Your Fantasy

2nd Draft

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# One-Night Stand

The music thrummed through the night club as the throng of people on the dance floor moved to the heavy beat. Lavo was near full capacity this Friday night with a big name guest headlining but Nox didn't care. The night's priority was to dance. But getting laid was a close second.

In the middle of the dance floor Nox danced with a girl he'd met at the bar. Nox lifted her up, and she wrapped her legs around his waist. With the grace of a swan she fell backwards, her hands and head fell towards the floor. The sheer shirt rode up on her stomach leaving Nox's fingers to play against the soft skin. Long dark hair dangled near the ground, her chest and neck exposed making Nox's mouth water. With long lean abs working under his fingers, she righted herself. Nox lifted the small brunette from his hips and her legs slid down his body as he pulled her legs to one side. Flinging her around to the other side before her feet touched the ground again.

Both of their chest rose and fell in rapid cadence from exertion. Nox spun her away from his body then back again pulling her close again. With one quick motion Nox lifted her off the ground and she wrapped her limbs around him. Nox shivered as her breath caressed his skin. Nox kissed lush lips with eager abandon. Wet lips trailing along her jawline to her ear. Lust filled his voice. "What fantasy can I fulfill tonight, Duckling?"

Long fingers coiled through Nox's black dyed hair tugging his head back. Her other hand played with a crimson-colored strand hanging over his forehead. Dark lust filled eyes gazed into his own chocolate brown. She contemplated his question with a seductive smile splaying across ruby red lips. A pink velvet tongue slide across her pouty bottom lip as she closed the gap. Her tongue left a wet stripe across his lower lip, and down his jawline. When she reached his ear, she took it in her wet, soft mouth and suckled. Shivers radiated up Nox's spine. A voice made of silk slide over his body. "Take me home and I'll show you."

She moved her pelvis against Nox's groin and a small moan escaped his lips. Lost in the moment of pleasure, thoughts of leaving vacated Nox's mind. Her body sliding down his body brought Nox back to the here and now. Her fingers entwined with his long slender ones as she led him from the dance floor. Nox watched the small woman sway in six-inch heels and a baby blue skirt that just covered her tight ass. He couldn't help but stare as he followed her through the crowd.

The air outside the club was cool against his flushed skin. Nox raised his hand above his head and hailed the nearest yellow cab. A siren sounded off in the distance as the traffic flew past the idling cab. Nox opened the door for his prize and watched as she bent to climb inside. Rude thoughts tickled his mind, and he wondered what her fantasy was.

The line brought the weird out in people all too often. Nox didn't mind. He'd try anything once. Once seated next to the small brunette she gave the cab driver the address. The cab jerked forward into traffic. A faint tinkling of music played in the background too soft to make out.

A hand on his knee brought him out of his revelry. Nox took the smaller fingers in his own and pulled her into his lap. Hands wandered. Mouths sucked at exposed skin. Their breathing was rapid by the time the cab driver pulled over near the edge of Hell's Kitchen. Nox was thankful for that small amount of luck. He would have had to abort if she lived there. It brought too many complications.

Nox handed the cabbie the fair and a tip and followed several paces behind the now drunk looking woman. The sway was no longer sexy as she stumbled up the steps to her apartment building. Nox sighed as he took the four steps up to the front door where she was fumbling with her keys. The keys fell from her drunken fingers and jangled on the ground. He bent and picked them up casting a glance up at her. With lips parted she stared down at him with lust filled eyes and he grinned up at her. His fingers on his left hand slide up her silky smooth leg and Nox watched as her body shuttered.

A small gasp fell from her lips as he pushed the hem of her dress up her hip. Nox unfolded his bent body to stand holding the keys on the palm of his other hand. With a gentle touch she took the key between her thumb and forefinger and lifted the key to the door. Nox wrapped his arms around her body pressing his front against her back. Her key slide home and door opened with a creak.

The petite woman came undone before they even entered her apartment. Her heart raced. Sweat slicked her skin. She trembled underneath Nox's fingers as he whispered sweet nothings in her ear. She let loss a small moan from parted lips. For three flights of stairs Nox's fingers danced over her body. His mouth licking and sucking at her supple neck. By the time they reached her door, she was wanton. Nox had worked her skirt up around her waist with his long lithe fingers.

He turned her towards him and took the keys from her delicate hands. With ease he lifted her, and she wrapped her body around him. Lips pressed against his neck, a soft suckling sound sent electricity down his body. Nox fumbled for the lock.

The door clicked open and a blast of cold air greeted them. Nox carried the licentious woman to the couch. He set her down pulling his black button-up shirt off this arms. The sweat soaked white t-shirt below he left on as her fingers worked the button on his denim jeans. Nox took the condom from his back pocket before shedding them. He remained dressed in t-shirt and boxers. He knelt down between her spread legs. Nox took her breast from her cup and sucked on the hardening nipple through the sheer fabric.

Her head fell back and Nox smiled against her chest. His fingers worked their way between her legs and over her cotton panties. He caressed the sensitive nub under and she gave Nox a loud moan of pleasure as his reward. His fingers slide inside her panties finding her wetness and pushing two fingers inside.

The sound she made had Nox's cock at the ready. He worked his fingers in and out until she was panting against his chest. Her hands pushed at his boxers. Nox stood up letting her free him from the constricting clothing.

Her hand grabbed his length unrolling the condom over him and his head flew back. Nox sat down and pulled her into his lap slipping inside. Nox dug his painted nails into her hips while she rocked against him finding her rhythm.

Orgasm shook her body, and she spasmed bringing him over the edge. Nox's eyes fluttered close and lights danced behind his eye lids. He took deep breaths as his body came down. The pulse racing in his ears muffled the sound of their panting.

After several moments in silence Nox made his way to the bathroom to clean up, grabbing his clothes on the way. When he exited with all his clothes on, she was half lying on the couch, her chest rising and falling with sleep. Nox pulled a blanket from the top of the couch over her and slipped out the door without a sound.

# The Gay Part

The sun streamed through the curtains, Matt didn't know the time. He had nowhere to be today. Last night had been long. The premiere went off without a hitch. The after party lasted far too long. He missed Tiffany. He hadn't even called her before he collapsed in his bed at 2am.

A soft melody played suddenly. "I get knocked down / But I get up again / You're never gonna keep me down." Matt searched for his phone. Glanced at the blue digits on the alarm clock on his nightstand - still too early. Matt found his phone underneath a pillow and swiped it to answer. "Yeah, Stan. what's up?"

Stan Fillmore had been his agent since his mother stopped managing his career. He was good to Matt, almost family. His voice came across sad. "That last audition, the one for the TV show. Do you remember it?"

Matt nodded knowing Stan couldn't see. "Yeah."

"The casting manager just called you didn't get the part." Stan's voice still strained, "But..." Stan loved the long dramatic pause; Matt let him have his moment. "They asked for you to read again. This time for the lead role."

"The Victorian hunter who's gay? You mean that one." Matt asked.

"Yes. I know. Type casting from hose last few parts. But this could be good for you. It's a leading role." Stan was eager and trying to convince him. Stan was right. It would be good for his career. Even though it meant he could end up stuck in the same type roles his entire career.

"I'll do it."

"Good." Stan's voice picked up. "I already told them you would. Today at 10, same place. Good luck, son."

The reading had gone well. Matt always felt good when they asked him to read a specific part; the odds were in his favor. And they already knew he didn't have a problem kissing another man if the need arose. It became second nature.

The sun was high in the sky as Matt walked along South Broadway thinking. A few girls giggled as he walked past. One woman stopped and gawked at him as he passed her on the street. Recognition came with the territory. But sometimes it still surprised him.

Tubthumping played again in his pocket. Matt got a few stares as he pulled it out and answered, "Stan."

"Good news, my boy. You got the part!" Stan's voice sang with joy. Matt stopped at an outdoor cafe and ordered a coffee while he and Stan hashed out the remaining details. Which ended up being two weeks to prepare for the trip to New York City. Training would start upon arrival and a month later shooting would start.

Matt could perform his own stunts, and the team encouraged it. Moments after Stan hung up, Matt's phone exploded with notifications. Hundreds of mentions on Twitter and Facebook congratulated him on his new part. His followers on Twitter exploded in numbers, more so than before. New blog posts talked about their favorite Victorian hunter. The world buzzed with the news.

Matt supposed reading the novels should be on top of his to do list now. He hadn't touched them yet but Stan handed Matt the first book when he told Matt about the part. "Read it. You'll love it." He hadn't... read it that was. But he would now.

The temporary move to New York wasn't difficult. His family found him a great apartment nearby. He'd grown up there after all. He had one week to finish getting into character.

Matt sat on his new couch, curled up with the first book. A glass of white wine sat empty on the floor beside him. Matt ran his fingers through his dark hair and stretched. The sun had gone down hours ago, but sleep was far away. He was understanding Tobias Vallen by the second book. But Tobias was openly gay - really into men and not afraid to show it. Every character he played in the past hid in the shadows until the end.

Matt knew to get the right mindset he needed to see it in action. Study people like Tobias. Google to the rescue. Matt found a gay bar near his place. He had wondered about it on the way to the market.

Dressed in black jeans and a blue polo shirt. Matt walked into the dim bar. Many colognes mixed with a soft scent of lavender wafted over Matt. The man at the door took his black blazer and hung it in the coat room and handed Matt a number. The man wore a silk shirt and purple tie, his hair shaved close to his head and he moved with the grace of a cat. Matt tried not to stare too long. He walked into the bar proper. The dim lighting allowed Matt to see enough. Soft instrumental music played in the background. The noise droned on like any typical bar. Matt went up to the bar tender and smiled. "White wine."

Matt stood with his back against the bar and watched two men dance. The smaller man curled into the other. His head pressed against the taller man's chest. When he turned his head, pressing his cheek to the taller man Matt saw smeared make up on his face. The tall man sported black hair with red highlights. He whispered into the smaller man's ear.

Matt's wine arrived. He sipped at it while he watched them dance together. It wasn't a lovers quarrel at least not from the posture of the taller man. He held the smaller one, comforting him. They swayed and spun in gentle circles.

A man sat down next to him and nudged his shoulder. Matt looked at the other man. He was large and burly and his smile was white underneath the well-manicured beard that covered his face. The other man spoke over the din. "You don't want either of those boys. Bas was just dumped and Nox is well... Nox. Find someone else."

Matt smiled. "I was just watching them."

The other man nodded. "The pretty boys are always the mean girls."

"How so?"

The other man turned to face Matt. "You see how Nox holds Bas. If Nox were interested in his friend it would mean more. Bas knows that Nox won't make a move. Even though Bas is desperately trying to get his attention."

"Why isn't he interested? They seem close enough."

The man laughed. "Nox doesn't do relationships, and that's what Bas wants. Well not today it seems." Bas's hands were straying underneath the taller man's shirt as he cried. "Sebastian is needy. Nox doesn't do relationships. Find someone else to drool over." He walked over to the pair. He said something to the taller man. The taller man, Nox, walked his direction. The gruff man took the other one to the front door.

Matt averted his gaze because Nox smirked at Matt. He wore a grin on his face that was all too knowing. It made Matt nervous. He sat down in the chair the other man vacated and ordered water with lemon. The red color on his nails matched the colored highlights in his hair. Nox looked over at Matt when he waved the bartender over and ordered a shot of tequila to ease his nerves.

A grin splay on Nox's lips. Surprise lit Matt's eyes as he realized the other man did not paint his lips the same color, or wear lip gloss. He seemed the type. Nox leaned over so he didn't have to yell. "Scoping out your new role?"

Matt blinked at him in confusion before he realized what he'd said. "Why do ask?"

Nox smiled. "Can't see any reason why a straight guy would come into a notorious gay bar."

"I... uh..." Matt stuttered, not sure why he couldn't make words form. The tequila shot sat empty, he never realized he'd drank it already. "Yes. He's openly gay. Figured this was as good place."

Nox turned towards Matt on the bar stool and held out his hand. "Nox Durante."

Matt glanced down at the painted nails and took his hand in his and shook. The other man's grip was firm; he looked weaker than he was. It had to be the make-up. Matt ordered another shot and watched as Nox shook his head at him as he introduced himself. "Matt Lucas."

Crooked white teeth beamed back at him. "I know who you are."

Matt raised his eyebrows in surprise. "Maybe you can help me then?"

Nox's smile faded before it was back on and he nodded. "Let's sit someplace else."

Matt raised two fingers for two more shots. He staggered a little getting off the bar stool as he followed the other man to a round booth in the corner.

Nox scooted to the middle of the table to look out on the crowd. Matt sat next to him - a little too close, but Nox didn't seem to mind. Nox put his arm over the back of the chair around Matt but not touching him. Nox sipped at his own water.

Matt knocked back the first shot the waitress brought him and his hair brushed Nox's arm. Matt pulled away but his head spun. He heard Nox laugh, "You've had enough."

Matt nodded, that had been a mistake. This was a bad idea, coming here alone. Matt asked, "Why don't you like Sebastian?"

Nox shook his head. "Sebastian is fine, but he's needy. Vic told you that. He may be a good lay, but he needs more than just sex. I can be his friend and give him that, but not both. He takes things too serious."

"Are all gay men like you?" Matt asked with bravado.

Nox shook his head. "No. I'm not exactly strictly gay."

"Oh?" That had Matt curious, "You like women too."

Nox shrugged. "I like sex. Where it comes from I don't care too much."

Matt giggled. He couldn't believe he giggled at his own thought. "Animals too?" He thought he was funny, but Nox just shook his head and pulled the last tequila shot away from him.

"You've had enough. Let me get you a cab back home." Nox stood up and walked over to the bar, Matt closed his eyes just a moment.

# Babysitting

Aaron had taken Sebastian home after telling Nox about the man checking them out. Nox had known who the man was before he started talking to him. He knew the consequences of his potential actions. But Matt had come to learn more about the life, Nox couldn't hold it against him.

When Matt started downing shots without really thinking Nox became worried. His questions were not what he had expected and it was time for the actor to go home. However, after he'd returned from the front to call a cab Matt had passed out.

He couldn't stay there. Matt woke up enough once Nox had him outside he could stand on his own two feet. He swayed standing still, and staggered when he tried to walk, but Matt was at least on his feet. The cab arrived and Matt still wasn't making any sense. "What's the address?" Nox kept asking him.

With a heavy sigh Nox said, "Just take him to my place." Nox climbed into the yellow cab and gave the cab driver his address in the East Village.

Matt's head lolled over on to Nox's shoulder. Nox looked over at the drunk man. Matt stared up at him with a stupid smile plastered on his lips. Nox noticed how kissable they were and averted his gaze. Not what he needed.

Matt muttered in Nox's ear, "You are wearing make-up." He laughed softly, "Do all gay guys?" Matt's fingers traced underneath Nox's eyes sending shivers down Nox's spine.

Nox shook his head. "No, Matthew they don't. Not all gay guys like fashion either." Nox took Matt's fingers in his hands away from his face and held it against his thigh until they pulled up outside of his building. The bar at ground level was packed. People were coming and going; a couple was waiting patiently for the cab they were exiting.

A twenty exchanged hands and Nox helped Matt out of the cab. He had his arm around the actor's waist and Matt's arm around his neck helped the man stay upright. Nox stared up the stairs and frowned. This wasn't going to be any fun. Grateful that his studio was on the second level he managed to get Matt to the door.

Nox propped Matt's limp body against the wall and he slid down. Nox didn't want to have to lift him again so he pressed his body against Matt as he unlocked the door to his apartment. Matt mumbled, "You smell good." Nox dropped his keys when Matt nuzzled his neck.

Awkwardly placing the palm of his hand against Matt's chest Nox knelt down and picked up his keys. He couldn't get the door open with one hand and had to resort to the prior position. Nox pressed his body against Matt's up against the wall. Matt kissed Nox's neck at his pulse point and started suckling softly. Fuck! Nox missed the key hole again but didn't drop the keys this time.

It was a fight he wasn't going to win, so he let Matt mark his neck while he unlocked the door finally and put his arm around the man who was not in his right mind.

The couch was barely a love seat but it would have to do. Nox deposited Matt on the burgundy cushions and Matt grabbed his hand. It would be so easy to let this go farther, but Nox knew Matt would hate himself in the morning. And he wouldn't be proud of himself either. He didn't mind a night of drunken debauchery, but it had to be consensual - Matt hadn't agreed. Nox had his rules.

Nox kissed Matt's temple and laid him down on the couch pulling his hand free of Matt's grip. He seemed to close his eyes and drift and Nox took the opportunity to get a blanket and a pillow from his bed and help Matt get comfortable.

A bucket sat near Matt's head in case of emergency and Nox took a shower to get the smell of bar and smoke from his skin. He looked in the mirror as he brushed his teeth admiring the mark on his neck. A large bruise bloomed on his neck just above the G tattooed three fingers below his jaw line.

Nox took a hot shower washing the dirt and grime from his body. Showering was one of Nox's luxuries. It was one of few times he felt at peace with who he was. The water searing away the things people had done to him. Leaving him clean. But water cost money and Nox turned it off. He pulled a pair of boxers on and walked out into the studio apartment. The lights from outside shown in illuminating Matt's sleeping form. His chest rose and fell with the heaviness of sleep. He was a beautiful man it was too bad he was straight.

Sleep came fitfully for Nox as his mind wandered to Matt and his ministrations in the hallway. Nox had wanted to let Matt continue. He had wanted to touch the other man. Sleep took him.

Nox's heart was pounding as he started awake. He couldn't remember what he'd dreamt about, but it was never good. The clock on his phone read 6am. Too late to go back to bed, so Nox got out of bed. Breakfast was his favorite meal. It was the only one he was guaranteed to have home cooked - so he ate big. An egg white frittata with feta cheese, sausage, sun dried tomatoes, basil and black olives.

Noise was inevitable as Nox cooked breakfast. He heard the sounds of Matt stirring on the couch. Nox placed the frying pan in the small oven to finish cooking the top and turned to see Matt scrubbing his hands through his hair.

Nox filled a glass with water then knelt down in front of Matt handing it to him. Matt looked up at Nox with bleary eyes with a frown. He reached across and touched the bruise that had formed overnight on Nox's neck. Matt's fingers were cool against his skin. "That wasn't there last night."

Nox laughed. "I know. Care to guess how it got there?"

Matt paled and fell back against the couch. "Don't tell me."

Nox couldn't help but laugh. He took Matt's hand and placed the glass in it. "Drink it, you'll feel better."

The smell of melting cheese took over the studio and Nox checked on breakfast in the oven. He could feel Matt's eyes on the back of his neck. Matt asked, "Did I make a fool of myself?"

Nox shook his head as he slid half the frittata to one plate and the other half on another. "No. You made a few stereotypical comments. Told me I smelled good and you see the results of that."

"Why did you let me?" Matt asked.

Nox grinned as he carried the two plates to the couch and sat down next to his guest. "It was either that or have to pick you up off the floor. The latter didn't seem appealing. And I didn't mind."

"What are you going to tell people?" Matt asked astounded.

"Nothing. No one will ask me anything. If you are worried I'll say anything I won't. Not that anyone would believe that Matthew Lucas likes men. He may play gay men on the big screen, but his drop dead gorgeous girlfriend of three years says otherwise."

Matt stammered. "I don't... like men."

"If you say so." Nox just grinned at him. "Eat Matthew. Before it gets cold."

"You called me Matthew last night? I remember thinking it strange." Matt commented as he shoved another bite into his mouth.

"Is that a problem?" Nox asked looking at the other man watching him enjoy the food he'd made. It always made Nox smile when people thought something he made was good.

Matt shook his head. "No. My mother is the only one who calls me Matthew, and then only when she's mad at me."

They finished eating in silence. Matt stood up and looked around. "Bathroom?"

Nox pointed the direction and watched Matt walk away admiring what he saw in the tight jeans.

# Another Shot

Waking up on the couch was one thing. Waking up on someone else couch another. But waking up on another man's couch who he'd apparently given a hickey to another story entirely.

Matt had denied liking men, but he didn't think the other man believed him. He didn't like men! The bathroom was small - barely enough room to move around. Matt washed his face with cold water. What the hell had he been thinking last night? He didn't even remember the guy’s name. But he remembered shaking his hand. He remembered feeling how soft and strong they were. Shit!

The night came back to Matt in spits and sputtered. He remembered the cab and touching Nox... That was his name, Nox... Matt closed the lid to the toilet and sat down with his head between his knees. What had he been thinking? He hadn't that was apparent.

"Fuck!" Matt whispered to himself.

Or so he thought because Nox shouted through the door, "You okay in there?"

Matt stood up and hesitated to open the door, but he did it anyway. "Yeah. Just trying to remember the night."

Nox shrugged his shoulders as he was pulling on a white t-shirt over his long lean body. Matt would have sworn he saw scars marring what would have been a perfectly sculpted back. Fuck! Maybe he did like men. This character was going to be the death of him.

Matt realized he was staring when he met Nox's gaze in the mirror above his dresser that separated his studio into two separate areas. He was grinning at Matt. "Still think you don't like men."

"I don't. Didn't. I've never stared at a man before apparently yesterday." Matt stammered.

Nox turned around keeping the bed between Matt and himself. He had a shit-eating grin on his face and Matt had to swallow hard. His voice was heavy with emotion; Matt could only assume was lust. "So Matthew, you've only stared at me?" He licked his lips and Matt took an involuntary step backwards.

"I..." Words did not form; his thoughts were erratic. What was it about this man that made him speechless?

Nox turned around and Matt felt relief flood through him when he picked up his keys on the dresser. "I have to get to work." He looked over his shoulder as Nox pulled on an orange button up shirt over the t-shirt he'd already put on. "Lock the door when you leave, Matthew."

Matt didn't stay long in Nox's apartment. He was out as soon as he found his shoes and made sure he had his keys, phone and wallet. Superstitiously Matt had gone through the wallet and sighed with relief when he found nothing missing.  
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Three days had passed since the night he'd gotten drunk and spent the night on Nox's couch. But Matt couldn't get the dark hair and red highlights out of his mind, or the way Nox had smelled. He cooked. That was one up on Tiffany.

What the fuck! His thoughts had been wandering for three days. Matt had finished reading the Victorian Hunter trilogy and was working on other material out there on the subject. The good thing about working with existing fandoms is that there was plenty of study material.

Tobias Vallen was an honorable man. He just happened to like men in a world where that was worse than being a monster he hunted. That was the biggest reason Tobias had fallen for Anders Bak, a centuries old vampire. If you can't beat them join them.

Matt decided he didn't need to go back to the gay bar without someone backing him up. He was grateful for Nox and the fact that he hadn't taken advantage of the situation. But it would feel better with someone he knew. So Matt called Jon.

Jon picked up his phone, "Dude! We get to be lovers!"

Matt laughed, "That's why I'm calling. There is a gay bar near my place, want to go study the characters?"

"Sure why not. I'll meet you there? 8:30?" Jon asked.

"Sounds good." 8:30 was still an hour away. Matt went early.

The bartender nodded at Matt when he sat down to wait for Jon. "White wine."

The man behind the bar nodded. "If you drink wine, I won't give you tequila tonight."

Matt nodded. "Is that how it happened?"

The man just laughed. "And a pretty face."

"You mean Nox?"

He just laughed as he placed the wine glass in front of Matt. Matt sighed, "Can you tell me what happened?"

Jon chose that moment to come in, "What happened when?"

"Oh nothing." Matt tried to direct the conversation elsewhere. He didn't want Jon to know what happened.

But the bartender saw Matt's discomfort and smiled. "Oh nothing, your buddy just drank too much and went home with a pretty face."

Matt's hands covered his face as he felt the blush creep up. Jon laughed. "Dude! You've been researching without me." He hit Matt's arm. "So unfair!"

The bartender left and he saw him pick up the landline and dial but Jon grabbed him by the arm and dragged him towards the same booth he'd spoken to Nox in.

Matt finished two glasses of wine before the bartender started bringing him water in wine glasses. He brought them over himself with a smile and always said, "If it's too weak let me know."

An hour into their research, Jon had excused himself to hit the men's room. A familiar face entered the room and sat down at the bar. He spoke to the bar tender who was nodding and then nodded in his general direction. Nox turned around, his hair and nails still matched, so did his shirt this time. Nox smiled as Jon sat back down drawing Matt's attention. "The bathroom is disgusting here."

Matt raised an eyebrow. "All bathrooms in all bars are disgusting."

Jon nodded towards the dance floor. "Check him out!"

Matt felt his heart stutter when he saw who Jon was looking at. Nox was alone on the dancefloor. No one was out there; the juke box was playing a hip hop song Matt didn't know. Nox's body flowed from one dance move to the next with perfection. The whole bar was watching him. He didn't seem to notice all eyes were on him.

The burly man from before stopped in front of their table blocking Matt's view of Nox. He grinned. "You won't learn will you."

Jon asked, "What's he mean?"

Matt shook his head as he watched the big man walk past Nox on the dance floor and spoke in a low gruff voice Matt didn't hear over the music, but Nox was smiling when Matt looked at his face next. Matt finally answered, "I have no idea." And he really didn't, Nox seemed nice enough.

Jon finished his drink as another round landed on our table. "Benji says that this should be more to your tastes," the waitress said.

Matt sipped at the new glass and found it was again white wine. Matt looked up at the bartender with a nod of appreciation. Benji the bartender shook his head and nodded towards the man dancing in the middle of the bar. Nox had given them this round.

Nox danced alone on the dance floor. No one bothered him, and no one joined him. People came and went but no one ever changed the music playing. Jon had left ten minutes before the last song ended and Matt watched Nox walk to the bar and drink an entire glass of water. He watched Matt over the rim of the glass and smiled when Matt met his gaze.

Last call was announced. Matt made his way to the door. He wasn't sure he learned anything, he did watch more than Nox to his own credit. He watched couples and men who were there to get picked up and another man who was trying desperately to pick up another never seeming to land a guy. Somewhere between his walk to the door Matt had lost sight of Nox.

But he found him again standing at the exit leaning against the doorframe with a smile. "Learn anything?" Nox asked.

Matt shrugged as he reached behind the other man for the door handle brushing against the fabric of the crimson shirt Nox wore. Nox stepped to the side so Matt could pass. Matt shrugged an answer. "I don't know. I don't think I'll pick up mannerisms overnight."

Matt noticed the yellowing bruise on his neck and blushed. Nox smiled. "Don't drink so much. You'll see a lot more that way."

Matt laughed, "I tried to drink more, but I only had three glasses of wine."

"I know." Nox said as he waved down a cab.

"How did you know?" Matt asked as the cab stopped in front of them.

"I told Benji if you came back to stop you at two unless I was there." Nox opened the cab door and stood behind it and waved for Matt to get inside.

"Why would you do that?" Matt stood outside the cab waiting for a reply. "Why give me water in a wine glass?"

Nox smiled. "Drink enough people don't suspect what you are doing. Then drink water. You are completely yourself and can pay attention but still act drunk if that's your game. Then before you leave cap it off with a final one so you taste like whatever you were drinking."

"That still doesn't answer why?" Matt asked again.

"Because I didn't want you to repeat what you might regret later." Nox said flatly. "Go home, Matthew. Tomorrow is a big day."

Matt got in the cab and went back to his apartment wondering how Nox knew he had a big day tomorrow.

# Twist and Turn

Nox was up and going early. The writers had already given him a list of scenes the actors needed to perfect before the first day. They'd been working on the scene with himself and another choreographer as the actors fleshing out each movement. It was their job to teach the actors. But the actors had a rigorous day in the gym beforehand so Nox had plenty of time to go through all the scenes again. And even more time when he arrived at the studio early.

Black spandex covered his body, it moved and breathed with him and gave full coverage. Though he did opt to wear a pair of loss fitting shorts over his midsection. The room he was practicing in had two floor to ceiling mirrored walls, the third wall had various weapons hung, the other was a series of charts and posters - some motivational, others were specific to the scenes they were working on. Nox's wall of notes - most of the material on it was new to this set of actors and character scenes, but some of it was things he took from job to job.

He was stretching against one of the walls much like a ballerina might. He'd taken ballet as a child, but he never really enjoyed it, but the warm ups he still used. His back was to the door when Nox heard a throat clear. He looked over his shoulder and saw Matt standing in the doorway. "So this is how you knew?"

Nox smiled at him and switched sides so he was stretching facing Matt in the doorway. "Maybe. Maybe I was just stalking you."

Matt laughed, "I wouldn't put the latter past you." Matt stepped inside and closed the studio door behind him. He stood three feet away from Nox. "Did you know we'd be working together when I did..." He pointed to the remnant of the hickey on Nox's neck.

Nox nodded. "Yes. It's why I decided to help you with your research as well as make sure you got home alright."

"I didn't actually make it home." Matt laughed.

"That's because you passed out before I could get an address from you." Nox stopped stretching and sat down on the ground to move into the next one. He had to cNox his neck to look up at Matt. "You better get to where you need to go, Matthew."

"Why do you same my name like that?"

Nox grinned, "Like what?"

Matt looked behind him to see if anyone was near, the door had remained closed. "Like you are making love to my name." Matt squinched his eyes closed as the color in his faced grew to a rosy color.

Nox waited for him to open his eyes before he answered. "Habit I suppose. Would you prefer Duckling? Or that I not say your name at all?"

Matt shook his head. "So it's part of whatever game you are playing?"

"No game. I like your name. I like how it rolls off my tongue. Am I flirting?" Nox stood up and closed the distance between them. But he didn't invade Matt's space. "Yes. But only when we are alone."

"Why?"

Nox smiled. "Because Matthew. It's rare when I like someone enough to try." Nox nodded at the door. "You have someplace to be. Leave the door open when you leave," Nox licked his lips before he finished his sentence, "Matthew."

The early encounter with Matt had given Nox cannon fodder for his imagination. He didn't know why he was being blunt with Matt about what he felt. Hell, Nox didn't even know why he was flirting with a guy who was fighting to remain completely straight. But Nox knew Matt had watched him dance. He knew that Matt when uninhibited had liked him. But was it really worth risking the effort and the soul bearing. Nox would have to wait and see, for now he had two actors to teach their first stunt and it happened that Matt was one of them.

After lunch Matt was the first one in the room. He wore a pair of basketball shorts and a white tank top. Nox couldn't help but admiring the long lean muscles of his arms and legs before Evelyn showed up. She was playing Tobias partner. Both hunters out hunting a werewolf in the first episode. They would be jumping from tree branch to branch above the ground and landing on the ground to jump into a hand to hand combat scene. The werewolf actor would be CGI so a stunt man was able to do the job effortlessly in this scene.

Evelyn was wearing tights and a leotard. Her body was well defined and exquisite under the thin layer of clothes. Nox let his eyes wander once before he was at the actor’s side. He held his hand out to Evelyn. "You must be Evelyn."

She took his hand and Nox lifted it to his lips and kissed softly on the third knuckle. "A pleasure. My name is Nox." She smiled at Nox and took her hand from him placing it on Matt's arm pulling him closer. "This is Matt."

I offered him my hand which he took wearily. I shook firmly. "Matt. A pleasure." I looked at both of them, "Shall we?"

Matt raised a questioning eyebrow and Nox only grinned back at him. "You both know the scene?"

The both nodded. "Alright, then watch me."

Nox climbed up on top of the stage set up and jumped from the fist tree top to the next and to the next without the wires. "You'll start out with wires, if you can master it in time you won't need it. But they are always there if you want them. In the scene Evelyn is first, then you Matt following close. We'll start out one at a time then when you can do it alone we'll put you both up there. Who wants to go first?"

Evelyn shook her head. "Nope."

"Matt?" Nox asked.

He sighed. "Alright, it can't be that hard." Matt climbed up to the first branch and the stunt coordinator strapped Matt into the wires. Nox climbed up there and watched as Matt tried to make the first jump, but he missed, falling slowly to the ground.

Matt tried several more times, "So, what am I doing wrong?"

"You are leaving too soon." Nox stood behind Matt and pushed his leading foot to the edge of the mock tree. "You need to leave from here." Nox knelt down grabbed Matt's front leg. "The power needs to come from here."

Matt nodded. "Okay." He tried again this time he made it to the second branch but stopped.

Nox laughed, "You are supposed to do it again."

They worked on and off for three hours. By the end of it Matt and Evelyn had made it to the end of the tree sequence and were ready to begin the jump down then the fight scene. Evelyn left quickly citing some obligation before their next training session in the gym. Matt sat and watched Nox on his small break.

Nox wasn't doing anything special worthy of watching but the other man watched none-the-less. It was quiet in the studio now that they were left alone. Matt spoke softly, "Matt?"

Nox grinned, "Do you want me to call my something else in front of others?"

"Why did you?" He asked in quick response.

"I didn't think you wanted your co-workers to hear how I said your name considering what you told me it sounded like." Nox grinned at Matt's deep blush as he climbed to the top of the tree structure and bounded from branch to branch back and forth like he was playing on the jungle gym in a school playground, flipping over every third jump to land on the other branch.

"If I hadn't said it would you still be calling me Matthew?"

Nox shook his head. "No. You aren't comfortable, I won't make it worse. Or let your friends make it worse."

"Make what worse?"

"Matthew, do I really need me to say it out loud?" Nox smiled as he flipped one last time and stuck his landing on the ground.

Matt's voice was quick and quiet. "Yes."

Nox walked up to Matt and placed himself directly in front of the other man who was resting against the desk. Nox whispered. "I didn't want to make you feel more uncomfortable about what you did while intoxicated. I don't think you want people to know you found me attractive enough then to push past your boundaries and leave a mark on my neck. I don't think you want people to know you are questioning things you thought to be true. And I definitely don't think you want people to know I'm flirting with you. Is any of that wrong?"

Matt shook his head and stuttered. "I... Uh... Need. To go."

Nox smiled. "As you wish, Matthew. I will see you tomorrow."

# Double Dog Dare You

One thing was certain now in Matt's mind - Nox liked him. And there was a very nagging feeling that said he liked the other man back. Matt just wasn't sure what that meant.

The next few days went by with little incident. They worked on the tree sequence, he and Evelyn and Nox and the stunt man playing the werewolf. Matt never caught the guy’s name, he was always quiet and never really did anything with them other than run away and fight the good fight when it came time.

Nox on the other hand, he flirted with everyone, Matt included though in that flirting he never once called him Matthew. Matt was thankful and felt disappointed in the lack of his name - like it was all some big game to Nox. And maybe it was.

One afternoon after Jon had finished his requisite scene with Nox - some jumping from the top of a building Jon found Matt watching Nox. The other man was dancing around the studio room listening to his own music in his head. Matt watched as his mouth moved, counting out the sequence of steps - he was working on foot movements his hands hanging limply at his side. Matt had no idea what he was doing. Jon stood in the doorway next to Matt, "He's a good instructor and gay too. I've seen him at that bar several times in the past few weeks. Though I've never seen him with another man. Maybe he's not so gay."

Matt smirked. "You know he's slept with Dawn right? He's not entirely gay."

Jon stared at Matt with a wide smile. "You've been listening to the gossip. How unlike Lucas you are today. Where is my friend?" Jon started punching Matt in the shoulder. Jon laughed, "Maybe you should talk to him about your research. He clearly knows how to be openly gay like Tobias."

Matt shook his head. He still wasn't sure why he was standing her watching Nox to begin with. "I'll just keep watching his mannerisms."

Jon laughed. "I've a better idea - ask him out. Pretend to be gay, or into men, play Tobias and see where it takes you."

"I couldn't do that. He's done nothing wrong." Matt sighed. His friend was going to make him regret standing here now.

"He's gay. He won't know that you aren't into him. He'd probably be grateful for your time."

Matt's voice sounded angrier to him than he should feel. But he had to say it, "Just because he likes men doesn't make him an idiot."

Jon laughed, "Then you aren't a very good actor." He leaned over and whispered in Matt's ear, "I double dog dare you to ask him out and make him like you."

Jon had just done two very bad things, accused Matt of not being a very good actor and dared him into something stupid. Matt was not a risk taker by any means, but a challenge to what he felt was the core of his ability that was another story.

"Fine." Matt nodded his head. "I'll do it."

Jon waved his hand in front of him gesturing Matt to be his guest. Matt sighed. Fuck! He had to do this now. It took all the courage he had to walk past Jon and into the studio. Matt stopped just outside the area Nox had been using for his movements and cleared his throat. "Nox."

Matt's voice sounded strained even he could hear it cracking underneath. Why did this man make him nervous? Why was he doing this in front of Jon. Nox turned towards him with a smile that Matt had come to learn was faked. One he wore when he was playing his game. Matt took a deep breath, "I was wondering if you'd like to get a drink sometime?"

The look on Nox's face changed from that fake smile to a look of confusion. Nox was staring past Matt at Jon grinning in the door way. When Matt turned to see what Nox was looking at Jon scampered off down the hall. With a heavy sigh, Matt turned around to see a dark light behind Nox's eyes. He didn't sound angry when he spoke though, "Are you playing games now, Matthew?"

Matt shook his head, but his words said something else. "Yes. I mean no."

Nox walked past Matt to sat down in the char at the desk and started writing something down on a piece of paper. "Which is it?" He never once looked up at Matt, just continued to flip through the papers on his desk while Matt stood there staring at him.

"Both, I guess. Yes, Jon thinks it's a game. But it's not a game I was wanting to play. I would like to get a drink with you."

Nox lifted his eyes towards Matt with a slight cock of his head to one side. The long line of his neck exposed Matt something inside Matt shutter - memories of tasting his skin coursed through his body. Nox spoke softly, so soft Matt barely heard him. "I don't drink."

It took a few moments for Matt to realize what he'd just said. How could that be possible... "But... At the bar. Jon says he's seen you there a lot these past few weeks."

Nox grinned, a real smile one that wasn't faked as he stood up and closed the distance between them. "I only ever ordered water if you recall, Matthew." Nox smiled as he tucked the piece of paper into Matt's breast pocket and patted it softly against his chest. "I'll play Jon's little game."

And without another word Nox gracefully slide out of the studio towards the gym leaving Matt standing alone in the room. He stood there for several minutes before Matt reached into his pocket and pulled out the note. In a very neat and elegant print was written, "Starbucks around the corner 6am tomorrow."

Matt smiled. He had a date. Not that he expected to have a date with another man. But Matt suspected that Nox knew what was going on. Even though it wasn't like a date. He didn't like guys. Nox's words from earlier in the week sounded in Matt's head - questioning things he knew to be true. Did he like Nox? He pushed it out of his mind, he had to go prepare for the first shooting tomorrow. It would be a long day. Which was why Nox probably opted for 6am coffee.

Matt found himself sitting in the lounge with his script and reading over his lines for the scene tomorrow. Jon bounded in with a grin plastered on his face. He plopped down next to Matt and hung over his shoulder to see what he was reading.

"So... How'd it go?" Jon quipped.

I smiled. "Coffee tomorrow morning."

As if he'd just landed a date with a girl Jon held up his hand for a high five and Matt obliged his friend though he wasn't exactly sure that was a good thing. What if he liked Nox?

His phone sang a soulful ditty about love and Matt answered his phone. "Hey Tiff, give me a second to go someplace more private. I got Jon hanging on every word." Matt smiled at his friend and left the lounge to go to his own trailer for now.

Jon laughed as Matt walked away. Tiffany asked in his ear, "What's he laughing at?"

"Oh nothing. He thinks it's funny I've a date with a guy tomorrow."

"A what?" Tiffany's voice rose in anger.

"It's nothing. Just coffee with a guy who can shed some light on the current role. He's very gay. Nothing to worry about." Matt said casually, but he wasn't sure he believed his own words.

# Not On My Time

Nox had been surprised to have Matt asking him out in the open until he saw Jon standing in the doorway watching with utmost attention. He'd play their game for now. Matt was openly looking at gay men with objective eyes - researching his part. Nox could help at least he thought he could. Working with Matt had become a strain.

4am was bright and early - even for Nox. But he wanted to go for a run before he met with Matt at 6, that gave him plenty of time to shower and pimp for this so called date. The coffee shop was around the corner from the studio lot and it was frequented by nearly everyone on the set. It was as good a place as any for this imaginary date. He didn't expect anything from it. Though he still couldn't keep his mind off of Matt. Nox had been dreaming about the actor since the night he'd met him. He'd sunk deep into his mind so quickly and so easily Nox couldn't shake it.

The coffee house was busy even 6am, but mostly with people coming and going with their morning pick-me up. Nox was a few minutes early and his hair was dripping wet from the rain outside. His carefully styled spikes had now fallen into his face and he could taste the gel from his hair when he licked his lips. Nox sipped at black coffee while he waited for Matt to show up.

The crowd waxed and waned for twenty minutes with no Matt. The weather could be a deterrent but Nox was feeling the sting of rejection with the dredges of his coffee. Nox stood up and was leaving a tip on the table when another coffee arrived. The girl set it down and smiled. "You Nox?"

He nodded and she continued. "He said to order you another of whatever you are having. He's running late. If you could wait, but if not he'd understand."

"Thanks." Nox sipped at the other coffee and waited. Another 20 minutes went and Nox finished his second coffee. Matt walked in dripping wet and looking around frantic. Matt smiled when he saw Nox setting down his cup. The other man rushed over with a sad smile. "I'm sorry I'm so late."

Nox shrugged. He could feel the empty pit in his stomach. Matt put his hand on Nox's arm. "My girlfriend had to call and I couldn't get her off the phone. She was telling all the things I needed to ask you." He sighed and sat down opposite Nox. "I'm sorry."

"We can do this another time." Nox said. "I've been here 40 minutes and I don't think I can drink another coffee."

Matt frowned. "I'm sorry. Really."

Nox nodded. "Don't worry about it." Nox glanced at the time on his phone. "I need to get to work."

"Okay. Can we do this again some other time?"

Nox stood up and placed himself in front of Matt and leaned down. "Matthew, you have a girlfriend. Why are you even bothering to pretend that this means anything to you?"

Matt took Nox's hand and pulled him closer. "I..."

Nox stood up straight and looked at Matt. He whispered, "You what? Matthew. I need you to say it."

Matt looked up at Nox like a deer in headlights. He was afraid, but he stood up and pressed himself against Nox. He tried to work his mouth but it failed. Nox watched him fail to find the words and shrugged. He turned to walk away from Matt, but Matt grabbed Nox's shirt and pulled him towards him. The kiss was sudden and tentatively on Nox's lips. Nox stared at him with wide eyes. Matt relaxed when Nox did and Nox's eyes fluttered closed as he leaned in to press his lips harder against Matt's.

First kisses were not new to Nox. But they always held the tinge of excitement of what was to follow. This was different. Butterfly wings beat inside Nox's stomach. His heart pounded against his chest and the only sound Nox could hear was the sound of Matt's breathing and his own pulse in his ears.

Nox pulled away with a smile and leaned his forehead against Matt's. "Not exactly what I was expecting."

Matt smiled back. But Nox frowned, "That still doesn't negate the fact that you have a girlfriend and this is just pretend for you." Nox leaned in and kissed Matt softly on the lips, just a brush against the other man. "I will be your guinea pig, Matthew. But nothing more in public." Nox stepped away from Matt and headed for the door. "I will see you at work."

Nox left Matt standing next to their table. He could feel the other man's eyes on his back as he walked back into the down pour.

The next time Nox was alone with Matt was at the end of the day. Nox had just finished his sessions with Jon and Evelyn before everyone was leaving the set to go home. Nox was cooling down when Matt stopped in the doorway. Nox smiled to himself as Matt watched as he danced around the studio rehearsing the last bits of tomorrows sessions.

Nox stopped and walked over to his desk to put on his shoes. Matt spoke softly. "Dancing is your life isn't it?"

"It's what makes me happy." Nox looked up to find the other man sitting on the edge of his desk.

"We should go one day." Matt said softly.

"You have a girlfriend for that."

Matt asked. "That's a big deal for you isn't it?"

"No." Nox shook his head. "It is for you. Do you want to be seen with me - cheating on your girlfriend with another man? Do you even want the rumor to exist? You've lead a relatively unscathed limelight life. Why do you want to tarnish it for a research project?" Nox stood up and pressed himself against Matt's leg on the desk and leaned into him. "I've been with men who were in the closet. I've been with women who were cheating on their boyfriends. Neither bother me. I don't want you to regret anything, Matthew."

"I..." Nox put a finger to Matt's lips.

"Shhh. Would you like to come over and we can finish this conversation?" Nox asked quietly.

Matt nodded. Nox asked another question. "Do you remember where I live, Matthew?"

He nodded. "Meet me downstairs in the bar in an hour." Nox pressed two fingers against his lips then to Matt's. "See you soon."

Nox took the train home in relative silence the rattling of the tracks the only thing interrupting his thoughts. He wasn't sure why he was investing time in a guy who was only doing research. But he couldn't get Matt off his mind, so this was at least catering to that particular dream.

The bar below his place was owned by Anna - his landlord/roommate. The living situation was perfect for Nox. Ana had a three-bedroom apartment above her bar. One room had its own access which was used as a make shift office years before Nox moved in. The adjoining door dead bolted on both sides, but only Anna's side could unlock his. Anna never had to, it was more an emergency thing than anything. She had the key to his front door anyway. He could use her full sized kitchen anytime he wanted as long as he cooked for her too. They only did that once a month when they marathoned Game of Thrones or some other TV show they both watched.

Nox managed a shower and threw on a t-shirt and a pair of khaki shorts and padded barefoot down to the bar. Anna kept it perfectly clean it was free of bar debris. And besides it would be near empty at this hour. Anna might even have shut down by now. But from the light music playing down the stairs Nox didn't think so. Most of Anna's clientele was regulars and the night shift was slow thought Anna did stay open in hopes for a few customers.

Nox made his way to the jukebox near the stairs and started setting up a playlist with the quarters in his pocket. He had a set list. When he finished there were about three songs in front of his. They weren’t' Anna's choices which meant there was a few stragglers in the bar. Nox turned to look out at the near empty bar.

Sam sat in the corner nursing his beer. He looked like a homeless man, but Nox knew he wasn't. He worked for a local IT company and on his time off spent it in the streets helping out the homeless in the East Village.

And then there was Jerry at the bar. He was a biker out of place. But he was Anna's uncle. He came in every other Thursday for a few drinks and to catch up with Anna. Anna's father, Jerry's brother died a few years back and they reminisced and had a good time on a slow Thursday night.

Anna was regaling a tale to her uncle as Nox sat down at the bar and waited. Anna didn't even ask me for my order as she moved about the bar and poured me a glass of lemon water as she continued the story. "I remember the fish was only as big as his hand. But every time he told it grew bigger and bigger."

Jerry laughed. "Sounds like your father." He glanced down the bar at me. "How's it going Nox?"

"Confusing, Jerry. Job's great. Love the actors, they do well - listen better than some I've had in the past."

Anna laughed. "What bring you down here on your late night?"

"Date."

Anna raised an eyebrow. "You are bringing someone here?"

Nox shrugged. "It's complicated. See if he even shows up."

"He?" Anna asked as she leaned over and bent a listening ear.

"I'd rather not talk about it right now Anna." I gave her my best smile and pleaded with my eyes. I really didn't want to tell Anna about Matt. She'd find out soon enough.

Anna asked, "Why wouldn't he show up? You already being a prick?"

"No". Nox shook his head. "It's complicated, but he nearly stood me up this morning. Too late to actually have our date." Nox glanced at his phone and sighed, "And another twenty minutes late now."

Nox took a sip at his water. "I'm gonna go dance, if he shows up that's where I'll be. If you need to close up just let me know."

Anna asked, "How will I know if he shows up, Nox?"

Nox grinned, "You'll know."

Nox moved out on to the dance floor and started dancing to the sound of the music on the jukebox, it wasn't one of his choices but he didn't want to sit at the bar and talk with Anna about Matt. He didn't want to talk about anything right now at all, just dance.

# Long Distance Relationship

Matt had today all planned out. He had a date at 6am - one he was looking forward to in a weird sort of way. But Tiffany had called the night before and he'd stayed up way too late and woke up late. He did manage to call the coffee shop and asked Nox to stay. He really didn't have any way of contacting him otherwise. It had been raining which slowed everything down. Matt had been more than 40 minutes late. Nox hadn't seemed happy about it but he didn't say much more other than he had to go.

After work he had spoken to Nox and he invited Matt out again. Nerves coursed through his body. He took a cab home and got a shower. As he was leaving his phone rang. Matt knew Tiffany was going to make him late but he couldn't help but answer anyway. "Hey babe."

"How'd your date go?" Tiffany sounded like she was enjoying him teasing about his new friend.

"You kept me up too late and I was too late to talk to him. And if you keep me talking too much tonight you'll make me late again." Matt teased back.

Tiffany laughed. "Oh honey. You'll be late again? When are you ever on time, Matt?"

"I don't think he likes tardiness. He seems to get antsy when we are late to sessions."

"Does he yell at you Matt. Or do gay men not yell?" Tiffany's humor could be heard over the phone.

"I don't know about all gay men, but he doesn't yell just gives you this look that says he's pissed."

Tiffany laughed, "Well fine go talk to your boyfriend and leave me all alone."

"Stop calling him that. He has a name you know."

"You never told me his name."

Matt sighed. "Nox. Nox is his name."

"Is he cute?" Tiffany asked as he shut his apartment door to get in the cab that had arrived for him.

"I don't know. How would I know?" Matt climbed in the cab and gave the driver the address with his phone tucked against his chest.

He put his phone back to his ear. Tiffany asked, "So cryptic, Matt."

"Sorry." Matt apologized. "I'm already running late; can I call you back tomorrow?"

"Yes, my love. I want to hear all about your date with Nox." She giggled. "Love you." Tiffany hung up before he had a chance to reply.

The cab ride was short, traffic was on his side, but he was still 30 minutes late. It was better than before, but not much. Matt knew he was always late. It was one of the things Stan got on to him about. The bar was lit up outside, but the open sign was not on and the door was locked. Matt sighed. "Well shit."

Matt was going to have to hail yet another cap tonight, but the door to the bar opened up. "He's still here." Said a soft voice. "Nox is preoccupied right now. Come on in."

The woman had brown hair she kept pulled back in two braids, and wore a pair of black glasses on top of her head. Matt smiled "I'm sorry I'm late."

The petite woman smiled, "You don't need to apologize to me. Nox has been dancing for about forty minutes, he'll run out of songs soon. I'm Anna. I own the bar you two are welcome for as long as you like. Just leave out side entrance."

Matt nodded, "Thank you Anna. I'm sorry to inconvenience you."

"No worries. I'd worry about him more than me. If he wasn't dancing he'd have already left."

"Thank you again." Matt moved towards the dance floor and stopped a few feet away from the path Nox had been taking. He watched the tall graceful steps of long legs and fluid movements of his arms. Nox frowned when he saw Matt standing in front of him. Nox didn't stop whatever movement he was doing when he spoke. "Matthew, you are late. Is this something I should expect?"

Matt could hear the note of disappointment in the other man's voice. "Most likely. I've never been early."

Nox nodded. "Noted."

"Pour yourself a drink. Anna's gone up to her place, we've the bar to ourselves for a little while." There was a hint of command in Nox's request. Matt walked behind the bar and poured two glasses of water and added lemon to them. When he handed one of them to Nox the other man had a bright smile and sipped at the water. "You don't want anything a little stronger, Matthew?"

Matt shook his head. "No. I want to remember."

Nox smiled and waved his hand towards a table. "As you wish. What do you want to talk about?"

Matt followed the other man and sat down opposite him. "I'm sorry about being late. I'm bad at it. Stan always tells me to be someplace a half an hour before I need to be there."

Nox smiled, "I will have to remember that."

Matt felt a sudden relief when the other man smiled. It wasn't the fake smile he was coming to see regularly while they worked together. This one was real. "How did you know?" That was the first of many questions Matt asked Nox about being into men. Nox was very open with all his answers. But Nox looked like he was fighting something. His eyes were sad even though his smile was genuine.

Matt changed his line of questions. "How long have you known Anna?"

Nox laughed, "That's slightly off topic."

Matt shrugged. "Not really. I'm understanding your underlying personality. Anna seemed to know you well enough to know you were miffed I was late, but that dancing kept you here."

"If I answer personal questions you answer in return." Nox countered.

Matt nodded, "Alright."

"Anna has been my landlord for eight years. After I graduated with my Masters in Dance, I found a job at studio nearby and needed a place to stay. It was all I could afford at the time. You're turn. Does your girlfriend know you are here with me?"

Matt nodded. "Yes. She thinks it’s funny. Have you and Anna ever..."

Nox cocked his head to the side when Matt didn't finish the sentence. "Have we ever what?"

"You know..." Matt blushed.

Nox grinned, "Say it, Matthew."

"Had sex. Have you ever had sex with Anna?" Matt could feel the blush running to his ears and cheeks.

"No we've not. If you want my answers, Matthew, you must ask them. Turning red is fine. I will answer anything, but you have to ask." Nox sounded very confident in his words. He never seemed to get embarrassed.

Matt nodded. Nox stared at him sipping at the water in front of him. The silence was long. Matt frowned, "Your turn."

Nox blinked and smiled like he'd forgotten their deal. "Does your girlfriend know you are entertaining the idea that you like men?"

The blood rushed to his ears again, he could feel the burning underneath his collar too. Matt shook his head and spoke in hushed whisper, "No."

Nox leaned back against the chair and tipped on to the back two feet. It took Matt a few moments to realize it was his turn to ask a question. His voice never rose more than that bare whisper, "Are you playing me?"

The chair Nox was leaning in tipped forward and slammed into the ground loudly through the empty bar. Nox was standing and turned Matt's chair so he could sit in Matt's lap. He leaned forward and Matt could feel Nox's breath against his neck. "If I were playing you, you would not be in the bar below my home."

"Then what are you doing?" Matt asked.

Nox ran his nose and lips against Matt's neck. His chest rose with the deep intake of breath against Matt's skin. "Ah ah ah, my turn. Do you want me to stop?"

Matt was honest. "I don't know." Matt swallowed hard. "Will you kiss me?"

Nox sat back putting his weight on Matt's knees and looked into Matt's hazel eyes with curiosity. Nox nodded. "Yes. Matthew, will you come upstairs? I promise nothing will happen that you don't want to."

Matt nodded unable to speak. Nox leaned forward and placed his lips against Matt's. The sensation was electric. Nox's mouth was soft, his lips were softer and he tasted like lemon. A small moan escaped Matt's mouth through their kiss when Nox's fingers found their way into the hair at the nape of Matt's neck. For a man, his kiss was gentle yet strong and it sent blood rushing to other parts of Matt's body he wasn't ready to admit to wanting.

# Above the Bar

Nox pulled away from Matt sensing his discomfort. He stood up and offered Matt his hand. "Only if you want to Matthew."

Matt took his hand and Nox smiled. Nox entwined his fingers in Matt's and lead him over to the door outside to make sure everything was locked up before he headed towards the stairs. The bar and the stairwell went dark when Nox flipped off the switch. Matt's long fingers twitched nervously in his. Nox squeezed Matt's fingers reassuringly as they reached the landing Nox let go and fished his keys from his pocket to unlock the door.

Matt spoke softly. "I do not remember the last time."

Nox chuckled. "I do quite well." Nox turned to look at Matt who was blushing brightly. Nox touched his cheek and smiled. "You are too cute sometimes."

Nox welcomed Matt into his home. The small burgundy couch where Matt had slept the last time was not empty. Anna was sprawled out on it. Nox's mouth fell into a natural grin. "I think she was worried about me."

Matt stood in the doorway. "Maybe I should go."

Nox turned around to face the other man. "If you want to but you don't have to. I'll just take Anna to bed." Matt's face went pale and Nox laughed softly, "In her own bed. If you could get the spare key taped to the bottom of the fire extinguisher case."

Matt stepped outside and Nox picked up Anna, one hand under her head and the other under her knees. She was not too heavy but Nox walked slowly so as not to bump her head against the door frame. Anna curled against Nox and smiled.

Matt saw the smile and asked, "You do this often?"

Nox nodded. "Often enough. We've been friends a long time. She's the only person who is always there for me other than my foster family or G."

Matt unlocked the door and Nox headed straight for Anna's bedroom in the darkened apartment. He set Anna down on top of her blankets and removed her shoes before covering her with another blanket. Matt was waiting for him outside the apartment. When he saw Nox he stepped forward and sighed, "I should go home."

Nox shrugged. "If you want to." He could hear the disappointment in his own voice. Nox locked Anna's door behind him before heading into his own apartment. Matt followed a few steps behind and stopped in the doorway. Nox opened up the fridge and pulled out a bottle of water. "Whatever you want to do, Matthew."

Matt didn't move from the door way as Nox opened the bottle and turned to look at the other man. Matt asked, "Why do you sometimes make what you say sound like a command and other times you leave it for me to decide?"

Nox smiled. "I'm trying to understand what you want from me. The commands to see if you want me to take charge and make all the decisions where we go. When I don't to see what you'll do if given the choice to flee. You don't seem to know what you want. I'm trying to figure out how best to get to where I want to go."

Matt asked, "Where do you want to go?"

Nox let out a short laugh. "As if that's not obvious from my reputation."

"That's not an answer."

Nox nodded and sat down on his bed. "Alright I'll play straight. My end goal is to have you in my bed enjoying everything we can offer one another." Nox held up a finger. "But you aren't ready for that. You are barely ready to be kissing."

Nox leaned back and stared up at the ceiling. "Matthew, I'll be completely honest with you. I like you. I want you very badly. I don't bring guys, or girls, especially girls, home to my apartment. Yet I've done it twice with you and neither time did I have the express intention of sleeping with you."

"Why not?" Matt asked. Nox gave Matt a quizzical look. "Why didn't you intend to sleep with me tonight?"

Nox sat up suddenly and was standing in front of Matt. "Because you aren't ready. You blush when we talk about sex. You get nervous when I'm close."

"I.." Nox leaned in and kissed Matt softly interrupting his comment.

Nox pulled away breathless and Matt was panting too. "Matthew, you should go home."

"See, you did it again." Matt pressed his lips against Nox's quickly, "What if I don't want to?" His voice was breathless.

Nox grinned against Matt's lips. "I would have to insist."

"Would you make me?" Matt asked.

Nox took a step back and smiled. "Would you like that Matthew?"

Matt just stared at Nox his lips parted and still panting softly from the previous kisses. Nox closed the distance and pressed his lips against Matt's ear and whispered. "What if I gave you incentive to go home?"

Nox could feel Matt's pulse racing in his neck. He wanted to bite down on that spot and suck hard and make Matt moan. "What kind of incentive?" Matt asked in a lust filled voice.

"Homework. Do you want to be with me Matt?" Nox kissed his neck in the place he wanted to suck so badly.

Matt nodded against Nox's mouth. "Yes," he whispered. "But..."

Nox bit softly not hard enough to leave a mark but Matt groaned softly. Nox whispered, "Will you do as I ask?"

Matt nodded. "I'll try."

Nox chuckled in Matt's ear and Nox could feel Matt's body tense under implied pleasure. "When you go home, I want you to try a few things. First I want you to see if you like the sensation of a wet finger against your rectum."

Matt audibly swallowed. "And the other things?"

"Just one other, when you come tonight, I want you to taste yourself." Nox kissed against Matt's neck.

"How is this incentive to go home?" Matt's voice was heavy with desire. "I could do all that here."

Nox let out a soft moan of pleasure, "Oh how I would love to watch you, Matthew. But you should be alone while you think about me. I want you to think about me. If you do this and tell me about it later we can do more. If you don't want to do this, Matthew that is alright too, but I won't be more than a friend. We can talk about whatever you want, pretend for Jon if you like that its more, but we would only ever be friends. I won't pressure you into anything not even this. There is no pressure, Matthew. No commands, no ultimatums, just the facts."

Nox kissed Matt softly, "But I need you to go home and think about what you really want from this. I want you, but I will wait until you are ready."

"And if I'm never ready?" Matt asked.

"Then we'll be friends. No harm, no foul."

"But you'll still help me with understanding Tobias?" Matt asked and Nox nodded. Matt smiled. "I will go home." Matt leaned forward and kissed Nox hard on the lips his tongue darting between Nox's leaving him breathless. Matt pulled away and his ears and neck were bright red, "Think of me."

Nox drew in a deep breath as he followed Matt out the door and called after Matt, "Always."

# Second Thoughts

Matt left Nox's apartment with a raging hard on. Something he hadn't expected from the man, any man, to give him. Nox's mouth was soft and wet and Matt couldn't help but think about all the things he could do with it. He walked home. All the way home in the cold air of the night. Matt thought about calling Tiffany but he couldn't think beyond Nox's homework. Matt wondered if Nox would think of him in the same way. He had wanted to watch Matt come - to touch himself. That sent shivers down Matt's spine.

The cold air did nothing to diminish the hard on he had as he walked. And the walk had done nothing more than make the inevitable happen when he got home. Matt pulled his clothes off and lay in bed stroking himself thinking of Nox's mouth on his cock. The electric touch of his fingers against his balls. And lower...

Matt sucked on two of his fingers and moved slowly between his cheeks and did as Nox instructed. He caressed the rim of his anus and bit back a moan of pleasure imagining Nox's plush tongue running around it. He slid a finger just inside and felt his cock twitch against his sheets. Matt cragged himself and thought about all the things he had done in a prior relationship with women, but in those position he substituted Nox. His soft scent of lavender, the taste of lemons on his mouth. Matt shuddered as he came into his hand. He hadn't finished spasming when he brought his hand to his mouth and licked it clean.

Matt fell asleep naked curled up around his pillow wishing he wasn't alone. The next morning the sun shone into Matt's window and he found waking up to a name he was uttering, "Oh Nox." He found himself lying with his hand around pillow in a death grip. His cock was hard again and pressed against the pillow. Images of the other man scorching his mind. His phone rang and Matt jumped. Tiffany... He grabbed his phone and glanced at the time. He was late - again.

"Tiff. I can't talk now. I'm late." Matt rushed out as he pushed thoughts of the other man from his mind.

"You never have any time for me." Tiffany pouted.

"I'm sorry. I'll make it up to you I promise." Matt promised.

"Tell me about your date while you get ready?"

Matt felt fear run through his mind. He had cheated on his girlfriend with another man. Nox had been right it was a big deal to him. "Nothing happened, Tiff." Matt lied, kinda. "I asked a lot of questions. How he knew he was gay? When he knew? What his first time was like?"

Tiffany laughed, "Did he answer that last one."

Matt was busy getting dressed and nodded. He knew she couldn't see him, but his voice seemed to be gone. Nox had told him all about his first time with another man. Matt croaked out, "Yeah, he did. In detail."

"Really? In detail." She sounded horrified.

"He likes to talk about sex. It was awkward."

Tiffany laughed, "I bet it was darling. Get to work before he yells at you for being late."

"Thanks. I'll talk to you later, Tiff. I love you." Matt hung up. He felt the lie in his mouth. It tasted like garbage, why was he doing this. Why was he flirting with a guy who was clearly only into sex? Matt sighed and talked to himself, "I'll just ignore him. Pretend I didn't do what he asked. He'll believe that. I can do this."

Matt found himself late to the gym and their trainer got angry but he didn't do anything. He hadn't miss a shoot, and he hadn't missed any line readings, or Nox's lessons. He was the first one to their session and he watched as Nox ran through the choreography he was about to show them. The man moved gracefully through each of the fight sequences, like he had been fighting his entire life. The man opposite him moved like a fighter, graceful like a wolf, where Nox was like a cat.

Matt shook himself he had to stop thinking of him like that, stop thinking of him like he was interested what lie underneath the tight clothes he wore. Matt jumped when someone touched his shoulder. Jon laughed. "Watching the pretty boy? He a good lay?"

Matt stared at Jon in stunned silence. He mumbled, "What?"

"You had a date with him last night? He fucks everyone. Was he a good lay?" Jon asked again.

Matt shook his head, "I wouldn't know. I didn't spend the night. We just talked. He's just helping me understand Tobias."

Jon laughed, "One doth protest too much."

Nox noticed them standing there and waved them over. "We need Evelyn then we can begin. You can start warming up." Nox moved towards his desk and sat down waiting on Evelyn who was twenty minutes late.

She came in panting like she'd been running. Nox sighed. "Does everyone in this room think appointed times are negotiable?"

He was aggravated, Matt could tell. He stood and frowned, but he said nothing. Nox moved out on to the floor and started demonstrating what going on.

They carried through the scene the three of them fighting and learning new moves until it was time to go read lines. Nox spared Matt a smile and said nothing. Matt turned quickly pretending he didn't see the smile and moved on to his next thing on his schedule.

That's how they played it for the next week. Each day it grew easier for Matt to pretend he wasn't drooling over the misplaced hair that fell over Nox's forehead when he was demonstrating things. Or when he caught the other man lifting weights in the gym in the wee hours in the morning. They had even gone to lunch together with Jon and Jon asked him questions about his character and what he could do to make it feel better.

Matt was fairly certain Jon hadn't meant it the way Nox answered it. And from the tight way he looked at Jon the whole time he knew exactly what the other actor had meant by it. Jon had been fishing for a dick comment - something to infer that Nox was good and truly gay and into Jon. Which Matt knew was not the case. Nox never once gave Jon that smile he knew all too well.

The next week Nox was no longer sparing Matt hidden smiles. He was pleasant and flirting the same as he always had been but the smile was gone. Their lunches became regular and Nox was true to his word, he kept helping with Tobias and they were friends, even Jon considered him a friend.

Tiffany had stopped teasing Matt about Nox when she realized it was just a friendship. It was working. But Matt was still fantasizing about the other man. Finding himself dreaming of him on a regular basis.

The three of them were at lunch on a Friday night three weeks after Matt had seen Nox alone in his apartment when Jon asked, "Nox why don't you come out with us tonight, we are going dancing."

Nox looked at Matt, "I don't think that would be a good idea."

Matt frowned, "Why not?"

"I have other plans." Nox said flatly.

"If it's with that girl you are banging you can bring her." Jon said with triumph.

"It not appropriate." Nox answered.

"Why the hell not?" asked Jon.

"Because we don't do the dating thing."

Matt encouraged, "Aw come on you can join us for a little while."

Nox frowned, "Fine, if you insist."

Jon nodded, "We do." Jon got up. "I got to hit the gym for a list few reps I'll see you guys tonight outside Lavo."

Matt nodded and Nox just grunted, he didn't sound happy.

When Jon was gone Matt found Nox looking at him. Matt gave Nox a half smile, "You have a girlfriend?"

He stood up and answered flatly, "No. A friend with benefits. I needed an outlet." He walked away from Matt without another word.

Matt sighed and got up and followed Nox out of the diner. "Hey wait up." Nox never slowed down. "Come on Nox. I didn't mean anything by it."

Nox stopped. "I know you didn't, Matthew. Go do your thing I will see you tonight." Nox rushed across the street dodging cars so Matt couldn't follow. Matt felt like an ass. But there was little he could do about that right now he had to get to the reading on the table for the night before the long weekend.

# Rejection

Three weeks had gone by before he and Matt had been alone together and Nox had wanted to go before Matt said anything but he had moved too slow. Matt asked about Dawn. The only girl with whom he had a long term arrangement with - fuck buddies. They didn't date. They didn't go to each other's places. And they certainly didn't hang out. She was in an on again phase, and because Nox had met Matt he'd been telling her no. That was until one week ago when Dawn found him alone in the studio and came on to him.

They'd had sex right there on the desk with the door wide open anyone could have walked in while Nox was pounding in to her. He almost had wished someone had. But Dawn was one of those people who liked to spread rumors so Jon had somehow found out about their little tryst and the one in the costume room. Maybe even about the one down in the gym early one morning. No one had caught them but it was not like it meant anything. It was just sex.

It was what Nox did when he started hating himself. Instead of downing booze like his step-father he slept with everyone he could possibly think of. Except that the one person he wanted to sleep with was ignoring him and was the reason why he was drowning his misery in between the legs of Dawn Mendes. Now Jon was asking him out as a friend would. He had never done so until he'd started joining he and Matt at lunch to discuss gay culture and the likes. Nox supposed it was better than playing gay best friend to a girl like Dawn. Dawn tried so hard, but he didn't want that. He'd promised Matt he'd stay friends so when Matt had wanted him to go dancing with them he had agreed.

But he was regretting it the moment Matt opened his mouth. He darted across traffic to escape the terror that was running through his mind. Matt had wanted to be friends, nothing more. He could do that, he was doing that, but Matt was liberal with his liquor and Nox was weak. He knew he was weak when it came to Matt.

But Nox didn't miss a chance that night to make an impression. He wore tight leather pants that had no room for anything underneath and a sheer black gauze shirt that he buttoned up the whole way. His nails were painted black. Nox colored his hair completely black and tipped it in gold and silver and dashed glitter in his hair, and all over his skin. His eye liner was thick and wider than usual. He finished off the look with knee high leather boots.

Anna caught him walking out of his door and she whistled, "What you looking so hot for?"

Nox smiled. "For myself - mostly. I intend to show Matt what he's missing out on. Don't wait up for me. I don't intend to be home early."

Anna frowned, "I'm assuming you won't be seducing Matt tonight."

Nox shook his head. "Not on his life. He doesn't want me. I'm not going to waste any more time on trying."

Anna nodded, "Don't get lost in the fight to feel better about yourself Nox. Come over when you get home, no matter the hour. I'll have ice-cream and a movie waiting."

Nox nodded as he left to catch the train to Lavo.

It had been a while since he'd been to the club. It was thumping and Nox walked the line from the doors to the end looking for his friends. But he didn't find them, he was early and the first one apparently.

Evelyn was the first one to show up with a man on her arm. He was mildly attractive, wearing jeans and a silk button down in green. Evelyn made the introductions as they wrapped their bodies around themselves and started dry humping in the line to the music thrumming outside of the open doors.

Jon was late. He clapped Nox on the shoulder and then pulled his hand away like he'd been shocked. "Holy fuck! You are dressed to get laid."

Nox smiled. "That's kinda the point. Why come out dancing without at least getting laid as a secondary goal." Tonight it was his primary goal.

Matt showed up ten minutes after Jon and they'd only moved about 20 feet closer to the door. They stood outside Jon was chatting with the girls in front of them when Nox saw Matt from a distance. His walk was distinct and Nox watched him. Matt saw Nox too and stopped dead in his tracks when he saw what Nox was wearing. His mouth dropped a little and Nox smiled. He pretended not to see Matt and wrapped his arm around a girl that Jon was talking to. She was the uglier of the two and Jon didn't seem to mind when Nox was whispering in her ear. Matt finally joined them. "Hey."

Nox spared Matt a glance and noticed he was wearing jeans and a button up shirt in white. Nox nodded at Matt and went back to flirting with the girl. The girls slipped into the club before them, said they'd meet them at the bar. It left the five of them together waiting at the front of the line. Jon wrapped an arm around Nox, "You are the best wing man ever." He elbowed Matt, "He takes the ugly ones. I guess when you are gay looks don't matter."

Nox frowned and turned towards the bouncer and smiled at him. Nox knew the guy. He'd gotten the number of a guy for him before - one he'd been chatting up at the door before he gained entrance. Nox put a hand on the big bouncer’s forearm and smiled. "Can I get in?"

The man smiled at him. "Anything for you sweet-thang. I owe you. Your friends I can't."

Nox smiled. "That's alright. I want to get away from him." The bouncer took Nox by the hand and helped him past the velvet rope. Nox kissed the bouncer softly on the lips and winked at him. Then waved a sarcastic good-bye to his so-called friends and headed off into Lavo to dance.

The night went on with Nox on the dance floor. He wrapped himself around a girl but whenever he was getting ready to make a move he'd see Matt ruining his mood. Or rather making his mouth water as the other man moved on the dance floor.

Nox watched as Matt frequented the bar four times in the span of thirty minutes always carrying too shots. He wasn't dancing with anyone in particular, but he'd move across the dancefloor like he knew what he was doing but still faithful to his girlfriend who was around the world. Nox sighed and decided it was best if he left.

It wasn't even 11pm when he found himself outside the bar. Anna was still tending bar on a busy night. Nox walked in and no one even noticed as he walked over to the juke box and started up his play list. Anna came over and put her hand on the juke box and leaned over looking up at Nox. "You are here early?"

Nox whispered, blood rushing to his ears, "I couldn't focus on anything other than the man I went to forget."

Anna hugged Nox before she went over to the bar and fished a few more quarters from the cash drawer. She handed them to Nox with a glass of water. "Until I close up. That should last you."

Nox nodded, "Thanks Anna."

Nox dropped a few more songs and moved into the dance floor getting lost in the motions of the dance. He had the whole floor to himself. No one bumped into him. No one came up behind him to dance with him. There was no one to grind against. Nox didn't follow the flow of a traditional dance throng anyway choosing to do things he'd learned throughout the years - ballet, tap, jazz, a few waltz to the speed of the music, getting lost in each dance move.

The lights went out as the last song ended and Anna stood in the door way that lead to their landing with an outstretched hand. Nox took it gratefully and they went up the flight of stairs and to Anna's apartment. On her couch sat three movies - Fifty First Dates, Iron Man and Save the Last Dance.

Anna went into the kitchen and grabbed a carton of chocolate mint ice-cream and a bottle of white wine. She brought one spoon and one glass. We each had our go to anti-depressant. Anna poured a glass of wine and sipped at it setting the ice-cream down on the couch.

Nox smiled, "I should change."

Anna shook her head. "Just take off the pants you'll be fine."

Nox laughed "Anna, Darling, there is nothing on underneath. I need to go change into something more comfortable."

Anna turned red as a beat and nodded, "Sorry. I didn't think." She tossed Nox the key to the side door. "No point in closing you out tonight."

Nox returned to his room quickly and pulled on a pair of boxers and a tank top. If he fell asleep on Anna's couch he'd at least be comfortable.

Anna smiled, "That's more what I was expecting." She pushing in a DVD into the player. "I figure we'll start out with sappy then dance and finish off with something hot for you to go to sleep too."

"Robert Downy Jr? You really think that will work?"

"The man is rich and gorgeous and that suit could be fun." Anna giggled. "You know I wouldn't talk boys with you unless you were down Nox."

He sighed. "I know. Let’s watch." Anna put one leg up on the couch and Nox sat down and leaned against her and pulled the blanket up around them. They'd watched a few movies like that in the past, but usually it was the other way around, Anna in his arms. She wrapped her arm around his shoulders and sipped at her wine while the first movie started playing.

Anna drifted during the second movie and Nox took it upon himself to push her to bed. She refused but he picked her up and carried her to the bed. She kissed him softly on the lips. Ana tasted like wine but it wasn't meant to be filled with anything other than comfort. She smiled at Nox when he set her down, "It'll be alright. Stay as long as you want, Nox. Finish the movies." Anna curled up in her bed and Nox covered her up and kissed the top of her head and left to do as she asked.

The movies had been distracting and Iron Man left Nox with an action flick to call his night an end. He had put the ice cream away as soon as Anna had gone to bed. He chocked down a glass of wine to finish the bottle so it wouldn't be wasted he couldn't find the cork anywhere.

Nox closed up the door between his and Anna's apartment and went to sleep, but he still couldn't get Matt out of his head. He could see him clearly when he closed his eyes, watching him move and sway with a girl, her boyfriend came up behind him and moved against him. He never even filched. The song ended and he hugged them both before hitting the bar again. Matt was probably puking his guts out by now.

# Drunken Lines

Matt looked everywhere for Nox on the dance floor. Every time he saw him, the man would slip away in the crowd. But he hadn't caught sight of him in a while. It was late when Jon found him and told him Nox had left. He'd seen him leave. Matt nodded which hadn't been a good idea his head spun a little.

Matt raised his hand and hailed a taxi. The yellow cab pulled up and Matt said, "Just drive."

Matt didn't see the cab drivers smile as he started off towards the far end of Manhattan. They drove past so many building, Matt lost track of the time and where he was. Matt stopped a liquor store and drank as he rode around.

Things started to look familiar when Matt saw the familiar front of Anna's bar, and Nox's apartment. "Stop. I'm getting out."

The fair was horrendous when he got out but Matt had to pay it. He'd done as he'd been told, the driver.

Matt knocked on the darkened bar's door. He hoped to get someone's attention. But no one answered. Matt thought about calling out Nox's name, but he didn't think he could hear him anyway. He went around the side to the apartment entrances and found the door unlocked. "How fortunate."

Matt climbed the stairs to Nox's apartment and started knocking. Matt knocked louder until he heard shuffling on the other side. The door opened and the beautiful man he'd been looking for stood in between the door and the frame, he looked sleep addled. His voice was choppy with sleeping, "Matthew, what are you doing here?"

It was the moment when he was about to answer that his stomach felt horrible and he wretched. Splattering Nox in the process, which Matt was only half aware as he doubled over to empty his stomach.

Matt felt a cool hand on his neck and one under his arm as someone strong picked him up and lead him to a small bathroom and set him down on the cool tile with his head hanging over the bowl.

Matt didn't notice Nox cleaning up the mess without a word. He could only feel the pounding in his skull and the liquor trying to make its way back up to see the light of day. He wretched into the toilet again. He didn't know how long he emptied his stomach into the bowl. He felt hands on the back of his neck and a cold cloth wiping his face and neck. His head pounded and spun whenever he tried to move.

Matt heard Nox like he was far away, "I think you've emptied everything. Come on, you need to sleep."

Matt struggled to stand up but with Nox's strong hands under his he made it to the bed. Nox tried to help him to the couch. Matt felt his body go limp as Nox tried to get him to move to the uncomfortable couch. "No please. It hurts." Matt whined. His voice sounded so distant, even he didn't recognize it. "Let me sleep with you."

Nox sighed and took Matt's shoes off and removed his filth covered clothes leaving him in only his boxers. There was a slight chill of the air against his skin, but Matt felt hotter than he ever had before. Nox pushed him down into bed and covered him up. Matt could smell the soft scent of laundry detergent and lavender as he laid against the silky pillow case. The sheets covering his near naked body felt the same and Nox slipped in next to him just as Matt closed his eyes and fell asleep.

There was a loud clattering noise and Matt started awake. He sat bolt upright and regretted that the moment he did. His head was pounding. Matt didn't recognize his surroundings when he looked around slowly. Not ten feet away a man in a pair of boxers and a tank top stood with his back towards him. Nox's hair was still tipped in silver and gold like the night before but he looked much more himself in near to nothing than he had the night before. Not that Matt had minded how the man looked.

Matt scrubbed his fingers through his hair and frowned. He didn't remember getting there the night before. He didn't even remember talking to Nox at all after he slipped into Lavo without them. Matt felt the sheets against his skin and lifted the blankets he was thankful that he still had his boxers on. "What the fuck happened last night?"

Nox turned around with no makeup on and frowned. "I didn't mean to wake you up. I'm sorry." He smiled, "I could ask you the same thing. I left early, watched three movies in Anna's apartment and then when I finally fell asleep you were pounding on my door. You started puking on my doorstep and me. So I let you in and took care of it. You refused to sleep on the couch and I sure as hell ain't sleeping on it, so we shared." Nox turned around and finished what he was doing, "I behaved myself don't worry. You passed out the moment you hit the sheets."

Matt flopped back in the bed. "I'm so sorry."

Nox didn't turn around. "Don't worry about it, Matthew. Your clothes have been washed and are in the bathroom. Take a shower and I'll have breakfast ready when you are done."

"Are you calling me Matthew again?" Matt asked as he got up from the bed and started towards the small bathroom.

Nox turned and looked at him, "In the privacy of my home, yes. Don't expect it anywhere else."

Matt nodded. He deserved that, he knew it. Matt knew he should tell Nox what he'd done that night. But he didn't. He stepped into the bathroom and shut the door behind him. The shower was small but the water ran hot and the pressure was almost perfect bordering on too hard. There was no amount of soap that would make Matt feel clean, but the soft scent of lavender reminded him of the man outside in the next room. He took a deep breath taking in his scent. Matt wasn't sure how long he spent in the shower, but the water never ran cold. For that he was grateful, but when Matt left the bathroom, there was only one plate on the small table and he couldn't find Nox anywhere.

There was a soft knock on the side door leading ... when Matt looked over, he realized it lead into Anna's apartment. She smiled. "He said you were welcome to have breakfast. Just lock up when you leave."

Matt sighed, "Did he say where he was going?"

Anna shook her head. "No, but he has a standing appointment Saturday mornings, he had to leave or he'd be late waiting on you - his words."

Matt frowned, "Yeah. I've been late to nearly every appointment with him."

Anna nodded, "I know. You are killing him." She took a few steps inside while Mat sat down to eat. "Can I say something to you without you thinking I'm crazy."

"Who am I to judge? I came knocking on a man's door while I was drunk. The same man's door who I've been avoiding speaking to alone for three weeks." Matt sighed, "And yet every time I forget who I am I find myself in his apartment."

Anna smiled. "You either need to back off and let him go, Matt, or you need to man up. He's crazy about you. I've never seen him like this. He's willing to let you come to him when you are ready. But if you'll never be ready you need to let him know. The longer you string him out the more damage you will do."

Matt finished the last bite on his plate, he hadn’t realized how famished he was. "He doesn't do relationship so why should I care? I have a girlfriend anyway."

"So tell him that and stop talking to him about your character's situation. Nox has told you more than he's ever told me about himself under the guise of giving you insight into Tobias Vallan. I've known him for 10 years and you know more about the boy next door than I do." Anna frowned.

Matt nodded and picked up his plate and put it in the sink noticing nothing else in there. Matt carefully washed the plate and put it in the drying rack. Anna laughed. "You are observant."

"He's a neat freak?" Matt asked.

"No. Yes, in a way." Anna smiled. "But that's for him to tell you why. It's the one secret he's not shared with you yet. And I can't imagine that he'll ever let you know that side until you decide what you want from him."

Anna turned and shut the door behind her and locked it. Matt heard two deadbolts turn. There really was nothing more to do other than to go home.

Matt called Tiffany once he got home. She picked up lazily, "There you are. I have good news."

"Hmmmm?"

"I get two weeks off to come see you." Tiffany said joyfully.

"When?" Matt asked.

"It's still two months away, but I can't wait to see you again. This phone thing sucks."

Matt laughed, "Yeah it does. Can't wait."

Matt told Tiffany all about his night. And when they were done he felt better about all his decisions including the one that had him avoiding Nox.

For the next week and a half Matt continued to avoid Nox to the best of his ability. Everything Anna had said made him feel guilty but he couldn't bring himself to talk to the other man. He only had to see Nox on occasion when they had new fight scenes to go over. But more often than not Nox wasn't even there, giving Matt's sessions to one of his underlings while he opted to work on new scenes.

Nox had even stopped coming to lunch with them. Jon barely noticed apparently he was still talking to Nox regularly and knew Nox had taken on another job in tandem with the one he was working on for them. It was in the same studio so he could toss between the two based on his schedule. Which explained why the underlings were working with them.

He felt bad for not telling Nox how he felt. He couldn't get the man off his mind, but he knew he couldn't be the person Nox needed him to be. Anna had been right he needed to tell Nox.

# Friends with Benefits

The night after Lavo Nox had spent the night lying awake not getting any sleep while Matt lay next to him. His hands wandered over Matt's stomach and he knew he had to get up. He went down to the laundry room and washed and dried Matt's clothes. He showered and made breakfast all before he dropped a hot pan on the ground when he picked it up from the sink without an oven mitt.

Matt had woken up and their brief talk had left him wanting. Nox left a message with Anna and knew it had been wrong to not say anything to Matt, but he couldn't face him again.

That morning he taught a few kids dance at the YMCA for free. It was his community service project in college and he just continued doing it. There were a few talented kids that Nox made sure to nurture. And a few who needed a little more attention not because they were talented but because they needed someone to guide them, to be a friend where everyone else saw just another kid from the ghetto.

He sat with one of those little boys for three hours that day while he cried because his father was dying of cancer and they couldn't afford to pay for any treatments. So everyone was forced to watch the man deteriorate. Nox bought him ice-cream and they talked about this that and everything.

Nox's phone rang. It was the studio with an additional job. A pilot they were working on. They would double his pay for that one episode if he worked them both. So that's what he did. There were a lot of things to choreograph and very little time.

He had to schedule his team early in the day and show them the next few scenes and he could work on the new material. Unfortunately, that meant Dawn was close as she was working that other show with the director. But she was a good distraction.

They’d found themselves alone together in the small mirrored room on the pilot.

"Nox." Dawn panted.

Nox looked up from his desk and Dawn captured his lips in hers and sat down in his lap. "Why can't we do this in a real bed?"

He pushed her away, "Because there are no beds here. You aren't coming over to my place."

She kissed him passionately, her tongue diving in to his mouth forcing his mouth open wide letting a small moan escape. Her fingers entwined in his hair. "But we could have fun in a bed."

Nox laughed, "We can have fun on the desk." He lifted her skirt and found nothing underneath and let out a small groan. "Or in this chair." Nox unbuttoned his pants and Dawn reached inside and pulled out his cock. They fumbled for the desk drawer they knew a condom was before they eventually got one on and Dawn was rocking back and forth on him, her head hung back as she finished.

She was breathless and crawled down out of his lap on to the floor to finish him off, he pulled her up by her chin, "I'm alright."

Dawn looked concerned, "You've not been into this for a while. What's wrong?"

Nox shook his head. "Nothing for you to worry about."

Dawn dropped it. But it became a regular thing, the desk, the chair, the floor, up against the mirror. And each time Nox never finished. He wasn't frustrated. He was finding plenty of opportunity at home to do what he needed to do. What he wanted to fantasize about, he never fantasized until recently. Matt was so far ingrained in his sexual needs at the moment that he hadn't even realized the transition.

One afternoon Dawn and he were alone. She wrapped her arms around his shoulders and bit his ear lobe. "What aren't you getting Nox? What do you want?" It made Nox shiver, it was so close to his line.

"Honestly?"

Nox pulled her around and sat her in his lap and whispered in her ear. "Fuck me in the ass."

Her eyes went wide, "With what?"

Nox smiled and pulled his gym bag out. Inside he had a smaller bag with the perfect implement to do what he wanted. Dawn's eyes grew even wider, "You carry that?"

"Not usually. I put it in the wrong bag the last time I used it and I keep forgetting to take it out."

Her eyes were still wide as she stood up and tried it on. She spun her finger around in a circle and Nox obliged her. He wrapped her hands around his waist and undid his jeans and yanked them down his thighs. With a little lube on the dildo she eased it inside of Nox as he bent over the desk. He moaned in pleasure as she moved inside of him. He closed his eyes and Dawn rammed into him. Electricity ran through his body as she found the rhythm against his prostate. He felt himself building and tried to push it down to make it last longer, but his mind wandered the wrong way. He remembered the feel of Matt's skin against his fingers and he came against the desk just as the door opened.

Dawn yelped at the intrusion, covered up her body and removed the toy she was ramming inside of Nox. Nox stood there with his pants around his ankles while Dawn darted past Matt who was standing staring in the door.

Nox closed his eyes and pulled his pants back up. Matt just stood there as Nox sat back down and banged his head against the desk. Seconds flew by. They turned into minutes before either one of them said anything, and Nox was surprised it was Matt first. "I wanted to tell you something."

Nox looked up, "And now?"

"I still want to tell you something, but I have a question."

"Shoot, can't be more embarrassing than that."

Matt chuckled softly as he stepped closer and sat on the edge of the desk. "Why was she doing that? Honestly."

Nox sighed. "Honestly, because I asked her too. The complete truth, because I can't get you out of my head."

"You want me to do that to you?" Matt asked quietly.

"Among other things. But I get it, you aren't interested. I've backed off, so don't worry about it." Nox got up from the chair and started for the door. He turned around remembered Matt had something to say. "You wanted to tell me something."

Matt nodded and closed the small distance between them. "Do you remember what you asked me to do that night?" His voice was a quiet whisper. Nox nodded. "That night I went home and got off just like you wanted me to. I felt guilty the next morning when Tiffany called. So I decided that I didn't want that. Didn't want you."

Nox nodded and turned to walk away but Matt grabbed his arm. "But if my drunken state is anything to go by, I'm lying to myself. I can't get you out of my mind. I know I have a girlfriend. I know I'm not what you want in the bedroom. But, I can't stop thinking about you."

Nox turned around slowly and looked at Matt. The other man continued, "I can't say I'm ready for what you need, but we can work our way there."

"You aren't playing me?" Nox's voice held so much pain in it Matt felt bad that Nox could feel that way.

He shook his head, "No, Nox. I am not." He pulled Nox close and kissed him. The kiss was slow and passionate, lips wandering and fingers pulling at clothes and hair without really making a dent in either.

Nox pulled away breathless and put his forehead against Matt's, "We don't do this in public, for now. You have a girlfriend. You only play gay men or so the rumor says. Though I've heard others lately."

Matt chuckled. "Yeah, that's Jon. I'm sure. I think I can handle that. And I promise I'll try not to be late to any more dates."

Nox smiled against Matt's lips. "Do you want to come over tonight and we can talk?"

Matt nodded his head and kissed Nox again. With a breathless whisper through the kiss Mat said, "Yes."

# Whirlwind

Walking in on Nox had probably been the best and worst thing that could have happened to Matt at that time. It made Matt realize that he was indeed lusting after the man. He liked what he'd seen of the other man on more than one occasion, that had not been the only time. But it was the vulnerability that he showed when he thought Matt was playing a game with him.

Matt's confession made Nox leave at first until Matt told him the complete truth. Nox had given him that and he knew that he had to tell Nox how he felt even if it broke him to do so. But Nox was far more understanding and the tender moment they shared with their lips pressed against each other in acceptance was intoxicating. Matt looked forward to talking things over with Nox. Whatever that meant.

That night, Nox had a bottle of wine in his studio apartment which he poured for Matt. It went well with the chicken and pasta in garlic white wine sauce he'd made for them with a side salad with the same sauce. It was heavenly. Dinner had consisted of get to know you chat. Things everyone talked about on first dates. Not that they hadn't had a first date before with each other, but this one was a bit more personal.

They wound up lying together on Nox's bed. Matt staring down at the other man lying on his back stealing kisses while Nox played with the cloth at Matt's back. It was a tender moment but was quickly turned into something far more exciting and embarrassing when Nox looked up through his long eye lashes and smiled. "What do you want from this, Matthew?"

Matt leaned down to kiss Nox to stay the question, he didn't really have an answer for him. Nox chuckled against the Matt's lips and pushed slightly on Matt's chest to give him room to look up at him. "We need to talk about this."

Matt whispered, "Why?"

Nox leaned up and placed a soft kiss on Matt's lips, "Because if we don't things will get messy. I will hurt you. You will hurt me and then it's a mess and you nor I need a mess."

Matt sat up and sighed, "What do you want from this?" He asked instead of answering.

Nox nodded. "Fair enough. I would like you in my bed in the ways that satisfy myself and you hopefully. But it's not just sex I'm after. I like this. I want more of this - a relationship. Something I don't normally even try for. Now what do you want Matthew?"

Matt looked away from the bed and stared at the far wall. He shook his head, "I don't know."

"So let me ask you then. Do you want to keep seeing your girlfriend?"

Matt's eyes went wide in fear. "You want me to break up with her?"

"No. I want to know if you want to keep seeing her. I want to know where I stand. I already told you I'm okay being the guy on the side."

Matt didn't relax. "Is that even fair?"

Nox smiled. "There is no fair in this. You are essentially cheating on her. You have to deal with that emotional baggage while you are with me, and then again heavier when you are with her."

Matt fell back against the bed and stared up at the ceiling. "I can't break up with her."

Nox sat up leaning on his elbow looking down on Matt. "That's fine. Do you have specific days that you guys talk? Have phone sex? Enjoy each other's company?"

Matt could feel the blood rushing to his ears and burning underneath his collar. "I... I don't know."

Nox kissed his lips softly. "You need to talk to me. Sex seems to be a topic you don't like to discuss."

Matt knew he was growing redder by the minute and shook his head.

Nox chuckled. "If you want this to work you have to talk to me. Days you and tiffany talk are they scheduled?"

Matt shook his head. "We talk Saturday nights. Usually end up..."

Nox smiled, "Okay. Saturday nights you reserve for her."

"I could call her from here whenever. It's not a big deal." Matt said eagerly.

"You need alone time with your girlfriend, Matthew."

"I..." Nox stopped his train of thought with a brush of his lips.

"I insist, Matthew."

"What about you and your ... um... friend?" Matt asked.

Nox laughed. "It'll be off again, until farther notice. Besides you walking in on us while she was trying something new is probably a bit much. I'll be fine."

Matt blushed. Their conversation wound around then for hours talking about large details like places they could go on their dates where no one would recognize Matt, which pretty much amounted to only Nox's place. To little things that embarrassed Matt. Nox never pushed him past his comfort level except the talking part he made him say things he would never have said to any girl - positions he liked without actually just trying them out.

But Matt watched Nox, talking about sex was his element. He made it sound like it was no big deal, and to him it wasn't. Matt was beginning to realized that Nox was well and truly gay, the women he used for sex and only sex. When he mentioned it he smiled and said, "I use sex like you drink. It covers my nerves, put me at ease. And just as dangerous as the drink or drugs."

Matt asked, "So does that mean I make you nervous?"

Nox blushed, the color rising to his ears and over his neck. Matt couldn't help but lean down and kiss the rising color which made a small gasp escape Nox's throat. The vibration against Matt's lips made his body tighten. Nox nodded his head, "Yes, Matthew." He voice was heavy with desire and Matt's body tightened further.

"Why are you nervous?" Matt blurted out.

Nox sat up and pushed Matt to his back. "I don't do relationships. But here I am discussing that very thing with you.

"We don't have to discuss it." Matt smiled. Hoping that the topic could end and they could move into more making out. He liked that part.

Nox grinned down at him. "We do need to discuss it. Would you like me to kiss you in front of the cameras? Or the set crew? On the side of a busy street?"

Matt sighed, "I guess you are right. It's not a normal relationship."

Nox smiled. "But we can stop for now. Matthew. You should go home now."

Matt whined, "I was hoping for more kissing."

Nox kissed Matt hard and heavy. His lips trailing along his chin down the jaw line to his ear and whispered, "There is plenty of time for that. You've an early morning. Besides it's Saturday night and you need to call Tiffany. Make her happy tonight Matthew."

Matt pulled away from Nox to see the seriousness in his voice. Matt sighed in resignation and left Nox's studio apartment with the express intent of calling his girlfriend because his boyfriend asked him too. That just didn't make any sense. But as the days turned into a week, Matt was enjoying the few hours a night he'd spend with Nox.

They would kiss and Nox would give him some little task to do when he got home. Nox never let him spend the night. The tasks were all sex related. When Matt had asked the first night after they'd started seeing each other he said, "What no homework?"

Nox grinned and told him how he wanted Matt to touch himself. It wasn't new, at least it wasn't always new. Sometimes it wasn't even about getting himself off, it was always about sex though - want he wanted to do, learn, things that made Matt squirm.

Saturday night rolled around and Nox sent him home to call Tiffany. He'd not spoken to her all week and they had very little to catch up on. Matt even started their conversation asking Tiffany what she was wearing. It leads to a very vigorous session. One he had whispered in Nox's ear the next morning when they had breakfast. Breakfast had gone cold by the time Matt had finished the tale and Nox had enjoyed the tale.

The next week proceeded much like the first. Matt liked the moments they would spend in Nox's bed. Matt's fingers wandered lower each time without Nox's instruction. Nox never instructed him when they were lying in bed. He would move out of reach when Matt tried to touch his back or caressed the scars he felt on Nox's body. But Matt never found the courage to ask him what they were from. Or why he couldn't touch his back, Nox always changed the subject as soon as it came up with a kiss or a gentle touch that brought Matt back to their foreplay.

Every night Matt thought about Nox in the comfort of his own bed. His fingers exploring new things and returning to the old stand-bys. Except Saturday, it was about Tiffany. The third time Matt told Nox about his night he admitted to Nox he'd been thinking about him, which brought the story to an abrupt end with Nox removing himself from under Matt. He didn't push Matt off just pulled away from him, far enough until he could stand up with Matt and stepped away. He was angry. Matt hadn't heard him like that before, he was always so carefree. He warned. "Don't think about me with her, Matthew. That's not fair to her. Don't think of her when you are with me. You will fuck everything up if you make a mistake. Just don't."

Nox had gone into the bathroom to cool down. He came out ready for bed, just boxers and a white tank top. Every muscle in his body was tight with the strain of his anger. He laid down and Matt stood staring at him. There was an awkward silence as Matt watched Nox curl under the blankets. He turned to leave without a good-bye when Nox took a deep breath, "Stay?" There was pain in his voice.

Matt took off his clothes and shoes and climbed into Nox's bed under the microfiber sheets in orange and curled around Nox's back. His chest pressed against the scars underneath the shirt. Nox whispered, "I'm sorry."

"There is nothing to apologize for, Nox." Matt reassured him.

"Yes there is. You just don't know it."

Matt kissed the back of his neck, "It's okay. I forgive you." Matt felt a tear fall on to his arm underneath Nox's neck. He pulled the other man closer and didn't say anything again just held him and let him feel whatever he needed to.

Nox broke the silence. "Tomorrow I need to go see my birth mother. Do you want to come with me?"

"Is this you bringing me home to meet your parents?" Matt teased.

Nox shook his head, "I don't want to go alone, you'd be my friend - nothing more."

Matt smiled against Nox's neck, "I'd love to."

# Too Great a Price

It was the first time Nox had asked Matt to stay. He'd wanted to many times before, but tonight he needed the comfort. Matt's mistake brought up more issues than it should have for a normal person. Seeing his mother to give her money meant seeing G and he never looked forward to that. Knowing G would ask about his lovers and his thoughts he didn't want Matt to fall prey to his mistakes. G had hurt him once for the same thing - thinking about someone else while in G's bed.

Matt had agreed to go with him, as a friend. Which wouldn't be easy for either of them to do, but Nox really didn't want to go into Hell's Kitchen alone.

He had fallen asleep in Matt's arms, and he woke the same way at 4am. He hadn't started awake, but he knew his dream had woken him. He never remembered them, only the beating of his heart remained. Nox pulled Matt's sleeping form against him tighter and tried to fall asleep again, but he couldn't. Matt's presence was comforting and that sent new worries through Nox. He knew this was all going to end with his heart getting ripped out. Anna encouraged him to let it happen. She said she'd be there to help pick up the pieces. Loving had never come easy for Nox - not even with his foster parents and siblings. He never told them how he felt. They knew, but he'd never said it.

The sun started peaking up over the horizon and Nox pulled out of Matt's arms and grabbed a shower before he started breakfast. It was a simple breakfast, a left over scramble. Matt didn't seem to mind the simple means. He claimed he liked the home cooked meal no matter what it was. So far Nox hadn't found anything the other man didn't eat.

Nox heard the sheets move behind him. When he turned around he saw Matt lying awake watching him. Nox smiled at him. "You should take a shower, Matthew."

He grinned. "I have nothing to wear except what I brought with me."

"Your jeans will have to work for the day. I'm sure you can find a shirt that fits in the drawer or closet."

Matt climbed out of bed and Nox turned to finish breakfast. The other man wrapped his arms around Nox's waist and kissed the back of Nox's neck. "I could go like this."

Nox laughed softly. "Yeah I'm sure my mother would like to see my boyfriend half naked."

"I won't be your boyfriend." Matt teased.

"She won't know that but I will. And G doesn't need any excuses." Nox added sadly. "Go take a shower, Matthew."

Matt kissed Nox's neck again and obliged him. Matt was rumpling the shirts in Nox's drawer looking for something, or nothing, just looking. Nox watched as he settled on a white t-shirt and went into the closet where Nox could no longer see him. "Who's G?"

"It's a long story. He was my first of many things. But I can't pass through Hell's Kitchen safely without seeing G first."

Matt stepped out of the closet with one of Nox's black button ups over his arms and was testing the fit. "Will you tell me the story over breakfast?"

Nox nodded, "If you take a shower now."

Matt smiled and nodded. "Deal." Matt started to shut the bathroom door behind him but turned and teased, "You could have gotten more out of that deal if you wanted to." Nox could only smile as Matt closed the door. The water started running and Nox finished up breakfast.

The food had only been plated for about a minute before Matt came out dressed and running the towel over his head to get the water from his head. Nox watched his boyfriend - yes boyfriend, he felt it in his heart sit down across from him still tapping his head to the side removing water from his ears with a cute smile plastered on his face.

Nox took a bite and chewed slowly then started his story without being prompted; Matt had done as he was asked, Nox didn't need the instructions that it was his turn. "G was my first sexual experience, but before that he protected the gay little boy that got beat up pretty much every day. The only person G couldn't protect me from was my step-father. I was 8 when I knew I liked boys. G did too, but he stood up for himself and it helped that his brother was high ranking in the gang that called Hell's Kitchen their territory. That same gang is very homophobic and beats down any one gay in the neighborhood - except G who now years later runs it. He's feared. Even though I have G's section to be me." Nox pointed at the tattoo of the G under his chin. "It says I'm G's property. Messing with me could be fatal. Dating me even worse. But G can only enforce it in Hell's Kitchen so when I left when I was 11 he had no claim on me - except for when I return."

"I found out the hard way, that if I didn't see G before seeing my mother then I could end up with more than a few broken ribs from others inside the gang, and worse treatment from G for not coming to him and stopping myself from getting hurt. I'm one of his favorites. So I have to see G before I can see my mother and pay the price for entering Hell's Kitchen." Nox looked down at his near empty plate, he hadn't realized he'd eaten so much in the telling of his life. "Usually it's sex. But I'm not sure I can pay that price. It might be a trip not worth taking, but I have to try."

"You do what you have to do Nox. I'm not going to hold it against you." Matt reassured him. "I mean I've a regular Saturday night date with my girlfriend."

"That's different Matthew. You actually like her. G is just sex. He's nothing more than a guy with whom I've shared gratification with, more so providing his than receiving my own but not really the point. I don't want to have sex with G."

Matt smiled, "As long as I'm not the price I'm okay. I promise. I'm ready when you are."

Nox smiled his gratitude. He offered Matt his hand and the other man took it with ease and they were out the door. The moment they stepped into the alleyway that lead out of the apartments Matt pulled his hand away and stuck it in his pocket with a grin, "Probably better this way."

Nox laughed softly and started walking towards the subway station. They sat down in a singular aisle and Nox leaned forward and whispered. "Don't act like me when you get there. If you can manage it keep your eyes averted particularly when looking at me, G won't like you checking me out. Even if he suspects it could go down nasty. Until he gifts me to someone else I'm his. He sees me as property. You need to treat me as such."

Matt nodded. "Fine, but you aren't his property Nox. You never were."

"I know, Matt. I know."

Matt frowned, "Well now I know this is serious."

Nox looked up confused. Matt smiled, "You called me Matt. There was not even a hit that you were holding back like usual."

Nox averted his gaze and could feel the blood rushing to his ears. "Matthew..."

Matt leaned back in his chair with a smug smile on his face.

The rest of the trip to Hell' Kitchen was quiet. Even they didn't speak. Nox took of his hoodie and offered it to Matt, "Put the hood up, we don't need Matthew Lucas seen in the hood."

Matt obliged him without a word of distrust. It was like an invisible line when Nox crossed the street. He stood up straighter, he had been slouching, it was his nerves. He was more afraid for Matt than he was himself, Nox was starting to doubt inviting Matt along now. He had to worry about him now too.

Nox saw the first body appear from a brown three story building in a hoodie. Nox saw the color on the cuff of his sleeve and stopped where he was. One of G's enforcers. Matt stopped a few feet away and walked back to stand with Nox. The man walking towards them light up in a smile and when he reached Nox he offered him a man. "Nox. It's been a few months."

"Pete, not since you got shot a while back. Good to see you out again." Nox took his hand. "I need to see G."

Pete started walking towards G's guarding Nox against any other gang members who might be on look out. "Who's your friend?"

"I didn't want to come alone. My mother was a royal bitch the last time. Saying it wasn't enough, she had more mouths to feed. Like it's my fault she's fucking every dick that walks through the door."

Pete laughed. "Don't say that around G."

Nox nodded. "I know man."

"Fair warning, he's a new strumpet and the boy's finer than you."

"Good maybe, he'll cut me lose." Nox said flatly.

"You know he won't. He swore he'd never gift you again."

"One can hope."

Nox stole a glance at Matt behind him, he was following his head down. "Pete this is Matthew."

Pete stopped and turned around with a proffered hand. "A friend of Nox's is a friend of mine, Matt."

Matt smiled, "You don't share Nox's propensity to call me by my full name?"

Pete laughed, "No, the fact that he did is telling."

Matt's mouth dropped and his eyes went wide in fear. Pete smiled, "Don't worry. Nox is my friend, I won't give him a beat down for liking men. As long as that man is not me. I got your back while he's with G."

Nox relaxed a little but it didn't last long as they stopped outside a front porch with three big men standing in front. Pete stopped and held out his hand to keep Matt from following Nox up the stairs. Nox walked slowly up the stairs with his hands at his side. "I need to see G."

A big black man stepped in front of Nox and pressed his body against his with the hopes to intimidate the fairy boy. Nox saw the insult in his eyes. "Tiny, I need to see G."

"He's busy." The man said in a small chipmunk like voice, which is why they called him Tiny. Other than the fact that it was ironic because his forearm was thicker than Nox's thigh.

Nox sighed. "I don't want to wait around all day, interrupt him."

Everyone on the porch scattered. Tiny didn't but he took a step back and blocked the door. "You do that fairy boy and you are in for trouble. G's breaking in a new boy."

"I'm not going to wait. Let me by." Nox pushed past Tiny who didn't move. Nox looked back as Pete was whispering to Matt. He couldn't worry about it right now. He opened the front door and there were fingers from the living room pointing to where G was as they were exiting the room. No one wanted to be around when G was interrupted. They feared G and for good reason. But none of them knew G like Nox did. He didn't frighten him. The worse he could do was shoot him, and he wasn't likely to do that for an infraction of this nature. Not when Nox sent the man who plagued all his boys to jail.

Nox didn't knock on the door G was behind. He could hear the tell-tale signs of G's attentions on the other side. When the door opened it revealed G's Hispanic ass bared with two little black legs between his. "G. I need to see my mother."

He continued what he was doing. "What the fuck Nox! Shut the door."

Nox obliged him. "I need to see my mother; I'm not going to wait till you finish."

G was a short man, but he was built like a truck. He pulled out of the boy beneath him his cock hard as a rock and swaying before him. "You can't fucking wait." He slapped Nox against the side of his head and pushed him into the door. "I should take this out of your skin." He pushed Nox down to his knees. "What are you willing to pay?"

"Not the usual." Nox kept his eyes on the ground. He wasn't afraid of G, but he respected the man.

Nox's comment caught G off guard and he let go of him and smacked the ass of the boy who he'd been riding. "Go to the bathroom. Don't finish without me. This won't take long."

G walked around his room butt naked without a care in the world. "What do you offer me instead boy?"

"I'll give you what I have on me. But it's all I can offer you." Nox pulled out a roll of money he'd been saving for his mother. She'd have to live without it this time.

"Then what's the point of you going if you give that to me?" G asked.

"I'll make up an excuse, say I got robbed or something."

G was looking out the window. "The boy with you the reason you won't pay?"

Nox nodded. "Yes, sir. He won't be any trouble I promise."

G took the roll of money from Nox's offered hand and took three of the top bills from it. "I've never known you to deny me for your flings."

"He's not a fling."

"He looks familiar."

Nox nodded. "Matthew Lucas."

"The pretty boy playing a gay boy. How very... He has a girlfriend." G observed.

"I know."

G handed the roll back to Nox. "This will do. Arrangement in the future with Pete, 1/10 is mine." He pulled Nox up by the scruff of his neck and brought Nox's neck to his mouth and sucked hard and fast on the tattoo leaving a very large and messy hickey on his neck. "Go see your mother Nox. The boys will be told about your future visits. Do not interrupt me again boy."

"As you wish G."

G slapped Nox on the ass clearly dismissing him as he went off in search of his new boy toy. Nox took a deep breath in relief and headed for the exit.

As Nox was leaving G yelled. "Nox!" Nox walked back into the room finding G holding his new friend by the scruff of his neck, "Your step-father is out. Be careful, I heard he was at the bar earlier. He's not been home yet."

Fuck! "Thanks G."

# Ghetto Up and Go

Matt was anxious. Not about the trip itself but how Nox was handling things. It was hard looking at the man who thought everything was a joke or his happy go lucky nature be so serious and hidden.

Outside while Nox went inside Pete pulled Matt aside. "Don't worry. G won't hurt Nox. Nox is his golden boy."

Matt paced nervously outside until he saw Nox walking out the front door. His shoulders were up around his neck and he was looking down. Tiny just glared at him. Pete smiled. "Dude. You got out quickly." Pete grabbed Nox's chin and turned his head and showed the other's looking. Matt tried not to gasp but he failed. Nox only gave him a half smile.

"Shall we?" Nox asked.

Matt nodded. Nox shook Pete's hand. "Thanks man." Pete returned both with a smile and they were on their way down the street.

They walked for two blocks in silence. "That looks like it hurts."

Nox looked over at him. "Only a little. A small price to pay for not having sex with him."

"What did you offer him?" Matt asked curiously.

"Money. He took the top of the roll I have for my mother. He wants a tenth next time and I don't need permission. I can probably just pay Pete and be good."

"Is that good?"

Nox shrugged. "Yes and no. It can mean he trusts me, or that he's getting tired of me and wants to get rid of me. Either way for now is fine."

Matt sighed, "I can't imagine living like that."

"You do what you have to survive." Nox smiled at Matt. "He told me something that isn't good though."

"What's that?"

"My step-father is out of jail."

"Why is that not good? You mom is probably happy."

Nox frowned and whispered, "He's the reason you can't touch my back, Matthew. You must have noticed that by now."

Matt nodded. "Oh. He abused you?"

Nox only nodded and opened up a gate in front of one of the houses. "Just be watchful, he could return anytime. Do not engage him if he does, Matthew please don't protect me."

Matt nodded but Nox knew from the look on his face he wouldn't necessarily listen.

Nox knocked on the door and a small black girl opened the door yelling back, "Mama, some white dudes are here."

Nox smiled, "Tala, stop."

"What it's the truth. Mama, Nox is here. Can I let him in? Andre's not here, I'm not supposed to open the door."

I nodded. "I know baby."" Nox knelt down and pulled the screen out and handed Tala the money. "Give this to Mama."

Tala scurried away from the screen door and an older boy with a black eye stood in front of the door. "Nox you should go before our Father comes back."

"Has he hurt anyone other than you?" Nox asked.

The boy shook his head. "No. I've kept him occupied till he passes out. He's not hurt our mother yet either. Go before he comes back. He'll be drunk."

"Andrew, be careful." Nox stood up and put his hand against the screen right before the boy on the other side paled. "Fuck!"

Matt watched as the man swung his fist into Nox's head yelling, "Your gay fucker won't save you this time boy!"

Andrew rushed out the door and stood in front of Matt. The boy shouted at him, "Stay here behind me."

"G never saved me from you." Nox quipped. "You did that all by your lonesome. Beat me until I nearly died. You fucked up. Got caught when Mama had to rush me to the hospital or lose her only living baby. You fucked it up." That earned Nox another punch to the face which Nox took. He could have moved, but it was better than letting Andrew take him on, Nox wished his little brother didn't stand up to him.

There was a deafening silence right after the hammer clicked and the shot rang out. Matt watched the blowback splatter all over Nox and Andrew in front of him. The boy was screaming. A woman, Matt could only assume was Nox's mother rushed from the screen door and collapsing next to her husband and cried. "No, no, no." She looked up at Nox and spat, "Your fucking friends are responsible." She stood up and started hitting Nox across the chest. "You killed him. You're a murderer. Fucking fairy. Get out."

Matt watched Nox collapse into himself as the words hit him harder than the fists of his step-father. Andrew pulled their mother way. "Nox, go. Before the cops come. Go! You know they'll take a while. Just go. Please."

Nox nodded and headed down the steps careful of the blood spatter. Matt followed him in stunned silence. They were two blocks away before they heard the sirens. Matt pulled off the hoodie and offered it to Nox. "Dude, blood everywhere."

Nox pulled it on over the blood and zipped it. They both kept their heads down and their voices low. "You didn't kill him, Nox."

"I know. G did. Or G's men did. He had me followed, like he always does. So no one messes with his property. He can't protect me from Andre without causing waves. But if he hits me and his guys see, he can shoot him. It's fair play in the street. I belong to G."

Matt nodded. "I'm sorry Nox."

They walked in silence past G's place, but Matt stopped and stood in front of the four men who were taking up residence on G's porch. Matt wasn't afraid. This was the right thing to do, even if it was still illegal. "I'd like to speak with Mr. G. I can wait if he's busy." He was polite, his hands weren't in his pockets presenting no weapons, he wasn't a threat. Just unarmed.

One of the men slipped inside and Matt glanced back to see Nox standing just outside the gated yard. No one approached them, no one hurt Matt. Nox was pretty much frozen in place watching things unfold.

G came out with a lazy grin. "Mr. G?"

"Inappropriate? I didn't think I could call you just G, I don't know you. You don't know me. But we have a common acquaintance."

G laughed, "If that's what you are calling it these days. Your boy looks scared." G nodded towards Nox and Matt turned to look with a smile on his face. "Yeah he just watched his step-father’s brain get blown out while they were having a sort of discussion with their fists."

G laughed at that. "So I've heard."

Matt smiled. "I'd like to thank you for ending that piece of shit." Matt took out cash and laid it on the ground. "It's all I have on me and it's not even enough to show the appreciation, but no one should hurt him."

G took the stairs down and picked up the money and pocketed it. He didn't even count it. "Appreciation?"

"It's all I can offer you. Thank you." Matt smiled. "I'm going to take him home; he looks like death warmed over."

G smiled and nodded. Matt turned on his heel bravely and joined Nox and put his arm around him to get him started again. "Come on let's go."

Nox whispered, "You turned your back on a gun toting gangster. You thanked him." Nox didn't sound like himself at all.

G yelled. "Nox."

Nox turned around, "His name should be present next time. I like him."

Nox nodded then quickly took Matt's hand in his and pulled him along.

They stood waiting for the next train, "What was that all about?"

Nox kissed Matt and whispered, "He gifted me to you. Until he takes me back I'm yours. Which is G's blessing. He won't ask for me back unless you do something horrible or don't want me anymore. It changes nothing between us except G won't kill you for being with me in Hell's Kitchen."

Matt smiled, "My name though? I think I understood that part."

"I'll show you when we get back to my place." Nox smiled.

# Relief

The train arrived and they got on, Nox could barely breathe. His step-father was dead. He was free of G and Matt was sitting next to him holding his hand despite the fact that they should not be doing so in public. They did nothing but sit in silence as the train rattled on.

Nox's place was still a few stops away when Matt got up, "Come with me."

They made their way off the train and Matt lead the way up the stairs and on to the streets. It was still early afternoon when Matt stopped in front of a diner and pulled up the door. "We can eat lunch here."

Nox nodded and opened the door for Matt and he walked through and waited to be seated. It wasn't what Nox thought on entering. It was casual but it was upscale. Not something he expected in the East Village. Matt sat down and the hostess set down their menus. "I'm Leslie, can I take your drink orders."

"Water with lemon please."

Matt nodded, "Same."

Nox smiled with pleasure at Matt's choice. "I'm going to wash up. Order for me?"

Matt nodded and Nox left to go to the bathroom to clean his face off, he could feel the dry blood stuck to his cheeks. The paper towels sucked for cleaning up blood, but they worked well enough. Nox splashed water in his face as he stood staring in the mirror thinking about everything. The weight on his shoulders felt lighter. There as a sudden relief in his soul. His step-father couldn't hurt him anymore.

G couldn't demand anything from him. He was free to be with the man he was quickly falling in love with. But he wasn't sure Matt felt the same way. He was intrigued with him, tempted to his bed by liquored feelings. Nox hoped it was of his own free will that he stayed.

Nox took a deep breath and went back to join Matt. He was on the phone when Matt sat down. "Yeah, alright, Tiffany. I'll pick you up at 10 in two days. I'm glad you got time off early. You staying for two weeks?"

Nox sighed. Tiffany was coming to town which meant he'd back off. Matt was still slightly in love with her. Nox couldn't hear her answer but from the look on Matt's face he wasn't happy with it. "Alright. Nox just got back. We were in the middle of a big topic when he got pulled away." Matt was lying to his girlfriend - that was good and bad.

Matt hung up the phone and Nox frowned, "You are lying to her?"

Matt nodded. "Only about you." Matt sighed, "She'll be in town for three weeks. Nox I don't want..."

Nox smiled, "Shhh. I know. Let's just eat and we'll deal with things as they come."

Matt laughed, "So unlike you."

"I've had a few changes of heart in the past hour or so."

"Do you want to talk about it?" Matt asked.

"I don't know. I have so many things running through my head. And the one thing I want to talk about I can't talk about here." Matt blushed. Nox smiled. "Thank you for being you. You thanked G. Freeing me."

Matt smiled. "So does this mean you owe me?" Matt was flirting.

Nox grinned, "Maybe. Did you have something in mind?"

Matt chuckled softly, "Maybe."

Matt didn't get to elaborate as the waiter brought out their plates. It smelled good. Matt ordered surf and turf for both of them and with Nox's he ordered a very large side of vegetables. Matt had French fries. Nox reached across the table and took one of his fries. "I'm not opposed to fried food you know."

Matt laughed. "No but in the time I've known you, not including the time we were pretending to ignore each other, have you ever eaten fast food."

Nox stole another fry off Matt's plate. "I will have to rectify that. Not that I've seen you eat more than a few French fries."

They ate in companionable silence for a little while. Nox smiled. "My step-father is dead. He can't hurt Andrew again. Or Tala, Nick, Mia or anyone else."

Matt added, "He can't hurt you."

"I know. But I can handle it."

Matt nodded. "But you should have to, Nox. No one should hurt you, not then, not now, not ever."

Nox smiled. "Are you going to protect me, Matthew?"

"If I have to."

The rest of their dinner they ate in silence sharing looks and smiles but not any words. It was a good dinner. Nox enjoyed the steak it was perfectly cooked. The vegetables were seasoned well. Nox couldn't have done better himself. Though if he'd done so at his house they could have touched and kissed making Nox's mind wandered as desert arrived.

Nox looked up at Matt. "Desert?"

Matt smiled, "I figured you could use something sweet." The waiter poured two cups of espresso into small cups with a hint of mint added. "And something to pick you up."

Nox waited until the waiter left. "Do you have plans, Matthew?" Nox took a bite of the berry tart Matt had ordered him and it melted in his mouth. "Oh. my. god." Matt smiled and Nox sipped at the espresso in front of him. It didn't quite go with the tart but it was good too, a decent brew.

Matt watched Nox eat the tart and nibbled on his own. "I take it you don't want that." Matt just smiled. Nox raised his hand for the waiter with the look from Matt he hoped no one else noticed. "Check." The waiter brought it to them and Nox paid for it. Matt started to object but he didn't say anything more.

They took the train to Nox's place it was not a long trip and they could have walked but neither of them really wanted to wait any longer than they had to.

# My Fantasy

Matt and Nox got off the train with electricity flowing between them. Sharing a glance but never really looking at the other person. Matt could see the change in Nox, it was like the world had been lifted from his shoulders. His step-father must have plagued his life more than he let on. Matt still didn't understand what had happened with G or even begin to understand how someone could feel like they were owned. Yet Nox felt that, and was relieved to be free from that burden.

There were a lot of unspoken things happening between them and lunch at the diner had only added to it, but they hadn't eaten since early that morning and Nox hadn't eaten well at least not compared to how he normally ate in the mornings Matt had spent with him.

The shared glances continued as they walked side by side to Nox's apartment. Matt went to go down the alley way but Nox just smiled and nodded his head towards the bar with the blinking open sign. It was probably better that way, to prolong the inevitable, Matt was certain things would end up in bed tonight. It was a scary yet exciting thought. He'd thought about Nox on many occasions. His head spun with each new thing they did together, or alone as was usually the case.

Nox held the door open for Matt and he went inside followed by the other man. The place was empty except for Anna who looked up from behind the bar with a smile. Matt noticed the way she looked at Nox and knew if things had been different Anna would have pursued his boyfriend. It still felt weird saying that.

Nox headed straight for the juke box and dropped a few quarters in the machine and pressed buttons. A soft song played with a good tempo, but it was more ballad than his classic get-up and dance type music he threw on. Matt had taken a seat at the bar where Anna placed a glass of water with lemon next to Matt, "What you having?"

Nox answered for him. "He'll have a glass of white wine, and we'll take the rest upstairs." Nox took a swallow of his water and Matt watched his muscles in his neck and his body tightened and he had to swallow hard to keep his mouth from hanging open. He wore little makeup today but his hair was spiked in his classic way with highlights in sapphire blue. When he had time to change the color Matt really didn't know but he managed it from time to time always surprising Matt.

Anna set the wine glass in front of Matt and he took a sip. As soon as the glass was down on the bar, Nox offered him a hand, his palm up and inviting with the blue painted nails glinting with glitter against the bar lights. "Dance with me, Matthew?" Nox asked. Matt loved the way he said his name. It had only gotten worse over time, the small effect his own name caressing Nox's tongue had over him. Matt shuttered and Nox grinned at him.

Matt took his hand and Nox lead them out onto the dance floor of the empty bar. Nox pulled him close, he could feel the other man against his body. They'd done this before in privacy of the studio apartment upstairs, but this was the first time that Nox had let them show any sort of physical contact in a public setting. Nox was always more careful that Matt was. He took more concern when it came to Matt's own reputation than he himself did. But then Matt wasn't used to hiding in the shadows. Nox was - even if he was openly into men.

A press of lips against his neck Matt brought him from his thoughts and he wrapped his arms around Nox's waist. The other man was a few inches shorter than him, and the slight height advantage was nice. Nox's chocolate brown eyes were full of desire as they moved slowly in a circle around the wooden floor. Nox's hands playing gently with the tag of Matt's shirt and the back of his neck sending shivers down his spine.

Finally, they were alone but all Matt wanted to do was stare at the beautiful man before him. It was not unusual for him to want that in Nox's presence. Nox usually obliged him such luxuries as it allowed him to watch Matt's responses to the light touches against his body.

Anna dimmed the lights and flipped the open sign off and locked the door down for lunch. Matt was fairly certain she was closing up for them and that was the only reason. Nox pulled Matt closer, not that it was possible to be any closer. The press of his lips against his ignited every nerve in his Matt's body.

Matt smiled breathless when Nox pulled away. "Thank you."

"For what?" Matt said resting his head on Nox's shoulder and brushing his lips against his favorite spot on Nox's neck.

Nox let go a small moan and pulled Matt against his body. Matt remembered watching Nox dance with girls on the dance floor, how his body moved against theirs. How their bodies entwined together gracefully? Matt imagined it didn't quite look the same with two men, but god did it feel erotic. Nox's knee was between his and he could feel the press of Nox groin against his hip. Matt sucked softly against the soft skin on Nox's neck and the other man's head fell back exposing more so that Matt could latch on harder.

Nox whispered, "I remember the first time you did that."

Matt blushed. He didn't. The first time he was drunk. But Nox clearly remembered and Matt licked and kissed the now blooming bruise before moving to Nox's lips. "Did I make you weak in the knees then?"

Nox chuckled against Matt's ear and bit softly on his ear lobe sending sparks down Matt's body. "You made me weak when you said I smelled good. Your mouth made me forget what I was doing."

"And now?" Matt smiled against Nox's neck before he bit again this time on the other side.

"Hmmmmm." Nox hummed in Matt's ear as his hands ran down Matt's spine and grabbed on to his ass pulling his body fully against Nox's own. The pupil's in Nox's eyes were blown wide and he moved against Matt's groin in a way that Matt could only wish was less restricted by clothes. Nox smiled and leaned up and kissed Matt biting at his bottom lip. His voice when he pulled away was full of lust and heavy with desire, that made Matt twitch in his pants. "I want to make your fantasies come true. Matthew, how can I make that happen?" Matt's body felt like Jell-O, unable to move with the feel of the other man against him.

Matt pulled away with a smile and took Nox by the hand and moved towards the stairs up to his landing, "Does that line always work?"

Nox grinned as he picked up the wine bottle and two glasses Anna had left for them. "Almost always."

"Almost?"

Nox laughed, "Sometimes I get slapped. But the girl is usually too far gone."

"So not a line you use on guys? Why do I rate?" Matt teased.

Nox stopped and pushed Matt up against the stairwell wall, the railing making an awkward curve in Matt's body but the closeness of Nox's body against his made him forget the discomfort. Nox was grinning widely at him. "Most guys don't let me romance them." Nox kissed him eagerly. "Most guys don't like the way I say their name, Matthew." He said his name extra sensually this time and Matt couldn't stop the small moan that escaped his throat. Nox continued purring against his lips. "You like when I say your name, Matthew." Nox kissed him hard and pulled away again, whispering, "Matthew."

He really did love the sound of his name coming from Nox, but he had little time to collect himself before Nox was pulling him up the stairs to his apartment. Matt wrapped his arms around Nox's waist and waited with baited breath for the other man to get the door open. Matt's fingers wandered to the button on Nox's jeans and below. Nox let out a stifled moan as the door clicked open.

Nox turned around in Matt's arms and walked backwards into the studio apartment. He maneuvered him towards the bed depositing the wine bottle and glasses in the sink as he passed. Matt kicked the door shut behind as an afterthought, he was too wrapped up in kissing Nox's plush lips and gliding his tongue inside his mouth tasting the lemon on his tongue.

Matt managed to unbutton Nox's jeans when they tumbled onto the bed. But that was the extend they managed before their hands wound underneath shirts to touch skin. Matt ran his fingers over the sides of the man below him. The soft taunt skin over muscles, the random scars that Matt's fingers caressed and Nox's eyes would go wide before he relaxed into Matt's fingers with each kiss. Nox let Matt raise his shirt up his body, kissing his chest and pushing the shirt over his head. Matt trapped his arms against the bed and ground his hips against his lovers. Nox let out a groan of pleasure before freeing himself from the shirt and bringing his hands back to Matt's body.

Matt sat up and stared down at the lovely man before him taking in the sight he'd yet to see. The small round scars scattered across his arms and his shoulders. A very large patch with repeated burn marks marred one shoulder. Matt's fingers caressed the scar as Nox unbuttoned his shirt. Nox winced but said nothing. There was a sense of fear about him, but Nox continued to let Matt touch the scar tenderly until he was free of his own shirt.

Leaning down Matt ran his tongue over the offending mark and Nox's painted fingernails dug into Matt's shoulders as he bit back a groan of pleasure. Matt smiled against the scar and kissed him tenderly before he whispered, "No one should ever hurt you."

Matt pulled Nox's pants and boxers off and stood at the end of the bed looking down on his lover for the first time. His lips parted and Matt pulled off his pants revealing his own long hard body and Nox's eyes went wide with the sight and he bit his bottom lip. Matt smiled as he climbed over the man his body just above the other man's not touching anything except where his cock hung down. Nox shuddered underneath him. Matt put his body on top of the other man and the skin to skin contact was overwhelming. They both moaned into each other's mouth.

Nox was groping around the nightstand and managed to pull open the drawer. Reaching in however posed a problem and Nox had to sit up and Matt took advantage of the new position and wrapped his legs around Nox and kissed on his neck and ran his fingers over Nox's back. The man froze under his fingers and his body tensed. Matt could feel the change in his breathing from breathless to frightened. Matt laid is palms against his lovers back and moved them firmly up and down with a tender touch. Nox pulled back and let his head fall back as Matt felt the scars, the ridges and holes that the scars created.

Matt watched Nox's expression as he ran his fingers over his back. The fear fell away with each tender touch and Nox regained his composure and reached into the drawer and pulled out a string of condoms and lube and tossed them to the side for later. Matt didn't think he intended for them all to join them on the bed, but his fingers weren't quite working and he was frustrated if the soft grunt was any indication.

Nox closed the drawer and pulled Matt closer still sitting in his lap. Matt's fingers tightened on Nox's back and he let out a moan. Matt kissed Nox hard and opened his mouth to the other man, their tongues danced together.

They fell down against the bed and Nox adjusted underneath Matt. His voice was needy, "Please." Matt leaned to the side shell shocked. He wanted to give his boyfriend what he wanted but sudden panic overwhelmed him.

Nox leaned up and kissed him softly and whispered. "It's okay." Nox's head fell back as he slide his hand behind him and Matt watched his expression change as his finger entered himself. Matt fell against Nox and rolled him over, Nox grinned against his cheek and kissed it softly. "What do you want Matthew?"

"Inside. you." Matt begged.

Nox sat up and opened a foil pack with his teeth and unrolled it over Matt. Matt's body bucked in the sensual touch. Nox applied a small amount of lube over the condom before he rose up over him and pushed himself down around Matt's cock. Matt's hip thrust up and Nox held him down by the waist, "Slowly Matthew. I'm not ready for you, you'll hurt me." Matt froze and closed his eyes at the overwhelming feeling of his first anal experience.

Nox whispered, "Matthew. Look at me."

Matt's eyes popped up and he watched as Nox's head fell backwards in pleasure and came to look down on him when he was fully engaged His mouth hung open in pleasure and Matt's fingers dug into his hip and pushed up against him. Nox smiled, "Soon, my love, soon."

Nox rocked slowly against Matt and Matt groaned as Nox flexed around him. Matt drove up inside Nox and his head rolled back again. His breathing had quickened and he fell against Matt. "All yours, Matthew."

Matt took the hint and rolled them over without losing any contact and Nox grunted with the loss of breath when Matt pushed hard into him. Nox was coming undone beneath him, his breathing was erratic, his pulse speeding in his throat and Matt latched on sucking harder with each thrust into this wonderfully gorgeous man. Matt felt Nox orgasm underneath him, the hot semen shooting between them. Nox moaned his name, "Oh god Matthew." And Matt lost all control all sense of being as he finished one last thrust and came inside pushing deeper wanting to sink farther inside and become one with him.

# Meeting the Girlfriend

Matt collapsed on top of Nox and kissed him softly. Matt's phone started ringing and Matt groaned. Nox knew who it was, Tiffany had been calling for the past thirty minutes. Nox sat up his still around Matt's chest. "You better get that. She's been trying for thirty minutes or so."

Matt sat up quickly and searched for his pants that were at the end of the bed and fished his phone out of the pile of clothes and blankets. "Shit."

Nox got up and was cleaning himself up in the bathroom when he heard him call her back, "Hey sorry, Tiff, we must have had the music too loud. I didn't hear my phone." He lied yet again to his girlfriend. Nox sighed and brought Matt a wet wash cloth to wipe down with while he sat on the phone.

Nox pulled his boxers on and a tank top from his drawers and sat down quietly on his bed and laid down watching Matt converse with his girlfriend.

Matt frowned, "Wait, your ten minutes from my place. I'm not home."

Nox couldn't hear the other side of the conversation. He continued on after listening to her. "I'm at Nox's place. We were talking and working on a new dynamic for Tobias." Lie number three that Nox knew about.

"I don't know, Tiff, he doesn't exactly invite people over casually." He paused. "Fine, I'll ask." Matt held the phone against his chest, "She wants to know if she can just stop by here, then we can all go get something to eat."

Nox sighed, "It's your love life not mine. I'm not hungry, we just ate. Have her meet you downstairs, Matthew?" Nox got up and started rummaging through his closet and tossed out a shirt that would fit Matt and one for himself. He made sure it was nice and bright, persimmon orange would do the trick with a pair of faded blue jeans with rips through. He put on a white t-shirt underneath. The shirt he'd picked for Matt was the only one that matched the color in his hair exactly. He smirked at the thought of them matching slightly.

Matt had finished relaying the message. "Nox. I'm sorry."

"For what?"

"I forgot that Tiffany was flying in soon. She got an earlier flight." Matt sighed.

"It's okay. You didn't plan this. Go take a shower, Matthew, you smell like me and sex." Matt did as he was instructed with a frown. He could see the discontent on Nox's face. He could feel it weighing on him. She had to come in today, and now. They had so much more that could have been. Fuck!

Nox grabbed Matt's boxers and pants the sapphire blue shirt and laid them over the sink in the bathroom. He watched the shadows of Matt washing himself through the curtain and smiled. He was going to miss Matt. "Don't take long. She'll be here any minute. You'll have to find an excuse to why your hair is wet."

Matt laughed, "We had a good workout before practicing an upcoming scene."

Nox leaned against the bathroom door. "Lie number 4 within my hearing. Can you keep this all straight?"

Matt turned off the water and opened the curtain and Nox openly stared at the man before him, the remains of the shower running rivulets down his body making Nox swallow. When Nox's eyes met Matt's again Matt was grinning. "I'm glad you like what you see. I hate lying but I don't know what else to do."

"Tell her the truth, maybe?" Nox said as he stepped out of the bathroom. At the dresser he applied eyeliner in thick broad strokes. He saw Matt standing in the bathroom doorway watching him through the mirror. Nox smiled. "How do you want me to act, Matthew? Like the gay man you've been hyping me up as or be myself? Or like I act around work."

"Yourself Nox. I don't want you to be anyone but yourself."

"In front of your girlfriend? Do you want me to call you Matthew?" Nox asked flatly.

"I don't care. I like the way you say my name. Tiffany will think it's just part of your charm."

Nox nodded and closed the distance between them. "I will try not to say it with too much desire, Matthew."

Matt laughed, "She already thinks you are crushing on me. So desire all you want." Matt kissed Nox softly. "Let her think the truth about one of us."

Nox smiled. "So you want me to try to be suave and sexy and get you in my bed?"

Matt blushed, "You've already managed that. She just doesn't need to know that. Besides, it'll be good to see you trying to woo me."

Nox laughed, "Oh I wooed you very well, Matthew. You were oblivious to my charms at first, but they worked."

Matt continued to blush as Nox stroked his cheek. "I am falling completely head over heels for you Matthew. This is going to be a very hard few weeks for me."

Matt nodded. "I know. Me too. But..." Matt's phone rang with Tiffany's ring tone. He sighed and answered it, "We'll be down in a minute."

Nox headed for the door and Matt grabbed his hand and plastered a long passionate kiss on to his lips. Nox was smiling as they headed down the stairs and into the bar. A gorgeous blond with bright green eyes stood in the doorway with several suit cases leaning against the wall. Nox watched as Matt walked to her and wrapped her in an embrace and a gentle kiss. Nox felt the first stab of jealousy strike and he had to walk to the bar where a glass of lemon water waited for him. Anna was hiding a glare behind her own beer. Anna liked Matt up until that point.

Matt pulled Tiffany's things away from the door near the coat rack and walked her over to them. Nox held out his hand to Tiffany, "You must be Tiffany. I've heard so much about you." It was a lie, he'd heard next to nothing about his boyfriend's girlfriend and he wanted to keep it that way.

Her smile was perfect. "You must be Nox."

She took his hand and Nox lifted it to his lips and kissed the knuckle on her third finger. "I am. A pleasure."

Tiffany clapped with delight, "Oh he's just as charming as you said he was."

Anna scoffed from the other side of the bar and Nox laughed. Tiffany turned to Anna with her dingy brown hair in braids and glasses. Nox could see Tiffany weighing Anna's worth in that one glance, she frowned then turned it into a bright smile. "What you don't think so?"

Nox grinned, "Anna is immune to my charms."

"Nox, dear, I'm not immune to them, I know better than to get excited when you use them. I refuse to be one of those girls who finds herself in your bed wanting more and you walk out of their lives forever." Anna quipped with a perfect flash of her pearly whites and a twinkle in her eye. She had once fallen for his charms, Nox remembered the almost night of drunk debauchery. Sadly, Anna came to her senses before any damage was done. Nox was grateful now for their friendship and wouldn't change it for the world.

Tiffany asked, "Wait. I thought he was gay?"

Anna choked on her laughter. "Matt, did you forget to tell your girlfriend that the man you were eliciting character inspiration from was very into girls as well?"

Matt blushed slightly, "It never came up about his actual orientation. Tiffany assumed since Tobias was gay, that my informant was completely gay as well."

Anna set two glasses of white wine on the bar for Tiffany and Matt. Tiffany scooped up the wine and asked, "Water, please?"

"Since when don't you drink wine, Matt?" Tiffany asked.

He smiled, "Just need water right now." Nox smiled to himself, Matt was easily manipulated into drinking less and he was doing it without thinking about it now.

Nox added, "His last drinking episode had him puking on my doorstep."

Tiffany giggled. "I'm so sorry. He's a horrible drunk."

Nox waved it away. "He was fine after he stopped puking on me that is."

Matt blushed. Nox knew he didn't remember any more of that night than he had their first one. But he knew he'd come on to Nox then too.

"Matt, darling. I want to do something fun. Take me dancing. Call Jon and Evelyn and we'll go someplace fun. Nox you and Anna should come too."

Anna grinned with a mischievous glint in her eye. "Lavo should be hopping tonight."

"It's always hopping, Anna."

Anna grinned, "You would know."

"Is he a dance connoisseur? Tiffany asked Anna.

Both Matt and Anna laughed, and said simultaneously, "You could say that."

"Ooh." Tiffany cozied up to Nox and smiled up at him with a smile meant to suck up to him, "Please tell me all about it over dinner."

Nox looked to Anna and then down at the girl cooing against his chest. "Fine." This was not going to go well. "Anna will you meet us at Lavo around 8?"

She nodded, "Love to." She smirked. "Wouldn't miss it."

# Let's Go Dancing

No it wasn't awkward at all, Matt thought to himself as his girlfriend snuggled with his boyfriend. Nox didn't look the least bit happy. His fake smile was splayed across his lips, the way he held himself said he was trying very hard not to roll his eyes. Even Anna noticed, but Tiffany was completely oblivious to the elephant in the room.

"Let me get shoes on." Nox said and Tiffany looked down at the ground and scoped out the bare feet that had padded down the stairs.

Tiffany grinned up at him and waved her hand over his body like the fashionista she was, "Put on something fabulous for me, darling. Club worthy."

Anna stifled a groan, "Tiffany, you don't have any clue what you are saying if you plan to go someplace respectable with Nox in tow."

"Oh come on, he's probably got outfits that you could wear too."

Matt watched the glare that came over Nox's face before he quickly hid it behind his glass of water. Tiffany had stated a stereotype and Matt knew she would regret her statement. The last time he'd seen Nox mad over that he'd started playing gay hard.

Nox started for his apartment, "Give me ten." Matt watched him carefully not stomping up the stairs. Matt looked at Anna and she was frowning up after him.

Anna sighed, "Matt, you will have to watch his temper. And do not let him drink tonight. Not even a swallow."

Matt nodded. But Tiffany asked, "Why?"

Anna just shared a look with Matt. Matt sighed, "Likely because he's in a foul mood. He had a busy morning before I showed up."

Tiffany said innocently, "He doesn't seem upset."

Anna sighed and walked to the end of the bar, "You don't know him like I do." She gestured to Tiffany's things. "You can leave your stuff here and stop by after the club to take your things to Matt's."

Matt suggested, "Or we can have them delivered. I could have Pete call Dawn and have her do it."

Anna gave Matt that look, "Really Dawn."

Tiffany asked, "Who's Dawn?"

"Oh just a random girl Nox is banging." Matt forgot that. Fuck! Yeah that wouldn't go over well.

But Tiffany was classically herself, "I'm sure Nox won't mind."

Nox came down the steps just then, "What won't I mind?" Tiffany turned to look and her jaw dropped. Nox was walking down the stairs in the same outfit he'd gone to Lavo in the last time. The black leather pants were tight against his skin and Matt didn't have to imagine what lie beneath he had already seen - he knew. The shirt hid little, his scars neatly hidden by the sheer black fabric. He had a leather jacket in his hand. His hair was still colored with sapphire blue but he added glitter to it and to his make-up. He sparkled in the bar light.

Matt wasn't the only one staring. Both women looked at Nox with wide bright eyes filled with desire. Anna was the first to look away and at Matt who had stopped looking only moments before. Tiffany clapped her hands, "See I told you he'd be stunning."

Nox wore a black cord tight around his neck with a pendant on it. Nox stepped close to the bar and picked up his water and sipped when Anna noticed it too. She gasped and picked the gold pendant up off his neck and looked at it then directly at Matt. Nox grinned at her but he didn't look at Matt.

Anna asked, "Can I have a moment with Nox before you go. It's important."

Matt nodded, "We'll get a cab."

Matt lead Tiffany out of the bar and stood in the doorway while he dialed for a cab company.

"Nox. G? He knows? He gave you to Matt?"

Matt didn't hear Nox's reply as the cab company picked up and he had to pay attention to the conversation. He felt Nox stand behind him and when he'd hung up Nox whispered, "If any of G's men see me they'll think it's a game. If he knows you have a girlfriend, all deals are off."

Matt nodded. "Okay." He paused and took a step forward as the cab pulled up. Matt opened the door for Tiffany and she climbed inside, Matt followed and Nox was next to him. It was a tight squeeze more so since Matt purpose left Tiffany enough room for her purse between them so he could feel the leather against his leg. This was going to be a tough night for everyone.

While in the cab Matt called Jon and Evelyn and told them to meet them at Lavo. Tiffany wanted to go dancing.

Matt was surprised by how chatty Nox was with Tiffany. He was the only one who felt awkward in the situation apparently. But Matt membered Nox was used to playing the game - that he could separate himself from what he felt. Nox wore the leather coat over the sheer shirt and for that Matt was thankful, he wasn't sure he could stop staring if he hadn't.

Tiffany went through three glasses of wine at dinner. Nox hadn't touched the one glass Tiffany insisted he try. He'd brought the wine to his lips but Matt watched as he set it down with the wine barely wetting his lips. How he'd love to kiss them and taste the wine on them.

Matt had to avert his gaze and calm his mind several times. Tiffany's hand had strayed under the table one too many times when he'd been staring at Nox from the rim of his water glass. She smiled seductively at Matt thinking she was the reason for his growing problem. Let her he thought to himself.

When dinner was over they took a cab to Lavo on the other side of the City and waited in line. Anna was already there and Nox had stopped to talk to the bouncer at the front of the line. Anna was wearing a tight black dress that barely covered her ass and thigh high stockings with lace at the top. The black high heels giving her enough height to see over Tiffany's head. Tiffany smiled at her, "You look hot." She kissed the other woman softly on the lips.

Matt raised his eye brow at Anna who frowned when she saw him looking at her. "Don't get any ideas. I'm here to make sure Nox behaves."

Matt nodded. "Good idea. Though I don't think you need to worry."

Anna shook her head, "Oh I have to worry."

Jon and Evelyn arrived at nearly the same time. Nox waved them all over and they got in before the rest of the line. It sometimes pays to be a regular. And for Nox it was more than that, he and the bouncer floated in the same circles.

Nox took Anna's hand and they gravitated towards the jumping dance floor. Jon and Evelyn came with Matt and Tiffany to a table. Matt ordered a bottle of white wine and enough glasses for their party. Though he was certain Tiffany would drink the whole bottle alone. They would normally split it, but now that he'd been seeing Nox regularly he rarely drank anything unless Nox handed it to him.

30 minutes into the night Nox and Anna drifted their way. Anna sat down and poured a glass of wine. She waited while Nox poured one and pushed it towards Matt before he sat down, he took a sip of Anna's - a real sip and Anna swatted his hand. Nox pulled Anna down into his lap and whispered in her ear too low for anyone else to hear.

Tiffany leaned into Matt and whispered, "They are cute together, you sure they haven't hooked up?"

Matt nodded, "Yeah. They are best friends."

Tiffany bit his ear and pouted, "I want a gay best friend."

Matt frowned, "Don't let Nox hear you say that."

Tiffany unfurled from her seat and pulled Matt's hand and stumbled towards the dance floor, "Let's dance."

Matt followed. He saw Anna pull Nox out on the dance floor. He didn't look like he wanted to go but he went anyway.

Tiffany saw them dancing next to them and moved closer and started dancing with Anna and Nox. Anna's grin was mischievous as she moved around both Tiffany and Nox flowed with her Matt saw it happen right before his eyes. Anna had set Nox to dance with him and Tiffany was none the wiser while Anna curled around the other woman. Nox's hands strayed helplessly to Matt's body and Matt had to close his eyes to keep from thinking about earlier. Tiffany was moving in front of him. Anna in front of her. But the only thing Matt could think about was Nox's behind him.

Tiffany turned and faced him with Anna at her back and she looked past Matt at the look on Nox's face. She smiled salaciously, "He so wants you, Matt."

Matt just nodded. He wanted him too.

Tiffany was moving against Matt and he was feeling guilt washing through him. Nox whispered from behind him, "I can't do this anymore, Matthew. I'm going to take Anna home."

Matt nodded. "See you at work."

Nox took Anna's hand and she followed dutifully behind him casting Matt a sad glance before turning her attention to Nox. Tiffany pulled him against her and he put all thoughts of Nox away for now. Nox would be angry if he spent time thinking about him while he was with Tiffany. And he didn't want to disappoint Nox.

# Dancing the Fear Away

Nox had tried to ignore Matt, but he was failing miserably. Dancing with him had proven to be disastrous to his state of mind so he'd left early with Anna. She hadn't minded though she was disappointed to leave so soon.

"Really Nox. It was fine, the blonde was oblivious."

Nox shook his head, "Not completely, she knew I wanted him. That's only going to cause problems."

Anna smiled and raked her fingers against the leather cord against his neck, "This is amazing. I can't believe G let you go."

Nox sighed, "He won't let it be if he finds out about Tiffany."

Anna nodded, "It's all a game, we know. Tiffany is just his clueless scapegoat to stay straight in the limelight."

She wasn't far from the truth, but she didn't need to know that. "Matt adores you." Anna cooed.

"All the more reason to avoid him until she's gone." Nox vowed. And for the first week that was fine and well. Tiffany kept Matt busy in their free time, and Nox was still busy on the other pilot episode and others were working with the actors.

The second week saw a break in his schedule and Nox had more time to work with them. Matt convinced Tiffany to go take a lunch with Dawn at her side as a distraction while they worked. It made things a little less awkward, but Nox could feel the tension between them. Though it was passable, nothing more strained than they had done the last time.

But the third week Nox was done with the pilot and was working solely with the series again. He and Matt had several sessions alone. The first went smoothly. The second not so well.

Matt had come in wearing shorts without a t-shirt, he was pulling it over his head when he came into the studio. Nox couldn't help but stare at the body he'd not touched in over two weeks. Matt caught his gaze and they were almost close enough to touch when Tiffany walked in. "Oh there you are darling. Can I steal you away for a moment?"

Matt turned and floated towards Tiffany like a moth to a flame except he knew it could burn him. Nox turned around when she didn't move out of the room to wrap her arms around Matt's neck and planted a wet passionate kiss against his lip. Nox could hear her panting when they broke part. "Just a reminder, that he's mine." She smiled at Nox as she left.

Nox saw the sadness in Matt's eyes as he walked towards him. He didn't apologize though for her words. All part of the charade. They went through the strained motions of the exercise they were working on. Tiffany showed up when Nox was physically manhandling Matt's body into position after the 100th attempted. She quipped when Nox dismissed Matt to work on it later, "I bet you liked having your hands on my man."

Nox felt the hatred for the girl rise in his stomach. He sneered at her and turned around to deal with the equipment that hung lifeless from the rafters. Matt had stepped out of the room to get a drink of water outside the fountain and Tiffany came up behind Nox and smacked his ass, "If you weren't so gay, I'd take you to bed with us." Her smile was lust-filled. "But you'd be more into Matt than me. And that's such a pity."

Nox leaned down and growled. "I wouldn't join your bed even if you paid me."

Tiffany slapped him just as Matt walked back in the room. She cried, "He's such a pig Matt, why are you even friends with him."

Matt sighed and pulled Tiffany away from Nox. He cast Nox an apologetic look as Tiffany regaled the false tale she was weaving to make her look better. Fuck this, Nox thought to himself.

That night he'd gone down stairs to Anna's bar and ordered a glass of wine. Anna only grudging gave him the wine seeing the look on his face. After the first glass Nox started rambling at Anna. "I think I need to get over Matt. He's pussy whipped by a demon girl. I don't have a chance."

Anna sighed. "Nox, Matt likes you. He's just got this image."

"Fuck his image, Anna. What about what I want?"

"What about G Nox?"

"Let him come at me. It'd be a relief to be wanted again. Even if it's as his property." Nox could taste the venom in his words.

Nox knocked back the glass of wine and tapped for another one as he got up from his seat and moved to the juke box and a dropped a few quarters in and set a few songs. His movements weren't very fluid as he danced with a light buzz. He'd look up and see Anna giving him a concerned look before going about her own business.

The last of the songs ended and Nox drank the warm glass of wine on the bar and tapped for another Anna shook her head. "No Nox. I won't let you do this."

Nox reached across the bar and grabbed another bottle and poured it into the glass. It wasn't wine, it was far stronger and he downed two shots before he dropped cash on the bar and walked - no staggered out the door.

The street outside was busy with people and cars and they all pretty much avoided him anyway. He was wearing his tights and shorts and people gave him weird looks as he pranced past them. He thought it was prancing but he knew he was wasted. He never got wasted. How had Matt fucked him up so bad?

Nox walked all the way to Benji's bar. He didn't stop to say hi to anyone just went straight for the juke box there and started setting up songs. There was a soft groan when the first song started playing - it was a fluff piece that would set the tone for the night. Nox smiled. Soft soothing and completely not meant for a bar yet there it was. The song was depressing but Nox didn't like it for the lyrics, it was perfect for what he needed - to dance slowly with precision. Well with as much precision as his drunken self could muster.

Nox found the rhythm and he danced. No one would disturb him here. No one would give him the look that said he was fucking things up. But he was done with Matthew Lucas. That was the lie he was going to try to dance into his head.

# Your Fantasy

Tiffany was getting ready to leave for a flight in the morning. She was cutting her visit short when a sudden contract came available in Milan. She couldn't refuse and Matt didn't blame her. It would be good to get back to normal.

They'd had a good time. Though Matt couldn't help thinking about Nox when he was alone. He hadn't had any time to talk to him. He missed talking to him. He missed other things but he really missed talking to Nox.

Tiffany interrupted him, "Your phone is ringing, darling."

Matt came to and heard his default ring tone singing softly in his pocket. "Hello?"

Anna's voice was heavy with concern, "Matt, are you busy?"

"No. What's up Anna?"

"Nox has been drinking. Benji called and said he's been on the dance floor for three hours straight with no break. He's scaring away the customers with the music. I can't leave. Can you go get him? Please?" She begged.

Matt sighed, "I'll see what I can do. Tiffany is getting ready to leave I think I can slip away."

He hung up the phone and looked at Tiffany, "Tiff, I need to go out for a little while. Nox is in trouble and Anna can't leave to help him. He doesn't have any other friends."

Tiffany smiled, "But of course, darling. He's your friend. I only like to tease him."

"I'll be back as soon as I can." Matt grabbed a coat and headed out of his apartment and took a cab to Benji's bar.

Matt walked into the bar with the sounds of a silky smooth voice blaring through the bar. Benji looked at Matt with a frown. He spoke softly, "He's in a mood. At least he's not drinking here. But he can't stay here Matt. He can't."

With a heavy sigh Matt nodded. "I'll see if I can get him home."

Matt watched at the edge of the dance floor for Nox to catch sight of him. His eyes lifted just as he spun through a turn and Matt saw the flicker of a smile that turned ugly the next second. "Go away Matthew."

Nox turned and kept his back to him as he danced. Matt sighed and stepped on to the dance floor and took Nox's arm and spun him towards him. Nox glared at him and made to punch Matt but Matt caught it and brought Nox's hands down in front of him. "Nox I can't go without you. Everyone is worried."

Nox growled, "No one cares. No one ever does."

"I care." Matt whispered. "Anna cares."

Nox frowned, "You have a girlfriend." He spat the words out and yanked his hands from Matt. "Anna refuses me time and time again."

Matt grabbed Nox's hands and pulled him against him, his hands behind his back making Nox hold him close. Matt whispered, "I still want what we have."

Nox pulled at his hands but his equilibrium was off and they both tumbled to the floor in a heap. "I don't want you anymore." He whispered and Matt's heart sank. Nox had given up. He was broken. Matt wondered what had actually happened with Tiffany before. He knew Tiffany had lied about the situation, she always did. But why was Nox drinking - he never drank. He never looked this defeated.

Matt sat up and looked at Nox who was lying on his back staring up at the ceiling. "Just go home, Matthew, and leave me alone."

"Sorry Nox. I can't obey that command." Matt frowned as Nox sat up with a look of horror on his face. Matt smiled, "I know the control you exert over me. Because I want you to. I would love nothing more than to listen to you right now. But you need me right now. I can't leave. I'll regret it with every fiber of my being. I can't stand seeing you like this."

Matt stood up and offered Nox a hand. "Come with me, we can talk."

Nox took Matt's hand and pulled him into his lap. "I'm sorry." Nox whispered over and over again.

Matt smiled against his neck. "It's okay Nox. I forgive this and everything else we do to each other. Please let's go home."

Matt stood up pulling Nox with him. Once they were both standing Nox pulled Matt close and held him close. "Why do you like me Matt?"

Matt kissed his ear. "I don't know, Nox. I just do, I can't get past it." They swayed on the dance floor not quite dancing but not standing still either. The music changed to something more bar worthy and Matt glanced at Benji and things appeared busier. Matt held Nox for a good long time as they danced together. He knew that people were staring, and that it was likely got get out but it was not like he had an explanation. Matt whispered in Nox's ear. "What do you want from me Nox. How can I fulfill your fantasy?"

Nox pulled away from him and looked at Matt with confusion. "I..."

Matt pulled Nox away from the dance floor, "Come with me Nox."

Nox followed willingly. Benji had called a cab already and it was waiting outside for them. Matt opened the door and Nox climbed in. He was distant as they rode in the back of the cab. Matt kept his distance, he didn't need to set Nox off further. He knew how he felt about public displays of affection with himself. It was the image that Nox wanted to protect, but Matt was at the point that he wanted to say screw it. But there was still Tiffany. He'd been with her for three years. Not that these past three week said anything about their relationship. They had barely had sex - mostly his fault but she didn't seem interested either.

Nox's place came up and they got out. Nox went straight for the side door and Matt followed. Once they were in the stair well Nox's hand searched for Matt's.

Once they were upstairs Nox had the door open and was stepping inside. He searched his fridge and pulled out a bottle of wine. Matt reached for it and Nox pulled it away from him and popped the cork. Nox didn't smile as he walked to the sink and poured it down the sink. "I won't drink anymore. But I can't deal with you right now."

Matt sighed and sat down. "I know. But we need to talk."

Nox flopped down on his bed. "Matt. Please just go home."

"You've resorted to Matt. Are you really done with me, Nox?"

"I don't know." He rolled over and away from Matt.

"I'll give you time, Nox. It's all I can do. I don't want to end this." Matt said as he stood up and headed for the door.

Nox whispered, "Ask me again."

Matt turned, "Pardon?"

"What you asked me earlier, ask me again."

Matt thought about it. Nox was up and standing up next to him before he could say anything. Matt pulled him close by grabbing fistfuls of Nox's shirt and whispered, "What's your fantasy, Nox?"

Nox kissed him softly and opened the door for Matt to leave. He whispered against Matt's mouth, "Choose me."

Nox pulled away and left Matt standing breathless in the open door way and shut his bathroom door behind him. Matt stood staring after him. He heard the water start in the shower and sighed. Matt left through the bar entrance. He stopped in front of Anna. "He's home. He's not got anything to drink. But I don't think things are better."

Matt had a lot to think about on his way back to his place.

# Broken

He told Matt what he wanted and then he walked away. The shower felt good against his cold skin. He's never been so afraid in his life. So lost and empty. Nox had given everything to Matt and now he gave him the one last thing he had to give - the truth of what he wanted.

Nox found himself crying in the shower, the tears running down his cheeks were burning his eyes. He sank to the floor of the tub and curled up into a ball. Matt was all he wanted. He was free of G. Free of his step-father and now he could lose it all because Matt wasn't ready to have more. This was going to end so very badly.

The water ran cold and Nox started to shiver but he didn't move.

Nox heard a knock on his door. But he didn't move.

Another knock and then he heard Anna yelling his name. She opened the door and pounded on the bathroom door. "Nox!"

She opened the door and found him crying curled up in the bathtub shivering and shriveled. Anna turned off the water got in the tub with Nox. Her arms were warm and she wrapped them around him. Not caring about the water still soaking his skin. Nox buried his face in her neck and cried. There was nothing more he could do. But she kept Nox warm.

He felt like he cried for hours. His tears had run dry and they were still scrunched in the tub. Anna stood up with Nox in her arms and helped him over the edge of the tub and into his bed. Anna went to her apartment and brought back ice-cream and her laptop. She curled up on top of the comforter and started a movie. It wasn't sappy - it was action filled. Anna handed Nox a spoon and he held it close as pressed his face against her leg to keep from crying dry tears and ate small bites of ice-cream.

Anna watched three movies with Nox. Nox closed his eyes and pretended to be asleep after the end of the third. He knew Anna would see through the ploy but she left anyway leaving the ice-cream in Nox's freezer and locked the door behind her.

Nox cried himself to sleep.

He woke up the next morning sore and his eyes were rimmed in red. He didn't look like he'd slept all night. He felt like shit. Nox got up and took another shower.

The water ran cold by the time he pulled himself out. He'd wasted two hours in the shower and he was late for work. Nox couldn't face Matt today. He didn't think he could look anyone in the eye. Nox picked up his phone and he called someone to cover his sessions today. He didn't want to go to work anyway.

Nox pulled on a pair of comfortable shorts and t-shirt and curled up on his bed with a book. He ended up crying halfway through the book and had to stop reading his mind couldn't focus on anything other than the sting of rejection he was feeling now.

It was late when the door to his apartment opened. But it wasn't Anna, nor was it Matt. His heart sank when the realization that it wasn't Matt either. His foster mother stood in the doorway and cooed at him, "Oh my poor baby."

She sat down on his bed and wrapped her arms around his upper body and pulled him close like she'd done so many times when he was a child. And the tears fell again.

Nox looked up and saw a petite red-head going through his drawers. "Mama, you think he needs something nice to go out in, or just jeans and t-shirts."

"Meg, I think he'd feel naked if you didn't pack at least one button up and a hoodie."

"Alright Mama. His laptop must be at work. I'll see if Anna knows how we can get it to him." Nox watched as his foster sister picked up the book on his bed and chuckled. "No wonder he's in tears, Mama, this trash he's reading."

She turned the cover so their mother could see. "You know that will make you feel worse, Nox darling."

Anna poked her head in the door as Meg was packing the last of his things for an apparent sleep over on the Upper East Side. "Dr. Austin, is there anything else you need?"

"I've told you call me Charlie so many times Anna."

Anna ducked her head and Nox pulled out of his mother's arms and hugged Anna in gratitude, "You called my mother?" he whispered.

Anna smiled, "You didn't need to be left alone. Matt stopped by last night, he needed to speak to you, but I didn't think that was a good idea?"

Meg interrupted. "Anna, Nox's laptop is at work. Do you know anyone who can bring it to the Upper East Side for him?"

Anna looked up at Nox and he smiled with a slight nod and handed her his phone. Anna smiled at Meg. "Yeah, actually I do. But I'll have to steal Nox's phone. I don't have his number. Excuse me a moment."

Nox watched as Anna left to her apartment with his phone to call Matt. He had wanted to talk. Nox wanted to be hopeful but the longer time passed the less hope he felt and the more he talked himself out of it. Matt wanted to end it, but he was at least nice enough to do it in person.

Nox asked, "Is Brett home?"

His mother shook her head, "No darling, he's away at school. He's a lovely apartment with a great girl who's mellowing him out. Her brother is gay, so it's helping some."

Nox nodded, he wasn't sure he could deal with his homophobic foster brother. "Your foster brother loves you Nox, he just afraid to show it."

"He wished I was dead the last time I saw him, Mama. He doesn't feel anything towards me. That would mean I existed to him." Nox sighed. "How long do you plan on kidnapping me from my life?"

Megan wrapped her arms around her, "Until you are yourself again. Until the hair is flashy, the eye make-up thick and the clothes deliciously tasteless."

Nox grinned, "My clothes are not tasteless. I'm not 12 anymore Megan."

Anna stepped back into his apartment handing him the phone. "Matt said he could drop off the laptop around 8 but under one condition."

Nox raised his eyebrow, "And that was?"

She smiled. "That you cook him dinner."

Megan clapped her hands. "Yes. Oh Yes!" She stopped her hands mid-clap and looked at Anna then back at Nox. "You don't mean Matthew Lucas do you?"

Anna nodded. "Oh my god, Nox had the biggest crush on him when he was a boy. He's coming to our house, for dinner. Oh my god, what am I going to wear?"

Anna laughed, "Should we tell her?"

Nox shook his head. "No." It was flat and harsh and Anna frowned.

She wrapped her arm around him. "I had Matt find your boss and tell him you were going Uptown for a few days so your schedule would be wonky. He said as long as he's not dead or dying, he can have the day off tomorrow."

"If I were dead or dying I'd have to go to work tomorrow. Lovely to know." Nox grinned at Anna. He was feeling a little better, Matt wanted him to cook for them. He'd invite his family too. He hoped Matt would understand.

Nox hugged Anna good-bye then they took a cab to the apartment he'd grown up in. His bedroom was the same as he'd left it when he was 16. The same cramped space with a Matthew Lucas poster stapled to the ceiling above his bed. He laid down and stared up at the very young version of the man he'd fallen in love with and waited for later.

# I Choose You

Matt had left Anna's bar with a heavy heart. Nox had told him it was over, but then the two simple words out of his mouth made Matt feel every pain the other man had gone through. The devastation in his voice. He didn't think he was worthy of anyone and thus his fantasy was to be wanted. Matt did want him. But that wasn't what Nox was asking.

Nox wanted him to choose the other man over Tiffany. Over his career, the image Nox was so careful to maintain. Could he do that? Loving a man wouldn't ruin his career, he was already playing gay men more often than not. It was the whole reason they'd met in the first place.

Matt walked half way home before hailed a taxi. Tiffany was on the phone and promptly hung up when he opened the front door to his apartment. She'd been having a few of those phone conversations lately. He figured she was cheating too. That meant a great deal of problems for the future.

She smiled brightly at him and he smiled back. "You find him alright?"

Matt nodded. "He's home now, not better by any means but home so Anna can take care of him."

Tiffany smiled. "What was wrong?" She asked as if it were any of her business.

Matt shrugged, "No telling. He's been seeing someone and I think shit might have hit the fan. But honestly I don't know."

Tiffany laughed, "What did you do?"

"About what?" Matt asked as he poured his girlfriend a glass of wine and sat down with his own.

"What did you do to piss him off? Or make him sulk?"

Matt's eyes went wide. "What?"

"Oh please. I see the way you look at him, and the looks he gives you when you are with me. He's jealous. I get the side project. He's cute. But does he really think he stands a chance."

"No he doesn't, that's part of his problem." Matt's heart fell, "How long have you known?"

Tiffany grinned, "Since you first started seeing him. You started spending too much time with him. It was Nox this and Nox that for several months."

"Why didn't you say anything?" Matt asked.

"You were happy. I have my own sidelines as well Matt. Or hadn't you noticed."

Matt sighed, "I had. Didn't say anything because I wasn't about to be a hypocrite."

Tiffany smiled and sat down in his lap. "I'm so glad it's all out in the open now. Well between us anyway. You are still hiding that you like boys."

Matt shook his head, "I like one boy. It's not like I have an attraction to just any man out there."

"Keep saying that Matt. You'll stay right in the closet."

She smiled, "Nothing wrong with being bisexual."

Matt kept his mouth shut, he didn't think he'd like other men. It was a one off with Nox. It wasn't meant to happen but it had over time. Though his drunken self-seemed to think Nox was hot from the beginning. It was the alcohol talking - wasn't it?

Tiffany kissed Matt softly, "Come to bed. I've an early flight."

"I'll be there in a bit." Tiffany pulled herself away from him and went upstairs to his bedroom while he thought long and hard about what he had to do. Did he want to be with Nox? Would he stick around if he didn't choose him? And then there was Tiffany who after three years together they'd grown so apart cheating on him didn't hurt, and he hadn't hurt her by doing the same thing. Matt wondered what happened first. Or for how long she'd been cheating on him.

He made his decision but he had to take care of this first.

Matt slept on the couch that night, pretending to fall asleep with wine and a TV show, but the truth was he didn't want to sleep in his bed with Tiffany. He'd only had one glass but it felt like thirty in the morning - probably from the angle of his head on the couch.

In the morning Tiffany was up and in a bright pink sun dress and pushing matt out the door with barely a shower and clean clothes. It didn't matter anyway.

They rode to the airport in silence. They stopped to eat breakfast once inside before security. Matt couldn't go past that so he sat down with one intention in mind. "Tiffany we need to talk."

"You know Matt, nothing good ever comes from that statement."

Matt nodded. "I know. And it's not going to change the statistics either way. This isn't working for us anymore. We don't see each other. We are both cheating. Neither of us care about that. That tells me this was done a long time ago."

"You are going to break up with me after three years because of some affair with that dancer? He's not that hot, Matt."

Matt sighed, "It's not about Nox. It is but it's not really. Underneath I hadn't been happy for some time or my head wouldn't have been open to that particular manipulation of my libido."

"He's more than just a fling isn't he?" Tiffany asked. He could feel the hatred wafting off of her.

"He is. Tiff, look I'm sorry. But this won't work for me." Matt got up and dropped enough cash on the table to pay for breakfast a tip and then some. "Take care Tiffany."

She flipped him off as he left the table and out the restaurant door. That was done. One step at a time. But he needed to see Nox. Too much time had gone by since he'd seen him alone, and now Matt's heart ached for him.

When he reached Nox's place Anna's bar was still open and he used that entrance but she stopped him. "Now's not a good time. Go to work and he'll let you know when it's okay to see him."

Matt tried to push past her, "I have the day off. Anna, it's important that I talk to him. He's hurting. I can save him some of that pain."

Anna shook her head. "No, Matt. Go home then. He's a mess, I doubt he's even out of bed. Please Matt. His mother is on the way; they are going to take him Uptown for a few days give him the support he needs."

Matt sighed, "I can do that now. I make it better I promise Anna."

"No. He needs to get his head around his feelings. He drank Matt. When Nox feels like becoming his step-father he's hurting too bad and only two things fix that."

"Let me guess. Dancing and his family."

"Almost," Anna said. "His sister will make sure he perfectly pretty before she lets anyone near him. That includes tears and fears and his disgust of himself. Matt I get you want to help, and that you care about him, but I don't know what this is about, but he's in pain. He needs some time."

Matt left without so much as a good-bye. He could sneak up to Nox's apartment the back way but he decided it was best just to go home. Though he didn't do that either. He went for a walk. Matt thought about how much he'd grown since meeting Nox. His drinking alone had been cut into eighths. He had one drink at dinner and that was usually it. Walking had become second nature now. Nox preferring to stretch his legs rather than ride the subway or in a cab.

Matt sat in Central park for hours just watching everything. He wasn't sure what he was looking for but when his phone chirped happily with Nox's ring tone he answered it quickly. "Nox?"

But his heart fell when he heard Anna on the other side. "Hey Matt. Sorry it's just Anna. Though good news. He's open to seeing you. His sister wants his laptop brought from the studio. Can you get it and I'll give you the address and you can take it to him?"

Matt's heart soared. "Of course I can. Can I make a condition on that retrieval?"

Anna laughed, "What is that?"

"I want to have dinner with him, preferably something he's cooked so he can stay home where he's safe and secure."

"I'm sure he'd love that. Bring it by at 8pm. Don't be late Matt. I'll text you the address."

"I won't be late."

Anna had hung up and sent him the address. Matt took a cab home and was very glad to not find Tiffany or her things strewn about his apartment. The address wasn't very far from his, that was good to know.

Matt showered and threw on one of Nox's shirts he'd seem to have collected over the past months of spending the nights at his place without a change. It was the sapphire blue one that he'd picked out for him when they'd met Tiffany. It was more than that, it was the shirt he'd handed him after they'd had sex for the first and only time. How retched he felt knowing that their first time was marred by Tiffany. Nox had to hate him for that.

Matt bought flowers and one long stem rose. Matt threaded the rose into the bouquet so it was easier to carry. And he picked up a bottle of wine he knew Nox actually liked after he'd grabbed the laptop from Nox's studio. He wasn't the one usually keying up the romance, not when Nox always beat him too it.

At the front desk of the apartment building Matt asked for a sheet of paper and he wrote down three simple words on it and folded it and took the rose out of the bouquet.

Matt was 15 minutes early but he knocked anyway. Nox's laptop hung over his shoulder. A small red-head opened the door with a grin so wide it swallowed her face. "Matthew Lucas. Come on in." She said his name very much like how Nox said it at times. He wondered if that was going to be common in this house.

A woman in a brown suit and high heels walked out of the kitchen and greeted Matt shooing her daughter away. "Megan go help Nox. I'm sure he needs an extra set of hands by now."

Matt laughed, "I doubt it. He doesn't let anyone help." Matt handed her the flowers and the bottle of wine. "Flowers are for you Dr. Austin, and the wine for dinner."

She smelled the flowers and headed off towards the kitchen, "He's in the kitchen, come with me."

Matt stopped in the kitchen doorway and watched as Nox danced around the kitchen, Megan was sitting on a bar stool around the island watching him - not helping. Dr. Austin was filling a vase with water and arranging the flowers perfectly in it. Nox moved gracefully around and Matt couldn't help but stare, but he'd come for one reason. With a deep breath Matt moved to block Nox's path, when the other man looked up he held the flower wrapped in the note up in between them.

Nox grinned at him. Matt loved that smile. It wasn't fake and everything else left as Nox brushed his fingers against Matt's as he took the flower and lifted it to smell pulling the note from the stem he unfolded it closely as he read the three simple words, "I choose you!"

Nox stood staring at the note when he finally looked up he took a step closer to Matt and grabbed his shirt with both hands and pulled him close and kissed him like he missed him. Matt missed him too and he didn't mind the thorns of the flower poking into his neck as they kissed. Nox pulled away and whispered against Matt's mouth, "Really?"

Matt nodded. "I broke up with Tiffany. This is what I want, Nox. We don't have to hide in the shadows anymore." He pulled away and took out his phone. "I'll prove it." Matt snapped a picture of him kissing Nox and sent it to all his social media accounts.

Nox shook his head, "You didn't have to do that."

Matt nodded. "I did, Nox. I choose you. And I choose to be open about it."