

ALEX'S SURPRISE

Fetal Heart
Report 160
WorkSheet
Graph



CHRIS MCHART

ALEX'S SURPRISE

Alex wanted a night of hot passion with Gerome, but he gets more than he ever bargained for. His life will be changed forever in a world where he'll be thrown in jail—or worse—for being pregnant.

Alex's best friend, Sam, has been acting strange ever since he met Alex's one-night stand, but now Alex needs help in order to hide, and Sam is his only hope.

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Love is an Open Road

An M/M Romance series

ALEX'S SURPRISE

By Chris McHart

Introduction

The story you are about to read celebrates love, sex and romance between men. It is a product of the *Love is an Open Road* promotion sponsored by the *Goodreads M/M Romance Group* and is published as a gift to you.

What Is Love is an Open Road?

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 these authors 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 is an Open Road*.

No matter if you are a long-time devotee to M/M Romance, just new to the genre or fall somewhere in between, 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.

Each year, a dedicated group of Volunteers from the M/M Romance Group work hard behind the scenes to bring these stories to you. Our Editors, Formatters, Proofreaders, and those working on Quality Assurance, spend many long hours over a course of several months so that each Event is a success. As

each and every author also gives freely of their time and talent, it was decided that all edits suggested may be accepted or rejected by the author at any given time. For this reason, some stories will appear to be more tightly edited than others, depending on the choice of the author.

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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ALEX'S SURPRISE

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Photo Description

A blond-haired man making love to a visibly pregnant man. From the expression on the blond's face and the kiss he presses on the black-haired man's shoulder, it's clear these two are a couple who are deeply in love. They are somewhere hidden, maybe a basement, since there are stairs visible in the background. It makes me wonder, is the pregnancy forbidden? Are they hiding because of that?

Story Letter

Dear Author,

When I got pregnant unexpectedly and my partner-in-babymaking up and ran off, I figured I'd be alone forever. It was a rough time and if not for best friend I don't know how long it would have taken to drag myself out of it. I never thought I'd find myself in this position with him. He has been so supportive through the pregnancy and all these feelings I'd never noticed before started blossoming. This is our first time together and I never thought sex could be this amazing—tender and smoking hot all at the same time. I think it helps that he spent so much time wooing me and we were able to fully switch from “friend” mindset to “romance” mindset before we just jumped into bed.

Sincerely,

Kathy Reinard

P.S. I'd really like to see that initial dark time when he first found out he was pregnant and best friend was there with support and then some of the later wooing. However, what I'd really, really like is a tender hot sex scene with a heavily pregnant MC that isn't all about writing an M/F love scene and just making one participant male. Please make these two MCs equal and avoid differing power dynamics in the bedroom (no BDSM).

Story Info

Genre: paranormal

Tags: vampire, m-preg, friends to lovers, forbidden male pregnancy, unexpected pregnancy

Content Warnings: hot sex with a guy who's not going to be the boyfriend

Word Count: 28,211

Dedication

For Kathy with thanks for such a great prompt and for my awesome beta readers for the help. For Meg from Bawd Designs for the awesome cover.

And, as always, for my husband. Love you.

ALEX'S SURPRISE

By Chris McHart

Chapter One

Alex

Alex zapped, annoyed, through the channels. He lounged on the couch, bored out of his mind. Sam, his best friend and roommate, had taken up the recliner, reading something. Maybe Alex should do that as well? Watching TV wasn't going to keep him entertained, since nothing caught his interest, no movie, no documentary, nothing. He zapped on, but stopped at a news report showing a pregnant man. He sat up a bit straighter. What was up with that?

The man's stomach was swollen, showing he was at least five or six months along. His hands were cuffed in front of his baby bump and tears were streaming down his face. The camera showed a courtroom full of people, slowly sweeping over the interested men and women watching the process.

Alex turned up the volume. What had the man done? And why was he pregnant? He'd heard it was possible, but he'd never encountered someone who'd actually experienced that.

The reporter's voice came up. "Robert B. was tried for violation of the racial laws. Today's sentencing was long awaited. No one had heard of pregnant men for years, and there had been uncertainty about the actual jurisdiction in such cases. B., who is, according to doctors, six months along, was sentenced to five years in jail. His child will be put in an orphanage until he is released. The fathering sire has no legal claim over the child. He will be able to visit his child, but he can't get guardianship over him or her. The child and the carrier will be outcasts of society after that.

"B. broke down after hearing the judge's decision. Even though it's forbidden, he clearly hoped the old laws would be overturned. Instead, the judge confirmed that male breeding between the races is still forbidden and punishable. With that, back to the studio."

The picture changed, now showing a woman in a suit, smiling at the camera. "Thanks to our reporter in Berlin for a summary of today's events in court. Now to the weather..."

Alex turned down the volume, muting the forecast. He turned to Sam, who had apparently put down his book to watch the news as well. "Did you hear that? How can they judge someone because he got pregnant?"

"I have no idea? Maybe because it's wrong? Are these children dangerous? I've never met one, or heard of one, for that matter, but I guess there's a reason it's forbidden. The whole pregnant man thing is so strange, no wonder it's against the laws. Who knows what'll come out of such breedings."

Alex frowned. A new life was precious, not wrong. He couldn't imagine a child being dangerous, even if it was mixed. Children born from interracial relationships were allowed, as long as one of the parents was female and the other male. Why this didn't apply to children born from a same-sex relationship was beyond Alex. Even if it was unusual for a man to be pregnant, he shouldn't be put in jail for something like that.

This was the first case in a long time, according to the reporter, but he'd not given a reason why the laws were upheld. "It's still wrong to judge someone for getting pregnant."

"I don't know. Like I said, there must be a reason why it's forbidden." Sam picked up his book again, ending the conversation. Alex took a moment to study his friend's features as he buried himself in yet another sci-fi book. He was quite handsome with his blond, unruly hair and his strong jaw. The gaze of the piercing blue eyes that never seemed to miss anything flew over the page, pulling Sam into yet another outlandish adventure.

Maybe Sam was right. There had to be a reason it was against the law. Alex was kind of sorry for the man who now faced five years in prison, but then, the man knew what he risked with getting pregnant in the first place.

Alex settled back and focused on the TV again. Sam was not in the mood to discuss the matter anymore, his mind clearly on the story he was reading. As if they'd need sci-fi to experience something unusual. Ever since paranormals had come out of hiding back in the 1980s, going to certain clubs could be more adventurous than anything an author could come up with.

Maybe he should go out today? Blowing off some steam wouldn't hurt. He'd not gotten laid in quite a while, and a night in one of the mixed clubs sounded too good to resist. It was better than staring at a rerun of a movie.

Alex switched off the TV and stood. "I'm going out, do you want to come with me?"

"What do you have in mind?" Sam looked up from his book.

"Dancing? I thought of going to the Downtown."

“Na, go without me. I’m not in the mood for that crowd.”

“You sure? It’s been months since you’ve been out.” Alex wasn’t surprised, Sam wasn’t one to go out much, and he despised big crowds. The Downtown is a huge mixed club, catering to all kinds of paranormals and humans. Not that paranormals were forbidden anywhere, but they, as well as humans, preferred to stick with their own kind. One of the exceptions was a club like the one Alex was going to visit. A night of dancing, and maybe getting laid, sounded better with every second.

“I’m sure, yes. I think I’ll read for a couple of hours, then I’m off to bed. Have fun.” Sam smiled at Alex. “See you tomorrow.”

“Will do. Goodnight.” Alex grinned back. He fully intended to have fun. The last months had been stressful enough with starting uni and working to support himself; he deserved some time out.

Chapter Two

The hard beat of the club's music reverberated through Alex's chest, his heartbeat syncing with it, forcing him to follow the rhythm. His body moved on its own and no worries had a place in his mind as he danced with closed eyes in the middle of the other hot and sweaty bodies.

Yeah, that, and to find a hot man to fuck him senseless, was why he'd come here tonight. That'd be the icing on the cake of relaxing. The dance floor was packed, bodies moving left and right, pressing against him, only to back up, giving him some space, and then closing in on him again. Sweat beaded down his back, not unpleasant but letting him know he'd need a break soon.

Finally, Alex worked his way off the dance floor, got himself something to drink, and watched the crowd around him. Vampires showed off their greater speed by dancing like whirlwinds, while some of the weres had way too much fun with shifting partially during the dancing. One man sported a tail and wolfish ears, while his face and the remainder of his body were human-like. A woman in skin tight trousers raked long, catlike claws down a man's back, who shuddered and pushed a hand into his jeans. Those two weres would be gone soon, having a lot of fun together.

Someone shifted into a big cat in one of the corners, but nobody batted an eye. The huge, dark feline vanished between the other people as Alex downed his drink. *Time to get back to dancing.* He pushed through the hot bodies, trying to find a spot where he could move without getting squished. Eyes closed, he lost himself to the beat again.

Strong hands landed on his hips, slipping under his shirt, touching his bare flesh. Alex turned his head to look at the man behind him. Jet-black hair, a stubbled jaw, and a killer smile. He was a couple of inches taller than Alex, but since Alex was only five foot eight, that wasn't uncommon. He couldn't make out more of the man's face, but then, he wasn't going to marry the guy. He was going to get laid. That was all. The man would do.

Alex leaned back carefully, testing whether the guy'd hold him up. He did, pressing closer to Alex, who rocked back against the guy's crotch. His arms encircled Alex, pulling him tight to the man's front.

The stranger was already half hard, his cock pushing at Alex's ass. Just what he needed tonight. Alex closed his eyes as the man's hands ran over his

stomach, down to the top of his trousers. The man slowly opened the button that held them together and trailed a finger under the fabric, getting closer to Alex's nonexistent pubic hair. Alex sucked in a harsh breath as his conquest's fingers touched the sensitive skin, inching closer to Alex's cock, while trying to at least keep up the pretense of dancing. It was more of a swaying than actual dancing, but at least they didn't stand stock still on the dance floor in the middle of all the moving bodies.

The man bit Alex's neck, sending a shiver down his spine. Not unpleasant, yet it was a tad harder than Alex liked it. Alex turned his head around to find the guy's lips, but the angle was all wrong, so he continued nibbling on Alex's shoulder.

Ah, well, that was as good, and then they'd get to business faster if they didn't stop to have some kind of foreplay. Instead of kissing, Alex rested his head on the man's shoulder, trusting him to keep Alex upright, and pressed his ass back against the crotch behind him, letting the man know what exactly Alex intended to do with him.

They swayed for a few more moments, Alex getting more and more aroused. Judging by the hard cock poking Alex's ass, his dance partner wasn't faring any better. Alex smiled to himself. They were going to have a lot of fun.

The man released Alex, taking a step back. Surprised by the loss of contact, Alex stumbled. The guy grabbed Alex's arm, steadying him until he regained his footing.

"Your place? Or mine?" he shouted in Alex's ear.

Sam was at home, most likely still reading. He might not be happy if Alex brought someone home. Then again, he knew Alex was out and knew that Alex planned on getting laid. It didn't matter what Sam thought about Alex's one-night stand, since it wasn't as if he didn't bring guys back home. What sealed the deal was that Alex didn't live far away.

"Mine?" Alex shouted back.

The guy nodded, his eyes nearly glowing in the flashing lights. He took Alex's hand and pulled him to the entrance, where they retrieved Alex's jacket. When Alex looked at him with a question in his eyes, the guy shook his head. *No jacket?* It was winter and freaking cold outside. But then, it wasn't Alex who'd be freezing his ass off.

They stepped out into the icy night and Alex zipped his jacket. Holy shit, after the heat in the club it was *more* than freaking cold outside. He could not

only see his breath, but every time he inhaled his nose and lungs hurt. They needed to get into the warmth soon, preferably in Alex's bed.

Alex cast a glance at the man he'd take home in a couple of minutes. He didn't seem to be cold, or uncomfortable in the icy weather. Maybe a shifter, then. Some of the guys from Alex's classes had told him shifters had a different sensitivity to temperatures. All the better for him; Alex only wanted to get into a cab and out of the cold.

Two cabs waited already, but both had passengers lined up. "We'll have to wait until another one comes up." Alex forced out between chattering teeth.

"Looks like it. Are you cold?"

"No, everything's good." Alex cast a quick glance at the guy next to him. Nothing indicated what they'd done on the dance floor a few minutes ago. They didn't cuddle or stick close to stay warm. Alex wouldn't have minded sharing some body heat with the guy, but this was as romantic as a business deal.

"What's your name?" Alex asked instead, eager to finally get a name. He should've asked sooner, but he never got around to it.

"Gerome."

"I'm Alex." Shaking hands would've been too weird, so they just smiled at each other.

The next cab drove up and Alex signaled they'd take this one. Alex couldn't wait until he finally had Gerome in his bed. They climbed in, Alex very thankful he was out of the wind and cold.

"Good evening. Where do you want to go?" the driver asked politely.

Alex told him his address, and after the guy punched it into his navigation system, they were on their way.

Alex stared out of his window; Gerome probably did the same, bathing the car in silence. They both knew where this would lead. Maybe, if it was good, they'd do it again, but that remained to be seen. This knowledge didn't stop the lust running through Alex's veins, though. He needed to get fucked, badly.

Alex cast a glance in Gerome's direction. The light in the cab was low, but he was able to make out more of his handsome face than in the club. Damn, the man was hot. Clearly older than Alex by a few years, Gerome was not only easy on the eye, but he carried an arousing air of danger. *Just a few more minutes.* Alex shivered at the thought. He could barely contain the arousal rushing through his body.

As if he'd known Alex's thoughts, Gerome caught his gaze, smiled and leaned over to Alex. Their lips met in a sensual kiss, and Alex sighed deeply. Gerome raised his arms and pushed Alex back while coaxing Alex to open his mouth and let him in. Alex complied all too happily. While Alex wasn't a passive guy in any way, this time, before he knew it, he was on his back in the cab, Gerome pressing him into the cushions, kissing the living daylights out of him. All he could do was hang on for the ride.

Gerome's hands roamed Alex's body, apparently trying to touch him everywhere at once. He was limited because of the position, but that didn't stop him. Alex had more luck; he ran his hands down Gerome's back, tracing the strong muscles, and then he cupped Gerome's ass, smashing their crotches together, grinding at each other.

Alex broke away from Gerome's mouth, breathing heavily. Gerome nibbled on his neck again, sending a shiver of lust through Alex's body straight to his hard cock. Why weren't they at the apartment already? Alex needed Gerome inside of him, now.

Gerome claimed Alex's mouth again, ramping up the intensity of the kisses and humping against Alex. Alex's matching movements increased, pushing back hard at Gerome. Damn, he'd come in his trousers if they didn't stop now.

"Um, hate to interrupt, but we're here."

A voice broke through their lust filled haze. Alex needed a second to understand the meaning of the words. Right. They were there.

They sat up slowly, untangling themselves. Gerome climbed out of the taxi, then reached in to offer Alex a hand. He grasped it and Gerome pulled him out and into his arms, planting yet another kiss on Alex's mouth. Alex kissed him back, their tongues meeting and dancing.

Alex broke off though, since he had to pay the cab so they could make their way up to his apartment. Alex bent into the car to pay the driver while Gerome groped his ass, making it incredibly hard for Alex to concentrate on handing over the right bills. As soon as the cab sped off, Alex turned, mashing their lips together again in a toe-curling kiss. How they'd make it up to Alex's third floor apartment would be interesting. The building had no elevator, so they'd have to separate long enough to climb the stairs.

Right now, though, it didn't seem like they'd make it that far. Should he pull Gerome into the shadow next to the building? The scrub would provide

enough privacy for a quick BJ. No, Alex needed to get fucked. Blowing Gerome might be hot, but Alex needed more.

Alex pulled away from Gerome's mouth long enough to pant, "Inside. Now." He went back to kissing Gerome, pulling him in the direction of the entrance of the building. They separated long enough for Alex to fumble with his keys and open the door, but inside, Gerome pressed him against the wall, attacking his lips again. At least they were out of public now.

Gerome dropped to his knees, pulling at Alex's jeans. "Shit, not here. Come up. Let's get up to my apartment."

Gerome shook his head and nuzzled Alex's cock through his jeans. Freeing himself from the confinement of the trousers sounded too tempting and Alex even pushed Gerome's face against his crotch, squishing his eyes closed. If they made it to actual fucking, it'd be explosive.

A shout rang out somewhere above them, pulling Alex back into reality. Shit. They needed to get going. "Come on, let's go." Gerome only nodded and got to his feet. Being caught in the hallway wasn't what Alex had envisioned for tonight. "Up. Third floor." He started climbing without looking whether Gerome was following and very much aware how his ass looked in his tight jeans. He added just a bit of extra sway.

They made it up without further incidents, which spoke volumes about their restraint, and Alex even managed to open the apartment door without getting attacked again, which was for the better. If they started again, there'd be no stopping anymore.

Gerome followed him into the small entrance area, and Alex closed the door with an audible click. The moment they were alone, all bets were off. Gerome shoved Alex backward against the wall next to the door, mashing their mouths together.

Alex pushed against him, trying to guide them the few steps to the privacy of Alex's room. Never breaking the kiss, never stopping to look where they were going, they stumbled into Alex's room. Alex panted hard, his chest heaving, and his hard cock rubbing uncomfortably at his zipper. He needed. Now.

During a short break from kissing due to lack of air, Alex pulled off his jacket and shirt, motioning for Gerome to do the same. Seconds later, they were back in each other's arms, their tongues meeting in a battle of lust.

They didn't make it to the bed. Gerome pushed Alex against the wall next to the door and, with a careless kick, closed it. At least Sam couldn't walk in on them now. Alex's fingers probably left bruises on Gerome's hips, on his arms, everywhere. After a last, hard, desperate kiss Gerome turned Alex, pinning him against the wall. Alex's jeans were yanked down his legs; an impressive move considering how tight they were. Gerome gripped Alex's hands, raising them over his head.

"Keep them there," he rasped in Alex's ear, running his hands down Alex's chest, pausing to tweak the little nubs. Alex gasped, a shiver running down to his crotch. Gerome explored further, grasping Alex's hips and grinding his still clad cock against Alex. Still too many clothes between them, definitely. And if Gerome didn't hurry the fuck up and get inside Alex, he'd go nuts.

Finally, Gerome's fingers trailed between Alex's ass cheeks and Alex sighed deeply, allowing his head to fall forward to the cool wall. Now this was more like it. It was just so... dry... Lube. Right.

"We need... lube..." Alex panted, already so aroused he could barely form a coherent thought.

"Already on it. How much prep do you need?"

"Finger. Two, or so. Then I'm good." Alex groaned and closed his eyes as Gerome started to get him ready. *Holy fucking shit*, Gerome knew what he was doing. He got Alex ready in record time, stretching Alex without giving him a second to catch his breath.

Gerome's fingers alone had Alex on the brink of an orgasm. He latched onto Alex's neck again, his upper body covering Alex's back. Gerome bit down hard as he pulled out of Alex. Alex gasped. Fuck, the bite hurt, but in a good way. Maybe Gerome was some kind of bloodsucker? Not that it mattered, but it'd explain the hotness of the bites.

Gerome fumbled for a second with what Alex assumed was a condom, and then something thicker pushed at Alex's ass. He breathed through the initial twinge, then Gerome filled him and Alex fucking fell apart.

The pounding was rough, hard, fast, and just the way Alex needed it. Gerome thrust into Alex, holding him close, giving him everything he had. His teeth were, again, embedded in Alex's neck, and he bit down in time with an especially hard thrust.

Alex wasn't into pain, but this was good, so good, and the telltale signs of an orgasm tingled in Alex's stomach. He'd been on the brink for so long,

holding back would be impossible. Alex came fast, the pace too much to stave off the orgasm for longer. The nearly touchable relief coming hand in hand with the release coursed through him, leaving him empty but satisfied. He hadn't even touched his cock.

Gerome followed a few seconds later with a deep groan. His fingers gripped Alex's hips in a borderline painful fashion. Damn, Alex was going to have bruises as well.

Gerome carefully licked one last time over the bite mark on Alex's shoulder. The flesh was a bit sore, but Gerome's licking soothed it. Alex had never been into pain, but that'd been hot. Gerome rested on Alex's back for a moment, breathing hard.

After a few moments in near silence, only their combined breaths audible, Gerome kissed Alex again on his shoulder and pulled out.

"Do you have a tissue for—shit!"

"What? What's wrong?" Alex turned around and switched on the light. He blinked a second, then he noticed Gerome's stricken expression. "What happened?"

"It broke. The damn thing broke."

Alex stared down at the condom, or the remainder of it. Cold settled around his stomach. "Shit. Please tell me you're clean."

"I am. There's nothing to worry about."

"Me, too." But Alex still was really uncomfortable that the damn thing broke in the first place. Such accidents shouldn't happen. But it had. Alex handed Gerome a tissue, who got rid of the sad remains of the latex. If Gerome told the truth, it wasn't much of an issue. Alex ran a hand over his face. He didn't want to think about the consequences if Gerome wasn't clean. STDs were nothing to be taken lightly.

Alex pulled himself together. There was nothing he could do now. "Do you want to stay?" he asked since it was polite to do so. Maybe Gerome would leave, then Alex could crawl into his bed alone. This was not the kind of fuck where you wanted to wake up the next day next to each other. There'd been one purpose. To get off. They'd done that. Now it was time for Gerome to get going.

"Na, I think I'll leave. I've got to work tomorrow." Gerome smiled at Alex. Apparently he'd hooked up for exactly the same reason. To say Alex wasn't

glad would be a lie, so he pulled on his sweats and then helped Gerome collect his clothes, who quickly dressed and was ready to go in only a few minutes.

“Should I call you a cab?”

“No, I don’t live too far from here. I’ll walk. Thanks. Can I use the bathroom before I leave?”

Alex nodded. “Of course. This way.” The small apartment had two bedrooms, but only one bathroom. Alex opened the bedroom door. “Second on the left.”

Gerome stepped out into the hallway. “Oh, hi.”

Oops. Apparently Sam was awake. Alex looked over Gerome’s shoulder. Sam stood in the door to his room, wearing only his boxers and a frown on his face.

“Hi.” Sam nodded more or less politely to the stranger.

“I’m Gerome.” He didn’t offer a hand to Sam, though. Considering where his fingers had been a few minutes ago, it wasn’t even rude. But Alex wasn’t going to tell Sam that.

Sam nodded. “I’m Sam.”

“Uh, the bathroom is this way.” Alex pointed to the door and Gerome vanished quickly.

Alex was left to the questioning stare of Sam, which didn’t divide Alex’s attention from how good Sam’s muscled chest looked in the dim light, or how his package was visible through the fabric. He raised his gaze again to see the frown still marring Sam’s handsome face.

Sam was Alex’s roommate and best friend. They weren’t in a relationship. Alex could fuck whomever he wanted, as could Sam. It was his loss that he didn’t go out as much. Alex raised his chin in defiance. Sam might judge him for his one-night stand, but at least Alex had gotten laid. He didn’t have to tell about the thing with the condom, though, as this would only lead to more frowns on Sam’s side. Alex wasn’t going to justify bringing a guy home.

Gerome interrupted their staring contest. “I’m off. Bye.” He waved to Sam.

“I’ll walk you to the door,” Alex said, and followed Gerome down the stairs to the entrance door. Alex let Gerome out, and with a last peck on Alex’s lips, he was gone into the night. Alex stared after him, not able to see anything in the

darkness. It'd been fucking good and now Alex was tired enough to fall asleep standing up. He closed the door and climbed back up to the apartment.

Sam was nowhere to be seen as Alex closed and locked this door as well. The door to Sam's room was shut, which meant Sam had gone back to bed already. A quick shower was in order, and then Alex would be gone as well.

The hot water increased his tiredness even more, and by the time he made his way back to his room stark-naked, Alex was more asleep than awake. When he finally crawled under the covers, Alex didn't even register his head hitting the pillow.

Chapter Three

Sam

Sam listened to Alex closing and locking the apartment door, then the shower turning on and a few minutes later cutting off. He hoped Alex would come to his room and chat a few minutes about his evening, but apparently Alex had other plans.

Now Sam wasn't even good enough to talk to. It hadn't been bad enough hearing how Alex and this Gerome guy fucked like rabbits. No, Alex didn't even bother stopping at Sam's room. Sam pulled the covers over his head, although he was far away from falling asleep.

He should've gone out with Alex. A night of dancing was about the worst entertainment Sam could think of, but at least he could've stopped Alex from taking home Mr. Good-Looking. That would've gone over well, probably with Alex being pissed at him for days, but at least it would've spared him from hearing the two getting it on. Sam ground his teeth as the sounds Alex had made came back to his mind. It'd been a while since Alex brought a man home, but this time it'd been worse than ever. He'd heard every moan, every grunt.

He'd long ago discovered how thin the wall separating their bedrooms was, and that he could not only exactly pinpoint what Alex was doing, but where Alex was, since he had the habit of humming whenever he was concentrating. Although Sam couldn't make out spoken words since the walls muffled the sounds too much. Sam knew how often and at which times Alex jacked off. Not because he spied on Alex, simply because it was impossible to *not* hear him.

The man was loud in bed, no matter whether he was alone or not. Every moan and grunt sent shivers down Sam's back, and it took a lot of restraint on Sam's part to not barrel into Alex's room and help him out. Alex didn't know of Sam's feelings, and Sam intended to keep it that way. Alex was not interested. He had made it clear years ago, telling Sam in no uncertain terms he was Alex's best friend, but not more. There was no room for a boyfriend in Alex's life, and one like Sam? Even less. Boring, ever-reading Sam.

Sam trailed a hand over his stomach to his cock. He was not really hard, but maybe if he jacked off now he could sleep afterwards. He recalled the sounds he'd heard from Alex in the throes of passion, and his cock rose. If only Alex made the sounds with him, under him or on top of him. But no, he had to go and pick some stranger.

Sam forced the thought out of his head. As long as he concentrated on Gerome, he wasn't going to finish his business. Alex, he needed Alex. Alex, as he'd smiled at Sam today, when they were cooking dinner. The finely chiseled face, which sometimes led people to assume Alex was soft or weak, which he wasn't. Those stunning green eyes and the full lips, made for kissing. Alex's ass as he'd bent over at the fridge to get something. God, that ass would be just the right size to have in his hand if he fucked Alex. Or if he blew him. He would hold on there, time Alex's thrusts with his head's movements. Alex would push deep into his mouth until he came, spilling his seed into Sam's mouth.

Sam could also pull those cheeks apart and rim Alex. He'd scream in pleasure and come so fast. Sam didn't know whether anyone had ever pleased Alex with a tongue, but he doubted it.

His hand wrapped firmly around his now hard and aching cock, Sam envisioned Alex, how he'd fuck him, kiss him. How Alex would moan his name when he came on Sam's cock. Sam sped up his movements, jacking his long uncut cock. He grunted in pleasure, his orgasm near. He imagined Alex's face, how he'd look when he erupted in pleasure. His own orgasm took him by surprise, and he spilled all over his hand and the bedsheet.

Sam lay there, panting. That'd been mind shattering. He slowly sat up. It had only been his imagination. Alex was in the other room, probably fast asleep. He had no idea Sam just had an earth-shattering orgasm while he pictured himself with Alex.

He probably would either be creaped out beyond everything or drag Sam with him the next time he went out dancing so Sam could get laid as well. Little did he know about Sam's feelings.

Sam cleaned himself up, turned around the covers of his bed, and crawled under them again. Now he was tired. It was three in the morning, making it high time to be asleep. Sam closed his eyes and tried to forget about the sounds Alex made when he fucked another man.

Chapter Four

Alex

Alex didn't sleep well. A nightmare about the accident with the condom forced him out of bed early. He stood grumpy in the kitchen, stirring his coffee. A test was useless until four weeks after it happened. At least he could get tested after the four weeks. Just a few years ago, it'd been a much longer waiting time until STDs could be proven, but new tests had been invented to stop the diseases from spreading. But, for now, the getting tested option was out. He hadn't come up with another one. The best thing was to get on with life until he actually got results, but that was going to be hard.

STDs were a real threat these days, especially HIV. Any of these diseases would destroy his career very, very fast. It wasn't like anyone wanted an employee with STDs. News traveled fast. One wrong word to anyone and Alex's career was done before it even started.

Right now, he was trying to find out what to do with a degree in business and marketing, but he still had a couple of years to go until he had to pick his major and thus to exactly figure out what he intended to do with his life. An infection with a STD would put a stop to all that. The students had to attend tests every year to make sure they were clean.

Allegedly the government wanted to prevent "sick" people from getting good jobs. The reason behind that was unknown. In any case, if Alex had caught something last night, he was fucked. And not in a good way.

They'd worked so hard, Sam and he, to become something, someone, after their parents died in a car accident. They'd been friends, too, since their kids were inseparable. They'd all been together in the car as a truck hit them on a highway, leaving both of their kids orphaned.

Alex sipped his coffee, thinking back to the dark times of his teen years. Sam and he'd stuck together, having each other's back. The first years in the orphanage had been hard, but they'd grown out of it eventually. When the time came, they'd found jobs, moved to Munich together, and continued to be best friends.

Alex couldn't let Sam down now, especially not because a one-night stand went wrong. Sam had worked for Alex as much as Alex had worked for Sam. So they both had a future, even if there was no one left to support them.

Which still left Alex with nothing to do but wait until he could get tested. Until then, he'd stick with his routine, which meant another coffee, a run, a shower, and then working at the bar where he earned just enough to get by. Alex sighed. This was going to be a long four weeks.

Alex's hands were shaking as he waited for the test results. It'd been four weeks since that night, and he'd impatiently counted the days until he could get tested. His arm hurt where the nurse had drawn blood, but it was nothing compared to the clenching of his stomach. Twenty minutes, and still no word. These tests were standard. What took them so long?

Finally, after ten more minutes, the nurse came back to fetch him. Alex followed her on weak knees. Had Gerome told the truth? Had he really been clean?

The middle-aged woman smiled at Alex, but his stomach still fluttered. "Everything's clear so far, sweetie. You've got to come back in six months to recheck about HIV, but other than that, you're good."

Thank the heavens. Alex rubbed a hand over his face, the tension finally gone. It'd been a while since he'd been so relieved to hear news. "Thank you. Thank you so much. I was really worried."

"You had unprotected sex?"

Alex answered, even if it wasn't any of her business, but she'd asked nicely, like she was really interested. "Something like that, yes. Rubber broke."

"Oh, that's horrible. You'd think they'd be able to make those things more reliable. Is the girl okay? Did she say she carried anything?"

"He said he didn't have anything, but I wanted to be sure."

She smiled. "At least you don't have to worry about getting pregnant then."

Alex laughed. "No, thank God, that problem won't happen with me. One of the perks of being gay."

The nurse chuckled. "Oh, yes, I know that. Nothing to worry about, if you didn't sleep with a vampire."

Alex's smile froze on his lips. "What do you mean, vampire?"

"Nothing. Really. Just saying there are vampires who can apparently impregnate men. You'd have to carry a certain gene, and he has to have the ability, but it's very, very rare."

A cold shiver ran down Alex's spine. Impregnate men? Fuck. This was the second time he'd heard about it in the last month. What were the odds of that?

"They don't teach about that in sex-ed. How do you know it's possible? The only thing I've heard about it was the case last month. If I recall right, the pregnant man got sentenced to serve time."

"I went to school years ago, in the 1990s. Back then, they taught it, but that stopped when the laws were changed. I didn't think it happened anymore. The men were either killed or run out of society, and nobody would want such a fate for himself or a loved one. Now there are laws in place to stop mixed breeding, which is for the better, if you ask me. I recall one man getting sentenced to a few years in jail, since he got pregnant. This was the first case I've heard of in a few years. But nothing to worry, sweetie," she said, ripping Alex out of his thoughts. "I don't want to scare you with my stories. You're fine. Perfectly healthy from your blood results."

"If you say so." Alex smiled at her. Gerome hadn't passed on any diseases, so Alex could stop worrying. "Thank you again. Have a good day."

She pushed her glasses up her nose. "You, too, sweetie. See you in six months for the checkup."

Alex left the clinic with a lot more energy in his steps than when he'd entered it. While he walked briskly to keep warm, his head was already on his studies. Now since it was pretty clear he wasn't sick, Alex could focus on his life again.

Sam would wait with dinner, and afterwards Alex had to read a bit more for an upcoming exam.

Chapter Five

Alex stood in the kitchen, busy eating pickles and a peanut butter sandwich, while he had a glass of milk ready. The combination was odd, but he craved something sour with sweet, so he just went with it. If it tasted good together, who was he to judge?

Sam walked up on him, peering at the contents on the plate. "Please tell me you're not eating that stuff together?"

Alex chewed slowly before answering. "Why? What's wrong with that? It's good together, wanna try?" *I'd never guessed the combination would be so good.*

"Brr, go away. Never in my life. And are you seriously drinking milk with it? A pregnant woman doesn't eat stranger than you." He shook in a mock full body shudder, but Alex didn't laugh.

His hand with the glass of milk hovered in the air. *Shit. No.* Not really.

It was close to impossible. She'd said it was very, very rare. Gerome hadn't said what he was, but... *fuck. The bite, the not being cold outside.* Alex put his glass down, his appetite gone.

"Alex, are you all right? What's wrong?" Sam sounded worried.

Alex pushed down his panic, trying to form a coherent answer. It was nothing. That couldn't have happened. It was insane. "Nothing. Leave me alone, and don't criticize my eating habits." Alex forced out a laugh to take out the sting of his words.

Sam chuckled. "Okay, okay, if you really want to eat that, please go ahead. But don't come running to me if you get sick later." He turned and vanished out of the kitchen.

Alex fell down hard on a chair. *Fucking hell. Pregnant. Impossible. Fucking impossible. Or not.* He'd seen the pictures. Heard the story.

Tomorrow, he'd get a test to prove to himself that he was some kind of strange eater, nothing more. Resolution made, he stood, opened the fridge... and closed it again. The smell got him. It'd started a while ago, increasing until he couldn't even so much as open the door. He'd forgotten to hold his breath, and his stomach had turned upside down. He needed to clean it out, see what

made it smell so nauseating, but Alex knew he'd puke his guts out if he even attempted to do that.

Sensitivity towards certain smells, another sign of a pregnancy. No. A sign of a dire need to clean out the fridge, nothing more. *Don't be a freak, Alex. Man the fuck up. You're imagining things.* But he'd get himself a test as soon as possible.

Alex stood in the bathroom, staring at the mirror, examining his flat stomach, which wasn't exactly ripped, but close. He could see some muscles, even if they were not steel. Not much longer, and the look of his stomach might change. That depended on the outcome of the test. He'd receive his answer in a few minutes. Alex dropped his sweater and wiped his clammy hands on his jeans. Buying a pregnancy test had been awkward, the clerk looking at him strangely. Peeing on the damn stick was way worse. Nauseated from the rolling in his gut, Alex had nearly puked on the thing, which was not what he was supposed to do with the test. But he'd finally managed, with shaking hands, to do what he was supposed to do.

Now he waited for the blue line to appear, telling him he'd done everything right. The second line would only get visible if he was pregnant. Which he was not. The test was lying on the wash basin, next to the mirror. Alex glanced over every few seconds, willing it to change, to see one line. Not two. There couldn't be two. He wasn't pregnant.

Alex picked up the test again, too nervous to have it simply sit there, and stared at the damn thing in his hand. It showed nothing yet. He willed it to stay that way. Maybe the stress had been too much? University was demanding, as was working on the side.

Maybe he just needed to get out again and get laid. Or not, since the last time landed him in trouble in the first place. Alex stared at the test in his hand again. It'd been nearly three months since he'd had sex with Gerome. If there were hormones in him that didn't belong—not that he believed they were there—they should be enough to color the lines. Only tests for women were available, but Alex hoped it would work with him. He couldn't go to a doctor with his problem.

A blue line appeared slowly on the indicator. It worked. The test worked. Next to it, faint, but getting stronger with every second, was a second line. No, please no. *No. Go away. Go the fuck away.*

But it didn't help. Alex stared at the line, praying for it to vanish. But it got stronger, until he couldn't deny what he saw. The stick fell out of his hand and clattered over the tiles on the floor, but he didn't care. He sank down, coming to rest on his ass. Pulling his legs close to his body, he rested his head on his knees. Tears prickled in his eyes. Alex closed them, trying to get the images out of his mind. The impressions of him with a thick stomach, a baby on his arm. Alex's baby.

The tears won and Alex sobbed in his hands sitting on the cold bathroom floor. The chill inside him was way worse than any tiles could ever be. He needed to run and hide. Get rid of it. Could he have an abortion? They were considered murder and were against the law. Did it matter if he'd go to jail because he was pregnant or because he killed the baby?

Alex hugged himself tighter, stifling a sob. He couldn't be a father. There was no way. He was too young, he had his studies, he wanted... he never wanted kids. He was gay, for fucks sake. He was going to lose everything. He already saw himself, being on the run, forced to live under a bridge. Sam leaving him, turning his back on Alex. Being alone when the time came to give birth...

A low cry ripped through Alex and fresh tears spilled over. He dragged himself back to the bedroom, onto his bed, and curled up in a ball on top of the comforter. Then the tears came back full force. He sobbed and sobbed, until there was nothing left in him and he was completely drained. Hours had passed, it had gotten dark in his room, but he didn't get up to turn on a light.

Who cared if he was in darkness? One light bulb wasn't going to change that. Nothing was going to change that. It was done. He was going to have a child. Going to be a single father.

His thoughts drifted back to abortion. No, that was no way for him. At three months into the pregnancy, it'd be murder in his eyes. Besides, who could do it? Some shady guy in an alley? He couldn't even go to a doctor, since everyone who knew was a possible threat. Shit.

Alex started sniffing again. He needed help, Gerome's help, but he had no idea what his last name was, so he had no way to contact him. What if he told someone? His coven? The authorities? No one could know. Alex couldn't even cry anymore about that realization. Emptiness had gripped him, hugging him tight. No matter which way he turned it, he was fucked. And not in a good way.

He rubbed over his stomach, over his unborn child. Not that he could feel anything yet, but the baby was there, being already a part of him and his future, as dark as it was.

Alex fell asleep some time later, still on top of the comforter.

The shivering woke Alex. It was cold, his teeth were chattering, and his body shook. It came from inside of him, a bone deep chill. He needed to get under the blankets to warm up, even if that wasn't going to get rid of the ice in his veins. Nothing would help. He needed the night with Gerome undone, which was impossible. Nevertheless, he had to pee, thus he had to move.

Alex scrambled into a sitting position, and then stood, his back cramping from being in an awkward position so long. He stumbled to the bathroom, his eyes gritty and swollen, and while he managed to pry one open to see where he was peeing, that was all he could muster. Sam was thankfully still working at the library. Today, he had the late shift, which meant he got home around ten or so. The last thing Alex needed now was for Sam to see him in this state.

After doing his business, he hurried back to bed. Shivers continued to run through him, wracking his body. Alex's teeth never stopped chattering and his hands still shook. Alex crawled under the comforter and curled up again. The tears came back, together with the desperation. He couldn't have a child. He'd just started university. He couldn't be a father now.

How could he support himself? He barely made a living now with waiting tables. He wouldn't be able to do that much longer, since a baby bump would be hard to hide. The first few months, he could tell people he'd just gained weight, but at a certain point, he'd have to vanish out of the public eye. And then?

Even if he managed to somehow hide the pregnancy and give birth, he had to support the little one and himself. The money he made was barely enough for him to get by. Never could he buy all the stuff babies needed; like formula, diapers, clothes. Working while caring for an infant was impossible, so he wouldn't have any money for himself or his child. Shit.

He wept again. He cried until there were no tears left in him and he was beyond exhausted. Then Alex stared wide awake into the dark room, his thoughts running in circles. Alex heard Sam come home some time later, but since Alex's room was dark, he didn't look in. Maybe Sam would help him, get

food and such. Tears welled up in his eyes again. Just when he thought he couldn't cry any more. *Sam*. His best friend. The man who'd been with him through everything.

Alex ran a hand over his flat stomach. How would Sam handle Alex becoming pregnant? He'd been strange since the night with Gerome. It wasn't the first one-nighter Alex had brought home, so he had no idea why Sam was acting distant now. And he'd had his fair share of guys as well.

Alex needed to tell him, try to get Sam to help him. Shit. Alex didn't want to start imagining what Sam would say. Alex curled up tighter, hugging himself. *Why me? Why the fuck me?* It was a long time before sleep found him again.

Chapter Six

Somehow Alex made it through the next day and a half. He never got the opportunity to tell Sam, though. In the morning, before Sam was even up, Alex was gone, and he spent the day at the University, like every other day. It wasn't unusual for Alex to be gone all day, so Sam didn't question him when he came home late, said goodnight to Sam, and vanished into his room. The following day, Sam had an early class, so Alex stayed in his room until Sam was gone.

He wasn't going to be able to hide much longer, but every small reprieve was welcome, before he faced Sam's rejection. He hadn't forgotten Sam's words to the news they saw a few months ago.

In the evening of the second day, though, Alex's luck ran out. His stomach had been clenching for a while, and he barely made it to the bathroom to puke his guts out. He wiped his mouth and brushed his teeth, telling himself the puking was because he was so upset, in no way was it due to the pregnancy. No way. He wasn't going to start throwing up every day now. Nope.

Sam had apparently heard Alex in the bathroom, since he had a very concerned expression as he asked, "Are you okay?"

Alex grabbed some milk out of the fridge to get rid of the lingering taste, ignoring Sam's question. He couldn't answer right now. How should he say it? *I'm pregnant? I'm going to be a father? I made a mistake? I ruined my life?* That'd go over very well. Sam would look down on him, how something like that could happen. What a freak Alex was. So Alex drank, his back to Sam.

"Is it really so bad that you can't talk to me?"

Sam's quiet words ripped through Alex, and he closed the door to the fridge slowly. How could Alex look Sam in the eye and tell him? He couldn't. To see the disgust in his eyes, have him turning his back on Alex—he couldn't stand this. They'd known each other forever. Sam had been Alex's best friend from the moment Alex stole Sam's shovel in the sandbox and Sam dumped a bucket of sand over Alex. Seeing him turn his back on Alex would destroy him, so he hung his head, his back still to Sam.

"Please, Alex. It can't be that bad."

It was. Frozen to the spot, Alex's fingers grasped the handle of the fridge door like a lifeline. He tried to force his tongue to speak. The shaking of his shoulders was probably visible from across the room, but Sam didn't comment.

In fact, a few moments later Alex heard Sam's footsteps and he was gone. The door to his room closed a bit louder than usual. He was angry. And he had every right. Alex slowly turned around and shuffled out of the kitchen, the milk in his hand.

Alex curled up on his bed in front of the TV, watching some stupid comedy and drinking his milk, the whole bottle of it, as a tear ran down his cheek every once in a while. How was he supposed to get Sam to help him if he couldn't even tell him?

He had to work tomorrow and he had no idea how to stand the smells of ashtrays and stale beer. The last couple of shifts had been bad, but since Alex puked for the first time today, he suspected it would be worse.

Alex yawned deeply. He was always tired these days. At first, before he'd realized what had happened, he thought it was him being overworked with his studies and such. Doing the job was more draining now than ever, and the smoke and loud music probably weren't good for a child anyways, so he probably wouldn't be able to do the job much longer. He closed his eyes again and allowed the tears to come. It was hopeless. Alex sobbed into his hands, crying for the future he lost.

That was how Sam found him. He just came in and stood next to the bed, looking at Alex.

"Spill."

Alex shook his head. Tears ran silently over his face, and he wiped them away. Sam couldn't know. He thought it was wrong and should be forbidden.

"Spill! I'm not leaving until I know what's up with you."

Alex couldn't say. Telling someone made it so real. He didn't *want* it to be real.

The bed dipped when Sam sat down. He pulled at the comforter Alex was wrapped in. Alex was a mess, he knew that. He'd spent the better part of the evening crying. His hair was probably standing up in all directions and his face was swollen and red. Didn't matter. Alex didn't care. Sam had seen him in worse conditions. And as soon as he found out the truth, he wasn't going to talk to Alex anymore.

"Are you sick? Has someone hurt you?" Sam asked, still calm, unconcerned by Alex's looks.

“No.” Alex shook his head.

“Alex, tell. You’re miserable. I won’t leave, even if I have to sit here all night.”

“No.”

“Talk to me, please. I won’t leave here. I won’t leave you.”

New tears welled up. Sam was going to leave if Alex told him. “I made—it was an accident. A terrible accident and I can’t tell you.”

Sam stared at Alex, clearly thinking about what to do now. “You know I’ll always be there for you? No matter what?” he asked quietly. “I really wish you’d have more trust in me. I always thought we were friends. Appears we’re not. Come find me if you actually want to talk.”

Shit. Now Alex had hurt Sam. He’d hurt him more if he told him, but—Alex raised his head, took a deep breath and looked at Sam, pinning him with his gaze. “I’m pregnant.”

Chapter Seven

Sam

Sam didn't know what to say. He stared at Alex, waiting for him to start laughing. To tell him it was a joke. But Alex just stared back, tears still glistening in his eyes, his whole face swollen from crying.

When he'd come to Alex's room to find out what was up with Alex, he'd expected everything, from Alex being sick, to a new crush that didn't want anything to do with him, but not that. Men didn't get pregnant.

"But—but—how? You can't..." he finally stammered out.

Alex smiled weakly. "Apparently some vampires carry the genes that can impregnate men. I'm not sure how it works and I haven't looked it up, but it's true. We saw it on the news a few months ago, if you remember?" He swallowed visibly. "I took a test a few days ago. I've been sick. I've had mood swings. I eat a lot and in strange combinations."

"But how... who? Weren't you careful?" Alex was the one who always told him to double check he had enough condoms when he went out. Alex was the one telling him about diseases all the time. How could he get pregnant?

Alex hid his face in his hands again. "Gerome. It broke. He fucked me. And afterwards we realized... it was... shit. I got tested four weeks after, but only for STDs, not pregnancy. But the nurse there told me something about men getting pregnant by vampires. It seems to be rare, but it has happened before."

Sam watched him, waiting for him to say something more to explain. Even if he didn't know what more there was. "But the condom. Were you really careful?"

"It broke, okay? I didn't mean for it to happen," Alex snapped.

"Hey, it's not my fault. I'm just asking. Do you think he set you up or something?"

"Sorry," he replied, much less on edge now. "I don't think so. He seemed to be as shocked as I was." He ran a hand over his face. "I just have no idea what to do now. I mean, I need to hide. I can't go to work much longer. Nobody can see me.

"I can't go to a hospital. I'd need to deliver at home. And a child comes out the same way it went in, at least that's what I think! Can you imagine that? Can

you fucking think about that? It will cause internal bleeding, and then... then... then I might fucking die," he sobbed.

Sam stared at Alex again, dumbstruck. What had he just said? Die? What the fuck? Alex dying? Never would he allow that. No way. With his heart beating like mad in his chest, Sam put his hand on Alex's shoulder. "I'll help you. You know that, right?"

He couldn't say more. His throat closed, too many emotions in him, too close to the surface. Alex's words still ran amok in his head while he was trying to figure out a different meaning to them. There had to be something he'd missed. Some misunderstanding on Alex's part. Or not? Sam had seen the news as well. It'd been months ago, but now he remembered. Alex could land in prison because of the pregnancy. He could die. Alex looked the same as ever; it was so hard to imagine how everything would change. Except, Alex wasn't the same. Alex would never, ever, allow anyone to see him in tears. Never. Not since the first months after their parents died. And they were twelve back then. Alex was funny, carefree. No matter how hard his studies were. Always laughing, joking. A diva on his best days. A sassy brat on the others.

The Alex gripping his hand was a far cry from his best friend. Sam squeezed Alex's hand. "We'll figure it out, okay? I won't let anything happen to you." Not that he had any clue how to do that.

Alex smiled weakly. "Thank you."

"There's nothing to thank me for. You'd do the same. We'll find a way to help you and the child. I'm assuming you want to keep it?"

Alex nodded. He looked beyond miserable, tears still in his eyes, but at least he'd stopped sobbing.

"Scoot over."

"What?" Alex stared at Sam, bewilderment showing in his handsome face.

"Get over. Let me in." Sam stood long enough for Alex to raise the covers, then he slipped under them to Alex.

"What the fuck do you think you're doing?" Alex protested, but Sam simply pulled him close, carefully forcing his head on Sam's shoulder. Alex resisted a few seconds, but finally allowed himself to take the comfort he so obviously needed. He relaxed against Sam's body, his breath evening out a bit.

Sam murmured nonsense in his ear, holding him tight. Alex fit perfectly in his embrace. Sam closed his eyes, allowing himself a moment to just enjoy having Alex this close.

He was Sam's best friend. He'd do everything to protect him and help him. And if that meant keeping him hidden the next—"Just how long will the pregnancy last? Nine months? Or longer? Or shorter? And is there something special with the baby being a half vampire?"

Alex tried to raise his head, but Sam held him down. "No, stay. You can talk like this." Alex did what he was told for once. Must've been one of the first times in his life.

"I have no idea. Nothing shows yet, so I don't think vampire babies have a shorter gestation period, but I have no fucking clue. All I know is that I'm apparently fucking pregnant. Or I'm crazy, which I think I'm not. I haven't found anything on the internet. I have no idea who I could ask, aside from Gerome. And I'd rather not tell him. I'm—I'm afraid he'll tell someone."

Sam grit his teeth at Alex's mention of the other man. Alex didn't know. He didn't have the same feelings. Sam needed to keep a clear head here, to help Alex. Even if the words he spoke tasted sour in his mouth. "Why? Maybe he could help."

"And what if he wants to take away the baby? Since it's his as well? Maybe his—his coven wants it?"

"But then the child would be gone. You could give birth and then let him have it?"

"I can't. I won't give it up. Not after... our parents..." he trailed off.

Sam closed his eyes at the mention of their parents. He still missed them, would miss them forever. He knew how it felt to grow up without them around, and he understood all too well why Alex didn't want to give up his child. It'd mean the child would have to endure things similar to what they had, but maybe with the knowledge Alex had given him or her away of his free will.

Sam pulled Alex even closer, burying his face in Alex's neck. "I'm sorry. I couldn't do that, either." They were silent for a few minutes, Sam lost in his memories.

Sam started speaking after a while. "Gerome might tell, but can we afford to not try to find him? For help?"

"I have nothing besides his name."

"Where did you meet? The Downtown? Since you wanted to go there?"

Alex nodded. That place was huge. To find a certain man in there would be close to impossible.

"Let's talk about it tomorrow, okay? Can I stay here tonight?" Alex was fiercely independent, so he'd most likely throw him out in under a second. But Alex just pressed closer. To say anything was probably beyond what he could muster, but at least he allowed Sam to be near.

Sam burrowed his nose in Alex's short, black hair and closed his eyes. He murmured, "Do you need to get up again?"

"No, all done."

"Me neither. Goodnight, then."

"Goodnight."

Sam couldn't sleep. He lay awake long after Alex had succumbed to slumber, thinking. He'd have to find Jerome. The man was their only hope. He was the father, yes, but he also was the only one they could turn to for help. Maybe Jerome would tell the authorities, but maybe he'd be up to supporting Alex to keep the little one.

Sam carefully ran his fingers over Alex's stomach. It was still mostly flat. Maybe in a few weeks, he'd have a real baby bump.

Sam pulled back his hand. Shit. That thought was wrong. Men didn't get pregnant. And other men shouldn't find that strangely arousing. Except... proof was in his arms, asleep from sheer exhaustion. And the knowledge that Alex was going to have a baby bump still didn't send him running.

He was in deep trouble, but he already knew that. And his best friend was pregnant. *Oh shit.*

Chapter Eight

Alex

The following days passed with not much happening. Alex went to work and to school, doing the best he could, considering there was only one subject on his mind. Alex knew he fucked up a few times, but he caught it before anything happened and he got yelled at for bringing anyone the wrong order.

Sam was gone every evening. He spent his free time hunting for Gerome. They'd agreed that he should look at the club where they'd met, since it was possible that Gerome was there again. Alex didn't dare to come with Sam, the loud music not what he wanted to subject his child to. Sam had no luck, though. It'd been three weeks since the day he found out, and still nothing.

Alex stood in front of his mirror, staring at his stomach. He did this every day, wanting the little the bump to grow, and yet dreading it at the same time. If his stomach got bigger, it meant the child was healthy. If he stayed slim, Alex could go to work longer. Leave the apartment in general. Once the baby bump was more visible, Alex's ability to move would be severely limited. He was going to be able to hide behind wider T-shirts and maybe snag jeans from Sam, but that was only going to buy him a couple of weeks, tops.

The door opened. Sam stood there, staring at Alex. "What are you doing?"

Alex pulled down his shirt, a blush creeping up his face. "Nothing."

"Are you looking at your stomach?"

"Yeah. To see how much I'm showing." Alex blushed harder. Time to change the subject. "Are you going out again?"

"I have to. Until I find him, I have to look every day."

"I know." *I just want another night in bed with you.* Alex didn't say that, though. The one night with Sam had been nearly too nice. He wasn't clingy by nature, but it'd been good to be held by Sam. Sam was family. Alex's family. With him it was okay to cuddle, even if they hadn't done that since they were teens. Maybe Alex should invite Sam to his bed again?

"I'll be home by one, as usual."

"Okay. And thanks."

"Don't mention it. It's okay."

It wasn't. Alex saw the dark circles under his eyes, the faint lines that spoke of the toll it took to stay up that long every night, searching for Alex's one-night stand. Alex pulled on a long sleeved shirt and went to the kitchen to get something to eat.

Sam had already left, not even taking the time to grab a bite. It was so unfair he had to do all the searching, but Alex didn't dare accompany him. The club had body scans at the entrance, and Alex didn't trust they wouldn't show anything. And even if they didn't, the loud music, the smoke, all that probably wasn't good for the little one. Every mom was warned against these things, so Alex and Sam figured the same rules applied to male pregnancies. The pub where Alex worked was bad enough; he didn't need to add the club to the mix.

Alex placed a hand over his stomach. He didn't want the baby to suffer, even if it might kill him or at least force him to hide in his apartment. The little one was innocent.

Alex ate then crawled into bed, even if it was only nine p.m. He was exhausted and didn't even bother with reading. He just closed his eyes and drifted off.

Images appeared in front of his eyes. *A baby, looking like a cross between Jerome, Sam, and Alex, being carried away by a strange person. Alex trying to crawl after the person, but unable to do so.*

Then, him again, lying on some hard floor, bent over in pain, and a voice telling him to stop crying. There was no one who'd help him.

Blood, blood everywhere, all over Alex, and a cruel voice laughing at him. He knew he was dying, since there was so much blood, more than anyone could survive losing. But he couldn't stop it. The voice kept telling him to stop fighting, since it was done and he was going to die. Alex was shackled to the ground, powerless to do anything but to wait for the end.

Alex, stomach swollen and heavy, in front of a judge, hearing he'd have to spend the next ten years in jail.

Alex jerked awake. Shit. Where was he? He was bound, unable to move. Alex pulled at the thing holding him down, robbing him of air. He couldn't breathe, couldn't move. His head was swimming and Alex thrashed around, trying to get out, to get free. He tried to force air into his lungs, get a deep breath, but it didn't work. His throat was closed, the air supply cut off.

"Shh, I've got you. I'm here."

Sam. Sam was here.

Cool air hit Alex's skin and the first batch of oxygen filled his lungs. He opened his eyes. Sam was kneeling next to him on the bed, and clearly visible in the dim light, he was wearing a very worried expression on his face. Alex was tangled in his covers. They'd been holding him down. Shit.

His heartbeat slowed down a bit and he was able to breathe better.

Sam sat down on the bed and put a hand on Alex's arm. "Are you okay?"

Alex nodded. Speech was beyond him right now. The images from his dream were burned in his mind. Sam pulled his shirt over his head and pushed his jeans down. "Scoot over."

Alex's gaze drifted down to Sam's package, lingering for a second, but then he jerked his eyes away. Had he just been ogling his best friend? But damn, who wouldn't stare at such a great offering right in front of his eyes?

Alex remembered Sam had said something and complied, making room for Sam. He needed Sam's arms around him now. Maybe he'd be able to chase away the lingering pictures of the nightmare. Sam settled in and pulled the comforter over both of them. He was nearly naked, only wearing his boxers, but that didn't matter. What mattered was that he was warm and familiar and he held Alex like he'd never let him go.

Alex's trembling subsided as he snuggled closer to Sam, who wound his arms around Alex. Alex closed his eyes, enjoying being in Sam's arms again.

"I found him," Sam murmured.

"Huh?"

"Gerome. I've found him. He said he'd come over tomorrow."

Alex raised his head. "Really?"

"Hmm. I told him what was up, and he was really shocked. Appears he didn't know."

He'd really found him. Maybe he could help them. The thought of someone knowing still caused his stomach to clench, but Gerome was the only hope they had right now. They needed some answers.

"Thank you," Alex said quietly. And he meant it. He'd seldom been so grateful for anything.

"You're welcome. You know that."

Alex raised his head and looked at Sam. All he could see were the shadows of his face, but it didn't matter. Alex knew how Sam looked. He was the man Alex had known forever. The man that knew him too well and still was his friend.

Alex leaned over and kissed Sam on the mouth. It was just a quick peck, nothing sexual, and he was apparently too stunned to react. Alex pulled back, resting his head on Sam's shoulder again. What'd come over him? These damn hormones had Alex doing things he never thought he'd do.

Chapter Nine

Sam

Sam raised his hand to trace his lips. They still tingled from Alex's touch. He carefully ran his hand over Alex's hip to the small of his back and rolled over to face him.

"What are you doing?" Alex asked quietly.

"Should I turn back?"

"No," came the reply. It was a bit breathless. What was wrong with Alex? They'd never crossed the boundary between friends and lovers. Alex never hinted he was even remotely interested. His peck on Sam's lips was the most sexual thing they'd done so far.

Except... Alex needed him. Now more than ever. And he'd need him after the child was born. Maybe... they could raise the little one together? Both of them being his or her dads?

A warm feeling settled in Sam's stomach. He'd resigned himself to never having kids, but if he had the chance... he'd take it in a heartbeat. Especially with Alex.

Gerome didn't want the child; he'd already told Sam that. When Sam had met him today, Gerome promised to help, but he'd made it clear he was in no position to take care of a child and it was more or less Alex's problem. Whether that made him an ass or not depended on how much he did to help Alex.

Alex turned around, putting his back to Sam, who pulled him closer to his body and buried his nose in Alex's hair. He smelled so good with hints of his shampoo, his shower gel, and simply Alex.

"Think you can sleep now?" he whispered in Alex's ear.

"Hmm." Alex burrowed even closer. "I hope so. Stay?"

"Of course." Sam yawned. It was long after midnight and while they could sleep in, as it was a Sunday, he was dead tired. The nights looking for Gerome had taken a toll on him.

"Goodnight."

"Goodnight," Sam answered. But it was actually quite a long time before he managed to fall asleep.

Sam woke slowly, Alex still wrapped in his arms. Alex hadn't turned during the night, and his ass was still pressed flush to Sam's groin. And what a nice ass that was.

Sam slowly ran his hand over Alex's stomach. The muscles were still there, but a good bit of softness padded them. Alex had put on some weight during the pregnancy and it showed on his hips and ass. The not-so-small bump under his navel also indicated that he'd be a dad soon.

Sam's cock stirred even more. Damn. He shouldn't find that arousing—except he did. He wanted to kiss the long, slender neck until Alex woke. He ached to explore that ass, fuck Alex until he couldn't walk anymore. Or make it slow, draw it out, until neither of them could think anymore. Caress every delicious inch of the strangely sexy baby bump and the rest of Alex's body.

The soft skin of Alex's neck beckoned him. He shouldn't kiss him. He really shouldn't. Alex was his friend. He might destroy everything if he crossed that line. Alex didn't have other feelings than friendship for him. If he repeated it long enough, he'd one day even convince himself.

But then, the possibility that he might lose Alex still chilled him to the bone. During the days, he could put away the thoughts, get his mind to shut up. But at night or in quiet moments like this, the threats of Alex being thrown into jail or dying were there. Very, very real.

Sam leaned forward and kissed Alex's neck. Alex didn't have to know. It was one simple, innocent kiss. Sam lingered a few seconds, then pulled back, his lips breaking contact with Alex's skin. Damn, the man smelled good. How did he do that?

Sam breathed deep, still staying way too close to Alex. Well, Alex's ass was pressed to his groin. That didn't speak of friendship either, as did Sam's hard cock. It reacted to the kiss on Alex's neck in an "I don't want you as a friend" way. Shit.

Sam pulled back a little. These thoughts were dangerous. He couldn't have Alex. Although... he willingly snuggled with Sam, and he seemed to enjoy the intimacy with Sam. Maybe Sam could show Alex there was something more between them? Not that Sam had much hope in that department; Alex had been blind to Sam's love for him forever.

But for now it was time to get up. Gerome was going to show soon. They'd have to figure out how to help Alex. Then he could worry about changing their friendship to something deeper.

Sam kissed Alex's neck a last time and traced the skin of Alex's stomach with his fingers. Slowly he pulled back from the embrace and crawled out of bed. Alex had a little longer to sleep, but Sam needed to shower and be ready when Gerome showed.

He would talk with Gerome until Alex woke.

Gerome rang the bell at exactly ten. Sam was ready and opened the door. In the light of the day, Gerome was even more handsome. Sam studied his short, dark hair, his handsome features, and his killer smile. It was no surprise Alex had picked him.

He was so much more handsome than Sam. How could he make Alex fall for him if there were men like Gerome around? But then, Gerome had made it clear he didn't want anything beyond supporting Alex in this hard time, so maybe he wasn't in the queue for boyfriends.

Gerome's smile lasted only for a few minutes, until they were both sitting in the sun-flooded kitchen, Sam sipping his coffee. Gerome had declined.

"So, Alex is pregnant? And he claims I am the father?"

Straight to the point. "Yeah. He says there was a little accident when you two... hooked up."

"He hasn't been with anyone else?"

Sam bristled at the question. Who did he think Alex was? Alex didn't sleep around! "No, he hasn't," he bit out between clenched teeth, "and besides, he's careful. The broken condom was an accident, or so he said. You brought it, right? Was it prepared? Are you purposefully trying to impregnate innocent men? You must be a vampire to be able to do that. Are you trying to breed more vampires?"

"Hey, stop it right there!" Gerome's face had gone hard, his face a mask of rage. A hint of longer teeth glistened in his mouth. "I wanted a night of sex. As did Alex. Nothing more. Yes, I am a vampire. No, you don't *breed*," he spat the word, "vampires." Gerome visibly tried to pull himself together. The teeth vanished again. He spoke, calmer now. "I won't go into coven politics here, but let me tell you it'd not be a good idea for me to impregnate someone I have no intention to mate. I have every interest in keeping this under wraps, not since it's forbidden but because you wouldn't like the outcome if my fa—coven

heard about it. This was an accident; something that shouldn't have happened. I've never had a condom break before. I don't carry any diseases, so I use condoms to placate human lovers or one-night stands, since I'm tired of explaining why we don't need protection. It's easier that way."

He ran a hand through his hair. "Not many male humans can carry a child. There is an anomaly in their blood, something that allows the changes necessary to get pregnant. It has something to do with one of their ancestors being a vampire, although the blood is mixed down too much for any obvious signs like enhanced speed. In fact, if you do a blood test, you'd find out Alex is completely human—except for the whole getting pregnant thing. There's more to it, and I don't know all the details, but I think that's enough to know for now.

"And before you ask, I spent the whole night looking this up. I had no clue I could father a child with a man. Nor did I know anything about it."

Gerome looked tired, indeed. Did vampires need sleep as well?

"So, it looks like we need to figure out a way to keep Alex and the baby safe. Nobody can see him, since he could get thrown in jail, which means hiding for at least three or four months." Sam had to make clear why they needed Gerome's help.

"My coven or other covens protect mixed children, but nobody can know about the baby, so hiding him there is out of the question. Alex has to stay here. Feeding will not be a problem. He or she can survive drinking blood, but it doesn't have to. I can eat what I want, but food does nothing to satisfy my hunger. It simply tastes good. The child will be able to do both. The little one can eat to get sated, and can drink blood and live off it. The baby will also have longer teeth, like I have, but other than that, the child will be like every other human. At least that is what I've dug up." Gerome sat back in his chair. "Oh, and the gestation period seems to be forty weeks as well."

"You've found all that out in one night?"

"I didn't go to bed. We need sleep as well, but we can be awake longer than normal people. I need a few hours rest every couple of days."

"Oh. Okay. Thanks for looking this all up."

"It seems I'm not innocent in this mess. So I think it's my duty to help."

"Yeah, but you're the father. Not that I don't appreciate the effort, but you could've also said that it's not your problem."

“And what the fuck am I, if he’s the father?” A pissed off voice came from the doorway, where a very annoyed looking Alex stood. His hair was standing up in weird places, and while he was dressed, from the sweatpants he was wearing it was clear he hadn’t even glanced in the mirror.

“You know what I meant. And good morning.” Sam smiled at him.

“It’d be better if I didn’t wake up to you gone and him,” he nodded in Gerome’s direction, “sitting in my kitchen.”

Wow, someone was moody today. “Sorry, but I thought you’d need the sleep. And someone had to let Gerome in until you woke up. Next time, you can get your princess ass out of bed yourself.”

“Sorry,” Alex said quietly. His shoulders slumped. At least he came down as fast as he blew up.

Alex nodded at Gerome. “Thank you for coming.” Then he looked at Sam, a little smile playing around his lips. “Thanks for last night. And for getting up earlier, and keeping Gerome company.”

“You know you’re welcome.” Sam grinned back. “Princess.”

Alex stuck out his tongue. “Maybe. But still, thanks.” Alex fixed his coffee and sat down at the table. “I’m going to get dressed in a minute, just let me have some coffee first.”

“You’re drinking that stuff? You know how bad it is for unborn babies?”

Sam waited for Gerome to drop dead, from the look Alex gave him. No one came between Alex and his one cup of coffee in the morning.

Alex put his mug on the counter and turned slowly to Gerome. Every one of his movements was precise and deliberate. “Listen. I need this one cup. I have a lot of problems and no solutions, and for a lot of them, you’re as responsible as I am. And you want to tell me I can’t have my coffee? Think again, Mister.”

“Phew, princess. I get it, okay? You want a few more minutes to enjoy your coffee or do you want to talk about what happened?” Gerome tried to placate Alex.

“Good, just give me a moment, okay?” Alex sipped his hot java, closing his eyes while savoring the taste.

Sam watched the whole exchange, smiling. His Alex might be short, but he was a force to be reckoned with. Gerome hadn’t even dared to argue about the coffee.

Usually, Alex was pretty easy-going, except if someone came between him and his coffee. The kitchen was silent for a few moments, then Alex spoke. "Okay, better. Thank you. I'm going to put on some jeans and a shirt, and be right back."

He stood and vanished through the door, leaving Sam and Jerome sitting in silence again. Sam studied Jerome's handsome features again. He was certainly easy on the eyes. But he wasn't Alex.

The man in question chose that moment to reappear, a very distraught look on his face. He held his jeans with both hands. "I can't close them anymore. They are too tight..." he collapsed on a chair, tears welling up in his eyes.

Taken aback by the tears, Sam stood and kneeled down next to him. "Hey, come on, it's okay. Shh, sweetie, I've got you." Sam pulled Alex into his arms, gathering Alex's head to his shoulder. "Hey, everything is good. It's supposed to do that. No need to cry."

"I fucking don't want to cry!" Alex burst out. "It just fucking sucks I can't wear these jeans anymore."

He raised his head a bit. Tears still spilling over, but Alex seemed to be able to pull himself together. "Sorry." He buried his face in Sam's shoulder again.

Sam ran his hands up and down his back. "Shhh... it's really okay."

"I know, you dork. I know. I just can't help myself." Alex started laughing into Sam's shoulder, interrupted by some sobs and sniffing.

"What the—are you crying or laughing?"

Alex raised his head a little and looked at Sam, tears in his eyes, laughing, sobbing, all together, a totally confused expression on his face.

Gerome cleared his throat rather loudly, and Sam shot him a stern look before he concentrated back on Alex.

"Sorry... can't help... can't help myself." Alex ran a hand over his face, then chuckled again. Gerome offered a tissue, and Alex wiped off the tears. "Sorry. I start crying on the spur of the moment. It sucks, and I can do nothing to stop it. I just start. And it's really shitty I can't wear my favorite jeans anymore."

"The hormones getting to you?" Gerome asked calmly, either used to such breakdowns or simply unaffected by it. *Asshole*.

Alex nodded. Sam stood and sat down on a chair again, watching Alex closely. He looked better already, even if he was still red eyed.

“Seems like the hormones. I’m usually much more balanced.”

Sam snorted before he could stop himself.

“What do you want to tell me?” Alex narrowed his eyes at him.

Sam raised his hands. “Nothing, I swear.” But he couldn’t stop laughing, even as Alex glared at him.

“Stop laughing!” Alex yelled, but he was smiling as well, even while he tried to keep glaring. “I’m not that moody!”

“You don’t cry. But you are the least balanced person I’ve ever met!”

Alex stuck out his tongue. “I am. As soon as this is over, I’ll show you.”

Sam stopped smiling. Alex stared at his coffee mug. Gerome watched the cars drive by in front of the apartment building.

“Shit. Sorry.” Alex ran a hand through his hair, clearly distraught now.

He’d been so carefree just a second before, and now he was back to the more brooding self he had become in the past weeks.

“I forgot for a second. Okay, Gerome, thanks for being here. Can you tell me a bit more about the whole pregnancy thing?”

Chapter Ten

Alex

Alex stirred the remainders of his one allowed cup of coffee and listened to Gerome explain about male pregnancy with half-vampire babies.

“As I just told Sam, the baby would be protected by my coven, but they can’t know. I can’t tell you why, since it’s too dangerous if anyone knows. The little one will be able to eat food and drink blood, and can live from either one. You don’t see any differences right now, but vampires can drop their fangs to fight or drink. It’ll be able to do that, as well.”

Gerome paused. “Pregnancy will last forty weeks and the baby will be born the way it came in, which is the biggest problem with male pregnancies. Not all men survive that.”

Alex winced. That was still one of his biggest fears. He’d done some experiments alone or with partners. He knew what fit and what didn’t. Giving birth that way was definitely not a good idea in any case.

“My coven is in possession of certain herbs that are supposed to ease the process. The hormones from the baby help as well. A few of us had male lovers and pregnancies weren’t that uncommon. It’s also a way of securing the cooperation of a rival clan, and a way to ensure the king’s bloodline lives on. This is nothing of our concern here, though. Your chances of surviving are not that bad, but I won’t tell you everyone survives. And before you start freaking, I’m working on it, okay?” Gerome shot a look at Alex. He apparently knew how close to a breakdown Alex was. Not that it was a surprise, but still.

“Can the little one go out in the daylight? I’m assuming you can, since you’re here now, but is the baby going to be the same way? I’ve heard rumors that young vampires can’t go out in the sun?” Sam asked.

“Yes and no. It’s a myth that we can’t go out during the day. I don’t like summer sun, and beach holidays don’t sound appealing to me, but it doesn’t harm me. The child might even like the sun, as it’s only half vampire. Young vampires, which means the ones who were just changed, don’t go out since their senses become overwhelmed with all the impressions.” Gerome paused. “Any more questions?”

“Can you turn me? If that’s the right term? Would that help me to survive?”

Alex caught Sam staring at him. They hadn't talked about him becoming a vampire, but the idea popped in his mind as Jerome mentioned newly made vampires. Sam clearly wasn't happy with Alex's question, but it was his life in the line here.

"I can't. I thought of changing you as well. It's been attempted a few times, but in every case the father and the child died. Turning someone involves a pretty demanding ritual, including the person who gets turned losing so much blood he or she basically dies. That was too much for the pregnant men and they died, along with their children."

"Crap, there went that idea." Alex slumped back in his chair. "Can you tell me what exactly changes in my body? I mean, I have no uterus. Where does the baby grow?"

"You really want to know?" Jerome asked. Alex nodded.

"You do have a uterus now. It's located in your abdomen where it is in a woman. The hormones from a vampire's seed prompt it and an egg to grow there. Currently the uterus is closed off, but it will reopen shortly before birth. You'll feel this, as it was described, as a sharp stabbing pain."

"Oh, fun," Alex murmured. What else could a guy wish for?

"Any more questions?" Jerome looked first at Alex, then at Sam. They both shook their heads. That was enough for now. Definitely.

"I think I understood everything. The only thing really worrying me is the giving birth part." Alex fucking didn't want to die. "Can we find out more about the herbs? And maybe if there are ways to ensure the father survives? I mean, it's my life we're discussing here. I really want to keep it. I don't want to fucking die because of a one-night stand!" Alex sobbed the last words. Tears welled up in his eyes again, and he wiped his face. The last thing Alex needed now was to start crying again, but his hormone-laden body begged to differ.

Sam stood, raising his arms to hug Alex.

"Don't—just don't. I can't right now. I'm not someone who needs constant cuddling. I cry because of the hormones, nothing more. Just stay where you are."

Sam's face fell and he sat down heavily. *Shit*. Alex ran a hand over his face, again. He hadn't wanted that. He just needed a few moments for himself. Alex didn't recognize himself anymore on most days, but that made snapping at Sam

no better. "I'm sorry. I know you mean well. I'm just... it's freaking too much right now. I don't cry because I want to, or need to, it just happens. I don't have a big chance of surviving this shit, so I can't even tell myself it'll get better in a few months. It all sucks. So much."

Gerome had the decency to look guilty. He'd better be. It wasn't like Alex got into this shit alone.

"I'm sorry, Alex. I really am." Gerome reached over and took Alex's hand. Gerome met Alex's gaze and spoke very quietly. "I didn't know I carried the genes. Not all vampires do. I also didn't know you could get pregnant. Not all humans can. To actually meet and then to have something like the condom breaking happen—that's against all odds. Nevertheless, I'm going to do everything I can to make sure you're well and can give birth to the baby. I will be around as a father to the child, if you want, but I can't and won't try to have a relationship with you just for the sake of it. I'm pretty sure there's nothing between us that could lead to a mating anyway. Is that okay with you?"

Alex needed a moment to understand Gerome's words. Then Alex tried to formulate his answer. Not that Alex was interested in Gerome that way, he'd been a one-night stand, and that was it. But to be told that Gerome didn't see Alex as boyfriend material hurt. Mostly Alex's ego, but it still hurt. "I don't think we should try anything in the relationship department, no. But you can stay around and help with the baby. You're the father as well, you know."

"Smartass. I know that."

Sam interrupted by clearing his throat. Alex cast a glance at him, seeing a strange expression on his face. What was up with him? He never did that. But Alex currently had more important things to figure out. "For now, I'd like to concentrate on the other things. Giving birth. Hiding until I can actually give birth."

Gerome nodded. Sam stared at the table. Alex pulled his hand out from under Gerome's and put it over Sam's. "Hey, are you okay?"

Sam looked up and smiled at Alex. "Yeah, I'm okay. Sorry. I was just thinking."

"About what?"

A few seconds ticked by until Sam spoke. "About you. The baby. The father part. Everything."

"Precise answer, I'll give you that."

“Brat.”

“You love me anyway.” It was Alex’s standard response to Sam’s ‘brat’, which he heard about ten times every day. Usually Sam laughed and said, “Don’t you wish.” This time, however, he didn’t laugh. He said nothing. Absolutely nothing. Alex’s stomach fluttered strangely. Why was he not replying? Was he hiding something? And if he was, what was it?

Alex couldn’t focus on that problem now, though. He’d find the answers as soon as the whole pregnancy thing was over. For now, they needed to plan for the coming months. Which led him to the first, and most important question. “So, how do we do the whole me keeping out of public part? I need to stay at home. I hate to say it, but I need money. I get along okay right now because I’m still working, but I think I’ll have to quit in a couple of weeks. I thought of calling in a family emergency, maybe a sick relative I have to take care of.

“But I still need money; for baby things, for food, for rent. Can you help me out? I know it’s a lot to ask, but I... well studying is expensive and I really can’t think of another way.” Alex’s gut rolled at the thought of asking someone for money and he swallowed hard.

“I assumed you’d ask that. I can help you out. I mean, I guess I’d pay child support anyway. I think it’s only fair to help you until then. You can’t stay here alone, obviously. You’re okay on your own now, but as the time of birth comes closer, you’ll want to have someone with you.” Gerome turned to Sam. “I assume you’re living here as well? Can you look after him? Buy groceries, help him if something happens?”

“Yeah, I’m living here. And of course I’ll help him until the baby is here.”

“*He* is right here, you know that? And *he* can care for himself,” Alex threw in, slightly annoyed.

“You need someone to bring you food, at least until the baby is here. So tone down your anger and accept that you need help,” Gerome answered, sharply. Alex got it. He just didn’t like to be talked about like he wasn’t there.

“Fine,” he grumbled. Needing help was one of the things one never admitted in an orphanage. Alex had learned this lesson the hard way. But this time, Alex probably wasn’t going to get around it.

Gerome pulled out his wallet and counted six crisp fifty Euro bills on the table. “Okay, now that that’s settled, I’ll leave you. I don’t have more with me right now, but I’ll drop by later this week. Here’s my number, in case you need

anything else.” Gerome put a shiny business card on top of the money. “I’ll try to find out a bit more about the whole giving birth thing. Until then, it was nice seeing you again.”

He stood and turned to the door. Sam scrambled to get up as well and murmured something along the lines of, “I’ll let you out.”

Alex just shook Gerome’s hand. Getting up from the table was beyond what he could do right now. He was exhausted. The empty coffee mug placed carefully on the table, Alex laid his head on his arms and closed his eyes. Finally they had some answers, yet they didn’t know much more about surviving the birth.

And Sam was a completely different matter. He’d stayed in bed with Alex last night. Something Alex had enjoyed way too much. *Having his arms around me was... made me feel special. But Sam only stayed because he felt sorry for me.* Not the best reason to have a man in Alex’s bed, even if he was his best friend.

Sam came back into the kitchen. “Are you okay?” He rested a hand on Alex’s neck, the warmth of his fingers seeping into Alex’s skin and tingling where he touched him. Alex didn’t raise his head, just murmured, “Yeah, tired. So tired, and yet happy that we finally have at least some answers. I feel like there’s some light at the end of the tunnel.”

“I know the feeling, believe me. It was good Gerome was here.”

The fingers on the back of Alex neck twitched, then left. The coffee machine hissed to life telling Alex exactly where Sam had gone.

He always drank the stuff, even at night before he went to bed. Sleeping after so much coffee would be impossible for Alex, but Sam didn’t seem to be affected.

Alex watched Sam’s fingers as he opened the carton of milk and stirred his coffee. He had long, slender fingers, yet Alex knew how strong Sam was. After all, these fingers had been on Alex’s neck a few minutes earlier.

Sam still stood with his side to Alex, looking down at his coffee. His strong back muscles, clearly visible under the T-shirt, rose and fell with every breath he took. Alex watched them, mesmerized, unable to tear his gaze away.

A few minutes later, as Alex started to wonder if Sam ever was going to turn back and speak with him again, Sam finally asked, “Why do you do it? Only one-night stands?”

What the...? "Why are you asking?"

"I want to know. You could have anyone as a boyfriend. Yet, you decide to get your rocks off with strangers. What's the thrill?"

"I've never thought about it. I mean it's a way to get off. I am only a normal guy, nothing more. I'm not much into commitment. I only want a night of hot sex, no strings attached. Let's face it: I'm not the guy you'd want to wake up next to every day. And I've yet to meet someone *I* want to have around every day. Except you, of course."

Sam was silent again. Then he slowly raised his coffee mug and left the room without a word. What had Alex done wrong now? He'd only told the truth. The only man he could live with was the one he'd just pissed off, even if he wasn't sure what he'd said wrong. But this was proof again. He wasn't even able to *not* hurt his best friend, even unintentionally. Who'd want Alex around for longer? And he wanted nobody else in his life but Sam right now.

Chapter Eleven

Sam

It was hours later before Alex finally opened the door to Sam's room. He stuck his head in and smiled in the way that always robbed Sam's brain of every working cell. This time, it wasn't different.

"Hey. Can I come in? I'm... I'm sorry."

Sam raised his head from the textbook he'd been reading. "Do you have any idea why you're sorry?"

And, just with that, Alex blushed an adorable dark red. "I... um... I figured. I. No."

Sam patted the floor next to him. He figured Alex had no idea what exactly had set Sam off. "Just forget it. It's okay."

Alex slowly sank to the floor next to Sam. "So, are you okay with staying at home the last months of the pregnancy? I know it'll be hard, but I don't see any other way. And now that we'll have some money, paying for food shouldn't be a problem."

Alex played with his fingers, urging Sam to put his hand over Alex's. He stopped himself. Alex had made his point clear once again earlier. The last thing Sam needed was another hit with reality.

"I'm not okay with staying at home and hiding. Absolutely not. But I've known since I found out that it would be the only way to keep the pregnancy under wraps."

Alex's fingers twisted again. Sam hesitated, but finally reached over and covered Alex's hand with his own. Alex stilled under his touch and raised his eyes to look at him, the intensity of his gaze nearly robbing Sam of his breath. He was so beautiful. So handsome. Sam held Alex's gaze, not daring to break the moment. He didn't even breathe. Time stood still with the simple touch and the intensity burning in Alex's eyes.

Was Alex maybe not as unaffected as he always appeared to be?

Alex finally said very quietly, "I should... I should go." He looked down, to their joined fingers.

Sam released him and pulled his hand back into his own lap. Alex got to his feet without saying anything else. He quietly left the room. The snick of the door told Sam he was alone again. He rubbed his eyes. What exactly had just happened?

It was bad enough to hear how much Alex put himself down, how he thought he wasn't relationship material, and how much he didn't want to commit to anything besides a night of sex. He sounded like he never entertained the thought of settling down with a guy one day. Let alone Sam. But then, in this quiet moment, something had happened. The dynamics had shifted. Alex left the room, even though, or because, he felt the connection as well. Sam would wait and see. Maybe he'd find out what exactly had changed.

He picked up his book again. If he wanted to acquire his engineering degree, he'd better start reading again. Pining after the man he couldn't have wasn't going to help him.

Sam ticked off the list in his mind to make sure he had packed everything. Drinks, food, a blanket. Everything was in his backpack.

It'd been a week since Gerome had visited them, and Alex would have to stop going out very soon. That's why Sam planned to take him to the lake today and treat them to a day of doing nothing but relaxing in the sun.

While it was late spring, it was warm enough to stay outside for a couple of hours, and the necessary jacket would hide Alex's baby bump. He'd have to wear one of Sam's, since all Alex owned were skin tight, stylish jackets. These used to fit perfectly and highlight his great body, but they didn't fit anymore. Sam was a bit broader and taller than Alex, and he wore comfortable clothes, so nobody would see anything.

Sam closed the backpack and went in search of Alex. The man was lounging in the living room, reading some stuff for his studies. He'd have to switch to online classes soon, but that wasn't a problem. Attending the tests in person would be one, but they hoped he could stave them off until after he gave birth. Neither of them had talked yet about the possibility of Alex dying. Sam pushed the thought to the back of his head. They'd find a way for Alex to survive.

Sam paused in the doorway, just watching Alex. He was so lost in his reading that he didn't even hear Sam approaching, so Sam took a moment to

study Alex's fine features. His dark hair was carefully styled today, and his expression of absolute concentration was plain adorable. Alex's hips and stomach were visibly rounded by now, and while he was wearing sweats, he looked delicious. All Sam wanted was to grab him, drag him off to bed, and make love to him all day. Explore that hot body. Kiss every inch of Alex's stomach. Hold those hips in his hands, as he fucked Alex into oblivion.

But since that day when Alex had come to his room, nothing had happened. Sam had tried to flirt with Alex, but Alex either wasn't interested or he didn't pick up on the signals. In any case, he hadn't come any closer to showing Alex his feelings.

But for today, they'd have a day in the park.

"What are you reading?" Sam asked.

Alex looked up from his book, a little frown on his face. It was his usual you-interrupted-me expression, cute as hell. Sam wasn't going to tell Alex that, though.

"It's about the influence of marketing. Interesting, but very dry writing. What do you need?"

"Can you stop learning for a few hours?"

"Yeah, of course. What's up?" Alex put his book away, marking the page he'd been studying.

"Let's spend the day at the park. I packed a picnic."

Alex wrinkled his forehead. "Why?"

"Just because? Isn't that reason enough?"

Alex smiled and got up. "Yeah, why not. Let me get some jeans and look in the mirror, then we can go."

He walked up to Sam, who still stood in the doorway. He stopped and hesitated for a second, as if he wanted to say something, but then he passed Sam and vanished into his room. Sam's gaze followed him until he was out of sight. Damn. The man was so sexy. And what had the little bit of hesitation been about? Confused, his mind not able to figure out what had just happened, Sam went to collect his backpack.

Alex joined him a couple of minutes later, having wrestled his stomach and hips into jeans Sam recognized as some of his own. "Ready?"

Sam handed Alex one of his jackets. Alex slipped it on and closed it, hiding his baby bump effectively from view.

“Ready when you are.”

“Then let’s go.” Alex treated Sam to another of his breathtaking smiles and opened the apartment door.

Chapter Twelve

Alex

Alex reclined in the sun, enjoying the warmth on his face. He'd love to take off his jacket, but it was too cold and he couldn't risk exposing his stomach. During work, he wore wide button down shirts, but when he leaned back like this his stomach would be too visible. He couldn't risk that. One wrong word from anyone, and he'd be in jail.

Alex had no idea what people thought of male pregnancies, and he wasn't keen on finding out. He glanced over to Sam, who sat next to him, relaxing as well. Eyes closed, he wasn't aware of Alex watching him. He looked as happy as Alex was. Despite everything going on in his life, today was just perfect.

Spending time with Sam was awesome, and since it was still spring they were relatively alone in the park. The silence—only interrupted by the birds singing—the sun on his face, the company, everything was perfect. This was one of the moments he'd remember for a long time.

Sam leaned back and lay down on the blanket, his eyes still closed, a small smile on his lips. How would it feel to kiss him again? He'd only tasted Sam's lips a week ago, in a moment of absolute gratitude, but now he couldn't stop himself from wondering how Sam would kiss if they really took the time to get to know each other better.

Was he more of an active kisser, demanding entrance in Alex's mouth and taking what he'd be offered? Or would he be the gentle type, waiting until Alex took the initiative? Would he place a hand on Alex's neck, to hold him in the kiss? This was one of Alex's favorites, to feel a man taking possession in such a way.

Sam opened his eyes, grinning widely at Alex. "What are smiling at?"

Alex needed a second to collect his thoughts. What had he been thinking? Had he really just fantasized about kissing Sam? What was wrong with him? Sam wasn't interested in him.

"Nothing. Just thinking about how beautiful it is here. And how much I love being outside."

"Yeah, me too." Sam sat up. He reached for his backpack and pulled items out of it. Sandwiches, fresh fruit, water, and lemonade. Muffins for dessert.

Alex's mouth watered, he was always hungry, and such a lazy day in the sun had increased his appetite. He dug in, eating the sandwich Sam offered him.

After Alex was so stuffed he wasn't able to move anymore, he helped Sam to pack away the remainders of lunch. Sam hadn't said if he had any more plans or if they'd just stay where they were. Alex opted for the latter. He didn't want to move and he didn't want today to end.

Sam leaned back again, and closed his eyes. Alex followed him, but turned to his side, so he could watch Sam. After a while, Sam opened one eye and peered at Alex. "Why are you watching me?"

"Just because? Am I supposed to not do that?"

"By all means, if it makes you happy, watch me."

Alex laughed. "That sounds creepy." He added, quieter, "Thank you for today. It's awesome. Just what I needed."

"You're welcome." Sam closed his eye again.

Alex rolled onto his back and did the same, knowing they'd have to leave eventually. He dreaded the moment.

Chapter Thirteen

Sam

Sam smiled to himself as he watched Alex eat the third peanut butter sandwich with cheese. Alex had put on a good chunk of weight by now. He wasn't fat, but definitely not slim anymore. At nearly five months along, the additional weight suited him, but Sam was going to keep that to himself. Alex's mood was bad enough without Sam telling him he liked the newly developed love handles on Alex's hips. He could do without the blowup that would follow. He'd been forced to quit his job the week before, since hiding his stomach was impossible by now.

Alex was oblivious to Sam watching him eat. He stared out of the window, into the bright spring day. He'd last been outside a week ago, and being trapped inside already took its toll on him. The next months would be interesting. It was only a matter of time until Alex got a bad case of cabin fever.

Sam watched Alex bend over the fridge, rummaging a bit and getting out the—no, pickles? With the peanut butter? That was just plain gross.

Not gross, though, was the way Alex's ass looked in the jeans he was wearing. They didn't close anymore, but he'd left the button open and wrestled them up his hips anyway. Now they hugged his ass and thighs like they were painted on.

A deep sigh left Sam and he nibbled on the bread in his fingers. Sam had no idea how Alex felt. If he really didn't have any deep feelings for Sam, that would be hard, but acceptable.

But did Alex know Sam was interested in him? That Sam saw him as more than a friend? Probably not. The feelings in Sam had grown over the last years, and Sam didn't know if Alex ever realized the change. Maybe he had done too good a job of hiding them?

He shifted to get up, to simply tell Alex the truth, but stopped halfway. What if Alex didn't feel the same? Would he destroy everything then? Sam would be devastated by the rejection.

Did he have to find out now? Or should he carefully try to get more information about how Alex felt? Might be better. Sam sat down again, staring at his breakfast. What should he do? All he could do was to stay around, help Alex, and prove to him how much he cared.

He started eating, his eyes glancing back at Alex again, who had returned to looking out of the window. Alex slowly raised a hand to his stomach, a distraught look appearing on his face.

“What’s up? Everything okay?” Sam was already moving. “Alex? Has something happened?”

Alex raised his gaze to Sam’s. “It moved. The baby. It moved. The little one kicked me.”

“That’s... that’s. Wow!” Sam pulled Alex in a tight hug. “That’s simply awesome!”

Alex hugged him back. “That it is. Absolutely.”

They stood for a few moments in each other’s embrace. Then Sam pulled back, releasing Alex, whose eyes glistened again. Sam smiled at him. “It’s a great sign that you feel it, right?”

“I guess so. I mean, yes, I think. But mostly I find it amazing to feel the life in me. It’s... I can’t even start to describe it.”

Sam pulled Alex close again. He couldn’t even begin to name the feelings running through him. How must it be for Alex? “I know,” he murmured in Alex ear.

Every new life was a wonder. This one even more. And Alex allowed him to be part of it. That was even more of a wonder, even if he didn’t share it in the way Sam wanted.

Gerome dropped by twice in the following weeks. Each time, he’d give Alex an envelope with money and vanish again without even sitting down. Sam saw how it pissed off Alex to no end that he delivered money as if he was trying to buy Alex. Yeah, they needed the money and it was nice of him to help them out, but he could at least ask Alex how he was doing. That wouldn’t hurt him and would give Alex the feeling that he wasn’t just a nuisance to Gerome.

Alex was furious after this day’s visit. Hours after Gerome had left, he was still seething. Sam watched him punch his finger at the remote of the TV like it was the one who’d done him wrong, although Gerome hadn’t offended him. He’d just not even bothered to ask how Alex was doing. He seemed to be completely distracted by something else, and Sam hoped he still searched for a safe way for Alex to deliver. So far, they’d come up with nothing, which was another reason for Alex’s bad mood.

Sam approached Alex, taking in the dark circles under his eyes. "Can I get you anything? Do you need something?"

"No, I fucking don't need anything! I'm not that fat already, and I can fucking take care of myself! You don't have to hover around me every second of every fucking day! Don't you have anything else to do?"

Sam recoiled at Alex's yelling. What the fuck? "You think I've got nothing better to do than being there for you? You think I like being around you and your sour mood? You're wrong! You're so wrong! You think you can do all this shit alone? Then go ahead. I won't be around anymore!"

Sam turned and half ran out of the room. Alex's words stung in his heart and his ears. He did everything to make it easier for Alex, and that was what he got? Alex's mood was bad, but Sam understood. Had he been in Alex's shoes, his mood would be the same.

The helplessness was the worst. Alex spent hours at the computer, trying to find out as much as he could about male pregnancies, but the search was fruitless. Either the men survived or they didn't. All info dated back from 1980 to 1995, when male pregnancy seemed to have mysteriously stopped. Either there were no other cases or everything was kept under wraps. It was frustrating. Sitting at home finding nothing would drive anyone nuts, and especially such an active person as Alex.

But that still was no justification for Alex yelling at Sam. Not like that.

Sam didn't wait to see if Alex said anything else. He grabbed his wallet, his jacket, and his keys and let himself out of the apartment. It was definitely time for some fresh air and a drink or two. The door closed quietly behind him. Sam headed to his favorite bar, intending to have an evening out, even if he'd rather curl up with a book somewhere. But Alex was at home, and he needed some time away from him now.

Chapter Fourteen

Alex

Alex took a deep breath. What the heck had just happened? Did Sam really leave? Just like that?

Asshole. He and his hovering, his constant waiting, helping, trying to make things easier for Alex. He was fucking pregnant, not sick. He didn't need constant attention. Alex closed his eyes and rested his head back. The TV was blaring at him, but all he could hear was the silence now that Sam had left.

What if he was gone for good? Would he do that? Just because Alex yelled at him? Would Sam leave Alex? Would Sam tell someone about him? No, not that. Leaving Alex for good? Unlikely. But not coming back for a few days... Alex had no idea. He'd been kind of moody in the last weeks, there was no point in denying that. This was the first time he'd yelled at Sam like that, but he *had* snapped at Sam quite often. Usually, Sam was not impressed by Alex's moods, and he either told Alex to stop it or to go bitch at someone else. But lately, Sam had started to act strange whenever Alex was around. Or when he had one of his fits. Not that Alex had them too often, but it happened. Alex was sorry the second it was over, and spent the better part of the following day making sure everything was fine between them again, but he just couldn't stop himself from throwing the fits in the first place.

Alex didn't know if the fits came from the pregnancy. But why had Sam acted so strange? Was he sick of Alex's moods or was it because Alex was very visibly pregnant by now? He was thirty weeks along, and there was no hiding Alex's stomach anymore. It must be hard for Sam to see Alex getting thicker and thicker, but it wasn't Alex's fault. He was innocent in getting pregnant.

Not in the making, of course, but in the way the accident happened. He never wanted any of that, even if he looked forward to it. Feeling the little one move in his stomach was beyond beautiful and amazing at the same time. Alex wanted to share the wonder with him, but he never was sure how Sam would react.

They weren't a couple, so there was nothing offensive with Alex being pregnant with another man's baby, but when Alex invited Sam to touch his stomach, it was as if he rubbed it in Sam's face that he'd been with another man. Sam knew, anyway, and yet, he was there, through everything with Alex. Until now, at least.

Now Alex had chased Sam away, driven him out of the apartment, maybe look for someone to get a quick fuck. The sick feeling in Alex's gut increased. What had he done? He'd not only yelled at the man who did everything for him, he'd maybe driven him into the arms of another man. He barely made it to the toilet before he threw up violently.

Alex wiped his mouth and brushed his teeth, the nausea and guilt still lingering. His heart constricted at the thought of Sam with another guy. Sam belonged to Alex. Nobody had a right to touch him.

Alex paused. *Where did that come from?* He was not in love with him. Alex was not... they never... but Sam was—If Alex ever wanted to settle down... he'd accept him. He could deal with Alex's moods. He already knew Alex was going to have a child.

And he never even hesitated when Alex told him. He was there for Alex. He always had been. He always would be. And he was hot as hell.

Why had Alex never seen that? Was this the answer to Sam's strange behavior? Or was there another reason and Alex was totally wrong? Now that he thought of it, was it the opposite? Did Sam hate Alex's guts since he had a child from another guy? He'd agreed to help Alex, but was it because they were friends for so long and he thought he had to?

Alex stood, intending to go to bed. He'd get a headache if he tried to keep up with the thoughts running wild in his head.

Maybe Sam would be back in the morning. Then Alex could sit him down and talk to him. Maybe he wasn't going to like Sam's answers, but Alex needed to know.

Alex headed to his room, but just shy of the door, he stopped short. He didn't want to sleep alone. He wanted to curl up in Sam's arms, bury his face in Sam's hair, and breathe in Sam's scent. Those were the only nights Alex really slept well, when Sam was at his side.

That in itself should've been a clue, but sometimes Alex wasn't the brightest guy in that department. He turned and made his way to Sam's bedroom. Alex doubted Sam would be home before morning, and until then, his bed was free. Maybe sleeping in his bed would help him get some rest.

Alex curled up under the comforter, pulling it tight around him. Hopefully, sleep would come soon, and by the time he woke again, Sam would be back. Then Alex could find out if Sam had feelings for him, if there was something to explore.

Alex saw Sam's face in his mind, his smile, his unruly, and therefore short cropped, blond hair. His handsome face. His eyes, a dark, startling blue. They crinkled at the corners when he smiled.

Damn, Alex really wanted him. Now Alex was hard and aching for Sam. If he hadn't driven him away, they could've spent the night in bed, doing whatever they wanted to do. But Sam was gone, maybe getting his rocks off with another man. Time to sleep, otherwise Alex would start calling Sam on his cell or doing something equally insane. Stalking him was a sure way to win his heart. *Not*.

The only thing Alex could do now was to wait, hoping he'd come home soon and then to get a vibe for Sam's feelings for Alex. And to find out what Alex's feelings for Sam really meant.

Alex didn't dare to think the L-word. He never fell for anyone. But there was no other word to describe the feelings inside of Alex. It was definitely time to sleep now. Alex's head was pounding. He snuggled deeper into the covers. Sleep would find him. And maybe, with a lot of luck, so would Sam.

Chapter Fifteen

Sam

As Sam stumbled out of the bar hours later, he still seethed. Yes, Alex was moody. Yes, Alex had a temper. Yes, it was understandable that he snapped. But Alex had said some hurtful things, and it wasn't Sam's fault he was in this shit. He'd not gotten pregnant all by himself, but he wasn't innocent either.

If they hadn't been best friends, like, forever, Sam might have walked out on Alex. It'd be his right. If they got caught, both of them would spend a lot of time in jail. Sam paused. Okay, he wouldn't have walked out on Alex. The man needed help, and who was Sam to deny him? Best friends or not. Even if it made Alex's behavior even worse. They were best friends. It wasn't okay to treat a good friend like this. A lot of Sam's anger had settled, but he still bristled over the outburst.

He'd have to go back and see if Alex had cooled down and then see whether he planned on apologizing. If he didn't... Sam refused to follow the thought, since it hurt too much.

He walked back to the apartment, breathing in the warm summer air. Everything was quiet when he let himself in, no TV running, no lights on. Should he stop at Alex's room and see how Alex was doing? Or not? Would Alex consider that hovering again? Nope, they could talk tomorrow if they needed to. For tonight, he wanted some more peace. Sam opened the door to his own room and switched on the light.

He stopped short, seeing who was already in there. Sleeping peacefully in his bed, only his head peeking out from under the covers, was Alex. Sam drew closer, staring. Alex's cheeks were red, and his eyes looked swollen. Had he been crying again? And what exactly was he doing in Sam's bed? Not that Alex in his bed was a bad thing, but it was unexpected, to say the least.

Sam wouldn't get an answer to his questions now, and he wasn't going to wake Alex up. Sam undressed, switched off the light, and crawled in beside Alex, wearing only boxers. Alex stirred, but didn't wake. He only burrowed closer to Sam, resting his head on Sam's shoulder.

Sam pressed a kiss to Alex's forehead and closed his eyes.

"I thought you wouldn't come back," Alex murmured.

So he was awake. Oh, and he had felt the kiss. Damn.

"I wouldn't leave you. I just thought it was a good idea to get away for a few hours."

"I said some awful things. I'm sorry. I... I'm just so frustrated. I'm pent up here, with nothing to do. I can't read all day; I can't watch TV all day; I'm going crazy here. Research turns up nothing, and I... I think I hate myself right now. But I didn't mean to yell at you. I'm sorry for that. You do so much for me, and all I am is a burden, and... fuck." Alex started to rise.

Sam put a hand on his shoulder. "Stay. You're not a burden. I like taking care of you." Alex still tried to get up, probably to run away again. Sam bent over and kissed him full on the lips. He lingered there a second, then pulled back. "Stay? Please?" *Did I really just do this?*

From the shocked look on Alex's face, he had. Alex stared at Sam like he'd grown a second head. He had grown one, but that was currently trapped in his boxers, which was better right now.

Alex hesitated a second, then smiled shyly and laid his head back on Sam's shoulder. What had Sam done? And why was Alex not yelling at him? His lips tingled from the kiss and he suppressed the urge to touch them, to get a better taste of Alex.

"What... what was that?" Alex asked quietly.

Sam chuckled. "Do I really have to tell you that?"

"No! I mean, why? And..."

Sam turned his head, his face now inches away from Alex's lips. What would he give to be allowed to kiss him again?

Alex's answered his unspoken question as he wrapped his fingers around Sam's neck, and slowly pulled him forward to his lips. They were kissing again.

Despite the need burning in Sam's stomach, it was a slow, lazy kiss. Their tongues met, touching, caressing, though without the immediate need to get off. Sam pulled Alex closer, trying to press him flush to his body. Alex's stomach was trapped between them, and Sam scooted back a bit.

"Stay," Alex breathed against Sam's lips. "It's okay." Their lips closed the distance, meeting in another long, languid kiss. Slowly, as air became necessary, they pulled back, only inches separating them. "That was... that was..."

Sam stopped Alex from saying more in the best possible way. He kissed him again. Meanwhile, Sam's fingers explored Alex's back and stomach, but nothing more. Alex was as shy, his hands never going down near Sam's boxers. Sam was hard, painfully so, but this was not the right moment to take things further. Alex allowed him close, which was absolutely enough for now.

They slowly separated, until they were looking at each other again. "Here. The little one is awake," Alex said quietly and brought Sam's hand to his stomach. "Feel."

Sam closed his eyes and rested his head on Alex's shoulder, waiting for another kick. There. Something nudged his hand. The baby. Their baby. It nudged again, harder, kicking against Sam's palm.

"He or she is strong."

"Wait until tomorrow, then I can show you how it looks when he jumps. My whole stomach moves. I saw it happen a few days ago for the first time. Looks funny as hell." Alex chuckled. "My stomach has a life of its own."

Sam joined in laughing, the kicks against his hand getting stronger and stronger, then vanishing only to come back again. He swallowed around the lump which was suddenly in his throat. This was beyond amazing. He kissed Alex again, simply enjoying it. Alex pulled him close and kissed him back.

This was no kind of foreplay. This was simply enjoying the moment.

They fell asleep sometime later, still wrapped in each other's arms, Sam's hand resting against their baby. Nothing besides a few kisses had happened, but that'd been enough.

Chapter Sixteen

Sam pulled Alex's warm, strong body closer to him. He breathed in, the mix of Alex's shampoo and his unique, intoxicating scent teasing his nose. Alex always smelled so good, Sam wanted nothing more than to cuddle next to him.

Alex was the man Sam longed to have in his arms, the man he dreamt of, fantasized about, but who wasn't interested. That was what he'd thought until last night. Right now, Alex rested in his arms, just where he belonged. He was asleep, snoring ever so slightly. His ass rested against Sam's groin, pressed as close as possible.

Sam's cock hardened, ready to take Alex and show him Sam's feelings. Sam shifted a little, trying to get more comfortable, which was close to impossible with his cock throbbing between them. He didn't want to poke Alex, but he needed some friction, *now*.

Sam carefully caressed Alex's swollen stomach. While the baby technically wasn't his, he or she belonged as much to Sam as to Alex.

The baby moved again, not kicking as hard as yesterday, but clearly stating "here I am." Not that Sam could forget for a second. He breathed again deeply, trying to wrap his head around the fact Alex was with him. He'd do everything to help Alex survive, and then they would raise the little one as theirs.

"Mmmhh, what are you doing?"

Sam carefully pulled back a little. He didn't want to come on too strong, as long as he wasn't exactly sure what was between them. Alex wouldn't get out of this *thing* between them—and Sam's bed, for that matter—without a good reason, but they both needed to be clear about what they wanted. Sam wanted everything, but Alex needed to be on the same page before they took things further.

His hand was still on Alex's stomach, and the embrace was quite intimate. Sam tried to unsuspiciously pull back a bit, but Alex stopped him by laying his hand over Sam's.

"Stay a little longer? I don't want to get up yet."

Sam closed his eyes and nodded against Alex's neck. If Alex wanted some more cuddling, he'd get that. They could talk later. "Of course. Think you can sleep a bit longer?"

"I hope so," Alex mumbled. His breathing was already evening out and the tension left his body. Sam scooted closer again and stared at a point over Alex's head. He wasn't going to sleep, since he enjoyed having Alex in his bed way too much. Happy, Sam closed his eyes and let his mind wander, imagining their future together.

Alex woke two hours later, still in Sam's arms. He hadn't even stirred the whole time.

Alex turned around to Sam, his face still sleepy. "Good morning." His mouth pulled into a soft smile. He stared at Sam, not saying anything. Sam's heart beat like mad, trying to get out of his ribcage. Alex's smile did this to him every time, but having him in his arms made the sensation even worse.

Slowly, very slowly, Alex bent and pressed a kiss to Sam's lips. Sam's heart stilled, his world stopped. In the light of the day, not tired and worn out from crying, Alex was kissing him again. And Sam kissed Alex, breathing him in, devouring him. His hands ran over the swollen stomach, Alex's ass, his back. Hell, why hadn't they done this months earlier?

Alex pulled at Sam's boxers, his hands as impatient as Sam's, shaking, tugging, yet not getting anything done. They slowed down a bit, their movements getting a bit more coordinated, and soon Sam was naked, and Alex was busy pulling his shirt over his head. He still wore his sweats, but they'd go soon enough.

Alex's lips were red and slightly swollen. His dark hair, longer than usual, was already disheveled, and he was panting slightly.

"You do know there is no going back? I want everything, if we do this," Sam asked quietly.

"I know. I fucking know." Alex wound his arms around Sam and pulled him into a kiss again. Sam closed his eyes, giving in to his lust. They lay down next to each other, Alex's stomach between them. Sam caressed his hand down Alex's back, who pressed as close to him as possible. His stomach got in the way, keeping them apart too much.

That wouldn't do. That wouldn't do at all. Sam got on his knees, and settled next to Alex, who turned on his back, exposing the swollen stomach and his nipples. They were pebbled and hard already, begging Sam to lean down and suck them, much like he planned on sucking something else in a few moments.

He bent down and took one of the small buds in his mouth. Alex moaned softly, pressing his chest closer to Sam's face. Fuck, the man was responsive. Sam shifted to the other side, alternating between carefully biting, sucking, and teasing with his tongue. Alex's breath came in harsh pants, a few moans here and there thrown in. If he got that aroused by simply having his nipples sucked, he'd explode as soon as Sam took his dick in his mouth.

Alex's fingers clutched in Sam's hair. "So good. So fucking good," he half moaned, half said, and then he tried to guide Sam lower. That was absolutely fine with Sam. He pulled on the string of the loose fitting pants Alex wore these days and with a few quick movements, he had Alex lying naked in front of him.

His long, slender cock stood out like a flagpole, practically begging Sam to suck it. Sam licked a long line up from Alex's slightly fuzzy balls to the red tip.

"Sorry, I haven't shaved, I didn't think..."

"Shh, I don't care. It's perfect. You are perfect just the way you are."

"I'm not. I'm far from—"

Alex stopped midsentence as Sam sucked on the hard shaft, pulling it deeper into his mouth. Yes, that was probably the best way to get Alex to be silent. He really should do that more often. Sam pulled off for a second, only to whisper, "You are. And now stop arguing."

Then he went back to his task of driving Alex out of his mind. He ran one finger down Alex's crack. If he was careful, there shouldn't be obstacles to Alex bottoming. They could switch up, Sam wanted to feel Alex inside of him, but for this very first time, he wanted to be inside of Alex.

A full body shudder wracked Alex's slender frame as Sam found his ass. Oh, yes, someone was eager to get fucked.

"Here..." Alex panted, and dropped something next to Sam on the bed. Lube. Where had he gotten it? His nightstand, probably. *How did he know where to look?* For now though, Sam was going to be grateful. He slicked up his finger without letting go of Alex's cock in his mouth. Before he pressed in his finger, he looked up to Alex's face to make sure everything was all right.

His lips slightly parted, his eyes closed in pleasure, Alex was beautiful. Sam watched him, his reactions, as he slowly pressed in a finger, looking for signs of discomfort or pain. It'd been a while since Alex had had sex, and Sam needed to be careful.

“Put it in, damn it. I can take it.”

Sam shook his head and smiled around the cock in his mouth. Impatient brat. He wasn't going to hurt Alex, no matter how much he wanted to fuck Alex senseless. Alex fisted Sam's hair again, holding on as Sam pushed in a second finger. Alex was tight, his muscles clenching. Fucking him was going to be heaven.

Alex's whole body shook, and he moaned even louder. Sam's own cock was painfully hard and ready, yet not allowed to play. Not much longer. Alex panted, begging to be fucked, for Sam to get into him. His pleas were music to Sam's ears, ramping up his own arousal a few more notches.

Chapter Seventeen

Alex

Alex watched Sam kneeling next to him, his mouth sucking Alex's dick, his fingers in Alex's ass. It was everything, and more than Alex ever wanted. Sam slowly pressed in a third finger, and Alex closed his eyes for a second. It hurt. It'd been months.

Doing it himself just wasn't the same. But the twinge of pain subsided as fast as it had come, and all it left in its wake was the need to get fucked. *Now!*

"Fuck me. Please, fuck me." Alex hated pleading and he hated sounding needy, but he wanted Sam in him. "Come on, I can take it. Please." Nope, definitely not above begging. Not when he sucked Alex's cock like a pro, and not when his fingers were on his—*oh yes, there, exactly there.*

Alex closed his eyes, his fingers tangled in Sam's hair. *Oh god, what is he doing?* Alex panted, his breath coming in harsh gasps. He needed Sam, ached to feel Sam in him.

Sam let go of Alex's cock and smiled up to him. He got in between Alex's spread legs, ready to—

"Condoms?"

"I'm clean. The only time I was without was Gerome and he can't carry anything. And before that, I got tested regularly. And I know you did as well. I want to feel you. I've known you for so long. Let me have everything of you." *Where did that come from?* Alex didn't know. And he didn't care as Sam slowly pushed in, past the tight muscle of Alex's ass, until he was inside of him. It burned, and Alex needed to take a deep breath, and another one. But then it was perfect, Sam inside of Alex, hot, hard, and oh so good.

And with that, it was clear. It made sense like it never had before. Alex had never been in love because his heart belonged to one man. Always had and always would. And now Sam was here, making love to Alex.

Sam pushed in the last couple of inches, and Alex tried to raise his legs, but his stomach got in the way. His usual flexibility in bed was only a distant memory.

"Wait, let me help." Sam grasped Alex's legs and laid them over his shoulders.

"Thanks." Alex smiled up to Sam. It should've been embarrassing for Alex that he was too thick to raise his legs on his own, but Sam didn't seem to care. He just kissed Alex's left ankle and grinned back at him.

"No problem. Are you good to go or do you need a bit more time?"

The burning had lessened and Alex nodded to Sam, who still watched him closely. Sam started, the first slow thrusts bringing tears to Alex eyes. Not because of discomfort, though. Because having Sam inside was so right.

Alex watched Sam as he fucked him, gentle enough so he wouldn't hurt him or the baby. Sam's face was a mask of lust and want, probably the same emotions that showed on Alex's own. He looked so happy.

Alex reached down to his cock, wrapping his fist around it, but the position was awkward, since Alex's stomach was way too big to jack himself off.

"Wait. Can you turn around?" Sam interrupted Alex's attempt to stroke himself.

Alex nodded and Sam pulled out of him, leaving Alex feeling empty. "What do you have in mind?"

"Get on all fours, this should be easier for you."

Alex complied, moving into the suggested position, his back to Sam and waited for Sam to come inside of him again.

He did what Alex wished within moments. Sam kissed Alex's neck, which sent a shiver down Alex's back. His arms found their way around Alex, pulling him close to Sam's chest as he pushed into him again. It was as slow as it'd been previously, when he filled Alex up, connecting them. Alex closed his eyes, the emotions overwhelming him.

Sam's hand wound down to Alex's cock, gripping it, stroking him in time with his gentle movements. No urgent need to come ran through Alex. This wasn't sex to get his rocks off. This was lovemaking.

Sam kissed Alex's shoulder again, telling him how beautiful he was.

"I'm not. I'm fat," Alex replied, although without any heat.

"I love your stomach as much as I love you. And you can kick my ass for it later, just accept it for now."

Alex misheard. He absolutely got everything wrong. Sam didn't—"Did you just say you love me?"

"I told you, you could kick my ass later, okay? I just wanted you to know."

So Alex hadn't misunderstood? "I love you, too." And he meant it.

"Really?"

"Really." It was mushy, but in this moment, everything was all right.

"I love you, and I want the baby to be mine as much as yours, if you let me."

How could Alex not love him? "I want the same," he whispered, his throat closed from too many emotions running through him.

Sam rescued him from saying anything else by stroking faster, his thrusts getting stronger. Yet, it was a far cry from the hot, sweaty kind of sex Alex usually had. This was something different. And it was so much better.

A few more jerks brought Alex to a great, eye-crossing, getting-out-of-breath orgasm. His arms trembled with the effort of holding him up, and his body relaxed. Sam steadied Alex's hips, helping him stay on all fours, and with a few last thrusts, Sam followed Alex over, spilling his cum into him.

"I love you," Sam murmured.

"Love you, too." Alex raised up against Sam's chest and met him in a sloppy kiss over Alex's shoulder. "Let's sleep a little longer?"

"Hmm. I'm gonna clean up and be right back." Sam kissed Alex one last time before pulling out. Alex missed him already, but he was going to have more of him. Sam stood and stumbled out of the room. Alex laid down again and waited for Sam. He heard the bathroom door open and the water running. Sam would be back soon, and then they could cuddle again.

He smiled into the empty room. He was happy, simply happy, and he looked forward to having a family with Sam. He was going to give birth somehow, and then they could raise the child and live their own happily ever after.

Sam was back a few moments later, before Alex could get all teary-eyed because of his feelings. He wiped Alex clean then pulled him against his chest, Alex's stomach trapped between them again.

"You do know this is serious, right? I want everything. You, the baby, a family."

Had he known Alex had been thinking about the same a moment ago? “You know how corny you sound?” Alex couldn’t stop himself from ribbing Sam gently, but he couldn’t keep the smile out of his voice. They were on the same page here, apparently. Alex kissed Sam and murmured, “I want exactly the same with you. Love you so much.”

“Love you as well.”

Chapter Eighteen

Gerome showed up the next week again. It was nearly lunchtime and Alex was bored and lonely. Sam was working and Alex had been alone since this morning, missing him. The nights were awesome and hot, but the days were long, leaving Alex with too much time to think and worry.

Alex invited Gerome in, happy he had some company. Gerome hadn't even bothered with asking about him or the baby the last few times he visited, but today he didn't seem to be as stressed out. He'd accepted the invitation and sat down in the kitchen while Alex rummaged through the fridge, looking for something to snack on.

"Do you want something to drink?" Alex turned around to Gerome. He never drank anything, but it'd be rude to not ask.

"No, thanks."

Alex shrugged and got himself a bottle of water and a couple of yogurts out of the fridge. His stomach didn't make it easy to bend down, but he managed. Alex sat down across from Gerome and fiddled with the bottle in his hand.

"How are you feeling?" Gerome asked into the silence of the kitchen.

"I'm okay, thanks. The baby is growing," Alex ran a hand over his very round stomach, "and I'm just hoping it's healthy."

"That's one of the things I'm here for. I found a doctor. He runs a very reclusive, hidden, and secret hospital. He treats humans and paranormals, and he agreed to do a check-up."

"You found a doctor? Who treats pregnant men?" He'd really found someone? Hope! Finally, finally a silver lining on the horizon.

Gerome smiled, looking a little smug. Yeah, he had every right, having found someone. Alex had to give him that. He was just beyond grateful they had more than a little hope for actually having a shot at being a family now.

"Thank you," Alex murmured, his eyes suddenly tearing up again. Damn these hormones.

"Your appointment is tomorrow evening. Since it gets dark at around nine, I'll pick you up at nine thirty. That way we have the cover of darkness to get you there undetected. Is that okay?"

"I will be here," Alex answered. Not that he could be anywhere else, but he didn't have to rub it in.

"Okay, then. I'll see you tomorrow." Gerome stood and smiled at Alex again.

"Thank you. Really. I mean... it's awesome you found a doctor."

"Don't mention it. I want you and the little one to be healthy and happy."

Alex rubbed over his stomach. "I want the same."

"See you tomorrow, then?"

"I'll be ready."

True to his word, Gerome stood in front of the door the next night. Alex followed him down the stairs, but stopped outside to take deep breaths of the warm summer air. It was still pretty hot and damp, but oh so good after being inside for so long. Opening the windows was simply not the same as being outside. Alex had contemplated going for a walk, but it was too dangerous. Earlier in the pregnancy, he'd snuck out a few times, but not recently. There was no way he could hide his stomach.

The few meters to the car were no problem, though. Alex slipped into it, Sam close on his heels. Gerome got behind the wheel of the sleek, black car.

Alex settled back in the seat, took Sam's hand, and tried to get comfortable with his stomach in the way. Today, his back ached like a bitch. A few days before, his right leg continually fell asleep whenever he stood for a minute. He breathed deep, hoping the little one would change position so he could sit down comfortably. The next nine weeks were going to be fun if it was that bad already.

Gerome sped up, and soon the city flew by. He drove for about twenty minutes, during which Sam didn't let go of Alex's hand once.

They stopped in front of a very normal looking house. Alex didn't know what he had expected but was somehow disappointed. From Gerome's words, Alex had anticipated more, like armed guards or hidden entrances. This was supposed to be a secret clinic, and yet, they drove right up, without anyone hindering them. If he stopped and thought about it, it was clever, since no one would look for a clinic here, as this was just a house and a small parking lot.

Two other cars were standing there already, and on a lawn nearby stood a swing and a sandbox. Alex was really curious to meet the doctor who ran such an institution.

Gerome led them to the entrance area. No sign announced who worked here. He pushed open the door and they walked into a large reception area.

A friendly smiling woman sat behind a desk, looking up as she saw them. Alex pulled the jacket he wore closer over his stomach, in a very useless attempt to hide, but there was no hiding a thirty-one-weeks-along stomach.

She was probably used to it. She'd seen more pregnant men, at least Alex hoped so. The knowledge didn't ease his anxiety. Alex took a deep breath and stepped over to the desk. Before he could say anything, she spoke. "Hello. Dr. Brown is awaiting you. Would you please go through to the second door on the left? You can wait there, he'll be with you shortly."

"Thanks," Alex stammered. That was really fast. Alex turned in the direction the woman had pointed, and Sam and Gerome followed him. They entered the room together, neither of the men making any move to wait outside.

Alex wanted to have Sam by his side, since this was his baby as much as Alex's. Gerome? Not so much, even if he was biologically the father. Alex had no idea how the doctor was going to examine him, but he didn't want to have Gerome in the room with him.

Alex just had no good reason to tell him that without looking like a total asshole. Gerome had organized the whole appointment, driven them there, and he was the father, so it was only fair he be allowed in the room, yet this was something very private, and in Alex's eyes, Sam was the father, biology be damned.

Alex perched his pregnant ass on a chair, while his boyfriend took the one next to him. Gerome remained standing at the door.

The opposite door opened and Dr. Brown stepped in. He was in his late thirties, with sandy-blond hair and a stocky build. A welcoming smile lit up his entire face.

"Hello." He shook Alex's hand, then greeted Sam and Gerome.

"Who of you two is the father of the child?" Dr. Brown asked and glanced between Sam and Gerome.

"I am," Sam and Gerome answered simultaneously.

Dr. Brown's smile grew wider. "Oh, I'm sorry. Who of you is the sire, then?"

"That would be me," Gerome answered.

Dr. Brown hurried around the desk and bowed deep in front of Gerome. "Your highness, it's an honor to have you and your partners here."

Wait, what—sire? Your Highness? What the fuck? Alex tried to make sense of what he'd just heard.

"Highness?" he mouthed to Sam, who sat wide-eyed next to Alex. Sam shook his head. He didn't know either.

"Gerome, what do you want to tell us?"

Gerome's shoulders fell. "I'm a prince. A vampire prince. Only descendants of the royal line are able to impregnate men. I learned that tidbit of info after I accidentally got you pregnant. I'm not first in line or anything, so me being the biological father or sire of the child has no consequences to you. That's why I didn't tell you anything about it. I wanted to keep it under wraps as well." Gerome ran a hand through his hair. He addressed his next words to Dr. Brown. "And while I'm flattered you think we're in a relationship, I may be the sire, but actually, Alex and Sam are a couple."

"Oh, okay, I understand." Dr. Brown went back behind his desk. "There are a few things I need to tell you, then I'll examine you, okay? But first, let me get an extra chair."

Dr. Brown vanished for a second, while Alex's mind still reeled. Gerome was a fucking prince? And he'd never even dropped a hint. Nothing about this had turned up in his online search. Nothing. Not a single clue. He'd ask Gerome about it as soon as they were in the car again.

Dr. Brown interrupted Alex's thoughts as he returned with a chair. Gerome sat down with a "Thank you" and waited for Dr. Brown to continue speaking.

"So, the legal stuff first. We offer medical advice and help for a minority here. That includes pregnant men, vampires, and weres. You are in a situation yourself where nothing about your pregnancy can be public. You might meet other men here, pregnant or wounded... you get the picture. I'm asking you to keep silent about the patients. I can help you, and I will help you if you want, but I can only do my job if nobody knows about this clinic. It's as simple as that. You can give my address to someone who needs medical help as well, but

not the authorities. I have papers here that you'll need to sign, basically that I can sue you if you tell the authorities, and that everything you see and hear here is strictly confidential." Dr. Brown looked every one of them in the eye for a second. "I'm sorry I have to go to such lengths, but I have a family to protect as well."

"I understand." Alex couldn't say he was comfortable being basically accused of possibly wanting to harm him, but he understood all too well where Dr. Brown was coming from.

Dr. Brown pushed three papers over the desk, together with a pen. Alex flew over the contents of the contract, and it was basically all what he'd just told them. Tell about his clinic and he could sue them. Keep under wraps what Alex saw here.

Alex signed on the bottom line, then passed the pen to Sam. He and Jerome scribbled their names on the documents as well. Sam's expression revealed he was not too happy with the contract they'd just signed, but there was no way out if they wanted help. And since Alex had no intention of telling anyone about his visit here, he shouldn't have trouble keeping up his end of the agreement.

"Thank you. I appreciate it." Dr. Brown collected the papers. "Let's take a look at you now, shall we? If you could please follow me?"

He waited until Alex nodded, then stood and opened the door to the room he'd come from. Alex dragged his ass out of the chair and followed him to the room, Sam and Jerome close on his heels.

"Please, lie down here. We'll start with an ultrasound. Could you pull up your T-shirt?"

Alex took his place in an awkwardly formed chair. It had strange rests on the sides for the feet and was leaned back in a slightly skewed angle.

The doctor poured some cold, lube-like stuff on Alex's stomach. He jumped slightly, but forced himself to be still as the doctor had the hand-piece ready. It took a few moments until the picture became clear, but then Alex was able to see something resembling a leg on the monitor.

Dr. Brown fiddled with some knobs. A loud, rushing and pulsating sound filled the room. It was a very fast, strong pounding. The baby's heartbeat, most likely. Alex stared at the monitor, as Dr. Brown explained he'd found the

umbilical cord. He was measuring it to see if the child was getting enough blood.

All Alex could think of was that he heard the heartbeat of his child. His baby. The constant kicks in Alex's stomach were apparently not enough sign that the little one was there. He needed to hear it as well. Tears streamed down Alex's cheeks as he listened to possibly the best sound in the world. Sam came over, wiping Alex's face dry.

"Hey, it's okay. Come on." He kissed Alex gently on the forehead.

"Everything looks good to me. Do you want to know the gender?"

They both shook their heads simultaneously.

"Okay. Anyway, the baby is healthy as far as I can tell."

Sam leaned over and kissed Alex again. "I'm so happy everything's okay," he murmured.

"Me, too," Alex whispered back.

Alex focused back on the ultrasound and the last questions he had. "So, Jerome told me you'd do a C-section? How are the results? Can you tell me about the technique you're using? Where are you cutting?"

"Of course. I've done about one-hundred and twenty C-sections. There is a certain risk, but I don't have to tell you that. Nevertheless, the possibility of dying at birth is much higher if you give birth the natural way. All of my patients survived, as did the children." He ran his finger over Alex's stomach close to the waistband of his trousers. "I'll cut here. That way the scar will be hidden if you're shirtless."

Alex smiled at him. That was what he'd wanted to hear. "Thank you. Can we make an appointment, then?"

The doctor wiped down Alex's stomach, getting rid of the lube-like stuff on it. "I suggest we find a date about two weeks before it's due, so you don't accidentally go into labor."

"That sounds good to me."

"Have Lizzie look up a date. I assume you know when it happened? Since you're too far along for me to calculate that?"

Alex shot a look at Jerome. "Yes, I know the exact date. I've got about nine weeks left."

“Good. Then please make an appointment in two and four weeks for check-ups, and then let’s schedule in seven weeks for the C-Section. I’m going to keep you here for about ten days afterward, and then you shouldn’t be alone at home. But I think that’s not a problem?”

Alex cast a glance at Sam. “No, that’s not a problem.”

“Okay, then. I’ll see you in two weeks. Have a nice evening.”

They shook hands, made the appointments, and then stood outside in the pleasantly cool summer air. Gerome stared in the distance, an odd look on his face. Why was he acting so strange? And what was up with the prince thing?

Alex stomped over and pulled on his sleeve. “Can I talk to you?” It took Gerome a moment to understand what Alex wanted, but then he followed him. Alex stopped in front of an overgrown bush. “What’s up, Gerome? Is it the money? We’ll come up with it.”

“What? No, I already settled that.”

“Oh. Then, thanks. Really. But—what’s up? Is it because you’re a prince? I don’t get why you hid that from us, but I figure you have your reasons. But you’re acting really strange today.”

“It’s nothing. Everything is fine.”

“Do you really want to tell me everything’s okay? I see how sad and tired you look. Is it because Sam and I are together now?”

“No, it’s not. It’s okay. Really. Nothing to concern you.”

His closed face told Alex he wouldn’t get any more out of him. Well, then. He’d done everything he could, and while it stung a bit that Gerome didn’t trust him with his problems, maybe it was for the best. If he wanted to talk, he’d find Alex. “Then let’s go home?”

Alex didn’t look forward to getting home, but he was exhausted from the trip, and it was after eleven as well. Gerome stopped him from turning around and getting back in the car.

“Alex, just a moment, please. I’m happy everything will be okay now. I’m happy for you. Please don’t worry about me. I’ll be fine.” He pulled Alex into his arms, baby belly and all, and hugged him tight.

Everything would be well. He had no intentions of denting Dr. Brown’s statistics, and the baby was healthy.

A few feet away Alex's boyfriend waited for him, so they could get home and crawl into bed together.

Yeah, everything was good.

The End (FOR NOW)

Alex and Sam's story continues.

Check out Saving Alex, the sequel to this book.

Author Bio

Chris McHart is from Germany and, while an accountant, writing is Chris's real passion.

Chris likes to spend time with family and has way too many animals that demand constant attention. Chris also enjoys landscaping and cooking.

Whenever Chris has a free minute, it's spent writing on a laptop, a cup of coffee in hand, deeply lost in the worlds Chris's muses have created.

When coming up for some air, you'll find Chris on a lot of social networks. Check out Chris's website to see where you can find out more. Chris looks forward to hearing from you!

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