



WE'RE BOTH
STRAIGHT, RIGHT?

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ZACK should have known something was up when he saw Larry engrossed in a conversation with Steve Marsh at the frat party. It wasn't that Steve was a bad guy, really. Just that he had a reputation for being a little... well, sleazy. Zack wasn't even sure what he'd done to get the rep, though he'd heard something about fucking a dog on a drunken dare in high school. That was probably bullshit. But it still made Zack a little uncomfortable to see his best friend and roommate spending the entire party talking to this guy.

Usually, Larry was hitting on every girl at the party. Striking out, generally. He was handsome enough, and built like an athlete, but as soon as he opened his mouth and girls realized how dorky and spastic he was, it was all over. He was lucky to get an occasional pity fuck. But he never gave up trying. Except for tonight.

It all became clear when they walked back to the dorm together a couple hours later. Larry was even more wound up than usual, which didn't sit well with Zack's level of inebriation and slightly sour stomach. But they'd been friends since middle school, so Zack was pretty used to Larry's manic episodes. He just let him ramble without interruption, until Larry said something that made his ears perk up.

Porn?

Yeah! Larry replied, his bright blue eyes wide with excitement. They got two thousand dollars for it! Isn't that fucking nuts?

Wait a minute. Back up a bit. Who made a porn film?

Steve and Alan. Weren't you listening? Larry sounded hurt. He was used to other people tuning him out, but Zack usually listened.

Zack was too startled to pay much attention to that. They're both dudes.

No shit, Larry replied, rolling his eyes. Don't tell me you're homophobic.

No. At least, he didn't think he was. But aren't they both straight?

That's the point! There's this whole fetish market for straight guys who are willing to go down on each other. Larry waved his hands in excitement, as if this wasn't a totally fucked up idea. Steve says this porn director he knows likes to recruit from college campuses because he thinks college guys are totally fucking hot. And Steve's willing to put me in touch with him.

Zack stopped dead in his tracks. Whoa, whoa, *whoa*! What the fuck are you talking about? If Steve wants to blow his roommate for a few bucks—

A thousand dollars, man!

Whatever. That's his business. But don't tell me you're seriously thinking of sucking some guy's dick for money!

Zack was pissed. He'd always felt protective of Larry, even though they were the same age and Larry was a little bigger than he was. The guy was just too naive; too trusting. He didn't have a mean bone in his body. If that asshole, Steve, wanted to recruit Larry for this sleazeball pornographer friend of his, Zack would have a few things to say to him!

I wasn't going to suck some random guy's dick, Larry replied, oblivious to his friend's foul temper. That would probably be pretty gross. But I figured sucking on yours wouldn't be too bad.

BY THE time they reached their dorm room, Zack was fuming. The conversation had gone downhill from Larry's comment about sucking Zack's cock, to the point where Zack was accusing Steve of taking a commission for finding new recruits for this porn director scumbag. But Larry didn't seem to care about that. He just kept going on about how they could use the money.

And they could. Neither of them had jobs, and they both relied on Zack's car to get around. Or at least they had, until it failed inspection. It would take hundreds of dollars to get the repairs it needed. So, yeah, a couple thousand dollars would help out.

But that was beside the point. It's fucking *porn*, man! Don't you get how sleazy that is?

We both watch tons of porn, Larry said reasonably. This much Zack couldn't deny. Other people let themselves be filmed so guys like you and me can watch. It just seems fair that we let them watch *us*. That's ridiculous. Some people like to be watched; some people don't. Those that like to be watched star in porn movies. Zack hesitated. Besides, unless there's something you're not telling me, neither of us watches *gayporn*.

What difference does that make?

Suddenly, Zack wondered if Larry *was* trying to tell him something. Dude... this isn't some weird way of coming out to me, is it? I'd be totally cool with you being gay. I just don't want to fuck you.

Larry had begun stripping down for bed and was in the process of removing his jeans. He gave his friend a smirk as he unfastened his belt and let the jeans fall to the floor. As usual, he was wearing one of his geeky pairs of boxers with Star Wars characters on them. I'm not gay. But come on. What's the big deal? We jerked off together a few times in high school.

A lot of kids do that, Zack replied, feeling defensive. And it was like ten years ago. They

certainly didn't jerk off together *now*. They slept in separate beds and rarely touched each other. Sure, they saw each other naked coming back from the showers in the morning. But that wasn't sexual. It was just the way things were when you shared a small living space.

Look, Larry said as he slipped under the covers in his bed, if you're so disgusted by my dick, you don't have to suck it. But I'm not disgusted by yours—not as long as it's clean. Maybe that director guy will just let me suck you off.

*I'm*not going to let you suck me off, Zack said as he undressed himself. Never mind the fucking director.

THE next morning, Zack called Steve as soon as he woke up, and ripped the guy a new one. But Steve didn't seem to care. Dude. Stop being such an asshole.

Oh, *I'm*the one being the asshole?

Larry was just complaining about how broke he was, so I told him a way I knew to get some extra cash. It's not like I suggested he become a cocaine dealer.

No, you're just trying to make him into a porn star!

Steve laughed. Oh, yeah, man. I can hardly keep up with all the fan mail coming in. Jesus, Zack, get a grip. How many of the chicks in those Girls Gone Wild' tapes do you think go on to have porn careers? Probably none. It's just an hour or two, and the pay's great. Plus you get to blow your load in front of a room full of people.

That particular kink didn't appeal to Zack, but he let it slide. What if somebody we know sees the video?

What are the odds of that? There are millions of those straight boys sucking each other off' videos all over the Internet. As long as Larry doesn't use his real name, nobody will ever find it, even if they go looking for it. I'll bet you twenty bucks you can't find the one with me in it.

Nothing Zack said could get the guy to admit he'd done anything wrong, or to promise not to put Larry in touch with the director. After he hung up, Zack did try to find Steve's video. Everything he could think of to search on brought up hundreds of videos—all just a minute or two long—with a link to purchase the full video at the end. And all so much alike that it was hard to tell one actor from another. But Zack couldn't find anything with Steve in it, and he eventually had to admit defeat. Maybe Steve was right on that point.

It still didn't make it a good idea. But when Zack broached the subject with Larry again that afternoon, his friend grew irritated with him.

Will you stop acting like my goddamned mother? Larry said with a groan. I can make my own decisions, you know.

Like that time you did a handstand on your skateboard, down Harriman Hill Road?

I was eleven.

Or that time you let me shoot a tin can off your head with a BB gun?

Larry gave him a lopsided grin. That was your idea.

I know, Zack admitted. But you were still dumb enough to let me do it. Zack had been a cocky little shit with that BB gun. It had never occurred to him that it was possible he could miss. Larry had just stood there, trusting him completely, and fortunately Zack's aim had been good.

I knew you'd never hurt me, Larry said with a shrug, as though friendship alone had kept Zack from shooting his eye out.

Zack sighed, seeing now the same trust in those blue eyes that he'd seen on that day seven years ago. I'm just trying to look out for you, man. You're my best friend.

Which is why I'd prefer to do it with you, Larry said. But if the idea bothers you that much, I'll find

someone else. It's cool. Maybe Steve will do it.

Steve? The thought horrified Zack. He's probably got a shitload of STDs.

Better him than some guy I don't even know.

Zack looked at him for a long time, gritting his teeth in frustration. But he knew that once Larry got some idiotic idea into his head, he'd never let it go. Zack weighed his options and didn't like any of them, but at last he said, Fine. If you're going to insist on doing this, I'll do it with you.

He saw Larry's face start to light up with a grin, and quickly added, But that's only because I know you won't catch anything from me. And I want you to swear you'll never—and I mean *never*—tell anybody about this. How he was going to keep Steve from spreading it around, he didn't know.

Larry smiled and gave him a thumbs-up. You're the best, man.

Zack wasn't so sure of that. He felt as if he'd just decided to shoot another soda can off his best friend's head. But now he was old enough to know better.

LARRY called Steve that evening, and the arrangements were made. A short time later, Larry received an e-mail from a man calling himself Ed Lang, who introduced himself as Steve's acquaintance and said that Steve had relayed Larry's interest in participating in one of Ed's films. If Larry and his friend would like, they could come to the studio the following Saturday for an interview and possible screen test. The e-mail assured Larry that there would be a full shooting crew present and asked that both Larry and his friend bring proper identification with them.

Sounds legit, Larry said.

Zack was reading the e-mail over his shoulder, scanning the few lines for any hint of a scam, or... he wasn't sure what. Something dangerous? What else could happen, besides them being filmed? An attempt at seduction? That seemed possible. Drugs? Maybe. The two of them had smoked pot together on a few occasions, but nothing heavier. This guy might try to offer Larry cocaine or heroin and *then* try to seduce him.

Zack knew one thing: no way was he letting Larry go to that studio alone.

SINCE the dreaded Suck Zack's Cock on Film day (as Larry insisted on entering it into his phone calendar) was a week away, Zack hoped he could more or less put it out of his mind until then. But he discovered that Larry had other ideas.

As they undressed for bed that evening, Larry stripped completely naked. Zack could have ignored this if Larry had reached for another pair of underwear, or even his bath towel. But instead, he stretched out on top of his blankets and began blatantly fondling himself.

Um... what are you doing? Zack asked, focusing intensely on the book he'd brought to bed, willing himself not to look at his roommate. In the small room, their beds were lined up parallel, only about four or five feet apart.

Jerking off.

Zack was sure his face must be crimson. He could feel the heat radiating off his cheeks. Yeah. I can see that, actually. Don't you think that's pretty crass?

I figure we could use the practice.

Larry, Zack said slowly, we've both been masturbating since we were eleven. I don't think we really need much practice.

Larry laughed. I don't mean practice jerking off. I mean practice *watching* each other jerk off.

I don't want to watch you jerk off. It's making me uncomfortable, actually.

Exactly.

To Zack's horror, Larry proceeded to get up from his bed and come over to sit down on Zack's bed. His naked ass bumped up against Zack's foot, causing Zack to yank the foot away as if it had been

burned. Get off my bed, you freak!

Larry was unfazed by his friend's reaction. Look, I know it feels weird, but that guy will kick us out on our asses, with *no* money to show for it, if we can't even look at each other during filming. Same thing if you're so wigged out you can't get it up.

Is this like some fetish you've always had but never told me about?

Making porn?

No. Flashing me.

Larry looked thoughtful for a minute. During this entire exchange, he'd continued stroking himself, and he was fully erect now. Zack looked at it out of the corner of his eye, not wanting to admit that he was curious. But he *was* curious, he realized. He'd never seen Larry's cock hard, since they'd become adults. A little stiff in the morning, perhaps, when Larry undressed to go shower. But never this blatantly aroused, this completely rock hard.

To his dismay, Zack noticed that *he* was starting to grow hard now.

I don't think I've been wanting to do it, Larry said at last. But now that I am, I am kind of getting off on it. Could you look directly at my dick for a minute?

Zack sighed, as though this was a hardship. But frankly, he was minding the situation less and less with each passing second. Okay, he said, blatantly staring now. I'm looking right at your big, hard cock. Does that do it for you?

Yeah, actually, it kind of does. Larry was starting to breathe a bit harder and pump faster. Zack couldn't believe this was happening. It was completely vulgar and tacky. But the heavy-lidded, open-mouthed expression of pleasure coming across Larry's face was beginning to fascinate him... and turn him on.

Why don't you try it? Larry asked breathlessly. You might like it too.

It was amazing how quickly Zack had gone from feeling freaked out to feeling incredibly aroused. He was sitting on his bed in just his boxers, his knees up, hiding his own growing erection. The whole situation was embarrassing, but the longer he watched Larry, the harder his dick grew. After a moment, he sighed again and put his book down on the nightstand.

All right, you pervo, Zack said, trying to sound reluctant. I guess, if we're going to be doing it next weekend....

He didn't finish the thought but reached down with both hands to slip the boxers off. His swollen cock jutted up as he spread his legs and took hold of it.

For several minutes, they watched each other in silence. Silence, that is, except for the sounds of their heavy breathing and the rhythmic pumping of their fists. Each stared at the normally forbidden space between his friend's legs and enjoyed the exhilaration of performing this intensely private act in front of each other.

Larry came first, moaning unashamedly as he spurted thick ropes of white cum all over his hand and wrist. The sight sent Zack over the top, and in a few more pumps of his fist, he erupted all over his stomach. He couldn't have avoided the shuddering moan that escaped from his lips if he'd tried.

They stayed like that for a long time, waiting to catch their breath, intensely aware of the strong scent of semen in the air. Now that the arousal was gone, Zack was rapidly growing uncomfortable with what they'd just done. He was too embarrassed to look Larry in the eye.

Larry stood up from the bed and retrieved his underwear from the floor—not to put on, but to wipe himself. He chuckled and said quietly, That was pretty cool.

Yeah, Zack agreed. But he still felt awkward. *Very* awkward. He reached down and retrieved his boxers to wipe up his own mess, then tossed them on the floor and slipped naked under the covers. I

suppose you'll want to do it some more before Saturday. Larry nodded. I suppose so. Are you feeling weird now?

A little, Zack admitted.

Me too. But it will probably feel better if we do it again.

Zack thought about that as Larry turned off the light and climbed into his own bed. Would it feel better? He wasn't so sure. Right now, he was beginning to feel a little sick to his stomach. Which was probably the way a straight guy *should* feel after jerking off with another man.

Zack tried to console himself with that thought—that he was reacting normally to the whole thing. But he wasn't really convinced. Because while it was happening, he hadn't been disgusted at all. He'd been incredibly turned on.

ZACK woke up the next morning after having lain awake most of the night, his head in too much turmoil for him to sleep. He glanced over at Larry's bed and was only moderately surprised to find Larry going at it again. At least the guy was in his own bed this time. But he had the blankets pulled down to his knees, knowing that Zack would see everything when he opened his eyes. You're a pervert, Zack grumbled, but Larry just laughed in response.

Zack tried not to watch. But it was like trying to ignore an alligator sunning himself on your dresser. You could *try* to look somewhere else, but your eyes would inevitably wander back to stare at it, wondering how the hell it got there, and was it going to bite you?

Eventually, Zack gave up even pretending to look away. It bothered him that he was getting hard again watching this vulgar display. He'd always thought of himself as pretty open-minded about gays, but he'd never had homosexuality shoved in his face like this. Now he was finding himself torn between conflicting emotions, ranging from disgust to arousal, and he wasn't quite sure what that meant.

Was he secretly more bigoted than he'd thought? Or was he secretly more *gay* than he'd thought? He couldn't deny that he was turned on by what Larry was doing. But was he really turned on by Larry's body? Or was he just turned on by how raunchy the situation was? He couldn't sort it out.

After a bit longer, he stopped trying to make sense of it, at least for now. He just rolled onto his back and shoved the covers down so Larry could watch as he took care of his own need.

Larry finished first, not surprisingly, and sat up to watch Zack more closely. This made Zack both more uncomfortable and more aroused, and he quickly shot all over his stomach. He lay there panting for a moment, then said, Dude... please tell me we're not going to just do this all day long.

Larry laughed as he reached for his underwear again and wiped himself off. I suppose we should go to the dining hall and get breakfast.

And find something else to occupy our time, Zack added. This is still kind of wiggling me out. I need to think about something else for a while.

Larry regarded him a bit more seriously. Are you okay?

I don't know. I guess so. But... doesn't this feel at all weird to you?

Well, I did have a little oh, shit, what am I doing? moment when you first opened your eyes. But that went away pretty fast. I mean... it's just you, Zack. We've been best friends forever. Shouldn't we feel completely comfortable around each other, no matter what we're doing?

Zack chuckled at the thought and shook his head. I don't think this falls under what most people would categorize as things best friends do together.

If it really upsets you, Larry said tentatively, we can stop. I mean it.

That was tempting. Do you mean we can skip doing the porno? Or just stop practicing for it?

I'm still going to do the porno, Larry replied. If you want to drop out of that, I'd appreciate you letting me know so I can find someone else. I don't *want* you to drop out, because I doubt I'd find anyone else I'm as comfortable with. But if you want to go ahead with that and just stop what we're doing now... I guess we can do that.

But you'd like to keep doing this?

Larry nodded and gave him a slightly embarrassed grin. Fuck, yeah. I'm actually kind of getting off on it.

Do you think this means you're gay?

Larry shrugged. I think it means I've found something that turns me on. Maybe I'm just an exhibitionist. What difference does it make?

Zack wished he could be that casual about it. To him, this had the potential to fuck with his whole identity. He'd always thought of himself as straight and pretty middle-of-the-road, sexually speaking. Even if enjoying masturbation with another guy didn't necessarily make him gay—and he was having a hard time wrapping his head around *that* idea—that meant he had some kind of weird sexual kink he'd just discovered. What would that end up leading to? Would he start wanting to do this with other guys besides Larry?

Well, he said at last, there's no way in fucking hell I'm letting you screw around with any guy who makes porn, and that includes Steve Marsh. Some guy was just in the news for catching HIV after making porn films for only a few months. So if you're still going ahead with it, I'll do it with you. If you want to keep doing... what we're doing now... I guess I'm okay with it. Just... let's do something else for a while.

Larry smiled at him affectionately and reached down to grab Zack's underwear off the floor and hand it to him, apparently oblivious to the fact that touching another guy's cum rag was another taboo for most men. All right. Let's go eat. I'm fucking starving.

IT WAS Sunday, so there wasn't much to do. Neither of them was much for homework—an hour a night was about all they could stand—and frankly, they spent so much time in each other's company, they didn't have a large circle of friends. So they decided to take in a movie. It was Zack's suggestion to actually go out to a theater rather than just rent or download something. He figured, the less time they spent sitting around the dorm room, the less likely Larry was to come up with X-rated things they could do to entertain themselves.

There wasn't much playing that really interested them. A few action movies. A romantic comedy, which was *definitely* out. Zack half expected Larry to try to hold his hand if they watched anything romantic.

There was also the most recent Pixar film. Zack jokingly said, Hey, you want to go see a Disney film? expecting to be shot down.

But Larry just shrugged and said, Okay.

Truthfully, Zack was glad. A cute kid's cartoon was about what he needed right now. No sex. No *gay* sex. Just cute computer-animated toys.

While they were waiting in line, Larry attempted to charm the two girls standing in front of them by telling them he was a film star.

Zack's eyes went wide in alarm as the blonde with enormous breasts asked skeptically, Really? You don't look familiar. What have you been in?

Well, probably nothing you've seen, Larry admitted. Then he leaned in and said in a confidential tone of voice, Mostly porn.

By the grin on his face, Zack could tell that Larry thought she'd be impressed by that. But she

merely made a disgusted noise and turned away. Larry glanced at Zack and shrugged.

Why is this idiot my friend? Zack had to wonder.

But he already knew the answer. Zack might be less socially inept than Larry, but they were more similar than different. They shared the same interests and found the same things funny. And when it came down to it, Larry would let Zack shoot a tin can off his head, and Zack would be in a porno for Larry. They were a team.

The Pixar film ended up disturbing Zack more than he'd anticipated. Who expected there to be that many thinly veiled gay jokes in a kid's movie? He was relieved when they finally left the theater and went to get supper at the dining commons.

Back in their room that evening, Zack made a halfhearted attempt to get through a chapter of the sci-fi novel he was reading, but it was hopeless. He couldn't focus on anything other than the fact that he and Larry would soon be masturbating together.

It wasn't that he didn't want to. That was part of the reason he was so stressed out over it.

When Larry began to undress, Zack put his book down on the nightstand and stood up to remove his own clothing. They didn't say a word about it until Larry came to sit naked beside Zack on his bed.

You know, Larry said tentatively, we're going to have to touch each other in the film.

I know.

So... should we... help each other out?

Zack's stomach had begun churning the moment Larry had brought it up. He shook his head and replied, No. Not tonight. We've got a whole week. Let's wait until tomorrow for that one.

Okay.

When Larry stretched out beside him, sitting back against the wall with his shoulder just barely touching Zack's, Zack didn't tell him to go back to his own bed. They masturbated together in silence, the skin where their shoulders rubbed together growing hot and slippery with sweat as their breathing grew more labored.

THE dorm beds were too narrow to sleep two comfortably. Sure, two *could* squeeze into one, and that was far from unusual, but Zack wasn't going to let Larry crash in his bed when Larry's bed was just a few feet away.

Still, he wasn't surprised to wake the next morning with a naked Larry already sitting on the mattress beside him.

Hey, Larry said quietly. Zack was lying on his side, and Larry's hand was resting lightly on Zack's hip. It was above the covers, and he wasn't moving it, but the gesture still felt intimate. The bastard was grinning at Zack in a way that could only be described as lecherous. We've only got an hour before my first class. Do you have some morning wood you'd like me to take care of?

You really don't have any sense of tact at all, do you? No.

Zack sighed and rolled over onto his back. He *did* have a morning erection, and the movement brought it directly underneath Larry's hand. All right. Have at it.

Larry began by caressing it through the blanket, and Zack quickly decided he liked this new phase of their practice. He closed his eyes, settling into the stroking. He made no objection when Larry's hand slipped under the blankets to grip his cock directly. Zack moaned and writhed in pleasure at his friend's caress.

When he opened his eyes again, he realized that Larry was hard, too, of course. And the guy was having a tough time, awkwardly stroking himself with his left hand. Well, Zack realized, it was hardly fair for him to accept a hand job without giving one in return. So he reached out and pushed Larry's

hand aside to take hold of the guy's erection.

It was strange, touching another man's penis. He'd thought it would be like touching his own, but it wasn't really. When Zack touched his own erection, the sensations in it overrode whatever his hand was feeling. Now, he was intensely aware of the feel of Larry's swollen penis as he ran his fingers along its shaft and head, exploring it. He couldn't feel what Larry was feeling – though his friend's slack jaw and closed eyes indicated that it was damned good – so instead, he felt the smoothness of the skin and the bristly hair at its base; the incredible hardness of the shaft, and the soft spongy dome at its tip. Zack's finger stroked the slit at the very top, causing Larry to shudder. When he pulled his finger away, there was a thin string of glistening pre-cum arcing between it and the slit.

This might be more comfortable, Larry said as he moved to lie beside Zack, their right sides touching and his crotch near Zack's chest. He lifted Zack's right leg and placed it over his chest, giving his right hand easy access to Zack's cock.

Zack imitated him, slipping his head and shoulders under Larry's right leg. It was an incredibly intimate position, allowing him to look directly between Larry's legs at the guy's dick and balls, and even his asshole—something Zack never thought he'd get this close a look at. It also made it more comfortable for Zack to grip that dick and give it the stroking it needed.

He'd never been so turned on in his life.

That is, until Larry farted. And not in a small way. Jesus Christ! Zack shouted, scrambling out of the bed to glare down at his friend. What the fuck was *that*? Larry doubled over laughing, which unfortunately just made him fart again. Oh, shit! I'm sorry, man.

What the fuck, Larry? It's no wonder girls never come back for seconds, if you pull that shit on them.

If Larry was offended by the comment, he didn't give any sign. Dude, everyone has to fart first thing in the morning.

Not when somebody has their face right next to your ass! Christ, you're a disgusting pig!

Now Larry was beginning to look a little hurt. I said I was sorry. Come on, Zack. I'm just about ready to pop off. I promise it won't happen again.

No, Zack snapped, grabbing his towel off the metal railing at the end of the bed. You just totally killed the mood for me. I'm going to take a shower and get to class.

Please? I don't have any gas left. I swear.

Zack wrapped the towel around his waist, refusing to give in. That's a nice image. I can't imagine why my hard-on just completely shriveled up. Take care of it yourself. I'm done.

Larry started to stroke himself, but his expression was sullen as he watched his friend leave the room.

ZACK didn't go back to the room after class. He wasn't sure why, but he was royally pissed. It didn't make a lot of sense. Yeah, Larry was a crude bastard, but he hadn't done anything to warrant Zack being pissed off for hours. Zack just knew he didn't want to see the guy right now.

When his cellphone rang and Larry's name came up on the display, probably wanting to meet up for lunch like they usually did, Zack realized he didn't want to talk to Larry, either. He ignored the phone. After Larry tried calling several more times, Zack turned the ringer off.

The day wore on, and his mood only worsened. What the fuck was Larry trying to do to him? This whole situation was fucked up. And now Larry had Zack questioning his sexuality over it! It should have been Larry questioning things, not Zack. It hadn't been Zack's idea to do the porno in the first place. And it certainly hadn't been his idea to start doing sexual things together *before* the porno.

Maybe Larry really was gay, or... questioning. This whole thing could be him wanting to try it out without having to worry about the consequences if he decided he didn't like it after all. That thought

pissed Zack off even more, though he wasn't quite sure why.

By the time supper rolled around, Zack had pretty much made up his mind that he wasn't going back tonight. He picked up his cellphone and dialed his friend, Jake. Can I crash at your place tonight? he asked. Larry and I had a fight. He probably shouldn't have dropped that last line. Jake had never liked Larry. What the fuck did the freak do now?

He's just being a douchebag, 'cause I got with a girl he was interested in Friday night, Zack lied. He'll get over it. I just don't feel like dealing with his bitchiness right now.

Sure thing. You can have the couch. Or if you want, you could probably crash in Kevin's bed, since he's in Vermont for a few days.

Remembering how often Kevin's girlfriend stayed over, and how infrequently he changed his bed sheets, Zack replied, I'll be fine on the couch. Thanks.

When he hung up, he checked his phone log. Larry had been trying to reach him all day. There were five messages and twelve missed calls.

ZACK didn't actually sleep that well at Jake's apartment. The couch was old, and no matter what position he contorted his body into, there was always a spring or a part of the frame jabbing into him. On top of that, the apartment reeked of pot smoke, spilled beer, and something moldy—possibly the couch itself.

All night long, he kept going over and over in his head what an asshole he'd been to his best friend. It didn't help that Jake had grilled him when he'd first arrived, hoping to learn all the dirt about the argument. He'd never liked Larry anyway, so Zack knew that anything he said would just fuel his dislike of the guy. Zack tried to keep it vague, but he was still forced to compound his lie with details that had never happened. It made him feel like shit.

He thought about returning to the room the next day, but his nerves failed him. What would he say to Larry? *You're my best friend, but you're weirding me out?* But it was more than that, and deep down, Zack knew what the problem was. He was enjoying these experiments more than he'd ever expected to. In fact, he was *loving* them. But he didn't want to. It was one thing to jerk off with a buddy in high school; a lot of guys did that, and it didn't necessarily make them gay. But what he and Larry were doing now... it felt gay. It felt *incredibly* gay. And even though Zack didn't think there was anything wrong with *other* people being gay, he didn't want to be gay himself. It was like waking up one morning to discover you were in somebody else's body. Everything he'd thought he was seemed different now. And he wasn't sure how to deal with it.

Sitting on Jake's disgusting couch that evening, missing his own bed and Larry's company more than he wanted to admit, Zack took out his cellphone. He'd been ignoring it all day, not wanting to talk to Larry, but now he wondered if maybe he should finally call.

When he checked his missed call log, he was surprised to discover that Larry hadn't tried to call him at all since the night before. Apparently, he'd gotten the message. And Zack was also surprised to realize how much that bothered him.

HE DIDN'T have much choice but to go back to the dorm

room first thing in the morning. He needed to pick up some books for his classes, but also his clothes were starting to smell, and he *really* wanted fresh underwear.

Larry wasn't there when he crept in. Zack wasn't sure if he was relieved or not, but as it turned out, he didn't have much time to think about it. Larry walked into the room a moment later. He'd

obviously been in the shower, since he was wrapped in a towel, with small rivulets of water running from his wet hair down his torso.

For the first time that he could remember, Zack was acutely aware that Larry had a pretty good torso.

Hey, Larry said, looking uncomfortable.

Hey.

Larry hesitated for just a second before taking the towel off to dry his hair a bit more. Zack forced himself to look away, upset by the way his eyes automatically sought out his friend's crotch.

Where did you go? Larry asked as he rummaged around in his drawers for fresh socks and underwear.

Uh... just to Jake's. When Larry didn't comment on that, Zack added, I guess I just needed a little time... away from all this.

He made a gesture with his hand, taking in the whole room. But of course, it wasn't the room that he meant, and Larry knew that. Larry merely shrugged and said, That's cool, as he slipped into the Darth Maul boxer briefs he'd pulled from his drawer.

It didn't feel cool. Larry rarely got upset about anything, and Zack couldn't even remember the last time the guy had been upset with *him*. But clearly, he was upset now.

Are you mad at me?

Larry sat down on his bed to slip his socks on. Why would I be mad at you?

I don't know. Maybe 'cause I yelled at you... I can't fault you for telling the truth. I'm a disgusting pig and nobody wants to fuck around with me.

Zack sighed. Nothing like a good passive-aggressive argument to start off the day. I'm sorry I called you a disgusting pig. We've shared a room for three years now, so you know I can be pretty gross too. Remember when I puked in my bed, after our first frat party?

But Larry wasn't buying it. He'd stopped fiddling with his socks and was just sitting on his bed now, no longer trying to hide the fact that he was pissed off. His expression was dark as he glared at the floor between them. I thought that was pretty disgusting, but I didn't think *you* were disgusting for doing it. You were just too drunk. I've never thought of *you* as disgusting.

I'm sorry, Zack said as he sat down on his own bed across from Larry. I was just pissed off. I don't really think you're disgusting.

But you don't want to fuck around with me.

Zack threw up his hands in exasperation. What the...? What the hell do you want me to say to that, Larry? We're both straight, right? I said I *would* fuck around with you, as long as you're still determined to do this porn shit. But we're not supposed to *want* to fuck around with each other!

Why not? Larry asked, his jaw set stubbornly. If it's fun, why can't we do it?

Zack didn't really have an answer for that one. It's... I don't know. I guess it is kind of fun. But it's still creeping me out.

Why?

Doesn't it bother you, at all? I mean... straight guys—

Oh, fuck straight guys! Larry snapped, apparently oblivious to the irony of that statement. All my life, I've always been the freak. Lamebrain Larry; Larry the Loser; Scary Larry. All of my so-called friends are really just friends of yours who put up with me for your sake. I know that. I've always known it. But I also thought I had one real friend—one guy who would always have my back.

You do, Zack said quickly, and I do. I've been going along with this, haven't I? Even though it's fucking insane?

What's insane about it?

Zack didn't even know where to begin with that one. Straight guys don't do shit like this, Larry. It's

not normal.

Larry made an irritated sound with his mouth. I wouldn't know normal' if it bit me in the ass. And I don't give a fuck about it. I know I like jerking off with you. Do you like doing it with me?

Christ, Zack thought, *I hope nobody can hear him*. Dorm room walls were notoriously thin.

He lowered his own voice, hoping Larry would too. Yeah, I guess I do....

Then why are you being such an asshole about it?

I'm sorry. He wasn't sure what made him do it, but he extended his leg so that his foot rubbed against one of Larry's. It was an oddly affectionate gesture, one that he would never have made a week ago. But somehow it felt right now. You're my best friend, and I don't want you to be mad at me anymore. Just tell me how I can make it better. I'll do whatever you want.

Whatever I want? Larry echoed, a disturbing gleam coming into his eyes.

Oh, fuck. Zack knew he was in for it now. You mean something sexual. Um... yeah. I guess. As long as it doesn't hurt or anything.

It won't hurt.

What won't hurt? Zack asked hesitantly.

Get out of your clothes, Larry commanded him. He was looking directly at Zack now, and the intensity of that look pierced Zack's eyes and shot straight down to his cock.

I, uh... I don't have time right now, Zack hedged, wanting to give in but also wanting to get the fuck away from here as fast as possible. How the hell did Larry go from being his best bud to being someone who could make him grow hard with a look? It was nuts. I have to get to German.

Skip it.

I can't skip it. I have a test today.

Larry looked away, his face clouding up again, and Zack suddenly missed the lecherous look he'd been getting a moment before.

Look, dude. I'll be back at lunch. Twelve o'clock. I'll be here, and I'll be—he stopped himself, just before saying all yours and amended it to, —ready to do whatever you say.

Larry looked at him again, and the lustful gleam was back in his clear blue eyes. He quirked his mouth up in one corner and said, You promise?

I promise.

ZACK'S TEST DIDN'T GO VERY WELL. HE COULD BARELY FOCUS ON THE

questions, his mind constantly straying back to Larry and whatever Larry was going to make him do when he got back to the room.

Everything was spinning out of control. Yesterday, he'd been weirded out by what they were *doing*. But jerking off together seemed almost normal now in comparison to what he was *feeling*. Seeing how hurt Larry had been by Zack's rejection.... Well, it changed things. These sex games were starting to upset both of them. Not just because of the whole sexuality question—though that was still fucking disturbing—but because they were both starting to get emotionally wrapped up in it somehow.

Like they were frigging dating, or something.

As he approached the dorm, Zack felt anxious. But underneath the anxiety, there was something even more troublesome: anticipation. He wanted to play. And though he tried to think of all the girls he'd ever had sex with— picturing the way they'd looked naked, how great the sex was—Zack knew there wasn't a single one he'd rather be going to see now than Larry.

Fuck my life.

He entered the room and found Larry already lying on top of Zack's bed, stark naked.

You know, Zack said, trying to hide his nervousness, there's something to be said for starting out with clothes on.

Do you like watching me undress?

I... He shook his head uncertainly. I don't know. Maybe.

I'll remember that. Now come over here.

In the past, Larry had always been the subordinate one in their friendship, always willing to let Zack call the shots. They'd joked about it, Zack calling Larry his bitch and Larry playing along.

But apparently this didn't apply to this new aspect of their relationship. Larry was the one venturing fearlessly into unmarked territory now, with Zack following tremulously behind.

Zack stepped closer to the bed, and Larry stood up. For the first time in their lives, the fact that Larry was a few inches taller than Zack seemed to matter. Zack actually felt intimidated. He was almost fearful—though incredibly turned on—as Larry began to run both of his hands up Zack's sides, caressing him. It was the first time since this had all started that Larry had touched him in such an unambiguously erotic way, like a lover. And though Zack shivered with anxiety, he couldn't even pretend he didn't like it. His eyes closed involuntarily, and a whispered moan escaped his lips, betraying his desire.

Then, while his eyes were still closed, he felt something soft and warm on his lips. Larry was kissing him.

He jerked back, opening his eyes to regard his friend in shock. Larry looked less hurt than annoyed this time.

What the fuck? Zack gasped.

What? Are you going to say I have bad breath now? I've been sucking down mints for the last half hour.

That was definitely true. Zack could taste the mint on his lips. He reached up to touch his mouth with his hand, not sure whether it was because he was horrified by what had happened or because he wanted more. You kissed me.

Really? Larry replied, laughing. I thought I was giving you CPR.

Are we going to have to do that for... the film?

Larry nodded, his expression softening. Steve says he and Alan had to do it. People really get off on seeing two straight guys kiss. So I thought we should try it, in case one of us puked or something.

Christ. We aren't going to end up fucking, are we? I don't think so. Steve says they didn't have to. 'Cause there's no fucking way!

Relax. I said we wouldn't be doing that.

Zack took a deep breath to calm himself. I'm sorry. I just... wasn't expecting it.

That's okay, Larry replied, casually reaching up to unfasten the top button of Zack's shirt. I'm sorry I startled you. I thought you were ready for it. You certainly *looked* ready.

Zack was dimly aware that Larry was continuing to unbutton his shirt, but he didn't make any attempt to stop him. It was just... I don't know. So *intimate*. Much more than you touching my dick.

I've always thought kissing was the most intimate thing two people could do, Larry said, as if they were just having a casual conversation. I don't actually like kissing most girls. Not unless I really like them. And I don't just mean the way they look. But I can fuck chicks I don't like at all, as long as there's no kissing.

Larry slid the shirt off Zack's arms and let it fall to the floor. Then he reached down to unfasten

Zack's belt. But you're willing to kiss me? Zack asked.

Larry shrugged. I like you more than anybody. So I guess I'd like kissing you. If you let me try it. Well... just give me a minute.

His pants fell to the floor, and Larry ran a hand over the front of his boxers, cupping the bulge that was rapidly swelling there just long enough to elicit a frustrated sigh from Zack. Then, grinning impishly, Larry slid both of his hands into the waistband of Zack's underwear and down his hips to caress both of his ass cheeks. The boxers slipped off, and Larry let them fall. Zack's painfully swollen cock swung upward, free and desperately needing attention.

But Larry didn't touch it. Instead, he moved his hands up along Zack's naked waist and caressed the young man's back, pulling him into an embrace. Zack sank into it, feeling Larry's naked body along his entire length, hot and damp with perspiration. And somehow that undeniable, unambiguously sexual contact between them melted the last of Zack's resistance. He felt a warmth swelling up within him that had nothing to do with the heat of Larry's body—a warmth that had perhaps always been there, but he'd never been aware of it.

Without thinking, Zack ran his tongue along the skin on Larry's chest, tasting it and wanting more. Zack knew the way Larry smelled. They'd been living in close quarters for too long. But for the first time, the faint musk of Larry's skin was driving him wild. How had he failed to notice how delicious it was, all these years?

Larry giggled. Dude, that really tickles.

Do you want me to stop?

No.

And so they both began kissing one another's bodies,

Zack kissing and licking Larry's chest and Larry doing the same along the back of Zack's neck and shoulders. Gradually, the path Zack was blazing across his friend's body took him up Larry's neck, until they were kissing each other's cheeks, moving closer and closer together.

And then they were kissing once more, full on the mouth. But Zack didn't pull away this time. He'd known it was coming. He'd *wanted* it. And it wasn't long before the tentative brushing of their lips together made him crave more. He allowed his lips to part, and Larry's tongue dove in, exploring his mouth, wrestling with Zack's own tongue, while further down their bodies, their aching erections ground against one another in frustration.

They pulled their mouths apart to gasp for air, and Larry breathed, I definitely like it.

Then he practically lifted Zack off the floor to toss him onto his small, metal-framed twin bed. Zack grunted as Larry fell on top of him, but he ignored minor details like broken ribs and pulled Larry back into a tight embrace. Their mouths once again sought each other out, and though he was unable to speak, the thought echoed in Zack's mind: *I definitely like it, too!*

He could no longer understand his reticence about kissing Larry and touching any part of Larry's body. Now, he couldn't get his tongue far enough into Larry's mint-flavored mouth, and he couldn't stop his hands from roaming over that smooth skin and exploring which parts of Larry's body were soft and which parts were hard. His hands reached down, frustrated that they couldn't reach all of Larry but delighted that his firm ass cheeks were within range.

Larry brought his own hand up between their bodies and wrapped his fingers around both of their hard cocks, pressing them tightly together. Then he began to stroke. Not hurriedly, as Zack had expected, considering how frenzied their kissing had become, but slowly and languidly, as if they had all the time in the world.

Which they more or less did. Zack knew he should be getting to lunch so he could go to his Music

History class, but there was no way in hell he was going to stop Larry from doing what he was doing. It was too amazing.

He felt as if he'd slipped into some weird alternate dimension—one where the geeky best friend he'd had all through high school had suddenly become cool. And amazingly sexy. Zack had never called Larry all the derogatory names their fellow classmates had used on him; he'd known that Larry was a great guy and the most loyal friend anyone could ask for, in spite of his poor social skills. But privately, Zack had always agreed that the guy was kind of dorky.

Now, that perception of Larry had been shattered, leaving Zack wondering just who this man really was. How did he know Zack's body better than Zack knew it himself? And how could he make Zack feel this good?

They came together, their cocks pulsing together in Larry's hand, so that it felt to Zack as if they were joined at the crotch and shared one enormous cock, squirting cum like a hose until it completely covered their stomachs and chests, while Zack moaned deep into Larry's receptive mouth. When they were finally finished, Larry brought his hand up, dripping with their combined fluids. To Zack's surprise and fascination, Larry tasted it, and this filled Zack with a desire to taste it as well. He stuck his tongue out and licked the little finger that hovered near his face. It wasn't exactly new. He'd tasted his own before. But the knowledge that Larry's was mixed together with his somehow made the taste better.

Larry laughed. You don't have to do that. I'm the one who's going to be sucking you off in the film. You don't want me to suck you off too?

You could, Larry answered, but I didn't think you'd want to go that far. If you're going to suck me, I can suck you. Zack didn't mention that he was now excited by the idea. All right. Far be it from me to turn down a blowjob.

Larry reached down to pick up Zack's discarded shirt and began to wipe both of them off with it. Zack was mildly annoyed that it was *his* shirt being sacrificed, but he didn't really care enough to complain. And when Larry tossed the shirt aside and then snuggled up against him rather than getting out of bed, he was relieved. He hadn't wanted to break the contact between them.

How are you feeling? he asked tentatively. Sleepy. Larry sounded as if he was already drifting off.

That hadn't really been what Zack was asking, but he didn't bother pursuing a more intimate line of questioning if Larry was already about to pass out on him. You don't want to go to your own bed? No. I want to cuddle 'til I fall asleep. Then I want to wake up and try out that blowjob thing.

Don't you have any classes this afternoon? Fuck it. They can wait 'til tomorrow.

Zack was beginning to feel sleepy too, so he settled into Larry's arms and sighed contentedly. All right, then. Anything you want. Anything? Larry asked with a faint chuckle, but he was asleep before Zack could think of a reply. ZACK woke about an hour later to the feeling of his dick being gently stroked.

That's rape, he said, opening one eye to see Larry beaming down at him, those bright blue eyes practically sparkling with excitement.

Larry snorted. Rape? It's consensual. How can it be consensual when I'm asleep? Because you said I could do anything I wanted. Do you want me to play it back for you?

Zack, of course, had no real interest in debating it. Larry's hand felt good on his body, as if it

belonged there. Play it back?

I haven't told you, Zack, Larry replied in mock seriousness, but I'm a government cyborg, programmed to spy on you. All of our conversations have been recorded.

You *would* do something like that, Zack said. Some government official comes to you, saying, We'd like to implant these devices into your body, so you can become a tool of evil', and you'd just be, like, I get to be a cyborg? Awesome!'

Larry laughed, then paused, smiling, watching Zack's face for a long time without saying anything.

What? Zack asked when the examination became uncomfortable.

You know, you're really hot.

Zack blushed, but he was pleased to hear it. After a moment, he said, quietly, How is this going to change things?

How is *what* going to change things?

You know, Zack replied, feeling awkward. *This*. What's happening between us.

Discovering that we have the hots for each other?

That hadn't been quite it. For the first time since this morning, Zack wondered if he and Larry were really seeing this in the same way. So... is that all this means to you? That we've added sex to our friendship?

Larry looked a little puzzled. Well, it makes us a little closer, I guess. I mean, you've always been my best bud. And now we're doing this together too.

This is not good.

It hadn't occurred to Zack that Larry might just be doing this for fun, when it was having such a big emotional impact on him. Now, just as he was beginning to come to terms with the possibility of—falling in love?—with his best friend, he was being slapped in the face with another harsh reality: Larry might not be falling in love with Zack.

What's the matter? Larry asked. Apparently, Zack's anxiety was showing in his face.

Zack wanted to tell him. He wanted Larry to say, Oh, of course I also meant that I'm in love with you. But even as he thought it, the idea seemed so ludicrous that Zack couldn't bring himself to say it out loud. Adding humiliation on top of the hurt swelling up in his chest would be just too much. Instead, he sat up and swung his legs over the edge of the bed, pulling his crotch away from Larry's reach. I'm sorry. I really have to take a leak.

Okay, Larry said, but he was frowning. You're coming right back, right?

Zack stood up. I don't know. I'm kind of hungry too. Maybe we should go eat something.

What the fuck? Larry was growing angry now. You're shutting me down again.

Zack couldn't blame him. He knew he was being a tool. But if all of this was just fucking around for Larry without any real emotional attachment, Zack wasn't sure if he could keep doing it. Look, Larry... I can't deny that I like having sex with you. But it really messes with my head. One minute, it feels incredible. The next minute I'm freaking out.

Why? Larry demanded.

I don't know....

I'm starting to get really fed up with this hot-cold bullshit, Zack. What is it now? Do I have morning breath? Do my pits smell?

No, I like the way you smell.

Then maybe I have a mole somewhere that really grosses you out?

Larry, Zack said, restraining himself from crawling back into bed with his friend to try to soothe him. There's nothing about you I don't like, okay? I think you're fucking sexy as hell.

Then why aren't we sixty-nining, right now, instead of having this stupid argument?

He had a point. But Zack wasn't ready to give in. He shook his head. Let's just go find something to eat, okay? We can talk about it later.

He wasn't sure how much he'd really be able to talk about, even after lunch. But at least it would buy him some time.

Larry was clearly pissed, but he dressed along with Zack, and the two of them went to the dining commons. If Zack had been afraid that Larry would try to continue the argument where other students could overhear, he needn't have been. Larry was barely speaking to him at all. They ate together in silence while Zack racked his brain for a solution.

If he went back on his promise to do the film, Larry would find someone else to do it with. And if he were being honest, Zack had to admit that his discomfort over that idea stemmed from more than just his fears of Larry catching something from a stranger. It also made him incredibly jealous to think of Larry being with another man. So, they'd do the film together.

But then what? Continue fucking around like this? Zack wasn't sure he could find a way to shut Larry down without damaging their friendship. The guy took rejection very personally. But what would it do to their friendship if Larry continued chasing girls while still keeping Zack as a fuck buddy on the side? Zack wasn't sure he could handle that. It would tear him apart. And eventually, Larry would get sick of him acting like a jealous girlfriend whenever he wanted to go out. It didn't seem likely that their friendship could survive that, either.

On the other hand, Zack wasn't sure he could continue to hide the way he felt. He was doing a shitty job of it, anyway. Larry knew something was going on, and he kept taking it as a personal slight. Zack couldn't let him keep thinking that the problem was with *him*.

THEY went back to the dorm room, and Larry continued to give him the silent treatment, sitting down at his cheap, pressed-sawdust desk and appearing to become deeply engrossed in his geology textbook. But Zack knew he was faking. This was the first time Larry had opened that book all semester.

Zack took his own chair and slid it close to Larry's desk before taking a seat. Larry didn't even look up.

Okay, Zack said nervously, not sure where to start. This is the deal.

Larry closed the book but kept his eyes focused on the table in front of him, clearly waiting for Zack to continue.

This... stuff that we've been doing... I've been kind of surprised at how much I like having sex with you.

That got Larry's attention. He finally looked up, his expression defiant. Why? Did someone tell you I suck in bed?

Stop it! Zack kicked his friend's foot in frustration. This isn't about you. It's about *my* sexuality—the fact that I never thought I would like having sex with a man. And now I've found out that I do. Or, at least, I like having sex with you. Then, for emphasis, he added, I *love* having sex with you. Somewhat mollified, Larry shrugged. So, I love doing it with you too. What's the problem?

Zack hesitated for a long moment before responding. Because it isn't just about loving the sex. It's been stirring up... feelings I didn't think I had. For you. When Larry continued to stare at him, as if he wasn't catching on, Zack groaned and said, Goddamn it! I think I might be falling in love with you, asshole.

Dude! Did you just say you're falling in love with my asshole?

Zack looked at him sharply, wondering if he really was that stupid, but Larry was giving him that

quirky lopsided grin again.

I fucking hate you, Zack muttered.

Uh-uh, Larry said, shaking his head, I don't believe that at all. Not after you just professed your undying love for me, sweetcheeks.

I didn't say it was undying. If you keep calling me sweetcheeks', it may die pretty fucking quickly.

Larry giggled like a twelve-year-old with a stolen porn magazine.

Christ, Larry. I'm trying to be serious, here.

Do you wish you could quit me?

I wish my foot could reach your goddamned head, so I could kick it.

That just sent Larry into more laughter, so Zack had no choice but to wait for him to calm down. In a way, it was reassuring. This was the juvenile idiot Zack had been friends with for over a decade. He may have turned out to be beautiful and great in the sack, but he was still a dork.

Eventually, Larry stopped cracking himself up and took a breath. The smile he turned on Zack was warm with affection. Look, bud, it's okay. It's cool.

Please don't say you're flattered, Zack said, his embarrassment returning.

Larry shrugged. I don't know if I feel the same way, but you're still my best friend. I want you to be happy. And if we're sleeping together, won't that make you happy?

Zack tried to hide his disappointment. It was a very mild rejection, but it was a rejection just the same. Larry just wanted a fuck buddy. And in his mind, if Zack was in love with him, and people liked having sex with people they were in love with... then what was the problem?

At some point, they were going to have to talk about the subtleties of relationships. Larry had never really been in a romantic relationship—girls just didn't go for his crude, sophomoric... everything—so it wasn't a big surprise that the difference between romantic love and friendship with sexual attraction eluded him.

Larry leaned forward and brought their lips together in a tender kiss, and Zack could no longer think about anything else but getting Larry back into bed. There were still things to be sorted out, but they could wait. Somewhere in that bed was a sixty-nine with his and Larry's names on it.

SINCE Zack's car was still out of commission, they walked to the studio on Saturday morning. It wasn't far from the college, and the weather was good. Besides, Zack needed the exercise to calm the butterflies in his stomach.

He was no longer at all nervous about the sex itself. He and Larry had skipped classes all day Thursday and Friday to explore each other. There would be hell to pay next week, but it was worth it.

It was insane the way Larry filled him up now, as if Zack could sustain himself on nothing more than the musky scent and taste of Larry's skin. To hell with food and water! He felt like an addict now, and Larry was his drug.

The porn shoot had almost been welcome, as a way to force them out of the room and into daylight for a time. But of course, they'd be back at it soon, and this time with an audience.

The studio turned out to be in an old mill building that had been converted into some kind of artist commune. The directory in the entryway listed sculptors, potters, painters, and photographers, among others. Zack supposed it made some kind of sense. Filming was an art form, even if the art was pornographic. The building was strange and unusual and still had the feel of an old factory, with rickety metal loading elevators and massive wooden crossbeams. Each artist's space had an entire wall that slid on runners, like a cargo bay door, as if someone expected the sculptors to be offloading fifteen-foot marble replicas of Andy Warhol or something.

But these huge sliding walls had normal-sized doors with knobs placed at floor level, and it was

one of these that Ed Lang's directions told Larry to knock on. The door in question had a plaque on it with the name Piddling Pup Photography.

Larry read the sign, then glanced at Zack for a second, one eyebrow quirked up. I don't even want to know, Zack muttered. His friend grinned, then knocked on the door.

They were both surprised by the person who opened the door. In the first place, she looked like a normal college student—a little on the tomboyish side, perhaps, with short black hair, wide green eyes, and a pierced eyebrow. In the second place, she looked like... a *she*. What the hell was this cute young woman doing in a den of gay male debauchery? Can I help you?

Yeah, Larry said, putting on the cocky manner he always used with women. Is this the place looking for hot young man-meat?

The young woman looked decidedly unimpressed, which was generally the way women looked when Larry spoke to them. Maybe. If you see some, why don't you send it over? Good lord! a man inside exclaimed. Nicki, drag those idiots in here, before someone calls the cops again.

Zack was annoyed at being called an idiot, but Larry just grinned, as if they were all in on the same joke, and followed Nicki inside.

Ed Lang wasn't exactly what Zack had expected, either. The man was middle-aged and kind of dumpy-looking, balding and plump around the middle. He might have been gay—his voice and mannerisms seemed a little effeminate when he introduced himself and shook Zack's hand—but Zack had long ago realized he had no gaydar to speak of, so he wasn't sure. It hardly mattered. Zack was the one who'd be having sex with a dude today.

This is Paul, our cameraman, Ed said, gesturing with a wave to the bearded guy standing behind a prosumer digital camera and tripod rig near one of the sets in the room: a couch and coffee table. The other set was a large double bed against the far wall.

Nicki is Paul's daughter, Ed continued. She's filling in for our sound technician today. The poor man has a touch of flu, so I told him to stay far, *far* away from me for a few days. Anyway, Nicki's done sound for us before. She knows what she's doing. I hope you don't mind having a girl in the room while you fuck? Some guys get off on it, but others....

He turned away without really waiting for an answer. Larry gave Nicki a lascivious grin and said, Hey, the more the merrier.

I'm just here to record you, stud, Nicki shot back, though she seemed more amused by Larry's sophomoric humor than offended by it. I won't be getting merry with you. Who knows? Once you see me and my buddy here in action, you may not be able to control yourself. Oh, my god, Zack groaned before Nicki could respond. Please ignore him. He's an idiot.

Nicki just grinned and shook her head, then walked away to check on the sound equipment. Did you bring your IDs? Ed asked, spreading some papers out on a desk in the corner. When Zack and Larry produced their licenses, he looked them over and said, All right. Please look over the release forms and sign them.

Our friend said we wouldn't have to use our real names, Zack said quickly. Do you mean Alphonso'? Ed asked, rolling his eyes. Trust me, he signed his real name on the release form. You have to, in order for it to be legal. We never use last names in the credits, but there's a line there for a pseudonym, if you'd like one.

Larry went ahead and signed, only hesitating when he got to the pseudonym. Hey, can I be Butch

Cassidy? He looked at Zack. You can be the Sundance Kid.
You can be Butch', Ed said, but *nobody* is going to believe a straight guy with the name Sundance'. Your friend can be Robert', if he likes. After Robert Redford?
Larry seemed to like that idea, so that's what Zack wrote down.
Ed signed the forms after they did and used a desktop scanner to print copies for them.
Now, why don't you two go have a seat on the couch, and we'll begin?

The couch? Already?
Don't you want to interview us? Zack asked quickly. Are you and your debonair friend both anatomically male?
Zack blinked at him. Um... yes.

End of interview! Ed exclaimed, clapping his hands together in delight. You're hired!
Look, kid, Ed added when Zack continued to stare at him, I can already see that you're exactly what we're looking for—good-looking, straight-acting, and the right age to be both legal and in college. So, unless you're changing your mind—
No! Larry interrupted. We're good.
Then let's make a movie!

THE film was apparently going to follow the format Zack had seen in the online clips. First they'd sit on the couch fully clothed while Ed asked them questions from off camera. At various points during the conversation, he'd ask them to take articles of clothing off: first their shirts, then their pants, and finally their underwear. From there, they'd progress to masturbating while the conversation continued. Then he'd ask them to give each other hand jobs and eventually to suck each other.

Now, which one of you is going to be the bottom? Ed asked.
Bottom? Zack asked.
When we get to the anal part.

What? Zack had begun to think this situation wasn't all that bad. But now, all of his fears of the sleazy' porn underworld came rushing back. You're expecting us to *fuck*?

Of course, Robert'. Didn't Alphonso' tell you about that part?
Zack grabbed the paper from where he'd set it down on top of his windbreaker. Ed came over to glance over his shoulder as he hurriedly read through it, looking for a mention of anal sex. There wasn't anything. It's not in here.

If we actually listed sex acts on paper, we could be arrested for procuring, and *you* could be arrested for solicitation.
Then you can't force us to do that?

Ed sighed and rolled his eyes at him. I'm sure Butch' over there could break me in half if I tried to force either of you to do anything. But we pay five hundred—each—for one of you to fuck the other. And you each get another five for all the rest of it. But it's the anal our fans want to see. I'll still film you if you don't want to fuck, but you'll only get half pay for it.

Zack had an image in his head of Steve laughing his ass off at the frat house. Asshole.
Dude, Larry told Zack, it's cool. I'll be the bottom.
Zack looked up at his friend and once again saw the trust in those eyes, the certainty that Zack would never hurt Larry. No matter what. Zack just hoped he could live up to that.
If you say so, he replied.

There! Ed said, smiling. All settled. Shall we get on with it?
SITTING around fully clothed and answering questions should have been the easy part, but they quickly ran into a snag.

Do either of you have girlfriends? Ed asked. Zack and Larry glanced at each other and shook their heads. No.

Cut!

The two young men turned to him in surprise.

All right, Ed said patiently. You can't *both* not have girlfriends.

Why not? Larry asked.

Well, in real life, of course, anything is possible. But this is The Movies! It looked more like a warehouse with a digital camera and a cheap light kit to Zack, but he kept his mouth shut. One of you should have a girlfriend. And you don't want her to find out you're fucking a guy for money. Got that?

Okay, Larry replied with a shrug. I'll have a girlfriend.

Ed hesitated for a second, looking him up and down. Eh... no offense, sweetie, but I've seen your technique. What say we give the girlfriend to your friend with the social skills?

Nicki snickered at that, and Zack had to smile too. But if Larry was offended, he shrugged it off quickly, and they went back to filming.

Zack answered the questions the way Ed wanted as they began undressing. He even managed to improvise a bit about the sexual things he enjoyed doing with his fictional girlfriend, whose name he chivalrously declined to mention. All of this while he was stroking his erect cock. He never would have thought he could do something like that with three strangers watching. But Ed was completely casual about it—not lecherous, as Zack had feared he might be. And Nicki and Paul were more interested in fiddling with the microphones, lights, and camera than really watching what Zack and Larry were doing. It almost didn't seem sexual.

Except of course, that Zack needed to keep himself aroused. Fortunately, watching Larry jerk off was still enough to drive him wild, no matter what else was going on around him.

Segueing into jerking each other off went smoothly enough. Then Ed asked, I assume neither of you has ever kissed a guy before?

Oh, sure, Larry replied. He's a great kisser.

Cut!

This time, Zack didn't have to be told what was wrong.

I thought you guys said you were straight! Ed was flailing his arms about in exasperation while Nicki laughed and shook her head.

Well, we had to practice, Larry said defensively.

Practice? The whole point is that you're supposed to be two straight guys trying gay sex for the first time on camera! You don't practice for that!

Zack thought Nicki was going to drop her boom mic, she was laughing so hard. Her father finally spoke up and said, Nicki, we're trying to be professional here.

Sorry.

Look, Zack said, trying to calm Ed down, we can just pretend we've never kissed before. It'll be fine. He's been on film less than an hour, and now he thinks he's Lawrence Fucking Olivier.

Come on, Ed, Paul said. Half the guys who do these straight guy, first time' things have been fucked so many times, you could drive a semi through their assholes.

Ed coughed in a failed attempt to disguise a laugh, then waved his hands in the air. Fine, fine. At least you're both easy on the eyes.

We haven't done anal yet, Larry pointed out. Just hearing the word anal made Zack cringe.

All right. We'll just see how it goes.

When the camera was rolling again, Ed said once more, I assume neither of you has ever kissed a guy

before?

This time, Zack did his best to look uncomfortable—he just imagined they were discussing the anal sex thing, instead—and gave a nervous little laugh, as he responded, No. Never.

Well, why don't you give it a try? Come on, don't be shy....

Ed coached them through some faked awkward kissing. Zack found this frustrating, because they were pretending to be tentative about it, when he would have loved nothing more than to stick his tongue down Larry's throat and french him until they were both so worked up the anal sex wouldn't seem so intimidating.

Since he was the one pretending to be über-straight and Larry was playing at straight-but-curious, Larry ended up being the one who had to suck cock. Zack had actually gotten used to mutual fellatio, and loved it. That was another thing he'd hoped to do, to get himself worked up. Of course, he wasn't the one who'd volunteered to be fucked. It would be worse for Larry. Zack knew that some people liked it, of course—being on the receiving end. But the first time was liable to be painful. He just hoped he wouldn't be too rough.

Okay, boys. Let's move to the bed. It's time to do it the way the big boys do.

Larry lifted his mouth off Zack's cock, and their eyes met. For the first time since this had begun, Zack could see the uncertainty in Larry's eyes, but Larry quickly stood and said to no one in particular, All right! Let's do this!

There's lube and condoms on the table, Ed told them as Paul began moving the camera equipment over to where the bed was.

The bed didn't actually have any blankets on it other than a single fitted sheet. Larry stretched out on the mattress as Zack grabbed the lube from the table. Zack approached the bed and looked down at the idiot he knew he was falling in love with. Larry met his gaze with a look full of trust, spreading his legs and lifting his hips to allow Zack access.

My God, you're beautiful, Zack thought.

If he's never been fucked before, Ed said, his own acting not quite good enough to hide his skepticism, you'll need to start out slow. Put some lube on the tip of your finger and massage his asshole for a while. Then you can try sliding the finger in.

Zack put some lube on his finger and knelt on the bed beside Larry. Are you sure you want to do this?

Larry smiled at him, though his voice sounded a little nervous. Your dick's not *that* big, buddy.

Fuck you.

As long as you lube me up first.

Zack reached between Larry's open legs and slipped his hand under Larry's balls to seek out his asshole. It was soft and hot and puckered against his finger, and Zack felt a little weirded out just touching it. He'd never even played with his own anus before. He'd been taught that it was dirty and disgusting.

But now that he was touching Larry's, his curiosity was overriding that. He began to rub the puckered hole, exploring it, fascinated by its softness. When Larry began to writhe and moan in pleasure, Zack realized that he was discovering a new way to please his lover, and all thoughts of it being disgusting fled. Larry liked it. That was all that mattered.

Larry reached out with his hand and fumbled around on the table beside them until he found the lube. Zack thought for a second that he needed Zack to put more on his finger, but Larry opened the tube himself and put some on his own finger. Then, tossing the tube aside, he reached under Zack's butt where he was squatting on the bed and quickly found Zack's hole.

It shot through Zack like an electric shock. He gasped, and when Larry began to massage the

sphincter, Zack moaned, Oh, yeah. That feels awesome.

Okay, boys. Ed's voice cut through their lovemaking. Let's see if... Robert... can slide that finger in, now.

Paul had moved the camera around to get a close-up of what Zack was doing to Larry's ass. Zack had almost forgotten that they were there, and from the way Larry giggled slightly, Zack suspected that he had, as well. It was annoying, being brought back to reality like that, but they were getting paid, after all. There would be time to explore these private feelings later, when they were back in the dorm.

Zack watched Larry's face closely as he gently pushed his finger through his friend's anus and into the hot cavity beyond. There was a slight grimace, but then Larry's face seemed to relax as he grunted slightly. Are you okay?

Yeah, Larry said. Do you want me to do it to you? Go ahead.
If it had hurt Larry at all, it certainly didn't hurt Zack.

He loved the feeling as Larry's finger slid into him. He felt warmth flooding through his insides, as though he were being filled by Larry. But it wasn't enough. He was beginning to want more.

He bent low and kissed Larry passionately on the mouth, surprised when Larry didn't seem to be kissing back much. Zack pulled away and looked closely at Larry's face. This was not the expression of someone in ecstasy. He looked as if he were enduring what Zack was doing to him rather than enjoying it. You look like you're in pain, Zack said softly.

I'm fine. But Larry's eyes were beginning to tear up. Zack gently slid his finger out and sat back. Is there something the matter? Ed asked.
It's hurting him too much, Zack said firmly. We can't do this.

No! Larry said, pulling out of Zack's ass and sitting up himself. It's cool. Really. I just need to relax a little more. You guys don't have any beer or anything, do you?

Ed looked at the two of them for a long time, clearly annoyed. So young men could claim I got them drunk? No, I'm afraid not. He sighed, and his voice softened. Look, kid, if you can't do it, that's okay. We'll just use the footage we have.
But we'll only get half our pay?
Well... yes....

Larry turned to Zack with a pleading expression. Come on, Zack. We can do this. We can't just throw away a thousand bucks!

Zack had been amazed at how empty he'd felt when Larry had pulled out of him. Now, looking at Larry's handsome face and those beautiful blue eyes imploring him, he knew he wanted to be filled by this man again. And filled completely.

I'll tell you what. I'll be the one who gets fucked. You? Larry asked in amazement.
Why not? It wasn't hurting me at all. I liked it. I want to see if I like having your dick in me.
Larry just looked at him in dumbfounded silence, but Ed said, That works for me. Paul, start rolling again. I never stopped. You didn't say cut'.
Ed made an annoyed sound and fluttered his hands again. Fine. Action!

Zack would have found that funny if he weren't suddenly in a panic about what he'd just volunteered for. But Larry reached up a hand—the clean one—and touched Zack's face tenderly. Promise you'll tell me to stop if it hurts.

Why? You weren't going to.
I'm an idiot. But you're not. You'll tell me, right? Zack smiled. I will. I promise.

He kept his eyes locked upon Larry's as Zack moved to straddle him. Ed had to remind them to put a condom and some more lube on Larry's cock before Zack eased himself down onto it. It felt amazing, as if they were joining, body and soul. And he could tell from Larry's eyes that he felt it too. Zack kept watching those eyes, and the affection shining through them, as he began to move, sliding slowly up and down that beautiful, hard shaft. When Larry's eyelids had nearly fluttered closed in ecstasy and his breathing was becoming ragged, Zack couldn't stand it anymore. He lowered his face and kissed Larry hard and deep, his tongue plunging into Larry's mouth as Larry's cock was filling his body.

Larry's hand slid between them to find Zack's painfully swollen erection, and he began to pump it in time to the rising and falling of Zack's hips. Eventually, he began to thrust upward, pushing himself as deep into Zack as he possibly could.

Does it hurt? he gasped into Zack's open mouth. No. I want you to fill me. I *need* you to fill me. Zack could feel Larry tensing under him as his orgasm

built up. At last, Larry gave a grunt and thrust hard into Zack's ass, and he could feel Larry's cock pumping squirt after squirt of cum. Larry grabbed his head and pulled it close. His lips against Zack's ear, Larry hissed, Take me into you. Everything I am. It's yours.

At that, Zack exploded in Larry's hand, dousing them both with wave upon wave of his own fluids.

They collapsed together, Larry's softening cock still in Zack's ass, and their chests and stomachs slippery against one another. Breathless, Zack kissed Larry's cheek and the side of his face, until he was close enough to Larry's ear to whisper, That was kind of a strange thing to say. Do you always get that... poetic... when you fuck?

No, Larry whispered back. That was just for you. What did you mean by it?

Larry pulled his head away, so that he could look at Zack, eye to eye. What do you think I meant, you stupid fuck? That was the most romantic I've been in my entire fucking life!

Zack couldn't help but laugh, even though his expression was affectionate. He shook his head and said, How could I possibly resist that? Then he stopped laughing and said earnestly, It was beautiful. And I hope that means it's okay for me to say... I love you.

That's better, Larry replied, a bit sullenly. I love you too. Fuckwit.

WELL, that was lovely, Ed's voice cut into the moment they

were sharing, but I'm afraid we have a slight technical problem.

Both young men turned to look at him, conscious of the fact that Zack still had Larry's cock up his ass and both were drenched in cum.

What problem? Larry asked.

No cumshot. Or at least, not much of one.

What? Zack shot back, offended. I came all over the place!

So you did. But, regrettably, not where the camera could see much of it. And although it was apparent that Butch' ejaculated, obviously we can't film it if he's buried to the hilt in your very sexy, but quite opaque, ass. Ed raised his eyebrows. I should have said something, I know. But it was clear that you two were having a moment'. I hated to interrupt.

Larry groaned. So what? You're not going to pay us, now?

Come on, Ed, Paul said, a note of warning in his voice. You should have given them instruction if you wanted it done differently.

Ed looked extremely put out. I didn't say I wouldn't pay them. But our audience demands cumshots. We can do it again, Larry interjected. Then he looked at Zack for confirmation. Right? Well... I might need a few minutes to recharge.

No problem! Ed said, delighted. There's a clean towel under the pillow for you to clean up your current... detritus. Then we'll all take a short break. Would anyone like some tea?

AS THEY walked home that evening, both young men with checks in their pockets, Larry said, You have to admit, they turned out to be okay.

I guess so, Zack admitted. He was walking a little funny, his asshole burning a little after giving Larry a second ride. But I think Ed's corrupted me. I'm barely able to stand up, and I'm already wanting you to fuck me again.

Larry laughed and reached behind Zack to grab his ass, which was a little disconcerting, since they were on a public street.

Zack shoved him away, but his expression was playful. Not until I recuperate. That thing between your legs isn't exactly a baseball bat, but it sure feels like it going in.

You want it, and you know it.
Hence my problem.

They walked on in silence for a bit before Zack grew more serious. He looked around to make sure nobody was nearby. He could cope with people overhearing the sex banter, but not this. Did you really mean it? About loving me? Or was that just after-sex warm-and-fuzzies?

Larry shook his head, and for a moment, Zack's heart fell, thinking that Larry might be taking it all back. But Larry simply said, I love you. I wasn't sure at first. I thought maybe it was just us growing closer, you know? But when we joined together like that....

He seemed to run out of words, so Zack finished, It felt like we belonged that way.
Fuck, yeah, Larry agreed, nodding.

He stopped walking, and Zack had to stop, too, to avoid losing him. When he looked back, he was surprised at how earnest Larry's expression was.

Look, Zack. I know I'm a crude asshole. I'm not exactly a genius, and I probably embarrass you in public all the time. But even before we started fucking around, you were my whole world. Now, I feel like I'll explode if I go more than ten minutes without holding you.

Zack laughed, feeling a little awkward but happy. What is this? he teased. A marriage proposal?

For the first time Zack could remember, Larry actually looked embarrassed. He grinned, his face flushing crimson. I'm telling you I fucking love you, man. I'm *in* love with you. And I'm hoping you love me back.

I thought we'd established that, Zack said. Yes, you moron. I love you. But what does this mean, exactly? Are we going to give up having sex with girls?

Larry shrugged. I don't know. Honestly, right now, I don't have any interest in fucking anyone but you.
I kind of feel the same.

You want to fuck yourself? Larry asked with a grin. You fuck yourself.
No, *you* fuck yourself.

Zack groaned and started walking again. I can tell the maturity level of this relationship is going to be right up there.
Just like always.

Yeah, Zack said, looking at Larry and realizing once more just how beautiful he was. Those bright blue eyes looked back at him, full of tenderness, and Zack marveled at how it had taken him so long to see past Larry's dorky behavior and crude sense of humor, to realize just how amazing he really was.

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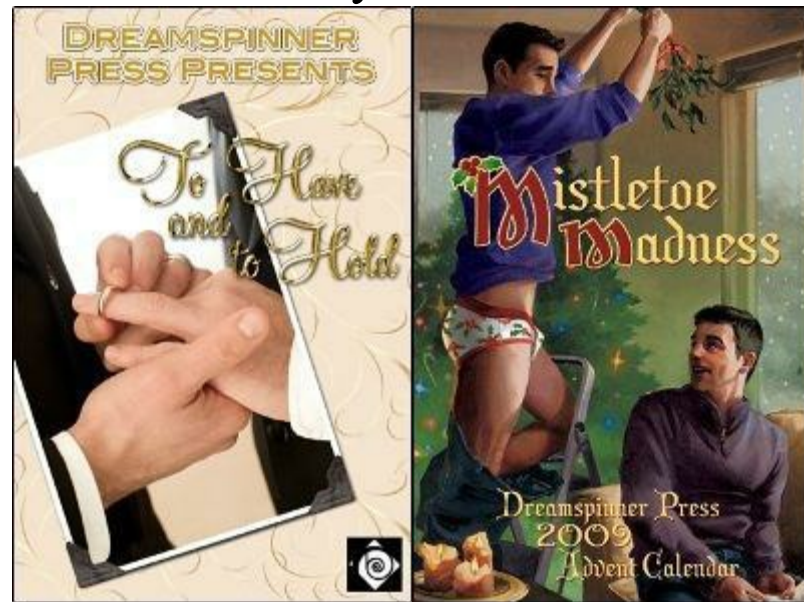
JAMIE FESSENDEN set out to be a writer in junior high

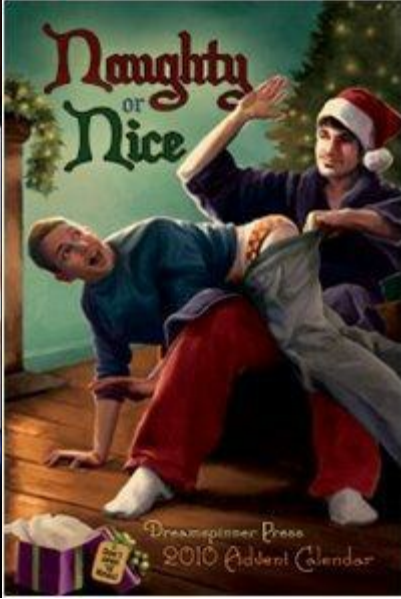
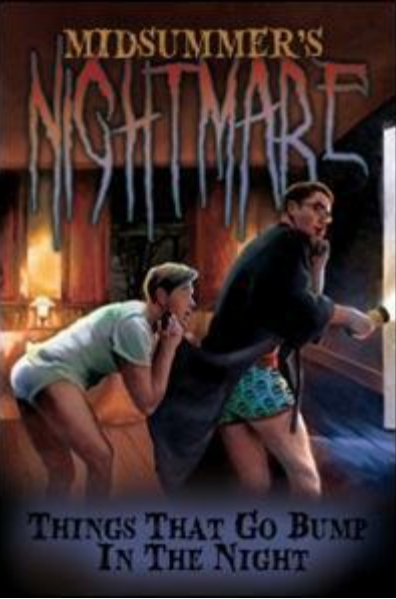
school. He published a couple short pieces in his high school's literary magazine and had another story place in the top 100 in a national contest, but it wasn't until he met his partner, Erich, almost twenty years later, that he began writing again in earnest. With Erich alternately inspiring and goading him, Jamie wrote several screenplays and directed a few of them as micro-budget independent films. His latest completed work premiered at the Indie Fest 2009 in Los Angeles and also played at the Austin Gay and Lesbian International Film Festival two weeks later.

After nine years together, Jamie and Erich have married and purchased a house together in the wilds of Raymond, New Hampshire, where there are no street lights, turkeys and deer wander through their yard, and coyotes serenade them on a nightly basis. Jamie currently works as technical support for a computer company in Portsmouth, NH, but fantasizes about someday quitting his day job to be a fulltime writer.

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Published by
Dreamspinner Press
4760 Preston Road
Suite 244-149
Frisco, TX 75034
<http://www.dreamspinnerpress.com/>

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Released in the United States of America June 2011

eBook Edition
eBook ISBN: 978-1-61372-042-4