



Learning

TO WALK

EDUCATION OF THE HEART 3

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LEARNING TO WALK

The Education of the Heart, Book 3

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Published by M.A. Innes, 2023

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LEARNING TO WALK

First edition. August 2023.

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Learning to Walk

Gareth: Weirdest neighbor ever...but he has an addicting smile and he was helpful in explaining Brady's...well, Brady's love of interesting things.

Cashel: Craziest way to ever be asked out on a date...but Gareth is happy and the nosy neighbor is nice...and a good kisser.

Bates: Best first date ever...and the best apartment building ever.

Everyone sees meeting a potential date for the first time a little differently.

Someone might walk away from a first meeting confused about names and wondering how they ended up with a date.

Someone else might walk away appreciating an offer for a bit of naughty help.

Another might end up loving life and hoping that the two cuties upstairs are just as adorable on a date as they are when he's eavesdropping.

However, there are a few things everyone can agree on...their neighbors are fascinating, Gareth has questions, and Cashel has no idea what's going to happen with the wickedly helpful neighbor.

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Chapter 1

Downstairs Guy

“It’s not offering to save their souls or kill their bugs.” The innocent cutie was so insistent I had to stop at the bottom of the stairs and listen to what he was saying. I wasn’t going to apologize for being nosy when everyone in the building was fabulously weird and not shy about sharing their personal life...but I was quiet while I listened.

Brady, my delightfully naïve neighbor who was into his Daddy and being spanked, was very confident about the odd list. “Those are the only random questions you’re allowed to ask. It doesn’t matter if you’re being helpful or not.”

Who made those rules?

Whose bugs were they trying to kill?

Were the crickets back?

Had the cutie found God in the last few days?

Oh, had the spider escaped again?

The cutie continued before I’d figured out what they were talking about. “Even I know you’re not supposed to just ask people what their kink is even if you think they’re not vanilla. It’s not an appropriate question no matter if you’re a door-to-door salesman or a friend.”

Oh.

He was adorable and a bit insane, both were things I appreciated, but I wasn’t really into frightening innocent littles so I stepped back from the stairs. Giving him a

heart attack by popping out around a corner was not good manners either.

“Bambi, they’re your roommates, not strangers you’re quizzing about their relationship with Jesus.” Boyfriend Daddy Guy, aka Jude, sighed and I could picture him deciding if he could frown at his cutie or not.

The guy was funny even if he was scowling all the time.

“I’ve been very open about my life.” Brady’s confused voice got louder as they got closer to the bottom of the stairs. “They’ve been very accepting but not that curious about the details. I have no idea why they’re so weird about the spankings.”

I loved this building.

Moving in while I finished my masters had been the best decision ever.

“I think the being weird part is a clue that they’ve got questions.” Brady’s Daddy was definitely on the more logical side of the spectrum but he wouldn’t do anything to upset his insane cutie, so I wasn’t going to hold my breath on him winning the argument.

“They’ve had plenty of time to ask them.” Brady shrugged as they finally stepped off the stairs and headed toward the parking lot, not even noticing that they had an audience. “I’m not going to be pushy and make them uncomfortable.”

Brady sighed like that should’ve been obvious. “They were very good about feeding me and taking care of me before you came, Daddy. I can’t repay them by being rude.”

I wasn’t sure if I’d missed part of the discussion since they’d gotten their window fixed or not, but as I looked up at the building, I wasn’t so sure leaving those two to stew in their worries was a good idea.

Brady's roommates seemed just as interesting as he was, but they were slightly more subtle about it.

Not that being more subtle than Brady would've been hard.

That was one little who radiated out his sweetness and curious innocence no matter what he was doing. He even talked to himself while he was bouncing down the stairs and sang to himself when it was his turn to take out the trash.

The whole situation would've been easier to figure out if their window was still stuck open, because the sound carried fabulously and it made being nosy a lot easier, but now that they'd gotten it fixed, I was missing out on so much.

The most logical decision would've been to mind my own business. It was what a polite neighbor in any other building would've done. Ignore the odd conversations and pretend you didn't know your neighbors were kinky little cuties. Yep. That was what polite neighbors did.

But I wasn't a polite neighbor.

That would've had me missing out on so much romance and fun gossip, but at the moment, it was putting me in a difficult position. Was I supposed to ignore the questions Brady's roommates clearly had? Brady's Daddy didn't seem to find them nearly as adorable as I did and he had his hands full with Brady.

Was there anyone else they had in their life besides Brady who could answer their questions?

How many questions had Brady and his sexy Daddy been ignoring?

Frowning up at their apartment, I glanced down at mine and sighed. "Work or play?"

The answer seemed obvious so I bounded up the stairs, not worrying about appearing insane. I was the least nutty person in the building and they probably wouldn't even realize how strange it was, anyway.

Besides, no matter what, it would be more fun than studying.

I probably should've come to my senses by the time I got to their door, but I hadn't, so I knocked and gave them a big *I'm not a creep* smile as the cutie I thought was Gareth opened the door. Just eavesdropping hadn't really given me a clear picture of which insane cutie was which, but I thought I had it right.

"Hey, I'm from downstairs?" When the tall, almost blond guy just blinked, I widened my smile. "I was cheering Brady on when he was figuring things out with his Daddy?"

Yep, that had his eyes widening.

I had the best neighbors, so I had to cheer them on when they finally got what they wanted. Just because Brady's wish list had been a bit interesting hadn't bothered me. He'd found his Daddy and he was enthusiastic about getting spanked and cuddled.

"Um..." Gareth swallowed and nodded slowly, looking a bit like a confused surfer dude from a movie. "Thank you for being supportive? He's very happy."

So cute.

"You're welcome." Before I could say anything else, he turned his head. "Cash? A neighbor is here."

He needed reinforcements?

Interesting.

Was I scary or weird?

Giving myself props for guessing the right name with the right neighbor, I waited patiently as Gareth frowned

and Cash came to the door.

“Um, hi.” The dark-haired one was shorter and watching me like I was trying to sell them Tupperware or Jesus, and he gave Gareth a curious look that had the cutie who’d opened the door shrugging.

Were they dating?

They had the silent shorthand thing down pat because Cash turned to me and just knew he was supposed to take charge. “Were we being too loud?”

Sadly, no.

Gareth leaned in and whispered. “He’s the neighbor who was excited for Brady.”

“Oh.” Cash looked at Gareth and they exchanged another silent message before turning to me. “He was glad you were happy for him.”

That seemed to be all they knew what to say. I had a feeling it was probably because Brady’s Daddy had given them more than a few lectures on boundaries.

Hmm, probably another reason they weren’t asking nearly enough questions.

Deciding to charge right in since small talk didn’t seem to be their strong suit, I treated it like it was any other conversation two neighbors might have.

I was offering to help. That was all.

“I heard that you guys might have some questions about kinks and BDSM and Brady’s love of spankings.” When all that got was matching blinks, I kept going... silence was not a safeword. “He seems to think it would be bad manners to ask what you’re into or if you have questions. I think that’s just silly, but Brady seemed firm about it, so I thought I’d see if you needed help.”

When they didn’t slam the door in my face, I thought we’d made progress.

Hmm, another silent conversation.

They were so cute together and something about their mismatched looks made them even more adorable.

“At the very least, he and his Daddy are open to answering questions, but Brady thinks it’s bad manners.” I shrugged. “I heard them on the stairs and he had some logic about bugs and Jesus that I just couldn’t follow.”

That had them both letting out matching sighs and I couldn’t resist smiling.

“You guys are so cute.” That got wide-eyed stares from both of them and it just made me chuckle. “I can’t be the first guy who’s told you that. I’ve seen you go out on dates, and Brady was so excited a few months ago when you started seeing that guy who delivered pizzas here for a while.”

Cash blushed a delightful shade of red as Gareth continued to stare at me.

“Now, admittedly, I’m curious to know if you guys are dating now since I haven’t seen the pizza guy in a while, but I just wanted to make sure you knew you had other resources besides Brady and frowning Daddy Jude if you had questions.” Waiting for someone to nod or at least point out I’d crossed their boundaries, I kept grinning and just stood there silently.

It took several more sighs and pointed looks before Cash spoke up again, and the spokesman for the duo didn’t seem pleased to have been nominated. “The pizza guy didn’t work out.”

Not missing out on a chance to get to know them better, I nodded. “He seemed kind of stuffy for you. I mean, he didn’t even seem to understand that Brady’s a little. The whole *why does he have crayons* discussion was a clue he was too vanilla for your household.”

More blinks.

“Yeah.” Somehow I’d gotten Gareth to actually talk that time. “He didn’t understand that Cash wasn’t going to blow him on their first date either, so I didn’t think he’d last.”

I loved oversharers.

They were both wonderfully fascinating, but I frowned that time. “Cash isn’t a *blowjob on the first date* kind of guy. He has to get to know someone first, and more importantly, he wants them to understand Brady. You guys have been a family for a long time.”

If I knew that, then it shouldn’t have been hard for someone who was dating them to figure it out. Him. Dating him.

Right?

Instead of jumping into the blowjob conversation, Cash turned to Gareth. “We really are way too loud.”

“Never.” I scoffed and Gareth seemed to be trying not to smile or maybe even laugh. “I was very sad when the window got fixed, but don’t worry, Brady talks to himself a lot, so that’s keeping me mostly up to date.”

Cash scrubbed his hands over his face. “This has all just gotten...”

Since that seemed to be my opening, I toned down the smile and nodded. “I know. It’s been a wild ride with Brady finding his Daddy and you guys finally getting to see what that means in a healthy relationship way, but that doesn’t mean you have to be frustrated or confused. Communication is important. You’re still family.”

Just one that Jude didn’t seem to like most of the time.

But since that was how family usually worked, I wasn’t worried.

Gareth didn’t seem to know what to say, and I had a feeling that was due to Cash’s confusion just as much as his own. They really were two halves of a whole even if

they didn't seem to realize it. But that was okay because I was very helpful.

That was the part that Gareth did seem to understand because he actually stepped back from the door and waved me in as he responded. "Brady says he's happy."

But... I could hear that unspoken word as I followed him in, just inside the doorway so I didn't seem too overwhelming.

"But the spanking thing confuses you?" That had both of them nodding, but I couldn't decide if Cash was confused or if he was saying Gareth was confused.

Did it matter?

Deciding no, it did not, I charged in again and followed Gareth over to the couch where I had to move crayons and stuffed animals to sit down. "For a lot of people, the pain and pleasure centers get a bit mixed up."

And judging by Brady's orgasms, he was in that category, but I didn't point that out to his roommates because I had a feeling the orgasm part was something they hadn't missed either.

"It can be for a variety of reasons." I tried to sound relaxed as Cash shut the door and walked over to sit in a chair in the living room as Gareth sat down beside me on the couch. "From what I've overheard, Brady likes the pain and it's also cathartic for him. It makes him feel good physically, and emotionally he feels cleared out. Like a reset button that comes with an orgasm."

Blinks.

Sigh.

Reset.

Gareth frowned. "But Jude is hurting him."

“Only in the most technical sense of the word.” They were both back to frowning. “First, let me ask a few questions. Is Brady happy?”

That got immediate nods, so I knew their confusion hadn’t passed into fear yet.

“Does Brady like having someone who’s just there to watch over him and set boundaries?” I knew the answer to that one, so I was glad to see their heads bobbing again. “Would Brady stay with someone who was mean to him?”

Shaking their heads without seeming to think about it, finally had their shoulders relaxing. It seemed that something was getting through to them, but I wasn’t sure I’d answered enough questions yet. “Brady is honest to a fault. If he says he loves Jude and he loves spankings, I think you can trust that. He probably loves them more than he loves coloring, guys.”

They both went silent before a slow breath escaped Gareth. “I still don’t understand it, but you’re right, he wouldn’t do something he didn’t want to.”

Cash nodded but he seemed more focused on Gareth’s emotions more than the actual spanking itself.

“He likes having someone there to take care of him completely.” That was obvious to anyone with eyes. “You guys did a great job taking care of him, but I don’t think either of you are natural Daddies and that’s what he needed.”

And they went still again.

Oh, had they not realized they were subs of some sort?

Somehow that always seemed to surprise a large percentage of people.

Cash licked his lips as his eyes darted back to Gareth, but Gareth was staring at me like I’d said something

scary or brilliant.

Both?

They were my favorite neighbors for a variety of reasons, one being they never woke me up at six in the morning on a Saturday singing about Barney or Winnie the Pooh. They'd also never let bugs escape into the building and they didn't glare at me every time I said hello...that actually applied to several guys in the building, oddly enough.

Yep, the fact that they were both sexy in different ways was the icing on the cake.

"I probably shouldn't offer to spank you since we haven't known each other in person very long, but Brady's the type to share. So I don't think he'd mind letting Jude spank you as long as clear boundaries were set up beforehand."

Because that was one kinky cutie with questionable logic and he could talk himself into just about anything.

"Would you like me to help you ask them?"

What else were neighbors for?

Chapter 2

Gareth

The building was filled with nothing but insane people.

On some level I knew that included me, but I wasn't going to focus on that part at the moment.

"I'm not sure that's a good idea." I wasn't sure that was what my response should've been, but focusing was hard, so I was just glad I'd gotten some kind of answer out.

"He's not attracted to Jude. I think that would have to come first for the spanking demo to work." Cash's answer was smooth and logical in a weird way.

He was also not wrong.

But it also seemed like kind of an odd way to answer the already weird suggestion.

Right?

"He frowns a lot and he's just not a happy person." The *why Jude wasn't my type* topic seemed easier to answer than everything else. "He makes me anxious even when he doesn't realize it."

Downstairs Neighbor Guy nodded and didn't think the statement was weird. "Yeah, a lot of...people need someone happier to make them feel...confident."

I wasn't always the brightest when I was stressed. My nerves made my brain cells vacate the premises pretty quickly, but even I knew he hadn't been going to say that to begin with.

But what had he been going to say?

He was so weird...but in a friendly way?

Friendly was nice.

It also seemed to make Cash stupid too because he started nodding again. "Yeah, happy is important in a lot of ways."

What the fuck?

How had this conversation gone so off the rails?

Our possibly overly friendly neighbor just gave Cash a pleased smile like he was really proud of him for something. "It really is. So let's figure out someone else to help Gareth walk through his research."

Research?

Oh, the spanking.

Wait.

"I think I'm fine. It'll be fine." Yes, it would all be fine.

Downstairs Guy cocked his head and looked disappointed in me for some reason, and that had my stomach knotting up. "Don't back down now. You've got questions you need answers to. Your family here would want to help you."

How did he know I had questions?

Did he just mean about the spanking thing?

There didn't seem to be a way to ask that without admitting that I had questions, so I just stayed silent. When in doubt, say nothing. Sometimes it made me appear stupid but most of the time people didn't question looking stoic.

Downstairs Guy sighed. "Not good, cutie. We don't block our feelings. That's just not helpful in the long run."

Who was he and how did we always get ourselves in situations like this?

“At least it’s not a spider.” Cash’s quietly whispered answer seemed to say he was reading my mind...which was frightening in a lot of ways.

“Thank you for trying to help.” Yes, Brady said being polite was important and would get us out of most situations.

It seemed to just make Downstairs Guy smile, though.

Was that helpful?

“You’re welcome, but I’m not sure we’ve done enough to ease your mind.” Looking serious and sweet, he glanced between us and sighed. “I think we’re going to have to handle this amongst ourselves to do that. You and Cash here are already close and look super sexy together, honestly, so I think that’ll be the best option.”

I felt my jaw drop open but nothing else came out.

Cash seemed to be in a similar state, but I’d kind of expected him to at least tell the guy politely that he was nuts.

Nope.

Downstairs Guy seemed to take that as permission to keep going. “Great. Alright, first step is going to be to get everyone comfortable together. If you’re going to understand spankings, and probably submission in general, you need to be relaxed around all of us first and I’m not family yet.”

Somehow it was so logical I found myself nodding without realizing it.

Wait. Yet?

“Great.” But it made Downstairs Guy so happy...and I didn’t want to burst his bubble.

He was being polite...and helpful, right?

Brady's mom said it was good manners to let people help even if you didn't really need it. She'd said people like to feel useful.

And he did smile really nicely.

"So first..." He got a thoughtful expression that made him look even sweeter. "I think some kind of hanging out in a social setting would be a good idea. Yes. First thing to get out of the way...are we all going to hang out together or separately? You guys seem like the group date kind of family, but let me know if I'm wrong and we should go out two by two."

What?

I was back to stunned stupid, so I looked over at Cash.

He wasn't doing much better, but he looked surprised instead of like a blank moron, so that put him ahead of me. "I..."

Yep, he had words, so he got to handle it.

"We don't date." Cash had words but they were never the ones I expected to come out.

Downstairs Guy didn't seem surprised because he nodded slowly in an understanding but not approving kind of way that Brady's mom was really good at doing too. "That's a shame. We'll fix that, though. You guys are so in sync it would probably bother you to date the same person separately."

We were going to date him?

Together?

"Cash doesn't like it if you're bossy all the time, just some of the time." That seemed important for Downstairs Guy to know but I wasn't sure why. "And you really don't mind Brady being little?"

It definitely wasn't one of the top five questions I should've been pondering at the moment, but it was what had popped out, so I just went with it.

"No." Downstairs Guy seemed so confident about that he made me feel immediately more relaxed. "He's a cutie and I was really glad when he found his Daddy. But if that question is in regard to me wanting to date him too, you don't have to worry. I'm not a Daddy, and while he's open-minded, I think he's more of a traditional couple kind of person."

What kind of person wasn't a traditional couple kind of person?

Did that mean I wasn't a traditional couple kind of person?

No, that couldn't be right.

But what else could he have meant?

Downstairs Guy seemed to be the type to say what was in his head most of the time, but it didn't always make sense. "But you'll have to let me know what kind of boundaries you have for your relationship so I don't accidentally stomp all over them. Limits are healthy and should be defined."

Huh?

"Do we have a relationship?" Leaning toward Cash, I didn't take my eyes off Downstairs Guy...mostly because I wasn't sure he wouldn't disappear the moment I looked away.

Had we accidentally eaten more pot brownies?

That would've explained a lot.

"Did Brady bring home any more brownies when he went to visit his family yesterday?" My question was serious but it made Downstairs Guy laugh.

“Nope, not a hallucination and not a spider.” He winked before grinning wider and leaning over slowly. “Remember to tell me about your limits.”

He kissed my cheek.

“See, I’m real.”

Still smiling as he sat back, he glanced between me and Cash. “Do you need proof too?”

Oh.

Now Cash was the one who was staring in shock with his mouth hanging open.

We all waited for a few seconds but his mouth never closed, and when he glanced over at me, I realized he thought I was going to answer for him.

What the fuck?

What was I supposed to say?

Somehow the only thing that came to mind was one of Brady’s lectures about Santa sending the best presents to good littles, and I couldn’t help wondering if Santa was just late on his special present to me and Cash.

“If you’re going to date us both it seems fair?”

What the fuck?

Why had I said that?

Brady’s questionable logic was contagious somehow, but Downstairs Guy’s eyes lit up. “Oh, that’s definitely something I’ll remember about you, cutie. Fair. Got it.”

Downstairs Guy slowly rose, bent over so he could lean over the arm of the couch as he carefully inched toward Cash. It didn’t take a rocket scientist to know he was giving Cash time to tell him to back the fuck off, but Cash didn’t.

Cash didn’t do much of anything, really, but he watched Downstairs Guy as he got closer and let the

confusing guy brush his lips against his cheek. "Real and fair."

We had the weirdest neighbors.

But at least he wasn't into collecting bugs...and he smiled?

"Fair." Cash's mumbled response confused the fuck out of me, but it made Downstairs Guy smile again.

"That's right." As he carefully sat back down, somehow feeling closer to me than he had before he moved, he glanced between us. "We're going to keep things fair and work on good communication skills."

Oh, that sounded terrible...well, the communication skills part, at least.

"I'm not going to write letters about my feelings." Brady's mother had some great ideas and some frustrating ones...and her insistence on us writing letters when we hurt each other's feelings was a terrible one.

Cash shook his head. "Me neither."

Downstairs Guy's lips quirked but he managed not to smile. "Deal. We'll talk things out so I can reward good boys."

Rewards?

Ignoring the rest seemed like the best idea, or at the very least the less stressful. "Like Brady gets rewards when he cleans up his toys?"

Downstairs Guy finally smiled again and it looked like he thought we were cute, not actually funny. "I'm thinking something on the more grown-up end of the reward scale, like kisses or special dates or orgasms."

He said it like it was so...

"But we're fair, right?" Cash's question made it sound like Downstairs Guy had broken his brain.

He should've been arguing about this.

At least, I thought he should have.

One of us definitely should have been arguing about it.

"Yes." Downstairs Guy looked very pleased about something, but this time his smile seemed...wicked. "We're going to keep things fair but that doesn't mean identical. You might like a reward that Gareth doesn't. But you'll both get rewards you enjoy when you're good boys for me."

What was he thinking that made him look at us like that?

Had we done something to already earn a reward?

How was that going to work?

How would I know when I'd been good?

If I got rewards for being good, did I get punished for being bad?

What would being punished look like?

If spankings weren't punishments, would we have to stand in the corner and pout like Brady?

Would Cash even agree to that?

Licking his lips, Cash nodded. "Like communication."

"That's right." Downstairs Guy looked pleased and almost hungry like he wanted to kiss Cash again. "It's not always easy but it's important."

Something passed between the two of them, but it was gone before I could figure it out. I would've obsessed over it but I already had a lot to focus on...like why hadn't Cash figured out the punishments part of the "good and naughty" equation.

What was distracting him so much that he missed out on a very important piece?

“I don’t approve of corporal punishments.” The stupid words popped out before my brain could stop them.

I sounded like Brady spouting off something random because he’d done the first half of the conversation in his head, but Downstairs Guy didn’t seem to think it was weird.

He took it seriously and shook his head. “No, if we’re exploring spankings with you, we won’t use them as punishments. There are a lot of ways to correct a sub’s behavior that aren’t things like corporal punishment. I don’t want you worried about that.”

He didn’t need to worry.

I was going to obsess over the sub comment first.

I wasn’t Brady.

Explaining that seemed harder than it should have, though. Nothing felt quite right and it didn’t make enough sense. I had questions, but nothing I wanted to actually ask, and luckily none of them randomly popped out that time.

“Okay.” Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. “Um, when are we going to hang out?”

Moron.

Wimp.

But I was a moron wimp who’d made the weird neighbor happy?

“I’ve got a ton of studying and some work to do this afternoon or I’d take you out right now, but how about dinner tonight?” He glanced between us, looking curious but still smiling. “We’ll have dinner and do

something fun, and it won't give you too much time to overthink it."

He really did know us entirely too well.

"Fun is important." Cash's random response had me giving up on anything helpful coming out of his mouth.

"It really is." Downstairs Guy's wicked grin was back and aimed at both of us.

My body didn't seem to know what to make of that and was sending weirdly mixed signals between my brain, my dick, and the rest of me. But if my brain was saying Brady would approve and my dick liked his smile, did it really matter that the rest of me was confused?

"I can't wait." Downstairs Guy's smile had me deciding that my brain and my dick were the most important parts. "One more kiss and then the books have to win my attention for the time being."

With that announcement, he quickly rose and gave both of us another kiss on the cheek, innocent and distracting all at the same time, and then bounced toward the door in long strides. "I'll be back at six. We'll just do something casual, but you both have great asses for jeans if you want to distract me."

And then he was gone...taking nearly all my brain cells with him.

What had happened?

Did I have a date with Downstairs Guy and Cash?

Chapter 3

Cashel

As the whirlwind strode right out the door, the living room felt oddly empty and heavy. I wanted to say something important or at least ask Gareth if he'd realized what he'd agreed to, but that just wouldn't come out.

"Do you know his name?" Well, it wasn't a brilliant question but it was better than sitting there in shock looking like an idiot.

Gareth's head cocked and his brows pulled together. "Um, no. I thought it might just be me who didn't know his name...and I didn't want to be rude by pointing that out."

Shit.

Um...

"He's a grad student. I heard him talking to one of the girls a few weeks ago." That was all I knew, really. "They were trying to get him to go to a party or something."

It hadn't seemed like they'd succeeded, but he was so polite it'd been hard to tell.

"Is he into girls?" Gareth seemed to be focused on the most irrelevant details of the whole encounter, but that was better than him just sitting around in shock, so I pretended it was a good question.

"He didn't mention being bi." Hmm, okay, maybe it hadn't been a bad question.

“Did he mention being gay?” Gareth frowned as he finally turned to look at me, his words echoing my thoughts. “He said he wanted to go out on a date, right?”

Glad I wasn't the only one who was confused, I shrugged and tried to mentally go back through the conversation.

“Yeah.” He'd said a lot of interesting things but that was one of the awkward but easier to sort out parts. “With both of us.”

We didn't do that, though.

We'd *never* done that.

We'd known each other since we were in diapers.

I didn't think Gareth had ever thought about doing that.

“We're really loud.” Going back to something that probably felt easy to focus on, Gareth sighed and looked at the window that was now fixed and closed. It'd been stuck open for so long we'd started to forget about it and that had obviously led to a lot of oversharing with the weird but sexy neighbor. “He didn't seem to mind, though.”

That finally made me laugh. “He's nosy as fuck. I think he loved how loud and clueless we were.”

But in our defense, there really had been a big-ass spider in the Christmas tree and Brady's mother had kind of poisoned us with pot brownies.

Gareth gave the faintest smile. “Yeah.”

Telling myself that at least Gareth didn't think the whole weird situation made it too awkward to talk to me, I forced myself to bring up the elephant in the room since I wasn't sure he would. “Are we going on a date with the neighbor together, or are we both just dating him at the same time?”

Yep, that was definitely the best sentence I could've asked.

Utter silence.

I wasn't even sure he was breathing.

He made me crazy sometimes, but thankfully, he came back to life without finding anything else to be confused and worried about. "Um, I'm not sure what *he* thinks is going to happen. He seemed confused about our relationship. But...but I think both of us just going out with him at the same time would work?"

He didn't seem sure of that but I couldn't blame him.

"Okay...but we're actually going to do it?" Had he been listening to the whole weird conversation? "You heard why he wanted to get to know us better, right?"

"The spanking thing." Gareth said it so casually, I still wasn't sure he knew what he'd said. Was his brain actually working? "Yeah, it's probably not something we should jump into with a stranger. He's happy, though. He's confident and he smiles."

Sure, he wasn't Brady's grumpy Daddy, but that didn't mean we should let him spank Gareth.

Right?

Jude would definitely have said we needed our heads examined, but he wasn't actually being helpful sorting out Gareth's questions. If it came down to a choice between smiling guy and Jude or just leaving Gareth confused...well.

"Do you want to...I mean..." Was there a good way to ask all the weird questions running around in my head? "Do you want to explore the spanking thing with him? To help clear up your questions, I mean."

That hadn't sounded like I was talking about him getting off from it, right?

I thought that might be the goal, maybe, but I wasn't sure this was the time to ask that part.

Gareth didn't seem to take it that way, so I told myself not to worry as he shrugged. "He's nice and he smiles. He didn't think it was weird to be confused about either. He didn't make me feel stupid? I think that's important. Right?"

Okay, those were all good points.

Jude kind of made both of us feel stupid when he growled and protected Brady from God only knew what.

They were kind of weird.

"But Brady's attracted to Jude. I think that's one of the key pieces." It certainly helped, but I really didn't understand what Brady saw in him.

He was so grumpy.

But what else was important besides attraction?

Oh.

"That and trust." And being a sub, but I left that part out because I wasn't completely sure about it. "Are you attracted to him?"

I wasn't sure how I felt about the way Gareth immediately nodded, but he made the shit in my head even more confused when he jumped right into his next question. "Are you? He said we were doing this together because...well, something about family."

What the fuck had happened?

"Do you want me to find him attractive?" That didn't seem like a reasonable question, so more words just kept rambling out. "We don't date the same people."

Yes, we were both gay, much to our families' frustrations, but we'd never dated the same people even accidentally.

Shrugging, Gareth didn't seem concerned. "We don't date at all."

Okay, technically, he had a point.

"He...he seemed to think we were dating." I wasn't sure where I was trying to lead the conversation but that seemed to be important. "We're not."

Gareth just shrugged again. "I don't think he'll mind."

What was going through his fucking brain?

Was it just the topic that made him so frustrating?

Had our parents ignoring us too much growing up finally fried his brain?

"Do you mind?" At the very least we needed to make sure the weird neighbor wasn't going to fuck up our life too much before we went out to dinner with him.

No questions were worth screwing up our friendship...and Brady would tattle on us to his mother if we made everything all dramatic around the apartment.

He had no filter whatsoever.

"You're my best friend." Gareth frowned, not seeming to understand what I was worried about. It made me feel good and confused all at the same time. "I don't mind not dating you."

For fuck's sake.

"He kissed us both." God, I wasn't any better than Gareth.

"He did." Gareth nodded as he turned his head to look toward the door. He was quiet for a few moments as he settled back against the couch. "He asked permission, though. That's good, right?"

Well, yeah.

“He was polite.” And he had soft lips. “Did you mind?”

Gareth shrugged again which made me crazy, but it didn't take long before he started talking it out, which saved him from getting smothered by one of the decorative couch pillows Brady's mother said were important to have to make our apartment a home. “He agreed that being fair was the right thing to do...if we're both dating him, that seemed to be important. And it made him happy.”

Gareth was going to end up doing something stupid just to make the sexy weird neighbor happy. Fuck. I was going to have to date him too just to make sure Gareth didn't talk himself into something ridiculous...like getting spanked by a stranger.

God.

“It did make him happy.” Yes, I was just going to focus on the most logical parts. “And I liked the way he didn't leave either of us out. If he's...well, if we're both dating him, that seems like it'd be important.”

“So we didn't get jealous or frustrated.” Nodding slowly to himself, Gareth kept staring at the door like he was still imagining the neighbor standing there. “I like how easy it is to make him happy. Like the jeans thing. Sometimes it's hard to know what to wear.”

Well, he wasn't wrong again.

“Yeah.” That was helpful. “And we know he thinks we're attractive.”

I'd lost track of what was important and what was just stupid, but Gareth thought it was worth mentioning.

He even smiled. “Yeah, I like not having to guess about that.”

“He's very...” I wasn't sure how to explain *weirdly open*, so my voice just trailed off.

It made Gareth chuckle, though. "Oh yeah. But I don't mind it?"

He more than not minded it, but I wasn't sure it would be polite to mention.

"It's helpful." And kind of hot in a weird way-too-open-minded kind of way. "But I wasn't sure what to say to some of it."

I was hoping that by giving Gareth an opening he'd share more about what he was feeling, but it didn't seem to work the way I'd intended. He just looked at me and frowned. "Do you think he's going to be too bossy for you?"

Huh?

Okay, some of my dates had been controlling dickheads, but it didn't happen that often...did it?

"He didn't seem annoying, just weird." I wasn't going to lie about that part. "He also asked to kiss me. So he's polite."

God, we were going to end up dating a serial killer together just because he smiled and had good manners.

The way Gareth nodded said he hadn't thought about how many ways it could go terribly wrong...but it was probably nice to talk to someone who could explain the spanking thing better than anyone else around us.

Jude was...well, he was only appealing to Brady, and Brady was...well, he was confusing on a good day...and I was an idiot.

Yep, I was starting to see how we'd gotten ourselves into this.

We should've done more internet searches and less worrying.

"Are you going to wear jeans?" Gareth didn't seem to realize how many mixed signals he threw my way with

that one question.

“Yeah.” All I could do was accept it at face value, though, because he was Gareth. “You?”

His slow nod wasn't a surprise, neither was the way his gaze went back to the door. “He'd probably like you in that blue shirt if he likes your ass. It looks good from the back.”

Wait.

Nope.

I wasn't going to ask.

“Alright. But you should wear that black one. He'd like that.” For very similar reasons. “You don't mind that, though, right?”

I wasn't sure if the question made sense or not when Gareth frowned. “That he likes your ass?”

Nodding, I kept my mouth shut since I wasn't sure what else to say. If I opened it, more of the questions in my head might pop out.

Shrugging, Gareth didn't think it was one of the weirdest questions I'd ever asked him. “No, it's fair.”

That was the least helpful answer ever, so I just changed the subject. “Do you think he's going to stay just as polite and cheerful?”

First impressions were sometimes wildly off base with what would actually turn up on a date.

He just answered my question with a question of his own. “Do you think he's going to keep saying everything that pops into his head? He kind of reminds me of Brady...but different.”

Gareth knew the guy was a Dom with no filter but didn't seem to have the vocabulary to explain it. I had a tiny bit of the vocabulary but no experience and nothing in my head that made any sense at all.

For some reason, I seemed to have been the only one to do any research after Brady had first explained he was a little looking for a Daddy and not just a stressed-out freshman who was more than a bit weird.

The weirdness had grown on me, and it'd grown on Gareth too, but Brady had never been pushy about it. Honestly, a bit of push and a few conversations might've been a good idea. But looking back, it'd been such a culture shock from the way we'd been raised, it was like moving in with an alien.

Just a really polite one with a *huge* family.

They'd grown on both of us too.

"Yeah." Going back to the question Gareth had asked, I nodded and shifted my gaze to study the door too. "He's probably going to get worse once you've decided that you know him well enough to figure out the spanking thing with him."

Gareth was one fucking surprise after another.

"*We've* decided." He cocked his head, finally turning back to me again and giving me a look that said he thought I hadn't been paying attention. "He's dating both of us, and you heard him, we're family. We do everything together."

For fuck's sake.

What the hell did that mean?

Gareth seemed to think it was the most rational discussion ever, but he was ridiculously unhelpful.

"Okay, yeah, good point." Clearly, he wasn't the only insane party in the room. "But we've got to figure his name out before the date. Can you imagine what Brady's mom would say if she knew we went out on a date and didn't know his name?"

The *that's not safe* lecture would go on for days.

Gareth's wince said he realized that too. "Um, is our name on the mailboxes?"

Good question.

"I don't know." I'd seen it too many times to remember what it said. "Would Jude know? He's bossy enough to know everyone's names just because."

Frowning, Gareth shrugged. "I'm not sure I want to be the one to tell Jude we're dating the cheerful guy to understand spankings better. He's kind of cranky when the subject comes up."

Oh, very true.

"Should we make Brady ask?" He wouldn't mind. "He'd do it, but it sounds kind of dangerous."

"Oh, I'm not sure what he'd tell him." Gareth sighed. "I think our best option is admitting we don't know his name and just claiming he overwhelmed us with his... smile?"

No.

"How about we just wait and see if we can see it on his credit card when he pays for dinner?" He asked us out, so he'd probably pay. "He seems like the pay-for-dinner type."

Gareth lit up. "That's a great idea. Yeah."

Eventually, we'd figure it out...right?

"It'll be fine." It might end up being one of the weirdest dates ever but he didn't seem like the angry and vengeful type, so either way, we probably shouldn't worry.

"Are you going to do that reading you were talking about?" Gareth's mind seemed to be rabbiting all over the place because it took me a second to remember that I'd been originally looking for my textbook. The professor was old school enough that he even hated

digital copies, but I kept setting the book down in weird places.

“No.” There was no reason to hide it. “My brain is not going to focus on schoolwork right now.”

How was Smiling Guy able to just jump from running through our life like a hurricane to doing homework?

“Yeah.” Gareth’s frown said he was in a similar position. “We could do some baking and that meal prep stuff you were talking about.”

That’d still be productive.

“Okay, and maybe we make some soup?” That would be good to eat for a few meals. “And somehow Brady talked me into switching chores with him, so I need to vacuum.”

Brady was kind of dangerous when Jude wasn’t around to tell him to stop talking us into stupid shit.

“Yeah, somehow I have to mop the kitchen.” Gareth glanced back toward the door with a confused frown on his face. “Do you think Downstairs Guy would keep Brady from Bradying us?”

If he was actually a Dom...yes.

“It can’t hurt to ask.”

We were at the point where the conversations couldn’t get any weirder.

Chapter 4

Downstairs Guy

They were so adorable they could've been littles.

"If we're going to play games, I think we should go for the high-points ones so we can win Brady a prize." Gareth was very earnest as he focused on the games area across the restaurant.

He hadn't even picked out dinner and he was already thinking about his friend.

"I think we're supposed to be talking about...well... other stuff." Cashel couldn't seem to say the word date but I thought it was obvious.

"Like what?" Gareth glanced around the table. "Oh."

Now he remembered he was on a date.

Cashel was doing his best not to roll his eyes, but it seemed to be painful to keep all that lovely snark trapped inside. "Yeah."

So cute.

"I don't mind if you talk about Brady." The wide-eyed little was adorably high-maintenance, so I had a feeling they talked about him a lot. "And we're in a restaurant that has fun food and games. I'd be surprised if it didn't make you think about him."

Reminding them that I knew Brady was little and was perfectly okay with it seemed like a good idea. It hadn't been my intention to focus on him on our date, but I'd wanted to take them someplace a bit silly where they wouldn't overthink it.

“Does he like games?” I glanced between the two slightly uneasy men and smiled. “I know a lot of littles like different kinds of games, but I thought I heard Brady say something about Legos?”

They blinked for a few seconds before Cashel nodded. “Yeah, he’s on the younger side, I guess? I don’t know anyone else like Brady except for, well, Brady. But he said he likes coloring and stuff like that, so I never thought to bring him here. The internet never said to take him here.”

They were the cutest big brothers ever.

But since Cashel seemed worried, I shook my head. “Brady is the type to be very vocal about what he wants and he seems very happy. Nothing I overheard him say to you guys, himself, or his Daddy makes me think you missed out on fulfilling his needs.”

They both let out a deep breath like they’d been carrying around a bit too much on their shoulders.

Even Gareth nodded faintly. “That’s good. Sometimes it’s hard to know what to do.”

“I think you both did wonderfully.” Making sure to meet both of their gazes, I aimed for a serious tone. “You’ve been friends for several years now. I think you said you were roommates freshman year?”

When they nodded, I continued. “You got to know someone new who was very different than you were used to. You did your best to build a relationship and to understand what he needed. You’ve made him a happy little who was mentally healthy when his Daddy came into his life.”

Subs didn’t always have that kind of support around them.

“Now it’s your turn to have someone focus on what you need.” Aiming the more serious expression at both of them until they let out another sigh and nodded, I

backed it up when they acknowledged I was right. “But that doesn’t mean we can’t play games together and win Brady a big prize.”

Gareth grinned and Cashel just chuckled as he shook his head, but both seemed to mean they thought it was a wonderful plan.

“But first, food.” Gesturing to the menus they hadn’t looked at yet, I had to fight back a smile as they both squirmed. “There are no right or wrong options, and the restaurant has veggie substitutes for several different proteins if either of you has decided to change your diet recently.”

Considering I’d smelled bacon a few days ago, I wasn’t surprised when they shook their heads.

“Great.” Pretending to ignore the way they slowly opened the menus and started to endlessly browse, I glanced down at my menu and picked my favorite salad. “Okay, all set.”

They both looked up and gave me wide eyes like they thought I was an alien. “I like steak on salad. It’s one of my favorite combinations, so I’m getting that and then a side of fries to make sure I actually get full.”

Salad could be fun but it wasn’t always filling.

“What looks good to you?” Smiling at both of them, I tried not to laugh as they seemed to panic. “I’ve heard they have good burgers here and the chicken strips look great.”

That didn’t seem to help.

“Oh, I...that sounds good.” Gareth looked down at the seemingly never-ending menu and frowned. “Brady says dipping things is fun.”

Cashel sighed and shot Gareth a glare. “I’m starting to realize why your last dates tanked.”

Gareth huffed and frowned. “At least I—”

Chuckling would've encouraged the bad behavior, so I cleared my throat to cut off the drama and did my best to look like a stern grown-up. "Would Brady's mother have you write a letter for that?"

That had them both hunching over and sighing.

"I'd rather go in the corner like Brady." Gareth seemed utterly serious as he said it, earning a nod from Cashel that was so cute I wanted to laugh.

"I'll remember that option, but for now, I think communication is a good idea." They were the cutest subs I'd ever seen. "Let's start with Cashel since I think that will be easiest to tackle."

He nearly pouted but eventually nodded and leaned against the tall table where we'd been sat. "I won't poke at him."

Not exactly what I was going to say.

"I'm glad, but I actually wanted you to know that I don't mind hearing about Brady." I really didn't. Maybe if it'd been new and overwhelming that would be different, but I already knew about him. "I think with the spanking still on his mind and probably other questions about submission, in general, Brady just keeps popping up in his head."

Cashel's gaze was still cloudy and I had a feeling I knew why. "Yes, I want to get to know both of you more. That's the reason for our date, but there's no timeline on that or a rigid plan. I'm not going to get frustrated and walk away just because Gareth is thinking about Brady."

It wasn't like we were making love and he was still chattering about the cheerful little.

"He'd already said I could talk about Brady?" Gareth seemed confused, but it was so cute I wanted to wrap him up in my arms and give him a hug. "We already decided that he was the type to tell us what he was thinking. Why would he lie?"

Cashel's brows pulled together. "I don't know but dates do that all the time. They say one thing but you're supposed to understand they mean another. I just didn't want to..."

Fuck up the date?

I was glad he wanted it to go well but worried about how anxious he was.

"I will tell you exactly what I mean." Shifting my gaze between the two guys, I aimed for serious and relaxed, so neither of them would question what I said. "Right now, I am saying that I'm enjoying our date and I like hearing what's on Gareth's mind. I will make sure you know if any of that changes."

Eventually, it might get frustrating if I never learned about Gareth, but for the time being, it was fine and I liked the peek into his head.

"Now, Gareth." Focusing my attention on him earned me a sigh from the slightly dramatic sub. "Are you having a hard time figuring out what to pick for dinner?"

His nod seemed to have a cascading effect because Cashel started to do it too without much thought.

"Alright, we can handle this." Not a problem.

Turning to Cashel, I nodded toward Gareth's menu. "What do you think Gareth should have for dinner?"

He didn't even have to think about it. "He wanted a burger earlier but we didn't have the right stuff to make it for lunch and the schedule said we were supposed to be eating spaghetti."

So schedules were important?

Got it.

"I think that sounds good. Bacon, barbecue, or traditional?" It only took seconds for Cashel to explain

what condiments should go on Gareth's traditional burger and it felt like they were both relieved to have gotten over that hurdle.

"Gareth, what should Cashel get for dinner?" Yep, it was definitely the right way to go because he didn't even have to look down at the menu to answer.

"He wanted a salad too but his last date said salads were for, well, something rude that Brady's mom would wash my mouth out with soap for saying, so I'm not going to say it, but he'd like the steak salad too and onion rings." Once the flood of words stopped, he seemed to deflate like stress had been the only thing holding him upright. "Dating is a lot easier when I don't have to think about me and Cash can do it."

He seemed slightly confused by that as he turned to Cashel. "Why didn't we think of this earlier?"

Adorable.

And so focused on making sure Brady was happy they'd forgotten to worry about themselves...or maybe it was just easier than trying to work out what they wanted out of a relationship?

"I don't know." Cash didn't seem entirely honest as he answered the question but I didn't call him out on it, and I did my best not to react when he shot me a quick glance. It was clearly an *are you going to tell on me* look, but I just pretended not to notice.

"It's working now, that's what matters at the moment." Then, giving Gareth a cheeky grin, I looked over toward the games on the other side of the large building. "And in a few minutes, the only thing that will matter is how many points we can get."

He seemed delighted with that plan and started chattering away about what he wanted to play and what he thought Brady would think of the whole thing. After a bit, I could feel Cashel's stress growing again.

Gareth seemed to unconsciously notice it because he kept sending smiles toward Cashel but that wasn't really helping. So when he turned toward the games and started plotting again, I reached under the small table and rested my hand on Cashel's thigh.

He went completely still and suddenly seemed to have more interesting things to focus on rather than getting worried about Gareth's delightful chatter.

It took several long seconds where I kept my hand completely still and continued talking to Gareth before Cashel relaxed again. But once he did, I slowly moved my fingers, barely caressing the sexy, stressed-out man.

It was obvious that he wanted the date to go well, but I couldn't tell if it was because of his own desires or Gareth's. They were so entwined that they seemed to be always focused on the other and not what they wanted.

Having our date together for the first time had definitely been a good idea, but it left me wondering what I should do going forward...and that led to a lot of other interesting questions about firsts. But I knew they could wait until we'd gotten to know each other more and Gareth had figured out how he felt about spankings.

Fearful or fascinated.

It seemed to be a toss-up at the moment, and I thought that was one of the reasons he found it so easy to talk about Brady. That cutie was a safe topic that he knew inside and out and didn't have to worry about since I already knew Brady was little and interesting.

He probably could've gone on all night but our barely-managing-not-to-smile waiter was a wonderful distraction when he came back to get our order. To say he found us funny would've been an understatement, but after sending him away three times earlier, I couldn't blame him.

“Great. I’ll get this in and bring you guys more drinks.” He gave me a wink as he shook his head, obviously grasping the dynamics, and it made me wonder if I’d seen him at any BDSM events in the area.

But before I could get distracted down that mental rabbit hole, I thanked him and focused on my dates. “Alright, with that all set, I’m going to be nosy.”

Rubbing my hands together like an evil villain got a grin from both of them, which I thought was a good change of pace. “What are your favorite desserts?”

The ridiculous question had them blinking in confusion and seemed to take a minute to adjust to. They’d probably assumed I’d ask something naughty but keeping them on their toes seemed like the better plan.

Cashel found his words first. “That wasn’t fair. But, um, I like to bake? So I enjoy a lot of different things.”

Oh, that was good to know.

“I’d wondered who made the cakes.” I couldn’t resist perking up as he smiled and blushed. “It was hard to figure that out. Can I say I like anything chocolate that comes in a cake form without seeming greedy?”

Gareth nearly giggled. “Yes, but you have to put in your request in enough time for us to remember to buy the ingredients.”

The way Cashel rolled his eyes said there was a story I couldn’t remember. I let my gaze bounce between them and mentally sorted through their recent conversations. “Brady’s mother. You have to talk her into going grocery shopping.”

That had them both laughing and as it trailed off, Gareth sighed dramatically. “We really are too loud.”

“What did I say about that?” Giving him a mock glare like he’d been naughty had him squirming slightly and looking sweetly sheepish...it brought my mind right

back to spanking him, but he didn't seem to realize that, so I behaved.

"You...you like hearing us." The blush that crept over his face made me smile, but it was the way Cashel was studying both of us knowingly that made me reconsider the avoid-the-spanking plan.

"I do." Nodding slowly, I leaned over toward Cashel. "He was very naughty to forget that. I think I'm going to have to help him to remember to be a good boy later."

Cashel let out the softest, barely audible whine before cutting it off and letting out a breath. It would've been delightfully obvious if Gareth hadn't been sitting there with his mouth open in utter shock.

They were so cute.

After a moment, Cashel nodded slowly and swallowed. "I... Yes, that's probably a good idea. He'll keep worrying over it unless you...unless you make an impression on him."

I had the best partner in crime.

Hmm, maybe he wasn't just a sub?

That'd come out a bit too easily.

"A spanking would definitely make an impression." As we teased Gareth, his mouth closed and his eyes darted back and forth like he was connecting the dots. "I want to make it clear that he shouldn't hide things from me and he shouldn't worry about pleasing my nosy side. It's very important to remember."

Because not knowing was painful.

I loved every fascinating person in the building, and I couldn't imagine them all being boring and hiding the shenanigans they got up to.

What if I'd missed out on the crickets?

What if I'd missed out on both grumpy guys finding love?

What if the three cuties upstairs kept their budding romance so quiet that I'd missed the drunk night?

That would've been tragic.

Cashel was doing his best and getting into the spirit of things. He even nodded again and managed not to sound panicked. "He might need more than one reminder. He's kind of an apologetic worrier by nature."

"Don't worry." Sitting up straighter, I winked at Gareth as I pretended to stay focused on what Cashel was saying. "I don't mind hard work. If it takes several spankings, I won't complain."

Because based on Gareth's needy wiggles...he liked the idea.

But did he understand that?

Chapter 5

Gareth

He'd spank me for worrying.

He'd help me remember to be good.

Okay, I was starting to understand why Brady didn't mind frustrating Jude sometimes.

The wink said Downstairs Guy was teasing, but something about it felt just real enough to have a tornado whirling in my stomach. It pinned me in place as it spun and even made my dick hard for fuck knew what reason.

Yeah, Brady might've been on to something.

It probably shouldn't have surprised me because he was incredibly smart but what made it even harder to understand was the way Cash played along.

He was so good at it.

The tornado liked him too.

He was my best friend so that was probably why but Downstairs Guy seemed to be having fun including him. He really was good at making sure everything was fair and no one was left out. Brady's mom was going to like what good manners he had.

"I'm sorry. I just..." Oh, I'd apologized again.

Downstairs Guy's eyes sparkled with something happy and wicked, but Cash was trying not to laugh. He probably had a good reason, though, because the only thing that wanted to come out was an apology for apologizing.

Would a spanking help me remember to stop doing that?

Before I could even begin to figure that question out, Downstairs Guy shook his head and sighed. "Yes, I see I've got my work cut out for me, but like I said, I don't mind hard work."

Was spanking me hard work?

Was he talking about doing it several times?

Did we need to have more dates in between or were the two things not connected?

I couldn't remember Brady's spankings having much of a connection to dates after their first one, but I wasn't sure if I'd missed something important there because of Jude's crankiness.

"I..." Shoot. I managed not to apologize again but I wasn't sure what else to say. "Thank you for taking us out on a date."

Cash's snicker said he thought I was stupid, but Downstairs Guy gave me a big smile. "Oh, if you keep saying sweet things like that, I can guarantee you'll love your spanking."

How?

Cash's shoulders were shaking as he tried not to laugh again, but he was doing such a bad job I knew he'd gotten the threat...promise? Giving up on looking smart on the date, I leaned around the tiny table. "How can he promise that?"

He couldn't seem to decide if he wanted to laugh or roll his eyes more, but he finally huffed and leaned in to whisper back. "He's going to make you come, moron."

He was?

He could promise that?

“I still don’t understand how he can promise that.” How did it make Brady so happy? Why did he keep doing things to make Jude drag him downstairs? Why did he get so smiley and stupid after it?

“Because he knows how hard it’s going to make you and he knows it’ll be easy to get you off.” Downstairs Guy winked again as he leaned across the table and talked about himself in the third person. “He can see how just thinking about it is making you hard.”

He could?

I managed not to look down at my lap, but it was close.

“Should I double-check that?” His eyes sparkled when it took me a few seconds too long to figure out what he meant. “Oh, so innocent. I love it.”

Ugh.

“I...” What was I supposed to say to that? “We haven’t finished our first date?”

Wait.

Was that a reasonable response?

Kisses were acceptable, even Brady’s mom had said so, but I wasn’t sure she’d approve of dick-grabbing on the first date. She’d said we should respect ourselves and know our worth. Was my worth dick-grabbing on the first date level?

Sometimes I wished she’d been more specific when she’d been giving dating advice.

Sometimes I was glad she hadn’t been.

Downstairs Guy looked positively wicked as he nodded and something about the whole situation made Cash moan. But Downstairs Guy took all my concentration at the moment because he kept putting the

craziest things in my head every time he opened his mouth.

This time was no different.

“I like your idea of how a first date ends, sexy.” Something about the way he licked his lips had me remembering the soft kiss he’d given me earlier and my dick got even harder.

It was really confused at the moment and I didn’t blame it.

“I...” Shoot. No apologies. “I...I don’t know what to say.”

He didn’t seem to think that was stupid because he nodded slowly and looked really sincere. “I know and that’s okay. You don’t have to know what to say or how to act. We’re just going to talk and flirt and I’m going to tease you. All you have to do is react and let me know what your first thought was.”

That was it?

“What if I get it wrong?” I’d managed to piss off a lot of dates in the past, and I didn’t want to fuck things up with Downstairs Guy...especially not before I knew his first name.

“There’s no right or wrong.” He shook his head, seemingly believing what he said. “If I tease you and it makes you squirm and blush, that’s fine. If I come up behind you and brush against you as you play a game and you need more space, you just tell me. This is about us figuring each other out.”

That sounded easy and hard all at the same time.

He must’ve realized that, though, because he smiled again. “And if saying please move or something like that is too difficult, you just say yellow and I’ll back off.”

Safewords.

“Safewords.” Cash echoed my thought so completely, I found myself looking at him. It made him shrug. “It was online.”

“That’s right.” Downstairs Guy nodded and looked pleased...but still wicked. “I’m glad you understand that.”

Cash blushed like he didn’t know what to do with a compliment from the sexy man who was still a bit confusing.

“He’s smart. He knew what to do with Brady first.” And he’d made sure I hadn’t panicked either.

For some reason that made Downstairs Guy’s smile soften. “I think you’re both smart, but it’s really sexy when you stand up for him.”

It was?

I had?

I must’ve looked confused and ridiculous because he chuckled. “You two are so cute.”

Leaning closer to the table again, I was so focused on his smile, I almost jumped when his foot stroked against my leg. “I can’t wait to see what you do when I have a chance to get closer later. Will you moan? Maybe you’ll jump and then need space? Hmm, maybe you’ll be naughty and press back against me?”

Oh wow.

As my brain kind of stopped working, Downstairs Guy seemed like his brain was going full steam ahead. “Did I tell you how sexy you looked in those jeans? And that shirt.”

His gaze dropped to my chest and suddenly my clothes felt tighter and my brain felt smaller. “Cash helped me pick it out.”

And Downstairs Guy was back to smirking.

It was turning into the strangest first date I'd ever had and the best...I just wished I knew what would happen next.

Games and flirting and smiling...he'd been very honest about what he wanted to do after we'd eaten, but somehow, I hadn't thought he'd really do the flirting thing. Guys just didn't do that with me. Brady said I needed to smile more and Cash said I just needed to date guys who could read me better, but Downstairs Guy didn't seem to have a problem with me.

Or with Cash.

He kept touching Cash.

It took me entirely too long to figure out what he was doing, but eventually, my brain caught up and I started noticing all the little ways his hand brushed against Cash. His hand. His arm. His thigh. The only thing I hadn't seen him touch was Cash's ass but that was probably because there wasn't quite enough privacy for that.

The craziest part was the way he'd smile at me and wink, and make it feel like he was touching me too or maybe I was touching Cash...I couldn't figure out what was going through my head but it was definitely flirting.

Just the weirdest flirting ever.

But since it was flirting that I didn't have to do, it was working out fairly well.

Downstairs Guy wasn't disappointed in me or asking if I was really into him. He just smiled and touched and winked and said the craziest things like it was normal.

"Do you think I should help Cashel?" His idea of helping seemed to be analyzing Cash's ass as he leaned over to throw the small, hard ball. "He looks like his form might be off."

Was he serious or just looking for a reason to grope Cash?

Did it matter?

“He needs help.” Yep, it didn’t matter because Cash lost his grip on the ball and it went flying completely off target. “Lots of help.”

Downstairs Guy’s wicked smile was back and I got another wink. “You’re a very good friend.”

Since that seemed like something I should be proud of, I didn’t apologize or say anything stupid as he stepped closer to Cash and pressed his front against Cash’s back...and the jeans he’d picked out to wear for our weird neighbor.

Not that I minded that he was a bit odd.

Nope.

Not a problem anymore.

Cash nearly moaned.

He even shivered which had him pressing harder against Downstairs Guy and that made him let out a low, sexy sound.

Best first date ever.

“You can’t...” Cash would’ve sounded more believable if he’d stopped moaning or if he’d used the safeword.

But he didn’t.

Downstairs Guy leaned closer so his lips were next to Cash’s ear, but his gaze never left mine. “No one is watching but Gareth, and he likes watching us together.”

It would be rude to lie.

So I just didn’t say anything as Cash’s gaze darted over to me, watching me curiously as he made another needy sound.

Out of all of us, though, Downstairs Guy was the one with the most workable brain. “He likes seeing you get excited, and he likes knowing you’re having fun, don’t you?”

The sentence was a weird mix of talking to both of us, but I knew the last part was for me, so I nodded. I was glad to have gotten an easy question. I liked knowing Cash was enjoying himself. Our first date with Downstairs Guy needed to be something he had good memories about.

Just in case it was our only date with him.

Downstairs Guy stroked his hand down Cash’s arm until he was holding Cash’s hand in his. “Let me help. Let’s show him what we can do together.”

They were still talking about Skee-Ball, right?

It probably should’ve been easy to tell, but Cash moaned again and Downstairs Guy looked really pleased with himself as he swung Cash’s arm back. “We’ll show him how good we are.”

Maybe he wasn’t talking about the game?

Oh.

They got the ball in the highest point circle.

Maybe he had been talking about the game?

As the ticket counter on the tiny screen kept going higher and higher and the game made slot machine sounds, I wasn’t sure anymore.

It definitely proved my point that dating was not as easy as everyone said it was. But as I watched them move together and Cash blushed, I decided I didn’t care. Watching them play Skee-Ball was one of the most erotic things ever, even if he hadn’t meant it that way.

Damn it.

I was never going to hear slot machine sounds the same way again.

I must've missed something because they were both looking at me and Cash finally found words. "No, I think it's Gareth's turn."

To get cuddled or to play?

"He likes games."

Both?

Cash wasn't being helpful and Downstairs Guy's heated stare was distracting but not informative. "Um, I like games."

I was back to wondering if we were still talking about Skee-Ball when Downstairs Guy smiled even wider. "I love hearing that."

As Downstairs Guy stepped away from Cash, his hand trailed over Cash's back making him shiver. They were perfect together and that was all my brain could focus on. "What if I'm not as good?"

I was pretty sure I was talking about the game.

Hopefully, I was talking about the game.

Downstairs Guy didn't seem to think it was stupid, no matter what I meant. He just kept walking over to me slowly, a subtle rhythm in his stride that made me think of the music that was playing loudly through the speakers. "It's not a competition. We're just here to have fun and to get to know one another. Everyone is different and that's not a bad thing. It adds spice and fun to whatever we're doing."

I gave up wondering what we were talking about when he reached out and took my hand in his. "Come play with me. We'll just have fun."

I really hoped playing with him would be as fun as it would be memorable because as his fingers caressed

mine and the warmth of his body sent a shiver through me, I knew I'd never forget it.

Chapter 6

Cashel

“We can’t ask him upstairs until we know what his name is. If we ask him up, we’ll do...we’ll do *things* with him.” Gareth wasn’t the most articulate as he leaned forward between the seat and the door of the car to whisper to me, but he wasn’t wrong.

We’d definitely do things, at the rate the neighbor guy’s smile was getting to us.

“How were we supposed to know that he’d pay cash for dinner? No one does that anymore.” He had to have done it just to fuck with us, but we’d run out of time to figure shit out.

Our sexy and fascinating neighbor was walking around the front of his car, set on being the gentleman or maybe the Dom. He’d said he wanted to help us out and we’d agreed to wait, but that was mostly to panic where he couldn’t hear us.

“What do we do?” Gareth seemed to have decided I was the brains between us, and I wasn’t sure where he’d gotten that stupid idea from. “Do you want him to go upstairs too?”

And do *things*?

“Would it be weird if I said yes?” That was probably a stupid question but Gareth didn’t seem to think so.

“No.”

He was really taking all of this entirely too well... when was he going to start to panic or question what the hell we were doing?

No, I'd worry about that later, but for the time being, the neighbor's name was the big sticking point.

"We're just going to have to confess it." And hope he thought it was cute. "He's not the get mad type."

"It's worse." Gareth sighed as the neighbor reached for my door. "He might get sad."

Shit.

We both must've looked ridiculous as he took my hand and helped me out of the car because his eyes were showing how much he wanted to laugh. "You both look like you have the weight of the world on your shoulders."

He kissed my cheek, looking sweet and dashing as he glanced at Gareth. "Don't worry. We'll figure out how to tackle whatever it is."

It was us looking stupid and I was really hoping it'd be as easy to get past as he seemed to think. "Okay."

Yep, I was wonderfully articulate too.

His eyes sparkled, but he released my hand without laughing and went to help Gareth out of the car as I waited patiently and worried. "My wonderful dates look very thoughtful."

That had to be better than nervous and obsessed, right?

Giving Gareth a matching kiss, the neighbor smiled. "Alright, what do we need to talk about to clear your worries? I thought we've had a wonderful evening so far."

"We did." The words popped out before I could tell my brain I shouldn't talk for both of us. "I mean, I have."

But Gareth had a similar problem. "Yes. We thought it was great."

The neighbor chuckled and shut the car doors before reaching out to take my hand and pull me closer to them. It seemed that after the safeword discussion he'd become a lot more relaxed about touching us and he didn't worry about snuggling us against him.

When my shoulder was pressed against Gareth's arm and the neighbor held our hands, he cocked his head. "Alright, what do we need to talk about?"

Gareth looked at me.

Glaring at him, I couldn't resist getting frustrated. "This isn't just my problem."

He was such a pain in the ass sometimes.

"But you're better at handling stressful things." He shrugged when I sighed. "We could have Brady do it."

That would just make a mess of everything and we'd end up distracted and baking cookies instead of getting Gareth his spanking. "No."

Now Gareth was the one who sighed as the neighbor tried not to laugh.

I liked that he wasn't worried, but I hoped he'd stay just as happy when we told him our stupid problem.

Some people were way too easily offended.

"Brady's mom gave us dating rules, and she wouldn't like it if I got spanked when I didn't know your name." Gareth's word vomit said I should've been the one to do the talking. "Sorry? And now I'm sorry for apologizing again when you can't punish me yet."

Neighbor Guy cocked his head but didn't get mad or laugh. "That is a very smart rule."

Brady's mom wasn't stupid...she was just cute and bossy.

"Would you like to know my name so we can spend more time together tonight exploring the spanking

conversation, or would you like to have another date before we do anything else?" The neighbor didn't seem to think the conversation was insane, but I was starting to think he had a really high bar for what he'd consider too nuts to date.

Gareth thought it was a reasonable question and was mulling it over seriously. I was going crazy trying to be patient, but the neighbor was amazing and just smiled as he waited.

Weirdest first date ever.

"I'd like to know your name." Gareth nodded slowly to himself. "Yes, and I'd like to continue to explore, and I think Cash has things to explore too because he liked it when you touched him."

Yep, weirdest first date ever.

"Thank you for being so thoughtful with that and really focusing on what you and Cashel want." The neighbor smiled and kissed his cheek. "My name is Bates. I keep forgetting you aren't nearly as curious as I am."

Bates.

"We forgot to ask." Gareth's confession made Bates's smile wider. "I thought Cash knew and he thought I knew, and neither of us wanted to ask Brady."

"For obvious reasons." Bates's nod looked serious, not silly. "We'd have never escaped and who knows what Jude would've done. That's one Daddy who obsesses about everything. I mean, I like that he's protective of Brady, but would he think I'm safe to be around?"

Oh, good point.

"Is it okay to hope you're not safe to be around?" Gareth's question had me flashing hot and cold, not really knowing if he meant it as dirty as it'd come out.

Bates's smile got wicked again...because he'd obviously taken it dirty too. "You say the sweetest things."

Gareth looked pleased but confused...the same thing I was feeling. "I'm glad it makes you happy."

Instead of pissing him off.

Me too.

Again.

"Can we go to your place? You know, with Brady and all..." Gareth shrugged like the request made perfect sense. "I don't know where they're going to be tonight and I'm not sure I want interruptions."

Wow.

He'd really said he wanted to keep the date going.

I was excited and still confused when they both turned to me and made it worse. I'd forgotten it was my date too. Strategic mistake. They were so much fun to watch, it'd slipped my mind that I was there too.

"What do you think?" Bates wasn't the type to get upset or push me. That was obvious. But would it ever be okay to need a push?

As I obsessed over the probably stupid question, Gareth sighed. "His brain is going too fast. You have to do something to stop it or he'll end up baking."

That was the dumbest thing ever...but brownies did make everything better.

Shit.

Bates chuckled softly but took the ridiculous order very seriously. "Well, you are the expert for the moment, so I'll take your word for it."

As I wondered what he meant by that, his face got closer.

Oh.

“That’s a wonderful idea.” Gareth’s voice was the only thing grounding me in the moment and his thoughtful tone seemed really at odds with what was happening. “See, his brain has already slowed down, but don’t stop, he wants this too.”

Too?

Before I could wonder if Gareth meant he wanted it too, Bates’s smiling lips touched mine.

Wow.

Gareth had been right.

My brain had slowed down and the only thing it could focus on was how warm and solid Gareth felt next to me and the softness of Bates’s lips. Even as they moved against mine, I thought it couldn’t get any better until Bates nibbled on my lower lip and Gareth slipped his hand in mine.

The sparks that showered through me said it could get better...and a little voice in the back of my head couldn’t help wondering how much better it could get if we had a bit more privacy. But I pushed those dirty thoughts away to stay in the moment and feel their bodies around me.

Incredible...and it just kept getting better.

As Bates’s tongue slipped between my lips and caressed mine, it wasn’t until Gareth chuckled that I heard myself moan. It was the best kiss ever, so I wasn’t embarrassed, but hearing Gareth’s pleasure did a number on things a lot lower than my lips.

He liked seeing Bates kiss me?

Bates eased back, something knowing in his eyes as he glanced between us. “So cute.”

I found myself blushing and I wanted to squirm and hide...either against Bates or in the kitchen...and everything in my head got even more confused when Gareth leaned over and rested his chin on my shoulder. "You liked that."

Duh.

But what did he mean?

"He's a good kisser." Sticking with the most obvious facts made figuring out a response easier. "Do you want a turn?"

Fair was fair, after all.

Gareth nodded as he straightened, but he made me question what he was thinking when he looked around the parking lot and frowned. "But inside. I'm hoping for at least PG-13 and I'd rather not have to explain that to some of the neighbors."

Good point.

Wait.

What made a kiss PG-13?

What made a kiss rated R?

Had mine been G?

Bates's wicked chuckle sent a shiver through both of us and said he didn't mind Gareth's request. "You have the best ideas. Come on."

Taking both our hands, he led us over to his apartment, not worried about anyone seeing us. It was nice and unnerving at the same time. He'd gone out with both of us. Shouldn't he be at least a bit nervous about what people would think?

That thought stayed at the front of my mind until he finally released our hands so he could dig out his keys and let us into his apartment. Then I started obsessing

about Gareth's kiss again because it seemed to be the most important topic since we had privacy.

What were they going to do?

Why did Gareth think it was okay for me to be there?

What was I supposed to do while they kissed?

The list of questions could've just kept going, but Bates answered several of them in one go as he pulled us over to an oversized, overstuffed chair that seemed more like a chair-and-a-half and pulled us both down to sit on his lap.

We were all squished in together, half on his lap and half on the soft leather chair, but Gareth didn't seem to mind either. Bates clearly loved it because he was doing his wicked, ear-to-ear grin. "I knew this would be perfect."

As I wondered how long he'd been thinking about it, Gareth nodded and wiggled closer so he was pressed against Bates's chest and his legs were tucked between mine. "Yes, I like that we fit together."

And I was back to wondering if he realized how that'd sounded as well.

Bates's grin said he was hearing it just as dirty as I was, but he always knew the right thing to say. "We're going to keep it fair and not leave anyone out. Don't worry."

That made Gareth happy and left me wondering what the hell it meant.

How would we keep it fair?

How far did they think that would go?

But my head went blissfully quiet as Bates slid one hand up Gareth's back to cup his neck and brought my curious friend's lips to meet his. I was close enough to

feel their bodies move together and to hear every breathy whine and sigh.

Bates was right...I didn't feel left out.

I felt turned on.

Gareth's insistence that everything be fair made it hard to worry about what he'd think of me getting aroused by watching them...and Bates seemed like the type to enjoy an audience, based on how tight he was holding me...but my brain and my dick were still slightly conflicted about the reality of what was happening.

They were kissing.

And I was starting to understand what PG-13 meant to Gareth.

Moaning and whining and rocking against the man who clearly wanted to be his Dom...our Dom?

Nope, not thinking about that.

Focusing on the sounds they were making, and if grabbing my dick was socially appropriate under the circumstances, seemed much more important.

Because the way they moved together...they were the hottest thing I'd ever seen, and I was really hoping they didn't stop anytime soon.

Chapter 7

Bates

God, they were beautiful together, breathy and moaning in near unison no matter who was getting kissed. The utter lack of jealousy was mind-blowing and erotic, but it left me with questions that couldn't wait long.

But I knew I wouldn't rush as soon as I released Gareth's lips and he looked so needy and perfectly at ease. "Cash needs another kiss."

"To make it fair." Nodding, I gave him one last peck. "He only got an innocent one in the parking lot."

And I was pretty sure Gareth wanted to watch us make out when he nodded so easily.

Cash sucked in a breath as we turned to him, a bit more nervous about what would happen than his sexy roommate, but he seemed to have a clearer view of what was at stake. "I...I liked my kiss."

Adorable.

"But don't you want another?" Gareth was the best wingman ever because all Cashel could do was nod. "Good."

Oh, the questions that were floating around in my head...

The way Cashel's gaze slid over to me said it was my turn to take the lead again, so I stroked my hand over his back, slowly working my way up to give him plenty of time to safeword or pull away. When he didn't do either,

I wrapped my hand around his neck and kept a firm grip on my nervous boy.

He shivered, pressing against me and making Gareth moan quietly as he watched us together like we were the most fascinating thing he'd ever seen. I'd have given anything to know what was going through their heads, but I wasn't sure either of them could've articulated it.

So as their Dom...even a temporary one...I did the best thing I could think of.

I kissed him.

Cashel moaned into my mouth as I immediately deepened the kiss, making love to his mouth and stroking his tongue with mine. I'd been gentle in the parking lot, carefully letting him get used to my touch, but that wasn't what he needed this time.

And it wasn't what Gareth wanted to see, which turned Cashel on even more.

Every low moan and sigh our date let out got a shiver from Cashel and he'd wiggle against me, feeding off both Gareth's and my desire, and my touch. He was sexy and tasted sweet, and I nibbled on his lips and fucked his mouth until my two beautiful subs were rubbing their legs together and moaning so perfectly, they were going to send me right over the edge.

When I finally released his lips, I kept him pressed close to me. "You have the softest lips and you taste so sweet."

Gareth inched closer, maybe not even realizing it until he'd rolled himself up smaller and his head was resting against mine. "He uses a lot of Chapstick."

I couldn't decide if he was adorably clueless or just had never realized they were more than friends, but I took the cute comment as seriously as I could with Cashel staring at him with wide eyes. "Why don't you

taste them and see? It's only fair. I haven't gotten to see you two together yet and it's your date too."

They seemed to be doing their best to ignore that part, but I'd never agreed to that level of delusion.

Gareth went still in his thoughtful way that said his mind was turning the idea around, but Cashel's stillness was shock and arousal. There was no way to hide the heat in his eyes, but worries were floating around as well, so I kissed his cheek. "I can't wait to see if you look as sexy as I'm imagining."

That seemed to do it for Gareth, and he did his absent-minded nod as his hips rocked forward to try to get friction against his hard cock. Neither of them seemed to notice the movement but it left me aching to slide my hand lower over his ass.

But I was patient.

Kisses first and groping second.

Or maybe third, depending on where our spanking conversation ended up taking place.

"We did say it was going to be fair." Gareth's wonderful logic had Cashel letting out a confused and slightly frustrated huff.

"*You* said it had to be fair." Cashel might've been frowning, but Gareth wasn't worried as he inched closer.

"He agreed to it, though. He said it was a good idea." Barely a breath away from Cashel, Gareth waited. "And Bates's right, it's our date too. We agreed to that and dates get kisses. You said the date was going good."

"So I owe you a kiss?" Cashel was trying to decide if he wanted to laugh or groan, and I wasn't sure which would win as Gareth nodded.

"Yeah, it's fair...and it's been a good date so far. You said so." His logic was curious but impeccable.

“You’re the biggest pain in the ass sometimes.” Cashel’s grumble made Gareth smile like it’d been the sweetest endearment ever.

“I think Bates is going to be in charge of the ass pain.” He chuckled to himself, clearly loving how funny he thought he was, as Cashel groaned. “Fair’s fair.”

Then he crossed that final span and brushed his lips against Cashel’s.

Even if they hadn’t made it clear over dinner that they’d never crossed certain lines, I would’ve known how guileless their friendship had been by the sweet way they kissed. There was heat and passion, but it was careful and subtle as they moved against each other.

It was still almost innocent as they eased apart, both breathless and imagining much more wicked things. I wasn’t sure what to expect, but I almost smiled as they turned to me in unison, clearly wanting reassurance everything was fine.

So each got a soft kiss on the cheek and I hugged them tight as their stress slowly melted away and they curled into me again. When they were snuggled up with their legs intertwined and their heads resting on my shoulders, I couldn’t help smiling. “You were both beautiful and that was the most perfect first kiss ever.”

Cashel let out a soft, slightly embarrassed chuckle, but Gareth seemed proud of his accomplishment. The smile and utter satisfaction in his voice were impossible to miss. “He deserved a good one.”

“That’s what you’re going to say?” Cashel’s huff made me want to laugh, but I did my best to be a good Dom and kissed his head.

“He’s proud of himself for giving you such a good kiss, and I’m proud of you both for being so open and loving.” And for not having a grand freak-out moment.

Yet.

Nodding, because he couldn't argue with anything I'd said, Cashel's tension faded again. "He likes knowing he did the right thing or that he was good at something."

Praise.

Got it.

Resisting the urge to tell Cashel his pleasure wasn't a test or basketball game, I gave them another hug which had the benefit of snuggling them closer together. "How about you let Gareth know you'd like to hear something personal about the kiss so you don't worry?"

Cashel froze like a startled rabbit, but Gareth stepped up to the plate even though he was obviously confused about why his earlier statement had caused a problem. "I wasn't sure what would happen when I kissed you, but it didn't feel wrong...it kind of felt like Brady said it did when he kissed Jude for the first time. Right. You know?"

Kissing them both again, I smiled. "I'm glad it felt right, and I bet hearing that is making Cashel feel steadier."

The prompt had Cashel nodding and relaxing back into me. "It does. I just wanted to make sure you...you liked it too? I guess?"

They were both adorable...and clearly needed a third to keep them on the happy relationship path.

"I did." Gareth shifted, rubbing his leg against Cashel's in a very deliberate movement that made Cashel blush. "And I liked that Bates was watching us. Is that okay?"

Cashel's immediate nod had my dick begging to be let out to play and he didn't appreciate being ignored. "Yes, I liked it too. And if we're both dating him, that's probably to be expected."

“I thought so too, but I wasn’t sure if we should look it up online or not.” Gareth’s expectant tone and knowing look got a huff from Cashel.

“You can look up stuff too.” His tone sounded frustrated but Gareth didn’t seem to be worried as he responded, so I had a feeling this part was routine for them.

“But you’re so much better at it.” Gareth shrugged. “And you’re good at explaining things...like Brady.”

Did that mean he realized this was kinky in some way or was I as confusing as the cheerful little? Neither was offensive, so I just snuggled my cuties and let them work their way through what was happening.

“But this is something that you have to figure out too.” Cashel’s earnest tone had Gareth slightly confused because he started wiggling again. “I don’t want to accidentally talk you into something you don’t want to do.”

Gareth made a soft, thinking sound that had me nearly holding my breath to see what he would say. “Well, if anyone is going to talk me into something weird, it’ll be Bates. You’ll only talk me into stuff you know I want to do but haven’t admitted it yet...like the zipline.”

Adorable.

And not wrong in any way.

“You were very proud of yourself after the ziplining and you loved that rush of adrenaline.” It was actually a good comparison, so I jumped into the conversation. “I think you’re going to like things like the spanking the same way.”

My helpful response had both of them sighing.

“Yep.” Cashel shook his head. “We were too loud.”

“Perish the thought.” Why would I want them to have been quieter?

Gareth let out a quiet chuckle but his fingers started stroking over my chest like he was slightly nervous or thinking through something. “It was scary at first.”

“A lot of new things feel that way. It’s our body’s way of keeping us from doing something too stupid.” And yet people still did ridiculous things that killed them every day. “But nothing we do will be dangerous or will hurt in a bad way.”

I wasn’t sure he could understand the difference yet, so as he lifted his head, clearly ready to question something, I gave his ass a smack. It had his eyes going wide as his gaze darted back and forth between me, Cashel, and his ass as he tried to look over his shoulder.

“That’s not going to work.” Cashel rolled his eyes as he lifted his head and looked over Gareth’s shoulder to study his ass. “It’s still there. Don’t worry.”

The delightfully insane commentary had me fighting the urge to laugh, but I didn’t want to distract them, so I stayed quiet.

“Did it *bad hurt*?” Cashel seemed to be taking his time studying Gareth’s ass, but they were both too distracted to notice.

“Not really...and I think I get some of it now. That wasn’t something that would hurt me, it just hurt a little.” Gareth thought he made perfect sense and Cashel’s slow nod said he was following along. “It didn’t make me come, though.”

Delightful.

“It takes more than one spank to make Brady come and everything Jude does seems to make him orgasm.” Cashel’s dry response had me pressing my lips together so I didn’t accidentally agree with him.

Brady came if Jude gave him a sexy look, so we weren't going to use their level of passion as average.

"Good point." Gareth gave up trying to see his ass and turned back to me. "It didn't bad hurt, but do you really think that could make me orgasm?"

"Yes." Not seeing any point in hiding the truth, I gave him a quick peck on the cheek. "I think your curiosity is your body's way of pushing you to try it, and I think you're going to love being held by us and feeling our hands running over you as I spank you."

And the wide eyes were back.

But nothing seemed fear-based, so I kept going.

"I might be telling you how naughty you were, or I might be telling you what a good boy you were and how special you were to get a reward like that." Cashel's innocent fact about how Gareth liked doing something well came back to me as the confused cutie in question shivered.

"Cashel would be giving you more kisses and telling you how good you were. I'd be telling you how proud I was of you as my hand came down on your ass again." I stroked my hand over the ass in question, gently squeezing the area I'd tapped. "You'd be so hard, and every time I spanked you, you'd be grinding your dick into the bed or my lap."

Feeling brave, or maybe just entranced by his sweet friend's shock, Cashel leaned in and kissed his cheek. "I'd hold you so we'd be doing it together. I...I'd like kissing you as you got your spanking."

They were the sweetest couple I'd ever met.

"I..." Gareth blinked, some of his brain coming back online. "I like doing things right and I like making people happy."

Cashel nodded like the connection made perfect sense to him. "Bates would be really excited if you came. He'd be really pleased at being right."

They could talk themselves into the most fascinating things.

I was starting to see how their apartment always had so many shenanigans going on constantly. But I wasn't going to worry about that because I would be the only one talking them into ridiculous things going forward.

I hadn't been planning on adding in my two cents yet, but they turned to me, so I shrugged. "I would. I'm not going to lie. Seeing you come and knowing I was right would make me blissfully happy. I'd also really like to see your ass get pink, oh and don't forget, I like seeing you kiss too."

Might as well make sure all that was out there too so there were no surprises or confusion.

"I think I heard Jude say something like that to Brady." Cashel's quiet confession was obviously aimed at Gareth, but I thought it was a pretty good sign for the start of our relationship.

However, they were going to define it.

"The ass thing or the orgasm thing?" Gareth's question didn't surprise Cashel.

"Both." His earnest response had Gareth curling back into me. "I think it's a Dom thing."

Yep.

And they were both looking at me again.

"Yes, I'm a Dom." We'd spent most of dinner talking about games, Brady, and guessing if our waiter had decided we were all together or not...he definitely had... so we hadn't really gone into detail about Doms and subs and what I'd love to do with both of them.

“I discovered BDSM a few years ago when I was here for my undergrad.” Best college ever...for so many reasons. “After I graduated, I continued learning and figuring stuff out and I’ve had play partners and casual relationships, but I’ve never met anyone in the lifestyle I wanted to keep.”

Glancing between the two of them, I smiled. “Until now.”

Cashel blushed and Gareth cocked his head but neither interrupted so I kept rambling. “I’m not a strict Dom and I don’t have a lot of random rules to follow. I want to figure out what makes you both happy and I want to touch you and kiss you and see what turns you on so much it feels like you’re flying.”

Cashel’s barely audible response said his research had been fairly thorough. “Subspace.”

Nodding faintly, I didn’t get distracted. “But it might take us a while to figure out what each of you likes and what we like to do together. It’s not a movie or a dirty romance novel. Sometimes things take time.”

And I was going to enjoy every moment of it.

“But since we’re dating and this isn’t just a hookup from an app or a scene at a club, we’re not going to rush.” I brushed kisses over their lips, smiling when their sweet moans escaped again. “I’m going to love getting to know you both and I’m going to savor every first with you.”

Chapter 8

Gareth

“But we’re not going to savor too slowly, right?” The savor comment made me more worried than thinking about the actual spanking. “Like those tiny little meals you get at fancy restaurants? That would kill me.”

Cashel sighed but Bates smiled. “How about we think of it as learning to walk before we learn to run? One step at a time and we’ll go as fast as it feels right.”

As long I didn’t have to find too much patience, I’d agree with that.

“Just don’t forget, I’ve been crawling around awkwardly for a while, so learning to walk feels like it should go pretty fast.” Something about that made Cash giggle like a kid who’d heard a dirty joke for the first time, but I thought I’d done a pretty good job of staying with the theme of the conversation.

“Deal.” Bates gave me another quick peck and something about his smile sent butterflies whirling through my stomach. “We won’t drag our feet walking, but we might come back to that crawling note later.”

Cash thought it was so funny, he buried his face against Bates’s neck. He had the strangest sense of humor sometimes.

Bates didn’t mind, though.

He just kissed both of our heads and let Cash laugh because he was a nice guy who didn’t think we were strange. “I think he’s just glad the date is going so well.”

Yes, he’d liked my kiss.

He hadn't even said it was weird either.

"Yeah, I can feel how much you're both enjoying the date and I have to admit, it's wonderfully distracting." Bates's comment was a bit vague but between his sparkling eyes and the way Cash was snickering, it didn't take me long to figure out it was an erection comment.

But it meant Cash was hard too, right?

My glance at him must not have been as subtle as I'd hoped because Bates's grin just got wider and he waggled his eyebrows.

Well, I had my answer.

But it didn't tell me what we should do next, so I decided that was probably up to Bates.

I kind of liked that for some reason. Some idiots I'd dated were just bossy in a pain-in-the-ass kind of way, but Bates made it feel natural to let him take charge. I wasn't sure if it was because he'd just started out bouncing into our life already being nosy and bossy or if it was about the Dom thing, but I had a feeling it was probably both.

So I was going to let him be in charge.

To me, that meant I could cuddle back into his chest and just let him and Cash figure things out. Cash liked being bossy sometimes too, so I hoped Bates would let him make some decisions too. But that seemed like something they'd need to work out together, so I tried not to be helpful.

Luckily, Cash finally stopped giggling and opened his eyes, completely distracting me with how deep they looked.

"Are you hard too?"

Fuck. I hadn't meant to ask that.

He managed not to start giggling again but it looked painfully difficult to hold it all in. "Yeah, so is Bates."

Oh.

Cash's leg was on the bottom of our stack of limbs, so I took his word for it. "Good to know."

But did that mean Bates liked kissing us or watching us kiss or did the spanking conversation do it for him too?

I could hear Brady in the back of my head saying that I shouldn't ask because it might be rude, so I just snuggled back into Bates as he let out a quiet laugh. "You two are so cute."

That was better than being confusing or annoying.

Bates continued stroking our backs and kissing our heads as we snuggled against him, and I had to admit, it was one of the best dates ever...but that didn't mean I was ready to start savoring things.

And if I wasn't going to savor, then maybe it would be okay to ask questions?

"Why does Jude like spanking Brady?" It seemed like a good place to start, but Cash's eyes went wide. I started to worry Bates would get upset, but he made a soft, thinking sound and kissed my head again.

So maybe he wasn't upset?

Had Cash thought it was a weird question?

Was he worried about what Bates would say?

Oh, maybe I wasn't supposed to talk about another Dom when I was cuddling with one?

There seemed to be a lot of rules that no one had mentioned yet, but Bates was the funny, patient type of Dom and didn't seem to be easily offended.

“Well, all I can do is answer that from my perspective, so this might not be right for Jude, but I think it’s going to be close.” Bates’s hand stroked down over my ass, barely petting the place he’d spanked before. “I like giving my partner pleasure. I like seeing my partner submit, and I like seeing my marks on a sub.”

As I thought about that, he squeezed my ass and chased out most of the logical bits that had accumulated. “I’d love seeing you submit so completely to me and give yourself to me. I’d love seeing you cuddled up to Cash, nervous and sexy. I’d love seeing the way my hand decorated your ass and the way you squirmed as the pleasure built, and I’d love to see you orgasm.”

His answers were always thorough, but sometimes that made me want to squirm because he said things to me no one else ever had before.

“You might be humping the bed or you might be draped over Cash and get off against his body.” Bates made another thinking sound, like planning out the options was perfectly reasonable. “We could sit opposite from each other and you could lie across both our laps. That way I could spank you and you could hump his lap while he held you.”

Bates gave my ass the lightest pat while he thought again and it made the fantasy seem even more real. “We could also do it so you were facing Cash on your side but that might be a bit harder to get the right leverage. I’ll have to think about the mechanics of that one.”

He had a good imagination.

And was a really good planner.

Were all Doms planners?

Pushing the thoughts of Jude out of my head since it didn’t seem like a discussion he belonged in, I looked over at Cash who was still wide-eyed and quiet. “What do you think?”

Cash swallowed and his brain had either stopped or was going too fast because it took him a few seconds to answer. "I...I think I like the holding you on our side option best but Bates is probably right. That might not be practical. So... So you should be stretched out over our laps? Then I could hold you?"

"And you wouldn't worry as much if you could see everything up close." For some reason that made Cash grin.

"Oh yeah, I'd see everything up close."

His comment made Bates giggle like a kid, but we both got more head kisses, so I didn't mind. "Just imagining you two like that is making me hard, but it's also so romantic I just want to hug you tight."

He gave us both a big hug, squishing us against his body and closer together, but it made me wonder if he was going to do anything about the hard comment.

He didn't.

I must've looked frustrated with that part because Cash giggled again, making me frown. "I'm being patient. Stop that."

It didn't help his giggles.

"Hmm, is my curious boy wondering about something?" Bates's fingers danced up my spine, sending a shiver through me. "What were you thinking?"

Bates had talked about communication enough that not answering never occurred to me. The words just popped out as the wonderful sensation swept through me. "About your cock and if you were hard and if talking about your erection meant you wanted us to do something with it."

Cash was back to burying his face against Bates, and I couldn't decide if he was sighing or trying not to laugh.

But Bates just gave me a squeeze and made a low, sexy hum, so I didn't worry about it. "You put the best ideas in my head. You're such a curious little cat."

I wasn't sure that was a good thing considering curiosity was supposedly what killed that cat, but Bates looked sexy as he smiled at me, so I didn't point it out. "I like not having to worry about what I tell you."

That had something sweet sparking in his eyes and he pulled me closer to give me a soft kiss. "I always want to hear what both of you are thinking, but I love how inquisitive you are and how you want to understand so much."

He was really nice...but he was also kind of distracting because I still didn't know if he wanted us to do something with his cock. We'd talked about getting to know one another and about exploring my spanking questions...but there was other stuff we should probably explore.

"I want to understand you too." And part of that was if there was something I was supposed to call him. Brady called Jude Daddy more than he actually used his real name. That had to mean there was something Bates should be called.

I was starting to wish I'd done as much research as Cash.

Hmm.

As Bates smiled and studied me, I inched closer to Cash. "Are we supposed to call him something other than his name? Brady calls Jude Daddy all the time."

Bates's smile turned into a sexy grin, but he didn't interrupt my question. Cash probably would've appreciated it if he had, but he didn't get too dramatic. "Yeah, there are options, but I'm pretty sure we should figure out more about the submission stuff before we

settle on a title...and Bates probably has a preference too."

Good point.

"Okay." Hmm, that made me think of another question I had to ask Cash. "Oh, while we're working on stuff...what's your opinion on first dates and doing more than kissing? Are you okay if I'm a *blow job on the first date* kind of guy?"

Bates was doing a great job of not laughing...but on the other hand, Cash giggled again. "Gareth. God."

I shrugged since he wasn't pissed at me. "It's a good question."

Bates's faint nod said he thought it was a good idea too.

I loved supportive dates...Doms? Whatever he was.

Cash was shaking his head against Bates's shoulder but didn't take too long to answer. "I think I'm flexible on that as long as I really like the date...dates...whatever. I think I'm more flexible than we thought."

"And we know his name now." What else would Brady's mom say was important? "He's really nice and I want a second date...with both of you. So, yeah, I think that covers the important stuff."

"Yeah, she said we'd know when we met our special someone." Cash finally turned his head and peeked over at me. "Do you think she knew we'd have the same special someone?"

"I think she's got too many other things to worry about, so as long as we tell her we're safe and happy, it won't matter." Every time we turned around, she had another grandkid or someone was getting married, so as long as we didn't need help, she'd be fine.

"Good point." Once Cash realized I was right, he nodded and we both turned to Bates who was still

looking very pleased and kind of giggly.

“What do you think?” Yep, he needed something besides his name...maybe some kind of nickname until we got his title figured out?

“I think you’re adorable.” He beamed as he gave us both quick kisses before settling back in his chair again. “I also think you have amazing logic when it comes to first-date plans. I’m definitely not opposed to some erection exploration, but don’t forget, our focus was getting to know each other so that you’d feel safe being spanked.”

Oh, right.

“I do.” What did I do? “I mean, I feel safe with you and I’m starting to understand more about the spanking thing, but there are lots of ways to get to know you, and I’m still not sure if that savoring us comment meant I was getting spanked tonight or not.”

Bates got his thinking face on and slowly nodded. “Those are very good points.”

I liked that he wasn’t rushing but that kind of made me think about the savoring comment, so I wasn’t surprised when he shook his head. “No spankings tonight. I want to give you time to come up with more questions and for both of you to process our first date before either of you gets naked.”

Hmm, not a bad idea really.

It was kind of unfortunate, though.

“But you getting naked would be alright?” We all said we were okay with kisses on the first date, but had we actually specified *where* those kisses would be placed? “That’s not us getting naked and worried.”

So it should be fine.

Right?

I peeked back at Cash to see him studying me like I was that stupid spider. "What?"

"You want to go...do...I mean...him?"

Was that a surprise still?

I knew I was missing something, so I tried to guess what he was worried about. "I'll share. We can do it together. Then you won't be left out and no one's mouth will get tired."

I thought it was a pretty good plan, but Cash crashed his head back into Bates's shoulder. "God."

He was so dramatic.

But Bates seemed to like it based on how big his grin got. It seemed to be a Dom thing, though, because Jude liked it when Brady got dramatic too. I wasn't a Dom, so I just ignored it. I wasn't going to reward bad behavior just because he was cute.

"I'll go first so you don't have to." Performance anxiety was probably part of the problem since all it took was one tug on his arm and he wiggled down to the floor with me.

Yep, he just hadn't wanted to go first.

Bates was watching us both very carefully as his hand moved to his pants, but instead of freeing his dick, he made us wait again. "Do we remember the safeword that slows things down?"

Cash answered first. "Yellow."

"Good boy." Bates leaned over and kissed his head, petting it as he glanced between us again. "And red stops everything. Right now, no will stop everything too, but if it's too hard to say that, then say red. Does everyone understand?"

"We'll come back to that why no won't work all the time, right?" Looking between Cash and Bates, I knew

that was something I should've already heard about, but I couldn't remember and Brady had never talked about it.

Had Jude?

It was too easy to ignore him when he started lecturing and complaining, so I might've missed something he'd said.

Bates gave me a wicked grin and nodded. "Definitely. But we won't need to go into that right now."

"Alright." I was good with that answer, but Cash was blushing. He clearly knew something dirty I didn't. Yep, research was more important than I'd expected. "I don't need a safeword right now."

I had a feeling it wasn't something I could answer for Cash, even though I knew he was fine too, so I just looked at him and waited.

And waited.

"Even I know you have to tell him you're fine or we won't get to suck his dick." This was not rocket science, it was a blow job.

Cash got all dramatic again and scrubbed his hands over his face as he sighed. "I know. This is just...weird."

"And erotic. Don't forget that part." I kind of liked the whole *kneeling and waiting* thing as long as we'd eventually get to do something more fun.

He finally nodded. "Yeah, I wasn't thinking about that enough. I'm green."

Stoplight colors.

Yes. Green was good...Brady had said something about that.

"I'm green too." Ha, that was much better. "He can be green and nervous, right?"

What were the rules about that?

Bates nodded, a thoughtful, happy look still on his face. "Yes, that's one of the reasons we use safewords because sometimes thoughts and emotions get scrambled up."

Ah.

"So kind of like me being nervous about the spanking and a bit worried but still telling you green because I want to know what it's like?" And I wanted to see if that orgasm he kept promising really materialized.

"Yes, my curious cat." Bates leaned in and gave me a kiss before petting Cash's head again. "And before we play next time, I'll talk to Cash and see when he wants me to push him and when he wants to ease into a new activity."

That was probably a good idea.

"As long as he's still rolling his eyes and sighing you can push. But if he glares at you and looks like a constipated puppy, you're in trouble and you have to back off." I knew it was an accurate description, but it made Cash sigh and hide his face again.

So I shrugged and gave Bates a *see* kind of look that made him grin. "Thank you for the help."

And it got me another kiss.

And it got him to unbutton his pants.

Brady's mom was right...being helpful was good for a lot of reasons.

"He's got some kind of briefs on and they're dark blue." I was just trying to make sure Cash wouldn't be surprised when he finally opened his eyes, but he was still stuck in drama mode. "He's already hard. You were right. And he's more than a handful and has a big flared head."

I was still partial to my more tapered look, but it made sense that Bates's cock would be just as attention-grabbing as the rest of him was.

"I'll let you know how it tastes."

This was going to be fun once Cash stopped sighing.

Chapter 9

Cashel

He was trying to give me a heart attack.

Or punish me for something?

Maybe I'd forgotten to bake him something earlier in the week and he was getting back at me?

Gareth moaned.

Fuck.

Bates moaned.

Double fuck.

I forced my hands down and took a deep breath, earning another soft caress from Bates as he made another sexy sound. The part of me that kept worrying about what would happen later wanted me to keep my eyes closed, but Gareth had been utterly Gareth as he'd described Bates's cock.

There'd been nothing in his voice that said he was worried about it. He'd genuinely seemed to think there was nothing to freak out about since neither of us were getting naked. He'd even volunteered to go first...and judging by the sounds he was making, he was enjoying himself.

How had I not known how much Gareth liked sucking dick?

I wanted to know what he looked like doing it, but a voice in the back of my head kept asking what the fuck I was doing.

This was Gareth.

And Bates.

Our date.

Our Dom?

Yeah, I had questions about what that would mean in the long run, but for the time being, it seemed to mean he'd give me a safe place to panic while Gareth dragged us into shenanigans. Brand-new ones that were *startling*.

Hmm, being a safe place was important.

He also hadn't pushed me even though that might've made things a lot easier...like ripping off a bandage. Just get it over with and see what happened. Yes, then I'd know if I had to obsess or not. I'd also know if it would be too weird and if it'd fuck up our friendship.

But Gareth was still moaning...and shit...he took my hand.

Now I *had* to look.

Peeking one eye open, I focused on Bates's knee, and when the world didn't come crashing down around me, I opened the other and nuzzled against his hand. That had him bringing his hand lower to cup my cheek, and I could feel the desire and tension in his body before I'd even decided to look higher.

Bates was proud of me.

The first thing I saw was his eyes and the pride that was in his gaze as he smiled down at me. It gave me the courage to stop ignoring the way Gareth's head was bobbing. It was bobbing a lot. He really had wanted to suck Bates's cock.

Marveling at learning something new about him after so long, I found myself smiling as he made sexy sounds and even did his excited shift back and forth as he tightened his grip on my hand. He liked Bates's cock as much as he liked cake.

I was so distracted in watching his pleasure, I forgot about the man the dick was attached to until Bates moaned and his hand tensed again.

It seemed that Gareth was excited and pretty good at it too.

Bates's gaze was going hazy and distracted as he seemed to be fighting the urge to fuck Gareth's throat. I couldn't help imagining what that would look like, and I was so lost in the fantasy, I forgot to worry when Gareth pulled off the toy he'd been playing with.

"You have to taste him, Cash. He leaks a lot of precum." Gareth's eager expression said that was a good thing, but I hadn't done it enough times to have an opinion on that aspect.

Bates was the smartest Dom ever because he distracted Gareth and gave me something else to obsess over. "Why don't you give him a taste? Let me see you kiss him."

Oh.

As my mind scrambled to catch up, Gareth beamed and leaned in to capture my lips. There was no hesitation in his movements and just excited pleasure on his face as he made me moan and slipped his tongue inside my mouth to fuck me with it.

There was a musky taste that hadn't been there before and I knew it was Bates. I was tasting Bates on Gareth's tongue. Moaning into his mouth again, I found myself searching for more and stroking my tongue against his to find it.

We kissed until the erotic flavor had faded and Gareth pulled away just enough to give me another earnest smile. "Your turn."

His thing for being fair was going to get us into a fuck ton of trouble one day, but for the time being, I just let him wrap himself around me and eased my head lower.

He didn't push, but he made it clear he wanted me to have my turn.

I just couldn't decide if he wanted to see me suck Bates or if it was something about our first date or sharing...just realizing how many different crazy ways I could've ended up in that position had me finally able to push the worries to the back of my mind.

I'd worry later when I had more details to obsess over.

For the time being, I was going to focus on all the wonderful things I did understand and was confident about. Gareth was excited and happy. Bates was tender and thought we were funny. It was the best first date I'd ever had, and Gareth was right, our Dom did taste good.

Bates was also cuddly and loving, even in the middle of a blow job, because he kept petting our heads and making the softest, happy sounds. "You're both so good to me. So sweet and so sexy."

Something had Gareth making an agreeing noise, but I was too focused on taking Bates's cock deeper into my mouth and figuring out what made him moan so sexily to look over at Gareth. The way he was holding my hand told me everything I needed to know.

So as Gareth gave me enthusiastic support and stroked his fingers against mine, I pulled off just enough to lick around the head of Bates's cock and tease his slit with my tongue. I might not be able to take him as deep as Gareth could but that didn't seem to matter to Bates.

He moaned and his body went tight again just like it had for Gareth, and just hearing that sent a wave of pleasure through me. They both seemed to notice because Gareth let out a quiet, happy sound that was almost a laugh and Bates sighed. "So responsive and so sexy...I have the two sweetest cocksuckers in the whole world in front of me."

I could feel my face heating up even as it made my dick harder, but Gareth did another pleased wiggle as I went back to sucking on the head of Bates's cock. "He liked making you happy too. We both do."

His habit of explaining everything we were thinking was going to end up making me do something ridiculous one day...like orgasm.

Gareth had been my best friend since I could remember, but I hadn't realized what his ability to read me would mean in a situation like this.

I couldn't decide if it was freaky or erotic...and I ignored the voice in the back of my head that was an asshole and said both. I had more pressing things to focus on, like the way Bates's cock throbbed in my mouth.

I wasn't sure what the orgasm plan was yet, so I pulled off and looked over at Gareth. He was wearing an ear-to-ear grin and immediately leaned in for another kiss. "My turn."

He made it impossible to worry.

I found myself kissing him and pressing my dick into Bates's leg before my brain caught up to reality. But since reality tasted good and felt even better, I decided not to think about anything else as I humped our Dom.

Yep, not overthinking that at all.

Gareth moaned into my mouth as his tongue stroked mine, loving the taste of Bates in my mouth. With the way he was rubbing against Bates and how obviously he loved the taste of our new Dom, I probably could've gotten some kind of complex, but every time something nagged at the back of my head, he would do something sweet like open his eyes and smile, or nuzzle against me.

When he finally pulled away, I was somehow riding Bates's leg and Gareth had his arms wrapped around

me. "Bates's right. You do taste sweet. It makes him taste even better."

Fuck.

He was definitely going to make me come saying stuff like that.

Bates seemed to agree with me based on the way he moaned, and it distracted Gareth enough that I got a second to breathe as he beamed up at Bates and took his cock down deep again. Watching them together could've given me too much space to start overthinking again, but I was much more focused on figuring out how deep Gareth was actually taking Bates's cock and if he could breathe.

Why wasn't he gagging?

Had he practiced that shit on fruit like Brady had?

Gareth hadn't dated enough to have perfected that technique on a guy. But I pushed the thought of him deep-throating a banana out of my head and just focused on the sounds they were both making and how happy Gareth was.

He was having fun.

And not passing out, so it seemed to be safer than Brady's adventure with the banana.

Was it weird to think his lips looked sexy wrapped around Bates's dick or just polite?

I loved the way Bates moaned and the way he was fighting to stay still so Gareth could enjoy himself, but Gareth's lips...and Bates's cock...they were so fucking sexy together.

And they kept making me feel like I was right there with them and not just watching the hottest porn scene ever. Bates kept stroking my head and his fingers would tease around my ear when Gareth lifted his head to lick

the tip...and Gareth kept squeezing my hand and slowly caressing his fingers against mine.

I wasn't sure if he knew he was doing it, but it made the whole thing less weird and kept me from worrying. Bates was...he was fascinating and made me feel safe enough to do stupid things, but worrying about what Gareth wanted would've killed the mood.

Luckily, he didn't seem to mind sharing our Dom or what he was thinking.

Yep, still the weirdest first date ever.

But they were so hot together and Bates was so sweet.

Bates was also ready to come based on how he was moaning and the way his body was radiating tension. Gareth dragged out his fun for a few more seconds, but he must've read the signs too because he finally pulled off, giving the head another lick like it was a popsicle.

"Do you want another turn?" It took me a second to realize he was talking to me. "Cash?"

"Sorry. Watching you is distracting." Fuck. "In a good way."

Gareth smiled like I'd given him the best compliment ever but Bates chuckled like we were hilarious. When they both stayed quiet, I realized I'd never answered the question.

Fuck.

Where had my brain gone?

"I think he's going to come and you look like you really want that part. I'll share when you're done."

What?

How had that come out of my mouth?

Bates was still grinning but Gareth nodded and took the whole thing seriously. "I do. Thanks."

It was...

Bates started to laugh but it turned into a strangled moan as Gareth swallowed his cock down again, looking dead set on finally making Bates orgasm. His enthusiasm was...erotic. There was probably a better word, but there definitely weren't enough brain cells in my body to figure it out.

The way Bates was moaning and barely hanging on...

The way Gareth was making excited, greedy sounds...

The way I kept grinding my dick against Bates's leg...

Oops.

I hadn't realized I was still doing that until his leg twitched and it sent sparks through me. Before I could decide if I should stop or not—because I didn't have permission and I was pretty sure that should be part of the Dom and sub thing—Gareth made a triumphant sound and Bates cried out.

Wow.

Just wow.

Gareth swallowed Bates's cum and just watching the way his throat was working made me even harder. The way Bates shivered and moaned was like the icing on the sexiest cake ever, pushing me right to the edge...and it wasn't even my blow job.

How was watching them this hot?

Brady's mom had made it clear that some things were just fun to watch in porn and not do in real life, but I was starting to think this hadn't been what she'd meant.

Maybe that was just stuff like fisting?

Bates let Gareth play for a lot longer than I would've thought was fun, but when he tapped his finger against

Gareth's head, the greedy sounds stopped and he released his new toy. "Good boy."

Gareth preened at the praise before turning to me and offering his mouth like it was the most natural thing in the world. But it seemed like it was because I closed the distance before even thinking about it.

He'd saved some of Bates's cum for me.

God.

I could feel myself shake as I sucked cum off his tongue, earning another dirty, needy sound from Gareth.

I'd done that.

And I did it again as I made love to his mouth and licked every drop of cum from him.

Breathless, I heard myself whine as he finally pulled away, but air was good and I knew cuddling up to Bates would be even better. I just couldn't stop the sound.

Gareth didn't think it was silly, though. He just gave me a big smile and sighed as Bates stroked his head. "You're such a good cocksucker and thank you for sharing with Cashel."

God, the things he said.

"I like sharing your cum with him."

The things Gareth said.

"Thank you for sharing."

The things I said.

Weirdest first date ever...but definitely the best.

Chapter 10

Bates

They were adorable.

And were starting to give an overthinking vibe as I tucked my dick back in my pants and they stared up at me. Well, Cashel was overthinking. Gareth seemed to be on an oral fixation high and I wasn't sure his brain was seeing the world the same way as everyone else's was at the moment.

Subspace, maybe?

"Come here, my cuties." That got a grin from Gareth and a blush from Cashel, but they both scrambled up without a second thought. "Good boys."

Gareth preened, wiggling and smiling like a happy little puppy, but Cashel was still on the overthinking side of the scale. They both got kisses, but I decided to see if we could shake Cashel's worries free.

Turning to Gareth, I dropped my voice like I was pretending we had privacy. "Do you think Cashel realizes how much I loved seeing you share my cum with him?"

My adorable Gareth shook his head very sincerely. "No, he might be worried? I don't know if it was about the cocksucker nickname, but I liked it."

Aww.

I gave him a quick kiss before looking over at Cashel who was giving us both a look like he was one step from rolling his eyes again. "He might not remember that I

could feel both your erections when you were humping my legs. He liked the nickname too. Don't worry."

Oh, I got an eye roll and a blush.

Gareth snickered, curling into my chest and wiggling his legs so they were intertwined with Cashel's. "Maybe he doesn't understand that you liked both kinds of blow jobs and there's no wrong way to suck a dick?"

Adorable.

And it made Cashel groan and bury his face against my shoulder.

"That's a good point." Kissing Cashel's head, I frowned at Gareth. "Maybe he doesn't realize that you liked having him as a cock-sucker-in-arms? Like a battle buddy for sex. He might be worried about what we're thinking?"

"Not anymore." The grumbled, slightly muffled words from our current drama queen had me trying not to laugh, but Gareth just leaned over and kissed his cheek.

"I'm glad. I like doing things with you." Gareth made it sound like they were having fun going grocery shopping together.

But come to think of it, he might actually see it the same way.

"I'm glad." Kissing both their heads, I snuggled them closer and hugged them tight before feeling Cashel finally relax. "I like both of you a lot and I like seeing how close you are."

I thought that was simple and to the point, but for some reason, it got the worries going again for Cashel. "You weren't just a dick for Gareth to play with. You were there with us."

His brain was just as fascinating as Brady's and Gareth's...he was just better at disguising it.

“First, I don’t mind being Gareth’s plaything. He seems to have an oral fixation and we can work on giving him lots of sucking time.” I bet he was the type of sub who went through a thousand pencils a week just chewing on them.

Cashel went very still and dropped his voice as Gareth stared curiously at both of us. “He’s constantly sticking stuff in his mouth.”

Bingo.

“We’ll give him better things to suck on. Don’t worry.” That was going to be fun. “Thank you for thinking about making sure I felt included, but I did. You were both holding me tight and grinding your dicks against me, and you both kept looking up at me and checking in. It was perfect.”

Cheek kisses that time got another blush from Cashel but Gareth wasn’t embarrassed about anything we’d done. “What kind of things can I suck on? Can I suck on your dick whenever I want to?”

For some reason that had Cashel mumbling something about bananas and Gareth finally frowned at him. “I wasn’t the one who passed out, so I don’t know why you’re still obsessed with that.”

What had they done with bananas?

Frustrated that I’d obviously missed something fun my cuties had done, I decided a distraction was in order and gave them both more kisses. Gareth got a light spank with his and Cashel got an ear nibble and a tease. “You were so sexy.”

Picking a fight because he was nervous wouldn’t be helpful, so I was hoping to head that off.

“He might be frustrated because he didn’t come?” Gareth wasn’t subtle at all as he studied Cashel’s lap, clearly trying to see if he was still hard. “I’m good for the time being but maybe he’s not?”

I couldn't decide if he was as earnest as he looked or if he was using it as an opportunity to see Cashel hard, but it was a reasonable question. "What do you say, Cashel? Is that the problem?"

His groan wasn't terribly helpful, but Gareth started nodding. "He gets grumpy if I haven't let him have enough privacy. He doesn't like jerking off in the shower."

He was a wealth of fabulous information.

"Do you like jerking off in the shower?" Knowledge about both my boys was important.

Gareth shrugged, scrunching up his face slightly. "It's okay and practical."

But clearly not a favorite method.

"So you are more practical and do it in the shower, but Cashel doesn't like that and you have to make sure to give him privacy in your room." They had the most fascinating relationship. "How often do you give him privacy?"

How had they worked that out to begin with?

Gareth took the question seriously as Cashel groaned. "Very deliberately once a week. I make sure he has private time on Wednesday night, but he probably does it other times while I'm in class?"

Cashel's drama didn't seem to be fading, but he was at least groaning quieter.

"I think we need to make sure he's getting more orgasms during the week." Something about the way Cashel had twitched when Gareth talked about his best friend's orgasm schedule made me curious. "You don't jerk off in the same room together?"

Hadn't they said they'd been living together since their freshman year?

Gareth looked confused and shook his head. "No."

How had that not occurred to him to do at least a few times?

"Well, how about we try that and see how it works?" Cashel had stopped groaning *and* breathing, so I kissed his head to try to prompt that to restart.

It was kind of important.

"We'll figure out if you need a schedule later, but for the time being, you both clearly need an orgasm tonight, and I think Cashel needs an emotional connection with you while he does it." And that got air going again.

Yep, I was right.

"I'm not sure privacy and too much thinking time by himself would be helpful at the moment." Rubbing Cashel's back, I kissed Gareth's cheek. "Would you like to jerk off together so he knows you don't mind being watched and you want to make him happy too?"

That got an immediate nod from Gareth. "If we're dating together and dating you and he's going to be there while you spank me, I think that's a good plan. It'll probably make him feel more like we're dating too?"

"I would have to agree." Yes, less roommate behavior and more dating behavior might help them see they'd been in a relationship for longer than they'd realized. "So tonight, the plan is for you to both jerk off in your room. It's okay if it's under the covers because the goal is an emotional connection."

Gareth looked like he thought it was perfectly reasonable but he turned to Cashel. "What do you think? It's not Wednesday."

Did he really think that mattered?

Did *he* have a schedule?

I was starting to understand why Brady hadn't thought it was a good idea to ask them anything personal. The answers were always curious and probably confused the fuck out of Brady. But luckily for my cuties, I was made of more interesting stuff than our adorable friend and little.

But honestly, Jude should've been able to handle more of this if he'd really tried.

"I don't mind that it's not Wednesday." Cashel's answer was fabulous.

Of course, Gareth didn't seem to realize how carefully worded the response had been, he just gave me a big smile. "Alright, we've got a plan."

He was the cutest thing and Cashel was the most dramatic.

They complemented each other perfectly in nearly every way but the most important...the ability to push themselves out of their comfort zones. Yep, that was definitely the reason I'd been put in their life, and fate was utterly brilliant.

"Wonderful." Having a plan was a good place to start. "But what do we do if we feel overwhelmed?"

Gareth piped up immediately as Cashel sighed. "Safeword."

"Perfect." Gareth got a quick kiss as Cashel worked up an answer.

"Safeword." Cashel let out a long breath and bravely kept going. "I'm green."

Gareth had no idea why Cashel had needed to say that, but he gave his dramatic friend a hug as he seemed to mentally brush away his questions. "I'm glad."

Yep, he couldn't have explained what was going on there if there'd been a gun to his head, but he was delightfully supportive.

Brady must've been very confused the first year they'd all lived together. Hm, had he brought them home the first time so his mother could explain to him what was going on with them?

Every step we took together led to a thousand more questions. It was wonderful and maddening all at the same time. They'd never leave me bored, that was one thing I was certain about. But the constant quest for answers would be insanely distracting.

However, it would be worth it to have them in my life.

"When do we get to date again and is this one over?" Gareth glanced back and forth between us as he mentally jumped a few steps further than Cashel. "How much longer do I have to wait to get a spanking? You left that part kind of vague."

Yes, I had.

Thinking about his list of questions, I rubbed their backs and gave them each kisses while I sorted through everything. Gareth could see I was processing, but Cashel sighed after a few seconds and eased back enough to look at my face.

Once he was that brave, the rest seemed to come easier because the hiding stopped and he went back to simply cuddling with us. Gareth's questions hadn't been hard but feeling the tension ease out of Cashel made everything easier.

"Well, for the spanking part, you and I are going to have a conversation tomorrow after you've had a chance to process what we've talked about and just about our date in general." Brushing my lips over his pout, I tried not to laugh. "Then I'll have a better idea about how long we'll wait."

"I don't think you'll have to wait long, but Brady's mom would probably say thinking about it was a good

idea." Gareth curled back into me as he frowned at Cashel. "Right?"

She seemed to be the only adult in their lives that they could relate to, so I wasn't surprised when Cashel nodded. "We already went on a date when we didn't know Bates's name. We shouldn't push her. Brady's already going to tattle on us for something."

Telling myself that laughing would not have been an appropriate response, I kissed their heads. "I'm glad she's got good rules for you."

She had to be just as strange as I'd always pictured.

I loved my neighbors.

These two cuties especially.

"What are you going to do tonight?" Gareth's head popped up like he'd just thought of the most important question ever. "Are you going to come again?"

Delightful.

That was something I'd never been asked on a date before.

"I think so." Being honest made Gareth smile and Cashel crash into me again. "My current plan is to imagine what you're doing upstairs and I might throw in a few fantasies about what I'm going to do to you next time."

Gareth wiggled like an excited puppy. "Will you imagine my spanking?"

I wasn't sure if it was a request or if it was a theoretical situation, but either way, I nodded. "Most definitely. I'm going to imagine you over our laps and Cashel giving you lots of kisses and hugs while you hump his leg."

I might've been reading him wrong, but Gareth seemed to think it was romantic based on the sigh in his

voice. "Thank you."

He even gave me a quick kiss without overthinking it...but that might've been because Cashel was doing all the overthinking for both of them.

As Gareth went back to his favorite cuddling position with his head by my shoulder and looking at Cashel, our cute drama queen was very quiet. It took him a few long moments to figure out what to say. "I think I'm going to imagine his spanking too."

Oh, that pleased Gareth to no end.

Wiggling and making another romantic sigh, I could hear the smile in his voice. "That's so sweet."

He was fascinating.

"It seemed like the right thing to do."

They were both fascinating.

Ugh.

Best first date ever...I wished it would never end.

Chapter 11

Gareth

Shower before or shower after?

How dirty was I planning on getting?

Would I want to move after?

It'd been so long since I'd jerked off in bed that it turned out to be more complicated than I'd expected. I was so distracted as we headed into the apartment, I ran right into Jude who was walking out. "Sorry."

Ugh, he frowned.

Everything made him grumpy and he proved me right by glaring at us. "You two are up to something."

Turning around to look at Brady, Jude raised one eyebrow. "Is there something you wanted to talk to them about?"

"No." Brady's simple answer was nice to hear. He was always very pleasant even when he was confusing. "I'm tired and you said I could have an orgasm if I was good. I was good."

I'd been good too, but Bates was careful and that was frustrating.

Cash's snicker said he was thinking the same thing, but it got Jude's attention again. Somehow he made even laughing frustrating, but it seemed like he was actually trying to be helpful because he pointed to Brady. "He's willing to answer any questions you have. He's just not going to be nosy."

Well, that was good to know.

“Thank you but we found someone else to answer them.” I tried to step around Jude and get into the apartment but he didn’t budge.

He was so grumpy.

“Who?” Somehow his being nosy wasn’t as cute as when Bates did it.

Wondering why, I turned around to look at Cash. “When Bates does that it’s not as frustrating. Is that because he’s hot or is it back to the happy thing?”

As Jude snorted, Brady peeked around him. “Jude’s hot.”

That was up for debate.

Especially when Jude rolled his eyes. “Thank you.”

Yep, not as cute as Bates.

“I think it’s the happy thing.” Cash shrugged, not looking positive about it. “Brady’s mom said being happy would bring more good stuff to you...or something like that. Maybe she was actually right.”

That didn’t explain how Jude had gotten Brady, though.

“I still think there are some holes in that logic.” But she hadn’t been wrong so far. “We’ll see what Bates has to say. He’s smart.”

“Jude’s smart.” Brady was glaring at us and it was kind of creepy. “Daddy’s very smart.”

The frowning had to be contagious because they were wearing matching expressions. It wasn’t twice as frustrating as when Jude did it but it was still... something, so I stepped back and ended up in Cash’s arms.

He was the smartest of all because he gave me a hug and huffed at them. “This is ridiculous. We’re going to

bed and you're going to stop glaring at us like we've done something wrong."

Brady seemed to realize he'd been naughty and backed off, but Jude was very Jude. "You've been talking about BDSM shit with strangers. I have a right to be worried."

Did he?

Leaning back, I tried to whisper but everyone was just too close. "Did him becoming Brady's Daddy make him some kind of relation to us? Will safewords work on him too? This is getting...yes...red. I'm red."

Ha, it worked.

Somehow it was magic and made Jude take a step back as his eyes got even wider than Brady's...and his looked like they were going to pop out of his head. But the magic word opened up a space in the door so I wasn't going to question it.

Grabbing Cash's hand, I tugged him in through the hole and hurried him back to our bedroom as he waved at Brady. "Have fun with your Daddy and I hope you get an orgasm."

He was so polite.

I'd figure out if I had to apologize later, but I wasn't going to be polite.

I was too frustrated and *wound up*, as Brady's mom would've said, to be polite...and somehow, I was exhausted once we got the door to our bedroom shut and we were safe from the frowning. "That was..."

It seemed like the best thing about getting to date Cash too was that I got a lot more hugs because he just wrapped his arms around me and squeezed me tight. It was so good, I closed my eyes and leaned into him. "I think we need to have Bates walk us home next time. I'm

kind of sorry we said we could walk upstairs on our own.”

Not the best move.

“Well, in our defense, I didn’t think they’d be here.” Cash let out a deep breath. “Or that Jude would be so...I think he was worried about us?”

He had a funny way of showing it.

“I wish he’d worry less.” Especially if he wasn’t going to be helpful. “Brady said Daddies are supposed to make their little’s lives easier. Are Doms the same way? Can we make it Bates’s responsibility to handle Jude?”

“Yes.” Cash didn’t even have to think. He was so smart. “The internet completely agreed on that. No question about it. If we want Bates to handle Jude, we just have to tell him.”

Thank God.

“Let’s tell him tomorrow.” Because just walking in the door shouldn’t be exhausting. “First thing.”

Cash nodded against me, resting his head on my shoulder. “First thing.”

“Somehow Brady thinks Jude is hot.” That was just so weird.

Almost giggling, Cash shook his head as he pulled me closer. “I don’t get it either. Bates is...he’s just happy and funny.”

“And he’s really confident and he just knows things.” Leaning my head back against Cash’s, I closed my eyes. “He’s also got good ideas even if he’s going to make me wait for a spanking.”

“He wanted you to think overnight, drama queen.” Cash didn’t try to hide his snickers that time. “He didn’t say you had to wait weeks.”

“I still think he’s doing it just because he likes to control things. You said they liked control.” I really should’ve been paying more attention when Cash had been rambling about Doms. “He even gave us homework. That’s a lot of control.”

Cash couldn’t seem to decide if he wanted to laugh or groan. “He’s going to ask if we...if we did our homework tomorrow.”

“Yeah, he’s not the type to give out practice problems and then forget about it.” Unlike some professors I could name. “What kind of questions is he going to ask? Do you think it’s going to be like just a *raise your hand if you did it* honor system or is it going to be like standing up in front of the class and giving a quick presentation?”

I wasn’t good at doing those on the fly.

I always sounded stupid if I didn’t practice it beforehand at least once or twice.

Cash seemed to have settled on groaning. “God, Gareth. Um, honor system if we look weird about it, but he’d prefer at least a rambling short answer.”

I thought that would be what he said.

“You have to help me. I don’t think I’m going to have time to practice explaining it and doing it.” It wasn’t late but it felt like we’d had a long day. “You do better with presentations.”

Yes, he needed just a bit of buttering up.

“And I think he’d like hearing you talk about it. He likes it when you get all squirmy and hide.” Like that. “Yes, do that, and then he’ll probably agree to handle Jude right away. You look cute like that.”

“You’re in front of me, moron. You can’t see me.”

He was so cranky.

Yep, he hadn’t been getting enough orgasms lately.

Bates was really smart.

“I watched you a lot today on our date. I know what you look like right now.” And I could feel him too. “Well, I know some of what you look like right now. Are you going to do it with the lights on so I can see the rest of you? I’ll be able to give him a better presentation if I can see what you’re doing.”

He was so dramatic.

When he stopped groaning, I wiggled my butt. “This will work. I don’t have to see you.”

He was probably a sex-in-the-dark kind of guy and that was why he’d been so shy about giving Bates a blow job.

“If you want to do it in the dark that’s fine, but can we kiss first? With the lights on, I mean. You didn’t mind that earlier, but it’s okay if you’re shy without our Dom around.” Hmm, that hadn’t been as weird to say as I thought it would.

Dom.

Our Dom.

Yep, it seemed to be one of those words that got easier every time it came out.

Cash didn’t groan for nearly as long that time before he nodded. “Yeah, we can kiss with the lights on...and... well, I think Bates would like hearing about that too.”

He liked seeing it, so that seemed reasonable to me.

Oh, he liked seeing things.

“Cash?” He was going to groan again, but I wasn’t sure it could be helped. “If we’re dating him together, should we be doing stuff without him? I mean, we can’t be with him all the time but aren’t we supposed to do, like, big stuff together?”

When he didn’t groan, I started to worry.

He was thinking.

“I don’t know.” He didn’t seem to like saying that any more than I liked hearing it. “Um, well, he said that we were just going to jerk off in the same room. Since he gave the orders, I think that means we’re good. It was his idea.”

Okay, that made sense.

“But if...say, *eventually*, I want to touch you while we’re doing that kind of...you know...is that when he needs to be here too?” I was starting to see why Bates had said we had stuff to figure out. “What about if I wanted to push the beds closer together?”

Yep, I was going to have to start a list.

Cash shrugged, staying quiet for a long time. But since he hadn’t moved and I was still getting hugged with his erection snuggled against my ass, I was inclined to be patient. “Bates is going to have a lot of opinions on this, but I think...I think if we’re all dating together then we should probably do stuff together. Like firsts, you know?”

I was glad he hadn’t made me wait too long but I wasn’t sure I liked the answer. “That’s confusing.”

His sigh said he agreed with me.

That wasn’t good because he was generally the brains between us...well, at least when it came to real-life stuff like BDSM and spankings and how to get the window fixed.

And how to bake.

Wow, he was in charge of a lot.

I was starting to see why he needed a Dom. They handled stuff. Now if we could just figure out why I needed one, that would be great.

But one step at a time.

“I know Bates gave us the rules for tonight and a plan. I appreciate that. I like plans.” Especially ones that meant I got to listen to Cash orgasm. “But this...I don’t know about this. We’re all three dating.”

Shrugging, Cash made a thinking sound and sighed again. “Yeah, I know what you mean. But he said he was going to be thinking about us while he jerked off.”

“That’s really nice and all, but it doesn’t seem fair.” And we’d decided that was important. “He’s alone, Cash. He’s not even going to be able to see me listening to you come for the first time. That’s got to be a big first, right?”

Once Cash stopped groaning, he nodded, but it took us a while to get to that point. “I don’t like it when you’re right.”

There was nothing I could do about that, so I ignored it.

“Are we both on the same page where we think firsts are important to do together?” Starting with that didn’t sound hard and even Cash was able to nod quickly. “Do we think Bates will be okay with that rule?”

We both started nodding at the same time which made me feel better about asking the next question...the one he wasn’t going to like.

“Are we both on the same page where he should hear us hearing each other for the first time?” When Cash just sighed, I kept poking at the question because a sigh wasn’t a safeword. “I liked being there when you kissed him for the first time and when you sucked his dick for the first time. If I were Bates, I’d feel bad about missing other firsts.”

Just imagining being Bates was exhausting, so I didn’t try to do it for long.

And thankfully Cash didn’t sigh again; he was actually willing to be helpful.

“Yeah, I think I’d be the same way. And he was there for our first kiss too, so he should probably be there for other first stuff.” Cash sounded like that was painful to admit, but it felt right to me, so I didn’t worry about him being dramatic.

“We can turn off the lights with him in the room as easily as we can without him.” I shrugged when Cash snickered. “He’d like listening to us. I bet he’d like seeing you cuddling me too. It’d make him all smiley and he’d want to cuddle us both again.”

I liked that about Bates.

“He could cuddle us in the dark, you know.” We didn’t need lights for that either.

I thought it was logical but Cash almost giggled. “Yeah, lots can happen in the dark.”

He was so weird when he was tired and hadn’t gotten an orgasm.

I’d have to remember that for later, but for the time being, I focused on what was important. Masturbation.

“So what are we going to do? Because I’ve been hard for hours.” It’d been kind of fun when Bates was smiling and teasing us, but it’d gotten to the point where I was horny and frustrated...and not the good kind.

Who knew there was a good kind?

I’d learned all kinds of fascinating things on my first date with Cash and Bates, and it definitely showed me that there were good reasons people dated more than one person at a time. It was educational.

Cash buried his face against my neck and groaned, but the way his breath tickled my skin sent a shiver through me, so I decided I was going to be patient and hope he did it again.

He did.

Yep, I was going to be very patient.

“Stop grinding your ass on my dick. I can’t think when you do that.” Before I could point out he was the one moving, not me, he groaned. “God, the things I’ve said today.”

It wasn’t my fault he’d lost his filter somewhere.

“My orgasm, Cash. We were talking about my orgasm.”

He barked out a laugh. “No, we weren’t.”

Yeah, we were.

“You need to stay on topic.” He was so easily distracted when he hadn’t come enough. How had I not realized that already? “What are we going to do?”

“I think you know what we’re going to do and you just want me to say it.” Cash wasn’t happy when I nodded, but I thought it was a good sign when he growled instead of sighing. “Fine.”

Ha.

Didn’t have to be the one to say it.

This was definitely going to count as his idea if it went all wonky and fucked up.

Chapter 12

Cashel

“He’s going to think we’re insane.” Because Bates was smart and understood our behavior was questionable at best.

Gareth shrugged, not worried at all as he carried his pillow and sleepover essentials down the stairs. “We’re being thoughtful. He’s going to appreciate us more.”

Um, no.

“We’re showing up at his door and...God, Gareth...” I just couldn’t finish the sentence.

Mostly because one of the other guys in the building was walking up the stairs and doing his best not to stare.

Nope.

I wasn’t going to explain why we were dressed in our pajamas looking like we were heading to a sleepover.

Gareth just waved.

God.

Someone needed to shoot me...how had I agreed to this nonsense?

“You worry too much. I’m starting to realize that’s why you need a Dom.” Gareth’s helpful response had coughing coming from behind us. I refused to look and see what the guy was doing but it probably involved barely suppressed laughter.

“You’re...” He was going to give me a heart attack one day.

“Helpful.” Gareth reached out and took my hand as we made it down to the bottom floor and dragged me around the corner to Bates’s apartment. “Come on. I’m tired.”

And horny.

What were we doing?

Before I could figure that out...or at least what to say to Bates...Gareth knocked on the door like it was no big deal we were showing up for an unplanned sleepover. “He’s got a safeword.”

He seemed to think that would make everything fine, and I couldn’t decide if he was right or delusional.

Both?

“I think we should—” Shit.

Before I could try one more time to explain to Gareth that we were going to drive Bates nuts, the door opened and our slightly confused-looking Dom smiled at us. “You guys are the best.”

Taking in the sight of us in our pajamas and Gareth with his pillow tucked under his arm, Bates smiled. “Sleepover?”

Gareth beamed at him. “I knew you’d understand. We decided you should be included in all our firsts because we’re dating you too and the first time we listened to each other come seemed important.”

Bates cocked his head, thoughtfully entertaining the insanity. “I can see how you came to that conclusion, but is Cashel here of his own free will?”

Bates really was smart.

Gareth wasn’t worried, though. “He didn’t safeword.”

Once he learned something it stuck.

Bates's smile got even wider, but somehow, he managed not to laugh. "All right, but does Brady know where you are?"

Yep, smart.

"We left a note on the table." Gareth gave him another bright smile, clearly delighted at having guessed what our new Dom would say. "You can safeword. I didn't think you'd mind, though. But Cash was kind of worried we'd be a pest."

"Never." Bates stepped closer and gave Gareth a quick peck before turning to me. "I don't know how I didn't think of that problem earlier. But this fixes it."

Whatever he saw on my face made him laugh quietly as I got a kiss too. "Poor Cashel. Come on. Cuddle time."

"And I still haven't gotten an orgasm yet, but I did get a shower." Randomly torturing me by letting out every thought in his head, Gareth just kept going as Bates let us into his apartment. "It was weird waiting, but I liked your plan and I liked that you gave us a plan."

"Thank you." Bates seemed to be delighted over the whole thing and took it in stride, closing the door and taking charge again. "Alright. I'm almost ready for bed, so you two are going to go climb in and wait for me."

We each got cheek kisses as he led us toward the back of his apartment into what was a bigger bedroom than I was expecting. It fit a king-size bed. How?

Nope.

Refusing to get distracted, I just followed and tried to turn off my brain. Thinking hadn't gotten me out of this so I wasn't going to worry about it anymore.

"Pick a side. I'll get the middle and then we'll turn out the lights and cuddle." Bates made it all sound completely rational. "My boys get their orgasms and we'll all have that first together."

Gareth nodded, kissing Bates's cheek before nearly jumping up on the bed with his pillow. "I'll take this side. Cash, you take the chargers on that side."

Obedying as he threw the mess of cords at me, I peeked over at Bates who was still smiling. "He said you had a safeword and he meant it."

Instead of answering right away, Bates wrapped me in a tight hug as Gareth set our toothbrushes on the nightstand and started reorganizing the pillows on the bed like he'd been sleeping there forever.

Something about the situation tickled Bates, but he managed to keep his delight down to a soft puff of laughter. "I think I should be reminding you of that."

Before I could figure out a response, he kissed my head and continued. "But just to make sure you don't overthink this all night long, I'm touched that he wanted to make sure I'm included in all your firsts, and I'm very grateful you're stepping out of your comfort zone. It makes me feel very special."

Hiding against his neck, I sighed and got another quiet laugh from our confusing new Dom. "He had a good point and...and it felt stupid coming down here but not wrong."

Chest jerking in silent laughter, it took Bates a second to catch his breath as he rubbed my back. "I can see where you're coming from and why you feel that way, but you made me wonderfully happy sharing this with me and trusting me enough to come back."

I hadn't really thought about it that way, but as he kissed my head again and stepped back to shoo me onto the bed, I felt slightly less stupid. "Up you go. I'm going to brush my teeth and be right back."

"Yes, Sir." The words popped out before I could even think about it and I could feel my face heat up as he let out a quiet moan.

“Oh, sweet boy.” Something about the way his voice dropped sent a shiver through me. Gareth was watching us with wide eyes but when he reached down to adjust his dick under the covers, I realized he was turned on... and probably confused.

Mumbling something about distracting him, Bates headed back to the bathroom in the hallway as I headed around to what seemed to now be my side of the bed and plugged in the charger. “Hand me your phone.”

Getting them organized gave me something to do and made it all feel more normal as I climbed into bed. But once I was sitting there with the space for Bates between us, my nerves started coming back. Of course, that somehow made my dick spring back to life too, but it was just stupid and probably confused.

He was supposed to be worried over everything that had happened, not turned on. But the confusion was probably Gareth’s fault because he was looking ridiculously excited and wiggling like a kid with ants in his pants. “I knew this was right. Bates was really happy to see us.”

Bates shouldn’t have rewarded stupid behavior even if he thought Gareth was cute.

“Yeah, he was.” There was no point in lying about that when he could probably hear us. “You were right.”

Ugh, now I was rewarding stupid behavior too.

“And tomorrow we’ll work on the details like we said. We’ll figure out how to do all the firsts together and what order they should happen in.” Gareth looked like he was ready to make notes for a term paper. “I’m not quite sure how that should go, though, but you’ve done research and Bates seems to understand a lot about what’s going on. So he’ll probably have a plan.”

I could almost picture Bates trying not to laugh while he was brushing his teeth.

"You were talking about firsts together." I hadn't brought it up. "You keep forgetting that part."

Gareth waved his hands around like that wasn't important in the slightest. "You said I was right and you were probably thinking the same thing. You were just too nervous to mention it."

How he managed to be insane and right at the same time always managed to impress me.

Luckily, Bates saved his life by coming back in the bedroom and I didn't get the chance to smother the insane lunatic with the pillow he'd brought down. I was too polite to use one of Bates's. That would've been rude.

Besides, Brady's mom had said we should bring our own tools to a murder and not use someone else's.

"How are my fascinating cuties?" He raised one eyebrow as he leaned against the door, almost daring me to say something else snarky.

"Horny." Gareth's overly honest answer got a laugh from both of us. "And I feel like I've been patient all day long."

Because he kind of had.

Bates chuckled. "You've been very patient, my curious boy."

That got another wiggle from Gareth, and his desire just radiated out from him, drowning out every other emotion in the room. It was impossible to feel nervous when he was so excited and didn't seem to have any worries at all. "I have been. Brady says he gets rewards when he's been good."

Oh.

Bates's grin got wider before he flicked off the light and plunged the room into darkness. The lights outside in the parking lot kept the room from being pitch-black and gave off just enough glow around the curtains to

outline him walking across the room. "Brady has a lot of interesting ideas."

But they always led crazy places...so what did that mean for our night together?

I probably should've worked on that question a bit faster but nothing in my head was moving at the right speed as Bates climbed up on the end of the bed and slowly inched his way up between us. Logically, I knew he was giving us time to safeword or say anything but it was all so crazy.

I didn't want to stop him, but I wasn't sure what I wanted or what would happen or what Gareth would say next and the number of unknowns was giving me heartburn. I clearly wasn't hiding that very well either because as soon as he stretched out between us under the covers, he wrapped one arm around me and kissed my head.

"Come here, my nervous boy. We go at our own pace and there's no right or wrong." He nudged me closer, making it clear what he wanted and I jumped at the chance to curl into his side and hide against him. "That's perfect. No matter what we do, I'm so glad you're here with me."

Gareth only managed to stay quiet for about five seconds. "But I still get to come, right?"

One day I was either going to kill him or he was going to give me a heart attack.

"Yes. Come here." The smile was obvious in Bates's tone but there was a mix of desire and something sweeter too.

I couldn't see well enough in the dark to know exactly what they were doing, but as Gareth moved closer, I closed my eyes just in case. Noises. Sounds. One step at a time. Yes, I'd agreed that we needed to get more comfortable with each other but just listening.

That wasn't too fast or too...well, too anything.

It was just a tiny step in a dating direction.

Gareth's moan didn't sound like a tiny step, though. It sent a shiver through me that I knew Bates could feel and went right to my dick, helping it to decide that it was ready to obey Bates's order.

The way he tightened his hold on me said he knew it too...hell, he could probably feel it.

And the very hard *it* that was pressed against his thigh.

But Gareth's sounds had to be taking up so much of his head Bates wouldn't even realize how hard I was. Gareth was probably moving so much Bates wouldn't notice my rocking it against him. Not humping him of course, that would just be...no...but giving it a bit of subtle friction. That wouldn't stand out.

"This is so much better than the shower. I'm not even going to fall."

Oh.

Clearly, our tub wasn't too slippery for normal activities.

As I wondered if I should return the nonskid ducks I'd ordered online, Gareth shivered so hard he rocked the bed. "That's so much better. I don't even have to use both hands to play with my dick and my ass."

I couldn't decide if he was oversharing or being helpful, but I was going to have to take another look at his hands because they must've been bigger than I'd thought.

Bates chuckled but it was a low, wicked sound that sent another shiver through me. "I love hearing that, my curious boy. Does it feel good when you fuck yourself with your fingers?"

The moan that filled the room was a pretty clear answer, but I could hear Gareth moving in the darkness.

Had he nodded?

I couldn't help it. My eyes opened without me having any say in the matter and I could see the outline of Gareth curled up on the other side of Bates, rocking and moving under the covers.

Jerking off.

My hand decided to follow my eyes' lead and it moved without my permission too. The traitor just slid down Bates's chest and into my sleep pants before I could remind him that we should probably have a discussion about it first.

No one listened to me.

Not my eyes or my hand or even my dick.

"Cash, that's so...do it again..." Gareth's breathy order was confusing until he made a pleased sound and I realized the other noise I'd almost tuned out had been me.

I'd moaned.

I wasn't going to panic, nope, I was perfectly fine... but Bates kissed my head as his hand started stroking my back again. "That's my good boy. I'm so proud of you for going after what you want. Let us hear how good it feels. Gareth jerks off even faster every time you moan. He loves it."

He did?

He was?

That did not help my hand behave and my dick was a total loss. He kept getting harder and more insistent that he get an orgasm and Bates's sexy running commentary wasn't helping. "Moan for him again. Gareth's so hard I think he's going to come any second."

Bates's order shouldn't have been so easy to follow, but in my defense, it was the sexiest thing I'd ever heard.

So I moaned.

And I squeezed my dick.

Then Gareth gasped.

And then I came because he had.

"My boys love doing everything together." Bates's words should've been teasing and ridiculous but they kept the crazy pleasure going and somehow made it all make perfect sense. "My good boys. Yes, I love feeling you holding me so tight and come so hard."

The words made me realize I had a death grip on his sleep pants. I was holding him so tight that as I finally came down from the pleasure, my hand ached.

Everything should've felt awkward and stressful, but Bates hugged us both tight and we got kisses as Gareth made happy noises in the darkness. The sounds were so familiar that I found myself smiling and snuggling against Bates without even thinking about it.

He let out a quiet, happy laugh and pulled me closer to kiss my head. "Sweet boy."

That had me hiding against his chest as Gareth giggled like a punch-drunk kid. "You have the best ideas."

Bates was nearly giddy he was so excited over the whole thing. "I'm so proud of you both."

Only he could make that sentence sound utterly innocent and genuine when it came to listening to us jerk off.

But it shouldn't have surprised me because only he could've gotten us together like this to begin with.

Doms were clearly more magical than I'd realized.

Chapter 13

Bates

Deciding whether or not it was safe to move and wake my cuties up had turned into one of the great mental debates of my life. Gareth had been so easygoing and happy that it seemed entirely logical that he'd wake up with a *what the fuck* panic.

Cashel on the other hand could go either way. He'd been brave and incredibly turned on as he'd listened to Gareth orgasm, but then he'd crashed after the barest cleanup. I couldn't decide where his mind would be at, so a distraction as soon as they woke up sounded like the best idea.

Working out the details kept my mind occupied as they started to stir, still completely in sync with each other.

Gareth opened his eyes as Cashel buried his head under the pillow, not quite awake enough to panic. "Hi."

His quiet whisper didn't seem to disturb Cashel, so I focused on him and the fact that he seemed very at ease with the whole situation.

"Hi." Since he hadn't rolled away, I slowly leaned in and kissed his forehead, sparing him morning breath. "Thank you for coming to me last night. I'm glad you knew you could trust me and it was wonderful to be included as you deepened your relationship with Cashel."

Cashel had gone entirely too still to actually be asleep, but he was playing possum, so I kept my focus on the cutie who was ready to talk. He beamed, snuggling

closer and letting out a happy sigh that had Cashel silently relaxing again. "I didn't think you'd be frustrated, but Cash wasn't sure you'd understand the logic."

I had a feeling that was an understatement.

"Well, this isn't quite the way his relationships usually go, so that's probably making him uncomfortable sometimes." Yep, another wonderful understatement. "He's also not used to having a Dom in his life."

And something about that seemed to be making him...I didn't have a good word to describe it, but he was slightly off balance. I couldn't decide if that was from how different this was in general or if there was something he needed I hadn't figured out yet.

"Yeah, this is different. You've stuck around a lot longer than any of our other dates and you didn't get angry at how close we are. You're smart and just decided to date us both." Gareth closed his eyes and smiled as he nuzzled against my chest. "You took charge last night too. That was really helpful."

Adorable.

"I'm glad." Kissing the top of his head as he made happy wiggles, I ignored the relieved-sounding breath that Cashel let out. "I want to be helpful, and while I want our relationship to grow as well, I want to make sure your relationship with Cashel stays good too. You're both very important to me."

Another fun understatement.

But one I thought Cashel got more than our *take things at face value* cutie Gareth.

"That's really nice." Gareth's earnest answer somehow made my heart ache. "I like being important."

I wasn't sure what the story was behind that innocent statement but it felt filled with meaning. However, all I could do was give him a hug and kiss his head again. "You are very important to me *and* Cashel, and that's not going to change."

Gareth scooted tighter against me so he was draped down half my body and made a happy sigh. "This is a lot nicer than waking up by myself. Do you think Cash would sleep in my bed sometimes? Do you think he'd need more space than that?"

Those very interesting questions finally had Cashel giving up on playing possum. He eased his head out from under the pillow and slowly shifted so he could see Gareth's face. "I...I wouldn't mind. I'm glad you like waking up with us."

Us.

That seemed like a good sign, but I stayed very quiet so I didn't spook my nervous sub.

"This is so much better than waking up by myself." Gareth didn't seem to have the same caution that I did because he squirmed until he was draped over me and gave Cashel a quick kiss. "Good morning."

Cashel nearly giggled, hiding his face against my shoulder. "Good morning."

After a second, he peeked up again. "You're going to squish Bates."

Gareth gave a little wiggle. "Nope, he's pretty sturdy."

I couldn't help laughing and rolling my eyes. "One part of me is getting sturdier by the second with all those wiggles."

As Cashel groaned in embarrassment or maybe nerves, Gareth grinned and wiggled his hips. "Good morning to him too."

Chuckling, I gave him a quick peck. "Someone seems to be a morning person."

Technically I was talking about Gareth as a whole but he rocked his hips forward and grinned. "He is. Thanks for noticing."

That did not help Cashel's embarrassment, but I thought he was the cutest sub ever. "Hmm, should I say hi to him this morning or would he like to relax while I make you breakfast instead?"

Gareth actually had to think about that, so he might've been hungrier than I expected.

Nope.

He was just Gareth.

Finally shrugging, he frowned. "I don't know. I usually only have time for a quick shower in the morning, so he's kind of used to having to wait."

But my favorite part was when he laid his head right on top of Cashel's and sighed. "What do you think, Cash?"

Cashel's first thought was to hide because he tried to squirm and get his head under my arm but Gareth had him trapped. "I think I'm going back to sleep."

That got a huff from our funny boy.

"But Bates said he was going to make breakfast and I don't think he's the type of guy to think cereal counts."

Cereal was not making breakfast.

Oh, Brady.

Was he still not allowed to touch anything in the kitchen?

"I was thinking pastries or something like that. I've got puff pastry in the freezer I can make something with." For some reason that had both of their heads

popping up like I'd said I had a million dollars hiding under my mattress. "What?"

"You can't put the canned cinnamon rolls in the freezer." Gareth shook his head. "I don't think the croissants would work that way either."

Okay.

"I don't think he means from a can." Cashel cocked his head. "What's puff pastry?"

Where had they grown up?

"Come on." Giving each of them a kiss before silently telling my dick he wasn't getting the attention he'd hoped for, I smiled. "I will show you, but first, bathroom and teeth because I want to spend a few minutes kissing my boys."

Cashel blushed but Gareth beamed. "I told you bringing our toothbrushes was a good idea."

"Because you are a good planner." And I couldn't wait to see what else his fascinating mind would think up next.

"You seem to be Bates." Jude leaned against my doorframe as he glared at me, not seemingly pissed, but definitely getting close. "Did you know that I had to talk to half the building before I figured that out?"

No.

"I need to introduce myself better." Shrugging, I gave the crazy Dom a smile. "I take it you're looking for Gareth or Cashel?"

The building just kept getting more and more interesting.

Who remembered my name?

Who hadn't?

Had he picked up any new gossip while he'd been traveling the building?

It didn't seem like the right time to answer any of those questions or admit that Gareth was in the shower, *not* playing with his cock, and Cashel seemed to be hiding in the bedroom because he'd quickly disappeared as soon as we'd heard the knock on the door.

"Yes." Jude seemed to think that when paired with a frown it was enough of an answer.

It wasn't.

And I wasn't a confused sub who reacted strongly to frustrated authority figures.

"You'd be much easier to talk to if you used more words and stopped frowning. I'm not going to just start spilling my guts because you rescued me from a spider." I would take a bit more work than that.

But judging by the shocked inhale that came from my bedroom, Cashel wasn't used to anyone pushing back against Jude.

The cranky Dom in question just folded his arms over his chest and glared harder.

He really would be cute if he smiled more.

"Brady has made it very clear that they're my responsibility because we're family." Jude didn't say he agreed with that logic, but knowing how much he loved his nut, he wasn't going to admit that. "Right now, I have a very worried partner because his roommates left a vague note about going to spend the night with Bates and to wish them luck about getting an orgasm."

Oh.

Gareth had definitely left the note.

And Cashel's groan said he hadn't proofread it.

Hoping we'd all learned a lesson from the interesting experience, I held out my hand. "I'm Bates. I'm their... let's call it new friend for now. We had our first date yesterday and they spent the night. I'll admit to being an over-sharer by nature, but I'm not sure we're on the right terms to answer the orgasm question."

If there'd been a question.

I was slightly vague on that part and the way he started scrubbing his hands over his face didn't help clarify that.

He also didn't shake my hand, so I lowered it back to my side as I wondered if Brady's mother knew that Jude needed some lessons in manners.

"If that answers your questions, I've got some danishes coming out of the oven any minute." And he wasn't interested enough to risk burning them. "It was nice talking to you, though, and I'm glad to see someone is watching out for them, but you can tell Brady that they're just fine."

Yep, no manners at all.

Instead of leaving, he went back to his folded arms stance. "No. I'm not taking the word of a nosy stranger that they're fine. No one has seen them since yesterday and the orgasm note did not help my...Brady from worrying."

This was going nowhere.

"Everyone in the building knows he's a little and you're his Daddy, so I think it's perfectly fine to call him your sub or your boy." I was just being helpful but he nearly growled. "Did you get enough sleep? Was Brady up late again?"

They kept the weirdest schedule sometimes.

"This building has no fucking soundproofing." His frown seemed to think that was somehow my fault but it

was one of my favorite parts about the complex, so I smiled.

“I know. It’s great.” Clearly, he didn’t appreciate learning so much about his neighbors. “So, you wanted to see proof of life?”

This just kept getting more and more fun.

I thought I was hilarious but he sighed. “Yes.”

I was starting to see why he made Gareth so nervous.

“Let me see if that’s possible.” Trying to still be polite, I gestured toward the door. “If your attitude comes any further in my apartment, we’re going to have words. Because you make my boys very uncomfortable when you get like this. However, if we can both behave like civilized Doms, I won’t tell Brady’s mother about your lack of manners.”

There was a spark of laughter in the grumpy Dom’s eyes as Cashel sucked in a dramatic breath again like I’d just hauled out the big guns and he wasn’t sure what he thought about that.

“Understood.” The attitude eased back, but I wasn’t sure if it was the threat or if he finally realized I wasn’t someone he needed to worry about.

“Thank you.” As I turned away from the door and headed back toward the bedroom, Jude was polite and stayed where he was, not coming deeper into the apartment, which I appreciated. “One second.”

Yep, the timer was about to go off.

Taking the cream cheese and cherry pastries out of the oven had the wonderful smell filling the apartment, but it didn’t give Cashel very much time to figure out what he was thinking.

My cautious boy wasn’t going to like a surprise like Jude showing up unannounced, so I tried to give him a

moment, but that might not have been long enough judging by his wide eyes as he sat on my bed.

“He’s here.” The nearly silently mouthed words said more than his actual sentence had, so I nodded and walked over to crouch down in front of him.

“Yes.” I kept my voice quiet enough that Jude couldn’t hear, but not as low as Cashel’s. “He and Brady were worried about you two, and it seems that Gareth’s note might’ve been a bit confusing.”

That finally got a smile from Cashel and he looked relaxed enough that I reached up and cupped his cheek. “But he’s not here because he’s angry. He’s just not good at opening up to people.”

Something about his demeanor said he had a troubled background, but he was one of the only private enough people in the building that I didn’t know much about his life.

The bed gave Cashel just enough height on me that he had to lean down to give me a kiss as he continued to nuzzle my hand. “He’s always...he’s very...”

“Jude.” My answer got another smile from him.

“Yeah.” Taking a deep breath, Cashel looked toward the doorway and smiled as Gareth’s voice escaped the bathroom as he sang one of the recent pop hits. “He’s going to be really glad he missed this.”

I wasn’t sure about that, but the way he was working his way through top hits of the past twenty years said he wasn’t rushing out of the bathroom.

“He seems to like the shower even if he doesn’t get to come.” My teasing response got a blush from Cashel, but it also seemed to give him a boost of confidence because he sat straighter. “You ready to go show Jude that I haven’t abducted you?”

“Proof of life.” He couldn’t seem to decide if he found it funny or not and finally just nodded. “Yeah.”

As I rose, I held out my hand and smiled as he took it. “Come on, cutie. Let’s get this over with and then we’ll have breakfast.”

Judging from how long Gareth had been in the shower, he should be almost done.

Orgasmless showers could only take so long, even when we had a budding pop star in the making.

“Breakfast smells really good.” The easier topic finally made Cashel smile. “I bet they look very fancy.”

“Good enough to impress Brady’s mom if we need a bribe. So don’t worry.” The subtle reminder about my threat had his eyes brightening...but that only lasted until we got to the living room.

He didn’t seem to know what to do with Jude because he just stood there staring at the grumpy Dom who I thought looked relieved to see Cashel in one piece. “See, safe and sound.”

As Gareth hit the chorus, I smiled and nodded toward the back of the apartment. “Gareth’s in the shower. I’m not sure dragging him out is necessary?”

Instead of answering me, Jude focused on Cashel. “Are you okay? Brady was worried.”

I was pretty sure Brady hadn’t been the only one, but that didn’t seem to have occurred to Cashel.

“Yes.” His simple answer seemed to make Jude insane. But aside from a deep breath, the strange Daddy managed not to say anything rude as I stepped up behind Cashel and just smiled at the lunatic.

After a few seconds, he realized that wasn’t going to be enough for Jude. Leaning back into my touch, Cashel swallowed and nodded at whatever he was thinking. “We’ve been getting to know Bates and he’s been really

helpful. Gareth's getting his questions answered and... and I've found a few new questions, but we're fine."

Aww.

Kissing the back of his head, I squeezed his shoulder. "I'm glad you're figuring out some new questions."

It meant his brain was finally catching up to his dick.

That was definitely progress.

"We'll just keep taking things one step at a time, though." I wasn't going to just basically let my boys move in after a long Christmas break.

It'd take a few more weeks than that no matter how cute they looked when they showed up in pajamas.

"Yes, Sir." Cashel went very still as the word he hadn't meant to say after yes escaped.

For once, Jude managed not to look like the live-action version of thunder. "Brady will be very happy that you're figuring things out, but...but just remember what his mom said about finding the right person. Because I'll help Brady bury his body if *Bates* isn't nice to you."

Somehow he managed to make my name sound like fucker or dickhead...it was impressive.

Cashel had no idea what to say to any of it but he managed a nod as he gathered his wits. "Thank you, but I don't think that will be necessary."

He was so cute and had such good manners.

Polite was so sexy.

Chapter 14

Gareth

“I’m gonna—” A knock on the door made me frown as I was cut off, but then I realized who it was.

My...

My Bates.

He was definitely my *something* because I’d woken up in his bed after having the best orgasm ever. I’d been lying down and cuddled and Cash had been moaning.

Best orgasm ever, so he was definitely my Bates.

And my Bates had played right into my naughty hands.

“Breakfast is ready.” Bates waited and I knew he was waiting to hear me acknowledge him but that didn’t seem nearly fun enough, so I made him wait. “Gareth?”

I wasn’t the only curious one in our new family-ish, boyfriend-ish partnership thing, so I went back to singing and tried not to laugh.

Finishing up the line, I started in on the next verse as the door cracked open. I kept going and pretended not to hear as he spoke to the crack. “Gareth?”

I did my best not to snicker as he sighed, but it was hard once I wiggled my ass against the curtain. “Naughty boy. I’m trying to give you privacy.”

Who’d said I wanted that?

I kept singing, making him bark out a laugh. “You’ve got Cashel out here blushing again.”

That made me laugh because he had to have seen my butt. "That means I'm doing something right."

Because Cashel only seemed to blush when we did the best things with Bates.

Our new boyfriend-ish Dom laughed, definitely agreeing with me as he pushed the door open enough to lean against the frame. "I'm not sure he'd agree with that statement."

Nope.

Cash groaned.

He loved it.

Even Bates chuckled as I stepped back just enough that I knew he could see my ass around the shower curtain. It wasn't clear enough to see everything, so I wanted to make sure I tempted him enough to come closer.

I'd never showered with anyone else outside of locker room stuff, and no matter what porn said, no one had ever done anything interesting. But I had the perfect chance, and once I did it with Bates, then I could talk Cash into letting me scrub his back...and his front.

Yep, all he had to do was see that Bates approved and thought it was fine, and he wouldn't worry.

Bates's sexy groan said he was tempted and he even stepped closer, but then he let out a very Cash-sounding sigh. "I shouldn't."

Oh, that sounded terrible.

Turning around, I poked my head out. "Why?"

Bates had definitely looked showerable when I'd hopped in...what had changed?

He was pouting and looking very cute and almost as dramatic as Cash or Brady, but it wasn't an expression that said we were heading to another orgasm anytime

soon. "Brady was worried enough about you that he sent Jude to find you."

That was definitely terrible.

Pouting was definitely the right answer...and not just because it got Bates to come over and give me a kiss. "You're too cute like that, stop it."

He didn't seem terribly serious about that order, so I shook my head. "I had it all planned out to get you to come in with me."

Maybe guilt would help?

Bates chuckled and gave me another soft peck as he shook his head. "I would love to, but Jude is threatening to bury my body if I hurt you two cuties, so I think Brady is having a fit. But with the windows closed, it's hard to tell."

Well, that was inconvenient.

"We'll have to leave them cracked open more often." Making sure our Dom knew what was happening in our life seemed important. He liked being well-informed and it'd put him in our life, so I couldn't complain about it too much. "Jude doesn't like it when Brady is upset."

No one liked it when Brady was upset, but I wasn't sure how we'd gotten to that point.

"I left a note." Frowning, I leaned closer to beg for another kiss. Bates grinned and gave me another but kisses couldn't fix a pouting Brady. "Why is he so upset?"

I'd left a note.

I hadn't gone alone.

I knew Bates's name.

We hadn't even had official sex yet...we'd just had *kind of sex*.

Had I missed some kind of rules?

“I think we’re going slower than Brady did.” That had to mean we weren’t doing something wrong.

“We are.” Bates kissed me again but then did the saddest thing and stepped back. “Alright, you finish up and no *finishing up*.”

That got another groan from Cash which made Bates look wicked.

“I’ll be good.” Mostly because I’d been hoping to be naughty later, but I wasn’t so sure that was the plan anymore. “One more kiss?”

“Any time.” Bates was very Dom-looking as he stepped closer and dove into a deep kiss that had my dick convinced there was more to come.

There wasn’t.

Once I was breathless and hard, Bates released my lips and headed out of the bathroom before I could find another way to tempt him. “You are distracting.”

He was really sweet even if Jude had been a pain in the ass.

I was trying to keep all that sweet naughtiness right at the front of my mind as I got dressed in my pajamas again but it was difficult. Cash had gone from worried about wanting to be naughty to just worried, and Bates had decided the best way to take care of us was to keep our clothes on.

It was tragic.

And definitely Jude’s fault somehow.

“Breakfast was wonderful, thank you for making the danishes.” Bates kept saying they were easy, but the pastry stuff and the cream cheese and everything didn’t seem simple.

Even Cash hadn't been convinced it was easy and he could make a cake that didn't come from a box.

"You're welcome." Bates kissed my head as he walked by the table carrying plates to the kitchen. "Does anyone want more coffee?"

I wanted to say yes, but I wasn't sure that would lead to more kissing or my conversation about spankings. "Why does it feel like our morning is already over?"

Bates sighed but didn't tell me I was being ridiculous like I'd hoped he would. "Because you're a very smart cutie."

As he came back, Cash was frowning too. "I'm not saying I'm ready to have conversations, but they shouldn't control what we do."

I thought that seemed logical since I wasn't sure he'd ever be ready for a Bates kind of conversation, but Bates scrunched up his face as he sat down. "I can understand why they're worried, though."

I couldn't.

"Is it rewarding bad behavior to go back now?" I can't imagine Brady's mom approving of any of it. "We shouldn't reward bad behavior."

I was supposed to be either getting an orgasm or talking about a spanking that would lead to an orgasm.

This was neither of those things.

"Brady's worried, though." Cash sighed and somehow that seemed to be the signal for us to go.

I wasn't sure how it happened, but in seconds, I had my pillow and the toothbrushes and Cash was slowly leading us upstairs like we were headed toward the guillotine. "This is ridiculous."

"I know. I didn't even get to come this morning." Ignoring the giggles that came from somewhere on the

stairs, I sighed. "How did this happen?"

"We live with the biggest worrywarts on the planet?"

Cash's answer was helpful and confusing.

"Are we living with Jude?" I hadn't thought of it that way. "I kind of thought Brady was living with him and they just visited us sometimes."

That made Cash stop in the middle of the stairs.

After a few seconds, he shrugged. "I don't know. It seems like he's always around and he's even bossier lately and he brought groceries the other day. Doesn't that mean he lives with us too?"

Was that the threshold? Groceries and being bossy?

"I don't know." I thought I knew, but it seemed like we needed to have more than one conversation. "Should we ask Brady or his mom? I'm not sure who makes the rules on when people are living together and not just visiting a lot."

Cash chuckled as he started walking again. "I say we ask his mother."

Mumbling something about serving the brat right, Cash seemed to be in much better spirits as we headed inside the apartment, but that didn't last long. Brady and Jude were sitting on the couch like parents waiting for kids who'd broken curfew to come home.

I'd seen it on TV before, so it was easy to recognize.

"I was so worried." Brady frowned and shook his head. "You were with a stranger."

Were we?

We knew his name.

We'd given him a blow job.

We'd had dinner with him.

Deciding to take a page from Cash's usual playbook, I sighed and headed back to put our toothbrushes and stuff away. I'd hoped that by the time I got back they'd have figured out how to behave or I'd have figured out a good answer to the stranger issue, but neither of those happened and Cash was just glaring at Brady.

"When does he stop being a stranger?" Deciding that it seemed like a group discussion topic, I frowned at Brady. "I'm not sure if sexual contact is a deciding factor in that or not."

Cash's groan seemed to mean he was voting for it being a deciding factor as he rubbed his hands over his face, but Brady sighed and sounded like his mother. "Oh, no. You need to get to know someone first."

Really?

Before I could figure out how that made any sense at all, Brady stood up and came over to us. "I was so worried about you. You should talk about spankings with family. I didn't realize strangers were the only option if I didn't step in. I'll be rude. Don't worry. It can go on the bugs and Jesus list."

Huh?

Leaning closer to Cash, I tried to whisper. "I don't know what to say to that."

Chapter 15

Cashel

"I'm pretty sure we were cockblocked by your Daddy." Ignoring how crazy that sentence was since none of the rest had made any sense, I was glad Gareth was nodding beside me like it was perfectly reasonable. "We had breakfast and then suddenly we were heading back up here. I'm pretty sure there was supposed to be a morning after *something*."

Yes, we were going to stick to the facts and not get distracted by bugs, Jesus, or spiders.

Gareth's head was moving so fast, he looked like a bobblehead doll. "I was supposed to have a conversation about my spanking, but Bates said I should probably check in with you first. Since when does it work that way?"

He didn't seem to be being hyperbolic, which made the whole thing feel even stranger.

Gareth realized this was weird.

Brady shrugged, ignoring how odd we both found the conversation. "Relationships change and I think it's time I started taking a more active role in taking care of you."

Turning around, he looked over at Jude who just nodded.

God.

Getting his Daddy's approval, he smiled at us again and seemed to be doing his best to channel his mother.

“There is nothing wrong with being curious and we’re here to help answer any questions you have.”

Since when?

Even Gareth cocked his head. “That’s not how this works either.”

It felt like we’d fallen into some kind of alternate dimension and I wasn’t sure what to do.

The way the pod person who looked like Brady just kept going didn’t make it feel any saner. “Curiosity is natural and nothing to worry about.”

Okay.

Still an alien.

“Who are you and where is Brady?” Gareth’s words echoed my thoughts, but he seemed to have decided that he didn’t have to keep them internal just to be polite. “This is weird. We had a sleepover with the guy we’re dating. I found someone to talk to about spankings. He likes both of us, so we’re keeping him.”

Glancing over at me, Gareth frowned. “Is that it? I think that’s it unless I can complain about the cockblocking thing too because I didn’t even jerk off in the shower. Bates said not to.”

“Should you really be submitting to someone you don’t call Master or Sir or Daddy?” Brady’s question seemed nuts to me but Gareth took it very seriously.

“Yes, we don’t have to label ourselves to make other people happy.”

When did he get smart about this shit?

“I called him Sir.” Once. Maybe, twice? “Earlier when Jude came to find us.”

Not that we’d been lost.

“See.” Gareth beamed, pleased to have found a way around some of the crazy logic. “Now it’s not a problem.”

Brady’s gaze was bouncing back and forth between us. “Does it count for you if Cash said it?”

“Yes.” Gareth’s confident answer had Brady nodding slowly and Jude rolling his eyes and muttering about us being insane. “We’re dating him together.”

Gareth seemed to think that would explain away a lot...and for some reason it did.

The first few times he’d said it, my stomach clenched like it was expecting an oversized bean burrito to appear any second, but the more times I heard it, the less weird it felt. There was obviously some merit in exposure therapy, but I still wasn’t happy about the cockblocking nonsense.

I’d been trying to figure out a way to make Gareth think we should suck Bates’s cock again, but Jude had shown up before I could work on the details of the plan.

How was I going to get better if I didn’t practice?

I wasn’t going to defile the bananas just to get rid of my gag reflex.

Brady was quiet for a few seconds before he turned around and looked at Jude again. “Daddy, he’s keeping the weird neighbor for both of them. And Cashel called him Sir.”

Yep.

We were keeping Bates...our Dom or something.

Jude groaned. “Brady, they slept over at a stranger’s place to talk about spankings and have sex. That’s dangerous.”

“Why?” Gareth was studying them like they were bugs. “You were a stranger who talked to him about

Santa, and spankings, and then took him to sleep over at your place.”

Oh.

He had a good point.

“And we’re doing it together so that’s safer. Brady’s mom said so.”

Brady blinked. “I think she said we should go run errands in pairs because that was safer.”

I shrugged. “She said it could apply to a lot of things.”

She’d been kind of upset when we’d lost Gareth in Walmart and had started lecturing us on the buddy system. She hadn’t technically said it didn’t apply to dating, so Gareth might’ve had a point.

“She did...” As his voice trailed off, Brady turned to Jude again. “Daddy, I think it makes sense. They’re using the buddy system and everything. Do they get an apology for an accidental cockblock?”

Yes.

Gareth nodded too. “Yes.”

As Brady and Jude debated who should give us the apology, Gareth turned to me. “Do you want to get dressed and go grab something to bring Bates for lunch? He said we should come back later when everything is fixed up here.”

I wasn’t sure it was going to get fixed since the problem was confusing to begin with, but I liked Gareth’s plan. “I think he’d like a sandwich from that Italian place down the street.”

Bates seemed like a real-food kind of person not a fries or pizza kind of person.

“That’s a good idea.” Gareth headed back toward our bedroom, so I followed him as Brady started telling his

Daddy about the merits of hands-on research. "But how do we know which one to pick?"

Hmm, another good question.

"The owners seem as nosy as Bates is. I'm pretty sure we'll just need to describe him and they'll know what to make for us." Gareth's nod said he thought it was a good idea, but he didn't get distracted by it.

As we got to our bedroom and he closed the door, Gareth took a deep breath. "That was weird, right?"

"Oh yeah." I just wasn't sure I could list out all the ways *why* it'd been weird. "I think they're just concerned for us, though?"

Maybe?

"But Brady did it too." Gareth gave the door a confused, slightly concerned look like he was imagining Brady and Jude. "Didn't he?"

Shrugging, I wasn't sure what to say. "I think it's a case of do as I say not as I do? But I don't know why."

Gareth finally pulled his focus away from the door and went over to sit down on the twin bed on his side of the room. "Was it wrong for us to have had a sleepover with Bates?"

Before I could even shake my head, he went back to worrying. "I didn't mean to get you in trouble. They didn't fuss at us for dating him together, but do you think that's—"

"No." Cutting off whatever he'd been going to say, I went over and sat down beside him, not really sure if I could hug him or not. "Brady doesn't care about that and Jude just hasn't figured out how to start worrying about it yet. He's just a glass-half-empty kind of person."

I wasn't sure they realized we were both dating Bates yet, much less dating each other. They'd gotten stuck on one part and hadn't moved past it. "They seemed kind

of distracted on the asking a stranger about spankings part.”

“But that was what Brady did.” Frowning again, Gareth let out a sigh and leaned over to rest his head on mine. “We even know Bates is real and where he lives and his name. We know he’s human.”

He had a point.

And he didn’t seem worried about the touching thing like I’d been, so I wrapped my arm around him. “I think we did great when you look at it that way.”

Bates might not have rescued us from the spider but he’d been helpful in other ways...and we knew he was real which was actually a big step up from how Brady’s relationship with Jude had started.

“But more conversations are going to be important if you want your spanking...or if you want to suck his dick again.” Bingo. Got it in. “I think lunch is a good start, though.”

Nodding against me, Gareth wiggled closer. “Should I have asked you out first and then asked to invite Bates? I’m not sure I know how to ask out two people who aren’t in the same room.”

“Oh.” I had no idea. “I don’t know the rules about that so...let’s just say it’s fine?”

I was pretty sure we had enough problems without bringing Miss Manners into the conversation too.

“Good.” Nuzzling against me, he sighed again and I found myself wanting to laugh at his blatant manipulation about...well, something. “What about snuggling and hugging and kissing and stuff like that? Do you think there are rules about that?”

“There are probably rules about everything, but I don’t know them.” What did I know? “Um, well, Bates

probably wouldn't want us orgasming without talking to him first. That's something we need to talk about too."

"That list is getting longer and longer." Gareth wiggled closer, not-so-subtly asking for attention...I just wasn't sure what kind yet. "Spankings and orgasm rules and dating manners. What else?"

"I don't think we need to search for anything else, honestly." The list seemed overwhelming to me as it was. "I think this counts as a one step at a time thing."

"You're probably right." Gareth might've thought I was right but he didn't move, so I didn't think the conversation was over yet. "What about kissing, though?"

Yep, not over yet.

I was blaming my entirely too calm demeanor on the drama overload of having to talk about cockblocking with Jude and Brady. There was only so much crazy a brain could handle before it broke and I'd reached that limit.

Besides, anything with Gareth was easier than talking to Jude.

"What about kissing?" I'd obviously missed something in the conversation because I wasn't sure what Gareth was talking about. "Bates likes kissing."

He liked kissing us and he liked watching us kiss each other...and Gareth didn't seem to mind any of that, so what was he confused about?

"Yeah, he likes kissing but if he likes watching us kiss too, do we need to ask him first?" As my brain struggled to process what Gareth was saying, he just kept going. "He sent us up here last night to orgasm but I can't remember what he said about kissing."

He made a quiet huff. "Yeah, we need to have more conversations and he needs to list out the rules a lot

more clearly.”

I was struggling to figure out what to say because my mind had gotten stuck on the whole Gareth wanted to kiss me again part.

How had my life gotten so weird in less than twenty-four hours?

“Um, I think he’d be fine with it but if we want to double-check we should text him?” Right? “He’s our Dom...I think...and well, at the very least, he’s the most dominant person in our little dating group thing so we should get his input.”

“Yeah, he’s kind of the top of the triangle between us.” Wiggling, Gareth dug his phone out of his pocket. “I’m glad he thought about making sure we had his number.”

“Bates is smart.” And he seemed to understand that we’d end up confusing ourselves once he let us out of his sight because as soon as Gareth sent off a silly text about kissing, his response came back in seconds. “He types fast too.”

“I’m glad he wasn’t busy jerking off. I’d have hated to wait to find out if I could kiss you.” Gareth made a happy sound as he read the text, not realizing he’d killed my brain again. “Perfect. Kissing is fine but orgasms should wait until after we tell him about our interrogation with Brady and Jude.”

Yep, he’d called it an interrogation.

“Ask him if he’s okay with us coming back down for lunch. He was talking about studying.” We kept getting distracted by conversations about submission and stuff like that, so I wasn’t completely sure what he was studying but I knew he was getting his masters and I knew he was smart.

Yeah, we needed a few more conversations.

“Lunch is great just not too early.” Gareth typed back something that made him wiggly and happy, but he sent it so fast I didn’t get to be nosy. “Now we have time to kiss and cuddle and then get ready for the day before we go grab lunch.”

His to-do list was a lot more interesting than it had been just a few days ago.

As he put his phone on the nightstand, my brain got stuck on how much had changed so quickly, but Gareth didn’t seem to have the same problem. He was still bouncy and happy as he lay down on his bed. “I get to kiss you. This is so great.”

It was so weird.

But he wanted a kiss, so I stretched out beside him because that was easier than trying to figure out what alternate universe I’d fallen into. “I like kissing you too.”

I felt a bit silly but it made Gareth smile even wider. “Let’s see how it feels to make out when Bates isn’t watching. I already know I like it when he is watching.”

“Me too.” That seemed obvious, so I couldn’t not answer. “What if it’s weird to make out when he’s not here?”

Gareth shrugged. “Then we practice until it’s not weird.”

He always had the best logic.

“Okay.” But now what? “Can I get closer?”

“Sure.” Gareth didn’t seem to need space as I pressed my front to his, in fact, he wrapped his arm over me and smiled. “I like this. We should cuddle more.”

“I like cuddling.” My brains seemed to have wandered off, which was why it took me so long to realize that he was waiting for me to kiss him. He was just smiling and petting my back and watching me with an expectant look that finally made everything click.

When had I agreed to be in charge of the kissing thing?

Fuck it all.

Inching closer, I told myself he had a safeword and it'd been his idea to begin with. Gareth knew what he wanted and that was a kiss. From me. He wanted to cuddle. With me.

Yep, I knew what he wanted.

When I was so close I could feel his breath against my lips, I finally kissed him, keeping it soft and simple in case...

Well, I wasn't sure what I was worrying about, but it felt a bit silly when he moaned and wrapped himself around me, draping one leg over mine as he sucked in a breath.

"Kissing you is so..." His voice trailed off as his leg pulled me tighter against him and sent a shiver through me.

That had him making a happy, pleased sound, but it was lost as I finally managed to stop worrying and deepened the kiss. As our tongues stroked against each other's and his cock ground against mine, worrying was the last thing I wanted to do.

Kissing and conversations with our Dom suddenly seemed a lot more important.

Chapter 16

Bates

“We kissed and snuggled but we didn’t have sex or orgasms...and we brought lunch.” Holding out what seemed to be sandwiches, Gareth gave me an almost innocent-looking smile. “We were good enough for rewards.”

It seemed like I had a boy who was eager for an orgasm, but before I could tease him about it, Cashel poked his side.

“Oh, and you were very patient this morning with Jude and didn’t threaten him with burying his body, so you deserve a reward too.” Gareth’s eyes dropped to the front of my pants, making his idea of a reward clear. “It’s only fair.”

I had a feeling Cashel had influenced Gareth’s idea of rewards and fairness, but I wasn’t going to call out the blushing cutie. I was too proud of him for his clear manipulation of Gareth and getting him to ask if they could give me a blow job.

“I think that sounds very logical and I was very polite about all of it.” Finding it funny had helped a bit in that regard, but I wasn’t going to talk my cuties out of their plan...especially with Gareth’s delightful oral fixation. “Should we have lunch and then think about rewards?”

One of their stomachs gurgled making it clear that lunch needed to come first. They each gave the other an *are you kidding* kind of look, so it seemed that neither was willing to be the one to admit to needing food more than sucking dick.

“So we have a plan.” Giving them a kiss as they came deeper into the apartment, I shut the door and pulled them into a big hug. “I’m so glad you came back.”

Cashel curled into my shoulder and blushed, but Gareth huffed. “I didn’t want to leave to begin with.”

That had been wonderfully obvious.

Subtle, he was not.

“You leaving had not been my plan either but there had been extenuating circumstances.” The drama queens had been afoot early and needed to be placated so I didn’t get accused of kidnapping. “How did your talk go with Brady?”

I already knew how it had gone but I wanted to hear it from their perspective.

Cashel sighed and seemed fine with letting Gareth do the talking. “They were so weird. Why should it be stressful when we have a date and stay over but it’s not when Brady meets an elf and basically moves in with him?”

Before I could come up with a delicate way to make sure Gareth didn’t still think Jude was an elf, he kept going. “And when does someone go from being a stranger to not a stranger? Is sex part of that? Is Jude living with us or is Brady living with him? And do you know if buying groceries is the threshold for that?”

I loved this building.

And my two cuties.

Leading them over to the table, I kissed Gareth and had him sit down before we dove into any of his fascinating questions. “I don’t think buying groceries is the threshold, but buying furniture might be.”

That seemed to be the most logical answer I could give him, so I went on to the next question. Concise answers would be important or we’d get bogged down

before we could handle the whole list. "It sounds like they're bouncing between both apartments so they don't have to actually say they're living together. That's just semantics, though. They're definitely living together because Brady has a playroom at Jude's place."

That said living together more than groceries.

As we got out the sandwiches, the perfect subs from the place down the street, I tried to make sure I got everything on his list. "Stranger to not a stranger isn't sex, it's either a conversation or food."

That seemed to be a better explanation just in case we broke up and he met someone with fewer scruples than me.

"Dinner or coffee or bringing a neighbor food to introduce yourself. We had dinner and I made you breakfast so we're well past strangers." What else?

No, lunch before anything else.

"Let me get us some water." Cashel seemed slightly lost, so I gave him a smile. "Would you grab the paper towels off the kitchen counter? These sandwiches are always so messy."

"Sure." Perking up and probably relieved to escape the discussion, we put it on pause while I got everyone water.

When we were sitting down and my favorite sub had magically appeared, I decided we needed to finish getting the conversation over with so Cashel didn't stew on it forever. "I think Brady was stressed because with Jude, he knew how safe he felt and his connection with the grumpy elf was so strong that he didn't question it. He can't feel your connection with me."

They got a slight reprieve chewing but they nodded slowly and I could see their brains whirling. Gareth's logic was always a surprise but it was Cashel who actually spoke up next. "I can see that. Brady is very..."

well, he sees things his own way and I think this surprised him.”

Understatement of the year.

“Was it just me that surprised him or was it the mix of all three of us?” I hadn’t been able to read Jude well enough to guess, but judging by the confused looks they exchanged, it seemed like I wasn’t the only one who was confused on that point.

“Um...” Cashel finally shrugged. “We don’t know.”

Gareth seemed to think it was his turn because he jumped in again. “We think that part didn’t surprise him, but I’m not sure he’s thought about it yet? You’re distracting him from everything else.”

That probably shouldn’t have been a surprise.

“We’ll just take it one step at a time with him too.” I flashed Cashel a grin when he snickered. “Just conversationally.”

Gareth blinked a few times. “Oh, yeah, we’re not having sex with him.”

Adorable.

Even Cashel’s embarrassed groan was cute.

“Agreed.” Glancing between my boys, I gave them a wink. “I have my hands full with you two.”

“Not yet.” Gareth gave a dramatic pout. “We got cockblocked by a grumpy Daddy before that could happen.”

Cashel’s bite almost flew out of his mouth, but he caught himself just in time and ended up coughing and choking for several moments. Eventually, he could breathe, but that led to a sexy glare being aimed at Gareth. “Don’t say things like that while I’m eating.”

Not looking apologetic or worried, Gareth shrugged. “Would you prefer if we started the spanking

conversation?"

"You're mean when you're horny." Cashel finally found his gumption but ended up pouting and taking a big bite of his sub to get out of saying anything else.

"I know." Aiming his sweet pout at me, Gareth slouched. "I didn't even get to talk you into showering with me."

I couldn't decide if he should be rewarded for being so cute or punished for trying to manipulate me. It felt earnest enough that it could've gone either way.

"I'll let you talk me into it next time as long as there aren't more death threats at the door." Gareth took my words seriously and nodded but Cashel was barely holding back laughter. "We made it through the drama, though, and it seems like Brady will accept it eventually."

I wasn't so naïve that I thought it would be smooth sailing from there on out, but we'd gotten over one of the biggest bumps in the road. The next would either be Gareth's spanking or the first time it occurred to Brady that we were a threesome...or about Cashel and Gareth's relationship.

I wasn't sure which he would worry about first but it would be interesting no matter what happened.

"I'm not sure about Jude, though." Gareth frowned at his food before looking up. "He was worried about us walking to get lunch. I think we might've broken him?"

Probably.

"I think it's the Daddy Dom part of him. He'll get used to it." Or Brady would distract him. Either way, though, my cuties were mine to worry about. "I know you can go get us lunch without there being an issue."

I couldn't help but wonder what interesting thing Gareth had told him that made him panic, though.

Cashel was doing his best not to laugh but he looked like he wanted to giggle. There was definitely something that had set off Jude, but making sure Gareth was happy and distracted seemed more important than gossip.

Yep, I'd found something more important than gossip.

I always knew that moment would come but I'd expected it to take a bit longer to get to that point.

"I'm really glad I'm not a little. Daddies seem stressful." Gareth shook his head as Cashel jerked with barely suppressed laughter. "They do nothing but pick up toys and worry. There has got to be other kinks that are more relaxing."

Hmm.

Cashel's eyes went wide as he clearly thought of several kinks that would be less stressful, but instead of volunteering his information, he shoved the last of his sub in his mouth, barely managing not to choke to death.

"Be careful. You've got a gag reflex, remember?" Gareth seemed to think he was being helpful but he almost killed Cashel as the sub went down the wrong way.

That just got another concerned stare like he wasn't sure why Cashel was being so reckless. I'd managed to keep a straight face until that point, and unfortunately, my laughter did not help Cashel's ability to swallow.

But we managed not to kill him.

After a few firm pats on the back and some water, Cashel could breathe and remembered that he had a gag reflex.

Yep, they were adorable.

I was ready for us to move on from Cashel's death-defying bite but Gareth was starting to find his gumption and studied both of us. "He thought of something. What did I say that was stupid?"

“Nothing.” The word jumped out of Cashel’s mouth without hesitation. “You’re really smart.”

I could see he didn’t want to upset Gareth, but I wasn’t actually sure he could explain what I thought he’d been thinking. So as he gaped at Gareth, I eased into the conversation. “I’m pretty sure your comment about other kinks that were more relaxing had him actually thinking about other kinks.”

“Oh.” Brows pulling together, Gareth seemed content to poke at the idea and get his questions answered. “Why did it make him swallow wrong and choke? Was it something weird?”

That depended on the definition of weird.

Cashel was still wide-eyed and doing a very good impression of a goldfish as he realized Gareth wasn’t going to let it go. “I...”

When that was all we got, it seemed like time for their Dom to come to the rescue. “Come on. Let’s go to the chair. Do you want to kneel or sit on my lap?”

Before Gareth could answer, I gave him a firm stare. “My dick stays in my pants until we’ve gotten a few things out of the way.”

We’d never get through a conversation otherwise.

“Fine.” Pouting, he slouched back in his seat. “Sit.”

Drama queen.

He was so cute.

And so was Cashel but for completely different reasons.

Something about Gareth actually wanting to keep going and for someone to explain the dirty thing he’d missed had shocked Cashel to the core.

Was he finally starting to realize that Gareth was dead set on continuing his journey?

“That sounds like a wonderful choice and I’m sure Cashel agrees with it.” That got a slow nod from my stunned boy, but he actually managed to stand up as I rose from the table. “Quick cleanup and then we’ll talk.”

Throwing the trash away didn’t take nearly as long as Cashel was hoping it would, and soon, we were curled up in the chair with Gareth still pouting and Cashel hiding. It was starting to feel very familiar but I didn’t let memories distract me.

Giving Gareth a quick kiss as Cashel stayed pressed against me, I focused on my curious cutie. “Alright, you wanted to know why Cashel was so startled and what he was thinking about, right?”

“Yes.” He nodded but his frown was still firmly in place as he glared at Cashel’s head.

Since I was fairly certain anything else he would say would be rude or aggressive, I didn’t poke for a longer answer. “First, we both thought your explanation of a Daddy’s role was very accurate and funny.”

He cocked his head and was very still for several long moments before he nodded slowly. “I guess I can see that. I was just being honest, though.”

“That was what made it even funnier.” I shrugged. “You’re very earnest but thoughtful and smart in a unique way. I love the way you see the world, but sometimes it’s going to make us smile. However, swallowing at the same time was probably not a good idea.”

“Yeah.” Sighing, he stopped glaring at Cashel. “Sorry I almost killed you.”

Adorable.

Cashel reached out to pat his back but didn’t move, so I took that as a sign to keep going. “Second, and I think what you were more confused about, the kinks. There is a huge range of them and some that go from what I

would consider stressful and high-maintenance, at the very least, to fun and...let's say playful."

When Cashel stopped breathing, I knew we'd been on the same mental page.

"I'm pretty sure he was picturing one of the fun, playful varieties because I know I was." No point in lying about that. "I pictured one that I thought you might like based on how you were describing age play and Daddies in general."

The cocked head confusion came back but Gareth didn't interrupt me or glare at Cashel.

"I don't think he was comfortable with the idea yet and he probably started to panic once the image was in his head...probably because he didn't want to upset you." That got a nod from Cashel, so I kissed his head as my gaze stayed on Gareth. "Then it kind of all rolled out of control."

"Because I kept asking about it." Gareth's expression tightened as he turned his gaze back to Cashel, so I shook my head.

"No, this is no one's fault and nothing is wrong. It's just a bit of confusion and drama." We were going to have those a lot until they both got a lot more comfortable with the discussions we needed to have. "You can ask any questions you want, and eventually, it will get easier for both of you."

He sighed and nodded, as some of the weight seemed to lift off his shoulders. "We've never talked about this kind of stuff unless it was about Brady."

That was not a surprise.

"We are now, though." Giving both of them quick kisses, I hugged them tight. "It might just be hard sometimes but that's not a bad thing."

Gareth nodded even though he didn't seem to like having to agree with me. "Yeah, but I'd rather it be easy."

That got a quiet giggle from Cashel as his stress eased back enough to make Gareth relax again. It didn't make him any less curious, though. "What kink do you think he pictured me doing? I don't know many. I tried looking up some of them once but they were kind of scary."

Whatever he'd stumbled across still made him stressed enough to have Cashel reach out and wrap an arm awkwardly around him. They were both adorable but I kissed Gareth's head since that was what I could reach. "We wouldn't do anything scary with you but it might be confusing. I'm pretty sure he was thinking about puppy play."

And they both froze.

This was going to be interesting.

Chapter 17

Gareth

If age play meant being little and getting a Daddy, puppy play had to be something about puppies and having someone taking care of them. BDSM stuff had one person submitting and one person managing the person who submitted.

The logic felt right but I knew I was missing a few pieces.

What did puppies do?

It couldn't be real ones but was there a fetish about stuffed animals?

Okay, there probably was but I couldn't imagine Cash picturing me with a pile of puppies. I didn't like stuffed animals and real ones were messy.

Cash was still silently freaking out and thinking I was mad at him, so I focused on Bates who was snuggling me close. Petting his chest, I decided to stop worrying and just ask. "I don't know what that is but Brady's into age play and has a Daddy who takes care of him...so it's something like that?"

Feeling Bates nod and hearing the quiet, approving noise made me feel better. It wasn't a smart or dumb thing. I'd connected some of the dots. Bates was still acting normal. Cash was just being Cash and was worried about something ridiculous.

It wasn't my fault that his brain was weird.

"Yes, it's along those same lines. To oversimplify things, Brady relaxes and finds a lot of joy in getting to a

headspace where he's younger than his body is, right?"

"Yes." Sighing, I nodded. "But even when he's big in his head too, he's still not the most adulty person I've ever met."

Bates chuckled. "I have to agree with that but don't get us off track. For puppy play, when the sub—well, usually the sub, but it doesn't have to be that way—never mind, I'm getting off track too. Okay, when the person who wants to relax finds their playful headspace, they're pretending to be a puppy."

Huh.

"Like a tail and everything?" Had Cash ever talked about that before? Had Brady?

"Yes, generally, but everyone does it differently." Kissing my head, Bates stroked my back and kept explaining. "The pups I've met usually have a hood, kind of like a mask, that shows what they picture their pup side looking like and they pick out other gear to help them feel more like a pup. Tails. Things like that."

Well, it seemed a little different.

"But why did that make Cash choke?" Pulling back again, I frowned at Bates. "Do I look like a pup? I'm missing something."

He frowned back in an exaggerated way that made me fight the urge to smile. "I have not gotten enough kisses or smiles from my curious boy."

He was just as dramatic as Cash.

But he was our Dom, so I gave him a quick kiss, and somehow that made me smile which made him smile. "Perfect."

He was so distracting.

"I'm just going to explain what was in my head when it was all going on, okay?" He waited until I nodded

before going on with storytime. "The pups don't always wear a ton of clothes. Generally, the most they'll wear is biker shorts and fitted shirts, but a lot of the pups online and in the clubs are wearing a lot less, and the...let's call them the most fun tails are attached to plugs. So when the pup wags his tail it's fun for him and to watch."

Oh.

"I never found that kink when I was first looking." I'd found Brady's stuff and then decided the rest was overwhelming and kind of scary. "That's not scary."

It was kind of odd, though, but it seemed rude to mention that part.

Bates gave a vague half-shrug and smiled. "I don't think so either. They're cute and it can be sexy when they have the fun kind of tails."

Well, he probably had a point there.

"But Cash..." Was still acting weird for one thing. "He was thinking about me with the fun tail? Because that was the most relaxing kink he could think of and... and he was startled when he pictured me naked?"

Before Bates could do more than nod, Cash sighed and nodded too.

Well, that cleared up some of it.

"Why did he feel bad about that?" The list of questions in my head just kept growing longer and longer but that seemed to be the best starting point. "Did he think I'd look silly?"

That didn't feel right, so I wasn't surprised when they both shook their heads.

Cash didn't seem to have found his words yet, so Bates kept explaining. "I think he thought you'd look sexy and I think he was worried about what you would say if you figured out he was imagining you as a pup."

We both turned to Cash who nodded again, still hiding. "Sorry?"

Well, a word was good even if it was confusing.

"I still don't understand why he's apologizing." It was all so weird...hell, the puppy stuff made more sense than Cash's emotional meltdown.

"This is all very new to him, the boyfriend and dating stuff and the kink conversations, so he might not know why he's nervous." Bates gave Cash another kiss on his head as Cash relaxed enough to curl into Bates instead of using him like a wall he was hiding against. "And he's probably not used to having discussions about finding you sexy."

Oh.

"Yeah, and he doesn't do well with new things he hasn't researched yet." Cash liked to understand things before he did them. "Do you think he's researched the pup part? The puppy play stuff, I mean? Oh, hey, is there porn for that?"

He'd gotten embarrassed the first and only time I'd walked in on him watching porn, so it'd make sense if it still made him nuts.

Bates was grinning like he was trying not to laugh, so I wiggled closer to Cash. "Do you watch the puppies and get hard?"

Man, that sentence was weird.

Okay, I was starting to understand why he'd gotten so embarrassed.

"It's okay if you do. They have tails." I couldn't help wiggling my butt as I tried to imagine what it would feel like. "Are you watching happy, clothed pups or the naughty ones?"

Cash groaned.

“The naughty ones.” Bates’s helpful answer got more drama from our boyfriend. “That was probably part of what was embarrassing him too.”

“He’s not good at talking about porn.” I shrugged as Bates chuckled. “Even with me.”

And we were best friends.

Bates gave us both kisses again and pulled me back into another hug. “We’ll work on finding ways for Cashel to feel more comfortable sharing. It might take time, though.”

Ugh.

“Like we’re going slow with my spanking kind of time or longer than that?” How long was he supposed to get before he had to tell us what was going on in his head?

“Good question.” Bates made an exaggerated thinking face which made me smile. “Let’s say a bit longer than that if he needs it, but you’ll be working on your spanking, so I don’t think it will feel like you’re waiting forever.”

I hoped not.

“I like knowing what’s going on in his head.” Snuggling back against Bates, I pressed my face against his neck and nuzzled against him because he smelled so good. “You tell us what you’re thinking and that’s one of my favorite things about you.”

He even explained things without my having to ask and his thoughts always made sense.

That was kind of special because most people were confusing.

“Now this is just a guess, but I think he’s still worried about what will happen if he lets what feels like lots of weird stuff in his head escape where he can see it.” Bates

made a low, sexy sound as I kissed his neck. "You're distracting me."

As I laughed quietly, he gave my ass a teasing spank. "Naughty boy. What was I saying? Yes, stuff in his head. He just hasn't realized yet that no matter what's in his head, we'll talk about the idea and the fantasy and see what we want to explore."

Hmm.

Kissing him again to make him moan, I thought about what Bates had said. "We don't have to do things we don't want to, and it's not mean to tell someone no. We tell Brady no all the time, but that's because we love him and he makes weird decisions."

I was being serious but it got a laugh from Cashel.

Thinking back, I could see how it was funny, so I pulled back enough to look over at him and saw he was finally looking at me. "I'm serious. What if we didn't tell him no about using the coffee maker?"

The whole building would've burned down or exploded or something worse.

"If you ask for a coffeemaker level of kink, we'll just tell you no and come up with a safe way to give you caffeine." It didn't seem hard to me, but Cash seemed to have forgotten that we knew how to deal with weird problems.

We'd gotten lots of practice since Brady had moved in with us freshman year.

"We're smart. We even found an elf to save us from the Christmas spider." Man, holidays were weird. "Kinks can't be harder than that."

Bates let out a happy sigh and gave us both head kisses, but Cash couldn't seem to decide how to feel. "I'm...I'm not used to talking about anything close to coffeemaker-level stuff."

“Um, there’s probably a reason we get along with Brady so well.” Had he thought we were completely normal? Like boring?

Oh, should I not have told him?

“Bates?” Whispering, I inched back closer to his ear. “Did Cash think we were normal?”

I had no idea what we were and I’d been good with that, but I was starting to think Cash hadn’t been on the same page as me.

“It’s possible he didn’t realize you knew your family was a bit interesting.” Bates gave us more cheerful kisses and wiggled like a kid opening Christmas presents, but Cash was just staring at me with wide eyes.

I had no idea what to do, but when Bates seemed to be waiting for Cash, I decided that was a good plan. And an even better one was going back to snuggling Bates and making sure he knew I was still interested in sucking his dick.

So as Cash caught up with reality probably, I kissed Bates’s neck and wiggled just enough to tease his dick. He groaned, making it hard not to laugh. “Ugh, I should tell you to stop distracting me.”

But he didn’t.

“We have our clothes on, no one’s dick is peeking out, and I’m just snuggling you while we’re talking.” I shrugged as I kissed him again, making Cash snicker. “Cuddling is very important in a relationship.”

Brady’s mom had said so.

Even Cash nodded, clearly remembering that Walmart lecture.

Something about walking and shopping made her very chatty.

“We clearly have different definitions of cuddling, my curious boy.” Bates hugged me tight, then gave my ass another light spank. “I don’t even remember what we were talking about anymore. Shoot.”

Laughing, I kissed right under his ear again since that seemed to be his distraction zone. “Pups and tails and Cash hiding.”

That made Cash glare at me but Bates laughed. “What do you think about pups? Do you want to see some of them online?”

Cash seemed to be holding his breath but I nodded. “Sure.”

Wiggling my ass since it let me tease Bates’s cock without getting in trouble, I arched it out a bit more. “Do you think I’d look good with a tail?”

The way Cash went back to hiding made me think he’d like it, but Bates gave a wicked chuckle and squeezed one cheek. “Oh yes. You’re happy and sweet and wonderfully wiggly. I think you’d look adorable and so sexy when you wagged your tail.”

Well, I liked making Bates happy so it couldn’t hurt to look at it.

And wiggling was fun.

And I liked playing with my ass.

“Are tails better than fingers?” I ignored Cash’s dramatic groan and gave Bates a quick kiss on the cheek because his grin was so cute.

And naughty.

“Oh, there are lots of things better than fingers.” His fingers were almost kneading my ass like I was bread dough, and it made me squirm for some reason. “Should we get you some toys to try out?”

“Yes.” The shower was convenient for some things but not for everything. “Now that I can lie down and jerk off, exploring seems more practical.”

Hmm?

“Cash?” I didn’t bother waiting for him to stop being dramatic because my patience wasn’t that good. “Do you have toys?”

His groan wasn’t really helpful, so I turned to Bates.

He was our Dom, so figuring out the answer seemed like it should be in his job description. Bates was so smart I could already see him working on the problem and it only took seconds before he nodded and gave me a grin that said he knew what to do.

“Maybe if we tell him good boys get a reward, he’ll be more open to answering your questions.” Bates sounded very polite and thoughtful, but he looked naughty.

He was really good at being a Dom.

“Rewards are always good.” For me too. “We still owe you a reward too.”

Everyone needed a reward.

The way Bates’s eyes sparkled said he was on board with that plan. “I haven’t forgotten.”

Thank God.

“Can we reward him for answering just one or does it have to be a couple? Because I still don’t know what he was thinking about that whole puppy thing.”

My just guessing didn’t count.

Bates got a thoughtful look on his face. “I think at least three answers would deserve a reward.”

I could deal with that. “Green.”

Now we just had to wait and see what Cash would do...besides groan.

Chapter 18

Cashel

Why was he still trying to kill me?

“Green.” It wasn’t very loud but I managed to get the word out.

Gareth’s excitement almost made the whole thing worth it, but it was the way he stopped mid-wiggle and sat up to look down at himself that really made it worth it. “I think I’m starting to see it.”

Bates couldn’t seem to decide if he wanted to beam with pride or give him a wicked grin. “You’d be a very cute pup.”

Part of me was glad I wasn’t the only one to see it but another part was frustrated that we couldn’t drop the subject.

I wasn’t built for talking about things like puppy play with Gareth.

“Do you think I’d be a cute pup?” As I hid against Bates’s shoulder again, Gareth got even more pushy. “That’s my first question. I get three.”

God, it was like dealing with Brady when we’d bribed him with candy to do his chores.

“Keeping track of your questions is a very good idea because he only has to answer three to get his reward.” Bates’s voice was so cheerful, I couldn’t tell if he was talking about M&M’s or orgasms.

“I’m going to be patient too, so that means I should get a reward too.” The matter-of-fact way Gareth made

sure to work his own orgasm in there almost made me laugh.

“I think my curious boy is lucky I like giving out rewards.” Bates’s teasing response got another wiggle from Gareth that made our Dom laugh. “See? Adorable.”

Gareth must’ve done something funny because Bates chuckled again, but I missed it. Hiding still felt like the best option, so I didn’t let myself feel guilty, either.

“If I have to remind him about my question, does he still get a reward?”

He was just as big a brat as Brady.

“That will be my call and will depend on how long he puts it off.” Bates was easing into Dom mode and something about the slight change in his tone had some of the stress in me fading. “Cashel wants to be a good boy, it’s just hard.”

Oh yeah.

And Gareth had started right in on a question that made me confused.

I’d spent so long feeling guilty for thinking he’d be a cute pup that I wasn’t sure how to tell him he’d be a cute pup.

Life was so weird.

“Yes.” I knew that wasn’t enough, so I kept going after taking a deep breath. “Yes, I think you’d be a cute pup.”

When the world didn’t end and Gareth was quiet, I pulled back and rested my cheek on Bates’s shoulder. Gareth shrugged like it was no big deal. “What? I’m cute. I’d look good in a tail. I just wanted to make sure you agreed. I like those black jeans and you don’t.”

“Because they make your ass look small.” And they didn’t do anything for his package either.

“Oh.” He cocked his head. “See, if you’d have said that the first time, I wouldn’t have bought them.”

Fuck.

“I didn’t think I was supposed to be looking at your ass.” That seemed obvious, but he rolled his eyes like I was stupid.

He was so annoying.

But I remembered not to say that when Bates cleared his throat.

Yep, questions and rewards.

Gareth decided to behave too but I could see that he wanted to tell me how ridiculous I was. “Thank you for answering my first question.”

Kiss ass.

Oh, we still had two more to go.

He was definitely trying to kill me.

“What else would you like to know?” Bates gave us both head kisses as Gareth’s mind seemed to whirl a thousand miles an hour.

The tension just kept building but I wasn’t sure what would make it go away or if I was the only one feeling it.

“I want to know if he has toys.” Gareth glared at me as I froze. “Not because I’m nosy but because I don’t have any and I don’t know what he thinks would be fun to play with.”

Together?

Alone?

With Bates?

Nothing in my head was making the question easier so I tried to make the random thoughts go away, but it wasn't working. Gareth even had a good reason for his question but my brain was making it worse.

"I..." I didn't want to hide, but I wasn't sure I could look him in the face.

Bates must've realized that because his arm around me tightened and he kept me pinned against his side. "Take a deep breath for me."

As I obeyed, he nodded and kissed my head. "That's right. Feel how I'm right there with you? I want you to imagine being tied up. Completely helpless and just listening to what to do to make me happy."

His tight hold made it almost feel like I was restrained and it released something inside me. I liked the idea of just making him happy. Bates smiling was one of my favorite things and just as perfect as Gareth curling up with me to watch cartoons with Brady.

By the time he'd eased his embrace, I was feeling almost fuzzy-brained and I liked it. Without the panic, it was also easier to remember that my Dom needed to know what kinds of toys I liked too. "I've got a few. I've got a few small dildos. I...I think you'd like some kinds of toys, but we might have to try out different things to figure out what you'd really enjoy."

Full fucking sentences.

I was fucking fabulous and Bates knew it too because I got another big hug and he kissed the top of my head. "You're doing great."

I wasn't so sure I agreed with that but Gareth's nod made me feel better.

Until he opened his mouth.

"I need you to answer this one really honestly and not what you think I want to hear."

God.

“Alright.” What was I supposed to say to that?

Gareth wasn't the type of person to get mad at me for stupid shit, but I just hoped it was a question that would be easy to answer honestly.

“My last question is...I don't know...it feels simple to me, but...” His frown said he wasn't sure what I'd think of it, though. “Should I ask Bates to help me look at the dildos and pups online and do it when you're not around? I don't want to make you uncomfortable or push you to go faster than you're comfortable with.”

Fuck.

It was a hard one.

I couldn't resist looking to Bates for help but he shrugged and gave me a very Dom response. “It's a reasonable question and you need to think about what you're comfortable being pushed to talk about and what you're not. I don't know your limits on this yet.”

When I was silent and still overwhelmed, Gareth sighed. “I thought I did, but now I don't know.” Gareth was mostly focused on Bates, frowning again. “I don't know why this was so hard for him. I know it was hard. But I just don't get it.”

Because I was throwing off all kinds of mixed signals.

“I didn't safeword.” That probably wasn't the right place to start, but it got nods from both of them, so I didn't feel stupid. “I just...we don't talk about this kind of stuff and it makes me worry that I'm going to do something wrong.”

That made me feel stupid.

But Gareth frowned again instead of rolling his eyes, so maybe it shouldn't have?

Bates spoke first, though, deciding it was time for our Dom to take charge. He was really smart but that kind of made him a pain in the butt too. "What's the worst thing that could happen if you tell him something that shocks him? Like you told him about the puppy thing. What if he'd have reacted differently? What's the worst that could've happened?"

"That he won't be my friend any longer." Duh. "There are just some things you can't come back from. What if I...I don't know...what if I made him feel weird?"

"All of this makes me feel weird." Gareth's helpful response made me sigh and Bates chuckle. "We're already past that point. But it's fine. I don't have any idea what strange stuff is running through your head, but if something too freaky pops out, I'll just tell you that's past my limit. And if I can't tell you for whatever reason, well, that's what we have Bates for."

Gareth gave him a beaming smile. "I'll tell him and he'll tell you no. That has to be something a Dom does."

Probably.

Bates was still grinning but he nodded. "I think that's a very good reason to have a Dom around."

He always had the best responses to Gareth's logic.

"Okay." I liked that plan. "It's just...I keep worrying about what will go wrong and I know you don't see it the same way."

Gareth didn't see anything the same way I did, and sometimes that drove me insane.

Sometimes I liked it though.

It'd gotten us a Dom after all.

"We're supposed to see things differently." Bates sounded utterly confident as he quietly gave both of us soft kisses. "That's how we complement each other."

Nodding along with our Dom, Gareth curled back into him and reached over to wrap an arm around me. "I like complementing you."

He was such a dork.

"I like it too."

Just like me...and Bates.

"You're both so cute. Alright, kisses to make up and to make your Dom smile." Because he thought we were sexy together.

"We can't kiss until he answers my question." Gareth had his stubborn face on even though he was watching my lips like he was waiting for them to do something weird. "Then we can kiss and make you very happy."

By giving him another blow job?

By making out together in front of him because he liked that?

The questions bouncing around my head were so distracting it made it easier to answer his. "I want to complain and wish you'd asked me something easier but I can't think of anything that wouldn't have been stressful."

Gareth gave me a *yeah moron* kind of look but didn't say it out loud and actually waited patiently.

He was definitely trying to get the better reward and it was driving me insane.

I'd never seen myself as someone who was competitive but it seemed like it just had to be the right circumstance to bring it out.

"Part of me knows it's going to make me nuts but part of me knows it'd make me even more crazy not to know what was going on." Me? Insane? "So I'm going to say I want to do it with you and I'll need Bates to push me and just do it."

Did that make any sense to him at all?

When he cocked his head and stared at me for a few seconds like I was an alien, I wasn't sure how it'd come across. His words didn't help me figure that out, either. "So I'm supposed to let our...our Dom, I guess, push you into something that's clearly making you uncomfortable because him not pushing you would make you more uncomfortable?"

Okay, maybe it did sound insane when he put it that way.

"Yeah?" I managed not to hide or avoid his gaze as he processed it but he was still looking incredibly confused.

Finally turning to Bates, he sighed. "This is like that spanking thing, right? It'll hurt but it won't hurt and no doesn't always mean no?"

Bates was trying to take the conversation seriously, but I could see him fighting not to smile at the very least. "Exactly."

Gareth sighed again and shook his head. "I'm glad I didn't start looking this stuff up on my own."

Good point.

"Okay." Snuggling against Bates, Gareth let out a breath. "I don't get it but I understand the rules and what you want."

Really?

"How are you feeling about it, though?" Understanding what I said didn't mean I hadn't hurt his feelings. Hell, I could've made him angry and I just hadn't realized it.

Part of me did realize how insane that all sounded but I couldn't help myself as the silence dragged out.

When he finally shrugged, the nervous tension in me wanted to explode, but Bates seemed to get that. "My

curious boy, he needs more words to reassure him that you're not frustrated with him or upset."

"I don't know if I'm upset. It feels a little like he doesn't trust me." Gareth's words stunned me silent and all I could do was sit there as he worked through it. "I wanted to do the spanking stuff with him because I thought we do everything important together and that's kind of important, but he's got all these fantasies that he's not going to share without worrying."

Fuck.

I was an idiot who had no idea how to respond or what I was supposed to fix, but luckily our Dom's brain worked faster.

"No, don't think of it that way." He kissed Gareth's head again before nuzzling him so Gareth would look up. Bates's hands were kind of full of us at the moment so he had to wait for Gareth to shift. "Kiss."

That was one order Gareth was eager to obey and I got to watch them slowly come together. It was soft and romantic and over before I was ready, but Bates took charge immediately. "His *everything important* is you. You're the most important thing to him. That's why nothing else mattered as much as keeping you with him. The rest is fun and sexy, but it's not you."

How did he understand everything so clearly?

"Sexy and fun wouldn't change that for us, though." Gareth took a moment and finally nodded. "But I guess it's hard to remember that when stress is eating your brain."

Yep, there were giant dick- and tail-shaped holes in my brain making it impossible to think.

"We'll help him remember it." Giving Gareth another kiss, that time fast and radiating happiness, Bates jerked his head toward me. "Do you think kisses will help his memory?"

“It can’t hurt to try.” Gareth looked so serious, I couldn’t tell if he was teasing or not as he leaned in. “Moving helps you learn shit.”

He was so insane.

But then his lips touched mine and nothing else mattered...because I had Gareth and Bates and all the kisses my brain needed.

Chapter 19

Bates

They were beautiful together.

Just watching their lips move against each other's and hearing the needy sounds and low whines they made went right through me. My heart and my dick were both in agreement that it was a sexy turning point for my two boys, but I knew we weren't quite done yet.

Cashel needed something else to imprint the lesson he'd learned or he'd end up worrying himself silly once he was out of my sight. For the moment he was relaxed as he kissed Gareth and moved against us, so I used the time to run my hands over their backs and let the ideas flow through me.

By the time Gareth eased back, giving Cashel one last peck, I had the outline of a plan. However, the actual implementation would have to wait until I knew what Gareth was thinking about rewards and all the fun things I knew were bouncing around in his head.

"We do things together because you're my everything important too." Gareth was adorable and kissed Cashel's nose as he wrinkled it. "I just remember that you're going to love me no matter what a bit better than you do. But I'll help. Don't worry."

Cashel seemed to be trying to process the innocently confusing part of that statement, but after a second, he simply nodded. It took another moment before words would work, though. "I'll remember."

Probably about several things from that wonderful lecture.

Swallowing, he kept nodding. "Thank you for helping."

Gareth's beaming smile just melted my heart. "You're welcome."

Adorable.

But his smile turned slightly naughty as he pulled Cashel closer and dropped his voice conspiratorially. "Should we reward Bates for being so good to us too?"

Cashel blushed but his scoff made me laugh. "I'm pretty sure that should count as your reward too."

Gareth gave him a wicked grin. "I'm multitasking."

So that was what we were going to call it?

Barely managing not to laugh again, I shook my head as they both slid down to the floor, looking eager and excited. All the stress that had been there when they'd been focused on their own relationship was gone. It seemed like they were both in sync when it came to me.

It was fun being the relaxing part of a relationship.

"Look at my beautiful boys." It was my turn to get kisses as they knelt in front of me, looking sweet and naughty at the same time as they each cuddled up to one of my legs. "Let me see you kiss again. I love watching my boys together."

Cashel's cheeks still had a bit of color but Gareth was eager and didn't hesitate at all as he leaned closer to Cashel to take his lips. "I love the way you watch us."

Gareth seemed to love performing too because this time there was tongue and heat and lovely moans as shivers raced through both of them. He didn't get lost in just the passion, though. As he pulled away, he gave me a cheeky grin and leaned in to do a stage whisper to Cashel. "Don't you love the way he looks at us, like we're his everything important too?"

“Because you are.” Taking the opportunity to give both of them another kiss when they were pressed close together, I loved the feel of them wrapped in my arms and the way I could feel the other’s breath as I kissed them. “It’s just a bit newer for the three of us than it is for you two.”

We’d get there, though.

Gareth radiated a naughty excitement as he nodded. “But there are lots of things we’re all new at together.”

The way his gaze dropped to my lap made his intention clear enough for Cashel to groan in embarrassment. But he didn’t tell Gareth to behave or try to distract our curious boy, so I knew he wanted it as much as Gareth...just for different reasons.

He loved seeing Gareth suck my dick even more than he loved sucking it...which made us a perfect fit.

Caressing Gareth, I shifted my touch until I was cupping his cheek and petting him softly. “Would my sweet cocksucker like to have some fun?”

Gareth shivered, his gaze sliding toward something soft and romantic. “Yes, Sir.”

Oh, so sweet.

“I think Cashel wants you to go first so he can watch.” We both saw Cashel’s slow nod out of the corner of our eyes, so I continued seducing my curious boy. “He likes seeing your sexy lips wrapped around my dick and he loves how excited you get.”

Gareth’s pleasure at getting to play with my dick and knowing Cashel was going to be watching him was so blatantly obvious that even Cashel relaxed into the excitement. He shifted closer and rested his head on the side of the chair so his chin was on my thigh. “I like seeing you happy.”

He was the master of understatement.

But it made Gareth shiver and smile even wider as he leaned over and kissed Cashel's cheek. "This is going to be so much fun."

His earnest pleasure made my dick even harder and I was grateful that I'd just slipped on sweats earlier so I didn't have to wrestle it out of my jeans.

Gareth appreciated it too based on the happy sigh he gave me as my erection came into sight. "I don't know why Jude is so worried. I have the best time with you guys."

Cashel was trying not to laugh as Gareth curled into me and took my cock in one smooth movement, cutting off my higher brain functions. "Such a good boy."

The simple praise took more thought than Gareth probably realized, and his happy hum and little wiggle didn't make it any easier. The vibrations raced up my cock and his excited movements just had me imagining a tail wagging behind him.

Gareth was going to look so cute like that and he was going to love how the plug felt as it moved inside him. He clearly loved sucking cock but he was nearly as passionate when he fingered himself, so I couldn't wait to see how he reacted to a plug with a tail.

Something about the way Cashel was watching him move said he was thinking the same thing. I just wasn't sure how he was seeing it or if he was still worried. His body language was calm and pleased, but that didn't give me enough to work with.

And Gareth's mouth was wonderfully distracting.

He kept taking my cock deep and teasing the head with his throat, almost giggling when he made me groan and gasp. It was taking all I had to resist the urge to fuck his throat but I'd forgotten to ask about that again.

I was going to have to start writing a list of important questions down so I didn't forget them when my boys

curled up with me. “Gareth...sweet boy...that’s...”

That was going to make me come and he knew it.

His very deliberate hums made that obvious, so I had to distract him or he’d race us to the finish.

“Wiggle for me, naughty boy. Let me see my sweet cocksucker move and wag his tail.” Gareth snickered around my dick, almost choking on it for the first time, and the distraction was enough to keep him from realizing how still Cashel had gone.

Of course, my curious boy had to play along and he licked the head, wagging his ass like he had a tail swinging around as he sucked me down again. “Oh, that’s sexy.”

And the fact that there was nothing to worry about finally got through to Cashel’s confused brain because he nodded slowly and made a low, approving sound that had Gareth wagging even faster.

“Just think about how good it would feel to have a plug in your ass as you suck on my cock. It’d be like you were playing with yourself but even better.” Based on what I’d seen and felt, he’d like that. “Harder. Thicker. And we could get you a toy that nudged your prostate every time you clenched it.”

That had them both moaning.

Cashel’s reactions had questions flooding through my head, but one thing I knew was that he liked the idea of seeing Gareth plugged and aroused. I just wasn’t sure I knew what else was going through his head. There were pieces missing that I hadn’t figured out yet and the mystery was driving me crazy.

And not just because of how nosy I was.

I needed to understand so I could help Cashel. My nervous boy was holding something back and it was making them both uncomfortable. So, getting him to

open up would be one of my top goals...once I could think.

Because Gareth's tongue was...

"You'd be so sexy." Doing my best not to grab Gareth's head, I kept petting him softly and running my hand through his hair as Cashel nearly giggled.

He seemed to find my slightly precarious grasp on my control funny.

Gareth was just pleased as punch that he got to play with my dick and get praised for something he was having so much fun doing. He made happy noises that vibrated up me as he wagged his tail again, loving the reactions he got from us.

My laughter was slightly strangled and more of a moan, but Cashel's was still almost a giggle, sweet and innocent, and it seemed to go right through Gareth. His confidence increased and I could feel the excitement radiating from him.

Just hearing Cashel's happiness made everything better for him...and seeing both their reactions made it even better for me.

"You're both so...I just..." Words were harder than I'd expected.

Gareth looked delighted at having scrambled my brains and slowly pulled off as I moaned, keeping a tight suction around my cock that had me desperately holding back my orgasm. When he finally pulled off, looking very pleased with himself, he rested his head on my thigh and smiled at Cashel. "Do you want a turn?"

Aww, pup was sharing his favorite toy.

Cashel blinked for a few seconds as he processed the question. I wasn't sure what was going through his head, but something made him blush and squirm. "I...I was thinking..."

He was definitely overthinking something.

But before I could step in, Gareth leaned over and kissed his cheek. "We won't be mad. What do you want?"

Cashel seemed to grab ahold of the burst of confidence Gareth gave him and pushed the words out. "I want to watch you. That's my favorite part but I want to taste him again on your lips once he comes."

Oh.

Teasing my fingers over his head, I danced them over his neck and smiled as he shivered. "I love how excited you get watching him and knowing you want to taste me on his lips is...oh, that's just the perfect way to end a wonderful blow job."

Gareth was just wiggling and beaming, the excited puppy in him loving all the happiness and attention. "I think that's a great plan. I love it when you make those little sounds when I'm sucking Bates off."

He gave Cashel a quick peck that made our nervous boy blush again before looking up at me and smiling. "We should let him come next for being so good and so honest about what he wants. He liked that restraining thing you talked to him about earlier. Maybe we should tie him up after you orgasm? That doesn't seem scary."

Having it all organized in his head, Gareth dove right back into playing with my cock, no longer worried about sharing. As I did my best to multitask, thinking about Cashel even as Gareth was doing his best to drag my orgasm out of me, Cashel was back to blinking at his best friend in utter shock.

But the way he hugged my leg and shifted said he wasn't against the idea.

Had he thought Gareth would miss his reaction earlier?

Had he realized how strongly he'd reacted?

There were other questions I should've asked but Gareth decided teasing the head of my dick with his throat would be fun and my train of thought completely derailed. "That's...I was..."

Closing my eyes, I tried to push back the pleasure but it just made both boys laugh, and the combination of Cashel's happiness and the vibrations of Gareth's laughter made it impossible.

"You're going to make him come." Cashel's helpful commentary didn't make it easier to hold back either. "You're both so...yeah, this is one of my favorites."

The way Cashel was pushing himself to open up and engage in the scene, not just watch it, added a spice I wasn't sure either of us realized was missing. Gareth teased my slit before looking up at me with love and need in his eyes as he swallowed me down again.

"That's just so..."

Beautiful.

Cashel seemed to have lost the word as Gareth moaned, but I knew what he meant and it shattered my control. Rocking up into his mouth pushed my dick deeper into his throat, but Gareth didn't complain. He made a sexy moan and swallowed me down as he shivered.

"He liked that." It didn't seem to be a question but I nodded as Cashel reached out and stroked Gareth's head. "He's a really good cocksucker. Maybe...maybe you should get on top of him next time and fuck his mouth."

My boys had the best ideas.

Between the fantasies Cashel pushed into me and the pleading in Gareth's eyes as he sucked my dick, I was a goner. "Sweet boy..."

Gareth was a cocksucking mind reader and teased my slit again as I came, exploding in his mouth as he worked to get every drop of cum from me. The feel of his tongue flicking over me and his lips almost nursing on the head made it all even more incredible.

But I had to admit, my favorite part was watching his pleased smirk as he pulled off and leaned over to share his prize with Cashel.

God.

Best boyfriends ever.

Best subs ever.

Best friends make everything better...including sex.

Chapter 20

Gareth

Rewards should always be this fun for everyone.

Stroking Cash's tongue with mine, I fed him Bates's cum and moaned as he shivered and made a sexy, needy sound. Cash got freaked out by some things but kissing didn't worry him at all, which made it even more fun.

But sadly, breathing was important and once he'd licked the last of Bates's cum out of my mouth, I had to pull away, giving him one last peck. I didn't let him get far, though. Wrapping my arms around him, I snuggled him close as I wiggled us between Bates's legs. "There we go."

Cash chuckled but let me hug him tight as Bates leaned over and held us both. "You're really good at getting your way."

"Thank you. I learned from the best." Brady. "You just need to remember that and not give me such a hard time to begin with."

Bates laughed as Cash snorted. "We'll have to find a way to help him remember that."

Oh, I liked that idea.

"Yes, Sir."

Ha, he liked that. It even got me another slow kiss where he made love to my mouth.

"Hey, what do I get if I call you Sir?" Cash's teasing grin made it clear he was just looking for attention, but Bates was feeling very wicked.

He leaned closer and kissed Cash's neck, moving his way up until he could nibble on his ear. Cash was right. Watching was fun too. But listening to our Dom talk dirty to Cash made it all even better.

"You'll get to be tied up and blindfolded, and when you're completely helpless, we're going to make you come." Bates didn't seem to notice the way Cash's mouth dropped open. He just kept going. "You were such a good boy answering all Gareth's questions that we need to give you a very thorough reward."

Cash was very quiet and blinked for a few seconds.

"He didn't safeword, Sir." That was always important to remember. "But what happens if he gets broke before he says his safeword?"

Bates gave him one last neck kiss before he turned to smile at me. "Well, one option would be to give him something like a bell at the start of a scene where he can simply drop the bell if words just aren't cooperating or if we have a gag or an erection in his mouth."

Good point.

"Is that why you haven't fucked my mouth? I don't have a bell yet?" We were going to have to fix that. "Brady's got some really annoying and noisy toys. What about a tambourine?"

That would work.

But for some reason, that was the part that made Cash's mind get back to work. "We're not getting that stupid toy out. It took a month to hide it where he couldn't find it."

Okay, he might've had a point.

"It makes noise when you drop it and it sounds like Bates can't fuck my mouth until we have a way for me to safeword." Rules were probably a good idea but they were a pain in the ass.

“You can always tap his thigh.” Cash mimicked the action on my arm. “See? That’ll work as a silent safeword.”

“If you’ve done all this research, you should be a little less easily panicked.” I rolled my eyes when he huffed. “But now that your brain is working again, are you going to safeword?”

Cash just pinched his lips together and looked like he wanted to pout.

“That’s not a safeword.” I looked up at Bates to make sure he’d seen it too. “Right? Pouting isn’t a safeword.”

Otherwise, Brady would never get a spanking.

He liked pouting.

Bates smiled and nodded. “That’s right. Pouting isn’t a safeword.”

Since that seemed to be settled, I tried to decide what we needed to do next. Safeword and then...rules. Bates always told us what would happen.

“What are your limits?” I wasn’t sure if I was supposed to start listing mine, but I didn’t bother. I wasn’t sure what mine were and I was pretty sure his would be stricter anyway.

Cash liked to make things complicated.

“I...” And his mind stopped again.

I turned back to Bates. “He’s easily broken. How do we fix this?”

Still looking all relaxed and smiley, he kissed Cash’s head. “I think he just needs a bit of prompting to get back on track. Why don’t you go into my room and get the blindfolds for me? In the bottom drawer of my dresser, there are some restraints. If you would pick two of the pieces of fabric that look like long scarves that would be very helpful.”

Oh, toys.

“Sure.” I nearly fell backward trying to get up but Bates steadied me as he laughed. “Got it. Sorry.”

“Careful. Kneeling is harder work than you might think.” Bates held me carefully as I stood up, but once I was on two feet and not tipping over, he let me go. “Bottom drawer. Don’t get too distracted with the other goodies.”

Hmm, promising that didn’t seem like a good idea, so I smiled and tried not to lie instead. “I’ll be right back.”

That was mostly the truth.

As I headed toward his bedroom, Bates kissed Cash again and whispered something soft.

Oh.

Private time.

Yes, he’d talked about taking both of us on separate dates when we’d first met, but it made sense he’d need private time with us. Especially to remind Cash that I was confused but not going to panic.

I had safewords and access to a tambourine and a Dom with a great imagination...we were good to go until I figured out the whole spanking thing...and the submission thing...and the dating two people thing.

Yep, we were good until I figured out what other questions I should be asking.

Like what some of the toys in the drawer were.

I recognized a few things like handcuffs and a spreader bar that I’d seen on a rerun of a weird cooking show...and man, I had questions about that...but some of the stuff didn’t make any sense. And I wasn’t sure I wanted to know what the little whip or sweeper type thing was for.

Nope.

Bingo.

Okay, fabric. I knew what Bates wanted to do with that, so it was easier to pick out two matching lengths of black fabric that I thought would look nice on Cash. I just wasn't sure if this was a *decorate naked Cash* plan or a *just make him come* plan.

Either would be fun, but I was kind of curious about what naked Cash would look like because I'd never seen him like that. He didn't seem to be one of those *got to be modest* people but he also didn't randomly take off his clothes.

Hell, I'd never seen him shirtless in a bathing suit.

Hmm, maybe he was one of those modesty people that I'd seen online?

As I headed back out into the living room, I paused by the kitchen and waited as Cash quietly whispered "Yes, Sir" and frowned. "Are you religious?"

Bates cocked his head but Cash just flopped over on the floor and looked up at the ceiling. "No, but sometimes you make me want to ask God what I did to deserve you."

"You must've done something incredible." Walking over, I dropped down beside him and kissed him because I could. "I'm awesome."

Bates was grinning so big he was nearly giggling. "You two..."

Yep, he thought we were both awesome.

"I found the stuff to tie Cash up, but you had stuff in there I didn't know what it was." Climbing over Cash since he was kind of in the way, I straddled him and tried not to squish him as I gave Bates the fabric. "What's the whip-broom-thing?"

Something fun judging by the naughty grin Bates gave me.

“I think what you saw is a small flogger.” He trailed his fingers up my chest, tweaking my nipples through my shirt. “It’s good for teasing nipples and cocks and all kinds of wonderfully sensitive places. If you like your spanking as much as I think you will, you’re going to love that.”

Well, if his expression was anything to go on, I was curious at the very least.

“Are we going to talk about spankings and limits and things so I can get my spanking?” I was starting to understand why he said we needed to talk, but so far, we hadn’t talked enough. “I’ve been very patient.”

Ignoring Cash’s scoff, I wiggled my ass over his cock as punishment for being cheeky.

“And I understand why you need to learn about our limits, mine especially, just in case you make my brain not work too.” But I could get the tambourine, so that would help with some of it. “I’ve really been patient too.”

Cash was feeling very cheeky and made another rude sound I had to ignore. “Yeah, because twenty-four hours is so long.”

I gave him another wiggle but focused on Bates. “We should also talk about punishments for naughty subs who are rude.”

“That might be a very good idea.” He glanced down at Cash who’d finally decided that being mouthy might not get him what he wanted.

Whatever the hell that was.

“But first, we were talking about rewarding him, so maybe forgiveness for a snarky mouth would be nice?” Bates was trying to look serious but his eyes were sparkling. “I think that might be more important at the moment.”

Hmm.

Rocking back and forth, I ran my ass over Cash's bulge and did my best to ignore the way he was squirming and the quiet whines that kept slipping out. "I don't know. He didn't seem like he wanted me to play with him and to make him come."

Shrugging, I sighed and pouted at Bates. "I was just being nice and his brain stopped working. That's got to be punishable."

Or maybe Bates could show me what that flogger did?

He was creative...Bates could think of a fun way to punish a naughty sub.

Coughing, Bates took a breath as Cash started grumbling and thrusting his hips up. "Get off me."

I hadn't heard the magic word or a safeword, so I just ignored the drama queen. "You're a very smart Dom, Sir. I'm sure you could figure out a good punishment that would make him hard and drive him crazy."

Brady had complained about some stuff that seemed insane at the time but I was starting to figure out what he'd meant...and if Jude could drive Brady nuts, Bates had to be able to enjoy torturing Cash. He was much better than Jude.

Cash just sucked in a breath and shivered.

No safeword there either.

Bates was right, they were important.

"I'm green, Sir." Giving him a big smile, I kissed his cheek. "I've been very good too."

That had Cash grumbling again but his brain, mouth, and cock were all working at the same time, so I thought I'd done pretty good.

“You’ve been a delight, my curious boy.” Bates leaned in and gave me a soft kiss, barely brushing his lips against mine. “I think you’d like helping me give Cashel an orgasm as your reward. What do you say?”

Oh.

“Do I get to see his cock or are you going to make him come through his clothes? That seems kind of dirty, though, so would that make it sexier or just messy?” I wasn’t sure and Cash had gone so still I didn’t think asking him would help. “It’d be sexy, but that might just be me, but I’m curious so see Cash’s cock. So I’m voting for naked if that’s an option.”

Cash shivered but stayed quiet.

It was definitely a mixed signal but Bates knew what to do. “You have wonderful ideas and thank you for making sure we both know what you want. Since I’m excited to see his cock too that’s my vote, but I won’t know exactly what we do until we get him tied up and I see how relaxed he gets.”

Made sense to me.

“Alright.” Climbing off Cash, I leaned over and kissed him again even though he still looked kind of startled. “I can’t wait to see your dick and give you an orgasm. But don’t forget. I’m your boyfriend too now.”

Helping him remember that seemed important even though I wasn’t sure how he could forget.

“I...I won’t.”

Words.

Cash was doing great.

“You’re going to make our Dom really proud of you if you keep using your words.” Pulling him up, since giving him a hug seemed like the right thing to do, I took advantage of being bigger than him and wrapped myself around him. “He likes giving our rewards.”

Cash groaned, but since that was his normal setting, I was glad to hear it. "You're going to kill me one day."

He was such a drama queen.

"So cute." Bates gave us both kisses as he smiled so big I knew he agreed with me about our drama queen boyfriend. "And so sweet together even when you're both being ridiculous."

And our Dom was so smart for knowing us so well already.

"I've been good." I was not going to deviate from that until I got an orgasm too. "Very good."

Cash snorted. "Just saying that over and over doesn't make it true."

Yes, it did.

And none of his pouting would change my mind.

Well, it might if he ever decided to wrap that pout around my dick...then I'd be more flexible about the whole thing.

I just wasn't going to tell him that...there was no reason to tell him my weakness. It'd be more fun for him to figure it out on his own.

Chapter 21

Cashel

I wasn't sure how he could be so sexy and annoying all at the same time but he'd turned it into an art form. The most frustrating part was that I couldn't decide if he was fucking with me just to distract me or if he was serious. It could've gone either way and that drove me insane.

Even more insane than when he'd been straddling me and trying to jerk me off with his ass.

God.

He'd been so...

"If you're a very good sub for our Master, he might let me suck your dick." Gareth's excited tone sounded like he could've been talking about dessert, not my cock. "But only if it's within your boundaries. You talked about those with Bates, right?"

He broke my brain again.

Bates gave me an understanding smile and mimed taking a deep breath which made my nerves settle even though I hadn't been the one to do it. It was enough to help me to nod so Gareth would know he could trust Bates to lead the scene.

A real scene.

This wasn't just Gareth talking Bates into letting him suck his cock.

That'd been hot, but a scene was real.

Part of me realized I was mentally going around in circles, but I felt stuck on that point and I wasn't sure I could escape it yet.

It was real.

Fuck.

Finally taking the breath that Bates had wanted me to, I felt my brain slow enough to listen to Gareth's chatter. "We all have limits, though, so you don't need to be worried about yours. Even if we're just going to make you come while you stay clothed, I'm going to love touching you or watching Bates touch you or watching you hump his leg. There are a lot of ways we can make you come without touching your dick with our hands."

One day he was going to be so helpful he killed me.

Bates was doing his best not to laugh, but the heat in his gaze made it clear he was thoroughly enjoying himself. "My sexy boys. So sweet together."

Leaning in, Bates gave us both soft kisses but he stroked my cheek, sending a shiver through me. Something about the soft touch felt like there was so much intent behind it. My Dom was touching me.

Something made it all feel so real.

Fuck.

No, I wasn't going to keep doing that.

"I..." I took a breath and tried again. "My head is going in circles and I don't like it, Sir."

A spark of something that looked like pleasure or pride flashed in his eyes making me feel even more like his sub than I already had. "Thank you for telling me, sweet boy."

Brushing his lips against mine, he nuzzled against both of us for a few long seconds, giving me time to take another deep breath. I wasn't sure it was helping as

much as it had the first time, but it felt better than just sitting there worrying.

When I'd relaxed enough or he'd figured out what he wanted to say, Bates ran his thumb over my cheek before straightening. "I'm going to give you two choices. If you can't pick between them and need me to take charge completely, then all you have to do is thank me for choosing. If you need to safeword, I expect you to say red or yellow. Is that clear?"

Wonderfully.

"Yes, Sir. I'm green." I knew he wouldn't be upset if we stopped, he'd made that very clear when he'd sent Gareth to get the restraints, but every little shift in his personality just reinforced the fact that was our Dom and our boyfriend.

"Good boy." He gave me another kiss, pleased at the response. "I'm going to restrain you. Do you want to sit on the floor here or the bed?"

I wasn't sure if he was asking if I felt comfortable with him on the bed or just asking about practicalities but I didn't have to think long. "The bed, Sir."

Knowing I had an out where he'd just step in and do what he wanted made it easier to answer, even if it didn't make any sense at all.

"You made that decision very quickly." He didn't praise me for making the decision or even tell me I was his good boy, but I had a feeling that was deliberate.

No bad choices?

"Thank you, Sir." Deciding that I liked the idea, I leaned back into Gareth's embrace and felt even more relaxed as he hugged me tight.

He must've realized how much I liked it because he made a happy sound and kissed the side of my head. I'd always been frustrated at how much bigger he was than

me, but now it felt perfect. Like I was supposed to fit against him and I'd been made perfectly for him.

Gareth liked cuddling and it wouldn't surprise me if that translated into wanting to hold me on his lap. Before everything had changed, the images flashing through my head would've frustrated me but not any longer.

Bates seemed psychic because he waited until my brain slowed again to smile and take my hand. "You're welcome. Now, Gareth is going to help you stand up and we're going to head into the bedroom. You're going to sit down on the edge of the bed closest to the door."

The step-by-step instructions might've been overkill at any other time, but for our first scene, it brought everything into focus. Bates would make the decisions. All I had to do was follow directions and let him lead us.

I'd always understood the logic of why someone would want a Dom but walking through the emotions in live time was mind-blowing.

"Yes, Sir." I didn't have to do anything else...no thinking or worrying required.

Gareth realized that was a good thing for me because he simply stood up behind me and carefully helped me up before moving us back just enough for Bates to rise. Gareth seemed to like the instructions too because he felt relaxed and...content felt like the best way to describe it even if that wasn't quite right.

"My good boys." We each got a kiss before he nodded to Gareth, which seemed to be the silent order to start walking.

Gareth was quiet but as he led me toward the bedroom, he stroked my back and stayed close to me. Nothing about it said he was worried or anxious, though. He wasn't even his chatty, oversharing self which was the oddest thing about the whole situation.

But there wasn't enough time to overthink about that.

Before I could even come up with a reason why he was so quiet, we were at the bed, and I sat down where I had this morning. However, instead of feeling stressed and trying to hide, I felt like it was where I belonged.

What a difference a few hours could make.

When I was in place, I closed my eyes and let out a deep breath. All I had to do was wait and listen. No worries. Nothing to plan. I really hoped that wouldn't be my favorite part of the scene, but I knew it'd probably be in my top five.

It'd been so long since nothing was my responsibility.

Somehow the random thoughts had me taking another deep breath. As I let the air out, I realized Bates had started wrapping the first cloth around my head.

He'd blindfolded me.

Gareth had done it to me a few times when we were kids but no one else ever had. I'd never even dated anyone I could've pictured giving that much control over to. That probably said more about the kind of guys I'd dated than it did about me, but I was amazed at how easy it felt with Bates and Gareth.

Normal.

That might not have been the right word, but it seemed like a good one as Bates stroked a hand over my head and Gareth trailed his fingers over mine where my hands lay on my lap. It probably should've felt awkward at the very least, but it was just blissfully normal.

"That's right." Bates brushed his lips over my head. "I can see that you're trying to relax and let us take care of you, and I'm so proud of you for that."

Trying.

As I worked at gathering up a few random brain cells to respond, Bates scattered them again by trailing his fingers down my chest and inching up the bottom of my

shirt. I heard myself suck in a breath. Bates gave the barest pause before inching it higher and fingers caressed low on my stomach.

“He’s always looked good like that.” Gareth’s voice was quiet, almost a whisper. “I like it when his shirt rides up.”

He did?

The question stayed stuck in my head as Bates made a low, agreeing sound. “Just a tiny bit of temptation makes you want more.”

Gareth must’ve agreed because something made Bates chuckle, obviously pleased and sounding sexy. “Why don’t you give it a kiss? I bet you’d like that.”

Me?

My—

He did.

I couldn’t help moaning as Gareth’s tongue flicked over the skin right below my bellybutton. That seemed to make him moan and definitely encouraged him because he did it again, that time licking around it and sending shivers through me.

Why was it so sensitive?

Bates made another happy sound that for some reason went right to my dick. “I knew he’d be delicious.”

That sent wicked images flashing through my mind and had Gareth easing my legs apart so he could get closer. “He is, Sir.”

Fuck. It was even hotter when Gareth said it.

Making a low hum, Bates did something that sent a shiver through Gareth and then through me, almost like we were connected. “That’s right. Good boys.”

I wasn't sure if it was the praise or the way Gareth was pressed tight between my legs, but something had me whimpering and rocking closer to him. He chuckled, pleased as fuck to be making me crazy, but Bates made a soft, thinking sound.

Making him think was dangerous because it had Gareth pulling away from me.

That should not have been in anyone's plan.

I might've made some kind of protest sound—not whining, protest. But I wasn't sure it got me what I wanted or not, because Bates chuckled. "Hands up and I'll let him eat out that pretty bellybutton some more."

I could feel my face heating up but my arms lifted before I could think about what I was doing. That just had Bates making another happy sound, but I didn't care once his hands were caressing up my chest and my shirt disappeared. "That's my good boy. Thank you for letting me know how much you like being touched and kissed."

I had?

Oh, the moan had been me.

Somehow that was hard to keep track of and it only got worse as Gareth went back to fucking my bellybutton with his tongue.

That was...

I thought it couldn't feel any better, but as his teeth nibbled on my stomach just enough to send sparks through me that fried my brain, Bates started wrapping the second restraint around my chest. Between his soft touch, Gareth's teeth, and the way the fabric was making me feel helpless and owned, the real world felt far away.

It was so much better than I'd expected and even more incredible than Bates had promised.

“Such a good boy for us.” Bates’s lips brushed against my cheek as the restraint pinned my arms to my side and somehow made thinking even more difficult. “Take another breath for me.”

Obedying was easy and made me feel even more relaxed, but it made the fabric feel like a tight hug that was completely encasing me...like I was snug in their arms. But this was a hug where they could kiss me and tease me with light touches making me even harder.

Gareth was right...hugs were the best.

Gareth was also a wicked boyfriend because he was back to tongue-fucking my bellybutton and sending waves of pleasure through me. I wasn’t sure how my dick and bellybutton were connected but the sensations were incredible.

Teeth.

Oh, his tongue.

Bates’s light, teasing caresses seemed to dance over my skin and made Gareth’s touch feel even more wicked. But it was impossible to worry about what we were doing or what would happen when I felt so good, and Bates kept giving us both such sweet praise.

“Did you hear him moan, my curious boy?” Bates’s body shifted and I imagined him running a hand over Gareth’s head. “He likes your tongue there. Can you hear him? He thinks you’re a wonderful lover.”

It was like the world had turned upside down but somehow that made it right side up.

“Yes, moan for us, sweet boy. Let us hear how good it feels. I bet it’s almost like you’re floating.” Bates was tender and psychic because he knew how foggy the world was getting from just my desperate sounds. “Good boy.”

I wasn't sure what I'd done, but I got a Gareth-level rush from knowing I'd made Bates happy.

"I..." Had I been supposed to say something? "Thank you."

Yes, polite was important...and it really did get nice things just like she'd said it would.

It got Gareth rubbing his face over my sadly still-clothed erection and Bates's hands seemingly everywhere at once. Then the world tilted again. But it took me a moment to realize the world *had* shifted, but it was because Bates had stretched me out on the bed. "Beautiful."

Hands kept moving over me, and even though I'd known their touches so clearly before, it was almost impossible to figure out where one man stopped and the other began. They were so in sync, it was like Bates had four hands and two mouths and all of them knew exactly what he wanted.

It made the world whirl and I tried to reach out and pull them to me, but I'd forgotten about the restraints. Just remembering it made it all even more incredible and reality got even harder to track as my brain got fuzzy. It was such a whirlwind, I'd have sold my soul for an orgasm.

Someone wicked must've been listening to that plea because a mouth wrapped around my dick but it wouldn't let me come. It kept flicking the head of my cock before swallowing me down again. Every time the pleasure built, the naughty mouth would find a new way to tease me.

It licked and fucked my slit and lapped at my balls and took me deep again.

I wanted to beg for more or demand someone make me come, but all I heard was whines and moans. If I begged, it seemed to get stuck in the whirlwind of need

and emotions in my head. It'd never felt anything like it and knowing it was Bates and Gareth there with me was the only thing that kept me grounded in the storm.

I thought the teasing would go on forever since it felt like years since they'd first touched me. Over and over, they pushed me to the limit only to drag me back and as they swallowed around the head of my dick, I kept expecting them to pull away, to go back to fucking my slit and making me whimper and beg...but they didn't.

Their voices hummed and made pleased sounds that finally got through to me.

I could come.

Swallow...hum...swallow.

I exploded.

Pleasure that was so good it almost hurt fired through me and I could feel the mouth swallow me down as shot after shot of cum filled their mouth. When they settled into almost nursing on it and dragging out the wonderful pain feeling, the sensation and helplessness was so incredible and so overwhelming, everything finally faded away.

Chapter 22

Bates

“There you are.” Kissing Cashel’s forehead as he finally shifted, I stroked over his chest, encouraging him to stay still. “The blindfold is loose and just draped over your eyes still so that you can choose when to take it off.”

Cashel let out a breath and wiggled his fingers, ignoring the blindfold for the time being. It wasn’t really a question since he hadn’t said any words, but I took it as one. “The restraint around your chest is loose as well, but still wrapped lightly around you. I didn’t want to surprise you as your head started to clear.”

Gareth was so quiet I wanted to poke him, but I knew why he was nervous, so I just gave him a smile as Cashel took the easy way out and nodded.

It seemed to be a sign that he wasn’t ready to confront reality yet, so I just kept lightly caressing him and kissed him again, encouraging Gareth to do the same. Knowing he could kiss Cashel seemed to jumpstart his body again and he actually let out a tense breath.

That got a smile from Cashel and he leaned his head toward Gareth like he was searching for our nervous partner. Waiting for Cashel to speak up on his own seemed fruitless, so I kissed him again and pretended to whisper. “If you don’t at least smile at Gareth, he’s going to have a heart attack worrying.”

Gareth’s frustrated huff got a laugh out of Cashel. “I’m not worried. I’m just being patient.”

Bullshit.

“Ah, I’ll remember the difference next time.” My response got a blush from Cashel, so I kept going. “New relationships are hard.”

Cashel’s snicker got another huff from Gareth, but that was mostly for show judging by the grin on his face as Cashel teased him. “You’re so dramatic.”

“Takes one to know one.” Gareth’s childish response got another laugh from Cashel and he finally tilted his head back so the blindfold started sliding off.

As I helped and he could finally see, Cashel forgot whatever snarky response he’d been gearing up to give Gareth. “Hey.”

They were so cute.

“Hi.” Gareth smiled like it was a perfectly normal day and he was just glad to see his best friend. “You’re awake.”

Cashel rolled his eyes, which had probably been the response Gareth wanted. “You’re a genius.”

“Yep.” Eyes sparkling, Gareth beamed. “That’s why you love me.”

That kind of confidence was the sexiest thing I could imagine.

“You’re such a pain in the ass.” As soon as he said it, Cashel squirmed, knowing Gareth too well.

Ignoring Cashel’s groan, Gareth shook his head. “No butts this time. I’ve still got to have conversations and we didn’t talk about your limits on that.”

Cashel’s eyes went startingly wide but Gareth took pity on the nervous sub. “But if you promise not to freak out, I won’t ask about that limit. For now.”

“Someone needs to shoot me.” Closing his eyes, somehow wonderfully dramatically, Cashel sighed and missed Gareth’s wicked grin. “Just shoot me.”

“Is that a kink I don’t know about?” Gareth cocked his head, clearly pretending to be confused that time. “I’m not sure that’s safe.”

Snorting, Cashel huffed but opened his eyes and smiled. “Fine. No freaking out.”

They were adorable.

“Will you freak out if I ask Bates to look up the pup stuff online with me?” Gareth’s eyes darted back and forth between us questioningly. “I won’t ask about looking at sex toys this time.”

And the eyes closed again.

“I should’ve left the blindfold on.” Cashel’s drama lasted a few seconds before he shrugged. “I’m stuck. Helpless. There’s nothing I can do to stop you.”

Gareth’s brows pulled together and he looked over at me before he mouthed silently. “Safeword?”

Nodding, I didn’t bother trying to hide my grin. Besides safewording, the nut could’ve just gotten up because he was barely restrained and it would’ve fallen off as soon as he did more than wiggle.

And judging by how still he was being, he had no intention of moving.

The answer relaxed Gareth but there were still questions in his eyes. I wasn’t sure what to expect but he surprised me and gave Cashel a smacky kiss. “Alright. But do you need a drink of water or a snack? Didn’t Brady say something about taking care of a sub after a scene?”

Gareth seemed to think that was slightly skeptical, though. He propped his head up in one hand and got the cutest thoughtful expression. “I think I’m supposed to get you water and a cookie? He might’ve made up that cookie part, though.”

Oh yeah.

“Water is a good idea.” But who to go get it and who to make sure our nervous boy didn’t forget about that no panic promise?

Gareth took care of that question.

He gave Cashel another quick peck and nearly hopped off the bed. “I’ll get him water.”

Alright then.

“Thank you. There are some water bottles in the cabinet over the sink that have straws and will be easier for him to drink.” Since he wasn’t going to ruin his perfectly crafted insanity by actually moving.

“Great. Be right back.” Wearing a wide, unconcerned smile, Gareth nearly bounced out of the room, leaving Cashel and I together.

When he was gone, Cashel’s eyes popped open and he started to frantically whisper. “Was that his mouth? I couldn’t tell at the end. It was confusing. But did he panic? Was he worried? Did he think I came too soon? Did I make him work too long? That’s rude, right?”

The things he found to worry about were fascinating.

“You were not rude. I’m not surprised it was confusing because you were pretty deep by the end. And nothing we did worried him except at the end when he started worrying that you were going to worry.” Raising one eyebrow, I let that sink in.

It only took a few seconds to realize that his possible reaction had been the only stressful part of the whole thing for Gareth. My curious boy loved having fun with his partners and it hadn’t been until we started releasing the restraints that he’d started to overthink the situation.

“Oh.” Cashel took a breath and slowly let it out. “Okay. Good.”

He was so cute.

“Are you going to start worrying?” Or obsessing or having a grand old freakout? “Gareth was a bit stressed thinking about how you would feel when you woke up.”

That was a bit of an understatement but not much.

“I’m not.” It wasn’t the most confident answer but it seemed mostly true. “I’m just...thinking too much? But not overthinking it. Honest.”

I wasn’t sure I saw the distinction, but I nodded anyway.

Pushing crazy people out of their delusion wasn’t a good idea, and if he wanted to pretend those were very different things, I’d let him.

“It was a big shift in our relationship and in your relationship with Gareth.” So a bit of thinking too much wouldn’t be unwarranted. “But how are you feeling?”

Because there was no way Gareth hadn’t found the water bottles by that point.

Cashel let out another breath, working on relaxing as he thought about the question. “Not as weird as I thought I would? That’s probably a stupid answer, but I don’t—”

Cutting him off with a quick kiss, I shook my head. “No, there are no stupid answers. It’s hard to know what to expect after something like a first scene. You just need to know that we’re here for you, no matter how you feel. You just need to communicate with us, okay?”

Scrunching up his face, Cashel sighed. “That sounds terrible honestly. I bet you have a gag somewhere. Why don’t we try that?”

Gareth must’ve decided that we’d gotten enough private time because he came bouncing back in with water and a smile.

Whatever he’d overheard hadn’t stressed him out, so it was one less thing to worry about as he climbed back

in bed with us. “Why would someone like a gag? And you can’t get weird because you brought it up.”

“I never agreed to that rule.” Giving Gareth a sexy glare, Cashel decided that was something he wouldn’t back down from. “Bringing up a topic doesn’t imply consent to discuss, that’s just—”

He kept grumbling right up until Gareth shoved the straw in his mouth.

I had to remind myself that laughing would just encourage their antics, but it wasn’t easy. Luckily, my curious boy had given me a wonderful distraction. “For some people, taking away one sense, or something like their voice, makes the others feel more intense. For other people, it’s another way of feeling restrained for their Dom. But those are just the first answers that came to mind. There are probably a lot of reasons people enjoy them.”

Gareth nodded as Cashel proceeded to let the water trickle into his mouth, drinking slower than anyone I’d ever seen. “That makes sense. Do you have one? Can I see it?”

“I do not have one but we can look those up online once we get to that point.” And since he’d traded pup research for sex toys, I wasn’t going to pull it up on my phone. “I’ll make a list of things we want to explore.”

Looking curious and like he was making a wonderfully confusing mental list, he gave a curt nod. “Let’s look at pain things and not pain things. I don’t know how to narrow them down any more than that.”

Well, it was a start.

“How about pain from impact toys, pain from nonimpact toys, and fun anal things to start?” It sounded almost like we were building a Jeopardy category, but Gareth took it as seriously as I meant it as Cashel kept taking his tiny sips.

“I think that’s a good idea.” But judging by the expression on his face, he still had questions. “What other categories would there be?”

His curiosity was wonderful.

“Well, restraints and maybe a creative or fantasy play section? Costumes and alien dicks seem like they’d go together, but maybe tentacle penises should go in the anal play section?” I started second-guessing that category placement as soon as I’d said it. “Would a French maid’s outfit and a tentacle go in the same search results?”

Cashel’s eyes were so wide I knew he had a response he was barely holding back. Gareth didn’t have that reservation, though. He shrugged. “It depends on where you’re starting? I mean, I’m pretty sure Brady could come up with a question for Google that would spit out those answers together.”

Hmm, he was probably right.

“Good point.” But if it was logical to Brady, we probably didn’t want to go that route. “So, let’s put nonhumanoid appendages in the anal fun category for now.” My response had Gareth looking pleased to have the debate settled but Cashel grinned.

He’d figured out my slightly rude logic and thought it was funny.

Well, I might not look like the greatest Dom at the moment considering how rude I’d been, but he’d stopped wanting to crawl under the bed and hide, so I was counting it as a win.

“There are more than I realized.” Still looking wonderfully thoughtful, Gareth leaned down and gave Cashel a quick, slightly unexpected kiss. “You’re smart for wanting us to separate those. I don’t think we have time for puppy research and sex toys. I kind of thought there were just a handful of types.”

Like what?

I really didn't want to give Cashel a heart attack, but the question was just looming in my head. I kept a tight leash on it and was going to pass up the wonderful insanity but Cashel sighed. "Just ask. Even I want to know."

Yes!

"What kinds did you know about?" My question cleared up some of the confusion on Gareth's face.

"Well, I'd heard about dildos." He shrugged like that was to be expected. "You can't go to Walmart without seeing something weird so I know there are things that go around your dick and vibrate."

I needed to go to Walmart more often.

"Um, what else?" He looked up at the ceiling like he was shuffling through memories. "I heard some guys talking about gags and one asked the other about nipple clamps."

Focusing back on me, his frown deepened. "I wasn't sure about something with clamps in the title, though. Sounds like a car part."

Hmm.

"I hate it when you have a good point." Cashel was back to sighing dramatically but wasn't nervous anymore. "Those would go in the nonimpact pain section."

"You're so smart." Beaming, Gareth gave Cashel another kiss. "Are you ready to show me the pup stuff? I think tails sound like fun."

Barely managing to hold back a groan, Cashel nodded. "Yes, I can do it."

Gareth rolled his eyes. "You talked to Brady about diapers. I'm just asking about tails. That's not nearly as

stressful and you think I'm cute. So just imagine me naked and wagging my tail. Then you'll forget to be worried."

Their family was fascinating.

"Fine." Cashel's frustrated huff made it sound like it might not be the right time to ask about the diaper conversation. "But you keep forgetting you matter more than Brady. So stop comparing us."

Instead of finding it rude, Gareth's smile got even wider. "You say the nicest things."

Adorable.

And slightly insane.

I loved it.

"I'm going to smother you one night." Cashel glared at the grinning nut like he was imagining doing it right then.

"You sleep too soundly for that." Gareth gave him another quick peck. "Alright, I've been very patient. Time for pups."

Cashel seemed to decide that the pups were the safer discussion topic because he nodded and finally wiggled to sit up. "Um..."

I held my breath as Cashel squirmed and sighed, needing only a little bit of help from us to move around. His brain was either going a thousand miles an hour or it'd stopped completely. I couldn't guess which, but Gareth didn't seem to mind either way.

He simply sat up and leaned against the wall, looking excited and almost content. "Should Bates sit in between us?"

It could've been a distraction for Cashel or a legitimate question, it was hard to tell, so I just waited

and watched Cashel mentally wrestle with something.
“One second.”

Oh, this was getting interesting.

Staying quiet was painful but I managed.

“Do you want to come?” Once the words were out, Cashel seemed to be able to breathe easier. “It’s fair.”

So cute.

Gareth shook his head, though, confusing both of us. “I want to come later while you’re listening again. You’re not ready for me to be naked in the daylight, so we’ll just have another sleepover with Bates.”

They would?

“Alright.” Cashel either thought it was logical or too insane to question because he snuggled the fabric tighter around him and leaned back against the wall, relieved the hard part was over. “I think I want to be in the middle for now.”

“It’ll give you more people to hide against.” Nodding like it was a good choice, Gareth snuggled closer to Cashel. “See, you’re a great planner. That’s why I need you to call the maintenance guy and see if our shower is supposed to be making that noise.”

No laughing.

No laughing.

“I’m not even going to respond to that.” Cashel turned to me, completely forgetting how nervous he’d been just moments before. “One blow job and he thinks I’m calling maintenance. He’s crazy.”

“Who said he gave you the blow job?” My question had our indignant boyfriend’s mouth falling open.

Turning to Gareth, I smiled as I sat up beside them. “I think my laptop’s going to be best for this.”

Luckily, I'd tucked it beside the nightstand earlier so it was in easy reach.

"Do you have a preference on where we start? I know of some pups and their handlers online who talk about what it's like. It would also be easy to find some cute, fully clothed ones that are playing." When Gareth snorted, I laughed. "And we can find some pups that are having a bit more of the naughty type of fun."

"That one." Rubbing his hands together, his grin looked wicked. "I was promised happy tails and I want to see just how happy those get."

Ignoring Cashel's groan and the way he seemed to be looking up to decide which deity to pray to, I opened my laptop. "Deal."

This was going to be fabulous.

Chapter 23

Gareth

This was so weird.

“Don’t his knees get tired running around like that?” I wasn’t sure the plug would be comfortable either, but it was probably easier to focus on the happy aspects of that with all the wagging.

But his knees...

“Why did I think sitting in the middle was a good idea?” Cash was back to being dramatic and wiggly, so I just ignored him as I leaned closer to the computer.

“My knees don’t hurt giving you a blow job when you’re in the chair, but that just doesn’t look comfortable.” All the pounding had to make his knees hurt. “Sir, have you heard the pups talk about that?”

Bates reached around behind Cash and squeezed my shoulder as the computer shifted on Cash’s wiggly lap. “I think the knee pads would really help with that problem. So we don’t go cheap on those.”

Yes, no dollar store knee pads or sex toys.

But as I scrolled on my phone through an online store that sold hoods, I wished there was at least a discount store version. Maybe Walmart version at the very least.

Some people were on a budget.

“That’s a good point.” Gesturing toward the pup on the computer screen who was running back and forth in what seemed to be his or his handler’s living room, I pointed to his mitts. “Those don’t look uncomfortable, though. He seems happy.”

Very happy.

So it couldn't be too distracting.

"Happy or happy-happy?" Cash couldn't seem to decide if he wanted to giggle or hide at the bad joke that popped out of his mouth.

Bates laughed. "Both."

"Yep." Definitely both. "Happy barks and happy wiggles."

The pup on the screen liked wagging his tail and he liked chasing the ball that the other man who was just off camera was throwing.

"Ignoring the penis part, it looks like simple fun. The Dom-handler-person gets to relax and pet his puppy, and the puppy gets to run around and play and get turned on." The more I watched, the more I understood why Cash thought I'd like it, but the less I understood why he thought I'd get upset at him for thinking I'd like it.

Overthinkers were confusing and made everything stressful.

Even playing fetch.

"So one guy is the human in charge, one guy is the pup and gets to pick out how cute he wants to look, then they play?" That was it? "Are we sure there's not a bigger part of this that you don't think I'm ready for? I am. I'm not going to get startled."

Well, maybe a little depending on what it ended up being but not much.

Bates cocked his head as he leaned around Cash but didn't confess anything right away. So maybe he was trying to figure out how to explain the stressful part?

Cash just frowned. "Like what?"

“I don’t know.” This just couldn’t be all there was to it. “Brady started off by telling us he liked playing because it was relaxing, then he mentioned the age play thing, and then he talked about the age sliding around a bit and diapers and Daddies. People start off saying it’s just a little odd then they start easing you into all the bigger odd parts.”

Everyone did that.

Cash was just blinking, so I looked over at Bates who shrugged and seemed to struggle to answer my question. “I can’t think of anything else with the pups that would be like that. They play. They get attention. They cuddle or wag themselves into an orgasm.”

Pausing, he frowned and thought about it for a moment.

“The most stressful thing I can think of would be the pups who go to places like a BDSM club or meet up to play with other pups somewhere.” Bates gave Cash a side-eye as I scrolled past a few more pup accessories. “Some people don’t like public scenes.”

Would Cash mind my having a public scene?

Would I have different outfits for public scenes?

Was I supposed to look nicer when other people could see me?

Was I supposed to look naughtier when other people could see me?

Was it like going to a regular club and showing off a great ass by wearing the perfect jeans?

I knew Cash wasn’t the type to show off how sexy he was when he submitted, but what if I showed off how cute I was?

Ugh. Every time I thought we got closer to my spanking, something else we needed to talk about came up. It was like some kind of trick question that we’d

never get to because the talking part would always get in the way.

“I don’t know what I feel about public scenes.” I knew that was okay but it was nice when Bates nodded and smiled. “But we can figure that out later. We’ve got spankings and things like that to figure out first.”

And it would probably be good to figure out how we all felt about the pup thing too.

“One thing at a time, right.” Cash took a deep breath and seemed very focused on the screen even though I knew it was making him strangely nervous. Maybe he was nervous because he was turned on? “Um, what... what do you think about the pups?”

Had I not been clear on that?

“As long as there’s nothing crazy no one mentioned already, I think it looks fun. Easy fun, not the complicated kind that comes with a lot of rules like those big board games one of Brady’s brothers likes.” Anything that came with that many instructions was not fun.

Cash actually laughed as he nodded. “I agree. He’s crazy.”

For some reason that made Bates nearly giggle, but he leaned in and distracted me by hugging us both. “Simple fun is the best kind.”

Cash seemed like he’d finally relaxed but quickly went back to wiggly and weird. “So they’re fun but...but what else?”

He was overthinking this, but I wasn’t sure what the right level of thinking would be, so I just started rambling and tried not to worry about it. “Um, I liked wagging my pretend tail before. It was funny to see your reactions and the pup looks like he’s enjoying himself, but I’m not sure how he gets in that headspace? That’s what it’s called, right?”

I probably should've waited for them to do more than nod, but I didn't because it felt like Cash would start to worry again if I stopped.

"I don't know how you pick out what kind of pup you are or what hood to get—there are a lot of options here—and I'm not sure what else I'd do besides play fetch? I don't want to make you worry about it or just weird about it and I don't know how to fix that either." What else? "Oh, and what if I come? I think you're going to end up seeing my penis if we do this. And do pups get punished for making a mess or rewarded?"

I thought that was a reasonable question, but Cash groaned, rubbing his hands over his face and sighing as Bates giggled. "I'm not scared of your penis."

Could've fooled me...and I didn't miss the way he ignored several important topics.

"It's okay. Not everyone is comfortable with them." People came in lots of varieties. "Did you know I met a couple on campus a few weeks ago who are dating and boyfriends but they mostly don't do penis things because one of them is asexual?"

As still as Cash went, I realized I probably hadn't mentioned it.

"I don't think they do other stuff but it didn't come up in conversation, so I don't know." They might've been interesting, though. "Hmm, do you think people who talk about penis stuff so easily are into something like this?"

Maybe I should find them and explain that there are other things they could do as boyfriends?

Bates mostly ignored Cash's drama, just kissing the side of his head and shrugging. "I think it's a good possibility. But it's hard to know what people are into just with a quick conversation. Some people radiate out

how special they are and other people are more camouflaged. It's what makes life fun."

I thought it was what made life confusing but to each their own.

"I'm not going to worry about that now, though. We've got a lot of other stuff on our list, like hoods and penises and things like that." Looking away from the screen again, I focused on Bates. "You're not worried about seeing my penis, are you?"

I didn't think so, but it seemed polite to ask just in case we'd rushed him before. "You can tell me if that's on your limits list. I think it's on Cash's."

Bates chuckled but shook his head. "Your penises are not on my limits list, so don't worry about that. So far, nothing you've done would touch on anything on my list."

That was good to know, but I wasn't sure I was ready to ask what he didn't want to do...it seemed like that could be slightly nerve-racking.

"Do you have a preference on hoods?" Going back to my phone as the pup on the computer barked and wiggled, I frowned. "There are a lot of options, but I kind of like the ones with the dark red accents. I'm supposed to have a preference on what my pup would look like, right? Is that something you decide?"

Doms seemed to have a lot of leeway when it came to all the things they could decide for their subs, so I wasn't sure who picked out the clothes for a pup.

"I think you deciding what your pup side would look like makes the most sense, but if you need help, I'm sure Cashel and I would both be able to give you opinions." Bates smiled as he volunteered Cash to talk about stuff that would make him squirm.

Doms were kind of wicked sometimes.

“Are there any colors or types you don’t like?” I didn’t have the disposable income to buy pup gear that either one of them hated and didn’t want to see me wearing.

Both of them were shaking their heads as I glanced over at them, so that made things easier, but didn’t give me a starting point. “Okay, should we try a harness tail first or the plug kind?”

There were a lot more decisions that needed to be made than just what color I would be, and they were going to help me narrow down at least a few of them or I’d never buy anything. “We can try one and then next month the other.”

As long as I spread it out, we could make it work.

Cash was squirming again but Bates reached over and paused the video so I looked over at him. He was giving me a curious look and finally shifted so he was sitting sideways on the bed. “Do you want to test it out slowly? There’s nothing wrong with that, but I want to make sure I know what’s going through your head.”

Probably smart...sometimes my head confused me too.

“It’s expensive.” Cash’s nod made me feel better about that. He was good with managing our money and I didn’t want to screw up the budget. “Cash handles the budget and stuff, but I think it would be easier to spread it out over a few months. He says we have to plan for things just in case my parents forget me again.”

Bates blinked but after a second slowly nodded. “Okay, well, I think as your Dom it would be appropriate for me to buy the gear. That’s very common in a lot of BDSM relationships and I think you’ve even heard Jude talking about buying stuff for Brady. Like the toy conversation last week.”

“We really are way too loud.” Cash’s quiet drama made Bates grin, but his words didn’t tell me what he thought of Bates buying stuff.

Leaning closer, I hoped I wouldn’t sound like I was calling him a liar. “Um, is he allowed to do that or would it be rude? I don’t know the manners stuff for this.”

Brady’s mom said knowing all about manners was very important.

Cash shrugged and thought about it as Bates smiled, waiting patiently...he was really good at that. “I can see the logic either way, but I don’t think it would be rude to let him pay for it as long as he has the money. I’m also not sure he wants to wait to stretch out the...the hands-on research for this over several months.”

Good point.

Bates’s smile widened and he gave Cash a quick kiss. “You’re very smart. My patience could not wait several months to figure out if he liked wagging his tail.”

That made Cash blush but he didn’t get dramatic. It made me realize how much he wanted this for him to actually answer questions without groaning. So I did my best to take what he was saying seriously too.

“What about money?” Trying to remember everything Cash had said as I looked at Bates, that stuck out to me the most. “You said you had a part-time job but college is expensive.”

Bates didn’t brush it off or refuse to talk about money like other people I knew would have. “I’m getting my master’s in mathematics because I work for a company that does statistical analysis. I got started with them when I was an undergrad and they’re paying for most of my degree. They’re letting me work from home too, so I can pay for the gear without it being a problem.”

Huh.

“So, you’re like average smart and lucky with getting your foot in the door or like that professor on campus who jumps around from class to class because he’s ridiculously smart and kind of odd?” Cocking my head as Bates started to do a really good impression of Cash, wiggling and sighing, I realized the answer should’ve been obvious.

Interesting people always seemed to fall in the *too smart to be normal* category and the way Bates started stumbling through his answer made that clear. “Um, well, I like math.”

Duh.

“Math is good.” At least he’d always have a job? It seemed like one of those skills that jobs would always need. “We don’t mind that you’re smart.”

The building was so weird it might make things easier, honestly. He’d have probably known what to do with the spider a lot faster than we had.

“Maybe you could help us with Gareth’s taxes this year? His parents keep forgetting to claim him and then we have to fix it and then they go back and claim him. It’s been a mess.” Cash’s idea was brilliant and earned him a big kiss from me.

“That’s a great idea.” Cash was just as smart as Bates.

But, man, I hoped neither of them was as smart as that professor because he was just weird.

“And now we don’t have to worry about how to pay for groceries and the puppy play stuff.” That would’ve been hard on the budget. “But you know, we probably could’ve explained to Brady’s mom and she’d have helped. She likes helping.”

And she didn’t care that Brady was very Brady, so she wouldn’t mind me being interesting either.

But that idea sent Cash into another round of groaning and shaking his head. "No. Just no. We are not talking with her about anything kinky. Meeting Bates is going to give her enough to worry and lecture about."

True.

"I get to meet her?" Bates seemed thrilled for some reason. "That's going to be so much fun."

Yep, he was weird-level smart.

Chapter 24

Cashel

The smart thing explained so much.

They were always nuts.

But Bates was nice and cute and not too weird, so we could probably just ignore the smart part. What we couldn't ignore was that Gareth thought I was scared of his penis and that he wanted help picking out his gear.

Ugh.

"No, nothing interesting." Bates kissed my forehead. "We're just going to talk about our threesome. Perfectly boring."

He was such a brat sometimes.

"She likes interesting and she doesn't mind Brady is little. So I don't think she'll find it weird at all." Gareth paused, cocking his head and mulling over something. "You know, one time she—"

Nope.

"No distracting us with Brady stories." I hated to be the one to get us back on track talking about something so hard, but if we wandered off mentally, I wasn't sure I'd survive coming back to it. "We have things to discuss."

Someone kill me.

Bates was nearly giggling, but Gareth was just looking at me like he thought I'd lost my mind. "Are you sure?"

“No, but we need to anyway.” And I’d never get confident about it if we didn’t talk about it.

Bates liked the pup idea.

Gareth thought it looked like fun.

No one thought it was bad-weird and I wasn’t scared of Gareth’s dick.

God, even thinking about it sounded insane.

“I’m not sure this is a good idea.” Gareth reached up and stroked my head like I was an overly anxious pet. “You don’t have to talk about penises or plugs if you don’t want to. We can take that slow.”

God.

As I tried to bargain with God to just strike me down with lightning since that’d be the fastest or maybe most ironic way to kill me with all the shenanigans we were getting up to, Bates let out a breath and managed not to laugh. “I think he really wants to see you as a pup and that’s what’s making him so anxious. Yes, he’s worried about what will happen, but this has been something he’s wanted for a while.”

I couldn’t help nodding...it just happened on its own, but instead of making things clearer for Gareth, he looked even more confused. “Why? I mean, I understand wanting to live out the fantasy. That part makes sense. But why is he so...*wiggly*?”

That seemed to be the nicest word he could come up with and it made Bates fight off the giggles again. When he could breathe without snickering, he sat straighter and seemed to be doing his best to look like the TV version of a Dom, serious and confident. “Because he’s never been a Handler before and he’s worried that he’ll be a bad Dom for you.”

Huh?

“Huh?” Gareth echoed my thought, but it didn’t take long for me to realize we weren’t seeing things the same way. “Why would he think he’d do a bad job of taking care of me? I’d be easier to deal with than Brady and Cash did great with that.”

Somehow I’d fallen into an alternate universe.

Marvel kept saying there were an infinite number of the damned things, so maybe they were right.

“I...” Nothing else came out as my head ping-ponged back and forth between the two confusing men. “I... that’s...”

Well, at least it’d been more than one word?

They just ignored my accomplishment, though, which was rude and appreciated all at the same time.

“He keeps reminding you that you’re more important to him than Brady.” Bates shrugged. “There’s family and then there’s family.”

Gareth nodded like it was sage advice even though it was insane. “Yeah, and we’re the family kind.”

I was still trying to decipher that ridiculousness when Gareth started shaking his head. “But still, playing fetch is so much easier than keeping Brady occupied.”

Okay, he had a point.

My brain still hadn’t caught up to current events when Gareth turned to me with a serious look on his face. “You know that if you’re my Dom when I’m a pup, you’re going to have to see my penis?”

Oh.

My.

God.

So maybe I shouldn’t have complained about being ignored?

"I'm not scared of your penis!" Fuck.

That'd been way too loud but it didn't really hit me until a voice came through the window from the parking lot.

"If you have to keep telling him that, then you shouldn't be getting naked with him for fuck's sake. Work on your communication."

As I groaned and tried to decide the quickest way to end my suffering, Bates called out to our helpful neighbor. "We're just working out the kinks with it. No one is being manipulated. They're just slightly stubborn and a bit blind."

"Alright but you've got safewords, right?"

Dead.

Somehow I was dead and being tortured with embarrassment for all eternity for doing something evil in life.

"Yes, stoplight colors for all of us." Bates seemed to think the whole thing was perfectly reasonable. "Thank you for looking out for my boys."

He was smiling as he turned away from the window. "I'm glad we have such good neighbors."

Yeah, I'd died and just hadn't realized it.

Maybe the spider had killed me and the past few weeks hadn't been real?

Gareth clearly wasn't real because he thought it was reasonable too. "Yeah, except for bug dude. The crickets. I just..."

I found myself shaking my head in commiseration and agreement even though I was dead.

"But overall, they're great." Bates was beaming and turned toward the window like he was imagining we

were in some kind of Disney movie. "This is so much nicer than being at work or my old apartment."

So he liked the building because everyone was nuts?

He really liked us because we were nuts?

Thank God.

That meant he wasn't going to leave because we were too weird.

"I'm glad." Gareth gave him a laid-back smile and leaned over me to give Bates a quick kiss. "You'll show Cash how to be my puppy Dom? I can have two, right? Do you trade off? Do you cooperate and do it at the same time like dating us both together?"

Gareth was still trying to kill me...but he had some logical questions.

Assuming the Dom-Handler thing wasn't a figment of everyone's imagination.

Bates seemed just as relaxed as Gareth, shrugging and reaching out to stroke his cheek. "I would be happy to help Cashel figure out how he wants to be your Handler. Once he gets used to the idea, he'll relax. I don't think he's been thinking of himself as a switch and that made it harder to figure things out."

Gareth looked over at the door and it took me a second to realize he was looking at the light switch. "Switch. Dom and sub, right?"

"Yes." Bates looked proud of him and I felt myself wanting to smile. "Some people are just one or the other, but some people shift back and forth under specific circumstances."

Bates glanced over at me, not looking worried when I just sat there stupidly. "We'll talk it through after he's had a chance to think about it. But I'm pretty sure he'll be happier with chances to dominate and to submit."

Maybe?

“He’s kind of bossy sometimes and he’s dated a few guys who didn’t like that.” Gareth was wearing a distracted expression and I knew he was thinking about the guys I’d dated. “It also explains why he’s so good at managing our family but why it’s a lot of work too.”

How was it all so easy for him?

“I’m glad he has you to help him now.” Gareth kissed my head and snuggled closer. “He gets stressed a lot and I didn’t know how to help.”

Oh.

“I will do my best.” Bates scooted closer so I was sandwiched between them. “But he’s going to get more stressed for a little while until we work out how he wants to dominate you. He’s been telling himself for a very long time that he shouldn’t want those kinds of things.”

“Because he shouldn’t want to dominate anyone in general or just me?” Another fascinating question popped out of Gareth, sending confusion through me.

Bates lifted his hands in an *I don’t know* gesture. “Both, maybe? I think it’s mostly tied with the puppy play so that’s why it’s so hard for him to talk about, but I don’t know if it’s just you he sees as a pup or if it’s a lifestyle he’s drawn to in general.”

As Gareth opened his mouth to talk more about me, I somehow lost my patience or my mind. “Stop talking about me like I’m not here. I don’t know what I think but you’re making me insane.”

Gareth didn’t look apologetic as he lifted one shoulder in a half-shrug. “But you’re speaking now and not so wiggly.”

Asshole.

“You’re such a brat.” My glare just made him grin. “Why is this so easy for you?”

The head cock came back but he didn’t look upset or nervous. “The pup part or the you being a light switch thing?”

“Stop that. You know it’s not the word.” He was just trying to make me insane.

“Lights. Camera. Action. Now you’re a Dom.” He gave me a very manufactured thinking face. “I think I’ll call you lightie or bulb from now on.”

I wasn’t actually going to strangle him.

Honest.

Besides, Bates grabbed me before I actually got my hands wrapped around his throat. “Come on. That’s not how you discipline your naughty pup.”

He was taking it way too easily, too.

“This is so crazy.” Collapsing back against him, I closed my eyes and snuggled into Bates. “I’m not supposed to dominate Gareth. That’s just not how we do things.”

Gareth didn’t hold a grudge about the whole strangling thing. His lack of self-preservation instincts might get him killed one day, but for the time being, I just appreciated the weight of him as he curled around us and rested his head in my lap. “You’ve always been the Dom in our family. You just didn’t like doing it all the time and I didn’t know there was a name for someone who flipped back and forth.”

That light switch analogy was going to make me even more nuts than I already was.

“You should’ve made me do more research about the BDSM stuff if you were always my part-time Dom.” Gareth’s tone said he thought that statement was

completely logical and didn't understand why Bates tightened his hold on me. "You're really stressed today."

"A jury would understand why I killed him, wouldn't they?" It was mostly a rhetorical question but it made Bates laugh.

"You can't kill him. I'd miss both of you very much if you went to jail for murder." Bates wasn't doing a very good job of hiding his delight at the insanity. "Just remind yourself that Gareth doesn't mind you being his Dom when he's a pup."

Okay, that might've made me feel less nuts.

"I'm not...he's just..." Someone had to take care of him. "That's not how we do things."

Gareth made a low snort which I ignored as Bates kissed my head. Bates always saw things differently, so I wasn't surprised when he disagreed with me. "It seems to be how you do things, honestly. You manage the household and the finances and you're the one who handles the practical side of your family. I bet you've always helped with a lot of stuff. You just didn't have a sexual relationship at that point. Sex and domination don't always go hand in hand."

"I know." I did. Kind of. But it just wasn't how I'd seen things. "That's just..."

Nothing logical came out so I gave up, just taking a deep breath and letting them hug me tight. It seemed like the stupidest thing to be panicking over. I should've had my major freak-out when Gareth and I'd first kissed. Or when we'd gone on our first date with Bates. Hell, the first time I'd watched Gareth suck his cock. "This is stupid. I shouldn't be such a dick about this."

"Pretty sure it's not." Gareth's dry response had Bates's chest jerking in silent laughter. "It's going to take some getting used to seeing yourself that way."

“Don’t be logical. That’ll just piss me off.” I sounded stupid even to myself, but I felt Gareth’s head move like he was nodding.

“Alright.” His arms wrapped around me and hugged me as we sat there quietly for a few moments. “I don’t mind you being a second Dom. If that’s what you’re worried about, I mean.”

I wasn’t sure what I was actually worried about, so I shrugged.

Gareth didn’t mind. He just kept talking through everything that was in his head. “I like you being in charge and this means that doesn’t have to change. I was mostly worried that you were always doing too much, so I was glad you had Bates to help you now. But this seems like a good compromise.”

A good compromise... just hearing that part made me smile.

“And I think this means you don’t have to feel bad about wanting to do sex stuff with me anymore.” Gareth’s casually delivered words had me doing my best to remember to breathe. “If you’re feeling like a sub, we wait and do things with Bates, and if you’re feeling like a Dom, you can watch me jerk off or something like that.”

Something made him groan and let out a long sigh. “We’ll probably need to have another conversation before I get spanked. Fuck. This one is even my fault. God.”

Yep.

“Yeah, it kind of is.” Focusing on that was easier. “I hadn’t even thought about any of that yet.”

Bates was back to snickering and delighted with the insanity.

Smart people were so weird.

Chapter 25

Bates

They were adorable even in an existential crisis.

I gave up wondering how neither of them had realized that Cashel was a switch and just held him as he finally realized that killing Gareth wouldn't solve any of his problems. Just how long that took should've been a clue that he wasn't a complete sub, but he didn't realize that either.

And poor Gareth, just adding to our conversations list every time he opened his mouth.

But this one felt like something we should get out of the way right off the bat, so I didn't let the silence drag out long.

"This is something that will be a work in progress, but for now, what I'm thinking is that if you are both feeling submissive, then you don't do more than kiss or watch each other jerk off." That had both of them going still but nothing felt stressful so I kept going. "We might add asking permission somewhere, but I'm not sure we're ready for that yet."

Gareth sighed, rolling over so he could look up at me from Cashel's lap. "Yeah, conversations."

Those were going to be the bane of his existence, but I wanted his first spanking to be something he enjoyed. That meant I needed to know his fantasies better and how to get inside his head. I didn't even know his pain tolerance when it came to erotic activities yet.

Cashel's emotions seemed to shift from murderous to feeling sorry for the curious drama queen because he let out a slow breath and moved his hand to start stroking Gareth's head. "If we fuck up the first spanking, you'll never know if you like it or not. I don't want to react badly, and I bet Bates has stuff he needs to know first."

Bingo.

Just how much thought had Cashel been giving Gareth's spanking?

"I guess that makes sense. It's an *only one first impression* kind of thing." Pouting, Gareth wiggled to get more pets from Cashel. "But we're going to start having the conversations. We just need a list because I've lost track of everything we need to talk about."

He had a good point and made Cashel chuckle. "Yeah, there's a lot going on."

Understatement of the year.

"Where do we start?" Gareth's question made Cashel groan, but it was on the low end of the drama scale so we just ignored it until he shook his head.

"No, we're not switching topics again. We've got the attention span of rabbits." Sighing like he was tired of chasing toddlers around all day, Cashel mentally seemed to inch closer to the Dom side he usually ignored. "We're finishing up the last discussion first."

Interesting.

"So how do you feel about what I said so far?" I kept it vague so we didn't make Cashel squirm, but I wasn't sure it was necessary. "We can always shift rules around if they don't work for us. The point is to find rules and systems that make everyone feel better about themselves and our relationship."

Nodding slowly, Cashel seemed to be working through something, so we both just waited. After a few

seconds, he let out another breath and Gareth shifted so he was completely focused on Cashel as he started to speak. "Right now, I think that Gareth isn't getting enough physical attention and we need to figure out a way to fix that."

I wasn't completely sure what to say but as Gareth opened his mouth, Cashel huffed. "If you tell me again it's okay that I'm scared of your penis, I'm going to figure out a way to punish you. Is that clear?"

Gareth, ever the surprise, reached down and adjusted his dick. "That's kind of hot. Threaten me again."

As I reminded myself that laughter would not be appropriate, Cashel glared at the curious nut. "Standing in the corner kind of punishments."

"Ugh." Scrunching up his face, Gareth pouted. "Aww, that's not fun."

Cashel started mumbling about not killing him before he took a deep breath. "You have no self-preservation instincts."

Gareth shrugged. "You love me. You wouldn't kill me on purpose."

But he might get killed accidentally?

Oh, the questions.

But I stayed on task. Good Masters did not get distracted by the fascinating things that popped out of a sub's mouth. "He might be more inclined to stop testing your patience if he was working toward a reward?"

Keeping the reward vague was supposed to help Cashel stay relaxed, but they both went very still.

Hmm.

Clearly that didn't go as planned, but Gareth provided a wonderful distraction.

“I like rewards.” Gareth was still not-so-subtly playing with his erection which had Cashel rolling his eyes.

“That’s not a surprise.” Cashel’s snarky response said he wasn’t as nervous as I’d worried he’d be. “Are you supposed to be doing that?”

I wasn’t sure if it was a rhetorical question but Gareth shrugged and looked between us. “I don’t know? You guys are in charge.”

That seemed to trip up Cashel’s brain and he took a few seconds to reset. “You’re right.”

Oh, it was getting so good.

Turning his head, Cashel’s expression was serious and it was almost like he was discussing a term paper or something at a corporate job. “How do you feel about him playing with himself like that?”

Oh, badass switch mode.

Gareth was right...it was sexy.

“I think he’s making it very clear that he finds you sexy as hell.” I couldn’t resist giving Cashel a quick kiss as Gareth snickered. “And I think it’s his way of being naughty as he reminds his Doms that he hasn’t orgasmed recently.”

His plan to wait until bedtime didn’t seem like the right way to handle it any longer.

Cashel looked like he was giving himself a silent pep talk and nodded after a few seconds. “Yes, but should we be thinking about rewarding bad behavior?”

“No one said I couldn’t play with it.” Gareth’s helpful commentary was cheeky but he had a good point.

Cashel seemed to take a page from Gareth’s playbook and just ignored it. “He’s going to need rules.”

Oh yes.

“But maybe we could give him a reward for...for being adaptable?” I wasn’t sure that was the best idea, but it was the first thing that came to mind. “And it would reinforce your role as his Dom.”

That got a few long blinks as Cashel nodded slowly.

I wasn’t sure if we’d broken him or if his brain was just resetting again, but after a few long moments, he looked more alive. That didn’t mean he was in a hurry to let us know what he was thinking, though.

Leaning into me, he nuzzled my neck and gathered his thoughts. “You’ll help me?”

Cashel’s quiet question had Gareth hugging him tight again, but I kissed the side of his head and nodded. “Yes, we all start somewhere and a good sub understands that. Besides, Gareth can’t wait to show you his penis, so he’s going to be very well-behaved.”

Barking out a laugh, Cashel returned Gareth’s hug and seemed to thoroughly enjoy the way our pup was vibrating with excitement. “That’s a good point.”

Gareth was trying to stay still and quiet, probably afraid saying anything would get his reward taken away or would startle Cashel. I wasn’t sure Gareth believed that Cashel wasn’t afraid of his penis. Whatever was going through his head would’ve probably been fascinating, but he was smart to keep it to himself.

I could only hold back a frustrated Cashel so many times before he’d get wiggly and escape.

“Another good point might be to find a way to help him remember who’s in charge.” I shrugged, trying to look casual as Gareth shivered. “He’s just a bit cheeky for a sub.”

That had Gareth looking curious and needy, but it made Cashel chuckle as he stroked a hand over Gareth’s head. “That’s a very good description of him.”

I was feeling just as excited as Gareth, but I tried not to rush Cashel as I kissed his head and shifted my hold so I could run my hands over him. Since it didn't look like he was going to try to strangle Gareth, I pressed my lips against his neck and caressed his chest. "He also looks needy."

Both my boys did.

But with Cashel exploring his less submissive side, I didn't think pointing that out would be the right move.

"I bet he's one naughty thought away from humping the bed." That got an eager nod from Gareth who didn't seem ashamed of his desire in the slightest.

"I'm really hoping I don't have to, though." Gareth's cheeky response was utterly sincere which made it even better. "But if my Doms told me to, well, that'd probably be hot too."

His ability to adapt was incredible.

"We'll have to explore that another time." Running my other hand over his head, my fingers caressed over Cashel's as we both pet our boy. "I think you'd look beautiful humping one of us while you sucked the other off."

Either one.

I might not enjoy watching quite as much as Cashel, but it wouldn't be a hardship with something that perfect.

Gareth's needy whine made it clear what he thought about that idea, but Cashel surprised me. He kept stroking Gareth's head and I could feel even more tension easing out of him. "You'd love that."

Nodding, Gareth didn't bother to hide that at all. "I really would."

His honesty was adorable, and judging by Cashel's soft chuckle, I wasn't the only one who thought so.

“I think you’d also enjoy being the one to get tied up this time.” Cashel’s teasing smile made him look even sexier, but it was the first time I could remember seeing him without the worries he usually carried around. “You’d have to wait for us to decide when you got to come, though.”

Such a brave cutie.

“I’ll be good.” Gareth nuzzled into Cashel’s touch, looking almost relieved at the shift in plans or maybe in their relationship.

He’d always talked about Cashel being the head of their family, so for him, it was probably clarifying a lot about what he’d always felt. “But I’ll get to come, right?”

He didn’t go into his *it’s okay to be scared of his penis* speech, but I could see it right on the tip of his tongue as he swallowed. “There are lots of ways to do that.”

I barely held back my laughter, especially as Cashel sighed. “This is just going to take proof.”

Probably.

Gareth’s brows pulled together, though, so it didn’t seem like he knew what Cashel was talking about. “I’ll... I’ll be very good.”

When in doubt, promise to behave.

Got it.

Caressing around his ear and down his neck, I smiled as Gareth shivered. “You’re going to be a very good boy because we’re going to tie you up and you won’t have a choice.”

A soft whine escaped Gareth as he nodded and licked his lips. “Yes, because you’re in charge and I’m the sub and only my safeword stops things.”

“That’s right.” Cashel’s tension faded even more with Gareth’s simple review. “Tell us what will stop

everything.”

Good boy.

The reminder was important but it also seemed to turn Gareth on because his hand inched back down to give his erection a good squeeze. “Red. Red stops everything, Sir.”

God, that was so perfect.

“That’s right.” If Cashel was second-guessing what was happening, I couldn’t hear it in his voice. “And what happens if you need us to slow down or back off something for a moment?”

Gareth didn’t question the review, he simply let out a breath as his fingers started tugging at his dick to try to get it in a more comfortable position. “Yellow. Yellow slows things down. But I’m green. Very green. Bright green. No questions green.”

Our needy boy wouldn’t have questioned anything that got him a chance to show off his dick and got him an orgasm. That was very obvious. But we wouldn’t do anything to push his limits, so I wasn’t worried about desperation brain pushing him to do something he normally wouldn’t.

“I’m glad.” Cashel leaned over and kissed Gareth’s head, finally looking at ease with everything that had happened.

I wasn’t sure how long it would last but I was going to let myself enjoy it while it did.

“Let’s get him ready.” Giving Cashel’s neck one more kiss, I marveled at how incredible the moment was and just soaked in how sweet and loving they were.

Any second Gareth would say something that made Cashel insane, but that was part of their charm and a reason I would savor the sweet times even more.

“I’m going to go get the restraints, how about you distract him with some kisses?” Distracting them both wouldn’t hurt.

Cashel nodded at the suggestion, petting over Gareth’s head and combing his fingers through the longer bits on top. “It’ll keep him from saying anything that makes me want to kill him too.”

Smart men were so sexy.

As Gareth sighed and nodded, perfectly willing to admit to the shenanigans he loved stirring up in Cashel, I gave Cashel a quick peck. “He needs to behave if he wants a good orgasm and not a ruined one, so I’m sure he’s going to be good for us.”

And off the curious boy’s brain went at ninety miles an hour.

As I took the risk and climbed off the bed, leaving my two boys together without adequate supervision, Gareth finally huffed. “I don’t know what that means, but it doesn’t sound good.”

“It’s not.” Cashel’s barely suppressed chuckle said he knew what it was and he would have fun enlightening our curious pup. “It’s when you get to orgasm but you don’t get the big bang of feelings and there’s no big shot of cum.”

Gareth sucked in a breath as he moved off Cashel’s lap and lay down on the bed, wide-eyed and worried about the horrors he was being told about.

So of course, Cashel gave him a long, slow kiss and played up the drama. “It’s only an orgasm in the technical sense of the word, and you’ll feel like all the pleasure was missing from what it was supposed to feel like. I’ve read about Doms doing it to punish a naughty sub.”

I needed to remember to ask him what he’d been reading, but for the time being, I dug through the

drawer of goodies and picked out some softly lined cuffs. If Gareth liked it, I was going to figure out some other options, but the ones I had would work until I could get a headboard at the very least.

“That sounds...” Gareth’s voice trailed off as Cashel gave him another kiss, that time quicker and teasing. “Terrible. That’s...I’d rather write an apology letter.”

I loved their mental punishment scale.

“But what if Bates just wanted to do it because it would make him happy?” The wicked sound in Cashel’s voice had me pulling a Gareth as I rose and reaching down to adjust my erection. I wasn’t sure Cashel realized how sexy he was, but Gareth’s needy moan said I wasn’t the only one turned on by it.

“It’d be like suffering for him just to make him happy.” Feeling more confident or maybe just turned on, Cashel stretched out beside him and rocked against Gareth. “I think you’d like that.”

Well, the fact that Gareth didn’t immediately discount the idea said a lot.

“I’d...I like it when Bates is happy.” The quiet confession went right to my dick and I had to remind it that we already had a plan and Cashel was just fucking with Gareth to make sure he behaved. “And I do get curious.”

Gareth was going to talk himself into all kinds of fun things.

Cashel, surprisingly enough, didn’t mind. He just nodded and gave Gareth another kiss, almost innocent that time. “Bates likes that you’re curious. He doesn’t mind answering questions.”

“Once we have more conversations, he’s going to want to show me things too.” Gareth’s confidence went right to my dick. “We just have to do more talking and less cock sucking. I’ll remember that eventually.”

Adorable.

And sadly, not wrong.

“But you like that too, so it’s just as important as talking.” Cashel shrugged like the conversation was perfectly reasonable. “So we’ll just figure out a balance because I like watching you both.”

Gareth sighed like it was the sweetest thing he’d ever heard. “I’m glad. I like being able to share important things with both of you.”

So cute.

“Me too.” After a quick peck, Cashel snuggled closer to Gareth again. “And I like having someone to...to help us figure things out. We wouldn’t be here without Bates and I won’t forget that.”

Aww.

Gareth was just as sweet as I started quietly walking back over to the bed. “Yeah, and he makes both of us feel really good about ourselves and each other. That’s really important.”

Another bit of wisdom from Brady’s mom?

“She’s always right. It’s kind of scary.” Cashel’s casual response answered my question. “It makes me wish we were actually related to her and not just adopted.”

To say I had questions would’ve been an understatement.

“Yeah, but that’s okay.” Gareth stretched his head up and gave Cashel a quick kiss. “She’s going to like Bates.”

Ignoring the relief that rushed through me, I finally closed the distance and climbed up on the bed behind Cashel. “I’m glad, and I’m glad you guys found a big wonderful family to become a part of.”

Because from the little they'd said, their biological families were a struggle at best.

"I'm glad we found you too." Gareth looked up and gave me a beaming smile. "And not just because of how helpful you are. You're really special."

Somehow it was one of the most romantic things anyone had ever said to me. "Thank you, pup."

Gareth grinned as Cashel blushed, but it seemed more about the romance than the reminder about Gareth's pup side because he just shook his head as Gareth beamed. "See, we're so good together."

As I sent out a silent prayer to the universe that it would always feel that way to Gareth, he put his hands over his head, resting one wrist over the other. "I'm ready to learn my lesson, Sirs."

Chapter 26

Gareth

They looked so cute together, I wanted to explode and just send cum everywhere.

Cash glared at me, forgetting to be nervous. "You're a pain in the ass."

Maybe, but I hadn't regretted it yet.

"You're really cute when you get mad at me. I'm probably not supposed to say that yet, but it's true." The light switch stuff made so much sense.

But I really should've done more research and not left everything up to Cash. He'd ignored himself and focused on Brady so much he'd missed a few big pieces. Like what a cute pup I would be and his switchiness.

It made me wonder what else he'd missed?

Or maybe ignored would be a better way to see it?

Something about the way Bates had just announced it made it feel like he thought it was obvious.

Would Brady have thought it was obvious?

What about Jude?

Oh, handcuffs.

Once Bates had the first cuff wrapped around my wrist, the questions in my head poofed away like magic. I must not have hidden that very well because Cash chuckled and sat up so Bates could put the other one on me. "Yeah, I thought you'd like that."

He needed to get better at pointing out the stuff he thought I would like, so I added that conversation to the growing list. Part of me wanted to point that out right then, but once the other cuff was on, my brain got slightly distracted. "That's so crazy."

I tried pulling my hands up so I could see them cuffed together, but Bates held my hands down to the bed and shook his head. "No. They stay right here or we'll stop the game."

Oh.

Shit.

Pouting.

When in doubt, Brady said to pout and look sad.

"But what if you're both so sexy I can't help it?" Wide eyes. Nervous expression. It works best if there is at least a grain of truth. But since it had a bushel of truth, I wasn't worried about that part. "I've wanted this for a long time."

Brady was a fucking genius.

Bates caved first. He sighed as his fingers slowly caressed over mine, tracing around the cuffs. "I know it's hard the first time, so"

"No. Don't fall for it."

Cash was such a pain in the ass.

"He's pulling a Brady." Glaring at me, Cash huffed. "You can't do that to us. That's not fair at all. What if I wasn't here to stop you? You'd have Bradied Bates."

That sounded kind of funny, but I knew better than to laugh.

I'd learned from the best.

"I don't think you realize how sexy you both look when you're talking about punishing me." I shrugged

like I couldn't help it. "You tied me up and you're going to at least see my penis. It's a lot."

And I was supposed to slide right into another pout... just a bit softer that time...then look thoughtful and slightly sad.

Bingo.

Bates frowned. "Does it matter if it's an act if he does it so well?"

No.

"Yes." Cash's grumbling tone and glare made my dick even harder somehow. He really liked it when Cash got nuts. It was really nice to finally know why, though. "He's manipulating you."

"But he's so cute when he does it." Bates clearly didn't mind because he leaned down and gave me a soft kiss as he continued to caress over my fingers, never letting me forget that I was restrained.

He was so good at everything that I couldn't figure out if he was fucking with me or not.

Brady would be so impressed.

"That is not a reason to reward him." Cash seemed very insistent, but Bates and I knew how wrong he was.

"I think we know who's going to be the Dom with all the rules." Bates's eyes sparkled as he nodded toward a still very serious Cash. "You should feel very lucky he's only looking to be a part-time Dom.

Oh yeah.

"He does a good job of taking care of me, though." Soft smile. Snuggle closer. "He'd be a very good full-time Dom."

"God, you're such a brat."

Cashel seemed to be feeling a bit dramatic but Bates smiled wider. "And such a cute one too."

I definitely owed Brady a treat.

New crayons were in his future.

"Thank you, Sirs." Innocent smile. Don't look guilty. "You're both so good to me."

And hopefully that translated into an orgasm sooner rather than later because I wasn't sure if Cash would freak out if I stopped making him nuts. It still felt like it could go either way. He'd never been this confident when he was taking charge before and I wasn't sure how long it would last.

What if they called it being a switch because it could get turned off just as fast as the lights could?

Nope.

Keeping him just a bit insane was the best plan.

"Are you sure I can't strangle him?" Cash's cheeky response made Bates cough as he tried to cover a laugh.

After a few seconds he kissed Cash's cheek and gave him a pretty good innocent smile. "How about you take all that frustration and channel it into edging our cheeky boy?"

Oh.

I knew what *that* was.

"But I'm getting rewarded." Smiling would've been a terrible idea, so I pouted and did my best to look nervous. "It's the first time Cash is going to see my penis."

As long as he didn't get any more nuts than he already was.

Fingers crossed.

“It’s going to be the time Cash strangled you too if you don’t stop trying to manipulate us.” Cash grumbled but it was so cute. He’d included himself as *us*.

He saw himself as my Dom too.

Aww.

Bates wanted to melt too, but he was smart and just kissed Cash’s cheek.

Yep, he was just as smart as me but I’d have to teach him how to channel Brady a bit better because he smiled a bit too much. Wow. I never thought I’d say that about Bates. Things changed very quickly when you found Mr. Right.

Mr. Rights?

My Rights.

Either way, Bates was definitely the right something because he kissed Cash’s neck and held my hands tighter against the bed sending a shiver through me. “Maybe we should punish him by making him wait?”

Hmm.

I wasn’t sure I agreed with that plan, but I got to watch Bates start to seduce Cash, slowly kissing his neck and making sounds like Cash was the best dessert he’d ever eaten.

It was amazing to watch...and highly educational.

“I can’t wait to see you playing with our naughty boy’s cock. I bet you’re going to make him whine and beg to come.” Bates said it so smoothly he sent shivers through both of us. “Should we just tease his slit and the head of his cock and see how long it takes for him to beg for mercy?”

Yes.

We should.

Wait. Could I beg for more too or was mercy the only option?

Fuck.

That was another conversation we should've had.

"He'd probably like it." Cash's frown was so sexy I almost nodded, completely forgetting I was supposed to be being sweet and innocent. "But there's only one way to find out."

Yes!

Wide eyes. Don't look too excited. "I'll be good."

Vague promises so it wouldn't be a lie.

Cash snorted but Bates smiled and his fingers went back to teasing mine. "See? He's going to be so good for you."

I would do my best.

"I'm not sure we all have the same definition for that." Cash was smart, but it seemed like playing with my cock was more fun than grumbling because his hand finally stretched out and stroked high on my thigh. "He's learned his from Brady."

Yep.

And he was a very good teacher.

But luckily, the moan that came out of me as Cash inched his hand up higher distracted both of them from realizing that.

Being tied up made *everything* so much better.

"He's so excited for your touch." Bates kissed Cash's neck again as he whispered and somehow made the observation sound sexy as hell. "I can't wait to hear how he sounds when you're finally touching his skin."

Oh, me too.

“He’s going to have to wait until he stops trying to hump my hand first, though.” Cash huffed as he tapped the head of my dick sending sparks through me. “He’s not being very patient.”

But being pushy was getting me so many wonderful things.

“Please...do that again.” Ha, remembered the magic word. “I’ll be very good.”

Yes, that was important too.

Cash made a confused sound but before I had to find the words to explain what I was begging for, Bates chuckled and did it again. “I think that answers one of my questions. That feels good, doesn’t it, my curious boy?”

I managed to nod but an actual verbal response just disappeared as Cash flicked the head again. “I...”

Shoot.

Gone again.

“Yes, this is going to be very educational.” Bates’s soft, curious tone did wicked things to me. “We’ll use this to help figure out how much pain you like, pup.”

As my eyes probably rolled around like slot machine cherries, I sucked in a breath and forced my ass to stay on the bed. Suddenly, being their good boy seemed much more complicated and I wasn’t sure how serious Cash had been about that no-humping thing.

“Just think about all that wonderful pain being aimed at your ass as you squirm over my lap, pup.” Bates had the most wonderful suggestions. “All those fabulous sensations mixed with feeling naughty and needy. You’re going to love it.”

Okay, I was starting to understand why Brady loved his spankings.

If they were anything like the flashes of crazy my Doms were firing through me, I'd have been naughtier sooner. It was no wonder Brady was always doing things to make sure he got a spanking.

"Maybe we should see if he likes pain other places too?" Cash's voice teased at the edges of my fantasies but I couldn't decide what he meant with my limited brain power.

What was he going to do?

Bates hummed, nodding softly as their hands started caressing over me in long strokes. "I think research would be a good idea. We want to make sure we know how he'll react to all kinds of stimuli."

That sounded scary and fascinating.

Yep, I was starting to see why people wanted a Dom for more than just helping them make decisions.

I was so lost in the feeling of being restrained and their hands and just the sexy teasing that came so easily to Bates that I nearly came off the bed as they each took a nipple and tugged at them through my shirt. I wasn't sure if my reaction was about being startled or the pain itself, so I was glad when they did it again.

Testing the theory made it easier to realize that it was definitely about the pain, but in the best way possible.

Why did we call it pain if it felt so good?

Why had no one told me my nipples and my dick were tied together somehow?

It was so incredible but it was so weird.

Bates was tugging harder and not afraid to make me crazy, but Cash was twisting his softly and making these low sounds that made it all even better. "You're going to love your spanking, brat. I'm definitely not worried about that anymore."

Part of me wanted to tell him there hadn't been anything to worry about to begin with, but he kept chasing away the words. Every time I got close to grabbing a handful, he'd twist and tug or flick the head of my dick again.

I still had my clothes on and I'd never been harder in my life.

Bates was so fucking smart...Cash was so good at being a Dom.

And it just kept getting better as fingers teased over the front of my pants and someone freed my dick.

Magic.

I couldn't help thrusting up against all the fingers that seemed to be teasing me. There were just too many and it was so good. "I...you've...please..."

Cash's pleased chuckle made me feel awesome. "Needy sub."

Their needy sub.

"He's so pretty." Bates's tender praise sent a rush through me that was almost as good as the one I got when Cash wrapped his hand around my dick for the first time. "I can see why he wanted to show it off to you."

It was really nice-looking.

Cash was even nodding slowly as his hand started to stroke along my shaft. "It's very pretty."

I'd told him that but he always had to see things for himself to believe it.

"And long." Before I could point out that pretty was more important, Cash tightened his grip and sent my thoughts flying again. "Let's see how sensitive his pretty cock is."

Just feeling him tap right over my slit had me moaning, but when he flicked the head, I couldn't help thrusting up into his hand. That got me another tap and left me shaking. If it'd been a punishment or some kind of threat to make me behave, it didn't work.

"That's...Cash..." Fuck.

Bates made a low, happy sound and leaned over to kiss me softly as Cash pressed a finger against my slit. It left me moaning into Bates's mouth and shaking, but that just made Bates even happier. "Such a good boy. I can't wait to see what other kinds of pain you'll like. We're going to have so much fun, my curious boy."

Cash might've made some kind of agreeing sound, but as another flash of pain fired through me, I couldn't focus on anything but how incredible it felt. "He's so good."

"For both of us." The smile in Bates's voice was clear as I came down from the high. "Look at how wonderful you're making him feel. He's shaking and whining, and you're the one doing that to him."

Cash made a low sound that I realized was them kissing and I opened my eyes to see him nuzzling against Bates. "We're both doing it to him."

So fucking sexy.

I had the best, most romantic Doms ever.

"Should we do even more to him?" Bates's question made me feel like we were in the middle of an old romance movie. "Let's see if we can make our boy beg."

They were so perfect.

And they were so wicked.

Hands went back to teasing over me, and no matter how much I whined and squirmed, Bates never released my hands. He kept me trapped even when he flicked my

dick and Cash slipped his hands under my shirt to pinch my nipples.

Bates was such a wonderful Dom, Cash even kissed his cheek and smiled at him. "You're so good at keeping him trapped and submissive."

He really was.

And Cash was so good for praising Bates when my brain and mouth wouldn't work at the same time. People forgot how important it was to recognize a good job. I knew I'd tell them both later, but I was so proud of Cash for remembering.

When it was his turn to be tortured, I hoped Bates would do a good job on him too.

Pain was so fabulous.

Why had no one besides Brady mentioned that before?

As I came back from the edge, I was working at remembering to breathe, and I wished someone who seemed to be a bit more reliable had explained the pain-pleasure thing before. Brady was sometimes...well, very Brady...but it seemed like he was right about this one.

"Yes, ease him back down." Bates gave Cash another sweet kiss, making me smile as he taught Cash how to make me crazy. "You've got him shaking and look how hard he is...all that precum. He's beautiful and you did that. Let's see if we can get him even closer."

Cash was such a good light switch.

Something about the way Cash's hand tightened on my dick as he started jerking me off again had them both chuckling. But every time I almost figured out what was so funny, they'd send another flash of pain through me or tell me how pretty my dick was.

It was too distracting and all the important thoughts kept escaping as I got closer and closer to my orgasm. I

seemed to get there faster every time and it was like I was a train, barreling toward the cliff where the best reward was just out of reach.

As I got closer, I expected them to pull me back and find a reason to snatch the pleasure away. No humping. That wasn't enough begging. He hasn't learned his lesson. But that time there was nothing but pinches and strokes and teasing fingers wandering over my balls.

All it took was one tug and they sent me flying over the edge. My train soared through the air, cum exploding out of me, and then I had the best crash ever. It was so good the world went fuzzy, and when it cleared, I was tucked in between both my guys and they were snuggled close. "That was crazy."

I was being serious because I didn't have a better word for it, but they chuckled and gave me kisses. "You're going to love that, Cash. I can't wait to see you get your turn."

That was going to be so much fun.

For some reason that made Cash groan and hide his face against my neck. "I can't decide if I want to thank you or tell you that you're insane."

They didn't seem mutually exclusive to me, so I turned to Bates and gave him another Brady smile. That time innocent and happy. "He didn't safeword, Sir."

As Bates laughed, he snuggled even closer, running his hand over both our heads and smiling like he'd won the lottery. "You're right. He didn't."

He was such a good Dom, he even knew he should ignore Cash's drama.

"Thank you for helping me remember...well, remember something." Yes. That was what we'd been doing. "I'll remember it better once I can think. Everything's still kind of floaty."

Bates gave me one of his soft kisses and his romantic smiles. "I'm glad everything went floaty for you, my curious boy."

That was good because I kind of liked it.

"You helped Cash be a good Dom." But Cash didn't seem very Dommy anymore, so I kissed his head and hugged him tight, finally realizing that my hands were free. "Hey, I can move. That's so weird too."

Cash giggled, still hiding as he whispered softly. "I'm glad you thought I was a good Dom."

"You're the best at everything. You're the best grown-up in our family. You do the budget so good. You're a great baker and you're so good at loving me. Of course you'd be a good Dom." As Cash hugged me tight, I looked up at our smiling Dom.

"I can't wait to figure out all your 'best of' stuff too, but you're the best at making us feel good and your smiles always make me feel safe. You're really good at snuggling us and you've got a lot of patience." Huh? Maybe I did know a lot of his best things. "You're even the best at figuring out everything going on in the building. And you're smart too. That's going to be really useful at some point."

Bates gave both of us head kisses, keeping them sweet and soft. "Thank you, and I can't wait to learn all of your 'best of' things. But so far, you and Cashel just being yourselves is the best thing ever. You're funny and sweet, and the past few days have changed my life."

That was another of his bests, he was the best at changing our life. He'd given me Cash as a boyfriend and himself as our Dom and changed our whole family forever...and I couldn't wait to see what would happen next when we learned to run.

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Their story continues in [Learning to Run](#).

Jude isn't the only frowning guy and Brady isn't the only little in the building, so keep scrolling for more information about the other fun cuties.

## *Cameos*

If you haven't read my books before, this is my moment to confess I have a terrible time letting go of characters. To keep from having to say goodbye, I bring them back in unexpected places. If you're curious, here's some information about side characters from this book that have their own stories. Have fun with my guys, and visit my website or stalk me on Facebook if you have any questions.

### **In this book**

Another one of the grumpy Doms in the building is Leon from *Learning to Trust* and *Learning to Love*. Leon and Morgan have a duet that are the first books in [The Education of the Heart](#) series.

Brady and Jude have their story in [Save Me Santa](#) where Jude ends up saving Brady, Gareth, and Cashel from an oversized spider right before Christmas.

Another couple that was in the building is Bryan and Maddox. Their first story is [His Missing Pieces](#). It's a friends-to-lovers, age play series.

The original couple who first started off the wonderfully kinky apartment complex near the college is Kevin and Jeremy. Their story starts in [Too Close to Love](#), and it's available on Smashwords and on my own site because it has topics Amazon doesn't like.

M.A. Innes and Shaw Montgomery are two sides to the same squirrely brain. M.A Innes is the part of my imagination that leads to kinky and curious things like age play and puppy play. Shaw is the aspect that likes sweet BDSM but isn't taboo in nature.

I love hearing from readers, but if you liked my book, the best thing you can do is to leave a review. Books that are a little different or seem unique need reviews to help push other readers to dip their toes in the water.

I have all kinds of books from sweet guys in lingerie to cute boys in search of a Daddy. The best place to find all my books and to explore what I write is on my website. You can also get the occasional freebies and early peeks at the first chapters of new releases so make sure to keep checking back.

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