



Desmond Chase was on the phone when Dave came into the bookstore. Des' hands were full of book, a particularly large and rare volume that necessitated the use of white cotton gloves, and he had the phone wedged between his ear and his shoulder. It was an awkward pose, both for doing business and for greeting an unexpected lover. He couldn't even put the book down in order to move the phone to say hello.

Instead, he nodded at Dave, and smiled, and tried to say everything with his eyes. With his voice he kept talking to the client. "No, there is some edgewear, but it's slight. Contrary to what you've been told, there's absolutely no water damage at all. The spine is a little sunned, but the volume is in very good to fine condition."

In his ear the client's clipped voice said, "Might I come by and see it on Friday? I'll be in the city on another matter, and can come at two in the afternoon."

Dave was smiling at him, his hands in his jeans' back pocket, his eyes saying a lot of things right back at Des.

"Mr. Chase?"

"Oh! Yes, of course." Desmond blinked and turned from Dave to rid himself of the distraction. "Two o'clock would be fine. You have the address?" He closed the book and glanced around for the cloth he kept it in, but saw the sign hanging on the door instead. For some reason the light was hitting it all wrong for that time of day.

Dave was there. Dave should be at work.

The client said that of course he had the address and hung up, leaving Des with a dead phone at his ear, his hands full of a book he couldn't put down and a sneaking suspicion he'd worked overtime without intending to. "Dave?" he asked tentatively, frozen in place. "What time is it?"

"Five thirty-seven." Dave sounded amused, his voice as warm as clover honey. "Want me to close up for you?"

"If you would just flip the sign and lock the door, please." Des sighed and tried to aim the phone at his desk as he let it go. It landed with a clatter, the sound loud enough to make him wince. "God. Honestly, some people will go on for ages before getting to the point. I can't believe he took almost forty-five minutes of my day. He probably won't buy the damn thing, either."

Worse was the knowledge that he'd been on the phone for over forty minutes and there hadn't been any customers in the shop to interrupt him. True, the store was supposed to close at five Monday through Wednesday, but no customers meant no sales, which in turn meant he really had to hope the client did, in fact, buy the volume.

"Does that happen a lot?" Dave asked curiously. The bells over the door tinkled softly when Dave moved them, the sign catching their string as he turned it. The heavy deadbolt snicked into place and then Dave came around the desk and into Desmond's line of sight again.

He was really quite attractive, even with sawdust on his sleeve. Maybe especially because of the sawdust.

"Yes, unfortunately it does." Des shrugged one shoulder and finally saw the piece of cloth he'd been looking for. He tossed it into position on the table, and finally set the book down. "More often than I actually sell one of these. It's a little frustrating."

"I can imagine." Dave leaned over the desk, over the book, and kissed Desmond's mouth. "I'm sorry to hear it, though." He leaned back before Desmond had a chance to tell him to be careful of the book.

A quick glance showed him that none of the sawdust had fallen, and another glance showed him that Dave knew what he was looking for.

Dave didn't seem to mind, though, and gave Desmond a wink. "I was careful to keep my arm out of the way. I just really wanted to kiss you. Did you have a bad day?"

"Not really, no." Desmond wrapped the book carefully before he took off his gloves. He tossed them on the table and said, "But it's awfully good to see you."

"Does that mean I get more kisses?" Dave asked hopefully, looking almost like a small child. A potentially corrupt small child, of course, and an overgrown one at that. Des stopped that line of thought before it could get really started. It didn't bode well to start thinking of one's lovers in terms of naughty children.

Instead, he focused on the very grown up man and nodded. "Absolutely. The door is locked, the book is away, and yet, you're still over there." It was hard to maintain the somber thoughts of work when Dave was in the room. "Come here, please."

Dave grinned and came close. "You're getting very good with the 'please' these days." His big hands slipped around Desmond's waist and pulled him forward a step or two. "I appreciate it."

"It's second nature," Desmond lied. Well, it wasn't really a lie. It wasn't exactly second nature, however. It was one of those things that he was learning to do, and he was finding that it was easier than he had thought it would be. "I really am glad to see you."

"Prove it." Dave's grin grew into something a little more intense, and then he was kissing Des hard. He tasted like coffee and candy. He smelled of wood, drywall dust, and varnish. Desmond was surprised that he could identify both the drywall and varnish, and a moment later he couldn't identify anything at all, as he was lost in the kiss.

It hadn't been that long since he'd seen Dave. The four of them, Desmond and Dave, Archer and Wyatt, had made a point of seeing each other socially more often than they had before Archer and Dave moved into their fire station. There had been dinners with all four of them, and Archer had frequently invited Wyatt to the fire station, where the two of them could explore their own arrangement. On those nights, Desmond and Dave would go out for dinner, or to see a play, and frequently found themselves back at Des and Wyatt's home above the shop.

The guest rooms in both houses were seeing a lot of use. The four of them liked it that way, and there had been very little hassle about who was to see who, when. Sharing seemed to be going very well for all of them. Wyatt was very settled and didn't seem to have any problems with having two masters. Of course, Archer wasn't really a master, but more of a luxury. Desmond appreciated both Wyatt's calmness and the fact that Archer's marks never lingered more than an hour or two. The one time that Archer had actually bruised Wyatt's ass, the apologies had gone on a lot longer than the bruise had lasted.

Dave had confided to Desmond that he really appreciated having someone to go to galleries with, someone he could discuss plays with, and someone who would let him read poetry for longer than two minutes. "Don't get me wrong," Dave had said. "I love Archie. He's my partner. But he just doesn't get the Romantic poets."

Desmond did. Desmond got a lot of things. He got a submissive in Wyatt, he got a friend in Archer, and in Dave he got an intriguing mix of carpenter, football player, and bibliophile.

At the moment, Des also had a raging hard on. "Dave." He kissed his way along Dave's jaw to his ear. "We really need to stop. The shop lights are on."

"Let's go upstairs." Dave's hands were on Desmond's ass. "Have I told you lately how much I like that you live and work in the same building? It's so damn easy to find you." Dave made no move to go to the back of the shop and thus the stairs; the only move he made was to rub his erection over the curve of Des' hip.

Des groaned and kissed him again, one hand on the back of Dave's neck to pull his head down. Dave made a noise, too, and rubbed again, sucking on Des' tongue. Des was also pleased that he lived above his store -- if he could move Dave just enough to get some momentum going, they would be able to go upstairs and he could get Dave to suck something other than a tongue. Upstairs there were chairs and beds and walls that were not lined with books.

Well, some walls that weren't lined with books. One had to merely pick the appropriate room. The guest room, perhaps, or the kitchen.

Des pulled away, panting. "We have to stop," he said, trying to stop Dave from undoing their pants right there. "Wyatt is likely home. And if he isn't, he will be any moment."

Dave nodded, but his fingers kept on working at Des' belt. "Phone him up," he said, watching Des' pants become undone as if by magic and not his own fingers. "Call and tell him."

The phone was already in Des' hand. "Stop that." He pushed Dave's hand away and pointed to the back of the shop. "Upstairs. Not here." He pushed the speed dial button for the house phone. "We get yelled at when we have sex in the shop."

Dave merely grinned at him and licked a line along Des' jaw. He didn't go to the back of the store.

"You never do as you're told," Des whispered, the phone ringing in his ear.

"Nope." Dave was laughing softly. "And that drives you nuts."

"It does," Des agreed. "It makes me want to make you." He was mostly teasing.

Dave seemed to know that -- goodness knew they'd discussed the matter to death. He laughed again and held his hands out, wrists together, a dare in his eyes.

"Sir?" Wyatt answered the phone, sounding a little rushed, like he'd had to hurry to pick up the line.

Des reached out and grabbed Dave's wrists, squeezing them together with one hand. "Hello, love." He watched Dave and felt a familiar sense of calm power settling over himself despite his best intentions to keep that sort of thing out of his head when he was with Dave. Still, Dave had invited the play, so it was a gray area. "Am I interrupting you?"

Dave outweighed Des by about fifty pounds and could easily break free, but instead he let Des hold him. Dave's only reaction was a widening of his eyes and the dilation of his pupils.

"Just trying to get supper on. I'm a little late today. Sorry."

"That's okay. I am, too. I had a client phone call and then an unexpected guest." Des smiled thinly and squeezed Dave's wrists again. "Dave is here."

"Oh." Wyatt chuckled. "That explains why you're breathless, too. Are you both coming up? Is he staying for dinner?"

"That, I don't know. We'll be up in just a moment. He's teasing me, and I'd like to get out of the shop. We thought it best to make you aware."

Again, Wyatt laughed. "I'll make sure there's nothing breakable in the hallway this time."

Des rolled his eyes. "We're not that bad."

Dave tugged at his hands. "Can you ask Wyatt to clear the hallway? That table thing was a bitch to fix."

Wyatt must have heard, if his continued laughter was any indication. "I'll do that, sir."

"We'll be right up." Des hung up and looked at the wrists he was holding. "Why are you letting me do this?"

Dave shrugged one shoulder. "'Cause I can see how it makes you just that much harder. And maybe sometimes I like it a bit rough." His voice dropped a few notes. "If you have to work for it, I can push back."

"An actual struggle. Interesting." Des let go of Dave's wrists and reached for his own belt. "I think I'll just file that bit of information for another, more appropriate time."

"I thought you might." Dave grinned and moved closer again, his hands once more going to Des' fly and interfering with Desmond's attempts to re-dress himself. "This comes off, Des, not done back up."

"Now, now," Des said as he pushed Dave hands away. "You've given me something to think about. Plus, it's not exactly good form to go upstairs minus my belt and with my pants undone." He smiled a little at that; it wasn't like it hadn't happened before.

Dave frowned at him, but then grinned once more. "You know, I did have a reason for coming here."

"Clearly." Desmond picked up the book, and made sure that the cloth wrapping was secure. Gloves and book in hand, he led the way to the collections room, so he could put it away. Even with the client coming later in the week, it wouldn't do to leave the book unlocked and exposed.

"Yep. Undressing you is just a bonus." Dave followed closely, close enough to have a hand almost in Des' back pocket. It made it difficult to walk, but Desmond wasn't about to tell Dave to stop.

"I like the bonus. But perhaps there is a better time." It wasn't so much that Wyatt was home as it was that Wyatt was cooking dinner and the evening hours tended to be just for the two of them. Of course, if Wyatt had no objections, goodness only knew what kind of interesting circumstances everybody could get into.

Dave snickered as they headed to the back of the shop and then up the stairs. "I suppose, if you really think so. Arch would be a little annoyed with me if I didn't ask what I'm supposed to ask, though."

Desmond glanced back at him as they reached the landing and turned for the final four steps up. "You're on a mission?"

Dave nodded. "Just a favor we need to ask. You can always say no, and we'll totally understand."

Desmond resisted the urge to roll his eyes. "Don't be silly, the only way we would refuse is if it was something that involved vast amounts of cash. And then, it would only be from necessity's sake and not an unwillingness to help out."

"Yeah, we know. But still, we have to ask instead of just assume, right?"

"True." Desmond and Dave went into the kitchen where Wyatt was stirring a pot on the stove and looking at them curiously.

"This isn't the entrance I was expecting, sir." Wyatt greeted him with a kiss and then took one from Dave as well. That was a relatively new thing, but Desmond thought that he rather liked it. Wyatt and Dave didn't have an intimate relationship, but they were very fond of each other, and it stood to reason that once intimacy had grown between other partners the two of them would at least touch each other.

Desmond also thought that it was particularly pretty to look at.

"He foiled my plans," Dave told Wyatt with a grin. "I almost had him and then he got all reasonable and responsible. Something about us getting in trouble when we mess around in the shop, supper being made, all that stuff."

"Aw, poor Dave." Wyatt laughed and Desmond let the two of them exchange their teases as he sorted the mail on the table. "It's hard being with a grown up business man sometimes. And you have two of them!"

Des set aside the household utility bills and watched as Dave crossed the kitchen and opened the broom closet, then casually took out the lint roller and went to work on the sawdust clinging to his shirt.

"Yeah," Dave said to Wyatt as he cleaned up. "Right on both counts -- hard, and there's two of them. They both have this thing about me being distracting in their places of business, too. Me and Arch almost got caught messing around at the inn last week. He was only even willing to kiss me 'cause the job is almost done."

Wyatt didn't seem to think that there was anything at all odd about Dave knowing where the lint roller was, let alone about Dave making himself at home like that. Des was grateful for that, but at the same time it was a bit of shock to his system that Dave was so obviously at home there. It took a moment for Des to realize that while he and Dave had been spending a lot of time there together, it was a bit different to have Wyatt home as well.

It was a little like disorienting, in a way. Things were as they should be, and he truly did like that Dave was comfortable enough to just wash his hands, find the little things like the roller, get himself a drink of water. But at the same time, Dave always seemed to slot into a "guest" place in Desmond's mind when Wyatt was home. He found it to be just one more peculiar thing to note about the strange circumstance he'd found himself in.

"Is the inn that close to being finished?" Wyatt asked. "I know Archie said there was only a couple more weeks."

Dave nodded and ripped off the used part of the lint roller. "Uh-huh. So, there's two things about that. One, yay. It's almost done and it's really, really beautiful. Archie's going to make a reputation for himself off this project, and I learned a lot about finishing and cabinet making." He nodded, apparently to himself, and balled up the used lint sheet while he put the roller away. "But now we're in a bit of scramble for new work. There's a couple of small jobs he's got lined up, but not enough to keep the whole crew busy."

Des frowned. "That doesn't sound good."

"Way of the business, way of the economy." Dave shrugged and tossed the ball of sticky paper coated in sawdust in the garbage can. "Contractors rely on people starting projects. Speaking of projects, there's that favor I'm here to ask."

Wyatt tapped the wooden spoon on the edge of the pot and glanced at Des. "Favor?"

Des nodded. "Ask away -- like I said, anything you two need, as long as it's not masses of money."

"Not yet." Dave winked at him. "Actually, we're okay. Between the condo sale, the inn project and a nice bonus from the owners for finishing early, we've got enough for savings, that pool table Archie wanted, and the next stage of our remodel of the fire station. That's where the favor comes in -- we're doing the bathroom."

Desmond nodded, not quite seeing where the favor was going to come into play. "Well, it's a good thing about the bonus." He looked at Wyatt, one eyebrow raised.

"Yeah, that. That'll come in handy, I'm sure." Wyatt looked back at him, clearly not knowing where the favor was, either.

"Archie was really happy with it." Dave grinned at them both and nodded. "The thing about doing bathrooms, though, is that we have to shut off the water." He gestured around the room with his hand, and then at his sleeve. "And, well, we don't exactly have the cleanest job in the world. Showers are kind of necessity of life."

"Oh!" Desmond nodded, understanding immediately. "Of course, sure. Whatever you two need. Is it just the shower, or would you like to stay here for a few days? Either is fine with us; we have the space."

Wyatt beamed around the room. "Man, that would be awesome. I mean, I know it's small here, but to have you both staying for a few days would be really great."

Dave was already shaking his head. "No, I don't think that will be necessary. It would be sort of neat, though. I'll see what Archie says, but as far as I know we're just looking for a place to shower each day, maybe twice." He winced and shrugged. "The morning shower would be easier to skip than the ones after work. Archie might look really cute, but the boy can reek."

Wyatt looked slightly offended, but then he began to laugh. "Don't tell him that. You might hurt his feelings."

"Oh, please. The man works in construction -- he's heard it all before." Dave looked amused, though, and he favored Wyatt with another kiss. "So, it's all right? I can tell Archie?"

Desmond, feeling like he was missing out on the kisses, reached for Dave's sleeve and tugged him close. "Of course. There was no real need to ask."

"I suppose. Although it would have been amusing to see your face when we both showed up here with our towels." Dave winked at him, and shared the kisses around. The kiss that he gave Desmond lingered a lot longer than the ones he'd given to Wyatt, Des was pleased to note.

"Ahem." Wyatt tapped the pot again, and gave them both a stern look. "I moved that table in the hall for you," he said pointedly. "And here you are, taking up room in the kitchen."

Desmond gave Wyatt a long look, and then patted Dave's arm. "Excuse us for a moment, Dave. Wyatt seems to be relaxing a little bit too much."

Dave winced and gave Wyatt an apologetic look. "I'll be in the library, if that's okay. Sorry, man. I didn't even notice, if it matters."

"You're not supposed to, really." Wyatt said with a chastised look. "But Mr. Chase should and does, and that's good. I'll talk to you later on."

Dave nodded and moved away, his hand trailing down Desmond's arm. His phone rang, however, startling all of them for a moment. "Sorry," Dave blurted, blushing. "Stupid thing." He pulled it from his pocket, still walking toward the hallway and the library beyond. "Oh, it's Archie. You two... Uh, discuss things. I'll be around when you're done."

Des watched him go and then turned to Wyatt, waiting until he knew he had Wyatt's full attention before speaking. "How was your day?"

"Fine, sir." Wyatt spoke softly, his hands behind his back and his gaze trained on the floor. "I apologize for being so... Um, informal? Familiar?"

"Sassy." Desmond shrugged a shoulder. "Kidding around is all well and good, and I expect you to have that kind of relationship with Dave; the two of you fall into it very naturally and easily. Even with Archer you have a certain amount of leeway. That's good. But you've asked me to be firmer with you when Dave is around, not to back off. So I'm not. You'll mind your manners with me or there will be consequences."

"Yes, sir." Wyatt's voice had dropped to a whisper and all the teasing had vanished from his tone. "I'm sorry, sir."

"I know you are, love." Des stepped to his submissive and pointed to the floor. "Kneel, please." He could hear the low murmur of Dave's voice in the other room, one side of a conversation.

Wyatt knelt and Des rested his hand on Wyatt's head, gently finger combing his hair. "After supper tonight you'll wash the floor in here."

"Yes, sir." Wyatt nodded once, then stilled as Des' fingers tightened against his scalp.

"On your hands and knees."

"Of course." Wyatt didn't sound overly delighted by the idea, but that was okay. He didn't have to be happy about scrubbing floors.

"Good boy. Is there anything you'd like to talk about?"

"No, sir." Wyatt sighed and waited until Des tugged at his hair again. "Really, there isn't. I was just hoping that they would stay with us for a night or two. But then, maybe that wouldn't work, after all. I seem to forget myself."

"You only forget yourself when I'm being very familiar with Dave. Neither of us are blind enough to miss that." He pet Wyatt's hair as he thought. "We should discuss it at another time. Perhaps the logical solution is for me to back off from Dave, not you, when we're all together."

"Sir!" Wyatt actually turned his head and looked up at Des, his eyes wide. "No! That would be horrible. I never meant to make you feel like... like..." Apparently at a loss for words, Wyatt waved one of his hands. "I wouldn't like that at all."

Des let Wyatt react, but only lifted his shoulders in response.

"I'm really sorry," Wyatt said, his eyes pleading. "I'll think about it. I will. While I'm scrubbing the floor. I'll figure out why I act up and get sassy."

"And you'll tell me the truth," Des insisted. "I refuse to hurt you, Wyatt. You're my primary, and if you aren't happy with my relationship with Dave, we'll deal with that and see where to go from there. But you must be honest with me."

Wyatt nodded and looked back at the floor, his shoulders slumping. "Yes, sir," he whispered. "I'll be honest. But I'm not unhappy. I'm not. I like Dave and I like that you love him and I love that you're happy. I'll think about it all."

Des petted him again and crouched down next to him. "Good boy. Kiss me and then get back to supper, okay? I'll go see if Dave is staying for the meal."

"Can't, sorry. But thank you." Dave was standing at the kitchen door, looking vaguely uncomfortable. "Is everything okay?"

Des nodded and kissed Wyatt's cheek. "Up you get, love. Supper." He got to his feet as well, not quite as gracefully as Wyatt, who had more practice. "Everything is fine," he assured Dave. "Wyatt's all right, he's got a chore to do so he can make up for being sassy, and he and I will have a long talk later tonight, when we're curled up in bed."

Dave seemed to think about that for a moment, then he smiled. "I like that last part."

"Me, too." Des laughed and went to him, patting Wyatt's bum on the way by the stove. "Everything is fine," he said again. "But you have to leave?"

"I do." Dave nodded and took Desmond's offered hand, tangling their fingers together as they stood in the doorway. "Archie's got dinner for me and we have some work to do at the house before we turn in. I told him you don't mind if we use your shower, and he said he'll call you in a day or so to give you the dates -- and he hopes we'll even be on schedule. He says thanks." Dave looked over at Wyatt. "He also told me to tell you, Wyatt, that he said hi and he'll call you tonight to say goodnight."

Des watched Wyatt's slow smile and nod, and smiled in response. "Very good," he told Dave, leaning in for a last kiss. "I'll talk to you soon, then?"

"I'll call tomorrow," Dave said with a nod. "Love you."

"Love you, too." Des' belly still got little flutters when he said it out loud. He found the way Dave's cheeks went pink each time to be endearing, however.

"Bye." Dave kissed him and backed up, still blushing. "See ya, Wyatt."

"Bye, Dave." Wyatt smiled and waved from the stove, and then Dave was gone, dashing down the stairs and out the back door.

"Sir?"

"Mmm?" Des sat at the table to open the utility bills.

"I get that Dave would know where the drinking glasses and such are. That makes total sense." Wyatt turned to face him, his head tilted to the side. "But how does he know where to find the lint roller?"

Des blinked. "I have no idea."

"Are you ready to talk?" Des sat up in bed, watching as Wyatt moved around the bedroom, putting things away and making sure that the laundry was in the bin and Des' suit jacket hung up after he'd assured himself that it didn't need to be dry cleaned.

Wyatt nodded and finally stripped off his boxers before crawling into the bed and resting his head on Desmond's chest. "I really am sorry, sir. I didn't intend to make you think things that aren't so. I honestly don't have any kind of issue with Dave. Is that odd?"

"Probably." Des smiled and pet Wyatt's hair. "I would expect that in polyamorous relationships it's natural to have frictions."

Wyatt laughed softly. "We have that."

Rolling his eyes, Des let Wyatt have his giggle. "And tensions. In the bad way. It's a way of identifying problems, perhaps. How can we solve any issues if we don't even know about them?"

"But I don't have any issues with you and Dave." Wyatt sighed. "I looked really hard for jealousy or resentment and I can't find any. He doesn't take you away from me; I'm not missing you; you don't spend too much time with him. You tell me often, even when he can hear, that I'm primary. You've done what I asked and remained firm with me, even when I know you worry about scaring him. And on top of it all, I genuinely like Dave. A lot."

Des nodded slowly, his hands still playing with Wyatt's hair. "All right." He spoke softly, trying to puzzle the matter out. "And yet, you definitely acted up today. Do you know why?"

"No." Wyatt sounded disappointed and -- worse -- frustrated. "I just. Things didn't happen the way I expected."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, you called from the shop. You were already late, and Dave was there, so I assumed you were messing around. You more or less confirmed it, and that was *fine*. It really was. But then you came upstairs and instead of going down the hall to keep that up, you came into the kitchen and it was like he'd just stopped by to chat. But he went into my cupboards and took care of himself, didn't need me for anything." Wyatt looked up at him and sighed. "I guess that's it. I didn't feel like I was stopping you at all, but I didn't feel like I was being helpful, either."

Des closed his eyes and nodded. Damn it. "I think what happened, love, is a classic working at cross purposes. Dave saw that you were busy and he knew what he needed, so he took care of it for himself. You would have happily helped -- would have been *happier* helping. It's in your nature. And it's in his to try to not be a bother."

"Oh." For a very large man Wyatt could have a very small voice. "So then I pushed myself into your moments with him because... I had hurt feelings?"

"Because you felt ignored, even though you were part of the conversation." Des nodded. "Talking is all well and good, but for you to feel engaged, you need to feel like you're being useful and helpful to me. Apparently you've extended that to Dave, as well. Plus, this is your home, and he must have seemed a bit rude to you, going into the broom closet like that. I've been here with him a lot more frequently than you have, so it didn't faze me in the least."

"I suppose." Wyatt didn't sound convinced. "Why do you think that I'm really not jealous, though?"

"Because you're a generous soul." Des touched Wyatt's shoulder and waited until Wyatt looked up at him again. "Also, if I may flatter myself, because I try very hard to make sure you're secure in your place. I can't say that Dave means nothing to me. That would be a lie. He means a great

deal to me, and I would be heart sore to lose him. But my first love is you. I need you like I need air. You are the submissive to my dominance and you are the other half of my soul. It would damage me in irreparable ways if I were to let you feel anything less than cherished."

Wyatt's eyes filled briefly and he blinked rapidly for a moment. "I love you, too."

"Good." Des smiled at him, petting the smooth skin of his shoulder. "Now. We know why you got it in your head to bring yourself to my attention. I'll make sure to ask Dave to keep your needs in mind when he's here; I'm confident he'll try hard. But if he slips up, I need you to remember that he's only doing what's in *his* nature -- being helpful by taking care of himself so he doesn't feel like he's imposing."

Wyatt nodded again and pressed a kiss to Desmond's chest. "I will, sir."

"Good boy." Desmond winked at him and nodded. "You can keep on kissing, if you want."

"I want." Wyatt grinned back at him and did it again, kissing the very center of Desmond's chest before kissing again, to the left. He made a trail of feather light kisses to Des' nipple, all the while looking up at Des' face. "I love you."

"I love you." Des let his eyes drift closed as Wyatt moved on the bed to hover over him, kisses turning to licks. "Wyatt."

"Love you." Wyatt's voice dropped to a whisper and he matched deed to words, loving Des with his mouth.

Nipples kissed and licked and sucked, belly stroked and nuzzled, Wyatt took his time. Des encouraged the slow pace, not raising his voice above a soft murmur, keeping his touches to Wyatt's face and hair light.

Wyatt eventually got himself between Des' legs, his larger frame making almost a tent out of the bed clothes. Des would have laughed at the image if he hadn't seen it so many times before, and if he wasn't so turned on. They had a light burning by the bed, but the shadows cast made the room feel even more intimate and warm.

Wyatt's mouth made everything feel intimate and warm. His tongue licked, like a cat, like a man seeking tastes at a banquet, like a lover wanting to pull tremors and shudders from his partner. Des couldn't help but give them up, one after another. He'd thought that he knew all there was about making love with Wyatt, that years together had taught them all they'd need to know.

He knew the kinks, he knew the words to say that would drive Wyatt wild.

Wyatt, though, was setting a new mood. They'd been quiet and gentle together, of course they had. But never before had Wyatt spent so long on one part of Desmond's skin. Never before had he made Des' chest ache, made his skin feel so fevered and tight. Des' nipples were stiff peaks, hard and taut and fiery, his cock was like an iron rod.

"Please." The word hung between them, floating like a sign pointing to the unexpected speaker.
"Wyatt. Please."

Wyatt smiled, and slid down a few inches, loving a trail to Desmond's need, his mouth still warm and gentle. By the time it closed around Desmond's erection the tremors in Des' legs had become quaking, and even the quiet mood couldn't keep Des from thrusting deep, plunging his prick into Wyatt's throat, one hand resting on the back of Wyatt's head.

Wyatt groaned deeply, the sound more felt than heard, muffle by sheets, blankets and cock.

Des did it again, the drag of his cock from Wyatt's lips enough to demand he get more sensation, more suction, more tongue and pressure. He was holding his breath without intending to, his hips jerking until Wyatt's hands began to guide them smoothly.

In and out, deep and shallow, Des fucked Wyatt's mouth, listening to cries and words he barely registered as his own. He loved this man, loved the giving and the touch and the devotion, and was helpless to reciprocate as he soared, his whole body floating and shaking as he reached his climax.

"Wyatt, yes, please," he said over and over, heat and lights flashing through him as he came with his entire being. "Yes."

Wyatt took. He took Des and held him, licking and swallowing and being there in every way imaginable. He tasted and whispered, his mouth and hands seemingly everywhere as he brought Des back to earth and back into Wyatt's arms in the bed. "I love you, sir," he said just as he kissed Des' mouth. "With everything I am."

"I love you." Des whispered the words, afraid that if he spoke much louder he'd break the feeling that was enveloping him. He loved and he cherished and he knew that he was loved in return. Wyatt was within his soul, the warmest part of it. And alongside Wyatt in Desmond's heart stood Dave, the two of them generous enough to be not only willing to share, but happy to do so. "How did I get so lucky?"

Wyatt laughed softly, curling into Des' side and resting his head on Des' chest. "Your heart says you earned it and that you earn it every day. It's not easy, being you. Of all of us, you're doing the most work. Dave and I appreciate it more than you can know. We're grateful for every effort."

Des closed his eyes so Wyatt wouldn't see him roll them. "You'll make me blush."

"There's nothing wrong with blushing, sir." Wyatt yawned and snuggled up some more.
"Nothing at all."

Smiling, Des had to nod. He knew that blushing on either Wyatt or Dave's cheeks was endearing. "Did you come?" he asked curiously.

Wyatt tensed ever so slightly and nodded, his cheek rubbing on Des' skin. "Yes, sir. Was I supposed to wait?"

"It's rather late to be asking that now," Des pointed out with a laugh. "It's fine, I didn't say otherwise. Go to sleep, love."

"Yes, sir." Wyatt relaxed again and Des could feel eyelashes fluttering. "Good night. I love you."

"I love you, too." Des tugged the blanket up over Wyatt's shoulders and reached for the light. Darkness filled the room and Des, petting Wyatt's hair, went to sleep smiling.

"We really appreciate this. Like, a lot."

Des and Wyatt stood together in the kitchen and stared at Archer and Dave, who were looking rather shamefaced. "What happened?" Des finally asked.

Archer glanced at Dave and put down the gym bag he was holding, the movement resulting in a cascade of fine dust. "Crap. Sorry." He sighed and stood back up, apparently trying very hard to ignore the secondary slide of grit. "We actually tried to get most of it off out in the yard."

"We really did," Dave said. "You've seen us enough after work to know that we don't typically look like this, right?"

Archer nodded twice, and then stopped when more dust settled. "God, what a mess. Of all the days for us to start the bathroom. That's actually what this is, unfortunately. We helped them take down a wall, and this is what lives behind tile."

Desmond glanced at Wyatt, unsurprised to find him grinning. It was pretty funny after all. "Well, you'd best get into the shower then, don't you think?"

"And then we'll come back out here and clean up after ourselves," Dave said with a roll of his eyes. "Sorry, Wyatt."

"It's really not a problem," Wyatt said, finally starting to laugh. "We really should get a picture of this."

Desmond had been thinking the same thing. The two of them were dressed as usual, in jeans and T-shirts, but they were almost entirely gray. If they had actually managed to shake off most of the dust before coming inside, he shuddered to think about the state of their bathroom at home. "Are you going to be able to breathe at the fire station?" he asked.

"Oh, yeah, I'm sure we'll be able to." Dave looked at Archer, one eyebrow raised. "Right?"

Archer nodded. "Yeah, I've got the air scrubbers on. Between that and the heavy plastic, not to mention all the fans, we should be just fine."

"All right, then. We're good." Dave, losing a little bit of his gray dust, shrugged his shoulders. "I guess all that's left is to figure out who goes first. We promise not to use all your water." He smiled at Desmond and winked.

"That is entirely up to you," Desmond said. "I say we have no objection to both of you sharing if you wish to."

Archer and Wyatt both snickered. Dave rolled his eyes.

"There isn't quite enough room for that," Dave said. He bent down and picked up the bag that Archer had set on the floor.

"I guess you're going first then." Archer didn't seem to mind, in fact he was already moving toward Wyatt. "I think I can find a way to keep myself occupied."

"Yes, you can have Wyatt take you outside to get some more of that dust off of you. It will be a change for you; he can smack your butt for a while." Dave laughed to himself as he headed down the hallway, taking the bag with him. "I crack myself up."

"No one else is laughing," Archer called after him.

"I am." Desmond grinned broadly. "Wyatt, take your other sir outside and brush some of that off him for me. Then you can sweep in here."

"I'll do it," Archer protested. "Really, it's our mess."

"And it's Wyatt's job." Des undid the knot of his tie. "I'm going to join Dave in the shower, if you're not."

Archer snorted at him and took Wyatt's hand. "Fine, fine. Wyatt can clean up after us, but that means I get to treat him, later on. When I'm clean."

Wyatt's head whipped around so fast Des was almost sure he heard a snap. "Oh, I like the sound of that."

"I can tell." Des laughed, and slid his tie off. "All right, then, it's a plan. I get my time with Dave now, and you two can play later on. Either here or at the station, whichever works best; just let us know. The four of us will have supper together?"

"Sure," Archer said. He was already tugging Wyatt toward the stairway. "We can order out."

Desmond nodded. "Chinese." He watched them go, smiling as Wyatt followed Archer down the stairs. They really were quite cute together. Eager.

Speaking of eager... Des walked down the hall to the bathroom, undoing his shirt buttons as he went. Luckily, Dave hadn't locked the door behind him; that would have proved frustrating and a little embarrassing when Wyatt and Archer returned to find him cooling his heels in the hall.

The bathroom was filling with steam as he stepped in, the curtain pulled all the way around the big tub. Because he'd made sure to get a vintage, claw-foot, soaking tub, the curtain was hung on an oval rod, the metal stand actually outside the tub. The curve of the tub bottom did tend to make for close quarters, but Des was more slight than Archer, and he had more than once shared the shower with Wyatt. He knew where to put his feet.

"Change your mind?" Dave called from behind the curtain. "The water pressure is great here."

"It is, isn't it?" Des smiled and started stripping, leaving his clothes in a neater heap than Dave's. "I hope you brought a change of clothing with you, dear. Those are almost ready to be burned."

"Oh, hey!" Dave stuck his head out between the curtain's overlap. "Those are my best jeans. No burning."

Des eyed them suspiciously. "Your best? And you tore down walls wearing them?"

"They make my ass look awesome." Dave grinned and vanished again. "Hurry up, I'm just getting to washing the best parts of me."

"I can help with that." Des finished undressing and opened the medicine cabinet. "Did you take the waterproof lube in with you?"

Dave hooted. "I like the way you think. No, grab it. Then we can negotiate who's going to apply it where."

Des smirked and got the lube and a condom. "If there's negotiating to be done, I suspect you've got ideas." He got in the shower from the back of the tub, making sure to close the curtain behind him. "You should know, however, that there's really only one way to fuck in this shower. The lack of walls limits options."

"That much I'd already figured out." Dave smiled and reached for him, his big body wet and a soapy. "First, we can start with hello, though."

Desmond was a big fan of Dave's hellos. They'd once managed to kiss hello for almost half an hour. Of course, they'd been sitting down when they started and that would likely make a difference to the length of this hello; Dave was simply taller and it could become difficult for Des' neck after the first few minutes.

Of course, this time there were other things to consider, as well. The hot water wouldn't last forever and Archer absolutely needed to have a shower. Dave's erection, also, needed to be considered, as it was pushing insistently along Des' belly. Des' erection began to make an issue

of itself, too, especially when Dave's hand closed around it and began to stroke with a very loose fist.

"Hello," Des said against Dave's mouth. "That's nice."

"You're nice." Dave kissed him again, his mouth soft. "You're really nice. I like the way you feel. I like your shower. I like that you're letting us use it. I like that you're in here with me."

"I couldn't help myself." Des smiled at him and slid his hands over Dave's ass. "Is this the bit you were about to wash? I can help."

"Actually, I was more thinking about the front." Dave kissed him again and laughed when Desmond obliged by moving his hands to the front. "So, tell me. How does one fuck in a shower with no walls?"

"Carefully." Des rolled Dave's balls in his palm and gestured with his head back at the end of the tub where he'd climbed in. "The lucky man who bends over for his partner... er, bends over for his partner and holds on tight to the rim of the tub."

"Nice." Dave rumbled in his chest, and Des wasn't sure if he meant the position or was reacting to the way Des was touching him.

Assuming that it didn't matter -- after all, both were completely acceptable and worthy of comment -- Des kept stroking. Dave felt different from Wyatt; not only because they were clearly different men despite their similar height and build, but because Desmond had decided to keep up what Archer had started. Wyatt was routinely waxed smooth since the night Archer had demonstrated his wall restraints. Dave, however, merely groomed, and Des thought of himself as being spoiled, getting to enjoy both sensations.

Dave made an encouraging sound and the hand he had on Desmond's cock tightened up a little. "Want to?" Dave asked in a low voice. "Bend over, I mean."

Desmond paused for a moment. Not because he objected to the idea, but because the request was so unexpected that he had to gather himself before replying. "It's been a while, hasn't it?" he asked, already turning.

"Uh-huh." Dave fitted himself to Desmond's back, his huge hands skimming over Des' torso, spreading hot water. "Do you want to? It's okay if you don't. Promise I won't have hurt feelings."

Des smiled and leaned back, feeling the hard, wide length of Dave's cock pressed against him. He passed the lube back and stretched, soaking up the heat from the water and Dave's body. "Don't be ridiculous. It's hardly a troubling request."

"Do you let Wyatt fuck you?" Dave asked, his tone curious. "Or is that none of my business? It's kind of hard to tell."

Laughing, Des shook his head. "You can ask anything you want, of either of us. If we don't want to answer -- or if we want to check with the other before revealing information -- we'll just say so. In this case, I can tell you that yes, Wyatt has been in me. But not often, and it usually happens when I'm topping from below."

"Yeah?" The curiosity was still there, but Dave sounded a little more turned on, too, his voice dropping a few notes. "How does that work, exactly?" The sound of the condom packet tearing signaled Dave's activity.

Des looked back at Dave and arched his eyebrows. "I'll tell you exactly how it's happened before if you'll get on with this so Archer can eventually get clean."

"Huh? Oh!" Dave blinked and then grinned at him. "I am! See? Condom on. Bend over then, and start talking." He held up the lube and popped the top. "I'll take care of this."

Rolling his eyes and laughing to himself, Desmond bent over and grabbed the end of the tub. "Honestly, you're too much fun sometimes."

"Sex should be a lot of fun," Dave told him seriously. "If it's not fun, you're doing it wrong."

"I suppo--oh!" Dave's slippery finger circled Des' hole and nudged in. "Yes. Fun."

"Talk to me," Dave coaxed. "How do you top from the bottom?"

Des closed his eyes and let himself get used to the way the water was hitting him and the feeling of Dave's legs brushing against his own thighs. The fingers teasing at his ass were not meant for getting used to. "The last time," he said, trying to remember exactly when that had been, "was after we'd been to an incredibly long event at the university. Dressed in tuxedos, being polite to all of Wyatt's colleagues... he'd been awarded tenure, and the event was for something totally unrelated, but people kept coming up to us."

A finger pushed in, nice and slow, and the familiar rhythm started up. "So you were both on show, all night long."

"Yes. I was Mister Doctor for the night. It was very peculiar."

Dave laughed softly, then his tongue slid over Desmond's spine in a long lick. "Do you mind it, being Mister Doctor?"

"Not really." Desmond tensed slightly, waiting. When nothing happened, he looked back over his shoulder again. "Dave."

Dave grinned and pushed his finger in again. "Sorry. You were saying?"

"You're playing. Brat." Des held onto the tub and enjoyed the tingles coursing through his body as Dave opened him. "Anyway. We'd been out for hours, he was beautiful, he was the doctor of philosophy, he was the very picture of professional, in control, and confident man about town."

"So you had to take him down a peg." Dave matched the word peg by adding at least one more finger and brushing over Des' prostate.

Gasping, Des arched his back and took a moment to get his senses back under control. "Not so much that," he said, his voice tight. His cock had lifted high and started to leak. "I wanted my boy back, yes, but I knew how much he wanted to *be* my boy again. Sometimes the transition can be tough. So I tied him to the bed -- he likes that."

"You don't say." Dave was finger fucking him earnestly by then, in and out and out and in, hitting the sweet spot at random intervals. "I hadn't noticed."

"Sarcasm won't get you laid."

Dave laughed, his fingers working magic. "So, he was tied up..."

Des nodded, parting his legs and bracing his feet a little better. He wanted Dave to do it faster, a bit harder, but he wouldn't ask. He'd probably climax too soon, and that would be a waste. He'd rather come around Dave's prick. "He was tied up. We talked a bit, I teased, he teased. The usual sort of thing."

"I have no idea what that is." Dave's voice was bland, but as his tongue came back and made swirls and his finger most definitely teased, Des assumed he was being sarcastic again.

"When he was tugging at the ropes and his cock was as hard as I've ever seen it," Des said in a rush, angling his hips for Dave, "I crawled on top and fucked myself down on him."

Dave froze. Luckily, his fingers were in a good spot and Des could move; he rocked back and forth, the tingle turning to bolts of lightening. "Oh, God." He reached down for his cock and started stroking. "Yes."

"Hey!" Dave came back to himself and the fingers vanished. "Wait for me!"

"Fuck me," Des panted. He could almost feel it, rising up in him. He was empty, Dave's hand gone, Wyatt's cock a mere memory. "Hurry."

Dave batted Des' hand away from his prick. "Hang on to the tub, I don't want to kill you."

"You're killing me now," Des insisted. "Get in me!"

"Jesus. Pushy, bossy, demanding -- oh, fuck. Tight." Dave groaned, the head of his cock nudging into Desmond's body.

Des' back curved again and he held onto the tub with a white knuckle grip. "Yes," he whispered. "More."

Dave slid in slowly, the wide girth far more substantial than the fingers. "Don't let me hurt you," he whispered. "Damn, you're tight."

"Trust me, pain is not my thing. I'll tell you." Des' eyes were shut and it was all he could do to keep himself from grabbing his erection and masturbating furiously. "I need. Dave. I need."

"What do you need?" Dave's voice was like crushed rock, his body like a furnace as he pushed close, got even deeper with a slow, driving circling of his hips. "Jesus. Holy fuck, Des. Going to drive me crazy."

Des nodded, but he wasn't sure why. "Crazy," he agreed. "Full. Dave. Move. I need to come."

Groaning, Dave pulled back. His chest still covered Des' body, but his hips slid away and his cock dragged out, making Des' ass feel like fire at the center of the universe. When he pushed back in the fire cooled like ice and they both cried out. "Des?"

Des nodded and hung his head low, his balance secure. He needed. Fast and hard and rough; his entire body was poised to fly.

Dave's teeth scraped ever so lightly over one of Des' shoulders. "Love you," Dave whispered. Then he started to fuck.

Their bodies came together in hard, sharp smacks. Des could feel every thrust in his balls, in his belly, in his hands. When Dave's cock slammed into his gland, Des yelled, reflexively tightening his muscles.

That made Dave yell, too, and the fucking turned into pounding, Dave's fingers holding tight to Des' hips, pulling him back and forth as they moved together in a frenetic pace.

Des wasn't sure who came first. He supposed it didn't matter. He was close, so close, and then Dave was grunting and Dave's cock was huge, and then Des was coming. His hands were cemented to the tub, his legs were locked, but when he shot and his body constricted all he could feel was the cock inside him, big and hard and strong, lighting up his whole world.

He held on as best he could while the aftershocks coursed through him. He could feel Dave shaking behind him, the powerful shudders almost picking him up when Dave clamped an arm around his middle. They eased off, both the shudders and the arm, and in a few moments Des and Dave were panting, the bathroom quiet except for the sound of water and their breathing.

"Are you all right?" Dave asked, slowly moving away.

Des nodded, staying exactly where he was while Dave dealt with the condom. "I am," he said. "More than all right, actually. Wow."

Dave chuckled and rinsed them both off, touching Des carefully and coaxing him to stand. "Good." They kissed again and Dave turned off the water. "That was amazing."

Blushing, Des leaned into Dave's body and let Dave hold him for a couple of moments. "I suppose we should let Archer get clean. Oh, by the way, Archer promised Wyatt a treat later. I'm not sure if he meant later tonight or later in more general terms."

"Okay," Dave said easily. He kissed the top of Des' head and pulled the shower curtain back. "They'll let us know. Right now, you and I need to get dry, and I'll talk to Wyatt about supper."

"We're ordering Chinese." Des reached for the towels and handed one to Dave.

Dave looked at him for a moment and then grinned. "Okay, then. That was easy."

Des toweled his own hair dry. "Oh." He made a face. "Sorry. We probably should have asked you, shouldn't we?"

"It's not a big deal." Dave stepped out of the tub and started drying off. "I like Chinese. I like ordering out. It's also a lot easier to do that when Arch and me just descended upon you, messy as all get out. Arch would have said if he thought I wanted something else or something specific."

Sighing, Des dried off as well and then watched Dave get dressed in clean clothes, his dirty ones going into a plastic grocery sack when he was done. "I made an assumption, though, and I also made a decision for you without asking your opinion."

"Des." Dave dropped the bag and came to him, putting his hands on Des' hips, over the towel. "If I have a problem with what you do, I'll say. Okay? I asked you to let yourself make mistakes. Now I'm asking you to stop second guessing yourself. You just be you -- I love *you*. When things come up, I'll use my voice. Okay?"

Des studied the serious, earnest face and nodded. "Yes, Dave. I love you, too."

Dave grinned at him. "I know. Cool, huh?"

A laugh was startled out of Des and he nodded. "It's pretty cool, yes."

They would probably have stood there kissing for a long time if there hadn't been someone knocking at the door. After twenty seconds of that Dave finally broke free and sighed. "Guess he wants in."

"It's not locked."

Dave laughed and took Des' hand. "Let's go get you dressed again. Archie can shower, we'll all eat, and then we'll see what's next."

That sounded like a lovely plan to Des. He nodded and opened the bathroom door, smiling at Archer who was still rapping at the door frame, looking less than impressed. "Hello. Would you like in there?"

"I gave y'all three minutes after the orgasm, God." Archer eyed them both and nodded. "One dressed, one naked. I called that much right, but got the people wrong. Huh."

"You're not always right, see?" Dave said sweetly as he followed Des out of the bathroom and down the hall to the bedroom.

"Yeah, yeah. Laugh it up, shopboy."

Des snorted. "Shopboy?"

"Don't you start," Dave warned, grinning at him. "You're naked and I know how to snap a towel real good."

Wyatt laughed and Des pulled up short. He hadn't realized Wyatt was in the bedroom. "That's one of the better lessons we learned playing football," Wyatt said, laying out a clean suit for Des. "Tie, sir?"

"No, thank you." Both Dave and Wyatt gave him a fast look and Des rolled his eyes. "Please. I can leave a tie off at home in the evening. I do, often."

Dave grinned at him. "It's 'cause I'm here. You're dressing down for me." He seemed to think that was absurdly sweet.

Wyatt picked out a shirt with a less starched collar and smiled. "I think it's nice. The tie comes off most evenings, but I think it's nice, anyway."

"Are you two done?" Des asked, reaching for his boxers. Honestly, it was just a tie.

Wyatt and Dave grinned at each other. "Nice water pressure," Dave said conversationally.

"It is, isn't it?" Wyatt and Dave both watched Des dress. "It's great for filling the tub fast. It's a lot bigger than it looks."

"Looked plenty big from where I was." Dave's grin was definitely growing into a self-satisfied smirk.

Des snorted and pulled his trousers on, only wincing a little.

Instantly, Dave's smirk fell away. "You said I didn't hurt you!" He rushed to Des' side and it took a very firm swat to Dave's arm to make him back off.

"I'm *not* hurt," Des insisted. "Honestly, I'm not. Just because muscles twinge doesn't mean you hurt me."

Wyatt looked baffled and then comprehension dawned over his face as he looked from Des to Dave and back again. "Ohh." Apparently that was going to be the sum total of his reaction, however, as he fell silent and said nothing as Des finished dressing.

For his part, Des ignored the anxious looks Dave gave him until it got annoying and he couldn't let it go any longer. "Dave." Des took one of Dave's hands and made sure he had Dave's full attention. "You did not hurt me, and if you don't stop fussing you're going to get anxiety marks all over my afterglow. Stop it."

Dave made a face and sighed. "All right. If you say so."

"I do say so. Besides, you can't tell me you don't know the feeling I'm talking about. I've seen you have it. I've even *caused* it. Let it go."

Flushing, looking a little rueful, Dave finally nodded. "Okay. Letting it go." He kissed Des' mouth quickly and winked at him. "I'm hungry now."

"And that's my cue." Wyatt waved to them both from the doorway. "I'll go order supper. It should get here by the time Archie is out of the shower."

"Thank you, love." Desmond nodded at Wyatt and watched him go. It might have been his imagination, but he rather thought Wyatt seemed a little subdued. Deciding to keep an eye on him, Des got dressed for his audience of one and set about the rest of the evening in their new, temporary circumstances.

On Thursday and Friday the book shop was open until seven-thirty, and Desmond usually liked it that way. Once in a while he treated himself and closed up a little early on Friday -- usually so he could take either Wyatt or Dave out for dinner -- but as a general rule he liked the quiet evenings in the shop. The evening customers were either regulars or foot traffic, and the shop seemed to be a warmer, cozier spot in the evening.

That Thursday, however, he was fully aware that he was missing Dave and Archer's visit to his showers, and though they both came into the shop to say hello, they couldn't stay long enough to visit for the evening. The bathroom plumbing was going in and they had a lot of work to do at the station before they could go to bed.

Friday was full as well, all day spent with stock and customers. The client arrived from out of town to see the volume he'd called about, and to Desmond's delight and mild surprise, bought it.

Having nicely secured his mortgage payment for the month, Des' mood improved greatly from "vaguely worried about money" to "all will be well." There had also been a noticeable increase in sales all week, and to celebrate that he decided to close early on Friday.

Life conspired, however, and it wasn't until almost seven that he found himself alone in the store. He didn't like to close early if there were customers -- a rushed customer was likely not to buy anything, after all -- but when he got the chance to change the sign to closed, he took it.

It only took him a few minutes to run the vacuum over the shop floor, then he turned off the lights, double checked the lock on the door, and went upstairs. Oddly, Wyatt wasn't in the kitchen. Desmond could hear the shower running, however, so he knew that it was more than likely their guests were somewhere around the place.

Loosening his tie, Des walked down the hallway. The library was empty, and so was the living room, but he could hear voices very near. Curious, Desmond glanced into Wyatt's office. The voices were speaking in low, easy tones, and with a smile Des identified Wyatt and Dave. He lifted a hand to push the door the rest of the way open, but he stopped short of it. It sounded like a serious discussion, and perhaps one he wasn't to be part of.

"No, really. It's okay," Wyatt was saying. "I don't mind, Dave. Honestly, I don't."

"Not minding is one thing," Dave said slowly. "And I get that there's got to be parts of all this where we compromise and each person gives a bit on certain things. Stuff that's perfectly okay, but maybe not ideal for them. I get that. Hell, it's hard enough having a relationship with one guy and getting to the parts that are 'ideal' or 'mostly great'. Doing it with four is going to make more things that are 'fine' than 'awesome.' But still." He sighed. "That didn't make a lot of sense, did it?"

Wyatt laughed softly. "It did. It made sense. It sounded kind of dreary, though. None of us is settling for less, being part of this poly relationship. We're adding to, not taking away."

"Right, that." Dave's voice became a bit more cheerful. "So, my point is, I'm sorry if I upset you the other day. It wasn't my intention."

"I know that. I do. And you didn't upset me at all, neither of you did. I was surprised, is all. Mr. Chase doesn't usually... uh."

"Bottom."

"Right."

Wyatt said something else, but his voice had dropped and Des missed it. Of course, he could have missed it because he was busy getting himself out of any accidental line of sight. Eavesdropping was never a good idea, but getting caught was an even worse one. He wasn't invited to this particular conversation, but he didn't intend to miss it, either.

"I don't think it's something he seeks out," Dave said thoughtfully. "He's let me do it twice, and both times it's been amazing. But there's got to be a certain mood, maybe. We talked about you, this time."

There was a startled silence and Des lifted his gaze to the ceiling. That would be enough to get Wyatt asking a lot of questions. Of course, it would also lead to a reenactment, perhaps, so that would be all right.

"Why on earth would you do that?"

"Because I'm just as curious as you are." This time it was Dave who laughed. "I see how hard he works, both with you and with himself. I appreciate what you're both doing, what Arch does. I think that Des... I get curious. I do." It had the sound of an admission. "So I asked him about you, about the two of you together."

"Asking questions is very rarely a bad thing." Wyatt sounded a little amused, and a little surprised that Dave would have curiosity.

Desmond had been waiting for it.

"I know. Well, I assume, anyway. I certainly don't mind *answering* questions, but no one has any about me. I'm kind of easy to understand, I guess." Dave sounded almost proud of that, as well he should. "But if you ever want to know what I think about something, don't be afraid to ask."

"Okay." It was just one word, but Des knew Wyatt well enough to know that he was already forming questions. He was a fast thinker, a deep thinker. "I do have one. Just give me your impression. It goes right to the issue, and I'm going to talk to Mr. Chase about it, too. Actually, I should probably ask him first." He sounded almost depressed as he spoke the last words, like he'd already changed his mind. That was confirmed when he added on, "Yes, I should. Never mind."

"Um." Dave drew the sound out and made a clicking noise with his tongue. "Okay. It's up to you, of course. Last thing I want to do is step into the middle of your relationship and your dynamic. But if you want my opinion on something, I'll give it to you, independent of Des. Maybe that's a good thing, sometimes. Not every time, but sometimes. If it's got something to do with me topping him, then I'm kind of already in it, too."

Des nodded to himself. That much was true. Of course, he would definitely appreciate it if Wyatt spoke with him before Dave, but life had a way of throwing curve balls. And as he was already there, he at least knew Wyatt's intentions, before they were pushed off track.

"I just. It's just. I don't. What if." Wyatt trailed off, his voice and words confused. Des straightened up, immediately concerned. That wasn't like Wyatt at all.

"Easy, buddy." Dave spoke in low tones, soothing and calm, but Des was still ready to go in and put things to right. He probably would have if a hand hadn't fallen onto his arm and another slipped over his mouth to smother his startled yelp.

"You're not supposed to be listening, are you?" Archer whispered in Des' ear, his body pushing close. He was hot from the shower, his clean clothes smelling of fabric softener. "What are they talking about?"

The hand moved away and Des hissed, "Shh."

"You're gonna get in trouble," Archer sing-songed in Des' ear. He didn't move away, however.

Wyatt finally seemed to gather himself. "I just wonder what if he wants that from me, too, and I never noticed? What if I've been letting him down all this time?"

Dave, ever the diplomat, did not laugh. Archer did, though, silently shaking next to Des in the hallway. "Has he met you?" Archer whispered.

Des reached back and pinched Archer's thigh. Hard. "Shh!"

"Wyatt, think about this." Dave was still speaking calmly. "First of all, if Des wants something, he says so. He tells you, he tells me, he tells everyone. That's just who he is. He knows that his expectations can't be met if he keeps them to himself. He would say so, if he wanted that. Also, if there's one thing I've learned the last few months, it's that we all get something different from each other. Different people provide different things. You get from Arch something you don't from Des, and something different from me again."

"My man's smart," Archer whispered proudly.

"So is mine," Des shot back. Then he blushed. It was hardly a contest. "They're both brilliant."

Archer merely looked at him, still laughing.

"Oh, shut up." Des turned back to listen through the door.

"I know," Wyatt said. "I just got surprised. He was so happy, so obviously post-coital."

"Orgasms do that," Dave said dryly. "I've seen you like that. We've all seen it, on all of us. It's a good thing, bud. We make each other happy."

"Yeah, I guess." Wyatt sighed again. "I don't usually get insecure. Not about my relationship. This whole thing really threw me for a loop."

"I can tell." Dave sounded sympathetic. "If it helps, I've been tossed, too. I mean, it's all so different. Every time I see you kneel, I blink, and I'm even getting used to that. There's bondage gear as a built-in element of my house. There's a freaking dungeon being constructed down the

hall from my bedroom. Arch just calls it 'Wyatt's room', but I know what it is." He laughed. "You and me, we're buddies, right? We're good to each other and it's all cool. But it's definitely different. And that's okay."

Des turned to face Archer, his eyes so wide he thought he might look like a bug. "Wyatt's room?" he mouthed.

Archer had the good graces to look abashed. "Surprise?"

"I'd say so, yes." Des knew that it wasn't meant as a slight, not telling him about the dungeon, but he would have liked to have been a part of the excitement of building it, or even planning it.

"Pardon me?" Wyatt sounded just as floored.

"Oh. Damn it." Dave didn't sound even vaguely apologetic. Instead, he went on, clearly delighted. "It's the room down at the end, next to where we keep the workout gear. Arch got it reframed and it's just bare right now -- he wants the three of you to plan it all out and take your time making it what you want. Me, I'm just going to walk on by, I think."

Des looked back at Archer, chagrined.

"Don't worry about it," Archer said, grinning at him. "I would have wanted my balls, too."

"You know," Dave said when Wyatt said nothing at all. Desmond assumed Wyatt was as speechless as he was. "There is something that you and I need to iron out, though."

"There is?" Wyatt sounded mildly stunned, though Des couldn't tell if it was about the fact that they had an issue or if he was still reeling from having a room.

"It's not a big thing. But I think we're both going to have to compromise on something." Dave paused for a moment and Archer drew closer, his brow furrowed. Clearly this was news to him as well. "I know that you have a job to do here, and that there are things that you do in your home that are important to both you and Des. You have chores and duties and they matter. But I gotta be honest, man. It's killing me to watch you do all the dishes. And I know you're the one cleaning up the bathroom after us, and I know that me and Arch are welcome here, but we're also adding to the mess."

Wyatt immediately began to protest but Dave wouldn't let him. "No, Wyatt, this is where the compromise comes in. Let me get my own drink of water. Let me wipe down the bathroom or dry the dishes or something. I need to feel useful as much as you do. Well, okay, maybe not that much. But I do need to take care of myself a bit more. I know this is your house, your lifestyle -- but the four of us are mixed and mingled so much that we need to find a way. And when you're at our place I won't even blink when Des has you kneel or even serve dinner at our table. I respect what you have. I don't want to have lines of behavior being different in each house. But I can't put myself in a position of being a reluctant dom, either."

Des wanted to hear Wyatt's reply. He wanted to go in and join the conversation and tell Wyatt that it was okay to let Dave do small things, that there would still be plenty of chores. He wanted to tell Wyatt that he'd make up even more of them if Wyatt needed it.

He couldn't do any of those things because Archer was dragging him down the hall to the kitchen.

"I wanted to hear that," Des said, almost tripping as Archer dragged him.

"I know. I do. But." Archer got them into the kitchen and turned to face Des, holding onto both of Des' arms. "There comes a time when we have to let them sort stuff out for themselves. We know them. Inside and out, we know them. This is something they need to discuss between them, then they'll bring it to you and you have final say. Even Dave knows that. Actually, he knows it so well that he knows he can ask for this. You've done great, Des."

Des stared at him for a moment and then looked away. "Sometimes," he whispered, "sometimes it feels like a tight wire. Like I'm trying too hard."

"Because you are. If anything gets through to you from your little eavesdropping session, let it be this." Archer's curls bobbed as he nodded his head earnestly. "We're all on board. Nothing is going to fall apart if you just be you. Dave loves you for you. Wyatt adores and loves you. You and me, we're in this the same way they are -- they're buddies. We're... what's a more dignified word for buddies?"

Desmond smiled slightly. "Buddies will do. Compadres is a bit much."

"Okay, then." Archer let go of him and patted Des' arms where he'd been holding them. "You're doing great. Be yourself. Everything is fine. Now. Okay?"

Des nodded slowly. "Okay." He thought about the way Dave and Wyatt were together, the way they were with him, and he nodded again. "Okay. I won't break anything by being Wyatt's dom and Dave's lover. We're all doing well."

"You've got some peace?"

Oddly, given the anxiety he'd been having, Des thought that maybe he did have some peace. Or at least he'd decided that the best way to proceed was to follow what Archer and Dave and Wyatt had all told him. "I do," he said, looking down the hall. "Peace is in contentment."

"Right." Archer grinned at him. "So why don't you peace out and get your boy to come and get things ready for supper?"

"That's a very good idea." Des crossed to the telephone stand first, though and opened the drawer. "Your dungeon intrigues me. And judging by what we overheard while casually passing by Wyatt's office, it seems that all four of us are on the same page." He turned around and held up two house keys. "Do we need a ceremony?"

"Nah." Archer waved a hand. "Just a bottle of wine."

"I have that." Des smiled and raised his voice. "Wyatt! To me, please."

He could be himself. They all could.

Epilogue

Des leaned over the pool table and called his shot. "Eight ball in the side pocket."

"Only because I left you sitting pretty," Archer grumbled at him, leaning on one of the loft's support beams.

"Regardless, it's my shot and my game. Again." Des smiled as the ball sank. Above them, cheering started up, both Wyatt and Dave stomping and yelling. "You know, it would be nice if even a fraction of that was for me."

"You wanted to play pool during the Superbowl, man. We're just lucky that there's going to be food."

"Still. It would be nice."

"Tell him," Archer dared, his grin wide as he racked the balls again. "Both of them."

Desmond raised his face. "Hey! Boy! I just won again."

"Way to go, sir!" Wyatt yelled. A short scuffle later and both Dave and Wyatt were cheering again.

Desmond chose to believe it was for him. After all, he'd managed to find his way to peace and contentment, and if that wasn't worthy of cheers, nothing was. Certainly not a sporting event.

"My break," he said, bending once more. "Nice table."

"Glad you like it, buddy. Glad you like it."

end

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