



If Wishes Were Horses
By BA Tortuga

"Okay, boys, let's run it again, in G." Malcolm leaned back in his chair, grinned over at Foster on bass, laughing as the big old redneck flipped him off.

"In G? Who's singing? Terry?"

Malcolm nodded and grinned over at the pierced and tattooed slip of a girl with the mandolin. The girl was old enough to come jam, then she was old enough to sing lead. "Yup. Come on, little girl. Belt it."

Terri breathed in deep and let it fly, and man, she had a pretty voice. Smoky, kinda. It was a good, solid song, a nice hook, a bridge that was exciting enough for any musician. It should sell like a motherfucker.

He heard the doorbell, but that was what he had a housekeeper for. Elaine would get it.

Foster was jamming the bass line and Malcolm bent his head to work the lead guitar, trying hard to keep up with Chris. That little fucker could *pick*.

The last strains of music faded a few minutes later, and all of them whooped and grinned. Yeah. Yeah, that worked. He looked up to see his housekeeper, Elaine, hovering in the doorway.

"Hey, lady. What's up?"

"You have a visitor, Mr. Mal. He's in the foyer. His name is Dalton Amos." Her eyes went wide, her hands fluttering at the famous name.

One of his eyebrows went up, and he heard Terri squeak. Foster looked at him and he looked back. What that motherfucker wanted was beyond him. The sorry bastard had single-handedly ruined Malcolm's singing career and had damn near destroyed his entire fucking life.

"You want me to go, Mal?" Foster was a good man, solid.

"Nope. I'll get it. I think I'm done for the day, though." He nodded to the back door. "I'll see you next week."

"Sure, man." They all stared at him, but he knew they'd do what he asked.

"Don't stress it, y'all. Ain't the first time a man came looking for me to write him a song." Even though he wasn't writing dick for that bastard, so far as the world knew.

"See you next week, Hoss." Terri slipped past him, patting his arm. Shit, she was too young to have a clue what was going on, so he must look like a thundercloud.

He nodded, waved to Foster, then headed toward the door.

Mal set his lips and flung the door open, coming face-to-face with the single biggest mistake of his life.

Dalton shifted from foot to foot, wondering what the hell he was doing here.

Mal didn't want to see him. Shit, that had been obvious from the get-go. Why he thought ten years and one song would change that...

Well, it wasn't Mal who had changed, was it? Nope, it was him. He guessed he needed to do this. For closure, or some shit. The last thing in the list of things a man had to do when life as he knew it was pretty much over.

That heavy wood door swung open, Malcolm Parker standing there, big as life. The man hadn't changed much, but at the same time, he'd changed completely. Lean and dark-eyed, skin tanned leather and a nose like a hawk. All that dark hair was gone, though, Mal shaved down to the scalp.

Dalton's fingers twitched, reminding him how he'd loved that hair. Jesus. "Hey, Mal." He croaked the words out, his throat so sore from the last test that he could hardly make the sounds. He'd skipped the next one they'd scheduled because it hurt so damned bad.

Mal frowned. "Hey. I have to say, Dalton, you're possibly the last person on Earth I expected to see."

"I bet." Damn. So much for his being able to handle this and move on. He could barely fucking talk. Jesus, he was an idiot.

"You want to come in?"

"Please." Dalton stepped on in, taking his hat off and holding it.

"Kitchen's this way."

They passed a pristine leather front room, a formal dining. The kitchen was homey and huge, a plate of sandwiches on the counter and coffee brewing.

"Thanks. Could I have some water, man?" Then he'd spill what he came to spill and leave. Mal had done fine for himself. He didn't need to worry.

"Sure." A bottle of water was fetched, handed over. Then Mal poured himself a cup of coffee before leaning back against the kitchen cabinet.

Dalton took the time to calm himself by opening the water and taking a huge gulp. Mal would probably be surprised that it wasn't going to improve his voice. "Thanks."

"Sure. What are you doing here? I mean, not to be rude or anything, but I thought this was against the rules."

Rules? What?

"Don't matter now." He shrugged. "I heard that new song you wrote. Guess I needed to come see you for myself." Did that even make sense? Christ.

"It's got a good hook. I'm older. It's been a long time. What's wrong with your voice?"

"It's pretty much gone." Vocal fold scarring, extensive. The tests were just to see what would be more effective, therapy or surgery.

Mal winced. Actually, honestly winced. "That sucks, man. I'm sorry to hear that."

"Thanks." Dalton spread his hands. "I don't know why I'm here, Mal. Thanks for the drink. I... See ya."

"So, you came... to drink water?"

"No. I came to tell you I was sorry, but you don't need that from me." That had been pure arrogance. Pure D cussedness. Maybe desperation.

Mal shrugged. "It's every man for himself, I hear. You doing Twelve Steps or something?"

"No." That almost had him laughing, but it hurt these days. In fact, he intended to hole up somewhere and drown his sorrows. "I think of you, is all. Sometimes."

"I'm flattered." Mal sighed, straightened. "You want a sandwich? I've been working all day."

"Sure." His butt landed on one of the bar stools by the island without him even being aware that he'd moved. "You still like ham and swiss?"

"I do. Elaine makes a platter every day she's here." Two little plates landed on the counter. "You want iced tea?"

"Thanks." Mal was being too damned nice. Way more than he'd be.

"So, you got cancer or something? AIDS? Hemorrhoids? Polyps?"

"It's called vocal fold scarring. It's a thing." He shrugged. It could build up or it could come from an injury. His was both. And mostly irreversible. He'd been on steroid shots for a bit, everyone thinking it was sinuses.

"Does it hurt?"

The tea was handed over and suddenly it was like it had been ten years ago, Mal young and curious, sharp as a tack.

"Yeah." He smiled a little. "You gonna tell me it's what I deserve?"

"Nope. You're one hell of a singer. You don't deserve that."

"Thanks." All of a sudden he wanted to scream. Loud. He couldn't do that either. "You... Shit, Mal. What am I doing here?"

One black eyebrow arched. "Well, either you've lost your mind, you're stoned, or you're dying. Maybe you got religion."

"No. No religion." He wished to hell he was stoned. "So you live alone?"

"Yeah. I have a housekeeper who comes in during the day during the week, but that's it." Mal rubbed the back of his neck. "I mean, she's taking the holidays off, but..."

"You just in between fellers?" Why that seemed so damned important, he didn't know.

"What?" Mal looked at him like he was crazy.

"You ain't been alone all this time, Mal. You're too fine for that."

"I don't date." Mal looked, for about half a second, like there was going to be a screaming fit, then it disappeared again. "You want mustard, right?"

"Yeah." Dalton pushed at it, like putting his tongue on a sore tooth. "Why not?"

"Don't be an asshole, Dee. You know full well why not."

Dalton just stared. Wow, that was a hell of a load on his damned head. That was why he'd come, though, right? To -- to do something.

The mustard was put on the island, along with a butter knife. Mal grabbed a couple of sandwich halves for himself, put them on a plate, then parked it.

I'm sorry seemed both inadequate and hugely arrogant, so Dalton just... ate. Kind of. Swallowing still sucked.

He heard a door open, then close. "Mal? Mally? I need to borrow your steam cleaner. Mother's new puppy had an asspllosion all over that new sofa and she's in meltdown mode because her Christmas-slash-Hannukah-slash-Kwaanza party for the blue-haired posse is Saturday and..."

Mal's sister came zooming in, the little thing only looking more like something from a kung fu movie as she'd aged. It had been one of the neatest things about knowing Mal -- the family of five kids, all different nationalities, all adopted. Melanie, though, he remembered her as being fierce. "What the fuck is this asshole doing in your house, Bubba? Do you want me to kill him for you? I know where the gun safe is."

"Well, hey, Mel. Good to see you, too."

"Fuck you, dickhead. Aren't you dead yet?" She flipped him off, went to Mal. "Bubba?"

"Mel. Breathe. The steam cleaner's in the garage. I'll go get it. Don't kill him."

"Oh, why not? It'd be a great way to end my career." Okay, now he was getting bitter.

Mal flipped him off, leaving him with a red-faced, vibrating Korean woman in pigtails and Mom jeans. "So? Why are you here?"

"None of your business." She'd always hated him. Always, even when he didn't deserve it. She'd never thought he was good enough for Mal.

"Just leave him alone, huh? He did everything you wanted -- from the hospital to keeping his face totally clean to not performing. Just let him be."

Hospital? What? "Everything I-- No. No, I never asked him for a goddamned thing. I never even saw him."

"Bullshit." Jesus, she was so goddamn mad she was vibrating with it.

"Bullshit? You don't know a thing about it." He was trying to shout, but it just wasn't happening.

She stepped right up in his face. "You got to have the tours, the life, the fame, everything! And he got fucking committed!"

Dalton stepped back, his mouth dropping open. Oh, Christ. He'd known... He'd known they'd probably dealt Mal a raw deal, but committed?

"You're an asshole and a selfish bastard and I fucking hate you." She was poking him in the chest, forcing him backward. "You know what it was like? Having the media here? Having to tell *Mom* that her son wasn't just queer, but a queer man who agreed to go to rehab for his fucking boyfriend?"

"Melanie." Mal's voice snapped out like a whip and Mel's mouth shut with a snap. "Go. Now."

Dalton shook his head. No. The media? No way. He'd never seen a thing on the news, in the tabloids. They'd promised him it would be quiet.

"Bubba."

"Now." Mal took Melanie's arm, talking quietly to her as he walked her out, then firmly locked the door behind her.

Dalton just stood there, half a sandwich dangling from his hand, his throat on fire.

"Finish your sandwich, man." Mal headed back for his coffee, calm as a deep pond.

"I... I'm. Mal." What was he gonna say? It had been years, and he couldn't even go back to his people and raise hell. He didn't have fucking people.

"No, Dee. I'm Mal. Eat your sandwich."

"Oh, fuck you." That had him chuckling, though, damn it. And sitting down to eat his sandwich.

Mal sipped his coffee, dark eyes watching him.

"What?" Did he have mustard on his lip?

"Nothing." Mal looked down, looked up. God, this was fucked up. "You... you ready for Christmas?"

"Not really, no. I figured I'd hit a beach somewhere and drink."

"Cool."

This talking shit had been a lot easier when they could just fuck.

That? That had always been good. So good that it made him sweat late at night when he was alone and fucking lonely. Hell, it made him sweat a little now, having that hard little body across the room.

Bad Dalton. "You?"

"I'm staying here, writing. I usually see all the nieces and nephews on Christmas Eve..." Mal's voice trailed off.

"Yeah." Well. That was nice, huh? Now what? Shit. Shit, shit, shit.

"So, really. Did you just want to see if I'd gone native or something?"

"No. Maybe." He shrugged. "I wanted to see you. I guess because I could. No one gives a shit now."

"You... don't have somebody? I mean, not business-wise."

"Nope." He hadn't since Mal. Oh, he'd had anonymous, double-bagged sex. But no one.

"Ah." He got this odd, arched eyebrow look. "Stunning, ain't it? Two fine fuckers like us and we get to pay for it once a quarter?"

"No shit." That had him grinning, shaking his head. "We're idiots, Mally."

"Well, you never were all that bright, man..."

"I know. Trust me, I know." Hell, he'd known that five minutes after he'd let them talk him into splitting with Mal.

Mal chuckled, shook his head. "Man, you should have seen the looks on the guys' faces when they heard you were here."

"Yeah? Well, I'm just a ball of laughs."

"Don't be a fucker. There's a couple with real talent, young enough and hungry to make it."

"Good. If I had better contacts than you, I would help them out." He didn't. Oh, he probably would again, once people got over the wow, awkward that you lost your voice stage. But not now.

"I try my best. Sometimes it works."

"Your best has always been amazing." Always. Malcolm wrote songs that... shit. The man could build a hook that caught any which way. Dalton shook it off. "Anyway, I'm sure they're good kids."

"For the most part, yes."

"Right." Okay. Okay. It was time to go.

Mal looked at him, arched an eyebrow.

"I should go, huh? Thanks for the sandwich." He dropped the uneaten sandwich in the trash before going to grab Mal's hand.

Oh, damn. Hot and callused, perfect and rough -- Mal felt so good.

Those dark, dark eyes met his. "No touching."

"No?" Dalton swayed a little, his body moving toward Mal's.

Mal's other hand landed on the center of his chest, solid as fuck.

"Right. Sorry. Sorry." He wasn't, though, He wasn't sorry he'd gotten to feel.

"Don't. Don't fucking apologize. Just..." Listen to that growl. Jesus, for the first time, Dalton could hear heat, passion in Mal's voice.

"Just what?" He wanted... Hell, he wanted what he just did. Dalton bent and kissed Mal hard on the mouth.

Mal's fingers grabbed the hair at the base of his skull, tugged them apart hard enough that his eyes watered. "I don't fucking kiss." Then Mal's lips slammed against his.

Oh, God. That was just what he'd missed all this time. Why he'd come. He stepped forward, Mal's ass bouncing off the edge of the counter so that tight body pressed back into his. Dalton moaned into Mal's mouth, his hands going down to hold Mal's hips. He wasn't gonna let go, ever.

Oh, Jesus. That ass was tight as a boar's backside where his fingers brushed it, and just the thought of touching it made him shudder, made his balls draw up tight.

Fuck, he'd missed this man. So much.

They hadn't been fuckbuddies; they'd been real. Real. And if they hadn't gotten caught... Not just caught. Red-fucking-handed. This, though? This was like he'd never walked away. He met Mal's eyes, the dark, almost-black eyes staring right into his as one more kiss crashed into the next. He could hardly breathe, his ears were ringing, and he was so fucking hard he was going to explode.

Mal's hands slid down his belly, palms hot as hell, even through his sweater. Shivering, Dalton licked along Mal's lower lip, letting his teeth close on it. Just a tiny bit. Mal cried out, and those hands pushed under his shirt, dragging up along his belly. For a man who didn't kiss, Mal was doing a bang-up job. Dalton thought he might come in his pants.

He could feel Mal -- hot and hard against his thigh. He wasn't alone. No, not alone. Hell, it was an amazing feeling, because he had been alone for years and fucking years. Lonely, too.

And this was Mal. Fucking Malcolm Parker, real as life and in his arms.

Christ. Dalton bent and licked at Mal's throat, pushing a line down, heat making his head spin. Mal cried out, fingers curling into his waistband and jerking him closer. Dalton grunted, hips jerking. Shit, this was reawakening things he'd thought long dead.

"Why the fuck are you here? I was over you..." He smiled against Mal's throat.

"I don't know, Mally. I don't... There." Those hot fingers grazed his cock, which was pushing up against his waistband.

"Fuck..." Mal's eyes rolled and his jeans were tugged open, his cock pushing out.

"Anything." Fuck, suck, hand job. Anything Mal wanted. Mal's fingers wrapped around his prick, the calluses feeling so fucking good. "Mally." He dove back in for another kiss, his hips rocking.

That hand worked him like a master, like Mally was playing for his fucking life.

"I... Oh, fuck." He wanted to touch Mal, too, but he couldn't. Asshole always knew how to make him stupid. He'd use his mouth. After. Mal loved his mouth, and that he could still do with the best of them. He hoped.

"Shh. Just let me fucking do this." Mal was growling, the sound vibrating through him.

"Okay. Yeah." Shit. He was going to blow like the Fourth of July.

Mal's lips crashed down onto his, tongue fucking his mouth, just like that. Dalton grunted into the kiss, holding on like he was a frickin' monkey in a hurricane. When Mal's thumbnail scraped the head of his cock, he came like he hadn't come in years. Mal moaned, breathing hard, their foreheads together. When he could open his eyes, focus, those dark eyes were staring right into him.

"Wanna suck you, 'kay?" He kissed that mouth one more time before dropping to his knees on the hard kitchen floor.

"This can't be fucking real."

He wasn't gonna argue. Dalton figured he'd just show Mal how real it was by unzipping those jeans and pulling out Mal's cock.

Mal was hard as nails, the tip swollen and wet and... Oh, Jesus fuck. Was that... Mal had... There was a thick gold ring, pressed tight against the head, disappearing in the slit. Dalton stared. Just stared for maybe a long minute. Then he licked at it, needing to see if it made anything taste different. Metallic. Hot. But under that it was Mally. God, he loved that flavor. He dreamed about it. A lot.

"Fuck. Oh, fuck. Dee." Those heavy thighs shook for him.

Christ, yes. Dalton closed his eyes and gave Mally everything, licking and sucking, hitting all the spots he could remember. Short and thick, like Mal himself, that cock spread his lips. He wanted more. Now. Like right now. Dalton reached up, playing with the heavy balls.

"Dee. Harder. Fuck." Mal's head fell back, hips pumping.

Sensual son of a bitch. Mal had always been sensitive there. Dalton squeezed, just a little. This raw, hungry sound filled the air, drops of salt teasing his tongue.

God. Dalton took Mal all the way down, all the way in. His lips met his fingers at the base of Mal's cock, and that hard ring hit the back of his throat. He could tell by the way that Mal's cock throbbed that it wasn't going to take long at all; someone needed him just as badly as he'd needed earlier. Hell, he could go again if it kept up, and he'd been off his game pretty much since his voice went. Dalton sucked, putting everything else out of his mind.

Mal fucked him, pushing hard, filthy words pouring from the fine son of a bitch. Dalton had to let go of the soft balls, the base of the thick cock so he could hold on to Mal's hips. So he could keep up. Mal bit out a warning, right before seed hit his tongue, salty and hot and sharp.

Fuck. Oh, fuck, he was lost all over again. Danger, baby. Danger.

Mal was breathing hard, air panting from him and it sounded like sobs.

Dalton didn't dare break the fragile silence. He just leaned his cheek on Mal's hip. He barely felt the touch, the gentle caress of fingers on his hair. He felt it, though, and it gave him something he'd almost forgotten.

Hope.

Mal sat and stared into his coffee.

He'd lost his mind. Lost his motherfucking mind. He'd not only let that asshole in his house, but he'd...

Jesus.

He'd come to his senses and showed Dalton the door after. He had to. He'd been burned before; he wouldn't do it again.

That vicious old man had come to him with pictures of Dalton, touching him, making love to him, and had threatened to send them and the video to his mom, to his dad. Threatened to destroy his fucking life. All he had to do was spend six weeks in a detox program and go to songwriting.

After all, Dalton had been the one who was a rising star. Dalton was the one who had things to lose. And Dalton had needed him to do this. Fucker.

Mal took a deep, slow breath, his hands tightening around the cup.

The phone rang, making him jump, his sister's number coming up on the ID when he looked at it. Grand.

"Hey, you." Leave it alone, Mel.

"Hey, Bubba. I was... I was just checking in."

"You're good to me. I'm fine." Tired. Sad. Alone. Fine.

"Well, I was worried. If you need me..." He could hear her fretting.

"No, honey. I'm going to work today. You go do your thing."

"Okay. You call me if he comes back. I'll cut his balls off for you." She sounded so fierce that it made him smile.

"Yes, dear." He chuckled, shook his head. "I'm fine. I promise."

"Okay, Bubba. See you later." She hung up, leaving everything quiet again.

He went back to drinking his coffee and not thinking, very hard.

The doorbell rang, and Mal figured if it was Mel or Dalton, either one, he'd commit murder. He didn't recognize the little guy standing there, though, so he opened up.

"Hi. Are you Mr. Maxwell?" The kid had a big hot bag, the kind restaurant delivery came in.

"Yeah, but I didn't order anything, son."

"Well, you didn't have to. It's all paid for." The kid pulled out a big old bag with a very familiar logo on it.

Oh, that bastard.

"Who sent it?" Mal was going to kill him. Kill him.

Damn, the enchiladas smelled like heaven, though. It was hard to get good Mexican food this far out.

"Sorry, sir. My boss didn't leave any sort of message about that." The kid smiled. "Tip's already taken care of, too, so have a good night!"

"Thanks." He shut the door, put the bag from Molina's on the counter. God, he hadn't had Molina's in... years.

He and Dalton had met there. Shit, Dalton had been pretending to be half Freddie Fender, singing ridiculously bad Spanish ballads. Jesus. He'd been stupid for the bastard from the get go. The guy was pure sex, but more than that, Dee was clever, funny, and the man could sing.

Well, he had been able to sing. Mal guessed he couldn't now. That was what had put him off his guard. That ruined voice. It wasn't fair.

He thought he'd be tickled, in a mean way, but... shit. The music was bigger than either of them. It always had been and always would be. And damn, that food was making his mouth water.

He should just throw it away. He should. But... That was probably a sin or something. Much better to eat it, right? There were starving children in Africa. He should know. His folks had adopted some of them.

He opened the bag, moaning at the scent of chile and cumin.

Everything was there, from the enchiladas to the rice and beans, to the chips and the guacamole that Dee had always said was weirdly salty and chunky. All of the sudden he wished Dalton was there, to share it with him.

Asshole. That was no doubt what the fucker had planned on. Shithead. Goat fucker. Mal fucking hated that smarmy pigheaded prickmonkey.

Not enough to not eat, though. It was probably the best meal Mal had had in years. He ate every bite, moaning over the flavors. God. This was one hell of a Christmas present.

Even if it came from a lousy bastard.

Dalton figured it was time to go see Malcolm again.

He'd sent food from Molina's. He'd sent toffee from that place in Colorado that they'd hit when their truck broke down between Denver and Salt Lake. He'd sent a pretty little gold ring for that fascinating piercing. Hell, he'd sent a guitar. An old one. One that sounded clear as a fucking bell when it got new strings.

It was nearly Christmas, though, and Dalton had nowhere else to go.

So he went to Mal, hoping Mal's sister wouldn't be there. This time he didn't send something. This time he brought tres leches cake.

There was Christmas music playing when he walked up. No. No, not playing, being played. It was coming from around back, and he followed the sound around the house, toward where he knew the kitchen door was. *Silent Night* turned into *O Come All Ye Faithful* and then he heard the music change.

If Wishes Were Horses.

Damn.

He'd been sitting in a hotel room, drinking, when one of them stupid specials came on the TV featuring songwriters and bang. There was Mally. That damned song had stuck with him. So had Mal's face. He hadn't expected to end up trying to woo the man, but here he was.

He could barely hear the words, but he knew them. He fucking knew every word -- from the wishing to the needing to the waiting. It had been hard and they'd been fucked over, but he knew Mal and the man still loved him.

Damn it.

Dalton took a deep, deep breath and knocked on the kitchen door, the bag of stuff sat down on the porch. Please let me in, Mal.

The music hiccupped a little, then he heard Mally's voice. "Come on in, Dee. I was waiting."

"Yeah?" He wandered in the back, coming into the kitchen, which was the one room he knew in Mally's fancy house. "Is that good or bad?"

"It..." Mal came in from inside the house, the guitar he'd sent in hand. "I don't know, Dee. What's going on with us?"

"I don't know." Dalton wished to hell he knew. "I brought cake. And that Mexican beer you like."

"I don't drink. I haven't since the last beer we had together."

"Oh. Well, then you can use it to make chili." Dalton took another deep breath, feeling a little dizzy. "Tell me what happened, baby? Tell me what they said to you. They won't tell me."

"What do you mean?" Those dark eyes stared at him. "Clarkson came over with the photos, the tapes. Said they'd show them to my folks. Said y'all had discussed it, and if I agreed to go to rehab, give up the performing gig, they'd leave my folks alone. Let me keep writing and doing studio work." Mal's mouth twisted and it was ugly, angry. "After all, you were the one that was going to be a star, right? I was just... a good fuck."

Dalton blinked, his hands opening and closing. "Tapes? Pictures? They said... They said they had proof, that they'd shown it to you and you left." Oh, he'd known something more had to happen, but he'd tried to get a hold of Mal, had tried to see him when the worst of the shit had died down. "They told me you wouldn't see me. When I tried."

"They had video tape of us, in your bedroom. You're saying you didn't know? There were cameras in your place."

Cameras. Dalton thought he might puke. All this time, he'd thought Mal had just walked away that easy. God, he'd been so stupid. Young, sure, but mostly stupid. He definitely thought he might puke.

Mal turned away from him, carefully put the guitar on a stand.

"Mally. I-- For what it's worth, I'm sorry." What else could he say?

"It's over. Has been for a long time."

"Yeah? Well, some things ain't ever been over." The way he felt about Mal hadn't changed.

"How do you know it ain't been over for me?"

Oh, shit. Did Mal really think he was foolin' anyone? Dalton took a step closer. "Because of the way you didn't kick me out when I first got here. Because of the sounds you made when I sucked you off." He met those dark eyes head on. "Because of that damned song you wrote."

"You stay over there, Dee. No one said that song was about you." Jesus, he still loved how the flush climbed up Mal's throat when things got heavy, hot. He wanted to touch, to taste. He wanted to know if his ring was in Mal's cock.

"Then you look me in the eye and tell me it was about someone else." If Mal could do that... well. Then he was fucked.

Those dark, dark eyes met his, and for a second he was scared. Really fucking scared. "Fuck you."

Score.

"Yeah. That's what I thought, baby." Dalton took another step, then another. "You don't have to have beer, but have some cake with me?"

"Stay over there, asshole." Fuck, it was so hot between them, still. Dalton could smell Mal, could see that thick cock swelling.

"I don't want to. I know you don't want me to, either. When did you get your prick pierced?" There would be a hell of a lot of baggage to work out, but Dalton wanted. Now.

"Long time ago. Years. You fucker." Mal's eyes ate him up, dragging over him.

"I know it. Doesn't keep me from wanting you." He took that last step, closing the distance between them.

"It's been ten years. Three thousand days." Mal's fingers brushed his wrist.

"I know. I counted." He had. Even when he couldn't say it out loud.

Mal searched his eyes, and Dalton could see the man's heart beat in his throat. "This is fucking insane. Crazy."

"It is. But we always have done some stupid shit, baby." Always.

That actually got him a smile -- a real smile.

Since he figured he was making headway, Dalton just moved in for a kiss. Mal tasted like Christmas. They stepped together and that tight little body pressed against his. God, he loved the way Mal hung on, the way those strong picker's hands clutched at him. His cock went so hard that his balls ached with the speed of it.

Mal pulled away, their lips parting with a pop. "What if they find out again? What would you do?"

Dalton gave that the thought it deserved, because right now he had very little to lose, save for some residual sponsorships. If he still had his voice, would he tell them all to take a flying leap if Mally asked him to? "I'd tell them to go fuck themselves, baby. I'm through being their bitch."

"It's not him you have to convince, asshole. It's me." Melissa's voice rang out. "I knew you couldn't resist him. Jesus, Mal, you've been waiting for him for ten years..."

"This isn't your business, Sissy."

Dalton sighed. He didn't want this to get ugly. "Melissa, I'm sorry, but he's right. I admire the hell out of the way you defend him, but you have to give him room to live, even if that means he screws up once in awhile."

"Shut up. Mal, please. He hurt you."

Mal nodded. "Yeah. Shit happens. He didn't know how bad it was."

If he had, he wouldn't have waited ten years. "I know you never did like me, Mel. I'm just asking you to let Malcolm make his own decisions. Having you as his conscience these last ten years has had to suck."

"I was the one that was here."

"Mel." Mal turned to her. "It's almost Christmas Eve. Go to your kids; get ready for your holiday. Please. I'm not a kid anymore. I'm not going to end up like that."

Dalton didn't say anything else. If he wanted Mel to let Malcolm handle his own life, he had to respect that, too. Melanie stared at them both for long moments before turning on her heel and leaving, no more words passing between her and Mal.

Mal watched her go, shook his head, sighed. "Jesus, life ain't never boring."

"Nope. Maybe it's not meant to be." He held out a hand, wanting Mal to come close again. They'd sprung apart when Mel'd come in.

"Maybe. You sure you want to?"

"I'm damned sure, baby." He knew what he knew. Losing his voice had been the catalyst, but he'd needed this for ten years.

Mal's fingers turned, twined with his. "You think you might want to come see the rest of the house, or are we gonna play the whole thing out in the kitchen?"

"I'd rather move on. Floor is hard in here, Mally." God. If Mal was fucking with him... No. Malcolm didn't have an ounce of show business bullshit in him.

"Then we ought to put the cake in the fridge. I'll let you do it. I need a cup of coffee."

Mal turned away from him and he frowned, but grabbed the cake. He opened the fridge, found all the stuff to make spaghetti and meatballs. His favorite Christmas dinner.

Dalton grinned, carefully putting the cake beside the stuff. "You were wishing hard, baby."

"I don't know what you're talking about." Butter wouldn't melt in that mouth.

Uh-huh.

"Either that or you know me better than I do. You knew I was coming home for Christmas."

Mal looked at him, cheeks dark red. "I... There's no shame in hoping."

"No." No, he wasn't going for shame. "Makes me hot, Mal. Makes me want to forget that the floor is hard."

"There's a sofa in the front room. There's a guest room. A studio." Mal met his eyes. "My bed."

"Bed." Dalton took Mal's hand. "Let's go to bed."

He had lost his mind.

Lost it.

Part of his was screaming that he'd made it, he had a life, something to lose.

Part of him was pointing out that paying a pretty and discreet whore once or twice a year in LA had to be, at best, unhealthy, and that it felt good to be wooed, to be wanted.

Most of him, though, was going 'nookie' at the top of his lungs.

He led Dee into his bedroom, where there were no windows, no camera, just a huge, soft bed, a ceiling fan, ten thousand dollars worth of stereo equipment and the door to the most decadent bathroom he could afford.

"Jesus, Mal. You've become a hedonist. I like it." Dalton glanced around, eyes crinkling up.

"Me? I just like what I like, huh?"

"Mmm. You like comfy stuff." Dal took him to the bed, hands reaching for his clothes.

"I've never had a man in here."

Elaine had been in to clean, Mel and Mom to decorate. That was it.

"No?" Dalton smiled wider, the look a little evil, a lot happy. "Good. I'm selfish."

"Butthead." He poked Dee in the belly. Oh, man. Tight.

"Mmmhmm." His shirt fell on the floor, then his pants and briefs. Dalton's eyes went straight to his prick, to the new gold jewelry gracing his piercing. One long finger traced the ring, and Dee moaned, soft and deep. "You look good, Mally. You look good with my ring in your cock."

"I haven't changed." Dee was more toned now, sleeker, stronger.

"You're fucking beautiful." Dalton bent and kissed the base of his throat, fingers working the tip of his prick.

He arched a little, leaned back until he had to catch himself.

"I got you." Dalton still had a picker's arms, strong enough to hold him up.

"Sorry, Dee. Do it again?"

"Mmmhmm." There was no hard talking to convince Dalton there. Lord, no. The man licked, then bit a little, pinkie finger sliding in to tug his piercing some. Oh. Oh, sharp. He approved.

His toes curled and he slid closer. Oh, shit. Hot as the Devil, his Dalton. His? Oh, that was crazy talk, wasn't it? Dalton walked him back to the bed, his ass hitting the mattress.

"You're dangerous." He tugged Dee's shirt out of his jeans.

"Am I? I don't want to be, baby. I want to burn down the house with you, but it needs to be good." Dalton helped him, wiggling out of cotton and denim.

"No man that you've spent ten years cursing and jacking off to isn't dangerous." Surely Dalton knew that.

"I know. I said I don't want to be." One scarred hand slid down to press against his cock, lifting a little. His hips followed the touch, prick sliding on Dee's palm.

"That's it. Look at you." Dee nibbled on him some more, right there, right where his neck met his shoulder.

That little spot made him gasp some, made his cock start to leak. He let his hands start to play Dalton's body, relearning all those chords. Some were the same, some were all new. Dalton's shoulders were broader, his chest heavier. He'd had to work out to stay in shape for the cameras, Mal guessed.

He almost let himself get bitter about that again, but shit. He didn't like that part. He was a writer. Dalton didn't really give him a chance, either. The man kissed and bit and humped, just all over him. Before he knew it, Mal was moaning, both of them tangled up together.

Then they were horizontal, and man. Dalton felt good. Heavy, hot, a little fuzzy. Mal got one leg wrapped around Dalton's hip, tugging them together. Moaning, Dalton kissed him, and with gravity on the man's side, there was no stopping the force of it. That big body pressed down on him, reminding him how good it felt to be loved on, instead of just given sex.

"Dee... Jesus fuck, love. Tell me this is real." Lie, but say it.

"It's real, baby. God, I missed you." One hand slid down between them again, tickling his belly a little on the way to his cock.

"Uh-huh." His lips loved the curve of Dalton's throat, teeth grazing the skin.

"That's good." That hand closed around him, pulling a little, testing his hardness.

He bit down, marking Dalton. God, he'd never been able to do that before. Fuck, it was hot, so he did it again. Dalton jerked, cock poking at him, hand squeezing him. Someone liked that. He leaned back, smiled at the dark bruise. He liked it, too. He headed south, sucking up a mark right about Dee's nipple.

"Baby. Making me crazy." Dalton moved restlessly, hand sliding up against his belly.

"Good." He wanted to make Dee absolutely fucking insane, just like he was.

"Butthead." Well, at least Dee didn't call him goat fucker. No, Dalton just grabbed him and pulled him back up for another kiss, their cocks rubbing.

"Uh-huh." He got them both in hand, working them base to tip, squeezing hard on the upstroke, making sure Dalton felt his ring on each stroke.

"Fuck. Oh, fuck." Dalton helped, pushing against him, giving them some serious leverage.

"Uh-huh. Later. We got time, huh?" Unless Dee had somewhere else to be.

"We do. We so do." It was still weird to hear that scratchy, rough voice, but he'd take it as long as the owner was right there with him.

"Good." More than good. Fuck, he needed.

"Yes." Dalton moved faster, balls slapping against his body, cock hot and wet against his.

"Jesus." He begged for another kiss. He needed a little push.

Dalton gave it, biting his lower lip hard enough that he tasted blood. He shot hard enough that his bones rattled, his cock aching.

"Oh. Baby. Smell you." Dalton's eyes went wide, hot and bright and blue. Then the man moaned, coming so hard for him that he was gonna have bruises where Dee smacked against his skin.

Mal moaned, leaned up to kiss Dalton, both of them shuddering and shaking through their orgasms. Dalton finally just flopped down on him, panting, hands petting him where they could reach.

They didn't say much; they just breathed together. That was okay. They did better writing songs to let each other know how they felt. Once, Dalton had been real good at singing it to him.

"You ever gonna be able to sing again, just for you?"

"I don't know." Dalton didn't look up at him, just burrowed into his shoulder a little. "I didn't go to my last round of tests."

He nodded. "It don't matter to me, more than I hate you can't do what you love."

"Thanks, baby." Dee's shoulders hitched once, but then the man was chuckling. "You never did think I was all that, anyway."

Mal swatted that tight ass. "You're a better picker than you let on, and you let them stop you from writing. That's the good part."

"Yeah. I know, baby. I just... I been this for so long. I ain't sure how to be anything else." Dalton nibbled his shoulder. "Guess having to learn is better than the alternative."

He nodded. "You'll figure yourself out. You're one of the craftiest, smartest guys I know."

"Shit, Mally. I let them use me for years." Dalton finally looked up, grinning a little. "Guess they can't do that now, either. It's a trade-off."

He reached out, traced Dalton's smile. "I think we're supposed to be hating on each other."

"No shit? Nah. You're gonna make me spaghetti. How can I hate that?"

"Noodles, the global equalizer."

"Not noodles. It's that you bought them for me." Dalton kissed him silly. That was the only way to describe it.

"It's Christmas. A man deserves to be happy." Damn it.

"Hell, yes." They grinned at each other, both nodding. "We can fight later."

"It's a deal." Fucker. Beautiful, insane fucker.

Dalton got the orange juice while Mally heated up waffles and sausage that Melanie had probably left earlier. Mal didn't waffle. Mel did. They'd decided the cake could wait for tomorrow and would go with the spaghetti and meatballs.

That kind of shit was easy to talk about. The big stuff hanging over their heads, that wasn't so simple to broach.

Damn near black eyes looked over at him, quick and knowing. "So, I don't know anything about you anymore. Well, nothing new. Where do you live now?"

"Mostly I was living on the bus." He'd kept a grueling tour schedule, preferring not to be home alone. "I sold my place in Oklahoma about three years ago, got a little place here with a few acres."

Mal nodded. "I've got five acres here. It makes for good privacy."

"I like it, baby. 'Course what I like is your studio." Dalton grinned. He liked it all, mostly Malcolm himself.

Mal's face lit up. "It rocks, huh? It's like fucking magic in there. Everything we could want."

"No shit. It's grand, baby." Mal loved to make music. "Maybe we can pick a little. Later."

Was that a bounce? It was. Goddamn. He could see Mal force himself to relax, to chill out.
"That's cool."

He wasn't just throwing Mal a bone. Nothing would make him happier, except maybe to take Mally back to bed. Later.

Mal brought the plates over, sat down. "So, you came because of the song?"

"Partly." That had been what had pushed him, had poked at his brain.

"What was the other part?"

"I needed to see you. I knew I needed to apologize." Dalton grimaced. "Now I know it was even worse than I thought."

Those eyes looked at him again, looking into him. "It was hell. I hated you a long time, once I finished having the fantasy that you'd come for me."

"I tried." He let out a short, bitter laugh. "I called. I came. They told me--" Well, it didn't matter. He'd let them convince him, hadn't he?

"What did they tell you?" Mal shrugged at his look. "I need to know, Dee."

"They told me that you didn't want to see me. That you'd taken your payoff and that was all you wanted." It had made him sick when he finally came to believe it, when he couldn't convince himself that Mal still wanted him.

"They didn't give me a dime." Mal's eyes flashed. "I lived with Mel for eighteen months before I sold my first few songs."

"I know that now, baby." His shoulders hunched. "They told me you were set for life. I just... I was fucking hurt. I believed that you just walked away."

"I was in fucking rehab. They locked me in a room for six weeks. I lo... I wouldn't have walked for cash." Mal shook his head, then a sudden, blinding grin split the tanned face. "Shit, Dee. You made me a fucking ton of money."

"I heard that song." He swallowed hard. "I heard a lot of songs over the years, but I heard that one on the songwriter dealie, and I knew."

"No. No, you don't understand. You know *Key in the Lock*, *Shotglass Heartache*? Uh... *Devil in Leather*?"

Dalton nodded. Sure he did. The entire fucking country knew those songs. Devil in Leather was made into a goddamn cable series. They were the songs that sent him to the top. They'd been

written by a guy in Texas or something, some old dude. Nate Fredericks. They were one hell of a team, for two men that hadn't ever even shared an email.

"I'm Nate Fredericks."

Dalton stared. Hard. His mouth might have dropped open. No way.

No fucking way.

"You mean I recorded your songs?" Dalton laughed, the sound growing until it was almost hysterical. Definitely painful. They'd always wanted to be a singer/songwriter partnership.

"Nobody knows what you'll like better than me."

"No. No one ever does, baby." His throat was on fucking fire and he couldn't decide if he was tickled or betrayed. "You got anything harder than orange juice? Coke maybe?"

"That won't make it worse?"

"In the long run? Probably." The burn would help right now, though.

"Then no. Even if you don't perform, I won't help it get worse." Oh, the little *fuck*.

Damn. Mally was worse than his manager. "Coffee? Chocolate?" There was beer.

"How about hot chocolate? I got the real stuff from Mom. I just got to warm it up."

"That would be good." He tilted his head. "Marshmallows?"

That grin widened. "Whipped cream."

"Well, hell, that's like medicine." He'd take it, especially if there was whipped cream.

"Uh-huh. I'm an evil bitch." Mal started moving again, turning music on along the way.

"You're amazing." Mal's ass was all tight and hard, filling out the soft sweats the man had pulled on.

He got this surprised, shocked little look. "You don't have to flatter me, man."

"I'm not." Shit. Okay, Mal needed to know this stuff. "You can write a hell of a lyric, put a hell of a hook in a melody, and you have an ass I could rhapsodize about for hours. Still." Look at that pretty, pretty blush. Damn. Damn, he could eat that up.

"Yeah, and you're good enough that I never did find one just like, no matter how much I paid."

"Yeah." They stared at each other for long moments before Mal turned back to making hot chocolate. Dalton just grinned.

He was either the luckiest fuck on Earth or God was playing a vicious trick on him. If it was a trick, well, maybe he deserved it. So he'd take it. Dalton hummed, getting back to heating waffles. Mal was singing with the radio, ass swaying back and forth Tick. Tock. Tick. Tock. Sexiest metronome ever. Irresistibly drawn, Dalton wandered over, leaving the waffles in the toaster oven. He had to touch.

Mal stirred the pot of chocolate, lost in his own little world.

Dalton waited until he was pretty sure no one was gonna get burned before pushing his hands around to rest on Mal's flat belly.

"Dee." He loved the way Mal's abs jerked.

"Hmm?" Innocent only worked for him if you couldn't see his face, so this was good.

The tight little heinie kept moving, back, forth, back, forth. Jesus. Jesus. Was it worse to blaspheme over a tight ass during Christmas? Probably. Still, it was an amazing ass, and he wasn't gonna look it in the mouth. Or something.

"Are you thinking evil thoughts, Dee?"

"I am. About Jesus and your butt." Wait. That came out wrong.

Mally's laugh filled the air. "Merry Christmas to the Heinie?"

"Yeah." He rubbed a little, and it felt good to laugh, too. He felt lighter than he had in years.

Mal started to sing, sweet and low and easy, just a little Christmas carol, but it was just for him. It was sweet, warm. Good. Dalton wanted to sing along, but he knew better. On a good day he'd sound like a bullfrog.

Mal poured two mugs, turned toward him, and offered him chocolate and a kiss. Dalton took the kiss first, but backed off to take the chocolate. They didn't need to get busy again, really. He was admiring.

"Let's eat. We can watch the Grinch movie after."

"Cool." He used to sing that silly song about the mean Grinch to Mal year 'round. Mal had always been the frugal one, back in their paneled and carpeted van days.

Mal nodded, then went back to pottering around, wandering and humming, like he couldn't light. Hell, the man even nibbled waffles during a wander.

"Am I making you nervous, baby?" If he was, he could understand why. He just hoped not, was all.

"I just... I don't know what to do, Dee." Mal leaned against the wall and looked at him. "No one comes in this house that isn't hired to come or here to jam. Even Mel only ever stays in the kitchen for a second."

"Well, we have food." They had waffles and shit done. "Let's go sit with a plate, and we can pretend we both remember how to be with someone."

Mal chuckled, nodded, and looked damn relieved. "There you go. Shit, we're smart sons of bitches, I bet we can relearn." Those dark eyes danced. "After all, I heard you learned to play a six-string again..."

"I did. Amazing, huh?" Hell, given enough time, he could learn to sing harmony again. That would be something.

"Yep. Like a fucking Christmas miracle."

They plopped down on a comfy-as-fuck leather sofa with about forty-two soft blankets draped on it. Definitely a hedonist. He'd bet it made up for the lack of booze and all. Mal liked creature comfort. There wasn't a lot of shit about -- no real decorations or things -- but the TV took up half the wall and the sound blew his socks off.

Chuckling, Dalton wrestled for the remote and turned it down a little. "You got any family plans for the next few days?"

"Nope. Mel and her troupe are heading for Florida to be with her in-laws and I don't interfere with Mom's... parties."

"Ah. Well, then." He was feeling greedy and hoping they'd just be together, assuming that Mal didn't kick him out again.

"You? You got places to be?"

"No place at all." He moved a little closer on the couch. "Maybe here."

"Maybe?" Mal popped a bite of waffle into his lips.

"Well, I don't want to interrupt whatever hot date you have with the meatball guy."

"Well, he's something else, you know? He taught me to make them, a long, long time ago in this piece of shit apartment in Memphis."

"Yeah? Wow. And then you got better at making them than him, huh?"

"That didn't take long at all."

"No shit." Mal had a much better hand with Italian food than he did. "I bet I still make better chili."

"I haven't made chili in ten years, easy." Mal snorted. "Especially when the shit in the can's so much better."

"Bite your tongue." Maybe they'd do chili for New Years. Oh, that sounded promising. Then there would be bowl games...

Mal stuck his tongue out, the tip wiggling.

Dalton moaned a little before leaning in to nip at the very tempting bit. God, he felt eighteen again. Except then he could sing and they'd been terrified of getting their asses kicked if they so much as touched each other.

Mal made a damn sweet noise, lips opening for a second. "You taste like maple syrup."

"You taste like orange juice." That should have been a gross combination. It wasn't.

"Tell me you still play strip poker and that you still eat Cheetos with bean dip."

"I do and yes, but I eat the lower fat beans these days." He grinned, reaching up to trace the smile lines by Mal's mouth. "Tell me you still sing gospel in the shower."

"You know it. It works out the kinks, makes the melody lines clearer." Those pretty dark eyes got serious. "Tell me this isn't a trick."

"No, baby. No trick." He kissed Mal's mouth, his eyes closing with the sweetness of it. "I missed you so bad."

"Good." Mal sounded sure about that. "I wanted to be important enough to you to miss."

"You were. Are. Jesus." Dalton laughed a little hysterically. "There's Jesus again. I feel like an idiot, Mally. Baring my soul."

"Especially when there's so much neater shit to bare..."

"There is." Mal was a butthead, but he was a smart one. They set the dishes aside, snuggling up a little.

Mal turned the TV on, the Grinch starting up. Those callused fingers touched his, petted them. "Mel's gonna have a cat."

"She can hack up hairballs for all I care." Dalton paused. "I'm more afraid of your momma."

"She's... well, she's very, very busy, you know? Grandbabies and dates and cruises. I was always more of one Dad hung with."

"Yeah." Dalton's people had sort of drifted off. He'd tried, to begin with, when he got famous. He'd sent gifts and shit. But he'd realized pretty quick that being rich didn't make his mom and dad any more willing to get to know him than they ever had been.

"Do you like it?" At his curious look Mal shrugged. "Making it, being a star. Do you like it?"

"I liked a lot about it." It would be stupid and dishonest to say no. "I'm ready for a change, and I don't want to be a has been on the late night talk show circuit."

"I thought about it, a lot, but... I wouldn't have liked it. I like the music, not the business."

"Yeah. Yeah, you would have been miserable, on a bus for weeks at a time." Look at this house. Mal couldn't have survived it. "The band used to tease me about living like a monk."

"The boys here tease me about living on coffee and score paper."

"But you have this amazing bed."

"I do. You should see my shower."

"Anytime, baby. Anytime." Now would be good.

"How does now work for you? We know how this ends. Cold feet, warm heart, happy dog, roast beast."

"We do. In fact, I bet we can watch it again, later." He got up, held a hand down to Mal.

"Over and over, along with Rudolph, Frosty, and that one with the mice." Mal's hand slid into his, then those fingers wrapped around his wrist.

"Kerplunk." It was an old joke, and lame at that, but it made him smile. He pulled Mal to standing and wrapped an arm around that lean waist. "Come on, baby."

"I'd love to."

He hadn't been able to sleep. He watched Dalton for a long time, before the worry and bugaboos started. So he did what he always did when his fucking head wouldn't stop. He played.

Malcolm started with Christmas carols, then he played every song he'd ever sold. Then the song he wrote for Dee -- the one that talked about wishes and horses and fishes, about regrets and hope, about that ache that lived in a man's heart.

Then Mal started working on something new.

He had no idea how long he'd been working, how long his fingers had been cramping, but when Dee came wandering in wearing his sweats, he took notice of it. And of all of his aches and pains. Dalton didn't say a word, just reached out and took the guitar from his hands, put it in its stand. Before the guitar finished rocking in its cradle, Dalton was kissing him, lips warm and firm on his. Put his brain right into no thinking mode.

Oh. Oh, wow. He. That. Damn. His hands wrapped around Dee's arms, the man's skin cool to his burning hands.

"Mmm. You sounded good, baby." Dalton nipped at his lower lip before moving along his neck, down to where it met his shoulder.

"I..." His voice was a croak, and his chin lifted, begging for more.

"Now you sound like me." Chuckling, Dalton bit at his skin, hard enough to sting. To put a little bruise right there.

"Been play... Do it again." Mal was thinking he could learn to be very demanding.

"Uh-huh." Dalton did again, then moved to another piece of skin and did it there, too.

"Never. Never did this in here." He liked it, though.

"No? We could make a new memory. If you want." Dalton had that edge of nerves in his voice a good bit, that little question.

"I want. God, I want." He spread, hips sliding toward Dee in, what he hoped, was a clear offer.

"I do, too." The relieved smile told him all sorts of things. The way Dee grabbed his ass told him something more pornographic.

Dalton leaned him back on the low sofa, hands dragging down his belly to pull off his shorts. That talented singer's mouth worked down his chest, lips closing around his left nipple. Dee sucked, hard.

He arched up, grunting as his belly rubbed Dee's chest. "More." He fucking needed. Now.

A soft noise was Dee's reply, and the man moved even lower, nuzzling his belly, nipping at the skin next to his navel. The best mouth. Dalton had the best fucking mouth. Mal thought, just for

a second, that this room was never going to be the same, and that idea didn't upset him like he thought it might.

Maybe it was time to expand his world, an inch at a time. Dalton was right there to help him, lips moving, tongue touching, sliding to playfully fuck his piercing, tease it.

"I want you. Fuck. Fuck." His toes curled so tight, the bones popped.

"I got you, baby." Dee murmured it against the base of his cock, moving down to lap at his balls.

Oh, Jesus. Best Christmas ever. Best. He grabbed one knee, spread himself wider. Dee moaned for him, breathing him in. Two fingers pushed up behind his balls, pressing the tiny strip of skin there.

"Yeah." He let himself rub, hips moving up and down, over and over as he felt it. Felt Dee.

Laughing, the sound pure joy, even in that ruined voice, Dee moved up to suck the head of his cock in, work it. Those fingers tapped his hole, reminding him how many nerves he had there. Everything inside him went tight and his prick bobbed, bounced right on Dalton's tongue. That amazing mouth took him right in, took him down to the root, Dalton working him like a real fine instrument. Like he was fucking special.

Malcolm's hands found Dalton's head, the smooth, short hairs tickling his palms. Dee started moving, up and down, lips tight around him. Callused hands worked his balls and his ass, and it was like heaven on earth.

"I fucking need you. So much." He let himself talk, let himself pour his soul out to the man he still loved, beyond all good sense.

Dalton took it all, moving faster and faster, that big body moving against his legs. He could hear the little noises in between his words, could feel the vibration of Dee's moans. Dalton's cock leaked against his thigh, pushing harder, faster. One finger slipped inside his body, the tight, scratchy feeling making him cry out. Christ. He was gonna explode.

"More. Just a little more, love. Please."

Dee's eyes flashed up to his, dark with need. Then Dalton sucked him in so the tip of his cock hit the back of Dee's throat, and two fingers pushed deep into his ass.

That was all it took. Mal shot so hard his world tilted. Hard.

Dee was there to catch him, free hand on Mal's hip, keeping him from sliding right off the couch. That hot tongue scraped on his sensitive skin, licking him clean.

"Damn. Damn, lover. I. Wow." Dalton sorta blew his mind a little. If little meant, oh, hugeness.

"Mmm. Goddamn, baby. You still taste like something I could have the rest of my life." Dalton leaned against him, cock hard enough to drill a hole in his leg.

"Okay. It's a deal." He grabbed Dalton, kissed the man, full-tilt, giving it all he had, even as he reached for that sweet cock.

Dalton crowded up against him on the couch, kissing him right back, that hot prick slapping against his palm. Dee needed him right back.

"Come on. Come on, now. Give it up for me." He knew how to touch, where to stroke.

"Mally. Oh, baby. I'm gonna."

Uh-huh. He could see the flush rising in Dee's skin, up from chest to throat. He squeezed Dalton's prick, thumb working the slit as he nipped Dee's bottom lip.

"Oh." The sound was one long, drawn-out breath, and Dee came for him, hips rocking and pumping. Sensual bastard.

"That's it. Yeah. Just like that."

Dalton's hands were on his scalp, touching, petting the shaved skin.

"Christ, I love you, baby." Dalton sounded wondering, looked a little awed.

He didn't have anything to say to that. It was like a song. "You know how many times I prayed to hear that?"

"No. I know how many times I wished I'd said it." Dee kissed his neck, his chin.

He brought their mouths together, and the kiss went on and on, fucking perfect.

When they broke to breathe, they just stared at each other, as if neither of them was willing to break the fragile accord. Dee grinned at him, one hand coming up to stroke his cheek. Mal leaned into the touch. It was fucking Christmas. They could fight later. Maybe over New Years. Tie it up.

Maybe they could just have their wishes. Fuck knew they'd earned the ride.

end

If Wishes Were Horses

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Printed in the United States of America.

ISBN: 978-1-60370-889-0, 1-60370-889-8

Torquere Press: Single Shot first electronic edition / December 2009

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

<http://www.torquerepress.com>