



Mi Amore

CHOCOLATE
DREAMS

EM WOODS

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Chocolate Dreams

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Warning: This book contains sexually explicit content which is only suitable for mature readers. This story has been rated *Total-e-burning*.

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CHOCOLATE DREAMS

Em Woods

Dedication

To all the other chocolate lovers out there...
Enjoy!

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Chapter One

Joel Raner pushed through the front door of his family's accounting firm, glancing at his watch. Four forty-five. *I'm late*. Tossing his briefcase onto the passenger seat of his rust-and-red Explorer, Joel fired up the old beast.

A belch of black smoke erupted from the tailpipe and Joel squeezed his eyes shut, praying the thing kept running. After what seemed like an eternity, the shuddering vehicle quieted and the motor settled into an uneasy rumble. He looked around at his brothers climbing into their own cars, wondered what his family thought of the piece of shit he drove.

Tom and Dave both drove Mercedes SUVs, and Janet—Tom's wife and their secretary—drove a 2010 Town and Country minivan. Most days they ignored him, treating him like the geek in math class everyone avoided on principle. But today, he'd drawn attention because he'd sprinted from the office when Janet finished her fifteenth lecture of the day on how to properly check email.

It wasn't his fault technology hated him.

Shaking off the gloom of working nine to five, Joel shifted both his truck and his mind into gear and headed for *Chocolate Dreams*, the little bakery at the end of his street.

He checked the clock on his dash. Four-fifty. A tiny grin tugged at his lips.

Bet I can make it before five.

Yeah. If he missed the traffic, hit every green light, and the slow drivers stayed the fuck out from between him and his truffles.

Joel snorted as he weaved through traffic. Sure, it was the *truffles*, all right. And it had nothing to do with the handsome chef who hand-delivered them to his table every day.

Without any effort at all, Aaron Giadano's face formed in Joel's mind.

Dark brown hair, cut short but still long enough for little wispy curls to tease at Joel's fantasies. Curls that made Joel want to tuck them out of the way—right after he twisted his fingers in them, getting a good grip while Aaron sucked his cock.

Then there were those brown eyes that sparkled even before the smile reached his lips, and the ever-present five o'clock shadow darkening Aaron's olive-toned skin.

Add in the Sicilian accent, and Aaron was Italian to his core.

Joel groaned as his cock stiffened in his pants. He could easily imagine Aaron's tongue sliding over his skin. He blinked hard, trying to erase the lingering image as he pulled into the parking lot to the side of the bakery.

He nabbed a spot near the rear of the lot and hesitated a moment, deciding if he should just leave. Sure, the guy came out and talked to him every day, but he probably did that with all of his regulars. Of course, there was Joel's friendship with Amelia. That probably helped too.

No.

He'd seen often enough the professional but friendly air Aaron kept with other patrons of the popular bakery, and this was more than that. Joel took a deep breath, reached to open the door and nearly jumped out of his skin when he realised he wasn't alone.

Aaron stood outside Joel's car, hands on his hips, looking exceptionally pissed off.

Well, fuck.

The cock Joel thought he had under control leapt back to life even as he registered the tick in Aaron's temple as new. He hadn't seen that before. But, damn, Aaron was magnificent when he was angry and Joel couldn't keep himself from doing a long sweep of Aaron's body.

Aaron's eyes narrowed when Joel met his gaze again. He rapped on the glass, directly in front of Joel's face, like they weren't staring at each other already.

Joel cracked the window, afraid to give Aaron too much room because he didn't have a clue what the man was bent out of shape about. "Yeah?"

"Where you been?" Aaron's accent was thick enough that Joel had to think over the words. Aaron checked his watch. "You're...forty minutes late."

Joel's cheeks heated. He hadn't needed to check in with anyone since he moved from his mother's house. "We had a date?"

"You know damn well every day you're here at four-thirty." Aaron yanked on the door handle, getting nowhere because Joel beat him to the locks. "You could've been hurt or dead or..."

"Working late?"

Aaron pressed his lips into a thin line, then whirled and disappeared through the back door of the bakery.

Joel blinked through his shock, trying for all he was worth to figure out what had brought on Aaron's tantrum. He knew he'd been late other times and Aaron had greeted him like normal when he arrived.

He heaved out a sigh, rolled up the window and climbed out of the car just as the back door of the bakery swung open and Amelia poked her head out.

Sweet Amelia. Aaron's older sister and assistant. Joel's best friend since sophomore year at the local community college. *God, has it really been five years since he helped them set up the books for this place?*

"You still alive?" She carefully shut the door, making sure a stick wedged in the door track so she could get back in without ringing the bell.

"What's his deal today?"

She snorted, flicking a hand in the air. "Not sure, but he's had a stick up his ass since yesterday." One manicured eyebrow rose as she studied Joel. "Started right about the time you left, as a matter of fact."

Heat rushed to his face. *Damn it.* He turned away from her, headed towards the front of the building. "Don't know why that would be."

"Really?" She stepped in front him, blocking him like only a five-foot-three spitfire could. "What did you say to him that we all have to suffer for?"

Joel sniffed and remained silent, staring over her soft cinnamon curls at the blank wall behind her. If he had been thinking, he'd have kept his eye on her. The next thing he knew, she swore under her breath and stomped on his foot—hard.

"Shit!" Joel yanked his foot out from under hers and glared at her. "Amy, God damn it! What was that for?"

The light in her eyes was pure irritation. "What did you say to him, *jabone?*"

He faced her square on, cupped her chin in his hand. "I'm no asshole and you know it." He let her go, let her drop back on her heels. "He asked my plans for Valentine's Day, and I told him I was spending it with my boyfriend."

"What boyfriend?"

Joel rolled his eyes. "There isn't one. I didn't want to look pathetic."

"So you lied?" She slapped his arm. "You are a *jabone*."

"Yeah, I know." Joel's shoulders slumped. "How the fuck am I gonna fix this?"

"Go tell him. Now."

Joel shook his head, backing towards his car. "Maybe I'll come back tomorrow."

"Are you *pazzo*?" She tipped her fingers off the side of her head, reminding him of her brother.

He'd bet his life she couldn't complete a sentence if he held her hands still. Aaron was the same. Always gesturing, waving his hands around like whomever he was talking to wouldn't understand unless he drew a picture in the air between them.

She gripped his arm and steered him to the back door. "No. You go now and explain your stupidity."

Joel jerked away. "Oh no." He stood his ground, panic churning his stomach, pushing him to bolt. He kept his feet rooted, though. If he ran now, she would know.

"Why would you say such a thing?" The exasperation gave her tone a clipped edge. "Why to him, the one you love?"

Well, shit. She already knew. No point in sticking around then.

Joel made for his truck.

"Get your ass in here." The low baritone froze Joel in his flight.

Slowly, Joel turned to face Aaron. "I'll come back when I'm less likely to get my ass kicked, thanks." Then with as much control as he could muster, he walked to his vehicle. He had the door open before he realised Aaron had come after him.

"I was worried." The words were so quietly spoken Joel almost missed them. "Come inside for your truffles."

A shiver drifted down Joel's spine, raising goose flesh on his arms. As much as he wanted to leave, he found himself shutting the door and turning to face Aaron.

Aaron gestured to the shop door.

Amy held the door open and Joel entered the kitchen of the little bakery. He knew as soon as he crossed the threshold it was a mistake. The rush of chocolate and cinnamon assailed his senses and hardened his dick, painting pictures of Aaron laid out over the stainless steel countertops, his body decorated with both, Joel licking each inch of delicious naked skin.

A puff of hot breath brushed across the nape of his neck, the smell of flour and strawberries filled his lungs as he took a deep draw in, and Aaron leant against him to whisper, "The kitchen is an incredibly seductive place, no?"

Joel closed his eyes for a long moment, then told the second biggest lie of his life. "No."

Aaron chuckled. The older man always thought he got away with his fibs. He slid between Joel and the rack of clean tools hanging on the wall, letting his hand trail across Joel's ass. "Come, I will prove you wrong."

"Oh, no. No, thanks." Joel tripped over a floor mat in his hurry to be away from the conversation, only to find Aaron's arm wrapped around his waist, steadying him.

Aaron willed his heart to slow. Joel stood at the same height he did, his blond hair trimmed short—military style almost. Startled blue eyes locked with his over Joel's shoulder. He let out a heavy breath and calmed his nerves.

Pulling Joel back against him, he let Joel feel the erection straining the cotton material of his trousers. A tiny gasp of acknowledgement from Joel was enough satisfaction for now.

He released Joel and let him continue into the lobby of the small bakery. Aaron winked at Amelia as they entered the area behind the cash register then he patted Joel on the ass, sending him scurrying to the other side of the display cabinet.

"Where did you stash his truffles, Amelia?"

She pushed a small white carton across the cool Formica countertop. "Not that he deserves them." Her tone was as chilly as the delicacies he kept refrigerated in the back.

Joel sent her a scathing look, one meant to shut her up.

Aaron glanced from him to his sister, never before having heard them say a cross word to each other. "Of course he does." He turned his gaze to Joel. Bile rose in his throat, making it difficult to get the next bit out. "Taking them to share with your *amore*?"

A snort from Amelia and a choking cough from Joel had him again swinging his attention from one to the other. Joel's face flushed bright red, spurring Aaron's curiosity as he watched the man flounder for a response. He couldn't wait to get his sister alone and find out what the hell was the matter.

"I don't share." Joel tossed a ten-dollar bill on the counter and fled, barely getting, "See you later," out before the glass door cut off the sound of his rushed footsteps on the sidewalk.

Aaron stared, slack-jawed, at the empty lobby. His mind worked furiously to catch up to the events and figure them out. He pivoted on his heel to face his sister. "Tell me. Right now."

Amelia shrugged and brushed past Aaron to turn the lock in the door, flipping the closed sign over. "You are asking the wrong person, *fratello*."

"No." Aaron blocked her passage into the back. "I am not. You know."

"Sì. I know."

"Then tell me so that I know."

Again she shook her head. "I believe he is wrong." Her hand flashed through the air, her fingers spread wide in a careless flip. "The *jabone* will not listen."

Aaron clenched his teeth. "Tell. Me."

"Neither do you." She shoved him to the side. "I said no."

Frustration zinged along his nerves. He stalked after her to the back door, narrowly avoiding her flying apron as it landed in the laundry hamper. "Amelia."

"I said no. Ask him." She slammed the door, ending the argument.

"Fine," he said to no one, "I'll clean up."

He grabbed a rag from the utility drawer under the sink, letting his mind tick over the last few days. This whole mess started when he'd pressured Joel about the holiday. The man had sprung the news of a new boyfriend like a steel trap.

Emotions Aaron hadn't realised he possessed ripped into his heart. He'd waited too long. Been too patient. He'd thought to let Joel come to him. Every night Aaron lay in his king-size bed, alone, dreaming of Joel's smooth, pale skin pressing against him. Every night he jacked-off to the mini-reel of those blue eyes glazing over with desire while Aaron fucked him.

"God damn it." Aaron growled and slapped down the dishcloth he'd been using as Joel's words from the previous week repeated themselves over and over.

"What are you doing Monday night?" Aaron said.

Joel stopped with the truffle halfway to his mouth. "Why?"

"It's Valentine's Day. No one should be alone."

"I won't be alone." Joel set the unfinished treat down and shoved the plate towards Aaron. "Eric will be there."

"Eric?" Aaron hadn't realised his capacity for feeling such jealousy, but there it was, eating at his gut.

"My..." Joel studied his hands in his lap. "My boyfriend."

Aaron couldn't remember the rest of the conversation. Everything had turned into a blur after those two words. But now, in the darkness of the kitchen, alone, he examined the bits he *did* remember.

The last two days, Joel had been jittery, nervous. He had looked Aaron in the eyes once, maybe twice, and *never* while they had been talking about Eric.

Well, damn. Who was the bigger schmuck?

Joel for lying or Aaron for falling for it?

Chapter Two

Joel sat curled on the end of his leather couch, staring out of the large bay window in his living room, feeling every dip of the sun as it dropped below the horizon. He had been relieved for all of an hour when Aaron hadn't followed him out of the bakery but that soon turned to disappointment for the same reason. Aaron couldn't want him that badly if he didn't make an effort, right?

He shrugged to himself. He had to admit there was the whole fake boyfriend thing. That might be a show-stopper.

Of course, Aaron probably didn't think he was much of a catch anyway, what with the rundown piece of crap truck he drove and the thrift store clothes he wore. Aaron couldn't know those things were intentional.

William, Joel's ex-partner, had ensured Joel would be more careful in the future. Every time Joel thought about that cheating bastard and how much money he'd spent to maintain him, Joel's blood boiled.

Just once, Joel wanted someone to love *him* and not the things he could afford to buy. His eyes drifted shut as he listened to the sounds of the house, the settling noises inherent in a nineteen-forties colonial. Joel had almost lulled himself to sleep when the creaking of the porch steps reached his ears.

He lifted his head, turning towards the door.

A metallic scraping jerked him off the couch and had him reaching for his Louisville Slugger propped in the corner. The door pushed open and just a millisecond before he swung the bat, he realised who it was.

Aaron.

"Christ, Joel." Aaron instinctively covered his head with an arm, trying not to drop the grocery bag he held in the other. "It's me."

Joel's heart hammered in his chest as his arm and the bat fell useless at his side. "How the *fuck* did you get my key?"

"Amelia." Aaron smirked.

Joel made a mental note to read his friend the riot act the next time he saw her. "Figures."

Aaron peered around him, his gaze sweeping the living room. "No Eric?"

"No Eric." He sucked at lying, which was why he did so little of it. Joel shifted on his feet, letting his gaze travel Aaron's length. He was still in his work uniform—drawstring trousers and white T-shirt, small bits of flour and smears of chocolate spattered across the front. "Why are you here?"

"You look exhausted, *amore*." Aaron patted Joel's cheek, sending heat rushing to Joel's cock with the careless gesture. Aaron nodded towards the couch and abandoned blanket. "Lie back down."

Joel's head was reeling. *Amore*. He moved in slow motion to the couch, watching the man who had just invaded his home. What game was he playing? Joel bumped the glass end table, just managing to keep from knocking over the ceramic lamp perched on top.

He stopped when he reached where he'd been sleeping, staring at the indented spot in the cushion, not sure what to do. "Aaron?"

His friend poked his head out of the kitchen. Of course, he had gone to the kitchen first. Joel groaned. He hadn't done the dishes in two days, ever since his safe world had imploded with one simple question about Valentine's Day.

"Yes?"

Joel raised his eyes to meet Aaron's, unaware of the need shining in their blue depths. "Why are you here?"

Aaron grinned. "Because you're here."

With that he ducked back into the kitchen, humming some tune or another, banging pots around and running water. Presumably to do the dishes.

That got Joel's feet in motion. "Damn it, Aaron. Get out of my kitchen."

Aaron's deep, endless brown eyes stared up at him as he loaded the dishwasher. "I'm just helping. You looked stressed earlier." Aaron's gaze dropped to the dish in his hand. For the first time, Joel noticed Aaron was trembling.

"Hey." Joel stepped closer, reached for him. "Hey. You okay?"

"I thought..." Aaron's jaw clenched, then he took a deep breath, before looking up again.

And Joel realised his mistake.

"I thought this would be easier." Aaron growled, his accent thick. "I thought I could come here and not mention it. But I cannot."

Joel took a step away. "What—"

"Your boyfriend, *amore*." Aaron set the plate on the counter, the dishes forgotten. He advanced a step for every one Joel took backwards. "The man who does not exist. I got *that* from Amelia as well."

The last words were hurled at Joel. He winced, feeling them like knives to his heart. Aaron knew. And he was pissed as hell. "I'm sorry."

"Don't fucking apologise."

Joel began to stammer an explanation but Aaron looked ready to snap so he shut up, waited for his friend to make the next move, to dictate the course they would take.

"I don't want your apologies. I don't want your explanations." Aaron came nose to nose with Joel. Tension and uncertainty blazed across Aaron's face. "No, on second thought, I *do* want your explanation."

Joel continued to wait him out.

"Answer me!"

"Explain what?"

"Don't play games. It does not suit you. Lying, *amore*. About something so stupid, too." Aaron scrubbed his hands over his face before pushing his hair out of his eyes. "Why?"

"I didn't want..." Joel's voice trailed off with the last of his strength. He sank onto the arm of the couch. His world crashed around him, slumping his shoulders with the weight, as he stared at the floor helplessly. *How do I tell him he scares the fuck out of me?*

"You didn't want what?" The choked sound of Aaron's voice brought Joel's head up. "You didn't want *me*?" Aaron shook his head, like he hadn't quite thought of that. He pressed his lips together, and with Joel's continued silence, closed his eyes.

When Aaron opened them again, all emotion was gone. "I see." His body was rigid, tense, and each step he took towards the door looked like he was walking through quicksand.

The soft click of the door release sent Joel into action. In three swift strides he came to the door, directly behind Aaron. He slapped his palm on the door, slamming it shut before Aaron could get it wide enough to leave. "You see what?"

Aaron kept his face to the door, his knuckles white in the grip he still had on the knob. "I made a fool of myself. Coming here like this."

Joel watched the little tick in Aaron's temple, fascinated with the wild pulse. "You did no such thing."

Aaron laughed, dry, bitter. "*Si*."

"No." Joel crowded him into the door, pressing their bodies together. He kissed the back of Aaron's neck, revelled in the hiss of breath he received in exchange. Again, he wondered how their roles had shifted. "You would have to be in my head to know the rest."

"The rest?" Aaron moaned lightly, leaning back into Joel's chest.

"I didn't want to look pathetic. Someone who couldn't even get a date for Valentine's Day." Joel rested his forehead on Aaron's shoulder and told the rest. "I've been in those shoes enough times I didn't want that pity when you looked at me."

Aaron faced Joel, searching his eyes. Joel didn't hold anything back. If Aaron ran, it would be from the truth. He wanted Aaron. He *loved* Aaron. There was relief in finally being able to let go. In admitting it, if only to himself.

Aaron slid his hands along Joel's neck to cup his face, before ever-so-slowly pressing his lips to Joel's mouth. Gentle. Sweet.

Not what Joel wanted.

Joel leant forwards, bracing his palms on the door, trapping Aaron as he rubbed their cocks together. A chuckle rumbled from Aaron's throat, the tiny vibrations adding to the tease.

"Slow down, *amore*." Aaron rocked his hips forwards, increasing the pressure. "We have all night."

"Don't you have to be back at the bakery early?" God, Joel hoped not.

Aaron shifted again, sliding his fingers over Joel's hair. "We still have all night."

Good. "In that case...what did you bring with you?"

"Dinner."

"Dessert first?"

“Per favore.”

Joel straightened, keeping Aaron close. “This way.” He walked backwards, afraid if he turned his back Aaron would disappear, that this would be a dream.

Aaron tucked his hands into Joel’s back pockets, copping a feel, holding them together for another kiss. This one, not so sweet.

Joel moaned as Aaron drove his tongue through Joel’s parted lips, tangling them together from head to toe. Somehow, they found the bed, tumbling onto the soft down comforter. Joel spread his legs wide, more than ready to welcome Aaron between them.

Fumbling with Joel’s pants, Aaron hissed a breath between his teeth. “You should wear less clothing.”

“Some people would protest.” Joel batted Aaron’s fingers away and with a flick of his wrist undid the buttons on his Levi’s. “Like my sister-in-law.”

Aaron snorted, yanked the denim down Joel’s legs and off to the floor. “I meant for me, silly fool.”

“Mmm...sounds—” Joel sucked in a fast breath, almost choking on air, when Aaron wrapped his lips around his cock.

Wasting no time, Aaron hollowed his cheeks and sucked Joel’s prick like a lollipop. Joel pushed his hips up, driving his cock into Aaron’s throat, his eyes crossing as Aaron swallowed around the head.

Aaron curled his fingers around the base of Joel’s cock, lavishing long strokes of his tongue along the sensitive flesh, palming Joel’s balls with a slight bit of pressure. Joel couldn’t hold back the moan as Aaron’s fingers played over his skin, his other hand finding the tight pucker between Joel’s cheeks.

Joel watched, pure need directing his movements, amazed at how good Aaron looked with his mouth full of cock.

Licking and sucking, fucking with purpose, Aaron’s beautiful brown eyes were bright with desire.

For me. Joel closed his eyes, wanting to remember this feeling, memorising each swipe of Aaron’s tongue, each brush of lips over his cock.

A fleeting thought that this was temporary, that Aaron would trample his heart far worse than William had, brought a frown to his face but he pushed it aside. Temporary or not, right now, this was what he wanted.

Cool air startled Joel as Aaron let his dick slip from between his lips. A small whimper escaped Joel but Aaron shushed him. The bed dipped beneath him and Aaron's warmth blanketed him. When he opened his eyes, he found Aaron staring at him, concerned lines between his brows.

"*Amore?*"

Joel simply raised an eyebrow.

"What are you thinking of so intensely?"

Not quite sure how Aaron expected him to answer with Aaron's hand still playing at his asshole, Joel grunted. Aaron's fingers stilled and the fog in Joel's brain cleared enough to focus. "You."

"No." Aaron's words were normally drawn out in a roll of sounds, seductive. This one word was clipped, the short '*noh*' jarring Joel's nerves.

"Actually, yes." It was the truth, damn it.

"Then tell me what you were thinking of me."

Joel struggled to hold Aaron's gaze, struggled to edit his thoughts. "I was trying to memorise each thing."

Aaron's eyes narrowed and he tapped one fingertip to Joel's hole, causing his entire body to jerk. "Why do you need to do that, *amore*, when this is only the first of many?"

Joel shrugged, shifted to close his legs, feeling a bit like a cheap whore spread out in front of Aaron like he was.

Aaron braced one hand against Joel's opposite leg and dug his elbow into the one next to him. "Stay."

It was Joel's turn to narrow his eyes. "I'm not a dog."

"Then quit wiggling like one."

Joel stopped moving but every muscle quivered with the need to climb out of bed and get dressed, to cover himself with *something*. Pretty damn sure Aaron wasn't going to move or let *him* move until he answered, Joel chewed his bottom lip, searching for something that would appease the other man.

"Why?" Aaron's voice was a whisper, tempting the truth from Joel.

"Because it won't last."

Aaron's clenched jaw was the only sign of tension.

But no tick, Joel noted. That was a good sign.

Aaron sighed. "This is crazy, *amore*. I love you. Why would I leave?"

Joel met Aaron's gaze, saw the need and desire there calling to his heart. God, he wanted to say it. He wanted to belong to someone. But the echo of the past was still too loud.

He pressed his lips together, holding back his own declaration. "Because that's how it always happens."

Joel was unprepared when Aaron sat up, crouched next to him on the bed, and hauled him like a sack of flour over onto his hands and knees.

"You want to pretend this is less than it is? I will show you what is less, *amore*."

Aaron's hot tongue speared Joel's asshole as his fingers wrapped around Joel's cock. The heat was overwhelming, sending Joel rocketing to the edge. Lip-covered teeth nipped at the tight pucker protesting the invasion. Aaron's tight fist pumped fast strokes along the hard length of Joel's shaft, pre cum easing the friction while ramping Joel's tension at the same time.

Joel cried out, scrambling to get his bearings. He clenched his hands in the thick comforter under him, loving the out of control rollercoaster ride Aaron was dragging him on. "Fuck. Fuck. Aaron."

The babbling, the begging, did nothing to change Aaron's course. He flattened his tongue against Joel's pulsing hole, swiping the sensitive skin before pushing the tip through the tight ring to mouth-fuck Joel.

Joel's balls tightened close to his cock, the tingling racing along his spine, heading for release.

Then it was gone.

All of it.

Cold air rushed Joel's overheated skin. He pressed his face into a pillow, trying to figure out what the fuck was happening. When Aaron's heat didn't return, he pulled himself up to his elbows and looked over his shoulder.

Aaron sat back on his heels, his eyes closed and pain marring the beautiful olive skin Joel loved so much. A tear slipped from under Aaron's lashes and he quickly swept it away before climbing off the bed. "I am sorry, *amore*. Forgive me."

Realising Aaron was straightening his clothes and walking out the door, Joel scrambled from the bed to follow him. "Wait."

Aaron came to a stop in the middle of the living room, shoulders stiff, back to Joel. Neither man spoke, though Joel knew he needed to say something to keep Aaron from leaving.

Moments passed and when he could think of nothing else, Joel offered the best he had. "I lived with William for three years. We became lovers right after high school and stayed that way until just after I met your sister. I came home one day from class and found him fucking the neighbour in our bed."

"I'm sorry." Aaron continued to face away from Joel. "But I am not him, *amore*. Neither will I compete with him."

"I didn't ask you to." Joel's body began to shake. Everything rode on this conversation. Everything.

"No. But you compare us just the same." Aaron stepped towards the door, casting a sad, tired look over his shoulder. "I love you, but I cannot fight a memory."

Joel slapped his hand against the wall, pleased at the flinch in Aaron's rigid stance. "Don't you really mean you're not willing to fight?"

Aaron faced Joel, his dark eyes glittering with rampaging emotions and thoughts. "No. I said what I meant."

Joel scoffed and went back to the bedroom. Better to argue while he was dressed, rather than naked, sporting the erection Aaron had walked away from.

"Get back here."

Joel picked up his pants, stuffing his legs through them. "Pot, meet kettle."

Aaron watched him closely. "What?"

"You were the one leaving. I am merely getting dressed."

"I—"

"You know what, you're right. Maybe you should get out, Aaron." Joel brushed past him, stalked to the front door and yanked it open. He kept his eyes on the wall opposite the entryway and waited for Aaron to go.

"No."

Joel's gaze jerked to Aaron's. "First you all but race to leave and now I can't even throw you out?"

"I was wrong."

Not exactly the three words Joel wanted to hear but they were damn close to perfection right at that moment and his anger deflated like a cheap soufflé.

Aaron walked to Joel, pulled the door from his grasp and shut it with a quiet click. "I am a bundle of contradictions, no?"

Joel lifted one eyebrow and remained silent.

"I love you. And I promise my lapse in judgement will not happen again." Aaron wrapped his arms around Joel's waist and pulled their bodies together.

Joel's eyes drifted shut and he reminded himself this was the same man who was ready to walk out on him five minutes ago.

"Let me take care of you." Aaron ghosted his lips across Joel's neck, nipping at the pulse pounding under Joel's skin. He slid to his knees, deftly unzipping Joel's pants again.

Shifting his hips, Joel wiggled the pants until they pooled at his feet.

Aaron leant close, nuzzling Joel's cock, licking a trail of fire from the base to the head, inhaling deep as he went.

Joel lost all reason when Aaron curled his fingers around Joel's cock, tonguing the slit. He threaded his fingers into Aaron's soft brown curls, holding on for dear life as Aaron sucked him down.

The moan rolling from his throat only served to egg Aaron on as he dipped further onto Joel's prick. When Aaron cupped his balls, Joel pitched head-first over the edge into bliss, shouting Aaron's name.

Aaron eased Joel down next to him, dropping a soft kiss on his lips before standing. "I'll be right back, *amore*."

Joel caught Aaron's hand as he turned to leave. "Where are you going?"

"Washcloth."

"I can clean myself up. You don't have to do that."

Aaron bent and bussed Joel's lips with another chaste kiss. "But, *amore*, I need to clean up my own mess." Joel's confusion must have been written on his face because Aaron laughed. "I came when you did, that is how sexy you are when you fill my throat with your cock."

A heated blush coloured Joel's cheeks and he looked away. "How about we both clean up then?"

Aaron's hand appeared in front of his nose. "That sounds better than my idea to wash alone."

Joel took the offered hand and pulled his pants up as he stood. "What time do you have to be at the bakery?"

Aaron glanced at the clock. "Three hours."

"Let's catch a nap and I'll go with you." Joel shrugged. "Maybe I can help."

"*Amore*." Aaron tucked his finger under Joel's chin to force his gaze to meet Aaron's. "I would like that."

Chapter Three

Aaron glanced at the clock again. *Only an hour?* God, it felt like a century since he'd walked out of Joel's house with a promise from the other man to come straight away.

Grabbing his keys, he headed down the back stairs to the entrance that would let him into his kitchen. He fumbled through the key ring, found the right key to the bakery and let himself in. Flipping on the lights, Aaron took a deep breath, pulling in the familiar smells of dough rising, flour and sugar, chocolate.

As he eased the breath out, peace settled over him. This was where he should be. He snagged an apron from one of the hooks by the refrigerator and slung it over his neck. Aaron let the routine take over, hauling out the various tools and ingredients he needed to pull together one of his favourites.

He lifted the lid on the cocoa powder, letting the dark, rich aroma fill his senses. He closed his eyes and envisioned the Chocolate Lava Cake that had become his speciality. Customers came from miles around to buy his cakes and he never failed to have them, hot and delicious, waiting for whoever stopped by.

Aaron was so lost in his world that the screech of sirens as they whipped past his place startled him enough to spill the chocolate across the counter.

Two police cars and a fire truck.

He waited for the sound to fade as he pulled a rag from the drawer to scoop the mess into a nearby garbage can. But the wails were still as loud as before, even after he'd wet the towel and washed the counter.

The fine hairs on the back of his neck stood up. From the sounds of it, the sirens were about two blocks away. About the same distance as Joel's house.

He shook his head.

Coincidence. Had to be.

Just because Joel lived that way didn't mean it was him.

Two minutes later, after he'd thrown all the dairy back in the fridge, Aaron found himself walking down the sidewalk to where he could see a vehicle on fire.

As he got closer, he picked out another car with a crunched front end, and now he could see the crushed driver's side of Joel's truck. *Shit.*

Aaron's heart pounded in his chest, fear pushing him into a run when he recognised its owner spread out on the kerb with paramedics working frantically around him.

A police officer stepped in front of him, holding out his hand. Aaron didn't intend to stop but a fire fighter stepped next to the cop. He skidded within inches of them, heaving for breath as he stretched to catch a glimpse of Joel. "Please, let me through."

"Let the medics work." It was the fireman who answered.

The officer glanced over his shoulder then at Aaron again. "Who are you, sir?"

"A friend." Aaron stood on his tiptoes, cursing under his breath. "Is he okay? What happened? Where are they taking him?" He could see the medics moving Joel onto a gurney.

"His legs are moving, that's a good sign, right?" Aaron was pleading, he knew it. He couldn't stop himself though.

The cop tapped his fingers on the pad of paper in his shirt pocket—took his time assessing Aaron. "They're going to St. Mary's. You know the way?"

"Yeah." Aaron watched the ambulance pull away with his Joel in the back.

The officer moved away to talk with his partner but the fireman lingered. "You must be Aaron."

Startled, Aaron could only stare at him.

The other man jerked his head in the direction of the crash. "When we pulled him out, he was mumbling the name over and over. I assumed it was his ...ah, partner."

Aaron closed his eyes for a moment, licked his lips to take away some of the sting from the dry air. "We're — we're not. Yet."

"Life's too short, mate." The fire fighter slapped him on the back before walking away.

Aaron turned towards his house, his face drawn painfully tight. It was time for them *both* to grow the fuck up and take this thing between them seriously.

* * * *

Aaron slouched in the cracked vinyl chair, resting his head on the travel-size pillow, curling his fingers with Joel's. The morning sun spilled through the blinds covering the hospital window, giving enough light for Aaron to see Joel's face.

At least Joel was stable with only bruising that looked more serious than it was and minor smoke inhalation.

A neighbour had seen the whole thing, had seen the drunk driver sail right through the stop sign, smashing into the side of Joel's truck as he'd tried to back out of his driveway. Aaron shook, anger consuming him at the carelessness of some people. Joel was very lucky. Aaron shifted his head to better watch the sleeping man, to see if he made even the slightest movement.

The doctors said this was normal, that patients could be out for hours, sometimes days, after such a traumatic event. Everything inside Aaron wished he could trade places.

Aaron's eyes had just drifted shut when a low moan jerked him out of his near-sleep. He rubbed his thumb over the back of Joel's hand, squeezed his fingers.

Joel squeezed back.

"Ah, *mi bello*. Are you joining the land of the living?"

Joel's eyes cracked open. "Aaron?"

"You have been out a while, *amore*." Aaron smoothed his fingers over Joel's forehead, brushing the unruly blond hair back from Joel's face. *So pale*. "How are you feeling?"

"What are you doing here?" Joel made to sit up but dropped back with a hiss. What little colour was left in his face drained away, leaving him pasty white. "Fuck."

"Want a sip of water?"

Joel nodded and Aaron felt him track his movements as he crossed the room to snag the ice cup from the adjustable table against the far wall. Aaron's hands shook as he pressed the straw to Joel's lips. Joel opened his mouth just enough to suck the straw in, took a quick sip, then pushed the straw away.

Aaron set the cup on the nightstand before answering Joel's question. "Why *wouldn't* I be here?"

"How did you know?" Joel tried to sit up again then began searching for the remote to the bed. "That I was in an accident, I mean." The blush to his cheeks showed a brilliant red against his pale complexion as he fumbled through the sheets.

Aaron pulled the cord for the controls up through the side rails and adjusted the head of the bed so that Joel was high enough to look him in the eye. "The sirens."

Joel turned his gaze to the blue sky outside the window. "How's my truck?"

"Toast." Aaron cupped Joel's chin, tilted him to look at his face, at the bruises marking his skin dark purple and blue. "You were so lucky, *amore*."

Tears pooled in Joel's eyes and he blinked them away. He tried to pull away but Aaron didn't let him. Joel sighed, deep resignation in the long breath. "Has Amy been here?"

He nodded before rising to stick his head out into the hall. The day nurse was two rooms down, writing in another patient's chart. "Jill?"

The nurse looked up and smiled. "How's our boy? Still sleeping?"

"He is awake."

Her smile widened. "I'll be right there."

Aaron nodded and ducked back into the room. Joel was silent. And watching him, guarded. "I will call Amelia and let her know you are up." He passed Jill as she bustled through the door with a cart laden with medical equipment. "Be right back," he said.

Jill shooed him out. "I need to take his blood pressure and such anyway. Best you're not here to rile him up." She winked and turned to her patient, clapping her hands. "Joel. It is so good to finally meet you."

Aaron shut the door behind him, knowing Joel was in good hands for the moment. He dialled his sister at the cafe. Thank God she had the presence of mind to remember the bakery, because for the first time in five years, he hadn't given it a thought.

"Chocolate Dreams." Amelia's voice was shaky at best.

"Hello, *Bella*."

He heard her catch her breath. "How is he?"

"He is awake." Aaron rubbed his forehead. He was exhausted. "He wants to see you."

"I'll wait until you bring him home."

"Probably tonight then."

"Okay."

He heard the ping of the cash register, glanced at his watch. Eight o'clock. "Thanks, Amelia."

"Aaron?" She was quiet for a second. "Don't let him hide away again."

"See you tonight."

"Bye."

Joel answered the questions from the nurse on auto-pilot, the whole while wondering exactly what was going to happen from here. Sure, they'd parted on "see you later" terms but things had a way of changing when lovers weren't within eyesight of each other. *It sure had for William.*

"Joel."

He looked at the nurse, raising one eyebrow in question.

"History of depression in your family?"

"No." He shrugged.

"How were you feeling? Before the accident."

"Fine." God. That sounded like a lie, even to him. He'd been nervous as hell. Not sure what he expected from Aaron, but determined to see him anyway.

The quiet click of the door in the ensuing silence frayed Joel's nerves. That it was Aaron returning did nothing to calm him.

The nurse shook her head but the grin turned into a full-blown smile when Aaron sat on the bed next to him.

Aaron linked their fingers, ignoring the tug from Joel. He pulled at his hand again and this time Aaron turned narrowed eyes on him, freezing him in place.

Jill cleared her throat. "Right then, when you're ready to go, you're a free man. Doctor's orders say to take it easy, no work, let your young man here give you some TLC, and you'll be fine in a few days."

"He's not my man." *Wishful thinking.*

Aaron grunted. "I will take him out of here as soon as he gets dressed."

Joel glanced at Aaron, barely registering the giggle from the retreating nurse. "Is Amy coming?"

"She said she would see you when we got home." Aaron opened the closet door, pulled out a set of scrubs and Joel's shoes, tossing them on the foot of the bed.

Home. Joel smiled at the thought, watching the other man fuss over him.

As Aaron gathered their phones from the bedside table, the doctor's instructions, the pain meds, Joel could see him giving the same attention in their home. The one that didn't exist yet, he reminded himself. The one that might never exist.

"Ready?"

When Aaron curled his fingers around the blanket, Joel tightened his grip on it. One thing he'd managed to figure out was that under the hospital gown was...nothing. Suddenly bashful, his grip turned white-knuckled. "I can manage."

"No. You cannot." Aaron gave a sharp tug and ripped the blanket from Joel's weak hands. He eased his fingers under Joel's legs, careful of the bruises mottling his skin. "Okay, *amore*. Swing your legs around and I will help."

Joel's face burned with embarrassment. He ground his teeth together. "I said —"

"I know what you said." Aaron put steady pressure to Joel's knees, shifting him even against his will.

I'm not a freaking invalid. Joel reached out to grasp the side rails, aching muscles screaming, his breath short from both the contact with Aaron and the pain. "Slow down."

"I go any slower and you will not be moving at all, *amore*." He must have looked a bit mulish, because when Aaron looked up at the silence, he laughed. "Focus, Joel. If you do good getting your clothes on, I have a surprise for you."

It took twenty minutes but Joel now sat on the edge of the bed, dressed, and sucking in air like a dying man. He kept his gaze on the floor, counting the flecks in the tile between his feet. Aaron squatted on the ground at his feet, smoothed his hands along Joel's thighs, setting them trembling.

Aaron cocked his head, searching Joel's face. "Okay now?"

"You said a surprise?"

The smile that spread across Aaron's face would have stolen Joel's heart if it hadn't been his already. Aaron dropped forwards onto his knees, raised himself up to a breath away from Joel's lips. His brown eyes locked with Joel's, his expression suddenly very serious.

"Ti amo. Always, amore." Aaron closed the distance, settling his lips on Joel's mouth.

God, he feels good. Joel leant into the kiss, opened when Aaron nipped the corner, met him stroke for stroke with his tongue. The kiss deepened, hardening his cock as he pressed closer to Aaron's erection.

Joel clutched at Aaron's T-shirt, tried to climb under his skin. Pain shot through his body as it protested his movements. He moaned and Aaron immediately stilled.

Aaron's breath puffed across his lips when they pulled apart, intensifying the tingle left there by Aaron's demanding kiss. Aaron dropped a soft kiss to his nose. "And because I am not letting you out of my sight again, you get to see my flat."

Joel quirked an eyebrow. "That's my surprise?"

"Something of a let-down, yes?"

Joel laughed, shaking his head. "Let's go."

Chapter Four

Aaron stood with his back to his door, his keys jingling in his hand as he waited for Joel to move past the foyer. He peeked around the other man, assessing the living room. It didn't look bad. The only mess was the newspaper and his coffee cup from the previous morning.

The black leather couch and chair were relatively new and the glass coffee table was clean. He thought the fifty-inch flat-screen TV was overkill but Amelia assured him it wasn't. Getting worried, he leant around to see Joel's face.

Stunned. That's how he looked.

Aaron ran his hand down Joel's back. He leant into Aaron's touch so Aaron moved in closer, pressed along his back, rested his cheek next to Joel's. "Hey. Everything okay, *amore*?"

"This is wonderful." Joel's shoulders drooped. "I'll hate to leave in a couple of days."

"Mmm." Aaron stepped around him, snagging the bag they'd stopped for from Joel's fingers. "I will clear out a couple of drawers and some hangers."

"I won't need it."

Aaron sighed. "Okay. It will be there when you are ready."

Joel stayed in the foyer, looking first one way then the next. Silent.

Leaving Joel to shuffle at his own pace, Aaron tossed the bag on his bed, then slumped down beside it, his elbows on his knees and his head in his hands. He heard the soft footsteps on the carpet but still flinched when Joel touched his shoulder.

"If I'm too much, I can stay at my place."

Aaron lifted his head, raw emotion racing through his body, pent-up yearning breaking the short leash he kept it on. "Too much? *Amore*, you are not giving me enough."

Joel's brow scrunched. "What?"

Aaron caught Joel's hand with his, pulling him around to stand between his legs. He pressed his face to Joel's stomach, wrapped his arms around Joel's waist to hold him close. "I want so much. But I know you are afraid and I don't want to rush you."

Joel slid his fingers into Aaron's hair, tangling them there, tilting his head back to see his eyes. "I'm afraid because I want just as much."

Aaron's breath caught.

Joel smoothed his thumbs over Aaron's cheeks. "I want you but I don't want to be hurt by you." He paused. "I wouldn't survive that, I don't think."

Aaron leant forwards, pressing a kiss against Joel's stomach. He nuzzled the cotton shirt separating them, revelling in the heat emanating from Joel's body. "I can tell you all day long that I will not hurt you, but the odds are I will. Not intentionally, and not for long, but I will always apologise and I will always do better."

Joel petted Aaron's hair, drifting one hand down to cup the nape of his neck. "I can live with that."

"And I *can* promise I will love you always." Aaron looked up, brown eyes meeting blue, solid and real. "I have loved you from the beginning. That will not change now, *amore*."

A low growl rolled from Joel's chest and he gave Aaron a shove backwards onto the bed. Carefully, gingerly, he followed. Aaron held up a hand between them. "You lie down, take it easy, *amore*. Let me do the work."

Joel grimaced as he lowered himself to the bed. "I think you're right. I'm not so ready for heavy action."

Aaron smiled at him, the urge to pamper Joel nearly overwhelming. He'd almost lost the man stretched out in front of him. Wasting another minute waiting to touch Joel like he deserved was beyond Aaron at this point.

Smoothing his hands up Joel's legs, he kneaded the tender muscles, working some of the tension from them. He slid his hands to Joel's waist, tapping his hips to get him to lift up.

Joel watched him through heavy-lidded eyes and Aaron knew this would be an exercise in self-restraint. After he had tossed the pants to the floor, he eased Joel's shirt up his chest, supporting his back to pull it over his head.

Aaron sat on his heels and appreciated the view. Joel shifted one knee outward, giving Aaron a better look at the tight hole clenched between his cheeks. Aaron's mouth watered at the thought of tasting him again but he swallowed and kept to his plan.

He leant over Joel, relishing the little moans and sighs when he skimmed his lips over each bruise, each cut. Aaron took his time, licking and kissing every inch of skin he could reach.

"Are you trying to relax me or kill me?" Joel's voice was rough, desire-ridden.

Aaron grinned against his current obsession, the smooth patch of skin at Joel's hip. "Just taking my time."

Joel shifted his hips, brushing his erection over Aaron's cheek. "There is another part of me that's aching and you haven't even touched it yet."

The glistening drop of pre cum on the tip of Joel's cock caught Aaron's attention. He snaked his tongue out and licked it off, sliding his tongue around the engorged head.

Joel's entire body jerked, bringing both a moan and hiss.

Aaron lifted his head to watch Joel's face, looking for any sign of serious discomfort. "If this hurts you, you have to tell me, *amore*. Otherwise, I stop now."

Joel nodded furiously. "I'm fine. Don't stop. *God*, don't stop."

Taking him at his word, Aaron sucked Joel's cock into his mouth, swallowing him down to his root. The moan this time was gut-deep and filled with pleasure.

Aaron closed his eyes, thoroughly enjoying the taste of his man. He pulled up Joel's shaft, sucking and swirling his tongue along the vein running along Joel's cock. Aaron tongued the slit at the tip before sinking back down the silky length, picking up a slow, tortuous rhythm that had Joel cursing and writhing on the bed under him in minutes.

"Fuck. Fuck." Joel arched his hips, pushing his cock deep into Aaron's throat. "Coming..."

Aaron groaned with his mouth full of Joel as heat and tang flooded his tongue. He swallowed everything he could, licking the rest from the softening cock before releasing Joel completely.

He looked up into Joel's face, sweat-streaked and flushed. Joel's breathing was laboured and he wasn't moving. Concern trumped satisfaction instantly. "*Amore?*"

Joel cracked his eyes open. "What?"

Aaron rested his head against Joel's stomach with a choked laugh. "Christ, you scared the hell out of me. I thought I hurt you."

"Oh, no. I'm way fine." Joel's words were slurred, sleepy.

Aaron stood from the bed, removed his clothes. He wriggled the sheet and blanket out from under Joel and spooned in behind him. Aaron's erection fit perfect in the crevice of Joel's ass, nestled between the two firm globes.

Joel shifted, rubbing against Aaron. "Want me to take care of that?"

"Shush. You're in no shape to worry about me." Aaron ground his teeth together, trying to keep his hands from straying down Joel's body to his ass. If that happened, only a miracle would keep him from pushing into the tight heat and filling Joel with his cock.

"You know, you're right. My throat's raw and when I recover from that mind-blowing orgasm, my body will be aching... so you go ahead and take care of it. I'll just watch."

Aaron squeezed his eyes shut. Just the thought of Joel watching him jack-off had pre cum leaking from his cock. "Oh shit."

Joel wiggled his ass again. "C'mon, baby. Let me see you come undone."

Aaron couldn't control his breathing or his actions, apparently. He rolled onto his back, panting, waiting for Joel to get situated next to him. When Joel nodded, Aaron slid his hands up his thighs, grazing his fingers along the quivering skin next to his dick.

He moaned, low in his throat, as he wrapped one hand around his shaft and used the other to massage his balls, rolling them between his fingers. Aaron slowly pumped one stroke, wanting to draw it out, but an impatient noise from Joel urged him to pick up the pace.

Quick, short strokes along his cock brought him close but it was when Joel leant over, sucking the head of Aaron's prick into his mouth, that Aaron soared over the edge. He bowed up into the heat, emptying his seed down Joel's throat.

"Christ." Aaron shifted, helping Joel slide up to share his pillow. He gripped the back of Joel's head, held him steady for another long kiss, pushing his tongue into Joel's mouth to tangle with the heat of Joel's tongue. "If just jacking-off with you is that good, I can't wait to fuck you."

Joel moaned. "God, the day I'm ready to do that, I'll be waiting for you, naked."

Aaron kissed him again, ruffling Joel's hair with his fingers. "I can hardly wait, *amore*." He tucked one knee between Joel's and wrapped an arm around his waist.

Joel snuggled against Aaron's hair.

"*Ti amo, amore*."

There was no answer, but Aaron hadn't expected one.

* * * *

“God, you look fucking gorgeous like that.”

Aaron snatched a towel, wiping up spilled chocolate, glaring at Joel across the room. “It makes you happy to startle me, *amore?*”

“I live for it.” Joel nodded his head, a small grin tipping the corners of his mouth.

Aaron paused in his clean-up to stare. There was something different in the expression, something...new.

Confidence.

Even though they’d been inseparable for the last two weeks, Joel had kept a barrier between them. Something invisible, something Aaron wished with all his heart he could fix. But he wasn’t the one who needed to fix it. “Did you need something?”

Joel nodded again.

“Cat got your tongue?”

One eyebrow rose, lending an amused air to Joel’s demeanour.

Oh fuck, am I in trouble. An insecure Joel had Aaron wanting to beg Joel for his ass. A secure one had Aaron wanting to bend over and beg for his cock.

He must have made a sound because Joel’s eyes deepened, turning clear blue skies to the darkest, turbulent blue of the oceans. “Put away whatever you need to, Aaron.”

The rough demand from Joel launched Aaron into motion. He opened a drawer and scooped his tools into it, slid the ingredients to the edge of the counter against the wall. He was breathing hard when Joel finally stepped towards him.

Trailing his fingers along the stainless steel counter, Joel advanced on Aaron. And that was all it could be called. Aaron was being stalked, feeling each stroke of Joel’s fingers on the cool metal like it was across his own skin.

Joel stopped in front of Aaron, tilting his head, watching him. “You *do* love me, don’t you?”

Aaron wasn’t sure why it was still a question. He nodded. “Always, *amore.*”

Slowly, Joel reached to the first button of his work shirt and pushed it through the hole. Then a second, a third, on and on, until Joel’s shirt hung open, exposing creamy skin free of bruises.

Aaron sucked in a breath as Joel shouldered off the shirt, letting it drift to the ground.

“Remember what I said, that first night together?”

Aaron simply stared into the sparkling blue eyes of his lover. Waiting.

"When I was ready, I'd be waiting for you naked."

Aaron swallowed, nodded.

Joel flicked the button on his dress pants. With the same ease, he slid the zipper down, letting his erection free from the restriction. Already the swollen head of his cock was shiny with pre cum. "I wasn't sure if you understood that night if I meant more than physically."

Aaron's eyes drifted shut and he licked his lips, moistening the suddenly dry skin. He remembered. And he had known. It was the one thing standing between him and Joel. He met Joel's gaze again, watching the desire burn there. *Oh, sweet God, finally.*

Joel gripped his cock and stroked idly up and down, drawing Aaron's attention. With his free hand, he tugged at the drawstring on Aaron's pants, releasing them to fall around Aaron's ankles.

"What...what are we doing here, Joel?"

Joel's hand wrapped around Aaron's cock but otherwise didn't move. "You've never asked about me – financially."

Aaron's forehead crinkled. "What?"

"Why haven't you asked? I would have thought you'd be concerned about me supporting myself." Joel's voice cracked at the end.

"No, *amore*." Aaron replaced Joel's hold with his own on Joel's prick, pumping the engorged length with firm strokes. "Rich or poor, you are mine. You should get used to that."

Joel thrust his hips forwards, and started moving along Aaron's dick with the same motions. His head fell back, leaving the long expanse of smooth skin open for Aaron to enjoy. "I have money. Lots of it."

"*Amore*." Aaron leant forwards to lick the hollow at the base of Joel's throat, the spot too tempting to leave alone. "*Ti amo*. But I do not care about your money. Do whatever you want with it. I make enough with the bakery for us to be more than comfortable, even if you want to live in your house and not here in the flat."

Joel's breathing hitched and he wrapped an arm around Aaron's shoulders. "Aaron. Baby. Fuck me."

Aaron chuckled. "Are we finished talking now?"

"Hell yes." Joel squirmed in Aaron's arms. "Please, *fuck me*."

It wasn't the words that spurred Aaron into gear, but the emotion behind them. "Turn."

Joel released Aaron's cock to spin and brace his hands against the wall, his pants falling to his ankles. "There's a counter, you know."

"We are *not* fucking on my baking counter. I would have to sterilise it and do you know how much of a pain in the ass that is?" Aaron was babbling, but he couldn't stop the useless flow of words to save his life. Fuck. "First you have to bleach it, then wash it—"

"Aaron."

"I know." Aaron took a step forward and almost fell on his face. Gritting his teeth, he kicked his shoes and pants to the side.

Joel looked over his shoulder. "You've got two seconds to get moving here or I'm going home and taking care of this myself."

Aaron's cheeks heated with the mental picture. "While that sounds really fucking good, *amore*, I would much rather feel you come on my cock while you scream my name." Aaron dropped to his knees behind Joel, smoothing his hands over the firm globes of Joel's ass, the muscles clenching under the pass of his fingers. "Lube?"

"Pants pocket."

"Condom?"

"Same."

"Good boy." Aaron pressed a kiss to one cheek, nipped the other.

Joel wiggled, pushing back towards Aaron's mouth. "Please," he begged.

Aaron reached down and pulled the small packet of lube from the rear pocket of Joel's pants. "One packet? Not planning on much, were you?"

"I figured we'd head back to my house after we christened your kitchen." Joel grinned at him over his shoulder.

Aaron smiled back. "Too right." He ripped the tip off and squeezed the slick onto his fingers. They both moaned at his first touch to the pucker pulsing in front of him.

He swirled his finger, tapped the rim, then pushed into the tight heat clutching at his fingertip. Aaron pulled out then pushed in further, out, then in again, brushing his knuckle against Joel's gland.

Joel rocked back, taking more of Aaron's finger, begging prettily for more.

Aaron obliged with two fingers, working Joel's hole, adding a third and loosening him until Joel was incoherent, thrusting onto Aaron's hand. Aaron shifted his other hand, pushing his thumb in with the three fingers, stretching Joel open.

Joel moaned, shifted his hips again. "Fuck me. Fuck me. *Please.*"

Aaron leant forwards on his next press in and licked the heated edge of Joel's hole, bringing Joel howling back against his lips.

"Jesus Christ, Aaron, *now!*"

With the same urgency, Aaron released Joel and ripped open the condom pack, slicking the latex on and rising behind Joel. He lined his cock up with Joel's flexing asshole and pushed in, seating himself in one stroke.

The muscles in Joel's ass clamped down on Aaron's cock, wrenching a keening cry from deep in Aaron's gut. He sank his teeth into Joel's shoulder.

Joel lifted his leg, propping it on a nearby shelf, changing the angle of Aaron's strokes, riding Aaron's cock like he'd been doing it forever.

Aaron spread Joel's ass apart, pounding harder into Joel's channel. The ping of metal pans joined their harsh breathing and the slap of skin against skin. Sweat made Aaron's hands slide along Joel's hips, but he adjusted for a better grip and slammed forwards again, pegging Joel's gland every time.

Joel's back arched and he yelled Aaron's name as cum coated the wall in front of him.

At the first clench of Joel's ass on his cock, Aaron's balls drew tight and his orgasm exploded down his prick, Joel's release heavy in the air. "*Amore!*"

They collapsed against the wall, their chests heaving for much needed air.

Aaron braced his hands on the wall to either side of Joel's head as his cock slipped from Joel's still-pulsing hole. He brushed his lips to Joel's ear. "*Ti amo.*"

Joel sighed, a content grin spreading across his lips. "Yeah, I love you, too."

Aaron pressed a kiss to the bite mark on Joel's shoulder, knowing without a doubt all his dreams had come true.

About the Author

Hi all! Let's see, a little about me. I am an Army brat, which lends to my imagination...and I am a wife & mother of two energetic little boys, which gives me my sense of humour. I started writing in high school for the newspaper and have written steadily since then for my own enjoyment. I have lived a little of everywhere thanks to the travel bug I inherited from my dad, but currently am push-pinned in southeast Michigan. A typical day is a little crazy but I always work in writing time and I love chatting with friends.

Email: em.woods.erotica@gmail.com

Em Woods loves to hear from readers. You can find her contact information, website and author biography at <http://www.total-e-bound.com>.

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