



Desmond Chase stood in the middle of the huge garage and carefully turned around in a precise circle. "Well," he said finally, knowing that there were three sets of eyes on him, waiting for him to say something -- anything -- about the notion of people choosing to live in a former fire station. "Well, you'll have interesting acoustics, for certain."

Dave laughed, but Archer was nodding, his smile more knowing and appreciative than Dave's amusement. "I came in here one morning and yelled, just to test that."

"You so did not." Dave's laugh turned incredulous. "You've been with me almost every morning!"

"You were here," Archer explained with a grin. He pointed to the door that led the way to what had been the offices and classrooms when the fire station had been operational. "Remember? I sent you to measure the last room down the hall, so we could figure out if the weight bench would fit in there. And then I yelled for you."

Desmond approved. "Very sneaky."

Archer grinned at him, his All-American-Boy charm looking distinctly out of place given the conversation. "I liked it. Better than just screaming and having the neighbors call the police about the crazy guy living next door. Best to get that taken care of before there's actually a person chained to the wall or something." He sent a wink toward Wyatt, who promptly dropped his eyes and smiled.

Desmond watched Dave roll his eyes and look away, his brow furrowed as he thought about something. Des was doing that a lot, he knew; watching Dave think. Watching Dave, really. It was a pleasant thing to do, and Des firmly believed that a man owed it to himself to allow a little watching. After all, there were limited things of beauty in the world, and if he was lucky enough to have some around him, he should look. Between Wyatt and Dave, Des' eyes were happy.

"You know, it really won't be that big a deal to put a loft in since we need to redo the floor." Dave was looking up at the high ceiling. "The support posts can go in with the new concrete slab."

Wyatt looked at the floor under their feet and frowned. "Why do you need to redo the floor?"

"Mostly because of the oil stains." Archer pointed. "And we need to have all the drains inspected before we cap them off. This was a garage for a long time, and if we're going to use this as living space instead of a workshop, I want the floor to be new and clean. Years of small spills and stuff leeching in just make me a bit wary." He turned and looked in the same direction as Dave. "What are you thinking, babe? Halfway down the length of the garage or two thirds?"

Wyatt came to stand next to Desmond as Dave and Archer paced off a large section of the floor, discussing how they would build iron stairs up to the loft and what they'd put up there, if it would be the TV viewing area or more for conversation, with the TV and couches set up under the loft. To Desmond it sounded like they were more intrigued with the idea of having a loft than what they'd actually do with it. He couldn't really blame them; the architecture of the garage was a feature they should exploit to its fullest.

"You like the polished brick, don't you, sir?" Wyatt murmured. "It's just rustic enough to be interesting and not as cold as a full out gothic basement would be."

Smiling, Desmond nodded. "I do. It's also sturdy, in great shape, and smooth enough that it won't cause abrasions."

Wyatt's hand slipped into his. "Always considering my safety."

"Always, love." Desmond gave his fingers a squeeze and went back to watching Dave. "They seem very excited about this."

"Do you blame them?" Wyatt laughed softly. "This is like a dream project for Archie, and Dave's going to learn so much as they work on this. It's too bad they'll have to do most of this in the evenings and on weekends, though."

Archer had apparently heard that, as he turned and nodded at them. "It's going to take a while, for sure. The rest of the building only needs decorating and few walls knocked down, for now. We'll get around to moving bathrooms and updating the kitchen later." He shook his head and made a few notes, then looked around the garage. "The permits and renovation paperwork are taking a while, though; likely we won't be able to live in this part of the building for months."

"That's okay," Dave put in, looking around with obvious pleasure. "It's going to be awesome when it's done. Big and open and different from everyone else's homes. Suited to us."

Des nodded and let go of Wyatt, who was drifting toward Archer. "It's a step up from apartments, that's for sure. I wonder, though, why you chose not to integrate the business into the building as well. The garage would have made a practical choice for your work."

Archer and Dave both nodded. "We thought about it," Archer told him. "It comes down to working together and living together and then having home and work in the same place. Too much of a good thing and all that."

Dave nodded once more. "Moving in with him is a big enough step," he said with a grin. "I didn't want to move in with a million board feet of pine, too."

Wyatt gave Desmond a sidelong look and Des waited, sure that Wyatt was going to say something about books. They lived together, too, and above Desmond's bookstore. Not only that, but there was an entire room of Desmond's personal collection of rare and collectable volumes. "Go ahead," Des encouraged with a rueful smile, thinking that perhaps his submissive partner wasn't sure if he should jump into the conversation or not.

"Thanks, sir," Wyatt said with a smile. "But I think I'll take the Fifth Amendment on this particular subject. After all, I do have an office of my own on campus that I can escape to." His eyes twinkled, and Desmond was sure that Wyatt had said precisely what he wanted to; he was very clever that way.

"You need to escape me?" Desmond arched one eyebrow. "It's an escape to go teach philosophy to freshmen?"

"I only need to flee when you spend your mornings talking about the state of modern genre fiction," Wyatt told him, laughing.

"Oh, I've heard that lecture," Dave put in. "The one that starts with him snorting at a movie tie-in novel for one of the latest crop of space movies? And goes through a progressively more adjective laden speech about the quality of science fiction from HG Wells right through to whatever he happens to be holding, with obscure references to the Hugo Awards? Then ends with a big finish that slams every TV show currently in existence that he doesn't even watch?"

Wyatt nodded eagerly. "That one. I haven't found a reliable way to stop it other than doing all the shelving for the Science Fiction section on my own before he can get to it."

Dave looked smug. "I found a way."

Clearing his throat, Desmond moved between the two of them. "Yes, well. We're here to discuss this fine space and where Archer is going to put things for play. Not my literary tastes."

Archer, damn him, looked as curious as Wyatt did. "Wait, hold up. I want to know how Dave can stop you when you've got your wind up. I've known you a long time, Des, and I don't think I've ever seen you stopped cold." He transferred his look to Dave. "Unless you mean you just distract him with something worse than poorly executed sci-fi before he can get rolling."

"No, no." Dave's smugness grew a depth and texture. "Full out ranting that I stop with something infinitely better, not worse."

Wyatt looked at Des with wide eyes. "Sir. Not when the shop is *open*!"

Archer made a sound that was close to a tsking noise. "Desmond. Very naughty."

Desmond lifted his chin. "I like naughty; you know that." Honestly, it was the best defense he could come up with on short notice.

"True." Archer laughed and slapped Dave's shoulder on the way past him, toward the ledge where he'd left a measuring tape. "You do give damn fine kisses, babe. It would shut me up."

"It has," Dave agreed. "But I have to get a bit more dramatic with Des than mere kisses."

Wyatt laughed and went to take one end of the measuring tape from Archer. "Keep talking, Dave."

Dave, thankfully, glanced at Desmond before happily describing the very risky public blow job that had derailed his last impromptu lecture. "Oh, I think I'll keep that to myself," Dave said. "A reserve item, so to speak."

"Thank you," Des mouthed to him when Wyatt couldn't see. It was always painful getting a lecture from his sub; Wyatt never said a word and his attitude was never of the sort that Des could correct; but the lecture would be there, all the same. Partly, he supposed, because they knew each other so well -- and partly because Wyatt would be right. It was very unwise to have sex in the shop during business hours.

The fact that it had been so good he'd seriously thought about closing for an hour and taking Dave upstairs to do it again was beside the point.

"How tall are you?" Archer was asking Wyatt. "The same as Dave?"

"I think so, yes. Six three and a little more."

"Good." Archer nodded thoughtfully. "If I need help making things fit you it's handy to test on Dave. God knows when I'll finally get around to putting in the bolts and such."

Wyatt looked pleased that there were going to be custom fittings for him and Dave didn't seem bothered by the prospect of acting as a stand in for fittings. Des made a mental note to have a talk with Wyatt when they were alone, to see how things were really going between him and Archer. They'd only played twice, but judging by the bruises and Wyatt's continued affection, it all seemed to be fairly smooth.

He hoped that it was as smooth as his own burgeoning relationship with Dave; mixing two couples the way they were was a delicate balancing act. Between all four personalities -- and the fact that while three of them were decidedly kinky, one most definitely was not -- there were more mundane matters to deal with. There was the basic scheduling problem of finding times that worked for everyone, and then things such as who was going to use what car on a given date, who was going out and who was staying in. They were all feeling their way, so to speak, and still really just trying to get to know one another.

Dave and Archer, as well, were experiencing changes in their own relationship that had little or nothing to do with Des and Wyatt. According to what Dave had intimated to Des, the two of them had gone from thinking about each other as partners but not wanting to make demands on each other, to something deeper. Deep enough to buy a fire station and move in together. Dave was also Archer's employee, and they were working on remodeling a Victorian Inn, side by side. All of that added up to the simple fact that the time Dave and Archer had for each other outside of work was limited by their long hours, and yet they were finding time to spend with the others.

Desmond thought that perhaps Dave and Archer had been able to move forward with their relationship as a direct result of the sharing they were all doing. The sharing of each other and the deepening of trust they were needing to create in order to find balance was only helping Dave and Archer to know what they want and recognize what they already had.

Dave had told him, the same day he'd come by the store to tell him about the fire station, that they'd finally even used the word "love." His eyes had been so bright and delighted; it had made

Desmond sigh with relief and joy for them. He and Wyatt had been fully aware of how much Dave and Archer cared about each other, and were privately dismayed that the men didn't seem to know it themselves.

And yet, here they were, all four of them. In a fire station, marking out the space that was to be a living room and a game room, a place to entertain and watch TV and shoot pool. There would be built in braces and supports that Archer could turn very easily into restraint stations, and yet subtle enough that they would go unnoticed during a Super Bowl party or a holiday bash, or even an elegant dinner.

"It's rather far away from the kitchen," Desmond said, mostly to himself. Wyatt would look so nice, though, dressed to serve them at a long table.

"Not that far, really," Dave said, his voice suddenly close. Des had been too lost in his own thoughts to really notice how close Dave had come. "There's another door down at the back of the kitchen that goes to the hall. You look dreamy."

Des smiled. "Like I'm dreaming or like a dream?"

"Want to come see the bedrooms? We have a bunch, you can pick one." Dave apparently had other things than dreams on his mind.

Feigning shock, Des' smile grew. "Why, Dave Allen. Are you suggesting we go mess around while our partners measure and figure out where to put ropes and chains?"

"Uh-huh. The chains thing really isn't my style, as we've already established."

"True. And this is a rather large building. Perhaps another tour would be a good idea. I'd hate to get lost on my way to the bathroom or something." Des took Dave's hand and they started walking, across the garage floor and to what had to have been an office; it had a large glass window that looked into the garage itself and had a built in desk. "You know, you should keep that room as it is. A desk with shelves like that is never a bad thing."

"That green color is hideous," Archer called out. "But I like the window. We can take the door off the hinges and do something with it, I'm sure. Wyatt, spread your arms, please."

Des looked back, caught Wyatt's wide smile, and laughed. "They'll be busy for a while, I think."

"Cool." Dave sounded pleased, but also more or less like he'd be dragging Desmond off anyway. It was rather flattering. "Hey, Arch. We're gonna go and test acoustics for you."

Archer gave them a thumbs up and Dave led Desmond directly through the office and another door, out into the hallway. "We're going to take this door off, too, when we figure out how to keep the heat distributing evenly in the building."

"A wood or pellet stove with fans?" Desmond suggested.

He got a nod. "We're seriously considering it, yes. At least for the garage, after we take care of the insulation."

They turned left and went down a short, wide hallway. "There's so much to do."

"So much," Dave agreed ruefully. "We're going to have fun, though. This hall is going to have neat art, and a long bench on that wall. I don't really have any idea why, it just seems to want one. Blank walls are surprisingly intimidating, I'm finding. It's actually easy to walk through and say this room is a bedroom, this will make a good workout room, we can put books and stuff in here. Decorating is proving to be harder."

Desmond nodded, looking around as they turned a corner and went up a flight of stairs. "It's a very utilitarian design. It'll be hard to inject warmth without losing some of the character; it would be a shame to make it look like any other home, when it would be fun to live in a fire station. Unique."

"Exactly. We're actually advertising for mementoes we can display -- newspaper clippings, photos, old badges and stuff. The station was used right up until two years ago, so some of the old crews are already stopping by to shake Archie's hand and offer things like decals and whatnot. It's pretty cool, really." At the top of the stairs, Dave pointed to the left. "Classrooms, bunk rooms and the main bathroom that we're going to repurpose. But we've decided to take the two back rooms down here and make it the bedroom instead of a workout space. Well, our bedroom. I think we'll wind up with three, actually. Look, we already knocked out the wall, last week. Moved some stuff in a couple days ago."

Following him down the hall to the last room Des asked, "Why three? It seems an odd number, and you have space for even more than that, even with taking two for separate offices and a workout room."

"Money." Dave laughed as they walked into the sun-filled room that bore signs of both construction and hasty unpacking. A few boxes, a mirror leaning on the wall, and an unmade bed haphazardly took up space. "This room is big enough for a king sized bed -- or two -- so we'll buy one. Then we can put my queen in a guest room and Archie's in another. Some day we might make one of the other rooms into a bedroom, because you're right -- it's not like we don't have space. But for now, three beds equals three bedrooms."

"That makes sense." Desmond looked around and approved of the room. It was very large, naturally enough since a wall was gone, and it had windows on two sides. There was room for a bed, dressers and perhaps even a chair for reading, over in the corner. "I assume there's a bathroom or showers nearby?"

"They're just down the hall; I expect we'll eventually put in an ensuite. You know, when we're rich. For now, though, we're just going to move a bunch of my stuff in here and maybe stay over once in a while while all the construction is being done. We'll be living at Archie's condo for a few more weeks, for sure."

"Back and forth," Des said with a nod. "Thus the bed already here."

Dave grinned and pulled him toward it. "Would I invite you to come make out and not have a nice bed for you lie back on?"

"Now, now. You know I don't mind if we make out against walls. We've done that a lot."

"We have. But I like the way you feel when you climb on top of me and rub your cock on my hip."

The bluntness and language almost made Des' breath catch, and it certainly made him growl. "You're getting very good at that," he said as he gave Dave's chest a shove with a flat hand. There was no way at all he could manhandle Dave -- or Wyatt -- not really, not from this angle, but Dave was clearly willing to play along and had even set the stage himself.

Dave grinned at him and fell back on the bed, grabbing at Desmond's wrist as he went. "Good at making you growl?"

Des tugged his arm free. "Good at finding buttons to push." Desmond put one knee on the bed, alongside Dave's thigh, but didn't get on top of him. Not yet. "You always manage to find a way to surprise me."

"Just keeping things interesting. I'd hate for you to get bored." Dave didn't quite wink as he said it, but his mouth twitched as if he was trying not to laugh. He also expanded his chest in as unsubtle a way as possible, making his T-shirt taut. "Come on, Des. I want you. You look like you need a good musing, standing around the garage like that. All nicely dressed, button up shirt and ironed trousers." He reached up and smoothed one hand over Des' chest, his large hand spreading heat in a fan shape. "No tie today, though; that's new."

"I didn't think a tie was necessary to tour a construction site." He'd even rolled up the sleeves of his shirt in what was an act of utterly casual flair for him. "Keep talking." With one hand he started to unbutton his own shirt while he traced Dave's erection over his jeans with the other. "Impressive."

The hand on Des' chest brushed over one nipple, teasing it. "It's better without fabric in the way." Dave licked his lower lip, just a flash of tongue before his hips pushed up against Desmond's hand. "You should try it that way."

"When I get to it." Des watched Dave's face and squeezed a bit, pleased with the way Dave's eyes lost focus. He'd been working on that erection for a while, apparently. Des wondered why he hadn't noticed, but then decided it didn't really matter right then. They were taking care of things in a timely manner and that was what counted. "Tell me," he whispered, slipping his hand down to cup Dave's balls. "How do you want to do this? Anything specific?" There was still so much for them to do.



"I hadn't gotten much further in my thinking than a lot of kissing, some grinding and maybe making enough noise that Archie will come and check the situation out."

Des raised an eyebrow and finished unbuttoning his shirt. "Forget my lack of tie, *that's* new. You want them to watch?"

"Let's just say I don't object to the idea." Dave's hand slid under the fabric of Des' shirt and started pushing it off his shoulder. "Archie, on the other hand, really, really likes it. A lot. Hell, he can almost come just talking about it. It's interesting, in a way, how me sleeping with you has resulted in some pretty fantastic sex with Arch."

"Always glad to help." Des laughed and finally swung his other leg up and straddled Dave's upper thighs. "Do you two talk a lot while you're having sex?" He looked down at Dave and allowed the removal of his shirt.

"Sometimes." Dave grinned widely and wiggled under him, trying to get some friction. "Archie and I don't really have a predictable pattern for anything. It doesn't matter who tops, who blew who in the shower, whatever. We just do what feels right at the time."

"I'm glad the system works for you." Des grinned back and leaned way over Dave's body and braced himself by placing his hands on either side of Dave's shoulders so that he could more or less hover over Dave's big body, without dropping his weight down on top of Dave. "But I think maybe we should concentrate on you and me, at the moment. If Archer and Wyatt choose to come looking for us, we'll take things from there."

"Excellent idea." Dave lifted his head and kissed Des, not gently. "Are you having ideas?"

"Many. Most of them involve far less clothing, a lot more energy behind the kissing, and you holding onto the bed frame." He smiled at Dave's expression and added, "For traction, if you'll forgive the term. I want you to be able to move in counter motion. The more force we can build up, the better."

Dave nodded, his eyes losing focus again. "Uh-huh. Okay, yeah. But we might want to hurry up a bit or we're going to have a limited time to get that force built up."

"Oh, I think you can hold out a lot longer than you think you can. In fact, I'd bet on it."

"You want to wager on my ability to delay orgasm?"

"Certainly. Make a game of it, Dave. Let's say, whoever comes first has to provide a night out. Or even better, a planned night in. Something more than a movie and dinner."

Dave's eyes narrowed. "Taking into account, of course, each other's tastes and interests?"

"Of course." Desmond shifted his weight forward a little and rocked his hips, just once. "Tailored to entertain, relax, excite, delight, learn. A special evening, for you and me."

Dave rocked back, lifting his hips to rub the hard length of his erection against Des. "All right," he said slowly. "Only now I'm not sure if I want to win or lose."

Des could sympathize. "Step one." He kept his voice low, just above a whisper. "I suggest we undress. No one's pants but mine will fit me, and I don't relish the idea of driving home sticky any more than I like the idea of trying to be comfortable in Archer's borrowed jeans."

"I think that's a wise first step," Dave said gravely. But instead of making any sort of move to actually do anything about undressing, he stretched. His arms went up over his head and then back, turning and flexing as he reached for the headboard. His fingers curled around it.

Des' mouth went dry as he looked down, taking in the taut muscles and artful pose. "You don't play fair."

"Hell, no." Dave laughed and gripped the headboard a little more tightly, his biceps swelling as he made a proper show of it. "I think I have a pretty good shot at working up some force."

"I don't doubt it." Des smiled to himself and got up. "Stay there."

"I beg your pardon?" Dave laughed, but he stayed where he was, lifting his head to watch Des as he continued to undress. "I don't see why you get to be naked and I don't."

"Oh, trust me. You'll be naked as well; I'm very fond of you naked. Please, where are the condoms and lubricant?"

"On top of the box over there, by the window." Dave let go of the headboard to point.

"Interesting choice of storage space, given it's nowhere near the bed." Des walked across the cold linoleum floor and made a mental note to give them a throw rug as a housewarming gift.

"We were exploring our space," Dave said suggestively. "And Arch has a fondness for bending me over stuff."

"I can't say I blame him at all." Des laughed and got what he needed, then turned back to face the bed, only to find Dave had peeled off his T-shirt. "I did say I'd make sure you were naked, didn't I?"

"Just making sure." Dave smiled sweetly at him and lay back on the bed, his arms once more going back to hold the headboard. It didn't escape Des' notice how erect and tight Dave's nipples were, pink peaks that almost demanded to be pinched or bitten. If Dave had been another man, Des would have found a way to clamp them, but Dave was Dave and Des respected his tastes.

The image of it, however, put a little lift in Des' prick and he gave himself a fast stroke, just because it felt good. "You have cold floors," he informed Dave as he got back on the bed.

"That's what Arch said." Dave's gaze was ranging hungrily over Desmond's body in a most flattering way. "Are there any rules to this game? Or do I have to lie here and hold onto the headboard?"

Words formed so easily in his mind, the order to do just that felt so natural to give, but Des caught himself in time. He and Dave did not play those games. Dave had made it clear that he had no wish to venture into Desmond's world of control and structure. Des had no wish to disrespect that, and every desire to be with Dave as a peer, a partner.

It was a little frightening, if he thought about it for too long. The chances of committing a grave error, of saying the wrong thing, of not muting his inner impulses fast enough, was high. Thankfully, he knew Dave not only to be forgiving but also indulgent. It wasn't like Desmond was being asked to give up a vital part of himself; he and Wyatt were very much a lifestyle pairing. Dave, and Des' relationship with him, was adding a new roster of experiences and pleasures to Desmond's life, not limiting any of them.

Still. It took a moment's thought to dismiss the instinct to tell Dave precisely what to do and to instead say, "No rules, no. Although you're awfully pretty like that and could possibly win the bet just by flexing your muscles at me."

Dave laughed, clearly delighted. "You say such wonderful things. However, I think I'll add in some kissing and touching, if you don't mind." He let go of the headboard and drew Desmond to him.

"Oh, not at all." Desmond curled into Dave's side and kissed him, pressing close. "I don't mind one bit." He couldn't resist tweaking one of Dave's nipples and when that earned him a gasp and one of Dave's arms pulling him closer, he did it again, then moved on to licking and suckling.

"Oh, man." Dave's hands were quick as well as large, and he had one sliding over Des' hip in a long caress within seconds. "Nice." A tug pulled Des closer, close enough that he could rub up against one of Dave's hard thighs.

Denim gave a whole new layer to the sensation, rough where Des wanted soft and smooth, and then Dave's hand was there, not even stroking. Just holding his cock snugly as Des tugged at the nipple in his mouth with his teeth.

Dave made a sound that was half laugh and half groan, his hand flexing a little around Des. His thumb rubbed at the head and Desmond could feel himself give up a little fluid, the crown suddenly slick and cool under the pad of Dave's thumb.

It was very odd being the one completely nude; certainly a direct reversal of Des' usual method. He wasn't entirely sure he was comfortable with it, although that had nothing to do with any sense of vulnerability; more, it was a matter of winning. It was very hard not to just thrust into Dave's hand and seek pleasure, which was counter-productive to winning the bet.

He lifted his head, just a little, and licked Dave one more time before kissing his way across to the other nipple. As he did so, he shifted his weight and removed himself from Dave's grip.

"Aw, hey." Dave sounded like he was trying to protest or even pout, but there was a catch in his breath when Des treated a nipple to a gentle bite once more. "All right then. Yeah, okay." He put his hands on Des' hips and guided Desmond into straddling Dave's hips again. "Like I said. I get off on you getting off on top of me."

Des growled again. "Stop that."

"Hell, no." Dave laughed happily. "It's true, it feels good and it makes your cock throb when I say it. You like the plain talk, for all you use ten dollar words. I felt it."

That was probably true, since Des was pushing down, grinding on Dave and not caring for the denim at all. Hell, Dave still had his sneakers on, and the only item he'd taken off was the poor T-shirt that was hanging half off the bed. Des had a plan, though, and he put it in motion, the trail of kisses heading down Dave's torso, over his sternum and following the line of fine, soft hair.

"Oh, yeah," Dave encouraged. "Let me help you out." He reached down, fingers brushing against Des' skin as Dave undid the buttons on his own jeans. The sound of shoes thumping onto the floor seemed to echo in the room and Des had a momentary thought to the acoustics.

He wondered if Wyatt and Archer were talking about them and what they were doing, if the two were listening for cries or moans. If they were making their own fun or if they were clinically discussing chains and ropes instead, oblivious to what Desmond and Dave were doing.

Yes, he'd definitely have to sit Wyatt down and have a long talk with him. He looked forward to it a great deal, actually.

Under him, Dave wiggled again, shoving his jeans down and apparently struggling to rid himself of his socks as well without bucking Des off. It was rather inelegant, but as every lift of Dave's hips forced his erection up against Des' chest, Des didn't make any moves to help. In fact, since there was a wager to consider, he went out of his way to make things a challenge. The best way to distract Dave from making Des feel too good was to make Dave's attention focus on himself.

When Des licked the warm skin under Dave's belly button, Dave laughed. When Des nuzzled along the length of Dave's erection, the laughter died off, but Dave didn't sound displeased at all. And when Des opened his mouth and started licking, Dave moaned.

Des knew where Dave's sweet spots were and he used the knowledge to his advantage, humming as he pressed and kissed where he could get the strongest reaction, all the while working on ridding Dave of his jeans, since Dave had given up. Dave, bless him, was distracted enough to be cooperative and pliant, only moving one leg enough to better brace himself so he could begin to thrust into Des' mouth.

For a moment, Des was reasonably sure he was going to win, and a lot faster than he'd anticipated, but Dave came to his senses. "Oh, no. No, no, no." Laughing, Dave gently pushed him away. "As wonderful as that is, I don't get to touch you. We can't have that."

Des allowed himself to be pulled back up the bed, but he made sure he was still straddling Dave's thighs. They both liked it, so why not? As an added bonus, and in a fit of inspiration, he grabbed the pump bottle of lube as he moved, Dave's hands steadying him. "This might be cold," he warned.

Dave flinched but he didn't complain as the gel fell on his groin. "A little too much, maybe?" he asked as Des depressed the pump twice more.

"Not for what I have in mind." Des smoothed the lube around and warmed it, smiling as Dave made a sound of approval. Slippery and slick, Des added even more lube, coating his own cock, too. "See?"

Dave's eyes rolled a bit as they started moving together, slipping and sliding. Des lined up their pricks and pushed down, laughing when Dave thrust up so hard he lifted Des off the bed. He heard Dave start to pant and hid a smile by kissing Dave's chest, once more paying close attention to Dave's nipples. "Use the headboard," he whispered. "Leverage."

"Oh, God." Dave groaned and started moving faster, his body braced by his arms. His biceps strained as his hips thrust and worked with Des until they were coming together in a mockery of fucking, the sound of their bodies slapping becoming loud in the room, the lube making every sound like a snap, a slap, a wet popping as Des drove himself against Dave.

"Shit, shit, no," Dave said with a whimper. "Not yet."

Des stopped before he remembered he was supposed to be winning a bet; it felt too good to waste, too good to let it come to an end. He was panting, he discovered, and his balls were beginning to insist there be more than just rubbing off, no matter how good that felt.

Dave handed him a condom without a word, his eyes wide and dark.

"Thank you." Des tore it open and rolled it on, his eyelids fluttering as he stroked it into place. He reached for Dave with the other hand and did it to him too, jacking them both at the same time, nice and slow.

"Come on," Dave whispered. "More lube. Do it again, Des." He pulled on the headboard, grinning as it made a muffled banging sound near the floor. "Need to tighten that up, I think."

"At least there's no wall for it to bang up against."

Dave laughed softly and nodded, his breathing beginning to even out a little. Des kept playing with him slowly, waiting until Dave had his breath all the way back, if only because he needed Dave to hear his words. Des probably could have jacked him harder, or just gone right for the kill

and sucked him off, fast and hard, but that wasn't really in the spirit of the bet or what the entire experience was becoming. No, he wanted Dave to come despite his best efforts not to, not because the right bit of his body got overstimulated, but because he was so very turned on that not coming was unthinkable. He wanted Dave's orgasm to be given, not taken.

Later, he'd rethink the strategy and try to recall why his reason had deserted him. It wasn't as if there was anything wrong with coming because one's cock was encased in a wet, warm mouth, and slippery fingers were pushing and nudging in very exciting ways at hidden places. Nothing wrong at all.

"Des," Dave said hoarsely. "You're playing a game. I know it, I think I even like it, don't get me wrong. But if you don't get your cock in me and start to fuck me within a few seconds I'm going to get up, find something sanitary and take care of the issue myself."

Des closed his eyes. "That button just keeps coming back to get me by the balls."

"Balls." Dave pounced on the word. "Crawl up here and let me suck them."

"Shut up." Des covered Dave's mouth with his own to get Dave to be quiet, leaning over far enough that his cock slipped and slid through all the lube, riding down the crease of Dave's ass.

"Yes," Dave said into Des' mouth, the breath flowing from Dave's mouth to Des'. "You're there. I can feel you, right there, at my hole. Fuck me. Come on, do it. Fill me up."

"Absolutely filthy mouth on you." Des wouldn't have guessed it, the first week they'd met. It still surprised him, and he suspected that Dave had to be wildly turned on to talk so dirty. It was, perhaps, the conditions of the vulgarity that got to Des as much as the words. He reached down with one hand and guided himself, held himself steady. "You do it."

Dave grunted a laugh at him, but he didn't hesitate. His shoulders flexed as he pushed back against the bed frame and found his leverage. "That's it," he said. Eyes going wide, Dave moved down, impaling himself on Des' erection.

Tight and warm, and slick with too much lube. Des had a long, endless moment to consider that he'd perhaps made an error, that it would have been far, far wiser to go in for the easy kill, so to speak, and then even that thought was lost to him as his body lit up and gave way to pleasure.

The banging of the headboard told him how fast he was moving, the staccato rhythm sharp and clear in the room, every thump and bang punctuated by a grunt as he chased his orgasm. He pushed into Dave, Dave pushed back, and the pressure rose exponentially. He could hear words, huffed out with breath that was lost again as he pulled back, forced out of Dave's lungs when Des plunged back in.

His own lungs burned as the need to yell rose in him and his skin prickled with a sudden release of sweat. So, so close, he could feel his orgasm uncurl in his belly.

"Now," Dave whispered or yelled or mouthed. "Now." And Dave's ass tightened around him and Des threw back his head and came, crying out to the ceiling above them.

The room was still, the bed finally silent. He could hear his voice echoing and the way the cry ended on a note of release, high pitched and fading into a moan. He could hear Dave panting, and Des could feel his cock give one more aching throb.

"Fuck, yes." Dave panted louder, moaning, and Des looked down at him, ready to smile and kiss and share a few moments of needed rest, but Dave wasn't there yet.

Shining, glossy skin was flushed pink and Dave's fist flew on his cock as he jacked off, his teeth clenched in a tight grin. "I win," he said. Then his eyes rolled back and he came with a volley of come streaking over his belly, the scent of it rising up thick to surround them.

Des watched and shook his head slowly. "You have indeed. Luckily, so have I." It was merely two different matters, really. Des waited until Dave was satiated and relaxed, grinning up at him before he moved away and grabbed the nearest thing around to clean up with. "I look forward to coming up with a plan."

Dave smiled sleepily and pulled him back down to the bed. "I look forward to everything."

Desmond laughed and curled up with him, hoping they'd have a few more minutes to relax before they had to get up. "I don't think I've enjoyed going to see a new home more."

"I would hope not." Dave kissed him and held him closer. "Now, tell me what you think we should do about the lighting. I want to get rid of the florescent lights."

Nodding, Des started making suggestions, asking questions and letting Dave talk about his new home. He was happy to be a part of it.

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"Would you like water with dinner, sir? Or perhaps wine?"

"Do we have anything that's not very sweet?" Desmond looked up from his book and smiled. Wyatt stood in the doorway looking content and calm, which was always pleasant. It was also very much typical of Wyatt, and it never failed to make Des happy. The calmness, the small smile and the peace around Wyatt's eyes meant that Desmond was doing his job correctly, that Wyatt wasn't in need of anything important to his comfort or health. "I assume that's the chicken I'm smelling?"

"Yes, sir." Wyatt nodded and put his hands behind his back. "I made a lemon glaze I hope you'll like. The rosemary was fresh."

"Oh, this does call for wine, then. How long until dinner is ready to eat?" He had half a chapter to go and he'd hoped to get to the end of it before heading to the table.

"At least fifteen minutes." Wyatt came in and crouched down to kiss his cheek. "You have plenty of time to enjoy your book."

Des smiled his thanks and kissed Wyatt back, taking his mouth and gently tasting with a flick of his tongue. "Lemon is right; but not too much. I look forward to it."

Wyatt, looking pleased, got up to leave. "Did you see the phone message I left on the counter, sir?"

"Yes, thank you." He'd seen the note that Dave had called, but had been unable to reach him when he called back. "Do you know if they were working late at the inn tonight or if they were going to start more demolition at the fire station?"

"I'm really not sure." Wyatt paused by the door and looked back at him. "I could call Archie and ask, if you'd like."

"No, no." Des shook his head and held up his book. "I'm going to enjoy this, then your meal, and then we'll see if I can track down Mr. Allen. We have a debt to settle and I need to know when is the best time; if he called to order a book I'll be quite put out."

Wyatt laughed and started walking again. "I doubt very much if that's why he called. He's far more interested in your person than your books."

"You are my person."

Wyatt's cheeks went pink and he smiled. "I love you, too."

Des watched him go, his belly warm. They were very lucky, and he knew it. He appreciated every smile and bit of joy he found with Wyatt, and thanked God in his prayers for the stability of his life. He was afforded a lot of comfort, and he thought it his duty to be thankful for it, and not to become too used to having it; it was entirely possible for it all to be taken away from him through bad business or accident. He wouldn't live a fearful life, but Desmond Chase also wouldn't live an entitled one.

He counted his blessings, enjoyed the chapter of his book, and then had a fine wine with a delicious meal. Dining was much the same as ever -- he and Wyatt talked about their day, customers that had been in to the bookstore below them or calls that Desmond had taken regarding his real passion, the rare and limited editions collections, and Wyatt talked about what had been going on at the university. The classes Wyatt taught were all going well, and Desmond liked hearing about the politics within the Department of Philosophy.

After dinner was over -- and praise had been given for the new recipe -- Des had Wyatt do the dishes. When he again got no answer on Dave's phone, he made his way to their living room and crossed to the CD player, which was usually loaded with something that he really enjoyed, a selection of discs to fit his every mood, but this time he was looking for something more modern,



more to Wyatt's taste than his own. It took him a little while to find the CD he was searching for, but by the time Wyatt came in from the kitchen he had it playing softly and the lights were burning on low.

"Oh, I know this atmosphere," Wyatt said with a smile. "This is talking time, isn't it?"

"It is." Des gestured to the couch and rolled his eyes as he realized he probably looked like a therapist inviting a client to be seated. That wasn't exactly the feeling he was reaching for. "I'm curious about a few things, and I feel it's time we touched base about the way things are going."

Wyatt nodded, but didn't move to sit. "Do you want anything before we start, sir?"

Desmond shook his head. He knew that Wyatt wasn't asking in order to delay their talk or change the subject; he was merely making sure that Des was comfortable and ready. Usually, if they were going to watch a movie or even just read in the same room, it was Wyatt's job to prepare a drink for Des or even just to make sure he had a pillow or whatever little comfort he could want for.

"Not right now, thank you," Des said. If he wanted a drink later he'd send Wyatt, and he'd even go get one himself if he needed to walk around and think. "If you're thirsty, though, you should have some water. This isn't going to be all about you listening to me ramble, dear. I want to hear you, too. In fact, I'm mostly curious about you." He settled into a corner of the couch and waited for Wyatt to either join him or go back to the kitchen for water.

Wyatt knelt down beside him, though, or at least started to. His cushion was there, but before Wyatt's knees could hit it, Des had shaken his head. "On the couch, please? If you don't mind. You can kneel later, and I promise I'll treat you to something nice before bed. But for this, I think we need to be on an even footing; at the very least at eye level."

"You put too much stock in that, you know." Wyatt smiled as he sat at the other end of the couch, one leg curled under him. "Even at eye level I know my place."

Smiling, Des took his hand. "You talk so sweetly," he teased. "Now, stop trying to be flattering and such a good boy, and talk to me. Were you upset with me the other day when I went off with Dave?"

Wyatt looked genuinely confused for a moment, his eyes widening and his head tilting to the side. "No. Should I have been?" The question, as far as Des could tell, was genuine and not an attempt to pry. "It didn't occur to me to be upset or jealous. You both said where you were going and the intention was pretty clear."

"And that didn't bother you?" Des pressed.

Wyatt sighed and gave Des' hand a pat. "Are we going to have this conversation every single time you have sex with Dave? No, it doesn't bother me. At all. I know what I am to you -- your partner, your lover, your submissive, your... your *partner*. And I know what he is -- a great guy

who you like very much, who you might come to care for very deeply. Perhaps even love, given time. But even then, he's not a threat to me -- and we all promised to never allow such a thing to happen. The threat part, I mean, not the love part. We all talk too much, just like this, to let that happen."

Des listened to Wyatt all the way through, and raised an eyebrow at the end. "So, on the one hand you wonder if we're going to keep having this conversation and on the other you see the need for it."

Wyatt blinked twice and started to laugh. "Okay, point taken. Sorry." He looked more amused than apologetic. "Should we start again?"

"I don't think we need to go that far." Des shook his head, smiling at him. "Let's just say that at this point you aren't bothered by my sexual relationship with Dave and move along." He had to admit he was relieved; intellectually he knew that he was in the first stages of his relationship with Dave and that the high excitement would eventually taper off. He wanted to enjoy it, however, and his instincts wanted to protect it from any form of discouragement. All of that was moot if Wyatt was uncomfortable. He wouldn't do anything to hurt Wyatt. "I'll trust you raise the issue if that changes, all right?"

"Of course." Wyatt nodded seriously. "Just as I know you'll say something if you don't like what Archie and I do. Mind you, you'll have a lot more detail about what we do." Wyatt laughed softly and nudged Des' knee playfully. "Archie will tell you his plans before anything happens, and I'll likely babble about it for ages after."

"I can always gag you if it gets annoying." Des could tease, too. Of course, it was also true.

"That's what Archie said." Wyatt winked at him, his whole face alight with pleasure. "He did it, too."

"I know." Des chuckled and shook his head. Wyatt had told him every single detail of the two encounters he'd shared with Archer, parts of them more than once. Des was reasonably certain he could recreate both events down to the words spoken, if he were given the proper gear. "Would you like that level of information about my dates with Dave?"

"That's an interesting question." Wyatt's forehead furrowed for a moment. "If you want to tell me, then of course I'll listen. But that's not what you're asking. I think..." He paused again, apparently turning the idea over in his mind. "I think it would depend, which may not be very helpful. For example, I really would like to hear about what you were doing at the fire station. But I don't want to know in detail about the first time you were with him, here. It's enough to know that you both had a good time and that it was fun. Dave told me enough without being explicit that I felt in the loop but not like a voyeur."

There were a couple of things there that Desmond wanted to address, but the last tied into something else as well. "You don't want to watch?" he asked casually.

"I didn't say that." Wyatt flashed a grin at him. "Archie does. I would need it to be part of some kind of planned event, I think. I don't think I'd enjoy walking in on you two, though I wouldn't be angry if I did; I'd likely just turn around and leave again. The surprise would be the issue for me, not the sex."

Desmond thought about that for a moment, nodding slowly. "Yes, I can see that. It would be a bit of a shock; honestly, I'm not sure how enthusiastic I would be if I came around a corner and found you and Archer making out on the couch. I'm reasonably certain that I'd have an entirely other reaction if you were in chains and I was there to observe."

"Would you like to?" Wyatt smiled a little as he asked.

"At some point." Of course he would. Wyatt was his and Desmond wanted to be as much a part of his life as he could. "When you and Archer are ready. I'll wait for an invitation."

"Okay." Wyatt stretched a little and made a soft noise when Desmond rubbed at his calf. "I'm sure that as the four of us settle into things we'll get to that. Perhaps a certain level of comfort needs to be established."

"Perhaps. Likely." Desmond rubbed Wyatt's leg again. "You said you wanted to hear about what we did at the fire station."

"Assuming, of course, that you're willing to share."

"Of course." Desmond smiled at him again. "I'd like to know if you could hear us."

Wyatt laughed and ran his hand through his hair, his cheeks going very slightly pink. "Not until the very end. Or what we assume was the end. It sounded intense."

"It was." Des tried very hard not to smirk. "And, you know, it was completely vanilla. Like, more vanilla than you and I ever get. He still managed to make it interesting and erotic -- and he won the game."

"Ah, see? Games." Wyatt snickered at him, clearly not bothering to even pretend he wasn't laughing at Des. "What kind of games does our unkinky playmate go for?"

"I challenged him to a simple bet, is all."

"Competition." Wyatt nodded and didn't look at all surprised. "He can be very competitive -- but he's a team player. Dare I ask who won?"

Des rolled his eyes. "Who did you hear yelling?"

"Why, if I know your voice at all, sir, I do believe I heard you yelling and swearing and sounding like the top of your head had come off." Wyatt's grin was huge, his eyes sparkling. "We were

very impressed. Archie said something about liking the acoustics from the bedroom and that he hoped the insulation in the outside walls was sufficient to keep the neighbors from complaining."

"I just hope he wasn't too upset that I did it in their bed."

Wyatt waved it off. "He didn't seem to be bothered."

"What were you two doing while I was playing games with Dave and losing my bet? Incidentally, I have to plan a date with Dave and he's probably calling to select a day and time. Should I let Archer know that you'll be free, or would you like an evening all to yourself?"

Wyatt merely looked at him.

Des smiled. "All right, then. Anyway, what were you two up to?"

Wyatt shrugged. "We measured me, talked about restraints we might like to try, the width of cuffs, that kind of thing. He's got some ideas for things he can make, and he wants to put rings up in various places. He's got enough space that we can play in the garage, but we could also take one of the other rooms and set stuff up. He's not sure if he wants to go full out with a playroom or not -- plus that costs a lot of money and none of us are rich."

"True." Des nodded and draped one of his legs over Wyatt's. "But things can be collected and built up gradually over years. He certainly has the space."

"I said that." Wyatt's voice was neutral. "But I wasn't sure if I should or not, to be honest. I mean, we're all just starting this thing, I didn't want to be too forward."

"That makes sense." Des took a long look at Wyatt's face. "Does the idea excite you?"

After a moment's hesitation, Wyatt nodded. "The whole thing does, sir. Being with you, being with him. Being shared, cared for, every single possible need I can think of being met -- even having a football buddy, with Dave. It's so huge. I'm half scared it's a dream. I have love and balance and fun and I feel so..." He shrugged a shoulder and blushed a little. "I feel safe."

Des shifted forward and kissed Wyatt softly, then again, his tongue slipping out to taste the corner of his mouth. "That's good. That's what we all want."

"Dave seems happy," Wyatt said softly. "And Archie does, too."

"Good."

"I think you're happy -- you sounded happy when you were coming, anyway." Wyatt's voice dropped to a whisper. "But I worry that maybe you're stretched a little thin, or having trouble finding your footing."

Des pulled back and looked at him. "Why do you say that?"

Wyatt sighed and looked a little uncomfortable. "I don't mean that you're not doing a great job."

"I know," Des soothed. "Sweetheart, it's okay. I need you to say what you feel, what you see. This goes back to what we said at the beginning of the conversation. You need to be honest so I can do the best job by you that I can."

Wyatt bit his lip. "I just want to be really clear that it's a very small thing. This is not a big deal, sir. It really isn't."

"Wyatt. The more you protest the more sure I become that it is, in fact a big deal." He looked into Wyatt's eyes and sat up a bit more. "Come here. Let me hold you properly and then you can tell me. Above all else, you are my priority. Always."

"Yes, sir." Wyatt spoke softly and moved slowly.

They shifted around on the couch until Wyatt was curled up against Desmond, his larger body taking up a much bigger amount of the couch. It never felt odd, however, to be the caregiver, the holder instead of the one being held. Size had never played a part in the way Des perceived roles.

"Now," he said softly. "The way that we will avoid small things becoming big things is to talk about them early on. You and I have said that to each other for years now. It's no different now that there's more people -- but it's become more important. Yes?"

"Yes, sir." Wyatt looked up at him, his head resting on Des' shoulder. "How do you manage to say all that and not sound stiff or condescending?"

"It's a gift," Des said dryly. "Now. What's this tiny little thing that's bothering you?"

He felt rather than heard the breath that Wyatt took. "I just think... well, it feels like... Um."

"Wyatt."

"You back off when Dave's around," Wyatt said in a rush. "I mean you back off on me. You're not as firm, not as demanding. You let me get away with things, let me be too buddy buddy."

Desmond made himself pause before he did anything, even blink. He ran the sentence through his head again, and when it still didn't make sense he cautiously said, "I let you be too buddy buddy with Dave?"

"No! With you." Wyatt looked up at him again, his eyes wide and somehow vulnerable. "It feels to me that you don't top me as hard when he's around. Are you worried you'll scare him?"

"I." Desmond did blink, then. "I don't think so. He didn't get scared the first day we met and I assumed he was Archer's sub; I practically ordered him around and he was very polite and not scared by it."

"Right." Wyatt nodded. "Right. He wasn't. And you're not trying to dominate him. I just think you could... maybe be a bit more naturally dominant with me when he's around."

Des said nothing, considering Wyatt's words and trying to recall his own actions. He hadn't intended to be any different with Wyatt, ever.

"Sir, all the time, every day, we have to pretend to be what we aren't. We don't really ever get a chance to just be exactly who we are around people who are close to us. A party here and there, dinners with select friends, sure. But Dave and Archie could be a huge part of our life. I want to enjoy being who I am, to my fullest. I want to serve you; I want to show you off. I'm a good sub. I want to show Archie that, too."

"Wyatt." Des felt a little shock go through him, a flood of emotion that was a cocktail of pride and shame and understanding all at once. "Wyatt. Sweetheart." He held Wyatt to him and let the pride take priority. "You're an amazing submissive. Of course you are. And of course you want to show that off -- to me and to Archer as well. I'm so sorry."

"Shhh, don't be sorry, sir," Wyatt said hastily. "It's not like you've been treating me like anything but your sub and lover -- you just tend to relax a little."

"I suppose I do -- or rather, I let opportunities to be very firm with you slide by." He nodded to himself. "Part of that is because it's difficult to order you to your knees, pet your hair and then turn to speak with Dave and ask his opinion on a painting or a book or something and not merely tell him what I think. The switch over takes a bit of work."

"I imagine it does," Wyatt said softly. "Never mind, sir. I'm sure things will--"

"No." Des shook his head. "Absolutely not, Wyatt. You are my priority, and having a relationship with Dave was my idea. I have a responsibility to you and it's one I chose and continue to choose. You have every right to ask that I am the best Dom I can be, and you deserve to preen for your other partner of choice. Not only that, but it will reflect well on *me*; I need to earn Archer's respect as well as yours."

"But. Dave?"

"Dave and I will talk. He's very reasonable and I'll try my very best not to get my words tangled up. He can be very forgiving, and he understands enough to know that this is important." Desmond nodded. "I'll speak with him, I promise."

Wyatt turned on the couch, pulling away and almost sliding to his knees. When he was kneeling next to Des, he bowed his head and put his hands behind his back, lightly clasped at his waist. "Thank you, sir."

Des bit his lower lip, thinking hard. "Was there anything else you wanted to talk about?"

"No, sir." Wyatt held himself completely still, his voice low.

"All right. Turn off the music on your way out and go run a hot bath. Put towels on the warmer, and then wait for me by the tub. Naked, of course."

"Yes, sir."

"You may go."

Wyatt rose to his feet and turned on his heel, his face carefully neutral. Des watched him, once more almost shocked to see how absolutely Wyatt's height and breadth could take over a room. His sub, his quiet, mild philosophy professor of a sub, had the physical presence of a linebacker and when Desmond was seated, curled into a corner of a couch; it showed off the contradiction to its very best.

Wyatt turned off the stereo and started to leave the room, but stopped at the end of the couch, pausing with apparent reluctance. "Sir? Are you all right?"

"I love you." If he'd said it any faster, it would have been blurring.

Wyatt's sudden smile lit the room. "I know, sir. Thank you. I love you, too."

"Bath." Des said quietly, hoping that his voice was firm enough to make up for his declaration and to recover a bit of his mastery.

"Yes, sir." Still smiling, Wyatt continued on his way to fulfill his orders.

"Well," Des said to the empty room. "I suppose that could have gone a lot worse." He got up and went to his library, the room full of the shelves Dave had built, and sat in his reading chair.

He had plans for one more shelf in the room, a glass case for the best volumes; it would go right there by his chair and Dave would make it. There was talk of dovetails and inlays and beveled glass; Desmond was waiting until the fire station was livable before he started pushing for more than talk. He had to save up for it, anyway; even with a discount on the cost of labor, the materials were going to be expensive.

Listening to the water run, he picked up the phone extension by the chair and dialed Dave yet again.

This time, thankfully, Dave answered. "Des," he said warmly. Under his voice, there was a rhythmic banging. "Hang on; let me get to somewhere quieter."

"Sure." Des waited a moment and the banging fell away, not so much muted as muffled, made into something resembling the baseline of a song. "Are you at the fire station or the inn?" he asked curiously.

"The station." Dave groaned softly and there was a squeak of something needing a shot of oil. "Sorry I didn't answer earlier -- it was really, really loud then and I missed the call entirely."

"That's okay." Des heard the bathroom door close. "I only have a moment, actually. I'm returning your call and I'd like to see if you're available on Saturday night this week."

"Oh." Dave sounded pleased. "Yeah, I think so. I was actually calling to let you know Friday would be a poor choice to pay up."

"I assumed so, given how hard you work during the week." He smiled and leaned back in his chair, soaking up Dave's voice. "You sound exhausted as it is and it's only Wednesday."

"Uh-huh." Dave sighed. "The final push on demolition happened today, and we dragged ourselves over here to tear down a wall. We've got vapor barrier plastic up to keep the dust out of the bedroom, but it's pretty messy in here. I think we're going to go stay at the condo for a few nights."

"That would probably be best," Des agreed. "You don't need to be breathing all that garbage in if you don't have to."

"Right, that. Archie says he'll wait another month before putting the condo on the market; I think it's costing him more than he thought, hanging on to it. We're going to ramp up making this place livable, so we might be pretty tired for the next while."

"I'll keep that in mind -- and pass it along to Wyatt. Would you like to skip this weekend?" He'd already made plans, but he could make new ones if it would be easier.

"No," Dave said easily. "I'm really looking forward to getting out and away from it all, actually. Archie and I are going to knock off early on Friday, kick back with a movie and get some sleep. Saturday night out with you would be wonderful, and I suspect just what I need."

Des smiled. "All right then. I'll see you Saturday. I'll pick you up around eight, at the condo?"

"Sure. What should I wear?"

"I'm the wrong one to ask," Desmond looked down at his usual suit. "But I think that most of the other gentlemen will be dressed casually, but not in jeans. Some will be more dressy, some more relaxed, but I think a nice shirt and trousers will do."

"Sounds good to me. Any more hints?"

"Not a one." Des stood as he heard the water shut off in the bathroom. "I need to go. Would you please tell Archer that if he'd like to see Wyatt it's all right for him to call?"

"And that crosses the other thing off my list. I'll let him know. Talk to you soon, Des."



"Good night, Dave." Smiling to himself, Desmond hung up and left the library, pleased. The night he had planned was fairly low key and very flexible; if Dave was particularly tired, they could leave at any time.

He approached the bathroom door and opened it without knocking. "Good boy," he said softly, seeing Wyatt waiting just as he'd been instructed. The bathroom was warm and steamy, the large tub full of hot water, and Wyatt was kneeling naked beside it. "Is your back sore?"

"Not tonight, sir. Thank you."

"All right. If you get a twinge or anything be sure to let me know." He undressed as he spoke, handing each item of clothing to Wyatt to fold and place on the floor in a neat stack. "Oils?"

"Not in the water, sir. I wasn't sure if you wanted scented or plain this evening."

Des got into the tub and sighed as he sank back into the heat. "Plain, I think. Just a little, and don't get my hair wet."

"No, sir."

Des leaned back and closed his eyes, letting himself become utterly relaxed as Wyatt began to wash him. The body wash they used was almost without scent and it lathered easily; Wyatt's fingers slipped over Des quickly and easily, the gel making everything slick. Used to the sensation and the careful order of Wyatt's movements, Des allowed his arms and then his legs to be manipulated: washed, caressed, rinsed and kissed before being put back in the hot water.

"Sit up, sir," Wyatt whispered. His voice was calm and encouraging, quiet so as not to disturb Desmond's relaxation.

Des sat up slowly, Wyatt's hand on his back to steady him. He leaned forward, his legs bent at the knee, and sighed as Wyatt washed his back. The oil came next, just a little bit of it on the palms of Wyatt's hands as the wash turned into a mild massage.

"Thank you," Des said with a low moan. "A little lower, dear."

"Of course." Wyatt's hands moved lower, the water sloshing slightly as he worked at Des' lower back. "Are you sore?"

"Not really." Desmond moaned again and leaned forward even farther. He let his legs slide back down under the water and held onto the edge of the tub on both sides. "God, that feels good." Wyatt's large hands moved over him, massaging the muscles and caressing around his sides, the pressure just hard enough to keep from tickling.

"Lean back?" Wyatt whispered again, this time right into Des' ear. "I can make you feel even better."

"In." Des moved forward in the tub, not back, but Wyatt knew what he meant.

Carefully, Wyatt settled into the tub behind him and Des leaned back, lying on Wyatt's chest as the water sloshed. "Oil."

"Yes, sir." Wyatt had the bottle in his hand, a palmful being poured even as Desmond gave the order. "I'll take care of you, sir."

Des smiled and closed his eyes again, pliant and warm as Wyatt touched him. The oil smoothed over his chest, his belly, down to his thighs, each stroke of Wyatt's hands better than the last. Neither of them said a word, but Des could feel Wyatt's erection behind him, getting longer and harder as Wyatt loved him.

Des' stomach grew taut as Wyatt's hands smoothed over his belly and down to cup his balls. "Yes," he whispered. "Keep going, Wyatt. Don't come."

"No, sir." Wyatt rolled his fingers over Des' balls and used the other hand to stroke down Des' erection. He squeezed at the base and worked his way back up, his fingers tight around Des' cock. Just the way Des liked it.

Des allowed himself to ride the sensations, all of his attention on his cock and balls. There was no need to even think about anything else; Wyatt had him. Wyatt would keep him warm and slick and Wyatt would do exactly what he was told. With another low moan, Des lifted one leg out of the water and draped it over the side of the tub, opening himself wide.

Wyatt moaned as well. "Sir. Desmond." His voice was thick and rich, his breath as hot on Des' neck as his hands were on Des' prick.

"Touch me," Des ordered, his back arching.

Wyatt rubbed a little faster, one hand jacking Des steadily, the other completely under the water and stroking the soft skin behind his balls and then farther back, to tease over his hole. The water was still hot, but there was not enough oil to completely eliminate the catch and drag of wet skin on wet skin.

It was perfect and Desmond allowed himself to writhe on top of Wyatt, water splashing higher and higher as he chased his orgasm.

"Sir," Wyatt said, his voice breaking on just that one word. "So beautiful."

Desmond rocked hard, thrusting himself through Wyatt's fingers and feeling the stiff jut of the cock at his back. With a sharp cry, he let go and came, repeatedly jerking in Wyatt's embrace before relaxing, boneless and panting.

"So, so, beautiful," Wyatt whispered, gently rinsing Des off with his hands and the cooling bath water. "You have no idea."

Desmond kept his eyes closed and let Wyatt take care of him, smiling to himself as he felt Wyatt's cock throb. "You did well, love."

"Thank you, sir." Wyatt held him and kissed Des' temple. "Let me know when you wish to get out of the tub."

Des nodded and made an agreeable sound. "Soon. The water will get cold." He said nothing about Wyatt's erection and made no effort to take care of it. He'd told Wyatt not to reach orgasm and that order would stand until he countermanded it. "You've earned your treat."

He could feel Wyatt smile. "Thank you, sir."

Des smiled, too. "You may sleep in your chain tonight. On the floor, next to the bed."

Wyatt stilled for a moment and his cock pulsed so hard that Des knew he was trying not to come. "Thank you, sir," he repeated.

Nodding, Des made himself sit up and allow Wyatt to get out of the tub to fetch towels. It wasn't a treat that he would have chosen for himself, but Wyatt was the submissive, and he had some masochistic tendencies as well. Being denied orgasm and made to sleep in a chain on the floor had intense reactions in him. "Early to bed tonight," Des said as he stood up and got out of the tub. His morning would be intense as Wyatt woke up and was permitted back in the bed.

"Yes, sir." Wyatt dried him off and cleaned the bathroom, his prick still hard and his face alight with joy. "Whatever you say."

"Precisely." Des laughed, happy with his life and every direction it was taking.

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"I can't remember the last time I was down here." Des held onto Dave's hand as they strolled along the sidewalk, moving slightly to the side to let a group of laughing people pass them and go into one of the coffee bars.

"It's been a while for me, too," Dave said with a smile. "I don't have a lot of reason to be wandering in and out of art galleries, coffee bars, or cocktail lounges. I do like the way they've gentrified the street, though."

"It's nice, isn't it?" Des smiled as they passed a carved wooden bench under a tree. Even the city garbage cans were fancy, and the street lights that lined the wide sidewalk on either side of the street were fashioned to look like gas lamps. "I'm sure the shop owners pay a hell of a lot more property tax than I do."

"I bet they do." Dave laughed and gave Des' hand a squeeze. "So, we're dressed up, we're strolling, the night is warm, and the air is full of the scent of coffee and sweets. Where are we off to in the art district?"

"Just up here," Desmond assured him, pointing ahead of them a little. "A couple more doors -- one of the galleries is having an opening I thought you might like to see. The photographer is quite talented."

Dave grinned at him, his eyes twinkling. "Artistic nudes?"

"No, actually." He grinned back and reached for the door handle. "Something even more up your alley."

Looking intrigued, Dave went into the gallery, still holding Des' hand. They'd barely cleared the door frame when a man in tight pants and shoulder pads blocked their way, holding a silver tray out. "Wine?"

Des and Dave both nodded and took a glass of wine and man stepped back, allowing them to continue.

Dave was biting his lower lip as he led Des away from the door until they were out of earshot. Then he laughed and bent his head low to Des' ear. "I think the waiter needs a bit of training. Maybe you should get Wyatt on that?"

Des laughed, nodding. "You know, I was just thinking Wyatt could teach him a thing or two about serving. That reminds me -- when we're finished here there's something I'd like to discuss with you; Wyatt's made a request."

"Oh?" Dave's eyebrows shot up. "Of course. Did you want to talk about it now?"

"No, no. Later will do, it's not a big thing at all." He smiled when he realized he was producing almost a carbon copy of the conversation Wyatt had initiated with him. Eager to change the subject before he turned the topic into an event, Des said, "Let's look at the photos, shall we?" People were milling about in small groups and the laughter and chatter was picking up already. Given how relatively early in the evening it was, Des was a bit surprised at the large turn out.

Dave smiled and took his hand once more. "Okay. Let's see these photographs that are right up my alley."

Desmond truly hoped they were; he'd feel like a complete idiot if he'd selected the entirely wrong type of evening out. To cover the unaccustomed flutter in his nerves, he sipped his wine as he and Dave walked around a small knot of men standing and talking. "I think the exhibit starts on this side," Des said, gesturing with his glass.

Dave nodded, but he was already making his way toward the wall, his curious smile growing into a broad grin. "Des! That's my team! Well, not my year, but that's the team I played for in college!"

"I know." Relieved, delighted, Des watched Dave's face as Dave looked all around them. "I don't know how many photos there are--"

"Man, it's all football! College ball, NFL... This is so cool!"

Des started to reply but one look at Dave's posture and the intent way he was examining the photo in front of them had Des falling silent to allow Dave all the concentration he wanted.

He'd picked correctly.

The photo exhibit was by a man Desmond had never heard of before, which wasn't at all unusual. Des' expertise was in writers, not photographers. But the show opening had caught his eye due to both Dave and Wyatt's interest in football, as it was being billed as an exploration of the heart of the game. Not photos of team portraits or even winning plays, the theme of the show was what they were marketing as the real grit.

The photos, all blown up to at least sixteen by twenty, most even bigger up to poster size, were of players on the bench, in change rooms, at practice. Dirty, weary, changing, charged up, in huddles, in scrimmages, lying on the ground and looking up at the sky, in physio therapy. Photo after photo laid bare an emotion or told a story, and very few were about the high of winning a game. All were about the work and energy it took to make the win happen.

Dave was completely captivated. He kept Des tight to him, talking in a low, urgent whisper as they went around the display area. He told Des about his own experiences, pointed out teams he'd played for or against, named players when he saw people he knew or knew of. He smiled often, nodded almost constantly, and spoke with his hands.

Desmond did his level best to follow the stream of information and not merely get lost in how hot Dave was when he was so animated.

"Can we go back and look at the ones over there?" Dave asked when they'd made their way back to the door. "The ones with the guys on the bench?"

"Of course." Des wasn't going to say no, not if Dave was so impressed. The more impressed Dave was, the better the night was going, and Des took a huge amount of pleasure in making Dave happy.

"Look," Dave said, all but dragging Des to the series. "This one is what you see every time you watch a game, it's what you see any time the TV cameras pan. Guys on the bench watching, some drinking their sports drink, some taping up a wrist or whatever, some talking. It's the way things are. But look at this." He pointed down the set to a photo of one face in profile. "This is what it feels like."

The image was clearly taken with a telephoto lens, the profile taking up three quarters of the photo. The player had his helmet off, his hair sticking up in sweaty spikes, the black grease under his eyes completely smudged. He had stubble, his face was lined with beads of sweat making tracks through dirt, and his eyes were fixed on a point somewhere ahead of him. His jaw was clenched so tightly Des' ached in sympathy.

"That," Dave said, his voice awed, "is what football feels like. Determination and grime and knowing you can do anything."

"Thank you."

Desmond and Dave turned to see a man standing just behind them, also looking at the photo. "That's Kyle Woodside. He played another season and got hurt enough that he decided a business degree was a better bet than football." Smiling, he held a hand out to Dave. "And I'm Peter Thorpe. Photographer, one time water boy, never even a bench warmer."

"Dave Allen." Dave put his hand on the small of Des' back and nodded toward him. "And this is Desmond Chase. Your photos are wonderful."

"Again, thank you." Peter Thorpe looked exceedingly pleased. "Who did you play for, Mr. Allen?"

"Just some college ball."

"At its heart, it's all equal. Who did you play for?"

Des stepped back a little and let Dave and the photographer chat while he continued to look around the room. There were a couple of photographs that he thought might appeal to Wyatt, and he certainly knew which ones Dave liked; he'd come back in a day or so and see about some holiday gifts, perhaps. Maybe he should start buying lottery tickets.

In a moment, Dave and Thorpe shook hands again and Dave turned to Des, smiling. "Cool," he said as Thorpe walked away. "He's a nice guy."

"Talented, too." Desmond took Dave's hand again. "Are you ready to leave?"

"Sure." Dave said it easily, with no reluctance. "That was really neat. Thank you, Des." He leaned forward and kissed Des lightly, apparently not giving a damn where they were. Of course, the chances of being harassed were fairly slight in that part of town and in an art gallery in particular, and Dave was large enough that most people would think twice about being rude, anyway. Des thought that maybe Dave could even get away with kissing in a sports bar. Well, maybe not.

On the sidewalk, they headed back the way they'd come, once more walking slowly and holding hands. "Do you want a cup of coffee?" Des asked. The street was lined with cafes, most of them with outdoor seating.

"Not coffee, it'll keep me up. But something hot to drink, sure." Dave nodded and pointed to a sign that said there was herbal tea available. "Can a big guy like me get away with drinking herbal tea?"

"A big guy like you can get away with drinking anything he wants." Des got them seated and in a moment or two, they'd ordered.

"What was that about Wyatt? You said he had a request?" Dave leaned over the table a bit. He was still smiling, the corners of his mouth curling up. He looked well rested -- better rested than Des had expected -- but the lines around his eyes still showed how hard he'd been working.

"Oh, right." Des smiled at him and put his hand on Dave's knee under the table. "He's asked that I not be so lenient on him when we're all together. I admit I didn't realize I had been, but he's right. I tend to back off and not be so firm with him when you and Archer are around, and that's not fair to Wyatt. It means a great deal to him that he be allowed to show me -- and Archer, and to a lesser extent even you -- how good a submissive he can be and how he can please me. Within our lifestyle it's more or less expected, and it hurts him not to be able to be who he is."

Dave shrugged one shoulder. "Okay, if you say so." He chuckled and shook his head. "I wouldn't want any one of you to be what you're not. It would kind of go against the point of dating and developing a relationship if we're pretending. I don't understand a lot of it, but if Wyatt wants you to be firmer, that's cool with me."

Des pet his knee, the gesture starting as a pat and finishing as a caress. "I knew it would be. I just wanted to warn you, really. Not so much about the tone of my voice or the lack of saying please when I tell him to do something for me, but more because... well." He took a breath and let it out in a huff, hating to admit to a weakness. "I'm afraid I'm not going to be very good at barking orders at him and then immediately switching to meet you with politeness and equality. I might... how do you say it? I might fumble now and then. I hope you'll be patient with me."

"Shoot." Dave put his hand on top of Des' and smiled. "None of us gets everything right all the time. I'll forgive, you'll do your best because you can't do anything but your best, and we'll make our way. If I find that it's too hard, we'll talk it out." He rubbed his hand over Des'. "Okay?"

"Okay." Des leaned forward and kissed Dave's mouth, not caring that they were sitting in a cafe, out on the sidewalk, for the world to see.

Des smiled and let him, kissing right back. "I'm so glad you liked the photos." He studied Dave's face, admiring the crinkles around his eyes. "I think maybe I can see some of why you loved it so much. Football, I mean, not the photos."

"It's a great game." Dave smiled, his whole face lighting up again. "Wyatt was really good -- some of the plays he's told me about I don't know if I could have pulled off."

"Wyatt is good at many things." Des smiled and ran his fingers over Dave's thigh again. "As are you. I enjoyed watching you get so involved with the pictures and their stories. I like it when you talk with your hands. Very sexy."

Dave, to Desmond's delight, flushed a little. "I probably talked too much or too loud."

"Not at all." Des leaned closer, his hand sliding up to brush against Dave's balls. "You were very focused. It was enticing. Tell me -- have you ever gotten caught up in someone's passion, something you never anticipated? Let it carry you away?"

Dave stared at him, his eyes wide and his pupils growing larger by the moment. "I've gotten carried away by stuff, sure. Like in football."

Des nodded and leaned close enough to kiss him again. "How about something a little smaller in scale?" he whispered. "A lot more risqué than playing a team sport in a stadium."

Dave's body seemed to jerk toward him. "What do you have in mind?"

Smiling, Des sat back. "I was caught up in your passion when you were talking. I didn't even care what you were talking about; your excitement was addictive. It turned me on."

Someone walking by on the street stumbled and stared, but Des didn't even look to see if it was a man or a woman.

"Are you done with your coffee?" Dave asked as he stood up. "Not that it matters."

Desmond laughed and debated denying Dave immediate gratification and telling him to sit down again. But Dave was not Wyatt and Des had a perfectly lovely view of just how affected Dave was by the turn in the conversation -- and after all, that was what he was after.

Dave led them out of the cafe, pausing only long enough to settle the bill. There was a moment of confusion when they both pulled out their wallets, but Des declared it his date and therefore his treat. Dave, thankfully, let it go. He also hovered behind Des, close enough that his erection was almost continuously brushing against Des' ass.

"My place?" Des suggested as they walked toward the car. "The fire station?"

"Archie's got Wyatt strung up in the garage," Dave reminded him, saying it so casually that Des almost did a double take. "I expect they're being loud. Speaking of loud, and getting caught up in passion and being risqué..." He suddenly took Desmond's hand and pulled him into a cocktail bar.



"I thought we were going to go find our own passion." Des was vaguely amused as Dave all but dragged him down the length of the bar toward the back. The place was packed, the bar itself lined two and three deep with patrons and every small table filled. The music was loud, and the style something he might even have liked if he'd been able to hear it without the din of talking under the jazz.

"Passion is high," Dave said over his shoulder as he pushed his way right to the back wall. "And so am I." He turned them, pinning Des to the wall simply by leaning on him as he took Des' mouth in a deep kiss.

Des felt his eyes go wide, but he didn't try to stop Dave. He kissed back, letting Dave hold him to the wall, not sure if he was more excited by the fact that they were making out in a real public space or if it was the sheer bulk of Dave that had him pushing up and back. He wanted friction, certainly, but he also had a bone deep need not to merely be trapped and manhandled.

Even if being manhandled was making his cock rigid and stiff so fast he was getting dizzy.

Half-terrified of being made to stop, half-terrified that no one would make them take it somewhere else, Des held onto Dave's shoulders and ground his hips against Dave's groin. He could feel Dave's erection there, just as hard and hot as his own, and he could feel the tension in Dave's thighs as he held them against the wall.

Next to them, a woman giggled. Then another woman, the sound slightly higher. "Guys," one of them said. "I hope you'll do it. Here or in the back, whichever. Just don't stop."

Dave tore his mouth away from Des, and Des couldn't stop the whimper of frustration that escaped. "What's out back?" Dave demanded.

"Just the bathrooms. But they're big. Big enough that we could all go and have some fun."

Des looked over and saw them, both of them dressed in short black dresses. He had a strong impression of youth and long legs, then red nails dragging on one thigh. Then he was distracted by the way Dave was moving, his attention shattered.

"Sorry," Dave told them, and Des could have sworn he heard actual regret in Dave's voice. "We don't do shows." But he had a hand on Des' cock, was jacking him off over his trousers, right there.

"Oh, God." Des' head fell back and he let Dave do it, his whole body tight. "Dave."

Dave kissed him once more, his tongue plunging in. Moments later Dave said into the kiss, "I want you. I want to fuck you."

Des nodded, unable to speak as his orgasm unfurled slowly. It started in his spine and worked its way out, balls then cock and everything was glowing as he came in his trousers, into Dave's hand. "Yes. God, yes."

Dave was smiling at him, pressing close. "You're beautiful."

Beside them, one of the young women with long legs gasped, but Des didn't care. They had all night. They had each other and passion, and they had partners who were understanding. It wasn't for everyone and not many people would understand it. It was a custom situation, and he and Dave would tailor it as they went along.

"Take me home," he whispered. "We have a night to fill and I want you, too."

Dave smiled and took his hand, leading him back the way they had come, and Des, for once, was more than happy to follow instead of to lead. He could hardly wait to tell Wyatt.

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