



# Throuple Next Door

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**Category:** LGBT+

**Description:** Austin knew change was inevitable, but he hadn't counted on just how difficult it was going to be... for all of them. He, Weaver, and Randy have been together for two amazingly hot years, and then with a single decision, everything is different. When Randy receives an offer on his gyms in Brooklyn, he jumps at it and switches careers with a teaching job in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

Weaver is also interested in making a change after nearly burning himself out as a lawyer. With both of his passionate partners needing something new and Austin's modeling career cooling as he ages, the three of them decide to relocate from New York to Carlisle. Randy settles into his new position, and Weaver easily lands on his feet, but Austin wonders how he is going to fit into their new world.

Austin knows he has the support of the men he loves, and who love him, but he needs to pull his weight. With very few prospects, what could small-town life hold for him? Randy and Weaver have their special way to make him forget, but it will take more than love and hot sex for the throuple next door to start the next chapter in their lives.

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## Page 1

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Austin Reynolds stood in front of the house that was to be his new home. After seeing that everything from the Greenwich Village apartment had been loaded onto the moving truck, he'd made the four-hour drive as quickly as he could, even though their furniture wasn't going to arrive until Monday afternoon. He leaned against the door of his Mercedes convertible, looking up at the two-story brick house.

The front yard was tiny, the area covered in a deep green vine rather than grass, which he liked, clumps of daffodils popping through for color. The shrubs were well-tended and framed the nicely painted and well-kept porch. He loved that there was a front porch, but the swing at the one end needed to go. Not that there was anything wrong with it. It was nice as swings went, but it wasn't the style he wanted. Austin pulled out his phone, searched online until he found what he wanted, and placed an order for chairs with plush cushions, ottomans, and a table, for rush delivery. Satisfied, he put the phone in his pocket and used his key to let himself inside.

When Randy told him that he had bought a house on his own, Austin had gone a little cold, but as he let himself into the entrance, he nodded to himself. The paint was fresh, a soft mushroom tone that he liked, and the wood floors gleamed warmly. Opening the inner door, he smiled at the patterned glass. Maybe this wasn't going to be the disaster he had imagined when he'd seen the pictures on the realtor's website. They hadn't been bad, but Austin had learned long ago not to trust such things.

His phone chimed in his pocket, and he pulled it out, answering it.

"Well, what do you think?" Randy asked. "I did good. Didn't I?"

"Don't sound so smug. I just got inside, and there's plenty that I haven't seen yet."

He grumped it up on purpose just to make Randy pay for not letting him see it first.

“Randy did his best,” Weaver said through Randy’s truck’s Bluetooth system. “At least it isn’t one of those new-construction plastic houses you hate so much. And the market there is tight enough that there weren’t many houses to choose from.”

“Okay.” He stood in the middle of the living room, the mushroom color from the hall extending that far and up the stairs. “It isn’t a disaster so far. Not that it would matter if it was. You’d just expect me to make a silk purse out of whatever sow’s ear you’d found,” Austin grouched, but he liked that he was appreciated for his talent, and he knew he was a nester, the one who made a home and ensured that where they lived was comfortable and felt warm and welcoming. “When will you get here?”

“Tomorrow,” Weaver answered. “Randy and I are finishing up contract negotiations today, and we’ll leave Chicago as soon as we can.”

Randy and Weaver had been together for almost six years. Randy owned a small chain of gyms in New York, and Weaver, an attorney by trade, was helping to negotiate the sale to a national chain headquartered in Chicago. Then, Randy, with his PhD in physiology, was taking a position as a professor at Dickinson College. Hence the move from their three-room apartment in the Village to this house.

“I’ll see you tomorrow, babe,” Randy said.

“Yeah. We’ll get there and be ready to get done whatever you have on your list. Shoot—we’ve got to go or we’ll be late. See you tomorrow, Aussie.”

The call dropped, and Austin sighed, smiling to himself before putting away the phone. He continued through the house into the dining room. The previous owners had left the neoclassical sideboard as part of the sale. Austin wasn’t sold on it at first, but as soon as he opened the doors, checking the construction, he smiled. This was a

quality piece that would go with the dining room table he'd taken out of storage and had on the truck. The ceiling medallion was gorgeous, as was the original chandelier, which glowed warmly when he flipped the lights on. Still, the windows needed help, and he snapped some pictures before continuing to the kitchen, which was clean and passable. He checked the family room at the back of the house, smiling more at the coziness. This was going to make a great room for the guys to watch sports and hang out.

Austin went upstairs, where two nice-sized bedrooms and a clean, sleek bathroom waited. But it was the master bedroom that surprised him. The room was spacious, with a fireplace against one wall and a large nook off to the side for the bed. He paced it out and grinned; it was enough room for a king-sized bed. He pulled out his phone and sent Randy and Weaver a note. You did good. Now get here as fast as you can.

Austin woke early at his hotel, stretched, and climbed out of bed. He checked his phone, but there were no messages. It was a little early, but he was up, so he went into the bathroom, used the facilities, showered, and dressed before having a quick breakfast and getting ready to leave. He took one of his bags to the car and drove to the house. He had spent most of the evening shopping for some of the things he needed, and he expected some of those deliveries in a few hours. So once he was at the house, he parked in front and hurried inside. He had already made a list of things he wanted to get done before the truck arrived, and he'd drawn up where all the furniture was going to go.

He peeked at the time as a knock sounded on the door. Austin figured it was one of his deliveries, so when he saw Randy and Weaver standing on the porch, he stepped back in surprise. "What are you doing here this early?"

Weaver was the first one through the door and instantly had Austin in a bear hug, lifting him off the floor before kissing the life out of him. "We drove as much as we

could last night and got up early this morning for the rest.” He swung Austin around before setting him back on his feet. Then Randy pressed right up behind him, holding the both of them as he nipped at the skin just above his collar.

“We missed you,” Randy said, and Austin leaned back, turning his head so Randy could capture his lips, nearly bruising him with the way he devoured his mouth.

“I missed you both too,” Austin managed after being kissed breathless, his heart racing a mile a minute. He closed his eyes, engulfed in the heat that washed off the men in his life, building even further as Randy kissed Weaver and then him, their lips and tongues becoming a tangle that set Austin on absolute fire.

A buzz that Austin realized was the doorbell startled him out of his haze.

“What is that?”

“Deliveries,” Austin said. “And we don’t need to shock the locals. At least not on the first day.” They broke apart, and Austin went to get the door. “The list of things that I need you to do is on the counter in the kitchen.”

“I have a bed and mattress,” said the delivery man in his early twenties, wearing blue coveralls and carrying a clipboard, barely looking up. Another man stood behind him.

“They go upstairs,” Austin said, leading the men and showing them where he wanted it. Then he got out of the way as they carried everything up and put it together. He already had sheets and bedding in the car, so if nothing else, there would be a place for them to sleep in a new bed rather than the nearly worn out one they’d had in New York. Though Austin hoped none of them were going to get a lot of rest.

“You want us to take down the swing?” Randy asked as he met him at the bottom of the stairs with the list. “I like the swing.” Austin hit him with a stare. “Okay. I can put

it in the basement.”

“Perfect,” Austin said, and found Weaver in the kitchen.

“You don’t expect me to remodel the kitchen today, do you?” The gleam in his eyes had Austin smiling.

“No. It’s a comprehensive list. You can hang the holder for the television. I have a diagram for placement. We can then attach it when the monstrosity you require shows up on the truck. There’s the shower curtains that need to be hung. There should also be some more deliveries later today.”

“Your wish is my command,” Weaver said, then went off to do as Austin asked.

Thank goodness. Austin returned upstairs as the delivery men finished up. He tipped both of them and showed them out before grabbing the newly washed sheets and bedding he’d brought along and began making up the bed.

There were certain things that were required when making a new home, and familiar bedding, blankets, and pillows were an absolute must, not that the other two would think of that. Randy and Weaver each had other talents. Weaver handled the legal matters and organized their business dealings. He was incredibly skilled, but had been burned out by the big Manhattan law firm he’d worked for and had stepped away from the partnership to come here. He could also fix just about anything. Randy was strong, and to most people’s surprise, he was the smart one and the peacemaker of the relationship.

Austin had just gotten the bed made and all the pillows placed when Randy came in, his shirt off, displaying the body he’d spent years perfecting. “The swing is downstairs, and there’s someone standing out in front of the house.”

“Let’s go see what they want, and as much as I hate to say it, put on a shirt. I have no idea how the neighborhood is going to react to us, and they are going to be our neighbors, so we don’t need to advertise. Okay? We aren’t in New York any longer.”

Randy grabbed a black T-shirt out of the bag he’d brought up and pulled it on. It fit him like a second skin. Austin took his hand, leading him down the stairs. Weaver was still in back, so he opened the door and went outside, dropping Randy’s hand just before he did.

“Can I help you?” Austin asked.

“Sorry, I didn’t mean to disturb you,” the older man said with a warm smile. Another man, shorter but maybe a few years younger, hurried up. “I’m Andrew, and this is my husband, Dominic. We live just over there, and we wanted to welcome you to the neighborhood.” He handed Randy a plate of cookies, probably a little intimidated. “We saw that you moved in and wanted to say hello.”

“I’m Randy, and this is Austin.” Randy could be completely disarming when he smiled, and he chose that moment to shine. “Weaver is inside doing his handyman impression.” Randy slipped an arm around his waist, and Andrew smiled knowingly. For a moment, he wondered if the guy was going to make a pass or something; it had happened before. But they were being good neighbors.

But Andrew grinned and motioned around him. “Welcome to the Gayborhood, or at least as close as we get here in Carlisle.”

Austin swallowed hard. “You’re kidding.”

“Nope. We’ve lived here over twenty years, and there’s another couple at the end of the block. A third couple live just around the corner, and then there are the ladies in the next block.”

Weaver chose that moment to make an appearance, standing in the summer sun on the other side of him, a hand sliding into Austin's back pocket.

Dominic shot Andrew a look, but he simply nodded slightly.

"It's very nice of you to come over." Austin couldn't help it. It came from years of living in New York, where everyone kept to themselves and barely knew anyone else at all. Even the people in the building had largely been strangers.

"No problem. If you need anything, be sure to let us know. We've done about everything as far as the house goes. Plumbers, electricians, painters, plasterers. One of the neighbors owns a handyman service...." Dominic pointed. "You'll love the neighbors—everyone is really cool."

"On most Fridays we have porch wine gatherings that shift from house to house. We'll let you know when the next one gets scheduled so you can meet everyone."

"Thanks, that would be great," Randy said cheerfully as Austin watched as the two of them headed back to their house. Austin turned as Randy shoved a cookie in his mouth, humming softly. Weaver grabbed one, eating it in a single bite.

"Dang," Weaver mumbled around the cookie. "That's good."

"You're both animals," Austin grouched.

"And you know you love it," Randy told him as he pinched his backside, making him jump. "What's with you anyway?" Weaver asked as they headed back inside. "They were really nice to come over."

"Both the realtor and the seller said that this was an amazing neighborhood, and they make good cookies and have already invited us to the neighborhood gathering."



Randy held the door for him and Weaver. “What’s gotten into you?”

“Maybe it’s just the New York in me. I don’t know. People aren’t that friendly.”

Randy handed the plate to Weaver, then pulled Austin into his hugely strong arms. “I know your family was for shit, and no one had anything to do with the lot of them, but that isn’t the way it always is. New York isn’t how it is everywhere either.” He slowly rubbed Austin’s back. “That’s part of why I took this job. I needed to get out of the business, and we needed to be out of the city. We have a real chance to make a great life here, but not if we act like we did in New York.”

“Great. And what is Weaver supposed to do? He isn’t licensed to practice law here.”

“I have a line on a teaching position at Penn State Law. I got a call back while we were in the car. One of the women I practiced with a few years ago, Veronica Seaborne, is on the faculty. And if that doesn’t work out, I’ll take the bar exam.”

He should have known Weaver would land on his feet. He was too smart not to. But where did that leave him? Austin didn’t want to whine, so he kept quiet. The guys seemed happy and excited, and he didn’t want to be a Debbie Downer. His job had left him behind. A couple of years ago, he had been an in-demand fashion model. He’d worked all the time, but now he was past thirty, and the new faces and younger bodies had pretty much pushed him to the side. At least in New York he could find something in the industry. That wasn’t about to happen in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, that was for damned sure.

“Everything is going to be okay,” Weaver told him, resting a hand on his shoulder. “You’re way too talented to let anything get you down.”

“Yeah...,” Randy whispered.

It was nice that he knew he had the guys' support, but that didn't take away the worry. Austin had always made his own way after being taken from his folks at sixteen and placed with a foster family, to aging out of the system and finding himself on his own at eighteen. He fought to survive, getting a job at a club, where he lied about his age and danced for the guys to make tips. During the day, he beat the pavement to get modeling gigs and somehow managed to get small bookings and work up to runways in New York, Paris, and Milan. Now he was in the middle of nowhere, and while he wanted to trust Weaver and Randy, it was so difficult for him to think that anything good was just going to come his way, because so little of the good things in his life ever had.

"I can hear you thinking too much," Randy said. "And you need to stop worrying. This is a good town and a nice place. From the looks of it, we even stumbled onto a street with good neighbors."

Austin snorted lightly. "That was pure luck on your part, and don't think I'm ever going to let you forget it." He couldn't help smiling as he inhaled deeply, Randy and Weaver's scents mingling into a cocktail heady enough to make his mind spin.

They stood together for a while, and some of Austin's tension slipped away. But he had things to do, and that meant getting to work. "We need to get back to it. The rest of the furniture comes Monday, and there's still a lot to go."

"Like what?" Weaver asked.

"Well, you need to go pick out a paint color for your office and get two gallons of satin paint so we can have that done for when the furniture arrives. I have a few color choices that I think you'll like." None of them had moved, so Austin stayed where he was for the time being.

"I don't think he's going to let us get away with holding him for long enough that it's

too late to start, do you?” Weaver said.

“Hey.” Austin stepped to the side. “That room is the one they didn’t get a chance to repaint, probably because it was where they stored things while the rest of the house was freshened up. The previous owners chose nice colors, but I know your office is important to you.” He grabbed his notebook and pressed color samples into Weaver’s hands.

“These are nice,” Randy said.

“They are, but I was thinking purple with red trim.”

Austin rounded on him. “I know you’re joking, but if you come back with some hideous color, I will make you live with it.”

Weaver put his hands up. “I know. And I like this one. Butter Spread is soft and bright.”

“Good. Then go get two gallons and the supplies for painting. I’d come with you, but there are still a few things I need to try to find.”

“Then we’ll go get painting stuff,” Weaver agreed, and judging by the smirk on his face, Austin was sure he was going to regret letting them do any sort of shopping. The last time he sent one of them to the grocery store, they came back with what he wanted... as well as a number of things that “looked good,” which Austin had found in the back of the cupboard when he cleaned out their old apartment. So lord knew what they were going to come back with.

## Page 2

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### ChapterTwo

Andrew waved as Austin passed his house. Austin returned it and continued down, parking in front, behind Randy's truck. Because of the trip to Chicago, Weaver's precious BMW was being driven to Carlisle by his brother, Gregory, who would continue on to Pitt for college by train. Weaver made sure Gregory knew exactly what would happen to him if he got so much as a scratch on his baby.

"Afternoon," the neighbor next door said as he hurried out of the house. "I'm Doug. It's good to meet you. Eileen is going to be sad she missed you, but she's in New York on business. Welcome to the neighborhood... all of you." He shook Austin's hand before hurrying toward his Prius. "I'm late or I'd chat longer." He waved, got in the car, and pulled away. That was interesting.

Austin carried the bags of groceries inside and right to the kitchen. One thing he knew about his men was that they would be hungry sooner rather than later. Austin put the groceries away and grabbed three cold bottles of water, heading upstairs. All he had to do was follow the scent of fresh paint to find Randy and Weaver. He reached the top of the stairs and pushed the office door open slowly. Randy and Weaver were both barefoot in shorts and T-shirts. Randy was edging the walls as Weaver rolled on the paint.

"Do you like it?" Weaver asked.

"This isn't the same color," Austin said as he stepped inside.

"I know. I got the color strip and really liked the one a shade lighter. It's softer

and....” He trailed off as Austin looked over the wall they’d finished.

He nodded slowly. “You did good.” It really was a better choice, but he wasn’t willing to tell them that. Their egos were already big enough.

Weaver mocked dropping his roller. “That’s twice he’s said that. Do you think that deserves a reward?”

“It does. You each get a cookie when you’re done.” Austin backed out of the room, heading down the stairs.

“You know what I want to do,” Weaver Fisher said softly as soon as Austin was out of earshot.

Randy snickered, but his eyes said it all. “Strip him down and make him scream until all that worry leaches out of him?”

Weaver nodded. “He’s too damned uptight. Between us, we’ve got everything covered.” He continued putting paint on the wall, ready to have this job done so the three of them could talk this shit through.

“You know that’s not enough. Austin has to have a way to support himself so he can have a way out.” Randy climbed on the ladder, and Weaver admired the way those shorts clung to that one-of-a-kind ass. “He’s always wondering when he’s going to end up on his own again. It’s happened too many times for him to just trust that we aren’t going to decide that he isn’t wanted or needed.”

“That’s bullshit,” Weaver muttered. “I don’t know what the fuck I’d do without either of you.” Randy was his best friend and confidant, the one he could say anything to, and Austin was all energy and vitality, the one person who could lead him into trouble and make him happy about doing it. Together they completed his life in a way

neither of them could do alone. And he was sure Randy felt the same way. They had been together, all of them, for three years. He and Randy had been together for almost three before that, but it wasn't until they had met Austin that things really clicked and that last piece fell into place.

"I know, and Austin does too—at least part of him does—but there's still the need for a parachute. We have to help him have the safety net he needs to feel safe." Randy continued painting, finishing edging the third wall and moving on to the last one, which, with all the angles, was going to be a pain.

"What is wall and what's ceiling?" Weaver asked.

"If you can hang pictures on it, it's wall. Otherwise it's ceiling," Randy answered as he continued working.

Weaver returned his attention to his task, pulling it away from Randy's surprisingly fluid movements. For a man of his size, Randy was graceful, and Weaver could watch him all the damned time. "So what do we do?"

"Just be there for him and give him the space and support he needs," Randy answered. "There are opportunities here. We just need to keep our ears open for something that is going to make Austin happy." He stepped down off the ladder and moved it over. "But whatever we do, we have to make Austin think it was his idea."

Weaver snorted. "Why can't we just fuck him until he can't move and is too tired to think about it?" He watched Randy as he turned around, those eyes a deep sapphire blue. He knew that look, but Weaver looked away. He had to keep his mind on the task at hand, rather than on the fact that he was hard enough to pound nails.

"Who says we can't do both?" Randy got back up on the ladder, and Weaver worked a little faster. Damn, that was the best idea he had heard in a long freakin' time.

With the painting and cleanup done, Randy Mather munched on a cookie as he checked out the room before opening the window to let in some fresh air and help the walls dry a little faster. He wandered to their bedroom, hoping to find Weaver, but it was empty, so he descended the stairs, locating his quarry in the kitchen, chugging a glass of water.

“It looks nice,” Weaver said.

Randy kissed him lightly before getting his own water. “Where’s Austin?” he asked before drinking most of the bottle. “I expected him to come in to see that everything was up to his standard.”

Weaver shrugged. “I haven’t seen him in the last hour. His car is gone, so maybe he decided to run some more errands.” He put the glass in the sink and then checked his phone. “I keep hoping to hear something from the law school.”

“You know these things take time,” Randy said. “They’d be a fool not to hire you.” Weaver was a leading authority on international law, which was the specific subject they were advertising a teaching opening for. “You have to give them time.”

“Veronica said that they were interested in filling the position as quickly as possible. So I figured I’d hear something.” He shoved his phone back into his pocket.

“I know this is tough for all of us,” Randy said, knowing he was the reason that they had all uprooted their lives. Maybe he should have just kept managing the clubs, but this opportunity had opened up, and it was what he had always hoped for. Besides, with the proceeds from selling the clubs, they would have enough that money would never be an issue for any of them.

“We can deal with it. This is what you want, and I can always register for the bar here in Pennsylvania if I need to. The important thing is Austin.”

“What about me?” Austin strode in, closing the doors behind him. “Is the room done?”

“Yes, and everything is cleaned up.” Randy watched Austin closely. “Where have you been?”

“Downtown. There are some great antique shops here, and I was able to get six chairs for the table that will arrive on the truck.” He set his keys on the counter before opening the refrigerator. “I bought some steaks and things for dinner, but I’m not sure where to cook them.”

“I’m on it,” Weaver said, grabbing the truck keys. “We’re going to need a grill and stuff. I might as well see if I can find one.” He hurried out, and Austin closed the refrigerator door.

“I know I’m being stupid with all this worry and shit,” Austin said.

“Hey, we get it,” Randy told him. “And you know all you have to do is tell us... talk to us. We could have stayed in New York.”

“Nothing would be all that different. The offer on your business was too good to pass up, and his firm had been working Weaver to the bone. I’ve been worried about him for the last six months. We’re here now, and it’s no use going over the coulda-woulda-shoulda’s. That isn’t going to get us anywhere.”

“True.” He pulled open the refrigerator and grabbed a second bottle of water, chugging it in a few gulps before shooting the empty into the recycling container Austin had set up.

Austin shrugged. “Besides, I somehow think we’re going to like it here. As I drove down the street, a couple of folks waved to me. At first I thought something was



wrong with the car, but they were being nice. It's fucking strange... and good at the same time."

Randy rolled his eyes. "Dorothy, we're not in New York anymore."

"Tell me about it," Austin said as he left the room. Footsteps on the stairs told him he was going to check out the room. Randy followed to the bottom of the stairs, enjoying the way Austin's pants clung to him with each step. "Are you perving on the view?"

Randy growled. "It's not perving if you're already mine," he called up, and Austin turned, flashing a smile before heading on to the room. Randy wandered through the house to find Austin's list. There were still plenty of things on it, and he might as well get some of them checked off, but he needed energy, so he grabbed another cookie and then headed to the utility room to check the connections for the washer and dryer. He ended up cleaning out the dryer vent and tightening the water line to the washer. By the time he was finished, Weaver returned with a grill, which they placed in the backyard and got the charcoal going.

"You could have gotten a gas one, you know," Austin said as he joined them with three beers.

"I like old-fashioned charcoal. It gives a better flavor," Weaver said as he got everything set up with paper and the chimney. Then he lit it. This was Weaver's element—the man was a grill master. In New York, with limited space, the man had performed wonders. Randy's mouth watered at the thought of what he was going to be able to do here.

The three of them stood watching the flame as the charcoal caught. Randy popped open his beer and raised the bottle. The others did the same. "To new adventures," he said softly before slipping an arm around Austin's waist. Weaver did as well from

Austin's other side. They tapped the bottles and then drank.

“Everything is an adventure with you two,” Austin drolled.

Randy lowered his hand, getting a good grab of Austin's perfect ass. “And don't you forget it.”

## Page 3

*Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 6:32 am*

### Chapter Three

After dinner, Austin fell into bed. His original plan had been for them to stay at the hotel, but with the bedroom set up, the three of them could make do at the house. It was a little rustic, but they were good to go for a few days, and it wasn't like there was a shortage of things to get done. The guys were still down in the family room working to install the bracket for the television, which seemed to take more time and effort than they thought it would. That was okay. It gave them something to do, and Austin knew they would join him soon enough. He figured he'd wake up when they joined him, but the next thing Austin knew, he woke to a bright room with Randy on his right and Weaver on his left.

Randy was pressed to his back, an arm around his waist far enough that he was touching Weaver as well. Weaver faced him, a hand on his arm. Austin had long ago discovered that no matter which position they were in when they got in bed, they seemed to gravitate to where they were all touching each other.

"I think he's awake," Randy said softly, his voice deep with a desire that always got Austin revved up. There was something about that tone that sent his heart racing.

"I know he is," Weaver said. "I can feel just how awake." Warm fingers slipped around his length, and Austin closed his eyes, groaning as Randy slid in closer, his cock pressing against Austin's ass. "And it's a Sunday morning."

"What does that have to do with anything?" Austin groaned as Weaver began stroking him lightly before pushing the covers away.

“None of your damned deliveries to interrupt us,” Weaver said before sliding downward. Austin moaned as Weaver’s lips grazed a nipple and then trailed down his belly.

“Oh yeah,” Austin gasped as he pressed closer to Weaver, desperate for sensation. “Do it.”

Weaver stopped. “What is it you want?” He held still. “I need to hear it.” Sometimes, Weaver was so deliciously frustrating.

“Blow my mind with that mouth of yours,” Austin said. Why be ordinary if he could help it? Weaver chuckled and then slid his lips over Austin’s cock, taking him all the way. “Jesus.” He ran his fingers through Weaver’s thick, black hair, carding it as he bobbed his head, sending Austin into fucking orbit.

Randy, of course, was not going to be left out. Austin turned his head, and Randy claimed his lips, kissing him hard enough to almost make him forget what Weaver was doing to him.

“Don’t think for a second that I’m just going to watch,” Randy purred into his ear as he slipped a finger between Austin’s lips. He sucked that digit, getting it good and wet before Randy pulled it away. He knew what was next, and Randy didn’t disappoint, slipping the spit-slicked finger between his cheeks and then inside him, tilting it until Austin slammed his cock down Weaver’s throat. It only took seconds before Austin could barely remember his own fucking name. He shivered and tried to maintain some kind of control, but his men knew exactly how to drive him out of his mind and touch his heart at the same damned time.

For an instant, Austin felt empty when Randy pulled away, but then he groaned loudly as Randy filled him, stretching him completely, then pressed against his back, heat from foot to shoulder. Within a few seconds, Randy set the pace, and Weaver

followed right along, taking him, filling him, surrounding him, all of it sending Austin to near oblivion.

Randy's arms enveloped him in warmth as Weaver sucked harder for a few seconds. Then he backed away and lay in front of Austin, pressing back onto Austin's cock, pressure surrounding him. Give and take—that was the hallmark of their relationship and moments like this.

“How do you want this?” Randy whispered in Austin's ear.

“Fuck me so hard that Weaver can feel it,” Austin moaned, and Randy did just that, driving into him, giving to him, and Austin passed it right on. He loved being between his men, giving and getting at the same time, surrounded by love, more love than Austin had ever dreamed of... maybe more than he deserved. Randy held him tighter, sucking at the base of his neck. He knew he was going to have one hell of a mark, but Austin didn't mind. It was a visible sign that he was loved, and Austin passed the sentiment onto Weaver.

“Love you,” Randy said, and Austin knew it was meant for both of them. Weaver pressed back, groaning his feelings as well. Austin tried, but Randy drove into him at that moment, and Austin wasn't sure what the hell he actually said, shaking as waves of passion overtook him completely.

Within seconds, the last of his control snapped, and Randy trembled as his climax washed over him. He filled Weaver with his release just as Randy did the same, all three of them trembling with the combined power of their ecstasy.

Austin floated in the arms of his men as Weaver slowly pulled away and then rolled over. Austin gasped as Randy slid out of him. Their three-way kiss was languid and gentle, each of them holding him. “Don't think I don't know that this is your way of trying to keep me from worrying about shit.”

Randy snickered. “Really? That’s what you have to say at a moment like this.”

Austin smiled, pulling both men down to kiss them. “Don’t forget, I know both of you too well.”

Weaver nuzzled Austin’s neck, finding just the right spot to send tingles up his spine.

“And we know you, too, honey,” Randy whispered. “Never forget that.”

Randy was the first one out of bed, and soon afterward, the shower started.

“Too bad the damned thing isn’t big enough for the three of us,” Weaver said softly.

“Then you and Randy need to fix that. I’ll add it to the list.” Austin rolled into Weaver’s arms, dozing off until it was his turn in the shower.

Weaver got out of the shower and dressed in old clothes. Then he peeked into their bedroom, which smelled strongly of sex. God, he loved that scent, and the man still curled up in bed. He closed the door quietly and followed the aroma of food downstairs to the kitchen.

“I grabbed McDonalds,” Randy said, pushing the bag toward him. Weaver grabbed the two Egg McMuffins and began eating. “Where’s Austin?” Randy asked around his sausage biscuits.

“Still asleep. I don’t think he slept much last night, so I figured we could let him rest.” He opened the fridge and grabbed two bottles of OJ, handing one to Randy. “Now that the paint is dry, I thought I’d get your office cleaned up and ready for tomorrow.” He leaned against the counter. “Austin is adding to his list. He says we need a shower big enough for all three of us.”

“I thought of that too. But if we enlarge the bathroom, then we’re going to lose a lot of the third bedroom, and that’s already small enough.” Randy took another bite and swallowed. “But I was thinking that if we shored up the foundation of the screened-in porch on the side, we could use that space for a hot tub. It’s big enough, and I was thinking that if we made the space more private....”

“I like it. Maybe we could rework the space to be more of a three-season room instead of a screen porch. All we’d need to do is replace the screens with glass, add some privacy... and we’d be gold for most of the year. We could put the hot tub at one end of the space and build in cabinets and stuff on the other end for supplies, towels, and things like that.”

“Deal. But not a word to Austin. He’s such a water baby that it would be a great surprise for him. I set aside some of the money from the sale of the business for something nice for us, and I think we got it.” He put his hand up and Weaver slapped it, bro-style.

“What’s the high-fiving for?” Austin asked, wandering into the room, his hair askew, old sweats hanging on his hips, wearing one of Randy’s majorly faded New York Yankees T-shirts.

“Just happy,” Weaver said, handing Austin the McDonalds bag. “Randy got us food, and I’m going to get busy.” He went upstairs and began pulling the edging tape off the walls of Randy’s office before gathering up the plastic and tossing all of it in the trash.

“Austin, what did you have planned for the third bedroom up here?” he called down.

Weaver waited until he appeared at the bottom of the stairs. “Honestly, I think it can be a guest room or an office for you if you want one.” Austin slowly climbed the stairs. “Randy gets squirrely if he doesn’t have a space that’s his, especially when

he's working on a paper or something." He was the least social of all of them, and sometimes he needed to hibernate for a while. "Do you want a workspace? If you do, then we'll make that up as a second office."

"What about you?" Weaver asked. Austin shrugged, but Weaver knew him too damned well. "How about we add a desk for me and bookshelves along that wall with a chair for you." Austin was a reader—the dozens of boxes of books testified to that. "We can share it."

Austin came right into his arms, and Weaver hugged him hard. Sometimes it shocked him just how surprised Austin seemed to be whenever they were good to him. It broke Weaver's heart and made him determined to correct it.

Randy checked his department email with a sigh and then closed the app. "They want me to go in for meetings this afternoon and tomorrow." He hated that he was going to be gone and knew he was adding work for the others.

"It's all right," Austin told him immediately. "The movers will bring things in. I have layouts for all the rooms, and every single box is labeled so they just need to get to the correct rooms." He seemed so together.

"We got your back," Weaver added.

Randy put his arms around both of them. "I know that, but I don't want to dump more things on you."

Austin snickered. "Don't worry. We'll leave plenty for you to do once you get home. Now go on and get yourself all respectable and looking like a professor. Do you need me to get you one of those jackets with elbow patches?"

Randy pulled Austin into a deep kiss, devouring his mouth. "No elbow patches



required.” He pulled back and went upstairs to change before saying goodbye to both Weaver and Austin just as the moving truck pulled up in front of the house. After getting into his car, he headed to campus and his first meeting.

After two hours of nothing but talk, he shook his head before leaning to the woman next to him. “Are these committee meetings always this useless?”

She nodded and rolled her eyes. “They make people feel important, but nothing ever gets done.”

“Do you have something to say?” the man at the head of the table asked, looking pointedly at the two of them.

She leaned back and tried to disappear.

“Yes,” Randy said clearly. “Is there a point to all this, or is this just a waste of time so everyone can drink coffee and eat donuts?” Damn, he should have kept his mouth shut. “So far, we have been here two hours. There are no action items and nothing has been determined. So what’s the point? We all have better things we could be doing.” Lord knew he was wasting time while Austin and Weaver dealt with the movers.

“I don’t think you know how things are done here,” the leader said.

Randy shrugged. “You mean wasting hours and doing nothing?” He stared the man down, and the others around the table began to nod.

“I have plenty I could be doing,” the woman across from him said. “This is supposed to be about the curriculum, not a discussion about adding new classes that have nothing to do with our department.” A number of throats cleared, and the leader sat down, shuffling papers.

“Then maybe someone else would like to lead the group?” he asked, clearly challenging the rest of the room.

“I will,” the woman across from him said, and the man at the end of the table practically swallowed his teeth. “Our next meeting will be in two weeks. By that time, everyone is to have developed a list of two justified proposals for updates that should be made. Send them to me, and we will discuss and evaluate each of them at that time. They must be to me in ten days, and I will aggregate them and distribute. This meeting is adjourned.” She stood, and the others left the room, with Randy staying behind.

“I probably should have kept quiet,” Randy told her.

“I’m Violet Richards, and you’re Randy Mather. I think I’m going to love working with you. Gerald has led this committee for a decade, and nothing ever happens. Everything has stayed exactly the same, and I’ve wanted this chance, but I never got an opening. You gave me one.” She was clearly pleased. “I heard you just moved to town.”

“I did. The moving van is at the house right now.”

“Then go and help. And I’m looking forward to your proposals for updating what we teach. You have a great deal of practical experience that we should be incorporating into our program.”

“I’ll do my best.” He gathered his things and headed out of the building to his car. He drove home to find a well-oiled machine, with Austin holding his clipboard and the movers and Weaver obeying his every command.

“Go inside and get changed,” Austin said. “I need you upstairs. They’ve brought in a number of things for your office, and you can start setting it up. I have Weaver in the

family room, and once the movers have everything inside, I'll start in the kitchen.” One thing was for sure, it was best to do exactly what Austin said when he got into drill-sergeant mode.

To Randy's surprise, the major pieces of furniture were placed, with boxes piled out of the flow of traffic. He raced upstairs, changed his clothes, and spent the next hour in his office setting up bookshelves and getting his papers organized in his desk. By the time he was done, the house was quiet. Randy opened the door, wondering what was going on. He descended the stairs and found Austin putting away dishes.

“They're done?” Randy asked.

“Yeah. I read online that it was customary to tip the movers, so I did and made a note of it so we can adjust the costs.” He pulled open the refrigerator and handed Randy a bottle of water, taking one for himself. Ever the caretaker, Austin anticipated what he wanted. “A couple of neighbors were outside while I was seeing them off, and I gave them my cell number. They said they'd add it to the neighborhood chat.”

“Excellent.” It was his job to see to it that everyone was happy. Weaver had always been the peacekeeper, but Randy was the leader, the problem-solver, a man of action. It was his job to blaze the way, and he always felt like he had to make sure that they had what they needed.

“The family room is done, so we can watch TV if we want. I also got the boxes redistributed where they belong. I found some that go in the basement and carried them down.”

Weaver's phone rang as he joined them, and he pulled it out.

“Is it them?”

Weaver nodded, and Austin shifted closer to him. Randy took his hand, knowing that Austin wanted this for Weaver almost as much as Weaver wanted it. “No matter what happens, everything is going to be cool.” Austin squeezed his hand, and Randy waited as Weaver listened, nodding and then finally smiling that bright smile that Randy had fallen in love with the first time he saw him enter one of his gyms.

“Did you get it?” Austin asked quietly, and Weaver smiled.

“Full-time, permanent,” he mouthed back.

“Go to my office,” Randy told him, and Weaver nodded and headed for the stairs.

Austin turned to him, smiling, but Randy knew it was his nervous grin. He usually wasn’t the most attentive of men when it came to everyone else’s emotions. They sometimes went right over Randy’s head. It wasn’t one of his strong suits, but even he could see that Austin was nervous—it practically washed over him. Austin needed to find a place for himself, and as much as he hated it, Randy didn’t know what to do to fix it, which totally sucked.

### Chapter Four

The walls were closing in, and Austin had no idea how to stop it. After their call on Monday, the law school sent Weaver a contract, and he had been spending quite a bit of his time at the law school, working through details and getting himself oriented. Apparently, once they made a decision, they moved quickly. Randy was at the college most days, either in meetings or working on his preparations for his fall classes.

Austin was happy for both of them, but he was also at complete loose ends. He had already unpacked all the boxes, hung the pictures, and set up the porch. He'd even made sure that Randy's office was clean and had ordered the things for Weaver's home office. Basically, he had spent enough time indoors that he was beginning to go as little stir-crazy. What he really needed was a job of some sort, something to occupy his time and make him feel like he was contributing.

The years of modeling had left him fairly well off. He'd always lived as frugally as he could, even in New York, and he'd saved quite a bit of money from his golden years. But that wasn't the issue. He knew that Weaver and Randy loved him, but he also knew they saw him as the member of the family they needed to look out for, the one who needed care and their protection. And maybe that was true, especially after the crap he'd been through. It was nice to know that his men had his back, but he didn't like to think of himself as someone who needed it—more like someone who wanted their support. He was a man, after all, and that meant that he had to make his own way.... The shit thing was that he had no clue what that direction was, especially in a town twenty miles west of Harrisburg and nowhere near the kind of locations where he could get any kind of work. Not that it would make that much of a

difference. Austin had to face the truth: he was getting too old to be a real force in modeling any longer. There were plenty of guys who were younger, thinner, and willing to do just about anything to get ahead.

He headed to the back of the house, flopped down on the sofa, and turned on Weaver's big-ass television. After logging into Netflix, he found a cooking series and settled in to watch Chef's Table, hoping for some ideas. He made it halfway through the episode before turning it off. This wasn't helping him, and neither was the urge to go to the kitchen, grab a bag of Cheetos, and finish the damned thing off. Stress-eating was his absolute nemesis.

The doorbell sounded, and he was grateful for the distraction, even if it might only be the UPS guy needing a signature. He hurried to the front. "Hey, Andrew," Austin said, glad for the company, even if it was for a few minutes.

"Dominic and I are hosting the weekly neighborhood get-together this Friday evening. It starts at seven, and all of you are welcome to come on over. Bring a bottle of wine, maybe some munchies, and join us."

"Thanks, that would be great," Austin said.

"How are you all settling in?" Andrew asked.

"Pretty well, I think."

"If you need anything be sure to let us know. We have tools and professionals who will show up and complete the work."

"Thanks. I'm coming to the end of the unpacking. Weaver got a position at the law school, and Randy is off at the college...." He sighed, stopping himself before he could complain. "I'm still trying to figure things out." That sounded pretty good, he

thought.

“I understand. I completely changed job directions about fifteen years ago, and it took some getting used to.” His smile was genuine. “Give yourself a little time, and don’t put a bunch of pressure on yourself.”

“I suppose.” That had not been a reaction he expected. “But I have to find something. I was thinking about starting some sort of business, but I have no idea what kind.”

“You were a fashion model, right?” Andrew blushed a little. “I looked you up on Instagram. If you want to stay within that sort of area, then maybe clothing. Carlisle is a smaller town, but there’s Mechanicsburg and Camp Hill as well as Harrisburg, and if we want anything really fashionable, we have to go to New York or Philadelphia. Either that or shop online, and I don’t know about you, but half of what I buy goes back because it doesn’t fit. Large, extra-large... there’s no consistency.” Andrew snapped his fingers. “Maybe become a fashion design consultant. You could help with various aspects of design and clothing, sort of a local lifestyle helper.”

Austin wasn’t sure if that was what he wanted, but he appreciated Andrew’s suggestions. “Like I said, I have to think about it and figure stuff out. But I’d like to stick with something in fashion. It’s what I really know.”

Andrew nodded. “I should let you get back to your unpacking. I need to return to my latest story, but I hope to see all of you on Friday.” He smiled and then turned, stepping off the porch as Austin closed the front door. Maybe there was something to what Andrew had suggested, but Austin needed to figure it out.

“You should do it,” Weaver said as soon as Austin told him about the fashion idea once he got home from the law school. “It would play to your strengths. I bet there isn’t anyone in town with your kind of knowledge, and the only nicer clothing store I see here is for brides.” He really did think this was a good idea. “Have you told

Randy?”

“No. And I don’t really want to yet because I don’t know if there’s anything in it. It sounds good, but who is going to hire me or pay high-fashion prices for clothes here?” It sounded like Austin was already discounting the notion, and Weaver hated that. It was what he always did—downplaying his talents and gifts. Austin had so many, but he never seemed to see them himself.

“I think you should. It’s a good idea. Besides, clothes don’t have to be expensive to be fashionable. They just need to be—” Weaver looked down at his tan pants and blue shirt. “—not boring, and allow for self-expression. And that’s something you can do big-time.” Clearly, Austin wasn’t seeing it, and maybe he was right; quite possibly, Weaver was still thinking like they were New York as opposed to Carlisle. It could be that he wanted Austin to feel settled, and he was being a little pushy. “But you can do plenty of things.”

Austin shrugged. “Like I said, I don’t know if the idea is worth pursuing or not.” He backed away and then went to the kitchen.

Weaver thought of following him, but knew Austin probably needed a chance to think. So instead, he went upstairs to change into shorts and an old T-shirt. He returned down the stairs as Randy arrived home, his expression thunderous. “What’s going on?” Weaver asked.

“Politics. Fucking college politics. Instead of just getting the job done so we can all move on, some members of the committee have started throwing their little bombs over the wall just so they can watch what happens. I’m starting to think that I should have stayed in the gym business.” He set down his bag. Randy was a hothead sometimes. Especially when he got himself spun up, and Weaver could just imagine his response to these “bombs.”



“Every job is going to be like that, and these committees are a necessary evil, especially during the summer. In a few months, classes will start, and you’ll get to do what you came here to do: teach and impart some of the things you’ve learned.” He lightly patted Randy’s chest, loving the firmness underneath the cotton shirt. “Give it time, and remember to try to get the bomb-throwers on your side. People often do that when they feel they aren’t being heard.” The storm seemed to be passing and finally broke when Randy slipped a hand around his waist, pulling him to his chest and kissing him hard, almost possessively.

An amazing smoky scent drifted in from the kitchen, immediately making his belly growl and cutting off their conversation. The two of them went on through to where Austin had a pan of bacon in the oven and was slicing a tomato and making toast. “I thought BLTs for dinner. It should be about fifteen minutes.” Tension rolled off Austin as well as Randy. Weaver knew it was for different reasons.

“Could you put a little turkey on mine?” Randy asked.

“Sure,” Austin agreed, pulling open the refrigerator, grabbing the deli bag, and placing it on his work space. Randy turned to him for an explanation, like Weaver was supposed to know everything. He tilted his head toward the family room, and Randy followed him in. Weaver turned on the television as Randy cocked an eyebrow in a silent question.

“What’s going on?” Randy asked as he sat down.

“Why don’t you just ask me?” Austin demanded from the doorway. “I know the two of you have been together longer and that you have this silent communication thing that happens between you.” He rounded on Randy under a full head of steam. “But I’ve got news for you. If you want to know what shit is going on with me, just ask. Don’t sit in your damned little corner trying to figure it out between yourselves like I’m some toy you need to fucking fix.” He poked Randy in the chest a few times and

then stormed out of the room.

“Are you trying to stir things up?” Randy growled, getting to his feet and flying into the kitchen. In an instant, the testosterone in the air rose to heady heights. Weaver could almost smell it, and his heart pounded with it. He took a deep breath and waited.

“You already did that,” Austin countered. “You did plenty of that when you dragged us here.”

“Shit...,” Weaver said out loud, and headed to the kitchen, where Austin and Randy stood glaring at each other, arms crossed, both men breathing heavily, like they were bulls getting ready to fight for territory. “Guys,” Weaver said calmly. “Remember, we all agreed to come here and to do this. Randy got a good job, and it was an opportunity he really wanted to take.”

Austin broke the stare down first. “And you got a job you’ve always wanted, too, and....” His words broke off.

“You’ll find something you’ll love,” Weaver said softly, both of his men settling down. He inhaled and quickly pulled open the oven door.

“Shit,” Austin yanked on an oven mitt, rescuing the bacon before it burned. “I guess I can’t do anything right.” He strode out of the kitchen. Randy watched after him, then turned to Weaver as though he were supposed to fix this.

“All you, big guy,” Weaver said.

“Yeah, I guess,” Randy confessed, which completely tickled Weaver. “I just asked why he was so wound up, and I still don’t fucking know.”

Weaver rolled his eyes. “You should by now.” He held Randy’s gaze, giving him a few seconds for everything to sink in.

“Okay. But what do I do to fix it?” That was part of why Weaver loved this man. He truly wanted to try to solve their problems. Hell, Randy would take on every challenge either of them had, head-on, or he’d fight any battle for them just to try to resolve their issues and make them happy.

“Maybe what you need to do is go into the living room, fling Austin over your shoulder, take him upstairs, and do what you are the very best at.” Weaver smiled, knowing his eyes were probably already dilating at the very thought, because there were few sights sexier than those two together.

“That isn’t going to fix anything,” Randy countered, but Weaver could tell by the shallowness of his breathing that the idea had appeal.

“There is no solution. Not one we can provide. This is something Austin has to figure out on his own.” He held Randy’s gaze until he nodded and then strode out of the room. Weaver turned off the oven and closed the door. A squeak followed by a grunt from Randy told him all he needed to know. After slipping things back into the refrigerator, he strode to the stairs, pulling his shirt up over his head as he went. By the time he reached their bedroom door, his shoes were off. He paused in the doorway.

Randy had Austin on his back on the bed, legs apart, his weight pressing Austin against the mattress. They were chest to chest, clothes still on, both rocking slowly, their gazes locked on each other’s. Randy was talking, but whatever he was saying was too soft to hear. The heat in the room hit Weaver like a furnace, but he stayed where he was until both of his men slowly turned toward him.

Randy stayed still, watching Weaver, loving the view of him in the doorway. Austin

slowly extended his hand, and Weaver moved forward, his abs flexing slightly with each step.

“You two okay?” Weaver asked softly. Austin nodded, his eyes wide. Weaver came around behind Randy, his hands sliding around Randy’s waist before tugging at the hem of his shirt. Randy lifted his arms, letting Weaver undress him. His pants followed until Randy was naked. Then he shifted and Austin was next, stripped before his hungry eyes. “You better not have been expecting slow,” he growled at Austin, tugging him to the edge of the bed.

Randy’s heart pounded and his pulse raced. He lifted Austin’s legs before slowly sinking his spit-lubed cock into him. Austin gasped, his eyes glazing over as their bodies connected. This was what he needed and what Austin seemed to want as well. That amazing body just opened to him, surrounding him in heat that pulled at Randy. Almost as soon as Randy seated himself, he pulled out before slamming back into Austin, who had drawn Weaver down into a kiss that quickly included him.

The temperature in the room skyrocketed, sweat beading on Randy as well as his other two men, the bubble of passion around all three of them growing more intense by the second.

“Fuck...,” Austin cried as Randy sped up, snapping his hips. Weaver joined in, slipping his lips around Austin’s straining cock. Austin moaned and rocked on the bed, his entire body quivering under them.

“Yeah, baby. Just let us love on you,” Randy whispered, and Weaver pulled away to kiss Austin deeply. It was an amazing sight, and one Randy loved to see. These two men gave his life meaning, and Randy would do anything for them.

“Yeah...,” Austin whimpered as Weaver sucked him hard, all three of them moving to the pace Randy set. “Not gonna last....”

“It’s okay,” Randy said. “Let it all go. You don’t need to hold on anymore. Just let yourself go, and Weaver and I will be right there with you.” In that moment, he wasn’t sure if he meant in their love-making or in life. Maybe it was both, but Austin did let go, and soon all three of them were flying together.

Randy lay with Austin in his arms, Weaver pressed against his back, all three of them in a sweaty heap. “Are you feeling better?” Randy whispered.

“I guess I’m less stressed, but I still need to figure out what I’m going to do,” Austin said.

Randy sighed, knowing it was true. Too bad a good fucking didn’t actually solve life’s problems.

“You’ll figure it out,” Weaver said, and Austin nodded, but his response didn’t convince Randy. There was more going on here than just the fact that Austin hadn’t figured out what he wanted to do. Austin had always been careful with his money, and Randy knew he had a sizable nest egg, so this wasn’t a cash kind of issue.

“I know we keep asking, but what do you want?” Randy almost held his breath, hoping like hell that Austin didn’t say to go back to New York. But if that was what he needed....

Austin slipped out of his arms, sliding upward until he was propped up by the pillows. “I have no fucking idea. That’s what scares me. The things I know how to do aren’t valued here, and I’m not even sure I want to continue in that world.” He half smiled, and Randy held his hand while Weaver slipped out of bed and climbed back in on the other side of Austin. “That’s part of the problem. I have no idea what I want. I’m not going to model any longer. I’m getting too old.”

“You are not old,” Randy growled. “You’re hot and sexy as hell.” Okay, maybe that

was a little of his own insecurity coming out. Chronologically, he was the oldest of the group—five years older than Austin. He would never say anything about it, but he dreaded the morning he found gray hair, and judging by how it happened with his father, it was bound to happen soon. “And you always will be.”

“Thanks,” Austin said before rolling his eyes. “From the man who only gets sexier with each passing year.” He ran his fingers through Randy’s chest hair, and Randy closed his eyes to the warm touch. “I know I’m stressing, and I know both of you feel it, but I’ve got to do this. You both want to help, but I don’t think you can. Other than being there.” Austin kissed each of them before slipping off the bed, wincing as he began dressing.

“Did I hurt you?” Randy asked.

Austin shook his head. “Nope. Just a little sore from your ride halfway to the moon.” He pulled on a pair of shorts and a T-shirt before heading to the door. “I’m going to finish making lunch.” He left, and Randy watched every movement until Austin disappeared from sight.

“We have to fix this somehow. Otherwise, it’s only a matter of time before he decides he needs to leave, and I don’t think I can deal with that.” Randy was strong and could handle just about anything, but it had taken a long time for him to truly feel whole, and both Weaver and Austin were big parts of that.

“You heard what he said,” Weaver told him.

Randy shrugged and then slid off the bed. “And I also saw how lost he looked in the fucking kitchen.” There had to be something they could do to help.

## Page 5

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### Chapter Five

Austin had two bottles of white wine chilling in the refrigerator and had made up a charcuterie board. The guys were up showering, and as much as he wanted to join his wet men, he had a few other things to do before they were set to leave for their first neighborhood gathering.

“Are you about done up there?” he called up the stairs.

Randy appeared at the top of the steps in jeans and a maroon polo shirt. “Weaver is just about ready,” he reported as he came down the stairs.

“I have our things all set to go. I’m really not quite sure what to expect.” He bit his lower lip and then stopped, refusing to be nervous. Everyone they had met so far had been nice, and if the neighbors took exception to the way they lived, then that was just too damned bad. They didn’t get a say in their relationship.

“It’s going to be people talking, an outdoor wine party. Just relax. You’ve already met a lot of the neighbors, and Weaver’s friend Veronica from across the street is going to be there. So this should be fun.” Randy was not much of a drinker, so Austin had made sure that the wine he brought was one that he knew Randy enjoyed.

“I’m ready,” Weaver said in a striped shirt and tan pants. He looked just as good as Randy, and for a second, Austin thought about chucking the entire party idea and luring his two men upstairs for a private party of their own. “Do you need me to get anything?”

“The wine is in the fridge,” Austin said before going to the kitchen and retrieving his contribution to the munchie portion of the event. Then he led the way outside, with the others following him down the sidewalk. Andrew and Dominic’s house was two doors down and had a large wraparound porch. Chairs and a table had been set out.

“Welcome, guys,” Dominic said in greeting. “The food goes on the table, and there’s a cooler for the wine if it needs it.” He had glasses out, and Austin opened one of the bottles to pour a glass for Dominic as well as Weaver and Randy. “Are you getting settled in?”

“We are. Austin has really done a lot to start making the place into a home,” Randy said, slipping an arm around his waist. “I’ve started work, and Weaver’s official first day was this week. So it’s going pretty well.”

“What do you do?” Dominic asked, turning to Austin as Andrew joined them.

He had dreaded his question. “I’m still figuring it out.”

“Have you ever modeled for book covers?” Andrew asked with a smile. “You have a great look. Granted, I don’t think you could make a living from that, but it’s something to think about. I had a model some years ago for one of my books, and it helped him get ten-thousand additional Twitter followers at the time.”

Austin had never thought about that, but it sounded like fun. “How do you do that?”

“Well, you could set yourself up for custom pictures, or you could sell some images from your backlist... so to speak. They could be loaded onto the photo sites, and designers would pay to use the images.” Andrew smiled and sipped from his glass as others joined the group. Andrew made introductions as more food was added to the table. Drinks were poured, and over the next half hour, five more couples joined the group.



Austin didn't know why he stayed near the guys. He wasn't usually self-conscious in any way. As a model, he had been photographed in everything from parkas to bathing suits and underwear. Still, this seemed to be more consequential for some reason.

"Are you having a good time?" Weaver asked in a whisper after refilling their wine glasses. "You're usually so outgoing and the life of the party. Poor Randy is trying to make up for it, and I think his head is going to explode pretty soon. He's usually the strong, silent type at things like this...."

Austin smiled and chuckled. "Maybe I should go rescue him."

"Just be yourself," Weaver said, patting him lightly on the butt. Austin flashed him a dirty look before making his way to where Randy was talking with Doug and Eileen.

"It's a great neighborhood, and everyone has made us feel welcome, except that weird guy across the street," Randy was saying.

"Yeah, what's up with him?" Austin asked, sidling up next to Randy, who lightly hip-bumped him. "I was coming back from the grocery store, and the entire time I unloaded the car, he stood on his porch, staring at me like his eyes were death rays. It was weird."

"That's Steve. He's a real piece of work," Eileen said as Doug nodded. "There were potential buyers before the three of you, and he started calling them names and stuff. Scared the couple off. None of us heard it, but the couple did and so did their realtor. We don't invite him to these or the other neighborhood things and do our best to ignore him."

Austin turned to Randy. "I dare say if he says anything to us, we'll ask Randy here to have a talk with him." Randy was a kind man, but if you threatened his family, he could be frightening as hell. Austin had seen it a few times in New York, and it

thrilled him that Randy would stick up for him... but it also scared him a little bit as well.

“Good. None of us have anything to do with him if we can help it.” Eileen sipped her wine, and the conversation shifted to the pair of chickens she kept in her backyard. Austin had been fascinated by the pair of birds and their tiny coop on wheels that could be moved around the yard. Apparently, their names were Gwyneth Poultry and Hennifer Aniston. Austin couldn’t help smiling.

Randy’s arm slipped away, and as Austin glanced around, he found him hugging a handsome Black woman, with Weaver doing the same once Randy backed away. He must have had a look of curiosity that Eileen picked up on.

“That’s Veronica. She’s a professor at the law school. Her house is right across the street, and they know each other.”

“Evidently,” Austin said as his men brought her over. “Veronica?” he said with a smile. “I’ve been hearing about you.”

She shook his hand with a huge smile. “Weaver and I have known each other for years. I’d heard that you boys were moving in and would have been over sooner, but I had a family issue in Philly. I’m so thrilled we’re going to be neighbors.” She slipped her arm around Weaver’s waist, and Austin wanted to slap it away. He didn’t know where that stab of jealousy came from, and there was no reason for it, but damn, it hit him hard for a few seconds. To try to cover it, Austin sipped from his glass. “I knew that Rose and Gene were selling their house, but I didn’t know Weaver and his family had bought it until Rose told me a few weeks ago.” She squeezed Weaver. “I can’t believe you’re all here.”

“And we’re grateful for your help in getting Weaver the position at the law school,” Austin said, trying to be happy for everyone... and he was. He just wished he could

be happy for himself too.

“I had nothing to do with that,” Veronica said. “The administration was thrilled that he was interested in working with us.” She was very pleased, Weaver beamed, and Randy stood there proudly. Suddenly, the wine in Austin’s belly wasn’t sitting so well. He pasted on a smile and turned away from the happiness parade, wondering if there was a way he could simply sneak out and return home.

Weaver was so glad to connect in person with Veronica once more. They almost instantly began talking about old times and then segued into what he could expect during his first semester. “Unfortunately, the previous instructor has left you with quite a mess,” Veronica told him. “He wasn’t updating his materials and thought he could skate by. That went on for a while, and he was warned, but he thought that he had allies....” She shook her head. “But there were student complaints, plenty of them... and his tenure had been deferred.”

“But they hired me on permanently, I thought” Weaver asked, wondering if he should be concerned.

“Now that I did have a say in,” she said with a smile.

“But what does that mean?” Austin asked softly from next to him.

“That Weaver is on the fast track for tenure. His stellar reputation and case history means that he will bring additional prestige to the school. Basically, most professors come up for tenure after five to seven years. The plan is that Weaver will be offered it after three. His experience will stand in for the time.”

“I see.” Austin plastered on a smile, one that Weaver knew well. He hated that smile because it meant Austin was shutting down and mentally pulling away.

But it seemed Veronica was persistent. “What are you looking for in our little town?” Veronica asked.

Austin shrugged. “There aren’t a lot of calls for over-the-hill fashion models,” he said flatly. Weaver suppressed a groan and slipped his arm around Austin’s waist. He hated how lost Austin seemed and wished he could do something about it. “I’ve pretty much unpacked and set up the house. So....”

“You could volunteer,” Veronica offered. “There are plenty of organizations that could use your expertise. The theater downtown is always looking for help.” She grinned as if a lightbulb just went on.

“What’s happening behind those eyes?” Weaver asked. “Should we be scared?” He was teasing, and thankfully, even Austin smiled at his joke.

“I think I might have an idea. Is it okay if I look into it and then get back to you in a few days?” Veronica asked. “I don’t want to promise anything I can’t deliver.”

“Sure,” Austin said, drinking the rest of his wine in a gulp. “I’ll be around.”

Veronica stepped away from Weaver, drawing closer to Austin. “I get that this is hard, I really do, and I know you don’t know me from Adam, so let me tell you something about myself. I’m a pushy Black woman who’s about to get all up in your business.”

Weaver chuckled, because she had said the same sort of thing to him back in law school when he’d been trying to figure out his own way forward. Veronica had always been a little pushy, but it came from a place of caring. Weaver had been struggling midway through law school, and it had been Veronica who basically told him to shit or get off the pot. He could complain and grouse all he wanted, or he could buckle down and become a damned good lawyer. Then she had explained

everything she was doing just to be able to stay in school, including working two jobs and putting off sleep until the summer. Weaver had shut his mouth and taken her advice, because she'd been right. Law school had been tough, but after that, he had thrived, and he'd taken that work ethic into his career—hell, he still carried it with him, in part thanks to her.

“Okay. You can't do any worse with it than I am.” Austin was trying to make light of it, but the joke fell flat.

“That's just it. So you don't have a job or a direction at the moment. It will happen. You're smart, healthy, and you have two men who love you and have your back. That's a hell of a lot more than most folks have. So take up gardening... or a sport. Get out there, be active, and drop the defeatist attitude.” Austin seemed shocked, but that was Veronica. She wasn't the type to hold back. “Something is going to come along. Just keep your eyes open, and rather than worry about the time you have on your hands, be grateful for the chance to take a breath and figure out your next steps.” She cut right to the chase and made a great point.

Austin was nodding slowly. “I just want to pull my weight and....”

“Hey,” Weaver said softly. “You always do.” He tilted Austin's head upward, looking into his eyes. “You make both Randy and me happier than we ever were without you. So just give yourself a break.”

“Sometimes, I wonder if I'd be better off in New York,” Austin said, and Weaver's belly clenched. “But I don't think this has anything to do with geography. I think I'd feel this way no matter where we were living.”

“Life changes?” Weaver asked.

“Exactly. Only I wasn't ready for this particular one.” Austin patted Weaver on the

shoulder. “Don’t worry. I’m not going to run back to New York. We all decided that the move here was best for all of us. I just have to figure out my path. Good things are happening for you and Randy, and hopefully, my turn will come.”

Austin was saying all the right things, but Weaver still wondered if that was how he really felt or if he was just trying to make Weaver feel better. He’d even settle for a little bit of both.

Randy peered across the porch while Dominic made him hungry talking about the food that he and Andrew had had on their trip to France earlier in the year. Austin, Weaver, and Veronica were talking, and Austin seemed to be smiling, which was great to see.

“What is he doing here?” Dominic asked, and Randy turned as their neighbor from across the street passed by on the sidewalk, pausing right in front of the house.

“I see all the freaks are in one place.”

“What the hell?” Randy asked.

Dominic set down his glass. “That’s Steve from across the street from you. Did Doug and Eileen tell you about him?”

Randy nodded slowly, glaring as Steve slowly continued down the sidewalk, watching them as though he expected an orgy to break out at any moment. Randy excused himself and joined Austin and Weaver, putting an arm around each of them.

“What an ass,” Austin said softly. Weaver hummed his agreement, but Randy was on guard, ready to pounce at any second if that POS decided to cause any trouble. Austin leaned against his shoulder, and Weaver slipped an arm around his waist.

“You know, we could all kiss. That would probably short-circuit him completely.”

“There’s no need to antagonize him. He does live across the street,” Weaver said.

Randy had to agree with him, though he wished there was something he could do about the guy. Knowing he was there, sitting on that damned porch of his watching their home. It made him angry. “We’ll have to see what we can do to make his life a little uneasy.”

“He works for the Special Police. They’re the crossing guards, and they direct traffic around accidents when it’s needed.”

“Then I think it’s time they got a report on his behavior,” Randy said. He watched as Steve continued down the sidewalk, refusing to look away. Steve kept looking back, and Randy met his gaze each time he turned to look.

“Let’s rejoin the party,” Austin said from next to him.

“Yeah. Does anyone need a refill?” Dominic said from nearby, circulating through the group, refilling glasses, and working to banish the already dissipating gloom. “There are also plenty of munchies, so help yourself. Also, if anyone is interested, Andrew has opened the pool if anyone wants to put on their suit and take a dip.”

Veronica set her glass aside and hurried across the street.

“Do either of you want to swim?” Randy asked, pleased when Austin finished his wine and put his glass on the table. He and Weaver headed back to the house to change while Randy spoke to a few more of the neighbors, one of whom, Maria, was part of the community garden nearby and invited him to come down to take a look sometime.

“I think I’d like that. Weaver and Austin aren’t particularly interested in gardening, but I’d like to learn if for no other reason than to make our yard nicer. We had a small space in New York where I had some plants in pots, but I’ve never done anything more than that.”

“Cool. Be sure to talk to Andrew as well. He’s president of the local garden club and is willing to help out with that sort of thing. Andrew is really into flowers, while I grow veggies. Between us, we can help with just about anything.”

“I don’t want a fancy yard, but it’s pretty plain right now, and I’d like to add some shrubs and things along the fence.” He really wasn’t sure what he should do and was about to ask more questions when Weaver and Austin returned in their bathing suits, and his mind kind of blew out.

“Damn, you are one lucky guy,” Maria said, half under her breath. “Those men of yours are....” Both of them followed his two men around the side of the house with their gazes. Randy found himself smiling, knowing that these guys were his, truly his, heart and soul.

“Yeah, they really are,” Randy said.

“Are you going to join them?” Maria asked.

Randy shook his head. “I don’t swim. My mom was deathly afraid of water, and she kind of passed that on to me. I was never taught as a kid.” He hated talking about it. Admitting any sort of weakness was not something he found easy to do. Maria’s kids hurried across the street, waving to their mother as they crossed the immaculate lawn toward the backyard.

“You know you can learn if you want,” she told him quietly. “The Y offers swimming for adults. There are plenty of people who didn’t learn for whatever



reason.” It seemed that everyone in the neighborhood was a font of information.

“Did you learn to swim?”

Maria nodded. “My parents had a pool, so I learned when I was four. My mother taught swimming and lifesaving. She still does sometimes. If you wanted private lessons, I could ask her about it.”

Randy found himself pausing. It was something he had never really thought about. In New York, it hadn’t mattered much. But here, it seemed that Dominic and Andrew hosted at their pool quite often. It would be nice to be able to join Weaver and Austin. “Would you?”

“Sure. Mom loves doing that sort of thing, and adults are so much easier to teach than kids sometimes. They come in motivated to succeed. I’ll give her a call tomorrow, and if she’s interested, I’ll get the two of you together.”

“I really appreciate it,” he said as Steve approached the front of the house once more. Randy scowled and crossed his arms, meeting the weasel’s gaze, almost daring him to say anything. Maria turned away, pointedly showing her back to the street. Randy did the same, relaxing as most everyone else ignored the jerk.

“What a douchebag,” one of the guys said.

“Dominic and I invited him to our Christmas party right after they moved in. He and his wife came in, pulled cheap cans of beer out of their pockets, and proceeded to sit in the living room and get themselves drunk. By the end of the evening, I was wondering if they could get home and how they got all those cans in their coats.” He shook his head slowly. “We never invited them again.”

“I don’t blame you,” Randy said as peals of laughter drifted in from the back.

Maria went down the back steps and returned smiling. “The kids are playing with their father, Veronica, and the guys.” She took a seat near Randy, and he sat on one of the white wicker chairs. “God, it’s nice to have a little time to myself.” She sipped her wine, and Randy talked a while until others joined them. Then excused himself to wander out back to find his men.

He stood at the closed gate, watching the guys as they played with squirt guns against the kids, who seemed to have the upper hand, judging by the way Austin kept getting soaked. But it was the laughter that made him smile. He had been worried when he bought the house without the others seeing it. He hadn’t been familiar with the neighborhood, and yet it looked like they’d hit the jackpot as far as neighbors went.

Austin swam over to the side of the pool, and Randy raised a hand, smiling at him. Austin smiled back, and some of the worry he’d been holding eased up, at least a little. The kids all hit Austin with streams of water, and he turned away, growling playfully as he sprayed them back.

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### Chapter Six

“I thought we’d take a walk downtown to see what’s going on,” Austin said Monday morning. “Neither of you needs to go in today, so let’s make the most of it. Things should be open, and maybe we could have lunch somewhere.” He felt like it was time for him to get out. He’d spent the weekend looking for job openings, and while there were plenty, none of them really appealed. Austin had waited tables for years while he’d been trying to get his modeling career off the ground, but wasn’t particularly interested in stepping back into that business.

“Sounds good,” Randy said, looking up from the class materials that he was reviewing. “What do you think, Weaver?” Randy turned as Weaver stepped to the bottom of the stairs, rubbing his eyes.

“That I was up way too late last night reviewing case notes.” He yawned, his shirt riding up. Austin couldn’t resist the strip of warm flesh and slipped his hand under Weaver’s shirt.

“We noticed,” Randy said, marking his place before closing the book.

“Then I should....”

“He’s teasing,” Austin broke in. “We missed you last night, but you had work to do. It’s just that the bed seemed a little empty. I didn’t sleep well until you joined us. Now, let’s get dressed and we can head to town.”

“I’ll be right back down,” Weaver said, hurrying back up the stairs.

“That wasn’t very nice,” Austin told Randy. “You work late all the time, and neither of us says anything to you. He’s getting his career set on a new path, just like you.” He perched on the arm of Randy’s chair.

“I know. I just missed him,” Randy said softly. “I was hoping that we could have a nice weekend, but he spent much of it upstairs in his office.”

Austin swatted Randy on the shoulder. “And he’s trying to untangle a mess from his predecessor. I’m sure we can all understand that.” He leaned closer. “Maybe I wasn’t distracting enough for you.”

Randy grabbed him around the waist, pulling Austin onto his lap. “You are always distracting and damned sexy. You know that. But I like to go to bed knowing that everyone is safe and secure. I know it isn’t rational, because I knew that Weaver was just in the other room.”

“Then what are you going to do when one of us needs to travel for work?”

Randy hugged him tighter. “Then I’ll just have to deal with it.” He slid his hands under Austin’s shirt and then over his ribs. Austin laughed and squirmed to get away from the tickling fingers.

“Stop,” Austin said, chuckling before he managed to get away. “You’re awful.”

“What did he do?” Weaver asked, returning down the stairs.

“He was tickling me.” Austin scrunched his face like he was tattling. “And don’t you start too,” he told Weaver, moving away from both of them. They had this idea that tickling him was fun.

“You’re so cute when you laugh, though,” Randy said.

Austin sighed. "I get that." He swallowed hard, turning away from both of them. "Let's go."

Randy growled, and Austin once again found himself hauled onto Randy's lap with those big arms wrapped tightly around him. "Don't you think it's time to tell us what's going on in that amazing head of yours?"

"What? Because I don't like to be tickled?" he demanded. "Fine, since it seems to be pick-on-Austin morning." He tried to wrench himself away, but Randy held tighter. "You know I was the youngest of three boys. Well, my brothers used to love to get their way. They'd hold me on the ground and tickle me until I could barely breathe. They'd only stop when one of two things happened. Either I gave them what they wanted or I wet myself." He pulled away from Randy. "Are you two fuckers happy now?" He marched to the front door, yanked it open, and stepped out into the warm summer air. Taking a deep breath, he couldn't believe he'd actually told them that shit. It was stupid and had been many years ago. Austin had a good relationship with his brothers now and that kind of behavior was long gone on their part.

"Hey," Randy said softly. "I didn't know and thought I was being playful." Once again, those arms engulfed him, and then Weaver's arms joined his.

"You don't have to be afraid of telling us the shit that happened to you. We all have a history, and it's nothing to be ashamed of," Weaver whispered. "You know the neighbor's chickens? I'm scared to death of them. If I would have been the one to look at houses, I would have seen that they were there and would have told the agent to move on. I don't know why I'm scared of them, they're just chickens, but..." Weaver held them both tighter before letting go. "Now it's Randy's turn."

"What, me? I'm the strong, silent type, and I prefer to keep my embarrassing shit to myself." He let Austin go. "Are we going to go to town or not?" Randy locked the door, and they all headed down the sidewalk, with Austin holding back.

“What are you doing?” Randy asked.

Austin grinned. “My favorite pastime, butt-watching.” He could almost see the guys rolling their eyes even though they never turned around.

Weaver shifted his walk, swinging his great ass from side to side, but Randy grew stiffer. Randy was always the ultimate top in bed. He was the one who called the shots, and between the three of them, there was only one rule... at least when dealing with Randy. He never bottomed. Austin knew that some guys didn't enjoy it, and that was fine. But as he stared at Randy's muscled ass with dimples hidden by his pants... well, damn. Randy turned around when he groaned a little. He didn't push it, and they continued their walk while Austin continued enjoying the view.

Shopping had never been one of Weaver's favorite things. Austin loved it and was great at finding bargains or managing to know what they needed. He dragged Randy into store after store, while Weaver stood outside under the trees, taking in their new home town. The clock on the old courthouse chimed noon, and Weaver's stomach rumbled.

“Dang, we better feed this thing before it takes over,” Austin teased as he and Randy joined Weaver. “There's a brew pub, a distillery, and a cidery within a few blocks. What sort of libation are you in the mood for?”

“Cidery?” Randy asked.

“Yeah. Hard cider. They have other things, too, I'm sure,” Austin said as he led them back toward the courthouse with its belltower, then turned to the west. “It's right over there.”

“Sounds good to me,” Weaver said as the other two looked at him. “What?”

“I got it in one. I’m going to write that down in my calendar.” Austin pulled out his phone. “Mr. Picky Pants agreed to the first restaurant chosen. It’s a miracle.”

Weaver huffed. “Is it a sin to want to know what my choices are?” The others rolled their eyes. “Okay. I already looked on the internet and checked out the menus of most of the places in town. So sue me.”

Randy grabbed him. “He’s teasing you.” He drew closer. “Both of us appreciate the fact that you research places to eat. Remember our trip to P-town and that place we stopped? You refused to eat there and probably saved all three of us from food poisoning.” He grinned. “Let’s go. I’m hungry and thirsty.”

“And he’s buying,” Austin quipped and darted inside before Randy could grab him. Randy shook his head and followed Austin, who was already asking the hostess for a table. Weaver swore the man could smile and charm his way into a table at a restaurant that was booked solid for months. “Thanks so much,” Austin said as she led them to a table near the window.

“How do you do that?” Weaver asked.

“It’s a gift... and the fact that I did her job for three years.”

They sat down, and Weaver looked over the menu. A flatbread pizza sounded good, and he chose the one he wanted before gazing out the window. “What the...,” he said to himself at the reflection in the glass. Then he got up and went outside, checking out the theater marquee. He smiled to himself and hurried down the street to grab a flyer from the stand in front of the theater.

“Where did you go?” Randy asked as he sat back down.

He handed the flyer to Austin with a slight flourish. “The theater is having a fashion

show as a fundraiser, and they're looking for people to help."

Austin picked up the flyer, read it, and set it back down.

"Hey, this is right up your alley."

"It isn't a job," Austin said. Weaver didn't understand why Austin wasn't more excited.

"We're fine for money. But this is something you could do to make a difference. The theater is important to the town, and they're raising funds to restore the facade. There was a story about it last week," Randy explained. "Honey, it's a chance for you to use your skills and meet a lot of people. It's how folks get jobs and find out about opportunities."

Austin picked up the flyer once more and pulled out his phone. Weaver caught Randy's eye, and they shared a quick smile. As their server approached the table, Austin pointed to what he wanted on the menu and then stepped outside. Randy asked her to come back in a few minutes as Weaver smiled brightly, watching as Austin spoke on the phone, pacing slowly up and down the sidewalk.

"I love how he always does that when he's on the phone," Randy said softly.

"I know. But watch him. It's like he expects something bad to happen at any moment. His shoulders are tight, and watch his steps—he's almost marching in formation." Weaver lifted his gaze, frowning slightly.

"I know. I worry about him too," Randy said as Austin hung up and came back inside. Randy cleared his throat as though to banish their earlier conversation. "The server will be right back."



“Thanks,” Austin said gently.

Weaver leaned forward. “So what did they say?” He was too curious for words.

“That they need plenty of volunteers and she would be happy to have me help. They are meeting tomorrow at ten for a planning session, and I said I’d be there.” Austin actually looked excited, his eyes bright and a smile on his lips.

“Did you tell her your background?” Weaver asked. “There can’t be many people around here with your kind of experience and expertise.” Damn, he wanted this to work out for Austin.

“Yes. She seemed really excited. But I’ll have to see how things really are.” He was still smiling as the server returned, and they placed their orders. Just as the food arrived, Austin’s phone rang. He crinkled his eyebrows and answered it, speaking softly. “Yes. ... Yes, my family and I are at the cidery a few doors down. ... Sure, if you want.” He hung up and seemed confused. “That was Chris, the lady from the theater. It seems she looked me up and asked if she could speak with me.” Now, Austin’s smile was radiant.

Weaver grinned and took Austin’s hand, squeezing it lightly.

Randy stood the way his mother taught him when a lady entered the room, and Chris was most definitely that. Dressed for business with a professional air that seemed to say “take me seriously” and “keep your distance” at the same time.

“Austin,” she said with a genuine smile. “Chris Weathers.” They shook hands, and Randy offered her a seat, asking if she’d like anything.

“We were just having lunch,” he said, sitting back down himself.

“These are my partners, Randy and Weaver,” Austin said with a touch of nerves. Randy rested his hand on Austin’s bouncy leg under the table, hoping to signal support.

“Let me come right to the point. The theater fashion show, the first we’ve ever done, is scheduled for two weeks from now, and the organizer backed out because of a health issue. We support her and wish her well, but for the last two weeks, I have been trying to steer the ship, and it’s about to run aground.”

Randy quietly asked the server to bring her some water once she delivered their drinks.

“All right.”

“We have volunteer models who know nothing about walking a runway. Local stores have agreed to donate the clothes, and they paid for each slot in the show. But we need someone to run this thing. I know it’s a lot, but if you’d be willing to help me....”

Austin’s leg stilled. “Who has chosen the clothes?”

Chris sighed. “That’s just it. Each store has looks they want to feature.”

“But there’s no direction, so everyone is choosing the items that they want to push, and there isn’t anyone giving any sort of guidance on the overall look or telling them that this is not a clearance sale.” Austin grinned, and Chris looked relieved. “Yes, I think I can help you. I have never run a charity fashion show, but I have attended them, and I know how to walk a runway and how a show should flow. You said your planning meeting is tomorrow. Can you get as many of the store reps there as possible, along with their potential looks? Tell them to each bring six and give them the heads-up that I can be a real pain in the ass. Make them think twice about what

they choose.” He grinned, and Chris actually laughed softly.

“Then I’ll see you tomorrow?” Chris asked Austin.

“Yes. I think this is going to be fun.”

Randy sat back in his chair, pleased that Austin seemed excited and that something was happening for him. This was just a local charity fashion show, and it wasn’t like there was going to be a regular thing, but it was a start and a chance for Austin to shine and to meet people in town.

“Thank you,” Chris said as she stood, then shook Austin’s hand. “I appreciate this more than you know.” She left the restaurant, and Randy patted both Austin and Weaver on the back.

“That was awesome,” he said as their server brought their food.

“Yeah, it was,” Austin said. “We’ll have to see what kind of mess this whole thing is, but there is potential.”

“And if anyone can figure it out, it’s you,” Randy told Austin before digging into his pizza. He had full faith that Austin could do anything he set his mind to.

“Thanks,” Austin said, looking deep into his eyes. “Now, what is it that is getting to you? Every time you get yourself in those books, you grind your teeth and mutter under your breath.”

He should have known Austin would pick up on his frustration. “It’s nothing to worry about.” The politics at the college were beyond irritating. He wasn’t used to that kind of childishness. Everyone there seemed to be more interested in protecting their own little fiefdom than anything else. At least some of them were, and they made it

ridiculously hard on everyone else. "I have a curriculum meeting coming up, and it's driving me crazy." He took another bite and set down the piece of flatbread.

"And of course you stepped into it and now you can't figure a way out of the mess," Austin said.

"That's about it. The chairman of the committee stepped down, and a new one took his place. That's a good change, but the old coot is still on the committee, and he's trying to whip up the other members against any sort of changes, even though what we are teaching is out of date."

"And why is he doing that?" Weaver asked.

"I'm not sure. But it's my guess that he would have to learn something new," Randy said, and Austin nodded. "He would need to update his skills and teach material that he's never covered before."

"And that scares him half to death," Austin interjected.

Randy smiled. "Maybe I should take you to the meeting as a political advisor so you could tell me when I'm about to put my foot in my mouth."

"Just do what you think is right," Weaver told him. "Politics is all part of the job, and the best thing you can do is make sure the students are being exposed to the best materials and latest thinking. That's what colleges and universities are for."

"I know. But I have to work with this guy all year long, and he's such a..." Randy growled under his breath. "An old codger set in his ways."

"Then you have two choices. Either commence battle and make sure you win, or do your best to win him over to your side," Weaver advised. "And the best way to do

that is to meet with him and explain the changes that you and the committee are proposing and reassure him that there will still be a place for him. After all, you don't want to toss him out on his ear, just update some things... right?" Leave it to the lawyer of the family to be the one to show him the possible path. Randy hoped he wasn't going to have to use the all-out battle approach, but he'd fought for what he believed in before, and he was willing to do it again.

"It's okay," Austin told him, putting a hand on Randy's leg this time. "You'll see your way through it."

He was about to return to eating when his phone chimed. He pulled it out, groaning as he took the call. "Hello, Mother," he said tensely. "How are you?" His conversations always started out the exact same way, and he listened as she recited the current list of her ailments and aches. His father had passed away six years ago, and since then, she had become more and more dependent on him. The move was in part a way to put some distance between them so she would stop interfering in his life... and that of his family. "What's up?"

"I bought a train ticket to Harrisburg for next week. I wanted to see your house, and I was getting tired of being here alone."

Randy groaned and lifted his gaze to the ceiling. "Did you get a hotel too? We're still getting the house set up, and we don't have a guest room that's ready."

"A hotel? You expect me to stay in a hotel when I visit?" She always assumed that everyone would rearrange their lives to fit her expectations. Randy looked at the others, briefly explaining what was going on.

Austin held out his hand, and Randy handed him the phone. "Louise, it's good to hear from you." Damn, that charm of his was impressive. "When are you coming?" He continued smiling. "Then we can get you a reservation for the weekend at the

Comfort Suites. They have nice rooms, and you'll be so much more comfortable. We are still getting the house together. We have two extra rooms, but right now they're set up as offices because of Randy's and Weaver's new jobs. Weaver got a position at the law school, and I'm doing some charity work for the local theater." He barely took a break to breathe. "We're looking forward to seeing you." He handed the phone back, and Randy wasn't quite sure what to say.

"Send the time your train gets in from the city, and we'll pick you up." The server came to their table to check on them, and Randy used that excuse to end the call. "I'm having lunch with the guys, but we'll see you next weekend." Relieved that she didn't press him, he disconnected the call and jammed his phone into his pocket. "What is wrong with her? She didn't ask about visiting, just announced that she was coming."

"At least she didn't just show up," Weaver said. "Remember last October when we were leaving for the Christopher Street Halloween festival? I opened the door and there she was."

"And we were dressed as the Village People... or barely dressed." Austin chuckled. "With her darling son wearing nothing but a loincloth." Austin's eyes widened, and he leaned closer. "Do you still have the loincloth? Because that was sexy as hell."

Randy rolled his eyes. "It was October in New York. I was cold all evening, and I swear my junk shriveled to the size of a pea." That had been the worst costume Austin and Weaver had ever talked him into.

"Oh, come on. It was in the sixties, and you were hot. Everyone at the parade spent all night watching you." Austin tore off a bite of his flatbread with his teeth. "And you were an animal. Grrrrrr."

"If you remember, that was also the night she found out about you, and I had to explain our relationship to her once we got home." And it hadn't been pretty. His

mother had not understood the fact that the three of them were together. She thought that it was some giant ploy for Randy to cheat on Weaver, whom she adored. There were weeks of phone calls and even tears on her part until Austin and Weaver went to see her, and she got the full dose of Austin's charm. The problem with her visiting was that she still didn't understand and kept asking when he was going to make a choice between Austin or Weaver. It was simply upsetting.

"It will be okay. You don't have to deal with her alone," Weaver said.

Randy pushed his plate away. "That's just it. I want her to myself."

Austin lowered his gaze. "You don't want us to see your mother?" He knew the way Austin bit his lower lip.

"No, I don't mean that. You shouldn't have to be around her. Every time I see her, she asks me when I'm going to choose one of you." He got so tired of hearing it.

"Duh," Austin said. "Do you think your mother can keep anything quiet? She's from Brooklyn, and she has no filter. The last time I saw your mother, she asked me when I was going on the road with my modeling and if I thought I'd find someone else when I was away." Austin smirked. "I considered telling her that I left for Paris the following week and that I was going to be on the lookout for a handsome, sexy Frenchman to bring home so we could be a foursome... but I held back." Damn, Randy had been worried for a second.

"Your mother has always been like that since she met Austin. She asked me if I felt like I was being replaced," Weaver said. "Don't worry about it. I understand our relationship, and I'm happy. So does Austin." Suddenly, Randy found a comforting hand on each leg under the table. "Your mother is the person she is... but she's your mom, and we'll deal. Your mom's worry stems from her concern for you."

“But I don’t want her stirring things up. We’ve just moved to a new town, we’re starting new jobs and endeavors... it’s a lot to take on all at once. And....” He nearly growled.

Austin leaned closer. “Go ahead and finish your lunch. Everything is fine. I know you’re trying to protect us, and we appreciate it. But you don’t need to stand between us and your mother. When she comes to visit, we’ll be our normal selves. She’s going to be here a few days and then she can see how much we care for each other. Besides, your mother has never been able to resist me.”

Randy shook his head. “Okay... fine.” He sighed and pulled his plate back. “Let’s just have a nice lunch and hopefully a quiet day. We could walk to the park to see the ducks,” he offered.

Austin leaned close to his ear. “Or we could just go home and you could duck me... duck me hard.”

Suddenly, Randy’s appetite for food flew out the window.



### Chapter Seven

“How did the walk-through go?” Randy asked, setting his book aside as Austin dragged himself through the door.

“Terrible. Not one of them has any idea how to walk, and the guys all move like truckers.” He flopped down into a seat. “At least we got the outfits chosen. That was a nightmare, but from a clothing perspective, all twenty looks will flow together.” He’d spent much of the past week getting the show organized. It would have been much easier to herd cats, but regardless, he was enjoying himself a great deal. “Randy...,” Austin started when he noticed his attention being drawn back to the book. “If you don’t want to hear about it, then just say so.” He left the room and went upstairs. He was tired and cranky after having to hold in his frustration all evening so the volunteers didn’t pick up on it.

He turned on the shower and let it heat as he slipped off his clothes, then stepped under the water. This was turning out to be a bigger job than he thought at first. But they were getting close. Though it turned out that the fashion show was the same weekend as Randy’s mother’s visit. Talk about piling it on. He reached for the soap as the shower curtain slid open, and Randy stepped in behind him.

“Hey, I was listening,” Randy said, his voice low and deep.

“But your book was just so good....” He wasn’t willing to let Randy off the hook just yet. Though his dick was more than ready, throbbing in front of him as Randy’s hands slid around his waist.

“I had a tough day, too, and I was waiting for you to come home,” he explained. “And I probably should have put my book away. But it was just too good... and sexy.” Randy leaned closer, his fingers tightening slightly as he pulled Austin back against him, Randy’s thick cock pressing along Austin’s crack. “Do you really want to talk about fashion shows or how my day went when we could talk about something much... hotter?”

The water suddenly switched off and then the shower curtain was pushed aside. Weaver stood there. “Damn, that is one hell of a sight.” Randy moved them both back, and Weaver stepped into the tub. There was barely enough room for them, but no one seemed to care. Austin certainly didn’t as Weaver surrounded him in wet heat that made Austin’s head throb and his leg shake. He groaned and shivered back against Randy.

“What do you want, baby?” Randy growled into his ear. He lifted his arms, and Randy’s warm hands slid up his belly and chest, caressing him slowly. “You aren’t saying anything,” Randy whispered, and Austin swallowed.

“That’s because what I want is something that I can’t have.” He stilled, and Weaver pulled away, the mood changing in an instant, and Austin wished he hadn’t said it.

“You can have anything,” Randy said, his hands continuing to roam.

Austin shook his head. “I can’t have you.” He felt Randy stiffen, and not in a good way, and then his hands slipped away and his heat disappeared when he stepped out of the tub. Randy handed him a towel as Weaver stood and got out as well.

“I’m sorry, but....” Austin swallowed, realizing that he had gone too far and that he should have just kept his mouth shut.

Randy shook his head and sighed deeply. “I don’t think this conversation is for the

bathroom.”

Austin dried himself as he followed Randy to their bedroom. He set the towel aside and climbed on the bed on the far side of Randy, with Weaver on the other. “I didn’t mean to push something on you.”

“I know that, and....”

“Randy has always been a top,” Weaver added, but Austin knew by Randy’s reaction to the idea that there was more to it than that.

“You don’t really want to talk about this, do you?” Austin asked.

Randy shook his head hard.

“But...,” he prompted.

“I think it’s something I should.” He ran his fingers through his hair and sighed deeply once more. “You know I grew up in Brooklyn, and you’ve been to my mother’s place. It’s a rough neighborhood.”

Weaver drew closer. “Did someone force you?” His question had been on the tip of Austin’s tongue.

“No. Not really. But I was this misfit gay kid in a tough neighborhood in Brooklyn. I didn’t know shit. My first time was with a kid in school, but that was just a blowjob under the bleachers.” Randy had already told him this part. “But later, when things got more serious, we started trying other things, and I got hurt... like, really bad. I was bleeding and.... Let’s just say that I was ashamed and in pain, and I didn’t know what to do. I didn’t think I could tell my mother or anyone.”

Austin sighed. "So you suffered in silence." He ran his hand lightly over Randy's amazing chest. "You know that we would never hurt you. Right?"

"Of course I do. But... I never want to do that again. It makes me feel..." Randy tensed. "I don't know how to explain it. But it makes me feel small, like I'm that kid back in my room in Brooklyn, bleeding into my underwear and trying to figure out how I'm going to keep this a secret from my mom." Randy put his arms around both him and Weaver. "My mother doesn't know about any of this, and I've never told anyone before."

"Why?" Weaver asked.

Randy sat up, crossing his arms over his chest. "I'm a gay man, so that's supposed to be something that I'm supposed to like. I mean, it's part of the way we make love." He kissed both of them hard enough and hot enough to set the bedding on fire. "Lord knows I love making love to both of you, but..." He swallowed, and Austin knew that was as far as Randy was going to go. It was one thing for Randy to explain what happened to him; it was quite another to vocally admit a vulnerability. Not that he needed to.

Austin got to his knees, straddling Randy's lap. "Look here, big guy. If that's how you feel, then you never have to do that." He leaned back, rocking his hips, Randy hardening under him. "You are and will always be the man we fell in love with." He pulled Weaver into a kiss. "Right?"

Weaver's eyes darkened. "Oh yeah. You are both the men I'm in love with, and nothing is going to change that." He kissed Austin and then Randy, the temperature of the room rising by the second. When Weaver pulled back, Randy tugged Austin forward. Weaver came behind him, licking down Austin's back and then to his opening.

He quivered in Randy's arms as Weaver's tongue did amazing things to him. Damn, his men were talented, and as Weaver buried his tongue inside him, Austin kissed Randy, needing his strength to keep himself from shattering into a million pieces.

"And I love you... both of you," Randy said just loudly enough for them to hear. "You fill my heart."

Austin groaned as Weaver filled him in another way, his long cock touching him deep inside. Austin gasped, holding Randy, who kissed him again, probing his mouth with his tongue.

Weaver leaned over Austin, his chest to his back, rolled his hips, loving the way his men kissed as he sank deeply into Austin's heat. There was something sublime about making love to these men, and it didn't matter who was inside who. They were together, and the way Randy ran his hand around the back of his neck, the connection between them tingling up and down his spine, sent him over the moon. He kissed Austin's shoulder and then sucked lightly at the base of his neck, Austin's salty sweetness tasting amazing on his tongue. He needed them, and it wasn't long before his control began slipping. His men were the sexiest guys on the planet as far as he was concerned, and he was damned lucky to have them in his life.

"More...", Austin whimpered, clutching Randy. Weaver thrust and held still, the ecstasy overtaking him, short-circuiting his mind. He leaned against Austin, breathing hard, as Austin turned to the side, where he captured his lips.

"You're amazing," Weaver whispered as he slipped from inside his body.

"So are you," Austin said, repositioning himself, legs wrapped around Randy as Randy sank onto him. Fuck, that was the hottest thing ever. Austin always amazed him, but taking both of them was stunning, and Randy rode Austin hard. Sweat glistened on their bodies. Austin grabbed his arm, pulling Weaver close, the three of

them kissing.

That was what always blew his mind: the three of them together, even if it was a kiss. It was the three of them. There were many uncertainties in this world and in their lives, but the three of them, together, that was right, and Weaver knew that to the core.

“Don’t stop,” Austin groaned, skin slapping skin, Randy disappearing into Austin’s body, then appearing, only to sink back inside. Weaver’s libido was already kicking in again by the time their movements became frantic. As he drew closer to watch, Austin wrapped his fingers around Weaver’s cock, stroking to his and Randy’s pace until the world narrowed to just the three of them.

Randy reared up, pressed into Austin, and lifted him off the bed with a groan as Austin’s eyes rolled into his head, painting his release across Randy’s chest. Weaver added his own release as Randy came as well, all of them floating in a post-orgasmic haze that Weaver hoped would last.

Austin collapsed against Randy, and Weaver held them both, their kisses now languid, gentle, almost exploratorily tender. Weaver lay on the bed, Austin settling next to him, and Randy cradling them both against his chest.

“Sometimes it surprises me that you’re afraid of anything,” Weaver said, looking up at Randy. “Remember how we met?”

Randy nodded. “How could I forget? At that club in Soho, where the most beautiful man I had ever seen was dancing up a storm. I was just about to work up the courage to talk to you when this guy grabbed your arm and pulled you to his chest. You struggled and told him to leave you alone.”

“Yeah, I did, and I was trying to figure out how to get away from him when this tall,

broad man pulled him away and clocked him right in the nose. The brute when down to the floor, and you stepped over him and gently escorted me off to one of the tables. The bouncers escorted the idiot out of the club, and you made sure I was okay and sat with me for hours, just talking. I thought you were nice. Little did I know at the time that you were sexy nice and would have my back for going on ten years.”

“But something or someone was always missing,” Randy said. “I mean, you and I were good together, but we....”

Weaver closed his eyes. “I know. We loved each other, but you and I... there was always someone missing. We went to work and built a life, but it was so haphazard.”

“Is that your way of saying that neither of you could figure out how to make a home?” Austin asked.

“Yeah. That’s about it. He was so busy with law school and then making partner. I was building the business. When you showed up, he and I were still using some of the furniture we’d had in college. There had been no need to change it, so we didn’t. After you moved into the building and our hearts, then into the apartment, that old furniture was gone and you had turned the place into a home within a few months.” Randy said.

“The apartment was just a place for us to live before you came into our lives. Now we have this house that feels like the home I always wanted.”

“That we always wanted,” Randy said, holding them both. “We each bring something to this relationship that the others don’t. I think that’s why we work.” He patted each of them before slipping off the bed. Randy headed to the bathroom, and the shower started a few minutes later.

Austin sighed and began getting dressed.

“Aren’t you going to join him?” Weaver asked.

“That was where all this started, and as much fun as we had, I don’t think I’m up for a round two right now.” He winced slightly as he stepped into his underwear.

“I know the feeling.” Weaver began dressing as well. “Come on. I have a few projects to try to finish in the yard, and I could use your help.”

“Me? You know I have a black thumb and can kill just about anything.”

Weaver grinned. “Great. We can start with the weeds.” He patted Austin on the shoulder, and he groaned. Weaver was pleased that Austin joined him outside anyway.

Randy’s mother was coming in a few days, and with the guys out in the yard, he took the time to walk through the rooms of the house, making sure it was safe for family. Not that they had sex toys or dirty magazines around, but the last thing he wanted his mother to find was their copy of the Tom of Finland compilation or things like that. He didn’t see anything, but that didn’t mean that his mother wouldn’t find it. The one thing he’d done was make sure his and Weaver’s offices had locks. His mother was a snooper, and that was the best way to keep her out of those areas. She had no business being in there, but that wouldn’t stop his mother. He hoped the locks would be enough of a deterrent.

“Your mother’s visit is going to be fine,” Austin said as he came up the stairs, covered in dirt. He looked almost like he and Weaver had built a dirt play pit, and Austin had fallen in. “Stop worrying.”

Randy set his jaw. “You know what she’s like. And she isn’t going to be any different just because we’re here in Pennsylvania instead of New York.”



“It’s been two years, and your mother likes both Weaver and me,” Austin said, naively. “What’s the problem?”

Randy crossed his arms over his chest and looked Austin deep in the eyes, making sure there was only stone cold in his expression. “Because she is going to spend the weekend here, laughing and having a good time, and before she leaves, my mother will take me aside and say that she likes both of you, but then she’ll tell me which of you she thinks I should choose. She’s done it before. My mother will never understand that it’s the three of us together. That this is what I want, what we all want. That is beyond her, and she’ll cause trouble just so she can feel comfortable about my life.”

Austin shrugged. “So?”

“How can you be so blasé about this?”

“Because your mother is going to be here for two days. She can think what she likes, but after that, we’ll take her to the train station, and she’ll go home. And her opinions and views will go with her.” Austin sometimes had this way of looking at the world that surprised him. Because he was the newest member of their relationship, Austin was sometimes a little insecure about his standing with him and Weaver, but then maybe things were changing for all of them. “It only matters what we think and what the three of us want.” He kissed him. “And now I need to shower so I don’t go to my runway walk class looking like a ragamuffin. I have somehow got to teach these people not to walk like truckers.” He grinned slightly. “Actually, they’re improving a great deal.”

He zipped into the bathroom, and Randy wanted to follow him inside, but he kept to his task. Austin was right, and his mother coming for a couple of days was just a blip on their radar.

Austin cracked open the bathroom door, sticking his head out. "I got tickets for the show for all of us and your mother. And on Friday, we have the neighborhood get-together. So we'll be able to keep your mother pretty busy. Just stop worrying. There is nothing that your mother can do to hurt Weaver or myself." He came out, stark-naked, in all his warm-skin glory. "The only person she has the power to hurt is you, and only if you give her that power." He stroked Randy's cheek. "I love you, Randy. We don't say things like that all that often, but I do, and nothing your mother says or does will change that." Austin patted his cheek and then turned, his amazing ass drawing him toward the bathroom, until the door closed.

Randy knew that Austin was right; he usually was about this sort of thing. Still, he couldn't help worrying about what his mother had up her sleeve. He got the feeling that there was something more to this visit than her just coming to see him. His mother didn't leave Brooklyn all that often, and for her to decide to travel to the "wilds" of central Pennsylvania, there had to be a reason.

"Stop worrying." Austin said through the bathroom door. "And go out back and help Weaver. He's in the middle of a big project and could use the help." The water started a few seconds later, and once again, Randy was tempted to join him, but changed into jeans and went to the back yard, where Weaver was talking over the fence with their neighbor. She waved as he came out and then excused herself to go inside.

"I didn't mean to scare her off," Randy said softly.

"We were talking for a minute. She's a writer and is on a deadline, so she was taking a breather before returning to her article." Weaver grabbed the shovel he'd leaned against the fence.

"So what are we doing?"

"Well, the previous owners had the area for their son to play back here, and I've

decided to turn it into a shade garden. But there are some drainage issues, so I got some large rocks, and we need to line this channel with them. Then we can fill the rest of the area with the new soil, level it out, and then plant.”

Randy rolled his eyes. “You make it sound so easy.”

“I already have the stuff in the back of the truck, and Austin helped me gather the rocks out of here. So do you want to line or spread?” Weaver asked.

“I don’t suppose neither is an answer?” he asked with a smirk.

“No. We have a number of great things out here, but I want to make the yard even better, so we can spend time outside. This is the first house I’ve had with space like this, and I want it to be really nice.”

“Okay. I’ll spread the soil. That way you can place the rocks how you want them.” Randy went to the back of the truck and began unloading the bags of topsoil, while Weaver set down the pea gravel and then arranged the larger rocks to keep everything in place. After an hour of hauling bags of dirt, his arms ached, but Randy finished with the topsoil, getting it spread.

“Looking good,” Austin called as he strode their way, every inch the high-fashion model. He walked tall, almost gliding as he moved toward them.

Randy set down the last bag of dirt, grinning. “I’d say you were the one looking damned good.”

“I thought I’d dress to impress. Let them see what they can look like and maybe teaching them to walk and present themselves will be easier.” He carefully kissed both of them. “Don’t get your dirty hands on me,” he said before adding in a whisper, “You can both do that once I get home.” Then he sauntered away and out to his car,

leaving both Randy and Weaver completely hypnotized. Between the work and Austin, he had completely forgotten about his mother... for now.

### Chapter Eight

Randy had been called into a last-minute faculty meeting at the college, and Weaver was at the law school apparently filling out enough paperwork to buy three houses, so it was up to Austin to pick up Louise at the train station in downtown Harrisburg. Traffic had been a nightmare, and he sat at the light just around the corner, checking the time yet again. The light changed, and he made the turn, went the two blocks, and pulled into the station just as the clanging bells indicated her train pulling in. With a sigh to himself, Austin got out of the car and went inside, meeting Louise as she came down the station toward him.

“How was the ride?” he asked with a smile, refusing to let any of the trepidation that churned inside show. Louise could sense fear, and he was not about to give her anything to jump on.

“It was okay. The seat was lumpy, so I moved, and that seat was lumpier. And what I wanted most was a cup of coffee, but there was no food on the train.”

“Well...,” Austin said, lifting her bag. “Let’s get you in the car, and we can stop and get you coffee or something to eat along with way.” He led her out of the station and to his car, then put her bag in the back.

“This is fancy,” she said.

Austin grinned. “I needed a car, unlike in the city, so I got to buy my first one.” He grinned. “Can you see me in some sedate sedan or SUV? No way. I needed something with style.” He held the door for her and then opened his door and slid into

the plush seat, waiting for Louise to settle before setting the engine to purring and pulling around the circle and out of the station. “How are things in New York?” he asked, trying to come up with a question to keep the conversation going.

“The usual. Brooklyn is fine. It’s home.” She looked around. “I don’t understand how Randy can choose to live here. It’s....”

He kept himself from rolling his eyes. “Wait till you see our town. It’s smaller and quite pretty, and you’re going to love the house and our street. There’s a neighborhood get-together tonight, and everyone is anxious to meet you.” He looked over and caught a glance of her expression, like he was completely crazy. “They get together every Friday for wine and nibbles.”

She humphed softly under his breath, and Austin ignored it. “He could have had that in New York. People are friendly there, especially if he were to come home. If he wanted a change of scenery, Randy could have returned to Brooklyn. There was a nice house just a few streets away.” She seemed determined to make her point. “I blame Weaver and you for this. He had those gyms and a great business, and now....”

Austin tuned her out as he reached the freeway on-ramp, concentrating on driving in afternoon traffic. “Randy got a new job that he’s really excited about, and he sold at a good time.” He and Weaver had helped him, and Randy had gotten an amazing price for the health clubs. And since he owned most of the buildings, he was now collecting rent each month from the national health club chain, because he hadn’t wanted to sell the real estate. It was a great deal that would only ensure that Randy retained the assets that were likely to appreciate in value.

“But it’s not home,” she said, determined to make the point, at least in her mind.

Austin continued driving, knowing Louise was only trying to pick some sort of argument so she could try to take the high road and seem magnanimous. She had

done it before; Austin knew the game and refused to play it with her. “What would you like to eat?” he asked instead.

“Korean?” she asked.

“There’s basic food around here. The ethnic restaurants are not like those in New York. It is one of the things I miss, but we’re collecting cookbooks and learning how to make various things for ourselves.” That was true, at least in part. Austin had bought some books on cooking and was trying out a few new things, so far with mixed results.

He ended up taking her for a burger because he knew they were good, and judging by the way Louise inhaled hers, it was. After they had eaten, he took her to the hotel to check in, messaging Randy where they were and that he should get here as soon as possible. He let her take her luggage to her room and got settled in the lobby, relaxing while she was gone.

Randy strode in, joining him two minutes before the elevator door slid open, and Louise walked out, her bag across her body. “Randy!” she said with a smile. “You should have been here. I had to carry my own bags.”

“Do either of us look like bellhops?” he snapped. “If you think you’re going to be waited on this weekend, you can forget it. Okay? Austin has a big event tomorrow, and there’s the neighborhood get-together tonight. So be on your best behavior.”

“Is that any way to talk to your mother?”

Randy crossed his arms over his chest. “As I recall, a certain Mother invited herself this weekend, so that Mother will need to make the best of it. We all have plans, and you can either join in with the three of us or you can stay in your hotel room. The choice is up to you.” Damn, he was stunning when he spoke like that. There was no

heat in his voice, just firmness.

“Look who thinks he knows more than his mother.” Louise tried another tack.

“I’m just speaking the truth.” He tilted his head to the side, and Austin knew the moment she realized she was fighting a losing battle.

“Let’s go see this house of yours.” Louise headed for the door, and Austin followed Randy, enjoying the view.

Weaver pulled up to the house. Louise, Randy, and Austin sat in chairs on the porch with what looked like glasses of iced tea, but judging by Randy and Austin’s relaxed state, he figured theirs had been spiked. “Afternoon, Louise,” he said, greeting her. “How was the trip?”

“It was a train,” she answered. “How have things been here for you? It’s a lot of change.” And there was another of her digs.

“I’m well. Got a teaching job at the law school. I’m still getting my bearings, but I think I’m going to like it. They seem to be treating me well. The three of us are settling in, and the house is really coming together.” He took the last empty seat, putting his feet up and closing his eyes. “We have great neighbors, and they appear to like us, so it’s about as good as we could have hoped for.”

“What sort of job have you found?” Louise asked Austin, making Weaver want to jump to his defense.

“I’m doing volunteer work at the moment while I look for something permanent.” He sipped some more, and Weaver then took a gulp from his glass. As he expected, there was plenty of whiskey to brace it.



“Then how will you pay your share?” Louise asked. Randy tensed, and Weaver handed the glass back to Austin, about to explain how things worked with the three of them.

“I don’t need to. Weaver and Randy have decided to keep me as their sex slave. All I need to do is make myself available any time they want me, and I’m good to go.” Austin took another sip, his eyes filled with mirth while Louise about did a spit take. Then she turned to Randy for some sort of confirmation. Weaver loved her confusion.

“Mother, Austin is my partner, along with Weaver. We are equal. And when it comes to money, I don’t think that’s any of your business.” He smirked. “And in the future, I suggest you don’t ask questions you really don’t want the answer to.”

“I was just curious,” Louise said as Weaver slipped an arm around Austin.

“If you must know, I have plenty of money. My modeling days may be behind me, but I saved a lot of what I made, thanks to a great money manager. So right now, I’m doing some volunteer work until I figure out what I want to do going forward.” Weaver loved the way he met Louise’s gaze. There was no back-down in him, and that was pretty amazing.

“Mother, that’s enough of the questions,” Randy said softly. “You’ve known both Weaver and Austin for years. This isn’t the first time you’ve met them. So what’s the deal? I know you don’t understand my life and the way I live....”

Louise set down her glass. “I keep wondering when you’re going to settle down.”

All three of them chuckled. “We are settled,” Randy said. “This is us. We have a home together, and we’re building careers and building a life. With you and dad, it was the two of you against the world. Well, it’s the three of us.”

She nodded, and Weaver wondered if she was finally starting to understand. “But you won’t be able to get married. I mean, you fought for the right to marry legally, and you won’t be able to do that.”

Weaver cleared his throat. “We understand that. But you have to know that I’m an excellent lawyer and that the three of us are as protected as we can be from a legal perspective. So that isn’t something you have to worry about. The three of us aren’t going to be getting married... at least not legally, but for us, that isn’t what this relationship is about. It’s about what we mean to each other.” He sat back and closed his eyes, letting Randy deal with his mother. He had said everything he needed to, and whether she understood or not really didn’t matter to him. But it did to Randy, and he hoped that he had been able to provide some help to them.

“What time is this neighborhood thing?”

“About seven,” Randy answered. “It’s at the place just to the left across the street.”

“I got the wine to take, and I picked up a veggie tray when I was at the store,” Austin said.

Louise got out of her seat. “I think we can do better than that.” She headed inside, and Randy groaned before following her.

“It’s fine, Mom. It doesn’t have to be fussy.”

The door closed, and Weaver sat back, enjoying the quiet.

“I give Randy five minutes before he’s back and Louise is tearing her way through the kitchen.”

Austin groaned but stayed seated. “I’m not going to fight her. If she wants to cook

something to take, I'm going to let her." He put his hands up as Randy joined them.

"Mom is making rumaki. I guess we had some water chestnuts in the pantry and some bacon, so she's going to it."

Weaver patted Randy's hand. "Your mother loves you. She may not understand everything about your life, but she does care about you, and to some extent, about us."

Austin took Randy's other hand. "It could be much worse."

The three of them sat together until Louise joined them again, setting a timer on the table.

Randy carried the plate his mother had made, and Weaver carried the veggie tray as they crossed the street to where a number of neighbors were already gathered and talking.

Dominic hurried over to open the gate so they could enter the yard.

"There's so many people," Randy's mother said softly from behind him as Veronica, the hostess, welcomed them before being called away.

"This is Randy's mother, Louise," Austin, ever the social butterfly, said to a few people, and soon, word got around the entire gathering and people came up to introduce themselves and talk to her. He and Weaver set down the food while Austin took charge of his mother.

"A glass of wine?" Eileen asked, and Randy nodded hard. "That bad?" she asked, looking at his mother.

“She doesn’t understand the three of us and keeps wondering when Randy is going to pick one of us.” Weaver snickered and leaned close enough to keep his voice from carrying. “I know it hurts Austin when she does that, even though he puts a brave face on it.”

“Sometimes, it’s hard enough being married to one person, let alone two,” she said. “Family needs to be supportive... or at least not trying to pull things apart.”

“It’s only for a few days,” Randy said, gulping the wine and refilling his glass. He liked an orderly, quiet life. That was a big part of the reason he’d wanted this job so badly. Randy had had years in the city, where everything went a million miles an hour, and everyone felt like they were trying to play catch-up. His hope had been that all of them could enjoy a better quality of life with more space to live their lives and maybe the chance to do something other than work.

His mother’s laugh drifted over, and part of the knot in Randy’s stomach eased, at least a little.

“It’s going to be okay. Your mother really isn’t that bad. She’s a little demanding, but if you think about it, she doesn’t have to understand who we are or how we live.” Weaver slipped his hand into Randy’s. “The three of us do, and that’s all that’s required.”

“I know.” Randy managed a smile because Weaver was right.

Austin hurried over, took Randy’s other hand, and practically dragged them to where Louise was surrounded by four other people. She seemed to have them enthralled, and that was great—until Randy realized she was telling stories about him as a little one.

“Mom,” he warned.

“Oh, please. You will always be my baby. And he was so cute... and really small when he was born. I must have fed him right.”

Randy turned away, finding Andrew and Dominic speaking with Veronica.

“She seems to be having a good time,” Andrew said, looking as more laughter rose into the evening air.

“Mom is always the life of the party.”

“Usually at Randy’s expense. I expect she’ll be sharing potty-training stories soon.” Weaver smiled. “She’s done it before.”

Andrew snickered. “My father always thought he had this great sense of humor. I have a sister and brother, and his jokes usually involved some trick at our expense. I endured his stories and jokes for years. And if we said anything, then we didn’t have a sense of humor. Of course, he was our father, and we had no real way to retaliate, because any trick we tried to play on him, he didn’t think was funny.” Andrew’s voice held a harsh edge. Clearly there was some old hurt there.

Dominic lightly patted his shoulder. “Tell us how you really feel,” he said softly.

Andrew rolled his eyes. “I’m just saying that parents are parents, I guess. They’re proud of their kids, though they show it in different ways.” More laughter drifted their way. “At least she’s having a good time.”

Randy knew he should probably be grateful for that and for the smile Austin shot him when their eyes met, sending a jolt of heat through him. Austin wandered over, slipping an arm around his waist, the two of them and Veronica speaking to Andrew and Dominic for a while as his mother held court.

“There you are,” she said half an hour later, her face flushed. “You have the nicest neighbors.” She might have been a little tipsy—it was hard for him to tell—but her glass had been kept full. Most of the food was gone.

“They are fun. And they do this almost every Friday through the summer, apparently,” Weaver told her, resting his head on Randy’s shoulder. “It’s been a long day, I guess.”

“We can go,” Randy said softly. “Mom, do you need more to eat?”

“Gosh, no. They plied me with everything from veggies to empanadas.”

“Then I’ll take you back to the hotel,” Randy said as he grabbed the empty dish from his mother’s contribution. He also arranged for one of the neighbors to take what was left of the veggie tray. Then they headed home, and Randy got his mother into his truck.

“Your friends are really nice. This is a good place to live, especially surrounded by people like that.” She patted his cheek. “Maybe I should think about giving up my place in the city and moving here.”

Randy said nothing, but his belly went cold. That was so not a good idea. “All your friends are in Brooklyn.”

“But you left...,” she complained.

“Yeah. Because it was time for a change. Austin’s career was coming to an end, and Weaver wasn’t happy. So when I got the opportunity, the three of us discussed it and decided to make a change to our lives.”

She narrowed her gaze at him as Randy pulled to a stop at the light. “But I

thought....”

“What? That I got a job here and Weaver and Austin just followed me? It was a decision we all made together. That’s how we live. It’s the three of us, and we’re a family. That’s the one thing all those people you met tonight get that you don’t.”

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Austin was nervous, but the excited kind of nervous that kept him on his toes. “I have to go to the theater and make sure everything is ready.”

“How are you doing this? The theater is too big,” Weaver asked.

“We built an addition to the stage that will create a circular runway out into the theater. That way people can sit close and get a good look at the clothes. We’re only using the area in front of the curtain, to bring the clothes as close as we can. And once the models have done their runway, they’ll stroll down the center of the theater and out toward the lobby. That way everyone can experience the show no matter how far away they’re sitting.” He ate his light breakfast. “What time are you picking up Louise?”

“Eleven,” Randy answered. “We’ll be there in plenty of time.” The show began at three, and he expected the entire experience to take about two hours. And that’s what Austin wanted this to be: an experience. “Just go and do whatever it is you need to. Don’t worry about anything.”

Austin’s phone rang as he finished his eggs, and he answered it as he hurried out the door.

“There’s an issue with the runway, and we may need to use the stage,” Chris told him. He picked up his pace without thinking.

“No. Don’t do that. I’m on my way, and we’ll figure it out. I’ll be there in ten minutes.” He rushed toward his car, still talking. Then he raced back and gave Randy and Weaver each a kiss before sailing out into the sunny morning and getting into his



car. He zoomed through town, reaching the theater in record time. There were always issues before something like this.

Chris met him in the lobby, and they walked through to the theater—where part of their runway looked like a third grader assembled it.

Austin took a closer look. “They forgot to secure this area right here. There was supposed to be another brace here and a leg there. No wonder it isn’t working. Get the carpenter in here and tell him he needs to fix it right away.”

Chris’s eyes widened. “I tried that, and he said he was busy.”

“This is his fault, and he’ll fix it or he isn’t going to get paid for anything. Play a little hardball. He should have been here to check on this already.” Austin crawled past the bunting and under the rest of the setup, making sure it was put together properly. It all seemed okay. “And call the borough inspector. Tell him that we need him to check this out today. I want to make sure this is safe once the carpenter is finished.” There was no way in hell this show was going to fall apart, not on his watch.

“He says it’s a Saturday, and he’s in Maryland with his family,” Chris reported after talking to the carpenter. “I told him that if he didn’t get back here, we weren’t paying his bill and that we were turning him in to the borough. The bastard hung up.” Those words seemed so out of place.

“Okay...,” Austin said as he tried to figure out what to do. “Did you call the building inspector?”

“The office is closed.”

“Look up his name, then search locally. He lives near here. Dig in and see if you can get any sort of borough official. They have a stake in this as well. They all know each

other, and once you get hold of one, they will be able to contact each other. Word gets around fast in New York. I bet it's even quicker here."

"Okay. But what can they do?" Chris asked.

Austin groaned loudly. "Damned if I know. But someone has to help. It's either that or we tear this thing down completely and rework everything." He snapped his fingers. "That's it. Get everyone you can in here, including the models. We need to get this entire thing out of here. We can't fix it and know it's safe." His mind went in a million directions in seconds. "Please."

"But...?" She seemed completely lost.

Austin took her by the hand and led her halfway up the theater. "We remove the extension. Then we change the entire show. The models come down the center of the theater, past everyone, and then over to that side the stage, up and over, then down the other side, and exit down the side aisle. We close that entire side of the theater except for the first four seats and use only this side. It will make the entire show more intimate and give everyone a good view. But we need people and we need them now. The event is in four hours, and there's a lot to do." His head ached, but he had a plan. "What do you think?"

Chris smiled. "Okay. That's what we'll do."

Austin pulled out his phone and sent a text to the neighborhood group explaining that he needed help. Then he called Weaver.

"Help...", he said. "The show is going to crumble." He explained what was wrong. "I need you, Randy, and Louise. Get down here as fast as you can." Messages started coming in from the group, but he ignored them at the moment. "I'll explain everything when you get here... and bring drills and hand tools. We'll need them."

He hung up and checked his messages.

Sorry. We're out of town. Hope everything works out.

We're camping this weekend. But good luck. Hope you fix the issue.

Austin groaned as another message popped up from Dan, their next door neighbor. Cassie and I can be there in ten.

Austin grinned and pumped his fist in the air. "Any luck?" he asked Chris as she ended a call.

"I started with the guys, and most said they could get here early."

"People from my neighborhood are coming, and so are the guys." He texted Randy to bring his truck. "We're going to need to haul all this away."

"We'll break it down and put it against the very back wall of the stage for now. The main curtain will be closed during the show anyway. Later, everything will need to be carted off."

Austin shook his head. "Call one of the local construction companies. There is a ton of plywood and bracing that can be reused. I bet they would pay you for the materials since they are barely used and can be easily recycled into other projects. But that can be done after the show." He intended to make the very most of all their resources.

"What is it you need?" Weaver asked as he strode in with a toolbox in hand, Randy right behind him, both of his men in T-shirts that showed off their muscled arms.

"We need to take all that down. The carpenter messed up, and it isn't going to be strong enough. The entire show is being reworked on the fly, but I can't rehearse it

with the models with the extensions in place.”

“Okay.” Randy and Weaver strode down and began getting out the tools. Soon, the drills whirled, and sheets of plywood flooring came loose. Chris directed where to put things as some of the neighborhood people joined them. Cassie grabbed another drill, and she loosened screws as Dan joined Randy in hauling parts backstage.

Some of the models began to show, and they joined in, getting the extension down in what had to be record time. A steady stream of people hauled pieces up behind the curtain, and the sounds of multiple drills and hammers filled the theater.

As the rest of the models came in, Austin got them together, while Louise passed out coffee and water to everyone who needed it. “Everything is going to be different from how we rehearsed it,” Austin told the models an hour and a half before the show as the last of the old setup was removed. “The clothing will be the same, but you will be walking a different route. So, everyone follow me.”

“Where will we gather?”

“Backstage just like before. Chris will signal you when we are to start, and she will lead you along the side of the theater wings back to the lobby. You’ll come in through those main doors.”

“What about the ropes?” Randy asked.

Austin barely took a breath. “Use them to close off everything from that section of seats over that way. No one is to sit there.” He turned back to the models. “As I was saying. You’ll walk down the center aisle of the theater from the lobby. Everyone follow me.” He stood tall and walked slowly to the front. “Then cross over to the right, where you’ll climb the stairs to the stage, walk across, stopping in the middle to turn and strike your pose just the way we rehearsed it. Then continue, slowly descend

the stairs, and exit down the side aisle. Move slowly and steadily, just like we rehearsed. No faster. Give everyone a chance to see you and the garments.”

“Why are we doing this?” one of the models asked. “Everything was working so well.”

Austin couldn’t argue with him. “It’s because the carpenter messed up and didn’t shore up the extension well enough. It came apart, and while we might have been able to fix it, we didn’t want to take any chances, so we’re making this change.” He looked out at the faces and smiled. “You are all going to be great. Go and walk the route a few times over the next ten minutes. Make sure you feel comfortable, and then go back and get dressed for your first looks. We have hair and makeup people ready, and they are going to need some time, so the sooner you’re ready the better.” He sat down, watching as each walked the route and then exited the theater. This just had to work.

“Weaver and I are going to take Mom with us so we can change,” Randy said. Austin hugged both of them, with Randy enveloping him in his arms. “You’re going to do great, so don’t worry.” He kissed him, to a few catcalls, and then they took off. Austin wished he had a chance to change clothes, but the show had to go on, and it was his job to make sure it did.

“That was a cluster and a half,” Weaver said as they rode back to the house. “But Austin seems to have it in hand.” It had been a lot of work in a very short time, but the task was done, and the theater had been cleaned up, so it looked like the mess was never there.

“He can do anything,” Randy said. “I just hope everything goes off tonight.” He dropped his mother off at her hotel. “We’ll be back in twenty minutes, so be ready.”

“I will,” Louise said and went into the hotel while Randy took off. He pulled up in

front of the house, and Weaver hurried inside and upstairs, starting the shower before stripping off his clothes. He washed quickly, getting out as Randy got in, taking but a second to admire the hunkiness on display. Weaver dried off and got dressed, putting on the clothes Austin had chosen for him. While Weaver was at it, he found the outfit Austin had planned to wear and put it in a garment bag. By the time he was dressed and had everything ready, Randy joined him, and they retraced their steps to the hotel, where he picked up Louise in her glittery black dress.

Randy found a place to park less than a block from the theater. “You two go inside, and I’ll find Austin so I can give him this,” Weaver said, carrying the garment bag inside. He messaged Austin and met him in the wings. “I thought you might need this.”

Austin broke into a huge smile. “Thank God. I thought I was going to have to go out there looking like this.” He leaned in for a kiss and was gone.

When Weaver returned to the lobby, a number of other people had gathered for the show. It looked like a good turnout, and just before the main doors opened, even more people showed up until the lobby felt pretty full.

Then ushers opened the theater doors, and people slowly moved forward, funneling into the theater along the left side. “You may sit wherever you like, but not behind the ropes.” They quietly repeated the instructions as patrons made their way inside.

There was a certain excitement in the air, like this was a big show in New York or Paris. People talked among themselves, and the theater buzzed with low tones that only added to the evening.

“Let’s sit on the aisle,” Weaver suggested. “Austin mentioned for us to sit about here. He’s going to have to give a short talk before the start, and I think he’s nervous and wants to see us.” He went in first and let Randy and his mother sit together.

“Remember Paris last year?” Randy whispered.

Weaver chuckled as his cheeks heated. “Yeah. You and I at those fancy fashion shows with all those important people.” Austin had booked a couple shows during Fashion Week, and they had gone along with him. It had been an amazing trip, but during the shows, they’d felt like fish out of water. Neither he nor Randy were particularly interested in fashion or what was stylish. But they made damned sure that they saw Austin walk those runways. If Weaver hadn’t already loved him, he sure as hell would have after Austin glided down the runway in flowing pants and shirt that made him look like an angel. Weaver hadn’t been able to take his eyes off him, and it seemed Randy hadn’t either. The clothes really didn’t matter—neither of them knew anything about that sort of thing—but it was the man wearing them that entranced both of them.

“Yeah....” Randy’s voice was soft and ocean-deep. “And stripping him down once we got him back to the hotel....” His throat rumbled. “Seeing all those people watching him....”

“Yeah,” Weaver agreed. It awakened something in both of them, and they’d had to take Austin so he felt like he was theirs again. It had made for a number of very intensely passionate nights. He grew warmer just thinking about it. “I wonder if tonight is going to feel like that.” Weaver sat back and closed his eyes.

“Now I am happy I’m staying at a hotel,” Louise said. “You boys need to settle down. Jesus, it’s getting testosterony in here.” She waved her hand in front of her face.

“Austin is ours and we’re his. It’s....,” Randy began, his words very deliberate and slow.

“He’s doing something he loves,” Louise supplied.

Weaver leaned forward. “We know, and we’d move heaven and earth to be here for him.” He was grateful Austin wasn’t in the show itself, if only because the situation was already stressful enough.

“I know. I saw,” Louise said.

Weaver met Randy’s quizzical gaze as the lights in the theater lowered, and music began to fill the space. He had expected something new and bright with a strong beat, but he recognized the Charleston instead.

“Good evening, and welcome to the Carlisle Theater Benefit Fashion Show,” Austin said as he stepped out onto the center of the stage in black pants and a white jacket over his tuxedo shirt and black tie. He looked stunning, and Weaver swallowed hard as Randy shifted in the seat next to him. Because, well... damn! “Tonight, we are celebrating the glamour and sophistication of simplicity. We’re going to harken back to the roaring twenties, when almost everything, it seems, including the movies, were in black and white. The elegance and sophistication of simplicity. So, please, enjoy the show.”

The lights came back up in their portion of the theater, leaving the unoccupied section dark. The music volume rose, and the first model began coming down the main aisle. Austin stood at the side of the stage, and once the first model reached the edge, he began explaining the clothes the young woman was wearing and that, like all of today’s looks, they could be purchased in the lobby after the show, with a portion of the proceeds going to the theater.

“I like that,” Randy told him as one of the male models passed their row in all white. He looked almost ethereal. “I think it would look good on you.”

“Me?” Weaver said. “Can you imagine me in white?”



“Yeah, I can. With your hair and eyes, you would be stunning.” Randy nudged him, and Weaver began to consider the notion as other looks slowly passed by and across the stage, until all of the twenty models had shown each of their two looks.

“Ladies and gentlemen, I want to present to you our final collection for today, as well as the amazing volunteer models who made this day possible.”

The doors opened once more, and all the models paraded in before climbing on stage so all the looks could be seen at one time. Weaver and Randy stood, with Louise, as did the rest of the audience, clapping. But it was Austin’s smile as he stood off to the side that warmed his heart. Randy nudged his shoulder, having seen just how happy Austin was as well.

Chris slowly climbed onstage, taking the microphone from Austin. “And I’d especially like to thank the director of this production. He took over the job just two weeks ago, and as you can see, he made it a success. Austin Reynolds.” She motioned to him, and Austin made a slight bow. “Who I am thrilled to report has just accepted a position here at the Carlisle Theater as the director of events and fundraising.”

Weaver snapped his head around to Randy, who did the same.

“Well, I’ll be damned,” Randy said, grinning.

Weaver couldn’t help be happy as well. He had a new job that he thought he was going to enjoy, and with Austin’s new position, it looked like all of them were beginning to get settled in their new town.

“Did you know?” Louise asked.

“No. But it’s great. She must have offered him the job after we sat down,” Weaver said, clapping along with the rest of the audience.

Chris handed Austin back the microphone, and he moved center stage, smiling brightly. “We have drinks and snacks out front, and be sure to stop by the vendor tables on your way out. Thank you all for coming, and enjoy the rest of your evening.” Austin set the mic aside and slowly descended the stage steps.

Weaver and Randy met him, engulfing him in a three-way hug. “I’m so proud of you.”

“Me too,” Randy added. “I think you’re going to do some amazing things.”

Austin grinned at both of them, and once they broke apart, Weaver stepped back as Louise gave Austin a hug as well. “Thanks, all of you. She asked me backstage.”

“Is this what you want to do?” Weaver asked.

“I think so. I love big events, and I know I can put them together and find ways to help make money for the theater. They want to restore the facade above the marquee. It’s going to cost a lot, because no one seems to know why the surface is peeling away, but we’ll figure it out, and I’ll raise the money to make the outside of the theater as grand as the inside. Why?”

Weaver hugged Austin again. “Because we want you to be happy, the same as you do for us. You moved here because you thought it would be best for Randy, and you more than any of us took a chance that you’d land on your feet. And we’re thrilled that you have.” Weaver hugged him once more. “You know I love you and so does Randy.”

“And I love both of you.” He pulled away, but still held Weaver’s hand. “The day isn’t over yet.”

Weaver nodded. “Randy says that I’d look good in the all-white outfit.”

“Of course you would. Why do you think I had it set aside in your size? Go on out front and pick it up.” He turned to Randy, who had the audacity to smirk at him “I have a few things set aside for you too. Now go on out there, mingle, and get some clothes for summer.” He practically dragged the two of them out front and got them the clothes he had picked out.

Weaver didn’t argue and paid for what Austin had chosen. Randy did the same, and with their purchases and the couple of things Louise found for herself, they all did their bit to support the theater.

“I think I get it,” his mother said that evening as she set a bowl of her amazing pasta with pesto on the table.

“What is it that you get now?” Randy asked, expecting another of her pronouncements.

“The three of you. I think I get it now.” She pulled out her chair and sat down. Randy leaned forward, half expecting another verse of the same tune. “Austin needed something, and the two of you came running without a moment’s hesitation. Just like your father. If I needed anything, he came running and moved heaven and earth for me. The two of you did that for Austin, and I dare say he would do the same for you.”

Randy patted her hand. “Mom, this is something all three of us know. With you and Dad, your hearts were filled with each other. For us, there are two and our hearts are just as full. But it’s different too.”

“It takes even more work,” Weaver said gently. “We look out for each other and make sure that no one feels left out or better than the rest. Randy was part of me first, but that doesn’t mean that I love Austin less or that Austin took away from Randy. I think my heart just got bigger, so they would both fit.”

Randy couldn't have put it better himself. "Just think of it this way. Instead of one son-in-law, you have two."

His mom nodded slowly. "I guess I kept trying to fit you into the mold of what I thought a good relationship should look like, and instead, you were already out there, making your own brand of happiness." She sighed deeply. "Can you forgive me?"

Randy smiled. "Mom, there's nothing to forgive."

"Yeah, Louise," Austin said, along with Weaver. "The three of us are a family."

His mom took both Weaver's and Austin's hands. "We're all a family."

Randy was shocked. He never thought he would hear those words from her. But here they were, plain as day.

"And now I can relax."

"And maybe find someone to share your life with," Austin said.

Randy about choked on his glass of water and shot Austin a dirty look. "My mother does not need to be going out on dates."

Louise scoffed. "I've seen a number of men over the past few years." She whispered it like she was sharing some big secret.

"Why am I first hearing about this? And are these men good enough for you? Why haven't I met any of them?"

"Because you'd scare the crap out of them," Weaver told him. "It's good your mom is dating. She's a vital woman and should be happy."

Randy growled as he ate his pasta, not liking this one bit.

“There is a man I really like. We’ve been dating for a few months now, and it’s starting to get serious.”

Randy swallowed. “Damn.... Then I need to meet him to make sure he’s good enough for you.”

“Don’t get your underwear in a twist. I’m not going to get remarried any time soon, and Jerry is a nice man. We keep each other company and do things together. He lost his wife about the same time I lost your father, and we’re both figuring out how to get on with our lives.”

“I think it’s wonderful,” Austin said.

Randy wanted to growl at him, but Weaver said the same thing, and he knew he was outnumbered. “Yeah. I suppose. As long as you’re happy.”

Louise rolled her eyes dramatically. “Just stop that and be nice. I’m your mother.” She shot him one of her “I changed your diaper” looks. “Eat your dinner before it gets cold,” she muttered under her breath, and Randy did as he was told, grateful that she was going home tomorrow. As much as he truly wanted her to be happy and to have a full life, it was still disconcerting to know she was out there dating other guys.

“Just stop the brooding,” Weaver said once Randy returned from taking his mother to the hotel.

“But she’s dating and....”

“Has been for a while,” Austin added. “Just let it go.” He slipped his arms around Randy’s waist, his hands sliding under his shirt, stroking his skin. Randy closed his

eyes and gave himself over to the caress. “Your mother has finally accepted our relationship.” He rested his head on Randy’s shoulder. “And Louise is a big girl. She can definitely take care of himself.”

“Yeah, she can,” Weaver said, pressing his chest to Randy’s, kissing him hard. “Meanwhile, we have plenty to celebrate, and none of it has to do with your mother.” Damn, that smirk was wicked. “Austin has a position doing something he’s going to love.” Weaver pulled off his shirt while Austin cupped his pecs, tweaking his nipples in the most amazing way. “And the three of us have a real home here.”

Randy shivered as Weaver unbuttoned his pants and then lowered the zipper, pushing them down his legs.

“So just let go of the rest of it,” Austin whispered before sucking on his ear. “We all have plenty to be grateful for. We’re starting a new chapter in our lives.” His hands slid down Randy’s belly and then into his boxers, cupping him in warm hands. “But right now, this is a celebration of us... the three of us.”

“Yeah?” Randy moaned softly. He was usually the instigator of their bedroom activity, and he liked that the others were taking charge tonight.

“Oh yeah,” Austin kissed his shoulder. “We love you, Randy.” He began stroking him, and Randy clamped his eyes more tightly closed, letting the care, love, and passion wash over him.

“I love you too. Both of you, more than I ever thought possible,” Randy whimpered just before Weaver kissed him again, harder and with enough intensity to weaken Randy’s knees.

“We’re built on love,” Weaver said, kissing Austin and then him once more.

Randy had no doubt about that. They had been through a lot and had come out the other side stronger and he hoped happier.

“And we take care of each other.” All three of them slowly moved toward the bed. “We have each other’s backs, and we always will.” Weaver stopped moving, and Randy opened his eyes. “We always will. We’re a family. We may be unconventional, but we’re still a family. And we’re building a new life here. The throuple next door.”

Both Weaver and Austin sealed their point with a kiss that took Randy’s breath away.

*Source Creation Date: July 17, 2025, 6:32 am*

Austin sighed as he pulled his coat closer around him, leaving the theater using the back door. He hurried to his car through the fall chill and drizzle. On nice days during the summer, he walked to work, but those days were ending. He loved his job and had found a whole new skill set that involved talking people out of their money for a great cause that benefited the entire town. Randy really loved teaching and was becoming a favorite with his students as well as the faculty, especially now that the dreaded curriculum discussions and updates were over. Weaver seemed to like his new job, though he said he missed practicing and was helping a group of students from the law school. Leave it to him to make his quest to practice in Pennsylvania a teaching experience for others.

He cranked the heat once he started the engine and drove the short distance home, pulling around back, up the alley, and into his spot in back of the house.

He walked through the yard that Weaver had worked on for much of the summer, now cleaned up and bedded down in preparation for winter. He climbed the steps and strode to the back door, using his key to let himself inside. Before he could close the door, a small dog raced up to him.

“Monty,” Weaver called, but the small terrier completely ignored him.

“I take it you went to the shelter,” Austin said, kneeling down to pet the newest addition to the family. “I know we talked about getting a small dog.” The little thing sure was cute, but he was so tiny. Still, he propped his front legs on Austin’s knee until he lifted him up. Monty snuggled right into his arms and settled immediately.

“I saw them when I was there and couldn’t—”



Austin paused. “Them?” Randy came in carrying another dog in his arms, with a third racing along the floor for her share of the attention. “I thought we were getting one dog.”

“This is Bruiser, and this little girl is Posey,” Randy said. “Weaver and I had picked out Monty, but when he went back to pick him up...” Randy stared pointedly at Weaver.

“All three of them were curled together, and as soon as I picked up Monty, the others began to whimper. They knew their friend was going to be taken away. The shelter attendant tried distracting to the others, but as soon as they saw that one of them was missing, the other two began to bark and yip.” Austin had never seen Weaver appear helpless before. “They’re almost a year old. They aren’t litter mates, but they were raised together and were brought in a few weeks ago when their owner died.” Weaver swallowed hard. “What was I supposed to do?”

Austin smiled, holding Monty to his chest. Weaver held Posey with her pink collar, and Randy had Bruiser, all three perfectly happy. “Exactly what you did.” He leaned forward, kissing both his men and getting a lick on the chin from Monty. “After all, who are we to break up a throuple?”