



THE REPLACEMENT GUITARIST

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The Replacement Guitarist
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To Lucy, George, and Lee, my eternal thanks for your
encouragement.

Kele, there wouldn't be a story without you.

To my husband, you are everything. Little hearts!

CHAPTER 1

BLAZE patted his pocket, feeling for his lucky guitar pick as he walked through the halls of the venue. He sighed in relief as he felt the triangular outline of the piece of green plastic through the thick denim material. He went through his mental checklist, hoping he'd remembered everything, because this was a huge day for him.

He had been offered the chance of a lifetime, a tryout with a major record label to fill a space in the band for one of the hottest pop stars in the world, Cassie. He had been dreaming of this moment ever since he had picked up a guitar. Well, not this moment in particular—he stood in front of the door to where he would audition, his palms sweating—this part sucked.

He wiped his palm on his pants as he tried to tamp down his nervousness. Then he opened the door and went inside. There was no one in the tour manager's office yet, but the security guard at the gate had informed him that someone would be along in a few minutes. As he'd walked away from the entrance after getting a visitor's badge, the man had called over his radio for someone to meet him at the office.

He set his guitar case down by the music stand and chair. He picked up the music sheets that lay against the stand, reviewing them quickly. It was the same selection he'd been given in his e-mail to play today at his audition.

He heard a noise and looked up from the sheet music to see a woman not much older than he was standing in the doorway. She was rather pretty, with blonde hair pulled back in a ponytail and expressive green eyes. “I’m here for my tryout,” he said, trying to explain his presence.

She nodded. “I’m Jennifer Davis, Mr. Stockton’s assistant.”

“Blaze Shinozuka,” he said, holding out his hand, grinning. “Call me Blaze.”

“Nice to meet you, Blaze. Mr. Stockton should be down any second.” She shook his hand, her eyes never leaving his face.

He dropped her hand, feeling uneasy under her gaze. He’d always felt uncomfortable when girls looked at him like that, like they were picking apart his appearance, looking for something to be disappointed about.

Her words sank into his consciousness. Jason Stockton, one of the biggest managers in the business, would be conducting his audition. He’d thought maybe Cassie’s tour director would be interviewing him, but if he had a chance to impress Mr. Stockton, even if he didn’t make it onto Cassie’s tour, then he could have a chance at something else in the business down the road. He tried to keep his cool as he asked, “Should I tune up my guitar?”

She seemed flustered as she looked down at her clipboard. “Yes, of course, and your sheet music—”

He held it up with a wry smile. “Right here.”

She flushed. “Great! Well, good luck,” she said, tapping her clipboard with her pen.

“Ah, Blaze, right on time I see.”

He whipped his head around as a tall man walked into the office. If he had to hazard a guess, the manager was at least six-foot-three, though those thick dark curls may have added an extra inch. Blaze couldn’t tear his eyes from the man because he was jaw-

dropping handsome, with a clean cut, all-American look about him, not to mention his dazzling movie star smile.

Mr. Stockton walked across the office and grabbed a sheet of paper from the desk. The manager's pants tightened across his hips, clearly accentuating the man's firm ass, and Blaze caught himself staring at how the fabric clung to it. Cassie's manager was simply gorgeous, hands down.

Blaze was fairly certain Mr. Stockton was probably straight and therefore quite uninterested in Blaze's perusal of his assets. He stood up a little taller and lifted his chin proudly, his mind on the task at hand. Blaze wanted to make a good first impression on this man because even if he didn't get this job, Jason Stockton knew everyone in the music business. Blaze felt everything in his future hinging on this moment.

Jason looked back at him, his demeanor casual and relaxed, which was the exact opposite of what Blaze felt. Adrenaline surged through Blaze's veins as he squatted down next to his case, fumbling with the clasps like it was his first time opening it. With all the fear he felt, it was a wonder he was getting hard, but his cock had a mind of its own as it swelled.

As Blaze finally pulled out his guitar and readied his instrument, Jennifer was shooed from the room by Mr. Stockton and he was left there all alone with Cassie's manager. He didn't really mind—if he screwed up, at least he would have one less person as an audience.

He sat down in the metal folding chair near the desk and started tuning his guitar. "I'm terribly sorry I'm not ready, sir."

Jason smiled as he shook his head. "No formalities here. Just call me Jason."

Blaze nodded and strummed his fingers down the strings, listening for the keys. "Did you receive my resume?"

Jason nodded and leaned against the desk. "I saw you graduated with honors at Berklee with a bachelor's in professional

music. While you don't have any touring experience, you did come highly recommended from the head of Cassie's record company. He saw you in your performance at the college when he went to see his family for the holidays a couple years ago."

Blaze froze. Jason seemed to know a lot about him, while he knew nothing about the older man. He knew the public persona of the manager because his reputation in the music business preceded him. But the idea of being here in the moment, of having a real life audition with Jason Stockton, was sending off sparks through his body, and not just because he was sinfully hot.

He had really thought the winter performance hadn't mattered, since his family hadn't even bothered to come to see him. It had been a simple performance the seniors had put together, almost like a class project. He'd had the great honor of performing a solo in guitar in the show, but his parents couldn't have cared less. Now, as he dragged his guitar pick across the strings, he tried to put the feeling of inadequacy from his head as he finished tuning his guitar. "I'm ready," he said quietly.

Jason indicated for him to start, and Blaze plucked at the strings as he easily followed the music on the sheets. He'd received a copy of the selection through his e-mail a few days ago, so he already knew it by heart. He had also picked up the tempo as he'd listened to the recorded song. When he played it now, he felt the magic flow over his fingers.

He strummed the last note and cast a glance up at the other man. The expression on Jason's face made Blaze's breath hitch. Was he just imagining it, or did the manager find him attractive also? He doubted it. Why would someone like Jason want him?

Jason cleared his throat, the look gone from his face. "Jerry said you're from Japan originally?"

Blaze nodded. "I was born there, but I was a dual citizen of both countries until a couple years ago. My brother, Yosuke, was older when we moved here, so he was a bit more attached to life there. My mother was born in Hawaii and missed life in the islands,

so we moved back when I was three.” Blaze wanted to kick himself as he rambled, wondering desperately why he was continuing to babble on like an idiot.

Jason smiled. “Just idle curiosity. So your family now lives in LA? I see you flew in from there.”

Blaze shook his head. “They live in Hawaii, but I’ve lived in LA since I graduated. I share an apartment with five other guys right now so...” Blaze trailed off as he stroked the smooth surface of his guitar’s body with his thumb. He did it when he was nervous, and generally it would calm him, but an uneasy mood hung in the air, as if one of them was waiting for the other to say something.

Jason stared at the floor, still leaning against the desk, before he swung his gaze up to meet Blaze’s. Blaze was lost as he looked into the manager’s eyes. They were a rich, earthy brown with a ring of gold around his pupils. Blaze was jerked back to reality as Jason cleared his throat and said, “How badly do you want this job?”

Blaze really couldn’t believe his ears, and now he knew for sure. His mind raced ahead of him, his heart pounding as he thought about all of those old-fashioned rumors he had heard about Hollywood casting couches. As he glanced up at the manager, he felt a zing of desire run through him. He could feel an aura of power radiating off the taller man, even though he was leaning against the desk in a relaxed manner.

Blaze felt his cock stir even as uncertainty rocked him. Did Jason want him, or was this only his overactive imagination playing a cruel trick on him? He wanted Jason to want him, even though so much was riding on this interview. It scared him how willing he was to throw it away for a chance to show Jason how much he wanted him.

Blaze looked away as he put his guitar down inside the case. In his peripheral vision, he saw Jason leaning down to pick up a sheet of his music as it fell to the floor. The guitarist just couldn’t help the hiss of breath he took in. It was nerves, plain and simple.

The intake of air brought Jason's gaze to meet his. Those brown eyes were no longer distant and cool but had now gone dark with passionate fire. Blaze just couldn't help himself as he let out a soft sigh. If this was what it took to get this job, it wouldn't be bad at all. He could admit to himself the older man was sexy, even if he couldn't say it aloud. He figured he should answer, lest Jason think Blaze was an idiot. He cast his eyes downward as he was unable to meet older man's eyes when he said, "I want it. I want it more than anything."

Jason sucked in a breath, and Blaze met those dark eyes as the manager looked down at him. Blaze knew Jason understood the ball was in his court now. All the manager would have to do was give some indication he felt an attraction so he knew this wasn't just in his head.

Jason stood there, not saying a word, and Blaze felt his gut tightening. What was he thinking? Was Blaze too forward for his liking?

Jason's expression shut down, his look cool and unreadable. He stood up straight and said, "The job is yours."

Blaze stood up as well when Jason turned and walked from the room. He let out the breath he had unconsciously been holding. "Fuck," Blaze swore softly as the door shut behind the manager. Jason had turned him down. At least he had the job.

Of course someone as hot as Jason wouldn't want him. The guy was probably straight as an arrow and Blaze had just misread what he had seen in Jason's eyes. He had never seen anyone look at him with such open desire, nor had he ever had such a deep, stirring answering reaction as he had felt towards the older man.

He didn't have much of a chance to ponder his rejection, since the door opened again as Blaze was closing his guitar case. He looked up to see Jennifer bouncing in. "Congrats on your new job, Blaze. If you'll come with me, we first need to take a picture for your badge. I'll be calling ahead for a room at the hotel for you, and just so you know, since your car isn't here, we have a shuttle service

to and from the hotel four times daily if you need to sleep while the crew is putting together the stage.”

“Wow. Did you take a breath?”

Jenny smiled ruefully. “I’m used to running alongside Mr. Stockton, trying to get a word in between phone calls, so I talk fast and yes, I’ve learned to talk without taking a breath.”

Just hearing his name caused Blaze’s heart to jump. He had to get a hold of this desire for the manager, hopefully long before he saw him again. Blaze grimaced as they rounded the corner, running into a couple of people from the crew.

“Jenny, I need those final measurements from the venues we’ll be attending.”

“Check your phone. I sent them to you via e-mail.”

“Okay... hey! Is this the new guitarist?” one of them asked.

“Yeah. He should be starting this afternoon. I’ll be announcing his arrival along with the pyrotechnic staff later this afternoon. Make sure you’re around at about three.”

“Are we ever anywhere else?” he asked jovially. The other one chuckled as they turned the corner, leaving from their sight.

Jennifer turned her attention back to him. “As you can see, we’re sort of like a family here. While we were sorry to see the last guitarist leave, we understand and wish him the very best in his career path. I had a chance to read your resume and I saw you went to Berklee.”

“I did. I majored in professional music. You sure do jump from subject to subject a lot.”

“I had too much coffee this morning, which you can pick up at the commissary. It’s free, as is soda, tea, and bottled water. We also have lunch and dinner provided behind the stage area, along with snacks and cereals and the like available twenty-four hours. If you need something in particular, please ask me and I’ll try to procure it. I’ll be here until we break in three weeks for our pre-tour vacation.

Mr. Stockton does have to travel a lot, so if you need to contact him, just give me the message and I'll send it along to him. Any questions?"

Blaze was silent. He couldn't exactly give the message to Jennifer that he wanted to give to Jason right now. For the moment, he decided to just go with the flow and hang loose. "No, no questions," he said, shooting a smile at Jenny.

Jenny appeared to be speechless for a second before smiling shyly back at him. "Great. Right in here," she said, pointing to a door to their right. He pushed open a door labeled "Security" and found a massive man sitting at a desk piled with papers. "This is Terry, our head of security. He works for the record label, not Stockton Entertainment and Music Enterprises. He's already processed your background checks, and he just needs to take your picture for your tour badge. Don't forget it when you come in or you won't be admitted past security. If something happens to it, make sure you call me."

"First tour, kid?" Terry asked. Blaze nodded, and the head of security chuckled. "Well, don't let it get to you. By your first week of the tour, you'll be an old hat at this. Just don't take life too seriously, and you should get by just fine."

Blaze tried to smile, but his nerves were so shot by this time that it came out wobbly. Luckily, the other man was concentrating on typing something on his computer as he adjusted the camera. "Do they call you Blaze for those red streaks in your hair?"

He reached up and tugged the dyed strands absently. "No, I've had the nickname for a while. Can you put my nickname on the badge as well, sir?"

"No formalities around here, sonny. Call me Terry."

"Like Jason, huh?" Blaze asked.

Terry's eyes widened. "Uhm, the boss-man? Everyone either calls him Boss or Mr. Stockton."

"Oh? He told me to call him Jason."

He looked at his computer as he directed his camera at Blaze. “Really? Wow. He must have taken a shine to you. Not a bad thing considering all of his connections in the music business. Smile for the camera.”

Blaze gave a closed lip smile as the camera clicked, and Terry continued on. “Yeah, the boss-man is quite the celebrity. His brother is a famous actor and his parents... well, they’re both silver-screen legends. He decided to stay busy behind the scenes, but it doesn’t stop the women from throwing themselves at him.”

Blaze flushed with embarrassment. Had he done that exact thing? Had he thrown himself at Jas—Mr. Stockton? He corrected himself mentally, thinking of the proper name to call the manager. He was Blaze’s boss, after all, even though using formalities didn’t change the fact Blaze had nearly begged him for sex. His cheeks flamed as he thought about it. Had it really been the most professional thing to do?

Terry slapped his pass down on the desk, a hard plastic badge with his picture on it. “Don’t lose it, kid,” he said with a cackle.

Jennifer smiled at the head of security before gesturing for Blaze to follow. He had almost forgotten about the personal assistant while he had been talking to the burly man. She seemed to blend in with her surroundings, a special trick for someone who seemed to talk so much. He wanted to ask her how she managed to do it, but she was already talking. “So make yourself at home. The crew will get your guitar and put it on stage for you around five p.m. today so you can practice with the rest of the band. Just realize they have toured with Cassie before and they know their marks on stage better than you. Try to relax and just do your best today.”

He tried to do that as he grabbed a cup of coffee and took a self-guided tour of the San Antonio Alamodome, their home for the next three weeks. A couple of floors of offices with brown doors and white walls got boring quickly, and after a while, he wound up sitting in the stands, watching the crew put the stage together. As he

sat there, he tried to digest what had happened earlier in the morning.

He had noticed Terry had said women kept throwing themselves at the manager. Dread settled into Blaze's stomach as he realized it meant the manager was probably straight. Maybe Mr. Stockton was bisexual. Blaze had always known he was always inclined toward liking both sexes, even though his innate shyness had kept him from doing anything about it.

He hadn't seen the manager since his audition, not even walking across the stage or around the venue. He wondered if he could get up the balls to tell Mr. Stockton about his attraction the next time he saw the older man. Would he look into Mr. Stockton's eyes and see desire there again? Blaze had never experienced such an intense sexual attraction to another man. Did the other man feel a zing of desire or perhaps the dull ache as it settled in his groin, like Blaze did?

Shame flooded him. At the ripe old age of twenty-three, he was supposed to have some knowledge in the romance department. Being a guy and a virgin wasn't attractive. Girls expected him to have some kind of experience, even if was just a hand job. Guys figured you were only experimenting and not serious about being bisexual. Even most bisexual guys had been with a girl by his age.

Blaze ran his hand through his hair and pursed his lips. Confusion set in as he stared off into space, his thoughts racing from subject to subject. How could he not be totally thrown for a loop? He had just been attracted to his boss, an amazingly hot guy with the sexiest ass he had ever seen. What could possibly go wrong, except for everything?

JASON tapped his fingers on the desk as he waited impatiently on hold. He wasn't used to waiting for anything, least of all for information on when Cassie's private plane would be touching

down. He'd planned on meeting her at the executive airport to discuss the media blitz occurring after the three weeks of practice were over, but now he could barely concentrate on the elevator music that was humming in his ear.

Blaze had thrown him for a loop, to say the least. When he'd walked into the room, all he could see were those eyes, an incredible shade of aquamarine that had stolen his breath away. Jason had felt hypnotized, like he could fall into those ocean colored eyes. He barely took notice of his thick, glossy hair with the obviously dyed red streaks throughout or those full lips moistened by the tongue that had just passed over them. To regain his sanity, he had turned away, hoping he could stabilize some before starting the audition.

He'd never felt so off-kilter. Jason felt like someone had punched him in the gut as he tried to hide his interest, taking in the guitarist's striking features. Blaze Shinozuka had to know how sexy he was. With a thick, muscular body that Jason was nearly drooling over and gorgeous, exotic features, the guy probably had women throwing themselves at his feet all day long. What guy wouldn't like that, unless he was gay?

He tried to stay focused on the task at hand, keeping to open-ended questions so he could listen to Blaze's rich baritone. He'd been impressed with Blaze's qualifications and his schooling. Berklee was a top school for musicians, and he knew quite a few people in the industry who had degrees from there. Blaze was qualified for the job, and he had a talent for playing the guitar like Jason had never seen before. So why had Blaze so obviously flirted with him?

Was he trying to use sex to get the job? The label probably hadn't told Blaze just how desperately they were in need of a guitarist after the little idiot, better known as the famous pop star Cassie, had thrown her ex-fiancé, the previous guitarist, off the tour?

The label had pretty much hired the guitarist before he'd even set foot inside the arena. Jason hadn't really had a say in the matter, except to confirm Blaze was of a high enough caliber to play on

tour. The fact was that Blaze was much better than the sugary pop sounds Cassie cranked out on a regular basis.

The secretary at the airport came back on the line and confirmed Cassie's plane would be arriving on time. Jason thanked her absently and hung up, all the while thinking of the guitarist.

If he was anyone else, Jason would have made a move, fucked him, and gotten over it. But they would be working together, and that could make for a sticky situation, not to mention it went against every rule Jason had. Blaze had nothing to worry about, but Jason had everything to lose. He'd worked too hard over the past eight years building his music management business to risk it all for a quick affair. He was essentially something akin to Blaze's boss, even if he didn't make the direct decisions about what happened in day-to-day tour operations. Jason just couldn't get past his unwritten code not to dabble at work, but then Blaze might be someone he was willing to break all the rules for.

The true test of his willpower had come when Blaze had looked at him, his intentions clear on his face as he said he wanted it more than anything. Jason's mind knew the guitarist meant the job, but his dick had other ideas. It had taken every ounce of his self-control not to bend him over the desk and fuck him silly.

In a flash, he saw himself at Blaze's feet, looking up at the guitarist as he begged to suck the younger man's cock. He saw a confident smile on those full lips, those aqua eyes full of lust as Blaze unbuttoned his own jeans, shimmying out them slowly, seductively.

Jason shook his head to clear it. He needed to concentrate on getting some work done before picking up the singer at the airport. He welcomed the distraction from his errant thoughts of the hot, studly guitarist who would no doubt be intruding on his thoughts from now on.

BLAZE stood on the stage next to Jennifer as she introduced him. “This is Blaze Shinozuka, and he’ll be our new lead guitarist. I hope you’ll welcome him. And now for our pyrotechnic staff....” She kept talking, but after his introduction, he tuned her out as he looked around the staff gathered. He realized who he was looking for and tried to stop.

As Jennifer finished announcing the new additions to the tour staff, Mr. Stockton came in from the back of the stadium. “Look who I found,” he called out as he led a tiny slip of a girl through the crowd. She was shaking hands as she went, a very bright smile plastered on her face. She was rather pretty, but she looked different in person than in the magazine pictures where she was all dolled up.

She came to stand in front of him, her dark green eyes peering up at him. “Jerry told me I’d have a new guitarist when I came back. I hear you’re good,” she said, her eyes narrowing.

Blaze froze. “I promise to do my best,” he stammered, not used to taking compliments.

She smirked. “You should. I—” Her sentence was cut off as she looked over his right shoulder. She was staring so intensely that he just had to look over it himself, and he found Mr. Stockton standing there, an unreadable expression on his face. She cleared her throat. “Well, good luck.”

He felt perplexed, but she turned on her heel and walked away before he could ask. He turned to the manager and asked, “What just went on there?”

Mr. Stockton glanced at his phone briefly before looking Blaze in the eye. “How are you settling in?” The older man answered Blaze’s question with his own, leaving the guitarist pondering the mystery.

Blaze tried to play it cool when in reality, his heart was pounding. “Doing great,” he said as he stuffed his hands in his pockets, trying to relax.

Mr. Stockton nodded. “That’s good. Listen, if you need anything, just ask Jennifer and she’ll get it for you,” he said as he turned to walk away.

Blaze opened his mouth. *Ask him anything, just don’t act like a fucking idiot again.* “I’ll see you around?” he asked, willing cool composure into his voice but worried he was failing miserably. He hoped the other man understood the deeper meaning in his question.

The manager shot him a dazzling smile that sent blood rushing from Blaze’s brain directly to his cock. “Definitely.”

JASON tried to play it cool as he walked away. Inside, he felt anything but calm. Jealousy had risen within him, unbidden and certainly unwanted, when he’d seen Cassie with that gleam in her eye as she looked at Blaze. She’d always had a thing for guitarists, and he had watched her go through them one after another before finally settling down with Craig. Jason felt like he should have known the union was doomed from the get-go.

As he watched her honing in on Blaze, he’d felt the razor-sharp teeth of a green-eyed monster inside him, but also a well of protectiveness towards the younger man he’d found confusing. He didn’t want to explore either emotion right now, knowing just how risky dating someone from work was, especially someone of the same sex.

He was thankful for the distraction when his phone rang. As he answered, he started to put his attention toward business matters and not the sexy guitarist.

CHAPTER 2

BLAZE sat on his bed in the hotel room later that night, trying to get used to what would be his surroundings for at least the next few weeks. He had put away his shorts and was looking for a place to put his suitcase when his cell phone rang. He flipped it open and said, “This is Blaze.”

“Why do you still call yourself by that name?”

He tried his hardest not to let the jab get to him, but it was difficult. His parents hadn’t been the most supportive of his choice of instrument when he’d signed up at Berklee, but his grandmother and brother had been encouraging. “Hi, Mom. How are you?”

“Your father and I fine,” she said curtly. “Yosuke called us to see if you got the job.”

Blaze bit back a groan. He knew his brother was concerned, but he was certain his mother had called out of curiosity rather than a real need to support him. “I did. I’ll be staying here for the next few weeks, and then I have two weeks off before we start the tour.”

His mother sniffed. “We won’t be here, so you can’t stay here.”

Blaze sat down on the bed and rolled his eyes. He hadn’t even given her a specific date and already she was coming up with

excuses why they wouldn't be home to see their youngest son. "I wasn't saying I was coming to Hawaii," he said, trying to stay calm as anger started boiling within him. "I was thinking about going to Japan."

"Your brother's busy with his family, and besides, he's bringing the little one to Hawaii to see Tutu, not that you come back often to see us."

Blaze gritted his teeth and tried not to lose his temper. One minute she was telling him she didn't want to see him, the next she was complaining about his absence. "Fine. I might just hang out with friends in LA, then. Don't worry about me. I'll be fine," he said sharply. There was silence on the other end, and for a second he wondered if she had hung up. "Mom?"

"I'm here. I just... just call your brother. He's worried about you." There was click in his ear as she hung up the phone. He was upset they'd hung up on such a bad note, but he wasn't surprised. Their relationship had been rocky for years, ever since he'd decided to pursue the guitar rather than the piano.

He stared at his cell for a second before realizing it was nearly lunchtime in Osaka. He dialed his brother.

"Hey bro," he said when his brother picked up. "Mom told me to call you. She said you were worried."

"Blaze, you know that means they're just worried about you."

"Yeah, I do. I did get the job, though."

"That's amazing. I'm really happy for you." Yosuke sounded genuinely happy, as Blaze had known he would be.

"Thanks. It means a lot to me."

"You know, Mom and Dad care about you too."

"I know they do, but... I'm really just a disappointment to them because I didn't become a classically trained pianist."

“You know that isn’t true. They love you no matter what. They’re proud of you.”

No matter what? Even though I like other guys? Blaze shook his head. “Yeah, I guess. I’m still surprised they didn’t kick up a fuss when Tutu paid for college after I chose my courses.”

His brother chuckled. “Have you ever said no to our grandma?”

Off the top of his head, he couldn’t remember a time when he had. “Well, she is a force to be reckoned with. But hey, at least I have you two.”

“That’s right. You’ll always be my little brother.”

He said his goodbyes as he hung up with his brother, feeling a little better about himself. Talking to his parents and feeling their judgment always weighed heavily on him, but the thought of maybe seeing a certain manager tomorrow lifted his spirits.

BLAZE set his guitar down in the stand and walked off stage after a break was called. Last night’s practice had been more of an introduction with learning their new marks. Today, however, they were playing the music, and it had felt amazing, practicing with other veteran musicians. He was buzzing from the high, excited to be there and doing what he loved.

He walked down to the commissary for a quick snack. When he turned a corner, he ran straight into.... “Oh God.”

Mr. Stockton was holding his BlackBerry in one hand and a cup of coffee in the other hand. The lid on his coffee must have not been on very tightly, because it had flown off upon their impact, and the hot liquid was now soaking into the expensive fabric of his white shirt and tan suit pants. Blaze looked at him in utter horror. “Mr. Stockton, I’m sorry.”

The manager put his phone away and tried to shake the droplets of coffee off his fingers. “Don’t worry about it. And I thought I told you to call me Jason. Mr. Stockton is my dad.”

Blaze frowned. He’d expected the manager to be angry, not calm while wearing his coffee, and it threw him off a bit. “Terry said everyone calls you Boss-man or Mr. Stockton.”

Jason flashed a dazzling smile as he turned to walk inside the office Blaze had auditioned in yesterday. “Not everyone does. My family doesn’t address me as that.”

The guitarist froze. Was the older man really feeling this comfortable with him? Of course his family wouldn’t address him so formally, except Blaze wasn’t his family. They were colleagues at best, but in reality, Blaze was Jason’s subordinate. Did the manager mean he wanted something more?

Blaze’s pulse raced as he looked up at the manager walking into his office. Jason was sending all these vibes his way, like he wanted Blaze to make a move. Maybe Blaze had been wrong about Jason being straight. Maybe he *was* bi, like Blaze.

Blaze really didn’t know what to think.

Blaze’s feet moved of their own accord as he found himself following Jason in. “Well, obviously. Look, I’ll pay for the dry cleaning,” he offered as he watched Jason set his coffee down.

Jason waved him away. “I have to launder them anyway. Don’t worry about it. Are you enjoying your new job?”

Blaze beamed. “I never dreamed of working a huge tour like this so soon. I love playing the guitar.” As the words left his mouth, he wanted to slap himself. The manager probably thought him a star-struck idiot of the highest class.

Instead, Jason just smiled as he loosened the knot of his tie. “That’s great. You’re very talented,” he said. Once the manager took off his tie, he started unbuttoning his shirt and pulled it off.

Blaze stared at the manager's slender yet muscular chest, his skin pale with a light dusting of dark hair in the center of his chest and around his nipples. Blaze's breath caught, and he couldn't seem to tear his eyes from the older man as his cock filled, desire racing through him.

Blaze watched as Jason's hand moved to his pants, unsnapping the button and dragging his zipper down. Jason shimmied his hips, and the fabric dropped to reveal his erection tenting his boxers. Blaze's mouth dropped open as he read the red letters stamped across the white fabric: DO ME!

Blaze jerked as he slammed his eyes closed, shutting down the little fantasy fast. What the fuck was he thinking? He was staring at Jason changing his soiled shirt like the man was stripping for his private entertainment. Blaze opened his eyes and looked up at the manager's face, a faint blush staining those pale cheeks as he saw the desire that Jason wasn't even trying to hide.

Oh God, Jason had been watching him looking. Not even that embarrassing thought was enough to put a damper on his hardening cock. He couldn't help but stare at Jason on display, looking deliciously beautiful. He closed his mouth, his teeth gnashing together almost painfully.

"Could you hand me my shirt?" Jason said, the tone in his voice turning husky and seductive. Blaze tried to breathe normally as he met the manager's gaze. The fire he had seen yesterday in those dark eyes had returned exponentially. Blaze swallowed as he looked behind him for it and found a small travel case standing near the doorway. He squatted down next to it, relieved to have a chance to discreetly adjust himself as he dug through the case.

He stood up and held the shirt out. As Jason took it, their fingers brushed. Blaze jumped as if he had been burned, but he didn't back away from the touch. He pushed the shirt towards Jason instead so they were touching more, the heat of Jason's skin making him breathless.

He looked up at Jason, who wasn't returning his gaze. He followed Jason's line of sight to their hands touching. Blaze gasped as he watched Jason's hand encircle his wrist. The manager jerked on his arm and pulled Blaze close.

Blaze never let go of the shirt, and he clung to it like a lifeline between them. Jason smiled and grasped the fabric. "Thank you," he said softly as he took the shirt from Blaze. Blaze looked up at him, realizing just how tall, intimidating, and overwhelming Jason was. Blaze's senses were flooded with him.

Jason suddenly let go of his wrist, but he didn't step away. It was like he was waiting for Blaze to make the next move. They stood there, and Blaze felt a touch of anger boil inside him. How could Jason look so damn cool while Blaze felt like fire was flowing inside his veins? For Jason it was like nothing was happening; he was looking down at Blaze with a half smirk painted on his face.

Blaze stepped forward until he could barely insert a piece of paper between their bodies and every breath caused Jason's bare chest to brush against his. He wanted to do something to wipe that cocky smile off Jason's face. He wanted to invade Jason's space, try to make the other man uncomfortable, make him step back. In that second, he realized he was on dangerous ground. Jason was his boss, after all. If any of this went wrong, things could end badly for both of them.

Thought flew from his mind as the manager grabbed Blaze by his shoulders and jerked him forward. Jason dipped his head, and their lips met. Shock crashed through Blaze like a hammer, running along his nerves and straight down his back to his fingers and toes. It created sensual warmth in his chest that spread to his cock, causing it to twitch.

Jason's mouth was like a brand, searing across Blaze's lips. Blaze gave himself over willingly, opening against Jason's probing tongue. He'd never felt anything like this before. This kiss was hard, passionate, and it broke Blaze's soul open. Jason tasted creamy, like his coffee, and beneath the added flavors, warm and amazing.

A hand left his shoulder to snake around his waist as Jason pulled him closer, and that was when his suspicions were confirmed. Jason wanted him. He hoped Jason realized the feeling was mutual and felt Blaze's pounding pulse, not to mention the matching erection.

In the back of his mind, his thoughts were running faster than the speed of light. That he could even think while Jason was kissing him this way was pretty amazing, but a thought insistently pushed forward to the front of his mind. Was Jason gay? Or was he just fucking around with Blaze?

Those lips were gone as Jason pulled away. The look he shot in Blaze's direction was questioning. *Is this okay?* Jason seemed to be asking. Blaze understood they were entering the point of no return as he swallowed hard. He had never thought this far ahead about being with another guy in reality, just fantasy. He'd only dated girls in the past, even though none of them had held his interest for long. Now he knew why. No one, especially not a girl, had ever made him feel like this.

An internal alarm went off within him as he thought about the time. *Shit, rehearsals.* "I—I have to go. Stage... and stuff," Blaze sputtered out, pulling back, looking anywhere but Jason. He glanced up as he turned and was left breathless from the open desire he saw there.

As he left the room, he saw a smile on the manager's face. Embarrassment burned in him. The man had probably figured out his inexperience, not just with the same sex, but with women as well. *Fuck,* he thought to himself, completely rattled. It was probably a turn-off.

Blaze ducked into the bathroom down the hall from Jason's office, locking the door behind him. He rested his hands on the sink, looking into the mirror. He had to get a handle on this desire boiling inside him every time he saw Jason. God, how could someone look

that sexy, exude such a smoldering sensuality, and not have people hanging off him all the time?

He looked at his watch. He hadn't been completely truthful when he said he had practice right then. He just had to get out of there before he ripped off his own clothes and offered himself to Jason to have right there in his office.

His cock throbbed, and his hand dropped down to it as he leaned against the wall of the restroom. He squeezed his cockhead through his pants, groaning softly. It echoed in the tiled room, and he clapped his other hand over his mouth. It sounded so wanton, and he wondered if Jason sounded the same when he was touched.

Blaze pulled down his zipper, lost in the fantasy. He pulled his cock out as he shoved his shorts down his hips to his knees, his hand becoming Jason's in his mind. He started stroking, leaning his head back against the tile. He bit his lip to keep from moaning as his hand moved faster and his muscles tensed. He thought about Jason's mouth on him, and that was all it took. He spilled his seed over his hand, pleasure flooding him as his knees gave out. He slid down the wall, catching himself before he hit the floor.

After a few moments, he stood up, still shaky from what had to be one of the most mind-blowing orgasms he'd ever had. As he stumbled over to the sink to wash his hand off, he wanted to kick himself. Jason had wanted him, and instead of giving into the need, Blaze had run out of there like a scared kid.

He looked in the mirror at his flushed cheeks, cursing them. He had to do something about this desire for Jason or it would wind up wrecking their working relationship. Not to mention it might look bad if every time he saw Jason, he wound up popping a boner. Now, that might be hard to explain to the other members in the band.

JASON unbuttoned the dress shirt, now wrinkled from Blaze holding it so tightly. He slid his arms into the shirt and buttoned it up, chuckling to himself. This interlude had suddenly turned very interesting, although it was no less dangerous.

Blaze had confirmed he was definitely bisexual. Jason could tell from the way Blaze had kissed him, his hot passion palatable as it boiled beneath the surface. If Jason had his way, he would have stayed there all afternoon, making love to him with his mouth, sucking him off until the younger man came. Jason's tongue was ultra-sensitive and seemed to be directly connected to his dick. He'd been semi-hard when he started taking his shirt off, but once he took the initiative and dragged Blaze toward him, he had a full blown hard-on.

Blaze had been hard as well when he had pushed their hips together, his cock sliding against Jason's hipbone. Jason's mouth watered just thinking about sucking on the guitarist's hard dick. He was fairly certain he could come just from sucking Blaze off.

He adjusted himself to a more comfortable position, giving his hard-on a quick stroke through the fabric. As much as waiting made him ache desperately for the younger man, he could wait until Blaze came to terms with his desire for someone of the same sex.

It had been a long time since he'd met someone so naive. He'd spent most of his life shuttled between New York City and Los Angeles, so most of the people he'd known had lost their innocence long before he'd met them. It was refreshing, and yet deep down he felt the darkest temptation to be the one to corrupt Blaze. He was the forbidden fruit, and to have him meant he had to break the rules of his own making.

Desire washed over Jason as he thought of the need that had been written so deliciously in Blaze's eyes. The way Blaze looked up at him made it damn near impossible to resist him, and against his better judgment, he'd kissed the younger man. He had backed off

after realizing Blaze was just as turned on as he was, fighting his dark yearning to possess Blaze in the deepest way possible.

Jason groaned, trying to get a hold of his runaway libido. He needed to keep a clear head to resist Blaze, because he was on dangerous ground here around the mysterious and exotic man. He was off-limits, and Jason knew he should keep his distance, but something about Blaze beckoned to a part of his soul that hadn't felt this alive since his heart had been broken all those years ago.

AFTER Blaze had walked out the day before, he had known he would wind up right back at Jason's office the next day. He had some time off since the pyrotechnic crew would be working on installing some needed upgrades to the equipment. It was right around lunchtime when he grabbed a quick snack before strolling down to the office. He almost kept walking before finally gathering the courage to walk inside. Blaze couldn't stay away.

Jason sat behind the desk, going over paperwork and working on his laptop. He looked up as Blaze walked in, a smile slowly spreading across his full lips. Blaze felt his cheeks go hot as the manager gave a nod and acknowledged him.

Oh fuck, he was getting hard again. Blaze almost groaned before he caught himself. It wouldn't do to be moaning out a confession of desire before he even spoke a word. "Mr. Stoc—"

"Jason," the manager said, correcting him as he put down his pen and closed his laptop. He stood up, walked around the desk, and leaned against the edge of it, just like he had during Blaze's audition. The memories of that day came rushing back, and they made Blaze speechless as he stood there, shoving his hands in his pockets to hide his hard-on.

JASON tried not to smile. Blaze looked adorable as he hemmed and hawed over his words, developing a posture to hide his desire for someone, something Jason hadn't used since he was a teenager. Jason licked his lips, his mouth going dry.

He was sure Blaze would say something as he stood there looking at the floor, but instead, he looked up, his pupils dilated, the need so clearly written on his face as words seemed to escape him. Jason felt himself moving. Blaze was as well, and they collided in the middle.

Their lips met, and the guitarist tasted sweet like apples, his lips moist as Jason sucked on Blaze's full bottom lip. Jason dragged his teeth across it enticingly, and Blaze moaned, opening his mouth. Jason pounced on the opportunity to slide his tongue inside the other man's mouth.

It was his turn to moan as their tongues met, sliding against each other. Jason couldn't believe how good this felt, how passionately the other man was kissing him. His arms left Blaze's shoulders and went to his hips, pulling their bodies flush against each other.

Jason groaned loudly as their cocks touched through their pants and slid against each other. Passion flooded him, and it took a while for the waves of desire crashing within him to ebb. It slowly dawned on him that Blaze's body had stiffened. He pulled away briefly and realized as he looked into those gorgeous eyes that Blaze was shocked and looking uncomfortable.

CHAPTER 3

BLAZE looked up at the manager to see need plainly written on his face. He'd thought about seeing it as he was in his hotel bed last night, his cock hard as a rock as it begged for relief. He had jerked off once when he got to the room and again this morning in the shower, both times while he thought of the other man sucking him off and Blaze returning the favor.

He was so hard now that it was painful. The ache in his groin was slowly eating away at his good sense. Blaze knew he had to walk away from this. They worked together, and he tried to tell himself again that if it went sour, things could get really bad, really fast. And it wouldn't be Jason leaving, it would be the new guitarist, and that reputation would no doubt follow him everywhere.

Blaze wanted Jason so much he could nearly taste the desire. Even though Jason's lips weren't on him, he could still feel the pressure of the manager's mouth against his. He must have hesitated too long, because he felt Jason step away, and he made a split-second decision. He closed his eyes and tilted his face up. He was offering himself, hoping beyond hope he would be accepted, pushing aside his fear of rejection.

The other man lips were tentative on his own, slightly gentler than before. Blaze felt a surge of excitement mixed with surprise. He was sure Jason would take him hard and fast, bending him over the

desk and fucking him senseless. He seemed like a person who took what he wanted without regard, but instead, his touch was gentle. His fingers were warm and soft as they touched his cheek. They were so different from his own, which were thick and callused from the strings of his guitar.

Those fingers were trailing along his jaw, stroking gently as they moved to the back of his neck. Blaze sighed against his lips, opening his mouth when he felt Jason's tongue probing again. He heard a groan, and he realized it wasn't his own, but Jason's.

A hand on Blaze's hip, making its way to his zipper, shocked him into facing what Jason was doing. The older man was trailing his knuckles along his bulge, and Blaze felt his cheeks begin to burn. He was scared of Jason seeing his desire for him. There would be no turning back from this moment.

When Blaze didn't protest, Jason pulled down his zipper and deftly unsnapped his jeans. Blaze thrust his hips against the older man's hand, a moan flowing from him into Jason's mouth. The kiss was broken, and the older man looked down, fumbling with the waistband on Blaze's briefs. Then Jason's hand engulfed him, and Blaze let out a strangled cry.

Blaze bit his lip. He couldn't help his gasp as Jason started stroking him, the manager's soft hand stroking his cockhead. He was being mercilessly teased, the touch light but insistent. Blaze jerked, his head falling back as he thrust into the other man's hand. When the hand was gone, Blaze tried to focus through the haze of desire on the taller man. "Don't stop!"

Jason's voice held a husky timbre, and the words he spoke made Blaze tense with anticipation. "I never intended to." His hand was back stroking him, and Blaze realized Jason had opened his own pants, his bulge straining against the cotton boxers. It was pressing insistently against his side, digging into his firm abs.

Blaze tentatively touched the other man's cock through his shorts, and the answering moan nearly did him in. He pulled down

the older man's boxers and gripped the hard flesh. His eyes widened at how huge Jason's cock felt in his hand. He hesitated momentarily, feeling no foreskin on the cock in his hand. "I—I don't know what to do."

He felt bereft as the other man took his hand off Blaze's cock to grip his wrist. Blaze felt those long fingers, wonderfully soft and different from his own, as Jason brought his hand up to spit in it before guiding it back to his cockhead. Desire rushed through him at how intimate the action was while the older man covered his hand and showed him how to stroke it. He caught the rhythm, spreading the fluid that beaded at the tip as he moved his hand. He heard Jason's breathing hitch, gratification spreading through Blaze as he gave the other man pleasure.

Jason tilted his head back, his eyelids fluttering closed. Blaze swallowed a groan, fighting the ache to be touched by the older man. Blaze moved his hand faster, wanting more than anything to see the other man's cool composure break. Instead, Jason reached for him. He pulled their hips together, his other hand working the skin covering Blaze's cockhead back and forth.

Blaze was surprised by Jason's lips on his neck, moving up to his ear, nipping at the tender skin. He shivered at the older man's sensual caress. He began to shake as his pinnacle neared, his muscles tensing. "Oh, I—I..." He tried to say something, but nothing else came out except for his helpless cry as he peaked.

Blaze watched Jason through the aftershocks of his orgasm as he slid his own hand jerkily up and down Jason's length, a look of pleasure crossing Jason's face as gratification came upon him. Jason shuddered when he came as well, his groan filling the quiet room.

Jason stood there, his cock softening as Blaze looked up at him, the aftershocks of his orgasm flooding him. Blaze's body shook, his lips parted and his hand coated with Jason's fluids. Jason wanted to lean down and kiss him, but suddenly, his phone rang. "Fuck," he swore as he stuffed himself back in his pants and grabbed his phone, hitting the answer button. "This is Jason."

Jason ducked out of his office as he wiped his hand on his pants, making sure his zipper was up before he went through the door. He'd worry about changing his pants later. As he listened to the caller rattling off details of the sales for Cassie's latest single, he thought about what had come over him in his office. They hadn't locked the door; anyone could have walked in and seen them jerking each other off.

The way the younger man had looked up at him had made thought impossible and common sense fleeting when he saw the matching desire as those searing eyes looked up at him. Blaze was definitely naïve, but that innocent man had just seduced him.

It wasn't Blaze being a guy that threw him for a loop. Jason had always known he was bisexual. But he hadn't ever felt quite like this before, not even with his college boyfriend Derek. Derek had been as tall as he was, good-looking and cocky. His deep, sexy voice and British accent had always driven Jason wild. But it hadn't lasted. Derek had left and returned to England without a glance back, leaving Jason with a broken heart.

He'd been so traumatized when the relationship ended, Jason had wound up dating girls until he met Blaze. But he'd lost himself when he looked into those aqua eyes, loving the look on Blaze's exotic face as he stroked his cock.

When Blaze had asked him not to stop, the control it had taken Jason not to throw the younger man on the couch and fuck him right there was enormous. He hadn't done so only because he'd known it would scare Blaze. Since Jason was fairly sure he was a virgin—although he may have been inexperienced with men only—he wanted to take things slow with the younger man.

He shouldn't want this at all. The level of emotions Blaze made him feel scared Jason. He felt like he was free-falling, desperately scrambling to get a hold on something. It had been disconcerting to lose control so quickly and spectacularly.

When he kissed Blaze, all Jason could think of was the beauty of Blaze's tan skin in contrast to his own pale skin as he moved his hands across the younger man's hard, muscular body. Blaze was shorter than Jason, thick and muscular in contrast to Jason's long and lean build. Being six-foot-three was a problem if you wanted to build muscle mass, as Jason had found out while growing up.

He leaned against the wall and closed his eyes. Was this Blaze's way of getting a leg up in the business? The thought burned in Jason's stomach. No, Blaze was quite innocent, guileless. Maybe Blaze hadn't meant to seduce him... but he had. As Jason walked away from the room, he wondered just what had started here for both of them. Rounding the corner, he was dragged from his musings by Jennifer.

"Oh, stay out of my office for a few minutes, would you?" Her eyes widened just a hair at his words but snapped back to normal as she nodded and kept walking.

Jason pursed his lips. Damn Jennifer. She took in his disheveled appearance and had no doubt correctly deduced what had gone on in his office. She wasn't judgmental, just perceptive.

"TAKE it from the top of the number five, folks. Just try to get your timing down. Cassie has a change after this number, so just fade out when she leaves the stage and wait for the video to end to start the second set. Refer to your set list if you're confused."

As the stage manager went on, Blaze stretched his hand out to help the cramping from playing for so long at one time. He was getting the songs down as he played alongside the other musicians, hearing them in his musician's earpiece. As they took a small break, he took a sip of his water, which was resting on the stool next to him.

"How you holdin' up?"

He looked over at the bassist, Stu. "I'm doing fine. My fingers are just cramping up a bit."

"That's pretty normal in rehearsals while conditioning your hands. But a word of advice, don't get too used to sleeping in such nice accommodations at the hotel. At most, we have a couple of nights a week in a hotel. The star gets a room, but for a majority of the time, we get the bus."

Blaze frowned. "So you don't like life on the road?"

"Don't get me wrong. I love the road. But I have realistic expectations and so does my family. I'm not joking when I say I have watched my kid growing up via webcam. My baby girl is now six years old. I have a photo in my wallet if you'd like to see her," he said, reaching for his wallet.

The stage manager waved at them to start playing, so the picture show was cut short. They started up again, and Blaze lost himself in his music.

They stopped after a while for a two-hour break, and Blaze set down his guitar in his stand. He gave the guitar tech a quick smile as he left the stage, heading for the break room. He was just a few doors away when a hand snaked out from one of the rooms and he was dragged into a small office. "Hey!"

He was pushed against the wall as soft wet lips met his own. His eyes adjusted to the dim light in the room, and he saw it was.... "Mr. Stockton."

He pulled back, and Blaze could see his brown eyes were heated with arousal. "Jason," he corrected as he dipped his head to Blaze's neck, nipping gently along his skin.

"Um, er... Jason, then. Should we be doing this here?"

Jason pulled back to look at Blaze. "Well, we don't have time to head back to the hotel with only two hours to kill. So," he said as he brought his hand to Blaze's waist. Jason lifted up his shirt to snake under and touch the skin beneath it. He smirked at Blaze's

gasp before he continued. "I thought maybe you would like to blow off some steam."

Blaze looked up into those eyes as Jason's hand started moving against his stomach, teasing lightly. He felt his cock twitch as he stuttered, "O-okay." He was looking up at the other man, watching his face as he concentrated on divesting him of his shorts. Jason looked fucking gorgeous as his tongue flicked out, running along his lips as he absorbed himself in his task. Blaze smiled.

Jason caught his grin and looked down at him. "What?"

"You're really sexy."

Jason looked taken aback for a second before he smiled confidently. "Really?" he asked, and it became apparent to Blaze he wasn't just fishing for a compliment. He was genuinely surprised, and slowly a blush crept into his cheeks.

"Is it so hard to believe?"

Jason finished opening Blaze's pants and started shoving them down his hips. "I wasn't sure if you were that into me," he said softly. When Jason delved inside the waistband of Blaze's briefs and his hand met Blaze's cock, the younger man's hips surged forward as he roughly shoved his cock into Jason's hand. The whimper that escaped sounded foreign to his ears.

"You have the most gorgeous eyes," Jason whispered, his own eyes going darker with lust as Blaze looked into them. God, the look on Jason's face alone was enough to set him on fire. Jason's hand was sliding back and forth over his cockhead, spreading the fluid his hard cock was leaking as he moved his hand. Jason dipped his head and met his lips. Jason's tongue slid inside, searching for Blaze's tongue. The moan that escaped was wrenched from him against his will. He hated sounding so fucking needy.

Jason's hand was moving faster, gripping him tighter. When he heard Jason's moan, he realized he was being greedy and not returning the favor. "Let me touch you," Blaze whispered.

Jason's groan sounded wanton to Blaze. The arm steadying him moved and went to Jason's belt, unbuckling it. Blaze brushed the other man's hands aside and opened Jason's pants. He could see the outline of his hard cock straining against the thin boxers. Blaze stroked him, the fabric rustling as he moved. Jason thrust his hips forward as he said, "Take it out."

Blaze did as he was ordered, pulling down the boxers to reveal Jason's hard member. He marveled at Jason's length as his hole clenched reflexively. Yesterday he'd been in a race toward his pleasure, but today he wanted to take the time and enjoy this. He ran his fingers along it, using some of the fluid beaded along the slit to start moving his fingers along the head, stroking him gently with his thumb. Jason's hiss caused him to stop momentarily, but he thrust into Blaze's hand, urging him on. "Keep going."

Blaze looked up at Jason, watching the satisfaction dance over his face as he kept stroking. Jason's eyelids were at half-mast as he looked at him, all the while still jerking Blaze off.

Didn't Jason want something more than just a quickie? As he looked up into Jason's hooded eyes, he tried to think, but his brain was blocking anything but pleasure. It was hard to keep his eyes open, but he wanted to see the other man as he came. His hand fell to Jason's hip as he dug his fingers into his cotton pants, twisting the expensive fabric. "Yeah, oh God, Jason," he cried out as a spark ran along his spine and his balls drew up. His cries became wordless as the hot bliss spread through him. That hand never stopped as it stroked him into mindless pleasure.

As Blaze stood there panting and weak-kneed, Jason kicked his shoes aside and pulled his pants off, leaving his boxers and his dress shirt on. He sat down on the couch, taking the younger man with him, which was rather convenient for Blaze, since his knees were ready to give out. Jason rubbed Blaze's seed off his hand with his dress shirt, cleaning his fingers off as Blaze spoke. "You didn't get off." Blaze wanted to slap himself for stating the obvious as Jason's hard cock dug into him.

Jason chuckled softly. "I enjoyed watching you. Your face is so expressive when you come, and the way you moan is so hot. I love it," he said huskily. He lifted his head to punctuate his statement by dragging his lips across Blaze's neck. Blaze tilted his head to allow Jason more access to kiss along his jaw.

Jason shifted them so he was flat on his back and Blaze on top of him, straddling his thighs. The younger man's hips tilted, rubbing his recovering cock along Jason's. "Do you want to put it inside me?" Blaze looked down as he braced his hands against the armrest behind Jason's head.

Blaze's words made Jason nearly explode. He sensed the tension in those taut muscles and gripped the younger man's hips. "I know you aren't quite ready for that just yet, so, maybe you could just suck me off?"

Blaze bit his lip. "Don't you want... what..." He trailed off, looking almost self-conscious.

"Have you ever done it before?" As Blaze shook his head, Jason sighed as he tried to tamp down on his lust. "For a whole host of reasons, not right now. Have you ever sucked anyone off?"

Blaze flushed. "No," he said quietly.

"Don't get embarrassed. I like it," Jason said, reaching up to stroke the younger man's cheek. "I like that you're so innocent."

Blaze met Jason's eyes. "I haven't done this with anyone," he blurted out nervously.

Jason melted. "Girl nor guy?" When Blaze didn't say anything, sweet warmth spread through Jason, making his cock throb. "It's okay. Maybe," Jason said, trying to swallow around the lump in his throat. Why in the fuck was he so nervous over this? "Maybe, I could teach you."

He met the younger man's gaze. He wanted to brush away the insecurity he saw there, the dark expression on his handsome face.

Jason rocked his hips against Blaze's growing cock, showing he was still hard. "Would you like that?"

"You don't mind me being a virgin?"

"Mind?" Jason growled. It was making him hot to know he would be Blaze's first. "I fucking love it."

Blaze's gaze turned intense as he shimmied down Jason's legs, moving between them. Jason's cock twitched in anticipation. "Okay, what do I do?"

Jason couldn't help but grin. Blaze was so fucking cute looking at Jason's cock so intensely. "Well, just take the head in your mouth, and if you lightly suck on it, it feels pretty good for me. Just remember, watch your teeth."

Blaze did as he was told, covering the hard flesh with his mouth. He was rewarded with a hiss from Jason as he dug his hands into the cushions of the couch. The wetness of Blaze's mouth covering his cock was heaven, and the look on the younger man's face as he concentrated so heavily was such a beautiful contradiction, he didn't know whether to laugh or moan. "You can suck a little harder. I'm not that sensitive," he directed.

Jason looked into aqua eyes as Blaze looked up at him. As he sucked, he moved his tongue along the underbelly, just like he would have dragged his fingers along the underside of his own cock. Jason tried to encourage the younger man with his moans and with the thrust of his hips as Blaze continued to suck him off.

He was too turned on to last, and he could feel his orgasm building inside of him, his muscles tensing uncontrollably. His breath hitched as he stopped Blaze. "I'm really close," he warned the younger man.

Blaze pulled his mouth off of him with a resounding pop. Jason took his own cock in his hand and started stroking, his hand moving over the spit-slicked skin. The younger man shifted and got on his knees between Jason's legs, stroking his own cock as his eyes

glazed over. Jason was close, but when Blaze reached out and cupped Jason's balls and stroked them, it sent him over the edge. His whole body stiffened as he came, thrusting his hips in the air as he cried out wordlessly.

He came down off his high to find Blaze panting, his hand covered with his own seed as well. He tried to think of something to say, some kernel of intelligence that would punctuate Blaze's first time sucking him off. "That... was... really good," he said in between pants. Apparently, he failed quite brilliantly at coming up with eloquent comments in the afterglow of his orgasm.

But Blaze, with all his innocence, beamed adorably as if he had been given a gold star. "I—it was? I didn't hurt you?"

Jason nodded as he sat up, using his shirt to clean them both off. Blaze tried to stop him, but Jason waved him away. "Don't worry about my shirt. I have another one here. I have to go, since Cassie has an interview, and I'm sure you need dinner," he said as he stripped the expensive shirt off and wiped Blaze's hand. He got up and walked toward his desk, grabbing a small travel bag from behind it. He went into the connecting bathroom, quickly stepping into his pants as he shut the door behind him.

Blaze zipped up his pants, trying his best not to feel slightly dejected. Yesterday, he had ducked out of Jason's office while the other man had been pacing in the hall. The embarrassment of facing him had been too much for Blaze to take. Jason now seemed to be the one in a hurry to get out of the room afterwards. Was this payback for him bolting yesterday? Blaze wondered about it as Jason came back out with his clothes on.

Jason bent over the desk as he knotted his tie and grabbed his BlackBerry from his desk. "I'm flying to Minnesota tonight, but I'm coming back in a couple of days. Maybe we could see each other again?" Blaze nodded and stood up as Jason walked toward him and dropped a kiss on his lips and left the office.

Blaze sat back down on the couch, shock settling in. Was Jason only using him for sex? It had been amazing for him, and Jason had told him he was good, yet he couldn't help the feeling of foreboding that settled in. Blaze had been the seducer on their first time. If he had to be perfectly honest with himself, he hadn't flirted with Jason to get the job. He could have moved on, found another opportunity. He did this because he hadn't felt such a strong physical attraction to anyone, least of all another man.

He was still sitting there when he felt his phone vibrate in his pocket. He had a text... from Jason. He opened it as Jennifer came into the room, holding a tray with a plate. *I sent Jennifer to my office with dinner. Sorry I had to leave. I would have liked nothing better than to stay with you all evening.*

Blaze was grinning like a fool, but he didn't care if anyone saw him. Jennifer smiled at him, dropping off the food and a can of soda. "I noticed you liked Sprite, so I got you one of those. Mr. Stockton said if you needed to use his computer to check your e-mail, please feel free to do so. I'll pick it up for him before he leaves, but you'll probably be back onstage before then. If you need anything else, let me know."

Jennifer smiled at him before she walked out of the room and left Blaze to check his e-mail while he ate dinner. He was floored as he sat down at the desk, opening the laptop. Maybe Jason liked him in a way that meant more than just a hook-up and a quickie in between practices, more than just blowing off some steam. Blaze smiled to himself as he opened his drink. Life couldn't have been better.

JASON sat in the back of the limo, reading his e-mail on his BlackBerry. The door opened and Jennifer slid in the backseat. "I have some more papers for you to sign. Also, we need to confirm if you are going to the awards show right after rehearsals finish."

“Confirm me. I don’t think I need a date for it, do I?”

She was shuffling papers with a smile on her face. “Thinking about taking Blaze?”

Jason shook his head. “No. I’m not about to take a guy I just met a few days ago to an awards show.”

Jennifer pouted. “That’s sad. You guys would be cute together, holding hands in your tuxes.” She let out a dreamy sigh as she pulled a stapler out of her bag.

“Jennifer,” he said with a playful warning in his voice. “Stop fag-hagging over Blaze and I.”

She grinned at him as they rode in companionable silence for a while as she stapled some of the paperwork together. “You know, he got your text message right before I walked in.”

“Oh?”

“Yeah. He has a very nice smile.”

Jason tried to remain casual and not let on that Blaze’s happiness mattered as much as it really did. “Really?”

“He’s kinda shy and he keeps all his cards close to his chest, but he’s quite genuine, you know. He doesn’t have it in him to be devious. I just think he jumps in with both feet to everything he does.”

“That’s rather astute of you.”

Jennifer smiled. “Thank you.”

“All the same, keep your nose out of this. And stop rubbernecking at him. I know he’s hot,” Jason grumbled.

Jennifer pursed her lips, trying to hide her smile. “You’re the boss-man.”

Blaze was hot, the way he had sat between Jason legs, watching him as Jason had jerked off. His fiery gaze had been enough to set him off. He had wanted to be inside Blaze desperately,

watch the younger man writhing on the couch as he slammed his cock deep inside his hot virginal ass.

Jason crossed his legs to hide his growing erection from his assistant. He hadn't been this horny in a long time. It must have been Blaze's innocence that made him feel like he was in college again. Yeah, that was it. "By the way, what's Blaze's real name?"

"Shinozuka's his last name, but... well, I thought he'd told you. He asked to have his nickname, not his real name, put on his badge. He works for Cassie's record company, so I'll make a couple of phone calls tomorrow for you."

"Well, Terry should have it. Didn't he run a background check on it?"

"That's right. I'll e-mail you it tonight when I get back to the venue."

CHAPTER 4

IT WAS a couple of days before Jason came back, and the practices were intense, since they had been working on the pyrotechnic timing. Blaze swore he would have been deaf by the end of the practice if he wasn't wearing the earpiece that let him hear the other band members but shielded his eardrums from the noise in the background.

Just before lunch, a break was called, as Cassie needed her second fitting on her costumes and would be gone a few hours. He set his guitar on his stand and left the stage, heading straight for Jason's temporary office. Earlier in the morning at the hotel, he had received an e-mail from Jason saying he would be arriving before lunch, and Blaze fought down the excitement as it buzzed through him upon reading it.

He was now sitting on Jason's couch, balancing his laptop on the arm of the chair as he wrote out an e-mail to his brother. He would normally have his headset on as he listened to one of his favorite bands, OneEskimO, but he was enjoying the sound of Jason's voice instead as he spoke on the phone. It was comforting to hear him speaking so casually with artists and contractors while Blaze was in the room. It spoke of a trust building between them, and Blaze couldn't help but feel it was undeniably intimate.

“You’re sure you’re not bored?”

Blaze looked up from his sent mail and smiled. Jason was looking particularly sexy this afternoon, his warm brown eyes looking inquisitively at him. “I’m not bored, I swear!”

Jason smiled and took a sip of his water, going back to his phone calls. Blaze being in the same room was slightly distracting, but it was something he could live with if it meant he could watch him while no one was looking.

Jason had watched him with an executive from Cassie’s label from one of the suites earlier in the day as the band ran through the first set list. The executive had been impressed with the show’s progress and how well Blaze fit in. Pride had risen within him, with confusion being next up. Why was he proud of someone he had just met?

Even if they were meeting up on a regular basis, this alone didn’t explain the feelings, including the jealousy he felt when people stared openly at how gorgeous the younger man was. He had never been a jealous person before. It just didn’t exist in his heart.

He glanced over at the guitarist on the couch and found him making strange faces at the computer screen. Jason burst into laughter, thankful he wasn’t on the phone with a client.

Blaze looked up from his screen. “What?” he asked.

Jason hesitated, not necessarily wanting to reveal he had been watching Blaze without him knowing. “You’re pretty sexy, you know.”

Blaze flushed and looked back at his computer for a second before he closed the cover. “I am? Well, what’re you going to do about me being so sexy?”

Jason nearly broke his pen as he clenched it in his fist. There it was again, the look of innocent seduction in Blaze's eyes as he looked at Jason, his lips parted. Jason sent the office chair flying backward, he was out of it and around the desk so fast.

Jason leaned in and covered Blaze's lips with his own, thrusting his tongue to claim the other man's mouth as he kneeled in front of Blaze. Possessiveness welled up inside of Jason, confusing him. He had the urge to pull back and insist Blaze be his and his alone as the selfish need rose inside him.

He went with those emotions, pouring those feelings into the kiss as his desire grew exponentially. He lifted Blaze's shirt, wanting to touch the younger man's heated skin. His hands went to the younger man's zipper, pulling it down as Blaze looked up at him, his eyes full of heated desire.

When he touched Blaze's cock, Blaze's moan filled his ears, causing his own cock to twitch. He wanted desperately to slide himself inside the younger man. He thought of the condoms in his desk drawer, along with the packets of lubrication.

He'd been surprised this morning when he entered his office and opened one of the drawers to find the protection. Even now, he felt the embarrassment like he had then, wondering how they got there. They were the larger size and the specific brand he usually bought. He'd thought it had been Blaze until he saw Jennifer looking at him with a smug smile. He didn't know whether to lecture her or give her a raise.

He decided on the latter as he hooked a finger inside the waistband of Blaze's underwear, pulling it down to reveal his hard member. Jason stroked the head gently, moving the foreskin slowly as he looked at his lover. Blaze's eyes went unfocused, and he dropped his head back. The sound was half a sigh and half a groan as it escaped the younger man. The guitarist grabbed the hem of his

T-shirt and pulled up, parting from Jason momentarily, but he was back quickly as he tossed the T-shirt away.

He leaned in to bite at the skin covering Blaze's collarbone, wanting to mark him. He tried to fight down the primal urge of making it known to everyone Blaze was his and cursed at himself when he realized he was losing the battle to tamp down on it. The younger man was no help, making a noise as he moved to allow more access for Jason's lips. Jason groaned, feeling the ache in his hard cock even more so now.

He pulled away to look at the bite, the mark barely showing on the tan skin of his lover. The frustration must have showed on his face, because Blaze leaned toward him, murmuring as he planted a kiss on his jaw line, "What are you doing?"

Jason was spiraling downward, losing himself in his own desires. "I wanted to mark you as mine. That's why I was biting you."

Blaze chuckled. "You're going to have to tattoo it on my ass, then, because I don't bruise easily."

Jason growled as he dug his fingers into Blaze's hip. "Don't mention it to me again or I might just demand you do that."

Blaze felt a thrill go through him as he looked at Jason, those dark eyes showing only a thin ring of brown around his wide pupils in the dim light. This slightly dangerous, less controlled side of the manager was exciting to him. Blaze could see the restraint Jason always exhibited was really just a façade. Even as he admired this new, wild side, he watched hesitance flash over Jason's face as he put back on the mask, building the wall separating Blaze from the other man's true emotions.

Blaze grabbed him by the shirt, holding him still as Jason's eyes widened. "Don't."

“Don’t what?” Jason looked perplexed.

“Don’t shut me out. You’re doing it again. You’re trying to distance yourself,” Blaze whispered. Jason jerked away as if he had been burned. Blaze pulled himself up a little bit and kissed him hard, thrusting his tongue between those full lips before he moved his arms to wrap around Jason’s waist. The older man was still for a few seconds before he relaxed into the embrace, his arms going around Blaze.

Jason’s leg went between Blaze’s, sliding against his hard cock there. A groan bubbled inside the younger man as his hips jerked against the hard thigh, rubbing his cock against the older man. Jason’s hand encircled his cockhead, and stars exploded behind his eyelids. Blaze shoved himself into his lover’s grip over and over again, moaning.

He pulled back and opened his eyes to see Jason looking at him. His eyes were hooded, passion written openly on his face. Jason’s expression was no longer guarded, and his lips parted as he licked them. “Jason....”

“Yeah?”

Blaze took a deep breath, his heart racing. He wanted to say those words. He wanted to let Jason know he wanted this to be the time. Blaze wanted to give himself over to the older man, give him something special. But how did he say it? “I want you.”

Jason smiled. “That is sort of obvious with your cock in my hand.”

Blaze flushed deeply. “No, I meant, I want you... inside me. I want to give that to you.”

Jason stopped his hand, and he closed his eyes. Behind his eyelids, all he could see was white, and he was deaf because his

heartbeat was so loud in his ears. He was sure Blaze could see his pulse in his neck because his heart was pounding so hard. He opened his eyes and looked at Blaze sitting against the back of the couch, seeing fear mixed with desire.

He would take it slow with the younger man and stop if he hurt Blaze. Jason would allow Blaze to set the pace and try his hardest to give him pleasure... and then he realized he was mouthing the words along with his thoughts. Blaze had lifted his eyebrow, and Jason tried to keep the nervous laughter from bubbling over.

Jason got up and found the lube and condoms in his desk. He came back to Blaze and set them on the table next to the couch. "I'm going to let you tell me when you are ready, okay? Don't hesitate to stop me because I don't want to hurt you."

Blaze flushed deeply. "Okay," he said softly as he worked his jeans down his hips, kicking off his sandals so he could completely remove his pants. Jason felt odd when he was fully clothed while the other man was totally naked.

"Kneel on the couch and rest your hands on the armrest," he directed as he unbuttoned his shirt, pulling it off as Blaze wiggled around on the couch. He grabbed a packet of the lube and tore it open, spreading it on his finger. He kneeled behind Blaze and groaned at the sight of the younger man kneeling and ready.

"Is this exciting you that much?" Blaze asked.

Jason shuddered as he met aqua eyes as Blaze looked over his shoulder. "You have no idea." He really couldn't say much more, not without his voice cracking horribly as his mouth went dry at the sight in front of him.

Blaze looked amazing, his muscles tight as he gripped the arm of the sofa. His lips were parted, and his aqua eyes were hot with anticipation. With all those sights, there was one that made Jason's

mouth water: the little rosebud between his cheeks, waiting for his cock.

He reached out to Blaze and pushed a finger inside. Blaze's eyes shot open, and the intake of air let him know the discomfort the younger man felt.

He moved the finger inside Blaze's tight hole slowly. He kept going until his finger was in to his second knuckle and started to pull out. "You all right?"

Blaze let out a pent-up breath. "Yeah," the younger man said breathily. Jason kept moving even though the word, more of a sigh, zinged through him. He saw Blaze clench his jaw as his back arched. Jason stopped his finger and then bent it slightly, probing inside Blaze. He knew when he hit the place he was looking for because Blaze tensed and let out a gasp. He pressed gently against the place again before he withdrew.

He put more lube on the second finger as he added it, pushing slowly inside as Blaze squirmed. He hit against the spot again softly as he moved his fingers back and forth. He heard Blaze's breath catch in his throat as he tried to stretch the younger man, trying to be gentle, but he knew he could do this all he wanted and it wouldn't be enough. It would hurt, no matter what he did.

He pulled his fingers out and got up to take off his pants, taking off his shoes and placing them neatly by his desk. He grabbed the condom, his emotions warring within him. He hated himself for hurting Blaze, but he couldn't seem to stop himself from opening the packet and rolling it on his hard cock. Jason looked down to see Blaze on his knees on the couch, watching him with those trusting eyes, which for some reason only made desire run through him.

Jason rolled the condom on and kneeled behind Blaze, spreading his amazing cheeks with one hand. "I'm sorry, but this is going to hurt."

Blaze nodded and looked over his shoulder. “I know,” he said, his voice wavering slightly. “But I want this, and I want my first time to be with you.”

Jason closed his eyes and willed his self-control back into line. “I want it too,” he whispered, hoping the younger man didn’t see just how closely he teetered towards spilling over already. He didn’t want to embarrass himself.

When he opened his eyes, he looked at the back of Blaze’s head. The guitarist was gripping the armrest with his hands, his back stiff with fear. Jason ran a gentle, comforting hand up Blaze’s spine, feeling the younger man shiver. Jason moved closer, positioning his hips closer to his lover, his cock throbbing in anticipation.

Jason guided himself into the tight hole, hating the pain in his chest as Blaze brought his hand to his mouth and bit down on his knuckle. He pushed in slowly. Jason flashed back to his first time, thinking about how painful it had been, remembering how gentle his partner had been as he got used to being stretched and the pain before he moved.

Jason stayed there for what seemed like hours, letting Blaze catch his breath. Jason felt his gut clench when he saw the stiffness in the younger man’s back, the way the muscles were tensed. He slid a hand around to Blaze’s stomach, moving lower to grip the younger man’s cock. It had lost most of the hardness from the pain of penetration.

He moved his hand, watching Blaze writhe under his ministrations. He had started to move on his own, thrusting his hips as he slid up and down on Jason’s cock. “Push back against my cock,” Jason ground out.

The suggestion seemed to work, because the vise-like grip on Jason’s cock relaxed minutely as Blaze moved. Jason let him take it at his own pace as he thrust into Jason’s hand. When Blaze stiffened

suddenly and let out a cry, Jason realized his cock must have hit Blaze's prostate, and he let go of the younger man's cock as it jerked on its own. Jason's hips jumped forward, pushing against the spot again as Blaze arched his back. "Please?" was all that came from Blaze's mouth.

The younger man begging was more than Jason could take as he started to move, trying so hard to be gentle with him as those internal muscles gripped him. Blaze was pushing his hips back again and again as Jason's peak neared. Blaze suddenly tensed as he let out a sharp cry, and for all his life, Jason would never forget the way Blaze arched his back beneath him as Jason came inside him.

His orgasm must have triggered something inside Blaze, because as he lay against Blaze's back with his cock sensitive and flagging, he heard the younger man cry out and jerk, his muscles tensing around his extra-sensitive member. He tried to move to pull out, and he realized in the back of his mind that he needed to do it slowly, so as to not hurt his lover.

His movements were unhurried as he pulled out and felt Blaze shiver beneath him. Jason got a towel from the bathroom and came back to clean up the younger man. He tried to be gentle, but finally Blaze snatched the towel from him. "Stop treating me like a china doll. I'm not broken," he said, wincing.

Jason stared at the younger man, an odd feeling running through him. He felt like he should apologize as the young man stood up and walked naked toward the bathroom connected to the office. Jason couldn't help but admire the view even though a touch of guilt had swept through him.

Blaze came back out of the bathroom and grabbed his jeans, putting them back on. "Shit, I have to be on stage in ten minutes."

Jason sighed as he scrolled through the e-mails and messages on his BlackBerry. "Not now. Practice has been delayed because someone knocked over the drum kit."

Blaze frowned. "Are you kidding me? How'd that happen?"

"Stage accident, but no one was hurt, luckily. One of the techs knocked it over. Jennifer just texted me that it'll be at least another thirty minutes."

Blaze sat down on the couch, his jeans zipped but unbuttoned at the top. "Oh... well... then..." He didn't know what to say to the man sitting next to him. What did you say to someone who just took your virginity? He didn't have to say much, because Jason wrapped his arm around his waist and pulled him close.

"Too bad we aren't at the hotel right now. It would be nice to just hold you right now."

Blaze looked at Jason. "You aren't holding me right now?"

"Not the way I want to," he said as he stroked a circle on Blaze's shoulder. He sighed, nuzzling his lips to the skin.

Blaze had to admit Jason's arms felt good around him. He leaned his head against the other man's dark curls. He realized he didn't want to leave, even though he knew soon he would have to, as rehearsals were only delayed for a short time. But for right now, in Jason's arms, nothing existed but the two of them.

CHAPTER 5

BLAZE dished some salad onto his plate and grabbed a soda from one of the coolers. It would be a couple of hours before he needed to be back on the stage, and he contemplated heading to Jason's couch for a catnap. If Jason saw him doing it, though, he would think of it as an invitation, and right now he needed sleep, not sex.

He sat down at one of the tables and started to eat. He really didn't expect the interruption. "Blaze?"

He realized Cassie was standing behind him, and a sense of unease flowed through him as he took in the look on her face. "Yes?"

"What're you doing?"

"Eating," he said, looking at her like she was an idiot of the lowest caliber.

"I thought you'd be hanging out in Jason's office for lunch, like you have for the past three days. Jennifer always catered the lunches."

"I just had some questions for him."

"Is that what they are calling it these days?" The sly tone in her voice sent a shiver down Blaze's spine.

He felt like his cheeks were on fire, but he stared her down. "I'm not sure what you mean."

"I'm sure you do. We were pretty desperate for a guitarist for the band. You didn't need to sleep with Jason to get the job, you know."

"That's not what happened," Blaze ground out.

"I know Jason very well. I saw the spring in his step when he picked me up at the airport, and then I saw the way he looked at you. I put two and two together. It's almost cute."

"Cassie, damn it. That's not what happened." The snide tone in her voice turned his stomach, but he still couldn't help but feel a tiny bit of happiness at her words. Jason had been happy after his audition? What did she mean?

"Why deny it? It's obvious you don't feel the same way Jason feels for you. You're too good for a bottom feeder like him," she said in a low voice.

He felt a zing of happiness when she pointed out how much Jason liked him. The happiness was soon drowned by the anger he felt as he could barely speak. "Don't say that."

With her next words, she raised her voice slightly. "So admit it to me and yourself. You only slept with him to get the job and get your foot in the door here."

He balled his fists to keep from jumping across the table at her. He was ready to open his mouth to deliver a scathing denial when he saw a shadow fall over the both of them. He closed his eyes as horror ran through him, hoping the person behind him was not the one person who could destroy his heart in a single blow.

He turned and saw Jason standing behind him. His expression was like a knife in the gut, as if pleading with Blaze to say it wasn't true. It was those seconds he paused to get his thoughts together that were his downfall. If he had simply yelled something unintelligible,

it might have stopped the taller man from walking away. But he was frozen in space and time as he watched Jason walk out the door.

He couldn't bear to look at Cassie's self-satisfied smile as he stood up and took his tray to the trash. He'd lost his appetite, and now he could only think of one thing: explaining this to Jason.

Between practice and not being able to locate him, it was hours before Blaze could find him to explain. When he entered the office, Jason looked up from his laptop and then back down again. Blaze's heart clenched when he saw the broken look in Jason's eyes before he cast his gaze down to his papers.

"Jason, I—"

"Blaze, I don't have time for this. I have a ton of paperwork."

Don't shut me out, damn it. Not again. "It wasn't like it sounded."

"Look, we were desperate for a guitarist. The label probably kept that quiet, and we were damn lucky to get someone of your caliber this late in the game. I probably should've rephrased it differently when I asked you how badly you wanted this job. I wasn't trying to pressure you for sex, you know—"

Blaze knew Jason would seize upon that one statement and read into it. "I know that," Blaze said, but Jason was continuing.

"I was only trying to find out if you would leave us in the lurch like Craig did. He thinks he can do anything he wants since he's fucking the star," Jason said woodenly.

"I know that, Jason," Blaze said, emphasizing every word.

Jason looked up, anger written on his face. "Then why didn't you deny it? Your silence said it all. I'm not even your employer really, and even if you had rejected my advances, you would still have your job. The label pretty much hired you before you stepped foot in this arena."

"It's not that," Blaze ground out.

“Then explain it to me.”

How could Jason think he had slept with him only for the job? *Because you would have slept with him to get the job*, a little voice inside him said. He knew, though, that even if he hadn’t been offered the position, he would have done anything to be with Jason. Blaze balled his fists at his side and opened his mouth to deny it, but nothing came out.

Jason pinched the bridge of his nose and closed his eyes. “I think you should leave my office. You shouldn’t be here alone anymore.”

Jason’s tone had an in-charge quality that brooked no argument, and Blaze’s heart dropped to his stomach. Oh God, this wasn’t happening to him, not when he’d found the person he’d looked for his whole life. “O-okay,” he said, shock and hurt running through his body. He felt powerless as he turned and walked through the doorway.

JASON watched as the younger man walked away. He wanted to run out there and grab him, pull him back in the room and demand an explanation. Was Blaze really sleeping with him only to get his leg up in the music business?

He could admit to himself it had been a possibility, but he hadn’t wanted to think about Blaze being so devious. He wanted to think Blaze wouldn’t do that, even if it meant deluding himself that Blaze hadn’t just turned his back on Jason and walked out the door, even if he had only done so at Jason’s command.

AFTER rehearsals, Blaze flopped on his bed, clutching his cell phone so hard he thought he might break it. *That damn little bitch*

Cassie, he thought to himself, wanting so badly to throw something to give a voice to the anger he felt.

The agony on Jason's face had hurt him more than he could put into words or thoughts. The way Jason had turned on his heel and walked away, Blaze was sure he would never talk to him again. The idea of never feeling his touch again hurt so badly, it turned into physical pain.

Jason held all the cards in the relationship. He had Blaze's heart in his skilled and powerful hands. Jason had shut down their relationship in a nanosecond and broken him.

Was he in love with Jason? It was all so sudden, meeting the gorgeous manager and having sex... no, to Blaze they'd made love. Was he just imagining things when he'd seen the tender look in Jason's dark eyes as they sat on the couch afterward? But he hadn't asked himself what Jason wanted.

If Blaze had to be honest with himself, he only wanted the other man's happiness, even if it meant letting him go. It would be painful if Jason said he didn't want him anymore, but if it happened, he would move on.

Blaze swore to himself he would go in the next day and get to the bottom of it, not only for himself, but for Jason, because he deserved better than this.

FIVE days later, Blaze leaned against the wall as he watched the hallway near Jason's office. Jason was avoiding him. It was inevitable after their little spat... no, make that a major fight. He had to make this horrible misunderstanding right.

But every time he had encountered Jason in the halls of the venue, he either had someone with him or saw him and turned to walk the other way. Blaze was at the end of his rope. He was willing

to admit he had made a mistake, but no matter what Jason thought, it didn't change the feelings Blaze had for him.

The look of hurt on Jason's face that was mixed with resignation whenever they saw each other caused a pit in Blaze's stomach. He had to fix this. It would be a few hours for the crew to work on disassembling the stage, so he had time to wait. It wasn't long before Jason walked around the corner, looking at his phone.

"Jason."

His head snapped up. "Shinozuka, I'm busy. Please see Jennifer if you need anything."

It hurt Blaze to hear him use his family name in place of his nickname, but still he forged ahead. He had to make this right. "I can't tell Jennifer what I have to say. Please just stop and listen to me. I'm not here to use you."

Jason laughed coldly and pushed past him into his office. "Everyone in this business is out to use each other. It's a way of life. Even a husband and wife in this business use each other. It is kind of cutthroat but hey, I do love you for your naïveté."

Blaze rubbed his eye with the heel of his hand in pure frustration. This already wasn't going well as Jason froze midstride but continued talking. "Just forget what I said before. I think practice is done for today, so if you need to head back to your hotel, Jennifer can get a ride for you."

"I don't want to go back to the hotel. I want to talk to you. Just listen to me."

Jason shook his head. "I can't do that. Not after what you told me. I can't be alone with you."

"Why?"

"Because," Jason said with a sigh. "It could be misconstrued as sexual harassment. You don't have anything you need to worry

about, but I do. I've worked long and hard to get to where I am today. I just don't need any trouble."

Blaze was shocked into silence as the other man turned to walk away. "Is that really how you feel about me? Am I just a problem to you?" Silence met his question, so he plunged forward, walking beside him down the hallway. "I may have thought you were trying to take advantage of me at the beginning, but trust me when I say I went along very willingly. I couldn't say no to you because I wanted you just as much as, if not more than, you wanted me."

He followed Jason into his office, the same one where Jason had taken Blaze's virginity almost a week ago. "Do you understand me? I want you."

"Just leave, please."

"No!" Blaze yelled. "I'm not leaving! We were fine until Cassie opened her big mouth. If it hadn't been for her, we'd be fine."

Jason clutched his phone, his brown eyes filled with pain. "It would've fallen apart sooner or later. This, whatever we are, started on a premise that wasn't valid. I never wanted to take advantage of you."

"You didn't take advantage of me. Maybe I wanted this gig so badly it hurt. Maybe I was willing to do anything to get it. But somewhere along the way, I started caring for you, Jason. I probably could have made it in this town on my own. But I can't ignore destiny when it's thrust into my face."

Jason threw a disbelieving look over his shoulder as he walked behind his desk. "I would hardly call this destiny. I would call this an unfortunate incident waiting to happen. You just don't get it. I can't be with you."

Blaze rounded the desk as the fear of losing Jason swelled within him, and he grabbed the taller man, pushing him against the

wall. His hands were trembling from the fear he felt. “And I can’t lose you.”

Jason’s eyes widened at the younger man’s confession. “Blaze, I—” Whatever he was going to say was cut off by Blaze pulling his head down to kiss him.

Their lips met, and Blaze was certain the taste of desperation was evident on his lips. He held Jason there, not wanting to let him go, but the older man didn’t seem to be responding. Tears hit his eyes, and his heart twisted. So, that was that. He released his hold on the other man and turned swiftly.

The thought entered his mind that maybe Jason was relieved at the chance to get rid of him. Blaze had been the one to throw himself at Jason, begging him for sex. Bile rose in his throat as he imagined what Jason must think of him; he had acted like a slut.

I will not cry, damn it, not in front of him, he said to himself. Embarrassment hit him hard, and he tried to swallow the knot in his throat. He stood there, wishing desperately he could go back in time and make everything right. Things may not have turned out differently, but he wouldn’t have gotten this involved, and he wouldn’t be this devastated.

He could feel Jason’s eyes on his back. He wanted to turn around and let the taller man see what he was doing to him, but nothing prepared him for the surprise when he felt those strong, slender arms encircle his chest and heard Jason’s deep voice in his ear. “I’m sorry for hurting you. I was only trying to protect myself. I’ve been hurt too many times, and if you weren’t serious about this or if you were just using me, I...” Jason trailed off, too choked up to speak.

Blaze closed his eyes and reveled in the feel of the warm body against him. “I wouldn’t hurt you. I couldn’t,” he said thickly, emotions warring within as he wanted to say more, but the fingers unbuttoning his shirt were distracting him. “Wow, you move fast.”

"It has been almost a week since I touched you last. I missed it... I missed you." He heard the words in his ear and then saw his lover's lips move when Jason spun him around.

Blaze was turned on simply by his soft fingers moving beneath his button-down shirt, parting it as Blaze's fingers moved to reciprocate. He'd finished unbuttoning it when Jason took his hand and turned it over, dropping his mouth to kiss the inner part of his wrist. Blaze's growl sounded almost feral to his own ears.

Jason's mouth didn't stop as it trailed up his arm, moving to his chest when it encountered his shirt. He wished for a second he had taken it off so Jason could have moved to the sensitive skin of his neck, but when Jason's lips trailed lower and he kneeled, Blaze's knees went weak.

He fell back against the wall as Jason lowered his zipper and unsnapped the button of his jeans. Jason started stroking him through his shorts, and Blaze thrust into his lover's hand. He moaned, looking down into those brown eyes that were full of lust. "Please," he whispered.

"Please, what?" As Jason whispered those words, he kept stroking. "Tell me what you want."

"I—oh yes. Your mouth... suck me!" He could barely form a thought, let alone speak coherently, but his lover understood. He pulled down Blaze's briefs and licked the underside of his cock, paying special attention to the tip.

Blaze threaded his fingers into Jason's thick hair. He loved the feel of his soft, dark curls in between his fingers. He sighed as Jason took the tip of his cock in his mouth. He started sucking him off, and Blaze tried desperately to keep his hips still as the pleasure became too much.

Jason bobbed his mouth up and down on his lover's cock, delight flooding him as he tasted the saltiness of Blaze's pre-come. If Blaze had only known how heartbroken Jason had been when he'd heard those words Blaze hadn't denied. He'd wanted to run off

and lick his wounds, but with all he had to do, he'd been forced to stay. Instead of working, this was what he'd wanted to do, be on his knees in front of the man who was slowly taking over his life.

He massaged Blaze's balls, hearing the groan from his lover as it sent a spike of pleasure straight to his dick. His own hand went to his pants, jerking the belt and finally the button and zipper open so fast, he thought he broke them. His dick was so hard, aching from desire and sucking off Blaze, that he had almost come in his pants. He started stroking himself, knowing it wouldn't be long for both of them.

It had been five very long and torturous days as he worked at the venue, having Jennifer text him when practice was done and the musicians were leaving the stage so he could make himself scarce. Jennifer had disagreed with him about it when she found out his reasons, the first time she'd ever argued at length with her employer. He knew now that he had been wrong in avoiding the inevitable. He was falling hard for Blaze.

He added an extra swipe of his tongue to Blaze's cockhead, not just for the guitarist but for himself as well. Jason's tongue was overly sensitive, and the sensations of touch mingled with taste were too much. He covered his own cock with his hand as he came, groaning around Blaze's cockhead in his mouth.

The sensation Jason's mouth made caused Blaze's balls to draw up, and fire raced up his spine. He let out a sharp cry, his fingers curling through Jason's ringlets, tugging gently at them. He couldn't pull the mouth off his cock, and he shot his seed into his lover's mouth as his legs started to shake from the intensity of his orgasm.

Blaze slid down the wall as Jason stopped holding him up. His cock had slid out of Jason's mouth, the sensations that ran through him when Jason's tongue dragged over the sensitive skin of his dick causing him to hiss. His naked ass hit the carpet, and he gave a soft laugh.

Jason leaned in and kissed him, his tongue thrusting into Blaze's mouth. Blaze tasted himself on his lover's tongue, finding the taste not that unpleasant. He really was going to have to return the favor, but when he reached for Jason's pants, he found them open and his cock soft. Jason broke the kiss with a gasp when Blaze touched him. "I came already."

Blaze looked up into Jason's sated brown eyes. "I'm surprised I lasted as long as I did. I missed you."

Jason reached up and caressed Blaze's cheek. "I missed you too. I was an idiot for shutting you out. Forgive me?"

Blaze laughed at the simplicity of his apology. "Let's see, I'll let you suck my dick but not forgive you? Did you really think I'd do that?"

Jason smiled down at Blaze. "I'd be mad at you if you shut me out for a stupid misunderstanding like this. I should've listened to you."

"I tried to get out what I was trying to say and it just wouldn't come out. I found what I've been looking for my whole life and I almost threw it away because I couldn't tell you what she was saying wasn't true."

Jason's eyes softened as he smiled. "I should've known better than to think it. You've never given me a reason to doubt you."

Blaze looked at Jason as he went from kneeling to sitting on the floor. God, his lover was the most gorgeous man he'd ever seen. He had the darkest brown eyes he'd ever seen, and they were now full of emotion. It made Blaze's heart skip a beat. He watched as Jason rubbed his seed on his pants. "Don't do that."

Jason pursed his lips. "Why not? I have an endless supply of trousers in my bag."

Blaze laughed. "I think it's because I hate doing laundry. It sucks."

Jason smiled back. “Then we’d be good together, because I like laundry. I hate dishes though.”

Blaze’s breath hitched. They were good together and not just because of the sex, which was pretty magnificent. He’d almost passed out from the pleasure of Jason’s mouth on his cock. But love was blossoming in his heart, and that scared him. Should he tell Jason now? Or would Jason brush off his declaration as his befuddled mind being caught in a post-orgasmic haze?

Jason’s words shook him from his reverie. “I like showers even better. Want to join me?”

That sounded nice—naked Jason in a small, enclosed space with their soapy bodies sliding against each other. Blaze’s cock swelled with a renewed interest. He nodded, words unnecessary as he took Jason’s proffered hand.

CHAPTER 6

JASON sat down on the couch and put his head in his hands. It wasn't the worst thing that had ever happened at the beginning of the tour, but a truck sideswiping one of the tour buses in the parking lot of the venue was definitely the source of his headache.

He'd been outside in the heat and sun for what seemed like forever, looking over the damage and running interference between the trucking firm and the insurance company on the phone, but now he leaned back against the couch, hissing as his collar dragged along his sun-burnt skin.

"Jason?"

He looked toward the door of his office. "Hey," he said, gesturing to Blaze as he stood up. "C'mon in."

"Are you okay?" Blaze said with a frown. "Jason! God, you're sunburned."

Jason loosened his tie and winced, as the soft material felt like sandpaper against his burnt skin. Blaze was squatting in front of him, holding out a water bottle. He took it gratefully. "I normally put extra sunscreen on if I know I am going to be outside for long periods of time, but a delivery truck hit one of our tour buses."

Blaze winced. "Is everything going to be alright?"

“The delivery firm’s insurance will cover it. An adjuster will be out here later to look at the damage, hopefully later tonight when it’s dark, because I can’t go out there again in this sun. I guess everything is bigger in Texas, including the sun,” Jason said grouchy.

Blaze dropped to his knees. “Do you have some after-sun lotion or something? You have really fair skin. You need to take care of it.”

Jason pointed toward the bathroom. “Yeah, in my travel case.” Blaze was gone, and Jason leaned back on the couch. A few seconds later, the younger man was back, kneeling as he put the gel on his hands. It felt good, cool, as it was spread on his face.

“Thank you,” Jason said as he closed his eyes.

“I’ll go get some aspirin because you’re gonna have a headache if you were out there that long. Try to rest and I’ll let Jennifer know to leave you alone,” Blaze said as he turned off the lights in the office, shutting the door behind him as he left. Jason relaxed. It felt nice to have someone take care of him for a change.

A COUPLE days later, Blaze walked into the meeting room near the suites at the top of the venue. Jennifer had come downstairs to the stands where he had been sitting with his laptop to give him a message from Jason. Her face was devoid of emotion, which was rather disconcerting. She was so honest, almost unable to hide her emotions. It generally gave him a heads-up on Jason’s mood, which had always been upbeat and playful.

The man who was sitting on the table as he looked out over the arena was anything but happy right now. He didn’t look angry, just dejected. “Jason?” He didn’t answer, didn’t acknowledge Blaze’s presence. For a second, Blaze wondered if he had lost a friend or a

family member. He reached out and touched the older man's shoulder.

Jason's arm was surprisingly fast as it sneaked out and pulled him into a hug. "Just hold me." Blaze moved into the embrace, positioning himself between Jason's legs and leaning against the table edge. He could feel the tension in his arms as they shook slightly.

"I lost a client," Jason said suddenly. He buried his head in Blaze's shoulder, resting his cheek there as Blaze stroked his hair, reveling in the softness. He whispered sweet nothings in his ear, hoping he was doing something right. When Jason lifted his head, the look in his eyes was no longer dejected but slowly morphing into something else.

Jason spun him around, his hand roaming over Blaze's body. His hair was brushed aside, and he felt soft kisses, which turned into delicate bites along the nape of his neck. He let out a quiet moan as he hardened. He knew what was coming as those hands moved lower and felt cool air on his stomach as his shirt was unbuttoned. He heard the soft rasp of his zipper as Jason bit hard. "I'm going to make you beg me to fuck you here, I promise."

Those words sent a sharp, thrilling lust through him. He had never seen Jason so commanding before, but he was always directing everything going on around him instead of focusing it on Blaze. Normally he had an outlet for it, exerting his power at work. When he came to be with Blaze, he was always relaxed and patient. This time was different.

His hands were pulling Blaze's pants down, reaching inside his briefs and encircling his cock with his long fingers. Blaze arched his back, unable to stop his hips from moving in time with the strokes on his member. The hand was squeezing him, a thumb dragging over the cockhead and a finger moving deftly along the underside. His cries urged Jason on, telling him just how much Blaze was enjoying it.

Jason slid to the edge of the table and started rubbing his own bulge against Blaze. The hand on his cock made it difficult to think, and his hips thrust forward on their own, as Blaze was barely able to hold himself back.

Blaze's world whirled as the hand disappeared and Jason shifted them. He put his hands on the table as his pants were stripped down to his knees. "Kick off your shoes and pants," Jason ordered. Blaze obeyed, hearing the rasp of Jason's zipper. He looked back to see the other man fumbling with a small foil packet of lube. He spread some on his fingers as he met the younger man's gaze.

"You had this planned," Blaze said in an almost accusatory tone.

Jason smiled. "I needed this." For a minute, the dark passion that sat behind his tightly held control showed through. He came towards Blaze with those wet fingers as Blaze turned to face the table, gripping the wood tightly. He jumped when he felt the cool gel on his entrance, tensing as one digit moved inside him. Another finger was added swiftly, and Blaze felt the burn as he was stretched. Those lips were back on his neck as Jason pulled his shirt down to expose his shoulders. The two fingers stretched him, going deep, and suddenly he saw stars. He felt the pressure deep within as Jason gently stroked his gland.

"Please, Jason, fuck me." The words flew out of his mouth. Blaze bit his lip when he realized he was doing exactly what Jason wanted, begging to be fucked by the older man. He smiled inwardly when those fingers disappeared.

Jason was back rather quickly, his cock sheathed with a condom as he positioned it against Blaze's hole. "Say it again," he rasped.

Blaze turned around to look at Jason. The need written on Jason's face was blatant as Blaze began to shake, his own desire flaming inside him. "Fuck me, please."

Jason started pushing his cock inside him, moving slowly, letting Blaze adjust to the fullness. Those shudders Blaze was feeling from the older man signaled to him the control Jason had over his passion was going to break. As scary as it sounded, Blaze wanted Jason to lose his inhibitions and fuck him into the table.

His words and the looks he tossed over his shoulder coaxed Jason into revealing a different side of his personality, the one he hid from everyone as he slammed into Blaze. “You want this, don’t you?” Jason asked darkly. “You love having my dick inside you... oh!”

Blaze’s muscles tightened involuntarily as he started to stroke himself. He wanted Jason to concentrate on his own pleasure for once, not both of theirs. But his muscles were now tensing as Blaze was nearing his peak.

Jason’s moans were urging him on, the friction causing tightening inside him as their pinnacle neared. Blaze lost himself in the pleasure as he stroked himself. “Jas—oh,” he tried to say as he came with a grunt.

Jason wasn’t far behind. He caught Blaze by his hips as he fell forward against the table, his cock pulsing inside the younger man as he thrust in and out. Blaze’s cries begged Jason to follow him, and it wasn’t long before he felt Jason’s hips jerk hard and then still.

It took a while for both of them to recover. Blaze moved into Jason’s lap after he’d discarded the condom, sitting awkwardly as Jason held him. “Sorry you’re so sore,” Jason whispered against his shoulder.

“It’s all right. It was definitely worth it to see you lose control so... wow,” Blaze said, robbed of intelligent speech.

Jason winced and leaned until his forehead rested against Blaze’s cheek. “Now I have guilt. And I didn’t lose control.”

“Sure,” Blaze said with just a touch of a humoring tone in his voice. Jason lifted his head and looked at him.

“Blaze isn’t your first name, is it?”

Blaze stiffened slightly. “No, it isn’t.”

Jason looked like he was waiting for Blaze to tell him his real name. A name shouldn’t hold this much power, shouldn’t be connected to that many bad memories. He shoved away the dark thoughts as he looked into Jason’s eyes. “You lost an artist?” Blaze asked curiously.

Jason sighed as it became apparent to him Blaze wasn’t going to confess his name. “He found new management. He said he didn’t like the direction I was taking him in. I didn’t think it was that bad.”

“You win some, you lose some, right?”

Jason frowned. “I’ve never lost an artist.”

Blaze cocked his head as he looked at Jason. “Really?”

“Well, I’ve had some retire or move on to movies. I even helped them get an agent for that career path, but I’ve been managing musicians for eight years and not one has left me yet.”

Blaze tightened his arms around Jason, placing a kiss on top of his head. He was enjoying the familiarity of them talking about Jason’s workday. It was almost domesticated of them. “I’m sorry. But I am glad you were here when it happened.”

Jason nodded and buried his face in Blaze’s shoulder. Jason didn’t bring up the fact he’d just travelled three hours by plane just so he could be here with the man who was quickly becoming the most important part of his life. That wasn’t that significant, was it?

BLAZE would have flown to LA with Jason. Jason had a meeting with another performer and her record company tonight, and then there was an award show the next night. The only thing keeping him there was their final dress rehearsal, which was that night. He really

didn't need it, since he had the music down. The three weeks of practice had passed so quickly.

He would be flying out on Monday to LA with Jennifer, who would take him to Jason's place for the next two weeks. He felt excited about finally seeing Jason's home. He never talked about the house, but Blaze was still looking forward to it. He knew he still had to pack up his things from his apartment, but none of it mattered. He was going to be with Jason.

Now, as he was sitting in the backseat of the limo as he accompanied Jason to the airport, he felt an odd sense of satisfaction, as if his life was finally coming together. Jason, like always, was scrolling through e-mails on his BlackBerry but his other hand was resting on Blaze's knee.

Blaze looked down at the hand and then covered it with his own. It was nice to just sit there in the back of the car, shut away from the world with him. He looked up from their joined hands and saw Jason was looking at him. "What?"

"Just thinking about you staying with me out in LA. You're okay with that, right?"

Blaze beamed. "Of course I am. I'm looking forward to seeing your place, you know?"

Jason looked down. "It really isn't much compared to my parents' place. I mean, it's just been me out there, and I'm not there all that much."

"I'm sure it's fine. Is your bed comfortable?"

Jason shrugged. "I like it," he said as the car started to circle into the departure drop-off area. "But if you don't like it, maybe we can find something different when we're out there."

Blaze's heart leapt into his throat. Maybe he was reading too much into his words, but it almost sounded like an offer from Jason to be something more, something permanent. "O-okay."

The driver was getting out, and Blaze's heart started pounding. He wanted to ask Jason not to leave, but it would be selfish... and impossible. Jason had an important meeting, not just for himself, but for one of his artists. So when Jason looked at him, those soft brown eyes making him melt, he froze, because he didn't want Jason to leave.

Jason turned to go, and Blaze slid towards the door. Jason turned back. "I'll call you tonight when I get in, okay?"

Blaze nodded, and Jason bent into the car. Their lips met, and Blaze wanted to hang onto the moment, because for a second, they weren't a guitarist and a manager sneaking around, they were lovers about to part. As much as it killed him, he let go of Jason's hand.

BLAZE was finished. The guitar tech was packing his equipment away for it to be trucked off to Tampa in two weeks. The last rehearsal was finally over, and only a couple of problems had arisen, which had been taken care of rather quickly. He thought of asking Jennifer if he could surprise Jason by taking a late-night flight to LA but then decided against it. He was sweaty, he didn't have the key to Jason's house, and so on.

He threw his computer bag on the bed and went to turn on the awards show he knew Jason would be attending. He had no idea why Jason went except that he was invited, a sort of see-and-be-seen event. Cassie had left for her private jet as the smoke dissipated from their final run, needing to be out at the same show. Blaze hadn't understood why the dress rehearsal had been booked the same day, but in the end, he hadn't really cared. He was looking forward to the two weeks off.

He switched the TV on, flipping through the channels, looking for the show. He finally found the pre-show on a cable network and left it there. He pulled out his computer and opened it, resuming the

list of e-mails he had been reading through all the while keeping an eye on the screen for Jason.

His parents had sent an e-mail to their friends list from their cruise in the Mediterranean. His brother had e-mailed him a picture of his niece at her second birthday. He had to smile. She was so adorable.

A familiar voice coaxed his attention from his computer to the TV, and he grimaced. Cassie was smiling at a question from the reporter who had his microphone in her face. She was babbling something about her designer, and he was half paying attention until Cassie beckoned off-screen.

Blaze felt his heart leap into his throat as Jason reluctantly stepped onto the screen in a black tuxedo. His gorgeous pale skin stood out against the black fabric, his curls perfectly gelled into place, and those heavenly dark eyes were staring into the camera uncomfortably. His smile was slightly forced. Because Blaze knew him, he recognized that particular smile as the one he used when trying to keep his cool while arguing with a vendor on the tour.

Blaze realized he was grinning like a fool at the television, and he tried to stop, finally giving up and watching the reporter ask about her new tour. It was all basic stuff Blaze knew by heart, the start date, the starting city, and so on. He only had eyes for his tall, dark, and sexy man, who suddenly had a shocked look on his face.

The reporter was congratulating them, and Cassie was beaming. Wait, why was she being congratulated? He wished he were able to rewind the live show and hear it again because surely he'd heard her wrong.

He turned the volume up. "So has a date been set yet?"

Jason looked like he had been sucker-punched, and Blaze wanted to scream at him to deny it, but Cassie flipped her hair over her shoulder and looked up at him. "No date yet, but soon." She looked like she was going to say more, but then Jason took her by her elbow and thanked the reporter as he pulled her off-camera. The

camera focused in on the reporter as he said, “You heard it here first. Jason Stockton, son of actor Jeremy Stockton and actress Laura Banks, is getting married to platinum recording artist Cassie, who he’s also managing. And after commercial, we will back—” Blaze couldn’t take any more as he shut off the TV.

His chest hurt, and his stomach burned with bile. So this was how it was going to be. He was just the boy on the side, the guy Jason fucked while being married to his little pop star. Jason had said it best when he told Blaze husbands and wives in Hollywood used each other to work their way up the Tinseltown ladder.

Thank God no one had known about them on the tour, or he would never have been able to face them when they came back from their two-week vacation. Fuck, he was going to have to find a place to stay now that he had given up his place. He couldn’t stay in a hotel for two weeks....

He ran into the bathroom and dropped his cell phone on the counter. Wave after wave of nausea ran through him as he stood over the toilet. How could he have been so blind? Jason was the son of two very famous people in Hollywood. Why would he want a simple guy like himself? Jason would never have come out about their relationship, even though it wouldn’t have damaged his career.

Blaze might have handled it better if it were anyone but that fucking bitch. He hated Cassie, hated her with a blind, wild passion. Did Jason kiss her with the same sensuous mouth? Or was she just a beard, and he wanted to have Blaze? The nausea stopped as he leaned his head on the cool marble counter. His hand brushed his cell phone. He wanted desperately to call Jason, get an explanation. He figured Jason didn’t have his BlackBerry on him, so he shut that idea down.

He picked up his phone and dialed Osaka. “Hey, bro,” he said when his brother answered.

“What’s wrong?” He should have known when he picked up the phone that Yosuke would sense the anxiety and pain laced in his voice.

“I just wanted to talk. I’m done with our practice run and I have a little over a week off before I need to be back. I was thinking of coming to Japan to see you.” He hadn’t been thinking of going to see his brother, really, until just right then. It didn’t sound like a bad idea to him. He wouldn’t have to see Jason, and he’d think about calling him in a few days when he’d cooled down.

“You haven’t booked the ticket yet, have you? I thought you got my e-mail. Mitsu and I are bringing the little one to see Tutu.”

Shit. He had seen the e-mail about them going to visit their grandmother in Hawaii but forgotten it. “I didn’t think about that. I haven’t booked the ticket yet, thank God.”

“Well then, meet us there. Tutu would give her right arm to see you. We’re staying at Mom and Dad’s while they’re gone, but they get back just a couple of days after we get there. I’m sure Tutu would have a room for you at her house.”

Blaze smiled, though a tear slid down his cheek. “She always does.”

CHAPTER 7

HE WAS standing at the counter, waiting for the lady to bring his ticket over and check his bags. The past two days had been hectic as he packed his stuff away at the apartment and put everything in his car. He didn't have much to pack, so instead, he'd spent most of the time calling around to see if there was a cheap hotel he could stay in for a few days before heading off to start the tour.

He'd given Jennifer the slip when they came into LA, feeling bad about leaving her in the lurch and having to explain to Jason about showing up empty-handed without him. But then, Jason would be expecting it.

He'd seen the number on caller ID when Jason had called. It had taken every ounce of strength to not answer, instead sending the call to voicemail. It hurt every time he saw the number pop up, and he felt the physical pain deep within himself. What was worse than the pain was knowing he would eventually have to face Jason, all the while knowing he was sleeping with that bitch.

He had known all along that things could go this badly but still he'd jumped in with both feet, just like how he'd thrown himself into playing the guitar, all or nothing. He'd wanted to be with Jason so badly that he hadn't anticipated what could happen in the future. Not having a place to stay wasn't as bad as losing his heart and having it shattered.

He leaned his head against the counter, hoping the cracks in his heart weren't showing for the whole world to see. He felt so stupid. It was all over between him and Jason, even though he hadn't told the older man yet. If Blaze had to learn his lover was getting married on an award show of all places, Jason could deal with the suffering.

"Here's your ticket, sir. Your flight will be departing from terminal two." Blaze was pulled from his thoughts by the ticket agent holding out a folder. She had a lovely, flirtatious smile, but it was no match for the smile of the man who had crushed his heart.

Blaze politely smiled back and thanked her. He opened his folder and looked at his gate number as he turned away. He probably should've been looking where he was going, but he was concentrating on the signs directing him towards security when he was knocked over.

Confusion reigned as he lay there on the floor, the wind knocked out of him. His hip was sore where he had landed. His ribs also hurt where someone's elbow was digging in, and that was the moment when he realized someone was laying on top of him. Once he saw those dark brown eyes, his lungs couldn't seem to drag air in. *What the hell is he doing here?*

"Blaze." Jason's brown eyes lit up when Jason said his name. It made Blaze's heart twist and start to beat double time.

"Jason."

"Yes, I know my name, you fuckwit. What the hell are you doing here?"

Now was not the time to be getting an erection, but fuck it all, he certainly was. He tried to shift uncomfortably, which was difficult with the pain shooting through his shoulder as his cock pressed against Jason's hip. Blaze grimaced. "I could ask the same thing of you. I'm on break, aren't I? Shouldn't you be chasing after Cassie, making sure she doesn't end up strung up by her toenails?"

Jason scowled. "I'm not her babysitter. Only her manager. Again, why are you leaving?"

Blaze could only stare at the man on top of him. "Why would I stay? I'm going to see my family and... maybe sleep?"

The angry look was still marring Jason's handsome face as he pulled away, sitting back on his haunches as he helped Blaze up. "You can do all that here, with me. Invite them to come see you."

"No, asshole," he said as he slapped Jason's hand away as he stood up, brushing his clothing off. He gave a discreet glance at Jason, more than a little shocked by his casual dress. He'd never seen him in anything other than dress pants and a collared shirt. The fitted blue shirt and jeans that left nothing to Blaze's imagination were something he wished to enjoy in private, not in the middle of the airport. "I can't ask them to come all this way just for me. My brother's coming from Japan with his wife and their daughter and I'm seeing my grandmother while I am there. They live in the real world. They don't live the glamorous lifestyle we do."

"Are you leaving because of what Cassie said on TV? Tell me you didn't see that." The crushed look on Jason's face was too much to bear.

Blaze closed his eyes. He was in a dangerous place, becoming so transparent that Jason could see through him in everything he did. "Don't worry about it. I'll be back for the tour."

"Fucking forget her tour. I want you to come back for me." Blaze's eyes flew open, and he looked at Jason as he continued to talk. "If I had to get another guitarist, I would. But... you're important to me."

"Am I? If I was that important, you wouldn't have gone to the award show with her. You wouldn't be announcing your engagement to her. How is it, screwing her guitarist while she is planning the wedding? Does she get off on it too?"

“We’re not engaged. Not even close. The reason we lost her last guitarist is because she was engaged to him, she broke it off and then threw him off the tour. She got rid of the only man who was willing to put up with her shit, which makes her a fool. I would never marry her. God have mercy on the man who does.”

Blaze stared hard at Jason, trying to figure out.... “Are you kidding me?”

Jason shook his head. “I’m serious. I would’ve never led you on like that. I have no idea why she spouted that shit on TV, but then I don’t understand half of what she does.”

Blaze crumpled his ticket in his hand. “I wish I’d known. I might not have gone back. But I already have my plane ticket, and... my flight is leaving in just a couple of hours.”

Jason stared at him, the anger evident in his eyes. “Damn. I knew something was wrong for the last two days when you wouldn’t answer your cell, but I never thought you would actually think there was something between Cassie and myself. I hoped beyond hope you hadn’t seen her little sideshow on the red carpet. She’s a fucking little troublemaker. If we hadn’t grown up together, I would’ve tossed her off on another manager long ago.”

Blaze held up his hands. “Whoa, don’t get all angry at her just because of me.”

Jason ran his hand through his hair, seemingly trying to calm down. “Like you said before, if it wasn’t for her, we wouldn’t be having this trouble. God, I’m sorry I’m taking all this out on you.”

Blaze wanted to hug Jason, feel those slender long arms around him. “Don’t worry about it,” he said, feeling slightly giddy and suddenly very magnanimous about the whole situation. “I do feel stupid about this though.”

Jason frowned. “You should. Have I ever given you a reason not to trust me?”

Blaze looked at the ground. “No. Not really.” He would have said more, but suddenly Jason took his hand and started dragging him through the terminal until they reached a secluded lounge apart from the bustling travelers.

Jason was looking down at him as he pulled Blaze into a hug. “I was scared that I’d lost you.”

Those arms felt so good around him, and Blaze leaned his head against Jason’s shoulder. “Me too,” he admitted.

Jason put a finger under his chin and tipped Blaze’s face up to look at him. “Don’t run off like this again.”

Blaze couldn’t look away, not when he saw the pain of Jason’s loss in his eyes. “Come with me to Hawaii,” he said softly.

Jason groaned and looked away. “I want to, and honestly, if I hadn’t run into you here, I might’ve followed you to Oahu. I couldn’t have stood the next week knowing that you were angry and hurting, waiting to see if you were coming back.”

“I was going to come back to the tour. I just couldn’t show up at your house and face you, not after what she said on the awards show.”

“But you knew it wasn’t true.”

Blaze shook his head. “I didn’t know, Jason. I met you three weeks ago, and ever since then, my life has changed in every single way. I don’t know what to think right now. Come with me to Hawaii,” he said again, nearly begging.

Jason made a small noise as he closed his eyes. “I wish I could, but I have meetings here. There’s nothing I would like more than a vacation right now. Just trust me when I say that if I hadn’t run into you, I might have chased you to Hawaii. But I just can’t go right now.”

Blaze looked at his feet. The plane ticket hadn't cost much, and he could go after the tour. But.... "I already told my grandmother I was coming. I can't let her down."

Jason smiled for the first time Blaze had seen today, even if it was a bit sadly. "Then you have to go. You can't get your grandmother's hopes up and then dash them. We can talk on the phone, and it's only for a week. We still have a few days in LA before we head off to start the tour."

Blaze nodded and looked at his watch. "I have to go to make sure I get through security in time for my flight. I'll call you when I get there."

Jason dipped his head down for a quick kiss. Blaze flushed, worried about being seen by the tourists in the airport, but he returned the kiss. When he pulled away, he noticed the insecure look on Jason's face. "Are you sure you're returning?" he asked.

Blaze sighed and looked Jason in the eye. "I promise you... I'm coming back."

JASON pulled out of the airport in his SUV, dreading the drive back to his house. He was satisfied, if only for the time being. He knew in the instant he dragged Cassie off the camera that Blaze had no doubt seen Cassie's little stunt. The dread had burned in his stomach as he ground out a lecture about her shitty PR, chastising her as they walked inside. It had done his heart little good, though.

For the past two days, he had tried to call Blaze with no luck. Finally, Terry called after Blaze left details of his trip so anyone who needed to could reach him in case of an emergency. Jason had promised to work on getting the label to give him a raise, thankful the head of security had thought to call him.

It had been pure luck to literally run into the guitarist in the middle of the ticketing desks. Jason's shoulder was still sore, and

he'd twisted his knee slightly when they fell to the ground. His heart had clenched when he had seen the pain in those sea-colored eyes, the way those full lips had thinned when Blaze looked up at him.

It had been on the tip of his tongue to tell the younger man how he felt. He had almost blurted it out, wanting so desperately to hear it back as well. The fact he had chased Blaze to the airport, hoping to catch him, was telling. He hadn't even chased after Derek when he left.

He wasn't keen on letting the other man go, and for a second when Blaze had asked him, he'd almost given in to going to Hawaii. If Jason hadn't had the meetings later that week, he would have hopped the plane with Blaze. He could buy clothes there, or perhaps Blaze would make sure he didn't need them at all.

He smiled at the thought, but his reverie was broken when his cell rang. He hit the button to answer on his headset. "This is Jason." He listened for the caller but was surprised to find silence. "Hello?"

"Jason?"

"Blaze? Are you on the plane yet? Are you missing me already?" Jason said sweetly.

"Um, about that... my flight was cancelled due to heavy winds."

Jason felt his heart skip a beat. He hit the brakes and made a U-turn, ignoring the horns of the oncoming cars, trying to get his thoughts together. He'd need a change of clothes from home, and he should call a hotel near the airport. Blaze's voice brought him back to reality. "Jason? Oh God, are you okay?"

"I am fine," Jason said, grinning. "I'm on my way."

BLAZE sat on the bed in the hotel and picked up his phone. He had intended to ring his brother in Hawaii to let them know, but with all

the bad weather on the island, they should have figured it out. Still, he sent a text from his phone and then relaxed on the bed.

Jason had told him to go to this hotel and that a room would be waiting for them. He just hadn't expected it to be this nice. The one-bedroom suite was pretty awesome, actually, much nicer than the hotel room he had stayed at in San Antonio.

When he'd learned his flight was cancelled, he had thought he would be disappointed, but instead, his first thought had been to call Jason. Maybe this was exactly what they needed.

There was a knock, and he opened the door, thinking it was someone from the front desk. Instead it was Jason was standing there, holding a bag. His hair was tousled, his cheeks flushed. The look was actually pretty hot on him, Blaze decided.

Jason didn't say anything, just strode through the door and pulled Blaze into his arms. It was so comforting to be held by this strong man, he thought as he closed his eyes and leaned into Jason's arms. For a second, he could forget their fight and just be in the here-and-now with his lover.

He pulled Jason's lips down to his own, their lips meeting in a crushing kiss. Jason knew he didn't have to be too gentle with Blaze. He wouldn't break. Blaze slid his tongue back and forth along the other man's lips, pressing in, possessing his mouth and tasting the sweetness of rum on his tongue.

Blaze pulled away. "Have you been drinking?"

Jason looked chagrined. "I had to have a drink downstairs at the bar. If I hadn't, I might be fucking you into the mattress."

Blaze's ass clenched hard as a thrill of pleasure ran through him. "What if I wanted it like that?"

"You did? Do you need this as much as I do?" Jason asked silkily as he rubbed his arousal against the younger man.

Blaze flushed and hid his face in the older man's soft cotton shirt, breathing in his musk. He felt the chuckle in the taller man's chest, and he leaned into him, loving the way he smelled, the expensive cologne permeating his senses.

Jason turned him around to face the hotel room and pushed him gently toward the bedroom. Neither could wait, and they started stripping their clothes as they went. A belt fell to the floor by the bar and a shirt by the couch. When they both hit the bedroom, only Jason had his boxers still left on. They fell onto the bed, kissing as their hands groped.

Jason straddled Blaze's hips, pinning him to the bed. He leaned down, dropping a kiss on his lover's neck. "This is what I've wanted all day. I chased you to the airport, not wanting you to leave. I had to have you."

"Then let me... this time?" Blaze's aqua eyes were full of questions. At Jason's nod, he was pushing Jason down on his back, pulling off his cotton boxers. He covered the older man's body, looking into those brown eyes full of blazing fire.

His hand trailed down Jason's chest, moving over those tense muscles in his abdomen. He had started with stroking the thick member, urged on by the other man's gasps. The noise that came from Jason sounded almost painful. Blaze searched Jason's face but only found pleasure.

"Don't stop. Oh God, please." The look of need on Jason's face sent a rush of power through him, and he licked the underside before he engulfed the whole cockhead with his mouth. The answering groan urged him on, and he started bobbing his head up and down, working the swollen flesh. The vocalizations as Jason sounded his approval went straight to Blaze's cock, making it throb.

He pulled back, all the way off Jason's cock, wetting his lips as he dragged his rosy lips down the hard flesh. Jason moaned, his pitch going higher at the end. His cries were wordless and yet conveyed how much he enjoyed his complete and utterly pleasurable

torture. Blaze poked his tongue out, moving back up toward the plump head. He slid his tongue back and forth just near the tip as Jason jerked his hips.

“Fuck, Blaze. How’d you learn that?”

Blaze smiled. “Did you like it? I can continue.”

“Oh no, you don’t. I won’t last.”

Blaze looked up at Jason as he was pulled up and laid against the hard, long body that had brought him such luscious ecstasy in the past. Their cocks slid along each other, the heat from their skin soaking into his member. Jason was slick from Blaze’s spit, causing them to move together deliciously. Jason thrust his hips up as Blaze kissed him, plunging his tongue inside Jason’s hot mouth.

The friction of their sliding cocks sent pleasure racing through Blaze’s body, shooting sparks along his nerves from his toes to his fingertips. He thrust again, enjoying the sensation and Jason’s moans as they ground against each other.

Jason’s hand moved down Blaze’s back, cupping his hot ass and moving between his cheeks. Blaze moaned as he pushed away the other man’s arm. Jason’s eyes flew open as the younger man sat up, straddling his hips. “I’ll do it.”

Jason’s hips came off the bed. “You’ll do me this time?” Jason asked excitedly.

Blaze froze as he reached for the lube. He’d meant he would lube himself up for Jason’s long cock. Could he really do Jason? Fear filled him as he worried about hurting the older man. Jason had probably never done that, and Blaze had no idea what to do. Instead of answering him, Blaze grabbed the lube and squirted some on his fingers.

Jason saw the worry in Blaze’s eyes. “Babe?” Jason questioned as he leaned up on his elbows. When Blaze’s hand disappeared behind him, Jason groaned. “Oh fuck.”

The sight of Blaze on his knees, his hand behind himself as he prepared himself for Jason's cock, accompanied by the sound Blaze's hand was making as he thrust his fingers inside himself, was too much for Jason. He grabbed a condom and rolled it on, adding more lube to his sheathed cock, all the while keeping his eyes on his lover above him. "Ready?"

Blaze bit his lip. "I think so." He edged up Jason's body and steadied himself with an arm by the other man's shoulder. Jason held his cock in place, and slowly, Blaze slid onto him. Jason closed his eyes as he felt his cock enveloped, but Blaze's moan brought him back to reality.

He looked up at Blaze sitting on him, his eyes shut tight. "You okay?" Jason whispered as Blaze started to move.

"Yeah... you're just big and... and it's hitting... oh God." Blaze stiffened and grabbed his cock as sensation shot up his spine with every thrust Jason made.

Jason sat up and grabbed Blaze's ass. "Then you better start this before it ends for you."

Blaze bit his lip as he moved faster on his lover's hard cock. His little pants were edging Jason along, not that it was taking much to get him there. When Blaze actually started moving faster, Jason arched into the younger man, the sensations too much to bear. Blaze stiffened, his mouth formed into a circle. Jason's body tensed as a tortured moan escaped him. His fingers twisted in the bed sheets as Blaze's cock jerked, the tip leaking as they moved faster.

Jason held Blaze's hips, thrusting deeper as his end neared. Blaze had his face scrunched up tight, his thighs tensing as his peak hit him hard. His seed splashed all over Jason's stomach and chest, and he felt oddly primitive, like Blaze was marking him. Blaze collapsed back against Jason's bent legs, his head lolling back as he clenched around the cock still inside him. Jason groaned and his hips jerked, his pinnacle taking him over as he came inside Blaze.

BLAZE lay against Jason's chest, his eyes closed as he let the orgasm run through his body. Jason's chest was rising and falling quickly, and Blaze let his cheek rub against the light sprinkling of dark hair there. His thighs were sore as he moved off the taller man, standing up on shaky legs carefully. Jason was sitting up, a slightly dazed expression on his face.

He went into the bathroom to clean up, leaving Jason sitting on the edge of the bed. As he looked at himself in the mirror, he realized he had a goofy grin and a look in his eyes that made it obvious he had been freshly fucked by someone he loved.

When he left the bathroom, he walked over to the bed, seeing Jason propped up on a pillow. As he got closer, Blaze realized Jason was asleep, his mouth open slightly. Blaze smiled and dropped a kiss on Jason's lips and pulled the sheet and blanket up to cover him.

"BLAZE, tell me your real name. The label wouldn't tell me."

Blaze had been reading his e-mail in bed and glanced over to find Jason awake and staring at him sleepily, his head propped up on a pillow as he lay on his stomach. He sighed and closed his laptop. "Fine. But you have to tell me something about yourself. Something no one knows."

Jason looked into Blaze's eyes. "I have no secrets with you."

"Akihiko."

Jason smiled. "Ah-key-hee-co," he said it slowly, sounding it out. "I love it. It fits you."

Blaze shook his head. "I've tried to distance myself from that name for the longest time. My parents picked it and they don't even know me," he said, biting his lip.

Jason said nothing but took his lover's hand as Blaze continued. "Since I picked up a guitar, this is what I've wanted to do. I'll never be who they want me to be." Blaze looked away for a few seconds before glancing back with a sad smile. "Now... tell me something about yourself."

"I have a nipple ring."

"I know that isn't true, Jason. Come on, be serious."

Jason rolled onto his back and stared at the ceiling. "I sometimes feel like I'm living this big lie. Everyone looks at me like I'm this amazing manager."

"You *are* an amazing manager."

Jason snorted. "No, not really. I mean, how difficult is it to call and book your artists in these shows if you know who to call? The venues are always looking for the big talent to play there, and the media is always looking for an interview. Even if there is some terrible scandal, the media outlets hound us for interviews, and that's when it gets really bad."

"People look to me to be a leader, and half the time, I feel like I don't know what the fuck I'm doing. I do however feel like I carry the weight of all my employees, like they trust me to bring it every day, make it happen even though I feel like I'm falling that much further down the rabbit hole."

Blaze stared at Jason, speechless. "I didn't know," he said softly, feeling odd as he looked at Jason's lost expression. He had never seen the older man lose it emotionally.

"I mean, I'm supposed to be the one who is always in control of everything, including my feelings. Not really. Least of all when it comes to you, Blaze. I see you with someone else, smiling at them, and I wig the fuck out on the inside. God forbid they touch you, because I want to walk over there and break their hands off."

He looked up at Blaze, his eyes wide. "Oh God, Blaze. Don't hate me," Jason said, choking on the words.

Tears hit Blaze's eyes. "Jason, how could I hate you? I lo—" Blaze snapped his mouth shut and bit his lip, looking at Jason in horror.

Jason seemed to freeze. His slender arms tightened around his pillow. "You love me?"

Blaze looked down at him as he clenched his fists. "Don't make me say it."

Jason blinked as he rolled over and looked directly into Blaze's eyes. "Let me clue you into something. I have no control in this relationship. You've held all the cards since the minute you walked into my life, and it has fucking freaked me out. So... please? Give me this one gift."

Blaze looked at Jason. He knelt over the older man, who was now stretched out on his back. He steadied himself on his knees so his eyes were level with Jason's. He wanted to see the reaction there when he said it. "I love you, Jason."

The older man briefly closed his eyes and smiled. When his eyes opened, the happiness there made Blaze's heart twist. He thought saying it to Jason would have prepared him for hearing it, but he was wrong. Amazingly and beautifully wrong. "I love you, too, Akihiko."

Blaze jerked slightly when he heard his given name, but when he realized the loving way Jason had whispered his declaration was part of his defenses breaking down, he knew he could put up with Jason using it if it made him happy.

Blaze dropped a kiss on his collarbone, trailing his lips downward as he pulled the sheet down to reveal Jason's naked body. He trailed kisses down the older man's body, loving the way Jason's muscles tensed when Blaze's lips hit his abs. As he got down to Jason's hard cock and his hand closed over it, he lifted his head and looked at Jason's face. The need was mixed with something Blaze realized had been there for a while now. Love.

“I sorta like this other side of you,” Jason said as he ran the backs of his fingers over Blaze’s cheek.

Blaze leaned into his hand. “What do you mean?”

“This take-charge attitude. You on top of me, demanding to suck my cock.”

Blaze frowned. “I didn’t demand anything.”

Jason chortled. “Yes you did, you horny little fucker. And it’s hot as hell too.”

Blaze made a face. “Are we done talking?” In a second, Blaze felt Jason’s arms surrounding him as he was flipped on his stomach and covered by the older man, Jason’s hard cock digging into Blaze’s back.

“Are you done being a mouthy little brat? Or am I going to have to fuck you into this mattress?”

A thrill shot through Blaze. “Is that a promise? Because you’ve been threatening you were going to do that since you walked into the hotel suite.”

He felt Jason’s hardness grinding into him, and he had to suppress a moan as he heard the older man whisper in his ear, “You’re about to find out.”

Jason’s legs straddled Blaze’s thighs, their skin heated and Jason’s sweaty from sleep. Blaze felt Jason’s cock, hard and long, as it tickled his thighs. A hand disappeared from his shoulder, and he felt the sting of Jason’s palm against his ass cheek. “Oh fuck.”

“You like that, baby?” Jason’s voice was gruff from exertion as he spanked Blaze again.

“As long as you don’t ask me ‘Who’s your daddy?’” Blaze said with a chuckle, breathless from the desire singing within him.

Blaze could hear the smile in Jason’s voice. “You’re gonna pay for that.” Another slap landed on his ass, and then another. With

each one, Blaze got harder, the movement causing more friction on his dick, which was trapped between his body and the sheets.

“You’d better fuck me when you’re done spanking me, babe,” Blaze growled, wriggling his hips.

Jason grabbed for the lube, slicking up his finger. “I’ll fuck you when I’m good and ready. But first, you’re gonna pay for being a mouthy brat,” he said, probing Blaze’s hole.

Blaze tensed at first, more from the shock and not from pain. “Is this some sort of naughty schoolboy meets horny headmaster fantasy? Do I have to put on a school uniform next?” He knew asking would egg Jason on.

Jason growled. “I hated my school uniform. We had a bonfire after school the day we graduated and we all burnt our uniforms. So no, I’m nixing that idea.”

Jason pulled his finger out to get more lube, and Blaze took the opportunity to turn the tables on the older man. He twisted and turned as he grabbed Jason’s shoulders and pushed him down on his back. The shock written on Jason’s face had him crowing on the inside. “So let me get this straight. You hated your school uniform but you wear essentially a uniform to work. You’re a rock and roll manager, Jase. You can wear anything you want.”

Jason sighed. “I’m a dork, okay? I like dressing upscale. And besides, the uniforms were polyester,” Jason said, wrinkling his nose. “I hate polyester.”

Blaze chuckled. “Well, admitting you’re a stuffed shirt is the first step,” he said, releasing Jason. He wasn’t prepared for Jason shoving him back onto the pillows, topping him again, this time so they faced each other.

JASON looked down at the younger man, his gorgeous blue eyes wide with shock. God, his lover had a pretty look on his face. Blaze's lips were bruised from their rough kissing before, and his cock was leaking, smearing all over his stomach as it bounced.

Jason leaned in, wanting to taste those sweet lips again. Blaze responded, probing Jason's lips with his tongue. Jason grabbed a condom off the nightstand, fumbling with the packet. He finally got it open, rolling it down his stiff prick. "Would a stuffed shirt fuck your ass like this?" Jason ground out as he slid inside that hot ass.

Blaze was still loose from the time before as Jason slid inside that amazing heat. Blaze arched his back, his sleek hair falling into his eyes. "Oh God," Blaze moaned, tensing around Jason's cock.

He slid all the way in as Blaze's muscles shuddered around him. They'd never done it like this, always using other positions. This time, he would be able to see Blaze's orgasm, watch as his lover came undone and kiss him as the spasms wracked his body. Blue-green eyes, trusting and loving, looked up into his. Jason swallowed as emotions welled within him. How had they gone from playful spanking to making love so quickly? "Love you."

The emotion on Blaze's face as he whispered back those words tore his heart open. "I love you, Jase. I—" Blaze would have said more, but Jason captured his lips, kissing him with a fervor he'd never felt before.

He pulled back and brushed away the hair that fell over his lover's face. *Akihiko*, Jason thought as he thrust gently inside him. The name was beautiful, as gorgeous as the man beneath him, who was arching his back with a cry.

Jason kissed along Blaze's jaw, nipping at the skin gently. He felt Blaze's arms go around him, holding him close. He pulled away from kissing his lover, watching his eyes go unfocused as Jason thrust hard inside him.

Blaze made a breathless sound, and Jason knew he'd hit that sensitive spot inside the other man. Beads of sweat broke out on his brow as Blaze shut his eyes. "Oh no, baby, open your eyes."

He followed Jason's direction as their hips came together again. "You're driving me out of my mind," Blaze ground out as his muscles started the rhythmic tensing that signaled his orgasm.

Jason moved his hips faster, but he didn't look away from the stormy sea he found as he looked into his lover's eyes. He felt like he was being drawn deeper in, drowning in the maelstrom. His peak hit him hard and took him by surprise. He lost himself in the aqua eyes of the man he'd already lost his heart to.

THE next morning, Blaze stood at the counter as he checked in. It was way too early to be awake, but they had checked the weather, and the winds were calm in Hawaii. The clerk was printing off his boarding pass again as she took his bags and weighed them.

At the hotel, Jason had leaned over for a kiss as Blaze left their room, and now, he could still feel the other man's lips on his own, even twenty minutes later. It had hurt his heart, but he'd had to leave.

"Here's your ticket, Mr. Shinozuka. We're terribly sorry for the delay yesterday. You're in seat 2B, and if you just listen for the pre-boarding call in the lounge—"

He blinked. "Lounge?"

"Yes, Mr. Shinozuka. The first-class lounge is just inside terminal two on the mezzanine level. Here is a pass for it," she said, handing him a little invitation card.

Blaze stared at it. "I don't understand. I booked a coach ticket, not first class."

“Let me see. The notes on your reservation say you received an upgrade with miles from a corporate account. It looks like someone with the initials JD called in to make the changes this morning.”

He racked his brain, but he could only remember Jason watching him getting ready for his trip this morning. Blaze had been distracted by Jason kissing him, but he remembered he had responded to a couple of e-mails on his BlackBerry as Blaze had made his way to the door. JD... Jennifer.

He smiled and thanked the woman as he picked up his backpack. He slung it over his shoulder and started walking through the terminal, a little spring in his step. He flipped open his phone and sent a text to Jennifer, thanking her for the upgrade, before calling Jason.

“Hello?”

“Thank you for the upgrade.”

Blaze could almost hear the smile through the phone. “Thank Jennifer, she is the one who arranged it.”

“I just sent her a text before I called you. I didn’t want to wake her up, but I know you must have asked her to do it.”

“It’s three hours later in New York, so don’t be surprised if you get a message back. I doubt she is sleeping with an appearance coming up for Cassie.”

Blaze got in line at security and made a sour face. “Just had to mention her, hmm?”

“Better get used to her. She’s one of my biggest clients, and I hope neither of you are going anywhere anytime soon.”

Blaze’s frown changed to a goofy smile. That little sentence was so simple and yet gave away so much. It was interesting how just a few words could change his mood completely. “Okay... hey, I have to hang up since I am going through the scanners soon, but...”

Blaze trailed off, wanting to say those words even though he was in public.

“It’s okay if you aren’t comfortable with saying—”

“I love you,” Blaze blurted out.

“I love you, too, Blaze.” The tenderness in Jason’s voice made it difficult to hang up. He closed his phone and took his laptop out and put both in bins on the belt. The girl next to him in line smiled at him. “Talking to your girlfriend?” she asked him.

“Boyfriend,” he said without thinking. His eyes widened in horror as he turned to look at her.

She laughed. “All the cute ones are gay or taken. Or both.”

CHAPTER 8

BLAZE got out of the limo he'd taken from the airport. He'd called Jason and left a message thanking him for scheduling the car on his voicemail, remembering vaguely he was on his way to New York to supervise Cassie at promotional appearances. The whole experience, first class and then a limo, was all very surreal for him.

He walked up to the door of the house he had been to so many times over the years. Nothing changed here; instead, he was the one who had changed. He knocked, and after a couple of minutes, the door opened.

"Blaze!"

Blaze stepped through the doorway and was immediately drawn into a hug from his older brother. He smiled as his brother hugged him hard, patting his back. "Good to see you."

Yosuke pulled away, and Blaze looked into dark eyes alight with mirth. "You look good. The way you sounded on the phone, I was worried about you."

Blaze grimaced as he kicked off his shoes. "I'm sorry about that. I had some... issues to work out."

His brother raised his eyebrow. "Oh?"

As his brother's wife entered the foyer, Blaze shook his head. "I'll tell you about it later," he said softly. He turned his attention to the little girl his sister-in-law was carrying. "Is this the big birthday girl?"

The little girl looked at him, her dark eyes so much like his brother's. Then her eyes lit up as she smiled and reached for him. Mitsu held her out to Blaze. "This is your uncle Akihiko," she said as she pointed to Blaze.

"Or you can always call him Kiko, like I did when I was young," Yosuke said from behind him.

Blaze made a face as he took the little girl from his sister-in-law. "That's a girl's name. Just because you couldn't say my name didn't mean you had to give me gender issues."

Yosuke laughed. "Sorry about that." But in true brotherly fashion, he didn't sound sorry in the least.

Blaze glared at his older brother before he turned back to his niece. She put her hands on his face, playing with his nose. He smiled as he looked at her. "She's so beautiful."

"She looks just like her mom," Yosuke said, moving to take his wife's hand. She smiled at him as Blaze started walking his little niece around, leaving his luggage behind in the hallway.

"Let's go find Tutu," he said softly as she continued to play with his nose.

He walked through the house to where he was sure he would find his grandmother, in the kitchen. He walked in to find a tiny lady scrubbing dishes.

"Tutu," he said in a sing-song voice.

She whirled around, and Blaze saw the surprise in those eyes that were so much like his own. There were a few more grays in her long, dark hair than the last time he had seen her, but it was still thick as it framed her regal face. "Akihiko!"

He sighed as his niece giggled and pinched his nose. “Ack! Help me. She’s got me!”

His grandmother reached for the little girl. “Yuki, come to Tutu.”

Blaze smiled. “God, she’s so cute. I adore her.”

Mitsu was right behind them. “Here, let me take her while you catch up with your grandmother,” Mitsu said, holding out her arms. She took the little girl out of the kitchen as his grandmother put a hand on each of his cheeks and turned his head to face her.

“Let me see what a fine young man you have become.”

“Tutu,” Blaze said with a laugh. “I just got off a long flight. Let me get a soda and we’ll sit down.”

“I can’t right now because I have to run to a friend’s house to drop off some food for them. Her husband just got out of the hospital, and she really needs all the help she can get. But we’ll have dinner tonight, yeah?”

Blaze smiled. “Sure, it’ll give me plenty of time to catch up with Yosuke.”

“Sounds good to me,” his brother piped up.

“Go to the beach, yeah?” He’d already dropped into the island way of speaking. You could take the boy off of the island, but you couldn’t take the island out of the boy.

Yosuke nodded, heading out of the kitchen. “Just let me get my keys. Mitsu,” he called out for his wife. Blaze turned back to his grandmother as she leaned over into the icebox for two casserole dishes.

“Wow, Tutu. I hope you made one for us for tonight,” he said, his mouth watering.

“Actually, I made your favorite dessert. Butter mochi and fresh raspberries.”

“Oh, oh wow,” Blaze said. “Can I have some now?”

Tutu laughed. “No, not now. Go to the beach with your brother.”

Blaze sighed and left the kitchen, running into his brother in the living room. “Mitsu is going to stay here with Yuki-chan, so it’ll just be us. Which is good, because I think you need to get some stuff off your chest.”

Blaze nodded. His heart was going to beat out of his chest. If his big brother rejected him, he wouldn’t know what to do. He knew he would be completely crushed, much more so than if his parents rejected him. He tried to put his thoughts together as he put his shoes on.

Yosuke rattled his car keys. “Ready to go?”

Blaze realized he was staring at the wall, and he turned to his brother. “Let’s go.”

BLAZE fished a few dollars out his pocket and handed it over to the shave ice vendor. Yosuke was laughing. “Dude, just get me a soda. You’re like a tourist.”

“Shut up, bro,” Blaze said, laughing. “We can’t get the good ones on the mainland. Guava, please.”

He took the cone from the vendor and handed his brother his drink as they started walking toward the waves. Blaze breathed in deeply, taking in the scent of the ocean. “I’m in heaven right now.”

“I know, right? It’s sort of weird coming back here, knowing this is no longer my home.”

Blaze frowned. “This will always be my home. I feel like when I visit elsewhere, I am doing just that, visiting.”

Yosuke sighed. “That’ll change when you fall in love. You’ll think of your home as with your family, not just a place. And then when you visit here, this will be a place you grew up, where your parents live. It will be a place you’ll always love, but no longer your home.”

Blaze stopped in his tracks. Were his brother’s words true? He had wanted to stay with Jason instead of coming here, only finally getting on the plane because he had told his brother and grandmother that he was coming and he didn’t want to disappoint them.

Yosuke had stopped with him and was seemingly unaware of the hell his brother was going through. “So... what’d you want to talk about?”

Blaze spooned more of the ice into his mouth so he didn’t have to speak. It was the moment of truth. He could pussyfoot around the matter as much as he wanted, but he needed to have his brother on board with him. Blaze needed him to be okay with this. “I’m seeing someone.”

“Oh! Is it someone from the tour?”

Blaze nodded, and then, as if he had opened a floodgate, the words came pouring out of his mouth. “It’s a guy. He’s Cassie’s manager and his name’s Jason. And I’m just really fucking confused. I never liked a guy before like this, but... I think I’m in love with him.”

Blaze turned to Yosuke and found him with his mouth hanging open. A burning pit of dread settled in his stomach as he looked at his older brother. Finally, Yosuke closed his mouth and said, “I can see you’re confused, bro. Do you think he doesn’t love you back?”

Blaze hadn’t been expecting acceptance, especially with that look of shocked horror on his face. “Aren’t you supposed to be yelling at me, calling me a homo or something?”

Yosuke's brow wrinkled. "I don't understand. Is that what you want me to call you?"

Blaze crumpled his cup and sat down hard in the sand. His brother's acceptance meant more to him than anything, and now he had it. He felt odd, like he had built up all these defenses and none were needed. "No, I'm just happy you don't hate me."

Yosuke sat down next to him. "How could I hate you? You're my little brother."

"I just sorta figured you would."

"Mom and Dad might flip, but not me. Do you remember Jon?"

Blaze looked thoughtful. "You mean the tall guy you used to hang around with?" he asked.

"Yeah. He's mahu," Yosuke said, using the Hawaiian slang for gay.

"No way, Jon is gay?"

"Yeah, he came out to me in our junior year of high school. I was cool with it, but his parents weren't. He was dating a college student in our senior year and when his dad found out, he flipped and beat Jon so badly, he missed our graduation."

"Oh God, I never knew that. I always thought you guys were chasing chicks and partying, ya know?"

"Well, we were definitely partying, and most of us were dating chicks, but Jon wasn't. We kept it quiet and didn't talk too much about his sexual preference. Did it really matter to us if he was gay? No, not really, because he was attracted to other men who liked other men. He didn't want a guy who liked chicks, ya know?"

Blaze looked at his hands. "I thought I liked girls back in high school. I did have crushes on a few of them, but I never got up the balls to go up and say hi to them. Then there were some of them that

would stand a little bit away and point and giggle at me. Dude! It always had me wondering if my fly was open or something.”

Yosuke laughed. “I know. There were a few girls like that for me. Oh, to be that age again and know they were just as nervous as we were.”

Blaze closed his eyes. “I didn’t date much in high school, and I dated very little in college, but I don’t know what happened to me when Jason walked in for my audition. I felt like I had been kicked in the stomach.”

“I felt like that when I saw Mitsu. So, you love him, then?”

“I think I do. I mean, I’ve never been in love and certainly not with a guy, so... I—I don’t know for sure.”

Yosuke let out a sigh. “I’m not going to pretend you being gay doesn’t bother me, but not for the reasons you think. The path you’ll be walking is difficult. I wouldn’t wish it on anyone, least of all my brother. There’ll be times when you’ll doubt yourself. There are going to be times when you wonder if it’s worth the harassment.”

“But Jon got through it, right?” Blaze asked as he bit his lip.

“He got through it with the guy he loves. He might’ve lost his family, but he had the man he loved and is still with today. So... do you love Jason?”

Blaze swallowed hard. “Yes. I love him,” he said softly as he looked over at his brother.

Yosuke smiled broadly. “Then I am happy for you.”

“I’m going to tell Mom and Dad when they get home.”

Yosuke got up off the sand. “They’re going to flip, bro. Do you want me to come along with you?”

Blaze played with the sand between his toes. “I don’t think so. I think that this is something I have to tell them for myself, yeah?”

DINNER with his brother and grandmother was full of laughter, and Blaze was happy he had a couple extra days to spend with them before throwing himself to the lions. He was dreading telling his parents. If Yosuke said his parents would go nuts, they were going to.

Yosuke had always been the perfect son, their firstborn. He had been on the baseball team in high school, popular with all the girls as far as Blaze could remember. He'd been accepted to a top university in Japan, where he had met his wife, and now he had a beautiful baby girl.

Blaze had never begrudged his brother the success he had, but he'd always felt a little inadequate in his parents' eyes in comparison. As he said his goodbyes to his brother and family when they left for the evening, he couldn't help but dread facing his parents and seeing the disappointment there again.

It felt nice to be barefoot as he walked into the kitchen. His grandmother stood in front of the sink, washing the dishes. "Let me help you with those, Tutu."

"Oh hush. Get yourself a drink and sit down. Did you like your treat?"

Blaze knew better than to argue with her as he reached into the refrigerator and grabbed a soda. "Yes, I did. It was amazing. I wish I could take it with me on tour."

"Those are going to be some long hours. Are you sure you're up to it?"

"Not a problem. Better do it while I'm young, yeah?"

She turned around. "That's the spirit, Aki. It is so good to see you."

He put down his soda as she came over and hugged him hard. "It's good to see you too. I'm hoping to get out here more often

since I'm based in LA now. I couldn't come and see you as much as I wanted to when I was at Berklee."

"And I didn't expect you to. You were so busy with college and your job, I always wondered if I should send more money to help you."

"No, no, Tutu. You paying for my college was enough. I always told myself I'd pay you back once I got a job." He already had enough guilt taking her money for college, but she had saved the day when his parents refused to pay when he switched instruments.

"No need to pay me back. But you should get a job at Kam. Then you could come back to the islands and be here with your family."

Blaze sighed at the nickname for his high school. He loved the idea of living in Hawaii, but if he took a job here, it would mean being away from Jason. As much as he loved Oahu, he had to admit that he would hate leaving Jason. "I enjoy my job. I really like what I'm doing."

She smiled, if a bit sadly, as she finished drying her hands. "Then I am happy you like it. Now, this old lady has to get to bed."

"Sleep well, Tutu," he said as she walked to him and dropped a kiss on top of his head.

"Night, Aki."

BLAZE awoke to his phone going off at eight a.m. He flipped his phone open and saw the caller ID. It was Jason. "Mmm... 'lo."

"Oh... I was hoping I would wake you up."

"Jason," he said, his voice husky from sleep. "FYI, this is my vacation and rest time. This means I get to sleep in."

"I was hoping you would be kinda growly. That's really sexy."

“Are you fucking with me?” Blaze tried to make his brain function to figure out why Jason was calling him so early.

“No, it’s just when we woke up next to each other at the hotel, you growled a good morning to me and it turned me on so much I had to jerk off after you left.”

Blaze buried his face in his pillow, his cock hardening at the thought of Jason pulling one off. “You’re a psycho.”

Jason laughed. “Only crazy about you.”

“Wow, that was kinda dorky. So what are you doing right now?” Blaze closed his eyes again, waiting to hear Jason’s voice.

“I’m still here in New York, since Cassie’s up here doing some promotion and also Terri’s recording a new album, so I wanted to stop by to see how she is doing.”

Blaze nodded, recognizing the name of the popular R&B artist Jason managed. “Sounds good. I’m just gonna hang out at the beach today with my brother and his family. My niece is adorable. She looks just like her mom.”

He could hear Jason’s smile through the phone. “Nice. Hey, try to get some pictures of you in your trunks and send them to me via e-mail.”

“Stop being a pervert,” Blaze said with a laugh.

“What can I say,” Jason said, his voice turning deep and sensual. “I think my hot, younger boyfriend is sexy.”

Blaze was thankful no one could see him right then, because his cheeks were burning. “Stop. Stop right now.”

Jason chuckled. “Alright. I’ll let you go.”

“Okay... I love you.”

“I love you, too, Blaze.”

CHAPTER 9

BLAZE was relaxing on the couch, dozing off after a trip to the beach with his brother and his family. It was nice to just relax to the faraway sounds of his grandmother cooking in the kitchen.

The phone rang off in the distance, and he sighed. It was so peaceful here, the sun slanting in through the windows, the fragrance of the flowers from outside wafting in as he sat in a state between sleep and awareness.

“Aki.”

He jerked awake to find his grandmother holding out a portable phone. “It’s your mom.”

He thanked his grandmother as he took the phone. “Hello?”

“Akihiko, why didn’t you tell us you were coming to Hawaii?”

He sighed. “It was a last-minute decision to come out to see you guys, and I couldn’t exactly reach you being on the cruise.”

“Well, we might have not booked the cruise if we knew you were coming too.”

“No, that’s fine. Like I said, I didn’t know until the last minute when I was going to be here.”

“You could have stayed at our house, you know?”

Blaze frowned. He wanted to say that, no, she had told him specifically he couldn't stay with them, but he bit his tongue. "Well, Tutu gets lonely, so I stayed here."

"Well, it's nice you stayed with Mom. And yes, she does miss you, so you should probably call her more often."

Here comes the guilt trip. "I know. I try to call her a couple of times a week. But I wanted to have dinner with you when you get home."

"Well, that's nice. We're back at the port, and we get home tomorrow night, so if you want, we can have dinner the following night at our house."

Blaze bit his lips. "Let me take you guys out," he said, not just to treat his parents. He wanted neutral ground for what he was about to tell them.

"Oh, that's nice." She picked one of his favorite places, and he agreed right away.

TWO nights later, Blaze stood in front of the steak house. He was looking forward to the meal, if only because this was his favorite restaurant. It was always used for special occasions, and tonight was definitely an occasion, to say the least.

He had driven his grandmother's car to the restaurant rather than have his parents pick him up. He was paying tonight as a treat, but nothing was going to take the sting out of telling his parents about being gay. Blaze flipped open his phone and looked at a picture of his boyfriend sprawled out on his pillow sleeping.

"Akihiko!"

He looked up from his phone to see his mother walking across the parking lot. "Hi, Mom," Blaze said with a smile. It felt slightly forced. It wasn't that he didn't care about his parents, but he knew

what would come out of tonight. Yosuke was right. His parents were going to flip the fuck out.

He hugged his mother, pulling back to look at her. Her aqua eyes sparkled. “You look well-rested,” Blaze said.

“Well, you know how vacations are. It’s so nice to go, but it’s nice to come back too.” Blaze nodded along with the statement, feeling the same way. He was looking forward to heading back to LA for Jason. He enjoyed seeing his grandmother and especially his brother, but he missed his boyfriend.

He smiled at his mother as his father approached after parking the car. “Hello, Akihiko.”

He’d long since given up telling his parents to call him Blaze. “Hi, Dad.” His father seemed to bristle at his casual tone and greeting.

“I like your dressy shorts,” his mother said as she played with the fabric of his new shorts.

“Thanks. I even bought a new pair of slippers too,” Blaze said, turning his shoes to the side to show them off. “But no one calls them slippers on the mainland. They’re called sandals or thongs.”

“I remember. We visited LA once for a conference, and everyone tried to show us these fuzzy socks or house shoes when we asked for slippers,” she said as they started walking inside the restaurant.

“You’ve been to LA? You should come visit me when I get back after Cassie’s tour before we take off for the European leg.”

His mother frowned. “I don’t know, dear. Your father is so busy. I don’t know if he could get off from work.”

Blaze looked at his dad, asking him wordlessly to agree to a visit. His dad held his gaze for a second before turning to the podium and requesting to be seated.

It was a cut, a deliberate cut that his mother either didn't want to acknowledge or was completely oblivious of. Blaze's heart clenched, and he felt slightly sick as they followed the hostess.

They were seated at a table with a beautiful view of the water. Blaze looked out the window, enjoying the scenery before looking over the menu to stall for time. He didn't want their meal to end before it started. He knew the family he had been raised in and his parents' limits. This wasn't going well so far, but he figured he had better prepare his parents.

"So," Blaze said. "How was your trip?"

"Well, the Mediterranean was beautiful. Early May is the perfect time of year to go, so remember when to go if you ever do decide to go there."

"I think I'll be taking time off from now on whenever I can get it, what with being on tour and all."

Blaze recognized her brittle smile. It was the one he saw when he knew whatever it was he had done had not been quite good enough for his parents' approval. He swallowed his disappointment as she said, "I really wish you had pursued classical piano. You were amazing at it."

"Well, I think it worked out all right now," Blaze said casually, his tone belying his discomfort.

"This isn't something we should be discussing here," his father said gruffly. Blaze's eyes flew to his father, who continued looking at the menu, not meeting his eyes. The tension hung in the air even as the waiter approached them for their drink order.

Blaze ordered a glass of water while his parents ordered their drinks. He let out a pent-up breath, trying not to be nervous. "So, Yosuke said you asked him not to come along tonight. Was there any particular reason you did that? Did you two have a fight?" his mother asked.

Blaze resisted the urge to roll his eyes. He hadn't said that to his brother at all. He would have loved nothing more than having Yosuke along for moral support, but he already ran so much interference between them, and Blaze didn't think it was fair. "I think that may have been a misunderstanding. I just wanted to talk to you both, just the three of us."

"Oh? What do you have to say?" his father asked.

Blaze leaned forward but stopped himself as the waiter brought the drinks. "Are you ready to order?" the waiter asked.

They placed their order, and after the waiter left, they made some small talk before his mother asked, "Are you sure you can pay for dinner? We understand you are a struggling musician."

"Mom," Blaze said patiently. "I'm in the band of a platinum recording artist. I do all right."

"Well, yes, but you're just in the band. It isn't like you're the actual artist yourself, and jobs come and go in your industry, not to mention your standard bills you have to pay like rent and car insurance. Don't forget to save some of the money, because you might have a dry spell—"

"Mom," Blaze interrupted, feeling the dig more than he wanted to. "I'm doing fine. I don't have my apartment anymore, so..."

Her eyes widened. "What happened to your apartment?"

It was the perfect opening, and he seized the opportunity. Taking a deep breath, he said, "I let it go."

"Why? You need a place to stay when you aren't on tour."

Blaze could admit he had jumped in so fast with Jason, he hadn't thought ahead to what might happen if they broke up again. Just the idea of breaking things off with Jason stole his breath away. He'd have bigger problems than just not having a place to stay if he and Jason ended things, like a shattered heart.

It was when his parents were looking at him he realized he hadn't said anything. He grabbed his water glass and took a sip, needing something to wet his dry mouth. "I have a place to stay. I'll be moving in with someone."

"So you are getting a roommate?" his father asked. "Are you moving to a nicer place or something? You should be saving your money instead of spending it all."

"No," Blaze said, trying to collect his thoughts. "Jason owns his house. We're seeing each other."

His father frowned and his mother said, "Well, you will be roommates. Of course you will see him."

Blaze shook his head. "No. I—" he said, breaking off his sentence with a sigh. "I am trying to tell you that I am seeing him. He's my boyfriend."

Blaze's heart was pounding in his throat as his mom blinked quickly. "Are you trying to say... you're gay?"

"Yeah," Blaze said with some relief. It was out there, on the table. "Mom, Dad, I'm gay."

He really had picked the perfect timing to say it, because the waiter brought the food to the table, setting it down in front of them as Blaze gave them enough time to digest what they heard. When his mother picked up her knife and started to cut into her steak, he kept going. "His name is Jason, and he manages Cassie's career. I auditioned for him and I... I fell in love with him."

Silence greeted his declaration. "You should really come and meet him. He's really nice, and his parents and brother are all actors. He got into music management because..." He trailed off. He didn't really know why Jason was into music. It would have made more sense to him if Jason were a manager of actors rather than musicians. "I guess he likes it?"

He picked up his fork and knife and started cutting into his steak. They ate in silence for a few minutes before he finally put down his utensils and said, "Say something."

His mother let out a shaky breath. "Are you sure you're gay?"

"He's not gay."

Blaze's eyes flew to his father, who popped a piece of his chicken into his mouth. "Yes, I am, Dad."

"Don't be ridiculous," his father snapped. "No son of mine would ever be gay. You liked girls in high school."

Blaze tried to tamp down on his anger. "Dad. I'm in love with Jason."

"It's just a phase. You were always the rebellious child, always testing your limits," his father said angrily.

"I don't think you get it, Dad," Blaze said, cutting viciously into his steak. "I'm moving in with Jason. I love him."

"You're just confused," his mother said softly.

"Okay, stop it," Blaze said. "Stop being in denial. I've known since high school I was interested in guys too."

"Too? I really want you to stop being so ridiculous, Akihiko." His father's statement was punctuated by the slam of his fist on the table.

Blaze bristled. Suddenly, it was like being a teenager all over again, with his parents ignoring him until he wanted to do something that went against their life plans for him. "Obviously this is too much for you both to take right now. You need some time and space to think it over."

"So do you, young man." His father said the words crisply as Blaze felt the heat of his stare. "Think of where this path will take you in life. Why am I even saying this? You're just confused. You are not gay."

“Are you saying that just for yourself?” Blaze said, his temper flaring. “I’m not confused. This is how I am. There is nothing to change. Please just accept me for me. Please.”

“I have had it with this, Akihiko. You can rebel all you want, but I have had it,” his dad said, throwing his napkin on the table and pushing back his chair.

Blaze leaned forward. “This isn’t rebelling, Dad. I love Jason.”

His father closed his eyes and stood up. Without another word or even a glance at his son, he walked away from the table. Blaze felt his stomach churn. “Mom?”

She shook her head as tears glistened along her eyelashes. “I don’t know if this is some sort of revenge, Akihiko, but just realize your father and I only want what is best for you.”

Blaze sat back and pinched his thumb and forefinger against the bridge of his nose, trying to stop his own tears from forming. “I know, Mom, but I couldn’t choose who I fell in love with. All I’m asking is for you to accept me.”

The sorrow written on his mother’s face was more than he could bear. Her shoulders slumped, and she said, “I’m sorry, son. I have to stand with your father on this.” She stood up and walked away from the table.

Blaze dropped his chin to his chest and looked at his hands twisting the napkin in his lap. The night was a complete and utter failure. At least it was done with and he could move on from tonight. He wouldn’t have to dance around the issue anymore with his parents, hiding in the shadows.

“Would you like me to box this up for you?”

Blaze looked at waiter and nodded. “Thank you.”

BLAZE put the leftovers from dinner in the refrigerator and plodded upstairs. It was late, and the light was dark from under his grandmother's door. He walked past her door into the guest bedroom and closed the door behind him. He leaned against wall and fished for his phone.

One in the morning in LA, Blaze thought as he looked at his cell. If there was ever a time he needed Jason, it was now. He flipped the phone open and was dialing before he could stop himself.

The sigh and moan as Jason answered made guilt run through him. "I'm sorry. I just needed to hear your voice."

"If it was anyone else," Jason said, his words slurring from sleep, "I just wouldn't have answered. What's wrong?"

"I told my parents about us tonight."

"Oh God, I am sorry."

"Why are you saying you are sorry?"

"I can hear it in your voice. It didn't go well, did it?"

Blaze closed his eyes to stop the room from spinning. "No," he said quietly. "My parents freaked out."

Jason sighed. "Oh love, I am sorry."

"I knew it. I knew they were going to flip," Blaze said as he bit his lip. "Yosuke said they would, and I knew it, but there was no easy way out. My dad wouldn't even acknowledge what I was telling them. He just shut down. Oh God, I woke you up out of a sound sleep to dump all this shit on you."

"Blaze," Jason said softly. "I'm here for you. You and I... we're together. I'm the one who should be worried about you coming to your senses some day and taking off."

Blaze frowned. "Why would I ever leave you? You're amazing. I've never had anyone who has treated me like this. How

could I ever give you up?" Silence met his ear after his confession. "Hello?"

"Sorry," Jason said, and Blaze could hear the smile in his voice. "I was just savoring what you said to me. It was nice."

"Nice? What the fuck kinda word is 'nice' to describe what I said. You make me feel amazing. You listen to me babble in the middle of the night. You're wonderful."

"No one ever tells me it. It's just good to be appreciated. It's nice that I'm the one you turn to in the middle of the night. I love it."

Blaze smiled. "I know you need to get your sleep. Should we talk tomorrow?"

Jason's words were like a salve on Blaze's soul. "I can talk as long as you need me to."

"It is just good to hear a friendly voice. Yosuke has been great, but he shouldn't have to be a referee between me and my parents. I'm so lucky to have you."

Jason chuckled. "I'm the one who's lucky."

CHAPTER 10

THE next night, Blaze's grandmother invited his parents around to a family dinner. His stomach had churned all afternoon at the thought of the approaching meal. Would his father out him at the dinner table? Would his mother come crying to Tutu about her youngest son being gay?

They showed up right as Tutu had finished cooking, which was good for him, since it left no time for his parents to start in on him. Not that he had much to say, and when he did meet his mother's eyes across the table, he was sure the look in his eyes was defiant, daring either one of them to bring up the matter here.

His father dished some salad onto his plate. "Akihiko, I have something to tell you."

Blaze frowned. The tone in his father's voice meant dinner would no doubt end up tense. "And what's that?" he asked cautiously.

"Our next door neighbor and I were talking, and his daughter works at Kamehameha High. She's a year older than you, so she went to school there when you two were going there."

Yosuke started dishing out the salad as well. "Oh? What's her name?"

“Kiana Ling.”

Blaze’s grandmother spoke up. “I knew her grandmother. She’s a nice girl!”

Yosuke nodded. “I remember her too. She was really cute back in high school.” His wife turned and looked at him pointedly. “Well, all my friends liked her... and I am sure she’s fat now,” he said miserably.

Blaze held back a snicker. He looked down the table at his brother’s wife, who winked at Blaze. “Well, who didn’t have a crush on her back in high school?” he quipped, trying to make his brother feel better.

He thought he had escaped unscathed, but his father was continuing. “Actually, she’s still very beautiful, and now she teaches hula to the kids.”

Blaze stabbed at his salad with his fork. “That’s cool.”

“I was hoping you might like it, because I set up a date between the two of you for tomorrow night.”

Blaze dropped his fork on his plate. “What?”

Everyone at the table froze except for Blaze’s grandmother. She clapped her hands. “Aki! She comes from a very old Hawaiian family, and she is such a nice girl. You two will have such a good time!”

Blaze felt a poke in his side, and he turned to his brother. “Didn’t you tell them about Jason yesterday?” he whispered.

“I did,” Blaze hissed. “I don’t know why he’s doing this.” He looked at his father, whose expression dared him to protest. Blaze felt the battle lines being drawn, and his gut clenched.

AFTER dinner, once he was certain his grandmother was asleep, he called Jason. His mind churned at what he had to tell his boyfriend. When he answered, Jason's voice was husky from sleep. "Shit, I woke you up again."

"No... I was just resting my eyes."

"Yeah, people also call that sleeping." Blaze chuckled at Jason, trying to make him feel better about disturbing his sleep.

"You can always call, because I sleep better after I talk to you."

Why was it that just hearing his voice made him smile?
"That's nice."

"Mmm hmm," Jason said sleepily. "What are you wearing?"

"Why are you asking me that?" Blaze unbuttoned his shorts and pulled down the zipper as he started to get ready for bed.

"Isn't it what you ask when you're having phone sex?"

Blaze smiled as he plopped himself on the bed. "I wouldn't know. I've never had phone sex."

"I'm naked."

Blaze chuckled. "Really?" he said, flushing as he realized it had come out seductively.

Jason's voice was deep and sensual when he answered back, "Yeah. I wish you were here right now."

Blaze knew he had to tell Jason about what had happened during dinner that night, but the sound of Jason's voice in his ear was too sexy for him to turn down. His fantasies kicked into high speed as he slid his hand down to rub his cock through his briefs. "I wish I was there too."

"I would have your dick in my mouth right now," Jason said, his voice turning gravelly with desire.

Blaze's cock jumped. "God, I'm getting so hard right now."

"So touch yourself. I am."

Blaze groaned softly. "I want to touch you, feel your dick in my hand," he said, not believing the words coming out of his mouth, but Jason's groan encouraged him to continue. His own hand slid inside his briefs, and he groaned himself. "My hand is on my cock, and I'm thinking... wishing it was yours."

"Oh God, Blaze. I wish I was sucking your cock, and at the same time, I'd be getting your hot, tight hole ready for me," Jason said tightly. Blaze heard his panting, and he knew right then just how much he was affecting the older man.

"God, Jason. I want to feel you licking my dick right now."

"Oh yes. Stroke it and think of my mouth there, sliding up and down, sucking your cockhead."

Blaze's hand quickened as he thrust his hips off the bed. "Please, Jase!" he said softly as he felt his balls draw up and a hot thrumming deep within him. "Jason, I—I'm... there."

Jason's groan in his ear pushed him over the edge, his seed splashing over his hand. He lay there, panting, as he listened to Jason's moans as his boyfriend jerked off. "God, you are so fucking hot," Blaze whispered after he had recovered some.

"You know what I think about all the time?" Jason whispered, his voice tight and wound up.

"What's that?" Blaze said huskily.

"When we were at the hotel, how you prepared yourself for my cock. Watching you fingering yourself almost made me come right then and there."

Blaze let out a satisfied sigh. He could tell Jason something that would send him over the edge. "You know, I've done that before... to myself, ya know?"

"Tell me." Jason's voice was strained.

“I would soap up my fingers and then put one in,” Blaze said. Jason’s moans changed, and Blaze knew the other man was close. “Then I’d lean against the wall face first and finger-fuck myself.”

A sharp cry let Blaze know Jason was there, and Blaze felt warmth pool in his belly, knowing Jason was coming like he had, all over his hand and stomach. It was a high, the thought of his words turning the other man on so much that he had come just from Blaze’s whispered expressions. He cleaned himself up, throwing the tissues away in the basket next to his bed.

“Did you really do that?”

“Huh? Oh yeah, you mean, what I said before?” Blaze said, feeling suddenly shy now that he was not in the throes of passion. “Yeah, I did it. I didn’t know it turned you on so much.”

“I didn’t either, but I have to admit, you on your knees straddling me while doing that nearly killed me.”

Blaze felt his heart skip a beat as heard the passion in Jason’s voice. “Oh... well, um, I don’t know whether to say I’ll do it again or to apologize.”

“You better do it again,” Jason growled.

“Shit,” Blaze said, slapping his forehead as he felt his buzz diminish at the thought of tomorrow. “You’re gonna hate me, buzz-killing the afterglow and all. My dad set up a date with this girl from my old high school without telling me.” He wondered for a second if he should mention to Jason about the little crush he’d had on her back in school but then dismissed the idea.

“What?”

Blaze winced at Jason’s tone. “I’m pretty pissed, because I told him about us, but he shut down. He’s in denial.”

Jason sighed. “The older generation is a tough sell on two guys together. That’s why I was pretty shocked my grandmother was okay when I brought my college boyfriend home.”

The casual mention of an old flame struck Blaze in his heart. “Did you love him?” he asked before he could stop himself. The silence on the other end was deafening. “Never mind,” Blaze stuttered out.

“No, it’s okay. I’ve asked myself those questions a lot lately. I thought I did, because I hadn’t loved anyone like that ever, girl or guy. Then I met you. You changed my world.”

Blaze was frozen. He tried opening his mouth to speak, but words failed him. “Blaze? Did I lose you?”

“No, I am here. What do you mean?” Blaze asked carefully.

“Well, I thought I was in love with Derek back when we were at college, but once he was done with college and went back to England, we drifted apart. It wasn’t like we meant to, but I got caught up in starting my business and he was the next in line to take over his family’s company, so he was always busy.

“I always wondered how we could give each other up if we really loved one another. But he went back to England and left me here to pick up the pieces. When you left to go to Hawaii, I realized I could never let you go like I did Derek. I love you.”

Blaze’s mind raced. Was this some sort of post-orgasmic declaration of being together indefinitely? The thought of it flowed through him, warming him to his toes. Stay with Jason forever... or at least as long as the older man wanted him. Blaze had to admit.... “That sounds nice,” he said with a goofy grin.

“What does?”

“Forever with you.”

It was Jason’s turn to be silent. Blaze pulled the phone away from his ear, hoping the call had been dropped and his boyfriend wasn’t freaking out. “Jason?”

His boyfriend groaned. “Fuck. I wish you were here or I was there. I need to hold you so badly.”

Blaze smiled. "I want to be there too."

"I wish the circumstances were different... but you should go out with this girl. I mean, if for no other reason but to catch up with the people from your school days."

"Are you sure it's okay?"

"I'm sure, babe." The trust was evident in Jason's voice, and it made Blaze's heart beat double-time.

"I was going to tell her I'm gay upfront. Hopefully she'll be cool with it."

"Feel out the situation first. She might freak out."

Blaze frowned. "Uh, Jason? Hawaii is the rainbow state. We're pretty liberal here."

Jason laughed. "Well, okay. Just...."

"What?"

Jason sighed. "You might as well get used to this in the music business. You're a representative of Cassie now. When people attend her concert and one of our staff is nasty, it reflects on the artist. They don't remember the manager or crew as being rude, they remember the artist as being rude."

"But Cassie is awful."

"No, she really isn't. You've only seen a small portion of her, and yes, she's been awful to you. But she does a lot of charity work, not just donating money but also going and actually walking the walk as well."

"So basically, be nice to this girl from Kam? I don't think that'll be a problem. Yosuke, on the other hand, got in trouble tonight," Blaze said, relaying the story. He didn't want to hang up, but he knew it was late in LA, and after he finished telling the story, he told Jason to get to bed. He hated saying goodbye, but it was what Jason needed.

THE next day, Blaze stood in front of Buzz's Steakhouse, his hands in his pockets. The smell of the island, something he had been taking in ever since he got off the plane, was what he missed when he was in LA and when he had been in college back east. If he became successful in the music business, he would definitely be moving back here.

With a pang, he realized he would need to talk about it with Jason before just deciding on his own to move back here. It didn't sound so bad, Blaze thought with a smile. In a short span of time, he'd given up his freedom for something better. Love.

"Aki?"

He turned to see a woman standing there. Her straight, dark hair was pulled back in a ponytail, and she was dressed in a dark blue sundress. Her eyes, aqua like his own, showed her delight at seeing him. "Hi, Kiana. It's nice to see you again."

"God, you look just like your brother, but you have the Hawaiian blue eyes," she said with a smile.

Blaze laughed as he felt his cheeks color. "I guess that's a compliment, considering how many girls chased after him in high school."

"Well, another reason was also because he played baseball at Kam."

"Wow, that's definitely not my gig. I tried and failed miserably at PE," he said, laughing.

"Well, that's okay," she said as they walked inside the restaurant. He held open the door, and she flashed a brilliant smile at him. He was dumbstruck momentarily as he stood in front of her. It was odd, seeing his crush from school after all these years.

They were seated quickly, a table for two in a cozy little corner. A waiter quickly approached and took their orders. After he left, Blaze asked, “So you teach hula? I remember you always danced so beautifully.”

She blushed. “Thank you. Yeah, I teach it now. I guess I was okay back in school, but I got better over time. You, however, were always amazing at playing the guitar. When my Dad mentioned you’re playing professionally now, I wasn’t surprised.”

Blaze smiled. “Thank you.”

“At the school exhibition, the way you played the guitar, I know all my friends were totally over the moon for you.”

His smile changed to a frown. “What?”

She flushed even darker and played with her napkin. “I had a crush on you, too, in high school, but you gave off this unapproachable vibe that sorta shut me down before I even took a step toward you.”

He gaped at her. “I—I don’t know what to say. Are you kidding me? You’re a year older than me. I never thought I had a chance with you.”

Kiana looked shocked. “You can’t tell me you didn’t know, yeah?”

His eyes widened. “I most certainly can,” he huffed. “No one ever told me this. I thought Yosuke was just the chick magnet and I was doomed to failure in that department.”

Kiana smiled. “The girls definitely liked your brother, but then he had this... welcoming air about him, yeah? He promised a good time and he would always deliver, but you were the unknown. No one was willing to take the chance of getting shot down.”

Blaze stared at her. “Did we go to different schools? This is not how I remembered Kam.”

“Oh no, this was how it was. You hung around Yosuke a lot, which was even more daunting for us, because you were running with an older, more mature crowd. I remember when I was in senior year this rumor got started about you dating a college student. She came to pick you up once, I think.”

Blaze pursed his lips as he remembered. “She’s my brother’s wife. Well, she was his fiancée at the time.”

“Really? Well, that’s how cool you were. All my friends believed it.”

“She came to pick me up for my tux fitting for their wedding. I was Yosuke’s best man.”

“Wow, he got married young. He moved away, didn’t he?”

“Yeah, he moved to Japan so they could be near her family. It worked out because we were both dual citizens to the US and Japan. He met Mitsu in college and they got married at nineteen. They decided to stay on in Japan, so he gave up his US citizenship.”

Kiana had a goofy grin on her face. “That’s really romantic.”

“They have a two-year-old now, and she’s so cute.”

“Aww, how sweet. So you like kids, then, yeah?” she said, her demeanor casual but her question pointed.

Blaze’s mind was way ahead of her. He did like kids, especially his niece. He always figured he’d get married and have a couple kids and a white picket fence. The door was now shut on that part of his future if he stayed with Jason. They could adopt, but there would be major roadblocks with that route. “I do want kids,” he said truthfully, “but I have to tell you something.”

Kiana looked worried, but Blaze charged ahead. “This is really terrible of me but... I’m already seeing someone else.”

Kiana closed her eyes. “Shit.”

“I know why my Dad set us up, and I’m pretty pissed about it.” He hated to see that look on her face. She was hurting because of his dad.

“Your family doesn’t approve of the relationship.”

“No, they don’t. Well, Yosuke doesn’t care as long as I am happy but... my parents are pretty ticked off.”

She smiled sadly as she looked out the window. “What’s her name?”

He licked his lips nervously. “His name is Jason.”

Her eyes flew back to Blaze. Her mouth dropped open. “Oh my God. You are mahu.”

Blaze’s stomach churned at the Hawaiian slang for “gay.” “Yeah, I am. At least for Jason, I am.”

Kiana stared at him for so long that he felt a wave of panic run through him. Suddenly, she smiled. “That’s sort of... hot.”

“What?”

“Do you have a picture of him?”

Blaze got out his phone and flipped through the pictures he had saved. He felt his cheeks heat up when he saw the one he had taken of Jason sleeping in the hotel before he had left for Hawaii. He kept going, preferring to keep the picture for his eyes only. He found one of Jason sitting at his desk in his office. He held it up for her to see.

“Wow. He sorta looks like the actor... Jake....” She trailed off.

“Stockton, right?”

“Yes!”

“They’re brothers. Jason is Cassie’s manager.”

She took a drink of water and started fanning herself. “Well, thinking of you two together will keep me warm for all those lonely nights.”

“Oh, I doubt there will be many ‘lonely nights’. You are a beautiful woman.”

She flushed. “I thought you were gay.”

“I can appreciate female beauty.”

Kiana cocked her head. “Well, thank you, then,” she said as the waiter brought their food. He smiled at her as they started eating. They chatted casually through dinner about mutual friends, trying to catch up in what little time they had. After he paid the check, they walked out to their cars, the night breeze bringing in the smell of the ocean air.

Blaze bumped her shoulder with his in a friendly way. “I’m sorry my Dad sorta played you. I wish he hadn’t done that.”

Kiana brushed her hair out her face. “You know... it’s okay. I’m just happy we got to catch up and hang out for a while. Don’t be a stranger?” she said as she held out her hand.

He gathered her in a hug instead. “I promise to come back and hang out. If you ever get out to LA, call me, yeah? I might be on tour, but if you call ahead, I’ll try to be there.”

Kiana pulled away and smiled broadly. “Sounds like a plan.”

BLAZE got home, looking at the time. He walked quietly to his room and shut the door. Rather than calling Jason when he was in New York, he sent off an e-mail, knowing it would go to straight to his BlackBerry. He let his boyfriend know everything was okay and that they would talk in the morning.

He shed his clothes and started the shower, still thinking of his boyfriend. He did want to talk to Jason, assure him everything went all right. He wanted to do more than talk; he wanted to show him how much he loved him.

He stepped under the warm water, ducking his head to get his hair wet. He had a lot on his mind, not the least how he had been treated in high school. He had often felt ostracized by not only the girls but the other boys as well. It had been the reason he had stuck close to Yosuke through his first year in high school. The brothers had always been close at home, sharing a bedroom until Yosuke became a teenager. It was interesting, he mused, knowing now the results of his loneliness had also been the cause.

He leaned against the shower wall, his thoughts turning to Jason. He was so accepting, welcoming. He had been undaunted by Blaze's cool exterior, getting to know him slowly as they worked together at the venue. He had spent all those hours in Jason's office, getting to know Jason as well.

Blaze groaned as his cock stirred. Once those images had entered his mind, he couldn't get them out of there. Images flashed across his mind, Jason lying in bed, hugging the pillow, his dark curls tousled. His cheeks still flushed from lovemaking, his lips wet and bruised from their kissing.

Blaze rubbed some soap across his palm, working up a good lather. He closed his eyes as he thought of Jason on his knees in front of him, licking and sucking his hard cock. Blaze rubbed his slick, soapy hand up and down his own cock in time with the lips of his fantasy of Jason.

He sighed as Jason turned him against the wall, sliding a slick finger inside him, working his tight hole. In his mind, the shower walls evaporated, and he was on all fours on a bed, Jason's cock replacing his finger inside him. Jason's hand had replaced his own in his fantasy, stroking in time with those thrusts inside him.

Blaze bit his lip to keep from crying out when Jason nibbled on his shoulder. His strokes got faster. His cock twitched as his balls tightened. Suddenly it wasn't Jason's hand on his cock. It was Kiana beneath him as Jason was fucking Blaze into her.

His mouth opened in a silent cry as he came. He leaned back against the wall, shock running cold in his veins. In the past, he had had sexual fantasies about girls and guys—even one or two about Kiana before—but none since he had met Jason.

He washed himself quickly as guilt spread through him. He loved Jason, didn't he? So then why now did he just jerk himself off thinking of the three of them together?

CHAPTER 11

IT SEEMED like his vacation was ending too fast for his liking, even though he was looking forward to seeing Jason. He counted down the minutes, savoring the brunch his grandmother had made as she fussed over him.

“You bought presents for your friends on tour, right?”

Blaze nodded. “Those are all packed. I promise I’ll bring something back for you guys, okay?”

Tutu frowned. “What I want to see next time is you bringing back a girl, you hear?”

Blaze groaned. “Tutu!”

“What time is your car set to arrive?”

Blaze looked at the clock in the kitchen. “Should be anytime now.” Jason had set up a car service via Jennifer to take him to the airport.

“I could have driven you, you know.”

“Yeah, but I didn’t want to trouble you. You are so busy with everything, yeah?”

Tutu sighed. “I am never too busy for my grandbabies.”

Blaze heard the front door open. He shut his mouth on the words he was about to say as his brother and father walked into the kitchen. “We’re just here to see you off,” his brother said with a sad smile.

Blaze hugged his brother, clapping him on the shoulder. “I’ll miss you, man.”

“Don’t forget to call, and when you do, you’re at least ten hours behind us. So no calling in the middle of the night, yeah?”

Blaze could hear the smile in his brother’s voice. “Okay, okay. Have I ever made that mistake before?” When they pulled away, his brother looked down, but he could see Yosuke was already missing him.

He hugged his grandmother one last time and turned away, not wanting to see the sadness in her eyes. “Let me help you with your bags,” his father said.

Blaze nodded as he took his carry-on, his father rolling the one suitcase he had brought. “Thank you.”

They walked in an uncomfortable silence out to the waiting limo. He wanted his father’s acceptance more than anything, about being a guitarist, about leaving to become successful, just to accept that he wouldn’t ever be the perfect son.

The driver put the bag in the trunk and got back inside the car. Blaze faced his father and was unsurprised to find his father expressionless. He had never been one to show his emotions, and Blaze had always found it disconcerting.

“Well, I am not sure when I’ll be back,” Blaze said, steeling his voice carefully. “But you and Mom are more than welcome to come see me on tour. You know, meet Jason and all.”

It was petty of him, he knew that, but he had said it to get a reaction out of his father. He was mildly disappointed when all he saw was his dad’s nostrils flare. He bowed his head and stared at his

shoes as his father spoke. "I tried my hardest to fix you up with a nice girl and do right by you as a father."

Blaze scowled. "Do right by me as a father? Instead of trying to fix me up with a nice island girl and wind up hurting her in the process, why don't you try by accepting me for who I am."

"How do expect me to accept you are gay? You don't look gay. You certainly don't act gay. Why are you doing this to us? Is this some sort of rebellion?"

"No, Dad. This isn't some sort of rebellion. It's not like I just looked at Jason and thought, 'Wow, he's the perfect way to get back at my parents for not accepting who I am.'"

"We have always accepted who you are, Akihiko."

Blaze clenched his fists. "No, Dad, you haven't. How about when I wanted to study guitar? You said to study the piano and if I didn't, you wouldn't pay for college. Luckily, Tutu stepped in and paid my fees so I could study what I wanted."

"Now look where that got you. You have turned into some kind of pervert, sleeping with another man."

Blaze saw red at his father's words. He closed his eyes and tried to calm the anger welling within. "I'm sorry you said that, Dad." He spat out the last word as if it was distasteful to even say it. "But at least now I know where I stand with you." He brushed past his father and got into the limo, pain curling inside him.

He heard his father calling for him outside the car. He directed the driver to pull away and swallowed his pain. The fury was slowly being overridden by the hurt stewing inside him. He wanted to call Jason so badly, hear his boyfriend's voice on the other end comforting him. He let out a shaky breath, and then he noticed his body trembling from the adrenaline.

He felt sick all the way to the airport at the falling out with his father. He had known it wouldn't be happy and joyful, but he hadn't expected to be called horrible names either. He knew he should have

called Jason, but he didn't want to end up crying in the middle of the first class lounge at the Honolulu airport as he waited for his plane.

The flight was uneventful, and it gave Blaze a little time to cool off. Once he deplaned in LA, he made his way to baggage claim. He was so caught up in his thoughts that he was surprised when he felt a hand on his shoulder and turned to find Jennifer. "Hey, you!"

She smiled. "Hey, Blaze. Jason sent me to pick you up."

He grabbed his bag off the carousel. "Thanks, but you didn't have to do this. I could have caught a cab."

Jennifer smiled. "Do you know Jason's address?"

Blaze pursed his lips. "I could have called him, or you even."

Her smile was maddening. "Uh huh," she teased.

Blaze laughed. "Lead the way, then," he said with a grin. Jennifer stared at him for a second before she turned around and walked away, her cheeks flushed. Blaze cocked an eyebrow and started pulling his bag behind him.

Jennifer got on her cell and let the driver know to pick them up. "So how was your flight?" she said after she hung up.

"It was really nice. I sent you a text message saying thank you for the upgrade."

"I got it and it wasn't a problem. Let me know if you need a flight for someone while we are on tour. Jason has enough miles on his account. He rarely travels by private plane like Cassie does, but then her label pays for the expense," she said breathlessly.

"I forgot you talk without taking a breath. I'm still on island time," Blaze said with a laugh.

"Sorry, am I talking too fast?"

"Not at all. Keep going."

“Oh... well, Jason’s on his way home right now, and he should be meeting us at his house. He gave me your keys while you were in Hawaii and I drove your car to his house. I hope you don’t mind.”

“That’s fine.”

“You won’t be needed at any of Cassie’s appearances here in LA, so you do have a couple of days off before you and Jason fly to Tampa. Just so you know, Jason will be at some of the stops on the tour, especially in the major markets like when we come back to LA or in New York.”

Blaze stared at her as they stopped at the curb. “I know I’ll forget most of this, but go on.”

“If you do, don’t worry about it. I’ll be travelling on the tour with all of you. Cassie is Jason’s biggest artist, so he needs someone to keep tabs on everything there, and since I am his executive assistant, I get the honor.”

“Wow, was that a touch of sarcasm in your voice?”

“What? Me?” she said scornfully.

Blaze laughed. “I am sort of traumatized. You’re always so nice, but go on.”

“Anyway, you two will be flying out to Tampa on Thursday morning. We want to give you plenty of time to get settled into the tour bus before you head out early Saturday morning. I’m sorry this is such a crash course here.”

“I’m alright. Don’t worry.”

The limo pulled up right then, and the driver hopped out and put his suitcase in the back. He got inside, moving over for Jennifer. “Here, let me take your bag.”

“Thank you,” she said as she sat down next to him. The limo pulled away from the curb as Jennifer pulled out some paperwork.

“I have to admit,” Blaze mused, “I’m a little taken aback by all the special treatment.”

“Wait ’til you travel with Jason.”

Blaze raised his eyebrows. “Really? It gets more luxurious than this?”

“Oh yeah. Yachts, beachfront houses. You two will have an amazing time.”

Blaze felt slightly embarrassed that she knew about him and Jason, but he couldn’t put his finger on why exactly. Sure, they all worked together, but she was Jason’s assistant, so of course she would know. “Jennifer. When did you find out about us?”

Jennifer looked up from her papers. “Oh,” she said, blushing. “I knew from the beginning. I can read Jason pretty well.”

Blaze sat looking out the window. Did the whole crew know? He pondered it all as they rode along in companionable silence. It felt slightly awkward sitting in the back of a limo he would never have been in if it wasn’t for the fact that he was the boyfriend of one of the biggest managers in the music business.

Blaze decided to enjoy it while he could, riding in peace and quiet back to his boyfriend’s house.

THE limo idled in Jason’s driveway as the driver got the suitcases out. Jennifer pointed out Jason’s SUV in the garage. Blaze’s little coupe car had been pulled over to the side, all still in one piece, he remarked jokingly to Jennifer. She scowled playfully before getting back in her limo to head off to one of the many appearances that were part of the huge media blitz that would precede Cassie’s tour.

He walked up to the front door, ringing the doorbell. He waited with butterflies in his stomach. He didn’t know why he was

so nervous, especially since Jason had said he was looking forward to seeing him when he arrived back from his trip.

He was so caught up in his thoughts that when the door flew open, Blaze jumped. “You startled me.”

Jason stood there, wiping his hands with a towel. “You’re here! Come in, how was your flight?”

“Good,” Blaze said, smiling as he dragged his luggage into the foyer. “First class is pretty nice.”

Jason grimaced as he started walking farther inside the house, leading the way into an expansive living room. “Well, I’ve flown in coach and I haven’t been very impressed with it so far, but I’m glad you enjoyed your trip. How was your grandmo—” He was cut off when Blaze wrapped his arms around him from behind.

Blaze felt Jason lift one of his hands from around his waist up to his lips to drop a soft kiss there. It was an intimate, loving gesture, and it made Blaze’s heart skip a beat. “I’ve missed you,” Blaze whispered against Jason’s back. Blaze loosened his hold, not wanting to choke his boyfriend.

Jason turned around and bent his head to kiss him but stopped before their lips touched. “I missed you too.” Their lips met in a kiss of lovers kept apart too long, a wanting washing over Blaze as Jason’s arms wrapped around his waist.

Jason moved his lips away from Blaze’s mouth, trailing towards his ear, planting a kiss on the soft skin. He opened his mouth, sucking the lobe in between his teeth, enjoying the other man’s hiss as he bumped his hips against Jason’s slender thigh.

Blaze pulled away to adjust himself as Jason asked, “Did you touch yourself after we had phone sex?”

Blaze arched against the older man again. “I was staying in my grandmother’s house. You’re a dirty man, and you’re behaving so badly.”

“Maybe I am,” Jason said softly, his deep voice causing Blaze’s toes to curl even as the guilt of his fantasy flooded him. Blaze’s answer came out unintelligibly, and Jason smiled. “I think you like it.”

Blaze’s fingers were moving to Jason’s shirt, moving down the buttons as he opened it. Jason pulled back once he reached the waist and started pulling the shirttails out. “Tell me what you did.”

Blaze felt a thrill shoot through him. “I...” he said as he looked away from Jason. “I was in the shower.”

“Go on,” Jason said as he lifted Blaze’s shirt, running the back of his hand along those hard abs.

Blaze tensed, another shockwave of desire running through him. “I stroked my dick—” he said as a cry erupted from his lips, caused by Jason moving his hand downwards to squeeze Blaze’s cock through his jeans.

“Did you pretend it was me?” Jason whispered in his ear.

Blaze pushed his cock against Jason’s hand, moaning. “I did. Your hand feels so good when it strokes my cock. Please,” he pleaded, and a whimper came out. This man nearly drove him mad, but he would do anything, say whatever Jason wanted, as long as the older man touched him.

Instead of sliding the zipper down, Jason pulled up Blaze’s shirt, pulling it up over his head. Just as he was about to pull his arms out, Jason twisted the shirt and wrapped it around Blaze’s wrists. The shock had to be written plainly on Blaze’s face as Jason’s hand worked on opening his pants. “Kick off your shoes.”

Blaze did as he was told as Jason pulled down his pants, hooking his hands behind Blaze’s thighs and lifting him onto an accent table neatly placed against the wall before pulling his pants and underwear all the way off. As Jason was kneeling on the floor, he looked up. Blaze felt like he was falling into Jason’s dark eyes.

Jason was talking, but Blaze was deaf to his words with his heartbeat so loud in his ears. He was so exposed, his soul open and his body bare and unclothed for Jason to have his way with.

Not to mention his shirt wrapped around his wrists. Blaze's pulse raced. He had to admit he was slightly turned on by having his arms bound by his lover. Jason rose, dipping his head as their lips crashed together. Blaze kissed him back eagerly. "Please," he begged against those lips. "Touch me."

Jason's hand reached out to wrap around Blaze's hard cock. Blaze's tortured cry rang through the room as he thrust into the smooth fingers he'd ached for. A mouth replaced the hand on his cock, and stars exploded behind Blaze's eyes.

Blaze's bound hands searched for something to hold on to as those lips bobbed up and down, but he settled for resting his hands against the wall above his head, relying on and trusting Jason to hold him. He groaned, the fire coursing through his body, his balls tightening as the swirls of pleasure settled in his stomach. "Jason," he ground out.

Jason unbuckled his belt and opened his khakis, shoving them down as he pulled out his own cock to stroke. Blaze wanted to touch him so badly, thread his fingers through his lover's hair. "Untie my wrists."

Jason looked at him, his eyes hazy with desire. "No."

Blaze groaned as Jason took him inside his hot, wet mouth again. He arched his back, and the sound that escaped his lips was feral. "Oh God, Jason."

The mouth disappeared. "I need to be inside you," Jason whispered, fumbling for the lube packet and condom from his pants.

Blaze lifted his head to look at Jason rolling on the condom, seeing him opening the lube packet swiftly. Blaze's cock jumped as he saw Jason's stomach muscles tense as he spread the fluid over his covered cock. Then those fingers were probing his hole, and Blaze

tensed. One finger, then two as he stretched Blaze's tight ring. "Just fuck me."

Jason smiled. "You're a dirty boy, Blaze." Blaze felt himself being stretched and then filled. His groan was soon smothered by Jason's lips, swallowed by the older man as he began to move.

Blaze threw his still-bound wrists over Jason's head, keeping him there as they moved faster, their rhythms matching as Jason snapped his hips. "Oh God, Jase. I'm... close."

Jason thrust deeper, and Blaze arched his back. Jason hit his prostate, causing Blaze to twist in Jason's arms. A couple of more thrusts sent them both over the edge, Jason coming inside Blaze.

Blaze leaned his head against the wall as a small part of his mind took in the tasteful, masculine luxury furnishings like the table that Jason had fucked him so skillfully against and was now cutting into his bottom. "Jase...."

"Oh God, Blaze. I'm sorry," he whispered as he untied Blaze's hands.

"No, don't be sorry," Blaze said as he dropped a kiss on Jason's cheek right near the corner of his mouth. He looked up into those hot, molten eyes and smiled.

Jason dropped a kiss on his lips and whispered, "I promised myself I wouldn't bend you over the first piece of furniture. That really didn't go according to plan, did it?"

Blaze was silent for a moment. "Well, if you look at it, you didn't bend me over, did you?"

Jason pursed his lips. "I like your way of thinking," he said, taking Blaze's hand. Jason dragged him through the house, heading through a hallway and up a staircase. "Shower sounds good?"

Blaze sighed happily. "Sounds amazing to me."

CHAPTER 12

THE next two days, mostly spent in bed, flew by too fast, and soon Blaze was on the flight with Jason going to Tampa. It was a long day with a connecting flight that left late, but for most of the trip there, Jason typed away on his laptop while Blaze tried to relax with Jason's iPod. He was quite pleased with the wide selection of music his boyfriend had, ranging from indie to Top 40.

Jennifer was waiting at baggage claim to escort them to a limo. As they arrived at the hotel, Blaze felt like he was in a whirlwind, Jason talking on his phone the whole time. Jennifer directed the bellboy to take their bags, and when he caught her eye, she smiled at him.

Blaze smiled back wanly.

Jennifer had already checked them into the hotel. Cassie was staying in the same hotel, as was a label executive who had been sent out to see the pop star with his family since his daughter was a fan of hers. "First show of the tour is a big one, Blaze. No pressure though," Jennifer called over her shoulder.

Blaze glared at her as she led them through the lobby and down one of the corridors to their suite just off the pool area. The bellboy was following behind them, pushing the trolley toward their room. Jennifer chuckled as she opened their door.

“We will be leaving for our next city at six the morning after the concert, so I’ll be at your door at five. Jason, your flight is at nine in the morning on the same day, so the car will be here at seven-thirty. Blaze, your sound check is at three-thirty tomorrow. Jason, you have a meeting with David at five tomorrow as well.”

Jason nodded, while Blaze felt like his head was starting to spin. “How do you keep track of this?”

Jason sighed. “You’ll eventually become use to her amazing mind for scheduling and gathering useless information after a while.”

Jennifer frowned. “Useless, huh?”

Jason put his BlackBerry away and shot her a smile. “Sorry.”

Jennifer glowered at Jason before finishing her checklist. Finally, she seemed to be done, and she walked out of their suite, calling behind her, “Be ready tomorrow at two-thirty to go to the venue.”

Blaze sat on the edge of the bed, staring out the window. “So, the moment of truth is finally here?”

Jason nodded as he sat down next to Blaze. “Scared?”

Blaze shook his head. “Excited.”

Jason smiled. He decided not to tell Blaze that the record executive wasn’t here just to see Cassie’s show but to scope out Blaze’s talent as well. “There’s a whirlpool tub in the suite here, care to try it out?”

Blaze looked up at the older man, those blue eyes dancing with desire. “Sure,” Blaze said. “I’m always game for a little fun.”

Jason went into the bathroom as Blaze stripped his clothes off, throwing them on the bed. He went into the bathroom and found Jason disrobing while the water filled the huge bath. “It looks big enough for the both of us.”

Jason turned and smiled as he threw his pants on the counter. "Just barely. Remember, I have long legs. You, however, have the sexiest legs I have seen."

Blaze snorted, but he had a smile on his face. "Flattery will get you everywhere."

Jason smiled as he looked down at Blaze's cock, already hard. Jason shucked his boxers and stepped into the bath, holding out his hand. Blaze nudged it away. "Do you think I'm a chick or something?"

Jason wrapped his arms around Blaze's waist and pulled him close, burying his face in Blaze's dark hair. "This was what I was going to do," he said softly as he rocked his hips, their cocks sliding against each other.

Blaze arched, shoving his hips towards his boyfriend's. "Jason," he growled. Jason pulled away as Blaze moaned. "Fucking tease."

Jason took Blaze's hand as he sat down, his feet sliding between Blaze's legs, Blaze's hard, uncut cock right at eye level. Jason looked up at his lover looking down at him, his aqua eyes fiery with desire. Jason clasped his waist and pulled him down, Blaze's knees bending as he sat in Jason's lap. Jason groaned as his cock slid between Blaze's cheeks, the water acting as a lubricant.

Blaze rocked his hips against his lover. "Have you ever thought about doing it without a condom?"

Jason clenched his teeth. "Um... that isn't really something we should talk about right now."

Blaze tensed as Jason's cock twitched and jerked against his ass cheek. "Why not?" he asked as he leaned his head back, groaning.

"Because I have to do the right thing," Jason said, his voice laced heavily with regret. "You may have been a virgin when we started out, but I wasn't, and I have to protect you."

Blaze's head snapped up, and he looked Jason in the eye. "I—I... oh!" Blaze forgot what he was going to say as Jason trailed a finger down between ass cheeks, moving between them toward his tight, puckered hole.

"Wanna try something different?" Jason whispered against Blaze's neck as he trailed his lips along the soft, dark skin.

"S-sure," Blaze whispered tightly.

"Turn around and stand up." Blaze did as he was told, resting his hands against the wall as he heard the water splash behind him. He felt Jason's soapy hands on his cheeks, cleaning him off, and then a splash of water warmed his rapidly cooling skin. He turned around to see Jason bending over, and Blaze frowned.

"What are you—oh God! Jason!" Blaze cried out, shock running through him. Jason's tongue was moving along his hole, licking it gently. Bliss replaced the shock in his system as the pleasure spikes ran straight to his cock, causing a drop of fluid to gather along the slit of his cockhead. His cries were wordless, his body jerking as fire shot through his extremities.

Blaze closed his eyes as he leaned his head back, his balls tightening. "Jason," he managed to grind out as the tongue moved faster. His hand moved to his cock, and he began stroking himself in time with the tongue sliding in and out of the puckered hole. Jason's hand went between his legs and cupped his balls. Blaze groaned as he pushed his ass back against Jason's mouth, his head falling forward to lean against the cool tile wall. Jason stopped, and Blaze moaned at the loss of the sensation. "Why did you stop?"

"Because I have to be inside you," Jason said softly, the water sloshing inside the bathtub as he moved past Blaze for the travel kit he had hung on the back of the door. Jason grabbed protection and then looked at Blaze. "Unless this time, you want to do me?"

Blaze froze with his hand on his dick. The thought of being inside Jason was exciting and extremely frightening. He almost said yes as he reached for the condom, but instead of rolling it on

himself, he rolled it onto Jason and squeezed some lube onto his covered cockhead.

“Fuck me, babe,” Blaze said tightly as he turned around, wiggling his ass at his boyfriend.

Jason growled as his cock twitched. “I will. Trust me,” he said, grabbing Blaze’s hip with one hand, fingering Blaze’s puckered hole. He slid one slick finger and then another inside his lover, enjoying Blaze’s body stiffening and his gasp of pleasure. The fingers slid out, and finally Jason slid his cock inside Blaze.

Jason dropped a little kiss on Blaze’s shoulder blade as he slid in until he was balls-deep. Blaze’s breath caught in his throat, and all he could whisper was, “Hard... fuck me hard.”

Jason slid out until his cockhead nearly popped out, and Blaze’s delicious moan filled the bath as Jason started fucking him slowly. His thrusts were unhurried, torturously slow but speeding up as Blaze loosened around him.

Blaze’s little grunts as Jason slammed inside him sent a thrill straight to Jason’s cock, making his balls tighten as he rushed toward his release. Jason wanted to hold back, but Blaze’s muscles tightened rhythmically around him, and he was lost in pleasure, dimly aware of Blaze’s body tensing as he got close.

Jason leaned in close to his lover, kissing the back of his neck as he felt the tingle at the base of his spine. Blaze shouted as he coated his own hand with his seed, his impossibly tight muscles caressing Jason’s cock, urging him to follow. Jason’s kisses turned to a bite as he thrust a final time into Blaze, his body jerking as he came.

THE next day, there was chaos backstage as most of the stagehands and techs ran around at full speed. Someone yelled for hairspray,

another yelled for oil. Blaze stood off to the side of it all with the other band members and his guitar.

“Are you pumped?” Stu asked.

Blaze nodded slowly. He did have the set list taped to the back of the eighteen-foot-high speaker that would always be to his left so he could cheat, just in case. But he didn’t need it. This was it. The show was everything they had prepared for, and now it was here.

“Two minutes ’til the band entrance. Seven minutes until show starts,” a low voice came over their earpieces. The custom fit earpiece was aligned very comfortably in the shell of his ear. At this point, after three weeks of constantly wearing it in rehearsal, it felt natural.

Jason walked past him, throwing a glance toward him. “Hey,” he said, licking his lips as he threw him a suggestive look.

Blaze groaned, thankful for a second that no one could hear them or see Jason. “Damn it, don’t start anything you can’t finish right now.”

Jason’s smile said it all. This morning had been languorously indulgent, keeping his mind off of what was to come.

“Fifteen seconds ’til band entrance.”

Blaze smiled at Jason as he fiddled with his lucky guitar pick. “This is it. Wish me luck.”

Jason grinned. “Good luck.”

AT SEVEN a. m. the next morning, Blaze found himself leaning his head against the window of the tour bus as he tiredly watched the trees flying by as they rode down I-4. The show in Tampa had been a raging success. Cassie’s tour was nearly sold out, with a few new

dates being added to cities they were already playing in. The quiet rumbling of the tour bus was lulling him to sleep.

He hadn't rested all night, instead wanting to relish being in bed with Jason just a little while longer. He could sleep on the bus, which had seemed like a great idea in the middle of the night.

Earlier in the morning, Blaze had stood at the door with Jason, not wanting to let his lover go. In a second, Blaze had been willing to give all this up just to stay by Jason's side, and that scared him. It meant Jason was becoming more important than his dream. A knock at the door signaled Jennifer's arrival, and Blaze just couldn't let go. Jason reached behind him and pulled open the door to reveal his secretary.

She smiled. "Wow, this is better than coffee. I need a cup of this every morning." She turned to give them some privacy, satisfied they were awake and Blaze was on his way out the door.

"I'll miss you," Jason whispered, tucking the long strands of Blaze's hair behind his ear before leaning down for another kiss.

"I love you," Blaze answered back, and for moment, he wished they had all morning to lie in bed together. But they both had somewhere to be, and going there meant being far away from each other.

Jason kissed him gently, pulling back and looking longingly into his eyes. "Love you too. Call me when you get in. Luckily, you don't have far to go."

"We should get in there about noon. Sound check is at three."

"Try to sleep on the bus," Jason said softly as Blaze broke away from his embrace.

Blaze sighed in his sleep as the bus rocked along I-4, Jason never far from his dreams.

BLAZE called Jason like he had promised at their next stop in Jacksonville, and after the show, it was back on the bus to head for Atlanta. Jason was flying into their next stop in New Orleans, and he was planning to ride along to Houston before flying back out again. But now Blaze was counting the minutes until Jason arrived in Louisiana.

He was sitting at a table in one of the small tour offices the tour band normally used when the door suddenly opened. Blaze turned from his laptop to find Cassie peeking past the door and into the room. "Looking for something?"

Cassie shut the door behind her. "Yeah," she said softly as she walked in. "I was looking for you." Blaze felt a chill run down his spine. He read her intentions loud and clear, her dark blue eyes hooded and her lips parted.

Blaze held up his hands as he got out of his chair and started backing away. "Cassie, come on now. Don't do this."

Cassie smirked as she came closer. "I know exactly what I'm doing."

Blaze had been uncomfortable since she had started walking toward him, but as she was trying to corner him against the makeshift desk, he started to sweat and his stomach turned. He tried to speak, but only a rush of air came out. He scooted around a chair, but her hand on his arm stopped him.

She was pushing him toward the couch, the same couch that had been in Jason's office and had been moved to the band's room. It was on this couch just a few months ago Jason and Blaze had been together for the first time. "Cassie, damn it—"

She shoved him down, and he would be damned if she weren't quite strong, much stronger than he thought she would be. She straddled him, her hands moving to his casual button-down shirt. "Don't play coy, Blaze. I can feel you want this," she said as she ground her hips against him. She leaned in and kissed him. She

tasted like mint, sweet and cool as she thrust her tongue in his mouth and pressed her body against his.

Blaze squirmed, turning his head from side to side, trying to wrench his lips away from her. “Stop,” he said, wanting to push at her, but at the same time aware of his own strength. He didn’t want to hurt her. God, she was strong for the short, skinny girl she was. He couldn’t quite seem to grasp her shoulders as he struggled against her.

She rubbed against him, unbuttoning her shirt, and Blaze stiffened. His body was betraying him, his cock swelling as she moved against him. The words she spoke in what he was sure she thought was a sultry voice grated on him like nails against a chalkboard. “You like being pinned down, big boy?”

Blaze looked up at her, anger flaring in his eyes. “Not really, and certainly not by you. Now get the fuck off me.” He renewed his struggles, finally able to push her to his side without injuring her. Once she was off of him, he adjusted himself, trying to hide his throbbing erection. Dismay and guilt flooded him, along with confusion, as he turned to glare at her.

“C’mon, baby,” she said as she ran a hand up his leg, heading for the waistband of his pants. “I know you want me, how could you not?”

Blaze stood up and straightened his clothes. He opened his mouth to deliver a scathing setback, but the door opened, and in walked Stu and Jason.

Blaze looked in horror at the singer, who was buttoning up her shirt delicately, shooting Jason a triumphant look. Stu looked between Blaze and Cassie, his eyes wide. “Maybe I should leave,” Stu said. When no one said anything, he turned and walked out the door.

Blaze wanted to say something, deny it all, but his mouth couldn’t seem to move. *Not again*, he thought as a pair of slender

arms wrapped around his chest from the back. He stiffened. "Let's do this again sometime."

His mind was running in slow motion as he watched her walk out the door. How the fuck had she got the idea in her head he would ever want her, especially after the way she had just thrown herself at him? It occurred to him he wasn't the only one in the room. Stu and Cassie had left, but Jason was standing in front of him, an unreadable look on his face. "Jason," Blaze said, pausing. "Nothing happened."

Jason frowned. "Well, that wasn't 'nothing' as you called it."

Blaze felt his heart skip a beat. "No... I mean I didn't initiate it. She... um." Blaze stuttered, not wanting to say it and risk appearing weak in Jason's eyes. "She forced herself on me."

"I know."

Blaze wrinkled his brow. "You know?"

"I was in the security office getting a new lanyard for my badge when Terry told me to come and look at the monitor. I saw her push you down so I could see what really happened. But..." Jason trailed off and looked down at the outline of Blaze's erection.

"Oh." Blaze felt like a bucket of ice water had been dumped on him. He looked up and wished he could read some sort of emotion on Jason's face, because he would know whether his boyfriend were angry about the way his body had responded.

"Are you attracted to her?" Jason asked quietly.

Blaze hated the doubt in Jason's voice. He might have been good at hiding the emotion on his face, but not in his voice. "No. I'm definitely not attracted to her."

Jason crossed his arms, and Blaze wanted to kiss away the look on the older man's face. "Are you confused?"

Blaze sighed. “Look, my body just... responded. I... I don’t know.” He really didn’t know what to say to Jason. He had seen Blaze at the worst possible moment.

“It’s okay, Blaze. You can be honest with me. It won’t change how I feel about you.”

Blaze sighed. “Maybe I do like girls, but not Cassie,” he blurted out.

Jason looked like he was trying his hardest not to react. “Okay.”

Blaze felt his stomach drop to his knees, but he needed to say it. “While I was in Hawaii, I fantasized about having a threesome with you and Kiana.” He felt a sense of relief as he said it, but still he searched Jason’s face, begging him to understand.

Jason looked Blaze in the eye. “It’s okay. I assume you’ve had fantasies about girls before?” At Blaze’s nod, Jason plunged forward. “It’s fine. I don’t love you any less.”

“Nothing she could do would change my feelings for you,” Blaze said fiercely as he stepped closer to Jason.

Jason smiled as he uncrossed his arms and curled them around his lover. “I know how it is. I still like the idea of being with a woman, but being with you... it’s amazing. I’ve never felt this way about anyone. I love you.”

Blaze felt his heart swell at Jason’s acceptance as he folded himself into Jason’s arms. “I love you too.”

CHAPTER 13

BLAZE didn't get to spend as much time with Jason in New Orleans and Houston as he would have liked, but Jason promised to fly back into Phoenix before they headed out to Vegas and California. There was a three-day break in LA, and Blaze hoped for a few days of rest and relaxation once they got done with the three sold-out concerts.

Blaze wasn't overly excited about going to the afterparty at the latest and greatest club in Arizona, but Jason coaxed Blaze into meeting him there before they headed to their hotel. They had the following day off while Cassie made an appearance at a youth camp for underprivileged teenagers, and Blaze was looking forward to a day off.

Blaze stood at the bar in the VIP area of the club, waiting for the bartender to serve him. There was a line of people waiting to get in to the pop star's little corner, with one of Cassie's guards standing at the rope. The guard stared out into the crowd, only letting the rope drop if someone he knew was with the tour or a friend of Cassie's came up.

"I have been waiting ten minutes for him to notice I need a new drink."

Blaze turned to his left to see a young blonde holding an empty glass. She looked barely old enough to be in the club and certainly not of age to drink. "It must be because it's so busy here tonight."

She cocked an eyebrow. "If I knew it was going to be this busy, I wouldn't have come here."

Blaze almost laughed. He had been around the see-and-be-seen crowd enough in LA and on the road to know she was lying through her teeth.

A guy snapped his fingers from behind them. "Hey, Brady, get these two kids a drink already." He leaned toward Blaze. "Sorry for the wait. We weren't exactly expecting this many people tonight, but we should have known, especially since we have a pop princess in the house tonight."

"Whatcha drinking?" the bartender asked as he walked over.

Blaze turned back to the bartender. "Malibu and pineapple," he said, sliding a twenty onto the bar. The girl next to him indicated she'd have the same.

The crowd was so thick with people it almost made Blaze claustrophobic. The bartender pushed their glasses back and waved the money back at him. "This drink is on the house, courtesy of the manager. Sorry for the wait."

Blaze took the money and shoved it in his pocket, pulling out a few dollars for a tip. "Thanks, man," he said, dropping the money on the bar.

The girl pulled a face as she sipped her drink. "C'mon, man! Put some rum in this or something."

Brady shook his head. "Oh no. I'm not getting caught serving to an under-ager. No way."

The young girl bit her lip and threw puppy eyes at the bartender, but he just smirked in reply. "Tough one, little girl. Come back when you are twenty-one."

The girl sighed and threw a glance at Blaze. Her gaze shifted to someone behind them. "Dina!"

Blaze glanced at the tall brunette standing behind him. "C'mon, let's dance," the new girl said, beckoning to him.

Blaze waved them off. “Thanks, though.” He turned back to his drink and found the bartender shaking his head.

“She’s in here every week, showing the damn doorman those tits so she can drink.”

Blaze nodded. “I understand. I used to bartend in LA. I saw girls like that every day of the week.”

The bartender grinned. “Wow, and now you’re in the big leagues on tour with Cassie.”

Blaze smiled. “Yeah, it’s pretty fucking cool actually,” he said as he took a sip of his drink.

The bartender waved at him as he moved on to take the next order. “You come back and see me if you need anything, got it?”

He gave the bartender a thumbs-up as he left the bar, turning out into the crowd. The music was pounding, and people on the dance floor were grinding against each other, sweat glistening on their bodies. The place was hopping, more so than the bar he used to work at in LA. Blaze really didn’t care much for partying, since being here was more like being at his old job.

Someone bumped into him, and he looked over his shoulder to see a guy in black jeans and wearing a business jacket over a gray T-shirt. “Sorry,” he called out over the music.

Blaze held up his drink in a gesture telling him it was all right.

“Hey, you’re Cassie’s new guitarist, correct? You replaced her boyfriend, right?”

Blaze grimaced. “I replaced Craig on stage, but not when it comes to being her boyfriend. Someone else can have that honor.”

He laughed as he held out his hand. “My name’s Jon. I help out when the tour is on the West Coast.”

Blaze chuckled as he shook Jon’s hand. “That’s cool.”

Jon looked out at the dance crowd. “I get people what they need, ya know? I can get candy for you, if you’d like. Or maybe beans are more your style?” He met Blaze’s gaze as he said it.

For one wild second, Blaze thought he was joking, offering him coke and E, but when he realized Jon was completely serious, he tried to not let his mouth drop open. “Oh, I don’t know,” Blaze stammered.

Jon nodded. “My stuff is really high quality, so you’ll love it. Here, try some,” he said, holding out a little pack. Blaze took it, staring at the tiny white tablet.

Blaze felt a jolt of shock as Jon let go of the packet. “I’ll be around if you want more. Just ask for me, ’kay?”

Blaze watched as the other man walked off, heading straight for Cassie’s little corner, being admitted past the rope with a handshake to the guard at the rope.

Blaze shoved the bag in his pocket, shock running through his veins. He’d tried some drugs in college, mainly sticking to pot. He’d remembered how hyper-aware he’d become when he’d tried ecstasy. He licked his lips, wondering for a second how it would feel with Jason touching him, his body sensitive and his desire in overdrive while on E.

He headed to the bar, catching the bartender’s attention. “A water, please.”

JASON made his way through the crowd, looking for Blaze. The days apart had left him feeling bereft and missing the man who had become so important to him. He missed seeing those aqua eyes shining back at him.

He almost laughed at himself. He was becoming a sap over Blaze, but no one but he and Blaze needed to know that. He spied Jennifer looking at her BlackBerry, and he waved her down. “Have you seen Blaze?” he yelled.

She pointed toward the dance floor, and Jason followed her direction, waving his thanks back at her. He wove his way through the crowd, stopping behind his boyfriend. The thumping beat of the

bass switched into a more mellow song. He wrapped his arms around Blaze's waist, not caring who saw him, only wanting to touch the man he'd longed for during the past few days. "Hey," he said in Blaze's ear.

He felt Blaze suck in a breath and he looked over at his shoulder, his aqua eyes dreamy. "Hey," Blaze responded, their hips connecting as Blaze rocked back in time with the music. He rested his hands on Jason's wrists as Jason pulled them closer, his erection nestled against Blaze's cheeks.

Blaze felt good, a little warm and sweaty from dancing, but he smelled good, like the cologne he'd worn in LA when he wasn't working. Jason buried his face in the crook of Blaze's neck and breathed in the scent, reveling in the man he had fallen for so desperately.

Blaze shifted in his arms, turning to face Jason, his eyes closed. Jason trailed his lips from Blaze's neck to his ear, his dark hair brushing Jason's cheek. His hair was soft, and all Jason could think of was how amazing Blaze tasted, smelled.

"Touch me, Jason," Blaze said softly, shoving his hips forward. Jason barely heard him over the music, but he certainly felt the thick prick through the dark jeans. Jason resisted the urge to grab Blaze's hips and mash their dicks together.

Instead, he grabbed Blaze's hand and dragged him through the club. There was nothing he wanted more than to be naked in bed with his lover, making love to him—maybe multiple times—until the sun came up. They finally made it to the front of the club, and the cool desert air hit Jason in the face.

His limo was waiting. He hadn't planned on staying very long, only long enough to grab his boyfriend and leave. He turned to ask Blaze something, but the question died on his lips when he saw the faraway expression on Blaze's face.

Jason grabbed his chin and forced Blaze to look him in the eyes. "God, Blaze, how much did you have to drink?" he asked out of concern.

“Only two drinks,” Blaze said airily.

Jason cocked an eyebrow. “Two Long Island iced teas maybe?” he said, joking as his stomach sank, knowing that look too well. Knowing it wasn’t alcohol causing the haze in his boyfriend’s eyes.

Blaze looked up at Jason, his lips parted, his breaths coming rapidly. “No, just pineapple and coconut rum. Then I switched to water.”

“Oh shit, babe. You’ve taken something.” Jason felt a chill run through his body as he said the words, not even needing confirmation.

Blaze nodded, digging into his pocket and pulling out a plastic bag. It was empty, but in the street light, he could see some dust from a pill in the bag. “It was freebie from a guy at the club.”

Jason felt the anger rise inside him. He opened his mouth several times to rail at Blaze, but he knew he wouldn’t get through tonight. “Give me the bag.”

Blaze obediently dropped the bag in Jason’s hand, looking up at him. “Are you mad at me?”

Jason dug his phone out of his pocket and dialed Terry, not answering Blaze. “This is Jason. Meet me outside real quick.” When he hung up, he looked back into hazy aqua eyes.

“Oh God, Jason, don’t be angry with me.”

Even though he knew his face belied his true feelings, he patted Blaze on the shoulder gently, watching as a shiver and sigh ran through him. “It’ll be okay, baby,” he said as he spied Terry walking out toward them.

“Get in the car,” Jason said gruffly, pushing Blaze behind him. He faced Terry, gripping the bag, his heart pounding. Too many emotions ran through him right then, fear coupled with anger and finally dread as he stepped forward. “We have a problem.”

He explained the situation, handing over the bag to the head of security. “Blaze is a little naïve,” Jason said, shrugging his

shoulders. “He probably thought it was a caffeine tablet or something.”

Terry looked at Jason, his eyebrows in his hair. “You sure about that? It’s not like I have to report this to the label or anything.”

Jason raked his hands through his curls, tugging on them as he tried to center himself and find a little bit of sanity in his life. “I don’t know, but you need to handle this situation. If Cassie’s flying, she needs to do it in a place where people can’t get pictures of her doing it. She needs to move her little party to the hotel.”

Terry nodded. “Got it, boss man.”

“And test the stuff left over in here just to be certain it’s E. I’m fairly certain it is high quality, but I want to make sure it’s not acid or something else,” Jason said with a shudder.

“You gonna be all right with the kid?”

Jason took a deep breath. “I’ll talk to him in the morning. I’m just going to take him back to the hotel and put him to bed. Call me with those results. And for God’s sake, keep this quiet.”

“You got it.”

Jason slid inside the limo, finding Blaze stretched out on the seats, face down, stroking the running lights along the floorboard of the small bar that lined one side. He was humming softly the tune from the club, looking dazed.

Jason heard the tap on the top of the car as Terry signaled for the driver to leave. Jason grabbed for Blaze, patting him. “C’mon, Blaze, sit up. Have some water.”

Blaze stared at Jason’s tie as he took the water bottle from him. “That tie is so gorgeous. You should wear it every day.”

Jason frowned. “Why did you take it, babe?” he asked softly

Blaze swayed as the car went around a corner. “Are you mad at me? Please, don’t be mad at me.”

Jason pulled Blaze from his bench on the side of the limo to his seat so they were both facing forward. “I’m not mad at you. And it might help if you faced forward while we ride to the hotel.”

Blaze looked up at Jason reverently. "What would I do without you?"

"Well, you'd be back in the club, probably being groped by God knows who," Jason said angrily.

Blaze shook his head. "I knew you were on your way. I wanted to be ready, waiting there for you," he said, closing his eyes with a sigh. When he opened them, Jason could see the feverish desire there. "And when you walked up to me and put your arms around me, I saw heaven. I was soaring, and you were there with me."

Jason bit his lip. He wished that Blaze had thought this out more, of all the possibilities that could have happened. The guy he got the drugs from could have been an undercover cop, or worse, the drugs could have been fake and super-dangerous. Jason shuddered as he put those thoughts from his mind. "Thank God we have a day off tomorrow. You're going to be messed up for a bit."

Blaze leaned against him and laughed. "Days off are fun!"

Jason felt the anger melt away a little at Blaze's exuberance. He sighed and put his arm around Blaze to steady him. "Okay."

Blaze sighed as he turned his head to look at Jason. "I love the way you feel against me right now."

Jason tried to pull away. "Blaze, it's just the drugs."

Blaze caught his arm. "No, Jason. I always love the way you feel against me. You have the softest hands. They're not all callused like mine are, and I love it when your hand is on my dick." Jason felt his cheeks burn at Blaze's wanton words as he continued. "I love your hands. They're shaped so beautifully, and so slender and strong." As he spoke, Blaze took one of Jason's hands and turned it over, kissing the palm gently, almost reverently, before taking a finger in his mouth, sucking lightly.

Jason gasped, and it turned into a moan, his body acting of its own accord. His cock hardened as he stared at Blaze going down on his finger, running his tongue along his finger just like he would have if he had his mouth on Jason's cock. And Blaze was getting

just as much enjoyment out of it as he was. “Oh God,” Jason said breathlessly as he tried to put a damper on his desire.

As Blaze looked up at him, his pupils wide and unfocused, Jason knew he shouldn’t be kissing him. He shouldn’t be taking advantage of the situation, but then Blaze’s lips were on his, and he couldn’t quite bring himself to stop the younger man.

Blaze took Jason’s hand and rubbed the bulge in his jeans. Blaze moaned, arching against Jason. “Touch me all over, Jason. It feels so fucking amazing.”

Jason slid down the seat so they could lay down as he pulled Blaze on top of him. Blaze tensed, vocalizing his pleasure as their bodies slid along each other. Jason couldn’t stop his own hips from rolling, his cock rubbing against the younger man’s through their clothes.

Blaze was arching into Jason, moaning deliciously. “Don’t stop,” he said as he humped the older man’s hip.

Jason let out a shaky breath, knowing he was completely ensnared by Blaze’s seduction. He was powerless to resist, falling into Blaze’s aqua eyes, letting himself go in the moment. He threaded his fingers through Blaze’s, bringing every inch of their bodies together as Blaze rolled his hips, his moans hurtling Jason toward an orgasm.

Blaze responded to every touch, to every moan from Jason, and after a kiss where Jason felt like he was drowning, Blaze stiffened in his arms, their lips parting as Blaze cried out in intense pleasure.

Jason saw the low lights of the hotel as the limo pulled into the small driveway. He hit the intercom, calling out to the driver. “Give us a minute.”

BLAZE looked out the window, realizing through the throbbing end of his orgasm that they were at the hotel. This was something he had

looked forward to since he popped the pill. He looked up into Jason's eyes, his eyes dark in the low light. "Promise me you'll fuck me hard. I have to have you."

Jason looked torn, and he opened his mouth once, then again before finally saying, "I promise to give you what you need," he said noncommittally.

Blaze sucked in his breath as the limo bounced slightly. Jason looked out the window, and Blaze saw the bright lights of the hotel invade the darkness. He pushed Blaze up and grabbed his jacket to drape over Blaze's shoulders. "Good evening, sir," the driver said.

Jason slid out. "Good evening," he responded as he turned to help Blaze. "Careful."

He guided an unsteady Blaze through the lobby of the luxury hotel. From his flushed appearance and his wavering walk, Blaze was sure everyone assumed he was sick, and he knew that was exactly what Jason was aiming for. Jason beckoned to the bellboy, who scurried over. "Can you have juice and water brought to room 1508?"

The bellboy nodded. "Right away, sir."

Blaze was thankful Jennifer had checked them in already. As they went to the elevator, he pulled the key out of his pocket. Jason led him into the elevator, and Blaze was thankful they didn't have to spend a minute more in the lobby, because he could only think of one thing: he and Jason together in bed all night.

He had really hoped they would be alone in the elevator, but another man stepped in behind them and pressed the button for the eighth floor.

Jason put the key into the slot to unlock the button for the top floor. He pressed the button as Blaze shivered. "It's okay. Just wait 'til we get to the room, and we'll get you some juice."

As the doors closed, Blaze whispered softly, "I don't want the juice. I just want you."

Jason's cheeks flushed. "Ahh... uhm," he stammered as the elevator shot upward, glancing away furtively. The movement caused Blaze to sway in the elevator. "Careful," Jason said, reaching out to catch him. Blaze fell unceremoniously into his lover's arms and looked up at him.

"I can't wait 'til we get up to our room. I need this."

Jason couldn't contain the look of horror on his face as Blaze shimmied against him. Blaze had always had the feeling Jason wasn't hugely into being kissy in public, but Blaze was getting desperate. He wanted to ride out the last hours of the drug in Jason's arms, and he would have Jason fucking him if it was the last thing he'd do tonight.

Once the doors slid closed after the other man left the elevator, Jason opened his eyes. He looked at Blaze leaning against him and dropped a kiss on his forehead. "It'll be okay."

The doors slid open at their floor, and he pulled Blaze onto their floor. "Thank God the rest of the tour isn't staying here," Jason said, more to himself than to Blaze as he opened their door and Blaze followed him in.

JASON looked around their suite as they entered, pocketing the key as Blaze walked past him. He spied their bags upon entering, grateful all their luggage had been brought over before he got there. Blaze was immediately pulling off his shirt and kicking his shoes off near the door. "Hold up. At least wait until the people bring up... oh, maybe not," Jason said distractedly as he watched his boyfriend strip down to his underwear.

"I'm hot."

"Yes, you are." Jason licked his lips as he watched the sexy guitarist walk around, taking in the room. Blaze was looking around in wonder and ended up staring out the panoramic window at the city lights. Jason was starting toward his boyfriend when he got the phone call. "This is Jason."

“Boss man. I tested that bag, and it is definitely ecstasy.”

A wave of nausea ran through Jason. He didn't know what he had been hoping for, maybe that Blaze had taken a sugar pill and he was experiencing some sort of placebo effect. He closed his eyes as he rubbed his forehead. “What does this mean?”

Terry chuckled. “It means you should enjoy tonight.”

“I can't do that,” Jason said sharply.

“Why not? Let's face it, Blaze took this drug tonight to have great sex with you. Don't bullshit me. I've been around the block a few times. I'm not as green as the new guy on the tour.”

Jason closed his mouth. It had been hanging open pretty much the whole time Terry had been spouting his advice. “Um, Blaze and I aren't—”

“Oh, you aren't? I'll have to tell all the dancers and staff who have been lusting after him.”

“You'll do no such thing,” Jason snarled jealously. He clapped his hand over his mouth as he listened to the peals of laughter in his ear. He groaned as he heard a knock at the door.

“I need to go. I ordered some drinks for Blaze, and they're here.”

“That's a good idea. Keep him hydrated. He would have already had a bad reaction if he was going to have one. Just enjoy yourself tonight.”

Jason grumbled a goodbye and shouted, “Blaze, please, oh God. At least put your pants back on.” He realized too late after he said it that he hadn't hit the end button on his phone and cringed at the thought of the further entertainment he had just provided the head of security.

He opened the door and a woman in a suit smiled as she pushed the cart in. Jason looked at her badge with her name on it and the title “General Manager” beneath it. “Good evening, Mr. Stockton,” she said quietly. “I trust everything is fine with your room?”

“Yes, it’s fine. You don’t have to push that all the way in.” Jason was trying to keep Blaze out of her line of sight, especially since he was running around in his underwear, but Blaze chose right then to come into the entry hall and stare at the drinks on the cart.

“Here, drink this. It’ll make you feel better,” Jason said as he handed his boyfriend a glass of juice. He wanted him to walk back into the main hotel room, but instead, he just stood there as he drank the orange juice, swallowing and making soft little sighing noises. Those little noises were similar to if not exactly the same as the ones Blaze made when he was sucking him off, and Jason felt his cock harden.

He heard a little noise next to him and saw the hotel manager gaping at the gorgeous sight in front of her, and the part of Jason’s mind that had disconnected from the situation agreed with her reaction wholeheartedly. He took the bill from her and signed it quickly. He reached into his pocket as he said, “He has a fever right now. He took some cold medicine, so I imagine he should feel better in the morning.”

Her nod as she saw the fifty-dollar bill he slipped inside behind the room service bill assured him of her silence. She smiled up at him. “Please call me if you need anything else,” she said, turning and walking out the door. She glanced quickly over her shoulder as Blaze turned around and walked back into the main room. Her eyes widened as she watched him walk out of sight. Jason stepped into her line of sight and shot her a wan smile. She closed the door behind her, and not a moment too soon.

Blaze ran back into the entrance hall without a stitch of clothing on. “Are we ready?”

Jason’s mouth watered at the sight of Blaze’s washboard abs and those muscular thighs as if he was seeing them for the first time. Not to mention Blaze’s thick prick bouncing as it stood hard and ready. God, he wanted this so badly. “Yeah, I’m ready.”

Blaze sidled up to him. “Jason,” he whispered as he shimmied along his body, rubbing his soft, tanned skin along the silk and cotton of Jason’s clothes.

Jason dipped his head, capturing Blaze’s lips as the younger man clung to him, digging his hands into the soft fabric. Blaze’s mouth went slack as he rubbed his cock into Jason’s thigh. Jason reached between them to run his hand over Blaze’s cockhead, stroking it gently.

Blaze broke their kiss, his head falling back as his eyes went unfocused. He didn’t speak, only thrust himself into Jason’s hand, mewling wordlessly.

“Do you want this?” Jason asked.

“Yes, oh God, yes,” Blaze said, taking Jason’s hand, dragging him into the bedroom.

Jason slid out of his traveling loafers and unbuttoned his shirt, all the while keeping an eye on Blaze, who was staring at him through hooded eyes. “On your knees.”

As Blaze dropped to his knees, Jason gaped at him. He wasn’t into the whole domination and submission scene, but he had to admit the way the younger man was on his knees, staring up at him with need and adoration written so plainly on his face, was sexy. “No, on your hands and knees on the bed,” he said, laughing around his internal discomfort.

As Blaze scrambled onto the low-profile hotel mattress, Jason shucked his pants while keeping his boxers on, threw his shirt aside as Blaze didn’t listen to him. He was on his back; his hand was leisurely stroking his cock, his eyelashes fluttering in pure ecstasy.

Jason kneeled above Blaze, looking down at him. “You all right?”

Blaze nodded. “Touch me, Jason. Fuck me senseless.”

Jason bit his lip. He knew damn good and well Blaze had chosen to take the drug with every intention of them fucking their brains out, but Jason just couldn’t bring himself to do it. He should

have told Blaze before this moment why he never drank, why he didn't do drugs, but right now wasn't the time.

He lay down next to Blaze, brushing his hand away to cover Blaze's cock with his own hand. "Let me," he said as he bent his head to drop a kiss on those gorgeous lips.

Blaze arched his back, his nipples turning into little pebbles. He met Jason's tongue eagerly, his hands roaming to stroke Jason through his boxers. Jason hissed, his hips moving instinctively into the touch. He started stroking Blaze's cock faster, working the foreskin over the sensitive head. Blaze's touch, made clumsy by their position, teased him rather than brought him closer to his pinnacle.

However, he knew all the buttons to push to make Blaze fall over the edge. Those aqua eyes shot open, and Blaze whispered, "Fuck me, Jason."

Jason slid down Blaze's body, intent on bringing him off. He switched his grip as he ran his tongue along Blaze's lightly furred balls. The orgasm was explosive; the cry ripped from Blaze's chest as he twisted beneath Jason.

Jason lay down again next to Blaze, watching his heavy breathing. "You okay?" Jason whispered.

Blaze's eyes drifted closed. "Yeah. I'm sorry you didn't get off," he said as curled into Jason's body.

"Don't worry about me," Jason said softly. "Why don't you sleep now and we'll talk in the morning?"

Blaze tried to resist sleep. "Let me take care of you. It's not fair."

"Don't worry about me, Blaze," Jason said firmly, pushing his boyfriend back against the pillows gently. "Sleep, okay?"

He looked to make sure Blaze understood him but found him already asleep. Jason slipped from the bed, throwing his boxers to the floor before striding into the bathroom.

Jason turned on the shower, his mind in another place, transported back to when he was younger. He would hide in the shower every time he heard his parents argue, feeling the sickness wash over him. At least here, the rush of the water would drown out their fighting over his mom's drug abuse.

Again, Jason found himself instinctively wanting the comfort of the water rushing over his skin, knowing he was safe here. He stepped into the shower, letting the near scalding water cleanse his soul. And as he dried off, he tried find the righteous anger he had felt before toward Blaze over carelessly subjecting himself to the drug. Instead, as tears hit his eyes, he could only find love. He hated himself for a split second, wanting to be strong enough to distance himself from Blaze over this and protect himself.

It wasn't how it worked though, as Jason well knew. He would love Blaze no matter what, and it was like turning a knife inside his heart. In the morning, he would find out how bad Blaze's drug use was and try to help him.

He slipped into bed next to his boyfriend, listening for his deep steady breathing, reaching out take his pulse. Finding it steady, he let himself relax a little as he drifted off to sleep.

THE first wrong thing he noticed was that he was naked. Blaze rarely slept without clothes, even since he had started sleeping with Jason.

Jason. Blaze's eyes flew open, and he licked his chapped lips. Jason was with the tour for a couple of nights before they headed out to the next city. Two tour dates in the city—with the first concert having been yesterday and the next tomorrow—meant another night with his boyfriend and the entirety of the day free.

Blaze lifted his head to check the spot next to him and found it empty. He frowned and looked at the clock. It was just a few minutes past nine in the morning. Jason was probably on the phone

already. He went to push the covers back, and that was when he felt how badly his thighs hurt.

“Shit,” he cried. Not only did his thighs and stomach muscles hurt, but his cock and balls were sore. What the fuck happened last night?

When he saw Jason appear at the door, his phone to his ear, it all came rushing back to him. Except this morning, Jason was wearing glasses. “You okay?” Jason whispered.

Blaze nodded, and Jason disappeared again. Blaze tilted his head back and looked at the ceiling. He felt like he had been stampeded by a whole herd of elephants, his muscles crying out in agony.

Jason reappeared without the phone, instead with a glass of orange juice and a couple of pills. He set them on the end table and then helped Blaze sit up. “It’ll be all right. Just take it easy. God, we got lucky with an extra day in between the concert dates.”

“I think I’ll be fine. I’m just a little tense,” Blaze said as he gestured toward Jason’s glasses. “What’s up with those?”

“My contacts are really dry in this weather. Here.” Jason handed him the pills and then the juice to wash it down with. “I have breakfast coming up. Care to have some?”

Blaze smiled. “Yes, I’m starving.”

“I guess so, after....” Jason’s expression darkened. “Get dressed and come out.”

Blaze hated the angry look in Jason’s eyes. “Are you mad at me?”

“No....” Jason said, hedging.

Blaze sighed. “You were angry last night too. What’s wrong?”

The anger morphed to pain and suddenly Jason looked much younger than his thirty-two years. “It’s not something I want to talk about.”

“Okay.” Blaze knew by the tone of his voice that right now, nothing could pry Jason’s thoughts out of him. “I’m glad you were here, though.”

Jason had his mouth open to say something when Blaze had started talking, but he would never find out what Jason had been planning to say. “Really?”

“Yeah. You’re the only one I’d trust to be with me when I was like that.” Blaze saw emotions flit across Jason’s face after his admission, but Jason said nothing. He stared at him for so long Blaze started to feel uncomfortable. “What?”

Jason said nothing for what seemed like forever. Finally, he spoke. “Why’d you take it?”

Blaze looked away, feeling stupid and embarrassed. “I took it in college once, but I’d always heard that sex was amazing on it, and I thought it was no big deal to drop some E with you, but... I was wrong. I’m sorry.”

Blaze’s heart wrenched as he met Jason’s eyes. He would admit a thousand times over that he was wrong, just to see the lost look leave Jason’s expression. “I was worried about you,” Jason admitted softly.

Blaze nodded, running his hand along Jason’s forearm, feeling the dark baby-fine hairs there. “I don’t need anything but you, Jason. Last night was stupid, and I’ll never do it again.”

Jason expression went blank for a second, almost like he was in shock, but he turned his head as they heard a knock on the door. He turned back around and shot Blaze his perfect white smile. “Come out in a few minutes and have breakfast with me, okay?” At Blaze’s nod, Jason got off the bed, grabbed his pants, and headed for the front room of the suite.

Blaze sighed and leaned his head against the headboard. He felt a heat creep across his cheeks as the memories of the previous night flooded his mind. Had he really begged Jason so desperately for sex? Oh God, he’d even dropped to his knees for it, hadn’t he?

Blaze felt a wave of nausea hit him. Jason must have hated to touch him last night. He had been in such a horrible drugged-out state, grasping and clawing at the older man. He closed his eyes as he heard the door shut out in the main area. Finally, Blaze dragged himself from the rumpled bed. At the very least, he had to apologize some more for what he'd done.

He dragged a pair of loose cotton shorts out of his suitcase and pulled them on, not bothering with a T-shirt. He walked out as Jason was sitting down. Jason looked up, his warm smile reaching his brown eyes.

Blaze winced as he sat down. Everything hurt: his thighs, his abdominal muscles. A shower sounded really nice at the moment, but food sounded much better, especially what was right in front of him. "How'd you know I liked crepes?"

Jason ate some of his eggs. "I'm pretty observant."

Blaze wasn't buying it. "Jennifer told you."

Jason smiled sheepishly. "That too. She takes it all in. I wish I had her kind of mind, always remembering every detail."

"Sounds like a lot of hard work to me. Listen, about last night," Blaze said, and Jason looked up from his breakfast. "I'm sorry."

"Why are you sorry?"

"I forced myself on you."

Jason gave a mirthless laugh. "You didn't force yourself on me. I just—" he broke off, shaking his head.

Blaze could hear the pain in Jason's voice. "Tell me what's wrong, Jason."

Jason speared a slice of tomato. "I can't right now, Blaze. I don't know if I'll ever be able to tell you."

He tried to force down the hurt that Jason couldn't trust him, or maybe himself, enough to let go. Blaze cut the crepe, pushing it through the blueberry sauce. "I'll be here whenever you want to tell me about it," Blaze said softly. "I mean it."

Jason's face changed a little, a look of relief passing over his gorgeous features as he looked across the table at him. He took a sip of his water and then cleared his throat. "Thank you."

They finished breakfast, Jason leaving the dishes outside the door for room service to pick up later. Blaze followed him, wanting desperately to make things right. "I know I've upset you, Jason. Whatever I've done, if it's the drugs, I'll change. I'll never touch them, ever again. You are the most important thing in my life, more than anything. Please, just... please."

Jason turned and hugged him hard. "It'll be okay, Blaze. Someday I'll let you in," he whispered, choked up.

Blaze dropped a kiss on Jason's bare chest. He said nothing, only hoping that someday, he could heal Jason.

CHAPTER 14

LAS VEGAS ended up being pretty uneventful after Phoenix, since they didn't have an overnight booked there. That was a rarity, as Jason pointed out. The whole crew loved Sin City, and Blaze had always wanted to visit there, especially after hearing stories from Tutu about her trips there.

But it was on to Los Angeles, with a short three-day break after the two back-to-back concert dates. Blaze felt like he was riding a tornado, twisting one way before taking a turn in the other direction.

After the shows, he found himself standing with Jason at the door of a large Hollywood home, the pounding beat from inside thudding along with the rhythm of Blaze's heart. "So whose party is this?"

Jason shrugged. "I'm not sure, but I have someone I want you to meet."

The door opened and a huge bodyguard greeted them, smiling. "Jason, good to see you again. How long you in town for?"

Jason smiled. "Just for a couple of days before I head to New York again. Hey!" he said, greeting a guy who walked out the door as they walked in.

Blaze was caught up in the whirlwind of people coming up to Jason, and he stood off to the side, letting them pass by and greet Jason. Jason nodded for the younger man to follow him, and Blaze obliged. They walked through the house, Jason picking up a bottle of water and a beer for Blaze as they walked through the bar.

“So,” Blaze asked casually, sipping his beer as they walked outside, “why are we here?”

“You’ll see,” Jason said mysteriously.

“Oh no.” Blaze grabbed Jason’s elbow and stopped him in his tracks. “I hate surprises, and I would much rather be at home with you.”

Jason looked surprised, and then he grinned. “Home? Is my house really like a home to you?”

Blaze groaned, feeling weird about letting that little fact slip even though Jason seemed inordinately pleased about it. “Yeah, it is. So, wanna go home?”

“Not yet,” he said softly as he grabbed Blaze’s hand and led him outside onto the massive brick deck surrounding the pool. “Humor me for a couple minutes.”

Blaze was self-conscious as Jason led him through the house. He felt like eyes were following them, staring at their linked hands, but when he actually looked up, everyone seemed oblivious to him and Jason. It had all been in his imagination.

Blaze nearly ran into Jason when he stopped. When Blaze looked out over the valley, the darkness peppered by the glittering lights, the scene took his breath away. Jason tapped his shoulder, smiling. “If you think this is gorgeous, wait ’til you see my parents’ house. Anyway, you see that girl over there?” he asked, discreetly pointing across the pool.

Blaze followed Jason’s directions and saw a tall, leggy redhead, her freckled skin indicating her hair color was more than likely natural. He couldn’t tell her eye color from such a distance,

but he could see they were light, maybe green or blue. She was the kind of girl he could never have a chance with because she was way out of his league. Even as he and Jason looked at her, men fawned over her like she was a princess. At Blaze's nod, he said, "Well, we used to date."

Dread pooled in his stomach. "Where are you going with this?"

"You told me about your little fantasy with your girl from Hawaii joining us, and... well, I thought we could turn that into reality." Jason's eyes smoldered as he spoke.

Lust slammed into Blaze, snaking through his body. What Jason was suggesting was beyond anything he could have imagined ever happening to him. Jason spoke again, his voice thick with desire. "I've never had a threesome with another guy, just one with two girls sharing me."

Blaze's mouth hung open. "Are you serious?" The thought of Jason being touched by two girls caused jealousy to rise within, choking him. Another thought entered his mind, one of sharing his lover with the girl across the pool. The idea of her touching them both as he kissed Jason was hot, and yet he couldn't bring himself to get into it. "No."

"What?"

Blaze gritted his teeth, unsure what he would do or say if Jason pushed the subject. "I'm not sharing you."

"Oh no. You don't understand. I want us to share you," Jason said, his deep voice husky. "I want you to be inside her, fucking her as I thrust deep inside you. I want to feel you around me as you come deep inside her."

Blaze looked into Jason's eyes and saw the raw, unadulterated lust there. God, he loved it when Jason lost control of his desire, and right now, he was dangerously close to the precipice, a hair's breadth away from going over the edge. With a sense of

responsibility and love, he said the word he'd never imagined he'd say. "No."

Jason looked bereft as he stared down at Blaze. "Why not?"

Blaze shook his head. "Sometimes a fantasy should remain just that. I don't need anyone else, Jase," he said hoarsely, his heart skipping a beat. "Just you."

He was close enough to see Jason's pupils spring open. "Are you sure about that?"

Blaze nodded. "Positive."

The look on Jason's face confused Blaze. He looked touched by Blaze's refusal but torn. "I already asked her if she'd be interested, and she said yes."

Blaze looked across the way at her as she laughed. The sound was just as beautiful as she was. "And I'm saying no. You're everything I need but never knew I was looking for. The idea is hot beyond belief, and I almost can't believe that she would want me."

Blaze felt Jason's fingers under his chin as he pulled his gaze back. "Why wouldn't she want you?"

Blaze frowned. "I understand why she'd want you, because I wanted you from the moment you walked into my audition. But I'm just a regular guy, nothing special."

"Nothing special?" Jason growled. "Really? Do you *really* think that?"

Jason's disbelief struck a chord in Blaze, and he looked up at his boyfriend to find him genuinely upset. "I do. People fall all over you wherever you go. I'm just—" He was cut off by Jason's lips crashing down on his, his tongue sliding inside his mouth to claim his mouth possessively.

If their hand-holding hadn't gotten the attention of the people attending the party, then certainly the hot kiss that was setting Blaze's nerves afire would catch it. But he was powerless to push

Jason back because he wanted to feel Jason, to know that Jason was his. When Jason pulled back, Blaze wasn't certain how much time had passed, a second or an hour.

Jason was breathing heavily, his eyes hooded and his lips wet. If they'd had privacy, Blaze would have torn his clothes off in his eagerness, so he said, "Wanna leave now?"

Jason's eyes were unfocused with lust, and he nodded absently. "Let me just make my excuses to the host," he murmured as he turned. Blaze caught a glimpse of the other man's erection and smiled to himself.

He looked out at the amazing view again, trying to stay patient as he waited for Jason to come back. Their conversation had left him with a weird feeling of anticipation that Blaze just couldn't shake. He didn't know whether Jason was stupid for giving Blaze the chance to walk away or if he was just that confident in the strength of their love.

He was so caught up in his thoughts he didn't realize the redhead was standing next to him until she said, "Nice view, huh?"

She was prettier up close, with gorgeous green eyes that sparkled with amusement. He nodded mutely as he made eye contact, realizing she was nearly as tall as he was. She laughed, a self-assured smirk on her face that reminded him of the confidence Jason had. "He told me you said no."

Blaze squirmed. "You must think I'm an idiot."

She shook her head, her glossy red hair caressing her shoulders. She reached into her pocket and pulled out a pack of cigarettes, offering him one first. He declined, and she pulled one out and lit it. She inhaled and then blew out the smoke. "My name's Brittany."

"Nice to meet you. I'm Blaze."

She smiled. "Jason told me. You know, I don't think I have ever seen Jason this happy."

Blaze blinked. “Really?”

Brittany shook her head. “Not as long as I can remember. I knew he was bisexual, but for as long as I have known him, he hasn’t dated any guys. You must mean a lot to him, because for months now, he’s told me was exclusive with you.”

Blaze gaped at her. He had known, even though they’d never discussed being exclusive, but to hear her say it, to know for sure, made his heart blossom and fill with love for the older man.

She grinned. “God, you’re sexy. I have to admit I’m disappointed you don’t want to play. You and Jason, the thought of being with you two is hot like fire, but I couldn’t bear it if I came between you two.”

The idea of her thinking he was good-looking made him feel good, and he smiled back at her. “Well, thank you.”

She cocked an eyebrow. “Are you sure you don’t want to at least try? I promise I won’t do anything you’re uncomfortable with. Tonight could be all about fulfilling your every fantasy.” As she spoke, she reached out and put a hand on his shoulder, stroking the bare skin near his throat.

He knew he was staring at her gorgeous beauty, mesmerized by the seductive note as it crept into her voice, changing it from gently caressing to husky, but he just couldn’t look away. He was on the edge, words about to tumble out of his mouth, when he felt a steady hand on his back.

Jason looked down at him, smiling enigmatically. “I see you’ve met Brittany. Britt, this is Blaze, my boyfriend.”

Brittany chuckled. “Are you sure he’s your boyfriend, Jason? I think I’d like to make him my boyfriend.”

“Not likely,” Jason said as he pulled Blaze closer. “But I thought if you’re ready, love, we could head back?”

Blaze nodded as Jason's fingers wove through his, clasping his hand. "I'm ready."

Brittany smirked as they turned to leave. "Well, have fun with that. No hard feelings, Jason?"

Jason faced her again, and the look in his eyes was utterly sexy and slightly dangerous. Blaze felt a sensual shiver run down his spine as Jason's fingers squeezed his hand. "None at all," Jason said with a wolfish smile.

Blaze felt the tension between Brittany and Jason. They were having a war without words, and for a second he felt weird because he thought it was over him, but he couldn't figure out why two of the most beautiful people he'd ever known were fighting over him. Their eyes were locked, cat-like green eyes meeting delicious, searing brown ones.

Brittany looked away, and Jason's chin tilted up, a silent sign of victory. With a tug on Blaze's hand, they set off toward the front door of the house, the people they passed by nothing more than a blur. Blaze was at a near-run keeping up with Jason as he stalked through the house like a panther. They finally made it outside, and once they got to his SUV, Jason pushed Blaze against the passenger door.

Blaze felt sparks along his nerves, thrilled to the core. His cock hardened almost instantly as Jason leaned in and claimed his lips with his own. He grasped blindly at Jason's shirt, pulling at the silk, hearing the fabric tear as he did.

Jason pulled away suddenly, his eyes wild with lust as he pushed his hips into Blaze's. "I can't believe you turned her down."

Blaze felt Jason's hard cock pushing against his stomach, and it made his ass clench in anticipation. "Why wouldn't I?" he said, his words ending with a groan.

Jason dipped his head, leaning in to trail his lips across Blaze's cheek. His breath was hot as it fanned across his earlobe. "You want this. You want me over her."

Blaze chuckled. "Well, that makes you a fucking genius," he said, the sarcasm dripping off his tongue.

Jason slammed his hips into Blaze, dry-fucking him as Jason started panting. "I'm about to fuck you right here, since you're being a smart ass. Would you like that? Me fucking you, my dick inside your hot, tight ass right now?" Blaze groaned at the lust Jason's words caused in his body. His balls tensed and his ass clenched at the thought of that hard prick sliding in, this time without protection, finally feeling Jason's skin against his own.

Jason pulled back, his eyes slightly unfocused, his muscles tensed as he held himself back. He closed his eyes and drew in a shaky breath. "God, you smell so good," he said, his deep voice wavering.

Blaze fumbled for the handle of the passenger door. "We're not far from the house, are we?" he asked, nearly cringing when he heard the desire laced in his own voice.

Jason held the door closed as he leaned heavily into Blaze. "I'd fuck you right here if you said yes."

Blaze groaned at how amazing the weight of his lover's body felt pressing against his. "I'd rather spend the night with your cock inside me, not in jail, so let's head back to the house."

Jason's eyes were clouded over, and Blaze wondered for a second how close his boyfriend was to really losing control. It was deliciously dangerous to know Jason was near the edge and he was the one who had caused it.

"Get in the car," Jason growled, stepping back and rounding the car. He moved so fast that he was at the driver's door, opening it, before Blaze was opening his. Blaze climbed in, sliding his seatbelt on as Jason started the car.

The ride was quiet, almost contemplative. Blaze didn't want to break the silence because he didn't want Jason to pull over and fuck him silly in the back seat. He wanted to be in their bed, their sheets on the floor at the bottom of the bed, Jason's cock sliding in and out of him.

They pulled into the driveway, relief singing in Blaze's veins. The garage door opened, and Jason pulled inside, Blaze hopping out as soon as Jason put the car into park.

Blaze shut his door and started walking toward the back door, intent on getting that much closer to making love to his boyfriend. Jason came around the front of the car. Blaze expected him to take his hand, and he was surprised when Jason shoved him against the car. "What the fuck?"

Jason claimed his mouth passionately, his hands busying themselves with opening Blaze's jeans. "I have to touch you. Don't deny me this."

Jason had pulled back to issue that fervent plea, but he pushed his hips forward to bump his erection against Blaze's stomach. How could Blaze refuse Jason anything? He answered with a kiss and a thrust.

Jason's reaction was immediate: he shoved his hand down Blaze's briefs and grabbed his prick. The pleasure spiked through Blaze, and Jason's lips muffled the groan he couldn't hold back. Jason kept stroking as Blaze's cock leaked, the fluid spreading along the light dusting of hair on his stomach.

Jason's thumb dragged across the head as he stroked, his fingers tightening as Blaze's cries urged him on. The ride back to the house had left Blaze on edge, excited to the point that Jason was able to bring him off quickly. Blaze spurted his seed on his lover's hand.

Blaze's legs nearly gave out, and Jason caught him, holding him close and whispering sweet nothings in his ear. He felt lips on

his cheek and then on his mouth as Jason melded their bodies together.

The kiss was broken as Jason turned and led him inside the house. Dazed, Blaze followed Jason until they reached the master bedroom. Jason tore off his clothes, throwing them on the floor. Blaze looked him up and down, staring at the gorgeous sight before him.

He'd been so tired the last three days that Jason had let him sleep when he wasn't onstage. He had missed Jason, missed seeing his big cock, missed touching him and hearing him moan. He undressed quickly and sidled up to his boyfriend.

Jason grabbed him by his shoulders and pulled him in for a kiss. Blaze sighed into Jason's mouth as Jason started walking him backwards, never letting go of his mouth.

He realized they were moving toward the bathroom when Jason pulled away momentarily to grab a condom and lube from a drawer. Blaze turned away, heading for the shower.

He turned on the water, putting his hand under the water. He felt Jason's arms encircle his waist as they stepped into the shower and under the spray. The warmth soaked into his skin, running down his body and between them, caressing him. Jason pressed their bodies together, throwing the lube and protection onto the floor of the shower.

Jason reached for a bar of soap, running it over Blaze's chest and abs, cleaning off the semen coating his skin. Jason washed his back, running the bar of soap down between his cheeks, which caused a shiver of anticipation to crash through him. Jason pulled away suddenly and splashed water all over him, washing away the soap.

Blaze put his palms against the shower wall and leaned his forehead against the cool tiles. No words were needed when Jason turned the water off and parted Blaze's cheeks, but Blaze thought he would feel Jason's fingers preparing him, not his mouth and tongue.

Blaze's breath hitched and he issued a strangled cry, caught up in the beauty of the moment. Jason's tongue probed his entrance, dragging around the puckered hole. Lightning snaked through him, heading for his extremities, causing his knees to shake as he leaned fully against the tiles.

Jason sat back on his haunches as Blaze looked back, taking in the gorgeous sight of his lover. He lifted his head as he finished rolling the condom on, his brown eyes full of lust mixed with an emotion that made Blaze's heart swell. "I love you," Jason whispered, grabbing blindly for the lube.

Blaze was unable to break the gaze, not when Jason covered his fingers in the gel, not even as he probed Blaze's entrance. "I love you too."

Jason leaned in and kissed him. Blaze's muscles strained as he kept his torso twisted. Jason stretched him, moving quickly. Jason's long cock finally replaced his fingers, and Blaze sighed in relief.

Blaze turned forward, panting from the discomfort, which was soon replaced by the feeling of fullness. When Jason started to move, Blaze's cock perked up, and the burn morphed into pleasure.

Jason's hands on his hips kept Blaze still as he thrust inside him, his mind exploding when Jason struck the gland inside him. He nearly choked on air, his cock almost spilling as they moved together.

Jason suddenly pulled out and stood, pulling Blaze up with him. Jason spun him around so they faced each other, dipping to kiss him passionately. He pulled away and said, "Put your arms around me."

Blaze obeyed as Jason lifted one of his legs. He leaned back against the wall, angling his hips, his body instinctively responding to the older man. "Oh God," Blaze squeezed out as Jason's cockhead breached his hole.

Jason's answering groan filled the shower as he shoved in until he was balls-deep. Lights exploded in Blaze's vision as Jason hit his prostate and they started to move. Jason claimed his lips, fucking his mouth with his tongue while his cock fucked his ass in tandem. The rhythm was lost as Blaze's hole clenched, his come shooting from his dick. Jason's uncontrolled moan joined Blaze's as he milked Jason's cock until he came.

Jason must have been stronger than he was, because he managed to keep standing after what had been, for him, one of the most mind-blowing orgasms ever. Jason turned the shower back on as he slipped from Blaze's body, a pleasurable shudder passing over both of them.

The silence was full of the sweetness and a comfortableness that now existed between them. Blaze was happier than he'd ever been, Jason's hands roaming his body, washing him, lips caressing his neck as he leaned in for a quick kiss.

They dried off after they were clean again, crawling into bed naked, pulling only the sheet up. Jason dropped another kiss on Blaze's forehead. "I can't believe you chose me."

Blaze chuckled. "Are we still on this? To be honest, I am surprised you wanted me over her, knowing you two dated before we met. Did she dump you? She's an idiot if she did."

"You're good for my ego. I told her I was falling for someone when I saw her at the beginning of May. We hadn't seen each other in months back when you and I met. She wanted you much more than she ever wanted me."

"You fell for me in... May?" Blaze had started on the tour on the third of May. He swallowed hard, looking at the way the moonlight streaming through the window glistened in Jason's eyes.

"Yeah," he whispered, reaching out to stroke Blaze's hair.

Blaze closed his eyes as his heart beat rapidly. It had been too much to hope for, but now he knew. He opened his eyes and scooted closer to Jason. "I love you."

His hand moved to Blaze's back, pulling their bodies flush. The warmth of Jason's naked body against his made him sigh. "I love you too," Jason whispered back.

JASON woke up in the dark room, Blaze's warm body pressed against his back. He smiled to himself as he felt his lover's hard cock pressed against his back, his deep, even breathing telling him Blaze was fast asleep.

He turned over, his legs twisting in the sheets. He took in a deep breath, smelling how good Blaze smelled, a mix of his natural scent and the soap from the shower they had shared. The moon had set and the room was dark, so he couldn't take in his lover's features, but he had them memorized anyway.

Blaze's full lips tasted like heaven every time they kissed. The way he brushed his dark hair, longer now from touring for months without getting a haircut, out of his aqua eyes and looked up at Jason made his gut tighten. The months of touring had thinned Blaze out, taking away his thicker, muscular physique and slimming him down.

Blaze shifted closer as he licked his lips. The sky was lightening outside the window, still dark but turning beautiful shades of blue and purple as Jason looked over Blaze's shoulder.

Blaze sighed in his sleep, his hips pushing forward as if he knew Jason had moved away from him and was seeking the warmth he craved even as he slumbered. Jason's chest tightened, and he wrapped his arm around the younger man, bringing their bodies flush.

Jason's cock met Blaze's, and they slid together with the fluid that had gathered on both pricks. Blaze issued another sigh, and Jason smiled. He slid a leg between Blaze's to hold him there and moved his hand to their cocks. *God, this feels amazing*, he thought as he wrapped his long fingers around both their cocks, squeezing gently.

Blaze buried his face in Jason's shoulder, his hips thrusting forward naturally. Jason moaned at the thought of the younger man plunging inside him, filling him in a way he'd needed since he'd met Blaze.

He looked down at the outline of the dark head leaning into him as Blaze's body shook. He felt lips caressing his neck, and he pulled back, chuckling. Hooded aqua eyes looked up at him, a study in contradiction: sea-colored eyes full of fiery emotions.

"Did I wake you?" Jason asked.

Blaze nodded sleepily. "I don't mind, though. This is better than an alarm clock."

Jason leaned in and kissed Blaze's temple. "I'd do this every morning if you were here."

"Oh God, Jase, don't tempt me," Blaze said sleepily, rubbing his face against Jason's chest. "I have to honor my contract."

"I could get you out of it," Jason said, loosening his grip on their cocks. He pulled his hand away momentarily only to return and stroke Blaze's cock lazily. Jason knew it wasn't fair to discuss this as Blaze was waking up, but then he wasn't above using sex to keep this amazing man with him until Blaze finally came to his senses and left the tour.

Blaze looked up at him, and for a moment, Jason was actually scared that Blaze might say yes, because that wasn't the man he had fallen in love with. Blaze was honorable, trustworthy, and the thought that he would just throw everything aside, even if it was for love, made Jason's stomach churn. The warring emotions clashed

inside him as he looked down into sleep-narrowed eyes until he finally heard, “No.”

Jason swallowed a sigh of relief. He continued jerking Blaze off, his own hand brushing occasionally against his cock as he brought his lover to the edge, his cries signaling he was close. He kept him hovering there, easing off his strokes torturously until Blaze was mindless from the pleasure. He coated Jason’s hand with his seed, panting from exertion.

The way Blaze’s eyes went unfocused, the lazy movements as the orgasm continued to flow through his lover’s body, caused Jason’s balls to draw up. Blaze’s hand drifted to his cock, stroking the head gently as he looked up, satisfaction evident in his eyes.

Blaze leaned in and nuzzled against Jason’s neck, lightly brushing his lips along the stubble. He moved down his chest, kicking the sheets out of the way. The sensation of skin against skin caused an ache inside Jason as his lover moved down his body. His legs fell open naturally to accommodate Blaze as his lips trailed against Jason’s heated skin.

Blaze looked up at him once he got to his cock. Those wide eyes were full of an innocent love as he brazenly took Jason’s hard member in his mouth. Jason hoped right then Blaze would never lose his naiveté, because he loved corrupting this beautiful, innocent man.

Already Blaze had become an amazing cocksucker, his tongue working the head in time with his hand stroking the shaft. Jason threaded his hands through thick dark hair, twisting it in his fingers gently. Spikes of pleasure soared through him, coursing down his legs and arms.

Blaze pulled his mouth off Jason’s cock, moving up his body slowly. Jason couldn’t breathe when Blaze moved his hand to Jason’s mouth, a finger lightly trailing along his bottom lip before pushing inside. Not wanting to hope too much, he sucked on the

finger, groaning around the digit at the sensations it caused along his tongue.

When Blaze pulled back, Jason whispered, “Are you going to do me this time?” When he asked the question, he saw the fervent look leave Blaze’s eyes to be replaced by fear. He wanted to wipe that look from Blaze’s face, never to see it again.

“I... can’t.”

Of all the things Jason had thought Blaze would say, he had never considered this. The fact that Blaze was younger than Jason and quite healthy and desirous, as well as the hardness rubbing against his thigh, told him it wasn’t because of a lack of physical desire. He quelled his frustration, knowing now wasn’t the time to push Blaze. “It’s okay.”

“I’m scared. I don’t want to hurt you.”

Jason felt the urge to kiss the hell out of this man. “Babe, you can’t hurt me. I—” He was cut off by Blaze leaning in to kiss him soundly, his tongue thrusting into to meet Jason’s. Once he pulled back, Blaze put his finger back to Jason’s lips again.

This time, Jason swirled his tongue around Blaze’s finger, causing the younger man to groan and give him a heated look. “Later,” he promised, and Jason looked forward to sucking his boyfriend off.

The finger was gone, and Blaze moved back down his body, kissing his navel before taking the hard cock in his mouth again. Jason hissed at the feeling of being completely engulfed in the wetness. He lost himself in the sensation, his back arching as his cock hit Blaze’s throat.

He was a goner, sure that he’d hit his peak and was heading for his orgasm until he felt that wet finger trailing between his cheeks. He let out a groan as he spread his legs wider. He realized how he must look, naked and spread open for his lover, a complete wanton slut for Blaze.

He'd never had control, even though he'd clung to the illusion of it for months now. He'd lost any semblance of it the day he had looked into those aqua eyes over sheet music and a guitar back in May. The epiphany rocked him to the core, and he gave up trying to fight against the fear of being hurt again. He gave in to what he'd been denying himself since he'd met Blaze and let himself truly love again.

It was too much, he was close, and with a sharp cry, he came in Blaze's mouth. He'd wanted to withdraw before he spent himself, not wanting Blaze to be horrified at the bitter taste. Instead, Blaze held him still, Jason's cock jerking, his ass clenching the finger tightly. The orgasm was more than just a physical release—it was emotional as well.

When Blaze was reaching up to kiss him, Jason saw the worried look on his face. Blaze brushed the tears from his cheeks, and it wasn't until then that Jason realized he was crying. "I hurt you," Blaze whispered, upset showing in his voice.

"No," Jason said firmly. "You most definitely did not. That was amazing." Blaze was frowning, and Jason couldn't help but want to smooth away the troubled look. "Truly, it was." He cupped the back of Blaze's neck, pulling him in for a kiss.

He tasted the tang of himself on Blaze's tongue, sighing into Blaze's mouth, until at last Blaze relaxed a little into Jason's arms.

They lay there as the sun came up, only parting so Jason could grab the sheet and cover them with it. Their limbs were entwined, the fingers clasped as if they wouldn't let go, not even in the next morning, when they would part.

CHAPTER 15

THEIR break was over too soon, and Blaze was set to fly up to Seattle after the three dates at the Staples Center. Leaving Jason behind in LA was weighing heavily on him as he stood at the entrance to the house, the car waiting to take him to the airport.

“These next couple of months are going to be hard on both of us. I won’t be flying in nearly as much, but I’ll definitely be in New York at the end of the tour.”

Blaze looked up at Jason and leaned his head against the older man’s shoulder. “I don’t want to leave you.”

Jason dropped a kiss on Blaze’s forehead. “I don’t want you to go either, but I’ll come see you, okay? I promise. I love you.”

Blaze squeezed Jason’s hand as he pulled away from his boyfriend. “I’ll see you soon?”

Jason smiled. “Yes, you will.”

THE cities flew by as the tour traveled across the Northern US, moving from Seattle to Utah and Colorado. Missouri and Illinois passed in what seemed like a heartbeat until they reached Indiana

and he got a call from his brother. He picked up the phone, recognizing the country code of Japan on his phone. “Yosuke?”

“Hey.”

Blaze smiled. “It’s nice to hear from a friendly voice.”

“Well, this isn’t a friendly phone call. Tutu’s worried because she hasn’t talked to you in three weeks.”

Blaze stared at the calendar in the lunch area. “That’s not right... oh shit.”

“She said she didn’t want to call because she is worried about you getting enough sleep and she didn’t want to wake you.”

Blaze hung his head. “I know. Don’t get pissed at me. I’ve been losing track of days, being on the road and all.”

“Are you drinking a lot or something?” He could hear concern and confusion in his brother’s voice through the phone.

“No, I am not drinking or anything,” Blaze said, deciding not to admit to dropping some E at the club. “It’s just disconcerting to wake up in a different city almost every day. But I promise I’ll call her when I get off the phone with you. How’s Yuki-chan?”

They chatted for a few minutes, trying to catch up, but as soon as he hung up with his brother, he called his grandmother. “Tutu?” he asked when she picked up the phone.

“Oh! Oh Aki. Are you okay?”

“I’m fine. How are you? I’m sorry I haven’t called. I lost track of the days.”

“I’m okay. I have been busy. One of our neighbors broke her leg, and I’ve been helping her cook for her husband. Their anniversary was last week, so I made pork katsu for them, like your Dad makes for your Mom for her birthday. They were so pleased.”

Blaze smiled at his grandmother’s sweetness. “You’re so kind to everyone, Tutu.” He leaned against the wall as he listened to her,

enjoying her easygoing manner as she relayed the happenings in the community he had grown up in. He hated to hang up with her, but she said she had to go and run to the store.

He stared at the phone for a second before he called Jason. "Hey," he said when Jason picked up.

"What's wrong?"

"Nothing's wrong. I just wanted to make sure I'd talked to you recently."

"Um... uh oh. Did your family wonder where you'd disappeared to?"

Blaze chuckled. "How'd you know?"

"It happens to almost all performers. I haven't really come up with anything to battle it except lots of apologies and taking my grandma's guilt trips with a smile. And just so you know, we talked last night."

Blaze sighed. "I remember. I just... it felt so weird. I miss you."

He could hear Jason's smile through the phone. "I miss you too. I'll be in Nashville tomorrow. We'll have dinner?"

"Sounds nice," Blaze said dreamily.

THE day flew by as they made their way into Nashville. Jason stopped by briefly, flying out the same day after business meetings with producers and a manager in Nashville. A hurried dinner took place in an unused office and consisted mostly of Blaze staring at Jason, drinking in the sight of him. Finally, Jason dropped his fork and scowled at Blaze. "Why do you keep looking at me?" he snapped.

Blaze flushed. "I'm sorry. I just missed you. You look so good."

Jason's face softened. "I missed you too. You look so sexy in those shorts. It made me want to fuck you right here, but I told myself you were probably hungry and tired so I just—"

"Jason?" Blaze said, and Jason raised his eyebrows. "I am a guy, just like you. What do you want?"

"I want my cock in your mouth, hand, whatever you feel like."

"Don't you think I want the same things?"

Jason gazed at him, a shocked look in his dark brown eyes. Blaze stood up just as he did. Jason came around the table, jumping at Blaze as their lips met in a crushing, desperate kiss.

Jason's hands were already unbuttoning Blaze's shorts, pulling his hardening dick out and wrapping his fingers around it. Blaze rolled his head back, moaning as Jason stroked away. "Jason," Blaze said softly.

Jason leaned in and nipped at Blaze's neck, spreading the pre-come all over the smooth tip, pulling back his lover's foreskin. Jason slowly dropped to his knees in front of him, looking up as he smoothed his hand down Blaze's thick shaft. Blaze looked down, eyelids heavy with desire. "Please," he whispered.

When Jason covered Blaze's cock with his hot, wet mouth, Blaze's thigh muscles tensed and fire raced down his legs to the tips of his toes. "Fuck," Blaze gritted out. No privacy, a fast-paced tour, and no lover had left Blaze with no options to release the tension that had been building inside him. He was embarrassingly quick as Jason sucked him off while he leaned against the table, and Jason swallowed his seed as Blaze came with a shout.

Jason pulled back, and Blaze tucked himself back in his pants. Jason leaned in to kiss Blaze, and as their lips met, Blaze tasted his bitter fluids on Jason's lips. "Do you want me to suck you off too?" Blaze asked after they broke apart.

Jason pulled away, and Blaze looked at him, looking into those gorgeous eyes. “I wish we had more time,” Jason said softly as he pulled Blaze close, wrapping his arms around Blaze’s waist. Jason’s arm twisted as he checked his watch. “You need to get going.”

“I know. I just don’t want to let you go. You can’t come to see me nearly enough,” Blaze said, wincing internally at the whiny note his voice had taken.

Jason sighed. “I know.”

Blaze buried his face in Jason’s shoulder. “Just two more weeks, right?”

The comforting rumble as Jason spoke made Blaze feel better. “Yeah, and then you’re coming with me to LA, right?”

Blaze pulled away. “Of course I am. Why wouldn’t I be?”

Jason’s lips pursed. “Never mind. I’m just being stupid.”

Blaze frowned. For a second there, he was sure Jason had sounded... insecure. “I can’t wait to go home.”

Jason smiled. “Really?” At Blaze’s nod, Jason squeezed his arms tighter around him.

Blaze grunted. “I guess that means you’re happy to hear that.”

“Yes, I am.”

THE next weeks passed so quickly that before Blaze knew it, he was in New York. The buses pulled into Madison Square Garden, the police barriers surrounding the service entrance crowded by throngs of people and paparazzi. Blaze watched out the window, the screams of people muffled by the bus walls.

Once the bus stopped inside the barricades, Blaze exited the bus and set off to find Jennifer. He found her in between the buses, punching out an e-mail on her BlackBerry. “Hey.”

She looked up from her phone and smiled. “Hey. Jason’s plane is running an hour late, but he should be here for lunch time.”

Blaze’s eyebrows knit together. “How do you always know what I am going to ask?”

“I’m just cool like that. Have you gotten Jason a gift for his birthday yet?”

Blaze froze. “I wanted to talk to you about that. It is tomorrow, right?”

Jennifer nodded. “Do you want gift suggestions? Jason’s really hard to buy for because anything he wants or needs, he just buys it himself. But he doesn’t really want anything until you actually give it to him.”

Blaze sighed. “I sort of have an idea and I was wondering if maybe you could help me....”

THE next day, Jason walked between the buses, taking in a deep breath. Even in the Garden, he could still smell the city. In some ways, he missed it when he was gone, the city he had spent so much time in growing up, but right now, he couldn’t wait to get back to LA with Blaze. One night down, two more to go, and then Blaze was his for a whole four weeks. This time, Jason would make sure he didn’t run off to Hawaii unless they did it together. He’d missed having Blaze in his bed, missed waking up next to him every morning.

This morning had been wonderful—he had woken up slowly and not to a phone call, since he had forwarded all calls to Jennifer as a little birthday treat to himself. He had ended up watching Blaze

sleep, those slow, deep breaths rhythmic as his eyelashes fluttered. He had short, masculine eyelashes, not long, girly ones like Jason did.

Blaze had woken up slowly, smiling as he realized Jason was watching him. “Happy birthday,” he had whispered to Jason.

“Best birthday ever,” Jason had whispered back before kissing his boyfriend. Breakfast was forgotten as their kisses deepened and their hands roamed.

He had gotten a wonderful birthday present earlier from Blaze, but there was supposed to be cake and a party here at the venue, which he would have been more than happy to miss—except for the cake part. He had always had a bit of a sweet tooth, and there was nothing better than birthday cake... unless he had the choice of spreading the icing all over Blaze.

He groaned as he thought of the pale frosting against Blaze’s dark skin, imagined smoothing it along his stomach, licking it off. What a fucking birthday present that would be, a sexy dessert all for him and then hot birthday sex.

“Jase?”

He whirled around, happy to find his boyfriend and not someone else, especially since he was sporting some wood in between the buses. That might have been hard to explain to anyone else on the tour. “Hey,” he said softly.

Blaze jogged up to him, and Jason licked his lips. He still couldn’t get over just how sexy the younger man was. *And all mine*, Jason thought to himself. He grinned as he reached out his hand. Blaze took it and stopped just as their bodies touched. Jason was sure Blaze could feel how hard he was. Blaze was babbling about something, but Jason would be damned if he could figure out what it was, since he was distracted by his dick pressing against the younger man’s abs. “What?”

“I was telling you about your birthday present. I am giving it to you tonight, but you have to meet me in the hotel lobby after the concert.”

Jason could only stare at the younger man, dumbfounded. He told himself to stop thinking with his dick, but all he could do was move his hips against Blaze like a horny teenager. “I’ll follow you anywhere after that blow job this morning.”

Blaze snorted and laughed at the same time. “Okay... you can dress in jeans if you like,” he said as he pulled away from Jason.

Jason wasn’t too excited to let the younger man go. “What is it? Give me a hint.”

Blaze playfully shoved Jason away. “No hints. You’ll have to wait,” he said coyly.

Jason let Blaze go and watched that sexy ass as he walked away. He wanted to run after him, push him up against the bus, and grind his hard cock into those gorgeous cheeks until Blaze was begging to be fucked. But he let the younger man continue walking as he enjoyed the view.

CHAPTER 16

JASON was looking out the window as the limo glided through the streets of New York. “Okay, I have had about enough of this mystery. Where are you taking me?”

Blaze grinned. “It’s a surprise. Be patient.”

Jason frowned. “I am not a patient person by nature, so this whole surprise thing is killing me. I am a spoiler whore.”

The car was pulling to the curb, so the discussion was moot, and the driver got out and came around to open the door. Blaze stepped out of the car and onto the sidewalk before turning around to look at Jason. “Clubbing? Really?” Jason asked incredulously.

Blaze grabbed for Jason’s hand and led him through the crowd of people milling around outside the club. The line was to the right of the door, a bouncer standing in front of a black rope. They walked instead to another man in a suit holding a clipboard. “Hi,” Blaze said to the bouncer. “We’re on the list. Shinozuka.”

The man nodded. “Jenn called you two in. How is she doing? I haven’t seen her in ages.”

Jason wrinkled his brow. “She’s doing great actually. She works for me. And you are?”

“My name’s Dave. Jenn and I are old friends. You must be Jenn’s boss.” Jason nodded as Dave snapped a VIP bracelet around his wrist. “She told me you’re a huge eighties fan and your boyfriend was treating you to a night on the town.”

Blaze grinned as he offered his ID, and Dave waved it away. “Jenn vouched for you two. That’s good enough for me. C’mon inside. Enjoy yourselves.”

The rope dropped, and it was as if Jason hadn’t been listening before, because now he could hear the pounding music. “Wow, I love this song!”

Blaze smiled as they walked through the doorway into the two-story gay club. He loved to see the way Jason’s smile lit up at the music. The older man was bouncing a little to the music, and Blaze was inspired to ask, “Wanna dance?”

The look on Jason’s face was sweet and full of innocent fun, and Blaze had to bite his tongue to keep from laughing. “Sure!” Jason said as he grabbed Blaze’s hand.

Blaze had remembered hearing that if you were a great dancer, you would be good in bed. He already knew Jason was amazing in bed, but with his lanky frame, he hadn’t really anticipated the older man would be as agile as he was on the dance floor.

Although “agile” wasn’t really the word he would have used to describe what Jason was doing. “Skilled,” maybe. “Experienced,” possibly. “Sexy as hell,” absolutely. Blaze looked up at his lover, and the heat he saw there was impossible to ignore.

He looked away, staring at their feet for a few seconds before glancing back up at Jason. Blaze didn’t regret bringing Jason here, but he did feel a bit sorry for himself, because if Jason was going to dance like this all night, Blaze was definitely in for having a hard-on for the whole time. “Having fun?” Blaze shouted.

Jason nodded enthusiastically. “Yes!”

Blaze smiled up at Jason as he took Blaze's hand and pulled him closer with his other arm. Blaze stiffened. "Oh," he said breathlessly. Their hips were joined, and Blaze could feel Jason's hard cock jutting into his hip. Blaze felt desire run through him as Jason started to move.

Jason seemed to know the music well and had anticipated the end of the song and the seamless transition into the next, a faster remix of a slow song. Jason ground his hips into Blaze, his gaze burning into the younger man. Blaze felt out of breath, and not from their dancing.

Blaze wanted to leave the dance floor and dump a bucket of ice water over himself to cool his desire. He could only hope that would be enough. But Jason's arm held him close as their hips moved together, rocking in a primal rhythm in time with their heartbeats.

Jason tipped Blaze's chin up, and Blaze suddenly felt dizzy from the heat they were creating. Blaze might have said his lover's name, or he might have asked the older man to fuck him, but his mouth was covered by Jason's, and he was lost in time and space.

Blaze wanted to stay with Jason on the dance floor, their lips locked, but he broke their kiss. "Jason, stop. If you keep doing that, I'll drag you out of here and all of Jennifer's hard work to set up tonight will go to waste," Blaze yelled over the music.

Jason just stared at Blaze for a minute, his pupils dilated. Then he licked his lips and pulled away. "Sorry. I don't want you to think I don't appreciate this."

Blaze took Jason's hand and squeezed it. "I knew you'd love it. That's why I planned it. C'mon." Blaze pulled Jason off the dance floor and toward a center bar. "A Heineken and..." Blaze turned to Jason. Now that Blaze thought about it, he had rarely seen Jason drink alcohol.

“A water, please,” Jason said. The bartender made up their order, and Blaze slapped Jason’s hand when he reached for his wallet.

“My treat. It’s your birthday, for crying out loud. Are you sure you don’t want a beer or something?”

Jason sighed. “I will later. I don’t drink much, so I’m a lightweight.”

Blaze took a sip of his beer. “You don’t like the taste of it?”

Jason opened his bottled water and shrugged, not meeting Blaze’s eyes. “Just never got into drinking alcohol. I like the taste of beer, and sometimes I’ll share a bottle of wine with a client at dinner, but no, never really had the urge to drink.”

Blaze nodded. “So you don’t drink, smoke, or do drugs. Are you for fucking real?”

Jason looked hurt. “Am I really that square? I just never needed an artificial high, you know? My life has always been exciting and cool,” he said defensively.

Blaze frowned. “You aren’t square. I haven’t ever met anyone who doesn’t have some sort of vice.”

Jason played with the label of his water bottle. “I guess I just like being in control.”

Blaze felt his cheeks grow hot. “I’m sorry.”

Jason shook his head. “I didn’t mean for you to feel the need to apologize. But enough about serious shit. Let’s dance.”

Blaze smiled and followed Jason out to the dance floor.

“GOD, I’m exhausted,” Blaze said, following his boyfriend back to their room.

Jason stopped whistling the tune they'd heard as they were leaving the club and heading back to their hotel room. "Too tired for fun?"

Blaze sagged against the wall. "Is that all you ever think about?"

Jason looked like he was thinking about it. "Yeah, pretty much."

Blaze smiled as Jason fumbled for his key card. "Hornball."

Jason opened the door, and Blaze followed him inside. Once the door was closed behind them, Jason grabbed Blaze and hugged him hard. "Thank you so much. No one's ever given me a birthday gift like this."

Blaze felt a pure, sweet happiness run through him. "I knew you'd like it," Blaze whispered against Jason's shoulder. He had seen Jason's pleasure and enjoyment on his face so plainly, and it had left an indescribable feeling in Blaze's heart. He couldn't put it into words, but he had felt Jason's joy at his gift. Blaze had enjoyed it as well, feeling the freedom to touch his lover whenever he wanted, kiss him, and nearly fuck him on the dance floor. It had been an amazing night.

They stood there, Jason holding him tightly, for what seemed like forever. "I love you," Jason whispered.

Blaze's heart clenched. He was sweating with his leather coat on and the heat blasting in the hotel room, but he didn't want to push Jason away after they had been apart for so long. The older man's body felt good against his own, and he felt his cock rise regardless of the fatigue he felt. He felt Jason's lips against his temple. "If you're too tired—"

Blaze chuckled. "I am never too tired."

Jason pulled away and yanked his jacket off. Blaze sighed with relief when he could take his own coat off, and he left it on the floor

as Jason cupped his chin, pulling him in for a kiss. Blaze snapped his hips forward to rub against his lover's bulge.

Jason moaned into Blaze's mouth, his hands grabbing the younger man's ass as they thrust against each other. Blaze broke the kiss, his lips not leaving Jason's skin as they traveled down that slender throat to his Adam's apple. He unbuttoned Jason's shirt, trailing his lips downward as he revealed pale skin inch by inch.

Jason's ragged breathing urged him on as he flicked the last button open. Jason pulled his shirt off as Blaze opened his pants and pulled his cock out of his boxers. He covered the head with his mouth, Jason's groan and the jerk of his hips telling him just how much he loved this. He moved his lips down the thick shaft, taking as much as he could before the mushroom-shaped head hit the back of his throat, gagging him. Blaze knew he wasn't quite as big as Jason, but he wondered how the older man had taken so much every time he sucked Blaze off.

He continued to bob up and down on the hardness, Jason's hands thrusting into his hair. The moan that filled the air drove Blaze on as Jason fucked his mouth. Blaze felt his own balls draw up, the tingle along his back as he stroked himself through his jeans with one hand, the other hand resting on Jason's hip.

Suddenly, Jason pulled out of Blaze's mouth, and he looked up into those eyes, gray in the dim light of the hallway. "Have to fuck you," Jason growled out as he took Blaze's hand and pulled him to his feet. Jason dipped his head to kiss him, his hand moving to open Blaze's pants. Blaze kicked off his dress shoes in the hallway as Jason led him to the bed.

They finished undressing, Jason grabbing for the lube and a condom as Blaze pulled back the sheets and lay down on his back. His hand flew to his cock as he watched Jason climb onto the bed and kneel between his legs. Jason's eyes found his as he whispered, "God, Blaze. Do you know how fucking sexy you look right now?"

Blaze felt his heart skip a beat. “I know how sexy you make me feel.”

Jason’s eyes darkened. “How can you not know how dead sexy you are? You kill me with how fucking hot your body is. All I can think of when we are apart is the next time I am going to see you, when we can do this again,” he said as he lay between Blaze’s legs, their cocks sliding together.

Blaze arched as Jason’s hand wrapped around their pricks. “Oh Christ... have you looked... oh God,” Blaze said as Jason’s fingers started stroking. “Looked in the mirror lately?”

Jason frowned as he looked down at their leaking pricks joined in his hand. Blaze moaned at the sight as Jason said, “Yeah, why?”

Blaze gasped as he tried to not come from the sensation of skin against skin, the sound of the wet, silken flesh moving together. Thought, intelligent thought at least, was becoming more difficult. “You’re pretty fucking sexy yourself.”

Jason tore his gaze from their joined cocks to shoot him a cocky smile. “I know I am hot,” Jason said. But through the conceited words, Blaze saw a sliver of vulnerability, the side of him he showed to no one... except Blaze.

He no longer had to ask Jason to let him in. This time, as Jason smashed their lips together, he felt like they filled each other, like his heart was going to burst.

Jason broke the kiss, pulling back to look at him with lust-filled eyes. “Please, this time... I—”

He looked up into needy brown eyes, his pupils wide from lust and darkness. “What?” Blaze whispered, even though he had no reason to keep his voice down other than not wanting to break the spell.

The pleading look Jason gave him as he released their cocks sent a shiver through his body and shocked the breath from his lungs. “Make love to me, Blaze.”

Jason's words caused his cock to jerk and throb as his heart skipped a beat. "Are you sure?" Blaze asked, his hands going to Jason's hip, caressing it.

"I wouldn't have asked you to do it if I didn't want it," Jason said lightly, but his voice was laced with a hunger so powerful it rocked Blaze to his core. His eyes conveyed the same need, and Blaze felt a pull inside him as he rolled their bodies until he was on top of Jason.

He bent his head to kiss Jason and thrust his tongue inside Jason's mouth to claim him. He blindly groped for the lube, wanting to prepare Jason's tight heat. As he gathered a little bit of the lube, it hit him—*this was it*.

If he hadn't been so ready to go, needed his release so badly, his nerves would have killed his erection. Right now, though, all he could think about was prepping Jason's tight hole as he pulled his body away to make room for his hand.

Jason's sigh flowed through him as he opened for Blaze, as he did to Jason what he had done to himself in the hotel room, stretching Jason as he spread the fluid slowly. The soft moans of pleasure urged him on, pointed him in the right direction until Jason stiffened and his eyes shot open.

Blaze pulled away. "I hurt you," he murmured regretfully.

Jason shook his head as he reached for the condom in the rumpled bed sheets. "No, you hit my gland, and it was fucking amazing. Please, Blaze. I need you," he said breathlessly.

Blaze snatched the condom from Jason's fingers, fumbling with it as he cursed his inexperience. Jason never had problems getting the wrapper open, but finally Blaze managed to get his fingers working.

He rolled the condom on and lubed up as Jason moved to roll over and get on his hands and knees. Blaze stopped him and moved

between his spread legs, looking down into those dark eyes and flushed cheeks. "I want to watch you as I make love to you, Jase."

Jason's eyes softened, his lips moving without sound as he looked up into Blaze's eyes. "Yes," he finally said softly.

Blaze acted on instinct as insecurity flooded him, and yet his body boldly moved forward as his dick throbbed insistently. He hooked his hand under the back of Jason's knee as he settled against the backs of Jason's thighs, leaning in for a quick kiss.

Jason groaned. "I've wanted this since I met you, babe. I've wanted to feel you filling me. Please," he begged, arching his back, scooting closer.

Blaze placed his cockhead against Jason's little wet bud, watching as it relaxed. His eyes flew to Jason's face, looking for any signs of discomfort but only seeing an intense hunger that nearly burned him.

Blaze took a deep breath and pushed past that tight ring slowly, biting his lip to distract himself from coming as the tightness swallowed him. He stilled for a second to steel himself against the pleasure of the tight heat and stop himself from coming.

Jason had other plans as he stretched around him, bearing down as he slid down Blaze's cock. Blaze gasped and slammed his eyes shut. "Oh God, Jason, stop."

Jason gripped Blaze's shoulders as he panted. "Is something wrong?"

Blaze shook his head. "No," he said with a tiny laugh, opening his eyes and seeing Jason's worried look. "Everything's right." He inched forward as Jason took him in until he was resting snuggly against soft cheeks, his stomach tickled by the soft, dark hair on the back of Jason's legs. Blaze licked his lips as he looked down into dark eyes, knowing Jason felt impossibly full. "You okay?"

Jason nodded as he shifted, groaning as he did so. Blaze moved minutely at first as Jason arched his back, his mouth falling

open in a silent cry of pleasure, his thrusts becoming longer, faster as Jason loosened around him.

Jason tried to speak, but all that came out were breathless moans, sweet music to Blaze's ears. Suddenly, a sharp cry had him stilling as Jason's head came up. "No," Jason growled. "Keep going."

Blaze lowered his lips to the tender skin of Jason's neck, nipping gently as he started to move again. Blaze groaned as Jason's ass tightened rhythmically around his cock. Jason wrapped one arm around Blaze's neck as they moved together, their skin now damp from exertion.

Jason's hand moved between them, moving to his cock as his moans changed. Blaze had never heard Jason sound like this as he pounded that tight hole, his body singing. "You okay?" Blaze asked.

"Don't... stop," Jason said between pants.

His ass pulsed around Blaze's cock, making stars appear behind his eyelids. Blaze groaned as he shifted his hips, hoping for a deeper penetration as he rushed toward his orgasm, trying desperately to hold back until Jason came as well.

Jason's breath caught as he stiffened, his brown eyes focused on the ceiling as a cry that sounded ripped from his chest rang through the room. Through the haze of his impending orgasm, Blaze watched the pleasure cross Jason's face as he let go, coming with his lover's name on his lips.

After what seemed like ages, Jason dropped a kiss on Blaze's chin, trailing his lips along the minimal stubble. "Thank you for the best birthday... ever."

Blaze was barely aware of the older man pulling away, grabbing a small towel from the bathroom to clean himself up. Blaze pulled off the condom, tying it off and dropping it on the nightstand before his eyes drifted closed, done in from the exhausting tour schedule. Vaguely, he registered Jason getting back in bed, pulling

him close. He wanted to hang onto the beauty of the moment, but he was too tired to think, so he snuggled deeper in Jason's arms as the cloud of sleep overtook him.

THE next day, Cassie threw open the door and stormed in. "What the fuck do you think you are doing?" she hollered.

Jason didn't look overly amused with the blonde as she came striding into his makeshift office at the arena. Blaze stood up, his fist unconsciously clenching as she threw a rolled-up paper at her manager's head.

Jason threw his hand up to protect himself, the newspaper bouncing off his arm harmlessly. "What the hell are you thinking, throwing that shit at me?"

She grabbed it from the desk and threw it open to the gossip column. "If we are supposed to be engaged, especially after I announced it on TV with you standing there not denying it, the least you are supposed to be doing is not running around kissing him in a club where you can be seen."

Blaze walked over and read the blurb aloud. "A certain pop star's fiancé and her guitarist were seen last night in a club together. The club should fix their lighting, because I would have snapped a picture since those boys looked so pretty kissing.' Okay. They don't even mention our names."

Cassie looked murderous. "You are an idiot if you think everyone doesn't know who this is. I mean, I am the only artist here in New York performing right now. This is going to be all over the news," she wailed dramatically.

"Shut the hell up. You aren't the only performer in New York right now," Jason said, looking half interested as he reached over and picked up his BlackBerry. "Your little drama show had better stop right this second, as it's starting to piss me off. If this 'reporter'

had bothered to fact check, they would have found out I told Rolling Stone that you were playing a prank on me at the awards, just like you used to when we were kids.”

Blaze’s eyes snapped up at the dangerous, biting tone the older man had taken. Jason’s gaze was intense as it met Cassie’s. Neither of them broke away, and Blaze felt frozen in space and time. He didn’t want to say anything, his stomach churning as they continued to stare.

Finally, Cassie looked down, and Blaze would have missed the smirk on Jason’s face if he hadn’t been looking at him. “Do you think I don’t know how to manage your career? We got here together. Your talent and dedication and my perseverance got us where we are today. Don’t fuck this up.”

Cassie looked angry, her cheeks going red as Jason stood up. “And FYI,” he said, his voice going low and commanding as he continued to lay it all out for her, “I won’t be tolerating your shenanigans anymore, least of all when it comes to hurting Blaze. Don’t deny it; you were trying to get the upper hand here, but it just isn’t going to happen. You will end up ruining your career by doing this.”

Cassie glared at him. “I know the fucking game, too, Jason. Did you stop and think maybe I wasn’t doing any of this to spite you but because I wanted him?”

Blaze nearly pulled a muscle in his neck as his gaze flew to Cassie. She was holding her head proudly, and for a second, she looked quite beautiful in all her fury and passion. But underneath the façade, though, he knew her true personality, and she truly was a manipulative bitch. Knowing all this turned him off permanently.

“Cassie.”

“Yes?”

“Go back to Craig, for crying out loud, for my own fucking sanity. I know you have a thing for guys who play the guitar, but just leave Blaze out of this,” Jason said wearily.

She was silent for a second before she sneered. “You’re not worthy of him.”

Jason smiled ruefully. “Probably not,” he said as he looked at Blaze. “But I love him.”

Cassie looked like the wind had been taken out of her sails, but Blaze really didn’t notice. He had met Jason’s gaze when he had declared his love for him, and a rush of warmth had flowed through him straight to his toes. In the back of his mind, he realized Cassie was huffing next to him.

“Well, fine, just go be a couple of faggots together, then,” she hissed as she turned and stalked out of the room.

Blaze swallowed. Jason rounded the desk to stand in front of him. “The hating is only going to get worse once more people find out you are gay.”

Blaze looked up at Jason. “I know. But I’m pretty tough.”

“Nothing has prepared you for this... for being ostracized from your friends, your family.”

“Well, my parents have already flipped. I can’t even begin to think of what my grandmother will think when she finds out.”

“We could end off here. The tour is over... you could move on. I could find you a gig somewhere else, if you want.”

Blaze looked up at Jason, who seemed to be holding himself so carefully, as if preparing himself for the devastating blow he thought was coming. How he could even think Blaze wanted to leave him? Jason was the love of his life. “I think I’ll be fine. As long as we are together.”

“Are you sure?” Jason asked.

“Definitely. I don’t think you can get rid of me that easily,” Blaze said as a smile started to appear on Jason’s lips.

Jason let out a nervous laugh. “Okay, good. I was kind of worried there for a second. You seemed to be ready to run out the door.” Jason’s hands were on Blaze’s shoulders, and then he was enfolded into his embrace. Blaze leaned into Jason as those arms tightened. “Move in with me.”

“What?”

“You heard me,” Jason whispered. Blaze pulled back and looked into dark brown eyes that held just a touch of fear in them.

“Well, I’m going to be staying with you until I leave for the European tour.”

“No. I mean, move in for good. I don’t want to let you go. No matter how long you are gone on tour, I want you to always come back home. To me.”

Blaze felt his heart clench at the words. How could he say anything but.... “Yes.”

“Yes?” Jason asked.

“Of course I’ll move in with you. Where else would I ever want to be?”

EPILOGUE

BLAZE shut the hotel door behind him, pulling off his thick leather jacket. They had spent hours at the tour's wrap party, congratulating each other on a job well done and going over the reviews in the newspapers as the night wound down.

Jason pulled off his watch and set it on the desk, blinking rapidly. "Now for four weeks vacation, and well deserved too," he said, his voice gravelly from lack of sleep. "Did you meet David, the label exec?"

Blaze sat on the bed, unlacing and kicking off the lined boots he'd had since he had weathered the cold through four years of college. He flopped backward on the bed, buzzing off the champagne he had indulged in as he tried to think of all the new faces he had met at the party. "Yeah, why?"

Jason grinned as he kicked off his shoes. "I sent him some video of you in concert, and he told me the door is open if you ever want to leave Cassie's tour band and start your own gig."

Blaze's mind went blank as he pinched the bridge of his nose. It was too much to take in right now. "Really? Well, I'm sorta partial to having a steady job right now."

Jason nodded. "Does that mean you're ready to head off to Europe?"

Blaze looked up at Jason as he got on the bed and straddled Blaze's hips. "I was born ready, baby."

Jason laughed. "Wow, who has the cheesy lines now?" Blaze laughed as Jason settled down, Blaze's cock starting to show interest in that gorgeous ass pressed against his body. "So how do you want to spend the time off?"

Jason rolled off him and lay down next to him, an arm snaking out to wrap around his waist. Blaze rolled over lazily and sighed contentedly before saying, "I think we could spend all day in bed. What do you think?"

Jason chuckled. "Yeah, sounds nice, but where? Here in New York, LA, or... maybe Hawaii?"

Blaze froze. "Not Hawaii. I just... God, Jase. I just can't tell her about us yet."

Jason propped his head up with his hand. "Why not?"

"I went there while on break with every intention of telling her about you because I love you. I want us to be together forever, but then my parents freaked out and... I can't lose her," Blaze said as he bit his bottom lip.

Jason nodded. "I understand. I'm close with my Gram too."

Blaze swallowed hard. "It's not you. It's me. I—I'm scared," he whispered softly, choked up. Jason pulled their bodies closer and whispered soft words of encouragement in Blaze's ear as Blaze stared at the ceiling.

"It'll be okay, babe. I think she'll surprise you. My parents freaked out bad when I brought my first boyfriend home, but they came around. But my Gram was always supportive. Give her a chance."

Blaze looked into those dark eyes, sighing heavily. "Give me time?"

Jason nodded. “So Hawaii’s out. I’d love for you to meet my Gram, though. She’s my mom’s mom, and I think you’d like her. She lives here in the city, and we could stay with her for a couple days.”

Blaze didn’t know what to say, so he just nodded. He felt honored Jason would want to bring him to meet someone so important to him, but he was so tired, the champagne making his lids heavy. He heard Jason laugh softly as he felt lips on his forehead. “Sleep, baby, and tomorrow, we will make our plans.”

Plans for our future, he thought, not knowing he’d said it out loud until Jason said, “I love it, baby.”

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