

Rage

Standalone

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Rating:
Adults Only
Category:
Fanfiction
Pairing: Brian
Kinney,
Justin Taylor
Genres:
Angst, AU,
Romance
Warnings:
What If
Summary:
What if the
night Debbie
and Michael
took Justin
home in
Season 1,
had far
reaching

consequences? What if Brian and Justin didn't see each other again for two years? What if in the time they were apart, both men changed? What if when they met again, Brian had stopped repeating the same mistakes over and over again. Would there still be chemistry between them?

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It was late afternoon and the trees were almost bent in half from the force of the wind. Brian shivered as the it blew straight threw his orange safety suit. It was icy and whirled around the crumbling old building. They should have postponed till the weather cleared, but management was always in a hurry.

He was supposed to feel relieved. They had the go-ahead and everyone was evacuated, but he couldn't shake the feeling there was still someone inside. The niggling in the pit of his stomach continued. Something was wrong, he knew it. He rushed back into the old warehouse, calling out urgently, as he ran. "Is anyone here? Hey?" Brian called out again. Searching deeper and deeper into the structure, he continued calling. "Is anyone here?" The niggling had changed to alarm, now. Time was running out. As he ran through the building, unable to shake the feeling he wasn't alone; he heard a large cracking sound and the floor collapsed from beneath him.

Brian grabbed for anything to stop himself from falling. There was nothing. As he dangled, his fingers

holding fast to the edges of the hole he'd fallen through, he wondered whether the floor would collapse further if he tried to pull himself up. He tried, but the floor began to shake. Brian looked down for signs of somewhere to land and let go. "Fuck," he cried out when he felt his ankle snap, as he hit the floor.

"Are you okay?" A small voice said softly.

Brian opened his eyes and saw the outline of a young boy standing over him. "Where were you? We searched the whole building for people," he gasped.

"If you don't know how to hide, you wouldn't last very long around here," the boy smiled. "Do you need help?"

Brian couldn't see the kid's face clearly. He wasn't sure what to do. Suddenly he remembered why he was there, but when he tried to move, he winced from the pain. His ankle had to be broken. Shit. He felt for his intercom, but couldn't find it. It must have fallen out of his pocket when he fell. "Look around for my two way, we need help. This building is about to come down," he said frantically.

Justin was scared. What did he mean? This was their home. They couldn't tear it down. He disappeared as quickly as he had appeared.

"Fuck, no don't," Brian repeated and reached out for him, when he saw the kid take off, but before the words left his lips, the boy was gone again. It was too dark to see, so he desperately felt around for his intercom until he found it. "Thank god," he mumbled. "Frank, its Brian, I'm still inside."

He heard his friend shout out. "Wait!" There was a large crashing sound and Brian felt debris falling all around him as he lost consciousness.

Brian opened his eyes and saw Frank glaring at him.

"Smart Kinney, real smart," Frank growled. "What the fuck did you go back in for?" He liked Brian, but he was a cowboy.

"There's a kid in there. Did you find him?" Brian moaned.

"What kid?" Frank gasped. "We searched the whole place, there's no one."

"I saw him, he spoke to me," Brian persisted.

Frank looked frightened. "Shit."

Brian watched his friend run. He tried to get up, but his head was spinning as he fell back against the stretcher.

"Hey," a voice boomed. "You can't get up. It's fucking broken."

It was the foreman.

"There's someone still inside," Brian groaned.

"No, you were the last one out."

"No, someone else, I saw him," Brian roared. "Make them stop." Brian glanced behind him and could see people running around frantically from Frank's revelation. He breathed out heavily, relieved. His head was pounding as he lifted his hand to feel bandages. "What happened?"

"You fell through the floor in that shit heap, asshole. You're lucky the whole building didn't come down on you. Where did you see him?"

"I don't... when I fell," he mumbled. "He asked... help me... disappeared." Brian was dizzy, but he couldn't pass out, not until he knew the kid was safe. He wasn't sure how much time passed, but when Frank walked towards him smiling, he closed his eyes again.

"We got him and there's a little girl as well. I dunno how we missed them, Brian, thank god you saw him. They were huddled in the basement. Fuck, the whole building would have landed on top of them."

"Where?" Brian moaned then passed out.

Brian opened his eyes and blinked a few times, trying to work out where he was. He was in the loft. As he reached up to hold his head, he felt the bandages again. "Fuck," he mumbled.

"Don't move around asshole."

"Mikey?"

"What were you doing going back into that building after the sirens?" Michael demanded.

"I knew someone was inside, I had to go back in," Brian sighed.

Michael sat on the bed beside his friend and took his hand, holding it tightly. "Of course you did," he breathed out heavily. Brian had been obsessed with 'truth, justice and the American way' ever since he left Vanguard. Brian felt responsible for his role in getting that asshole Stockwell, elected Mayor. Brian had always been Brian, but when the revelation of helping Stockwell almost destroy Liberty Ave hit him, he hadn't been himself since. Now he helped everyone he could. Instead of being self absorbed, he was selfless; always putting others needs before his own. His friend was softer now, always ready to jump into a cause. "Do you want some soup?"

"No," Brian frowned. "What's wrong with me?"

"Apart from a concussion and a broken ankle, two of your ribs are cracked," Michael sighed. "They wanted to keep you at the hospital, but I said I'd stay with you."

"Thanks Mikey," Brian smiled weakly. "Can you get my phone?"

"What do you want the phone for? You should be resting." Michael rolled his eyes. as if he didn't already know. Who needed help now?

"I want to check on a kid," Brian mumbled.

Michael knew once Brian made up his mind, there was no point arguing. "Who am I dialing?"

"Frank."

Mikey sighed and nodded. "Frank, its Michael, Brian wants to talk to you. Hang on." He passed the phone to Brian.

"Fine. Tell me, what happened to the kid?"

"Child Services took the little girl and the boy went to a shelter."

"Girl?"

"His sister."

"There were two of them," Brian gasped. "Why did they separate them,? he gasped again.

"He was too old for them."

"Old?"

"Apparently, he's nineteen."

"How old was the girl?" Brian stammered.

"Eleven."

"Eleven, fuck," Brian gasped again. What was an eleven year old girl doing in a place like that? "What shelter, Frank?"

Mikey took the phone from Brian's hand. "You're gonna pass out again," he warned. He could see Brian was pale and wobbly.

Brian's head was spinning and he lost consciousness again.

Michael smiled as he looked at his friend. "Frank, its Michael again, yeah, passed out, let me get a pen." He wrote down the details Brian was interested in. He didn't have to ask. He knew what Brian would want when he woke up.

Brian was very different the last year. Ever since the whole Stockwell fiasco, Brian was the champion of the underdogs. He sighed loudly and dialed his mother. "Ma, it's me. There was an eleven year old girl picked up today in the warehouse Brian tore down. Do you know anything?" His mother's best friend was with Children's Services.

"I was just talking to Fran about it. Poor little tyke being taken from her brother that way, both kids were hysterical. The boy had to be sedated, he was so distressed."

"What happened to him?"

"They took him to the hospital and then he was going to Antonio's. Fran tried to assure him his sister was safe, but he wouldn't listen. He insisted they couldn't be separated. Fran did some checking. The parents were killed two years ago. It seems they've been living on the streets ever since," she sighed.

Michael shook his head. Brian would have a fit when he regained consciousness. He would feel it was his obligation to help them back on their feet.

"I heard about Brian. How is he?"

"He wants to know about this kid."

"He can't save every stray dog, baby," Debbie sighed.

"You tell him that, Ma." Michael shook his head. "Call Antonio for me? Brian will want to know when he wakes up."

"I'll do it now and call you back," she sighed. She was worried about Brian. Everyone was worried about Brian. From the moment Brian realized he'd sold his soul to the devil, he'd been trying to get it back.

"Make sure he's okay, Ma," Michael said softly.

"I'll do my best," she promised.

"I love you, Ma."

"I love you too, baby."

Brian was sleeping peacefully when Debbie called him back, a few hours later. "He wouldn't settle. He was worried about his sister. They had to restrain him at the hospital."

Michael rolled his eyes.

"Something else, Michael," she paused. "When I saw him...."

"What?" She saw him, this didn't sound good.

"Do you remember a couple of years ago; there was a blond kid who came looking for Brian at the house. His father was giving him a hard time and he wanted to move in with Brian? He threatened to run away to New York."

How could he forget? His mother forced him to take the kid home that night and inferred he was a eunuch. He was furious with Brian for his selfishness and for making a mess he had to clean up. "Yes," he asked cautiously.

"Same kid."

"Fuck," Michael gasped. "Don't tell me that, Ma." He and Brian had fought over that kid. He was always following Brian around.

"There's no mistake, it's him. He recognized me straight away. Apparently after we dropped him off, the parents were arguing and there was a car crash. They were killed and the kids have been on the streets ever since.

"Oh Ma," Michael moaned.

"I bought him home with me, honey and I promised I'd help him with his sister," Debbie sighed. "I had to, I didn't say anything about Brian, but I have to help him."

Michael sighed. His mother obviously felt responsible, now so did he. "Thanks Ma. I'm sure we'll be seeing you as soon as Brian wakes up." When Brian heard, there would be no way he'd be able to stop him feeling the same.

Justin lay in Michael's bedroom looking at the Captain Astro wallpaper. It had been a long time since he'd been in this room. It was a long time since he'd slept in a bed. It was nice of Debbie to let him stay. She was a nice lady.

A lot had happened since Brian sent him away that night. He was so in love with Brian then, he couldn't think straight. Brian was only the first of many men he'd slept with. He soon learnt, Brian was right...love had little, if nothing, to do with sex. Living on the streets had taught him to take whatever he could get.

Debbie hadn't changed. She was kind to him when they first met two years ago and now she'd promised to help him get Molly back. He would need all the help he could get. Molly must be so scared.

Justin felt his heart pounding. He was scared too. How could he support his sister if he couldn't trick? They weren't about to award custody to a hustler. He was fucked if he did and fucked if he didn't.

Maybe Debbie would be able to help? She seemed very friendly with the woman who took Molly. He remembered how nice Debbie and her brother were, the night Brian rejected him.

It wasn't anyone's fault. Justin understood Brian's attitude. He had the same beliefs now... fuck or get fucked, no ties, no regrets and especially no promises. The system worked.

He closed his eyes and remembered Brian touching him in this room. He'd been hesitant at first, but after he'd sucked him off, Brian was more than willing to fuck him. He felt close to Brian, connected. It wasn't until they went downstairs that Brian just watched, without a word, while Debbie took him away. He'd thought Brian loved him too until he just let him leave. Debbie and Michael took him home

and he never saw Brian again. When his parents died, Brian was all he wanted, but he knew Brian would reject him again and he didn't think he could take it. Justin smiled. Rage looked after them and always loved him back.

His mind wandered forward in time to where the guy fell through the floor above him. For a moment, he even reminded him of Brian. Justin smiled. That guy was nothing like Brian. Searching a building for homeless people... Brian... Yeah right. It was something Rage would do.

He'd fantasized about Rage so many times. Rage was his idealized version of Brian. He always conveniently left out Brian's detached nature from his daydreams. Rage was loving. Over the two years, he'd perfected his dream. Rage begged him to stay with him that night. Even though his father was angry, he understood and forgave him. His parents never argued, they were never killed and Molly was happily settled in at home where she was safe.

Justin closed his eyes and remembered the way Brian's arms held him tightly and the way, when their lips touched; he heard fireworks going off in his head. He'd imagined Brian's face on every trick who'd ever fucked him since. It was the way Justin dealt with selling himself to feed Molly. Day dreaming it was Brian inside him, made everything more bearable.

Justin wondered if Brian was still in Pittsburgh, if Debbie still saw him and if he and Michael were still friends. Of course they would be. It was obvious how Michael felt about Brian. He wondered if Michael ever told Brian, he was in love with him... probably not. Brian didn't believe in love, he made that clear enough. Justin reached for his back pack and pulled out his sketchbook. He had another chapter for his chronicle.

It was a close call this afternoon? He didn't know the sirens meant they were about to tear down the building. They hid because someone was always looking to steal their stuff and their money. He had to take care of Molly. There were plenty of people out there who liked to touch little girls. It was bad enough what he had to endure. No one was ever gonna to do that to his sister.

He quickly sketched the outline of the guy who saved them. Justin thought of the orange suit and smiled as he continued sketching his fantasy. He used Brian's face for Rage, he always did.

The sound when the guy hit the floor was loud. A snapping sound had to mean something was broken. He hoped the guy was okay.

Rage was his hero. Justin had been drawing him since his parents died. Rage was strong and always kept him safe. Whether it was a crazy trick or just some crook stealing his stuff, Rage, always saved him. As his hand flew across the page, he wished his cartoon character was real and not just in his imagination. Justin closed his eyes and felt Rage sweeping them both up in his arms and carrying them to safety. Rage gave him hope that the world wasn't all bad, that things could be better, that one day it would be different.

The first words out of Brian's mouth when he woke were "Is he okay?"

Michael knew there was no way to hide this from Brian. Any time he tried to hide anything, Brian was furious with him. "He's at Ma's. She promised to help him with his sister."

Brian frowned. Debbie always had a kind heart, but she'd never taken anyone in before. "What's going on?" Brian asked suspiciously.

"She knows him, we all know him," Michael said softly.

Brian looked puzzled. "Who?"

"The kid who went to the hospital with us, the night Gus was born."

Brian shook his head. He used to fuck around so much in those days; he had no idea who Michael was

talking about. There was someone there that night, but it as only a trick and that's all he remembered.

Michael shook his head. "Think... blond hair... He turned up at Ma's place a few days later and I had to get rid of him," Michael prompted.

Brian still had no idea.

"You fucked him in my bedroom," Michael growled.

Brian remembered the argument they had about it, but not the trick. "But why did Debbie take him in?"

Michael sighed. "Apparently after we took him home, the parents got into a fight, they were driving," he paused. "And were killed. The kids have been on the streets ever since. I guess Ma feels responsible." He was certainly feeling responsible as he waited for Brian's reaction.

Brian stared at his friend. "What were they fighting about?"

"I guess that the kid was gay," Michael shrugged. "I'm not sure."

Brian searched his memory. There were so many tricks in those days. He felt a lump in his throat. Was that the virgin he fucked? That's right. The kid followed him around for days. He swore he was in love with him.

Was this his fault? Brian's heart began to pound and he couldn't breathe.

Michael knew what Brian was thinking. "It'll be okay."

"How?" Brian said flatly. "His parents were killed, Mikey. They've been on the streets for I don't know how long. I don't really even remember him. I was such an asshole, I didn't care who I fucked then or how it affected them."

"But you care now," Michael smiled. "We can't change what happened, but we can fix what's happening now."

"We?"

"I'll help you." Michael pulled Brian into his arms and was amazed at the way Brian clung to him. "Get some sleep and I'll take you to see him tomorrow."

"Thanks Mikey." Brian closed his eyes and fell asleep again.

Michael was disturbed by Brian trying to get out of bed.

As his friend moved, he let out a blood curdling groan. "Fuck, I can't get up."

"You fell through a ceiling, Brian and have broken ribs and a busted foot. Of course you can't get up," he snapped. He was never very good in the mornings.

"Didn't they give me crutches?"

"How can you use crutches," Michael sighed. "You have broken ribs, Brian."

"How am I supposed to get around?" Brian replied impatiently.

"You aren't. You are supposed to stay in bed for at least a week," he growled.

"I can't. I need to help that kid."

Michael sighed again. "Ma is taking care of him. If anyone can help him, it will be her. Let her take care of it until you can get around."

"No way. What was his name?" Brian frowned. This was his mess and he was going to clean it up.

"Justin," Michael answered softly. He remembered driving them back to the loft after the hospital. Brian was high and that kid was trouble, he knew it from the minute he saw him. "Justin Taylor."

Brian thought about the night Gus was born. He was really out of it. That bitch Anita had given him something that was supposed to be E. The rest of the night was a blur. "Did we drop him at some school the next day?"

Michael nodded. "St James Academy."

"That's right," Brian smiled.

"And then he came to Ma's and you fucked him in my room," Michael scowled.

Now he had a face in his mind, Brian remembered another night when he took the same kid home from Babylon too and there was a night he turned up at the loft. Fuck, he remembered now. That kid had made him feel things that scared the fuck out of him. It was hard to turn him away. He was so damn happy to see him at Debbie's when he turned up the night Ted came out of his coma. Fuck. He remembered it all. "I want to see him." Brian tried to get up again.

"It would be easier if Ma bought him over here? You really shouldn't be out of bed, Brian. You have a concussion," Michael sighed. This was crazy. No way was Brian getting out of bed. "I'll tell Ma to bring him here. You can't go out," he barked at his friend.

Brian looked at the determined look on Michael's face and sighed. "He might not want to see me."

"I'll take care of it. He'll be here."

Brian nodded. Everywhere he went, there was someone who'd been fucked by the way he used to lead his life.

Justin was excited to see Molly, but when he realized where they were really going, he was uncomfortable "Why are we here? This is Brian's place," he said cautiously.

Debbie nodded. "He wants to see you and then we'll go see Molly."

"Okay." Justin was nervous. He'd been dreaming of Brian for two years and finally he was going to see him. He wondered if he was still the same. Why was Debbie bringing him here? Brian had made it very clear he wasn't interested in anything other than fucking and Justin wasn't interested in giving away freebies.

Debbie pressed the buzzer and Michael opened the door. "Justin."

"Michael," Justin smiled cautiously. He was exactly the same. The loft was just like he remembered too. He looked around for Brian, but couldn't see him. "Where is he?"

"In bed, he's waiting for you," Michael nodded in the direction of the stairs.

"Hey, what's going on here?" Justin growled. Was Michael organizing tricks for Brian these days? He might be down and out, but he wasn't a piece of meat to be handed around for old times sake.

"He was hurt in an accident and he's in bed," Michael quickly explained.

"Hurt?" Justin walked to the stairs and saw Brian propped up in bed with bandages around his chest and his head. "What happened to you?"

Brian didn't speak, instead staring at the familiar blond mop moving towards him. Justin was still gorgeous, but he wasn't as wide eyed and innocent looking now. "I fell through a floor," Brian said softly.

"You fell," Justin gasped. "Was that you?" He was amazed. What was Brian doing in a place like that?

Brian nodded slightly, but then grabbed his head and moaned. The pain was intense.

"Are you okay?" Justin ran up the stairs.

Brian squinted from the pain. His mouth was dry, but as he reached for his water glass, he groaned again. "Oh."

Justin dived for the glass to help him. "Here."

Brian sipped the water while Justin held the glass for him. "Thanks," he said softly. "Why did you disappear?"

"I had to get to Molly," Justin explained. "I'm all she's got."

"Michael said your parents were killed," Brian said softly. "I want to help, Justin."

"We're okay. I just want my sister back," Justin said coldly.

Brian saw the icy wall descend and the softness disappear from Justin's face. For the first time, he noticed the tattered clothes. "I'll ask Michael to get you some new clothes."

Justin's eyes flashed. "I don't need your charity. I can get my own clothes. I don't accept handouts and I'm more than capable of working for what we have," he said indignantly.

"It's not a handout. There's nothing wrong with accepting a hand up."

"What's in it for you?" Justin growled and stood up. He decided where he spent his money. Clothes were an unnecessary luxury he didn't need or want, Molly always needed something for school.

"Nothing," Brian gasped. "I just want to help," he stammered. Justin was very different. What happened to the innocent kid he remembered, the one he thought was so sweet?

"You're in no condition to fuck." He scribbled a phone number on a pad on the nightstand. "It's a hundred when you've recovered and I'm always safe." Justin turned and walked away. He wanted to see Molly. He didn't have time for this shit. If Brian wanted to fuck him, he could pay like everyone else. Sentimentality was a luxury he couldn't afford.

Brian stared as Justin walked down the stairs. Did Justin think he only wanted....

Debbie could see by the look on Justin's face, meeting Brian again wasn't the best idea. She smiled nervously. "Let's go see Molly."

Justin walked past Michael and out the door.

Debbie followed him, glancing over her shoulder at her son. "I'll call you later."

Michael wasn't sure what happened. He closed the door, hurried to check on Brian and found him just staring into space. "What happened?"

"Nothing," Brian said quickly.

Molly clung to Justin and cried "Don't leave me."

Debbie and Fran watched the two of them huddle together while Justin tried to explain to his sister, what was going on. The child was eleven. Although Justin promised her it would be fine, Debbie knew there was little to no chance she would ever be adopted and Justin was obviously in no condition to take care of her. He was only a child himself.

Fran excused herself. Perhaps Debbie could get the kids to open up. She was getting nowhere with Molly. The little girl wouldn't tell her anything. Her reaction was normal. She was angry she couldn't be with her brother, angry the state had a say in who she was with, and angry to be trapped in a place she didn't want to be in.

"They said I have to stay here," Molly cried.

Justin held her tightly. "Don't worry Mol, I'll work it out. It won't be for long. I'll find us a place."

"What about my school, Jus," she sobbed.

"You go to school?" Debbie smiled.

Justin smiled. "She goes to Freeway Prep."

"But that's an expensive school Justin, how do you pay for that? Did your parents leave you money, baby?"

Justin bristled. "I take care of Molly. She has everything she needs."

"What about a home?" Debbie gasped.

"They demolished our home yesterday. I just need to find us somewhere else."

"Justin, they won't let you take her," Debbie sighed. "You have no way of supporting her. She needs a home and a family."

"She's my sister and she should be with me. I work. I earn money," Justin said indignantly.

"How? You were living in a dump."

"I don't let Molly go without anything she needs. As long as we're together, we're fine."

"We need to talk, Justin," Debbie frowned. "You can come back and see her later." How did she go to Freeway? They were homeless. It only made sense if....

"No, no, Jus don't leave me," Molly sobbed.

"You need to talk to me Justin or I can't help you," Debbie sighed. "I promise I'll bring him back," she smiled at the little girl.

Molly's eyes darted nervously to Justin.

"I'll be back, Mol, I promise," he smiled.

Molly watched her brother and the lady leave. She knew he'd be back, he promised and Justin never lied to her. He always kept his word. When Daddy was alive, he always promised things and he never kept his word. He was always at work and never came to school when he promised. Justin was always there for her.

Debbie tried to question Justin, but couldn't get a straight answer. She was determined to get to the truth and Justin's evasive answers were annoying her. "You either want my help or you don't," she growled. "You're telling me nothing."

"Molly should be with me," Justin insisted.

"I don't understand, Justin. You don't have a home, but Molly attends one of the finest schools in the state."

"School is important."

"I know that, but how do you pay for that?"

"I earn what we need."

"How?"

"I hustle, alright, I hustle," Justin blurted out.

Now the truth, Debbie scowled.

"You have no right to judge me. I don't need your approval. I just want my sister."

"You can't have your sister, you don't have a home for her," Debbie said coldly.

"I'll get one then. You want a house, I'll get one."

"By selling yourself," Debbie gasped. "You should be in school."

Justin's eyes filled with tears. "I can't bus tables and earn enough for Molly's school. I'm doing the best I can."

"You need help." Debbie held out her hand to comfort him.

"I thought you said you'd help us?" Justin pulled away.

"I'm trying to help you," Debbie sighed. "I don't understand, Justin. When Michael and I took you home... Your parent's house... Didn't they look after you and Molly?"

"There wasn't anything. The house was part of the business. Uncle Jim had to sell it."

"Uncle Jim?"

"My Dad's business partner. Look, talking about this doesn't help and you can't tell me how to live my life."

Debbie sighed again. "You can do so much better."

"If I have a home, will they let me keep Molly with me?"

"Not if you're tricking. You need a real job."

Justin shook his head. On minimum wage he'd never get a home for Molly and what about school? He took a deep breath; he needed time to get this organized. If he stock piled his money, maybe he could get an ordinary job for the court. "She can't stay there."

"I'll see what I can do," Debbie sighed. Maybe Lindsay would take her? "I'll make a call." She dialed Lindsay's number. She and Mel wanted another child. Eleven wasn't exactly a baby, but Molly did need help. "Linds, I need a favor. Can I come over?"

"Sure Deb," Lindsay replied.

"I'll be there soon." She put down the phone.

"Linds?"

"She's very nice. She and her partner, Melanie have a little boy Gus. He's two," Debbie smiled. "They may be able to take Molly, until you get on your feet."

"I've met them. I was with Brian the night Gus was born. I helped decide on his name," Justin smiled and told Debbie Melanie wanted to name their son Abraham.

"I'm glad you were there," Debbie laughed. "I'm sure Gus will be too when he's old enough to appreciate it."

Justin laughed for the first time all day. He couldn't imagine what it would be like at school if your name was Abraham. Justin frowned.

He needed time. Debbie was right. Lindsay was nice and if there was no way he and Molly could be together at the moment, anything had to be better than where she was. If his sister stayed with Lindsay, hopefully Molly could still go to her school. This may work out. Molly would be safe and he'd be free to work and have peace of mind she was okay. It wouldn't take very long to get the money together for an apartment if he could work nights. Fuck, they'd need furniture too. He had some regulars, but he would need to get stuck into it.

Debbie smiled at him. "You can stay with me until you get on your feet."

"I won't be a charity case," Justin scowled.

"It isn't charity. I like you, I always did. There will be rules though."

"What rules?"

"Keep your room tidy, no hustling in the house and no tricks after midnight," Debbie smiled.

Justin nodded, he could live with that. He wasn't used to bringing home clients anyway and besides, he didn't trick for free. "Thanks. How long before Molly can get out of there?"

"I need to see Lindsay, but hopefully this afternoon," she smiled. "I'll do my best."

"I appreciate it," Justin smiled. "But I want to pay my share, so I need to go to work."

Debbie cringed. She knew she couldn't stop Justin from hustling, but hoped he would come to his senses. That was no life for him or Molly. "Dinner is at seven. Take a break and come home and eat, you can go back out later."

Justin nodded. "Thank you."

Brian was deep in thought when Debbie arrived. He was thinking Justin.

"Lindsay will take Molly for a few weeks until Justin gets on his feet," she smiled.

"A few weeks? How will it only take a few weeks, Deb? His clothes were rags, he has nothing."

Debbie sighed. "He's a hustler, Brian."

Brian shook his head. "I wanted to help him, to get him some clothes, but he went off his head."

"He's proud, honey. He won't take charity," Debbie sighed. "He's staying at my place. I'll keep an eye on him."

"Why won't he let me help him?"

"He's a man, Brian. He's struggling to be a man. He won't let you help him. He needs to do this for himself," Debbie sighed. "You can't help everyone, baby."

Brian fell silent. No wonder the sweetness was gone, this was his fault.

Debbie knew Brian felt responsible, she did too. "It isn't your fault, Brian," Debbie sighed.

"Whose fault is it then?" Brian frowned. This was a legacy of his asshole days.

Justin made sure he spent time with Molly everyday after school.

She liked living with Lindsay and Melanie and as long as she saw Justin each day, she seemed happy. Molly liked sleeping in a bed again and even had friends come over after school. Gus was great too. She liked him and he liked her.

Justin chose the furniture he and Molly would need and calculated what it would cost. He would need to order it six weeks before he wanted it delivered. He'd been working hard and already had almost half of the cost already. After investigating apartments, he made a list of better areas, ones close to school, in the good neighborhoods. That would be important when he applied for custody.

As the days passed, Justin was looking exhausted.

Debbie was concerned. She wasn't sure how much he was working, but she knew it was a lot. Justin was like a man with a mission. Taking care of Molly and providing the home they needed, was all that mattered.

Justin should have been sleeping, but instead he was deciding where he was up to. Molly's school fees were paid for this term. He had two weeks till the furniture needed to be ordered. Another three weeks to get the bond for the apartment together and another week before her fees were due again. She'd grown again, so her uniform would have to be replaced again. She was growing like a weed. That was always expensive.

He sighed. It never ended, but at least Molly was safe and happy. She liked living with Lindsay and Gus. Justin still helped her with her homework every day and when she went to bed, he went to work. He always slept during the day while she was at school. Occasionally, he saw Brian when he was visiting with Gus, but most of the time he just stayed in Molly's room until Brian left.

It was good to be able to work at night. The money was great. With Molly safe, he could work uninterrupted.

Debbie had introduced him to Ted, a friend of Michael's. He'd always hidden his money before, but Ted introduced him to a money market account. Being sure his money was safe, was a change too. Justin felt liberated. For the first time since he'd been on the streets, he could work as much as his ass would allow.

Justin smiled. Everything was on track, now he could sleep.

Brian was keeping close tabs on Justin. He'd offered to help the few times he saw him, but Justin always refused. He knew Justin was hustling and would have preferred to see him in school. Lindsay told him Justin should be an artist and told Brian, he was very talented. It was such a waste and it was

his fault.

How could Justin's father not provide for his family if something were to happen to him? It didn't make sense. Michael told him their house was a mansion. The man was a businessman, something was wrong. He discussed it with Mel and she agreed to make enquiries. It didn't sound right to her either.

Another two weeks passed. He'd barely seen Justin and was sure Justin was avoiding him. Justin always stayed in Molly's room until well after Gus went to bed or he left.

Brian was drinking coffee with Lindsay when Mel came home from work. She smiled when she saw Brian was still there. Sometimes the changes in Gus' father amazed her. She'd always hated him, but Brian wasn't anything like he used to be. He was a good father whose son came first with a real job where he helped people. Brian made a difference and she was happy he spent so much time with Gus.

Melanie sat and poured herself a cup. "You were right, you know. Taylor Electronics is a successful company. Something is very wrong about the whole thing. The business partner's name is Jim Patterson. The company is in tact, but Jim seems to be very attached to his money. I searched the company title history and when Craig Taylor died, his name just disappeared and Jim suddenly owned it all. Did I mention Jim was also the executor of both the Taylor's wills? Justin couldn't have signed it away. He was under age at the time. My instincts tell me, our friend Jim, is a crook," she sighed.

"Can you do anything?" Brian asked.

"We technically," she paused. "I guess, we are Molly's representatives. We could start the ball rolling on her behalf, I suppose. Justin probably won't like anyone interfering. He's very independent, Brian," Mel sighed.

"Then don't tell him till it's done," Brian smiled. "He can't keep hustling, he should be in school," he sighed. "Thanks Mel." This Jim character sounded like a crook. If Mel could sort this out, Justin could go back to school and lead a normal life. Now, he just needed to think of a way to keep Justin off the streets for the moment.

Justin was surprised to see Brian was still there when he came downstairs. "Molly's in bed," he smiled nervously.

"Would you like some coffee, Justin?" Lindsay smiled.

"No thanks, Linds, I should be going," Justin shook his head. "I need to be somewhere."

Brian reached for his crutches and stood up. "Me too, it's late," he smiled.

Lindsay jumped to her feet. "Can you help him to the car, Justin?" She smiled.

"I'm fine," Brian objected. He still preferred to be independent. "I can do it. I'm starting to get the hang of this," he laughed.

"You shouldn't be driving," Mel scowled.

"It's the other foot, I can still drive. I can't stay cooped up in the loft all the time. I'll see you tomorrow," Brian kissed Lindsay on the cheek and hobbled to the door.

Lindsay shot Justin a pleading look and nodded in Brian's direction.

Justin took a deep breath. What was he supposed to do now? Lindsay was asking for his help. He couldn't refuse her. "I'm going in your direction," he shrugged. "Can I get a ride?"

"Sure," Brian smiled. Justin was at least talking. It was the first time they'd spoken in weeks.

Brian climbed into the jeep and Justin laid his crutches across the back seat. He looked over his shoulder. "Where to?"

"Tremont is fine," Justin replied softly and climbed in. This was the closest he'd been to Brian in two years.

"So, how's it going?" Brian smiled as he glanced sideways at his companion

"Good," Justin shrugged. "How is your foot healing?"

"Okay," Brian shrugged. "I can't do much, but its okay."

"How much longer before the cast comes off?"

"Another two weeks," Brian sighed. "I'm looking forward to going back to work."

As long as they were talking, he may as well satisfy his curiosity. "How long have you been in demolition?" Justin asked.

"A year."

"Do you like it better than advertising?"

"Some days," Brian sighed again. He missed the thrill of advertising, but this job allowed him to meet plenty of people who needed help. He would need to make a decision soon though. His cash reserves were running low and he couldn't help anyone, if he didn't have any money. He'd been contemplating doing some freelance to boost his income.

"So, you haven't been out much?" Brian must be getting his tricks in these days. He wouldn't exactly have been dancing at Babylon the last few weeks or tricking in the back room.

"No," Brian laughed.

"Is Michael still staying with you?"

"No, I packed his fussing ass off, two weeks ago," Brian frowned. Michael had stayed till he was mobile, but he was pleased to see the back of him. Michael drove him nuts.

Justin knew what Brian meant. Debbie drove him crazy sometimes. She fussed over him constantly. The other night, she even tried to convince him to wear a coat when he was tricking.

Brian stopped the jeep in front of the loft and shifted nervously in his seat.

Justin smiled. "Thanks for the ride."

They sat in silence for a few minutes.

"Are you meeting someone?" Brian asked slowly.

"There's always plenty of work," Justin shrugged.

The hell with it, Brian thought. "It's a hundred, isn't it?"

"Huh?" Justin replied.

Brian pulled out his wallet and handed Justin two hundred dollars.

Justin stared at the money in his hand and scowled. "It's a only a hundred, I don't need a handout," Justin frowned.

"Haven't you heard of upsizing?" Brian laughed. "It isn't very enterprising to knock back business? Besides," he smiled. "One won't even touch the sides."

"I never refuse business but charity is something else entirely," Justin growled.

"Oh, I have expectations, believe me," Brian smiled. "How many tricks would you turn in a night?"

"Four, five, it depends," Justin shrugged.

Brian pulled another three hundred from his wallet and pushed it into Justin's hand. "Then I guess tonight is mine, if that's okay with you?"

Justin's heart was pounding. The idea of spending a night with Brian was more than he ever dared hope for. To not need to hustle for a change, would be nice too. He could relax and not be wondering where the next hundred was coming from.

Brian was surprised by Justin's hesitation. He didn't trick much anymore, but he knew he was still attractive. "If you don't want to, we can forget it."

I guess it would be okay, as long as I earn what I normally would, he thought. "Do you want anything in particular?"

"You decide. It's been a while for me," Brian replied.

Justin was confused. Brian wasn't tricking? He wondered why. He was still gorgeous. "How long is a while?" he asked boldly.

"Long enough," Brian frowned. If this was going to turn into an inquisition, he knew he would lose interest quickly. His personal life was his own business.

Justin felt Brian bristle and smiled. Seeing a glimmer of the old, arrogant Brian he remembered, felt nostalgic and strangely familiar. The man he'd met lately was different, softer, unlike the Brian he dreamed about from his past. Would it be the same? He could feel his heartbeat increase. He knew a lot more now, than the last time they were together. The night Gus was born; Brian had just about blown his mind. This was his chance to return the favor. "Let's go upstairs. I have plans for you," Justin smirked.

"Plans, huh?" Brian was intrigued. This would be interesting. Last time, Justin was so young. Brian wondered what Justin was like to be with now? "We better go up then," he smiled.

Justin handed Brian his crutches and walked slowly, alongside him, as he hobbled to the elevator. There was no need to be nervous, he was with Brian. He usually tried to stick to public places. Going to trick's apartments was dangerous. Justin smiled. Being with Brian was dangerous. He might actually enjoy being with the real thing for a change. It would sure be a change to not fake it. Brian was an accomplished lover. He may even enjoy it.

Brian was surprised he was feeling a little nervous. It had in fact been almost six months since he'd tricked. It just wasn't a priority anymore. His whole life had always been driven by sex, but he'd discovered in the last year, there was a lot more to life than just getting off. Sex was great, but if it made you numb to everything else, then what was the point of being alive. Walking around in a satisfied coma was a poor substitution for living. After entering the security code, Brian slid the loft door open and ushered his guest inside.

Justin entered, and then turned. When Brian closed the door, Justin stepped towards him and pressed their bodies together. As they touched, all the old feelings came rushing back.

"Here?" Brian smiled.

Justin nodded as he undid the buttons on Brian's jeans. "Here."

Brian's back was hard against the cold steel of the door, as Justin dropped to his knees. He leaned on his crutches heavily, his heart racing... closing his eyes when Justin took him in his mouth. "Mmmm," he moaned softly. Time seemed to stand still as Justin brought him to the brink over and over again, never allowing him to come. Before he could stop himself, Brian was begging. "Please?" he gasped.

Justin decided to give Brian a break. He knew how good he was at this. Brian didn't stand a chance. When he increased his pace, Brian cried out with relief.

"Thank god," Brian moaned as he came, filling Justin's mouth with thick, warm liquid.

Justin was surprised when he swallowed happily, something he never did. He could feel Brian was shaky on his feet and held him upright, so he wouldn't fall.

Brian opened his eyes a few minutes later and smiled. "Here was good, but I need to sit."

Justin smirked. "Not sit... but come with me anyway." He helped Brian hobble across the loft to the stairs. "Is up here okay?"

"Perfect," Brian smiled. The way Justin blew him was incredible. He was afraid he would come in a second and he would have, but Justin wouldn't let him. As Justin removed Brian's clothing, his skin was tingling. He couldn't wait to be inside Justin as he sat on the bed and waited.

Justin slowly removed his clothing, his eyes transfixed on Brian's. When his tongue slid out of his mouth and slowly licked his lips, he watched for Brian's reactions to him. He saw Brian's cock jump to attention again. It was good to hear Brian beg before. Justin wanted to hear a lot more of that before this night was over. He wanted Brian to know exactly what he'd missed out on, by sending him away that night.

Watching Justin's tongue was making him as hard as steel. Brian wanted to kiss those lips, to feel Justin's tongue in his mouth, to taste him.

Justin opened his bag and took out the lube. He flicked open the cap, his eyes never moving from Brian's for even a second. Justin could feel Brian's desire for him, the atmosphere in the room was electric. Brian was sitting with his back against the headboard and Justin sat at the opposite end of the bed out of his reach. He coated his fingers, massaging his cock slowly and watched Brian shift uncomfortably. When Brian reached forward to touch him, Justin smiled and moved out of his grasp. "Watch," he ordered.

Brian's heart was pounding. He wanted to touch Justin so much. He watched as Justin's fingers slid down and circled his entry. Brian felt his stomach somersault over as Justin slid a finger inside himself.

Justin closed his eyes as he pleasured himself. He needed to be loose for what he had in mind and hoped Brian would wait until he was ready. Part of him wanted Brian to be so swept away with desire for him that he had no control. He wanted Brian to grab him and throw him onto the bed and possess him completely. Another part though, wanted to be control, to make Brian suffer, to know what he'd lost.

Brian watched Justin's finger disappear and reappear again. His mouth was dry. When Justin slid two fingers inside, Brian held his breath. Justin's moans were making him crazy. As much as he was enjoying the show, he wasn't sure how much more he could take.

Justin knew he was ready. He opened his eyes and saw Brian stroking his cock slowly. "Don't come yet," he ordered.

Brian knew he was close. When Justin rolled the condom down on his cock, he wasn't sure if he could. He was so very close. "I don't know if I..." he panted.

Justin climbed on top of Brian and straddled his thighs. As he slid down, taking Brian inside him completely, he moaned loudly. This was better than he remembered, so much so that he struggled to focus. Brian was a trick, they weren't making love. Justin tried to keep reminding himself.

Brian cried out as Justin rode him. His orgasm started in his toes and swept through his body like a brushfire. "I can't wait," he panted as he exploded into the condom.

Justin didn't stop. He knew Brian wouldn't go soft after he came.

Brian composed himself quickly, as Justin continued to fuck himself on his dick. He sat up and slid his hands around Justin's waist, holding his hips, increasing the pace as he sandwiched Justin's cock between their bodies.

Justin moaned loudly. "Ohhhh."

Brian slammed Justin down hard on his cock, unable to stop himself from moaning too. The feelings were overwhelming and in an instant he knew he could never let Justin go again. He searched for Justin's lips and when he found them, he devoured his lover over and over until they both came. Their bodies shook. They seemed to come forever, neither man wanting it to ever stop, both breathing hard as they clung to each other.

Justin's eyes were closed, but his mind was racing. Fuck, he thought. What the hell was that? He'd been fucked hundred's of times, but it never felt like that. His perspective was gone. Shit, he needed to get it back. This was work, it was only a job. Brian is a trick; Brian is a trick he kept repeating over and over in his head.

Brian smiled as he opened his eyes. Fucking hell, that was incredible. He kissed Justin's neck softly. "You are amazing," he murmured tenderly. "I want you so much. Now it's my turn," he smirked.

Justin stiffened. Tonight Brian owned him. He could do whatever he wanted.

Brian was feeling very mellow. A lot had happened since he first saw Justin under the streetlight outside Babylon. They needed a fresh start. He was idiot to not see it then. So much wasted time, so much unnecessary heartache. This was a new beginning for them. He lifted Justin off his cock and onto the bed. "Turn over for me," he smiled as he removed the condom and discarded it.

Justin did as he was told. His heart was breaking all over again. He lay on his belly, hoping this would be over soon and thinking he was crazy to have agreed to it in the first place.

Brian blanketed Justin's body with his own, starting his kisses softly as he explored Justin's body with his lips. As he slid down, he remembered when he introduced Justin to rimming. His tongue slipped between Justin's cheeks as he searched for his opening. He lapped at the now, not so tight, pucker, easily sliding inside him with his tongue. "Mmmm," Brian moaned. He felt Justin stiffen again then, relax into his ministrations. The first time he was only going through the motions. Now, two years later, Brian wanted Justin to never leave him again. He rimmed Justin until he was moaning out of control. His cock was hard. "Roll over," he said firmly.

Justin opened his eyes and did as he was told. He watched Brian pick up the lube, snap the cap open, then felt it squirt directly inside him. He shivered.

"It'll warm up," Brian smiled. He tore the condom wrapper open with his teeth and handed it to his partner. "Put it on me," he smiled again. "Slip it on my dick."

Justin rolled the condom onto Brian's hard cock. It was like the first time all over again. Didn't Brian realize how much it was hurting him? Why would he? He was only a hustler, his feelings didn't matter.

"Put your legs on my shoulders," Brian ordered. He moved into position and slid inside Justin slowly.

Justin cried out as Brian breeched him. He tried not to react, but when Brian was inside him, he was lost. He couldn't 'not feel anything' when it came to Brian.

Brian thrust slowly and purposefully. Being inside Justin was all he wanted. All the feelings which scared him the first time were what he'd been missing. Justin was what he wanted. He pressed their lips together, hungry to taste Justin again. When he angled his thrusts to collide with Justin's prostate, Justin closed his eyes and groaned.

"Fuck me, Brian," he sighed.

Brian increased his pace, hungrily devouring Justin's mouth until they were coming all over again. "I

love you," Brian gasped at the height of his orgasm, then collapsed, exhausted.

For a moment, Justin's heart leapt, until he remembered Brian had told him the same thing the first night they fucked. He could tell Brian was asleep and his eyes filled with tears. The tears continued to fall as Brian slept, his cock still pulsing inside him. Brian was all he ever wanted, but even though he needed the money, he couldn't do this again. It hurt too much to be so close to something he could never have. Justin rolled Brian off him and covered him with the duvet. Brian continued sleeping soundly as Justin dressed. He pulled the money out of his pocket and stared at it for a long time. Justin knew he would always love Brian, no matter how much he didn't want to. He walked to the door and threw the money onto the counter as he left.

Michael opened the door to the loft. He hadn't seen Brian for three days. The place was a mess. He tidied up the clothes from the floor. Brian was still asleep, so he put on the coffee. Michael looked at the notes on the counter and shook his head. Brian had no respect for money, he grumbled as he gathered them into a bundle. He was straightening the cushions on the sofa, when he heard Brian call out.

"Come back to bed."

Michael smiled. He walked to the bottom of the stairs laughing. "Some of us still have to work," he chuckled.

Brian was startled to see Mikey. "What are you doing here? Where's..." he paused.

"There wasn't anyone here when I got here," Michael shrugged. Some parts of Brian were still Brian. "Coffee's almost ready."

"Thanks," Brian muttered. Where was Justin? Why had he just taken off? He grabbed his cell and dialed Justin's number. It rang a few times, then diverted to the message service. Brian frowned. It was as if Justin didn't want to speak to him otherwise, it would have gone straight to the service the first time. He dialed Debbie at home. "Deb?"

"Brian how is the foot?"

"Fine, is Justin there?" Brian asked.

"He's asleep, honey. He only came home a little while ago. He looked like crap. I wish I could convince him to stop hustling," she sighed. "He could barely walk."

Brian smiled. He hoped Justin was okay.

"Justin says it happens sometimes and it's nothing, but I don't care," Debbie growled. "No one has the right to hit anyone."

"What do you mean, hit?" Brian gasped.

"He says it's only a black eye and a few bruises. I wanted to take him to the hospital, but he wouldn't go. He could barely walk, Brian."

"Someone hit him?" Brian gasped.

"That's what I'm telling you. Some guy was too rough last night and beat him," Debbie frowned.

"Where did this happen," Brian roared.

"He didn't say, but he has a busted lip and a black eye."

"I'll be right over." Brian closed his cell, scrambled out of bed and pulled on his clothes. Whoever hurt

Justin, he'd kill them. Justin must have been attacked on his way home. Why didn't he stay where he was safe? Suddenly, he stopped. Why did Justin tell Debbie it happens sometimes? What happens? Getting mugged? Brian was confused.

No, he told himself. Surely Justin hadn't left his bed and gone hustling. It was real for them last night, it was, he couldn't have been wrong.

Brian slumped onto the bed, unsure what to do. Was he mistaken last night? Was it an act? Was he just another trick to Justin? He'd given him the money he wanted. Justin didn't need to hustle last night.

Michael could see Brian was bothered by something. He walked up the stairs and handed Brian his coffee. "What's up?"

"Nothing."

Justin lay in his bed, crying. Every part of him was aching. The guy had given him a hiding. He didn't know what to do. There was no way he'd be fucking for a while. His ass was burning and he was torn up pretty bad. It had only happened to him once before, but he remembered what it felt like. At least the guy had used a condom.

He should have just kept Brian's money, but he couldn't. His head was still so full of Brian that even though he'd said yes to the trick, he couldn't go through with it.

When he'd changed his mind, the guy went berserk. He hit him and when he was semi-conscious, fucked him with no preparation. When Justin came to, the guy was still fucking him. He tried to get away, but the guy held him down. When he was finished, he knocked him out and Justin woke up in the alley behind Babylon, battered and bleeding.

Fuck, how was he supposed to work now? He couldn't even give head jobs until his face healed. Justin looked in the mirror again. He looked like the elephant man. Debbie wanted to take him to the hospital, but he couldn't let her. He had no insurance. He stayed in bed all day and called Lindsay at two for her to tell Molly he had the flu and wouldn't be over for a few days. There was no way he could go near her like this. It would scare her to death.

Brian had sat feeling betrayed for most of the day. He ignored the phone twice, but it wouldn't stop ringing. "What?" he growled as he answered it.

"Brian, I've just called an ambulance. I can't wake Justin up. I was worried about him and when I checked him, his sheets were covered in blood," Debbie sobbed. "I can't get Michael. He isn't answering his cell."

Brian talked to her while he drove to the Novotny house. Trying to calm her down enough to get some answers was difficult. He arrived the same time as the ambulance was pulling away. Fuck. Brian took off after it, using the siren as an effective means of speeding. When they arrived at the hospital, he jumped from the car, not bothering to use his crutches.

He grabbed Debbie who was crying.

"What's going on?" he demanded.

"He needs a transfusion, but he doesn't have insurance."

Brian went to the counter and pulled his check book from his pocket. He signed some forms and Justin was whisked away. He sat next to Debbie to wait.

A few hours later, doctor spoke to them. "He's lost a lot of blood, but he's stable now," the doctor frowned. He looked at Debbie, unsure of what to say.

Brian patted her hand. "I need to talk to the doctor for a moment. Why don't you try and reach Michael again?"

Debbie nodded.

When she was out of earshot, Brian sighed. "What's wrong with him?"

"Are you family?"

"His parents are dead and his sister is only eleven. He lives with Debbie."

"His symptoms suggest he's been raped. He's badly torn, making him highly susceptible to infection. We'll need to keep him for a week. I believe he doesn't have insurance."

"I told them I'd pay. I want him to have anything he needs."

"I've contacted the authorities. Someone will need to speak to him when he wakes up. Do you know who did this to him?"

Brian shook his head. "Debbie said he looked like he'd been beaten when he came home. She couldn't wake him a few hours later, so she called an ambulance."

"Good thing she did. His attacker had nicked a vein. He would have bled to death by morning," the doctor sighed.

Brian's stomach clenched. "Will he be okay?"

"He'll live but," he paused. "I'm assuming he's gay?"

Brian nodded.

"Penetration may be difficult for quite a while. It will depend how he heals." The doctor paused again. "His injuries are extensive."

Brian nodded again. "Thank you, doctor. Can I see him?"

The doctor looked at Brian's cast. "You need a new one, it's cracked. You shouldn't walk on it. That cast is not designed to be load bearing. How much longer is it on for?"

"Next week."

"Then you'll need another. By the time they get your new cast on, Justin will be in his room."

"It's fine," Brian shrugged and shook his head.

The doctor shook his head. "It isn't fine, it has to be re-photographed and replaced. I'll arrange for someone to come and get you. You'll be no good to him if you don't take care of yourself."

Debbie returned as the doctor walked away. "What's wrong with him?"

"He was raped. They just have to wait and see. He would have bled to death if you hadn't found him. Did you reach Michael?"

"He's on his way over."

"The doctor insists on changing my cast and by then Justin will be in his room and we can see him."

Debbie looked down at Brian's foot. "Fuck," she gasped. "Well you killed that one."

Brian smiled and looked himself. The cast was cracked.

"Mr. Kinney?" A nurse smiled at them. "Could you come with me please?"

Brian rolled his eyes, but followed her. He didn't care about his foot. He wanted to be sure Justin was okay. The x-ray and the plaster seemed to take forever. When he was finished, Debbie was still waiting with Michael, for word on Justin.

It was another hour before they were able to see him but he was sleeping peacefully.

"He looks a lot better," Debbie smiled.

Brian wondered how he looked before. He was barely recognizable. His beautiful face was swollen and purple with a large cut over his eye and another on his lip. The knot in Brian's stomach tightened.

Michael watched his friend, sitting by Justin's bed, holding his hand. "I'll take you home, Ma. Justin will sleep for ages yet. We'll come back tomorrow."

"I should stay," Debbie objected.

Michael looked at his mother and nodded at Brian, who was staring at Justin, oblivious to their conversation. "We should go," he insisted.

"Um, okay. Will you be okay, Brian?"

"Mmm," Brian grunted, his eyes never leaving Justin for a moment. He didn't even notice them leave.

Lindsay listened quietly as Debbie explained about Justin. She clutched the phone tightly. "Is he out of danger? Should we take Molly?"

"He's fine. I think it would scare her," Debbie sighed. "Poor little tyke, she's been through enough."

Lindsay agreed. She'd already told Molly Justin was in bed with the flu, so she wasn't expecting him. They'd wait a few days and see. When Mel came home, Lindsay was crying.

Mel sat as Lindsay explained what was going on. If Justin was injured, the case against his father's partner was now even more important. She had refrained from contacting Jim Patterson, assuming she would have been politely told to 'fuck off'. It was better if he continued believing he got away with it. He wouldn't feel the need to hide anything. "I have some work to do tonight on Molly's case."

Lindsay nodded. "Will I heat you up some dinner?"

"Thanks," Mel smiled. As Molly's guardian, she was able to obtain the probate information on the Taylor's' estates. Their combined assets were in excess of seven million. The children had received nothing. It was supposed to be held in trust by Jim Patterson for Justin until he reached eighteen and then Justin controlled Molly's share until she reached eighteen. Melanie contemplated the best way to proceed. It appeared the business was valued at almost seven and a half million and was virtually debt free. Mr. Patterson also had considerable personal assets. She dialed her law partner who specialized in litigation. "Jonas, did you get time to go over those papers?"

"Yeah." Jonas replied. "I think we should have the company assets frozen."

"I agree. What about Patterson?"

"I'll file a notice of motion in the morning on behalf of Justin and Molly. If we move quickly, Patterson won't have time to do anything. I think we should make a formal complaint to the Equity Court."

Penalties are high against executors who defraud estates. Once the company assets are frozen, we'll contact the authorities. I'll ask for an urgent hearing."

"Justin was attacked last night and is in the hospital," Mel sighed. "It is that asshole's fault the kid was on the street."

"Will he be okay?" Jonas asked.

"They think so," she sighed. "Make him pay, Jonas."

Jonas laughed. "That's why they pay me the big bucks, baby."

Melanie laughed. Jonas was good. Patterson would be sorry, that's for sure.

It was almost four in the morning when Justin regained consciousness. He opened his eyes, wondering where he was. "Mmmm." His eyes glanced down. Why was Brian next to his bed, holding his hand?

Brian felt Justin stir and sat up immediately. "Justin?"

"Mmmm," Justin moaned.

"Are you okay?" Brian squeezed his hand gently.

"Where?" He gasped. Where was he? This wasn't his room at Debbie's and it wasn't the loft.

"In the hospital."

"Why?"

"Someone hurt you, Justin."

"Hospital?"

"You need to rest." Brian brushed the hair back from Justin's forehead. "I won't let anyone ever hurt you again," Brian whispered. He had a thousand questions, but now wasn't the time.

"Not the hospital," Justin mumbled. "I can't afford..."

"I took care of it. Don't worry, just rest. I'm here," Brian said softly and stroked Justin's forehead.

Justin didn't have the strength to fight. He felt so bad, he was glad Brian was here with him. He closed his eyes and went back to sleep.

The next time he woke up, Brian was snoring and a nurse was smiling at him. "You're awake?"

"Why am I here?"

"You were attacked and were hemorrhaging badly when you were admitted yesterday. They repaired some of the damage, but you'll need to talk to the doctor. I'll let him know you're awake," she smiled and nodded at Brian "He's exhausted, poor love. I tried to convince him to go home, but he wouldn't leave you. You're a lucky man, he loves you a lot."

Justin smiled, but didn't correct her. He wondered why the nurse thought Brian was his partner. It must be because he stayed. This was getting to be a habit. Brian was always saving him. He'd changed. He had a kind heart these days. Brian must be paying for him to be in the hospital. Justin would have swapped every kind gesture if Brian truly loved him for even a moment. It wasn't possible for him and Brian to be friends. He would always want more than Brian was capable of giving him and it just hurt too much, seeing Brian and being so close to him. As soon as he was recovered, he would

repay Brian's investment in him for the medical expenses and he and Molly would disappear. He smiled at Brian, who was sleeping alongside him. Brian was usually a light sleeper, he must be exhausted.

The door opened and a man in a white coat entered. "I'm Dr. Harrigan, how are you feeling?"

"Lousy," Justin sighed. "What happened to me?"

"You were attacked and then you hemorrhaged. They brought you in and I tried to repair the damage."

Justin could see by the serious look on the doctor's face, there were complications. "Tried to?"

"Justin, the damage was extensive. It will be a while before we know how you're healing."

"But I'll be okay?" Justin was scared.

"In time."

"How much time?" Justin said softly.

"Justin, I'm not sure if this will be an issue but penetration won't be possible for at least a year." The doctor could see it was an issue clearly by the shocked look on Justin's face.

Brian kept his eyes closed and didn't react at all.

"A year?" Justin gasped. "You're joking, right?"

The doctor shook his head. "It will depend on how fast you heal. I'm sorry, son, it maybe longer."

Justin felt the lump in his throat rise up to almost choke him. "Who knows?"

"I haven't discussed your prognosis with anyone," the doctor replied, surprised. "Justin, I'm sure your partner will understand. It's obvious how important you are to him. Talk to him," Dr. Harrigan pleaded.

"Not a word," Justin growled. "I want your promise, not one word to Brian."

"Of course, Justin," Dr. Harrigan reassured him. "Your records are confidential, but you need to consider discussing this with him. You will need his emotional support and if he doesn't know of the danger, he may try to penetrate you and cause irreparable harm."

"Just don't say anything to anyone," Justin growled again.

The doctor nodded, but hoped his patient would reconsider. This would be a difficult time for him and the support of his partner was crucial. "I'll check on you later."

Justin waited for the doctor to leave and then the tears began to fall. He constantly checked Brian was still asleep. Brian was the last person Justin wanted to know about this. He would feel sorry for him and insist he be able to help. Justin didn't want Brian's pity and Brian's love, Justin knew he would never have that.

It was almost an hour before Justin could compose himself. Brian waited patiently, still pretending to be asleep. He was so worried about Justin, that he hadn't fully grasped the nature of Justin's injuries. It was time for him to wake him. He moaned softly and then stirred. "Mmmm" He opened his eyes and lifted his head then looked directly into Justin's eyes. Brian smiled. "You're awake."

Justin wiped his face quickly and smiled. "So are you."

"I'm sorry I fell asleep," Brian apologized. He lifted himself up with his arms, leaned forward and captured Justin's lips. Brian felt Justin stiffen but proceeded anyway. "I was so worried when I woke up and you were gone. Now I've found you, I never want to lose you again," he murmured.

"Found me?" Justin gasped.

Brian smiled. "I told you, Justin. I love you."

"What?" Justin gasped again. What was this, some kind of sick joke? "I don't understand."

Brian smiled. "What's to understand, I want you with me, I love you," he repeated.

"You don't even know me," Justin whispered.

"I knew the minute I touched you and when I thought I may lose you, I nearly went crazy. I want you, Justin, I want you with me all the time," Brian smiled. He didn't wait for Justin to answer, instead, climbing onto Justin's bed and wrapping his arms around his lover. Brian laid his head on Justin's chest and held him tightly.

Justin was flabbergasted. In the last hour, he'd been told he couldn't be fucked for at least a year and Brian was pledging his undying love, telling him he wanted him. He obviously hadn't survived the attack and was dead. This must be Purgatory and he was being punished for his sins. Brian finally wanted him, but wouldn't be able to fuck him. Justin wondered if it his punishment or Brian's or both.

Brian held Justin tightly. Everything he'd told Justin was true. He did love him and he did want them to be together. Being pressed against Justin was almost a relief. He still didn't understand why Justin had left his bed to hustle tricks but he didn't care about the reason. His feelings for Justin were real and he just wanted to be with Justin. When he felt Justin's arms wrap around him, he was relieved.

Justin wanted to enjoy the feeling for a while, before he told Brian it just wasn't meant to be for them. Two years ago, it would have meant everything. Even two days ago would have been a blessing. His life was over. He couldn't work, so he couldn't support Molly. He'd never pay her school fees just doing blowjobs. He was grateful she was with Mel and Linds. They would take care of her and she would be safe. It was too late for him and Brian...an angry trick in a dark alley, had seen to that. As the time passed, it became harder and harder for Justin to tell Brian it was over. They spent the rest of the day in each other's arms.

Brian wanted Justin's arms around him. He wasn't sure how it would work, but if he loved Justin half as much as he knew he did, they would get through it. Although the road would be tough and would require sacrifice, as long as he and Justin were together, that was all that mattered. He smiled when he felt Justin kiss his hair.

"How long since you showered Mr. Kinney?" Justin laughed.

Brian smiled. "A while." He snuggled closer.

"Do you think you should go home and do that?"

"Are telling me I stink?" Brian laughed and looked up at his lover.

Justin kissed him softly. "Perhaps 'pungent' is a better word."

"I could shower here," Brian suggested.

"You need clothes," Justin reminded him. "These ones have had it."

"Hmm," Brian grumbled. He didn't want to move. He didn't want to leave Justin even for a moment.

Before Justin came back into his life, Brian had made many changes. His self absorbed, narcissistic days were long gone, but although he had discovered that being Pittsburgh's 'numero uno' homo was less than satisfying, true happiness had continued to elude him. He'd had glimmers of it in the past, but had never allowed himself to experience it, choosing instead to push it away and forget about it. He was terrified of caring about anyone back then. Terrified he would give his heart and he would be rejected, the way his parents had always rejected him.

The night he spent with Justin had touched him, had shown his heart what he was missing. He knew

what he had thrown away once and knew what he was never prepared to lose it again. He could feel how much Justin loved him. If Justin left his bed to hustle that night, he must have had his reasons. He would be happy to hear them when Justin was ready but until then, he was where he wanted to be, with the one person he wanted to be with.

"Brian," Justin kissed him softly again. He could tell Brian's mind was a million miles away.

"Mmmm," Brian smiled again.

"Where were you?"

"I was thinking about how important you are to me."

Why hadn't Brian told him this before? Although he had to leave Brian behind once and for all, he wanted the words for his fantasies. They would need to last him for the rest of his life. "And how important is that?" he asked softly.

"When we met, two years ago, I never allowed emotion to affect my life. I thought being confident and knowing I was more successful than other people would make me happy, but it didn't. I perpetuated the facade in my mind to protect myself from the pain," he paused. "I knew in Mikey's room that night, I loved you, but I wouldn't admit it to myself. A lot has changed since then. Now I know what I want. I've been looking for something. The moment you touched me, I knew. I've been looking for you all this time. I love you, Justin," Brian smiled.

Justin pulled Brian close and held him tightly. "I love you too, Brian," he whispered. "I've always loved you and I always will."

Brian stayed in Justin's arms, enjoying how safe and warm he felt, for the first time in his life. He didn't want to leave, but Justin was right, he did stink. He sat up and smiled. "I'll shower and change, I won't be long." He carefully stepped off the bed and reached for his crutches. He pecked Justin on the cheek. "I'll be as fast as I can," he smiled.

Justin nodded and sat up; waiting for a few minutes until he was sure Brian was gone. He needed to get out of here. Justin grabbed a barf bag and filled it full of dressings from the shelf above his bed. What was he supposed to do for clothes? There were none in the robe, shit. He had to move slowly or it killed. If he left the hospital, what would he do? He couldn't afford medical care. Justin decided to worry about that later. He had to get away while Brian was gone. If he saw him again, he wouldn't be able to leave him. He had the money he was saving to move out with Molly. That would keep him until he could work. Justin paused...work. How would he work? Without Molly's school fees, he could get a job bussing tables.

He needed to get out of here, sneak back into Debbie's, get his stuff and make a hasty exit. Justin opened the door and stepped out into the corridor. If he looked casual, no one would notice him. It was easier to get lost in a crowd than any other place. There had to be clothes around here somewhere?

Justin strolled as best he could, down the corridor. There was a door on his left...locker room...perfect. He opened it slowly, sneaked inside and checked the lockers until he found clothes to fit. Justin dressed quickly. This was tough, he was already exhausted. As he exited the room, he was breathing hard.

Brian was in the store across the street, buying clothes. He'd decided it would take too long to go home to shower and change, unwilling to be away a moment longer than necessary. As he walked out, he saw Justin hailing a cab... what the fuck? He hailed one too and instructed the driver to 'follow that cab'. They followed at a discreet distance and he watched as the cab waited at Debbie's, by the back lane. Justin emerged shortly after with his back pack and jumped back into the cab. Brian followed him to the bank and then to the bus station. He couldn't believe it. Justin was running away from him. Brian felt a lump in his throat.

"Where to, buddy?" The driver's voice boomed.

Brian took a deep breath. "Wait here for me and then back to the hospital." He jumped out of the cab and hobbled inside after Justin.

Justin was at the ticket counter when he saw Brian walking towards him. The look on Brian's face said it all. Justin felt sick and was having difficulty moving. His stomach felt as if it was dragging on the ground and his ass was on fire.

"Let's go," Brian said coldly.

Justin nodded and followed Brian back out to the taxi. Even though Brian was struggling to move himself, Justin was slower. He was obviously in pain. They drove to the hospital in silence. When Brian deposited Justin back into his room, they still hadn't exchanged a word. He waited for Justin to get into bed, informed the nurses they would need to watch him and left, without saying a word.

Jonas filed the notice of motion and contacted the police. It was only three hours after the papers were served when he received a call from Jim Patterson's lawyer. He offered them five million, but Jonas remained fast. The children were entitled to the full amount of their parent's estates plus the legal fees plus pain and suffering. In his investigation he'd discovered from an acquaintance that Mr. Patterson had a Cayman account. What luck?

According to the books of the business, the scoundrel had been cleverly absconding with more than his share for years. Jonas knew Jim Patterson had no choice but to pay. If he didn't, he would be arrested. He gave the lawyer an ultimatum, pay up or go to jail. He negotiated ten million for the children plus his fee and gave them forty eight hours to transfer the money. The authorities were advised, so there was no way Patterson could flee the country.

Brian didn't care his cast was cracked again. When Justin easily agreed to go back to the hospital, Brian knew it was him, Justin was running away from, not Pittsburgh. He was far too sick to be on his feet and looked so pale and fragile. Brian couldn't understand how Justin could tell him he loved him, not fifteen minutes before, and then want to get away, to leave him. He was so hurt by the rejection, he couldn't think straight.

Justin felt as if his heart had been torn out. The look on Brian's face tormented him. He knew Brian didn't understand. How could he? He didn't know that sex with him would be impossible. When he left the loft that night, he had no idea Brian really meant what he'd said.

The nurse had changed his dressings and Justin wasn't surprised he had worsened his condition.

His mind was racing. He couldn't not work, he needed the money. How was he supposed to know the guy he picked up was a nut job? If he'd stayed where he was safe, with Brian, none of this would be happening. It had all come full circle and it was all for nothing. Loving Brian had forced him to 'out' himself to his parents. They were arguing about him when they died. Now, when he had a shot at something he'd always wanted, his stupidity had taken that away from him too. He couldn't be with Brian. Sex was important to the man he loved. He couldn't ask Brian to settle for a life with someone who was incapable of giving him what he wanted?

His mind wandered to Molly and he started to cry.

Michael arrived with take out and found Brian staring into space. "How did it go with Justin?"

"It didn't," Brian said coldly.

"Ma told me he was awake."

"He is," he answered abruptly.

Michael sat on the sofa next to his friend. "I know you care about him."

"He doesn't care about me."

Michael was amazed. "That's crazy. He's in love with you."

Brian shook his head.

"He is, I know he is," Michael insisted. He could see something had happened between them. "If you think he doesn't, then you're reading him all wrong. This was an accident, Brian. I don't agree with his choice of profession, but he's independent and wants to take care of his sister. I have to admire him for that."

"I don't care that he hustles, Mikey. I do care when he takes my money, climbs out of my bed, goes tricking and gets hurt. He didn't need to hustle, I gave him the money."

"You paid him," Michael gasped.

"I wanted him off the streets. I don't understand why he was out there. I gave him enough so I was sure he was safe," Brian sighed.

Michael frowned. Fuck, the money. He reached behind the cushions and pulled out the wad of notes. "I found this on the counter that morning"

Brian stared at the money. "What?"

"This was thrown on the counter. Did you put it there?"

Brian shook his head.

"It must have been Justin. He didn't take your money," Brian. He must have left the money and been trying to earn his night's take when he was attacked."

"Oh Mikey," Brian gasped. "It's my fault."

"It was an accident, Brian. It's no one's fault. Do you love him?"

Brian nodded.

"And he loves you. I don't see what the problem is?" Michael shook his head.

Brian told Michael about Justin escaping from the hospital and how he had retrieved him from the bus station.

Michael looked puzzled. "Why would he do that?"

Brian sighed loudly. There was only one reason he would do that. It was sex...all of this was about sex. Brian slumped forward and buried his face in his hands.

"What is it?" Michael exclaimed.

Brian didn't answer.

"Brian, you're scaring me. What is it?" He repeated.

Brian raised his head slowly. "He's hurt badly, Mikey. I think he's trying to spare me."

Michael put his arm around his friend and smiled. "You should see him then, I'll take you. Where are your crutches?"

Brian looked around, but couldn't see them. "I think I left them in the store near the hospital." He looked at his cast and shook his head. "I fucked another one."

Michael laughed. "You need a new cast and to talk to Justin. Come on." He helped Brian to his feet and walked slowly, as Brian lent on him for support. "They are gonna ban you," he laughed.

"Probably," Brian smiled. On the way to the hospital, Brian decided. No matter what Justin's reasons, it wouldn't make a difference. He loved him and he and Justin would be together, no buts, no excuses.

When they arrived, Michael made arrangements for them to collect Brian from Justin's room when they were ready to replace his cast again.

Brian looked through the window and could see Justin was crying. He opened the door and hobbled in.

Justin remained on his side and didn't move.

Brian climbed onto the bed and held him.

Justin looked over his shoulder. "What are you doing here?"

"There isn't anywhere I'd rather be than with you," Brian smiled.

Justin tried to pull away, but Brian held him tightly.

"I pretended I didn't want to be with you once and look how that turned out," he shrugged. "If you pretend you don't want to be with me, it might get worse."

"How can it get worse?" Justin growled.

"You don't want to know. How about we just make it work?"

"It can't work, Brian."

"It can," he paused. "I love you, you love me. It will work," Brian persisted.

"I want you to go." Justin pulled out of Brian's grasp.

"No, I'm here and I'm not going anywhere. I think you should move into the loft," Brian said firmly.

"No, I can't be with you," Justin yelled. He wanted Brian to stop torturing him. They couldn't be together. This was going nowhere and just hurting both of them.

"I want you with me," Brian repeated.

"I can't be with you," Justin screamed. "I can't be with anyone."

"If you could be with anyone you wanted, who would you want to be with? It better be me," Brian smiled, then his face became serious. "If I want a hole, I'll call a hustler. The fact of the matter is... you are more to me than that. I love you, Justin. I want us to be together."

"You know, don't you?" Justin said softly.

"I know, I only want you," Brian smiled.

"But Brian..."

"No but Brian. This isn't a negotiation. I demand your unconditional surrender," Brian laughed. "We'll

make it up as we go along. We can do that. It's our life together. We've already wasted too much time, let's not waste any more. Do you love me?" He grabbed Justin. "Answer me, do you love me?"

"Yes, I love you," Justin growled.

"Good," Brian smiled.

A nurse came through the door, smiling. "They're ready for you in the Plaster room, Mr. Kinney."

Justin frowned. "What's wrong with your foot?"

Brian laughed. "Someone keeps making me walk on it without my crutches."

Justin looked at Brian's cracked cast.

Brian looked at his lover and frowned. "Can I trust you to stay in bed until I come back?"

Justin nodded.

"That's good too," Brian laughed again. He kissed Justin on the top of the head. "I'll be as fast as I can...stay put this time."

"Pass me my sketch book before you go," Justin smiled.

By the time Brian returned, Justin was asleep. He took the sketch book out of his hands and flicked through the pages. Brian was sad when he saw the history of the last two years, perfectly chronicled in cartoon form. Justin had immortalized him as a super hero. He looked at the last two pages. Rage had saved him at the bus station and pledged no obstacle would be too vast for them to overcome. Brian smiled. Justin finally understood. The doctor had given him a walking cast this time. Although Brian had promised to stay of it, for some reason he doctor didn't believe him. He kissed Justin goodnight and settled into the chair for some much needed sleep.

Jonas arrived at the hospital at five thirty. The deal was done and he needed Justin to sign some papers.

"Jonas," Brian smiled. "This is Justin Taylor. Justin, Jonas is Mel's partner in the law firm."

Justin smiled and shook his hand.

"How did you go?" Brian smiled.

"Done and dusted," Jonas laughed. "I have some papers for Justin to sign."

"Papers?" Justin said, puzzled.

Brian took Justin's hand. "I didn't tell you because I thought you had too much going on, but I asked Mel to investigate your parent's estate," he paused. He had been so excited to help that he hadn't considered how Justin would react.

Justin shook his head. "There was nothing, Brian. Everything belonged to the company. Dad only drew his wage while he was alive," Justin sighed. "Uncle Jim paid Molly's school fees for a term, but that was all he could afford." He looked at Jonas. "What papers?"

"I managed to get some money for you from Jim Patterson," Jonas smiled. "It seems he wasn't exactly honest with you."

"What?" Justin gasped.

Jonas pulled the papers from his briefcase. "Part of the deal was you agree not to prosecute him."

"If he wasn't fair, then he should be prosecuted," Justin gasped.

"The money would be tied up in a lengthy legal battle. I advise you to take the money and run. I've made sure you got everything you were entitled to and then some," Jonas smiled.

Justin looked at Brian for guidance.

"Is it a good deal, Jonas?" Brian asked.

Jonas smiled and nodded. "This is the release Justin. Sign at the tabs."

Justin signed his name three times in the places marked and handed them back to Jonas.

"Now I need an account to transfer the money to."

"I have a money market account," Justin offered.

"That will be fine," Jonas smiled again.

Justin rummaged in the draw for his passbook. "I have the number here."

"Good, good." Jonas wrote down the number. "I'll arrange for the money to be transferred from our holding account tomorrow."

"How much do I owe you?" Justin asked slowly.

"I added my fee to the amount Patterson had to pay," Jonas winked at Brian.

Brian laughed. "Thanks Jonas."

"No problem," he smiled.

"How much did we get?" Justin asked softly. He hoped it was enough to cover Molly's fees until he was recovered.

"Ten million," Jonas smirked.

Both Brian and Justin gasped.

"How much?" Brian choked.

"Ten million. The value of the estates was seven and we demanded another three for interest lost, and 'pain and suffering'."

Brian looked at Justin who had gone sheet white and grabbed his hand again, to ground him.

"Justin is a little overwhelmed, Jonas. Is it okay if we talk about it later?" Brian was a little overwhelmed as well. Ten million, fucking hell.

"Sure," Jonas grinned. "Justin controls Molly's share until she's eighteen. The money will be transferred in the morning. Any questions, feel free to contact me."

Brian shook Jonas' hand. "Thank you very much."

"Thank you," Justin added, weakly.

"Always pleased to be of assistance," Jonas laughed. "Believe me, it was pleasure."

Brian knew it was. If Jonas made Patterson pay, his fee would have been ten percent. When Jonas left, Justin was still pale. "Are you okay?"

Justin nodded. "I can't believe it."

"Believe it," Brian smiled. "You'll have it tomorrow. You'll need to be cautious, Justin. It's a lot of money and money attracts sharks."

Justin nodded again. He still couldn't believe someone he'd known all his life had cheated them that way. He'd believed his uncle when he told them there was no money. He'd even been grateful when his uncle had paid a term of Molly's fees. How could he have done that? How could he have cheated them?

"Fuck," Justin gasped.

"What?" Brian asked.

"I sold my ass because that bastard cheated us," he growled.

"Looking back will drive you nuts. You need to look forward." Brian squeezed his hand. "You don't need to worry anymore. Molly will be taken care of. You will make sure of that. If you want advice, talk to Ted."

Justin nodded. "He helped me before."

"He's a good accountant," Brian laughed. "Money is what he does best."

Justin smiled. "Do you mind if we don't live at the loft?"

Brian looked up, startled.

"I want to get somewhere where Molly can live with us. Is that okay?"

Brian hadn't thought that far ahead. It hadn't occurred to him they wouldn't live at the loft. "Wherever you are is fine with me," Brian smiled.

"Thanks."

Brian raised one eyebrow and smirked at him. "Can I put in my dimes worth?"

"Sure."

The money gave Justin the security he needed. It was time he thought about his intellectual future. Brian wanted him to be happy. "I think you should go back to school. What about PIFA?"

Justin grinned. He'd always wanted to go there. His father had wanted him to go to Dartmouth, but Justin knew he would never be happy being a business major. He loved art. "Sounds like a plan," he nodded.

"Another thing," Brian paused. "I saw your sketch pad. You should talk to Mikey about Rage. The world needs a gay super hero," Brian smiled. "Mikey owns a comic book store now. He'll be able to help you."

"I will," Justin smiled. Rage had gotten him through the most challenging time of his life. Rage was his hero. Perhaps there were kids out there who could use Rage to help them too. "I'm tired. Will you stay with me?"

Brian nodded. He climbed onto Justin's bed and held him.

Justin nestled into Brian's arms. For the first time in two years, he knew he would sleep peacefully. His money problems were over. He would have no trouble getting custody of Molly, they were both safe

and he wanted to sleep.

Complete

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