

# LOVE Has NO Boundaries



Don't Read in the Closet Event 2013

# SMARTASS

# Lynn Lorenz

## **Contents**

Love Has No Boundaries .....	3
SMARTASS .....	6
CHAPTER ONE.....	7
CHAPTER TWO.....	11
CHAPTER THREE.....	16
CHAPTER FOUR.....	21
CHAPTER FIVE.....	26
CHAPTER SIX .....	30
CHAPTER EIGHT.....	39
Author Bio.....	44

# Love Has No Boundaries

*An M/M Romance series*

## SMARTASS

**By Lynn Lorenz**

### 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.

All rights reserved worldwide.

This eBook may be distributed freely in its entirety courtesy of the *Goodreads M/M Romance Group*. This eBook may not be sold, manipulated or reproduced in any format without the express written permission of the author.

Smartass, Copyright © 2013 Lynn Lorenz

Cover Design by Goodreads M/M Romance Group

This ebook is published by the *M/M Romance Group* and is not directly endorsed by or affiliated with Goodreads Inc.

# SMARTASS

By Lynn Lorenz

## Photo Description

The photo is of a young man wearing a T-shirt with the caption “Life is short & so is your penis.”

## Story Letter

*Dear Author,*

*I'm screwed! I never should have done that, but it's not like he didn't deserve it. Please help me get out of this mess I've made!*

*Thank you!*

*Natalija*

## Story Info

**Genre:** contemporary

**Tags:** smart-ass, brat, hero, hurt/comfort, ex-military

**Word count:** 10,853

# SMARTASS

By Lynn Lorenz

## CHAPTER ONE

“You kiss your mother with that mouth?”

Ricky Vargas stopped, turned and shot the big son-of-a-bitch following him out of the bathroom the finger. Guess he didn't get the message when Ricky told him to fuck off and die after the sloppy drunk tried to grab Ricky's dick at the urinal.

The man lurched forward, reaching for Ricky. *Seriously?* Did this guy not realize he was drunk *and* ugly?

“Come on, mosquito dick! Prove you're a man. Whip it out and let the bar vote,” Ricky called out, loud enough for everyone in the vicinity to hear. He held his hands apart about twelve inches and then brought them together until only about four inches separated them. The crowd laughed. Someone shouted, “Oh, snap!”

If there was anything Ricky liked better than being the center of attention it was causing trouble. For Ricky, they usually went hand in hand.

As the man glared into Ricky's face, Ricky used his foot to slide a chair in the big man's path.

“Motherfu—” The drunk stumbled over the chair, careened to the side and smashed into another guy at the next table.

The big, bald, and tatted guy's beer arced up out of his glass and splashed all over his date, who blinked fast enough to cause a seizure. Beer dripped down his face and over the front of his clothes. He hit a note only dogs could hear, stood, and furiously wiped the liquid off his skintight black jeggings.

Ricky grinned, and then frowned. Where were the fashion police when you needed them? Jeggings? *Seriously?*

The beer guy cursed, turned, grabbed the drunk and slammed his fist into the dude's belly, doubling him over. Then he grabbed him by the belt and tossed him onto another table, which splintered and disintegrated under his weight.

The two leather daddies sitting there stood and waded into the melee, as the bartender vaulted over the bar and pushed his way through the crowd, whooping like a B-movie Geronimo.

The rest of bar watched like drivers passing a fatality.

Ricky knew just how this would end; no one would step forward. They never did. It was his cue to leave. As the bar erupted into pandemonium, he sauntered through it, out the door, and onto the street. At the curb, he cocked one hip out, raised his arm, and waved at a passing cab.

For a moment, his self-satisfied smirk slipped.

*Where the hell is a hero when you need one?*

Ricky needed a hero and damned if it looked like he would never find one.

\*\*\*\*

Dirk McAfee raised an eyebrow at the destruction occurring all around him. Chairs and tables were tossed like confetti as the fights continued. Whoever said gays couldn't fight had never been in the right bars. The bartender had a bald man in a headlock, as everyone else gathered to watch and egg them on.

And the cause of it all had just traipsed his fine, tight ass right out the door, without a look back over his shoulder. In a way, Dirk admired the young man, and not because he looked like sex on two legs.

In Dirk's experience, you don't cause that sort of trouble without knowing what you're doing. The kid had the routine down pat, proving this wasn't the first time he'd started a fight.

And walked away without a scratch.

Damn.



He was a force of nature. But even storms run out of energy and Dirk had a feeling this kid was about to run out of luck.

*Not my problem.*

He took another sip of his whiskey and leaned back against the bar. His gaze flicked from the action around him to the door. Everyone was moving away, the bartender stood over the drunk, and the other guy sat on a chair, his boyfriend fretting about him.

If the kid wasn't careful, he'd get his ass kicked, or worse.

Still, not Dirk's problem.

Nothing was his problem anymore. Not since he'd left the Marines behind him, fed up with fighting a war he didn't believe in, tired of seeing his friends blown up or shot. Tired of being on constant alert, of sleeping on the ground, of sand in every nook and cranny on his body.

Where had the kid gone?

Why should he care? He made it a point not to care about anyone anymore. A little survival technique he'd picked up pretty damn quick in Iraq, and he couldn't seem to shake it. Couldn't get back to normal.

Whatever the hell *that* was.

Dirk sighed, finished his drink in one toss, slid off the stool, and headed for the door.

On the street, the young man waited as a cab pulled up to the curb. Dirk edged closer. Either the kid was going home or he was moving to the next bar.

Dirk stood just behind him as he leaned into the open rear door.

"Rockaways." Dirk recognized the name of the bar. One of those places leather and motorcycles gathered at. Not good. Lots of ways to get into trouble there.

When the kid got in, Dirk was right behind him, pushing his way into the cab, forcing the guy over into the other side of the bench seat.

"What the fuck are you doing?" The kid pushed back, even as he moved.

“Heard you were going to Rockaways. So am I. Thought we’d share a cab.” Dirk shrugged, slammed the door and tapped his finger on the plastic partition. “Let’s go, driver.”

The dude glared at him, but Dirk didn’t miss the once over. He must have liked what he saw because he just crossed his arms and sank back into the seat.

The cab pulled away and into the traffic.

Dirk glanced sideways at the young man next to him. A familiar scent caught his attention—vanilla and baby powder. No wonder the daddies wanted him. Besides the kohl-lined blue eyes and the thick dark lashes and blue eyes. His lips were built for kissing. Dirk looked down between the kid’s legs.

Either he was a shower or he was aroused. Either way, he wasn’t lacking. And either way, Dirk needed to keep his eyes and hands to himself.

How long had it been since Dirk had had sex in a cab? Whether it was the scent, the sight of the young man, or the outline of his cock in his black leather pants, his dick thickened.

Dirk had no idea what had come over him, other than the basic need to fuck, but he had mastered controlling his needs in the military. And tonight would be no different.

He had to ask himself again what the hell he was doing, and why the hell all he wanted to do was pull this young man down and let him suck his dick.

Dirk didn’t like the answers to either of those questions.

\*\*\*\*

## CHAPTER TWO

“I don’t know who the fuck you think you are, but usually people ask first before barging into a cab.” Ricky shifted in his seat, spreading his legs apart to get more comfortable. No room to lounge in the backseat with this asshole taking up all the space and oxygen.

“I’m Dirk.” He crossed his hand over his body to offer it for a handshake. A bear paw, if Ricky’d ever seen one. If old Dirk thought he’d get him some of this tonight, he was crazy.

Ricky stared at the hand until the man lowered it.

“And your name is?”

“None of your fucking business.” Ricky looked out the window as the scenery rolled past. Stores, parking lots, a few apartment buildings. Nothing he hadn’t seen before. Same old, same old.

Next to him, the man smiled, like he had a secret.

Ricky hated secrets.

He’d seen all sorts of moves before, and this was no different from the others. The guy would try to strike up a conversation, and when they got to the club, he’d try to stake a claim on Ricky.

But this dude? Now he was something Ricky didn’t come across every day. Ricky couldn’t put his finger on him—tough, quiet spoken, but he oozed danger. As if he were a coiled snake, hiding in the dark, waiting to strike.

Dirk, if that was really his name, wasn’t handsome, not model or movie star good-looking. Not at all. But Ricky found him attractive. Something about the man, his size, his voice, the distance he kept from Ricky, as if afraid to touch him and spook him, all pulled Ricky to him like a comet caught in the gravitational pull of a sun.

Dirk oozed daddy, but not like the others, staked out in leather and nail heads, walking stereotypes from gay porn. No shaved head or thick mustache. No curling chest hair peeking out from a too-tight deep V-necked T-shirt.

This guy had on jeans and a black cotton sweater. The only thing he wore that could point to being a leather daddy was his boots. They looked like tan military boots, worn and scuffed, like he'd gotten them used from the army surplus store.

Fashion faux pas or fashion fabulous?

Dirk wore them like second nature. Like he'd worn them for years. He was comfortable in his own skin and his boots. That appealed to Ricky, which was scary, because Ricky's taste in men sucked.

Ricky swallowed, not sure if he was in danger or not. Usually his warning bells would be going off, ringing like mad, but right now, nothing. Not even a chime.

Calm oozed off of Dirk and it slipped around Ricky like a warm blanket. For a moment, he thought he'd been drugged. But the man hadn't touched him, other than to muscle him into the cab. And Ricky hadn't had a drink at the bar.

The urge to sink against the man, to let him wrap a strong arm around him and hold him close, had Ricky leaning, ever so slightly, toward Dirk.

*Oh, fuck no!*

Ricky coughed and hunched against the door, moving as far away from Dirk as he could get. He didn't like losing control. It scared the crap out of him, which is why he didn't drink or do drugs anymore.

When you give up control you're at the mercy of those around you. And that's when you learned who you could trust. And who you couldn't.

And you're fucked if the one person you thought you could trust turned out to be the one you should have been afraid of all along. You were alone, with no one around to help. No one who'd step forward, intervene, keep the pack from tearing you to shreds, like starving wolves on a rabbit.

"Been to Rockaway's before?" Dirk asked.

Ricky nodded, afraid to speak, to keep engaging with this man, despite being drawn to him. He wanted out of the cab, but knew if it just kept driving, he'd be content to sit next to Dirk until daybreak.

Ricky slipped his hand over the door handle and clung to it, like the end of a rope tethering him to freedom. When the cab stopped, he'd get out and ditch Dirk in the darkness of the club.

Rockaway's. He might get lucky there. Like a dozen times before, his heartbeat quickened and his adrenaline shot up.

His dick stiffened.

Now that wasn't what usually happened just going to a bar. It wasn't the bar, the prospect of what might happen inside, or what he might find there. No. It was the fear he'd give up his search for what he needed for who sat next to him.

Temptation on two jean-clad legs.

Short cropped blond hair. Gray eyes. And a honey-tinged whiskey voice that wrapped around Ricky, lulling him into dropping his guard, lowering his defenses.

Ricky depended on those defenses to keep him safe. If he surrendered, he'd be right back where he started—alone and vulnerable to attack.

The cab pulled over. Before it finished rocking to a stop, Ricky opened the door and bolted toward the club, leaving Dirk and the driver behind.

\*\*\*\*

The little shit was fast. Dirk chuckled. "Here." He handed the driver a twenty. "Wait for me. I shouldn't be long." He slid out and stood on the sidewalk.

The red Rockaway's sign blinked off and on over the door through which the kid had disappeared. Dirk didn't rush. The guy could handle himself. He'd proven that already at the other bar.

But Rockaway's had a rep and it wasn't good.

This kid was looking for trouble. But why?

Mysteries intrigued Dirk. And this kid was a mystery Dirk wanted to unravel. Hell yeah, with his hand on the guy's head as he took Dirk down his throat.

The thought of his dark-lined eyes looking up, his mouth open around Dirk's cock, sucking him like a Hoover. Hell, yeah. Dirk rubbed his cock and started toward the bar.

A biker exited and staggered off down the block. A row of motorcycles lined up next to the building on the side parking area.

His kid had bitten off more than he could chew coming to this place and Dirk needed to get in there before all hell broke loose.

He stopped in his tracks. *His kid?*

Dirk exhaled. Yeah, his kid. There was no fighting it and Dirk knew it.

He grabbed the door handle, pulled it open and stepped inside. After pausing to let his eyes adjust to the dark, he moved to the bar to order a beer. The bartender slid a draft to him and Dirk tossed a five on the counter.

Then he turned, leaned his back against the bar and scanned the club for his kid.

All the usual suspects. Loud music you had to shout over to be heard. The stink of stale beer. An underlying smell of sex and aftershave.

Not a hint of vanilla and talc. Or a sign of black spiked up hair.

Where the hell could he have gone to? For a moment, Dirk thought maybe he'd gone out the back. Through the dim light, Dirk made out the sign for the restrooms, down a back hall.

Had to be.

Dirk slammed down the rest of his beer, got off the stool and headed for the men's room. He crossed the bar, skirting tables of men dressed in leather and bad attitudes.

The door to the bathroom burst open, expelling the little smart-ass like a watermelon seed. And right behind him, a huge man stalked.

“Come back here you little fucker!”

This had to be a record, even for the kid. He’d been in the bar less than ten minutes and he’d managed to start shit. Dirk grinned.

Until the kid stumbled, catching himself on the wall with both arms outstretched to keep from diving face first into the floor. His shirt hung open and blood trickled from the corner of his mouth.

Dirk’s grin faded and something inside him snapped. Flicked on like a light switch. Electricity shot through him, cranking his heart like an old carburetor, bringing him back to life.

\*\*\*\*

## CHAPTER THREE

Ricky tasted blood and spit it out as he wobbled on unsteady legs down the hall. The side of his face still stung from a wicked backhand slap. He had to get away, get out of there, before the bastard finished what he'd started.

This time, he'd gone too far.

The hall looked like a tunnel, dark and threatening, and for a moment all light had been blocked.

He wiped his hand over his eyes and looked again.

The figure of a man came toward him, dimly illuminated from behind. Ricky knew there was no going back, only forward. But this man was just as big as the other one, and maybe, just maybe, Ricky had run out of luck.

He was trapped.

Both men advanced. Ricky swallowed blood, and then staggered forward, head down. Maybe he'd just pass the guy up, get to the bar, but if he stood here, the other man would reach him first.

Out of the darkness, the man from the cab appeared. *Dirk*.

Ricky almost cried, until he saw the look in Dirk's eyes. It said death, motherfucker, I'm going to kill you, and don't touch what's mine, all at once.

Ricky flattened against one wall as Dirk passed him like the angel of death or like a god bent on destruction.

"Get the fuck away from him, cocksucker." The menace in Dirk's voice was more than enough to make the man from the bathroom halt, and take a step back as he shook his head.

"Hey, man. I didn't know he belonged to anyone. Pussy comes in here, nothing on him, what was I supposed to do?" He held up his hands to ward off Dirk.

"You don't touch, fucker. You ask permission." He turned and pointed to Ricky. "That blood don't look like permission, it looks like no. Don't you



know what the fuck no means?” His voice dropped to a dangerous level, rumbling like bass against the wall of the narrow hallway.

Ricky stared at Dirk’s back. The man seemed bigger than he had in the cab. Had he somehow blown up, enlarged, like a cobra, giving the illusion of being larger than he actually was?

No, Dirk was really and truly big. And pissed off.

Over Ricky?

No one had ever—

“Now, I need you to apologize to my friend and then leave.”

The biker frowned. “Leave? Who the hell are you? I’ll say I’m sorry if I stepped on toes, but I’m not leaving.” He put his hands on his hips and spread his stance.

“Walk out the front door, or I’ll throw you out.”

Ricky edged closer to Dirk. “He can do it, too!” Ricky shouted. “Don’t fuck with him; he can whip your ass!” He couldn’t help himself; he had to tell that fucker off.

“I don’t need your help, honey,” Dirk drawled over his shoulder. “Just stay behind me and keep your smart ass mouth shut. For once.”

Ricky nodded. “Okay. Zipped.” *Honey? Smart ass?*

“Fuck you and your little pussy boy.” The man roared and charged. Ricky backed up, sliding against the wall until he hit the old phone hanging on the wall.

Dirk stepped into the rush, and his fist connected with the guy’s jaw, snapping back his head. He staggered backward and Dirk landed another punch, this time in the kidneys.

The guy doubled over, fell to his knees, clutching his belly and groaning. In slow motion, he collapsed to the side against the wall.

“Next time, ask. And remember no means no.” Dirk looked down at the dude, then up at Ricky. “Are you hurt?”

Ricky shook his head.

Dirk nodded. He strode down the hall to Ricky, took him by the elbow, and marched him out of the bar.

“Just keep walking and keep your mouth shut.”

\*\*\*\*

Ricky dragged his heels, as Dirk pulled him along. Who the hell did this guy think he was?

“Hey, let me go!” Ricky struggled against Dirks’s grip, but the man had him in a grip so strong he couldn’t break it.

“No way. You’re done for the night.” Dirk reached the door and kicked it open.

“I’m not going anywhere. You’re not the boss of me.” Ricky twisted away, breaking free at last, only to stumble on the sidewalk. A cab waited at the curb.

“Maybe I should be.” Dirk opened the door of the cab. “Get in.”

“You can’t tell me what to do.” Ricky balked like a stubborn kid. “I’m twenty-three and been on my own since I was sixteen.”

Dirk exhaled, his massive shoulders rising up and then down. He looked as if he were about to lose his patience. Ricky glared at him, but it was an act. Ricky wanted... Dirk. Damn him.

“I don’t need you to tell me what to do or when to leave or where to go.” Ricky jutted out his chin and cocked his hip.

Dirk stepped up to him, wrapped a big paw around the back of his neck and dragged Ricky against his hard body. Ricky gasped as he raised his hands to brace himself against Dirk. Solid muscle.

The big man leaned down and whispered in Ricky’s ear, “You *will* get in the cab. You *will* go home. And you *will* do as I say.”

All the air left Ricky’s lungs in a deep sigh. Dirk’s voice slid through his ear and straight to his balls, where it wrapped around them and gave a loving squeeze.

“Yes, Dirk.” What else could he say? He’d never been so helpless or so willing to be helpless.

Dirk released him and gave him a little push toward the taxi’s open door. Ricky got in, slid across the seat and waited for Dirk to get in.

\*\*\*\*

Dirk stood with one hand on the roof of the cab and one on the door. He took a deep breath to steady himself. God Almighty. This kid was going to be the death of him.

Didn’t he ever stop pushing? Didn’t his mind ever control what came out of his mouth? Dirk doubted it.

The kid needed a keeper, for damn sure. But not him. Hell, no. He’d left his babysitting days when he kissed the military goodbye and he didn’t plan on falling into that trap again. No matter how sexy it looked.

He shook his head, stiffened his resolve and got into the cab. He stayed on his side of the seat, because that last move, pulling the boy against him, nearly killed him.

“Tell the driver your address.”

The kid rattled off his street and numbers, and his arms crossed over his chest as if protecting himself. From Dirk?

If anyone needed protection it was Dirk.

“What’s your name?” He shouldn’t care, but he didn’t want to keep calling him “the kid”.

The silence stretched as the kid chewed his bottom lip. Dirk stifled a groan and the urge to run his tongue over it.

“Ricky.” Like it killed him to say it.

“Okay, Ricky.” Figured. He probably spelled it with two “Ks” and an “I”. All Dirk needed to do was take Ricky home, deposit him there and be on his way. Job done.

“You’ve got a real way with words, Dirk.” Ricky glared out the window, refusing to look at him.

Dirk refused to rise to the bait. “It’s a gift.”

“You should return it and get your money back.”

Dirk chuckled. “Maybe I will.”

“You should.” Ricky had to get the last word. He pouted and Dirk almost burst out laughing.

They fell into a mutual silence. The neighborhood changed from businesses to residential, and from nice to questionable. Shady men and trashy women hung on the corners under street lights or in the shadows of abandoned buildings. Unease rippled through Dirk as the area sank deeper into disrespectable, moving fast into dangerous.

Ricky lived around here?

The cabbie called out the address as he pulled up in front of a run-down apartment building covered in spray painted gang symbols and pigeon shit. Half the windows were busted out. A man younger than Ricky sold crack to an even younger girl. She slipped him some cash and pocketed the small plastic baggie.

“You live here?” Dirk frowned as he bent forward to look past Ricky. The place had to be abandoned. Probably no running water, no heat, and no electricity.

“Sorry, it’s not the Ritz.” Ricky opened the door. “Oh, yeah. Wait. I don’t give a shit what you think. Fuck off, *Dirk*.”

Oh hell, no. Not on his watch.

\*\*\*\*

## CHAPTER FOUR

Dirk could make all the faces he wanted, but it didn't mean a thing to Ricky. This is where he lived and if Mr. High and Mighty didn't like it, well, too fucking bad.

It was cheap.

So what if Ricky had to lock himself in and shove a chair under the doorknob? So what if he had to pay Fazel, the dealer who ran the building, fifty bucks to stay here and another fifty for protection? At least Fazel left him alone. Most of the time.

"Well, it's been a slice." Ricky pushed the taxi's door open and slid to the edge of the seat. He had one leg out the door when Dirk grabbed his arm and pulled him back in.

"What the fuck?" Ricky turned back to glare at where Dirk's hand wrapped around his bicep. "Will you quit grabbing me!"

"Get back in the cab."

Ricky snorted. "Who the hell do you think you are? You can *not* tell me what to do. You must have me confused with someone who gives a shit what you say." He jerked his arm, but Dirk held on tight. The heat from Dirk's fingers singed Ricky, but he refused to succumb to the burn.

"I said, get back in the cab." Dirk's voice dropped two octaves.

Ricky froze. His heart hammered as if it'd break his ribs trying to get out, and the air in his lungs vaporized.

No one had ever given a shit about him. Not his family. Not any so-called boyfriends. No one.

Except this man. This stranger had come to his rescue, not once but twice. And now Dirk was trying to do it again.

Damn.

Ricky slumped back against the seat. He pulled in his leg and shut the door. His throat convulsed as he tried to swallow back what threatened to burst out of him. Tears burned his eyes, but he turned his head and blinked them away.

“Hey, honey.” Dirk placed his finger under Ricky’s chin and turned his head. “Look at me.”

Ricky looked up into ice-blue eyes filled with something he’d never seen before. If this was what he’d always wanted to see from a man, why the hell did it scare the shit out of him? Why did he want to throw open the door, haul ass up the stairs straight to his room, and lock the door behind him?

He trembled, on the verge of destroying his one and only chance at maybe having his dreams come true.

But for guys like him, dreams never came true. Not when he’d been a kid and his father walked out on him and his mom. Not when his mom took up with a man who liked to touch Ricky where no one should have touched a child. Not even when his mom refused to stop that man from throwing Ricky out of what had been his home for sixteen years.

“Dirk, you don’t know me. You don’t know anything about me. I’m not—”

“Shut up, Ricky. For once in your life, can you just listen?” He looked deep into Ricky’s eyes and Ricky melted.

Ricky nodded, his lips pressed tight together. Maybe...

“I’m not leaving you here. This place is a hell hole. You don’t belong here. I don’t know who convinced you this is all you deserve, but they were wrong.”

Ricky stopped breathing. He couldn’t be hearing right, could he? What was wrong with Dirk? Couldn’t he see what Ricky was?

Maybe he did.

Maybe he didn’t care.

“You might be a smart-ass, but you’re smart. Cocky as hell, but under all that is confidence. And I’ve never seen anyone so determined to cause trouble.” Dirk chuckled. “You’re a force of nature.”

The cabbie turned around. “Hey, you getting out or what?”

“No. He’s not.” Dirk gave the driver his address.

“What are you doing? Where are we going?” Ricky stared out the window as the taxi left his apartment building.

“My place.”

“Why?” Ricky threw his hands up in the air. “Look, Dirk. I’m not some lost puppy you can just pick up and take home. I have a home.”

“That was a home?” Dirk snorted. “That was a hovel. That was a crack house. You’re not safe there. “

“But it was *my* crack house hovel!” Ricky couldn’t believe it. Dirk insulted his home and now was taking him to his place. “Who said I wanted to go with you? And for how long? A day? A week? Forever?” His voice had reached a new octave, but he couldn’t stop. “All my *things* are there.”

Dirk stared at him, and then he ran his hands through his hair. “You’re right. I’m completely out of line. I don’t know you. I don’t know what your place is like. It was a knee-jerk reaction.” He leaned back against the seat and cut his gaze over to Ricky. “I’ll take you home. To your place. If that’s what you want.”

Ricky looked out the window, his pursed lips working left and right. Dirk had no idea what had come over him, but when he’d seen the place, he’d flipped. Protective didn’t begin to explain how he felt, and damned if he understood why.

“Should I take you home, Ricky?”

“No,” Ricky whispered. He rubbed his hands together and wiped them on his leather pants. “I don’t want to go home. I want to go with you.”

“Look. I didn’t think this through. I just reacted.” He shrugged. “Why do you want to come with me?”

Ricky sighed. “Because you cared. Because you stepped in back at the bar.”

“You were about to get your ass kicked.”

“Maybe.” Ricky shrugged

“Definitely.” Dirk grinned. “But it wasn’t the first time you’d done that, was it? Started shit?” The kid was annoying and fucking adorable in a way that twisted Dirk inside out.

“Maybe.”

“Definitely.” Now Dirk laughed. “Jeez, you’re a little smart-ass. When I saw you at the bar...”

“You wanted me?” Ricky leaned closer and put his hand on Dirk’s leg.

“I wanted to keep you safe.”

Ricky edged closer and placed his lips next to Dirk’s ear. “You wanted me bad, didn’t you?” Just the heat from Ricky’s body and what he offered got Dirk’s cock up.

Dirk could turn his head and take Ricky with a kiss. Unzip his jeans and push Ricky’s head down to suck him. He could, but he didn’t.

“I wanted to keep that asshole from killing you. That’s all.”

Ricky laughed. “Liar.” He glanced down. “That’s not what your dick says. It says you want to fuck me.”

Dirk stared at the back of the driver’s head. No way was he going to get into shit with Ricky in the back of this cab. He recognized the neighborhood. They were almost to his place.

“Look. Let’s discuss this later. At my place, okay?”

Ricky fell back to his corner. “Okay.” He rolled his eyes. “Whatever.”

*Whatever?* Dirk wasn’t sure if getting into anything with Ricky was a good idea. If he was smart, he’d let Ricky spend the night, and send him on his way in the morning.

He’d always been smart about the men in his life, keeping them at a distance. Before he’d gone into the military, while he was there, and now that he was out, he planned on staying smart. Picking up Ricky had been stupid.

For once, he didn’t have a plan of action.



Ever since he'd spotted Ricky, Dirk had been working on gut reactions and instincts. Not always a good combo.

"This is it." The cab driver pulled the car over in front of Dirk's apartment. The overhead light over the door shone a wide circle on the sidewalk, then faded into the night on either side.

Dirk paid the outrageous amount for the cab ride, then he leaned over Ricky and opened the door.

"Oh, can I get out now?" Ricky asked, batting thick dark lashes at him.

"Smart-ass. Get out before I toss you out."

Ricky grinned and got out.

"Hey, are you checking out my ass?" Ricky asked as he stood on the sidewalk.

Dirk groaned. What had he gotten himself into? Dirk slid across the seat and reached the door.

"No, I'm checking out whether I've lost my mind bringing you home."

Ricky's smile slid into a frown and hurt filled his dark eyes. "I knew you'd regret it. Never mind, Dirk. You don't have to take care of me. I'm out of here."

And with that Ricky spun on his heels and headed off down the street before Dirk could get out of the cab.

"Goddamnit!" Dirk shook his head. He took a step, and then stopped.

Maybe he should just let Ricky go.

\*\*\*\*

## CHAPTER FIVE

Ricky marched down the street, each step taking him farther from Dirk. He strained, listening for footsteps on the concrete behind him. Nothing.

*Please. Please come after me.*

*If he comes after me, then he cares. Then he's the one I've been waiting for. If he doesn't...*

He should have known someone like Dirk wouldn't really want him for anything other than a quick fuck.

And Dirk didn't even want him for that.

Face it. He'd never been good enough. How many times had he started shit in bars hoping someone would show up? Hoping someone would step forward? Hoping for a hero?

In all that time, he'd never thought if he actually found a hero, a good man, that the man wouldn't want him. That he was just being who he was, a hero. A protector of the little guy, savior of the underdog, even if he was a smart-ass like Ricky.

*Pleasepleasepleaseplease call my name.*

Ricky's chest tightened and he gulped for air. Tears burned his eyes, blurring his vision. He dashed them away with the back of his arm and kept walking, even though every bone in his body wanted him to turn around and run back to Dirk.

What for?

More rejection?

For once he wanted someone to stop *him*, to beg *him* not to go.

*Please. Dirk. Just say my name.*

He took two more steps and knew Dirk wasn't going to call for him.

\*\*\*\*

“Fuck!” Dirk ran his hand through his hair. If it were longer, he’d have grabbed it and pulled. Ricky was going to drive him nuts, he could see it already. The younger man was a full-time job, the care and feeding of whom Dirk wasn’t sure he should take charge of.

Ricky stalked away down the block, probably without a clue as to where he was heading, other than into more trouble. Damn it. Something about Ricky called out to Dirk, reached deep inside him and triggered all his protective instincts.

“Ricky! Stop right there.”

He did.

*Amazing.* Ricky listened and obeyed. That probably would never happen again. Dirk snorted as he walked toward his new... whatever the hell Ricky was.

“Ricky.” Dirk called to him as he approached. The stiff spine and clenched fists told Dirk that Ricky might be a bit pissed off.

Dirk came to a halt right behind the young man. Ricky let his head fall forward and his shoulders rose and fell in a huge sigh. Relief? Resignation?

This meant more to Ricky than Dirk realized. *Aw, hell.* How many men had let Ricky walk away? How many never called him back or stopped him?

*Ah, shit.* Dirk’s heart ached for Ricky. He’d pushed everyone away, testing and trying every man he met, no doubt. Was Dirk the only one who’d stepped in? The only one who’d ever stopped him?

Dirk put his hand on Ricky’s arm. Ropy muscles tensed. Dirk ran his hand up and cradled Ricky’s throat in his hand, moving so close their bodies touched.

“Honey,” Dirk whispered as he wrapped his other arm around Ricky’s chest. “Don’t go. Stay with me.”

“But you don’t know me.” Ricky’s sob tore at Dirk’s heart. Ricky shook his head, as if denying this to himself, even as he grabbed Dirk’s forearms and clung to him.

“Got plenty of time and nothing better to do. Hey, you don’t know me either.”

“I got nothing to do too.”

“See? Come home with me. We’ll take it slow.”

“But my stuff is still at my place,” Ricky whispered.

“We’ll pick it up tomorrow, during the day.”

Ricky sighed and leaned his head back against Dirk’s shoulder. “You probably don’t have room for me.”

“You’re small. You won’t take up much space. I just hope you don’t eat much either.”

Ricky chuckled through his tears. “Asshole. I’m not a puppy.”

“No, you’re a *brat*. Come on, honey. I’m tired. It’s late and I have work in the morning.” Dirk softened his voice to coax the man like a skittish colt.

“Work?” Ricky strained to look up at him.

“That’s right. I work in private security.” Dirk unwrapped his arms from Ricky and turned him around to face him.

“Oh. Nice. My job is sort of lame. I work at a printing company making T-shirts.”

“Cool.” At least the kid wasn’t turning tricks or selling dope.

“No, it’s not. It sucks.”

“Ricky?”

“Yeah?”

“Shut up.”

Dirk placed both of his hands on either side of Ricky’s face to tilt it upward. He lowered his head to Ricky’s, keeping his eyes open, watching Ricky watch him.

Ricky's lips parted, his eyes shuttered closed, and his breath caught. That was all Dirk needed to close the gap between them and take Ricky's mouth in a soft, tender kiss.

Ricky moaned, pressed his body harder against Dirk, and opened to allow Dirk in. Dirk took the hint and deepened the kiss, thrusting his tongue in to taste the man he'd been longing to learn since he'd seen him in the bar.

God, Dirk's body reacted, letting his need take over his rational mind. He'd not felt this level of arousal in ages. Familiar cravings, yet new. Dirk wanted Ricky on his knees, ass in the air. That wasn't strange, but Dirk wanted Ricky to be there in the morning and for a lot of mornings to come.

"Finally figured out how to shut you up," Dirk whispered as he broke the kiss.

"All you had to do was ask." Ricky grinned.

"I did. You kept talking."

"Nuh-uh." Ricky shook his head.

Dirk narrowed his eyes. "Are you trying to get me to shut you up again?"

Ricky laughed. "Whatever."

Dirk planted another kiss on Ricky's lips, and then swatted him on the ass. "Let's go. I think we've put on enough of a show." He took Ricky by the elbow and led him back to his building.

\*\*\*\*

## CHAPTER SIX

Dirk unlocked the door and stepped aside so Ricky could enter. He edged in, like a frightened puppy, checking out whether it was safe or not. Dirk figured the kid wasn't even aware of what he was doing, he'd done it so many times.

Ricky stood in the center of the living room, turning in a small circle. "Nice place."

"It works." Dirk tossed his keys in the ceramic pot on the table near the door. "You hungry?"

Ricky bit his lip. "Sure." He sauntered toward Dirk. "For you." When he reached Dirk, he curled his fingers into Dirk's belt loops and tugged on them. "How about you?" He licked his lips slow and sexy as if he'd practiced in front of a mirror to get the right look.

"I was talking about dinner." Dirk removed Ricky's hands and headed to the kitchen, skirting the eat-in bar and stools, putting it between them.

He wanted Ricky, no doubt about that, but he was pretty damn sure Ricky needed more than a fast fuck.

Despite coming on to Dirk, Ricky's eyes held a touch of fear. He was unsure he should trust Dirk. And he was right. He'd come to a stranger's apartment, no last names, nothing to protect himself with. Incredibly dangerous and reckless.

Dirk figured that Ricky had "dangerous and reckless" tattooed on his ass.

He pulled out a package of ground meat and an onion. "Spaghetti and meat sauce okay with you?"

Ricky's mouth fell open. "You weren't joking. Sure." He came closer.

"Have a seat at the bar. We can talk while I cook." Dirk grinned and picked up a chef's knife to slice the onion. Ricky froze, then as Dirk put his chopping board on the counter, he relaxed and took a seat.

“No one’s ever cooked for me.” Ricky leaned forward, chin resting on his fist, watching.

“No one cooks for me, either. Can’t count the mess tent.”

“Mess tent. Were you in the marines?” He scowled at Dirk, as if trying to picture him in fatigues.

“Yeah.” Dirk shrugged.

“Where?”

“Iraq.”

“Oh.” Ricky bit his lip again, almost said something, then clamped his mouth shut.

As Dirk cooked, Ricky watched, asking a few questions about what he was doing, commenting on how good it smelled. He even set the table for them to eat at.

He added a huge scoop of meat sauce on his plate. Guess the guy was really hungry.

“This is delicious.” Ricky dug into the food, cutting his spaghetti into small bits, then scooping it up with the big spoon Dirk had given him to twirl with.

“Glad someone likes my cooking.” Dirk grinned.

Once they’d finished, Dirk had picked up the dishes and rinsed them, then loaded the dishwasher.

“So, you ready for dessert?” Ricky stood at the edge of the kitchen, his shirt unbuttoned down to his belt buckle.

Dirk nearly laughed at the blatant attempt; instead, he closed the door and started the machine. Then he wiped his hands on a dish towel and crossed the kitchen to Ricky.

“Look. You need to relax. I didn’t bring you here for sex.”

Ricky’s mouth fell open and for a second fear flashed in his eyes, as if he were afraid to ask what Dirk had brought him here for.

“You need someplace safe. Not the bar, not that crack house you live in. Someplace where no one is demanding something from you.”

Ricky’s eyes brimmed with tears, but he said nothing.

“You take the spare bedroom. It’s all yours. Tomorrow, we’ll go get your stuff if you still want to stay with me. No pressure.”

Ricky shook his head. “Well, this is new. I’ve never heard this line before.”

“It’s not a line.” Dirk opened the door to his spare room. A single bed, with pillows and a blanket, sat against one wall. On the other side of the room was a four-drawer dresser with a mirror attached. “If you stay, you can put your stuff here. That’s a small closet. We share the bath.”

Ricky sidled up to the door and peered in. “It’s nice.” He glanced up at Dirk, then back to his room. “Thanks.”

Dirk nodded and headed to his room. “I’m going to bed. Gotta get up for work early. If you’re not up, I’ll leave you a key, okay?”

Ricky nodded.

“Don’t bring anyone here, got it?” Dirk cocked an eyebrow at his new roommate.

“Got it.”

“Good. ’Night.” And with that, Dirk went to his bedroom and shut the door. He exhaled and leaned against it, straining to hear if Ricky said anything. Silence.

He glanced at his watch. After two A.M. He undressed and got into bed in just his briefs. Morning would come fast enough, especially with the hard-on he sported reminding him about the sexy little smart-ass in the other bedroom.

Man, he wanted to tap that ass.

“In time, Sarge. All in good time,” Dirk muttered, then rolled over and thought of breaking down his weapon, piece by piece.

\*\*\*\*



Ricky stared at the door as Dirk disappeared behind it. He waited, sure the big man would come back out, announce he was just joking, and demand Ricky get on his knees.

The idea of that both excited and frightened him. Part of him wanted to be with Dirk, wanted his hero to give him the fairy tale. Part of him just wanted Dirk, period. And another part of him whispered that sex was all Dirk would ever or could ever want from him.

The slit of light under the door went out.

Ricky looked at it, then at his bedroom, then over his shoulder at the kitchen. He was alone. In a strange man's apartment. He could leave or stay. Go back to his place or hang around and see what happened.

Hanging around was cool. He could leave in the morning. Was Dirk *really* going to give him a key to his place? The man was loco to trust a complete stranger.

Ricky shrugged, and went into the bathroom. He rooted around in the drawers, found a brand new toothbrush and used it. He pissed, washed his face to clean off his eyeliner, or as much as he could get off, then left, turning out the light.

He padded to the guest room and shut the door.

This place was so much nicer than his hovel. He checked the doorknob. There was a lock on it. Silently, he turned it. Look, Ma. No chair needed! Turning, he gazed at the bed with a longing he hadn't felt in years.

Clean sheets.

He'd died and gone to heaven. He undressed, putting his clothing on the dresser, went to the bed and pulled down the covers. Naked, he climbed in, wiggling around in the coolness of the cotton sheets.

With a contented sigh, Ricky folded his arms behind his head and stared up at the ceiling.

"A boy could get used to this."

\*\*\*\*\*

## CHAPTER SEVEN

Ricky woke the next morning, sunlight filtering through gauzy curtains. He lay in bed, listening to hear any sound of Dirk. Silence. There was no clock in the room, but since it was Saturday, he didn't have to be at work, unlike his new roomie.

He rose, dressed in his skimpy briefs and headed to the bathroom. The living room was empty, but the scent of coffee filled the air.

“Dirk?”

Nothing. Ricky shrugged, closed the bathroom door and locked it. Then he pissed, showered, and slipped back into his briefs. When he came out, the living area and kitchen were empty.

He went back to the room and dressed, then padded back to the kitchen. Dirk had left a cup for him, so he poured coffee, added some sugar and hunted in the fridge for the milk.

As he stirred his coffee, he spotted a chalkboard on the wall.

*“Gone to work. Help yourself to breakfast. The key is on the counter. See you after five. Dirk.*

*PS- don't bring anyone home.”*

Ricky grinned. Dirk had really left him the key. He'd trusted Ricky not to rob him blind, trash his place, or eat all his food.

Wow.

The man was either a fool or a good judge of character. Ricky would never have done any of those things. He'd struggled hard to stay away from a life of crime, no matter how bad his situation got—he'd always found a legitimate way to earn money, even if at times he'd relied on his sugar daddies to pay a few bills.

He ran his hand through his hair as he looked around for the key. It lay on the counter, attached to a little rainbow key ring. Ricky scooped it up and shoved it in his pocket.

The kitchen, like the rest of the apartment, was neat and tidy. He found a box of cereal, a bowl and got the milk back out. Then he sat down on a stool to eat at the counter.

After breakfast, he washed his dish and spoon, poured another cup of coffee, and wandered around, looking at Dirk's stuff, inching toward his bedroom.

At the doorway, he pushed the door open farther with his foot. "Oops." It swung wide and he leaned in.

Dirk had made the queen sized bed. Precision corners and everything. Man, he hadn't been kidding about being in the military. A place for everything and everything in its place.

Rules Ricky did not live by. He was more of a this-looks-like-a-good-place-to-drop-this-shirt kind of guy.

Mr. Clean meet Mr. Slob.

Ricky shook his head. This didn't bode well. He gave these living arrangements about three days before Dirk booted him out on his ass.

Maybe sooner if Ricky played hard to get.

But Dirk wasn't pressuring him for sex. Why not?

Again the thought of Dirk not really wanting him popped into Ricky's mind. *People*, Ricky's mama used to say, *are complicated*.

Ricky didn't think he was very complicated, but Dirk sure seemed like the poster child for complicated. Dark, brooding, commanding. He had everything that pushed Ricky's buttons.

Unfortunately, Ricky didn't seem to have what pushed Dirk's buttons.

Sure, he'd kissed him, but that was just to shut him up, right?

Ricky rolled his back across the door frame and out of the room. He went to the couch, sat down and picked up the remote from the coffee table. Sitting back, he turned on the flat screen TV and scrolled through the morning's offerings, wondering what he'd do all day.

Hot damn! Dirk had cable porn.

\*\*\*\*

Dirk walked in at half past five in the afternoon. He half expected Ricky to have bolted, but there he was, stretched out on the couch, napping. The remote lay on the floor next to the sofa and the TV was on, spouting the early news.

He shut the door and Ricky woke, sat up, and rubbed his eyes like a kid.

“Hey, you’re back.”

“Yep. Ready to go get your stuff?” Dirk wanted to get there before it got dark. Dark was dangerous and he’d rather accomplish this mission in the daylight.

“Sure. If you’re sure you still want me here.” Ricky scratched his chin.

“It’s against my better judgment, but yeah. You’re welcome here.” Dirk chuckled.

Ricky frowned. “If you don’t want me here, I’ll go. I don’t want you to feel like you have to let me stay, or you’re obligated to, or something. I’m not a stray.”

“Look. We’ve been over this. I want you here.” Dirk went to his bedroom, stalked over to the dresser, opened it, and found his SIG. He stuffed it in the back of his jeans and pulled his shirt over it. Then he went to the closet and pulled out two duffel bags for Ricky’s stuff.

When he came out, Ricky stood. “Why? I don’t get it. I’m cute and all that, but wasn’t getting me out of the mess at the bar enough?”

“You’re cute as hell. But you need a keeper.” He tossed one of the bags at Ricky, who caught it.

“And you think that’s you?” He slung the empty bag over his shoulder.

“Yep. Any more questions?” Dirk walked to the front door and put his hand on the doorknob.

Ricky shook his head.

“Daylight’s burning. Let’s move out.” Dirk opened the door and Ricky raced across the room to join him.

\*\*\*\*

The cab pulled up outside the crack house Ricky called home. In the light of day, somehow, it looked worse than at night. For the first time in a long time, embarrassment filled Ricky as they got out. Dirk was right. It was a hovel. But it was the only thing he could afford at the time.

“Wait for us. We’ll be about fifteen minutes,” Dirk told the driver. The man nodded, glancing up and down the street, clearly not happy about sitting here, even in broad daylight.

“We’ll go in, grab your stuff, and get back down here. Fifteen minutes. Not a minute more, got it?”

Ricky nodded, and headed for the building. “I’m on three.” They trotted up the stairs; the elevator hadn’t worked since he’d moved in. On three, he took a left and went down two doors, one of them open and hanging off the frame, busted in months ago by the cops.

“Here’s my place.” He dug in his pocket for the key, unlocked the door, and opened it.

Dirk followed him in. The place was one room. On the floor in a corner was a mattress, a small pillow and a blanket. The tiny kitchen was in another corner, with a single cabinet over the sink. A doorway, minus a door, showed the minuscule bathroom. Sink. Shower stall. Toilet. The only thing to sit on was a worn loveseat. No TV. No computer. No stereo system.

Ricky went to a beat-up, three-drawer dresser next to the bed and opened it. He knelt, plopped the duffel bag on the floor and started to shove clothing into it. Dirk headed to the bathroom and threw all the stuff there into the other bag. Typical guy stuff, plastic razors, deodorant, lube, toothpaste, toothbrush, comb and brush stuck together, and some makeup.

Dirk snorted at the last, but he added it to the bag. The whole time, he shook his head, wondering how the hell someone lived like this, but he knew people did. Ricky barely got by, for whatever reason; lack of education, lack

of opportunity, training, whatever. Inside Dirk, a voice whispered, *not on my watch*.

He grabbed the towels off the rack and folded them neatly to fit in his bag. That was everything worth bringing. He came out and went to the kitchen.

“Anything here you want?” he called out.

Ricky zipped up the bag, stood and walked over. He opened a few drawers, but there wasn't much in them. “No. Nothing worth keeping.” He slammed the drawers shut.

Dirk opened the mini fridge. The light had burned out, and it held only a few cans of beer and a pack of curling bologna.

“Leave it.” Ricky turned away, color staining his cheeks.

Dirk closed the door and made a last sweep of the room. “Got everything?”

“Yeah.” Ricky headed for the door, with Dirk following. He opened it and let Dirk pass him, then he turned and tossed the key into the middle of the room and closed the door behind him.

“Let's go.” Dirk led the way down the stairs and out. The cab had waited. They got in, and without a look back, they left.

\*\*\*\*\*

## CHAPTER EIGHT

Dirk stood in the doorway with a strange mixture of emotions churning his gut as he watched Ricky unpack. Ricky placed his clothing in the drawers, folded and neat. After he closed the last drawer and hung up his last shirt, he turned and faced Dirk.

“Thanks. For letting me crash here. When you need me out, just say the word.” Ricky rubbed one foot with the other.

Dirk read him like a book. The man begged for reassurance. The desire to give Ricky whatever he needed filled Dirk.

“Okay. But that’s not going to happen.” Dirk pushed off the door. “Get over here.”

Ricky advanced, eyes down at the floor. “Why? Why do you want to be my keeper?”

Dirk chuckled. “We went over that, didn’t we?”

“No. Yeah. What do you see in me? I guess that’s what I’m really asking.” Ricky looked up into Dirk’s face, and the expression he wore gutted Dirk like a knife. Hope. Fear. Confusion. Longing.

Man, this guy *needed*. He needed Dirk *so* bad. And it became clear—Dirk needed Ricky to need him. He had to stop fighting his own nature, like he had back in Iraq. He had to open up now. Here was the perfect opportunity to get normal. To care for someone. To let himself be vulnerable and risk being hurt again.

Dirk took Ricky by the back of the neck and pulled him to him. Ricky came, without resistance.

He brushed his lips against Ricky’s forehead. “It’s what I see in me. Because I need *you*. Because it’s my nature. Because I can’t walk away from you. You call to me, deep inside. Fuck, I don’t know, I’m drawn to you. Hope you feel the same.”

Ricky's breath caught, and he dug his hands into Dirk's shirt. "No one's ever said... No one's needed me. Ever."

"I do." Dirk tilted Ricky's head up. Ricky's lips parted and Dirk took his mouth with a deep, hungry kiss.

Ricky groaned and wrapped his arms around Dirk's neck and clung to him, kissing him back like a starving man. They fed from each other for a moment, then Ricky broke the kiss.

He pushed Dirk back against the door and dropped to his knees. "Let me..."

Oh, God. Dirk had wanted this since the first time he'd seen the little smart-ass saunter across the bar. And he'd been fighting it.

Now it was time to give in. To surrender.

Dirk worked open his buckle as Ricky unbuttoned his jeans. The sound of the zipper added to the excitement filling Dirk's dick. Ricky rubbed the bulge, enticing it to grow even harder.

The cool air hit Dirk's cock and he looked down at the top of Ricky's head. Ricky wrapped his hand around the thick shaft and pulled it forward. He stuck out his tongue and licked the tip of the swollen, red head.

Dirk groaned as he watched, turned on and needing this so bad. "Don't tease. Suck me."

Ricky looked up, caught Dirk's gaze, and grinned, cheeky and fucking sexy. He licked again, all the while maintaining eye contact, and it drove Dirk wild. He wanted his dick in Ricky's mouth. Now.

Dirk spread his legs as much as he could, bent his knees and braced his body against the wall. He'd be lucky to keep on his feet if Ricky looked at him again like that.

Ricky swallowed him. "Fuck." Dirk groaned the word, letting it drag out, the sound of it mixing with his pleasure.

This was good. Worth waiting for. Ricky sucked him hard, easy, long and slow, fast and light, working his hand on the base of Dirk's cock, twisting and



pumping. Blowing him, blowing the top of his head off, blowing his mind completely.

Ricky never let up, just kept dragging Dirk to the edge of the cliff, then letting him hang there, almost... almost... there.

Dirk shouted as he came, spilling down Ricky's eager throat, filling Ricky's mouth with so much cum it trickled from his lips, down his chin.

Dirk grabbed Ricky by the hair, yanked him off the softening cock, and dragged him up so he could taste his cum in Ricky's mouth, on his lips, lick it off the man's chin and neck.

Ricky threw his head back and met Dirk's mouth with his, partly open, ready to be plundered, ready to share part of the load he'd kept. They kissed, sharing spit and cum and something unnamed between them.

Dirk broke off to lick Ricky's face, catch the last of the streaks of cum trailing down his neck. Tasting himself on Ricky's skin.

Ricky quivered as Dirk licked and kissed his neck, clutching Dirk's shirt again, head thrown back and eyes closed.

Dirk pulled Ricky closer, felt the hardness pressing against his thigh, and grabbed Ricky's ass, kneading it with both hands.

"Bed?" Ricky asked.

"Whoa." Dirk stilled his hands. "You don't have to do this. You didn't have to blow me, either."

"What?" Ricky blinked up at Dirk. "You don't want me?"

"I want you. I want you safe and secure. I want you to know you're not here because I want to fuck you."

"I don't get it. First you want me, now you don't!" Ricky's brows knotted.

"I don't want you to be someone who feels obligated to fuck me because I took you in. If you don't want to have sex with me, that's okay. I get it. Maybe you've had to do things you didn't really want to do with guys you didn't want to be with." He gazed into Ricky's eyes.

Ricky gave the slightest nod as his cheeks flushed red.

“I thought so. What I want is to take it slow. To build on what we have. I need you, Ricky, but I don’t want any of it, if you’re not happy here. With me. And the only way you’ll find that out is to give us time.”

Ricky swallowed and nodded. He looked around the bedroom. “Is that why you put me in this room?”

“Yeah. To give you your own space. If you don’t want to sleep with me, you can sleep here. I won’t pressure you. Ever.”

Ricky closed his eyes, took a deep breath and let it out slowly. “Wow. You’re... my hero.” He opened his eyes and gazed up into Dirk’s face.

Dirk shrugged. “I’m no one’s hero.”

“Of course you are. You’re mine. I’ve been waiting for you. I’ve been looking for you for what feels like ages.” He laughed and grabbed Dirk’s hands. “And now I’ve found you!”

“If you say so.” Dirk couldn’t deny the pleasure racing through his heart at Ricky’s words. He needed to be someone’s hero.

Ricky leaned in and whispered, “Can we sleep together tonight? Just sleep?”

“Sure, baby. You call the shots.” Dirk kissed Ricky. “Now, how about some dinner?”

“Can I cook?” Ricky led the way to the kitchen.

“I don’t know. Can you?”

Ricky smacked Dirk on the ass. “Now who’s being a smart-ass?”

Dirk laughed. “You didn’t think you were the only one, did you?”

Ricky rolled his eyes. “Maybe not, but I’m the best!”

“Yeah, and you’re my smart-ass, so don’t forget it.” Dirk wrapped his hand around Ricky’s neck and pulled him into a deep, searching kiss. Before he let Ricky go, he swatted him on the ass.

This might have turned out to be a rescue mission for Dirk, but in the end, he was the one who got rescued.

**THE END**

## Author Bio

*Lynn Lorenz lives in Texas, where she's a fan of all things Texan, like long horns, big hair, and cowboys in tight jeans. She's never met a comma she didn't like, and enjoys editing and brainstorming with other writers. Lynn spends most of her time writing about hot sex with even hotter heroes, plot twists, werewolves, and medieval swashbucklers. She's currently at work on her latest book, making herself giggle and blush, and avoiding all the housework.*

## Contact & Media Info

[Email](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)