

LOVE Has NO Boundaries



Don't Read in the Closet Event 2013

RADIO LOVE SONG

J. Rocci

Love Has No Boundaries

An M/M Romance series

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By J. Rocci

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.

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Photo Description

The photo is focused on two pairs of legs in baggy sweatpants and skate sneakers, toe-to-toe facing each other. One person is wearing light blue sweatpants and grey/black Vans, while the other is wearing dark blue Aéropostale sweatpants and dark DC skate shoes. They're outside and it's bright out, on dry grass with trees in the background. The person in the dark sweatpants is standing on his toes, leaning forward toward the other person.

Story Letter

Dear Author,

I have been blessed. I have only loved two guys. The first guy was literally the boy next door but we were so young. The second guy is still the one I'm with. We are happy, domestically so, just like an old married couple... if you know it was allowed. But finally! Finally! Our state passed a law that we can!

So now... WHAT IS HE WAITING FOR? I never thought in our lifetime that we would have this chance. Does he not want to marry me? Should I ask him? Help!

Definitely HEA. I just adore domestic, sweet, established relationships.

Sincerely,

Rissa

Story Info

Genre: contemporary

Tags: performing arts, established couples, family, flamboyant characters, holiday, multicultural, sweet no sex, weddings

Word count: 6,904

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“Hey, Stokes!” Gurdeep called out as Liam tried to slouch past the radio station’s break room door unnoticed. “Check out MJ and Tooth’s wedding pics...”

There was a crowd around the break room table, passing phones and tablets around. Liam would have kept walking, but Gurdeep was a station manager and the one who had given Liam and his boyfriend, Eddy, the same days off for the first time in over a year. He couldn’t really ignore the man the same way he’d been avoiding all of his other coworkers cooing over the latest in-house wedding at WTFM.

Swallowing a sigh, Liam course-corrected and leaned over the shoulder of Lilah, their latest summer intern, to look at the tablet’s screen. Lilah was flipping through MJ’s photo-sharing site faster than Liam could track, but Liam had actually been at the wedding and made the appropriate noises. The pictures were standard rocker-wedding fare—a whole lot of tattoos, piercings, ear gauges and spiked hair; plenty of alcohol-induced stupidity; and a Chihuahua for a best man. At least Dozer had a tux on.

“So when’re you making an honest man out of our darling Eduardo?” Lilah asked Liam coily. “You guys have been together forever, haven’t you?”

This was the topic Liam had been trying to avoid. He just made a noncommittal noise and pointed at the tablet. “Did you guys see MJ’s status update...?”

“That the backpacking honeymoon was stalled in India because Tooth got Delhi belly?” Lilah snorted. “She even posted pictures.”

“Weak, man,” Gurdeep said dryly with a rueful headshake. “I don’t think they really thought it out when she agreed to fulfill Tooth’s dream of re-creating Anthony Bourdain’s Asian travels by foot.”

Liam slid away quietly while they were distracted. He quickly made his way down the scuffed hallway to the office shared by all of the DJs. He'd only stopped by to grab his own tablet before heading out to a club, Plaid Water, for their Tuesday industrial night broadcast. While it didn't sound like it would be a popular night, the DC college scene ate it up and he'd be out later than usual. But that meant he'd miss his usual midnight dinner with Eddy, who got off shift around eight but kept a later sleep schedule so they'd be more synchronized.

Liam paused to watch Eddy through the studio window on his way out. They were lucky to get spots at the same station with awesome and accepting coworkers, after going through some rough years building up their reputations and resumes during college and after they graduated. DC wasn't one of the craziest party cities out there, but WTFM had had room on their already eclectic staff for both an angry frat boy night DJ and a flamboyant, ridiculously popular afternoon DJ.

Eddy was mid-broadcast, laughing into his mike as he camped it up for the commuters heading home and cracking up Jenna, his producer. Gurdeep had warned the staff enough times about distracting each other while on air, and Liam was usually good about it but Eddy was in fine form and he had to stop to watch.

Liam was only in his expensively-distressed pair of jeans and a baggy ringer T-shirt because he had to go out for his broadcast and mingle at the club, wearing a worn trucker cap backwards over his golden curls so the "What the FM??" and WTFM station logo was showing. He liked to play up his frat boy image as "Stokes," but Eddy—

Eddy was hot all the time, rocking his "Eddy J" style. Liam admitted to some bias, but he doubted anyone would deny his boyfriend's Latino good looks, with his dark hair slicked up in a little flip, his pert nose, and his wide smile. Tonight, Eddy had on a tight baby-doll tee, tighter pants, and a line of bangle bracelets almost up to his elbows that only served to draw attention to the strong bones in his wrists and hands as he worked the boards.

But it was more than Eddy's looks—Liam wasn't hesitant to admit the guy was perfect for him. Sweet to his friends and fiercely protective but always ready to diffuse tension, Eddy lit up a room when he entered. He was the one their friends went to for advice or a shoulder to cry on, while Liam was good for getting sympathy-drunk and looming menacingly in the background. When Liam was worked up, Eddy calmed down. When Eddy freaked out, Liam was ready to break kneecaps. They balanced each other.

Obviously switching to commercial break, Eddy looked up and caught Liam watching. Liam waggled his eyebrows suggestively, getting a grin in return, and gave a little wave as he started walking again. Eddy held onto his headset with both hands and blew an enthusiastic kiss after him. Jenna must have made a snide comment because they both burst out laughing.

Smiling, Liam continued down to the elevator. Traffic in DC was a bitch and it'd take him at least an hour to drive the five miles to Plaid Water. He settled into the electric-blue Mini Cooper that he shared with Eddy and pushed the seat back when his knees ended up around his ears. Eddy would catch a ride home with Jenna. Probably.

“Listen up, all you sorry DCers stuck on the Beltway parking lot! You're listening to Eddy J on What the FM and we're about to get *muy caliente* up in here!” Heavy bass started pumping out of the car's speakers. “Turn the volume up, dial those inhibitions waaaaay down, and get crazy—I wanna see someone on YouTube in the next ten minutes!”

Liam snickered, imagining the reaction of the station's lawyers to that, and pulled out into traffic. At least he'd have Eddy to listen to on his way...

All the movies he'd watched as a teenager had made the life of a DJ seem glamorous, exciting, and above all, like easy money.

Hollywood lied.

In reality, the four hours Liam was on-air was only a third of the time he put in at the station or various promo get-outs. There was enough playlist planning to make him feel like a third grade teacher with a lesson plan. There

were appearances, from concerts to events like Capital Pride to judging a college cook-off. There were the meetings, and constant brainstorming for new (but safe! and legal!) stunts (or the lawyers would cry!), and riding herd on the interns, and keeping Danno, his producer, from throwing himself out the window. There were social parties and work parties and mixes of both, and that was just Liam's schedule, never mind Eddy's.

If they didn't share a condo, he'd be worried about their time management skills, but for the most part they'd worked out a nearly synchronized schedule, mostly thanks to only having one vehicle in a city where public transit was either spotty or took four times longer than driving.

Nearly synchronized, except for Tuesday nights. Liam always worked Plaid Water late and the Tuesday before the Fourth of July in DC was a new level of insanity.

Midnight came and went, and Liam was soggy from the heat of hundreds of bodies in an enclosed space, his T-shirt dark with sweat and his hatband sweated through. He'd kept guzzling water as he worked the mixer throughout the night, but now he just wanted a cold beer. Maybe a rum and Coke.

Alcohol appeared at his elbow, courtesy of Danno the Mindreader, and Liam seized it triumphantly. He nodded to a couple dancers where they hung out at the bottom of the raised DJ booth, and shouted the occasional encouragement into his microphone as a mosh pit started in the corner.

He cycled through the classics, from Nine Inch Nails to early Sick Puppies to Mudvayne and Slipknot. After a while, Danno smacked his bicep and pointed into the crowd when Liam turned to glare. Liam peered through the thick haze from the smoke machines and spied Eddy gyrating next to Lilah, both of them covered in glow sticks. He grinned and checked his watch. Almost time to announce last call.

If he wasn't doing an on-air broadcast, Liam would've tried to slip down to dance. As it was, he just kept his eyes glued on Eddy, which was difficult through the haze and the different colored strobe lights. The crowd thinned around closing time, though, so when Liam finally signed off and switched the

sound system back to the club's standard pre-programmed playlist for the last song, he knew exactly where he needed to go. He waved at Danno, who'd started packing up, as he leapt off the podium and weaved through the crowd.

It wasn't hard to find Eddy, and Liam grinned at Lilah as he slid in behind his boyfriend, definitely up in Eddy's personal space. The shorter man tensed at the first touch, head whipping around in indignation, only to relax once he saw who it was getting frisky. Liam smirked down before kissing the back of Eddy's neck gently in apology. Eddy went up on his toes to steal a kiss.

The music and the crowd were too loud to talk over, so Liam just pressed their damp bodies together, chest to back, and swayed with the heavy beat of the last song. Eddy leaned back into him, legs on either side of Liam's left thigh, letting Liam bear most of his weight.

Wrapping one arm around Eddy's chest, Liam smiled against Eddy's neck when the other man stroked down his forearm in one sensuous undulation that started with their hips. Eddy's fingers trailed over his knuckles, rubbing at Liam's fingers before bringing them to his lips for a kiss.

Hot lips, soft skin, the lightest flicker of tongue, and Liam pushed forward with his hips to relieve the ache of his dick. Eddy ground back with his ass before pulling away, turning in Liam's arms to slide his hands up Liam's chest, fingers meeting at the nape of his neck.

"Home?" Eddy asked with a grin. Liam read his lips more than heard him, but nodded and motioned toward the booth and Danno. Eddy nodded back and drew Liam's hand up for another kiss, again on his left hand, and Liam wondered if it wasn't deliberate.

Reluctantly, he stepped away and made it back to the booth in time for the song to end.

"Let me guess," Danno drawled as the house lights came up. "You two are going home to make your own porno while us poor singles get friendly with our hands..."

Liam laughed. "There are so many things I could say to that, I have no words."

“Get outta here and go enjoy your vacation,” Danno mock-grumbled.

“It’s my grandmother’s birthday and the Fourth of July, dude. Hardly a vacation!” But Liam didn’t need to be told twice. He made a break for it.

Eddy was standing outside under a street lamp, skin glistening in the muggy heat of a DC summer night. He guiltily flicked a cigarette away as Liam approached, but Liam just rolled his eyes. They’d had that argument enough times to agree that no amount of Liam’s bitching was going to get Eddy off his cancer sticks, and Eddy only indulged in social outdoor settings. Liam figured if he waited long enough, DC’s anti-smoking laws would evolve until it was impossible to smoke anywhere but home, where it was strictly off limits.

“*Vámonos, mi novio,*” Liam said with a truly horrendous accent, slinging an arm over Eddy’s shoulders.

Eddy shuddered in fake horror. “I’ll quit smoking if you promise to never speak in my native tongue again...”

Liam pretended to contemplate that as he steered Eddy towards the car. “Does it count as your native tongue if you were born in Brooklyn?”

“I think it’s the first language you learn, right? My parents only spoke Spanish at home...” Eddy plucked the car keys from Liam’s hand and went to the driver’s side. Liam was tired, so he didn’t argue, but he did snicker as Eddy had to move the seat forward nearly a foot.

“Since I mostly warbled with the dog until I was six, does that make my native tongue Bassett Hound?” Liam mused, slouching in the passenger seat. Eddy rolled his eyes fondly and a peaceful quiet descended.

Tall, boring concrete government buildings flashed past as Eddy drove back to their condo. The streets of the capitol were nearly deserted at that time of night, save the random homeless person huddled in a doorway or group of drunken partiers headed home. The entire trip took maybe fifteen minutes with traffic lights, ridiculous compared to his earlier drive to the club.

Liam yawned loudly as they walked through the parking garage of their building, following Eddy into the elevator. Eddy pushed the button for their floor.

“You know,” he said casually as the number ticked up. “Jenna’s moms are thinking about getting married in the fall.”

Liam glanced sideways at him, then held the elevator doors open when they reached their floor.

“Good for them,” he responded lightly, gesturing for Eddy to go first. “After three kids, and they’ve been together for, what, almost thirty years now?”

“Jenna turns twenty-eight this year, so yeah. About that much,” Eddy said quietly, voice echoing down the hallway. The harsh fluorescent lighting still couldn’t make him look bad to Liam.

“Hm.”

Eddy unlocked their condo door and traipsed inside, shedding his baby doll shirt and tossing it at the overflowing laundry bag by the sofa. Liam kicked off his shoes and followed suit.

“You told the laundry service not to stop by on Friday, right?” Eddy called over his shoulder, heading towards the bathroom.

“Shit, I forgot,” Liam cursed around another yawn. “I’ll call tomorrow?”

“Yes, please,” Eddy said pertly. His skinny-leg jeans sailed out of the bathroom doorway in the vague direction of the sofa. The shower turned on.

Liam got a cold beer from his drawer in the fridge, avoiding Eddy’s microbrew bottles. He leaned against the kitchen counter and held the sweating can to his cheek. Peering at the sink with a frown, he realized there was something growing on one of the plates. They probably needed to do the dishes before they left town.

He’d just taken a long pull from his beer, reveling in the feel of the air conditioning against his bare chest, when Eddy stuck his head out of the bathroom.

“Well?” He demanded with an arched eyebrow. “Aren’t you going to get in here? The sooner you’re clean, the sooner I can dirty you up again...”

Suddenly, Liam wasn’t as tired anymore.

Morning came too soon.

Liam rolled over with a groan, groping for the horrible buzzing noise. When he realized it was his cell phone and not the alarm, he gave up and let it go to voice mail.

Blissful silence, then the buzzing started again.

Blearily, he got hold of it and eyed the screen of his smartphone. Somehow, he found the coordination to answer.

“Lo?” he growled. Eddy whimpered behind him and burrowed his head under his beaten-up pillow. Liam tried to muster up the will to be jealous.

“Hi, honey!” his mom chirped. “I know it’s early for you”—Liam made a displeased noise—“but I’m here at the grocer’s and for the life of me, I can’t remember if Eddy drinks just diet, or does he prefer that zero-calorie one?”

Liam took a moment to process. “...just diet. I think.”

“You think?”

“He likes water.”

“Never mind, dear. I’ll just get both. Lord knows we’ll have enough people over this weekend, I’m sure someone will drink it.”

Liam was probably supposed to have a response for that, but he was in a warm, comfy bed with a warm, pliable Eddy beside him.

“You’re not even awake yet, are you?” she asked, proving she was still psychic after all these years. “I’ll let you get back to sleep, night owl. I just wanted to make sure we have things Eddy likes in the house. Your sister’s bringing that Jonathan boy she was seeing at Easter and I don’t want anyone to accuse me of playing favorites, but I completely am. Are you two still doing that low-carb diet? No, don’t answer. You go back to bed, and I’ll see you

both tomorrow. Call if you're going to be earlier than six in the morning, all right? Kisses for you both. Drive safe!"

Liam blinked at his phone, then let it drop onto the floor. If he was lucky, the carpet would muffle any further calls.

Then he realized what his mom had said.

"Oh fuck!" He jackknifed up in bed. "We're going to my mom's tomorrow!"

Eddy snuffled and mumbled, "Duh."

"Shit. Shit. Shit."

"Shhhh." Eddy pawed at him blindly, still face down in his pillow.

"We forgot to get Gram a present!" Liam hissed, envisioning the horrific hoards of Independence Day tourists crowding the streets of the city, blocking traffic, and the massive shopping frenzy of all the malls in the region. He was doomed. They were heading out at ten in the evening just to have the possibility of getting to New York before Thursday night. Traffic would still be shit, even then.

"Maybe we can grab something in Pennsylvania tomorrow morning?" he asked in despair.

Eddy made a negative noise.

"You're right. Everything'll be closed. Unless it was a live Amish person churning butter in front of her, Gram wouldn't care. Fuck. Keira's going to have her stupid boyfriend and a perfect present, and we're just gonna have a card with a crappy gift card she'll never use..."

"Did that five years ago," Eddy said out of the side of his mouth, eyes stubbornly shut.

"Damn, we did. Have we gotten any cool freebies lately?" A mental review of their grab box of station goodies left him disheartened. "Not unless she wants plastic '80s sunglasses and a muscle T-shirt..."

Liam flopped down with a groan, shaking the entire bed, to burrow back under the covers and wrap them around his head. He whined pitifully and poked at Eddy with one finger. “We’ve got less than twelve hours to find something.”

Sighing heavily, Eddy lifted his head and glared adorably at Liam, a pillow crease mark on his cheek.

“As fun as it is to watch my grown-ass significant other cower at the thought of going shopping while I’m trying to sleep,” Eddy said hoarsely, voice deadpan, “All you need to do is go down to the jeweler’s on Connecticut Ave and pick up our order.”

“The jeweler’s?” Liam asked, hope creeping back into his body as he uncurled from the fetal position.

Eddy’s eyes were barely open, just glittering dark slits as his face sunk slowly back into his pillow. “Convenient, hm? Almost like someone knew you’d forget...”

“Have I told you lately that I love you?”

“If you dare sing Rod Stewart to me in my own bed, I will kill you,” Eddy threatened, tone dire even through the pillow. “Now go pick up the damn necklace and let me sleep.”

Kissing the top of Eddy’s dark hair cheerfully, Liam rolled out of bed and sniff-tested a couple shirts before putting one on. Flip-flops, board shorts, and sunglasses discovered, he was whistling his way out the door in under five minutes.

It was almost noon, so the sun was high overhead and the heat was unbearable when he reached the street. The jeweler they’d been going to since they moved to the city was only a few blocks away, though, so he just got an iced coffee from Starbucks and hoofed it.

The store was amazingly chilled when he entered, and he nodded to the nearest clerk, who said someone would be right with him. One of the reasons

they kept coming back was because they could come in looking like beach bums and still get great customer service.

That, and the store played WTFM during the day, when the programming was more Top Forty rock than industrial grunge. It sounded like their midday guest DJ was doing his own mix of Beyoncé’s “Single Ladies” with Rihanna’s “Pon de Replay”. Now he’d be thinking about putting a ring on it all day. Wonderful.

He wandered over to the men’s side, not really caring about watches or cufflinks but a new display had caught his eye. Where they used to have “domestic partnership” rings—a case he’d lingered over a few times during the past couple years—now they just had an expanded wedding band display, featuring tasteful rings with inset rainbow jewels or other inscriptions celebrating the city’s Pride history.

As much as it frustrated Eddy, Liam didn’t really care about activism or marching for rights and all that. He just wanted to live his life. But Eddy cared, so Liam went to all the meetings and the protests and the celebrations. He’d even been cheering outside with the crowd when Mayor Fenty had signed the DC Council bill that allowed same-sex marriages in DC.

Liam had always told himself and anyone who would listen that a marriage certificate was just a piece of paper. It was what people got to tell the rest of the world they were with someone for the long haul. So really, it was merely an outside validation of something he knew in his bones—it didn’t have anything to do with how much he loved someone or how long they’d actually be together.

And now he was wondering if Eddy wanted to do the whole wedding thing. Like, back when the marriages first started, he and Eddy had been out of college for almost a year, young and struggling with finances and trying to get their lives together. They hadn’t really talked about it, except for in a “maybe one day” kind of way. Some far off future when they had the money and time to do it right.

But now most of their friends were getting to that age when they were getting married, having kids, buying houses. They'd never be the picket fence sort, but when Liam saw how people treated those relationships differently after the wedding, well... It was tempting, to get that acknowledgement. To know that if something happened to one of them, the other would be treated with respect. To have people take them seriously instead of writing them off as a couple of kids. Plus, they were in a better place financially...

"Hi!" The clerk said cheerfully after she finished with her other customer. "What can I do for you today?"

"I need to pick up a necklace," he said with a smile, and gave her Eddy's cell phone number for her to look up the order in the store computer.

She made a thoughtful noise and clicked through a couple screens. Finally she asked, "You said a necklace, right?"

"Yup, under Juarez, I think. Or it might be under Stokely."

Smiling, she held up a hand. "Got it under Juarez. You're Liam Stokely? I just need to see your ID." He handed it over. "Great! I'll be right back, sir!"

Liam watched curiously as she went over to a locked cabinet drawer and sorted through a few white paper bags, holding two up to inspect the printed labels on them. She selected one and put the other back.

"Here we are," she said, breaking the seal on the bag and removing a velvet box. Inside was a white gold heart with what looked like randomly colored gems along the edge. "If you could just confirm that these are the right birthstones..."

Liam tried to look like he knew what his own birthstone was, let alone the rest of his family's, but there were enough stones for his mom, him and Eddy, and his sister, so he nodded.

"Looks great. Thanks." He accepted the box and started to turn away as she did the usual "anytime" spiel. Pausing, he looked down at the case again and tapped above a ring on display. "Actually, you can help me with something else."

“Oh, good choice! That’s one of our more unique pieces...”

Whether or not he was the one who asked Eddy or Eddy asked him, he was pretty sure he knew what the answer would be.

Pretty sure. Maybe.

When Liam’s parents had divorced after he was off at college, they sold the old family house in Vermont and his mom used her half of the money to move to the middle of nowhere in southwest New York. It wasn’t completely “nowhere”, but it was miles from the nearest spot of what Liam and Eddy considered “civilization”. She had a couple acres and a small private lake, with a small ranch-style house that had probably been someone’s vacation cabin at one point. It was cozy. A nice retreat.

By mutual agreement, they could only take a few days a year there. Thank God, they went to Eddy’s parents in Miami for Christmas.

Driving past the end of state maintenance sign about a mile from his mom’s house, Liam reached over to wake Eddy up. Their six-hour trip had turned into eight, and Eddy had dropped off to sleep around four hours in. At least one of them would be fresh to deal with Liam’s family.

He loved them, he really did. They were just a bit... much... in a concentrated dose. At least his dad wouldn’t be there. As far as he knew, no one had really spoken to his dad in a couple years.

“Mm.” Eddy groaned as he tried to stretch in the small car. “Should we take bets on how much drama your sister’s going to bring this year?”

“I don’t take sucker bets,” Liam said as he pulled onto his mom’s gravel driveway. The mailbox had the red flag up, and since his mom was paranoid even in the boonies about leaving outgoing mail in the box overnight, that meant she was up. Her pair of Labradors greeted them at the edge of their invisible fence, chasing the car up the drive and announcing their arrival.

Liam groaned when his sister’s car came into sight, parked beside the detached garage. “Man, Keira’s already here...”

They were beset upon by the dogs as soon as they opened their doors. Eddy squeaked as he was covered in drool, still not used to getting slobbered on.

“Why couldn’t your mom like cats?” he hissed.

Liam just nudged the dogs out of the way with a knee and grabbed their bags from the back of the car. His mom opened the front door as they approached, grinning widely.

“Hi there, strangers! Oh, let me look at you boys!” She smothered them both in hugs and kisses, which Liam took stoically, considering she barely reached his shoulder. He got his height from his dad, but his blond hair and blue eyes from his mom.

Eddy returned her embrace more enthusiastically, exclaiming over her new hair highlights or something. Liam didn’t wait around to listen; he just headed for the guest bedroom they usually slept in.

His little sister, Keira, was sprawled on the couch with her boyfriend, Jon. They looked half-dead in the light of the TV. Liam gave them a chin nod as he walked past. His mom and Eddy were chatting at a ridiculous speed when he followed their voices to the kitchen.

“Look at that frown,” his mom admonished when she noticed him. “Do you want something to eat? Grammy’ll be here any minute for brunch. You boys look so tired. You haven’t been working too hard, have you? You’re never home when I call—”

Liam didn’t even bother trying to answer, but Eddy started making noises about the drive, and the traffic, and all the hours they’d had to put in to get the weekend off.

Jon wandered in to get a soda as Liam settled in for the long haul at the kitchen table. Liam didn’t know the guy very well—his sister met him online, and they’d only been dating a couple months. He seemed all right.

Two more days. Liam could totally handle this. The twin dog alarms went off.

“It’s Grammy,” Eddy declared dramatically, peering out the window. “Someone make me a Cosmo!”

Liam laughed. “You like Grammy.”

“I adore that woman, but she has a tendency to pinch my ass and call me Fernando after she’s had a couple gin and tonics,” Eddy exclaimed as Jon choked on his diet soda. “I’m preemptively dulling the pain!”

Liam had to concede that. They still couldn’t go back to the Olive Garden in Warwick, Rhode Island, after she threw bread sticks at the surrounding tables while shouting, “Fire in the hole!” Liam was the first to admit Grammy rocked.

“Lucky for you,” his mom said with a grin, “I made a pitcher of Sangria this morning, and I have everything for mimosas!”

Liam was already at the fridge when Grammy shuffled in. Another round of greetings drew Keira from the living room.

“Food first, then presents,” his mom announced as the small kitchen was suddenly full of people.

“Booze first, then food,” Grammy declared. Liam handed her a champagne flute as he said happy birthday. “Knew you were my favorite, kiddo.”

They settled in to eat, his mom producing some sort of fluffy egg and bacon dish from the oven.

“I heard from Marjory Blythe this morning,” his mom said after a few bites. “We Facebooked.”

Normally Liam would be noting that “Facebook” wasn’t a verb, but he just paused chewing. Marjory was their old next-door neighbor in Rhode Island. She was also the mother of Liam’s first (and only other) boyfriend.

“How’s she doing?” Eddy prompted. He knew the whole sordid story, and Liam appreciated the moment to finish chewing.

Keira glanced at Eddy then Liam, just like Grammy did. Liam hated the attention. The break-up had been inevitable, but painful. The relationship and

its aftermath was one of the many reasons Liam hadn't spoken to his dad in years. But all that had happened almost a decade ago. He was over it.

"She's doing great," his mom said with a hesitant smile at Liam. "She wanted to get the new address so she could send out wedding announcements. Simon's marrying his boyfriend in the fall, since they just made it legal out there earlier this year."

"'Bout damn time," Grammy muttered.

Again with the marriage stuff. It was everywhere he looked lately.

The ring box in his sweatpants pocket felt heavier.

"Good for him," Liam said casually, resuming with his breakfast. It seemed like everyone around the table relaxed, and he wanted to roll his eyes. Christ, he wasn't a teenager anymore.

"She asked how you were doing," his mom continued more enthusiastically. "She listens to your program over the Internet. I told her all about Eddy, too. She's a big fan." She patted Eddy's arm. "She sends her regards, and she's glad to hear that you're so happy. She asked when you two were getting married, but I told her I haven't wanted to pry and I'm sure you'll tell us when you're ready."

Her smile was encouraging and hopeful. Liam exchanged a glance with Eddy, whose expression definitely showed he was caught off guard. Liam had no idea what his own looked like.

"Oh, for chrissake, Dana," Grammy grumbled. "I thought we agreed to leave the boys alone, and you can't go for five minutes without bringing it up—"

His mom flailed her hands defensively. "I was just telling them about my conversation with Marjory—"

"Well," Keira interrupted, clearing her throat and setting her fork down. "While we're on the topic of marriage, Jon and I would like to make an announcement."

“What?” His mom stopped mid-rant, voice flat, zeroing in on Keira. Jon leaned back from the table, swallowing nervously.

“We’re engaged,” Keira said calmly.

His mom made that face where her nostrils flared and her eyes widened. “No, you’re not. You’re twenty-one years old. You haven’t even finished college—”

“Yes, we are, mother. It’s just a declaration of intent. The wedding won’t be until Christmas—”

From the murderous look in his mom’s eyes, Liam felt pretty bad for Jon. At least Keira had waited until after the food had been cooked.

“Oh, no, you’re not. You just met him! We barely know this guy—”

“But I know him, and I love him!”

“You’re too young to know what love is!”

“Just because you and Dad couldn’t make it work—”

Liam slid back from the table himself at that one. He looked at Eddy again. Eddy’s eyebrows were raised, but he was obviously also happy to have the attention off of them.

“Don’t you talk down to me,” his mom snapped. “And think about your grandmother, bringing this up at her birthday brunch—”

“Oh, don’t mind me,” Grammy drawled, sipping her mimosa. “I always enjoy a good shitshow in the morning.”

“Mother!”

“You never listen to me,” Keira yelled and threw her fork at the table. “For all you know, I could be pregnant—”

“*WHAT?*”

Granny just chortled into her champagne flute as his mom’s face turned purple. Quietly, Eddy slid his mom’s place setting out of the way by the corner of the lace placemat so her fists came down on empty table instead.

When the real screaming started, Liam caught Eddy's eye. *Run?* he mouthed silently and Eddy nodded enthusiastically. Grammy saluted them with her glass as they slipped away from the table and out the back door.

"Well, that was certainly dramatic," Eddy sighed once they were out of sight of the house, following the worn path down to the lake. The dogs panted behind them.

"Told you," Liam said with a grin. "Sucker bet. I think that beats even the scene at your sister's *quinceañera*."

"But this one didn't involve lobster tails down anyone's shirt and the limo in a water fountain."

"The day is still young," Liam mused.

Eddy laughed and caught Liam's hand, just holding on as they strolled through the dappled light of the trees. It was cooler than it had been down in DC, and Liam took a deep breath, thinking it was nice to get away from the busy city, and not dwelling on what would await them back at the house.

"Is it just me," Eddy asked lightly, "Or does it seem like everywhere we look these days, people are talking weddings and marriage?"

The tremor in Eddy's palm betrayed him. Liam gave his hand a squeeze.

"You noticed that, too, huh?" was all he replied. His pocket felt heavy.

"Yeah."

They walked in silence a while longer, following the trail out into a clearing. The dogs took off barking at something in the trees and they paused to watch them disappear into the underbrush.

"So—"

"Do you—"

They both started talking at the same time and broke off, chuckling. Liam grinned down at Eddy and tugged on his hand.

“You go ahead.”

“Nah, I was just—” Eddy broke off, grin fading. “I was just wondering if you’d ever thought about, y’know...”

Liam’s heart rate started picking up until he could feel it in his ears and in his flushed face. “I—um.”

“Never mind,” Eddy said with a wave of his hand, not meeting Liam’s eyes. “I mean, I know how you feel about it, so it’s just silly. I’m just being silly.”

“No, no, you’re not,” Liam was quick to say, even if he couldn’t find the right words. Instead, he fumbled in his pocket for the box. “Actually, I— Well.”

When Liam held up the box and flipped it open, Eddy gave a sharp laugh, which wasn’t quite the reaction Liam had been hoping for...

“No, I’m not laughing at you,” Eddy said with a thick voice. He let go of Liam’s hand to dig into his own pocket. His fingers shook as he pried it open. “I’m really not.”

Liam had to laugh, too. All that worrying for nothing. They’d picked out the same silver bands from the jeweler, with a spiky waveform engraved on the outside. It was the sound of the artist saying “Love”.

“So, I guess we’ve both been thinking about it?” he finally asked with a shaky voice.

“Yup.” Eddy nodded a couple times, and then they both burst out laughing in nervous relief.

Liam felt his laugh die off when Eddy stepped in, going up on his tiptoes to curl his arms around Liam’s neck. Liam wrapped his arms around Eddy’s waist and lifted him for a moment, grinning when Eddy squawked.

“You love me,” he said smugly against Eddy’s mouth.

Eddy kissed him back, hard, before pulling back triumphantly. “Did you ever doubt it?”

They kissed again and Liam had to grin, burying his face into Eddy's neck. "You realize that there's going to be a cage fight at the station to see who'll DJ for us, right? It'll be MJ and Tooth's planning woes all over again."

Eddy shrugged. "So we'll make our own mix tapes and have an open bar. Problem solved."

Liam laughed again, and they got lost in their own little world a while longer.

THE END

Author Bio

Since 2006, J. Rocci has published several GLBT romance stories with Torquere Press, ranging from contemporary to steampunk to fantasy. A voracious reader from a young age, Rocci currently has a career in research and lives near Washington, D.C. with the love of her life and their furry children. She often indulges the whims of her best friend—and Muse—when writing, and loves giving her characters happy endings.

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