



Burning Up (Fitting In Book 4)

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Category: LGBT+

Description: What's better than one hot firefighter? How about three...

The trauma he experienced at a tragic house fire, sends Bryce searching for a fresh start. He keeps to himself at his new job until Matt and Toby—two hot young men in his unit—throw temptation in his path.

Bryce knows better than to mess around with co-workers, especially two newbies who are in the closet. But after a difficult day, Matt and Toby offer him not only a spot in their bed, but also compassion and friendship.

Bryce finds the combination irresistible.

When one night turns into weeks together, Bryce knows something has to give. He wants both men, but he refuses to hide who he is. Coming out will separate the three of them on the job, and Matt and Toby aren't sure about that step, leaving all three of them facing difficult choices. Can they find a way to stay together?

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Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 2:47 pm

Bryce paused in packing up the equipment he'd used to conduct a fire safety demonstration at a local elementary school. Toby, a young guy in his unit who'd only been out of the Academy for a year, attracted his attention when he squatted down to talk to a little girl from one of the first grade classes. The look on her face said she could burst into tears any moment.

"What's wrong?" Toby asked, his voice neutral, not the condescending tone so many adults used with kids.

"We had a fire at our house," the little girl said, her voice shaky.

"I'm sorry," Toby said. "Did anyone get hurt?"

The little girl shook her head. "B-but we... we panicked. You said not to, but we all did. I was s-scared."

Toby shook his head. "Don't you worry about that. I'll tell you a secret. I'm scared every time I go to a fire."

The little girl wiped at tears that were about to fall from her eyes. "You are?" Her eyes went wide like she couldn't fathom it.

"I am. Being scared is okay. In fact, it's natural. Why don't you tell me what happened."

"Um... I saw flames coming up from the stove. I screamed for my mama and daddy."

Toby nodded. “Calling them was the right thing to do. What happened next?”

“Mama came running in and Daddy too and they were yelling and opening cabinets and doors and stuff, and then Mama got the fire extinguisher, and she put it out.”

“She did the right thing. Sometimes it’s hard to remember where things like fire extinguishers are when you’re scared. Do you know where the fire extinguisher is now?”

The little girl nodded. “It’s under the sink.”

“Good. Why don’t you talk to your parents tonight? Tell them about what you learned today and make a plan so you know exactly what to do and where to go if you ever have another fire.”

The little girl smiled. “I can do that. So you think we did good?”

“Yes, you did. I’m proud of you.”

The little girl beamed. Toby gave her a sticker, which she immediately stuck onto her dress.

“Thank you, Mr. Firefighter,” she called as she raced off to rejoin her class.

Bryce couldn’t help but smile after watching the exchange. Toby gave off the vibe of a hotshot kid, full of himself because he was hot as sin and a kickass firefighter, but in just a few months, Bryce had learned he was one of the most caring men at the station. Bryce doubted there was anyone Toby couldn’t charm. He’d sure reeled Bryce in. All it had taken was a gorgeous smile and a plate of homemade cookies on Bryce’s first day. He’d admitted his sister had made them, but Bryce didn’t care, he’d been hooked on Toby and his roommate Matt from that day on.

In his fantasies, they weren't just roommates, though he'd not heard a single rumor about them being gay. Still... nah, it was just wishful thinking and pointless anyway since he wasn't going to pursue someone he worked with, let alone two someones. He'd worked with plenty of good-looking guys over the years, and he'd never had a problem keeping his appreciation to himself. But Toby wasn't just blond, muscular all-American goodness. He was always making sure the guys at the station were well-cared for. If anyone was upset like the little girl he'd just soothed, Toby took the time to do what he could to make them feel better. Matt had that dark, brooding vibe. He was much quieter than Toby, but he was the kind of guy you could always count on to jump in and do the work no one else wanted to do. He gave his best no matter how small the task.

"You've done an awesome job today, you know?" Bryce said when Toby joined him in repacking the last of the kids' fire hats, stickers, and handouts.

"You think?" Toby toyed with his hair, a gesture that, based on Bryce's observations, meant he was nervous. But why would he be nervous now?

"Yeah, you're a natural with these rug rats."

Toby shrugged. "I'm the oldest of five, so I guess I've had a lot of experience."

Bryce could just see Toby using his charm to calm younger siblings.

"I'm going to carry some of this to the truck," Toby said when they were done.

Bryce picked up a box of equipment they'd shown the kids, intending to follow Toby, but he caught sight of Matt throwing a baseball with some of the boys who must be in fourth or fifth grade. Their classes had gone straight to recess after the fire demo, and Matt had been playing with them for a while. Anyone who spent more than a few hours at Station Six knew Matt was obsessed with baseball. If the Durham Bulls or

the Braves were playing, he was glued to the TV, and once the season ended, he continued to talk stats and prospects for the next year to anyone who would listen.

Matt raised his arm, ready to throw, and the boys backed up. Bryce couldn't help but watch the muscles in Matt's back flex under his dark blue t-shirt. Damn, he was a fine specimen, tall and lean, and probably ten years younger than Bryce.

The ball sailed over the heads of the boys, and one of them ran to chase it down.

"Wow," a red-haired boy yelled. "How do you throw like that?"

"Come here, and I'll show you."

The boy stood beside, Matt and Matt demonstrated a solid throwing stance. The boy who'd retrieved the ball tossed it back. Matt handed it to the red-haired boy and then pulled his arm back and gently pushed it forward, showing him the right motion. They practiced a few more times before Matt asked, "You think you got it?"

"Yeah. Maybe."

"Then give it a try."

The other boys moved in closer, not expecting a long-range throw. The boy sent the ball over their heads. It didn't land as far away as Matt's had, but it obviously went farther than he expected. "Wow! Thanks!" he yelled. "That was awesome."

Bryce hated to break up the lesson, but they needed to get back to the station. "Hey, Matt!"

Matt looked over his shoulder. "You need me now?"

“Yeah, we’ve got to head out.”

“All right. Bye, guys!” He waved to the boys.

They watched him walk away, awestruck, though not for the same reason as Bryce. He could watch Matt’s lithe body move all day. Bryce closed the side of the truck after replacing the last of the gear they’d shown to the kids. When he turned around, he caught Toby staring.

“Come on, Toby, we’re ready to go,” Matt said, tugging on his arm.

Toby smiled at Bryce before turning to follow Matt toward the driver’s side doors.

He’d totally been staring at Bryce’s ass, hadn’t he? But if Toby was that bad at hiding his interest, why hadn’t he been outed before now?

Bryce jumped up into the passenger seat, his designated spot as officer of the unit, but Matt and Toby stood beside the open driver’s door, talking. They kept their voices low, and he couldn’t make out what they were saying.

“You guys all set?” he called.

“Uh... yeah,” Toby answered.

“We are,” Matt answered, his tone curt. He took his place behind the wheel, and Toby settled into the back.

What was that about? Not that Bryce needed to know. It probably had nothing to do with him or with Toby watching him—if he had been watching Bryce, which he most likely hadn’t.

Bryce needed to get laid. There hadn't been anywhere near enough of that since he'd moved to Durham a few months ago. That had to be the explanation for why he couldn't keep his eyes off these boys.

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“They’re watching you again,” Mason spoke in a low voice as he whizzed past Bryce, carrying drinks to the opposite end of the bar.

“You’re imagining things again.” Ever since Mason swore that Toby and Matt—who’d become regulars at the bar after Bryce started working there—were gay and interested in Bryce, he’d been teasing Bryce about their interest.

Bryce told himself not to look, but he couldn’t help glancing toward the corner booth where they usually sat, before going back to wiping down the bar. Did they sit there because it gave them a good view of the bar? Bryce scowled. No way in hell were his hands shaking, and no way in hell was he letting himself get his hopes up. Even if they were gay, even if they were interested in him, starting something with two guys from work would be the pinnacle of idiocy. Hell, getting involved with more than one guy was insane from the start. Just because Mason and his boyfriends had made a threesome work didn’t make it realistic for Bryce. There was an exception to every rule.

“You’re wrong,” Bryce said as he passed Mason on his way to take a customer’s order.

Mason snorted in reply.

Bryce was glad to see the bar was filling up. He did not need to spend the next hour telling himself not to look at Toby and Matt. He did plenty of that at the firehouse. Toby’s smile could heat up an entire room, and Bryce never wanted to look away from it, unless it was to contemplate running his hands through Matt’s wavy brown hair while staring into his dark eyes.

But if Mason was right and they were gay, maybe they really were lovers. If so, he had no business approaching them, whether they were watching him or not. Just because they liked to look didn't mean they wanted to play. They didn't need him fucking up whatever they had going.

Plus, they worked together. They were a team, with people's lives on the line.

The line at the bar grew long, and Bryce got busy taking orders, making drinks, and ringing people up at the register. When things finally slowed down, he needed a bathroom break. As he headed to the back, he noticed Matt and Toby playing pool with a couple of guys he recognized as regulars. Toby waved, and he waved back, hating the way his pulse accelerated. What the hell was wrong with him?

He pushed open the door of the restroom but failed to check his instinct to glance back over his shoulder. Toby's eyes were glued to his ass. There was no doubt about it this time. He whirled back around before their gazes had a chance to meet.

So Toby wasn't straight. Bryce had to admit that now. He was gay or at least bi, but he was just appreciating the scenery. That didn't mean anything. Bryce appreciated guys' asses all the time.

When Bryce left the bathroom, Toby and Matt were leaning in close, talking, arguing actually based on the angry expressions on their faces. Bryce hurried back to work, glad he didn't have to decide whether to speak to them or not. Several minutes later, Toby appeared at the bar. Mason, the little bastard, wasn't busy, but he made no move to take Toby's order.

"What can I get you?" Bryce asked.

"Just cashing out our tab." Our? Maybe Toby was just buying that night.

“Sure.” Bryce looked Toby’s name up in the register, ran his card, and handed him the receipt to sign.

“Thanks,” Toby said, flashing a smile that made his eyes twinkle. How was it that he made that single word sound flirtatious? Bryce was supposed to be the one who flirted, the one in control of a situation, but despite Toby being so much younger, Bryce ended up flustered every time they spoke.

Toby looked up from signing the receipt. “You working till close?”

Bryce gave him a questioning look. “No, I get off at midnight. Why?”

“Oh I was just... um... thinking you’ve probably had a long day.” Toby twirled one of the strands of his longish bangs around his finger. His nervous gesture again. Why was he so often nervous when talking to Bryce?

You know why.

Bryce ignored his inner voice and shrugged. “It’s not been too bad.”

“Good. Well, I’ll see you tomorrow.” Their shift at the station began at eight AM the next day.

“Yeah. You heading home?”

Toby shook his head. “Nah, we’re going dancing. You could join us if you wanted?” Was that what Toby had wanted to say before? Had he been trying to get his nerve up?

“Thanks, but us old folk need our sleep. Have fun.”

“We will.” Again with the sexy voice. Toby grinned at him and walked away.

“Was that proposition another example of my imagining things going on there?” Mason asked the next time things got quiet.

Bryce fought the urge to growl at his friend. “That wasn’t a proposition.”

“Right. He wasn’t flirting with you, and he definitely didn’t want to dance with you.”

“That’s right. He was just being polite.”

Mason nodded. “If you want to talk about all this nothing at some point, you know where I am.”

“Fine.” The word came out harsher than Bryce meant for it to, but the last thing he wanted to do was talk about Toby and Matt. What he wanted was to forget about them, which was never going to happen since he spent several days a week with them.

Things got busy again, and before Bryce knew it, it was time for him to leave. “Have a good night,” he said to Mason as he headed to the back to clock out.

“Yeah, you too. When are you working again?”

“Day after tomorrow. Six till close.”

As he drove home, Bryce’s mind drifted to thoughts of Toby and Matt dancing, their bodies sliding together. Would they have removed their shirts? Would their skin be slick with sweat? He let the fantasy spin. Matt was the aggressor, yanking Toby to him, pushing his hand between them and gripping Toby’s cock. Toby’s head would drop back with a groan, one Bryce would only hear if he were right there, grinding

against Toby's ass, working him over, pumping his cock. He'd tell Matt exactly what to do, how to touch Toby, then he'd...

He slammed on the brakes, barely noticing the red light in time. Fuck. He'd never been that into the idea of two men at once before, but now...

He'd moved to Durham to start over, to see if he could still do the job after a horrendous fire in Atlanta had shaken his confidence. He shuddered, still unable to let the memories creep in without the threat of a total breakdown. That family. Everyone said they hadn't stood a chance, that no one could have gotten to them in time. Bryce pushed those thoughts aside, along with his fantasies of Toby and Matt. He concentrated on driving as he headed home to go to bed, alone. He wasn't ready for anything else.

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Bryce stood at his locker, towel wrapped around his waist. He'd just showered after a morning workout and training session. Matt and Toby were across the locker room, both also fresh from the shower. Were they ever not together? He'd caught sight of their naked asses on display as they dressed, and his cock was threatening to let them know just how interested he was. He hadn't bothered to hide the fact that he was gay. He'd been out when he'd worked in Atlanta, and he wasn't about to go back into the closet after he moved. But that didn't mean he was going to let anyone think he was perving on his fellow firefighters in the showers. Who he slept with didn't make a difference in how good a firefighter he was, and he wanted the straight guys to see that when it came to the job, they were all the same. Sporting wood after ogling Matt and Toby wouldn't accomplish that.

The locker room cleared out as he stood there, trying to get his body under control. Now it was just him, Toby, and Matt. Their joking around, slapping each other with towels, and roughhousing had delayed them. Bryce could hear them whispering to each other now. Toby laughed, and the sound was like a caress to Bryce. Don't turn around.

Bryce ignored his better self and glanced their way, catching Matt giving him a once-over. Color filled Matt's cheeks, but Bryce still couldn't make himself look away. Before any of them had a chance to speak, the alarm blared. Bryce grabbed his clothes and dressed hastily, no longer thinking of anything but the job. Once he had on his pants and t-shirt, he rushed into the bay where his turnout gear was laid out by the truck.

Experienced enough to know that rushing would only make him take longer, he methodically pulled on his pants, his hood, and then his coat. He checked and

doubled-checked his air tank and settled into the passenger seat in Ladder Six after picking up his helmet. As the rest of the men and women getting geared up buzzed around him, he took a few seconds to go through the ritual he'd developed long ago when he'd been as new as Toby and Matt.

He touched the brim of his helmet—rubbing his fingers over scratches that had occurred during the fire in Atlanta that was still messing with his mind—and said a Hail Mary. He'd stopped going to church years ago, and he wasn't sure what he believed or didn't now, but what he did know was that saying the prayer and thinking of Mother Mary watching over anyone who was in danger eased his nerves. Going in calm and clear-headed was the best way to come out alive and uninjured. The prayer had become his good-luck charm his first year on the job, and some might say it had always worked. He was alive and healthy, but it sure hadn't helped that family in Atlanta.

Bryce had been the driver in his unit in the AFRD, but with his move to Durham, he'd been promoted to lieutenant. Their driver, WT, hopped into the cab and took his place behind the wheel. Matt and Toby settled into the jump seats, and Bryce responded that they were ready to go. He focused on the data coming through the onboard computer. No more time to dwell on the past.

They were headed to a house fire that had progressed enough that a witness had seen flames coming from the window. The witness had called it in after driving by. No one had been seen outside the house. It was late morning on a weekday, so there was a good chance no one was home. He prayed that was the case.

Bryce glanced at the map on his computer screen. Not far now. The battalion chief had just arrived, and Bryce and his men were going to be third on the scene.

They sped down a suburban street, and WT made a left. The neighborhood changed. Run-down, graffiti-riddled buildings lined the streets now instead of the nicer houses

they'd just passed. Then he saw it a few blocks away, a ramshackle home with flames rising from a side window toward the back of the house.

WT brought the truck to a stop in front of the house. Flashes of memory rushed into Bryce's mind as he jumped down from the truck. This wasn't Atlanta, though that neighborhood had also seen better days. This one wasn't so urban. You're here, not there. You can do this.

"You all right, man?"

Toby patted Bryce's shoulder, and Bryce looked up, realizing he'd been grimacing. "Yeah, fine, just..." He choked. Fuck! He really had to pull himself together.

Toby watched him intently. He didn't need the younger guys thinking he was going to wig out on them. They all knew what had happened in Atlanta. They all knew he'd run from there because of it. "I'm good." His voice remained steady, if a little rough.

They exited the truck as they got their respirators and helmets on.

Over the radio, the battalion chief addressed Bryce. "Ladder Six, your unit will take primary search."

"Yes, sir," Bryce answered.

He turned to the rest of his unit. "Toby, you're with me. WT, you take Matt. We'll go right, you go left."

The men nodded and approached the house. The attack team was already in and working on the blaze, which was centered at the back of the house. The heat wasn't bad yet at the front of the house, so they were able to stay on their feet as they crossed the living room. Bryce's heart pounded as the smoke thickened and the heat began to

rise in the hallway. What were they going to find? Please, God, not a body. But whatever was there, he'd deal. He had to. He wouldn't let Toby or anyone else down.

They dropped to hands and knees to take advantage of the cooler air near the floor. The attack team was pouring water on the fire, which raged in a room at the far end of the house. Bryce and Toby entered a bedroom on the left side of the hall and began their search. Bryce laid his right hand against the wall just inside the doorway, and Toby held on to the heel of his left boot and reached as far into the room as he could, searching for anyone who might have taken refuge there.

"Nothing yet?" he prompted Toby.

"Nothing but bare floor."

As they made progress around the room, Bryce's hand hit the frame of a closet door. "Toby, I'm at a closet. I'm going to hold on to the door while you check inside."

"Yes, sir." Toby crawled across the floor and entered the closet. "Nothing but shoes and some boxes."

"Okay, we'll keep moving around the room, then."

Bryce encountered a window after a few more paces. He made a mental note of how far in they were. It would be their escape route if the heat in the hallway grew more intense.

"I'm feeling something. I think it's just the edge of a rug," Toby said.

Bryce stretched a little farther so Toby could get a better feel.

"Yeah, a rug. Coming to the bed now."

The chief spoke over the radio. “Ladder Six, pick up the pace. Flames are spreading into the hall.”

Bryce tensed. They needed to check the bed and work their way to the exit. “You check underneath,” he instructed Toby.

The bed was against the wall so Bryce stretched out his hands and felt the top of the bed. He found a lump, but when he pressed down it gave, just a pillow. He stretched out as far as he could, trying not to miss anything.

“Find anything?” he asked Toby.

“No,” Toby responded. “You?”

“No, keep moving quickly.” They finished their circuit of the room. When they reached the door, Bryce determined they could still use the hall to return to the front of the house.

Within a few minutes, the crisis had passed, and the attack team had gotten the fire under control. Bryce and Toby went back in for a secondary search. Bryce could feel how much cooler the air was. The team must have ventilated the room, because the smoke was thinning.

Once again he and Toby made a right-hand search. They could see a bit now and were able to reach the bed quickly. “You take underneath again,” he said. He felt the top of the bed. This time when he pressed down on the pillow, something moved. He reached underneath in and felt a small foot.

“Chief, there’s a child hiding under a pillow in the left front bedroom.”

“What is her condition, Ladder Six?”

Bryce scooped up the child and she began to sob, but that was good, crying meant the little girl was alive. “She’s conscious and appears to be uninjured.”

What if they’d missed her? What if... But things had gone right. They’d found her. This wasn’t Atlanta. He carried her out with Toby following them and passed her to the paramedics. She was coughing and crying, but she didn’t look like she’d sustained any burns or other serious injuries.

Bryce dripped with sweat. Nothing like full gear on a hot summer day. He’d been able to turn off his fears when he needed to, yet he’d missed the girl on the primary search.

You had to move fast. You went back in and you found her. You got her out. You did your job.

Yeah, he had, but he couldn’t shake the heavy feeling in his chest.

No one else was found in the structure or anywhere nearby. The little girl said her parents were at work, but she was too shaken up to give any more information. Bryce wished he could have a few minutes alone with the parents who’d left her home all by herself. No kid deserved to be abandoned like that, but at least she was alive and so was he. The job had never been easy, but it was worth it. This story had a happy ending. That used to be enough for him.

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Bryce startled when a hand landed on his shoulder as he exited the station. “We’re taking you out to breakfast.”

It was Matt.

“You look like you could use company,” Toby said, appearing at his other side.

How did they manage to make him feel surrounded when he had several inches on both of them? “Umm... I should go home and try to get some sleep. I’m working at Nathan’s tonight.”

Matt tilted his head and studied Bryce. “Are you really going to be able to sleep?”

Fuck, how badly had he given himself away? He thought he’d gotten better at hiding how damn hard this was for him. “No.” He considered using his beagle, Rollo, as an excuse, but the dog was with a neighbor he adored, and an extra hour or so wouldn’t matter.

“Then come with us,” Toby said in that cheerful way that usually got him exactly what he wanted, though it never seemed contrived. He just seemed to be that happy and comfortable. “We’ve... uh... been wanting to get to know you better.”

Or maybe not so comfortable. Why did Toby sound nervous?

He likes you.

No way. Bryce wasn’t going to listen to that troublemaking voice in his head. They

were watching him because they appreciated his body. That was as far as it needed to go. As sexy as they were, they could get laid as often as they wanted. Sexy and smart and caring. Bryce realized he hated the idea of them fucking just anyone. They deserved someone who would take his time with them, who would treat them right. Someone like you.

Once again, he was assuming they were a couple. They might truly just be friends, right? Suddenly Matt's ancient sedan was right in front of them. They'd guided Bryce there while he was lost in thought.

"Hop in," Matt said.

Wait a minute. How the hell had he let himself get railroaded by a couple of kids? Because you know you're not going to sleep. You like them, and it's just breakfast.

But somehow Bryce knew if he got into that car, he was in for a mess of trouble.

Toby patted his shoulder. "You take shotgun, I'll get in the back. Don't want your legs all crunched up."

Bryce smiled. "Yeah, I'm a little too big for the backseat."

"That you are," Toby said, sounding like he was saying something dirty.

Yeah, Bryce was big all right, all over, but he wasn't about to respond with those words, no matter how much he wanted to. "So where you want to go?" Toby asked as he slid into the backseat.

"You seem to have this all planned," Bryce retorted, realizing his words sounded more annoyed than he intended. They were trying to be nice, but he didn't want anyone being nice, because he didn't want anyone noticing his weakness.

“Elmer’s?” Matt suggested with no hint he’d taken offense.

Bryce considered. Saturday mornings brought in a big crowd, but it was only ten after eight so it wouldn’t be bad yet. “All right,” he agreed, still not allowing himself to show any real enthusiasm despite how much he loved Elmer’s French toast.

“You hardly ate last night. You’ve got to be starving,” Toby said.

“I ate.”

“You—”

“Toby.” Matt’s voice held a warning.

“Sorry. I can be a bit of a mother hen sometimes. It’s that oldest kid thing.”

“Can’t say I’ve ever been mothered by someone half my size,” Bryce said.

Toby laughed. “Get used to it now that I’m on your shift.”

“He has a hard time with boundaries,” Matt said.

Toby reached around the seat and slapped Matt’s shoulder.

“Hey, I’m driving here,” Matt protested.

Bryce loved the easy camaraderie between them. The drive to Elmer’s Diner only took a few minutes. He’d predicted correctly that they’d beat the crowd, and they got seated right away in a corner booth.

“Coffee?” the waitress asked. All three men nodded vigorously. She smiled as she

filled their cups. “I’ll be back to take your orders soon.”

“You’ve been here before, right?” Toby asked.

Bryce nodded. “Yeah, several times.” It had actually been one of the first places he’d discovered. Mason had recommended it, and it was only a few streets over from the duplex Bryce was renting. Mason tried to get him to try the chocolate chip pancakes, but despite knowing that cinnamon sugar French toast with syrup was just as sweet, chocolate chips in pancakes seemed like too much.

Matt smiled. “Good. You got a favorite order?”

“I’m partial to the French toast.”

“Biscuits and gravy is my favorite,” Matt said, his words dreamy like he was being mesmerized by the menu choices.

Toby was about to share his choice when the waitress arrived.

She took Toby’s order—banana pancakes and sausage. Matt ordered biscuits and gravy with a side of scrambled eggs. And then it was Bryce’s turn. “I’ll have the cinnamon French toast platter with scrambled eggs, bacon, and hash browns.”

When she walked away, Bryce realized Matt and Toby were grinning at him. “We knew you were hungry,” Toby said.

Bryce laughed. “That’s nothing. There’s a lot of me to keep going.”

“I can see that.” Toby let his eyes roam. Whoa, he was way too bold for his own good. Bryce was going to have to watch himself if he intended to keep work and sex separate.

“You were right, though. I’m starving. Thanks for suggesting breakfast.”

“Sure.” Toby’s eyes twinkled. He seemed very sure of himself.

“You just... Well, we thought it might be good for you to eat and hang out,” Matt said.

Bryce sighed. They were trying so hard to be kind, and he shouldn’t resent that, but he had to set things straight. “I don’t want either of you to think I’d let you down out there when it counts. If I thought I would, I wouldn’t be here.”

“Never crossed my mind,” Matt assured him.

“I’m fine. Really. I just have to psych myself up before heading out on a call.”

Toby nodded. “Most guys do, right? I know I do.”

“So how do you like Durham?” Matt asked.

He was thankful they were willing to drop the subject. “It’s good so far. I know people complain about traffic, but after Atlanta, it’s great.”

“I bet,” Matt said. “You get out much? Other than at the bar.”

Bryce could have given a dismissive answer but instead he decided to tackle things head-on. “Not much, honestly. I guess I’m becoming a homebody.” Was he? Damn, what had happened to him?

Old age, baby.

“So no wild nights partying?” Toby asked.

Bryce grinned. “Don’t you think I’m a bit old for that?”

Matt looked up, truly startled. “Seriously?”

Bryce raised his brows. “When I go dancing these days, I feel like a dinosaur.”

“You’re the hottest dinosaur I’ve ever seen,” Toby blurted out.

“Toby.” There was that warning tone in Matt’s voice again.

Toby’s cheeks colored. He was such a fascinating combination of shy and bold. Bryce knew Toby’s interest should concern him—and Matt’s, which was less obvious but clearly there.

Where had his own boldness gone? He’d always spoken plainly in the past, told people exactly what he was thinking. If he wanted a man, he said so. Of course, in Atlanta he’d never wanted a man, or two, who also happened to be part of his unit. But back then he would have at least returned the flirtation. He wouldn’t have pursued it, but he would have played the game and enjoyed the attention. Even now, he had to admit he was flattered. Who wouldn’t be by two young, hot guys wanting him? But he wished he could interpret whatever undercurrent there was between them. They obviously didn’t agree on how—or maybe whether—to pursue him. The last thing he wanted to do was screw up their... friendship.

The waitress showed up then with their food. Still unsure how to handle Toby’s boldness, Bryce almost chickened out and asked her to box his up so he could go. Instead, he took a much stupider tactic. “Could I get a Bloody Mary?”

“Sure.”

“That’s a great idea,” Toby said. “Bring one for me too.”

Matt looked uncertain, but when the waitress looked at him, he said, “Sure why not. One for me too.”

The guys didn’t talk much while they ate. Most of the comments they did make were about how good the food was.

When they finished up, the restaurant was getting crowded, but the line for tables wasn’t too long yet. “Another round?” Toby asked, lifting his glass.

Why the hell not? “Sure.”

They ordered more drinks, and Matt suggested they take them outside on the balcony where there were barstools. Bryce wondered what all the families dining with their small kids thought of them drinking on the balcony at nine AM. Of course with his schedule, he often didn’t know night from day anyway. It could just as easily be nine PM for him. Though he had to admit he was starting to feel that second drink.

He should head home before he said something he shouldn’t. The longer he stayed with Matt and Toby, watching them—the line of their throats as they swallowed, the way Toby pushed his hair off his face and tilted his head toward the sun, the contemplative expression on Matt’s face as he studied the perfect summer sky—the more something stirred inside him, something that hadn’t come online often, if at all, in the last year.

“So what did you think about the Bulls game last night?”

Toby groaned. “Seriously, you’re asking him that. I hope you’ve got all day.”

Matt rolled his eyes. “The ump clearly had it in for them. I mean, did you see those calls? A baby could have done better than that.” Matt continued in the same vein for several minutes, seemingly not even pausing for breath. He jiggled his leg, and it

moved more quickly the more agitated he got until Bryce felt the vibration two seats over.

“Stop,” Toby said, bringing a hand down on Matt’s leg. “You know I hate that.”

“Sorry. I can’t help it.”

“Can we please change the subject?” Toby asked.

Matt scowled. “Maybe Bryce isn’t done talking about baseball.”

Talking? Bryce wouldn’t exactly call it that. “I’m fine. I think you gave a very thorough answer.”

“See?” Toby said.

“Why don’t you tell me about your family, Toby? You’re really the oldest of five?”

Toby nodded. “Crazy, isn’t it, but yeah. After me there’s my brother Rob. He’s only eighteen months younger, but we... We don’t really talk now. Then there’s Jenna. She’s awesome. She’s the one who’s made the cookies for you, and she’s studying interior design.”

Bryce immediately liked her. He didn’t need to know more.

“I also have two more younger sisters, Laura and Felicity. They’re twins and they’re lots of trouble, but they listen to me. Usually.”

Matt rolled his eyes. “Only when they want to.”

Bryce laughed.

They were all silent for a while after that. Bryce drifted off into thoughts about the rest of his day, about running with Rollo and working at Nathan's, wishing he had someone other than his dog to spend the day with.

Toby polished off his drink and set the glass down on the eating shelf that lined the edge of the porch. "Could we have said anything to convince you to come dancing with us the other night?"

Bryce nearly choked, but Toby didn't look away. No hair twirling or anything else to indicate he was nervous now. It must be the alcohol making him bold. Bryce shook his head. "No."

"Why? And don't say you're too old."

"Like I said, I haven't really been going out much, and..."

Bryce glanced at Matt. He was frowning at Toby and jiggling his leg again. This time, Toby didn't seem to notice.

Bryce downed the rest of his drink before finishing. "If I'd joined you, I wouldn't have wanted to come home alone. I can't complicate things at work, especially not with me being new and everyone knowing about Atlanta."

Toby smiled. "We didn't want you to leave by yourself."

Matt's cheeks were bright red and his eyes dark. He put a hand on his leg as if trying to hold it still. "No, we didn't."

"I don't sleep with co-workers. It's my own rule as much as the department's."

The desire in Toby's eyes turned to concern.

“I won’t rat you out unless your relationship affects your job performance,” Bryce said. But the knowledge would weigh on him every single day. “I won’t put myself further at risk, though. I’ve never been good at hiding things.”

“It wouldn’t have to be?—”

The fantasy Bryce had indulged in when he’d imagined them dancing, imagined taking what he wanted ran through his head. He didn’t think once would be enough with them. If he got a taste of them, he’d want more, a lot more, and that was not going to happen. He slid off his stool. “I should head home.”

Matt stood too, but Bryce held up a hand. “I only live a few blocks from here, I’ll walk it.”

“But your truck’s at the station,” Toby protested

“I’ll get it later.”

Matt frowned. “Bryce, don’t?—”

Toby laid a hand on Matt’s arm. “All right, but give one of us a call if you want a ride to get your truck later.”

Bryce nodded. “Yeah, I will.” But he wouldn’t. He’d bike over after he got some sleep. He didn’t need to be in a small space with them, easily close enough to touch. Fuck! How was he even going to work with them in a few days when he couldn’t get the image of them dancing out of his mind?

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Bryce woke later that afternoon, his mouth dry and his head throbbing. He'd only had two Bloody Marys. They wouldn't have fazed him a year ago, but he'd been concerned by how much he was drinking to dull his senses in the months after the Atlanta fire, so he cut back drastically to prove to himself that he didn't need it.

He squinted at the clock as he forced himself out of bed. It was five, so he'd been asleep about six hours. He'd slept through his alarm, but at least he wasn't late for work, and he ought to be plenty awake for his shift at the bar that night.

As he showered, he tried not to replay the conversation he'd had with Matt and Toby or to contemplate how awkward things would be at work later that week. He couldn't help but be curious about their relationship. Matt didn't seem to be as comfortable about pursuing him as Toby was, but Toby had been offering a three-way, hadn't he?

Bryce had always preferred to focus all his energy on one man, on making him beg, on telling him what to do to make them both lose their minds, but Matt and Toby were making him rethink that. He had no doubt that having them both would be mind-blowing.

Damn, it had been too long since he'd been laid. Maybe tonight after Nathan's he'd go looking for a quick fuck.

The evening went by swiftly. The bar was crowded, first with people watching baseball, then with those who stayed or came for post-game celebratory drinking or commiserative drinking or just plain drinking drinking. Around eleven, the later-night crowd poured in. By one AM, Bryce was exhausted despite his long nap. Mason's boyfriends, Gray and Jack, had found seats at the bar. Mason stopped to chat with

them and take their drink orders. Bryce caught them glancing over at him. What had Mason said? Hopefully not anything about Toby and Matt.

At least if Gray thought Bryce had his eye on someone other than Mason, he might stop acting like such an asshole, though Mason said that overprotective attitude was just Gray being Gray, as if it were endearing. He'd told Bryce he was a lot like Gray himself. No way was he that grumpy. At least he didn't use to be.

Gray had to know Bryce's flirting with Mason was just in fun. Bryce didn't really do any serious flirting these days. Mason was safe, easygoing, and so taken that Bryce could be his old self, knowing there wouldn't be any unwelcome consequences, like actually having to make an effort with someone. He scowled as he carried a tray of dirty glasses to the kitchen. He really needed to get laid.

Yeah, by Toby and Matt.

That is the last thing I need. A bunch of fucking complications.

Are you so sure it would be complicated?

We work together.

If a conscience could shrug, his did. There are other arrangements that could be made. You saw that position they posted for the fire marshal's office.

He scowled. He'd been thinking about applying for an investigator position with the fire marshal in Atlanta, but after the fire that rocked his sanity, he'd gone into survival mode. He didn't need to go trying to change jobs when he hadn't even been in this one a year yet. He stomped back into the bar, not realizing how fierce he looked until he glanced at a customer and she flinched.

“Sorry. I was just... thinking about something.” He really didn’t want to piss off any customers at Nathan’s. He’d fallen into this job when he discovered the place shortly after moving to Durham. He’d struck up a conversation with Mason and mentioned that he was looking to pick up some bartending shifts. Mason sent him right to the office to interview with Elizabeth, the manager, and he was hired the next day.

The woman smiled. “That’s okay. You must have been thinking of something pretty awful.”

He nodded. “Yeah, I was. What can I get you?”

“Absolut and lemonade.”

“You got it.” He made her drink and handed it across the bar. “On the house.”

She frowned. “Oh, you don’t?—”

“I do.”

“Well, okay. I don’t suppose it could come with your number.”

Dammit. Now he was being too nice. “I’m honored, but—” Mason slapped him on the ass as he walked by, obviously having picked up on the situation. He gestured over his shoulder toward Mason. “He’s more my type,” he said.

“Ah.” She smiled, not looking at all hurt, thank goodness. “Thanks for the drink.”

“You’re quite welcome.” Bryce smiled back at her. Why was it he could flirt with female customers and guys who were taken, but not with guys he actually wanted? Ridiculous. He had to get back out there.

He glanced down the bar and saw Jack watching him and snickering. “Bastard,” he mouthed.

Jack flipped him off and Gray actually smiled. Mason probably had said something or else Gray’d had enough beers to make him jovial.

An hour later, Jack and Gray were still hanging around, waiting for him and Mason to finish cleaning up after they’d shooed the last customer out.

“So Mason tells us those hot boys have been after you to go dancing,” Jack said.

He snorted. “Boys? It’s not like you’re that much older.”

Jack scowled in mock offense. “They’re practically children. I’m a seasoned cop.”

Gray snorted and Jack shoved at his shoulder, but the big man didn’t even budge. It was good to see them joking around so easily. Jack had been shot at a crime scene several months ago, and his recovery, mental and physical had been rocky. But now he was working with a youth task force, and Gray was settling into his position as a vice detective.

“You both ready to get out of here?” Gray asked Mason, a sultry smile on his face.

“Soon,” Mason promised. He leaned over, kissed Gray and held on to him, turning it into more than just a peck.

Bryce couldn’t help but watch. Jack pulled Mason away from Gray so he could get in on the action. They were a fine-looking trio, and Bryce’s cock couldn’t help but respond to the stimulation.

Gray caught Bryce watching, but instead of looking annoyed, he just smiled. “You

going to put those boys out of their misery?”

“They don’t look miserable to me.”

“Ha! They look like sad little puppies trailing after you,” Jack said.

Bryce shook his head. “I’m sure they can find someone to satisfy them or just take care of each other.”

Mason gave Bryce a look that said he pitied him for being so stupid. “They need a man who will take charge, especially the blond one.”

A shudder ran through Bryce. That’s exactly what he wanted to give them. “I don’t?—”

“Come on,” Jack said. “You know exactly what we mean.”

Gray actually fucking grinned. “It might even be worth the trouble they’ll cause you.”

That earned him another shove from Jack and an obviously manufactured look of outrage from Mason.

“Look, they’re hot, okay? But as much as I’d like to bend them over right here on the bar, I work with them, and I’ve only been here a few months. I’m not going to screw up my chance at a fresh start.”

Gray nodded, serious now. “Yeah, I get that.”

“Me too,” Jack agreed. “I could never have resisted Gray, but working together made it tough. I loved being his partner on the job, but being out is even better.”

Bryce wasn't sure how to respond. These men had found a solution, but their position hadn't been the same as his. He changed the subject like the coward he was. "Y'all get out of here, and I'll finish up."

"You sure?" Mason asked.

"Shut up and get moving," Gray said, his words running over Mason's.

Bryce didn't have much left to do after he sent the three men on their way. A few minutes later, he let the manager know the bar was all set for the next day and grabbed his bag. It was two thirty now. All the clubs would be closed. There were a few guys he'd hooked up with when he first came to town. He had one of their numbers, but a random wee hours booty call smacked of desperation and they were probably either with someone or not interested. And Rollo, the beagle he'd rescued from a fire a few months back, would be a lot happier if he came straight home.

When he got home, knowing he wasn't going to fall asleep any time soon, he changed into pajama bottoms, made himself a bowl of ice cream, and flopped down on the couch. Rollo jumped up and sat beside him, begging for a taste. Bryce let him lick some ice cream off his fingers. "You're so damn spoiled."

Rollo gave him that look that said, "Yep. And I'm loving it."

Bryce scrolled through channels, but nothing struck his fancy until, on his second pass, he paused at an episode of some show he'd never seen and couldn't stop watching, because some guy named Stiles had eyes and a smile just like Matt's. At a commercial break, he discovered, embarrassingly, that he was watching Teen Wolf. God, he needed help.

But he didn't turn the channel and soon a fantasy rolled in his head. In his mind, he was the detective questioning the young man, and then he wasn't interested in talking

anymore. He was interested in taking off Matt's clothes, slowly, while he ordered him to stand still. At that point Bryce clicked the TV off, pushed Rollo off the couch, and shoved his pajama bottoms down so he could wrap a hand around his dick.

Toby joined Matt in Bryce's fantasy, watching wide-eyed as Bryce bared Matt's ass. Matt's cock stood up and begged and Bryce sank to his knees, needing a taste. "Don't move," he ordered. Matt simply nodded.

Toby stepped closer. "Hold his hands behind his back," Bryce told him.

Toby obeyed wordlessly.

Bryce's hand worked faster on his cock as he let the fantasy roll. He shoved his other hand between his legs and toyed with his balls as in his mind, he took Matt's cock into his mouth, licking, sucking, teasing. Matt shuddered and bucked under his attentions, pushing his cock farther down Bryce's throat.

"Please," Matt begged.

"God, this is so fucking hot." Toby's words were breathless.

Bryce gripped Matt's hips, keeping them still as he took Matt even deeper.

Matt whimpered as he fought Bryce's hold. Toby ground his crotch against Matt's clasped hands, moaning as he worked himself.

Bryce let go of Matt's cock long enough to say "Toby, don't you dare come until I'm ready for you."

"Fuck!" The word was as much an exhale as real speech.

“Matt, I want to taste you right fucking now.” Bryce swallowed him back down and let go of Matt’s hips. Matt bucked against him, fucking his mouth.

Bryce shuddered, tugging hard on his balls as he stroked himself faster and faster. He was going to come any second.

In his fantasy, Matt cried out his orgasm just as heat slammed through Bryce, making him arch up off the couch. He shot over and over, coating his abdomen in sticky fluid. When he was done, he collapsed against the couch, wrung out.

“Fucking fuck shit fuck.” That should not have happened.

As if you could have stopped it.

Damn, if real sex with Matt and Toby was anywhere near as good as his fantasy, it might kill him. At least then he wouldn’t have to face the consequences.

He stumbled to the bathroom, cleaned up, and fell into bed, refusing to listen to that wicked voice telling him he was destined to fuck them for real.

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Bryce had the next day off. He slept until late morning and was finally awakened when Rollo began racing around the bed, desperate for companionship. After eating bacon, eggs, and toast for breakfast—Rollo got his share too—Bryce made up a few pans of lasagna to feed himself through the next week, and he and the dog took a long run.

Despite not having to go to Nathan's to work, he headed over for dinner, needing to get out of the house. He refused to spend the night jacking off to thoughts of Toby and Matt again. He'd planned to go alone, but Rollo's plaintive look when he grabbed his keys changed his mind. Nathan's technically only allowed dogs on the tiny patio out back, more of a smokers' gathering spot than an actual dining area, but as long as the dogs were well-behaved, no one said anything if they came inside. Fortunately, everyone there loved Rollo.

"Got any plans for tonight?" Mason asked, a sly grin on his face when Bryce took a seat at the end of the bar where Rollo could lie down under his stool.

"Why does everyone who's in a relationship turn into a matchmaker?"

Mason grinned. "Happiness likes company?"

"I thought that was misery."

He shrugged. "Maybe it works both ways."

Bryce huffed. "I'm plenty happy."

Mason studied him. He obviously wasn't fooling anyone.

"I've got two good jobs and good people to work with—for the most part." He narrowed his eyes at Mason, but the bastard only laughed.

"So you're really not going to pursue them?"

Bryce sighed. "What is it with you? Do you want me to fuck over my new position?"

Mason shook his head. "No, but I also don't want you to say no to possibilities."

"Yeah but... I know you and Jack and Gray worked things out, but seriously, how often can a three-way work?" Wait... What? Why the fuck was he comparing Toby and Matt and himself to them? Mason was in a committed relationship. All Bryce was considering was whether fucking Matt and Toby was the worst idea ever.

Mason smiled like he realized what Bryce had said, but he didn't comment on it. "It all depends on the people involved, I guess. I've seen how you watch them."

Bryce hoped no one else had noticed. "They're really fucking hot."

"Plenty of guys who come in here are hot."

Exasperated, Bryce blurted out, "They're extra hot."

Mason laughed. "Keep telling yourself that's all it is."

Bryce finished his meal and shot a few rounds of pool with some firefighters who worked at another station in town. Rollo sat watching and happily accepting treats from anyone who offered.

When the game wrapped up, he glanced at his watch. It was late enough he might succeed in picking someone up if he hit a club or another bar. From the look a guy was giving him from across the room, he could likely pick him up right then, but he'd made a rule to stay away from Nathan's regulars just like he needed to stay away from his fellow firefighters.

As he headed to the bar to pay his tab, Toby and Matt walked in. Fuck.

You know you hoped they'd be here.

The hell I did. Was he lying to himself? Had he hoped they'd come in? He didn't have to stay just because they were there. He could still head out to a club or another bar like he'd planned.

Toby made a beeline for him. "Thought you weren't working tonight?"

Had he told Toby that?

He glanced at Mason, who quickly looked away. Bastard. He'd been talking to them? They were going to have a long chat later.

"I'm not. I just stopped in for dinner and a beer or two, but?—"

"You're not leaving, are you?" Toby asked in a voice so sultry he might as well have said "You're going to fuck us tonight, aren't you?"

"Um..." Since when did he get tongue-tied, especially around overly bold twenty-two-year-olds?

"If you can stay for a while, come sit with us," Matt said, giving Toby a look that probably meant for him to tone it down.

Stay or go? He'd not accepted Toby's invitation to join them at a club because he figured the chances of them all ending up in bed were almost certain, but here at Nathan's that wasn't the case. Toby and Matt weren't out and there were plenty of people around so all they were going to do was talk, right? "What do you think, Rollo?" he asked, looking down at his companion. Rollo stood up on his back legs to sniff at Matt and Toby. Then he gave a little yip that Bryce decided meant they should stay. "Okay, I'll join you. You wanna head to the back, play pool or something?"

"Sure. Go on." Toby gestured to Matt. "I'll get your beer. You want something else?"

Bryce nodded. "Mason knows what I'm drinking." And now he'd know Bryce was drinking it with "his boys," as Mason called them. Dammit.

Bryce headed toward the back, and Matt followed close behind him.

"I feel like I should apologize for him, but Toby's just?—"

"Extra friendly?"

Matt laughed. "Yeah, that's one way to put it. I just don't want him to piss you off. He's a little..."

Bryce looked at Matt. His cheeks were red. "I get it. It's fine." What had Matt planned to say—eager? Infatuated?

The pool tables were taken, so they played a round of foosball while they waited for Toby. He joined them a few minutes later, set their drinks down on a high table next to the game, and leaned on the edge of the table to watch. Matt was good, but Bryce ultimately won the round.

Matt and Toby played each other next, and Bryce sipped his beer and petted Rollo while he watched. The more he saw, the more he wanted them. Toby smiled the whole time, even when Matt got a point. When Toby won a point himself, he shook his ass and danced in a little circle that made Bryce wanted to bend him over the foosball table and see what it felt like to drive right into all that energy.

Matt was making Bryce just as crazy. His sculpted arms bunched and flexed as he twisted the handles to move his men. And his ass. Bryce circled the table just to get a better look at it. He wanted to yank those tight jeans down and bury himself. He was in serious trouble.

Fortunately, their game ended before he did something as foolish as proposition them.

Now it was Bryce's turn to play Toby. How the hell was he going to concentrate?

He forced his gaze away from Toby's twinkling hazel eyes and onto the game. Watch the ball, not Toby's balls. How would he react if Bryce toyed with them, tugged on them, took them in his mouth? Toby scored a point and danced around just like he had with Matt. Toby was so goddamn adorable Bryce couldn't even manage to be pissed at himself for being distracted.

"Ready?" Toby asked, holding up the ball.

"Yep."

"You seem distracted." The grin on Toby's face told Bryce that Toby knew why.

"No, I'm good."

Toby winked and sent the ball onto the table.

Bryce managed to concentrate well enough to keep the score tied until the very end, and sheer luck gave him the final point just as Matt returned with more drinks.

“Go again?” Toby asked.

“Nah, let’s sit for a bit,” Matt said.

They drank in companionable silence for several minutes, and then Bryce asked a question he’d been curious about since he’d met them. “Did you meet at the Academy or did you know each other before?”

Matt glanced at Toby, a nervous look. Why would Bryce’s question provoke that? “We knew each other before. We were friends in high school, and...” He looked at Toby again.

“Well, we started out as friends, and then we...”

“Got closer?” Bryce asked.

“Yeah.”

“Well, kind of.”

Toby’s and Matt’s answers ran into each other. Matt’s leg was bouncing and Toby was watching him. What was Matt so reluctant to say? Bryce wanted to understand, especially if they were going to... But they weren’t. They were definitely not going to fuck.

“Remember the first day at the Academy?—”

Toby’s comment brought Matt out of whatever funk he’d fallen into. “Oh God yeah.

You were such an idiot.”

“What happened?”

“Toby was running late. We were both living at his parents’ house then, in a garage apartment.”

That was interesting, but Bryce didn’t interrupt to ask questions.

“So I thought—” Toby lost his obvious battle to hold back giggles.

“Toby didn’t want to make me late too, so he convinced himself it would be fine to come to training dressed in the pink shorts he was wearing.”

“They weren’t really pink, just light red.”

“Pink shorts and a white undershirt,” Matt insisted.

“Holy shit.” Bryce shook his head. He could only imagine what the officer in charge of their workout had to say about that.

Toby rolled his eyes. “How dumb could I be? Obviously everyone else was in uniform and it was not in any way okay for me not to be. I probably got twice as many extra laps as I would have for just being late.”

“I’m not sure you’ve run that far in a single day since,” Matt said.

Toby grinned. “I hope I never do.”

Bryce laughed as he pictured the two of them at the Academy: Matt trying to keep Toby focused and Toby cheering Matt up, just like they were now. He hadn’t quite

had enough to drink to come right out and ask them how long they'd been fucking each other.

"So you've been a firefighter for ten years?" Matt asked.

"Almost eleven."

"You must have seen a lot in that time."

Toby slapped Matt on the arm.

"Oww!" Then his eyes widened. "Oh, I didn't mean... I wasn't thinking. Just ignore me."

"I haven't told anyone about that day, not even the counselor they sent me to. I've just never..." Bryce didn't know why those words burst out of him, but now his throat tightened and his eyes stung. He fought to be able to finish his sentence. "Never been able to put it in words."

"We would listen if you wanted us to," Toby said, his caretaking instincts evident in his soft smile and gentle touch on Bryce's arm.

Bryce hadn't wanted to talk about the night a mom and her kids were trapped in a burning house, had sworn he never would. He'd thought that if he put it in words, it would be like reliving it. But if he shared the story, would he actually be able to let it go? Was it wrong to burden Toby and Matt like that?

"Nah, I..."

"We'd be honored," Matt said.

If Toby and Matt hadn't been firefighters too, he wouldn't have considered telling them, but even though they were still green, they'd understand. They'd never mock him for how he felt. "Yeah?"

They both nodded.

He looked around the bar. It was crowded, and he couldn't be sure if he'd make it through the story without breaking down. "Not here."

"Come home with us."

Home? With them? That was definitely not a good idea, especially if he was going to spill his guts, because after he did, he'd need to get really drunk. If he got drunk around Matt and Toby, he was going to say something he shouldn't. Hell, he was probably going to do something he shouldn't. "I'm warning you, if I get through this, I'm going to want to get shit-faced afterward."

"Who wouldn't?" Toby slid off his stool and tugged on Bryce's arm. "We've got plenty to drink at home, and we can either drive you back to your place or you can crash on the couch."

Of course Toby would offer Bryce what he needed, but Bryce didn't think he'd really end up on their couch. That was what worried him. "I shouldn't?—"

"We're friends, right?" Matt asked.

"Well yeah, but like I said?—"

"And we put our lives in each others' hands already."

"Yeah but?—"

Matt gave him an assessing look. “Would it help to tell us?”

Bryce had no idea why, but he was sure it would. “Yeah, but I’ve got Rollo with me. I’d have to bring him too.”

Toby glanced at Matt. “We love dogs. Let’s go.”

Bryce heard himself say “okay,” but his voice sounded far away.

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The buzz of the bar patrons talking battered Bryce, making him dizzy. He clung to Rollo's leash, frozen in place.

"Walk him out, and I'll settle up," Matt said.

Bryce wobbled drunkenly as he followed Toby to the door. Three beers shouldn't have done that to him. They were almost at Toby's truck when he realized he needed to pay his own tab.

"I'll be back in a minute. I've got to pay my tab."

"Matt will get it."

Bryce shook his head. "No."

"You can pay the next time."

Toby laid a hand on the small of Bryce's back, his touch warm and firm. Bryce lost the desire to protest. Toby pressed against Bryce's back, encouraging him to move toward Toby's pickup. Fuck, they'd all have to squeeze onto the single bench seat.

They waited by the truck and Matt joined them quickly. Bryce didn't even want to contemplate what Mason would say about Matt paying his tab, but he'd deal with that later. His heart hammered as he climbed in after Matt. Their thighs pressed together, and he practically had to feel up Matt's ass to get his seat belt buckled. Rollo jumped into Matt's lap and licked his face, demanding attention.

“Sorry.” Bryce tried to pull him back.

“No, I’ve always wanted a dog.” Matt scratched just behind the ears, instinctively knowing what Rollo liked best.

Bryce let his dog revel in the attention and didn’t say anything for most of the short drive to Matt and Toby’s apartment. He should be embarrassed to be there. They weren’t his personal confessors, and he wasn’t sure he’d be able to talk now anyway. He was about to ask them to take him home instead, when Matt patted his thigh. “You okay?”

“Yeah.” And he was. Something about that touch, friendly, not sexual, but incredibly reassuring, relaxed him.

Toby pulled into the parking lot of their small apartment complex, and Bryce followed them up the steps to their second-floor loft apartment. The units in the complex were each painted a different cheerful color. Theirs was Carolina blue, which didn’t seem right a few blocks down the street from Duke’s campus, but who was he to judge. He still thought red meant Bulldogs, not the NC State Wolf Pack.

He’d not put a lot of thought into what Matt and Toby’s apartment would look like. Matt was always excessively neat at work, and Bryce didn’t think he’d let Toby be a total slob, but he certainly would’ve assumed their place would be more college-boy casual than the pristine, stylish apartment he stepped into. They had a tiny foyer, and on the left, steps led to the loft, which appeared to be a single room with a railing looking down on the floor below. On the right, a hallway led to an open-plan living room, dining room, and kitchen. The walls were painted a color that was neither coral nor brown and managed to feel soothing and beachy. There was art on the walls, actual art, not just cheap posters. The only exception was memorabilia from the Durham Bulls and the Braves, Matt’s touches obviously. Their place was small, but they’d made it a real home.

“My sister,” Toby said, obviously realizing how disconcerted Bryce was. “The one who’s majoring in interior design. She insisted on helping us.”

Bryce was seriously impressed. Toby’s sister—Jenna?—had talent. “She did a great job.”

“Yeah, she did.” Toby beamed, obviously proud of her.

“What can I get you to drink?” Matt asked.

“Whiskey if you’ve got it. Straight up,” Bryce replied.

“Perfect. Toby?”

“Just a beer for me.”

“Okay.”

Bryce sat on one of the two sofas that faced each other, and Toby settled across from him. Matt returned with beers for Toby and himself. Bryce’s drink was in an actual highball glass. “Wow. Real grown-up glasses too.”

“Yeah, Jenna said we had to get real dishes too.”

Bryce laughed. “I’ll have to meet her sometime. She sounds impressive.” Suddenly he realized the intimacy his comment suggested and hoped he hadn’t overstepped.

“I’d love that,” Toby said. “She’d like you.”

Silence descended. Bryce knew he had to talk or it was only going to get more awkward. He tossed back his drink and set the glass down.

“Another one?” Matt asked.

“Not yet. But when I’m done, you should probably just bring the bottle.”

“Whatever you need,” Toby said. Matt nodded and settled beside Toby.

Bryce ran his hands through his hair and took a deep breath. If he was going to do this, he had to plunge right in. “We couldn’t have saved them, the family in that house. I know that, but I still replay it every fucking day.”

“There were bars on the windows?” Matt asked.

Bryce guessed he’d read about what had happened, maybe when he was still at the Academy and maybe after he found out Bryce was going to be the officer for his unit.

“Yeah. The neighborhood... it wasn’t good. Lot of houses had them. Damn I wish to God they weren’t allowed to. Better to be robbed than trapped like that.”

Bryce leaned down and scrubbed his hands through his hair. His heart pounded against his chest, too hard, too fast. Was he about to have a fucking heart attack?

Toby moved to sit beside Bryce and laid a hand on his back. “You okay?”

“I don’t know,” he answered honestly. “It’s... Fucking hell, it’s hard to think about it.”

“You don’t have to,” Matt said, moving to Bryce’s other side.

Bryce nodded, acknowledging that. “I’ve gone this far. I might as well finish. I sure as hell don’t want to start over.” He drew in a shaky breath. Why did he feel like he had to do this at all, and why with these guys? He couldn’t explain that. At least after

they saw him looking so pathetic, they weren't likely to want him anymore.

"The fire had destroyed the kitchen and one of the bedrooms before we got there. The mother called it in, but instead of leaving the house, she went to get her children from their room. It was after midnight, so the kids were asleep. But once she got into their room, they couldn't get back out. The fire had spread down the hall.

"My unit was first on the scene. We tried as hard as we could, but the flames wouldn't quit. We knew the mother had refused to leave without her kids, and they weren't outside, so we were certain they were still in there. The heat outside the room where they were trapped was too high for the primary search team, and when we were able to go in for a secondary search, they found the bodies, a twenty-eight-year-old woman and her two children, ages six and four.

"If we'd gotten the fire under control faster... Or if we could've gotten into that window..."

"Bryce," Matt said, his voice low and serious. "Did anyone think you should have done something different?"

Bryce shook his head.

"Did you think you did everything you could?" Toby asked.

"Yes, but?—"

Toby interrupted him. "You did your job, and that's all you can do."

"They tried to get out, tried to break through the window. The woman's hands were around the bars when we found her and the kids. The little boy had his hands and arms wrapped around her leg, and the girl was across the room, like she'd run, like

she was determined to find another way out. I just think about being trapped like that, knowing there was a way out but you couldn't access it, knowing that if only we'd gotten those bars off..."

Bryce dropped his head into his hands, fighting the tears that stung the backs of his eyes. He would not fucking cry in front of them, no fucking way. He hadn't cried since the night of that fire and he'd been drunk then, really goddamn drunk. He wanted to be that drunk again.

"Would now be a good time to bring that bottle?" Matt asked, as if reading his thoughts.

"Yeah." The word came out choked, and Bryce didn't dare look up. Rollo pressed his head into Bryce's lap, understanding he needed comfort. Toby stroked Bryce's back, the movement rhythmic and soothing. "Do you need anything else?" he asked.

Bryce shook his head, not ready to attempt words. Matt returned a few seconds later and set the bottle on the table in front of Bryce.

When he thought he could look at them without tears spilling over, Bryce drew in a slow breath and lifted his head. Matt and Toby were sitting close together on the floor by the coffee table, nearly touching. "Y-you guys want some?" He raised the bottle to indicate what he meant, inwardly cursing the weakness in his voice.

Matt glanced at Toby, and Toby nodded. "Sure. I'll get glasses."

Toby returned, and Bryce poured drinks for all of them. No one said anything for so long Bryce decided he'd made a huge mistake in spilling his guts. "Should I go?"

Toby's eyes widened. "What? No, we're just... We're honored that you felt like you could talk to us."

“I just made the night fucking depressing for you.”

Matt shook his head. “No you didn’t.”

Bryce poured himself more whiskey, thinking how if he were alone he’d resort to drinking from the bottle at this point.

“Did it help? Saying it out loud?”

Bryce considered Matt’s question, trying to force his now fuzzy brain to think clearly. The images in his head from the Atlanta fire still gave him a heavy, sick feeling in his stomach, but he didn’t feel the need to flinch away from them like he had before. He wasn’t at peace and he might never be, but... “Yeah, I think it might have.”

Matt nodded. “Good.”

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Bryce wasn't sure how much time had passed, exactly what they'd talked about after his confession—he was pretty sure baseball had been involved—or how many drinks he'd had. There was a second bottle on the table now. When had that happened?

He polished off the amber liquid in his glass and looked over at Toby and Matt. They were sharing the chair across from him, and Matt had his arm slung around Toby's shoulders. "So you've been together since high school?" he asked, drunk enough to have lost the filter on his mouth.

Matt answered first. "We've been friends since then, but not?—"

"My family adopted him," Toby said.

Bryce hadn't been expecting that. Apparently Toby came by his instinct to care for everyone naturally.

Matt sighed. "My family kicked me out when they caught me with another guy. I called Toby, because I didn't know who else to call. I thought maybe he'd help me, loan me some money, give me some food to get me through a few days. But when he told his parents what happened, they insisted I live with them, so I did for the last year of high school and the years we spent at community college trying to figure out what to do with ourselves."

Now their inseparableness made a lot more sense. Toby had truly been a lifeline for Matt.

"I wanted him like crazy," Toby said. "But he was living in my house and seemed to

think we were brothers, so I tried to respect that.”

Matt rolled his eyes. “He had no clue I’d wanted him for ages. He’d become the focus of my fantasies way before I moved in with him.”

“So finally, one night we were studying for one of our Academy classes and?—”

Matt smiled. “We finally figured it out.”

“Well, kind of. We started fucking then, but we still didn’t let on about how we felt, not for a long time. I thought Matt had just realized that I was...”

“Convenient?”

Toby snorted. “I was a hell of a lot more.”

So they truly were together. Had they been exclusive all this time? Neither seemed jealous enough to be worried about a three-way. Did they just want Bryce to be a fuck buddy they played with occasionally? Could that even work? Maybe he was just too old-fashioned to understand twenty-two-year-olds or too drunk. He wasn’t too old-fashioned to fuck them, though, if that was what they wanted. He also wasn’t smart enough to stop himself in his current state.

“So do you play with others?” Holy God, he really was drunk to be asking that.

“Only other men we both want. Like you.”

Matt sputtered and scowled at Toby.

Toby made a dismissive gesture toward Matt. “Ignore him. Has he told you I’m the best kisser ever?”

Was Toby actually as drunk as Bryce was, or had he just decided it was time to make a move? Bryce imagined the two of them kissing. That simple act was hotter than the nastiest porn.

“Show me.” As soon as the words were out of his mouth, he regretted them, at least as much as his alcohol-fogged brain would allow. “Forget that. I shouldn’t have...”

Toby straddled Matt, cupped his face, and leaned down. But instead of kissing Matt right away, he hovered over him, lips less than an inch from Matt’s. Matt dropped his head back and took hold of Toby’s hips, pulling his lover tight against him, all reservations about what they were doing seemingly gone. Just before Toby moved the final inch to claim his mouth, Matt looked at Bryce and licked his lips.

Bryce’s cock went from semi-hard to I’ve-got-to-fuck-somebody-right-this-minute. Toby kissed Matt like he was dying and Matt was his only hope for salvation. Matt groaned into Toby’s mouth and arched up, grinding their crotches together.

Bryce rubbed the heel of his hand over his dick, desperate for friction. He shouldn’t be here, shouldn’t be doing this, but he was too drunk to go home and even a saint couldn’t turn away from the sight of Toby kissing Matt.

A few seconds later, Toby sat back and turned to face Bryce, his fingers fiddling with his bangs. “Join us.”

His voice was low, sultry, and so tempting, but Bryce knew he was nervous and trying to hide it.

“I shouldn’t. We...” He moved toward them as he spoke. Why the fuck wasn’t his body listening to his brain?

When he was within reach, Toby grabbed his arm and pulled him down before his

fuzzy brain registered what was happening. Then Toby was kissing him and it was unbelievably good. Later Bryce couldn't say precisely what it was Toby did that made him the best kisser ever—the way he moved his tongue, the perfect variation in pressure, the so-sure-of-himself way he held Bryce tight while plundering his mouth—but Bryce would easily award him that title.

Several seconds later, Matt joined the kiss. Bryce had never even thought about a three-way kiss. He wouldn't have believed it would work, but oh God, did it ever. The heat of their mouths, their tongues lapping at his lips, pushing their way inside, the taste of both of them. He wanted more, a lot more.

Matt pulled back. "Please say we're going to do this."

Bryce's head swam with the taste of them, and his cock threatened to bust through his jeans. "Need to fuck you," he said, once again marveling at his inability to keep his thoughts in his head.

"God, yes," Matt murmured, and he grabbed the hem of his t-shirt and pulled it over his head.

Toby tried to stand then and ended up spilling all three of them onto the floor. He lay there laughing like a hyena until Matt gave him a playful kick. "Get up and strip."

Toby sank his teeth into his lip as he got to his feet, but looked like the laughter might burst out of him again as he undid the fastenings of his jeans.

Bryce sat on the floor, awed by the two of them as they revealed their lean bodies. He'd seen them before in the showers; it wasn't like they were modest. But having them right here, knowing he was going to get to touch them. Damn.

He realized his hands were shaking as he tried to unfasten his pants. Toby, now fully

naked, his long cock standing out from a trimmed bush of blond hair, moved in front of him. “Let me do that,” he insisted, pushing Bryce’s hands away.

Matt moved closer too. Bryce’s gaze slid over the honed muscles of his torso before taking in his sizable cock, which looked as eager as Bryce’s and Toby’s. Matt undid Bryce’s pants while Toby pushed his shirt off his shoulders.

Matt slid his hands into the waist of Bryce’s now loosened pants and pushed them down, caressing Bryce’s ass as he did so.

“Fuck.” The word slipped out of Bryce with a shudder. Matt’s hand felt so damn good.

“Yeah,” Toby responded in that same sultry voice as he lifted Bryce’s t-shirt, encouraging him to raise his arms so Toby could get it off.

When Bryce was finally naked, Toby whistled. “You are so fucking hot,” he said, the excited tone he usually used overtaking the sultry one.

Bryce felt heat rush to his face. He knew he looked good, but having these two young guys ogle him was as embarrassing as it was exhilarating.

“So which one of you do I get to have first?” he asked, all thought of protest forgotten. He was doing this and to hell with what it meant. He wrapped a hand around each of their dicks and pumped, not rushing, letting them really feel his grip. “Let me be clear. I like to be in charge in bed. I’ll make you love every minute of it, but I won’t go easy on you.”

Matt made a choked sound, but Toby grinned and fucked into Bryce’s grasp. “I don’t want any mercy.”

“You won’t get any.”

“But I do want to watch you fuck Matt first.”

That surprised him. Toby was the more submissive of the two if Bryce read things right, and he’d have expected Toby to beg to be fucked. He’d certainly been begging for attention for weeks.

Bryce worked them each faster. “You like that idea, Matt? You want Toby to watch as I shove my cock up your ass and ride you until you beg to come?” Holy fucking shit, Bryce was never drinking again if it made him talk like this. He was often vocal in bed, but the crap spilling out of his mouth was getting ridiculous. He wasn’t starring in a porn flick, though he did have a feeling that with Toby and Matt, he might be able to explore some of his kinkier fantasies.

Or not. This was a one-night thing. That was all it could be.

“Y-yes, oh fucking God, yes,” Matt moaned. Bryce had seen the moment his resistance crumbled. The tension had visibly drained from his face. Watching him give in to what he needed was going to be delicious.

Bryce considered the carpet under him. It was soft enough. “I want you on your back. Now.”

“Fuck.” Matt dropped to his knees. Toby shoved the coffee table out of the way to make more room for them. Neither man questioned why Bryce didn’t want to go to the bedroom. He wasn’t sure himself except that everything seemed more impulsive here, like he didn’t really have to admit he was doing this, like it was just happening and he couldn’t stop it.

Matt never dropped his gaze from Bryce’s, which made his attempt to arrange

himself on his back as Bryce had ordered comically awkward.

Bryce settled between Matt's open legs. "Lube? Condoms?"

"Getting them," Toby said.

He returned seconds later with the supplies they needed and then watched eagerly as Bryce squirted lube on his fingers and pressed one against Matt's hole. Matt bit his lips and looked from Bryce to Toby and back.

"Relax and don't hold back on me," Bryce said as he worked a finger in. Damn, Matt was tight, so fucking tight. "Been awhile?" Bryce asked.

"Yeah, I don't usually..."

Bryce had figured Matt usually topped. That was why Toby wanted to watch. He added a second finger, forcing a whimper from Matt. "Good?" he asked.

"Y-yeah."

He worked his fingers in and out, trying to go slow. He didn't want to hurt Matt, but he was eager as hell to get inside him.

"I want you to suck Toby while I open you up. You good with that?"

Matt nodded.

"I want an answer I can hear." Bryce was curious how far he could push Matt. He sensed that Matt longed to submit to Bryce but didn't like to admit that need for surrender.

“Y-yes.” Matt looked like he might say more, but he didn’t. Had he been about to add a “sir”? That was more than Bryce would insist on, at least for tonight. Fuck! He would never insist on it, because he couldn’t do this again.

Toby winked at Bryce and mouthed “perfect.” Then he straddled Matt, brushing his cock against Matt’s lips.

Bryce realized he’d been holding his breath. Watching Matt suck Toby as Bryce opened Matt’s ass was the hottest thing he’d ever seen. How could he have ever thought he wouldn’t like a threesome?

He pushed a third finger into Matt, and Matt moaned around Toby’s dick, the sound making Bryce’s cock throb. He wasn’t going to last as long as he wanted to once Matt’s tight ass was clamped around his cock. So he took his time, working his fingers in and out of Matt’s ass while Toby fucked Matt’s mouth. Matt took every inch of Toby’s cock like a champ. God, Bryce needed to feel that mouth around his cock, needed to watch Matt’s eyes widen as he swallowed, but this would have to be enough.

“Enough, Toby. I’m ready to fuck him and I don’t want anything distracting him from my cock.”

Toby whimpered and flexed his hips against Matt’s face one more time.

Bryce slapped Toby’s ass, making him gasp, the sound ragged with passion, but he moved this time and Bryce pushed Matt’s legs up farther. Matt whimpered, already looking passion drunk, his pupils blown, his lips red and swollen from deep-throating Toby.

Bryce pushed at the tight ring of Matt’s ass and Matt tensed.

“Relax,” Bryce instructed.

“I’m trying,” Matt said, forcing the words out around panting breaths. “You’re. Fucking. Huge.”

Bryce chuckled. “I am, but you can take it. You’ve just got to relax, to give in to me.”

“Please. I... I’m not sure I can.”

“Do you want me to stop?” Bryce asked, heart pounding as he waited for Matt’s answer.

“N-no.”

Bryce drove in a little more, but Matt tensed up again. “Don’t. Think. I’ve ever... had anyone this big.”

Bryce loved having that honor. He’d love it even more if his was the only cock Matt had ever had. Wait... What? Where the hell had that thought come from? Maybe confessing about that hellish night in Atlanta had made him completely lose his mind.

“Can I suck him?” Toby asked. “That might help him relax.”

“Are you as good at it as he is?”

Toby smirked. “Better.”

Bryce arched a brow. “Show me.”

“I’d show you anything.”

Dear God, what was he doing? He had lost his mind. Watching Toby suck Matt was only going to make him more desperate to feel both their mouths on his dick. No way in hell was he going to get them out of his system in one night.

Toby positioned himself at Matt's side and leaned down, his gaze holding Bryce's the whole time. He was so brazen. How good would it be to spank his ass until it glowed red and he begged to be fucked?

Bryce pushed in farther as Toby swallowed Matt's cock.

Matt cried out and arched up. That was all Bryce could take, he thrust in the rest of the way and Matt gasped and tensed again. His eyes showed a mix of emotion—desire and uneasiness. Bryce forced himself to hold still as he watched Toby, slide his mouth up and down Matt's cock. Matt squeezed his eyes shut and scrabbled at the carpet, trying to find something to hold on to. "Relax and give in. That's all you've got to do."

Matt's eyes flew open and he stared at Bryce. "I... I don't..."

"You do and you can."

Matt took a few ragged breaths, and Bryce felt him relax a little. "Good. Keep that up. Give in to what you want."

Matt nodded frantically. "More. Please."

Bryce couldn't hold back anymore. He drove deep again and again, fucking him in earnest as Toby sucked Matt even more enthusiastically. Matt's eyes went wide. He was on sensation overload. Bryce worked to find the angle that would allow him to hit Matt's sweet spot. When he succeeded, Matt cried out, his whole body reacting, the last of his resistance melting away.

“Good?”

“Don’t stop. God, don’t stop.”

Bryce didn’t. Toby sat back and watched, his gaze shifting from Bryce’s cock driving into Matt’s ass to the obvious ecstasy on Matt’s face.

“More. Going to come soon. Please!” Matt was crazed with need. And just seeing it, knowing what Bryce’s fucking was doing to him, was enough to push Bryce so close he knew he had to bring Matt off or he was never going to last to fuck Toby too.

Bryce wrapped a hand around Matt’s cock. “Do it. Come for me.” A few strokes was all Matt needed to obey. Toby whimpered as he watched Matt’s cum shoot over his abdomen. When Matt fell back against the carpet with a look of pure satisfaction on his face, Bryce glanced at Toby. His cock was red and leaking. Bryce didn’t know how he’d held out this long. He’d been jacking himself as he’d sucked Matt off.

“Hands and knees,” Bryce ordered.

Toby scrambled to obey and stuck his ass out invitingly. Bryce tossed him the lube. “Open yourself up.”

Bryce forgot what he was doing for a few seconds as Toby fucked himself on his fingers. Then Bryce felt Matt’s hand on him, helping him slide on a fresh condom and slick up again. He looked down at Matt and smiled. “You’re incredible, you know that?”

Matt’s cheeks grew even pinker than they already were. “Thanks.”

“No. Thank you,” Bryce said as he positioned himself behind Toby. He caressed Toby’s back. “You ready?”

“I’ve been ready for months.”

Bryce drove into him, not being as gentle as he had with Matt, hoping he was reading things right and that’s what Toby needed.

He got his answer when Toby pushed back against him, taking him deeper. “More. Won’t hurt me.” He reached under himself to grab his dick, but Bryce slapped his hand away.

“No touching,” he ordered.

“Fuck!”

Bryce did. He fucked Toby hard and deep. Toby writhed, begged, called his name, and muttered nonsense. Bryce loved how vocal and enthusiastic he was. It was just how he imagined fucking Toby would be. At some point, Matt sat up on his knees and grabbed Toby’s arms, pulling them over his head and pinning his wrists. Toby pressed his forehead into the carpet, giving Bryce even better access to his ass.

“Fuck him hard; he loves that,” Matt said.

Bryce had to grab the base of his dick to keep from coming. These boys couldn’t be more perfect for him. When he had himself under control, he gave Toby all he had. “You close, baby?”

“Yes. Need... need your hand on my cock.”

“No. You’re going to come without anyone touching you.”

“Fuck. I can’t. I...”

“You can.” Bryce drove into Toby hard. “Come for me, Toby. Right. Fucking. Now.”

Toby cried out and struggled against Matt’s hold.

“I’m not letting go. You heard him.”

“Can’t. Please.”

Bryce shifted his angle and worked himself even deeper into Toby. Toby shouted, cussed, struggled. Bryce must have hit just the right spot, because he cried out long and loud. Bryce gave him another stroke and another, and Toby shuddered.

“Holy fuck!” he screamed as his body jerked and he came.

Matt kept his hold on Toby’s wrists. “God, Toby. He’s so good, isn’t he? He knows just what you need.”

Toby nodded furiously. Bryce let himself go. He drove into Toby. One stroke, two, and then he was coming, not caring about what he shouldn’t do, only caring about his overwhelming need for these men.

When he was spent, he collapsed over Toby. Matt let Toby go and curled at their sides. Some time later, Bryce shifted, reluctantly letting his cock slip from Toby’s body. He discarded the condom and lay back down between Toby and Matt. He only meant to lie there for a few minutes. Then he’d put them to bed and sleep off the alcohol on the couch, where Rollo was curled up and giving him a look of disdain. Apparently he hadn’t been impressed with the show. Bryce would leave as soon as he sobered up, and as much as he wanted to, he wouldn’t come back, wouldn’t touch Matt and Toby again. He’d risked too much already, not just his job, but his heart too.

The next time he came to awareness, hours had passed and he was still on the floor

between Toby and Matt. A crew had gone to work sledgehammering his skull, and his back was stiff as a board. The first hints of dawn showed out the window, so it had to be at least four AM. They were all supposed to be at work at eight. At work, together. Fuck. His stomach heaved. What the hell had he done?

He tried to sit up and realized that was a mistake. Where was the bathroom? Down the hall; he knew that. On the right? It seemed like a long way off. He shuffled down the hall like the hunchback of Notre Dame until he found it. He fumbled for the light switch when he reached the bathroom. The light pierced his skull, and his stomach gave another heave. He almost didn't reach the toilet in time.

When he'd expelled the alcohol from his body, he rinsed his mouth and tried to make his brain work linearly. Clothes. He needed clothes. Where had he left his? They must be on the floor somewhere near where he fucked the hell out of Matt and Toby. Two men he had to work with all day.

Get dressed and get out of there. That's what he had to do. He managed to down a few sips of water and used his fingers to scrub the fuzz off his teeth.

He tried not to make any noise as he walked back to the living room, head throbbing with each step. Toby stirred when he got close to him, and Bryce froze. But Toby just turned on his back and began to snore. Bryce couldn't help but grin despite the pain in his head and his near panic at what this dumbass move would do to his job.

He found his clothes and dressed. He was about to leave when he realized Matt and Toby might sleep right through the start of shift. He found a timer in their immaculate kitchen and set it to go off at seven AM. That would give them time to dress and shower.

He signaled for Rollo, who thankfully obeyed. Then he opened the door, praying the noise wouldn't wake Matt and Toby. Neither man moved. He gave them a final

longing look. He wished things could be different, but knew he'd have to turn them down if they asked to see him again.

He stepped outside and pulled the door shut behind him. When he looked at the street in front of the house, he groaned. He'd left his car at Nathan's. His bike was at home, and no buses would be running this time of day. He clipped on Rollo's leash. They were going to have to walk. Which was closer, Nathan's or his house? The effort of mental mapping nearly made his aching head explode so he gave up and began walking toward Nathan's. He had to get his car sooner or later, better to do it while no one was around to see his walk of shame. His head jarred with every step. Walking might just kill him. At least then he wouldn't have to face Matt and Toby at work.

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Bryce was checking out the engine later that morning, making sure it was fully equipped for the first call of the day, when Toby's voice startled him. "Thanks for the timer. We would've overslept otherwise."

"Yeah, no problem," Bryce said, keeping his tone neutral. What the hell was Toby doing bringing that up at work anyway? Did he want people to know he'd spent the night at their place? Of course, he could have been there as a friend, a friend who got drunk and had to sleep over. They were friends, right? No one would even suspect he'd fucked them. So why did he feel like everyone knew? Guilt?

Or because you can barely keep your hands off them, even now.

Images of the night before assaulted him, and he had to take a deep breath and think of sickening things—roadkill, roaches, brussels sprouts—to keep his cock from getting hard. Toby and Matt had been fucking perfect, so responsive, so happy to let him be in command.

Toby walked away and helped Matt straighten the cabinet where they kept hoses and other supplies. Matt laughed at something Toby said, and Toby pushed him, which set off a round of horseplay Bryce should have reprimanded them for. How could they be so fucking cheerful? They'd had as much to drink as he had the night before, and he was still suffering from his hangover. Fucking twenty-two-year-olds.

Why did he feel so damn awkward around them when—at least as far as he could tell—they were unaffected by what the three of them had done? Was it that easy for them to see the previous night as a get-him-out-of-our-systems fuck? He hoped so.

The hell you do.

That was all it was.

Then why can't you stop looking at them this morning? Why are you wishing you could drag them into the supply closet and put them both on their knees?

Bryce survived his workout and a training session without having to talk to Matt and Toby again. He hoped they hadn't noticed he was avoiding them, but Matt had given him an odd look when they'd headed to the showers. Had that been hurt in his eyes?

Later in the afternoon, Bryce played cards with WT and two guys from another unit while Matt and Toby sat together watching TV. Occasionally, one of them glanced his way, but he couldn't read their expressions—curious? Hurt? Angry? They had to have picked up on the fact that he was ignoring them. Why couldn't he stop acting like an ass? He'd known things would turn weird if they slept together. He was too much of a pussy to enjoy a night with a man he really liked, then just forget him. And he didn't just like Toby and Matt, he wanted to make them his. Sleeping with strangers was so much easier.

In the early afternoon, a call came in for a traffic accident, and Bryce's unit was sent to assist. They arrived on the scene just after the police. Bryce sent WT and Matt to assess the condition of the vehicle's occupants while he and Toby collected the necessary gear. With a crisis to focus on, there wasn't any awkwardness working side by side with Toby. EMTs arrived on the scene a few moments later, and everyone focused on getting the victims, a middle-aged man and his teenaged daughter, free from the wreckage. Both were injured but not critically.

When both victims were loaded into the ambulance, and all that was left was cleanup, Bryce finally took a deep breath. Everything had turned out better than he'd expected when they'd first pulled up at the scene and he'd seen the crumpled car.

“Good work!” Matt clapped him on the back.

He flinched before he realized it was completely normal for Matt to touch him or any of the other firefighters that way. “Sorry. Just jumpy.”

Matt gave him an odd look and walked off toward the truck.

Fuck, he needed this day to end. Maybe after a few days without seeing Matt and Toby, he’d be able to get his act together.

Bryce survived the rest of his shift without having to spend time talking to Toby or Matt. After the traffic accident, they were called to the home of an elderly man who’d fallen and then to the scene of a five-car pileup. When he finally got a break, Bryce grabbed some dinner and then tried to sleep on one of the bunks at the station. All he managed was a light doze as his head spun with questions he couldn’t—or wouldn’t—answer.

The next morning when his shift ended, Bryce tried to get some more sleep, but he didn’t have any better luck. He finally gave up on the notion of rest, went for a run, then dragged himself to Nathan’s. At least as exhausted and cranky as he was, no one was going to suspect he’d had some of the best sex of his life less than two days earlier.

He pushed open the employees’ entrance and stepped inside, managing to make it all the way to the bar without having to do more than nod to a few of the guys in the kitchen as he passed by. Of course he wasn’t going to be able to keep that up. Bartenders were generally expected to talk to customers.

When he reached the bar, he saw Mason serving beers to a couple of guys who didn’t look more than eighteen, though he was sure Mason had carded them. Damn kids get younger every year.

Kyle had been scheduled to work with him, so he wasn't prepared to face Mason's teasing—or worse, questions—about the other night.

“Kyle call in sick?” he asked.

“His mother's in the hospital.”

“That's too bad.” From what Bryce knew of Kyle, he no longer talked to his mother, but illnesses had a way of breaking down family barriers.

For the first hour of his shift, the bar stayed busy, and he and Mason didn't have a chance to talk. Jack and Gray came in and settled at the bar like they usually did on nights when they weren't working and Mason was. Eventually, there was a lull as the dinner crowd thinned and the later-night crowd hadn't filtered in yet.

“How'd it go the other night?” Mason asked, a shit-eating grin on his face.

Bryce pretended to ponder the question, tapping his forehead with his index finger. “How did what go?”

Mason punched his upper arm. “You left here with Matt and Toby. You know you did.”

“We left at the same time. I do remember that.”

“You left with them, not just at the same time,” Mason insisted.

“I never kiss and tell.”

“So you did...”

“Did I what? Kiss?” Bryce asked, determined not to give an inch.

“You’re infuriating,” Mason said, scowling.

“And you’re a snitch. What were you thinking telling them my schedule?”

Mason shook his head. “I didn’t tell them anything, though I probably should’ve become their informant ages ago.”

Bryce narrowed his eyes at Mason. “You really didn’t tell them?”

“Cross my heart.”

“Then who...” His words trailed off as he looked down the bar at Jack and Gray. Mason followed his gaze. “Would they?” Bryce asked.

“Not Gray. Can you imagine that?”

Bryce couldn’t. “Jack?”

“Yeah, but only because he wanted to?”

The rest of Mason’s words were drowned out by the noise of customers as Bryce stalked toward the far end of the bar.

“How’s it going?” Jack asked, all smiles.

“Good. Bad. Awkward. I’m not sure.” That was the goddamn truth if anything was.

Jack just grinned and nodded.

“Mason says he didn’t share my schedule with Toby and Matt. You got any ideas who did?”

“Jack.” Gray’s tone was full of malice.

Jack raised his hand. “Guilty. I’d like to say I was sorry, but…”

Bryce wanted to be annoyed, but Jack was so damn sincere, not to mention cute. And he’d had an amazing night with Matt and Toby, a fucking unbelievably good night. If only he didn’t want another and another and…

Jack wagged his brows. “Mason said you left with them a few nights ago.”

“Now my sex life is evening entertainment for the three of you?”

Gray snorted. “I entertained them far better than that.”

Bryce chuckled at Gray’s defensive tone. “If they ask again, and I doubt they will, don’t encourage them.”

“All right. I’ll restrain my matchmaking abilities next time.” Jack pouted a little.

“Damn right you will,” Gray said. Bryce was surprised when Gray backed him up instead of defending Jack.

Gray must’ve sensed Bryce’s surprise. “If someone had pushed me toward Jack before I decided for myself I was ready to make a move?—”

Jack snorted. “You made a move? I’d still be waiting if it had been up to you.” He looked at Bryce. “I got fed up with waiting, and I told him?—”

“Enough,” Gray interrupted. “That’s not the point.”

Bryce sighed. “It’s okay. I know you were trying to help but...”

“Things didn’t go well?” Jack asked.

Bryce considered what he should say. “They went too well, and that’s the problem.”

He turned away from Mason’s boyfriends. There were more customers at the bar than Mason could handle on his own now, and Bryce was glad of an escape.

Gray continued to bitch at Jack as Bryce walked off. The little shit deserved it, but Bryce wasn’t really mad at him. Only one person deserved his anger and that was himself. He could have walked away and found a random fuck like he’d planned.

Telling them was the right thing. You needed someone to talk to before you drowned in those memories.

Maybe, but I didn’t have to get stinking drunk and fuck them afterward.

It was inevitable.

Why did that seem so true? Why were they so different from other men he’d been attracted to?

Because they’re perfect for you?

And now, after sleeping with them, he knew just how right that was. He’d always loved taking a dominant role in bed, but he’d only occasionally explored the limits of his need to take charge. Everything about the other night told him Toby and Matt would be willing to explore with him, to submit to more than a few commands and a

rough fuck.

Bryce had tried the BDSM scene when he was their age, thinking that would be the best way to get some of his desires met. But most of the men he met wanted more from him than he wanted to give. He wasn't interested in a slave or a twenty-four-seven sub. He wanted men who enjoyed being dominated in bed, then walked away the next morning, not a relationship. But some of his kinks required more trust and the time it took to build that trust, so he'd relegated those to the realm of fantasy.

Could he explore those with Toby and Matt? He imagined what it would be like watching them respond as he delivered pain and pleasure, but even if he'd guessed right and that's what they wanted, he couldn't seriously contemplate anything more than a fling with them. He sucked at hiding who he was and what he wanted, and he certainly couldn't expect them to come out and change shifts or stations for him.

He pushed those depressing thoughts away and concentrated on making drinks and flirting with customers. He was feeling proud of how well he distracted himself. Then Matt and Toby walked into the bar.

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Bryce made himself busy while they chatted with Mason, but he didn't have the willpower to keep from checking them out after they walked away. They found a booth off to the side. Usually, if they weren't ordering dinner, they hung out in back, chatted with whoever was around, played pool or foosball—fuck, when was the thought of that game not going to make his cock twitch?—but even Toby didn't seem interested in socializing. Tonight they simply ordered dinner and kept to themselves. What was that about? Not about him surely. No, he wasn't conceited enough to think they were pining for his attention. Hell, they'd had more than enough of that a few days ago.

Matt turned his way, and Bryce immediately looked down, pretending to be busy wiping the bar. When he looked up, he noticed Matt was bouncing his leg and giving Toby an agitated look.

Several minutes later, he noticed Matt at the bar. Maybe he just wanted another beer, but why wouldn't he order that from Rachel, the waitress for their section.

“What can I get for you?” he asked, trying to sound friendly but business-like, as he would with any customer.

“I just need to pay our tab,” Matt said, pulling his wallet out of his back pocket.

“Okay, just a sec.” Bryce hadn't expected them to leave so early, but that was not disappointment he was feeling. No, it wasn't. If he kept telling himself that, maybe it would be true.

He finished making two martinis and handed them to a swankily dressed couple at the

bar. Then he pulled up Matt's tab and gave him his total.

"All right." Matt handed him a card, not saying anything else. Why were things even more fucking awkward than they'd been during their shift the day before? He wished Toby had come up instead of Matt. At least he'd chatter away if he were nervous. That would be easier to handle.

Bryce was at a loss for words too. How was he able to talk casually with any other customers, no matter how attractive, but with Matt he was suddenly tongue-tied?

"Here you go." He handed Matt a folder with his receipt, his card, and a pen inside. "Have a good night." Wow, that sounded impersonal and douche-y.

"Yeah... um... you too." Matt concentrated on signing his receipt.

Bryce walked to the other end of the bar, needing to get away.

After Matt headed back to the table, Bryce picked up his check folder. When he grabbed the receipt to place it in the register, he noticed Matt had written more than his name.

Going to Marlo's later. Join us after your shift.

Instinctively, he looked toward their table, but they were gone. They must have gone out the side door to disappear so fast.

Head spinning, Bryce shoved the receipt into the register drawer. He'd decide what to do about it later.

As if there's any decision to be made.

Right. I'm going home. Alone.

No, you're going to Marlo's and living out your fantasy.

No, I'm not.

"What's up?" Mason asked.

Bryce realized he'd been staring into space. "Nothing. I... It's nothing."

Mason nodded. "Mmmhmm. If you change your mind, you know where I am."

Bryce didn't even try to protest. "Okay. Thanks."

Marlo's was a hot gay club, the kind of place that made Bryce feel about a hundred years old and ultra conservative. Of course, even when he was Matt and Toby's age, he'd never felt like he fit in with all the nubile twinkles at dance clubs.

What the hell was Matt thinking asking him—telling him—to show up there? He had no intention of going. He'd just pretend he never saw the note. The next time he saw Matt and Toby would be at the firehouse. Even Toby wouldn't have a conversation about gay clubs at work, would he?

Things got busy again, and before Bryce knew it, it was eleven, time for him to head out. "See you in a few days," he said to Mason as he untied his apron.

"Have a good night." Mason grinned as if he knew where Bryce was headed or contemplating heading. Had he seen the damn note?

Jack and Gray had gone to hang out in the back, but Gray had returned a few minutes earlier and was seated at the bar. "Got plans with those boys tonight?" he asked as

Bryce came back through the bar area on his way out.

“They want me to,” Bryce said, not sure why he hadn’t simply blown off Gray’s question. Gray was the last person he could imagine having a relationship conversation with. Hell, most nights, Gray wasn’t up for conversation of any kind. Not that Bryce needed to talk about relationships, since he had no intention of having one, especially not a three-way one. Mason, Jack, and Gray worked too damn hard for what they had.

“So you’d rather go home and jerk off thinking about them?” Gray asked.

If he were a cartoon, Bryce’s jaw would literally have been on the floor. “How many beers have you had?” he asked when he’d recovered enough to speak.

Gray smiled, actually fucking smiled. At Bryce. “Enough to say just about anything. I know how it feels, wanting something you think you shouldn’t have.”

Gray probably did. It couldn’t have been easy for him when he started sleeping with Jack. Or when they both decided they wanted more than just sex with Mason.

“I can’t fuck with my job,” Bryce said. “I’ve only been there a few months.”

“There not going to fire you or anything, just reassign you.”

“Yeah, but I just got a promotion.”

“They’d most likely reassign Matt and Toby.”

Bryce nodded. “They might end up on different shifts and hardly see each other. I don’t want to screw them over.”

Gray nodded. "I get it, but..."

Bryce studied Gray. He didn't really seem all that drunk, but he'd said more to Bryce in a minute or two than he'd said in months. "What?"

Gray shrugged. "Be sure you know what's really important."

"My job. It's a hell of a lot more important than giving my dick what it wants."

"Hell yeah. Your dick will get over it. The rest of you, that's the fucking problem."

"The rest of... Oh, you don't think... I'm not..."

Gray rubbed his forehead, as if talking to Bryce was giving him a headache. "You've got that look."

"What look?"

"The one I had after Jack and I... you know."

Bryce almost said "fucked?" but thought better of it. "And what exactly does this look entail?"

Gray took a sip of his beer and seemed to ponder how to answer. "When you see them, you look like a terrified rabbit. Your heart's probably beating like it's about to explode."

"You nailed it," Bryce said.

"That ain't got nothin' to do with what your dick wants."

Bryce's pulse sped up, and his head swam. Gray was right. What he felt for Matt and Toby was about way more than sex. But didn't that mean he shouldn't go to Marlo's? If he slept with them again, those feelings would only get worse.

Jack chose that moment to join them. "Whatcha talking about that's made you both look so serious?"

"Nothing." Bryce and Gray spoke simultaneously.

Jack looked back and forth between the two men. Then his eyes widened. "Shit, was he trying to give you relationship advice?"

"No," Gray said at the same time Bryce said, "Yes."

Jack cupped Gray's face with one hand, turning him so Jack could look into his eyes. "You feeling okay?"

"Fuck off!" Gray pulled free of Jack's hold. "See what I get for trying to be helpful?"

Before Bryce could reply, Jack said, "He wasn't much help, was he?"

"Actually, he might have been."

Gray nodded. "Damn right I was. Now get out of here. Do whatever you think's best and don't blame me for any of it. I used to be able to keep my mouth shut. These two assholes are a bad influence." He gestured toward Jack and Mason, who was at the other end of the bar.

"Will do." Bryce walked off before Jack could start giving him advice too. He grabbed his bag and headed for his SUV. Where was he going? Home? Marlo's? He looked down at himself. He wasn't going to Marlo's dressed in some of his oldest

jeans and a scruffy Atlanta Fire and Rescue Department t-shirt. If he had any sense, he wasn't going at all. No matter what Gray thought, he wasn't falling for Toby and Matt. He enjoyed their company and thought they were hot as hell and good in bed—or on the floor. Who wouldn't want them? They were awesome guys, caring, dedicated to their job, easy to get along with, good kissers, pliable, submissive, so good at taking his cock. And they made such gorgeous noises.

Holy fuck! He had to stop this!

In the end, his rational side lost the battle. Once he'd taken Rollo on a walk around the block, instead of grabbing an after-work snack and winding down with a movie like he usually did, his legs carried him, unbidden, to his bedroom. He extracted a pair of tight black jeans from his closet. Thank God he'd kept in shape and they would still fit. Once he'd zipped himself up, he changed into a fitted shirt, gray with thin black stripes. He'd never gone for flashy, but his body looked damn fine in the ensemble. He ran a hand through his short hair, studying it. Fuck, no! He wasn't going so far as to break out the styling products. Matt and Toby could take him like this or not at all.

They'll take you right home and you'll fuck them again, won't you?

Hell, yes.

He'd obviously lost his goddamn mind.

A few minutes later, he pulled into the parking lot at Marlo's. On a weekend it would be packed, but Tuesday night was quiet enough that there were several spaces left. After parking, his prudent side nearly got the better of him. He dropped his head onto the steering wheel and took a slow breath. Was he really going to do this?

Go home.

Stay.

Go home.

Stay.

For a few seconds, he let himself recall his fantasy of watching Matt and Toby dance, of telling them what he wanted, moving with them and then in them.

Fuck. Now he was so hard, he'd have trouble walking to the door. Maybe they wouldn't even be there. Maybe they'd moved on to another club or changed their minds. That would be best for everyone, wouldn't it? If they weren't there, Bryce could find someone else for a hot, dirty fuck and forget them.

Those boys are the only dirty fuck you want.

Bullshit. I'm just horny, and I need to get off with a willing man.

Right.

Yes, right.

Please tell me you don't really believe that.

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Before he surveyed the room for Matt and Toby, Bryce found a spot at the bar and ordered a drink. Within seconds, he located them, standing at a tall table near the bar, drinks in hand, watching the dance floor like they were making a plan.

He almost ran for the door. Was he going to be a reckless idiot or a gutless coward? He chose door number one. But he wasn't reckless enough to approach them yet. Maybe they wouldn't notice him. There were plenty of gyrating half-naked men on the dance floor who might attract their attention.

Bryce studied the crowd, trying to find someone who interested him half as much as Matt and Toby. There were plenty of men out there who were hot as hell and would probably bend right over for a big bear of a firefighter, but they weren't what he wanted.

He turned to order another drink, and a man slid in behind him, rubbing his firm body against Bryce's back. Nothing odd in a place like this, but usually his size intimidated people.

"Fancy seeing you here."

Toby. So they'd seen him after all.

He took his drink from the bartender and turned around. Toby was right there, so close that leaning in for a kiss would hardly take any effort. But Bryce didn't move. He simply waited. Toby moved even closer. Bryce could feel his warm breath, but instead of kissing him, Toby angled his head so he could speak against Bryce's ear.

"We want you to join us."

Bryce couldn't have said no if his life depended on it. Toby took his hand and led him to their table. Once again, he wondered how the hell Toby managed to take control so easily when with any other man, Bryce set the pace.

Matt watched them as they approached. Even in the dim light of the room, Bryce could see uncertainty in his eyes. But when Toby glanced back at Bryce, he was all confidence. His blue eyes sparkled in a grin that could melt even the coldest heart.

"I thought you didn't go out much." Toby shouted to make himself heard over the music.

"I don't, but I decided to tonight." He glanced at Matt. Had he told Toby about the note?

"Did we inspire you?" Matt asked, smiling now and looking less concerned.

"I didn't feel like sitting home alone tonight."

Toby caressed his arm. "We didn't want you sitting alone at the bar either."

"I doubt he'd have been alone for long," Matt insisted.

Toby rolled his eyes. "That's why I had to grab him quick."

Bryce laughed. "Are you laying claim to me?"

Toby grinned. "Abso-fucking-lutely."

Bryce should have been bothered by that, but he wasn't. He was thrilled, his body buzzing. He wanted to take them home right then.

The DJ started a new song, and Matt grabbed Toby's arm. "Come on. This is your favorite."

"Join us?" Toby asked.

Bryce shook his head. "I'm more of a watcher."

"Then we'll have to give you a good show."

Despite Toby's comment, Bryce expected them to melt into the crowd. Instead, Matt grabbed Toby and pulled him in tight as they began to swing their hips.

Bryce's cock responded immediately. They looked just as hot as they had in his fantasy. Matt held Toby's hips tight as they moved against each other. Toby dropped his head back and shimmied against Matt, his body slithering in a way that shouldn't be humanly possible. Other men moved around them, against them. Toby and Matt flirted and touched, but they also remained pressed together, never seeming truly interested in anyone else.

To make his fantasy come true, all Bryce had to do was cross the space between the table and the dance floor. If he joined them, they were his. He could take them home and do everything he wanted to them. Well, maybe not everything. He couldn't possibly accomplish that in one night.

But fear kept him rooted in place, alternately watching them and trying to distract himself by appreciating the men around them. A lithe man with long dark hair took hold of Toby from behind, rubbing up on him. Toby relaxed against him, laying his head back on the man's shoulder. Matt leaned in and kissed Toby's neck. Bryce could easily imagine him swiping his tongue across Toby's sweaty skin.

The dark-haired man wrapped his arms around Toby's waist, but Matt yanked Toby

back against him and the man flitted off. A tall, muscular man who'd removed his shirt to show off his chiseled chest began grinding up on Matt. The stranger's ass was perfection in leather pants. His movements were fluid as he closed his eyes and worked his body in a way that said he knew exactly how to give his whole self over to sensual endeavors. He was just the type Bryce usually went for. A few seconds later, the man moved away from Matt and Toby and headed toward the bar. Bryce considered pursuing him. He'd be a good distraction and be much safer than Toby and Matt, but Toby had claimed Bryce and it was a bond he seemed incapable of breaking.

When he glanced back at Matt and Toby, they were headed toward him. As they worked their way to the table, Toby pulled his shirt off, and Matt did the same. The sight of their sweat-slick chests made Bryce forget all about Mr. Perfect Ass.

"Entertaining enough?"

Bryce grinned. "Very. Especially the guy that just walked away."

Toby stuck his lower lip out in a pout, but Matt looked in the direction the guy had gone. He leaned in close to Bryce, no longer seeming shy like he often did. Dancing had made him bold, or else the pulse of sex in the air was affecting him as surely as it affected Bryce. "From the feel of it, his cock could do a hell of a lot of entertaining."

Bryce chuckled. "His ass would look damn fine with my cock in it."

Toby gasped and pretended to be shocked.

"You could see the goods a lot better if you came out on the floor with us," Matt pointed out.

"Feel them too," Toby added.

He wanted to feel Matt and Toby's goods, but some thread of sanity was holding him back.

Toby grinned at him, the look excessively cheeky. He cocked his head to the side and licked his lips. The glisten of sweat on his pale chest drew Bryce's attention to his light pink nipples, which were hard and begging to be tasted.

"I dare you," Toby said.

Oh fuck no. Bryce thumped his glass down on the table. He was halfway to the dance floor before he realized just how well he'd been played.

Matt laid a hand on his spine, encouraging him to keep moving. When they reached the edge of the crowd, Bryce took Matt's hand and pulled him around to stand in front of Toby. "Dance with Toby like you were earlier. Hold him; show him how much you want him."

Matt swallowed. "O-okay."

Bryce heard the resistance to taking commands. Making him surrender again was going to be fucking amazing. "Make him crazy for you."

"Oh fuck!" Bryce read the words on Toby's lips.

"We'll see about that."

Toby winked, obviously able to read his lips too.

Matt turned to him, and Bryce sucked in his breath at the depth of emotion he saw in Matt's dark eyes. "Are you sure?"

Why did Bryce feel like Matt wanted him to be sure of something far more serious than fucking him again? “Are you?”

Matt swallowed, and Bryce studied the line of his throat. “Yeah. I...” He glanced over his shoulder at Toby. “I am.”

Bryce nodded. “Then go get him.”

Toby was already dancing, face to face with a lovely blond boy. They were all so young Bryce wondered what the hell he was thinking.

Turn all those thoughts off for tonight.

So I can regret it even more in the morning.

Not as much as you’d regret giving up this chance.

Matt moved in behind Toby, grasped his hips and pulled him into the curve of Matt’s body. Bryce was glad no one could hear his groan over the music as he watched Matt thrust against Toby’s ass and Bryce imagined how good it would feel. He took a step, bringing Toby with him, then spinning him around so they were face to face. He leaned in and whispered to him. Toby kissed him. Bryce’s cock was already half-hard, but watching them kiss got it fully engaged in the game. He moved in close behind Matt just like in his fantasy.

“Is he hard for you like you are for him?” he whispered in Matt’s ear. Matt shuddered and Bryce wanted to grab the two of them and drag them out of there, but he wasn’t going to rush this night.

Toby reached for Bryce then, pulling him into a kiss. He was too startled to protest. He opened for Toby’s questing tongue and ground himself against Matt’s ass,

desperate for friction on his cock as Toby tongue-fucked him. Once again, Toby's skill was intoxicating. Where the hell had he learned to do those things with his tongue?

When Toby finally pulled back for air, Bryce swayed, dizzy from the pleasure. Could someone come just from a kiss? "Damn," he muttered.

Matt looked over his shoulder. "He's so fucking good at that."

"Yeah" was all Bryce could manage to say.

Toby just grinned.

"Stroke his cock," Bryce whispered in Matt's ear as he captured Matt's hand and pushed it between their hips.

Toby's head dropped back, and he bucked into Matt's touch. Bryce reached for Toby's hips, holding the three of them together as he thrust against Matt's ass. He wanted to fuck them right there. He glanced around and realized they had several onlookers.

Were they hoping Bryce would take things further? Did they want to see him fuck his men in front of them? Did they want him to order Matt and Toby to their knees so they could watch them suck Bryce off? Hot as that fantasy was, Bryce had better sense. They needed to take this somewhere else quickly.

He let go of Toby's hips and pulled Matt away from Toby. He thought Toby whimpered, though he couldn't have really heard it over the pounding music. Tilting his head toward their table, he took Matt's hand to lead him off the dance floor.

Toby tugged on his arm, pulling him down so he could talk against his ear. "What's

wrong?”

Bryce smiled to reassure him. “We’re going back to my place.”

“Really?” Toby beamed.

Bryce nodded, though he wondered if he could make it that far. He was so horny that fucking in the parking lot sounded better every second.

“I’ll drive,” he said as they exited the club and the music faded enough for regular conversation. He’d only had one drink, and he had no idea how much they’d had before he arrived. Besides, he liked to be in charge, and so far they didn’t seem to mind that at all.

Toby climbed in front with him, and Matt slid into the backseat and strapped on the middle belt so he could lean forward. Bryce turned around, unable to resist snatching a kiss. Matt groaned, leaning into him, sliding a hand into his hair, and kneading his scalp. Bryce hated that he had to pull away, but they were never going to get to his place if he didn’t start driving.

“You two still good with me taking control? Maybe pushing things further than last time?” he asked as he cranked the engine.

“God, yes. The way you take charge is part of what makes you so fucking hot,” Toby said.

“Mmmhmm,” Matt agreed.

Toby grabbed Bryce’s right hand and placed it on the bulge in his jeans. “Feel that? That’s what happens every time I think about you getting all bossy, telling me what to do. I want to obey your every command.”

Bryce stroked him, giving him just a touch of pressure. Toby arched up. “More.”

“You’ll get more when I say so.”

Toby shuddered. “God, I need this.”

Matt leaned in closer. “Are you going to torment him? Because I really want to see that.”

Bryce laughed at Matt’s eagerness. “I might torment you both.”

“So long as fucking is involved. I want to feel you in my ass again.” Matt’s voice had a dreamy quality that made Bryce shudder.

“I haven’t thought of much else since that night,” Bryce admitted, surprising himself.

“Me either.”

“Are we going to fuck in the car or are you really driving us home?” Toby asked.

Bryce put the car in gear and backed out. “This car would never work for all the things I’ve got planned for you.”

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As soon as Bryce opened his front door, Rollo came bounding toward them, ready to pounce. “Watch out,” he called as the dog did his best to knock them all to the floor with the full extent of his excitement.

“Settle down, boy!” he yelled, but Rollo just kept yipping, snorting, and sniffing like mad. Bryce walked through the kitchen and opened the back door. “Out.”

At the sound of the word, Rollo’s nails slid on the floor as he tried to change direction. Matt and Toby were laughing so hard, Bryce was surprised they weren’t crying.

“A little excited, isn’t he?” Bryce asked as Rollo shot into the small fenced-in yard and raced around before finding a spot to do his business. “I rescued him, and he’s still trying to repay me by loving me to death.”

“Aw, you got him at the shelter?” Toby asked.

“No, I pulled him out of a burning building, and no one claimed him.”

“Wow, that’s like Hallmark-movie kind of sweet,” Toby said.

Bryce snorted. “Hardly. I’d been thinking about getting a dog, but I’d held off because of my hours. Luckily, I’ve been able to find awesome dog sitters to help me out, and Rollo doesn’t seem to mind.”

“No,” Matt agreed. “He doesn’t.”

Rollo scratched at the back door and Bryce let him in. He circled them, but at least this time he didn't pounce. "If we go in the bedroom, he won't bother us," Bryce promised. "Now that he's had his wild run, he'll likely go to sleep."

Focusing on the dog had distracted Bryce from his need, but as he led the way to his bedroom, the pulse of desire returned. Apparently he wasn't the only one feeling it either. Toby practically pushed them through the door and kicked it closed behind them. "I love dogs, but this is going to be all about us."

Toby crossed the room to the foot of Bryce's king-size bed—a luxury Bryce had allowed himself after his promotion—and began undoing his pants.

"We don't have to rush this," Bryce said. "Unless you have other plans for later. I had the impression I was the only man on your agenda."

Matt shook his head. "No other plans."

"Good because I have a few things to say first."

Toby rubbed his hand over his cock, which he'd yet to free from his pants. "I don't want to talk anymore."

"Then close your mouth and listen," Bryce said. "If I do anything that bothers you at all, you tell me and I'll stop."

"I trust you," Toby said, and Matt nodded.

"I get that, but I don't ever want to scare you."

"What did you have in mind?" Matt looked slightly concerned, but Toby's eyes were full of excitement.

Bryce swallowed, trying to find his voice. Toby continued to stroke himself, and all Bryce wanted to do was watch Toby's hand. Finally, he forced his gaze up until his eyes locked with Toby's. "I want to restrain you. I want to tease you, bring you right to the edge and then make you wait." He hesitated.

Neither man seemed disturbed. Toby was working himself faster than before, and Matt was smiling. "Too bad I didn't bring our bondage rope," he said.

The tension in Bryce eased. He hadn't been wrong about them.

Matt pulled Toby's hand away from his cock and replaced it with his own. "I'd love to see you use the rope on Toby. He's gorgeous all trussed up. I get a little skittish with bondage, but I don't mind being held down or told what to do. I... I actually like it." Matt blushed adorably.

"Wait right there." Bryce rummaged in his closet until he found the red ropes he hadn't used in far too long. "How about this?"

Toby's eyes widened. "Oh yes."

"Perfect. Now strip."

"I thought you wanted to go slow," Toby teased.

"I want you to do exactly what I say."

Toby sucked in a breath and quickly shucked his pants.

"You too," Bryce ordered Matt.

This time Matt didn't even try to resist taking Bryce's commands. After pulling off

his shirt and going to work on the fastenings of his pants, he looked at Bryce, who was still fully dressed. “Aren’t you going to get naked too?”

“Eventually.” He loved how disconcerted it made his lovers for him to toy with them while he was still dressed.

Toby scooped up his clothes and tossed them on the chair Bryce had tucked under the window in the perfect position to catch the morning sun. It was usually occupied by Rollo.

Toby walked to the bed, obviously enjoying being watched, working his hips, showing off his lean, gorgeous body. Matt wasn’t self-conscious—and God knows he didn’t need to be—but he wasn’t the show-off Toby was. He must have had enough of Toby’s display, because as Toby put his knee on the bed, Matt reached out and goosed him. Toby jumped, making an undignified squawk.

They were fucking adorable together. That thought gave Bryce a momentary flash of doubt. Then Toby stretched out on his back and reached his arms above his head. When he sank into the mattress in total surrender, Bryce’s hesitation fled.

“You said something about restraining me?”

Bryce raised his brows. “Spanking you would probably be better.”

“Mmmm.” Toby’s grin grew even more sly.

“That can certainly be arranged, you know.”

Toby licked his lips, looking less confident now. “Really? You would...”

“If and only if you want me to.” Bryce didn’t always go in for spanking, but the

thought of Toby draped over his lap, wrists lashed together, the red rope stark against this pale skin... Fuck yeah he wanted that. With Matt kneeling, waiting his turn or helping hold Toby down.

“Stand up,” he ordered Toby as he handed Matt a length of rope. “Tie his hands behind his back.” Toby turned so he faced Bryce, putting his back to Matt. He sighed dramatically as Matt began to wind the rope around his wrists. His cock was deeply pink and straining for attention.

Bryce closed the distance between them and reached for Toby’s hard shaft. Toby groaned and pushed into his hand as Bryce jacked him a few times before catching the drop of precum that glistened at the tip of his cock and brought it to his mouth. Toby’s breath quickened as he watched Bryce lick his finger clean.

Bryce grinned and stepped back until he could sit down on the bed. “Are his hands secure?”

Matt and Toby nodded at the same time. “Do you have a safe word?” he asked Toby.

Toby chewed his bottom lip.

“I need to know if you really want me to stop.”

“Hydrant.” Toby whispered the word.

Bryce grinned. “Perfect. Come lay over my lap.”

Toby walked to him with shaky steps.

“Help him,” Bryce told Matt.

Matt assisted Toby with climbing onto the bed since his hands were behind his back. Once Toby was in position—the rope looked as lovely as Bryce had imagined it would—Bryce stroked his ass carefully. “Have you been spanked before?”

Toby nodded.

“Hard?”

“Y-yes.”

Bryce looked at Matt. His cheeks were red but his cock was as eager as Toby’s. “He kept asking me to go harder,” Matt confessed.

Bryce took a slow breath, trying to slow the rush of need racing through him. How had he ever thought he could resist these two?

“You’re going to stand right there and watch,” he told Matt. “But you’re not to touch yourself. Once I’m finished with Toby, I’m going to fuck you until you lose your fucking mind.”

Matt sucked in his breath and nodded. “Yeah, that’s... yeah.”

“Good.”

“You ready?” he asked Toby, sliding his hand over his ass and down his thighs.

“Yes, please.”

Bryce’s first smack against Toby’s ass was just hard enough to make him really feel it. Toby moaned and wiggled. “Keep still,” Bryce ordered as he spanked him harder. Then he glanced up at Matt. His eyes had darkened to black, and he licked his lips as

he watched Bryce caress Toby's ass.

Time to turn things up. He brought his hand down so hard the crack echoed in the room. Toby jerked under him. "More!"

"Keep quiet and still, and you'll get what you need."

Toby shuddered under him, and Bryce heard Matt suck in his breath. He brought his hand down again, never pausing for Toby to catch his breath. Sometimes he landed the blows on one side of Toby's ass, sometimes the other in no predictable pattern. Toby tried to keep still at first, but eventually he writhed, whimpered, begged. Bryce felt something warm hit his leg. Holy fuck, Toby was coming from Bryce heating up his ass. He gave one more gentle slap, then held Toby against him, letting him enjoy the rush of orgasm.

"Sorry," Toby gasped. "I couldn't..."

Bryce stroked his hair and his sore ass. "It's okay. I'm pleased to see how much it affected you."

"That was incredible," Matt said, the words strained.

Bryce looked up. Matt's cock was leaking, and he looked like he was about to die from the effort of standing still. Bryce loved that he hadn't given in, that he wanted to obey.

"Go take care of Matt. I want to look at your bright red ass as you suck him."

Toby sat back and looked up at Bryce. "Thank you."

The raw openness of his words made Bryce's breath catch. He was already in way too

deep, but Toby's response was exquisite. "Turn around so I can untie you." He took the ropes off and rubbed Toby's wrists for a few seconds. "Are you okay?"

Toby nodded. "Yeah. Okay. More than okay." His voice was shaky but there was a smile on his face, so Bryce trusted his words.

Toby crawled sensuously across the floor toward Matt.

"Take his cock in your mouth, Toby. I want you to reward him for being so patient."

Matt gasped, clenching and unclenching his hands at his sides as Toby wrapped a hand around his cock and guided it to his mouth.

"Matt, you can touch him, use him," Bryce said, smiling at the fact Matt had waited for permission.

Matt grabbed the sides of Toby's head and thrust into his mouth. Toby didn't falter. He just opened up and took what Matt had to give. It was all over too quickly. Bryce had no doubt Matt could have brought himself off with a few strokes of his cock, and the suction of Toby's mouth had to be far more stimulating than Matt's own hand.

Matt braced himself on Toby's shoulders. "Toby, help him onto the bed."

Toby got to his feet, but he was nearly as wobbly as Matt. They stumbled toward the bed together. Matt flopped onto the mattress and scooted up toward the headboard.

"You ready to be fucked?" Bryce asked him.

His eyes widened. "Yes, please."

Matt's cock had never completely softened, and Toby was fully hard again.

“Lube and condoms are in that drawer.” Bryce gestured toward the nightstand. Toby extracted the supplies while Bryce undressed.

“Help him relax,” Bryce ordered Toby.

Toby climbed on the bed and snuggled in against Matt. He cupped Matt’s face with one hand and kissed him. Matt groaned into the kiss as Bryce worked a slick finger into his ass.

Matt’s body gripped Bryce tight, but he pushed in farther, working him open, adding another finger. “You okay with this?” he asked Matt as he slid his fingers from Matt’s body and grabbed a foil packet.

Matt nodded vigorously.

“Then get ready to be fucked more thoroughly than you ever have.”

Toby sat up. “I want to watch him open you up, baby.”

Matt nodded again, apparently beyond speech.

Bryce pushed Matt’s legs up to his chest. Toby reached out a tentative hand. “Go ahead,” Bryce said, grinning.

Toby took Bryce’s cock and stroked it a few times. “So fucking thick,” he murmured.

“Fuck,” Matt said.

“Yes,” Toby agreed as he guided Bryce’s cock to Matt’s entrance while Bryce held on to Matt’s legs. When Toby let go and sat back, Bryce thrust and Matt cried out, tensing a little but nothing like the first time they’d fucked.

Bryce forced himself to hold still once he was all the way in. He watched Matt, seeing the tension on his face, then watching it slowly ease. Toby snuggled against him and lazily caressed one of Matt's nipples.

"More," Matt said, the word barely audible.

Bryce slid out, fighting back a groan as Matt's ass gripped his cock, not wanting to let go. He forced himself to go slow, wanting Matt desperate before he got rough. In and out, the pace excruciating. Sweat dripped down Matt's face, and Toby watched, mesmerized. Matt squeezed his eyes shut, twisting and fighting Bryce's hold, trying to thrust, trying to go faster. He sank his teeth into his lower lip, holding back the cries Bryce was sure were ready to burst forth.

"Stop holding back."

Matt shook his head.

"He's stubborn," Toby said, his voice low and raw with need.

"Open your eyes," Bryce commanded.

Matt obeyed, locking gazes with him. His eyes flashed with passion and anger. "Fuck me."

"I am." To emphasize his point, he pulled out gradually. "That's my dick in your ass, stretching you open."

"Fuck me for real."

"Then let go. I want to hear you, want to know what you feel."

“Please.” Matt looked pained.

“Do it, Matt. It’s so fucking hot when you let go,” Toby begged.

“Need you,” Matt said. “Need it hard and fast. Please.”

“So gorgeous.” Bryce thrust deep and began fucking Matt relentlessly. Matt whimpered and moaned, then grew even more fevered, babbled Bryce’s name and Toby’s. The sounds drove Bryce crazy.

When he thought Matt was about to come any second, Bryce pulled out. “Toby, I want you on your back.”

Toby scrambled to obey, lying down beside Matt. Bryce had never been more thankful for his big bed.

Matt’s eyes were wide, his breathing harsh and fast. “W-what are you doing?”

Bryce raised a brow and stared down at him. “You afraid I’m going to leave you like this?”

“Please.”

God, he was beautiful when he begged. “You want to fuck Toby while I fuck you?”

Matt shuddered. “Oh my God.”

“Like that idea, do you?”

Matt nodded vigorously.

“You like the idea of driving into his hot ass, making him cry out as I destroy you, own you, and finally let you come when I say and only when I say?”

Matt and Toby both whimpered, and Bryce’s cock let him know he had about one second to get on with it.

Bryce handed Matt a condom and tossed the lube to Toby, who squeezed some onto his fingers as Matt rolled the condom down his shaft with shaky hands.

Bryce’s breath rushed in and out as he watched Toby push his fingers into his ass, fucking himself. He closed his eyes and stuck out his tongue, giving them a good show. He was so perfect for Bryce. “Enough.”

Toby opened his eyes and winked at Bryce, adding another finger to those in his ass. Bratty but perfect. “I said enough.”

“But it feels so good,” he whined.

“Matt’s dick’s going to feel better.”

Toby nodded. He pulled his fingers from his ass and reached up, grabbing the headboard without Bryce having to tell him.

“Don’t move those hands, or we’ll have to stop and tie you up.”

“I want you to. Please,” Matt begged.

Bryce nodded, and Matt found the rope on the floor by the bed and tied Toby’s hands to the slats in the headboard. Bryce loved the sight of Toby spread out for them. He was so fucking beautiful. He considered forgetting his original plan and having both him and Matt jerk off over Toby. Bryce longed to see him wearing their cum, but first

he wanted to hear the sounds they'd make when they were all fucking.

"He's all yours, Matt."

Matt climbed on top of Toby clumsily, but even as sex drunk as he was, he didn't have a problem positioning himself and driving roughly into Toby. He didn't go for finesse or gentleness, but Toby obviously loved it. He wrapped his legs around Matt's hips and thrust up, meeting each stroke. Within seconds, both men were panting, grunting, groaning, and if Toby struggled against his bonds any harder, the headboard was going to crack.

"My turn," Bryce said, pushing Toby's legs aside to give himself the access he needed.

He grabbed Matt's hips and held them tight. "Keep still until I'm ready," he ordered.

A whimper was all the answer Bryce got before he drove back into Matt, taking him as roughly as Matt had taken Toby. Matt cried out and Bryce held himself still, afraid he would truly hurt him. "Can you take this?"

"Fuck yes," Matt said, his voice breathy and desperate.

"Good. I want you to take Toby just as hard as I take you, but don't you dare come until I tell you to. You either, Toby."

"Okay, just please... I can't..."

Bryce cut off Matt's words by pulling out of his ass as if they had all the time in the world, then driving back in, pushing him into Toby. Within seconds, they were fucking with abandon, all of them desperately racing toward orgasm.

“Bryce! Oh fuck!” Matt cried out again and again.

Bryce knew he couldn’t last much longer either, and he didn’t want either of them thinking they’d disappointed him. “Come for me, both of you.”

“Holy fucking fuck,” Matt cried, bucking against Toby. Bryce pulled out and let him concentrate on emptying himself into Toby.

As Matt’s thrusts slowed, Toby gripped his dick, jerking himself to a fast, wild climax. He squeezed his eyes shut and shuddered as he shot across his abdomen.

“Clean him up,” Bryce ordered Matt as he drove back into his ass.

“Bryce! Oh my fucking God!” Matt cried.

Toby slid his hands into Matt’s hair as Matt licked the cum from his belly while Bryce thrust madly. Seconds later, fire lit Bryce up from head to toe. As he fell apart, something burned behind his eyes. No way, not fucking tears. Stars gleamed in front of him, clouding his vision. Then he passed out over Matt’s back.

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After disposing of the condoms and wiping everyone off with a t-shirt he found on the floor, Bryce collapsed back on the bed. Just like the last time, he didn't mean to fall asleep, but his legs weren't ready for walking yet.

Some time later, he woke. It was still dark. Matt and Toby lay curled next to him, sound asleep. He slipped from the bed and stumbled to the kitchen, his muscles sore from the workout he'd given them.

He let Rollo out, then poured himself a glass of water, drained it, and set the glass in the sink. He simply stood there, holding on to the counter, trying to still the swirling thoughts in his head.

You're a fool to have slept with them again.

You're falling for them.

They're perfect.

They're worth it.

What are you going to do now?

What was he going to do? Ending things now didn't seem like an option. Matt and Toby drew him in a way he was powerless to resist. He might be the one who took charge in bed, but every other moment of the day, he was willing to follow wherever they led.

Even if it's to another shake-up in your life?

Maybe. Was he seriously thinking that? Seriously wanting to pursue this? Like a relationship?

"Bryce?"

Toby stood in the kitchen doorway. Bryce hadn't heard him come in, even though he was usually hyperaware of what was going on around him. He wanted to think he'd been in a fog because he'd just woken up, but he knew that wasn't true. He was off balance, and he didn't know how to right himself.

"You okay?" Toby asked.

"Yeah," he answered, not wanting to explain his unease.

"You don't look okay."

Bryce sighed. "I'm all right. I'm just... confused."

Toby held out his hand. "Come back to bed. We want to snuggle some more."

Bryce pushed away from the sink. And took a step toward Toby. Was this going to end in disaster? Was he capable of a relationship? A hot three-way was one thing. But having them spend the night, cuddling? "Are you sure?"

Toby nodded and closed the distance between them. Bryce took his hand.

"Matt's okay with this too?" Bryce asked.

Toby nodded. "He sent me out here."

“Why didn’t he come himself?”

“He said it was his job to keep the bed warm.”

Bryce laughed. “And you bought that?”

“I decided not to argue.”

“You guys are happy together and I... fuck, I don’t know how to do this.”

Toby gave him a lopsided smile. “Neither do we, but we want to try.”

“I’m afraid we’re all going to get screwed.”

That made Toby laugh. “That’s kind of the idea, isn’t it?”

Bryce cupped Toby’s face and traced the line of his cheekbone with his thumb. “I don’t want to hurt you.”

Toby brushed his lips gently over Bryce’s. “We don’t want to hurt you either. Come back to bed.”

Toby turned to walk away and Bryce followed, hoping Matt had done a good job of keeping the bed warm.

Several hours later, he woke again, snuggled between Matt and Toby. This time sun streamed in the windows, letting him know it was morning. Normally he let Rollo out right away, but since he’d gone out in the middle of the night, he could wait. Bryce was glad, because he didn’t want to move. Matt was pressed against his back, and Bryce could feel his morning erection pressing against the seam of his ass. He couldn’t resist rubbing back against it. Matt made a soft sound of pleasure but didn’t

wake.

Toby's leg was slung over Bryce's and his head was tucked beneath Bryce's chin. Bryce laid an arm over him and hauled him even closer. Toby murmured and snuggled against him. Bryce contemplated all the delicious things he could do to them, but even after Toby insisted they wanted to spend the night cuddled against him, he had trouble reconciling himself to a three-way relationship.

Maybe he should get up and make some breakfast. While they ate, he'd have a chance to make sure they were really okay after last night. Things had gotten seriously intense, after all. On the other hand, a morning fuck would feel incredible. Of course, Matt and Toby were likely sore as hell. Bryce blew out a disgusted breath. If he lay there any longer second-guessing himself, he was going to lose his mind. He needed something to do with his restless energy.

Toby chose that moment to shift position, and his cock brushed against Bryce's. Bryce sucked in his breath and wrapped his hand around both their cocks. He stroked them gently at first. Toby moaned but didn't open his eyes. Bryce gripped him a little tighter, and he pushed into Bryce's hand. "That's it. Wake up, Toby. I want you to really feel this."

Toby blinked. "You're really here. Not a dream?"

Matt sat up then. "Are you two fucking?"

Bryce chuckled. "Toby was poking me with his dick. What was I supposed to do?"

Matt gave them a sleepy smile. Then he pushed his hips forward, sliding his cock along the crack of Bryce's ass. "You ever bottom?" he asked Bryce.

Bryce looked over his shoulder at Matt. "Rarely, but yes. Why? You want to fuck

me?”

Matt nodded hesitantly. “Not now, though. Too asleep to enjoy it but... sometime... I mean, if...”

“I’d like that,” Bryce said.

“Mmmhmm,” Toby murmured.

Bryce wasn’t sure if Toby was saying he’d like it too or just voicing his interest in what they were already doing. Whichever it was, he thrust more insistently against Bryce’s cock.

Soon they were all beyond speech, taken by the rush to get off. Again and again, Bryce worked his hips back against Matt, then forward to rub his cock along Toby’s until within seconds of each other, they all lost it, covering each other in cum.

Bryce lay there for a while afterward, listening to Toby and Matt’s ragged breathing and basking in these last moments before the day began, pretending the rest of the world didn’t exist until his stomach growled loudly.

Toby snickered and Matt groaned. “Why can’t breakfast just appear right here? I don’t want to leave this bed, ever.”

Bryce understood that sentiment. “If I get first shower, I’ll cook breakfast.”

“Deal,” Matt answered.

Bryce summoned the energy to get out of bed. He glanced back at Toby and Matt before stepping into the adjoining bathroom. They had snuggled against each other. He wondered if they’d be asleep again before he got out of the shower. They were so

adorable lying there together. And so young. Don't think about that. Don't plan any further than breakfast.

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As soon as he was dressed, Bryce headed to the kitchen, surveyed what he had in the fridge, and settled on bacon and blueberry pancakes. He remembered Matt complaining about how unhealthy everything was at the station. But adding the blueberries made the pancakes healthy, right? He started coffee and turned the stovetop griddle on to heat while he stirred up the pancake batter. By the time he had bacon in the oven—once he'd learned about baking a pan of bacon instead of frying it with grease popping up at him, he'd been sold—he heard the shower start. Apparently, Matt and Toby hadn't gone back to sleep after all.

Toby stumbled into the kitchen as Bryce poured the first pancakes onto the griddle. He wore a pair of Bryce's sweats, which he'd had to roll up at the ankles and down at the waist. His hair was dripping wet, and he didn't look like his shower had done anything to wake him up.

"Coffee?" Bryce held up the pot.

"God, yes," Toby answered.

Bryce poured him a mug and set it in front of him. "You can sit down if you want. I'll have everything ready in a minute."

Toby took a few sips of coffee and seemed to perk up a bit. "Those smell so good," he said, staying where he was, propped against the counter.

Matt joined them just as Bryce took the last pancakes off the griddle and pulled a second pan of bacon out of the oven.

They'd joked about his appetite when they'd gone to Elmer's, but after the workout they'd had the night before and the fact that it was nearly lunchtime, he figured they might eat just as much as he would this morning.

He gestured toward the table. "Go ahead and sit down. I've got everything ready."

"Please tell me there's coffee," Matt said.

Toby patted Matt's shoulder. "I'll get you some."

Bryce handed Toby a mug so he could fill it for Matt, then set a plate of pancakes on the table followed by a plate of bacon and a carafe of maple syrup he'd heated up.

"This looks amazing," Toby said, now sounding fully awake.

Matt simply nodded. "Yeah."

Rollo, back in from a morning foray in the yard, took his usual spot on the floor by Bryce's chair. "You know you're going to get some bacon, don't you? You spoiled rotten menace."

Toby laughed. "If he keeps looking at us like that, he's going to get some out of all of us. That face is truly pathetic."

"Don't let him fool you." Bryce scratched Rollo's ears even as he scolded.

The men all filled their plates, and for a while, other than requests to pass things or comments on the food's deliciousness, they focused on eating.

When their hunger was sated enough for them to slow down, the silence took on an awkward feel. "So... um... I guess we need to get my car," Matt said. "If you don't

mind driving us over... or we could take the bus if you've got plans."

Bryce shook his head. "No plans."

"Okay, well..."

"We'll help you clean up first," Toby said.

Rollo jumped up and danced around like he knew exactly what cleanup meant and he was eager to help. Bryce ignored his antics. "Do you have plans today?"

Toby's hand went to his hair, fiddling with it. "We were just going to lay around, maybe watch a movie, try to force ourselves to work out. Nothing special."

"You could do that here." Bryce wasn't sure what the hell he was doing. Prolonging the inevitable? Surely he wasn't going to suggest they let this... whatever it was continue.

"You'd let us stay?" Matt asked.

"I'd... uh... like you to. I mean, unless you?—"

Toby dropped his hand to his lap and beamed at Bryce. "We'd like it too."

"We can still go get your car if you want. I don't want you feeling like you're stuck."

Matt shook his head. "It's fine. I want to spend the day with you."

"Me too," Toby said.

Bryce nodded, not sure he could think of the right words to add to this uneasy

conversation.

“What movie should we watch?” Toby asked, seeming to take spending the day together in stride, unlike Matt and Bryce.

Bryce shrugged. “You can look through my collection of DVDs or load up Netflix.” Toby started to speak, but Bryce held up his hand. “No jokes about how only old people have DVDs. I’ll make some popcorn.”

Toby snickered, but Matt stared at him like he was crazy. “We just ate a huge breakfast or brunch or whatever it was, aren’t you full?”

“Yeah, but it’s a movie. We need popcorn,” Toby answered before Bryce could.

Matt rolled his eyes. “Fine. But you do not want to leave Toby in charge of the movie or we’ll be watching Sharknado Meets Godzilla.”

“That would be epic,” Toby yelled from the living room where he’d already opened the cabinet under Bryce’s TV where he kept his DVDs. “If you leave it up to Matt, we’ll just be watching baseball.”

“No matter who’s playing, baseball is better than the shit movies you come up with.”

“Don’t listen to him, Bryce!” Toby hollered.

“Go save us,” Bryce said, gesturing for Matt to join Toby. “I’ve got this.”

Bryce heard them arguing in low tones, but he couldn’t really discern their words, especially over the sound of his mind freaking out.

What are you doing?

Making this last as long as it can.

So it will be that much harder to break it off?

And that much harder to see them at work tomorrow? Yes. That.

You know you're crazy.

Yes, but I'm going to pretend I'm not, so shut up.

When the popcorn finished, he called out, "Spicy popcorn or caramel or plain?"

"Spicy."

"Caramel."

Bryce laughed. "I don't think spicy caramel is quite the thing, although it does sound like a new hipster appetizer."

"I'll pass. Spicy's fine," Toby said.

"How spicy can you take it?" Bryce asked.

"After last night you still need to ask?"

Heat rose to Bryce's face at the memory of Toby with his hands tied, begging to be fucked.

Matt rescued Bryce from further commentary. "Ignore him. On a Thai-restaurant scale, he's two peppers, and I'm three."

“Told you he really likes kinky once he gets into it,” Toby responded.

Bryce heard something which might have been Matt throwing a pillow at Toby.

“I’ll go with medium spicy.”

“I can take whatever you give,” Toby called.

Bryce’s cock reacted to the sultry words. At this rate, he wasn’t sure they’d make it through a movie. But as much as he wanted to fuck them again he also really wanted to spend time hanging out with them. He needed to prove to himself that he wasn’t crazy, that there was more here than just incredible sex. Did they have enough in common to enjoy each other outside the bedroom? What if they did? What if they had a terrific day together? What then?

The only way they could make a go of a relationship was to make some major changes at work. Why would anybody take such a risk unless... No way was he even going to think the L word. They’d fucked twice. This was hardly love.

Pushing those thoughts aside, Bryce coated the popcorn with a mixture of olive oil, Sriracha, and honey and carried the huge bowl into the living room. “So what are we watching?”

“Fast and Furious 8,” Matt and Toby answered together.

“You can’t go wrong with all that hotness,” Matt added.

Bryce heartily agreed. “No, you really can’t.” He wouldn’t have pegged Matt and Toby as Fast and Furious franchise fans. Maybe they had more in common than he thought.

He turned on the movie, and they settled on the couch with him in the middle. From the get-go, they were quoting lines and arguing over who was the hottest man in the movie. Matt was in the Jason Stratham camp while Toby championed The Rock, and Bryce had serious fantasies about Vin Diesel. When the movie finished, they argued over what to watch next—Fast and Furious 9, Hobbs and Shaw or something from another franchise.

“How about a game to see who gets their choice?” Toby asked.

Matt raised his brows. “A game?”

Bryce had the impression Matt had been privy to Toby’s “games” before and had reason to be skeptical.

“We’ll all jerk off while watching each other and the last one to come gets his movie choice.”

Bryce choked, nearly blowing soda across the coffee table. Apparently, he was going to have to get used to Toby making him blush as if he wasn’t a grown-ass thirty-two-year-old man who’d had plenty of dirty sex. “Is he serious?” he asked, looking at Matt.

Matt nodded. “Sadly, yes.”

“Come on, you know you want to.”

“Isn’t that one of those lines guaranteed to precede disaster?” Matt asked.

“What, like the chief walking in on us?”

Toby surely meant the comment to be funny, but his words sobered all of them.

“Well, that killed the fucking mood,” Matt grumbled.

“How about I let Rollo out and make sure the door’s locked.” Bryce hadn’t been ready for the real world to intrude on them, even figuratively, so he was happy for a chance to step away for a few minutes.

When he returned with Rollo trotting at his side, Matt was tapping the side of the couch, bouncing his leg and glaring at Toby. He looked like a bundle of nervous energy that might explode at any moment. Bryce had the sense he and Toby had managed to have an argument while he was out of the room without actually saying a word to each other.

“Sorry,” Toby muttered, not looking at Bryce.

“S okay. We’ve been ignoring it, but we all know it’s there.”

“Can we please ignore it for a little longer, like the rest of the day?” Matt asked.

Bryce glanced at Toby, who smiled and cupped his crotch. “My game would help.”

Trust Toby to brush off even the most depressing thoughts like they were nothing. “It certainly would be a distraction.”

“Toby.” Matt’s voice still held an edge of anger.

“Should I take you to your car now?” Bryce asked Matt.

Matt looked up. Their gazes locked and heat rushed over Bryce. Matt had looked at him like that the night before, full of desire but also apprehension, right before Bryce pushed into his tight ass. “No. I don’t want to go.”

Bryce didn't want him to go either. So he sat down on the couch, pushed his sweats and boxers down, and pulled out his cock, deciding to let his body do the talking. Toby's and Matt's eyes widened, and Bryce loved putting that look of shock and wonder on their faces. He loved it so much he let all his fears go and slid his hand up and down his cock in a steady rhythm, trying his best to give them no choice but to join him.

Matt licked his lips. "God, that's hot."

"You like thinking about me fucking you, about how you begged for more?"

"Holy shit!" Matt reached for his own cock.

Toby snickered. "So you like my game after all?"

"Shut up!"

Toby grinned like a cat with cream and joined the party. He pushed his borrowed sweats all the way to the floor, and like in most things, he didn't start off slow, he went right in with fast, sure strokes. His gaze darted from Bryce to Matt and back. Toby's excitement and energy mesmerized Bryce for a while, but then he focused on Matt. His pace was slower than Toby's, and his expression said each stroke gave him the same combination of agony and pleasure as the torment Bryce had given his ass the night before. He was so fucking sensuous. Both these men were divine, and Bryce wanted them, not just for that day but for... for how long? Weeks? Months? Forever?

Soon even Bryce and Matt were moving their hands as quickly as Toby. It was anyone's guess who could hold out the longest, but Bryce didn't give a damn if he won or not. He just wanted to watch their faces as they came so he let go, working his dick in a way sure to bring him off quickly.

He was close. So close. He reached a hand down and tugged on his balls. “Watch,” he yelled as his orgasm hit. He kept milking his cock until it was too sore to bear being touched. Matt and Toby never looked away.

“Fuck,” Matt yelled. “Oh fuck. That was...”

“Oh my God. Can’t. I can’t—” Toby cried out.

Bryce fought his body’s exhaustion, sitting up enough to watch Toby’s cum shoot over his hand and spray his abdomen. Toby was still working his cock, enjoying those last seconds of ecstasy, when Matt made a strangled noise and his body stiffened. Toby slid off the couch and knelt in front of him, managing to get his mouth around Matt’s cock before he came. Toby swallowed over and over, taking all Matt had to give.

They watched Fast and Furious 9 and 10, ordered pizza, let it get cold while they fucked like mad before heating it up and eating it while starting Hobbs and Shaw, which they followed with a daisy chain of slurping, sucking, and dirty pleasure. Bryce almost passed out from the sensation of Toby rimming his ass, then swallowing him down as if the concept of a gag reflex was unknown to him. He could easily put a porn star to shame.

As they lay there, covered in cum and too exhausted to do anything about it, Bryce realized it was after ten PM. “Wow, we really spent the whole day fucking and watching TV.”

Toby giggled. “Fantastic, isn’t it?”

“We didn’t go for a run. I never skip my run,” Matt grouched.

Toby raised up on his elbow and looked at Matt. “Seriously? Doesn’t all this sex

count as a workout? I can hardly move.”

Bryce agreed. “You’re excused today.”

Matt just groaned. Trust him to be the conscientious one.

“Hey, if I didn’t think it would kill me, I’d do my best to get your heart rate up again.”

“Don’t try, because it would definitely kill me,” Matt conceded.

Toby sat up, grinning. “Not me. Let’s go!”

“Shut up!” Matt and Bryce said the words simultaneously.

Toby snorted as he collapsed back onto the mattress. “Matt’s such a fucking rules follower.”

“Really? You’re saying that when I just sucked you off while Bryce wrapped his mouth around my cock like he’d never tasted anything better? That’s following the rules?”

Toby rolled his eyes. “You know what I mean.”

“Look, I don’t need you?—”

Bryce whistled and raised a hand, which had to look ridiculous since they were all more or less lying down. “Enough. We’re all breaking the rules here, and I’m the fucking officer for our unit, so I really can’t keep ignoring it. We need to?—”

Matt levered himself to a sitting position. “Just take us to my car, and we’ll?—”

“No,” Toby said. “We’re not going to pretend this never happened. This”—he gestured between them—“is too good to ignore.”

Bryce nodded. “You’re right. Things are good between us, but we can’t keep working together if we—” Shit, he’d almost confessed to more than he meant to.

“Need each other so much we can’t fucking stay away?” Toby asked.

Bryce nodded. “Yeah. Something like that.”

Matt looked at Bryce, pain clear in his eyes, his usually tan skin now pale. “I... I can’t...” He sounded like he was about to hyperventilate.

“Lie down.” Bryce pushed him back against the mattress and held him there. “Good. Now take slow breaths.”

Matt pushed his hands away and tried to sit up again. “Don’t. I don’t need you trying to take care of me.”

“You’re about to fucking pass out. So lie the fuck down,” Toby yelled.

Bryce looked from one man to another. He’d made a mistake, and now it was likely to cost Matt and Toby their relationship as well as leave him feeling lonelier than he had before he’d slept with them.

“Talk to me,” he said to Matt.

“I don’t want to change units,” Matt said. “I don’t want to do this without Toby. I... I’ve never done anything without him.”

Toby ran a hand through his hair and shook his head. “You don’t need me.”

“Yeah, I do. I... I really do.”

Toby looked panicked now too. Fuck, how could Bryce make this right?

“You could probably manage to stay on the same shift and work at different stations.”

Matt shook his head. “No. Not yet, please. Just give me a little more time to figure this out.”

Bryce knew it was wrong for him to agree to it, wrong professionally, wrong personally. If they were caught, he would be blamed for not reporting that they were in a relationship. He could lose his job. Wasn't the possibility of getting transferred a hell of a lot better than that?

And yet, once again, instead of the smart move, he made the stupid one. “Okay, I won't say anything or expect you to right now. But if we... If this...”

“You're not going to report us? Really?” Matt looked so fucking hopeful, like a puppy who realized he was about to be cuddled instead of kicked. How bad had it been for him as a kid?

Bryce shook his head. “Not now, but I can't let this go much longer. You've got to understand that. I was already ignoring what I suspected about you and Toby, and now I'm involved too.”

“But you only suspected about us. You didn't know about us for sure,” Matt said.

“There were enough clues that I considered confronting you.” That wasn't exactly true, but Bryce wanted Matt to see the risk he was running.

“Fuck,” Matt muttered. “Who else knows?”

“No one that I know of, but that won’t last forever.”

Toby laid a hand on Bryce’s arm. “Give me and Matt a chance to talk about the best way to approach this. I know things have to change, but we need a little more time.”

Against all his instincts, Bryce nodded. “Okay, you got it.”

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A little more time turned into a week and then a month. The three of them spent as much time together as they could. Matt and Toby stayed over often and a few times, Bryce and Rollo stayed with them. Matt insisted they all go to a Durham Bulls game, and Toby foisted an afternoon of roller skating on them. Bryce hadn't been that sore in a long time.

Bryce was the best cook of the three of them, so he ended up making dinner a lot of nights, just basics like spaghetti and meatballs or enchiladas—he wasn't up to chef-quality meals but Matt and Toby seemed impressed.

The likelihood that someone at work was going to figure out what was going on grew every day they were together. Bryce sensed that they were barreling toward disaster, but he couldn't make himself jump off the wild ride. WT had to at least suspect something. They all acted different at work, didn't they? Bryce sure thought so. How could anyone be so damn oblivious that they didn't notice? He sucked at hiding anything, and Matt wasn't as good at it as he used to be. How much longer did they have before this exploded in their faces?

Bryce kept telling himself he'd bring the subject up, but he always made an excuse not to. He didn't want to wreck what had started to feel like paradise. The more time he spent with Matt and Toby, the more he realized how very much he cared for them. He still didn't let himself use the L word, but it hovered in the air, threatening him with all it meant. How much longer could he ignore it? He was ignoring so damn many things, he was going to lose track of something soon. But the thought of them all ending up on different shifts, rarely able to enjoy time together, made him sick to his stomach. Some nights he wished he'd never let himself get into this mess, and other nights he thought he'd do anything to keep things like they were, to keep Matt

and Toby both in his bed, in his life.

Surely they were worth taking a risk for, worth stepping out of his comfort zone and making a career move. In the months before the horrible fire in Atlanta, he'd contemplated applying for an investigative position with the fire marshal's office. He'd been fascinated for years by all that went into discovering the cause of a fire, and he wanted to learn how to solve those puzzles and make sure no one got away with arson. He'd have to attend the police academy since the law required he be both a firefighter and a sworn law enforcement officer to investigate potential arson. It was a big step and a risk. He might not get a job if he applied and then he might not like it as much as he thought he would. When he'd decided to move, knowing he had to get away from Atlanta, he'd dropped the idea. Was he ready to consider it again?

He longed to talk it over with Toby and Matt, but he was too much of a fucking coward. He could talk about riding crops, dildos, and how hard they wanted to be spanked. But love and long-term commitment? Way too scary.

Then one day, a little more than a month after the night at Marlo's, the fragile little world they'd created fell in on itself.

Bryce stood at his locker after a shower, towel wrapped around his waist. He heard Matt coming out of the shower and couldn't resist glancing his way. Even now, after weeks of sleeping together, the sight of him nearly naked raised Bryce's pulse. No one else was around, so he didn't bother to hide his interest. Matt slapped his ass as he walked to his own locker. Even the straight guys did that to each other, so no one would've thought anything, even if someone had been there to see. Bryce dressed, stealing glances at Matt. When he pulled his phone from his locker, he brought up his text screen and wrote a message to Matt. Almost jumped you after your shower. Can't wait till tomorrow night. Going to make your ass ache.

He smiled to himself as he pressed Send. Just as the message went through, he

realized he hadn't sent it to Matt. Sending it to Toby or even to Mason would have been okay, but no, he'd sent it to WT. "Fuck!"

Matt jumped at the loud, unexpected expletive. "What's wrong?"

He turned to Matt, unable to explain. His stomach was in a knot, and he felt warm and cold at the same time. He had to find WT right then and explain or apologize or something. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.

"I fucked up. Big time. I'm so sorry. I..." He raced out of the room as he yanked his shirt over his head.

He found WT in the break room, staring at his phone. WT looked up when he entered the room. Bryce's heart thumped hard against his chest. "You got my text, didn't you?"

"Yeah and I'm hoping it was meant for some other dude, 'cause you're a good-looking guy, but you ain't turning me."

Bryce smiled, thrilled WT was able to laugh it off.

"Yeah, it was for someone else. Sorry about that."

Bryce had been certain WT would know exactly who it was meant for. Of course since he hadn't been in the locker room, he probably assumed it was someone Bryce saw come out of the shower early that morning, before work.

WT punched his arm. "Just don't do it again. You scared the shit out of me."

"I'll be more careful next time. Trust me. I may never send a dirty text again."

WT laughed. "I won't hold you to that as long as you don't send them to me."

Bryce forced himself to laugh too, trying his best to seem like he was casually brushing off the mistake, though he still felt sick to his stomach. What the hell had he been thinking letting things keep going with Toby and Matt? Tomorrow they were finally going to have the talk they should have had a month ago.

Matt walked into the break room a few moments later and sank into the chair next to Bryce. "You okay?"

Bryce nodded. "Yeah, I'm fine. I just made a stupid mistake."

"Texted me instead of whatever guy he's banging," WT said.

Matt made a choked noise.

"Yeah, that was kind of my reaction too. Must be a pretty hot night he's planning."

"Knowing him, I bet it is," Toby added as he joined them, rescuing Matt, who didn't look like he could get out any words. They had to know the text was meant for one of them. Bryce wondered if they'd be pissed or scared. Whichever, they'd all needed the wake-up call. And they were lucky; it could have been much worse. Even if WT had guessed, he'd have given them time to get their shit together and come out on their own.

Bryce didn't talk to Toby and Matt during their shift other than to make the necessary comments to get their job done. Even when they weren't busy, they didn't have any privacy, at least not enough to risk discussing what had happened. He'd gotten away with his mistake; he wasn't about to risk their secret again. And he sure as hell wasn't going to text them an explanation.

When their shift ended the next morning, Bryce, Matt, and Toby headed to the parking lot together. They had all spent the night at Bryce's house, but Matt and Toby drove in together in Toby's truck. The other firefighters might assume they'd decided to carpool, but too many oddities, even if each was explainable, might raise suspicions.

"So what happened?" Matt asked as they stood by Toby's truck.

Bryce blew out a long breath. "I'll follow you home and tell you there."

Toby opened his door and hopped into the driver's seat. "Let's get going, then."

But Matt stayed where he was. "Why our place? Don't we need to let Rollo out?"

"I need to get some sleep before my shift at Nathan's, so I thought we could talk there and then I'll head home on my own." And I might be about to break up with you, and I don't want to have to kick you out of my house.

Bryce ran scenarios through his head as he drove. He'd tell them what happened first, that was the easy part, embarrassing but easy. After that, what could he say? That he couldn't do this anymore, couldn't hide? But honestly, even if they stopped seeing each other, they would still be compromised on the job. They had no business being in the same unit. He wasn't going to stop caring for them, and if he broke it off, there would be a hell of a lot of anger mixed into the strong feelings they already had. A very dangerous mix to bring into the field.

Fuck! This situation sucked. Why had he listened to his dick instead of his brain? That ain't got nothin' to do with what your dick wants. Gray's words echoed in his mind. He didn't want Gray to be right, but he was. Bryce was listening to his heart, and it was even harder to deny than his dick. Fuck, did that make him old? He'd never been this mushy gushy before, but leaving Matt and Toby wouldn't just be about giving up

the great sex. Bryce could get laid easily enough. He could even find someone who'd be a match for what he needed if he put a little effort into it. But to find someone else who made him feel the way he did with Matt and Toby, to find someone he wanted to spend all his free time with, someone he wanted to snuggle up with, that wasn't going to happen.

He'd spent too much time working during his first years at AFRD to have time for more than casual hookups. Eventually, he'd managed a few short relationships. Maybe that was all he was meant to have. If someone had told him a year ago that he was going to fall for someone, much less two someones, he would've run as fast as he could. But he wasn't afraid of commitment now. He wanted to make it work, but they'd only been together for about six weeks. Was he really going to expect them to turn a short fling into a long-term commitment? He needed to think about what was best for Matt and Toby.

He parked behind Toby when he reached their apartment. His hands shook as he stepped out of his SUV. This wasn't going to go well, because he was going to do the right thing and let them go. How had he let himself get to this point?

It's called love, you asshole.

No, it's called fucking up.

You're so going to regret this.

I already do.

He forced himself to put one foot in front of the other. He could do this. He could go into their apartment and tell them things were over. A few steps from the door, he stopped, afraid he was about to lose the eggs and toast he'd wolfed down at the station. When he had his stomach under control, he stepped inside, not bothering to

knock. They were long past that. “Hey!”

“We’re in the kitchen,” Matt called.

Despite the early hour, he longed to ask for a drink to fortify him for what he had to do.

“You look like hell!” Toby observed. “What happened?”

“I almost got us all caught. That’s what.” The words came out angry, though Bryce hadn’t meant them to. “Sorry.” He raked a hand through his hair.

Toby moved toward him, but Bryce backed away. If Toby touched him, he’d lose his resolve, and they’d probably all end up in bed.

“Matt walked out of the shower yesterday afternoon, and I couldn’t stop staring. I meant to send him a text telling him what I had planned for tonight.” Bryce paused, trying to pull his thoughts together and make himself go on.

Toby nodded, encouraging him. “And...”

“I sent it to WT.”

“I figured that much out. What did he say?”

“He didn’t connect it with either of you. Figured it was for some guy I’m seeing, someone random. But what if he’d been in the locker room too or he’d already had suspicions?”

“How the hell does he not?” Matt asked, the words bitter. “We suck at hiding it.”

“You didn’t use to,” Bryce said. “It’s me.”

“No, it’s all of us,” Matt insisted.

“This isn’t working,” Bryce said.

The color drained from Toby’s face. “Is it because we waited? Because we wouldn’t talk about outing ourselves? We put too much pressure on you, and now?—”

Bryce held up a hand. “It’s not just that. It’s... so many things. I can’t ignore that you two are a couple, but I can give you a little more time to get used to the idea of working different shifts or at different stations.”

“We’re a couple?” Matt asked, glaring at Bryce.

“Yeah, you and Toby. You deserve a chance to out yourselves, but you can’t keep working together the same shift.”

“But what about you?” Toby asked, his tone anguished.

“Like I said, this isn’t working for me.”

Matt looked at him like he was crazy. “You’re breaking up with us? Seriously?”

Bryce snorted, hating himself as he did it. “Breaking up? That’s a little dramatic, isn’t it? I’ve enjoyed fucking you, but we can’t keep this up.”

“The fuck that’s all this is,” Matt yelled. He moved toward Bryce, and Bryce braced himself for a punch, which was less than he deserved. He was being an asshole, but if he didn’t piss them off, they weren’t going to let him go. It was better this way, better not to admit what he was feeling.

Toby laid a hand on Matt's arm. "It's going to be okay."

"The hell it is. You know." He jabbed a finger toward Bryce. "You know this is more than just fucking."

"I know it's been hot as hell, but it's over. I can't risk my job for you."

Matt showed shock and anger and something Bryce feared was disgust. "So now you're giving us an ultimatum. Confess or you'll rat us out."

Now Bryce was truly pissed. "No, it's not like that."

"Sure sounded like that to me."

Bryce exhaled sharply. "I'm asking you to come out."

"If we get caught, we'll keep you out of it," Toby insisted.

"It's not about that," Bryce said. "It's about keeping all of us safe on the job."

"The fuck it is," Matt yelled.

Toby ran a hand through his hair and twined a strand around his index finger. "Matt, you know he's right."

"You going to turn on me too?"

Bryce's gut clenched. God, he hated this. He wanted to pull Matt into his arms so he could comfort him, but that would only make things worse, wouldn't it?

Why don't you find out?

No!He'd started down this road and he wasn't turning back.

"No one is turning on you," Toby said.

"Shut up!" Matt turned toward Bryce. "Just get out of here if you're so tired of us."

"That's not?—"

"I think you'd better leave," Toby said. His voice was calm, but pain showed in his eyes. Bryce wondered if either of them could see that he was hurting too. Apparently not if they believed the bullshit he was saying to them. How the fuck were they going to work together now?

Bryce almost said he was sorry, but he realized it wouldn't help. He'd chosen to be an ass, and he had to see that through. Without another word, he turned and walked away. As he pulled out his keys, he realized he still had a key to their apartment. He should give it back, but he didn't want to. The thought of giving up that link to them was more than he could handle.

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Bryce pulled the covers over his head. What was that awful sound? Was someone hammering right outside his window? No, hammering wouldn't make such a piercing screech. When the sound didn't stop after several more head-throbbing moments, he lowered the covers so he could investigate. Bad idea. He squeezed his eyes shut against the piercing rays of the sun and wondered if his head was going to fall off his shoulders. Clearly moving was worse than listening to the noise.

But the horrid squawk wouldn't give up. He couldn't sleep. Couldn't think. He tried moving again. His stomach wasn't pleased, but he managed to shift toward the edge of the bed without puking. The alarm clock. That terrible noise was coming from the alarm clock.

He fought against the fuzz that surrounded his brain. What day was it? How long had he been asleep? He squinted at the bright red numbers on the clock, fighting nausea as he tried to read them. Three minutes after five. In the afternoon? Probably, judging by the death rays the sun was shooting into his bedroom.

Why would an alarm go off at five PM? Work. Shit. He'd taken a nap before work. Or judging from the jackhammers going in his head, he'd passed out. He was supposed to be at Nathan's in half an hour. How long had the damn clock been screaming at him?

With a sickening twist of his gut, he remembered why he'd gotten drunk in the middle of the morning. He'd broken up with Toby and Matt. He'd dismissed them as nothing more than a hot fuck. He tried to swing his legs over the side of the bed and immediately knew if he stood up, he'd vomit. Phone. Where was his phone?

He saw his pants on the floor by the bed. Bending over didn't seem like a reasonable proposition, but he managed to lift them with his toes. Thank God his phone was in his pocket and hadn't fallen out. He squinted at it; why the fuck was the screen so bright? Finally he managed to find the number. Kyle answered. "Nathan's. What can we do for you?"

"It's Bryce."

"Are you okay? You sound like hell."

"Yeah. Feel like it too. Not going to make it in today." He forced each word out as he fought the urge to be sick.

"Okay, I'll tell Elizabeth. Were you working till close?"

"No. Midnight."

"All right. I can stay for your shift. I need the money anyway."

"Thanks." Bryce ended the call and lay back, taking slow breaths and wishing the room would stop spinning. Was he still drunk?

The next time he woke, it was to pounding. At first he dismissed it as something happening to his head, but eventually he had to accept that it was truly coming from somewhere else.

"Bryce, you in there? You okay?"

Was that Mason? At his door?

He really didn't want to get up, but Mason sounded ready to break the door down.

After he'd taken his first shuffling steps toward the door, the pounding stopped and his phone sang a line from a Beyoncé song, the obnoxious ring Mason had set for himself.

Bryce ignored the phone and kept moving toward the door, since turning around seemed too complicated. When he looked through the peephole, he saw Mason standing on the stoop, phone to his ear.

Bryce fumbled with the lock, finally managing to get the door open.

“What the fuck?” Mason said, gaping at him.

“Get in here,” he growled.

“What happened to you?” Mason reiterated his question once Bryce had shut the door.

“I'm sick.”

“You're hungover.”

Bryce merely grunted.

“Bryce, what is going on?”

“Nothing.”

“You don't get wasted in the middle of the day and call into work because of nothing,” Mason insisted.

“I'm sick. Everybody gets sick.”

“You are not sick.”

“Fine. You’re going to find out anyway. If I tell you, will you shut up and leave me to die in peace?”

“You aren’t dying either. Sit down.” He gestured toward the kitchen table.

Bryce sat and dropped his aching head into his hands. At least his stomach was steadier than it had been when he’d woken earlier.

“I’m going to make some coffee and toast, and you’re going to tell me why a man who is the model of responsibility called into work with a half hour notice.”

Bryce laid his head on the table. “I fucked everything up.”

“Oh shit. It’s Toby and Matt, isn’t it?”

“I told them... God, I can’t talk about it.”

“What did you do?”

Bryce groaned. “Almost got us caught. Could have fucked all of us over.”

“But you didn’t?” Mason asked.

Bryce explained about the text he sent WT and then about telling Matt and Toby it was over.

“They didn’t take it well?”

That was too much of an understatement to contemplate. “No.”

“Bryce, there’s something you’re not telling me.”

Overly perceptive bastard. Bryce shook his head, then regretted it. How much had he drunk anyway? “I’m done talking. Now go away.”

Mason ignored him. He set coffee and toast in front of Bryce and then joined him at the table, holding his own mug of coffee. For several seemingly interminable moments, they sat in silence. Bryce broke first. “Fine. I had to make sure they would take me seriously, so I told them that we’d spent enough time fucking and I was over them.”

Mason stared at him. “What the fuck?”

Bryce shrugged.

“Bryce, you’ve got to fix this.”

“No fixing it. They hate me now.”

Mason took a sip of coffee as he studied Bryce. “You know working with them isn’t going to be any easier now.”

“That’s not the point.”

“Call them.”

Bryce was done. He stood up and leaned on the table. Mason scooted back, his expression showing concern and maybe a little fear. Bryce probably looked like a monster with hurt and anger filling him up until he couldn’t imagine being happy again. “I am not talking about this anymore. I will call Elizabeth and apologize in the morning. I’ll even take some extra shifts. It’s not like I’m going to have a social life

or anything.”

“Bryce—”

“Not another fucking word,” he snarled.

Mason banged his mug down on the table and stood. “If you want to be miserable, that’s your choice, but do you have to make Toby and Matt miserable too?”

“I’d make them even more miserable if I stayed with them,” Bryce growled.

“Where the hell did you get an idea like that?”

“They’re too young to be trapped in a relationship that is so much work.”

Mason raised his brows. “Did you ask them how they felt about it?”

“Yes. No.” Bryce walked away from the table. “This is over. Let yourself out.”

He stomped to the bathroom, shut the door, and turned on the shower.

Bryce dragged himself through the next few days. He worked a lunch shift at Nathan’s, the end of which overlapped with Mason’s hours. He only talked to Mason when he had to, and he did his best to ignore Mason’s reproachful looks. But not having a friend to talk to made work hell. He had to act like everything was fine because he didn’t want anyone asking questions. It was a slow day, so he didn’t have much to distract him. His next shift at the firehouse was even worse. Things were slow there too. Bryce thought he managed to look normal, but Matt and Toby certainly didn’t. They were snappy with each other and everyone else, and they both looked like they’d been ill for days: dark circles under their eyes, pale skin, hair sticking up. Had they even showered that morning?

“What’s up with those two?” WT asked that evening, tilting his head to where Matt and Toby were slumped on the couch watching a baseball game. “They’re acting like little shits.”

Bryce shrugged. “I don’t know. Hopefully, they’ll get over it.” If someone else was as pissy as they were, they’d be facing disciplinary action, but Bryce knew he was responsible for their attitude, so he tried to cut them some slack, yet another way relationships fucked up the job.

“They better get over it before they cause us all to make a mistake.”

Bryce nodded. He’d been worrying about the same thing.

That particular shift ended uneventfully, and Bryce survived an entire week of dirty looks and short answers from Toby and Matt. At least they didn’t appear to be slacking on anything at work and they remained professional, if distant, when they were out on calls. Mason kept trying to get him to talk, and one evening Bryce spent a hellish half hour chatting with Jack and Gray during which he avoided mentioning Matt and Toby, though he was certain Mason had told them all about his idiocy.

The following Saturday, the station was crazy busy. Shortly after they arrived, Bryce’s unit was called to the scene of a tractor-trailer accident. As soon as they got back to the station, they were sent out again. Around nine PM, a call came in for a warehouse fire in a run-down part of downtown.

Bryce’s unit arrived at the scene at the same time as the battalion chief. One other unit had arrived ahead of them and their men were inside, attacking the flames. The chief sent Bryce and Matt to assist them.

Matt entered the building with Bryce on his heels. Bryce knew he should be in the lead, but he didn’t force Matt to move behind him. The last thing he needed was an

argument while they headed into a raging fire. He was close enough to grab Matt if he needed to. Slowly, they began to make their way toward the spot where the first team was working. A few feet in, they dropped to the floor and began to crawl.

“Pumper Eight. Falling back to maintain an exit. Heat is too intense.”

“Confirmed, Pumper Eight,” the battalion chief responded. “Keep water on the exit as long as you can. Ladder Six, make your way out of the building.”

Bryce heard a creak and knew they were in trouble. The beams above them weren’t going to hold much longer. He pressed the button on his radio, intending to tell Matt to turn around, but he was too late. A beam crashed down, hitting Bryce on the shoulder. He fell back, bruised but okay. “Matt!” he called. “Matt!”

No response. “Firefighter Ladder Six down. Beams fell. Searching for him now.”

“Officer Ladder Six, what’s your position?” the chief asked.

“Twenty feet from the southwest entrance.”

“Are you injured?”

Was he? His shoulder ached but he’d be fine. “No, sir.”

“How much air do you have?”

Bryce glanced down at the display. “Twenty-one hundred PSI.” That would give him roughly twenty minutes. But the hotter the air and the more effort he put out, the more air he’d use, so he could easily have much less time. He reached out in front of him, searching for Matt. All he could feel was debris.

“Where is he?” Toby’s panicked voice came over the radio.

“I’m going to find him,” Bryce said, willing the young man to calm down.

“Firefighter Ladder Six, do not go into the building.” The chief spoke in a stern, clear voice.

“Listen to the chief and stay where you are. I’ve got this.” Bryce knew he didn’t have long. He’d been keeping up with radio communication. The attack team was now simply trying to keep the exit open and the teams outside were switching to defensive mode, meaning they were now focused on keeping adjacent structures from catching rather than trying to save the warehouse.

Beep! Beep! Beep! The piercing sound had come from Matt’s respirator, which was designed to send out an alarm if he stayed still for too long. All Bryce could tell was that Matt was somewhere in front of him, and he wasn’t moving. “Matt! Matt!” He yelled into the radio hoping to rouse him, but there was no response. Matt’s respirator screeched more loudly. If he was conscious he’d shut it off. Fuck!

Bryce began to scale the debris. It slipped and slid, but he kept going.

“Officer Ladder Six, the RIT is moving toward your location.”

Bryce registered that help was on the way, but he wanted to find Matt himself. This was his fault, and he had to fix it. He should be the one who was trapped. He should never have let Matt take the lead.

Bryce slid down the far side of the pile of debris. Keeping a foot hooked over one of the heavy beams, he stretched out and felt around. He’d almost given up, thinking he’d have to move farther away from the downed beams, when he brushed something soft. Matt’s glove. He inched forward and got hold of Matt’s arm. “Matt! Matt!”

Matt didn't respond. Bryce ran his hands over Matt's body, checking for serious injuries. A beam lay across his ankle. He couldn't wait for the Rapid Intervention Team. More of the ceiling would come down any second. He shifted Matt into a position so he could drag him to where he hoped they would have a clear path to the exit. "Firefighter Ladder Six has been located. Bringing him out now. A beam had trapped his leg, and he's unconscious."

Getting over the debris wasn't easy, but Bryce managed it. His air wasn't going to last much longer at this temperature with him working so hard. He prayed the path to the door was still open. "Chief, can we get out the way we came?"

"Yes, the RIT is almost to you. Follow them out."

More beams crashed down behind him, but Bryce kept moving steadily, crawling with Matt balanced over his back. Finally, he was where he could stand and he put Matt over his shoulder. The Rapid Intervention Team, Ryan and Gina, two firefighters he'd worked with a few times, found them a few seconds later.

Once they were far enough from the building to be safe, Bryce sank to his knees and laid Matt on the ground. Ryan and Gina took over, checking Matt's vitals and his injured foot. Gina turned to him, ready to examine him as well, but he waved her off. "I'm fine." Now that the immediate crisis was over, his shoulder ached like hell, but he ignored it. Toby ran toward them and sank to the ground beside Matt. "Is he okay? What happened?"

"He's going to be fine," Bryce assured him, hoping to God he was right.

Ryan patted Toby's shoulder. "Don't worry. His ankle is injured, probably fractured, and he's likely got a concussion, but he'll recover."

Matt moaned and opened his eyes. "What happened?" he asked, his words slurred.

“The ceiling came down on us,” Bryce answered.

Matt tried to sit up, but the paramedics pushed him back down and fitted an oxygen mask over his face.

Toby leaned closer to Matt, but Bryce laid a hand on Toby’s arm, afraid Toby had forgotten where he was. This wasn’t the time for them to out themselves. “It’s okay. We were lucky.”

“You saved him.” The emotion in Toby’s eyes made Bryce’s chest ache.

“I just did my job. You would’ve done the same thing if you’d been there.”

“I panicked. I couldn’t think straight knowing he was in there.”

Bryce wrapped an arm around Toby. Nobody would think anything of it after a scare like they’d had. “That’s natural, but you kept yourself together, and if you’d been inside, you would have focused and gotten him out, just like I did.”

“Did everyone else get out uninjured?” Bryce asked.

Toby nodded, and both men looked at the building. Flames rose toward the sky now, shooting through holes in the ceiling. Bryce shuddered, realizing how close they’d come to being trapped.

Matt pulled the oxygen away from his face. “I’m fine. I want?—”

Bryce put a hand on his chest to keep him from trying to sit up again. “You need to go to the hospital.”

Matt shook his head. “No, I’m?—”

Gina interrupted. “Yes, you do. Even if you want to argue that you’re fine otherwise, you need an x-ray for your ankle.”

“I’ll come with you,” Toby volunteered, then looked at Bryce. “If I can, that is.”

“Chief, this is Officer Ladder Six, I’d like to send one of my men to the hospital with the injured firefighter.”

“Permission granted, Ladder Six.”

Bryce laid a hand on Toby’s shoulder. “Go with him. Make sure he’s okay.”

Toby nodded, his eyes glistening.

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Bryce's hands shook as he drove home the next morning. He was glad they hadn't gotten another call after returning from the warehouse fire. He wasn't scheduled to work at Nathan's that day, and he didn't want to spend all day and night by himself. He needed a friend, someone who might understand the tangled feelings inside him, those that said he wanted Matt and Toby back and those that were still terrified of what that would mean. He'd rebuffed every attempt of Mason's to talk about what had happened and put up with censorious looks from Jack and Gray. Now it was time to eat crow and call on them for advice, because no way in hell could he see Matt and Toby again and pretend he didn't care about them.

He pulled out his phone and typed a message to Mason.

You guys free tonight?

Yes, Mason answered a few seconds later.

Dinner? Need to talk.

7:00 at Undertow?

Perfect.

Bryce spent most of the day sleeping with Rollo curled next to him. At five thirty, he finally got out of bed, went for a long run with the dog, and then headed to Undertow, a gastropub not far from Nathan's. Several nights of the week they had guest chefs offering a variety of cuisines like Ethiopian and Cuban. Tonight was Thai. Undertow wasn't specifically a gay bar, but it was gay friendly. The sign for the below-street-

level establishment said, “Undertow, we’ll suck you right down”.

He found a parking spot in the lot across the street a few cars down from Gray’s Expedition. His heart beat much too fast as he crossed the street and started down the steps to the entrance. Why was he so fucking nervous?

Because you’re about to announce that you’re in love, and you want to rearrange your life for a relationship, a three-way relationship.

But these guys have all done the same thing, at least to some extent.

They’re going to rag on you after all the protesting you did.

Yeah but they care; I know they do.

Mason was probably the best friend he had in Durham, and for all the ways they might irritate him, Jack and Gray were good men too. Bryce hadn’t spent as much time as he should getting to know them. For a long while, he hadn’t been sure Gray would permit it. Mason assured him Gray was much softer than he seemed, just overprotective. That might be true, but Bryce was sure that if he hurt someone Gray cared for, the man would be anything but soft on him.

The guys were already there when he arrived, seated in a corner booth toward the back of the room where it was typically quieter. There was a good crowd, but it wasn’t oppressively busy like it often was on weekend nights.

“I got you a beer,” Mason said as Bryce slid in beside him. “A Twisted River Wit.”

“Great. Thanks.” Mason knew that was one of Bryce’s favorites, and simply remembering that Mason was the kind of friend who knew things like that about him put him at ease.

“I heard what happened at the Wraston warehouse. Is everyone okay?” Gray asked.

Bryce nodded. “Matt’s going to be in a walking cast for a few weeks, but he’ll be fine.”

“You went in together?” Jack asked.

“Yeah, he was just ahead of me when the ceiling came down. We got separated, but I found him and got him out.”

“It was close, though, from what I read in the paper,” Mason said. He never liked it when Bryce downplayed how serious a situation was, be it firefighting or a relationship.

Jack shuddered, as if imagining the situation. “You didn’t get hit?”

“Just on the shoulder, but I’m fine.”

Mason raised a brow, and Bryce sighed. “I’m bruised and sore, but that’s all. It should have been me, though, in front.”

Gray shook his head. “No good can come of replaying your decisions. Everyone is fine, that’s all that matters.”

“Yeah, I guess.” Once again, Gray shocked him with his calm understanding.

“No guessing. That’s the truth. I’ve been there enough.”

He looked from Jack to Gray. Jack had been shot several months ago when he tried to save Gray from a drug lord who was about to kill him. He’d nearly died. Gray was right. Matt was fine, and Bryce needed to let go of his guilt.

“I...” How the hell did he start this? “Y’all were right. I was an idiot to end things with Matt and Toby.”

“Finally!” Jack beamed.

“Have you talked to them since the accident?”

“No, well, not really. I called to make sure Matt was okay and that Toby wasn’t freaking out. He panicked and almost ran into the building while I was trying to get to Matt. He’s still a mess, but he sounded steadier on the phone than he did when he headed to the hospital. Hopefully, he’s better now.”

“You need to call them again or just go the hell over there,” Mason insisted.

“What should I say?” Bryce immediately regretted the question. He held up his hand as Jack opened his mouth to speak. “I’m sorry. It’s not your job to tell me.”

Mason laid a hand over Bryce’s. “It’s okay to ask for help. You’re lucky enough to know an amazing threesome of guys ready to share their wisdom. You’d be an idiot—more of an idiot—not to use that resource.”

Gray rolled his eyes. “Just say you were stupid, and now you’ve wised up and you’re going to find a way to make this work.”

“But they might not want?—”

“Bullshit!” Mason interrupted. “I’ve seen them with you. They want you, and you all deserve the chance to make it work.”

“We all have to make changes at work, and they’ve always worked together?—”

“Then they’ve always been wrong just like Jack and I were,” Gray said. “Matt was fine this time and Toby stopped himself from going in, but what if that’s not the case next time? What if one of you or someone else gets hurt because you’re focused on each other instead of the job?”

Bryce knew Gray was right. He’d worried about the same thing for a long time. Despite that, anger at Gray and at himself, tightened his chest. “I’m not?—”

Mason touched his shoulder. “He knows what he’s talking about. Because of Jack.”

The anger and tension drained from Bryce then. Gray wasn’t trying to make Bryce feel bad about hiding their relationship. He truly understood what could happen when a relationship clouded your judgment. Jack had come after him, determined to rescue him, even though it went against protocol. He’d realized Gray had walked into a trap, and instead of waiting for backup, he went in after him and almost died.

Bryce looked at Gray. “You’re right. I need to say something to the chief either way, whether I get back together with Matt and Toby or not.”

Gray nodded. “Yeah, you do. And trust me. I get it. I was scared to tell Jack and Mason that I was applying for the detective position. I knew it was the right thing to do, but I hid it because I didn’t want to argue.”

Bryce could imagine how hard it was for Gray to admit to being scared. “I’m terrified to talk to them. What if we can’t do this long term? What if they regret it?”

“Whether you work things out or not, they’re in a relationship and they need to be separated. Are you still thinking about becoming a fire marshal?” Gray asked.

Bryce nodded.

“Then you’ll be making a change you want to make, and they’ll have to make one anyway.”

“I’ve only been here six months. Is this really the right time to change jobs again?”

“If you keep worrying over it, there’s never going to be a right time,” Jack said. “I kept telling myself it wasn’t the right time for Gray and me to come out or for him to go for the promotion he deserved. Finally, when Gray took things into his own hands, I realized there would never have been a magically right time.”

“It’s going to be hard as fuck working out a relationship with two men, but it’s worth it,” Gray said.

“Aww. That’s about the sweetest thing you’ve ever said, at least in public,” Mason said, grinning at Gray. “He’s right, you know. You’ll regret not seeing where this could go more than you’ll regret trying if things don’t last forever.”

Forever. Was he really thinking about forever? “Can I really have fallen for them so fast?”

Mason reached across the table and laid his hand over Gray’s. “Yes.”

Bryce loved how the three men showed their affection for each other. No one could doubt that they loved each other.

“So I should just call Matt and Toby and say ‘I was an idiot, let’s get back together’?”

Jack nodded. “For once, Gray has some good advice.”

Gray glared at him. “You’ll pay for that.”

“I hope so.” Jack lowered his voice to a sexy purr.

“I’ve got another question,” Bryce said. Heat rushed to Bryce’s face. He hated asking for more advice.

“What is it?” Mason asked. “You can ask us anything. No need to be embarrassed.”

Jack gave him a sly grin. “Yes, double penetration really works. It’s not just for porn.”

“Holy fuck, you did not just tell me that.”

Gray gave Jack’s arm a playful punch. “Quit scaring our friend.”

“I’m not scared exactly, just... Wow. TMI.”

“Ignore him and just ask us,” Mason said.

“What’s your secret? How do you stay together?”

“Talking. Lots of talking,” Mason said.

Gray nodded. “If you’re worried about something, you’ve got to talk to them about it even when you’d much rather ignore it. It’s damn hard, and I still suck at it, but I’m learning. I hope.” He glanced at his lovers and both of them beamed at him.

“He’s right,” Jack said. “With three of you, there’s even more of a chance of misunderstanding or someone getting their feelings hurt.”

“So I’ve got to call them, admit to being an idiot, and talk about all the things I’ve been avoiding? This fucking sucks.”

Jack shook his head. “Just think about what it’s like when you’re together. Think about the feeling you get when you see them and remember that it’s worth the pain and agony for that,” Jack said.

Gray frowned. “He’s big on mushy shit tonight. I’m not going to be able to eat if this keeps up.”

Mason snorted. “As if. I’d like to see something that would actually take away your appetite.”

Bryce laughed. He’d seen Gray eat plenty of times, and he doubted the man was going to push his plate away even if Jack sang him love songs right in the bar.

“Speaking of food, let’s order,” Gray said.

They did. Then they spent the next hour eating, drinking, and talking, not about Bryce and all the shit he was dealing with, but about the coming basketball season, the rivalry between cops and firefighters, and the amazing qualities of sweet tea and biscuits. Bryce realized he needed that kind of companionship as much as he needed what he had with Matt and Toby. After that hellish night in Atlanta, he’d closed himself off from friends as well as lovers, but after what happened in the warehouse with Matt, he’d been reminded that life was fragile. He had to quit punishing himself and start living.

“You going to be okay?” Mason asked as they exited the bar several hours later.

Bryce nodded. “Yeah.”

“You going to call them?”

“In the morning.”

Mason studied him carefully. “Don’t put it off any longer than that.”

“I won’t. Matt needs to get a good night’s sleep. I don’t want to keep him from it, but I promise I’ll call first thing tomorrow.”

“Good, do that.”

Bryce said good-bye too, feeling better than he had since he’d broken things off.

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After Bryce got home, he changed into sweats and poured himself a bowl of Captain Crunch. Why the hell was he still hungry when he'd eaten a huge bowl of curry and a plate of bacon-wrapped dates at Undertow? Nerves?

Just as he took his first bite, his phone rang. He glanced at the screen. Toby. He couldn't answer fast enough. "Hello."

"Bryce?"

"Yeah?"

"Would you... um... would you come over? Matt wants to see you, but he's not going to call you himself, and I... It would mean a lot. I saw it last night, okay? You were right, but please forget about how pissed off you are and come see Matt."

"Pissed off?" Did he really think that?

"Yeah, we were idiots. Okay? I admit it."

"I'm not angry with you. I'm... I'll be there in just a few minutes."

"Thank you." The words were quiet and shaky. Toby hung up before Bryce could say anything else.

Bryce wolfed down his cereal and hopped in the shower. He'd washed off after he'd gotten back to the station last night and again that morning, but he didn't feel like he'd ever get the scent of the fire off his body. He knew it was all in his head, but he

would swear he still smelled like he'd just stepped out of the building.

By the time he was ready to leave for Matt and Toby's apartment, his heart was beating nearly as hard as it had been when he'd lowered Matt's limp body to the ground. Matt could have died, and despite Gray's words, Bryce still struggled to accept that it wasn't his fault. He should have gone in first and not worried about whether Matt was in a snit or not. He should never have been Matt's officer in the first place.

Toby opened the door before Bryce knocked as if he'd been watching for him. "Matt's lying down." He turned away, never looking Bryce in the eye. Was he scared? Hurt? As nervous as Bryce? The last time he'd been there, he'd tied Toby up, then he and Matt had proceeded to drive Toby out of his mind. Why had he run? He hadn't been doing what was best for himself or for them. He'd just been scared. Was there any chance they could put the pieces back together again?

Matt looked up when Bryce entered their bedroom. Bryce simply stared for a few moments before he found his voice. "How're you feeling?"

"Like shit," Matt said. His foot was propped up on several pillows, and he had an icepack on his ankle.

"I think the ice has been on long enough. I'll put it back in the freezer," Toby said in a not so subtle attempt to leave Bryce and Matt alone.

Bryce sat on the edge of the bed. "I should never have let you go in first."

"So you could be the one injured?"

Bryce hated hearing the bitterness in Matt's voice. "It was my place."

“I acted like an ass and you let me. None of this is your fault.”

“But you’re pissed at me anyway?”

Matt shook his head, and his expression softened. “I’m pissed at myself. You saved my ass. How can I be angry with you when you’re such a good man?”

Bryce looked away, uncomfortable with Matt’s praise. “Not always. Not when I say things I don’t mean just to hurt people.”

“Yeah, people who don’t care enough about you to stop putting your job in jeopardy.”

“People who expect you to lie for them when you hate lying,” Toby said, stepping back into the room. Obviously, he’d been listening from the door.

“I agreed to it,” Bryce insisted.

“Yeah, but I seduced you.” Toby waggled his eyebrows, lightening the mood. Bryce couldn’t help but laugh.

Toby laid a hand on Bryce’s shoulder. “I meant what I said on the phone. I get why we have to stop working together, but I’m scared.”

“Not half as fucking scared as I am,” Matt said. “I’ve never done anything without Toby.”

Toby shook his head. “You’re the strong one, Matt. I’m the one who just turns everything into a joke.”

“Or a flirtation,” Matt added.

Toby huffed. “If I hadn’t flirted with Bryce?—”

“We wouldn’t be in this mess.”

Bryce didn’t think Matt meant for those words to hurt, but they did. He’d made a mess of their lives. All the encouraging things Mason, Jack, and Gray had told him fled from his mind, replaced by apprehension. He took a step back, his chest so tight he couldn’t get air in his lungs. Breaking up had hurt them, but staying with them wouldn’t have done them any good either.

“I should go. I really ought to get some rest. Last night was...”

Matt looked up, panic in his eyes. “Don’t. I didn’t mean that like it sounded. I was just...”

Toby glared at Matt. “Just being an idiot. Bryce came to see you. Don’t you think he’s ready to admit he didn’t really want to end things? We might have a chance to?—”

“Shut up, Toby. You know this is fucking impossible.”

Bryce took a few more steps toward the door.

“Please stay,” Toby begged.

Bryce sighed. He couldn’t ignore Toby’s pleading tone, but he wasn’t going to come between them. The last thing he wanted was for their relationship to end because they were fighting over him. “What if Matt’s right and this won’t work?”

“If you believe that, why did you come when I called you?” Toby asked.

“Because...” There were so many things Bryce could say, some of them lies, some of them half-truths. Would those really help? “Because I missed you. I needed to see Matt, to know he was truly okay.”

Matt blew out a long breath and laid a hand over his eyes. Tears ran down his cheeks.

Bryce sat back down on the bed and laid a hand on Matt’s chest. Was this impossible? He didn’t want it to be. He loved both these men. He wasn’t ready to say it out loud, but he could admit it to himself. The strength of what he was feeling didn’t leave him any choice. Mason, Jack, and Gray had worked it out. So maybe...

“This isn’t impossible, improbable maybe, but if we want it badly enough, we can make it work,” Toby said as he joined them on the bed. He was twirling his hair with one hand, but he laid his other hand on top of Bryce’s. Bryce hated how agitated he made both of them.

“You guys are so young. I don’t want you changing your lives for me. You don’t know what you might want in a year, or in six months, even.”

“We can’t keep working together whether we’re all together or not. You know that. So we’ve got to make a change anyway,” Toby said.

Matt nodded. “Even if you hadn’t realized Toby and I were together, someone would have eventually seen it.”

Bryce had to admit that was true. “And someone is going to realize how I feel about you both.”

“How the fuck does WT not see it?” Matt asked “The way you look at us, protective and tender at once. It’s so obvious.”

“I warned you I sucked at secrets.”

“You suck?” Toby said, an incredulous look on his face. “What about me being ready to charge into the building and get my ass disciplined because Matt was hurt?”

Bryce grinned. “Last time I checked, you loved having your ass disciplined.”

“Well, yeah, but only by you or Matt.”

“I’m not going to change my mind,” Matt said. “Not in a few months. Not in a year. I want you, both of you.”

Bryce took a deep breath, not sure how to respond.

“You have to know I feel the same,” Toby said. “I’m the one who’s pushed for this from the beginning.”

Bryce realized this was one of those no-turning-back moments. Did he take the risk? Hell yes. “I’d been thinking about a job with the fire marshal’s office before I left Atlanta.”

Matt’s eyes widened. “There’s an opening downtown. I saw it posted on the board yesterday.”

Bryce froze. He’d never believed in fate, but this seemed too good to be true. “Really?”

“Yeah. You’d have to do police training unless you were just doing inspections, but I think this position is for someone doing primarily investigations.”

“I want to be an investigator. That’s why I was considering it in Atlanta.”

“Are you going to consider it again now?” Toby asked.

Bryce nodded. “Yes. Yes, I am.”

Toby squeezed his hand. “Are you also going to consider other options as well?”

Bryce knew Toby didn’t mean work options. He looked from Toby to Matt and back again. “Yes, if one of those options is both of you. I still think this is totally crazy, but I won’t walk away again. I was a fool to deliberately hurt you. Can you forgive me?”

“Yes,” Toby said, just like that, with no equivocation.

Matt reached for Bryce, pulling him into a kiss instead of answering with words. Toby knelt on the bed so he could get in on the action. Bryce tried not to jostle Matt and hurt his ankle, but it wasn’t easy with all three of them trying to devour each other.

Finally, Matt pulled back for air. “We missed you so much.”

“We missed this so much,” Toby said, nibbling Bryce’s neck.

“We can’t,” Bryce protested. “Matt’s ankle.”

“I’m fine,” Matt insisted, licking his way down the other side of Bryce’s neck.

Bryce was quickly losing the will to argue. “I don’t want to hurt you.”

Matt scooted low so he could recline more and pulled Bryce down on top of him. After a thorough kiss, he whispered in Bryce’s ear, “I want to suck you. I need to taste you again.” All thought of restraint fled. Matt and Toby were right. It had been too long. Surely he could be gentle enough not to cause Matt pain.

Bryce glanced at Toby. He was sitting on his heels watching them and rubbing his hand over the erection tenting his sweats. "Strip," he ordered.

Toby sighed dramatically. "God, I've missed you telling me what to do."

"I've missed telling you."

"Sometimes, when you go all dominant, I think I could get off just listening to you give me orders."

Bryce grinned. "We'll have to find out some time, won't we?"

"Really? We're really doing this?" Matt asked. "This isn't a dream?"

"No, this is real," Bryce said. "Very real." For better or worse, he was done avoiding the fact that he'd fallen for them. It was time to admit this was a real, actual relationship and to let go of the fear that had weighed him down since Atlanta. It was time to allow himself to be happy.

Matt put his hands on Bryce's hips and tugged. "Come up here where I can taste you."

Bryce wasn't sure he'd last two seconds once Matt put his mouth on him. He'd been in such a funk he'd hardly even jerked off since he'd walked away from them. He hadn't done much of anything but work and sleep.

"I missed you," he said, looking first at Matt and then Toby, who was now utterly naked. "I wouldn't have made it much longer without calling you."

"We almost called you so many times," Matt confessed.

“I wish you had. I wish you’d told me what an idiot I was. Mason tried, but...”

“You wouldn’t listen because you’re stubborn as fuck?” Toby asked.

“And you’re not?”

Toby huffed in mock offense.

“Come back,” Matt begged as Bryce pulled away from him and stood.

“I’ve got to get out of these clothes if this is going to work.”

“All right, but hurry,” Matt pleaded.

Toby teased Matt’s cock through his shorts, and Matt groaned, arching up into the touch. Toby began to stroke himself with his other hand, and Bryce paused to watch. They were so beautiful. He didn’t deserve them.

“You’re thinking too hard,” Toby scolded.

Bryce laughed. “You caught me.”

“So stop.”

“Okay.” Bryce finished shucking his clothes and climbed back on the bed.

“Straddle me,” Matt said.

“Not yet.” As horny as he was, he was afraid of getting too rough. “I need to know we’re really not going to hurt you. How’s your head?”

“It’s fine. Toby’s been fussing over me enough to cure anything. I need you, need to feel surrounded by you both.”

Bryce didn’t like the pain in his eyes. “You’re thinking about last night, aren’t you?”

“I didn’t think we were going to make it out when the ceiling started coming down. I thought...”

Toby leaned over and laid a line of kisses across Matt’s chest.

“You’re okay. We all are. And we’re going to be even better.” Bryce actually felt the truth of those words as he said them.

“Are we going to hurt him?” Bryce asked Toby.

Toby drew in a slow breath. “I don’t think so as long as we’re more gentle than usual. He’s not shown any serious effects from his concussion. The doctor said it was mild.

Matt nodded, and Bryce shifted position so he was stretched out alongside Matt. He kissed him, gently at first and then harder, until he was thrusting against Matt’s side, his cock aching. Bryce finally pulled away when he couldn’t go any longer without air.

“If Toby rides you while you suck my cock, will you be okay?”

“God, yes.”

Bryce looked at Toby for confirmation.

“I’ll be careful. I swear.”

“I expect you to keep your leg on the pillow and stay still. Let us do the work. You got that?”

“Yeah, I got it,” Matt responded.

Bryce still wasn't confident he was going to obey. “If you start moving too much, Toby and I will stop, and you can forget getting off.”

Matt sucked in a breath. “I can be good.”

Toby winked at Bryce as he grabbed lube and condoms from the nightstand drawer. Then Bryce turned his focus back to Matt, straddling him and holding on to the headboard. He lowered himself until his cock was a few inches from Matt's red, kiss-swollen lips. “Open up.”

Matt reached for him, wrapping a hand around his cock.

“No. Hands at your sides.”

“I—”

“Do what I say, or you won't get my cock or Toby's tight little ass. You got that?”

“Yes.”

Bryce raised a brow.

“Yes, sir.”

“Good boy.” Somehow he sensed Matt needed him to push harder than he had before, that he needed to submit utterly. Bryce wanted to take him there, wanted it more than

he would've ever thought possible.

He brushed his cock against Matt's lips. Matt kept his hands at his sides, but he raised his head, trying to get more. Bryce pulled back. "Keep your head on the pillow or we'll both stop."

"Fuck," Matt grumbled.

He looked over his shoulder to see Toby putting a condom on Matt and slicking himself up. "Take him slowly. Hold his hips down if you need to. I want him desperate."

"Yes, sir," Toby said, his voice low and sultry. He swung his leg over Matt and took Matt's cock in his hand, positioning it so he could sink down. But before he did, he looked up at Bryce. "This is all so fucking hot. You. Matt. Us."

Bryce nodded. "I know. Now show Matt how much you need him."

Toby groaned as he lowered himself. Matt sucked in a breath and squeezed his eyes shut.

"Don't move," Bryce ordered.

Matt whimpered. "You're killing me."

"No, I'm loving you."

"Yes," Toby agreed. "I love you, both of you."

Bryce felt an odd feeling rush over him at Toby's words. He wanted to reply, but he knew it wasn't the time. He needed to confess his love when they weren't all about to

lose control.

Toby's thigh muscles visibly strained as he held himself still.

"More," Bryce said.

"Please!" Matt fisted the sheet in his hands, squeezing so hard his knuckles were white.

"All the way now," Bryce ordered Toby, and Toby lowered himself until he was fully seated. "Perfect, now stay there."

"But—"

"You need some torment too," Bryce said before turning to look down at Matt once more. "Now open up and take my cock."

Matt's eyes widened, but he did as Bryce said. Bryce pushed gently into his mouth, making a shallow thrust, holding himself so Matt felt none of his weight.

"God, that's... fucking amazing," Toby said, his voice strained.

Bryce pulled out. "You're going to suck me, and Toby's going to ride your cock now. I expect you to stay still and enjoy it. You got that?"

"Yes... sir."

"Good."

Bryce watched Toby for a few seconds as he worked himself on Matt's cock steadily but not nearly as hard as he obviously wanted to. Then Bryce rose back onto his

knees and positioned his cock so Matt could suck and lick and torment it. He wanted so badly to truly fuck Matt's mouth, but he held back, determined not to hurt him.

"Look at me," he ordered, and Matt did, his dark eyes showing a depth of emotion that made Bryce suck in his breath. Nothing could have made Bryce look away from that intensity. Matt grabbed Bryce's ass and tried to pull him in deeper, but Bryce resisted. "When you're completely healed, I'll fuck your mouth until you choke, then keep going, but right now we're keeping this gentle or you're getting nothing at all."

Matt gasped, and Bryce took advantage of his open mouth to slide his cock back in. Matt held tight to his ass, encouraging him to stay right there. Seeing Matt like that, surrendering, longing for Bryce to fuck his mouth brought Bryce right to the edge. "Come for me," he ordered Matt.

Seconds later, he arched up, crying out and babbling incomprehensibly. Bryce pulled back and watched him ride out his orgasm.

"Want to watch you come now," Matt said, the words forced out between panting breaths.

Bryce settled on one side of Matt. Toby let Matt's spent cock slide from his body and then moved to his other side. Rising onto their knees, they positioned themselves so their cocks rubbed against each other, and Bryce took them both in his hand. Toby kissed him, fucking Bryce's mouth with his tongue, driving him ever closer to what was sure to be an explosive orgasm. Bryce tightened his grip, and Toby gasped. Bryce kissed and sucked his neck, then bit down just above his collarbone. That was all it took. Toby cried out and his seed poured over Bryce's hand. The slick, hot feel of it sent Bryce over the edge. He kept working them until Toby pulled away. "Can't... Too much... Wow."

Bryce nodded. "Yeah. That."

Matt reached for them, and they both collapsed to the mattress, snuggling against him.

“What do we do now?” Matt asked after they’d all dozed for a while.

“The same thing again,” Toby suggested.

Matt sighed. “Not until I rest some more.”

“Does your ankle hurt?” Bryce asked, worried he’d taken things too far.

“No more than it has been, but I’ve not got my usual recovery time right now.”

Bryce nodded. “We should let you rest.”

“What I actually meant was: what do we do to make this work,” Matt said.

“We talk to each other, even when we think we can’t. That’s what Mason, Jack, and Gray told me. I hope you don’t mind that I talked to them. They’ve known about us since the start, and they’ve been telling me I was an idiot since I walked away from you two. I’m so sorry for all the awful things I said.”

Toby patted his leg. “We knew you didn’t mean it.”

“Toby did. I wasn’t sure,” Matt said.

“I didn’t mean any of it. I knew that if I didn’t push you away, didn’t make you hate me, you’d try to change my mind.”

Toby nodded. “That’s what I figured, but it still hurt.”

Bryce hated that he'd hurt them. "I'm sorry. I wish I could make it up to you."

"You are," Matt said. "By being here."

Bryce gave him a gentle kiss. "It was never just fucking for me, not even the first time."

"Me either."

"Or me," Toby said.

"I don't understand how this could have happened so fast, and I'm still worried that..."

"That what?" Toby asked,

"That I'm too old for you. That this is the wrong time for this type of commitment."

Matt shook his head. "I've known I wanted Toby since the first time I saw him when I was fifteen. I felt the same way about you the day you walked into the fire station. I can't explain it. I know it sounds crazy, but it's true."

"Every time you two argued, I felt like I was coming between you, messing up what you have with each other, and I couldn't stand the thought of that."

Toby looked at Matt, then back to Bryce. "We fought plenty before we met you, and I'm sure we'll argue again, maybe before the night's over, but none of that is your fault. It's just part of trying to live together."

"But you've got so much history. And we've only known each other a few months." Bryce hated how pathetic he sounded. What was wrong with him? He hadn't felt this

insecure since he'd come out to his mom. She'd taken it well, but she'd passed away a few years later, and the rest of his family had no interest in him. By then he'd been confident in his own abilities, and he'd known he was the man he wanted to be, even if outside of work he was a bit lonely. He didn't have to be lonely now if he could figure out how to keep from screwing this up.

"We want you with us. It doesn't matter how long we've known you." Matt pulled him into a hug, and Toby climbed on top of them so he could join in.

"We're going to figure this out, and we're not letting you walk away again," Toby said.

When they finally released him, Bryce took a deep breath and sat up. "I love you. Both of you. I've never said that to a man before, never thought I would, but here I am saying it and meaning it in a way I didn't understand before I met you two."

Matt reached up and cupped his face. "I love you too. I'm so glad you came back."

Toby's eyes glistened, and he turned away and swiped at his face. "It was all I could do not to come after you. I love you both, and I don't want to give this up. Ever."

Bryce nodded. "I know it can work. Look at Mason and his boyfriends. They're sickeningly happy. And surely we can do better than a couple cops."

Toby grinned. "Damn right we can."

"If I ran home and got Rollo, would we be welcome to spend the night?"

Matt smiled. "Absolutely. Any chance you're going to cook us breakfast? I'm supposed to stay off my feet so I'm going to be stuck with Toby's cooking."

Toby slapped his arm. “I ought to be insulted.”

“But you aren’t because you know how I’ll suffer.”

Toby grinned at Bryce. “That’s the real reason we need you back, you know? Your cooking.”

Bryce narrowed his eyes, glaring at Toby in mock annoyance. In reality he loved how much they enjoyed the food he made, and he was already planning what he’d make for breakfast: cinnamon raisin French toast, a recipe that had become a favorite for all three of them.

“So by the time we start our next shift, or Toby and I do anyway—I guess Matt will be out for a while—will we be ready to talk to the chief?”

Toby glanced at Matt, and Matt nodded. “Yes, we’re ready. We’re finally ready.”

A day and a half later, Bryce stepped into his battalion chief’s office.

“You needed to see me?” the chief asked.

Bryce’s heart thudded heavily. “Yes, sir.”

The chief waited silently for him to say something else. You can do this. Just tell him. “You already know I’m gay.”

The chief nodded.

“Matt and Toby are too. They’ve been seeing each other, and now I’m seeing them too. We need to request a transfer for two of us.”

Bryce had worried the chief would be angry. Instead, he looked relieved. “Thank God.”

“Sir?” That was definitely not the reaction Bryce was expecting.

“After the warehouse fire, I wasn’t going to be able to wait much longer to confront you.”

“You knew?”

The chief smiled. “I suspected. Strongly.”

“Even about me?”

“You’re the main reason.”

Bryce should have known. “I’ve never been accused of having a good poker face.”

“No, if I were you, I would stay far away from casinos.”

Bryce smiled. “I will.” The chief didn’t even look shocked. Three of his men were fucking each other, and he didn’t seem to mind. Either he had a fantastic poker face or his life was a lot more interesting than Bryce had assumed. “Can we work something out? I know I’m new here, but what I would like most of all is to work for the fire marshal. I’d inquired about a position in Atlanta before I decided to move. I noticed that there’s an opening here. Would you be willing to recommend me?”

The chief nodded. “I’d be honored to.”

The chief’s reaction was even better than Bryce had hoped for. “Thank you, sir.”

“I’ll keep Matt and WT together. Toby can fill a position I’ve got at station eight. Assuming you get the position, and I think you will, you can start at the police academy this fall. Until then, you can take over Brad’s unit, and he can take yours. I’ll do the best I can to make sure you and Matt aren’t expected to work together.”

“You’ve already thought this through, haven’t you?”

The chief smiled. “I have.”

Bryce wondered how he’d gotten so lucky since he moved. He hoped to hell his luck was going to hold.

“I’m going to call Toby and talk to him, and I’ll brief Matt once he’s back. Now get out there and scrub some engines or do something else useful.”

“Yes, sir.” Bryce hesitated at the door and turned back to look at the chief again. “Thank you.”

“Go.” The chief shooed him out, but he was still smiling.

four months later

Bryce sank onto the couch, so exhausted he didn't think he could move. Struggling to take in so much information at the police academy might just kill him before he was done. Having Gray teach a tactics class today—and rag on him incessantly—hadn't made things easier. The bastard. Admittedly, Gray would have been just as much of an ass to Jack or Mason, not that it was really any comfort.

Bryce let a few classmates talk him into going out after classes even though he was exhausted. He should have come straight home and gone to bed. He hadn't slept more than a few hours a night for days between studying and keeping up with two very demanding lovers. He doubted he could stay awake long enough to get undressed and get into bed. Maybe if he just lay down for a few minutes, he'd re-energize.

“Bryce! Bryce, wake up!”

Why was someone shaking him? He tried to tell whoever it was to go away, but no actual words came out so he turned over and pretended not to hear.

“I know you're awake.” Toby's voice. “What are you doing on the couch?”

Good question. Why was he on the couch? “Too tired.”

“Aww, are the mean old police instructors wearing the poor little baby out?”

Bryce sat up and scowled at them.

“At least he’s sitting up now,” Matt said. Bryce could hear laughter in his voice. They were fucking mocking him.

“Are you two asking for trouble?”

“Do you want trouble?” Toby asked.

Bryce considered the idea. What he wanted most was to sleep for several more hours. Was it really after eight in the morning? It must be if Toby and Matt were home. If he couldn’t sleep anymore, then his cock was definitely interested in trouble.

“No, no, no. You both promised,” Matt said.

“Promised what?” Bryce didn’t remember promising anything.

Matt glared at him. “That you’d go house shopping this morning.”

Ugh. Bryce had only promised because he’d figured Matt would be too tired after his shift. “Don’t you want a nap first?”

“Yeah,” Toby said. “A ‘nap’.” He winked at Bryce.

Matt shook his head. “We’ve put this off long enough.”

“All right.” Toby sounded defeated. “But I want trouble after house hunting.”

Bryce sighed. “I’ve got to study.”

“What we’ve got to do is find a bigger place so we’re not driving each other crazy.”

Matt was right. Toby and Matt’s lease had come up for renewal and they’d given up

their place, which, lovely as it was, wasn't big enough for the three of them. They'd moved into Bryce's duplex, which wasn't a hell of a lot bigger, with the intention that they'd search for a new place for the three of them. So far, they hadn't found anything they even remotely liked.

Bryce pushed off the blanket he'd pulled over himself sometime in the night and forced himself to stand. "Let me get a shower, and we'll go."

Matt frowned at him. "You never even got undressed last night."

"I was too tired."

"Gray must have really worked you hard," Matt said.

"He's a fucking ass."

Toby laughed. "He's got a cute ass. That's for sure."

Bryce swatted Toby's rather fine rear end as he walked by. "I'll remember that later."

"Please do."

Bryce frowned as he poured himself a bowl of cereal. He'd been slacking on his cooking duties because of his classes. Matt and Toby hadn't complained. Much. But he was getting tired of cereal and Pop-Tarts for breakfast.

Matt walked into the kitchen and grabbed his jacket from one of the hooks by the door. "Hurry up. We're meeting the rental agent in ten minutes."

"We have an appointment?"

“Yes, weren’t you listening when I told you this yesterday?”

“Um... maybe.”

Matt rolled his eyes. “I got us an appointment to see two houses I noticed on my run a few days ago.”

“Okay, I’m ready,” Bryce said, pushing his chair back from the table. He wanted to be enthusiastic about finding a house, but they’d looked at what felt like hundreds of apartments and rental houses and something had been wrong with all of them. Not wrong like a few details weren’t to their liking, but I-wouldn’t-rent-that-if-my-life-depended-on-it wrong. Turning the light on at one place had sent a large colony of roaches fleeing for cracks in the walls. Another was less than half the advertised size. Yet another had rotten floorboards and mildew-covered walls. Bryce had started to think they should just get some tents and take to the woods.

The first house they saw that morning was okay, but while the square footage was a little bigger than Bryce’s current house, the bedrooms were both too small to hold his king-size bed and the floor plan sucked.

As they followed the agent to the second house, Toby sighed. “I don’t know how many more suck-ass houses I can look at.”

“The last one wasn’t bad,” Matt said.

“No, but it wasn’t right either.”

“Maybe this one will be better.” Bryce wasn’t optimistic, but he didn’t want Toby hurting Matt’s feelings.

When they got out of the car, Theresa, the rental agent, was standing on the porch

wearing a God-I-hope-you-rent-this-house smile. The outside was freshly painted, and there were boxes of pansies in the windows. It was promising. Could it be the one?

The moment Bryce stepped inside, he knew they were going to rent that house. The downstairs had an open floor plan with living room, dining area, and kitchen, and the numerous large windows made the space feel even bigger than it was.

“The bedrooms are all upstairs?” Bryce asked, although it was obvious.

“Yes, would you like to see them now?”

Bryce glanced at Matt and Toby. “Yes, ma’am,” Toby answered.

The three of them followed her up the carpeted stairs. They would be a pain in the ass to clean, but the carpet was plush and comfy. It would feel great under cold feet in the morning.

Two of the three bedrooms were tiny, but the master bedroom was large and as full of light as the open space downstairs. “It’s big enough to fit a king-size bed,” Matt observed.

“Oh, yes, most definitely,” Theresa said, though she looked surprised that one of them would have one. They hadn’t bothered to correct her assumption that they were roommates. Bryce was tempted to say, “What the hell else would we all fit in?” but he behaved himself.

The upstairs bathroom wasn’t amazingly spacious, but it was adequate, as was the one downstairs, and both were full baths, which wasn’t easy to find in his neighborhood.

When the agent finished her spiel, Bryce looked at Matt and Toby to see if they were as into the place as he was. Toby grinned and gave him a thumbs-up while the agent was answering a question from Matt about average utility bills. Trust him to come up with the practical questions. Like Bryce, Toby was probably more interested in the fact that they could set up the third bedroom as a playroom. It might not fit a king-size bed, but it was sure as hell big enough for the spanking bench he'd been planning to build.

"So what do you gentlemen think?" the agent asked.

Bryce wanted a chance to discuss it with Matt and Toby without Theresa listening in. "Could we have a few minutes to look around on our own?"

The agent hesitated, as if deciding whether they'd do any damage if she left them alone. They must have passed muster, because she said, "Of course. I'll be on the porch when you're ready."

Once they heard the front door close, Bryce glanced at Matt and Toby. "Do you like it as much as I do?"

Matt nodded. "This is it. The place where we start over. Together."

Toby pulled Matt to him in a one-arm hug and kissed his cheek. "You're right. This is just the place to start a new life. Open, bright, roomy."

"Roomy enough to get into endless trouble," Bryce added.

"And endless punishment," Toby said as they stepped into the hall and took another look at the other bedrooms.

Bryce chuckled. "That can be arranged."

“It’s perfect for a playroom, isn’t it?” Toby asked, stepping into the extra room. “I can just see a spanking bench here.” He gestured to one corner. “And some cushions for kneeling over here.” He turned to face the opposite side of the room.

“Who said you get cushions?” Bryce asked.

Toby shuddered dramatically. “Oooh. You’re soooo bad.”

“Are you sure?” Matt asked, interrupting Toby’s silliness.

“About the house?” Bryce asked.

“About all of it.”

Bryce pulled Matt and Toby close. “I’m more than sure. I didn’t think I could handle all this at first, but now I know I made the right choice. I couldn’t be more excited about my prospects both at work and with you.”

“Then let’s go tell Theresa we’ll take it,” Toby said.

Bryce grinned at Toby. “You eager to get out of here for some reason?”

“Nope. I just want to have this settled.”

“And to get back home?” Matt asked.

“Well that too. Bryce did make me a promise.”

“What I said was that I had to study.”

“And then you said you’d get me back for liking Gray’s ass. You shouldn’t put that

off.”

Bryce grinned. “I won’t.”

They signed a rental agreement and fixed a date three weeks down the road to take possession of the new place. Bryce prayed he’d find someone to sublet his house by then. He had three months left on his lease. The landlord wouldn’t let him out of it, but if he found someone to take over those months, that person could have dibs on the place when the lease ran out. One of the guys in his class was considering it, and Mason had another prospect for him.

Renting a home together shouldn’t have been such a big deal, but it did feel like a new start, something truly theirs in a way his house couldn’t be. The changes at work hadn’t been as bad as they’d feared. Matt and Toby were on the same schedule so they all got to see each other even though Bryce was in class for long hours and had a lot of studying to do. His police training wouldn’t last forever, though. Then he’d make another new start. New job. New home. A life with the men he loved.

“We need to celebrate,” he said when they were all settled in Matt’s car.

“Mmmm. Definitely,” Toby answered, closing his eyes and dropping his head back as if imaging what that celebration might entail.

“Do you ever not think with your dick?” Matt asked.

Toby frowned at him. “What kind of celebration were you thinking of?”

Matt shook his head and looked at Bryce for support. “He’s hopeless.”

“Seriously,” Toby said. “Don’t you want to go home and fuck?”

“I didn’t say that, but I thought we might celebrate by going out somewhere special or maybe shopping for something for the new place.”

“We could do that after fucking,” Toby said.

“Don’t you have to study?” Matt asked, looking at Bryce.

“I do, but it’s not every day the men I love and I rent a house together.”

Matt grinned, and Bryce knew he’d said the right thing. “Let’s go to that hipster place on Ninth Street, the one with the awesome cocktails.”

“Those things are dangerous.” Toby sounded like he knew from experience, a very bad experience.

“I probably don’t want to know, do I?” Bryce asked.

Matt shook his head. “Obscene acts with pool cues were involved.”

“Wow.”

“But they also have that appetizer with the egg and the fried pickles,” Matt said.

Toby sighed. “It’s sooo good.”

Bryce wasn’t so sure about this. “Are you really going to make me eat weird food?”

“The chef is a genius. It’s weird, but you won’t even care.”

Matt was right. He wouldn’t. As long as he was with Toby and Matt, he’d be happy.

Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 2:47 pm

“On your knees, both of you,” Bryce ordered.

Matt and Toby both obeyed flawlessly, sinking gracefully to the floor at the same time.

In the past, Bryce had felt a touch of hesitation dominating them, but now he knew they wanted this as much as he did. Matt and Toby’s desire to submit in the bedroom was just another part of their relationship they were slowly figuring out. Looking down at his lovers kneeling in front of him, eyes cast down, he couldn’t wait to make them writhe with pleasure. He’d make them beg, then they’d all enjoy a reward. They’d gotten tested a few weeks before, thinking they were ready to stop using condoms. Everyone had gotten good results, and they’d decided to include going bare for the first time as part of their celebration of the new house.

“Turn around and face the end of the bed.” They did as he said. “Now lean forward, brace yourselves on the mattress, and stick your asses out.” Bryce had already laid out the cock rings and butt plugs he wanted from their toy drawer as well as lube from the nightstand. He grabbed the rings and knelt behind Matt and Toby.

“I don’t want either of you to disgrace yourself by coming before I tell you to, so I’m going to put these on you.”

Matt sucked in his breath, but Toby moaned and pushed his ass out even farther.

Bryce fitted the rings around them, making as little contact with their cocks as possible. They were going to have a long, hard wait before he touched them.

“I thought we’d have some fun with these today.” He held up the sizable butt plugs he’d ordered for them. This would be the first time they’d used them.

Bryce grinned at Matt’s look of apprehension. “If you can take me, you can take this.”

“Y-yes, sir,” Matt said, looking back down at the bed.

Toby bit his lip as if holding in what he wanted to say.

“You have permission to speak, Toby.”

“I... thank you.”

Bryce smiled, glad Toby couldn’t see him. “You’re welcome. I thought you’d be pleased. No more talking now. I’m going to get your asses ready.”

Bryce slicked up his fingers and circled Matt’s hole. Matt took a shaky breath, but he didn’t otherwise react until Bryce pushed a finger inside him. He was usually slow to warm up, but he pushed back, taking Bryce deeper.

Bryce slapped his ass. “Stay still.”

“C-can’t,” Matt said.

Bryce spanked him again. “Be quiet,” he said as he added another finger.

“Fuck!”

Bryce let that one go since Matt had stopped moving. “You notice more when you don’t move. I want you to feel everything as I open you up.”

Matt whimpered, but he didn't move. "Feels so good."

"So hot," Toby murmured. He'd turned his head to watch.

Bryce swatted Toby's ass with his free hand. "Quiet!"

Toby just grinned, the little bastard.

"Remember what I'm about to do to you."

Toby turned away, but the smile was still on his face.

Bryce pushed a third finger into Matt's ass. Matt gasped and tensed.

"Breathe," Bryce instructed.

Matt drew in a slow breath, and Bryce waited until Matt relaxed enough to allow him to go deeper. It didn't take long before Matt let go and took what Bryce gave him.

"I'm going to put the plug in now, okay?"

Matt nodded. "Yes, sir."

"I'm proud of you. You're doing so good."

Matt exhaled and pushed his ass back, taking Bryce's fingers deeper. Bryce couldn't scold him for that. He loved that Matt was relaxing into him, accepting what Bryce wanted. Bryce slicked up one of the plugs and brushed it across Matt's hole. "Feel that? You're going to take that inside and it'll stay there while you fuck me."

Matt gasped and turned to look at Bryce. "You... I..."

“Yes. You’re going to fuck me while I fuck Toby. Do you like that idea?”

Matt nodded frantically.

“Good, because I do too.”

Toby whimpered and worked his hips like he was fucking the air.

Bryce slapped his ass. “Don’t move.”

Toby let out a plaintive sound, like he might die if he didn’t. Bryce only smiled and began to push the plug into Matt. Matt’s breathing was shallow, but he stayed relaxed and his body swallowed the phallus until the flange nestled against his ass. Bryce thumped it and Matt jerked. “Fuck.”

“Later. Right now. I want you to kneel up and watch Toby.”

Matt did as he was told, though Bryce could see the tension in his legs. Bryce continued to watch Matt as he pushed two slick fingers into Toby’s ass. Toby whimpered at the invasion, but he didn’t pull away. Bryce kept still and Toby pushed back, trying to take more. “Don’t move,” Bryce ordered.

Toby obeyed, but Bryce knew by his ragged breaths that he was struggling. He worked his fingers in and out a few times, loving the way Toby’s ass gripped him. He pulled his fingers free when Toby started to moan and cuss. “That’s all the prep you’re going to get. I’m slicking the plug for you right now.”

“Please,” Toby begged.

Bryce was fairly sure he meant please shove the plug up his ass but to be sure, he laid a hand on Toby’s back. “Nod if you’re okay with this.”

Toby nodded.

When the plug was ready, Bryce positioned it and began to push it into Toby's ass. Toby tensed and Bryce waited a few seconds before giving him another inch. Toby whimpered but he made no move to get away. He had a safe word, and he'd consented, so Bryce kept going, driving the thick shaft deeper. Sweat rolled down Toby's back by the time the plug was fully seated.

Bryce sighed. "You're both so fucking beautiful like this. He twisted Toby's plug and Toby cried out. "Mmmm. Perfect. Turn around and face me now. You're both going to keep your hands at your side as you watch me."

Bryce stood up and took his cock in his slick hand, working it lazily. Both men watched as he'd ordered. Toby's mouth hung open, and Matt clenched his jaw and squeezed his hands into fists. Between the cock rings and the plugs, they had to both be about to lose their minds.

He worked himself faster, until both men were practically salivating. Then he stepped close to Matt. "Suck my cock."

Matt leaned forward eagerly, taking Bryce's shaft in his mouth. Bryce thrust gently in and out, then pulled back. Matt whimpered, but Bryce shook his head. "Toby's turn."

Toby sucked him just as enthusiastically. When Bryce tried to pull free of his mouth, Toby grabbed his ass to hold him in place. Bryce reached down and pinched Toby's nipple hard enough to make him yelp. "You're not in charge here. You'd do well to remember that." He glared down at Toby, but the little brat simply looked up wide-eyed and adoring.

He studied both men. "Maybe I should just jerk myself off and leave you two like this. Toby is especially disobedient today."

Toby's eyes widened. "No, sir. Please."

"Tell me what you want, then. I need to hear you beg for it."

"I want your cock in me. I want you to fuck me hard and fast. My ass is so ready for you. Please."

Bryce didn't think he'd ever get over how eagerly Toby begged. Bryce turned to Matt. "What about you?"

"I want to fuck you, sir. I want to find out how it feels to have my bare cock in your ass. I want to come in you, please."

"God, yes. Turn around, Toby. Hands and knees." Bryce grasped the end of Toby's plug. "Push out as I pull." He did and the plug popped free. Bryce tossed it on a towel. He'd clean it later. "Matt, I want you to wear yours while you fuck me. Are you okay with that?"

Matt nodded enthusiastically.

"Good. Don't you dare come when I take these rings off."

Both men nodded, and Bryce released Matt first, then Toby. Both of them gasped as blood rushed back to their cocks, but they didn't try for extra contact with Bryce's hand.

"Toby, on the bed on your back."

Bryce lubed his cock as Toby positioned himself even though Toby's ass was probably plenty slick from the plug. He didn't intend to go slow, so he wanted nothing impeding him. When he was ready, Bryce knelt in front of Toby. "Matt, slick your cock and get ready to fuck me once I'm inside Toby."

“Y-yes, sir.”

“You ready?” Bryce asked Toby. He was about to come all over his hand just thinking about what it would feel like to fuck him bareback.

“Yes! So ready.”

He teased Toby with the tip of his cock, but he couldn't wait long before sinking into Toby's heat. He groaned as Toby's muscles squeezed him. “Fuck!” He loved the feel of Toby surrounding him, slick and tight against his cock. “So good. Not going to last long. Matt, I need you now.”

Matt positioned himself between Bryce's legs, and began prepping his ass for Matt's cock. Bryce tensed, leg muscles quivering. He was panting as hard as Matt had been when he'd put the plug in. Why had he asked for this? When Matt brushed the tip of his cock over Bryce's hole, Bryce froze. He was desperate to feel Matt's hot thick flesh inside him, but it had been a long time since he'd bottomed for anyone, and for just a second, he was afraid of how much it would hurt.

Matt caressed his back. “Relax and breathe. Tell me to stop if you need me to.”

How had Matt known exactly what he needed? “I'm good.”

Matt pushed in a little and stopped, waiting for Bryce to adjust. “You still good?” he asked a few seconds later.

“Yes,” Bryce said, but the word came out ragged. He was okay, though, more than okay, caught there between the two men he loved. “I... I love you. Both of you.”

Toby raised up enough to take hold of Bryce's face and pull him down for a kiss. Matt worked himself all the way in as Toby distracted Bryce with lips, tongue, and teeth.

“Amazing, so fucking amazing. I love this, love being in between you,” Bryce said.

Matt groaned. “Feels so good, doesn’t it? You need this, don’t you? Need us both.”

“Yes! You like having your ass stuffed while you fuck me?”

“God, yes,” Matt said.

“Fuck. Me. Now,” Toby demanded.

Bryce did, working himself in and out until Matt started fucking him so hard, Bryce no longer had to do any work. The force of Matt’s thrusts drove him into Toby. Matt found just the right angle so his cock slid over Bryce’s sweet spot, and suddenly Bryce was right on the edge. “Fuck! Too good. Too... Can’t...”

“Come,” Matt ordered and almost immediately Bryce did, filling Toby’s ass as he jerked Toby off. Toby came too, arching up as his cum spilled over Bryce’s hand.

“Holy fuck!” Matt yelled. “So good. Can’t stop!” He drove into Bryce and came, the heat of his cum searing Bryce, making him jerk against Toby one last time. They collapsed on each other. Matt and Bryce rolled over a few seconds later, and they snuggled together, sticky, messy, and oh so satisfied.

“That was... wow,” Toby said, still breathing so hard Bryce wouldn’t have thought he could speak.

“I knew going bare would be good, but I didn’t... I mean, it was... Yeah, wow.”

“I can’t wait to do that again,” Matt said. “I want to feel you buried inside me. I want Toby to fuck me while he wears one of these plugs in his ass. Finding a house is awesome, but this? This was a taste of our future, and I couldn’t love it more.”

Toby grinned. “It’s abso-fucking-lutely perfect.”

Bryce nodded. “It is. I’m exactly where I want to be.”

“Me too,” Toby said.

“Me three.” Matt’s words preceded a sizzling three-way kiss that sealed their new beginning.

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