

LOVE Has NO Boundaries



Don't Read in the Closet Event 2013

HEAD OVER HEELS

Sunne Manello

Love Has No Boundaries

An M/M Romance series

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By Sunne Manello

Introduction

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

What Is Love Has No Boundaries?

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

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

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

Words of Caution

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

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

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Photo Description

Although it's in color, the photograph has an old-fashioned feel. Two short-haired men recline together, visible from the waist up. Both wear collared shirts with no ties, and their sleeves are rolled up. The young man in the foreground wears suspenders, his eyes are half shut and he has a peaceful expression. The slightly older man cradling him wears a waistcoat. He looks with nearly closed eyes and a loving expression at the man in his arms.

Story Letter

Dear Author,

I have tried to come up with a specific prompt for this photo but nothing is coming to me. This photo could be telling so many different stories:

Perhaps the man in the suspenders is relaxing in the arms of his lover/husband after a particularly long, hard day at work...

Perhaps the two men are finally together for good after dealing with many obstacles that kept them apart...

Perhaps they have just made it to their hotel room and are finally able to relax after their very long and tiring (but very happy) wedding day...

Perhaps because of distance or circumstances, they are only able to get together sporadically—a weekend every few months, etc. ...

Perhaps they are lovers, partners... but the man in the back is also a Dom and the man in suspenders is his sub and needs some “attention” from his Dom...

I am completely open to whatever story this photo inspires in the author, all I want is serious, emotional, romantic. Don't care if it's angsty or kinky as long as the emotion is there.

Sincerely,

C.J. Anthony

Story Info

Genre: historical

Tags: brother-in-law, widower, first time, family, full life, loss, men with children, age gap, quick evolving love

Word count: 14,012

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Summer 1955

Richard Anthony Beale III stood at the railing of the small balcony and gazed out at the ocean. Blue and grey mixed together in an impressive but depressing way. The rolling motion of the huge ocean cruiser Liberté had become familiar over the last two days. Behind him, in the luxury suite, he heard Therese, his baby's nanny and his childhood ally, singing a sweet song to his baby boy. It was nappy time, and William was by god due for some sleep. He hadn't handled being at sea well so far.

But what could Richard do? It was long past time to fulfill his dead wife's last wish.

“Begrab mich bei meinen Eltern.” Bury me with my parents.

Elisabeth's spine had been broken, her lungs punctured. She had died a painful death. Richard closed his eyes; the image of her young and vital body so cruelly destroyed still haunted him. Damn that car, that crazy fast car. It had been her wish, a present for the birth of his first son, and he had given it to her, like everything she had desired. It was the least he could do for her after marrying a guy like him, a man who wasn't able to cherish a beautiful and vital woman like her. And as soon as she had been able to party again, she had been driving around like she had lived—fast and fearless.

And now, ten months later, he was bringing her ashes home to her twin brother to be buried in the grave with her parents. It had taken this long because he hadn't wanted to cross the ocean with a baby in winter and he had to arrange for all his business to be taken care of by his assistant, Jonathan. Now they were on their way to Le Havre and from there on they would travel by car to Germany, to a city called Friedrichshafen at Lake Constance. Elisabeth's parents had been buried there, and her brother Paul was teaching in the well-known boarding school, Salem, close by.

A noise behind him disrupted his morose broodings.

“He is sleeping now.” Therese took one long look at him and added, “Maybe you should take a nap, too. I don’t mind staying here.”

“No, go and have some fun at the sun deck. Enjoy it. I’ll be there if he wakes up and if I need you, I’ll send a steward after you, okay?”

“You’re sure?”

“Yes, go!” He quietly ushered her towards the door. “We’ll be in Le Havre tomorrow and then your fun will be over.”

“Ha, as if.” She grinned back at him over her shoulder, then snatched a book from the table, gathered her sunglasses and stylish sunhat, and left the suite.

Richard couldn’t help but smile. She had been his own nanny’s helper and so much fun, just nine years his senior when she had started to work for his parents at the age of fifteen. Therese had been enough of a child herself to hide in the woods with him, playing robber and sheriff. And every so often coming up with a plan to hide activities which hadn’t been suitable for the heir of the “Beale-fortune”.

The moment it had become clear that Elisabeth wouldn’t care for their son he had called her, and she had come within days. Now over fifty years old, she still hadn’t lost that spark of mischief that had entertained him as a child. Her down-to-earth attitude had kept him together over the last months. She was his savior.

Richard stopped his musings. He tiptoed to his son’s room, opened the door cautiously and peeked into the bed. William slept on his back, both hands in little fists, the soft auburn hair on his head a bit sweaty, his lips thrust out as if he was waiting for a kiss. To resist the urge to do exactly that, was difficult. He loved his baby. He loved him like no one else in this world.

Paul closed the book in front of him and looked up at the faces of twenty-four children.

“And this is the end of the story.” He paused dramatically. “And the beginning of your summer holidays.”

The noise level only increased a bit. Ah, such well-behaved children, his pupils. Karl stretched his arm, indicating that he wanted to ask something.

“Yes, Karl?”

“Herr Hohenfels, is it true that you are going to teach us English next year?”

“That is true. The government has concluded that starting the next school year, English has to be a part of the education. As you may know, I’ve learned English at my school, and studied it as a minor subject at University. That means I’m going to be your English teacher next school year.”

Another hand in the air. Paul looked at the boy. “Patrick?”

“Is it difficult? And do you know anyone who is from England?”

He had to keep himself from grinning: “No, I think it is very easy to learn. You are all going to like it. And no, I don’t know anyone from England. But I’m going to meet my brother-in-law tomorrow for the first time, and he is from America. Also, my mother had friends in America who came to visit us shortly after the end of the war.”

Karl’s hand was in the air again in his own slightly erratic manner. He burst out, “Why do you have a brother-in-law in America?”

“Karl.” Paul gave him a stern look. “Can you please wait until I give you permission to talk?”

“I’m sorry, Herr Hohenfels.” Eyes downcast and a demure look on his face; this boy was going to be a real handful in a few years. Who was he kidding, he already was a handful.

Paul took a deep breath. That was the hard part: “My sister visited the American friends I mentioned. She fell in love and married an American. Now he is coming to bring her ashes back. She died last year.”

His class was silent and Paul sighed. So much for the good mood before the holidays. These kids had been born in the last years of the war, and he was all too aware that somewhere in their memories the fear of dying had been planted. To lighten the mood he added, “And he is bringing my nephew. A little boy named William, just a year old. Can you imagine how excited I am? I haven’t seen him at all.”

And like a light switch turned on, his pupils brightened and spent the last minutes asking questions about the baby.

After the lesson, Paul did a quick clean-up of his classroom. He had done most of it in the days before, well aware that leaving directly only a day after closing for summer was a favor granted by the headmaster. “Extraordinary circumstances”—thank god. Paul would be on his way to Friedrichshafen tomorrow morning.

Richard hadn’t slept well. Oh, it hadn’t been the bed’s fault, that one was very comfortable, the room big and airy despite the fact that the Hotel Krone in Friedrichshafen was an old and historic building close to the small yachting harbor. His dreams had bothered him. He couldn’t recall them but the permanent feeling of loneliness and loss still tingled in his guts.

Today was the day. He would finally meet Paul, his brother-in-law. They had to arrange the funeral, and of course, Paul would want to meet William. He groomed with special care. It always helped him to focus and today was not going to be easy. He knew what Paul looked like; he had seen a few pictures. The similarity to Beth was obvious. Paul was the male version of his pretty and dead wife— the very attractive male version. Young, fresh face, clean eyes and a charming smile. He couldn’t suppress the nervous flutter in his stomach. Immediately the guilt followed. Not the guilt to find a man attractive. No, he had made his peace with that fact a long time ago. It was the remorse that he hadn’t been able to be a better husband to his wife and that of all men in the world this one would be the worst for him to find striking.

A look at his watch showed him that his peace would be over soon. He was already hearing Therese and William in the adjoining room, accompanied by the soft clinking sounds of dishes. They obviously were having breakfast. The delighted sounds of his boy made him smile. William was close to walking. He pulled himself up on every available piece of furniture and had no patience. Richard wasn't so sure if it was a blessing or a curse when the boy finally would be able to walk.

Smiles greeted him when he entered the bright living room of the hotel suite.

“Good morning my lovelies. How fare thee this wonderful morning?” A kiss on his son's auburn hair, a smile for Therese, and he took his seat at the table. “Do we have eggs?”

“Good morning, Richard. Of course, here,” Therese handed him a basket with brown, warm eggs. “And how are you?”

He wanted to tell her that he was well, fine and dandy and whatever but blurted out. “Nervous.”

“Why?”

“I don't know. Maybe I'm afraid that he is going to blame me?” Not that he wasn't already blaming himself enough.

“No, Richard,” Therese's voice got that stern sound that he remembered so well from his childhood. “Stop that immediately. It was a car accident. Beth was driving; nobody else was in the car, not even on the street. She miscalculated the speed and the bend and it happened. It is not your fault.”

“I know, rationally I know. But I still feel like I did something wrong.”

“Did you?”

“Do something wrong?” He frowned, not sure where she was going with this question.

“Yes. Did you do something wrong to Beth that makes you feel guilty now?”

Richard wasn't sure how to answer that. Marrying her in the first place? Never telling her he was queer? Getting her pregnant? Buying her that damn fast car? Therese could have her pick.

He was saved from his answer by a knock at the door. Their visitor had arrived.

This was the moment Paul had waited for. He would finally meet his nephew. The door of the hotel suite opened and Paul recognized the man he had seen and silently admired in pictures. He had to make a conscious effort to not let his jaw droop. Richard in person was his very own wet dream. Every inch a manly man, well groomed but still with an unmistakable hint of alpha male around him. Short, dark hair, grey eyes, the kind of skin you knew would hold stubble well before the evening, broad shoulders, an inch taller than him at least.

“Good morning. It’s nice to meet you finally.” And the man had a sexy voice, too.

Paul scrambled his last remaining brain cells together: “Yes, likewise.” Great answer to make an impression; this was so not how he had pictured this meeting. “I mean, I’m glad I can finally meet you and, of course, William.”

“Of course, come in.” Richard motioned into the room. A pretty older woman and a toddler were sitting at the breakfast table.

“Come and meet Therese, Will’s nanny, and,” the pride in man’s voice was obvious, “here is William himself.”

Paul knew he took the woman’s hand and greeted her, but his eyes were glued to the boy, who, unconscious of the severity of the moment, munched happily on a cookie. God, he looked so much like Lisa and even more like himself. The spitting image of their heritage, the auburn hair, the big blue eyes, he even had the same slightly bigger right earlobe like Paul himself.

“Hello Will.” Paul extended his hand cautiously, offering it palm upwards. William grabbed one finger and stuffed it into his mouth, chewing on it with

sharp little teeth, the blue eyes intent on his face. Slimy cookie remainders slipped over his finger and Paul fell in love head over heels. With a sudden clarity he realized that he wouldn't be able to leave and go on with his own life. His sister's son had just stolen a big piece of his heart.

A warm hand on his shoulder kicked him out of his daze.

“Don't let the little dinosaur bite you, his tiny teeth are sharp. There are more coming and he stuffs everything in his mouth to chew on.”

Paul laughed shakily: “I can feel that.” He carefully extracted his finger, bite-marks and cookie-slime the evidence. “Can I hold him? Please?”

Richard just handed him a napkin and nodded.

Paul wiped his finger and then took the boy in his arms, and sticky, sweet-smelling hands touched his face. William's body was so light, the bones still small in his hands. He hadn't been prepared for the onslaught of emotions, for the sudden and total rearranging of his own priorities. He didn't realize the tears that were running down his face either. So this was how love felt. He wasn't going to give him back.

“Paul?” That voice again. “Are you okay?”

He nodded, of course he was okay, he was just falling in love with this little person in his arms. A little finger tried to crawl into his nose. He playfully snapped after the hand and was rewarded with delightful giggling. “Yes, everything is fine, sorry. It's just... he is wonderful.”

“I know.” Nothing more. Richard couldn't say anything more anyway. He was out of his element, so completely that it shocked him. Paul was eerily similar in appearance to Beth but so different in manners. How he had immediately tuned into William made him speechless. And the obvious delight and emotion he showed was nothing compared to the slightly helpless affection Elisabeth had shown for her son.

With a firm hand on his shoulder, Richard led Paul to the couch in the middle of the room and nudged him to sit down. “Take your time, Will is

obviously pleased to meet you.” And it was true, William gurgled and giggled and patted Paul’s face with delight. Paul just nodded, eyes fixed on the boy.

Richard turned back to the table where Therese was following this emotional moment without interfering. Now she stood up, laid her napkin on the table and murmured, “I’ll be in my room just in case, but I think he needs a bit of time. Poor boy looks overwhelmed.” And with a thoughtful look first at Richard and then Paul, she left.

Richard’s eyes followed her exit with a stunned expression. She was going to let him handle this alone? No help? God, he really didn’t understand women. He turned back to the young man on the couch.

“Do you want something to drink? Maybe a cup of tea? I can order you a breakfast, you must be hungry.” Richard wasn’t sure what made him so nervous that he suddenly started talking like there was no brake between his brain and his mouth.

“No, thanks, I’m fine.”

“I’m sorry, I’m usually...”

“It just overwhelmed...”

“Sorry, please, I didn’t mean to interrupt...”

“Oh, the whole situation...”

Paul started laughing. They both were hilarious, asking, making excuses, talking at the same time. William made high squealing noises of delight and jumped with his whole little body up and down in Paul’s arms.

“Hey there, little man. Careful, I don’t want to let you fall down.”

“He can be a handful.” Richard couldn’t suppress the grin. Will was a whirlwind; a handful was a mild description of his son.

“I can imagine. If he takes anything after his mom...” There was a pause. “Don’t get me started on her.” Paul felt a lump in his throat. He didn’t want to think of Lisa right now. It still hurt even after all this time. Maybe it was because he had never buried her. For him, nothing substantial had changed

since the time she had traveled to America. The only difference had been the absence of letters. The last one, the one that burnt a hole in his jacket, came a week after he received the phone call that informed him about her accident and death. A message from the grave. Paul wasn't sure whether he should show the letter to Richard or not. It was a very personal message, a very telling and private observation. He needed time; he needed to get to know the man. Time, yes, maybe the best course of action was to find out about that.

“How long do you intend to stay?”

“As long as it takes.” Richard wasn't sure what he meant with this answer but it seemed right to him. As long as it would take to feel normal again? As long as it would take for Paul to get to know William? Or as long as it would take for him to get to know Paul? “Well, we have to plan the funeral. That would be the first step.”

“And after that? You are going back to America?”

Richard could see disappointment in Paul's eyes. He had the sudden urge to put him at ease. “No, I don't plan to go back for a while. My business there is in good hands and I'm thinking of expanding to Europe. So I thought of finding a base here in the vicinity, and traveling around to get new business connections”

“A base?”

“Yes, I thought of renting or buying a house. Maybe here at Lake Constance? I enjoy the view over the lake.”

“It certainly is a great view on sunny days. On rainy days it can be depressing as hell.”

Richard grinned: “You're sure you are a schoolteacher?”

“Yes?”

“Depressing as hell? Language, my dear Paul, language.”

The blush that crept into the young man's cheeks was adorable. Two bright red spots that immediately got beaten with two very sticky baby hands. Paul

turned towards William: “I think someone is getting very impatient here? What do you think, Will?”

As if given permission, the baby boy started to babble incoherent things and tried to leave Paul’s grip. Which was the reason why Paul positioned him on the floor: “He is lively. How do you keep him tamed?”

Richard had paid less attention to the action than to the grown, cute man in front of him, so he was startled by the question. Damn, had his brother-in-law caught him ogling? “Will? Oh, we provide him with outlets, like his playground at home, which actually so far isn’t as used as it will be the moment he can walk. But he loves to play in the sand. Or the swing. Here it’s going to be a bit more difficult. I thought about going to the lake and feeding ducks later. Maybe we can find a playground.”

Paul wasn’t sure what to think of the pause that had followed his innocent question. It wasn’t like he had told the attractive man in front of him that he not only wanted to get closer to his nephew but to the nephew’s father, too. He hadn’t expected it, this sudden, overwhelming attraction. And the immediate moment afterwards when he had seen Will for the first time, the urge to claim and protect and never let go. The pull towards Richard had been forced into the background before it had even had a chance to take root. But now it had come back. Mightily. *Wow*.

“Would you like to accompany us? Will, Therese and me? Feeding ducks, I mean?” Richard wasn’t sure what he had done but Paul seemed to be struck with muteness: “Paul?”

“Ducks? Yes, of course, it would be my pleasure. I’m sorry, I’m just... it’s all a bit overwhelming.” The shy smile did something to Richard’s guts.

“Well, then let’s go. I’ll call Therese, can you pick up Will and follow me?” And with that, Richard took command of “Operation Ducks”.

It was a full success. William was delighted, Therese and Richard bantered good-naturedly, and included Paul in their conversations. They ordered a light lunch in a café near the lake, then walked slowly back to the hotel to tuck William in for his nap. Therese excused herself again, declaring that she

wanted to take advantage of someone else looking after Richard during Will's nap. She finally would be able to finish the novel she had been reading for weeks.

They were alone, a pot of coffee on the table and a load of questions and tasks to tackle. Richard wasn't sure where to begin. So far he had gotten the impression that Paul was a very easygoing, calm and warm person with a dry wit. He obviously adored William, it was fun to watch. Talk about being bent around a little finger. He liked the young man already, he enjoyed his company. It was a pity that he had never seen brother and sister together, as a pair they must have been quite a show. Well, maybe it was for the best he would tackle the most important questions first: "Let's talk about the funeral first, okay?"

Paul nodded: "Yes, I have already informed the pastor. We can have a service at the little chapel in the graveyard, and the stonemason will add Lisa's name and dates to our family's gravestone as soon as I give him notice."

"Are there any relatives or friends you want to invite? How do you do your funerals?"

Paul's face darkened: "No, no relatives left, and no friends. The only family friends that remained are the Winterbergs, the family Lisa went to in America."

Which meant that Paul had no family friends or relatives either.

"Okay, then, what about having the funeral next week, as soon as the pastor can manage. It'll be just us. And I have brought a few things back with me, too. Your letters to her, for example. And a few pieces of jewelry I assume have been in your family for a while?"

"Thank you. I appreciate that."

So he was back to being polite. Somehow the topic had caused Paul to retreat, to rethink his open attitude. Richard wasn't sure why but he was

certain that he didn't want that. "Paul?" The demanding tone in his voice seemed to startle the young man.

"Yes?"

"You know that you still have a family? We are family. William is your nephew and I'm your brother. We will keep contact, hell, we even intend to be here for a while anyway." Brother, oh my god, he had just called himself Paul's brother. He wanted to be anything but his brother. Lover, oh yes, that would be a good idea but he hadn't even a clue if Paul was queer, even more if there would be a chance for an old guy like him. Brother...

Paul looked a bit shell-shocked: "That is... I don't know... you don't have to..." He was back to stammering, great. This perfect man in front of him offered to be his family. A wonderful idea with just one little mistake. He didn't want to be Richard's brother. His over-imaginative mind suggested differently. But Paul had to be cautious. Lisa's letter had hinted something but he wasn't sure if that wasn't just his wishful thinking. He blushed, not sure how to react to the offer of family. In the end he did the only logical thing, he looked Richard in his eyes, smiled and said very deliberately: "I thank you."

It was a stone that dropped from Richard's heart. He hadn't known how much Paul's acceptance really meant to him. But he knew what he wanted even more and decided that there was no time but the present: "What do you think about moving in with us?"

Another surprised expression flickered over Paul's face: "You want me to live with you?"

"Yes, with Will, Therese and me. I intend to buy a house in the area. I need a place to stay for a longer time. My business in America is taken care of and I want to expand my overseas connections and companies. Germany is a growing market. You can say it's still under construction; there is a lot to do, to buy and to invest. I intend to stay here for at least a year, probably longer. I need to fly to America from time to time for a few days to keep an eye on my other companies, but I want to make my home base here, at least for a while.

And I want you to live with us. William needs to know his uncle. We need to be a family.”

“I have a room at the school.” Paul wasn’t sure if that was relevant but it was the only coherent thing that came to his mind. Scratch that, it wasn’t coherent, it was the only thought he could voice openly. Thoughts like “Oh my god, I could live with them.” or “Seeing Will and Richard every day?” weren’t suitable for this talk, or at least he assumed so.

“Well, you wouldn’t need that anymore. But you could keep it of course, just in case we are impossible to live with.”

“Ha, ha, you haven’t seen my room. Maybe you are going to throw me out as soon as you realize that I have a book-problem?”

“You have a problem with books?”

“You can say so; I have more books than shelves. It can be a bit... crowded.” Paul wasn’t going into detail about the books on his chairs and floor.

“Then a house with a library can be the solution.”

“A library.” Paul tried to hide the smile. “I think you have convinced me.”

“Good, then we start house-hunting tomorrow. You’ll get your say, too.”

“So I’ll be back tomorrow?” Paul checked his watch. It was time for him to go if he wanted to catch the train.

“Sure, and bring a few things with you, clothes and that stuff. We’ll find you a room here in the hotel.”

“I can’t afford that.”

“I’ll pay.”

“Richard, I don’t think...” Paul tried to voice his protest but Richard interrupted him immediately.

“No, don’t object, please.”

Paul couldn't get rid of the feeling that this might be important to his brother-in-law and so he agreed. Five minutes later, he was on the way back to his room with the book-problem, not knowing what to expect of the coming days but somehow exhilarated and nervous.

The next day started in chaos. A loud bang and a hearty curse woke Richard from his pleasant dreams. More curses followed and Will began to cry. That was definitely not Therese's usual way to start a day. Richard hastily slipped on his robe and hurried to the living room. There on the floor sat Therese, face contorted in pain while William wept next to her.

"What happened?" Richard kneeled next to her and cuddled his bawling son in his arms.

"I slipped." Teeth clenched, face pale, Therese tried to stand up. "Damn, that hurts. Ah... Will's just shocked because I went down like a stone. F... reaking hurts."

"Stay down, I'll call for a doctor."

"No." But she melted back onto the carpet.

"Yes, just stay here. Don't go dancing."

"Ha-ha, very funny."

"Somebody needs to be." And with that, Richard hoisted the still-sniffing Will to a better position, stood up, and made the call.

A few minutes later, he got the confirmation from the receptionist that a doctor was on his way. In the meantime, he had dried William's tears and put a cold towel over Therese's ankle, which got bigger just from looking at it.

Her head rested on a cushion and her eyes were closed, but when he took a seat next to her on the floor again, she looked at him and stated very matter of factly, "I won't be able to look after William for a while. You'll need to find other help."

“I’ll get that arranged. Paul is going to come and stay at the hotel. I invited him yesterday.”

“Good, but you need him in the room next to Will. You know that you don’t hear him at night; you always sleep like a dead man. When you finally wake up, he is already so worked up that he won’t sleep again.”

“Okay, we can put him in your room and you can get mine. Or the other room I’m going to book as soon as I get you looked after.”

“Yes,” she sighed, “that would do.”

For the next half an hour Richard was busy entertaining his cranky son, cooling Therese’s leg and waiting for the doctor. Finally the man came, took one look at the swollen ankle and decided that x-rays would be necessary to determine the further treatment.

Richard was discussing the merits of calling an ambulance, which meant waiting again, or driving Therese himself—all with a whiny William around and nobody to take care of him, when Paul knocked shyly at the open door.

“Hi?” His open gaze fell on Therese and he rushed to her. “You’re hurt?”

“Paul!” Richard was relieved; he hadn’t expected his brother-in-law to come so early. “You’re the man I need.” And with those words, he pointed to his son who was sitting next to Therese on the carpet. “I need to get Therese to the hospital, you are going to look after Will, okay?”

“Sure, but what happened?” Paul smiled at the little boy.

“She was clumsy, her ankle is swollen.”

From down on the floor Therese’s voice sounded acerbic: “Thank you for the clumsy, you elephant, now help me to the car.” Richard and the doctor hoisted her up carefully, and she hobbled ungracefully through the door, supported by both men.

“He hasn’t had breakfast! No honey for him!” Her voice carried back to them. Then Paul and his nephew were alone.

William glanced up from the floor, a disbelieving look in his eyes, his lower lip quivering.

“Okay, Will. We are on our own now.” Paul crouched down to the boy, carefully extending his arms, not sure of his welcome. A smile, with teary eyes but still a real one, was his reward. And then he had his arms full of joyfully babbling boy.

They had a good morning. After a huge breakfast ordered from the hotel kitchen, they went out again, through the small park to the lake. The ducks were already waiting and William fed them with the same enthusiasm as the day before. They finally discovered a small playground with a swing set and a small hand carousel. By the time they returned to the hotel-apartment, William was tired, and after a short lunch he went for a nap in no time.

Paul took his book out of his bag and got comfortable on the couch. But he knew the story already, and watching a toddler had been more work than he had imagined. Soon his eyelids dropped and light snores escaped him.

This was what Richard found when he entered his hotel-apartment. On the couch in the sitting room lay the epitome of male beauty, asleep, hair tousled, mouth slightly open, a book on his chest, one hand hanging to the floor. The only hitch in the perfect picture was the sound.

“Chrrr... pffffff... chrrrr... pffff...”

Richard suppressed a grin. Paul was adorable. But he shouldn't think that, he shouldn't think of his brother-in-law this way. He didn't even know if the young man was queer. A pretty boy like him must have a girl waiting for him. There was this air of innocence around him, maybe he never had met a girl? Maybe he...

Seriously, Richard tried to hold his thoughts in check, but that open mouth, those lips, they were so tempting. It didn't help that Paul was what you would call his “type”. He still remembered very fondly Tim, his first hooker. That boy had been beautiful, with white skin and auburn hair.

Richard had picked him up on a business trip to Chicago. The director of the Chicago branch, Artie MacBright, had thought it a good idea to entertain

him with a spree through the seedier parts of the city and there, on a wall close to a bar, this pretty boy had been waiting next to others. “Hookers,” MacBright had called them and had directed their car to another bar. Later that night Richard had come back, and had taken the too-slim young man to a hotel room. It had been his first time, but Tim had been a good teacher. At the end of the night he had learned a lot, and gave Tim a job in his company. Nothing special, office help, but enough to keep him off the streets.

They met every time Richard came to Chicago, and he visited that branch more than the others—for not so obvious reasons. He had broken off this connection when he married Beth. It wasn’t in him to cheat. Tim had wished him luck. These days he was one of his most trusted employees in Chicago.

Now he looked at a prettier, manlier, and innocent version of the male beauty that was unique to men with auburn hair and fair skin. “The Snoring Beauty,” he could call him.

Richard tiptoed around and peeked into William’s room. The boy was sound asleep, too.

“I wonder what you two did this morning to be so out to the world?” He shook his head.

Obviously Paul was a light sleeper because those muttered words penetrated into his consciousness and he opened his eyes: “Oh, hey.”

“Hey yourself. How was your morning?”

Paul grinned. “My, he is a handful. We had fun at the park. He wore me out.”

These words tingled in Richard; he wanted to wear out Paul but in a much better way. But he smiled back. “I know he can be a real whirlwind. I think it’s his mother’s heritage. I was a brave and quiet kid.”

“Yeah, I sooo believe that.” Paul stood up from the couch and rubbed his hair, ruffled it a bit more than it had been. “How’s Therese?”

“Ankle is sprained. They’ll keep her for one night so that they can have a look at her. Her blood pressure was a bit too low. And they also want to change the dressing tomorrow when the swelling is down.”

“Good that nothing’s been broken.”

“She’s been lucky and we’ve been lucky. That would have annoyed her big time and an annoyed Therese isn’t funny.”

“I can imagine. What are we going to do now?”

Richard hesitated, but he had to get this out anyway, and what use was there in stalling? “I asked for another room so that you could sleep in the one next to Will. I’m useless at night, I don’t wake up. And I thought Therese could take mine and I’d get another one. But.” He paused and Paul could sense that he was uncomfortable. “The hotel is booked up. So either I go to another hotel or I could sleep here on the couch, or...”

“Don’t use the couch. Seriously, I feel like sixty and I have only taken a nap on it. Isn’t there another bed in the room?”

“Well, the one I’m using now has two beds, but it’s going to be Therese’s room and I can’t sleep in the same room with her. And the one for you has only one bed, a king-size.”

Paul’s eyes widened a bit and slight flush crept into his cheeks. But he looked levelly at Richard and asked, “And that is a problem for you?”

“No, no, of course not. I was thinking of you. We...” He searched for words, “we don’t know each other that well so far, and I didn’t want to impose on you.”

“You won’t. So it’s okay. I promise not to snore.” Paul looked relieved and a bit anxious at the same time.

“You do, you know. Snore, I mean.”

“No, I don’t.” Indignation, your name was Paul.

“And what do you call that sound ‘*chrrr... pffffff... chrrrr... pffff...*’, hm?”

The couch cushion that hit him was soft enough to not do any damage.

“Maybe you should take the couch after all.”

“Oh no, you are not taking back your offer. I’m going to sleep with you in your bed.” The moment the words left his mouth, Richard paled. Not that this wasn’t exactly what he wanted, but you just couldn’t say that to another man, especially not one you had met just the day before. Or your freaking-fucking-brother-in-law.

Paul’s blue eyes were wide and open, his face flushed and his lips a promise of sinful desire. Then he lowered his lashes and the blush deepened.

“I’m sorry, shit, that came out totally wrong.” Richard hurried to apologize. “I didn’t mean it the way it sounded, I’m sorry.” Oh god, he had meant it exactly the way he had said it.

“It’s okay,” Paul mumbled.

“You will stay? I didn’t screw that up?”

“Of course. I love William and you need help. You didn’t do anything wrong. You just said something in a very weird way, okay?”

“I know. And as I’ve said, I’m sorry.” Richard took a step closer to Paul. “You trust me enough to sleep in the same room with me?”

“Hey, you were married to my sister. I don’t think I have anything to worry about with you.”

Richard didn’t comment on that, how could he? It would have been so wrong. He was falling hard head over heels for the young man in front of him. Instead he picked up the book on the floor.

“*The Two Towers*? You are a Tolkien reader, too?”

“Yes, I love the books. It’s the third time I’ve read them. I can’t wait till the last one is published. You know them?”

“Sure, who is your favorite? Arwen? Galadriel? Eowyn?”

Paul laughed: “Do I have to pick a woman? I’m thinking more of hero worshipping. Of course Aragorn is my hero. But I have to admit, Faramir is pretty good, too.”

“I love the elf, Legolas, how he handles Gimli. They are so different and yet so close.”

“Which is your favorite Hobbit?”

“That’s easy, it’s Pippin. He is the most light-hearted person in the books. I love his brave innocence. And yours?”

“Hm, I like them all. Each one represents values, like bravery, loyalty, knowledge and intelligence.

Richard had never thought of that but Paul was right, the Hobbits were created to be similar on some traits but to have individual fortes, too. He sat down next to Paul, and for the next half an hour they talked about the books.

When William woke up, they decided that the afternoon’s entertainment would be a short walk into the core of the town to shop for a new toy for William. Most of his toys had been left in America, and the boy had grown tired of the ones they brought with them. Richard also wanted to see if the realtor he had contacted the day before had come up with suggestions. The sooner they got their own house, the better.

Paul had enjoyed the day; it had been one of the best days of his life. Will was a vivid and funny kid, full of joy and laughter, quirky, and sometimes like quicksilver. Being in Richard’s company had been exhilarating and nerve wracking, in a good way. He was so smitten by the man, it was embarrassing. Hopefully Richard hadn’t noticed the lovesick expression he knew had been plastered all over his face the whole afternoon.

Now here, in the bathroom of the hotel suite, he looked at his reflection in the mirror and saw the constant blush that had bloomed again during their last hour of talking. William had been sleeping in his little bed; he and Richard had looked at pictures of possible houses and had made a list of their favorites. They had sat close together, considering one suggestion after the other and discussing it. Paul had been able to feel Richard’s body warmth, the heat seeping into his own side. More than once they had brushed legs or shoulders accidentally and every damn single time his body had tingled. And now he was

supposed to sleep in the same bed. While Richard had showered, he had unpacked his suitcase, then showered himself and changed into his pajamas in the bathroom, even gone so far to wear briefs under them, just in case. It would be awkward for him if Richard saw what effect he had on him. A knock on the door startled him out of his musings.

“Paul? You okay in there? Can I come in? I’ve forgotten to brush my teeth.”

“Sure. I’m done.”

The door opened and Richard entered, already dressed for bed in grey silk pajamas, which accentuated his eyes even more. The urge to reach out and touch the fabric, listen and feel how it would slip over the hairy chest, was strong. Thank god for the tight briefs under his pants, his cock made it perfectly clear he was interested.

“I assume you’ll take the side next to William’s room,” Richard said. “It won’t make much sense if you have to climb all over me if he cries at night.”

Climb all over him? Paul wanted to do exactly that, and not in the way the other man had meant it. It didn’t matter that he hadn’t done this so far. His experiences could be counted on three fingers, and one of them had been a hand job he had paid for in a dark alley in Frankfurt. The other two sexual moments in his life had been a kiss from a fellow student, and watching another student jerk off in the shower after sports. In theory, he knew what they could do with each other, in practice he was as clueless as a newborn kitten.

“Fine with me.” He turned away from the mirror and Richard’s reflection and strolled to the door, singing in a high girly voice: “I’ll be in bed if you need me, honey.”

“Smartass.” Richard tried to hit him with a towel but missed.

“Tsk, tsk, that is not gentlemen-like.”

“Leave, I need a moment. I’ll be in bed soon.” Richard grinned and made his voice so very sultry. “Honey.”

Paul couldn't suppress the shiver that ran down his spine. At this moment he wanted nothing more than to be that "honey" for Richard. He would be an emotional mess if they continued this way. For him, it felt like they were flirting, but what did he know?

Richard watched the young man leave, his eyes firmly planted on the cute ass in the modest black and blue striped pajamas. He contemplated if a cold shower was necessary but decided against it. Paul would wonder why he'd taken a second shower. He turned to the sink, and splashed cold water onto his face while wondering what he was doing. With a heavy sigh, he took his toothbrush and decided that sticking to the mechanics of going to bed and not thinking about the sexy man next to him would serve best.

A few minutes later he slipped under the covers, carefully avoiding looking at Paul, who had his nose buried in *The Two Towers* again.

"You want to read for a while?" Richard was very aware of his neighbor, his body, the sounds he created while turning a page, rustling the fabric.

"No, actually, I'm beat. I just waited for you." Paul laid his book on the nightstand and switched off the lights. A sliver of moonlight came through the open windows. They hadn't pulled the drapes completely because they both wanted the fresh night air to come in. Still, the bed was in the dark. Richard turned his body to look in Paul's direction. He could see the silhouette of his head.

"Do you miss her?" Paul's voice sounded different in the dark.

Richard took a moment to think his answer over. Should he go with the expected answer or should he be honest? Paul deserved honesty. "Yes and no."

"Why?" The curiosity was obvious. "Didn't you love her?"

Oh god, that was the question, wasn't it? The question he had asked himself often enough during their marriage, the question he wanted to avoid answering now. But he wanted to be true, to be honest with Paul. "I did, but not like she should have been loved. I think I," he paused, contemplating how to word it right, "loved her more like a sister."

“A sister? You don’t marry your sister!”

“I know. It was... difficult. I thought we had it, I really thought so. She was different from any other woman my parents had shoved into my face since I reached the right age for marriage. She was funny, snarky, intelligent, larger than life. Everybody paled in comparison to her. You knew her, you know that.”

“Yes, yes, I do. It was my luck. She made it possible for me to be me because people tended to forget I existed when she was around. It was comfortable to be invisible in comparison her.”

Richard had to smile. This was so Paul’s way of looking at it. Every other sibling would have been jealous, but not Paul; he had loved the freedom she had given him. “I felt attracted to her; I thought she could be the one. I hoped she would be the one. We married in a hurry, I know. It was the wrong decision, but she seemed so happy about it, she wanted it fast. I realized very soon, shortly after she got pregnant, that it wouldn’t work,” he paused again; it was harder than he had imagined, “that I couldn’t love her like she deserved to be loved.”

Richard heard the rustle of the bedcovers, and Paul’s silhouette turned to him. “Why couldn’t you?” There was no anger in his voice, only curiosity.

“I can’t explain, I just couldn’t.” He had no way to tell Paul that he now knew no woman would ever be right for him. “I will regret this for the rest of my life because she was a wonderful woman. The day she died,” god, this was harder than he imagined and he had to swallow hard to get rid of the lump in his throat, “I was in my office, working out how to ask her for a divorce, listing what I would give her to make her life comfortable. She deserved to live a better life than she had with me, one where she was free of a useless husband. Then I got the call.” Richard knew that Paul could hear the tears in his voice. It didn’t matter. “You know, I really loved her, just not the way she wanted.”

Paul switched on the light. It blinded Richard for a short moment, and then he saw the other man slip out of the bed, go over to his clothes and take a slip

of paper out of his jacket. He turned around, a thoughtful expression on his face. "Here, I think you need to read this." And he handed Richard the folded piece of paper.

Richard took it and opened it. The handwriting shocked him, it was Beth's. It was strange to see German words written by her, all her notes or messages to him had been written in English despite the fact that he was fluent in her language. It looked familiar and foreign at the same time.

Dear little Brother,

I'm a mother now. Funny? I think so because I still don't feel like one. I assume I have no motherly bone in me. Don't get me wrong, I love little Willy (don't tell anybody I call him so), he is very sweet. But I find all the tasks that are required to keep him happy just boring. Seriously, how interesting can it be to hold a bottle for a quarter of an hour and just look at a drinking baby, even if it's mine?

Richard is overjoyed, and like the perfect husband he is, he has already organized for a nanny. He finds said bottle holding interesting, the same with watching the baby sleep. But enough of that.

Paul, I need your advice. No, the sky is still not falling down on the earth, I need it anyway and you can feel proud that I ask you.

I made a mistake by marrying Richard. No, it's not him, he is the picture perfect husband, he is very attentive, always trying to fulfill all my wishes (he even bought me the convertible I asked him for). You have seen how good-looking he is in our wedding picture and despite my enormous efforts to waste money, we are still rich.

I don't love him. So, I finally said it to someone. He is a nice guy and I like him like a brother. Not as much as you of course, little one. But I married him for the wrong reasons. I was

panicking, unsure what to do. I couldn't live with Anne and her parents forever and where would I go from there? I needed to find either employment (and can you imagine that for me?) or a husband. And there he was, like the prince for Cinderella. He asked and I said yes, hoping that love would come with time.

Since then I have learned a lot about myself and Richard. Love doesn't come if you wish for it. I'm in love with being the wealthy wife but not with my husband. The fact that I don't miss his company whenever we are apart should be proof enough. But that's not the main problem. It is the fact that all the time and wealth and attention from my husband can't keep my restlessness at bay. I want to run, I want to scream, I want to feel free! I think I finally have realized that in my heart I'm a gipsy, I don't want to be trapped down by anything. It's bothering me. I don't know what to do now. Shall I explain all this to Richard and hope he will accept this, too? He already has accepted so much, my constant wish for entertainment, my wish after I got pregnant to not be "bothered" with anything physical (don't blush little brother, I know you know how babies are made) and so much more.

Not that I think that this upset him much, I can't get rid of the suspicion that Richard and you have more in common than being bound to me. If it is so, I wish he would find someone. I hate the thought that he tries to be faithful to me while my heart and soul are screaming for freedom.

I'm a mess. Paul, you are the one with the sense. Write to me.

Your dear loving older sister (even if it's only for a few minutes)

Lisa

Richard stared at the letter. It was dated two days before her accident. He looked up and right into Paul's intense stare. "Oh my god."

Paul tentatively reached out and touched his arm. “It is okay, she understood you. She didn’t blame you, you get it?”

“Yes.” Richard shook his head, still a bit dazed from the revelations of this letter. “I think I understand, at least partially.”

“Good, I wasn’t sure if I should show you the letter but now—I think you needed to know that it was her, too. I don’t want you to feel guilty and neither would she.”

“No, she was not one to harbor grudges.” A small smile crossed over his face.

Paul grinned back. “Yeah, she couldn’t care less.”

“Thank you for showing me that letter. It helps a lot to know that she wasn’t in love with me.” Richard threw Paul a curious side-glance. “Can I ask you a question?”

“Sure, you are already doing it anyway.”

But Richard sensed a hesitation in the answer. He asked anyway, “What did Beth mean with us having something in common?”

Paul’s heart dropped. This was the question he had been afraid of. He wasn’t sure if he had drawn the right conclusion, and if he admitted to being queer and he was wrong and Richard wasn’t queer, too? That would mean the end to his time with William and Richard. He couldn’t flat out say it. But what if Richard was like him, too?

“I assume she meant that,” he swallowed hard, “I have no interest in women.” There, that could mean anything, for example, he was just a geek and more interested in his work. Paul closed his eyes and waited, afraid to face reality.

Warm fingers touched his cheek carefully, and Richard whispered, “Me neither.”

Relief flooded Paul and without thinking, he turned his head and kissed the hand on his face. The gasp he heard made him open his eyes immediately. Richard stared at him with a hungry intensity that burned. The desire he saw

made Paul bold, and he licked the palm, carefully wiping his tongue along the lines, dipping between the fingers. He could hear Richard's harsh breaths and feel the hand tremble under his ministrations. It tasted salty. An urgency built up in his belly, a wish to be closer to Richard, and he could feel his cock harden. It took him less than a second to decide what he wanted to do next, and he voiced it before he took Richard's middle finger into his mouth and sucked on it. "I want you to fuck me."

Richard's body was definitely very interested in this idea. His erection strained against his pajama pants, eagerly hoping for body contact. His brain struggled between *Oh, yes, please, finally* and *This is my brother-in-law*, but the *Yes, please* part quieted it immediately with *no bloody blood relative, shut up*. So he leaned in, breathed the lightest of all kisses on Paul's lips and asked, "You have done that before?"

"No, I have no idea what I'm doing." Paul lay back in the middle of the bed, insecure and with bright red spots on his cheeks.

"Me neither." Richard moved closer, touched the face in its pale and red glory, the blue eyes shining unnaturally.

"But you have done that before."

"Yes, but that doesn't mean I've done this with someone who matters to me."

"I matter?" How could Paul still be so insecure?

"You do." And with that conviction, Richard took the other's face in his hands and kissed him. Oh, the lips tasted good and they felt like heaven or something similar.

The hands on his face made Paul want to melt, to crawl closer. The touch was warm, the skin an unfamiliar caress. The lips on his were so indescribably new, different and the most personal touch he had felt in years. And he wanted more. The tongue, people used their tongue to kiss. He opened his mouth. The sensation of Richard's tongue sweeping over his was more than good. The taste, the texture, everything made Paul crave more. His arms sneaked on their own around Richards body, bringing them close together. Contact, physical

contact, a warm and hard body pressed against his own. And a hard-on! The blood pounded in his head and in his groin.

Richard felt the young man melt into him, all that beautiful fresh body. He pressed them close together, devouring the open and eager mouth. This was different, so different from the male whores he had bought to satisfy an urge. This was how it should be. His hands started to roam along Paul's back, pressing against the fabric of the pajama-top. He wanted more, he wanted skin. The hot, light skin he had seen before, with the few freckles on the back and shoulders. "Your top, can I take off your top?" His question was husky, murmured against the open mouth. His breath ghosted over Paul's lips.

"Hmmm," it was difficult to answer, "yes." Paul wasn't sure he was still functional; his brain definitely had handed in its notice. The hands on the hem of his top weren't helping, either. Then the fabric was gone and after a short moment of disorientation because Richard, too, was missing, the man was back, shirtless himself. Freaking fantastic, coarse chest hair scraped over his skin, tingling and tickling, causing new sensations. He couldn't suppress the loud moan, only dampen it by burying his face in the crook of Richard's neck. But there was skin, directly under his mouth and it smelled so good. Paul licked and tasted salt and man. The whole package drove him crazy. The hands on his back, stroking slowly and torturously, now and then dipping under his waistband and tantalizing his butt. The male chest pressed against his own, the hair stimulating his nipples and the neck under his mouth, the neck that tasted so unbelievably good. And the best of it was the slow and rhythmic pressure on his cock. Should he warn Richard?

"Richard," another moan escaped, "I'm going to... oh god, oh, stop... stop, oh..." The sound he made was not very flattering, probably like an ape in the zoo, but it didn't matter. Shocks went through his body, cramps tightened his abs and his back like electricity as his orgasm pulsed through him.

Richard felt him shudder in his arms. He had made him come. It was a powerful feeling, strange but so potent. Just from that touch and the kissing, the rubbing and holding. Richard knew what he wanted to do now. He wanted

to see what he had caused. “Undress,” he huffed, “quick, undress, I need to see you.”

Paul tilted his head back from his comfortable place at Richard’s neck, and looked at him with dazed eyes. “What?” It seemed that the orgasm had killed his last brain cells.

With a little insecure laughter, Richard kissed him lightly on the lips: “I need to see you.” He tore down Paul’s sleeping pants and there, right in front of him, he saw the white boxer shorts with a large wet patch. Paul’s penis was still half hard. It was an impressive sight; he had been gifted by the gods. Carefully Richard pulled the boxers down. Directly under the tip of the cock was a little puddle of glistening semen, little drops still gliding out of the hole at the tip. Richard bent down and licked them away. The taste was strange and unfamiliar. This was new to him, too. But the way Paul jerked under him made him feel like the most powerful man in the world.

“What are you doing?” Paul thought his brain had been fried out already but that was torture in the most enjoyable way. His half hard cock tried to come back to life, stretching to welcome the caress. It was an overwhelming sensation and he wasn’t so sure anymore that he was already done. “Oh god, if you keep that up, I’ll be up again sooner rather than later.”

“That’s the idea,” came from his groin.

“What about you? Don’t you want to...?”

Richard chuckled and continued his ministrations. “What do you want me to do?”

Paul closed his eyes and tried to get his brain sorted out but all he could feel was the persistent tongue on his cock. And the wish to know it all. It was, as cliché as it sounded, now or never. “I want it all.”

Richard’s head jerked up. “All? Are you sure?”

“Yes” The admission was breathless.

“Don’t you,” Richard wasn’t really sure if he wanted to ask, if he should ask, “want to wait? We know each other for less than two days. You’re young.”

“And? Richard, I’m twenty-four, I’m in bed with the man I think I’m falling in love with, so far it feels incredible, and now tell me again why I should wait?”

“Love?”

Oh, shit, had he said that? “Eh, yes?” His voice sounded insecure, a bit like a little lost kid.

Richard scrambled up towards Paul’s face, a very tender smile curving his lips. “That’s great, because I’ve fallen head over heels for you, too.”

“Really?”

“Hm, really, from the very first moment. You stole my heart the second you came into the room.” He winked.

“Now you’re getting cheesy, you know that?”

“Oh yes, but what is a bit cheesy in the face of true love.”

“Continue and I won’t believe you. I’ll think these are your pick-up lines.” And with a mischievous smile Paul added: “And then I can’t let you fuck me.”

That stopped Richard; he knew it was just a tease but holy hell, he wanted to bury himself in Paul. He licked a nipple and murmured, “My lips are sealed.”

“Well, hopefully not so tight that my cock wouldn’t fit in.”

A little sharp bite to his nipple made Paul gasp.

Richard growled: “Well, let’s test that.” And he opened his mouth and sucked the big dick into his mouth. The skin was very soft and the flesh still malleable under his tongue, the taste strong and a bit bitter. Richard pressed it against the roof of his mouth and started to lick and press and suck. The moan he got in response was an obvious sign Paul enjoyed it, and the hardening flesh another. Soon enough the whole deal no longer fit into his mouth.

He tried to breathe between those slow thrusts, sometimes it worked, sometimes he just got suffocated. He didn't mind, all his concentration was focused on the slow movement in his mouth, the smell of aroused male, the trembling of Paul's legs under his hands, and the sounds. Oh god, the sounds. His own hard-on was aching between his legs but he just couldn't take care of it. The whimpers and groans got louder and the thrashing wilder. The man at his mercy was nearing another orgasm, Richard could feel and taste it, the pre-cum changed in flavor.

"Richard!" Paul knew his voice was shaking, that he was close to begging. "Now, please." The mouth on his cock disappeared; cool air hit the hot wet flesh. Then he heard the tin box with the Vaseline, which sat on the nightstand, be opened. The next moment a slippery finger probed his ass. The sensation, the utter and sheer knowledge of what would happen, made Paul shiver in anticipation. He tried to catch more, get more contact but Richard was careful and cautious. "Oh, come on, come on."

"Shhhh, don't hurry." Richard kissed the tip of his dick, licked with a broad and flat tongue along the most sensitive spot at the underside, exactly where his foreskin was. A finger slipped into him without effort. It didn't hurt, on the contrary—it felt damn good.

The hot mouth sucking him, one hand flat and stable on his stomach, the other working his ass—Paul felt already taken. He writhed under the assault to his senses. Two slippery fingers breached his hole, slowly entering his body, searching inside of him for the spot that would send jolts of pure sexual lust through him. He was going to combust from the sheer intensity sooner rather than later. Richard added another finger and Paul felt the sting for the first time. "Ow, this..." he couldn't breathe, "...hurts a... bit."

"Relax, it's getting better. Promise. Push a bit like you're taking a dump, okay?"

"You're talking shit now?" Paul tried not to laugh but, oh, so good, it suddenly became so much better when he laughed. Then Richard curled his fingers up again and Paul didn't speak anymore.

This was way beyond his imagination. And this was the man he had admired and wanted from the moment he had met him, oh shit, from the moment he had seen him in the photographs. Paul did the only possible thing; he opened himself up, body and soul, to be taken by Richard.

Richard noticed the subtle shift in Paul. He had turned from hot and sexy virgin to pliant debauched sex god, waiting to be devoured and possessed. And Richard was going to be the one to take him, take him and never let him go. Hot and greedy emotion welled up in him. This young man was his and he would take care of him, sexually, and from now on in every part of his life.

With a swift movement he positioned himself between Paul's legs, opened them up with one hand and slicked his own cock with the Vaseline. He positioned the tip against the ring of muscle, feeling the tightness, the warm and slippery circle engulfing him. Slowly he pressed further; the pressure gave way to more warm and slick heat. The whole time Richard was watching Paul, searching for any signs of discomfort but the man in front of him looked completely in tune with what they were doing. A small smile, dreamy eyes, short and excited gasps accompanied by little whimpers and moans bode well.

All he could feel was the hot heat around his cock, the incredible pressure that made him want to explode right at the moment and he wasn't even fully sheathed. Richard wasn't sure he could stand what was coming at him. It was too much, too much emotion, too many sensations. He pressed a bit more.

"Wait... ohh, oh my god, just a moment..." Paul's mouth was lax; the eyes focused inwards, the words falling accidentally like little drops of rain. "This is... shit, oh fuck, this is... goooood, oh, god, more... please... do something."

Richard released the breath he'd been holding. That sounded perfect; he was so willing to do something. Slowly he moved his own body, feeling the tight ring of muscle pressing him. Paul's ass was warm and slick, it felt perfect. The hitch in Paul's breath told him that he rubbed his cock over the right spot. With deliberate moves he did it again and again. The moans and whimpers that filled the room added to his excitement. Richard's eyes stung, it was so perfect. He was in love with Paul.

Paul's world had found its center. It was his groin. The fullness of his ass was only rivaled by the bursting pressure in his balls. The slow torture on his prostate made him crazy. His only wish was that this would continue for the rest of his life. But he knew he wouldn't last much longer. He felt the tingling in his balls. Another hit on his sensitive spot and with a loud scream he came. Cum erupted from his cock and sputtered all over his skin. His whole body contracted again and again and again.

He heard Richard's hoarse groan, felt the man's penis grow a bit more and twitch inside his ass. The hands holding him cramped, then after a few more jerks Richard released him again.

"Oh my god." Richard leaned closer to kiss him. "That was awesome."

Paul's body went limp, utterly spent. Only the connection to Richard above him anchored him, kept him in the real world. He closed his eyes and felt the hotness of one single tear in the corner. Damn, that had been a revelation.

Richard nuzzled the crook of Paul's neck, searching for closeness, warmth and the very special taste of his skin, salty and sweaty. This had been nothing like any encounter he had had before. This had been so much more, an eye-opener, a life changing moment. Was he cheesy? And what if? For him it had felt like coming home, finally finding the place he belonged. That hadn't been only sex, no way. He shuddered and pressed Paul's body even closer to him.

"Hey," Paul tried to get some air, "I need to breathe." Richard was lying heavily on him; Paul could feel the spent dick slipping slowly out of his hole. Wetness followed, and the strange feeling of losing something precious. But Richard was heavy and nearly suffocated him, holding him in a very tight embrace. And he was still struggling with the emotional impact. Had this been so very intense because it had been his first "real sex"? He thought not. This had been special because Richard was already special to him. God, yes, he had known him now for less than two days but he felt more comfortable, happy and just real and right around him than around anybody else in his life, even Lisa.

“Richard?” The man above him finally slipped to his side, keeping his body still as close as possible, not lifting his head. “What’s wrong?” Was it time to get worried? Did he do something wrong, Paul wondered, he had thought this had been unbelievably good but he was the inexperienced one. Kisses on his neck reassured him. If Richard was still kissing him, it couldn’t be bad, true?

“Nothing’s wrong,” Richard mumbled into Paul’s skin, “I’m just kind of emotional.”

“Hm, me, too. It’s scary, isn’t it? I mean, we met yesterday morning and now we...” Paul wasn’t sure how to continue. He wanted to say “we are a couple” and he wasn’t sure if that was really true.

But Richard hoisted himself up on his elbows and pinned his grey eyes on Paul: “And now we are what? Do you have second thoughts? Because Paul, I’m not sure if I’ve made this clear enough. I want you to move in with us, live with us and be my man. Forever. Don’t you want that, too?”

Weren’t these the most important words in Paul’s life? He thought he would explode from joy. “Yes,” kisses scattered over Richard’s face and every piece of skin he could reach, “yes, yes, of course I want that, too.” He pressed his eyes closed, bit on his lower lip and grinned: “I think I’m going to burst.”

Richard’s smile was huge: “Please, don’t. I have no idea how I would explain the mess to the maid.” The fist that bumped his arm was not so subtle.

“You are a spoilsport.”

“I’m not, I’m a responsible grown up.”

Paul’s eyes swept lower: “Oh I can see that, especially the grown part.”

“You’re going to complain?”

“No, but I’m going to wonder if I am moving in with a sex fiend.”

Richard laughed and kissed him, slow and languid kisses that made Paul’s toes curl and his dick very interested. Still, he put his hand on Richard’s chest: “Do you think it’s going to work? And how are we going to do this?”

Richard paused with his kisses: “Yes, it’ll work because we both want it. And we are going to do this very carefully. I think we won’t tell anybody, only Therese. She’ll be okay with it. But for the rest of the world I’ll be the widower who has lost the love of his life. And you are her brother. People will think that I took you in because of her, because I loved her so much that I don’t want to lose the connection to her twin brother. And for you my love, we’ll find another story.”

Paul scowled; he wasn’t happy but he already saw the benefits. “What kind of story?”

“Maybe a lost love, someone killed in the war. Something like, you always were in love with some girl who died during a bombing? People don’t ask names when you hint a sad story.”

“That could work, you are right. But what about William?”

Richard thought for a moment: “Maybe we should wait until he is old enough to understand and not accidentally going to blurt out that Dad and Uncle Paul are kissing.”

“This will require some restraint. But I agree. It’s dangerous to be queer.”

“I think,” Richard paused for effect, “I want a house with two bedrooms next to each other and a door between them. Of course,” his voice got formal, “the door will be closed.” His eyes sparkled.

“Sure. And I’m going to make you knock in a secret code.”

Richard laughed and lunged at Paul, tickling and cuddling him at the same time.

“Mercy, mercy!” Paul gasped for air from the assault. “I give, you’ll get a key.”

“Damn sure. And now,” all motion stopped, Richard brought his face so close, so close that Paul could feel his breath tingling over his lips, “kiss me.”

And he kissed him, with all the love, all the joy and all the hope he had in his heart.

Summer 2012

Paul took his book from the garden table. It opened at the bookmark, a laminated picture of him and Richard, taken in 1955 during their first weeks at their new home. Therese had captured it with his camera. Neither he nor Richard had noticed her do it, so it had been a surprise when he had developed the film. Their daughter-in-law, Kessy, had seen the pic a few years ago and had laminated copies made for him as a surprise present. She even had hung a huge copy in her own hallway. She was a good girl, a great mother to all their grandkids and a good wife to Will. And a mouthy little piece, oh yes.

The pic had been the first one of them together and showed them in the garden, enjoying the sun. It had been the afternoon of his first day of teaching after the summer holidays. He had been spent and tired. He was snuggling close to Richard, his eyes closed, a satisfied smile on his lips. Richard was looking at him with the most tender and loving expression. It still made his heart ache, he missed him so much. The last year alone had been nothing but empty. Oh yes, he was loving his family and his grandkids were his pride and joy, all five of them. But it wasn't the same without Richard. Thank god he had lived that long. Getting to ninety-four and then just passing away in his sleep was a blessing beyond words. Although it now meant that he had to drag his sorry eighty-one-year-old ass a bit longer, and one day they would be together again. Until then, he'd be the grumpy old man.

Voices drifted to his hiding place on the patio and Paul recognized Carson's deep bass immediately. The sound still startled him every time he heard it; it sounded so much like Richard. Their youngest grandson was the spitting image of his granddad Richard, voice and face, body and movement. It gave Paul a jolt of longing every time. Another voice he didn't recognize discussed something in a hushed tone with him. So, Carson was bringing a visitor? The two came around the corner, his handsome grandson, so tall and manly at the age of twenty, and a slightly smaller built man, blond bangs over one eye. Paul knew the look Carson gave his friend, oh, yes, he knew that one. This was going to be interesting.

“Opaul? Hey.” He got a hug from Carson, a handshake from—what was his name again? The young man had been here once or twice before. Eric, yes, that was the name.

“Hello boys. Take a seat.”

Both sat down opposite to him, a funny expression on their faces. Paul played innocent even though he had a good idea what was going on: “What’s wrong?”

Carson smiled, looked sideways to his companion and took a deep breath: “Maybe you have already guessed it, maybe even before I knew...” He made a pause as if not sure how to continue.

Should he give him time or help him, Paul wondered. He decided that time was overrated, grabbed his book from the table and opened it. The picture was there and he handed it to Carson, who took it and glanced with a questioning look back at Paul. “Opaul?”

Good, he loved this name, Opa and Paul combined. It never had mattered that formally these kids were his grandnephews and nieces. William was the son of his heart, and so William’s children were his grandkids.

“Carson. Take a look at Granddad’s face. What do you see?”

The boy was puzzled, not knowing where this would lead, and it showed. “I know the picture; you know that mom has a copy hanging in the hallway. It’s you and Granddad.”

He handed the pic to Eric, who studied it as if he hadn’t seen it before. Then Eric looked up and beamed at Paul.

“I think Carson, you can save your breath. Your Opaul already knows everything.” His smile was wide.

“What? Why? I mean, I haven’t even...” Carson was flustered.

Eric leaned forward and kissed Carson on the lips, ignoring his shocked expression: “Look, I see love on your Granddad’s face.”

Paul chipped in: “And I saw the same expression on your face just a moment ago when you looked at Eric.”

“Oh shit, you mean I was nervous for nothing?”

Paul couldn't suppress a grin: “Carson, you have known your whole life that Granddad and I were a couple. Do you really think that there is anything about being gay that you should feel nervous about? I knew it all the time. And I know you are in love and Eric is the one for you.”

“He is. I love him. I just didn't know, I mean, it took me some time to realize that I'm gay, too.”

It was moving, the look they gave each other. Paul felt a little twitch in his heart and he wished for the hundredth time this day that Richard was still alive and could see those two together.

“Well, there's nothing wrong with being in love.” He missed Richard so much. “And it really doesn't matter if it's a boy or a girl, as long as it is the right person. Respect what you have and never treat it as a matter of course.”

“Thanks Opaul. I know.” Carson leaned towards Paul, resting his forehead on his bony shoulder.

The kiss he gave the unruly hair felt comfortable, familiar and yet not. It wasn't Richard, it was Carson and he should go and be young, not sitting with his old opa.

“Go now boys, I need my nap. This old man isn't as fit as he used to be.”

Both young men stood up immediately, said their good-byes and left.

Paul picked up his book with the laminated picture and made his way back to the house. A nap sounded really good. Sleep was the only time these days when he could see his love again; in dreams Richard was there and Paul would touch him, feel him, smell and taste him. Maybe one day he just would sleep forever and be reunited with his love.

Until then... a nap was his new love life.

THE END

Author Bio

Sunne Manello fell in love with m/m a few years ago while listening to Keeping Promise Rock. Since then she hasn't looked back. During her long walks with her beagle, who is the cutest and best dog ever, she writes the most interesting and sexy stories in her head. Unfortunately most of the time they stay just where they are: in her head. Only parts find the way in files that still need to be put together to complete stories.

She is no native speaker but has more and more discussions with her hubby and her teenage sons about the words she uses. The last debate was about the word "intense". She was convinced that it is also a German word. Duh... it is not a German word, they were right.

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