



**DOUBLE SHOT  
CAPPUCCINO**

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Nash jerked, shocked the anger coming from Tyler was actually in his defense. "It doesn't bother you, me being attracted to guys?"

"Hell no, actually I'm very glad."

Shock coursed through Nash's body as his heart pounded, almost painfully in his chest. "It does?" he asked, stupidly, his mind raced too fast to think of a more intelligent response. "Why?"

Tyler reached out and used both palms to cup Nash's cheeks. "Because now I can do this."

Before Nash had a chance to ask what *this* was, Tyler kissed him. At first, Nash didn't respond, too stunned, to do anything but gasp like some teen girl. Then Tyler's tongue darted out to trace the outline of his lips and Nash moaned in acceptance.

His mind whirled with arousal and excitement even as he couldn't believe that Tyler was actually kissing him. Nash parted his lips, earning a growl of approval from Tyler. Need shot straight to Nash's cock when Tyler thrust his tongue inside his mouth to lick and tease. Off in the distance, Nash could still hear the low buzz of the small crowd gathered at the show, the sounds of honking cars and rushing traffic, but somehow the moment still managed to be intimate.

Nash fisted his hands in Tyler's shirt and brought him closer, so their bodies were flush against each other. He wanted to feel every inch of Tyler, to know every dip and ridge on him. Tyler groaned and spun them around so Nash was the one who was pressed against the car door. The handle dug into his ass, but Nash was too worked up to give a damn.

"Do you have any idea how fucking tempting you are?" Tyler demanded between kisses...

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BY

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DOUBLE SHOT CAPPUCCINO  
AN AMBER QUILL PRESS BOOK

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*To: Jackie, the best beta reader ever.  
Mom and Dad, I love you.  
Ken, Cody and Joie, for always believing in me.*

# CHAPTER 1

This was not the time to piss Nash off, but try telling that to his employee, Janet.

“One more week. Just give me that, please,” Nash begged as he hurried around behind the coffee bar, trying to keep ahead of the morning rush. It didn’t matter how hard they worked, though, the line just kept getting longer and the customers more irate.

“I wish I could, but I can’t,” Janet replied as she sprayed whipped cream on a mocha. Nash had the urge to take the can from her so he could console his loss with a mouthful of sugar and cream. He resisted, knowing his customers wouldn’t appreciate watching the owner of the coffee shop gorge himself on the product.

“Of course it is, you can meet up with your boyfriend and his

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grump band later,” Nash argued, as he handed off a tray full of drinks to his cashier, Colby. One of the customers, halfway back in the line, impatiently tapped her foot as she pointed to her watch. Nash gave her a small wave and what he hoped was a reassuring smile.

“That’s *grunge* band and I can’t hook up with them later because they’re taking my van for the trip,” she explained calmly.

Nash paused, rush momentarily forgotten, as he stared at her in disbelief. “You’re letting him use your van?”

Janet shrugged and Nash wondered if she’d finally lost complete control of her common sense. With mousy brown hair that she always kept in a sloppy ponytail, thick rimmed glasses, and a wardrobe of baggy clothes, she looked like she should be dating a computer geek. Certainly not some wannabe Kurt Cobain, who still lived in his parents’ basement and couldn’t hold a tune if his life depended on it.

“So, after working for me for two years, you’re going to take off and leave me hanging right before one of my busiest weeks?” He turned to pin her with an angry glare, only to ruin it when he yelped after spilling hot coffee on his hand. With a hiss of pain, he shook his hand several times as he hopped a bit on the balls of his feet.

The corners of Janet’s lips twitched, but she didn’t outright laugh at him. “Two years isn’t that long to be working for somebody.”

“It’s as long as this place has been in business. Would it make you feel better if I said, you’ve been with me since the day I first opened the doors?” He quickly ran his burn under cold water.

“Yes, it would. I really am sorry, but it’s not like I’m leaving you totally alone.” She pointed to the register. “You still have

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Colby.”

They both watched as Colby slowly handed change back to a customer. The cashier’s lips moved as he silently counted in his head. Nash shook his head as he despaired over the problem called Colby. Despite the fact they lived in Michigan, with his blond hair, blue eyes, and movie star looks, Colby looked like he belonged in LA. Too bad he wasn’t half as smart as he was handsome.

“Great, I have Colby,” Nash deadpanned, as he gingerly clutched his throbbing burn. Not that he didn’t like the guy. It was just that Colby was...well, Colby. There was a reason why Nash had the kid running the front instead of working with the equipment in the back. He could live with the drawer being a buck or two short, because Colby was horrible at math. He didn’t think he’d ever be able to withstand having one of his employees slice off a finger or worse and that would surely happen if he let Colby lose around sharp objects.

“I really am sorry.” Janet shot him a look that was all apologies, but stubbornness as well. “I can work tomorrow, but after that, I’m done.”

“Fine, but if I find out you’re pulling my leg and actually leaving to work for one of those big chain coffee shops, you are so off my friends list,” he grumbled, knowing there was no way he was going to talk her out of what he thought was a huge mistake.

“You know I’d never cheat on you, baby.” She winked and gave him a saucy smile.

They laughed and settled into their usual morning routine of working hard and praying they could keep up. Not that Nash was complaining about having so much business. When he’d first opened *Coffee by Luke and Nash* everyone had been certain he’d fail. With no guidance, very minimal startup revenue and a



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sluggish economy, it had been a huge gamble. It had paid off more than he'd ever imagined, though. Although Holly might be a small town, locals of all ages had fallen in love with his espressos, cappuccinos and flavored coffees.

It was nearly eleven by the time the rush finally finished. Nash was wiping down the counter in the back room, when Colby came up from behind and tapped him on the shoulder. "There's some dude here to see you."

"Is he carrying a briefcase or pamphlets?" Nash asked. The last thing he felt like dealing with at that moment was yet another salesperson and their pitches.

Colby scratched his flat stomach as he yawned. "I don't think so."

"Okay, I'm coming." The fact that Colby didn't know whether someone was carrying something or not shouldn't come as a surprise, but Nash still shook his head.

With a sigh of aggravation, Nash threw down the towel, then followed Colby back to the register. As he walked, Nash swore silently to himself if it was that same guy touting billboards again, he was going to lose it. He could barely afford to pay for a blurb in the local paper, let alone something as extravagant as a highway advertisement. As he rounded the corner, he steeled himself for the coming confrontation.

When he saw who really waited for him, Nash stopped dead in his tracks, his stomach doing a one-eighty. He could feel the blood draining from his face as his breath caught in his throat. He even blinked several times, as if to wash away the image. But nothing changed.

There stood Tyler Becker. The last man Nash ever thought would come back home to Holly.

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He was just as gorgeous as he had been in high school. From his short raven hair that contrasted nicely with his dark blue eyes, to his tight muscular build that would put a boxer to shame. Add in his strong jaw, full lips and high cheekbones and he neared perfection. Sure there was a bump on his nose, from where he'd broken it during his senior year, but that only made him more appealing in a rugged sort of way.

A swirl of mixed emotions hit Nash at once—shock, confusion and even a bit of anger. A cold sweat broke out over his body and his heart started to pound so hard, he was sure Tyler could hear it, even from across the counter.

*I'm not ready for this. It's too soon to talk to Luke's best friend. All it's going to do is make it hurt more.*

"Hello?" Tyler said, as his brows rose in confusion.

Nash realized he'd been standing there gaping like an idiot and cleared his throat to hide his embarrassment. "Hey, I hadn't heard you were home."

"Yeah, I'm finally getting my grandmother's stuff all packed up."

"You must have just got into Holly, because none of the town gossips told me a thing," Nash joked, still trying to cover how much seeing Tyler affected him. He walked the rest of the way to the counter and shoved his hands into his pockets to hide the fact they were shaking.

"I just drove in this morning."

"Are you on leave or something?"

"I got my discharge. I'm done with the Marines. I've been living with my parents in Ohio for the past few months," Tyler replied shortly, the good humor leaving his face.

*Okay, obviously something he doesn't want to talk about.*

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*Good, we can avoid that subject along with how I'm handling my brother's death.*

"So are you here to stay then? With your grandma's old house, it's not like you don't have any place to live," Nash pointed out, hoping if he kept the topic on Tyler, then it wouldn't drift to Luke.

"I don't think so. It seems like it's been too long since I've been here and so many things have changed." A sadness haunted Tyler's eyes and Nash knew without a doubt what had put it there.

*Luke is dead and he's never coming back.*

That one sentence replayed in Nash's head at least fifty times a day. At the funeral, several well-meaning people had told him things would get easier, the pain would lessen, that he would be able to move on.

They had been wrong, though. The hurt of losing his older brother still felt like a raw open wound one year later. The despair still as fresh as when he'd looked out his mother's front window and had seen the uniformed officers walking up the drive. The anger still simmering under the surface, ready to explode.

He knew Tyler felt Luke's loss just as much. The two had been best friends all their lives, from kindergarten to high school. They had even entered the military on the same day. Now Tyler was home and Luke never would be.

Nash wanted to hate Tyler for that, but found that he couldn't. Not when it was obvious the loss had devastated him, too.

"Would you like a cup of coffee? We can sit for a while and catch up," Nash offered on an impulse.

"Are you sure? I don't want to keep you from anything important." There was no missing the hopeful look in Tyler's eyes, though.

"Positive. I'd like nothing more." Nash just hoped he could

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keep it together.

\* \* \*

Tyler sat on the opposite side of the table and watched as Nash reached for a sweetener packet. Nash's hands trembled so badly, it took him a couple attempts to hold on to the thin pink package. Even though Nash might be trying to hide it, Tyler's unexpected visit obviously had thrown him for a loop.

"I'm sorry. I should have called first," Tyler said as he continued to watch Nash's attempts. Finally unable to bear it anymore, Tyler took the package away and opened it.

As he dumped it into the coffee, Nash muttered something that may have been a *thanks*. While Nash stirred in the sugar, Tyler took the opportunity to study the man. The last time he'd seen Tyler had been five years ago, when he'd been twenty. Since he and Luke were three years older than Nash, he really hadn't spent that much time around him. Now as Tyler gazed at Nash, he realized he'd been a fool for not noticing how handsome his best friend's younger brother was.

While Nash was thin, he still had enough of a muscular build to not come off as scrawny. His large brown eyes were as soft as Tyler remembered, although they had lost some of their spark. As a kid, Nash had always kept his dark hair cut short. Now he wore it a bit longer, so it curled up on the sides and at the nape of his neck.

Nash continued to stare into his coffee, his face pensive. He wore a red T-shirt that seemed to be the standard uniform for the shop. Tyler's gaze fixated on the name, *Coffee by Luke and Nash*. His gut clenched as he realized that Nash was far from getting over his brother's death. Which didn't surprise Tyler. Nash hadn't just

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loved Luke, he'd nearly worshiped the guy.

"If it's too hard to be around me, I can leave," Tyler offered.

Nash gave a slight shake of his head. "No, I was just surprised to see you."

His hands continued to tremble. Tyler fought the urge to reach over and hold them in a show of comfort. He held back. For all he knew, Nash might not welcome the gesture.

"He was proud of you. You know that, right?" Tyler asked

Nash raised a brow. "No, I didn't."

"I know Luke really wasn't the type to share his feelings, but it's the truth. He was impressed with you and how you made the shop a success."

"It was half his," Nash pointed out as he fiddled with this coffee cup.

"He may have given you half of the startup money, but you were the one who put in all the hard work and made it a success. He made sure everyone knew that, too."

A slight flush covered Nash's cheeks, making him look even more appealing. Tyler shifted in his seat as he realized that, under different circumstances, Nash would be the type of guy he went for.

Shamed, Tyler directed his gaze out the window. This was Luke's baby brother, for cripe's sake. Not only that, but the man was obviously still in mourning. So that meant he was hands-off. Try telling that to Tyler's cock, though, because it had stood to attention the minute he'd seen Nash, and wasn't showing any signs of backing down.

"So, I heard the town was still having its annual car show," Tyler said, changing subjects.

Nash smiled, softly, showing off the perfect set of dimples.

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“Yeah, and that means I’ll be busier than hell. Which is going to suck since one of my employees just quit.”

“Ouch, which one? The girl, or the guy who keeps looking at his reflection in the window?”

They both turned and watched as the blond cashier admired his image, even going so far as to run his hands through his hair to fix it.

“Colby is staying. It’s Janet who’s running off to be with her boyfriend and his grouch band.” Nash chuckled as he finally took a drink of coffee.

“*Grouch band*? What do they use, garbage cans or something?”

“Actually, it’s a grunge band. I just have fun ribbing Janet by getting it wrong.”

“What’s the name of the group?” Tyler asked. Judging by the sour look on Nash’s face, he didn’t think too highly of Janet’s boyfriend.

“The Crushed Cucumbers,” Nash drawled as he slowly shook his head.

Tyler let out a short burst of laughter. “Are you kidding me?”

“Nope. They even have it stenciled on the drums.”

“That has to be one of the worst names I’ve ever heard.”

“And yet they can’t figure out why they haven’t made it yet.” Nash gave a sly smile that did funny things to Tyler’s insides.

“So she’s running off right before the car show? That has to stink.”

“Tell me about it. I really think Colby’s a good kid and everything. He just has the tendency to get distracted and overwhelmed easily.”

“What are you going to do?”

Nash shrugged. “I don’t know. The show starts tomorrow, so

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it's too late look for someone else to take Janet's place. I have a few other part-timers, but they're all high school age, so they won't be able to work any extra hours."

Tyler pondered the situation for only a few seconds before the perfect solution came. "Why don't I help you out?"

Even as he made the offer, his injured leg throbbed in protest. It wouldn't be easy to stand behind a counter for hours at a time, but for Nash he'd suffer through the pain. Besides, it would give Tyler a chance to get to know Nash as a man instead of Luke's pesky little brother. Something he was suddenly very interested in doing.

Nash hedged, "Are you sure? You just got home. The last thing you want is to be stuck with me and working your ass off for a week."

"I'm positive. I don't have a job or anything yet, so I'm free."

"I'll pay you," Nash quickly offered, his face brightening.

"You don't have to."

"Please, I insist," Nash argued so earnestly, that Tyler decided to let him have his way.

As they settled on a wage and set up the work schedule, Tyler noticed how Nash acted like a heavy weight had been lifted from his shoulders. It pleased Tyler way more than it should have to know that he was the cause for the sudden change of mood.

"Janet is going to be here for one more day, so she can show you the ropes. Once you get the menu memorized, it's pretty easy. The cool thing is, even though we're busy, we still get to see a good part of the car show. They close off the street in front of the shop, so the owners can display their cars. They have a DJ booth, too, and since he always sets up in front of the Village Offices, we can hear him perfectly."

"Wow, the show has gotten a lot bigger than when we were

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kids. They used to be lucky if they filled Battle Alley,” Tyler said, referring to the short, historic street that ran along one side of the downtown area.

“Yeah, well things change. Even in small towns like this.” Nash chuckled.

Tyler silently agreed as he studied the now-very-sexy and grown-up man across from him. He vowed to himself, that before the week was out, he would get to know Nash better. In every way possible.



## CHAPTER 2

Although it was only six in the morning when Tyler drove to work, the main street had already been blocked off and several classic cars were parked in various spots. With nowhere else to park, he pulled into one of the back lots and walked the block and a half to the coffee shop.

He tried the door, only to find it locked with the *Closed* sign turned on. He rapped on the glass with the back of his knuckles and waited. Several of the locals passed by and shouted out greetings that he halfheartedly returned.

Colby came into view on the other side of the door. The kid had a sleepy, dopey look in his eyes, but Tyler had a feeling that was the norm and had nothing to do with the early hour. As he opened the door for Tyler, Colby poked his head out long enough

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to scowl at the crowd. "Don't these people realize that Sundays are made for sleeping in?"

"I guess they didn't get the memo," Tyler replied dryly as he walked in. He inhaled deeply, savoring the heavy scent of coffee beans.

"It should be against the law," Colby declared as he shot another dirty look down the street. "I haven't even been to bed, yet."

"That's your own fault. Nobody told you to go out clubbing last night," Janet called from the room.

"Don't be jealous just because I have a life and you don't." Colby went over to the counter and dramatically laid his head on it.

"Behave, children," Nash admonished in such a practiced way Tyler could tell he issued the order a lot.

While Colby looked half-dead, Nash seemed wide awake and ready to work. He'd never looked better, either, with his hair still slightly wet from the shower and worn jeans covering his perfect-sized ass. Even over the aroma of the shop, Tyler could detect the fresh scent of Nash's soap. Striving to look casual, Tyler leaned on the counter so he could get closer and breathe in deeper. *Nice. I have a feeling I'm really going to like working here.*

"It's going to be a long day. Are you sure you're up for this?" Nash asked as he smiled.

Tyler got so distracted at the sight of those dimples, it took him a second to realize that Nash had directed the question his way. He jumped, probably coming off as a real idiot. "Yeah, I can't wait."

Colby slowly shook his head. "Dude, you have no idea what you're in for."

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Eight hours later, Tyler finally admitted defeat. Colby had been right, this job had turned out to be a lot harder than he'd anticipated. Customers kept coming in, and no matter how hard he worked he always felt two steps behind.

To make matters worse, he didn't know the difference between a cappuccino, espresso or frigging latte. Plus, he had to learn all the right mixtures of syrups for the various recipes. By lunchtime Tyler felt like such a fumbling idiot that Colby looked like a genius in comparison.

Lucky for him, Colby did have one talent and that was charming the customers. No matter how long their wait, the cashier managed, with just a few well-placed words, to get a smile out of them. It made Tyler wonder if that whole dumb image he projected wasn't all an act.

"I'm never going to get this," he grumbled as he poured out yet another drink he'd messed up.

"Cut yourself some slack. It gets easier, I promise," Nash assured him as he hurried to remake the beverage. Tyler watched in awe as Nash's quickly mixed the right amount of syrup, milk and coffee.

"You're just saying that so I don't run away with Janet's gloom band," Tyler replied as he grabbed the next order and prayed he'd actually manage to make something drinkable for once.

"Sorry, there's no room in the van." Janet didn't even glance up from her work as she denied him.

"Well, damn, there goes my lifelong dream to be a roadie." Tyler shook his head as he let out an exaggerated sigh of disappointment.

"You'll get over it." Nash clapped him on the shoulder. "I did when I had to give up my quest to be the first cowboy astronaut."

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Tyler laughed. "I'd almost forgotten about how you used to run around in those stupid boots."

When Nash blushed, Janet's eyes grew wide with shock. "You mean to tell me Nash actually wanted to be a cowboy?"

"Don't forget astronaut, too. That's half the job title, after all," Tyler pointed out. "Although, I don't remember when you added that on to the cowboy part."

"It was after the Halloween when you dressed up as a space man," Nash confessed, as he averted his gaze. "I thought your costume was so cool, I made my dad go out and buy me one just like it."

For some insane reason, that gave Tyler a warm feeling inside. "The helmet did look cute on you."

"In my defense, I was only seven at the time. I can't believe you even remember it." Nash's cheeks burned even brighter.

"You wore those boots for a whole year, even on your dad's boat when we went fishing that one time."

"Cowboy boots on a wet fishing boat?" Janet gave a short laugh. "That must have been interesting."

"It wasn't too bad until Luke pushed me into the lake," Nash said.

"You lost one of your boots in the water," Tyler recalled.

"Yeah, and Luke jumped in and kept diving down until he found it for me." A sadness settled into Nash's eyes, making Tyler want to kick himself for even mentioning the incident.

He yearned to put his arms around Nash. To hold him and offer comfort. To soothe away that hurt, if only for a moment. Janet beat him to the punch. Crossing the small space between the counters, she wrapped her arms around Nash's waist and gave him a hug.

"Oh, isn't that just sweet," a snide voice snipped from the front.

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Tyler turned and saw it was Denise Ridion. Back in high school they had dated once or twice, but after graduation, Tyler hadn't talked to her. Not that he considered it a loss. With long blonde hair and soft blue eyes, she'd been good-looking enough. The problem was, she knew it and acted like everyone should consider themselves honored to be in her presence.

In the past five years, she'd put on about fifteen pounds and now styled her hair in a short, hard bob that gave her face a pinched and angry look. Plus, the long denim skirt and bulky sweater she wore made her appear older than the twenty-something she still was. It seemed pretty obvious that she'd left the short skirts and skin tight tops back in her high school days.

"Hey, Denise, it's been a while," Tyler greeted as he walked over to the counter, trying hard to hide the fact the pain in his leg had progressed to the limping point.

"Yes, it has. I hadn't heard you were home." She smiled tightly at him. "I'm sorry to see you with this kind of company."

As he pondered the insulting words, Tyler wondered what exactly he was missing. Sure Denise had been a bitch back in the day, but she'd never been this bad. Plus the animosity seemed to go both ways. Colby lost his smile, his jaws clenched together so tight a tic had formed on his cheek. Janet placed her body slightly in front of Nash, almost as if she were trying to protect him. Nash, for his part, just gazed intently at Janet, like he was waiting for something.

Before Tyler could ask what she meant by that comment, she turned her venom on Colby. "Are you going to take my order or not?"

Nash rushed forward and put a hand on the younger man's shoulder. "Why don't you get ready to go home, Colby? It's been a

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long day and I can handle this last order.”

Colby looked like he wanted to argue, but finally gave a reluctant nod. He stepped away from the register, but didn’t leave. Instead he moved over to stand next to Janet, crossed his arms over his chest and glowered at Denise.

“What can I get for you today?” Nash asked. Although his tone seemed pleasant enough, Tyler could tell by the tense way he held himself that he was upset.

Denise let out a long, exaggerated huff of irritation. “The same thing I always get. You would think you’d take the time to learn what your usual customers prefer.”

“Sorry about that, Denise.” He turned to Janet. “Can I get a small vanilla latte?” When Janet hesitated, Nash added, “Please.”

“Fine, but it’s not going to be made with love,” she muttered under her breath as she turned to the counter and started to slam stuff around.

Nash rang her up, silently taking the money. The entire time, Denise glared at Nash. Tyler felt a bit sick when he saw a bit satisfaction lingered in her cruel eyes, like she enjoyed giving Nash a hard time. When Janet handed over the drink, Tyler noticed the girl’s hands trembled with anger. It led him to believe this wasn’t the first time they’d faced Denise and her attitude.

Denise gave Tyler a brittle smile. “You know, sweetie, if you’re hard up for a job, you should stop by the grocery store and talk to my husband. You don’t need to lower yourself by working here.”

“So, Roy is still working at Dugger’s?” Tyler asked, referring to the one and only grocery store in the small town.

“Yes, he’s the night manager now,” Janet replied, proudly.

Tyler fought hard not to roll his eyes. Back in high school, Roy

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had been an overweight bully. He'd always tried to be friends with Tyler and Luke, but they'd never wanted anything to do with him because he was such a jerk. Tyler had disliked Roy and his mean ways so much, that the highlight of Tyler's senior year had been what had eventually been dubbed "the pigpen incident." At the annual 4-H fair, Roy had been leaning over a wood railing, using a stick to taunt the pigs. The wood had broken under his enormous weight and he'd fallen right into the pen, getting covered in mud and manure.

"Wow, thanks for the offer, but I'm happy working for Nash. So, has Roy gotten over his phobia, or is he still afraid to go into the pork section of the meat department?" Tyler blinked, playing innocent.

Behind him, Colby let out a snicker that he quickly hid behind a cough. Janet outright grinned. Denise, on the other hand, failed to see the humor in his comment. Her mouth opened and closed a few times as all the color drained from her face.

"Why are you sticking up for *him*?" She cast a withering glare at Nash, who still had yet to react to her venom. Frankly, Tyler didn't know how he managed to hold his tongue.

"He's one of my closest friends and a great person." *A much better one than you.* Tyler added silently.

"I can't believe that you would condone the activities Nash participates in."

Since Tyler had no clue what she was talking about, he just shrugged. "Nash has been my buddy for years and nothing is going to change that."

Meanwhile, Tyler's mind scrambled to think of what possible activities of Nash's could have gotten Denise's denim skirt in such a wad. Somehow he had a sneaky suspicion it wasn't something as

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nefarious as bodies in a dungeon or a sex tape. He'd be willing to bet it was something that really wasn't that bad at all. Denise struck him as one of the over judgmental types that he'd grown to hate over the years.

Denise's lips pressed together in a thin line. "Fine, don't say I didn't warn you."

With those parting words, she stormed out as fast as her ugly wedge shoes would allow.

"God, what did I ever see in her?" Tyler asked no one in particular once the door had slammed shut and they were free of her awful presence. He'd almost rather go back to Iraq and risk another gunshot wound than deal with her again. From the looks of it, poor Nash had to deal with her on a regular basis.

"At one time she did look cute in her cheerleading uniform," Nash suggested helpfully. Judging by the sour expression on his face, he didn't think even a great set of legs helped boost his opinion of her.

Colby snorted. Tyler suspected it was because Colby couldn't imagine anyone better looking than himself. Then he stunned Tyler by declaring, "Looks aren't everything."

They all turned as one to stare at him, identical expressions of shock on their faces. Colby blushed a little before shrugging. "At least that's what my grandmother told me."

Tyler shook his head. First with the anger on Nash's behalf and now with his words of wisdom, Colby was proving to be much more than a pretty face.

Colby started for the door. "I've got to go now. If I don't get to club early, then all the cute guys will have been taken. The last thing I want is to end up with a fugly one. That happened to me last week and I had to drink my weight in margaritas to get through



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it.”

Okay, maybe Colby *was* just a pretty face, but under all that self-centered *me-me-me* lay a caring soul.

Still it warmed Tyler as he thought about how protective both Janet and Colby had acted toward Nash. Even when Nash had told Colby he could leave, he still stayed behind to form a united coffee worker front against Denise.

“Why don’t we start cleaning up so we can close for the night,” Nash said with a sigh. “I think things have died down enough.”

Tyler said a silent thanks since the pain in his leg had started to progress from a burn to a steady throb. What he needed was a handful of ibuprofen and a long hot bath, but first he had to survive the long walk back to his car. He cursed himself for his weakness even as he shifted to the side to take some weight off his leg.

There were no customers in the shop, so Nash flipped off the open sign and counted down the drawer as Tyler helped Janet clean up the back area. After they were done Tyler and Janet waited on the sidewalk while Nash locked up.

It took several more minutes for Janet to get out her tearful good-byes. Tyler stood to the side, feeling awkward and wondering if he should just sneak away to give them privacy. Just as he was about to scoot, Janet turned and gave him a rib-crunching hug.

“I’m going to miss you, too,” she cried.

Not having the heart to point out they’d only known each other for a day, Tyler just patted her on the back and waited for the embrace to end. After two more hugs, one more to Tyler and another to Nash, she waved and left.

“Wow, your employees really like you,” Tyler said as they watched Janet walk down the sidewalk. He silently added himself

## DOUBLE SHOT CAPPUCCINO

to the *like Nash* list, but for a whole different set of reasons.

"I just wish I could have talked her out of this whole road trip." Nash's mouth turned down into a frown.

"You think she's making a mistake?"

"I don't think, *I know* she is. But she believes her boyfriend is a god and refuses to listen to me."

"I thought she was going to jump the counter and strangle Denise today." Tyler grinned at the memory.

"She nearly did last time. I had to grab her hand to hold her back." Nash nodded to a concession stand still open. "Why don't you let me buy you dinner?"

They each got two hot dogs and drinks, then took a seat in one of the decorative, green benches that were a permanent part of the downtown area landscape. Tyler took a moment to study his surroundings as a bit of nostalgia hit him. Both sides of the main street were lined with cars from various decades, each and every one of them in pristine, shiny condition. Beside most of them, the owners had set up lawn chairs and stood guard over their pride and joys. The DJ was playing fifties music, but the music wasn't so loud they had to shout to each other to be heard. Although the sun had just set an hour ago, there weren't as many people as earlier, most likely because it was Sunday and the first day of the festival.

"Do they still finish off the car show with a fireworks display at the end of the week?" Tyler asked as he took in the historic buildings that dominated most of the architecture. He noticed at least a third of the buildings were antique stores. Some things never changed.

"Yeah, although now they keep extra fire trucks nearby after the incident a couple years ago." One of Nash's dimples made a brief appearance.

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“What incident? I was in Iraq still, so I didn’t get to hear about it.”

“You remember Robby Reeve?” The sly look that came to Nash’s eyes as he asked that made Tyler all the more curious.

“Yeah, he was the kid who had a pipe bomb explode in his face.”

“Poor Robby never got over his love of explosives. He decided to celebrate on his own with some illegal fireworks he bought across the state line.” Nash gave a mock shudder. “It didn’t end so pretty.”

Tyler realized his mouth hung open in shock and he closed it. “He didn’t die, did he?”

“No, but he can’t use his fingers to count any higher than six anymore. He lost a few when he didn’t toss a M-80 firecracker away quick enough.”

“Ouch, that must have been bad.”

Nash took a drink from his tall-necked bottle of soda before giving a small chuckle. “Oh, it gets worse. That was just the beginning of the injuries that horrible, dark day that shall forever go down in Holly history.”

“Oh God, it has to be good if they’re still taking precautions two years later.” Tyler leaned back against the bench and stretched out his bum leg, trying not to wince in pain.

“Do you know Mrs. Milton’s ugly ass cat, Muffin? The really fat orange one that used to get into everyone’s garbage in our neighborhood?”

“Sure I do. My dad threatened he was going to shoot the thing because it always climbed into our cans and dumped them over.” Not that Tyler ever believed his dad would have gone through with it. His old man was such a pacifist. Tyler gasped in horror as he

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worried about the direction the story was taking. “Please tell me Robbie didn’t blow up Muffin.”

“No, but his explosion did scare the hell out of the cat and it darted out into the road, right in front of a police car. One that happened to be driven by Officer Montgomery.”

Now Tyler did wince. Officer Montgomery had to be one of the strictest, straight-as-an-arrow guys in the Holly police force.

Nash had more to tell, though. “Montgomery crashed into one of those fancy streetlights.” Nash tilted his head to the end of the road, where a pair of thick, green, ornate lights stood. They each were topped with a huge, white glass dome, so Tyler could only imagine what a mess it had made.

“Meanwhile, Robby was still running around screaming and bleeding all over the place.” Nash paused. “Didn’t Luke tell you any of this? I wrote him a letter all about it.”

“When Luke got stationed in Afghanistan and I got shipped to Iraq, we kind of drifted apart a bit.” Tyler bitterly regretted that, too.

“That’s too bad.” Nash fiddled with the label on his bottle.

“So, are you going to tell me why Denise hates you so much?” Tyler asked.

Nash’s jaw clenched as he looked away. For a second Tyler worried that he’d pushed too hard. Then Nash gave a slight nod. “I’ll make a deal with you. I’ll clue you in to why Denise thinks I’m the scum of Michigan if you tell me what happened to your leg.”

For the second time in the span of minutes, Tyler found himself open mouthed with shock. He’d thought he’d been doing a good job of hiding his injury, but Nash had still figured it out.

“I caught a bullet in my thigh a few months ago,” he confessed.

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“Is that why you left the Marines?” Nash’s gaze grew soft with concern, but not pity and for that Tyler could have kissed him.

“Yeah, I was going to reenlist. Instead I spent the last of my time in a hospital bed,” Tyler answered, hating how bitter he sounded.

“Why didn’t you tell me sooner?”

Tyler wondered to himself just why he’d been trying to keep it a secret. It’s not like he’d done anything wrong. It just boiled down to every time he thought about that day when he’d been shot, he couldn’t help but feel like somehow he’d failed as a Marine. Which was stupid, because he’d never thought that when he’d seen plenty of others get hurt or killed. “I don’t know why I didn’t just tell you. I guess I just didn’t want you to feel sorry for me.”

Nash’s gazed at him intently. “I feel a lot of things for you, Tyler, but none of them are pity.”

## CHAPTER 3

Nash nervously cleared his throat as he realized how telling that last sentence had been. He'd be lucky if Tyler didn't tell him off, or worse, take a swing at him. Nash had known the guy nearly all his life and if there was one thing he was certain of, it was that Tyler was in no way gay.

A tense silence settled between them, as Tyler stared at the cars and Nash looked down at his feet. The classic music, which had sounded upbeat earlier, now had an almost mocking lightness to it. In the short time they'd sat there, night had fully set in, but the lighting that had been brought in for the show, still made it easy to see everything. Nash glanced out of the corner of his eyes to see if Tyler seemed pissed, but the man's face remained a blank wall.

"We should probably get going," Nash finally said, not able to

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stand the quiet any longer.

"I guess," Tyler agreed, but he didn't move to get up.

"Where's your car?"

"Over by the park. The street was already closed when I got here this morning."

Nash worried about how the long walk would affect Tyler's leg. It was on the tip of his tongue to offer to go get Tyler's car for him, but Nash held back. Going by the way Tyler had been acting, the last thing he wanted was coddling or special treatment. So instead, Nash offered, "Why don't I walk with you? My house is just a block away from there."

He half expected to get a hard brush off, instead Tyler nodded and stood. Nash followed, gathering up his trash and bottle. He tossed the garbage away and put their bottles in the recycle bucket before he rejoined Tyler.

It wasn't until they were out of the downtown area that Tyler finally spoke. "So, you don't live with your mom anymore?"

"I'm twenty-five now, so I thought it was time I grew up and bought my own house. I moved in a year ago, right after Luke's funeral. Even after I opened the shop, I still had money left over from the inheritance from my grandfather so I used it as a down payment."

"Did you dad come to Luke's funeral?"

"No," Nash replied shortly. As far as he was concerned, there was nothing else to say about the bastard. Nash hadn't talked to him since he left his mom seven years ago. Hell, Dad had left more than just his mom, he'd left all of them, without once looking back. All so he could start a new life with his much younger, much prettier law firm partner.

"I can't believe he couldn't at least be decent enough to go to

## *DOUBLE SHOT CAPPUCCINO*

his own son's funeral," Tyler seethed.

"Last time I heard, he has a couple more new sons. So I guess he doesn't think he needs us anymore." Nash shrugged like it didn't hurt to say that, even as he felt a stab of pain in his chest. He silently told himself to get over it. It wasn't like he was a kid anymore who needed his daddy or something.

"He still should have been there." Tyler shook his head.

A few more moments of silence passed as they neared the parking lot. Nash said a quiet prayer that Tyler had forgotten all about the Denise issue. Those hopes were dashed when they reached Tyler's car.

"So, I told you about my leg. Now it's your turn," Tyler announced as he crossed his arms and leaned back against the side of his red sports car.

Nash suddenly became glad they were no longer under the strong lights from downtown, so the darkness hid his face. He absently kicked at a loose piece of asphalt, as he asked, "Luke didn't tell you?"

"Like I said earlier, it'd been a while since we really spoke."

Nash bit his bottom lip in indecision. It's not like Tyler wasn't going to find out the truth sooner or later, since Nash had already come out to all his family and friends. Nor was Nash ashamed of the fact that he was gay. It was just, after dealing with Denise, he'd had enough hate thrown his way for the day. But a promise was a promise.

"Denise thinks I'm a bad influence on the kids who come to the coffee shop because I'm gay," Nash blurted.

Even in the darkness, he could see Tyler's face grow tight with anger, and Nash tensed, waiting for the inevitable outburst.

"What gives that bitch the right to judge you?"



## *DOUBLE SHOT CAPPUCCINO*

Nash jerked, shocked the anger coming from Tyler was actually in his defense. “It doesn’t bother you, me being attracted to guys?”

“Hell no, actually I’m very glad.”

Shock coursed through Nash’s body as his heart pounded, almost painfully in his chest. “It does?” he asked, stupidly, his mind raced too fast to think of a more intelligent response.

Tyler pushed himself away from the car and moved forward, so he stood in front of Nash, their bodies mere inches from each other. “Yes, and you want to know why?”

“Why?” Nash croaked past a suddenly dry throat.

Tyler reached out and used both palms to cup Nash’s cheeks. “Because now I can do this.”

Before Nash had a chance to ask what *this* was, Tyler kissed him. At first, Nash didn’t respond, too stunned, to do anything but gasp like some teen girl. Then Tyler’s tongue darted out to trace the outline of his lips and Nash moaned in acceptance.

His mind whirled with arousal and excitement even as he couldn’t believe that Tyler was actually kissing him. Nash parted his lips, earning a growl of approval from Tyler. Need shot straight to Nash’s cock when Tyler thrust his tongue inside his mouth to lick and tease. Off in the distance, Nash could still hear the low buzz of the small crowd gathered at the show, the sounds of honking cars and rushing traffic, but somehow the moment still managed to be intimate.

Nash fisted his hands in Tyler’s shirt and brought him closer, so their bodies were flush against each other. He wanted to feel every inch of Tyler, to know every dip and ridge on him. Tyler groaned and spun them around so Nash was the one who was pressed against the car door. The handle dug into his ass, but Nash

## *DOUBLE SHOT CAPPUCCINO*

was too worked up to give a damn.

“Do you have any idea how fucking tempting you are?” Tyler demanded between kisses.

“No, I’m not like Colby. I don’t spend all day looking at my reflection,” Nash countered. His cock ached and he yearned to thrust forward to grind it against Tyler. But he held back, not sure if that would be pushing things too fast.

Then Tyler slid his hand between them and caressed Nash’s dick. Nash bit back a yell. Tyler’s touch felt hot and fantastic even through the thick denim of his jeans.

“It’s taking all I have to stop myself from bending you over the hood and fucking you right here out in the open,” Tyler said as he gave Nash’s cock a light squeeze.

Nash shuddered with pent-up passion. The thought of him facedown on the car, Tyler’s cock pounding in his ass, had him almost to the edge. So when Tyler abruptly pulled back, Nash couldn’t contain his cry of frustration.

A car pulled into the parking lot, the headlights temporarily illuminating them before it turned to the back of the lot and they were plunged into darkness again. Nash stepped away from Tyler’s car, the mood broken. His body still tingled, though, and he had to resist the urge to reach up and touch his bruised lips.

“I’ll see you tomorrow?” Tyler acted liked he was going to reach out for him. At the last minute he looked around and dropped his hand. Nash felt a little disappointed and he’d never been one for PDAs.

“Yeah.” Nash moved farther out of the way, so Tyler could get into his car.

Tyler gave him one last waved before he drove away. For several moments, Nash stood there, still too shocked by what had

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just gone down to think about walking to his house. He had to admit one thing, though. He'd been dead wrong when he'd been so certain that Tyler wasn't gay.

Nash smiled as he realized that for the first time in what had seemed forever, he actually felt excited about something. Whistling softly, he turned around and walked the final half block to his house.

\* \* \*

The next morning, Nash found that he could barely concentrate on the usual opening procedures because of nerves. He leaned over the front counter, looking at an order form, without really seeing it, as his mind raced. After the whole kiss incident the previous night, he didn't know how he should act around Tyler anymore.

Maybe he'd read too much into it. For all he knew Tyler could have just been experimenting to see how it was to kiss another man. He wouldn't be the first guy to do so. It's not like he'd come right out and said he was gay after all.

Still, it had been one hell of a kiss. A tingle went up his spine as he recalled how strong Tyler's hands had felt as they cupped his face. How soft his lips were. How addicting his taste had been.

Nash groaned in dismay as his cock reacted, pressing painfully against his jeans. Not the way he wanted to spend the rest of his workday—sporting a painful woody. At this rate, he'd have to keep his apron on all day, just so all the customers didn't think he was really, really happy to see them.

The lock on the door clicked. Nash didn't look up at first, knowing it was Colby since he and Janet were the only employees with keys. Colby walked over and dramatically rested his head on

## *DOUBLE SHOT CAPPUCCINO*

the counter, his arms folded under his cheek in a makeshift pillow.

“Rough night?” Nash asked as he slowly shook his head. He didn’t know how Colby managed to get by on so little sleep. Even as a college kid in his prime, Nash still had to have at least five hours a night to function. Lately, Colby was lucky to get five hours a week.

Colby turned his face enough for Nash to see a very wicked smile playing on his full lips. “Very rough, but that’s a good thing.”

“Ew, that may have been just a bit too much information. Do you even remember this one’s name?”

The grin got just a little wider and a little more wicked. “Big Boy or Daddy, I can’t really recall.”

Nash, paused, concerned. “Seriously, Colby, you’re being safe, right?”

Colby rolled his bloodshot eyes. “Yes, Mom, I made sure he used a condom.”

“That’s good to know, but I don’t mean just that. I worry about you getting into a situation that you won’t be able to charm your way out of.”

“I know what I’m doing. Don’t worry.” Colby sighed as his eyelids fluttered closed.

Nash couldn’t help but worry, though. In the past year Colby had been working for him, he’d grown to look at the kid almost like a younger brother. He hated it but, while Colby may act vain on the outside, inside he was dangerously insecure. The last thing Nash wanted was to see the young man get hurt just because he looked for acceptance in the wrong place.

A sharp rap on the door brought him out of his troubled thoughts. Tyler had arrived, and as usual, he looked damn good.

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Yesterday Nash had given him one of the official coffeehouse shirts, and it almost seemed to mold itself to Tyler's muscular chest. Add in the jeans that hugged his tight ass and Nash had to bite back a groan of appreciation.

Yeah, Nash would be wearing an apron all day. That was a certainty now.

Before he could move toward the door, Colby had pushed himself away from the counter and stumbled over to open it. Tyler shook his head as he looked at the young man. "Colby, you look like you need to take a weekend-long nap."

"There will be plenty of time to sleep when I'm an old man like you," Colby grumbled, but the teasing glint in his eyes showed he didn't mean the harsh words.

"Ouch, I think I've just been insulted." Tyler grinned over at Nash.

Nash's stomach did a strange flip as he smiled back. "Don't worry, there's nothing old about you."

The way Tyler's gaze raked over Nash screamed he repeated the sentiment, but he didn't say anything.

"Are you ready for this?" Colby asked, Tyler. "No Janet to back you up today."

"Bring it on." Tyler walked over, then reached behind the counter to grab an apron. He paused, an unreadable expression on his face as he stared at the stool Nash had moved back in front of the work station this morning.

Neither one of them said anything, but Nash didn't miss the look of gratitude that eventually passed over Tyler's face. Nash felt a flush come over his cheeks as he looked away and nervously tapped his pencil. He wished they were alone. He had so much he wanted to say to Tyler. More than that, he had a million questions

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he yearned to ask. First and foremost, why had Tyler initiated that kiss?

As the hours passed, Nash hoped to get a clue in Tyler's behavior, but the man continued to act the same as always. He wasn't unfriendly, but then he didn't seem to go out of his way to make Nash feel warm and fuzzy either.

Luckily they were busy, so the day moved quickly. When one of his part-time high school workers, Karen, showed up, Nash sent Colby home with strict orders to actually get some sleep. Nash didn't need to worry about being a worker short once Colby left. Not only was Karen proficient at her job, but Tyler hadn't been bragging when he said he was ready. He moved quickly behind the counter, slinging out the drinks almost as fast as Janet used to.

When Karen announced that her ride was there, Nash gave the clock a double glance, shocked it was closing time already. He let her go and then turned off the lights to the front of the shop and flipped on the closed sign.

Nash went around to the back storage room to help clean, only to find Tyler had already done it. Nash stood there awkwardly, painfully aware they were alone for the first time since that moment in the parking lot.

Tyler started to put the last of the things in the large, double door refrigerator and Nash waited patiently for him to finish. When he finally did get to speak to Tyler, he wanted to do it face to face. However, when Tyler finally did turn, Nash found himself locked into that intense blue-eyed gaze. His heart pounded with nerves as he opened his mouth to speak. Nothing came out, though, his throat too tight to form words.

Great, he'd waited for this moment all day and now that he finally had Tyler alone, Nash's fear of being rejected had to show

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itself. Fuck, this situation was quickly becoming the story of his life. So instead of getting all the questions off his chest, he stood there like a deer stuck in a hunter's illegal spotlight.

"I've got a question for you," Tyler said as he slowly walked forward.

At least one of them was capable of speech. Nash just nodded stupidly as he watched Tyler approach. His hips rolled so sensually that Nash's gaze homed in and locked. He jumped in surprise when Tyler reached out and touched the front of his apron.

"Why have you been wearing this all day?" Tyler grinned and Nash swallowed hard. Shit, he knew. There was no denying that, the truth was stamped in the cocky look in Tyler's eyes.

"Have I had it on since this morning?" he finally managed to get out, his voice sounding strained.

"You know you have, don't be coy." Tyler looped a finger through the top strap of the apron and jerked it forward, bringing Nash in close.

Nash sucked in a breath as their bodies pressed together. Too close for him to hide the erection that had plagued him for most of the day. Tyler's eyes glinted with satisfaction as a sly grin spread out over his lips. "Have you been trying to hide something from me?"

When Nash just shook his head and refused to speak, Tyler gave the apron another tug. "Answer me with that sweet mouth of yours. Enough with the head motions."

"I wasn't hiding it so much from you as the rest of the world." Nash flushed at his embarrassing confession, then moaned when Tyler leaned forward and nipped his earlobe. Tyler's teeth just barely grazed the skin, but it still made Nash jerk in pleasure.

Tyler paused, his lips just a whisper away from Nash's ear. "I

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couldn't sleep last night. All I could think about was how sweet your lips were and it made me wonder how all of you would taste like. I finally had to jack off, just so I could get some relief."

Nash let out a little whimper as the image of Tyler fisting his own cock popped into his head. Tyler reached behind Nash and untied the apron strings. His fingers lingered for a moment at the top of Nash's ass before Tyler abruptly stepped back.

"Take it off," Tyler ordered in a hard, military snap.

Nash shivered in desire as he slowly lifted the apron strap over his head. Once he had the garment off, he tossed it up on the counter and waited for Tyler's next order.



## CHAPTER 4

Nash tried to hide the fact that his legs trembled from anticipation as Tyler's heated gaze traveled over his body. For a moment the only sounds piercing the silence were the lull from the festival outside and the hum of the refrigerator as they faced off. Finally, Tyler slowly licked his lips as he eyed the obvious bulge in Nash's pants.

"Reach behind you and grab the counter," Tyler commanded.

Nash obeyed without a second's hesitation. The move arched his back slightly, making his erection stand out more. This time Nash felt no embarrassment, though. Not with the way Tyler's eyes flared with arousal. It gave Nash a moment of empowerment. Tyler wanted this just as much as he did.

"Yes, babe, just like that," Tyler said, huskily. "You're fucking

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perfect in that position.”

A warm feeling settled in Nash’s stomach at Tyler’s praise. “Kiss me,” he begged.

Tyler moved forward, but right before their lips met, he gave one last order. “No matter what, don’t move your hands. I want you to stay exactly the way you are.”

Nash nodded as he bit his bottom lip. Tyler reached and used his thumb to nudge Nash’s jaw down, so his lip slipped free from his teeth. “I can’t kiss you unless you give me full access to your mouth.”

“Sorry,” Nash whispered. They were so close now that every time Tyler exhaled, Nash could feel it against his cheek.

Tyler reached down and grazed the back of his knuckles against Nash’s cock. Nash bucked a little as he hissed with relief. After aching all day, it felt so good to have Tyler’s touch. With one last cocky smile, Tyler finally pressed his lips against Nash’s mouth in the softest of kisses.

Nash immediately parted his lips and moaned when Tyler took the hint and plunged his tongue inside. Nash thrust his own tongue forward to return the favor. A muffled groan still managed to escape his lips as Tyler began to stroke him through his jeans.

“I can’t believe this hot body was in front of my face all those years and I never noticed it,” Tyler declared before he started to kiss his way down Nash’s jaw to his throat.

Nash tilted his head to the side as he let out a happy sigh. Tyler’s lips left behind a hot, velvet path that made him yearn for so much more. He itched to bring his hands up to return the caresses, but he kept them in place, just as Tyler had ordered. Nash remembered how good it’d felt to get Tyler’s praise and he didn’t want to ruin his chance to get more of it.

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Tyler pulled back before he dropped to his knees in front of Nash. Even though they were tucked in the back of the store and no one could possibly see them, Nash still shot glances toward the front of the building, afraid someone, somehow would see them. Then he didn't give a damn anymore when he felt his zipper being lowered. Once it was down, Tyler popped the top button and lowered Nash's pants just enough for his cock to spring free.

"Beautiful," Tyler crooned as he slowly stroked the shaft.

Nash gripped the counter behind him so tight, the edges dug into his fingers to the point of almost pain. Then he let out a long hiss of pleasure. Tyler pumped his hand up and down Nash's cock several times before he finally leaned forward and ran his tongue along the head.

"Damn," Nash cried, as his hips snapped forward on their own accord. He squeezed his eyes shut as he fought to get control of himself.

"You look so cute trying to be good. Let's see how long it takes for you to finally break."

Tyler parted his lips and slowly took Nash's cock into his mouth. Nash cried out as his shaft became bathed in moist heat. Pleasure shot up his spine, making him want to thrust forward again, but he restrained himself, letting Tyler set the pace.

Tyler pulled back, flattening his tongue along the tender underside of Nash's cock. Then Tyler sucked in again, this time taking Nash in so deep there wasn't an inch left unattended. Through his sex haze, Nash wondered how Tyler managed it. While Nash wasn't porn star huge, he wasn't exactly small either and none of his past lovers had ever managed to suck him all in like that.

"You're not playing fair," he accused softly as he white-

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knuckled the counter even harder.

Tyler moaned around his cock, making Nash let out another cry. Nash let his head fall back as he allowed himself to get lost in the slow, easy rhythm Tyler set. It felt so good, he wanted it to never end. The way his balls were tightening, though, let him know he'd be lucky if he lasted five more minutes.

How could he ever have doubted that Tyler was gay? The way he sucked cock let Nash know this was not a first-time experience. In fact, it had to be the best blow job he'd ever gotten. Tyler seemed to instinctively know when to suck hard, when to give soft licks, and when to apply the gentle pressure of his teeth.

Pleasure poured over Nash and he finally did break, letting go of the counter so he could fist his hands into Tyler's dark hair. Tyler looked up from under his lashes, the triumphant look in his eyes clearly saying, *I won*. Funny thing, though, Nash didn't feel like much of a loser, especially when Tyler let his mouth hang open enough for Nash to start thrusting his cock in and out.

It took only a few passes before his cock jerked. Tyler clamped his lips around Nash's shaft right in time. Nash let out one last cry as he came, his cock shooting off hot jets inside Tyler's sweet mouth.

Tyler moaned, as if savoring the taste of Nash's come as he swallowed every drop. He even licked Nash's cock clean before he finally let it slip from his grasp. Nash panted, still not recovered from one of the most intense orgasms of his life as he gently ran his fingers through Tyler's hair.

Tyler gave him one final lick before he stood and captured Nash's lips in a heated kiss. Nash slid his tongue inside, savoring the tang of his own essence still lingering in Tyler's mouth.

"I guess that clears up whether or not you're gay," Nash said

## *DOUBLE SHOT CAPPUCCINO*

with a happy sigh once they pulled away.

Tyler leaned forward so their foreheads rested against each other as he gave a chuckle. "I would have thought the kiss last night would have been a big clue."

"I guess." Nash felt his face get warm again. Damn it, how many times was he going to blush like some frigging teen girl? "It just came as a surprise since Luke never said anything to me about it."

"I never told him. Before we left, I was in some serious denial. Then once I realized I couldn't hide from myself anymore I was in the military..."

"...and then you had to hide it from them," Nash finished ruefully.

"Bingo, so I kept it to myself, completely," Tyler said as he slowly stroked Nash's cheek. It was almost as if he couldn't get enough caresses in, which was fine by Nash since he took great pleasure in receiving them.

"Come home with me," Nash offered, impulsively. He and Tyler were still pressed together, their breaths mingling.

"Are you sure?" Tyler fanned his thumb along Nash's bottom lip.

"I would just have you take me on top of the counter, here, but I don't have any of the necessary supplies handy," Nash replied, only half teasing.

Tyler gave him a sexy grin. "How long will it take you to close?"

"Just give me ten minutes to count down the drawer and get the bank drop ready."

"Hurry." Tyler gave him a lingering kiss before he stepped back.

## *DOUBLE SHOT CAPPUCCINO*

Nash pulled up his pants and zipped them before he hurried to finish the tasks. The entire time he counted and sorted the cash, he felt Tyler's heated gaze on him. Somehow, Nash still managed to get it done in record time. As he tossed the bank bag into the store vault, he noted the one from last night inside and neglected. In all his nerves, he'd forgotten to make his usual morning run. He shut it as he made a mental note to take care of that tomorrow. Tonight he had much better plans.

"Ready?" Tyler asked as he leaned against the counter. He looked so sexy that Nash's cock swelled back to life.

Nash nodded and they left the store. As they went out, Nash noticed the streets were much fuller than the previous day. A couple of his long-time customers waved and Nash returned the gesture before he headed down the street in a near run.

"Anxious?" Tyler chided.

"Just shut the hell up and follow me." Nash grinned. He noticed that Tyler barely had a limp at all. The stool must have helped and Nash was glad he'd thought of it.

It took them less than five minutes to get to his house, but it seemed like forever to Nash. As he tripped up his wooden porch steps, he was already digging the key out. His home was one of the older, historic ones that dotted original streets. While the heating bill sucked and he always had some repair that needed to be done, Nash loved the wood floor and antique trimming that ran through all the rooms.

As soon as he had the door open and they were inside, Tyler attacked him like a man starved. Nash found himself pushed against his foyer wall face-first, as Tyler nuzzled the nape of his neck. Nash moaned as he felt the length of Tyler's erection pressing against his ass.

## DOUBLE SHOT CAPPUCCINO

“The stuff is upstairs,” he pointed out even as he thrust back at Tyler’s cock.

Tyler groaned before he let Nash free. They kicked off their shoes before Nash started to lead the way. He made it exactly six steps before Tyler was on him again. This time Nash got trapped between the banister and Tyler’s hard body. Nash opened his mouth to point out this was *on* the stairs and not *upstairs*, but Tyler shut him up with a hard kiss.

Nash allowed himself to get lost in the wonderful sensation of Tyler’s lips and tongue for a moment. Finally, he put his hand on Tyler’s chest and gave a gentle shove. “Up. The. Stairs.”

Nash made it up two steps before Tyler grabbed him from behind. Nash gasped as his shirt was pulled off him and tossed to the side. Tyler’s hands seemed to be everywhere, over Nash’s pecs, his stomach, and then finally his nipples. Pleasure ripped through his body as Tyler pinched them lightly while he bit Nash’s shoulder.

“Sorry, I just can’t stop touching you,” Tyler apologized in a rough voice.

Nash twisted around, his hands going to the hem of Tyler’s shirt. Nash peeled it off, licking and nibbling at the flesh as he exposed it. Tyler rewarded him with a long groan that made Nash smile. Once he had the garment off, Nash tossed it the side, not caring where it landed.

They continued their much interrupted trip up. The next time it was Nash who halted the progress, tackling Tyler from the rear. Tyler went down with a grunt and for one heart pounding second, Nash thought they were going to take a tumble, a la Scarlett O’Hara style. To his relief, Tyler twisted at the last second, so he took the fall on his back instead of his face. Nash landed on top of

## *DOUBLE SHOT CAPPUCCINO*

him, his knees hitting the hardwood steps with a painful thud. Neither one of them took time out to say so much as an *ouch*, too intent on each other.

Since his face happened to end up near Tyler's groin, Nash took advantage of it. After popping open the top button on Tyler's pants, he lowered the zipper. A small shiver raced through him when he saw that Tyler went commando. Just when he thought the guy couldn't get sexier.

With one quick motion, Nash stripped off Tyler's jeans. Once he had him naked, Nash only took one moment to admire Tyler's body. He smoothed his palms up Tyler's thighs, then dipped his head and ran his tongue over the head of Tyler's thick cock. The tang of pre-come elicited a moan from Nash, before he parted his lips and took Tyler all the way in.

Nash inhaled deep, drinking in Tyler's light, musky sent. His gag reflex almost kick in when Tyler's large cock went deep. It was only after Nash relaxed his throat and remembered to breathe through his nose, that he could savor the pleasure of having Tyler inside his mouth.

Tyler only let him get in a few minutes of sucking before he grabbed Nash by the hair and gently pulled him off. "I don't want to come until I'm deep inside your ass. Now where in the hell is your bedroom so we can get to it?"

"This way." Nash awkwardly scrambled to his feet and raced toward his room.

He pushed open the door and his gaze settled on the bed. He never bothered to make it and that morning had been no different. The covers and sheets were a tangled mess and dirty clothes lay scattered all over the floor. "Sorry, I wasn't expecting company or else I would have cleaned up some."



## *DOUBLE SHOT CAPPUCCINO*

Tyler laughed. “Only you would worry about housekeeping when you’re with a naked man who’s ready to screw your brains out.”

Tyler gave him a gentle push on the back and Nash got the hint and ran for the bed. Once he got there, he stretched across the mattress on his stomach, so he could reach over to the nightstand drawer to get the condoms and lube.

Once he had them in his hands, he started to roll over, but Tyler put a hand on the small of his back to stay him. Nash let out a surprised cry when his pants and underwear were roughly jerked off. At the last minute, he used his free hand to grab onto the edge of the mattress so he didn’t end up on the floor with all the dirty clothes.

“Fuck.” Nash gasped, when he felt big hands separating his ass cheeks, followed by the warm, swirl of a tongue rimming his hole.

Nash tossed the lube and condom in Tyler’s direction, then balled his hands into the sheets and let himself get lost in the pleasure. The velvet heat from Tyler’s tongue seemed to be everywhere—along the slope of Nash’s ass, spearing into his hole, caressing the tight ring of muscle.

His mind became so jumbled in a sexual haze, Nash didn’t realize Tyler had grabbed the lube until a cool, slick finger slid into his ass. Nash let out a choked cry of pleasure as he tilted his hips up to give Tyler better access. His cock, hard to the point of painful, rubbed against the bed, making for a wicked friction that had him moaning.

Tyler started to slowly work his digit in and out. When he added a second finger, Nash started to unashamedly rock back into his hand. It was a silent plea for more that Tyler heeded by adding a third finger. The stretch burned, but it also felt good and made

## *DOUBLE SHOT CAPPUCCINO*

Nash hungry for more.

"I need your cock," he begged as he arched his back.

A thrill went through him when he heard the condom wrapper rip open. He waited, expecting to feel the press of Tyler's cock at his ass. Instead, Tyler gently rolled him over. Nash's confusion must have shown on his face, because Tyler explained, "I want to be looking at you when you come for me."

Lifting one of Nash's legs over his shoulder, Tyler slowly pressed inside. His thick cock started to fill Nash like no other had before. All the while, Nash found himself locked in Tyler's blue-eyed gaze.

Tyler took things easy and gave Nash plenty of time to adjust to his size. Soon, though, he was all the way in. Tyler continued to look down at Nash's face. "Are you okay?"

Nash's breath caught in his chest. Never had he felt this close, this connected to someone. It wasn't because he'd known Tyler for nearly his entire life. No, it felt deeper, more visceral than that.

He didn't allow himself to dwell on it too much. Especially once Tyler started to fuck him at a slow sensual rhythm that was at direct odds with their earlier near frenzy. A look of wonder crossed Tyler's face before he reached down and gently caressed Nash's cheek. Nash pressed his face into the touch, turning his head so he could softly kiss Tyler's palm.

"You feel like a fucking dream," Tyler declared in a near whisper, as he picked up the pace, his hips snapping forward harder.

Nash let out a cry as the tip of Tyler's cock brushed against his sweet spot. When it happened again, Nash closed his eyes against the pleasure. Even though he could have gone on looking at Tyler all night, it just became too much. The emotions rolling inside him,

## *DOUBLE SHOT CAPPUCCINO*

along with the intense pressure, threatened to overwhelm him.

His body grew tight and Nash realized he was only going to last a couple more minutes. He clumsily reached for his own cock, but Tyler beat him to it, wrapping his strong fingers around Nash's shaft. It only took a few strokes before an orgasm hit Nash so hard it momentarily stole his breath.

Tyler tensed with a long moan as he found release, too, his cock jerking, then filling the condom. They stayed that way for several heartbeats, Tyler still buried inside Nash. Nash with his eyes closed, panting for breath. After a few minutes, Tyler gave Nash's sweaty brow a kiss before he slid out of him, then got out of bed.

Tyler went into the bathroom and Nash could hear the toilet flush and water running. He still lay there, the tingle from that after-sex high buzzing on his body. He didn't move until Tyler came back out with a washcloth and started to clean the drying come off his stomach. Even though the cloth was warm, Nash still flinched at the wetness.

Tyler worked in silence and as soon as he was done, he tossed the cloth into one of the piles of dirty laundry. Nash wiggled around until his head was on a pillow and he was lying in the proper direction on the bed. When Tyler got in behind him and pulled the covers over them, Nash let out a satisfied sigh. It got even better when Tyler threw an arm around Nash and brought him in close to his chest.

Although he wanted nothing more than to savor the moment, Nash's eyelids soon drooped and he fell asleep.

It seemed like he'd been out for only a few moments when the sound of the front door closing woke him up. Nash sat up and immediately reached out for Tyler, only to find the bed empty, the

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blankets still warm from his now-absent body.

## CHAPTER 5

When Tyler got to work the next morning, he found only Colby there. Trying hard to hide his disappointment at not seeing Nash, Tyler went behind the counter and grabbed an apron.

Colby barely said good morning, keeping his gaze directed at the floor and the bill of his baseball hat pulled low over his eyes. While that was strange by itself, the way he kept his yap shut struck Tyler as even odder. Usually the kid's mouth didn't seem to have an off switch, but he'd hardly grunted a greeting when he'd let Tyler in.

"Where's Nash?" Tyler finally asked, unable to stand the silence any longer.

"He called to tell me he was going to the bank," Nash replied shortly, as he started to take chairs down from the tables.

## DOUBLE SHOT CAPPUCCINO

“The bank’s not open this early.”

“Yeah, but he can still use the night drop. He said something about missing the past two days and not wanting to keep too much cash in the store.”

“I guess that makes sense.” Tyler went around the counter to help Colby. “Did he saw when he’d be back?”

Colby just shrugged in response as Tyler inwardly cringed at how needy that question probably sounded. Just because Nash had slept with him, didn’t mean he had to leave a daily agenda. Still, Tyler couldn’t help but miss his presence. They finished taking down the chairs, then Colby turned on the light and flipped on the open sign.

It wasn’t until he got behind the counter, that Tyler got a good look at the young man’s face. Shocked, Tyler bit back a curse as he rushed over and gently cupped Colby’s chin so he could do a thorough examination. “What in the hell happened to you?”

Colby had a nasty shiner. The swelling so bad, the eye was nearly closed. He also sported a fat lip and a swollen jaw. Tyler gently ran his fingers along it, not surprised to find it bruised.

“Nothing.” Colby jerked away, a flush coming over his battered face.

“*Nothing?*” Tyler echoed, incredulously. “It looks like you were on the wrong end of a MMA bout.”

The bell over the door chimed and the worst possible person waltzed in. *Denise! Fuck, she’s going to take all kinds of sick pleasure out of this.*

“Hey, Denise. What can I get you this morning?” Tyler asked, trying to direct all her attention his way.

It didn’t work. Her sharp-eyed gaze immediately honed in on Colby. “What happened to you? Did you come on to the wrong

## *DOUBLE SHOT CAPPUCCINO*

guy or something?”

“Colby just had a little incident. Nothing for you to worry over,” Tyler butted in. He actually went so far as to shift over some, so his body was between the bitch and Colby.

“He’s in public, making our whole town look bad with his activities. I say that should make me worry plenty,” Denise countered in a brittle tone.

Tyler felt torn. A huge part of him wanted to tell Denise she could take her worry and shove it up her precious ass. The only thing that held him back was he didn’t want to cause a scene in Nash’s store. Since Tyler was just an employee, and a temporary one at that, he didn’t think Nash would take too kindly to him telling the customers off.

When the door opened again and Nash came in, Tyler sighed in relief. Nash took in the scene, his gaze going from Tyler to Colby, before finally settling on Denise.

“Everything okay?” Nash asked.

Although his question didn’t seem to be directed at anyone in particular, Colby spoke up, “It’s all good, boss.”

“No, it’s not,” Denise seethed. “Your little faggot showed up with a beat up face to match his piss-poor attitude.”

Tyler sucked in a hard breath at the slur, while Colby let out a slight gasp. Nash’s normally carefree manner dropped away as his face grew hard with anger. “You can treat me like crap, Denise, but you are not allowed to treat my employees the same way.”

Her jaw dropped. “Who are you to tell me how to act?”

“My store, my rules,” Nash snapped as he went over and held the door open. “Now get the hell out of here and don’t come back.”

“You can’t do that.” Her whole body shook with anger.

“I believe he just did,” Tyler drawled as he fought back a smile.

## *DOUBLE SHOT CAPPUCCINO*

Even Colby had a small grin playing on his bruised lips.

Denise started to storm out before she stopped in front of Nash. “You’ll regret this,” she promised.

“Regret what? Losing the whopping twice a week sale of a small latté or the five percent tip you always leave my staff?” Nash cocked a brow. “I think we can suffer through those losses.”

She let out a high-pitched hiss of anger as she left. A stunned silence followed her departure as Nash shut the door and walked over to Colby. Grabbing his chin, much like Tyler had earlier, Nash twisted Colby’s face one way and then the other as his gaze slowly traveled over the injuries.

“Who did this to you?” Nash finally demanded in a quiet voice.

“I don’t know.” Colby tried to jerk his head away, but Nash kept a grip and didn’t allow it.

“I mean it, Colby. Tell me his goddamn name.”

Colby let out a broken sob that went straight to Tyler’s gut. “You don’t get it. I honestly don’t know his name. He never bothered to give it to me and I didn’t care enough to ask.”

Tyler echoed the worry and sorrow he saw flashing across Nash’s eyes. God, Colby may be of legal age and in college, but he was still damn young for the kind of games he obviously was playing. It looked like it had caught up with him last night, too. Red-hot rage burned in Tyler’s chest as he thought about someone taking advantage of a kid like that.

“Where did he take you? Do you remember the address of his house?” Tyler demanded, trying hard to hide the anger in his voice so Colby didn’t think it was directed at him.

Colby’s face flushed. “We never left the club parking lot. Everything went down in his car.”

“What kind of car was it? Did you see what color it was? Or



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did it have any dents or other marks on it?”

“Why? I didn’t go to the cops, so it’s not like they’ll need that kind of stuff to track the guy down.”

Tyler leaned in a little closer. “I want to know so *I* can track down the bastard and make him see what it’s like to have to face someone who knows how to fight back.”

Colby’s jaw dropped open as he slowly shook his head. “Why would you want to do that?”

“Because you’re a good kid and no matter how reckless you act, you didn’t deserve this.”

“Thanks, Tyler, it really means a lot to me, but I don’t want you getting in trouble over me.”

Tyler opened his mouth to argue, but shut it when he caught Nash give a slight shake of his head. So he just sat there and rubbed Colby’s shoulder while Nash ran off to get an ice bag and the first aid kit. When he got back, Nash gently treated Colby’s injuries.

“You need to go to the hospital. You could have a concussion or something even worse,” Nash urged.

“No hospital.” Colby shook his head furiously. “There’s no way in hell I’m even getting close to one of those places. I’d rather die first.”

Nash and Tyler shared an *oooookay* look.

“You should at least go home and rest. You have to be in a lot of pain.” Nash talked in the soothing tones one would use with a sick child or an injured puppy.

“I can’t...” Colby trailed off as he blinked hard a few times. “I can’t go there either. At least not right now. Please, can I stay and work? I just need something to take my mind off everything. Tonight I’ll go to a friend’s house and crash, but right now I want

## *DOUBLE SHOT CAPPUCCINO*

to be here.”

Nash nodded before he grabbed another stool from out front and brought it around to the register. “Just promise me you’ll take it easy?”

“Promise.” Colby sniffed before he let out a bitter laugh. “Who knows? I may even be better at math now. The blows to the head might have knocked something loose in a good way.”

After Colby had taken a seat, Tyler jerked his head to the back room to indicate to Nash that he wanted to talk in private. After giving Colby a small hug, Nash followed him there. As soon as they entered, Tyler’s gaze homed in on the spot where he’d given Nash a blow job the previous night. A warm tingling sensation went through his body as he recalled how wonderful it had felt to have Nash filling his mouth. As he ran his tongue over his bottom lip, Tyler vowed to try for a repeat performance at the end of the day.

He gave an internal head shake to clear away those carnal thoughts so he could focus on the problem at hand. “Does Colby come in looking like that very often?”

Nash shook his head. “Only once before and that was from a beating his step-dad gave him. I’m not surprised about today, though. I’ve been worried about this happening for a while.”

Nash looked so troubled that Tyler found himself reaching out to pull the man into his embrace. Nash immediately stepped into him, his cheek resting against Tyler’s chest. With a sigh, Nash continued his explanation, “Colby’s so desperate to have someone who gives a damn about him, that he’s willing to take anything that’s thrown his way. Even if it’s a series of quick hookups in the backseat of different cars.”

It sounded like Nash’s heart was breaking and that made

## *DOUBLE SHOT CAPPUCCINO*

Tyler's heart shatter in turn. Leaning back a little, he put two fingers under Nash's chin and forced him to look up. The sight of those soft lips parted questioningly shredded the last bit of Tyler's resolve. Dipping his head, he gave Nash the gentlest of kisses.

Nash immediately responded, and a small groan slipped past his lips as he gripped Tyler's shoulders. At the first flick of Nash's tongue, desire thrummed through Tyler, setting into his cock. He shifted his hand to cup the back of Nash's head, so he could deepen the kiss. As soon as Nash parted his lips fully, Tyler slipped his tongue inside. After spending the better part of the night before kissing Nash, Tyler still got joy in how sweet the man tasted.

"So, what are your plans for tonight?" Tyler asked, his lips just barely inches from Nash's mouth.

"The train museum is open late, maybe I'll go there." Nash grinned, those lickable dimples popping out.

"Please, tell me you're not talking about the same one you used to go to every weekend as a kid? I'd think you'd have every inch of that place memorized by now."

"Do you have any better suggestions?"

"I can think of one or two." Tyler gave Nash a hot kiss, leaving little doubt to what those things were.

"Okay, I guess I can put off the museum this one time," Nash teased, once they broke off the kiss.

"I missed seeing you this morning when I came into work," Tyler stunned himself by admitting.

"I missed you when you snuck out of bed last night," Nash countered, some of the warmth leaving his eyes.

"I thought it would be better for both of us if I did. You know how the gossips in this town are."

## *DOUBLE SHOT CAPPUCCINO*

Something flickered in Nash's gaze before he stepped back, out of Tyler's embrace. "I guess you're right."

"You know I am. If anyone had spotted me leaving your place early in the morning, we both would be the main topic of discussion at the donut shop," Tyler teased. Ever since it had opened for business, the local donut shop had been a place for the older members of the community to meet daily for coffee and chit-chat.

"How many people know you're gay?" Nash asked, as he leaned against the opposite counter.

Tyler started, confused at the sudden shift in conversation. "You and a couple of guys I hung out with back in Ohio."

"Friends or fuck buddies?"

Now Tyler felt an edge of annoyance. "What does it matter?"

"I guess it doesn't. If you don't want to share any of your private life with me, fine. I get the hint." Nash shrugged as he looked down at the tile floor, but not before Tyler caught a glint of anger in the man's eyes.

Tyler crossed the space and put his arms around Nash's waist. "Don't get mad at me. I'm only going to be here for the rest of this week and I don't want to waste any of that time with stupid arguments."

Nash's head whipped up and, for a second, Tyler thought he was in for an ass chewing. Then a rueful smile appeared on Nash's lips. "You're right."

"Of course I am." He started to nibble a path down Nash's neck. "Does the door lock?"

"Why?" Nash tilted his head back with a low groan. Tyler smiled against Nash's flesh, pleased to know he'd found another hot spot on Nash's body.

## *DOUBLE SHOT CAPPUCCINO*

“Just answer the damn question.” Tyler gave him a not-so-gentle love bite that made Nash let out a small yelp. The way he thrust his hips forward let Tyler know he liked it, though.

“Yes, it does,” Nash panted.

Tyler moved away long enough to secure the door, then took off his apron before he went back to Nash. He started sucking Nash’s neck again, loving how it made Nash let out little whimpers of delight.

“You taste so good,” Tyler said between sucks.

“It must be because I live off a steady diet of whipped cream and chocolate,” Nash replied as he threaded his fingers through Tyler’s hair.

The thought of chocolate and whipped cream being anywhere near Nash gave Tyler all kinds of wicked ideas. Something that didn’t help his already aching cock. Reaching between them, Tyler unbuttoned Nash’s jeans and slid the zipper down. Once he had access, Tyler slipped in his hand and pulled out Nash’s erection.

“We can’t do this now,” Nash argued, weakly. “The morning rush is going to start any minute.”

“We’ll just do something to take the edge off until tonight,” Tyler promised as he undid his own jeans.

Once he had his pants open he used one hand to grab both his and Nash’s cocks. As soon as they started sliding together, Nash let out a sharp gasp as his eyelids squeezed shut. Tyler smiled to himself, loving how Nash always let his pleasure be known.

Tyler started to slowly work his hand up and down their shafts, at the same time he returned to Nash’s neck, licking and sucking. Nash’s hands clutched Tyler’s shoulders almost painfully as he hummed in satisfaction.

“I don’t even want to know how many health code violations

## *DOUBLE SHOT CAPPUCCINO*

we're breaking," Nash joked with a breathy laugh.

"Does that mean you want me to stop?"

"Hell, no," Nash nearly yelled as he thrust into Tyler's hand.

"Didn't think so."

Tyler rubbed his thumb over the tip of Nash's cock and gathered some pre-come to use as a lubricant. He started to move his hand quicker, allowing himself to be caught up in the sensations of Nash gasping in his ear while their dicks rubbed together.

He was the first one to come, a strangled cry bursting from his chest as he shot off all over his hand. Nash found his release a couple seconds later, his come splashing over Tyler's fingers, mixing in with the mess already there.

Tyler rested his head on Nash's shoulder while they both regained their breath. The scent of their come mixed in with the warm smell of Nash and the aroma of coffee. Tyler knew then that if he lived to be a hundred, he'd never forget this moment.

"We should get out there," Nash finally said.

Tyler nodded before he reluctantly stepped back, zipped up his pants, then went to the big industrial sink to clean up. As he washed his hands, he could hear Nash doing up his jeans. Not turning around, Tyler warned, "Don't think that has satisfied my kink for this back room. I won't be truly happy until I have you bent over that counter so I can fuck you senseless."

"Good, then I have something to look forward to," Nash replied lightly. He gave one last dimple inducing grin before he unlocked the door and left.

After drying off, Tyler joined him. As he walked behind the counter, he saw Nash was already mixing up a drink for the one customer who stood in line. Colby turned to Tyler with a smirk and

## ***DOUBLE SHOT CAPPUCCINO***

mouthed *nice hickey*.

Tyler raised his hand to his neck until he remembered who exactly had been doing the sucking in the back room. Looking over at Nash, Tyler felt his stomach flip when he spotted the huge love bite he'd left behind.

Colby's smirk turned into a snort of laughter, before he leaned over and whispered in Tyler's ear, "Don't worry, your secret's safe with me. It's kind of nice seeing Nash smile again."

Tyler glanced over again and felt warm inside as he realized Nash did have a small grin playing on his lips, the sparkle in his eyes making him look so much younger. Then as soon as that good feeling had come it left, as Tyler realized that at the end of the week he'd be leaving and he probably wouldn't be seeing Nash ever again. For some reason that made Tyler almost sad enough to weep.

## CHAPTER 6

At six in the morning on Friday, Nash got the call from Janet that he'd been expecting, but dreading. After trying to calm her down over the phone, he finally got her to agree to meet him at the park, adjacent to the small beach, in the center of town.

He found her sitting on top of a picnic table, feeding bread to the ducks. Even though it was technically summer, the air still had a bite to it and Nash zipped up his hoodie before he shoved his hands in the pockets.

"You were right about him," Janet said as soon as Nash had taken a seat next to her. Her nose and eyes were both red and her chest heaved in those little hiccup breaths one gets after a long hard cry.

"What happened?" Nash asked as he put an arm around her and



## *DOUBLE SHOT CAPPUCCINO*

pulled her in close. She immediately rested her head on his shoulder as she let out another hiccup.

“He took the van and ditched me in Atlanta. I didn’t have anything. Not even my purse or cell phone. I had to beg some stranger to borrow theirs so I could call home and have my mother wire me money. I’ve never been so humiliated in my life. I felt like some hob...bo.” The last word got broken up as she took in a shuddering breath.

The ducks surrounding the table started to let out loud noises of protest as Janet neglected to continue to feed them. Nash took the bag from her and threw some bread in the birds’ direction so they could get some peace. The animals all let out quacks of delight as they wiggled their feathered butts.

“Did you report the van stolen to the police?” he asked as they watched two ducks battle over one of the larger pieces. It kind of reminded Nash of how Janet and Colby had acted the last time he ordered in pizza.

Janet shook her head. “I was too embarrassed to admit to anyone what happened. I just knew they would have laughed behind my back if I told them I lost my van to a wannabe gunk band.”

“That’s goop band,” he corrected, pleased when that got a tiny smile out of her.

They were silent a few more minutes before she asked, “I don’t suppose I can get my job back?”

“Of course you can. Tyler was only scheduled to take your place for this past week and I never did get around to finding anyone permanent.”

She pulled away and gave him a sly look as a tiny sparkle came to her watery eyes. “Colby told me all about you and Tyler.”

## *DOUBLE SHOT CAPPUCCINO*

Nash was horrified to feel a flush come to his face. "There isn't anything really to tell."

She tugged the collar of his sweatshirt down so she could point to the faded hickey on his neck. "This says differently."

Nash jerked his shirt back in place. "It's not that serious," he replied, trying his damndest to act as if admitting that didn't feel like a punch in the gut.

Her face grew somber. "What do you mean? Colby said you guys have been leaving together every night."

Nash made a mental note to duct tape Colby's yap shut. "Yeah, but Tyler makes sure he's gone from my bed before the sun rises."

Nash closed his eyes as he gave an internal wince. He so did not mean for that little tidbit to slip out. He thought maybe it was his mouth that needed the duct tape instead of Colby's. Janet's brow furrowed together as she shifted so they were looking directly at each other.

"Why does he bail on you like that? I know some guys aren't into the whole cuddling thing, but that's taking it to a new extreme."

He sighed, wondering how the discussion had gotten centered around his love life when he'd come out here to comfort her. "He doesn't want anyone to see him leaving my house."

Janet took in a breath as her eyes narrowed dangerously. "Why the hell not? You're a damn good catch."

Nash just shook his head. It didn't sit well with him to share any more, almost like he'd be betraying Tyler's trust or something. "It doesn't matter. He's going back to Ohio on Sunday."

"So he just came into town, used you while treating you like a dirty secret, and now he's going to leave?"

"Ouch," Nash squeaked as her words hit hard.

## *DOUBLE SHOT CAPPUCCINO*

"I'm sorry, I don't mean to hurt you or anything, but you deserve much better than what Tyler's willing to offer."

"You don't understand what he's going through." Nash shook his head.

Janet gaped at him, her expression so full of pity he had to look away. "Him? What about what you're going through?" she challenged.

"He just got out of the military after four years of having to hide who he really was. Crap, Janet, he hasn't even come out to his family yet."

"Why are you defending him?" When Nash didn't answer, Janet gasped. "Oh, my God, you're in love with him."

"Of course I care for him. We've been friends ever since I can remember."

Janet jerked on his arm until he looked back at her. "No, you really, really love him."

Nash blinked his eyes, shocked by the surge of sadness that hit him. Turning back to the ducks, he threw them the last of the bread. "What does it matter if I love him? He's still leaving Sunday and nothing is going to change that."

With those parting words, he got up and left before she could argue any further.

Nash learned, however, that there were just some conversations you couldn't walk away from and forget, no matter how hard you tried. All through the rest of the day, the exchange he'd had with Janet replayed in Nash's head. Like some sick soundtrack stuck on repeat.

Had she been right when she accused Tyler of just using him? Would it be too much to ask Tyler to not hide their relationship? Most of all, did Nash really love Tyler, and if so, what was he

## *DOUBLE SHOT CAPPUCCINO*

going to do about it?

Nash got so worked up that he dreaded the end of the day coming because he knew it would place him and Tyler alone. The funny thing about dreading something like time though, was the more one feared it trickling by, the faster it seemed it happened. Before he knew it, Colby had finished his shift, left and the store was closed.

Like a coward, Nash didn't say anything as he started to count down the drawer, not even allowing himself to make eye contact with Tyler. It was hopeless though, as his mind whirled so much that he kept losing count and had to restart three times.

*Just talk to him. Ask him if this week meant anything at all. You'll never know if you don't find the nerve to start the conversation.*

Even as he gave himself the internal lecture, he knew he'd never have the courage. Not while a part of him feared driving Tyler away for the last few hours they had together. So when Nash got back from locking the money in the safe and Tyler came behind him, Nash didn't pull away.

"I've been wanting to do this all day," Tyler murmured as he started to nuzzle that special spot on Nash's neck.

Nash's resolve folded like a cheap chair in a rainstorm as he leaned back into Tyler's arms. A small moan passed by his lips as he tilted his head to the side and opened himself more to Tyler's touch.

Tyler paused long enough to whisper in Nash's ear, "Come to the back room. I have a surprise for you."

Surprise? He liked surprises, so Nash nodded and allowed Tyler to take him by the hand and lead him to the room where they'd shared so many encounters. Once they got there, Tyler

## DOUBLE SHOT CAPPUCCINO

guided him to the far side of the storage area and spun Nash around. Nash gasped as he found himself pinned against Tyler's chest and the hard edge of the counter.

"Put your hands on top and spread your legs," Tyler ordered before he nipped on Nash's earlobe.

Despite the misgivings he'd had all day, Nash obeyed, his palms resting on the cool metal of the countertop. "What are you going to do?" he asked, his voice shaking.

In way of response, Tyler slammed something on the table. Nash sucked in a breath when he saw a condom and a small tube of lubricant. "What are those for?"

*What do you think they're for, dumbass? You think he has some bomb defusing MacGyver contraption cooked up that involves lube, condoms and a paperclip? You keep this up and you're going to make Colby look like a Princeton graduate.*

"I told you that I wasn't going to be satisfied until I had you bent over this counter," Tyler growled as he leaned in so close his face was practically cheek to cheek with Nash.

Nash opened his mouth to argue that yet another quickie in the backroom wasn't what he had in mind for tonight. The only thing that came out was a moan, though, as Tyler started to suck on his neck again. Nash closed his eyes as he vowed to himself that someday he'd learn not to cave as soon as Tyler touched him there.

The very last of his resistance shredded as his cock swelled to life. Hell, he even thrust his ass back into Tyler's groin, like some kitten in heat. Once Tyler let out a triumphant laugh, Nash knew he was a goner.

"Tell me you want this as much as I do?" Tyler demanded as he undid Nash pants, then pushed them and his underwear roughly down to his knees. Nash moaned as he felt strong fingers wrap

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around his shaft.

“You should already know I do since you’ve got my hard cock in your hand,” Nash replied. That earned him one all-too-brief tug that almost brought him to his knees.

“Wrong answer,” Tyler cooed into Nash’s ear.

“You know I want you, damn it. All I have to do is look at you and I’m ready to drop down to take it any way you want to give it to me.”

“Good boy,” Tyler praised as he moved his hand to pick up the lube.

Nash waited, tense and breathing hard in anticipation as he watched Tyler pour the liquid on his fingers. While he wanted to scream for Tyler to forget the prep and just fuck him, Nash knew it would hurt if he wasn’t stretched. So instead, he lowered his head to his forearms and waited.

At the first touch of a cool, slick finger circling his hole, Nash let out a stifled cry. Of their own accord, his hips swiveled back into the touch in a blatant plea for more. Tyler responded, thrusting his finger in, earning a moan of pleasure from Nash. Need crawled up Nash’s spine as he curled his fingers against the metal.

“Hurry, please,” he begged in a voice he hardly recognized as his own.

“Be patient,” Tyler admonished, but he did add another finger, curling them so they hit the sweet spot inside Nash.

“I can’t wait,” Nash argued.

But Tyler did make him wait. For several long tortuous seconds as he continued to thrust his digits into Nash. Finally, just when Nash felt like cursing loudly, Tyler moved his fingers, slicked on the condom, then pressed the head of his cock at Nash’s entrance. Tyler started to enter slowly, but Nash was at the end of his

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patience. With a loud growl, he thrust back, until Tyler was buried balls-deep inside him.

“Brat,” Tyler snarled, but he started to pound into Nash.

Nash braced his feet as far apart as his halfway lowered pants would allow him so he didn’t crash against the table as Tyler took him fast and hard. Halfway through, Tyler reached around and grabbed Nash’s cock again. Not that he had to. With as intense as things were, Nash knew he had seconds before he came, with or without the aid of someone’s hand.

Sure enough, it only took a couple strokes and his cock erupted, hot waves of come covering the side of the counter. After a few more thrusts, Tyler joined him, his body shuddering as he breathed heavily on Nash’s neck.

Nash braced himself, getting ready to take Tyler’s added weight as the man relaxed. Instead Tyler gave him a small slap on the ass before he pulled out and started toward the staff bathroom. One his way out he said, “Boy, I’m going to miss this. We’re going to have to do it one more time before I leave. Since I have tomorrow off work, I’ll just drop by your place after the shop’s closed.”

Not waiting for a response, Tyler left. As the door shut, pain sliced through Nash as he realized Tyler had said he’d miss *this* and not that he’d miss Nash. Which meant that all these encounters had been nothing more than a way for him to scratch an itch. Shame and hurt burned Nash’s throat as he looked down at himself. Now that things were over, he realized the truly pathetic picture he made with his pants down just enough for quick access and his come dripping down the side of the counter drawers.

He’d allowed Tyler to use him as nothing more than a hole to get off on. What was worse, Nash had begged him to do it. So how

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sick and desperate did that make him?

Nash took in a shaky breath as tears burned his eyes. Who was his kidding? He was desperate. Janet had been right earlier when she said he loved Tyler. That sad kernel of truth Nash could no longer deny to himself.

Nash closed his eyes against the pain as he realized that Tyler had never truly cared for him and when he did leave, he'd be taking a piece of Nash's soul with him.

\* \* \*

The sun was just beginning to set the next day as Tyler walked up the porch of Nash's house. He knocked on the door once, before he opened the screen and let himself in. He frowned when he noticed all the lights were off, which was odd for Nash. Even the TV was blank, and he always kept that on for background noise.

"Nash?" Tyler called as he walked through the house.

"In here," Nash answered.

Tyler found him in the living room, sitting in the big window seat. Nash had his knees to his chest as he stared out into the street, seemingly captivated by something. Tyler looked to see what could have Nash's undivided attention, only to find an empty sidewalk and nothing else of interest.

"What's going on?" Tyler asked, uneasily.

He reached out for Nash, but the man moved out of the way and gave a slight shake of his head. Most unsettled now, Tyler searched Nash's face for a clue as to what the problem may be, only to find Nash's face as blank as the sidewalk.

"You want to go upstairs?" Tyler tried.

Nash gave a curt shake of his head. "I can't. Colby and Janet



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are coming to pick me up any minute now to go watch the fireworks.”

Tyler felt a surge of disappointment. “Oh.”

“I want you to go with me.”

Tyler felt a blossom of hope. After the fireworks they could come home to Nash’s bed. It would just be a small delay, but Tyler was willing to put up with it if Nash wanted to hang out first. “Sure, sounds like fun.”

Nash pinned him with a hard stare. “You don’t get it. I want you to go with me. As in us—out it public as a couple.”

That little blossom of hope flew away as Tyler felt all the blood drain from his face. His gut clenched painfully as a cold sweat broke out over his body. “You can’t be serious.”

Nash stood, but instead of moving closer, he took a couple of steps away as he wrapped his arms around his stomach. “I’m very serious. I’m sick of being your backroom fuck and nothing more.”

A small bit of annoyance started to eat at Tyler. “It’s not like that.”

“Really?” Nash cocked his head to the side. “Then you won’t mind going out with me.”

“You know I can’t do that.”

“Why? It’s not like you’re in the military anymore, so you don’t have to worry about hiding it. You’re a civilian now, so nothing is holding you back,” Nash raised his voice as his eyes grew dark with anger.

“It’s not that simple for me.”

“Why? Are you afraid of being seen with the town queer? Scared of what the locals will think if they see the town hero with the gay guy?” Nash pointed to himself, so Tyler had no doubt to whom he was referring.

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"I'm not like you!" Tyler shouted. He immediately clamped his lips together as he realized how harsh and judgmental that comment probably sounded. While Tyler had meant that he wasn't brave like Nash, it had come off as something much worse.

A heavy oh-shit silence settled between them before a look of utter hurt came over Nash's face. "Just go," he said, his voice now cool and even.

"Nash—" Tyler started but Nash gave him the hand.

"I don't need you or your pity. Just leave and forget we ever did anything together. I'm sure that won't be too hard for you."

"Nash, please don't do this. We can't end it like this." Tyler reached out for him, only to have Nash shake his head and dodge the touch again.

"End what?" Nash gave a bitter laugh that was so unlike him. "We never had anything but some *gotta keep it a secret* sex. I was an idiot for thinking otherwise."

Tyler stupidly stood there, at a loss for words. It's not like he hadn't told himself it was just casual sex every night as he slipped out of Nash's bed. So why did it feel like his heart was breaking? He wanted to reach out, to hold Nash one last time. To breathe in his familiar scent, so he would have some memory to cling to when he went back home. One look at Nash's rigid stance, told Tyler he wouldn't be even getting that.

"Just...go," Nash repeated as he closed his eyes. One single tear slipped down his cheek before he wiped it with a short, angry movement.

"I'll miss you." Tyler turned and walked away.

As he reached the door, he barely heard Nash's reply. "I wish that were true."

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\* \* \*

A couple hours later, Tyler didn't feel any better, as he finished packing up the last room in his grandmother's house. He was surrounded by boxes, dust and a whole lot of regret, while he asked himself if there had been anything he could have done or said to have made Nash feel better.

A part of him was angry, though. It's not like he'd made any promises to Nash, so why in the hell did he expect Tyler to drop everything and change for him? Couldn't the brat be happy with what they had? Why did he have to push for more?

Off in the distance, Tyler heard some muffled booms that let him know the fireworks had started. Nash was probably there, with Janet and Colby, having a great time. Meanwhile, all Tyler had for entertainment was a houseful of his grandmother's old stuff.

"Stupid!" Tyler growled, as he kicked a box, not knowing if he were talking about himself or Nash.

The box tipped over and all the contents spilled out. He muttered some not so nice words as he knelt down to scoop up the mess. He'd shoved most of it in before he spotted a small video cassette tape. He picked it up and flipped it over to read the label. There, scrawled in his grandmother's crappy handwriting was *Nash, Tyler and Luke*. Underneath was the date and Tyler's heart lurched as he realized it was the weekend before he'd left for boot camp.

It took him a couple minutes of searching before he found the video camera and a few more for him to find the cords that allowed him to hook it up to the TV. As soon as he had it on, he sat on the floor and watched the screen.

The video started with him and Luke in the kitchen of his

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parent's old house. A sense of bittersweet pain nearly overwhelmed Tyler as he stared at his friend. They both had these stupid, excited grins on their faces as they talked about the different boot camps they'd be going to. Luke spent the better part of the conversation ribbing Tyler for joining the Marines instead of the Air Force.

God, they looked so young, so full of hope, so naïve to the horrors that lay ahead of them. Tyler still managed a smile as he looked at the image of his now dead friend. He'd almost forgotten about the way Luke's eyes crinkled at the corners when he smiled, how goofy his laugh had been and how he'd had that annoying habit of saying "dude" every other word.

Tyler's heart skipped a beat when the camera view swung around and focused on a much younger Nash. Sitting at one the bar stools lining the counter, he was dressed in a pair of swim trunks and a bright red T-shirt. His dark hair was cut shorter than it was now and he had a little more innocence in his eyes as he laughed at something Luke said.

Then Nash's gaze shifted to the on-screen version of Tyler and his expression changed, grew softer as a slight flush came to his cheeks. Tyler's breath caught as he recognized that look. It had been the same one Nash had shot his way so many times when they'd been in bed together. At that time, Tyler had just passed it off as gratitude for good sex. Now, he realized it had meant so much more. Shock coursed through Tyler as he watched his younger self return the gaze, his true feelings out there for anyone to see.

*How could I have been so stupid and blind?*

"Tyler, are you going to write home or are you going to be too busy playing the macho Marine and forget all about me?" Nash

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teased, flashing that bright smile of his.

“Like I could forget the stupid little punk that pestered me for years,” Tyler chided him as he went over and tried to get Nash into a headlock. Nash shoved him away, fighting back until Tyler finally knocked him off the stool and pinned him to the ground. The sounds of Nash’s laughter flowed from the speakers as Tyler twisted him into a classic wrestling pin.

Luke just rolled his eyes as he watched them. Finally he turned to the camera and whispered, “Do you think they’ll ever stop being stupid and realize they’re in love?”

Tyler’s grandmother responded, her voice louder since she’d been the one manning the camera. “I hope it’s sooner, rather than later. If Tyler’s not careful, someone else is going to come and snap Nash up.”

“I hope not.” Luke shook his head as he continued to watch them wrestle on the ground. “They were made for each other.”

\* \* \*

Tyler reached with shaky fingers and turned off the TV. Standing, he started pacing as he realized how he’d truly fucked things up.

He loved Nash. He always had, but he’d been too stupid and bullheaded to admit it. What’s worse, he’d let his worry about what others would think dictate his actions. Tyler’s insides clenched as he replayed their earlier argument in his head. Nash had looked so hurt, so broken, so lost. Would he ever be willing to forgive Tyler?

There was only one way to find out. He snatched up his keys and ran out the door to his car. He’d just go to the fireworks, track

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Nash down and make things right. He'd get Nash to forgive him, even if he had to get down on his knees in front of the whole town and beg.

The fireworks were always set off at the beach, which was a half mile away, but the trip wasn't as easy as he'd hoped. Tyler cursed in frustration when he got stuck in traffic, blocks away from his destination. He'd forgotten the entire population of Holly always showed up to this event. Cars were parked on all sides of the street and the area was thick with pedestrians. Finally, Tyler's nerves wouldn't allow him to wait any longer. He pulled off to the side of the road, added his car to the mess, and jumped out.

He ran the rest of the way to the beach. Halfway there, his leg started to throb, but he forced himself past the pain and continued on. All that mattered was getting to Nash.

Tyler ran past several people and he scanned all their faces in hopes of seeing his man, only to be disappointed each time. A small sliver of despair entered the already swirling mass of emotions inside him. What if he couldn't find Nash? It was so dark and there were so many people.

By now his leg hurt so bad, he limped with each step. He reached the street in front of the beach and despaired. With so many cars, concession stands, and other chaos surrounding the area, how was he ever going to locate Nash? Finally, in desperation, he cupped his hands and yelled, "Nash, where in the hell are you?"

Several people stopped and gawked at him, but nobody offered any help. So Tyler yelled Nash's name again, not caring that he was making a small scene. Then, just as he'd given up all hope, Janet strolled up to him. She had a massive thing of cotton candy in her hand that she lazily twirled around as she gave him a bored

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look.

“Janet, thank God it’s you.” Tyler sighed with relief.

“Yeah, so what’s it to you?” she challenged with a stubborn tilt of her chin. She gave Tyler the exact same glare she’d shot at Denise that one day in the store.

Tyler’s heart dropped as he realized that Janet was good and pissed at him and there were no guarantees she’d lead him to Nash. He knew he deserved the animosity. Hell, Janet would well be in her rights to take a swing at him. She had a very protective streak toward Nash, and Tyler had hurt the man, bad.

“Please, you have to take me to him,” Tyler pleaded.

“Why, so you can kick him while he’s down?”

“Look, I know I don’t deserve it, but I’m begging for your help. I need to talk to him.”

“What you don’t deserve is him, period.” Janet shot back.

“I know I don’t, but damn it, I love him and I can’t lose him,” Tyler declared brokenly. He was shocked to find himself on the verge of tears. Shit, he never cried. Not even when he’d seen men die in battle, not when he’d been shot, not ever. But, the thought of not being able to make things right with Nash nearly had Tyler sobbing like some frigging baby.

Janet searched his face for several tense seconds before she gave a small nod, turned, and handed her cotton candy to a passing kid. “Come on.” She held her hand out to Tyler.

They ran through the crowd, her leading the way, until they reached a small clearing across the street from the beach entrance. Tyler nearly yelled in happiness when he saw Nash sitting on the hood of a car. Colby was by his side and neither one of them noticed him or Janet yet.

Tyler paused, heart pounding in his chest as he stared at the

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man he loved more than anything. God, if Nash couldn't forgive him, then Tyler didn't think he'd be able to survive the hurt. Then Janet gave his hand a reassuring squeeze before she yelled, "Hey, Nash! Look who I found wandering the streets!"

Nash sat up straighter as he looked over at Tyler. As their gazes locked, all the breath left Tyler's body. Then Nash tilted his head to the side questioningly and that made Tyler push past his doubts. He let go of Janet's hand and rushed to the car, leaping on top of the hood. Colby let out a surprised sound as he jumped off to get out of the way. Tyler awkwardly crawled up, until he was straddling Nash's legs, their faces inches apart.

"Are you crazy?" Nash asked, his eyes wide with alarm. "You're going to hurt your leg."

"I don't care about my leg."

Nash rolled his eyes. "You say that now, but later on tonight when you—"

Tyler shut him up with a long hard kiss. At first Nash grew stiff with shock, but as things progressed, his body grew soft as he yielded to Tyler. A couple of whistles and catcalls drifted their way, making Tyler aware of all the attention they'd attracted. Once they broke apart, Nash brought a hand to his mouth. "What was that?"

Colby snorted. "And yet everyone calls *me* the dumb blond."

"I'm letting the whole town know that you belong to me," Tyler said softly, as he used the palms of his hands to cup Nash's cheeks.

"By tackling me and making out in public?" Nash grinned. As the sight of those dimples, Tyler finally felt some hope.

"Would you prefer I take an ad out in the Holly Press?" Tyler teased, before he pressed another soft kiss on Nash's mouth.



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"I would like to see that. But I'll only make you buy a quarter page one. Have you seen how much they gouge you for a full-page ad?"

Tyler laughed. "God, I love you so much, smart mouth and all."

Nash froze, the smile leaving his face. "What did you just say?"

Tyler took a deep breath and finally confessed the secret he'd kept close to his heart for all those years. "I love you, Nash. I always have and always will. I don't want to leave you tomorrow. I want to stay and make a new life together. Most of all, I want to wake up with you in my arms every morning for the rest of our days."

"That's a lot of *wants*," Nash observed with a weak laugh.

"I guess it is." Tyler searched Nash's face. "Please tell me you feel the same way."

Nash leaned forward and gave Tyler the gentlest of kisses. When he pulled back, his eyes were sparkling in a happy way that Tyler hadn't seen since he'd left five years ago.

"I love you, too," Nash said as he lightly stroked Tyler's jaw. "Why do you think I waited all this time for you?"

Letting out a cry of pure joy, Tyler pulled Nash into a tight embrace. As he breathed in Nash's scent and felt the warmth of his guy's body, Tyler finally felt like he'd truly come home. It felt damn good, too.

## **STEPHANI HECHT**

Stephani Hecht is a happily married mother of two. Born and raised in Michigan, she loves all things about the state, from the frigid winters to the Detroit Red Wings hockey team. Go Wings! You can usually find her snuggled up to her laptop, creating her next book or gorging on caffeine at her favorite coffee shop.

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