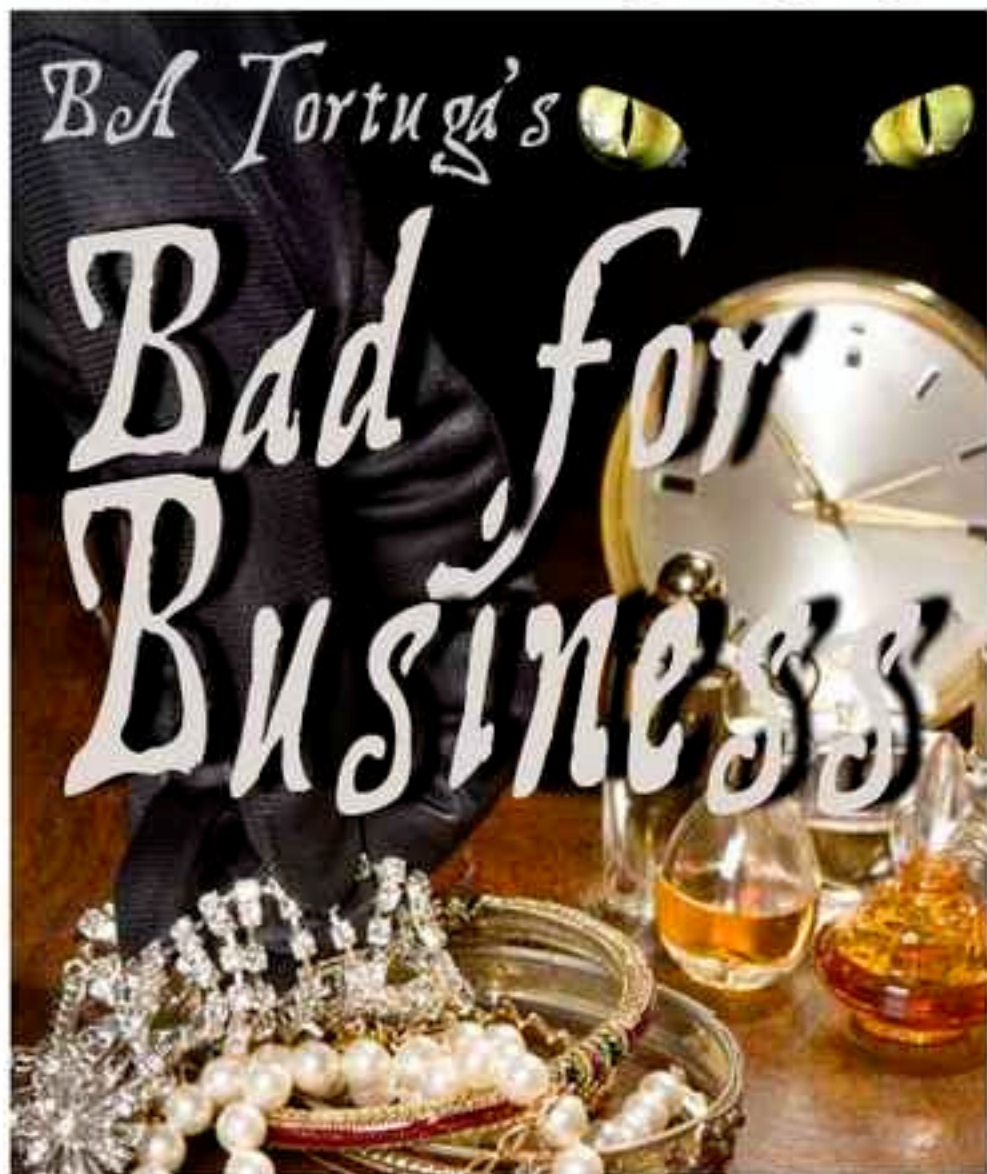




A Torquere Press Single Shot



Bad for Business
by B. A. Tortuga

Torquere Press

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Bad for Business

By BA Tortuga

Honestly, people were so incredibly...

Predictable.

Licking his lips, he hopped the privacy fence, slipping through the shadows and around the pool. That terrible little yippy fuzzball was bouncing furiously, little pink tongue flicking out, over and over.

He growled; the sound echoed just a little bit, and the puppy yipped and ran, white cotton ball of a tail held high. He fought the urge to give chase, hunt the little beast, but he knew better. That wasn't what he really wanted.

Padding around the edge of the pool, he headed for the house. He'd been in once before, hunting the safe with the artwork his client had requested.

Divorces were nasty things.

Slipping in through the doggie door, he moved through the empty house. He had two hours before the future ex-Mrs. McAllen came home, and by then, the Kertesz photos would be gone, heading for the copy machine and to his agent's agent so that he'd get his money, the originals on their way to a museum.

In and out, nasty little games averted.

If he were incredibly lucky, Mrs. McAllen would hire him to retrieve her mother's pearls and china from Frank.

That would be most amusing.

He dropped the little sack of equipment from his mouth, crouching low before concentrating. Two hours and he'd be home free.

Julian did love his job dearly.

"Mrs. McAllen, I know you feel like your personal property was stolen, but there's nothing about these photographs on your list of provisions from the divorce." Thayne Terra hated bored society chicks. And frankly, no one who'd looked at the crime scene could figure out how anyone could have gotten in to do the job. The doggie door was pretty small, and none of the windows or doors had been jimmied, picked or jammed. Personally, he thought it was an inside job.

"You don't understand! I've been violated! VIOLATED!" Lord, that woman could scream.

"We'll do all we can. Donny? Can you finish up the lady's statement? I need to check the escape routes."

He fled, the shrill screaming still sounding.

Donny was going to kick his ass, no sh...

He stopped short in the backyard, head tilting.

He knew that scent.

Sniffing hard, Thayne skirted the pool, ignoring the yapping little dog who followed him every step. There was a definite scent trail. He didn't know exactly what he was looking for, eyes on the ground, lips twitching; he was trying so hard.

There. Just by the back fence, there was half a paw print. A big one. Damn. That would be why there were no fingerprints, no jimmied doors.

He bent down, fingers tracing the lines. Male, strong, full-grown... But still small enough in cat form to fit through the dog door, without the relatively massive shoulders of a human being.

A black hair was caught in the print, another couple of hairs atop the fence. That would help. Jags were unusual in these parts.

Unusual at best.

Cool. He bagged the hairs for evidence, even though there was no way he could turn them over to the lab. Hell, that was why he was a detective. There were some cases that the uniforms didn't need to know about.

The tree leaves rustled, and he went still, hairs standing up all over his arms.

Lifting his face, Thayne scented the air, seeing if it was just paranoia, or if someone was watching.

Bright yellow eyes peered down from the leaves of the elm, the little calico howling at him, the sound low, seductive.

"Oh, look at who's a pretty kitty." He grinned, purring a little, just for her benefit.

She preened, stretching along the branch.

"What can you tell me about the Jag, baby?" He was so not above flirting with a house cat for some information.

Oh, that got a sniff and a yowl. Somebody'd taken her favorite napping branch.

Twice.

"You're a star, baby." He boosted himself up into the first available crook, then held up his hands and she flowed right

down into his arms for a scratch and some cheek rubbing. When he let her go, he checked out the branch.

Claw marks, deep and fresh. The cat had to be something to not be seen at all. To get out with booty.

Not that the McAllens had a security system. He'd bet the lady had one put in soon, though. She had to live for a long while on what the divorce provided. He snapped a couple of unofficial pictures with his phone before shimmying back down to the ground.

"You find anything up there, buddy?" Donny came wandering back, looking a little shell shocked.

"Nothing we can use. I mean, I think the guy must have come over the back fence, but there's not even a shoe print." See him. See him not lie and say "footprint".

"Damn. She needs herself a bigger dog and a nicer ex-husband." Donny winked, eyes on the pool. "Must be nice, huh?"

"She's a barracuda. What she needs is a bigger pool." He winked, clapping Donny on the back. "So, what next? We're not big on the leads."

"We file the paperwork. Question the ex-husband. Go on to something else." Donny was nothing if not practical.

"Sounds like a plan, man. Sounds like a plan." If he had the idea in his head to do a little investigating on his own time, well, Donny didn't need to know that.

Looked like there was a new cat burglar in town.

"Julian, darling." Yvette's hand slid down his cheek, nails just like claws, so careful not to mark. "How's things?"

"Busy, as always." He took a glass of champagne from a passing waiter, sipped. The room was crowded with people who desperately wanted to believe they were beautiful strutting peacocks. It made his nose twitch.

"And yet, you find time to attend my soirees." Her smile was as wicked as a pure-blood demon and he chuckled.

"I wouldn't miss them." Goddess knew how many baubles might fall into his pockets before the night was out.

"Ah, there you are, Yvette." A tall man with bright green eyes wandered over, his suit perfectly acceptable, and yet somehow out of place. "Can I steal you for a minute?"

Julian's nostrils flared as he stepped back, sliding into the shadows. Oh. There was pure danger there.

Pure, luscious danger.

Too bad it smelled like the law-abiding type.

Those bright eyes searched the shadows for a moment, the long, strong nose twitching. Then the man cupped Yvette's arm and he pulled her away, whispering in her ear.

Julian headed for the main room, staying in little groups of two or three, chuckling at the bodies pressed against him. Yvette always had such a varied crowd. They loved to pretend they were more than animals, but when it came down to it, they were all just slaves to instinct.

An emerald ring slipped from a finger, another man was careless with a Blackberry and a watch. That was why he came late—the alcohol did most of his work for him.

"You know, that's called stealing." The deep voice also screamed danger, even though the man was almost whispering.

"I'm sure I haven't the foggiest idea what you're talking about." Somewhere, his tail twitched.

"I'm sure you do." Goodness, the man had a voice that sent shivers down his spine.

"Nonsense. Are you enjoying the fete?" He had to get out of here. Honestly. Tall, broad and lovely just screamed danger.

"I am. The entertainment is something else." One big hand landed on the small of Julian's back, steering him toward a deserted hallway.

Oh, no.

No, he didn't think so.

"Excellent. I'm afraid I'll have to slip away. I have a rendezvous."

"Do you? With what? More art photography?" The hand on his back slid down to grasp his hip.

"Photography? You have me confused with someone else. I'm not a photographer." His muscles twitched and he moved from the touch, his skin tingling.

"No, but obviously you're an admirer." The man leaned close, breath fanning his cheek. "I recognize your scent."

"Armani, of course."

Fuck.

Fuck, fuck, fuck.

He forced himself not to show his panic, forced himself to stay loose, relaxed. He only needed to make the window.

"Underlaced with a hint of a rare sort of musk."

Damn it, this one knew. He really did.

He managed to get to the window, fingers flicking the lock. "Is that an insult, my friend?"

"A compliment. Now that I see how big you are, I'm amazed you made it through the doggie door." The big man moved close, pressing against him, and now he could smell musk.

His nostrils flared, body responding immediately, instinctively. "Doggie door? Do I look like the type of man who would deal with a doggie door?"

"Not in this particular disguise, no." The other hand came up to hold his other hip, and suddenly the whole length of the man's body was pressed up against his back.

The bastard was tall—tall enough that a heavy cock cradled against top of Julian's ass, pressing against that spot that made him arch, made his ass push back uncontrollably.

That was incredibly awkward.

"God, I knew it. Knew when I smelled you the other day that you would be trouble." Sharp teeth sank into the very top of his ear. "With a capital T."

He yowled low, the sound rumbling out of him like water bubbling from a spring. "I'm nobody you'd be interested in. Nobody at all."

"You're wrong. Just tell me. Did the husband pay you to grab the photos?" One hand flattened over his fly when the question came out, distracting him.

"Fuck." He was caught, instinct and urge battling his nowhere-near human enough brain. Damn it. Things started getting sharp, the shadows deeper, the glint of moonlight dazzling.

"If you want, sure. You're really bad for my self-preservation instinct. And I don't even know your name." Slowly, ever so slowly, the guy started rocking, cock like heated steel against him, even through all that cloth.

He reached out, nails sliding on the heavy velvet curtains, eyes going heavy-lidded.

What.

Was.

He.

Thinking?

"Mmm." The talking appeared to be over. Now there was just purring. The sound settled deep in his spine, and it was all he could do to step away, push the window out and let the wind clear his mind. Julian leapt onto the sill, eyes searching for the best landing place.

There.

Tree.

He could make it.

A low growl told him that he only had seconds to make his escape, the air moving behind him, too. Much warmer than the outside breeze.

"Sorry, pretty one. I have to hustle." It was a shame, too, because he could so do a sexy kitty dance for that one. He leapt, muscles stretching just enough, the top of the tree catching him and swaying.

The low roar said volumes about how pissed off that one was, how he didn't like to be left behind.

Maybe the next time they met there'd be fewer questions and more time. Maybe.

Right now he didn't have the luxury to worry about it. He needed to go underground for a little while. Let the trail cool.

He leapt for the next tree, then the next, managing to keep everything but his shoe, the tie for his hair and his hard on.

"Quite a party, Yvette." It had taken Thayne nearly a half hour to compose himself and find his hostess again. Goddamn, that was one hot cat burglar. And definitely trouble.

"Thank you, darling. You know I do love to entertain." Yvette's eyes glistened, gleaming, the tigress barely held beneath the surface, the champagne glass held carefully in her long fingers.

"I do. I know you love good gossip, too, hmm? Who's the new kitty in town?" He snagged a canape with one hand, carefully popping it into his mouth.

"Oh, you must mean Julian. He's a clever, slinky little thing, isn't he? I adore him."

Slinky was about right. Thayne had had that slim body pressed against him, long, black hair that smelled of citrus fruit caught between them.

"That would be the one. What's his story?" Hopefully, Yvette was in a chatty mood.

"He's only been in town three months, came in one night and introduced himself. He's an artist, simply amazing. I asked him if he needed a patron, but he didn't seem interested."

"An artist." Huh. A con artist maybe. "Well, he's interesting. You'll have to have us both for dinner one night."

"Oh, wouldn't that be entertaining? He isn't the most social of men, but I do enjoy him."

"I bet I would, too." He had to grab a drink, as well, just to shut himself up.

"Of course, I'm not sure he's into... rules." Was that an evil smile or what?

"No?" No, he knew for sure Julian wasn't into the whole law-abiding thing. Not at all. Still, the man had to know he was putting every one of their kind at risk should he get caught.

"No. No, he's a touch of a maverick. It's incredibly appealing, to have someone who still has a hint of... feral in him."

"Not a domesticated housecat, huh?" His cell phone vibrated in his pocket, and Thayne sighed, bending to kiss Yvette's cheek. "Don't forget to set up that dinner, honey. Work calls."

"I'll do my best, dear." One surprisingly heavy hand patted his shoulder. "Go protect us from the bad guys, will you?"

"You know it. I'll see you later, honey." He headed out, pulling out his phone and seeing Donny's number.

As the phone opened, he heard, "The ex-husband? Just turned in the picture—it's a fucking fake."

"No shit?" Well, now. That made Julian smarter than advertised. "So we need to look at fences, huh?"

"You bet. Mr. Man is pissed and the little lady is screaming. This is something. You think our perp kept the real thing?"

"I'd bank on it. Well, or sold it." He'd have to make sure he got Yvette to make that date. If the kitty was a collector, that would present a whole new set of problems.

"Yeah. Do you want me to hold the husband? He says he hired a private investigator to find the picture, not a thief."

"No. Cut him loose, but give him a tail. We'll see for sure who he hired that way, I bet." Private eye his ass.

"Good deal. I'm on it. What're you up to?"

"I think I'm going to do some checking at places that might have a vested interest in those pictures." He had a few sources that the regular cops didn't know about. Underground sources.

He walked, remembering that lean, slinky body moving against his cock.

His body tightened at the very thought, and Thayne thumped himself when he slid into his car. That kind of thinking wasn't going to do him any good, no matter how much he wanted to fuck Julian's slinky little ass.

He reached up to loosen his tie and the smell of Julian hit him, deep and sudden. No. No, not any good at all.

This whole damned case was gonna drive him crazy.

He could tell.

The photo looked amazing.

Julian stood in the crowd, glass in wine in hand, listening idly to the buzz, to the excited chatter of journalists and academics. It was about damned time that piece was available for everyone.

The crowd shifted, ebbing and flowing, but he stayed where he was, staring. Smiling. Until a voice he knew he'd

hear in his dreams sounded at his ear. "Looks much better there, huh?"

Fuck him raw.

He was getting tired of escaping and he'd *just* put his apartment together the way he liked it.

"Hmm? Did you come to see the image? It's always been one of my favorites." Strong, clean lines, amazing clarity, stunning light.

"I did, actually. Did you know that the previous owner had no bill of sale?"

"How on earth would I know that? I saw the advertisement in the paper. I heard it was an anonymous donor. I find that rather romantic."

He never turned, never gave Detective Thayne Terra the benefit of his gaze.

"Do you?" Moving even closer, big body against his *again*, the detective tilted his head and stared at the photograph. "I like it."

"It's stunning." Julian's cock jumped, jerking a little. "How are you, Detective? I wouldn't expect you at this type of opening."

"Oh, I'm a huge fan of the arts. Besides, when a gallery showing advertises something from a recent case, I have to attend." He got a sideways kind of smile, a pair of green eyes shining at him. How had he missed those eyes?

"A recent case? Honestly? How exciting for you." He stepped backward as a couple pushed in front of him, bumping into Thayne.

"Yeah. My days are full of nothing but excitement. I must be a real junkie, to come track you down."

"Now, now. I thought you came for the photograph..."

"Let's quit playing, kitty." Thayne caught him when he would have moved away, hands on his hips, just like at their first meeting.

"Playing is my job." Last time there had been little bruises—hot, dark, little bruises that he'd touched, over and over.

"Mine is a little more serious, though." Grinning against his neck, Thayne moved them back a little, toward the shadows. Someone liked to hide in the dark.

This was getting ridiculous.

Really.

Honestly.

He tried to turn, tried to break free carefully, so that it wasn't obvious and so his slacks wouldn't tear.

He loved those pants.

"Stop." There was a darkness to the order, a deep sense of danger that stopped him in his tracks. Made him hard.

He growled low, the sound vibrating in his chest. "I don't take orders."

"No? It'll be fun to try to make you." Laughing, breath fanning his neck, Thayne licked at his skin, tasting him.

"This is not the appropriate place." He twisted a little, keeping the sensitive, delicate skin of his nape out of reach. "What do you want?" He thought he probably knew the answer to that question.

"I have no idea. I know I should be trying to find a match for the evidence I found at the scene..." The words trailed off, Thayne's lips brushing his skin again.

"What did you find?" He had to stop talking before he moaned.

"That would be telling, honey." One big hand slid up to flatten on his belly, fingers moving too slowly to tickle.

His muscles went rock hard, everything in him wanting to purr. "I have to go, Detective. I have... plans."

"You always seem to have plans. What does it take to get on your calendar? I told Yvette to have us for dinner."

"Yvette knows that I'm incredibly sensitive. Dinner requires sitting in one place, being social." Being unable to escape those eyes.

"Uh-huh. Just with me. We've been pretty social so far." The man just overwhelmed him, rubbing and touching and breathing on him.

"Is that what we're calling it?" He reached back, let his fingers curl into claws, dragging up the man's legs.

"Well, if you want to be all civilized, yeah." Those strong legs flexed under his touch, Thayne's hips pushing against his ass.

Julian groaned and tried to step forward, tried to avoid that touch to his lower back. Thayne's teeth grabbed his neck, dragging him back. He supposed he should feel lucky it wasn't his hair. Still, he knew Thayne was scenting him, was marking him, and damn it, it shouldn't feel so good. Cave cat shouldn't be sexy.

"Fuck." He went up on tiptoe, rippling. Caught. "I have to get out of here."

"Let me come with you." It was the barest whisper, almost a tiny growl. Thayne cupped Julian's cock, pushing against it, and he had another moment of *deja vu*.

He was going to yowl like a kitten needing milk. "You're too tempting for words."

"I try. Come on. You obviously like to live dangerously." Thayne started pulling him back toward the exit, slow and sure.

"I do, but I don't do well in a cage, hmm?" He slipped out of those amazing hands, baring his teeth a little, panting.

"Tonight is off the record. We can go back to our little game of cat and mouse tomorrow." Thayne's eyes gleamed at him, and so did those very white teeth, bared right back at him.

"Off the record." He nodded, nostrils flaring. "There's a hotel, not a block away. Very understanding about torn sheets and caterwauling." Or so he'd been told.

"Let's go." Thayne didn't quite let go of him, though, fingers lingering on the small of his back as they turned to leave.

"Don't. Don't touch me there." He growled over, heading for the door. Sometimes he was too feline for his own good.

Damn it.

"Oh-ho." Laughing, Thayne followed him closely, right on his tail. So to speak.

Julian let himself bare his teeth, rumble, trying to push back.

"Shh. Be a good kitty, and I'll give you a treat." Pushy, pushy.

"You going to pour me a saucer of cream?" He could feel his tail twitching somewhere.

"Maybe. Maybe I'll just take a hairbrush to the base of your tail." Oh. No fair. No. Fair.

"Don't make me hurt you." He moved faster, forcing Thayne to keep up. He needed some privacy, damn it.

"Who knows. I might like it." The man was just... relentless. Planting all of these images in his head.

He paid for the room, using a throw-away name and a credit card that belonged to it, got the key and headed for the stairs. "Ninth floor."

Here kitty, kitty, kitty.

"Right behind you." In fact, Thayne was so close he could feel all of that body heat, all of those hard muscles.

He bounded up the stairs, leaping, knowing that the stairwell was empty and that he could let some of his energy out, get himself loose. All the way up, he ran, heading for the landing, the door. The room. Thayne stayed with him, tumbling against him just as the lock yielded to him, sending them careening into the room.

Bed. Window. Dresser. Oof. Floor.

Thayne landed on him, cock rubbing just right against his ass.

Rubbing madly, Thayne growled against the back of his neck, and he would swear he felt claws prick his sides. "Want you."

"Don't ruin my slacks. They're my favorites." It wasn't a yes, but it was close.

"Then let's get them off." Spinning him around, Thayne undid his fly, yanking his slacks down and off before tossing them aside. That left the man kneeling in front of him.

Oh, the possibilities.

He stretched, one hand reaching out, sliding on clothes. "Yours now. My turn to see."

"You think so?" His little briefs went next, and damned if Thayne didn't rub against his cock, cheek to head.

His growl actually echoed, even as his body arched up, responding eagerly.

"Smell amazing." Rough as sandpaper, Thayne's tongue brushed his slit, back and forth, tasting him. "Taste better."

Eyes rolling, Julian went with it. The beautiful son of a bitch could cuff him right now and he wouldn't care.

Humming, fucking purring, Thayne went down on him, sucking him all the way in. Just like that, Thayne's nose was buried in his short curls.

Julian howled, feet planting on the floor, head tossing. That mouth was pure heat, pressure.

Big paws shaped around his hips, holding him in place so that mouth could work him, up and down, harder and faster with each pull. Thayne wasn't wasting time, wasn't teasing. The top of Julian's head was going to blow right off. He twisted, pushing deep, desperate for more.

"Mmm." The noise vibrated around him, deep and hard, going right to his balls. Thayne sucked, cheeks hollowing, those bright eyes meeting his. Daring him to resist.

"Fucker." He groaned, breathing deep, trying to relax, and keep his shit together.

Pulling away just a tiny bit, Thayne grinned. "If you want, honey."

"Honey? Where on earth are you from?" He reached out, fingers on the strong jaw.

"Does it matter? You're not from around here, either." Licking at his palm, Thayne moaned, eyes closing for a second. "You taste good everywhere. Damn."

"You've got a great tongue." He rolled them, pouncing, scenting the long throat.

"Thanks." Laughing, chuffing, Thayne grabbed him, rolling them again, their bodies touching all the way up and down.

The play became toothy, both of them working, stretching, vying to end up on top. They pressed together, and the cloth between them became intolerable suddenly. It had to go. Someone was wearing too many clothes.

Good thing it wasn't him.

Thayne's clothes tore with a snarl, the sound zipping along his nerves. Excellent.

"Hey! What if I liked *my* pants?" Thayne wasn't fighting him, though. No, indeed. Thayne was playing sexy kitty.

"You forgot to mention it. Not my fault."

"Uh-huh. C'mere." Yanking him close enough to share skin, Thayne kissed him. Hard.

Julian blinked, everything stopping for a heartbeat. Two.

Then the whole world of sensation rushed back in at him, Thayne's lips hard on hot on his. The kiss went on until his

ears rang. He spread and arched, pushing hard into Thayne's strength.

"More. More, honey." Thayne was greedy, almost violent. It was hotter than anything Julian could remember.

"Yeah." He snarled, happy and horny, nails dragging down Thayne's side.

Biting hard against his skin, Thayne pushed at him until he was on his back on the floor, big body pressing down on him. His tail would be lashing madly at this point. His prick was hard enough that he ached, every nerve in his body screaming for more, for sensation.

It was like the best fucking hunt ever.

Panting, Thayne pushed his legs wide, rubbing against him madly, hot flesh all but burning him. Yeah. Oh, more.

The room lost its color, the feline in him right under his skin, his muscles jerking with the ferocity of it.

"Now?" He could feel Thayne pushing at his hole, the blunt head of Thayne's cock spreading him, opening him up.

"Now." Julian leaned up, biting at Thayne's shoulder as he bore down, the burn fucking perfect.

Surging into him, Thayne moaned, pushing him to the limit of what he could take. Thick, so thick and hot and hard.

He held on, claws digging in as they slammed together. His balls drew up as Thayne's teeth found his ear, the sting almost fucking perfect.

"Oh, fuck." Thayne moved faster and faster, growling for him, the sound moving through his whole body.

"Yes. Yes. Harder." Was that his voice? Fuck.

"Yeah." Thayne gave him harder, faster, deeper. Everything he could want. The burn inside him was almost too much, almost too big.

He reached down, fingers wrapping around his cock and squeezing hard.

Wide, bright eyes met his, Thayne looking almost amazed, dazed. "Yeah. Touch. Oh, fuck."

"Uh. Uh-huh." He squeezed again, his ass clamping down on that amazing cock, his belly rock-hard.

"Shit!" Thayne bucked for him, the cock in his ass throbbing, spilling hot and wet into him, filling him deeper than he could remember.

It only took one hard stroke, all the way down to the base and then back up before he lost it, seed pouring right on out of him, white hot and wild.

Slumping against him, Thayne covered him like a blanket, breathing hard against his neck. "That was it. I needed that."

All he could do was purr in response, toes curling and uncurling lazily.

Laughing, Thayne scented his cheeks, licking the corner of his mouth. "Not much for babbling during sex, are you? Hope I didn't talk too much."

He moaned happily, chasing that mouth. "It's fascinating. Quite fascinating."

"Yeah. I bet you love a cop who does a little pillow talk." Thayne gave him what he wanted, kissing him hard.

Actually, he found pillow talk amazing; the fact that Thayne might tell him something useful was only a bonus.

Thayne was something of a snuggler, too, curling up on top of him and moaning happily. "I knew you'd be worth the trouble."

He was screwed.

Bone deep.

Damn.

Jesus. What was he thinking?

Oh, who was he kidding? Thayne knew exactly what he'd been thinking with, and there was no end in sight. Taking Julian to a skeezy hotel hadn't gotten the man out of Thayne's system. No, sir, it had just sunk Julian right under his skin.

They'd moved to the bed, both of them ready to nap like the big cats they were, and Thayne had woke up curled around Julian, holding on like he knew his fascinating cat burglar would slip right away.

Julian's deep purr rumbled through him, the stubbled cheeks rubbing his shoulders, his throat, marking and scenting him.

Smiling, Thayne licked at the fine skin of Julian's shoulder, the musky taste and smell filling his senses. They smelled like really good sex. They needed to do it again. Soon.

He mapped the lean body, the muscles ropy under his hands. Slinky kitty. This one was built for speed and tricks, not power. It was like Julian had designed his body to do exactly what he needed, no more or less. Thayne found it fascinating.

His fingers slid over the small of Julian's back, and he chuckled as the man arched, yowling softly, the cat so close

to the surface. Thayne scratched, letting his nails dig in a little, just like he would scratch the base of a housecat's tail. Look at those muscles twitch and push. Those fingers dug in, rolling against his back, the little pants tickling the shit out of his throat.

"Mmm." Thayne purred, rubbing, stretching, needing more contact. His cock hardened fast, just a hot rush of blood and need.

The panting breaths turned into licks and laps, the rough tongue making his skin tingle. Wiggling, he got Julian's mouth into better position, right over the pulse in his neck. Yeah. Surely the guy could feel his heart beat.

Oh, he felt that purr all the way down into his bones, Julian's tongue slapping his vein, over and over. Yeah. He felt it deep, tugging at his cock, and he arched, pushing into Julian's warmth. Damn.

"Mmm. Pretty." The word was trilled, the sound amazing.

"You are." Honestly, Julian was the pretty one. Sleek, beautiful.

"Could eat you up." His neck got a sharp, toothy nibble.

"Any time." They could eat each other. Now that was a nice thought.

"Is now good for you?" Another bite and *fuck* it felt good.

"Very. Very good. Let me just scoot around." Thayne wanted to taste, too, so he turned, licking along Julian's thigh.

"Mmm." There was a long scar along one leg, old and almost silver, starting at one knee and ending near the heavy balls.

"What happened here?" he asked, trailing his fingers along the scar.

"I zigged where I should have zagged and I took a blade in the thigh. It put a cramp in my style for a while."

"I bet." Unless Julian was very different from him, the wound had been bad if it didn't heal quickly.

"It happens. I'm sure you find that out, in your line of work."

"No shit. I get shot at more than you'd think."

"Well, just think... I haven't shot at you a single time." Bastard.

"Not yet, anyway." He smiled, nosing along the inside of Julian's thigh, getting them back on track.

"Mmm. There's a time and place for..." Julian arched a little, voice going all rumbley.

"Everything." He licked just under Julian's balls, lifting them with his tongue.

"Oh. Uh-huh. Ev...everything." Someone liked that.

Thayne licked again, the scent flooding him, deep and earthy. The taste was good, too, so he did it again.

His cock was nuzzled, licked, the tip teased by that rough tongue.

"Uhn." Thayne rocked his hips, trying to get more, even as he sucked at the loose skin of Julian's sacs. Wasn't loose for long.

"You're one dangerous bastard. It can't be good for business." He just heard the words a second before his cock was sucked right in.

His eyes rolled back, and any clever response he might be able to make was blotted out by that sweet suction. Thayne figured the best thing to do was swallow Julian right down.

He felt it, when Julian groaned, felt it all around his prick, vibrating and buzzing, hot as hell. Moaning a little himself, Thayne licked under the head of Julian's cock, sucking all the way back down after. Yeah. God.

Every single touch he made was echoed by Julian's mouth, making it feel like he was kind of sucking himself, like he was driving them both.

It was damned freaky, but hellacious good, too. A man could get spoiled. Thayne sucked harder, reaching up to stroke the skin behind Julian's balls.

Oh, fuck. That touch was echoed, brushing his skin.

His balls drew up, and he had to pull back to take a deep breath. Then he pushed back down and licked all the way. Damn.

"Fuck." The word echoed before his cock was swallowed.

They both pulled hard, lips sealed tight, tongues working. The sounds they made were insanely erotic.

He'd never had someone follow him so close, keep him so on edge. Julian's touches matched his, every so often leading, just a little, just enough. He was going crazy, his whole body aching, flushed, needing. It was damned hot.

Then Julian shocked him, claws dragging down his thighs, stinging. Driving him to jerk, hump into that hot mouth. Thayne moaned around Julian's cock, barely keeping himself from biting, his hips sawing back and forth. So close. He was so close.

Julian's balls drew up, went tight against Thayne's chin and he felt the low groan all around his cock.

He squeezed Julian's balls one more time, a little harder than before, wanting the man with him. He was going to blow. Now.

Bitter, salty heat poured into his lips, Julian jerking, humping into his face.

Thayne came like a ton of bricks, his cock jerking madly. He held Julian's balls with one hand, the other sinking into Julian's thick hair.

That purr kept his orgasm going and going, Julian's pleasure echoing in him.

Finally they slumped to the bed, both of them panting, their hands lax on each other's skin. They smelled like heat and sex, and Thayne wanted to stay right there a long time.

His hip got nuzzled, the low purrs filling the air before they became strong, steady snores. Laughing, Thayne crawled up and settled in next to one very happy kitty. They could nap a little while.

Even if there was a good probability that this time Julian would be gone when he woke up.

He needed to get out.

Really.

Soon.

Now.

Julian stretched, reaching up far enough that his back popped, his loose sweats sliding down his hips.

Out. Out hunting. Playing.

He started running the stairs, up and down, up and down, muscles warming, panting on his third trip.

He lost his shirt on the fourth trip, his sweats on six.

By trip nine he'd shifted, the wood clacking under his claws.

The temptation was huge: to run upstairs, up to the roof, bound out into the night and explore.

His mind told him, over and over, to stay inside, to control himself. That the police officer was out there, in the city, and had his scent.

His body had him climbing up into the windowsill, staying in the shadows, panting as he breathed in all the amazing scents.

The night felt heavy, the humidity high, which held all sorts of noises and smells close to the ground. He leapt across to the oak tree, landing easily before looking to the next roof. He could make that jump. Maybe he shouldn't, but he could. He was just gathering himself when he smelled it. The deep musk of another cat.

He spun around, heading back for his house. His lair. His den.

His.

He'd made the bottom of the stairs when a heavy, and familiar, body hit his, rolling him over.

He snarled, fighting to get to his feet, to get his balance.

What he got was a nose full of fur, Thayne rubbing against him, tail curling down against his. Thayne. How on earth...

He found himself rubbing back, searching for that heady, male scent. Thayne. Thayne.

Thayne chuffed, cheek pressing against his. Then his sexy kitty jumped off him and ran, stopping at the tree to look back at him.

Play.

Play.

He crouched, butt wiggling just a second before he pounced, leaping in a happy attack. PLAY!

Thayne bounced away, tail just beyond his snapping teeth. Oh. Oh, yes.

They ran down the street, claws digging up chunks of grass and flowers and dirt, the mess spraying as they ran. Claws scrabbling, Thayne turned the corner, just flying. Perfect target. Julian barreled into him, pushing them both into a hedge, the bushes rattling.

They snarled and growled, all of it in damned good fun. Yeah. Thayne grabbed his ear, gnawing. Fun.

He raked his claws along that soft, thick-furred belly, chuffing at the growl.

Fun.

They rolled again, both of them falling out of the hedge, landing hard on a sidewalk. Oof.

He groaned, scrambling to his feet as a light came on from inside the house.

Thayne was with him all the way, slinking into the shadows. For a law-abiding man, Thayne was a slinky kitty.

Pale and strong, Thayne was a fine specimen of a cougar—broader in the chest than him, but not quite as springy—Julian admired him as they moved, heading for his place.

They played tag, jumping and nipping, having a ball. It was almost as fun as thieving. Less profitable, but very fun. He leapt up, heading for the trees, twisting and pushing up through leaves and branches. A stiff breeze slapped against his tail, just the ghost of Thayne's claws touching him. The branch bent under him.

He chuffed and pushed harder, moving faster; he'd had to run these trees a dozen times, making sure he could escape, leave home, get home. He heard it just before Thayne went down, the creaking of the branch right when his feet left it.

Julian spun, yowling as the branch he expected to be there wasn't and he started scrabbling, claws digging into the tree trunk as he headed for the ground.

His landing was broken by a hard body and soft fur, Thayne yowling back at him. Oh, that hurt.

He scrambled off with his teeth bared. Home. Home.

Limping, Thayne came along behind him, body curled over itself.

Julian led them both to the house, herding Thayne in to the soft carpet so he could sniff and nose, look for where things hurt.

Thayne batted at him with one paw, a weak attempt at playfulness. There was no blood, though.

He licked and smelled, reassuring himself that the big cat was whole.

There was a swelling on one back leg, the smell of fresh blood strong, but it was just a bruise. They'd both be sore tomorrow, but whole.

He licked that poor leg until Thayne purred, melting under him.

The uninjured front paws both came out, pulling him down, letting them curl around each other. Warm. Comfortable.

He licked at Thayne's chin, purring. Stay. Stay. Nap. Rest.

Heal.

Yes. Yes. Thayne purred for him, tail twitching against his, whiskers pressed to his face. Stay.

Good kitty.

He was bruised as hell. God knew, Thayne wasn't a whiner, but when he woke up on the floor, naked as a jaybird, it was hard to miss the giant hematoma.

He'd gone looking for Julian, figuring on enticing the man to play, on keeping him out of trouble. Looked like Thayne had gotten the trouble anyway.

He rolled up, looking around. The place was... slinky. Heavy cushions, rich colors, artwork everywhere. He'd know this place was Julian's, even without the scent of the man.

He could hear singing, and he followed it—through a dining room made for long, sensual meals, a tiny library with a lounge made for fucking.

"Anyone home?" He limped into the room, staring around curiously.

The kitchen was huge. Huge and bright red. "I am. There are towels in the microwave, for your bruises."

Julian was naked, stirring eggs in a skillet, singing.

"Thanks." Thayne couldn't help but stare. That could be dangerous.

Tight, tiny little ass, muscled legs, long, dark hair—he could just eat that son of a bitch up.

"Nice place." It suited the man to the ground, too.

"I like it." A steaming towel was pulled out, pressed to his hip. "You eat eggs?"

"I do." He liked them a little runny. "Oh, God that feels good."

A plate of eggs and toast were put on the little breakfast table. "What do you drink?"

"Anything but juice." Some things he just couldn't humanize. Fruit juice was one of those things.

"Milk?" That single word sounded obscene as hell.

"Milk. Yeah." Decadent. No doubt about it. The man was decadent.

He got a great view, Julian bending over in the fridge, bare balls peeking. Swallowing, Thayne flexed his fingers, trying hard to keep them from reaching.

"Milk it is." He got a glassful, then Julian started wandering—heating up another set of towels, nibbling on a bit of this or that, a walking temptation.

The milk went down very smoothly, reminding him of the simple pleasures in life. Of course, Julian's ass could be a simple thing, too, if he just grabbed. The hot towels were replaced, his bruised muscles singing with it. That long hair was loose for the first time, too, swinging, swaying against Julian's skin.

Thayne couldn't take it anymore. He just reached up and grabbed a handful of the heavy mass, pulling Julian up against him. "Hey. You're warmer than the towels."

"Mmm. Do you think so?" He could smell Julian now, a heavy masculine scent.

"I do." That skin was like silk, better than anything he could get out of an oven. Or a microwave.

Julian offered him a husky purr, body undulating against his side.

"See? Much better. Love it." Thayne purred some more, wanting to feel Julian against him everywhere. He rubbed a little, luxuriating in the feel of skin and hair.

"Pretty kitty." Fingers trailed down his back, scoring his skin, making him goose pimple up.

His back arched, his blood rushing south. "Feels good, huh? Real good."

His back was well-scratched, the touches enough to make his toes curl.

All he could do was twist and purr, his body completely out of his control. Goddamn. He hadn't felt so good in an age.

"Sexy kitty. Dance for me." That hot tongue lapped at his ear, his jaw.

"I'm... Oh. Not much of a dancer." At least he never had been. Jesus, he usually didn't even let go this much, let someone else take control. This? This was good.

"You're amazing. Dangerous. Trouble." The small of his back was tickled and teased, fingers tapping over his skin.

Toes curling, he yowled, feeling like he might just explode. His cock was suddenly hard enough to drive nails.

"Mmm. I'm not the only one who likes that." Julian slithered down to the floor, cheek brushing his cock.

"No, sir. I like it a lot. A lot." He's like it even better if that mouth would take him in, if Julian would suck him.

He didn't get that, though, at least not yet. Julian's cheek and tongue, fingers and jaw, stroked up and down, driving him nuts.

"Come on, honey. Need your mouth." Thayne figured that was commanding, not begging. He hoped.

The purr was knowing, teasing, but that mouth dropped over his cock, lips held away from his skin until the tip bumped the back of Julian's throat. Then those lips snapped closed, the suction sudden and fierce.

A shout burst out of him, his whole body going stiff, like he'd touched a live wire. Shit, that was... "More."

The fingers at the small of his back started moving again.

Caught between the hottest mouth ever and Julian's clever hand, Thayne moaned, hips starting to rock hard. He slid in and out of Julian's lips, wet and hot and fucking perfect. Those teeth teased his flesh, never quite snagging his skin, but threatening. The tiny pain made his nerves fire like crazy, his skin too tight and too hot. Thayne pushed his fingers through Julian's hair, holding on tight. Thick and silken, that mass of hair felt like it could cut his fingers.

"God. Julian." It was too much and not enough. He wanted to come, but he wanted to make it last. His leg throbbed, but his cock hurt more, for sure.

Julian's fingers moved, quick as shit, tapping at his hole, then pushing inside. His legs spread, his balls dangling, and Thayne growled, pushing back on Julian's fingers. Fuck, that

burned. The answering snarl vibrated down through his prick, into his balls. Damn it.

"Come on. Come *on*. You know you want in." He was willing to give it. He so was.

Julian flipped him out of the chair, spinning him until he was bent over on the tile floor. That tongue was on his hole, pushing in, fucking him straightaway.

Thayne arched up, his whole body begging for it, needing it. Rough, sweet, Julian's tongue made him crazy, scraping his nerves. It was fucking forever and nowhere near long enough when Julian crawled up along his spine, cock hard and leaking, pressing against his hole.

A low growl slipped out when Julian slipped in, and oh, God. Yeah. That was what he needed. Heat and pressure, like to drive him crazy. Those long, heated kisses continued, brushing along his shoulders as Julian started moving, nice and slow, in and out. Reaching back with one hand, he grabbed Julian's hip, holding on, trying to get the man to go faster. Or slow down. Something.

"Uh-uh. I get to decide. You can set the pace next time." The son of a bitch was sure coherent, for being in the middle of a good, solid fuck.

"Damn it! Faster." Like he wasn't going to try to speed things up. He had to make the effort.

He got a sharp, loud smack to his ass, that motion slowing even more.

"Shit!" No way. No way was he gonna let Julian do that to him. "Again..."

That low purr vibrated all through him. "Yes."

He got another slap, one more, that cock filling him up, stretching his ass. His whole body shook, his head falling back, his breath coming in deep gasps. He was fucking tingling all over, his cock hard enough to pound nails.

"So fine." Nails scratched—so lightly—against his hot ass, his skin screaming. Then Julian started pounding him, fucking him so hard and fast he couldn't breathe.

Thayne clawed at whatever he could reach: the tablecloth, the chair, Julian's hip. There was nothing solid to hold onto and his whole world was spinning. Teeth fastened onto his nape, his entire body screaming, even as one hand found his cock and pulled, hard.

Thayne shot so hard his teeth rattled, his ass rocking back against Julian's hips, his cock jerking. Oh, God. Please. Yes.

Heat filled him up, the bite on the back of his neck going sharp for a moment, before easing, that rough tongue sliding over his skin.

Thayne panted, his arms shaking, trying to hold their weight. "What the fuck? I swear, you take all my good sense, honey."

"Mmm. I inspire wickedness." Julian licked again.

"You sure do. Here I was hoping to keep you out of trouble." Thayne finally just collapsed, cheek pressed against the tile.

"Not a chance." Julian settled, heavy and solid.

"No? Well, at least I can give you an outlet, huh?" The tile felt cool and good against his leg, Julian warm against his back. It was perfect.

"Mmm. That you can." Julian nuzzled his nape. "That you can."

He could live with that for a sexy kitty like Julian. Even if it killed him.

"Julian. I have a job for you." Holding the phone to his ear, he looked over to the sofa, where Thayne was sleeping the sleep of the well-fucked.

"Hello to you to, my friend." Val was such a shit.

"Hello, Julian. I hope you're well. I saw you donated the pictures to the museum. Clever. The client threatened to kill our contact. I'm sure you're happy."

"I am." He padded into the office, nudged the door shut. "What kind of job?"

"A painting. A big one. I know how you love a challenge."

"Yeah? Oil? Oils are a bitch to transfer. Where? How much?"

"There's a resort about twenty miles outside of town. The penthouse suite is owned by a private collector. He leaves for St. Marten in a week."

"Interesting. What's the story?" He needed something better than "go steal a painting".

Well, usually.

Sometimes that was enough.

"Well, he bought this particular painting hot. It used to be in the Prado. In Madrid."

"Interesting." Julian sat down at his computer and started typing. "The Hidalgo, I assume." Ceasare Hidalgo's Masks had been stolen ten years ago.

He looked—it was a large piece focusing on Hidalgo's fascination with pagliacci. Creepy.

Cool.

"So, you're willing to talk terms?" Val was always so straightforward.

"I am. It'll be a challenge. It's big. It'll have to be worth my while." Not to mention that he wanted it returned to the museum.

"Of course it will. How do you feel about Spain?"

"It's lovely, and the food is amazing. Why?"

"Because you're going to take this painting back where it belongs. The museum doesn't want anyone to know they're paying to have it returned."

"Interesting. How, exactly, do you suggest I get through customs with a stolen painting worth... eight million Euro?" Still, it was a fun challenge, wasn't it? Maybe encase it in a few other paintings, hire a ship... Although it could be awkward, changing on a boat.

"That's your job." Val named a figure that made it seriously worth considering.

"I want expenses, half the fee up front, and a contact on the inside. I won't deliver it."

He started making notes, fingers flying on the keyboard. He had a friend with a small yacht. That would be incredibly convenient...

A soft knock at the door interrupted him, reminding him that he had guests.

A guest.

A very complicated one.

"Come on in." He made himself stay relaxed. "Send me the information, make sure everything's as it should be, hmm?"

"You have company."

"I do." Lovely company.

"Lucky bastard. I'll email. Be careful." Val sounded too amused for her own good.

"Always." He closed the phone with a click. "Sleep good?"

"Like the dead. Am I keeping you from your work?" The bruises on Thayne's skin were already fading, the big guy healing with amazing speed.

"Nope. Just finishing up a call." Like Thayne needed to know about his business.

"Hey, just wanted to make sure you didn't want me to leave." Big hands held up at his sides, Thayne wandered over, grinning at him.

"Not unless you're feeling particularly penal, Mister Kitty." He leaned over, nuzzling a bit, letting his tongue drag.

It was insane, he knew it, this immediate, intense need. On the other hand, it was fun, and he was more than willing to participate.

"Hmm. That's not exactly the word I'd go with." Thayne stroked his hair, fingers digging in, combing out the strands.

"Mmm." He did enjoy being petted. Groomed. Adored. Fucked. Pick one. "Feel free to pick another one."

"I won't be interrupting?" Amazing, how his curious kitty cop didn't even try to look at his screen.

"I hope you will be, Mister Kitty. I definitely hope you distract the fuck out of me."

"Well, hell. Why didn't you say so, honey?" Pulling Julian up out of his chair, Thayne hauled him to the couch, collapsing and pulling him down on top.

His hair fell around them and he chuckled, Thayne's eyes suddenly bright in the shadow. "I see you."

He leaned down, tongue sliding against Thayne's lips.

"You do, I'd bet. More than I want you to see." Thayne pulled him closer, mouth taking his, ready to take control again.

Someone was unnerved. It was a good look for Thayne. A very good look. Julian fought lazily, tongue warring for control, making Thayne work for it.

Thayne did work for it, grabbing the back of his head and holding him in place, pushing into his mouth and taking the kiss deep. Very deep. Hard. Bruising, even.

Catching himself growling into the kiss, Julian groaned, stretching out over Thayne, trying to get leverage. Thayne wouldn't allow it, holding him in place with a freakishly strong grip, pushing up against him. The man was hard for him, growling against his mouth.

He caught Thayne's bottom lip with his teeth, tugging hard, daring the bastard to play. A longer, harder growl sounded, Thayne nipping at him, claws coming out to play, raking down his back lightly. Oh, yes. He tossed his head a little, tugging harder, begging for more.

"You're something else, honey." The words came out ragged, barely human, and Thayne rolled them, pushing him to the floor.

He grunted as they landed, all of Thayne's heat covering him, pressing him down. So hot.

Rubbing, Thayne bit at his throat, his collarbone. God, yeah. That big body felt rough and hard, damp with sweat. His chin lifted, offering his throat, trusting Thayne with it. The simple motion ratcheted the heat up between him.

Chuffing, Thayne licked at his skin, just before those teeth closed on his skin, not hard enough to break through, but enough to sting. The tiny pain made his nerve endings stand up and take notice.

"Fuck." The word came out as a growl, low and rumbling and deep.

"Anytime. If that's what you want."

He'd get growly about Thayne's amusement if it wasn't breathless. If that cock wasn't drilling against his hip.

"I will beat you, you know." Later. After.

"Uh-huh. You bet." Oh, someone was playing right back, pressing his hands up over his head.

He arched with it, yowling, hot enough that he was going to catch aflame.

"Oh, yeah, honey. Someone likes that." Turning, Thayne bit into the skin of his upper arm, right where it was so thin and sensitive.

"Been... been too long since I met someone strong enough to play. Someone like us."

"I hear you. Too long." Those eyes glowed, staring into his, and Thayne rocked against him, stretching his arms out hard.

His muscles rippled, body responding to the pull and burn, the stretch. His fingers curled, wanting to become claws. Soft

rumbles told him that Thayne approved, that the cat was right there beneath the surface for both of them. More stinging bites came, peppering his arm, his shoulder. Each bite made him pull and snarl, rejoicing in the sting.

One long thigh pushed between his legs, pressing down against him, making room for Thayne's hips. They ground together, both of them hot, needy. The scent of them together made his blood boil, made him snarl and bite at the air.

Thayne just bit him, teeth hard against his skin again and again. Bruises bloomed up, little hot spots popping up on his flesh.

"I... I don't allow hickeys." He hid the laugh, knowing that Thayne wouldn't care.

"So?" There it was. Damn, that man. Thayne could suck, pulling up mark after mark, all the way down his chest.

Julian's balls drew up and he tugged against Thayne's hands.

"Sweet, sweet cat." One hand cupped his balls, like Thayne knew, like the man was going to push his orgasm out of him.

"Yes." He couldn't help hissing, bucking against the touch as his world went white-hot.

"Yeah? Like that, huh?" Pushing harder, Thayne bit him again, sending him right over the edge.

When he floated back down, he was moaning, bruised, and sticky. It was perfect.

"Julian. Sweet. Gonna tear you up." Pressing down between his legs, Thayne rocked, cock pushing and sliding against him.

"You think? I'd love to see you try."

"Okay." Keeping him pinned with one leg, Thayne rose up and licked his fingers, wetting them good before reaching down between them. Pressing behind his balls. "I'm going to keep an eye on you, sweet. I'm going to be bad for business."

He groaned, cock jerking a little, trying to take an interest. Strong—the beautiful bastard was strong. "No way. This isn't your..."

Those fingers pushed against his skin, then against his hole, demanding. Definitely demanding. "No, but this is mine. Tell me you'll stick around."

He snarled. "Tell me you'll look the other way when I do my job."

"I can't do that." He got a wild, fierce smile. "I'll tell you I'll tear your ass up every time I catch you being naughty."

"Naughty." Oh, fuck yes. He twisted, giving up a little fight, knowing it would spice things up and move those fingers against his hole.

They scraped inside him, two thick fingers, spreading him wide. God, that felt... Amazing. Necessary.

"Fuck. Fuck, Thayne." His eyes flew open and he bore down, taking more in.

"Yes. So hot inside, honey. I swear. Hottest thing ever." Thayne moved those fingers harder, in and out, getting him ready.

"Don't stop. Oh, fuck. Don't stop." He was going to catch aflame.

"Uh-huh. Because I could just get up and walk off." Thayne didn't stop. No, he moved faster, harder, fingers driving Julian mad.

"Fuckhead." He meant that, from the bottom of his heart.

"No. Fuck you." Thayne kissed the back of his neck before moving around so his ass pressed back against Thayne's hips. Those fingers slid free, and the head of Thayne's cock pressed there instead.

"Mmm. That works, too." He was easy.

"It does. It certainly does." Hands on his hips, Thayne yanked him back, slamming inside him.

"Uhn." His toes curled, electricity shooting up his spine. "Do it again."

"Yes. Again." Rocking hard against him, Thayne gave him every inch over and over.

His claws dragged over the floor, almost strong enough to score the wood. Oh, fuck. Fuck.

"More? More. Can't hold back, honey." Grunting, Thayne slapped against him, bit him, bruised him, inside and out.

He started slamming back, growling as he fought to balance on one hand, grab his cock.

"No. No touching. Only me, honey." That low growl sent shivers down his spine.

His eyes went wide, his body caught between fighting and going along with this amazing man.

It didn't take much urging for him to decide on going along. Thayne's hand reached down, closing around his cock, stroking him hard.

They sounded like a pair of cellos—squalling and yowling, calling out to beat the band. Their bodies slapped together, their breath sounding like the percussion section, and damn. Damn. His balls were so tight they ached.

He surged back, taking Thayne in to the root. Fuck! He went still, body moving in the tiniest jerks, riding the sensations.

Thayne moaned, fingers digging deep into his flesh. The man pushed him hard, in and out for long moments. Then Thayne came for him, the yowl and the splash of heat both hot as hell.

He squeezed hard, keeping Thayne in, pushing his cock through that hand a couple more times, sending himself over the edge.

"There. There. Yes." Hell, that didn't even sound like Thayne.

He couldn't answer; he just growled and panted, the world losing its color. A low, long growl answered him, and he felt it the moment Thayne went fuzzy, a long tail touching his.

He twisted, nuzzling and licking the thick fur, purring as their cheeks rubbed together. Batting at him with one big paw, Thayne rumbled, letting him know it was time to snuggle some more. Like they had nothing better in the world to do.

Sliding right in, he rubbed their bellies together, claws rolling as they touched. Pretty. Pretty. They stropped themselves against each other, rumbling and purring. Thayne had the softest belly fur.

Exploring happily, he licked Thayne's claws, nosed the pads, vocalizing over the sharp points, the strength there. Thayne batted at him, claws in, giving him a good shove to prove he was right. Strong. Good.

Where Thayne was strong, he was fast, nipping here and nudging there, always moving. Chuffing, Thayne romped with him, just like before, only with less falling out of trees. It was far better that way.

They wandered out of the room, bounding up the stairs to leap on the huge bed, roll in the sheets.

He heard the phone ringing downstairs, knew that he had work to deal with, to do, but he honestly couldn't be bothered.

Thayne was definitely bad for business.