

# KINGSLEY & i TOGETHER I



**GARY MARTINE**  
second in the kingsley & i series

“Kingsley & I Together,” like its predecessor, is not just another m/m erotic romance.

Kingsley is gay, yes, but his partner, “I,” still considers himself not “gay,” and although he is willing to accept the idea of bisexually, truth be told he thinks of himself more like a straight man who happens to love another man...but only Kingsley. He considers himself shy, but in front of a mirror, he is the epitome of an hedonist, and he loves offering his beautiful body to Kingsley... this is not the behaviour of a shy person! So, is “I” really shy or a hedonist in disguise?

And what about Kingsley? Is he, as he at first seems, the master of their relationship or is he actually more like the priest to “I,” the God of Love? Kingsley, “the King,” and “I” together are swept up in a greater force that drives them both relentlessly on.

In this second book in the “Kingsley & I” series, “I” is a Bermuda Triangle, safe and innocent alone, but deadly when near, and Kingsley and the reader with him, must struggle not to drown in the deep sea that is “I”. The more I read, the more I realized that, whether enthralling or dangerous, one cannot remain indifferent to the power of “I” and their growing relationship. I look forward expectantly to the next in the series.

Elisa Rolle

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# Kingsley & I Together

GARY MARTINE

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What is it about Kingsley? Only a few days have passed since Kingsley and I returned from our Magical Mystery Tour at the inn on the California coast — our first three consecutive days and nights together as a couple. Reflecting, my thoughts wander to when we first met, my first same-sex experience with him, the silver anklet he gave me as a token of our mutual love, our numerous passionate lovemakings. At this moment it all seems like a beguiling flight of fantasy, as if, perhaps, none of it actually occurred. Did it, I wonder, and if it did, where is Kingsley now? Why hasn't he even called me?

I vividly recall driving him back to his house after our romantic tryst. What by all rights should have been a frivolously happy drive together proved one of the loneliest tasks I've ever had to accomplish. Kingsley was silent the whole way, gazing distantly at the passing ocean, the wind ruffling his hair. Both of my hands tensely grasping the steering wheel, my eyes fixing hypnotically on the ever-flowing road ahead, fragments of thoughts and memories raced through my mind, some touchingly intimate, others rough and coarse, but all sizzling with primal animal passion.

Those few wonderfully wild days and nights together had changed me forever. Despite my initial fears, Kingsley and I were never at loss of words or what to do. Myriad feelings from our brief holiday continue to lurk just beneath the surface, like a pride of lions pacing in their cage, waiting for the slightest opportunity to burst out. I want Kingsley here beside me, to embrace me, to let me cry my heart out on his shoulder and let these imprisoned beasts loose.

So where is Kingsley? Love, if that's what this is, certainly is a crazy ride. Just a few days apart and I am lost in unfathomable depths of loneliness. I hunger for him, for the warmth of his body, his electric touch, his firmness rammed solidly into my belly. I don't want to be alone anymore.

At the same time, I have also acquired something tangible from our intense time together — something I can hold on to and cherish forever. I can now, for instance, vividly recall

Kingsley in exquisite detail at will. Even in the midst of my despair, I can call him up before me: black, wiry hair; dark, bottomless, liquid eyes; distinguished, aquiline nose; swarthy, rough-cut, half-shaven face; warmly inviting mouth replete with fatherly frown, playful grin or childish pout. Intense memories of his smell, the soft touch of his long fingers, his slippery, long shaft sliding back and forth inside of me, seduce me again and again as I recall him. I sense a new kind of tenderness for him within me that I wouldn't, couldn't have dared dream possible just one week ago. My memories of Kingsley challenge me to look into myself and decide if I want this relationship to continue or end. I can't help but wonder: Is it possible that a relationship as intense as ours might not have to end? If so, where can and will it yet go?

So, what is it about Kingsley, I ask myself over and over. Is it his five-foot-eight-inches of burly man? His weather-stained skin? His rough, just-woke-up continence? Is it his thick, lush lips? His strong shoulders and sinewy thighs? His strongly muscled legs? Or is it the penetrating gaze; rich, liquid voice; sharp, tangy taste; or excitingly musky smell? What exactly is it about Kingsley that keeps me returning to him even when I want to fight, growl, scream or run? The animal inside me says it's his incredible sexual prowess. The rest of me doesn't care. I long for him. I want him. I need him. Now.

There are a few other things about Kingsley. He's gay and he knows it. He's known it, in fact, since early childhood. He appreciates the beauty of a male body, mine included. He gets excited at the thought of another man's interest and I'm interested in him a lot. He likes gay sex, especially with an agreeably receptive partner, and I'm very agreeable. He's experienced with gay relationships, something I don't know much about yet, and he says he's been looking for years for a lifelong, monogamous partner — me. Kingsley says he loves all five foot six inches of my active body and mind.

Me, I'm not terribly patient. I can't sit still. I'm forever fidgeting, inquiring, exploring, poking my cute little nose into everything and anything. Kingsley says my inexhaustible

curiosity is one of my more endearing traits. It's certainly a big part of who I am, and right now I'm very curious about him.

I'm a professional dancer. I teach and perform partner dancesport — that's ballroom and Latin dance, in popular terms — most afternoons and some evenings at a big dance studio on the east side of the bay. Whenever the opportunity arises, I escort ladies to social and diplomatic dances. I'm especially proud of my reputation for quality dancing among the many single women frequenting the embassy party circuit. I'm told I wear a black evening tuxedo as handsomely as tight black Latin pants. It's not an overstatement to say that dancing is my life. When I'm not dancing, I'm practicing, at home or at the studio. I like my body lean and supple, and people who see me dance do, too.

Unlike Kingsley, I'm not knowingly gay. I don't remember as a child ever questioning whether I was anything but straight. I love a beautiful body, male or female, but am naturally attracted to women, and especially flattered when a beautiful woman is attracted to me. On the other hand, I'm painfully shy. I don't know why, but it's hard for me to make first contact, or take the initiative in a relationship with a woman. I remember as an adolescent wondering what to do when my steady girlfriend first kissed me. Whether it's something about me or just my naivety, things don't seem to come naturally for me with women. I often feel somehow left behind, suspended, lost forever in awkward adolescence. It especially bothers me when I overhear guys just back from a date talk about their amazing sexual exploits. Intimacy? No problem there. Romance? I'm a hopeless romantic. Erections? Staying power? No problems there either. Interest, always. Yet oddly, sex with women somehow eludes me and if and when it finally catches on, the sex seems perfunctory, like a diet of vanilla ice cream. Perfunctory, vanilla...that is, until I met Kingsley.

I first met Kingsley at one of the many obligate social cocktail-and-dance parties put on by various sponsors and organizations that my line of work requires me to attend. I didn't like the huge crowd or the loud continuous chatter at this one. I didn't really want to go in the first place. I don't know

why exactly, but right from the beginning the situation awakened an unpleasant, “being watched from behind” feeling, an itchy sort of tingling between my shoulder blades that slowly crept up my spine till the hairs on my neck were standing stiffly. It was at that moment I noticed Kingsley staring at me from across the room. His piercing eyes were locked onto me and followed me as I meandered in and out of the crowd, nodding, introducing myself, and exchanging pleasantries. I definitely didn’t want to be there, but it suddenly came to me with unavoidable finality: I am...and so is he.

Kingsley is, well, not forgettable. It isn’t just me, he affects almost everyone he comes into contact with in the same way. It’s his eyes.

We were drawn to one another from the first. For me, the crowd, the chattering, the social hellos and nice-to-see-you agains drifted nondescriptly into the background, and a space miraculously opened up obviously reserved for just the two of us. When we actually met, we immediately began seeking and discovering commonalities: people we’d both heard of, places we’d like to visit, things we’ve both dreamed of doing. That conversation, first begun that day, has never ended for me.

Today, frustrated and lonely, those memories, thoughts, hopes and desires seem like a shattered mirror, with the pieces put somehow not-quite-rightly back together. Where is Kingsley? Why hasn’t he contacted me since our lover’s tryst? Where is the man I can’t help but love so dearly?

## 21 MARCH

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I awaken to darkness, distant rolling thunder, and the sound of raindrops pelting the roof and my bedroom window. It's so dark I can't see my hand in front of my face. Formless anxiety quickly turns to edgy fear when a distant creaking noise issues from where the hallway should be. I grope blindly for the bedside clock and end up knocking something over that shatters on the floor. I instinctively know it's the photograph of Kingsley that I keep at my bedside. A sense of foreboding, cold and hard as ice, floats into and slowly suffuses the room. Though I huddle deeper under the thick down comforter and flannel sheets, a shiver courses through me. My pulse quickens and I feel my heart thrusting madly in my chest as if struggling to get out. My mind is racing: What's happening? What does this all mean?

I startle as if jolted by lightening and awaken, eyes wide, heart pounding, soaked in sweat, to rays of bright sunlight streaming through the window where a moment ago, a dark, amorphous, evil presence seemed to be hovering. "Kingsley, where are you?" my heart screams in anguish.

I reach over toward where I keep Kingsley's photograph and clasp it in shaking hands tightly to my chest. It didn't fall. It isn't broken. Tears well and I command myself to breathe deeply, slowly, trying to calm the terror within me. The phone suddenly rings.

It's Kingsley! I try to focus on what he is saying, but my heart, just moments ago drowning, grasps desperately onto the deep, sonorous voice. I try to listen to his words, but my hand is shaking so much I have trouble just holding the phone to my ear. At last, the pounding in my chest lessens, and I somehow manage to successfully command the fear that has been saturating the room to leave, dissolve, dissipate.

Kingsley is saying how difficult these last few days have been for him, and how much he misses me. He misses me, my heart and mind recite together. He was surprised to find several phone messages waiting for him when he walked into his home after being dropped off by me. He assumed they would be romantic accolades or heartfelt thanks from me for the wonderful weekend we had just spent together. He chased his inquisitive housemate away, and touched the replay button in ecstatic expectation. The messages, however, turned out to be from various friends while we were away. He felt crushed...then angry. Angry? I wonder why Kingsley is telling me this instead of how much he enjoyed our time together?

Excited just to hear his voice again, a little hurt and increasingly confused, I profess my love for him. I tell him how much I enjoyed our time together, and that I've wanted to call him a million times, but was, well, afraid. Afraid of what, he asks, suddenly serious. I don't know, I tell him anxiously. Just afraid.

Kingsley's voice softens, and he, in turn, declares his love for me. He's wanted to call but was also afraid. Surprised, I ask him what he could possibly be afraid of. Kingsley says after our intensely sexual time together, he was afraid I would change my mind about being in a gay relationship with him. I start to speak, but he interrupts me and explains that what he's come to realize is that he wants a lifetime, monogamous relationship with me.

I'm speechless. During the silence, my world slowly reassembles around me and my feelings thaw. Kingsley loves me. I remain silent, letting the words sink in. I have always had in my heart the answer to all of my questions: I love Kingsley, not men or women, nor gays, bisexuals or straights. He will always be with me if I but allow him in.

By the time I regain speech, Kingsley is already telling me that he wants to leave where he's currently living and move in with me. I am about to yell, Yes, Yes, Yes, when it occurs to me that Kingsley is not just professing his love for me but also may be confessing to a more than casual relationship with the man

he currently shares a house with. I listen more carefully. Yes, he is professing more than just love for me.

I ask him if he is involved emotionally or sexually with his housemate. A long silence ensues. Kingsley finally answers in a flat, somber voice that up to when we met, they had been living together as “uncommitted partners.”

I ask him again, this time more directly: Have they been sexually involved since he and I began dating? Another long pause. Kingsley answers carefully and guardedly that his former lover wants to resume their sexual relationship, especially since he learned about us, but he, Kingsley, has consistently declined. His housemate, he continues, was at first disappointed, more recently angry, and currently outright belligerent to the point that they recently agreed to continue to share the house only until Kingsley can find another place to live. Kingsley states again, this time emphatically, that he knows what he wants, and that’s to be with me. I listen desperately for the same undercurrent of love and desire in his voice that is even now steadily growing within me, but end up feeling angry and then bitter that Kingsley has been leading me on.

I ask him again, have they been sexual since we have been together? Kingsley explains that they haven’t been sexual for over a year, and that though his housemate wants to, they have not since well before we met. They share the house and rent, yes, but sleep alone in separate rooms. Kingsley’s been wanting to leave the relationship for some time - to move into a temporary place of his own so he can continue pursuing our relationship without encumbrance - but he wanted to do it without hurting his ex-partner’s feelings. I stamp my foot. Encumbrance? How can love, even abandoned love, be an encumbrance?

Our Magical Mystery Tour changed everything, Kingsley continues. He is absolutely clear about what he wants, and that’s me. He wanted to delay bringing up living together until we were both satisfied that that was also what I wanted. The last few days have been the most difficult of his life. He hoped I would call him, suddenly clear about my own desires. When I

didn't call, he assumed I didn't want to continue together. Nevertheless, he reluctantly called me. I have never known this Kingsley before: He's inviting me to understand him!

My heart and I in harmony answer without hesitation: I understand and appreciate what he's been trying to do, though I am surprised about his situation with his housemate, which I had always assumed was one of purely financial convenience. I remind him peevishly that he's never talked much about him, but realize as I speak that while that's true, he has also never avoided talking about him or their relationship. Looking quickly within my own heart, I realize it doesn't really matter anyway, and the past few days of fear and loneliness suddenly melt away. I just want to be with Kingsley. I want him here with me, and ask him, given his experience, how he imagines our relationship unfolding.

Kingsley tries to explain — tries, and in the attempt is completely unconvincing. It's clear that he wants to live together with me, and hopes that I will eventually commit to a lifetime, monogamous, gay relationship with him. I listen intently, asking him when he is finished what a "gay relationship" means to him.

Kingsley explains that he would expect me to be his exclusive sexual partner, and he mine. He is satisfied with me being solely receptive, if that's my pleasure. He says he is choosing me above all gay men. I like that but, as we continue talking, realize that he in turn expects me to choose him not only from among all gay men — something rather easy for me to do — but also above all women, including women with a future promise of children and family. I must be willing to give up sex with women, the immortality of biological children, and sex with other men as well. I hear what he's saying, but at this moment neither mind, heart nor body can fully comprehend the enormity of what he is asking, and I coolly assume Kingsley doesn't really either. How can anyone make such a commitment? Kingsley reminds me that monogamous couples around the world do so every day.

I tell Kingsley my concern that gay love alone, without promise of offspring, might not last after the veneer of initial lust wears thin — like between him and his housemate even now. Yet listening over the phone, to his incomparably seductive voice as he reminds me how strong and fulfilling our unique relationship could be, I capitulate, in my mind at least. Our sexual relationship may be unusual, but it is really not so different from everyone else's in terms of love for another and the desire to consummate those feelings. I ask Kingsley if he thinks that I can and will be enough to satisfy him over a lifetime. Kingsley says without hesitating that he believes we have just begun to experience the depth of our love together and we owe it to ourselves to explore where it can take us both as a couple and as individuals.

Our talk again flows more naturally. I tell him I don't hold him responsible for his actions before we fell in love, though I'd like to hear about his experiences, mentioning that they might give me a better idea about what, for me, the world of gay relationships entails. We finally agree to discuss this more in a couple of hours, face-to-face. Kingsley says he will call me just before he leaves. He parts with softly-whispered affections of how much he loves and desires me. As I hang up the phone, I feel my thighs tingle and the familiar heat within them mounting. How can I be anything other than what I am?

I get up, shower and look long and carefully at myself in the full-length bathroom mirror. Every detail. I am beautiful. I have grace, strength and the invitingly slim build of a professional dancer. I turn, looking over myself even more carefully in the mirror, and can understand why Kingsley desires me physically. But how is it, I wonder, that he, a man, can love me, another man, so? No other man has ever loved me like this or come close to holding me in such thrall.

I shave my face, brush my curly hair and stare at the hint of dark halo surrounding my genitals. I shaved off my pubic hair several months ago when Kingsley mentioned that he would like to have me not just naked, but nude. While difficult shaving the first time, it has proven even more difficult to maintain. My thick, dark pubic hairs grow back just fast enough to create a

fine, prickly stubble in the morning. I usually shave in the evening and morning now. I gently lather the whole area, rinsing it just until slick, and then carefully shave it clean with my safety razor. It is most difficult right at the base of my soft penis — the hairs there are the thickest and coarsest, and the skin most sensitive. After that, I sit on a towel on the lid of the toilet and carefully shave my ball sac. Finally, I spread a towel on the floor and squatting, shave behind it and around my anus, all the while imagining Kingsley's fingers gently prying me apart, searching for and probing my tightly-puckered hole. Just the thought makes my anus twitch and the usually irritating scrape of the razor intensely erotic. I start to stroke myself and then recall Kingsley's firm command: that I not masturbate unless he is there with me. It is one way of teaching my body, he says, to respond to his, and only his, touch. I feel the heat inside me rising and stop the stroking. I can wait. I can honor my promises to him. I can, I can, I assure myself over and over, a part of me obviously unconvinced.

Having finished shaving, I admire my nude body in the mirror again, and without thinking reach a hand up and touch a tiny nipple. It immediately tenses and points, and my body arches and presents for mounting. How is this? Is Kingsley — am I — too absorbed with sex? I recall several women partners mentioning that about men in general, and on occasion about me specifically. Irrespective of gender, lusty and satisfying sex seems to me an important part of lasting affection and couple-bonding. I've heard it said that some couples stay together their entire lives without sex, yet I've never met such a couple, and my mind tells me that couple-bonding just doesn't happen that way. It happens like it did with us, rooted firmly in initial and later uninhibited sex. It's important that at least one member of the couple want, pursue, initiate and consummate sex. Isn't that the man's role, to get things going? That's Kingsley, especially the initiating part. He, it seems, is always ready to initiate sex with me. Isn't it the receptive partner's role, when interested, to encourage, permit and accept sex - to be more aware of the consequences and moderate the other's desire? That's me clearly, and I love, desire, and, yes, on occasion hate Kingsley for it. Is this then to be my principal role in our relationship,

that of a sterile, surrogate female? An available receptacle for Kingsley's desire?

In gay relationships does one man consistently initiate, lead, dominate, deliver and the other choose, moderate, submit and receive? Will I ultimately have to learn to alternate schizophrenically between these two worlds, a chimerical half-male-half-female, or male this moment and female the next? I wonder if Kingsley really understands my struggle. I assume that he can choose top or bottom at his whim. But can he, in fact? I've seen him interact with women, sometimes even seductively in a playful, brotherly way. He just doesn't seem to have any desire to engage them sexually. How is this?

I suddenly catch myself wondering if, like me, maybe, sometime in his past, Kingsley had a male-female sexual relationship that seriously went wrong. I've heard him talk about his having girlfriends as a teenager, but were they really girlfriends, ultimately painfully alluring and yet emotionally unconsummating. Or were they to him really just girl friends? Either way, I feel rising envy for Kingsley's rock-solid gayness compared to the sexual quicksand that forever seems to surround me. Kingsley's desires are as they should be given his orientation. Inline, healthy, appropriate. So what about me? Mine seem off somehow, shattered in pieces that come together but in a different way than they were meant to be. Is this what people mean by the vulgarity "queer?" Will this gender war within me eventually resolve or is it something that I am destined to struggle with my whole life? Am I alone in this world or are there others like me, and if so, where are they? What is their life like? How do they do it? I'm told that experience is the foundation upon which we build our lives. Maybe I simply need more experience with Kingsley in his special world, and at being the only thing I seem capable of being at this moment for him: a wonderfully receptive male partner. I shake my head trying to clear it of this utter craziness. Kingsley will be here at any moment.

Naked and shaved, I again twist my gorgeously sleek body to the left and then right, staring inquisitively once again at the person in the reflection. Do I look gay, female, effeminate,

receptive? My wide shoulders, prominent Adam's apple, athletic arms and thighs, the barely perceptible male hair pattern, all make me look solidly masculine. My penis, balls and scrotum shout all-male, but the tight curls framing my face, my lean tomboyish body, narrow waist, slender hips and small buttocks, the small, silver heart of Kingsley's anklet dangling daintily from my right ankle and the gracefulness of my poise all seem to say different. I face away from the mirror, bend over and, looking over my shoulder, arch and present myself like Kingsley likes. My tightly muscled buttcheeks spread open of their own volition revealing a tiny, rosebud anus. I spread my legs, reach below between them and with one hand gently stroke my anus while telling it to relax. Its quickly swelling lips seem to blush at my touch, and it finally obeys, opening wider, shamelessly inviting anyone watching to enter. To take me. I can't believe I am male. Or straight.

I quickly remove my hand from between my legs, wash my hands, and straighten up, turning to face the mirror front-on. Are my facial lips, like my anus a moment ago, fuller and slightly redder, sending out an invitation for a real man to taste and possess them? My face seems flushed and my breathing shallow and rapid. Why am I holding my thighs tightly together? Why am I not hard and erect? God, I want Kingsley right now! Do people — men and women — know what I want just by looking at me when I feel like this? Do they know that I'm Kingsley's always-ready, receptive partner? Suddenly feeling an overwhelming need to bring these powerfully conflicting feelings to an end, I reach for my soft manhood, then realize that while I desperately want to climax, I really don't want to awaken either my sleeping organ or my eagerly-pulsing nether lips. Without Kingsley, I'm not sure how to gain fully satisfying release. He knows exactly what I want and need, and he always seems interested and wonderfully experienced at doing it. What would I do without Kingsley? That's me.

Thankfully, Kingsley hasn't yet called, so I put on a bathrobe and decide to spend a few minutes alone in my private garden outside cooling off. I go downstairs, open the window overlooking the garden, and place the phone on its wooden

frame so I can get at it quickly if Kingsley calls while I'm outside. I open the back door and venture a bare foot onto the warm earth. Sunlight suddenly streams all about me. Green, earthy smells engulf and gently fondle my suddenly quivering body. The warm humid air flows lazily around me, swirling beneath my light bathrobe, caressing my thighs as they brush together. I try desperately to calm down, but it's impossible to ignore the sensation of virile sex everywhere about me. Bright red tulips sway erotically in the gentle breeze as I walk by. Clumps of butter-yellow daffodils weave their way among the tulips, creating a yellow brick road inviting me into their world of sexual fantasy. Each flower spreads itself invitingly before anyone or anything that happens by. The air grows warm, sultry, heavy with a seductively musky fragrance that reminds me of Kingsley. Sex seems everywhere. Is there no escape? Must my desires constantly haunt me like this? And what am I to do with these desires when even the thought of Kingsley awakens and encourages them within me?

Frustrated, I turn and walk back into the house, reluctantly closing the door on the frenetic sexual energy everywhere outside. Inside, outside, what difference really? I desperately need some sexual boundaries if I am to continue pursuing an everyday close relationship with Kingsley, or I fear I may drive him and myself mad. Yet, as resolve begins to form in my mind, I suddenly imagine Kingsley standing beside me, laughing gently and telling me, no, that's simply love. It's in the letting go that we openly experience and appreciate the limitless richness of the world around us, our own self and our limitless potential.

On second thought, I return to the bathroom and take out a small enema syringe I bought several months ago. I plug the sink, turn on the water, adjust it until it's near body temperature, then fill the basin, and from it, the syringe. Earlier, I hated doing this. It all seemed awkward, artificial, morally wrong, like having sex with myself, ejaculating into myself what is neither Kingsley's nor mine. It was as if I were taking wanton advantage of myself. I didn't like it, but anal sex later inevitably proved much more pleasant, pleasurable and rewarding.

Suddenly, I'm tired of having to spend so much time preparing. I wish anal sex could be more spontaneous, like when a woman has sex with a man. Gay sex, at least for me, is neither completely carefree nor totally spontaneous. Squatting over the toilet filling myself with the warm water and expelling it over and over until clear, it occurs to me that I would still probably want to prepare myself even if I were a woman. As the warm water gushes out a final time, it occurs to me that I can wish all I want, but it doesn't change who and what I am. Besides, Kingsley likes me male and clearly prefers me clean.

Almost finished, I reach over to the side of the sink and suck a teaspoon of lubricant into a small syringe I recently acquired. Bending forward at the waist, I reach down and with one hand spread myself. With my other hand, I gently insert the syringe, pushing its contents just inside. Putting the syringe aside, I reach again between my legs, and slowly insert a finger to spread the lubricant all around and then along the narrow entrance. Even with my still-limited experience, anal sex, if and when it occurs, is always much easier this way, and the constant wetness and stickiness serves to remind me that I am ready to be taken by my man whenever he desires.

Straightening up, it strikes me that sex with Kingsley is grossly unequal. Kingsley doesn't need to prepare. He desires, I fulfill. Of course, I don't really have to prepare. I could place the burden on him and simply refuse to cooperate until he does or provides whatever I need, but that seems even more unequal, silly, mean-spirited even. I know from my experience with women that it's hard being the one who has to clearly indicate, initiate and consummate sex. I remember. Like I said, it's something I was always anxious about and never good at. My girlfriends mostly had to do, well, basically everything except the actual mounting, which now that I think about it they often orchestrated, leaving to me the ejaculatory act itself. What I've always been good at is the romance part. I think this is something Kingsley particularly appreciates about me and our relationship. It seems like it's often emotionally difficult for him to be romantic. On the other hand, I'm so comfortable with that aspect of a loving relationship that I easily provide enough

for both of us — as long as he provides the statement of desire, initiates and consummates. He's the master, my master, there. Master — that has a particularly erotic ring to it and I squirm just thinking about it.

I look down and check the heart-shaped anklet dangling about my ankle. Kingsley gave it to me as a token of his affection, a sort of "going steady" symbol. Since then we have dated each other exclusively and continue to grow closer together. The thought makes me feel relieved and rejuvenated. Ready. After all, Kingsley just brought up wanting to leave his prior sexual partner to live together with me. Me. The idea makes me shiver with delight and makes the slickness between my asscheeks even more stimulating. I suddenly believe, with my whole being, Kingsley's declaration of love, affection and desire for me, just me, while wondering, in the back of my mind what he and this other man shared together. Was this prior gay lover of his as hot for him then as I am now? Is he still?

The phone rings distantly in the living room. I rush for it, grabbing, fumbling and almost dropping it in my haste. It's Kingsley. His voice is strong, masterful, confident. He's on his way and will be here in a couple minutes. I say something, anything, in mounting anticipation. I grip the phone tighter and order myself to stop the mindless chatter flowing from my mouth, but my body, randy and aching for him, ignores me. Kingsley tells me to calm down, he's almost here and I hang up the phone. Clothes. I don't want my naked body shouting at him as soon as he walks in the door how utterly desirous I feel. I should put something on, but what? The doorbell suddenly rings, and I hear Kingsley slip the key I gave him earlier as a token of my affection into the lock. I grab the first thing I can reach — one of Kingsley's long-sleeved shirts, hastily buttoning it as I run bare-assed and barefooted toward the opening front door.

I wanted to walk nonchalantly up to him, look in his eyes and say something like, "Hello, Kingsley. It's nice to see you again." At least, I thought I wanted to. Now, I frankly don't care. Instead, I run like a child, throw myself into his open, inviting arms and wrap myself tightly about him. Before he even

crosses the threshold my warm, quivering lips are searching out his, and I am dissolving in his arms while blurting out uncontrollably, “God, I’ve missed you, Kingsley. Please don’t ever leave me alone like that again!”

Surprised, then visibly touched, Kingsley embraces me tightly, returning the kiss with equal fervor. A cool hand slips under my shirt and slides up my back. Although trembling with passion, I nonetheless try to push us apart so I can take his coat off, unbutton his shirt, and slide my eager little hands down the back of his jeans onto his muscled buns. I try, but Kingsley, in one motion, has the shirt off of me and begins kissing me wetly on the neck, then down my chest, stopping briefly to suck on one and then the other of my small but stiffening nipples. Heated to near incandescence, all I want now is to be taken, determinedly, so that I won’t ever forget this moment. Fuck me, Kingsley. Do it! Now!

Kingsley kisses my eyes, nose, lips and ears — little delightful nips — while I shakily unzip and slip him out of his jeans and boxer shorts. Before I know it, I am squatting before him on my haunches, staring at his huge, fat erection, its tip pointing directly at my lips, eagerly dripping as it bobs to his pounding pulse. I suddenly realize that Kingsley is still in the open doorway, in broad daylight, naked from waist to shoes and I am completely naked, squatting at his feet. Anyone walking or driving by would see everything! I look nervously out the door. Kingsley, however, leans against the doorway jamb without any intention of moving.

I look nervously up, down and across the street and, seeing that no one watching us, reach for him with outstretched arms as if praying to the erect god standing before me. I quickly remove his shoes and socks. Kingsley sighs, long and slow. Looking up expectantly once again at his throbbing godhead, I place one of my hands around the hungry-looking beast while lovingly cupping his tense balls at the same time in my other.

Kingsley shudders. I gently slide my hand up the length of his gorgeously chiseled tool all the way to its reddish-purple, mushroom-like head, in the process squeezing and extruding a

small gush of transparent fluid from the narrow slit at its tip. Kingsley groans as I place my warm lips on the fleshy head and begin gently sucking the pre-cum from within him. I feel his desire rapidly increase until he begins alternately tensing and thrusting, lightly but with increasing determination. I quickly release the captive head of his penis from within my mouth and begin licking it as if it were a scoop of melting ice cream. Kneeling before him like this, I look up and notice his eyes, glazed and distant. I lower my tongue and lick just under the bulging head of his tasty prick. Kingsley suddenly shakes his head as if snapping out of a dream and looks down at me. I can see the imploring, unrequited, ready-to-explode desire within him surface, and in one motion I rise up off my knees, turn away from him, spread my legs and bend over. Raising my buns up in the air, I look back up and over my shoulder as I part my two small, firm buttocks with my hands, arching and presenting myself to the man who owns my very heart and soul.

Kingsley's gaze rivets onto my pink, moist, lubricated opening and he immediately gloms onto his turgid member with one hand, seizing one of my hips with the other, and directs the long, hard shaft up and into me. I gasp as it pops in and again as he nudges it steadily deeper and deeper within. At last, his pubic hairs prickling against my anal lips, I feel him shove firmly one final time, and ripple after ripple of cum slowly begins to travel up the underside of the long spike imbedded in me, through my tight sphincter and irrevocably into me. Kingsley sighs, relaxes, then suddenly thrusts again and, to my surprise, pulls out.

I start to fall, but Kingsley grips my hips firmly with both his hands and gently directs me from the doorway back into the house, kicking our clothes in and out of the way as he goes. Holding me securely again in one hand, he reaches for the door with the other, and almost closes it. Then Kingsley suddenly releases me altogether, turns and begins nonchalantly chatting with someone on the other side of the door! I feel my completely naked body hidden behind him flush deep red from the tips of my toes to the top of my head. I grab for a shirt on the floor and begin struggling into it. It's Kingsley's. Outside, the postman is saying, "Hi there. Special delivery for..." but I

am too intent on struggling into a pair of pants — again Kingsley's — to hear the rest.

"Ah... Yes," I hear Kingsley say, obviously stalling for time while pushing me farther behind him. "Yes, he's here." Kingsley pokes me in the chest with a finger as he opens the door slightly more, at the same time moving his naked body further behind it and sliding behind me. A uniformed mailman, satchel slung jauntily over one shoulder, is standing there holding out a letter.

"Special delivery. Sign here," he says as I adjust my incorrectly buttoned shirt, half-tucked into Kingsley's quite obviously too-large-for-me jeans. My face, glowing red with embarrassment, flushes redder and hotter to the heady mix of embarrassment and sexual excitement. I grasp the front of the oversized jeans and, twisting them in my hand as tight as possible to keep them from falling off my narrow hips, reach out calmly with my other hand for the letter.

The postman, however, doesn't immediately release it. Instead, he stares searchingly into my eyes and then around the room as if sensing something is amiss. I twist the jeans tighter as they suddenly begin slip off my hips, revealing for the slightest fraction of a second the upper edge of my shaved pubic area. I almost die with relief when the postman finally presents in his other hand a receipt I must sign. I scribble my name and the letter carrier pulls the receipt back, but instead of giving me the letter and leaving, asks, "Do you have identification?"

Identification? I can't believe this! I reflexively reach into the back pocket of what are obviously not my jeans and, blushing even deeper, begin stammering when I feel a wallet thrust into my hand from behind. Ah, Kingsley! I shove the wallet forward, fumbling through it awkwardly, leafing through the glassine compartments with my free hand until my driver's license falls out and onto the floor just inside of the door. The carrier automatically reaches down and picks it up, glancing further into the house as he does. Oh, God! I quickly squat down so as to not lose my pants, and then slowly rise at the same time that

he does, blocking as much of his view as possible, aware of a growing wetness spreading in both the front and back of my jeans. I desperately want to look down and check, but am shaking so hard that I'm afraid looking might direct the postman's attention at exactly what I hope he, at least, will never be privileged to see.

He, on the other hand, suddenly appears bored and indifferent. He compares my signature on the postal receipt with that on my driver's license, smiles, nods approvingly and hands me the letter and license. Then he turns crisply on heel and, waving briefly, continues on his daily routine.

I close the door and, staring agog at Kingsley, try to say something — anything — but the situation is so outrageous, all I can do is to repetitively open and close my gaping mouth like a feeding carp. Kingsley, seeing me stunned, wordless, agape and gulping, desperately grasping the letter with one hand and at the same time clutching at the half-buttoned shirt and falling trousers, suddenly points at me and laughs. Before I know it, I am laughing with him until we are rolling on the floor together, tears streaming from our eyes. Finally, exhausted from laughing, the sexual tension dissipated, we lie on the floor, side-by-side, hand-in-hand, gasping for breath.

After several minutes, Kingsley slips his hand out of mine. I look up questioningly. Kingsley is immediately on his knees. He pauses, then slowly raises a spectral hand, his index finger extended crookedly, pointing at the almost-forgotten letter I am still holding in my hand. My curiosity suddenly piqued, I begin wondering what could be so important to be sent registered mail. Suddenly the whole ludicrousness of the naked apparition hovering beside me, pointing wordlessly yet ominously at the letter, completely overwhelms me and we both burst out again in side-splitting laughter.

Eventually, I sit up, curl my legs beneath me and begin seriously inspecting the letter. It is addressed to me and, interestingly, has no return address. I turn it over carefully as Kingsley pulls a blanket off the nearby sofa, wraps himself comfortably in it and kneels beside me. Kingsley cocks his head

to the side, looks at the postmark and says, "San Francisco. That's odd. Why would anyone send a registered letter across town?"

I look blankly at Kingsley, shake my head mumbling, "I don't know. I just don't know."

I carefully slit the envelope along the end, invert and shake it. "Shit, it looks...important," I blurt out nervously as a single piece of thick, tri-folded white paper with raised, richly embossed letterhead drops onto the floor with a solid thunk. "It looks terribly legal, Kingsley," I stammer, with growing fear.

Kingsley moves closer, putting his arm around my shoulders and placing his other hand on the inside of my bare thigh. Numbly, I start to read the carefully hand-written letter as Kingsley looks on. The letterhead turns out to be from our "honeymoon" inn where we spent several days together last week. My heart sinks. As I begin to read it I suddenly wonder, Oh God, maybe they are suing me for the mess I made on the bed sheets during our all-night orgy! Then a darker thought grips me: Perhaps they are officially notifying me that they don't appreciate homosexuals. Isn't sodomy against the law in California? Beads of sweat form on my forehead. Kingsley tightens his grip around my shoulders, and I look up at him fearfully. I expect him to mirror my fear, but Kingsley is actually smiling. He reaches out and runs his fingers calmly through my curly hair, nodding back toward the letter shaking loosely in my hands.

With a sense of confusion and dark finality, I return to the letter and begin carefully reading it line by line. It says that our time together at the inn was unforgettable and has changed Kingsley's life forever. It says that I am the one he's been seeking all his life. He loves — adores — me above and beyond all. It's then I realize it's written and signed in Kingsley's cursive.

At first all I can do is stare at the letter, letting the message slowly sink in. I'm not going to be arrested. I still feel terribly guilty about someone at the inn changing our cum-soaked sheets every day, and guiltier still that we were engaged almost

constantly in passionate sex. I remember the innkeeper's wife, entering our room to change the towels, only to see me on my hands and knees on the bed, sweat-soaked, naked, arching and pressing myself against Kingsley's crotch. Every day after that she thoughtfully and knowingly left us extra towels. She clearly knew that I was Kingsley's "woman" and he my "man." I could see it in her eyes every time we silently passed each other after that. Sometimes it even seemed to me as if, every so often, she was conveying underneath the knowing nods a kind of sisterly honeymoon empathy.

Finally the thought I am unknowingly searching for hits me: Here is incontrovertible proof that Kingsley loves me. The biggest smile I've ever experienced spreads across my face and a warm shudder courses through my heart, arms, chest and open thighs.

Without thinking further I toss the letter into the air, turn to face Kingsley, and wrap him in a warm embrace. Kingsley loves me. My heart swells within my breast and takes over my body, my soul, my mind, my whole being. My eyes suddenly burn, and an unstoppable flood of tears stream down my face, soaking Kingsley's shoulder. I grip him to me until there is no space anywhere between us and, hanging my head on his rugged shoulder, let the tears, one after another, bead and skitter down the back of the blanket around him and fall, pooling on the floor.

I try to imagine myself as I was earlier this morning, with all the crazy thoughts, fears and concerns struggling to possess me, floating without form or substance all around me, then suddenly dissolving in the moment's oceanic swell of love and affection — reawakening once again the mounting desire within. God, I love this man. And today, this moment, all the incredible love I feel for him is suddenly being returned to me in full, like measure.

But wait! Kingsley just tricked me! He had to know that I would react this way to a registered letter from San Francisco without a return address! I struggle to push myself out of Kingsley's arms and, with a fake pout, stare in mock-anger at

him. I want to look serious, but it's difficult when I'm dressed like a clown in his clothes and desperately holding onto his big pants. I get up, stamp my feet, turn away from him and start to walk away, chin up, wiping my wet eyes and fighting back an ear-to-ear smirk. Looking back, I can see Kingsley still wrapped in the blanket, his arms and legs sticking out like a scarecrow, rise up and follow behind me, mimicking my walk and every gesture. In the bedroom, I quickly turn and half-attempt to slam the door in his face, but he's too fast for me, bracing against the door and pushing it back open with incredible strength. Kingsley roughly pushes his way in and pauses before me, frowning gleefully as he extends himself to his fullest height, then drops the blanket and kicks it aggressively across the room.

I place my hands on either side of my face and, opening my mouth with counterfeit astonishment, stare wide-eyed at his gorgeous, exciting body, feigning surprise at the rapidly growing erection before me. Kingsley bursts out in laughter and jumps at me, tumbling me back onto the bed, covering my body with his. In seconds, using the weight of his body to open my thighs, his prodigious member searches for a way between my asscheeks. I open my legs further to help and he immediately thrusts firmly into me.

I hiss and struggle, but Kingsley grasps my wrists firmly, pins me down, and forces his huge, upcurved rod in one smooth thrust all the way into me. The swollen tip of his cock pops quickly past my begging prostate, lodging, it feels, just behind my navel. I immediately quit struggling and suck in a deep breath. Kingsley hesitates momentarily, then pushes himself harder and deeper, announcing as he does that he's about to come. Tensing his thighs, he installs a huge gush of impatient sperm deep into my trembling belly. Rammed up into me as far as his root will go, discharging the whole load all at once while enveloping my whole body with his, I can do nothing except docilely accept the voluminous oblation.

Kingsley's body suddenly tenses again, and he pours fourth another convulsing load into me. My anus feels as if it had been pried open by a huge iron wedge, driven with unbridled lust up

and into me. I gasp as Kingsley pushes the last of the huge bolus of fresh, virile semen into me.

I feel his panting breath against my ear, and feel his heart pounding heavily against my chest. The heat of his passion burns within me like a wild fire, igniting the carnal powder keg hidden in the center of my belly. I explode. A wave of muscular detonations radiates outward like a thermonuclear explosion, consuming in its path my every thought, sensation and emotion. With sudden, superhuman strength I tear my wrists from Kingsley's grip, clasp my arms around his sweat-soaked back and my legs around his iron-hard body, and draw him deeper.

My body ignites again, this time exploding in one all-consuming shudder, my anus tensing tightly around the base of his cock, sucking and stripping any remaining jism into me. My fingers and toes curl in a spasm of delight, my fingernails dig, as if with a need and will of their own, into his iron-hard back. Kingsley thrusts a final time with weakened but determined finality and then rests, plugging me completely, commanding me in whispers to relax and retain what he has, in the throes of combined ecstatic rapture, deposited in me.

Lying there, his weight on me, my arms and legs locked around him and his swollen cock locked inside of me, I slowly become once again conscious of my pulsing body. My body. Mine. Surrounded, penetrated, filled with Kingsley, yes, but mine. I suddenly become aware of how slick our bodies feel where they touch, and that our breathing and pulse, in perfect synchrony, are gradually slowing. His wiry body hairs begin to prickle my arms, legs, chest and clean-shaven crotch. His musky sweat drip, drip, drips onto me, as a slight rush of warm, ripe semen escapes from within me.

His softening member still snaked far up inside of me, Kingsley lifts his head onto one hand and with the other pushes himself off me. In one movement, what feels like two feet of softening cock slowly slides out of me; a huge gush of liquid rushes at the same time out onto the bed. Kingsley, looking happily at me, quickly shifts onto his side, reaches an arm across me and rests a hand beside my flaccid penis. Stroking me gently,

he traces a finger down along the edge of my shaved pubis, then nudges the finger behind my scrotum and up into me. I try to grab his arm to stop him, but am already succumbing to new sets of waves of overpowering contractions. My anus instantly constricts hard around his finger; the growing pool of cum escaping from me stops growing.

The sudden rebound sensation of fullness in my liquid-filled belly further kindles my passion. Inside of me, I can feel my walnut-hard prostate begin squeezing itself against his fingertip. I struggle, but Kingsley flexes his finger pad, and draws it firmly along the length of the tense mass, pushing, rubbing, coaxing, then reaching back into me and once again pushing, rubbing, coaxing. I melt around his finger, joining wholeheartedly in the intensely erotic massage.

After a minute, a warm glow suffuses my body. Then, slowly, almost imperceptibly, my body loses all its will — its need — to come, despite what otherwise is clearly an inevitably impending orgasm. The glow quickly spreads and clutches me in a vice-like grip. I look concernedly at Kingsley, the flaming mantle within constantly escalating as he continues methodically massaging the hidden area within me. I barely croak out a guttural “ahhh” before a stream of crystal clear fluid begins seeping from the slit at the tip of my still completely flaccid penis. “No,” I gasp, but Kingsley keeps kneading and in seconds the clear stream transforms into creamy white, slowly flowing ejaculate. I clutch at Kingsley’s arm, but he pushes my hands away while persisting, slowly, now drop-by-drop milking all the stored up semen from within me. I struggle, gasp, buck and thrust my pelvis in an inane attempt to reclaim my male ejaculatory birthright, but in seconds, the remnants of what should have been a massive sexual explosion both within and without resolves into a warm flush, then vanishes into thin air. No matter how hard I try, the orgasm that had moments ago been there waiting expectantly for me now eludes my every attempt to reclaim it.

Completely unable to bring myself to either erection or ejaculatory orgasm, I tell my body to just lie still and let go of what little remaining need for sexual release I still feel. When I

finally relax, Kingsley withdraws his finger and the last remnants of my desire immediately disappear.

Stunned by its finality, it occurs to me as I lie there floating within an odd, cloud-like mixture of chemical bliss and physical exhaustion that Kingsley has just demonstrated to me that ejaculation is not necessary or even essential for complete sexual pleasure. In fact, I've just experienced a new kind of orgasm, warm and satisfying, quite different from the shuddering, almost entirely penile orgasm that, in the distant past, I took, as a male, for granted.

My new orgasm is less point-focused, more encompassing, accepting, releasing. Draining me of pent up semen without even the semblance of penile ejaculation was just that: Nothing...or to be more exact, a welcome nothing, that by simply happening automatically rekindles within me the desire to be once again mounted, fucked and pumped into, in an attempt to once again trigger the elusive whole body orgasm I am quickly coming to enjoy. My intuition tells me that if I persist in my current sexual preference, this will soon become my main, and perhaps exclusive form of release in the future. A fleeting sadness grips my throat, but then, like my desire to come like a man a moment ago, dissolves and erases itself from memory. As long as my sexual interests remain limited to purely receptive anal sex, this new kind of orgasm and release seems infinitely better suited to my ultimate needs, wants and desires. It beckons and awaits, if I am but willing to accept it.

Drained, fulfilled, rejuvenated and already warming again to the musty, man-smell of Kingsley's body next to me, I tell him I'm ready. Ready for him to move in.

The rest of the morning, we slowly inventory my house, searching the various rooms, poking through cabinets, drawers and closets, rearranging things to make room for him and his things. I find it fun making room in my house like I already have for him in my heart and body; it leaves me feeling alive, excited, passionate and ready to be taken again. Kingsley is really here, like he was earlier inside me, but this time to stay. My wish has come true. I needn't be lonely again.

In the afternoon, I shuttle Kingsley back and forth from his former house, bringing a little more of him into our new home — our nest — each time, establishing with each trip a stronger presence of him within my world. It feels odd to touch and handle his intimate, personal things. Some, like his childhood mementos, I have never seen before. There's a photograph of him with his arms around a large, reddish Labrador, the dog looking soulfully up into his eyes like I often do. Kingsley is beaming down at the dog with a childlike, first-love innocence that I suddenly envy. I ask him about his dog, but he is focused entirely on packing and moving. Another time, he promises, as I gently wrap the memory in an old woolen sweater that looks and feels like it had been worn at sea. I sneak a smell — yes, it smells of Kingsley and the sea. Another adventure for another time. I want so much to hear him talk about his past, his childhood, his loves, dreams, disappointments and accomplishments. Sighing deeply, I place the sweater and its precious contents carefully in a weather-beaten leather suitcase into which he is tossing, helter-skelter, shirts, T-shirts, shorts and socks. Kingsley reaches for an old, clearly favorite leather bomber jacket I have seen him wear on occasion. Dark brown, distress lines crisscrossing everywhere, Kingsley hands it to me lovingly and I place it reverently lengthwise on the outside of the overstuffed suitcase. It feels soft and pliable as deer leather in my hands, and smells of rugged days and nights in the wild. I already secretly covet it. Kingsley turns and watches me smoothing it with my hands. With a distant longing in his eyes, he opens his mouth as if to speak, and then falls silent, returning to his hurried packing. Pausing, I watch him throw jeans and slacks in no particular order into another old leather suitcase, wondering at his haste.

Shaking myself from my reverie I watch the afternoon sun, now a deep brilliant gold, cast long shadows across the almost-empty room. There's a certain tension now in Kingsley's movements, a drivenness in his actions, and I ask myself if it's because he's trying to finish packing and leave before his "housemate" returns. I am about to ask Kingsley when he turns to me, drops a pile of sweaters he was trying to stuff into the suitcase and engulfs me in his arms. I don't know what to say or

do. My arms pinned at my sides, I suddenly feel small drops on my neck and I realize that Kingsley is crying! I slowly work my arms free and, stunned, place them awkwardly one and then the other around his heaving shoulders.

Kingsley soon quiets, then shudders and sighs deeply in my arms, releasing me awkwardly while attempting to wipe away the accumulated tears. My heart opens to him, and our half-embrace suddenly becomes one of heart, mind, body and soul. I love this man so deeply and so completely. Kingsley sighs again and we slowly, wordlessly, untangle from each other. Gazing questioningly at Kingsley, for the briefest instant, I see a shy, young boy, like the one in the photo with his dog, flicker through my mind, leaving in its wake a melancholy neediness I can see etched in the chiseled lines of his still damp face. In that instant, I wordlessly invite Kingsley to reach, and in the act of reaching, repose forever in my heart. Kingsley's eyes soften and I feel myself melt in a newfound tenderness. I reach out and take his hands in mine. Why do I love Kingsley? At moments like this, asking that question seems totally superfluous. I've never known anyone who shared him or herself with me like this. Oh Kingsley, how can I help but love you?

The moment passes, and we return to packing with a renewed determination, two lovers working as one. I don't understand all of what just happened, but I vow in my heart to protect and treasure the moment forever. I close the latches of the last of his four suitcases, all packed to overflowing. The metallic snap echoes back and forth in the barren room with a crisp finality, and an orphic silence descends. Kingsley and I look around, spellbound by the enormity of the moment, and then at each other in mutually deepening awe. In the far distance, the faint sound of a metal key being inserted into a metal lock shatters the silence. It must be Kingsley's housemate, and I suddenly begin trembling.

Kingsley, however, stands up and walks directly from his room into the shared living room. From where I sit, I can just see the door open and the mythical man of his past come into view. He enters the living room, removes his key from the door, tosses a large briefcase and long, gray wool overcoat into a

nearby easy chair, and, looking up, notices Kingsley standing near him. "Hello, Kingsley," rolls out of his mouth as if he were greeting a familiar, anticipated lover.

"Hi, Steve," Kingsley says with a softness that stabs me in the heart. Kingsley still loves and respects this man.

The world suddenly stops in mid-motion. No one moves. Steve looks directly at Kingsley; Kingsley looks slightly askance at Steve; I look from one to the other, my eyes the only movement in this dark tableau. "So. You're really leaving," Steve eventually blurts out, his shoulders and then his whole body slumping. My heart aches. I know this feeling, this moment, the end of a journey, the end of a lifeline. If, as the proverbial saying goes, we each have nine lives, I am witnessing one life's death; what really frightens me, however, is that neither man before me can totally release the other. Not in their hearts. I can see it.

"Yes," Kingsley says, this time with finality. Both turn to me. I feel like an evil wench, with long, dirty fingernails and filthy thighs, thrusting herself between them, ripping apart the common life, memories, feelings, hopes, and dreams they have struggled so hard to collect, share, treasure together. I am the wicked witch — slashing, hacking, clawing them apart without mercy or remorse. A heaviness in my chest and throat brings me to tears. Steve and Kingsley continue staring at me but with surprised looks on their faces. No tears, just surprise.

"So this is your life's love then, Kingsley?" The air suddenly electrifies, sparking and crackling all around us. The three of us are instantaneously transported onto a single uninhabited planet flying recklessly in some predetermined but unknowable path through space. Nothing exists outside of our small, closed, tense, about-to-explode world. Frightened, I look at Steve. Steve's face softens. He turns from Kingsley and walks over to me. My eyes drop in horror and embarrassment. What have I done? What is he doing? I look in panic at Kingsley, a million miles across the room.

Kingsley's eyes narrow and lock on Steve, following his every moment as he approaches me. A blue, electric spark

seems to jump from Steve's advancing body to me, crackle, and surround the two of us — both Kingsley's lovers — in one pulsing, shimmering, shifting, surreal aura. Steve stops next to me, lowers his face and gazes into my downturned, averted eyes. I want to die, but he stretches out his arms, slowly bringing me up next to him, and encompasses me in a kindly, strong, compassionate embrace. "Your one-and-only has doe eyes, Kingsley, just like you described, and he's even more beautiful than I imagined from your constant praises. It's clear just looking at him how much he loves you. More maybe than I ever have or could." Steve gives me the slightest of hugs and releases me. Turning from me, he re-approaches Kingsley and takes Kingsley's hands in his. After a moment, as if on an impulse, Steve places his hands tenderly around Kingsley's shoulders, closes his eyes, cocks his head slightly to one side, and kisses Kingsley tenderly on the mouth.

Kingsley, hands at sides, doesn't resist or return the kiss. Steve, as if burned, releases Kingsley, and looking at me, wipes his quivering lips with the back of his hand. "He's yours," I hear him whisper to no one in particular as he turns and leaves, closing the door behind him.

I feel crushed. Kingsley looks pale and aghast. I search for a word, a gesture, something to help lessen the pain I can see welling in his eyes. Kingsley walks over to me, picks up two suitcases, nods at me to take the other two, and we walk silently out of the house, locking the door behind us and carrying his life out to the deserted street together. I toss the suitcases in my waiting MGB, fitting them any way I can into its meager confines, then walk around and open the passenger door for him. Kingsley looks at me as if from a distance, hesitates, then walks alone back up to his former home and reverently pushes his key under the door. Turning back toward me, I see life slowly returning to him at last. His step seems firmer, more determined, his face set and no longer ashen. He climbs into the car with conviction, and I shut the door, walk back around to the driver's side and get in. Silence once again falls heavily. I turn the key. The engine rumbles to life, breaking at last the oppressive silence and final heart-renting pull of his former life.

As I direct the loaded roadster onto the highway, Kingsley smiles, slips a hand between my legs and squeezes my thigh.

At my — now our — house, Kingsley seems more animated, sometimes chatting while unpacking, spreading his things throughout the house, into the various drawers and closets we cleared earlier today. Mostly he talks about us, occasionally stopping, putting his arms around me and telling me how good this change is for both of us. I think, however, he is talking more of, and perhaps to, himself. I wonder if it's really a good change for both of us — for me — but quickly dismiss the thought. It doesn't matter. In the end, we are together. I ask him if he's hungry and, at his nod, whip up a small smorgasbord of leftovers while Kingsley continues unpacking in the bedroom. No flowers. No candles. It's just Kingsley and I.

Dinner at first bodes ill. For the first time since we began going together, neither of us has anything to say. We both pick lightly at the food and finally, as night deepens and the fog begins to roll in, I suggest we clear the table and wash the dishes together. Kingsley grins. The last time we washed dishes together he was in me before the soap was in the dishwasher. Kingsley says he'll clear the table if I wash. As soon as the table is clear, he joins me, and side-by-side I wash while he rinses. At first, it feels strange. In spite of all of the new freedom we now have, and the deliciously invigorating associations I have of washing dishes with him, it is at this moment totally nonsexual. Just...domestic. Domestic, yes, like living day-to-day together. Isn't this what I wanted? What I dreamed and wished so desirously for? I'm suddenly chagrined and begin to giggle like a child. Kingsley looks questioningly at me out of the corner of his eye, but I can't stop the giggling and already see a genuine Kingsley smile breaking out.

Kingsley shifts his weight, bumping his hip intentionally against mine. Standing next to him like this, I am instantly aware of how simply being close to him increases my ardor. I scoop up a handful of dishwasher and toss it at him, soaking the front of his shirt and jeans. "Hey," he says, looking at me in mock anger, eyebrows together, staring intensely, but with an even larger grin on his face. "I'm all wet!"

“You are, aren’t you, poor boy. I’m so sorry,” I say condescendingly, contritely dropping my gaze. “We should get you out of those wet clothes immediately before you catch a cold.” Turning to face him, I begin unbuttoning his shirt with my wet fingers. Kingsley stands there patiently while I strip the soaked shirt off of him. Then I get down on my knees and carefully unbuckle his belt, finally unzipping his wet jeans. Kingsley seems distant but I can’t tell if it’s a ruse or for real. I tell myself, however, in a moment I’ll know for sure.

I reach into the front of his jeans and wrap my cold, wet hands around a rapidly expanding, elongating cock, already wet at the tip and pulsing like a jackhammer. So, it was a ruse!

I carefully finish freeing his enfolding tool from its tight confines, then stand up, and at Kingsley’s grinning nod, strip off my shirt, drop my pants, and, rising on my toes, bend forward over the sink to present myself to him.

Kingsley places his hands on my bare hips and caresses them gently, enticingly. Suddenly his hands wander down between my buttocks, parting and exposing me. I rise up farther on my toes wiggling in heated anticipation.

Kingsley grips his now fully elongated cock in one hand and, grabbing the top of my shoulder firmly with his other, plunges into me. I stagger, let go of my buttocks and grab the edges of the sink, in the process knocking over several dishes, which crash to the floor. When I try to turn to survey the damage, Kingsley releases my shoulder, returning both hands onto my hips with renewed determination.

To my surprise, Kingsley starts to pull out. I quickly assume that he expects me to clean up the pieces of broken dishes scattered about us, but as I move to reach down he plunges deeply back into me, the familiar contractions within his embedded member announcing an impending ejaculation. I squirm in his vise-like clutch, as warm, eager semen begins pushing its way up along the underside of the spike rammed up into me. I brace, breathe deeply and accept, bending farther forward, reaching my wet hands between my legs back to gently swaddle his slapping testicles. I like the feel of their rhythmic

contractions in my hands, each squeezing another piece of him into my awaiting belly. Kingsley groans, thrusts once, twice. I open my hands, expecting to receive his load, but he slows and to my surprise pulls his long, engorged member slowly out from me.

I try to steady myself again against the edge of the sink when Kingsley, his left hand still gripped tightly on my left hip, suddenly slaps my right buttock with an audible crack, saying, "You're a bad, bad boy! You need to be more attentive to your chores. I'm going to have to see to it that you are punished for this kind of blatantly inappropriate behavior when you're supposed to be washing dishes." Then he laughs heartily. I look over my shoulder to see him already sliding his turgid member back into his pants. I turn — part astounded, part inflamed, part infuriated, part disappointed — and place a hand on his nicely-muscle chest, entwining my finger in its coarse curly hair. I like this Kingsley. I'm pleased I have him back.

Kingsley frowns. I let go of his chest hair, turn and begin rubbing my warmly glowing buttcheek. Chastised but not at all contrite, I return to washing the remaining dishes. Kingsley, in the meantime, goes about cleaning up the pieces of broken dishes around me. Absentmindedly I lift my right foot off the floor, shifting my weight to ease the irritatingly persistent and strangely erotic stinging in the right side of my derriere. I don't know if Kingsley notices or not, so I reach to the side and gently tap a finger on his shoulder. Kingsley immediately slaps my butt again in exactly the same place as before, warming it further. I feel it prickle and tingle, and again tap him. This time Kingsley is waiting and, springing up behind me, he clasps the back of my neck, bends me firmly over the edge of the kitchen sink and begins smartly slapping the same place over and over, till I drop the dishes I'm holding to try to reach behind and deflect the slaps.

Kingsley grasps my left wrist and, pushing my other hand out of the way, continues the mock punishment until my hip feels like a red-hot charcoal briquette about to ignite my entire body aflame. Tense, erect and hard as a rock, I shift my weight again and cry out as the heat suddenly incites both butt muscles

to contract and a sentinel belly contraction ripples outward from within me. My stomach tenses and this time a single, tidal wave enjoins every muscle in my body in a ruthless grip. My pulsing anus contracts, then suddenly releases as I feel Kingsley's unnoticed stave suddenly drive hard into me. The slap of his hard balls driving against my underside sends a shock through me that triggers the familiar, one-after-another orgasmic waves that begin thundering through me.

Between each wave and thrust, thick, pungent cum oozes out of me and drips down my leg and onto the floor. No longer able to hold back the sobs of mixed pain and ecstasy, I cry out. Suddenly Kingsley stops, pulls abruptly out, and turns me around to face him. Then he lifts my burning rump up onto the edge of the sink, raises my legs up around his waist, and in one motion thrusts back up and into me, depositing enough of his thick, rich semen into me to replace all that, moments before, I unwillingly let escape. My abdomen, suddenly refilled with warm cum, erupts in an all-encompassing swell of raw, unbridled sexual frenzy, and I do the only thing left to me: I grasp my legs tightly around his middle, my arms around his neck, and ride him for dear life.

Kingsley, however, has already finished. What a moment ago felt like a three-inch thick, three-foot long hotdog rammed up inside of me now feels soft and pliant. I slide myself up and down on him, hoping to re-excite him, and in the process suddenly reach my own climax, even as he slips out of me. Fresh cum, like warm water, gushes all over the sink and flows like a river down the cabinet onto the already wet floor.

Exhausted and satiated, Kingsley steps back, leaving me perched precariously on the edge of the sink while he slips his soft penis back into his jeans and zips himself up, all the while looking dreamily at me with a distant twinkling in his eyes. This is the Kingsley I adore: the Kingsley of this life, here with me in the now. I wiggle down onto the floor, petulantly complaining to Kingsley about the continued stinging in my buttocks and, squatting over the aromatic, cum-soaked floor, unceremoniously begin wiping up the result of our wild dishwashing escapade with a dishtowel. I pause in the process,

gently touching a fingertip into the pool, and roll the cum that a moment before was within me between my fingers. This is also Kingsley. His legacy. If I were a woman, it would be our joint pathway to immortality. I'm not, so if we stay together (did I actually say *if*?) neither of us will have that uniquely human privilege. Simply being together will be our reward, and at the same time our sentence of mortality. Will we, can we, find in each other enough to counterbalance such a loss? Still rolling his slippery, now-cold jism between my fingers, I look longingly up at Kingsley, lost in the bliss of post-orgasmic rapture and the biological wonder of it all.

The kitchen finally cleaned, the dishes washed, rinsed and drying in the rack, Kingsley pecks my cheek and strides confidently into the living room. I sense in this moment that the transition is complete: Kingsley has moved in. We have begun living together as a day-to-day couple in our house, not as a dating couple or like with his former partner as sexual housemates, but as committed lovers. Is this true or am I trapping myself in the same snare that held Steve to Kingsley and Kingsley to Steve? I'm afraid to share this thought with him just now. That says something, but what?

I walk toward our bedroom, deviating briefly to the sofa where Kingsley sits buried in a book on sailmaking he's dug out of a suitcase lying open next to the sofa. Kingsley looks up, reaches out to me, and the tips of our fingers brush as I walk on by. I need to wash and get dressed for work. A glance at the living room clock tells me the American professor and Japanese competition dancesport partner I have been working with are probably already at the studio warming up.

I quickly wash my privates with the corner of a wetted towel, rub some lightly scented talcum powder between my quivering legs and slip into my tight, black Latin practice shirt and pants. The thought suddenly strikes me that I don't just like, I envy the couple I am preparing to meet. Unlike Kingsley and I, the horizon they share is unbounded. They could, as a couple, become world famous dance champions, or they could distinguish themselves individually within their shared love of dance, or they could become wonderful social dancers and

doting parents. Kingsley and I, on the other hand, have, as of today, committed everything we have to one principal thing: simply being together.

Dashing past Kingsley, I grab a favorite rainproof overcoat from the closet, rush through the kitchen and, tossing Kingsley a kiss, slip through the kitchen door that connects with the garage. It's a short drive to the studio and I won't have to warm up much thanks to Kingsley.

As the garage door opens and the growling car crawls into the rolling, gray fog I think back, relishing this first morning and afternoon of our new life together, and savor the relationship. Kingsley and I now have unlimited time to explore life together. What treasures await us? What form will our claim to immortality take? Perhaps it will simply be to live happily together, a privilege many in this world have given their very lives for.

At the studio I immerse myself in dance, flexing, contracting, extending, stretching every muscle in my body to the seductive slow-quick-quick rhythm of rumba, the dance of love. I demonstrate to my students how to roll the hips in a figure eight pattern to the music, how to create the sinuous movements of the abdomen, belly and hips that suddenly remind me pleasantly of sex with Kingsley. I can feel my face flushing and I begin breathing deeper with each successive bar. My God, am I about to climax dancing here in the studio with clients watching? I stop, sweating, fearful of the unquenchable sexual lust Kingsley has unlocked within me, fearful of the look of awe in the eyes of my two watchful students. I put my hand firmly over the painful stitch in my side and slowly catch my breath, wondering what they will say. Both begin clapping, and several other couples on the floor add to the applause. "Show me how to do that!" one man cries, his partner nodding wide-eyed.

Awestruck myself, the performer within me takes over. I smile, bow slightly and slowly absorb their accolades like sweet rain falling on a thirsty desert. How did I do that? Where did I learn? Who taught me that? I smile an enigmatic Mona Lisa

smile, thinking of Kingsley, my inspiration. Perhaps that's the first of many special gifts that our new relationship will bring to me: Exuberant life. Rich, robust, romantic, lascivious. What more could I ask for? What more could I possibly want?

After the lesson, I strip, shower, and don a spare set of street clothes I keep in my locker for moments like this, accepting more compliments as I work my way through and finally out of the studio. I climb into my car and reawaken the beast for the short drive back home, overtly pleased and satisfied. As I drive along, the familiar streets seem to disappear into a formless, gray, enveloping fog. I slow down, switch on the fog lamps, and let my thoughts drift as I creep carefully along. Rich, robust, romantic, lascivious. How different from yesterday and even our "honeymoon" at the inn! In one sense, I'm not really different. I'm still the same physical being I was then. Kingsley, too. So what's so different now? What is it that, sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly, is subtly and yet completely transforming my life? What is it about Kingsley?

At home, I can't wait to see my lover, my dearest, my Kingsley. Once in the garage, I hastily exit the car, and begin tearing off my clothes one after another as I approach the door to the kitchen. Naked and shivering, I turn the handle and dash through the kitchen into the living room looking for him.

Kingsley is in the exact same place I left him, sitting on the couch, totally immersed in the same book. Yet something has changed. I can feel it. Then I notice the crackling fire in the fireplace and a rose — a single, red rose — lying on the coffee table immediately in front of him. I want to rush into his arms, curl up in his embrace and tell him every detail of my amazing experience at the studio, about the profound impact that he has already had on my life just during our first day of living together. Instead I quietly approach the fireplace, turning first my back and then my front to the warm fire, rubbing my cold hands together, hoping he will look up from his book and notice my wanton show of naked desire for him.

Kingsley, however, remains absorbed in his book and doesn't seem to even notice me! Warm anger suddenly flares

within me, and I stamp my bare feet against the cool flagstones as I loudly clear my throat.

Kingsley raises a hand palm out facing me, like an Indian greeting...and continues reading. I can't believe this! I want him to notice me. I want him to offer me the rose on the table that's — please, Kingsley, please — meant for me. I want...Kingsley suddenly looks up at me, his face a wide, warm, charming smile just for me, and I run into his arms instantly forgetting everything.

Kingsley tosses the book aside and cradles me wordlessly in his strong arms for several minutes. I revel in the feeling of his hands on my bare body, the licking warmth of the fireplace caressing my bare back. I grasp Kingsley's head, directing his gaze at me and me alone, in my hands and I close my eyes and tenderly kiss his lips. Kingsley returns the kiss, firmly, seductively, slowly moving his hands from my back to my firm and still-prickling butt. Yes, I'm still tender. Tender for you. I gently toss my head and bury myself deeply in another of his aphrodisiac kisses.

Kingsley pulls me closer until I feel his growing manhood beneath, nudging me. We break our kiss at the same time and breathe in each other deeply. Kingsley's rough evening beard gently scratches the palms of my loosing hands. I take another deep breath, this time taking in his raw, musty, manly smell, and rub my nose against his nose, cheeks and neck. I move my hands lovingly from his strongly chiseled face to his brawny shoulders, bare arms and downy muscular forearms. This is my animal. Mine. All mine. All I want right now is to feel the huge manhood beneath me thrusting firmly up inside of me. I start to unbutton Kingsley's shirt, but he brushes my hands aside, reaches over to the coffee table and presents me the rose.

The rose. I had forgotten it in my growing passion. I take it in my hands and quietly mutter, "Thank you," as he softly strokes my hips and buns. My abdominal muscles contract with a memory and will of their own, and my anus ripples momentarily in anticipation. I try to wriggle in his arms, but it's impossible, locked tightly as I am in his embrace.

Kingsley puts a finger to his lips and whispers, “Shhh,” rolling me onto the sofa on my back. My bare skin grabs stickily onto the cold, leather surface. Kingsley begins stroking me from my neck to my heaving chest, to my rhythmically contracting abdomen, down the inside of my thighs, across my ticklish knees and down my taut leg muscles. I lay entranced, as if I were a cat, lying on its back, its arms and legs splayed open to expose its underside, desperate for the petting to continue.

Kingsley peels my fingers from the rose I am clutching and begins stroking me with the soft tips of the flower. The soft strokes and heady fragrance makes me dizzy. I grab Kingsley’s forearms tightly, digging in my fingernails as he moves the flower seductively down my rippling abdomen. I moan gutturally in some primal animal language that escapes my open lips. The silky stroking descends along the inside of my thighs. I open my legs instinctively and realize I’m now bearing down, presenting to him my own pulsing flower, as he continues directing the rose’s wandering path along the rim of my ravenous anus. My whole body shakes in an explosive orgasm. I am barely able to scream, “Kingsley!” before the soft petals continue their journey up and down the hairless valley between my trembling buns.

I have tried many times since but still can’t remember entirely what happened next. I must have been in a trance, flying from one ethereal ecstasy to another, my body, mind and soul in Kingsley’s hands. What I do remember is the slow return of the feel of the soft sofa beneath me, the distant crackling sounds of the fire, its warmth once again warming the side of my body, the feel of Kingsley moving on top of and within me, our slow synchronous breathing as he grinds his pelvis on mine. I try moving my hips but they don’t seem to want to move. Instead, Kingsley’s long firm erection shifts slightly within me and launches me back into yet another raging orgasm. From far, far away, some part of me awakens, fearful that the orgasmic tsunamis won’t, perhaps can’t be stopped. The thought pushes me further into wakefulness, but is quickly extinguished by yet another internal seismic explosion.

When I truly awaken, it is from deep sound sleep. Kingsley is still on top of me, one arm underneath my neck and shoulder, his legs entwined in mine. My side now feels icy cold. I turn my head toward the fireplace but see only darkness. I try to move, but the combination of Kingsley's weight and the stubborn stickiness of my skin on the leather sofa hold me fast. I spread my legs slightly and feel Kingsley's soft, warm, wet penis slide from the crack between my buttocks.

I reach out with my right hand. Crushed within is the flower Kingsley presented to me and used to caress my body and propel me into another world. Shadowy, ecstatic fragments of the night slowly begin to flood my mind. I listen quietly to Kingsley's slow breathing, suddenly aware also of the slow beat of his heart directly above mine. I try to look about the room but it is so dark that I can't even see the ceiling and for a moment panic. Where am I? Why am I lying here with this huge man on top of me, one side of me cold as death, the rest of me warm and glowing? I try again to remember our lovemaking but it keeps eluding me. What did Kingsley do to me that I can't remember anything — anything except that it was utterly wonderful beyond my wildest imagination?

I struggle more forcibly and this time Kingsley stirs. I whisper in his ear that we should get up and go to bed. Though he responds, I don't think he ever completely awakens as I gently guide him from the living room into the bedroom and into what is from today forward our shared bed. I struggle mightily to stay awake long enough to take in some of this incredible first day and evening together, but thoughts slip through my mental fingers and before I know it I am lost, back in the gentle arms of sleep.



Our first complete day together as a real couple begins opportunely: I awaken with Kingsley still entwined around me. Though barely sunrise, the soft sky outside sheds just enough light for me to see the man in my — our — bed, lying next to me: A shock of jet black, loosely curling hair. A long, aristocratic nose. I reach out, gently stroking his rough morning beard. His full, Arabian lips. His sweet breath. I snuggle into the covers and against his warm body, immersing myself in his invitingly earthy scent. I slowly trace a finger through his wiry chest hair, the palm of my hand eventually lying on his chest, rising and falling with his every breath.

Kingsley is now real to me in an abiding sense. No more going out together and dropping him off at his home. His home is here, with me, sleeping peacefully beside me in our bed as he is right now. I gently rest my head and arm on his chest, and slide a leg between his warm, rugged legs. Curled up, rising and falling with his breathing, listening to the strong, regular beat of his heart, I drift into a world where Kingsley is an endless ocean and I am a small boat floating to and fro on its surface.

I dream vividly of Kingsley kissing and caressing me all over, and awaken to him actually kissing my neck. Stretching like a cat, I reach out to find that he has already gotten up and dressed, returning to half-sit, half-lie on the bed next to me. Bright rays of sunshine stream through the window, lighting the bedroom cheerfully. Yawning, I extend my arms. Kingsley props himself up on one elbow, brushes a few tight, naughty little ringlet curls falling in my face, then kisses me sweetly on the forehead. “Wake up, sleeping beauty. It’s already day. You don’t want to sleep away our first day together now, do you?”

I’m immediately awake. Pushing his hand aside, I sit upright, clutching the sheets around my neck to hide my naked body. Why am I doing this, I wonder? Kingsley’s seen me naked many times before. I release the covers and let them fall about my

waist, stretching my limber dancer's body. I slide out of bed clutching the sheets around my waist, taunting Kingsley as clearly as I can, daring him to rip them off me, but Kingsley turns away, oblivious to my game. I start to grab him but he already has one hand on both of mine. With his other he pulls the sheet from me and slaps me squarely on the rump — exactly, to my indignant surprise, where he spanked me last night. I feel the sudden warmth and pricking return, and my face flushes.

Kingsley watches me like a hawk as I pout, toss my head away from him and try to jerk the sheet he's clutching out of his hands. Laughing, he rises, moving on his knees to the side and jerks firmly back. Covers fly everywhere. I am suddenly standing there, hands trying unsuccessfully to cover my completely exposed body, shivering in the spotlight of his admiring gaze. I crouch as if attempting to protect myself from examination, and then screaming with delight I run for the bathroom, my bare feet padding loudly on the wooden floor with Kingsley only a fraction of a second behind me. I rush into the bathroom and try to slam the door in his face, only to find his strong body resisting my every attempt. I finally let go of the door, and to my surprise, Kingsley does, too! I wait expectantly, but nothing happens. Slowly peeking around the edge of the door, I scan the hallway for Kingsley but there is no sign of him anywhere. Where has he gone? I open the door wider, stick my neck out and look both ways. No Kingsley. Where could he be?

Then I hear humming in the kitchen. I've never really heard Kingsley hum. Listening attentively, I can just barely hear it — a lilting, Celtic tune that instantly captures my interest. I try to catch the tune and hum it to myself along with him. Before I know what I'm doing, the bathroom door is wide open and I'm dancing a sort of Highland jig in the hallway. With each lilt, I rise up on one foot and twirl. Soon my arms close together high above my head and I am dancing ecstatically, entirely lost in the enticing tune. As I rise, ready to twirl, I notice that I am suddenly humming alone and Kingsley is standing, totally enraptured, watching me from the kitchen doorway. I try to stop, but having already committed my weight, end up

stumbling into his arms. Embarrassed, I look up into his face. Nothing less than pure joy and affection course through me when I see him smiling down at me with such adoration.

As I quietly disentangle myself from him, Kingsley starts humming the tune again. Smiling he turns and, dancing a short jig of his own, returns to the kitchen. I can see that Kingsley is seriously into making brunch, so I leave him for my morning ministrations.

I shave myself carefully. I shower and apply some aloe in all the newly-shaved skin folds, in the fold behind my scrotum and just inside my very sore anus. Inserting a finger kicks off a short series of quickly diminishing echoes of last night's zealous passion. I grab for the towel rack, bracing myself for the tsunami-like waves that usually follow but thankfully, this time, they don't materialize. As I hesitantly let go of the towel rack, Kingsley yells, "Hey, what's going on in there? Breakfast's ready!" and I quickly slip into jeans and a favorite blue, cotton shirt. I glance aside into the mirror and, deciding the effect is quite sufficient for the morning, join him hungrily at the kitchen table.

Kingsley has made us each an omelet stuffed with a variety of finely-diced vegetables. There's also toast and jam, and even my favorite tea steaming in my personal mug. It's all so considerate, yet there's something not quite right that I can't lay my fingers on. Then I remember: Kingsley doesn't cook! He can't, at least that's what he told me. So who is this grinning man standing triumphantly before me, a mug of coffee in one hand and a frying pan in the other?

During our leisurely breakfast, Kingsley mentions that he has a client he must meet downtown at the wharf in an hour. The man needs new sheets. I smile. I have known Kingsley now just long enough to know that when he says sheets he means sails. Kingsley is, by universal acclamation, one of the best sheetmakers in the Bay Area. He's an artisan, helping one client at a time. I've never been in the shop he says he shares with several other sailmakers, but everyone seems to know his shop

and that he's the best of the best. When I ask when he will be returning, he shrugs his shoulders — whenever.

We finish our drinks, chatting about how to let his friends know his new address and phone number. Although I trust Kingsley when he says the transition has been slowly coming to a head for over almost a year, it has only been a day in coming for me, and that day has, to say the least, been an emotionally tumultuous one. Our discussion finally arrives at where it inevitably must: How will we go about telling our friends, his and mine, about our new relationship?

Kingsley is silent. I imagine him telling his gay friends about his new lover, and them congratulating him, patting him on the back and, then when they meet me, undressing me with their inquisitive eyes. Worse, I try to imagine my straight friends and family when I tell them that I'm living with a man who is also my lover. I suddenly recall my family's reaction early on in our relationship when, visiting home, the after-dinner discussion devolved into a depreciative gay joke, with everyone except me laughing heartily. Momentarily agape, I eventually summoned enough courage to tell them how inappropriate I thought the joke was, but they all just ignored me. How in heaven's name am I going to talk about my new life with such a family? For that matter how can I, in all honesty, subject Kingsley to their blatant prejudice? More so, how exactly am I to introduce him to my immediate friends? "Hi, Bill. Hi, Sharon. I'd like to introduce the man I'm currently sleeping with?"

Kingsley downs the last of his coffee, places his mug on the table and tells me he has to go. I look at my watch. Yes, it's time. I want to scream, "Oh God, Kingsley! Don't abandon me just now!" I want to, but I don't. Kingsley gets up, slips into his beat-up bomber jacket — the one we both love — and on his way to the living room door he reaches quizzically into a pocket and pulls out the key to our house I gave him several months ago. He smiles, nods, and enclosing the key in his fist, says, "Don't sweat it. It will all work out, I promise. Just give things some time. I'll be back soon and we'll talk more. Everything with friends and relatives will work out. It always does eventually, somehow."

I get up and run to him, but he is already out the door. It closes in front of me with an echoing finality. Work it out? Just give things more time? Eventually? Somehow? Doesn't he realize how difficult this is going to be for me? It's easy for him. He's gaining a lover, while I'm...well...gaining a lover, too, I guess. Well, it's true. No matter how I look at it, no matter what angle, what point of view, it still comes out the same: I love him. I know I love him. So the real question is: Will I stand by this relationship and him?

I spend the next several hours engaged in an increasingly troublesome mind debate. I keep returning to the fact that I resent how difficult it will be for me compared to him. Or am I just deluding myself? Was it easy to say goodbye to Steve? It looked easy, but I was there and it wasn't. Kingsley stood by me. What about me? Am I willing to stand by him now? Funny, I was always the one who, in the throes of our romance, was willing to place my arm in his in public. Kingsley was always more cautious. More streetwise. Maybe it goes with years of experience being gay. Now it's my turn to be cautious, but that doesn't mean I have to say no. What was the old saying? When the going gets tough, the tough get going? Or was it when the tough get rough, one best get going?

The phone rings. I pray that it's Kingsley but in the end, I don't really care who it is. I just need an excuse, any excuse, to stifle the demons fighting in my mind.

It's not Kingsley. It's Edward, one of my best and oldest friends, a fellow dancer who teaches at the same studio as I do, who suffered patiently with me through the prerequisite years of dance training. He's got some time before going to the studio and wants to know if I'd like to hang out together for awhile. My house being the closer to the studio, I invite him over. I'm ready to yelp for joy. Thank you, Ed, for saving me from myself!

The moment I put the receiver down it rings again. Maybe he's changed his mind? Or, maybe it's Kingsley.

It's Samantha — Sam for short, or Sammy as I call her — a dear painter friend I've known for several years who is

struggling hard for recognition. Any recognition at all. We dated on occasion, mostly when she desperately needed a hot meal or a strong shoulder to cry on, but one night it developed further. I'm suddenly wary. Hungry, single and frustrated, she asks if I am still her friend and lover. OK, we were lovers, but the abiding chemistry, if there ever was any, was not there and definitely isn't there now.

Listening to her current woes, however, I feel sorry for her. Life is kinder to dancers like me. A man who dances well need never be without female companionship and, if he so desires, a modest but steady income as well. Painters like Sammy, on the other hand, seem destined — doomed would be more accurate — to become recognized, if it happens at all, years after their demise. I don't envy Sammy. The last few months have been especially hard for her and, from the sound of her voice, at the moment devastating. Since our one-night stand, I've always welcomed her back into my house for a few hours, a day or two, whatever it takes for her to get her life back together. I tell her Ed's coming over in a short time, and Sammy immediately invites herself, also. She's in the neighborhood, she says, and will be here in just a few minutes. Me, Ed, Sammy — a comfortable threesome who've known and come to trust and depend on each other. They're my friends and I look forward, suddenly with some trepidation, to seeing them in a few minutes.

I quickly pick up around the house, make some iced tea and open a box of chocolate chip cookies. Tea and cookies is our social trademark, an instant solution for anything and everything that ails.

I suddenly hear someone at the front door — Ed, from the sound of his almost rhythmic stamping — but then notice instead of a knock, the metallic sound of a key slipping into the lock. I stand transfixed as the lock turns and the door swings open. It's Kingsley. Expecting Ed or Sammy, I'm speechless.

Kingsley stands in the doorway shaking the rain from his jacket, all the time flashing a happy smile at me. Kingsley. I open my mouth to say something, anything to not look like the

jerk I feel when Ed, clothes soaked and crooning “Singing in the Rain” while holding a closed umbrella in one hand, suddenly appears next to Kingsley. Kingsley starts, looks questioningly at Ed then back at me, and then extends a hand and begins talking with Ed as if they were old friends. I run into the bathroom and bring back a large towel, my own, for Ed, as Kingsley, arm around Ed’s soaking shoulder, escorts him into the living room. I change direction on heel, and chase after them, feeling rather like a puppy following any available master. As I reach out to hand Ed the towel, I hear more stamping coming from the open doorway.

Unlike the others, Sam doesn’t ring, knock or wait for anyone to invite her in; instead, she walks boldly across the threshold and directly into the room. Shaking her hair like a wet dog, she shouts, “I’m here!” suddenly freezing when she notices Kingsley. Kingsley looks...surprised, but again recovers quickly. After seating Ed, he walks over to Sam, shakes her hand briskly and suavely introduces himself. I desperately want to hear what Kingsley is saying but they are too far away and he is already speaking in his trademark, soft, smooth, genteel voice.

Sam is completely taken aback. Who wouldn’t be, I think to myself, when suddenly and unexpectedly confronted by such a gorgeous, self-assured guy? Kingsley offers her his arm and while Sam is at first reluctant, the next moment she slides her arm into his and begins actively engaging him in conversation, tossing her long, wet hair every so often and batting her eyes at him. My hackles rise. I’ve seen Sammy act like this before — once when we first met, and another time when she was, as she pointedly told me afterwards, putting the make on a guy she met during one of her particularly needy periods. At first it strikes me as comical, then ludicrous, then absurd and finally not at all funny. Kingsley on the other hand seems to be enjoying himself immensely, taking everything in stride, escorting Sam to the couch and placing her, interestingly, on his left, with Ed on his right, leaving me to take up the far right, as obviously far from her as possible. I decide on the spur of the moment, half out of spite and the rest out of curiosity, to instead sit between him and Ed.

Sam ignores Ed and me and resumes running her fingers lithely through the length of her hair. She clearly has eyes for Kingsley. Kingsley, in turn, respectfully devotes his entire attention to her every word and gesture. Ed tries his best to engage me in a discussion about the future of dance. Tempting, but nothing compared to the drama unfolding between Sammy, who, over the years, I have counted as perhaps my best woman friend, and Kingsley, to whom I have barely had time to adjust as his everyday lover. I want to scream, "Stop!" and begin again, reboot this surreal, out-of-control program that is already blundering wildly off in...who knows what direction, but clearly not where I'd like it to go. Kingsley, finally noticing my discomfort, to my abject horror, leans forward, reaches out a hand and places it on my knee. The abrupt silence seems to last an eternity. Ed and Sam look together at Kingsley, who innocently continues chatting, then at me, and finally at Kingsley's hand on my knee.

Looking menacingly at me, Sam breaks the silence. "Ahem, well, it's good to see you again, and meet your new friend."

"Kingsley," I blurt out.

"Kingsley," she and Ed mutter together.

"You are...friends I take it?" Sam takes the lead, unable to resist probing. Kingsley at that moment almost removes his hand from my knee. The operative word is *almost*. All eyes turn to and follow his hand. Kingsley returns it, slightly further up my thigh while flashing one of his winning smiles, yes, melting my heart in spite of the disparate fears that are trying at the same moment to rip it apart. My God, how did I engineer this awkward mess? I want to stand up nonchalantly and, with head held high, walk over into a dark corner and disappear.

I start to shake my head in a sort of definite no, then switch to a hesitant yes and finally realize, looking into Sam's blank eyes, that I've successfully added further to the mystery and confusion. Sam, running her fingers through her hair, this time a little too quickly, looks absently at first at me and then locks onto Kingsley. Small pout lines emerge. She's getting it, I think, but the big question is, what is she getting? "Ah, so, Kingsley,

you and” (she points offhandedly at me, her eyes suddenly widening) “well, I mean, you two, ah, I mean...” Sammy finally looks me directly in the eyes, “I mean, hey, you never told us about Kingsley!”

I begin nervously: “Yes, well, like I said, this is Kingsley. Kingsley, Sammy. And this is Ed.” Ed frowns, and from his look I assume he still hasn’t got it yet. Sammy, however, is clearly seething with suspicion.

“Sammy’s a struggling and, as yet, undeservedly unrecognized artist,” I finally blurt out. “Ed and I, well, we go way back. He and I supported each other when our schoolmates were busy chiding us for loving dance. Kingsley’s, well, Kingsley. We met a while ago, and have come to be close rather fast. I’m sorry I hadn’t introduced you before, but I’m glad we could all meet, together like this, my very best friends in life.” Stunned silence. Then, the ice broken at last, everyone begins talking at once. Kingsley flashes a raised eyebrow at me. I smile weakly, trying to assure him that it’s all under control and then, in retrospect, I ask if anyone would like something to drink or eat. After a resounding “Yes,” I gladly leave the couch and conversation to bring back glasses of ice tea and a plate of cookies. “Hey, thanks!” Ed says, the only one who seems to even notice the drinks and snack.

Back in my place between Kingsley and Ed, I sit quietly sipping tea and munching on a cookie, listening to the conversation unfold, wondering why I was so worried about everything. My friends obviously love Kingsley and have tacitly accepted that we have a special relationship, one that Kingsley has somehow clearly made known includes, rather than excludes, them. How could I ever have doubted Kingsley? I’ve never known a person who could so easily put everyone, including myself, at ease.

Ed is asking Kingsley about his likes and dislikes, while Sammy continues trying to probe his and my past for what are now clearly self-centered reasons. She still flips her hair nervously every few words but, at the moment, more out of frustration. Just as I start to relax, I notice the conversation

suddenly turning to me — how I attract the best of people, like this group that Kingsley is now an accepted member of. I feel uneasy about this new direction but, not knowing what to do about it, decide to let go and flow with it for the time. My own thoughts start to drift to the first time Kingsley and I talked together. He still has that magic that somehow invites people to let down their barriers. It feels odd, however, to see it happening from an outsider's viewpoint, and especially to my best friends.

I suddenly notice Sammy laughing happily at something Kingsley has said, and Ed watching their repartee with increasing interest. Sammy tries nonchalantly to ask Kingsley if he's single, but it ends up totally transparent as to where she's going with it. Kingsley, the erudite gentleman, has clearly piqued her interest again. I suddenly sense the overpowering presence of raw female pheromones flooding the room, hovering over us like a hawk ready to pounce on any male prey willing to present itself.

Kingsley adroitly avoids her questions by turning the discussion back to me again. The conversation this time, however, takes a more worrisome turn. Sammy starts talking about how she and I first met, a couple of comical events that occurred during our earlier "dates" and, to my horror, several of the women I dated in the past. I start to interrupt, but the direction of the discussion seems set, Kingsley egging it on with a regular, "Really? He did?"

In moments, Sammy is blabbing on about my sexual prowess with women. My sexual prowess? For God's sake, how did the conversation get here? Again I try to interrupt, but everyone *shushes* me and Sammy continues. It suddenly occurs to me that there's a sort of war going on here. A war between female and male, with me the battleground, Sam the prosecutor, Kingsley the judge and Ed the audience. Rather than trying to defuse the situation, everyone sitting about me seems to be egging it on.

My dear, best woman friend, Sammy, is now talking about how cute I am and how much she wanted to go to bed with me

the first time we met. She dwells particularly on how much she likes my thin athletic build and nice buns. Especially my buns. I blush, looking hopelessly away from the pack of totally engaged people. Kingsley, obviously entranced, begs her to continue.

Sammy, mollified, pipes out I'd be quite the catch for any of several women who've had their eyes on me for the past couple years, some of whom I've dated, several of whom I eventually bedded. It's my cute ass, Sammy concludes. Kingsley nods. Ed looks perplexed. I want to die.

Ed thankfully begins to break things up, asking offhandedly if it isn't time for him and me to go to work. Kingsley rises with him and walks him over to the door, his arm once again around Ed's shoulders, both men chatting, indecipherably from where I sit. Sammy looks smugly at me and, raising her eyebrows conspiratorially, silently mouths, "Nice guy. Nice bod," pointing back at Kingsley.

"Yeah," I say.

Sammy looks inquiringly at me, and mouths, "Boyfriend?"

I cringe and mouth back, "Yeah, sort of," holding my bent head in my sweating hands.

Sammy has her voice back. "Sort of? What does that mean?" and I feel her refocus her female power in an attempt to compel me to answer. Before I can assemble my ravaged thoughts, Kingsley has rejoined us. With typical Samantha directness, she turns to Kingsley and asks, "Kingsley, are you two involved?"

Kingsley looks at me, then back at Sam. "Yes."

"For God's sakes, why do the best men all have to be gay?" she blurts out, looking from Kingsley to me with sadness. "How, I ask you, are we women going to do our job maintaining the human race if you guys keep cutting us off at the pass?"

Kingsley smiles, reaches out and gently touches her hand.

Sam continues: "Damn it, Kingsley, you're both such nice guys. I'd gladly roll in the hay and spread my legs for either of you. Don't you like girls? Don't you like me?" she asks, an edge

of hysteria in her voice. Coming so bluntly from her heart like that, I can find no words. Surprisingly, neither can Kingsley. “Well, I’ve gotta go,” she finally retorts crisply, “Thanks for the interesting conversation. You’re both nice fellas and I wish you the best. If you change your inclinations, think of me. I make it a point to never ask where a man’s been, only where he’s going.”

It doesn’t require seeing the single tear Sammy deftly wipes away to know that she feels deeply hurt. Kingsley, always the gentleman, offers her his arm, and walks her to the door. Sammy — my dear Sammy — walks resignedly with him, then looks back at me briefly as she leaves the house alone, her final words, “A damn waste,” trailing behind her as the rain and fog surround and escort her back to her world.

I busy myself cleaning up. Kingsley walks back to the sofa, sighs and sinks heavily into the cushion that a moment before was Sammy’s. “Nice friends,” he finally says. “Really. I like them. I should have known you’d attract people like that. I’m sorry it went so hard for them, particularly Sam. I especially like her — in a friendly way.”

I return to the sofa and sit next to Kingsley. “I didn’t plan this, Kingsley, and once it got going, it didn’t go at all like I so hoped. I’m going to miss Sammy. She’s always been there for me and me for her. Ed, well, he’ll be back and with a million questions. But Sammy...”

“Trust me, Sammy will be back. She won’t abandon you, nor do you have to abandon her. It just takes some adjustment time. Trust me on this.” Kingsley runs his hand roughly through my curly hair.

We sit side-by-side, separated by a half-inch that might as well have been a mile. Neither of us says anything until I sigh, and then Kingsley starts talking about his afternoon. His client was already there, eagerly awaiting him. Agreeing on the work and price turned out to be easier than he had anticipated. It means several weeks of work, and the man agreed to whatever price Kingsley thought fair. Easy. Kingsley left elated, rushing home to share with me the good news. The rest I know. Then

Kingsley falls silent again, and begins wringing his hands. I have a bad feeling about this.

After another awkward silence, Kingsley tells me again how much he enjoyed meeting my friends and that he looks forward to seeing them again. Carefully choosing his next words, he admits feeling jealous of both Ed and Sam, but especially Sam — my “Sammy” — and asks me to please tell him about the people I’ve been sexual with in my recent past. Shocked, I back away from him, but Kingsley reaches out and clasps my hands in his. I look down, averting my eyes, then swing them courageously back up at his handsome face only to see genuine concern written all over it.

I try reassuring him about Sam. She’s my friend. A girl friend, not girlfriend. Yes, we were sexual once, well, maybe even more than once, but it was more about relieving mutual loneliness, the skin hunger that sometimes just grabs a woman’s ovaries and a man’s testes and draws them together even if just for a night. At Kingsley’s urging, I recount several of my other brief affairs with other women.

Kingsley becomes quieter as I speak, eventually brooding over what I’m telling him. With the utmost delicacy, he raises the question of HIV and AIDS. Everyone thinks, he says, that AIDS is a disease of gay men. It is actually, he assures me, a disease that threatens everyone who is or has been sexually active. He asks gently if I know for sure that all of my past partners were HIV free.

I’m speechless. I know for sure, I tell him, that I was HIV negative when I left the military. It is a routine part of discharge and I saw my result. It was HIV negative. That was, of course, a number of years ago, and I never thought of asking to see any of my subsequent partners’ HIV test results. So, no, I tell him honestly, I don’t know for sure that I am HIV negative as of this moment. Kingsley nods, then apologizes and says that with all partners before me, he has made it a life-and-death rule to not have unprotected sex until he knows for sure his partner is HIV free. I start to awkwardly ask his HIV status but he saves

me the trouble, telling me his is negative up to when he met me, and that he can show me the test results if I like.

Once again, I'm speechless. Kingsley suggests that perhaps we should begin our new relationship by both getting tested, refraining for the moment from further unprotected sex until we share our test results with each other. I agree and see him visibly relax. Kingsley then tells me that this issue has weighed heavy on him since we first met.

Now it's my turn. OK, so where should we go to get tested? A public health clinic? A gay center? Kingsley, to my surprise, suggests his private physician. Then he pauses and asks me if I have anyone I can talk frankly with about my newly emerging role in our relationship. I feel my body tense. Maybe this was one reason I invited my best friends here earlier today, I want to say, but I don't. I think for a moment instead about trying to talk with Ed or Sammy about my "new situation." Actually, I had the opportunity toward the end. Sammy opened the door several times for me to talk, but I was just too scared, embarrassed, or whatever. Now I seriously wonder if I would have ever really garnered enough courage to talk openly with them about Kingsley and me.

Thankfully, my thoughts switch and I imagine going with Kingsley to see his private doctor. The idea of going with a man to talk about sex with another man, especially a doctor, while sitting semi-naked on an examination table waiting nervously to be examined by what surely must be another gay man completely terrifies me. I tell Kingsley my concerns, and can't help shaking as I do. A thought bolts through my mind: Am I scared...or excited? The line between the two seems remarkably blurred these days.

We discuss what his physician will probably ask and do. I listen and agree to go through with it, as long as Kingsley can assure me that the man is safe. Kingsley assures me over and over till I finally believe him. Or do I? Do I even want to?

## 25 MARCH

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I am slowly adjusting to my new place and role. Despite all my previous fears, life together is really quite wonderful — I am much more at ease. I awake each day to my lover beside me. Day after day, event after event, Kingsley demonstrates his kindness, consideration, love and passion. In spite of my continued emotional fluctuations he remains steady and steadfast. I am slowly coming to believe that he does indeed love me for myself as a man. It's hard for me to grasp, but each day reaffirms his keen interest in my male body, and my interest in his. It's like living in a dream between dreams.

At Kingsley's request, I sleep naked. Actually, I used to sleep that way as a child — odd for a straight boy, Kingsley says. Odd indeed, yet sleeping naked with him is like returning to my natural state — just one more of the many things I like about being with him.

These days, Kingsley works five or six hours a day on the sail order. He usually stirs about four or five in the morning and cuddles up against my curved back. Though deep in dream, I somehow sense when our bodies spoon, the combined warmth unconsciously inviting me to snuggle closer onto his inevitable erection. At first, I assumed Kingsley was awake, and would sleepily ask him to get a condom from the drawer next to his side of the bed. I soon realized to my surprise that, aside from his prodding erection, the rest of him is usually still asleep like me. These days I keep my own supply of condoms in the dresser drawer on my side of the bed.

When in the early hours I feel him stroking or rubbing against me, or his stiff rod prodding the crack between my asscheeks, I get a lubricated condom, turn and face him, and sleepily unroll it over the length of his attentive manhood. I've come to look forward to doing it, actually. I like how it feels: rubbery and bulbous at the top, with soft, tubular, moveable mantle in intriguing opposition to the hard, unbending firmness

wrapped within. I like how it rapidly expands into a long, straight, smooth, firm, fleshy rod, and how it attaches solidly just below his hard pubic bone. I like the feel of its delicate underside, with its long, small, supple tube already ready to guide his potent liquor upward out its tip and into me.

I don't really like the condoms but this, hopefully, is the last night we will use them. In the morning we go to see Kingsley's doctor. A shudder of anticipation passes through me and I turn, facing away from him, reassuming our spooning position, arching and presenting myself to him, inviting him to take his pleasure and in doing so impart some of his seemingly boundless self-confidence to me.

Kingsley, always the salacious animal whether awake or asleep, responds instantly, reflexively grasping my hips and pulling me gently onto him. I feel the tip of his penis slide forward until its point gently presses the center of my tight little bud. Kingsley nudges me gently until its bulbous head slips in. This is my favorite moment. I like the feeling of him sliding the length of his expansive tool into me, stretching open not only the entrance but the whole of the narrow passage within.

In the very early morning, like today, Kingsley thrusts lightly several times and quickly pours himself into the tight latex sheath that effectively separates everything Kingsley from everything me. Then his arm, thigh and leg muscles suddenly relax and, grasping me around the waist or abdomen, he holds me on his embedded cock while we both slip sated back into blissful sleep. Sometime later, unknown to either, his soft member softly slides out on its own.

When we reawaken, arm-in-arm in the full of morning, it is usually to a different, no-nonsense Kingsley. Almost immediately, he disentangles himself from me, gets up and sits naked on his side of the bed, yawning and stretching his gorgeous muscles one after another. Me, I like to turn on my side facing him and wiggle deeper into the warm, inviting sheets, watching him, with unseen smile, roll the condom I put on him adeptly off as quickly as he can before his appendage thickens and elongates again. As soon as it's off, I like to reach

around him with my hand, and surround his undecided cock with my warm fingers, a warm semblance of the condom that was just there. I watch Kingsley, literally in my hand, wiggle, tense and thrust as I slowly move my hand up and down the length of his affirming rod, coating its length with his own crisp smelling pre-cum. I slip my other hand behind the nape of his neck and slowly caress the delicate curls there, after a while sliding the caresses down the length of his spine while continuing to move my other hand up and down, up and down, his hard and now fully attentive cock.

Kingsley eventually begins groaning and thrusting into the air as if inside of me. This morning, intrigued and aroused myself, I slide the hand at his back down the tip of his tailbone, continuing until a searching finger touches the entrance to his anus. Kingsley tenses. As my other hand slides down to the spreading root of his penis, he shudders and sprays into the air. I quickly remove my finger from the rim of his tiny bud, while forming a constricting ring with the fingers of my other hand around his still-pumping cock. As he slows, I slide the tightening ring up from his root all the way to the tip of his penis, milking from him every drop of semen he has left.

Kingsley reflexively grabs at my fingers as they course lightly over the head of his penis, groans deeply. Guiding both my hands back onto his shaft, he slides his tool up and down within them until he suddenly arches and explodes again into the air.

Kingsley, still holding my hands around his pounding but already softening member, falls back flat on the bed. I try coaxing our hands back up and down to afford him another climax like I so often experience with him inside of me, but I can tell from his resistance that this is enough. I try to imagine his rod in my belly instead of my hand. I squirm, thinking of his warm essence spreading inside of me, and relish Kingsley claiming me as his personal trophy. Then I suddenly flash back to the last time Sammy and I were sexual together, me buried deep within her as, in the throes of orgasm, her vaginal muscles squeeze my member like I was just doing to Kingsley. I suddenly remember the comforting feeling of her warm interior surrounding me afterwards, her slightest movement intolerably

intense, like wet sandpaper against my spent glans, and I wonder if this is how Kingsley feels right now. I shake my head to clear the thought. Kingsley flinches and starts to grow again. Ah, Kingsley.

I loose my hands from his and begin to teasingly stroke the sides of his abdomen with my fingertips. Kingsley relaxes. With each stroke I lower my hand slightly, moving it closer to his center, then trace a line with the tip of my finger straight down from his navel, careful not to go beyond the wiry curls attempting to hide his manhood within. Kingsley sighs again, this time, cradling his member in his own hands, and begins masturbating himself. I take my hands away and watch him with astonishment. Kingsley, already caught up in the wildfire of desire, pumps himself faster and faster, his body straining, his head and neck arched powerfully back on the bed, his knees spreading. I reposition myself between his legs, watching in fascination while Kingsley, totally wrapped up in the travail of impending orgasm, doesn't even notice me.

Kingsley thrusts his hips up. Flecks of pre-cum fly in every direction from his dark, grossly distended hose. I slip onto the floor and kneel with my belly against the edge of the bed and slide both hands beneath his ass. As I inch him down to the edge of the bed where I'm kneeling, I wet my lips and place my warm, succulent mouth over the bluish, swollen head of his pole and begin moving my tongue in a small circle around the tiny slit at its tip.

Kingsley, groaning, thrusting, sweating profusely now, claws the last of his way to orgasm. His crisp, earthy smell changes to a heavy, pungent, male muskiness as salty pre-cum begins flowing freely in my mouth. Kingsley suddenly arches, tenses and quivers, pouring gush after gush of himself into my eagerly waiting mouth. I quickly swallow each load of astringent cum, one after another, then begin sucking hungrily. Kingsley bucks and thrashes, wildly pumping more thick, creamy cum into my mouth. Suddenly, just past the peak of orgasm, Kingsley gasps coarsely, "Enough!"

I slip my hands out from under him and allow the flushing red head of his dick to slip out of my mouth where, instead of surrendering, it continues to pulse, pointing accusingly toward me. Kingsley is still lost in ecstasy but already his cock is expanding upward a little higher with each pulsation. Looking fondly at his amazingly rekindled, upright interest, I purse my lips tightly around it and suck until Kingsley, covered in sweat, once again begins writhing and groaning. As I look up momentarily at his strained yet beatific face his hard member pops out of my mouth and, seeing it bobbing entreatingly before me, I decide to finish what I've intentionally begun. This time, holding him down with all of my weight, I lick his scepter with long, slow strokes. Kingsley arches, and I stop for a moment to let him catch his breath then resume licking him all over his shivering wet body. Kingsley twists from side to side as if in the throes of yet another impending orgasm but I can already tell from the flush of his body, his quickly weakening thrusts and lessening grip, that he is truly finished.

As I raise myself off of him, Kingsley's hands fall loosely to his sides as if he were a rag doll. His breathing changes from panting to a series of deeper, slower sighs. Looking longingly at my lover, I notice his body patterned with changing areas of gooseflesh that alternately appear and disappear.

Half-lying between Kingsley's legs, I bend at the waist, slide my palms onto his and lightly lower my outstretched body onto him. As my weight settles on his muscular chest and abdomen, I curl my fingers between his and spread our arms out until we are touching, front-to-front, flesh-to-flesh everywhere. Staring with wonder at the stunning man before me, I lower my lips to his and place them lightly over his open mouth, breathing his breath into me. His eyes closed, Kingsley startles, like Cinderella awakening to Prince Charming's kiss. I like that image and try to hold it. Me, Prince Charming? Yes! Kingsley, Cinderella? Definitely not, and the image dissolves — poof — like vapor into the air. Somewhere within the dissipating image, I imagine a red valentine heart emerging and lingering momentarily. It's my own love-filled heart given freely to Kingsley. Suddenly I rather like the idea of being his Prince Charming.

Pushing myself up and gently off of him, glancing out of the corner of my eye at the clock on the nightstand: It's nine o'clock and our appointment with Kingsley's private physician in downtown San Francisco is at ten!

"Kingsley, we've got to go," I whisper hastily, taken aback. Kingsley opens his eyes, shakily pulls himself up and, sitting dazed on the edge of the bed, nods affirmatively. I cock my head to the side, smile coyly and in one motion turn and run for the bathroom. Kingsley follows behind me.

In the bathroom, we struggle playfully to see who will be the first to shower. I win, my reedy body slipping under the outstretched arms meant to block me. Reaching up as I pass under him, I frivolously tickle his armpit, shove the shower curtain closed and turn on the hot water.

While I shower, Kingsley resigns himself to washing his face, brushing his teeth, and waiting. The wait, however, is short. As soon as the steam begins to rise, I pull back the shower curtain a bit and, smiling, invitingly signal with my finger for him to join me. Kingsley drops everything and is instantly in the shower next to me, grinning ear-to-ear. I turn away from him and direct my face into the shower stream while Kingsley lathers my shoulders, then back, then my buns, and finally the cleft between them. I turn and drape my arms around his wide manly shoulders, an invitation to wash the other side to which Kingsley gladly complies. Gliding the soap in his hand along my neck and upper chest, he makes a point of lathering my tense little tits, first one and then the other, then my abdomen and finally my soft, hairless genitals. Well-lathered, Kingsley pushes me back into the spray. I luxuriate in the pins and needles feeling all over my face and body, as joining rivulets of water run lithely down my body. Kingsley turns me around, positioning me so my butt muscles tighten and I end up arching back toward his crotch, his long, tense spear once again at attention, its tip already pulsing greedily in the groove between my buttocks. I spread my legs and reach forward to brace myself against the shower wall but instead of availing himself, Kingsley kisses the back of my neck provocatively then turns, climbs out of the shower and begins drying himself.

I know it's time to go, but I feel cheated. Pouting, I reach forward, and petulantly turn off the shower. Kingsley throws back the shower curtain, tosses me a towel, and stands back to watch me dry myself. My aggravation immediately dissolves as I enjoying watching him watching me and my every move.

I climb out and begin my compulsory morning body shave. Kingsley observes everything I do with fascination, pointing every so often at a place he says I've missed. I wonder if he wants to shave me, but he seems more intent on just watching and correcting me. When I've almost finished, Kingsley gets up and leaves, returning a minute later with some clothes in his hands. He's dressed in western jeans and his favorite flannel shirt. I slip into the black silk bikini underwear he favors then, smiling apologetically, wiggle into the tight jeans he holds out. Kingsley hands me a soft, blue denim shirt and black leather belt. I quickly run my fingers through my hair, grab some socks, slip into my black calf-skin loafers and we are off.

Although sunny, the air outside is moist and wet. Low dark clouds loom in the near distance. Together we put the ragtop up on the MG and then pile in. I drive cautiously in and out of heavy morning traffic across the Bay Bridge and into downtown San Francisco. My right hand, which when I'm not shifting I like to rest on Kingsley's left thigh, begins trembling. I must be anxious about this visit. I've never liked doctors, and I've never talked with or been examined by one with whom I would share my current situation and predilection. I wonder nervously if he already knows that I'm Kingsley's boy and exclusively receptive. I wonder if he will think me abnormal, or worse yet, intriguing. What will he think when he sees me without pubic hair? Will he examine my anus closely and check my prostate? And if he does, will I suddenly become excited or, worse, have an orgasm right in front of him as he examines me? Kingsley's warm palm gently covers my freezing hand and for a moment my fears disappear, only to return when I pull my hand away to downshift.

We eventually end up in a fashionable neighborhood of typical narrow two- and three-story classic San Francisco-style houses, and we park in front of one with "Private Parking for

Patients Only” hand-painted in flowing gold cursive just above the door of the brick garage at the end of a short cobblestone driveway. Am I a patient? This is clearly no public clinic!

Once out of the car I hesitate, my gaze passing slowly from the twelve marble steps in front of me to the massive, carved wood door with stained-glass window depicting two nymphs entwined. Looking further up, I count six stained-glass bay windows on each level. This is not at all what I imagined. “Kingsl—” I start to say, but he scoops me up the steps with his arm. Exuding his usual confidence, he steps right up to the door, grasps the polished brass griffin knocker, and pounds it loudly against its brass striker plate.

A tall, thin, elderly gentleman dressed all in black partially opens the door, looks briefly from me to Kingsley and then back to me, asking Kingsley his business. Kingsley tells him we have an appointment to see the doctor. The gentleman nods and opens the door, beckoning us to enter.

Kingsley and I walk in, hand-in-hand, and follow the man down to the end of a rosewood-paneled hallway where we are finally directed through a set of translucent frosted glass doors into what appears to be a richly-appointed waiting room, complete with overstuffed leather armchairs, shelves upon shelves of books and, in the far corner, a small piano. It is like no doctor’s waiting room I’ve ever seen, and we are the only ones here.

Kingsley motions me toward a maroon leather loveseat next to one of the bay windows. As we sink together into it, it is as if we are slipping into another time, another world. Looking nervously about, I am astounded by the flickering gas lamps spaced evenly around the room, suffusing the room with a soft, subtle, relaxing glow. I look at Kingsley, sitting silently, staring at me and smiling. It’s clear this is all usual to him, but I feel as though I’ve stepped back a hundred years into Victorian San Francisco. My imagination begins to flutter like the shadows cast by what I quickly realize are modern electric lamps flickering robotically in the gas lamp enclosures. It may all look

Victorian, but beneath the surface, everything is surprisingly contemporary.

The gentleman who ushered us in returns bringing a tray with two tall glasses of what looks like iced lemonade. Kingsley takes one and immediately begins sipping it; me, I'm too busy to drink, instead slowly turning the glass around in my hand and inspecting with fascination the design of interlacing ivy leaves etched in it. "The doctor will be ready to see you in a few moments," the man says, bowing slightly, turning and silently walking out, ceremoniously closing the glass waiting room doors behind him as he exits.

I barely have time to ask Kingsley what kind of doctor's office this is before the glass doors suddenly swing open, revealing a short, portly man dressed exquisitely in a dark blue suit with a bluish pin-stripped shirt and conservative blue tie. "If you will please follow me," he says in impeccable English, the smallest hint of a British accent showing through.

"Kingsley, what's going on..." I start to ask, but already we're up and following him briskly out the glass doors, down to the end of another hallway this time to the center of seven single frosted glass doors all lined in a neat row, three on our left, three on our right. The man places a short chubby hand on the door latch, turning it with a flick of his wrist, and stands to the side. Inside is a brightly lit, no-nonsense, steel equipment-laden examination room.

"Ah, Kingsley. How are you?" the doctor says as Kingsley leads me in. "And this must be the friend you told me about." He extends a fleshy hand toward me; his handshake is surprisingly firm. "I have had the pleasure of being physician to two generations of Kingsley's family. If it's not too presumptuous..." he turns and looks toward Kingsley, who smiles and nods, then looking back at me continues, "...I would like to welcome you to the family." I nod in speechless thanks.

"So. Kingsley says you two would like to document your HIV status for each other, and, may I suggest that while we're at it, that I do a quick history and physical examination?"

Nothing painful, I assure you,” he adds, looking briefly at me. “By the way, I am quite comfortable and experienced with gay partnerships, so please don’t hesitate to ask me any questions that might be lurking around in the back of your mind, especially any that you’ve been afraid for any reason to ask, okay? Good. So will you be so kind as to disrobe, put on the white gown on the table, and then sit patiently on the exam table while I escort Kingsley to another room?” Without waiting for a response, the kindly doctor puts his arm around Kingsley’s shoulders and quickly escorts him out of the room, closing the door behind them. I turn, blankly watching their vague outlines disappear in the foggy translucent glass. Where is he taking Kingsley, I wonder? I listen anxiously as the sound of their footsteps diminishes. And why so far away?

I turn my back to the door, looking apprehensively around the small cluttered room. To my left are several steel hooks mounted on the bare white wall, obviously to hang my clothes on. A steel basin on rolling legs sets beneath and just to the side. Next is a waist-high wooden cabinet with glass doors above and numerous wooden pullout drawers below. A sink, paper towel dispenser and several boxes of examination gloves are visible on the marble top. At the end is a steel, gooseneck lamp on rollers. To my right I see a small gray steel-and-cloth chair quite obviously for a patient to sit on while discussing with the doctor the results of the examination. I wish I were seated there now, listening to his reassuring words, the indignity of the whole thing already over. Next to the patient chair is an onerous-looking waist-level surgical tray, also on rollers, with an array of what look like steel torture instruments, their business ends partly obscured by a folded towel. In the far right corner is another small wood cabinet with many drawers, a typical steel hospital wastecan and next to it a rolling stool obviously for the doctor. In the center of the room, projecting forward from the far wall, is a formidable examination table that takes up most of the room. Made cleverly of wood and steel, the end facing me has numerous small metal drawers, ostensibly containing larger examination instruments and accoutrements. The top of the table is cushioned with black leather covered with a wide white strip of white paper on which I am obviously expected to sit. I

start to take off my shirt and hang it woefully on the first of the clothes hooks, thinking about how little difference there is really between an examination room and torture room.

I pick up the too-small, white linen patient gown lying on the examination table and, holding it between my fingers like a dead rat, look it over disdainfully. Split down the back and barely long enough to cover my upper thighs, it seems irreverently revealing. Strange, I didn't think of that when I wearing Kingsley's shirt a few days ago. A pleasant thought suddenly flashes in my mind: What if Kingsley were the doctor? In that case, I would love to don the gown right now and begin our game.

I lay the gown back on the table, and begin slowly and reluctantly unbuckling my belt and peeling off my jeans, hanging them on the second hook. Cold and exposed, I suddenly look longingly at the gown and, reaching for it, I wonder if I need to take off my underwear now or later. God, I hate this! Leaving it on feels safer, but I feel embarrassed to be seen by a conservative doctor in my almost see-through black silk bikini-style underwear. On the other hand, taking it off now, without being asked to do so, might suggest that I'm planning something seductive. I finally decide it will be less embarrassing to take them off now, and as I slowly begin slipping out of them, a smart, double knock sounds at the door. Shit! I quickly rip them the rest of the way off and toss them deftly on top of my hanging clothes, then back myself up against the examination table. I stand nervously on my toes and reach back to lift myself onto the table. "Yes?" I croak nervously.

"Are you ready? May I come in?" booms the now-familiar deep voice with its imposingly real or fake British accent.

"Yes," I manage, this time with more confidence.

The doctor, a brown folder tucked under his arm, strides into the room, rolls the stool in front of the examination table, sits and looks up at me. "So how are you, young man?"

"I've been better," I stammer. "It's sort of daunting. I mean, all this," I say waving my hand around the room. "I've been to clinics, but never one like this."

"Yes, well, it is a rather unique looking office, I suppose. It's all meant to help my private patients, like you, feel more comfortable." I find myself relaxing, even warming to this man. I shift my weight, and suddenly become aware again of my near-nakedness. I try to pull the gown further down and its top falls off my shoulders. I awkwardly attempt to pull it back up, re-exposing my thighs, while the doctor watches silently.

"Kingsley tells me you and he are living together. How's it going so far?" he finally asks. A million thoughts all converge at once and while I open my mouth and try my best to speak, nothing comes out.

"Ah. Kingsley mentioned as we walked together down the hall a moment ago that the whole gay experience is new and perhaps rather perplexing to you." I nod awkwardly. "Well, let's just get on with the routine examination questions and we can come back to that later, okay?" With that, he proceeds to ask about every conceivable personal thing imaginable about me, from birth to present, notwithstanding my family, my work, my travels, even my current spiritual practices. After the first awkward minute or so, I actually begin to enjoy the dialogue. It's simple, direct and unthreatening. At last, we arrive at my sexual history and thousands of little red flags suddenly pop up in my head. How can I possibly summarize who I am sexually and what I ultimately want when I don't know yet?

He listens patiently while, at his continual prompting, I recount in detail my various unsuccessful liaisons — unsuccessful in term of longevity — including my two brief, unproductive and ultimately unsuccessful attempts at long-term relationships. He asks me gently if we ever investigated the possibility of infertility. I say no, but as I say it I begin thinking about the various opportunities my partners have had to get pregnant, and it suddenly seems odd in retrospect. Why didn't I ever wonder? I've never fathered any children, though it was

possible that one partner “caught” once. If so, it would have had to have ended in an early miscarriage.

Eventually we arrive at my experience with Kingsley. I have been steeling myself for this, expecting the worst: confusion, lack of insight, hopeless self-questioning. Yet as we slowly further explore my past and recent sexual interests, I realize I am actually quite interested in discussing them with someone like this seemingly neutral man. I tell him about my instant attraction to Kingsley, and how easy it is to engage in sex with him. I recount how physically and emotionally comfortable it feels, and how mentally uncomfortable it sometimes turns later when I begin questioning myself. Yet beneath it all, I’m proud to say, is deep love and affection along with an awakening within me of a new kind of sensuality I have never known before.

He asks if I’ve had the opportunity of having sexual relations with other men. No, I answer, surprised at the finality of my voice. No, and I don’t want to. I don’t seem to have any desire for other men. My experience is limited, yes. However, I really can’t imagine having the same kind of sexual feelings I have for Kingsley for any other man. I don’t know why. In a way, I actually desperately want to, because then I’d be gay. At the same time, I don’t, and I’m not sure I would want to discover I’m gay if I am. These days I have even caught myself worrying if I were gay like him, if it would affect our current and future relationship.

What is my partnership role so far in this relationship, he asks. A strange question, I think, as it encompasses so many past, present and future unknowns. Well, I finally answer, I’m neither wife nor husband. Given my own proclivities I’d be more the woman than the man, but Kingsley repeatedly reassures me that he likes — prefers — my manliness. Domestically, we seem to share almost, but not entirely, equally in day-to-day partnership and household responsibilities so far, though clearly we haven’t been together long enough for the vast majority of such issues to surface yet. Yes, I answer, I fully expect more will yet surface and I’m not at all afraid. Maybe I’m a bit more domestic than Kingsley. Maybe. Sometimes.

Sexually, I have been exclusively anal receptive. No, I don't have any desire to mount, enter or be inside of Kingsley. In fact, quite the opposite. I find it thrilling and satisfying to have him mount, enter and be inside of me, especially when he finally comes. Yes, I orgasm most of the time, though in a way quite different than when, in the past, I partnered with a woman, and yes, I often orgasm multiple times, to the point of sometimes feeling completely out of control. Afterwards, I generally find his taking pleasure with me quite satisfying. Oddly, my satisfaction doesn't seem related to whether I come or not. In fact, I prefer not to.

After several minutes, the questions subtly change: Where in my body do I imagine or feel the sensations I have when aroused? What about when I see, smell, touch, kiss, give or receive oral sex? What about during receptive anal sex, and when I climax? How do I prepare myself beforehand? How do I feel about that? I like this man. He seems to know a lot about sex between men, and, as he mentioned, I have so many unanswered questions.

Soon, it's my turn to ask the questions. Am I — could I be — a female trapped in a man's body? Would I know if I was and how? Will having and holding his sperm inside me cause me physical harm or change me? If I'm male, how come I get so randy around Kingsley? What is it that Kingsley has that no other man or woman in my life has had? Most importantly, what can I expect to experience, to become, if I continue this relationship?

As the questions roll one after another off my tongue I notice his shoulders slowly relax, as if we are reaching some kind of special place necessary for him to help me better understand my situation. I'm beginning to trust this man more than I have allowed myself to trust even Kingsley. I'm even suddenly glad to be here. We continue talking for maybe ten more minutes or so, then he explains that he has enough history, and am I willing to allow him to examine me now so that he can better counsel me? I feel the warmth that was beginning to suffuse my body suddenly turn to icy coldness. Examine me? I'd forgotten about that.

After I reluctantly agree, he begins explaining exactly what he is going to do, encouraging me to ask if I have questions. Then he begins inspecting, touching, prodding, tapping, and listening to every square inch of my body.

It's difficult at first, but I slowly relax as he methodically moves from one area to the next. I momentarily panic when he delicately prods my chest, measuring between his fingers my breast fat and finally firmly squeezing first one and then the other tit. My stomach sinks, the muscles inside my belly tighten. I suddenly want to pull the short gown further down to hide the partial erection already beginning to form, but I'm afraid all I'd accomplish would be to embarrass myself even further. I think — no, I know — that I'm becoming sexually aroused, but this time it's not Kingsley touching me, it's another man, and the thought heightens my anxiety.

He continues methodically examining my heart, then lungs, slowly working his way down. I'm incredibly relieved when, by the time he finally asks me to lie flat on my back and begins pressing on my belly, my half-erection has entirely disappeared.

When finished with my stomach, he asks if I have ever had my genitals or anus examined. I laugh nervously, saying yes but only by Kingsley. He smiles and then goes on to explain the process of this part of the examination. I can stand, sit or stay as I am now. I choose to remain lying down.

I suddenly remember my shaved body and start to mention it offhandedly, but he is already asking me to flex my knees and pulling up the front of my gown. Then he asks if I'd please spread my legs and scoot down toward him until my bottom touches his hand. I try again to mention the shaving, but instead end up complying resignedly with his request.

Once I touch his warm hand, he examines my flaccid (thank God) penis, its shaft, and its soft circumcised head, briefly expanding the small slit in its tip with his two fingers and carefully inspecting inside. While doing that, he brushes a hand without comment across my shaved area, and focuses his attention on inspecting the front, sides and back of my hairless scrotum. Carefully but firmly he checks each testicle and their

ducts rolling them between his fingers, then follows their course as they run up into the inside of my abdomen and into my belly. Finally he prods firmly behind my drooping ball sac, asking if I've had any injuries or surgeries anywhere in this area. Though surprised at the question, I answer no. He nods and asks me to please spread my cheeks with my hands, explaining that he wants to examine the area behind my scrotum to my anus. Again I passively comply, although I feel my face flush as I present myself to him in much the same way I so often do to Kingsley. He reaches over to his left and moves a light on wheels close to my open rear. I hear a click and feel the warmth from the bright light press against me and feel my anus reflexively pucker. Suddenly my nipples tingle and tighten, my stomach muscles tense and I feel a sinking feeling in my stomach. The sexual tension that has evidently been slowly simmering within me throughout this part of the examination begins to escalate, and my no-longer-docile member suddenly swells, lengthens and stands at attention.

The doctor either conveniently doesn't notice or kindly ignores it altogether. Nonetheless, I once again wish I could pull the short gown further down, though it's completely impossible while holding myself open for inspection like this.

After a moment, I hear the light click again and feel the pressing heat on my derriere, but not the excitement within it, lessen. As I bend my neck to look down between my legs at him, he suddenly looks up at me. I flush deeply. Hesitating momentarily, he asks if I am all right. Yes, I answer, I just want to get this examination over with as quickly as possible.

He looks questioningly into my eyes, then begins explaining that it's almost over but he still needs to do the rectal exam. I try mightily to listen to his explanation, but my mind is already filling with dark, erotic fantasies. Still holding my buttocks open for him, I suddenly hear him as if from a distance asking me to please bear down. As I do, I feel thick, cold liquid drip onto the outside of my protruding anus; a soft finger pad immediately spreads it around, then the digit slips deftly into me.

The doctor places the flat of his other hand on top of my shaved lower abdomen, avoiding the expansive erection now pointing up attentively. I gasp, as the finger pad inside of me rotates to face forward toward my belly button. I feel him push firmly until the knuckles of his hand are hard against me, the tip of the finger inside of me slowly curling forward above and then down my firm, ready-to-explode prostate.

I instinctively reach down to push away the hand rammed up into me, but the doctor “*Hmmm*”s and in panic I return to holding myself open. “You may experience a sensation of having to urinate but don’t worry, you won’t. We’re almost done,” he rattles off as he slides his fingertip down the center, then back in and down each side of my tense, throbbing g-spot. I suddenly feel an overwhelming urge to pee, like when Kingsley suddenly fills me with his cum, and I sense a small amount of liquid exit from the tip of my penis.

“There,” he states as he pulls the gloved finger out of me, smearing the tip on a small glass slide. Then he quickly grasps my hard rod in his other gloved hand and expresses more liquid from the tip of my quivering member onto another slide. “So, we’re done with that,” he says, and I wonder devilishly if this is where Kingsley learned how to milk me like he did so deliciously the other day.

I quickly prop myself up in anticipation of leaving but he waves a hand and says, “I’d like to do just one more thing before I send you and Kingsley to the lab to get the blood test you requested and a few additional, routine laboratory tests I like to do the first time I meet a new patient. What I need to do is called anoscopy. It’s a little uncomfortable but not at all painful.” He then explains the steps of the procedure in sufficient detail for me to understand that I am about to have a steel tube shoved up inside of me so that he can inspect me inside. It’s an important part of his routine physical examination for partially or, as in my case, wholly anal-receptive patients.

His back momentarily toward me, I follow his instructions, climbing off the examination table, turning around, and bending my chest down flat on its top, reaching my hands back to once

again part and expose myself to him. As I wait obediently in this totally compromised position, I hear an instrument-laden tray being moved behind me, and the sudden hissing of what can only be a suction device in the background.

After asking if I'm ready, he immediately launches into the procedure. First, several globs of the same cool, sticky lubricant are spread on the outside of my tightly-clenched anus. Then I feel the familiar fat finger pad spread it around and into the center. Applying steady firm pressure with his finger, my anus eventually relaxes and the length of his finger slides back into me again in one swift movement. Once firmly inside, he moves it in and out, rotating it around to further lubricate me.

My anus suddenly tenses tightly around his stubby finger and to my surprise the finger quickly slips out. The potential space momentarily created is immediately filled with a heavy, smooth-tipped, cold metal probe, which he slowly but relentlessly eases into me.

At first it feels only an inch or so long, but then I realize he is just pausing temporarily to allow my anal muscles to relax. I panic, suddenly spasming tightly around the wide unyielding metal tube, willing it out of me. Soon, however, my muscles relax and I feel the whole length of what feels like a six-foot long tube slide up inside me until its cold base abruptly splays out flat against me, stopping its further advance. The invisible man behind me explains that I really don't need to keep holding myself open, successfully impaled as I am, but I decide to continue to do so anyway, if only to maintain an illusion of self-control. I nervously reposition myself, shifting my weight forward onto my toes, but quickly realize that this is not going to lessen the awkwardness of having the steel tube rammed up me and instead shift my weight back onto my soles. As I do so, I feel the scrape of metal against metal as he pulls out the heavy central metal plug while holding the tube in place.

I brace myself firmly against the examination table as he repositions the light behind me and proceeds with the inspection. I jerk suddenly when I feel a jet of running water

directed inside of me, the hissing of the suction device turning to a loud gurgle as it sucks the water back up.

After a few moments, I feel him pull out the water and suction tubes and once again the gentle heat from the illuminating light. "Good," I hear him say from behind, as he pushes the light away and slowly removes the fat metal tube. "Done!" he says handing me some soft tissues to wipe myself as he turns away from me and begins to clean up.

I wipe myself with one and then another and another tissue, tossing them into the steel wastebasket he kindly moves next to the side of my leg. His gaze returns as I wipe myself with yet another tissue. Suddenly, before I realize what I'm doing, the muscles inside my belly begin their familiar rhythmic tensing and releasing in preparation of an impending climax. I turn away from him to hide my erection and the unavoidable ejaculation already coursing its way up its length. Holding one tissue in front and another in back, I feel my face and body flush hot with excitement to the tips of my ears.

Finally admitting to myself the futility of hiding it all from him I bravely decide to turn, face him and suffer the embarrassment, only to find him looking the other way, busily checking the labels on the various slides and specimens to be sent for analysis. The inevitable contraction grabs me unprepared, exploding with nuclear-like force from my center outwards. As he checks the specimens a second time, I wonder that he can so prudently maintain his discretion in the face of my out-of-control condition.

The searing waves explode, one on top of the other, and I feel a rush of volcanic cum course up from within me. To my utter surprise, just before I ejaculate, he casually turns back toward me and hands me a plastic cup, asking politely if I would please be so kind as to direct the product into it. I stop in horror at the sudden realization that he knows exactly what's going on. Before I can register my surprise, however, my body shudders and a burst of semen catapults out into the waiting cup.

A moment later, having shot my wad and recovered some semblance of self-control, I shakily hand the cup with its crisp-smelling, creamy contents to him, only to jerk it back when another wave grips me and I erupt again. "Please don't be embarrassed," he says, looking kindly into my wide, tortured eyes. "You would have had to provide a sample at the lab if you hadn't here," he says, taking the plastic jar quickly from my hands, sealing and placing it into the box with the other samples. "So. That's it. You can get dressed whenever you're ready. Feel free to rest on the examination table a while if you like. I'm going to leave for a few minutes to send off these samples. And don't worry, we'll have time to talk after you're dressed."

As he walks out of the room humming, carrying the box of samples under his arm, I waddle awkwardly over to the sink, the rumpled patient gown falling off first one then the other shoulder. I begin to wash first my exhausted anus, then my exquisitely sensitive rod, the shaved area around it and finally my whole body. I wash and rewash my hands and, feeling clean once more, I walk with mock assurance across the room to put on my clothes just as Kingsley, looking back over his shoulder, slips stealthily through the door and into the room.

Kingsley turns toward me as I reach for my underwear. "Hi," he says sheepishly, at the same time eyeing me up and down greedily. "I tried to stay away, but I kept imaging you in here. Doc's a trustworthy man — he's been looking after my family and me for as long as I remember — but I couldn't help but wonder how you were getting along. By the way, you look really nice in your birthday suit!" I pause, shuffling my feet as I try to cover the evidence of my betrayal ineffectively with my hands and the miniscule handful of underwear wadded up in them.

"Did...did you know that I was going to go through all this?" I ask, feinting anger as I slip as nonchalantly as I can into my underwear and quickly reach for my jeans.

"Yeah, well, he's thorough, Doc is. Anyway, you're now one of the family. That means we don't have to worry about money.

The family pays for Doc's services to all family members." He extends an arm that sweeps in everything in the room, including, I notice, me. "My mother, in fact, has already paid for this visit."

I step into my jeans and begin zipping them up. Kingsley smiles conspiratorially and, positioning himself adroitly behind me, wraps his strong arms around my abdomen, slipping his inquisitive hands into the front of my jeans. I pause, at first fearful that the doctor might suddenly return and catch us like this, then relax and let the warmth of his searching fingers reanimate me. Placing my hands on his, I lay back in his arms.

"Your mother knew all about this?" I ask questioningly after a few moments of well-appreciated sensory indulgence. Then I add with a laugh, "She must be trying to get rid of me." I slide around to face Kingsley, directing his hands onto my increasingly desirous buns, and shirtless, stand on my bare toes to look into his eyes, frowning as fiercely as I can.

Kingsley returns the mock frown and laughs. "No, not a chance," he says lovingly. "I've told her all about you, and she's just pleased that I've finally found the right man, the one I truly want. The big question in hers and everyone else's mind — yes, they all know about us — and I suspect in yours, too — is whether this is what *you* really want."

I start to reply, but a knock at the door interrupts us and the doctor walks in. "Ah, Kingsley. I see you two lovers have found each other. Good. Let's talk for a few minutes, okay?"

Kingsley quickly removes his hands from my pants and I reach up, grab my denim shirt and thankfully finish covering myself. My body at last relaxes as I methodically button my shirt and finally zip up my pants. I move over to the after-exam chair with relief and begin putting on my shoes and socks. Kingsley slips into my chair beside me as the doctor tosses his bulky frame onto the examination stool. I sit up straight and watch the white-coated doctor scribble the last of his notes in a new brown medical file with my name on it. Kingsley reaches a hand over and places it on my thigh, squeezing it gently and smiling.

“So, Kingsley, you wanted this appointment to check you and your new partner’s HIV status — a great idea which I wholeheartedly commend — before launching out together as a committed couple. Of course, I didn’t know you and your partner’s prior situation, but in the course of taking the medical history, it has become abundantly clear to me that you two had already engaged, numerous times, in unprotected sex. So, in effect, what you (and I might also point out, your mother, Kingsley) most need to know is whether there are any possible indications of HIV infection. Well, I’m pleased to say that there are no signs or symptoms at this moment of HIV infection. On the other hand, you both, I hope, know that signs and symptoms often appear later rather than earlier with HIV infection. The only way to know is to do a blood test, which we will draw immediately after this talk. Your sexual behavior already would most probably assure that if one of you is positive, the other would probably also be or rapidly become so, too. No, I’m not saying that to scare you, Kingsley. You know all this very well, but I am saying this to caution you, and your partner here, at least for the future.”

“Let’s assume for the moment that you are both HIV negative, which I fully expect to be the case. If you, by choice, decide to have unprotected sex together like you have been having, then for your own sakes you must each not only make certain that the other is HIV negative now, but also that there will be no opportunity whatsoever for such in the future. That means you both must be willing to pledge to absolute fidelity to each other and strictly maintain a monogamous relationship. In the end, that is ultimately your principal and perhaps only real protection. So, my question to each of you is, can you honestly make such a commitment? Are you willing to trust each other with your lives?”

Silence. I look at Kingsley. He grips my thigh tighter. I see the intense hope in his eyes and the flicker of doubt. I try to imagine what Kingsley is actually thinking just now, and it seems to me that it comes down to this: Kingsley’s gay. He seems capable of and ready to pledge fidelity to me over all other men. I’m not gay and from what I’ve learned during the

examination today, maybe I am ambivalently bisexual. Nowhere and everywhere. Can I pledge the same kind of fidelity to him? Over men, probably, though today has begun to cast a first shadow of doubt. Over women? I think so, but the fact that I'm hedging at all suggests that while I know I'm capable of such fidelity, I still don't know enough about myself to completely and totally pledge myself to him and with complete assurance safely hold his life in my hands.

I look at the floor while Kingsley stares at me. I don't know what to say. Kingsley and the doctor remain silent until it becomes intolerable. "This is really all about me, isn't it?" I finally ask.

"Not so," the good doctor quickly retorts. "It's about both of you. But your situation is more complex than Kingsley's at the moment. Where are you, Kingsley?" the doctor asks.

I look at Kingsley out of the corner of my eye, and notice him straighten and take a deep breath, "Well, I'm here, aren't I? In fact, we're both here. That means something. A lot, I think. Doesn't it?"

Over the next half hour, we continue talking, *our* doctor — I like the sound and feel of that — exploring ever deeper first my, then Kingsley's, and finally our combined needs, wants and desires. At first it seems as if, in the asking, a widening gulf separates us, but by the time the discussion concludes, I feel a deeper and firmer conviction to my lover, partner and life companion. I am willing to try, try mightily, and to this end I pledge to Kingsley my fidelity. Kingsley says the same and we leave the office for the lab hand-in-hand, another golden thread slowly weaving itself into our growing relationship.



27 MARCH

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In opposition to our consciously growing bond, the wait for the results of our HIV tests seem unduly long and strained.

The call comes, as promised, at 8 a.m. sharp, and I am surprised at Kingsley's relief to hear that we are, indeed, both HIV negative. Anxious, I ask him why he's so relieved. Kingsley explains that he and Steve tested HIV negative, always used condoms, and to the best of his knowledge were strictly monogamous, even as we are now. He thinks of our relationship as a fresh beginning with its own unique hopes and expectations, but sometimes the similarities seem uncanny. I listen intently, giving Kingsley all my attention, and invite him to continue.

Kingsley explains that with Steve, his hopes for a lifelong committed partnership slowly evaporated, being replaced eventually by a relationship of mutual comfort and convenience: split the rent, split the household chores and always have someone to talk and go out with.

He wants it to be different for us, and has wanted it so from the moment he laid eyes on me. It was as though, unlike with Steve, Kingsley and I were drawn together across time and space by a power greater than ourselves, as if destiny itself directed the meeting. He suddenly realized that his life up to that moment had been one long preparation for our meeting and, thus prepared, we quite simply had to meet and be together. It wasn't convenient or comfortable. Spontaneous, yes, but for him it would require a starting over and not just in terms of a new partner. When our eyes met a bond, the depth of which he had never before experienced, inexplicably drew and bound him to me and, he sensed, me to him. There was something about our meeting that was indeed a first moment of a new life for both of us. That's when he realized that his relationship with Steve was a stepping stone, a temporary place which eventually led to me. Who knows, Kingsley muses,

without Steve perhaps he wouldn't have been able to appreciate me the way I deserve.

As he and I came to know each other better, he continues wistfully, he realized that the electric attraction we felt for each other during that first meeting was indescribably more. Whereas words served to describe his past relationships and experiences, they utterly failed him when attempting to understand ours. He didn't just want, he desperately needed this one to work. It was the singular intensity of his desire for me that finally made our HIV testing so important and has made the waiting yesterday and this morning so terribly difficult. It was as if at this moment the universe were giving its tacit approval for us to not just *be* together but to fulfill our life destinies together as one.

Listening first with my head and then with my heart, I begin to see a side of Kingsley I have often glimpsed but never had the opportunity to know or take in. That Kingsley loves me I know. That Kingsley feels so passionately about our relationship leaves me awestruck.

Taking my hands in his, Kingsley continues: Matters came to a head when he returned from our tryst at the inn. He came home to a resentful Steve and the next day, while visiting with his family, his mother noted a distinct difference in him — one, she said, she had for years been patiently praying for. A reawakening she called it, and she specifically asked him what it was that had suddenly changed in his life. Changed, he said? She said a glow seemed to surround him, one that she had never seen before with her hardened, pessimistic gay son.

Kingsley explained that while she had always known he was gay, instead of fighting it like most of the family, she simply came to accept it. It was, nonetheless, a deep disappointment. It meant the loss of an idyllic future filled with loving grandchildren — flesh of her flesh — she had always so looked forward to. To his father, who adamantly refused to believe he was gay, it meant a bitter end to his life endeavor: the establishment through Kingsley, his only son, of a rich, powerful and potent dynasty. Their losses, so deep and profound, redoubled as the problem echoed through the family,

profoundly straining their relationship and interactions with him and, eventually, his with them.

His mother eventually honored his being gay as a personal choice of his and, following her matriarchal lead, the rest of the family grudgingly fell in line. It was a lot for the family, requiring over the years that they each face their own personal demons in order to come to terms with their feelings about him.

That particular day, talking face-to-face with his mother over dinner, she listened intently as he talked about me. Afterwards, tears in her eyes, she cautioned him that he should carefully follow his heart with this one, and suggested that he begin by meeting with the family doctor. It had been a complete surprise to him coming from her, especially given that she had not yet met me in person. She seemed to him to be welcoming me into the family, something she had not done with any of his past partners no matter how well they had gotten to know her and she them. Again, it was as if she too recognized that a singular power was already preparing a future for us, together.

Stunned by his revelation, I imagine wheels within wheels of old, dusty machinery suddenly moving, coming alive with hopeful expectations that one after another flash before me. I look up and into his deep, dark, liquid eyes, wondering if this person before me is indeed the life mate chosen for me by the universe. I pause to let it sink in, but the thought is so vast, so all-encompassing, that I can't begin to grasp its totality. Instead I sense a simple warmth, a oneness, begin to glow within me.

Our relationship has already become much more than just the feelings, hopes and desires I have invested in this man and the embodiment and fulfillment of his. I wonder: are we right now, at this moment, actually fulfilling something greater than ourselves? Are other destinies already woven into, maybe already dependent upon our relationship together? My mind leaps and I see two rich, spectral ribbons, drifting in time and space, suddenly converging. At the convergence, a pinpoint opening appears in the fabric of all that was, is and will be and a new reality suddenly floods in until both our pasts transform

into what simply exists this very moment. Now. Kingsley and I. Together at last. Really together. How can such a thing be, I wonder, suddenly even more awestruck. Then as quickly as it appears, the vision vanishes and I am staring once again into the fathomless eyes of my dear Kingsley, my lover, my life mate, my soul mate. I am the same as I was a moment ago, and yet totally changed. A shiver passes through me and I realize that the world, like me, is also the same, yet entirely different. I grasp Kingsley's hand tightly in mine.

There is an edge to our relationship the rest of the day — a sharpness, a clarity to it that seems to cut not just more deeply but also so broad a swath that I catch myself wondering if some little thing I might do, like touching his arm or kissing his cheek, might somehow yet again change the fabric of the universe. A sense of onerous personal responsibility slowly overcomes me, and I stop every so often to just look in wonder at him. Outside, the morning fog parts. Brilliant, rays of warm California sunshine stream in filling every inch of our home. Birds I never noticed before in the gently swaying trees outside suddenly chirp sweetly. My God, this is love. I really, truly am in love!

Kingsley and I continue talking throughout the ensuing day: When he returns home briefly from sailmaking for a cup of coffee with me; when, on a whim, I visit him at his shop later in the afternoon; when we go for a brief walk together along the bustling wharf; late that night when, in bed, with him solidly embedded in my supPLICATE belly, Kingsley whispers in my ear that we should formalize our commitment to each other. It takes me some time to return from the sensual ecstasy of feeling him within me, back to the bedroom where two sweaty bodies lie naked and entwined. Formalize? That sounds an awful lot like a proposal of marriage!

I try to get him to slip out of me for a moment so I can think, but Kingsley holds onto me and whispers in my ear that he loves me. He knows I love him. We're both free and unencumbered. We're HIV negative and the future lies open before us. We're committed lovers, partners, and mates. Why not formalize our commitment?

I listen raptly as he continues whispering, at the same time sliding rhythmically in and out of me. Oh God! I can't think at all — I keep drifting, floating along, riding his thrusts, the heat and fervor inside my belly escalating, fantasies of life together exploding like fireworks all around me. "Oh Kingsley," I sigh as he again thrusts firmly into me, his strong thigh and leg muscles tensing, his grip tightening. I want to scream, "Yes! YES!" but the feeling of him bursting inside of me and filling me with his virile cum momentarily erases everything. My body suddenly explodes with feverish lust. I let my mind go, and ride one after another of his wild ejaculatory thrusts, at the same time hoarding and treasuring that part of him growing collectively inside of me.

I try to turn and face him, but Kingsley continues holding me, thrusting, withdrawing, thrusting and withdrawing again and again, each time ramming his huge, up-curved rod more firmly into me, leaving me no retreat. I try again to think, to come up with an answer to his proposal, but I am already slipping back into blissful reverie — a hot air balloon slowly ascending, floating to and fro on whatever capricious current drifts by. I imagine looking down on our bed where two male bodies — one swarthy-skinned, coarsely shaven, rough and muscular; the other pale-skinned, smooth, slender and lithe — lie locked inseparably together, one within the other, two moving as one in an ultimate dance of life. In this rarified atmosphere, my ethereal thoughts suddenly bump up against Kingsley's all-too-concrete question: Why not formalize our commitment?

And why not? We're here, together, now, our bodies and souls inseparable. Why not simply recognize — acknowledge — what we obviously are? It seems such a small step from where we are this moment to the next, inevitable stage of our relationship. We live together now. We share mutual love, respect and affection. Our bond to each other is already strong and flexible enough to withstand the rigors of daily life. I wear Kingsley's anklet constantly, proudly and without embarrassment. What's the difference really between a silver anklet and gold ring? Kingsley says I'm already family. I

constantly think of and am sexually attracted to him. So, why not take this next, infinitesimally small step I began so few days ago?

Then, a familiar, nagging voice lurking in some dark recess of my mind whispers coarsely: *Do you really think of no one else? What was running through your mind at the doctor's office that you panicked at his touch, and again that you exploded in orgasm when he was unemotionally examining you? Didn't you, at that moment, have feelings for this other man? Be honest. You did, didn't you? You actually liked and trusted him, in some inexplicable way different from, but perhaps, just perhaps, more than you do Kingsley. You actually like men just as much as you like women and they are both equally exciting to you though in different ways. Mightn't there be another man waiting out there somewhere, sometime, even better than Kingsley?*

Something hidden keeps creeping just outside my mental grasp. I don't know, but I sense its ultimate direction and purpose are dark, sinister and enslaving. I suddenly realize I need to know more about myself before I can truthfully commit myself to Kingsley in marriage for the rest of my life.

So, what does this mean for Kingsley and I? I desperately want to "date" Kingsley more, meet some successful gay couples, learn more about the gay world that he's asking me to enter. My experience is just so limited with this style of relationship, and there are such large, gaping holes in even my best imaginings, that I need, in all honesty, to fill in in order to take this next step, no matter how small the step seems. Relaxing in his strong embrace, suffused with post-orgasmic bliss, I try my best to explain my feelings to Kingsley without hurting him. Kingsley listens, and to my complete surprise, adamantly agrees.

To my even greater surprise, Kingsley, during the next few hours, seems increasingly positive about our future together. That evening, he tells me excitedly that he wants to begin introducing me to some gay-couple friends. I sense a new, stronger wind suddenly fill our sails, thrusting us ahead in the very direction that, seconds ago, I feared we might never have the opportunity to go. I agree happily and for the rest of the

night do my best to show him my gratitude in a most physical way.



Our days together have become heaven on earth. Kingsley constantly hovers around me, stroking, touching, kissing, assisting me in every little way. It is as if the universe has woven about us a protective cocoon, insulating us from the vicissitudes of life outside. Wherever we go, I feel imbued with a pulsing, rainbow-like aura, joining and rejoining the strong, constant, diamond-clear one Kingsley projects. People who come into contact with us together instantly notice.

Kingsley and I have become, in every sense, a bonded couple. I revel in the warmth, safety, care, desire and companionship that I used to so deeply envy in newlyweds. It is as if by agreeing to let go of our future, we have come into it. I find myself silently inscribing every detail of these treasured days in my heart so I can recall them at leisure or when in need in the future. I notice that I am unconsciously emotionally investing a little more each day into this relationship and that all my previously-stated concerns, while still real, seem to no longer wield power over us. It is as if by simply living what we both desire, the fears and limitations that have been relentlessly nagging at my heart are, one by one disappearing, and in their place broad new vistas are opening and replacing them. In my heart of hearts, I wonder with silent awe at the joy that seems to constantly flood my body and senses.

At breakfast Kingsley remarks that, as I'm a dancer, a performing artist, he would like to introduce me to a gay couple who are themselves artists. Perhaps tonight we could pay them a visit, if I'm willing? I am willing, even excited, and tell him so. As Kingsley walks out through the living room door to return to work I realize that, despite our time together, I have not yet met any of his friends — Steve, his roommate and former lover, excepted. Our get-together tonight will be not only my debut before his friends, but also for me as a gay partner — his gay partner — and for us as an openly gay couple. The daunting

thought suddenly stops me and an irritatingly familiar, unscratchable mental itch appears in the back of my mind. There's something important — monumentally important — here. The problem is, I have no idea what it might be, and tonight is already changing from idea to reality.

My mind races into high gear: How should I prepare? What should I wear? What will they — what will Kingsley — expect? My thoughts become a writhing mass of inseparable unknowns, except perhaps for the last and most important one: *Kingsley will expect me to be me*. Yet even as I try to latch firmly onto this one constant, disquieting thoughts begin reforming, one in particular drowning out all the others: *Yes, but who exactly are you?*

It may seem crazy, but I decide to begin by cleaning the house. The thought of order within our home seems to quiet the crazed voices. *Who am I?* I slowly work my way from kitchen to living room, bedroom to bathroom. *Right now, this is who I am*. Finally, in the bathroom, the business of getting ready returns.

I peel off my T-shirt and cutoffs and, devoid of restrictive clothes, close the door. Warm, limber, dusted lightly with effervescent sweat, I gaze at my reflection in the bathroom mirror. I focus carefully, analytically, on each inch of my sinewy, pleasantly boyish dancer's body. I twist to examine the outline of my lean butt. I like my boyish curves and imagine Kingsley staring hungrily at me. I examine myself from the front, placing my hands jauntily on my hips, shifting my weight to one side. The silver anklet with its dangling heart tinkles cheerfully like sweet Kingsley whispering in my ear. I take my hands off my hips, spread my arms and hands out at my sides, my legs and feet open and apart, and try again to look critically, unemotionally at my body, then try yet again to see my body through Kingsley's and finally his gay friends' eyes.

The tight, black, Grecian curls peeking around my ears; my short, pixie nose; clean shaven face; lean, gymnastic musculature in the harsh, white, florescent light make me look like a Grecian marble statue. I relax and pretend I'm holding a discus in one hand, pausing in the antechamber of a huge coliseum, ready to

walk out naked before tens of thousands of yelling, cheering Greeks as my event is called. The pale body in the bathroom mirror suddenly comes alive with warmth and color, caught up in the flush of pre-athletic fervor. I take several steps forward, gracefully extend my arm and the cheers of the crowd swell to a thunderous roar. I am the favorite of the crowd. Even my fellow athletes, standing nude beside me, are momentarily jealous of my beauty and the crowd's adoration until at last, albeit reluctantly, they also join in the cheering. I glance sidelong at one particularly beautiful athlete, whose youthful body mistily morphs before my eyes into that of the doctor of a couple days ago, extending a hand toward me, his short, fat fingers reaching out toward my exposed genitals. I quickly look away, back into the countless cheering faces that fill the Olympic stadium, and I suddenly realize that each of them sexually desires me all to himself. I scan their lustful, covetous faces and am suddenly aware that there are no women in the crowd. Of course, I say to myself, this is ancient Greece. Women are barred from such functions. Why would I expect anything different? My fantasy, however, is already crumbling. The adoring crowd dissolves into a mob of lecherous old men standing naked and erect before me, leering at my body that's calling from within them a pantheon of wild, prurient, carnal beasts lurking inside. Panic clutches my chest and clasps me about the throat in an icy, breathless grip.

I try with all my strength to will my thoughts back to the adoring crowd, but this time the stadium is filled with tens of thousands of screaming, diaphanously draped young Greek women with firm, rounded breasts; pink, upturned nipples; dark, curly, pubic hair and blushing nether lips peeking visibly out at me; eyes fixed hungrily on my body. I try to erase the image but can't, though I know that in my fantasy there can be no women, only men. I suddenly rouse myself from the daydream and stare once again at the thin, young, invitingly nude male body in the mirror looking absently back at me. I turn away with finality, a sense of sadness weighing heavy on my heart as I turn on the shower and climb in. Its stinging spray pummels the last vestiges of the disturbing daydream and the painful anguish it conjured from my mind and body.

The afternoon is rapidly waning and I still need to finish preparing for my visit with Kingsley's gay friends, hopefully my new friends-to-be. I rough myself dry and reconsider how to further prepare. Preparing myself for Kingsley is straightforward: I prepare for the possibility or, more correctly, the probability of sex. But what about tonight? Kingsley and I will be together with another gay couple. Will the meeting be sedate? Chatty? Catty? Will the focus be on work, social, or strictly gay issues? Will refreshments, if served, be a formal, relaxed or wildly hedonistic affair? For that matter, what do gay couples do when they get together? Do they discuss the day's happenings, comment on each other's looks, talk about mutual interests, check each other out?

My commiseration is interrupted by Kingsley entering the front door. I shake my head to clear it, and run into the living room and Kingsley's arms.

Kingsley seems surprised, perhaps because I haven't yet begun to dress for the impending event or perhaps at the inviting naked Greek athlete clinging desperately onto him. I slip behind him and help him out of his coat, kiss him cheerfully on the cheek and coyly busy myself putting his coat away in the closet. Kingsley, visibly warming to my lascivious display, gathers me into his arms and asks if I've something particular on my mind. I want to say, "Yes," tear his clothes off, throw him flat on the floor, and guide the growing cock I feel rubbing against me inside of me. I want, I want, I want. Instead, looking plaintively into his eyes, I grab tightly onto the fabric of his shirt and begin crying.

Kingsley tenses, then sighs and spreads out his arms, surrounding me in a warm embrace. My knees weaken and I cling tighter, as if my life depends on it. "Kingsley..." I manage to whisper between heart-wrenching sobs. I feel Kingsley brace for what is to come. "Kingsley, I... I just don't know what to wear!" Even as the words gush out between the wracking sobs and heaving breaths, I realize how utterly stupid this must sound.

Clothes? *Is this all about clothes*, I imagine him saying. I should tell Kingsley that I didn't really want to say that. What I wanted to say is that I'm simply overwhelmed with meeting not only some of your friends for the first time, people I desperately want to like and approve of me, but also meeting them in what is for me an entirely alien situation. I have nothing right now to hold on to except you.

Kingsley lowers his strong arms to my waist and, looking directly into my tearing eyes, smiles then softly places his pursed lips on mine. The kiss is long, steady, tender. The sobbing and heaving stop. My body warms, then heats, then flames with desire, and I return his kiss with a fervor I hadn't imagined myself capable of. My body melts and my lips flush as the tip of his wet tongue slides into my ravenous mouth.

Kingsley runs his hands down the small of my back and grasps my quivering buttocks. Pulling me closer, tighter, his agile tongue continues its explorations. Then our tongues suddenly touch, like inquisitive fingers, and an electric spark arcs from him to me that quickly spreads until every nerve in my body is buzzing. My skin bursts with pyrotechnic sparkles and the muscles behind my belly button clench.

Kingsley slides his liquid tongue deeper and I caress his gently with mine. Soon our conjoined tongues writhe like two snakes in a warm, dark cave, locked in a climactic embrace. The clutching feeling behind my navel begins to reverberate like a bell throughout my rapidly acquiescing body.

I struggle with the buttons of his shirt, and then in sheer lust rip it off, jerk his jeans down, and begin rubbing my front against his flowering erection. I slide my hands down his hips, run my fingers delicately through his damp curly nether hairs and slide my fingernails up the sides of his well-outlined abdominal muscles. Sliding the palms of my hands up his chest, I slowly push away from him until at last our lips separate. I suck in a deep breath of cool, heady air mixed with the intoxicating smell of his rapidly growing ardor. Looking lustily into his eyes, I drop down on my haunches, the anklet Kingsley gave me as a token of his affection tinkling merrily.

Kingsley towers unclothed before me, his up-curving erection lengthening in front of my face. I grasp his ankles, rip off his shoes and socks and slowly glide my hands up his manly legs, his strong knees, the soft insides of his thighs. I notice his low hanging balls suddenly tense and rise up; the head of his stiff member swelling ruddy red. I reposition both hands to cup his tight rock sac, delicately holding one firm, round testicle in each hand. Kingsley sucks in a deep breath. I smile rakishly, extend an index finger up behind his scrotum and begin stroking gently along the ridge between his balls and rear bud. Kingsley lets out another long breath and a drop of clear liquid magically appears at the tip of his now rock-hard penis. I gently roll the two jewels in my hands until his pre-cum flows and he begins thrusting with his hips.

I release the two hard rocks in my palms and wrap my fingers firmly around his fat dick, slowly sliding them up and down, up and down. Kingsley throws his head back, spreads his feet and braces himself, driving his pelvis feverishly forward. Then he abruptly stops, utters a loud, guttural “Aaaagh” and sprays his creamy white cum into the air. I grasp his massive tool tighter and continue sliding my hand up and down until he sprays a second time, this time into my waiting open mouth. While Kingsley convulses, I lick my lips and quickly engulf the head of his bobbing rod and suck the salty-sweet semen from him as if from a straw in a milkshake. A flood of semen suddenly gushes into my mouth, which I swallow eagerly in one gulp.

Kingsley is already tiring, but I am not finished. I roll the tip of my tongue along the ridge just beneath his swollen glans, then course it up along the small furrow at its base, sliding it across the tiny slit on its fleshy tip. Flicking the tip of my tongue into the tiny wet slit, I return to sucking gently, rhythmically, like a hungry infant on a nipple, seeking the nourishment the swollen breast beneath it contains. Kingsley’s body jerks. The tangy smell of fresh semen mixed with the musky smell of his orgasmic sweat seizes me, throwing my own body into sympathetic orgasmic explosion. Though squatting, my knees buckle and a spout of my own seed sprays into the air

while I continue swallowing gulp after gulp of Kingsley's generous though rapidly diminishing libations. I stop momentarily to breathe and a volume of white cream escapes from my mouth and dribbles down my chin.

I let go of Kingsley's shaft to wipe my chin with my hand, and feel his manhood already softening. Cradling his withering member in my hands and mouth, I look up to see him looking down at me, an ear-to-ear smile on his softly glowing face, his eyes sparkling with delight. Time suddenly stops in the mutually post-orgasmic afterglow surrounding and infusing us. Sparking remnants of our white-hot passion seem to arc back and forth along our shaking, heaving bodies. Kingsley's wilting member slides out of my mouth. I kiss it warmly as it folds itself sweetly back into its forest of dark curls, and I swallow the last of his salty libation down my throat.

How long we remain this way, Kingsley standing at his full, naked height above with me squatting between his legs, looking lovingly up at the pink head of his male member peeking out at me, I don't know. I just know that in that momentary gaze, Kingsley presents me something precious that entirely erases my faltering perception of myself, providing me with the wellspring of strength I so desperately need to face his friends and open myself fully to their and our new ways of life.

I suddenly know how to prepare. Was I really crying over what to wear a short while ago? I need only ask my lover, my guide, Kingsley. I don't need to wax dramatic. I stand, shakily gather him into my arms, and ask contritely what he thinks I should wear tonight. Kingsley returns the embrace and tells me it's quite informal, suggesting I simply wear the denim shirt and jeans he favors. I kiss him happily on the nose and he pushes me playfully away, telling me I'd better get my pretty ass in gear as it's already past time to leave. I hesitate, thinking of all the damage the living room I so recently cleaned has incurred during the last few minutes, but Kingsley is already heading for the bathroom to grab a towel and clean it up, at the same time encouraging me to quickly wash and dress so we can get going. Eyes twinkling, he says he will join me in a moment but that we need to stay focused on getting ready for our "date."

I pad my way to the bathroom, looking fondly back over my shoulder at the naked man I have come to love and adore, a feeling of deep satisfaction lightening my thoughts and movements. In the bathroom, while doing a very quick sponge bath, I think about what Kingsley just said: Our date. When Kingsley proposed a few days ago — that is what he did, I think — I told him I needed more experience and wanted to date more. Kingsley heard me. He not only heard me, he is right now honoring that request in arranging this get-together with his gay friends. Love, like the proverbial engagement diamond, has many facets, some as difficult to grasp as my fantasies, but Kingsley's caring for me always shines out singularly clear and real. Not a token, it's an ongoing expression of his conviction to me, another aspect of the commitment he asked me to formalize. I've had other partners over the years, but never one who honored me like this. In the past, I have always been the one relied on to provide the strength and support to the partnership. At first an unstated duty, it always rapidly developed into an unrelenting obligation and, finally, a test of my devotion to the relationship. Yet I'm not testing Kingsley nor, I think, is he me. At least, I don't think or feel so.

As for me, I still don't know how this date Kingsley has so kindly arranged is going to help me come to grips with my deeper needs, wants and desires. It's not really his duty anyway; it's mine. Then, as I think further, I realize it's not a duty. I don't have to get clearer but I'm hopeful I will grow into clarity within this relationship, something I've never been able to accomplish before. Why didn't I bring this attitude to my past relationships? Am I less a man than Kingsley, or am I simply bringing something totally different to this relationship?

As I finish sponge-bathing Kingsley strides into the bathroom and, hands on hips, stands naked and arrogant before me. I respectfully prostrate myself in deference before the "King." Kingsley nods and gestures magnanimously for me to rise. I rise into a crouch and after bowing solicitously rewet my washcloth, wring it lightly and begin washing him, starting with his exhausted-looking but oh-so-royal appendage. Refreshing the washcloth, I wash his thickly muscled thighs, then his legs,

and finally his long, masculine feet, kissing each as I finish. Next I stand beside him and wash his arms, forearms and hands, kissing his proffered fingers and moving on to his wiry-haired chest, finely muscled abdomen, and curly public area, refreshing the washcloth between each. Finally, I wipe his back and hips, his firm buttocks and the crack between them. I reach for a towel and begin the process over, this time laughing merrily as I roughen and dry his slick, olive-colored skin.

Kingsley seems enthralled, like a cat that can't help purring when its stomach is rubbed. Finished, I stand, roll up on my toes and kiss him gently on the lips to reawaken him from his pleasant dream. Kingsley reaches for the washcloth, presumably to do the same for me, but I look him naughtily in the eyes and wag an index finger back and forth in the air, pointing at my wristwatch lying on the sink, shaking my head in a firm *no*. Kingsley feigns disappointment, and then suddenly flicks the washcloth so it cracks on my butt like a whip. I stand beside him, rubbing my burning cheek, watching my King dissolve before me into a wild, wanton Neanderthal, trying unsuccessfully at the same time to calm the animal in heat he has once again reawakened within me.

Kingsley chases me into the bedroom then stops, looks me naughtily in the eyes, points at my inviting hips and, wagging his index finger back and forth in the air, shakes his head in a firm *no*. Then he parentally takes two hangers from our closet — one with the blue, denim shirt he favors on me; the other with a pair of low-cut, distressed blue jeans — and lays them on the bed next to where I'm standing. In minutes we are dressed, Kingsley in similar garb but wearing a soft blue silk shirt that I bought him that, simply because I bought it for him, is one of his favorites. His wearing it tonight honors and calms me.

The sky outside the bedroom window is already changing to dark crimson. I rush into the living room, grab a windbreaker from the front coat closet and wait patiently for Kingsley. He is there in a flash and slips into a fashionable boat jacket. We walk briskly, hand-in-hand, back through the living room and the kitchen, into the garage.

I open the garage door to a light, misty rain dancing before a darkening, violet-hued horizon. In the far distance, the fog is rolling in from the ocean. We deftly check the ragtop and, as Kingsley slides into the passenger seat, I pull the starter switch and awaken the beast within.

Zippering through the oak-studded neighborhood, we roar up a fog-enveloped onramp to the Bay Bridge. As we thunder across the Bay, the drizzling fog suddenly parts to expose the twinkling lights of San Francisco melting imperceptibly into a limitless, black, star-studded sky. From back where we just came, the first silver beams of what will soon be a large, full moon peek over the Berkeley Hills.

Across the bridge, we wind our way up and down San Francisco's infamous hills, crossing the peninsula to the ocean side of the city, where Kingsley tells me his friends own a ranch-style house on a knoll overlooking the expansive Pacific. The soft, moist coastal air flowing past smells crisply of salt water. Suddenly the Pacific Ocean stretches out before us uninterrupted from south to north. This is not the urban, gay San Francisco I expected and as we approach the house it becomes quickly apparent that this couple is not, in any sense of the word, wanting.

I follow Kingsley's pointing finger, turning onto a semicircular, white gravel driveway. The gravel crunches as we slowly approach the house. Parking to the side of the brilliantly lit stone entryway, I notice ours is the only car. When I turn the engine off total quiet engulfs us, replaced immediately by the soft hissing of ocean waves as they roll in and break against the unseen nearby shore.

Kingsley jumps out of the car and I quickly join him at his side. We walk, again hand-in-hand, through an overarching stone arbor of grape leaves that leads to a solid brass-and-wood door. Kingsley rings the doorbell and shifts his weight jauntily onto one leg, looking into my eyes reassuringly. The door opens almost instantly and a balding man in his late forties, dressed in a tight-fitting black T-shirt, blue jeans and fashionable black running shoes, opens the door. He greets Kingsley warmly with

a hug. Kingsley slips him a brown paper bag I hadn't noticed before which, from its outline, I assume contains a bottle of wine. Our host immediately extends an open hand toward me.

I extend my hand to him, but he doesn't immediately clasp it. Instead, the man takes me in slowly and carefully from head to toe. Finally, cocking his head to one side, he grabs my hand and shakes it vigorously, then nods first to me and finally, with a broadening smile, to Kingsley, swinging the door open widely and inviting us in.

From this point on, I follow Kingsley's lead, shedding my coat in the stone entryway, placing it over the man's outstretched arm like Kingsley does. Kingsley and he instantly engage in light conversation as they walk forward into an open, lavishly appointed living room. I stop behind them, transfixed, my mouth agape as I more closely inspect the stone walls of the foyer we just passed through. On my left is a large, artistically-displayed piece of driftwood, delicately curved, radiating femininity. Lit from behind, it is framed in an unworldly, ethereal glow. On the other side of the foyer, an ancient Roman wall-fountain babbles softly, releasing its continuous stream of water from a small, hidden spout at the top into a carved semicircular stone basin. The fountain, spotlighted from above, looks timelessly elegant.

Lost in these totally different yet somehow mysteriously related artistic works, I barely notice Kingsley return, grab my hand and drag me away, extricating me from the hypnotic hold. I follow him, dazed, across a rich wood-inlaid dining area commanded by a ten-foot long, lion-footed table; the table is set with two silver candelabras, the candles still burning, and is littered with the remains of what was clearly a sumptuous dinner. I want to stop again, but Kingsley continues guiding me down three wide, curving steps into an enormous sunken living room. At our feet a long, curved, soft brown leather sofa faces a commanding stone fireplace that cradles a small but warm fire crackling merrily away, its flickering adding to the sense of primitiveness projected by the distinctly cave-like ambience of the huge sunken living room.

Two men sit talking together on the far curve of the sofa, a small, glass coffee table separating them from where Kingsley is directing me. Both men stand as we approach, the one who greeted us at the door once again extends his hand toward me. "Larry," he says simply.

Kingsley introduces me as I reach for Larry's hand. This time, Larry instantly grasps my hand firmly and warmly, releasing it without shaking as if we were old friends. He looks deeply and intensely into my eyes then, turning, introduces a younger man of about my height, with wavy, sand-colored hair. He's wearing a deep, almost iridescent green shirt tucked smartly into loose but impeccably tailored slacks, an Italian branded black leather belt setting the one off from the other. "Richard," Larry says softly and Richard extends his hand. Richard flashes a bright smile. His hands are softer than Larry's but his grip equally strong and firm.

After a moment, everyone sits and an animated conversation that seems to have been temporarily interrupted by our entrance continues where it apparently left off. Larry and Kingsley return to talking about fine art and current market values of contemporary paintings in San Francisco and New York. Richard listens attentively, occasionally adding observations about specific artists, buyers and collectors he apparently knows personally. Kingsley eventually turns to his family's current art interests, a topic of obvious interest to both men.

While they talk, I try to learn everything I can about these two men and their relationship. It's soon clear that they are each a master of fine art, Larry favoring oil painting, Richard preferring sculpted works like the ones in the foyer, which I assume from his passion when speaking of them are his. Looking around the periphery of the immense living room, I notice in the distance a richly-colored landscape of what looks like the ocean from the driveway outside. Beside it is another of fruit in a bowl and beside that one, nearest the fireplace, another of a nude male, who I quickly recognize is Richard. I can easily imagine the paintings on display in a national art museum. If they are indeed Larry's, then both men must be

known not only to Kingsley's family, but to art collectors throughout the world.

As we talk, I notice Richard frequently deferring to Larry, who seems to be the titular spokesperson for the two much as Kingsley is for us. Yet it's more than just deference — more like a courteous sharing based on some intrinsic rules that these two have developed over the course of what increasingly appears to be a long relationship together.

Though intrigued by their work, especially Richard's, I am even more interested in the nature of their relationship. My intense curiosity makes it harder and harder to not cut in and ask personal questions. I find myself instead cattily watching, listening closer, trying to ascertain which is the more likely primary receptive partner like me.

As if attuned to my thoughts, the conversation suddenly turns from art to relationships. Larry and Richard congratulate Kingsley on "discovering" me and at the same time congratulate me on my luck at having found a partner like Kingsley. Larry mentions that Kingsley has been looking for a steady partner for quite a while, quickly looking me over again in the same ingratiating way he did in the entrance, the way I imagine one might do when considering purchasing a horse on behalf of a benefactor. Larry winks at Kingsley. The conversation suddenly quiets, and I wonder what exactly it is that everyone knows but I don't. Kingsley squeezes my hand, and I suddenly realize that they probably know pretty much everything about me!

All continue staring at me. Yes, I say, trying at the same time to deflect the stares, I am lucky to have met Kingsley. I've never met anyone like him, I affirm, flashing a brief frown angrily at him.

The conversation resumes, this time even more animated than before, Kingsley explaining that one reason for this social visit is to provide me a chance to see and observe a gay couple who've been living successfully together for a number of years, my experience being quite limited. I sit up and bite my lip, feeling as if I'm being shown for purchase in an open market,

my “ass-sets” being maximized, my liabilities minimized and my fate resting on the highest bidder. The coolness that began encroaching a moment ago deepens; my heart begins racing.

I look searchingly from one person to the other. Larry’s eyes are the first to soften. Richard’s widen. Kingsley’s remain rock steady, unreadable and unfathomable. Larry breaks the silence: “Yeah. Well, you sure know how to cut to the quick, Kingsley. But then, that’s always been one of your gifts.” Turning toward me, Larry continues: “Richard, Kingsley and I have a...rich shared history. Most people would stereotype a gay relationship as unique as ours in one or another bizarre way, but in my experience, gay relationships range from pretty conventional to just about anything you can imagine. For heterosexual couples, there are usually long-established social expectations, boundaries, rules, customs, and all of that. I think I can say truthfully that Richard, Kingsley and I, when we first realized we had feelings for each other, had to struggle through an incredibly awkward period together to establish our own set of boundaries and guidelines.” Richard and Kingsley nod. “Maybe it’s that way to some extent with all relationships, gay or otherwise, but I think even if it is, it is particularly so where gays are involved, especially where individual attractions and desires converge as they did in our case. What eventually resulted turned into a deep, mutually respectful relationship, Richard and I ultimately pairing. All this without the immediate concerns that most couples have to face right off regarding children.”

Speaking to Kingsley, Richard adds, “For example, you, Kingsley, if anyone, know me and my family particularly well. When they found out I was in a gay relationship, they were horrified, though I’m not sure that’s a strong enough word for it. At the time I had no idea where things would go, and even today still feel that way occasionally. Maybe it’s that edge of tension that makes relationships like ours cut so deep.” Turning toward me, he continues, “If someone had prophesied then how my relationship would end up right now with Larry, I wouldn’t — I couldn’t — have believed them.”

I start to speak, but Kingsley jumps in ahead of me: “After you two made the commitment to be a couple, did either of you

continue having reservations about yourself? I've had short-time partners, but this time, I really want it to be different." Kingsley looks lovingly at me. "I'm overwhelmed by how intense and satisfyingly really committed lovemaking can be, yet afterward, self-doubt always seems to rear its ugly head, if just for awhile."

I want to, and almost do, say it: *Kingsley, how could you talk like this in front of people we — well, I — barely know! I'm curious, even desperate to know about gay relationships, yes. And it's true that we talked about this visit as an opportunity to explore this issue with some of your gay friends. And, yes, despite all this, I'm still not able to ask what I most need to ask, and am depending instead on you doing it for me. But, God, Kingsley, do you have to be so blunt? Everyone can tell it's me, not you, you're talking about.* Instead of stating my anger, frustration and outright humiliation, however, my face hardens, and my eyes fill with tears. Lowering my head and covering my eyes with both hands, I murmur, "What am I going to do, Kingsley? What am I going to do?" and look up longingly for an answer, any answer that might be offered.

Instead there is another deepening silence.

Larry looks searchingly at Richard, then turns to Kingsley. "Damn, Kingsley, what's going on? I knew you two lovebirds were busy making a nest, but I didn't realize that you came here tonight to scale Mt. Everest the very first day." Turning to me, he continues. "Hey, look, we had, and still have, lots of doubts and reservations. What lovers don't? It's not easy being a couple, gay or not. But if it seems right and you're willing to plunge in with your eyes and heart wide open I think, from what we've experienced, it can be for you like it is for us: a discovery experience far beyond anything you can imagine right now."

Stifling a sniffle and wiping a tear away, I look up to see Richard and Larry looking lovingly into each other's eyes, just like Kingsley and I so often do. This time, Richard speaks: "Like Larry just said, I think everyone struggles when they first make a long-term commitment to each other. Larry knows I still struggle mightily, but for me there's been something in the

struggle itself that has made our relationship what it is. One thing I can say for sure: I learn more about myself every day I'm with Larry. And who knows, maybe that's the true measure of love, gay or straight."

Richard continues, this time in a hushed voice, as if to me alone. "But I get the feeling that you already know this, at least in your heart. I'm going to make a big presumption, based on my own struggles, and ask if what you're really wanting to know right now is something more basic, like who's the man, the boss, the leader — who wears the pants — and what happens to the other person." I nod, my face still covered by my hands.

"The answer," he says, "at least for me, is that in the end, we both do. It sort of changes. Sometimes Larry's needs dominate. Sometimes, mine do. We pass the buck, so to speak, back and forth, sometimes assuming one role for a few minutes, another for a few months. I don't feel like either of us, over time, is distinctly top or bottom, if that's really what you're getting at. Personally, that's something I especially like about being with Larry and being gay."

Again, silence. I dry my eyes, silently pleading for Richard to keep talking. Kingsley squeezes my hand again and sighs.

Larry, still looking bewildered, asks me bluntly if I have a particular preference: top or bottom. I look painfully up at him and tell him that I don't know why, but exclusively bottom.

Up to now, I have kept my interest in receptive sex private. I am amazed, even aghast, at how easy it seems for Larry to talk about what for me is an unfathomably complex issue. Kept so carefully entombed all these years, it feels like I constantly harbor within me a nebulous but out-of-control beast always on the very edge of rampage, ready to pounce and consume me at the first opportunity. In reality it slowly consumes, bit by bit, me, my heterosexual-bisexual-homosexual world, whatever you wish to call it — and, in the process, everything I hold dear. My greatest fear at this moment however is not what, stripped of my past, I might actually be, but what form the beast will take when my heterosexual past finally shatters in the light of my unique relationship with Kingsley.

Immersed in fear, I almost miss Larry offhandedly asking if I don't miss topping. I shake my head to clear the thoughts that continue bombarding me from within. Larry takes my head shake as a no. In fact, to me at this moment there seems something grotesquely ludicrous about the thought of wanting to be on top of a man, despite the fact that not long ago I was and enjoyed being on top of Kingsley, just not in him. I grasp both Kingsley's hands, take a deep breath, and momentarily close my eyes to calm the chaos inside. I desperately want to say something, to be part of this important discussion and Kingsley's kind social group, but words refuse to come.

Larry finally asks me directly if I'm gay. I am even more flustered but this time, instead of letting my fears engulf me in another maelstrom of conflicted feelings and ideas, Kingsley comes to my aid. He tells Larry and Richard that he believes that beneath my bisexuality, I am gay, at least gay enough to appreciate and accept a gay relationship, given time to come to terms with my own self. Richard's eyes soften and he nods.

Silence once again descends.

The group, now much subdued, returns to discussing art, but more as an interlude than a primary interest. I relax and listen with more presence as Larry and Richard discuss their newest artistic creations. The sounds and the intrinsic rhythm of their witty foils and counterfoils transform into a melody in my mind and in my mind's eye, a vision of a dance forms. I see playful swordplay between three musketeers, inseparable friends who actually live the famous motto, "One for all and all for one." I see them dressed in seventeenth-century finery, tossing ribald jokes back and forth as they verbally sally, parry and riposte. Here are Athos, Porthos and Aramis, with me the young inexperienced d'Artagnan, looking on, eager, desirous yet hesitant to fully join in. This is a dance of more than just intellect, wit, skill and experience. It is one of camaraderie. One slip, one lapse, one hesitation and the sharp tip of a sallied word could accidentally slice a torso and pierce a heart.

Serendipitously, Kingsley mentions that I'm an accomplished dancer and he mentions some of my pen and ink

sketches of performances I'm planning. Reaching for his cup of coffee and in the process shifting his hand to my inner thigh, he mentions that he thinks they're quite good. Larry and Richard immediately ask to see some and, with newly found joy in my heart at being at last invited to join the group in something I am clear about, I promise to bring some next time. Larry, Richard and Kingsley all nod, seemingly satisfied at the offer and my response.

My promise and their acquiescence are tacit signals for the conversation to wind down and our visit to come to an end. As we rise I hear a clock in the background, chiming eleven. It's hard to believe we've been here so long. Now, as we hug each other warmly, walk back up the living room steps and slip back into our coats, it seems as if Kingsley and I arrived only moments ago. I shake Richard's hand and sense something different this time. We have both subtly changed. I feel it in his handshake, a true welcoming — warm and sincere — that I have been yearning so long and desperately for. There is something in his face that says that d'Artagnan, the bumbling but beloved initiate, has fallen under the personal protection of these three Musketeers of gay love. Larry, and especially Richard, proffer an open invitation to get together with them again.

As we walk out the door Larry and Richard follow, arm in loving arm. Kingsley and I climb into the car. I pull the starter and the sports car awakens with a throaty rumble. As we slowly crunch back down the luminous white gravel driveway, I look back over my shoulder and see Larry and Richard leaning against each other, smiling and waving. I may not know who I am, but if these two longtime gay friends of Kingsley's — and, of course, Kingsley himself — are willing to accept and help me, then I am satisfied.

Turning from the driveway onto the Pacific Coast Highway, the full moon unexpectedly illuminates Kingsley quietly contemplating me. I reach over and slip my shift hand momentarily onto his knee...and notice a flicker of concern. Yet as I retrieve my hand to shift through the remaining gears

the look of concern disappears, replaced by one of ardent love and warming desire.

Kingsley deftly slides a hand in back of my neck and begins playing with my tight curls as I drive. My body instantly melts into simmering, receptive heat. I slow the car and pull over next to a turnout panoramically overlooking the silvery, moonlit ocean, silhouetted at the sides by black, gnarled, windswept pines. Kingsley moves his hand to my chest, opens my jacket, unbuttons my shirt and, sliding his other hand in, gently strokes my nearest tit until it hardens. I feel his warm breath tickle my ear and listen, mesmerized, as he whispers how much he loves me. As if in a trance, I hear him distantly invite me out of the car.

Kingsley removes his inquisitive hands from my body and climbs out of the car into the aural silver darkness. He sits on the hood of the car, face-forward toward the endless ocean stretching out before us, the pale, swollen moon now at its very center. I turn the engine off, get out of the car and place myself in front of him, blocking his view with my body as I look him directly in the eyes.

Kingsley's hands drift forward, about and around me; minutes later, my jeans and shorts lie piled in a heap around my ankles. At his bidding I mechanically step out of them. He yanks my jacket and shirt off of my shoulders and tosses them to the side, then steps back and admires his work as I kick off my loafers and peel off my socks. Grinning wickedly he reaches down, grabs my shorts, jeans and shirt and cavalierly tosses them over the guardrail. I watch them concernedly as they float down the steep cliff, catching one breeze and then another, as if waving a plaintive goodbye before receding into the darkness below.

Suddenly aware of my nakedness I look nervously to my left and right, up and down the road. I reach for Kingsley, who is already teasing out from his jeans a long, eager, horse-like erection that has obviously been impatiently waiting for me since we departed his friends' house. The distant moon

suddenly slips behind a large cloud, plunging Kingsley, the ocean and, I hope, my nude body into darkness.

Despite the darkness, Kingsley's hands find their way around my slender hips, already growing moist with condensation from the cool night air. Pulling me forward against his hard cock while coaxing me to trust him, he interweaves his fingers behind me into a basket that surrounds my shivering buns. Kindly but adamantly he asks me to keep facing him, my buns in his hands, and to place my feet on the bumper on either side of his legs. I obediently comply.

My giddy nervousness suddenly changes to jittery foreboding when the moon bursts back out from behind the cloud, bathing the ocean, car, Kingsley and me in its pale, eerie light. Illuminated as if in a giant spotlight, I draw my arms and legs tightly together about him. I can hide my chest, but Kingsley's legs remain solidly between mine, leaving me, despite my efforts, open and exposed.

Kingsley, oblivious to my concerns, charges me to bring my knees up toward my chest and slowly lower myself onto the monumental phallus, glistening with pre-cum and dew, reaching up toward me from below. Complacently obeying his command the moment he nudges me, my anus reflexively sucks him in.

Kingsley steadies himself against the hood of the car and begins thrusting upwards. I grab the shoulders of his jacket, throw my head back and release my body into his control and the greater embrace of the ocean, moon and night surrounding me. Kingsley's thrusts quickly increase in power and determination, and within moments he is plunging his full length in and out of me with one determined lunge after another. His cold testicles slap excitedly against the bottom of my rump and I imagine myself a wild-eyed female warrior, cornered and taken by an opposing warrior, the enemy King, as his prisoner of war. Without thinking, I howl to the distant stars in an ancient, guttural language as an awestruck moon looks down lecherously on the enfolding primeval sight.

Kingsley, hearing me, joins me in a coarser, deeper animal call, lustily copulating, pouring his carnal seed into my

unresisting, fecund bowels. I open myself physically, mentally and emotionally to receive the ripe oblation totally, completely, unconditionally. Staring mistily up at the bright face of the moon immediately above me, I imagine myself a savaged virgin sacrifice, bound and struggling, my ravaged belly bloated with bestial spore, about to be laid on a flaming altar for vulgar nature to uncaringly accept or reject. As if in answer a shooting star streaks brightly across the sky, changing slowly from brilliant blue-white to dark blood-red before it plunges into the distant horizon. The gods are pleased. They bless our feral mating.

Kingsley, holding his breath, clutches me in a fiercely unrelenting grip, his iron-hard ramrod packed firmly into me, ejaculating over and over into my belly. I draw my body around the implanted shaft, allowing my anal muscles to strip out every last drop of his generous outpouring as a long, low, beast-like wail escapes from deep within my throat, projecting out in every direction, echoing back from the distant, moon-drenched hills.

Kingsley finally exhales, releases his grip, finally allowing me to awkwardly slide my well-fucked butt up and off of his still towering hard-on. I carefully extend my aching legs, re-placing my bare feet on the damp but solid asphalt. As we slowly separate, I gaze briefly at his face. Kingsley is sated, his dark, liquid eyes revealing for just an instant a jealous, solitary claim on me — his prize, his trophy and his sexual possession, his and his alone.

Kingsley awkwardly slips his shriveling cock back into his jeans, and I suddenly realize I'm standing on the edge of the road completely naked with what's left of my clothes scattered somewhere on the ground. I notice in the distance what I assume to be a shoe. As I turn and bend to retrieve it a brilliant flash of light pierces the night. I turn my head back over my bare shoulder just in time to see two headlights sweeping down from the distance, directly toward me. I suddenly hear the nauseating grind of heavy truck gears downshifting. I freeze, a deer caught unexpectedly its headlights, unable even to breathe.

Kingsley lurches forward, turning to get between me and the intrusive headlights, but they have already flashed from dim to bright. The long semi-trailer truck finally steps out of the darkness, continuing to slow until it barely crawls past us, brakes squealing, the smell of acrid burning rubber enveloping us. Its loud horn blares. The cacophony of lights and sounds then suddenly stops and everything plunges back into silence and darkness. A second of respite and my naked body is once again spotlighted in the bright shimmering moonlight.

Kingsley quickly looks around, grabs my jacket off the ground and tosses it around my shaking shoulders. I struggle awkwardly to put on one shoe I locate near me. His arm around me, he escorts me back to the driver's side of the car, where he opens the door and slips me in. I gasp as the leather seat grips, icy-cold and wet, onto my bare, feverish buns.

Kingsley walks quickly back around to the passenger side, in the process grabbing up my other shoe. I look up the road and notice the huge truck that passed us a moment ago stopped on the side of the road, its emergency lights flashing and a tall, dark figure walking alongside the road toward us. I can't believe this. I quickly search around for something, anything, to cover my unclothed lower body but all I can find are some pieces of an old, weather-beaten map stuffed in the glove compartment. Small, wet and limp, the colors running into each other and onto my hands, I try to place them strategically over as much of my naked lap as possible, sighing in frustration as the man walks up to my side of the car.

Kingsley stops getting in the car, instead straightening defensively to his full height as the burly, six-and-half-foot tall, unshaven hulk stops and stares first at me, then at him. "You two all right there?" he asks in a gruff voice, with the faintest note of chagrin.

"Ah...yeah," Kingsley retorts pointedly, trying to divert the man's attention from me. "We're fine. Just fine. Just admiring the coastline." He gestures openly toward the silvery moonlit ocean beneath the distant, black, star-studded horizon.

"Yeah, I know what you mean," the man says, winking at Kingsley then looking down into the car at my mostly naked, hairless lap and long, bare legs. "Nice view here. Don' know when I've seen anythin' quite like it before." He laughs, nodding his head indistinctly toward me and at the same time the view, then returning his gaze back to me. Right now all I want to do is slink down and die. "Too bad one can't buy somethin' like that, eh?" he says, looking expectantly at Kingsley and again back to me.

I squirm, trying unsuccessfully to cover more of myself, and in the process end up exposing both bare thighs and my hairless crotch as some of Kingsley's cum squirts unexpectedly out of me and glistens whitely onto the seat. The tough-looking man sniffs loudly and gazes at me with animal-like sexual hunger in his eyes. My hands tighten, one on the edge of the leather seat I'm sitting on — in a growing pool of Kingsley's pungent semen — the other frozen on the ignition switch. What did he just say? Buy something like what?

Kingsley flashes one of his winning smiles. "Yeah, too bad."

The man straightens up, rubbing his nose and coarse facial bristles with a large, hairy hand. "Well, looks you've got everythin' under control here, so I guess I'll be movin' on. Take care," he says, reluctantly releasing me from his visual stranglehold then turning and walking away.

I slowly let out the breath I've been holding all this time while forcing myself to sit silently in the growing pool of cold cum spreading out over the seat underneath me. The man in the distance suddenly stops and I almost choke, abruptly suckin' back in all the breath I've just let out. Turning back to face us, he lifts a hand and waves. "That was the best view I ever seen from that spot —ever — and thanks for sharing it with me. You've given me something special to jaw about with my truckin' friends for many years to come. See ya again sometime on the road I hope!"

Kingsley rolls his eyes and slides in. With him beside me, my body begins thawing again. I engage the starter my numb fingers have been frozen on for several minutes, and the engine

instantly rumbles to life. As I reach down and place my hand on the shift knob, I feel Kingsley's warm hand cover mine. With my other hand I flick on the headlights, and I look longingly at my wild-eyed Kingsley-animal, the mystical fantasy of the night in tatters all about me, seeds of tears forming in the corners of both of my eyes. I grind the car loudly into reverse, squeal the car jerkily backwards then grind it back quickly into first and prepare to tear off onto the highway. But no matter how hard I try, I just can't will it to happen. Instead I gun the accelerator without moving, letting the palpable rumble of the car course up through the gearshift, along my arm and into my bones as my eyes begin misting and defocusing.

Kingsley takes his hand off mine and places an arm around me, kissing me gently on the cheek, then ear, then neck. With sudden determination I lift my foot off the clutch and we roar onto the highway, back on our way home. Home. I just want to go home, to bed, with Kingsley between my legs, holding me. Home.

I awaken, wedged tightly in the curl of Kingsley's body, to a glorious morning. Bright California sunlight fills the bedroom. I snuggle deeper into the covers and his embrace until I feel his soft manhood against me stiffen. A little at a time, I twist around to face him. Slipping an arm around his muscular waist and looking up at his tranquil face, I imagine I am looking again into the lustful, bestial eyes of the wild warrior of last night. In my mind the warrior becomes a feral wolf, pacing around me, sniffing and licking at my crotch — exciting me till, as his bitch in unbearable heat, I yield, arch, present my dripping opening to him, beg him to mount and fuck me. I cuddle closer into Kingsley's sleeping embrace and, hot and bothered, slip under the sheets and down along his muscled body until the tip of his turgid penis touches my lips. Kingsley starts in his sleep.

I wet my lips and begin licking the swollen head of his member in long strokes. Kingsley shudders. I run my tongue along its fleshy rim and, parting my lips, suck in its tip, then head, and finally shaft until I alone own and control it. Sucking slowly, I slide my hands down his muscular hips, parting his firm buttocks with my fingertips and holding them apart with one hand while I trace a soft circle around his tiny, tightly-puckered anus with my index finger. Slipping the tip into its soft center, I begin sliding it in and out to the rhythm of my sucking. Kingsley begins rocking, at first jerkily but soon in perfect synchrony. I let my finger slip deeper, carefully controlling the depth and rhythm, encouraging him to amplify subsequent thrusts, willing him to unfurl his every feeling and emotion. Little by little I slowly impart to him direction, purpose and focus, until I sense that he is in a state of uncontrollable frenzy.

Kingsley suddenly explodes in my mouth, shivering, shaking, flooding me with salty ripe roe which I quickly swallow in anticipation of more. The feel of his warm semen sliding down my throat flames my own desire to incandescence. I run the

surface of my tongue along the length of his shaft, inviting, welcoming any remaining droplets, swallowing them as quickly as they emerge. Glutted, I stop, gasp momentarily and direct the last vestiges of piquant liquor down my throat and into my belly.

Sated, I remove my finger from him and the softening fountain from my mouth, kissing its bulbous end wetly. Kingsley smells and tastes distinctly of Kingsley — musty, rich, earthy, almost effervescent — like a truffle just picked out of the moist, forested earth. Kissing his flaccid member a final time, I wiggle up and out from under the sheets and look lovingly at his satisfied face, a Mona Lisa smile slowly unfolding upon it.

Pleased to have pleased him I cast myself adrift on the endless, deep, dark, still ocean that connects us, held gently afloat by love's gentle, unseen hands. Tiny waves of warmth ripple the quiescent surface, lapping sensuously at my body. The seed in my stomach suddenly seems to pulse and glow, warming me from within. I wrap my arms tightly around him and we grip each other tightly, echoes of raw sexual wantonness invisibly touching, stroking, teasing, coaxing us on. Kingsley kisses my lips, licking a streak of wet cum from my cheek. I gratefully nuzzle my cheek into his hand, my passion suddenly dissolving into a vast all-encompassing mist of endearing affection. How could I ever doubt Kingsley, myself or us? My mind, my heart, my body, my soul — each and all know what I need, want and desire. What part of me, then, is still holding back? And more importantly, why?

Over brunch, Kingsley mentions offhandedly that he would like to introduce me at noon to another gay friend, Jim, and his young lover, Mark. Jim is a fashion designer. Mark is, well, Kingsley assures me, someone I will find quite interesting. Am I up to it? Can I meet him dockside for lunch? I nod affirmatively, kiss him quickly on the nose, and challenge him to see which of us can get through the front door first. Kingsley somehow beats me there by several seconds! Pouting, I throw myself forward, intentionally crashing into him and, with him off-balance, wiggling in front of him and out of the door,

sticking my tongue out at him as I walk nonchalantly off. Kingsley runs after me and on the sidewalk, in view of whatever curious neighbors might just happen to be watching, grabs me around the waist. Taking his hand in mine I laugh joyfully, turn, peck his nose once more with a very wet sloppy kiss, struggle out of his grip and run down the sidewalk, looking back every few moments, taunting him to re-catch me.

We separate at the dock for awhile then meet a short time later for lunch, which for the two of us usually means a cup of coffee at a favorite ramshackle wharf-side diner hanging precariously over the water. Packs of white seagulls scream in circles outside as, one after another, small fishing boats drone past the diner to deliver their catches to the local fish market just down the pier.

Inside the quaint cafe, sour dockside smells commingle with the luscious aroma of rich, French-roast coffee. I look around and instantly pick him out from everyone. I casually walk over and sit next to him. Kingsley immediately introduces me to a man seated on his other side. Jim is a tall, thin, fair-skinned but well-muscled young man with long, straight dishwater-blond hair. I extend a hand. Jim rises, looks me over carefully and nods but, interestingly, doesn't take my hand. He is wearing a weathered, salt-and-pepper Greek fisherman's sweater over spotless fashion designer jeans. Handsomely chiseled, close-shaved, with an almost aristocratic air of higher education and an infectious smile, Jim stands silently while I delicately withdraw my hand, nodding back at him to show neither offense nor hurt.

For some reason, talking with Jim comes easy; it is as if we've met somewhere or sometime before though, after exploring the idea for several minutes, to the best of our collective knowledge, we haven't. Kingsley, normally talkative, listens quietly and attentively to our spirited conversation.

After a few minutes Jim, soft-spoken and yet incredibly erudite, asks me if I have any interest in fashion design. After assuring him that performance dancers like me who enjoy being in the spotlight are by necessity well-aware of the central role

fashion plays in performance dance, Jim tells Kingsley he would like to show me his design studio and perhaps take me shopping in the fashion district. Kingsley is obviously pleased. Giving his assent, he excuses himself and gets up to return to work. I watch disconcerted as he leaves the diner, delaying just long enough to wave reassuringly before disappearing down the dock. Looking back at Jim, I think he notices my uneasiness at being apart from Kingsley and alone with a stranger. Jim casually smiles one of Kingsley's heretofore patented, winning smiles and extends an open hand toward the door.

Outside, Jim hails a taxi, which takes us along the back streets of the wharf to the edge of the industrial area. Forty or fifty large, boxy, three-story, lookalike brick warehouses, in various shades of Stalinesque gray, line each side of the street as far as the eye can see. Dark patina flows like black, bloody tears from the corners of hundreds of soot-blackened third-story windows, all looking like clones of each other. The taxi stops in front of the second building and we exit, exchanging the sunny world of San Francisco's dock area for the dank, dreary world of the industrial section. Jim directs my attention to an aged, flaking, green wooden door with three padlocks.

I freeze, dread clutching my arm. Why have I allowed Jim, a man I just met at the wharf and hardly know at all, to take me to a lonely, sinister place like this? Jim, oblivious to my fear, casually walks up the three crumbling concrete steps, unlocks the padlocks, one after another, and opens the creaky door, motioning for me to follow him inside. From where I'm standing, the inside looks darker and even more ominous than the outside. I imagine a person, standing where I am, held at gunpoint, walking into the darkness and disappearing forever from the face of the earth.

Jim walks in, unconcerned, waving to me to join him while reaching his other hand behind the doorway. Four loud thuds sound, one after another, and the interior suddenly floods with bright light. My fear lessened and curiosity piqued, I follow him up the steps and through the old, battered green door into a huge, modern, combination clothing factory and warehouse. The space is divided into work areas by solid color panels

stretching from the floor halfway up to the 20-foot high ceiling. Jim's hand moves again. A loud click echoes throughout the space, and "Jim's World" suddenly blazes high above us in fivefoot rainbow letters that float like ghosts in the air.

"Wow," I finally break loose.

"Glad you like it," says Jim. "This is my world." Jim points toward the various areas as he continues. "We're standing in the customer reception area. Over there is my design studio. Next to it, over there, is where we do measurements and fittings. Next to that is where my models dress to show my customers what the finished product will look like. I have sixteen design artists who work with me, transforming customer ideas into instant visual prototypes. I find that with the prototype before them, customers can better tell me exactly how they would like the garment to evolve. I make the original creation pretty much right before their eyes, and then over there either manufacture one, several or many depending on their specific needs and pocketbook."

The customer reception area is a mix of stainless steel, glass and white leather, with two ten-foot long leather sofas facing a large, royal red stage in the center. Jim's private design studio is immediately to the left of the stage and the model's area to the right. Jim walks over to the far side of the dais, his shoes clicking against the hardwood floor and echoing throughout the building. A heavy clunk sounds, and six white spotlights blaze down from a metal frame with what looks like hundreds more, differently-colored, spotlights suspended from the ceiling. The white spotlights all focus into one approximately three-foot diameter circle on the stage at center front.

"Like it?" Jim asks with pride.

"Yes," I manage in awe. "It's big enough to do a dance performance," I add slowly taking in its massive size.

"Some of my customers have said the same. Most find it daunting at first, but eventually they succumb to the allure of standing in the spotlight on my stage in a unique creation made

by me. Would you like to try it? Please, be my guest,” he says gesturing toward the spotlight center of the stage before me.

I walk slowly up to it, shedding my jacket and kicking off my shoes. Straightening, I drop my shoulders, extend my spine and invite my muscles to prepare for a performance. Closing my eyes I breathe deeply, imagining myself standing on a show dance floor, my tightly clinging, black Latin pants hugging my narrow waist, my black silk shirt open to my navel, sleeves billowing, both arms extended palms-up to a standing crowd clapping and roaring accolades. I walk slowly, feeling each step with my toes as I move imperiously onto the stage, asking my muscles to bless what I am about to offer in their honor. At last, with both feet planted firmly on the stage, I open my eyes and walk confidently into the center spotlight. My body instantly begins vibrating with terpsichorean energy, the brilliant light pressing hotly against me like Kingsley’s lips and thighs, invigorating my senses with a godlike perception, power and presence. I extend my hands, embrace the divine energy swirling around me, collect it in my arms and gather it all at once into the very center of my being.

My body, as if under some god’s control, suddenly snaps erect, muscles stretched tautly, every line directed straight above like a spear, ready at the slightly thrust of its master to soar straight up into the heavens, into the hand of the god who, at this one forever moment, controls my dance. I stamp once, stretching every muscle outwards to its utmost limit and, as the thump begins to echo throughout the warehouse like the heartbeat of a huge awakening beast, I begin clapping my hands sharply together, releasing the explosive tension, my body slowly, sinuously, moving in rhythm to the echoing beat. The dance is now in the god’s hands and I am but his vessel, his puppet.

How long this lasts I do not know, but suddenly the vibrating golden cord within me snaps, the energy dissolves, and I awaken from the ecstatic trance — my arms, hands and fingers outstretched at my sides, my face extended upwards directly into the light. For a fleeting second I am the *élan vital*, the spark that animates all life, the single center-point around

which the entire living universe revolves. Then, the moment gone, an unfathomable sense of emptiness grips me.

From somewhere offstage, I hear two hands clap sharply together. The clapping continues sharper and faster, until a booming voice pierces the air. "Damn! That was...magnificent! Bravo! Bravo!" My eyes search the blinding whiteness around me and finally locate Jim's dim figure staring at me, his hands still clapping, a warm smile on his face, a look of total awe in his eyes. "Kingsley said you could dance, but I...well... I've never seen anything like that. You're amazing! Amazing! Amazing! Damn!"

I take a deep breath, willing my taut, exhausted muscles to relax, slowly regaining control of my body. "Th...thanks," I eventually mumble, still tingling with the touch of the god. I recall my teacher and his last admonition, to always ask for inspiration because, when granted, in the ecstatic frenzy that follows, inspired dance elevates itself from dance to something spiritual, better than the best sex. Immediately an image of Kingsley, his thick, long, hard manhood planted solidly in my belly, flashes through my reverie. Is it really better than sex? I think so...except, that is, sex with Kingsley.

Jim, presumably reading some of my thoughts from the look on his face as I continue returning to my body, proffers, "Watching you, I realize why Kingsley keeps saying that you are the best partner he's ever known — better than his wildest dreams. God, I love your dancing! Your narrow, inviting hips — you've got one great ass, you know!"

Flustered by Jim's praises and directness, and then by a memory of Kingsley similarly praising my ass and easy receptiveness before his gay friends, a twinge of the sadness I felt moments ago, when the golden cord suddenly severed, reverberates within me. Above the somber note, however, the joy of the dance still resonates, and I wonder for a second, is it my thought of the god a moment ago or of Kingsley that elevates me now? I shake my head in confusion. Jim walks to the edge of the dais and reaches a hand out gently toward me. I take it, a wave of gratitude rippling through my body, and I allow

him to lead me down, out of the spotlight and back to harsh reality. As I step down I feel cold and suddenly realize I'm covered in downy sweat. I reach to brush the sweat from my brow, but Jim's hand is already there, tenderly stroking my face. I stop, shocked at his touch, but even more so at my willingness — my surprisingly deep desire — to be touched by him.

Jim leads me over to the other side of the stage, where I had earlier cast aside my shoes and jacket, picks the jacket up from the floor and drapes it over my shivering shoulders. I push myself away from his supporting arms and collapse onto the floor, my hands shaking so much I have to struggle mightily just to slip on my loafers. The god that took my body this time animated me with an intensity I have never felt before. Time has slowed; I feel as though I'm dressing before Kingsley in slow motion. I lift my eyes up and notice that Jim's eyes, gentle and sky-blue, radiate the same hungry intensity I have seen in Kingsley's. I look back down, finish dressing.

As I shakily arise, my head suddenly starts to swim. Jim puts his arms around me, maybe out of concern or helpfulness, maybe courtesy, maybe affection. I mumble some form of "Thank you," and again push him away. Finally my mind clears; I feel I am once again awake and in my body. Jim hesitates, then takes a step back.

"I've never seen or met anyone like you..." he says, his voice trailing off.

I nod complacently and the world abruptly shifts back to the way it felt earlier today when I was racing Kingsley to the door: Whole. Joyful. Fun. Crazy. I struggle with, and finally reluctantly accept that, something has just happened between Jim and me, something intimate, something I intensely desire; yet having realized it, I want desperately now to let go of and retain it only as a memory — another tiny thread in my new rich life, but one that ends here and now, with no further present or future presence.

Jim proves a gracious guide and friend, escorting me on a tour of the remainder of his facility that ends in his private studio. I appreciate his courteousness as he shows me drawings

of what he considers some of his best fashion ideas, ending by offering, maybe even begging, to make me a performance costume as a gift in return for my dance for him. Anytime, he says. I thank him profusely and we both fall into awkward silence. For him. What exactly does that mean to him, I wonder.

Jim offers to continue our adventure together by taking me shopping for clothes in the Castro District. I start to protest, but he insists that it is his pleasure and that, for today, art is everything and money no object. I again protest, but Jim brushes my protestations aside with a wave of his hand and without waiting for my response calls loudly outside to make sure our taxi is still waiting for us. It is. Walking together, with Jim in the lead and me a safe distance behind, he checks the huge warehouse a final time. Back at the customer waiting area, he grabs my elbow and reaches to the side of the doorway. The warehouse lights die one by one with dull echoing thuds, plunging the interior back into the abject darkness it had when I first looked hesitantly inside.

After locking, checking and rechecking the three padlocks, we climb into the cab and zoom off, out of the murky industrial district and back into the vibrant, sunny San Francisco that I know and love so well. It's mid-afternoon by the time we reach the Castro district. Jim asks the cabbie to stop and pays him, peeling off bill after bill from a large roll, and we jump out and join the crowd of male-male couples engaged in noisy afternoon promenades.

Jim escorts me from one shop to another, suggesting clothes and accessories, patiently waiting while I try them on then launching into a fashion designer's critical assessment of the various looks he believes they engender — selecting one, declining another for me. I enjoy seeing this aspect of his character and find myself once again strongly and uncomfortably drawn to him.

Though Jim seems oblivious to time, the air is cooling and the sun beginning to set in the distance over the rows of pastel painted houses, most cradling beneath a multi-story domicile a single first floor shop opening onto the street. I start to

mention the time, but Jim is already vociferously directing me into one last shop “I simply must visit.” One step into the shop and my hackles rise.

The shops and goods so far have been bright and colorful, like Jim’s designs. This shop, however, is dark and smells of old wood, earthy incense and leather. Along one wall are rows and rows of riding crops. Along the opposite wall are scanty leather creations: harnesses, pants, undergarments, even restraints. I start to back out but Jim sweeps me further into the room, introducing me to the owner, whom he obviously knows quite well. The owner is dressed in black leather — leather fisherman’s hat, leather shirt, and tight leather pants — and looks like a young teen runaway. “Mark,” Jim says to the boy, “this is Kingsley’s new partner,” and to me, “This is my partner, Mark.”

Shocked wordless, I try to say something but end up just gaping. Realizing my indiscretion, I suddenly flush. Mark, however, smiles and reaches out a soft hand to me. I take it and flush deeper, hotter and redder. Jim’s boy partner.

Mark, apparently catching my drift, smiles broadly and in a surprisingly mature voice says, “Kingsley talks about you constantly. It’s a pleasure to finally meet you,” shaking my hand with surprising firmness. “And, ah, just so you know, I’m twenty-three, though that’s not something I usually tell everyone right off.”

Relieved somewhat but still rattled, I look from Mark to Jim and back to Mark, then start a profuse apology. Mark, wanting to ease my discomfort, interrupts. “Hey, don’t sweat it. My youthful appearance startles many people at first. You ought to see the way some people look when Jim and I kiss in public. Me, I’ve gotten used to it, and just take it as a compliment. So, Kingsley’s New Partner, are you looking for something in particular?” he asks with a lascivious grin.

Once again abashed, Jim comes this time to my rescue. “No, not really. I just wanted to introduce you two. I showed him the studio and thought it would be fun to show him the District and pick out some things for him to show off to Kingsley.”

Mark looks at me with his astonishingly intense lavender-green eyes and laughs. "And this would be your last stop I imagine. Jim's one hell-of-a-fashion designer. He's number one in San Francisco and many say he's number one world-class. Living with him, I know he is. Leather, on the other hand, that's my thing. I'm not a designer, but I know what I like in leather. Here, look," he says, pointing to the wall of leather riding crops. "It may sound surprising, but I can be pretty strong-willed and very difficult for Jim to handle."

"Impetuous and strong-willed," Jim repeats, running the end of a woven leather riding crop through his fingers. Turning back toward me, Jim continues: "Show him something that Kingsley would like."

A cold wind brushes the back of my neck and makes my body quiver. Leather? Something Kingsley would like?

"Ah, back here." Jim continues leading me toward the rear of the shop to what appears to be several dressing rooms, each entrance covered with a black leather curtain, "something Kingsley might like" resounding in my head.

"Kingsley likes leather?" I finally blurt out.

"Who doesn't," Jim retorts. "Don't you?"

"Yeah, I guess so," I begin, Mark having quickly moved in front of me, looking deep in thought, a tape measure draped around his long, tapered neck. Jim steps back out of the way.

Mark grabs my shoulders with both hands and slowly turns me around, examining me in minute detail as if he could see beneath my clothes. "Nice butt," he mutters.

Jim, smiling, nods his assent. "You should see him dance."

"A dancer? Really?" asks Mark with incredulity. "I love dancing."

"I know," Jim says, condescendingly.

"A dancer," Mark repeats mistily, finishing his measuring. "OK, how about something like this?" Mark pulls a black leather chest harness off the wall. Six one-inch wide oiled

leather straps radiate outward from a single, thick, two-inch diameter shiny steel ring. One strap is permanently riveted onto a second identical steel ring; the other straps each have a snap allowing them to attach to the second ring. "Shows off every move you make," continues Mark, "especially when worn with this." Mark unveils another strap of leather, this one designed to encircle the waist, with two smaller straps riveted onto its front obviously designed to wrap around either side of the genitals. "Both fasten in the back and, voila, can be locked with a small padlock," he says, holding a steel lock dangling an attached key in his outstretched hand. His eyes flicker brightly for a moment toward Jim, "For added dramatic effect."

"Great! I like it," declares Jim, "and so will Kingsley." Turning to me, he continues, "A little gift from me to you to commemorate your extraordinary dance. Try dancing for Kingsley in this and see what happens." Jim peels off several bills, and Mark carefully slips the harness and belt together into a small black velvet bag. Before I can protest, Jim is thanking Mark while at the same time explaining to me that he has to get me back home to Kingsley; he ends the Daedalian conversation by blowing a quick kiss to Mark.

Mark, already behind the counter assisting another male couple, looks up briefly as we leave, waves sweetly and returns his attention back to his customers.

It's evening by the time Jim, a look of satisfaction on his face, and I, with several sets of new clothes, get out of the taxi at my house. Jim asks the driver to wait a few minutes and escorts me to the door. I unlock and slowly open the door, wondering how Jim expects me to conclude our little soiree, only to find Kingsley standing on the other side of the door asking if I've had a good time.

Before I can answer, he's already inviting Jim to come in a while and join us. Jim agrees and, after paying and dismissing the taxi driver, joins us. Kingsley asks again if I've had a good time, but I don't know what to say about my day with Jim now that I'm back at home with Kingsley next to me and Jim at his side.

Kingsley asks me what Jim bought me and, like a child eager to see some new candy, reaches into one of the larger shopping bags. My hand is quicker, however, searching around and moving aside the small velvet bag. Kingsley suddenly withdraws his hand and suggests that instead of just showing him, I actually try on all my new clothes for both of them to see. I can see by his face he expects me to be thrilled. In truth, my hand still clinging desperately onto the velvet bag, I'm horrified.

Kingsley, mistaking my horror for shyness, suggests I change in our bedroom while Jim and he talk. I turn, dragging the shopping bags grudgingly behind me into the bedroom, and shut the door. Once inside, I turn them upside down over the bed, letting all my new acquisitions — or, more accurately, Jim's gifts to me — fall into a heap in the center of the bed, four sets of clothes all in all, counting the skimpy leather outfit in the velvet bag.

I undress and put on the first outfit, a gray, washed silk shirt with light tan deck pants that tie at the waist. In the distance I hear Jim complimenting Kingsley on my ass which, from the sound of Kingsley's voice, pleases him immensely. I slip into matching gray silk socks and black calfskin loafers and sigh deeply. I'm ready — ready to show off for Kingsley. But what about for Jim? I suddenly feel flustered, but in the end tell myself that it doesn't matter. After all, I'm here for Kingsley, not Jim. The thought, however, seems to echo back and forth empty within my mind. I am here just for Kingsley, aren't I?

Feeling like a model about to climb onto the catwalk, I open the door and saunter out with a determination I don't feel inside. Their conversation stops. Kingsley's and Jim's eyes instantly lock on me. My initial uneasiness rapidly growing, I tell myself *if you have it, you might as well flaunt it* and recklessly throw a hip out as I slowly approach them. Kingsley grins ear-to-ear but Jim, expressionless, seems to be measuring every movement I make like a hawk does its prey. I stop and turn and, holding my head high, extend both arms then turn again and put a hand on one hip as I show off the back view. Jim wolf-whistles and I feel my face flush, partly in embarrassment, partly in pleasure, the rest in smoldering anger.

“Nice. Real nice, don’t you think, Kingsley? Gorgeous the way the gray brings out his eyes and the pants the sharp sexy butt line. This one’s my personal favorite,” Jim announces like a fashion emcee. Kingsley nods and points to the bedroom, clearly pleased.

Nice? Gorgeous? Sexy butt? Who does he think he is? Back in the bedroom, I quickly shed the clothes Jim favors and, fuming, toss them with sudden disgust into a corner of the room. Looking at them from where I stand, and then at my naked body reflected in the large mirror on the other side of the room, I tell myself it’s not the clothes but the man inside that matters and steel myself for the next round.

This time, I don a long-sleeved, high-collared, low-cut, slinky, midnight-blue rayon shirt with matching slinky high-cut slacks that definitely cling to my buns, creating a deep, visible cleft that separates them invitingly. A blue-black belt, buckle, socks, black calfskin loafers and a gray sweater, its arms tied over my shoulders, completes the outfit. I feel like a young Elvis Presley. I look at myself in the mirror: Add designer sunglasses and I would look like monied royalty, dressed for an expensive night out gaming and partying. Ready, I decide to this time focus solely on Kingsley and completely ignore Jim, irrespective of what he says or does.

Feeling more centered at last, I enter the living room and walk forward exuding absolute confidence. As I approach them, however, Kingsley and Jim ignore me, continuing their conversation until I stop, legs apart, hands on my hips, standing directly in front of Kingsley. That at last brings the conversation to a screeching halt. I slowly turn, keeping my eyes on Kingsley, displaying the back for him. After a moment I turn and, facing him again, place my open palm on the side of his face, slowly sliding it down his cheek and neck. Turning haughtily away, I walk casually back to the bedroom as if totally disinterested in their stupid conversation, irrespective of whatever interesting things they are undoubtedly saying about me.

In the bedroom, flushed with success, I quickly change into the third set of clothes, my personal favorite, a simple denim

blue, distressed silk shirt open to mid-chest, a pair of tight-fitting designer jeans that suggestively show the outline of my soft manhood at the crotch, and a pair of dark maroon penny-loafers. No socks. Add an old-looking, distressed brown leather belt with the simplest of buckles and I feel like an entirely different man. Encouraged by the sudden quiet in the living room I enter, walk over to the couch where they're sitting, place my hands in Kingsley's and sit down on him straddling his knees. Jim, on the further side of the couch, stiffens, extending his neck to get a better look.

"This one, on the other hand, is the most tempting, I think. What about you, Kingsley?" Jim asks banally. "It brings out the wild west lurking inside his gorgeous body, while at the same time broadcasting a loosely moralistic, ivy-league East Coast decadence that's impossible to ignore. It's about as natural as one can get while still wearing clothes. But that's, of course, for you to decide when you see the last outfit — selected personally, by the way, by Mark for your unmitigated pleasure."

Kingsley turns his gaze from me to Jim and back to me, a wicked smile growing on his face, and flicks a finger toward the bedroom. I freeze. I've been able so far to show Kingsley what Jim bought me with only minor embarrassment, the last two outfits by ignoring Jim and his ignominious comments altogether. This next time, however, that won't be possible. I will be almost completely naked in front of not just Kingsley, but this still largely unknown stranger who I have strong, mixed feelings about. I rise, still holding Kingsley's hands, and look contemptuously over toward Jim. Jim brazenly directs a lecherous gaze at the bulge in my crotch. I instantly turn away and start to negotiate with Kingsley to make the last showing private, just for him. Kingsley however, blind to what is transpiring between Jim and me, just laughs, lets go of my hands and slaps me smartly on the butt, pointing again toward the bedroom. As I exit, I can already hear Jim describing the last outfit to Kingsley in garish detail.

Once again in the safe confines of the bedroom, I strip down to nothing and, locating the black velvet pouch, loose its purse string and turn it upside down, shaking out the leather

harness and what is essentially a leather G-string. I can't wear this, I decide, no matter what Jim or Kingsley likes. What am I saying? I mean, no matter what Kingsley likes. Yet despite the initial revulsion, the thought of Kingsley ogling me in leather intrigues me: Would Kingsley really like this?

No, I can't wear it, I just can't. I pick the harness up and examine it with...what? Curiosity? I look at it from several different angles. It won't hide anything. Anything! I hold the harness up to my chest and look at my reflection in the mirror across the room. Actually, it isn't all that bad. After all, I don't cover my chest when swimming in front of others. Wearing the harness couldn't be any worse than going swimming with Kingsley and Jim. I sit on the bed and lay one strap up over each shoulder and two around my chest just below my armpits, and drape the final two down along the bottom edge of my ribs. Reaching back, I awkwardly snap each end to the center ring in back. I twist to look at my back in the mirror. As Mark pointed out, a padlock could be threaded through the attached snaps making the harness impossible to remove without the key bearer's assistance. I stand hesitantly, this time facing the mirror. As I move my arms, the radiating web of black leather straps move sinuously with me, back and forth, showing off every line of every muscle, drawing viewers' eyes outward from the centered steel ring to whichever muscle I tense. Actually, I rather like the effect and smile at my reflection. If I were dancing for Kingsley, for him alone, I would wear just this harness and nothing more.

I kneel on the bed, inching myself to its center and slowly giving myself permission to pick up the final leather appurtenance, holding it like an old, smelly fish before me with two fingers. If it was rolled up it would fit easily in one cupped palm. I unravel it and inquisitively wrap the largest leather strap around my waist, then thread the two smaller straps down around either side of my shaved genitals. Reaching around back, I struggle and at last snap the ends onto the steel ring like the one on the harness but slightly smaller. Again, a padlock would make taking the skimpy thing off difficult, if not impossible. I scoot on my knees to the edge of the bed nearest the mirror

and examine myself from every possible angle. The leather heightens and highlights everything: my chest, tits, muscular abdomen, hairless pubic area, soft penis and dangling balls. I rotate my hips and am surprised at how evocative the result is. Hell, even I find myself sexually exciting in this outfit! OK, if this is what Kingsley wants to see me in, if Jim is telling me the truth that this is something he will like, and if he's willing for Jim to see me in like this, then so be it.

I walk to the door and place a cold, trembling hand on the handle. In the background, I hear Jim finish telling Kingsley about our visit to Mark's shop. I take a deep breath, turn the handle, fling open the door and begin walking to where they are sitting. Jim notices me first, stopping in mid-sentence. Kingsley immediately turns toward me. His jaw drops. I panic. I didn't expect Kingsley to be shocked, I expected him to be ...well, amazed? Astounded? To drool over me? To rush up and cover me from Jim's inquisitive eyes?

Kingsley, however, recovers surprisingly quickly, an approving smile creeping across his face. From deep within his dark eyes I see flashes of pure, unadulterated lust. Good. I relax and continue focusing on Kingsley alone. Walking over in front of him, I raise my hands above my head, run my fingers through my hair and slowly begin rotating my hips in a figure-of-eight. Kingsley can't seem to tear his attention from my hips, so I decide to excite him further by working my sinuous fingers and hands down my body until they touch my small, soft nipples, stroking them in front of him until I feel them harden and peak. Then I continue working my hands down the sides of my belly, along the edges of my winding hips and, finally, back behind my buns, displaying myself as outrageously and lewdly as possible. Being careful to avoid looking at Jim, I turn while continuing to sway and rotate my hips, slowly bending over at the waist and showing my well-admired buns to Kingsley. Staring forward, away from Jim while continuing to sinuously gyrate my hips, I slide my hands down to the inside of my thighs. The silence that fills the room is so profound that I can hear Kingsley's and Jim's coarse panting in vulgar counterpoint to the almost, but not quite, silent wind rustling outside through

the trees. Two cold hands — surely they must be Kingsley's — touch my gyrating rump then grasp the curve of my buttocks, pulling me back toward what I now pray is Kingsley. Sitting down with my ass cheeks split wide open over his muscular legs, I feel Kingsley encircle my abdomen with his powerful hands and pull me onto a huge erection welling up from beneath his clothes.

"Yeah, well, I think it's time for me to go," I hear Jim remark in the distance. Kingsley offers no objection as Jim gets up and walks to the door. "Don't bother, Kingsley, I can see myself out."

Kingsley doesn't. Jim opens the front door, starts walking out into the darkness, hesitates and, peeking back inside at us, says offhandedly, "I hope you enjoy your gift. That's one heck of-a-partner you have there. You deserve each other. Well, enjoy," and he exits, closing the door with a resounding thud.

Even before the door shuts, Kingsley is already pushing me onto my knees. Holding me firmly with one hand by the leather strap around my waist, I hear him unbuckle and unzip his pants with the other. I arch and present myself to expose the swollen anal bud I imagine peeking between the two small leather straps highlighting my buns. Kingsley places the already-wet head of his stiff member firmly against me and bears down incisively. My swelling bud spreads wetly around and engulfs his stiff, arching erection. Kingsley grips the back of the belt tighter and drives upwards in a single, smooth, gliding motion, ramming the thick head of his long pole high above my impatiently waiting prostate. I stretch my hands out in front of me and brace to receive a full day's supply of pent up seed.

Not to be disappointed, Kingsley shakes convulsively and instantly begins spurting jets of warm liquid deep into my insides. I reach a hand back behind me to try to slow his ferocious pounding, but Kingsley just tightens his grip on the leather belt and continues thumping and pumping me. I grunt and grab wildly behind me with both hands to try to remove the embedded stick of dynamite already in the process of exploding inside of me.

Kingsley abruptly loosens the strap and grabs both my wrists from behind while continuing to pump. Without hands to brace myself my head drops to the floor, my new position allowing Kingsley to push his tool in even deeper, discharging yet more of this particularly heavy load centrally into me. I breathe deeply, my belly swelling slightly larger with each subsequent detonation.

Kingsley continues his frenzied bombardment until sweat pours out and down his body, quickly running down the crack between my outstretched cheeks, further lubricating the pike still pounding and impaling me. My belly, swollen like a ripe watermelon, finally can hold no more. Sprays of cum begin squirting out my occluded hole with each retreat, wetting Kingsley, the couch and floor all about us.

His thrusts finally lessening, my body — seemingly on its own initiative — suddenly erupts in a searing, convulsive, orgasmic explosion. I scream in ecstasy as a volcanic heat courses up from deep inside me up through my well-lathered hole and spreads throughout my body. I rear like a wild pony while Kingsley, once again holding fast onto the leather waistband, rides me like a broncobuster, refusing to exit.

I try again to reach behind me and pull him off, but without avail. Kingsley sinks his staff deeper into me a final time, forcing out of himself a final spurt of virile sperm. His final burst, now exceeding my own orgasmic critical mass, starts my body into rhythmic eruptions, the writhing mass of molten lava-sperm within me igniting what I sense to be an uncontrollable, crowning, climactic firestorm. Rational thought explodes into fragments, and the fragments dissolve in a broiling sea of seething sensation and emotion. I mindlessly buck, thrust, scream and grind, each action burying his sharp barb deeper inside of me. Seconds, minutes, hours or days — I can no longer tell — pass during the surging, flowing, ethereal orgasmic blast.

My first cohesive thoughts are, *My God, am I dead? Have I lost my mind? Whose body, mine or Kingsley's, is still thrusting like a horny stag; whose is wet and dripping like a doe, still locked in the throes of heat?*

*Whose body is slap, slap, slapping against the other?* Completely helpless to stop the relentless orgasms, I ask myself briefly why it even matters, at the same time letting go and drifting into a multicolored, multi-textured, fantasy world of constant climax.

By the time I regain my senses, I imagine it to be well past midnight by the feel and smell of the cool, night air creeping over my body. I slowly piece together that I am lying on my side in front of the sofa on the living room floor, in a huge puddle of cold, sticky semen, with Kingsley wrapped warmly around my back and still inside of me. I try to move but, weighed down by Kingsley and drained with exhaustion, my aching muscles refuse. I decide instead to snuggle deeper into his arms, but instead arouse the soft penis within me and feel it stiffen, elongate, widen, and stretch my exquisitely sore anus. My lower body suddenly spasms painfully around the turgid cock stretching me taut. Kingsley groans and shifts his body, the move instinctively shoving the cudgel buried within me deeper. Pins and needles pierce my distended, aching tunnel, and I quickly suck in my breath. I start to say something but my throat is too dry, and it is everything I can do to clear my throat. Even that small effort, however, reawakens waves of muscular contractions inside of me. I arch my back, and Kingsley, his strong hands still gripped around the restraining wet leather belt, sleepily tucks his pelvis forward, propelling his hard, up-curved erection further forward. I distantly sense the familiar squeezes begin just outside the grip of my clenched anus that portend, even when sleeping as he is, a powerful, reflexive emission. His nocturnal gift ripples effortlessly up the soft underside of his hard rod, and moments later my cold belly suddenly floods with warm cum. Ah, Kingsley. If leather is what you like me in, then I am yours in leather and love.

Kingsley slides his chin over my shoulder and breathes ticklishly in my ear. I turn my head back toward him and kiss his rough, scraggly cheek, whispering that it's time we go to bed. Kingsley, lost in sleep, smiles angelically and slips his stiff member further inside of me. I sigh, moving my wet hindquarters more centrally around his staff, awkwardly kissing

the side of his lips. Kingsley groans and sleepily empties another load into my overflowing pot.

After awhile Kingsley stirs and stiffly, slowly, untangles himself, in the process pulling out of me. Rising half-asleep above me, he offers me a hand which I gladly accept. I pull myself up off the floor, careful not to slip in the huge pool of pungent semen all around us. As I stand a familiar urgency quickly overcomes me and I grab for Kingsley, afraid I'm going to faint. I cross my legs, bend over and try to will the cramp to sweep its uncomfortable way through me. A harder cramp suddenly grips me and, in desperation, I slide a finger between my legs, through a raw and pulsing anus, then deeper into a huge chamber within that is filled with warm liquid — a massive reservoir of Kingsley's numerous gifts from yesterday, last night and a short while ago. Kingsley laughs sleepily and, grabbing me by the shoulders, escorts my bent, waddling figure into the bathroom.

Halfway there I grunt and begin to run, semen streaming like a waterfall down the hand beneath me, spraying my thighs and legs and splashing all around the hallway and bathroom floor. I move toward the toilet but Kingsley says "No" and spreads several towels on the floor, helps me onto my back, and instructs me to raise my hips up as high as I can. The very act of raising my hips starts another cramp but this time, with my pelvis thrust high in the air, no further semen escapes and the cramp quickly subsides.

Kingsley squats down beside me, slips a comforting hand beneath the small of my back and begins gently but firmly massaging my abdomen with the other. I try to relax but, anticipating more cramps, can't seem to get my abdominal muscles to agree. Kingsley, resting supportively next to me, begins softly singing while continuing to massage my stomach until the anxiety dissolves and suddenly, worn and haggard, my abdominal muscles release en masse. I immediately lower my buns onto the floor, floating indolently on the peaceful, dreamy tide within. Kingsley continues singing while slipping a wetted towel beneath my wilted genitals and into the raw, burning fold between my buttocks. A flood of intense, pure pleasure courses

through me and, following the soothing melody of his voice I drift off into nothingness, my belly finally accepting the many gifts inside.

I awaken on my back, in our bed, swaddled in crisp fresh bed sheets, iridescent sunshine riding a sweet springtime breeze that streams in through the open window. Kingsley is next to me, his arm draped heavily across my hip, his hand resting between my thighs. I carefully spread my legs and move onto my side to face a seraphic Kingsley. I gently caress his rough cheek and he stirs, returning to what I pray is a dream of satisfied desire with me at its center. My abdomen growls menacingly and a large amount of liquid inside moves from one place to another within. Inside. Wet. Kingsley. I suddenly remember last night.

I move my hand to my chest and then next to Kingsley's, still lying in my crotch. No harness or belt. I'm totally naked except for the anklet secured, as always, comfortably about my ankle. Squeezing my legs together about our hands, I feel an electric thrill shoot through me and decide to try to hold the feeling while drifting back into sleep. I close my eyes tightly, willing myself to relax, but end up reopening my eyes and gazing longingly at Kingsley, sleeping innocently next to me.

My world seems to change so fast in this relationship. A year ago I would never have imagined myself with a male partner, let alone an intimate male partner sleeping like this next to me in bed. I would never have imagined myself his receptive partner, not in my wildest dreams. I would never have allowed myself to be touched erotically by a man, or kissed by him, or let him mount me as if I were a woman or a wild beast. I would never have relished holding his warm semen in my belly. I would have never worn a leather harness. What was it Richard said? "I learn more about myself every day I'm with Larry." If that's the true nature of love, then I am totally, completely, hopelessly in love with Kingsley.

Did I learn more about myself yesterday and this morning? Yes, this morning I seem so much clearer about what I want

and desire — about who I might be — who I am becoming — who, ultimately, I am. More important, this morning I feel no embarrassment or regret, just thanks to this man I so dearly love lying next to me. It's as if Kingsley were helping me slowly peel an emotional onion one layer at a time. Each time we interact together a little more of my innermost feelings for Kingsley come to light, and through my feelings for him perhaps even men in general. What will I learn today? I can't possibly imagine, but I'm ready, willing, able. I prop my chin on my hands and take a long look at my lover, co-adventurer, mentor, guide and, at this moment, sweet life companion. My mind suddenly floods with erotic memories. Did we really have wild sex last night? Irrespective of my momentary disbelief, I feel the embarrassing proof slowly leaking out of me right now. Did I really parade myself bound in leather in front of Kingsley and his friend last night? The harness and belt may be gone, but the liquid memory boiling within my belly isn't. I did. I know it and, sometime soon, Jim will undoubtedly remind me of it.

I flex my legs and try to imagine the feel of Kingsley's hands clutching my hips while pumping his essence into me. Just thinking about him rammed into me, my stomach tenses, growls, and another gush of creamy liquor seeps out of my sore anus, wetting the sticky crack between my raw buttocks, proof again of the reality of last night's bacchanalia. A funny thought suddenly occurs to me: If I was Kingsley's evening entrée, then he provided the *au jus*. I giggle and more viscous juice escapes. I squeeze my anal muscles closed and tighten my buttocks together. Last night Kingsley made it once again clear that he wanted me to keep within me his masculine donations. Today I feel I am finally becoming truly his to command and enjoy. A shudder of ecstasy courses through me at the thought.

I carefully adjust a curl of hair on his brow. Kingsley stirs, his dark black eyelashes flutter and he suddenly opens his eyes and smiles. Yes, Kingsley, I'm here. I peck a kiss lightly on his nose, look directly into those captivating eyes, then place my lips next to his ear and whisper a special thank you for last night, and for cleaning me and carrying me to bed. I kiss his ear

wetly and willingly let myself fall back into strong warmth of his embrace.

Kingsley smiles widely, telling me it was really his pleasure and that he especially enjoyed last night. Then he hesitates. Did I? he gently asks. Oh yes, I answer, knowing it is no longer a secret to myself or others why I love this man so. It is just taking me some time to acknowledge his rightful place within my heart and soul.

Eventually, we get up. During our leisurely breakfast, a call interrupts our perfunctory exchange of daily plans. Kingsley asks me to get it. It's Jim.

Jim asks how I'm doing.

I answer, a bit shortly, that I'm fine.

How did the evening progress, he asks.

Fine, I answer.

And how's my sweet-leathered butt feeling today?

I fumble and almost drop the phone, my face flushing crimson. Kingsley looks at me askance then proffers, "Ah, that must be Jim. Tell him thanks for me."

I try to regain my composure, but end up stuttering, "I...I...I..." and Kingsley breaks out in a loud guffaw. Jim, still on the line, undoubtedly overhearing Kingsley's reaction, begins laughing also. I feel like a fool, the only one who doesn't entirely get the joke. Then I stammer out, "K...Kingsley sends his thanks," demurely adding, "And I do, too."

Jim immediately stops laughing and in a kindly, more serious voice says that he hopes my feelings and libido weren't hurt. Libido? A spate of angry words forms in my mind, but before I can utter any of them Kingsley slides down beside me and takes the phone from my hand.

"He means it, Jim, and so do I. Thanks."

I decide to opt out of the conversation at this point and bury myself in clearing the table while Kingsley and Jim continue to converse. Libido? Is that how Jim thinks of me?

Like some kind of randy hedonist — Kingsley's little wanton sex toy or something? How dare he? Yet listening to them talk on the phone — I assume about me — I wonder; is there perhaps a randy hedonist inside of me lurking just under the surface, watching for the smallest excuse to jump out and reveal himself? My belly rolls and growls acquiescently. Am I not, in actuality, Kingsley's wanton sex toy? What's more, don't I actually enjoy it?

Kingsley finally says goodbye and I am immediately all over him, wanting to know what Jim said about me. Kingsley raises an eyebrow and finger then frowns, asking why I care what Jim thinks anyway. I blush redder, but refuse to be deflected by this taunt and beg him to tell me. Kingsley breaks out in a huge smile.

Jim asked him, he says, to ask me if I would be kind enough to take his young lover, Mark, dancing. Jim appreciates but doesn't personally dance, and Mark, ever since meeting me yesterday, has been hinting strongly that he'd like to go dancing with me. I ask Kingsley eagerly what else Jim said about me, and to my amazement and disappointment Kingsley answers, "Nothing else, really." Then, as if in condescension, he adds that they did talk briefly about Kingsley's long search for the right partner and that he had clearly found the object of his searchings in me. There's something very important to me in this statement and, though I don't entirely understand why, a heavy weight seems to lift from my heart.

Writing the telephone number on the palm of my hand, Kingsley instructs me to call Mark at this number at his work later this afternoon and to feel free to go out with him. At first I am suspicious. Why is Kingsley handing me over to Jim's lover? Kingsley patiently explains that he wants me to meet more gay men, and Mark is a dear friend of his whom he believes I can trust and learn from, especially given Mark's own penchant for receptive sex. Mark's penchant for receptive sex? I repeat wordlessly to myself.

Satisfied and suddenly inspired I chirrup merrily, "Thank you, Kingsley!"

Kingsley is soon off to work on the sails — sheets — he promised would be completed by next week, but before leaving he kisses me sweetly and asks if I love him. My answer comes without hesitation or reservation: “Yes, I do!” As he leaves, I slowly begin reflecting on the full weight of the particular words I just chose.

Today is my day off from the dance studio so I decide to go totally domestic and clean the house top to bottom, like I am slowly doing these days with my own inner self. I finish, tired and sweaty in the late afternoon, just in time to call Mark. I have already decided to go out with him if he wants to go with me.

Mark is eager to go out dancing together, especially after Jim’s recount of my short performance on the fashion warehouse stage. I listen in wonder: Is there no privacy in the gay world?

Mark asks me where I like to go. Having never gone out dancing with a male partner I am completely at loss and ask him where he would recommend. Mark doesn’t hesitate: the Gold Coast, a private gay bar and dance club located in the center of downtown San Francisco. Given how difficult parking is in that area of the city, he suggests we meet at 10 p.m. at the BART station nearest the club. I ask Mark if it’s expensive. Yes, very, he replies, but Jim has instructed him to pay for both of us. Actually, Jim will indeed pay, he mentions laughingly, adding a moment later that the dress is fashionable, a good place to show off some of my new clothes if I wish. Mark, as an aside, asks what I wear when performing Latin — that’s what he likes — and in the end I agree to wear my best black Latin performance outfit tonight for him.

I check the wall clock. It’s already five o’clock; I’ve only four and a half hours before I have to leave for the nearest BART station. Where earlier today the hours passed like cold syrup, they are suddenly racing faster than I can think. It’s the dancing. I love dancing more than anything else. *Anything, that is, except Kingsley*, I remind myself.

Kingsley returns at six and offers to make me a quick dinner while I get ready. He asks what I'm planning to wear and I immediately step out of the bedroom showing off my skin-tight Latin shirt and pants. Kingsley looks me over, pauses and frowns. "I've been to the Gold Coast before. You're so gorgeously overdressed and oversexed for that place, people will be hitting on you the moment you walk in the door. I'd change into something more chic, over-casual...like maybe the all-black shirt and slacks you modeled last night." Kingsley flashes a humble, evanescent smile and returns to making my dinner.

My mind whirls: *Kingsley? Mark? Jim? Who am I serving here?* Then: *Why am I serving anyone?* Both answers, usually devilishly elusive, come to me quickly and clearly this time: *Always trust Kingsley.* I am who I am, and tonight with Kingsley's permission and encouragement I'm a gentleman going out dancing with another gentleman. I'm a dancer and dancing is my world, yes, but I'm still a novice in the world of the gay Gold Coast. "Got ya," I respond. "And Kingsley? Thanks."

"Don't mention it. But I have one more suggestion," he continues. "Stay close to Mark. Aside from his unusual, though I must add, wonderfully intriguing ideas about fashion, he's totally savvy about the gay scene. Trust him. He'll make the evening safe...and memorable."

I nod perfunctorily and, running out of time, rush into the bedroom to change. Kingsley follows at a distance and, while I strip, slowly closes the bedroom door behind him until it clicks shut. "A moment, please. Turn around."

I pause, my Latin shirt and pants on the floor around my ankles, and shuffle around till, looking quizzically over my shoulder, my body faces away from him. Kingsley walks over to me and places his hands on my hips, unhurriedly sliding them into my black silk bikini shorts. My shorts suddenly fall as if with a will of their own. His audacious fingers are instantly prying apart my tight buns and I barely have time to gasp before his hard, wetted staff thrusts into me. I grip the side of the dresser to stabilize myself. Kingsley is already thumping and

pumping. I shift my pelvis back toward him. Long, viscous drops of sticky semen from last night begin slipping from my stretched and pounded grotto. "Aghh," I grunt, writhing my loins lewdly around his thrusting rod, my body coursing with animal heat and lust. I brace myself for a long, intense screw, but Kingsley abruptly withdraws, whispering, "Don't forget me tonight."

Dripping wet, shaking with passion and now feverish with desire, I stand in shock, gaping at the deliciously long, soft, fleshy member pointing between his legs that just a moment ago was inflaming me with agonizingly sexual desire. I grab lustily for Kingsley's cock but he pushes me away, leisurely sliding my undershorts back over my hips and patting my quivering buttocks paternalistically. "Have a good time, just don't forget me," he reiterates, taking a step back, eyeing my shaking body with both amusement and satisfaction.

Kingsley moves over to the bed and sits down, watching me as I struggle to regain my composure. "Kingsley, I..."

"Shhh. Just don't forget me," he repeats again, as if trying to carve the words indelibly in my mind.

"I...I need to get dressed. To calm down. To take a shower, at the least," I say, walking shakily to the door, deliberately presenting one and then another inviting hip to him. Kingsley, however, remains audaciously unresponsive, so I slip nimbly through the barely-open doorway and race down the hall to the bathroom while bent slightly over, an index finger stuffed inside my throbbing hole to stop the impending breach.

In the bathroom I turn on the water until clouds of steam fill the room and then I step in, at the same time pulling out my finger. The spray washes off every trace of Kingsley's sticky roe and I begin to relax, letting go of all my raucous thoughts. Forget the burning he's conjured up inside of me? Hardly. Forget him? That wouldn't be possible even if I wanted to, and I don't want to. Not at all these days.

I climb quickly out of the shower and pat myself dry, being particularly careful around my sore but amazingly ready anus.

At first the loops of terry cloth scrape like sandpaper against the sensitive, puckering bud, and with each scrape another hot flash ripples through my body, setting me steadily more aflame until my stomach muscles begin clenching in imminent orgasm. I can already feel the muscles alternately clenching and releasing, spurts of gooey cum once again escaping with each release. I start to reach down to re-plug myself with a finger when from a misty corner Kingsley, who has apparently been standing there watching me, emphatically states: "Don't touch! I want you to have a good time, but I also want you totally aware of me inside you all night."

I turn and look directly at this amazing wizard anticipating my every thought and feeling, who suddenly materialized here and now at the crucial moment. Kingsley, leaning against the bathroom door, laughingly repeats, "Don't forget."

I start to protest but my whole body, now in the throes of orgasm, shakes convulsively, and blissful dreamy rapture starts spreading through me like sweet honey. Without thinking I clench my elbows to my waist and cross my knees, one foot on the other. Kingsley stops laughing and, reaching for a large bath towel, drapes it kindly over me and sweeps me into his arms. He holds me tightly as I shiver and continue to melt, an incalculable number of floridly orgasmic aftershocks coursing one after another through me.

Held tightly in his arms, the ecstatic waves flowing through me collectively peak again and then slowly lessen their stranglehold until I am at last free to collapse, exhausted, in his arms. Kingsley, whispering soothingly how much he loves me, lightly strokes my forehead, cheek and neck until I nod, on ce again cognizant of where and who I am.

"Now, you're ready," Kingsley says, softly but assertively.

In less than an hour I'm modeling the midnight blue shirt and slacks from yesterday, telling Kingsley I will wear my treasured anklet for him and my Latin dancing shoes for Mark.

"Ah, perfect. Now you'll fit in and at the same time stand out." Pronouncing me his "Man in Black," Kingsley puts a plate

with a sandwich he's made for me down on the table. Gliding his fingertips down the length of a crisp sleeve crease he slips his hand into mine, entwining our fingers. "You'll always stand out for me," he whispers, kissing my ear. I sigh deeply.

"So my dear, it's time. Have fun. I'll wait up to hear about your adventures." Kingsley disentangles his fingers from mine and stands silently at my elbow while I wolf down the sandwich. "Will that be all, sir?" he asks mockingly.

"Yes, Jeeves. And please leave the lights on; I'll be late tonight."

"On your sweet naked body!" Kingsley chortles, holding a rainproof trench coat for me to slip into. "Small ship warning: Rain imminent. Drive carefully."

I hug Kingsley a final time and dash for the garage. Kingsley stands just inside the garage doorway, his body braced against the frame, a smile on his face but sadness clearly in his eyes. *Does he miss me already*, I wonder? A feeling of uneasiness scratches at the back of my mind as I climb in the car, throw the starter and wave sheepishly goodbye. The garage door grinds open and, moving at last, I look back toward the open doorway only to find Kingsley gone. *Odd*, I think to myself. *Very odd*, as I leave the driveway and roar off down the road, suddenly contemplating going back. Then, in the rear view mirror, I suddenly notice Kingsley once again standing in the doorway, waving goodbye. The garage door closes like an eyelid heavy with sleep, slowly obliterating his image from my view. Panic grips me. *What does this all mean*, I ask myself as I roar down the road, the heavy fog already coalescing into tear-like raindrops on the windshield. I shake my head, trying to drive the morass of dark thoughts from my mind, and continue on to the local BART station and my date — yes, date — with Mark.

Traffic is suddenly bumper to bumper. I arrive in a pelting rain just as the nine-thirty train I planned to catch departs. Inside the empty station, under furious attack from all sides by the cataract outside, the large waiting area resounds with ghostly, distant, machine-gun like echoes attacking from every direction. Waiting impatiently by the tracks for the next train, I

look at my watch, appreciatively clutching the trench coat that Kingsley gave me tightly around my throat. The complete absence of people in the station is disquieting; at least the trench coat hides my attractive body and expensive clothes.

Over the next twenty minutes, a small crowd builds: Several businessmen carrying briefcases, all wearing trench coats similar to mine; a green-haired, multi-pierced teen in black leather and chains; a tall, thin, pasty-skinned redhead wearing a clear, vinyl raincoat over a forest green, knee-length, chiffon dress; an old, hunchbacked woman with unkempt hair and shabby clothes, being constantly pulled toward a corner by a rummy, sad-eyed dog restrained by a rope leash. *A not-unusual Bay crowd*, I tell myself anxiously.

Far back within the tunnel to my left I hear a faint hoot, and seconds later the train whooshes in, brakes screeching as it slows, stopping immediately before the small collection of passengers all huddling together. The train doors open all at the same time with a soft hiss and I jump on, taking the first available seat. A moment later a pure tone sounds, the doors close automatically and the train begins gliding smoothly ahead, its wheels screeching as it begins to turn and descend under the bay. My ears pop audibly.

I inspect the few passengers, most of whom boarded the train the same time as me, and nervously look from advertisement to advertisement as the train rumbles on. Outside the windows, total darkness envelops the speeding train. Soon the train slows, levels and then slowly begins gaining speed on its ascent back to the surface on the other side of the bay. Palpable relief suddenly suffuses the humid air. I look at my watch. Ten-oh-two, with several stops yet to go. Mark is probably wondering if I'm lost or have changed my mind.

As the train nears my stop I stand and prepare for a quick exit; several other passengers are already huddling expectantly next to the doors, the tall, pale redhead among them. As I approach she shifts her weight seductively from one hip to the other and casually asks if I'd like some. Her strong perfume and frank offer don't bother me as much as the immediate stiffening

of my hidden member. No, I tell her; yes, it says, ballooning disrespectfully to attention.

The train lurches; the exit doors hiss and open. The lady in green shrugs her shoulders, and turns her attention to several businessmen who respond similarly to her poorly-veiled offer. Disconcerted by my own body's quick sexual interest in a woman — and worse yet, one I don't even know or care about — I scan the area and search expectantly for Mark.

Mark is standing just outside the exit stiles, watching each person pass through. Suddenly, he rises above the crowd and waves at me. I sigh, letting go of the tightness in my chest and stomach that the woman's lingering perfume is still igniting, and begin walking toward him, reminding myself that Kingsley said I would be safe with him.

After exchanging quick greetings Mark pulls me aside, scanning me head to toe with a slight frown; then he pauses, cocking his head to the side and, noticing the quizzical look on my face, points both his thumbs at his body. Under an open trench coat not very different from mine, Mark is wearing tight black leather pants with a large steel zipper that runs from his neck down across an obvious bulge in his crotch and up the back of the slick pantsuit. The top is unzipped from neck to navel, and the tight sleeves sport a row of short fringe, giving him a faintly Western look I find pleasing. Tens of silver studs along the shoulders, topped along the neckline with several rows of rhinestones, make him appear outlandishly garish enough to be hotly attractive. Any lingering thoughts of the redhead disappear instantly when a waft of his musky cologne drifts at me, and I tell myself reassuringly how much, in just these few minutes together, I have already come to like and trust this young man.

In minutes we are queued in line at the Gold Coast behind thirty, maybe forty other couples, predominately but not exclusively male-male. A heavily-muscled bouncer patrols the line, while another up front checks each couple against a list. The patrolling bouncer stops next to us, looking coldly from Mark to me and back to Mark. I panic and grab Mark by the

elbow and I notice that my gesture didn't escape the dangerous-looking bouncer's eye. My mind starts spinning: *Why did I come here? Why am I holding tightly onto the arm of this flamboyantly-dressed obviously gay man? Why am I playing like I'm gay when, from the clothes I'm wearing everyone would guess I'm obviously not?*

"Hey, Mark," the imposing man says in a surprisingly soft voice. "Nice to see you."

"Hey, Aggie. You work here now?" Mark returns casually.

"Gotta make a living and, it pays for my steroids," he says laughing. "You like?" Aggie flexes a massive bicep.

"Nice. Just needs a little leather," Mark says, covering a grin with his hand.

Aggie cracks his neck muscles and moves closer to Mark. "Follow me," he whispers, and then to several couples standing next to us, "Move aside, move aside" in a deep, gruff voice. Everyone quickly moves away from us as Aggie escorts us up to the entrance, the whole way chatting happily with Mark.

At the entrance Aggie nods to the churlish, burly doorman, who parts the crowd and opens a plain black door, inviting us to enter with a bowing sweep of his hand.

As we enter, the noise slams into us like a brick wall, knocking each of us back a couple steps. A thousand-foot tsunami of bone-thudding sound trapped in a shaking warehouse enclosure of glitter, glass and neon, the Gold Coast Club is a large, totally packed, undulating ocean of crazed dancers. A single row of small tables rings the outside edge, a massively crowded bar lurks furtively somewhere at the back. A narrow marble staircase winds from my right up to a half-balcony filled with near-naked bodies visually inseparable from one another. In the middle of the dance floor, suspended from a high ceiling, is a swing with what looks like a very young, gold-painted and otherwise naked man swinging back and forth across the room. Gold balloons, gold paper coins, gold leaves and gold confetti fall about him and onto the crowd from somewhere further above. I reach up and catch a folded paper. Mark looks eagerly over my shoulder as I unfold it. "Trust your

man; tonight's the night" is written in large, flowing goldcolored cursive, over a faint impression of the Pacific Coast in the background. The Gold Coast. Clever.

Mark smiles and grabs my hand, working a way through the tight crowd to what appears to be the only free table left in the whole house.

I drape my coat over the back of a chair, but Mark takes it and adds his to mine and gives them both to a silver-painted waiter wearing silver boxer shorts, silver athletic socks and silver roller skates. He blinks his glitzy metallic eyelids seductively at Mark, trading him a receipt for the coats and, using sign language to communicate over the din, asks what we'd like to drink. I shrug my shoulders. Mark signs something back to the waiter and hands him a hundred dollar bill. The waiter nods, winks coyly at me and is off.

My partner for the night doesn't waste any time, asking me immediately to dance. Together we nudge open a space on the crowded floor immediately in front of our table. The deejay is spinning a hot Latin number with a pounding, primal African beat. Mark and I dance separately at first, freestyle, immersing ourselves into the aboriginal thudding that surrounds and suffuses us, enticing us to join the human ocean about us. As much as I try, however, I just can't suppress my love of partner dance, and soon I am leading Mark in an erotically gyrating, body-against-body samba. Dancers next to us suddenly stop in awe and a space seems to miraculously clear as we weave in a sinuous way across the glittering dance floor. A loud clack sounds above the deafening music and a brilliant white spotlight suddenly engulfs us, adding its oppressive weight to our muscular grinding.

I lead Mark into shadow position, one arm around his waist, the other extended high above us, and then, grasping the back of his hand in my palm, suck our bodies sensuously together into a slow, erotic, circling Volta. Mark's lean buttocks cup perfectly into the hollow of my crotch and, the two of us now moving as one, I transition into a slowly revolving body roll, encouraged now by the wild cheering erupting throughout the

room. In the distance I notice numerous men whispering to each other, I assume, about the awesomeness of our dancing. Mark follows effortlessly into a series of alternating side-by-side Botafogos and as we slither on, one man asks aloud if Mark and I are professional dancers as another next to him assures the ogling man that Mark is not just a dance partner but clearly my lover as well. I wonder in passing what Jim or Kingsley would think if they could see us right now.

The music suddenly ends and the crowd instantly subsumes us in a tumultuous roar of approval. Mark and I pause, bow slightly together with arms around each other's waists and are immediately mobbed. Countless disembodied hands vie from every direction for a touch of our sweat-soaked bodies. Mark suddenly shudders and looks deeply into my eyes. As we work our way back to our table more hands touch, pat, and stroke us all over, several pats slipping down from my heaving back to my hips and buttocks. Two men at the same time ask in hushed voices if I would like to dance with them. Another, grasping my face suddenly with his hands, kisses my lips and asks if he hasn't seen Mark and me dancing together on television. Mark calmly turns to him and says no. Another man slips deftly between us, rests his muscular arms on my shoulders and says he'd like to buy me a drink. Mark, dear Mark, as Kingsley promised, comes to my aid, telling him flatly no, I'm already taken as he ushers me back to our table.

Seated back at our table, Mark begins chattering about how much he enjoyed dancing together, while I continue the slow process of withdrawing from the adrenaline high of the dance and the erotic, emotional high of dancing in close physical contact with as incredible a follower as Mark. The imaginary line between an outstanding follower and an outstanding receptive partner suddenly slaps me garishly in the face. Mark is easily the best partner I have ever known. *Except for Kingsley*, I quickly correct myself, *but that's in a completely different way*, I tell myself. Mark toasts to the first of many dances together, and clinking my glass to his I silently toast him and his dancing. I have deeply enjoyed leading Mark, especially enjoyed his keen receptiveness. Is this what Kingsley so enjoys in me?

Since Kingsley and I first met, I have thought of myself as exclusively sexually receptive. Yet now a troubling question begins to haunt me. Given my immediate feelings for Mark, am I really so exclusively receptive? I try to grasp the immense implications of this simple question, barely hiding itself behind a whole new set of anxieties and fears. What am I to say to this gorgeous young man sitting next to me, leaning so far forward toward me from across the small table that I can feel the warm, exciting brush of his breath, smell the clean, youthful bouquet of his sweaty, excited body, the weight of his beautifully bright eyes locking on mine. He is, at this moment, an open invitation, his body language affirming it. In my mind's eye, I suddenly see myself reflected in Mark, then myself where Mark is, looking longingly up into Kingsley's eyes. How can I say to Kingsley when I return that I love him above all men when I feel such a strong attraction to Mark and felt, less than an hour ago, the same to an unnamed woman I don't even know? Why, in fact, do I feel so strongly attracted to each new gay friend I meet: adoring Mark, domineering Jim, aloof Larry, collusive Richard? Is this love, emotional need, sexual chemistry, animal desire? Or am I really gay? Where does one end and the other begin? Where does it come from? Am I slowly uncovering hidden, long-pent-up natural inclinations, or is my love relationship with Kingsley allowing me to grow emotionally and uncover the true depth and breadth of my own capacity for love?

Mark reaches across the table and takes my hand in his, and I suddenly begin shaking. The softness of his fingers, the tenderness I feel, pulls at my heart and, to my consternation, my crotch! Mark squeezes my hand and asks if I'm present. Shocked by the question, I realize I have been drifting somewhere that now completely eludes me. Where was I a moment ago?

Mark moves his fingers gently across my fingertips and slides them in between mine, saying playfully, "Hello! Earth calling!" We burst out laughing and, as if sensing my thoughts, Mark tenderly asks if I know that during our disjointed conversation I called Kingsley my lover several times. Hearing it from Mark's lips with his adorable voice sounds odd, but as it

echoes in my mind I realize how desperately I want to believe it and all it implies. It suddenly occurs to me that I don't just like, appreciate and trust Mark, but perhaps we have strong physical feelings for one another — feelings that will most likely never be permitted to be fully realized. Perhaps it is enough to enjoy this intimate moment with him while consciously maintaining Kingsley as the rightful ruler and king of my body, heart and soul. *Yes*, one part of me says sweetly, while another part offers a laconic *perhaps*.

1 APRIL

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I awaken at noon alone in bed, to the sound of the front door creaking open. A moment later Kingsley strides into the bedroom, kicks off his shoes and doffs his jacket and shirt, tossing it all wildly aside. By the time he's next to the bed, pants, underwear and socks are flying everywhere and he's standing in all his naked glory before me. The next moment, he's snuggling an icy-cold body against mine, pushing me from the center of the bed where I've been sleeping, claiming the warm place as his own. Kingsley intertwines his cold legs around mine, naughtily wiggling his freezing toes into my warm, soft privates.

I fake surprise, then anger, then docilely accept the dominating affection. Kingsley curls up at my side and begins stroking my body, running his soft fingers down my neck, deliciously stroking my nipples; it's immediate meltdown!

Continuing the gentle stroking, Kingsley offhandedly mentions that Mark called earlier this morning. He says Mark thinks I am a perhaps the best dancer in the world. "Mmm," I moan, reaching down and caressing the firm, fat erection pushing into the fold between my thighs as he rolls me onto my stomach and mounts me. *Perhaps, perhaps...* my mind echoes like a stuck record as Kingsley wetly kisses my ear and then my neck along an imaginary line from my ear down my spine. He heard, he continues, from several friends this morning that my dance is now nothing short of a city sensation. His words momentarily draw me out of my excited stupor. Kingsley continues whispering softly in my ear that he wants to see me dance for him like I did last night. Just for him. Flushing with passion from another wet, ardent kiss to my shoulder, I clear my throat and tell him I will agree to anything right now, anything he desires, as long as he doesn't stop. I feel him gently maneuver his firm member inside of me and promise to dance for him whenever, wherever, however he wants. Kingsley scoops my

butt cheeks into his nimble hands, parts them, and pushes the remainder of his prodigious pike hard into me.

I relax, inviting his whole length into me, asking him offhandedly if he dances. Thrusting firmly upward, he says no. The space he's suddenly filling within me softens and widens to accommodate him, inviting him even deeper. Would he like to try dancing with me? I ask as Kingsley propels his rough-veined, up-curving staff high up into me. Yes, he gasps, but only in private. Kingsley tenses, quivers and begins propelling his impatient liquid seed into my willing belly. My body responds with a single, coordinated, whole-body orgasm. I'm glad, I say, panting between gasps. With our combined strength we buck together, reaching simultaneous sexual peaks as one in a mutually explosive salvo. "I love you," Kingsley whispers throatily as he rests his heaving body lengthwise on mine and we plunge together into the calm, sweet oblivion that follows so closely on satiation's heels. "I love you, too," I whisper coarsely as I drift into deeply satisfying sleep.

I reawaken in the same position, draped by Kingsley's body as lengthening mid-afternoon shadows inch across the opposite wall. I cock my head to the side and breathe deeply. The air feels wonderfully pleasant, the midday sun having comfortably warmed the room. My legs are splayed out and my body is still pulsing with desire, with Kingsley wedged firmly inside of me. I try to move my arms but my wrists are locked together high above my head, held firmly in place by one of his hands. I stretch my neck to the side and can see Kingsley's swarthy countenance above me, eyes closed, eyelids fluttering gently in dream, his body totally relaxed and satisfied. I try to move my pelvis but the slight movement causes the long, pencil inside of me to instantly grow, prying as it does my taut anus open around it. Though still asleep his abdomen and thighs reflexively tighten, and I feel a series of small, almost imperceptible pumps course up the underside of the plug within me, gently suffusing me with wet, warm man-seed. I squeeze my butt muscles together tightly and the growing tide within my belly spreads, filling every available space, eventually forming one large, undulating pool deep inside me. I twist my head

further to the side and tenderly kiss his full, soft, open lips then lie back and drift, hovering at the very edge of orgasm, awash in a vast, dark, powerful, thrilling sea of desire and satisfaction.

Kingsley laggardly opens first one and then both eyes, his smile growing like the hard rod thrust up inside of me. I start to wish him a good morning but before the first word escapes my lips he stiffens, rams into me and bursts. My efforts at floating on the knife edge between heated fervor and explosive ecstasy are suddenly all for naught, and my body erupts in a frenzy of desire, lust and orgasmic explosions. My fingers clamp onto Kingsley's. My toes curl, my scrotum tightens, pulling two pulsing walnuts high up in my ball sac, and my flaccid penis suddenly begins issuing a gentle stream of creamy white, crisp-smelling cum. No peak, no pinnacle, no additional orgasmic release — just constant, copious flow as Kingsley pounds his own salty semen into me, replacing each drop of cum I release with two of his own.

Wet, soaked, heaving together, the barely perceptible boundaries between us dissolve, the only sensation that of a distant rhythmic kick, raising us together to the top of a spinning vortex, like a mare rearing against a white stallion mounted firmly on her, each holding desperately on while nature takes its primal course.

I feel myself soaring, an exploding disk stretching out infinitely in every direction until, stretched to my limit I suddenly break into tiny particles that slowly coalesce back into two separate bodies. Again I am me and Kingsley is once again Kingsley. But are we as we were, or in the sharing are we now something else? With each lovemaking, we seem to combine more easily and separate more difficultly, my yin to his yang, spiraling ever-recursively inward into a single, newly-defined whole.

Heart pounding, blood surging, lungs gasping for air, muscles and sinews aching exhaustedly, my skin prickling and bristling as if rubbed raw, every hair of Kingsley's that brushes against me instantly rekindles the barely containable flame in me. I feel another seismic shock wave spreading Kingsley's

essence throughout me. I breathe deeply, suddenly aware of Kingsley's strong, musky smell, his slightly bitter taste, the feel of his hands gripping me and sensation of his semen surging within me — and I explode again into a panoply of fireworks.

I slowly work my hands free from his viselike clasp, reach down, and try to push Kingsley out of me. He exits with a sucking *pop*, the lake of jism boiling inside of me suddenly gushing out to soak the sheets beneath me. Kingsley climbs off of me and collapses at my side. I reach down to stop the flowing cataract and in the process touch my small, shriveled member, still adding its own constant but diminutive stream to the quickly cooling pool beneath me. My mind is flying in myriad directions all at once. I try to stop and concentrate on my feelings, sensations and body. Suddenly warm and content, like a newborn lying quietly against its mother's beating chest, I sigh deeply and drift once again into a richly empowering sleep.

By the time Kingsley and I finally get up and shower the sky outside the window is dark; the first stars are already appearing. Kingsley, completely dressed, watches me from the easy chair across the bedroom. He suddenly asks me if I would please dress "for him," meaning, these days, lubricate myself generously and not wear underwear. I smile, gladly complying, wondering what it is that Kingsley has in mind for this evening.

After dressing I busy myself changing the soaked bed sheets. As I finish, Kingsley slips behind me, puts his strong arms around my waist, hugs me warmly and says he wants to take me a few houses down to a single gay friend's for a party. Several of his personal friends and quite likely one or two of mine will be there, he says with a twinkle in his eyes. I turn in his encircled arms, stretch up onto my toes and kiss him sweetly. In his embrace, I cock my head slightly askance and ask him if "take" means "go together" or...? Kingsley chuckles and comments briefly on my vivid imagination.

This time I am much more at ease mentally, physically and emotionally as I prepare to meet more of Kingsley's gay friends. My role in Kingsley's world and gay culture is fast becoming as interesting, familiar and even on occasion comfortable as it was

daunting a few days ago. In less than an hour Kingsley and I are walking on the sidewalk together, hand-in-hand, on our way down the street, the bright shards of crystalline stars strewn across a cloudless black sky, the evening fog but a vague specter off in the far distance. I slip our entwined hands into the pocket of his jacket and rest my head on his shoulder, looking up into a cloudless, star-studded sky, and frivolously begin counting the stars as we walk together. A moment later Kingsley is knocking on the door of a small but stunning Frank Lloyd Wright house tucked within a grove of tall, thin, swaying cypress pines.

To my surprise, Richard greets us at the door. "Ah, Kingsley and delightful partner. Do come in and join the fray." Richard bows fluidly without spilling even a drop of the pale champagne bubbling elegantly in a long, narrow, delicately-fluted glass in his right hand. "Come! Come!" he adds, sweeping his left arm toward a small knot of people who are engaged in fervent conversation just inside the door. Kingsley takes off his jacket and tosses it on a chair piled high with jackets and overcoats, nods for me to do the same, then politely nudges me forward toward the small group standing before us. As I walk past Richard we grin and wink at each other supportively. Kingsley nods approvingly at our secret exchange and, I assume, my newfound, blossoming friendship with Richard, my first gay confidante. I like Richard and put a mental tick next to his name in my mind, intending to share my recent adventures with Mark with him later tonight when opportunity arises.

Richard chauffeurs us toward a tall, fastidiously-dressed gentleman with distinguished, lightly-graying temples who suddenly breaks from a group of four incredibly good-looking young men to direct his attention to Kingsley. Richard introduces our host, Mr. Jerome K. Harkness, J.K. for short, Snake to his intimate friends. The man takes my hand and shakes it ebulliently, while at the same time turning dismissively back to face Kingsley. "Well, Kingsley, I see you've finally done it, and," motioning with his head toward me, "I compliment you on your taste." I shake my head incredulously. Mr. Jerome K. Harkness? Snake?

“Ah, I see the paradox has already struck,” he says with cool, aristocratic indifference while looking haughtily into my eyes. “I like to explain that my close friends, like Richard and dear Kingsley here, gifted me with the nickname Snake because of a rather unusual tattoo I received in my more impetuous years.” He casually rolls up his left sleeve and bares his forearm. A large, emerald green snake with red rubied eyes stares forward malevolently, its body coiled about several small dancing ponies. “Interestingly, the design carries with it a certain appropriateness even today. May I introduce my stable,” J.K. says, turning and sweeping a hand out toward the four young men. “Bill. James. Arthur. And my most recent addition, Adonis, an aptly fitting name don’t you think?” Each acknowledges Kingsley with familiarity while nodding softly toward me. Why am I surprised that they all know Kingsley?

The doorbell chimes and Richard excuses himself to return to his apparent duties for the night. Snake immediately engages Kingsley in a lively conversation about the relative merits of each of his four “ponies.” Kingsley, for his part, seems enrapt. Standing next to him completely ignored, pangs of jealousy and then of frank anger awaken within me. Despite my dislike of the topic, I would like to be part of the discussion. Actually, I feel that their discussion about each of the young men standing quietly together — who, like me, seem bored to the point of being self-absorbed — smacks of a discussion about the liabilities and assets of one’s concubines. I imagine J.K. — I don’t feel comfortable calling him Snake — prying open each young man’s legs to show Kingsley the excellent quality of his...

I move closer to Kingsley and grasp his arm but he and J.K. are so intensely engaged that he still doesn’t seem to notice me so I begin looking around the house inquisitively. There are tens of small groups like this one, engaged in intimate conversation, scattered throughout the large living room. One group sits around a glass coffee table, the central figure flinging his hands wildly in the air, an empty glass lying knocked over on its side on the table before him. Another group stands casually around the fireplace in what appears from their physical closeness and

frequent touching a particularly intimate conversation among particularly intimate friends. A third group hovers around two guests seated at a highly-lacquered, black baby grand piano, playing something together that's vaguely familiar but which I can't quite recognize. Numerous other groups are scattered throughout the room, each looking the part of the special topic or relationship niche they seem to naturally occupy. I longingly wish I were part of any group but the one I am currently enslaved to.

I place a second hand on Kingsley's arm, telling him that I'd like to mingle, but he continues ignoring me. I suddenly hate being here. I hate this party, this group, this "Snake," his cute little boys, and... Kingsley, for ignoring me like this. Am I just Kingsley's cute boy? Am I the first of his stable?

"Kingsley," I say firmly, stamping my foot for emphasis. Kingsley stops in mid-sentence and turns to me. "Kingsley, I would like to go meet some of the other guests." Kingsley, startled, looks darkly from me to Snake and back to me. All four of Snake's boys are suddenly alert, their eyes and ears locked on me. "Ahem," I manage to croak, feeling increasingly uncomfortable.

Kingsley starts to address me in a patronizingly fatherly voice: "Mr. Harkness — Snake — is our host," he begins, as if talking to a misbehaving child. I realize as he speaks to me that I'm actually pouting, though I don't mean to, and immediately feel even more embarrassed.

"Ah, Kingsley. No offense taken," his majesty, Mr. or is it possibly "Sir" Jerome K. Harness says depreciatively. "We can continue this interesting conversation another time. And your partner is absolutely correct: I mustn't ignore my other guests, some of whom undoubtedly wish to share your attentions, too."

Kingsley shoots me another dark frown, but then softens. "And I owe you an apology rather than a scolding," he says, addressing me this time as an adult entitled to his attention. "I brought you here to introduce you to my friends," he gestures toward Snake, his stable of gorgeous men, and broadly across the room, "and I've been a totally inattentive partner. Will you

excuse us, then?" Kingsley remarks, to my way of thinking too solicitously for me to buy, and definitely too much in the manner of Sir Snake.

The Snake — it's still uncomfortable for me to think of him this way — nods his assent. As we turn to go, one of his ponies, a fair-skinned, dark-haired man with closely trimmed beard and sparkling blue eyes, reaches out, grabs my arm, and says a little too offhandedly, "I hope we'll have a chance to talk sometime tonight." I hesitate. His words are sincere, but there is something disquieting about his voice and touch. Before I can reply, however, Snake is already introducing himself and his stable to another entering couple. Richard, after presenting them, offers Kingsley and I each a glass of bubbly, whispering as he slips past me, "Interesting guy, Harkness, yeah?"

A moment later, Kingsley and I are sipping our libations and weaving our way from group to group, meeting and greeting the many guests. I am particularly interested in the one lone woman among all the gay men here. Kingsley frowns, brusquely mentioning that Jane is a dyed-in-the-wool heterosexual who somehow pops up at many of the gay parties, for what particular reason he has no idea. Nonetheless, he adds, she's a columnist, an engaging and forthright conversationalist and well-connected socialite, thereby interesting in her own right. Kingsley doesn't volunteer to introduce me; instead he slowly guides me into the kitchen where we are at last alone.

What began politely soon turns into a disagreement. Kingsley feels that I am acting inappropriately. Why, for example, did I have to interrupt his conversation with Harkness? Why, I retort, is he more interested in a snake and his nest of sexual vipers than me? Vipers? What have they done to deserve such a slur, Kingsley asks with personal affront? I don't like Snake or for that matter his harem, I counter. Something is wrong — look at the boy who wanted to talk to me, for instance.

"Arthur?" Kingsley asks, suddenly looking left and right, then lowering his voice. "Arthur? Is that who you mean? What about him?"

"He's scared. You saw how he wants to talk with me in private. You saw how that snake tried to cut him off!" I assert.

"For God's sake! He's not scared, he just wants to meet you! And Snake is just being a polite host. Agreed, his manner is haughty, but that's Snake. What's going on here? This is supposed to be a chance for you to meet some other gay couples, different people in different relationships. That's why I brought you here! Don't insult my friends and acquaintances. Try to meet them and get to know them for who they are!"

I am flabbergasted. Am I projecting my own anxieties and concerns onto a purely social get-together? I don't really know gay culture that well yet; I have only sampled the surface. "Kingsley," I say contritely, "I'm...I'm sorry. Maybe I'm just not... I mean, maybe I've just got a lot more to learn yet. I don't know. I'm sorry if I've hurt you or your friends' feelings or embarrassed you in front of them. I know you're trying to help me. I'm just feeling kind of crazy right now."

Kingsley softens. "Yeah, well, hey, that's okay. For me, it actually wasn't so much your reaction to Snake as it was your interest in that Jane woman that set me off. You know I'm trying to make it more comfortable for you to find your place in the gay community. My friends are quite varied in their lifestyles. I want you to feel as comfortable as I do moving among them. They're all friends. Jane's not. I'm always jealous when you show interest in a heterosexual woman, especially when I'm trying to introduce you to the gay scene." Kingsley's voice softens further. "Come over here," he says, moving across the kitchen next to the sink.

I obey and Kingsley instantly wraps his arms around me and hugs me. Kissing me on the neck, he gently turns me around to face the sink, slips his hands into the front of my jeans, and unfastens them. "Kingsley..." I start to object.

"Shush," he coos, sliding his palms and splayed fingers beneath my shirt and up the front of my chest to stroke my quickly-erect nipples. "Kingsley..." I moan in halfhearted objection, arching and presenting my backside automatically to him.

“Shush,” he whispers in my ear, sliding his hands down into my loosed pants, peeling them low enough to expose my bare hips. I instinctively look over my shoulder — first at Kingsley and then at the kitchen door — and start to struggle, but Kingsley continues stroking my chest and whispering calmingly in my ear. I relax, turning my attention to his whispers, erotic ministrations and the sink in front of me. Behind me I can hear him unzipping his pants. Before I can turn he grasps my hips in his powerful hands, and pushes me firmly forward up onto my toes, his hard member slipping up between my opened buttocks. I reflexively grasp the hot and cold faucet handles and gasp as the head of his firm member pops just inside of me. Without a moment’s hesitation he slides its whole length into me, thrusts once and injects a long stream of his own kind of warm, effervescent champagne deep into my bowels. I arch my neck and let out a muffled groan.

Vaguely, as if in a dream, I hear a distant noise to my right and see the vague, dark outline of a person coalescing in the doorway.

“Ah, Kingsley. I see you two are enjoying the party,” Snake says all too casually, stopping in his tracks just inside the kitchen and staring lecherously. Seeing Snake smiling and staring at me bent over the kitchen sink, my pants rumpled around my mid-thighs with Kingsley rammed up my butt, I am absolutely mortified. Kingsley calmly looks toward Snake and smiles cordially while pumping the remainder of his sparkling liquor into me.

“Yes, well, pray continue,” Snake adds nonchalantly. “The party was slowing to a grind, but you two have obviously found a way to liven it up, at least for yourselves. I’ll just gather up some more champagne for us less-fortunates,” he says with a hint of a snicker, walking past Kingsley to the refrigerator, from which he removes several unopened bottles. “You know, I envy you, Kingsley,” he murmurs, popping one open, watching us pruriently out of the corner of his eyes as he slowly pours the champagne into seven high-necked glasses — every so often, I notice, licking his lips. Finished, he walks back behind Kingsley,

carrying the tray loaded with glasses and bottles, and then slithers out the doorway.

Kingsley instantly releases my hips and slides his already-soft penis out of me and back into his jeans, audibly zipping them back up. I release the faucet handles and, speechless, reach down to grab my pants and pull them back up, my body flushing hotly. Just as I bend slightly down, however, six people burst noisily through the doorway and stop, suddenly gaping at me. I freeze. One man — Bill or James, I can't tell which — grabs the other's hand excitedly. Another — I guess Arthur — is whispering something to another person half-hidden in the growing crowd encircling me. For some reason, however, my eyes are magnetically drawn to the half-hidden person he suddenly stops whispering to. Suddenly, it comes to me: It's Jane, the one person Kingsley is actually jealous of. Adonis and Richard, standing next to me close enough to touch my bare ass, look on with raised brows. Jane, looking initially paralyzed, suddenly pushes her way forward, her red hair aflame, her large gray-green eyes open wide and stands there agape, a look of shocked surprise on her face.

An orgasmic cramp suddenly grips me. My muscles tense reflexively and some of Kingsley's thick white semen oozes out of my clenched anus. In this totally compromised position, there is nothing I can do to hide. I blush deeper, from head to toe, and attempt to pull up my pants, in the process smearing the thick, white, syrupy infusion all along the outside of my tight jeans. Avidly watching the unfolding drama, everyone falls silent. Glancing to the side, I notice Kingsley blend in to the group. For the first time since I've known him, I see his face flushed, eyes wide and apologetic, looking intently at me. I flush again, this time beet-red, as I look back across the crowd to Jane, her narrowing eyes still fixed on me. A moment later she tosses her hair, turns briskly on a heel and pushes her way back through the crowd, walking out of the room without looking back.

Everyone suddenly begins murmuring to one another, slowly breaking back into small groups, turning away from me and exiting the kitchen. I wish I were dead.

Kingsley quickly approaches me and whispers how terribly sorry he is, as he holds my shaking hands in his and helps me zip up my pants. "Kingsley! I..." I begin bitterly, then angrily, then hopelessly. "Kingsley..." I blurt out again and then break into tears, sobbing on his shoulder. Kingsley holds me in his arms, talking soothingly in words that I neither care to hear nor would even comprehend in my state of overwhelming humiliation.

After several minutes Snake, after knocking and pausing briefly to assess the situation, saunters back into his kitchen as if nothing had happened. Unable to stop my sobbing, I look at him reluctantly out of the corner of a wet, swollen eye. "Kingsley," he says softly, "I...I didn't mean to hurt you or your beautiful partner here by inviting everyone to share in your foray. Surely you of everyone at my party would know that. You know that you're free to enjoy my house and party as you like. Heck, you should see what you've started! Everyone's already vying for a bedroom here or quiet nook there to try and come close to what you two have had the balls to share." Snake chuckles, seemingly at his own joke. "And that was absolutely the most erotic exhibition I've seen in years. You," Snake says directing his comment toward me for the first time, "have one awesomely gorgeous ass and should be proud of it."

I try to calm down and take in all of what the Snake is saying and implying, but the humiliation continues to clasp me in its death grip and won't let go. How could he, and Kingsley, do that to me? How could he... Yet, they each did. And what's more, I did, too. Kingsley only stroked me. I was the one who arched and presented himself, inviting him to take me then and there. At that moment, my blood was boiling and I wanted him to do it. All feelings aside, maybe I wanted him to take me in front of all these gay men. Maybe I want to prove I am not only gay, but as good as they are, which I am. Kingsley embraces me tightly, shushing me softly and brushing away my tears.

"Kingsley, that's one hell-of-a-partner you have. I envy you, and I've got a whole stable of great boys, any of whom would beg me to do to them what you did today. Trust me." Snake nods, patting me on the rump as he passes, mumbling

something like “really great ass” as he walks out with more champagne under arm.

“You *are* one hell-of-a-partner, and I *am* the luckiest man anywhere to know and have you,” Kingsley says softly, brushing tear-soaked curls from my eyes and kissing me tenderly on the cheek. “And I’m the luckiest guy there is,” he says, once again smiling. “Trust me,” he adds, and we both finally laugh.

With Kingsley’s support and encouragement we eventually return, hand-in-hand, to the living room to find it quiet and almost deserted. Snake is sitting at a coffee table strewn with half-empty glasses, with Adonis curled up like a kitten in his lap, weaving his pale, delicate fingers in an almost imperceptible dance along Snake’s bare neck. Richard, sitting next to Snake, conspicuously catches my eye then rises, steps behind Snake and genuflects in a gross caricature of my earlier performance. Finally, laughing lightly, he sits back down and begins nonchalantly conversing again with Snake. Adonis peels his eyes from Snake and looks at me with dark cold envy.

Kingsley and I, rising, thank our host, take our leave, and walk quietly together to the doorway. Kingsley sorts through the pile and, locating my coat respectfully places it over my shoulders; then he quickly grabs his and we leave. A few feet from the door he turns and waves quickly to Snake, who stops conversing just long enough to flash us an ear-to-ear smile and return the wave. *Goodbye, Snake, and good riddance*, I whisper under my breath.

April 4

The subsequent three days prove a succession of increasingly passionate sexual encounters with Kingsley — as Richard, when I first met him, so aptly put it, “beyond my wildest dreams.” Something important happened at what Kingsley and I have laughingly taken to calling the “Snake Party,” though what it is exactly neither of us can seem to fathom. That night at dinner I hesitantly ask Kingsley once again his take on it, and he says that he thinks it is a sort of

coming out for me, a public acknowledgement of my life-to-be as a partner in a fundamentally gay relationship. For him, he says, it was the reaffirmation of my fidelity to him — and men instead of women — that he had been needing to hear. I listen, wanting to believe every word, but I'm not sure. Even so, if I was the April fool that night then today I am somehow more openly able to love Kingsley the more for it.

5 APRIL

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Today, with my renewed, more willingly receptive attitude, opportunities for sex seem to occur even more and more frequently, like at the Coastal Inn where Kingsley and I went for our first Magical Mystery Tour tryst together. Both our thoughts turn to going on another such adventure together, but where? Kingsley suggests we visit New York City, where his family maintains several homes. One, where he grew up, is usually reserved for family member vacations and *no one should be there right now*, he says with a provocative smile. I like the idea. I've never been to New York City and the more he talks about it, the more intriguing it sounds. Kingsley grew up there so I would enjoy seeing it through his eyes and, in the process, learn more about the man I so cherish.

While eating breakfast, Kingsley and I fall back into a longstanding discussion about art. His family, while very diverse in interests, interconnect through art. Larry and Richard, for instance, are well known to the family, and his mother is one of their principal benefactors.

Kingsley mentions my artistry at dance and suggests we try making some form of art together: perhaps sex-dance art? I love the idea. Kingsley will look into making arrangements for an excursion together to New York City, and I will assemble the necessary accoutrements for an excursion into sex-dance art, whatever that might be. Ideas are already forming on their own in my active, fertile mind, some sufficiently scandalous, I think, to pique both Kingsley's jaded tastes and at the same time garner his family's interest through art.



7 APRIL

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Today is our mutual day off, and we commit to spending it entirely together. I suggest we try the sex-dance art we have been discussing, and Kingsley eagerly agrees. I ask him to turn around and face away from me. Giggling playfully I put my hands over his eyes, then I guide him through the kitchen doorway into the garage. I tell him to take a deep breath, and while he does I whisk my hands away.

Where the car usually stands — I parked it outside last night in anticipation — is an open area covered with several layers of newspaper, the center of which is covered again with long strips of white shelving paper taped in back, side-by-side, to form a huge canvas. Along one wall, just beneath an old two-chamber clothes-washing sink, are twelve large, open cans of tempera paint in different colors, the handle of a large housepainter's brush extending out of each. On a stand next to the sink are several large bath towels and, next to them, a couple of thick terry bathrobes. While Kingsley takes it all in I gently reach around his waist, unbuckle and unzip his pants and, squatting before him, pull them down to his ankles and begin untying one of his shoes.

Kingsley steps out of his rumpled pants and kicks them, along with his shoe, across the garage. I servilely remove his other shoe and peel off both his socks, then toss them irreverently into the air behind me into the opposite corner as his pants. Kingsley reaches out for me, but I duck under his outstretched arms and, laughing, slither up his body, holding him in a close embrace as I unbutton his shirt. Tossing his shirt with abandon into another corner, I then stop for a moment to take in the feeling of total safety that always seems to result when snuggled like this against his body. Stretching up I delicately kiss his warm succulent lips...then, laughing with wild delight, quickly pull down his drawers! Kingsley, grinning ear to ear, stands before me in all his naked glory. I guide him out of

the drawers, recalling with relish the time when Kingsley tossed my clothes over the guardrail along the moonlit Pacific coast. Like my clothes, his shorts arc gracefully above, quickly disappearing from sight somewhere in the kitchen. I lick my lips in eager anticipation, admiring my work, then begin rubbing my clothed body against his genitals. His soft, folded member instantly swells to rigid attention.

Getting the message Kingsley rapidly unbuttons my shirt, unbuckles my belt and, kneeling before me, pulls my pants and shorts down exposing my smoothly shaved body and my small, soft, reddish prick dangling languidly between my legs. Looking down from above, I can see the tip of Kingsley's stiff trooper already hungrily glistening with pre-cum.

My clothes bunched around my legs I shuffle along, leading him onto the white canvas where I sit, stretching my legs into the air, pointing both feet and the mess of clothes hanging on my ankles at him. Kingsley enthusiastically pulls them all off — shoes, socks, jeans, shorts — everything except my love anklet. The anklet is the last stitch of anything even indirectly resembling clothing left on my body and, sparkling in the light, it suddenly tinkles merrily. Spreading my legs evocatively, I invite the all-male centerfold standing erect before me to fill the space between. Kingsley lies down on me, his erect gun hard on my stomach. I immediately lift one leg and drape it over his shoulders, then turn onto my side, extending an outstretched hand toward the paint cans.

Even stretching to my dancer body's limit, I can barely catch the end of the handle of the nearest brush in my fingertips; I knock the brush accidentally down onto the newspapers with a splat. Grasping it more securely I pull it toward me as I roll back onto my haunches, slashing it through the air toward where Kingsley is now sitting, splattering brilliant scarlet paint everywhere. Kingsley's eyes widen as he looks down at the swath of red across his chest. Laughing hysterically I point at the numerous rivulets of red paint flowing from the stripe down his abdomen and into his curly black pubic hair. Kingsley reflexively scoots away but my brush is faster, this time slapping against his chest and down his right arm and hand, creating a

second band of blazing red. I immediately switch the direction of my flying hand and slap a third red line, this time from just below his chin, straight down the center of his hairy chest and his erect penis, finally burying the paint-soaked brush in his crotch. "Hey," Kingsley yells in abject shock as I roll back onto my side and reach my hand and brush toward the red paint bucket to refresh it.

Kingsley's hand suddenly shoots out for mine but the reloaded brush is already flying toward his chest, casting blobs of red all across the papered floor. *Splat!* A huge gob of red paint slaps onto his stomach. Kingsley grabs the brush from my hand and thwacks the side of my hip, drenching my whole left side in a stream of screaming red. *Smack!* Rivulets of garish color begin streaming down in a blood-red line across my chest, making me look momentarily like an inviting candy cane. A particularly large blob falls down onto my limp member, which begins dripping red drops from its tip onto the white canvas beneath.

Rolling this time onto my stomach and reaching for a different paintbrush, the red gash on my hip smears into a garish satin on the canvas below. This time the brush I grab drips viscous, sunshine yellow blobs in a raindrop-like line as I retrieve it. Preparing to roll back over and swipe at Kingsley with all my might, I suddenly feel the weight of his slippery body on me and his slick pole shoot between my red and yellow butt cheeks into my surprised anus. I stare back over my shoulder at Kingsley, abashed, still holding my brush of yellow paint in my hand, the paint now flowing freely onto the canvas in a wild, colorful zigzagging whirl. In my compromised position I just barely see the fugitive red brush in Kingsley's upheld hand, swinging at my shoulders to strike. I brace for the onslaught, at the same time grunting a loud "Argh," like a kung-fu fighter as I flick my own brush, dripping with its heavy yellow load, back toward him, smacking him from face to chest with huge blobs of dazzling yellow paint. Kingsley, unable to parry the thrust and already fully committed, slaps his brush across the back of my shoulders and down my spine, painting my back a florid red. I slip myself forward and, wiggling my red

hips from side to side, eventually expel his firm rod. Quickly rising up onto my knees, dripping a stream of red and yellow from my backside, I stop, turn my head to the side and take a moment to admire our work. Kingsley, once again sitting, is a *mélange* of red flowing stripes plastered with blobs of grotesquely distorting yellow polka dots. I close my eyes and smile as he lashes out again with his paintbrush, this time slapping it smartly across my face.

Kingsley screeches with delight. I growl and start stalking him on wet hands and knees like a tiger. Kingsley shakes his head and neck, tossing drips of paint everywhere, and growls back, raking clawed fingers through the air in challenge. We stop suddenly and stare at each other then both race for the paint cans.

For the next half hour or so, Kingsley and I hiss and spit, thrust and parry, yell and shout, shrieking merrily with paint flying in every direction. At last, side-by-side, panting with exhaustion, saturated head-to-toe in a wild cacophony of colors, our bodies blending inseparably into the psychotically-colored canvas beneath us, I slide up to Kingsley and push him onto his back. Squatting over him, I slowly lower myself back onto his monstrous multicolored erection. Kingsley sighs with pleasure, desperately trying to clutch my slippery, rainbow hips in his muscular green and blue hands, but I easily push them aside and begin to ride him, lustily driving him higher, deeper, more firmly inside of me with each gyration. Slipping and sliding on the wet canvas beneath him as I grind away Kingsley suddenly throws his pelvis up, ramming his colossal rod into me up to its hilt and, groaning, empties himself in one long, convulsive shudder. As I quickly fill, my body shivers uncontrollably. Color-streaked sweat starts running down, mixing, swirling, streaming across my body. Collecting momentarily in my every body fold, it suddenly flows down Kingsley's momentarily visible shaft until, thrust once again up inside of me, the sweat and cum-mixed paint flows onto the canvas beneath us.

Kingsley pounds in and out like a jackhammer until I am filled to overflowing, the familiar waves of warm contractions coursing through me. Soon, both of us thoroughly sated, I

slowly relax and let myself drape over him like a soft comforter. Kingsley, completely drained, lies quietly tucked inside of me while I rest on him. Time seems to blur like the colors on the canvas all about us. After a while I slowly place my hands flat on his chest and in one motion push myself up off of his long, hard shaft to lie panting beside him.

We lie there together, hearts racing, breathing in synchrony like two long distance runners, neck-to-neck at the finish line until Kingsley, reopening his eyes, calls softly for me. I turn onto one elbow and stare into those fathomless eyes of his — right now, two deep, dark, languid pools of lust and rapture.

Slowly the beasts within us release their strangleholds and retreat back into the dusky primordial worlds from whence they came to wait impatiently for another eager summons. Coated all over in thick layers of paint wet, slick and sticky, I begin lovingly stroking Kingsley's sweet, rainbow-colored face while imaging us as a picture: painted bodies sprawled on a painted canvas — a multidimensional, real yet abstract work of Kingslian sex-dance art.

Kingsley begins to get up. In a caricature of his voice I order him to lie absolutely still, just the way he is, and not move a muscle. Slipping and sliding off the canvas and onto the newspapers, I search about and finally locate the camera I left for just this moment, and I quickly snap off twelve photos of Kingsley on the floor in various positions — sometimes blending into, other times contrasting gaudily against, the background canvas.

Kingsley, his attention now on documenting our efforts, signals for me to change places with him, and with his encouragement I am soon posing in one after another unusual, frequently evocative position on the colorful canvas, Kingsley snapping away. At last satisfied, he formally announces the end of our studio session and extends a helping hand toward me to help me off the slippery canvas.

Standing next to each other like two discordant Picassos, Kingsley puts his hand to his chin and, with a comically serious look, surveys me from head to toe, concluding emphatically that

I alone am a work of art and snapping several more photos of me, first standing and later pressed up against the distant tan wall of our garage “studio.” The camera, refusing at last to snap any more photos, finally brings the session to its end.

Kingsley, looking around, announces that the best way for us to clean up would probably be for us each to climb into one of the two laundry sinks and wash. I look up at him in innocent surprise, as if the shocking idea were really his, and pad over to first basin and climb happily in. To fit in the small tub, I have to half-sit, half-squat with my knees folded firmly against my chest. Kingsley watches with interest while I direct a stream of warm water from the short hose attached to the faucet spigot all over my body.

Kingsley stares, seemingly entranced and later mesmerized by the swirls of colors flowing over my body — melting, enjoining, forming new colors as they slowly lighten, fade and finally disappear, revealing my youthful, pinkish, nude body underneath. I call Kingsley out of his reverie to join me in the adjacent tub, but he just stands there watching me as if bewitched. Finally I get out of the mini-tub, grab his soft, wildly painted penis and pull him into the other sink. Kingsley, still staring blankly, climbs methodically in and I immediately begin hosing him down gleefully. This time it’s my turn to enjoy the show of swirling colors as they morph and transmutate, slowly changing from opaque to translucent to transparent, eventually releasing the Kingsley I so love and adore.

I climb back into the adjoining tub and, kneeling forward with a bar of soap in hand, lather and rinse Kingsley like a mother washing her child. Kingsley, never the patient one, ends up snatching the hose from my hands and, placing his finger over its outlet, is soon spraying me wildly.

After several minutes of mischievous mayhem we climb out of our respective tubs. I dry him, then hold open for him the terry cloth bathrobe I placed next to the sink earlier. Kingsley slips his arms in, wraps himself luxuriously in the bathrobe and ties it jauntily, suddenly kissing me and then stepping back for me to admire him.

I extend my wet hands out from my sides and perform a slow pirouette, stopping briefly in mid-turn to glance at the floor canvas. Kingsley's eyes reluctantly move from me to the canvas. We both stare with deepening satisfaction at our work. After a few moments he approaches me from behind and invites me to join him in his bathrobe. I gladly comply, encouraging him to wrap his strong, warm arms about me. The cool air wafting about touches then strokes my still-wet, dripping legs, drawing gooseflesh, while at the same time the heat of Kingsley's arms and body around me touches off a wave of passionate desire within. I shudder in his arms like a copulating fish depositing its roe next to its mate in a cold, flowing stream. Kingsley immediately smiles and opens the bathrobe, inviting me to snuggle even closer to his body. Soon I am rubbing my body seductively against him, searching and filling his every nook and cranny to become as one in the shared robe around us.

Embraced warmly in his strong encircling arms, we pause together to re-admire the artistic product of our mutual passion. I suggest we cut it up into picture-sized works and frame each one. Kingsley hesitates then, impressed with the idea, adds that we should frame the photographs, too. He adds thoughtfully that if they look as good glassed and framed as they appear now, he would like to show them to a friend of his family — an avant-garde art dealer — in New York City. I clap my hands together in agreement like a child, overjoyed at discovering yet another aspect of Kingsley. Maybe later today, he suggests, after the canvas dries I could take it along with the photos to Larry and Richard's and ask their advice and help. I like this idea even better.

New York City. Just the idea sends an electric thrill down my spine and I begin chattering about seeing New York through his eyes — and meeting his family. Kingsley listens, suddenly silent and expressionless. I immediately wonder what is amiss and ask.

Kingsley grasps me tightly in his hands, looks directly into my eyes and states in a dead-serious voice that he will be going to New York City alone this time. I am crushed. Alone?

Without me? Me, here, without him? Kingsley, aware of my panic, quickly explains that he talked with his mother over the phone earlier about us visiting and she wants to meet with Kingsley first. It's nothing bad; in fact, he says, he actually has a good feeling about it. Though she didn't explain entirely why, he wants to honor his mother's request. It's important to do this his mother's way he says, as he wants the family to like me and she is the key. Then, finally seeing the depth of the hurt in my eyes, he promises we will go to New York City together the next time irrespective of family wishes.

I feel not just terribly disappointed but, worse, totally disenchanted with everything that moments ago commanded my utmost joy and wonder. I try to take his announcement like a man, but the veneer shatters when a gut-wrenching sense of panic descends. How can he do this to me? My panic changes to raw anger. I look Kingsley in the eyes. Kingsley, I demand, how can you even suggest this? My ruff up, I twist my body angrily in our shared robe, trying to tear free from him and his false embrace, but Kingsley struggles equally to prevent me from leaving. Frustrated, I stamp my foot and then place my bare feet, one after another, on top of his. I stretch up to my fullest height and try to stare him down, my white-hot anger grabbing at my throat and blocking all the bitter words I want to say. Kingsley places a finger tenderly on my open lips and asks me to please hold my anger for a moment.

It takes several minutes wrapped in his warm yet uncompromisingly strong and gentle embrace for the righteous anger to pass. I'm okay now, I finally declare. At least for the moment. One moment, like he politely requested. So, pray continue, Kingsley, I say acerbically, thinking, *and it better be good*. After acknowledging my disappointment, anger and anxiety, Kingsley pleads with me to hear him fully out and, despite the growing conflict within, I agree.

Originally, Kingsley explains, when he phoned and asked for help planning our pending trip to his family — meaning, he points out, his mother — she was openly pleased. However, after telling her about me and his desire to formally consummate our relationship, she expressed concern that I am

bisexual, not gay like he keeps hopefully assuming. She told him she feels both Kingsley and I need to explore this further before proceeding, so that neither of us ends up getting hurt. She then begged him to visit alone just this time, to give ourselves a chance to think carefully about what we really want, both individually and together, and what we may be up against.

I am dumbstruck. This isn't rejection. It's more like the missing next step in our rapidly-evolving relationship. As I listen, the heartache lessens.

Kingsley pauses as if collecting his thoughts, then carefully continues explaining that while he is clear what he wants, he truthfully remains uncertain what I want. I ask him angrily how he can presume to know what I think and want without asking me!

Again Kingsley pauses then resumes, choosing his words more carefully this time. He has strong reservations about leaving me alone, even with his friends — my new acquaintances — here to help me. He wonders, for example, about Jane. I start to answer but all the assurances I want to speak suddenly implode in a slag-like heap. I continue to stand tiptoe on his feet but suddenly look confusedly, though still lovingly, into his pained eyes.

Kingsley reiterates his desire to go to New York City alone for just a few days to address his mother's concerns about us, and he asks me to solemnly reaffirm my vow of chastity to him. Now. He asks me to promise that I will wear the anklet he bought me constantly while he's away. My voice finally returns and I huffily remind him that I have been doing both since he presented me the anklet.

Kingsley pauses yet again and then asks if I have been sexual with anyone other than him between when we first met and when he gave me the anklet. I act surprised and aghast but inwardly am secretly flattered by his jealousy, and I swear to him that I've been sexual with neither woman nor man — except him — since we met. Yet...while the words tumble without hesitation from my mouth my mind jumps guiltily to my old "friend" Sam, to Kingsley's doctor, to sophisticated

Larry, true-blue Richard, evocative Jim, sexually-exciting Mark, the Snake and his alluring stable and, always lurking in a dark corner of my mind, doe-eyed Jane. Are there thought-crimes? If there are, then I am guilty. Perhaps, I suddenly think, Kingsley's mother's suggestion has more than just surface merit. Perhaps...but what is "perhaps" compared against what is actually done? I am what I am. Kingsley and I are what we are. No more, no less. Why can't that be enough?

Kingsley visibly relaxes, I suspect warily reassured. He tells me he's asked Richard to hang out with me while he's away. I'm relieved and flattered at the same time. Beneath that, however, still lurks a kind of disappointment. And beneath the disappointment? Is it, I wonder, anger? Will Richard be staying with me at the house? Is he to be my caretaker? My guard? Kingsley explains to the child resentfully talking back to him that no, he's to be my guide in this gay world in which I am still just a novice who will undoubtedly continue to explore during his absence. Yet, in a way, yes; he is my guide in Kingsley's absence.

It takes several minutes for what Kingsley is saying to sink in. Kingsley isn't abandoning me, but he will not be here with me every day and every night, at least for a short while, and given the situation I can easily imagine myself not just tolerating but gladly appreciating Richard's chaperonage in Kingsley's absence. I ask when he is leaving. The day after tomorrow, he says. A dark, ominous note suddenly tolls within my heart.

8 APRIL

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I spend most of the morning with Larry and Richard, cutting up the canvas and getting pictures and photos matted and framed. Afterward, I want to help Kingsley pack.

I can't believe he's leaving. I don't want him to. By midday, whenever I catch myself refusing to believe, I think of something more I forgot to pack for Kingsley and reality sinks in like lead tossed into water. By mid-afternoon, my heart is rent: one part myself, torn, battered, naked, alone; the other Kingsley's love for me, already distancing itself, changing into cold, gray, amorphousness. I shake my head, trying to stop myself from thinking altogether. Kingsley, seeing the increasingly dazed look in my eyes, hugs, kisses and cajoles me throughout the afternoon. That evening we choose five paintings and two photographs for him to bring with him to New York City. One photograph is of Kingsley, the other of me. In both we appear as wet, colorful, abstract forms, almost but not quite indistinguishable from the rich, abstract canvas background. I pack them together, tenderly padding and binding them as if they were our very hopes and dreams.

That night Kingsley tosses and turns, repeatedly pushing me away. He's never done this before. What is he dreaming? Is this prophetic?



9 APRIL

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I finally fall, in the early morning hours, into a deep and troubled sleep. From the mist a huge brown circus bear, his legs loosely chained together, hobbles mindlessly along. A whip cracks somewhere and he drops obediently down on all fours. A red and yellow polka-dotted hat falls from his head into the dirt. An unseen crowd roars approval. The whip cracks again and he stands on his hind legs pirouetting clumsily, his small, short, polka-dotted skirt barely hiding his multicolor underwear, the crease in his crotch just obtuse enough to make it impossible to tell whether he's male or female. The crowd mumbles ominously. The whip cracks again, this time on his bare rump. He obediently stands on his hands, the skirt inverting to reveal his hairless crotch and a long, pink, circumcised penis. The crowd strains forward to see and laughs, guffawing derogatorily. The bear wobbles then tumbles down into a brown, furry heap buried in a pool of mud — a frightened, injured animal that knows he will soon be shot for his transgressions. The next crack is distinctly louder and a pungent smell of acrid smoke issues from the unseen gun...

I awaken, shaking and soaked. Kingsley, startled, looks worriedly into my terror-stricken eyes, embracing and trying to calm me with soothing whispers. What is it I'm afraid of? What is it that Kingsley knows that I don't? What is it he knows that is worrying him?

The rest of the morning and early afternoon is a lost memory, as if some kindly god, in sympathy, simply cut it out of my life and threw it away.

Returning alone in my car from the airport that afternoon, the house seems cavernous — dark, cold and foreboding. Evil lurks in every dark corner. How can it seem like this when the sun is still shining brightly outside? Rays of golden sunlight are, in fact, streaming in through the various windows, illuminating the dark interior like narrow spotlights. One catches and holds

me for an instant as I enter the foyer. I shuffle my feet listlessly, purposelessly. I wanted to dance for Kingsley before he left but missed the chance. There just wasn't time. Tears form in the corners of my eyes. I already miss him. I miss him. Oh God, I miss him! How can I live the rest of this day without him, and he without me? What about the other days he will be away?

The evening is one pointless exercise after another, as if I am practicing for my real life that is in suspension until he returns. Then it occurs to me: *If this is practice, then what kind of life am I practicing for? How will I survive the dark, cold evening alone?* The phone rings. *Oh God, oh God, oh God, oh God, please let it be Kingsley!*

It's Richard. Richard, my caretaker, guide, chaperone and guard. He asks how I'm doing, and then asks if I'd like to join him at an informal artist's gathering in maybe half an hour. It's not far from my house and I can come as I am. "You are dressed, aren't you?" he suddenly asks nervously.

"Yes," I reply, wondering why it would even matter. "And yes, I'll go," I hastily add. "I'll be there in just a few minutes."

I hang up the phone, drag myself to the bathroom, and splash cold water on my face. My stomach rumbles. I think of Kingsley and pause — there is no Kingsley inside of me today! Then I remember that I haven't eaten at all day. I race desperately to the closet and pull out my favorite leather jacket — Kingsley's — slip it reverently on and breathe in his smell. Moments later I'm in my car, roaring toward the address Richard gave me at the end of our phone conversation. The less than five-minute drive seems interminable. I want — I need — to get away from the house, and to the party with Richard as quickly as possible.

The party is in a loft apartment in an old, converted brick warehouse on the Oakland side of the bay. Long shadows extend from a bank of clouds concealing a descending, blood-red sun. The evening is crisp. A sense of change hangs like electricity in the air.

I park on the street and walk briskly toward the building. To my surprise, Richard joins me on the steps from somewhere out of the darkness. He grabs my cold, white hands in his, and pecks a quick Los Angeles-style greeting kiss first on one and then the other of my pale, freezing cheeks.

Richard compassionately takes my arm in his and escorts me up the steps to a massive wooden door, with mirroring art nouveaux lilies carved on either side. He pushes one of a row of buttons without reading the nameplates. The place is obviously not new to him. There is a loud buzzing, and a tinny voice from an unseen speaker instructs us to enter the building.

An elegant looking European-style elevator waits at the end of the dusky hallway. As we walk forward our shoes clack on old marble, the echoes amplified by walls of thick polished stone.

The elevator is so small that my rear brushes against Richard's crotch. An undesired spark jumps from his body to mine — or mine to his, I can't tell which — and my heart suddenly cries out in loneliness for Kingsley. Richard, sensing the tension, gently strokes my arm. I want, I need, Kingsley desperately yet, right at this moment, I also want to turn and throw myself at Richard — to beg him to make love to me, to take me, here, now. I shift my weight to move my arm away from his hand and in the effort hear the tinkle of the small silver heart with Kingsley's name on it at my ankle. Kingsley! Somewhere, right now, Kingsley is thinking of me. I feel it. I visualize him in my mind's eye, pining away for me. Damn it, Richard! And where is Kingsley when I want him? Now. Here. When I most need him?

The elevator lurches to a stop, and Richard reaches around me to open the door. We walk down a short, dimly-lit hallway to a common-looking apartment door; oddly, the only one on the floor. I raise my hand to knock but the door flings open as if in anticipation, flooding the hallway with brilliant light and raucous noise. Richard peeks around my shoulder and says in a hushed voice to the dark silhouette standing before us, "Joe sent us," and then laughs.

The mystery man blocking the doorway instantly grabs us, one in each hand, and pulls us in, slamming the door behind. The man turns out to be Roger, an artist-friend of Richard's who is the very picture of an effeminate gay: Tall, slender, a mass of light brown curls framing delicate hazel eyes. He releases us and, flipping one hand carelessly in the air, says in a soft, silky voice, "Joe, schmoe. I'd recognize you clothed or unclothed anytime, anywhere, dear Richard. Come in. And who's this beautiful friend you have with you? Or should I say, where's Larry these days?" Roger's raises his eyebrows and flashes a thin wicked grin.

"When have you ever cared, Roger?" Richard retorts. Looking back at me he continues, "This is Kingsley's one and only. Can you believe it?"

Roger, hand on hip, casually shifts his weight from one foot to the other and looks me over carefully. "Yes, I can," he says, extending a hand. "Roger. Kingsley's told me so much about you, but he failed to say how utterly gorgeous you are. Are you the dancer who..." I nod.

Roger continues for me: "Actually, everyone's saying you're the best dancer they've ever seen and believe me, a lot of people saw you at the Gold Coast dancing with Mark. And those who didn't, like me, have had to suffer hearing one lurid description after another of what can only have been one awesome dance." Turning to Richard he continues without stopping, "So, dear Richard, my closest friend and honest but always (I hope) flattering art-critic. Come with me and look at what I've been up to these last couple months."

Roger escorts us through a huge, packed-in crowd of people all seemingly trying to yell at the same time above the din. As we wind our way, Roger introduces us to one after another artist at what must surely be the largest gay artist party in the Bay Area. Before we make it to the other side of the room, I have met at least forty visual and several performing artists, many of whom, as Roger said, had seen or heard of my infamous samba with Mark at the Gold Coast. During introductions, Roger comments first aside and then,

disturbingly, directly to others about my nice butt. When I finally garner enough courage to object he tosses a languid hand in the air and, pushing me in front of another group of chattering artists, tells me to “flaunt it while you can, baby.” Roger eventually leads us to a small group of four well-known gay painters, all fawning over a woman standing in their center. It’s Jane. Her eyes instantly glom onto me. Completely unaware, Roger invites Richard into his private studio in the next room to get his opinion on several of his newest works, to which Richard agrees with reticence after suddenly noticing, with obvious disdain, Jane staring at me and me at her. Roger, however, takes Richard by the arm and literally drags him into the studio, leaving me suddenly alone.

Jane tosses her flaming red hair, breaks eye contact and suddenly ignores me, returning to the center of the group’s conversation. As I watch her, Jane works hard making it clear from the way she comports herself that she is single, intelligent, and likes, even desires, the attention of celebrated artists, particularly when she can act seductively without repercussion. That firmly established, she flashes her wide, gray-green eyes for the briefest moment back at me. Immediately the heat that, moments before I reserved for Kingsley and Kingsley alone, rises within me. I suddenly remember Jane’s look of surprise, followed by what seemed to me at the time to be abject disgust when she caught me bare-assed and impaled by Kingsley in the kitchen at Snake’s party. I feel my face flush crimson hot and I turn and walk away from her, attempting to put as much distance between us as possible.

On the other side of the huge living room two gorgeous, full-length French windows seem to appear in front of me from nowhere. Their long, white, chiffon drapes gently flowing in what seems an imaginary wind, the windows look out onto a large porch garden replete with a forest of bonsai trees. A stone pathway winds ribbon-like among the natural-seeming miniature forest. The overall impression reminds me of when Kingsley and I made love in the coastal forest, he the stag in rut, me his doe in heat. I suddenly remember the thrill of Kingsley between my thighs, dominating me, pounding and pouring his

animal essence into me. Looking dreamily out the windows and thinking back at my life with Kingsley, I am overcome by a forlorn sense of desolation. With Kingsley away, nothing is what it seems. I roll my hands into tight fists at my sides and, with conviction, swear to be true to him — worthy of his love — to prove to him that I can be the lifelong partner he has so long searched for and deserves. Eyes closed, I shake a fist defiantly in the air in determined resolve, but am shocked out of my reverie when a soft, slender feminine hand touches me. The alluring sound of Jane's soft breath next to me is heightened by a passing waft of her fragrant jasmine perfume.

I turn toward her, only to stare once again into those wide, questioning, gray-green eyes. Jane raises her head aristocratically and asks softly if I am all right. *Am I all right?* I wonder. Ripped through the heart, caught between desperate longing for Kingsley and the overwhelmingly seductive charm of this enticing woman wrapping her arm around mine, pressing her curving body against me. *Am I all right?* How exactly am I supposed to be in a situation like this, I wonder, and try to loosen her arm and hand from mine. Jane, however, places her head on my shoulder and, gently entwining her fingers in mine asks again, this time in a whisper reminiscent of Kingsley's, if I'm okay. I sigh deeply, willing my body to relax. Jane seems honestly concerned. Perhaps I'm reading everything wrong. It wouldn't be the first time with women. Or with men, for that matter.

Jane rubs her head against my arm and asks me to tell her about me...and Kingsley. I stammer, trying to say something coherent while her paralyzing, overpoweringly feminine presence grips and spreads its tentacles throughout my body. Jane and I turn in silence at the same moment to look out the French windows, still arm in arm, hand in hand. I try to focus, but all I see is a swirl of gray-green mist before and beside me. Her closeness, her touch, her soft voice and heady perfume grip me solidly behind the navel, where Kingsley normally thrusts and fills me. I try to fix on an image of Kingsley, naked, laughing, chasing me across the living room; or even the

forested porch directly in front of me, but all that materializes before me is Jane's mesmerizing eyes.

After some moments Jane gently squeezes my arm and hand, asking me if I like men or women. I shift my weight. The locket around my ankle tinkles softly. A vision of Kingsley listening intently to my promise of chastity suddenly comes to mind. Focusing hard, I can almost keep it in my mind. Almost. Jane pauses, looking down at the ground as if searching for the source of the soft tinkling sound from a moment ago, and then looks back at me quizzically. I tell her it's the locket that Kingsley gave me. I want to add "as a token of fidelity," but say instead "as a token of friendship," then feel ashamed and, when she squeezes my hand in gentle acknowledgement, completely humiliated. It's not just friendship, and why the hell am I so embarrassed to tell her? I haven't done anything. Well, a little voice reminds me, at Snake's party, Jane did walk into the kitchen where Kingsley and I were making love, and she did catch me in flagrante delicto. I suddenly vacillate. Why do I have to say anything at all to this woman? My resolve steadying, I try to tell her the truth: that I'm Kingsley's and I want to stay that way. Jane, however, looks up searchingly into my eyes, tightens her grip on my arm, and asks again: Is it men or women I like?

Over the next few minutes I unwillingly spill my guts about all the men I've met these last couple of weeks, since Kingsley and our honeymoon at the Coastal Inn together., I tell her that of all the men I've met throughout my life, I am attracted and right now given body, mind and soul only to Kingsley. As if on cue, one after another of the men I've met and felt physical attraction to during the same time suddenly begin to parade, naked and jeering, before my eyes. Finally I say it: I am still attracted to women. I don't want to be. My past affairs with women were always awkward and in the end disastrous.

Jane sighs and says she doesn't care about the past, only this moment. Do I like men or women — now — this moment? Do I like her? Do I find her sexually attractive, she asks, dropping her arm while placing the palm of her other hand on my rapidly-growing erection? I don't know what to say. Jane, in

response to her own question, thinks for both of us: Looking around to make sure no one is watching, she opens the French windows and suggests we go for a walk together in the garden patio. As we walk, her arm once again in mine, she asks me to remain quiet — to say nothing — and takes a business card with her phone number on it out of her pocket and slips it deftly into my trouser pocket. Jane says she wants to go to lunch together sometime. To talk. Then she asks me to call her. Anytime. Slipping her arm out from mine and quickly skimming her hands down the front of my shirt, she looks up once more into my eyes, then turns and leaves.

I am completely stupefied. Who is this vixen? Why me? And why this particular moment of my life? Is this a test arranged by Kingsley or Richard, both conveniently absent? Damn it, Kingsley, what are you doing to me and why? Or is his mother behind this? Is Jane a consummate actress, a hired gun, contracted to test my resolve? I walk slowly through the man-made forest to the edge of the balcony. The rich earthy smell of the green plants can't erase the lingering scent of Jane in my nostrils and brain. I look out over the million twinkling lights, sliced in half by the dark, brooding bay. The lights, each representing a different person's life, fade distantly into a thick rapidly grown bank of fog. I think for a moment about the lights of these innumerable lives and lifelines. Ah, this city, San Francisco. It takes but a fleeting moment, like Jane, to work itself into one's bones, one's very DNA, and in that moment change the outcome of every life it touches. The blood pounding through my body this very moment flows in a course dictated by its magic. It has always been my rock, a place I can return to over and over again, a center from which to build my life — the life *I* want, that *I* choose.

At this moment the battle within me rages, no holds barred. Will it be Kingsley? Or Jane? Yet even as I silently ask the forbidden question, I know it is not really a choice between two people, between ephemeral love and the immortality of children, between gay or heterosexual lifestyles. It's not really about giving or receiving sexually, or even male or female preference. No, it's a battle to the death between what I want

and what I can reasonably have in this life. The world is like a rich whore, with whom there is no final choice, no victor, no right or perfect solution, at least not for me. My choice is whether to allow the raging battle within, with all its temporary villains and heroes, to continue at a cost I will only discover after it's completely over. It's a long, lonely inside journey with dark challenges and brilliant discoveries yet before me if I but decide to accept them. Kingsley or Jane? Will either survive the battle or journey? I don't know. I only know at this moment that, despite my deep longing for Kingsley and the profound loneliness his absence engenders, Kingsley's mother was indeed right. I need time to sort out it all out. I sigh again, tears forming in the corners of my eyes as a wet, misty fog suddenly envelops the balcony.

"Are you all right?" a voice asks gently beside me, pulling me back to this time, this place, this world. *Thank God, it's Richard*, I almost scream to myself. Wiping a tear from my cheek, I run to him. *Oh, Richard! God, I need you right now*, my heart shrieks. I throw my arms around him and bury my sobbing, burning, shamed face deep in his chest.

Richard holds me in his arms, stroking my hair tenderly. Uncontrollable sobs wrack my body and I cling to him for my life. Oh God, how can love be so heart-wrenchingly painful? Why must it be this way?

I know I love Kingsley and I know he loves me. I know Jane doesn't love me. She can't, any more than I can love her after two fleeting meetings. Besides, a real friend, a real companion, a real lover wouldn't act like her.

I know in my mind there is nothing between Jane and me, but I also know now that the biological urge to procreate with a willing woman is solidly in my bones. I know now it won't disappear or go away. It's part of what makes me, me. It's partly what attracts Kingsley to me, and it will be mine to struggle and deal with all of my life. The heterosexual male inside me that Jane so easily re-awoke won't surrender to Kingsley or his love no matter how rich, how deep, how ecstatic or satisfying it proves. But is that what love is about? Is it just the drive, the

unrelenting urge to merge yin and the yang, male and female, in the end to produce offspring? Is that all we humans are — short-lived, hormonally-driven vessels whose only hope of experiencing anything enduring lies solely in producing a half-copy, a half-half copy and so on of ourselves till decades later we meld unobtrusively into a uniquely human oblivion? I reach into my pocket and take out Jane's card. It feels electrified, as if it has a life and mind of its own, willing me to place it safely back in my pocket until the right moment. I grasp it between my fingers, run them along its richly textured surface...and slowly tear it in two, tossing the pieces onto a nearby bureau.

No, I tell myself with all the determination I can muster, I can't, I won't, I don't have to succumb to any or all this. There is something that Kingsley and I share together that is profoundly real, valuable, precious and timeless. It's a sort of sidestep, an alternative pathway, a more powerful, less complicated one than a traditional heterosexual relationship. And isn't that enough? Isn't that more than most people can dare to hope for during their all-too-short time on this crazy planet? Who am I to dare, like Prometheus, to raise myself above my own humanity? Isn't it enough to just be human, with all of my idiosyncrasies and foibles?

Surrounded by Richard's arms and powerful, protective male presence, I allow myself to relax for a moment and absorb some of the strength he exudes, that he shares so freely, and I suddenly recall Kingsley's image, the touch of his fingers, the warmth of his smile, the pleasure of his companionship and, yes, the power and erotic ecstasy his maleness conjures within me.

Richard gently guides me, cradled in his arms, back from the surreal forest along my own yellow brick road, back through the magical French windows to the all-too-human world of the gay artist party and its myriad souls all trying so desperately to communicate with one another. I scan the crowd nervously. Jane is not there. Good. A weight lifts from me.

So what is it that all these people have that I don't? I don't know. I only know I have Kingsley.

I loosen my grip on Richard and, sniffing, wipe my tears away on my shirt sleeve. I must look frightful. I gaze up into Richard's kind eyes. Yes, I must look frightful, I can see it in his expression. Richard escorts me through the raucous crowd to the restroom, promising me that this time he will remain right here for me.

I nod my thanks and slip in. Looking plaintively at my reflection in the mirror above the sink, I can't believe how exhausted I look. I splash water on my face — wasn't I doing this just a moment ago? I already look better: more alive, more present. I run my fingers through my curls and smooth my rumpled, tear-soaked shirt. There. I'm as ready as I will ever be to rejoin the world. The deep sadness of the day has passed; now I eagerly await Kingsley's impending return.

I rejoin my chaperone, thanking him profusely and, in my mind, Kingsley too, for providing Richard, a trustworthy guide through this difficult time. Kingsley is once again...well, King. His is a world of unique friends, mostly gay, mostly kindhearted and caring. His world remains a challenge for me but one I am rapidly and, yes, eagerly coming to terms with.

Is it so different from the non-gay world? In some ways, yes. It's like an alternate world that occupies the same space and time as the more conventional, nominally heterosexual world. On the other hand, perhaps what's different is not so much its existence as the idea it represents and the counterpoint it provides.

I am slowly coming to understand that his, and now my — our — world is an inseparable part of a whole, providing a sort of side-burst of energy that's absolutely necessary to periodically re-enliven heterosexual human existence. Without the gay world, there would be no reference point from which to know and understand selfless love and affection without the sex between men and women. With it there exists a tacit, almost clandestine measure — a yardstick — for love, affection and companionship between humans, regardless of gender or procreative potential. Perhaps Kingsley's gay world is the mirror that I — we all — need to see in ourselves, the next step in

human evolution, a step in which humanity will at last move on from social adolescence, with its interminable violence, to a new, more adult world where intimacy, caring and nurturing become both the end and the driving force. Perhaps. But what, really, do I know? All I know for certain is that at this moment, I love Kingsley with all my heart, body, mind and soul, and I look forward with uncontainable joy to his imminent return.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Gary Martine is a reclusive writer, artist, photographer and videographer who, in his own words, "lives and breathes" San Francisco. The Kingsley & I series -- *Kingsley & I* and *Kingsley & I Together* -- published exclusively by MLR Press, marks Gary's introduction into the m/m erotic romance genre. Gary received a 2007 New Millennium Writer's Award for the short story on which the series is based.

Visit Gary on the internet at:

[http://www.geocities.com/gary\\_martine/index.html](http://www.geocities.com/gary_martine/index.html)

<http://garymartine.livejournal.com/>



## **SERVICEMEMBERS LEGAL DEFENSE NETWORK**

Servicemembers Legal Defense Network is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, legal services, watchdog and policy organization dedicated to ending discrimination against and harassment of military personnel affected by “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”

(DADT). The SLDN provides free, confidential legal services to all those impacted by DADT and related discrimination. Since 1993, its inhouse legal team has responded to more than 9,000 requests for assistance. In Congress, it leads the fight to repeal DADT and replace it with a law that ensures equal treatment for every servicemember, regardless of sexual orientation. In the courts, it works to challenge the constitutionality of DADT.

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## **THE GLBT NATIONAL HELP CENTER**

The GLBT National Help Center is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization that is dedicated to meeting the needs of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community and those questioning their sexual orientation and gender identity. It is an outgrowth of the Gay & Lesbian National Hotline, which began in 1996 and now is a primary program of The GLBT National Help Center. It offers several different programs including two national hotlines that help members of the GLBT community talk about the important issues that they are facing in their lives. It helps end the isolation that many people feel, by providing a safe environment on the phone or via the internet to discuss issues that people can’t talk about anywhere else. The GLBT National Help Center also helps other organizations build the infrastructure they need to provide strong support to our community at the local level.

National Hotline: 1-888-THE-GLNH (1-888-843-4564)

National Youth Talkline 1-800-246-PRIDE (1-800-246-7743)

On the Web: <http://www.glnh.org/>

e-mail: [info@glbtnationalhelpcenter.org](mailto:info@glbtnationalhelpcenter.org)

If you're a GLBT and questioning student heading off to university, should know that there are resources on campus for you. Here's just a sample:

US Local GLBT college campus organizations

<http://dv-8.com/resources/us/local/campus.html>

GLBT Scholarship Resources

<http://tinyurl.com/6fx9v6>

Syracuse University

<http://lgbt.syr.edu/>

Texas A&M

<http://glt.tamu.edu/>

Tulane University

<http://www.oma.tulane.edu/LGBT/Default.htm>

University of Alaska

<http://www.uaf.edu/agla/>

University of California, Davis

<http://lgbtrc.ucdavis.edu/>

University of California, San Francisco

<http://lgbt.ucsf.edu/>

University of Colorado

<http://www.colorado.edu/glbtrc/>

University of Florida

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/multicultural/lgbt/>

University of Hawai'i, Mānoa

<http://manoa.hawaii.edu/lgbt/>

University of Utah

<http://www.sa.utah.edu/lgbt/>

University of Virginia

<http://www.virginia.edu/deanofstudents/lgbt/>

Vanderbilt University

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lgbtqi/>

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