

Chapter One

A cold nose rubbed into RJ's arm, digging until he groaned. Then he was slurped by a tongue.

"Awright, awright, Samson. I got it. Daddy isn't home yet." RJ couldn't even remember how he got home last night. At least he *did* make it home. His body ached, and it felt like he'd had a rough night. Laurence and Josh sure knew how to throw a party.

Holding a hand to his head, he stiffly rolled to sit up. "You, then me," he muttered to the dog with the patience of a saint with a wagging tail. After lurching to his feet, he managed to stumble on wobbly legs across the room, aiming for the rear glass patio door. "Here ya go, big guy." The door opened and Samson was out like a shot. RJ knew just how he felt.

Blairily, he made the return trip, walked into the bedroom and froze solid, his heart slamming to a dead stop in his chest. Lying in RJ's bed on his stomach, facing away—of course—was a person he didn't know. "Shit," he hissed. "What did you do, RJ?"

His bladder prompted him to do things in order. Avoiding the bed, he made it to the bathroom, grabbing a pair of fresh briefs out of a drawer on the way. Behind the door, he held himself on a flat palm to the facing wall as he emptied himself of probably a quart or two of fine liquor. Smacking his lips, they felt dry. Yep, drunk himself dry. He'd take a shower if he'd been alone. A splash on his face was the most luxury he could take for the moment.

First things first: he needed to see who was sleeping in Papa Bear's bed.

Opening the door, he gazed over the now-flipped body splayed across his sheets. "Oh, mama." *That came home with me?* His guest looked to still be asleep, a strong arm tossed over his head on the pillow, the other tucked under the sheet that was almost not even covering him, and RJ would bet a ten that he was cupping his cock in sleep.

A hard, broad chest, wide shoulders, brown hair, but it wasn't dark, more candied... He tried to think, his eyes locked on the sleeping god in his bed. *Caramel*. Who did he know with that color hair? RJ wracked his brain. No one who would sleep with him. This guy was as unknown as a Catholic nun at his mom's house.

"Babe, if you keep staring, I'm never going to be able to move."

RJ startled. "You're awake!" He stumbled until the bathroom door hit his ass, holding him up. The husky, sleep-drawled voice sent goose bumps over RJ. "Who-who are you?"

A gentle smile curved lusciously full lips. RJ licked his. Fuzzy memories of devouring those lips, or them devouring him, danced into his thoughts.

"Someone who's been waiting over a year for you to get rid of that lazy ass you were letting screw you."

"Huh?" he squeaked. With flat palms, he scrubbed his hands over his face, driving away the sleep and the remaining alcohol fumes. "He...you..."

Finally the gorgeous man in his bed opened his eyes and drifted to look at RJ. Rolling onto his side, he propped himself on an open hand, his elbow beneath him. Suddenly, RJ wished he was wearing a hell of a lot more than just underwear. An allover suit of armor might just fit the bill, because the way this guy was looking him over made his skin tight and his dick throb. No one had ever looked at him like the main dish of a seven-course meal. Screw that. RJ was the dessert.

He gulped noticeably. “Look, I appreciate you getting me home, but I don’t bring guys home—”

“That’s good to know, because you didn’t bring me home. I made sure you didn’t kill yourself last night after you got snookered off your ass.”

He raked a hand down his face, trying to remember. All there was in his mind was a swirl of fog. “I didn’t try to drive home, did I?”

“No, thank God. I’d have had a heart attack. I took a chance and went to the party last night. Finding you there made my night. Finding you drunk off your ass scared the shit out of me. You never do that.”

“Wait. How do you know anything about me?” RJ still didn’t recognize the guy eating him up with his stare.

Brilliant hazel eyes dropped. His shoulders rose and fell, as though gathering strength or his thoughts. “Do you remember Antonia Reyes?”

RJ racked his brain, and the brick fell into place. “Last spring?”

The stranger in his bed nodded. “My sister. You organized her wedding.”

One of the few weddings RJ had accepted because he knew Antonia from years before and would have been all over her if she went bridezilla on him. *Wait.* His brain screeched to a halt. “You’re Toni’s older brother.” A faint nod. He shoved his brain through a thought mangle, fighting to squeeze out his name.

It wouldn’t come. Then a name fell from his lips. “Julian?”

Gorgeous beamed. He started to get out of bed, but RJ tossed a hand between them, halting his progress. “Not yet.” He fought to hide the quivering in his legs. “Why are you here? Why do you know anything about me?”

Julian blushed. “I bugged Toni about you, and as embarrassing as it is to admit...” He plucked at the bed sheet with his free hand. “I followed you once or twice, bumped into Laurence, and, uh...” Red hue'd his cheeks. “Learned about the reception party. I fudged the truth a little. Said I was a friend of yours, and he invited me to come.”

“Holy Christ! You’ve been stalking me!” RJ backed up, hiding half his frame behind the bathroom’s doorway wall.

Julian’s eyes widened. “No!” He sat on the edge of the bed, his head in his hands. What was left of the sheet barely covered a thigh and his man bits. “Okay, yes, but I’ve just been waiting for the chance to meet you face to face. Last night you were drunk, and I couldn’t let you get hurt.”

RJ watched Julian, misery and worry coloring his features. “Why? What happened last night?” There was something in Julian’s voice. What was he missing? What couldn’t he remember?

Just then the front door opened, followed by murmured male voices. “Fuck!” He glared at Julian. “Don’t say a word, and don’t get out of that bed.”

Julian grinned. RJ rolled his eyes in answer to the unspoken thoughts in that man’s head. Spying his jeans tossed negligently over his dresser, he picked them up and jumped into them. Leaving the room, he shut the door with a sharp click.

“Hi, Gregory. Morning, Charlie,” he greeted cheerfully, his smile so wide, it was a wonder it didn’t split his face in half.

Charlie grinned sheepishly. “Hi, RJ.” Considering Charlie *had* wanted to punch out RJ’s lights the night before, he could understand the shy embarrassment, but that was in the past.

Gregory set a bag down and Charlie followed, emptying his hands. RJ noticed the cane in his hand but didn't say anything.

"Hey, do you mind letting him crash for a few days with me? We're going to look for a place, but I think Dad's coming around to the new me. Dinner tonight."

RJ relaxed. This was normal stuff, friends stuff. "Really? That's great!"

"Uh, RJ? Whose car is out front and where is yours?" Gregory hooked a finger through one of Charlie's jeans belt loops, keeping him close.

RJ's face fell to his palm. "Fuck," he muttered. That explained some of last night. "I'm guessing my car is still at the hotel." He'd have to find a way to go get it.

Then, of course, more of his night that overflowed to day appeared. Julian opened the bedroom door. "Hey, babe. I'm gonna grab a shower." RJ whipped around and growled, his hands forming fists. Julian laughed into the face of his glare and shut the door on them all.

"Ohh-kay. That answers the car question," Gregory said, giving RJ a questioning stare.

Samson barked at the back glass door. "I'll let him in," Charlie offered, walking around RJ. All wiggles and tail, Samson bounded into the house, almost knocking Charlie off his feet to reach Gregory.

Samson's body vibrated with happiness to see Gregory. Madness had taken over RJ's home.

RJ gritted his teeth, fighting for calm. "Look, he's welcome as long as you need. I need to think. I'll be out in a few minutes." Then he spun on a heel and marched for his bedroom.

Of course, Julian hadn't been kidding. The shower was running in the bathroom with the door open.

He stormed to the bathroom. "What do you think you're doing?" RJ screeched, and didn't care that the shrill sound came back to him.

"Getting clean. Wanna join me?" Julian's honeyed tones raced over RJ's nerves.

"I told you to stay in here!"

"I did. I was just being polite to let you know where I'd be, babe."

RJ wanted to shove his fingers through his eyeballs. Instead, he just rubbed them really hard. "I would have figured it out, Julian. And polite would have been *asking* if you could use the shower, not commandeering it!"

A low, rolling chuckle bounced off the tiled walls. "Quit trying to throw a snit. Come here." Julian's hand emerged from the shower curtain and with a finger, bade him closer.

"I am *not* throwing a snit! I don't bring guys home!"

RJ was about to hyperventilate, he was breathing so fast.

The curtain moved and water cascaded over a round face, though there wasn't any sign of extra body mass on him. Julian had the proverbial baby face thing going on, which made him angelic and cute, and made it even harder for RJ to stay mad at him.

"Babe," Julian said gently. "You didn't bring me home. I made sure you got home." He tipped his head. "Come in here and get clean, then I'll explain everything. Okay? I'm not going to bite." A show of teeth accompanied the sparkle in his eyes. "Well, unless you ask me to, *again*." He purred the last word, leaving RJ to groan over his lack of memory.

"Why should I trust you?" he snapped.

Julian seemed to consider his answer, leaning on a shoulder to the wall of the shower stall. "Because I'm the one who brought you home, didn't let you drive, and didn't let that forty-something pretending to be thirty-year-old freak molest you when you were too drunk to know better."

Cool eyes didn't blink.

"Oh, God." RJ shivered. "I was attacked?"

"Not entirely, but two more minutes and you would have followed him to God knows where, and I wasn't going to let that happen. I heard what he was saying, and none of it would have felt good for you," he explained evenly.

Something... "A gag? *Bondage?*" RJ's shoulders bowed in as flashes of memory assaulted him.

Julian nodded. "I thought you two were hitting it off, until I began to purposely eavesdrop and heard him. He wanted to take you home and whip you like a bad side of beef."

RJ plopped down on the closed seat of the commode. "What did you do?" he asked, feeling more than a little dizzy.

"I interrupted in a big way, pulled you into my arms and stole you to the dance floor like we were the best of friends, which is where I realized you were toasted beyond any hope of return." He glanced away. "I had to look in your wallet to find out where you lived, but I got you here."

"Did we...?" Nausea tickled his throat that he couldn't remember jack shit.

"Honestly, not as much as I wanted, but we aren't hand-shaking strangers."

RJ groaned, his eyes closing.

"Babe, just get in the shower. The water isn't going to be hot much longer with all the yakking."

Numbly, RJ obeyed, standing to drop his jeans and underwear right there and accepted a helping hand over the ceramic wall. Shaky, he moved with Julian until they stood together under the spray.

"Hang on to me, RJ. Let me take care of you."

Resting his forehead on Julian's shoulder, he clung shivering as soap lathered, then rinsed down his body. The tender stroke of hands on his ass sent that tingle over his skin once more. Nothing but fingers and hands. No kisses, no lips, nothing but what he'd offered. RJ relaxed further.

"Flip," Julian teased gently. RJ did, his back to Julian's front, and closed his eyes to the caring touch as he bathed RJ from his neck to his hips. Water splashed against his chest in a heated spray, removing the chill of what had almost happened and getting any lingering alcoholic phantoms out of his system.

A drawn-out moan eased from his lips when Julian's fingers ghosted over his groin, gently cupping his balls and gliding over his cock, not intending to arouse, but it didn't matter. RJ was melting.

"I've never been with a guy who's hairless," Julian murmured by his ear. "I have to admit, it's a new addiction." RJ's heart pounded. "Stand up." RJ was guided under the water stream and a few seconds later, lather and firm fingers worked magic in his hair.

"No one..." He sighed, trailing off. "Feels good."

"Then no one has been taking care of you the way you deserve," Julian informed him. "Okay, water one more time." RJ closed his eyes, and with his hands braced on

marble, he let Julian rinse away the shampoo. Julian's hands coasted over his length, touching and sweeping until every sign of soap was washed away.

"Can I?" Julian whispered hoarsely. Thumbs separated his ass cheeks.

RJ's head hung limp between his still-suspended arms. "Do what?" he managed.

"This."

RJ hissed as Julian ran his tongue down the seam of his ass. He stiffened in more than one way as sensation sliced through him on a rocket of arousal. His cock ached and filled. "Julian," he murmured. Rivers of warm water suddenly chilled to ice as the heated water ran out. He gasped at the sudden change.

"Hm?"

"Water. Cold."

Without a word of complaint Julian stopped what he was doing. He then stood and turned off the taps. He slid the curtain out of the way and stepped out. Reaching for a hanging towel, he dried his face and then offered RJ a hand.

"Still mad at me?" Julian asked, patting the towel to his chest once they were both standing. RJ filched a clean towel out of the bathroom closet.

RJ finished with the towel and hung it with Julian's next to it. "Honestly, I'm not sure. The stalker thing still freaks me out a little."

A warm palm cupped his cheek. "Let's do this. I met you last night. The circumstances are irrelevant."

"All I know about you is your name, Julian," RJ said, peering into those hazel eyes. They weren't mirror images, but a menagerie of colors in each eye as individual as a shifting cloud.

"Then let's work on getting to know each other."

With that, he brought them close and touched his lips to RJ's, a sweet, gentle meeting. Somehow, RJ was positive he'd just been bulldozed by a professional.

Chapter Two

Julian waited for RJ to finish brushing his teeth in the bathroom, kicked back on the bed with his hands pillowed behind his head. He was glad RJ had taken the story. The reality was a lot uglier.

RJ had been drunk, there was no denying that. The guy who'd been trying to pick him up had a big mouth, probably thinking aside from drunk, RJ was hard of hearing. Julian had heard every detail about what the man had wanted. Why he was picking on RJ, who was too drunk to know what he was about to agree to, bothered the shit out of Julian. He had a sick feeling Mr. Pick-Up was looking for more than a one-night-stand and it would have ended up with RJ badly hurt, or worse. Once the word "caning" was uttered, he'd swooped in.

"RJ!"

RJ had whirled, smiling, and before confusion could claim his features, Julian had looped him into a quick embrace, planting one on his sweet mouth. "Sorry. I know I'm interrupting, but I've been hustling all night to get here for my man."

"Your man?" Mr. Dom-in-a-Park-Avenue-Suit exclaimed. Some had no qualms about poaching. It looked like Mr. Dom could go either way, a touch of disbelief in his gaze about just who Julian was to RJ.

"Yeah. I had some business to take care of. Just got here. Thanks for keeping him company."

Glad RJ had been too rocked to really get a word in edgewise, he dragged him out to the dance floor. "Please tell me you were *not* going home with that guy?"

RJ blinked bloodshot eyes at him, his lips loose and his hips looser. "What guy?"

Julian groaned. He remembered that clearly. "You're fucking wasted, RJ."

"Yay!" He'd grinned and spun on his toes, lurching into Julian when he stopped. "Mission accomplished."

He didn't care who was left at the party, RJ was officially leaving. With an arm around him, he poured him into Julian's car and after some searching, dug out his wallet. He'd been a little surprised by his name but could see why he went by RJ. With the address entered into his GPS, it was only a matter of getting there.

He hadn't expected the dog, but when he only woofed once, sniffed at Julian and licked RJ's hand, he guessed he was a cool pooch.

He'd fibbed more than a little. Absolutely nothing happened last night. In fact, more had happened in the shower between them just now than the night before. RJ had hit the twilight zone before he'd oozed into bed. Julian didn't even have to stay, but it would have taken more than his conscience to pry him away from RJ's side. First, he needed to know RJ was going to be all right. He had no idea how much the man had drunk. Second, he wasn't going to desert him when his own ride was still back at the hotel where Laurence's party had been.

Julian had been waiting months to have this chance with RJ. A little hangover amnesia was nothing in his book. Besides, he only had the rest of today to convince him to give them a shot. He had to go to work in the morning, and he was equally sure so did RJ.

After watching him from a distance, and keeping that distance, he realized a boyfriend was in the picture and did some research on Toby. Julian snorted. Yeah, he'd been a dreamboat. *Fuckin' mooch*. Worked part-time when he could find the time.

Didn't contribute butkis to the rent or bills, and in general treated RJ like his God-given meal ticket. A ticket that worked his ass off more days than the week could claim.

About the time Julian was going to do something about the prick, he'd dumped RJ after the New Year for greener pastures, though Julian would never tell RJ that. Not being able to comfort him after the crash and burn of their split was the last straw.

He sighed, stretching his neck to stare at the ceiling.

Yes, he'd stalked the man, but he'd also saved him. He'd planned on making first contact last night, wanting to give him a chance to recover out of the rebound zone, and had guessed a public party where he was surrounded by his closest friends would make him feel safe. Except discovering him talking to Mr. Park Avenue, he'd hung back. They'd been pretty tight in conversation, and he knew the older man was flirting with RJ. He'd been dying to do the same thing for weeks, now that he was free. RJ may have been drunk, but a part of him wasn't keen on the offer, and Mr. Dom was pushing. Julian shuddered. He had no problem with a little play, but the man sounded like a real-life dungeon master, and RJ was his next submissive slave.

To quote his cousins: *Oh, hell no!*

Eventually, RJ would either forgive or forget the stalking part. It wasn't like Julian had been in his face, tailing him every day, more just making sure he was alive and happy, and unfortunately still with Toby.

When he left, Julian was the first to leap on that train and ride the bitch downtown.

"Thank you."

Julian rolled his head, spying RJ in the bathroom doorway. He'd slipped his underwear back on, but nothing else.

"What for, babe?"

"For being there, for bringing me home." He shrugged, causing an exaggerated hike of his shoulders. "And for keeping me from doing something I'd regret." A grimace marred his features. "I remember some of the conversation. You're right."

"He wasn't playing fair trying to get you when you were drunk." Julian patted the bed, the side RJ had slept on. "Come here, RJ."

Black hair lay in feathery layers to his shoulders, swaying as it began to dry. He had loved running his fingers through the baby-soft strands in the shower. Not thin, just fine as silk. With his finer bone structure, his gray eyes were beautiful, surrounded by a ring of thick, sooty lashes. He wasn't pretty, that was irrefutable. RJ wasn't thin either, more middle-of-the-road with a solid chest and narrow hips, strong legs and thighs that made Julian tremble inside.

In fact, taken apart, he wasn't all that, but put the pieces together and he stole Julian's ability to think, every time. And RJ had since he'd first set eyes on him during a site consultation with Antonia for her reception.

Thinking then that RJ was just a hot guy, he didn't presume he was gay. He may be a wonderful planner, able to work magic with hotels of all sizes, make any hall worthy of any theme reception or celebration, but the guy didn't exude one gay pheromone because of his chosen profession. He had more zen and feng shui in his little finger than Julian had in his entire apartment.

Then Toni had asked about Laurence and Josh within earshot and Julian's world had flipped as he'd shamelessly eavesdropped. The man he'd been silently fantasizing about was within reach.

Except he was taken.

But not any longer. He patted the bed again, enticing him.

“You’re still naked,” RJ pointed out.

“I only have one set of clothes, babe.”

“Oh.” RJ hesitated.

He held up his right hand. “I promise not to touch, pounce or otherwise lick unless invited. How’s that?”

RJ’s mouth tightened as though holding in laughter, his eyes twinkling. “Were you a Boy Scout?”

“Not hardly, but I am trustworthy.”

RJ considered him for a moment more. “Okay. I’m going to hold you to that promise.”

Nervousness radiated from RJ. *At least he hasn’t kicked me out yet.* Would be well within his right. So long as he attempted to behave, things might go the way Julian had been longing for.

* * * *

RJ circled the bed, one eye on Julian, and one eye on... Well, he was only human. Julian didn’t seem at all fazed by his covert staring. Didn’t appear to be aware of it either. He slipped onto the bed to lie stiffly at Julian’s side. He crossed his arms over his chest, leaning against the headboard, the same as Julian. He crossed his ankles. He couldn’t remember the last guy he had in his bed to just talk. Toby had lived with him, but sleep and sex was all their bed had seen.

“Relax,” Julian soothed, sweeping up and down RJ’s features with a gentle look. He twisted to face RJ. “Are you uncomfortable with me being naked?”

RJ was quick to shake his head. “No. I mean, no, it doesn’t bother me if it doesn’t bother you because if it isn’t bothering you and you can be like that then I can man up and—”

Julian touched a light finger to his blathering mouth. A warm chuckle calmed the erratic beat of his heart.

“It’s okay, babe. I’ll put on something.” Julian scooted the other way, then stood. Bending over, he grabbed a piece of clothing off the floor and slid his own underwear up his legs.

RJ stared at his round ass, firm, with dimples. Julian was as tall as he was, thicker though, and darker, more naturally tanned. RJ’s Greek blood was stamped into his face. He wasn’t sure what kind of mutt Julian was, only that he was too cute for his own good, and probably got away with everything he’d ever done since he was a little boy, with that cherubic face.

He wiggled back onto the bed and sighed, relaxed and content.

“How are you feeling?”

RJ focused. Julian rested with his eyes closed, his hands threaded together to lie over his flat stomach.

“Better. Not as foggy as when I woke up.”

“That’s good. I was worried when I got you home. I had no idea how much you’d drank.” Julian cracked an eyelid. “Why were you so plastered?”

RJ left those curious eyes to stare forward across his room. “Just a moment of self-pity. It’s over.”

RJ felt he was allowed. Last night had been Laurence and Josh's ceremony and reception-slash-party into the wee hours of the morning. On top of that Gregory's beau, Charlie, had come riding in to the rescue from Texas after a horrible split that had all but shattered Gregory. Charlie had salvaged their relationship in glowing colors, if the fact that they were only getting in *this morning* was any indication. Even after their breakup and the mess he'd caused, RJ honestly liked Charlie and was glad he'd come to fix Gregory's broken heart.

Which left RJ as the last man standing from their little wily group. He hadn't expected Toby to end things the way he had, much less *when* he had. An *artiste*, he worked his own schedule, his own hours. RJ had given him all the time, room, and devotion a man could give.

It hadn't been enough.

The gentle stroke of knuckles to his face dragged him out of the wallowing dark. "Don't give him the time or energy, RJ. His loss is that he never knew the real man who loved him. If he did, he wouldn't have left."

RJ nodded, then gulped, his mouth falling open. "Christ on a stick," he squeaked, staring unblinking at Julian. "How much do you know?"

"It's why I didn't pursue you once I realized you were gay. I knew you were involved." Julian reclasped his hands.

"How long?"

"Since Toni's wedding prep."

RJ stared. He said that with absolutely no shame. "You've been following me for over a year?"

"No. I've been following you since about September." His brow scrunched. "I tried to forget about you when I learned you had a boyfriend. Then I spotted said boyfriend with someone who wasn't you and did some digging."

RJ gasped. "He was cheating on me?" His mending heart cracked all over again.

"No, at least, I don't think he was." Julian shook his head. Relief filled RJ, but he still felt it was useless and way too late. "But I learned what kind of a worthless dead weight he was for you."

"He's a painter. He works by the whim of his creativity."

Julian gagged, pure disdain in the sound.

RJ glowered at him. "You didn't know him."

"I'd have killed him," he retorted right back. "Did he ever paint here, try to do something that might, *might*, have been construed as actual creative effort? You know, something that might have made money?"

RJ stiffened, hating the way Julian ripped away his rose-colored glasses. Silence filled the room, and he knew Julian wasn't going to step in until RJ stepped up.

"Fine," he grouched. He shoved his shoulders higher. Julian, the prick, was still slouched, comfortable and obviously not going anywhere anytime soon. "No, he didn't, not often anyway."

Julian didn't press, his point made. RJ closed his eyes. He knew Toby had his faults. What human didn't?

"I loved him," he whispered.

"I know, babe. All I'm asking for is a chance." The bed quaked and when RJ glanced, Julian had slid to lay flat. "I'd hoped you'd be out of the rebound zone, but I can tell you're really not."

“It’s only been a couple weeks.”

“I’m greedy, selfish, and want you now, though,” Julian admitted. “But I can wait. I waited this long for you to be single. I can wait a little longer for you to be healed.” A moment later, Julian sat on the edge of the bed and reached for his jeans. “I’ll drive you to pick up your car when you’re ready. I won’t leave you stranded.”

“Julian?”

He eased jeans over slightly flared hips. RJ visually traced the cut over his waist and hips as he turned to face him on the bed. His jeans molded to him, scrambling RJ’s brain.

“Don’t go,” he whispered, finding his voice. RJ straightened to hold himself on his knees. Julian faced him. “No, I’m not fully over him, if you want the honest truth.”

“Always,” Julian replied.

“But I don’t want you to go either.”

“RJ,” he said tenderly. “I want a clean shot to be with you. I won’t be your rebound boy.”

He lowered and softly kissed RJ’s lips. Warm pants played between them. RJ closed his eyes when the support of a palm cupped his chin. Heat pooled into his blood, making his cock thicken and throb. His skin felt tight. He raised his hands, splaying his palms over Julian’s bare chest. The beat of a heart beneath flesh reached into RJ, dancing with his own.

Julian groaned and RJ whined when he took away that kiss. “Please,” RJ whimpered. *Please don’t go. Please make me feel that good again. Please make love to me. Please...*

Craving, hunger, desire all swirled in hazel eyes. Blunt nails curled to dig into Julian’s firm pecs. He hissed. “RJ.” Shuddering, he put a step between them. Sucking a gulp of air, he released it through a taut jaw. “That is why I want you, all of you. I’d hoped, and even I couldn’t have imagined how sweet you would be.”

Julian put both hands to RJ’s face. “But know this now, just because I’m not hounding you, don’t think I don’t want you. When you’re ready to do more, I’ll be the man waiting outside your door.” Holding him steady, Julian touched his lips one more time, a tease of a kiss. RJ’s heart did its little tap dance over his ribs in answer.

“Get dressed, babe.”

Julian’s request was graveled, his desire on the surface and so strong, RJ could have been burned by it. He also realized how tight a leash Julian was keeping on himself not to do just that.

Letting him go, Julian stepped away and quickly donned the rest of his clothes from the pile by his side of the bed.

If the sight of the man in his jeans had scrambled RJ’s brains, the aftermath of those kisses—kisses that weren’t more than touches of skin—was making him reel.