



Naaju Rorrete

# From Don To Dom

Unfinished Liaisons Series

Also Featured In The *Love Has No Boundaries* Anthology

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# Love Has No Boundaries

*An M/M Romance series*

## FROMDONTODOM

By Naaju Rorrete

### Introduction

The story you are about to read celebrates love, sex and romance between men. It is a product of the *Love Has No Boundaries* promotion sponsored by the *Goodreads M/M Romance Group* and is published as a free gift to you.

### What Is Love Has No Boundaries?

The *Goodreads M/M Romance Group* invited members to choose a photo and pen a letter asking for a short M/M romance story inspired by the image; authors from the group were encouraged to select a letter and write an original tale. The result was an outpouring of creativity that shone a spotlight on the special bond between M/M romance writers and the people who love what they do.

A written description of the image that inspired this story is provided along with the original request letter. If you'd like to view the photo, please feel free to join the [Goodreads M/M Romance Group](#) and visit the discussion section: *Love Has No Boundaries*.

Whether you are an avid M/M romance reader or new to the genre, you are in for a delicious treat.

### Words of Caution

This story may contain sexually explicit content and is **intended for adult readers**. It may contain content that is disagreeable or distressing to some readers. The *M/M Romance Group* strongly recommends that each reader review the General Information section before each story for story tags as well as for content warnings.

This story is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are the products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

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## Photo Description

Against the backdrop of a plain, white brick wall, a man with short dark hair sits on a modern sofa, flanked by two naked younger men. He wears a black dress shirt and slacks, and short shiny black boots. The curly-haired young man on the right lies on his side, knees tucked up, and has his head in the man's lap, his right hand tucked under the man's thigh, fingers curling up. On the left, the other young man leans on one elbow to look at the camera, leaning back against the man's chest.

## Story Letter

*Dear Author,*

*My name is fifth-generation Sicilian, passed down from father to son. Just like my profession. Mob boss with the Cosa Nostra. These are my boys. The one to my right is strong-willed and needs a firm hand. The one to my left is damaged and fragile, and requires more patience than I have most days. They hate each other, which is good because we're at war with a rival family, and my time to devote to them is not enough, never enough. I fear one or both will become a target. A way to hurt me where I live, where I love and from which I'd never recover.*

*Sincerely,*

*Moderaterix Lori*

## Story Info

**Genre:** contemporary

**Tags:** M/M/M, BDSM, twink, hurt/comfort, mafia, D/s

**Content warnings:** some violence

Word count: 28,534

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# FROM DON TO DOM

By Naaju Rorrete

## CHAPTER 1

The air reeked of danger. More than a smell, it was the sensation of knowing something critical was about to happen. Giancarlo had felt this eerie excitement in the past, and it always resulted in a dramatic milestone. Like that day when he lost so many loved ones to violence. He'd spent today trying to ignore the unwelcome feeling. What his grandmother called intuition, Giancarlo believed was only his unconscious mind warning him about something he already knew that could result in a disaster.

In his line of work, violence and death were the norm, but he had never gotten used to it. He'd struggled for the last decade to transmute most of his family's businesses into legit ones. But even if he succeeded, there were some associates who preferred the old ways. On his behalf, he counted on the support that mattered the most. Ernesto Montefiore, Giancarlo's grandfather was the official boss of the Condottieri family, and although Giancarlo considered himself only a lieutenant, most thought of him as the acting boss. Even before he had been made, some people began calling him the Don. He'd quickly corrected them, because his grandfather was alive and they didn't rule a monarchy. However, power inspired respect, and money, by all means, translated into power. And money was something Giancarlo knew how to produce.

Today, unlike other times, it wasn't his life on the line, but his sanity—although his life could follow for sure.

He should have never agreed to meet Braulio Santorno, but the boy sounded so distraught that Giancarlo couldn't refuse to see him.

Now, he waited in a mall parking lot for the right moment to let Braulio into his car without being seen. They usually took this type of precautions, but today, thanks to his hunch, more than ever.



Reclining on the backseat of the luxury car, Giancarlo held two cell phones: his personal one with which he stayed connected to his cousin, Nico, who was inside the mall executing their little scheme. And a prepaid untraceable phone he mostly used to talk with Braulio.

In the driver's seat, Nico's brother, Luciano, waited for orders. They were Montefiore too, Giancarlo's cousins. While at work, they never behaved like family, but employees—a matter of respect.

“Braulio, get closer to the exit that leads to the parking lot, but don't come this way yet.” Giancarlo instructed, and waited for Braulio's agreement before asking, “Nico, is he being followed?”

The answer came fast. “Yeah. Two guys I'd seen with Santorno in the past.”

Giancarlo uttered a curse. “Don't let them see you. Go create a distraction, we need to give Braulio a few seconds to get lost.”

“Sure, boss.” The cousins always referred to him as *boss* or *sir*.

A few minutes passed before he heard again from Nico. “I met two girls who assured me they're great screamers. They're going to pretend someone snatched their iPhone and run after the thief in the opposite direction to the parking lot exit.” He paused and faked a cough. “Boss, you owe me two hundred.”

“What?”

“They're good screamers.” Giancarlo almost could see Nico's witty expression.

“And where is your charm? I thought you didn't need to pay for it.”

“Well, my charm needs time to develop, and we needed a quick motivator. I'm sure even those goons are going to look at these girls, at least for a few seconds. Who knows, they might feel like rescuing them.”

“All right, I'll see you get your cash back,” Giancarlo conceded.

“Don't worry, I'll write it as a work expense to see Claudio flip.”

Claudio Albano was his right hand and much more. For some reason, Claudio's stoic attitude inspired everybody to provoke him, simply to see him lose his cool. Claudio, Luciano and Nico were Giancarlo's personal crew, the men he trusted with everything, including his deepest secrets.

Nico was talking again. "Boss, we're ready to go in sixty seconds."

"Thanks, Nico. Meet us at the sidewalk by the main door." Giancarlo ended the communication with his cousin, and put all his attention to getting the boy to do his part. "Braulio, are you carrying anything?"

"Yep, my backpack and my cell."

"Which is not an iPhone, right?"

"No, Dad would never get me one of those."

"Cool. Listen, turn off your cell and put it into the backpack. Next, hang it on your back, and when you hear girls screaming, ignore the commotion because that is part of Nico's plan, and start walking—no running—towards the parking lot exit. We're waiting for you outside the second level door."

After Giancarlo ended the call, Luciano got out of the car and stood next to the passenger's door, holding it open. Both Nico and Luciano often drove and protected his grandfather around town, and in the event that Santorno accessed the mall's security cameras, they could say that it had been the Don waiting for Braulio. Getting his grandfather to agree and help would take a lot of convincing, but it was a possibility that Giancarlo kept as his plan B.

Anything but getting Giancarlo directly involved. He knew that Santorno would blame him for everything his son had done within the last five years, including Braulio being gay. When all Giancarlo ever did was to offer his friendship and support to an abused teenager. Braulio had been born that way, whether the boy's father accepted it or not. Besides, Santorno ignoring their friendship had worked to their advantage, because Giancarlo had become a secret refuge for those times when Braulio couldn't take any more abuse at home.

He sighed with relief when he saw Braulio walking out of the mall's exit and getting into the car. As soon as Luciano got into the driver's seat, they were out on the street.

"Thanks so much for helping me." Braulio said while fussing with the seatbelt.

Giancarlo smiled at him. "No problem."

They stopped long enough for Nico to get into the front seat. "Hey, dude. Nice to see you." Nico's friendly smile told Giancarlo that he enjoyed these crazy runs, which were so different from the dangerous stuff they'd done in the past. Braulio smiled back at him and thanked him again.

The tinted windows of the car allowed enough light for Giancarlo to see Braulio's bruised face in spite of the sunglasses he wore. Giancarlo bet those hid a black eye. Fury ran through him, and he wanted to beat Fabian Santorno to a pulp. One day he would do it, that was a promise.

The bastard had raised Braulio in a cocoon, and thought he had the right of life and death over his only child. Who was already a grown-up man, but because of the way he was treated all his life, still behaved like a teenager most of the time.

When Giancarlo saw Braulio's hurt face, with his brave expression, he felt like holding him in his arms and assuring the boy that he would be safe, protected. Giancarlo had promised to be there for Braulio if he ever needed support, and he always honored his promises.

"Are you okay?"

"Yes."

For Giancarlo it was getting harder to resist the desire to touch the young man in front of the others. His cousins sort of knew the type of relationship he had with Braulio, but Giancarlo was always careful not to express any feelings in public. His logic was that if he got in the habit of hugging and kissing Braulio in front of those he trusted, he might do the same carelessly in public by impulse, and he couldn't let that happen.

“Thanks for coming. You have no idea how much this means to me.” Braulio extended an arm across the seat and grabbed Giancarlo’s hand as if it were a lifesaver. “I need you more than ever. If you weren’t here for me I don’t know what I would do.”

They held hands in silence for a few seconds, and then Giancarlo said, “You worried me with what you said over the phone. What’s wrong, Braulio?”

“I wanted to say good-bye in case I don’t make it past next week.”

“What? Wait, it doesn’t matter what it is, please don’t even think about killing yourself. I’ll help you with anything you need, you know that you count with me, right?”

Braulio nodded and the short bangs of his black hair followed the movement. “Yes. Giancarlo, I would never commit suicide. If you ever hear I did, you will know I was murdered.”

“Then, what are we talking about?”

“My dad again.”

“Well, that’s nothing new.”

“This time is the real thing because I told him the truth.”

“You came out to him?” Giancarlo asked, thinking, *Are you out of your mind?*

“I had to tell him, I couldn’t keep it inside anymore.” It was all Braulio said for a while.

That explained the bruises on his face—something that Giancarlo had seen more times than he wanted to recall and that he had never got used to. He sent caution to the wind and undid the seatbelt that separated them and pulled Braulio closer. “Come here.” After hesitating an instant the younger man accepted the embrace. Giancarlo could feel Braulio trembling and wished he could transfer some of his strength to him.

“Well, if your face is any indication of how he reacted, I guess I don’t need to hear the details.”

“It was worse than other times. Before he suspected it, now he knows. He said that if I let anybody else know, he will kill me, and if I don’t do as he says, he will kill me, that if I get involved with another man, he will... well, I’m dead.”

“I’m sorry,” Giancarlo said. “For now, you have to keep a low profile and do what he says, until I can find a solution.”

“Speaking of solutions, Dad told me that he would give me one last chance to make things right. If I go to this place and get cured, he will forgive me.” Braulio handed him a brochure. Giancarlo put the reading lights on to read the contents. “Reparative therapy? But that doesn’t work. I mean, do you think it will work with you?”

“No. That’s why I ran away.” A sad smile curved his lips. “I guess I should have done it years ago.”

“Better late than never. The only problem is, as soon as he realizes you’re not coming back, he will go insane.”

“I know, but I can’t let them put me thru an ex-gay camp.”

“Is that bad? I’m sorry, I heard of those places, but I have no idea how they work.”

“I did some research online, and what I learned repulses me.” Braulio added.

Giancarlo continued to hold him in silence until they arrived at the building where he had his offices, and an apartment at which he stayed sometimes. He still lived with his grandparents, because after losing his parents, he wanted to spend all the time he could with his old ones before they were gone too.

The car entered the underground garage, and this time Giancarlo helped Braulio out of the vehicle without any concern because he owned the whole building and controlled the security cameras. They rode an elevator all the way to the penthouse, and after they walked into the apartment, Braulio stood still looking at the Philadelphia skyline for a few seconds. Then he turned around and faced Giancarlo. “I won’t do like you. I won’t deny it, and if I find

someone to love, I will love that person proudly.” Braulio resented that Giancarlo refused to deepen their friendship into anything else for fear of being revealed as gay.

“Braulio, you have no idea of what you’re saying. In our world, this is the way things are. You keep this type of secret to yourself, and you don’t come out of the damn closet unless you have a death wish.”

“I know, you told me that years ago.”

Yes, Giancarlo had guessed the boy’s dilemma, and in an act of sympathy confessed his own secret and offered his friendship. Giancarlo told Braulio to call him if he ever felt desperate and at the end of his rope. Giancarlo never imagined that in the process he would lose his own heart to this tender man.

“I think that the best solution is that you move out west. I’ll help you.”

Braulio crossed the room and hugged him, being about a foot shorter, his head ended where Giancarlo’s chin started. “No. I want to be with you. What’s the point of being happy and free in San Francisco if I’m alone?”

Giancarlo lowered himself to a face-to-face position. “With your looks you won’t be alone for long.”

“We’d been through this before. I’m not leaving you. I’ll wait until you make up your mind.”

Giancarlo separated himself slowly from him and asked, “Do you know what today is?”

Braulio smiled widely. “Sure. I could have waited until Monday to run away, but I had to spend your birthday with you.”

“I didn’t know I was going to see you, and I have plans with my grandparents.” Braulio’s disappointed face moved him to add, “But after they go to sleep, I’ll do my best to come back here.”

Happiness lit up Braulio’s face again. It was so simple to make him happy, and sometimes Giancarlo hated himself for not giving the boy what he wanted. Like this moment when he had to bring him back to reality.

“Braulio, I’m thirty years old today, and I already decided how I’m going to spend the rest of my life.”

“In the damn closet, right? Did you patent the thing or what?” Fury distorted Braulio’s handsome face. His olive skin-tone showed off blue eyes under thick eyebrows—the most dominant feature of his face.

Giancarlo could lose himself in those eyes for hours, but now, he evaded them and sat on one of the sofas, explaining, “If you were anybody else it should be harder to understand my position, but you know what it means to be out for me. It’s a death sentence.”

“No. It’s playing along to the prejudices and macho ways of others. You’ve accomplished so much! Even Dad praised you, he can’t believe you got the organization back into Atlantic City, and what you accomplished in Philly is awesome.”

And that, coming from Fabian Santorno, had some weight. The man was short-tempered, and the bloodiest of all the underbosses, but Ernesto Montefiore kept him around because Santorno was also the one who brought in the most cash from their long list of illicit enterprises. That was before Giancarlo got the Family back into legal gambling in the casinos, though.

Giancarlo shook his head. “My success makes me more vulnerable. Don’t you see it? If I am known as gay, those who want to take over our territory will use it as an excuse to kill me. It’s happened before.”

“That was in the past.” Braulio said.

“We live in the fucking past, Braulio. Do you remember when the associates visited your father? They behaved like we are still in the feudal era. And with my grandfather, it’s even worse.”

Braulio had to agree with that. “It’s a matter of respect.”

“There you have it.” Giancarlo sighed deeply, opening his arms wide, and told him in a kinder manner, “You know your way around here, relax, take it easy and decide where you want to move to.”

Braulio remained silent and turned his back to him again, so Giancarlo added, “You’re secure here. Nico and Luciano will be doing the rounds tonight all over the city, but the guys downstairs are looking out for you. If you need anything, call me using the land line.” When Braulio didn’t move, he insisted, “If you don’t want to call me, then call Nico.”

With those words, he walked towards the door. In an unanticipated act, Braulio turned around and ran to him, lifted himself up on tiptoe and pulled Giancarlo’s head down to kiss him briefly on the lips, begging, “Forgive me. We’ve discussed this so many times, and I still don’t get it.”

“No, you forgive me for not being what you need.” With great effort Giancarlo left Braulio there alone, but his grandparents were waiting on him for dinner. Sadly, he couldn’t take Braulio, not even as a friend, because Santorno might learn they were together and all hell would break loose.

“Please come back tonight, I’ll have a surprise for you.” Braulio said.

\*\*\*\*



## CHAPTER 2

It was supposed to be a quiet evening in the company of his grandparents. Giancarlo had good reasons to decline a huge celebration of his thirtieth birthday. He'd learned his lesson years before—when the whole family was together, they kept asking questions about when he was going to marry and have children of his own. Like they didn't reproduce fast enough, they needed his progeny running around, too. It was a theme he refused to discuss at all costs, but family is family and his were nosy by nature—shamelessly speculative, to be exact.

The more they questioned him, the more inclined he felt to stand up and shout out that he wasn't dating any woman because he liked men, and since they wouldn't approve of a same-sex marriage, he wasn't going to marry at all. He'd fantasized about their scandalized expressions after hearing such a statement, but knowing that his grandfather would be hurt rather than shocked, he avoided the temptation.

He tried to pay attention to the documentary his grandparents were watching while he sat there with them eating nuts and sipping wine. Ernesto and Carmela Montefiore had celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary a few months ago, and they were not only Giancarlo's favorite people in the world, they were also living proof that love existed. Maybe that was why he liked to spend time with them.

He could have been at any of the clubs or casinos his family owned, but when one's job is managing entertainment and gaming offerings of all types, the last place he desired to be on a birthday was a public one. Although the most important reason to spend the night with his grandparents was that there was nobody else to share the night with, or that the person he preferred was out of the question. So this was the closest to a homey kind of night he would ever have.

“Giancarlo, can you get another bottle?” His grandfather extended the empty Prosecco bottle and Giancarlo took it as his grandmother also stood.

“Let me get it, today is your birthday,” she offered.

The younger one shook his head. "I'm getting more cheesecake, too, do you any of you want some?" Instead of a birthday cake he had asked her for the biggest caramel macchiato cheesecake she could bake, and Giancarlo had no intention of sharing it with anybody else but them. His grandfather refused, but his grandma walked alongside him toward the kitchen.

"Giancarlo, it's better if we get another tray together," she suggested.

"I can do it, Nonna."

"It's my kitchen, you know."

By the time they entered her kitchen, he feared she wanted to talk to him alone. He'd been traveling all over the country in the previous weeks, so there had not been much opportunity for them to speak. Once in a while, she liked to check on her favorite grandson's love life or lack of it. Avoiding her inquisitive stare, he fetched the bottle from the wine chiller and headed back to where his grandfather was. "I'll be right back."

When he returned, his grandmother was setting a tray with plates and forks. He opened the refrigerator, and using both hands, took the cheesecake out and placed it on the table. At the same time, she put a piece of paper in front of him, a simple phone number written on it, with a New Jersey area code.

"Juliano wants you to get one of those disposable phones and call him at this number."

"You mean a prepaid phone?"

"Well, that type. Not your phone is what I understood."

"Are you sure this came from Juliano?"

"His own mother gave it to me yesterday afternoon." Her black eyes met his. "She said that you should call him at that number, but not to tell anyone else about it." Giancarlo put the piece of paper in his pants pocket while she continued talking. "Why the secrecy? You are cousins, and you were the best of friends until he got that crazy idea to become a cop. But he's still family, Giancarlo, isn't he?"

“Of course, he’s family. He’ll always be.”

He cut three pieces of cheesecake and set them on the small plates on the tray. Even if his grandfather said he didn’t want any, he might change his mind when he saw the dessert. If not, Giancarlo would eat the extra piece.

She insisted, “I still don’t understand why Juliano chose that way to earn a living when he could have been your right hand. It’s a good thing his father is long gone, so he couldn’t see what Juliano is today.”

Giancarlo put the rest of the cheesecake back into the refrigerator. There were things she would never understand, and he hated that Juliano got her involved, but since he had, there must be a good reason for it. “Nonna, don’t worry about it, everything will be all right.”

“His mother said that he begs you not to tell anything to Ernesto or Claudio about him getting in touch with you. I don’t mind hiding this from Claudio, but Ernesto is another matter.”

“Did you tell Nonno?”

She shook her head. “I trust that you will tell him, Giancarlo.”

“Thanks, Nonna. Listen, Juliano doesn’t want Nonno to know yet, but as soon as I know the details I’ll explain everything. Got it?”

She nodded. “Yes, but I don’t like to keep secrets from him.”

He leaned forward, putting an arm around her shoulders, and kissed her on the temple. “Me neither. I think that Juliano doesn’t want to worry him, that’s why he wants to talk to me first.”

She raised her head and looked him in the eyes, he tried to explain what he thought could be going on, so she didn’t feel like betraying her husband’s trust. “Juliano is not a cop, he’s an FBI agent. A Fed. And that has been good for us, because he alerted us to danger in the past. There might be something threatening us again, and thanks to Juliano, we will catch it in time.”

“Fine, I’ll leave it up to you because you know what to do.”

“Thanks for your trust.” Giancarlo gave her one of his smiles that he knew no female was able to resist. “Who knows? Maybe he wants to give me a birthday present.”

She smiled too, but the expression didn’t reach her eyes. “I hope so, too.”

They were in the middle of the hall when Giancarlo’s phone rang. He had left it on the couch next to his grandfather, so when they were entering the living room his grandfather looked at the screen and asked, “It’s Claudio— do you want me to get it?”

“Yes, please.” Giancarlo had his hands full with the tray, and there was no reason for Claudio to call at that hour unless something important happened, or the man wanted to get Giancarlo out of the house for personal motives. He knew that asking his grandfather to answer was also risking the old man learning something he shouldn’t if Claudio was up to something wicked tonight, but refusing would have looked weird. Giancarlo silently prayed that it was business as usual while he placed the tray on the coffee table.

His grandfather explained, “Giancarlo is next to me, but busy, so this better be good, Claudio.”

Giancarlo observed how his grandfather listened and frowned with displeasure before saying. “No, no. Wait a second.” The kindly old patrician features switched to don mode in an instant. “Giancarlo will be on his way as soon as possible, and Claudio, pay attention to my words, let Giancarlo handle this matter, are we clear?” He ended the call and handed the phone to Giancarlo.

“What is going on?”

“They got the person who’s vandalizing the properties. It’s Gazzara’s son, no doubt about it.” He raised his eyes until they met Giancarlo’s. “Claudio wants to kill him and be done with it.”

In that moment his grandmother picked up the tray and walked out of the room saying, “I better put this back in the fridge until your return.”

Neither of them said anything else until she was gone. They both knew she hated to hear details of the family business when harm to someone was part of it. Giancarlo took his holster from the closet at the far end of the room and checked his handgun, then he stood in front of his grandfather as he adjusted the straps, explaining, “Claudio has been after him for months now. The damage has been thousands of dollars, but the worst is the irreparable harm to our reputation.”

“What do you mean?”

“Rodrigo Gazzara is also the person who has been stamping the Montefiore coat of arms on every property that we were not supposed to own. All those articles in the press about our association with the Condottieri family are a direct result of his graffiti.”

Giancarlo put on his leather jacket, waiting for his grandfather’s opinion on the matter. He didn’t want the boy dead either, he’d met him years ago while his father was still one of his grandfather’s underbosses. Before Gazzara ended up in jail. The older man handed his grandson a fresh glass of wine and said, “If that boy gets killed, I’ll end the rest of my days in prison, and you know it. Giancarlo, remember that we have a deal with Gazzara to protect his family.”

Yes, they did. In the past decades, most hit men who got caught betrayed their bosses, cooperating with the federal government and going into the Witness Protection Program to avoid prison. Because of that, whole crime families had gone down.

In Mario Gazzara’s case, it could have been Ernesto Montefiore going down. And not only him, but the whole Condottieri family—which included the Santorno, the Gazzara, the Albano, and the Montefiore families as well. The Condottieris distinguished themselves from other families in La Cosa Nostra because they were blood relatives from those four families only. This blood relation was supposed to foment loyalty, and somehow it had worked up until now. Mario Gazzara didn’t cooperate with the authorities, and received two consecutive life sentences in prison.

Giancarlo finished his wine and asked, “So what do you want me to do?”

“If Gazzara cooperates with the Feds he still can bury us with his testimony.”

“Okay, I got it. Having his son killed would turn him into a rat. Don’t worry, I’ll keep the kid alive no matter what.” With those words Giancarlo walked out of the house, thinking he’d better rush before Claudio lost his patience.

Once outside, he saw Nico getting out of one of the company’s cars and walking toward the house. “Boss, there is a situation going on in Philly.”

“So I heard. Thanks for telling me.”

It was good to know that even if Claudio didn’t call, his men would have told him of the situation. Giancarlo passed by him toward the car and Nico rushed to open the door for him. They immediately headed into the city.

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## CHAPTER 3

He asked Luciano to drop him off with Nico at the casino, and walked toward the basement, where he assumed Claudio was holding Rodrigo. Once he entered the hall where the offices were, he slowed down, trying to come up with a way to approach Claudio without taking his authority from him in front of everyone. Yes, his grandfather gave clear orders, but now it was up to Giancarlo to deal with the issue successfully, without insulting the man who meant so much to him, and whose true relationship with Giancarlo his family ignored.

His relationship with Claudio was very complex. While he had picked Nico and Luciano to form his crew, it had been his own grandfather who appointed Claudio Albano to be his right hand, and to show Giancarlo the ropes of their true family business. Soon, Giancarlo learned that Claudio's responsibilities were more than his simple well-being. The man wanted Giancarlo to succeed because that was the only way Claudio would achieve his goals, too. Only two years older than Giancarlo, sometimes it seemed as if Claudio were twenty years his senior, hence Giancarlo always followed his advice—from essential things like how to dress, to sex.

This last part was the ultimate proof of how far Claudio would go to ensure nothing stood in the way of their success. Years ago, when Giancarlo first attempted flirting with a guy at the gym, and went as far as getting a date, Claudio had said nothing, but insisted on driving Giancarlo to the place where he would meet the young man. Instead, Claudio drove Giancarlo into a motel where he'd had a room ready.

Recalling the incident, Giancarlo smirked, because yes, it was going to be a long night trying to persuade Claudio to not kill Rodrigo.

That other night, long gone in the past, Giancarlo had entered the motel room, and whirled when he heard Claudio closing the door behind him.

“What's this? We're going to be late.” It was all he could say while he watched Claudio silently removing his clothes until he was standing nude in front of him. For a few seconds all they did was to stare at one another. Then,

slowly, Giancarlo had looked up and down the beautiful body he'd admired for some time. He knew the instant Claudio bound him with those invisible bonds of his, because with a curt nod he had moved to pull something from a bag.

"I have condoms and lube, and a gay sex manual. Since neither of us has ever done this before, it will be something we learn together, like other things."

Giancarlo had been in awe. "Are you serious? What about my date?"

"Forget about him. I look better than him and I know you like me. Yes, I've noticed the way you look at me when you think I'm not aware of it."

"I didn't know you were..." Giancarlo had broken off the comment, but continued to look him in the eyes.

"I am not, but I'm doing this for you," Claudio had answered, raising a hand and pulling Giancarlo down to his face, their breath mingling, "I'm doing it also for me. I won't let you get killed over this sexual kink of yours, and lose everything I worked so hard for all these years. Go ahead, touch, do whatever you want with my body."

Giancarlo hesitated a few seconds, but gave in because he wanted him. However, the moment he leant forward to kiss him, Claudio skipped his mouth and said, "Except kissing. We're having sex, this is not a romance, and never will be."

Giancarlo had his doubts. He knew that Claudio's loyalty was real, but the motives to become his lover were not. Still, he accepted what was offered. And Claudio had done it in the same way he did everything else, efficiently. He had taken Giancarlo's cock up his ass in the same way he would have taken a bullet for him.

Somewhere along the way, Claudio must have liked it, because his body showed its enthusiasm for the act. As for Giancarlo, he had fallen in love with Claudio, his first lover, and assumed that even if they could never go public with their affair, it could last years. Then Claudio met his wife and decided he wanted to be married and have kids. Giancarlo faked that it didn't hurt, like he



had done with many other things, but it had hurt like hell. It still hurt every time he noticed that ring on Claudio's finger and remembered what it meant. Through the years they came to an agreement—when Claudio could, when Claudio had time, they had sex. Sex and nothing more.

“Giancarlo, what are you doing standing out there? I got worried that something happened to you.”

Claudio's remarks pulled him from his memories into the present. Giancarlo focused on him and couldn't believe his eyes. He'd known the man for years, but had never seen him so distraught. Claudio had always taken great care of his appearance, his custom-made clothes were a priority. Even Giancarlo let him pick out his own clothes, because Claudio knew more about fashion than him. So, Claudio's current disheveled look—wrinkled button-down shirt with sleeves rolled to the elbow and missing tie—surprised him.

“Can we have a word?” Without waiting for him, Giancarlo entered the office, and Claudio closed the door after following him inside. “Why didn't you call me as soon as you had Rodrigo?”

“Because I was busy with the rest of his gang.”

“What did you do with them?”

“I handed them over to the police. They were nothing but thieves and addicts—they let Rodrigo manipulate them—but knew nothing about this.” He pointed to a folder filled with accounts of the amount of money that Rodrigo's vandalism had cost them over the years.

Giancarlo glanced at the numbers on the paper, he'd seen them before. “If you kill him, who is going to pay for this?”

Claudio shrugged. “Nobody would, anyway. Even if I sell him by the piece he's not worth this much. Killing him will bring me some peace of mind, and we won't be dealing with his surprise attacks anymore.”

Giancarlo knew that regardless of that speech Claudio wasn't going to kill anybody tonight, otherwise Rodrigo would be already dead. “What is really going on, Claudio?” When there was no answer, he grabbed him by the

shoulders. After breathing deep Claudio said, “It’s that boy. Well, he’s not a boy anymore, he’s a man, the most annoying one you can imagine. He drives me crazy!”

“That I can see. You really unnerved Nonno, he’s sure you want to kill Rodrigo.”

“When I called you I was so mad, I might have done it. But I don’t really want to kill him.”

Giancarlo let him go. “I believe you, but the next time, insist on talking to me, even if Nonno answers the phone.”

“I’m sorry, I just needed to talk to someone who could stop me from doing something I would later regret.”

“What is it about Rodrigo that bothers you so much?”

“He called me names—like *faggot* and *bitch*.”

“Those are common insults. There is no way he knows...”

Claudio interrupted him. “I’m not gay, you know that. What happened between us was because of the circumstances.” As if he suddenly realized that what he was about to say was silly, he concluded by admitting the truth. “The worst of all is that when he calls me those names, I still feel something I shouldn’t feel.”

“I understand, it happens to me often.”

Claudio shook his head, “No, you don’t get it. It’s this need—it’s so wrong.”

He was an attractive man, with his carefully cut blond hair, blue eyes, and outstanding classical features. Giancarlo placed his hands on either side of Claudio’s head, looking into his eyes. “I thought this day would never come, at least not like this. You feel an attraction for another man besides me, that’s all. Yes, look at me, that’s normal.”

“No.” Claudio closed his eyes and shook his head.

Deep inside, Giancarlo enjoyed Claudio's dilemma, because it was about time the other accepted his reality. "Listen, I know it's disturbing. When it was only me, you could say that it was because you were helping me to channel my sexuality in a way that didn't harm our lives. Yes, those were *your* words. This, my friend, is the truth, and you'd better learn to live with it. The good news is you don't have to have sex with every guy you find hot."

"It can't be." Claudio shook his head again.

"In spite of all Rodrigo has done, it's not his fault he gets you horny. So let's go and resolve this matter."

"Are you going to forgive him?" Claudio stood in front of him.

"We don't have a choice, because we can't take the risk of getting his father mad at us."

"What about handing him to the police rather than taking justice into our own hands?"

Leaning against the desk, Giancarlo answered, "Too risky. The last thing we want is publicity. It's one thing to catch the gang that was vandalizing our customers, and another thing to let the press make the connection between the gang's leader and Mario Gazzara. It cost us a fortune getting them to forget Gazzara's partnership with Nonno."

"Yeah, right. It would start the whole thing all over again."

"Don't worry, Rodrigo won't simply walk away. I'm thinking I can use him somehow, keep him under control, and have him pay some of his debt to us at the same time."

Claudio stared at him with wide eyes, and Giancarlo quickly added, "Not in that way."

Calmer now, Claudio said, "Wait until you see him again before you decide."

"I don't even remember how he looked before," Giancarlo admitted.

“Of course, because even back then you only had eyes for Braulio. Speaking of whom, I hope you know the risk you’re taking by spending time with Santorno’s son.”

Giancarlo’s fingers combed his short black hair and he said, “I’m getting a headache, Claudio. Let’s be done with this.”

“You’re too tense, you need to get laid.” That was Claudio’s remedy for everything.

Knowing it would bother him, Giancarlo answered, “I know, I’m spending tomorrow night at Angelo’s place.”

Angelo Messina managed what they called the Adult Business Division, essentially four successful gentlemen’s clubs and a very discreet—and successful—escort service. Altogether, they brought in as much cash as one of the smaller casinos. All thanks to Angelo’s skills in entertaining the select clientele of all five enterprises.

The comment worked. Claudio pursed his lips. “I had other plans for us tomorrow night, Giancarlo.”

Feeling more relaxed, Giancarlo teased him. “Then you need to be more specific, and rather than saying I need to get laid, you should have said that you need to get fucked. But with enough lead time, because like I said, I have plans.”

For a few seconds Claudio seemed to consider the issue before he asked, “Are you having another jealousy attack?”

Giancarlo faked innocence. “Of course not. I simply assumed you were going to spend the weekend with your wife and kids, so I told Angelo to expect me.”

“So you guys are becoming an item?”

“I thought Angelo got your seal of approval, Mr. Albano.”

“For occasional sex, yes. I thought it was going to be only during those times you were desperate and I wasn’t available.”

Giancarlo wanted to remind him that lately he'd been very busy, but instead he said, "I didn't get the memo."

"So you like him." Claudio's eyes focused on the closed door in front of them, but Giancarlo could feel the bitterness behind the affirmation, and he wished that there was more to his liaison with Angelo, so his next words were more enthusiastic.

"Claudio, the guy is a professional at what he does. You know what, you should try him one of these days."

"Me? No, thank you, very much." This time he ventured to glance at Giancarlo briefly. "You're not falling in love with him, are you?"

"The closest Angelo and I could ever be is friends-with-benefits."

"Employee with benefits, because once again you're forgetting who is the boss." Claudio remarked.

"No, let's say I like to keep my employees comfortable because it promotes loyalty. You should know that as well."

"I'm not your employee, I'm your associate. There is a difference, and you know it."

"Sure, how could I forget that?" Giancarlo opened the door and held it for him.

Anybody else would have taken his words at face value, but Claudio knew him well, too damn well. He sighed before saying, "Giancarlo, when are you going to accept that this is the way our lives are? I'll always be here for you, anything you need, but I have to take care of my family too."

They started to walk down the hall and Giancarlo wished to tell Claudio the truth about his non-existent relationship with Angelo, but tonight, he wanted to get back at Claudio for all those years he suffered because of him.

Giancarlo ignored that last comment, because they had arrived at the room where Rodrigo was held.

## CHAPTER 4

The pain was something Rodrigo could endure—he had to—because this was only the beginning. Claudio Albano’s sadistic side had awoken, and he might torture him before he was killed. Rodrigo had finally succeeded in getting the Condottieri out of their freaking comfort zone. While his father rotted in prison, the bastards had become more successful than ever, and Rodrigo simply couldn’t let that happen. It might cost him his life, but after that, he was sure his father would put them where they belonged. Damn code of silence! For all he knew they didn’t deserve to be free while his father wasn’t and Rodrigo was alone on the streets.

His fists clenched in the plastic ties used as shackles—no way he could break free from those. Damn it. He heard voices outside and Claudio walked out, leaving his goons to look after him. Rodrigo resisted the impulse to provoke them further. There was no fun in poking them; Claudio was his target, and seeing his stoic image shattered was almost worth dying over. Lately, life didn’t offer many challenges—he had done everything he pleased in the last seven years, and nothing excited him at all.

The idea of dying without saying good-bye to his mother crossed his mind, but he cast it aside. His mother had been afraid of him since the day he nearly killed her new husband. The fear in her eyes and the way she had begged for the guy’s life had haunted him for days. She asked him to leave and never come back. He still missed her sometimes, but the part that hurt most was being away from his siblings.

The last time Rodrigo called home, they had been cold, and the youngest one had said that their mother didn’t want them near Rodrigo because he was like his father. So nobody but his father would miss him if he died tonight. He regretted not visiting the old man the previous week, but since they moved him out of the state, it had become harder to go see him. And there was no way Rodrigo could have guessed that son of a bitch of Claudio would catch him today.

The door opened and two other men entered with Claudio. Both looked familiar, but it took him a while to place them. One was about thirty, don't-mess-with-me type of big, and at least six and a half feet tall. He was dressed casually in jeans and a leather jacket, but something in his handsome face spoke of authority. The other one, in a dark suit, was maybe twenty, the same age as Rodrigo.

Giancarlo Montefiore. Of course, it must be him. And the younger guy was Nico; Rodrigo used to play with him as a child. Giancarlo's features were rugged and elegant at the same time, something Rodrigo never noticed before, maybe because when they met in the past, he wasn't into checking out guys yet.

Claudio spoke first, as if he were the ambassador or something. "Mr. Montefiore wants to talk to you, Rodrigo."

"Good evening, Rodrigo. It's been a long time since we saw each other." The moment Giancarlo spoke, his soft but firm commanding voice settled Rodrigo and soothed him like a warm hug. It felt wrong given the circumstances, but the minute their eyes met, Rodrigo also felt safe. He distracted himself from the younger Montefiore's charm by recalling all the hardship he'd endured when they betrayed his father. His rage came back like magic.

Regardless of his painfully split lips, Rodrigo managed a twisted smirk to go with the cynical comments. "What an honor! The motherfucking boss came to see me. Did you get bored of fucking your blond bitch and want variety?"

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Before Giancarlo had a chance to understand Rodrigo's words, Claudio slapped the younger man again. He wondered how much the boy really knew, or if he was fishing for information simply to offend. Sadly, Rodrigo had hit the nail on the head, because if there was anything Claudio hated, it was being called a faggot.

Rodrigo sat tied into one of the office chairs, his beautiful face beaten. He spat blood, looking furious at Claudio. “Remember that whatever you do to me, my father will do to you ten times over.”

Claudio laughed, a short and disturbing noise in the small room. “Really? How will he get his hands on me? Last thing I heard, your father is in a maximum security prison.”

Even before Rodrigo replied to Claudio’s mocking remarks, Giancarlo knew the answer. All the same, Rodrigo’s menace distressed him. “He will be out in no time, as soon as he learns I’m dead. He’ll go to the feds to tell them everything he knows. Nothing will stop him.”

Claudio clenched his fist at his sides. “It’s too late for that. It’s the word of a convicted felon against ours.”

Rodrigo’s surprise seemed genuine. “Who said it was only words? Dad has evidence, lots of it, and murder doesn’t have a statute of limitations.”

Giancarlo moved closer to the pair and said, “Enough insults and threats for today. Rodrigo, stop being a hothead.” He pulled up a chair and sat next to Rodrigo. “We need to discuss the mess you’ve made with your life since your father went away.”

The look he got from both of them clearly said the other two didn’t want to discuss anything, and Rodrigo seemed willing to die in order to achieve his revenge. What, exactly, was the boy so mad about?

Putting a hand on Claudio’s shoulder, Giancarlo said, “It’s better if you go home, I’ll take care of this.”

All he got was a warning look before Claudio left the room, but his soldiers stayed outside the door. Giancarlo opened the door and asked them to release Rodrigo. They were shocked, and one of them even said, “With all due respect, boss. This guy is not what he looks like, he’s dangerous. It took two of us to bring him down.”

Giancarlo appreciated their concern, but he knew that he could deal with Rodrigo. So he smiled and said, “It’s okay. I’m equal to at least two of you,



Nico is another, and this one amounts to a dozen.” He patted the gun at his side. Without another word, one of the guys entered the room and cut whatever was keeping Rodrigo tied.

Next Giancarlo told the guys, “Please be sure Claudio makes it home safe.”

They left with a, “Yes, sir,” and Nico asked, “Do you prefer to speak with him in private? If so, I’ll be outside.”

Giancarlo nodded. “Please.”

After his cousin left the room, he stared at Rodrigo, who hadn’t moved at all after being freed, not even to massage his hands. He glared back at Giancarlo with controlled rage. Giancarlo asked, “Are you hurt? Do you think you need a doctor?”

Rodrigo simply kept looking at him, as if he expected to be attacked again and were ready to defend himself.

After a few seconds Giancarlo broke the glaring match, and went over to pull a couple of water bottles from a small fridge behind the desk. He handed one to Rodrigo, who turned his face away and didn’t make any effort to take the water from Giancarlo’s hand.

Giancarlo placed the bottle on the nearby desk. After drinking half of his own bottle, he said, “You were very talkative with Claudio, why so shy with me?”

The boy continued to ignore him, so Giancarlo teased him. “Oh, I see, you prefer them blond. Should I call Claudio back? He will inspire you to talk for sure.”

That got Rodrigo’s attention. “Go fuck yourself.”

“Watch your mouth, Rodrigo. I’m not Claudio, and if you get me upset you’ll regret it.”

“What the hell do you want from me? If you are going to kill me, just fucking do it.”

“Are you scared? Do you think that’s why I’m here?”

“I know what you guys do with problems like me. I won’t see a new day.”

Giancarlo sat again, in the chair next to Rodrigo’s, and said, “Rodrigo, calm down. I’m your friend and I’m here to help.” He tried to find the right words to explain his presence and what he planned to do with him.

Before Giancarlo could say anything else, Rodrigo exploded. “That’s bullshit. You betrayed my father, fucking traitor!”

That was it. If he insisted on acting like a spoiled brat, he was going to be treated as one.

Using one hand, Giancarlo jerked Rodrigo out of the chair and across his lap. Rodrigo instinctively balanced his body by extending his hands to touch the floor. “What the fuck do you think you’re doing, you son of a bitch?” His voice sounded truly scared this time.

Giancarlo smiled; two could play this game. The answer Rodrigo got was one of Giancarlo’s hands at the top of his shoulders, keeping him in place, while the other hand pulled down his faded jeans to expose his backside. Giancarlo heard Rodrigo’s gasp, and held in his own.

The brat didn’t wear any underwear, but before any sensual thought could cross his mind, Giancarlo brought his hand down and began spanking him as hard and as fast as he could. He could hear Rodrigo’s grunts, and he obviously was trying to avoid screaming out of pride.

But suddenly, the grunts became moans, and Rodrigo sought his hand’s contact, even rubbing his ass against it. In one of those attempts, Giancarlo’s hand slipped between Rodrigo’s ass cheeks and the impulse to explore further crossed his mind. Rodrigo had a nicely sculpted ass.

The hardness rubbing against his legs clearly was a growing erection. Damn it! Claudio had been right, the boy was naughty as hell. Giancarlo spanked him harder, and the response was more moaning, and soon the next erection was his own. He stopped and pushed Rodrigo off his lap, onto his feet, only to find himself face to face with Rodrigo’s cock. He was hard.

Giancarlo raised his eyes until he met Rodrigo's dark ones, and stood without breaking the eye contact. He'd never been good at reading people, but his rude touch had worked like magic. The rage in the young man face was gone, replaced by expectancy and vulnerability. He deserved that spanking, but somehow Giancarlo felt bad looking at his hurt face. It reminded him of Braulio, and no, he didn't want Rodrigo beaten any more than he would want Braulio to be hurt by anyone.

"God, Rodrigo. What am I going to do with you?"

"You can start by finishing what you started."

When Giancarlo didn't get it right away, the boy asked, "Where do you want me? Bent over the desk?"

"Why would I—" Giancarlo shook his head in awe, and in case he had any doubts Rodrigo added, "I have condoms."

Giancarlo sat in the chair one more time, and resisted the impulse to bury his head in his hands out of desperation. Instead he asked, "What the hell happened to you after Mario went to jail?"

The fury came back to Rodrigo's expression. "Leave my dad out this. My dad liked you, you were his friend. He trusted in you and you did nothing to help him."

"We did help him. Who do you think paid those lawyers that prevented him from getting the death penalty? And who has been supporting your family to this day? Didn't your mother tell you? Why have you been doing all these things that harm the family?"

Rodrigo frowned and something changed in his demeanor. "Because my dad is alone, paying for something you all were involved in a way or another."

"Rodrigo, he knew the risks in the same way we all know them. But like you said, let's leave your father out of this."

Rodrigo nodded in agreement, and after thinking for a few seconds, said, "I'm not stupid. If you're not going to kill me it's because you're going to

make me your plaything. And I know better than to resist. Besides, my body likes you.”

He held Giancarlo’s gaze. Again, Giancarlo gave up and moved on. “Where do you live?”

“Here and there.”

“Stop playing games.”

“It’s the truth. I don’t have a permanent place. The last one I crashed in, I guess I shouldn’t go back, because if I do I might kill the owner.”

“And why is that?”

“Someone sold me out to Claudio. And I suspect it was one of my roommates. I deserved it, you know, I should have known better than hanging with folks that have a three-hundred-dollar-a-day drug habit.”

Deciding he had enough, Giancarlo explained, “Here is the deal. You’ll stay with me until I can find you a proper place to live and a job.”

“And why should I do that? Or better, why would you be so generous, when your bitch wanted me dead?”

“Among other things because you truly offended Claudio Albano tonight. And he is vindictive, but if you’re with me, he will control himself.”

“Really? Now that I’m not tied to a chair, I’m dangerous too.”

“I prefer if you don’t take the risk. Who do you think replaced your father as our problem solver?”

“That bitch is a hit man?”

“Rodrigo, stop calling him that. If you’re going to be close to me, you better get on good terms with Claudio.”

“Why? Because he is closest to you? Listen, I love threesomes, but I’d rather cut my dick off than fuck that whore.”

“Go to the bathroom and clean yourself up, I have a couple of calls to make before we leave.”

After Rodrigo left, Giancarlo sent a text before dialing his grandfather's number. "Nonno, I have everything under control."

His grandfather sounded relieved. "Thank God, Giancarlo. Listen, I was thinking that maybe you can do something for that boy. He might be useful, you know. We should have tried to approach him before."

"I was thinking the same thing," Giancarlo said. "The problem is under control, but the kid is badly beaten up, I don't think he needs a doctor, but I'm going to take him to see Palmeari, just in case. And later I'll keep an eye on him."

"So, you're not coming back home?"

"No tonight. I want to keep him under observation, so we'll be staying at my condo."

"Good. Thanks, Giancarlo. I'll see you tomorrow."

"Nonno... please tell Nonna that nobody died tonight."

"Sure, I will."

Giancarlo felt grateful for still having his grandparents with him, he didn't know what he would do once they were gone. He ended the call with a smile and turned around. His gaze met Rodrigo's, who apparently had returned from the bathroom while he was on the phone, his expression hard to decipher when he asked? "So, we're sleeping together tonight. Aren't you afraid that I will find something to turn it into a weapon?"

"It's not in your best interest to do such a foolish thing." Giancarlo disregarded both Rodrigo's eavesdropping and the sexual innuendo.

"And why not? Do you think I'm too weak to attack you?" Slowly Rodrigo sat down on the same chair he'd been tied into before.

"No. What you are is really lonely. I saw your expression when I finished talking to my grandfather. Don't bother denying it. You miss your family, the way it was before your whole world crashed."

“Stop psychoanalyzing me.” Rodrigo stood and Giancarlo stepped closer to him.

“Listen, I can’t give you back what you lost, because I didn’t take it from you in the first place, and even if I wanted to, there’s no way I could.” Giancarlo suppressed a grin, noticing he had the Rodrigo’s attention. “What I can offer is another chance to do things better, and my friendship.”

Rodrigo said, “You know nothing about me and would *never* understand my reasons.” Looking him up and down he added, “I’m only interested in your friendship if it includes benefits.”

“Benefits?”

“Friend with benefits, fuck buddies, or whatever you want to call it.” Impatient, Rodrigo waved a hand. “Even you should know what that means.”

Of course Giancarlo knew. He couldn’t even reject the notion, because his only close friends were exactly that. If anybody could see behind closed doors, that would be the definition of his friendship with Claudio and Braulio, even if he didn’t have intercourse with the younger one.

“So you don’t think there could be friendship only between two people.”

“Yeah, there are cases, but I’m not interested.” Rodrigo attempted a silly smile with his hurt lips, but it ended being an I-can’t-believe-I’m-stuck-with-the-likes-of-you expression. They looked at each other for a few seconds and Giancarlo changed the subject.

“Let’s go, I have a doctor waiting to see you.”

“Are we going to the ER?”

“No, I have a doctor who works for us, who has a clinic for this type of incident.”

“I see, the guy who puts you guys back together after a shootout.”

Giancarlo said nothing else, and started to walk away with Rodrigo on his tail.

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## CHAPTER 5

When they arrived at Dr. Palmeari's clinic, Giancarlo thanked the doctor and his staff for coming to open the facility that late. These types of things, where they needed a private doctor late at night did not happen that often anymore. A nurse took Rodrigo away, and Giancarlo asked the doctor, "Can you check him out, I mean, can you run a blood test on him?"

The doctor squinched his eyes at him. "Do you want me to do STD testing on him?"

"And drugs too, please." When Dr. Palmeari frowned at him, Giancarlo added, "I'm a little concerned because he's been living on the streets."

"It doesn't look like that, trust me. I see the homeless at the hospital all the time. But I'll include those tests with the others."

"Thanks."

While they checked Rodrigo over, Giancarlo walked around the empty clinic lobby and hallways. He sat at the waiting area and took out his prepaid phone to call his cousin Juliano. The phone was answered on the third ring. "Why did it take you this long to call me?"

"Nonna just told me. Why did you get her involved, eh?"

"I also got Mom into it. Besides, she's my Nonna, too. Listen, you should be grateful instead of scolding me, you know?"

"What is it?"

"I have a few topics to discuss with you, but I won't be able to meet with you until next month. We can't talk about this sort of thing on the phone, but there is a matter that can't wait."

"Go ahead. I think this type of phone gives us some privacy."

"I learned that your young friend is in danger."

"You mean... how the hell did you know?"

“That he’s in danger, or about you and him?” Juliano sounded as cocky as usual.

“You and your undercovers. I should check under the bed before going to sleep in case one is hiding there.”

“In your case, I suggest you check on it too, because there’s a chance you will end up in bed with one of my men one of these days. The way I see it, you are undercover, too, ’cause from your position you can protect your fellow gay folks. And here I am, helping out too, in the name of the blood ties we share.”

“You are a little crazy, Juliano.”

“So, knowing that he’s in danger doesn’t bother you?”

“Of course. Thanks for the tip. But right now he’s in a secure location, and he’s not going back home. And anyway, he’s been in danger since I met him.”

“Well, this is different. His father put out a contract on him.”

Giancarlo breathed deeply and still couldn’t find words to express his consternation.

“Hey! Are you still there?”

“Sure. I can’t believe he’s so cruel. He’s maltreated him all his life, and now he’s going to have him killed?”

“Well, my source said that he told someone that he prefers a dead son to a faggot in the family.”

“There has to be a way to stop him. Can you do anything?”

“No, all this is off the record. Until they make an attempt on his life there is little we can do.”

“I can’t believe this is happening and there is nothing you can do.”

Juliano explained, “We always say no names, but what the heck. I need you to understand the risk you’re taking protecting him.” When Giancarlo didn’t add anything, Juliano continued, “It’s not an open contract for anybody to execute. Santorno sent for Daniel Bucciarelli, who should arrive any day.



However, Santorno won't tell him who the target is until they're face to face. That's gives you time to move the kid to a secure location."

"Oh, Jesus. A hit man—why?"

"I guess it's easier if someone else does it, fast and painless. It's his son after all."

There was a silence that again Julianio broke. "Cousin, I'm sorry about the boy."

"Don't be, he's not going to die. But get ready, because I might have a sacrifice for you."

"Maybe more than one, if it is what I supposed."

"Your job is keeping them away from the Witness Protection Program, are we clear?"

"Sure."

"I've got to go, cousin. Thanks again. I owe you one."

Giancarlo loved Braulio as he had never loved anyone. So much so, he was willing to set Braulio free to live the type of life he dreamed.

Long after he ended the call, he sat without moving. What was he going to do to protect Braulio while he delivered Santorno senior to the Feds? Yes, Santorno was going to be the sacrifice he promised Julianio, because that was the only chance he had. Killing Santorno could start a war, and he wasn't going to make that mistake. The problem was the meantime.

All his men were known to Santorno, and openly protecting his son was almost as risky as killing him. Giancarlo used his smartphone to log into the security cameras at the casino and search for the video of Rodrigo's capture. It looked like something out of a movie, not only did the boy know how to fight, it truly took two of the guys to take him down. Maybe Gazzara had been training him. There were rumors that he had been training a replacement, who better than his own son? Giancarlo closed the app with the video access, and breathed deeply.

The squeak of rubber-soled sneakers resonated in the empty clinic hallway, and a slender, tall figure came walking toward him. Rodrigo's smile was a total surprise. "I'm done. The doc said I'd live to fight another battle. What's next?"

Both of his hands were splinted. "What happened to your hands? And why didn't you say anything before?"

Rodrigo stood in front of him with a bored expression. "Those dudes that protect your bitch are tough-skinned. And why should I tell you anything—you're not a doctor."

"How long do you have to have those on?"

Rodrigo raised his left hand. "This one, a couple of days, and I can take it off if I need to." He sighed. "But this one, I have to wear for at least a week, and it can't get wet." That was his right hand. He grinned and added, "I can hold my dick to pee with my left, but jerking off doesn't work right. I know because I tried. I'm going to miss my right hand a lot."

Giancarlo looked him up and down in shock. "Do you ever think or talk about anything else?"

"There is nothing more interesting that I know of. Do you have any suggestions?"

God, he was going to need patience with this one. "What else did the doctor say?"

"I got probed everywhere, except where I would have liked it." The smile on Rodrigo's face suggested the same place Giancarlo thought of. Well, two could play that game, and he had to find a way to get Rodrigo on his side.

"No prostate massage? No wonder you looked so disappointed." Giancarlo started walking.

Rodrigo followed him. "No, I'm not, because I'm going to get it in a better way."

"What do you mean?" Giancarlo kept going toward the exit.

“I had to sign those forms for the blood work you requested. A total waste because I’m clean, you could have asked me. Of course, you don’t have to trust me. I wouldn’t trust myself.”

Damn! That Dr. Palmeari needed to learn who was the boss. Giancarlo made a mental note to remember this indiscretion the next time they discussed the clinic’s budget.

He made an effort not to halt his steps. “It was just a preventative measure, Rodrigo. It will expedite your work placement.”

“Really? Am I going to be working at a brothel?”

This time, he stopped and the boy almost crashed against him. “Rodrigo, don’t push me anymore tonight because I have more important things to worry about right now.”

“Well, I think you should know that I’m not going bareback.”

“Me neither.” Giancarlo regretted those words the minute he saw the younger one’s grin.

Nico muttered an “ouch!” when he saw Rodrigo, but as soon as he looked at Giancarlo’s expression he limited himself to opening the door for them, and went to wait for orders in the front seat. *That* was the type of discipline Rodrigo needed to learn, Giancarlo told himself before asking Luciano to take them to his apartment.

Then Braulio came back to his mind, and he knew who would protect him better. Even if he wasn’t sure yet how far he could trust Rodrigo, he was the best option. A few people remembered him in their circle, and being closer in age to Braulio, nobody would find them hanging out together unusual, and in the same way, nobody would link Rodrigo to the Montefiore crew. But the most important part was that Rodrigo knew how to defend himself.

The fact that Rodrigo couldn’t fight or hold a weapon at the moment crossed Giancarlo’s mind, but he could get to know him better during the boy’s recovery. He could assign Rodrigo to protect Braulio from Santorno and

any assassins sent his way. But who was going to protect Braulio from Rodrigo? There was no doubt that Rodrigo liked sex, and liked men.

Giancarlo needed to see them interacting before he would know if he could trust his innocent friend to Rodrigo. Maybe Nico would do a better job. Nah, nobody else would do. Giancarlo felt jealous of imagining anyone close to Braulio. He had been willing to let Braulio find the love of his life, but putting someone next to him that would simply use him and leave him heartbroken—no, never that. He made up his mind and informed Rodrigo, “You’ll be staying with me tonight.”

“Where?”

“At my place. I have an apartment at Center City.”

“Yeah, I remember your conversation with your grandfather. And after that, what’s next?”

“I already have a job for you. I’ll know for sure tomorrow morning.”

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It was almost two in the morning by the time they arrived at Giancarlo’s apartment. He asked Rodrigo not to make any noise, and for once he obeyed, maybe because he was exhausted too. The living room of Giancarlo’s apartment looked cozy, three couches against each of the walls, with side tables and lamps, expensive fine art on the walls and a coffee table in the middle. At one end, a huge flat screen TV, and at the other end, panoramic windows showcasing the Philadelphia skyline.

Giancarlo checked the guest room, and when he saw it empty with the bed made up, he asked Rodrigo to wait right there. He rushed to his own room, and opening the door confirmed that Braulio slept in his bed. For once, this was a good thing. He told Rodrigo to stay in the guest room and then went back to his bedroom to lay down next to Braulio. They’d slept together before, but Giancarlo had done his best to keep the sexual play limited to mutual jerk offs and blowjobs. And kisses. They could kiss for hours. For Giancarlo knew that if he fucked Braulio, he would never let him go to live his dream gay life.

As if they slept together every night, when Braulio felt Giancarlo's body on the bed he snuggled against him. He felt warm and welcoming. "You came back."

"Uh-huh. A friend of mine had a problem and needed a place to stay. So I brought him here." Giancarlo spooned Braulio's body.

"But what if he sees me?"

"It's fine. He's going to work for me, and you already know him."

"Do I?"

"He is Mario Gazzara's son."

"Sure, I remember him. He's a bully."

"Don't worry, I won't let you alone with him until I know he won't hurt you. Go back to sleep, we'll talk in the morning."

Giancarlo started dozing when a beeping sound announced he had gotten a text message. It was from Dr. Palmeari, and it simply read, *the boy is totally clean.*

Giancarlo put the phone down on the nightstand and cuddled against Braulio's tender body, inhaling his sweet smell and kissing the top of his head. Braulio was the closest equivalent to a boyfriend Giancarlo had ever had, but for the younger one's sake he'd always referred to their relationship as a friendship, deeply caring, but a friendship.

He had even encouraged Braulio to find a boyfriend, someone closer to his age who could go out with him and have a normal relationship. According to Braulio, he tried, but nobody got him the same way Giancarlo did, so he always came back.

They had known each other forever, but Giancarlo started noticing him during the family gatherings his grandfather insisted they attend. It was a way for all the members of their organization to know one another. It didn't guarantee loyalty, but his grandfather thought it would help to make some sort of bond among them all, preventing the frequent betrayals that plagued their organization lately.

Santorno had always come with his only son, and they always got everybody's attention because the father would smack the boy for anything, or scream at him. Sometimes Santorno's actions were more violent than others. On a couple of occasions Giancarlo had begged his grandfather to intervene. But he refused, because it was the man's child. He was trying to discipline him. However, as Braulio grew older, the violent episodes didn't stop. At one point, the older Montefiore told Santorno to control himself, or he would not be welcome anymore.

The public abuse stopped, but obviously continued in private.

Braulio brought a light of hope to Giancarlo's life in one of the worst moments—right after his parents were killed, and Claudio got married. Braulio had been there for him with his warm smile, his comforting words, his presence. Giancarlo couldn't let him down. On the other hand, Braulio dreamed of having a normal relationship with a gay partner, even marriage, and acceptance, the joy of living in a community without spite.

And Giancarlo believed that Braulio could have those things, alone. Unlike him, Braulio didn't have responsibilities or people to protect. What Santorno called his son's weakness served to prevent him from getting involved in the family businesses—the illicit and the legit ones. So, in a way, Braulio was free to do what he wanted. On another hand, his father would never let him go and do anything that could shame the family name. Santorno would rather have Braulio killed.

Giancarlo opened his eyes in the dark and muttered, "Not on my watch."

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## CHAPTER 6

Rodrigo did not use the bed in the room Giancarlo assigned to him. He sat on one of the living room couches all night, and at some point fell asleep for a couple of hours. He'd lied when he told Giancarlo that he didn't have a home. He did, but it was far away from the city and he didn't want anybody to know about it. It had been one of his father's hideouts that Rodrigo had kept, hoping his dad would escape one day. The hope thinned as time passed. It wasn't as luxurious as this apartment, but it was all his.

When the boss said he was taking him to his apartment, he pictured a nice place, but the apartment turned out to be a duplex penthouse with rooftop swimming pool included. Rodrigo had discovered it when he opened a glass door to see the Philly skyline better. He spent most of the night watching the moon dance against the artificially blue water.

So, Giancarlo didn't want him for sex after all, because he had someone else. Rodrigo didn't miss that somebody was sleeping with him in the main room. But his glance had been too brief to know who it was. Somehow, the idea bothered him. He wanted those big hands touching him in different ways than they had done up until now.

Something in Giancarlo's eyes invited him closer—so mature, and so young at the same time. Rodrigo wanted to be near him, but he also needed to be by himself, to understand what the hell had happened. He'd always been picky about who he fucked, and he refused sugar daddies all the time, because he loved to be free. But upon meeting Giancarlo again, he wanted to chain himself to him.

Rodrigo had heard so much about Giancarlo since he was a child, but he never expected to find him attractive. Yes, he knew that he was young, his father had complained at first of having to follow Giancarlo Montefiore's orders, but later had started to praise the young man, saying that he was as smart as his grandfather. One of the few men of honor born in his generation.

Mario Gazzara had never told him if Giancarlo had anything to do with his downfall; Rodrigo just assumed he did, because he was the acting boss.

Whatever Giancarlo might have done, he'd redeemed himself tonight. Well, he'd certainly changed Rodrigo's life forever, and he had no idea of what he'd gotten into.

Rodrigo had always been a rebel, he would do the contrary of what he was ordered just because he felt like it, and he would never do as he was told. His mother put him on the street when he was fourteen because she couldn't control him, and even if it had been hard, he never regretted it, and he managed to survive. Not for a second did he stop being rebellious, and he'd never followed anybody's will, or felt the need for it.

Until tonight.

For the first time in his life he wanted to please someone to the point that he would do anything Giancarlo asked. The memory of Giancarlo's spanking drew a slow smile to Rodrigo's lips.

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The next morning, Giancarlo took the opportunity while Braulio was taking a shower to talk with Rodrigo about the bodyguard job. "Of course, it will start after you are recovered. In the meantime, you will have to stay with him inside the apartment."

"And who is he?" It was the third time Rodrigo asked the same thing. Giancarlo supposed it had to do with the fact that his charge was male. Couldn't he wait to get his hands on him? Giancarlo finished setting the breakfast table and asked, "Do you remember Santorno's son?"

"The punching bag?"

Giancarlo looked at him hard for a few seconds, and Rodrigo said, "Okay, I'm sorry. Yeah, I remember him, I don't remember his name, but the fact that his father was always punching him around is hard to forget."

"Yes, and you have no idea of what that does to a person."

"Father or not, if someone treated me like that, the man would get something back from me." Another hard look from Giancarlo and Rodrigo quickly added, "At a minimum, I would have run away long time ago."



“Well, not everybody is like you, Rodrigo. Besides, I bet that most of your confidence comes from the fact that Mario always treated you well.”

“Well, that’s true.”

“We both had good fathers, and even though I didn’t agree with mine on everything, I’m still proud of him.”

“What’s his name? I mean the punching bag’s name?”

Giancarlo sighed. “Braulio.”

Rodrigo said, almost to himself, “How could I forget a name like that? Anyway. So you need me to protect this Braulio person? Is he your lover?”

Giancarlo smirked and answered, “None of your fucking business.”

“Hey, that’s not fair.”

“See how it feels when you get that type of answer?”

“You want me to risk”—Rodrigo used his splinted hands to emphatically gesture at his own body—“all of this, protecting that boy, and you aren’t even telling me why?”

Giancarlo tried to ignore the shape those hands showcased. “Because it’s the right thing to do. What would your father do in the same circumstances?”

Rodrigo ignored the question but said, “I miss him, you know.”

“I understand.”

“No, you don’t.” The bitterness in Rodrigo’s voice touched Giancarlo in an unexpected way.

“Listen, there was no point in the whole family going down. Your father knew that if he were the only one in jail, business would continue as usual. And that my family would protect yours.”

Rodrigo turned around as if he were to leave the kitchen. “I’m tired of your fucking mantras, dude.”

“Mantras?”

He turned back. “Honor, respect, and family. You keep saying those words over and over, but the truth is that all of that is a matter of convenience.”

“You are going to be paid well for the favor. And I’m even considering forgetting your debt to us.”

“Debt?”

“Yes, all that damage you caused at the casino.”

“In that case, deduct it from my pay, I don’t want charity.” Rodrigo squinted at him. “Where is the cash?”

Giancarlo opened a briefcase containing thousands of dollars and placed it on the kitchen counter. Rodrigo pulled it to his side and picked up a few bills, holding them up against the light coming through a nearby window.

“Do you think I would give you counterfeits?” Giancarlo grumbled.

Rodrigo shrugged. “I’ve known you all my life, but the truth is I don’t really know you.”

“That’s more cash than you’ll probably ever see in your life.”

“You’re underestimating me again. You know, I have ambition. This is just the start of a very lucrative career.”

“Rodrigo, I hope you’re not planning on blackmailing me later.”

“I’m not stupid. I know that this can buy a few kills without a body left behind for evidence.” He smiled and stepped toe-to-toe with Giancarlo. “However, I’m going to cut a different kind of deal with you.”

“You want more money?”

“No. I want you.” Rodrigo looked him up and down. Slowly. “But you know that already. I want you to want me. I want to be your submissive, Boss.”

“You and your kinks,” Giancarlo sighed. “Rodrigo, I’m not into leather.”

“*Our* kinks. Because I know you like it too, or at least, your cock does. You’re a natural, Boss.” The way he said the word *boss* sent all types of sensations throughout Giancarlo’s body.

While Giancarlo tried to control that cock of his, Rodrigo closed the briefcase and said, “By the way, I’m taking the cash too. You know, working expenses.”

“So, you still have that fantasy of being spanked and fucked afterward?”

“Hold on. That was then, the other night—we’d just met again. Now, I want more of you.”

“Fine. Do you want a whole night? I can do that, no problem.”

Rodrigo shook his head slowly and Giancarlo asked, “A whole weekend? That can be arranged.”

“I want more.”

“What exactly do you have in mind, Rodrigo?”

Again those dark eyes evaluated him before Rodrigo sighed and said, “I’m a natural born rebel. I love to do the opposite of what I’m told, and I hate to follow orders. I want to see if I can submit to someone. You might have what it takes to make me a submissive. If you succeed, I want to be with you for a while.”

The idea pleased Giancarlo, too. “Okay, I’ll do it, but you have to keep Braulio safe, at least until this issue is dealt with.”

“What is this issue and how are you going to deal with it? If I’m going to be his bodyguard, I have to know, right?”

“The main problem is that Santorno has a contract on Braulio. He hired someone to kill his own son.”

“I told you he was going to kill me!”

Braulio stood in the kitchen doorway, and after the initial surprise of seeing him there, Giancarlo crossed the distance to pull him into his arms. “No, he

will not kill you. I will protect you, and we were talking about that this very moment.”

He placed his hand on Braulio’s shoulder and gently walked him forward until they stood in front of Rodrigo.

“So this is your friend.” The blue eyes looked Rodrigo up and down with distrust.

“Braulio, you know him from years ago. Remember those hunting trips we took with all the guys, back when you were kids?”

Braulio nodded and Giancarlo continued to explain, “This is Gazzara’s son, Rodrigo.” He turned toward Rodrigo and said, “This is Braulio Santorno, I’m sure you remember him, right?”

Rodrigo laughed, and moaned when, apparently, his lips hurt. “Of course? How could I forget the punching bag?”

Of all the things Rodrigo could have said, that was the one Giancarlo never expected. “Rodrigo!”

Braulio looked Rodrigo up and down again, and said, “Yes, Rodrigo, I do remember you. Welcome to the club. It’s obvious someone has been punching you around, too.”

*Where did that come from,* Giancarlo wondered. He’d never heard Braulio talk that way before.

Rodrigo raised both arms in a peaceful gesture. “I didn’t mean any offense, dude. Back in the day, your old man used to beat the hell out of you, so we joked about you being a punching bag.”

“You all were so insensitive back then. A bunch of bullies.” Braulio clearly recalled those days with discontent.

And Rodrigo didn’t comfort him either. “Don’t get any illusions that we changed. I just saw Nico and Luciano, and they’re the same bad-asses as usual.” Rodrigo walked out of the kitchen as if the matter was settled, and headed to the living room.

To Giancarlo's surprise, Braulio followed him, asking, "So you're hanging around here now?"

Giancarlo joined them in time to hear Rodrigo's answer. "I'm more like a prisoner, dude. The boss over here doesn't know what to do with me."

Braulio frowned as if he were trying to figure out what Rodrigo was talking about. The other young man kept talking, accompanied by his usual hand movements, while he contemplated the suite. "On second thought, I don't mind being a sex slave in this type of place." He sat on the sofa and placed his feet on the coffee table.

Braulio repeated the words like he was in a trance. "Sex slave? That doesn't sound right."

"Well, after seeing you, I don't have much hope he will ever touch me. Who would care about someone like me when he has someone like you as a plaything?"

Braulio turned to Giancarlo with wide eyes. "What's he's talking about?" Before Giancarlo could answer, he added, lowering his voice, "Is he high?"

Giancarlo nodded.. "Yes, high on problems and he keeps adding them up."

He closed the distance to Rodrigo and said, "Stop being a bother, if you annoy me enough I might do something you will regret."

"Will I get another spanking?"

This time Giancarlo didn't find it amazing at all. "Rodrigo, drop the act. You're not really a prisoner, but if you walk away, don't count on my protection. Remember that Claudio is still mad at you."

That interested Braulio. "Does he have a problem with Claudio?"

Giancarlo answered, "Yes. Big time. Claudio almost kill him last night, although he denied it later, but I wouldn't discount a vendetta."

Braulio smiled and sat next to Rodrigo. "In that case, welcome aboard. Claudio's enemies are my friends."

That was the *last* thing Giancarlo expected to hear from Braulio. And Rodrigo seemed pleased. “Oh. Thanks. It’s nice to see you again... Braulio.” The *punching bag* nickname lingered in the air.

“Great, you guys are friends. Now, let’s eat breakfast,” Giancarlo told them.

“Boss, I’ll take the deal.” Rodrigo’s expression was the most serious he’d seen in him.

“Good for you. I’ll honor my part too.”

“Which deal?” Braulio asked.

“I’m your new bodyguard,” Rodrigo announced proudly, and Braulio demanded, “You and how many more?”

“You’ll see when the time comes, but if you insist on knowing my credentials, let me tell about that time when...”

Giancarlo walked back to the kitchen, wondering how was he going to survive a few days with these two in the same place. A series of activities that Rodrigo would approve of ran through his mind, and he smiled to himself. Yeah, why not? A plan started forming in his head, his priority that the young men would forget past encounters and bond as fast as possible. The hope that Rodrigo inherited some of his father’s loyalty would be the base of Giancarlo’s agenda.

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## CHAPTER 7

The three of them were outside, wearing nothing but swimsuits, relaxing next to the private rooftop swimming pool at Giancarlo's penthouse. As long as Braulio was at Giancarlo's place, he was safe. Even if Santorno found out where his son was, he would know better than to attack him in the middle of Philly.

After much discussion, they agreed that once Rodrigo's hands healed, the boys would go to a cabin that Rodrigo's father had somewhere in the Lehigh Valley. Nico would drive them out there, and nobody else would know the location. As nice as it was to relax by the swimming pool, Giancarlo wanted the whole thing over with, because the sexual tension among them was rising to new levels. Rodrigo could provoke merely with his presence. Even if it had been only two days, Giancarlo felt it had been a whole week of controlling his desires. And Braulio was being affected too.

Point-blank, Braulio asked him, "Will you make love to me while he watches? Would you like that?"

"Where did that come from, Braulio?"

"I have noticed how you guys look at one another, and you've never looked at me that way." Braulio alternated continually from jealousy to wanting Rodrigo to himself, and because of his lack of experience, it was easy to guess his feelings.

"Did Rodrigo suggest that to you?" Giancarlo asked as casually as he could.

"No. It's my idea. Believe it or not, I have a brain. And I can be naughty, too."

"Hey, come here." Giancarlo pulled him over to him. He slanted his face and took Braulio's lips between his. In no time, those lips separated to receive his tongue. They kissed for a while, and Braulio calmed down, or at least that was what it seemed like.

For a few minutes afterward, Braulio snuggled against Giancarlo, but he kept watching Rodrigo. “Giancarlo, if we make love in front of him, he will know that you belong to me, and stop provoking you.”

Make love? Until now it had always been having sex, and what he’d done with Claudio or Angelo never included the word love. They didn’t even kiss. Maybe that’s why he liked to kiss Braulio so much, but Giancarlo had always stopped after getting Braulio off using his hands or his mouth. The shy question struck him the wrong way. What was so wicked about Rodrigo? He’d had many chances to take Braulio completely and had always controlled himself.

What was it about Rodrigo that drove him nuts?

Giancarlo sighed. “If we do anything sexual in front of him, he will more than likely join us.”

He studied Braulio’s reaction, how he looked from Rodrigo’s lean body back to him.

“And isn’t that what you wanted when you brought him here?” The words were strong, but the tone meek.

Giancarlo tried to find the right answer to that, and then Rodrigo, who had skinny-dipped since the first day, staying in the shallow end of the pool because he couldn’t swim, walked toward them.

“You two, stop showing off, because I’m getting hard.” As if Rodrigo’s cock heard him, it rose towards his belly right in front of them.

Rodrigo begged. “See? Are you going to leave me like this again?”

“Rodrigo, why don’t you wait until your hands heal before doing anything sexual?” Giancarlo teased him.

“My tongue and my ass are perfectly fine. I learned a long time ago how to take a beating, and I’ve had worse.”

Rodrigo placed a towel a few feet from them, and lay on it. He rubbed his cock against the towel frantically, the still reddened flesh of his exposed ass moving as if he were fucking someone. “Damn it, if I could only use my right



hand,” he complained loudly. As if they needed to hear about his beloved right hand’s functions or how those were highly missed.

Braulio and Giancarlo watched, transfixed by the demonstration. Giancarlo’s hand yearned to touch Rodrigo again, but for his plan to work, he had to control himself. He had been right when he assumed that having access to another man would awaken new desires in Braulio. During the last two days the sexual tension had heightened considerably, and on purpose Giancarlo limited the attention he gave to Braulio.

He felt disappointed and excited at the same time. It didn’t take too much thought to guess what Rodrigo was trying to accomplish by calling attention to himself like that.

Braulio whispered in Giancarlo’s ear, “Should we help?”

Giancarlo embraced him and whispered back, “If he lets you touch him—”

“What about you?”

“I’ll be watching, making sure he doesn’t hurt you. Braulio, use only your hands.”

Braulio crawled toward Rodrigo, who opened his eyes to see who was kneeling next to him. From his position, Giancarlo saw the tiny disappointment in the dark pupils, and hoped Braulio didn’t notice it. As if he read his mind, Rodrigo smiled as much as his hurt lips allowed and said, “Go ahead, I’m all yours.”

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Braulio couldn’t believe his luck. He’d come to Giancarlo looking for the usual refuge and companionship, and also hoped this was the weekend he would be completely possessed by him, but apparently his lover didn’t have any intention of furthering their lovemaking.

Maybe he misread Giancarlo’s eyes that told him love wasn’t that far away. If only he could express how much he was willing to be anything Giancarlo wanted. However, fate had brought a nice addition to their shared passion. At first, Braulio resented Rodrigo for invading their privacy, but now,

he couldn't wait to feel that golden skin, all that lean, muscular body begging for his touch.

He had caressed only Giancarlo before, but there were parts of him that Braulio never dared to put his hands on or his fingers in. They'd never discussed it, but instinct told him that Giancarlo's ass probably was off-limits, while Rodrigo waved his in an inviting manner.

"Rodrigo, turn over." Giancarlo's voice surprised both of them, but the command was obeyed instantly. Rodrigo turned over and Braulio breathed deep before he extended his hand and pinched a nipple between his index finger and thumb. He rolled it a little, caressing the skin around it up and down, and then pinched the other nipple. It pleased Braulio how Rodrigo arched in delight, and how the little pinkish nubs hardened.

Braulio licked his lips. Giancarlo had ordered him to use only his hands, but he was dying for a taste. Instinctively he raised his eyes to meet Giancarlo's gaze. They were on the same page, because without hesitation, Giancarlo nodded and Braulio lowered his head, darting his tongue and licking Rodrigo's nipples.

"Rodrigo, turn over." Giancarlo repeated the order, and Rodrigo obeyed, a little slower than before. This time, Braulio slid his hands all over Rodrigo's back, from his shoulders down to his calves, and up again. He lingered a little on the sculpted curve of Rodrigo's buns, until he heard the other one grunting his approval. For the first time in his life Braulio experienced what it was to feel pleasure by giving it to another.

Giancarlo spoke again, "Braulio, come here. Now."

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When Braulio crawled toward him, there was something so sensual in the almost feline pace that Giancarlo's cock lengthened and throbbed against his swimsuit. Behind Braulio, Giancarlo noticed that Rodrigo followed, and resisted the urge to tell him to stay away. He could only imagine the view Braulio offered Rodrigo as he moved toward Giancarlo's chest. He didn't want to touch Rodrigo again, at least, not tonight. Because if he did, it wasn't going

to be the type of caresses he planned to dispense to Braulio—he would take Rodrigo hard and fast.

So he ignored Rodrigo and focused all his attention on Braulio, gently pulling down Braulio's swimsuit, before spreading him over his own body, and brushing his lips. Braulio was beyond excitement, as he pushed his tongue out and searched for Giancarlo's tongue, slipping in it deeper with a newfound passion. Jealously could be a strong aphrodisiac.

Giancarlo fought for dominance of the kiss. They had played this way before, but this time Braulio's need turned into desperation. He reached to touch Braulio's back with his hand, and before he could, he felt Braulio tensing up while looking at him with wide-open eyes. It took him a few seconds to understand what was going on, he looked behind Braulio's to see that Rodrigo knelt with his faced buried between Braulio's ass cheeks.

For an instant, the eroticism of their nude bodies, in that pose, distracted him. A new sensation invaded Giancarlo's most inner self, the need to own another and proclaim his possession, and the redness he could still see on Rodrigo's buttocks, fed that need. A jolt of pleasure went through Giancarlo's whole body, but he had to look out for Braulio's reactions, currently puffing air against his mouth. "Are you okay with what he's doing to you?"

The rasped question got an equally raspy answer. "Yes."

Braulio leaned on Giancarlo's chest while Rodrigo licked his asshole. Giancarlo watched, fascinated, as Braulio's face contorted in pleasure—he had never done something like that to him, mostly because he'd stayed away from Braulio's backside, but by the way he was enjoying the invasion of Rodrigo's tongue, it should become part of their routine. He had been playing with the idea of keeping Rodrigo around for his own kinky reasons, but he worried about Braulio's reaction to a triad. Now, it was obvious that Braulio wouldn't put up much of a fight.

As if he were summoned, Rodrigo raised his head and asked, "What are you planning with him, Giancarlo? Why is he still a virgin?"

It was the first time Rodrigo said his name, and it sent another rush of heated blood to his cock.

While he talked Rodrigo moved closer and closer, until he stood next to Giancarlo's legs, allowing his hard dick to skim the skin. Giancarlo felt the wetness of the other's pre-cum leaving a trail, and yearned for a taste, or at least a simple touch. The black eyes were now on his face, trying to steal answers Giancarlo never planned to share with anyone.

Braulio was the one who answered. "I'm not a virgin."

Giancarlo frowned, wondering where was this going, and Rodrigo elaborated. "I know a virgin asshole when I see, or taste one." His wicked smile flashed briefly. "How long have you guys been together?" He insisted.

Again Braulio answered, "A couple of years, and why would you care, Rodrigo?"

"Because I want to fuck the hell out of you, but I doubt the boss would let me."

Giancarlo stated, looking into Rodrigo's eyes, "There will be no fucking here tonight."

Rodrigo rolled his eyes. "What have you guys been doing all this time? Holding hands and kissing under the moonlight?"

Those words in another's mouth would have sounded funny, but Rodrigo's mocking ridiculed what Giancarlo thought was the most respectful thing he could have done for Braulio. Recalling his lover's expression when Rodrigo rimmed him forced him to face the truth. Maybe Braulio didn't want to be respected, but completely possessed.

In an unexpected movement, Giancarlo grabbed Rodrigo's cock and started pumping him up and down. A slow smile appeared on Rodrigo's face. The message was clear to Giancarlo—*I got you, dude*. He resisted the desire to hurt Rodrigo or to stop jerking him off. He had been manipulated enough for one day.

“I’m not giving you what you want, but I’m going to get you off so you’ll shut up and go to sleep.”

Rodrigo pointed with his head toward Braulio. “What about him?”

“He’s my problem.” Giancarlo had shared enough for the moment.

As if he took that as his cue to join the action, Braulio said, “And you’re mine.” He pulled down Giancarlo’s swimsuit and lowered his head, placing a tender kiss on Giancarlo’s cock. The gesture inspired a laugh from Rodrigo, quickly followed by a groan when Giancarlo pulled his dick with extra force.

Then Giancarlo watched as Braulio licked the pre-come from the head of his penis before taking it into his mouth as he had taught him. He slowed down the pace at which he was pumping Rodrigo to match the rhythm of Braulio’s sucking. His gaze met Rodrigo’s nearly closed eyes, and he almost came. The sultry look promised every fantasy he could think of coming true. And all of them were as dark as those eyes.

Giancarlo slid his other hand down the curve of Braulio’s ass and between his cheeks. The skin was soft but firm, and he regretted all those times he controlled himself. His eyes searched Braulio’s, and it pleased him to see the same expression he saw earlier, when it had been Rodrigo’s tongue probing him. He increased the pace of his hand on Rodrigo’s cock, briefly stopping to gather the pre-come and use it as lubricant before rushing him to a loud climax. Rodrigo nearly convulsed in pleasure, ending with his mouth open, gasping for air. He slowly dragged himself to lie on a towel, away from Giancarlo and Braulio. So he didn’t like being touched during afterglow. Giancarlo took note of that fact, who knew, it might come handy in the future.

Rodrigo found his voice. “Thanks, Boss. That was good. However, my prostate feels neglected.”

Letting go of Giancarlo’s cock for a moment, Braulio asked, “Prostate?” and Rodrigo answered with another question. “Under which rock have you been living, Braulio?”

“Rodrigo,” Giancarlo warned.

Looking more relaxed, Rodrigo added, “If the boss gives me permission I’ll show you what I’m talking about.”

Giancarlo made up his mind. “There is no need, I’ll do it myself.”

Giancarlo gently pushed Braulio backward and moved up to lie beside him, his head propped on one hand. He began to kiss Braulio’s neck, alternating soft kisses with the light trace of the tip of his tongue, then he trailed a chain of kisses down his chest. Giancarlo was making an effort to be gentle. Admiring Braulio’s perfect skin, the nicely defined muscles of his chest, the dark nipples, now hard as a result of Giancarlo’s mouth on them. Speaking of hard, Giancarlo noticed that Braulio had an erection. He also had his eyes closed, breathing through his mouth, and his lips were trembling. Then Giancarlo kissed his mouth again; softly, slowly, enjoying every second of it. Braulio kept his eyes closed, but responded to his kisses. For Giancarlo, those were kisses that he felt deep down in his most inner self. He paused, and emotion made his voice almost unintelligible. “You are really beautiful.”

It was all Giancarlo could say before continuing to explore Braulio’s body, the way he had wanted to since the first time they met. Giancarlo kept stroking his thighs while his tongue circled one of Braulio’s nipples, enjoying the sensation of feeling it harden even more. After that, Giancarlo went down and took Braulio’s swollen cock in his mouth. Braulio opened his own to say something, and Giancarlo raised one hand to slowly caress his lips. The sensual touch urged Braulio to kiss that finger, then suck it, almost imitating what Giancarlo was doing with his length. Giancarlo gave a slight forward push with his chin every time his mouth sucked Braulio’s dick, bobbing up and down. He increased the pace, noting how Braulio began to moan. He could almost smile, if his mouth hadn’t been full. Then he went for the finishing touch.

With his hand, he caressed Braulio’s buttocks, until he located his entrance. Giancarlo could feel how Braulio froze, but he continued, anyway. He kept sucking him faster, while using the tip of one of his fingers to softly caress the outside of his entrance, Giancarlo was so busy, he didn’t anticipate the intensity of Braulio’s coming in his mouth. He swallowed the hot bitter

fluid, still holding Braulio's member with his lips, and he could feel Braulio's spasm in the most intense orgasm he had ever witnessed from him. A few seconds later, Braulio was still trembling and trying to catch his breath. He muttered a *thank you*, and Giancarlo let him go.

In that exact moment, Giancarlo felt another set of hands on his legs, stronger than Braulio. He guessed it was Rodrigo, and paused to tell him to let him alone, but somehow Rodrigo got under him, his whole body spread against Giancarlo's torso and genital area.

For a second Giancarlo thought he was trying to be penetrated by him, but Rodrigo intentions were something he'd never tried before, rubbing his backside against Giancarlo, he spread his legs enough to clamp Giancarlo's erect cock between his ass cheeks and guide it between his strong legs, and using the motion of his hips and the friction of his thighs, he started returning the favor of jerking Giancarlo off.

"Did you change your mind? You said that you were not going bareback." Giancarlo muttered against his ear.

"We're not, and this is for your pleasure. Since you're not fan of penetration, there will be none."

He didn't bother denying it, he could have given him a demonstration to prove how much he wanted to penetrate him, but instead Giancarlo started moving his hips, and aimed for Rodrigo's scrotum. The second time he nudged it, the moans out of Rodrigo were clear.

"What? I thought it was only for my pleasure." Giancarlo teased him.

Rodrigo kept moving fast, and met his thrusting until they both came, the pleasure unexpected and different. Giancarlo avoided falling onto him, but pulled Rodrigo on his side and hugged him tenderly. He felt Rodrigo tensing his body as if he wanted to reject him, but soon he relaxed. From the side of Rodrigo's body Giancarlo extended his hand and held Braulio's, meeting his blue gaze with some concern of what he was going to find there. Braulio smiled, satisfied, and the smile reached his eyes, giving Giancarlo peace of mind, and in a few minutes, they all were sleeping.

## CHAPTER 8

The next morning during breakfast Giancarlo put down his cup of coffee and asked, “Braulio, do you mind sharing some of your clothes with Rodrigo?” He was tired of seeing him around only in a pair of briefs, provoking constant erections that needed to be taken care of in a similar way to what happened by the swimming pool.

“No, why should I mind? I already shared with him what I care about the most in the world.”

Rodrigo winked and said, “Thank you. You have no idea of how much I appreciate it.”

It was hard to know if they referred to him or the clothes. Giancarlo had the feeling they were talking about him.

The last person Giancarlo wanted to see was Claudio, but there was no way to stop him when he came through the door, followed by Nico. “Since when do I have to announce myself to see you?” he asked from the living room.

Behind Claudio’s back, Nico shrugged both shoulders while opening his hands in a sign of resignation.

“You two, please stay here.” Giancarlo walked toward Claudio. “I thought we were not going to see each other until Monday.”

Knowing things could heat up soon, and not in a romantic way, Giancarlo walked out of the living room hoping Claudio would follow. He did, and they stood in the middle of the guest room to argue.

“Now I know why I’m persona non grata. You got company.”

“Claudio, irony is not one of your best skills. Listen, I’m in the middle of a dangerous situation.”

“That’s not news given the company you choose these days. Giancarlo, stop thinking with your cock. Those boys are going to ruin everything we worked for so hard all these years.” Giancarlo didn’t say anything, he knew these types of comments were expected. Claudio continued to make his case.



“Don’t you see it? Rumors will start, and soon your secret will be out. If you want to have sex with younger guys, Angelo can safely arrange that for you.”

“It’s not only about sex, Claudio.” Giancarlo stepped closer to him. “I’m tired of being by myself.”

“And you couldn’t find a more appropriate companion?”

“I’m not taking a wife like you.” Giancarlo lowered his voice. “I can’t leave Braulio alone now, either.”

“Why is that?”

“Santorno put a contract on his life. I have to protect him until a better solution comes up.”

Claudio’s mouth was a thin line, drawn tight at some thought. Giancarlo studied his face before asking, “Don’t you have anything to say?”

“No. You’ve become suicidal. Can’t you see that there is no way this can end well. There is nothing I can do around here, I’m going to spend the rest of the weekend with my family, and on Monday, I’ll go back to work as usual.”

“Good for you. I was hoping you’d give me a solution.”

“There is no way out of this. You’re going to have to kill Santorno, and a war will follow.”

Nico knocked on the open door. “Boss, everything is ready, we got to go.”

Claudio asked, “Where are you going, Giancarlo?”

“Not me. The boys are going to be taken to a secure location by Nico.”

“Both of them? What does have Rodrigo to do with all of this?”

“He will be looking out for Braulio.”

“I can’t believe you trust that delinquent. No, don’t tell me the details, I don’t want to know, the less I know the better.” With those words, he stormed out of the room and the apartment—the wish that Claudio would storm out of his life struck Giancarlo as a surprise. Yes, it was about time for him to revise his relationship with Claudio. But that had to wait.

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He went back to the living room and gestured to the boys to join him. “Everything is ready, you guys need to go now. Nico will drive you and give you a new cell phone to keep in touch with us. Don’t use it to call anyone else.”

Giancarlo kissed Braulio briefly on the lips, but hugged him for nearly a minute, both with eyes closed and knowing that it might be the last time they saw one another or touched each other. Making an effort, Giancarlo let go of Braulio.

“Rodrigo, I know you think of yourself as dangerous, but this guy, Daniel Bucciarelli, he’s someone you don’t want to fight.” As if to help to get his message across, Giancarlo put his hands over Rodrigo’s shoulders and lowered his face a few inches to match his, nose to nose. “Promise me that if you see him you will run, that you will escape as fast as you can. Braulio is not a street fighter like you, remember that.”

Rodrigo looked him in the eyes. “I promise, Boss. I will keep him safe.”

When their breath mingled Giancarlo felt the urge to kiss him, but controlled himself, because he’d never kissed his men before sending them out on a deadly assignment. He perceived the same craving in Rodrigo, so he eased their mutual need when he added, “Good. Nico will give you a weapon, too.”

Rodrigo smiled at that, but the smile didn’t reach his eyes.

Braulio hugged him again, his face buried in Giancarlo’s chest. It took a few minutes of reassuring words to get him out of the door. The last he saw of them was Rodrigo’s dark eyes, with a new sense of commitment in them. His bonding plan had worked better and sooner than anticipated—to his own detriment, because now, he not only worried for Braulio, but for Rodrigo too.

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They arrived at the one-story cabin in the woods, the perfect place for a hideout. There were neighbors, on the other side of the stretch of woods. This part of Lehigh Valley was considered rural, but at least the little house had

electricity and running water. Rodrigo showed him around and said, “I’m sorry, if it’s this simple.”

Braulio smiled. “Thanks for bringing me here, and for sharing what you have. I really like it.”

The four rooms were clean, and the kitchen had food, lots of food, besides what Nico got for them. For security reasons, they agreed to sleep in the same bed. Of course, Braulio knew that Rodrigo had his own agenda, but he didn’t care. By now, he shared that agenda, and who knew, he might learn a thing or two that he could use with Giancarlo if he ever saw him again.

First, they had to survive this ordeal. The idea of going back to his father to avoid putting Giancarlo and Rodrigo in danger had occurred to Braulio. But he knew that if he did that, and his father killed him, Giancarlo would start a vendetta that would cost many more lives.

He helped Rodrigo to fix a motorcycle that, according to Braulio’s limited knowledge, didn’t need any fixing. When Rodrigo took him into the woods and found a small valley for Braulio to learn to ride it, he understood that the bike might be part of some escape plan, in case they were found.

“But nobody knows we’re here,” he’d told Rodrigo one afternoon.

“Braulio, I’ll tell you a secret. My dad started to train me as his replacement before he went to jail.”

For some reason this didn’t surprise Braulio. “Really? So, you’re like that guy that’s after me?”

“No, I don’t have his experience, but I learned two rules from Dad. First, kill with anything at hand, don’t rely only on your weapons. And second,” he stared at Braulio before continuing. “Anyone can betray you, anyone. So, we need a plan B. One that only the two of us know about.”

“Giancarlo would never betray—”

“Okay, maybe not him, but what about Nico, Luciano or Claudio?”

Braulio couldn’t argue with that. “Tell me what you want me to do.”

Rodrigo grinned and said, “Get on all fours and spread your sweet ass for me.”

Braulio thought he was serious and looked around to find a place that wasn't covered with rocks and moss. Rodrigo laughed and said, “I'm kidding, maybe later we'll try that one. Now, I need you to learn to ride the bike on this terrain, because if something happens to me, I want you to ride it to the city.”

Braulio nodded, and paid attention to Rodrigo's instructions. They spent the next two days riding the motorbike, and finding the closest but most hidden places to put it. They even practiced how long it would take for Braulio to get out in the middle of the night and find it, start it, and run with it.

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Braulio woke up startled, and it took a few seconds for him to realize what was going on and that there was no imminent danger. Rodrigo was right there, standing, resting his back on the wall next to the bed, with one knee bent. In the semidarkness of the room, what caught Braulio's attention was what he held in his hand. He could see Rodrigo's swollen cock, fully erect. And from his point of view it looked huge. Rodrigo was breathing heavily, his eyes were closed, and his lips shivered. He opened his eyes and looked back at Braulio with surprise, but recovered very fast, and continued his task.

Braulio stayed on the bed, staring at him.

Rodrigo caressed his own nipples with one hand, while the other kneaded his thick length, teasing with the slow show until the urge made him increase the pace. His strong hand moved up and down, sometimes in a circular motion, or pulled his cock, letting his hand slide to the head and spreading the pre-come down to the base.

Braulio watched him for a few seconds before saying, “I would like to do what you were doing the other night with Giancarlo. It looked like fun.”

Rodrigo raised an eyebrow as if the comment were unexpected. “Then come over here.”

Braulio got nude and, raising both arms, pulled Rodrigo into a hug. A simple embrace that bonded their bodies from to chests to loins. He rested his head on Rodrigo's shoulder, and muttered, "I know what Giancarlo said about no fucking, but you guys agreed that night that it wasn't fucking, right?"

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This was a new experience for Braulio, and Rodrigo didn't want to mess things up. His previous experiences with other men in the past, had been fast and intense. There were few words exchanged, only the urgent need to satisfy the craving they had at the moment. But Rodrigo remembered the way Giancarlo made love to Braulio, so gentle and caring. He had felt envious of this boy that inspired so much in the man Rodrigo wanted. He'd been used to grabbing what he wanted from life, taking sometimes without permission. Never one to beg, for the first time in his life he wanted to make a deal with fate. He wanted Braulio to live, but most importantly, he wanted to be kept by Giancarlo. He wanted the man to be his reward for a life without love or tenderness. Could someone love two people at the same time?

Lust was possible, he had no doubts Giancarlo desired him too, but would he ever love him like he loved Braulio?

The touched of hands smaller than his own took him away from those deep thoughts.

Braulio's breathing and trembling body spoke of fears and excitement as he touched Rodrigo's back. If the hard evidence of that excitement weren't pressed against his own belly, Rodrigo would have turned him down. No matter how much he wanted to get intimate with him. Giancarlo might punish him later, but rather than fear it, he craved such discipline, so he was game. Rodrigo had always found it hard to resist a little play

"Since you've never done this fake fucking, let me drive."

As gently as he could, he freed himself from Braulio's arms, and stood behind him, pulling Braulio against his front. Next, Rodrigo placed his hands on Braulio's hips, feeling how he trembled against his body. There was a new type of sensuality in the boy's stuttering breath.

Rodrigo instructed Braulio, “Open your legs a little bit.”

The friction was totally different than being inside of him would have been, but Rodrigo could do with this, because it still felt better than his hand.

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Braulio felt the press of Rodrigo’s groin on his back, the sensation overwhelming. Rodrigo ran a hand across Braulio’s torso and ended by caressing his cock, the expert grip lingering there. Next, Braulio felt the hardness of Rodrigo’s cock sliding under his ass and between his legs. He gasped, unable to control the sound—the feeling so new to him, and beyond any forbidden fantasy.

As Rodrigo pressed his penis against his flesh Braulio felt the wet tip leaving a hot trace of pre-come, nudging the space between his ass and his balls. Before Braulio could adjust to this, Rodrigo placed one hand on his hip and grabbed Braulio’s dick with the other. The moment Rodrigo’s thumb spread the pre-come dripping from his dick while rubbing the slit, Braulio thought he would come. “Rodrigo, I think it’s too much, I’m going to... I can’t handle it much longer.”

“Go ahead, that’s the idea.”

“What about you?”

“Nice of you to be thinking of me. For now, be selfish and just feel.”

Rodrigo’s hand started stroking him, up, down, and around. Repeatedly. He gently but steadily started to fuck Braulio’s inner legs while jerking his dick to the same rhythm. Then Rodrigo whispered in his ear. “Do you like it?”

“Oh, yes.”

“Close your legs as tight as you can and try to match my rhythm.”

Braulio obeyed, and Rodrigo increased his thrusts. Seconds later, Braulio came, the release so much stronger than he anticipated that after the initial spasm of pleasure he almost lost his ability to stand. Rodrigo gripped his hips before shoving himself with more intensity, the movement lasting only

seconds before Rodrigo twitched, stood still, and lay down on the bed, taking Braulio with him.

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## CHAPTER 9

After the boys were gone, Giancarlo thought he was going to lose his mind. He couldn't sleep at all, so he stayed up planning scheme after scheme to get rid of Santorno. As soon as he saw Nico the next morning he asked, "Do you know where Santorno keeps the stuff he does business with on the side?"

"I think at one of the warehouses in South Philly. I'll tell you tonight for sure."

"Good." Giancarlo sat behind his desk. "I got a plan."

Nico sat in front of him. "Luciano doesn't like it when you say that, and I get nervous."

Giancarlo ignored the comment and leaned forward, asking, "Can you ask our friends, the Mexicans, if instead of cash they can pay their toll in merchandise?"

"Are we going to sell that stuff?" Nico twisted his nose at the idea.

"No, but I need some of it for evidence."

"Evidence? To incriminate someone? Santorno? I don't have to bother our associates, a small amount I can easily get."

"No, I need a few tons for the plan to succeed."

Nico was speechless for a few seconds. "What is the plan?"

"We're getting rid of Santorno once and for all. No bloodshed, sadly. If I want a long sentence he must be charged with conspiring to import tons of cocaine, some heroin and money laundering. We know he's done worse than that, but we have no proof."

"Okay, I'll speak with them and we will get a delivery to Santorno's South Philly location." He paused and looked Giancarlo in the eyes before announcing. "It will cost millions, Boss. Way more than what we charge them for doing business in our territory."

"That's what I like about you, efficient as usual. Don't worry about the cost, we will recover it some other way."



Nico observed him thoughtfully for a moment. “Giancarlo, you know, sometimes you can be evil. I don’t want you as an enemy.”

“Sometimes? That was the least cruel of my ideas. Like I said, I’m going to miss the blood spilling. I hope he gets it in jail, I need to send a message to Gazzara.”

Nico laughed at that. “Are you going to ask for Rodrigo’s hand in matrimony?”

“No, he wouldn’t approve it, but he will be pleased to know his son is part of my crew. I also want to give him a list of our enemies, the ones locked up like him. Old habits die hard, and who knows, he might take care of the bloodless issue.”

Nico stopped laughing. They both knew Giancarlo wouldn’t kill unless necessary, but this was one of those killings essential to keep the peace.

“Boss, I’ll find a way to get your orders to him. He will be thrilled to be of service.”

“Thanks. As long as Santorno is out there, we won’t be at peace.”

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“I promise you, I’ll make it fast and painless.” Daniel Bucciarelli told Braulio, with the calm attitude that Braulio knew went along with what they called honor and respect. The boy shook in fear, and not caring if they thought he was a coward, he extended his hand to grab Rodrigo’s. They hadn’t had a chance, because the two men had arrived at night, while they slept, without making any noise, and easily bypassing the traps Rodrigo had set. They were armed with what Rodrigo told Braulio were automatic weapons, so there was no point in fighting, hence Rodrigo didn’t even try. They were taken to the small living room of the cabin and watched over with a semiautomatic by Peter Rocco, Santorno’s main henchman.

Bucciarelli searched everywhere. He collected the four weapons Rodrigo had, making a nice pile in a corner of the next room and removing the

ammunition before dropping the guns on the ground. They even found the one hidden inside the toilet tank in a plastic container.

Braulio had known Daniel and Peter all his life. They weren't friends, but it was hard to imagine how they could be like this with him. "Please let me go, you can say anything to Dad, like we escaped or that we—"

"Stop begging." The order came from Rodrigo, who had said almost nothing since they were captured. An unusual behavior in him, if Braulio were asked.

Daniel shook his head. "And get your father upset with us? No way."

"Are you going to kill me?" Braulio asked.

"Not, yet. Your father is on his way. He wants to personally take care of this one." He punched Rodrigo again and Braulio yelled, "Leave him alone!" When Peter stepped backwards, Braulio added, "He is just a friend, he had nothing to do with my choices."

Daniel laughed. "Tell that to your father. We're following orders." He walked away from the younger men, but kept a watchful eye on them.

"They got all your weapons." Braulio pointed to the guns in the other room.

Rodrigo didn't say anything to that, and remained silent for a few minutes. The men were standing between him and his guns; he could have tried to fight, but Braulio figured that not resisting them earlier had paid off because they didn't restrain them.

"When my father gets here," Braulio whispered, "he will kill you to hurt me. If he recognizes you, he will think that we've been together for years, maybe since we met at the family gatherings."

"How romantic." Rodrigo smirked and whispered back, "Listen, I will try again to get rid of these guys. As soon as you see me walking to the kitchen, run to where the bike is. I'll try to join you, but if by the time you're passing the house, I'm not outside, you leave without me. Are we clear?"

Braulio nodded, and lowered his voice further. “What are you going to do?”

“What I planned for at the start, and no, you don’t want to know the details.”

Braulio couldn’t believe his ears. “You planned this?”

“Not step by step, but I knew I didn’t have a chance in a confrontation with Bucciarelli. So, I’m taking my dad’s advice.”

Braulio remembered what he told him the first day they got there, and since the bike was plan B, it had to be the kill-without-weapons part. No, he didn’t want to witness that.

Rodrigo looked at him and said, “Never underestimate anyone, especially not a gay teenager you think is weaker than you.” Braulio looked at the men and back at him without understanding. Rodrigo smiled. “Let me kiss you good-bye, just in case. Run when I say so.”

He leaned forward and kissed Braulio without closing his eyes. Braulio didn’t close his either, and lamented that the kiss was a lie. Rodrigo was a good kisser. If they survived this, he was going to do way more than kiss him.

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Daniel yelled at them, “You two, stop doing that—this is not Romeo and Juliet.”

Rodrigo walked fast to the kitchen, and on his way, he muttered to Braulio, “Remember to run as soon as they follow me.”

Braulio stood, but stayed put as if he didn’t know what to do. As Rodrigo predicted, Daniel went to the kitchen after him, but Peter stayed near Braulio.

Speed and surprise were his main weapons, besides the barbecue fuel the mobsters overlooked while they were looking for weapons. Without wasting another second, Rodrigo picked up the liquid fire starter from under the sink, stood up on the kitchen counter and sprayed Daniel with it. Next Rodrigo threw a match at him to light him on fire as he shouted out, “Braulio, run!”

Peter hesitated a second as if he couldn't decide to go after Braulio, or stay to help Daniel, who tried to put out the fire by rolling on the floor. Apparently, Peter made up his mind, because he entered the kitchen, fired a shot at Rodrigo and missed. Rodrigo jumped away from the sink, and used the same method to light Peter on fire. As both men tried to help one another, Rodrigo didn't hesitate, he ran outside, grabbing a handgun and their cell phones on his way.

By the time he reached the road, Braulio was coming toward him riding the motorcycle, so he jumped on the back yelling, "Go, go!"

On the road they saw lights coming from a car, and Rodrigo told Braulio, "Let's take the side road." They barely had time to make a turn to get off the main road when the car passed, a black Mercedes.

Braulio said, "That's my father."

Rodrigo told him, "Well, we better hurry, before he comes after us."

They also heard sirens heading toward the cabin, so probably the neighbors called 911 when they heard the commotion.

They changed positions, and Rodrigo rode the old dirt road as if the devil himself were after them.

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Giancarlo ended the call with Juliano and made an effort not to show how affected he was.

"What happened?" Asked Nico.

"The police found two guys with burns in the cabin, but no trace of the boys."

"That's good news."

"Yes, it means they are on the run. The problem is, why haven't they called me?"

Nico's expression told Giancarlo that he was hiding something from him. "Is there anything I should know?"

"Well, if I were Rodrigo, I wouldn't have called you either."

“And that’s why?”

“Giancarlo, someone close to you told Santorno where they were hiding. Only you can’t see it. All I’m going to say is that Luciano and I would never betray you.”

“So, according to you, Claudio told Santorno.”

“Of course he did. He hates Rodrigo, he has never liked Braulio, and he thinks you belong to him.”

“I find that hard to believe. And anyway, how could he have known the cabin’s location?”

“Boss, haven’t you ever heard of GPS? Claudio has access to our system, he bought the cars for us.”

“Damn it! I never expected that from him, Nico.”

“Let’s set a trap for him. Come on.”

Giancarlo followed Nico, even as his mind refused to believe Claudio would do this to him, because he knew how important Braulio was to him. Maybe precisely because of that he betrayed him. When they arrived at Claudio’s office they found him sitting behind his desk, doing some paperwork, as usual. In that moment, Giancarlo realized that Claudio had always acted as if he were the acting boss, or a CEO.

As soon as he saw them, Claudio asked, “Any news about the boys?”

Giancarlo said nothing, but Nico commented. “Should we expect any? I thought they were safe in Giancarlo’s South Philly warehouse.”

As if Giancarlo knew Nico’s intentions he said, “Nico!”

“What? Claudio didn’t know?” Nico’s innocent expression seemed real... almost as much as Claudio’s curious one.

“What should I know?” Claudio asked.

“That we changed the location where the boys were going to be at the last minute.” This time Giancarlo answered.

“You sent them to that warehouse? Are you insane? That place is so uncomfortable.” Claudio asked.

“Yes, but it’s safe,” Giancarlo replied. He studied how nervous Claudio looked, rearranging the objects on his desk as if he couldn’t wait for them to leave. Claudio finally opened a folder and started flipping pages. “I don’t know about you, but I still have work to do. Please keep me informed.” And just like that they were dismissed.

Giancarlo nodded and followed Nico to the door. At the last instant, he decided to use the trick of closing the door as if he had left, but remained inside. Nico closed the door behind him, and when Giancarlo turned around he saw Claudio, his back facing Giancarlo, walking toward the windows, already dialing someone on his phone.

After a quick exchange, Claudio said, “I don’t know who attacked those men, but the boys were never there. Well, if they were, they no longer are. They are at the warehouse, yes, the same one where the merchandise is. By now they saw it. You have to rush and get rid of them. No, Santorno, you listen to me, go and do what I’m telling you, or you’re alone in all of this.”

Giancarlo opened the door again, and let Nico enter the room with a grim expression on his face as he nodded to his cousin. When Claudio heard the noise he turned around and looked at them in shock.

Nico pulled his handgun and said, “Your gun, and your hands where I can see them.”

If it hadn’t been for the bitter taste in his mouth, Giancarlo would have smiled. Nico and his witticisms. Maybe he had recommended the wrong cousin to be a Fed after all. But that was another story for another day. Today might turned out to be tragic.

“You better kill me now, because if I live I will come after you all.” Claudio’s tone was cold as ever.

Giancarlo made an effort of matching it. “In that case, I will not hesitate to kill you.”

“Aren’t you worried that I will tell everybody the truth about us?”

“Which truth? You mean our lie? That you manipulated me to do whatever you wanted? I know that you’ll never tell anything to anybody, because you’re too ashamed of what happened between us, to do so.” This time the bitterness escaped in his words.

“You’re right. I didn’t mention you to Santorno. I told him that Braulio’s romance is with Rodrigo. So we can still fix this between us.” He looked Giancarlo with the charming expression that seduced him in the past.

Giancarlo couldn’t believe the nerve. “And fuck you as usual while I await your next betrayal?”

“Giancarlo, you will never find someone to replace me.” Claudio truly believed his own words.

“Where? In or out of bed? Managers are a dime a dozen, and as for in bed, I won’t have a problem there, either. And as a matter of fact, you were right about Rodrigo.” Somehow Giancarlo faked a smile. There was no evidence of the lust Claudio had shown before for Rodrigo, so it had obviously been another lie.

Then pragmatic, as usual, Claudio asked, “If you’re not going to kill me. Then what’s next?”

“I’m going to give you the opportunity you didn’t give Rodrigo or Braulio. I’ll let you go to jail, and with luck, you will never end up near Mario Gazzara, who will soon learn how you tried to kill his son. Twice.”

“I can’t imagine how you could send me to jail. I’ve done nothing that will stand in court.”

“It’s not going to be me. Actually, it will be a collaboration of the FBI and the DEA.” With a tilt of his head he told his cousin. “Nico, lock him inside the warehouse together with that extra merchandise we talked about yesterday. Claudio is Santorno’s coconspirator in his money laundering operation.”

After the initial shock Giancarlo’s words drew in his face, Claudio raised his head high and walked out as if nothing happened, as if they never cared for

one another. And maybe, on his part it had been like that, and Giancarlo had only been another stepping stone on his way.

Giancarlo didn't need Juliano's call to confirm his plan was a success; the ten o'clock news covered the arrest of Santorno and his crew. That Claudio Albano had been at the same location spoke of betrayal to anyone in the know. At least, Giancarlo could denounce Claudio's disloyalty without it being a complete lie. Giancarlo hadn't been surprised to see how calmly they all reacted to the arrest, they were probably counting on the good lawyers the Family would assign for their defense.

Of course, they might have a good defense, but there would be a better prosecution. There was no way Juliano, or the prosecutor would let Fabian Santorno walk away. There was no coverage of the burnt men at the cabin, but Juliano had told him that they were going to be processed for a bunch of charges when they left the hospital. Daniel Bucciarelli had a long list of crimes to pay for.

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Braulio looked at the screen of the cell phone and said, "Rodrigo, it's Giancarlo again. We have to answer."

"No. Someone next to him is a rat." Rodrigo repeated what he had told Braulio earlier.

Rodrigo and Braulio had found refuge in a truck stop near Philly. The place looked a lot like a diner, and people came and went all the time.

"Wait. He left a message, let me check." Braulio frowned as he listened, and said, "You were right. They got the rat, and they also got my father. We can go back home."

Rodrigo didn't say anything. He was glad the run was over, but at the same time he was going to miss his little cute friend, and as for the boss, he'd rather ignore any thoughts of him. "What home are you talking about? Your mother died years ago, your father is going to jail. You have the same home I do, here and there." Maybe he would stay with him, Rodrigo hoped.



Braulio faked a smile. “Welcome back, Mr. Optimism. Listen, Rodrigo, wherever Giancarlo lives, is my home. And I think you’re welcome too. He likes you a lot.”

“Yeah, right.”

Braulio called Giancarlo and they agreed to wait for Nico to take them back home. Rodrigo almost felt like leaving Braulio to go “home” by himself, but he had to report back to the boss and deliver the package safe.

There was a TV behind the counter, and the cashier and the waiter were listening to the local news, where the arrest of Fabian Santorno was breaking news everywhere. The boys sat at a table a few feet away, but they heard and saw the report.

“Braulio, come here.” Rodrigo opened his arms in an unusual gesture of warmth, and Braulio didn’t waste a second. He was inside the embrace and burying his face against Rodrigo’s neck as soon as he heard the invite. Then, as he remembered where they were, Braulio sat up straight in his chair.

“I know what you are going through...” Rodrigo said.

“No, you don’t.” Braulio explained. “Your father is a man that everybody missed. My father is someone that everyone will be happy is in prison. Starting with me. I’m not sad for that, but I’m worried for Giancarlo. If my father talks, the whole Condottieri family is going down.”

“That won’t happen, I can assure you.” Rodrigo spoke with confidence.

“How do you know?”

“During the first days my dad was locked up, there were a bunch of guys watching him to see if he was flipping, and if he had shown any sign of ratting out, they would have killed him right there.”

“But others have succeeded.”

Rodrigo insisted, “That was in the past, I’m sure he won’t have the chance if he chooses to talk. Trust me on that one.”

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## CHAPTER 10

When they arrived, Braulio jumped into Giancarlo's arms and kissed him. Rodrigo skipped the kissing couple and went to take a seat on one of the sofas. After a few minutes of making out, Giancarlo and Braulio walked over to where he sat, and Giancarlo said, "Thanks for bringing him back safe."

"You're welcome. Where is my cash?"

Giancarlo's smile froze and Braulio looked at Rodrigo, shaking his head. "I can't believe you can't wait."

Rodrigo shrugged. "Wait for what? I did my job, and I want to be paid. Whatever is left after the money I owe the casinos, of course."

Giancarlo answered, "What I gave you before is where you left it, in the kitchen." If Rodrigo cared so much about money, why did he leave the briefcase behind? It didn't make any sense. "I'll get your extra cash as soon as I can, but I just fired my general manager and we're sorting things out."

"I can't believe Claudio betrayed you." Braulio remarked.

"He most likely betrayed the both of you, which is the same thing. If someone hurts you, they hurt me too." Giancarlo explained.

Rodrigo stood as if he couldn't take it anymore and said, "Well, I'll call you tomorrow. Now, I better get going."

Braulio looked at Giancarlo with wide-open eyes, silently begging him to do something. Giancarlo extended an arm and stopped Rodrigo on his way to the door. "Do you want me to beg you to stay with us? Didn't you hear what I said?"

Rodrigo looked sideways at him. "I thought you were talking to Braulio."

"I included you, too, Rodrigo. I'm not sure what is going on between all of us, but whatever it is, I want to give it a good try."

Rodrigo faced him as if he were trying to figure out what Giancarlo wanted. "No need to be nice and gentle with me. What you want is to give me a good fuck. Ah. Before I forget, I didn't fuck Braulio, I touched him yes,

because he asked and because I couldn't help it, but his ass is as intact as when we left this house.”

Giancarlo laughed because Braulio's expression didn't announce anything good for Rodrigo. In that moment Braulio pushed his upper arm and said, “What is your obsession with my ass, Rodrigo? Stop it. This is more than fucking and you know it. If you want to leave, just do it.”

Rodrigo stared at Braulio in awe because he'd never seen him mad. Giancarlo put his arms around both of their shoulders and said, “I understand Rodrigo's obsession, Braulio. You have such a nice ass.”

“You too, Giancarlo?”

Giancarlo sighed and glanced at Rodrigo and then back at Braulio. “The truth is, Rodrigo's ass is the one I've been thinking a lot about.”

Braulio pushed him again, and asked defiantly. “Rodrigo, do you feel better now?”

“No. I already know he wants to fuck me.”

Giancarlo took a moment to clarify. “Yes, I want to fuck you, but after I spank the hell out of you. Hero and all, you're still a badass, Rodrigo. I can't believe I bothered doing anything nice for you.”

Rodrigo stared at him and asked, squinting his eyes, “What nice thing are you talking about?”

“Remember our last talk before you hit the road? I considered your suggestions and went shopping.” Giancarlo walked toward the guest bedroom and opened the door, “I got a lot of stuff that I have no idea of how it works, but I'm eager to learn. And I would like you to join me.”

Rodrigo entered the room. It had been transformed into a dungeon, even the formerly white walls were now black and burgundy. He touched some of the devices in there. He didn't know how to use them either, but the smell of leather and the shape of some of the toys on the different shelves excited him.

Giancarlo asked, “What do you say, are you hanging around here? Or going to your usual here and there?”

Rodrigo picked up a pair of metal cuffs and casually asked, “Is there going to be fucking with penetration?”

Giancarlo controlled a smirk. “Sure, deep penetration. I have condoms and lube too.”

Braulio stepped between them. “What about me? You guys aren’t going to leave me out, right?”

Rodrigo answered him, “This is for grown-up people.”

“I saw your driver’s license, you’re younger than me.”

“Maybe in years, but in experience, I’m ancient. I’m sorry, Braulio, you’re destined to die a virgin.”

“I am not.” Braulio insisted, and Rodrigo turned around to face him. “You are.”

“I’ve done so much stuff all these years with Giancarlo that I think we’re lovers. I’m not a virgin.”

“If he has never put his cock in you, that’s a virgin in my book.”

“Enough.” Giancarlo said the single word and both turned to look at him. Then he added, “Rodrigo, if what you want is to be the first to fuck him, tell him, and if he wants it, go ahead. I don’t have a problem.”

“You don’t?” Rodrigo asked surprised, and Braulio silently showed the same expression.

“No, I didn’t do it before because I feared becoming too possessive if I did. But you’re already very possessive of him, so to keep things in harmony, if he agrees, end his virginity.”

Braulio put his arm around Giancarlo. “And after I do it with him, will you ever go all the way with me?”

“Sure, I will. I’ll make love to you in any way you want me to.”

Rodrigo walked out the room, “Well, you know what, I love the sex thing, but I’m hungry. You’ve got to feed me first, or I won’t let you touch me.”

Braulio followed him, singing, “Somebody is jealous.”

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As Giancarlo closed the door to their makeshift dungeon, he got the feeling that this was going to be more intense than anything he ever faced in his life.

Rodrigo held Braulio’s hand for a second longer than needed. “Please stay.”

“No, pain isn’t my thing.”

“It’s not really painful, well, the good type of pain, I like it. This is something I always wanted to try.” He looked at his hand, an unusually shy gesture for Rodrigo. “When Giancarlo spanked me, I knew I had to do it seriously.”

Braulio smiled as if he understood, but still said, “I pass. I’ll be in the master bedroom.” He leaned forward and whispered something in Rodrigo’s ear that provoked a grin. Giancarlo watched Braulio leave with a thoughtful expression and asked, “What was all that about?”

“It’s a secret.”

“So you’re keeping secrets from me, eh?”

“No, Boss. He said that he missed my tongue, and that he wants me to make love to him later.”

“Do you know the difference between making love and fucking, Rodrigo?”

“I think I do. You should care deeply for the person you make love to, right?”

Giancarlo agreed. “Yes, but in Braulio’s case, he would probably like more tenderness.”

“I don’t know about that, but when I had to choose who lived back at the cabin, Braulio or me, I chose him. I knew I would have survived, but there was only one chance to escape, and I handed it to him.”

“Welcome to the club. I’ve never loved anybody until I met him.”

“So, we’re in love with the same guy.”

“I guess so.” Giancarlo wanted to add, *and after tonight, probably with each other*, but he moved on.

“Rodrigo, pick your safe word.”

“Stop.”

“Stop? Not very original, but it will do.”

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Rodrigo could hear Giancarlo circling him, slowly. Assessing him. Where had Giancarlo been while they were in the woods? He trusted him, but there was a little concern that wasn’t there before.

“The last time the three of us got together, you were all over the place, doing whatever you wanted. This time”—he held Rodrigo’s chin between his fingers—“I’m in charge.” He let go of his face.

“Is there any particular thing I should call you?”

“Just sir, or boss. Master is too much. I’m learning this together with you, so I don’t consider myself master of anything. Inside here, I lead, that’s all.”

“Good. Tell me what to do.”

“That sounds nice. For now, get undressed and put on some of this leather.” He handed the gear to Rodrigo, who took a while to figure out what it was. It looked like a bunch of intertwined leather strips. Giancarlo explained, “It’s a body harness. I’m wearing one too.”

“Can I see it?”

“Not yet. Let me help you put this on.”

Rodrigo observed as Giancarlo adjusted the different straps using the buckles at the ends of each one. The lower part left his bottom totally exposed, and only two leg straps helped keep it in place. At the front, Rodrigo easily recognized a set of two leather cock rings, resembling a pair of cuffs. Rodrigo was going to ask why two, when Giancarlo buckled one ring at the base of his

cock and another all the way around the top of his sack and his cock. He figured out he wasn't going to come any time soon, but he didn't say it.

When Rodrigo spent too much time looking at it, Giancarlo explained. "We release one first, then the other, at different times."

Next, Giancarlo put a set of leather cuffs on him, at both wrists and ankles. Rodrigo had never worn leather cuffs before, and he liked the feeling and security of the leather.

Finally, Giancarlo stood in front of him holding a leather collar that had a short leash. He hadn't been kidding when he said that in here he would lead. Rodrigo was amazed at how he could put all that gear on him without really touching him. That changed when the last piece was brought out—nipple clamps. Giancarlo's fingers briefly touched his skin as he adjusted the clamps on his nipples and Rodrigo wondered if he did it on purpose.

Giancarlo looked him in the eyes and asked, "Do you like what I put together for you?"

Rodrigo nodded, filled with an emotion he couldn't explain with words. It made him feel special that Giancarlo went this far to satisfy him, and now, what Rodrigo wanted the most was to please him. "Yes, Boss. Very much."

Giancarlo moved a few feet away and stopped in front of a leather seat that looked more like an ottoman.

"Get over here, and kneel on this. I want your ass in the air, knees bent and spread, and your hands resting next to each of your ankles." At first, it was hard to understand what Giancarlo intended, but once Rodrigo assumed the position, his cock went hard inside the leather rings. He would be so exposed with only the leg straps framing his bottom, a perfect position for spanking or being fucked.

"Beautiful, more than I expected." Giancarlo praised him.

"Thanks, Boss."

Giancarlo walked around the furniture, admiring his creation, and discarded his robe by throwing it over a nearby table. Rodrigo understood why

he waited until then to show himself. He looked magnificent, wearing a similar leather body harness, the only difference that the cock ring was made of metal. If Rodrigo had seen him from the start, there was no way Giancarlo could have gotten those two leather cock rings on him.

Giancarlo picked something off the leather bench, and it was then that Rodrigo realized that it had restraints that Giancarlo attached each of his cuffs to. An extra leather piece he hadn't noticed before forced his ankles to stay spread. Once all four cuffs were buckled down, the only way Rodrigo could move was forward and then backward until he could sit, his ass and balls resting on the leather that kept his legs apart. This sitting position was gently suggested by a tug of the leash on his collar.

For the first time in his life, Rodrigo enjoyed being tied up and dominated. It was also the first time he didn't have anything to argue or rebel against. It felt so right, and looking at Giancarlo, it seemed almost as if he was an experienced Dom.

Rodrigo raised his face to find Giancarlo standing right in front of him, holding his erect cock at his lips. "The other day you bragged that you were good at this. Do you want to show me how good?" Giancarlo suggested.

Rodrigo opened his lips to accept the uncut cock inside his mouth. Without using his hand, it was going to be a real challenge to display his talents, but he would enjoy every second of it. He used his tongue to lick the pre-come already gathering at the head, then he pushed the foreskin further back and continued to flick his tongue over the head and slit. He ventured a look at Giancarlo, hoping to see him lost in passion, but even as he breathed hard and fast, his eyes were set on Rodrigo and what he was doing.

He alternated sucking and licking, and at one point he left the cock to pay attention to Giancarlo's balls. He played with each one, again sucking and licking, then went up to engulf the head—and this time Giancarlo moaned. He used the leash to pull Rodrigo closer, going deeper into him. Rodrigo got ready to take him into his throat, but Giancarlo pulled his cock completely from his mouth, and said, "Lean forward like the first time, it's time for us to enjoy this seat."



Rodrigo wondered what happened. Didn't he like it? Was he going too slow, or did Giancarlo fear that he was going to come regardless of the cock ring?

He forgot all those questions when the leash was pulled again and he ended up leaning forward all the way, his chest almost between his spread knees, and his backside totally exposed. He felt Giancarlo standing behind him first, and next he felt a big strong hand, not the slap he expected, but a touch, a caress that could undo him more than the spanking.

The hand went up and down each of his buns, and after Rodrigo grew comfortable with that seductive touch, the first slap hit him. The tempo indicated that Giancarlo might be counting, unlike the first time, and the rhythm indicated a pattern he didn't have before.

The aching, like he said to Braulio earlier, was the best kind. He closed his eyes, holding in any scream he might want to release. Giancarlo stopped, his hand caressing again. Rodrigo could sense him walking around the seat, but he didn't open his eyes. Not until Giancarlo stood in front of him and raised his face using his hand, not the leash. "Are you okay, Rodrigo?" He was concerned, and that pleased Rodrigo. It had been a long time since anybody had been concerned about him. "Rodrigo?" he asked again, his voice had a little higher pitched this time.

Rodrigo almost forgot to answer. "Yes, I've never been better."

Next he felt Giancarlo moving around, undoing his restraints, but he still left the cuffs on. "I like how they look on you, but it's enough for today. We have many more nights and days to play with all of this."

Was he going to keep him around? Hope surged through Rodrigo's body, from head to toe. Yes, he cared deeply about Braulio, he wanted to make love to him, but the person that changed his life, and probably his destiny, was Giancarlo. His feelings ran so deep, he didn't want to admit them—not even to himself.

Rodrigo let the other man help him to his feet, and placed his hand on Giancarlo's waist, the skin tempting. He wanted to touch Giancarlo all over, but instead waited.

Giancarlo clamped onto his short hair and kissed him on the mouth. Slowly first, only with his lips, and later hungrily as if he couldn't help himself, sucking Rodrigo's tongue. "Do you think you can still do Braulio tonight?"

Rodrigo nodded. Simply by seeing him, he might come. "Yes, please bring him in."

"No, it's better if we go to the bedroom. There is a chance afterward you won't be able to walk."

"Really? Just watch me, Boss."

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## CHAPTER 11

They went to the next room, where Braulio sat on the bed, nude and obviously waiting for them. “Are you okay, Rodrigo?”

“Yes, I’m doing so well— guess who is going to lose his virginity right away?”

He pumped his cock up and down, and sat on the bed, but as soon as his backside made contact he stood up. “Oh. This time you did better than before, Giancarlo.”

Giancarlo laughed, and said, “It looks better too. All red and sweet.” He threw a few condoms on the bed and the bottle of lube. “I’m going to watch.”

“Hey, you said that you were going to do it to me tonight.”

“And I will. First do the honors to Braulio.”

“And you? Are you not going to touch me?” Braulio asked Giancarlo.

“Sure, if you want me to.”

“Please.”

Rodrigo kissed Braulio and slid his hands all over his abdomen, the muscles nicely shaped, not a six-pack, but who cared, he had a really lean body, and Rodrigo had enjoyed touching him so much back in the cabin. Now he couldn’t wait to be inside of him. He pinched Braulio’s nipples with both hands at the same time, and was rewarded by Braulio arching his neck in pleasure. Rodrigo licked his neck, and showered kisses all over his torso. At one point, his eyes met Giancarlo’s, who simply smiled, like he approved, before Giancarlo leaned forward and kissed Braulio on the lips.

Rodrigo went downward, a trail of nibbles until he reached Braulio’s cock. There, he licked the cut head and started to suck on it, looking for a reaction, but Braulio and Giancarlo continued kissing.

Then Rodrigo remembered what drove Braulio insane. Rodrigo lay between Braulio’s open legs and cupped Braulio’s ball sac in his palm. Keeping Braulio’s balls and cock out of the way, Rodrigo concentrated on the

rosebud of muscle between Braulio's ass cheeks. Using his head to keep the balls and cock up, he spread Braulio's ass cheeks until his tongue could access Braulio's asshole and then he started to flick his tongue over it. He didn't need to see what Braulio was doing, because he could hear his moans and his encouragement. He continued to lick him that way, until he felt Giancarlo's hand sliding into the crease of his own buttocks searching for his entrance.

"It's lube time, Rodrigo" He said with a deep voice that indicated the high excitement he was experiencing.

"Yes, Boss."

Rodrigo tried to concentrate on getting the slippery gel onto his fingers and into Braulio, carefully and slowly, pushing a single finger in and out. But it was hard concentrating on another's asshole when his own was being fingered, too. Besides, every time Giancarlo moved his fingers inside his crease, he also touched his bruised backside, and the sensations became hard to ignore. He finally got two fingers into Braulio, curving them he touched his sweet spot. Braulio shook with pleasure and Rodrigo twisted his fingers, looking behind him he said to Giancarlo, "I'm going in."

Giancarlo moved away to let him kneel between Braulio's wide-open legs. Rodrigo placed each of Braulio's feet over his shoulders and looked at his eager expression. "Braulio, at first it will bother you, even hurt, but after a few minutes, it will be okay. Let me know if you can't take it."

Braulio nodded, and Giancarlo handed Rodrigo a condom, which he rolled over his cock before placing the head at Braulio's entrance, pushing forward past the sphincter. Braulio grunted, but quickly encouraged him to keep going. Rodrigo went in and waited until Braulio moved his hips, then Rodrigo pulled out almost completely before going back in and starting a rhythm. Then he felt Giancarlo behind him, asking, "Do you want me now?"

Rodrigo hesitated for a second. He'd never done something like that, but if it was possible, of course he wanted it. "Oh, yes," he muttered through the intense pleasure of how Braulio grasped his cock. He had forgotten the cock rings, although in that instant he felt grateful for having them on.

Again he heard Giancarlo at his ear. “Open your legs, I’ll do the rest. Pay attention to Braulio.”

Rodrigo noticed how he winked at him before placing himself almost under Rodrigo in order to get his cock in a good position to enter him. Rodrigo stopped his hips long enough for Giancarlo’s penetration, and the burning pleasure of each thrust, coupled with the firm grasp of Braulio’s ass around his cock, almost drove him insane.

They achieved a good rhythm, and Braulio was the first one to come, his head thrashing from side to side, and nearly breathless Rodrigo asked, “Hey, Braulio, see? I was right, you were a virgin.”

All Braulio could do was nod, and then Giancarlo placed his hand at the base of Rodrigo’s cock, still inside Braulio, and undid the first cock ring. Rodrigo thought he was coming, too, the next time he received Giancarlo’s cock in full, but he didn’t. He let go of Braulio and started a frantic back and forth with Giancarlo, his head resting on the broad chest, their bodies going at the same tempo. He nearly missed when Giancarlo released the second cock ring— all he knew was why some called it the small death, because he felt himself dying and reviving again after that orgasm.

He felt Giancarlo removing the condom from him, and maybe he muttered a *thank you*, he wasn’t sure, but he saw Braulio’s smile after he kissed him briefly in the lips. Before falling sleep, he prayed for the first time in years. He prayed for them to continue to be together for the longest time.

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During the last three years, ever since Braulio went to college and came back, Giancarlo kept expecting that Braulio would find a boyfriend, someone around his own age who would attract him more. He never expected to be the one who introduced Braulio to this person, or that it was going to be Rodrigo. *What does he see in him?* He asked himself. *Idiot, the same thing you do. The guy is sex incarnate.* But the thing Giancarlo never, ever expected was falling in love with an intensity that scared him.

His love for Braulio was tamed, controllable— what he felt for Rodrigo didn't know restraint. He was in deep trouble, his only hope that Rodrigo cared about them at least enough to stay for a while.

Now, they lay together on the bed, Giancarlo in the middle, and each of them at his sides. Braulio snuggled, as was his custom, while Rodrigo kept the physical contact to a minimum.

“How was it, Braulio? Did you like it? Did he do a good job?”

Braulio smiled and said, “Yes, he was awesome. Now I know why fucking is so popular.”

Giancarlo laughed and Braulio joined him. They did that often, laughing together was one of their favorite things. Rodrigo didn't join them, and he stayed with his face hidden under a pillow.

Giancarlo poked at him. “Hey! Do you want a refund? Didn't you like it?”

Slowly Rodrigo turned and looked at him. “It was good.”

*Good?* Giancarlo felt everything inside him drop down to his feet. *Only good? God.* Then he noticed the sadness in Rodrigo. “What's the matter?”

“Nothing. I said it was good. Almost great.”

Yes, something was amiss. “Rodrigo, feel free to say whatever is going on with you.”

“There is nothing to say.” He turned his back on Giancarlo again, this time with no physical contact at all.

Braulio was going to reach out and touch him, but Giancarlo gestured at him to wait. Then he sat on the bed, resting against the headboard and asked Rodrigo, “Even if it was only *good, almost great*, will you stay with us for a while?”

This time Rodrigo turned over faster, and sat up. His dark eyes looked into Giancarlo's face and then Braulio's, before he returned his gaze to Giancarlo and confessed. “I'm afraid of getting used to this and losing it.”

Giancarlo felt those were the most sincere words Rodrigo said in a long time. “Me too, Rodrigo. Listen, if I use the word love, you will ridicule me, probably with reason, because it’s too soon. So, I’m going to say, that whatever is happening between us, it’s good, almost great, and I want to keep it for a while. Please stay.”

Braulio repeated, “Please.” And hugged Giancarlo while extending his hand. Rodrigo kissed it, and then hugged Giancarlo himself while saying, “I don’t know anything about love or those things people feel, but I agree, this good thing, we should enjoy it for a while. And since you guys are begging me. How can I say no? So, I’ll be hanging around here for sure.”

“Great.” Giancarlo smiled and held on to both of them.

Then Braulio asked, “Giancarlo, your grandparents have each other. Can you stay with us all the time? I mean, really live here with us, and go visit them?”

In that moment Giancarlo realized that he had a lot of explaining to do when he met his grandfather again, he hope his old man would buy his story of hiring these young men as new members of his crew. But that could wait, he smiled at Braulio and answered, “Since you’re begging too, I’ll live here permanently to save commuting time, because I have a submissive to train, and a lover to share.”

Braulio poked at a nearly sleeping Rodrigo. “I want to do the same thing you were doing with Giancarlo.”

“The other night?” Rodrigo asked drowsily. “We did that at the cabin. Do you want to try it again?”

Braulio demanded, “No, what you guys were doing just now.”

“I thought you didn’t like the dungeon.” Rodrigo barely opened his wary eyes.

“Who is talking about the dungeon? I want to be the one in the middle.” Braulio said.

Rodrigo opened his eyes wide. “You want to fuck me? Is that what you’re saying?”

Giancarlo rolled over and covered his head with his arm. “Guys, I’m taking a nap. When you know who is going to take it and from who, wake me up. For the record, my asshole is out of the equation.”

“Sure, Boss, we’ll be practicing. Braulio under me, of course.”

Braulio picked a condom and gave Rodrigo a nudge and his most angelic smile. “I’m waiting, my friend. So, you’re going to ride me, right?”

“You little monster, stop pushing me.” Rodrigo muttered between his teeth. “And give me that, you have no idea how to wear one.”

Braulio stood and grinned. “No? Get down on all fours and I’ll show you.”

“Give me that, I said!” Rodrigo tried to reach him in vain, and Braulio ran out of the room followed by Rodrigo to continue the argument all over the apartment. It took a while for Giancarlo to fall asleep, because they were making too much noise. Once in a while he heard what the argument was about, and the last thing he heard before falling asleep while smiling, was that they were flipping a coin, and Braulio won every time.

**THE END**



## **Author Bio**

*I live somewhere in the Northeastern United States and write gay fiction, because there are passions that don't fit in any closet. Please visit my blog to learn more about me or my current work.*

## **Contact Info**

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