

Healing Bite

M/M PARANORMAL

AGE PLAY

LOVE BITES
BOOK 4

Jayda Marx



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Love Bites Series: Book 4

M/M Paranormal Age Play

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Author's Note

This M/M romance is the third book in the “Love Bites” series, and they are best when read in order. This book features my take on vampires and other paranormal beings. They share many (but not all) attributes of vampires found in other fictional works. This world is different from those found in my other paranormal series, and the vampires’ properties differ as well. This low angst book contains **insta-love** between fated mates on a **fast track romance**, steamy scenes, and light age play between a caring vampire Daddy and his shy but sweet human little.

Chapter One

Andy

Tears filled my eyes as I looked down at the stack of bills on the kitchen table before me. I had no idea what to do with them. Obviously I knew they needed to be paid, but I'd never done it before.

It wasn't that I didn't *want* to; my brother Dalton always paid them because he said I couldn't handle it and would just mess it up, and I guess he was right. I'd seen him write out checks before, so maybe I could figure it out, but I was afraid I'd get in trouble for forging his name, since I wasn't on the bank account. I didn't even know if there was money *in* the account.

I needed to get a job to make money, but I'd never done that before either. In the past, I'd expressed interest in working to Dalton, but he said it was a dumb idea; that I'd just embarrass him out in public, and that my place was at home. He said if I was going to act like a girl, I could do the work of a girl by cooking and cleaning while he was out being a man.

I didn't think cooking and cleaning were girls' work; I thought they were important life skills for everyone. I also enjoyed doing them, which is why I never minded staying home. But now I had no job, no money, and no brother to help me.

Dalton was in prison for arson. He burned down a toy store in town when he learned that I bought a Barbie doll there. My brother had sent me to the grocery store one day to buy some ingredients to make dinner. I had a little of his

money left over and when I passed the toy store, I couldn't resist.

I tried to keep the doll hidden from Dalton because I knew he didn't approve. He hated the idea of me having any kind of toy, but dolls made him especially angry. He said that I was a man and should act like it, instead of behaving like a sissy baby.

I don't know why I like dolls. I don't know why holding them brings me comfort, or why playing with them brings me happiness. I don't know why I can't change it about myself, no matter how hard I try. Maybe if I could, Dalton wouldn't be locked away. Maybe he'd want to be around me. Maybe he'd even be proud of me.

I pushed up my glasses to wipe away the tears that rolled down my cheeks. I was lonely and lost, unsure of how

to pick up the pieces of my life. I wasn't even sure where to turn for advice; I was only allowed to visit Dalton twice a month, and I still had a couple of days left before I could see him.

I doubted he wanted to see me anyway. Our last visit didn't go well; he told me how disappointing I was, and how prison wasn't the worst thing, since it meant a break from me. I longed for a kind word or a smile; anything to help me through this difficult time, but I wouldn't get that from Dalton.

Only one person had shown me kindness; a young man named Joey. I'd only been around him twice; once in an alleyway, when Dalton saw my doll in my pocket and confronted me about it, and again in the police station when my brother was arrested. Both times, Joey was concerned

about my wellbeing. He even offered to be my friend and gave me his phone number.

I hadn't called him yet; I was too nervous. Even though Joey said that he didn't blame me for the fire, I couldn't help feeling guilty and at least somewhat responsible. And besides that, I wasn't sure *how* to be someone's friend. I'd never had one before. I didn't finish school, so I was never around many people my age.

But now more than ever before, I wanted - *needed* - a friend to lean on. I took a deep breath and summoned all the courage in my body as I pulled my cell from my pocket. If I were going to do this, I needed to do it now; I wasn't sure how much longer I'd have phone service if the bill went unpaid.

I opened up my contacts and found the number that Joey had entered. I hovered my thumb over his name,

wondering what could happen and if this was such a good idea, when my finger twitched and pressed the screen. The ringing sound made my heart leap into my throat, and tied my nerves into a knot.

Just before I gave up and hit the screen again, Joey's voice answered, "Hello?"

"H-hello," I stuttered back. "I don't know if you remember me; my name is Andy, er, Andrew. We met at the police station. Well, we kind of met in an alley, but not really." I rubbed my hand across my forehead and sighed. *This is not going well.*

Joey giggled. "Of course I remember you, Andy Andrew. I've been waiting for you to call me so that we can play together. Is that why you're calling? Do you want to play?"

My heart slammed against my ribs. It was what I wanted more than anything, but I knew I shouldn't. I was a grown man who should be writing out bills and taking care of business instead of dreaming about playing children's games.

But I *was* dreaming of it; every night, without fail, when my mind was free of restraint, it drifted onto sweet dreams of dolls and teddy bears. I was disappointed every morning when I woke up and the playtime stopped. But now I had the chance to experience it for real; to know what it felt like to play without worry or hiding.

"I do," I answered in a whisper. I was afraid to admit it too loudly, but hoped that Joey heard me.

"Great! Want to come over to my apartment? I've got *lots* of toys."

I nodded my head in excitement although he couldn't see me. "Where do you live?"

"I live in the big apartment building on Main Street."

"Oh," I answered sadly. It was much too far for me to walk, and I didn't have any money for a cab.

"What's wrong?" he asked, sounding just as sad. "Is it because they're vampire apartments? You don't have to be afraid; vampires are very nice. Especially me."

I held the phone away from my ear and blinked at it before putting it to my ear again. "You're a vampire?" I knew there were many different species in the city, *especially* vampires, but I'd never met any personally.

"Yep! Wait, if you didn't know that, why did you sound worried about coming over to play? Am I being too

pushy? Daddy says I can sound pushy sometimes when I'm excited. I just really want to be your friend; I don't mean to be rude."

"You're not rude," I answered quickly. "I want to be your friend too. It's just that I live on the other side of town and I can't drive."

"Oh, is that all? Don't worry; Daddy and I can come pick you up. Where do you live?"

Maybe I should have been leery about giving my address to a (mostly) stranger, but I instinctively trusted Joey. And I *really* wanted someone to talk to. I gave him the address to my own apartment and he answered, "Great. We'll be there soon to get you. Bring all of your favorite toys to play with. Bye, Andy Andrew!"

“Bye,” I barely got out before the line went dead. My head spun from our conversation; Joey was full of energy, and he left me with dizzying thoughts. For one, it was hard to wrap my mind around the fact that Joey was a different species.

And hearing him say ‘Daddy’ was just as confusing as the first time I’d heard it. When I saw the two men together, they didn’t look like father and son; they acted romantically towards one another. I was left with many questions which I hoped would be answered by spending some time with Joey.

I stood from the table and went into my bedroom, kneeling on the floor beside my bed. I reached my arm beneath my mattress and pulled out my Barbie doll. I thought I’d lost her forever when Dalton threw her away in the alley. When he went to work, I snuck back to the dumpster to look

for her, but found that someone had placed her on a cinder block, as if for me to find.

I hadn't played with her or even held her since I brought her back to the apartment; not even since Dalton had been in jail. I knew that he was gone, but I kept envisioning him bursting through the door and yelling at me again.

I kept Barbie cradled against my chest as I walked back into the kitchen, eyeballing the bills on the table again.

As excited as I was to have an escape, I couldn't totally forget about my problems or responsibilities. Hoping that Joey or his 'Daddy' could offer some guidance, I slipped the envelopes into the back pocket of my jeans before pacing the floor as I waited.

It wasn't long before there was a knock on my door. I hustled over and took a deep breath before opening it, finding

Joey smiling from ear to ear and holding hands with the man he called Daddy.

While Joey was tall and thin, the other man was built more like me; short and stout, though he wasn't quite as short or round as I was. My hair was curly like Joey's, but mine was black, and I had thick-framed glasses in the same color.

“Hey Andy Andrew!” Joey greeted, smiling even brighter. “Are you ready to go play? Do you have your toys?” I nodded and held up my Barbie for him to see, and his grin shifted into a confused expression. “Is that the only one you're bringing?”

I was a little embarrassed to reply, “It's the only one I have.”

“Oh, that won’t do,” Joey insisted, shaking his head.

“You’ll have to come to our store and pick out some more. But for today, I’ve got plenty to share with you at my place. Come on!” He let loose of the other man to grab my hand and pull me down the hallway.

He led me outside, to a black coupe parked along the sidewalk. When the other man opened the back door, Joey told him, “Thank you, Daddy,” and gave him a kiss on the lips.

Okay, they definitely have a romantic relationship.

Joey climbed into the backseat and the older man continued to hold the door open for me, so I told him, “Thank you, um...” but realized I wasn’t sure what his name was.

“Ian,” he told me with a smile.

“Thank you, Ian.” He nodded and closed the door behind me once I was settled next to Joey.

“Whatcha thinking about?” Joey asked, pulling his seatbelt across his hips.

I did the same as I replied, “Oh, nothing.”

“Sure you are. Your face looks like this.” He folded his brows together, scrunching up his forehead. “That’s a thinking face.”

Apparently I couldn’t hide anything from my new friend. I felt my *own* face heat as I admitted, “Well, I was just wondering...are you and Ian...related?” It seemed to be a better way to ask than, ‘Did you just mouth kiss your dad?’. I wouldn’t judge if he did, though; maybe they were just *really* close, which was nice. I never knew my own father.

“He’s my mate,” Joey answered proudly as Ian sat behind the steering wheel. “Isn’t that right, Daddy?”

“That’s right, sweet thing.” Ian looked over his shoulder before pulling the car out onto the road.

My face must have still looked confused, because Joey explained, “A mate is sort of like a husband, only better.”

“Better?” I couldn’t imagine anything better than having a partner to share your life with.

He nodded. “Every vampire is granted a mate by the Goddess Fate. They are our one special person to spend eternity with, and are our perfect match in every way. We take care of each other, protect each other, and love and desire *only* each other for all time. Our souls are bound together and we need each other to survive.”

“Wow,” I sighed. That *did* sound better than a husband, and I was a bit jealous that as a human, I couldn’t experience what Joey had, although I was still happy for my friend.

“Yep. But I’m extra, *extra* lucky because my mate is also my perfect Daddy.”

Okay, I’m confused again. “So he’s your…”

“Daddy,” Joey repeated with a nod. “And I’m his little.”

When he didn’t finish his sentence, I asked, “His little what?”

Joey blinked at me before reaching over and taking my hand. “Oh Andy Andrew, it’s a good thing you have me as a best friend.” My heart sped up with happiness even though

my brain was still perplexed. “It sounds like I have a lot to explain to you. It’s okay, though; I’m very good at explaining. Right, Daddy?”

Ian’s pearly grin reflected in the rearview mirror. “Yes you are, sweet thing. And I’m right here if you need any help.”

“Thank you,” Joey replied before turning his attention to me again. “Daddies are very good helpers. They’re good at lots of things, like snuggling, cooking, and telling funny jokes. But their most important job is making sure their littles are happy, safe, and taken care of.”

Before I could ask, Joey continued, “Littles are people like me - I’m a grown up, but I enjoy special things, like when Daddy chooses my outfit or hangs my artwork on the fridge. And I *love* playing with toys.”

All of those things sounded amazing. To make sure I understood, I asked him, “So, you get to pretend like you’re young again?” It would be great to escape the hardships of adulthood every now and then.

Joey bounced his head back and forth. “Kind of. When I’m in my little headspace, I’m not really pretending to be anything; I’m just me. I’m in a place where I can relax without worries because I know Daddy is watching over me, and I just do what makes my heart happy. It’s part of who I am, and being a Daddy is part of who he is,” he added, nodding towards Ian.

“That’s right,” Ian agreed. “I always knew that I wanted to be a caretaker for a special boy. I love watching Joey play, cooking for him, and snuggling together. But being a Daddy looks different for everyone; some Daddies take on a

firmer role and lay down rules, while others offer guidance or a helping hand, and some are just a friendly presence. Each relationship is special.”

“Littles are all different too,” Joey joined in. “Some are like me and love to play, while others need more care. I know some boys who like diapers, bottles, and bath time. There’s no right or wrong when it comes to their needs; it’s all about finding what makes them happy. Some boys are little all of the time, some boys schedule special little time, and others like me just go by how they feel.”

Ian added, “The most important thing is open, honest communication between a Daddy and his little one to make sure everyone is comfortable and fulfilled.”

“Thank you for explaining it to me,” I told them both. They obviously had the ‘open, honest communication’ part

covered, even when it came to speaking to me. They were so unapologetic with their lifestyle. “It’s beautiful.”

The whole basis of their relationship revolved around identifying and meeting unique desires. There was no judgment; only love and understanding. Joey was free to explore his interests without fear of getting chastised, and Ian was happy to see his special boy flourish.

Now that I understood it, the idea of a Daddy sounded incredible. I’d give anything to have someone who not only accepted my needs, but supported them. As I thought about someone watching me brush my Barbie’s hair or even playing *with* me, my heart ached with need.

It was as if a hundred questions about myself were simultaneously answered. *I’m...a little*. All my life, I hadn’t known the name for it, just how I felt inside. But as the words

bounced around my mind, nothing had ever felt more right. It was as natural as saying my own name. As I envisioned the things Joey talked about; toys, playing, and snuggles, my heart raced and my breathing grew quick. A whole new world was opening up to me.

And the best thing about this new world was knowing that I wasn't alone. There were other people just like me, and that made me feel like maybe there wasn't anything wrong with me after all; maybe I just hadn't met the right people. Even though the circumstances weren't great, I was blessed to have met Joey and Ian.

I'm afraid I wasn't good company as Ian drove across town. My brain was buzzing with the information given to me, and dreams of what it could all mean for the future.

But could it actually mean anything? Dalton wouldn't be in jail forever. And if he couldn't handle me owning a doll, there was no way in hell he'd be okay with any of this. He'd probably disown me, and definitely kick me out of the apartment.

Of course, I'd be kicked out soon anyway if I couldn't pay the rent. All of my problems, which Joey's news had distracted me from, came crashing down upon me again, making my stomach squeeze.

"Your thinking face turned into a worried face," Joey pointed out from beside me.

"I'm sorry." The last thing I wanted to do was bring down the mood when we were supposed to be having a fun time together. "I have a lot on my mind."

“Would you like to talk about it?” Ian asked with another glance in the mirror. It wasn’t hard to see his caretaking side; it was obvious in the softness of his tone and the words he chose.

“I don’t want to be a burden,” I answered honestly. As nice as it would be to share my troubles with someone, I didn’t want to ruin the day and make Joey change his mind about hanging out with me.

“I promise you that’s not how we will feel,” Ian assured with kindness in his voice.

“Yeah, you’re not a burden,” Joey agreed. “You’re our friend. You can talk to us about anything.”

The offer was too good to refuse. I took a deep breath and released everything weighing down my soul. “The only

family I have is my brother, and he's gone; he's in prison." I immediately felt dumb and rubbed my forehead. "Of course you already know that because you are the people he attacked to get *in* prison. I still feel so badly about what he did, and I know he wouldn't have done it if it weren't for my actions."

I stumbled into a clumsy explanation, "He doesn't understand my interests or needs. I guess I didn't even fully understand them until today. I only knew that dolls brought me comfort and happiness, but my owning one made Dalton furious and drove him to try and hurt you. He will never accept me. He sees me as weak and stupid and I'm finding out that I *am* those things. I just turned twenty but I don't know how to be an adult. I don't know how to drive or work. I'm not very educated. I'm afraid I'm going to lose my home because I don't have money to pay for it."

I reached into my back pocket and pulled out the thick stack of envelopes. “Bills are piling up around me and I don’t know what to do. I look at them and my stomach churns and I feel physically sick. I’m overwhelmed and scared and I’m so sorry to dump all of this on you.” I looked over at Joey with watery eyes. “I know this isn’t fun. You probably won’t want to hang out with me anymore, and I understand.”

Even though I *did* understand, the thought of Joey retracting his friendship was too much to bear. I slapped my hand over my mouth as my stomach lurched, but luckily nothing came up since I hadn’t eaten anything. *I forgot to eat; how dumb can I get?*

“Daddy, Andy is very sick,” Joey told Ian, his voice shaking with concern. “He needs to go to the doctor.” Ian nodded, looking back at me with worry in his gaze.

I couldn't speak for fear of getting sick, but I shook my head; I didn't have the money for medical care. Luckily, Joey seemed to understand my silent argument, and squeezed my hand.

"It's okay; Dr. Bentley is my friend and he's very nice. He won't want any money, he'll just want to help you. And I want to help you too! There's no way I wouldn't want to hang out with you. Sometimes things are scary or hard, but that's when we need friends the most, right?" My eyes watered even more as I nodded, blown away by how lucky I was to have found these men. "Daddy and I are here for you. Everything is going to be okay."

For the first time since Dalton went away; maybe for the first time *ever*, I allowed myself to believe that maybe everything *could* be okay.

Chapter Two

Tage

“Interesting,” I mumbled as I gazed through the eyepiece of my microscope. I was observing a cell swab I took from a human patient who had a painful throat infection. I’d given him an antibiotic the week before, but he’d returned to my clinic feeling no better than he did pre-treatment.

I was worried that might happen, since he was referred to me by a local hospital that had been unable to cure him. I didn’t see many patients, instead spending my time in the lab, but when other doctors needed help, I was happy to assist.

Human diseases intrigued me; they were always adapting and changing, as was the case with this particular bacteria. When I introduced the penicillin to it, the bacterial cells actually changed structure. Their shape morphed, camouflaging themselves to essentially hide from the antibiotic, which couldn't identify the cells as problematic. It was fascinating, but bad news for my patient; ordinary medication wouldn't help him.

I racked my brain for a solution. There had to be a way to prevent the cells from shifting so that the antibiotic could attack them. I leaned back in my chair and rubbed my hand through my bristly beard. All I needed was a way to freeze the bacteria.

That's it! Freeze! I leapt from my chair and hurried to the freezer to pull out a vial of enzyme inhibitor solution. I

warmed the vial in my hands as I walked back to my desk and retrieved a fresh slide of the bacterial cells.

“Try this on for size, you little bastards,” I said as I placed a few drops of the liquid onto the slide. After giving the fluid a moment to settle, I conducted the true test by introducing the penicillin to the mix, and held my breath.

This time, the bacterial cells did not shift or change; the enzyme inhibitor was blocking their chemical reactions, so they stayed steady...until the antibiotic infiltrated them. I smiled widely as each cell swelled and burst. *It worked.*

“Yes!” I yelled into the quiet room, pumping my fist over my head. With this discovery, my patient could make a full and quick recovery. Plus, I could share the information with the hospital to help future patients who may contract the same illness.

But before I could pick up the phone, I heard someone calling my name in the distance. I immediately recognized the voice as belonging to my young friend Joey.

I rose from my chair again and when I reached the door to my lab, I was overtaken by an overwhelming urge to get to him. I didn't understand what was happening; Joey couldn't be ill or hurt, so why was he in the clinic yelling for me? And why did it feel like finding him was the most important thing in the world?

My steps grew faster and larger as I made my way down a hallway and into the lobby of the clinic, where a few people were waiting to see the other doctors on staff. We specialized in blood disorders and research, but we had walk-ins as well; usually people who could not afford to seek treatment at typical hospitals.

I quickly spotted Joey and his Daddy Ian, but when I saw the young man they had with them, recognition fled through my body so quickly, my hands trembled and my chest ached with joy and gratitude. I was looking at my mate. After over eleven hundred years on this Earth, Fate had fulfilled her promise.

I rushed to the gorgeous man, but Joey spoke before I could. “*There* you are, Doc! This is my friend Andy, and he’s sick.”

My glee was overtaken with concern and dread. I would stop at nothing to help my fated one, and wasted no time in draping my arm across Andy’s shoulders. “Come with me.” I looked into his pretty chocolate eyes and added, “I’ll take care of you.” It was a lifelong promise which I would never betray.

“Hey, I was here first!” a man across the room grumped.

I had to bite my lip to keep from saying something rude. My top priority was now Andy, as it always would be, but I understood the man’s frustration and also cared about his well being. I gave him the best smile I could muster and told him, “Someone will be with you shortly, sir.”

Ignoring his scowl and without another word, I guided Andy through a door. Joey and Ian were on our heels, so as we walked, I asked Joey in a whisper that would only be audible to us and our keen hearing, “*How long have you known Andy?*” I wanted to thank him for bringing my mate to me, but also throttle him for taking so long.

“*A few weeks, but this is the first time we’ve hung out.*”

I couldn't keep my pride or excitement to myself any longer, and told him, "*He is my mate.*"

Joey let out a high pitched squeal which made Andy stop in his tracks and spin around to face his friend. "Are you okay?" He was precious; even though he wasn't feeling well, he was still worried about Joey.

"I'm *great!*" Joey replied with a huge grin. I gave him a pleading look; I wanted to be the one who told Andy about our connection. I wasn't sure what he knew about mates or even vampires, so I wanted to handle it with gentility. Joey was not a gentle boy. "I, uh...I'm just so happy we're here to get you checked out," he said, covering his cheerful outburst and granting my request. I nodded my head in thanks.

Andy turned back around and we continued our walk.

I heard Joey whispering the news to Ian (though I was sure

Andy couldn't hear), and Ian patted my back in congratulations.

I led Andy into an empty exam room and motioned towards the table in the center. "Can you sit up there for me?" He nodded and took a seat, folding his fingers in his lap and looking up at me from beneath his thick-framed glasses. His eyes were full of worry, but also a dash of intrigue. I was his mate, so it was natural that he was drawn to me. It made me proud and excited, but those feelings would have to wait.

"My name is Dr. Tage Bentley," I began, offering him my hand. "It's very nice to meet you."

"You too," Andy replied in a quiet voice, slipping his fingers in mine. His skin was warm and soft, and I wanted to feel every inch of it against me. But regrettably, I had to let him go...for now.

“What’s bothering you, Andy?” I asked gently.

“What’s making you sick?”

He looked at Joey, who nodded. It was difficult to watch Andy seek reassurance from someone else, but I knew that I would soon be his source of comfort and strength. Now that we’d met, our bond would grow quickly, and our souls would draw closer to one another. Even though he was human, Andy’s heart would recognize me as his own, and he would need to be near me, even if he didn’t fully understand why.

Andy looked back at me and told me, “My belly hurts.” I wanted to scoop him onto my lap and rock him until he felt better. I wanted to pat his belly until the pain went away. It was torture being unable to touch him.

“He was going like this in the car,” Joey *helpfully* added before making retching noises while lurching forward.

“Did you throw up?” I asked, but Andy shook his head no as his cheeks turned pink.

“I forgot to eat today, so there was nothing in my belly.”

My poor baby definitely needed someone to look after and care for him. “It’s important that we eat,” I told him, unable to resist the temptation any longer and placing my hand on his shoulder. “Food nourishes our bodies and gives us energy so we can have fun.” Once he nodded his understanding, I added, “Skipping meals can make our bellies hurt or feel yucky.”

I hated to pull my hand away, but I longed to meet his needs. I crossed the room and opened a drawer, pulling out a packet of crackers. I returned quickly and ripped open the

plastic for him, offering him the wafer. “Can you nibble on this for me?”

He nodded and said, “Thank you,” before taking a small bite. Crumbs fell onto the short, fine black hairs on his chin, but they tumbled away as he chewed.

I couldn’t shake the feeling that something had caused Andy to forget to eat. His body language portrayed worry and distraction. Wanting to get to the bottom of things, I asked him, “What have you been doing today?”

“He came to play with me,” Joey answered, and Ian wrapped his arm around his boy.

“I know you’re helping, but let Andy answer the doctor, okay?”

“Yes, Daddy.” Joey made a motion as if he were zipping his lips shut before nodding at Andy once more.

Andy took a deep breath and said, “I called Joey because I was feeling sad and a little scared.”

My heart broke for him, but I was glad that he was opening up to me. “Thank you for telling me that. I know that talking about our emotions can be hard sometimes, but it can also make us feel better. I’m very proud of you.” Andy sat up straighter at my words. A simple praise meant so much to him, and it made me believe he hadn’t been complimented very often in his life. “Can you tell me why you were feeling that way?”

“Well...I was worried about these.” Andy reached into his back pocket to produce a stack of white envelopes. He handed them to me and as I sorted through them, I realized

that they were bills. Some of them were even stamped with an ‘urgent’ message.

“Are you struggling with your payments?”

Andy nodded. “I’ve never been in charge of paying for anything.”

“Who took care of your expenses?” I steadied my gut for his answer; did he have a Daddy who took care of him? It would be difficult to hear about his past relationships, but I wanted to understand his situation.

“My brother,” Andy replied, and the knot in my stomach released. “But he’s gone now.”

“I’m so sorry,” I offered.

“*Don’t be,*” Joey vampire-whispered from across the room. “*He’s the worst.*”

I was about to scold him for talking about the departed when Andy added, “He’s not gone like dead; he’s in prison.”

“He’s the asshole who burned down Daddy’s toy store,” Joey added. I knew about the fire; everyone in the coven did. It was a terrible ordeal, but luckily no one was injured, the culprit was caught, and Ian was able to rebuild, thanks in part to a gift from the coven.

I’d had many conversations with Joey and Ian since the fire, and had heard about the culprit’s brother; how upset he was over Dalton’s actions, and how Joey said he was lonely and needed a friend. I just didn’t know they were talking about my mate.

Andy’s eyes welled up as he told me, “I’ve never taken care of anything like this and I’m confused. I have no money or job or skills. I’m worried that I’m going to lose my

home, and I'll be out on the streets." He gripped his stomach again, showing that the source of his pain was stress and worry, instead of an illness.

I gently rubbed his shoulder and looked into his eyes when I told him, "Andy, I promise you that's not going to happen. I won't *let* it happen."

"I don't understand."

I smiled and explained, "I'm here for anything you need; finances, housing... anything. I have plenty of money, and you are welcome to whatever you need. You never have to worry, and you'll never be alone."

His jaw dropped. "Joey said you were nice, but I wasn't expecting this." Andy dabbed at his leaking eyes and

added, “Why are you helping me? Doctors don’t usually help like that...right?”

I wiped away a stray tear rolling down his cheek. “I want to help you because I care about you.” He gasped quietly as he looked into my eyes. He didn’t question my statement. He would know it to be true; his heart and soul would tell him, and I would always show him. “And I care about how you feel. When you’re upset, is there something that helps you calm down?”

I noticed Andy’s hand creeping up his leg, landing on a lumpy object in his pocket. “What do you have there?” I asked curiously, drawing my eyes from his. He clasped his hands together and shook his head quickly as his cheeks blushed.

“It’s okay,” Joey soothed from his seat. He lowered his voice to tell me, “*He’s nervous because his brother was mean to him and called him bad names.*” Anger burned in the pit of my gut, but I kept my expression blank so I didn’t upset Andy. Joey spoke louder to assure his friend, “You can show the doctor.”

“You can show me anything,” I agreed.

He chewed his lip and his hand shook as he slid it into his front pocket. After a slow, deep breath, Andy pulled out a Barbie doll wearing a pink dress, making my heart flutter. All my life, I’d dreamed of a sweet boy who enjoyed delicate things. My Andy had a soft heart, but his brother tried to break it.

“That’s a nice doll you have,” I smiled, and Andy’s eyes snapped to mine again. They had looked away when he

retrieved his toy, and now they were wide and surprised.

“Does she have a name?”

“I just call her Barbie,” he answered after a moment.

“Does she have lots of friends?” Andy’s eyes sank to his lap again as he shook his head. I wasn’t surprised; if his brother had a problem with Andy’s toy, I understood why he wouldn’t have many. “Well, I bet *you’re* a very good friend.”

A tiny smile tugged at his lips. “Does Barbie help you feel better when you’re scared or lonely?”

“When I feel that way, I think about her, *and* I think she’d help me feel better, but...I don’t get to play with her very much.”

I knew from Joey that Andy’s brother disapproved, but I hoped that my mate felt comfortable telling me himself

when I asked, “Why is that?”

His eyes grew sad as he replied, “My brother told me that I was an adult and should act like it; that it was embarrassing for me to want to play with toys, and that I was a disgrace.” Once again, my core bubbled with anger, but I tried to remain stoic for my poor mate, who was already frightened enough. “But Joey explained to me that there’s nothing wrong with wanting to play; that some people *need* it, and that it’s part of who we are. He told me all about littles and...and I think I’m one too.”

A flurry of emotions tumbled within me. I was saddened that Andy had spent so much of his life not understanding his own needs, and actually believing that there was something wrong with him. But I was also proud of him for accepting and announcing those needs. And, I was grateful

to Joey for helping my boy understand so much of himself. I turned to him and bowed my head in thanks before looking at Andy once more.

“I’m glad you have someone to help you,” I told him with a smile. “Joey sounds like a very good friend.”

“He is,” Andy replied with a heart-stopping grin. But it soon faded, and Andy chewed on his lip once more. Before I could ask what was bothering him, he began, “But I don’t think about playing with boys’ toys. I want to play with dolls and tea sets. Is that wrong? Does it make me a sissy?”

That was undoubtedly a name his brother had called him, and it had left its mark on my poor boy. I grabbed a stool and sat in front of Andy so that we were at eye-level, and he could see the seriousness of our conversation. I took his hand, and my sweet mate didn’t pull away, but squeezed my fingers.

“Andy, I don’t believe there is such a thing as boys’ toys or girls’ toys; I think the whole point of toys is to cheer people up and make them happy. Who cares what particular toy makes you happy? There’s no rules to what a person can or can’t like. Do you know what happens when young boys play with dolls?”

He shook his head and I continued, “They learn how to treat other people, and how to be gentle and caring with babies. They learn empathy, and it can help them become loving fathers. I don’t see anything wrong with that, do you?” His eyes were wide as he shook his head again, and I smiled at his sweet innocence.

I could tell by the way his hand tightened on mine that he was thinking about something, and I gave him space to find

his words. When he did, he leaned in closer to me and asked,
“What if it’s not just toys that I like?”

I traced my thumb across his knuckles to soothe him
as I answered, “All littles have different needs; some like baths
or snuggles-” I stopped talking when he nodded his head.

“Joey told me that too. What I meant was-” he paused
and shot a quick look at his friend before leaning in closer. My
heart warmed at the action; Andy was growing more
comfortable with me by the moment, and felt secure in sharing
a secret. In a whisper (that I knew Joey could hear), he asked
me, “What if I like other...*girls*’ things?”

My heart pounded as I whispered back, “Like what?”

“Like...when I’m at the store, I see nail polish and I
think it’s so pretty. Or I find glittery shirts and I wonder what

they'd feel like on my skin. I sniff perfume and think that it would be so nice to smell like flowers or candy all day." His grip tightened on me when he asked, "Are there other littles who like that stuff too?" He was still learning about himself, but he was open with what he liked, and I could not be prouder of him.

"Oh yes," I replied with a smile, and his eyes actually twinkled. He didn't know it, but he was describing my very fantasy of finding a gentle boy with a feminine flair; someone who valued sweetness and care. "And I bet you'd look beautiful with nail polish on."

Andy was so close that I felt air pull against my cheek when he gasped. "Really?"

"Really. *And* a glittery top, too. Clothes are just like toys; they shouldn't be gender-specific, but *should* make us

happy. We can use them to express ourselves, and they help us feel more comfortable in our skin. There's nothing wrong with wanting to look pretty. And you, little duckling, are gorgeous."

The name came naturally to my lips; he was cute, soft, and in need of someone to follow, like a precious baby duck.

Andy's cheeks burned brightly and I worried that I'd embarrassed him, but a sweet smile pulled at his lips and he whispered, "I like that."

I winked and leaned back on my stool to look him over as I asked, "How is your stomach feeling now?"

He dropped my hand to put his palm against his abdomen and smiled. "Really good. Instead of feeling squeezy, it feels like it's dancing inside." Andy seemed excited to be talking about his interests, and finding acceptance for them.

He added with a giggle, “*And* rumbly.” Now that he was more comfortable, I saw more of his little side peeking out.

“It sounds like you’re ready for dinner,” I smiled. “I’d love to take you out if that’s okay with you.”

Andy’s eyes widened again, but before he could answer, Joey piped up with, “Aw, but we were going to play together.”

Ian gave his boy an understanding smile before turning to me. “The boys are welcome to play at our place. If you don’t mind watching over them, I’m happy to cook.”

I had much appreciation for my friend; he knew I couldn’t be away from my mate, so he invited me along without missing a beat. I was happy to go to his place; my own apartment was not prepared to entertain my boy. I had no toys

on hand, yet way too many medical devices lying around. I was also sure that Ian would welcome a break from his rambunctious boy, and Joey loved any company.

Only one approval was still needed. I asked Andy, “Do you mind if I come hang out with you and Joey? I’d really like to spend more time with you.” It wasn’t just a desire; it was a necessity. My soul could never be happy or at peace away from him.

“I’d like that too,” he replied with a bashful smile.

“Great!” Joey exclaimed, leaping from his seat. “Let’s go!”

Chapter Three

Andy

“Here we are!” Joey said as his Daddy opened the door to their apartment, and my friend dragged me inside by my hand. It was much different from my own place I shared with Dalton, which was small and only filled with necessities.

This place was huge, and so inviting. Everything looked soft and welcoming, from the puffy furniture to the shaggy carpet beneath my feet. Photos of Ian and Joey lined the walls, and there were toys strewn across the living room.

“I didn’t have time to pick up my toys before we came to get you,” Joey explained when he saw me eyeballing them.

He shrugged and added, "I'll get them later. Right now, I want to show you my playroom!"

"Hold up," Ian said with a chuckle before Joey could drag me again. "Before you play, I need to ask Andy something." He turned his kind eyes on me and asked, "Do you have any food allergies?" I shook my head no. "Okay, great. What do you like to eat?"

"I like everything," I answered honestly. I had never met a food I didn't enjoy.

"Well, that makes my job easy," he chuckled again. "I'll find us something yummy and call when it's ready."

"Thanks, Daddy!" Joey cried as he pulled me across the floor again.

I was excited to see his playroom and have fun with him, but somehow, I was even more excited to spend time with the handsome doctor who helped me. I looked over my shoulder to make sure he was following us, and found him right behind me wearing a beautiful smile.

I'd never seen someone so gorgeous in my life; he was tall and had wide shoulders, but he wasn't intimidating. He was kind and gentle, and made me feel at ease. His icy blue eyes were full of compassion and understanding when he looked at me. And his gray bristly beard and hair made him look distinguished and wise.

I wasn't sure how old he was, especially if he was a vampire, which I assumed he was since he worked in the coven apartments. I knew that vampires were immortal beings, and aged differently than humans, so he could be any age. For

that matter, so could Joey. But I didn't care. These people were my friends, and their kindness was the only thing that mattered to me.

The word *friend* left a sour feeling in my stomach when I thought about Tage. I was drawn to him. When he was touching my shoulder or hand, I knew he was just being a compassionate doctor, but I couldn't help the way it made my skin warm and my heart beat faster; or how my mind raced with visions of being wrapped in his arms. I wanted to be close to him. I wanted him to touch me. I wanted...more. I never had a boyfriend before, but I *knew* Tage would be a good one.

But it was a silly thought. He wouldn't want me. I was nothing special to look at, and I had nothing going for me.

Besides, after speaking with Joey and Ian that morning, I knew

that Tage had a mate waiting for him somewhere. That person would surely be better than me, *and* they would be very lucky.

“Check it out!” Joey said when we stepped inside a large room with orange walls and soft cream carpet.

“Wow,” I whispered, in awe of the sight of toys piled up in every corner. I’d never seen so many in one place outside of the toy store.

“What do you want to play with first?”

Looking around at all of the options, I was a little overwhelmed. I didn’t know where to begin, or what to ask for. Some of the toys were huge and had lots of parts, and I wasn’t even sure how they worked.

I relaxed as soon as I heard Tage’s voice ask, “Do you have any dolls?” He knew what I liked and wanted to help me.

“Hmm.” Joey put his hands on his hips as he looked around. “Oh, I have action figures!” He hustled across the room and returned carrying a plastic figure dressed in a superhero costume. “Whatcha think?”

I wasn't sure; my thoughts were everywhere. I was excited to finally be able to play without the worry of being caught, but I couldn't help still feeling a little guilty. I was also worried that I might not play the way Joey liked.

I flinched when I felt something rest on my shoulder, but once I realized it was Tage's hand, I relaxed and took a step closer to him. A simple touch from him brought me comfort.

“*I think he looks like a good friend for Barbie,*” Tage said into my ear. In all of the excitement, I forgot I had her

with me. I slipped the doll out of my pocket and smiled; it was nice to see something familiar. “Does she want to say hello?”

When I took a deep breath and nodded, Joey beamed and held the heroes in front of his chest. I turned Barbie to face them and said in a high pitched voice, “Hello.” It was a single word, but it brought me so much happiness that my eyes grew blurry. When Taje squeezed my shoulder, warmth and pride bloomed in my chest.

“Hello,” Joey answered in a deep, manly voice as he shook the figure. “I’m Superman. What’s your name?”

“Barbie.”

“What do you want to do today, Barbie?”

Oh no. Joey was leaving the game up to me, but I didn’t know where to take it. What *did* Barbie want to do? I’d

waited so long to play, but I was blowing it, just standing there in silence and confusion.

Tage's strong hand massaged my shoulder, instantly bringing down my racing heart rate. His mouth lowered to my ear once more and he suggested, "Superman is a hero; maybe he can help Barbie with something." *That's good. But what could he help her with?* As if he heard my mental question, Tage added, "Maybe she lost something."

I nodded my agreement at his very good idea.

"Superman, I've lost my..." *My what?* "Puppy!" I blurted out. I looked back at Tage, and he was smiling from ear to ear, making my chest even warmer. I turned back to Superman and asked, "Can you please help me find him? I miss him so much!"

"I'll leave no stone unturned. Come with me!"

Barbie followed Superman on his quest; they searched the whole room, looking beneath cars, blocks, and books. Just when the mission seemed hopeless, Barbie spotted a tuft of white fur peeking out of a pile of stuffed animals.

“I think I see him!” She pointed at the pile, and they rushed over. “There! The white fur!”

“I’ll save him!” Superman assured, and then used his big muscles to scoop away the other animals safely, revealing a white, fluffy puppy.

“Oh, you found him!” She squealed before giving Superman a big hug. “Thank you, thank you!” Her tiny hands pet through the pup’s fur. “Snowball, are you okay?” The pup gave a yip, showing that it was unharmed.

“Your puppy is very big,” Superman pointed out.

“Would he mind if we rode on him?”

“Is that okay, Snowball?” The pup gave another yip, and the duo climbed on his back. They hung on tight as the playful puppy dashed and bounced across the room.

“That was fun,” Joey said once Snowball decided to take a nap and our figurines climbed off of his back.

“Yes-” I cleared my throat, coughing away my Barbie voice. I was so engrossed in our game, it took me a moment to come back to myself. “Yes it was.”

I suddenly remembered that Tage was still in the room with us; when I was playing, everything around me had faded into the background. I spun around and saw that he had taken a seat on the floor, and had his chin propped in his hands as he

watched with a smile. He wasn't involved in our game, but he looked like he was having the time of his life.

“What should we play next?” Joey asked, capturing my attention again.

With one game under my belt, I felt more comfortable as I searched the room. The piles of toys were no longer intimidating; they were enticing. One thing in particular caught my interest, and I asked Joey, “Can we try the blocks?”

“Sure!” He pushed the pile of wooden squares to the center of the room and we got down on our knees to reach them. “What do you want to build?”

“What about a house for Barbie?”

“Ooh, good idea! We should make a giant one so that there's room for Snowball in there too.”

We laid the blocks end to end in the shape of a large rectangle to make the outline of the home. Then we stacked them high to make strong walls which would keep intruders out. Once the walls were nice and tall, I was able to poke out a few blocks to create windows.

Soon, every square was in place, and our house was complete. Barbie and Snowball approved; Barbie loved how spacious it was, and Snowball barked happily as he looked out the windows.

“Oh my, that’s a nice house you’ve made,” Ian complimented as he entered the room.

“Thank you,” Joey and I replied together.

“Are you two having a good time?”

“The best!” Joey exclaimed before jumping to his feet and running to Ian. He hugged his Daddy around the middle and lifted him right off the floor. I knew that vampires were strong, but it still surprised me to see him pick up the larger man.

“I’m so glad,” Ian said with a chuckle as Joey placed his feet back on the ground. “I hate to interrupt your fun, but dinner is ready. Please go wash your hands and come to the kitchen.”

“Yes, Daddy!” With that, Joey zoomed out of the room and Ian followed him, laughing again.

As quickly as Joey left, Tage appeared in front of me, offering me his hand. I slipped mine inside and my skin warmed, making me realize how much I’d missed his touch,

which was both exciting and disappointing. He wasn't mine to touch, and I shouldn't let myself need it, but I couldn't help it.

Tage pulled me to my feet as if I weighed nothing, removing any tiny doubt in my mind as I said without thinking, "You're a vampire too."

"I am. Does that bother you?" His voice held no offense; everything he said was laced with care.

I shook my head no before telling him honestly, "I wasn't sure what to expect from vampires; Dalton always said he didn't trust them because they were strong and could take whatever they wanted from humans. But every vampire I've met has been so nice." Granted, I'd only met Joey and Tage, but it didn't matter. I was finding out that Dalton was wrong about many things.

“Some people are scared of our speed and strength,”

Tage nodded understandingly. “But there’s no need to be.

Vampires want to live in harmony with all species. If we didn’t, we wouldn’t have worked so hard to create the blood substitute. It took away our need to feed from humans, while helping your species with blood supply and treating diseases.”

“I never thought of it like that,” I admitted. Realizing that he said ‘we’, I asked, “Did you help make the substitute?”

“I did. There were many people helping me, but I led the group of doctors who created it.”

“That’s amazing. You’re so smart!”

“Thank you, duckling,” he replied with a dazzling smile.

“I wish I were smarter,” I blurted out. Tage was easy to talk to, and I felt like I could tell him anything. “I only made it through middle school before I had to drop out.”

His eyes grew sad and he looked as if he were about to ask something, but before he could speak, Joey’s voice called from the other side of the apartment. “Andy, are you coming? Daddy says I can’t eat until you’re in here.”

Tage chuckled quietly as he squeezed my fingers. “It sounds like we better get in the kitchen. Would you like some help washing your hands?”

I blinked at his question. I was obviously capable of doing it myself, but I was intrigued by the offer. And since I was dipping my toes into the little world, I answered, “Yes, please.”

Tage led me out of the room and down a short hallway. We stepped into a bathroom and when he flipped on the light, I saw that it was decorated with a rainbow shower curtain and brightly colored towels.

I laughed and pointed at the soap dispenser on the sink, which was in the shape of a rubber ducky. “Look!”

“Just like you,” he smiled. Tage stepped behind me and my pulse quickened when he wrapped his arms around my waist. “Let’s get these hands nice and clean.”

He turned on the tap and tested the water’s temperature before placing my hands beneath the warm stream. After pumping a few blobs of soap into his palms, Tage worked it into a lather and placed it on my skin. He scrubbed the fronts and backs of my hands, between my fingers, and beneath my nails.

“I can tell you’re a doctor,” I teased, and his warm laughter vibrated against my back. I never wanted him to move, but he soon rinsed my hands clean, turned off the tap, and took a step back to grab a towel.

Tage patted my skin dry until every last drop of water disappeared. “There you go; all clean.” I thanked him with a smile and he asked, “Are you hungry?”

“I’m starving!” My eyes drifted down onto my round belly and I corrected, “Well, no, I’m obviously not *starving*.” All of my life, I’d always been heavy, and a little uncomfortable in my skin. Dalton was built much leaner than I was, and he accused me of lying around and stuffing my face all day while he was at work, but that wasn’t the case. No matter what I ate, or what I did, my shape didn’t change, which was disheartening.

Tage lifted my chin so that I was looking up into his eyes when he told me, “Your body is beautiful.” No one had ever said that to me. The words made my chest buzz with happiness. My cheeks blushed hard, and he smiled as he traced his finger across my skin. “Come on, let’s go feed that hungry tummy.”

He took my hand and led me through the apartment and into the kitchen, where Joey was sitting at a wooden table, practically drooling over the plate of food in front of him.

“*There* you are!” he exclaimed when we entered the room. “Daddy made my favorite - spaghetti and meatballs! Do you like it too?”

“I love it.” I blushed again when Tage pulled out a chair for me and helped me sit into it.

“I thought you might want to make Andy’s plate for him,” Ian said to Tage with a nod towards the stovetop, where all of the food waited.

“Thank you.” He prepared my food and I smiled when he served it to me; the spaghetti was chopped into tiny bite-size pieces, and the meatballs were cut into fours. It was resting on a blue plastic plate. “How does that look?”

“It looks great, thank you.” I turned to Ian and added, “And thank *you* for cooking. It smells delicious.”

“You’re so welcome. And you’re free to join us for dinner any time you like.” Ian’s words made my chest buzz again as Joey cheered. *So this is what friendship feels like.* It was the best dang feeling in the world.

Tage placed his own plate (which was white porcelain and matched Ian's) on the tabletop and sat in the empty chair next to me. He winked at me and grabbed his fork as I picked up my red plastic spoon.

“Watch this,” Joey said as he circled his fork into his pasta, lifting up a large pile. He stuffed it into his mouth and sucked hard, sending the noodles flopping against his cheeks and nose.

I laughed at his silliness, but I was glad that Tage cut up my pasta; I preferred to stay neat and clean. I scooped a bite onto my spoon and hummed happily at the sweet flavor of the sauce.

“Ooh, and check this out!” It was as if Joey wanted to show me all of his tricks as he leaned forward and wrapped his lips around his straw. He drank and I watched as milk rose up

the plastic, swirling through the curls and bends of his crazy straw. “Isn’t that cool?” he asked once he was done with his sip. I beamed and nodded quickly. It *was* cool.

“I’m so sorry, duckling,” Tage said as he stood up, “I forgot to get you anything to drink.” I was confused when he added, “I’m a little out of practice,” but I was grateful when he returned to the table with a cup of milk for me, plus my very own crazy straw to drink with.

Joey and I giggled our way through dinner as he slurped noodles and we had milk races with our straws. We even blew through them instead, making white bubbles climb up the insides of our cups. I kept peeking over at Tage, and every time I found him smiling back at me. It was the best dinner of my whole life.

“So, Daddy,” Joey said once all of our plates were empty, “What’s for dessert?”

Ian chuckled and reached over with a paper towel to clean off his boy’s messy face. “We have some orange sherbet in the freezer. You boys could have some of that while you watch TV if you’d like.”

“Yes!” Joey cheered, punching his fist in the air. Ian raised his eyebrows and Joey turned to me to add, “I mean...if that’s okay with you, too.”

I nodded excitedly, and rose from my chair when Joey did the same. I offered, “I can help clean up dinner,” earning a proud smile from Tage, but Ian shook his head.

“Thank you, but I’ll take care of it. You boys, go have fun and we’ll bring you some sherbet in just a few minutes.”

“Thanks, Daddy!” Joey rushed to Ian’s side and threw his arms around his neck.

My own hands tingled with longing. I wanted to hug Tage so badly; to feel his arms around me, to rest my head on his strong chest, and to show my appreciation for him. But I was too afraid of taking advantage of our friendship or crossing a boundary, so I stood still until Joey returned to me and grabbed my hand to take me into the living room.

Just as was promised, Ian and Tage brought us each a large bowl of orange sherbet a few minutes later. The two men sat on the sofa and talked while Joey and I happily ate, sitting on the floor and watching cartoons.

Joey found a show that he thought I’d like; it was about a girl named Polly who had a magical locket which could shrink her and her friends to the size of dolls. He was

right; I couldn't take my eyes off of the bright colors, and I was completely sucked into the storyline.

I imagined what it would be like to shrink down to four inches tall. I could play with Barbie inside her house, and ride around on Joey's remote control cars. And I would *always* win at hide-and-seek.

When the credits rolled on the fourth episode, Ian used the remote to turn off the television.

"Aw, can't we watch *one* more?" Joey asked, giving his Daddy a pouty lip.

"It's getting late, sweet thing," Ian replied. "And you two have had a big day of playing. Aren't you getting tired?"

"Not at all," he shrugged.

I, on the other hand, was getting very tired. It had been a long (but great) day of learning and exploration. My jaw dropped into a wide yawn while I stretched my arms over my head.

“Oh my, that was a big yawn,” Tage pointed out with a smile. “I think my little duckling is getting sleepy.” I knew it was just a turn of phrase, but I so desperately longed to be his. “I’d be happy to take you home.”

“I’ll go too,” Joey piped up, but Ian put his hands on his boy’s shoulders.

“I think we should let Tage and Andy have some time alone,” he suggested instead, and butterflies took flight in my stomach. As much as I enjoyed spending time with Joey, I had a burning need to get closer to Tage.

“Ohhh,” Joey replied while bouncing his eyebrows like he was keyed into a secret. “Good idea.”

“Besides, you need a shower before bed anyway,” Ian added, and Joey’s eyebrows furrowed. Ian gave him a stern (but loving) look, and Joey sighed.

“Yes, Daddy.” He crawled over to me and wrapped me in a big hug. “Thanks for playing with me today. I had a great time.”

“Me too. Can we play again soon?”

“Definitely.” Joey let me loose and went back to his Daddy, who waved goodbye to me before taking Joey towards the bathroom.

Tage stood up and offered me his hand once more.

“Are you ready?” he asked with a smile.

I was ready for so much more than he could give me.

But for now, even if it hurt later, I'd enjoy every moment with
him. "Ready."

Chapter Four

Tage

“I’ll get that for you,” I told Andy as we reached my red Porsche, which was parked in the garage beside the apartment complex. I opened the passenger door and he thanked me before sliding inside.

Needing to know he was safe, I leaned in over him and stretched his seatbelt across his chest, buckling it at his side. Andy’s cheeks were pink, but his eyes were grateful when he looked up at me.

It meant so much that he was comfortable in my presence and care; he didn’t even pause to accept my offer to

take him home. I shut his door and jogged around to the driver's side, wanting to be near him again as quickly as possible.

Watching Andy play with Joey was a dream come true; I got to witness him diving into his personality for the first time, and I would forever cherish the memory. But I was equally as grateful to have this time alone with him and find out more about my precious mate.

“Are you comfortable?” I asked him once I was buckled in as well.

“Very,” he smiled as he stroked the leather seat beneath him. “I love your car.”

“Thank you. You know, I've never been one to covet many possessions, but when I saw this car, I had to have it. It's

a bit strange; I saw the invention of cars and their evolution over time, and this is the first one that spoke to me.”

Andy blinked his wide eyes. “How old *are* you?” He blinked again. “I’m sorry, that sounded rude. I didn’t mean to blurt it out like that.”

“No worries,” I chuckled. It was definitely different than what he was used to, and I enjoyed his sweet honesty. “I want you to ask me anything. And to answer your question, I am eleven hundred thirty four years old.”

“Wow,” Andy whispered. “You must have seen some incredible things in your lifetime.”

I nodded as I pulled out onto the road. “I’ve seen some incredibly wonderful things, but also the worst of humanity; famine, war, and disease. In my younger years, I saw many

people die from human illnesses, and I was plagued with guilt because I wasn't affected by them. So, I decided to dedicate my life to finding cures for those diseases. I studied long and hard, became a doctor, and I work every day for medical advancements.”

“Like the blood substitute,” Andy concluded.

“Exactly.”

I was surprised when he put his hand on my shoulder and told me, “I think you're amazing.” And just as quickly, he pulled his hand away and blushed when he said, “Sorry.”

I grabbed his hand once more and held it, resting it on my knee. “Duckling, please never apologize for touching me.”

Andy ducked his head and smiled shyly. “Will you tell me more about yourself?”

He thought for a moment before answering, “I live at the apartments in Highland Park, and, umm...oh! I like to cook.”

“I didn’t know I was riding with a chef,” I teased, and Andy giggled sweetly. “What’s your favorite thing to cook?”

“Grilled cheese, but not the boring regular kind. I make them special.”

“I won’t ask for the chef’s secret, but maybe you can make one for me sometime.” While I wanted to provide for him, I also wanted to share in his interests and talents, especially anything special to him.

Andy squeezed my hand and replied, “I’d like that.”

After a few moments of driving in silence, my curiosity about Andy’s sorry got the best of me. “Back at Ian

and Joey's place you said that you had to drop out before high school. May I ask why?"

"That's when my mom left."

I was stunned not only by his words, but how calmly he said them. "She left you?"

"And Dalton," he nodded. "When I was growing up, she'd leave for days at a time, but she would always come back...until one day she didn't. I don't know what happened to her, but after a couple of weeks, Dalton and I knew that we were on our own."

"What about your father?"

Andy shrugged. "I never met him. It was just the three of us, and then just my brother and me. He was older, so he got a job to make money, and he put me in charge of the

house, because I was used to cooking and cleaning. At first I couldn't make anything more than ramen noodles or fried bologna, but I tried new things and taught myself over the years."

"Your mom never cooked?"

He shook his head and answered, "She was very sick with her own demons." I suddenly understood; I wasn't ignorant to the drug problem in the city, and it seemed that it had claimed another victim in Andy's mother. "I really think that she thought leaving was best for us, and maybe it was. She didn't want to be a mom."

My heart ached for him; most of his life, he didn't have a parental presence, and even when he did, it sounded troubled. I hated that he didn't get to finish out his education. The city was large and had its own problems, and I could see

where a child could unfortunately slip through the cracks of the education system.

Andy was forced to be more mature than his years.

Maybe that was why he was drawn to the little lifestyle; because he never got to enjoy playing or freedom in his youth.

Maybe the craving for a feminine presence was why he preferred certain toys. Whatever the reason, I was there to support him and give him anything he needed. *I* just needed to know exactly how to do that.

“I know that Joey and Ian taught you a lot about Daddies and littles today,” I began, and Andy nodded with a tiny grin. “How do you feel about it?”

“I feel...” he paused and scrunched his forehead as he thought. “I feel like the world finally makes sense; like I found the part of myself I’ve been missing all of this time.”

I squeezed his hand. “I understand what you mean.

When I was younger, I knew I always wanted to be a caretaker. At first, I thought it would be centered around healthcare, but soon I realized that I needed more. Of course, in those years, this type of lifestyle was unheard of, and then taboo. But as I grew older and the world changed, I discovered that there was an entire community of people just like me; there were other Daddies who wanted to care for their boys. I felt seen, understood, and most importantly, not alone.”

Andy’s eyes were full of wonder and longing when he whispered, “I *knew* you were a Daddy,” but I was unsure if he was talking to me or to himself.

Wanting to push forward and learn his desires, I said, “I know you had a great time playing with Joey today. What other things are you interested in trying?”

Once again he was quiet for a minute while he collected his thoughts. I respected how pensive Andy was, and would never rush him; I had all the time in the world to give to him. “Joey mentioned that some boys wear diapers, but I’m not sure that I’d like to use them.”

“Not all boys use their diapers,” I replied. “Some just like the soft feel against their skin, but they still use the potty. Others like to wear padded underwear or briefs printed in fun colors.” I looked at him from the corner of my eye and added, “Some like to wear pretty panties.” Andy’s face lit up and my sensitive hearing caught the uptick in his pulse. My sweet boy was definitely interested in them.

“I liked drinking with the crazy straw tonight,” Andy added. “It was nice to have something special.”

“Would you ever like to try a bottle or a sippy cup?”

His cheeks blushed when he answered, “Maybe. But I *really* liked the straws.”

“Thank you for telling me.” My shy boy was being very brave. “I’m proud of you.”

“Really?”

I brushed my thumb across his knuckles and said without a doubt, “Really.”

“Thank you.” He stared at our interlocked fingers and sighed before adding, “I’m very happy you’re my friend.”

The word sat like a rock in my stomach as I pulled into the parking lot of Andy’s apartment building. I put the car in park and shifted in my seat so that I faced him.

“I’m happy that we met and it’s my honor to get to know you, but I have to be honest; I’m not interested in just

friendship with you.”

His face melted into a distraught expression. “I don’t understand; did I do something wrong?”

“No, no, sweet duckling.” I moved my free hand onto his round, scruffy cheek and looked into his eyes. “I don’t *just* want your friendship. I want so much more; to be your partner, your provider...and your Daddy. I know it’s sudden, but I can’t wait to start our wonderful life together. Will you be mine?”

“It’s everything I want,” he replied, and my heart soared. But why did he look so sad? “But...I can’t.”

I didn’t understand. Andy was my fated one; my true love for all time. Was he scared? Confused? I took a deep

breath and used every ounce of composure to ask calmly,

“What’s wrong?”

“Joey told me about vampire mates,” he replied, and my bewilderment deepened. If he knew about our bond and felt our connection, why was he rejecting me? What could I do? “As much as I like you, I can’t be with you when I know that your mate is out there somewhere. I want you to be happy with your special boy, even if it can’t be me.”

“Oh, sweet Andy.” I was both relieved by the misunderstanding and touched by his selflessness. “I didn’t know you knew about fated mates. I was afraid if I told you, it might be too much for one day. But the truth is - you *are* my special boy. From the moment I saw you in the clinic with Joey, I knew that you were mine.”

“You did?” Andy asked with eyes as wide as saucers.

“How?”

“I caught your scent and my soul felt your presence; it recognized you, and my heart instantly fell for you. I’ve been waiting for you for so long. I’m blessed to finally have my other half.”

Andy’s hand trembled in mine. “I don’t know what to say.”

“I hope you’ll say yes.” Even though we were bound to be together for all time, I would never push for his consent. He had free will and a right to choose; I just prayed he chose me.

“Are you sure? I’ve never had a Daddy - or even a boyfriend - before. I’m not experienced; I’ve never even

kissed anyone. And you know I'm not very smart. I-

I stopped his words by sliding my finger onto his lips.

“Andy, you *are* smart. You're also sweet and caring and you make me happy. I'm sure Joey told you that vampire mates are perfect matches, so you know that you're everything I want.

Anyone would be lucky to be your partner or Daddy, and you don't know how thrilled I am that I get to be both. I don't care that you're not experienced. We'll move as slowly or quickly as you're ready for. I just want to be with you.”

Andy dropped my hand to pull me into a tight hug. “I want to be with you too.”

I nuzzled my face into his neck and inhaled his sweet, musky scent. His aroma in my nostrils and his soft body in my arms was better than anything I could have imagined. Every day of waiting, every time I cursed Fate for her timing, every

doubt that ever crossed my mind now meant nothing. My mate was worth it all. He was worth everything.

“You know how you said your soul recognized me?”

Andy asked, and I nodded against his neck. “I think mine recognized you too. When I first saw you, I thought you were very handsome, but it was more than that. I wanted you to talk to me and to touch me. I wanted to be close to you.” He shrugged and added, “But I’m just human, so maybe I’m wrong.”

“You’re not wrong.” I backed up to look into his eyes again. He was intelligent and in tune with his emotions; his trouble was with confidence, but I would build him up in every way I could. “Even though you’re human, you’re the mate of a vampire. We are made for each other, and our hearts know it. Because we are handcrafted for one another by the

gods, our connection will grow deeply and rapidly. Does that frighten you?"

"No," Andy answered without hesitation. "It excites me. I'm only afraid of letting you down."

"Oh duckling, you never have to worry about that. Just having you in my life is the answer to all of my dreams and desires."

"But what if I'm not a good little for you? I just learned about all of this; what if I do something wrong?"

Andy was used to being admonished, but those days were behind him. "As Daddy, I'm here to help you with all of that. You never have to worry; my sole purpose is to make you happy and take care of you. I just want you to promise me one thing."

“Anything,” he nodded.

“If we try something that you don’t like, I need you to tell me. Or, if there’s something you want to try, please let me know.”

“I promise. Joey and Ian told me how important honesty and communication are.”

I’d have to thank my friends for helping Andy so much. I was curious, “Did they tell you what happens when mates bond together?”

He shook his head no. “Just that they can’t survive without each other.”

“That’s right. When mates bond together, their lifelines become intertwined. A human mate will inherit some vampire properties, like immunity to illnesses, and most

importantly, immortality. Once we bond, you won't die naturally, but you *can* be killed, which would end my life as well. But I will protect you with everything I am."

"How do we bond?"

Curious what he'd think of the process, I began with a question. "You know how vampires must drink blood to survive, which is one reason why the blood substitute was created?" Andy nodded. "Well, once a vampire meets their mate, the substitute will no longer work for them. They must drink the blood of their mate to live. I promise it won't hurt you in any way." He nodded again.

"But to complete our bond, you will drink my blood as well. It only has to be once, and only a small amount. By taking in each other's life source, it will create an unbreakable bond between our lives and souls which will last for eternity."

“An eternity,” he repeated quietly. “It’s hard to believe.”

“I know you’ve been hit with a lot of information today.” But he handled it beautifully.

“A lot of *good* information,” he assured, bringing a smile to my lips.

“I’m glad you feel that way, but I bet learning everything is making you tired, huh?” Right on cue, Andy’s mouth stretched into another wide yawn as he nodded. “Are you ready for me to take you to your apartment so you can get some rest?”

“Yes, please.”

I patted his knee and requested, “Stay right there.” I climbed out of the car and hurried around to the other side to

open Andy's door. He took my offered hand and I helped him onto his feet before locking the car behind us.

Andy smiled at me as I took his hand and led him towards the building. He was at ease with my touch and allowing me to take the lead. Once we entered the complex, I asked, "Which floor are you on?"

"Six."

We took the elevator to the sixth floor and walked down the hall until we reached apartment 612. Andy happily passed his key to me so that I could let him in.

The interior of his small apartment was clean but bare. It showed its age with cracking paint and warped floors, but it held all of the necessities. There were no photos, decor, or personal touches to make it feel like a home. While it

saddened me, I knew that this housing was temporary. Soon, my mate would live with me in the coven house and I would make sure he had every creature comfort he wished for.

“What do you think?” he asked nervously as he looked around the space.

“It’s very nice.” Andy let out a relieved sigh at my reply. “Will you show me to your bedroom?”

He nodded and pointed to a wooden doorway. When we crossed the threshold, I turned on the light and looked upon a cramped room which held only a twin size mattress covered in a blue blanket, and a small dresser.

“Are your jammies in there?” I asked, pointing to the dresser.

“In the top drawer.”

It only took two steps to cross the floor. I pulled open the top drawer and saw a stack of clean underwear next to a few pairs of socks. On the right hand side were two pairs of cotton shorts and two white t-shirts.

They weren't fun or pretty, but I wasn't surprised; Andy lived with his disapproving brother, so he had to be mindful of what he wore. I lifted out a pair of gray shorts and one of the t-shirts and asked him, "Would you like some help getting ready for bed?"

Andy chewed on his lip as his eyes drifted down to the floor. "Is it okay if I change by myself?" As he spoke, his arms hugged around his stomach. I wasn't sure if he was uncomfortable with me seeing his body, or me caring for him in that way, but no matter his reason, I would never push. "I'm sorry."

I was in front of him again in the blink of an eye. I cupped his cheeks in my hands and tipped his head back so he was looking at me. “Duckling, I’m proud of you for telling me what you want and need. You never have to apologize for that. I told you that we’d take everything at your speed and I meant it.”

He gave me a grateful smile, making his pretty brown eyes shine. I was overtaken by his beauty and leaned in to kiss his forehead, but I stopped at the sound of his quiet gasp.

Dammit, Tage; you just said you’d move at his speed! “Forgive me for being too forward; is this okay?”

“Oh yes,” he whispered, so I pressed my lips to his soft skin, outpouring my care and affection. It didn’t matter that it was on his forehead; it was the best kiss of my life.

When I pulled away, Andy's eyes were closed and he had a dreamy smile on his lips, looking as satisfied as if I had ravished his body. He appreciated a gentle touch, and I was fulfilled by giving it to him.

"Once you've changed, may I help you brush your teeth?" I thought it was a good balance of helping him without crossing any boundaries.

"I'd like that."

I kissed his forehead again and Andy hurried out of the room with his night clothes. A couple of minutes later, he called out that he was ready, and I followed the sound of his voice into a tiny bathroom, where he was holding a toothbrush and a mostly empty tube of toothpaste.

As he handed them over, I noticed a stack of envelopes on the sink and asked, “Are those the bills from earlier?”

He nodded. “I took them out of my jeans pocket when I changed so that I wouldn’t accidentally wash them.”

“I’ll write checks for them as soon as I’m back at my place,” I promised, hoping to ease his worried mind.

“I don’t know how to thank you for this.”

“No thanks necessary,” I told him with a wink.

“Providing for you gives me joy.”

Andy slowly shook his head. “I don’t know how I got so lucky to find you.”

“I feel the same way.” The look of confusion in his eyes hurt my heart.

I spread toothpaste onto the bristles of the brush and Andy smiled widely, exposing all of his pearly white teeth so that I could gently scrub each one. *This* is why I was lucky; I got to care for my precious boy. By meeting his needs, I found my purpose.

“Go ahead and rinse,” I told Andy once his teeth were polished and his mouth was full of foam. He gathered a mouthful of water and swished it around before spitting and standing upright, smiling for me to inspect my work.

“How do they look?”

“Beautiful,” I replied, before giving him another kiss; this time to the tip of his nose.

I took his hand and led him back to his bedroom. As we walked, my heart sank further into my stomach; I knew

that once I tucked him in for the night, I'd be leaving his side, and the realization gave me physical pain. I wasn't ready to be apart from him. I'd gone over a millennium before meeting him, but now, even one night seemed too much to bear.

But my own woes took the backseat when we reached Andy's bed and I turned to him, finding a look of sadness on his face. "What's wrong?" I asked, wanting to do anything I could to cheer him up.

A pretty pink blush spread across his cheeks as he answered, "It's just...I'm not sure when I'm going to see you again and, well...I'm really going to miss you." My sweet mate was feeling the pull between us just as strongly as I was.

My plan was to spend every single day with him, but I felt guilty that I hadn't made it clear. It was my job to keep his

mind at ease, and instead, I left him feeling unsure about the future.

“Andy, I want to be together every moment that you’ll have me,” I told him, and his shoulders relaxed. “I’d like to spend the day together tomorrow, just the two of us; we can play, explore...anything you’d like to do. How does that sound?”

“That sounds perfect! I can hardly wait.” His rosy cheeks remained when he admitted, “I’ll still miss you tonight, though.”

“Andy, I’d love to stay with you tonight, but only if you’re comfortable with it. I can lie here with you and snuggle all night, or I can sleep on the couch or even the floor; I just want to be close to you.” If he needed me for any reason, I wanted to be right there for him.

His voice was quiet but clear when he answered,
“Snuggling sounds amazing.”

As soon as the words left his lips, I pulled back his blanket and patted his mattress. Andy climbed on and scooted against the wall, offering me space on the small bed.

“Is it okay if I take off my jeans so that I’m more comfortable?” I asked, and Andy swallowed hard before nodding his head. I toed out of my shoes and dropped my jeans; I was wearing boxers beneath, so I was completely covered, but Andy’s jaw still dropped at the sight.

“I wish I didn’t have to take my glasses off for sleep,” he whispered, making me chuckle as I climbed into bed beside him. “They don’t help much anyway,” he shrugged, removing them and passing them over so I could put them on the nightstand. When I tipped my head in question, he explained,

“Several years ago, I noticed that I was having trouble seeing, but I didn’t have the money to go to the eye doctor. One day, I was at the thrift shop looking for shoes because mine fell apart. I saw the glasses there and tried them on. They help a little.”

My heart broke as I pictured Andy’s toes peeking out of his shoes as he scoured the racks for cheap replacements, and imagined his joy when he found the hand-me-down glasses to help him see. My sweet mate was grateful for anything, but I would see to it that he never had second best of anything ever again. I would gladly take him to get the correct prescription lenses, but soon he wouldn’t need them; when he and I bonded, his vision would correct.

“Come here, little duckling,” I beckoned, opening my arms in invitation. Andy blushed as he snuggled closer, resting

his head on my chest.

After a few moments he nuzzled deeper and told me,

“I can hear your heartbeat.”

“It beats for you.”

Andy looked up at me, blinking his beautiful brown eyes. “Really?”

“Always.” His eyes twinkled even more as his face spread into a grin. “Andy, may I kiss you goodnight?” As I spoke, I traced my finger down his cheek and onto his plush lips, which parted with a tiny gasp.

They closed when he gulped again, and he answered with a nod. My heart hammered against my ribs as I cupped his cheek and lowered my face to his. His breath warmed my

cheeks in shallow pants as he waited. My keen ears heard his pulse quicken.

I closed the gap between us, touching my lips to his and lighting my world on fire. My eyes rolled back with pleasure at the feel of his soft skin, and the minty flavor that clung to them. Desire burned through my veins, but I kept the kiss sweet and chaste. I wanted Andy to feel protected, treasured, and loved.

When we parted, Andy's eyes fluttered open, appearing heavy and blissful until he blinked them back into focus. He whispered, "Wow," bringing a smile to my face. He smiled back before laying his head on my chest once more, listening to the steady thump of my heart.

I made sure the thin blanket covered him before wrapping my arms tightly around him, needing to feel his

warmth against me. It wasn't long before his breathing became slow and steady. He was relaxed but my presence, which brought me immeasurable joy. I always wanted to be his peace.

I kissed the top of his head and whispered into his curly hair, "Goodnight, Andy."

My heart nearly burst when he answered in a quiet, sleepy slur, "Goodnight, Daddy."

Chapter Five

Andy

I woke up from the best sleep of my life, wrapped tightly and safely in my Daddy's arms. *My Daddy*. It had been such a short time that I even knew about the world of age play, but now that it was within my grasp, I was never letting go.

I had only dipped my toe in by playing with Joey and having Tager - Daddy - help me with little things like cutting up my food or brushing my teeth. And while it had been wonderful, I craved more. I wanted to experience everything the lifestyle had to offer.

I was a little nervous, but having Daddy with me made me feel better. He was my vampire mate; my perfect match, so he would understand my needs. He needed them too. I didn't have to be afraid, because he shared my heart.

And so I decided I was going to jump in with both feet; to explore it all to find my likes and dislikes, to hold nothing back, and to be the best boy for Daddy I could be. I was going to be brave, and I hoped I made him happy and proud.

“Is my little duckling awake?” Daddy's voice asked, and my chest warmed at the nickname. I'd never had one before; well, not a pleasant one, anyway.

“I am.” I raised my head from his chest and found him smiling down at me, his icy blue eyes twinkling beautifully.

“How did you sleep?”

“*So* good. I dreamed that I was a baby duck swimming in a lake and playing with little fishies.”

His smile spread so that pretty lines crinkled above his cheeks. “That sounds like a very nice dream.”

“It was great! Did you have any dreams?”

He shook his head no and I felt bad for him until he said, “But waking up next to you is better than any dream I could ever have.” I smiled as he grabbed my glasses off of the nightstand and settled them onto my nose. “Are you hungry?” When I nodded, he said, “Let’s get dressed and I’ll take you out to breakfast.”

I jumped out of bed excitedly; I couldn’t remember the last time I got to eat at a restaurant. I usually cooked for

Dalton and myself. I wanted to cook for Daddy one day, but going out to eat was a treat I was looking forward to.

“My boy is ready to go,” Daddy chuckled as he climbed out of bed behind me. I snuck in one last good look of his strong, hairy legs before he stepped into his jeans. He straightened the blanket on the bed and stepped into his shoes before walking over to my dresser.

He opened a drawer and hummed as he looked over what was inside. It wasn't much; just things I'd collected from thrift shops over the years. I bought what was available in my size, and the majority of the clothing was sweaters and threadbare jeans.

“Let's go with this one,” Daddy said as he lifted out a black and white patterned sweater, “And these.” He also chose a pair of jeans in light blue denim. I liked that he took control

and chose my clothes for the day, but also appreciated it when he asked, “Would you like to change on your own again?”

I almost nodded, as I was admittedly still nervous about showing my body, but I stopped myself. I wanted to share *every* experience with Daddy. I didn’t want my fear to rob me of joy. I didn’t want to hide. I took a deep breath and asked him, “Will you help me?”

The delight in his eyes made my stomach do a flip. “I would love to, and thank you for trusting me.” Daddy had such a kind soul, and knew just what to say to help me feel comfortable. He took a step closer and asked, “Can you put your arms up for me?”

I took a deep breath and lifted my arms over my head. My cheeks flushed when I felt the hem of my shirt creep up

my torso, letting the bottom of my belly peek out. But Daddy only smiled and touched his fingers to the cotton.

He lifted his eyebrows, silently asking my permission.

It meant a lot that he understood this was a big moment for me. He didn't think it was silly that I was nervous about something as simple as taking off my shirt. He took his time with me, making me feel like the most special boy on Earth.

I nodded and Daddy slowly pushed the cotton up my torso. He gently worked the fabric over my head, making sure not to bump my glasses, and popped it over my arms, leaving my upper half bare.

Nervousness trickled over me again as his eyes trailed over my body. I had never been more aware of my stomach folding over the waistband of my shorts, or of the creases on my chest. My cheeks burned as I worried that he might change

his mind about me; that he might think Fate made a mistake...
that he deserved better.

But then his gaze met mine, and I couldn't deny the
heat they held. It made me believe his words when he spoke,
"You are beautiful, Andy; absolutely beautiful."

I blinked hard to keep tears from falling. How could
one sentence from one man soothe a lifetime of self-doubt and
criticism? Because he wasn't just a man; he was a Daddy, and
he was mine.

His hands slipped down my stomach, gingerly
stroking my skin along his path. When he reached the band of
my shorts, he paused again until he received another nod from
me. He wasn't making a move without my approval.

Daddy tucked his fingers inside the waistband and shimmied my shorts over my hips, letting them fall to the floor. The heat behind his eyes intensified when his gaze hovered over the front of my briefs. His jaw rippled when he swallowed hard. Desire poured out of him and made my blood race. I'd never been wanted before.

Luckily, his gaze flitted away before my racing blood could pool in my groin and make my briefs *extra-tighty* whiteys. He picked up my jeans and held them open, and I steadied myself with my hands on his shoulders as I stepped through the leg holes.

Daddy then stretched the neck hole of my sweater, allowing me to pop my head through before he fed my arms through the sleeves. I was fully dressed in an outfit I'd worn countless times before, but something felt off.

Maybe it was *because* I'd worn the outfit before; I was starting a new chapter of my life, but these clothes felt like the past clinging to my skin. Plus, they weren't what I imagined wearing when I was with Daddy. I didn't buy them because I liked them; I bought them out of necessity and because they fit. And because it's what Dalton expected me to wear.

But they weren't what I dreamed of wearing. I dreamed of pink clothes and sparkles. I dreamed of being pretty; I wanted to be so pretty for Daddy.

He smiled at me, but it faded as he studied my saddened expression. He didn't say a word, but somehow it felt like he knew exactly what bothered me; like an entire silent conversation passed between us. I'd never felt so understood with a single look.

He reached out to take my hands and said, “Andy, you look so nice in your outfit, but I know your heart is set on something else.” I nodded my agreement and his smile returned. “After breakfast, I’d like to take you shopping so that you can pick out whatever clothes you like.”

While my heart raced with excitement, my brain filled with worry. “Clothes are expensive.” I struggled to buy even hand-me-downs, so I could only imagine how much new, pretty clothes would cost.

He brushed his thumb over my knuckles and told me, “You don’t need to worry about things like that anymore.” When he saw I wasn’t convinced, he added, “I have more money than I could spend in a hundred lifetimes, and what’s mine is yours. I’ll not only take care of your needs, but your

desires as well. You'll never want for anything, and it's my right as your Daddy to spoil you rotten."

"I'm spoiled just by having you as my Daddy," I insisted, bringing a pearly grin to his lips. "But...a few pretty shirts *would* be nice."

Daddy gave a booming laugh that made my belly swoop. "That's what I like to hear." He patted the edge of the mattress and when I sat down, he rolled a pair of socks onto my feet (not mentioning the hole in the toe) before slipping my shoes over them and tying my laces tight.

"Ready?" he asked, tapping both of my knees before standing up. I nodded as he pulled me to my feet as well. I'd never been more ready for anything.

Our first stop was a diner close to my apartment. I'd walked by it many times on my way to the grocery store or thrift shop, but I never had the money to eat there.

When we walked in, my stomach growled at the scent of bacon that clung to the air. Daddy led me to a red leather booth and scooted in close to me before handing me a menu and telling me to order anything I wanted.

My eyes scanned over the options, and each thing looked better than the last. I couldn't make a decision. When I told Daddy that everything sounded good, that's what he ordered.

My eyes nearly bugged out of my head when a line of waiters delivered plates to our table. Soon, the entire tabletop was covered with eggs (both scrambled and fried), pancakes,

toast, bacon, waffles, and hashbrowns. Plus, a big glass of chocolate milk for me, and a mug of coffee for Daddy.

“Eat up,” he said with a grin, and he didn’t have to tell me twice. I gobbled down the delicious syrup-soaked feast like it was my last meal. Daddy didn’t give me judgy looks or snide remarks as I ate; he just smiled wider as I wiggled happily in my seat. And he even ate more than I did!

Once I felt like one more bite would pop the button right off of my jeans, Daddy wiped my mouth clean with a napkin and stacked our plates. I tried to peek at the bill when the waitress brought it to the table, but Daddy snatched it up before I could see it and gave me a wink.

After he got me buckled safely into his car, Daddy told me that he had a surprise for me. He drove deeper into town and pulled the car up in front of a huge toy store.

“This is Ian and Joey’s store. It replaced the one that burned down,” he explained as he shifted the gear to park. “I asked our friends to meet us here to help you pick out what you like.”

Right on cue, the front door of the shop opened and Joey stepped outside, waving over his head. Once Daddy helped me out of the car, Joey rushed up to me and captured me in a tight hug, squealing as he lifted me right off of the sidewalk.

“Easy, sweet thing,” Ian chuckled as he stepped behind his boy.

“Sorry,” Joey offered, placing me back on my feet. “I just really missed you.”

“I missed you too,” I replied, but it wasn’t entirely true; all of my thoughts had been revolving around Daddy, but I didn’t want to make my friend sad.

“Come on, I want to show you all of the toys!” Joey said, grabbing my hand. He pulled me into the shop while our Daddies chuckled and followed behind.

I’d been in Ian’s old toy store once, when I bought my Barbie doll, but this new shop was even better. It was bigger, brighter, and stuffed with toys of every kind.

Joey grabbed a shopping cart from the front of the store and then led me down each aisle, taking time to demonstrate every toy. Of course, my heart was stolen by the doll aisle. They came in every shape and size, and I couldn’t believe the amount of clothing and accessories! There were dresses in every color and style, and I wanted them all.

Joey helped me out with that, tossing armloads of outfits into the cart. I looked back at Daddy to make sure it wasn't too much, but he just winked and nodded his approval. It made him happy to make *me* happy.

We rounded the end of the aisle and my feet jerked to a stop as my breath caught. Before me was the biggest, most beautiful doll house I'd ever seen. Standing on the floor, it came up to my chest and had over a dozen rooms. It even had an attached waterslide on the outside which led into a pool.

"What do you think?" Daddy asked into my ear. I hadn't even noticed him walking next to me.

"I think it's the most amazing thing I've ever seen," I answered, unable to speak in more than a whisper.

"Then it's coming home with us."

I spun to look at him with wide eyes. “Really, Daddy?”

He grinned from ear to ear. “Oh, how I love hearing my name on your lips. Yes, duckling, you’ll have all your heart desires.”

I wrapped my arms around his stomach and hugged him tightly, as Daddy chuckled and kissed my curly hair. I wanted more, so I tipped my head back and puckered my mouth to receive a sweet kiss on my lips. I wasn’t embarrassed to kiss him in front of our friends; I knew they were happy for us.

“There’s just one problem,” Daddy said when he pulled away, and my pulse sped up with worry. “All of these toys won’t fit in my car.”

“I’m happy to help with that,” Ian offered. “I’ve got employees taking care of the shop, so Joey and I can deliver these to your apartment.”

“I can set everything up,” Joey added helpfully. “It’ll be all ready for you to have fun!”

“That would be wonderful, thank you,” Daddy smiled at them. “Because Andy and I have one more stop to make.”

The toy store had made me forget about the clothing Daddy promised, but now my belly tingled with anticipation.

Ian nodded. “No problem. Let’s get you checked out and Joey and I will take care of everything.”

Joey lifted the giant doll house like it weighed nothing, and we all headed to the register so Daddy could pay

for my treasures. There wasn't a luckier boy in the whole world.

Chapter Six

Tage

I helped Andy out of the car and onto the sidewalk in front of a shop called Jenna's Closet. It specialized in products in the age-play lifestyle, from diapers to clothes and even furniture. This city had so much to offer if you knew where to look.

I opened the door and led Andy inside with a hand to his lower back. I smiled as I looked around the shop; two other littles, one boy and one girl, were there shopping with their Daddies, who looked proud as punch. I was both proud and grateful to be there with my own special boy.

I leaned my mouth close to Andy's ear and asked, "Are you ready to look at some pretty clothes?" Andy nodded, but he didn't seem as excited as I imagined he would be. "Is something wrong, duckling?"

His eyes bounced between the other littles before he whispered to me, "What if the clothes don't fit?"

Oh, my sweet boy. The other littles were smaller in size than my Andy, which brought his self-consciousness to the surface. He was worried that his desire would be denied, and the thought hurt my heart.

But Andy didn't need to worry; I knew that this store was accommodating to all, and offered a wide range of sizes. Everyone deserved to live the life they wanted, while looking exactly the way they wished.

“Not only will they fit, they’ll look amazing on your gorgeous body,” I insisted, and a shy smile crossed his lips.

“But before we look at outfits, let’s pick something to go underneath them.”

I took him to shelves on the wall, which held packages of diapers. In front of the racks was a stand which held a single diaper, set out so that shoppers could see its pattern and feel the material.

“What do you think of these?”

Andy lifted the diaper and traced his fingers over the cotton. “It’s soft,” he said as he gave it a squeeze. But I noticed as he inspected it that there was no twinkle of interest in his eyes.

“Not for you?” I gathered, and Andy shook his head.

“I don’t think so.” I wasn’t surprised; while Andy was interested in a Daddy’s guidance, acceptance, and companionship, he didn’t seem drawn to certain age regression items like diapers or bottles. Everyone was different in their needs. “Is that okay?”

“Of course it is. Let’s see; if these don’t interest you, I bet *these* will.” I took his hand and guided him to another set of shelves. They held an assortment of panties in many different colors and patterns.

“Oh, Daddy!” Andy exclaimed excitedly. “They’re so pretty! And look!” He lifted a pair and held them in front of his pelvic region. “I think they’ll fit!” He looked down at the red cotton in his hands and sighed. “Oh. Maybe this kind *aren’t* for me.” I cocked my head in question and he flipped

the underwear around to show me the words *Daddy's Girl* scripted across the backside.

“Are you sure about that?” I picked up a pink pair and winked as I flipped them around, showing off the silver script reading, *Daddy's Boy*.

“Oh, I *love* them!”

“Then you'll have them.” Andy thanked me with another tight hug. “Pick out as many as you like.”

Andy's grin was wide as he rummaged through the panties. Within just a couple of minutes, he'd collected a black lacy pair, some made of purple cotton with pink hearts printed on them, and some yellow ones adorned with teddy bears. I couldn't wait to see them on his delectable plump bottom.

While Andy collected more cute undies, something in the corner of my eye caught my attention. When he had an armful and was satisfied with his choices, I told him, “Close your eyes.”

He did so without question, and allowed me to lead him across the room to a clothing rack. I positioned myself in front of him so that I could see his reaction when I told him, “Open your eyes.”

Andy’s eyelids popped open and he gasped at the sight of a tank top covered in red sequins. He’d told me that he always dreamed of wearing a glittery top, and now one was within his reach. “What do you think?”

“It’s beautiful,” he replied, slowly running his fingers over the sparkling fabric. “May I try it on?”

I smiled at the wonder in his gaze. “I can’t wait to see it on you. Let’s grab a few more things and we’ll go to the dressing room.”

Andy nodded and draped the red top over his arm. He followed me around the store, leaving the choices up to me. Excited to see them on my beautiful boy, I quickly gathered clothing items before taking him to the fitting rooms. Andy ducked inside and I waited impatiently for the moment which was a millennium in the making.

My heart leapt into my throat when I heard the lock slide and the dressing room door cracked open. Andy’s face appeared, and he looked in all directions for onlookers before he stepped out.

“Andy...” My words were stolen from me; my boy was a vision of beauty in a lavender t-shirt and a pair of

matching shorts with a lace ruffle sewn on the hem.

“Do I look okay?” he asked shyly.

“You look so much better than okay.” The soft color complemented the curves of his body and brought out his dark eyes. “You’re stunning. How do you feel?”

“I feel...” He looked down at his outfit as he ran a hand over his shirt. “I feel incredible. I’ve wanted to try something like this for so long. I’ve imagined it, dreamed about it, and it’s better than I thought it could be. They’re just clothes, but they make me feel...complete.”

His words made my heart ache with happiness. Andy had spent his whole life being looked down upon and forced to conform to what other people thought he should be. His own

family disowned him or made him feel inferior. He was finally free to find his true self, and it was a great thing to witness.

I placed a soft kiss on his lips and brushed my fingers through his hair. “My beautiful boy. May I see more?” He nodded quickly and slipped back into the room.

Every time Andy emerged in a new outfit, his confidence grew. He went from peeking out of the door to strutting out and spinning in circles to give me a clear view. He posed, giggled, and positively glowed.

“I saved the best for last,” he announced from behind the door. “Are you ready?”

“I’m ready.”

But I wasn’t. Nothing could have prepared me for the sight of Andy in the red sequin top and a black skirt that fell

mid-thigh. His body was so thick and luscious it made my mouth water.

“And look what’s underneath,” he added with a playful flick of his eyebrows.

Before I fully understood what he meant, Andy spun around and lifted the back of his skirt, giving me a peek of his pink panties. I never expected the brazen act from my sweet boy; he was definitely feeling more confident. I had to steady myself with a hand to the wall to keep my knees from buckling.

Once my head stopped spinning, I stepped behind Andy and wrapped my arms around his waist. I growled in his ear, “Do you have any idea what you do to me?” I pushed my hips forward, pressing my chick, now hard with lust and need, against his lower back.

Andy gasped. “I do *that*?”

“Only you, duckling. For the rest of time, only you.”

“You...you do that to me, too,” he admitted quietly.

His words drew my fangs to full length; they craved his taste, and to claim him as my own. But I knew he wasn't ready for that yet. Instead of biting into his flesh the way I desired, I pressed a gentle kiss to the crook of his neck.

Andy flinched when I grabbed the tags on his clothes and popped them off. “You're wearing this home.” I didn't mean to sound so forward; I just couldn't imagine seeing him in anything else when this outfit made him so happy. Luckily, Andy didn't seem to mind. He just nodded excitedly.

I gathered the rest of the items from the dressing room and carried them to the register. I wanted to get my boy home;

there was so much more fun waiting for us.

XXXXX

Andy and I stepped out of the elevator on the third floor of the coven house. We were nearly to the second elevator which would lead up to my apartment when a couple of familiar faces rounded the corner; my Coven Master Nikolai and his mate Izzy.

“Hi, Doctor Bentley!” Izzy greeted with a smile.

“Hello, Izzy. How are you doing today?”

“Great! Daddy made me some oatmeal for breakfast and I tried it even though it looked lumpy and kinda gross. He was so proud of me that he said I could have some donuts

too!” Nikolai gave his boy an adoring grin while I chuckled;

Izzy loved sweets.

“Well I hope you enjoy them,” I replied. “And I’m happy that I ran into you both; there’s someone I’d like you to meet.” I stood up straighter and proudly told them, “This is my mate Andy.”

Both of their eyes lit up. Izzy clapped his hands while Nikolai beamed. “This is marvelous news, my friend.” He extended his hand and, once I situated the shopping bags I carried, shook mine firmly. “Congratulations on this blessing.” He turned to Andy and said, “It’s nice to meet you. My name is Nikolai, and I am the Coven Master here. This is my mate Izzy.”

“Hi Andy,” Izzy smiled. “I love your shirt; it’s so pretty.”

“Thank you,” my boy replied with relief and joy in his voice.

“I like how shiny it is. It looks like my belly button.”

Izzy lifted the hem of his shirt to reveal the piercing there, and the sparkling gem.

“That’s so cool!” Andy exclaimed. “Did it hurt?”

Izzy shook his head. “I was scared that it would, but I held onto Daddy and it wasn’t bad at all.”

“That’s good. I really like it.”

“Thanks. Hey, would you want to play together sometime? You can meet my friend Denny too and we can all hang out together. That’s a good idea, right, Daddy?” He looked up at Nikolai, who smiled lovingly.

“That sounds like fun, little one.” He continued in a whisper that only I could hear, *“Your mate has certainly made an impression on Izzy. I’m pleased to welcome him into the coven, and I’m so happy for you both. You’ve waited a very long time, my friend.”*

“*He is worth it,*” I replied, and my Master bowed his head before turning to his boy.

“Come, little one; let’s get your donuts before the shop closes.”

“Oh yes, we don’t want to miss them.” Izzy told Andy, “Have your Daddy call my Daddy and we’ll set up a play date, okay?”

Andy eagerly nodded his agreement. “That sounds great.”

“Yay! I’ll see you soon.” We all waved goodbye and the duo went on their way.

“They were so nice,” Andy said once we were alone again. “I’m looking forward to playing with Izzy.”

“I’m sure you will be great friends. For now, are you ready to play with the new toys you got this morning?”

“I’m *so* ready!”

Andy and I rode the elevator up to the twentieth floor and walked down the hallway until we came to my apartment. When I opened the door, I had to do a double take to make sure I was in the right place.

Joey and Ian must have cleaned up when they dropped off the toys. My place was never messy, but it *did* have medical devices littered about, but my friends had taken them

out of sight. They had even delivered a few items that I hadn't purchased, like a fuzzy pink blanket draped over the back of the sofa. It was now much more inviting for my boy.

“Would you like a tour?” I asked, while also looking forward to seeing the rest of the place myself.

“I'd love one.”

I placed our bags near the door while he took a look around the living room where we stood, and then I showed him the kitchen and bathroom, which were admittedly the least exciting.

“Here's the bedroom,” I said as I flipped on the light.

Andy's eyes widened as they scanned the room. “It's so big!” It *was* over double the size of his bedroom in his old place. In the center, it held a king size bed dressed in hunter

green blankets. Along the walls were two large dressers, one of which held an ornate mirror. “It’s great.”

“I’m glad you like it, but I think the last room might be your favorite.”

Seeing as I hadn’t found any of the purchased toys yet, I knew where they’d be. It was the room I always planned to use as a playroom for my boy one day, so my friends had done perfectly.

When we stepped inside the playroom, Andy’s hands covered his mouth as he gasped. Just as I suspected, all of his toys were on display. The dolls were lined up against the wall, and their clothing was neatly folded in baskets next to them. A large pink car was parked next to the biggest item in the center of the room; the three story dollhouse.

“Daddy, may-” Andy paused and cleared the wobble from his voice. “May I play with them?”

I stepped in front of him and looked into his eyes.

“You never have to ask permission for that. These are yours, Andy. Everything I have is also yours. I want to share everything, including this home.” His hands, which were still on his face, began to shake. “Holding you last night while you slept was the most incredible feeling. I want to spend every night the same way. I can’t be without you, duckling.”

I sighed in relief when he replied, “I can’t be without you, either.” Even though our spirits were made for each other, Andy was still human and I had feared things were moving too quickly for him. But Fate made it all possible, and my worries were put to rest when he hugged me tightly, as if he were clinging on for dear life.

Andy pulled away and asked in concern, “But what about Dalton’s place?” It made me sad that Andy didn’t think of his old apartment as belonging to him in any way, but hopeful that he was settling in here with me.

“You don’t need to worry about that,” I promised.

“Daddy will take care of everything.”

“Thank you,” he replied, squeezing me tighter. “I’m so lucky.”

“I feel the very same way.” I kissed his curls and added, “I see some dolls who are looking lonely over there.” Andy let me loose and hurried over to his toys as I chuckled.

Andy picked up two Barbie dolls and carried them to the house, which he knelt in front of before straightening out

the hem of his skirt. I sat behind him and watched quietly as he sank into his game.

The two Barbies (which he named Kimmie and Candy) found out that they both rented the same vacation home on their beach trip. At first, they were confused and a little frustrated, but they quickly decided they didn't need to fight because the house was big enough to share.

The two of them walked through the house together and decided which bedrooms they liked. They put their luggage away and decided to go for a dip together in the pool.

Andy removed their clothing and carefully placed them in the baskets before pulling out a stack of tiny bathing suits. He dressed the dolls in every single one before choosing his favorites.

When he sent Kimmie down the slide into the plastic basin, I got an idea. I hated to leave Andy, but I knew he'd love my plan. I stood and hurried into the kitchen to retrieve a glass of water. When I returned, it was obvious that Andy hadn't even realized I was gone. I didn't mind; it meant he was enjoying his game.

"Duckling, I brought something for your pool." I poured the water into it while Andy beamed.

"That's so smart! Thank you, Daddy." He tipped his head back and pursed his lips, which I gladly kissed.

I lost count of how many times he slid the dolls into the water, cheering each time they made a splash. I didn't think he'd ever get tired of it, but eventually, he brought them back inside the house, dried them off, and tried on a string of outfits.

Candy announced that she was hungry for lunch and a pang of guilt shot through me when I realized how much time had slipped away. But when I offered to make lunch for Andy, he said he was still full from our giant breakfast and went back to his game.

I loved watching him with his dolls. He handled them so tenderly and played so sweetly. His game was full of friendship building between his toys, and it made my heart ache that he'd gone so long without experiencing that for himself. For most of his life, he had no one to lean on or talk to. But now he had Joey and Ian, and I was sure that he'd soon count Izzy, Nikolai, Denny, and Jett amongst his friends. And of course he always had me. Never again would he know loneliness.

The hours ticked on and Andy's attention didn't slip from his game. The gentle smile didn't budge from his face as he positioned his dolls, and the joy never left his voice as he staged the conversations. He was lost in a state of total peace.

Eventually, Andy changed his dolls into pajamas and tucked them into bed. Once they were settled in, he stretched his arms over his head and turned around to look at me for the first time.

“What time is it, Daddy?”

I pulled out my phone and felt guilty again when I answered, “It's almost six.”

“I thought it was close to dinner time,” he replied with a nod, and my guilt grew.

“What are you hungry for? I’ll cook you anything you like.”

“Actually, would it be okay if I cook for you? I’ve had such an amazing day and I want to thank you with one of my special grilled cheese sandwiches.”

While I’d like to treat Andy, I could see that this was important to him. “That would be lovely.”

I helped my boy to his feet and walked into the kitchen with him. I planned on showing him where my utensils and food items were, but Andy surprised me by opening cabinets and looking for things himself.

“Oh great, you’ve got all the ingredients!” he exclaimed as he gathered them and stacked them on the counter. Hm even though he’d never been in this kitchen, he

looked completely comfortable as he floated around, like he was made to be there with me. But then I remembered he *was*.

Andy sprayed a pan and got to work, masterfully stacking items I never would have thought to mix between the bread; two different kinds of cheese, barbecue sauce, and barbecue flavored potato chips to ‘give it a little crunch’.

When they were toasted, he placed each of them on a plate and set them on the table. I pulled out his chair for him and once he was seated, I grabbed two cans of soda out of the fridge, making a mental note that I needed to buy some juice and milk for him.

“Thank you,” Andy said when I gave him his soda and sat next to him. I popped the tab for him and after he took a sip, he gave me a sweet smile. “Daddy, do you think we could get some fun straws like Joey had?”

I was very proud of him for letting me know what he wanted. “We absolutely can. I’ve even seen cups with the swirly straws built into them. We can get some of those too.”

Andy clapped his hands. “Thank you, Daddy. You’re the best!”

I smiled at him and lifted my sandwich before taking a big bite. The tangy sauce and savory cheese blended perfectly on my taste buds, making me hum my delight. “*You* are the best chef. This sandwich is amazing!”

“I’m so happy you like it. This is my favorite thing to cook, but I can make lots of different things. I can make you something else tomorrow.”

“Duckling, I love your cooking, but I’m happy to make meals for you.”

“I know, and I’m excited to taste them, but it makes me happy to cook for you. It’s one of my favorite things to do.”

I could never rob him of something he enjoyed. Plus, there wasn’t a script we had to follow in our relationship. There was no rule stating I *had* to cook for him to be a good Daddy. Andy was capable of many things, and required a different kind of care than other boys. He needed help with finances, but mainly he needed someone to make him feel free to play, explore, and be his true self. Most importantly, he needed to feel loved, and *damn* how I loved him.

“How about we take turns cooking?” I suggested, and his face lit up.

“That sounds perfect.”

We gobbled down every delicious bite of our sandwiches, and then Andy insisted on helping me with the dishes (I washed and he dried). While he was drying his hands, I got an idea and I couldn't wait to share it.

“Andy, I bought you a surprise today while you were trying on clothes.”

“You did? Oh, thank you!” He gave me a big hug as I laughed. He was so sweet, being excited before he even knew what the surprise was.

“I did and I'd love to give it to you. If you sit at the table, I'll go get it.”

He quickly took a seat and I hustled back into the living room, where I searched through the shopping bags until I found the small bottle I was after.

When I stepped back into the kitchen, I found Andy with his eyes closed, awaiting his gift. I sat next to him and held up the bottle of pink glittery nail polish. “Open your eyes.” They fluttered open and widened. “What do you think?”

“It’s so pretty!”

“Would you like me to paint your nails?”

“Oh, yes please!”

Andy flattened both of his hands against the table. I gently shook the bottle and twisted off the cap and the acidic scent hit my sensitive nostrils. I wiped the excess polish on the neck of the bottle and touched the brush to Andy’s thumb. With two strokes, his nail was covered in sparkling pink gel.

“This color is perfect for you,” I told him as I dipped the brush in again. I knew nothing about cosmetics, but I did

know that *any* color would be perfect for my boy.

The apples of his cheeks swelled with a grin. “Thank you, Daddy.”

I carefully painted each fingernail, wiping away any drops I spilled onto his skin. In just a few minutes, he had two coats of perfectly applied polish. I lifted his hands and blew on his nails to help them dry. He watched me with a smile on his lips and gratitude and affection in his eyes that completely undid me.

I pressed a kiss to the back of his hand, and another to his wrist. My lips trailed up his arm, and I kept my gaze on his, watching as fire lit in his pupils. Andy moaned when my mouth found his neck. I nibbled gently on his throat, feeling his stubble brush against my cheek and dreaming of the moment I could bite into his supple flesh.

I lifted my head and looked into Andy's heavy-lidded eyes. Lust and need rolled off of him so thickly I could smell it. It raised the hairs on the back of my neck and made my pulse race, and I couldn't resist.

I took his lips with my own, kissing him firmly and passionately. His mouth sprang open, allowing me to slip my tongue against his. The first taste of his sweet flavor overwhelmed my senses, and flooded me with desire.

I cradled my hands beneath Andy's arms and lifted him to his feet as I stood up. I kissed him deeper as my hands explored his back, brushing against the raised pattern of his sequin shirt while feeling the plushness of his body beneath.

Andy grappled at my body as well, squeezing handfuls of my lower back and pulling me closer. Our tongues tangled and twisted, our mingling flavors dancing on my taste

buds. My hands crept around to the front of his body and slipped below the hem of his shirt. I pet his soft stomach and the patch of hair upon it before tweaking his nipples, receiving a delicious moan into my mouth.

My fingers slid down his torso and folded over the hem of his skirt. It was difficult to tear my lips from his to look into his eyes for permission. Not only did he nod his agreement, Andy covered my hands with his and pushed, shoving his skirt to the floor.

He was so beautiful; the pink fabric of his panties tented around the hard bulge beneath them, the perfect blend of feminine masculinity. I peeled down the cotton and tucked it beneath his fuzzy balls, getting the first glorious glimpse of his cock; short, thick, and cut.

“Oh Andy, you’re perfect,” I moaned as I wrapped my fingers around his shaft, completely encasing him in my palm. I gave him a few slow strokes and a stream of pre-cum drizzled out onto my skin. His flesh was hot, hard, and slick, and I needed to feel more.

I popped the button of my jeans and slid down my zipper to fish my hard cock from my boxers. Andy’s eyes widened and his jaw dropped at the sight; I was long, thick, veiny and uncut. He only muttered, “Daddy...” but in the single word, I heard his wonder and longing.

I gripped the base of my shaft and touched my tip to his, causing a shudder to rock through his body. I circled against him, painting one another with the slick liquid that leaked from us. Touching him was incredible, but I still wanted more; to encase him, to surround him.

I dragged my skin up my shaft and over my head, stretching it to cover Andy's tip, docking us together. He gulped hard at the sight of our bodies connected together. I wrapped my palm around our linked and stroked, both of us moaning aloud as our slick heads rubbed against one another.

I stroked faster, loving not only the heated friction on our skin, but the gentle sucking sensation of my foreskin wrapped around him. I gazed into Andy's unfocused eyes until the moment they rolled back and closed in bliss. His lips parted and spilled beautiful whimpers as I jerked us feverishly.

My jaw locked and my bicep bulged at the intensity and speed which I moved. I carefully watched Andy for signs of me going too hard or fast, but everything in his body language screamed *more*, and soon, his lips did too.

Our flesh glided like smooth silk over a steel pipe, each of us rock hard with desire. I was unable to control my need, and my hand slid so quickly that it blurred. Andy's head tipped back onto his shoulders and rocked from side to side as his moans turned to garbled cries of my name.

He lifted a shaking hand and rested it on my chest to steady himself. The view of his pretty pink nails gripping my shirt in ecstasy threw me over the edge. I felt my balls roll and lift towards my body as pressure built low in my stomach. I was barely able to grunt the word, "Watch," past my lips.

Andy lifted his heavy head and opened his eyes just in time to see my cock jerk in my hand. I cried out as I came, and my flesh swelled as my seed spilled inside. My cum spread up along Andy's shaft, slicking my path even more as I continued

to stroke him, lights bursting behind my eyes at the almost too-intense pleasure.

“Daddy?” Andy cried with a mix of concern and excitement. I could tell from the bewildered look in his eyes and his grip on my shirt that he was close. I jerked him faster as I gazed intensely at him, silently begging him to give me everything.

And he did. With a scream of, “Daddy!” Andy erupted, sending a warm burst against my tip, expanding my skin so much that his seed bubbled from beneath it and slid down both of our cocks.

I moved quickly when my boy’s legs gave out, catching him before he hit the floor. I gently lowered us both to our knees and took his trembling body into my arms. My

flesh slowly retracted, releasing its hold on his dick and allowing our cum to trickle onto the floor.

Andy's chest swelled against mine as he caught his breath, his heart hammering beneath his ribs. I ran my hands up and down his back until he calmed down. After several minutes, he lifted his head and looked at me with a dreamy, satisfied gaze. "That was the most wonderful thing I've ever felt."

I brushed a patch of curls off of his sweaty forehead.

"Me too."

His smile slowly faded and he asked, "Have you done that with a lot of boys?"

I can't say I was surprised by the question; my sweet boy had never had any experience with any man, and he was

curious about my past. “That? No.” There was something special about the connection of our most intimate parts, and I never tried it with anyone else.

“But you have had other boys.” It was more of a statement than a question.

While I didn’t want to risk ruining our beautiful moment, I would not lie to my mate. “I have, but please understand; I never felt for them what I feel for you. You are my fated one, the one who holds my heart forever.” When he was quiet for a long stretch, I asked, “Are you upset with me?”

“No,” he finally answered, and I felt like I could breathe again. “You are very old.” I bit my cheek to keep from laughing in surprise, and nodded my agreement. “That is a very long time to be alone, and I’m glad you weren’t lonely.

Besides, all of that practice made you the very best Daddy for me.”

“How are you so damn perfect?” I asked, resting my forehead against his.

I kissed his lips and stroked his back as we took slow, deep breaths to come down from the heights of passion. All was quiet until Andy said, “Daddy, I’m sticky.”

“Me too,” I chuckled. “How about you and I take a nice warm shower together?” I would have loved to give him a bath, but something about sitting in a tub of water with our combined cum didn’t seem like the best idea.

“Yes, please.”

Andy gasped in surprise when I scooped him into my arms and carried him into the bathroom. I started the water and

undressed us both. This time, Andy didn't try to cover up his body or blush when I looked at him. He could feel the care in my touch, and my heart swelled at his comfort.

Beneath the hot water, Andy marveled at my toned body, and the way I became hard again when he only looked at me. I couldn't resist my sexy boy. But, I ignored my body's response to love on his. I gently scrubbed his skin, washing away the stickiness and making sure he was fully clean.

Afterwards, I dried him with a soft towel and rubbed lotion onto his skin. I was disappointed in myself when I realized I hadn't bought him any pajamas, but Andy seemed excited about the idea of another clothing shopping trip.

I dressed him in his yellow panties and the purple cotton outfit he picked out earlier. It would be soft and

comfortable to sleep in until I could buy him some nighties.

The thought alone was enough to make my heart race with anticipation.

When I asked him what he'd like to do, Andy requested to watch a movie together. I made some popcorn and we snuggled beneath the fuzzy blanket our friends bought. But the excitement of the day must have worn my boy out, because he only made it halfway through *Aladdin* before he was snoozing against me.

I scooped him into my arms again and carried him into the bedroom. I removed his glasses, tucked him beneath the blankets to make sure he was warm, and then cuddled close to him. Even in his sleep, he reached out and rested his hand on my chest to feel me. I kissed his cheek and closed my eyes, grateful for a perfect day with my boy.

Chapter Seven

Tage

“Are you doing okay?” I asked Andy as we walked down the long, gray hallway. He’d asked me to accompany him on his prison visit with his brother Dalton, and he didn’t seem to be his usual, cheery self.

He didn’t look like his usual, cheery self, either. Instead of the sparkling, pretty clothes he’d worn the past couple of days, Andy asked me to dress him in his old sweater and jeans for the visit. He was worried about his brother’s reaction, and it broke my heart.

“I’m okay,” he replied, though his voice was uncertain. “Just a little nervous.”

I squeezed his hand and assured him, “Everything will be fine. Daddy’s right here with you.” He gave me a grateful smile just as the guard opened a heavy metal door and waved us inside a small room.

Andy and I took a seat in two plastic chairs which faced a large window. An empty chair sat on the other side of the glass, and there was a telephone hanging on the wall of each side.

After a minute of waiting, another guard walked in through a door on the other side of the glass, leading a man wearing an orange jumpsuit and handcuffs - Dalton. He looked nothing like my sweet Andy; he was tall and thin, and had

long hair that fell past his shoulders. The only similarity between them was the color of their eyes.

Andy picked up the phone and Dalton did the same, and I could clearly hear every word they both spoke.

“Hi, Dalton,” Andy greeted. “How are you doing?”

Instead of his own friendly greeting, Dalton snarled his lip and barked, “Andrew, what the fuck is on your fingers?”

Andy instantly curled his fingers to hide their tips.

“Oh, it’s nail polish. I’m sorry, I forgot to take it off.” Anger bubbled in my gut; how dare his brother make him feel guilty?

Dalton’s eyes flicked to me and then back to his brother. “Who is that?”

“This is Tage. He’s my…” Andy paused for a moment before answering, “Boyfriend.” I understood why he didn’t want to delve into the ‘Daddy’ conversation with Dalton, but I still missed hearing the word from his lips.

Dalton leaned in closer to the glass and spoke into the phone, “Do you really think it’s a good idea to be displaying that shit in a place like this? Please tell me you’re smarter than that.”

Andy’s head hung and I’d heard enough. I pressed a finger to his chin to help him look up at me and gave him a kind smile. “Duckling, you look thirsty. I saw a soda machine down the hall; why don’t you go get something to drink?” I fished a couple of dollar bills from my pocket and handed them over.

“Okay, Da-” Andy stopped and cleared his throat.

“Okay. I’ll be right back.”

I nodded to the guard (who happened to be another vampire) who opened the door for Andy. He undoubtedly knew what was about to go down, so he didn’t mind bending the rules of letting visitors go in and out.

I slid over to Andy’s empty seat and placed the phone to my ear so that Dalton could hear me speak. But before I had the chance, he began to run his mouth. “Did you just fucking call him ‘duckling’? That’s the last thing he needs. He needs to man the fuck up and-”

“Enough!” I yelled, slamming my fist into the bulletproof glass in front of me so hard that it cracked in a spiderweb pattern. The guard on Dalton’s side reached for his gun and stepped forward, but stopped when the vampire guard

held up his hand. Vampires were respected and humans deferred to their judgment in situations like this.

Knowing that Andy would return soon, I took a deep breath to calm myself down. Dalton blinked away his shocked expression to try and look tough once more.

“I know that the two of you were put in a bad situation when your mom left,” I began as calmly as possible.

“You don’t know anything,” he grumbled, but I shrugged off his rudeness.

“You were responsible for Andy while you were still young yourself. I understand that you probably feel robbed of a childhood and perhaps even saddled with things you didn’t ask for.” Finally, he stayed silent as I spoke. “But that sweet man is your brother. Your only family. For whatever

godforsaken reason, he looks up to you. He cares about you.

He still wants to visit you even though you treat him like shit.”

I couldn't stifle my curiosity and asked, “Why do you treat him the way you do?” He deserved so much better.

Dalton huffed a humorless laugh. “Everyone bailed on us. My piece of shit dad was nowhere to be found, only popping in to bang my mom once and a while, which is where Andrew came in. Mom was too coked up to even know her own name most of the time, and then she bailed too. During all of this, Andrew still thought the world should be glitter and rainbows. He has to know the truth; people suck. Life sucks. You have to be tough to make it through. If someone were to see him with fucking pink nails and a Barbie doll, they'd kick his ass. What kind of brother would I be if I let that happen? He needs thicker skin.”

In an instant, I realized so many things about Dalton.

For one, he carried so much pain and resentment from his younger years. He'd been dealt a crappy hand, and never took time to heal from it. He was cast into responsibility he wasn't ready for, and didn't know how to deal with Andy because his parents never knew how to handle *him*.

Though he went about it in a terrible way, Dalton may actually have been trying to help Andy by 'toughening him up'. He didn't want to see his brother get hurt, but he was hurting him in the process.

He took his protection to the extreme when he burned down Ian's toy store, while also releasing some of his pent-up aggression and anger. While I didn't agree with Dalton's actions in the slightest, I could at least partially understand them. More than anything, this man needed help to get over

his past and brighten his future. I hoped that prison gave him an opportunity to clear his head, and that he sought more help when he was released.

But my priority was Andy, whom I knew would return shortly. “I won’t argue that you got a bum deal, but you can’t take it out on others; especially Andy. You no longer have to be responsible for him; I’m here for him now. I will care for him and provide for him. I will give him everything he needs.”

“Until you get tired of his pansy ass and bolt too,” he replied with an eye roll.

My patience snapped. I was trying to be kind and understanding, but Dalton was making it difficult. He apparently only spoke one language, and I’d have to dip into my dark side to get through to him.

“I’ve got limitless finances and extreme power,” I told him flatly. “I can make your life a living hell. I can even end it.” While it was my life’s goal to relieve human suffering, I could make an exception if Dalton pushed me hard enough.

The ‘limitless finances’ part seemed to grab his attention. He leaned in closer and said, “You have money? Pay me. If you can take care of Andrew, you can take care of me too.”

“Counter offer; I won’t pay your cellmates to shank you in the shower.”

A menacing grin crossed his lips. “Oh, that would make Andrew happy, wouldn’t it? To lose his only family?”

The asshole had me by the balls and he knew it. As much as I disliked him, I loved Andy more. “I’ll keep your

rent and bills current,” I offered. It would break Andy’s heart if his brother was homeless. “When you are released, everything will be as you left it.”

“Hmm, I’m hearing a lot about things being taken care of while I’m in here, but nothing about when I get out.”

Be strong for your boy. Don’t break this glass and choke the life out of him. Andy would never forgive you. “They will be covered for your lifetime,” I conceded. The amount was mere drops in a bucket, and worth it for my love’s happiness. “But for me to keep my bargain, you must do your part.”

“Which is...?”

“You don’t have to agree with Andy’s lifestyle, but you will respect him. You won’t say a word against him, and

you'll be pleasant when he visits. When you're released, you will have dinner with him once a month, where you'll be cordial to him. Treat him like a brother, and show him the same kindness he's shown to you."

Dalton glared at me, and I could almost see my conditions bouncing around his mind. I was sure he didn't agree with my expectations, but the offer was too good to refuse. "I'll do my best," he answered curtly. It was the most I could expect from him, but I would always be around to make sure he held up his end.

Just then, there was a knock on the door, which the guard opened. Andy returned carrying a can of Coke in his hand. He gasped when he saw the shattered glass. "What happened? Is everyone okay?"

“Everyone is fine,” I smiled. “There was a defect in the glass.” I hated to lie, but I didn’t want to upset him by telling him the defect was my fist.

Andy nodded and took the empty seat next to me. I passed the phone to him and said with a warning glare to Dalton, “Your brother would like to talk to you again.” Andy pressed the phone to his ear and looked at his brother expectantly.

“So, um...” Dalton began. Pleasant conversation was obviously hard for him. “This is your boyfriend?” Andy nodded with a smile. “And, uh...he treats you good?”

“The best,” Andy replied, reaching over to put his hand on mine.

“Cool, cool.” There was a long stretch of silence before Dalton asked, “Do you love him?” There was something different about his voice when he spoke; it was curious and hopeful, almost as if he wondered if someone who had been through what they had could truly love and be loved.

Andy looked at me when he answered confidently, “I do.” He hadn’t yet told me the words, though I knew them to be true. But hearing them aloud was better than anything I could imagine.

“Good,” Dalton replied with a nod. “Just...be happy, okay?”

“I am,” Andy assured him. “I’m so happy, and I want you to be happy too.”

Dalton huffed another laugh. “Maybe one day.” His eyes flicked to mine before landing back onto his brother. “So, hey...maybe when I get out, we can have dinner together or something.” *Well, I’ll be damned.* It looked like the little creep was going to pull through after all. The answering smile on Andy’s face was worth every last penny I’d pay to Dalton.

“I’d love that.”

The rest of their conversation was patchy, but pleasant. I got the feeling that they’d never had a real talk before, and I hoped that they grew closer over time. Maybe without the stress of responsibility on his shoulders, Dalton could focus on being a decent human. Maybe acceptance could work its way into his heart, and maybe he could find love for his brother. But we’d take it one day at a time.

When our visit was over, the guard led Andy and me into the long hallway once more. As soon as the door shut behind us, my boy gripped me in a crushing hug. “I don’t know what you did, but I know it was you,” he said into my chest. “Thank you.”

“Anything for you, duckling.” I kissed his head and gave him a good squeeze back. “Come on; let’s go home.”

Chapter Eight

Tage

“Are you hungry?” I asked when Andy and I reached our apartment. When he shook his head no, I asked, “Do you need a nap?” Since we left the prison, he had been quiet, and I thought perhaps he was tired from the events of the day.

“No, Daddy.”

“Is something bothering you?”

He shook his head again. “But there *is* something I need.”

“Name it,” I requested. “Whatever it is, you’ll have it.”

He looked up at me from behind his glasses, with longing in his eyes. “I need *you*, Daddy. What I told Dalton is true; I love you. I think I fell in love with you the moment we met, and it has grown and grown until my heart is completely full. I need to bond with you. I can’t wait another moment to be yours.”

Joy rushed through my body so quickly, it made me dizzy. In a blink, I took him in my arms and held him close. “I love you too, Andy. I love you with everything I am, and for the rest of time.”

I leaned down and pressed our lips together, pouring my love and devotion into the kiss, hoping he tasted my passion and promise. What started out as sweet and simple turned steamy in an instant. Andy parted his lips, inviting me in as he gripped my back.

We kissed and stumbled our way down the hall towards our bedroom as I peeled his clothing off of him. Not only did I want to see his gorgeous body, but I knew he wasn't truly comfortable in what he was wearing. I wanted to see *my* boy.

I hummed in lusty approval when he was stripped down to his lacy black panties. Even though he didn't want to dress in his pretty clothes to see his brother, he still wore something delicate underneath, like a sexy secret for me to unveil.

But sexy didn't begin to describe it. The black lace hugged his curves and displayed his bulge. The holes in the fabric provided glimpses of his pretty cock, pale against the dark color in perfect contrast. Short, curled hairs popped out of the lace, beckoning for my touch.

I obliged, cupping my palm over his fuzzy sack. I gently squeezed, feeling the fabric pattern and coarse hairs tickle my skin.

“Daddy, that feels good,” Andy moaned. “I love when you touch me.”

His words lit a fire in my blood, which raced through my veins and stiffened my pulsing cock. I kicked off my shoes and pushed down my pants before ripping my shirt right off of my body. Andy’s hungry eyes roamed my body, only fanning the fire inside me.

I lifted him from the ground and tossed him onto the bed, making him giggle as he bounced. But his laughter died away when I crawled onto the bed and overtop of him.

His legs fell to the side in invitation, and I gave him a playful wink before dropping my head to kiss his chest. I moved backwards, peppering his chest and soft belly with kisses and receiving quiet moans. The moans became louder when I reached his panties and clasped the fabric between my teeth. I dragged the fabric down the length of his legs and over his feet before spitting it into the floor.

My appetite grew as I looked over his luscious body, just lying in wait for me. I kissed back up his legs, stopping to nibble on his puckered knees before making my way onto his thighs. Their hair tickled my cheeks as I licked against them.

And finally, my eyes met the most delicious prize of all; my mate's hard, dripping cock. I needed a taste. I touched my tongue to his base and licked up his shaft, lapping up the tangy stream of pre-cum on his skin.

I traced the tip of my tongue around his crown, tasting his smooth, slick flesh while Andy moaned his pleasure. I wanted to give him more, so I widened my jaws and took his tip past my lips. I sucked against his crown and swallowed the next trail of liquid that painted my tongue.

I slid my lips down his length, taking every inch of his shaft into my mouth and feeling his tip on the back of my throat. I swallowed, squeezing his sensitive cock as Andy buried his fingers in my hair. They tightened in my locks as I bobbed my head up and down, sucking hard. He chanted my name; first in a whisper, climbing until his voice was ragged and raw.

As much as I wanted to give my man release, I first wanted to give him every pleasure imaginable, so I dropped his member from my lips and reached my arm out to grab a

bottle of lube from the nightstand. I popped the cap and poured the liquid onto my fingers.

I helped Andy bend his legs, and he flinched when I touched my slick fingertips to his cute, pink pucker. “It’s okay, duckling. I’m going to be gentle and take care of you. Trust Daddy.”

“I do,” he answered as he released a breath, and his legs relaxed, opening himself wider for me.

“Good job, sweet boy.”

I passed the very tip of my index finger through his ring of muscle, feeling another flinch from him. But once I eased in and out, and moved in gentle circles inside him, Andy was relaxed again, and even giving quiet moans.

I slipped the rest of my finger inside him and rocked back and forth, living the view of his luscious ass swallowing my digit. When his moans and whimpers grew louder, I slid a second finger inside.

He gave a hiss of discomfort, so I curled my digits to massage the soft pad of his prostate. He forgot all about the passing pain and gripped the sheets beneath him as he writhed and groaned. My boy was ready.

I pulled my fingers free from his body and poured lube onto my stiff, aching cock. Even the pressure of the liquid was nearly enough to make me come undone, but I bit my cheek and took a deep breath, determined to satisfy my mate.

I touched my wet crown to Andy's hole. When I looked at him for permission, I found him nodding fervently with wide eyes. I gently pushed forward, and his tiny pucker

stretched around my girth. His eyes squinted shut as I slowly pushed in, inch by inch, until my balls jutted up against his cheeks.

I paused, giving Andy a moment to adjust to my size. After a few deep breaths, his eyes fluttered open. He nodded for me to continue, so I pulled my hips back and thrust forward again. This time, there were no signs of discomfort; only pleasure.

I pumped back and forth, watching my flesh emerge from his body just to disappear again. His channel hugged me tightly with sweet friction, perfectly tailored to me.

With each thrust, Andy moaned louder. He asked me to move faster, harder, and I gave him everything he craved. I slammed into him, burying my cock into his tight little hole.

Sweat dripped from both of our faces, and our breathing became quick and shallow.

Andy rocked with me, our bodies moving in perfect sync; when I pushed in, he grinded down into me, taking me as deep as possible. His hands wrapped around my back and pulled me closer.

His grip tightened and his nails dug into my skin when his cock became wedged between our stomachs. I milked his flesh with every roll of my hips. My skin was damp with sweat and the drops that leaked from my lover.

“Daddy,” he whimpered, bucking against me. “Daddy, I’m gonna-” his words died away, but action took over. Andy’s back arched off of the bed and his dick jerked against me before sticky warmth flooded over my skin.

The scent of his release hit my nostrils and sent my hips into overdrive. I clenched my teeth together and slammed into his tight heat until my balls tightened and lifted. I growled deep in my chest as I pushed into him one last time and erupted, filling him to the brim of my seed.

I brushed my fingers through his wet hair as his breathing slowed and the flush receded from his cheeks. Once he had come back to himself, Andy tipped his head to the side, exposing his neck as he simply said, "Please."

I needed it as much as he did. I'd waited so long for my mate; the other half of me. "Andy, just as we have joined our bodies together, our souls will bond too. One cannot survive without the other. Is it your wish to bind together for all of eternity?"

“It’s my greatest wish,” he whispered, drawing a smile to my lips.

I lowered my face to his neck, and the scent of his musk drew my fangs to full length. I glided them across his skin as he gasped and shivered, and then I slowly sank them into the meat of his throat. I bit down until his blood flowed freely onto my tongue, covering it in his sweet, metallic flavor.

As I drank, my senses came alive. My hearing and smell sharpened, and my muscles burned with renewed vigor.

Andy made me stronger in every way. But as my body strengthened, my soul relaxed. It knew that its match had come, and was there for all time. The world made sense, and I was filled with purpose and happiness like I’d never known.

When I pulled my fangs free, Andy’s skin knitted together, and two small scars appeared. Now everyone would

know that we were bound together, and he was mine. In all my life's accomplishments, this was the one that made me the most proud.

“To complete our bond, you must also drink from me, duckling.”

Andy took a deep breath and gave a tiny nod. His fingers interlocked behind my head and he pulled me closer. He pressed a gentle kiss to my neck before biting down. My skin gave way easily, allowing him to take a sip of my blood. When Andy pulled away, he licked the red droplets from his lips, and watched in awe as my wound closed quickly.

“We are now eternally bonded,” I told him, whispering in reverence. “How do you feel?”

“Incredible,” he answered with a smile. “My body feels strong and...” he stopped speaking and blinked a few times.

“Is something wrong?”

“My vision is blurry.” He reached up and removed his glasses, blinking again. “I...I can see better without them.”

“You don’t need them any more; you won’t be afflicted by any human diseases or ailments ever again. Over time, you will gain strength and my quick healing; any wounds you get will soon heal as quickly as your mate mark. But I promise to protect you in hopes that you’ll never gain any wounds.”

“I really lucked out with a big, strong vampire as my mate,” Andy answered with a sly grin, making me chuckle.

“I lucked out too. You are more than I ever dreamed of.” I kissed him tenderly. “I love you, Andy.”

“I love you too.” He nuzzled against me and asked, “Can we snuggle for a while, Daddy? And then will you watch me play?”

“Of course, duckling.” I told him a phrase that he was sure to hear across a hundred lifetimes. “Whatever you wish.”

Epilogue

One Year Later

Andy

“Kimmie, would you like to take a ride on Clip Clop?” Denny asked, making his rotund horse gallop up to my doll.

“Oh, yes,” I answered in a high pitched voice. “I love horseback riding!”

“Be careful, Clip Clop,” Izzy warned, “Don’t go too fast; Kimmie just drank a lot of tea. We don’t want her belly to get sick.”

The three of us were at Joey's house, having our weekly playdate. Today, we were having a tea party, which was one of my absolutely favorite things to do. Of course, I loved playing games of *any* kind with my friends.

"Eh, she'll be okay," Joey shrugged. "I say saddle up and hang on tight for a wild ride!" Joey always thought wild rides were a good idea.

We always took turns playing things that we each liked; we'd cycle from playing farm or zoo for Denny, tea parties with Izzy's rabbit Flopsy (along with other special soft friends), and even makeover days for me. Denny was a big, brawny guy; an ex cop, even, and it touched me that he allowed me to paint his toenails without a fuss. Joey's games were always fast paced and usually destructive, like knocking down block towers with cars.

But they were all perfect, because each of us were so different. Izzy was always in little mode. He relied on his Daddy for nearly everything, and enjoyed heavy age regression. Denny did as well, though he also had times when he was big, shutting down little time all together.

Joey and I were somewhere in the middle, but his interests and energy were amped up compared to mine. But I would never change any of us; including me. Over the past year, Daddy helped me realize that I was perfect, just the way I was.

He was the perfect Daddy, the perfect partner, the perfect man. He encouraged me every day, and loved me no matter what. He'd healed me from the inside, and shown me just how great life could be.

Daddy even helped mend the relationship between Dalton and me. I never asked what exactly the two of them had talked about, but since their first meeting, Dalton had been kinder and more open towards me than ever. He was getting out soon because of his good behavior while he was in prison; he seemed to have turned everything around, and I hoped it continued. I wanted my brother to be happy, and I couldn't wait to visit with him at home, and have a better life with him.

“Oh boys,” Ian announced as he came into the playroom, “Dinner is ready.”

“Woo, spaghetti and meatballs!” Joey cheered, pumping his fist over his head while his Daddy laughed.

Nikolai, Jett and *my* Daddy all walked into the room as well (the four of them usually hung out for adult time while us boys played).

Izzy was the first one to his feet. “Daddy, can you please change me before we eat?” he asked Nikolai sweetly. He wasn’t a bit shy or embarrassed around us when it came to his needs, and there was no need for him to be. We all understood and supported each other.

“Of course, little one; come with me.” Nikolai took his hand and led him from the room.

“How about you, baby?” Jett asked, looking at Denny. “Are you wet?”

“Nope, I’m okay Daddy,” he smiled. “But can you help me wash my hands?”

Jett stroked his chin as he pretended to ponder. “Hmm, yes, I think I can do that.” Denny giggled and stood up before the two of them left hand in hand as well.

“I’ll help set the table!” Joey exclaimed before zooming through the door. After all of this time, it was still surprising when he used his vampire speed. Ian just snorted and left to track down his crazy boy.

“Will you help me wash my hands too, Daddy?” I asked sweetly, earning a smile.

“Of course, duckling.” Daddy took my hands and helped me to my feet. “Are you hungry?”

“Very.”

“I bet; you’ve been playing hard in here.” He lowered his mouth to my ear and said, “Don’t tell the other boys, but I know a secret; Ian also made chocolate chip cookies for dessert.”

I gasped and quietly clapped my hands. “I love cookies! Come on, let’s go wash my hands extra fast so we can get to them sooner!”

He laughed and said as we left the room, “Whatever you wish.”

Thank you for reading the “Love Bites” series! I truly hope you enjoyed it. If you did, please consider leaving a review.

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