

Las Vegas Littles

The image is a vertical collage. At the top, a roulette wheel is shown in a high-angle, slightly blurred perspective, with a red '17' visible on the wheel's surface. Below the wheel, a clear glass is filled with water and ice cubes, with a dynamic splash of water rising from the top. In the foreground, a roulette ball is shown in motion, having just struck the roulette wheel. The background is a dark, vibrant purple and blue bokeh of light spots, suggesting a casino floor at night.

All Bets Are Off

Athena Steller

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Dedication

For everyone who is looking for their second chance. Never give up!

Book Blurb

Welcome to Sin City! Home to the newest Daddy/ little collection from author Athena Steller.

Brandon

Bleeding and nearly dying on a cold bathroom floor is the moment that I really started to live. I'm not broken. I'm healing. And I know who can help me take the step back into my little world and be the Daddy Dom I need.

Dane

I'm an addict. First it was alcohol but now it's a brown-eyed boy that I can't get out of my head. He's also my best friend's little brother and was traumatized by an ex. There is no chance that I am what Brandon needs. There is also no chance that I will walk away.

This book contains MM sexual content (men having sex with each other), Age Play, Daddy/little relationship, ABDL, and age gap relations. This book is an exploration of a relationship between two (male) consensual adults that are looking for love and acceptance. All characters are over the age of consent. No cheating or cliffhangers.

Brandon's story first started in the Daddy's Boy series *Creed* where he was rescued from an abusive ex. There are mentions of Brandon's past abuse but none of this is detailed or on page.

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Chapter One

Brandon

His own scream woke Brandon Smith.

Brandon, struggling to breathe, pulled himself off the bed, making sure to take his thick comforter with him. He crawled across the lush carpet until he made it to the closet. Luckily the door was already cracked open so Brandon could easily get inside and curl back against the wall. His fingers shook as he closed the door almost all the way.

The night-light in the closet had been his brother Eric's idea. Eric hated the thought of Brandon suffering alone in the dark and had suggested having a battery-operated night-light. His brother was awesome like that. Always thinking of ways to make Brandon more comfortable and safer.

Most nights Brandon could sleep peacefully, knowing that Eric was down the hall. Now that Ezra and Annabelle were staying for good, Brandon tried not to bother his family too much. And the nightmares were getting better.

The bedroom door opened, barely making any sound, but Brandon could nearly feel it. He knew the click the door handle made and the soft brush of the bottom of the door against the carpet. Brandon bit his lip. Eric wasn't home. Ezra and Annabelle weren't home. He should be alone in the house. Before he could panic fully, again, the softest whimper reached him.

Oh! That's right. Brandon wasn't alone. While Eric, Ezra, and Annabelle were visiting Eric's good friends in Rocky Lake, Arizona, Dane and Maverick were staying at the house.

Brandon wasn't sure if Dane's house was really having plumbing issues or if his brother had made up an excuse to have Dane stay so Brandon wasn't alone. Brandon didn't care either. He was just glad that there was someone, armed, in the house. Not that the threat to Brandon was anywhere other than in his mind.

The tip of a black nose at the crack in the door had Brandon pushing the door open farther in invitation.

Maverick shoved his head through. His big goofy grin just what Brandon needed to see. Maverick didn't get bothered by Brandon clinging to him. In truth neither did Eric or Ezra but Brandon was trying to be better! It was easier with a dog who Brandon knew didn't judge him.

Brandon already loved the K-9 dog. Maverick might be trained to sniff out drugs and assist Dane in capturing bad guys, but he was also the best cuddle partner ever.

His closet floor wasn't really big enough for a full-grown man and a two-year-old pup, but as Maverick crawled inside with him, Brandon didn't mind the tight fit. Brandon wrapped his arm around Maverick's neck as the dog lay against his chest.

"Hey, Bran."

Of course, Dane was there too. Dane and Maverick were a package deal. Not that Dane wouldn't leave if Brandon asked him to. Brandon might be embarrassed but he wasn't dumb enough to send the big man from his room. At least Dane was outside the closet.

"Hey," Brandon replied, his voice hoarse, worrying him that he might have screamed more in his sleep than he'd thought.

"I brought you a juice box." The box was set inside the opening of the closet door.

Brandon waited until Dane's hand was gone before he snagged the juice box. Not that he thought Dane would grab him and try to yank him out of the closet, but Brandon wasn't taking any chances. He'd been wrong before. "Thank you." He did remember his manners.

"You're welcome." Dane's voice was quiet, soft, comforting. "Do you need anything else?"

Even though he was struggling to get the little straw into the juice box, Brandon grunted in response. His fingers hadn't stopped shaking yet.

“Is it okay if I hang out too? Maverick sort of abandoned me for you.”

Brandon giggled, knowing that Dane was being silly. Brandon often regressed into being a little after a bad dream and had no doubt Eric had informed Dane of that. Now that Brandon had Eric’s partner, Ezra, to be little with, he was regressing more often. The safety that had once been taken away from him was slowly returning. Having little friends had been the final piece that Brandon had needed to reemerge himself into a little lifestyle.

“Brandon, can I stay?” Dane asked. “I need your consent.”

Oh! Brandon forgot to answer. “Yes, you can stay,” he answered softly. “But don’t open the door!”

“I won’t,” Dane promised. It sounded like he slid down the wall next to the closet. That’s what Eric usually did, so Brandon knew that sound.

Brandon finally got the straw in his juice box and was able to take a long pull. Crisp, fresh, and appley. The cold liquid soothed his sore throat.

“I hope you have enough room in there with Maverick’s big butt,” Dane told him.

Brandon patted that furry rump. “Might need a bigger closet,” he agreed. He had no intention of giving up his safe space and it would be nice if Maverick could fit in there with him without Brandon being squished.

“The contractor finished up the basement. I’ll talk to him about remodeling the closet, if you want?”

It was clearly a question. Even though Eric had told Brandon that the house was his too, Brandon didn’t want to overstep any boundaries. “Eric?”

“Eric won’t mind. You know that,” Dane said.

He did. Brandon looked around the small space. Yeah, it was pretty cramped. All his shoes were piled on top of one other to

make room for his body. “Yes, please.” If it was Dane’s idea, then Brandon could totally blame it on him.

“I’ll take care of it,” Dane vowed.

Brandon nodded even though Dane couldn’t see him. He scooted and wiggled until he could curl into a ball and wrap himself around Maverick. In this position he could even rest his cheek on Maverick’s broad back.

He slipped his thumb into his mouth as he forced himself to think of happy thoughts. Like the basement that Eric was turning into a playroom for Brandon and Ezra. There hadn’t been any plans for the basement before. Eric bought the house when Brandon moved in with him and it was bigger than just the two of them needed. With the addition of Ezra and Annabelle, the house was filling up quickly. Not to mention that Dane and Maverick spent more time here than they did in their own house. And now that Ezra had introduced Brandon to Dom and Lake, they had friends over often.

A year had passed since Brandon had been rescued from the hell that he’d found himself in. Brandon was aware that he might never go back to being the carefree young man that he’d once been, but the world wasn’t so bleak any longer. He had his brother, family, and new friends. He even had a furry best buddy that didn’t mind when Brandon drooled on him.

“I spoke to your brother a couple of hours ago,” Dane said quietly.

“They’re still coming home on Sunday, right?” Brandon understood Eric wanted to introduce his new partner to his friends. To show Ezra that there were other young men out there like them that loved age regression. That they had their own little community. He had even been invited to go with them, but Brandon wasn’t ready yet. Even though he wanted more little friends as well.

“Yes, they’ll be home around dinnertime Sunday,” Dane supplied. “Apparently Ezra hit it off with one of the littles that

is new to the dynamic. Well, I should say that both he and his Daddy are new.”

A new little and Daddy duo was interesting. Usually at least one of the partners had some experience in the lifestyle.

“Mickey, that’s the little, and Ezra are already planning for the couple to come visit at the end of the month. Ezra thinks you and Mickey will get along like gangbusters.” Dane chuckled. “Whatever the hell that means.”

Brandon smiled. Ezra had picked up all kind of silly sayings since he’d gotten back into age regression. He was fully embracing his little side and he was a riot to be around.

“Mickey’s Daddy agreed to the boy’s plan. Especially after he learned about Maverick.”

“Maverick?” Brandon hugged his canine buddy closer.

“They share the same name,” Dane said amused. “Eric said that Mickey went around the entire night calling his Daddy ‘human Maverick.’ The boys thought it was hilarious. So human Maverick can’t wait to meet our boy there.”

Their boy. Brandon placed a kiss at the top of Maverick’s head. Dane didn’t even pretend that Brandon hadn’t totally adopted Mav as his own. Brandon followed the rules though. When Maverick had on his working vest, Brandon didn’t interfere with his training. Dane spent several hours every day in the backyard training with Mav. And although Brandon wanted to coo all over Maverick about how good a doggo he was, Brandon only watched from the window. It was too hard to be outside and not praise Maverick. The added benefit being he could also watch Dane without the big cop knowing. Or maybe he did. Dane sure did take his shirt off a lot when he was training out back.

Las Vegas was nearly almost warm, but Brandon didn’t think that Dane needed to be practically naked. Not that he would ever complain out loud. He loved watching the bulging muscles and well-defined abs.

Brandon might have a crush, but it was harmless. It wasn't like he expected Dane to ever look at him as more than an annoyance. Someone he had to put up with because Brandon was Eric's little brother. Little being the key word.

He could fantasize though. No one else needed to know when Brandon had warm yummy dreams of Dane taking charge of him. Brandon wasn't just a little. He needed more than age regression to be fulfilled. Brandon was also a sub. The two, being little and a sub, were not always connected. Take their friend Dom. There was nothing submissive about Dom, but he still loved being a little.

Brandon was submissive through and through.

Even the same part of him that was terrified to ever trust another man again craved the strong, firm hand of a stern Daddy.

With his eyes fluttering closed, the sound of a rough snore reached him. Brandon buried his face in Maverick's neck to hide his giggle. Maverick immediately started to snore, sounding just like his master.

Well, sleeping was overrated, and Brandon would much rather have these two big protective heroes sounding like rumbling cats than lying alone and in silence. Life would be perfect if he could have this every night.

* * * * *

Dane

"Is he watching, buddy?" Dane patted Maverick's back as they crossed the yard to where Dane had set up the day's training session.

Maverick trotted beside him but took a moment to look over his shoulder.

Great, their little stalker was in position. Dane suspected as much. The boy just couldn't seem to help himself. At first Brandon had joined them outside when Dane started to work with Maverick at the house. That hadn't worked out since

Brandon wanted to praise Maverick no matter how the dog performed. Brandon had reluctantly agreed to stay inside but the little cutie was always watching.

“Make me look good here, buddy,” Dane told the dog. He gave the hand motion for Maverick to stay before he walked twelve steps ahead then then turned back around. Dane yanked his shirt over his head. He might be a little obsessed with teasing his boy. Anything that he could do to get Brandon’s attention. He tucked the end of the shirt into the back of his jeans as Maverick vibrated in front of him.

As much as he enjoyed knowing that Brandon was inside watching, Dane needed to give Maverick his serious training. The amount of time and money that went into K-9 dogs shocked him. Dane knew he’d been lucky when his application to become a handler had been approved but it had more to do with one of his best friends becoming the new lieutenant of their department. They needed a drug dog and someone to train with him. Dane had jumped at the chance.

He’d always liked animals. Dane hadn’t been lucky enough to ever own a pet. Never dared to bring home anything that would be just ignored as he had been. To make up for his own longing, Dane had spent his entire life rescuing stray animals and finding them forever homes. It broke his heart every time he found a home for an animal. They deserved a forever person even as Dane craved the same.

As soon as he’d leased his first house, Dane had been determined to finally have his own pet. Every year that went by he told himself it was time. His demons haunted him and as much as Dane loved animals, he also feared that he’d let them down. Do something to harm them. He’d put off adopting or taking in a stray until Brandon had entered his life.

Eric and Brandon had been somewhat estranged when Dane met his friend. It wasn’t until Brandon’s...trauma had forced him to live with Eric that Dane met the younger man.

One look was all it took for Dane to know that he’d met the person he wanted to claim as his own. He snorted. Dane knew

that was the wrong way to look at a relationship. His partner wouldn't belong to him...but maybe he would. Maybe Brandon could.

Forcing his mind away from the tempting young man in the house, Dane began the training session with his K-9 partner. Maverick responded perfectly to each command. Whether Dane used his voice or a hand signal, Maverick was right there, doing what he was supposed to. The perfect partner. The best dog.

The good boy would get a special treat after dinner. Maybe Dane could come up with something to reward another special boy. The one that Dane was struggling not reaching out to.

It was torture to watch Brandon freely snuggle and cuddle with Maverick when all Dane wanted to do was have the younger man curl up against his chest.

Dane had spent the last year focusing on himself and being a better man than he truly was. His past wasn't something that he could ever forget but he could heal. Dane stopped making excuses and started to plan.

If he was to be the Daddy Dom that Brandon needed, then Dane needed his head on straight. No more drinking. He no longer hooked up with strangers. Dane was fully committed to being the man Brandon needed.

Remi and Eric were starting to ask questions. Dane was having trouble coming up with excuses on why he needed to constantly be with Brandon and not at his own house. Time was running out. Dane had a boy that needed his claim.

He sighed while releasing Maverick from his stance.

"Good boy, Mav." He gave Maverick a full-body rubdown then removed the working vest.

As soon as the vest was in his hands, the sliding glass door opened.

Dane straightened and rolled his shoulders. Maverick gave a happy bark before he raced to the door. Brandon dropped

down to his knees right there to throw his arms around Maverick's neck.

Fuck! Dane wanted Brandon to greet him that way. And it damn well sucked that he was jealous of his own dog.

With the sun beating down on his shoulders, Dane easily ignored the slight chill in the air. All he had to tempt Brandon with was his body. Dane was getting that desperate.

Brandon finished loving over the canine and rose.

Checking his watch, Dane saw that two and a half hours had passed as he worked with Maverick. That meant that Brandon would be headed into work soon and right after, he and Maverick would start their shift.

He strode forward, pleased when Brandon waited on him.

"I made you dinner and put it in the insulated bag," Brandon told him.

Dane's entire core warmed. He loved that Brandon thought about him. About taking care of him. "You didn't have to do that," Dane said even though he was so happy.

"I would prefer knowing you had a good meal than thinking about you eating fast food," Brandon said with a sniff.

Dane grinned.

"Don't smile at me like that," Brandon demanded with a frown. "You have worse eating habits than Eric."

He shrugged. "No one ever cared before."

"I care," Brandon stressed. "I won't allow you to have a heart attack and leave Maverick all alone."

Just Maverick? Dane really wanted to push his boy. To see if Brandon would respond the way he sometimes did. Dane had control though. He would not tease Brandon right before the boy went on shift in the ER for the night.

"Did you make dinner for yourself too?" Dane checked.

“I did,” Brandon said. “We’ll need to go grocery shopping in the next couple of days. I don’t want Eric and Ezra to come home to an empty fridge.”

“We can do that,” Dane readily agreed. “Maybe tomorrow after we both wake up. We can even stop at the diner you love.” That was a date. Even if Brandon didn’t know it. By his calculations they’d been on thirteen dates together. It didn’t count if Eric or anyone else was with them. In just over a year, Dane had only been able to get Brandon alone for thirteen meals together. Dates. He was sneaky like that. And not at all ashamed. He’d tell Brandon one day. Once Brandon had accepted his claim.

“Sounds good to me. You better shower and get ready for work. I need to head in soon myself.”

His mouth watered to pull Brandon into his arms. Dane would kiss the hell out of the boy if given the chance. Instead, he nodded before moving toward the house. His best friend’s house.

Dane would eventually have to go to his own home. In the meantime, he could take a long hot shower and think about Brandon being in a room just down the hall from him.

He was hard and erect as he walked down to the room he’d claimed as his own. Ezra had been staying in the room, but he’d moved in with Eric, so the space was available. Dane had to use the bathroom in the hall that Brandon also used. If he sniffed the shampoo and soap that Brandon used, no one needed to know but him.

Brandon was still cooing over Maverick as Dane closed the door behind him.

The lighting in the bathroom was soothing.

Dane knew Brandon’s past with his ex. Had seen the report that Eric had hidden in his desk. The bathroom. No other bathroom was as calm and welcoming as the one he currently stood in.

He didn't know how to help. What to do to make the space safer for Brandon. Dane made sure that he kept everything clean and not cluttered.

Any little thing he could do to ensure that Brandon was happy, healthy, and loved.

Chapter Two

Brandon

From the corner of his eye, Brandon spotted movement. He followed the back of the tall dark-haired man wearing a form-fitting and perfectly tailored suit with his eyes until the door to the emergency exit closed.

“I’ll be right back, Mandy,” Brandon told his fellow nurse.

“Sure.” Mandy waved him off as she continued to text on her phone.

The late-night shift was always Brandon’s favorite. More now that his anxiety spiked when he was surrounded by too many people. Casually strolling down the hall, Brandon slid his hands into the pocket of his purple scrub pants. He ran his fingers over the small soft K-9 stuffie that he carried everywhere with him. Maverick couldn’t be with him physically at work but that amazing stuffie helped Brandon get through the hours that Brandon was alone.

He’d hate it when Dane and Maverick went back to their own house, but he was enjoying having his furry companion by his side for the time being. When they did leave, Brandon would still have his stuffie. The first gift that Dane had ever given him. His collection had grown in the last few weeks. It seemed as if anytime anyone saw a stuffie that looked like Maverick, they just had to get it for him. Dane was the worst. Always coming back with something.

Having his stuffies piled in his bed, Brandon had never been as thankful for anything in his life.

Nothing compared to that first stuffie though. The one that Brandon always kept with him. The perfect size. The best gift. Something from Dane even if he didn’t mean it the way that Brandon wished.

Except, Brandon was beginning to get the feeling that Dane might not be as opposed to Brandon’s interest. The past week alone together had really opened Brandon’s eyes to how

amazing Dane was. How patient and kind. How absolutely fucking hot and sexy.

Reaching the stairwell for the emergency exit, Brandon took a deep breath before he pushed the bar to open the heavy door. He slipped through the opening pausing on the ninth floor landing.

Brandon knew he wasn't alone in the mainly unused stairwell. He sat on the top step for the stairs that went down and pulled his Maverick stuffie from his pocket. He rubbed the furry ears with his thumb.

"You look well." The calm and soothing voice from his past warmed Brandon.

Brandon smiled. "I am." He hadn't known if he would ever say those words and mean them, but they were true. Every day was a new day. A new chance.

"You smiled. You looked down at your phone and smiled."

He laughed. It was silly but when Dane had sent him a picture of Maverick sitting in front of Brandon's closed door, his heart had warmed. Dane complained about having to keep opening Brandon's door as Maverick kept searching for him. Brandon had told Dane to just leave his door open. He was past being worried about what anyone would think about the toys he'd left out. "My...brother's friend." He hated that was all Dane was to him. "He's staying at the house with his K-9 and sent me a picture of Maverick. He's a very handsome dog." With a very handsome handler. "And he keeps looking for me."

There was a beat of silence. "You want him to be more than your brother's friend."

And...Brandon wasn't even surprised by that assessment. It was true after all. There were times when Brandon and Dane's gazes would meet and the chemistry between them was electric. Brandon's patience was getting tested. He wanted Dane. God, how he wanted him.

"Is he a good man?"

“Yes.” Brandon didn’t even hesitate with his answer. “Eric trusts him. He wouldn’t leave me with Dane if he had any doubts.”

“But do you trust him?”

That was a harder question. “He wouldn’t hurt me.” Not on purpose. Dane was very careful when he was around Brandon. Sometimes a little too careful. Brandon might be broken but he didn’t want to be. There were things that he needed, craved, and it would be hard to share with anyone.

“That isn’t the same thing.”

Brandon looked at the stuffie in his hands. “No, it’s not.”

“Marco tells me that I must allow you to make your own decisions.” The way Skinner said the sentence didn’t sound like he agreed.

“How is Marco?” Brandon knew that he should keep in touch better with the friends that he’d left behind, but it was hard knowing that they would always see him as that bleeding boy that had been rescued from a monster. Brandon was trying to move on and unfortunately that meant leaving people behind him. At least for now.

“He is well. He’s with the other boys, seeing the magic angel.”

“Cris Angel,” Brandon corrected. “I’m surprised that you let him on the Strip alone.” Skinner was well known for how protective he was over his boy. It was something that Brandon envied. Marco never rubbed it in, but Brandon could talk to Marco since the other boy was in a very structured and controlled relationship.

There was a soft snort. “Lance, Creed, and Finn are watching over them. It was requested that I not attend the show.”

Oh God! Brandon groaned. “What did you do?”

“I merely pointed out the tricks that the orange-haired man used at the first magic show we went to. It wasn’t appreciated.”

“You’re not supposed to point out the magicians’ secrets,” Brandon admonished. He could just imagine how annoyed the boys would be. Which would be reason enough for Skinner to do so if he could annoy Jackson.

“The boys were unnecessarily impressed.”

“Skinner. It’s magic. They’re supposed to be impressed.”

“I can shoot a man from over a thousand feet. I am considered one of the best marksmen in the world.”

Wow, that totally sounded like Skinner was pouting. “You are a total badass. But magic is fun.” For some people. Brandon didn’t get into it himself. The boys though. They would love it.

“It is...silly.”

“Yes, fun.” Brandon shook his head. “What else are you going to see in town?” He hadn’t done any of the touristy stuff. He tended to stay at home when he wasn’t at work. Since he still only worked part-time, Brandon was home a lot. At least he had new little friends and an awesome playroom.

“We attended a hockey game.”

“Hockey?”

“Apparently my boy and his friends have started to read gay hockey romance. They think these men are *hot*.” The last word was spat. “Jackson enjoyed the fights.”

“Of course he did,” Brandon replied. “And hockey players are hot.” He wondered what series the boys were reading. Brandon loved a good gay romance book but hadn’t gotten into any sports stories. He was more of the enemy to lover or brother’s best friend junkie. Huh, that probably said something about him.

“They don’t even have their real teeth.”

This...this was what he wanted. Someone who loved him so much that he’d go see magicians and hockey games. A person that put him before everyone else. A man that saw more than his past. And he’d have that. If a fucking hitman could find happiness, so could he.

Damn it, he deserved it!

If Brandon had any chance to be happy and find a partner, he needed to take that first step. He was running out of time. His brother would be home soon. Dane wouldn't be just down the hall.

He was making a move!

Determination brewing, Brandon stood and slipped his stuffie back into his pocket. "I need to get back to work."

"You will call if you need anything."

It wasn't a question. "I swear." Brandon turned, taking a few steps forward. He paused with his hand on the door. "Thank you, Skinner."

"You are an amazing young man with a kind heart and a big brain. The man who captures your attention had better do right by you. I know how to make someone disappear."

"I know you do. I think it's time that I took a chance though." It might not work out. Hell, the chances of finding a long-term partner were slim, but Brandon wasn't going to spend the rest of his life alone. "I'm ready."

"You've been ready. I am very proud of your strength."

Those words were probably the best that he'd ever heard.

"Go. I will see you soon." Skinner's words were firm.

That didn't mean that Brandon would see him. Having a dark knight in his corner, yeah, Brandon lived a weird life, but he wouldn't change anything. Not even the horror he'd been through since it had brought him right where he was supposed to be. "Give Marco my love."

"I will."

Brandon pulled open the door, returning to work mode. He had patients to check on, gossip to listen to, and then he would go home to his dog. Brandon snickered as he walked down the hall. Dane would frown at him if he knew that Brandon was still claiming Maverick as his. Brandon didn't care how much

money or training went into Maverick being a drug dog. He was still Brandon's giant fluffy pup!

He also needed to come up with a plan on how to seduce the sexy cop that was waiting for him as well. Brandon wondered if curling in Dane's lap and just planting his ass there for good would work. Possible.

* * * * *

Dane

He stroked his cock faster while pumping his hips. Dane couldn't get the right angle and huffed. His dick ached and he needed release before he was forced to spend another night down the hall from the boy that he wanted with every fiber of his being. Dane was also running out of time since Brandon would be home from work soon.

With the hand not currently wrapped around his cock, Dane pulled up the message thread between him and Brandon from earlier.

Brandon had sent a picture of himself sitting at a desk with his Maverick stuffie in his hand.

Dane groaned.

Even though Brandon was smiling in the photo, it was his eyes that drew Dane in.

Brandon's eyes really were the window to his soul. His eyes told Dane more than Brandon had ever shared. Brandon was a survivor. A warrior. He'd seen the worst of mankind and was still the same sweet, smart, and loving person.

It was probably wrong that just looking at the picture had Dane's horniness returning.

He tightened his fingers and jerked himself again.

"You like that, baby boy?" he asked the picture of Brandon. "You like Daddy's hand on your cock?"

Fuck! That was hot!

Dane would take care of his boy. Brandon would never have to use his own hand again.

“Daddy wants to eat your ass. Get you all nice and wet before I slide my big dick inside your tight little hole.”

God damn! Dane wanted that. To take Brandon. To have his boy.

“I’m gonna ruin that hole of yours. Fill you with so much cum that you drip with my release.”

His balls drew up. Yeah, this was what he had needed. If he couldn’t have Brandon in real life, he would just have to make do.

“I’m going to love you so good, boy. Daddy will always take care of you.”

He stroked and pounded into his own fist until he came. Dane’s moan would have alerted anyone else in the house what he’d been up to if anyone other than Maverick was home.

Collapsing against the mattress, Dane struggled to catch his breath. He dropped his phone back onto the mattress as he closed his eyes. It was hard not to bask in the afterglow and take a little nap. Brandon would be home soon, and Dane wanted to be in position on the couch when the boy returned. Any moment that he could spend with Brandon was a treasure. The hour that Brandon took to relax and unwind after his shift was the perfect time for a little pushing.

They would sit close on the couch with the television on low and talk about their days. Dane could probe and question as the sleepier Brandon got, the more open he’d become. They always ended the night with Dane asking about Brandon’s little side and him getting some real answers.

Oh, he’d done his research. That was why Dane was not shocked that both Eric and Remi were also interested in the Daddy lifestyle. It also hadn’t been hard to come to terms with the fact that Dane would be a much different Daddy than Eric was with Ezra.

Ezra needed a soft touch. A release from being a single father. Eric perfectly moved between being the Daddy that Ezra wanted, the partner that Ezra needed, and a second father to Annabelle. Their dynamic didn't take up all their time.

Dane didn't work that way and he suspected that was not what Brandon wanted either.

Brandon would regress more if he didn't push himself to be so damn responsible. Even when Brandon tried to let go of his worries, it was difficult. That was where Dane wanted to come in. Dane had control issues. His past partners hadn't enjoyed Dane's possessiveness or the way he needed to always be in control. Brandon... Brandon made Dane want to try again. To see if they could give each other what they both wanted.

The only reason that Dane hadn't made a move on Brandon was because he was terrified of it going wrong. Brandon wasn't just some rando at a club that Dane could easily forget. Dane already had strong feelings from Brandon. Eric would kill him if he ever hurt his brother.

There was so much on the line for Dane to even think of starting something with Brandon. That didn't stop him from throwing out hints or wishing.

The alarm on his phone drew Dane from his thoughts.

Brandon would be leaving the hospital now.

Dane rolled out of his bed, making sure to keep his sticky hand away from the sheets. He pulled up the jeans he'd hastily pushed down but didn't bother to zip. Strolling across the room, he gazed around. Nothing out of place or to show what he'd been up to. Dane had already pushed the bottle of lube under the pillow.

He opened the door and stopped.

"He's on his way home, buddy."

Maverick was lying in front of Brandon's open door, resting his chin on his front paws.

The dog really did love Brandon.

When they went home, Maverick would not be happy.

He crossed the hall and went into the bathroom to wash his hands and clean up. In ten minutes' time, Dane was clean, changed into an old pair of sweatpants and a tank, waiting on the couch for Brandon.

Maverick perked up when a door slamming closed sounded from out front.

The sound of keys in the lock had the dog up and racing off. Dane wanted to run to greet Brandon as well. If he had a tail, it would be going wild.

"Hey, boy. Who's my good boy. Yes, it's you! You're such a good boy!"

Brandon's voice carried down the hall to him. Dane snuck his hand under the blanket on his lap to grab the base of his dick. He was still worked up from earlier and just hearing Brandon's smooth tone made him ache. Plus, he wanted to say those very words to his own boy. Not the dog.

"Where is your Daddy?" Brandon asked Maverick.

"Living room. I have *Housewives* paused."

Brandon walked into the living room and grinned at him. "You're not fooling me," he said. "I know you're just addicted as Eric to that show."

He really wasn't. Dane couldn't stand the whining women. He just knew that Brandon loved the show. "I plead the fifth."

Brandon laughed, as Dane hoped he would. "Just let me change clothes." He glanced at the coffee table. "You even got the snacks?"

Dane shrugged. "I knew you would be tired. You worked four nights in a row."

"Yeah, I'm glad to be off the next few days."

Dane knew that Brandon returning to work was important to his healing, so he was glad that the boy was taking more shifts, but selfishly he missed Brandon when he wasn't around. Once Eric was home, Dane wasn't sure what other

excuses he could make up to stay. He wasn't needed there technically, but Dane wanted to be there. Not only to be close to Brandon. Dane needed...it was just easier being around other people. Not on his own. Dane was tired of always being on his own.

"Be right back!" Brandon called as he walked from the room.

Dane gave his unruly cock one last squeeze. "Behave," he grumbled to himself.

Spreading out the large blanket so that they could share it—ensuring that Brandon would have to sit close—Dane grinned. This was his favorite part of their night. Dane didn't care what was on the screen. He paid more attention to Brandon anyway. Brandon usually fell asleep once he had his snacks and it was the best sleep that Dane had seen the younger man get. He made sure there were plenty of pillows for Brandon before moving the coffee table even closer to the edge of the couch.

There, perfect.

Everything was within reach. Easy for his boy to relax after a long shift. If...when Brandon was his boy, Dane would introduce a soothing bath and massage into this nightly routine.

"I was just thinking on the way home that when Eric and Ezra get back, we'll have to start to decorate for Christmas," Brandon said as he returned to the living room.

Christmas. Dane hadn't even thought about the upcoming holiday. He'd ended up working the entire Thanksgiving Day and weekend. Brandon had made sure his lunches consisted of leftovers from the meals he missed but Dane had regretted that he couldn't sit around the table with his family.

Now he needed to think about Christmas.

And the small little group that had once consisted of him, Eric, Remy, and Carson had grown and changed. Lieutenant Carson Carillo was now in Rocky Lake with his own boy and new friends. They wouldn't be sitting around Carson's place

drinking beer and ordering take-out. Carson wouldn't be there. Plus, Brandon insisted that holidays needed to be home cooked food. No takeout for them when Brandon was around.

With the new members of their group including Ezra, Annabelle, Dom, Lake, and Jesse Lambert, Dane needed to start thinking of presents as well.

It was difficult to think about Christmas when they were in the middle of an unusual heat wave. Normally the days were comfortable with the colder nights. That wasn't currently the case. He barely needed a long-sleeve shirt.

A picture of Brandon in those little footie pajamas flashed and Dane wished for colder weather just to see Brandon dressed so adorably. He'd only gotten a brief glimpse last year, but Brandon was more comfortable around them all now.

A year had really had Brandon coming out of his shell.

Dane was so proud of the boy.

"We'll have to get Maverick a stocking," Dane mused. He knew that would make Brandon happy.

"Yes!" Brandon clapped as he danced the rest of the way to the couch. "I want to make it!"

"Whatever you want," Dane agreed.

"Pillows!" Brandon took a running start before leaping onto the couch cushions. He bounced then crawled over until he was practically on top of Dane. Not that Dane would complain.

"Oops!" Brandon giggled.

"Silly boy," Dane teased. He helped Brandon get under the blanket and the boy was closer than he normally sat. "I got you juice, carrots and ranch, and those chips you like with that dip."

"Thanks!" Brandon smacked his lips. "You're the best ever!"

Dane swallowed his moan. His cock pulsed. Fuck! Why did Brandon have to be so damn adorable? Dane just wanted

to eat him up. In a very sexual way. It was going to be a long hard night.

Brandon settled by his side as Dane reached for the remote.

Chapter Three

Brandon

Crossing to the kitchen cabinet next to the stove, Brandon hummed to himself. He had the next couple days off and after his visitor the night before, Brandon's decision to make a move on Dane had him buzzing. Liquid courage. That was what he needed.

After sleeping in, Brandon had spent the afternoon playing in his room while Dane and Maverick had been at work. Dane was putting his weapon away in the safe that he'd brought over, so Brandon didn't have much time.

He was going to do this! Brandon was a brave boy and he wanted Dane.

One shot. Maybe two. He didn't drink often. Ever. His meds wouldn't mix well with alcohol, but Brandon figured one little shot wouldn't harm him. He pulled open the cabinet door and stared.

Nothing.

He rose to his tiptoes in case Eric had moved the liquor bottles to a higher shelf. They did have a little girl who lived in the house with them. Nope. The bottles were gone. Damn. Beer! Eric kept beer in the fridge. He closed the cabinet door before spinning around.

"There isn't any."

Brandon squeaked as Dane spoke from the doorway. Brandon covered his racing heart with his palm. "You scared me!"

Dane dropped his head. "I'm sorry."

"There isn't any what?" Brandon asked.

"Alcohol." Dane didn't look at him.

"Oh." Brandon shrugged. "I can go to the store tomorrow." His mind raced trying to think of what to do now. He'd had a plan, damn it!

“Please don’t.”

“Don’t...” Brandon peered over at the other man. Dane wore those sinfully tight jeans with a wide black belt with his black T-shirt tucked in. The muscles of his shoulders, arms, and pecs strained under the thin cotton. He was a fucking wet dream and he had to know it. Brandon wanted to slowly unwrap Dane like he was a present.

Dane swallowed hard before he looked up. There was something in his dark gaze that concerned Brandon. His brain screeched to a stop. He needed to stop thinking about his dick. Something was wrong.

“Dane?”

“Your brother removed all the alcohol from the house before I came to stay.”

Brandon really didn’t drink so he hadn’t noticed. “Okay.”

“Because of me.” Dane pushed off the doorframe. He rolled his shoulders while lifting his chin. “I’m an alcoholic.”

The confession hung in the air between them.

“Oh.” Brandon dropped his hands to his side. Had he ever heard that before? No, Brandon was sure he would have remembered that. He remembered everything about Dane.

Dane’s jaw was set.

“I’m sorry. I didn’t know.” What else should he say? It didn’t bother Brandon. Brandon understood addictions, even if it wasn’t something he struggled with himself. Still, as a nurse, Brandon had seen the struggle from alcohol and drugs.

“I’ve been sober for eighteen months,” Dane told him.

Brandon lifted his hand. “You don’t have to—”

“I do,” Dane stressed. “You should know that the man staying with you has a drinking problem. That your brother removed the bottles of liquor and beer because I can’t handle being around them.”

He sounded so angry. Hurt. Brandon’s heart ached. Here was a reminder that while Brandon had been struggling and

healing, the people around him also had their own demons. A small part of him was relieved that he wasn't the only person who struggled on a daily basis but that made him feel like shit for even thinking about it. "I'm sorry."

"You have nothing to apologize for!" Dane barked.

Brandon jumped.

Dane took several steps back and dropped his head again. "I didn't mean to yell. I wouldn't hurt you."

"I know that!" Brandon snapped. He wasn't afraid of Dane. The volume had just surprised him. Dane was always so careful with Brandon. Too careful.

"I'll..." Dane shook his head. "I'll go to my room."

"Wait!" Brandon called before Dane could run away. He fisted his hands on his hips. They needed to talk about this. "Why did you tell me?"

Dane glanced up.

His eyes held so much pain. Brandon wanted to take the question back. He pushed forward. Communication. This was important. "About your drinking problem. Why did you tell me?"

"You deserve to know."

Not the answer he was looking for. "Why?" Brandon hoped he wasn't pushing too hard. In his mind and heart, Dane already belonged to him.

"Because I'm staying in the house with you. Because you need to know what kind of man is across the hall from you."

Brandon pressed his lips together. It was obvious that Dane was uncomfortable with this conversation. That he wanted to run. Hide. Brandon knew that feeling well. If he allowed Dane to run from him, they might not get this moment again. "Come here."

"What?" Dane's entire body was taut.

"Come here," he demanded. Brandon knew what he wanted. He didn't need alcohol. That had been a dumb idea

anyway.

Dane slowly, carefully, shuffled forward on his bare feet. He had sexy feet. Big. Veiny. Brandon would bet everything about Dane was big.

Brandon beckoned him closer when Dane stopped at least six feet away.

He appeared suspicious but kept scooting forward. Dane's dark eyes spoke volumes to Brandon. Dane was begging not to be judged. Rejected. Didn't Dane know that Brandon would never do that?

Leaning back against the counter, Brandon lifted a brow in challenge. "I don't bite."

Dane huffed but he finally closed the distance.

"Thank you for telling me," Brandon said sincerely.

"Yeah, no problem." Dane shrugged.

"I don't drink," Brandon said. "Shouldn't drink with my meds."

He received that scowl that was becoming so familiar. "You were looking for alcohol. That's all Eric kept in that cabinet."

Wow, Dane knew the house well. That shouldn't warm Brandon the way it did. Dane was Eric's friend. Had been Eric's partner in the narcotics division before Brandon had even been there. Yes, Eric had moved into a new house with Brandon. Dane probably knew Eric better than Brandon did. At least the adult version. A small part of Brandon hoped that Dane paid attention to him.

"It's fine," Dane said. "You can drink." He shook his head. "If they mess with your meds though—"

"Liquid courage," Brandon admitted.

Dane's eyes widened as he went to step back. "Because of me."

Without thought, Brandon grabbed Dane by the front of his belt to stop him. His fingers closed around the thick black

leather, and it felt right. Perfect. Brandon never touched anyone this way.

“Brandon.” Dane’s voice was strained.

Huh, when had he looked down? Brandon lifted his gaze and met Dane’s, finding that Dane was practically vibrating. “Yes?”

“Let go.”

“No.” No, Brandon wasn’t going to do that. Not when he finally had Dane right where he wanted him.

“Brandon.” Dane growled out his name.

“Dane,” Brandon whimpered in response.

“Let go,” Dane ordered.

Slipping his fingers into the waistband of Dane’s jeans to get a better hold, Brandon tugged.

Dane snarled. The wariness and hurt had gone from his gaze, replaced by hot need. Perfect. That was what Brandon had been waiting to see.

“If you don’t want this...don’t want me, then I’ll let you go.” He tugged again. “I would never betray your consent.”

“That’s not what this is about.”

He tugged again. Yeah, he didn’t think so. “What’s it about?”

Dane stared hard at him.

Brandon grew nervous but he’d come this far. He was not going to back down. Not unless Dane said no and meant it. Did they need a safe word?

Dane’s jaw twitched with how hard he was clenching his teeth. “If you tug me one more time, I won’t be responsible for what I do.”

He shivered. “We need a safe word,” Brandon told him.

“You aren’t ready for this. For me. Brandon, we shouldn’t
—”

Brandon laughed. “You don’t have any idea what I’m ready for. Safe word?”

“Traffic light system. Red, yellow, green.”

“Same.” Brandon was empowered. Strong. He wasn’t the same broken boy that had been found bleeding on the bathroom floor. Staring into Danne’s eyes, Brandon tugged hard.

Their chests slammed together.

Brandon was smashed against the counter digging into his back.

Dane growled as he grabbed the back of Brandon’s head while locking their lips tight.

Brandon melted.

Fuck!

Dane could kiss. Knew how much pressure to use. How to coax Brandon into an intimate tongue dance that had Brandon’s dick wanting to join the party. Dane nibbled on Brandon’s lip. Brandon opened for him. Dane thrust his tongue inside as he held the back of Brandon’s head with his left hand. His right arm wrapped around Brandon and Brandon was lifted onto his tiptoes.

There wasn’t an inch between them.

Brandon could feel every hard ridge and muscle of Dane’s body. Dane’s impressive erection digging into him.

This wasn’t a gentle coaxing kiss. Dane was demanding Brandon’s responses. Brandon clung to Dane’s strong shoulders.

Pulling back until they were a breath apart, Dane growled. “I’m not a good man, Brandon. I would never hurt you but that doesn’t mean you shouldn’t be afraid.”

“Afraid of what?” Brandon challenged.

Dane’s left hand caressed his cheek before he lightly wrapped those callused fingers around his neck. He tipped

Brandon's chin up with his thumb. "The control I want to have over you."

Brandon gasped. Dane was correct. Brandon should be terrified. His brain was trying to send out warning signals. His cock pulsed in time with his frantically beating heart. "I'm not scared." And he wasn't. Not with this man.

"You think you want me. That you can handle this. You can't."

Didn't Dane realize that Brandon had already made this decision? "Try me."

"What if I told you that you need more than a safe word? You need a nonverbal way to show me your boundaries."

"I would ask you why," Brandon replied.

Dane bared his teeth. "Because I plan to fuck you until you can't talk. Scream. Beg for mercy."

"Two taps on your right shoulder," Brandon answered quickly. Excitement raced down his spine. Dane sounded like he knew how Brandon wanted to be touched. Taken.

"If we do this, there won't be any going back. You'll belong to me. Do you understand what that means?"

"Tell me," Brandon ordered. He needed the terms spelled out to him.

"You will be the most precious person in my life. When I said control, I meant it. You'll tell me where you are always. You will lean on me when you need to. I'll be your person. For everything."

Brandon began to shake. That...that was what he wanted. His person. Brandon deserved someone who put him first. Who needed Brandon as much as Brandon needed his partner.

"I will never lift my hands at you in anger or any other time. I know your past. I won't even spank that amazing ass of yours. I won't tie you up. I won't need to. If I tell you to keep your hands somewhere, you will do it for me because you want to."

He was going to come! Just from Dane's words. Brandon sucked in a sharp breath, held it, then pushed the air out his mouth.

"I'll be in charge of when and how you come."

"Okay." He hoped he got to come a lot.

"You think I'm the hero of your story, but I'm really the monster hiding in the corner."

"I'm not looking for a hero." He'd had that once. A man who presented himself as the hero. A helper. That was not what he'd been. A dirty cop, an abuser—there was many names Brandon could use for his ex.

"This won't be a secret. That is due to many factors. One, I won't hide you or what you mean to me. Second, I respect your brother. I won't lie to him. Third, I won't hurt you mentally or physically. If you need help. Get scared. You need to have someone you can turn to. Eric. Remi. Your friends. You will have resources."

The words were the opposite that a monster would say.

"Lastly, I'm fucked up in the head. You have PTSD. So do I. It would be irresponsible as a Dom or Daddy if I didn't take responsibility to keep things safe for both of us."

Brandon nodded.

"I need to hear the words," Dane said. "You can take time to think about it."

Fuck that! "I want you, Dane. I want you to do everything you just promised. Be my Daddy?"

"God damn, boy." Dane's fingers tightened briefly on his throat. "I've fucking wanted you for months now."

"I'm right here," Brandon whispered.

Dane slammed his mouth down on his.

It seemed nearly impossible that this kiss was more powerful, deeper, hotter than the previous one, but it was.

Brandon's whine got stuck in his throat as Dane tongue-fucked his mouth.

Dane grabbed his ass cheeks hard before lifting Brandon off his feet. Brandon wrapped his legs around Dane's waist, pressing his hard cock into Dane's washboard abs.

Dane took a step back then another.

From the door, Maverick gave a low bark.

They broke from the kiss to look at their K-9 companion.

"Stay," Dane ordered.

Maverick dropped onto his stomach.

Brandon made a sound of protest.

"I'm not fucking you in front of my dog," Dane grumbled.

Yeah, that would be weird. As Dane carried him out of the kitchen and down the hall, Brandon sent Maverick a sad look. He'd make it up with special treats later. Brandon had a treat of his own that he was very interested in. He didn't know what Dane had planned, but before the morning light, Brandon hoped to have Dane's cock in his mouth.

They'd put Dane and Maverick in the room that Ezra had first stayed in. Ezra had moved all his belongings into Eric's room after the first night that they'd shared together.

So close to Brandon but he'd still been too far away.

Dane closed the door behind them before he carefully placed Brandon in the middle of the mattress.

"This is the last time I'll ask," Dane told him. "Are you sure, Brandon? Do you want me as your Daddy? As your Dom?"

He didn't even think. "With all my heart, Dane," he replied.

Dane tugged the tight black shirt over his head. "Is there anything that you don't like? That scares you?"

"No tying me up. No blindfolds." He'd once loved having his vision taken from him. Loved not knowing where his

partner would touch him. “Can I change that?”

“You can,” Dane replied. “At any time. Even if you want something and change your mind later, that’s okay. Safe word, baby boy. I won’t accept you not using them if you need to.”

“I don’t want to be blindfolded right now but...” He took a deep breath. “Maybe we could work up to that? I used to like ___”

“Yes. Slowly. After we have an entire conversation about it. Communication, baby. You are going to get sick of talking to me.”

Brandon giggled.

“I mean it,” Dane warned. He tugged on his belt.

Licking his lips, Brandon could still feel the warm leather under his fingers. He’d been such a brave boy and it had totally paid off. His friends would be so proud of him! Brandon couldn’t wait to tell them. Well, he could wait. Until Dane did as he promised. Walking was overrated anyway.

“Is there something you want?” Dane teased. He was slowly removing the belt from the loops of his jeans.

Brandon whined.

“I’ve seen you watching me from the window,” Dane said. “Did you think about what I looked like under my pants?”

“Yes,” he hissed. “You never wore a shirt!” It had been beautiful torture.

“Because I knew you were there.” Dane popped the button of his jeans open. He slid the zipper down. His erection barely contained by the tight jeans and cotton underneath.

“I want to see you,” Brandon pleaded.

“Anything you want, baby boy. You should know that by now.” Dane pushed his underwear and jeans down his legs before he kicked them away. He stood gloriously naked and Brandon had been right. Dane was big all over. “But now I’m going to get you naked.”

“Yes!”

“I can touch you?” Dane asked.

It warmed Brandon that Dane would ask. “Please touch me.”

“I want to fuck you tonight. Are you okay with that? It’s okay to say no. I can suck you off if you prefer. We take this at our own pace, baby.”

“I want to suck you,” Brandon admitted. “And you to fuck me. Until I can’t talk. Or move. Or walk.”

Dane flashed him a smile that was all teeth. “We can do that.” He closed his hand over Brandon’s ankle then yanked him down the bed. “Now let Daddy see all this soft gorgeous skin you’ve been teasing me with.”

Brandon hadn’t really been teasing. He never wore anything revealing. “I didn’t tease.”

“Just being in the same room with me is a tease,” Dane corrected. “And your cute little outfits drive me crazy. I love your onesies the most.”

“Damn,” he breathed. “You like that?”

“I love seeing you so happy and confident in your little clothes. It makes me so proud of you. I just want to cuddle you close before I get you all dirty. Of course I’d clean you up after.”

Maybe Brandon had died and gone to heaven?

“I can’t wait until you trust me enough to help you dress,” Dane said.

Could Brandon do that? He wanted to but—

“Our timetable, baby,” Dane reminded. “It’s something we can both look forward to.”

He relaxed. “Okay, Daddy. On our timetable.”

“Good boy.”

Brandon’s cock jerked. The wet spot at the front of his lounge pants grew.

“Oh, look at that,” Dane teased. Still holding his ankle with one hand, Dane cupped his erection with his free one. “Daddy’s boy liked being told how good he is.”

Brandon nodded frantically. Loved it.

“You are being so good for me,” Dane praised. “I’m going to take your pants and undies off now.”

“Green,” Brandon breathed.

Dane smiled. “Good boy.”

Fuck! If this was how Dane was going to talk to him, Brandon would stay hard all the time.

Brandon’s pants and underwear were pulled off and thrown behind Dane’s shoulder. He laughed. Dane was not concerned about their clothes ending up wherever and that was fun.

“Shirt now. Sit up for me.”

Brandon let Dane help him. Brandon’s T-shirt was removed and now they were both naked. There were noticeable differences between the two of them. Dane was all hard sharp lines and muscles while Brandon was thin and had lost any definition he’d once had.

The thrill of having a bigger partner engulfed Brandon. Knowing that Dane would never use that strength against him was a heady feeling indeed.

“Now I get to play,” Dane told him.

Dane picked him up before depositing him with his head on the pillow and his body stretched out. Dane crawled up the mattress to settle between Brandon’s legs. Brandon shoved his hands under the pillow to knock his fingers into something hard. He pulled out a well-used bottle of lube.

Dane smirked at him. “There was no use putting it away when I had to come in here and jerk off several times a day being around you.”

Brandon nearly choked on a bit of drool. “You were in here jerking off?”

“Every chance I got.”

He...wow...uh...

“Stay still for me, boy.” Lowering his mouth, Dane started to kiss across Brandon’s stomach.

Okay, he might not be as ready for this as he thought. Or he was too ready. It was hard to think. He just knew that his cock was totally into Dane dragging his tongue over Brandon’s heated flesh. It felt so good!

“I...I might come!” Brandon screeched.

“That’s okay, baby.” Wrapping his fingers around Brandon’s shaft, Dane gave him a pump. “You can come. I’ll just get you hard again. And again. And again. I have all night to spend with you.”

Hips coming off the bed, Brandon gave a short shout as his cock erupted.

Dane jacked him through the orgasm, not giving Brandon any time to recover before he started to lick up Brandon’s mess. Dane’s tongue teased the slit of his shaft then returned to the rest of Brandon’s body.

It was slow torture.

There was no way that Brandon could determine where Dane would put his tongue or fingers next. The entire time, Dane slowly stroked Brandon’s cock, keeping him erect and needy.

Talking? Walking? Thinking? Yeah, good thing that Brandon had agreed none of those were important.

Chapter Four

Dane

Dane sucked hard on Brandon's cock. The boy's entire body was shaking and after two orgasms already, Dane knew that Brandon was at his limit for the night. It was so hard to pull himself away from pleasuring his boy though. Dane had been dreaming about this night for so long.

Brandon was his. They'd made an agreement and even though they had many more conversations ahead of them, having Brandon at the mercy of Dane's absolute attention was addicting.

"Roll over for me, baby," Dane whispered against Brandon's trembling chest.

Brandon tried. He really did and that made Dane happy. Even if he had to help Brandon roll to his front, since he'd lost any sort of coordination. His boy moaned as his cock was trapped under his body.

"It's okay," Dane soothed. "Daddy has you." He grabbed the lube that lay forgotten on the mattress by his hip. "One more time for me."

"Yes, Daddy," Brandon replied so sweetly.

"Good boy," Dane praised as he nuzzled the back of Brandon's neck. "Such a good boy for me."

"Need you, Daddy," Brandon whispered.

"You have me," Dane promised. "Always." He lubed up two fingers before he gently probed at Brandon's entrance.

He knew to take his time. Brandon might be worked up and edging on the side of desperation, but Dane had made a promise. He wouldn't hurt his boy. Ever. Even though his own cock was rapidly leaking precome and Dane's balls felt like they were on fire, he would take his time preparing Brandon.

Dane slid one finger inside Brandon's hole.

The boy sighed as he pushed back.

Working his fingers deep inside, Dane watched the muscles of Brandon's back and paid close attention to Brandon's responses. Even though Dane had been teasing him forever, Brandon was just as enthusiastic as he had been. Even if he merely made sounds and wasn't using actual words.

Dane added a second finger inside Brandon's entrance.

Brandon groaned while lifting his hips and pushing back.

Even two fingers buried deep weren't enough. Dane was a big man. Brandon needed to be able to take three fingers comfortably...maybe four.

Adding lube and scissoring his fingers, Dane was careful but firm. Brandon begged with whines, whimpers, and cut-off words but Dane waited until his boy easily took four of Dane's thick digits.

He pulled his hand away and grasped his cock. His bare cock.

"Fuck!" He scrambled for the nightstand drawer.

"No!" Brandon wailed. "Come back!"

"Hold on, baby. Condom."

"Want you," Brandon argued. "Please, Daddy."

Dane squeezed the base of his dick. "Soon, baby boy." Where the hell were the condoms? He knew he had some in the drawer.

"Now!" Brandon whined.

Dane stopped. He placed his free hand on the small of Brandon's back. They both needed to calm down. "Shh," he whispered.

"I need—" Brandon kicked his legs.

"I know, baby boy. But I need to find a condom."

"Don't have to," Brandon told him.

"That is not a conversation we are going to have while we are both this worked up. We can discuss this later."

"But—"

“I would love nothing more than to come inside you,” Dane swore. Fuck, he really wanted to mark Brandon from the inside out. Then lick Brandon clean. But he knew better than to make that decision without a full conversation about boundaries. He would protect Brandon even if it was from the both of them. “Maybe next time.”

Brandon took a deep breath. His neck strained before he collapsed onto the mattress. “Sorry.”

“Proud of you, baby,” Dane said. “I know it’s hard.”

“So hard,” Brandon mumbled.

“But you can be patient for Daddy.”

“K.”

He had to do his own calm breathing. Dane leaned to the side and spotted the condoms he’d been fumbling for in the back of the drawer. Yes, they had both needed a moment.

Dane got his cock wrapped in protection before he coated himself with lube.

Taking the time to run his hands up the back of Brandon’s legs, Dane checked in with his boy. “Are you ready, baby?”

Brandon grunted. “Please!”

Okay, they were both on the same page. Bracing one hand next to Brandon’s shoulder, Dane grasped his shaft. He pushed the tip at Brandon’s entrance. “My sweet boy. My brave boy,” he praised. Carefully, Dane entered Brandon’s hot tight hole.

Brandon’s breath caught as Dane slid his cock deep.

Fuck! Tight! Good. Too fucking good. He was not going to last long.

“Knees,” he barked.

Brandon scrambled to obey and still Dane had to help.

With his fingers digging into Brandon’s hips, Dane pulled back gently. He rested the head of his cock just inside Brandon before he shoved hard.

Brandon gasped.

Dane nearly saw stars.

He repeated the move.

Watching his cock disappear into Brandon's stretched hole was almost his undoing. He pulled out halfway just to watch Brandon's entrance twitch. Fuck! This was even better than Dane had imagined.

He slammed forward.

Brandon arched as his ass cheeks jiggled.

Dane had to swallow back his drool. He rocked on his knees picking up the rhythm. This was his boy. His! Dane would never let anyone bad touch Brandon again. He would spend the rest of his life making Brandon happy. He'd keep his boy safe. Any and every way possible.

Each time he thrust forward, the bed rocked beneath them. He hammered into his boy's hole with the desperation that had been clawing at him. Brandon's shouts echoed around the room with only the sound of skin slapping against skin to counter the noise. Dane knew he was done and frantically grasped Brandon's swinging dick.

He jacked Brandon's shaft along with his thrusts until Brandon yelled hoarsely and his come covered Dane's fingers. He fucked his boy through his third orgasm until Dane couldn't hold back any longer. He kissed the back of Brandon's shoulder as he plunged deep and hard one last time.

Come shot from his cock and filled the condom.

It would be much better if he was filling up his boy instead. Maybe next time.

Brandon's arms gave out, but Dane caught the boy and carefully lowered him to the mattress. Holding the bottom of the condom, Dane gently withdrew.

"Na, uh, hmm," Brandon mumbled.

Dane nuzzled Brandon's cheek. There went the talking. That was one promise kept.

* * * * *

Brandon

He grunted as he scrambled to hold on to something.

“I got you, baby boy,” Dane soothed.

Brandon blinked his eyes open as he was lifted off the soft bed. The bed that he really wanted to be on and sleeping. Why was Dane waking him already? “Huh?”

“The bath is all ready for us,” Dane told him.

“Bath?” They were taking a bath?

Dane chuckled. The low sound going straight to Brandon’s drained balls. If he could get hard again so soon, he probably would have. “I knew you weren’t listening to me. We’re taking a bath. I don’t want you to be sore tomorrow.”

Brandon sighed. It was probably too late for that.

“Sorer than you need to be,” Dane amended.

Well, Brandon did enjoy baths even if he was really sleepy. “What time is it?”

“I let you rest for about an hour,” Dane supplied.

He groaned. An hour? After three of the most intense orgasms of his life? That wasn’t nearly long enough.

“Wouldn’t you feel better in the morning if you were all cleaned up tonight?”

Well yes but Brandon had wanted to sleep in Dane’s arms.

The bedroom door was open so Dane must have been up for a while. Or maybe he hadn’t lain down with Brandon? No, Brandon could clearly remember Dane cuddling him tight while speaking soft happy words. The words didn’t matter. Brandon couldn’t remember them anyway. It was the tone that had lulled him into a deep peaceful sleep.

Being carried was awesome so Brandon couldn’t complain about that. In front of the bathroom door, Maverick was lying down as he chewed on one of the bones that Brandon had picked up for him.

Dane noticed where Brandon's attention had gone. "He deserved a treat for waiting so patiently for us."

Brandon grinned. Dane loved that dog as much as Brandon. Even if Maverick was a working dog, he still deserved all the love of a real family. Could Brandon and Dane be that family for Maverick?

The bathroom lights were turned down but the full bubble bath was easy to see.

"I put some Epson salts in the water to help with any sore...muscles."

He giggled. Sore muscles. Sure. Brandon's ass ached but it was a good kind of hurt. One that he hadn't felt in so long that Brandon had forgotten how good an evening of hard fucking could be. Oh, he knew he wanted it but thinking about getting railed was nothing on when it actually happened.

Dane had treated Brandon with the upmost respect while still making his fantasies come true.

Gazing at the older man, Brandon wanted to pinch himself just to be certain that this was actually happening.

"Hang on to my neck tight," Dane ordered. "I'll sit you down gently."

Yeah, how was this his life? "K." The happiness that buzzed in the back of his mind wanted to remain in that safe space which also pushed Brandon's little side forward.

Brandon was the type of little that could easily get lost and not realize what was happening. It had driven his past partners crazy. He couldn't help it that when he was in a safe and happy place, his little wanted out to play.

"If you want to be little for me, then Daddy will make sure you are all taken care of," Dane told him.

Tears pooled in his eyes. How had Dane known?

"I can see you trying to fight something. Baby boy, if it's being little, then you don't have to. Big or little. You're all mine."

Bobbing his head, Brandon brought his thumb slowly up to his mouth.

“Perfect, boy. Hold on.”

The hot water and bubbles covered him as his Daddy gently placed Brandon in the tub. Brandon laughed. There were a lot of bubbles. Bubbles were cool. They smelt like lavender.

“Lean forward and let Daddy into the tub,” Dane ordered.

“K!” he mumbled around his thumb.

As Dane settled behind him, Brandon started to stack the bubbles with his free hand. He made a wall so high that he couldn’t even see the soap dish! His Daddy ran a warm washcloth down Brandon’s back as Brandon played with the bubbles.

He liked to have toys in his bath, but it was fun too to share. Dane didn’t bother him with questions or pull Brandon from his little space. He just caressed and massaged Brandon as Brandon amused himself.

Daddy even let water out of the tub and refilled it with hot water and more bubbles when needed.

Best bath ever!

Between the hot water and being sated from coming his brains out three times, it wasn’t long before Brandon was yawning.

He leaned his head back against Dane’s wide chest.

“Does the water feel good, baby?”

“Good,” he managed. His eyelids were growing so heavy.

“How about you let me clean you up and then we’ll snuggle in bed. I think Maverick is ready to turn in too.”

“I sleep with you?” Brandon asked. He didn’t want to be alone. Not after such a wonderful night.

“Oh, baby. Don’t you realize that you are going to be sharing a bed with me and Mav from now on?”

“Puppy pile?” That was the best. Ezra always let him puppy pile when Brandon needed to sleep with him and Eric. But maybe he didn’t need to sleep with his brother and friend any longer. Not if Dane answered right.

“Anything you want,” Dane promised. “Although Maverick snores so I’m warning you about that now.”

Brandon giggled when he remembered Dane sleeping outside his closet and the snoring that hadn’t been coming from inside. “Daddy!”

Dane sniffed. “Daddy does not snore, silly boy.”

“Daddy!” His Daddy totally snored. That was okay. Brandon was tired enough that he was sure that he would be asleep before his head even hit the pillow.

“Okay, baby boy.” Dane helped Brandon lean forward. “Whose room do you want to sleep in?”

He stiffened. Brandon hadn’t thought about that. Brandon’s room had everything he needed. The soft blue walls made him feel safe and his blankies were all piled on his bed. His little side tried to pull back—adult decisions needed to be made—but Dane ran his fingers gently across Brandon’s ribs, tickling him.

Brandon laughed as he squirmed around.

“No thinking too hard,” Dane said. “Just answer Daddy’s question. Where do you want to sleep with Daddy at?”

“My room!” Brandon replied.

“Good boy.”

Brandon grinned around his thumb. He had done a good job answering the question. Daddy was smiling at him. His small burst of energy didn’t last long. By the time that Daddy was satisfied that Brandon was clean, Brandon was curled up to his chest. Brandon didn’t want to ever move even if the water was now getting cold.

“I need to get up, baby,” Dane whispered.

“Nooo,” he whined.

“If I get up, then we can cuddle in bed,” Dane promised.

It was so hard to move though. Brandon sucked harder on his thumb as he kept his eyes closed. Dane moved from behind him but helped Brandon lie against the tub. There were sounds of Daddy in the bathroom but Brandon couldn't be bothered to worry about what Dane was up to.

He was lifted from the tub before a warm large towel was wrapped around him. Brandon sighed as he went from the cool water to being snug as a bug in a rug. Dane carried Brandon from the bathroom and down the hall.

Brandon looked for Maverick, but the dog wasn't in the hall any longer.

His bedroom was cool, but the sheets were turned down and Mav was on the far side, lying on the foot of the bed. Dane gently laid Brandon in the middle of the bed before he pulled the blankets up to his chin.

“Daddy is going to clean up the bathroom really quick. I'll be right back.”

Brandon yanked his thumb from his mouth. “Kiss!” he demanded.

Dane cupped Brandon's face while leaning down and brushing their lips together. Brandon closed his eyes, leaning forward. Dane didn't leave it at that though. He licked Brandon's bottom lip before thrusting his tongue into Brandon's mouth.

Brandon sucked on Dane's tongue.

Dane groaned as he pulled back. “Keep the bed warm for me.”

“K, Daddy.” He settled back onto the mattress when Dane left the room.

Maverick gave a huff, rising. He circled the bottom of the bed three times before he threw himself down. Mav ended up lying over Brandon's feet. Brandon couldn't be safer if he tried.

He found himself dozing until the blankets were pulled back and Dane's cool body settled beside him. Brandon forced himself to open his eyes. He just had to see Dane in bed with him. Sure, Brandon hoped that it was a picture that would happen a whole lot more but this was the very first time.

"You okay, baby boy?"

"Perfect," Brandon replied with all honesty. He trailed his free hand across Dane's naked chest. Dane hadn't pulled the blankets past his hips.

That reminded Brandon that there was one thing that he hadn't gotten to do. He slid his upper body down Dane's side. He didn't move his feet. Mav was in the perfect position, sleeping already. And yes, the doggo was snoring, but Brandon bent until he could reach for Dane's thick, soft cock.

Dane chuckled. "There is no way that you are ready for any more of Daddy. You are going to be sore in the morning."

Brandon allowed his thumb to fall from his mouth as he smiled up at his Daddy. "I good boy?"

"The best boy." Dane fingered Brandon's hair away from his forehead.

"Treat?" Brandon asked, running his thumb over the slit of Dane's shaft.

"You want to treat Daddy or take a treat from Daddy?"

Brandon frowned. That was a tough question.

"Doesn't matter, baby boy," Daddy told him. "It's one and the same. You can suck me until you go to sleep. Don't worry if I don't come. Just enjoy your treat." He held the base of his cock as Brandon slid farther down the bed.

Laying his head on Dane's pelvis, Brandon opened his mouth. Dane moved the head of his cock across Brandon's lips before placing the tip inside.

Brandon closed his eyes, memorizing the clean scent of his Daddy. Brandon sucked on the head of Daddy's dick. He was immediately rewarded with a small burst of precome. Brandon swallowed before he went back to suckling.

He wasn't surprised when Dane's cock grew hard in his mouth. Not that Dane was trying to make Brandon do anything to get him off. Brandon suckled on Daddy until the warmth and safety slowly drew him to sleep.

Chapter Five

Dane

Dane slid out of his truck and took in the scene in front of him. Dane had been called in by Remi and he could see why. Three vehicles were pulled to the side of the road. In the north part of the city, nothing good ever happened after midnight. It was currently twelve-oh-five.

“Thanks for coming.” Remi stepped away from the two uniform cops he’d been talking to.

“What’s going on?” Dane questioned.

“We’ve been watching a drop house for about three days. These three vehicles came from there. I’m worried that they caught wind and moved the stash. Can you run Maverick around the vehicles and see if he alerts? I can try to get a warrant based on the investigation, but Maverick would be faster.”

“That’s what we’re here for,” Dane told his friend. He turned but Remi caught his shoulder.

“What the hell?” Remi growled moving closer. He peered at Dane’s face as he scowled.

“What?” Dane couldn’t help the defensiveness. Remi was all up in his personal space.

“Dane.” Remi drew out his name. “What did you do?”

Dane had no idea what his friend was talking about. “Nothing?” he asked.

Remi drew him farther away from the other cops and the suspects handcuffed and sitting on the ground. Remi grabbed his shoulders in a tight grip.

“You can tell me the truth. I will always have your back.” Remi swallowed noticeably. “Did you drink?”

Dane reared back. “What? Fuck no!”

“Shh,” Remi hissed. His fingers dug in hard to Dane’s flesh.

He literally had no idea what was going on or why one of his best friends thought he might have been drinking. “What are you talking about?”

Remi’s hard gaze studied him. “Something happened. Changed. You look...different.”

How the fuck could he look different? “I...”

Suddenly Remi smiled. “Wait.” He held up a hand. “How’s Brandon?”

“He’s fine. Perfect.” Brandon had been curled up on the couch with his favorite movie series when Dane had gone to work.

“Yeah?” Remi waggled his brow. “You take good care of him last night?”

What. The. Actual. Fuck? “How could you know that?” Dane demanded.

Remi laughed as he slapped Dane on the back. “Only two things could put that happy look in your eyes. Take the almost permanent stress lines from your forehead. Either alcohol or you finally claimed your boy.”

Dane pushed his friend away. “Asshole.”

“No, really,” Remi said. “I’m happy for you. So everything is good?”

Was it really that noticeable that something had changed? “Everything is great,” Dane confessed. “We...we’re together.”

“Of course you are,” Remi said. His smile was way too big. There was too much knowledge in his eyes.

“You called me here for work,” Dane complained.

“And there is the grumpy guy that I know and love,” Remi said. “I’ll buy dinner so you can tell me all about you and your boy. After you work.”

Dane shook his head. Not that he would mind talking to Remi. He still needed to figure out what he was going to say to Eric. Eric was fully aware of how Dane felt about Brandon but

that didn't mean that Eric wouldn't have questions. Lots of questions. Dane was still questioning himself.

"Don't worry about it," Remi said. "I was just surprised by how happy you look. It's a good thing."

Dane just hoped that Eric felt the same. "I'm getting my dog." Work. He was there to work and if he concentrated on that, then he didn't have to worry about what Eric might say. Or think about how soft and sweet Brandon had looked when Dane had gone to work. He only had another couple of hours of his shift then he could go home to his boy.

"Make sure your camera is on," Remi ordered, back in lieutenant mode. Remi might be his boss but they both knew that he would be Dane's best friend first. He didn't hide anything from Remi or Eric. They knew about his struggles, had been the ones that had gotten him into rehab, and helped him keep his shit together.

"On it." Dane waited until just before opening the back door before he switched his body camera on. Thank fuck he hadn't had it on when Remi has pulled him aside.

He opened the back door as he pulled the leash off the belt. "Come," he ordered his canine partner.

Maverick jumped from the truck then gave a full-body shake. Dane waited until he was done before he clipped the leash to Maverick's collar.

Maverick danced at his side as he peered around the scene. There was intelligence in his canine eyes. One of the reasons that Dane had chosen Maverick as his partner was from the first time that Dane had seen the dog. Maverick had been in a field with several other canines that were up for matching with an officer.

Instead of running around and playing, Maverick had been watching. The dog's dark eyes had tracked Dane as he'd approached the fence. He'd known that was the partner for him.

After his stint in rehab and determined to get his life back on track, Dane had enrolled in the K-9 program for the police

department. He'd needed a change. Dane was also over being alone. It had taken a lot of therapy and the help of his friends to realize that his past still haunted how Dane had been living his life.

He'd been so determined to be the opposite of the man who raised him that Dane had let himself wallow in the past. Having an absentee father was not an excuse for Dane to drink himself into oblivion. Dane had been alone because he didn't trust other people. The only reason that Remi and Eric had still been around was because they'd refused to let him go. Or more accurately had refused to allow Dane to push them away like Dane had done with everyone else.

Pretending that he was content with his life had become habit.

Dane still had issues. He would always be an addict. An alcoholic. The choices that he made were now done with a clear mind and hope in his heart. The decision to change his life had brought Dane everything that he'd thought he hadn't deserved. Dane still questioned whether he could be who Brandon needed but he was willing to try. To put himself out there and hope.

Maverick nudged his knee and Dane had to shake himself from his thoughts. It was time to work. The sooner they could finish up here, the sooner they could get home to their boy.

Dane clicked his tongue as he strode toward the first vehicle. A black SUV with dark windows that made it impossible to see inside. Maverick was already showing signs before they started to circle the vehicle. Yeah, this was going to be a hit.

Reaching the back of the SUV, Maverick quickly sat before he pawed the ground. He was alerting to the scent of drugs.

"Good boy, Mav!" Dane ruffled Maverick's neck before he tossed Maverick's favorite tug of war toy. Of course, the toy was one that Brandon had bought and not what they had trained with. Because Brandon had become just as important to Maverick as he was to Dane.

Mav captured his toy and they did a quick little game of tugging before Dane turned toward Remi. Remi was already reading the suspect his rights.

“Come, boy,” Dane slid Maverick’s toy into his pocket as he moved them to the next vehicle.

There was nothing fast or easy about police work. Dane wished it was as simple as Maverick alerting and then they would be done.

Maverick had alerted to all three vehicles, so Dane gave Maverick extra love pats before returning the dog to his truck. Dane wasn’t finished though. Not only would there be a ton of paperwork, but he wasn’t done on scene either.

He sent a quick text to Brandon to let the boy know that he might be late. Brandon should already be asleep but if he woke up, Dane didn’t want the boy to worry about them. A text seemed like the polite thing to do for a partner. Not that Dane had ever had a real partner before, but he was trying. Fuck, he hoped that Brandon could see that he was trying.

Pulling on a pair of gloves, Dane moved to the last vehicle that Maverick had alerted to. He suspected by the bundles that the uniformed officers were pulling out of the first vehicle that this was going to be a massive haul.

Remi and another uniform were busy checking the second car and had already discovered a stash.

“Need some help?” Anton Jones asked as he joined Dane. It appeared that Remi had called in reinforcements for this bust. Jones was one of the detectives from Eric’s team. He was newer to the city and the police department but came with experience out of California.

“I’ll take the help,” Dane replied quietly. It was also hard for him to connect with fellow detectives. Dane’s lack of trust for people remained in the back of his mind. He was trying to be a different person though. Dane wanted to open up to others. Or that was what his therapist had suggested. Even though he found it hard to talk to anyone other than his best

friends, Dane needed to make an effort. “On call for the night?” he asked just to have something to say.

“Yeah, with Smith still on PTO, the team has been working the desk. Remi called me out and let me tell you I was happy about that. I hate paperwork.”

They all did. Paperwork was what made the cases though so they could put the bad guys behind bars. “I hear you, man.” Without anything else to say, Dane remained quiet. He’d made an effort. That had to be something. He popped open the back hatch. At first glance there was nothing there, but Dane knew how to do his job.

Less than five minutes later, Dane snagged the side panel of the SUV and pulled. Numerous bundles were stacked along the sides. He sighed. Damn it, there was no chance that he would be home anytime soon.

He motioned for Jones to check the siding on the other side. “Got it here.”

“Let me.” Jones yanked and his siding came off. He nodded. “Yep, fully loaded. At least fifteen packages. Maybe more.”

Dane was already tired.

* * * * *

Brandon

He tried to roll over, but he couldn’t move his legs. Pure terror filled him before the sound of a soft snore reached through the panic. Brandon sat up in bed, his breathing coming out in ragged pants.

Maverick’s big furry body held Brandon’s leg in place.

Shit!

Brandon was in bed with Maverick and Dane. The doggo at the foot lying over Brandon’s leg as Dane sprawled on the opposite side of the mattress as Brandon. Dane’s fingers locked gently around Brandon’s wrist. Dane’s touch was so soft that he hadn’t even noticed at first. Carefully, hoping not

to bother his furry friend, Brandon pulled his legs out from under the heavy body.

Maverick didn't even twitch.

Now that he wasn't in full panic mode, Brandon could appreciate the fact that both Dane and Maverick had managed to climb into bed without waking him. Normally Brandon was a light sleeper since he was often in fight-or-flight mode. Even in his sleep. Sleeping meant he was vulnerable.

A glance at the clock showed it was barely six in the morning.

He had no idea what time Dane and Mav had gotten home but it couldn't have been that long ago. Brandon had woken just after one to find text messages from Dane alerting him they would be working late. Brandon had been sad but it helped to know that his man and dog were safe.

His bladder gave Brandon another pressing matter that he needed to deal with. Brandon scooted away from Dane toward his side of the bed.

Dane immediately reached for him as Brandon slipped from his hold. He grunted in his sleep searching for Brandon. That... Did Dane really need Brandon as much as Brandon needed him? The evidence was showing that yes, everything that Dane told him was true.

Tears gathered before they fell from his face.

His heart warmed as Brandon watched Dane trying to find him even in sleep.

Brandon had doubted. He hated that about himself, but he had doubted that he would ever be healed enough to be someone that was needed. For over a year, his nightmares and past trauma had been all he had had.

He climbed onto his knees before leaning over and kissing Dane's forehead.

Dane sighed but settled back into sleep.

Brandon took the chance to get off the bed and made his way to the hall bathroom. His nightlight from the closet shone

enough for him to see. In the hall, another nightlight illuminated his way.

He quickly strode to the toilet and relieved himself.

The heater was running softly in the background of the quiet house. A cold front had finally hit the area, making it feel like December, the way it should be. Brandon had worn a pair of Dane's sweats and a T-shirt to bed. Not that he thought Dane would care much.

Brandon finished using the toilet and flushed before he went to the sink. He was just washing his hands when movement caught his eye in the mirror.

Dane pressed up to Brandon's back with an arm around his waist. "What're doing?" he grumbled. His eyes weren't even open.

"I had to take a piss," Brandon replied, amused. "Did you miss me?"

Dane grunted. "'Course."

"I was gone like two minutes."

His Daddy made some kind of rumbling sound deep in his throat as he pulled Brandon against his chest, walking them both backward. "Stay."

"Stay?" What was his man even talking about?

"With me," Dane complained. He picked Brandon off his feet as he shuffled into the hall.

"I am with you."

"Yeah." Dane half carried, half forced Brandon down the hall and toward Brandon's room.

"Are you even awake?" Brandon teased.

"No." Dane let Brandon's feet firmly touch the ground, but he was still pushing Brandon toward the bed.

Brandon went to the mattress and climbed up and into the middle as Dane followed close behind. Dane moved Brandon

until Brandon was lying on his stomach then wrapped himself around Brandon like a giant teddy bear.

“Can you breathe?” Dane rasped.

“Yeah,” he managed.

“Good.” Dane pulled the blankets over them and was snoring a second later.

Brandon laughed silently to himself as he threaded his fingers with the ones around his stomach. With his free hand, he plopped his thumb into his mouth, letting the sound of Dane’s snores lull him back to sleep.

* * * * *

Dane

Fuck! It was hot! Why was it so hot in here? His cock ached and his balls were pulled tight.

Dane thrust up into that wonderful warm heat.

“Mmm.”

Wait. What?

Dane opened his eyes, delighted by the sight before him. Brandon was on his knees between Dane’s spread thighs, swallowing Dane’s dick like it was the best thing ever.

Reaching out, Dane threaded his fingers into Brandon’s thick hair and tugged.

Without removing his mouth, Brandon peered up at him with his soulful gaze.

“Good morning, baby boy,” Dane whispered.

Brandon gave one more powerful suck then lifted off Dane’s shaft. He didn’t stop stroking. “Hi, Daddy.”

“Are you enjoying your treat?” Dane lifted his hips from the mattress, sliding his slick cock through Dane’s fingers.

“I good boy. I fed Mav. I hungry too.”

“Yeah?” Dane pushed up again. “For food?”

“No,” Brandon shook his head. “For Daddy.”

Well, there were certainly worse ways to be woken up. “Then take care of Daddy good. Swallow all of Daddy’s come. It’s just for you.”

“Me!” Brandon shrilled before practically falling back on Dane’s cock.

What coordination Brandon was lacking was made up for by his enthusiasm. He slobbered on Dane’s dick before finally getting it back into his mouth. Dane made sure to let Brandon control the pace of the blow job. He didn’t want to rush his boy.

There was a vague recollection of dragging Brandon from the bathroom back to bed earlier in the morning, but Dane wasn’t even certain if that really happened or if it had been a dream. All Dane knew was he didn’t want to be in bed if he wasn’t with his boy.

Brandon gave him a strong suck and it was difficult, damn near impossible, to stop from thrusting up. He rotated his hips, forcing the head of his cock to hit the back of Brandon’s throat.

His boy gave an approving sound.

Deciding that he was merely helping, Dane did it again.

Brandon’s free hand cupped his balls and gave them a slight tug.

Dane nearly came off the bed. That...he had liked that. “Do it again,” he ordered. He had never really paid that much attention to his own balls.

Between twisting his wrist and jacking him, sucking hard, and tugging at Dane’s balls, Brandon had Dane desperate to come quickly.

Dane scratched at the top of Brandon’s scalp. “Gonna come, baby. You want it?”

“Mmpf.”

He was taking that as a yes. Dane chased his orgasm until he was spilling inside Brandon's mouth. Just like the good boy he was, Brandon swallowed down Dane's come without missing a drop.

Once Brandon was gently letting Dane fall from his mouth, Dane grabbed the boy and yanked him up.

He kissed Brandon hard before he continued to push Brandon up the bed.

"Hang on to the bed frame and fuck my mouth, baby. Give me my own breakfast."

Straddling Dane's face, his boy followed directions to a tee. His cock had already been hard and red, full, needy as Dane took him into his mouth. He swallowed Brandon's dick while encouraging the boy to thrust. He didn't care how hard Brandon fucked his face as long as the boy got off. Dane had been given a wonderful gift to wake up to and he really wanted to return the favor.

In less time than Dane thought, Brandon was coming in his mouth.

He coughed, choked a little, but managed to get the boy's seed down.

Brandon fell to the side and collapsed in a sprawled state with arms and legs stretched out. A big smile on his face.

Dane chuckled as he tried to help right the boy.

Brandon was also trying to help and managed to be more of a hinderance, so Dane picked Brandon up to force the boy to curl against his chest. He got smacked in the cheek with a fumbling hand, but the sting was worth it.

Letting out a happy sigh, Brandon looked up at him. "Good morning."

"Yes, it is," Dane agreed before kissing his boy.

Pulling back, Dane could see the haziness of Brandon's eyes. He didn't know if it was because his boy was recovering from his orgasm or if he was tired. "How did you sleep?"

“Good,” Brandon said. “You hugged me like I was your very own body pillow.”

Dane chuckled. “That’s a good job for you, now that you say that. I’ll just keep you in my bed so I can cuddle you whenever I want.”

Brandon laughed as he poked Dane in the ribs. “Pillows don’t give good-morning blow jobs.”

Running his thumb over Brandon’s bottom lip Dane appreciated the boy’s lip. Brandon was hot, no question. He was also smart, kind, and just a little sassy. Perfect. He slipped his thumb inside Brandon’s mouth. “That’s true. And it would be a crime to deny myself this talented mouth.” Dane loved that mouth.

Brandon sucked on his thumb. “Yeah.”

“A few more minutes of cuddling then we need to get up. Shower and breakfast.”

Brandon nipped at the pad of Dane’s thumb as Dane pulled it away. “Eric, Ezra, and Annabelle will be home tonight.”

“They will.” Dane looked around Brandon’s bedroom. It had only been a couple days but he felt like he was home. Wait, was that his bag on the dresser? Huh. Actually, Dane’s clothes were on the chair in the corner. That little sneak. Had Brandon moved all of Dane’s stuff to his room? The boy was that sure of him? Dane was unbelievably happy with the thought. “Did you want to talk to your brother together or do you want me to do it?”

Brandon shrugged. “Does it matter? You said you wouldn’t hide me.”

“I will never hide you. Remi already figured it out anyway.”

“What?” Brandon watched him with big eyes.

“He said I looked too happy.”

Giving a little wiggle, Brandon grinned and laughed. “Cuz of me?”

“Yes because of you, silly boy. I couldn’t hide this from your brother if I wanted to. And I don’t want to. I would like to talk to him though, tell him, if you don’t mind.”

“Okay.” Brandon started to play with Dane’s fingers. “He won’t be mad?”

“I think he’ll be very happy for us,” Dane replied. He really did. Dane might doubt himself, but Eric had believed in Dane longer than anyone else. He trusted Dane to take care of Brandon and keep him safe while Eric was gone.

“K, you tell.” Brandon perked up. “I tell EZ!”

“Yes, you can tell Ezra. Maybe call Dom and Lake and see if they want to come visit in the next few days. The basement is all ready for a playdate.”

“I play today!” Brandon clapped. “Make basement awesome.”

“If you want. Just remember that you must clean up what messes you make. You boys promised.”

Pushing his bottom lip out, Brandon scowled. “I no like to clean.”

“A promise is a promise,” Dane reminded his boy. Although if his boy really didn’t want to clean, then Dane would. He was a sucker for his boy. Making Brandon happy was what Dane lived for.

“Okay,” Brandon drawled. His stomach growled. “Hungry.” He rubbed his belly.

“Me too. Shower first.” He swung his legs over the side of the bed before rising with Brandon still in his arms. “Then I’ll make you some French toast.” It was one of the few meals that Dane could manage.

Brandon gave his cheek a loud messy kiss. “Best Daddy Ever!”

Chapter Six

Brandon

“They’re home!” Brandon jumped from the couch, racing for the front door. Maverick gave a short bark before he chased after Brandon. Brandon’s furry buddy might not know what was going on but was always up for some running and playing.

“Check the cameras!” Dane hollered from the kitchen.

He sighed but stopped to view the screens beside the front door. After Joey Collins had staked out their place and with the threat of Ezra’s parents still a concern, Eric had upgraded the security with a brand-new system. He’d said that he knew a guy that knew a guy. It sounded suspicious to Brandon but who was he to argue. He was surrounded by overprotective men.

Brandon was safe. Ezra was safe. Annabelle was safe.

Seeing that it was indeed his brother’s SUV pulled into the driveway, Brandon unlocked the door and swung it open. He stepped out onto the porch with Maverick plastered at his side.

Ezra waved to him after closing the passenger door and Brandon bounced as he waved back.

“Go ahead inside, baby. I’ll get Annabelle settled and come back for our bags,” he heard his brother say.

“I can—”

“Go inside. It’s cold,” Eric interrupted Ezra.

Oh, his brother sounded cranky.

Ezra rolled his eyes before he ran to the porch. Brandon pulled him into a hug as soon as his friend was close enough. Ezra was more than just Eric’s boyfriend. He was the first person that Brandon had told his full story to. Ezra had cried with him, told Brandon how strong he was, then played cars with him for two hours.

It didn't bother Brandon that Dane and Remi knew what happened, but it had been Eric who'd shared Brandon's story. His brother had reached out to his two best friends when he'd been scared for Brandon. Brandon couldn't be mad about that but even his brother didn't know every detail. Ezra did. And Ezra still loved him.

"I missed you," Ezra whispered as he held Brandon tight.

The missing pieces in his heart all clicked into place. He was thrilled with his new relationship with Dane, loved having Maverick constantly by his side, but he had needed this too. Wanted to have his entire family home. "I missed you too." Brandon pulled back. "But did you have fun?"

"Yes. Rocky Lake is a really pretty place. I met some awesome guys, but it isn't home."

"Inside," Eric growled as he joined them on the porch. Annabelle was asleep on his shoulder.

Eric huffed but didn't argue. He pulled Brandon toward the house. The move had a little twinge in his backside aching and Brandon had to swallow a grin. Dane had kept every promise that he had made to Brandon. Plus, Brandon was finding it hard to keep his hands and mouth off Dane. Dane didn't seem to mind. He was always touching Brandon. Running a hand down Brandon's arm. Pulling Brandon into his lap. The relationship was new and exciting.

"Want to go downstairs?" Ezra asked.

"Don't you have to unpack? Or are you tired?"

Dane had helped Brandon with the finishing touches after breakfast, so he was excited to share the special space with his friend.

Ezra continued to drag Brandon toward the basement door. "No, I want to play. It was a long drive."

Brandon had the suspicion that Ezra might need time away from his boyfriend. Brandon didn't say anything until the basement door was closed behind them.

The basement had been turned into the most amazing playroom ever. Eric hadn't spared any expense in creating the most perfect little world down here. Brandon suspected that Eric might have had a little help in the finance department, but he'd decided not to ask. Small things that Dane said though that afternoon made Brandon wonder how much his Daddy had been involved, because it seemed like quite a bit. He loved this playroom way too much to worry about money.

"It's done! The room looks so good." Even though Ezra said the right words, the tone was off.

He turned toward Ezra, grasping his shoulder. "What's going on?"

"Nothing," Ezra said quickly, a little too fast.

"EZ?" Brandon pressed.

Ezra laughed. "I love my new nickname."

Drawing Ezra across the room, he pulled his friend into the giant purple beanbag chair. "Tell me what is going on with you."

"Nothing really." Ezra's sigh was heavy.

Brandon knew how frustrating his brother could be and was totally blaming this on Eric. He waited. Ezra was too easy and would give in.

"Your brother got a call when we reached the city limits. He won't tell me what it was about, but it put him in a bad mood."

Brandon understood better than Ezra knew. "He won't tell you what it was about?"

"No, he said not to worry about it," Ezra replied.

Brandon snorted. "Like that ever works."

"Exactly. And since he's been on vacation, I have a feeling that this is about my parents. Not work. Why would a call from work have put him in that bad of a mood?"

"Fuck," Brandon said quietly. Living in his little bubble since Eric and Ezra had been gone had been nice. There were

worries though that had to come back. Real life rarely allowed them just to be happy. Or least that was how it seemed to Brandon.

“Yeah.”

“It’ll be okay.” Brandon hugged Ezra to his side. “And you know my brother. He’ll realize that he’s being a dick then he’ll get his head out of his ass. He just needs a few minutes to sort it out.”

“I hope so.” Ezra frowned. “We were so happy singing to the radio and teasing each other. I just hate that my parents had the ability to ruin things for me still.”

“They’ll not ruin anything,” Brandon vowed. “If Eric doesn’t talk to you, then you make him. Withhold sex or something!”

Not that Brandon wanted to think about his brother and Ezra having sex. No...that was...yuck.

Ezra giggled just as Brandon had hoped.

The basement door opened. They both froze.

“I brought you two some snacks,” Dane announced as he came into view. He was carrying a tray that he sat on the table in the middle of the room. He crossed over to kneel beside them. “How’re you doing, Ezra?”

“Fine,” Ezra replied quickly.

Dane lifted a brow. “Do you want to try that again?”

Ezra’s reply was a shrug.

“Eric got a call,” Brandon supplied. “It might be—”

“I’ll find out,” Dane promised. “And make sure he shares what is going on with you, Ezra.”

Ezra smiled. “Thanks, Dane.”

“Okay. I needed to discuss something with him anyway. Why don’t you two play for a while?”

Brandon suddenly grew nervous. He knew what Dane wanted to talk to Eric about. If his brother was in a bad mood,

then maybe it wasn't the time.

"Maybe we should wait." Brandon played nervously with his fingers.

"It will be fine," Dane said sternly. "Play and eat your snacks."

"Okay." He trusted that Dane knew what he was doing. Dane knew Eric's moves. And really his brother didn't normally act like an ass for too long. He just had to think things out.

"Good boy." Dane hooked a finger in the collar of Brandon's shirt. He yanked Brandon forward and kissed him hard before he let go.

Well, Dane said he wouldn't hide what was going on between them. Ezra knew, so that meant that they had to tell Eric. There was no going back now. Not that Brandon wanted to. It was just scary. Change always was. Brandon knew that Ezra, Dom, and Lake would be happy for him. Brandon had talked about his crush enough for them to know how he felt. He hoped his brother was on board as well.

Dane grunted as he stood. "I'll check on you two in a bit."

The door barely closed behind Dane before Ezra turned on him. "Tell me everything!"

He laughed. Then laughed harder. Damn! Brandon couldn't stop. He hadn't felt this lighthearted in...well, in longer than he could remember. Brandon laughed until tears spilled down his cheeks.

"I have no idea what is happening right now," Ezra whispered. He was laughing too. Happiness shone from his eyes as Ezra held him tight while they cuddled together.

"Just happy. And I realized that I don't even know where to start. So much has happened. I'm...overwhelmed by it, I guess."

"But you are *together* together," Ezra questioned.

"Yes," Brandon replied. "He's my Daddy. And my Dom. We're...together."

“Finally!” Ezra pumped his fist in the air. “I was so hoping that with the two of you being alone while we were gone, something would happen.”

“It’s only been a couple of days,” Brandon confided.

“It happened when it was meant to,” Ezra told him. “If it was supposed to happen sooner, it would have. No, I really believe it happens when it should. Just like when your brother found me in the apartment.”

“You’re not still mad at him?” He nudged his friend.

“I wasn’t really mad,” Ezra said. “Hurt maybe. Frustrated. Sometimes Eric forgets that I took care of myself my entire life. That I took care of Annabelle on my own.”

“He knows that and he’s proud of you,” Brandon said. “Don’t be too hard on him.”

“I won’t be,” Ezra promised. “But stop trying to change the subject. I want to hear about you and Dane.”

“It just sort of worked itself out,” Brandon said. “He makes me talk to him. We have to discuss everything before we do anything.” Which could be frustrating, but Brandon also appreciated that Dane took his boundaries seriously.

“That’s good, Bran,” Ezra said. “Important.”

“I know.” He sighed. “I guess I’m wondering if it’s too good to be true.”

“Just remember that you’re not alone this time,” Ezra told him. “You have your brother. Friends. And I do think that Dane wants what’s best for you.”

“He’s a good man.” Brandon didn’t doubt that. “I believe that. I don’t think that it will be the same...that he’d ever do... you know.” He hated thinking about his ex and what that horrible man had done to him.

“It will never get like that again,” Ezra vowed. “I’d kill him myself.”

Brandon snorted. He had some pretty fierce friends but—

“Okay, I’d sic Dom on him,” Ezra allowed.

Now that, Brandon believed. “We need to plan a playdate now that your home and the basement is done.”

“Yes!” Ezra bounced.

“Oh! Snacks.” He had almost forgotten. He dragged Ezra to the little table where their snacks sat.

Ezra reached for a carrot and popped it in his mouth. “I missed this.”

“Carrots?” Brandon didn’t understand.

Ezra snorted. “No! Talking with you. I had totally given up ever having my little side again. With you I can flow in and out of my regression and don’t have to worry about being judged.”

Yeah, it had to be hard.

“I don’t know how this will work as Annabelle gets older,” Ezra confessed.

“We’ll figure it out,” Brandon vowed. He perked up, realizing they did have something important to talk about. “But first...Christmas!”

Ezra’s eyes grew wide. “Christmas!”

* * * * *

Dane

Waiting for his best friend to put the little girl down for her nap was more difficult than Dane expected. He could hear Eric’s soft voice as he spoke either to the little girl or just talked. There was something up with Eric and that was the first thing that needed to be addressed. He wouldn’t hold off on his news though. Brandon deserved better than that.

Eric exited Annabelle’s room, closing the door behind him. He jerked as he spotted Dane waiting.

“The boys—”

“Are fine,” Dane assured his friend. “Playing in the basement.”

“Good.” Eric ran his hand roughly down his face. “I need to—”

“Tell me what’s going on,” Dane demanded.

Eric shook his head.

“Or you can explain to Ezra now without working it out. Which do you think will be better?”

“Fuck,” Eric spat.

“Living room.” Dane grabbed Eric’s arm to lead him away from the sleeping little girl. He sat on the opposite side of the couch. Dane wished he was a better friend where he could offer Eric a beer but that would never be an option for him.

Eric dropped his head as he worked out whatever was going on. Dane gave his friend the time he needed. Eric was an overthinker. Other than taking Ezra and Annabelle home that first night, Eric never did anything spontaneously. He had to think through all the options.

It took less than five minutes before Eric grunted as he raised his head.

Dane lifted a brow. Ready and willing to listen.

“Jesse Lambert called just as we reached town.”

That shouldn’t be an issue. They’d become good friends with Jesse even with the other man being a fucking billionaire and them being run-of-the-mill cops.

“An older couple showed up at the coffee shop, asking about Ezra,” Eric informed him.

“Ezra’s parents?”

“I don’t know, but that’s who I’m thinking. They probably have no idea what happened to Joey Collins. That’s who they were paying to keep tabs on their son. And Annabelle.”

“What did Jesse say?”

“He got his information from Dom. Dom was working and since he knows everything, didn’t tell the couple a thing. Said he had no idea who they were asking about.”

“Might not have been the right way to handle things. They’d know he was lying since Collins already told them that Ezra worked there.”

“We should have discussed what to say if anyone ever asked after Ezra,” Eric said. “I dropped the ball there.”

Dane shrugged. “Maybe. Maybe not. They overplayed their hand and let us know that they were in town. That’s their mistake.”

Eric stared hard at him. “You think so?”

“Yep. It doesn’t matter what Dom said or didn’t say. We know someone’s looking for Ezra and that’s the information we need.”

Eric started to nod.

“We have the resources to keep both Ezra and Annabelle safe. We’re fucking cops, Eric. We have a billionaire on our side.”

The smile that grew on Eric’s face had an edge. This was a dangerous man when his boy was threatened. “We do have a lot of resources.”

“And this is our city,” Dane pointed out.

“It would be better to get this issue addressed with them than have it over Ezra’s head. I don’t want my boy having to constantly be looking over his shoulder.”

“They never should have let us know they were here. They lost any edge they might have had with the element of surprise.”

“I need to talk to Ezra.” Eric smacked his knee. “I got inside my head. I owe him an apology. I hope he’s not too mad.”

“Your boy loves you and will forgive you. He’s having a snack downstairs with Brandon. Let them get caught up first.”

Eric narrowed his eyes as he stared at Dane. “Is there something in particular that they need to get caught up on?”

There were so many ways that he could play this.

Dane nodded. "I won't be needing the spare bedroom any longer. My stuff's already been moved out of the room."

Eric blinked at him. Frowned. "You know you don't have to leave. We like having you here. Both you and Maverick are always welcome. Hell, you've put as much money into the basement as I have."

"Oh..." Dane grinned. "I won't be leaving the house anytime soon. I just don't need the spare bedroom."

"What?"

It amused him to watch Eric put the pieces of the puzzle together. His brows were drawn together trying to figure out what Dane wasn't saying before it dawned on him.

Eric crossed his arms over his chest as he leaned back against the cushions of the couch. "Really? Where will you be sleeping? I can attest that this couch isn't that comfortable. It's okay for naps but not real sleep."

Dane smirked. "I have a nice big comfortable bed in mind. I just prefer not to sleep alone any longer."

"You fucking asshole," Eric said. "When? How?"

"A couple of days ago. And your brother didn't give me much of a choice. He made his move, and I couldn't resist him. Didn't want to."

Eric snickered. "Good for him."

Dane knew this next part would irritate his friend. "Yeah, man, there's something about that kitchen." He knew all about Brandon walking in on Eric giving Ezra a blow job in the kitchen.

"Fuck, man! No!" Eric bitched. "Don't tell me about sexy times with my brother." He shuddered hard.

Dane laughed. "What are you talking about, you perv? Why would we have sexy times in the kitchen? We're not animals. We have some self-control."

Eric growled before flipping him off.

It felt good to have the confession off his chest. His two best friends now both knew.

“You’re good?” Eric questioned.

It didn’t surprise Dane that Eric was checking on him. Other people might worry about Brandon, but Eric knew the demons that Dane wrestled with. “I’m good. Brandon settles me. He’s so strong. I’m thankful that he’s even giving me a chance.”

Eric rose and crossed to him. He pulled Dane up and into his arms. “I don’t ever want to hear you say that again. You are exactly who my brother deserves. No one will work harder than you to make sure that he’s safe, healthy and happy.”

Dane allowed himself to lean on his friend. “I already love him,” Dane confessed. He hadn’t even been brave enough to say those words to his boy.

“He’s easy to love.” Eric patted his back. “I’m happy for the two of you.” He pulled back. “Don’t make me give the big-brother talk to you. It would just suck.”

“I swear that if I ever hurt him, I’ll allow you to kill me,” Dane replied.

“I’ll have plenty of help. Do we really want to see what Dom is capable of?” Eric teased.

Dane shook his head. “I don’t. That is one scary little.”

“How about we go downstairs and spend time with our boys?” Eric suggested.

That was exactly where Dane wanted to be. “Yeah.”

“Just let me grab the baby monitor,” Eric said.

“Oh, Brandon wanted to start decorating for Christmas,” Dane informed his friend.

Eric groaned. “I am so not ready for that.”

“They also want to have a little party now that the basement is done.”

Eric nearly dropped the monitor he'd picked up from the side table. "No glitter. I mean it this time. It is not happening."

Dane winced. "Actually, we should have considered anything with glitter in it."

"What did you do?" Eric growled.

"I took Brandon to the mall and there was a store... He wanted to get Lake something. I thought it was no big deal!"

Eric sighed. "What store?"

"The boys have an entire makeup kit. Or three. Then Brandon decided that he needed to practice putting on makeup so that Lake would be more comfortable around them. I had no idea the makeup had glitter in it! It was a mess!"

"Fuck my life," Eric grumbled.

Dane nodded. He felt the same way. Brandon had wanted glitter and Dane wanted to make Brandon happy. Then Brandon had wanted makeup for Lake. Dane really needed to learn how to say no. "There are pictures," he shared, still horrified by the entire ordeal.

"Wait!" Eric held up a hand. "Who did Brandon practice on?"

Dane rolled his eyes as he scowled. "He said he couldn't practice on himself. Brandon wanted to be a good friend to Lake. To be able to help Lake if he needed it."

"You!" Eric barked out a laugh. "You let him practice on you!"

When Eric nearly tripped because he was laughing so hard, Dane regretted telling his friend. "Fuck off."

"I need to see the pictures!" Eric demanded.

He walked away as he flipped Eric off. The smile on his face couldn't be wiped away. Not even when he remembered trying to scrub that damn makeup from his face. His skin had still been red when he'd gone into work that night.

Chapter Seven

Brandon

Everything had to be perfect. The playroom was clean. All the toys were in their place. His surprise for Lake under a sheet. And there were snacks and juice boxes. Brandon just knew he was missing something though.

“Baby boy!” Dane called from the door.

“Are they here?” Brandon scrambled to his feet.

“No, but they’re on their way,” Dane told him. “We need to get you dressed.”

He glanced down. Oh! Yeah, that was what he had forgotten.

“Come here, baby.”

He shuffled his feet until he was across the room and standing in front of his Daddy. He was nervous but excited.

“Stay,” he told Maverick as he passed his furry friend. Maverick was set up on the biggest pillow ever. He needed to relax since he would be worn-out by the end of the day, running after all of them. Dane said that it was good exercise for the doggo.

“Remember you can change your mind. I won’t be mad, baby. I promise.”

Brandon knew that. Dane was so patient and loving toward them. It had barely been over a week since they’d made the decision to be together and already Dane treated Brandon better than any other boyfriend that Brandon had ever had. This was a big step though.

Dane didn’t rush him. He pulled Brandon into his arms and gently rubbed down Brandon’s back. Soothing away the fears that Brandon knew were silly. He took several long, deep breaths before he was ready. Brandon pulled back slightly before he held up his arms. “Uppies!”

“Of course, baby boy. Why would you need to walk when Daddy is here to carry you around.”

Brandon patted Daddy’s cheek. His Daddy just understood.

Dane sighed. “Eric is getting Ezra ready. We need to hurry, or you’ll miss when your friends arrive.”

He didn’t want that. “Hurry, Daddy!”

“Oh, now it’s hurry, Daddy,” Dane grumbled.

That was okay. Dane might grumble and mutter, but he always knew exactly what Brandon needed. Playing before Brandon went to work. A cuddle session and long bath after a long shift. Morning blow jobs and being fucked out of his mind. It had been the best week ever.

Dane didn’t have any trouble carrying him up the basement stairs and to the main part of the house. Brandon didn’t hear anything. Eric’s door was closed as they passed. Annabelle was at daycare for the afternoon to give them their little time. She loved going to school so much that when they’d kept her out for a few days, she’d grown upset. The little girl was growing into her voice and stating what she wanted. Like going to school to be with her friends.

It had been harder to convince Eric and Ezra that Annabelle would be safe at daycare. The program was one for all of Jesse Lambert’s employees and Jesse had spared no expense when it came to the safety of the kids.

Brandon still feared that Ezra wouldn’t have fun if he was worried about his little girl.

The program had cameras that parents could check throughout the day and Brandon had just finished putting the app on the big screen in the playroom. Now their Daddies could watch over them and their little girl. Because she was all of theirs now.

Dane finished carrying Brandon into their bedroom, closing the door behind them. On top of the bed was everything that Brandon needed.

“One step at a time,” Dane said as he placed Brandon on the bed.

Brandon peered up at his Daddy. He wanted things to be easy. For his trauma to be behind him. But that wasn't realistic.

“I got you something.” Dane smiled and kissed his forehead. “Stay right there.”

Brandon nodded but didn't say anything. He waited. That was all he needed to do. Daddy would tell Brandon when he needed to move. Or whatever.

Dane returned and held up a bright pink pacifier with a cute little unicorn in the middle.

“For me?” Brandon reached out for his gift.

“I noticed that the one you had was ripped. I want the best for my brave boy.”

He accepted the paci and placed it in his mouth. He'd had his old one for so long that he worried holes in the rubber with his teeth. Brandon suckled his paci while grinning around it. “Tank you, Dada!”

“Of course, my sweet boy. And good job using your manners,” Dane praised.

Brandon loved making his Daddy happy.

“Now let's get you ready for some fun,” Daddy said.

He was ready now. Brandon could do this. He was a brave boy.

Dane undressed him slowly. Checking in with him to make sure that Brandon was still on board. He was. Being undressed wasn't the issue. They did this often enough over the last week.

Daddy picked up the diaper and showed it to him.

Brandon sucked harder on his paci.

“I'm proud of you. I know you're scared. But I want this too,” Dane said.

It was hard not to remember how wrong this had gone in the past. That his ex had enjoyed doing this for Brandon until he'd suddenly been disgusted by Brandon's need to wear the diaper.

The change had happened so fast it had made his head spin.

That had been the first time he'd been beaten.

Brandon gasped as he remembered the pain. The fear. He'd not understood what he'd done wrong.

"No, no, baby boy. Don't go back to that dark place."

The diaper fell beside him as Dane gathered Brandon into his arms. Tears soaked the shoulder of Dane's shirt while Brandon wept. He knew that Dane would never hurt him like that. It was not knowing why that haunted him. He was a good boy. Brandon hadn't deserved to be hit.

"I got you." Dane rocked him slowly. "You are such a good boy."

"I am a good boy," he repeated.

"That's right." Dane held him tight. "My good boy. So brave."

"Don't stop," Brandon whispered. "He can't have this. This is for me and you."

"I have an idea," Dane said. "Just breathe for me."

"K, Daddy."

Dane laid him back down. "So cute. Do you like your new paci?"

"Yes, Daddy."

"Good. I'm glad." Dane kissed his chest. "And we picked out a super cute outfit for today, didn't we?" He kissed Brandon's stomach.

"Uh-huh."

Dane helped him lift his hips off the bed and the diaper was slid under him.

“I think Lake especially will like your onesie.” Dane kissed his inner thigh.

That was why Brandon had picked the pink unicorn onesie with a ruffle skirt. He wanted Lake to be comfortable with them.

The diaper was wrapped around him and secured.

“I like the blue teddy bear shorts set too. We’ll have to dress you in that this week.”

He had three new outfits that Dane and he had ordered together. Brandon had a hard time deciding what to wear for the play party. He’d settled on the pink after Ezra had said he would wear pink too. His outfit was lounging pants though. Not the onesie that Brandon’s Daddy was sliding up his legs.

That was okay. Brandon liked his onesies. So did his Daddy.

He was dressed before Brandon realized that they were over the scary part.

“Up you go.” Dane lifted Brandon off the bed so he could straighten the outfit and check the fit. “Perfect!” Dane declared. He kissed the tip of Brandon’s nose. “Why don’t you check it out in the mirror.”

Brandon danced over to the full-length mirror mounted on the back of the door. He had to admit that he looked the perfect little. The pink was soft, the onesie making his pampered bottom stick out, and the paci matched perfectly.

“I cute!” he declared.

“The cutest,” Dane agreed.

He twirled. “Uppies!”

“Uppies.” Dane lifted Brandon off his feet.

Brandon wrapped his arms and legs around his Daddy before he rested his head on Dane’s shoulder. They’d done it. Brandon had managed to allow Dane to dress him in a diaper and even though there had been a small hesitation, they’d done it.

It felt like a win.

He couldn't wait until his next therapy session so he could tell Rebecca. She would be proud of him too.

Dane opened the door and they were exiting the room at the same time as Eric's door opened.

His brother led Ezra from the bedroom by the hand.

Ezra jumped up and down when he spotted Brandon. "Yay! You did it!" He let go of Eric's hand and raced over.

With one arm still around Dane's back, Brandon opened the other to welcome his friend. He held Ezra close as Eric joined them.

"So damn proud of you," Eric whispered in his ear before kissing his cheek. "Now, who's ready for fun?"

"Me!" Brandon and Ezra shouted.

The doorbell rang.

"And the gang is all here," Eric declared.

* * * * *

Dane

Lake blushed but the bigger boy was absolutely adorable in his long ruffled skirt and lace camisole. Brandon was working so hard on Lake's makeup that Dane didn't even mind the teasing he'd gotten from Eric and Remy when they'd seen the pictures.

He didn't mind being the guinea pig, not when Lake had been happy enough to squeal when the boys had started the playdate by applying makeup. For all of them. Lake wouldn't be the only one with a pretty face.

Ezra had gone first. Once Dom realized that Brandon did know what he was doing, he'd quickly agreed. Dom was done and now Lake was getting his turn.

Lake's smile was huge and while the boys gushed over how pretty Lake was, Dane and Eric stood, providing snacks and drinks. He'd thought about offering to give the boys time

on their own in case Lake or Dom were uncomfortable with them around but had quickly been vetoed with that suggestion.

The boys wanted them there.

Dane was thrilled.

The part of him that loved to spoil Brandon was happy that he could offer Dom and Lake what they needed as well.

Lake was a quiet little. He didn't seem to have the same energy as Brandon and Ezra. Dom worried Dane. The boy was paler than usual and his laugh just a little louder than it needed to be. As if he was forcing it.

Eric was paying special attention to Dom, with Ezra's help, so that allowed Dane to concentrate on Brandon and Lake. He wished that Jesse and Remi could have made it but they both had work things that were keeping them away. Glancing at the screen, he spotted Annabelle through the daycare's program as she used finger paints under the watchful eye of her teacher.

The little girl was growing so fast. She was a happy little one, making him proud that Dane had a part in making sure she was being well taken care of. The tip of Brandon's tongue was sticking out from his mouth as he finished lining Lake's eyes.

Where was his boy's paci now?

Dane had no idea how much he would be tracking that little thing down when he'd bought it. He'd already found it in a pile of ranch on the snack tray, buried under the purple bean bag chair, and now... Huh, there it was. Sitting on its side in the middle of the carpet.

How did Brandon keep losing it?

He snagged the paci and put it in his pocket so he could wash it, again, as he took Lake a new juice box.

"How're you doing, Lake?" he asked gently.

Lake didn't move his head as Brandon added more eye shadow. "This is so fun," he replied quietly. "I can't believe you all did this for me."

“We’re happy to do anything to make you smile like that,” Dane responded.

“This is the best playdate ever,” Lake told him.

“Good.” He patted Lake’s shoulder. The boy was bigger than he was and that was saying something. Dane worked hard to keep up his muscles and Lake had to spend just as much time in the gym as he did. Lake was an attractive man. Well-built. Had muscles that bodybuilders would kill for. That didn’t seem to match Lake’s insides. Dane might not know the man well, but Lake had such a gentle soul. He was kind and soft. All of Dane’s Daddy Dom instincts screamed that Lake needed a protector even if he could probably take down anyone intent on messing with him.

He’d have to pay close attention to Lake and Dom until they had Daddies of their own. When Dane became Brandon’s Daddy, he also picked up the responsibility for the other boys as well.

For his entire life, Dane had been on his own and his only responsibility had been himself. Brandon was giving him so much more than Dane had ever expected.

Brandon declared Lake all done.

Dom and Ezra immediately came over to drag Lake and Brandon into a game they wanted to play. Dane picked up the makeup area as the boys abandoned the space. Eric sidled up to him.

“You are going to have to make him clean up or you’ll be doing it forever.”

He laughed. “I know.” And he did. Maybe it was the newness of the relationship but there were bigger concerns than a few messes. The two of them had so much going against having a successful relationship that small things just didn’t matter. Dane caught Brandon wiggling around and grinned.

They’d taken a huge first step this morning when Brandon had allowed Dane to dress him in a diaper. Now that Brandon

was fully immersed in his little mindset, Dane hoped that they could continue making progress.

Dane waited until Brandon had stopped squirming before he approached the boys.

“Everyone doing okay?” he asked.

Ezra grinned with a mouthful of grapes. “Yep.”

“Manners,” Eric barked to his boy.

Ezra smiled after he swallowed. “Sorry, Daddy.”

Dane crouched behind Brandon. He patted his boy’s bottom. “Wet?”

“Uh-huh,” Brandon said around his last bite of peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

Cards were laid out in front of all the boys and Dane winced when he saw that they hadn’t been careful with their dirty hands. Brandon’s cards had peanut butter on them, Dom had spilled ranch, and Ezra... Dane wasn’t even sure what Ezra had gotten all over the place. Lake was the only little that seemed to be wiping his fingers clean before he played a card.

“Want to come with Daddy?” Dane asked quietly. He didn’t want to embarrass the boy. Brandon could say no.

Turning his head, Brandon buried his face in Dane’s chest before he nodded.

“Excuse us, boys. We’ll be right back,” Dane told the others. He helped Brandon stand before lifting him into his arms.

Brandon clung to Dane’s neck. “My paci?”

“Needs to be washed off,” Dane responded. “How do you keep losing it?”

“Not my fault!” Brandon said. “Silly paci.”

“I think you’re a silly boy,” Dane corrected.

“Me silly,” Brandon agreed.

Dane wasn’t going to have to go into the gym after a few days of carrying Brandon up and down the basement stairs.

They made it to the bedroom and Dane was glad that he'd left out everything he needed beside the bed. It was impossible to miss.

Brandon didn't seem to be too concerned.

Placing his boy on the end of the mattress, Dane started to unsnap the onesie. "It seems like the other boys are having fun."

"I'm so glad Lake let me make up his face. He's so pretty!"

"He is a very pretty boy," Dane agreed. He bent and kissed Brandon's belly. "Not as pretty as mine, but you don't tell him that."

Brandon laughed as he wiggled around. "Daddy! Tickles!"

"I know!" Dane teased. He ran his fingers lightly down Brandon's ribs before yanking the tabs from the diaper.

Brandon sucked his bottom lip into his mouth as he peered up at Dane.

"Okay?" Dane asked, checking in.

"Good, Daddy."

Dane nodded as he removed the wet diaper. His boy was clean-shaven, something that Dane hoped he could help with in the future. There was so much that they had to look forward to sharing.

Using one of the wet wipes from the tub, Dane made sure that his boy's skin was clean. He picked up the powder next.

"Smell good," Brandon said softly.

"You like the smell of the powder?" Dane questioned.

Brandon blushed but nodded.

Dane lifted the container to his nose. He expected the usual baby powder smell that he remembered from his childhood. This powder didn't have a scent that Dane could place. Brandon was right though. It did smell good. "Huh, I like that too."

“Yay!” Brandon clapped. “Buy special.”

He would make sure that he got the info on where Brandon bought the powder. Dane sprinkled a liberal amount before rubbing the powder into Brandon’s soft skin. No rashes for his special boy. Not a thought that Dane considered he’d ever have but life was turning out to be much more interesting nowadays.

“Up,” he murmured.

Brandon lifted his hips, letting Dane slip the new diaper under him.

The difference between now and before the playdate was noticeable. Brandon was much more in the right headspace. Being little with his friends helped Brandon relax into his safe space.

Dane had known that interacting with the other boys was important for Brandon, but he hadn’t actually understood. Not until he saw the four littles together.

A Daddy might be an important piece that all littles craved, but having friends that naturally got what age regression really meant. Why being little felt good. That made all the difference.

Brandon would be okay if he never found a Daddy.

Dane had no doubt.

He was there to enhance the experience. Dane was there because Brandon wanted him.

Dane pulled the onesie back down Brandon’s stomach then snapped the outfit.

“Tank you, Daddy!” Brandon told him.

“Such a good boy using your manners,” Dane praised. “How about we wash your paci clean and get you back to your friends?”

“K, Daddy!”

He picked Brandon up from the bed. Yes, he could totally skip a few days at the gym. Dane would rather spend time with

his boy anyway.

They made a stop in the bathroom and washed the pacifier Dane had given his boy. He slipped the rubber into Brandon's mouth and his boy began to suckle.

Dane's entire body reacted to seeing his boy with something to suck on. Oral fixation? It was quite possible. And Dane was becoming addicted to putting things in Brandon's mouth.

They returned to madness in the playroom.

Lake was sitting in a chair, blowing bubbles for Ezra and Dom, who were going crazy trying catch them.

"Bubbies!" Brandon cried, kicking his legs.

The paci slipped from his mouth, but Dane managed to catch the little thing before it fell to the floor once again. He set Brandon on his feet and patted his butt. "Go play."

Brandon started to waddle away but quickly returned. He rose to his tiptoes and kissed Dane's cheek. "Tank you, Daddy."

"Welcome, baby boy." Running his hand over the back of Brandon's head, Dane held the boy to him for a second before letting go. "How many bubbles can you catch?"

"A hundred!" Brandon claimed, racing to where the other boys were playing.

Loud laughter filled the little space, making Dane smile.

They'd done it. Made a place for Brandon, Ezra, and even Dom and Lake to be themselves. They were safe there. In a world that could be so scary at times. With people who hated for no reason. The boys didn't have to worry about that when they were in the new playroom.

Dane had never felt better about anything that he'd ever done than in that moment.

Chapter Eight

Brandon

“Online shopping is the best thing in the entire world,” Brandon declared as he pushed a big box against the wall. “But boxes are stupid!”

“I’ll get that,” Dane called. “Don’t hurt yourself.”

He rolled his eyes. The box wasn’t heavy—it was just big.

“I saw that,” Dane warned.

There was no way. Was there? No. His Daddy didn’t have eyes in the back of his head. Brandon narrowed his eyes at Dane’s back before he pushed the box with his foot. Just to check.

“Brandon!” Dane barked.

He quickly stepped away from the box. Okay, Dane was getting really good at the whole Daddy thing. Now he could even see when his back was turned.

From the floor, Ezra laughed.

Brandon turned to scowl at his friend.

Shaking his head, Ezra pointed up to the mirror that faced Dane and allowed Dane to see where Brandon was standing.

Brandon huffed. Not fair!

“Boy...” Dane turned, the tangled lights in his hands. “If you want to decorate this tree, then you need to find some patience.”

Brandon knew that he was acting like a brat. He’d been so excited all day to decorate the house for Christmas, had pulled out the boxes, even made some homemade eggnog, finished his custom stockings for everyone, but the stupid lights were all messed up. It wasn’t fair! He stomped his foot. “I want to decorate now!”

Ezra sucked in a sharp breath.

Very slowly, Dane turned around.

Fear filled him. Damn, shit, fuck! Why had he done that? Brandon knew better than letting his little side take over when he was frustrated.

He took several steps back when Dane gently put the lights down.

“It’s okay,” Dane said quietly.

It was? No. Brandon shook his head. He was sorry but he knew that saying sorry usually got him in more trouble.

Dane walked around the couch before he sat down. He... wasn’t coming after Brandon. Didn’t yell. “Pretty frustrating when you’ve had to wait all day for us to get home and when you think the fun will start, the lights are tangled up.”

Yeah. That was right. But—

Brandon eyed Dane where he sat calmly on the couch. What was Daddy doing? He didn’t even sound mad. Just soft and sweet. This was even more confusing than if Dane had thrown something at him. Then Brandon would know he needed to hide. He didn’t, did he?

“Would you like a hug?” Dane asked. He opened his arms out to Brandon.

Well now Brandon sort of did want a hug. But he’d been bad.

“I’m not going to hurt you,” Dane said. “I’m not mad or upset.”

This seemed like a trick.

Dane didn’t look mad though.

His ex...his ex would always look mad.

“You don’t have to come to me. If you need your space, that’s okay too.”

Brandon hugged himself. He much preferred Dane’s arms around him though. His eyes filled with tears. He didn’t know what to do.

“Don’t cry, baby boy,” Dane cooed. He dropped his arms to his sides. “No one is mad at you. You are not in trouble.”

“I was bad,” Brandon hated to admit. “Got mad.”

“And that’s okay,” Dane told him.

And that was okay. Emotions and feelings were okay. His therapist told him that. Eric told him that. Now Dane.

He took a deep breath.

Dane hadn’t lied to him. Hadn’t tricked him before. Sometimes his own brain played tricks on him but not Dane.

“You...not mad?” He just needed to make sure.

“No. I’m not mad. No one is mad.”

Brandon shuffled forward. A few steps at a time. If Dane was going to break his promise, would it be now? Was the other shoe about to drop? He froze.

“You don’t have to come to me,” Dane repeated. “I’m just going to sit here and give you space. And time. We have all the time in the world.”

Time and space.

Brandon could go to his room.

The playroom was downstairs.

Hell, Eric and Ezra were in the house. Ezra...Brandon looked down to see that his friend was smiling at him. He nodded encouragingly. Ezra wasn’t mad. Dane wasn’t mad.

He took a deep breath. Then another. Brandon started to count. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten. When he still wasn’t completely calm, he counted again.

Dane never took his gaze from Brandon’s. He was breathing too. Bobbing his head like he was counting.

Oh! Damn, mini freakout.

As the buzz in the back of his mind faded, Brandon realized that the Christmas music was still playing softly in the background. He could hear Eric playing ball with Maverick since Eric had stomped off in frustration with the lights. Dane

seemed to be the only one that had the patience to deal with them. And maybe deal with Brandon.

He huffed while rolling the tension from his shoulders.

“Good job, baby,” Dane praised. “You did very well.”

Brandon hadn’t panicked. Run away. Or curled up in a ball.

He smiled. He *had* done good.

“Th—” He had to clear his throat. “Thank you. For staying calm. For not rushing me.”

“Boundaries, baby. We all have them. I will always respect yours.”

Boundaries, limits, and safe words. Brandon hadn’t seen the need, for all the long conversations that he and Dane had every night. Brandon accepted Dane as his Daddy. Dane would never purposely push him or trigger Brandon’s fight-or-flight response. And he hadn’t. Brandon had done it to himself.

Had been doing it to himself for a while.

All those late-night talks had meant something to Dane, so Brandon had obliged his partner.

This was why.

The lightbulb went off.

Dane had known this might happen.

He closed the distance before he fell to his knees in front of Dane. “I...was scared.”

“I know.” Dane leaned forward still not touching him. “It’s okay to be scared.”

“Do you get scared?” Brandon whispered his question.

“I’m...I’m just gonna go...outside with Eric and Maverick.” Ezra made enough noise that Brandon knew when he was through the kitchen and out the back door.

“I do get scared,” Dane said. “I watch you sleep sometimes and get scared that I’m going to mess this up. I’m

afraid every time that I go into a store and pass the alcohol aisle that one day I'll buy something." Dane took a deep breath. "I'm terrified that I'll turn into my father."

Brandon's fingers shook as he placed them on Dane's knee. "Your father?"

Dane covered Brandon's fingers with his. "My father raised me. I guess you could call it that. My mom left before I even turned two and it was just the two of us."

Brandon winced. "Not good?"

"I wasn't abused," Dane said. "There was always a roof over my head, food in the kitchen, and I was clean. I went to school. He went to work. I washed my own clothes when I turned seven. Made my own meals before that. I made sure the house was clean in case I had friends over. He wasn't a bad man. He wasn't a good one either."

The trauma that parents who shouldn't have had parents was so common now a days that it amazed Brandon sometimes.

"He just didn't care," Dane told him. "It didn't matter if I was a straight A student or made every team I tried for. He didn't care if I was running the streets at night or in my room studying. I was on my own even though he was just down the hall."

"Dane."

Dane shook his head. "He never attended one game I played in. Didn't come to my high school graduation. Wasn't there when I boarded the bus for basic training. Or when I graduated and became a soldier. I didn't go home on my breaks."

"Where did you go?" He had never known this about Dane. Brandon felt like he knew the older man well but maybe he should have paid closer attention. There had to be a reason for the drinking, right?

Dane shrugged. "Nowhere."

"Friends?" Brandon asked.

“Didn’t make friends. I never got close to anyone until I joined the department here.”

“I always thought there was a strong bond between military brothers,” Brandon said.

“There was. Between everyone but me. My father had damaged something inside me. Why didn’t he love me? At least pretend to anyway? I was jealous of my friends and their families, so I stopped having friends. I didn’t bond with the guys in my unit because I didn’t trust them. If my father didn’t want me around, why would they? That was how I thought.”

“Something changed,” Brandon pointed out.

Dane snorted. “Your brother. And Remi.”

Huh. Really?

“After I joined the department, we were all put together on a team,” Dane explained. “They invited me to dinner. Or out for drinks. I always turned them down. I expected them to stop asking. Just like everyone else in my life.”

“They didn’t,” Brandon knew. Neither his brother nor Remi would have given up on Dane. Not if they saw something that they respected.

“Of course they didn’t,” Dane said. “Those fucking stubborn bastards. They did stop asking. Instead, they just showed up at my place with food or beer. Eventually, I just gave in and we became friends. They stuck with me.” He smiled. “That’s how they became my people.”

“I’m glad you ended up with them,” Brandon said sincerely.

“I am too, even more now that it brought you to me. The first time that I saw you.” Dane laughed. “You’d only been with Eric for a few days when I’d stopped by to check on you both. You were watching me from under a blanket. Your eyes though. I could see the pain that was there but there was so much strength too.”

Eric’s old apartment had been tiny. Barely enough space for Eric and no room for Brandon. They hadn’t been in the

apartment long before Eric bought them this house. The first days that Brandon had been there had been scary. He didn't know how long his brother would want him around. He was terrified of being on his own again. "I don't remember," he admitted.

"That's okay," Dane told him. "I remember. It was that night that I went home and threw out the liquor."

He gasped. Because of him.

Dane frowned. "It wasn't the last time I drank. That was harder than I expected. Alcohol is so readily available. I told myself that I could have one beer with the guys. I couldn't. I'm an all-or-nothing guy, I guess."

Brandon nodded. "But you did seek out help."

"Eric and Remi once again. They got me into rehab. A couple of times. Went to meetings with me. I'd been hiding my problem from them for a while. I couldn't have done it without their support."

"That's why you wanted to support me. For Eric."

"At first, yes. Eric was struggling with guilt for what happened to you. That he hadn't known or been there. It was eating him up inside."

Brandon knew this. "It wasn't his fault."

"We know that. He does too. There is only one man at fault and he better be rotting in jail for a very long time."

With Brandon's connections, he had no fear of his ex coming after him. He had very scary but good men in his corner. He'd have to tell Dane the story someday. "Thank you for telling me."

"Thank you for listening. I just wanted you to know that I get it. How your mind can play tricks on you. Even if you believe in your heart that I'd never hurt you, there's a small part that's still scared."

"I don't want you to get tired of my reactions. My triggers."

“We all have them, baby. You are working harder than anyone I have ever met to get your life back. It might have been your eyes that drew me in but it’s your strength that snagged me and refused to let go. I fought my attraction for so long.”

That had him smiling. Brandon told himself over and over that he wasn’t broken but those were words that didn’t always ring true. He did feel broken sometimes. But he was a brave boy too. He fought back the fear and insecurities. He might not be completely healed, maybe there would always be fear, but he also wasn’t giving up on himself.

“I think I would like that hug now,” Brandon requested.

Dane leaned back against the cushion while opening his arms. Brandon climbed to his feet before he draped himself over Dane’s lap.

“Can I hold you?” Dane asked.

Brandon slid his arms around Dane’s middle. “Yes, not too tight right now.”

Dane’s hands were gentle as he was cuddled close. The warmth of his chest against Brandon’s cheek.

He could hear the steady rhythm of Dane’s heart. Smell the soap from his shower earlier.

“Mmm.” Brandon closed his eyes. “A little tighter.”

Dane complied.

The Christmas music still played in the background. Brandon couldn’t hear Eric and Maverick any longer. Ezra probably told Eric about Brandon’s little freakout. Not that he minded. At least he wouldn’t have to talk out his feelings with his brother. Dane had taken care of that part.

The evening was ruined and that hurt Brandon’s heart. How much time had he lost because of one horrible man? It was not fair! Brandon had been a good partner. He loved fully and fiercely. He’d raged and cried and screamed about his past but that had never helped. Being surrounded by the people that

loved him? His brother, his new friends, Dane, Maverick—that was what filled him with peace.

“Would you still like to decorate the tree tonight?” Dane asked softly.

“I already ruined it,” Brandon complained.

“Ruined what?” Dane asked. “We had a moment where we spent quality time talking. That doesn’t mean that everything you worked for is ruined. We can still make this a fun night.”

“What about the stupid lights?” Brandon asked. He hated those damn lights.

“Never fear!” Eric said, strolling into the room. “I made a call to a hero.”

Brandon lifted his head.

Eric had Ezra tucked into his side with his free hand on Maverick’s collar.

“Hero?” Brandon asked.

“Remi will be arriving here shortly with new lights and tacos,” Eric replied with a grin.

Tacos? What did tacos have to do with the Christmas lights? That was weird, right?

“Everything good here?” Eric released Maverick, who quickly came to Brandon’s side. Maverick nosed Brandon’s knee.

With one hand buried in Maverick’s thick fur, he peered back at Dane. Dane was chuckling. Yeah, they were good. Brandon kissed Dane’s jaw. “Perfect.”

“Good.” Eric clapped his hands. “Because you really are the one in charge of this endeavor. How about we start with hanging the stockings while we wait on the lights? The ones you made should be dry by now.”

That was a good idea. Brandon should have thought about that before. He’d spent the afternoon making stockings for everyone he cared about. Dane, Ezra, Annabelle, Maverick, Lake, and Dom.

“Dada!”

Both Eric and Ezra turned toward the hall where the little voice called out.

“I’ll get her,” Eric offered. “You two boys can get busy.”

Brandon reluctantly climbed off Dane’s lap. “Tacos?” he asked.

Dane shrugged.

“That might have been my suggestion. I’ve been craving the street tacos from that one food truck down from the station. Remi would have to pass it anyway,” Ezra stated. “They’re so good.”

“Tacos sound good to me,” Brandon agreed. Now that the adrenaline was leaving his body, he could eat. “The stockings are drying on the kitchen counter.”

“I’ll get them,” Dane said. “You two decide where they’ll go.”

Brandon found himself alone with Ezra. Had that been by design? It wouldn’t surprise him. “Sorry.” He shifted from foot to foot. “About earlier.”

“Why are you sorry?” Ezra rushed over and yanked Brandon close.

He hid his internal cringe. Yeah. Boundaries. He needed to talk about those with Eric and Ezra as well. They meant well but sometimes being touched was too much. Brandon gently extracted himself. Maverick whined before nudging his back. Brandon went back to petting his furry canine. “For my mini freakout.”

“I’m sorry that it happened,” Ezra said. “I never thought about how lucky I am. I can be a brat. Throw a tantrum. But I don’t have any fear that Eric will hurt me. I’m sorry that it isn’t the same for you.”

“It’s okay.” Brandon shrugged. “Or...you know what. It’s not okay. That asshole deserves to burn in hell for what he did to me. But I don’t feel like I’m missing out or anything. I like

knowing that Dane really understands me. Better than anyone else ever has.”

“He was amazing. At no point did he lose his cool or get mad. Dane handled it perfectly,” Ezra said.

“Yeah, yeah, he did,” Brandon agreed.

Dane reentered the room carrying the stockings that Brandon had spent most of the afternoon on. “Take these. I think Remi is here.”

“Lights!” Brandon bounced as he clapped.

“Tacos!” Ezra danced in place.

“Alright, silly boys. I’m going to go help Remi. Where’s Eric?”

“Here.” Eric walked in with Annabelle on his hip. “The little lady wanted to change into her elf onesie so she matched her Uncle Bran.”

“My angel!” Brandon strolled over and stole Annabelle from his brother. Maverick danced by his side. The doggo loved the girl as much as Brandon did. If Maverick wasn’t with Brandon, then he could be found close to Annabelle.

“Hey!” Eric complained.

“Nope!” Brandon carried his favorite girl over to the tree. “I haven’t gotten to spend any time with this little lady since she started going to school full-time.” It was daycare but Annabelle was convinced she went to school every weekday. It made her happy so no one minded what they called it.

“I make tree stuff at school!” Annabelle told him.

“You did?” Brandon asked with excitement. He widened his eyes for her. “I bet you made the best tree stuff ever!”

“Yes!” She clapped herself.

Maverick barked, agreeing with her.

Huh, she might pay too much attention to them when they were little. Really that was an Ezra and Eric problem though. Brandon got to be the fun uncle.

“I have come to save the day!” Remi announced as he entered the living room carrying two plastic bags filled with food containers.

Dane walked in behind him carrying six boxes of new tree lights. Six? Why would they need six boxes? How big of a tree did Remi think they had?

“That’s a lot of lights,” Brandon commented as he walked over to the coffee table. The food did smell good. It would be better to trim the tree with a full stomach.

He passed Annabelle to Ezra, who had already settled on the floor.

“I see the doubt on your face,” Remi told him. “Only two of those boxes are for your tree. The others are for the roof and front window. If you’re going to do Christmas, then you have to do it right.”

Brandon glanced at Eric. They hadn’t decorated the outside last year because Eric refused to be one of the houses that had lights up in the New Year and his schedule was unpredictable enough that he might not have time to take them down. Brandon had said he would, but his brother hadn’t wanted him on the roof either.

Eric grunted. “Dane and Remi both said they would take the lights down before the New Year!”

“Before the New Year,” Dane and Remi repeated in sync.

Eric flipped them off.

Ezra covered Annabelle’s eyes as he cleared his throat.

“Shi...shoot,” Eric said. “Sorry, baby.”

Dane and Remi snickered openly.

Brandon settled on the floor across the food and patted his side for his furry partner. “Who are the adults here?” he asked Maverick.

Two short barks were his answer.

Chapter Nine

Dane

Why? How? The entire back seat of the borrowed truck was filled with bags and he hadn't even checked half the things off his Christmas shopping list. Most of what he had bought hadn't been on the list to begin with.

He glanced from the back seat to Maverick at his side.

Dane had borrowed Remi's truck for his shopping adventure. Since his back seat had been modified to hold Maverick, Dane had needed the space. It appeared he hadn't thought this completely through.

"Maybe you should sit in the front?" Dane asked his partner.

Maverick looked from the bags in his spot then back at Dane. Like Dane was supposed to figure this out.

"Never had this problem before I started liking people," he mumbled under his breath. Eric and Remi were good with tickets to a football or hockey game. Dane hadn't ever bought presents for anyone else.

He just knew that Eric was going to give him hell about this. This would be Dane covered in makeup all over again. And Dane couldn't even blame this on anyone else. It had been his bright idea to go to the fucking mall ten days before Christmas. He must have lost his mind.

His cell rang, pulling him from his dilemma. Dane slammed the back door closed before pulling his phone from his back pocket.

"Hey." He answered Jesse Lambert's call.

"Dane. Thank God you answered!"

He immediately went on alert. They had put feelers out, searching for Ezra's parents, but nothing had come from it. It hadn't appeared that the older couple had stayed in town long. "What's wrong?"

Jesse growled. “I can’t figure out the etiquette on buying lace for someone.”

Dane pulled the phone away from his ear. Double checked that his screen said Jesse Lambert. Then put his cell back to his ear and asked, “What?”

“I don’t want to embarrass him but he would look amazing in his peach lace—”

“Are you fucking with me?” Dane demanded. Leaning against the side of the truck, he patted his thigh for Maverick. His canine partner rested along his leg as Dane tried to get his heart to slow down.

The quick surge of adrenaline had him off balance. What was Jesse even saying?

“It’s perfect. The shade would look so good against his darker tone. I haven’t seen him wear this color though. He usually dresses in blacks and dark blues. But he needs this. Well, he needs a lot. How did I end up with two baskets full of silk and lace. I can’t buy this! What was I thinking? I need to get out of here.”

The Christmas craziness didn’t appear to have captured only Dane. That made him feel a little better. But now he needed to talk Jesse off the cliff, it appeared.

“Where are you?” Dane asked.

“At the mall. That little boutique store that carries men’s sexy garments. I didn’t mean to come inside. I had a very safe and nice gift picked out. But this peach color. It’s perfect for him.”

How was this his life? Dane knocked his head back against the truck window. He was going to have rescue a billionaire, wasn’t he? Didn’t Jesse have people that could shop for him?

“Five minutes. Don’t move,” Dane ordered.

“What? How?”

He hung up, cutting off Jesse’s questions. Dane did not want to go back to the madhouse that the mall was in the

middle of December, but Jesse had started to sound very panicked. A good friend would hurry to help.

Dane remembered fondly when he didn't have any friends. No one used to call him about something like this.

He pushed from the truck and gave the hand motion to stay by his side.

They strolled back out of the parking garage before making their way down the walk to the entrance of the mall. Of course, they grabbed attention with Dane in his jeans and leather jacket and Maverick in his brown working vest. Brandon was at work or Dane would have left the canine with his boy.

Thanks to the *working dog, do not pet* sign on the vest they didn't get bothered.

It took a good ten minutes to get through the crowd and find the store that Jesse had mentioned. He strolled through the open door while glancing around. He spotted Jesse in the corner looking more disheveled than Dane had ever seen him.

Jesse saw Dane walking toward him and threw his hands up in the air. "You hung up on me! People don't hang up on me."

Dane snorted. "Then you called the wrong person to save you."

"Eric didn't answer," Jesse complained.

He laughed. Eric would have been a much better choice to call. "He and Ezra took Annabelle to the aquarium. There's a special penguin show today."

"Oh." Jesse's shoulders slumped. "I'm in real trouble here."

Dane looked at the two baskets filled to the rim. "You want to buy lace for a boy? Someone you're dating?"

"No." Jesse looked away. "An...employee."

Dane snorted. "Dude, you can't buy an employee lace undies or any other sexy gifts." That was a lawsuit just waiting

to happen.

“We’re sort of friends,” Jesse snapped back.

“Friendly enough to buy him lace? Silk? Underwear?”

“No,” Jesse admitted. He studied Dane for a long moment. “You can buy it for him.”

There wasn’t a soul in the world that Dane could imagine himself buying something lacy for. Well, he would for Brandon if that was something his boy was into. Wait. “Who exactly do you want to buy this for?” He picked up the peach lace bodysuit on top of the pile.

It really was a gorgeous color.

And it was large. Two times the size that Brandon would need.

Dane didn’t even know stores carried that size in pretty clothes.

“You buy it,” Jesse demanded.

“No.” Dane laid the pretty piece down. “Neither of us are buying that.”

“But—”

Dane hooked his arm through Jesse’s before towing him out of the store.

“But—”

He didn’t stop. No good could come from this and Dane couldn’t believe that he had to be the voice of reason. Where was Remi when Dane needed him?

There was a little coffee shop tucked in the corner of the mall that wasn’t too crowded. Dane found them a small table and pushed Jesse into one of the seats.

“Hey, guys,” the waitress said as she approached. “What will you have?”

“Black coffee,” Dane replied.

“Same, please,” Jesse managed. He was still scowling.

“A bowl of water for your dog?”

“Yes, please.” Dane waited until the young lady walked away before leaning forward.

“You can’t buy Lake that outfit,” he said sternly. “It is inappropriate and he would be embarrassed.”

“It’s so pretty though,” Jesse whined.

“Yes, and he would look gorgeous in it,” Dane said. “That’s not the point.”

“He’ll barely talk to me. I try to get his attention but he’s always busy or if he’s on his break, he’s surrounded by other people.”

“And you think giving him that gift will change that? Lake would be mortified opening that at work.”

Jesse rolled his eyes. How did he remind Dane of Brandon at that moment? “I wasn’t going to give it to him at work. I was going to give it to him at the Christmas dinner Brandon invited us over for.”

“Christmas dinner.” This was the first that Dane was hearing about this. Not that he was surprised. Since the Christmas lights incident, Brandon had been sharing more about his past. The loneliness. How he’d always wanted to host large holiday events.

Sharing his own past had opened more doors and brought him and Brandon even closer. Not something Dane had even thought possible.

But communication. That really was the key to a good relationship.

“He called this morning. That was when I realized that I needed to pick something up for all the boys.” Jesse frowned. “It got out of hand.”

It was a good thing that Dane had already shopped for the boys. At least he didn’t have to go back into any stores. He needed to concentrate on Jesse and whatever the hell the other man had been thinking. Jesse was normally very calm and

collected. “Lake wouldn’t want to open a gift like that, even in front of us,” Dane told Jesse.

“But you’re his friends.”

“And you know how shy and reserved he is. That’s the kind of present that a Daddy should give his boy.”

“I know.” Jesse’s sigh held all his frustration.

The waitress returned with two mugs of black coffee and a bowl for Maverick. Dane took his time sipping the strong brew. This might be the best part of the entire shopping experience. Good coffee. He’d have to bring Brandon by.

Jesse didn’t drink his coffee but instead played with the handle of his mug.

“Can I give you some advice?” Dane asked.

“Didn’t really think that was your thing.”

“It’s not,” Dane agreed. “But I’ve been in your shoes.”

Jesse lifted his gaze.

“Money is not going to matter to Lake. He’s not that type of boy. You could buy him a dozen pretty outfits and it won’t change a thing.”

“But he likes pretty things and I enjoy seeing him dressed up,” Jesse argued.

“Have you ever spent any time around him away from the club? Where you’re not his boss?”

“I’m not really his boss though. I own the club, but I don’t have anything to do with how it runs on a day-to-day basis.”

“You’re his boss,” Dane said. “There are no two ways about it. That’s something that the two of you can overcome though.”

“You think so?” Jesse asked.

“If you’re willing,” Dane said. “But let me tell you, man, you’ll have to work for it.”

“I’ve worked for everything that has ever meant anything to me. I’m not afraid of hard work. I made my money by

putting my heart and soul into what I wanted.”

“But are you willing to do that now?” Dane could see that Jesse still wasn’t getting it. Jesse might have had to fight for what he had but the money was there now and maybe he’d forgotten how the other side lived.

“I—”

“Think before you answer,” Dane said quietly. Gently. He liked Jesse. Dane also cared about Lake and didn’t want to see the boy hurt. The two of them. Yeah, that could be a recipe for disaster. It might also be amazing to watch. If anyone deserved to be spoiled by a billionaire, it was that sweet boy. They were far from that point though.

“I don’t think I understand.”

“That’s a start.” Dane drained his coffee. It really was that good and he needed the kick of caffeine. “You haven’t spent time with Lake away from the club even though you’ve been invited the house for the little parties.”

Jesse opened his mouth. Dane could see the argument on the tip of his tongue and held up a hand.

“I get it. Things came up at work,” Dane said.

“I had planned to go,” Jesse said, but he was nodding.

“And Christmas?” Dane questioned. “What are the chances that you’ll cancel last minute? Honestly?”

Jesse winced.

“If Lake wore that pretty little peach number, would you expect him to not complain when you cancel dates last minute? Or would you have him be the only little without a Daddy at one of the parties because you didn’t show again?”

Jesse dropped his eyes.

“That’s what you need to think about before you buy anything for Lake like that outfit.”

“I get it,” Jesse replied softly.

“Now I have another question for you,” Dane said. These were the questions that finally pushed Dane out of his comfort zone.

“Alright,” Jesse agreed.

“How will you feel the first time that you see Lake with a Daddy that isn’t you?” Dane questioned.

Jesse’s head snapped up.

“That question hurts, doesn’t it?”

“Yeah.”

Dane nodded. He pressed on. “How will you feel when Lake turns to someone else for comfort? If he’s sick, or scared, or hurt. Because it will happen. He is too good of a man. Too special of a little to stay single forever.”

“Damn, man.” Jesse rubbed a hand over his chest. “You don’t pull punches, do you?”

“Someone close to me asked me these questions not long ago. I had to face some hard truths about my life.”

“And you chose your boy,” Jesse said knowingly.

Dane smiled. “It turned out there was never any choice.”

“Fuck,” Jesse murmured.

“Are you going to drink that or play with the cup?” Dane asked, eyeing Jesse’s coffee. Jesse laughed before pushing the mug away. “I don’t even like coffee. It’s just habit now.”

Dane gratefully stole the drink and downed it. Even cold, the coffee was good.

“Asshole,” Jesse teased as he laughed. “Thanks for answering your phone.”

He shrugged. “We Daddies have to stick together.”

* * * * *

Brandon

His feet hurt and Brandon was looking forward to the soothing bubble bath that Dane promised him when Brandon finally got home. Late shift was his favorite. Busy enough that he didn't have too much time to think about his past but not crazy with patients and their demands.

Must be a full moon or something because his night had been pure chaos.

Brandon kept his eyes down in the hope that no one would try to catch his attention and he could make a clean exit.

He avoided other nurses rushing to someplace else, doctors barking orders, and patients milling around. Brandon finally reached the door when he heard a voice he recognized. He snapped his head up, trying to find the speaker.

"I hate leaving you here alone. Are you sure that your ride is on the way?"

"I'm fine. My ride will be here in less than five minutes. Go! I know how busy it was on the floor."

"Dom. I'm worried."

"And I said I'm fine!" Dom's voice rose.

"Hey, Dom." Brandon stepped up beside the wheelchair that Dom sat in. He placed his hand on his friend's shoulder before smiling at the nurse hovering close. "Ready to get home?"

The nurse gasped. "You really did have a ride!" She turned her bright smile toward Brandon. "I thought he was waiting on an Uber again. That just isn't safe."

"I got him," Brandon told the woman.

"Great!" She bent and kissed Dom on the cheek. "See you next time."

"Yeah. Bye," Dom mumbled as he stared down at his hands.

Brandon waited until the young nurse had hurried away. Crossing his arms over his chest, he waited. Gaze glued to the top of Dom's bent head.

“I’m fine,” Dom said.

Brandon didn’t reply. He just waited.

“We don’t have to make a big deal about this,” Dom said.

Brandon crouched down in front of him.

“It’s not like I’m not used to treatments.”

Brandon nearly lost his composure. He hadn’t known that Dom was sick. Sure, Dom had never appeared to be the healthiest person, but Brandon tried to mind his own business. He’d hoped that Dom would come to him if he needed help.

Dom’s phone was open in his lap. Brandon slipped the little device from his cold fingers. The Uber app was on the screen.

Brandon canceled the ride request.

“Hey!”

Brandon locked the phone screen before giving the cell back. “Now I’m your ride. I can wait here all night.” It was cold though.

Dom shook his head. “I—”

“Do not say that you are fine. No one gets wheeled out of the hospital that is fine. Should I call Ezra? He would probably know what’s going on, right? There’s no way you’d keep this from your best friend.”

“You wouldn’t!” Dom demanded.

“Wouldn’t I?” Brandon waved his own phone in Dom’s face. “I don’t have many friends. I don’t plan on losing one of the few that I do have. Besides, do you want to ruin Christmas for Annabelle? That little girl loves you.”

“Low blow, dude,” Dom accused.

It had been. But it was really cold. Brandon wanted to be in his nice warm car. Even better would be the bath that had been promised. “Tick tock.” He shook his phone.

“I have chronic kidney disease,” Dom confessed quickly.

Looking down, Brandon spotted the bruises from constant needle pricks where his dialysis fistula would be. “Dialysis?”

“Three times a week for five hours at a time,” Dom told him.

Brandon knew only the basics of kidney disease. “You do treatment here?”

“Yeah, normally I come earlier, but I had car trouble and was late.”

“So that left you without a vehicle.”

“It’s fine. I have the weekend off. I’ll have my car fixed before my next treatment Monday.”

He had to think back on all the time that he spent around Dom. Brandon hadn’t noticed anything off, but Dom did limit the amount of fluid he took in and what he ate.

“You should have told me so I could provide appropriate food and watched your fluid intake.”

Dom snorted. “I’ve been doing this on my own for over a year.”

“That doesn’t mean that your friends won’t want to help.”

Dom opened his mouth. To argue, no doubt.

“It’s okay to accept the help from people who care about you,” Brandon said. “Especially if one of those people works in the medical field.”

“I know.” Dom threaded his cold fingers with Brandon’s. “It’s hard. My parents gave up on me after I came out as gay. If they knew I was sick now, they’d say it was punishment for my sinful ways.”

“Fuck them,” Brandon stated fiercely.

Dom laughed. “What would your Daddy say if he heard you talking like that?”

Brandon didn’t even have to think about his response. “He would agree. Then he’d go beat your father up.”

“He probably would.” The naughty grin that Brandon associated with Dom was there for a brief moment.

“Good. I’m glad we got that out of the way.” He rose and walked behind the wheelchair. “Let’s go home.”

“Finally,” Dom sighed. “I’m tired.”

“I bet.” Brandon had once heard that one hour of dialysis had the same effect on the body as running up ten flights of stairs at full speed. It was hard on the patients and that was not considering what other medical issues they might have.

He pushed the wheelchair down the sidewalk toward the employee parking garage.

Dom would eventually figure out that Brandon had no intention of taking him home. Well, Brandon was taking Dom home...just to Brandon’s home. Where there were plenty of people to look after his friend until Brandon figured out how to handle this situation.

They were friends and Brandon couldn’t have Dom making himself sicker by trying to accomplish everything on his own.

Once he was close enough, Brandon hit the remote start to get the vehicle warmed up for them.

It didn’t take long to get Dom settled in the passenger side of Brandon’s vehicle. He pushed the wheelchair off to the side. Someone would grab it or Brandon would take it back inside the next time he was on shift.

He stopped at the back of his car and shot off a quick text.

Bringing Dom home with me. I’ll explain later. Can you make sure that the guest room is ready for him?

Brandon double checked the text sent to Dane before he pocketed his cell.

Climbing into his chair, Brandon was relieved the interior was warming quickly with the heater blew full blast. Thank God for remote start. Vegas wasn’t the coldest of cities and Brandon knew he would never make it somewhere the temps dropped to the negatives.

Dom sat with his eyes closed as Brandon backed out of his parking space. He wished he had a blanket or something to offer his friend. Even from across the seats he could see Dom shiver.

Where was his jacket?

The boy really needed a Daddy, whether Dom admitted it or not. He claimed to not want that kind of burden but Brandon suspected that Dom saw himself as the burden.

Well, that was going to stop immediately.

There was power in numbers.

If Dom didn't want to listen to him, then Brandon would call in Dane, Ezra, Eric, and Lake. Between all of them there would be a schedule set to get Dom to and from treatments.

Brandon had an entire bedroom that was sitting empty since he'd sneakily moved all of Dane's stuff into his room the morning after their first time together. Dane had never questioned it or even made a comment. He would simply ask where whatever he needed was or where Brandon wanted him to put something.

So Brandon could totally be sneaky. Totally.

Relief filled him when Dom began to snore.

Or maybe not.

He might need to call in reinforcements. Brandon didn't want Dom mad at him. Dom could be scary at times. Not Daddy scary. Just...he had a bit of a sharp tongue. Yes, he'd let the Daddies help. Power in numbers after all.

Chapter Ten

Dane

“But why? What’s wrong? How come no one called me?”

Dane really wished he had answers for Ezra.

“He doesn’t know, baby. He showed you the text from Brandon. They’ll be here soon and then we’ll figure it out,” Eric said.

“How soon? What if something is really wrong?” Ezra asked.

Dane finished changing the sheets in the guest room before he added several thick blankets. Eric helped him straighten the comforter. The room was clean. Ezra had even worriedly run the vacuum over the bedroom carpet. Dane didn’t know what was going on, but Dom should be comfortable.

Pulling his phone from his pocket, he checked the GPS app that tracked Brandon’s location. Only a few blocks away. He passed the phone to Ezra. “Almost here. See?”

Ezra stared down at the screen while nodding.

“You’re tracking my brother’s location?” Eric questioned.

“You don’t track your boy?” Dane retorted.

“Didn’t think about it,” Eric mumbled.

“I’ll wait by the door.” Ezra ran off with his phone.

“Amateur,” Dane mocked as he followed Ezra from the room.

He made a stop in the kitchen to check their supplies. He knew his boy and if Dom was sick, he would spend the entire night caring for him. Dane did not want Brandon overwhelmed. He’d already worked a full shift. They could all take turns if need be.

The fridge was well stocked, including juices and Gatorade. They had soup and plenty of other meals or snacks that could get thrown together easily enough.

He strolled into the living room to catch Eric whispering frantically into his phone. Dane shook his head. Now was not the time to be playing matchmaker. Eric shrugged before he said one last thing and hung up.

“Dude,” Dane admonished.

“You would want to know,” Eric replied.

“Dom should have a choice,” Dane said.

Eric smirked. “Might want to hold off on the judgment. It was your boy who basically kidnapped Dom to bring him here.”

Dane groaned. “No, he didn’t. And how do you know?”

“Ezra is texting him off your phone.”

“Ezra.” Dane crossed the room to where Ezra was standing next to their gorgeous Christmas tree and he peered out the window.

Every time Dane saw that tree, he remembered how brave his boy had been and his heart warmed. He held his hand out for his phone.

“Sorry.” Ezra passed it over before he started to pace in front of the window.

He immediately went to the message thread.

It’s EZ. Is Dom ok?

Yes. Had dialysis and no ride. Bringing him home.

But he’s not sick sick?

I don’t think so. He fell asleep when he got in the car. He doesn’t actually know I’m bringing him home with me.

O no! He is gonna be mad mad.

Maybe we can get him inside with him still asleep? IDK. I got us this far. Someone else needs to figure it out.

I’ll make my Daddy get him!

K! Green light. Got2go

Dane snorted. Two littles trying to kidnap their third little friend? This was going to turn into a disaster. He didn't even want to imagine what would happen if he and Eric weren't there.

Tires screeched and lights flashed across the window.

He would give his boy a stern lecture if it was Brandon driving like that. Instead of seeing his boy's car, Remi had jumped the curb in his truck. This was not going to go well. Dom loved to push Remi's buttons and Remi wasn't used to anyone arguing with him.

Brandon's vehicle came into view, respectful of the speed limit. He pulled into the drive.

The lights from the front of the house illuminated where his boy sat behind the wheel. His eyes were huge and Dane could imagine how stressful the short drive had been for his boy.

Remi was out of the truck and stomping toward the passenger side.

Brandon quickly scrambled from the car before Remi yanked the door open.

Ezra raced for the door with Dane not far behind him. Ezra unlocked the door and Brandon ran in. Dane caught his boy against his chest.

"Dom is gonna be pissed!" Brandon whispered. "It seemed like a good idea at the time."

Voice drifted to the open door. Dom and Remi arguing.

"It'll be okay," Dane promised. He didn't know how he'd keep that vow but he would do his best.

"Don't crowd him," Eric ordered. "Let Remi bring him in."

Dane pulled both boys into the living room.

There was still a muffled argument but it wasn't long before Remi strolled in with Dom in his arms.

“I can fucking walk,” Dom bitched. He spotted Brandon huddled in Dane’s arms. “Traitor.”

“I just wanted you in a safe place for the night,” Brandon told him.

“And this is safe?” Dom waved his hand at Remi’s chest.

“Well,” Brandon hedged. “I sort of thought it would be Eric carrying you in.”

Dom sighed but rested his head against Remi’s chest. “I don’t care. I’m tired.”

“Spare bedroom?” Remi asked.

“Yes, please.” Brandon waved toward the hall. “I’ll help you get him settled.”

Dane kissed Brandon’s forehead. “Meet us in here when you’re done. I know you thought you were doing the right thing, but Dom had the right to refuse our help.”

“I know, Daddy. I will tell him I’m sorry. I’m just worried about him.”

“I understand.” He did. It was hard to fight instincts when he knew that he could help. That didn’t make this situation any less volatile.

Brandon shuffled down the hall after Remi and Dom.

“Don’t be too hard on him. His hearts in the right place,” Eric advised.

“I know.”

“What? I don’t get it?” Ezra said.

Eric pulled Ezra over to the couch before sitting and placing him on his lap. “It’s about consent, baby. Dom should have a choice.”

“I thought kidnapping cute boys was your style, Daddy,” Ezra teased.

“Funny.” Eric hugged Ezra tight.

“Dom won’t ask for help,” Ezra said. “Even when he needs it. He’s convinced himself that he had to do everything

on his own. It's the only thing that we argue about."

Dane settled back to wait for his boy.

Twenty minutes later, Dane was getting antsy. Brandon had to be exhausted. Finally, a bedroom door opened then clicked closed.

Brandon was dragging his feet as he came down the hall. His boy headed directly to him and crawled into his lap. Dane cuddled him close.

"Dom is asleep," Brandon said. His words muffled against Dane's chest. "He agreed to stay here for a few days. And that Remi could help him out. He doesn't want us making a fuss though."

Like that was even an option. "Is he sick? Was he at the hospital?" What had happened to bring them to this point?

"He has chronic kidney disease," Brandon said. "I asked permission to tell you and he said yes. He..." Brandon lifted his head. "He admitted that he was struggling and needed help."

"We'll be there with him every step of the way," Dane agreed.

"But he goes to dialysis," Ezra said. "That means he'll be fine, right?"

He suspected the answer even before Brandon shook his head. "He has zero kidney function. He must go dialysis three times a week for five hours. It cleans waste and toxins from his blood. Takes away excess fluid. But he still had to watch how much fluid he takes in. The fluid will build up around his heart if he misses any treatments. He can't miss treatments."

"Wait." Ezra paled. "He could die?"

"Yes," Brandon said seriously. "He should also be on a very specific diet. Low sodium and no potassium. I didn't know that before."

"We know now." Dane rubbed Brandon's back.

“But if he goes to treatment and eats right, limits his fluids, then he’ll be okay?” Ezra asked.

Tears pooled in his eyes. “No.”

“No?” Ezra gasped out.

“He needs a new kidney,” Brandon explained gently. “Every treatment that Dom goes through keeps him alive but also puts serious strain on his body and heart.”

“He lied.” Ezra was also crying. “He told me that everything would be fine.”

“Don’t be mad,” Eric encouraged. “Dom is probably scared and doesn’t know what else to do.”

“We’re going to help him,” Brandon promised.

“He can have one of my kidneys,” Ezra offered. “I can donate, right? I’m healthy.”

“We’ll get tested. You must be a match, Ezra. There are thousands of people on transplant lists, so a living donor is our best bet. I’ll start the research in the morning and get us scheduled for all the testing we’ll have to do.”

“Me too,” Eric said.

“And me,” Dane offered.

“The group of us then. Better chances of one of us being a match.” Brandon yawned. “We have time to figure this out. Dom is young and strong. He’s a fighter.”

“He is!” Ezra agreed. “And when he feels like giving up, we’ll fight for him.”

Brandon grinned. “With friends like us, how could he not fight?”

“Yeah, and while he’s here, we’ll make sure he’s spoiled and gets plenty of little time.” Ezra nodded.

“That might be where we run into trouble. It doesn’t seem easy for him to accept help,” Brandon said. “He argued but finally gave in, but I think that was mostly because he had a bad day.”

“I can be very determined when I want to. Plus, he totally owes me for not being honest. I’ll hold that over his head if I have to,” Ezra vowed.

“Let’s call Lake in the morning so he can come visit, help talk some sense into Dom, and doesn’t feel left out.”

“That’s a good plan. And there’s nothing more that we can do tonight,” Dane decided. “Now it’s time for me to take care of my boy.”

Brandon turned toward him. “Can I still have my bath?”

“Of course.” Dane slid to the end of the couch. That had been what he’d been preparing before he’d received the text from Brandon.

“You know, we should probably call the contractor back and get a quote on adding an extension for another master bedroom with a bath,” Eric said. “You know, if you don’t plan to return to your own house.” His smirk spoke volumes.

Dane looked down at Brandon. He had no intention of returning to his house. That wasn’t home to him. “We’ll discuss what to do with my house later, but I don’t have any plans on going anywhere. This is where Brandon feels safe. I’m not pulling him out of this environment or away from you all.”

“I don’t mind admitting that I’m relieved.” Eric smiled at his brother. “I like having you around.”

“I want to stay here. At least for now. I always wanted a big family. With lots of people around.”

“I know you did.” Eric rose with Ezra.

It was harder for Dane to get off the couch with Brandon clinging to him. He managed and they all said good night.

Dom’s door was closed as Dane carried his boy to the hall bathroom.

“Thanks for helping tonight,” Brandon said as Dane placed him on the counter.

“I would do anything for you,” Dane replied. He kissed Brandon slowly until the boy was leaning into him and not thinking about anything other than Dane in that moment. “Let Daddy start the water for us.”

* * * * *

Brandon

Their position reminded Brandon of the first bath they’d taken together.

The stress of working a full chaotic shift before running into Dom melted away into the hot water. He was still worried about Dom but also knew that with their group, they would figure out how to best take care of their friend.

Christmas was around the corner and by the looks of it, he was going to have a full house. Just like he had always wished for.

Eric had been so much older than Brandon that they’d never had much in common. He’d joined the military when he’d been seventeen, leaving Brandon behind with parents that cared more about their social life than the children they were supposed to love.

He’d understood more of how Dane had felt than his Daddy would ever know.

Brandon had also left home for college as soon as he’d been able to. He’d fallen in with the wrong crowd right from the start. His parents hadn’t minded paying for nursing school as long as Brandon was out of their way.

For so long he’d been mad at his parents. At Eric. Then the worst had happened, and Brandon had run out of options. He’d called his brother with a desperate plea for help and to his surprise Eric hadn’t even hesitated.

The man that had picked Brandon up when he’d been broken and scared wasn’t the same as the seventeen-year-old boy that had fled from their family. Little by little Brandon had begun to trust his brother again. They were the first two

members of Brandon's newfound family, but they had just been the beginning.

This Christmas he would have the holiday of his dreams. A man he loved, his family, and everything he'd wished for over the many years he'd been alone. He even had a dog!

"Did you fall asleep on me, baby?"

Brandon turned his head to kiss Dane's neck. "No, Daddy. Just thinking."

"About what?" Dane asked.

"Our family." He loved saying those words.

"We do have an amazing family," Dane said. "Do you know what I was thinking about?"

"No, Daddy. What?"

"About Eric's offer. Having the contractor adding onto the house and making us a bigger room. And a nice bathroom of our own so we can soak in the tub whenever we want. Especially if you keep kidnapping people and bringing them home."

Brandon giggled. "Eric started it."

Dane sighed. "That is not a ringing endorsement. I have never seen your brother do anything that spontaneously before."

"He knew it was right," Brandon said. "Just like I know with you. I want our own bathroom." He hummed. Brandon hated to bring up something else that he still needed. "And maybe a little hidey-hole like my closet. For when you're at work. Just in case I need it."

Brandon held his breath as he waited for Dane to respond.

"That's a great idea. Even if you need your safe space when I'm home, that would be okay. We might want to make it a little bigger than your closet though. Maverick's big butt takes up a lot of space."

Brandon giggled. "It...that's okay?"

“Yes. I will never take that safe space from you.”

“Not too much bigger though.” Brandon needed the smaller enclosed space to really feel safe. That no one bigger than him could fit to get him.

“We’ll take some measurements tomorrow.” Dane thought about that. “Or later today. Pretty sure it’s past midnight now.”

“Yeah. And we promised Dom that we’d go to his apartment and get some of his stuff. And his bird.”

“Bird? Dom has a bird?”

Brandon nodded. “Jimmy. I haven’t met him yet but Dom wants him.”

“Huh. I never pictured Dom as a bird person. He seemed more the black cat type.”

“But if Jimmy is already here, then Dom might stay longer,” Brandon said. That was the beginning of his new plan to get Dom to let them help.

“Now we’re going to hold a bird hostage?”

Well, when Daddy said it like that, he made Brandon sound a little crazy. He wasn’t crazy. But—

“Do you think Dom and Remi would move in?”

Daddy threw his head back and groaned. “Baby.”

“I’m just asking.” It wasn’t like he’d hide their shoes or keys or something to make them stay forever. Not crazy.

“Let’s get past the next few weeks,” Dane advised.

“Okay.” That was as good as he was going to get. He ran his soapy hand up Dane’s chest. He liked the light furriness. “We definitely need our own bath if they live with us though.”

Dane chuckled while shaking his head.

It was just a thought!

Dane cupped Brandon’s ass and Brandon turned where he straddled Dane’s lap. “Especially if my boy wants to keep having sexy times in the tub.”

His cock was already hard. Having Dane's hands on him, yep, happened every time. Brandon loved this time being just the two of them. Yes, Brandon wanted a full house of happy friends and family, but he also needed quality time with his Daddy.

"I was looking forward to this all night," Brandon confessed.

Dane ran his finger down his crease to tease Brandon's opening. "Me too."

"Did you remember the lube this time?" Brandon rubbed his cock against Dane's stomach.

"I did." Dane grinned. "But should I reward my boy when he kidnapped someone tonight?"

He squirmed and whined. "I did it for a good reason! Daddy! Don't tease."

Dane chuckled but picked up the lube.

Yes!

They'd both agreed to stop using condoms after they'd been tested and had a conversation. Brandon still appreciated that Dane cared about him so much that he had insisted that first time. Brandon loved how protective his Daddy was. Dane's amazing character was displayed nearly daily.

Those wicked fingers returned, slick, to push inside him.

With his knees braced against the bottom of the tub, Brandon pushed back, taking two of Dane's fingers deeper. He dug his fingers into Dane's shoulders while leaning forward to kiss him.

Was there anything better than a passionate kiss?

The raw power and need that Dane showed as he fucked his tongue into Brandon's mouth while working those thick digits in his ass?

Daddy knew how to work Brandon up.

The water splashed against the side of the tub as Brandon rode Dane's fingers while sucking on Dane's tongue like it

was his favorite treat.

Dane's third finger burned but Brandon knew that he had to take those thick digits before he would get what he was really after. Daddy's nice big cock.

Throwing his head back, Brandon moaned loud enough to be overheard.

He didn't care.

Nothing mattered but getting Daddy's dick inside him.

"Please, Daddy," he begged.

Dane withdrew his fingers. "If you want it, then you take it. Show me how much you missed me, baby boy."

Reaching back, Brandon grasped Dane's shaft, bringing the tip to his stretched hole. He sank down slowly, enjoying the pressure and slight sting as his body struggled to allow the thick cock in.

"Yes," he hissed. Brandon worked Dane's dick in and out of his ass until he could finally slide all the way down.

Full. Thick. Fucking hell! Brandon loved this cock. His cock. It might be on Daddy's body but that cock was all his, damn it!

With his fingers biting into Dane's muscular shoulders, Brandon started to ride his man.

Dane loved to tease him. Draw out the pleasure. Brandon didn't bother. He began a hard and fast rhythm as he chased the climax that he knew would come. Dane ran his hands up and down Brandon's back, encouraging Brandon with grunts and growls.

It wasn't often that Brandon needed to be in control but Dane always seemed to know.

"Just like that, baby," Dane said. "Ride Daddy. Take what you want."

He was! Brandon slammed himself down on Dane's thick shaft over and over. Water splashed onto the tile but that was

just background noise. Their sounds echoed around and bounced off tiles.

The veins in Daddy's neck strained.

Brandon laughed as the tingle started in his balls and traveled up his spine.

Dane wrapped his fingers around Brandon's cock and stroked.

That was all he needed.

Brandon closed his eyes as his dick erupted, painting Daddy's chest with his seed. At the same time, he clamped down on the cock inside him as hot come filled his hole.

Once Brandon's shaft gave one last twitch, he face-planted against Daddy's chest. Completely and utterly spent.

The water was cooling but that was a problem for when Brandon could move again. Maybe they should just live in the tub. Brandon was snug as a bug in a rug.

"Such a good boy," Dane praised as he rubbed Brandon's back. "That was good."

"So good." He mumbled his agreement. Brandon lifted his thumb to his mouth and even though he got a mouthful of soap, he didn't care. He sucked on his thumb as sleep pulled at him.

"We're not sleeping in the tub." Dane pinched his butt.

Then Daddy would have to figure out how to move them. Brandon was done. Gone. Too much for one night. Sleepy time.

Chapter Eleven

Brandon

There was an entire mountain of presents under the tree. So many presents. More than Brandon had seen in his entire life. His name, Ezra's, Dom, Annabelle's, and even Lake's names were printed neatly on the tags.

His fingers twitched with the need to shake the big brightly wrapped gift that was from his Daddy.

"You boys had better not be by the presents again!"

Brandon gasped as he looked at Dom then Ezra.

"I swear he has eyes in the back of his head," Dom whispered.

"He's not even in the room!" Ezra said in awe. "How does Remi know?"

"He's a witch!" Dom declared.

Brandon giggled. That could be it. Since Remi was in the kitchen baking, there was no way that he knew they were by the tree.

"Who wants to lick the batter from the spoon?" Remi called.

"Me!" Brandon scrambled up. Dom and Ezra fought to beat each other to their feet. Brandon was not waiting on them. He took off.

"No running!" Remi yelled.

Oops! Too late. Brandon hit the kitchen tile and slid at least four tiles in his socked feet. He grabbed the closest counter to keep from falling.

Dom and Ezra were pushing each other as they entered behind him.

"Stop fighting," Remi ordered.

Ezra and Dom immediately stopped.

Remi held three large mixing spoons with white batter. "There's plenty for everyone."

Dom moved fast. Wow. He grabbed his spoon first. The one that had the most batter. Not fair! Brandon hurried to get the second spoon.

He licked at the batter. Oh! That was so good. He shoved the spoon in his mouth. It barely fit.

"Wow, this is good," Dom complimented.

It really was!

"This is a dialysis-friendly cherry cheesecake," Remi supplied. "It's for our Christmas dinner tomorrow so you boys leave it alone."

Brandon sucked his spoon clean. Huh! Daddy would have been proud of that suction. Brandon snickered to himself.

"I think Brandon is getting dirty with his spoon," Ezra teased.

Brandon didn't stop licking his spoon. "Don't be jealous of my skills."

Remi snorted a laugh as the back door opened.

Dane, Eric, and Maverick strolled into the kitchen from the yard.

Mmm, his Daddy was looking good covered in a light dusting of snow, in a dark flannel and tight jeans. The spoon in his hand was forgotten. Brandon could think of something else he could be licking.

"What's going on in here?" Dane asked while crossing the kitchen to him.

Brandon held the big spoon up in front of his mouth before sticking his tongue out and licking it slowly.

Daddy's eyes widened comically.

"Brandon's being naughty," Ezra tattled.

"I think he's being a good boy," Dane corrected. His hands cradled Brandon's hips.

Brandon moaned as he twirled his tongue.

“I don’t need to see this,” Eric bitched. “Why is this happening in the kitchen?”

“Daddy!” Ezra said. “Remember when you—”

“Do not finish that question!” Eric ordered.

“Wait? What did you do in this kitchen?” Remi demanded.

“We cleaned up afterwards,” Eric retorted.

Dane was nuzzling his neck so Brandon really didn’t care about the conversation that was happening around him. Not when Dane’s erection was brushing against his hip.

Suddenly Dane lifted his head. “Is Annabelle still napping?”

“Yeah,” Remi replied. “Should be down for another half hour or so.”

Daddy grinned. “We’ll be back.”

Remi snorted.

Leaning forward, Dane whispered. “Uppies?”

Fuck yeah. “Uppies, Daddy.”

Dane lifted Brandon off his feet before striding out the kitchen. Remi snatched the spoon from Brandon’s hand as they passed.

“I have no idea how spoons ended up being so…” Remi started.

“Sexy!” Ezra helpfully supplied.

Halfway across the living room, Dane kissed him.

Brandon opened his lips to allow Daddy the access he wanted. Brandon sucked on Daddy’s tongue before Dane drew away.

“What were you eating? Tastes good.”

“Cheesecake batter,” Brandon supplied. “It was good but it reminded me of something else thick I could be licking up.”

Dane squeezed Brandon's cheeks hard. "So you were being naughty."

"You said I was a good boy," Brandon reminded him.

They reached the bedroom. Dane strolled through the doorway before setting Brandon on his feet.

"Knees now, baby." Dane closed and locked the door.

Brandon dropped where he stood. He peered up through his lashes as Daddy turned with his hand already on his belt.

"Open your mouth for me, baby. Stick out your tongue."

He was happy to obey.

Dane had his belt undone and his jeans open in seconds. He pushed the jeans and underwear past his ass then grasped the base of his cock.

Shuffling forward, Dane stopped in front of Brandon. "Safe word?"

"Green, Daddy. I want you to fuck my mouth."

"That's just what I'm going to do to you. I'm going to pound your throat so hard that you're going to have trouble talking."

He wouldn't really but the fantasy was fun.

Dane brushed the head of his cock over Brandon's lips, letting the precome from his dick paint a trail.

Brandon licked his lips, catching the tip of Dane's erection.

"You ready for Daddy?" Dane teased.

"Yes, Daddy." Brandon tried not to move. He wanted to reach for the cock in front of him.

Dane was in control this time though.

He had to be a good patient boy.

Brandon could do it.

"Pull your pants down to your knees," Daddy ordered. "I don't want you making a mess in your new Christmas

jammies. Then you couldn't wear them and match the other boys."

"Undies too, Daddy?" Brandon scrambled to get his pants down.

"Undies too, baby boy." Dane watched with his dark heated gaze.

Brandon shivered.

His Daddy was really turned on.

"Mouth wide. Let Daddy do the work," Dane commanded.

"K." Brandon tried to stay still.

Dane flexed his hips, the tip of his dick brushing against Brandon's mouth again. Closing his lips, he tried to keep that hard member inside.

"No," Dane said softly. "Daddy is in charge."

Brandon released the cock from between his lips. "Sorry, Daddy."

"That's okay, baby. I know you love my cock. I'll give you the chance to show me."

Dane's left hand caressed Brandon's cheek before he grabbed the hair at the back of Brandon's head. "Color?"

"Green." Fuck! This was hot.

With his dick in his right hand, Brandon's hair in his left, Dane pushed his cock into Brandon's mouth while shoving his head forward.

The head of Daddy's cock hit the back of his throat and Brandon gagged.

"Good," Dane praised. He pulled his dick out of Brandon's mouth before running the tip over Brandon's lips again.

Brandon sucked in a breath.

Dane's cock went back into his mouth. His head was pushed forward again. He choked. Dane withdrew.

They did this over and over until Brandon had tears falling from the corners of his eyes and his own erection bobbed.

“Such a good boy for Daddy,” Dane praised as he gave an extra-hard shove.

The tip slipped down Brandon’s throat.

Dane held himself in place.

“Swallow around my dick!” Dane ordered.

He tried.

“Good boy.” Dane withdrew his shaft.

Brandon coughed then sucked in a ragged breath.

“Again,” Dane ordered.

Brandon braced himself.

A powerful flex of Daddy’s hips.

A cock down his throat.

Brandon’s lips stretched wide around the member in his mouth.

Daddy stayed with his cock trapped.

Brandon couldn’t breathe. One. Two. Three. Four.

Daddy drew back again.

“Faster,” Dane ordered.

He was ready.

Brandon closed his eyes. Dane rammed his cock deep. Brandon didn’t even try to breathe any longer. He let the head of Daddy’s dick rest down his throat. Sucked when Daddy pulled back.

Again.

And again.

And again.

Brandon’s own dick hurt with how much he needed come.

Dane continued to use his mouth. Praising him. The hand in his hair no longer tugging but petting.

“Gonna. Gonna come this time,” Dane warned.

Brandon nodded. He couldn't see through his tears.

Dane pushed in hard. The first squirt of come made Brandon choke but Dane held his face tight against his groin.

Brandon came hard. Silent. Unable to move or even make a sound.

“Good boy,” Dane snarled.

Brandon couldn't even swallow his tasty treat. Not until Daddy pulled back. Dane wiped his own seed and Brandon's come across his lips and chin before dropping to his knees in front of Brandon.

Daddy cupped Brandon's softening dick. “You did so good. I know you wanted to play like that. Was it okay?”

“So good, Daddy.” Brandon leaned his weight against his Daddy's shoulder. That had been better than Brandon had even imagined. He'd never been afraid. Brandon knew that Dane would never hurt him. Not for real.

Blinking open his eyes, Brandon pulled back to smile up at Dane. “I love you.”

Dane laughed but happiness shone in his eyes. “I love you too, baby boy. But how about we tell each other again when we haven't just come all over each other.”

“K, Daddy!” Brandon glanced down. “I didn't make a mess on my clothes.”

“No, you saved that for my foot.” Dane winced. “It's probably safe to say that I do not have a foot fetish. I'll grab the wipes and get us cleaned up.”

He laughed as Dane crawled away from him. Brandon ended up on his bare bottom then fell back. He wiped his hand over his mouth, feeling the stickiness. Yeah, they definitely needed to clean up. It was almost time for presents!

* * * * *

Dane

He didn't know who was more excited about opening presents, the boys or Annabelle.

Eric wore a Santa hat as he passed out presents. The boys had made a semi-circle around the tree. Annabelle at Ezra's side. Remi was next to the tree, handing off the wrapped gifts to Eric, who then presented them to a very excited boy or an equally excited Annabelle.

Maverick watched the happenings from the safety of his new dog bed beside the couch.

"Remember we're saving some of those to open with Lake and Jesse tomorrow," Dane advised.

"I already moved those to the back," Remi replied.

Brandon was sitting between Dane's open legs and peered up at him. "Why can't Lake come now?"

"Remember that he had to go to his parents' house. It was hard enough for him to work out coming here tomorrow instead of going home," Dane said.

"But he is coming later?" Brandon questioned.

"To spend the night," Dane assured his boy. "After he's done at dinner with his parents and brothers."

"Slumber party!" Ezra cheered.

They had already moved a couple of air mattresses into the living room so the boys could have a slumber party in the living room. Dane wasn't happy about not having his boy in his arms for the night, but he could make a sacrifice for one time. Once a year. But that was all.

Dane was glad to see that he wasn't the only one who'd gone nuts with gift buying. Each boy and Annabelle had a pile in front of them. The bottom of the tree was still covered with more presents when Remi called it enough.

"Can we open? Can we?" Ezra asked.

“Open!” Annabelle repeated.

Remi moved closer to Dom, who appeared a little overwhelmed with the amount of presents for him. From the wrapping paper, most looked to be from Remi. Of course, Remi’s presents were perfectly done. Dane had about thrown the tape and paper out the window when he’d spent the few hours it took to wrap the presents he’d bought. Sometimes Dane wanted to mess up Remi’s perfectly ordered world.

Watching Dom hiss and complain at Remi might be enough now that he thought about it.

“Let’s do this!” Eric clapped. He settled behind Annabelle but close enough to Ezra to help if needed.

Dane picked up the closest present to him and handed it to Brandon.

As Brandon started to tear at the paper, Dane adjusted the gifts in a pile of what he knew was what. There were two presents sitting on their bed that Brandon hadn’t seen. They also didn’t need to be opened in front of other people or a little girl. Instead, the safe gifts would be opened in the living room but that didn’t mean Dane couldn’t have his own fun.

Brandon huffed as he finally got the thick paper off the plastic bag.

He ripped into the bag and several pairs of cute socks fell into his lap. They had dogs like Maverick all over them.

His boy squealed and gave a little dance before throwing the socks in Dane’s lap. Guess it was Dane’s job to keep up with them. He handed Brandon the next present.

Even with the Christmas music playing softly in the background, the sounds of laughter and teasing were what Dane listened to. This was what he’d missed out all the years that he’d either held himself apart from others or had been drunk on Christmas Eve because he’d been alone.

It might have started with Eric and Remi but the life he hadn’t known he wanted hadn’t been imaginable until Brandon had looked at him with those dark scared eyes that very first time.

Brandon had asked if Dane wanted to try to call his father for the holiday. He'd been embarrassed admitting that he didn't even know if his father was still alive. Dane hadn't thought about his parent in so long. If he was alive, Dane doubted that his father had ever moved from the house that Dane had grown up in. Probably would have been too much hassle.

He hadn't made a decision yet. Maybe not now but it was something to consider for the future.

His boy had wanted to call his own parents. Eric had been nervous. Dane wanted to sweep Brandon away so he wouldn't get hurt. In the end Brandon made the call, with Dane, Eric, and Ezra all by his side. The call on speaker.

If Brandon's mom was surprised to hear from Brandon and Eric, she didn't show it. She had been getting ready for a party so hadn't talked long but listened and made appropriate noises as Brandon updated her on his and Eric's lives.

The lack of warmth had surprised Dane.

This was the woman that had carried two children inside her for months but didn't seem to care that it had been years since she'd heard from them.

Dane couldn't imagine ever not wanting to know every small detail about Brandon's day. It was hard enough being apart when they both had to work. Dane hated Brandon and Eric's parents more than he did his own. It was a powerful emotion that he struggled with.

He kept passing his boy the presents to open as the night went on.

There was a definite theme to the gifts. Dane hoped they had enough space in the playroom. And Annabelle wasn't lacking in any way either.

He'd bought Annabelle a pink tutu and crown since her current favorite movie was a Barbie as a princess. Brandon had bought her both ballet and tap shoes. Dom had gifted her with a new Barbie and pink car. Remi kept up the Barbie theme with a Barbie house. Eric and Ezra had been a little

more responsible getting her new clothes, coloring books, and a few toys. Their big present to her was a play kitchen that would go in her room. Dane knew that Lake and Jesse's gifts would be the plastic food and dishes that would be opened the next day.

So far in his lap were Brandon's socks. More onesies. A few pairs of lounge pants all in fun designs. A couple of gay romance books from Dom. A new Kindle from Remi. Puzzles, toys, and Play-Doh from Ezra and Eric. He was currently finishing opening up the ones from Dane.

Walkie-talkies for all the boys. A new night-light in the shape of a superhero Brandon liked. More makeup so he could practice on Dane.

Brandon's smile was huge.

"It's your turn, Daddy," he said quietly before passing over a box.

"Me?" He took the box and noticed that Eric and Remi were also opening their own presents.

Dane hadn't thought about him getting anything. He should have. He'd bought for the others including Eric and Remi. Huh. Dane had been excited about giving gifts instead of receiving them for the very first time in his life.

"We wouldn't forget about you."

"I know you wouldn't, baby boy." No, this had been on him. Sometimes it was hard to remember he had a family again.

Remi had gifted him with a pair of ice level hockey tickets. Eric had given him a new hockey jersey. Ezra and Annabelle had wrapped up a dark frame that held a picture of the five of them. Dane, Brandon, Eric, Ezra, and Annabelle. Family.

Dane had never been one to decorate his desk at work but that picture would be front and center from now on.

"These are from me," Brandon handed over three more wrapped gifts.

“I’m sure I’ll love them.” Dane leaned forward to capture Brandon’s lips. He kissed his boy slowly.

“You would know if you opened them!” Brandon said once Dane drew back.

He laughed but tore at the paper. Little snowman dancing around. Cute. Brandon also seemed to have gotten the wrapping down. Maybe he’d have the boy wrap all the presents from now on. Except his own. Dane planned on bribing Remi for that.

The first present from his boy was a coffee mug that said *Best Daddy Ever*.

“I really do love it!” Dane praised. And it was the perfect large size for how much Dane needed in the mornings. A lot of mugs were just too small.

“Next one!” Brandon bounced in place.

Dane got the paper off before opening the shoebox.

He quickly closed it back up before looking around for Annabelle. This was not for little eyes.

Brandon snickered.

He lifted the lid back up, making sure he blocked the view from anyone else.

Annabelle was jumping around as Eric struggled to get her new Barbie out of the package. Ha! Dane would be teasing his friend about that later.

Nestled on top of green and red tissue paper were several bottles of lube, a butt plug, and a blindfold.

Dane ran his fingertips over the soft silk of the blindfold. He looked up to meet Brandon’s gaze.

Brandon was rocking side to side as he bit his lip.

“Are you sure, baby?”

“I’m sure about you,” Brandon said. “I think I’m ready. I know that I only want to try with you.”

He closed the box carefully and set it to the side before he pulled Brandon into his lap. His sweet, sensitive, brave boy. Dane kissed Brandon gently, enjoying the feeling swarming inside him.

This was what home meant. What having a family provided.

“There’s one more thing for you,” Brandon said.

Dane couldn’t think of anything he didn’t already have. He still accepted the package.

Brandon remained in his lap as Dane tore the paper down the middle. A matching frame to Ezra’s gift. This time the photo inside was one that he didn’t recognize.

They were in the backyard sitting on the grass. Dane’s back to the tree with Brandon in his lap. Maverick lay in front of them chewing on a bone as Dane and Brandon kissed.

“Baby—”

That had to be the most powerful photo he’d ever seen. His entire world all in one place.

“My brother took that picture,” Brandon said. “He showed it to me and I knew that he’d managed to capture the most perfect moment. Of my family.”

Dane found himself tearing up. “Exactly.”

Brandon leaned close to his ear. “We’re not covered in come right now.”

He barked out a watery laugh. “No, we’re not.”

“I love you, Dane. My Daddy.”

Dane set the frame down on his lap before he cupped Brandon’s face. “I love you, Brandon. My baby boy.”

Chapter Twelve

Dane

He remembered very clearly going to bed alone. Brandon, Ezra, Dom, and Lake had been sacked out on the air mattress in the living room with Maverick close by. Dane was not alone as he woke up.

Tightening his arms, Dane opened his eyes, peering down at the dark head of his love.

Dane was surprised he hadn't woken up at Brandon climbing into bed with him. He was normally a light sleeper. Nuzzling the top of Brandon's head, he whispered, "Hey, baby."

Brandon groaned before burying his face harder into Dane's naked chest.

"Good morning, baby boy," he tried again.

Nope. Nothing. Dane grinned.

"Merry Christmas, love."

Brandon's head popped up. His eyes only half open. "It's Christmas!"

"It is." He patted Brandon's bottom. "And not that I'm complaining but I thought you were having a slumber party with the other boys."

His boy pushed that bottom lip out as he batted his eyelashes. "But I missed you," Brandon said. "And I wanted to wake up on Christmas morning in your arms."

"That makes Daddy very happy." Leaning forward, he brushed his lips across Brandon's. "Very happy."

Brandon kissed him back before he pulled away and giggled. "I can tell how happy you are, Daddy. I can feel it."

"Of course I'm hard if I wake up with my baby in my arms. It would be a crime if I didn't."

“True.” Brandon wiggled down the bed, pushing the blanket to the foot as he went. “And if I’d been sleeping with the other boys, I wouldn’t get my morning treat.”

“You had better not,” Dane growled. “And what if I want a treat this morning?”

Stopping with his chin on Dane’s hip bone, Brandon pouted. “But, Daddy!”

Dane shook his head. “Daddy makes the rules this morning. Get your pants off. Then swing your legs over here. I’m going to eat your ass while you suck the come from my cock.”

“Ugh.” Brandon shuddered hard. “You almost made me come, Daddy.”

“Then you better hurry up and give me my treat or you don’t get to come at all today.”

His boy could move when he was motivated. And Brandon was motivated. Not only did Brandon get his own clothes off but Dane’s as well. Dane had to take control of Brandon’s leg as he scurried up the bed so that he didn’t get kicked in the face. Once he had Brandon straddling his face, Dane used his big hands to spread Brandon’s cheeks.

Brandon didn’t waste any time taking Dane’s cock into his mouth. The boy did love his morning treat. Dane couldn’t let his boy show him up though. Brandon would come first. That was for sure.

Swiping his tongue up Brandon’s crease, he had his boy squirming. Dane zeroed in on Brandon’s twitching hole. Such a pretty little things. He sucked on the opening before allowing his teeth to graze.

Brandon jumped.

Dane’s cock slipped down his boy’s throat, choking him.

Brandon pulled back and coughed only to glare over his shoulder.

He chuckled before doing the same thing again. Brandon’s legs began to shake. Dane went back to licking Brandon’s hole

open and Brandon settled. Sucking Dane's cock once more.

Knowing that his boy had very little control in the mornings, Dane set out to make him come. Dane licked and sucked until he could thrust his tongue inside.

He fucked Brandon's hole with his tongue and Brandon pushed back begging for more. Dane's tongue sunk deeper. He wiggled his tongue around before adding one finger.

Brandon went wild and the blow job turned messy.

Not that Dane cared.

He added a second finger, thrusting them in and out while sucking along Brandon's rim.

Brandon lifted his head and shouted coming down Dane's neck and onto his chest. He kept stroking Dane's cock and it only took a few thrusts up into Brandon's firm hold before Dane came.

He grunted out his release while catching Brandon's lax body and easing the boy to the side.

"Wow," Brandon mumbled. "I can't feel my toes."

Dane laughed reaching over and pinched Brandon's ass cheek. "Did you feel that?"

Brandon whined.

Banging on their door had Dane lifting his head.

"If you're done, there's a very excited little girl who wants to see if Santa came," Eric called through the door.

"Coming!" Dane called back.

"Yeah, we heard."

"Oh my god!" Brandon giggled, putting his hands over his face. "Could he be any more embarrassing?"

"If you think that's bad, you better hope that Dom didn't hear you."

Brandon groaned again.

Dane forced himself to sit up. They needed to face the day. Brandon had been looking forward to Christmas day and the meal that they would have with their family. Dane wanted to make sure that everything ran smoothly for his boy.

* * * * *

Brandon

Everything might not have gone as perfectly as Brandon had planned but the little mishaps that had happened during the day made things even better. Real.

It had started when Dom began to feel nauseous. Luckily, he hadn't fought against Remi and Brandon helping him.

Annabelle had a meltdown about something with her dolls since she'd fought taking a nap. The nap eventually happened with Ezra lying down with her.

Lake had been quiet. Something was off, but he hadn't wanted to talk about it. Jesse had shown up around lunchtime and that seemed to pull Lake out of whatever was bothering him. Especially when Lake opened the gift that Jesse had brought for him. The handheld gaming device had to have been expensive and all the boys had gotten one. Plus, multi-player games that they could play when they weren't together.

Brandon wasn't really a gamer himself but they had already found several that looked fun. And he could play with his friends! It was a great gift.

Remi had designated himself in charge of Dom's diet so he'd helped Brandon prepare all the food for their dinner. Dane had drifted in and out of the kitchen to check on him but Brandon didn't want to be anywhere else.

With the turkey golden brown, and the potatoes, veggies, and rolls placed on the gorgeous, decorated table, Brandon stopped to take a moment to enjoy the sight. Ezra had done a beautiful job picking the placemats, candles, and dishes.

A strong arm wrapped around him from behind.

He turned his head, surprised that Eric held him close instead of Dane.

“Is it everything that you ever hoped for?” Eric asked softly.

Brandon smiled. Eric still felt guilty for leaving home and Brandon behind even though Brandon didn’t blame him. Well, not anymore. Eric had been a young man and Brandon just a kid. They hadn’t been close due to the fifteen-year age difference. There were times when Brandon couldn’t remember when Eric had been around. It didn’t matter though. Eric had been there when Brandon needed him the most.

He turned in his brother’s arms and hugged him tight around the waist.

“It’s perfect,” he confessed. “The entire day, last night, the past month. I’ve never been so happy.”

Eric gripped his shoulders and pushed him back until their gazes locked. “I love you. I don’t say it enough and I’m sorry about that.”

“You’ve shown me,” Brandon told him. “I know.”

“I want you to always know.”

“I do.” Brandon grinned. “And because of you I have the family that I always wanted.”

“Ezra is making noises about keeping Dom,” Eric said on a sigh.

“And Remi,” Brandon added.

“Don’t you start too,” Eric complained. “I’ll call everyone in for dinner.”

“Thanks.”

“You okay, baby?” Dane’s hold replaced his brother’s.

Brandon nodded. He was so loved. “I love Christmas. I’m going to want to do it again every year.”

“You know that I’ll do everything in my power to make that happen,” Dane vowed.

Moving to his tiptoes, Brandon kissed his man. “I know you’ll try. We’ll make it happen together.”

“We will.” Dane peppered kisses all over his face. “Dinner ready?”

“Yes, waiting on everyone else,” Brandon said.

“And we are here!” Ezra announced as he carried Annabelle in. He set her on her booster seat between his and Eric’s places.

They didn’t use the formal table often. It was hard to get all of their schedules in sync and they mostly ate at the nook in the kitchen or in the living room. He was glad that his first real holiday memory with Dane would be them all eating a formal holiday meal together.

As all the chairs were filled, the scent of food and the sound of laughter ringing out Brandon grew teary-eyed. He slid his hand into Dane’s and squeezed.

Eric was the only one standing.

He lifted his glass of iced tea.

There was no alcohol at this meal or any of their meals. Not one person had a problem with that.

Brandon picked up his lemonade with his free hand.

“To family,” Eric toasted.

“To family!” Brandon and everyone else cheered.

Thank You

Thank you for reading *All Bets Are Off: Las Vegas Littles Book 2*.

This book had many very serious matters that were addressed throughout the story. If you made it to the end of this book, I hope you enjoyed watching our men find their family and place with each other.

As you can probably tell, Dom and Remi's story will be next.

Winning Big: Las Vegas Littles Book 3 will release in early 2025.

Up next is a new book from the Unlocked Mates series. If you've been waiting for our precious Logan to find his mate, it is finally happening! Logan and Dean's story, Cupcake, will release next month.

Did you catch the special release from the Unlocked Mates series, *Satan's Little Helpers*?

Keep reading for a peek at Lucifer's story, which is out now!

Satan's Little Helpers: Book Blurb

Lucifer

Dear Satan. Those two words are some of the sweetest that Lucifer has ever read. From December first to December twenty-fifth Lucifer dedicates everything to the happiest time of the year. With a snowstorm raging outside his window, his fireplace roaring and warm, and a hot cocoa in his hand, Lucifer is enjoying his favorite month when a portal opens in his office.

Gage and Cary are desperate. In a few short days Gage's parents are marrying him off to a woman since they don't believe in true mates. Finding an old magic book in the attic, Cary tried his hand at summoning. If a demon can't scare Gage's parents and clowder into leaving them alone, then no one can. They never expected to find their third mate, the king of hell, and the Daddy that they've been looking for.

Finding his two mates in his living room is a shock. Lucifer is in for an exciting month and that doesn't count all the presents he needs to assemble in his magical workshop. Dealing with an evil clowder leader, magic being abused, a kidnapped mate, and a moronic angel brother, Lucifer has his hands full. It's a good thing that he has his own little helpers and Christmas magic!

Satan's Little Helpers is a special edition included in the Unlocked Mates series and part of the Daddy Kink Age Gap Facebook group collaboration with several of your favorite authors writing sweet and sexy Daddy stories you're sure to love cuddling up with during the holidays.

This book contains MMM sexual content (men having sex with each other), Age Play, Daddy/boy/little relationship, ABDL, and age gap relations. This book is an exploration of a relationship between three (male) consensual adults that are looking for love and acceptance. All characters are over the age of consent. No cheating or cliffhangers.

Lucifer

Ten. Nine. Eight. Seven. Six. Five. Four. Three. Two. And one. Lucifer snapped his fingers at the stroke of midnight. It was December first. Finally.

Instantly the view from his large picture window changed. Gone was the red dirt of the hell realm soil. White, crisp, and gorgeous snow covered every inch of the ground. The orange hue of the sky had given way to the small slow flurries that had started to fall. As he watched, they began to fall harder. Faster. Soon the snowstorm would be all he would be able to see from his windows.

His cell began to ring from where he'd set it on his desk, but Lucifer ignored the interruption. Besides, Lucifer already knew it would be one of his princes, Dukes, or demons calling to complain about the changes he'd just made.

One month. He gave himself one month a year to indulge in his happy time, and Lucifer was not going to give it up. No matter what the other demons said. Or how much they complained that hell should be scorching hot. Technically, they weren't even part of the hell realm. This private plane that Lucifer had made for himself and his oldest and closest friends existed between realms and could only be entered if Lucifer allowed it. If the other demons didn't like the changes that Lucifer made every December, they could leave.

It only took a wave of his hand for the fire to roar to life in the hearth and for him to have a mug of hot cocoa piled high with marshmallows in his hand. He didn't feel the change of temperature himself, but he knew some demons were more sensitive.

In his red silk lounge pants, thin white camisole top, and red silk robe, Lucifer was going to enjoy every minute of his celebration.

Lucifer took a sip of his cocoa before sighing in pleasure. This was the life.

He could let the worries he constantly carried go for a short amount of time. The longer he isolated himself on his

private plane, the more out of touch he'd become to his people. Lucifer had vowed to do better, be better for his people, but after his favorite holiday.

For the last several months, changes to the hell realm and for the demons under his care had Lucifer paying more attention to what was happening to the world at large. The paranormal creatures were finding mates again. After decades of struggles, there was true hope for all of them. Meaning Lucifer needed to embrace the changes to make sure that all his demons were on board.

There was time for him to worry about his demons and mates later though. December...December was all for him. He might have had to create his own traditions, but they were all his. He knew that any moment his inbox would start to fill, aided by the magic he wielded.

He'd be busy making wishes come true. Using his magic for good. Even for realms that called him evil, or the devil, or Satan. They didn't know better. People who feared him didn't know the true Lucifer or his story.

It hurt but Lucifer had lived many centuries and knew he should be over the pain of how others saw him. His father and brothers loved him. Supported him. Understood him in a way no one else, not even his closest demons, did. Lucifer had been given a task that no one should ever have to endure. It was up to him to make sure that evil souls were delivered to justice and good souls found their paradise.

Even his father and brothers indulged in Lucifer's favorite holiday with him. They might find the whole thing ridiculous, but Christmas dinner was still the event that every member of his family attended.

Just thinking of the feast that he would put on had Lucifer smiling. That wouldn't come until after all the hard work was completed. The children from other realms deserved to have a happy holiday as well.

Lucifer jumped as a bright white portal appeared in the middle of his office. Quickly he set his mug down and prepared to defend himself. No one would dare enter his

domain without permission unless they were there for nefarious reasons.

With a fireball hovering over each palm, Lucifer prepared to attack.

The portal popped out of existence, leaving two young men standing in the middle of his office.

One young man, black hair, dark eyes, smelling of shifter, stared at Lucifer with his mouth open. The other, human, from what Lucifer could tell, was red-haired, fair-skinned, with an adorable sprinkle of freckles across the bridge of his nose and on his cheeks. The shifter had frozen in place while the human was muttering and staring at the big thick book in his hands.

Lucifer extinguished the fireballs with only a thought. "Hello."

About the Author

Athena Steller is a self-published author of MM & MMM Daddy kink books.

Athena Steller is the alter ego for MF paranormal author Crissy Smith. Under the name Crissy Smith she has been published since 2008 with Totally Entwined Publishing, becoming an Amazon bestselling paranormal romance author.

Athena first entered the MM/ MMM writing world in December 2019 with the release of the *Daddy's Boy* series. Writing the Athena books has given her a chance to explore an entire new genre. It quickly became addicting as soon the Athena books began to outnumber any she wrote in the MF worlds.

Athena/Crissy is the mom to a wonderful twenty-six-year-old daughter, dog mom to three crazy Labrador retrievers, and is addicted to coffee. Her dream of becoming a full-time author came true in late 2024 due to the amazing support she received from her readers.

For more information about Athena's upcoming books, please visit the brand-new website: www.athenasteller.com.

Athena Steller Books

Las Vegas Littles Collection:

Doubling Down

All Bets Are Off

Winning Big (Coming Soon)

Rocky Lake Littles Collection:

Coffee & Kisses

Coffee & Cuffs

Coffee, Cops, & Tattoos

Marshmallow Kisses (Short Story)

Unlocked Mates Series:

Treasure

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Precious

Double Trouble

Dimples

Duckling

Firebug

Sweetheart

Satan's little helpers (Special Edition)

Cupcake (Coming Soon)

Daddy's Boy Series:

Baby Boy

Pretty Baby

Lost Boy

Avery's Adventure (short story)

Camping Cuties (short story)

Pretty Princess (short story)

Bossy Baby

A Very Special Christmas (short story)

His Boy

Creed

Skinner

Jackson

Sin City Series:

King of the City

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