

SNAGGED

JET
MYKLES



The scanning, uploading and distribution of this book via the Internet or via any other means without the permission of the publisher is illegal, and punishable by law. Please purchase only authorized electronic editions, and do not participate in or encourage the electronic piracy of copyrighted materials. Your support of the author's rights is appreciated.

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

Snagged

Copyright © 2005 Jet Mykles

ISBN: 1-55410-606-0

Cover art and design by Eiris Key

All rights reserved. Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilization of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, is forbidden without the written permission of the publisher.

Published by eXtasy Books, a division of Zumaya Publications, 2005

Look for us online at:

www.zumayapublications.com

www.extasybooks.com

Dedication:

This one's for Morgan, who pushed, pulled and prodded me through the whole process. And also for Alvin and Suza, who are the most loyal and honest test readers an author could want.

Chapter One

Moonlight streaming through the den's windows was all the light Kyle needed. His nimble fingers sent the tumbler in motion, flicking the dial until the proper *click* sounded, then spinning the dial in the opposite direction. The safe *chunked* and Kyle's fingers stopped. He grinned. *Finally!* He opened the safe door, shone his penlight inside and...

They weren't there! He reached inside, carefully lifting the few items within the safe, but there were no documents anywhere in the small compartment.

That was impossible! For a moment, he gaped in disbelief at the safe's interior. The papers had to be in there. He'd seen Quince put them in himself just this afternoon. Why would the boss take them back out? But they certainly weren't there and the whole reason for this escapade was gone. Mind reeling in confusion, Kyle closed the safe and replaced the small framed photograph that hid it from view. Now what?

A hand clamped over his mouth and an arm snaked around his chest. Kyle froze in shock. His penlight dropped to the floor with a muffled *thunk*.

"What do you think you're doing here?" a voice demanded softly against his ear. The knitted cap he wore over his head heated from his assailant's breath.

He didn't struggle as a much bigger body hauled him back from the wall into the middle of the dark room. He could see the shadows of the furniture just fine and chanced a glance at the mirror over the bar to the right. He and his captor were silhouetted against the window. The man was a full head and shoulders taller than him. Short, straight hair gleamed bright blue in the moonlight.

Oh, no! It wasn't...?

"Stupid little shit." The low voice sounded more amused than upset as the bigger man set Kyle properly on his feet and spun him around.

Kyle looked up and couldn't help but gasp. *Seth?* There was no mistaking the older man's angular face and the almost sneering smile. The intense blue of his deep-set eyes was hidden in the shadows of his sharp brows. That white-blond hair shone an eerie blue in the moonlight, hanging loose and straight from the crown of his head to his chin and in unruly bangs over his eyes to the tip of his nose. For a brief moment, Kyle could only stare in awe at the perfection that was Seth, even in his anger.

"What do you think you're doing?"

Kyle flinched, tearing his eyes from Seth's beauty as his mind raced. He'd had stories ready for if he got caught, but none for someone catching him with his hand in the safe. Especially not Seth. The very presence of the man sent Kyle's thoughts in turmoil.

Seth bought Kyle a moment by reaching up with one long-fingered hand and snatching off the knit cap that covered his entire head. He blinked as his hair fell in his eyes. He reached up to clear his vision, only to have the cap thrown in his face. He caught it, mostly on instinct.

"Be glad it was me who caught you, stupid shit. What were you after? Or were you just practicing?"

"Yeah." Kyle anxiously latched on to the excuse given him. "Practicing."

"Wrong. And you're *such* a bad liar. How Quince thinks he can make a thief of you, I have no idea."

"Hey!"

Seth's hand clamped over Kyle's mouth. The scent of the clove cigarettes Seth smoked assailed Kyle's nostrils. He closed his eyes, head swimming as a simmering fire tickled his skin at Seth's touch. Not now, he willed his body. Why did he have to be caught by the one man, the one *person*, who always managed to keep him off his game?

Seth leaned in, almost as if he would kiss him. "Do you want someone to hear? Shut up!" He straightened, dropping his hand.

Kyle hastily backed up against the bar, putting some distance between them. Seth was also dressed in all black, a long sleeved T-shirt hugging every lean, muscular curve of his torso and arms and blacker than black jeans encasing those long legs. A pair of gloves was tucked in his waistband.

Seth grinned, a nasty one. Spearing eye contact with Kyle, he reached to his back pocket and brought

back a slim envelope. He held it up between two elegant fingers. "Looking, perhaps, for this?"

Kyle's eyes went wide. He grabbed before he could think about it, but Seth nimbly snatched it out of his reach.

Desperate, Kyle dismissed any pride. The hand that had missed the envelope landed on Seth's chest. He dug his fingers into hard muscle, gathering shirt. "Please," he begged, meeting Seth's gaze. "I need those."

Seth's cruel grin faltered. Something...*else* flickered in those shadowed eyes before the grin was drawn back in place. "You beg so pretty, Kyle."

Kyle gritted his teeth, ignoring the warmth that surged through his blood at the comment. He thumped Seth's chest, still gripping his shirt. "Seth, please. I'm desperate. You gotta help me."

"I gotta?"

"Please! Just give them to me. Those can't do anything for you."

Seth studied Kyle for a long moment. His mouth opened.

Footsteps sounded down the hall from the door. Both of them froze, heads snapping toward the entrance.

Seth recovered first. He grabbed Kyle's arm and hauled him toward the window. Kyle glanced toward the papers in Seth's other hand, but Seth deftly stuffed the envelope into the waistband of his jeans. Kyle suppressed a groan.

He came to himself when Seth shoved him at the

window. Knowing he had no choice, he was out of it in seconds.

“Meet me at Gentry’s Coffee House on Fourth and Grand,” Seth hissed at his back.

Kyle turned, but Seth was gone. Evidently he had another escape route.

Chapter Two

Kyle sat a moment in his blue Corolla, eyes screwed shut and forehead pressed to the steering wheel as he tried to muster his courage. His black gear was safely tucked in a backpack in the backseat and he now wore his preferred type of clothing: torn jeans, scuffed Doc Martens and a thick sweatshirt.

He did *not* want to meet Seth. He wanted to stay far away from Seth, and the tingling sensations his very presence caused. But he couldn't *not* meet Seth. Seth had the papers. Seth knew he'd tried to break into Quince's safe. Seth worked for Quince. Kyle had to know what he was going to do with that knowledge.

Kyle groaned. Around anyone else, he could be cool and composed. He was even accused of being aloof. And, for most people, he was. Although he didn't wish badly for people, he for the most part truly didn't care what anyone did. As long as it didn't hurt him. Life had drained the heat from his blood at a very young age by taking away his family and

throwing him to the streets. He'd developed a thick shell and cooled his blood to ice so that he didn't have to care. But Seth, the bastard, had heated it up.

He took a deep breath and exited the car. Gentry's turned out to be an old, rundown coffeehouse. Kyle hadn't known about it before tonight. He wondered why Seth would name a place on this side of town, but then Seth was a study of questions.

He pushed through the glass door to find the coffee shop nearly empty. Two customers sat at the Formica counter and a teenage couple giggled over dessert in one booth. Kyle spotted Seth's unmistakable hair at a booth in the back corner near the rear exit. As he walked toward Seth, he noted that the black T-shirt was gone, replaced by a blue sweater that would probably do wonders for his eyes. But the eyes were downcast. The man held papers in one hand, casually reading them as he sipped from a mug. Kyle frowned. He had little doubt what those papers were.

Without a word, he dropped down on the hard green vinyl of the booth seat across from Seth. The taller man didn't even raise his eyes, continuing to read. Before Kyle could muster any words, the elderly waitress appeared. He ordered a Coke, and she left.

Seth set down his mug of coffee and lifted his gaze. Kyle was right; the blue sweater made his eyes an amazing cobalt. Watching Kyle thoughtfully, Seth folded the official documents and replaced them in the envelope. He set it on the table, his hand atop it.

"I see now why you wanted these."

Kyle just nodded. Grimacing, he glared out of the window at the highway traffic passing by.

"How long has he had this?"

Kyle shrugged. "Years."

"The entire time you've been with him?"

"Yeah."

Seth nodded. He pulled the envelope back from the table, stashing it somewhere beside him on his seat. Out of reach.

"Will you give them to me?" Kyle asked, turning back around to face Seth.

"Maybe."

Kyle gritted his teeth. "Seth, I need those."

Seth nodded, calmly picking up his mug again. "I know."

"Are *you* going to use them to control me now?"

Bluer-than-blue eyes snapped up and considered him for a moment. "Maybe."

Kyle pounded the table, startling the waitress, who had just appeared with his Coke. He waited for her to leave before leaning forward to hiss in Seth's face, "Fuck you!"

Those elegant lips smiled. "Maybe that, too."

Anger fled to confusion. The hypnotic voice was low. Had he heard what he thought? "Huh?"

Seth sat back, flipping his head to clear straight white-blond bangs from his eyes. "You were stupid to try it, you know. Quince would've found you out. The only reason he didn't is because I threw him off your track."

"You what?"

Seth grinned. "You're welcome."

"Why?"

"I've got my own reasons."

Kyle sneered. "Did you do it before or after you stole the same papers I was after?"

Seth snorted. "Long after. I took those this afternoon."

"You asshole. They're nothing to you."

Seth took a long sip from his mug, maintaining eye contact with Kyle throughout. "On the contrary. They could be very useful."

"You son of a bitch! I'm not going to work for you just because..." He trailed off. Yes, he would. There was no use denying it. Both he and Seth knew it.

Seth let the silence hang in the air for a pregnant moment. Then he reached across the table and pushed the Coke toward Kyle. "Drink up."

Numb, Kyle obeyed. He stared into the fizzing brown depths, wrapping both hands around the coldly sweating glass. "So, now what?"

"Relax, Kyle. I'm not going to give you up to Quince." The warmth in that low voice slid over Kyle's skin like silk.

Kyle stared at his drink, desperate not to give away his reactions to Seth. *Focus!* "What'll I do when he finds the papers gone? He'll think I took them."

"Don't worry about it. Come tomorrow, you'll be the least of Quince's worries."

Surprised, he lifted his gaze and stared at Seth through his bangs. "What do you mean?"

Another Seth-silence as he thoughtfully sipped at

his coffee. "So he roped you into this whole thing? The whole life?"

Kyle grimaced. "What did you mean about tomorrow?"

One light brow arched. "I'm asking the questions."

Scowling, Kyle considered his drink again. "Yes. He roped me into this."

"Did you get to finish high school?"

Kyle sneered. "No."

"You seem like an educated kid."

"I spend most of my days in the public library. I work there part time."

"Really? Well, what do you know."

"Yes. I can actually read and everything."

"Don't take offense. There are plenty of those around us who can't." A few bills landed on the table just before Seth stood. Kyle looked up as Seth draped a thick black leather jacket over his arm. "Come on."

"Where are we going?"

"My place."

Kyle's eyes went wide and a lump blocked his throat. He couldn't quite hide the look of panic soon enough.

Seth smiled. "I want to find out more about you."

"Why?"

"My reasons."

"Why should I go with you?"

"Your own reasons. First among them that you want this envelope." He patted the jacket.

"You'll give it to me?"

Seth nodded. "Come talk to me and I promise

before you leave, I will let you have these papers."

Kyle's mind worked furiously, trying to find what Seth *wasn't* saying. But foremost in his mind was the panic of being alone with Seth in his house, so his mind wasn't working properly.

"Come on, kid. I don't intend you any harm." Although the sardonic quirk to the edges of those luscious lips said differently.

Kyle downed most of his Coke and stood. Seth turned and led the way out the coffee shop. Unable to help himself, Kyle's gaze strayed down that tapered back, lingering over the truly fine ass that rolled in those jeans.

Gritting his teeth, he shut his eyes for a moment to get a hold of himself. He wasn't gay! There were no other men that he ever noticed. Not like he noticed women. What the hell was it about Seth in particular that drew his gaze? Was it just that the man was a walking, talking piece of art? He'd heard rumors that Seth had once been a model, in his younger days. It made total sense. Kyle was sure he'd buy just about anything with that face and body selling it. And the man's voice was audible sex, a sound that reached down, took hold of the base of your cock and just *stroked*. What the hell was he doing working as thief for Quince Juarez, a small-time gang boss?

The bell over the door jangled, breaking Kyle from his thoughts. Seth stopped at the sidewalk to carefully shake out his jacket.

"Where's your car?"

Kyle pointed.

Putting on his jacket, Seth started for it. Puzzled, Kyle jogged to catch up.

"We're taking my car?"

Seth pulled a pack of cigarettes and a lighter from the jacket pocket. "Yes."

"Where's your car?"

"I didn't drive here."

"How did you get here?"

Seth stopped at the passenger side door and waited, not answering. Gritting his teeth, Kyle unlocked his own door, got in and leaned over to unlock the other door. He busied himself with buckling in and starting the car so he could *not* watch Seth's long legs fold onto the seat. *Seth's in my car!* his mind jabbered. He firmly told it to shut the fuck up!

"Where are we going?"

"Pull out and go left. Mind if I smoke?"

Chapter Three

A harrowing drive—for Kyle—followed. Seth sat calmly in the passenger seat, smoking and giving directions as needed. When not needed, he spent much of his time studying Kyle. Kyle tried to pretend not to notice. It was impossible. Despite the fact that Seth's window was all the way down, the scent of cloves permeated the car. That scent filled his mind with Seth even when he wasn't looking at the man.

"You okay?" Seth asked casually once, exhaling fragrant smoke in curly tendrils from his slim nostrils.

"I'm fine," Kyle gritted.

"You always this tense after a job?"

"Just the ones that go wrong."

"You have many that go wrong?"

"No."

Seth chuckled. "Well, this one didn't go wrong, really. You'll still get what you want in the end."

*Yeah, but what **do** I get to go with it?*

Kyle tried to ask again what Seth meant before about Quince, but Seth refused to answer. When Kyle

refused to respond to Seth's attempt at small talk, the two of them lapsed into a heavy silence.

Seth took him outside of town proper and into the less populated foothills. Kyle, never having been out of the city, was in awe of the trees that created a dense tunnel to drive through as well. It was almost as though they drove into a completely different world, replacing tall buildings with tall trees and sidewalks with dirt. Kyle drove carefully, expecting to see a deer at any moment. He had no idea if there were any here, but he wasn't taking any chances.

Finally, about an hour after they left the coffee shop, Seth instructed him to turn down a smaller road. Houses were interspersed with tree-filled land. Kyle turned onto a packed dirt driveway, pulled up to a modest ranch house and stopped beside a silver or white Land Rover.

"You live here?"

"For the moment." Seth got out of the car and started toward the house.

Kyle took a fortifying breath, exited the car and followed.

The house was nothing special for the area, Kyle supposed. Nicely but sparsely furnished in quiet, subdued colors. The kitchen was thoroughly modern, complete with what Kyle was pretty sure was called a breakfast nook. An open door near the front revealed a glimpse of an office with a full computer system. A long, dark hallway led to the back of the house.

"You hungry?" Seth asked, tossing his jacket over a chair before proceeding into the kitchen.

Kyle stopped beside it. The envelope was in there.

"If you take it and run now, could you leave the jacket? I actually like that one."

Kyle jumped, turning to face the kitchen. Seth wasn't even looking at him. His back was turned and he was bent before the refrigerator. Kyle's mouth actually watered at the sight of that ass presented to him.

Seth peered over his shoulder. The refrigerator light shone through his hair, creating a halo around that already perfect face. "But aren't you curious?" That *smile!*

Kyle scowled, deliberately stepping toward the kitchen, away from the jacket and its contents. Just to show that he could. "Curious about what?"

Seth straightened and turned, letting the refrigerator door swing slowly shut. In his hands he had two frosty bottles of water. "Why I asked you here. What I know. What I meant about Quince. What I intend to do with what I now know."

Kyle sneered. "Yes, I'm curious."

"Good."

Startled, Kyle caught the bottle of water that Seth lobbed to him. "What...?" Seth, however, was gone through a second doorway in the kitchen. Kyle hastened to follow.

The second door came out into the main hallway. Kyle turned into it just in time to see Seth enter a door at the darkened far end. Kyle hesitated when the light went on. Judging from the heavy wooden dresser, that was a bedroom. Did he really want to be alone

with Seth in Seth's bedroom?

Yes!

No!

His jaw hurt from clenching it so hard. What the hell was he thinking?

He heard what sounded like a sliding screen door from the bedroom. He'd delayed long enough. He trotted down the hall and stepped into the bedroom. Seth wasn't there, but a sliding door to the left was open to the night air. He crossed the room and froze in the open door. Seth was bent over an above-ground Jacuzzi, barefoot and shirtless. The jets sparked to life and he stood, the pale skin of his back gleaming in the dim, yellow light from a lamp hanging just outside the sliding door.

He turned and caught Kyle staring. Again. Damn it!

Seth grinned, hands going to the fly of his jeans. "We might as well be comfortable, right?"

Kyle heard the honest-to-God whimper that seeped from his own throat as Seth shucked the jeans. No underwear. Nothing else to cover the amazing expanse of skin over finely honed muscles. And, *oh, God!* when Seth straightened, jeans in hand to toss on a bench in the corner, Kyle saw that his cock was just as damned beautiful as the rest of him. Thick, even soft, and nestled in a sparse tuft of ivory hair. Good God, the hair was natural!

"Like what you see?"

"Huh?" Kyle knew he was beet red as he tore his eyes from Seth's cock to meet his eyes. He knew he

needed to explain away his fascination. But the sight of Seth's sex had short-circuited any and all thoughts in his brain. He wasn't sure he knew his own name anymore.

That grin of Seth's was dark and dangerous, and damned if it didn't boil Kyle's blood. Kyle waited, helpless.

Seth chuckled and turned, stepping up to the Jacuzzi. "Take your clothes off and get in here. It's good for what ails you."

Kyle swallowed. Could he do this? What was happening? Should he tell Seth that he didn't want this? That he wasn't gay? But then, Seth hadn't suggested anything other than talk. Men sat in Jacuzzis naked together all the time, didn't they? That didn't mean they were gay.

"Kyle." He looked up to see a warm smile on Seth's face. Thankfully, his legs and hips were now hidden beneath bubbling water as he knelt on the far side. "Stop thinking and come in here. Everything's fine."

He nodded. Stop thinking. Excellent advice. He'd follow it.

He set the water bottle down on the edge of the tub then leaned against the edge so he could lift his feet to unlace his Docs. Behind him glass clinked, and he glanced back to see Seth busy at a small bar built into the corner behind the tub. Boots and socks off, Kyle pulled off his sweatshirt. He paused at his own jeans, a flash memory of Seth's beauty surging through his mind's eye. Shit! He was half hard.

"What do you prefer? Jack Daniels? Tequila? I've got just about everything here."

He glanced again and saw that Seth had just taken a shot of something and was pouring another. "Whatever," he said, hurriedly removing his jeans and clambering into the tub. He almost made it, but Seth glanced up when his feet hit the water. But if he saw the erection, he didn't mention it.

Once Kyle was seated up to his chest in burbling water, Seth extended a shot glass toward him. Dark amber liquid within gleamed in the bad yellow lighting.

"I don't drink."

Seth gestured with his chin. "Just one. It'll calm you down."

"I'm calm!"

Seth chuckled. "You're tense as a wire, kid."

"I'm not a kid."

"I know. If you were, you wouldn't be here and I wouldn't be offering you a shot."

Unable to argue with the reasoning, Kyle took the tiny glass and stared at the dark liquor. "What is it?"

"Something good." At Kyle's continuing suspicious look, he added: "It's not drugged. Just plain alcohol."

He actually hadn't thought of drugs. He knew Seth didn't go for that, even though they were both surrounded by drug use in their line of work.

Quickly, he downed the drink. It tasted first of... honey? Then something like licorice. Then, as his throat opened and the liquid slid down, it burned. He

dropped the shot glass in the water, grabbed the edge of the tub and coughed.

Seth's grip on his shoulder steadied him, and he eventually heard Seth's warm chuckle. "Jägermeister. Packs a punch, doesn't it?"

Kyle subsided and sank back into the bucket seat. He licked the sweet taste from his lips and tried to think through the swirl in his head. He heard Seth moving around, water sloshing, but kept his eyes closed.

"Just relax, Kyle," Seth soothed.

"Why?"

"Why what?"

"Why relax?"

"Because you're too tense. You always are."

Just around you. "So?"

"You're not going to live long all tensed up like that."

He peeked at Seth. The other man was lounging on one of the horizontal benches, knees and chest visible. Tiny drops of moisture glistened in his hair and on his smooth skin. If there was any hair on his chest, it was undetectable. Small, pale brown nipples were erect.

Kyle screwed his eyes shut. "So? I'm not going to live long once Quince finds those papers gone."

"I told you not to worry about Quince."

"But you didn't tell me why."

"No. I didn't."

He opened his eyes again. "Are you going to?"

"Eventually."

Kyle sighed. The alcohol had hit him already; the combination of that and the warm, soothing water had loosened the muscles in his shoulders. He sank down into the water until bubbles tickled his chin. He let his arms float.

"What would you do if Quince didn't have a hold on you?"

Kyle was only mildly surprised by the question. Seth was showing a strange interest in him. "I don't know."

"Oh, come now. A smart kid like you. You've made plans, even if they're only in your own head. Besides, you must have expected to get away from Quince after you got those papers. What's your plan?"

"I've got a savings. Not much, but enough to get in my car and drive. First I needed to get away. Then I'd think about what to do."

"What do you *want* to do?"

"Hell, I don't know."

"Gotta support yourself."

"I can always take what I need." He heard the obvious scorn in his own voice even though he hadn't intended to put it there.

"Not much of a future."

"Whatever."

"Don't you plan to get a real job? Settle down? Find a girl, get married and have the two-point-five kids?"

Kyle snorted, shifting slightly to let his legs loosen a bit more. "Yeah, right."

"Not the marrying type?"

"Right."

"What about girls? I've never seen you with a girl."

Tension threatened to take hold of Kyle's neck again, but the alcohol and heated water helped him keep it away. "I date."

"Just not a lot."

"Hn."

Water sloshed and Kyle peeked to see Seth pouring more of the amber liquid. His white hair was now drenched, falling in heavy tendrils down his cheeks and neck. Kyle watched as long fingers lifted the shot glass to full, pink lips just before that sharp chin jutted forward and up to tilt the liquid fire between those lips. The long column of Seth's throat worked as the fire ran down. He was still watching when Seth's head came down and turned toward him, blue eyes dark.

"More?"

Kyle nodded without meaning to. Silent, he watched Seth pour another shot. Sufficiently buzzed, he just watched when Seth glided toward him, kneeling in the center of the tub in order to hand him the glass. The position put him between Kyle's outstretched feet. Kyle was muzzily glad of the burbling water that hid his more-than-half-interested erection.

He took the shot glass and brought it to his lips.

"Just open your throat and let it pour down."

He licked his lips, put the glass to them and then tossed his head back like he'd seen Seth do. It still

burned, but the second time was easier. This time, he could hand the shot glass back to Seth.

He watched, mildly alarmed, as Seth leaned down, a bit closer to him, his hand rummaging under the water. "What are you doing?"

"Getting the other glass you dropped."

"Oh."

Grinning, Seth lifted it from the water. Before leaving his knees, he quickly dunked his head below the bubbles. Kyle was glad Seth was out of hearing and didn't hear the yelp of alarm that came out of his mouth. When Seth resurfaced, seconds later, Kyle was seated straight in his seat, feet drawn up closer to him in the tub, as far away from Seth as he could get.

If Seth noticed, he made no mention. He surged to the side of the tub and put the shot glasses back.

"What kind of girls do you like?"

"Huh?"

Seth turned. He was now seated within arm's reach of Kyle to the side. He sat forward, elbows on his knees. The look he fastened on Kyle was one of interest. "The girls you date. What kind do you like?"

Kyle shrugged. He closed his eyes, the better to enjoy the warm buzz suffusing his system.

"Come on. Blond or brunette? Blue eyes or brown? Tall? Short? Stacked or sporty?"

Kyle had to grin. "Does it matter? As long as they're interested in something besides makeup and clothes."

"Ah! You want a brain, then."

"Yeah."

"But what about looks?"

Again, Kyle shrugged.

"What about sex?"

"What about it?"

"Have you had it?"

"No." He was proud of an unembarrassed answer.

"How old are you?"

"Nineteen."

"And you've never had sex?"

"It's possible, you know."

"Yeah, but... Why not?"

Kyle shrugged, eyes still closed. He heard the faint splash as Seth moved but couldn't open his eyes to track the move. "The only girls I really could have had were hookers, and..." He shook his head. "Nah."

"So you've been jerking off."

Kyle even grinned. "I'm good at it."

Seth chuckled. "I'll bet." A short silence. "But there's never been anyone who just drives you plain nuts? So much that you've just got to have them?"

Just you. "No."

"I envy you."

"Huh?"

"There's someone who drives me wild. Every time I'm around this person, I want to fuck so bad I can't think straight."

Kyle gulped down the surge of jealousy. He kept his eyes shut, not wanting to see the lust for someone else in Seth's eyes. He schooled his voice to calm. "One of your girlfriends?" There were many.

"No."

Water sloshed again and a wet slap on the side of the tub in the vicinity of his ear made Kyle open his eyes in surprise. The slap had been Seth's hand, bracing against the tub to the side of Kyle's head. The older man leaned over Kyle, his other hand braced on the side of Kyle's seat, boxing him in. Not that Kyle really noticed. All of his attention was on the beautiful face hovering before his, open lust darkening those cobalt eyes to near black.

"Actually," said Seth, leaning closer, "it's you."

Kyle's jaw dropped open in shock. Seth continued in until he could nip at Kyle's bottom lip with both of his. Kyle jumped at the contact, but couldn't pull away. His entire body trembled. When Kyle didn't pull away, Seth smiled and tilted his head, the better to slant his lips more firmly over Kyle's, taking them in a firm kiss.

Kyle's shock was so complete that he could only sit and receive. Seth's lips were warm and moist, whether from the tub or naturally Kyle couldn't think. The tongue that Seth slid into his mouth tasted of mostly of the Jägermeister, but there was an undercurrent of cloves. Seth's long, strong fingers slid into the hair at the base of his skull, taking control of Kyle's head, tilting it so he could deepen the kiss further. Kyle moaned. Seth knocked him off-balance and Kyle's limbs flailed. Clumsily, he clutched and ended up with his hands gripping Seth's shoulders and his thighs clamped to either side of Seth's slim hips.

Seth pushed in, pressing his full front against Kyle.

Kyle gasped as hot, wet skin caressed his and something hard and hot sidled in to press against his cock.

Seth's cock!

That broke the spell. No matter how good it felt, he...was...not...gay!

He freed his lips with a struggle. "Stop!"

Seth had released his mouth, but his teeth latched onto Kyle's pulse as the younger man continued to fight. "Why?"

Kyle pushed, but Seth's satiny skin was slippery when wet. He couldn't get a good hold and the more he tried, the more he noticed the strength in Seth's long, lean body. And the more he noticed that, the more his cock throbbed against Seth's. "Get off."

"Calm down." The voice was hypnotic. Seth's tongue drew a long, thick line from the nape of Kyle's neck to his ear. "Doesn't it feel good?"

"I'm not gay."

"Neither am I."

"Huh?"

Seth pulled back only enough to meet Kyle's gaze. He kept his hand firmly tangled in Kyle's hair, his other arm wrapped around Kyle's chest. "I happen to be a connoisseur of beauty and you, kid, are the most beautiful thing I've ever seen. Male or female."

Kyle gaped up into those shining eyes. "What?"

Seth smiled. The hand behind Kyle started to drift downward. "You have no idea, do you? Those big, brown eyes, a fucking incredible body and these lips." Seth bent to bite at Kyle's lower lip. "I've wanted to

taste these forever.”

Speechless, Kyle could only accept as Seth slanted another kiss over his mouth. His fingers clutched at Seth’s shoulders as he fought the urge to pull the older man closer. He didn’t want this. *Did he?*

The hand at his back reached his butt and squeezed. Kyle jumped, whimpering.

“Relax,” Seth soothed, breathing softly against Kyle’s lips. “I won’t hurt you, and I won’t do anything you don’t want to do.”

A stuttering breath left Kyle’s mouth as Seth’s hand squeezed again then skimmed forward over his hip. Kyle yelped when Seth took a firm hold of his cock.

“Feel good?” Seth’s hand pulled up firmly from base to head. “That how you like it?”

Kyle whimpered, fighting the urge to pump into Seth’s hand. Seth’s lips descended on his neck and shoulder, kissing, nipping and – when he shuddered at the nips – outright biting. Kyle cried out when Seth pulled, then palmed the head of his cock. He took a better grip and hit just the right spot. Kyle gave up the fight and surged forward with his hips, grinding Seth’s hand and both of their cocks between their bellies.

“Fuck yeah,” Seth groaned. His hand groped and he grabbed his own cock, squeezing both engorged rods together as he, too, pumped.

Kyle’s fingers were in Seth’s hair, pulling that succulent mouth back to his so he could devour him. Lost in the pleasure, in the feel of the body against

his, that hand wrapped around his cock and that cock rubbing against his, he forgot every protest he might have had. Seth released his hair to reach down and clutch his ass and he wrapped his arms around Seth's neck to maintain the kiss. He pumped frantically at Seth's hand, amazed by the difference another's hand made on his cock.

He came in a blinding fury, spurting into the bubbling water. Seth took him through it, pressing his oh-so-sensitive cock against Seth's still-hard one until Kyle's frantic pumping ceased.

Kyle hadn't caught his breath yet when Seth grabbed his hand and snatched it down under the water. Surprised, he looked up as Seth wrapped first Kyle's hand, then his own around Seth's cock. Seth squeezed, making Kyle squeeze. Seth shoved his hard cock through that tight channel. Pumping. Those last. Few. Strokes. And came.

He sighed forward against Kyle, forehead to forehead. He released Kyle's hand and let the younger man shy back. Kyle bit his lip, watching those ivory lashes flutter. What the hell had he just done?

Seth opened his eyes, immediately searching Kyle's. "Stay here with me."

"Huh? What? No!"

Seth stood back calmly as Kyle anything-*but*-calmly scrambled to his feet. When he would have fallen, Seth's hand steadied him. Finally, anger surged enough to give him impetus to bat away the hand. "Don't touch me."

"I just did a lot more than touch you."

"Fuck!"

"We could, if you stay."

"Christ! Fuck no!"

"Don't hurt yourself," Seth advised calmly as Kyle gracelessly threw himself out of the tub. "Towel's on the bench there."

Without looking back, Kyle snatched a towel and passed it over his heated skin.

"Kyle."

"Shut up!"

"Kyle."

He didn't look up, frantically shoving his damp legs into his jeans.

"Jesus, Kyle. Don't be so freaked."

"*Freaked?* What the fuck...?"

"No. We didn't get that far."

He rounded on Seth to find the other man still in the tub, leaning negligently over the side. His sharp chin was pillowed in the bend of one arm, his face calm.

"We're not going any farther! That shouldn't have happened."

"Why not?"

"I'm not gay."

Seth just arched a brow, pissing Kyle off further. He grumbled, bending down to get his sweatshirt.

"You're so cute when you're flustered."

Kyle's eyes went wide in incoherent shock. He left his sweatshirt off and snatched up his boots and socks on his way to the door.

"There are two envelopes in my jacket. One's yours, the other has money in it." Seth's voice stopped Kyle just as he crossed the threshold of the bedroom. "Take it and stay away from Quince's place. The police took him tonight and it'll look weird if you're there."

Too many conflicting urges held Kyle frozen. Part of him wanted to run, but another part wanted to demand what Seth was talking about, and the largest part of him wanted to lie back on the black sheets of the bed before him and invite Seth to take all his cares away.

"The police? What...happened?"

"I'll tell you if you stay."

He glanced over his shoulder. Seth now stood; the tub's walls weren't high enough to hide his groin or the erection he still sported. The water coating his skin made it glisten and Kyle caught himself watching little droplets traverse the smooth ridges of Seth's chest on their way down his belly toward...Kyle spun back to face the bedroom. "No way!"

Seth sighed. "Then take the money and run. I left instructions for contacting me in with the money. Take the money and run, or come back to me. Just stay away from any of your old haunts for awhile."

Kyle stared at the bed but his attention was on the man behind him. "What's going on?"

An evil chuckle made him shiver. It was followed by distinctive splashing. Seth was getting out of the tub. "You staying?"

Flight instinct took over. Kyle spun and ran, grabbing Seth's leather jacket on the way out the front door.

Chapter Four

Quince had been arrested that night, just like Seth said. It happened sometime when they were in the coffee shop. Kyle found out from Jake, another young man who occasionally worked for Quince and who lived down the hall from Kyle.

"It's weird, man," Jake said, eyes wide as he stood in Kyle's studio apartment. "They say someone inside gave him up, but no one knows who it was. Who do you think?"

Then, Kyle had only shrugged, eager to get Jake out of his apartment so he could pack what few belongings he had. On hearing Jake's news, he'd immediately decided to put the four thousand dollars Seth had given him to good use and get out of town as advised.

That was four days ago, and Kyle was still amazed. Four thousand dollars. Why would Seth give him that kind of money? Only one thousand had been in the jacket, some of it in twenty-dollar bills, but mostly in hundreds. The rest had been in the bus station locker, the key to which had been in the envelope with the

money. The locker had contained a gym bag with the remaining three thousand and a note:

Sorry I couldn't give you smaller notes, but they'd be too much to carry. Be careful how you break the hundreds and don't spend it all in one place. If you need help, call this number and leave a message for Harry, telling him that you've decided to visit your Aunt Mary after all and leave a number to contact you as her number. I'll be in touch within 24 hrs.

Seth

Kyle sat on the garish brown and puke-gold bedspread of his latest motel room, staring at the phone. Seth's note was in his hand, as had often been the case the last three nights. He itched to call but...was Seth the snitch? Was that how he knew? If so, that meant Seth worked with the cops. Kyle hated cops and any fool who worked for them. It was the police's fault that he'd had to work for Quince since he was fifteen. It was ultimately the police's fault that his parents were dead. It was the police who would snatch Kyle up and put him in jail for all the crimes he'd been forced to commit for Quince, not caring that he hadn't done it willingly.

Kyle put the note away. Again. With a sigh, he stretched out on the bed and fell into an uneasy sleep.

Chapter Five

Many days and many motel rooms later, Kyle settled in a quiet little place in the mountains and got a job as a busboy. He was entranced by the trees that dominated the town and the beautiful wood paneling on most of the buildings. Even the little motel he got a room in had wood paneling and an honest-to-God fireplace in the room. True, it was gas and screened in and the wood was fake, but for a boy who'd lived in the city all his life, it was novel. He turned it on every night.

His job was boring and tedious, but his boss was fair and didn't bother him. And it wasn't stealing. His fingers itched when he saw the safe in the locker room in the back, but not because he wanted what was inside. He just wanted to prove he could open the safe. But he left it alone and kept to himself.

At least, he tried to keep to himself. One of the waitresses that worked at the diner, however, had other ideas. Her name was Cynthia, and she was bright and cheerful with big blue eyes and straight, white-blond hair that fell to her shoulders. She wore

way too much makeup and talked too much, but she also had a nice laugh and was more than friendly to him. He didn't know why, nor did he notice at first, but Cynthia soon let it be known that she was interested in him. Namely, by cornering him in the locker room after their shift one night and kissing him. Shocked, he kissed back, more on reflex than any real desire. He settled his arms around her slim frame and let her press her small breasts against his chest. He kept kissing her long after he really wanted to stop. When she suggested they go back to his place, he agreed.

He slept with her. She did most of the work, tackling him to the bed, undressing him. In between frantic kisses, she assured him that he was the cutest guy she'd ever seen and *all* the girls in town wanted him. So he was a trophy, he decided, and felt weird that the realization didn't faze him. He was a trophy that she wrapped up in a condom and rode to her pleasure.

Thankfully, she didn't stay with him that night. She dressed in a hurry, prattling about her mother and the trouble she'd be in if she got home late *despite* the fact that she was an adult. He listened with half an ear and seemed to say the right words, because she was grinning from ear to ear when she left.

He wished he felt the same.

No sooner had she left than he padded to the bathroom and turned on the shower. For long moments, he stood under the steaming water, trying to work out his numb thoughts. He'd just had sex. For

the first time. With a girl. Shouldn't he be more happy? Wasn't sex the end all, be all? Had he even enjoyed it? To be fair, it had been nice. She'd been soft and warm and the human contact had been comforting, even if she had been frantic most of the time. But the actual sex part? Yes, he'd gotten hard, but that had felt more like a reflex. A natural reaction to stimulation. He'd come, but that had felt more like a release of tension.

Well, except for the one thing that he only now dared to think about, which was that the mental image that had kept him going toward the end, when he was ready to stop and give it up as hopeless, had been when he closed his eyes and let himself imagine that her small, soft hands were longer and stronger, and that her lips were firmer and tasted of cloves. The mere thought of cloves had sent his thoughts spiraling, and he hadn't been able to stop thinking of Seth. Seth's mouth. Seth's voice. Seth's body rocking with his. He'd almost completely blocked out the woman with him and been lost in his fantasy with Seth and *that* was what brought him to climax, a moment after Cynthia.

He clutched his fingers in a fist and banged it against the white tiles of the shower. What the *fuck*? He wasn't gay! He didn't want to be gay! He thought Cynthia was pretty. He wanted to want her. Why couldn't he? Why the hell was the only person who did it for him a guy? A guy with a voice like hot melted chocolate and gorgeous, suckable lips.

Thought of those lips put an undeniable image in

his head. Cynthia had given him a blowjob, gladly and enthusiastically. But his stupid mind twisted the memory and replaced Cynthia's lipsticked lips with Seth's full, succulent ones. The thought of that mouth sucking him down, of hitting the back of Seth's mouth while Seth's tongue traced him had his dick rearing back to life. "No!" he moaned, leaning his forehead on his arm as he gripped the side of the shower. "No!"

It was no use. The image was stuck in his head and his erection would not go away without help. He dropped his free hand to palm it, squeezing in desperation. He tried to picture Cynthia instead, but he couldn't recall her face as clearly as he could Seth's. Her blue eyes paled in comparison to his. Her eager moans dissolved into deep growls. Her fervent clutching faded into demanding holds. He came with a groan, nearly starting the whole thing over when the thought of Seth swallowing came to mind.

Nearly crying tears of frustration, he washed, rinsed and finished his shower. By the time he flopped, naked and damp, onto the mused sheets of the bed, he was exhausted. He pressed his face into his pillow, then grimaced. Cynthia's perfume. He could smell the evidence of their sexual encounter in the sheets.

Trying not to think about it too much, he pulled himself out of bed and called for new sheets. By the time the night clerk arrived with them, he was dressed in sweatpants and an oversized T-shirt. He made the bed himself, dumping the old sheets in a

pile by the door. He ended up sitting in the middle of the bed and, somehow, Seth's leather jacket lay in his lap. He stared at it. Even after all this time, it still smelled like cloves. Of course, that was also due to the half-empty pack of Djarums in the pocket. Kyle pulled out the red and black pack and extracted one of the long cigarettes. Feeling silly but unable to help himself, he brought it to his nose and inhaled. The scent filled his nostrils and closing his eyes, brought a vivid picture of a smiling Seth to mind.

Kyle pulled out the lighter, put the cigarette to his lips and lit it like he had seen Seth do. He inhaled too deeply the first time and came up coughing. The back of his throat ached from the hot smoke and tears stung his eyes. How the *hell* did Seth *enjoy* this? Then he licked his lips and tasted it. That sweet, exotic taste of cloves—the one that reminded him most of Seth—was on his lips, left by the cigarette.

Kyle put the jacket aside and turned around on the bed so he could reach the ashtray sitting on the nightstand. Cautiously, he put the cigarette back to his lips and inhaled. It still felt awful, but he needed the taste. He finally stopped trying to smoke and simply brought the filter to his lips occasionally to put the taste in his mouth. He sat back against the headboard, lingering over the cigarette and hugging the jacket to his side.

What was he going to do?

* * * *

"Hi, cutie."

Kyle looked up from the table he was bussing to see Cynthia standing beside him. Her waitress uniform was baggy on her slim frame, and her light blonde hair was pulled back into a simple tail. She had *that* look in her eyes. The one that promised him he could do anything he wanted with her if he took her out back. Too bad he didn't want to.

He dumped the remaining plates and glasses in his tub and straightened. "Hey."

She brushed up against his arm with her little breasts. Black-rimmed blue eyes batted up at him. "It's dead here tonight. What say we take a break?"

"I don't think that's a good idea."

"Aw, Dora don't mind covering and Vic's out back with his TV. No one will notice if we disappear for a while."

He tried to walk around her. "No, thanks."

She stepped in front of him to block him. "No, thanks? What's that supposed to mean?" He winced at the hissed anger in her tone. She pushed up in his face. "Listen, you, I'm not just some slut you can toss aside!"

He met her gaze coolly. *Actually, you are.* "I know that."

"What's the matter?" She reached up to trace the collar of his shirt. "Didn't you like what we did the other night?"

"Sure."

She blinked. "Sure?"

He shrugged. "I mean, yeah."

"Yeah?" She clenched her fists. "Oooo! You're so fucking cold! Even when we were doing it you were cold."

"Why do you want to do it again, then?" Funny, he didn't have any trouble maintaining his cool façade with anyone in this little town. So far, only Seth seemed to be able to break that.

Seth. His pack of cigarettes was tucked into Kyle's breast pocket, just under his apron. How fucking pathetic was that?

She slapped his arm and he was forced to juggle his tub so not to drop it. "You know, you're cute, but you're not all that."

He shrugged. Easier to get her mad so she walked away from him. She'd be happier if she thought it was her idea to dump him and not the other way around.

When she didn't move he did, taking his tub toward the kitchen. Unfortunately, she followed him. She trapped him by the sink, pressing her hips to his butt and sliding her hands up his sides. "It was your first time, wasn't it?"

He froze. "Huh?"

"It's okay. I could sorta tell." She giggled. "Don't worry, cutie. I loved it. I wanna do all sorts of things to your body. You feel so good." He caught her hand on its way down his belly toward his jeans. She giggled. "What if I invite one of my friends to join us?"

He gaped, staring dumbfounded at the cracked plaster above the sink. "What?"

"I thought that'd get you. All the girls in town want you, honey. And I'm willing to share."

He frowned. Fucking deviant, he was! Normal young men would kill for the chance he was offered. Why wasn't he taking it?

Face it. He knew why.

Carefully, he peeled her hands off him, turned and deliberately put her at arm's length. "I'm not interested."

"Huh? Why not?"

Why indeed? One simple answer sprung easily to his lips. "I'm gay."

"What?"

He actually chuckled. More at his lack of concern than at her anger.

She punched his arm. "Listen, you, I know it was your first time, but you don't have to insult me! I took care of you!"

He caught her hand to avoid another punch. "You did. I wasn't insulting you. Thank you."

"Thank you?"

He shook his head. "Never mind."

He pushed her gently away and headed toward the other end of the kitchen. Victor, the owner and chef of the diner, sat toward the back, feet up on the table, cigarette dangling from his lips and his little television turned to 'Everybody Loves Raymond'.

"I gotta leave town, Vic," he said, tearing at the ties of his apron.

"Hey!"

He ignored Cynthia's protest.

Victor turned droopy eyes to him. Those eyes—anything but sleepy—glanced at Cynthia, then back. “You havin’ trouble, kid?”

“Sorta.”

“Wait a second...” Cynthia again.

“Wait it out, kid. She’s harmless. It’ll blow over.”

“Fuck you, old man!”

Kyle shook his head, now holding the apron in his hand. “I’m sorry, Vic. You’ve been nice to me. Sorry to dump on you.”

“You’re serious, then?”

“Afraid so.”

Cynthia tugged at his sleeve but he twisted away, not looking at her. “Kyle, come on! You don’t have to...”

Victor nodded and rose to his feet. “Come out to the back and I’ll pay you your last wages.”

“Wait!”

Victor turned on Cynthia. “You get your ass back out front and help Dora.”

She glared at Kyle, then Victor. “But...!”

“Now!”

Kyle followed Victor to the back. The gray haired man said little as he found his checkbook, tallied on a calculator, then wrote out a check. “This okay?”

“Sure.” It didn’t really matter if he thought Victor’s check was good or not. He was sure it was. Victor was a good guy, even if he was gruff. But he didn’t plan on cashing it. He still had most of three thousand dollars left.

“You in trouble, kid?”

Kyle met that steady brown-eyed gaze. "No. There's just someplace I need to go."

Victor nodded slowly and handed over the check. "Whatever it is you're looking for, I hope you find it."

"Thanks."

* * * *

Kyle left the diner by the back entrance. He hit the sidewalk and walked the three measly blocks to the motel in which he was staying. He hadn't bothered to find an apartment yet. That in itself should have told him where his head was.

Once in the room, he picked up the duffel bag and tossed it on the bed. It took all of ten minutes to stuff everything he had back in because he'd never really unpacked. The few books he'd bought to kill time he left on the dresser.

Last, he took Seth's jacket and sat on the bed with it in his lap. He trailed his fingers over the padded, shiny black material that lined the jacket, imagining that it was still warm from the body that had owned it.

Did he really want to do this? It had made perfect sense at the spur of the moment when cornered by Cynthia in the diner. She hadn't done it for him. Not really. No one else did. Last night and earlier that day, Kyle had even tried an experiment and checked out other guys. On the street, in the diner, on television, in magazines at the drug store. He'd looked at them all and the only ones that held a

remote interest for him had pale blond hair and a slim, muscular build. Just like Seth's.

He groaned and pressed the jacket lining to his face. The scent of cloves was stronger, underlined by an indefinable scent he'd discovered before and finally defined as Seth's. A scent that was fading as time passed. A scent he wanted, no, *needed* to smell again at its source. And that's all it took. *Now* he was getting hard. He took another deep breath and pictured Seth's shining hair, gorgeous eyes, sardonic smile and killer body. He imagined those slim hands sifting through his hair. Now his jeans were really uncomfortable.

Sighing, he dropped the jacket back into his lap. It was hopeless. Just accept it. He dug out the note. Uselessly, he read it again. He knew the number by heart now.

He dialed.

An automated voice told him that the party he was trying to reach was not in and to leave a message after the beep.

Beep.

"Harry, it's me. I've decided to visit Aunt Mary after all. If you need to reach me, her number is...

Chapter Six

*R*ing.
"Hello?"

"Kyle."

"Seth."

"You took my jacket."

"Yeah. Sorry 'bout that."

Pause.

"Are you okay?"

"Yeah."

"You need help?"

"I...I need to see you. I have questions for you."

"We shouldn't talk on the phone."

"Okay."

"Will you come to meet me?"

"Yes."

"Where are you?"

"Tahoe."

"Nice."

"I guess."

Perhaps there was a small sigh. Kyle couldn't be sure. "Okay. Drive north on I-5..."

Chapter Seven

Kyle walked into the Hilton lobby, hands dug deep into the pockets of Seth's leather jacket. The clothes he wore beneath it were new, but not expensive. The boots were old. The haircut was new. He'd shaved. He still wasn't sure he should have dressed up, but he hadn't been able to stomach the thought of Seth seeing him rumpled and run-down.

It had taken most of the next day to drive to Oregon. Kyle had arrived in town long before their six p.m. time to meet and had taken himself shopping. He'd rented a motel room, taken a shower and dressed. Leaving the room, he'd taken everything with him and left the key. He didn't plan on coming back.

Seth sat on a couch in one corner, casually reading the paper. Those long legs were crossed and one foot bounced slightly. Kyle started toward him and Seth folded the paper, evidently already aware of Kyle's presence. Beautiful as ever, his hair shone in the horrible fluorescent lighting in the lobby. He wore a blue button-down shirt, crisp slacks and dress shoes.

Seth didn't look up until Kyle was perhaps ten feet away. Kyle stopped then.

They stared.

Everything that Kyle found beautiful sat before him. Rose with a fluid grace of strong, lean muscles. Smiled a bold grin. Stepped toward him and reached out a hand to trace one lone finger along the curve of Kyle's jaw until the pad rested on his chin.

"You take my breath away."

Kyle blinked, shocked by the open admiration he saw in those eyes.

Seth smiled. "Nice jacket."

Kyle found a small smile. "I like it."

Seth closed his eyes briefly, almost as though in pain, and let his hand drop. "So. Are you hungry? The restaurant's dead, so we should be able to find a quiet place to talk. Or—" those eyes peeked at him from beneath snowy lashes and an overhang of silky bangs, "—do you want to go upstairs?"

Kyle's cock poked at his Dockers, and he was very glad for the length of the jacket to hide his erection. "I'm starved."

Seth smiled and he nodded. He stepped back and swung an arm toward the far end of the lobby. "Shall we?"

They took a booth in the back. There were perhaps ten other patrons in the room and all were spread out. Their table was toward the back with a beautiful picture of a deer in a snowbound forest over it.

A waiter came almost immediately to take their drink order. Seth studied the menu after the man left

and Kyle took his cue and did the same. They were silent until the waiter returned, at which time Seth ordered the grilled salmon and Kyle ordered a steak.

Kyle watched Seth lift his whiskey on the rocks to those oh-so-kissable lips, keeping the eye contact until the glass again met the tabletop.

"You have questions," Seth prompted.

"Are you a cop?"

"No."

"Did you rat Quince out?"

"Not really."

"What does that mean?"

"I was sent in to bring him down in the first place. But, yes, I got most of the information that sent him to prison."

"And you're not a cop?"

"No."

"Are you, like, FBI or something?"

One corner of those lips quirked up in a faint grin.
"Or something."

"What does *that* mean?"

Seth traced the rim of his glass with one finger, drawing Kyle's attention. The move was incredibly sensual. It immediately reminded Kyle of the feel of that finger on his skin.

"I can't tell you that. It's classified."

"So you *are* something like FBI?"

"Something like."

Kyle sat back, unconsciously caressing the sides of his glass of Coke. He didn't notice until he saw Seth's eyes following the movement. Caught, he hesitated,

then continued sliding the pads of his fingers through the condensation. Two could play at that game.

"I hate cops."

Seth nodded. Having read the papers, he'd understand why. "I'm not a cop."

"You're worse than a cop."

"How do you figure?"

"At least cops you know about. You're *something else* that I've probably never even heard of."

Seth's grin turned sour. "You're better off not knowing."

"Am I?"

"Yes."

"Is that why you gave me money and sent me away?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"You were safer out of town."

"Why do you care?"

Seth met his eyes and tilted his head so that some of that silky hair fell in his eyes. His sunny smile was far too bold to be entirely real. "Didn't I make that obvious when we were together last time?"

Kyle shook his head, refusing to be set off track even if he was pretty sure he was blushing. He'd thought about this too much for Seth to rattle him again. "If you'd just wanted to fuck, you'd have kept me around."

"You didn't seem to want it."

Kyle shook his head. "You had that money ready to give to me in the coffeehouse."

Seth's brow rose. "Did I?"

"You had to."

"Perceptive little shit," Seth grumbled.

"It wasn't hard once I thought about it." Kyle kept his cool face, surprised he was able to maintain it.

"I guess not." The grin faded, and Seth's gaze listed to the left. "It was safer for you to be away."

"What does it matter to you?"

Seth continued to stare into nothing. Kyle waited.

"Did you run out of money?" Seth's voice was hollow. He took another sip of his drink, still not meeting Kyle's eyes.

"What?"

"Is that why you called? You need more money?"

"No. I've still got most of it."

"Did you steal to get by?"

"No!"

"It's a fair question."

It was. Didn't mean Kyle liked it. "I haven't pulled a job since that night you caught me. And I didn't pull the job that night. Fuck you!"

They sat in silence. The waiter arrived with their dinners and had returned with a refill for Seth's drink before they said another word.

"Sorry," Seth murmured. "I'd wondered if it would be enough to..." He shook his head. "I'm sorry. I'm glad you didn't have to pull a job."

"I got a real job recently. It was just bussing tables, but it was legit. It was the first time I could since..."

Seth nodded.

"Thanks for giving me the papers," Kyle said after

awhile. "I never thanked you."

"You're welcome."

Kyle was sure the meal of steak and potatoes was delicious, but he barely tasted it. He had his answers, but was at a loss as to how he felt about them. Although Seth said he wasn't a cop, he was close enough that it should bother Kyle. It should at least annoy him that Seth wouldn't directly answer. But the only fact that stood out in their conversation was that Seth had sent him away to keep him safe. Seth had tried to help him without asking him to turn state's evidence or to sit on a witness stand. Seth had sent him away and hadn't tried to track him.

Besides that, the sight of Seth was driving him crazy. The man had fluid movement that almost didn't seem human. When he picked up his tumbler, it was by the fingertips. He'd hold just the rim with those long, elegant fingers, twisting them easily to present the glass to his lips. He sat mostly sideways in the booth, the back of one shoulder pressed against the high seat of the booth. He only used one hand to eat and drink, and also used that hand occasionally to brush his hair back from his face.

To hell with it!

When the waiter came back to check on them, Kyle ordered a whiskey on the rocks.

"You started drinking?" Seth asked, amused.

"Yep. Right now." Kyle arched a brow at him. "Should I have ordered Jägermeister?"

Seth blinked. Then smiled. Then laughed. "No. Wouldn't go with that steak."

Kyle's words seemed to have broken the ice. Seth proceeded to fill the time with talk, asking him where he'd been and what he'd done. He seemed inordinately interested in Kyle's activities, few though they were. Kyle told him everything except for Cynthia. That he wasn't quite ready to divulge.

When Kyle asked, he told him the details of what Quince had been indicted for and what had happened to all the men and women they had known who worked for Quince. Talk filled the rest of the meal and took them into another round of drinks after the waiter left with their empty plates.

What the hell, thought Kyle, enjoying the buzz of alcohol in his system, I'm not driving tonight.

Kyle downed the last of his drink, the glass tilted to let a lump of ice drop into his mouth. He lowered the glass and let his cold tongue trace his lips.

Seth was watching.

Deliberately, he brought his fingers to his lips and pushed the ice out. He stuck his finger through the hole in the ice and slowly lapped at it until it was just moisture on his finger, lips and tongue. Seth watched silently until he stuck his finger deep into his mouth and sucked.

"You little shit," Seth groaned. He leaned forward. "Does this mean you're coming upstairs with me?"

This is it. Now that the time had come, Kyle was surprisingly calm about it, despite the erection throbbing in his crotch. "I thought you'd never ask."

Seth found the waiter in record time and signed the bill to his room. Kyle followed Seth out of the

restaurant, holding Seth's jacket before him to hide the bulge in his pants. Seth took his arm and led him to the elevators, glancing down at the jacket with a pained smile. He was calm until they were inside the elevator and the doors shut.

They were alone.

Kyle's back slammed into the padded wall when Seth shoved him, pressing his entire length against Kyle, crouching slightly to accommodate their difference in height. Kyle's arms wrapped tightly around Seth's waist and he eagerly opened his lips for the kiss that took his mouth. The man tasted of whiskey and the spices from his meal, but also of the dark, delicious taste that was all him. Kyle swallowed Seth's moan, replacing it with one of his own.

They swayed when the elevator came to a smooth stop. Seth grunted, grabbing the collar of Kyle's shirt and dragging him into the hall. With his free hand, Seth scrabbled in his pants pocket and produced the keycard. Kyle was thrilled to see Seth's fingers tremble slightly as he tried the keycard. Did he affect the other man so much? He didn't fight when Seth hauled him into the dark room. He did stumble over his feet, dropping the jacket to the floor as Seth's grip spun him around and shoved him back toward the bed. He tumbled in a graceless heap and grunted when Seth landed atop him.

Fingers dug into his hair, forcing another punishing kiss. He moaned, bucking up to grind into the hips that straddled his. He hooked his fingers into Seth's waistband without thought, then, realizing

where they were, grabbed Seth's shirt and yanked it free.

Skin! Glorious, warm skin. So much of it hidden beneath the soft cotton of the shirt. He slid his palms up and over hard ridges of muscle encased in hot satin skin. There were acres of back to explore and interesting ridges to Seth's sides and beautiful, wonderful curves to Seth's belly and chest.

When his fingernails scraped Seth's nipples, the older man gasped and tore from his mouth.

"You fucking little fuck!" Seth rasped, shoving from the bed and grabbing one of Kyle's feet to begin on the laces that would free his foot.

Kyle couldn't help it. The world was right for once and a happiness burned in his chest. The thought that want of him reduced eloquently spoken Seth to such language touched a warmth inside of him that had never been there before. It bubbled in his belly and tickled his chest, finally bursting forth in a joyous laugh from his lips.

Seth froze, staring at him.

Kyle pushed up on his elbows, grinning at Seth. "What?"

"I've never heard you laugh."

Kyle pulled a frown. "No?"

Seth shook his head. He leaned over to turn on the lamp he'd forgotten in his earlier haste. "Do it again."

Kyle bit his lip, trying to suppress a grin that just wouldn't be kept down. "No."

Seth yanked off the boot he'd loosened, amused threat in his narrow-eyed glare. Clutching Kyle's

ankle, he wiggled his finger under the arch of Kyle's foot.

"No!" Kyle wailed, trying to yank his foot back, laughing.

"Oh, yes!" Seth continued to tickle him.

Kyle fought, laughing until tears streamed down his face, but Seth was much better at wrestling. They ended up in a heap on the floor on the far side of the bed, Kyle pinned beneath Seth and Seth's fingers wiggling cruelly in his sides. Seth displayed strength even Kyle didn't know he had by holding both of Kyle's hands above his head with one of his.

"Stop! Please!"

"Oooo, begging?"

Kyle was beyond pride. "Yes, please."

The fingers, which had pushed Kyle's new pullover up to his armpits, stopped tickling and started smoothing. That felt good. Especially when the pads of those fingers brushed over his nipple.

Seth leaned in to put his lips to Kyle's, barely touching. Seth's silky bangs wafted against Kyle's cheek and forehead. "I like it when you beg."

"Fuck you." The threat had no substance, as it was exhaled on a breath as Kyle tried to capture Seth's mouth.

Seth pulled back, still barely touching. "Mmm, we're getting to that." He kissed Kyle, softly, barely. "Beg me."

"No."

Fingers threatened his side and Kyle squirmed, mortified to hear a giggle come from his lips.

Seth chuckled. "Beg me."

"For what?"

"Beg me to fuck you."

Kyle's breath hitched. He swallowed. "*You* want to fuck *me*."

Seth bit Kyle's bottom lip then lapped at the small hurt with that agile tongue. "Tell me you want me."

"Why?"

Seth kissed him breathless. The fingers at his side slid down to the waistband of his Dockers. Kyle nominally fought the hold on his wrists as Seth unbuttoned and unzipped his pants. Rather imperiously, Seth reached into Kyle's new boxers and took hold of his cock.

Kyle gasped, arching out of the kiss. "Fuck."

"Close," Seth murmured, lips sampling the pulse just below Kyle's left ear. He pulled his hand up the shaft of Kyle's cock. "You're so close to begging."

Kyle barely heard him, his attention centered on the hand dragging from the base of his cock up to the head, to the palm that swirled over the head then slid back down the shaft, damp from his pre-cum.

"Kyle." Seth sucked his earlobe and stroked him again. And again. "You're so fucking beautiful. Beg me to sink my cock in your ass and take us both to heaven."

Kyle moaned, Seth's words touching nerves he hadn't been aware of. It wasn't like he hadn't known this would happen. He knew what Seth wanted, and long before his drive to Oregon, he'd known he wanted it too.

"Yeah," Kyle breathed, arching in to Seth's hand.
"Fuck me, Seth."

"Oh, baby!"

Seth released his wrists and sat up. He stood, hauling Kyle to his feet only to shove him back on the bed. Frantically, they attacked each other's clothes. Kyle found himself giggling again but didn't care, especially not when Seth was chuckling right with him.

Kyle had never been so happy. He'd never before had the occasion. At least not in recent memory.

When they finally had each other naked, Seth laid him back in the pillows. Kyle reached for him and Seth spread himself on top, that long body draped over Kyle like a wonderful, living blanket. Seth's mouth met his, unhurried, exploring. At first his hands stayed in Kyle's hair, all of his concentration on the kiss. When he had his fill of Kyle's lips and tongue, he moved to Kyle's neck, then his shoulder. Seth smoothed his palms up Kyle's arms to his hands, forcing them gently above Kyle's head. Languid, Kyle let Seth arrange him and closed his eyes, letting the older man pleasure him.

Seth's wicked tongue found Kyle's nipple and the younger man gasped. Seth sampled one nipple, then the other, his hands sliding down Kyle's sides to urge his thighs farther apart. Seth traveled lower, laving and nipping at the smooth muscles of Kyle's belly, swirling and tasting his belly button.

Kyle gasped when Seth's chin nudged his cock. He chanced a look and moaned aloud at the sight of that

white hair draped over his belly. Glancing up at him, Seth smiled and rubbed his cheek against the side of Kyle's cock, causing some of that hair to glide over sensitive skin. Kyle moaned again, clutching the pillows behind his head.

He watched spellbound as Seth turned his head and nuzzled the curly hair at the base of his cock. Then, watching Kyle, he flattened his tongue and ran it up the length of the underside until the tip touched that aching spot just below the head.

"Oh, fuck, Seth!"

Seth grinned and did it again, this time swirling the tip of his tongue around the leaking head. Seth pursed his lips and kissed the moisture from the tip of Kyle's cock, pulling away to let Kyle watch him as he licked his lips and hummed happily. Then he set to licking Kyle's cock again. Kyle's hips tipped of their own accord, trying to get Seth to take it in his mouth. Seth slid his arms down under Kyle's thighs and reached around to flatten one hand on Kyle's belly and wrap the other around the base of Kyle's cock. It forced Kyle's thighs up and open, braced on Seth's shoulders. He barely noticed. Seth aimed his cock and slid it into the hot depths of his mouth.

"Oh, shit! Oh, fuck! Oh, yeah! Seth!" Kyle babbled, having to close his eyes to fight coming. It felt too good! Seth devoured him, and he was a struggling, whimpering, willing meal. "Please, Seth. Oh, please!" He didn't know what he was begging for, he only knew that he had to beg and that the begging brought him reward. Seth sucked hard, pumping his cock

with hand and mouth until Kyle really couldn't stand it anymore. "Seth, I'm gonna... Oh, shit, Seth!"

Lights burst and the world detonated. He lost touch with his body and could only heave and shout as Seth ruthlessly milked him dry.

He fell from heaven to the bed on a whimper, sweating and sated and out of breath.

Seth pulled back and up, kneeling between the legs Kyle couldn't quite figure out how to work. Kyle opened eyes nearly plastered shut with sweat to see Seth grinning down at him. "That was about the sexiest thing I've ever seen, baby."

Kyle shut his eyes and couldn't suppress the grin. He might have blushed, but he couldn't be sure. Every inch of his body was flushed.

"Don't move," Seth told him.

The bed sank and shimmied as Seth left him. Kyle cracked open his eyes again. "Move? Are you kidding?"

Seth laughed, bending over his suitcase and rummaging inside. Shortly, he returned to the bed and resumed his position between Kyle's thighs. He dropped the plastic bottle he'd retrieved to the bed and grabbed Kyle's legs to drape them over his bent thighs.

Kyle watched him, trying not to panic. He knew what was coming now. He wanted it, yes, but that didn't mean he wasn't scared.

Seth retrieved the bottle and flipped the cap, meeting Kyle's gaze. He smiled warmly. "It might hurt, but it shouldn't. Not much. Not if you relax. I'll

go slow."

Clear liquid coated two of Seth's fingers. Setting the bottle aside, Seth pulled one of Kyle's legs up so that his thigh was pressed against Seth's belly and his ankle hovered near Seth's ear. Kyle kept his eyes on Seth's face. Seth maintained eye contact as his fingers dropped. Wet fingers tickled the sensitive skin just behind Kyle's balls, then one of the fingers found his opening. Seth leaned forward a little, forcing Kyle's leg closer to his chest, opening him more as the finger traced Kyle's ass.

"So fucking beautiful," Seth murmured, those cobalt eyes at half-mast as he stared at Kyle. "I've wanted to fuck you since the first time I saw you. Young and innocent and cold to everyone. But I knew there was a fire underneath."

Kyle sucked in a breath as one wet finger pushed in. He couldn't process both Seth's words and Seth's actions, and the actions were winning the battle for his attention. Seth pumped the finger in and out. In and out. Kyle tried to decide if he liked it. He didn't *not* like it, but it was weird.

Seth slid his free hand up Kyle's chest and plucked a nipple. Kyle gasped at the biting pleasure and Seth deftly pushed a second finger in with the first. Kyle blinked. He felt full. That was only two fingers. And Seth wanted to put... His gaze dropped to Seth's cock. It was long and curved, the tip nearly kissing his belly. He licked his lips, wondering what it tasted like. Happy to think of that instead of...

"Shit!" His back arched off the bed as Seth touched

something that made his cock spasm and his world twist.

Seth grinned. "Mmm, found it."

Kyle gasped as Seth hit it again. "Found what?"

"Your g-spot."

"That exists?"

Again Seth brushed it and Kyle moaned. Seth chuckled. "You tell me."

"Oh, fuck!" Kyle gripped the bedspread, amazed that his cock was coming back to life so soon after an explosive orgasm.

He wasn't sure how long Seth fingered him, he lost track of time. But the fingers eventually left him and he heard the bottle top pop again. He opened his eyes to see Seth filling his palm with more lube before closing the bottle and taking his cock in the wet hand. Kyle bit his lip, both enraptured and frightened as that beautiful cock started to shine.

Seth pulled it down, angling his hips and positioning the head at Kyle's opening. "Relax and push out."

Kyle bit his lip harder as Seth started to push forward. Anxious not to cause himself pain, he obeyed Seth and pushed out. He imagined he heard the pop as the head of Seth's cock penetrated him.

Holy hell! Seth was inside him. *Seth was inside him.* His eyes rolled up and he felt the world start to spin.

"Breathe, baby," Seth crooned, leaning forward to force Kyle's leg up. He pushed some more and Kyle sucked in a breath. It didn't exactly *hurt*, but it didn't exactly feel good. "Breathe." Kyle tried to obey but...

Good God, did Seth never *end*? “Oh, shit.”

Kyle opened his eyes to see Seth’s closed and a frown of concentration on his face. “Fuck, baby, you’re so tight.” Seth’s tortured pleasure set off Kyle’s need, and he pushed. The move shifted Seth’s cock deeper and it found *that* spot.

Kyle hissed and pushed again, seating Seth all the way inside. They both froze, adjusting, feeling. Seth pulled out and Kyle groaned. Now that felt good. When Seth pushed back in, it wasn’t quite as uncomfortable and Kyle now knew what to expect.

“Fuck!” Seth’s cock could hit that spot a lot better than his fingers.

“Yeah!” Seth worked himself slowly in and out of Kyle.

“God, Seth, please.”

“Please what, baby?”

“I need...I... Oh, fuck, please.”

“Oh, yeah, baby.”

Seth picked up the pace and thoughts of pain flew from Kyle’s head. This was glorious! Even more so when Seth’s still-wet hand found Kyle’s cock and worked it in time to his thrusts in Kyle’s ass. Kyle clutched the bedspread for dear life, thrashing beneath Seth. He cried incoherent pleas at Seth, trusting the other man to fulfill his need.

Kyle came again, hot cum splashing on his belly and chest. Seth pounded his ass, eyes shut in fierce concentration. Suddenly, he cursed and pulled out. He grabbed his glistening cock and yanked it. He came, his seed mixing with Kyle’s on Kyle’s belly.

Chapter Eight

Kyle stayed with Seth, as he'd planned. The first day, they hadn't left the room at all, calling room service for all of their meals and indulging in wild, naked exploration. The second day was more of the same, but they did manage to leave the hotel for an amazing lobster dinner because Kyle revealed that he'd never had lobster. The third day, Seth got even more playful and took Kyle shopping. The clothes shopping didn't faze Kyle, and he actually enjoyed letting Seth dress him, but the trip to the adult shop had thrown him. He hadn't been able to stop grinning and blushing as Seth suggested toy after toy. He still couldn't believe some of the items Seth had purchased, promising to use them on and with Kyle later.

Kyle could hardly wait!

* * * *

Kyle fumbled through the doorway, hauling numerous bags and boxes. The fact that he still wore

Seth's bulky leather jacket didn't help his coordination. Behind him, more bags and boxes filled Seth's arms.

"Fuck, you little shit!" Seth cried out when Kyle cleared the door and it started to close. "You could at least hold the door open for me."

Kyle grinned. "I can? With all this crap? I don't think..."

He stopped, frozen at the sight of a man seated in the chair by the sliding door that led to the miniscule balcony. The stranger calmly put down the newspaper he'd been reading and faced Kyle. He was probably in his thirties. Lean and strong, like Seth. He had a Japanese look to him, but he couldn't be all Japanese because the features were off just a tad. He was dressed impeccably in a crisp green dress shirt, patterned tie and gray slacks. His black hair was short and slicked back.

"What...?" Behind Kyle, Seth stopped. Bags thumped to the floor. "What the hell are you doing here?"

Kyle glanced over his shoulder. Seth scowled, but in annoyance. Seth knew this man.

The man stood. He smiled. "Hello, Seth."

"Get the fuck out."

The man shook his head. "Such a greeting." Black eyes focused on Kyle. "You haven't introduced me to your...friend."

Kyle's eyes narrowed at the pause.

"And I'm not going to. Get out."

The man smiled, still looking at Kyle. "You must

be Kyle," he said, extending his hand. "I'm Damien Gaines."

"Who are you and why are you here?" Kyle demanded, taking his cue from Seth.

Damien sighed, letting his hand drop. "I suppose it was rude to just enter unannounced, but..." he met Seth's gaze over Kyle's shoulder, "*you* were told to report in."

"I reported in."

Damien's black eyes flicked down to Kyle, then back up. "Not everything."

"Some things aren't your business."

"*Everything* about this is our business, Seth. You know that."

Kyle's blood ran cold. This was obviously someone from the job that Seth worked. The one that was 'something like' FBI, but not. In the happy few days they'd spent together, Kyle had managed to push the fact of Seth's job from his mind and Seth had managed not to mention it. It looked like Kyle's happy ignorance was about to end.

Seth put a hand on Kyle's shoulder and maneuvered him farther into the room on the far side of the bed from Damien. He very obviously put himself between the man and Kyle. "Get out. I'll report in when it's time."

"It's past time."

"It's not right."

"That's not your decision."

"Or yours."

"Semantics."

"Get out."

Damien moved toward the door, but stopped in front of Seth. They were of a size, Damien perhaps an inch or so shorter than Seth. "I came as a courtesy. You know they're going to force your hand."

"Get out."

Damien glanced at Kyle. Smiled. "We'll meet again."

"Out!"

Damien Gaines left.

Seth exploded in muttered curses, stalking to the sliding door. He threw it open and stepped out on the balcony. The pack of clove cigarettes came out of his pocket and one was soon at his lips.

Kyle slowly approached the door, a sinking feeling in his gut. He leaned against the doorjamb, hands deep in the pockets of the jacket. "What was that about?"

Seth fumbled in his pockets for his lighter. "I work with Damien."

"I figured."

"I've...been sort of MIA for the past week or so."

"Because of me."

"Yes."

"You're in trouble?"

"No. Not really."

Kyle watched Seth carefully. He wasn't just smoking. He was scanning the parking lot below casually, without seeming to. "Then what was that all about?"

Seth didn't answer immediately. He was thinking.

Hard. Finally, he sighed, turned around, and sat on the ground of the balcony, his back to the stucco wall. He tilted bluer-than-blue eyes up at Kyle, studying him for agonizing moments.

"The company I work for operates outside the government." His voice was low and steady and he maintained eye contact. "Each one of us is an ex-con or soon-to-be-con and damn good at whatever it was that landed us on the wrong side of the law. We're handpicked for our skills, then they train us in a hell of a lot more. If you think Mission Impossible or La Femme Nikita, you're not far off the mark." He smiled but it was a pale reflection of his usual. "We're hired to go in and do what regular cops and even Special Forces can't. We're paid to break the law, paid to infiltrate. Most times we're just paid to get information that can't be gotten legally."

"Like information on Quince Juarez."

Seth nodded. "Just like that. Sometimes we're sent in as assassins. Sometimes we're sent to set off time bombs that will just destroy. The jobs are varied. For that, we're paid handsomely and we get to live outside the system. I've got as many different identities in as many different countries as you have fingers, with access to more if necessary."

Kyle remained very still. Every word Seth said made sense. It was almost as though he already knew this and Seth was just confirming it. He dreaded where it was headed.

"I was sent to infiltrate Quince's operation and discover any kind of information that could be had to

bring him down. I'm authorized to use any means necessary, including seduction, robbery and murder as I see fit. Turned out it was pretty easy to get dirt on Quince." His gaze dropped, focusing on the dwindling cigarette rather than on Kyle. "In my data hunt, I found information on a certain accountant who fixed the books for Quince for years. I also found the papers the same man had prepared trying to go legit and turn Quince in."

Kyle shook. The papers. His father's papers. The ones that not only proved Quince's guilt, but also his father's in more than one swindle. The papers that hadn't been quite enough for the stupid cops to put Quince away, so they'd told Kyle's father to hold on. To gather more. Only it had taken the last of his father's courage to make that one move. Having the cops turn him away had been devastating. Worse, he couldn't turn them down because now they knew to look for him and threatened to bring him down if he didn't produce information on Quince. So he'd tried, and he'd recruited his young son to help him.

Together, Kyle and his father had twisted the law to get more dirt on Quince. But it had never been enough. Quince had caught them. He'd had Kyle's dad killed, and forced Kyle to work for him. Kyle's mother had died under mysterious circumstances nearly a year later and Quince made hints that Kyle could be next if he didn't continue to work for Quince.

It was a bad situation all around, and Kyle was smart enough to know that not all cops were like

those who had ruined his father, but the hatred was deeply ingrained and was no longer a conscious thing.

Seth continued. "Luckily, I found a lot more. I didn't have to turn in those particular papers to get Quince. And I could do things a certain accountant couldn't to make the accusations stick."

Kyle turned, leaning against the dresser inside the room rather than in the doorway. He stared at his feet; at the new boots Seth had bought for him, tucked under the cuffs of the new pants Seth had also bought for him. Seth, who had filtered out incriminating evidence that he was paid to retrieve in order to keep Kyle out of trouble. Tears stung the corners of his eyes. Seth had kept him away from the cops, from Quince and from any link to Quince as the man was taken down. Seth had protected him. Why?

Kyle jerked his head up, staring blankly at the abstract painting above the bed. "So...why did that guy come? Is it time for your next job? Time to move on?" *To leave me?*

Seth was quiet for far too long. "My primary objective was achieved. They're being sticklers on my secondary objective."

"Secondary?"

Seth sighed. "I made the mistake early on of mentioning someone who I thought might be an excellent new recruit. The people I work for are always on the lookout for new blood."

Kyle's heart stopped. "What?"

"I told you I've been watching you."

"What?" Kyle spun and glared at Seth's bent head.

The other man remained seated, staring at his cigarette. "I've got a job offer for you, Kyle." His voice was empty. "You can use your skills at breaking and entering. There's tons of money, travel..."

"You son of a bitch! You planned this all along?"

Finally, Seth looked up at him. "Not all of it."

"Not all... Oh, fuck you! No way! Is that what this entire thing has been about?"

"No. It hasn't. Not all."

"Which part wasn't it about?"

Seth's anger flared. "I wasn't supposed to fuck you."

"Oh, great. What was that, a fringe benefit? Is that what you're in trouble for?"

"No. They could care less what your initial reasons are why you join, just so long as you do."

Kyle shook, so angry he could hardly see straight. "Fuck." He turned and fled for the door.

"Kyle, wait!" Seth caught him at the door, slamming him against it and wrestling him still.

"Let go of me, you asshole!"

Seth pressed in, tangling Kyle's hands in the huge jacket to keep him from lashing out. "Kyle, listen. They're out there."

"What?"

"They're out there." Seth's voice sounded so sad. "Damien's coming here was a warning. They're watching us. They've decided they want you, whether you want to go or not. It was my job to convince you and I failed. Now they're ready to step

in.

"You... Goddamn it, you never even told me!"

Seth released him and stepped back. "I know. I was going to. But do you *want* this?"

"No!"

"I didn't think so." He walked back into the room, scraping a hand through his hair. "I should have sent you away after that first night. They must have just caught up with us. I know I was careful when I left."

Kyle's blood went cold, despite his fury. "Sent me away? Just like that? Fuck me and free me? How would that *achieve your objective*?"

"Goddamn it! I was told to do it. That doesn't mean I want it! At first I didn't even know you. I just saw a really talented thief and a really bright kid that deserved a better life. Then I got to know you better..." He trailed off, then angrily shook his head. "I thought I could convince you. If I had *time*! I actually do think you'd do really well with us and I, for one, would be thrilled to have you around. But I *knew* you hated cops or anything like them."

"So, what? You tried to let me go?"

"I *did* let you go. I should have kept you away."

"What stopped you?"

"Oh, fuck you!" Seth exploded. "Maybe because I fucking love you? Maybe because I didn't want this time together to end? I was being selfish, *all right*?" He didn't face Kyle, despite the bombshell he'd just dropped. "I wanted you here. I wanted time with you. I wanted to fuck you and love you and... shit! I fucked everything up."

Seeing Seth derailed was almost as much a blow as his words. Kyle stood, nearly stunned out of his anger, just inside the bathroom door. Which was by the exit door.

Seth huffed. He grabbed one of the key cards and stomped toward Kyle. Roughly, he grabbed the lapels of Kyle's jacket and hauled him up against him. "I do love you," he rasped, slanting his mouth over Kyle's for a bruising kiss.

Kyle failed to fight, too overcome by conflicting emotions. He opened his mouth under Seth's onslaught, receiving the tongue that demanded compliance. He even moaned and curled his fingers over Seth's biceps, almost willing to forget their discussion if the touching would just continue. He was breathless when Seth released him.

"I'll be back in a while." He glanced toward the room, then back at Kyle. Then opened the door and left.

Kyle couldn't move at first, still stunned. He was angry. Wasn't he? Seth had tricked him. So where was the boiling anger? Where was the righteous rage? What the hell was going on?

He wandered back into the room proper and dropped onto the bed. He braced his elbows on his knees and dropped his face into his hands, the long sleeves of Seth's jacket folded over the palms that pressed his cheeks.

Seth loved him. He loved Seth. Why hadn't he said it? He was pissed. Seth had engineered the whole thing, had put him in a position to be taken by these

people he worked for. By his own admission, he was authorized to use whatever means necessary to gain his objective. Was this love thing part of a planned seduction? Probably. Definitely. It would be a perfect ploy. It was certainly *working*. Kyle was so much in love he was about ready to agree to anything Seth said. Then Seth could hand him over, tell him that he lied, and never see him again. With a secretive operation like that, surely it was easy to keep two operatives apart.

That thought ached, even if everything Seth had ever said was a lie. Kyle had found more happiness in the last few days than he'd experienced since he was a kid. More than that, even. His father had rarely been home those days, and his mother hadn't been the most attentive of caregivers. Kyle had always been on his own. He'd always been in charge of his own entertainment and responsible for his own happiness.

He glanced at the shopping bags that littered the floor beside the bed. There was candy and sweet pastries; stupid movies Kyle had never seen that Seth insisted were classics. Hell, Seth had even bought a DVD player, since the hotel didn't provide. One of those swanky little portables that Kyle thought cost way too much.

Then there were the toys. He had to smile to think of the things that were in the garish red bags. Flavored lube, three different dildos, anal beads and some vibrating eggs were among the many purchases Seth had insisted on even when Kyle had insisted he would *not* try any of them. Seth had purchased it all

without a care for the cost. Surely that account was funded by his employer. Was that how they tracked him? No. He used the same card for the hotel, Kyle was sure, and they'd been there a week. So his employers had known where they were all along. Lending evidence to the fact that Kyle was being played.

Groaning, Kyle flopped back on the bed. He bent an arm over his eyes. How could he believe anything Seth said? How could he not? Seth had gotten him away from Quince. But that only made sense if he wanted to recruit him. Kyle did them no good behind bars, right? Seth had given him money and sent him away, not knowing where he'd go. If Kyle had never called, what then? Would they have found him? Would they have looked? Was the money and the instruction to get out all Seth's doing? Or was there a tracer in the duffel bag and they'd known where he was all along?

Kyle laughed bitterly, mind reeling with endless possibilities, giving him a headache. How could he possibly know what was real and what wasn't? What was he supposed to believe?

He pushed up on his elbows.

Seth's wallet sat on the dresser. Why was it there when Seth wasn't?

Curious, he sat up and opened it. At least five hundred dollars was in that wallet. Kyle could take it and sneak out of the hotel. He wouldn't have to go to his car — which was surely watched or marked with a tracer — although it hurt to think of leaving the bag of

money behind. Stupid of him not to have kept the duffel in the hotel room, but he hadn't trusted the cleaning staff during his and Seth's afternoon shopping spree.

He went to the balcony, wallet in hand. He looked down at the deserted parking lot. Studied the sides of the balconies. They were only three stories up. It was getting dark. He could get down pretty easily. Was anyone watching? Could he get away? How careless of Seth to leave his wallet.

He froze. Careless? Seth? Not likely. He must have left it on purpose. Why? For Kyle to find? To give Kyle a chance to escape?

Groaning, he leaned against the balcony. The air still smelled like cloves. The jacket that surrounded him smelled like cloves. Everything of Seth's smelled like cloves. To Kyle, it was now a source of warmth, of comfort. Of love.

God! He loved Seth. It wasn't just the sex. He wanted the man. He wanted to spend time with the only person in a very long time who had been able to make him laugh. Who'd made him feel safe and wanted.

He stood up straight, staring at blue-gray shadows on the ground caused by the rapidly setting sun. How long would Seth stay gone? He had to make some sort of decision.

Okay, so what was really happening here? Putting aside the idea of Seth's engineering of the whole thing, Kyle was being offered a job. Some secretive FBI-like organization wanted him to work for them. If

he did, he would be stealing for a living. He'd be sneaking in to the lives of criminals and finding evidence to bring them down. That wasn't bad, was it? No. That was actually kind of exciting.

Thinking about it now, he could rather easily disassociate this organization from the police. The police had to work within the law. It was one of the main handicaps they'd displayed in their inability to help his father. They needed to do things by the book, and the criminals did anything but. But an organization like one Seth described could go around that, could find the proper evidence and use any means necessary to make it stick. That could fucking rock!

So that just left the issue of Seth setting him up. But did that really matter? Seth claimed it was the case early on, but when he'd gotten to know Kyle, things had changed. Which meant that he'd changed his tune when he'd fallen in love with Kyle. *If* he was telling the truth about that. But he had to be. Kyle couldn't believe even Seth was that good of an actor to have faked his enjoyment of the past few days. Even in his ignorance, Kyle was certain the sex couldn't be that amazing if there wasn't some feeling behind it. Isn't that what all the magazines and talk shows said?

In his gut, Kyle was *sure* that Seth meant that impromptu declaration of love. So, even if he had planned to lure Kyle in then turn him over to his employers, there shouldn't be anything now that said that it had to break them up. Who knows? Perhaps

they could work together. That would only bring them closer. Kyle's heart actually lightened at the prospect.

Kyle stuffed Seth's wallet into the pocket of Seth's jacket. No matter if this was an elaborate scheme, no matter if Seth meant what he said or not, the fact of the matter remained that Kyle was lost without Seth. Being with the man had only secured the final nail in his coffin. He couldn't leave.

He walked back into the dark hotel room as the parking lot lights were humming to life below. He shrugged out of Seth's jacket, tossing it on the chair. He felt oddly calm, almost the way he did the hour or so before a job. It was a time when all decisions were made, all plans set and he just had to wait for the proper time to arrive. There was nothing more he could do but wait.

So he might as well shower.

Chapter Nine

The sound of the door opening woke Kyle. He stayed curled in the sheets as footsteps sounded closer. They paused, then sounded again, coming closer. The bed sank beside him. He opened his eyes to the darkened room, able to clearly see the silhouette of a man seated beside him. The welcome scent of cloves wafted over him.

"You're still here." Seth sounded empty.

"Yes."

"I'd thought you'd leave."

"I figured that out."

"Then why are you here? You're good. You might have slipped by them. There aren't that many watching us and half of them were watching me." Seth sighed. "Let me take a shower, then I'll go for another walk. You can..."

Kyle took Seth's hand, stopping his words. "I couldn't leave."

"Why not?"

Kyle sat up, edging closer to the warm body he craved. "If I left, I'd lose you."

Seth was stiff under the arm Kyle wound about his shoulders. He groaned. "Kyle, I'm sorry."

Kyle pressed his lips to the curve of Seth's shoulder, feeling the crisp cold on the fabric from Seth's walk outside. "Don't be. I decided that working for this company of yours might not be so bad."

Seth snatched back. "What?"

Kyle had to smile. "What else do I have to do with my life? Bussing tables? No, thanks."

"You could get a job in another library. I'll get you more money. I'll send you to..."

Seth trailed off as Kyle climbed from beneath the sheets and into his lap. *There!* Now he noticed Kyle was naked and that shut him up. Knees to either side of Seth's hips and hand clutched in Seth's shirt, Kyle leaned back and over to turn on the light. Seth's hands went to his waist to steady him. They both blinked in the sudden light. Kyle twisted back and settled in Seth's lap, leaning back so they could talk comfortably. "You want me to work in a boring library?"

Distracted by Kyle's body displayed before him, Seth took a moment to frown. "I thought you liked the library."

"It was okay. But it wasn't exciting. Working jobs was exciting."

The frown grew.

Playfully, Kyle reached up with a finger to trace the lines in Seth's forehead. "I doubt I could go much longer without wanting to try it again."

"You haven't..."

"No. I haven't. But it hasn't been that long, has it?"

"I thought you didn't like it?"

"I didn't like doing it for Quince." He leaned forward to nip at Seth's jaw. "But the actual jobs were fantastic."

Seth grunted, his hands trailing to Kyle's back, then down to cup his ass. He pulled him to snug Kyle's crotch to his own. "I didn't take you for a thrill seeker."

Kyle trailed his tongue up Seth's jaw to his ear. "I'm with you, aren't I?"

The hands on his butt clenched. "Are you?"

Kyle sat back, fingers laced behind Seth's neck. "What? A thrill seeker?" he teased.

Seth wasn't in the mood. "Are you with me?"

"Yeah."

"Are you sure?"

"I love you."

Slowly, Seth's gorgeous smile bloomed. "Does that mean you trust me?"

Kyle sighed. "I didn't *want* to. But I do."

One hand slid up to the middle of Kyle's back to push him closer to Seth's chest. Seth planted a gentle kiss on his lips. "I love you, baby. You *can* trust me."

"I hope so."

They kissed, languidly exploring each other. Seth's hands roamed the expanse of Kyle's back and ass, caressing skin. It was nice, but it wasn't enough. Kyle groaned. He unlinked his hands from Seth's neck and went to work on Seth's shirt. "Want you naked," he muttered against Seth's lips.

“Fine by me.”

Together they freed Seth of his shirt, and Seth toed off his shoes when Kyle climbed from his lap. They kissed as they both tackled the button and zipper of his slacks. But when Seth would have risen to take them off, Kyle shoved him back on the bed. Seth watched, amused, as Kyle pulled off his pants and socks.

Kyle purred as he knelt between Seth’s legs, hands braced to either side of the older man’s hips. Slowly he lowered his face to bury his nose in that amazingly light hair curling tightly at the base of Seth’s cock. The overwhelming scent of Seth’s warm musk washed through him, a scent he was hopelessly addicted to. He went lower to nuzzle Seth’s balls, using his tongue to lap at them and gently suckle first one, then the other.

He barely registered Seth’s hands lightly sifting through his hair, so intent was he on learning the temperature and texture of Seth’s sex. He opened his mouth wide and dragged his tongue up the veins on the underside of Seth’s cock. He paused to nip at the bottom edge of the flared head before devouring the head and half of the shaft into his mouth. Seth moaned, fingers tightening in Kyle’s hair. Kyle let himself be guided by the clutching hands and moved his mouth up and down the shaft. He made a wet, warm entrance of his mouth for Seth to fuck, loving the taste of the dribbles of pre-cum that oozed into his mouth. He sucked hard, bobbing his head, wanting to make Seth come, and was frustrated when it didn’t

happen soon enough.

Abruptly, he stopped, tearing back from Seth's hands.

"Hey!"

"Stay there." Kyle pointed as he went to the corner of the room and the toys and lube he had unpacked earlier. Among them was a gay lovers' manual Seth had bought.

"Since you like books so much," Seth had teased.

Kyle would show him the value of books!

He walked back to the bed and dumped his treasures on the spread beside Seth. He held the book up so Seth could see it and started to flip through it, looking for a particular page. Seth was grinning ear to ear.

Kyle advised, pretending to be absorbed with the book. "You should move up on the bed and get comfortable."

"I should?"

"Yeah."

"Are we trying something?"

"Yes."

"Care to let me in on it?"

Kyle found his page, folded the paperback open and handed it to Seth. Those beautiful cobalt blue eyes opened wide in surprise. "You sure about this?"

It was the times when Seth used that tone, that obvious caring that he didn't even think about, that convinced Kyle to trust him. "Oh, yeah."

"All right, then!"

Once Seth was situated to Kyle's liking, Kyle

climbed up the bed until he straddled his lover's thighs.

His lover. Yes. He was quite comfortable with that thought.

He reached down to caress Seth's cock again, just to see the other man groan. He grinned and stopped, just to hear Seth call him a little shit.

"I'll make it up to you," Kyle promised, reaching for the lube.

"You don't have to do this, you know. I'm perfectly happy driving."

Kyle's grin twisted. "I noticed." He poured clear liquid into his palm. "But it's my turn."

"Okay, baby. I'm all yours."

Kyle paused to meet Seth's eyes. Without looking, he took Seth's cock into his wet hand. "Yes. You are."

Seth just moaned.

Grinning, Kyle thoroughly slicked Seth's cock, then pushed up higher on his knees. He edged his hips forward.

Seth's hands on at his waist held him steady. It was awkward, since neither one of them had ever tried this particular position. Seth told him earlier in the week that he'd only slept with two other men and really only in two positions. It was one of the reasons Kyle wanted to try this. He wanted an experience of firsts for them both.

Finally, together, they managed to place Seth's cock at Kyle's ass, and Kyle slowly impaled himself.

It was overwhelming. "Shit!"

"You okay?"

"Yeah. Wait. Yeah." He sighed, pushing up, then lowering again. He leaned back, hands braced on the mattress somewhere near Seth's knees. Up and down, relax and roll. After a few moments of moaning, he finally had Seth's cock seated fully within him.

"God, Kyle!"

Kyle lowered his chin and saw his lover's face screwed up in gorgeous ecstasy. Seth's fingers dug into Kyle's thigh. Grinning, Kyle rotated his hips.

Seth hissed and met his gaze. Cobalt eyes were almost black with lust. "You little shit."

Kyle dropped his head back and laughed and he pulled his hips up. What a wonderful position! Full of Seth, but in control. Bottom on top. He experimented with what felt good and finally decided on a smooth, rocking motion that had the beautiful benefit of making Seth's cock hit *that* spot all the damn time. Soon he was groaning, rocking with abandon. He heard Seth murmuring, but didn't register the words. The tone was all that was important. He was beautiful. He was special. He was loved.

Seth's hand closed around Kyle's cock and he cried out at the dual sensation. Instantly, he picked up speed, needing to bring this to completion.

"Seth!"

"Yeah, baby, I know."

"Seth! God, oh, Seth!"

He came, hips locking and ass clenching. Beneath him, Seth cried out and those glorious warm spurts of Seth's come filled Kyle. They stayed in that frozen tableau for precious moments, then, with a groan,

Kyle lifted himself a final time, letting Seth's cock fall away.

Murmuring happily, he leaned forward and, heedless of the ropes of his own come that coated Seth's belly and chest, sprawled across Seth and buried his face in the other man's neck. "You think I could work in a library after knowing this?"

Seth laughed, lifting his arms to embrace Kyle. "I suppose that's my fault, too."

Kyle settled happily. He knew he'd have to get up soon, but he'd put it off as long as he could. "Sure is. Before you, I thought I was straight."

Seth kissed his temple. "You still can be. You just happen to like fucking me."

"I just happen to *love* fucking you. Besides, I tried fucking a girl. Didn't like it."

"You did? You didn't tell me that!"

Kyle shrugged. "I wanted to see what it was like. I didn't want to want you. We did it. I'm happy to forget it." He kissed Seth's sweaty neck. "Not like fucking you."

Seth heaved a sigh. "So I'm not your first."

He pushed up enough to meet Seth's gaze. "How about my last?" Seth's eyes widened, shocked. But Kyle was serious, and Seth had to know that. "I mean it, Seth. You're not getting rid of me. And if this is all a joke or if this is some *job*, I'll hunt you down."

Seth blinked. Then grinned. "Will you tie me up and have your way with me?"

Kyle glanced at the pile of toys. A pair of fur-lined handcuffs was in the pile. He grinned. "Maybe."

"That might be worth it."

Kyle punched his arm. "Don't even try it, asshole."

Epilogue

Scaling down the wall proved trickier than scaling up, but Kyle managed it without mishap. He found the little window still unlocked as expected and shimmied carefully through the opening.

“Oh, yeah!”

Kyle dropped to the linoleum floor, brows raised in shock. Inside the bathroom stall, he couldn’t see the person making the noise, but he could hear well enough. And what was that slight squishing sound?

He opened the stall door, clearly recognizing the man’s moan. Seth leaned back against the vanity counter, head thrown back, shirt unbuttoned and spread wide, pants gaping open and wet cock in hand. He moaned again, loudly.

Kyle grinned, leaning in the opening of the stall and crossing his arms.

“Fuck yeah!” Seth cried, lowering his face to meet Kyle’s amused gaze. He grinned, extending his free hand.

Chuckling softly, Kyle went to him, allowing Seth to gather him to his side and into a devouring kiss.

"Enjoying yourself?" he muttered against his lover's lips.

A wet hand plucked his from Seth's chest and pulled it down to circle his erection. "Could enjoy more if you help."

Quite willing, Kyle pumped Seth's cock. He tipped his head back to invite another absorbing kiss. Having already started, it didn't take long to bring Seth off. Warm cum spattered Kyle's hand.

Seth sagged back against the vanity with a satisfied smile while Kyle stepped away to retrieve paper towels to clean him up.

He couldn't stop laughing, although he kept it soft. "What was that about?"

"Well, you were taking too long. Careful!"

Kyle briefly glared up at Seth before he returned to wiping Seth's cock. "I'm always careful."

"Hmm. And I heard noises. I figured I'd give them a reason to stay away."

Kyle shook his head, smiling.

"Don't knock it. It worked. And I got a handjob from you in the bargain."

Kyle snorted, depositing the soiled towels while Seth adjusted his clothing and washed his hands. Kyle rummaged in the backpack at Seth's feet and pulled out jeans and a T-shirt.

"Did you get it?"

Before pulling off his tight black pants, Kyle tossed a small packet to Seth. "Piece of cake."

"Cocky little shit."

"Hn."

Seth checked the packet while Kyle changed. Apparently satisfied, he put it in the inside pocket of his jacket. Once Kyle was done and had his own jacket on, Seth extended a hand. Kyle took it, and they walked calmly out of the bathroom. There were a few raised brows at them as they crossed the lobby, but nothing more. Kyle idly wondered if they'd heard Seth's antics in the bathroom, or if they were shocked because two men were holding hands.

He decided he could care less.

Seth asked him if he was hungry, and they discussed it calmly on the way to the sleek little BMW that Seth was driving these days.

They were on the highway when Seth reached behind Kyle. From somewhere in the tiny backseat, he brought forth a large kraft envelope, tossing it in Kyle's lap.

"What's this?"

"Open it."

He did. Inside was an ID with a fake name and his picture, a passport with the same name, a cell phone, a bank statement and an ATM card.

He checked the numbers on the statement. "Whoa."

"Think that'll hold you for a while?"

He glanced at Seth, who flipped white bangs from his face and kept his eyes on the road. "That's more than I was told I'd get."

"You earned it. You did great back there and the company is very happy with you."

Kyle grinned, staring at the bank statement. "So

what now?"

"You're a free man for a while. At least a few months. They'll call you when you've got an assignment."

"Really?"

"Really."

"Wow."

Seth chuckled. "You've been working hard."

With Seth right beside him most of the way. "What about you?"

Seth combed long fingers through his hair. "I'm on vacation too."

"So where are we going?"

"Sure you want me with you?" Seth's voice was carefully blank. "You can go anywhere you like. With anyone you like."

Kyle frowned. "I thought we had this discussion. There's no one I want to be with except you. So, where are we going?"

Seth's face lit up with that smile Kyle adored. He transferred his hand from the gearshift to Kyle's knee. "Anywhere you want, baby. Anywhere you want."

About the Author

Jet's been writing erotic stories since she was a teenager. But it took her until this year—her thirty-fifth—to believe she could get published. An ardent fan of fantasy and science fiction sagas, Jet prefers to live in a world of imagination where dragons are real, elves are commonplace, vampires are just people with special diets and lycanthropes live next door.

In reality, Jet lives with her boyfriend of nearly ten years, his daughter and father, and way too many cats. She also works as a product manager for a software company, because even in real life she can't help but create something out of nothing.