

Alicia Nordwell

Love Hijack You



A Love Has No Boundaries Novella

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Love Has No Boundaries

An M/M Romance series

NEEDING YOU

By Alicia Nordwell

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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NEEDING YOU

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Photo Description

The slim sub's thumb was dipped inside his blue tie-dyed underwear, teasing his cock. He'd worn them to please his Dom, and the addition of his shiny motorcycle jacket, his only other piece of clothing, was the perfect naughty counterpoint to his sweet face. His high cheekbones, that soft blond hair sweeping just above his gray-blue eyes, and those plump, pink lips made him look innocent. The heat in his eyes was anything but.

Story Letter

Dear Author,

He watched as the loud, aggressive red-head approached the blond boy on the dance floor. 'Jake' shook his head. The boy was just his type, but he'd found through the grapevine that the blond also came with a ton of baggage. Evidently the boy's ex really did a number on him, enough that his friends held an intervention. But it didn't help, the boy just stopped talking to all of them. Why the kid stayed with his ex for so long 'Jake' couldn't understand, but now the boy was free and still making all the wrong choices. The boy put on a brave front as he laughed, flirted and seemed to revel in the hungry eyes on him. But when he thought no one was watching, the smile slipped away and sadness settled across his features. And each time the boy returned to the club after an encounter, he looked more broken than the time before. But why should 'Jake' care? The boy wasn't his problem. What the kid needed was a shrink. So why did 'Jake' keep thinking about him? Too much baggage he kept telling himself. But every time he looked at the lost boy he couldn't help thinking, "What if?"

Note: Hurt/comfort and emotional healing of both characters. I suppose in a way this story could contain PTSD. Don't make them perfect, I don't like perfect people. I love character growth. For example, 'Jake' (doesn't have to

be Jake, I just chose a name), may also have some hidden need to rescue the boy. I'd prefer if he personally wasn't abused, but it could be anything that compelled him to want to 'save' people or this particular person. Something that 'Jake' has buried inside and didn't want to face about himself. I'm curious about what happened with the old boyfriend and does he come back to 'claim' the boy once he's with the new man. I really want this in third person. Angst is great, but this must have a HEA. If there is a bit of an age gap I'd also like that, probably no more than ten years between them. It can be less. NO instant love! Instant lust okay, with love growing between them, but NO instant love. The other thing is I love BDSM, but I understand that not everyone does. If you can make this into BDSM I'd love it. Maybe the boy is looking to submit in the wrong way so that's why he keeps picking the wrong men. Or maybe 'Jake' is a Dom and he's watching the boy at a BDSM club. If it's BDSM I'd like it more about submission than pain, but pain can come in at the end of the story. But like I mentioned, it doesn't have to be BDSM if you don't want.

Sincerely,

Penumbra

Story Info

Genre: contemporary, paranormal

Tags: abuse, hurt/comfort, D/s, graphic sex, Greek mythology, mystical abilities, mind-numbing orgasms, light BDSM, sounding

Word count: 36,717

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NEEDING YOU

By Alicia Nordwell

CHAPTER ONE

Cason looked out on the sea of dancing people. He could see several people he knew from the scene and a lot of newbies out in the crowd. Strokes wasn't really a fetish bar; it was more of a place for like-minded people to gather and hang out. Still, there was plenty of eye candy, bare skin held in harnesses, mesh shirts, and better yet, nothing at all. His cock stirred as he watched two twinkies dance with each other, their hips grinding back and forth to the throbbing beat of the music.

Taking a drink, Cason savored the bitter strength of the alcohol as it trickled down his throat. It had been a long week, and an even longer day making the wooden rocking chair Tiffany had ordered. He deserved the break to relax his aching body. The tiny woman had wanted something her size and carved along the back with moonflower vines, her favorite plant that had grown by the swing on her grandmother's porch when she was small.

Sentimental, but a lot of what Cason carved for people was. He liked listening to his customers and then carving something to meet their needs out of the responsive wood. It filled a driving force inside him. Rocking chairs, cradles, tables, spanking benches and even dildos had been carved, polished, then boxed up and shipped out of his shop.

It was a good hobby and the way it dovetailed into his other... life, was nice too.

Tonight his body craved a different force. He needed a sub; to control, to please, to drive his cock into until they both came.

There were plenty of options.

“Hey, man.” A hand clamped down on his shoulder. Cason smiled and turned to see his best friend standing beside him with a smaller guy tucked against his side.

“Brandon.” Cason cocked his head toward Page. “Something come out of your mouth that shouldn’t have?” he asked.

Page rolled his eyes but said nothing. He couldn’t with his dark red lips stretched tight around a ball gag that was strapped behind his head. Brandon reached over and pinched one of Page’s nipples, the small nubs already swollen, and the poor guy went rigid.

“Mmph!”

“No rolling your eyes,” Brandon said in his slow, deep voice. Page nodded frantically and Brandon let up on his grip slowly, then rubbed the abused flesh softly, which would only increase the ache over time.

Cason’s cock plumped up more at the small display. He’d met Page a few months back at a munch. Even for one of those informal gatherings Page had pushed limits. They’d talked; Cason even liked him, but the sub’s bratty demeanor wasn’t what Cason preferred in his partners. A glimpse of Page’s inner spirit and he’d known from the tinge of colors in Page that the small man would be perfect for his best friend. All it had taken was an introduction and Page had been smitten with the giant man with a deep voice and very deliberate hands. Just like Cason had known he would. “So, Brandon, having fun?”

“Always.” Brandon ordered a beer for himself, ignoring the imploring look from beneath Page’s lashes that was being sent his way. “He’ll behave and be ready to put that tongue to good use when I finally take the gag out though. Then we’ll both be having fun, won’t we, babe?”

Page’s wink made both men laugh out loud.

The brat had a thing for gags. Cason had an order due in a few weeks from Brandon for Page’s birthday gift; he wanted a wood bit gag that would let Brandon restrain and control Page’s head movement. It had to be silky smooth

wood, to protect his mouth, so of course Cason was the best man to order from. He'd made several toys for Brandon over the years.

"So, how is the counselor doing tonight? Found a new boy to fix and find a happy relationship for?"

Like he needed that reminder. Cason hadn't taken anyone home in a while for just that reason. He'd been in the lifestyle for some time but his particular *ability* made it difficult to want to play over the last year. One by one, the subs he'd guided through the scenes to their subspace and sent soaring to the bliss beyond had thanked him, usually on their knees with their cum still decorating their bodies... and then found someone else that fit the needs his ability allowed them to realize.

He always knew what they needed, but none of them ever needed him.

Cason scanned the dance floor again. Sometimes he couldn't resist; he needed that connection with them too, as fleeting as it was. He was a Dom and they were looking for something to fulfill them, personally, sexually... both of those intertwined for most of them. Creating their perfect scene and guiding them to it seemed to connect them to the submissive inside, whoever that person turned out to be.

None of the dancing singles on the floor captured his attention though, so he turned away, glancing at the door just as it opened. Maybe he'd order a second drink, if he wasn't going to play.

"I don't think there is anyone here that needs me, not tonight."

His balls ached at the thought. Pleasuring himself was fine from time to time, but he got tired of using his hands on his own cock. He wanted to knead malleable flesh, to stroke and smack it. He wanted hot lips wrapped around his cock while his hand was buried in sweaty blond hair as soft, gray-green eyes stared up at him.

Shit.

He knew better than to go there.

Vince, Page's roommate, had just entered the bar. Cason had been watching him for a few months, ever since he got to know Page. Vince sidled up to the edge of the bar and ordered. Cason hoped it would be a nice alcoholic beverage, something fruity maybe, or a rum and coke. Those would fit the way the young man seemed, flirty and fun or dark and smoldering when the eyes of interested men were on him. Cason frowned when the bartender smiled back at Vince as he handed Vince a bottle of water, saying something to the cheerful blond who slid his change in pants damn near too tight to get his hands in the pockets.

Someone else had come out to play tonight.

"Hey, Cason!" Brandon's big elbow nudged him.

"What?" He rubbed at his ribs, then realized he'd lost Vince in the crowd when Brandon distracted him. He glared at Brandon. "Keep those damn things to yourself." He tried looking around subtly for Vince. "Hey, a booth just opened up. Let's go sit down, unless you're going to dance?"

Page looked up at Brandon who shook his head. "Not yet."

They headed over to the booth, putting their glasses down and sitting on the soft leather benches. Page snuggled up against Brandon's side, his hands out of sight under the table. He was probably begging to go dance, in the only way he could with his mouth plugged.

Cason enjoyed the thick cushioned seat as he leaned back and sighed in relief. "Long day."

Unfortunately, Brandon was more focused on him than his sub, and they wouldn't be going dancing. Cason recognized the obstinate look on Brandon's face; they'd sit there until he answered his friend's questions. "What's up with you?" Brandon asked. "You've been acting off for the last few weeks."

How was Cason supposed to tell him about the stories he'd heard about Page's little roommate? About how he wanted to snap the so-called Doms the poor man had been playing with in half?

His friend looked down at Page who had turned away and was staring out at the dance floor. Brandon shifted his gaze out at the sea of people, looking in the direction Page was staring. Cason turned in his seat and looked too. He knew what he'd see before he looked, but he did it anyway.

The dance floor was lit up. The song had changed but the beat stayed the same, calling for dancers to move and writhe together in a parody of a more intimate act.

Of course if this was a fetish club people probably would have been having sex on the dance floor, but Strokes was too mainstream for that. Cason saw a woman whose breasts were being fondled under her shirt by the man behind her. Swaying next to her were a couple of men grinding into each other's thighs. They were locked in tight together; the dancer's ass he could see looked like a tight handful and it was being squeezed happily by a grinning man that scooted into the pair's space and joined them.

But Page wasn't looking at any of that. His roommate was on the edge of the dance floor, his chin tucked to his chest as an arrogant redheaded man standing beside him stroked his hand down his stomach toward his belt before hooking a finger into it. The man hauled Vince up against his body. Vince tilted his head back and smiled, saying something before he looked down again. His smile disappeared when he looked down, though.

Cason narrowed his eyes at the pair. He resisted getting up and interfering, even though the sneering curl in the redhead's lip pissed him off. Something about the blond triggered a protective instinct in him, but the man's spirit wasn't touched in any way Cason could see. He needed guidance, obviously, but not the type that Cason could offer him.

Some days he cursed his daimon heritage. He could see the color of the spirits inside a submissive and know, based on that influence, what would drive them to reach their center. Inside each submissive lay their truth, and finding that brought them to find peace in their individual submission. His own ability lay in taking them on the journey, through the scenes he planned for the submissive he took under his protection.

The last few times he'd been with a sub he'd succeeded in breaking down their barriers, but after each scene ended and he'd soothed their shattered nerves, gave them water and praised them, they left. He'd been sated, in a way, but the longing grew for someone who needed more from him.

But Vince didn't need him.

And Cason needed someone to need him. He drained his drink. "I'm going for a refill, can I get you anything?"

Brandon shook his head. "No." He polished off his beer. "I think we are going to dance."

Instead of getting up and losing their table, Cason had held up his hand until a waiter noticed him. "I'll take a beer."

None of the hungry spirits in the room called to him; no one truly needed him. He wasn't in the mood to play, so instead he drank. He was on his second beer when Brandon led Page back over to the table. They were breathing hard; Page's nipples were an angry red. Brandon had probably been teasing them the whole time they were gone.

"I got you some water."

The bottle sat unopened on the table on their side of the booth. Brandon cracked it open and drank, his head tipped back and his Adam's apple bobbing as he swallowed. Page whimpered. Brandon put the bottle down on the table and sat down. He pulled Page into his lap, staring down at his sub's face.

He traced his fingers around the lips stretched wide around the black ball gag. "You thirsty?" His voice was a low rumble. Page nodded. "If I take this out to give you a drink you won't move or make a sound, will you?"

The sub shook his head; folding both hands together and putting them in his lap. He rested against Brandon and waited.

"Remember, don't move." Brandon picked up the water bottle and took a drink. He slid a hand over Page's cropped hair and unbuckled the gag, holding the strap to the back of Page's head so it wouldn't fall when he slowly

removed the ball from his sub's mouth. Page didn't move, leaving his mouth wide open.

Brandon traced those lips with his finger again. Page's lips trembled and he breathed out hard through his nose. He closed Page's mouth with one hand under his chin and then kissed him, slowly giving him his drink. Cason shook his head as Brandon's tongue followed the water as the two kissed. Brandon gave Page two more drinks the same way.

He used his thumb on Page's glistening lower lip to part his lips again, then fit the black ball back into his mouth and fastened the buckle tight at the back of his head. Instead of acting resentful, Page melted against Brandon's body with a whimper, hugging him.

"I'm impressed," Cason said to Brandon. "He is very sweet tonight. I didn't think he'd like being gagged in public so much."

Brandon smirked. "He likes it when I'm mean."

His sub stroked at Brandon's neck, his eyes half-shut. He slid those naughty hands down, over the hard chest and stomach to drop below the table.

Brandon's eyes flared open wide and he shuddered. "I think we're going to go home early tonight though."

It was evident in the slow squirm of his body that, if Page could have smiled around the gag, he would have.

"You good?" Brandon asked. "Need a ride home?"

Cason waved his hand. "No, I'll be fine. I'll grab a cab when I'm done." He decided to have one more beer before heading home. That way he'd sleep really well. Just one more wouldn't give him a hangover but would see him comfortably buzzed.

While he drank he watched. He observed the people swirling in front of the bar, watching as those destined to meet up did and those who were still lost to their way searched for what they were looking for. Here, the spirit Kydoimos had touched a man with confusion; his eyes clouded with a pale white shade,

so he couldn't see the way the young woman at the table beside him looked at him shyly through her lashes. He would remain oblivious, tonight at least.

Caerus exposed his influence, in a blue flash in another man's eyes, as he took a sudden chance and seized the opportunity to ask the guy waiting for a drink at the bar in front of him if he wanted to dance instead. Oizys, green with tinges of red, had sunk heavily over a woman crying into her wine glass, her woes being soothed by the friend rubbing her shoulders and insisting that "the jerk didn't deserve her."

They were everywhere, the spirits his ancestors had venerated in ancient Greece. He'd scoffed at the stories his grandfather told until puberty struck. Then he knew the truth. Cason's grandpa told him about using his ability to help people, but he had to learn focus so he could see the truth of the path for those in need of help. Pappous had suggested eastern meditation practices, but Cason had rejected the lessons as stupid and old-fashioned.

It was during his senior year when Cason learned how right his pappous was. One kiss and grope after class in the empty locker room had Billy, the oh-so-straight jock, seeing the light shine into his closet of denial. Somehow it also showed Billy that he really wanted Sam Drisver from his geography class to pin him against the lockers, not Cason.

The sting from that first encounter still lingered. Deciding to heed his grandpa's advice on channeling his abilities through breath and focus, Cason had turned to vispassana exercises. He never let his friends catch him doing it, but the breathing and meditations, and the weight of history he felt when he finally understood what it really meant to search for that inner peace, had allowed him to reach new levels of confidence in his ability. After nearly a year, he'd learned to invoke the necessary state of calm within the space of one deep breath. He often wondered if that was what subs felt when they reached that high many of them called subspace.

Evidence of the spirits' influence was easy for Cason to spot after that. Gradually he grew into his sexuality and learned how to know who was touched by the spirits, and how to help them... if they wanted help. His grandfather's gifts had been different; they certainly didn't revolve around sex

like Cason's did, much less the BDSM kink he used, but Pappous had told Cason to remember that using his gift to help others would be rewarded one day.

His eyes returned again and again to Vince. He could see behind the bright smile and easy pliancy to Vince's anxiety as he molded his body to the redheaded man who'd claimed him, exposed by the tight clench of his fists and the expression in those eyes that no one else saw.

Fuck it. His ability might not be able to help Vince, but maybe he could. He knew a lot of Dominants in the city who would jump at the chance at the young sub. It needed to be soon too; with each scene he did the blond man seemed to break a little more.

He'd find the right man for the submissive, but first he'd have to find out more about him. That meant he'd need to talk to Page.

Tomorrow.

He was damn sure the sub's tongue was going to get a whole other type of workout that night.

CHAPTER TWO

“So what can you tell me about Vince’s interest in the lifestyle?” Cason barely waited until Page sat gingerly in the chair beside him before questioning him about Vince.

“Not a lot you don’t already know, unfortunately. He’s different now. We knew each other as kids, you know.” He shivered, blowing on his hands. “It’s cold outside today.” Snow was swirling around the sidewalk just outside the window they sat in front of.

“I ordered you a mocha.” He nodded at the cup on the small table between their chairs. His own preference was simpler; he enjoyed the rich bitter flavor of black coffee. His special blend of coffee at home was better, but he wasn’t going to meet with another man’s sub in his residence alone, even if it was his best friend’s sub. “Tell me what you do know, as soon as you warm up a little.”

“Thank you,” Page said as he pulled off his gloves and set them in his lap. “Ah, this is nice.” He held the cup curled between his hands.

Cason smiled. “Polite today, aren’t you?”

That made Page laugh. “Well, I don’t have anyone here who will gag me and paddle my ass if I’m not, now do I?” He winked as he took a sip. “They make the best mochas here. Sweet with a hint of dark roast coffee, like a rich hot cocoa for adults.” Page held his cup up and blew on it before taking another sip. .

“That’s Vince’s favorite drink, you know. Cocoa.” Page looked up at him. “I can tell you more about him, as a person, than I can tell you about him as a sub.”

Excellent. Cason already had one little tidbit of information to tuck away. He gestured for Page to continue.

“He doesn’t like caffeine, or sugar. He has a wicked way with cars. He knows how to get the broken ones purring in seconds. There’s no one better at restoration.”

“You live and work with him, right?” Cason asked.

Page shook his head. “We’re roommates, but I don’t work at the garage. I do custom work for him sometimes, leather seats for the cars he fixes up, or the motorcycles. I can’t program a coffee pot, much less fix a car.” He took another drink of his mocha, then sighed. “Growing up, most people would never have guessed we were friends. I met him when we were in high school. We were a pair of openly gay kids in a school that didn’t always keep an eye on the goings on between students.”

“Oh, nothing too horrible,” Page assured him when Cason frowned, “we weren’t jumped in the locker room and beaten or anything. But kids like to tease, and when you’re a social outcast, you tend to band together with other social outcasts. Vince hung out with these slacker guys in the shop. They all took this automotive class before the school decided to fire the teacher for selling parts from the shop’s teaching supplies.

“One day I got a bunch of food on me at lunch and I had an allergic reaction to the salad dressing. Vince drove me home to change and get some medicine, blowing off his plans with his other friends.” The small man’s voice was matter of fact about the incident. “Turns out the assholes who tripped me into the garbage can *accidentally* did him a big favor. The rest of the guys he hung out with spent the hour in the shop, after they stole the principal and vice principal’s cars and chop shopped them in protest, right there on school grounds. Idiot teenagers.”

“I’m assuming they got into major trouble.”

Page nodded. “Yeah, and the class was canceled anyway. After that Vince got a job working part time at Pearson’s. He sucked at school. He has ADHD, but cars just seem to focus him, you know? But he can do more than that, if he has a good reason. Pearson told him to go to college and learn how to run a business and when he retires, he’ll let Vince buy the place. It was the one thing that got him through and made him focus enough to graduate this year.”

The little walk down memory lane hadn't told Cason much about Vince's recent experience in the scene, but it did tell him a lot about the man himself. He tapped the side of his coffee mug.

"Is that what he's looking for with all those men playing at being Doms? Focus?"

Page cocked his head to the side. "I don't know. He won't talk about the scenes he does with them. You can see it, though, right?"

"The hole inside that seems to be getting deeper each time he comes back into the club and tries a new guy? Yeah." Cason didn't like it. The younger man needed some help and he was going to make sure he got it so he'd stop looking so sad when he thought no one was looking.

"I tried talking about it with him. We staged this whole intervention with him. He had some friends from school and I got them all together at our apartment. Some of them were freaked by the lifestyle, but I got that part. But something was still wrong, and none of us knew what to do about it.

"He was with this guy, for like a year, just after we turned twenty-one. He met him at some club he went to alone and after the first night he told me the guy signed a contract with him. Normally Vince is bounce off the walls energetic, except for when he's working on an engine, but he was depressed whenever he was home. He wouldn't talk to us, or let us touch him at all." Page was growing agitated and he had a harsh scowl on his face. Cason had never seen the normally smirking sub looking quite so angry.

"Turns out the bastard told him that when he was away from him, or not at work, that he wasn't to touch, or even speak, to another man. This guy was supposed to be this great Dom, though I'd never seen him at any events or clubs. Whatever hold he had on Vince, the bastard used it to make him miserable, but he wouldn't leave. After we confronted him, he completely shut everyone out."

Some Doms believed in breaking submissive partners into slaves that lived to serve their every need. Page's story sounded exactly like that was what had happened, but not every man was made to be a slave. Cason took a drink of his

coffee and grimaced at the cold drink. He set it down and folded his hands together in his lap. He was getting tense just hearing about Vince's experiences.

"So why did he leave his Dom then? He did leave him, right? Not the other way around?" If he'd left, then Vince hadn't broken. But how he left him, and why, would say a lot about the young man.

Page pursed his lips. "He never said, but I'm pretty sure the contract expired. Vince isn't stupid, but we're both new to the lifestyle, you know? I stopped playing for a while after I saw what was happening with him. It scared me. But this submissive chick I know told me about the munches hosted by Master Pete at the restaurant. I thought that would be safer than going to clubs, and I could learn some stuff too."

Cason nodded. "You were smart."

Page snorted. "I was lucky. I met you. I thought that I wanted you, especially after I saw that paddling you demonstrated on the guy wearing those leather chaps? Man, his ass was so red afterward it was practically glowing. You barely had to touch him before he came all over the stage. But Brandon is perfect for me, and you knew that, didn't you?"

Shrugging one shoulder Cason said, "I guessed you two would be good together."

"Brandon says it's more than guessing. You're good with people. That's why you're a counselor, right?"

"I advise students on the right career path. I'm not a psychologist." Cason wanted to help people, but he'd never wanted to study psychology formally. The classes he'd taken had various approved methods that made relying on his ability a bad choice. Second guessing himself never helped, so he went in a slightly different direction. He got up before he could start doing it then. "Be right back, I need to get a refresh."

He took his coffee up to the counter, getting a refill from the smiling barista. When he sat down again, though, Page started the conversation right back up.

“Do you think Vince is in some sort of crisis, like he might need to talk to someone? Is that why you’re so concerned?”

That had been Cason’s first impression. He argued with himself that Vince needed more than just an ear, and knowing he had a diagnosed mental condition like ADHD meant he’d need a psychiatrist. Kink friendly ones existed. Vince didn’t need a daimon descendent whose ability was completely failing Cason just when he most wanted to use it to help someone... but knowing that wasn’t going to stop Cason from helping Vince, not anymore.

“Do you know if he’s on medication for the ADHD?”

Page shook his head. “Not for a few years. He calmed down a little bit, at least compared to when he was a teenager. I think he has other ways of dealing with it now.”

Maybe Cason could still help him. He didn’t have to be their Dom to become friends with someone. “I’m guessing that he lost a lot of friends, even after that contract was up?” He tapped the arm of his chair.

“Yeah. I think he’s more cautious now about letting people in, too.”

Casually Cason said, “But he’s still in the lifestyle, so he’s still looking for a Dom.”

Page’s eyes got huge and his mouth dropped open.

Cason smirked. “Close your mouth.”

Page closed his mouth so fast his teeth clicked together. He carefully set his cup down. “Are you going to ask him to sub for you? I’ve heard—”

“A lot, I’m sure.” Cason shrugged his suddenly tense shoulders. “But no, I was thinking about approaching him at the munch next week and just talking to him. Maybe become his friend. Is he coming, do you think?”

“I’ll drag him there myself, if I have to. Brandon wants to go. There’s going to be a rope demonstration.”

“Ah yes, that’s my friend Suzanne and her sub, Mark. She can truss him up in the most interesting positions.” He’d met the older Domme several years

back and hit it off with them both. She'd taught him more than a few tricks about restraining people.

"If this is going to work, Vince can't know you told me all this. I really shouldn't have asked you, but what I'm hearing through the grapevine about the scenes he's done isn't good. Being safe is more than just making sure your partner will stop when you need them to, and it sounds like the direction he's been headed hasn't been very good for him mentally."

After Cason had talked to Page when they first met he'd known exactly who to introduce him to in order for Page to be happy. He had this desire inside, now that he knew some of Vince's story, to Dom the younger man himself but knew it could end badly. He had to resist the temptation and figure out which Dom he knew would be able to reach the submissive before he broke completely under the hands of the wrong ones.

CHAPTER THREE

It wasn't until after the demonstration where Suzanne had shown her favorite way to immobilize a two hundred pound man in the best position for a spanking scene that Cason found Vince standing next to Page. Brandon was nowhere to be seen, at the moment, but he could tell both young men had enjoyed the demonstration.

“—looks amazing,” Vince said softly.

Cason broke into the conversation. “Mark is a very handsome man, and the white rope does show off his dark coloring well.”

“Hello, Cason!” Page said happily. “I was wondering if you were here.”

“I was wondering if you two were going to show up as well. I don't see Brandon here though. Don't tell me he passed up a chance to tease you while watching Suzanne tie up Mark.”

Page waved his hand. “Oh, he's around. I think he went to talk to her.”

That made sense. She was entertaining a lot of questions from various Doms and Dommes about her techniques. “Well, she is a master at bondage. You can be sure that anything he learns from her you will enjoy. Probably.” Cason laughed.

Vince had fallen silent and had yet to look up after Cason interrupted the conversation. Cason raised an eyebrow and looked at Page. “Why don't you introduce me to your friend?”

“Oh! Sorry, Cason. This is my friend Vince. Vince, this is Brandon's best friend, Cason.”

“Hello, sir.” Those gray-green eyes flicked up but never made it past Cason's chin. Cason held tight to his smile and didn't allow his expression to waver.

“Hello, Vince. I take it from your comment when I walked up that you appreciated the demonstration?”

Vince's voice was soft when he spoke. “Yes, sir.”

Cason corrected him. “Cason. Use my name. We’re not in a scene, we’re at a demonstration. There’s no need for formality, so relax.”

“Yes, Cason.” The obedience factor of being a submissive was clearly something that had been drilled into Vince. It seemed unnatural for the man though. He usually flirted and laughed, teasing the young Doms he had been choosing in the clubs.

“Suzanne is an old friend. If you’d like to get up closer to her and Mark, see his bindings up close, I could take the two of you to the stage. She’s probably going to unfasten him soon.”

Vince glanced at Page, who answered for both of them. “Sure! Thank you, Cason, we’d love to see it. I wanted to check out the knot work she did on his arms. It seemed really elaborate.”

Nodding, Cason stepped behind both of the smaller men and guided them forward with a hand on their shoulders. It was a struggle to speak normally and keep his hand light on Vince’s shoulder; he couldn’t stroke the young man’s neck even if the golden skin called to be touched.

“Well, they seem elaborate because they *are* elaborate. Technically, she could have just wound the rope around his forearms, tying them together, but where is the beauty in that? The purpose in rope bondage isn’t just to immobilize the submissive. Cuffs and spreader bars could do that. There is an artistry in the way the rope touches the skin, the knots used and the positions it bends the submissive to please their Dom.”

“To make them attractive,” Vince said suddenly.

Cason nodded. “More attractive. The contrast of the colors of the rope, the way the body is positioned and curved, the beauty of the trust such submission takes. The sub must work with them and hold still for it to work so it shows their desire to please their Dominant.”

“Bending to their will.”

“Yes.” Cason stopped them a few feet from Mark, having made their way through the small crowd. “Of course, with some like Page here, bondage is a way to make them pay attention.”

“Hey.” Page’s lips parted like he was going to stick out his tongue, but then he stopped. “I pay attention.”

Vince’s laugh was light, but it seemed genuine, and it pleased Cason immensely to hear it. He chuckled himself.

Smirking, Vince said, “You realize you just kept yourself from sticking your tongue out at him because of the gag I saw Brandon make you wear at the club last week, right? You know, gags are a form of bondage too.”

“That they are,” Cason said. He proceeded to explain the Japanese harness and the intricate knots that formed a pattern with the coils going up and down Mark’s arms.

“With his arms up like that, he’s in a prime position to be spanked if he’s laid stomach down, or to have his nipples tortured if he’s chest up. His arms are immobilized, but comfortably secure up and out of the way.”

Page shivered. “Oh.” His eyes were staring at Mark but he wasn’t seeing him. Cason just knew he was imagining himself tied up like Mark with Brandon’s hands, mouth, and maybe some clamps making his nipples achingly sensitive.

He chuckled darkly. “I can see some rope in your future, Page.” He turned to look at Vince. “What about you? Are you a fan of rope bondage?”

Vince licked his lips as he stared at Mike but said, “Not really.”

That hesitant denial smacked of a bad experience, especially if Vince was aroused. If Cason wasn’t wrong, and he rarely was, then Vince had a hard-on pressing against the zipper of his jeans.

“What about bondage in general?” he asked.

“I like it.”

“Just not ropes.”

Vince glanced at him. “Not certain kinds of ropes.”

Cason smiled. “It’s always good to be sure of your preferences. That’s what these sorts of events are good for. There’s no pressure and you talk about the lifestyle, even learn something new. It’s good for newcomers to get together without worrying about protocols.”

“I saw the demonstration you did.” Vince looked at him fully instead of glancing at him from the corner of his eye. His not so subtle hint about not worrying about protocols worked, but this time Cason hid his smile.

“And what did you think?”

“You were very... controlled.” His voice was too enigmatic for Cason to decide if that was a good thing or not.

“Any Dom worth the title is always in control.”

Vince shivered. The room was comfortably warm; Mark showed no signs of discomfort, even though he was shirtless. Still, maybe Vince was cool. There was a fireplace at one end of the meeting room opposite the stage.

“Would you care to go sit down and continue talking?” Cason hoped Vince would say yes. “It looks like Suzanne is about to untie Mark. Brandon will be right over to get him, so we won’t be abandoning Page to his lonesome.”

The hesitation on Vince’s part disappeared when Page smiled and shoed them away. “Okay.” Cason led the way over to the armchairs, trusting that the younger man would follow him. It was warmer by the fire and Vince relaxed into the comfortable chair when they sat quietly for a few minutes.

Cason had a theory. Vince wasn’t nearly as reserved as he appeared. He had seen him laughing and enjoying the attention at the clubs, interacting normally with the other dancers. The flashes of sadness Cason saw were real, though. It was as if Vince played parts of whatever type of person he thought those around him wanted.

How was Cason going to get Vince to show him the real inside? Vince leaned to one side, propping his cheek up on his fist. It was so much easier

when he knew what was going on with a person's spirit. Of course then he'd feel the need to do a scene with Vince, and that was the last thing he wanted.

Well, he wanted the younger man. He had the softest looking lips, pale pink and wide. Would they turn dark pink with passion? Get puffy if he kissed them hard?

His breath stuttered when Vince licked the lips he was staring at. It took an act of iron will not to make a sound. A moment later he had his control back but it took a few minutes before Vince looked up at him finally.

"So..."

"So." Cason was patient; he had to be.

"You said you wanted to talk some more."

"Of course. I believe talking is invaluable. Without it, submissives don't know what their Doms want and vice versa. Communication is at the core of what we do. A good scene always starts with a negotiation beforehand. I thought maybe I could answer your questions, if you had any."

"You negotiate with your sub?" Vince cocked his head to one side, a slight frown marring his expression.

Cason nodded. "Always. How am I supposed to know their hard limits if they don't tell me when I ask?"

"Most Doms do that? Ask what the sub wants, or doesn't want, and listens to them?"

His question upset Cason, not that he let it show. Cason kept his forehead smooth, fighting the urge to scowl. What kind of idiots had he been playing with?

"A real one," Cason answered after a minute. "Look, there are a lot of people who play in the lifestyle. They think that bossing a person around and controlling them is all that it takes to be a Dominant. That's not how it should work between a couple who really believe in living the D/s lifestyle. One of the things we could never forget is that everyone is different and that's okay."

Vince shook his head. "I don't want to live as a sub all the time." His hands clenched on the arms of his chair.

"And not every D/s couple does. Some keep their scenes only to the bedroom while others incorporate the aspects that draw them to their roles into their daily lives. Neither are right or wrong. Just because a person likes to submit in bed doesn't mean they have to give up control in their day-to-day life."

"Really?"

Cason arched an eyebrow. "I do not lie."

A flush spread across Vince's face and he stared at his knees. "Sorry, sir."

"Forgiven. And my name is Cason, remember? You don't know me, and it seems like you haven't been given too many chances to learn how our lifestyle really works."

"I was in a relationship with a Dom once where he wanted me to let him be in charge all the time. Now I just do scenes. I don't want... I don't want to be submissive full time."

Maybe Cason could give Vince some advice about how to protect himself. Maybe that was all he needed to do, which was why he didn't see the spirits inside the attractive blond man. "As I said, you don't have to. Even in a single scene, you should talk to your partner before anything starts. Things you like, what you absolutely will not do, what makes you nervous and might need to be helped into doing." He leaned forward.

"That isn't to say that you dictate what will happen in the scene, but we're not mind readers. Doms rely on a sub's honesty. That's why I use a slow word."

"Page mentioned that, but I've never had a Dom use one."

"I've seen the types of guys you play with. I'm not surprised. I wouldn't trust arrogant newbies like that with an experienced sub, much less one who had been mistreated."

Vince jerked his head up and glared at Cason. “What are you talking about?” His nostrils flared and he spoke through clenched teeth.

Cason shook his head. Maybe no one had ever confronted Vince about his poor choices. “It’s pretty obvious to someone like me. I have made it my job, and my hobby, to read other people. Every time you come back and find someone new at a club you’re hiding more fear, more pain. You’re not finding the peace in submission you should be.”

“Obvious to someone who is what... an arrogant jerk? Where do you get off?” Vince stood up, his body rigid. His hands shook until he clenched them into fists. He glared down at Cason. “Try reading this,” he said before he walked out of the room completely.

“Fuck.” Cason slumped in his chair. He never would have guessed Vince would have snapped at him that way with how meek the man acted. He’d clearly struck a nerve.

What he’d said had been nothing less than the truth, but stating it so baldly was a mistake, in retrospect. Perhaps an apology would soothe his ruffled feathers. He tapped his finger on the wood arm of the chair. Now he had to figure out how to get Vince to talk to him again.

CHAPTER FOUR

Page had once again been coerced into helping Cason with the bribe of a mocha.

“You sure he’ll come?” Cason was unaccountably nervous, turning his cup side to side.

Reveling in his mocha with extra whip cream, Page mumbled an answer.

“What?”

“I didn’t tell him you were going to be here,” Page finally said.

“Damn it, Page!” Cason couldn’t believe that Page would do that. “So he’s going to walk in the door, take one look at me, and walk back out again. How is that going to help me help him?”

Page didn’t even look embarrassed. Or sorry.

“He’ll stay. I think you intrigued him, after he got over being pissed. He was only mad because you were right, you know.”

“I know.” Cason didn’t drink any of his coffee, just stared at the dark black liquid rippling as he fidgeted with his cup. “I could have said it better though.”

Page shrugged. “He has issues, but I don’t want to see him hurt again like he was last week.”

Cason has been swamped with the influx of students coming back after winter holidays and had gone home each night exhausted. He hadn’t been out to the clubs in the last three weeks since the munch where things went so wrong with Vince.

“Who hurt him? How?” He stared at Page, his eyes narrowed. The handle on his cup was going to break off if he squeezed it any harder.

“Some guy. I think Vince found the guy on Craigslist or something.”

White hot anger lit up inside Cason. “Vince did what?” He didn’t know who he was more furious with, the asshole who hurt Vince or Vince for giving him the chance without knowing him at all.

“Yeah, I know. I gave him a piece of my mind. It’s one thing to meet a stranger at the clubs, but he didn’t tell any of us what he was doing until he came stumbling home. He had bruises around his throat and was walking funny.”

“The guy beat him?”

“I think so.”

Cason’s lips curled in a snarl. He really hated the idea of anyone hurting Vince.

“What happened after that?”

“Well, he hasn’t been with anyone else since then, and he asked me about you. The night he went out to the club last weekend he didn’t go home with anyone, but I saw him talking to a few subs.” He winked at Cason. “Including the one that you were with right before I set my sights on you.”

Cason sank back in his chair. Was Vince staying away from new partners while he considered the way he’d been playing, or was he looking at Cason to play with? A large part of Cason wanted that, but he couldn’t help the drop dead gorgeous man and then watch him walk away, especially without the spirits involved.

He would though. He decided that the instant Vince walked in the door, shaking snow out of his dark blond locks, and they locked eyes.

Heat suffused his body. He *wanted* Vince under him, looking up with those smoky eyes shining with their green glints. His breath held, Cason waited to see what the submissive would do when he waved him over, pointing to the chair next to his.

Vince strolled over with an air of nonchalance, and shrugged out of his coat before he sat down. He raised an eyebrow while looking at Page. “You didn’t tell me we’d be seeing anyone else here, or is this just a coincidence?”

“Of course it isn’t,” Cason said before Page could open his mouth. “I wanted to see you.”

Vince's lips looked chapped, which was really too bad because they usually looked soft. Vince started gnawing on his bottom one as he turned his eyes on Cason, who was staring at him. "Why?"

"To apologize, for starters. I shouldn't have spoken that way." Cason didn't apologize for what he said, and he wouldn't, but he did need to make amends for how and where he'd said it. A perfect stranger telling him he'd been handling his sex life completely wrong would have pissed him off too. In fact, it had, back when his family had issues with the way he choose to use his daimon abilities.

"It's forgotten." Vince shrugged one shoulder. The white T-shirt set off the caramel tone of his skin. Cason didn't often mark his subs but he wanted to pull up a vivid purple mark right above Vince's collar on his neck so everyone could see it.

"Thank you." Cason said simply. "Can I get you a cocoa? Perhaps a peppermint flavor? I asked when I came in and they said they have it in sugar free syrup."

The look Vince sent Page was hard. "What the hell, Page? Have you been spilling all my secrets?"

Page shrugged. "Maybe." He tipped his head back and drained most of his mocha in one long drink.

"Maybe Brandon needs to know about your thirty minute shower this morning?" Vince's smirk was back. Cason had to hide his smile. The man definitely had a wicked streak, though he didn't seem as bratty as Page.

"Maybe Brandon told me to take that long shower." Page looked at his watch in an exaggerated movement. "In fact, maybe I need to be off to meet him right now. Have fun." He wiggled a single finger in goodbye at Vince as he left. Cason couldn't stop himself from laughing at the vulgar salute.

"He's such a brat."

Cason agreed. "That's why I thought he'd do so well with Brandon. He always needed a challenge. Now, cocoa?"

“I’d like a cinnamon cocoa, actually. I’m not a big fan of peppermint.”

“Good to know. I’ll be back.” Exchanging his cold coffee for hot, he waited until Vince’s cocoa was ready before he went back to their seats, carrying both mugs. He stopped in front of Vince’s chair and held out the cup. “Careful, grab the handle. The mug is hot.”

Their fingers brushed as he handed over the cup. Cason wanted to touch Vince more than that casual contact, but he restrained himself. He’d spent weeks trying to think of how to help Vince with advice, maybe arranging a set up with a Dom... but he’d changed his mind. Or maybe he’d always wanted to be the one for Vince’s awakening to what a real scene could be like.

Vince sipped his cocoa and pleasure spread across his face. He smiled at Cason. “It’s very good. They have the best cocoa blend here.”

“Good. I’m a big advocate of only accepting the best.”

He didn’t want anyone but him teaching Vince the truth of his submission and the peace that could come from a scene shared to the mutual satisfaction of both the Dom and the sub but him. He could see the need practically pouring out of the man for someone to show him why he felt the need to submit, and how to find the right way to satisfy that urge.

It would be him. Once he figured out how to get Vince to agree, of course.

Considering how the man had been questioning people about Cason, Vince might be interested in return. The difficulty lay in not seeing the path Vince’s submission needed to go, but maybe it would be better this way. He would delve into Vince’s desires in a whole new way from how he usually planned out scenes.

They sipped their drinks in silence; the chatter of other people who had come inside to avoid the snow and seek their daily dose of caffeine muted in the background as they studied each other. Cason set his cup down. He decided to be direct; it was, after all, what he’d told Vince Doms and subs should do.

“I heard you’ve been asking around about me.”

Vince's face flushed a little, his cheeks turning pink. He shrugged one shoulder. "I was curious."

"And did you satisfy that curiosity?"

"I talked to three different subs, and Page and Brandon too. Every single sub said you were amazing and knew exactly what they needed, even if they didn't know themselves."

He couldn't really explain he had an ancient Greek daimon for an ancestor who had passed down the power to see the influence the spirits had on a sub. He knew how to read those needs and reach through that to their inner spirits. Thankfully, his grandfather had been a daimon who sought to help people find the truth within that would bring them peace... not all daimons were good. Some sought to influence humans toward the darkness inside them, breaking them for their own purposes.

He compromised with the truth. "I'm usually very good at reading people. I'm not perfect. No one is. It helps that I insist on communication being a foundation to each and every scene I plan."

"So you plan out what you are going to do beforehand?" A bit of sugar free whipped topping from the garnish on his cocoa clung to Vince's lip.

Plans on how slowly he could lick that dollop of creamy white sweetness from the soft pink lips instantly struck Cason. Watching Vince lick it off sent more ideas of how he could have the man use his pointed tongue to lick other, now throbbing, areas.

Cason was glad he'd left his button up shirt casually untucked. "Each situation can be different, depending on where we meet and how well I know the sub. We always have a discussion beforehand, but sometimes I need a bit of time to set things up for us. Other times we can start playing as soon as we're done going over their limits."

"That sounds like a lot of work, not play."

"I enjoy it. Planning on how to blow a man's mind is very... stimulating." Cason gave Vince a wicked grin, making the other man laugh.

That look was amazing on Vince; curving up his lips and making his eyes shine. More than anything, Cason wanted to see that face sated and relaxed after an intense scene where the man let everything go under Cason's hands. "I'd like to do a scene with you," he said. He blinked. That was not how he'd planned to bring it up.

Vince's mouth dropped open and he stared at Cason, for once not seeming uncomfortable looking directly into his eyes. "Wh—what?"

Cason brazened it out, putting every ounce of his confidence into his voice. "I want to do a scene. With you." He leaned back and watched Vince's reaction.

The gorgeous blond wet his lips repeatedly and swallowed. All traces of levity had left him.

"Would you like that?"

Vince nodded.

"Talk to me," Cason said. "Do you want to do a scene with me?"

"Yes, sir." Vince's voice was hesitant.

"Are you hesitant because you are nervous about doing a scene in general or because you aren't sure you want to play with me, specifically?" Cason laced his hands together in his lap. All of his nerves had drained away and he was calm and steady. This is something he knew how to do. The importance of it just made him all that more serious.

"Nervous." Vince's Adam's apple bobbed a few times. "Definitely nervous." His fingers began to beat a rapid staccato beat on the arm of his chair.

"Good. It means you're going to pay more attention." Cason looked around the very public coffee shop. "Will you come with me?"

"Where? And can I call Page and tell him?"

Cason smiled. "Good. You should never just agree to go play with someone you don't know, in a location you aren't sure of. You can call Page

and tell him you're coming home with me. He's been to my house before. That is, if you want to come now." His voice dropped on the last line deliberately; Cason hid a smile as Vince shivered.

"Yeah. All right." All five fingers were tapping now.

Leaning forward, Cason clamped his hand down on Vince's wrist before he could reach for his phone. The tapping stopped. "I don't need to be called Master by the subs I play with. I'm not looking for a slave. But you will pay attention when we're talking, and remember how you speak to me at all times when we're discussing playing together or actually doing a scene."

Vince's eyes were wide and his breathing was shallow. His pants did nothing to hide the thickening erection beginning to create a bulge as he tried to pull his arm back and couldn't move. "Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir, I understand." Vince didn't look away from his eyes while Cason was speaking. "I'll call Page now, if I can still come with you."

Relaxing his grip, Cason caressed Vince's wrist where he'd been pressing down. "Of course. One small mistake isn't going to change my mind. Finish your cocoa and then call Page. I'm going to go the restroom."

Cason stood up. He dropped his coffee cup in the tub on the way to the restroom. When he was washing his hands he stared in the mirror. Shaking off the excess water, he ran his clean hands through his black hair, taming some of the curls the snow had brought out as it melted. There was a lot racing through his mind.

Vince had a lot of issues. His difficulty focusing tied directly into the problems he would have had with his previous Dom, who tried to force him to live the lifestyle all the time. Vince's mind just could not focus all the time.

Clearly the sub had learned discipline when he wanted something; he loved what he did and he was going to school so that he could succeed in his chosen career. Cason didn't want to live the lifestyle all the time either. That was a lot of stress and responsibility. He knew people who could, and some elements might spill into regular life, but he never wanted to boss a man around every second of the day.

Vince needed to learn the lifestyle he wanted was still reachable after his bad experiences. Cason was determined to help him, despite how long he'd tried to ignore his own need to do so. He'd start tonight. They could sit in the living room and discuss Vince's limits. His play toys were clean and ready for use, as he always kept them.

"No sex, Cason," he murmured. There were a lot of things he wanted to do with Vince. He wasn't sure he could take being that close to his golden man without a chance to do it more than once. If he lost control and they had sex it would be over before Cason had a chance to spend enough time with the sub.

So he wouldn't.

Even if his cock was already aching. He could take a bit of pain in order to save himself a lot later. He would focus on Vince; the satisfaction in helping the younger man find confidence in his submission would be enough.

CHAPTER FIVE

Vince followed Cason back to his house. Vince drove a really nice car; its polished exterior was shining, even through the winter rain pounding down. At least it wasn't snowing anymore. If that was the quality of the work Vince did, Cason knew he'd have no trouble getting business... he could just park that beauty in front of the business.

"That's a Mustang, isn't it?" Cason had waved Vince into the spare bay in his garage.

"Yeah. A sixty-nine. My dad and I got it as a total junker when I was thirteen. That's when we discovered my ADHD seemed to disappear when I have a car project to work on. I've been fixing cars up ever since." He held the door open and Cason peeked inside. The inside was gorgeous; leather seats and sleek instruments.

"It's gorgeous." He stepped back and let Vince shut the door.

Vince rubbed his hand on the roof. "Thank you." Cason took in the quiet pride of Vince's expression as he stroked his car. That was the look he wanted to see when the man looked up at him from his knees. Vince needed to know that he could be just as successful submitting as he was fixing up cars.

"Come inside."

Cason led the way, stopping just inside to take off his shoes. He emptied his pockets into a carved bowl with a flaring lip set on the glass topped table set beside the door. Taking Vince's coat, he hung it up next to his on the coat rack. The small entry opened up in a large living room. There was a couch and an arm chair by a wall mounted flat screen opposite a lovely wood bar built into the left side of the room.

"Why don't you take a seat." Cason's tone wasn't an order, exactly, but he wasn't asking a question either. "Would you like a glass of water?"

"Yes, please." Vince sat down on the leather couch, his hands stroking the butter soft surface. "This is nice."

The kitchen was just on the other side of the bar, so Cason could hear Vince easily. “I’m glad you like it. I’m not much for wearing leather, but I do like it for the feeling and smell.”

“I love leather. I have a few toys and some cuffs.”

Cason paused for a second, imagining Vince on his knees with his hands cuffed behind him, a leather half-hood over his head covering up his eyes. He breathed deeply for a minute before he grabbed two glasses and filled them with ice and water from the refrigerator. He walked back into the living room. “Here you go.” He flipped two coasters out of the holder onto the wood table he’d carved. He sat down on the other end of the couch and took a drink before setting down his glass.

“So.” Vince’s hands were clenched around his glass and he was staring at his knees. “Is this where we negotiate?”

Nodding, Cason settled back into the cushions. “It is. I can ask you questions, or you can tell me what your limits are.”

“I... you could ask me?”

“Okay. I remember you like bondage, but don’t like rope.” Vince nodded. “Are you willing to let me tie you up if I used something else, like silk? Or do you like cuffs?”

“I haven’t let anyone tie me up in a while.” His hesitance told Cason volumes.

“We don’t have to incorporate that, if it’s a hard limit for you. I don’t want bad memories to pull you out of your headspace while we’re playing.” Cason could work around that, though he loved to see a man held immobile, quivering as he waited for whatever came next.

“Maybe you could tie me so that I could get out of it, if I really needed to?”

Cason tapped one finger on his knee. “I’ll consider a few things. I have some options for bondage. What about pain? Not everyone feels the same about it.”

“Spankings can be hot, if they start slow. I don’t need it in every scene, though, and I don’t like a lot of pain. Definitely no blood or permanent damage.” Vince glanced up through his eyelashes in a look that was almost coy.

Cason felt a slow smile spread across his face. “Spanking could be fun, if used as foreplay.” With his hand. He could just imagine the taut curves of Vince’s ass slowly turning pink. His cock twitched with interest.

“What about toys?”

“Like?”

“Nipple clamps. Dildos. Cock rings. Though the last one might be considered bondage, there are different types like vibrating cock rings, ball spreaders, glans rings for guys who are uncircumcised... all sorts. I also have some ball straps which can take weights, cock cages. I own many things to play with.”

Vince swallowed. “Weights... that would hang from my balls?”

“It can stretch them beautifully and bring all of your focus to your balls.”

“Would it hurt?”

“I’d say it aches, but it isn’t a sharp pain. I never start a sub out with too much weight. The key is to build slowly.” That was going to be what Cason had to do with every scene; even the one he was already starting to plan. He would build things between them slowly; increasing the intensity bit by bit until he made Vince fly.

“Whatever you want.”

“So those are your limits? No blood or permanent damage? No severe pain? That’s it?” Cason wasn’t surprised that Vince seemed reluctant to speak up with the stories of how his past Dominants had treated him. “What about things like water sports?”

Vince’s nose wrinkled up. “Gross. No.”

Finally, a hard limit with no waffling. “Good. I’m not into that either. What about exhibitionism? Service?” Cason refused to suggest any humiliation play. He wasn’t into it and that would be the last thing that Vince needed. Breaking a sub down and pushing their boundaries didn’t mean breaking their spirit by degrading them.

“Service means what?”

Cason reached for his glass and took a drink, the ice clinking against his teeth. Vince was still holding his glass but he hadn’t taken a drink yet.

“Drink up,” Cason told him. “You need to stay hydrated.” He watched as Vince once again obeyed him immediately, taking a long drink. It pleased him, even if they weren’t playing yet. Clearly the man had a strong submissive streak, even if he didn’t want to live as a sub all the time.

“Service is just like how it sounds. You serve. It can mean taking care of the Dominant physically, or doing things like chores.”

“Doing chores can be a scene?” Vince sounded disbelieving.

Cason shrugged. “You’d be surprised what people get off on. For example, a sub could serve by washing my body in the shower before I let him suck me off. Or, a sub could bring me a drink while he fixed dinner for both of us, then sit blindfolded at my knees while we eat so I can feed him from my fingers. I’d consider that service, because he was taking care of my needs before I took him to my room and took care of his.”

Vince wiped at the droplets of water gathering on the side of his glass in short strokes with his thumbs. “I can’t cook,” he said bluntly. “But I’m not averse to being fed from your fingers.” He licked his lips as he looked down at Cason’s hands.

Cason chuckled. “That does remind me, you’re not allergic to anything, right?”

“No lubes or anything like that. I am allergic to shellfish, but nothing else.”

“Good.” He put his water down and then reached for Vince’s empty glass, setting it on the other coaster. “I think I have a pretty good idea of what you need. We’ve talked enough.”

“We have?” Vince bit his lip.

Standing up, Cason held out a hand to the nervous sub. “Yes. Come with me.” He normally didn’t have to guess what a sub needed. He could tell who needed to be hooded and whipped until they came screaming or who would respond better to being tied up and teased with a feather until they begged to come before their balls exploded.

But for Vince... it was harder. He couldn’t tell what path would lead to Vince’s center or where his submission truly lay. The challenge focused him in ways he hadn’t felt in a long time.

“Your house is beautiful. All this wood detail is so intricate,” Vince said as Cason led him past the kitchen to the stairs. His voice sounded shaky, as if he were nervous and trying to distract himself from his fear.

“Thank you. I did it myself.”

“Page said you did woodwork, I forgot though. This all looks amazing.”

“It’s a hobby.” He glanced back over his shoulder. “You’ll have to check out my collection of handmade dildos sometime.”

Vince’s eyes opened wide. “You make dildos?”

“Sure. I make all sorts of things to order. I have a day job at the college, but I like to make all sorts of things. I recently finished a crib for a friend having a baby. I have a whole website devoted to toys or bondage furniture for those in the lifestyle though. I’ve been talking with Page about offering some leather work on my website.”

“He’d be good at that.” Vince stopped when they walked into Cason’s room at the top of the stairs. “Oh my God. I think my room would fit in a corner of yours.”

Cason had a playroom to do scenes in with a swing, a cross, and a spanking bench, along with all sorts of toys. He kept his best toys in a chest in his

bedroom, the ones he collected but rarely used. Cason didn't use his bedroom for playing, but with what he was planning for Vince...

Besides, he wanted to see the sub in his bed. He planned for their time together to drive the man completely crazy. From everything he'd seen, there was a lot Vince could learn from their time together. Vince's reaction to talking about pain, bondage, coupled with his inability to understand submission being voluntarily given and not demanded showed his lack of positive experience in the lifestyle.

Cason would show him.

"We're going to start now."

"In here?" Vince licked his lips. Cason stared hard at him until he lifted his eyes. "Sir."

The addition pleased Cason. He stroked a hand down the post on the bed he'd made himself with some... special features. He wasn't going to use them tonight with Vince, but maybe one day, if he got the sub to stay with him he would get to use the hidden rings he'd built into posts on each corner. "Yes. We're going to play in here." He faced Vince, spreading his legs a little farther apart and straightening his spine so he stood erect, strong and balanced. "What is your safeword?"

"Finch."

"And your slow down word? This is what you will say if the intensity is getting to be too much for you or when you need to tell me something important."

Cason watched while Vince thought for a second. "Cardinal."

"You'll remember both of those?"

He nodded.

"And use them. It's important. We've never played together before, and I won't be pleased if you let me do something you cannot handle."

Vince took a deep breath. "I promise."

“Good. Finch and cardinal it is.” Finch means stop, cardinal slow down. Cason repeated that several times in his mind so that the words would be ingrained and would trigger him if Vince needed to say either of them.

“Strip.” The timbre of his voice lowered as he gave Vince his first order. He watched as a delicious flush spread across Vince’s face. His hands went to the bottom of his white T-shirt and he slowly pulled it up and over his head.

His hands shook a little as they went to the top button on his jeans. His chest and stomach were lean, muscled, but not overly built like a gym bunny. Hints of a six pack creased his stomach as his forearms flexed and the button came undone.

His zipper opened slowly.

“Red underwear. Nice.” They looked like silk. “I bet you’d look even better in blue.” It was his favorite color and he loved to see it on his subs.

Vince didn’t say anything, just hooked his trembling fingers into the top of his underwear and slowly slid them down his legs, taking a single step forward. His eyes stopped at Cason’s chin as he stilled, standing naked before him.

Cason’s breath caught. Vince wasn’t fully aroused, but he wasn’t limp either. He had a nicely shaped cock, circumcised, and the head was a pink almost the same shade as his lips. Cason licked his lips.

“Hands at your sides.”

First step in his plan wasn’t going to work if Vince wouldn’t look at him. “Eyes on mine.”

Vince grimaced but lifted his lashes, showing off those gorgeous gray-blue eyes as he looked right at Cason.

Feeling every inch the Dom in charge, Cason stalked forward. Vince quivered but didn’t move as Cason stood right in front of him, stopping when they were inches apart. “You’re tan all over.” He ran a hand down Vince’s side and rubbed a thumb in the hollow of his hip, careful not to touch the wakening cock.

“It’s my natural color.” Vince’s voice was shaky.

“I like it,” Cason told him.

“Thank you, sir.”

Cason kept his hands on Vince as he moved around him, holding on to his hips to keep him still. He held in his moan but he couldn’t keep his hands off Vince’s ass. It was just as tight as it looked in jeans, smooth curves barely dusted with fine blond hair. The skin was smooth under Cason’s calloused palms as he squeezed each cheek.

Vince’s back arched as he pressed back into Cason’s hands. A soft moan broke the silence. He seemed to be very sensitive; Cason would have to be careful. He let go reluctantly, his fingers tracing small paths as he stepped back.

“Go lay down on the bed on your back.”

The chest lid was heavy as he pushed it up until it locked open. Vince was on his back on the deep blue comforter, watching his every move. Cason had made the chest deep on purpose. With the lid up, the man on the bed couldn’t see what he was grabbing.

Looking into the neat compartments, Cason grabbed a small black leather case. From another area he grabbed the red silk cord he had coiled into a small circle that would be perfect for Vince’s wrists. A small crop with a furred end and a massage mitt joined the pile. The last thing Cason grabbed was his favorite black leather cock ring that would snap around the base of Vince’s cock nice and tight, while a second attached ring would encircle his balls.

Then Cason went to a large wood armoire made of the same cherry wood as the bed. He folded back the doors of the upper area and exposed a flat screen TV. The first drawer slid open smoothly and Cason took a minute to run his fingers along the movies lined up in orderly rows before he decided on one.

Sometimes he liked his prep work done beforehand, but he’d taken extra pleasure in moving each item from his chest to the bed one by one, Vince’s

eyes locked on each toy as it was revealed to him. His cock pulsed when Cason unfurled the silk cord and let it pool on Vince's stomach just above his now rock hard erection. The movie was in the DVD player, his toys were lined up, and Cason was ready.

"Sit up."

Vince sat up, spilling the cord onto his groin. Cason got up on the bed and moved behind him.

"You're not getting naked, sir?" Vince asked.

Cason allowed himself to smirk since Vince couldn't see his face, but his voice didn't betray his expression. "How does that make you feel, with me dressed and you completely naked in my bed?"

His hands clenched into fists at his sides and Cason noted the tense lines of the muscles in Vince's back. "Vulnerable."

Cason leaned against the pillows, his legs spread wide around Vince. He urged the sub to lean back against him. "Good," he said in Vince's ear. That was exactly how Cason wanted him to feel.

For a minute Cason stroked Vince's arms, his touch feather-light, from his shoulders to his fingertips. They fit well together and gradually he relaxed into Cason's touch.

Reaching for the red cord, Cason spoke quietly in Vince's ear again, prompting the younger man to shiver as he used his breath to tickle his ear and neck. "I'm not going to tie you up but I am going to restrain you."

He separated the cord into the two halves. He lifted his knee and wound the cord just above it, then moved Vince's hand to the outside of his thigh where he twisted the red cord in a firm twist around his wrist and palm, before tucking the other end of the cord through the loops around his thigh. Just like that, Vince's right arm was tied to Cason's leg, leaving him vulnerable but not helpless if he really needed to get away.

Vince's breathing sped up as Cason repeated the same move on his left arm.

“There. All secure.”

“Thank you, sir.”

“Shh,” Cason hushed him. “Unless you’re using your safewords, or I ask you a question, I don’t want you to speak. You can moan and cry out if you need to, but no words.” He wanted the sub to focus on the sensations and what was happening during their actual scene.

Vince nodded.

“Good.” Cason rewarded Vince with a small nip on his earlobe, then sucked away the light sting. The first touch of his lips on Vince’s body made the responsive man gasp. Cason smiled. He was going to have such a good time coaxing every sensation possible from Vince.

His cock was a hard ridge in his pants. Cason ignored it, focusing on Vince instead. He reached for the cock ring and unsnapped it. “I think we’re going to need this sooner rather than later.”

He didn’t palm Vince’s balls immediately. His finger slid up and down the small treasure trail of soft blond hair. He splayed his fingers out wide and toyed with the slim hip bones.

Vince squirmed.

“Stay still and do not cum.” There was no way Vince’s cock was going to listen. It was throbbing, a pearly drop on the tip. Ready to ramp up the torture, and not wanting Vince to fail, Cason quickly put the tight leather ring around the smoothly shaven balls and excited cock. “Oh, that’s pretty. Look at you.” The head of Vince’s prick was a deep red.

“Oh God,” Vince moaned.

“Naughty. I said no talking.”

Vince went rigid. “I—”

“If you want to keep playing, you will stop talking.” Cason put his hands on the bed and waited. Vince didn’t say anything. Incrementally, Vince

relaxed back into the cradle of his body, squirming a little. Cason gritted his teeth when the man's tight ass rubbed against his aching cock.

When Vince stopped moving, Cason picked up the remote from beside his pillow. Turning on the TV and DVD player, he started the movie he'd put in. On the screen a pale little sub with bright blue eyes and a long ponytail of dark hair was looking up at the camera. He was on the floor, a silver spreader bar separating his knees with a series of matching steel rings running up his cock, caging the slender prick.

A small gasp jolted Vince's body when the camera panned around and showed the cuffed wrists at the small of the sub's back and the glint of a toy stretching his ass just peeking out between his tight cheeks. The view from behind the sub also showed the Dom standing in front of him, leather pants doing little to hide a nice thick erection.

"You can just imagine what he's going to do with that gag in his hand, can't you?" Cason whispered in Vince's ear. A silver ring gag matching the sub's cock ring dangled from a leather strap in the Dom's hand. "This is one of my favorite films. Submission can mean so much more than masochism. It's about feeling and it's about giving up something and getting so much in return."

Cason was going to show Vince exactly what he meant. He used the tips of his fingers to trace the red cord trapping Vince's wrists to his thighs, holding him still without tying him up. He moved up, tickling along his biceps and collarbones, down to the smooth chest that he'd been dying to touch since he'd made Vince strip. Those small nipples were begging to be teased.

He stroked, twisted and tweaked the small tips until they were hard and Vince was panting, his eyes locked on the now gagged sub. They both watched the Dom on the screen caress the sub's mouth stretched around the ring, before he untied his pants. An impressively long and thick cock popped out and the sub's eyes widened and his tongue darted out of his opened mouth.

Picking up the furred crop, Cason began with tickling strokes over those tight nipples to increase their aching sensitivity before moving to trail the soft

fur up and down Vince's thighs and balls. His sub's hands clenched into fists against his legs and strained as he tried to move his hips and get more.

"Like that?"

He nodded.

"You want me to stroke your cock, don't you?"

"Yes, but—" Vince shut his mouth instantly when Cason stopped making small circles on his tight balls, lifting the crop away.

"Good. Very good," Cason said when Vince closed his mouth with a sharp snap. He rewarded his sub by trailing the crop up his leaking cock, knowing how intense the light caress would feel when every inch was tight and throbbing. Sliding the mitt onto his other hand, he used every touch to drive the man cradled against him higher and higher.

Every mindless moan took Cason's breath away. Vince was so fucking hot. He'd stopped thinking, stopped doing anything but feeling exactly what Cason wanted him to feel. If Cason's dick got any harder it was going to bust right through his pants and he couldn't help but rock against Vince.

"Watch," Cason told him after he'd been teasing for at least an hour, driving the sub deeper with each touch. Vince blinked and opened his eyes slowly and focused on the screen again.

The Dom was holding the back of his sub's head and fed him his cock through the ring gag. Slowly, he pressed forward until his pubes brushed against the stretched lips and then he stopped. The sub's throat worked as he gagged but he did not move, didn't fight, just stared up at the Dom with wide eyes and let himself be choked. "I love that," Cason said. "Love the trust in his eyes. The way he knows his Dom is going to take care of him even as he uses his throat, so he doesn't panic when he can't breathe. That is true submission."

That was what Cason wanted to see in his sub's eyes. If he ever found one that wanted to stay longer than one scene. For tonight, he wanted to show Vince that he could trust like that, so that he'd know in the future it *was*

possible to have someone take care of him. He'd teach the other man that he deserved that consideration from any Dom he chose.

Cason put down the crop and the mitt. "I want to do something to push you." He opened the black case, exposing the slender steel wands. "Do you know what these are for?"

"Yes, sir." Vince didn't tense; he stayed relaxed against him and watched as Cason pulled the three millimeter wand out of its slot by the smooth ball at its tip. The tiny rod glinted in the light.

"Have you ever played with sounds before?"

Vince shook his head.

"I'm going to show you how good it can feel to have your cock filled." He wasn't going to penetrate Vince with his cock but he needed to put something inside the gorgeous man. He dragged his mouth up Vince's shoulder, sucking and biting, until he reached his ear. "Are you ready for that?" he asked in a deep voice.

Vince shuddered. "Please." He writhed against Cason, thrusting his hips and his seeping cock into the air. "Sir. Please."

A sub begging him to be filled was the sweetest sound to Cason. His nostrils flared and he couldn't resist the urge. He nipped Vince's neck and then sucked hard, pulling up a mark right below his ear. His mark belonged on the outside of the sub's body, just like the one Cason was leaving on the inside. He could taste the salt on Vince's heated skin and he moaned.

Fuck, he wanted this more than once. He wanted to spend hours tasting every inch of Vince's body. He wanted to bite his ass, spread his cheeks and drive his cock into that tight hole. Cason pulled away and stared at the dark purple mark with pleasure for a full minute as he struggled for the control he was going to need.

He pulled the sterile Surgilube out its pocket. He slicked up the sound and then warned Vince. "You are not going to cum." His hand slid from the base of that angry erection to the tip for the first time. He let his callouses drag over

the sensitive skin, knowing how much that drove subs crazy. He trailed his fingers back down and found the snap under Vince's balls. He unsnapped the tight leather from that ring, but left the cock ring still snugly bound at the base of Vince's engorged erection.

Vince shuddered and moaned deep in this throat. His breath came fast as he panted. Vince bit his lip, tucking that soft pink bottom lip in between his white teeth as he struggled to follow Cason's orders. The way he fought to obey thrilled Cason.

"So good," Cason told him. "I'm going to make you feel so good." He squeezed more lube into his hand and began to lube up Vince's cock, using his hand to open his slit into a small hole and pushing lube in with his thumb.

Gasping, Vince pushed back hard against him, rubbing his ass back and forth against the steely ridge of Cason's cock. His voice was a deep growl when he spoke, "Oh yeah, you feel that, don't you?" Cason chuckled when Vince nodded.

He needed Vince to stay still and the way the sub's feet were shoving against the bed and his legs were writhing, he wasn't going to in that position.

"Put your feet over my legs." Vince didn't move. "Now, Vince."

Slowly, Vince put his legs over Cason's calves, opening his thighs and taking away the last ability he had to control his body's movement. He pushed more lube in Vince's slit and then took a firm grip around the head. "Deep breath now."

The slender metal rod was tiny but next to the hole in his cock, it must have looked huge to Vince, who took in a deep breath but didn't let it out. He stared down at what Cason was about to do to him, at the sound poised to slide inside his cock.

A guttural moan filled the air as Cason slid the tip into Vince's cock about an inch, then pulled it out before letting it slide in again, a little farther than the first time. Vince's groan seemed to go on forever.

Cason waited until Vince was forced to drag in a ragged breath and then he dropped the sound, burying it inches deep until the ball at the end stopped it from going any farther.

Vince cried out. His head thumped hard against Cason's shoulder as he went rigid. A deep red flush began to work its way up his neck. Knowing Vince wasn't going to last, that he'd drawn out the scene almost to its peak, Cason moved one hand down and quickly unsnapped the cock ring as he used his thumb to set up a soft tap on the ball of the sound buried inside Vince.

"Cason!" Vince's back arched and Cason plucked the sound out and stroked as the slender man shot rope after rope of sticky white cum all over the rigid muscles of his stomach and chest. The smell of the sub's heat, his spicy scent coupled with the smell of his cum, was too much for Cason.

Lost in the moment, no longer a Dom with iron control but a man who needed that connection with the man coming apart in his hands, Cason grunted, his teeth clenched, and shuddered hard as he thrust twice against Vince's ass. He spilled inside his underwear for the first time since he'd been an oversexed youth and loved every second of the pleasure sending sharp shocks through his balls.

CHAPTER SIX

Cason unwound the red cords around his legs and Vince's wrists. He opened the drawer on his nightstand that held a small box and dropped the used toys in it for cleaning later. He had an unpleasantly sticky mess in his pants, but he wasn't ready to get up. With everything out of the way, he rolled the sub in his arms over so they were on their sides, still snuggled together. For long minutes he enjoyed the smooth muscles of Vince's back against his chest as they lay quiet, breathing together.

Vince let out the occasional shudder as he slowly came down. "Jesus." His voice was hoarse. "I have never come that hard. I think my balls turned inside out."

Chuckling, Cason nuzzled the smooth shoulder in front of him with the raspy stubble on his face. He was already addicted to making the sub in his arms feel good. Damn, he wished he got more than a single scene. He could feel the tension he'd seen and felt in the man in his arms had melted away.

"You were deep in your sub-space," Cason said. He yawned, exhausted himself from the intense feelings. He found himself stroking over Vince's hip. "You want to stay?"

Vince nodded, rubbing his face on Cason's bicep that was curled under his head. "Yeah," he said softly.

Not ready to let him go, Cason smiled, happy that Vince wanted to be with him a little longer. His thumb stroked back and forth. "Stay still, I'll be right back."

He rummaged around in the closet and pulled out two pairs of lounge pants. Going into the bathroom, he grabbed a washcloth and put it in the sink, turning the water on so it would get hot. He peeled off his pants and underwear, balling them up and throwing them in the hamper in the corner.

He cleaned up and then pulled on his pajamas. Rinsing out the washcloth he got it wet again, then grabbed the blue pair of pants he'd taken out for Vince. The slim man was stretched out on his back when Cason went back

into the bedroom. His eyes were closed and a small smile turned his lips up at the corners.

Relaxed and sated. Cason loved that look on a sub. He climbed up on the bed beside Vince and proceeded to clean him up, using the soft cloth to wipe up all the cum off his chest and stomach, then gently washed his cock and balls to remove the lube.

“I got these pants for you to put on.” Cason handed the soft blue pajamas to Vince. “I’m going to go get some water.”

When he came back from the kitchen, Vince was under the covers, his blond hair spread across Cason’s favorite pillow. Crawling under the covers, he handed Vince the uncapped water. “Drink this. I don’t want you getting dehydrated.”

Vince drained the bottle, sighing when he finished. “Oh, that was good.”

Cason sat down on the edge of the bed, taking the empty bottle and tossing it in the garbage. He shut off the light and snuggled into the bed. He lay next to Vince on his side. He was surprised when the smaller man rolled over and buried his nose in his neck. “Hmm, you smell good,” Vince said.

“Thanks. How are you feeling?”

The smaller man insinuated one of his slim legs between Cason’s and then went limp. “So good, like I’m almost weightless, but I’m tired.”

It felt natural to wrap his arms around Vince and stroke his back. “I’m glad you feel good, you always should, when you come down from an intense scene.” What they’d done hadn’t been much, but he’d spent a long time teasing Vince and driving him crazy.

“Sleep.” He was tired too, but Cason’s mind was busy. He’d always taken care of his subs after a scene, but he’d never had one sleep over. There was always this sense of ending, a distinct finality when they were done that they *were* done. With Vince, he wasn’t feeling that.

There was so much he wasn’t sure of outside of his ability. He’d spent so many years knowing what he had to offer, and taking pleasure in helping the

subs through the scenes they needed. He'd grown dissatisfied over the last year, restless in a way he'd never been before.

Maybe he shouldn't have focused solely on the subs touched by the spirits that needed help. Though, thinking hard, he couldn't pinpoint any other sub he'd met whose center was hidden from him, even if they were happily paired with a Dom. His sex life had never been stale, but planning the scene for Vince and watching the man's face and body for the clues he needed had felt amazing. Instead of trusting his ability to tell him what to do, Cason had been completely focused on Vince; that urge to make sure he was filling the sub's needs had made it so much more immediate and stimulating.

He didn't want to give it up. Snuggling up to the man curled into his arms, he sighed. Morning was soon enough to talk with Vince. As much as he hated the power being out of his hands, he couldn't do more than ask Vince if he wanted to play again. Whatever the captivating sub answered, would be what they did.

Cason could enjoy the night though. Closing his eyes, he nuzzled his cheek against Vince's soft hair and sighed, content to hold the other man until he woke up.

The only problem with that was that when he woke up, Vince wasn't in the bed. Pushing up on his elbow and running his hand across the bed, Cason felt warmth. The toilet flushed and he slumped back onto his pillow. Vince hadn't left yet.

The lean young man sauntered back into the bedroom naked as the day he was born, rubbing his stomach and yawning. He must have left the pajama pants in the bathroom hamper.

Fuck, he was gorgeous. Cason's hard-on throbbed; he wanted that body under him, over him... any way he could get it. "Want to get some breakfast?" he asked before he could stop himself when he saw the other man pull on his bright red underwear. Vince froze mid-stretch for his pants.

He stood up slowly, turning to look at Cason. "Really?"

Sitting up, Cason nodded. “Yes. I liked talking with you before. Your roommate and my best friend are together. We’re both in the lifestyle and we’re going to be around each other. I thought... we could be friends.”

“Just friends or friends with benefits? I mean,” Vince looked down, “last night, you didn’t even fuck me.”

Cason stood up from the bed, the sheet slithering down his body to pool at the floor. Vince’s eyes locked on to the erection jutting in front of him. “I do want you, Vince.” There was no hiding how much, and he didn’t want to hide it anyway. “The scene last night was for you, because you needed to know that being a sub doesn’t mean pain, or not getting what you need even though I was in charge. You were too sunk into your sub-space to notice, but I came too. You’re fucking hot, you have to know that. Watching you do something that scared you, because I said we were going to do it, did it for me.

“I get off on being able to push sub’s boundaries by making them do things I want them to do. Things I know make them nervous. You didn’t need to get hurt, that’s not your kink. You got off on doing what I told you to do.” Cason smirked. “There’s a lot I still want to do to you.”

Vince’s cock responded to the command in Cason’s voice. His lips were parted and his eyes dilated, leaving just a small ring around the blown pupil. “Yes.” He stepped forward and shuddered as Cason reached out and pulled him close. “I’ve never felt like I did last night, all zoned out like that. But...?”

There was no but that Cason would allow to stop them. “What?” His hands crept down to the red underwear, slipping under them to squeeze Vince’s ass.

“You never do more than one scene with a sub.” Vince searched his face, his hands landing on Cason’s shoulders as he held on tight, digging his fingers in. “Do you want to sign a contract?”

That wasn’t where Cason wanted to go at all. Especially with Vince’s past experiences, but he did want the other man to know he was wanted. “That’s a bit more formal than I was thinking. I don’t want to own you or tie you down. I want to play with you, for as long as you want to play with me, at least until you are sure of what you need. I don’t do relationships,” Cason didn’t say it

was because no one seemed to want one with him; he had some pride, and he didn't want to scare Vince off, "actually, I don't usually do more than a single scene with a sub."

Vince searched his face. "Why me?"

Once again Cason wished he could tell Vince exactly why he fascinated him so much. He didn't want the young man to think he was crazy, or scare him off, so he just shook his head. "I don't know. You're different. I want to get to know you better. Playing with you was fun. If we can do that too, so that you learn what you need and how to protect yourself when you play with someone else, I'll be happy."

A pink flush spread across Vince's cheeks. "Page told you about that guy, didn't he?"

Cason nodded. "He did. That wasn't smart, and as bad as it sounded things went, you were lucky. If we do this... no Craigslist, no other Doms. Not until you know what you really need and who can give it to you."

"Is that an order?" Vince's cock was weeping against Cason's hip.

Cason pushed Vince's underwear down to his thighs and palmed his ass, pulling them together so their erections ground together, just enough precum between them to turn the rub into a slick glide. "Yes."

Licking his lips, Vince nodded. "Okay," he said. "Okay."

Cason lifted one hand and brought it down hard on one rounded cheek. His hand stung and Vince yelped. "Sir! Okay, sir."

With a firm grip on Vince's ass, not avoiding the spot that was probably stinging, Cason pushed his cock forward and ground against Vince. "You want this, you remember my rules." He pulled the smaller man against him, guiding their thrusts slow and steady, pausing to grind their cocks together. "No playing with other people. Remember your manners when we play."

Vince nodded several times, panting.

"And you talk to me. Communicate."

“Yes, sir!”

His own need ratcheting higher, Cason slid one hand between them and grabbed Vince’s slender prick and his. He used a firm grip, giving them something to thrust into.

“Close,” Vince panted.

Not quite there, Cason shook his head. “Not yet. Wait... wait.”

A whine started in Vince’s throat, but he didn’t come. Cason drew it out as long as he could, enjoying the build, the sweat darkening Vince’s blond hair, the way the sub’s mouth was open wide as he struggled to drag in the air he needed.

Vince began to shake. Unable to hold on to the edge any longer, Cason let go. “Now!” he grunted.

The hot cum spilled over his hand as they both came hard. Cason’s toes curled against the bedroom rug under his feet. The smell of their spunk and the squelching slick sounds made him even hotter as he stroked them both hard to draw out every last burst until it was too much sensation and he had to stop.

“Fuck.” Vince leaned into him and Cason held him tight. Cason just laughed.

“Shower.”

They showered together but each washed themselves. Cason loved the smell of his shampoo and soap on Vince’s skin, though. The woodsy scent smelled even better on Vince than it did on him, when he was unable to resist and pulled the younger man into his arms for a quick kiss.

“Diner food okay? I know this great fifties nostalgic place a few miles away. They have horrible coffee, not that you drink it, but their omelets are delicious.”

“Sounds good to me. Want to take my car?”

Riding in that gorgeous vehicle? “Hell, yeah.”

Cason locked up behind Vince and then followed him out to his car. Vince opened his door and then closed it behind him. The car smelled of leather and a bit like axle grease.

“This is a really sweet ride. I can’t believe you restored this.”

Vince ran his hand along the dashboard. “Yeah. Definitely a labor of love. It makes me feel good, you know? And I can focus when I’m working on cars. The basic stuff is okay, but I like doing the classic restoration the most. I’ve been talking with my boss, he owns the Pearson Auto Shops, and he’s been talking about starting a custom shop in the empty storefront next door and letting me be a partner.”

Cason raised his eyebrow. “Really? That sounds like a great opportunity.”

“Yeah, it is, but I have to finish school first.” Vince grimaced. “It’s been a lot of fucking work, but I’m almost there. I’ve been taking part time classes for business management. It’s only an Associate’s degree, but with that and my experience, I’m golden.”

“When do you graduate?”

“Next month.”

“Cool. That’s the diner there.” Cason pointed to the small red building on their right. The restaurant had black and white tiled floors and tons of chrome accents. There was a juke box playing oldies in one corner of the dining room area.

They took a booth with bright red benches that matched the paint job. “Wow,” Vince said, looking around. “This place is pretty great. I love the nostalgia vibe.”

“Yeah, I like it. They make an awesome Santa Fe omelet. They have these big biscuits instead of toast I always get too. I never need to eat lunch when I’ve had breakfast here.”

They ordered, both of them getting juice. Once their food came, they focused on eating. “You’re right, these biscuits are great.”

“So, is your family going to come visit and celebrate your graduation?”

Vince shook his head, still chewing his last bite of biscuit.

“Why not?” Cason couldn’t believe Vince’s family wouldn’t come celebrate his hard work. “You don’t have to tell me, if it’s a bad subject.” Maybe Vince had a falling out with his family. A lot of gay men did.

Swallowing, Vince wiped his mouth with his napkin. “No, it’s fine,” he said. “My family’s great. My parents are okay with me being gay. It was a little tense at first, my dad didn’t really understand. He’s sorta old school and I didn’t fit his idea of a gay guy. Nothing like the horror stories you hear though. My younger brothers are only a few years younger than me, so they were young teens when I came out.”

He shrugged. “They didn’t care. They were going to come up but my little brother’s graduation is the same weekend. Besides, airfare is expensive.”

He took a drink of his orange juice. “What about you? I know you do the wood working, and you’re friends with Brandon, and you have a day job.”

“Well, I’m a counselor over at the college. I help kids pick career paths, advise them when they are having issues with their courses, professors, roommates... stuff like that.” Cason cut another bite of his omelet, enjoying the bite of the peppers and onions along with the smooth eggs. He reached for the Tabasco and put a bit more on the last few bites.

“My family is really close. They live in the city too. We’re Greek, so I have a big family with lots of cousins and stuff, though I’m literally the only boy and an only child. We all know everything about everyone, there’s no privacy. I am surprised my parents didn’t tell me I was gay before I told them.”

Vince laughed. “Really?”

“Yeah. My dad married outside the community though, so my mom and my grandma are Southerners, born and bred for generations back to the Civil War. I learned home cooking from Grandma, she made fried chicken that was to die for and the biscuit recipe I finally cajoled out of her is even better than the diner’s.”

“So if your family knows everything, do they know about,” Vince waved his hand between them, “this sort of thing?”

“That I’m a Dom?” Cason asked. Vince nodded. “Yeah. It’s not the subject of dinner conversation, but I’m not ashamed of what I do in my life, or my bedroom.”

Vince leaned back in his seat. “That’s really cool.”

Cason shrugged. “No one can make me feel bad about my desires unless I let them. I know what I like, and as long as my partner is enjoying himself too, it’s all good. Kink comes in all flavors.”

A slow smile crawled across Vince’s face. “You are definitely to my taste.”

That sent a shot of lust to Cason’s cock. He groaned. “I’m so not a teenager anymore.”

Vince burst out laughing. “Okay,” he said slowly. “I have no idea what you mean by that.”

Cason set his fork down, completely full, and wishing he did have the libido of a teenager. Vince was hot, but when he laughed... he was fucking gorgeous. “You make me want to go right back home to play some more but I need a bit more time than that.”

Vince ducked his head a little, his cheeks pink. The mix of outgoing and shy turned Cason on. Ideas of things he could do to Vince next time rolled through his mind. Without his ability to guide him, Cason intended to plan out every aspect of their scenes together meticulously.

“I’d love to go back to your place but I have to do laundry today and study.”

Disappointment rolled through Cason but he had his own things to get done before he had to go back to work. Brandon’s order wasn’t the only one he had. As much as he wanted to spend all his time with Vince, he had to be realistic.

Coming on too strong could spook Vince. He’d had his life taken over by his last boyfriend; Cason didn’t want him to worry that he would do that to

him too. They were not dating; they were friends. Getting attached would be bad for Cason when Vince moved on; he had to protect himself too.

He paid for breakfast. They stepped outside and ran for the car. It was pouring down rain and they were both soaked by the time they were inside.

“Damn.” Cason wiped at his face. “I hope we’re not damaging your seats.”

Vince reached into the backseat and grabbed a towel. “Here. The seats will be fine, they’re protected ’cause it rains too damn much not to have them sealed.”

They had to let the car run for a few minutes to de-fog the windows. “Do you have your phone?” Cason asked. “I need your number.”

“Yeah.” Vince pulled it out and they exchanged numbers. Cason leaned close to Vince when he stopped in front of Cason’s house, his thumb rubbing against Vince’s cheek. “Thank you,” Vince said when he looked up into Cason’s eyes. “I... I had a really good time.”

Cason smiled. “Me too. I’m really glad you agreed to spend more time with me.” He leaned forward the last few inches and finally took those lips with his own. Cason kept it simple, rubbing his lips side to side just a little to taste every inch, flicking lightly with the tip of his tongue.

Vince let him explore. Cason nipped him a little before he pulled back. Damn, just kissed was almost as good a look on the blond man as the blissed out expression he got post orgasm.

“I’ll talk to you later, okay?”

Vince licked his lip and Cason almost kissed him again. Almost. He put his hand on the door handle.

“Bye.”

CHAPTER SEVEN

Vince was a texter. Cason kept his phone on vibrate during office hours, but during breaks between appointments he'd text back and forth with the younger man. They talked about the newest junker motorcycle Vince had picked up, what Cason was cooking for dinner, their tastes in music, movies, and books among a ton of other things.

It was probably one of the strangest ways Cason had ever gotten to know a friend or a submissive. But it fit the young man who only seemed to sit still and focus when he was in the middle of a scene.

"What are you grinning about?" Tiffany asked. She was sitting on the couch he kept in the corner of his office while they ate their lunches. Her swollen ankles were propped up on the coffee table.

"Oh." Cason dropped his phone in his lap and picked up his chopsticks. "Not much. Just made plans to have dinner with a new friend tomorrow night."

Balancing her take out box on her rounded stomach, Tiffany gave him a look. "A friend... or a *boyfriend*?" She gave him a lecherous leer.

"Oh, Gods. Don't do that. That's too weird from a hugely pregnant woman." Cason ducked when she threw her fortune cookie at him. "Ha! Missed me."

"I want my cookie, give it back." Wanting to avoid the chopsticks that would inevitably sail his way if he didn't, Cason got up and grabbed the cookie off the floor. He tossed it on the couch next to Tiffany and then sat back down.

"Right now we're just friends. Sort of. It's a little complicated."

Tiffany laughed. "Okay. Enough said. Hey, I wanted to tell you my mother-in-law saw that gorgeous inlay work you did on the head of the crib and wants to order some tables from you."

Cason perked up. He loved doing inlay, though it was meticulous work that demanded a lot of time and attention. "Really? That's great! Thanks."

“Thank you for the gorgeous crib. Everyone at my shower loved it. My mother-in-law is the pickiest woman ever but she thought the shading you used was beautiful, so I gave her your card.” Tiffany closed up the take out box and stuck it in the bag next to her. She opened her cookie wrapper, then took out the tiny scrap of paper sticking out of one edge. “Confucius says...” she squinted at the writing, “you will get your greatest dream today.” Snorting, she rubbed her belly. “Yeah, right.”

“You shouldn’t scoff at your fortune,” Cason said. “Sometimes there is more to living than what everyone can see.” Cason smiled, remembering the first time his pappous had said that very same thing to him.

Tiffany started to struggle up off the couch, and Cason got up to help her. “Well, my greatest dream is to get this kid out of me. I’m due next week but I swear I should’ve popped a month ago.”

Cason gave her a hug. “Well, you never know. Keep your phone handy, you just might have to call the hubby to meet you at the hospital.”

Rolling her eyes, Tiffany shook her head. “Okay, weirdo. I’ll see you later, okay? And eventually I will find out about your *sort-of* friend.”

She’d try. Waddling slowly, Tiffany left for her office just down the hall. Cason cleaned up the stuff from their lunch and then sat down at his desk. He had a date to plan.

Tiffany didn’t have her baby that day, but she went into labor during the night. Cason found out when he went to work the next day from the gossips in the staff lounge at the administrative offices. He chipped in to send her some flowers and balloons, plus some sort of giant basket of diapers or something the women were excited about.

Maybe he’d make her a set of baby blocks.

All day, Cason put up with kids coming into his office to whine about the classes they’d thought they could take, or didn’t want to take any more. He did have one interesting kid. His center was a warm golden glow, like he’d been

touched by Ananke, Goddess of Fate. He knew what he wanted to do, which was add classes. It would overload him, but he was so sure that Cason didn't argue.

Sitting back in his chair after he left, Cason fiddled with a pen. Young Dante seemed to know exactly what path he was taking. Would another counselor, not having Cason's ability, have denied his request to help him get into the classes?

That subject kept Cason's mind busy the whole way home. He turned automatically, not really paying attention to where he was driving. It had been a long time since he questioned his abilities, and how his life, and the lives of everyone he'd helped, would be different if he didn't have a daimon ancestor. Cason was lucky; usually he knew exactly what to do and could be sure he was right. Having to make choices that affected both him and Vince without that safety net his ability gave him was an eye opener.

Cason pulled up to his house. He sat for a minute in the garage. He was going on a date. With Vince. He grinned and was out of the car and rushing inside. A quick once over with the electric razor took away the stubble, leaving his cheeks smooth and soft, and he splashed on some cologne. Nothing said boring like his work clothes, so he changed into a pair of black jeans but kept the blue pinstripe shirt. He rolled up his sleeves.

"Ready," he told his reflection.

Vince's apartment was chaotic when Cason pulled up. Page's hollering could be heard through the door and no one answered the first time he knocked. He gave the door a good pounding, and it was jerked open.

"What?"

Cason narrowed his eyes. The guy standing in front of him was dressed in a ragged pair of jeans, held up by an equally dubious belt and nothing else. He slouched against the door and scratched at his greasy looking hair.

"I'm here for Vince."

The guy turned around. "Vince!" he shouted over Page's continued bitching.

It was cold outside so Cason stepped in and shut the door, even though he hadn't been invited. Page appeared in the doorway to the kitchen, a towel in his hands. "—can't keep your part of the fucking deal you can goddamned move out already, Jay. I'm not putting up with this shit anymore."

He stopped yelling when he saw Cason standing in the entry.

"Oh, hey Cason. Sorry about that, Jay's being a disgusting pig. You looking for Vince?"

Cason nodded. "Yeah. He here?"

"Yeah. I think he disappeared into the shower about five minutes ago. He was late getting home." He tossed the towel that had been folded over his shoulder into the kitchen. "Come on in and sit down." Page led the way to an old couch that sagged in the middle. Cason carefully sat on a corner cushion. It actually was pretty comfortable, though getting up and out of it might be a challenge.

"So where are you guys going tonight?" Page sat cross legged on the couch facing him.

"Dinner. I was thinking of hitting Grillmaster for some steaks."

Page grinned. "Good choice, red meat always goes over well." He winked. "So, you bringing my roomie home after that, or are you keeping him out all night having *fun*?"

"Wouldn't you like to know?" Cason laughed at Page's exaggerated disappointment when he wouldn't give him any information about his plans. The guy was a shameless pervert.

"You're not fun. Brandon is spending the weekend at his sister's watching her kids so I'm here, all alone, with no one to have fun with. You could at least give me something to entertain me!"

Cason folded his arms across his chest. "Nope."

“Stop being such a nosy ass, Page,” Vince said as he opened the bathroom door. Steam poured out behind him as he stepped out in just a towel. Cason licked his lips. Damn. The man was hot, especially all shiny and wet just out of the shower, with his hair slicked back showing off the clean lines of his face and those amazing eyes.

“Hey.” He gave Cason a tight smile, his hand clenched on his towel. “Sorry, I got held up at the garage helping a friend.”

“Hey back,” Cason said. “Don’t worry about it. We didn’t have reservations so we have plenty of time.”

Vince relaxed at Cason’s casual tone. His shoulders dropped and his smile grew when Cason licked his lips again. He couldn’t help it; all that sleek skin made him want to mark it something fierce.

“Okay. I’ll be right out.”

Cason finally managed to look away after Vince shut his door. Page was smirking at him. “Oh man, you have it bad for our little Vince.”

Cason shrugged one shoulder. “Maybe.” He did and he knew it. He was not letting Page know it, though. He’d been watching the sexy blond for months. Every time they’d talked Cason had learned something new that made Vince even more appealing.

He had a lot of ideas about what they could do, if Vince was up for playing after dinner. Those soft, hairless balls hadn’t had much attention the first time they’d done a scene and then there was that little surprise behind them that Cason hadn’t even gotten to play with.

Dinner first though.

Vince came out dressed in jeans and a white T-shirt with a shiny black leather jacket.

“You look great,” Cason said. He struggled up out of the couch, or he tried to. Vince came over and gave him a hand up, tugging him out of the couch’s depths.

“Thanks. Sorry about the couch. It’s awesome to sit on but getting up... not so much.”

Cason used his grip on Vince’s wrist to reel the smaller man in. “C’mere.” He leaned down and captured those enticing lips, licking at them until Vince opened his mouth. Cason dipped his tongue in briefly, rubbing it against Vince’s in a slight tease. “Cinnamon toothpaste,” he said, “I like it.”

Vince grinned. “Want another taste?” His lips were parted and he was staring up at Cason.

“Maybe later,” Cason said when Page groaned. He looked over. “What, brat?”

“Why did Brandon have to go away this weekend?” He fanned himself with one hand. “You guys are too hot for your own good. Or my own good.”

Cason knew that Brandon didn’t like his subs touching themselves so that slight bulge he could see under Page’s sweats was probably going to drive him crazy but not get any attention at all. He snickered.

“You’ll survive.”

“Yeah,” Vince said as he grabbed his wallet off the coffee table along with his keys. “Go check out the mess in the kitchen Jay left for you again. You’ll be unhappy in an instant.”

Page scowled. “Thanks a lot. Just what I needed. If Jay’s not here when you get home give yourself some plausible deniability, don’t look in the dumpster out back.” He got up from the couch and stalked back toward the kitchen. “Have fun you guys.” He paused in the doorway and muttered under his breath, his hands clenching at his sides.

“Do I want to look in there?” Cason asked. Page actually appeared mad, which was strange for the happy, though bratty, man.

Shaking his head, Vince led him toward the door. “Nope. Not unless you’re sure you have a stomach of steel or don’t really plan on eating dinner tonight.”

Cason didn't turn his head, determinedly not looking into the kitchen as they walked out. He loved the steak at Grillmaster and wasn't going to risk it.

Dinner was great; they ate and chatted while they devoured thick steaks and crisp steamed vegetables.

"You look tired." Cason had wanted to take the smaller man home to play, but Vince didn't really look up to it.

"Yeah, I'm sorry. I planned to get off early and take a nap before we went out. We've been swamped at the garage lately, plus I've been putting a lot of hours into this motorcycle restoration job. I'm supposed to have it done by Monday. Then Migg needed some help."

Cason had ordered a cup of coffee once his meal was finished. He toyed with one of the peanuts from the bowl in the middle of the table. He wasn't hungry, but he enjoyed the salt and the bitter flavor of the coffee combination. "Who's Migg?" he asked.

Vince's shoulders hunched up and he glanced down. "He's just a friend," he said slowly.

"Oh, I've never heard you mention him." Cason cracked the shell and picked out one of the peanuts. "What was wrong? Nothing serious, I hope."

"No." Vince shook his head. His shoulders relaxed. "He works at the coffee shop across the street from the garage. He's also a drummer in an indie band. He has a big kit, so he drives this van, but the damn thing is held together by two rubber bands and a whole mess of duct tape, I swear. It wouldn't start and it took me a few hours of calling around to find the right part and get it installed so he could make his gig tonight."

Cason smiled. "Sounds like he's lucky to have you as a friend. Have you heard him play? If he's any good, maybe we could go see his band together sometime. I like music, as long as it's not country."

Vince raised his eyebrows. "You want to meet him?"

"Well, he's your friend, right? I already know Page and I like him. Can't say as I really thought much of your other roommate, but I don't know him, so

I'm trying not to judge." Cason hadn't forgotten what Page had told him about his ex-boyfriend, or full time Dom, whatever he was.

"I'm not like the other assholes you've been around," Cason said. He didn't really want to bring up the bastard ex Vince had left behind, but he did want Vince to realize that not all Doms were like that. "A good Dom doesn't use your relationship to isolate you from your friends and your life. You are not a slave, Vince, and you don't want to be. I'd never ask that of you while we're doing scenes, outside of them you're still your own person. I don't want to own you, I want to be your friend."

"So, we're not going back to your place tonight?" Vince slowly crushed one of the peanut shells Cason had left on the table between them. He didn't look up. "I was surprised by dinner but I still thought..." He shrugged one shoulder. Damn. He'd been making progress during dinner, meeting Cason's eyes and talking up a storm but now he was back to the self-effacing techniques Cason really disliked. He fidgeted nearly constantly, but Cason was growing used to that.

"Look up, Vince," Cason ordered. "Look at me." He waited for Vince to lift his head and let him see those wide gray-blue eyes. Vince's lower lip was red where he'd bitten it. "I want to take you home with me and drive you completely crazy. Never doubt that. But you are tired and it sounds like you have to work tomorrow."

Vince swallowed, his Adam's apple bobbing. "I want to go back to your place."

The pleasure Cason got from that one statement was out of proportion for what they were doing and he knew it. He didn't care. He pushed his cup away, stuck some cash to cover dinner for their bill in the black folder, and then stood up.

"Come on." They weren't going to waste another minute in public when being together in private would be so much more fun. He held out his hand and Vince took it, following him out of the restaurant and into the parking lot.

Unable to wait, Cason stopped beside his car. He didn't let go of Vince's hand, using his grip to pull it behind the slim back as he trapped Vince against the cold metal. He ran his other hand along Vince's jaw, rubbing the smooth skin. Holding him by the back of the neck, he leaned down to the already parted lips, a cloud of warm breath between them.

So close, but he didn't kiss him. Cason skimmed his lips just above Vince's jaw to his ear. "When I get you home," he whispered, "I'm going to strip you naked and tease your balls until you feel like they are going to explode."

Vince shuddered.

"You want that? I was thinking we'd try out my weights this time."

This time Vince whimpered. He rocked his hips forward against Cason's thigh. The hard pressure of his erection made Cason fight back an answering thrust. "And this time I'm going to play with that sweet little ring you have hidden down there too."

"Oh, fuck." The breathless whine, the same noise Vince had made when he was so close to coming each time Cason took him to the edge, made him back off.

"Not yet," Cason said. He grinned at the pain on Vince's face, the impatient frown. They were quiet on the way to Cason's house, which was luckily only a few miles away from Grillmaster. The way Vince was practically simmering in the passenger seat had Cason feeling smug and *very* turned on.

He'd managed to keep their last scene about Vince but then he'd slept next to the man. They were getting to know each other, and Cason liked what he was finding out about the other man so far, but Vince wasn't his to keep. Cason had a purpose in life, to help people, and he did it best through dominating subs. He had to try and keep some distance.

Their first scene had rocked the boundaries he'd managed to erect when he'd realized that subs needed him, but never more than one night. Cason loved the fact that Vince wanted more from him, but it wasn't about him, not

really. It was about Vince learning how he needed to submit so he would know the right type of Dom to choose in the future when they went back to just friends.

Cason could do that for Vince. He'd make sure he enjoyed every second of it, and deal with what came after when it happened.

CHAPTER EIGHT

When he pulled into the garage, Cason turned off the engine and closed the door. Vince was right on his heels as they walked inside. Cason studied him, loving the slightly dangerous edge the leather jacket gave him. He wanted to see Vince in just that jacket.

Vince's eyes widened. "What?" he asked.

Cason winked. "An idea came to me. You trust me, right?"

Vince nodded. Warmth curled in Cason's chest and he smiled at the nervous man, pleased that they'd made enough of a connection for Vince to have enough faith in him to make those first steps into trusting him fully. He'd been worried that not using his ability would affect their scenes together, but maybe he needed to trust himself more.

"You remember your safewords?"

"Cardinal to slow down. Finch to stop everything." Vince had been biting his bottom lip again, turning it puffy already.

"Good. Let's go to my playroom this time."

He led the way to the playroom, opening the door and then stepping aside so Vince could see everything. It wasn't big but held several exquisite pieces of furniture he'd made himself. A cross was against one wall, the wood stained dark. By contrast the spanking bench was light wood, almost white, with black leather buckles and pad on top.

"I want you here tonight." Cason had moved over by the bench, waiting for the sub's eyes to finish traveling across everything in the room and move back to him. He popped up the kneeling bench from its folded position. "I designed this myself and it'll be perfect for what I want to do." He paused, watching the smaller man, hoping he'd say yes. "I want to buckle you down tonight. Do you trust me enough to let me do that?"

Vince opened his mouth, then cleared his throat. "Yes... yes, sir."

That same pleasure went through Cason. He peeled off his jacket, already warming up. "Strip down to your underwear, but then put your jacket back on."

Grinning, Vince did as he was told. Cason wondered what the look was for, but he was too busy watching that smooth chest being exposed to wonder for long. When Vince dropped his jeans, Cason inhaled a deep breath.

"The blue does look very good on you." His voice was deep as he struggled to control his desire.

Vince turned in a circle, then leaned back against the wall, one thumb tucked into the waistband and his jacket falling off one shoulder. "You like them? They're new." He'd gone out and bought new underwear, and then worn them hoping they'd be coming back to his house. Cason was surprised, but knowing Vince had picked them out and worn them, just for him, was a huge turn on.

He licked his lips slowly; Vince's eyes locked on his face.

"They look great, especially with that jacket." Fuck. Vince was one hot man as he posed, his briefs beginning to bulge, just for Cason. "Come here." Too bad he had to take them off, but what he wanted was hidden behind the blue, black, and white dyed fabric.

Cason rubbed his hands lightly across Vince's cock, then over his slim hips and back to his ass. The cotton was soft. "Hmm... they feel nice too. Another time we'll play with these on," he said. Hooking his fingers into the waistband, Cason squatted as he pulled them down so Vince could stand naked in just his jacket. That slim cock bobbed in front of his face, finally freed.

Vince's eyes fluttered shut as Cason blew hot air across the tip. He stroked his hands up Vince's thighs, then guided him to kneel on the bench. He considered leaving the jacket on, but he wanted to see the muscles in Vince's back ripple and arch as Cason played with his body. Easing it off, he set it aside, then positioned Vince onto the top of the bench.

“Remember your words,” he said when Vince tugged at the thick black leather wrist cuffs once Cason buckled them, trying to lift his chest up off the table.

“Just... testing them, sir.” Vince settled against the soft pad on the pale wood. He took a deep breath. “Feels safe. I trust you,” he said the last bit in a breathy voice as Cason spread his knees farther apart, exposing his ass and balls. That Vince had said he trusted Cason sent a warm thrill through him as he squeezed one tight cheek.

“Good.”

Cason had to step back and just look for a minute. All Vince’s soft bronze skin over sleek muscles was exposed to the air, pebbling slightly against a faint current of air moving around the room. The skin on his balls was darker than the surrounding skin, the same light brown as his nipples. Just behind those balls was a silver ring. He decided not to tease before he got started; Cason wanted to touch so badly.

Before leaving to pick up Vince, Cason had set out a few things. Picking up the ball stretcher, he showed Vince the rainbow colored metal ring.

“This is one of my favorite ball stretcher rings,” Cason said. “It’s so pretty, I bet it’s going to look amazing around your balls.”

Vince turned his head to see it, his eyes widening. He licked his lips.

“Do you like it?” Cason asked.

“Yes, sir. Just... worried about how it’s going to fit and how heavy it is.”

Cason opened the metal ring. “It weighs just enough. I’m going to put this around your balls, just above them, and then screw it shut. It won’t come off until I’m good and ready.” He traced a finger over extra loops on either side. “Then, from these, I’m going to put some weights.”

He loved the way Vince’s breathing picked up and his muscles flexed. He knew the idea was making the sub nervous, but he didn’t say his safe words. The ring looked thick, but he’d picked a hollow one, not one made from solid

steel. Cason didn't want to start too fast, with too much weight, or it would be too painful.

He didn't tell Vince that, though.

Vince had closed his knees and Cason spread them farther apart again. "Don't move your legs." He trailed his fingers up and down Vince's thighs, inching closer on each pass to his goal. Letting his pinkie graze the wrinkled sack on the next stroke upwards, Cason smirked when Vince groaned.

He was so responsive. Finally he began stroking Vince's balls, pulling them down and then watching them flex upwards when he let them go. Closing his hand around the loose sack, Cason tugged downward and then froze. Vince's back arched and his hands clenched in fists.

"You're going to like this so much," Cason promised him. He closed the beautifully colored metal around the stretched skin and then let go of Vince's balls. It took two hands to screw the rainbow ring closed. "Ready?"

Vince nodded.

"I want to hear you."

"Yes, I'm ready." Vince's body was tense but he was taking deep breaths and staying calm. Cason used one hand to stroke his lower back and waited just until Vince had let out all his air, then dropped the ring.

He wasn't the one with the stretcher on his balls, but still, Cason shuddered when Vince gasped in a huge breath and let it out in a shaky groan.

"Fuck yeah." He gave Vince a second to get used to the way the metal ring snuggled against his balls and pulled them low, stretching his sack. The skin wasn't very tight yet, but when he added the weights...

"This is going to look amazing."

The two tear drop shaped weights matched the ring, the metal colored with all the hues of the rainbow. They were tiny, just an ounce apiece, but he had others in the set that got bigger and heavier. He licked his lips. "I can't decide... should I put these on one at a time or at the same time?" He leaned

over, heat already rising from the sub to warm his lips, as he kissed the slender neck from shoulder to ear.

He nipped at the soft lobe, then sucked the sting away. “What do you think, hmm? Do want me to prolong this and add the weights to your balls slowly, one at a time so you can feel them stretch gradually, or do you want it all at once?”

“Wh-Whatever you want, sir.”

Stroking one hand down the stretched skin, Cason tugged on the ring. “Are you sure you want me to decide?”

“Yes! Please!”

He stood up straight. His hands were sure as he threaded the chains of the weights through both loops, holding the weighted tear drops in the palms of his hands. Cason watched intently, his own cock hard in his jeans waiting for the right moment...

He dropped the weights and let them swing free.

“Fuck!” Vince cried out. He shuddered and strained at the cuffs holding him down, his back arching and making the weights sway back and forth. “Oh God!”

Cason stood back and watched. He took a mental picture, the perfect image of Vince, his head up, back arched, with his balls stretched tight by the beautiful rainbow metal decorating his sack. Then he began to make all those beautiful lean muscles dance.

He stroked up and down the stretched skin with his fingers, then inched up to Vince’s ass, squeezing and kneading the firm muscles. Vince would groan and move with him, then hiss and try to stay still. Cason enjoyed making him writhe under his hands.

The only way he managed to keep control over his cock was to keep his pants on. He could feel the front of his pants getting wet as his cock leaked into his boxer briefs. Watching Vince’s hole flex, Cason couldn’t resist getting

inside him somehow. He toyed with the piercing, tugging on it, while he decided what he was going to do.

Stopping to get the lube would ruin the momentum as he drove Vince toward his orgasm. He squatted down instead. A brief bite of pain hit him as his cock twisted in his underwear. He used one hand, palming his stiff erection and shoving it into a better position.

Cason leaned in and blew air against Vince's balls, then used his tongue to draw wet circles over them, pulling and nipping at the tight skin.

"Oh. Oh, fuck." Vince grunted and his thighs trembled. The weights shivered and began to swing. Cason chuckled and let the vibration tickle the sensitive orbs. He swept the flat of his tongue up and over the weighted ball ring and along Vince's perineum to the sweet little ring piercing decorating the smooth flesh. He stuck his tongue through the silver ring and tugged gently.

He took the small chain he hadn't shown Vince and fed it through the hoop with small clinking noises. Vince's head popped up and he tried to look back. Sweat trickled down his sides. To increase the sensations, he clipped the chain to the weights. He tapped them, making them sway and pull on the chain through the ring in Vince's guiche.

"Cason! Oh..." Vince shuddered. "Please!" Deciding to take mercy on him, Cason leaned forward, watching that dark pucker flexing like it was begging to be tortured.

Vince's voice rose as he descended into incoherent noises, no longer able to talk as Cason began to rim him with all the skill he possessed. He licked, sucked, and thrust with his tongue until the muscles loosened. The weights danced as Vince moved constantly, unable to stay still. Wetting one finger, Cason probed the slick circle and then sank in to his first knuckle.

Soft, hot flesh surrounded his finger and then he pulled back, circling and then sinking back in again, this time all the way down. He did that over and over until Vince was rocking against him, clearly lost in the sensations Cason was giving him. Cason sucked on the back of Vince's balls, drawing up a mark on the stretched flesh.

“Please,” Vince cried when Cason began tapping on his prostate, just barely nudging the sensitive bundle of nerves. Teasingly, he slowed his thrusts, pushing the sub under his hands beyond sensation into pure need to come.

The next time he thrust in, Cason pegged his prostate firmly. Instead of letting up and sliding his finger back out, he thrust hard in small circles against the smooth bundle of nerves. Vince shoved back as far as his bonds would let him, slamming against Cason’s hand and shuddering as he spilled hot cum all over the bench under him.

Cason drew his orgasm out, massaging Vince’s prostate until the muscles stopped clenching and clinging to his finger with every pulse of cum. He pulled out slowly, but Vince groaned anyway. His hole winked and flexed as he slumped in his bonds.

Jerkily, Cason undid his pants and shoved them and his underwear down his thighs, pulling out his cock and balls. The shaft was rigid, thick and hard, throbbing and aching for release. With one hand Cason tugged on his balls and he stroked from base to tip, twisting his wrist as he roughly massaged the head of his cock. His hips flexed, driving hard against Vince’s thighs, until the heat building inside exploded, sending shot after shot of Cason’s thick cum splattering against Vince’s ass and lower back.

Falling forward, Cason caught himself on one hand, his chest against Vince’s bare back. They lay there for a few minutes, recovering together. Forcing himself up, Cason gathered the dangling weights into his hand before he unhooked all the chains.

Vince groaned as the weight on his balls eased. Using the wrench he’d set close by, Cason unscrewed the ball ring and took it off. He didn’t let Vince out of the restraints yet. He used a soft hand towel to clean up the mess he’d made, then ran his hands along the slim back, massaging his shoulders and arms.

“Just let your arms dangle when I unbuckle them.”

“Hmm... okay.” Vince was a limp puddle. Cason smiled softly.

Cason slowly undid the wrist cuffs, rubbing at the slightly red flesh where Vince had pulled against them. The wide black leather straps, butter soft on the inside, wouldn't leave marks for very long. He appreciated the leftover marks of what Vince had allowed him to do while they lasted, stroking the heated flesh.

Slowly, he eased Vince up off the bench until he was standing. Loose limbed, with shaking legs, Vince leaned back against Cason. He could tell Vince was just about blissed out of his mind and his own orgasm had left him tired.

"Come to bed with me?" Before he'd have asked if the sub wanted him to call him a cab, after they eased down from the high of the scene on the couch in the living room. Cason wanted to sleep next to Vince again; he wanted the slim man in his arms, safe and warm the whole night.

Vince nodded.

Cason tucked him into bed, then grabbed a bottle of water. He made Vince drink some of the cool fluid to ease his throat and keep him from getting dehydrated and then finished off the bottle. He stuck it on the nightstand, quickly stripped and left his clothes on the floor beside the bed.

Sliding beneath the covers, Cason grabbed his clock. "What time do you have to get up?" Cason didn't want to set the alarm, knowing that Vince would be leaving his bed when it went off, but he knew the other man had to work.

"Five. Five-thirty if you'll drive me."

Cason punched in the time and turned on the switch on the side of his clock. "Five-thirty it is." He lay down and Vince wormed across the sheets until he was tucked against Cason's chest. His cheek pressed against Cason's heart.

Wrapping one arm around Vince's back, Cason moved until their legs were tangled together and they couldn't get any closer. He sighed and relaxed into sleep.

CHAPTER NINE

Cason dropped Vince off and then went home. He sat in his chair in the living room with a cup of coffee and watched the news. His mind wasn't really on the forecast for the next week but it provided some badly needed noise outside of his own head.

His thoughts were swirling so fast, so many things running through his mind, that Cason could barely figure out what was bothering him. Finally, he narrowed it down to a single issue; he was disturbed by his continued inability to see inside Vince, even though the man was a sub who so clearly was seeking his center.

Maybe his grandpa would know what was going on with his abilities. Cason was close to his family, but his grandparents most of all. His father had more of the daimon blood than Cason did, but he'd never really accepted it. The family's affinity to connect with other people and precipitate that singular crisis of conscience people who came across their path needed made him uncomfortable

But Cason had spent long summers with his grandparents, working in the kitchen with his grandma on his mom's side. He'd learned southern cooking, and how to woo a man with the faint hint of an accent and manners that weren't seen all that often in the present era.

When visiting his father's parents, Cason learned how to make authentic Greek food... and how to use his ability that grew after he finally hit puberty. He'd never asked his grandpa why he accepted Cason's unique route to helping others, but he often wondered if his grandpa could see his center and was helping him find his path his own way.

Glancing at the clock, Cason picked up the phone. Early risers, he knew his grandparents would be up, even if they weren't running the restaurant anymore.

"Hello?"

"Hi, Gigia. How are you?"

“Oh, these old bones are still moving.” Cason tucked the phone against his shoulder. “Never mind that. It’s been so long since you called.” Two weeks. He’d called them just two weeks before. “How are you doing, Casonaki mou?”

He smiled at being called her little Cason, even though he was nearly thirty. “I’m good, Gigia. Busy helping all the indecisive college students figure out what curriculum best fits their career path. What’s been going on in the family?”

That question sent her off in a long ramble on the current status of his cousin Nikki’s pregnancy, Rhea’s latest boyfriend, and the shameful grades Nikita had brought home in English. Cason only listened superficially; he’d already heard a lot of this when he spoke with his parents.

“—which is ridiculous because she speaks English every day. That girl needs to learn how to apply herself.”

Cason braced himself as the litany ran down. If he told his grandma he’d met someone, everyone in his family would know about Vince by the end of the day. But they weren’t really more than friends, even if Cason knew he wanted more, that didn’t mean Vince did, or would in the future.

“And when are you coming over for dinner?”

“Oh. Soon, I hope. Things have been a little busy lately.”

“Too busy to come see your gigia and pappous? We all have a finite time on this earth and yet you can’t take an evening to visit your family?”

Cason took the guilt bullet with a wince. “I’m sorry.”

“Come to dinner and I’ll forgive you.” She knew she had him, and Cason knew she knew it too. “How about this Sunday?”

Cason turned his mug on his knee. “Okay, Gigia. I’ll be there for dinner with the family. Speaking of Pappous, is he there?” he asked casually.

He waited while she called his grandpa to the phone. “All right, here he is. Be here early next week and we’ll have time to chat.” He knew that meant she knew he had a specific reason to speak with his grandpa, and she’d drag it out of him if she had to. His grandma was fierce about protecting her family.

“Hey there Cason.” His grandpa’s voice was warm and it loosened the knot in Cason’s stomach just hearing it.

“Hi Pappous. I was hoping we could talk, if you have a few minutes.”

Cason took a sip of his coffee and made a face at the cold bitterness. He set it on the coffee table.

“Of course, Cason. Just let me go into the office.” There was a lot that other members of their family didn’t understand. Cason’s grandpa had more of the ability passed down through their family line than Cason did. Whenever he had a problem, he knew his grandpa could help him understand his ability; he hoped he still could.

“I’m assuming this has something to do with a man who you cannot help?”

“How did you know, Pappous?” Cason sank back in his chair.

His grandpa laughed. “Oh, I recognize the signs. You have been quite restless lately.”

“What? Am I on my path to my center?” Feeling incomplete had always bothered Cason. He knew what he wanted, but he’d never been able to find it. The lack of balance in himself was probably what drove him to help others, but now... he was tired of being left alone. Humans were meant to connect with each other and he’d never felt more disconnected.

“You know I cannot tell you that. Why don’t you tell me what’s going on?”

Cason explained everything he’d been through. He started with seeing Vince for the first time and learning about the younger man’s ex, Vince’s unhappiness after every scene growing every time Cason saw him. He ended with his need to be close to Vince, even though he couldn’t see the spirits’ influence on him, or how to help him reach his center through the paths shown to him.

“Hmm, you know...” Cason heard the loud thud of a book hit the desk, “your situation reminds me of something I once read in my pappous’ journal. Give me a few minutes, this book is pretty big.” Cason could hear him turning

the thick homemade pages in the leather-bound volume. Cason couldn't read Greek, so he'd never been able to read it himself, but during his teen years they'd spend several hours each week going through the information passed down by Procopio men from the very first daimon of their line, Cason's great-great-grandpa, and down to them.

"Yes... yes. Just as I thought."

"What did you find out?" Cason found himself leaning forward in his chair. He needed to know something, anything, that would help him decide what to do. He was getting too close to Vince to survive letting him go, and they'd only had two full scenes together.

"I believe this boy's ex you spoke of is either a daimon, or the descendant of one."

Cason almost dropped the phone. "What?"

"I would guess it is a descendant. A full daimon would not have let him go before he completely destroyed him. It sounds like your boy has some deep scars from the man he was with. That could be what is obscuring your ability to see his center. That and..."

"And what, Pappous?" Cason asked through clenched teeth when he didn't finish his sentence. This entire conversation had him on edge; sitting in his chair was going to drive him crazy.

Cason got up and paced the living room. He knew about the existence of other daimons, theoretically at least, but that one of them had used his abilities to try and break Vince, on purpose, sent rage flashing through him. If he ever came across the asshole...

His grandpa sighed. "I'm not sure, and I don't want to speak out of turn and disrupt your path. I will say one thing. It is impossible to escape from what is destined."

Cason frowned. "What does that mean? Vince is destined not be able to find his center because of the damage already done to him, which is why I can't see the influences of the spirits on him? Or, if I'm able to help him even

though I can't see the spirits' influences, I'm destined to lose him when he walks away from me like every other man I've been with?"

"I... can't say. I'm sorry I can't help you more, Casonaki. I really am."

Cason rubbed his forehead. He leaned against the chilly glass of the front window, trying to cool his anger. "No, don't feel bad, Pappous. I know more than I did before. It helps to know why my ability was suddenly defective. Thank you."

"You're welcome."

Cason turned around and looked at the clock. "I should let you go. I know you have your golf game at ten. I'll see you Sunday for dinner. Bye, Pappous, give Gigia a kiss for me."

"Bye, Cason."

It was a struggle, but he kept his mind busy and on something other than Vince as he sanded a set of dildos. He liked to do the work at a slow pace, by hand, to make sure the wood would be perfectly smooth without a single rough spot. He balanced on his tall stool at the workbench, letting his mind turn over his grandpa's words as his hands stroked back and forth along the grain of the wood with fine grit paper. The rasp of the wood was the only sound in the quiet room.

His phone rang; the loud trilling startled him. Cason jerked and dropped the dildo; it rolled and knocked his phone off the edge of the workbench. He got down on his knees and reached under the edge, grabbing the phone and answering just before his voicemail picked up.

"Hello," he said abruptly, wiping fine sawdust off the knees of his pants.

"Hi, Cason."

Cason's frustration evaporated and he leaned against the bench. "Oh! Hey, Vince. You actually called instead of texting me. To what do I owe this honor?" He grinned as Vince laughed.

"Dork."

“Guilty as charged. That doesn’t mean this dork won’t smack your ass for calling me names the next time.”

Cason heard Vince suck in a deep breath. “Not fair! I’m at work.”

“You earned it.” Cason didn’t have to try hard to come up with plans for their scenes together, even if he felt like he was stumbling around in the dark without his ability to guide him. There were so many things he wanted to do to and with Vince.

“Well it’s a good thing I’m wearing loose coveralls. I actually just got back from lunch and Migg told me that he’s playing at a gay bar tonight with his full band. You said you wanted to hear him and I thought, if you meant it—”

Vince was asking him out on a date!

Cason interrupted Vince as he began to babble. “Of course I meant it. I’d like to meet your friends since you’ve met Brandon and Suzanne. Page told me you met Luke and Sean too during sub’s night at the club. The only one of your friends I know is Page, and I’m not going to count your other roommate.”

Vince laughed. “Yeah, I wouldn’t consider him a friend either, but we need his rent money, so we put up with him.”

Cason swept some more sawdust off the counter into a metal bin. “So, what time tonight?”

“Nine.”

Cason checked the clock. Noon. Damn, he’d been working for a while. If he got moving he could finish the eight inch dildo he was working on, clean up, go get some groceries, and start some dinner.

“What time do you think you’ll be off tonight?”

“Five, hopefully. Six at the latest.”

Just enough time. “How about coming over here for dinner before we go to the bar? I have a cookbook full of recipes my Nana left me. It’s full of excellent down home Southern cooking recipes. Care to give my culinary skills a try?”

“So you’re going to feed me?”

Cason felt his cock stir. “I could,” he said throatily.

“Six-thirty okay?” Vince’s voice was breathy.

“Perfect. I’ll see you then.” Cason ended his call and turned his attention back to the dildo in front of him. He ran his hand up and down along the rings he’d carved down the shaft, testing the edges. He found a few rough spots with his fingertips and set about smoothing them.

Once he finally got it as smooth as he wanted, he set it aside on the felt lined shelf above his work bench. Cleaning didn’t take long, but the store was surprisingly crowded. Finding the ingredients he needed to make dinner took longer than he wanted, but he still made it home by four-thirty.

Flaky salmon, hush puppies, some fried okra and mushrooms. He couldn’t wait to feed slivers of the succulent pink meat to Vince. It was almost six by the time he had everything ready and Cason rushed off to shower. The warm water pounded on his neck as he washed with his back to the showerhead. The slippery soft suds tickled his cock and balls as they slid down his body.

Unable to resist, Cason slid his bare hand down his body, gathering more suds in his palm. He leaned one hand against the wall, closing his eyes. He imagined Vince kneeling on the floor in front of him, tickling his balls as he tongued them before sucking them into his mouth separately and then together.

Cason moaned and started stroking slowly. Vince’s hair would be slicked back but a few strands would hang wet and long over his eyes as he stared up at him. Closing his fist created a slick tunnel Cason could imagine was Vince’s mouth closing over the head of his cock and then sinking down to the base. He started a smooth glide back up, squeezing hard on the head.

“Fuck!”

Pleasure had his balls lifting before he knew it. He hovered on the edge, trying to hold out, prolonging the almost painful edge just before orgasm, gasping for breath in the moist steamy shower. He wanted Vince there in front of him for real. He wanted inside, his mouth, his ass, however he could get

him. The need he'd felt to touch Vince, to possess him, was driving him crazy. Marking Vince with his cum wasn't enough anymore.

Cason needed Vince.

That moment of realization sent him over the precipice and Cason came in shuddering spurts, his hips jerking, deep grunts punctuating each volley of cum as he shot all over the floor and wall of the shower. His hand dropped to his side when his cock became too sensitive to touch and he collapsed against the cool tiles.

CHAPTER TEN

Vince's mouth closed over the tips of his fingers. If Cason hadn't jerked off in the shower he would have been instantly rigid just from seeing Vince walk in the door dressed in his leather jacket over a skin-tight T-shirt, jeans that hugged his round ass, and boots. Cason's cock hadn't stayed quiescent for long, nor was his control enough to keep his underwear from being soaked with excitement as the smaller man sat on the pillow at his knees with a silk blindfold over his eyes.

They were both quiet for the most part as soft music played in the background while they ate the dinner Cason made. Their connection was humming between them. Cason's focus was on the sub at his feet but he still enjoyed the flavors of the herb crust on the soft salmon, the crispy outsides and fluffy center of the bite sized hush puppies and the vegetables. Vince took each bite he was given carefully, those lips too tempting for Cason to resist touching and tracing as he chewed.

"I'm full, sir," Vince said in a husky voice when he let go of Cason's fingers and swallowed his last bite.

"I see that." His jeans were tight, and probably uncomfortable on the welt he had to have from the slap on his ass Cason had given him, but Vince had been remarkably focused the entire time he knelt at Cason's feet. Cason wiped his fingers on his napkin before running them along Vince's cheek just under the blindfold. Vince pressed into his hand and smiled, those soft pink lips turning up.

"You look amazing. Quiet, happy."

Vince's face turned up toward him, even though he couldn't see. "I am. It's amazing, because my mind is always moving. It's always hard to focus, except for when I'm working, but with you... I always know when we're together that I have your entire attention, and I want to give that back to you. The way you make me feel, even for something like this, is what is really amazing."

"Come up here." Cason tugged Vince up and over his lap in the chair. He reached up with both hands and pushed the blindfold off. He needed to see the

man's eyes. Blinking, Vince looked straight at him with those gorgeous gray-blue eyes that reminded Cason of a stormy sky.

"You make it easy Cason," he said softly. "No one else has ever made me feel it's okay to want what I want. I don't have to fight my feelings when we're playing because you never treat me as anything less than an equal. We've only done a few scenes, but you treat my submission like a gift to be valued."

Cason refused to think about Vince's ex right then, and the way he'd messed Vince up. There was a new confidence in the submissive on his lap that came out as a stillness and focus that Cason hadn't witnessed in him before. "That's exactly how you should be treated. No matter what route you take to offer your submission, it's a gift a Dom should respect. Trust between a Dom and sub grows from mutual respect. You've always deserved to be treated this way. There are Doms out there that know how to take care of a sub, you just weren't finding them."

Smiling, Vince leaned forward. "Well I'm glad you found me. Maybe I should thank you." His eyes were hooded and he licked his lips. Cason's hands caressed his hips.

The loud blasting ring of his phone made Vince jerk almost completely off Cason's lap. "Sorry!" He dug it out to answer it; his pants were so tight Cason was amazed he could even get his hand into the shallow pocket.

"Migg? Hey..."

Vince mouthed sorry at him and stood up. Damn it. Cason wanted to growl in frustration. He knew they didn't really have time to do anything too intense if they were going to get to the bar where Vince had said his friend was going to be playing tonight, but still, the interruption had disrupted the intimacy between them and that irritated Cason.

"Okay, okay, we're on our way." Vince tapped his phone on his thigh with a frown. "I'm really sorry, but Migg's rig isn't working right *again*, and he needs the van to haul his kit."

Cason stood up. He knew how important it was to not let his irritation show; Vince had been cut off from his friends before by the daimon that had been trying to destroy him. As much as Cason wanted to pull that sleek body against his and not let go, he would always do the best thing for Vince. Hard as it was right then, being willing to leave early to help Migg was what Vince needed. “No, I understand. Let’s grab our jackets and head out now.”

“Not quite yet. You made me such a nice dinner and everything has been so great with you. There’s something I was about to do.” Vince walked up and nestled against him, fitting his body into Cason’s with a slow wiggle that brought back some of the urgency that had been lost. Cason knew how that lithe body felt naked against his, and he found himself craving the touch of all that smooth skin against him.

He didn’t wait for Vince to kiss him. Capturing the shorter man with one hand on his lower back and the other cupping the back of his neck, Cason lowered his head toward those barely parted pink lips just begging to be devoured.

By the time he let Vince go they were both breathing hard. Vince blinked slowly. “That was... yeah.” He shook his head.

Cason smiled nice and slow. “We should go.” It took a lot of willpower to step back but he did it.

They headed out to pick up Vince’s tools and then went over to Migg’s. Cason was really surprised when Vince introduced him to his friend. He’d heard the words band and drummer and the image of a long haired rocker had come to mind. Vince had also mentioned that the guy worked at coffee shop, though, so he could have been one of the emo kid types too.

A muscular, smooth shaven bald guy stood outside by a dirty van, blowing on his hands. He looked like he was Cason’s age too, not the young musician Cason had been imagining. Migg was definitely not what Cason expected.

“Hey man, thanks for coming. You’re really saving me, it would take forever to move my kit to the bar with Aiden’s tiny car.”

“Yes, it would. Stand back and let me work my magic so we can get you on your throne on time tonight.” Vince was soon up on a stepstool with half his body inside the engine of the old, dinged up van in Migg’s driveway.

“So, you are?”

“A friend of Vince’s. My name is Cason.” He offered his hand and Migg shook it, squeezing a little hard. Cason barely kept from rolling his eyes when the larger man let go. “He told me you work at the coffee shop next to the garage where he works.”

“Yep. He doesn’t drink coffee, of course, but he loves our sugar free coffee cake and cocoa. He caught me cussing out my van one day after work and offered to take a look. Don’t ask me how he does it, but he always gets her going again. Now I give him free cocoa whenever he comes in, and he keeps my baby from the scrapyard.”

Cason watched Vince’s ass wiggle back and forth as he muttered and then cursed over the broken down pile of Migg’s baby. Metal clanged as he tossed a wrench over his shoulder. “He is very good when he can focus,” Cason agreed. The image running through his head wasn’t the one in front of him, as enticing as Vince’s ass was. He kept imagining the soft smile and heavy lidded eyes he’d gotten after their dinner when Vince was snuggled on his lap, sated and horny.

“Nothing he can’t do.” Migg gestured toward the brick wall next to the sidewalk. Cason followed him over and rested his hip against the edge. He crossed his arms over his chest, even though he knew it would make him look defensive. Next time he wouldn’t forget his gloves.

“So. I’ve never seen you in the coffee shop before but my friend Carrie said you’ve been in a few times with Page.”

Cason nodded. “I met Page a while back; he’s involved with my best friend. We do get together from time to time to talk.”

Migg raised one eyebrow. “Page told me some of what they’re into, you know, submissives and the clubs and stuff. So you’re not... playing with him?”

“With Page or Vince?” Cason laughed at the idea of playing with Page. The bratty man would’ve found himself gagged and shoved into a closet in about two minutes if Cason tried to be his Dom. “No, Page is not my style, at all.”

“But you are with Vince.”

The urge to laugh disappeared and Cason’s voice was downright curt. “It’s not a game with Vince.” He dropped his arms and stood up straight. The sun had gone down and the wind that picked up felt downright arctic, but he barely felt it as anger at his motives being questioned swamped him. Cason hated it when people outside the lifestyle judged.

“Look, I’m sorry if you feel I’m overstepping,” Migg said slowly. “I don’t really understand the lifestyle, but I don’t want my friend to get hurt.”

Cason took a deep breath to calm himself down. He looked the intimidating man straight in the eye. “I wouldn’t hurt Vince. Ever.”

They stared at each other for a minute then Migg nodded once. “Good enough.”

“That’s it?” Cason asked.

“You mean what you say. I can tell. If you’re both happy, and I know Vince is, then I’m not going to judge.” Migg stood up, close to Cason, but that was a technique he knew; he didn’t budge. “As long as he stays that way.”

Migg was trying to protect Vince. Cason had to respect his loyalty, but he refused to be intimidated. “I like that Vince has friends willing to try to protect him. He needs it, but don’t think you have any say in our relationship. Vince is an adult and he won’t let anyone make his choices for him. I already know that much.”

“Aha! Figured you out, didn’t I?” Vince’s triumphant crow was accompanied by the slamming of the van’s hood. “Hey guys, quit trying to intimidate each other over there. I’m freezing my ass off. Let’s go!”

Vince ran inside Migg's place and washed his hands before they left. "We'll see you later." Vince waved and they walked over to Vince's car. "Hey."

Cason unlocked the passenger door but Vince stopped him with a hand on his wrist before he opened it. "Thanks for putting up with Migg's overprotective side. Outside, he can look kinda scary, but inside he's a big softie. He worries about everyone."

"Like I told him, I appreciate your friends trying to protect you." He leaned down and kissed Vince. "Now, can we go? You're not the only one freezing body parts off."

The wait outside the bar wasn't as bad because Cason pulled Vince's back against his chest and held him close. He liked how the smaller man reached behind them and tucked his hands into Cason's back pockets. "Man, Migg's band is really getting a following," Vince said as they slowly made their way up to the door and paid their cover charge.

Inside there were tons of people. The dance floor was crowded, but around the edges of the bar the music from the sound system wasn't too loud.

Vince asked, "How about a beer while we wait?"

Cason nodded and leaned down to speak in Vince's ear. "Sure." He smirked when the smaller man shivered. They waited for a space to open up at the bar and then ordered their drinks. Cason slid money across the bar and picked up their beers, and then followed Vince over to a table that had a few empty seats.

"Hey guys!" Vince took his beer and pecked Cason on the cheek, then slipped his arm around his waist. "This is Cason." He pointed his beer bottle at the four people sitting down in turn. "Cason, this is Mel, Tiffany, Dash and Donovan, some of my friends."

"Hey," Cason said. He hadn't expected to meet more of Vince's friends, but they weren't all young, hot, young twenty-year-olds. Mel looked about twenty-five and if Cason wasn't wrong, Tiffany was his sister. She was tucked up against Dash's side. Donovan seemed to be the odd one out; he looked

really young, which wasn't helped by the Goth face paint he had going on. Cason wondered if he was even legal to be in the bar.

"Mind if we sit with you guys? We were going to come later when the band was playing but Migg had van trouble again, so I had to perform my magic."

"Go ahead," Mel said. "We're not expecting anyone else tonight."

Cason expected Vince to sit down next to him but the younger man plopped right in his lap. Cason was surprised, but he liked how casually affectionate Vince was, even in front of his friends, so he wrapped an arm around his waist and pulled him close. Having that tight ass up against his cock, swaying slightly as Vince moved with the music was damn distracting. Cason didn't say much but he tried to pay attention as Vince chatted with his friends.

"So you work at the college?" Donovan played with the straw in his glass, stirring around the dregs of the melting ice. "I've never seen you."

"I'm a counselor, not a professor." Cason slipped one hand under Vince's shirt and traced the skin just above his pants. He traced the dip in the muscle ridges back and forth. "You go to college?"

Donovan laughed. "I get that a lot. Yes, I do. I'm legal to order another one of these too." He stood up. "Anybody else want anything?" A chorus of orders later, Donovan was on his way up to the bar.

Vince leaned back against Cason's shoulder, his soft hair brushed against Cason and caught in the stubble pebbling his cheeks. Damn, Cason loved his hair.

"Want to dance?"

"Dancing isn't something I'm really good at." Besides, the tent in his pants would be truly embarrassing if he were to stand up. "Why don't you go? I'll get our beers and wait here for you." He spoke in Vince's ear. "I want to watch you." His voice was husky, low, and he felt Vince shiver.

"Yes, sir," he said under breath.

Cason let his hand slide down Vince's side to his hip as the lithe young man stood up. "I'm going to dance," Vince told his friends.

Mel hopped up. "I'll come."

The pair headed for the dance floor and the crowd of people moving rhythmically to the music. Mel was absorbed into the crowd, led in by a young, blond woman with hair flowing down her nearly bare back to her ass.

The guy she had been dancing with slid up next to Vince and began to mirror the way his hips were swaying. Vince let him dance close, but put an arm on his shoulder when he would have moved closer.

Vince turned and moved away, staying on the edge, letting men and women close but always keeping a little bit of space between his body and theirs. He used them to put on a show for Cason who couldn't look away. Watching Vince move... he'd done it for months from a distance, but now Vince wasn't trying to attract someone else; he was trying to attract Cason, and *that* made all the difference.

Cason gripped the water he'd switched to, taking a deep drink. The icy cold liquid did nothing to cool his arousal.

Crimson lights flashed and strobed over the dance floor before a spotlight lit up the stage. Tables rapidly emptied as damn near everyone surged toward the stage, cheers breaking out as the band came on stage.

Migg's thick arms beat out a rapid tattoo across the drums and then picked up a deep rhythmic thump. Cason watched with fascination as the rest of the band joined in and the crowd began to move, throbbing with the same beat as the band.

It was like a heartbeat. Cason couldn't understand all the words being shouted into the microphone very well, thanks to the crowd screaming along, but the energy was amazing.

Vince slid an arm over his shoulders. Cason jerked in surprise. He couldn't believe he'd lost sight of Vince, but the band was good enough to distract him. No wonder they were getting a following.

“Great, right?” Vince shouted in his ear.

He nodded. “I didn’t know what to expect, but wow.” Cason was happy he’d met some more of Vince’s friends. He didn’t have many, but those he did have seemed to be pretty close knit. He was glad; Cason had to hope that when the inevitable happened and Vince walked away to find someone new he’d still have them, and they’d be just as dedicated to keeping an eye on him as they checked out the next man.

He offered his bottle of water and watched Vince down it, his chest still heaving from dancing, sweat beaded on his forehead and darkened his blond hair where it swept down to his eyes. Vince’s nipples were hard and poking through his damp shirt.

“I know you don’t dance but...”

Cason took the empty water bottle from Vince and set it down on the table. Everyone else had gotten up when the music started. “Let’s go.”

They didn’t go inside the tightly packed crowd close to the stage but stayed near the edges. People were absorbed in the music. Cason stepped up behind Vince, pulling him back until their bodies were pressed together. Bending over his shoulder, Cason ran his nose along his shirt to his neck.

“You smell good.” Spicy, sweaty, like a man who had been using his body until his natural musky odor was at its strongest. The irresistible beat was picked up by their hips and Cason let go as they moved together like they were fucking right there on the dance floor. He no longer cared who saw what was going on in his pants.

Vince’s ass pressed against his cock again and again. The tempo set him on fire, each song building on the last until Cason felt as if they were ablaze with lust and need. Cason was grinding against Vince. He’d already yanked off Vince’s shirt so that his hands could roam the muscular pecs and tight nipples.

His sub’s hands were locked behind his neck, holding on like Cason was the only solid thing in the universe. His moans were so loud the only thing keeping him from making a complete spectacle out of them were the wailing guitars and screaming vocals from the lead singer.

The agony of his jeans pressing against his cock was intense. His need was overwhelming and for once, Cason wasn't going to hold back.

"Come home with me," he said directly into Vince's ear. His hand cupped and rubbed hard against the bulge in Vince's jeans. "Now."

His lips were on Vince's neck, sucking up a dark mark as the sweet sub agreed frantically.

Icy wind outside slapped against his overheated skin as they rushed outside. Vince laced their fingers together and dragged him to the car. He shivered but it wasn't cold enough to completely cool his ardor. Cason caged the smaller man against his car by placing his palms flat on the roof. He went in for a kiss, dominating Vince's mouth as surely as ever.

His tongue thrust in and out until Vince went limp against him. He sucked Vince's bottom lip into his mouth and then bit down. Cason laved the swollen flesh with his tongue gently, leaving the reddened flesh slick when he let go.

"Please." Vince thrust his hips forward, shuddering and moaning.

"Home," Cason murmured against his lips.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Their coats fell to the floor in the tiled entryway. Cason squeezed Vince's ass when he bent over to pull off his boots. He toed off his own shoes, not wanting to give up his grip.

"I love your ass," he groaned.

Vince got caught up in his shirt. It tore with a loud rip as Cason yanked it over his head and tossed it on the couch as they rushed past the living room. Cason backed up the stairs, his hands undoing Vince's belt and unbuttoning his pants. As soon as they reached the top of the stairs he pushed them down Vince's hips. Cason got a very good surprise when Vince's cock sprang out unrestrained.

"Commando." He approved. His hand stroked Vince's shaft once, squeezing the slick head hard. Vince's hands fumbled with the button and zipper on Cason's jeans. Vince dropped to his knees right there in the hall.

Cason paused for a minute to let Vince get Cason's pants the rest of the way off, pushing down his underwear at the same time. Stepping out of his pants, Cason slid a hand into Vince's hair. He pulled him slowly toward his cock. Vince's lips parted and his pink tongue came out, slipping and sliding in small circles around the crown on Cason's cock before he pushed forward into the warmth to bury over half his length at once.

Vince sucked eagerly when Cason pulled back and the next time he thrust back in, Cason went all the way to the back of Vince's throat.

Nothing had ever felt as good as that tight vice gagging around the tip of his cock. No sub had ever looked so supremely blissed out as Vince did staring up at him with his gray-blue eyes nearly obscured by his lust-blown pupils.

Cason pulled out before he lost control. Vince tried to capture his cock again but Cason fisted his hand tight in the soft blond strands of his hair and held him still. "Not tonight. Tonight I want everything."

Vince gasped in a quick breath as his eyes squeezed shut. "Yes."

Unwilling to get the beautiful man up from his knees, Cason led him into his room slowly. Vince followed, never complaining, his expression eager.

“Up.”

That pert ass up in the air on the bed was like waving a red flag in front of the bull. Cason crawled after him, massaging and spreading Vince’s cheeks. He trailed his fingers down the crack to circle that pink hole, making the sweet sub squirm.

Cason leaned forward, blanketing Vince’s back with his chest. “You want me in here?” He tapped on the wrinkled flesh, barely touching the sensitive ring in small circles. “Are you ready to let me inside?”

“God, yes, please.” Vince was already panting. He arched his back and thrust back toward Cason’s fingers.

Cason reached higher and pulled open the drawer in the nightstand. He fumbled blindly before getting what he needed. Sitting back, he dropped the condom in front of Vince but kept the lube. He didn’t speak; he didn’t need Vince to either. Every tremble and thrust of Vince’s hips as he sought more sensation guided Cason and told him what the younger man needed from him.

Every scrap of Cason’s focus was on his slippery finger as he slid it inside Vince’s body. He’d penetrated that tight ring before but this time he wasn’t going to stop there. This time he’d get to feel that tight muscle clamping down on his cock and then sucking him in to the root.

Vince groaned. He tried to push back but Cason smacked him hard on one cheek. “Stay still. No restraints but your desire to do what I demand.”

His desperate sub stilled, though his thighs quivered, exposing exactly how hard it was for him to do what Cason wanted. To reward him, Cason thrust his finger the rest of the way inside.

“Ahh!” Vince’s toes curled but he didn’t move.

Smiling, Cason bent his finger down and pulled it back, grazing Vince’s prostate. He was pleased when Vince dropped his head to the bed but kept his

hips still and didn't attempt to get more sensation when he pulled his finger out.

The lube was cold on his fingers, so Cason took a moment to warm it before returning to preparing Vince. Every hot, slick inch surrounding his fingers made his cock harder, his balls achier. Cason shuddered as he slid his fingers in and out until Vince was moaning continuously.

With his fingers still gliding in and out, Cason leaned forward and licked a path up Vince's spine. He reached one of those smooth shoulders, a few hidden freckles distracting him. He tongued the marks, then closed his mouth over the smooth skin and bit down, sucking fiercely while probing the depths of the man under him.

Vince cried out. "Please!"

Cason picked up the condom and tore the package open with his teeth. He had to think of unsexy thoughts and struggle for control as he slid the thin latex down his cock; his own hand was almost too much sensation for him to endure. Pulling his fingers out brought a wordless sound of protest from Vince, but he wouldn't leave him empty for long.

More lube, then Cason was watching as the round head of his cock was squeezed between the tight, round cheeks of that perfect ass. He used his thumbs to spread Vince further, then pressed forward, barely breaching Vince's hole. A deep grunt was forced out of Vince as he slid in just to the flared rim around the head of his cock.

He pulled back. Vince's hands clenched on the sheets, but he didn't lose control. Cason could see how hard he struggled not to move his hips. This time, Cason stretched Vince with his thumbs in his hole, then stuck the head of his cock in between them. It was so tight; he watched a bead of sweat on Vince's temple slide down his caramel skin.

Cason's entire body was tense. He was poised, his control held by the tips of his fingers... literally. He was poised on the edge; he knew what this would mean, but he couldn't hold back. He needed to be inside Vince as far as he

could go. Nothing short of total possession would satisfy him, even if it was only for one night.

He wanted Vince to be his and when he slid inside, he knew he wouldn't last long. It was a fight between two desires; his need to drive them fast and hard to orgasm or take it slow and deep to make it an experience they would never forget, one that would last forever in his memory. He slid out and then back in again, pausing at the brink once more.

Vince's body was done with the teasing. He had been tense, trembling, fighting his needs but he suddenly relaxed his entire body. Cason's cock slid inside him, sucked in deep. He had to pull his thumbs out and catch himself, unable to stop until he bottomed out. The urge to pull his cock out and thrust back in until his balls slapped against those hairy thighs was almost too much for Cason.

Pressing his forehead against Vince's shoulder just below his mark, Cason shuddered, feeling his balls drawing up already. He held on, putting one arm around Vince's stomach, pulling him up on his arms and stroking his smooth skin. His hand slid down and grazed the leaking head of Vince's cock, erect and rubbing against his lower belly. It was hard enough to resist being pulled down, but Cason wanted to feel those muscles flex around his cock again, to have the vice grip of Vince's pleasure milk him as he began to come.

He could easily come that way. It let him gain a measure of control, the rhythmic pulses slowly building in intensity as he drove Vince crazy with small rolling circles of his hips.

"Cason, please..." Vince begged finally.

That was what he wanted; his name on Vince's lips was so sweet. He braced his arm next to Vince's and lost all control. He gripped Vince's cock tight and let the motion of his hips pounding hard against Vince's ass drive that dripping shaft through his fist.

Sweat dripped down his face. His thighs ached but he was approaching a moment of bliss he knew would be unlike any other. Nothing had ever felt as

good as the ass he was pounding into. Cason relished the sounds he was forcing from the sensual man as he shifted his aim and nailed Vince's prostate.

"Fuck." His gasps became a moaning wail as Vince began shuddering in his arms. Cason suddenly had to see it. He jerked out and flipped Vince over, picking up his legs and separating them so he could drive back into that slack hole and watch the feelings roll over that expressive face.

Those lust darkened eyes stared up at him. Cason felt their connection as he stared back down into the gray pools as Vince locked their gazes together. "Stroke your cock," Cason demanded through clenched teeth. He lifted Vince's legs higher and pushed him back. He could feel the firm lump of Vince's prostate as he used short strokes to drive the exquisitely sensitive head of his cock against it.

Vince's hand stroked up and down fast, turning that dusky pink head beet red. Vince tensed, his ass squeezing Cason's cock so tight he could barely move, and then his entire body went stiff.

Pulse after pulse of thick cum spurted from the slit of Vince's cock. Cason pulled back and slammed in hard without a rhythm, desperate to follow as Vince's muscles rippled around him. He gave a huge grunt, and then felt his cock swell slightly as his balls shot hot cum to fill the condom.

Cason ground down hard, moaning and grunting. The pleasure forced him to shut his eyes as it overwhelmed him. Each shot of cum sent a wave of pleasure shuddering up his spine. He collapsed sideways, not wanting to crush Vince under him. Struggling for breath, Cason left one hand on Vince's chest. He could feel the man's heart pounding against his palm, racing like his own.

He wanted to say something, to do his usual aftercare for the sub he'd just enjoyed, but he couldn't. Cason was wrecked, unable to do more than struggle to breathe and move one hand in short strokes on Vince's chest. Cason blinked, staring up at the ceiling. Maybe he didn't want to move and throw away the cooling spunk filled condom, or get a warm washcloth to clean them up, because that would mean admitting it was over.

How could he face that the end had come, just as it always did?

Tears pricked at the corners of his eyes and Cason closed them. His voice was rough when he said, "Give me a minute and I'll get up, I promise."

"Shh." Vince rolled over and kissed his shoulder. "Let me take care of you. I want to."

Objections rolled through him, but then Vince was already pulling off the condom and tying it off. He slid off the bed, staggering a little as he walked over to the bathroom.

It had been a long time since a lover had taken the time to clean him up; even when Cason wasn't being a Dom he did not give up control to his partners. He was always the one that took care of them. He didn't move as Vince used a warm washcloth on his cock and balls, stroking them slowly and carefully until he was clean.

Vince stood beside the bed after he tossed the washcloth into the hamper. "I can stay the night, right?"

"Yes. Please." Tonight would be the last time Cason was able to hold Vince in his arms as they slept; he ached to savor it.

They pulled up the blankets from the foot of the bed and curled up together. Cason's chest hurt and his eyes burned. He fought to remain quiet as tears leaked out of the corner of his eyes. Vince began a quiet snore against his throat, the air tickling him.

Cason stroked his cheek against that soft hair and then he began to let go and move back. He couldn't do it; he had to get up. Vince's arm tightened around his back and he threw one leg over Cason's thigh, muttering against his skin. A bittersweet smile spread across Cason's lips. He could taste the salt of his tears as he dropped another kiss on Vince's head and nuzzled that soft hair.

He'd be going to his grandparents' for dinner and maybe his pappous could help him figure out how to turn the ache in his heart into acceptance for the path of the one man Cason couldn't see inside. He wouldn't even get that small comfort of knowing he'd helped Vince find who he was really meant to be with, since it wasn't him.

Exhaustion dragged his swollen eyes shut in the end and Cason slept.

Vince crawling out of bed woke up Cason. He went from loose limbed sleep to rigid tension. He opened his eyes, just a small slit, and watched Vince through his dark lashes. It was agony to wait silently for him to come back out of the bathroom. Cason knew he'd leave then and he had no idea how he was going to watch Vince walk away without making a fool of himself.

Cason jerked back in shock when the shivering man climbed into the bed and burrowed under the covers. "Cold," Vince complained as he invaded the small pocket of warm air around Cason and tucked his chilly body against him.

"What...? You're not leaving?" Cason frowned. "I don't..."

Vince tilted his head back. "Leave? Why would I leave? It's freaking snowing outside and I don't have to work today." He shifted back a little. "I thought we could spend the day together, just hanging out."

"I have dinner with my family tonight."

Very carefully, Vince asked, "What does that mean?"

"It means I'm having dinner at my grandparents' tonight." Unable to stay still, Cason shook his head, threw back the covers, and got up. Vince sat up with his knees tucked up to his chin, pulling the blankets up to cover his body.

"I don't understand this." Cason grabbed a pair of underwear off his dresser and pulled the striped blue and red boxer briefs on. "Why are you still here? No one stays." He was muttering and not making much sense; he knew that, but he was so confused. None of the subs he'd ever done a scene with had wanted more from him before Vince, it didn't make sense.

Even before Cason had learned how to be a Dom or when he'd explored partners outside the lifestyle, he'd never had a man want to stay in bed with him beyond that... much less spend the day with him. Not after they'd had sex and whatever epiphany they experienced led them out his door and to the men that could fulfill their needs.

He spun around and faced Vince. “You want to hang out... just as friends? Is that it?” He’d shown Vince what it meant to submit to a Dom that knew how to respect a sub’s limits, while still pushing them into new experiences that expanded their boundaries. From the beginning, Cason had known this would be how it ended. He’d buried the fact that more than anyone else he’d ever been with, the sight of Vince walking away would seal his fate to be lonely and alone.

There was no one else he wanted. Vince had been the only one for whom he’d be willing to risk the utter agony he’d faced, the near certainty that the sub would walk away, and take Cason’s heart with him.

“What the hell are you talking about, Cason? You’re not making any sense.”

“We had sex, but you’re still here. I don’t know why.” Cason ran a hand through his hair and tugged, trying to figure out exactly what Vince wanted from him now that their chance to be together was over.

Vince’s jaw clenched and his lips pressed together. He pushed the covers away and sat silently for a minute, breathing hard. Cason could see the curve of his back, smooth skin rippling over the sleek muscles, as Vince sat facing away from him, his head hanging low.

“I get it,” he said in a strained voice.

He pushed away, getting out of bed. Vince walked out of Cason’s bedroom without saying another word. There was a pause in the angry steps, and then he heard loud stomping as Vince must have shoved his feet into his boots. Cason collapsed on the floor next to his bed when he heard the front door slam. What was he going to do?

CHAPTER TWELVE

He called his grandma and begged off from dinner that night. He'd gotten a horrible guilt trip, but Cason couldn't stand the idea of facing his family when he was so completely lost. Instead, he curled up in bed all day, hugging the pillow Vince had used that held a faint echo of his spicy cologne.

All week Cason went to work each day, barely paying attention to the students that came to him for help. He was so tired of giving out advice to make everyone else happy when he was so unhappy. It was lucky for him that Tiffany was out on maternity leave, because no one else was willing to brave his surly attitude to question him about what was wrong, preferring to avoid him instead.

Brandon called on Monday, Tuesday, and twice on Thursday. Cason deleted the messages without listening to them. Page had probably told him about his weekend with Vince, and Brandon was calling to check on him. He didn't want to hear the pity in his best friend's voice when he'd realized that Vince hadn't been just another sub for Cason.

Friday night Cason came home, exhausted and ready to open another six pack for a night in front of the TV, but Brandon's car was in his driveway. Worse yet, his friend was already inside.

"Damn it. I knew I shouldn't have given him a key." Cason considered just driving away but the front door opened and Brandon stared at him until he shut off the engine.

Gathering up his briefcase, Cason got out of the car. He trudged through the path he'd made in the snow from the freak storm last weekend and went inside. The warmth was welcome and Brandon had even lit a fire.

"Hey man, what's up?" Brandon looked concerned. Cason shrugged.

The kitchen was spotless when Cason walked in to get a drink. Brandon followed him, already drinking a beer. The top rack of the fridge was empty except for an old take out box and a shriveled pepper in a produce bag. Cason

looked over his shoulder at Brandon. His friend took a long drink and then set the empty bottle on the counter.

“I had a six pack in there,” Cason said. He glared at Brandon and then grabbed a bottle of water.

“No, you didn’t. That was your last beer. You had about four empty six packs on the counter and in the sink, though. I recycled them for you.”

Cason went over to the cupboard and grabbed an energy bar out of the box. “So?”

“So, care to tell me what has you drinking like a fish, ignoring my phone calls, and looking like a bear with a thorn in its paw?”

“Not particularly.” Cason walked out of the kitchen and into the living room; on his way through, avoiding looking into the dining room where they’d had that last meal. If he was really lucky, Brandon would get sick of him refusing to answer his questions and being an ass, and leave.

Nope. Not that lucky.

Brandon flopped down on the couch beside him. “I know what Vince has told Page, which isn’t a whole lot, but he’s pretty surly too. Page is being driven crazy ’cause apparently Vince is bouncing around like a bunny on crack. You’re depressed and not talking to anyone. I’ve never seen you like this. What is going on?”

Cason let his head fall back against the couch, tossing the energy bar on the end table. “You’re really not going to go away?”

“Nope.” Brandon’s rumbling negative was firm.

What could Cason really expect from the man he knew would have the patience to deal with a brat like Page?

“Life goes on, okay? Nothing unusual. I found a sub. I showed him how a scene with a Dom that cares about his sub should be. He went home. The end. Drama not included.”

Brandon snorted. “Liar.”

Cason jerked to his feet. “What do you want me to say, Brandon? That I felt something for Vince? That being friends with him, without getting to touch him again, is more than I can deal with right now? Even worse, what if he finds someone new? I couldn’t handle that.

“Every time I try to sleep in my bed I remember having him in it, spread out for me. My room feels empty when the man only slept over three times. That’s all it took, Brandon, and I’m hooked.” Cason paced in front of the fire, running his hand along the smooth wood of the mantle. “I’m giving myself time to get over the dream of the future I wanted with him so I can face reality.”

He glared at his best friend. “There, happy now? Is telling you how much of a mess I am going to make this better in any way?”

“It might,” Brandon said placidly. He sat forward, resting his elbows on his thighs. “Why do you automatically assume that he doesn’t want the same thing with you?”

Cason exhaled noisily. “I just know, all right?” He gripped the mantle, needing it to keep him upright as he said, “Vince was never going to be mine, I knew that from the beginning.”

“You don’t know shit!”

Cason froze, then turned around slowly. Vince was standing in the entry to the dining room. His hands were clenched into fists against his thighs, thumping against his legs as he glared at Cason.

“No one makes my decisions for me, Cason. Not even you!”

Cason looked from Vince to Brandon. His best friend was standing up. “Page and I decided you guys should talk, even if neither one of you thinks so. He’s waiting at my house and I’ve wasted enough time on you stubborn asses. I’m going to leave, but if after I go, you guys don’t find some way to work this out, we’ll make you pay.”

Brandon’s size and the threatening rumble of his voice had never bothered Cason before, but he’d never seen his friend look quite so intimidating. He

knew, and had seen first-hand, how creative he could be with his punishments too.

His shoulders slumped. “We’ll talk.” He didn’t promise they’d work it out, though.

“You’ll listen. This time I’m going to talk first.” Vince’s hands were still drumming.

Brandon clapped Cason on the shoulder as he walked by. “Good luck.”

Meeting Vince’s angry gaze was more than Cason could do. His chest hurt and every breath was a struggle he tried to hide in vain.

“Why don’t you sit down?” he asked.

“Why don’t you?” countered Vince.

Cason gave a short laugh. “I don’t think either of us can stand to be still for this.”

“What is this? Can you tell me that, huh?” Vince stepped inside the living room, coming up behind the sofa. He gripped the thick leather cushion, his knuckles white. Cason stared at his hands. “Why did you want me to leave on Sunday?”

“I didn’t want you to go, I just knew that you would.”

“Bullshit!” The spat out word made Cason look up. He’d never heard Vince speak or seen him glare at him like that; not even when Cason had pissed him off at the munch the first time they spoke. “I never once thought of leaving. I thought that we were building something. You said in the beginning that you wanted to do those scenes to show me what a true Dom was really like. But it was more than that from the start. You may have tried to deny that to yourself, but it was never just about doing scenes. All those conversations? Dinners? Damn it, we’re good together.” He shoved his hair out of his face. “Why wouldn’t you give us a chance?”

“There are things about me you don’t know. Things that have meant every man I’ve ever been with has walked away without looking back.” Cason

stopped talking. He couldn't believe he was about to tell Vince about his ability. He'd never believe Cason; not in a million years.

"Would you stop being so damn cryptic? Something about you. What? That you snore? I know that already. Do you floss your teeth in the kitchen? Drink milk out of the carton? Seriously, Cason, you're the single most desired man around. All the subs I know either rave about how amazing you are or want you and all the Doms respect you. No one has any horror stories, so whatever you seem to think is so awful can't be that bad."

Vince looked down at the couch. "This is about me, isn't it?" When he looked up some of his anger had drained away and he was left looking sad and vulnerable. "No matter who I pick, I always choose the wrong guy. No one ever wants me like I want them."

Cason couldn't stand that look on Vince's face. He'd have to tell him. "You'll want to sit down for this."

Vince hesitated. "Cason, I think—"

"Please." That one word stopped Vince's objections. He stared at Cason for a minute, then moved around the couch and sat down. His hand stroked the arm of the couch nervously in short strokes.

"Okay, I'm sitting. Talk."

Telling people about their abilities wasn't something done outside the family, so Cason had no idea how to start. Finally, he decided to begin where his grandpa had, back when he first told Cason about what was happening to him.

"I need you to listen, from start to finish. No matter how unbelievable it sounds. Do you understand?" Cason asked.

"A long time ago a woman captured the interest of a man, but he wasn't really a man. He was a daimon, not a red-skinned devil from hell, but a magical being with very special abilities. Greek daimons have the ability to see inside the center of a human, to the very essence of their psyche. How they use it depends on them. It can be used to help or hurt men.

“Some daimons fall in love with humans from time to time and they have children. Their abilities pass down the same gender lineage from that original daimon. Those descendants have abilities that they can harness in much the same ways as the original daimon, though to a lesser extent.”

Cason cleared his throat. “I’m descended from a daimon.”

Vince shook his head. “Really? This is your big secret? You expect me to believe that you have some magical power that makes men leave you after you fuck them?”

Of course he didn’t believe him. Cason sighed and said, “No, that’s not what happens. I can see the spirits’ influences on men. I see their touches like stains of color, each spirit has their own shade. I can tell who has touched a man, and how that touch has changed them. Using that knowledge, I can help them reach their center. I know who they are inside and my ability to give them what they need leads them to discovering that for themselves. I don’t have to plan a scene and hope it’s what the sub needs. I know.”

Vince’s eyes widened.

“But when the scenes end, not a single sub has ever needed me.”

“The subs I talked to,” Vince said slowly, “all those men who said you were the perfect Dom.”

Cason held his breath as he watched the wheels spin in Vince’s mind, from zero to a hundred just like that.

“Is that how you seemed to know exactly what I needed? Were you doing that to me?” He sounded strangely disappointed. His eyes widened. “Did you make me want you somehow?”

“No!” Cason shook his head. “No! With you, my ability doesn’t work at all. I wanted you before I knew that, though. I saw you, night after night, with the wrong men. Those wannabe Doms were ruining you.”

“Swear it. Look me in the eyes and swear,” Vince said intensely.

Cason went over to the couch, sitting down on the coffee table in front of Vince so they were face to face, just a foot apart. “I would never try to

influence you against your will, even if I could. That's not how my ability works. I can't make men do things, only help them to see the truth of what they need to be truly happy. I wouldn't want that. I want a partner, not a slave."

Vince took a deep breath. "Okay." He reached forward and laced his fingers together with Cason's. "So, if I believe you, that means you expect me to leave because what? We slept together and I was supposed to miraculously figure out that some Joe Blow down at the club was my Prince Charming? Even though you couldn't see inside me like the other men you've... guided?"

Cason felt heat spread across his cheeks as he blushed. "It sounds stupid when you say it like that."

Snorting, Vince said, "It is stupid. It's all insane. But," he shook his head, "and I can't believe I'm saying this, but I believe you. You know, we never talked about the subject but I have a ton of books on the different ancient religions. They've always fascinated me, and I wondered how so many different geographical regions could have similar stories if there wasn't some basic truth to them. I guess I was right."

"You really believe me?" Cason stared at him with his mouth open.

"What? You didn't expect me to? Why tell me if you didn't think I would?"

"I hoped you wouldn't run out of here, but I didn't believe this shit when my grandpa first sat me down and explained what was happening to me when I hit puberty. I was raised with a pretty strong Greek belief in the mysteries of the world beyond what we can understand. By the way, don't be upset if my Grandma spits in your hair when you meet her. Gigia always did things traditional."

A smirk spread across Vince's face, lighting up his eyes. "And what is spitting on me supposed to accomplish? Wash away the dirty non-Greek germs?"

Cason laughed. "No. Nothing like that. It wards away bad spirits."

That reminded him. His amusement faded and his smile disappeared. “There is something you should know. I can’t see any spirits influencing you which is very unusual. For some reason I can’t use my ability on you at all but I have a theory on why that is.” This was something Cason wished he didn’t have to admit. “Daimons are not solely good.

“There are some that, for whatever reason, choose to use their ability to misdirect humans. They lead them down paths that create internal conflict and confusion. In the end, their victims are completely lost and unable to find a moment of happiness ever again. Many kill themselves.”

Cason took a breath. “I asked my grandpa about you. I’ve never met anyone that I couldn’t help before, until you, and I wanted so badly to help you be happy, even if it meant that you wouldn’t be with me. He told me that you had probably been with a daimon that works to destroy humanity.”

“Derrik.” Vince scowled. “That son of a bitch. He was a daimon?”

“I think so. I don’t know for certain, though.”

Vince stood up and started pacing. “That sorry son of a bitch. I just thought he was a sadistic asshole, but you’re telling me that he actually was trying to make me crazy? I can’t believe this!”

“I’m sorry.”

“Why? It’s not your fault. You didn’t treat me like that, even though you’re a daimon too.” Vince’s laugh was bitter this time, harsh and short. “And in the end, it was my choice to be with him.” He hunched his shoulders, wrapping his arms around his chest.

Cason stood up and turned Vince around to face him. He said softly, “It was your choice to leave him too, remember? You kept trying; you didn’t give up. He didn’t manage to break you.”

Vince looked up at him through his hair. “But you still wanted to put me back together.”

“I wanted you, broken, whole it didn’t matter. Even though I knew I shouldn’t, I did.” Cason reached up and pushed the hair back out of Vince’s eyes. “For *me*, not just for you.”

“You have me, though. I’m not walking away from you. You’re my choice too; I need you just as much as you need me” Vince said in a fierce voice.

Something tight inside Cason unclenched when Vince said that. That was the one thing he’d always wanted to hear from a man, but never had.

“So if I asked you to come to dinner tonight and meet my family, you’d come?”

Vince bit his full bottom lip. “As what? Your sub? Friend? Boyfriend?”

“As mine.”

He was asking for commitment from Vince, and Cason held his breath as Vince stared deep in his eyes. Then he had a slim body on top of him and a very demanding man kissing him. Cason kissed back, tongue thrusting, his arms surrounding Vince and pulling him as close as possible. The heat of Vince’s body was like a sun burning him from the merest brush of skin on skin. But none of the intensity he was feeling touched the joy that flashed through him when Vince pulled away and gasped out one word.

“Yes.”

THE END

Author Bio

Alicia Nordwell is one of those not so rare creatures, a reader turned writer. Striving to find something interesting to read one day, she decided to write what she wanted instead. Then the voices started... Yep, not only does she talk about herself in the third person for bios, she has voices in her head constantly clamoring to get out.

Fortunately for readers, with the encouragement of her family and friends, she decided for her own sanity to keep writing. Now you can find her stories both free and e-published! She can be found quite often at her blog where she has a lot of free fiction for readers to enjoy and working hard, or maybe hardly working, as an admin on GayAuthors.org under her online nickname, Cia.

Oh yeah, she's a wife, mom of two, and lives in the dreary, yet ideal for her redhead complexion, Pacific Northwest. Except for when she disappears into one of the many worlds in her head, of course!

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