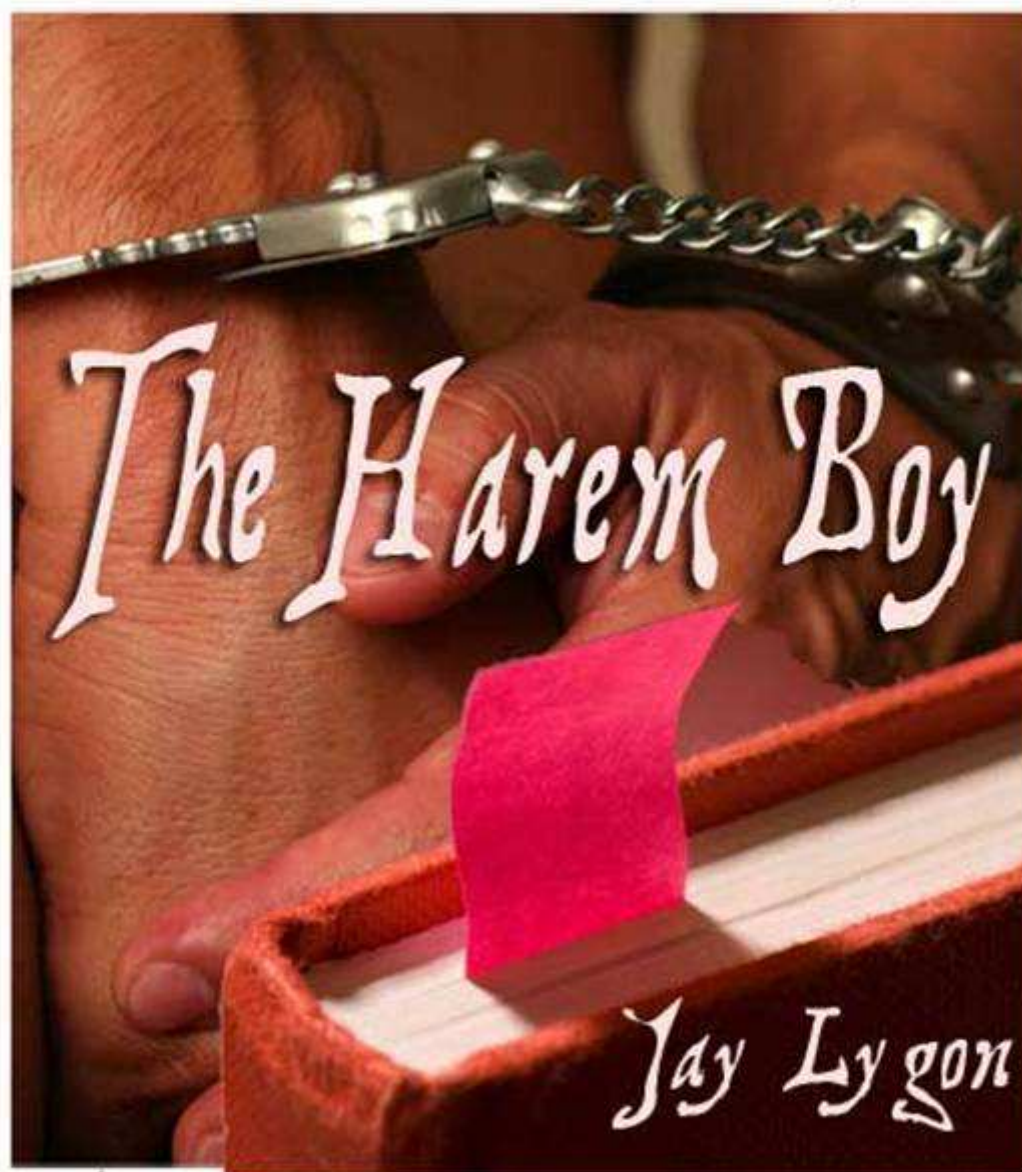




*A Torquere Press Single Shot*



The Harem Boy

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# About this Title

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Ophir patted his suit pockets. No, it wasn't there. A small frown that would have brought his slaves running didn't have the same effect on the small, red leather-bound book he sought.

Compared to the milk and beef-fed Americans he taught at the University, Ophir seemed slightly built, but his gray wool suit hid honed muscles. In his homeland, he was registered as a lethal weapon thanks to the martial arts he learned in the military. Even without knowing that bit of personal trivia, people were often intimidated by his intense, quiet presence. A precise black mustache and beard framed the frown on his full, brown lips. Thick brows furrowed over his dark eyes. Nearing forty, he had yet to find gray in his short-cropped hair.

He glanced around his English department office. What should have been an invisible division between his territory in the cramped room and his office mate's was quite apparent. The teetering stacks of files and dirty coffee cups most certainly weren't his.

Except for his computer monitor, nothing was on Ophir's desk, so he hadn't absent-mindedly set the book down when he came into the office. The space the book usually occupied on the shelves behind his desk was empty. His frown deepened as he placed his worn brown leather briefcase on top of his desk. He couldn't remember placing the book into the satchel after his poetry class, but he might have.

Lately, matters at home had been distracting him at work. That irritated him almost more than the missing book. Another boy lost. Well, not so much lost as given up as a mistake. He warned new slaves how life under his roof would be, but somehow, they insisted on trying to live out their own fantasies anyway. That simply wouldn't do.

Ophir opened the two leather buckles on his briefcase. Papers to be graded were in folders, sorted by class. The markers he used on the white board were in their plastic sleeve. But the book wasn't there.

An unexpectedly sharp pang came with the realization that the book was probably lost. Certainly, he had other volumes of Yeats' poetry. That wasn't the point. When he held that slim volume, the leather warmed under his fingertips as if it were alive. The binding

fell open to his favorite poems. Somehow, even though the words were the same in other copies of the book, they had so much more depth when read from those fragile pages. He never should have risked something that meant so much to him by toting it around campus, but until that moment, he hadn't realized how much he cherished it.

*The last gift from my Master.*

How long had it been since he'd flipped to the front page and read the words Hector had written in it? Years. He didn't need to see them, though. He remembered the inscription verbatim. He even remembered how he and Hector had tried so hard that last weekend to fall back in love even though they both knew it was over.

Another pang caught him under his ribs. Why was every memory of Hector as a lover bittersweet when their present friendship was so satisfying? Maybe because Hector had a new boy, Randy, and was head over heels in love, again.

Ophir shook his head, a wry smile replacing his frown. Was he jealous of Randy? Hardly. Well, maybe a little. The feeling of Hector's arms wrapped around him, and those lingering, passionate kisses were etched so deeply in Ophir's memory that he swore he could feel the brush of lips on the nape of his neck. He shivered even as his cock hardened.

A knock on his office door made Ophir flinch. His caramel skin darkened slightly over his angular cheekbones.

"Come in."

The office door opened slightly, then a bit more. Dark blond hair styled into stiff spikes appeared first, then a pale forehead, and finally, solemn eyes.

“Professor, er, Doctor, um...” A gangly boy slid into the office. He stared at his feet. “I’m sorry to interrupt, Sir, but I saw this on the stairs, and...” The boy thrust out his hand. In it was a small, red leather bound book.

“Ah. I was just looking for that. Thank you...” Ophir searched his memory for the boy’s name. Unusual for him, he couldn’t seem to remember one. Funny. The boy had been in class all semester. Although the boy slouched in the back of the class and never raised his eyes or his hand, such a charmingly submissive undergrad could never be invisible under Ophir’s gaze.

Ophir’s ex-Master Hector casually teased Ophir of being a chickhawk, but that wasn’t entirely true. Yes, Ophir admired beautiful young men. Who didn’t? Their unquenchable sex drives were a bonus. Their real charm lay elsewhere for him, though. Few young men wanted a serious relationship. After serving him for three years, they were ready to move on. He saw to it that they had a college diploma in hand and a good job lined up when their terms of service were up. It was a fair exchange, and it didn’t involve any messy emotions. A few begged to stay, but were firmly escorted out. He was sure they recovered quickly and got on with their futures. The young were resilient like that.

*And yet, your heart still stings every time Hector brings a new boy over to your house, Ophir chided himself. You always worry that this one will be the one he loves more than he ever loved you.*

*Oh just stop it. It’s been over for years.*

*Yes, you left him when you were young and resilient.*

That train of thought was going nowhere good, as usual, so Ophir concentrated on remembering the name of the boy fidgeting before his desk. The creases between his thick black brows grew deeper. Ophir took the offered book. The boy bolted for the door.

“Stop!”

The boy stopped immediately, his backpack swinging off his shoulder and thudding on the floor.

“As long as you’re here, why don’t we go over your term paper?” Ophir asked. He’d at least get the boy’s name that way.

The boy bowed his head. “That’s all right.”

“Sit.”

Used to being obeyed, Ophir didn’t wait to see if the boy took a seat. He settled onto his desk chair and withdrew the neat files from his briefcase. Was this the boy who wrote the impassioned but sloppy essays? No. That was the little brunet who always sat at the front of the class and tried to monopolize every discussion. Maybe he was the one who wrote the scathing denunciations of Shelly’s work. No. That was the jock who made it clear all he wanted was his humanities requirement filled as painlessly as possible. Hmm. He hoped the boy’s paper wasn’t as forgettable as his name.

The boy quietly closed the door and sat at the edge of a seat against the wall. As Ophir flipped through the files, the boy’s feet tapped on the floor. He stared at his writhing fingers.

“Name?”

The boy jerked to his feet.

“I didn’t give you permission to rise.”

The boy eyed the door, but slid back onto the chair. He leaned forward and put his head in his hands.

His dread ruined Ophir's pleasure over his obedience. How bad was this boy's work? Was he one of the failing students? No. Students were quick to drop any class that could ruin their grade point average. The University made it so easy for them to give up without ever really trying. Then Ophir smelled it. True fear. The boy was terrified. The office was cool, but the boy was already sweating. Ophir's eyebrow shot up, but he didn't look directly at the boy as he went through his file.

"What's your name, boy?"

The boy's Adam's apple bobbed. "I didn't turn in a paper, Sir," he whispered.

"I don't give credit for late work. This isn't high school."

"I'm, um, auditing your class."

Ophir brought his steady, dark gaze to the boy's eyes and said nothing for a while. The boy looked out the window, then at his shoes.

"That's impossible. You have to ask for a professor's permission to audit a course, and I never allow students to audit my course. Let me see your student ID." Ophir put his hand out.

The boy's face went white.

“Now!”

In a flurry of motion, the boy grabbed his backpack and went through it. Ophir watched the frantic zipping and unzipping of compartments with a blank expression that belied his curiosity. Most students toted around laptops and notebooks in their bags. This boy seemed to have underwear, shirts, and socks in his.

The hand that offered the ID card to Ophir trembled.

At first, there seemed to be nothing remarkable about the ID. “Christopher Lewis?” The picture was undoubtedly the same boy as the one sitting across from him, although the boy had once been about twenty pounds heavier. Back when the picture had been taken, the boy had been at ease, smiling, even a little cocky, but weren’t they all?

Ophir forced himself to look at the details, because something about that ID definitely had Chris in a panic. He was nineteen, almost twenty. He was a sophomore, or had been when -- aha! The ID didn’t have a renewal sticker for the current year.

“This ID is expired.”

“Please, Sir. I won’t come to your class anymore. I won’t bother you again. I promise. Just let me have my ID.”

The slight tremor in the whispered voice and the detectable edge of desperation was a sweet aphrodisiac. If he had been in his office at home instead of at work, Ophir would have dragged Chris over his lap and pulled down the boy’s pants just to see how Chris handled the humiliation of being spanked. Those stupid baggy pants boys wore made their asses look flat. Such a pity. He wanted to see if the striped boxers peeking out over Chris’ belt hid a muscular butt. Instead, Ophir flipped the card with his fingers as he leaned back in his desk chair. “Tell me.”



The boy gulped. “What?”

“Everything.”

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Students often broke into tears in Ophir’s office, usually for the stupidest reasons. The day before, a member of the University’s basketball team had gone weepy over being marked down for referring to Walt Whitman as a 'fagot'.

“Technically, you may be correct,” Ophir told the six foot eight center guard, “but the word has two gs. Faggot. I trust in the future that when you use a derogatory term, you’ll at least bother to spell it right. Illiteracy reflects poorly even on bigots.”

Figuring that Christopher was on the verge of breaking down, Ophir slapped a box of tissues on his desk.

Chris still sat on the edge of his chair, but he stopped fidgeting. For a while, he stared at the floor. Ophir was about to command him to speak when Chris started talking.

“Last summer, I decided to come out to my parents. They kicked me out. I don’t know why, but I thought that meant that they just needed some time to forgive me. I didn’t think they’d cut off my college fund. I guess I couldn’t imagine they could go from loving me to hating me so easily. But they did. I came back here because the semester was about to start, but when I tried to get my dorm and schedule, I found out that they didn’t pay my tuition. Duh, right? I walked around in a haze for a while. I learned a lot, like no one was going to lend me money for school without someone to co-sign the loan. Welcome to the real world.”

Ophir waited for more, but Chris seemed done.

“What did you do?”

Chris shrugged. “I got a job. I’m saving up for tuition. Maybe next year...”

“Why did you come to my class?”

Chris bowed his head so that Ophir could only see the top of it. “I was afraid that if I stopped thinking of myself as a student that I’d never get back on track. So I made out a schedule and went to classes like it was the real thing.” He tugged on his spiked hair. “I saw you walking across campus one day, and followed you to your class.” His gaze briefly flitted to Ophir’s before dropping again so that he missed seeing Ophir’s tight smile. “I’m sorry. Pity story. I’m sure it’s more than you wanted to hear. I’ll be going now, Sir. Can I have my ID back?”

Ophir held it up between two fingers, far out of Chris’ reach. “Why do you want it?”

“It says I belong here.”

Intrigued by that cryptic answer, Ophir leaned over his desk. “Why is that important?”

Chris lifted his chin and firmly met Ophir’s gaze. “Because they don’t kick me out of the library for sleeping when I can flash a student ID. Otherwise, I’d have to live on the street.”

Ophir handed back the ID card even though he would have liked to have kept Chris in his office a bit longer. The boy was far more interesting than many he'd met. Proud, but about the right things. No self-pity, and more importantly, no anger. But most of all, he wasn't going down without a fight. So many boys would have given up when faced with far less of a challenge.

Chris took the card and put it into his backpack. "Thank you." He stood and slung his backpack over his shoulder. He hitched up the jeans that were sliding down and showing more of his boxers.

Ophir picked up a pen and looked at the file on his desk. "I expect your paper by Friday."

Chris stopped, his hand on the door. "What?"

"I don't usually accept late papers, but under the circumstances, I will. Have it to me by Friday. If I like what I see, you may be back in class by next semester."

Although his face didn't show it, Ophir cringed.

*You fool. Trolling for boys where you work?*

*But he's not a student.*

*You're going to get him back into school, and then where will you be? Tenured or not, you'll lose your job.*

"You can get me back in? How?" Chris asked.

Ophir's gaze traveled up the line of the Chris' neck, down the line of the jaw, and up to those solemn eyes. They were filled with hope and worship.

*He'd look so sweet bound at my feet.*

"I have contacts and resources most professors don't."

*I only work so that I'll have a reason to get out of bed in the morning. If you were in my bed, I'd have no reason to leave it.*

"I'll get you that paper, Sir."

Ophir dismissed Chris with a wave of his hand. He looked down at his files but couldn't focus on them.

*I should call Hector and tell him I'm acting like an infatuated old fool. Except that instead of humiliating me until I forget about Chris, Hector will probably tell me I've done the right thing.*

\*\*\*

A girl with dark cherry hair and striped stockings was bashing Yeats' early poems as overly-sentimental drivel. Ophir let her talk as he paced the front of the lecture hall. The seat Chris usually took near the door was empty, and class would soon end.

Ophir stopped in front of the girl and tapped his finger three times on her desk. “While what you say may be partially correct, Miss Edgar, this class is about forming your own opinion, not reciting a graduate thesis you found on the internet. Hmm?” The sad thing was that she probably felt that counted as doing research. She certainly wasn’t embarrassed to be caught.

He glanced over the lecture hall. Everyone looked bored. “For those of you who share Miss Edgar’s assessment of Yeats, you’ll be glad to know that next week we are moving on to W.H. Auden.” Thirty sets of blank eyes stared back at Ophir. “Perhaps you heard his poem Funeral Blues recited in the movie Four Weddings and a Funeral?”

Miss Edgar nodded. “Oh, I saw that when I was, like, five. Or six. It’s a really old movie. Did someone die in that? I don’t remember.”

Ophir’s lips pressed tightly together.

“Four Weddings and a Funeral, duh,” the brunet in the next seat said. In an effort to hold his tongue, he’d squirmed the whole time Miss Edgar had been talking.

Miss Edgar turned to the brunet. “Have you even seen the movie?”

“No.”

“Then you don’t know for sure, do you?”

Ophir checked his watch. Thankfully, it was close enough to the end of class that he could let them go. Not that they would care if he let them out an hour early. “That’s enough for today. I’ll see you all on Monday.” He cast a glance toward the door. Still no Chris. Well, he’d see almost all of them.

As he suspected, no one complained about the early dismissal. He went to the lectern and packed his folder back into his briefcase. In his advanced classes, students came up to him at the end of lecture, but none of the students in that class seemed interested in discussing poetry.

Perhaps when they reached the unit where they looked at Death Cab for Cutie lyrics... Ophir sighed. Unless Death Cab for Cutie was already passé, like Four Weddings and A Funeral. Was the movie that old? He needed to ask his boys if his pop culture references were hopelessly out of date.

He took his folders out of his briefcase and checked that they were in the correct order before putting them back. A search around the lectern proved that he hadn't forgotten anything. He patted his suit pocket. His volume of Yeats' poems was there.

He checked his watch again. One minute after. Chris hadn't come.

\*\*\*

By the time Ophir left his office, he was annoyed with himself for looking forward to seeing Chris again. At least he'd enjoyed some pleasant daydreams about the boy.

*Daydreams? You fucked Number One's mouth raw while fantasizing about Chris.*

As much as he tried not to dwell on his irritation, it wouldn't go away. If he couldn't put it aside, he figured that he might as well examine his feelings until he could break them down into neat categories: the logical, and the illogical. As soon as he zeroed in on the illogical, he could banish it from his thoughts. Then he'd be back into a comfortable state of mind. Or at least that's what he tried to persuade himself as he crossed the University campus.

It was autumn in Los Angeles, but the lush semi-tropical plants lining the University commons were still deep green. Having grown up in a Mediterranean climate, Ophir preferred the mild weather to the real winter his friends often sighed over. If he wanted to see snow, he reasoned, he could look at Mt. Baldy on the far edge of the Los Angeles basin after a winter storm and see it capped in snow. Why people wanted to be mired in it, he'd never understand.

The walk across campus from his office to the parking garage wasn't long enough to ease his mind. Every time he thought he was back to his placid self, the image of Chris would set him off again. Chris, trying so hard not to be seen as he took the seat at the back of the lecture hall. Chris, listening intently while Ophir read poems to the class, his shoulders forward, almost leaning into the words.

Chris would have come up to the lectern after class to continue the discussion. At least he was interested in Yeats.

*Damn it. The boy is hot and you want to fuck his sweet little submissive ass. Just admit that, and you'll get over him.*

The sound of footsteps rushing down the sidewalk behind him didn't concern Ophir. If he'd been in a park, he would have checked, but the campus commons were teeming with students. Even though most classes were over for the day, someone running through the winding paths wasn't unusual either. Residents in the surrounding neighborhood often jogged the sidewalks around campus.

"Professor! Wait!" Chris called out.

Ophir wouldn't allow himself to smile, because that would be admitting that he was relieved to see the boy. He turned.

Chris' hair was a mess and dark sweat stains circled under his arms and down the middle of his chest. He shoved his hands into his jeans pockets. "I won't be turning in my paper. I'm sorry."

Ophir's gaze traveled down Chris' body. The sweat stains were bad enough, but the side of his left leg had a long brown and green smudge on it. The T-shirt was wrinkled in a radial pattern, as if it had been wadded up. Even his ankle had a stain on it. Strange. The boy had smelled slightly of fabric softener when he'd been in Ophir's office.

"Why not?" Ophir snapped. "You decided that you didn't need to write it?" The boy had obviously lied about wanting to return to school.

Chris shrank back. "No, Sir. I wrote it."

"Let me guess. Your dog ate it?"

There was a flash of anger on Chris' face, but it disappeared as quickly as it showed. "No, Sir." His lips moved, as if he were muttering to himself, but he made no sounds. Slowly, he turned away for Ophir.

"Boy! You aren't dismissed."

Chris shook his head as he turned back to Ophir. "I think, Sir, that you're done with me. It was a test, right? And I failed. No excuses. I just wanted to be man enough to face you and admit it rather than just disappear with no explanation. And that's it. For what it's worth, I enjoyed your class."

No boy had ever melted Ophir's wrath so quickly.



*So young, and yet, already a man. He would have done well in the military.*

There was the slightest hint of a smile on Ophir's lips. "Amuse me. You said you wrote the paper. If the dog didn't eat it, what happened to it?"

Chris' face twisted in a quick spasm of pain. He shut his eyes tight. "Someone stole my backpack when I was sleeping in the library. I was using it as a pillow, but I guess I rolled on my side, and someone just walked away with it. My paper was in it."

"And all your clothes, except what you had on your back." Ophir put a hand on Chris' arm. "What else?"

A slight shake in his voice was the only hint of how upset Chris was. "My student ID. My cell phone. Everything. They picked my pocket, too. My wallet is gone. I guess I was really sound asleep."

"You were robbed on campus, in the library?"

Chris shrugged again. "It happens all the time."

"When did this happen? When was the last time you ate?"

"Oh, I'm fine. I've been doing day labor the past three days. That's why I smell so bad, Sir. Sorry about that. I tried to wash my clothes in the sink in the men's room, but that soap doesn't work too well."

Ophir kept his expression blank. "You're fine? Boy, you're far from fine. By now, you

identity has probably been stolen--"

Chris cracked a rueful smile. "Joke's on them, isn't it? They can have my old identity. It isn't worth anything."

Sure, Chris was laughing at his bad luck, but his gaze darted everywhere, as if he expected another calamity to leap out and flatten him. The veins on his arms stood out, as if every muscle clenched tight. He might have thought he'd lost everything, but Ophir knew there were worse things Chris could lose.

"You will come home with me. We'll sort out your options." The offer was out of Ophir's mouth before he could stop it.

Wary, as if he knew Ophir regretted his hasty invitation, Chris said, "I couldn't."

"That was an order, boy, not an offer." Ophir pressed his lips together. What was he thinking, treating Chris as if the boy were one of his slaves? "Just for the weekend. I have a guest bedroom." He gave Chris' arm a friendly squeeze and let go. "Come on. You can wash your clothes, eat a meal or two, and sleep in a real bed."

Chris didn't say anything.

"You should call someone and tell them that you're coming to my house. That's a reasonable precaution. I won't be offended."

Solemn eyes locked with Ophir's gaze. "There's no one to call, Sir, even if I still had my phone."

\*\*\*

In Los Angeles, people measured distance by the amount of time it took to drive somewhere, not in miles. However, Ophir counted the drive from the University to his house in Belmont Shores in second thoughts. It had been a long time since he'd let his cock overrule his common sense.

"I'm sorry for stinking up your nice car." Those were the first words Chris had spoken since they left the parking lot.

"I knew how you smelled before I offered you a ride."

Ophir turned off the highway into the enclave of Belmont Shores. Some houses on the narrow street were little more than weathered beach shacks. Others were built in the bungalow style with cream stucco walls and red tile roofs. Sandwiched between those were ultra-modern stone cubes or turreted Mediterranean villas.

Past a high wall, Ophir turned into a driveway. Chris leaned forward to glance up at the house.

"Wow."

Ophir would never admit how pleased he was to hear Chris' appreciation.

It wasn't that the house was larger than the others on the street, but it gave that impression. It was set back from the sidewalk, whereas the other houses crowded as close to the street as they could. Ophir had bought the house next to his, razed it, and enclosed the Moorish garden with a high wall that enclosed part of the house, too. Carved harem screens covered the windows overlooking the street. The imposing wooden front door, imported from Tunisia, barely stretched to the second story, but the dome of the

horseshoe archway over it made it seem taller.

Before they reached the door, it swung open as if by magic. Beyond the doorway was a foyer with a dark floor and bright walls. As Chris followed Ophir inside, he craned his neck to look at the vaulted ceiling above them. His gaze went to the living room that opened off the foyer. Black leather couches and solid Spanish antiques were grouped together like the common room of a gentlemen's club or a very masculine hotel lobby. After glancing at the large fireplace on the far wall and the grand piano in the corner, Chris turned back to Ophir. He seemed about to say something when his eyes widened.

Ophir didn't spare a glance for the naked boy who had been standing behind the heavy front door. "I suppose I could have warned you, Chris." *But I wanted to see your reaction*. "I am a lifestyle dominant. Number Two is one of my slaves. If this upsets you, you can leave at any time, but I promise you that nothing will happen to you in this house without your consent. You're safe here." He handed his briefcase to Two. "Two, prepare the guest bedroom. Chris will be staying the weekend."

Two, a cheerful slut with a wrestler's solid build, nodded to Chris. Playing his part to the hilt, Two silently carried Ophir's sachel from the room.

"Do I have to strip?" Chris asked as they enjoyed the view of Two's broad shoulders, narrow waist, and muscled thighs walking away from them.

"No, Chris. You are my guest, not a slave. Why don't I take you on a tour of the house so you'll know your way around?" Ophir headed for the back of the house. "The kitchen is through that door. Don't be shy. If you're hungry, eat. If you feel you must ask, One or Two will bring you anything you want, or serve you in any way you desire. That includes sex. You'll find condoms and lube in every room. This door leads to the formal dining room. Your room is upstairs."

Ophir led the way up the steep staircase. At the top landing, he waited for Chris. "The first door on the left is your room." He opened the door and gestured for Chris to enter. "If you dial star 1 on the phone, you'll get One. Star 2 will connect you to Two. They both wear wireless headsets when they're in the house, so they will answer immediately."

The guest bedroom was furnished in a rich color scheme and art that hinted at Persian influences, but not to the point of being themed. The bed was huge and covered with tapestry pillows.

“The wardrobe across from the bed has a TV in it. The remote is in the nightstand. If you need a computer, I will have a laptop sent up.” After pointing out the amenities, Ophir walked through the far door. “You have a private bathroom. If you take off your clothes, I’ll have Two wash them for you. In the meantime, I’m sure you’d enjoy a bath.” He sat on the edge of a huge tub and turned on the water.

Chris followed Ophir into the bathroom. Like the bedroom, the bathroom had a Middle Eastern feel to it. There was a glass enclosed shower in one corner. A small fireplace sat in the other corner, and there was a TV above it. The tub, big enough for at least three men to sit in, dominated the room.

Chris looked down at his arm and picked at his elbow.

“Chris, you don’t have to do anything you don’t want to. But I would very much enjoy bathing you. Would you allow me to?” Ophir asked.

Rubbing his arm, Chris backed against the wall. “You want to give me a bath? I know I smell, but I can bathe myself.”

“I’ve sampled almost every pleasure a man can, and there’s little that compares to the simple luxury of being bathed by an attentive servant.”

“But you’re the Master, right? Isn’t this something one of your harem boys would do?”

“If you prefer, Two could bathe you. I can almost guarantee he’ll end up in the tub with you. One has a bit more restraint, but unfortunately, he’s at his kickboxing class right now. Or if you’d like both of my slaves to attend you, all you have to do is ask. But I have a feeling that you’d like to get clean as soon as possible. It must have been difficult sleeping outside the past few nights.”

“How did you know?”

“It was a guess. Your jeans are stained with mud. It hasn’t rained for months. So I assumed you found a bush in a nearby park and crawled under it to sleep. They must have watered the plants, and the ground was still damp under the bush.”

Chris’ mouth had dropped open. “You’re like Sherlock Holmes.”

“I notice everything.” Ophir rose from the tub and crossed the tile floor to Chris. “If you want to be alone, you only have to say the word. Your wish is my command.”

Chris laughed. “Oh man.” He shook his head. “I can’t believe this. It’s like some Arabian Nights story.”

“May I kiss you, Chris?”

The wariness was back. “Um. I’m not feeling very... I don’t feel like sex.”

Ophir put a hand on Chris’ waist. “Not every kiss is about sex, Boy.” He brushed his lips over Chris’. “Where I come from, it’s just a gesture of greeting between friends.” He kissed Chris again, but on the cheek.

“That must be a very friendly place.”

“Not really.” Ophir turned away so that Chris wouldn’t see his scowl. He couldn’t figure out why he’d said that. He never talked that much about his past for a reason. “You’ve had a hard week. You’re hungry, you’re tired, and you’re dirty. Where I come from, being a good host means helping your guest to relax, and I take my responsibilities as a host very seriously. So let me help you get clean. Then I’ll feed you. After that, you can curl up in that big bed by yourself and drift off to sleep. No one will force you to do anything. If you want me to go away, I will. Just say the word.”

“No one has ever waited on me before.”

Ophir’s hand hadn’t left Chris’ waist, but he didn’t kiss the boy again. “Offers like this don’t come often.”

Chris shrugged. “Well, okay, I guess.”

Smiling, Ophir lifted the hem of Chris’ T-shirt.

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“Do you bathe all your guests?” Chris asked as Ophir massaged shampoo into his scalp.

Ophir sat on the edge of the bath. To his satisfaction, the tension in Chris’ shoulders had slowly eased under his careful ministrations. He sluiced water away from the boy’s face as he rinsed away the shampoo. “Only if they want me to.”

*You liar. If it had been any other man, you would have ordered Two to attend to his needs. Why are you trying to seduce this boy?*

“What would you like to eat, Chris?”

Chris shook his head. “Anything. Cold leftovers are fine. Beggars can’t be choosers.”

Ophir rose from the side of the tub. He opened a slim cabinet near the sink over the bathroom mirror and pressed star 2. “Prepare a small lunch for our guest and bring it up to the bedroom, Two.”

“Yes, Sir.”

Ophir hung up.

“You have a phone in the bathroom? This place is like a hotel.”

“There’s a phone in every room. Communication is the key to a well-ordered house.”

The frown on Chris’ face deepened. “How--? I’m sorry. I’m being nosy.” Chris picked up the washcloth.

Returning to the tub, Ophir took the cloth from him. “Ask me anything. I may not answer, but don’t be afraid to ask.” He soaped up the washcloth and pointed to Chris’ foot.



Raising his leg from the water, Chris rested his heel in Ophir's palm. "How does a University professor afford all this? You drive a Bentley. Those are more expensive than a Rolls Royce, right?"

Ophir lathered Chris' leg. "I was once a slave, much as Two is. My Master was a generous man. We still own property in partnership."

"You're still friends."

Nodding, Ophir moved his hand up Chris' leg. "Friendship lasts longer than love."

"Love is a joke." Chris looked away. "People say it, but they don't really mean it."

The tension was back. Ophir's hand slid further up Chris' thigh.

Chris jerked away. "Um, sorry. The insides of my thighs are sensitive."

"Give me your other foot." Ophir scrubbed between each toe. "After I left Hector, I was comfortable, thanks to the real estate he bought for me and my job at the University, but far from wealthy.

"Then I got a call from the proverbial long lost relative, my grandmother's cousin. I didn't even know she was still alive. She is, and still sharp as a tack even though she must be over a hundred years old. She ran away from home when she was fifteen and danced in the theaters in Paris and Berlin for a while. Then she emigrated to the United States and was a silent movie actress. That was very scandalous back in the day, little better than being a prostitute. At least, that's how my family spoke of her. Talkies killed her career -- her accent was too exotic. After her show business career failed, she married well, several times.

"A couple years ago, she found out about me and asked me to dinner. She summoned me, really. I went to visit her, and the next thing I knew, there was a Bentley in my driveway. It's a bit showy for my taste, but she said, 'If the white sheep shun us, *Motek*, we black sheep will be our own little herd. We will take care of each other.' She has no children. Most of her friends have passed away. She wants to make sure her fortune doesn't fall into the hands of our family after the way they treated her, but she doesn't want to give it to just anyone either, so from time to time, she gives me an oil well, or an apartment building, or a sapphire that a Maharajah gave her when he proposed marriage. I wish she'd stop. It makes me feel as if she's paying for my visits, and I'd go to see her anyway."

"She must have led a wild life."

"A black sheep can't change the color of its wool in the eyes of our family, even though I suspect her real life wasn't nearly as wanton as everyone thinks. What else can she do but revel in her reputation?"

"Is it ever fun being the black sheep?"

Shaking his head, Ophir said, "No."

*When did I turn into such a braggart? Am I trying to impress you with my wealth, Boy? And why am I revealing so much about myself? You're too easy to talk to. You're dangerous.*

"The bath water is turning gray, Chris. I think it's time for you to get out." Ophir offered his hand.

With his hand before his cock, Chris rose. His skin glowed pink from the hot water. Water dripped down his lean thighs and through the hair on his calves. He seemed to

have resigned himself to Ophir's attentions, because he didn't reach for the towel when Ophir began to dry him off.

"Heated towels, too? I feel like I'm the guest of a maharajah."

Above a tuft of dark gold curls, Ophir knotted the towel around Chris' waist. He took Chris' hand and led him out of the bathroom.

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Two carried a plate into the guest room. "Lunch, Sir."

"Very good, Two. Turn down the bed."

Two set down the plate on the nightstand and reached for the bedspread.

Chris let go of Ophir's hand. "I don't need the deluxe treatment."

"Chris, I can see from your eyes that the hot bath made you drowsy. So climb into bed like a good boy." Ophir gave him a stern look.

Two folded back the linens and fluffed the pillow.

Grinning sheepishly at the stone-faced Two, Chris eased onto the bed.

Ophir sat on the mattress beside him and looked over the plate Two had set aside. “What did you bring our guest, Two?”

“Curried chicken salad, some cheese, and crackers, Sir. If Chris would prefer, I can make him a hamburger or a vegan stir fry,” Two said. Despite his unreadable expression, it was clear that Two hoped he wouldn’t be asked to prepare something else.

“Chicken salad is fine!” Chris said.

“That’s probably a wise choice. Two tries, but his cooking skills are sadly lacking. This chicken salad is about the only dish he’s mastered.”

Chris tried to reach for the plate.

Ophir sighed and shook his head. “Really, Chris. We’ve been through this in the bath. Just relax. I will feed you.”

Two made a slight noise. Ophir glared at him, but Two had wisely taken a submissive stance, his legs spread, his hands behind his back, his head bowed so far that Ophir couldn’t see the expression on his face. Turning back to the plate, Ophir scooped some chicken salad onto a cracker and held it up to Chris’ mouth.

Chris rolled his eyes a bit, but opened his mouth. As he bit down, the cracker shattered. Crumbs rolled down his smooth chest. He lifted his hand to brush it away. Ophir lightly grasped his wrist.

“You’ll get crumbs all over the bed if you do that.” Ophir let go of him. “Two, come lick the crumbs off Chris’ chest.”

Clearly pleased at the invitation, Two bounded onto the bed. He curled beside Chris and slowly lapped away the fallen crumbs.

Ophir readied another cracker. Chris watched Two lick between his pecs.

“Open your mouth,” Ophir told Chris.

Chris glanced at Ophir and opened his mouth, but his gaze quickly returned to Two when a tongue lapped across his nipple. “Oh. Wow.”

Grasping Two’s ear, Ophir pulled his slave off Chris’ chest. “I apologize for my boy. He gets a bit excited sometimes and forgets his manners. Shall I punish him?”

“For licking my nipple?”

“For licking it without your permission.”

“No! I mean, he can lick whatever he wants.”

Ophir released Two’s bright pink earlobe. “A reprieve, Two. You should thank Chris for his generosity.”

“Thank you, Chris.” Two immediately went back to sucking Chris’ nipple.

By the time the plate was empty, the towel around Chris' waist gaped open at his thighs, pushed aside by his hard-on.

Ophir sat with his back to the headboard and wrapped his arms around Chris. A clean soap scent wafted off the boy's neck. His fingers lightly traced Chris' forearm, following the meandering line of a blue vein up the slim but muscled arm.

Chris nuzzled against Ophir's shoulder.

"Good boy," Ophir murmured in Chris' ear. He pressed his lips to Chris' neck. "Two did a very good job of keeping you clean, didn't he? Don't you think he should be rewarded?" Ophir slipped a hand down to Chris' towel. He paused, giving Chris a chance to refuse. Hearing nothing, he eased the knot in the towel and pushed it aside.

Chris' hard-on pointed to his navel.

"Two, suck Chris' cock."

"Yes, Sir! May I?" Two asked Chris.

Chris' broad smile was enough of a yes.

Despite his enthusiasm, Two didn't take Chris' cock into his mouth. Instead, he rubbed the head against his face. Then he ran his tongue from the base to the head as if he had all day to spend on the blow job.

"Kiss the insides of his thighs," Ophir said.

Chris flinched.

“Calm down, Boy. Two will be very gentle, won’t you Two?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“Spread your legs for him, Chris. Bend your knees. Very good.” Ophir ran his hand down Chris’ chest. “Do you like nipple play?”

Turning his head, Chris seemed torn between which man he should pay attention to, the one kissing his neck or the one crouching between his legs. “Um. I guess. A little. Maybe.”

Ophir rolled his fingertip over Chris’ nipple. “Look at me, Boy.”

Two lifted his gaze to Ophir’s.

“Lick his balls, then work his cock, Two.” Ophir could feel the quick rise and fall of Chris’ chest. He crushed his lips to Chris’ neck while he pinched the boy’s nipple. Out of the corner of his eye, he watched Two. Two lifted his hand and made a thrusting motion with it, his eyebrow raised. Ophir nodded. Two spit on his fingers. In a swift motion, Two deep-throated Chris and slid his fingers into Chris’ ass.

Chris bucked as he yelped. He pulled away from Ophir’s kiss. “Oh God. Oh God.”

“What do you want, Boy? All you have to do is ask.” Ophir wished he’d held Chris

between his legs so that the boy would thrash against his rising hard-on.

“Do that to my nipple again. Only... Harder. And have him use another finger or two to fuck my ass.” Chris pulled his knees to his chest. “Really hard.”

Lips stretched in a tight smile, Ophir leaned away from Chris. Two paused with his mouth over Chris’ cock.

“Say please,” Ophir murmured to Chris.

“Please. Please, Sir.”

It was the sweetest sound to Ophir’s ears. Ophir nodded to Two. Two continued his assault on Chris’ hole with three fingers. His other hand gripped Chris’ cock and pumped as his mouth slid over the shaft.

Pinching hard on Chris’ nipple, Ophir plunged his tongue into the boy’s mouth.

Chris twisted as his body jerked. He clutched the sheets in tight fists.

Two masterfully refused to gag on the cock ramming down his throat.

Spent, Chris slowly relaxed.

Two savored the last drops of come he milked from Chris. Reluctantly, he obeyed Ophir’s dismissal.



Ophir released Chris from his arms and slid off the bed. “Rest. We can talk when you wake up.”

\*\*\*

The French doors in Ophir’s formal dining room overlooked the Moorish garden that filled the adjacent lot. Little white lights glowed from the topiary trees. The doors were usually left open, but fog was rolling off the ocean and chilling the autumn evening.

A long table dominated the dimly lit dining room. Ophir sat at one end; Chris all the way at the other. That was the seating arrangement normally used, even when a dear friend like Hector joined Ophir for dinner, but he wished he’d had Number One seat Chris closer. There was no intimacy with that much space between them. He could have ordered One to move Chris, but the idea that One might raise an eyebrow or somehow manage to convey his feelings on the subject was enough to stop Ophir from saying anything.

*You’re afraid that your slaves will laugh at you. Worse, you’re afraid they’ll see how this boy fascinates you.*

The music for the evening was classical guitar. The wine was Spanish. The food, however...

Ophir looked at the dish One placed before him. “Are those French Fries?”

One, a tall, muscular man with deep black skin, winced. “Patate frite, Sir. But yes, French fries. The stuff on top is lamb with olives and lemons. Two swears that’s the way it’s served in Morocco.”

Despite his formidable muscles, every move One made was graceful perfection.

Awed by One's powerful presence, Chris meekly thanked him when dinner was set on the table. He cast glances at One's uncut cock, which hung invitingly at eye level.

While Ophir didn't care if Chris spoke to One elsewhere, he wasn't about to let his guest upset the decorum of his evening meal by conversing with a slave. Ophir leaned over the table, although he was too far away from Chris to whisper. "This is a little game Two plays with me. He's trying to determine my ethnicity through food." He turned to One. "Tell Two I wish to speak with him."

"Yes, Sir."

Before the door leading to the kitchen stopped swinging, One returned to the dining room followed by Two.

In a concession to the house rules on nudity, Two wore a large apron. He wiped his hands on the cloth, revealing his cock. "Sir?"

"While I appreciate this culinary tour of Northern Africa you've decided to take us on, in the future, I expect you to adjust the recipes to my diet regime. No fried foods, Boy."

"I'm sorry, Sir. I thought you'd appreciate the authentic touch."

Ophir dropped his cloth napkin into his lap. He lifted a fork to his mouth and inhaled deeply. "Interesting. Although I think you should have used preserved lemons instead of fresh."

“Is that so, Sir?” Two bit his lips to hide his mischievous smile.

As he set down his fork, Ophir shrugged. “I couldn’t say for certain. I’ve never been to Tangiers. You’re dismissed, Two.”

Shoulders slumped, Two slunk off to the kitchen.

One remained in the dining room. Hands clasped behind his back, he stood near the wall.

Ophir winked at Chris. “Poor boy. Two has guessed the right country several times, but doesn’t realize it. I wonder sometimes if he’s ever considered that it’s possible to live, say, in the United States, and never have visited Boston, or Miami, or Seattle.”

As he caught on, Chris laughed quietly. “Why is it such a secret?”

Ophir ignored the question. “Maybe he’ll realize I’m playing a game, too. Maybe he won’t. He has seven more months to figure it out.”

“What happens after seven months, Sir?” Chris asked.

“One will leave us at the end of his contract, and Two will become my new Number One. Traditionally, cooking falls under Number Two’s duties, and I doubt this Two will miss the chore. I certainly won’t miss his more adventurous dishes.” Ophir gave his plate a disdainful glance.

“So what does One do?” Chris glanced at One, as if inviting him to answer. One,

however, stood mute as he'd been trained to.

"He runs my household and manages the other boys," Ophir said.

"You said boys. Are there more in your harem that I haven't met? Is someone on vacation?"

Laughing, Ophir reached for his wine glass. "Slaves don't get vacation. Normally, there are three boys serving me. The last Number Three didn't work out. Nor did the one before him. It's easier on all of us to be understaffed rather than have a boy who causes strife. As One is responsible for the boys under him, when they fail, he's also punished. Two is similarly responsible for Three. You can see why it's in their best interests to see to it that their fellow slaves are properly trained and fit for service. One and Two requested that the last Three be sent away. I'd already reached that conclusion, but it makes matters much simpler if everyone under my roof is of the same mind. My boys obey me, but I can't make them agree with my decisions."

"So..." Chris played with his silverware. "So if you don't find a Number Three before One leaves, then Number Two will be your only slave. Or will One stay until you have a replacement?" He glanced at One again. "I'm sorry, but I feel totally unPC calling you a slave because you're black. Doesn't it bother you?" he asked One.

Barely restraining the urge to correct Chris for talking to One, Ophir cleared his throat.

"One will leave the day his contract ends, no matter what the staff situation is. It won't be his concern anymore. I'm very strict about that. No exceptions, ever. And if it bothers One to be my slave, he can leave at any time. I doubt he will. He entered my service only because he wanted to learn how to be a Master. When he leaves here, he'll have no trouble finding boys to serve him. Slave is only an insulting term if you let it demean you. Look at One. Does he seem diminished to you?"

Chris took a long look at One. "No. I guess not. But it still feels wrong to use that word."

“Because of the color of his skin?”

“Yes.”

“You’re an American. Where I come from, slavery is part of everyone’s past. Skin color had nothing to do with it.”

Chris grinned. “And where might that be, Sir?”

Ophir took another bite of his food. He raised his napkin to his mouth and gently spit out the mouthful. “One, tell Two I want a word with him.”

Two reappeared in the dining room. “Sir?”

“Two, you really are the worst cook. Did you taste this before you served it?”

“I did, Sir, but I don’t know what it’s supposed to taste like.” Two pouted.

“No matter what the cuisine, edible is the desired result, Boy.” Ophir pushed his plate back. “Thank goodness your other talents more than make up for your cooking.” He winked at Two, who smiled in relief before hastily squelching the grin. “Take this away and try to come up with something we can eat.”

“Can I help?” Chris asked. “I mean, I like to cook. I used to cook all the time at home.” His voice caught. The corners of his eyes glistened.

One picked up Ophir's plate. "If you follow me, Chris, we will show you where everything is in the kitchen. Two will be your sous chef."

Chris bolted after One.

Ophir watched the kitchen door swing until it finally closed. He exhaled slowly as he silently cursed all mothers and fathers who threw away their gay children.

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A little over an hour later, Chris was seated at the dining table across from Ophir, as before. One stood in attention near the wall, moving only to pour wine.

Ophir set his knife and fork on his plate. "Excellent dinner, Chris."

Smiling, Chris bowed his head. "It was quick, at least."

"That's faint praise for a fine meal, Boy. Two always overcooks the salmon." Ophir frowned slightly. "I hope Two was gracious about dinner."

"Oh, he was. He even offered to suck me off while I was cooking."

Ophir leaned back in his chair. "I'm glad to hear it. My boys know I don't tolerate jealousy. It can destroy everything." His fingers slid along the stem of his wine glass.

*Why couldn't Hector see it? Every boy leaves him for the same reason. If he'd only learned to control it instead of letting the jealousy control him, I'd probably still be with him.*

"I don't see how you can stop it. I mean, it's natural, isn't it? And the more slaves you have, the harder they have to compete for your attention." Chris shot a glance at One, who stood as before, waiting silently to serve them. "I'll bet there's all kind of stuff going on behind the scenes that you don't see."

"I see everything."

Chris put his elbows on the table. "Or at least you make them think that you do."

Enjoying the conversation far more than he'd expected to, Ophir grinned. Chris was a bright boy, something Ophir never could resist. "During their first months here, most slaves seem to feel the same way. After a few harsh punishments, they learn not to make that mistake again."

Lifting his chin, Chris looked Ophir in the eye. "What does punishment mean, exactly?"

"It depends on the boy. Everyone has a weak spot; I find it and use it against him. One is very proud. Being shackled to my Saint Andrew's cross and whipped only brings out his stoic side. He'll endure anything that way, but he crumbles when the punishment includes humiliation. Order Two to kneel alone in a room, and he'll be crying piteously before the hour is out. Of course, pain is the most efficient method. It's a rare week that one of my boys isn't sniffing as he goes about his duties."

Laughing, Chris said, "I'm sure there are a couple students in your poetry class that you'd love to whip. Like that brunet who won't ever shut up."

Grinning, Ophir nodded. “Sadly, the school administration won’t allow it. But there are none I’d enjoy having in my dungeon more than you.”

Chris slammed back in his chair, his eyes wide.

“You admitted that you found me attractive, Chris. I’m returning the compliment.”

Letting out a low whistle, Chris shook his head. “If someone had told me this morning that a man would say he wanted to whip me, and that he meant that in a good way, I wouldn’t have believed it.”

“Don’t worry. I only whip my slaves.”

*He’s so adorably flustered.*

A quick smile played across Ophir’s full lips as Chris fidgeted. “I think a little entertainment is in order. One, tell Two to join us in the living room.”

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Ophir sat in the middle of one of the black leather couches in the living room and stretched his arm over the back. Behind him, the lights made halos on the raised cover of the grand piano. The vaulted arches of the foyer ceiling ended at the edge of the room, making way for one graceful curve high overhead. A few club chairs were paired off around the room, some facing the huge fireplace, others creating private spaces.

One handed Ophir a highball glass of whiskey.



“Two, the room is a bit chilly this evening. Turn on the fireplace,” Ophir said.

At the turn of a switch, tall flames leapt to life under the logs in the huge fireplace.

Ophir wondered briefly what he’d have his boys do, but then decided to simply let the scene unfold. “Stand facing each other, boys. Kiss, but only one hand can touch the other boy, and only on his arm or face.”

Two had to reach up to touch One’s cheek. One squeezed Two’s biceps as he bowed his head for a kiss. Between them, their cocks rose. As their kisses grew more intense, Two stumbled closer to One. Their hard-ons bumped.

“No frottage, Two,” Ophir warned him.

Two flashed a guilty smile at Ophir before turning back to kiss One.

Ophir was surprised to see Chris still hovering at the edge of the room. Catching Chris’ eye, he crooked a finger. “Come now, I promised entertainment. Unless you’d prefer to do something else?”

Dragging his feet, Chris came a few steps closer. “You’re just going to watch them, Sir? Couldn’t I suck your cock or something?” Chris’ face went bright red and he looked away.

“Chris, look at me. I know that I told you that you only had to ask, and you’d be given what you want, but I have to draw the line at this request. I only have sex with my slaves.”

“I’m sorry.”

“For what? Flattering me? Like anyone else, I enjoy being desired. And I’ll admit that I’ve been daydreaming about fucking your mouth, among other things. So the attraction is mutual, but that’s as far as it will go. But why don’t you join the boys? I don’t often allow them to play with others. I’m sure One is very sorry he wasn’t in your bedroom earlier. You haven’t been able to keep your eyes off him all evening. Kiss him.”

One extended his hand to Chris. Chris stepped closer to the boys.

“Make Chris feel welcome,” Ophir ordered.

The tight T-shirt and clinging pair of jersey shorts one of the boys had lent to Chris while his clothes were being laundered dropped to the floor. The boys knelt before the fireplace to kiss and caress. Every time Chris tried to stroke their cocks though, the others gently but firmly moved his hand away.

“One, you may suck his cock now. Two, put that talented tongue to work on One’s ass.”

It was a pleasing tableau. Ophir was tempted to stroke his cock through his pants as he watched but didn’t. One was on his hands and knees, deep-throating Chris’ cock while Two pushed his face between One’s muscular butt cheeks. Chris ran his hand over One’s shaved head as he leaned over to watch Two tongue-fuck One. Not sure of Chris’ self-control, however, Ophir decided to mix things up. He didn’t want his guest to come too soon. He enjoyed watching the flex of Chris’ taut ass as he rocked forward into One’s mouth.

“Chris, do you prefer to top or bottom?” Ophir asked.

“Huh?” Chris’ glazed eyes tore away from scene before him to focus on Ophir. “Either. I’m versatile.”

Two sat back on his heels. “Oh man! A top! Me first!”

Chris’ cock was left wet and dangling in mid-air as One spun around and roughly smacked Two’s ass.

“Wait for Sir’s orders, you little slut. You don’t get to choose.”

While Ophir was sure some of One’s fury was personal, the lesson had to be taught, so he allowed One to continue spanking Two’s ass until Two’s bottom was dark pink. He waited for sobbed apologies to be offered to One, himself, and Chris before telling One that the punishment was sufficient. One landed a last, hard smack before letting Two go. Ophir reminded himself to speak to One about that later.

Cock hard, Chris watched the spanking with wide eyes.

“You see, Chris, selfishness isn’t tolerated. Two is lucky I’m in a generous mood. Normally, he’d be bound to a bench by now, and I’d be wielding a cane on him.”

Two whimpered.

“I trust you’ll remember your place, Two?”

Two nodded hard.

“See that you do. I’d hate to have to bruise that bottom while we have a guest in the house. It reflects poorly on your training.”

Two slunk back.

“Perhaps a couple nights sleeping in the cage will improve your manners.”

Two gulped. “Thank you, Sir. I’ll strive to do better.”

“I’m sure you will.” Ophir caught Chris’ eye. “I’m sorry you had to see that. Two gets a bit excited sometimes and forgets himself. But we’re working on that, aren’t we, Boy?”

“Yes, Sir,” Two mumbled.

“Well, enough of that. I believe we were sorting out who gets to do what. Chris, would you like to fuck One?”

“Yeah, sure. If he wants me to.”

Ophir dismissed that with a wave of his hand. “He’s a slave. What he wants is irrelevant. I’d like to watch you fuck him, but you’re the guest, so I’m giving you a choice. On his back, or on his knees?”

“On his back. I like to look at a guy’s face.”

One happily rolled onto his back and lifted his legs to Chris' shoulders.

"Two, put a condom on our guest."

Two gathered lube and condoms from a table drawer near the fireplace. He sniffled a little as he rolled a condom over Chris' cock.

"Come kneel by me, Two. Chris, go ahead."

Two crawled over to Ophir and knelt at his feet. Ophir put his hand on Two's head and slowly stroked Two's short blond hair. Watching Chris work his cock into One's ass, he took a sip of his whiskey. Then he bent down near Two's ear. "I will be watching you very closely, Boy." The warning had the desired effect on Two, who immediately dropped to the floor with his forehead pressed to the toe of Ophir's shoe. The boy shuddered. Ophir balanced his drink on Two's back and turned his attention back to Chris and One.

One's hand clenched and unclenched at his side. The smooth rhythm of Chris' thighs and hips showed he was in no hurry to come, a common fault among young men. Chris braced his arms near One's shoulders and leaned close as if for a kiss. In silhouette before the fire, they were beautiful together.

Ophir lifted his glass from Two's back. A wet circle of condensation marked the spot where it had been.

"Now that you've had some time to think, Boy, you may join the others. I want you to rim Chris, and if he's willing, you may fuck him. However, don't even think of coming."

"No, Sir."

Ophir smacked Two's butt. "Run along and play then."

"Thank you, Sir."

Subdued, Two crept over to the other boys. His tongue delved into Chris' hole. Chris pushed deep into One and held still for a moment, then set back into rhythm. His kisses moved to One's dark nipples.

No longer able to ignore his cock, Ophir unzipped his pants and drew out his hard-on.

*It's just because he's forbidden fruit. It's only because he's new. But oh, he'd look so sweet kneeling in front of me, his hands tied behind his back, those pink lips around my cock, his eyes closed as if in prayer.*

One had turned over so that he was on his hands and knees. Chris leaned back, his head turned so that he could kiss Two as Two's cock poked at his ass.

"One, make sure our guest comes first."

"Yes, Sir."

The scent of boy sweat and sex carried on the waves of heat from the fireplace. Chris groaned as Two finally gripped his ass cheeks and worked a long, thin cock into him. One shoved back on Chris' cock. Ophir had enjoyed One's power bottom act enough times that he didn't have to imagine how it felt to Chris. Despite his protests that he hated to top, Two seemed to be trying hard to make sure Chris enjoyed what he was doing.

Chris tilted his head back. Then he bowed his head, a picture of concentration.

“Are you close, Chris?” Ophir asked.

“Mmm. Yeah.”

“Try to hold back.” Stroking faster, Ophir leaned back on the couch as he jerked off. He lifted his arm over his head.

*You could stand over him and shove your cock into his mouth. You made your silly rule about not fucking boys you don't own, so you can break it if you want to. He'd probably love to have cocks filling him everywhere.*

Chris panted in short gasps.

“Pound his ass, Two.”

Two shoved on Chris' shoulder until Chris' chest pressed to One's back. Their sweat-slicked skin seemed to meld together. Two grasped Chris' hips and banged Chris with choppy, hard strokes. Pinned under Chris, One rode Chris' cock as best he could.

“Do you want to come, Chris?” Ophir asked.

“Yeah.” Chris' eyes squeezed shut. “Yeah.”

“Are you close?”

Chris nodded.

“Can you feel the come rising up inside you?”

Whimpering, Chris nodded harder.

Ophir slowed the strokes on his own cock. The only thing sweeter than a boy fighting the urge to come was a boy surrendering control over his cock. Timing was everything. If Ophir gave the command too late, Chris wouldn't believe he'd given up control. But the agony of holding back was important, too.

*You aren't his Master.*

“Come, Chris. Come now.”

A deep groan welled up from inside Chris and spilled out as he shoved deep into One's ass. For a moment he held still, his face contorted. Then he thrust again in a slow rhythm, his urgency gone.

After Chris sprawled on the floor, Ophir smiled at One and Two. Gripping the base of his cock, he nodded. One and Two hurried over to kneel at his feet. Taking turns as they'd been taught, the two slaves licked and sucked Ophir's cock, pausing only to share a kiss.

Across the room, Chris sat with his knees drawn to his chest. His solemn eyes were sad



again. Ophir crooked a finger at him. He shrugged.

“Boy, get over here now. I need someone to kiss.”

*Breaking your own rules, you old softie.*

But the happiness radiating from Chris’ face as he climbed onto the couch next to Ophir was enough to quiet that grumbling internal voice.

Ophir held Chris’ face between his hands. His hand slid around the back of Chris’ head. Their gazes locked, and Ophir had the uncomfortable feeling that for the first time in years, someone was taking his measure. For a moment, he was tempted to send One and Two away. Of all the ludicrous ideas, he wanted to make out with Chris for hours without release. He wanted to run his hands over the boy’s skin and grind against him until they were both sweaty and frustrated.

*Hector used to do that to you.*

He plunged his tongue into Chris’ mouth. His slaves didn’t have to work long for their reward as he erupted over their faces.

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“Sir, may I speak with you?” One asked from the doorway of Ophir’s office.

Unlike the rest of the house, Ophir’s office had the distinct style of a headmaster’s office at an English boarding school. A large, faded Persian rug covered most of the wood floor. Behind the solid teak desk were built-in bookshelves that reached the ceiling. In the far

corner was a ladder for reaching the highest shelves. Hanging from the shelves directly behind Ophir was an old cricket bat.

Ophir closed the computer file he was working on and leaned back in his chair. "Come in."

One closed the door and crossed the room.

Ophir watched him with a bit of sadness. Boys always seemed to reach a state of perfection just as their term of service came to an end.

"Speak."

"I know it's not my place, Sir, but are you going to make Chris your Number Three?"

"You're right, it isn't your place."

Admonished, One bowed his head. "Chris is about to leave. He says it's not right to accept your hospitality any longer."

"Did he ask you to speak with me?"

"No, Sir. He handed back the clothes we lent to him and said it was time to move on. He said something about guests and fish stinking after three days. I convinced him that it would be rude to leave without thanking you for taking him in, so he's waiting in the hallway. If you're going to act, you have to do it now."

“Boy.”

Despite the warning, One blurted, “Two won’t stay after I leave if there isn’t another boy to help out. I can’t bear the thought of you being alone, Sir. You have to find a Number Three, and soon.”

“Silence!” Ophir prided himself on the evenness of his temper. He rarely raised his voice, because he didn’t have to. His boys were well trained. They respected him, but they feared him, too, as boys should. “Do you think I can’t live without slaves?”

The silky tone clearly didn’t fool One into thinking his Sir had forgiven his outburst. Still, he pressed on. “I’m sure you can, Sir. Besides, no matter how many boys you have in your harem, you’ll still be lonely.”

Ophir sucked in a breath. Had One gone insane? Didn’t he realize how much trouble he was in already?

Ophir tapped his finger on his desktop. “I never should have allowed you to study psychology.” That little attempt at humor did nothing to quell the uneasy feeling that One was right. He also hated admitting that One seemed to read his mind. He had been thinking of making an offer to Chris. “If you weren’t in a rush to find a new Number Three, what would your impression be of Chris?”

“He’s only been here three days, Sir. However, he didn’t seem too freaked out over our lifestyle, although he’s asked a few respectful questions. He gets a hard-on watching Two and me do our chores. He doesn’t exactly hide that he’s aroused by our nudity, but he doesn’t get stupid about it either. He offered to fold laundry and even did a second load without being asked. When Two made him refold all the towels, he didn’t ask why, he just did as he was told. It usually takes a couple months, and a few punishments, to get a boy to that stage. He doesn’t talk a lot, but he’s friendly enough when we start a conversation. He’s a natural submissive. And he’s completely in awe of you.”

“You want him to join us here?”

“I can’t explain it, Sir, but it already feels as if he has. He’s a good fit with the rest of us.”

“And it doesn’t hurt that he’s hot.”

One fought down a smile. “I’ve enjoyed playing with him.”

*Haven’t we all?*

Emboldened, One continued, “Plenty of boys have bodies to die for, Sir. And as I’ve watched the turnover in boys serving as your Number Three, I’ve come to appreciate a certain quality beyond looks.”

“What would that quality be?”

Spreading his hands, One shrugged. “I can’t put it in words, Sir. I just know it when I see it, and Chris has it. He will make an excellent Number One for you some day, Sir. Maybe the best ever.”

“You’re rushing things a bit.”

“I know what it takes to serve in this position, Sir. It does no good to bring a boy into your harem if all he’ll ever be is a decent Number Three. A boy has to have the qualities to rise to Number One, or else you’re wasting your time.”

“You’re being rather blunt tonight, One.”

“It’s my duty to manage your household, Sir.”

“Just doing your job?”

“With all due respect and love, Sir.”

*Love. Why do they always bring love into it?* Ophir frowned. “Show him in.”

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One opened the office door. “Sir will see you now.”

Chris wore his only clothes. He came into the room, but didn’t speak. Ophir appreciated that he waited for permission. Perhaps One was right about the boy. He certainly hoped so.

“One, I believe we have a matter of discipline to address first. Bend over the desk.”

The punishment would serve two purposes. One hated to be punished in front of other boys. He needed the reminder that his position didn’t protect him from humiliation. But it would also give Ophir a chance to observe Chris’ reaction.

Leaning over the desk, One stoically braced for the coming indignity.

Eyes wide, Chris watched Ophir take down the cricket bat that hung behind his desk.

Ophir walked around the desk. He put a hand on One's bare buttock and squeezed. "Give me the count."

While the sound of the first crack of the bat against One's bottom still hung in the air, One grunted, "For speaking out of turn. One, Sir." The bat slammed against his butt again, knocking the air out of One's lungs.

The paddling continued without pause until the count reached thirty. As usual, One refused to scream or plead for mercy, but his eyes were red-rimmed.

Ophir unzipped his pants and drew out his cock. Although he rarely punished his boys in his office, he had condoms and lube at hand. He grasped One's butt cheeks. They were nicely warm.

One gasped as Ophir shoved into him. He whimpered as Ophir pulled out and slammed back into him again. Slowly, his ass yielded to the assault.

Punishment and forgiveness, that's what every boy craved deep down, and Ophir believed in giving it to them. He did not, however, believe in allowing them to enjoy it too much. So when One moaned and lifted his ass, Ophir pulled out of his ass. One dared to try thrusting back on his Master's cock and take it in again. Ophir slapped his butt as a warning. One settled back onto the desk, breathing hard.

"Thank you, Sir. I will try to do better."

Before returning to his chair behind the desk, Ophir peeled the condom off his cock and zipped his pants. Only then did he turn his attention to Chris.

Through the punishment and fucking, Chris had been silent. Ophir wouldn't have been surprised if the boy had bolted from the room and run for his life. A few did when they witnessed their first punishment. Instead, he was pleased to see Chris standing exactly where he'd been left. Even more promising, there was a distinct bulge in the front of Chris' baggy jeans.

Ophir gestured to a chair before his desk. "Sit. We have matters to discuss."

Chris couldn't seem to stop his gaze from flitting to One's butt. It was at eye level when he sat in the chair. One hadn't moved.

"This is the life of a slave in my harem. I have strict rules. When a boy disobeys, he's punished. Once he agrees to serve me, he's not a pet; he isn't a lover; he's a slave. My word is law. If a slave doesn't like it, he can leave. In fact, I may insist on it. I don't care about a slave's feelings. I don't care about what a slave wants or ask for his opinion."

One dared to roll his eyes, a bit of mutiny quickly suppressed by Ophir's harsh glare.

Chris tore his gaze away from One's butt long enough to glance at Ophir, but as soon as their eyes met, he glanced down.

"It's not an easy life. Slaves have no privacy. They have no rights. They work hard. Their bodies and minds are pushed to limits and beyond. What I demand, they give, or they leave. Rarely, they are rewarded. It's not all orgies and quiet dinners with the Master. Slaves are invisible, silent, and obedient."

Ophir slapped his hand on the desk. "Boy! Is it the smell of One's freshly fucked ass so close to your nose, or the sight of his paddled butt that's distracting you? Do you need help focusing?"

Bewildered, Chris looked around the room as if searching for help, but he found none.

"Get your mind off your cock and concentrate on what I'm telling you, because I will not repeat anything. Optimally, my staff is three boys. Finding the right boy to fill the lowest position has been unusually difficult this year. Several have been dismissed. One feels that you would be a good addition to the household. I agree. Are you interested in hearing my terms of service?"

Chris' mouth opened. He waited a long time before saying, "Yes, Sir."

If he'd dared, One would have smiled at Chris' answer.

"This is non-negotiable. What I say is the final word in all matters. Don't forget that. If you agree to serve, you'll be assigned chores. If you refuse to do them, or don't do them to my satisfaction, you will be punished much more harshly than One was just now. If at any time I am displeased with your service, I will put you out on the curb with nothing more than you have on your back right now. However, if you serve me well, at the end of three years, you will leave here with a thousand dollars and more importantly, a college degree. Part of your education will include learning the role of a submissive house slave. The quality of my training is well known, and many of my boys find their skills in high demand by other Masters when they leave, should they decide to remain in the lifestyle.

"I will not lie to you. I am a harsh task master, as are my other slaves, who have my permission to correct. More often than not, it will be them, not me, who administers your harshest punishments. You will crawl into your cage some nights so sore that you won't be able to sleep. You will become well acquainted with pain. But I will never hurt you without reason. You will be allowed to question punishment if you feel that it is unfair or that I don't have all the facts.



"If you agree to join my household, your body is mine to use as I see fit. The other slaves are allowed to use you for their pleasure too, but unless I give you explicit permission, you are never to have sex with anyone outside the house. That includes guests at my parties. Condoms will be used, always. If you bareback, you'll be thrown out of here so fast that you won't have time to pull on clothes.

"Do you have any questions?"

"How will I earn a college degree, Sir? I can't afford tuition."

A terse smile stole over Ophir's lips. It was interesting, always, to hear what part of the offer a boy focused on. It was a window into their minds.

"I will pay your tuition."

Sucking in a breath, Chris raised his head. His eyes met Ophir's. "That's too much, Sir."

"You would hand over your freedom and body for less?"

"It'll be two years before I graduate. I know what tuition costs per semester. Would you spend that much just for a clean bathroom and a blowjob?"

Perhaps expecting to hear a harsh rebuke, One winced.

"I would consider the money well-spent," Ophir said gently.

“But if I screw up, it’s over.”

“Your tuition for the semester will be paid, and there’s no taking that back. So you’d at least leave here better off than you were on Friday.”

One’s head jerked up.

The puzzled look on his face gave Ophir pause. Ophir pursed his lips together, but a slow smile he couldn’t control spread over them. He chuckled. “I have no idea how I lost control of this conversation, Boy. I’m supposed to be discouraging you from accepting my offer, not trying to talk you into it.”

A sparkle of mischief not seen before was in Chris’ eye. “Is that so, Sir?”

“That’s my offer. Think it over.”

Chris rose from the desk. He pulled his T-shirt over his head, revealing a thin but muscled torso. He folded the shirt and set it down on the chair behind him. His jeans, shoes, socks, and underwear went onto the pile.

“At your service, Sir.” Chris inexpertly adopted the posture of a servant, with his eyes down and his hands behind his back.

Quickly made decisions were usually poorly made ones, but Ophir had no desire to point that out to his new prize.

“Well then. From now on, Boy, when you’re in this house, you’re Number Three.” Ophir

patted One on the head. “One, bring the student desk to the center of the room.”

One moved the wooden chairs against the back wall. From a corner, he dragged a heavy student desk, leaving trails in the nap of the Persian rug.

“Three, sit.”

Three sat in the chair.

“One, shackle his ankles to the legs of the desk.”

Bewildered at the speed of everything happening around him, Three didn’t seem to know where to look.

Ophir paced over to the desk as One secured Three’s ankles. “I believe, Boy, that you still owe me an essay on Yeats.” He slapped a composition book and a pen onto the small desk before Three. Then he leaned against his desk and stroked the cricket bat still lying on the desktop. “I will grade for grammar and spelling as well as content. You must score at least a B. Not a B minus. We take academic work very seriously in this household, and shoddy schoolwork is severely punished.” He rose. “You have two hours. Make the most of it. Come, One.”

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As soon as the office door closed, One threw his arms around Ophir’s neck. “Thank you, Sir. Although I think I’m scandalized. You’ve been flirting with him all weekend.”

“I do not flirt.”

Eyebrows raised, lips pursed, One didn't have to say a word to show he didn't believe Ophir for a second.

Trying to escape from the embrace, Ophir glowered. "Watch it, Boy."

One kissed Ophir's cheek before letting go. "Your humble servant apologizes."

"Humble?" Ophir snorted. "I can see that discipline in this house has been slipping if you feel you can get away with talking to me like that. You still have seven months of service to endure before you become Master Keith. Until then, you are--"

"But a lowly slave boy. I understand, Sir." One mockingly bowed to Ophir.

"You are an impertinent slave boy. Starting tomorrow, the tears are going to flow." Ophir headed down the hallway, but stopped and turned back to One. "You will sleep in my bed tonight." With a sharp nod, he headed upstairs, pretending to miss the spectacle of Number One doing a small, but dignified, victory dance.

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Ophir would never admit it, but in the weeks since Three had joined the household, he looked forward to coming home every day after classes. No one was in the foyer to greet him, but that wasn't unusual. His slaves were scheduled for their study time at that hour.

He headed for his office, but paused at the door. The slave quarters were right down the hallway. He had every right to check on them.

When he opened the door to the quarters the boys shared, One and Two jumped up from their desks. Three, however, was not at his desk. Of course, he had no classes to study for, yet. Slightly embarrassed that he'd forgotten that, what could he do to hide the fact that he'd wanted to see his new slave?

Inspection. That was the ticket. More than a little amused at himself, Ophir paced the room like his old military commander had when he inspected the barracks: hands behind his back, a scowl on his face.

"It smells like a locker room in here."

"Sorry, Sir. We'll air it out."

"See that you do." Ophir walked around the cage where Three slept. The boy had earned a pillow and a blanket. That was a good sign.

He fished a quarter out of his pocket and bounced it on Two's pallet. The sheets and cover were tight. "Very good, Two. I'm glad to see you haven't gotten sloppy just because I rarely come here."

Two bowed his head, but Ophir saw the relieved grin.

"How are your grades, One?"

"Straight As, Sir. I will graduate Summa Cum Laude."

“Of course you will.” There was nothing more to say. “Carry on, Boys.” Ophir left the room, feeling a bit sheepish. But where was Three? Refusing to let the opinions of his slaves stop him from doing what he pleased, he decided to search the last few rooms on the first floor.

His office was empty, as was the dining room. That only left the kitchen, unless Three was upstairs. Ophir decided to draw the line of his foolishness at the foot of the stairs. If he didn’t see Three downstairs, he’d stop searching. His last stop was the kitchen.

When he’d remodeled the house, Ophir had knocked out a wall between a small bedroom and the kitchen, doubling its size. At the time, his Number Two had been a student at a cooking academy, and his Number One an interior designer. Between them, they’d designed a gourmet’s dream kitchen worthy of a magazine spread. The cabinets were solid oak, the countertops granite, the appliances top of the line. In a bay window that overlooked the garden, there was a small table. Next to the table was a small desk. Three stood before the desk, his hand on the phone.

It happened every time Ophir saw Three. It was as if everything inside him welled up. He could barely control the grin that came to his face, or light that came to his eyes.

*Oh, you beautiful boy. You’re mine.*

Three’s head bowed and a deep sob welled out of him.

“Boy!”

Three spun around. His mouth hung open. His lips were deeply colored and he huffed, as if holding back tears.

Ophir rushed to caress Three’s face. “What’s wrong? Were One or Two too harsh with

you?”

Three shook his head.

“You’re not leaving, are you? Are you unhappy here?”

Shocked, Three found his voice. “No, Sir. I wouldn’t think of leaving.” He sniffled. “Can I get something for you, Sir?”

Realizing that Three wanted time to collect himself in private, Ophir grudgingly decided to give him some space. “Bring me a glass of lemonade, no ice. I’ll be in my office.”

Three nodded. He went to the far side of the granite-topped island in the center of the room and opened the cabinet.

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Three slipped quietly into the office. He put a coaster on Ophir’s desk and set down a tall glass full of lemonade. There was a sprig of mint and a raspberry floating on top. That the boy took pains to pay attention to such details while clearly upset was interesting.

As Three turned to leave, Ophir said, “Stop.” There was only so much space Ophir was willing to give a boy, and Three was at the end of that tether.

Three turned and adopted his submissive stance. Two weeks of training under One and Two showed already.

“Is there some reason why you’re sniveling?” The boy wasn’t really sniveling, but Ophir was still trying to find Three’s buttons. Until he knew the boy’s weaknesses, he wouldn’t feel comfortable. No boy was that perfect, not right from the start.

“I’m sorry, Sir. One told me that I could use the phone.”

“That wasn’t the question, boy.” Ophir rose from his desk and walked around Three, knowing that such scrutiny made boys uneasy. Across Three’s pert butt were several faint marks from a cane. One or Two had found some fault with him, obviously. Enough to punish the boy, but not severely. Still, that slight evidence was proof that the boy had some faults.

Three sighed heavily, as if he realized there was no way he could avoid telling Ophir the whole truth. “I realized that if there was an emergency, my cell phone was the only way my parents could get in touch with me, but it was stolen along with the rest of my backpack. So I thought, just in case, that I should let them know where they could reach me.” Three’s jaw clenched. “My mistake.”

Ophir put his hand on Three’s arm.

It was the undoing of Three. “For nineteen years, five months, and four days, they said they loved me. The next second, they didn’t. How can anyone just turn it on and off like that? How come I still love them? It’s like they didn’t ever really love me, you know. They loved their closeted son. Or they were lying the whole time and got to admit it when I came out to them. Dad told me to get AIDS and die.”

Fuming, Ophir clasped Three’s shoulders and looked into his eyes. “Your dad is an ass.”

Three’s laugh was so rueful that made Ophir’s heart ache. “Thank you for listening, Sir. I’ll be all right now.” He wiped his eyes with the back of his hand.



Ophir could have let him go. He could have pretended that Three was all right, but the boy's eyes told a different tale. A rush of longing filled Ophir's heart, followed quickly by a surge of anger.

"No one hurts my boy. Not without my permission."

Ophir knew where those words came from. He sounded just like Hector. Well, Hector had been an amazing Master, the best ever. And in this, Ophir completely agreed with him.

Three tried to step back.

"Boy, I didn't give you permission to leave."

"I'll get over it, Sir. I promise."

The hell he would. That poison would seep into his mind and heart and make him believe he was worthless unless Ophir acted fast with a remedy.

Ophir brushed his lips against Three's mouth, then worked his tongue past the trembling lips. He swore he could taste Three's sorrow. He tried to sweep it away, replacing it with something else. Under his hold, tension slowly eased from Three's muscles. Words could lie but the body always told the truth.

"I want you in my bed right now, Boy." Ophir released Three.

Three hesitated for the briefest of moments before running from the room. Ophir listened to him bound upstairs.

“Well, Hector, what would you do now? You’re the expert at soothing wounded boys, not me.” Ophir muttered. He didn’t really need to appeal to his old Master for guidance. He knew what Hector would do. In something akin to brainwashing, Hector wouldn’t allow the boy to rest or think for days, making love to him until the boy was overwhelmed by affection and sex.

Sex was a given. The affection part was what made Ophir pause. Yes, he was fond of his boys, but he wasn’t sure he could make Three feel loved without making the boy think they were in love.

*He needs me.*

Ophir pursed his lips. Time to prove he was worthy of the title Master.

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Ophir’s bedroom was sparsely furnished, but not austere. His large bed sat atop a black platform. There were no throw pillows or soft designer touches. A single black leather wing-back chair and small table sat in front of a fireplace. The jade walls and artwork leant the room a Japanese feel.

Three waited in Ophir’s bedroom in his usual stance. A few more tears had trickled down his cheeks, but he was also getting hard.

“You may undress me,” Ophir said.

Three seemed unsure of what to do.

“Start with my shirt, Boy.”

As Three unfastened the buttons, Ophir reached out to smear away the wet trail down Three’s cheek. That touch turned into a caress. Three’s sigh had a slight hitch to it.

“Hang my clothes as you remove them.”

Three slid the shirt off Ophir’s shoulders and took it to the closet. When he came back to Ophir, he knelt but didn’t immediately reach for Ophir’s pants.

“Good boy.” Ophir caressed Three’s hair. His hand slid to the back of Three’s head and gently brought it to his groin.

Three rubbed his cheek and nose against the outline of Ophir’s cock.

“Do you want it, Boy?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“Show me.”

Three unzipped Ophir’s pants. To Ophir’s satisfaction, he didn’t simply plunge his mouth over Ophir’s cock and start sucking as if he were in a race. Instead, he teased the

head across his lips and cheeks, and then slowly licked it.

The reverential treatment made Ophir harden immediately. He watched Three's face, admiring how the boy's eyes half-closed, as if he were in a peaceful trance. Those lips had yet to wrap around his cock. Instead, Three slid his mouth up the length of Ophir's shaft before running his tongue down to the base and over Ophir's balls. Finally, he took Ophir's cock into his mouth. Still, he didn't rush.

Ophir's touch on Three's head went from a caress to a more forceful hold. He was pleased that Three immediately responded to the subtle change and stopped. Time for the gentle tease to end. He grabbed Three's head and thrust deep into the willing mouth.

As tempting as it was to fuck Three's mouth until he climaxed, a true Master had enough control of himself to sacrifice his pleasure for the good of his boy. Reluctantly, Ophir drew his cock from Three's mouth. He grasped the base and thumped his cock on Three's lips and cheeks, leaving wet marks.

Three looked up at him in worship.

Ophir drew in a deep breath. He'd been in that place before, gazing up at Hector, his heart full, emotions barely in check. Once he'd become the Master, he'd lost his right to abandon himself to that. There were times that he missed it and envied his boys, but someone had to make it safe for them to drop every defense and be that vulnerable. He'd never realized when he was Hector's boy how much Hector had served him. For the rest of his life, Hector would be the Master he measured himself against.

"Remove the rest of my clothes, Boy."

Three pulled Ophir's pants down, but then realized he should have removed the shoes first. If he made that mistake next time they were together, Ophir would punish him to enforce the lesson, but he wanted to see how much Three picked up on his own.

When he'd hung Ophir's pants and placed the shoes in the closet, Three waited for instructions. Ophir walked around Three. His light touches corrected posture. Once he was satisfied, he made another circle around his new boy.

Since signing into servitude, Three no longer wore clothes in the house. There was a difference between nudity and the nakedness the boy probably felt standing before his Master the first time they were to have sex though. Ophir watched Three's fists grip tight, as if he fought the urge to cover his groin. Nerves were a good sign. It meant a boy's focus was on his Master's approval, not his own cock. When he saw Three's expression though, he regretted giving the boy time to think. Three's breath came short and shallow. His lips turned down. He was probably thinking of that phone call to his parents again.

Ophir grasped a handful of Three's blond, spiked hair and tugged. Three teetered forward as he gasped in surprise at being dragged to the side of the bed. Ophir released him, but only long enough to take a firm grip on the back of his head.

Ophir meant for the kiss to hurt. Nothing jolted a boy out of brooding like pain. As soon as Three kissed him back, Ophir shoved him down on the bed. "Put your butt up in the air and pull your cheeks apart, Boy. Show me what a slut you are. You like taking it up the ass, don't you, Boy?"

"Yes, Sir. Ah!"

Ophir's tongue plunged into Three's hole. Three's fingers dug into the meat of his beautiful butt as he tried to spread further for his Sir. Ophir worked Three's hole for a while and then slid his tongue down to the taint.

Three moaned as Ophir sucked hard. The licking continued down to his balls, along his shaft, and finally to the head of his cock.

With a tight smile of satisfaction, Ophir tasted the steady flow of pre-come. He slid fingers into Three's ass. When he felt the rough nub of Three's prostate, he gently pressed his fingertips to it to milk more pre-come from the boy.

Three groaned into the mattress. He wriggled, trying to get Ophir's fingers to fuck him instead of simply filling him.

Ophir immediately distanced himself from Three. "The most important lesson, the only lesson, is that you don't control anything, Boy. If I want your ass fucked, I'll do it. If I don't, you'll have to go without."

"Sorry, Sir."

"I'm sure you are, but you'll still be punished. I want you leaning over the mattress. You know the position by now, I'm sure."

Three nodded. He slipped off the bed then leaned over it so that his chest pressed to the mattress. His hands rested flat on the bedspread. As tall as he was, he had to bow his back, pushing his butt up high.

Ophir didn't want to give Three too much time to get back inside his head, so he used his hand instead of the flogger he preferred. "Give me the count, Boy." He raised his hand and brought it down on Three's butt with a sharp smack.

"One. I'm sorry I tried to fuck myself on your fingers, Sir."

Ophir barely gave Three time to get the words out before striking him again. Before long, both cheeks were dark pink, and Three hopped on his toes as the blows fell. Ophir switched hands, but knew that his left hand didn't strike with nearly the force of his right.

Frowning, Ophir looked at his palms. Both ached. He was sure Three understood the lesson. However, with the exception of a few tears squeezed from the corners of his eyes, Three had yet to break down. What the boy needed was a gut-wrenching cry. Pain would give him the excuse to give in. Continuing to spank him wasn't going to do the job.

Maybe rough sex would. Ophir tore open a condom wrapper and threw it down on the bed near Three's face. He rolled it down his cock and brutally slammed into Three's hole. He grasped Three's sore butt a lot harder than he needed to and pounded mercilessly. Three grunted, but he didn't cry out.

Frustrated, Ophir pulled out of Three's ass and gave it a hard smack. "Turn over." He hoisted Three's legs to his shoulders and plunged back into the boy. As he set into his rhythm, pre-come drops fell from the tip of Three's cock onto his flat stomach. With each thrust, Three's tight pecs bounced.

Ophir bent down to kiss Three. Three gasped as his knees were driven against his chest. Pinned like that, it would be hard for him to catch his breath. Ophir mashed his lips against Three's.

Three's hands clasped at Ophir, as if he couldn't figure out where to hold on, or even if he were allowed to. His stomach muscles clenched.

Ophir rubbed his cheek against Three's and whispered, "Don't hold yourself back from me, Boy. I own all of you. Give me everything." His lips touched Three's earlobe. "Let me in, Chris."

A sob, or was it a groan, pushed out of Three. He wrapped his arms around Ophir and clung tight, hiding his face against Ophir's chest as Ophir came.

Ophir rolled them over. Three still hung on as if for dear life. Ophir held him just as tight

so that he couldn't escape. A strong shudder passed through Three's shoulders. Sobbing quietly, he finally cried.

Knowing words would only ruin the moment, Ophir caressed and kissed Three.

Three didn't cry for long, but it was a start. A very good start, Ophir thought. Even Hector wouldn't have gotten better from a boy.

They lazed together, slowly releasing from their embrace.

"You didn't come, Three. Don't worry. We have all day to get around to that."

"I don't mind, Sir." Three rolled onto his back.

Ophir wouldn't let him get away so soon. He trailed his fingers up Three's chest. "I don't care if you mind or not. But when I tell you to come, you will. Because--"

"Because you're the Master, Sir."

"You get this one warning, Boy. From now on, you interrupt me at your own peril."

"Sorry, Sir."

Ophir stroked Three's cock, admiring the deep pink flush of the head when he was aroused. Enjoying the bond between them in the quiet moment, he gazed into Three's eyes. He couldn't help caressing Three's cheek and kissing him tenderly. What a sweet



boy. What a perfect boy. He'd never felt so lucky. Those words almost came out of his mouth. He had to fight down the emotions threatening to burst out of him.

*You have to stay in control so that he can give in.*

It was so tempting to whisper lover's words to the boy.

*It's because you just came. You'll be over it soon.*

"I'm pleased with you, Three. I look forward to the next three years of your service. We'll work together on your training. Let's go take a short bath, and then I'm going to teach you how to bottom for your Master. It isn't about lying there getting fucked."

"Yes, Sir."

"Oh, and Three -- never let the other boys know I called you by your name. That will only lead to jealousy, and you know how I feel about that."

"That secret's safe with me, Sir." Three glanced away.

"Look at me, Boy."

Three's gaze reluctantly met Ophir's. "May I ask a favor, Sir?"

"You can always ask. I rarely give boys what they ask for, but I always try to give them what they need."

“Let’s keep this purely business, okay?”

Ophir’s eyebrow arched.

“I serve you, you train me. We fulfill the letter of our contract. But that’s it.”

Taken aback, Ophir said, “That’s all I ever intended.”

Smiling, Three nodded. “It’s just for a second there, the way you were looking at me, I was afraid you were going to tell me you loved me. I can’t take that right now.”

Ophir squeezed Three’s cock. “You will never hear those words pass my lips, Boy. Your Master promises.”