



This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, organizations, or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental and beyond the intent of either the author or the publisher.

Mr. Plum

COLOR BOX

An imprint of Torquere Press Publishers

PO Box 2545

Round Rock, TX 78680

Copyright 2011 by Sue Brown

Cover illustration by Alessia Brio

Published with permission

ISBN: 978-1-61040-212-5

www.torquerepress.com

All rights reserved, which includes the right to reproduce this book or portions thereof in any form whatsoever except as provided by the U.S. Copyright Law. For information address Torquere Press, Inc., PO Box 2545, Round Rock, TX 78680.

First Torquere Press Printing: April 2011

Printed in the USA

Mr. Plum
By Sue Brown

To the guys on platform 4 who save the lives of weary commuters with caffeine and a smile. Thank you so much.

Whenever Tom told the tale of how they got together, he started with the story of the laundrette and the boxers. Dave used to smile and pull him into a hug, but Dave never told Tom he was wrong. Well, there are some things you sacrifice for the sake of a quiet life.

It actually started with a takeaway coffee cup two months previously. If Dave was going to be totally accurate, he'd point out it was because of the cardboard sleeve of the cup, the one they used to stop your fingers burning, but then Tom would say his OCD was showing and tell him to shut up.

It was the color of the sleeve that Dave noticed, a deep plum that matched the stripe on the tie Tom was wearing. Dave always noticed things like that. He had a keen eye for detail. Dave was green with envy; he had never been given that sleeve. Plum was by far and away his favourite color, and yet the world and the coffee shop on the station had never seen fit to give him a plum sleeve on Dave's morning drink.

He didn't get it this time either. His was red. It was a deep red and it wasn't bad, but it wasn't plum and it made Dave grit his teeth in frustration. He could hardly demand that Kai, the barista with a huge smile who made him industrial strength coffee every morning at no extra charge, hunt through cardboard sleeves until he

found a plum one. Yeah, he could just see how well that would go down with the queue of bleary-eyed commuters behind him. So he just smiled thinly and, clutching his coffee, followed Mr. Plum, for want of a better name, out of the tiny coffee shop on platform four, to await the 8:50 to London Waterloo.

The lucky man wandered farther up the platform than Dave normally stood, his nose buried deep in his Kindle. He didn't seem to notice the covetous glances Dave had been casting at his coffee cup. The train arrived and they both got on, Mr. Plum in another carriage. Dave was lucky enough to find a seat, and he sat, sipping at his coffee, with the crimson sleeve around his cup. If the coffee tasted a little bitter to him, maybe that was just an added dash of sour grapes -- plum colored, of course.

Two days later, Dave swore miserably under his breath as he staggered up the stairs to the platform. Having been off work the previous day, enduring the torture of root canal work at the dentist, Dave was not in the best of moods. He was grumpy and hurting like hell, despite painkillers that the dentist had sworn would fell an ox. It had taken him a long time to get moving that morning, his whole face and jaw aching with the pain. It was 8:48 and he was too late to get a coffee. With the best will in the world, Kai couldn't move the line that quickly.

Miserably, Dave moved to his usual spot on the platform, waiting for the train to arrive. Lost his own world, Dave wasn't prepared for the cup of coffee that was thrust under his nose. He looked up to see Mr. Plum smiling at him.

"Kai thought you might be in need of this," he

said, holding out the cup. When Dave didn't take the cup immediately, his smile started to wobble. Dave noticed that Mr. Plum had a really nice smile, in fact he had a really gorgeous face. Warm, dark brown eyes and olive skin, framed by a crisp, dark-red cotton shirt. The tie had a red motif the same color as his shirt. This guy knew how to coordinate.

Mr. Plum started to withdraw the cup as the train pulled into the station. "Maybe I got the wrong person," he said uncertainly.

"No!" Seeing his caffeine disappearing, Dave made a grab for the cardboard cup, "I'm sorry, I'm not feeling so good this morning." Their fingers tangled briefly as he took the cup.

Having handed the coffee over to him, Mr. Plum's smile returned. "Kai said that. Hope you feel better tomorrow." He moved down the platform to his usual spot with a brief goodbye.

Dave stared after him for so long he almost forgot why he was standing on the platform and had to make a hasty scramble to get in before the doors closed. As he sat down, clutching his coffee in one hand and the free newspaper in the other, Dave mentally made a note to thank Kai and settle up with him on Monday. It wasn't the first time Kai had given out a free coffee if Dave felt his customer was in need, but Dave didn't like to take advantage of the generous barista.

He took a sip of the strong black coffee and for the first time, caught sight of the cardboard sleeve. The plum-colored cardboard sleeve. For the first time since he'd got up, there was a smile curving Dave's mouth, as he traced his fingers over the cup.

It was the weekend after that with no chance of settling up with Kai, but Monday morning, he arrived at the station bright and early to give Kai his money and maybe see Mr. Plum as well.

Kai grinned at him as he offered his money. "Good morning, sir, your usual?"

"Yes please, Kai, and I owe you for last Friday as well."

As he poured out the coffee, Kai said, "No, you don't. Your friend paid for it." As usual he was completing several orders at once.

Confused, Dave stammered, "My... friend?"

If possible Kai's smile grew even broader as he handed over the takeaway cup -- a blue sleeve this time - - to Dave and a mocha to the man behind. "Yes," he said, "The handsome one with the nice eyes."

Dave went crimson. "I, oh, yes," he stammered again, then he said, "He's not my friend."

Pushing another cup toward him, Kai grinned. "Then maybe he'd like to be. He's just walking up now. Have a nice day. You can pay me tomorrow. Yes ma'am, what would you like?" Kai asked a woman standing behind Dave.

The woman jostled around Dave as he stared vaguely at the two cups. "Are you finished?" she asked him brusquely.

"Er, yes," he said stupidly and moved out of her way, aware of Kai's smirk following him down the shop.

The cause of all his confusion had reached the door of the coffee shop. As Tom pushed open the door, Dave thrust the coffee at him.

"Here, this is for you."

The delighted look on Mr. Plum's face almost made the whole embarrassment worthwhile. Almost.

"Thank you," he said, shifting his paper under one

arm so he could cup both his hands around the hot coffee. It was chilly and Dave mirrored Mr. Plum's actions with his own cup. "Are you feeling better today?"

"Much, thanks." It was true. The pounding pain in Dave's jaw had decreased to a manageable level, although it still hurt to chew anything.

The woman who had been at the counter coughed loudly. "Have you finished here as well?"

Dave looked up and blushed again as he realized they were blocking the exit. "I'm sorry," he said, moving to one side.

"No problem," she responded, her tone distinctly more amused than before. To add to Dave's mortification she winked as she passed him.

Dave wanted the ground to open up and swallow him. Wildly, he contemplated never being able to use this station again. Maybe he'd have to get the bus to work.

The raised eyebrow on Mr. Plum's face didn't help. "Is there something I'm missing here?"

Thank God the train arrived just as Dave shook his head. "Well, see you tomorrow," he said, and moved away before he could embarrass himself further. Did that sound like he was asking, or was it just a friendly farewell?

"Wait."

He turned to see Mr. Plum (he was really going to have to stop calling the man that) jogging up to him. The train doors opened and to Dave's surprise the man got on with him, rather than moving down to his usual carriage, sitting down next to Dave as the train pulled away. They were lucky enough to get two seats together, a minor miracle on the commuter train. The man and woman opposite were engrossed in their phones and didn't

looked up as they sat down.

"So... um, my name is Tom," the man said as they sat down together. "I thought I'd introduce myself as we're a bit like old friends now."

Well, that was certainly better than calling the hot guy 'Mr. Plum.'

"Dave," he responded, "I'd shake hands but..." and he waggled his hot drink very carefully.

"Nice to meet you, Dave." Tom was smiling again, "Thanks for the coffee. It's bloody cold today."

"Kai gave it to me," admitted Dave, then flushed a little.

"He's always doing that," agreed Tom, apparently unperturbed, taking a swallow of his coffee. He moaned quietly.

Dave stared at him, then looked away quickly. Did Tom have any idea of the effect he was having on Dave? God, Dave hoped not. Oblivious to Dave's plight Tom loosened his scarf to reveal a dark blue shirt with a matching tie. Dave had a thing about throats. He was a guy, he always checked out the package, but if Dave was honest with himself, it was the throat and maybe a hint of chest hair that did it every time. Tom's throat looked just ready for him to bite.

"You have to dress very formally at your office," Dave blurted out to break the silence and then felt like a total tool.

His companion didn't seem to mind though, as he pulled a face. "I'm lucky they don't still expect a bowler hat and umbrella. Honestly, I swear they think dress-down Friday is undoing your top button."

Dave wanted to say that Tom was welcome to undo his top button and undo anything else he'd like to, but that was possibly a little forward on a packed commuter train.

"My office isn't bothered about dress code," Dave said, indicating his jeans, "We don't have any clients coming in, so we can wear what we like."

"You're so lucky." Tom looked up as more people squeezed on the train. "It's busy this morning," he observed. "I think I'm going to have to fight to get out of here."

"Where do you get off?" asked Dave. His coffee was almost finished and he was wishing he'd gotten the larger size. There wasn't enough caffeine in the world that could help him deal with a gorgeous man sitting next to him.

"Clapham Junction. I usually stand a bit further back because there's less of a crush and when I get off I'm right by the exit for the stairs. I have to run for my next train, otherwise there's twenty minute wait."

Feeling guilty even though Tom had been the one to get on with him, Dave immediately said, "I'm sorry if you miss your train today."

Tom turned to smile at him, large eyes trained on Dave. "It doesn't matter, just for one day."

Dave's insides turned to mush. He couldn't help smiling back, aware of the warmth of Tom pressed along his side. If anything Tom's smile grew brighter and Dave was sure Tom was pressing even closer. There was no doubt in Dave's mind that Tom was flirting with him, just a little. It wouldn't do any harm to flirt back.

"Have you finished with that, mate?"

Confused, Dave looked up to see the man opposite them pointing at Tom's newspaper which he'd tucked down the side of the seat.

"Uh, sure." Tom handed it over without protest, even though Dave knew he hadn't read it. Catching Dave's stare, Tom shrugged. "I can get another one and I'd rather talk to you."

No matter how hard he tried, Dave knew he wasn't hiding his pleasure at Tom's bald statement. Dave had never managed to be cool in his life.

"You have to get off very soon," Dave pointed out.

Looking up to see that his was the next stop, Tom leaned into Dave's space, his tone lowered. "Ah well, there's always tomorrow."

Speechless, Dave nodded. He'd just made a date. Okay, a packed commuter train wasn't exactly his idea of an ideal first date but he wasn't arguing.

"Tomorrow it is," agreed Tom as he got to his feet. "First one there gets the coffees." His eyes narrowed. "Team?"

"Wasps," Dave said.

Dave's eyes widened almost comically as Tom said, "Not football then." At Dave's nod, Tom added "I should have realized with a build like yours you'd be a rugby man."

"You?" Dave asked.

"Spurs. I was praying you weren't Chelsea or Arsenal 'cause then I wouldn't be able to talk to you."

"Get out of here." Dave grinned at him and pointed to the crush of people between Tom and the exit. "You'll miss your stop."

"See you tomorrow, Dave. Thanks for the coffee." Tom squeezed Dave's shoulder briefly and started pushing his way down the narrow gap between the seats.

Dave couldn't watch his progress without turning around, but nothing could erase the grin from Dave's face. For the first time in years he couldn't wait for tomorrow morning.

Oversleeping was not the way to start a new

relationship. It was 8:47 and Dave was haring toward the station. There just had to be a bunch of school kids in the way as he ran down the narrow pavement to the entrance. Why the hell weren't they in school where they belonged? He dodged around the kids in their blue check skirts and headed toward the ticket barrier, thanking God that today they were open and he could just run through them.

As he pounded up the steps Dave could hear the received pronunciation of the announcer apologising that the train was four minutes late. He could have kissed the woman with the strangled vowels. Gasping for breath, he reached the top of the stairs and staggered toward the coffee shop, hoping and praying Tom was still there and not pissed off with him.

He just wasn't that lucky though. There was no sign of Tom, either at the coffee shop or further up the platform. At that point the train arrived and Dave stumbled, miserable and sweaty, onto the train, lacking in caffeine and man. It was just typical of Dave's luck that the only guy he'd met in months disappeared just as he thought his luck was in.

Hump day. Enough said. Tom was standing in the queue in the coffee shop, eyes glued to the floor. He didn't even look up to place his order. As Dave reached the queue, Kai exchanged a concerned glance with him over Tom's shoulder. Yes, it had to be said. Tom was not a happy camper this Wednesday morning.

"Good morning." Dave said softly, touching Tom on his shoulder. He frowned as Tom flinched away at his touch.

"Morning," Tom muttered, handing over the money

to Kai. Dave pushed Tom's hand away and paid for his own gutrot plus Tom's mocha from Monday and today.

"Morning, sir," Kai greeted Dave as cheerfully as ever. "Your usual?"

"Please, Kai."

Tom ignored them both and left the coffee shop. Conscious that he was staring after Tom, Dave turned back to Kai.

"He doesn't look very happy," Kai said quietly.

"No," agreed Dave and left it at that. The instruction was clear. *Go and sort out your boy*. And just when had Tom become his boy?

He walked up to Tom, who was waiting on the platform in his usual place, his eyes rooted to the ground. "Sorry about yesterday. I overslept. But I didn't see you, anyway." There was a pause and then when Tom didn't respond, he said, "I... um, well, see you around." Dave started to walk away.

Fortunately, it seemed to provoke a response and Tom laid a hand on Dave's arm. "No, wait. I'm sorry. It's... been a bad week for me, and I was taking it out on you. I'm sorry." For the first time he looked up and Dave could see the black smudges under his eyes.

The anger that had started to eat at Dave changed to concern. As the train doors opened, he guided Tom onto the train, a warm hand at Tom's back. "What's happened?" he asked, as they sat down. This time they weren't sitting opposite anyone else.

As Tom took a sip of his coffee, Dave noticed his hands were shaking. "I was mugged on the way home from the station Monday night."

"Oh God, I'm so sorry, Tom." Dave was appalled.

"Me, too. It's only a few cuts and bruises but he gave me a kick to the ribs. Even breathing in is a bit painful. I'm okay though."

"Why are you here? Why aren't you at home in bed?" Dave laid a hand on Tom's thigh, not caring if anyone else saw. It was oddly liberating not to care.

Tom took a sip of his coffee. He didn't seem bothered by Dave's hand on him this time, so Dave left it there.

"I'm fine. I'm just pissed off, that's all."

"What did the police say?"

"I haven't reported it. I didn't see much point."

"Why on earth not? You were assaulted and robbed, for Christ's sake." Dave was astounded.

"I'm six foot two and built like a brick shithouse. Do you think the police are going to be bothered about a minor mugging?" Tom asked, sounding exhausted. Leaning against the scratched glass of the window, he closed his eyes.

Dave didn't push Tom any further and left him to rest as they went through the stations, his hand still lying on Tom's leg. By the time they reached Clapham Junction, Tom was almost asleep. Almost regretfully Dave shook him awake.

"Tom?" At the bleary nod that Tom managed, Dave said, "It's your stop. Why don't you get off here and go home?" Dave hoped Tom understood how concerned he was.

"I'll go in for a while. I'm almost here now. See you tomorrow," Tom mumbled and got to his feet. "Thanks." It was obvious he could barely stand.

Biting back a *moron* under his breath. Dave sighed. It wouldn't be appreciated. "You're an idiot but okay, I can't force you to go home. Just don't come in tomorrow if you're still feeling rough."

"Sure." Tom said shortly, "Thanks for the coffee." Leaving the cup behind on the floor as if it was empty, he bade farewell to Dave.

Dave decided not to point out Tom hadn't had more

than a mouthful. He said goodbye and watched Tom as he left the train, seeing him wince as he had to twist to get around a couple of commuters, Dave kept watching him as he went down the stairs to the subway until he was out of sight, swallowed up by the morning commuters. As the train moved away, Dave picked up Tom's cup to stop it leaking over the floor. He could dump it later. It was useless to worry about the man. Dave didn't have Tom's phone number; in all honesty he didn't even really know Tom that well. He would just have to hope the man would be all right.

He wasn't going to admit that the sight of Tom waking toward him the following Monday made him breathe easier for the first time since he'd seen Tom limp away the previous week. The man hadn't been at the station Thursday or Friday, which was unsurprising really, and it had left Dave worried and unsettled all weekend.

As he paid Kai for his morning life-saver, a broad grin spread across the barista's face and he poured another cup.

"He's back this morning," Kai informed Dave, nodding over his shoulder. Dave looked over to see Tom dodging umbrellas as he jogged toward the coffee shop.

Dave couldn't stop the smile that spread across his own face. He dug out some more change and paid for both coffees. Tom had just gotten inside the door when he spotted Dave coming toward him, a cup in either hand and a paper tucked under his arm.

"You're looking better," Dave greeted him and handed over the takeaway cup with the orange sleeve.

Tom grinned back, his face looking more relaxed and

not etched with lines of pain like it had last Wednesday. "Thanks, but next time it's my turn." he said, accepting his drink, "God, I felt like shit last week. Work sent me home and told me not to come back until today."

"At least they had some sense," Dave said pointedly.

"Yes, mum." Tom pulled a face at Dave and sipped his coffee with a contented sigh.

They wandered onto the platform as the announcer called their train. It was still raining hard and platform four was filled with people shaking their umbrellas before closing them.

"Where shall we stand today?" Tom asked.

"It doesn't matter to me. Let's go down to your space," Dave decided and they grinned conspiratorially at each other, like small boys up to mischief.

That really set the tone for the next couple of weeks. They met on the station concourse sometimes, if they were both running late. Mainly they conducted their relationship in front of the commuter crowd for the 8:50 to London Waterloo. It was both fun and extremely frustrating for Dave. They talked sports; Dave hated football with a passion, but Tom could talk passably about rugby. They both thought cricket was boring but confessed to watching the Ashes. They discussed books and films; that was a short conversation until they found common ground in Lord of the Rings. It was like going on dates but without the making out and Dave's right hand was getting a lot of use.

It wasn't like Dave could actually pin Tom up against the timetable and kiss him senseless. He was convinced Tom was gay but they'd never actually had that conversation. Dave was leary of starting with, "So, do you like dick?" but the time was fast approaching when Dave needed more than a wank after he got into work. Neither of them were shy by nature; Dave wasn't sure

what was holding them both back. It just hadn't seemed the right time. Tom was working a big project which was just about to go live. Sometimes the man didn't get home before ten at night. He was going to ask Tom out on a date, but he'd wait until Tom's project was over first. The last thing he wanted was for Tom to fall asleep before they got to the making out.

Monday morning was dark and cold, with the rain sheeting down, leaving passengers cold and shivering as they waited for their train, some of them using their coffee cups to keep warm. Dave was thinking to *hell with it* and was going to broach the subject when Tom took him literally by the arm and guided him toward a quiet spot on the platform.

"The thing is, I'm going away on a business trip for a few days. But when I get back, if I asked you out, would you punch me in the face?" he said, before Dave had time to process what was happening.

"Er, no," Dave said cautiously. "For a drink or on a date?" In for a penny, in for a pound. A drink was fine, but sex was even better.

"I was thinking a drink first, but y'know, if a date means putting out, I was hoping you might blow me afterward." Tom grinned cheekily, but Dave could see the hint of uncertainty in his eyes. It made Dave feel better that he wasn't the only one suffering from nerves.

Dave returned the grin. "And what do I get as a reward?"

Tom's response was delayed by an announcement for their train, and he didn't seem in any hurry to answer as they sat down. The carriage windows were steamed up and Dave handed his cup over to Tom as he wriggled

uncomfortably out of his wet coat. He hated sitting in a damp coat all the way to Waterloo. As he took his cup back it suddenly struck him. He hadn't needed to ask Tom to hold his drink. In the past few weeks, Tom had become used to Dave's routine, just as Dave knew Tom loved it when Dave handed him the free newspaper with the mocha. They knew that much about each other already.

"So?" he asked when he had swallowed some coffee.

Raising an eyebrow, Tom made a *hmmm* noise.

"You know what I'm asking," Dave insisted, licking his bottom lip nervously.

"Remind me." Tom's voice dropped and the look in his eyes suggested he knew *exactly* what Dave was talking about.

Dave rolled his eyes. "First, we have a drink," he leaned a bit closer to Tom, lowering his own voice as he said, "Then I blow you, and then..."

"And then..." Tom moved closer as if he was just trying to make himself heard above the noise of the train. "I want you to fuck me. Is that okay?"

Oh yes, that was just fine with Dave and he shivered in anticipation. From the smug look in his eyes as Tom sat back and finished his coffee, he thought it was just fine, too.

The sound of his phone vibrating across his bedside table disturbed Dave just as he was dozing off. Without opening his eyes, Dave fumbled around, desperately trying to find the mobile before it fell on to the floor.

"Mumpf," he mumbled.

"Hi," a sleepy voice said. "Did I wake you up?"

"Umph," Dave managed, trying to clear his mind

enough to hold a conversation with Tom. He hadn't seen Tom for a couple of days as the man had been on a business trip to Birmingham. They'd exchanged numbers before he went and had texted a few times, mainly it was Tom ranting about how boring the meetings were, but this was the first time they'd actually spoken to each other. Tom's voice was warm and relaxed and Dave almost snuggled into his phone.

"Sorry, I forgot how late it is. I'll give you a ring tomorrow." Tom apologised and seemed ready to hang up.

"No, don't go. I'm sorry. Hold on." Yawning as he forced himself up into a sitting position, Dave rubbed at his eyes. He didn't want to miss talking to Tom, even if it was disturbing his sleep. "Um, sorry, how are you? Are you back?"

He heard a sigh and then a thump as if Tom had just sat heavily on his bed. "I am, baby. God, I'm tired."

Dave wanted to call Tom on the *baby* because he was nobody's baby, but Tom sounded as if he was just wanting his bed. It warmed Dave that Tom had taken the trouble to ring him.

"Go to sleep, Tom. I'll see you in the morning?" It was a question and Dave was well aware how hopeful he sounded.

"Yeah." It came out on a long exhale, "Looking forward to it. I've missed you."

"I've missed you, too." And he had. Much more than he'd expected. For a man Dave only saw on the platform on the way to work, Tom had wormed his way into Dave's life and lodged himself securely in Dave's heart. They hadn't even kissed for heaven's sake. Dave was hoping to rectify that tomorrow night.

There was a pause where Dave could hear muffled noises and then, "That's better. I'm in bed now." He

heard a soft sigh and imagined Tom settling back against his pillow.

"Naked?" The second it was out of his mouth, Dave wished he could take it back. The soft chuckle in his ear made his cheeks flame in the darkness, despite no one being able to see him.

"Naked," agreed Tom. "Just me and my Batman duvet."

"Batman?" Dave scoffed, thankful for the distraction from the thought of Tom, naked and warm. All that olive skin just waiting to be tasted. Almost unbidden, the tips of his fingers slipped under the waistband of his pajamas. He bit his lip. Tom didn't need to know that just talking to him made Dave hard.

"Don't diss Batman. He's better than Superman any day. Anyway, you've probably got a boring cover."

Dave smiled at he thought about his duvet cover. Boring yes, but as he thought about Tom laid out on his bed, dark brown hair framed against the plum of his bedcovers, Dave gripped his cock tightly. He wasn't a fourteen year old, he could survive more than a couple of lines and pornographic sequence playing out in his mind.

"I thought we could go out tomorrow night," Tom said, breaking into Dave's frantic concentration.

"Er... sure, where do you want to go?" Dave breathed through the desire to come all over his fist.

"Takeaway, film, your bed?"

"God, yes," Dave said so quickly that Tom chuckled again. It was doing nothing for his control.

"I wish I was there now." Tom's voice sound low and seductive, with a hint of regret.

Dave let out a low moan. He couldn't help it and he heard an answering one on the other end of the line.

"Fuck, don't do that," Tom whispered shakily.

"You're the one talking about being in my bed," Dave pointed out, his hand still gripping his cock.

He settled back against the bed and stroked himself a couple of times, breathing hard as the long, slow strokes made his toes curl. Raising his arse a little, he pulled his pajama bottoms down to avoid getting them covered in spunk.

"I wish I could see you touching yourself." Tom's tone was soft and wistful.

"Tomorrow," Dave promised. "Want to hear you come as well. Please?" he asked, stroking harder, not afraid now to let out the grunts as the familiar feeling started curling in the base of his spine.

A faint slapping noise let him know that Tom was fully on board with the idea and he lay back, content just to listen and feel in the darkness. Tom's noises grew louder and more guttural as his orgasm approached. Dave felt as if he were balanced on a precipice, desperate to come, yet wanting to wait for Tom to join him.

"Need to come," he bit out, his balls tight and screaming for release.

"Almost. There. Almost, fuck nearly. Now," Tom panted out.

Finally given permission, Dave let go, a sharp tug all that was needed to push him over, his cock pulsing in his hand, splattering semen over his belly. Frantically, Dave tried to prevent it getting on the sheets, one hand flailing out for tissues almost before he had stopped coming. In his ear, he could hear Tom's shout and gasps as he reached his own climax.

"Mmmm," Tom yawned in his hear, sounding sleepy and spent. "Thank you. I needed that."

Dave smiled, wishing he could see Tom all fucked-out and pliant. "My pleasure. Go to sleep. I'll talk to you

tomorrow about timings."

"Can't wait."

Tom sounded as if he was almost asleep, and Dave spent a few minutes just listening to the soft breathing in his ear and the knowledge that tomorrow they'd take the next step.

Saturday was Dave's housework day. He had to admit to being excessively tidy. OCD had been bandied about more than once by frustrated boyfriends. Dave tried, he really did, but the thought of something out of place, or a dirty cup left on the coffee table, drove him insane. Saturdays were used to clean, shop, and do his laundry. The kitchen of his studio flat was too small to hold a washing machine and a dryer, so he spent a couple of hours every Saturday catching up on his reading as his washing tumbled around.

This Saturday was no different, but this time Dave was filled with an excitement that he hadn't had in a long time. It had been nearly a year since his last relationship, six months since his last hook up, and anyway, he rarely brought dates back to his flat. Tom was different. He wasn't just a hook up. It was too soon to call it a relationship, but Dave was aware of the hope bubbling in his chest, not to mention the fact he was walking around with a permanent boner.

By four o'clock he was back in the flat. Tom hadn't called, which was surprising, but the bloke had been exhausted, he probably wasn't in the mood for talking to anyone just yet. Opening the small drawer in the kitchen, Dave flicked through the takeaway menus, eventually putting them to one side. He had no idea what Tom like to eat, let alone if he was allergic to anything.

Dave remade the bed, graphic images rolling through his mind of Tom splayed out on the plum sheets as he smoothed out the corners. The bedside drawer was stocked with lube and condoms and there were extra tissues on the bedside table.

At six, he was worried. He looked at his phone, but there was no missed call. He sat down and flicked on the TV, watching a little of last Sunday's Wasp's game to take his mind off the silence from Tom.

His mobile finally rang just before seven. Dave grabbed it and answered without looking at the caller ID.

"Hello, Tom, are you okay? I've been worried. I thought you'd ring earlier."

"I'm not Tom, honey. But I'd like to know more about him." The voice was amused, female and most definitely not the person he wanted to hear from.

Dave swallowed a sigh of disappointment and greeted his mother. "Hi Mum. I'm sorry, I thought you were someone else."

"Well, obviously." If an eyeroll could be seen over the phone, his mother would be doing it right now. "You have a new man in your life?"

Her tone was tentative and Dave knew she was trying hard not to ask all the questions that were buzzing around in her head. She was doing her best, he knew that. It was just... he hated discussing his love life with his mum. One minute they'd be talking about how he'd met the guy and the next she'd be giving him safe sex lectures. At twenty-nine, he pretty much thought he had that one covered.

"Mum, I'm expecting a call." He wasn't by now, but he just couldn't face a long call with his mother. "Could I give you a ring tomorrow evening? I promise to tell you all about him."

If there was anything to tell. Tonight was looking like it was going to be a no-show.

"Of course. Call me after eight, though." She sounded disappointed. That made two of them.

"I won't interrupt Corrie, I promise." He disconnected the call. Nations trembled at her wrath if she had to get up to answer the phone during the middle of Coronation Street.

Dave was left unsettled by her call. He knew that his mum would want to know all about Tom, and to be honest, he really knew very little beyond the social chit chat of their conversations on the train. He'd been hoping to change that tonight, although he'd hoped to get to know Tom in a whole different way, one he was *not* prepared to share with his mother. It was gone seven, though, and if Tom was going to turn up, Dave expected him to have called by now. Oh blow it! He was too old to be playing teenage games. Dave hit speed-dial for Tom's number.

It went straight to voicemail. "Tom, it's Dave. Are you coming 'round tonight? If you've decided to bail you could've at least let me know. Look, you know where I am if you want to call."

Hoping he hadn't come over as too desperate, Dave went to investigate the contents of his freezer. After discounting everything, including the Peking duck he'd been saving for a special occasion, Dave slumped miserably on the settee. He'd just thought that this time Tom had been the one, after all, it had been Tom who had flirted with him, Tom who had called him last night, Tom who had made him come harder than he had in a long time, just from talking in his ear.

By nine o'clock, Dave had been through worry and righteous anger. He didn't even know where Tom lived to see if he was all right. Now he was working his way

into self-pity with the help of a six pack. Fuzzy brained and fuzzy toed, he stared miserably into his beer can. He'd been stood up before. Why the hell should he care so much about this one?

Because it was Tom and he really *liked* Tom.

Well, he wasn't missing his train on Monday morning. It was his train and he was damned if he was getting another one just to avoid that asshole. It was going to be difficult to avoid Tom in the coffee shop. Maybe he'd just get a coffee at Waterloo. At least for a couple of days.

By Monday morning however, Dave had managed to get over his hangover and had worked his way back to angry again. As he arrived at the station, Dave was determined to get a drink from Kai's whether Tom was there or not. With ten minutes to spare, he had plenty of time to get a cup of really strong, black coffee. There was no sign of the bastard in the queue as he waited.

The huge smirk on Kai's face faded quickly as he looked at Dave. Without even asking, he pushed a large, steaming black coffee toward him.

"It didn't go so well?" he asked, as he took Dave's money.

"You could say that," agreed Dave. "It might have done, if he'd actually turned up." He knew he was being bitchy, but honestly, he didn't care.

"He didn't even phone?" Kai looked outraged for him, which made Dave feel slightly better, but he knew the expression that followed. Dave gritted his teeth. He really didn't need the pity.

"It's not important, Kai." Dave noticed Kai didn't make any suggestions about taking one for Tom. Shame, really, he would be happy to buy the largest mocha available and dump it over Tom's head.

"Whatever you say," agreed Kai as he greeted the

woman behind with, "Tea, madam or will it be hot chocolate today?"

Dave said goodbye and went out to wait for his train. Tom wasn't on the platform and, by the time the train appeared, there was still no sign of him. It was inevitable really. The man was hardly going to turn up, all smiles, when he'd stood Dave up on Saturday night.

He managed to get through the day, although his colleagues mentioned he seemed a little distracted. Dave apologised and tried to drag his attention back to the schematics in front of him. By the time Dave got home, there was still no call from Tom and he'd had enough of Monday. He'd hardly slept Saturday or Sunday night, despite drinking enough to fell an ox.

Kai looked a little puzzled on Tuesday. "He didn't get the train yesterday, and I haven't seen him today," he informed Dave.

The little knot of worry settled in Dave's stomach again but he pushed aside. "I'm sure he's fine," he said, his tone clearly that of someone ending the conversation.

He couldn't help wondering though. Tom still had to work. It was worrying that he hadn't turned up at all.

The laundrette was almost empty on Saturday morning. Most people came in later after a lie-in. It suited Dave to get the chore out of the way. Not that he had anything else to do today. There was a local rugby game that he might go to later in the day, but he wasn't that enthusiastic.

It didn't take long to wash his shirts and underwear. He read his latest find from the local charity shop as the machine spun around. Dave had a passion for old paperback classics and the charity shops were a great

hunting ground. When the cycle was complete, he emptied the machine, transferring his clothes to the dryer. After another wait, he emptied the machine, carefully folding the shirts. He was doing the same to his boxers when the door to the laundrette opened.

"I might have known you'd have purple boxers," Tom chuckled from behind him.

Dave didn't bother to turn around. "They're plum," he corrected and carried on folding them.

"Of course they are," Tom agreed and was silent, waiting until Dave had finished before he moved any closer, only to sit on the wooden bench in the middle of the laundrette. Dave didn't look at him. "I'm sorry," Tom said quietly.

Tom did a lot of quiet, Dave thought snarkily, a whole week's worth.

"I know you must be pissed off with me," Tom said suddenly.

"You think?" Dave asked. He didn't want to lose it. Not yet. He wanted the explanation before he punched Tom in the face.

"There is a reason I couldn't show on Saturday night," Tom insisted.

"And a reason you couldn't call -- for an entire week?"

"Actually yes." His tone made Dave look at Tom for the first time. He looked awful. Not as bad as when he was mugged but still wan under the olive-tinted skin, dark smudges under his eyes.

Dave sat down beside Tom. "You don't look too good," he said eventually. "What happened this time?"

Running fingers through his hair, Tom sighed. "I'm not ill, but it's been a shit week."

"What happened?" Resisting the urge to thread his fingers through Tom's, Dave clasped his hands loosely

in his lap. Out of the corner of his eye, Dave could see Tom's hand twitch as if he too wanted to hold hands.

"We all got made redundant Saturday morning. I got a phone call at eight in the morning insisting I come into work. The firm wanted to let the staff know before the business papers got hold of it on Monday. Some old-fashioned sense of morality. Looking after the staff before they shaft us." Tom's lips twisted wryly. "It turns out we weren't doing as well as the partners were telling us. They'd been covering up the state of things for the last couple of years."

"God!" Dave stared at him open-mouthed. "That's awful. Why didn't you call me? I wouldn't have minded if you'd wanted to take a raincheck."

"Pretty awful," Tom agreed. "But they took my phone and my laptop, saying they were company property. I couldn't call you because your number was on my company phone and I didn't know your address."

At least that part was true. They hadn't exchanged addresses. And hell, Dave could forgive the man for missing their date. But Tom knew where he was every weekday morning. He said as much.

Tom nodded in agreement. "Yeah, I do, but Sunday and Monday I was in shock. I didn't even manage to get out of bed. Tuesday I was at the job centre, and the rest of the days I was trying to decide what to do next."

"So why bother now and how the hell did you know I'd be here?" Dave was tempted to refold his laundry just for something to do with his hands. He felt strangely restless and exposed standing so close to Tom.

"You told me, remember?"

Dave vaguely remembered telling Tom that he always spent Saturday morning in the laundrette in one of their chitchats.

"I wanted to tell you why I didn't show up, so I've

been hanging around here all morning until I saw you. Then I'd drunk so much coffee I needed a pee."

"I've been in here for over an hour." Dave said, and felt stupid.

"Yeah, well, it took me nearly an hour to get through the door," admitted Tom, color staining his cheekbones. He wouldn't meet Dave's eyes. "I wanted to talk to you, but I was scared you were going to tell me to fuck off."

"I want to," Dave agreed. "I don't care about last Saturday, but it's been a whole week. I had no idea if you were alive, dead, or just avoiding me."

Tom angled himself so that he was facing Dave, tucking his leg in front of him. It occurred to Dave that it was the first time he'd seen Tom in anything other than a suit and tie. The jeans he was wearing looked old and faded, but they fitted him really well. Part of Dave wanted Tom to stand up so that he could see what the man's arse looked like molded by the denim. Tom was also wearing a tight-fitting green sweater under his coat. For the first time, Dave caught sight of a few dark hairs poking over the v-neck and that lovely throat, making him drool inwardly. Then he got angry with himself for thinking with his dick instead of his head.

"I'm sorry for being so lame and not meeting you. I just didn't want to have this conversation on the platform, or worse, the coffee shop in front of Kai and the whole damned station. And there was no point in me buying a ticket when I didn't have anywhere to go." Tom huffed impatiently. "Jesus Christ, I haven't even kissed you yet and we're already having a make-up conversation."

Dave concealed a smile. Tom could obviously only be penitent for so long. "You could do something about that," he suggested.

"About what?" Tom frowned at him, clearly not

understanding.

"About the not kissing."

For the first time there was a glimmer of hope in Tom's eyes. "You've forgiven me enough to kiss and make-up?" he asked, leaning forward a little.

Dave's eyes flickered over to the doorway. There was still no one else here and the street outside was pretty empty. "We could try and I'll think about it." He felt a thrill as Tom's eyes darkened.

If Dave was expecting a quick, chaste make-up kiss in public he was sadly mistaken. There was nothing quick, certainly nothing chaste, and if the public were watching Tom obviously didn't give a hoot.

Tom took his time, deciding what angle to take, his eyes totally focused on Dave's mouth. Nervous, Dave's tongue flickered out to wet his dry lips.

"God!"

A single curse came from Tom and he wrapped a hand around Dave's head, pulling him closer. Tom set his mouth on Dave's mouth, hard and frantic initially, as if he were worried there was only going to be the one kiss. His lips gentled as Dave responded, their mouths opening to each other, tongues tangling and exploring. Tom tasted of mocha and faintly of toothpaste. Dave wanted to lick the coffee out of his mouth until all he could taste was the man underneath. His hands gripped Tom's jacket and he wasn't about to let go, not until Tom had apologised with his mouth, for giving Dave such a shitty week.

Finally they broke for air, resting their foreheads against each other as they gasped for breath. Tom bit down gently on Dave's bottom lip. "Fuck," he murmured.

"You can come home with me to do that," Dave said, hoping it didn't sound too much like begging.

Chuckling a little, Tom's hands tightened around Dave. "I really, really hoped you were going to say that."

It seemed like an eternity, but in reality it wasn't more than half an hour before they were in Dave's flat, Dave not caring for once as the bag of washing was dropped untidily in a corner in favour of frantic kisses as he tried to steer them over to the bed in the corner. Dave had pushed Tom's coat off his shoulders, hands were busy finding the warm skin under Tom's sweater. Tom didn't seem to have any objection to Dave's plan and was trying to be helpful by holding his arms up for Dave to push the soft green wool over his head.

The second it was out the way, Dave was busy kissing Tom's neck and throat while his hands were running over Tom's back and sides, pinching Tom's nipples through the mat of dark chest hair and generally trying to taste and touch every part of the man in front of him. Dave remembered that moment on the train when he had caught a glimpse of Tom's neck. Now he had it in front of him to explore, to rub his cheek against the roughened skin until his own was raw.

"Fuck, need to see you as well," Tom growled out as he shoved his leg between Dave's, giving out noises of approval as they mindlessly rutted against each other, gasping in approval at the pressure.

"Naked," Dave managed, his powers of speech drastically affected by trying to calm the need to come right the hell now.

Tom didn't seem much better off, but he let go of Dave long enough to attack his button and zipper. Both men were back in each other's arms the second the last sock went flying across the room to land on top of the CD rack.

They fit together, despite Dave being a few inches

shorter. He was well muscled and able to manhandle Tom onto the bed. Judging from Tom's wild expression as Dave straddled his hips, he didn't seem to mind being held down.

Dave couldn't believe that he finally had this man under him, writhing and thrusting up as Dave aligned their cocks together. He was stilled by Tom's hands on his hips.

"I seem to remember the first part of the deal was for you to blow me," Tom pointed out, with a nod in the direction of his cock, already leaving a sticky trail on his belly.

"I can do that," Dave agreed and slid down Tom's body, smirking at the loud groan his movement elicited.

Settling himself between Tom's legs, Dave pressed his face against the blood-warm skin of Tom's inner thigh. He could smell Tom, shower-gel and musk, and his tongue flicked out to lick a stripe up Tom's thigh. Tom petted Dave's hair, clutching and relaxing his fingers as Dave got closer to where Tom needed him to go.

"Please, Dave, please." Tom was begging and trying to direct him, but Dave was in no rush, taking his time to suck light hickeys into his thighs. Dave supposed he should have asked if Tom minded, but from the way Tom was pressing into his mouth the answer was probably no.

"Dave, please," Tom sounded strained as he curled a hand around his own cock.

"Nope, hands on the headboard," Dave ordered.

"You're killing me," Tom moaned, but he did as he was told.

It was a close call not to come right then as Dave watched the play of muscles under Tom's gorgeous skin.

Kiss by kiss, Dave inched up Tom's thighs until he

could lap at his balls, rolling them into his mouth, tugging on them gently, one at a time. He wanted to push Tom's thighs above his head and tongue the man until he was a senseless, begging mess but not everybody liked being rimmed. Next time, though, next time Dave would find out if he was allowed to do that.

He nearly broke his resolve when Tom spread his legs wider, giving him a much better view of his goal. Dave was a second away from flipping Tom over and burying his face in Tom's rounded arse when Tom made his own wants perfectly clear.

"Blow me, then fuck me. Now!" he said succinctly.

Dave saluted and did as he was told, sinking his mouth around Tom's cock without further preamble, discovering Tom was loud when he was getting a blowjob. Really loud. Urging Dave on with cursing and pleading, Tom wasn't quiet about telling Dave exactly what he wanted. Hoping his neighbours were already awake because he wasn't about to stop Tom now, Dave pulled back with a messy slurp.

"Don't stop, please don't stop, baby." Tom begged, pushing his hips up toward Dave's face. He didn't move his arms though.

"Shh," Dave soothed and pushed him back down, going back to the task at hand. "You've got a beautiful cock," he said before he sucked lightly on the head. And it was, thicker than Dave's, dark and flushed plum. Dave smiled around the head, his tongue explored the slit, the taste stronger there. The taste was hardwired directly to Dave's own arousal and he had to resist the urge to hump his way to orgasm. A fuck Tom asked for, and a fuck he was going to get.

Tom was babbling incoherently as Dave took his time to suck, lick and bite him. As the muscles in Tom's thighs started to quiver, he took the prick deep in his

throat.

"Oh fuck, oh fuck," Tom chanted, his hands tugging painfully on Dave's hair.

Dave just took him in deeper, feeling Tom's cock pulse in his mouth. Dave pulled back to taste him, sucking and licking Tom as he shuddered his way to a noisy orgasm. Pulling off, Dave looked up at Tom as he licked his lips.

"Get up here," Tom ordered gruffly, tugging on Dave's shoulder. Crawling up beside him, Dave went to move off, but Tom stopped him. "Kiss me and then fuck me hard."

They kissed again, Dave lying on Tom, his erection rubbing against Tom's half-hard cock, Tom's arms and legs holding him close as they exchanged long kisses. Tom was unfocused and sloppy but seemed determined to lick every last taste of himself out of Dave's mouth. Unable to stop himself, Dave rocked against Tom, trying to get some pressure on his own unsatisfied cock. Tom had been lying with his eyes closed but at Dave's movement he opened them a crack.

"Give me a minute, baby, then my arse is all yours."

"You're very free with these *babys*," Dave observed as he buried his face in Tom's sweaty neck.

Tom ran a hand down Dave's spine, cupping his arse and squeezing lightly. "Got a problem with that?"

Dave thought about it for a minute. He was just about to fuck the man, he couldn't summon up the energy to worry about an endearment. "Nah, I don't care as long as I can stick my dick in you soon."

Chuckling at his admission, Tom rolled them both onto their sides. "How do you want me?"

Thinking about it for a minute, Dave said, "As I've just sucked your brains out you can lie on your back this time. As long as the next time we do this, I can take you

on your hands and knees."

Smirking as Tom shuddered, Dave leaned over him to the bedside table, taking out the lube and the condoms.

"We look good together," Tom said, and Dave followed his lover's gaze to where his arm lay across Tom's chest. Tom was right. His skin was lighter than Tom's, but they did look good together.

It didn't take long to prepare Tom. Within minutes he was bearing down on Dave's fingers and demanding that Dave get on with it.

"You're a bloody noisy bastard," Dave said fondly, as Tom let out another low moan.

"Shut up and get in me," Tom grated out, his fingers pinching Dave's skin.

Pushing him onto his back, Dave gave Tom the lube and condom. "Do something useful and get me ready."

"With pleasure," Tom agreed huskily. "Come here." Tom tugged Dave further up so that he was straddling Tom's chest.

Confused Dave said, "I thought you wanted to fuck me, not suck me off."

"I do, but you need the condom on you." Bending forward, he slid the condom over Dave's cock with his mouth, smoothing it out in one easy movement.

"Jesus Christ." Dave bit his bottom lip. Tom's mouth around him was so bloody hot.

Mouth still holding him, Tom gave Dave a mischievous wink and slid off, fumbling for the lube. Tom's hands were just as talented as they spread the lube and Dave had to pull away, too close to coming before the main event.

He settled himself between Tom's legs, pushing in slowly, obeying Tom's hissed request that he needed time to adjust. This wasn't going to be a long fuck, Dave

was too close to the edge, but he could wait. Bending down to kiss Tom, he sucked the taste of latex out of his lover's mouth.

"Okay, now." Tom said.

Dave pushed Tom's legs back as he slid in fully. "Hold on, *baby*," he told Tom.

"Fuck," Tom swore and grabbed Dave around his biceps.

Pulling back until the head of his cock was stretching the rim of Tom's hole, Dave waited, ignoring the growl of protest from the man underneath him. He waited until the screaming need in him couldn't be denied any longer and he snapped his hips forward. Tom cursed and shuddered, his nails digging into Dave's arms. It was fast and furious, not much in the way of finesse or rhythm as his balls drew up hard and tight and Dave's need to come overrode every other concern. Noisy again, Tom closed his hand around his own hardened dick, wanking himself as Dave thrust in harder.

It didn't take long to bring Tom to another climax. Another long thrust and Tom was spilling over his fist, the sight and smell triggering Dave's own orgasm, the feel of Tom's body clenching around him drawing out the spasms.

Wearily, Dave collapsed onto Tom's broad chest, listening to the fast thump of Tom's heart beneath his ear as he rested. Tom was quiet now, not objecting to the extra weight on top of him as he stroked Dave's back again.

"You look good on my sheets," Dave said suddenly. For some reason it was important for Tom to know that.

Tom squeezed Dave hard enough that he coughed in protest. "I might have guessed the color." His breath stirred Dave's hair.

"I like it," Dave said, listening to Tom's chuckle.

"I had worked that one out for myself."

"I like you," Dave admitted in hushed tones.

Tom kissed the top of his head. "I knew that one, too. I rather like you. Do you still like me now that I'm unemployed and probably going to have to live with my parents when the money runs out?"

Raising his head, Dave propped his chin on Tom's chest. "I do," he confirmed. "Do your parents know what's happened?"

"They do. I don't think they're too thrilled at the idea of me coming back home, but they can see that I don't have a lot of options." Tom sounded resigned and Dave knew where the guy was coming from. He would hate the thought of living with his mother again.

It was too soon, far too soon to say it, Dave knew that. And he wouldn't, not yet. But Tom wouldn't have to go and live with his parents. Tom had other options, he just didn't know it yet.

Dave tucked his face into Tom's neck and closed his eyes, enjoying the feel of Tom's arms around him. That discussion could wait for another time.

Only once did Dave ask why Tom always started with the laundrette. Tom thought for a moment before replying.

"I think it's because meeting over a cup of coffee is so prosaic, so *normal*."

"And meeting over a pair of boxers is less normal?" Dave asked.

Tom nodded and Dave mentally gave a shrug. He didn't really care. As far as he was concerned, he didn't care what story his lover gave out about their first meeting. In his heart he remembered it started with the

sleeves of the takeaway coffee cup and the day he got the first plum-colored one. Nobody needed to know that Dave still had it tucked away in his wallet, next to a photo of his man.

End.

If you liked this book you might like: Prey Time,
Twisted Creature, Mine