

LOVE Has NO Boundaries



Don't Read in the Closet Event 2013

SCRUM

P.D. Singer

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Love Has No Boundaries

An M/M Romance series

SCRUM

By P.D. Singer

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

A heavily muscled, bare-chested man stands in profile in a steamy room, his head turned to three-quarters profile. His chest is slightly furry, his brunet hair long enough to brush his shoulders, his chin cleft, and his features strong. He stares a challenge at the observer through slitted blue eyes, and he's holding a rugby ball.

Story Letter

Dear Author,

I am there for every game, eyes focused on one player alone. My heart speeds up as I watch his hair fly and legs pump as he races down the field. My sweat beads and falls down my back in tandem with his the longer the game continues.

Today is the day. It's my birthday, and I promised myself that I would gather the courage to introduce myself, to be close for even a moment and who knows what might happen? I can dream, can't I?

Sincerely,

Melanie

Story Info

Genre: contemporary

Tags: athlete, masturbation, slow burn/UST, coming out, sports, rugby

Content warnings: vanilla alert, HFN

Word count: 10,685

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CHAPTER 1

“Big piles of sweaty men.”

Robin’s buddy should be writing ad copy—Sebastian couldn’t have offered a better line to induce a team-sports-hater to come to a club game. Rugby union. “Not rugby league, none of that hoity-toity, stay-halfway-clean play, but scrums, mauls, and rucks!” Sebastian rattled off mysterious terms, half in a trance.

Robin hadn’t a clue, so not a word swayed him toward sitting on a damp hillside watching teams dispute possession of an oddly shaped ball. Until Sebastian handed over an ad. “They have a new player in. Yves Dubois. Played for the Canada under-20s and under-23s. Even if he just coaches, he’ll bring our Barbarians up to the next level.”

“And I care why?” Robin sneered until he got a look at the imported player. Suddenly whatever brought this man to Denver was the most important thing ever, and if that included team sports, Robin was a fan now. The buffest body in North America went with a cleft chin and a challenging stare daring Robin to come watch the manliest sport on the planet. The heat of his gaze might be only for the game, but it still went straight to Robin’s groin.

“Imagine that, covered in sweat, mud, and other men. In public.”

“What time?” He’d be there on the dot. Early. Early with tailgate party food. Early with something to autograph. The paper crinkled in his grip—Robin realized he was rumpling the most gorgeous visage he’d ever seen outside a magazine.

“The game starts at seven.” Sebastian chuckled, as if he’d heard every thought. “Dress warm. April’s still pretty nippy, eh?”

“I have a blanket in the trunk.” Basic winter survival gear in Colorado. Possibly at rugby games too, especially if he needed to throw something over his traitor groin. If he had to wrap himself head to toe, he could still wipe the drool off his chin with one edge. “Seven. Okay. Um...”

He’s playing, he’s not looking into the stands for the love of his life, or even the lust of the night. Yves would be looking at what was happening on the field, and he probably was straight as the goal lines.

But it would be something new for the spank-bank. For the first time since the end of his t-ball career, Robin looked forward to a game.

The wind would probably take his carefully styled hair straight to chaos, but Robin ran the comb through one more time and added another shot of super-hold spray. Getting the peak just so in the center mattered. A light spritz of cologne was his finishing touch, not that anyone who counted would be coming close enough to get a whiff. The testosterone and sweat rolling off the players would probably choke them both, but Sebastian would be getting the benefit of the perfumer’s art for a few minutes at least.

Robin’s rust-colored sweater would make him easy to pick out in a potential sea of green and white fans. Just in case Yves looked. Yeah, right. Robin grabbed the keys and dashed for the door. Time to get Sebastian and a good seat.

“Let’s put the top down.” Sebastian reached for the roof latch.

“Not today. Too cold.” Not really, but his hair would be in tatters before they reached the main avenue. He ignored Sebastian’s pout.

“I didn’t know you followed rugby.” Robin was a little startled to learn this about his friend. In three years of working together and the occasional Friday afternoon drink, the subject had never arisen. He aimed his Miata down Santa Fe Boulevard, zipping from lane to lane, trying to beat the lights that marred what should be a highway.

“Some. My cousin plays, but I didn’t really get interested until I saw that whiskey ad where the Scotsmen flipped their kilts at the New Zealand team.” Sebastian spoke with fond memory in his voice. “Nothing like responding to a war chant with big swinging dicks.”

Robin nearly rammed a tractor-trailer rig. “And I’ve been missing this all my life?”

“It was an ad!” The high note on “ad” was a clue Sebastian didn’t want to be reading that “How’s My Driving?” sticker from six feet away. “But the game is good—all bulging thighs in shorts, and the players hanging on to each other and shoving around, pouncing on each other.”

“Shorts.” Robin tightened his grip on the wheel. Crumpling his pretty red fenders would ruin his evening.

“Not kilts. Geez, Robin, you’re acting like you’ve never seen a naked man.” Sebastian knew perfectly well Robin had seen naked men—their chemistry ran to friendship, but Sebastian had pointed one or two guys Robin’s way. “And they’re fully dressed, even if their shorts are more like hot pants.”

If Sebastian wanted Robin to pay attention to the road, he should stop providing that kind of visual. Yves with those bedroom eyes, in small, tight shorts?

“This sounds like the gayest game on the planet.” Robin pulled into the stadium parking lot. “You said your cousin plays?”

Sebastian let go of the “oh shit” handle and flexed his fingers. “He does and it is. It’s also widely considered the manliest, so you might not want to comment too loudly on your particular interest. Makes football look like a sport for wussies.”

Football qualified as “savages in hobnailed boots jumping up and down on one another” and was not redeemed by the fine view of muscular asses bent over at the start of every play. Yves Dubois could be the sort of man who’d stuff people into lockers. He could be art, to be admired from afar, and the less one knew about what made him, the better.

“I could introduce you,” Sebastian said.

Memories made Robin go cold. “No. Do *not* introduce me to your cousin. Even if he’s gay. Especially if he’s gay. Every time you set me up with someone, it goes horribly wrong. Remember Steven? Or Kyle?”

“Hey, I thought they were okay! And who knew Kyle would laugh—” Robin cut that short by slamming the car door.

When Sebastian got out, Robin finished making his point. “Just *don’t* introduce me to your cousin or anyone else.”

“Okay, but you’d like him.”

“That’s what you said about Kyle.” Robin glared, force III. “No.”

He collected the blanket and the cooler from the trunk, and followed Sebastian into the stands. Nothing as organized as a program looked available, and the announcer’s voice was half static when he called the teams out to the field. A stream of green and white players, dressed in the promised shorts—small but not tight—and long-sleeved collared shirts emerged. Suddenly the fashion term made sense. Robin refrained from smacking a *d’oh!* on his forehead. Rugby shirts. Of course. And the stripes and colors made the teams identifiable, although certain match-ups might make the field look like a test bar on acid.

The opposing team in red with white flashes on more jersey-like shirts lined up opposite. “Cross-town rivals,” Sebastian supplied. “The Highlanders.”

Not a kilt to be seen, though. Not a problem—even in a group of men that averaged tall and heavy and all dressed alike, Robin could pick out the star player. Yves, with his hair loose and brushing his shoulders, stood squarely in the center of the lineup, noticeably buffer than the men to either side, muscles playing in his thighs and forearms with his slight fidgeting. The referee brought Yves and the other team captain to the center and flipped a coin.

That was the last part of the game Robin truly understood—but it didn’t matter. He watched, entranced, as the men ran, threw, kicked, and hit the turf

in clumps. No one wore padding, making Sebastian's comment about outdoing football for ruggedness terribly apt.

The players reformed in mats of men, bent over and interlocked, shoving, swiping. Yves was at the center of such formations. "He's playing hooker today," Sebastian explained, and even so, that told Robin nothing but that at least six other men were touching all that glory.

Yves had his arms over the shoulders of the two men at his sides, and two more supported him from behind. The opposition locked against him from the front. All told, a dozen men jostled each other, bent at the waist and interwoven. The ball appeared from beneath the heaving thicket—they broke apart and the frenzy began anew. When to shout was easy—scoring happened at goal lines, and snagging the ball away from the other team merited a cheer. The details didn't matter, only that every other man on the field either had his arms around Yves, was tackling him to the ground, or had been captured and brought down by him. The sheer amount of body contact was astounding, and not all of it looked painful.

"Why aren't they doing any forward passes?" Robin could see at least one player who was wide open to catch and didn't have his arms out. The ball shot out of the knot of men contesting possession.

"Against the laws." Sebastian's comment came without any real attention: he peered over the shoulders of the other spectators.

"This is mayhem," Robin muttered. "Laws?"

"Certainly. Rugby can't be contained by anything as puny as rules." Sebastian turned a superior eyebrow on Robin. "They'll have to scrum again, eh?" The irregular shape, not as pointy as a football, made the ball roll erratically, and no one had picked it up when the referee blew his whistle.

"Okay." Maybe this time Robin would figure out what that was. Oh, it was when a dozen men got to hug up and bend over around Yves. A player fed the ball into the clump, and the shoving commenced.

The red team buckled; the men in green surged over them and down. The players not involved in the scrum dashed to help peel the fallen from the pile,

all but one man who stayed down. Yves bent over him, as did the referee. “It’s easy to get injured in the scrum.” Sebastian craned to see the fallen player. “I hope he hasn’t broken his neck.”

Fuck. But after a moment to regain his breath, the downed Highlander rose to his feet. Yves spoke to him, and he shook his head. The scrum reformed, and the ball ended up in a Barbarian’s hands. Not Yves’, though he paced the other player toward the goal line. A Highlander tackled him just before the ball carrier flipped his prize at him. Yves went down, the referee tweeted and brought out a yellow card. The tackler headed to the sidelines, followed by Yves’ crabby look.

Even without having a clue about the importance of the infraction, Robin wanted that man off the field. Go sit in the sin-bin! How dare he bring down a man loping like a very muscular gazelle? To hell with the game, he was interrupting the poetry of movement. Robin interrupted it himself when Yves took a penalty kick and the scoreboard changed.

“Told you it was exciting,” Sebastian gloated at the half. “Another forty minutes of play, but it won’t be quite so lively, they’re tired.”

Good. Yves looked like he could run forever while the others puffed and panted. A little. In some cases, a lot. A few of the players had guts and receding hairlines. Was this even a semi-pro team? What was a former member of a national team doing in the hinterlands of the sport that had never even impinged on Robin’s awareness, even though he could reel off the names of every local franchise, including the soccer and lacrosse teams whose play he didn’t give a rat’s ass about?

The teams headed to the sidelines, carrying a good chunk of the field on them. No one had more than a few square inches unsmeared with mud and wisps of grass, still mostly brown in mid-April. Yves wiped his cheek with his arm, rearranging the dirt. Lucky dirt, touching him. Robin watched Yves drink, his head tipped back to let the fluid gush from the water bottle down his throat, his Adam’s apple working with each swallow.

Oh, if he could lick that bobbing neck... Robin decided it was a good time to spread the blanket over his lap, even if he missed the padding under him. If he didn't have such a scrawny ass he'd be a lot more comfortable. More lunges, less running would help, but the big 10K race in Boulder was at the end of May, and he intended to be top in his age bracket, since he was aging up just before the race. If there wasn't the small issue of breaking his neck, Robin might give it all up for rugby.

Forty more minutes of play under the lights made Robin glad for the blanket but in love with the game, where everyone had to put their arms around one or more of their teammates for half the maneuvers. No one hesitated to reach out, no one commented on the state of play, except to say if it was done well or poorly. "Poorly" was the consensus around them, "Except for that Canadian guy, who knows what he's doing." Robin's pride in Yves grew another five points when he scored a goal.

"No, that's a try." Sebastian supplied more terminology. The rest could be hoovered off the Internet.

The game ended, the Barbarians ("Call them Barbos if you don't want to look like a complete noob," Sebastian muttered.) outscoring the Highlanders 32-19. "Great game." Sebastian stood and stretched.

"Yeah." Robin watched the team at the sidelines. Some of the spectators came to congratulate them, and a few offered paper and pen to the imported star and then to the others. He wasn't brave enough to join them—would Yves take one look, hear the ping of the gaydar and dismiss him as a hopeless star-fucker? Not taking the chance.

But once he was home, Robin looked up and printed out the Barbarians' game schedule. One game a week, some as far as Houston, others as close as the stadium he'd just left. And the practice schedule. Tuesdays and Thursdays at a local park.

Anyone could go to a park.

CHAPTER 2

Tuesday found Robin doubting himself, Kindle in hand, strolling through Observatory Park. Maybe if he had a dog, he wouldn't look so pathetic marching around looking for a good place to sit and "read".

The team was out and running, in sweats and T-shirts, mostly recognizable for being a wall of men bearing down on him. He stepped aside, letting the team thunder by. Yves brought up the rear of the tight formation, which wasn't moving especially fast, but a tsunami didn't have to move terribly fast either. Robin was pretty sure he could lap them over a short course. Yves' attention was on the men, his eyes assessing, and he didn't spare a glance for Robin. Well, why would he?

The team ran to their practice area, where a couple of older men waited with the bag of oval balls. Robin followed nonchalantly, finding a park bench close enough to see everything. Ignoring the Kindle, he watched their drills with passing and kicking. Yves deferred to the coaches, explaining some skill with gestures and demonstrations only when asked. He took his place in the lineup for a passing drill, and flipped the ball to the men on either side while three of them ran. Good skill to work on—Robin had seen them fumble passes at the game.

If Robin made any passes, he'd fumble them for sure. He didn't get up and run—why would he? Why should he?—when the practice ended and Yves sauntered by, a towel over his shoulder and a gear bag in one hand.

That grin couldn't be for any reason other than a man in prime condition feeling good about a workout. Could it?

The hope of more meaning was enough to bring Robin back on Thursday.

He still didn't have much understanding of the nuances of the game, although Robin had spent enough time online trying to get the basics that he could at least make sense of some of the overheard chatter. Why the team

polished particular skills was clear enough, and they were growing noticeably better—fewer balls hit the ground in passing drills and more balls sailed through the goal posts with every practice. They'd won an away game in Pocatello, Idaho, and had another game this weekend, in Boulder. Close enough. Robin printed out his ticket and aimed his red convertible northwest up Highway 36.

Without Sebastian.

“Sorry, man,” he'd said when Robin asked him along. “Got a date.”

Robin would just have to keep a lid on his drooling without any good-natured pokes.

Check on contained drooling—the adrenaline dried his mouth when Yves went down in a pile of behemoths, and brought Robin to his feet to cheer for his goal—no, his try—and the two-point conversion after.

Oh, but the man could run! Charging down the field, dodging, leaping—Robin's every muscle tensed with Yves' efforts. How he hated every man who bound himself to Yves for a ruck or a maul. Whichever it was, Robin wasn't too clear on the difference, but since someone or multiple someones had their arms wrapped around Yves' back or neck, Robin envied them all.

The Barbos had the ball again, and Yves picked it out of the air when the carrier got tackled. Plunging goalward, he still couldn't evade every blue and gold defender bearing down on him. Robin whimpered when Yves went down under a mountain of flesh and didn't care that the ball passed the goal line in another man's hands. Nothing mattered but that Yves get up from the ground.

Getting flattened didn't seem to slow him much; Yves was running and tackling on the next play. He dove after the other player and got dragged a step or two, rising with a smear of mud from nose to shin. If Yves wanted to wrap his arms around Robin's thighs, he wouldn't run away.

The drive back to Denver was a clammy affair—Robin had pelted every step of the match alongside Yves, and if he wasn't covered with mud, the sweat had still dripped down his back to glue shirt to skin. Showering before his run was stupid, but necessary, if not to remove the sweat, then to think of

Yves' rippling muscles under the spray in the locker room, and to imagine soaping away the traces of the game. Robin's hands on himself became Yves', and he had to stroke himself to a shattering climax.

Tuesday found Robin at the park again; he'd found a closer bench and had given up any pretense of reading. He could watch a team practice, and could even note some of the other players. None as gorgeous as Yves, or as memorable, unless it was for the spectacular flubs one made in kicking drills. The ball went all over the field, bouncing unpredictably and apparently it had to hit the ground once before meeting a foot. Yves demonstrated and coached. Did his student appreciate the skill? Or the view?

And—oh man. Lifting drills? Groups of three sectioned off to hoist one of their number into the air, strong hands on thighs in front and butt in back. “Not the shorts!” Yves yelled. “That’s a league lift.”

And a giant wedgie, too. Robin shuddered sympathetically, and hated the men who supported Yves, who gripped his thighs and found their noses scant inches from his groin and ass for his seconds in the air, fighting for possession of the ball. Did any of them value what was so near, or was lifting only a skill to practice?

He should leave now, but hope for another grin, one that might even be meant for him, kept Robin on his bench after the coach's whistle blew to end the session. Reward and punishment stalked him, as Yves ambled past with white teeth flashing, and OMG eye contact! And a companion. Another player walked with him, chatting. They never broke stride.

Robin cursed himself for a fool and swore he wouldn't go back Thursday. A vow that lasted until Thursday.

The team went to Provo, leaving Robin to ache for the imagined falls and tackles and gloat at the score. He seldom had to cringe for the Barbos being on the wrong end of the spread. If he wanted to believe Yves scored every point, two or three or five at a time, he knew better. Robin had seen Yves pass the

ball when he didn't have to, if a teammate could make the try. The manly embraces and backslapping after each success were accolades his Yves deserved, for being a team player, for hauling all of them higher, for making them better. He was popular with the group, too; Tuesdays and Thursdays still brought that passing grin, but more often than not it was in the middle of a conversation about going out for a celebratory beer.

And yet Robin went, every time, hating the obsession and learning to love the game for itself as much as for the beauty of the players. The player. None of the others mattered, except if one or more of the competing team sat in the sin-bin for penalties, thus letting the Barbos humiliate their outnumbered opponents.

He trained for his 10K on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and dreamed of running alongside one particular rugby player, who might be faster than he looked during practice. If Yves couldn't match an average 5:56 minute mile on a hilly course, then there might be one thing Robin could outdo him on, but somehow Robin wouldn't bet on it. The Bolder Boulder was this Memorial Day weekend, and making top ten in the 30-39 age bracket was the only thing that would take the sting out of turning thirty right before the race.

That, or a conversation with Yves. Robin dared not hope for more. And he dared not approach, lest his dreams be shattered when Yves turned away from the hopeless fanboy. Better to sit on his bench and share the wordless communication of joy in the skills.

“Let me guess what you want to do for your birthday.” Sebastian put on his fakest “thinky face”. “You could sign up for scuba lessons—”

“Already certified,” Robin snapped.

“—or go bungee jumping.” Sebastian rolled right over his declaration as if Robin hadn't even spoken.

“Assuming I like crapping myself in public,” Robin snarled. If he enjoyed that, he'd already have had a chat with a certain Canadian godling.

“Or go to a rugby game!” Sebastian concluded happily.

“Fuck you.” Robin grabbed a folder off Sebastian’s desk and considered stomping off in a snit, but then Sebastian would only raise his voice to follow, and then the whole office would be in on this *discussion*.

“I didn’t think you liked me that way. My cousin, now—” Sebastian mused.

The heat flared beneath Robin’s collar and set his ears on fire. “Shut. Up. Not. Happening.”

“Now is that any way to talk to your best buddy?” Sebastian purred. “Especially since he knows what you want most?” Producing an envelope, he smirked, and then waved it just beyond Robin’s reaching fingers. He relented and handed it over.

Two tickets to the Barbarians’ home game. Saturday. Different stadium than the website listed. Closer to home. Yves. Two forty minute periods of watching Yves in motion. Sebastian was the best friend a man could want. “Thanks.” He swallowed hard. “You want to come?”

“Always.” Damn, why couldn’t Sebastian leave an opportunity for innuendo alone? “But yes, I’d love to see the game.”

Why couldn’t Robin stop leaving him openings? “I’ll pick you up three-ish.” He returned to his own desk, tickets clutched tightly. He would have gone to the wrong place, spoiled his own birthday, had his friend not intervened. He’d even put the top down this time if Sebastian wanted. He owned a comb.

And it wasn’t as if Yves would pay attention to anything but rugby.

At “ish” past three, Robin pulled up outside Sebastian’s townhouse. No one appeared at his honk, so he killed the engine and headed to the door. Sebastian opened it. He looked like hell, splotchy and swollen.

“What happened?” Did he need to drag this wreck to the emergency room?

“Found a wasp,” Sebastian croaked. “So I found the EpiPen, and then I found some Benadryl. This is better than it was.”

Better was definitely relative. “Should I take you over to Swedish Hospital, or does your insurance prefer Porter?”

“Don’t need to go in. The swelling’s going down. I own three more EpiPens, a big bottle of antihistamines, and a bed. I’m going to lie down until I feel more nearly human.”

Looking human might take longer—those were some spectacular blotches.

“Do you want me to stay, just in case?” Only for a friend as good as Sebastian would Robin even make the offer.

“No, don’t worry about it.” He waved away the suggestion. “Should have called, but you were already on the road. Go have fun. Happy birthday. Say hi to Yves.” He smiled, a ghastly affair given the state of his face. “Get some birthday kisses.”

“Sebastian!” Jaysus, the man could be a brat! But he looked slightly better than when Robin had come to the door, so Robin was willing to believe his claim of improvement. He got back into the Miata, mulling words his friend had spoken half in jest. Which meant all in earnest. Did Sebastian know something he hadn’t said directly? Or was it all crap?

Fuck it. Today was his birthday. He’d see the man of his dreams play some great rugby, and he’d grow a set. He was old enough to go for what he wanted, and it wasn’t going to happen unless he took a risk or two. At worst he could get his ticket stub autographed, and at best?

Robin dared not think of the best, or he’d never get this boner into the stadium undetected.

CHAPTER 3

Now that Robin had a slight idea of what the game was about, he could concentrate on more than the gorgeousness of the star player, who seemed to have switched positions for the game. He stood poised for action in the second row, and didn't participate in the scrums, but damn, could the man run!

Yves had the ball again, and streaked for the goal line, with his straight brows furrowed in effort or concentration, and seemingly aware of everything going on around him. Milliseconds before a red and black blur leaped at him from behind, Yves passed the ball to a teammate in green and white. He went down hard, and Robin missed the score.

But he got up. Why the hell did this team have to be thirty percent larger than the others? Wasn't there some rule, no, some law, about players being humans and not Mack trucks? Entertaining the suicidal thought of dashing out to punch the tackler when Yves limped to the sideline, Robin held his breath until Yves flexed for the coach—Oh Lord, the way the muscles in his thigh rippled—and sat down with a water bottle.

His shoulders were so broad, damn, and his butt barely took up any space on the bench. Did he need some ice for that ankle? Robin would raid a concession stand. Did he need ibuprofen? Where was the nearest drugstore? Robin would buy three brands. An ACE bandage? He'd wrap Yves' damaged leg with his own shirt if need be. But five minutes later, Yves loped back to the field to stand in the front row, and three plays later was in the middle of another ruck. Or maul. Or maybe brawl—they were stamping and kicking and men were on the ground. The ball boinged out of the heaving mass, to be scooped up by a green and white player. He and Yves played keep-away all the way down the field for another try, defenders never quite catching up with the right man at the right time. Robin ran every step with them, not relaxing until Yves planted the ball past the goal line.

Just don't let him end up face down in the mud again. A knot grew in Robin's back from mentally pushing the leviathans away from Yves every

time he had the ball. Forlorn hope—Yves bit the dirt five more times before the game ended, 29–24. The teams congratulated each other, and this time anyone who hugged Yves or slapped his back wasn't trying to grind him into the grass. The players hobbled to their respective benches. Yves' face was more dirt than skin, his clothing the memory of green and white, his bare arms and legs disguised beneath a layer of topsoil. He'd bound his hair in a ponytail for the game—wisps stuck out at all angles and the elastic was half out. Fuck, but he was sexy.

Now or never. *I'm a big boy, and all I have to do is get down there before he leaves. Say something. Anything. I can do this.* Why was it so hard to approach a man who looked like he'd been dragged through the hedge backwards, twice, and then run over with a tractor? Robin tried stretching the tension out of his body, arms low and behind him, his head back. He might as well have played the match himself for the physical toll.

And Yves was watching. Robin collapsed out of the stretch. Yves was looking his way, scrubbing at himself with a raggy old towel, and the same challenge he'd offered the camera long ago was now aimed Robin's way. Was that *Back off or come closer?*

Well, hell, if he was going to do something, he might as well, although slinking out had a certain appeal. *For my birthday I want a set of balls.* And that was the gift only Robin could give himself. *Unless Yves wants to fulfill my private fantasies and let me grope his.* Oh no, don't get started on that. *Just go and say one sentence, however lame, and then you can go back to being a slightly obsessed fanboy lurking in the bushes.*

Other people didn't hesitate, pushing ahead of Robin, begging for signatures from the players. "Sign my ticket, please?" must have gladdened the few others who had pens thrust at them. Yves smiled for the fans and scrawled on the proffered stubs, but his glance kept returning to Robin's slow progress. Was the upturn of Yves' lips left over from his clamoring fans, or was it for Robin? His feet weighed a thousand pounds each, as if they'd never run miles through parks and over country roads.

The five steps from the stands down to the sidelines were the longest, hardest steps Robin had ever taken. Longer than the hill climb up the Green Mountain trail. Longer than the last kilometer of the Bolder Boulder 10K. Longer than mere distance, and harder than the knock of his heart against his ribs. Yves watched him, and Robin forced himself to read some sort of welcome in the man's eyes. He could be just a fan, right?

The eager autograph seekers fluttered away, leaving Yves with his towel and gear bag, finger-combing his now-loose hair into some semblance of order.

"We're heading to the Bonnie Brae," called another man dressed in green, white, and mud. "See you there!"

"In a bit, perhaps." Yves' words were for his teammate but his eyes were on Robin. "After I clean up."

He spoke with a hint of an accent, more French than the Midwest-with-an-eh Canadian Robin was accustomed to. An accent to lick with. An accent to buckle a man's knees. "Say something in French" would be even lamer than the banal phrases Robin was still trying to find in the back of his throat.

"Don't take too long, or they'll close the locker room." The other players left with knowing smiles.

"Call if you need a ride, Yves."

Why was everyone so willing to leave them alone? Not that this wasn't exactly what Robin had dreamed of, but he hadn't expected to get it.

"Thanks, Marcus."

No! Don't take him away before I've made a thorough ass of myself! Robin's tongue remained stubbornly tied.

Yves' smile, so confident a moment ago, wavered slightly as the group trickled away, leaving them alone in the stadium with a few straggling watchers and a couple of cleaners with trash bags and poky sticks, stabbing the forgotten cups and hot dog wrappers.

“Great game,” Robin finally got out. “Ten points this time, and a lot of assists.” That had to be important enough to mention, even if his terminology was wrong.

“Thank you.” Yves’ smile returned full force. “The team is improving as the season goes on.”

“Yeah, they are.” Firmer ground here. “They aren’t dropping things at practice.” *Way to go, dodo, why didn’t you just say “I’m a creepy stalker?”*

“Kicking is improving too. Marcus scored a conversion from thirty-five yards out.”

He had? Somehow Robin had only noticed the screaming afterward. “That was great.” Okay, five sentences out at only seventy percent stupid, and Yves was still smiling, so this was a win all the way around. “Um, if you need to go shower before they lock up...” *Can I scrub your back?*

Yves shrugged. “I need to shower at home. I forgot to pack any jeans.”

He wasn’t reaching for his phone yet, so Robin dared offer. “I could take you...” Where did he need to go? Across town? Back to Montreal? Hawaii? The Miata might have trouble with the Pacific Ocean, but he could charter a freighter... “Oh, and I’m Robin Isley.”

“Would you? Thanks.” Yves swiped at his butt and the back of his legs again and slung the muddy towel into the gear bag. “Yves Dubois.” He put his hand out to complete an introduction he didn’t have to make.

Eve Doo-bwah. Robin memorized the accented syllable and shook a hand he’d spent a lot of time fantasizing about. Nothing stupid came out of his mouth, and his knees held, so he counted this a win.

Fuck, the walk to the car and the drive home would need conversation, and Robin had already used up his supply of prepared remarks. Now it was time for freeform opportunities to embarrass himself. “How long have you played rugby?” seemed safe enough, and maybe like he hadn’t tried to find out everything he could about Yves.

“Since I was a boy.” Was Yves as aware of Robin as Robin was of Yves? This steaming, warm assembly of muscle and bone couldn’t possibly be walking a few inches closer than necessary.

“It’s a popular sport in Canada, isn’t it?” A question he knew the answer to already, but it seemed safe. “You played for the national team, right?”

“Yes, in the younger teams. Not the Senior men’s team.” Yves seemed to be looking at some memory—his voice was far away. “An injury reminded me that I wouldn’t play forever, and my fallback field wouldn’t wait for one tackle too many. So I ‘retired’ to a day job and a semi-pro team.”

“But you still follow them?” Oh, good, Robin, a *d’oh* question. They were his friends and teammates.

“Canada is playing the US today. They’ll win.” Yves grinned.

“Probably isn’t hard to know who to cheer for.” Robin unlocked the car.

“It is hard, though. Now that I live in the US, shouldn’t I cheer for my new country?” Folding himself into the tiny sports car, Yves demonstrated that six feet three inches of man telescoped into a space more comfortable for Robin’s five feet nine. “The game will be on at the Bonnie Brae. We could watch with the team later.”

We? Had he heard that correctly? Even if it was just basic politeness, he’d take it. “Then you could explain to me what’s going on.”

“Then perhaps we shouldn’t watch with the team.”

“Oh.” Robin collapsed in spite of himself. “Okay. Where am I dropping you off?”

“*We* are going to 10th and Downing.” Yves looked him full on, his demanding gaze making it hard for Robin to look at anything but the steering wheel. “Not that I wouldn’t explain to you, but the team thinks you’re a scout, and they should be allowed to think that.”

And explanations would ruin the effect. No wonder the other players had been so willing to let him be alone with their star—they thought he had opportunities and money in his pocket for one of their own.

“And what do you think I am?” Robin threw the car into forward, braced for scraping parked vehicles when he heard the answer. *Fanboy. Stalker. Easy target.* Had he left out anything? *Remember to stop at the entrance and not just pull out into oncoming traffic.*

“You’re my lucky charm.”

CHAPTER 4

Hitting the brakes much harder than needed, Robin kept from nosing out into the path of an SUV. “Your lucky charm?”

Yves snapped against the safety harness. The car settled and threw them back. “Exactly. The team has won every game but one this season. They’re the same team as last year, when they won only three.” Yves went silent until Robin had them safely on the street. “The only change in the lineup is me. Except they’re not the same—they work harder now. And we win. I’m not doing it alone—I couldn’t. You come to games—they play with spirit. You come to practice, and they make the effort. They improve.”

“They’re doing it for you.” Robin’s knuckles went white on the steering wheel. “They want to be worthy of you.” *So do I.*

“Perhaps.” Yves rubbed his hand along his own thigh for a moment. A fleck of mud fell off, and he stopped. “But they worked much harder once you came to watch. So I think maybe they do it for both of us?”

“If they’re doing it for ‘the scout’, then they’re really doing it for you.” Robin refused to think of himself as valuable to the Barbarians, whom he didn’t know and who didn’t know him. “But I’m glad they’re doing it.”

“So am I.” Yves gave him that brilliant grin from the practice field, blinding at close range. “I like to win.”

The car suddenly felt the size of a shower stall. “So I should keep coming to practices?” Robin hung on the answer, missing the green left arrow and having to wait for the light to cycle.

“Please. Not just for the team.” Yves’ voice dropped. “I work harder when you watch.”

OMG, was Yves flirting? Robin swallowed hard. “Um, we’re about there. Where am I going?” He followed directions into the parking lot of a high-rise apartment building. “The team will be disappointed if you don’t join them for the celebrations, won’t they?”

“Probably, but they’ll be rejoicing for a long time and the game isn’t on for a few hours. Come upstairs and I can clean up, maybe explain enough rugby that we can both go without destroying the illusion that you understand the game well.” Yves had to get out of the convertible one leg at a time.

If the top were down, that would be less of a problem next time... If there were a next time. First Robin had to survive now.

An elevator that contained Yves really didn’t have enough oxygen in it. Robin tried to breathe normally until they reached the seventh floor, but the closeness of the man stole the air away. The car was intimate, but to go into Yves’ home... Robin went for what he hoped was a neutral topic. “Your scrum only pushed the other team over once today. Was that bad?”

Yves unlocked his door to let them into a not-very-lived-in living room, where mathematical rows of magazines populated the coffee tables and tan leather furniture grouped around a cream and tan Oriental rug with teal medallions. “If I’d known you were coming I would have tidied.” Yves dropped his bag in a corner.

If the place was any tidier, he’d have to do without reading material all together. Was he a real neat freak? Possible downside, *whoop whoop whoop*. Robin tried to find a place he wasn’t afraid to sit down for fear of creases.

“Pushing the other team over in the scrum at all was very bad. We try to move each other around but not cause a collapse.” Yves set his lips in a narrow line, and Robin predicted scrum drills for someone. “The other team didn’t set their scrum well, and we did. We were much stronger.”

Probably not for the Barbos, then. “What did they do wrong?” It all looked alike to Robin during the game, but then, the man he’d been watching wasn’t involved in the melee.

“It’s easier to show you, if I may.” In his tentative reach to Robin, half the confidence drained from Yves’ handsome, mobile face.

But to be touched... The thrill was enough to overcome Robin’s caution. Maybe he’d been getting signals, or maybe he was only hoping to get them,

but Robin wouldn't start a thing. And if Yves wanted to show him something, he'd allow most anything at all. "Sure."

Looking down his smeared shirt, Yves shrugged and stripped it away. "No need to transfer the playing field to you." The muddy garment landed on the gear bag, but now those rippling pecs and washboard abs were on display. *Don't stare, asshat, he's being polite.*

Yves aligned him with the arm of the couch, bending Robin at the waist and letting him balance with a hand on the furniture. *I'm assuming the position with a half-naked man, and it's not going anywhere. Just pay attention. Just... pay...* Oh fuck, this was hopeless, and Robin's trapped erection complained that there were too many layers of clothes between him and opportunity.

"Okay, you're the loosehead prop, the couch is your hooker, who's the only one allowed to snag the ball out of the scrum. You bind to him and he binds to you."

Sounded kinky. Bound. Bent over, ass out. But this was rugby.

"That means you are holding on tightly." Oh, getting worse. "And now I—" Yves bent over beside Robin and a little to his rear, and draped his arm over Robin's back. Damn it, why did this HAVE to be rugby? "I'm your blindside flanker, and we are on the outside left of the scrum. I bind myself to you—" He placed his hand on Robin's belly. Oh fuck, every non-rugby thought throbbed.

"—the other second rows bind themselves to me, the last man is in a row by himself, and we all push against the opposite team. But if the binding is too high, then all that happens is no traction and we slide and end up packed tight and high."

Yves' arm scraped up Robin's back, and his hand stroked quite impersonally up to Robin's chest, even if his hip and thigh curved around Robin's body. His back and belly were exposed—Yves could have his shirt off in another few inches. *Please, please...*

"This is bad."

Speak for yourself, buddy. It's only bad if you don't take it further.

“No power.”

Okay, for rugby that was bad. And worse, Yves stood up and pulled Robin's shirt down again.

“But for a properly set scrum, one gets low. Puts the head down, and the shoulder against the meat of the man ahead of him.”

Oh Lord. Yves did *not* just say that. But he was demonstrating, his shoulder now against the joint of Robin's thigh and ass, his head low enough to let him look under Robin's belly if he wished. Where he could see the throbbing erection he'd roused, demanding to escape the denim that contained it. *Maybe I could just die now. Or use it.* A muscular arm snaked around behind Robin's thighs. *This is for the game. Nothing more. Down, boy. Down.* Yeah, like anything short of an orgasm was going to deflate him with Yves' head at his side and hand on his hip.

“Lots of power this way.” Yves pushed.

Robin went flying onto the couch cushions, and Yves flew with him. Beside him. No, atop him, pressing him into the buttery leather. Pressing the length of his body to Robin's. And—oh Lord, Yves was hard. His length crushed against Robin's ass, just left of his cleft, not quite right—but if he wiggled to rearrange, would Yves get up? Or not? And why would he want Yves to do that anyway, not with soft lips explaining to the nape of his neck that, “This is how you take possession,” and hands tight to his shoulders.

Writhing, with Yves' body burning through their clothing, Robin wanted to be possessed. Turning his head enough to see his captor, Robin stroked his cheek against Yves' mouth. “You gonna possess me?”

“If you allow it.” Yves brushed his lips over Robin's skin.

As if he wanted anything more. “Let me turn over.”

Chest to chest, belly to belly, the glory that was Yves pressed against him now, their mouths meeting and arms tight around each other. Binding wasn't just for the scrum, it was for thrusting his cock against Yves', demanding

friction. Yves met him thrust for thrust, tongue probing deeply into Robin's mouth, and there were too many damned clothes in the way.

They tumbled to the floor, clothing flying, and somehow Robin ended up on top, straddling Yves' hips. Too far away to kiss, but the perfect distance to admire lightly-tanned skin with its dark streaks from the playing field, stretched over muscles that rippled with every caress Yves bestowed. Taut quads flexed under Robin's ass, which Yves was gripping with both hands.

Their cocks lay side by side, inviting a comparison that Robin swallowed with both hands, stroking them together. He'd rather look at Yves' face, and know that the challenge had gone from his eyes, only to be replaced with desire.

"Yes," Yves breathed, and Robin wouldn't question, but touch everywhere he was invited to—he'd touch everything he'd dreamed of for weeks. The heat against his palms, the rasp of hair against his balls, even the small pain where Yves dug into his butt a little too hard for the scantest moment—Robin was greedy for everything he could take, everything Yves would give.

Joining his hand with Robin's, Yves helped him stroke their cocks. The feel of that thick rod pressed against his own needy cock, wrapped in the primality of the hunt and the victory, and a little drowning, too, in eyes of pale blue. He gasped, bringing Yves upright to grip him with a strong arm and press his face to Robin's chest.

To be wanted by Yves, to be touched, to be jacked, all burst through him in jets of come and the shattering of a fantasy. Still trembling, Robin pulled Yves against him to bury his face in flowing, slightly muddy locks, and stroked, bringing Yves to his own shuddering finish.

They stayed entwined, more comfortably once Yves crossed his legs to make a nest for Robin's butt, and he leaned against Robin's shoulder, resting his head in the crook of Robin's neck. Wonderful but drippy, and Yves' muddy skin was starting to crackle.

“We’ll mess your rug if we stay here much longer.” The trails on their skins demanded attention. Robin brushed his lips across Yves’ forehead, tasting the salt of the game upon him.

“This rug is a hundred and fifty years old. I’m sure it’s met much worse.” But Yves helped Robin get up, with the same maneuver he’d used to lift his teammate in pursuit of the ball. In turn, Robin offered a hand, to be enveloped and rewarded with a kiss.

Guiding Robin to the shower with one hand on his shoulder, Yves walked them through a bedroom that looked as if the Tasmanian Devil had made the bed and finished with a trip through the closet holding a rake. The contrast with the pristine living room made Robin choke a little, but he didn’t comment.

“I would have had this neat by Tuesday, but...” Yves shrugged.

Tuesday was a practice night. “You were going to make a move?” After all those nights that ended in nothing but a happy flash of teeth?

“You seemed to be getting over that deer in the headlights reaction, so I thought it might be time.” Yves kissed him and shoved him under the shower spray. “But you approached me first.”

They explored each other with sudsy hands, finding crevices and bulges, the firm places and the soft ones. Yves bent to let Robin create masses of foam with the shampoo, and nearly wriggled under his hands. Robin had to nuzzle Yves’ Adam’s apple when he tipped back to rinse, remembering every swallow of sports drink where he’d held the bottle vertically. Tease. The top of Robin’s head only came to Yves’ nose—he had to stand on tiptoe to reach.

Free of shampoo and hard again, Yves took a dollop of conditioner and didn’t put it on his hair. Rubbing it on his cock instead, he turned Robin to face the tiles. “Not in.” But close—Yves settled his erection into the cleft of Robin’s ass to stroke between.

Good, but not as satisfying as in, but without a condom, Robin wouldn’t complain. Not with the man he’d yearned for plastered against his skin. With that friendly reach-around to get Yves’ big hand around his cock, Robin

wasn't about to say a word that wasn't "Mmm, good." Not when he was enveloped in strong arms and hands, not when Yves brushed his lips over the nape of Robin's neck, not when his hips were thrusting with increasing urgency. The water beat on them, but wasn't as hot as the come Yves sprayed across Robin's lower back, and scant strokes later, Robin convulsed against the pressure of Yves' fingers.

Yves lifted him upright and let the water wash his come away, nuzzling the side of Robin's head. They had to break apart to rinse off Yves' traces, letting Robin get his first good look at his favorite rugby player in the nude. He scrubbed at a muddy mark on Yves' leg, watching it drizzle away.

"You clean up nice." Better than nice. Gorgeous, but Robin was keeping a lid on the gushing. He ran the soapy cloth up and down Yves' thigh, and felt warm pressure under his arms, bringing him to stand.

"So do you." Yves bent for a brush of mouths. "Not that you were muddy."

"Not like—" Instead of explanations, Robin ran his hands over Yves' biceps.

"So?" That brought an eyebrow. "Strong and lean. Built like a runner." He investigated how runners' glutes felt.

"Yeah, I do run." Okay, he could breathe again: Yves liked what he saw, what he touched. Robin leaned against the wall of man. "I'm in training. Big race this Monday."

"Really?" Yves shut the water and groped for towels. "You're running the Bolder Boulder?" He flipped terrycloth around Robin's back and hugged the water away.

"Yeah." Should he mention the details, his expectations for himself? Would that seem too much like bragging, and feeble bragging at that, compared to the athleticism Robin had witnessed earlier?

"I thought about running, but had no partner. Maybe you and I...?" Toweling his hair, Yves' voice went much quieter.

The joy of his starting position turned to ashes. “I’m in the A wave. Even if you qualified, it’s too late to get into anything lower than HH. I’d be done before you ever started.”

“Then I could meet you at the finish line?” Yves emerged from his aqua terry barricade. “You’ll want a dry shirt and some water.”

“You’d do that?” Robin had already asked Sebastian to be the keeper of the keys and T-shirts, but... Could they get along? Could Sebastian refrain from telling every horrible story of Robin’s life while they waited at the finish line? Would they even find each other in the crowd at Folsom Stadium, or would Sebastian be okay with the opportunity to sleep in later? Or would Sebastian flutter his eyelashes? The horrid possibilities danced in Robin’s fevered imagination.

“Sure. Sebastian and I can drive up with you.” With one finger Yves lifted Robin’s chin, which had dropped like the perfect ninny’s.

“You... know Sebastian... Whah?” Words failed.

“He didn’t tell you?” Yves chuckled. “And here I thought you were too proud to lean on connections.”

“Connections?” Half-thoughts flickered *zzzt zzzt* in Robin’s head. The towel dangled from his immobile fingers. “He never said...”

Yves took the towel away and knelt to wipe the drips from Robin’s legs. “I’m the cousin you refused to allow him to introduce.” Sliding the towel between Robin’s thighs, he went on. “I didn’t imagine you refused to let him tell you who the cousin is.”

“He said his cousin played rugby. Lots of people play rugby. And I...” Robin shook himself and steadied with a hand on Yves’ shoulder. “I wouldn’t even let him mention his cousin...”

“Why?” Yves looked up, a smile playing at the corners of his mouth.

“If Sebastian had introduced us, we’d have hated each other on sight, or in ten minutes, twelve at the most.” Or fucked and parted just as fast. “He has a terrible track record.”

“That explains why he kept saying to let you have some time.” With his hands on Robin’s waist, Yves lifted himself to his feet. “But he thinks quite highly of you. Tells me stories about your adventures.” He didn’t release his hold on Robin’s middle. “You have an interesting life. I’ve never gone bungee jumping.”

The groan emerged from somewhere around Robin’s navel. “Only once, and never again.” One of Sebastian’s other introductions had suggested going, and had *not* been sympathetic, to say the least. That’s when Robin had also said “never again” to Sebastian’s matchmaking attempts. He leaned into Yves’ chest, unwilling to let him see the remembered humiliation.

“He said you were smart. And loyal.” Yves bent down for another kiss, which landed in Robin’s hair. “Also skittish, but you seem to have gotten over that.”

“No reason to dodge when I’ve been tackled by a big, sweaty rugby player who works harder when I watch.” Had Yves been dreaming of a Robin he’d known only from another man’s words? That deserved a kiss, and some living up to. Robin drew Yves closer and hung his arms around Yves’ neck. The reach up was worth every millimeter. “You took a chance doing that with a skittish man.”

“I got impatient, and you’d finally come to me.” His smile was more “worth the wait” than “high damned time”. “And I intend to do it again and again while I get to know you.”

“Okay,” could barely get out of Robin’s throat, but Yves had to get the message from their meeting of mouths. Seeking rather than passionate, Robin nibbled at Yves’ lips to be met with sweet caresses in return, and the sweep of Yves’ hand up and down Robin’s back promised interest.

Sweet kisses wouldn’t fill Yves’ belly—it grumbled. Yves blushed. “I need to eat, and the game... The team. Come with me.”

“Uh...” This was turning into a hell of a first date. Yves shouldn’t be done out of his triumph with the others. “That’s not what you said earlier.”

“We weren’t on kissing terms earlier.”

“True. Let’s go.” Robin went in search of his clothing.

Looking marvelous in a green Barbo T-shirt and jeans, Yves waited for Robin to unlock the Miata’s passenger door.

“Want to put the top down?” Robin was impressed with the way Yves could telescope his legs, but he shouldn’t have to, and his hair would finish drying awfully fast. His own would take a beating, but that was fine, this time. Maybe go with the tousled look for the summer.

“Yes!” That broad grin was added reason to go topless. Robin flipped a handle and opened the car to the sun.

The Bonnie Brae Tavern wasn’t far, just far enough for Robin to get jittery. “I’m going to have to keep really quiet if they aren’t going to twig to me not being a scout.”

Yves nodded thoughtfully. “I’m not certain it’s possible, and we shouldn’t try. If they lie to themselves, that’s one thing. If we lie to them, that’s another. They’re my friends; I want them to like you, and that’s a bad foundation.”

“Very.” But introducing him as a friend would also fly in the face of the way they’d seen him and Yves smile but never speak at practice. “What do you want to do?” He found a slot for the little red car.

Yves turned sideways in the seat and rested his hand on Robin’s shoulder. “Remember I said you were my good luck charm?”

“Yeah.” The heat from Yves’ skin somehow transformed into chills. “What else do you need good luck for?”

Yves sighed. “I’m not in the closet, but neither am I exactly out. They’ve never seen me with anyone. Nor heard me speak of anyone. There’s been no one to speak of since I came to Denver. So the subject has never come up. And I don’t want to lie to them by pretending you are no one to me.”

“What am I to you besides Sebastian’s stories?” *And a couple of orgasms.* Robin didn’t reach for his seat belt.

“I don’t know yet. I want to find out.” Yves stroked his shoulder, each motion demanding Robin turn to look at him. “But I don’t want to go in there

and have to be wary of touching you accidentally or smiling at you too warmly. I don't want to start off with lies."

"I don't want to start off with a stomping." He could outrun them if he had to, but why should he have to?

"If things degenerate, I'll protect you. We'll leave if it gets ugly, but Robin, they're riding the high of the victory. They've seen me at practice, they bind to me, I bind to them, there's never been a problem. They've had a chance to know me."

It almost made sense. Robin turned to see Yves' pleading eyes.

"I know we're doing this backwards, we should have dinners and runs and long afternoons before I ask you to meet them, but they expect me to come, it's what the team does. I don't want you to leave yet, and I don't want to treat you like just another man. Because I don't think that's what you'll be."

"Why not?" Robin relaxed into Yves' hand.

"Because Sebastian's set-up record with me is pretty good. So far he's been right, and you have been my good luck charm." Yves worked a thumb along the side of Robin's neck. "So this will go well too."

"I hope so." And if not, he could outrun them. Yves seemed pretty confident.

"It will." But Yves didn't open the car door until Robin had unfastened the seat belt and reached for the handle.

"Binding on, you called it?" Maybe this wouldn't last past the tavern door, but Robin would give Yves this much confidence. He slipped his arm around Yves' waist and snugged into his side. Yves dropped his arm around Robin's shoulders. Bound, they went in to meet the team.

THE END

Author Bio

P.D. Singer lives in Colorado with her slightly bemused husband, two rowdy teenage boys, and thirty pounds of cats. She's a big believer in research, first-hand if possible, so the reader can be quite certain P.D. has skied down a mountain face-first, been stepped on by rodeo horses, acquired a potato burn or two, and will never, ever, write a novel that includes sky-diving.

When not writing, playing her fiddle, or skiing, she can be found with a book in hand. Her husband blesses the advent of e-books—they're staving off the day the house collapses from the weight of the printed page.

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