

LOVE Has NO Boundaries



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ARES PURPOSE

H.A. Caine

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Okay, so I have a bit of a temper. So what? It's not like I didn't have a good reason to pick the fight. Besides, he started it. No one degrades my Zarek and thinks he can get away with it. If only Z understood that, too. But I can forgive his faults. It's hard not to when he looks that good naked.

Love Has No Boundaries

An M/M Romance series

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By H.A. Caine

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

This is a drawing rather than a photograph, and not a manga-style cartoon but a more realistic depiction. A muscular, naked dark-haired man lies face down on a bed, his pale butt cheeks contrasting with the rest of his tanned, cut body. Another equally muscular naked man is coming through the doorway next to the bed, carrying a loaded breakfast tray at exactly the right height to hide anything interesting.

Story Letter

Dear Author,

This image really needs a story. It's so intimate. Maybe he is being pampered by his lover. Supporting him through a difficult time. I would really love to read a story about a career, and how that sort of responsibility affects them and their relationship. I think these two are an established couple.

No BDSM or dub con for this please.

Sincerely,

Sarah

Story Info

Genre: contemporary

Tags: sweet no sex, established couple, homophobia, fighting

Word count: 4,460

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The music in the bar was so loud; he almost didn't hear the insult when it came. Fortunately for him, the man standing next to him stumbled and his drink spilled. Unfortunately for the asshole, Stumbling Joe was his boyfriend.

Gripping Zarek's arms, he waited a second until he was sure of his feet and then turned to face Asshole. Ares had been waiting for this jerk to approach them for the last hour.

All night, the idiot had sat in a corner, pointing at them and whispering with his buddies, Dumbass One and Dumbass Two. Evidently, Dumbass One and Two had stroked Asshole's ego enough that he finally felt capable of doing some damage.

Ares smiled.

"What you smiling at, fag? Finally spotted a rainbow you want to skip along?" That was Asshole; his buddies started snickering behind him.

Now, Ares had nothing against rainbows, but he had to wonder, where the hell did the guy get that one from?

Looking in the mirror that ran the length of the bar, he assured himself that no, he was not three feet short in an orange tux with a tall hat on.

He was, in fact, six feet four inches and dressed in leather. And if anyone ever even thought of putting such a stupid hat on him, he'd probably break their arm. Maybe even both.

Okay, so yeah, maybe Ares had anger problems. At least he could admit it. He even apologized for it.

Sometimes.

His smile widened. "You pushed my boyfriend." He kept his volume low, his voice rumbling out the words. Unconsciously, Trio Prick leaned in to hear what he was saying.

Behind him, Zarek sighed, tugging on the sleeve of his jacket. “Ares, no. We promised Phil you’d stay out of trouble tonight.” Phil was the owner of the bar and a longtime friend of theirs. Since the last time they were here, Ares had caused a couple hundred dollars in damage to the bar top and maybe a few stools, not to mention the tables that were broken, Phil had asked him to keep a lid on his temper.

But even Phil wouldn’t expect him to just stand by while people picked on Zarek.

Ares dug in his pocket, pulling out his wallet. Flipping it open, he pulled out a wad of bills and turned to the bar.

The bartender, having sensed the tension building all night, was already on the phone. No doubt calling Phil. His next call would be to the police.

Tossing the money on the counter, Ares turned back to Asshole as he spoke. “Give that to Phil for any damage, would ya?” He could practically feel the eyes rolling behind him.

“That’s not what I meant. Now, come on. They aren’t worth it.” Again, Zarek tugged on his jacket trying to get him to move.

Considering the fact that Zarek was just as big as him, and neither of them wanted for muscles, Ares knew damn well that Zarek wasn’t really trying to move him. He also knew that for his own peace of mind, the man had to at least make a show of attempting to dissuade Ares. While not as bad as Ares, Zarek was no angel, despite what he’d have people believe.

“Yeah, listen to the fairy princess and run along. This bar is for men, not little girls.” Once again Asshole opened his mouth and the Dumb Jock duet giggled.

Seriously, they giggled and yet he was the one being called a little girl?

Looking at the men in front of him, Ares had to figure they were still in school, maybe college. They weren’t small guys, which was most likely the only reason they felt brave enough approaching him and Zarek in the first

place. Maybe they were all dumb jocks? Ah well, didn't matter, he was still going to hit them.

No one made fun of Zarek and got away with it. Just because the man was quiet and wore glasses, idiots like the three standing in front of him always assumed he was an easy target.

Asshole, whom Ares was thinking of promoting to Jackass, leaned forward, pushing Ares back a half step. "What, you deaf? I said get out of here! No gays allowed!"

The hand on Ares' arm tensed. "Ares..."

"Yeah, babe?" He grinned; he already knew what was coming.

"Go for it." With that, Zarek stepped around him, reaching for Dumbass One. When Dumbass Two would have intervened, Ares punched him dead in the face, knocking him to the ground and following him down. He punched him again for good measure and turned, reaching for Jackass as he grabbed for the back of Zarek's shirt and attempted to yank him off of the now unconscious D.O.

Before he could do more than toss the man against the bar, a fist came flying from over his shoulder and Jackass' hands flew to his face as blood started spurting from what Ares figured was a well-deserved broken nose.

"Dammit! I thought you said you were going to behave?"

Grinning at the irate voice behind him, Ares helped Zarek up and turned to face Phil. Opening his mouth to make a comment, he saw Phil's eyes widen and heard Zarek yell his name as something unbelievably hard slammed into his head.

Vaguely, he registered the sensation of sweat sliding down the side of his face as the floor rushed up to meet him and his vision darkened.

Slowly, Ares woke, his head throbbing with a pounding headache. Opening his eyes, he realized the gentle rocking that had woken him was the vibration of the car as Zarek drove.

Groaning, he lifted his head. Quickly reaching out a hand to the dashboard, he steadied himself as dizziness hit and his stomach threatened to revolt.

“Unngh. What the fuck hit me?” he mumbled, cradling his head. Deciding sitting up maybe wasn’t the best idea, he slouched back against the window, but kept his eyes open.

“That would be the business end of a beer bottle.” The quiet answer startled him and he quickly swung his head towards Zarek, without thinking about the stab of pain such a movement would cause.

“Fuck!” Yeah, he wouldn’t be moving that fast for some time. And seriously, a beer bottle? Ares was pretty certain that only happened in movies. At least, he thought it only happened in movies. What kind of punk-ass actually did that? Mentally, he raised his hand. He knew that answer. Punk-ass college boys, who had bigger egos than muscles, did that.

He must have made some kind of sound that showed his incredulity at the fact because Zarek chuckled beside him, before patting him on the thigh reassuringly.

Ignoring the laughter, he lifted a hand and prodded at the spot above his left ear, where the throbbing pain was the worst.

He felt the stickiness of drying blood and grimaced. Sifting through his hair, he flinched when his fingertip made contact with his scalp. Poking around, he determined it wasn’t anything serious but he still needed to wash it.

Some swabs of alcohol and a few butterfly stitches should do, he decided.

“Jeez. I need to lie down. How much longer ’til we get home?” He leaned back against the headrest, turning to face Zarek when the man didn’t respond right away.

Narrowing his eyes, he watched as Z nibbled on his lower lip, the pink flesh shiny with spit in the dim light of the dashboard.

“Zarek.” He dragged the name out, waiting to speak until Zarek sighed and flashed his eyes to Ares before returning them to the road.

“Yeah?” he asked, pretending he didn’t hear Ares question.

Yeah, well two could play this game. “Where are we going?” Ares asked. As if he didn’t already know.

There was no damn way Ares was going to the hospital, damn sure not for some little nick that had already clotted over. Zarek was off his rocker if he thought Ares was just going to sit back and let him take him to the hospital.

Of course, knowing him like he did, Ares was sure that Zarek had probably been hoping that he slept through the ride and didn’t wake until it was too late to back out.

Fortunately for him, that didn’t happen.

He grinned when obvious frustration crossed Zarek’s face and had to fight the urge to fist pump in victory when Zarek sighed in defeat. Of course, he was too cool to fist pump. He settled on just considering himself lucky enough that his man was smart enough to not fight a lost battle.

“I was hoping you didn’t wake until we got there and a doctor helped me convince you to get checked out.” Zarek sighed again and Ares chuckled.

“I know you were. But as it is, you might as well turn around and take us home.” He gestured with his thumb at the back window.

Shockingly, Zarek shook his head and kept to his course.

“Nope. You need to let someone take a look at that wound.” His voice was stern but Ares could easily see stubbornness starting to rise in his body language.

“We both know that’s not going to happen. Besides, the blood clotted. You can take a look at it at home. Isn’t that why you purchased that big-ass first aid kit in the first place? I promise, you turn around and take us home, and for the first time since you bought that stupid thing a year ago, I’ll let you use it on me.” He mentally crossed his fingers, praying that Zarek took the offer. It wasn’t every day that Ares promised to let him play doctor with him, at least not without the promise of a sponge bath, and he could see Zarek thinking about it.

The throb in his head was becoming painful and keeping up the discussion wasn't helping to lessen the pain. Ares knew if he couldn't convince Zarek to drop the matter and deal with it themselves, he would end up agreeing to go to the hospital, if only to get a doctor to give him pain meds that would be stronger than anything he had at home.

He wouldn't mind passing out again, to be honest.

"Look, you can patch me up and put me to bed." He grinned, turning up the puppy dog eyes. "I'll stay put, promise."

He watched as Zarek's eyes flickered back and forth between him and the road before that beautiful, shy smile that Ares first fell for crept across those gorgeous lips and stayed there.

Shaking his head, Z laughed lightly. "Fine, you win. No surprise there." Slowing, Zarek checked the empty road behind them and executed a U-turn, heading back the way they came. "No hospital tonight. I'll take a look at it when we get home." Zarek reached over, skimming his hand over Ares' hair without really touching him.

Unsurprisingly, the touch started as a check to make sure Ares was no longer bleeding and ended up as a caress that trailed down the side of his face, skimming along his left arm before Zarek finally settled his hand over Ares' left knee, giving a gentle squeeze. Ares fought a shiver, placing his hand on Zarek's. He smiled when Z flipped his hand up, twining their fingers together.

They were quiet for a while, enjoying the clear night and simply being near each other. The pain lessened and Ares exhaled a breath, relaxing into his seat and closing his eyes. They'd be home soon and he could lie down, pull Zarek to him and get some much needed rest.

He was just starting to drift when Zarek spoke quietly beside him. "You know, some day you're going to have to explain your aversion to hospitals to me."

Ares didn't reply, simply squeezed Z's hand.

Right, he'd do that when the Devil himself bent over for the fuck of his very long life and invited them for front row seats. With the promise of a YouTube video.

Half an hour later, Ares pushed open the door of their one bedroom apartment, blinking his eyes as the motion sensor light turned on, momentarily blinding him after the almost black of night. Zarek pushed him forward, moving him out of the doorway. Stepping inside, he locked the door and grabbed Ares' hand, wasting no time in dragging him into the bedroom. For a minute, Ares forgot what had happened that night, as an image of Zarek naked, legs spread lewdly and arms open in welcome as he reached for Ares, popped into his head. Ares imagined Zarek's body glowing in the faint moonlight that would seep in from the cracks around the curtains, the faint light washing over his golden skin and creating an ethereal mood.

His mind snapped back to the present as he was shoved onto the bed, Zarek pushing Ares' jacket off his shoulders as he reached behind him with one hand to turn on the bedside lamp.

Seeing him struggle to do both at the same time, Ares took over removing his jacket, easing his shirt off carefully as well when he finished.

Rolling his shoulders, he stretched his arms above his head. Leaning forward, he rested his head against the hard muscles of Zarek's stomach and murmured softly in pleasure when fingers began running through his hair.

His body was so relaxed, Ares found himself a little slow in realizing the fingers were sifting through his hair with a purpose. Again he sighed, this time in resignation.

He was going to have to deal with Zarek's babying before he could make good on any fantasies he wished to play out.

"What are you doing?" Zarek was holding up chunks of his hair and pulling at it randomly. While it didn't hurt, Ares wasn't all that comfortable in his current position either. Maybe if he told Zarek that, it would speed things along, he thought to himself. What the hell—it was worth a shot.

“You’re giving me a hard-on, love. And while I love the feel of your hands in my hair, I’d much prefer them somewhere else.” He ran his hands beneath Zarek’s sweater vest, rubbing his rough palms along the waxed smooth ridges of his abs, wondering how long it would take to have them both strip and get his tongue against that fantastic skin. Maybe he could convince Z to put off the checkup until the morning.

Suddenly, his hands were batted none too gently away, and Zarek was tugging his sweater back into place.

“Or maybe not,” he muttered, frowning up at a glaring Zarek. “What? I didn’t do anything,” he defended himself, laughing inside. An angry Zarek was a sexy Zarek as far as he was concerned.

“What happened to staying put?” Zarek muttered, tilting Ares’ head down.

“I am staying put. You don’t see me trying to get up, do you?” he pointed out helpfully, grinning openly now. “No, you don’t,” he answered before Zarek could make a smart comment back. “And I never promised I wouldn’t try to get you in bed with me.”

“No, god forbid you do that.” Although the words were sarcastic, Ares didn’t have to see Zarek’s face to know that he was grinning; he could hear it clearly in his voice.

“Now, now. You wouldn’t want me to start making promises to you I have absolutely no intention of keeping, would you?” He wrapped his arms around Z’s hips but kept his roaming hands in place.

He’d let Zarek do what he wanted. But all bets were off the second after the man finished.

Just ’cause Dipshit and Dimwits ruined their evening, he wasn’t about to let them ruin their night as well.

Rolling over, he reached across the bed, frowning when his hand fell onto cold sheets. He blinked his eyes open, squinting when the sunlight blinded

him. Waiting for his eyes to adjust, he moved to lean up on his elbow and peered around the room, but Zarek was nowhere in sight.

Mumbling, he flopped onto his back, groaning when his head protested. He glanced at the clock on the wall, his mumbling growing louder when he saw it was a quarter to seven.

“Zarek?” he yelled. His voice was extremely loud in the quiet morning.

He could hear shuffling outside the room door and then it was pushed open, Zarek’s face popping around the corner, smiling.

“Yeah, love?” Zarek shouldered the door open, and Ares was able to see the serving tray the man held. He took in the view, loving the fact that Zarek hadn’t put on any clothes when he got out of bed that morning.

“What’s that?” he asked, thrusting his chin out at the tray.

“I thought I’d bring you breakfast in bed this morning. What do you think?” Zarek blushed, ducking his head so Ares couldn’t see his eyes, as he walked to the bed and set the tray down next to Ares’ arm before sitting cross-legged at his naked hip.

Ares smiled, loving this shy Zarek. He was so beautiful with his face flushed red, his bangs tickling at the top of his full eyebrows and his white teeth nibbling on lips that Ares wanted to bite, as he waited for Ares to say something.

He pushed himself up into a seated position and reached for Zarek, drawing him closer. Dipping his head down, he forced Zarek to meet his gaze and smiled lovingly, brushing a soft kiss against those luscious lips. “I think—” He paused, kissing him again, never mind the morning breath. “—that you are perfect.” Pulling back, he smiled again and turned to the tray, lifting the damp napkin from on top of the plates.

He looked at the plate of eggs, scrambled with feta cheese, just the way Ares liked them. Next to it was a dish with a mix of bacon and breakfast links, as well as a bowl of diced fruit. Zarek had also toasted some bread, slathering

it with enough butter that it was beginning to sag in the middle. He had placed a mug of black coffee and a cup of orange juice on the tray, too.

Ares grinned, turning back to an expectant Zarek.

“It looks great. Smells wonderful, too.” When Zarek beamed with happiness, Ares leaned in and captured his mouth with his own, loving how happy his man got over the simplest things. That was one of the qualities he loved most about Zarek. He took joy in the little things in life and appreciated what most people took for granted. He gave Ares a new outlook on things, and he loved how easy it was to make Zarek happy.

“How’re you holding up?” Zarek handed him the cup of juice, picking at a piece of fruit.

Resisting the urge to roll his eyes, Ares bit into a slice of toast, swallowing it down with the OJ. “I’m fine. I told you, it’s nothing. I’ve had worse.”

Zarek frowned and didn’t say anything. Shaking his head, Ares held the buttery bread to Z’s mouth. “You worry too much,” he murmured when the man reluctantly took a bite.

“Someone has to.” Smiling at the snippy comment, Ares picked up a fork and started feeding them both some of the eggs.

“I care about myself, I’m just not going to allow some dickless dorks bother you and let them get away with it. If it means a few cuts and scratches, well, then, it’s a good thing you think scars are sexy.”

Smirking, Ares put down his fork and reached between his legs, grabbing a hold of his dick and fingering the slightly paler skin beneath his bulbous head. As he expected, Zarek’s breath caught in his throat and for a minute it seemed he couldn’t look away as Ares continued to fondle himself, growing hard under Zarek’s heated gaze.

When Zarek finally looked back up, his eyes were shining and his face was bright. “It’s not your job to protect me. I can take care of myself—I don’t need you to do it for me.” Ares knew he wanted to sound serious, but the husky note to his voice gave away Zarek’s excitement.

Nonetheless, Ares released himself and nodded his head. “You’re absolutely right.” And Ares knew damn well he was. As he mentioned before, Zarek was just as big as he was. But where he was tough and always ready for a fight, Zarek was understanding and diplomatic. The only time he condoned fighting was when he thought someone was attacking Ares or when his sexual orientation was used against him.

But the same way Zarek wanted to keep Ares from getting hurt, Ares never wanted him to get hurt. Next to Zarek’s happiness, it was the most important thing in the world to him.

“I know you don’t need me to protect you. I know you can take care of—and care for—yourself. I get that, I do.” He reached for Zarek’s hand, trying to communicate his sincerity. The last thing he wanted was Zarek thinking he didn’t believe he could look after himself.

“But I want to protect you. I live for it. It gives me purpose. It’s like when I make you smile. I know I’m doing something right when you wake up in the morning and the first thing you do is smile at me.” Zarek blushed, dropping his head forward. Ares continued. “When you do that, it makes me feel like I’m here for a reason. So yeah, I know you can take care of yourself and I love that. It means I never have to worry about you getting hurt when I’m not around. But when I am around—” He lifted Zarek’s head with his free hand. “When I am around, you shouldn’t have to protect yourself. You don’t have to worry about anything happening to you because I will never let that happen. I love knowing that I can keep you safe. Let’s face it; fighting is all I’m good at. And there’s a reason for that.”

When Zarek opened his mouth to object, Ares swooped forward, silencing him with a kiss.

When he pulled back, he smiled, seeing Zarek lick his bottom lip. “It’s so that I can keep you safe. And I live for that.”

Cocking his head to the side, Zarek studied Ares. Ares remained quiet, knowing that Zarek was thinking on what he had said. “You live to keep me

safe?” It was meant to be a statement but Ares could clearly hear the question in it.

Smiling, he shook his head and raised his hands to cup Z’s face. “No, babe. I live for you.”

THE END

Author Bio

H.A. Caine remains in her hometown of Brooklyn, NY. She has hopes of opening her own bakery and is currently in school working towards that dream. She has self-published From Love and Pain and is working on multiple works at the moment, including two series.

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