



“Josh? You got a minute?” I asked, leaning into the doorway of his office for a moment. We’d just gotten out of the senior staff meeting, and I got separated from Josh as some other staffers interrupted me with questions on a couple of memos. So, he got to his office and actually had time to sit down at his desk before I caught up with him.

“Yeah, Sam, what’s up?” he answered, looking up at me with a slightly bewildered smile. “And where did all of this *work* come from?”

“Donna, probably,” I answered his second question. The first could wait until after I closed the door behind me...

“Uh oh – it’s serious?” he asked, catching the click as I locked the door.

“I don’t know yet... Is Leo okay?” I asked, sitting in the one extra chair that wasn’t stacked with books and files.

“He did seem a little distracted, now that you mention it,” Josh mused.

“I thought he seemed a little uncomfortable – maybe he’s caught that cold that’s going around...” Well, actually I didn’t think that, but I had a really hard time imagining that the other thing I thought might be true...

“Are you worried about him?”

I shook my head, although I wasn’t really sure I wasn’t worried – we all cared a lot for Leo, and I didn’t want him having to deal with something on his own if it was something we could help him with. “I – uh – well, I don’t know, really.”

“I’ve got to discuss a thing with him, so I could ask...”

I shook my head again and said, “Maybe you shouldn’t ask outright, just watch him closely for a bit – you know how he gets sometimes.”

Josh nodded, and I knew we were both thinking about what happened earlier that year, when they were hounding him about his drug rehab and we tried to help in our own unique, misguided way... “Yeah, I know how he gets. And I know how he’s gonna get if I can’t find the file in this mess before we talk...”

I stood up again and started lifting up stacks of books, then asked, “So, what am I looking for, anyway?”

“Uh...It’s red,” Josh answered helpfully.

“Red. Well, at least it’ll stand out, since I don’t know

what name to look for...”

“Sam, what’s wrong?” he asked, looking up at me as I bitched.

“I dunno – I–” Oh, that was good. Articulate, informative... Quite a way with words. Spit it out, Sam... “Yes I do – and it’s not something we can fix without a making things worse for both of us before they get better...”

“That doesn’t sound good...” Josh said, stopping his search and looking up at me. “Please, tell me...”

I took a deep breath and sighed, then very quietly said, “I nearly lost you, and I’m tired of having to hide ‘us’ from everyone. Not that we’re really hiding it from some of them very well...” I swallowed hard, trying to get rid of the lump in my throat, and continued, “I don’t want something to happen and our last time together be pretending that we aren’t together...”

“Oh, Sam,” he said gently. He reached out and stroked my cheek, and the expression on his face tugged at my heart. “I know it’s a pain in the ass – it bugs the hell out of me, too, but you know–”

“Yeah, I know,” I answered, nodding. “Doesn’t keep it from getting to me sometimes... Did you know that on National Coming Out Day, an eighteen-year-old high school student in Haverford, Pennsylvania put up a poster designating a later date as a day to beat up gays? He was suspended, but his suspension is now over and he’s back at that school...”

Josh frowned and shook his head. “No, I didn’t...”

“And that’s just the tip of the iceberg – I’ve been keeping a file,” I admitted uncomfortably.

“Why do you do that to yourself, Sam?” he asked, exasperation colouring his tone. I opened my mouth to answer, but nothing really came out. Instead, he said, “Yeah, I know, research. You’re trying to build an argument, or a defense, or something...” He stroked my cheek again, then returned to his search for the red whatever-file. “You’re going to keep making yourself upset...”

“I know...” I sighed and grabbed his hand, then asked, “Josh, if it got out and things went bad, what would you do? I know you actually like politics, and I don’t want to ruin your career...”

“What? Sam, what are you talking about? I love you, you silly thing, and after what happened recently, I can truthfully say you are more important to me than this job. If everything went bad, I’d stick with *you*.”

I could feel tears burning in my eyes and threatening to spill over as he said that. “You’re too good to me...” I whispered, smiling even as a tear escaped and splashed on the cover of the file I was leaning on. The red file I was leaning on. “Oh – here it is!”

He reached up to my face again and gently wiped

my tears away, and I wished he could kiss them away like he had when I visited him the first time in his apartment after the shooting...

"I love you, Sam," he murmured, taking the file from me and flipping through it for a moment. "And not just because you found the file, either, you know."

"That's good, 'cause I thought it was for a couple of other reasons, actually..."

"And I'll tell you all of them tonight when we're safely at your place..." I knew I was grinning like a fool again – he always makes me feel so good.

"But for now, you have to have your meeting with Leo, and I have people to call and things to do, yeah, I know. Remember, keep an eye on Leo, okay?"

"Yeah."

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"You wanted me to wait after the meeting, Mr. President?" Y'know, it still feels funny calling him that in private meetings, but I'm never sure if it's going to be work or otherwise until he starts talking about whatever it is... God, I've got aches in places I really wish I didn't, and I'm only going on three hours of sleep – I have to keep moving or I'm either going to fall asleep or freeze up completely!

"Yeah, Leo, shut the door, sit down, and just relax for a minute, I need some advice."

Okay, I can do most of that... door's shut and –ouch– okay, I'll stand. I looked over at him and he frowned again. Damn it, did Hoynes do this to make trouble for us? I'll pace.

"Damn it, Leo, will you just sit *down*?"

"I'd rather not, Sir."

"You know, I hear bran's good for that kind of thing..."

"Jed..."

"I could have Abbey give you something--"

"Jed!" If he's *trying* to drive me crazy, it's working...

"Just checking... Now sit. Please. You're making me dizzy."

"How would you know?" Ah – that one got him. He looked up at me over his glasses and stopped short for a full second. "I'm sorry – what do you need?"

"It's about Sam and Josh..."

"What's wrong? They're being discreet..."

"A hell of a lot more discreet than we were at that age," he answered, and I had to smile at that. Boy, is he right about that one...

"So what's the problem?"

"Sam's starting to crusade."

Ah. "Well, actually, that's work. He was working on the military thing, which, by the way, got a lot more complicated a couple of months back..." If we were going to discuss this, I'd sit down. Carefully... And try damned hard not to grimace.

"What happened a couple of months back?" the

President asked. I thought for sure he knew, but maybe that's something Sam was sitting on until he had it all put together...

"There was an incident at the SGC – the thing right before the treaty signing," I explained, knowing that now the President was going to yell at me for Sam and Josh being included in that in the first place...

"Why the *hell* did you have me bring them, anyway?" he asked, scowling at me fiercely.

"Because, they would have kept poking around until they found out what the SGC was, and at least this way you could control what they learned and who they mentioned it to. You know how relentless they get once they find something to dig up..."

"Honestly, Leo, the next time you hand out the strange cases, *please* make sure Sam *doesn't* get another UFO/alien conspiracy theorist. This is all your fault to begin with!" He stopped short and looked down at me from where he was perched on the edge of his desk, then asked, "Are you *sure* you're okay?"

"Yeah, I'm good." If you call being too sore to sit my ass down 'good'...

"So what happened? I remember they made friends while we were there, who--?"

"One of their friends pretty much had to violate 'don't ask, don't tell' or risk being lobotomized," I explained, trying to keep it as vague as possible and still give the President a chance to figure it out.

"How did that happen?"

"As far as I can tell, it had something to do with a really sensitive lie detector..."

"It could tell he was hiding something and he couldn't say what, so they thought he was under that mind control?" he asked, starting to see where the problem lay.

I nodded, then added, "And he gave Sam a full statement, partly as a legal defense should he need one, and partly as one of the cases where the regulation falls flat on its face."

"As Commander-in-Chief, am I violating regulations by asking who?"

"As a matter of fact, you are. It's O'Neill, though."

His eyes went round on that one, and turning very thoughtful he said, "O'Neill? Boy, if we could trot out his service record as an example of a gay officer who's proved his leadership ability time and time again..."

"We'd kill his career right then and there, unless the reg changes... Now you see why Sam's turning it into a crusade..." I shifted to try and get comfortable and winced, and again he caught me doing it.

"Now, I may not be the most observant fellow sometimes, and I'm terrible with names, but I am not a fool, Leo," he started. All of that's true, but I really didn't need to hear this right now... "So stop telling me you're

fine when you're obviously in pain." He moved from the desk to sit on the couch next to me. "What's wrong?"

"I –uh– I'm just a little stiff this morning, Jed," I answered, glancing up at him briefly and hoping he didn't push.

"You look like you haven't slept, either. Is it the attack on the *Cole*? You know you can come to me at any time of the night if you're having problems, Leo..." He reached out and gently laid a hand on my arm, then he said, "Any time."

"You need your sleep," I answered almost automatically. "You don't need me showing up at one in the morning because I'm depressed or thinking about taking a drink..." Oh, *damn*.

His hand tightened on my arm, and he got that tone in his voice... "Leo?"

"I didn't, don't worry..."

"I *am* worried, and not just as your President, either. Why didn't you tell me?" Great, now I've managed to hurt his feelings... This day is getting worse by the moment.

"I talked to someone else. Actually, he called me – same problem." Don't make me tell you anything more, please Jed...

"Oh. No, that makes sense," he said, his eyes going thoughtful. I could see him going through the list and crossing people off. I could even tell when he crossed the last one off automatically, and then realized he'd run out of people. He looked up at me and I could see puzzlement in his eyes. "You talked to Hoynes?"

"Yes."

"Before you talked to me?"

Oh hell. "Yes."

"Leo, why did you– you know how I–" He stopped himself both times, then I saw his mouth open again. Third time's the charm... "You don't even *like* him..."

"Yes." Now wait a minute, yes, *what*?

"But you talked to him."

"We go to the same meetings – I know he'll keep quiet; he knows I will. And he called me – He used to be Navy, Jed, it hit him hard, too, you know." I think that's the second time in my *life* that I've defended John Hoynes...

"Leo?"

"Yes."

"Watch your step with him..."

"He won't do anything against me, he's too worried about getting his own ass into trouble," I said, relieved that the discussion was going this way instead of where it could have gone...

"Just – don't trust him. I hear things, you know."

"What kind of things?" Yeah, don't count your chickens, I know...

The sudden knock on the door startled both of us, then Mrs. Landingham opened the door and looked in.

"Excuse me, Mr. President. Leo, Josh Lyman's waiting for you." Saved by the bell...

"Thank you, Mrs. Landingham," I said, looking up at Jed. "I have to go – we've got to discuss the Mideast thing."

"You do that, Leo," he answered as Mrs. Landingham backed out and shut the door again. "Just– be careful with Hoynes, okay?"

"Don't worry, I always am."

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"Josh," I greeted him as I entered the room, finding him hovering around Margaret's desk. "Come on." We went to my office and he shut the door, then sat in front of my desk. I carefully sat down. Guess I might have let out a grunt when I did, because Josh's head snapped up and he looked at me.

"Just a little stiff today, Josh; must have slept funny." Here we go again...

"You look like you haven't slept at all..."

"Look, I just went through this with the President. Why don't we just discuss the Mideast trip and get it out of the way, okay?" I asked him, probably sounding a little more annoyed than I'd intended to. "I'm sorry, Josh, I'm just tired. How are *you* doing?"

"Pretty good, actually. I just can't jog anywhere near as much as I could before..."

"Losing part of a lung will do that to you. Don't push yourself, and let Sam keep taking care of you – he does a good job."

"Leo..." Josh said, obviously embarrassed. He was blushing almost to his hairline!

"No, I mean it. You're good for each other."

"I'm not even going to ask you how you know. But things have been getting to Sam, and I have to ask: if it got out, would we – is there–"

"You were there for me when Lillienfield went after me; we were there for Sam when the reporter caught him giving that girl a graduation present; we're not about to abandon the two of you now!" And then he frowned at me and asked the question I was afraid he would.

"Are you talking as my friend, or is that official, Leo?"

"The President wants you two to keep being discreet, but if it got out, he wouldn't turn his back on you."

"That'll make Sam feel better – he's been worrying."

"Glad I could help then," I answered. Then a yawn fought its way out and I blinked at Josh across the desk. "Look, Josh, maybe you should have your meeting with Toby now, and I'll catch you later this afternoon. I think I need to put my head down for a little while..." He nodded and stood, and although he looked concerned, I don't think

he was overly worried. "Can you tell Margaret to wake me after an hour?"

"Yeah, I could do that. You have to take it easy, Leo..." He walked out and shut the door behind him.

I groaned and hauled myself to my feet, then walked over to my couch and settled myself as comfortably as possible. Finally alone, I could let myself feel more than the pain of stiff muscles. I know Hoynes wanted to leave me something to remember him by, and this ache deep inside definitely fit the bill. It actually felt kind of good, the kind of ache that reminds you you've been fucked so completely by someone... But god, I was so tired and my legs and hips really were calling me names. It really had been a long time since I'd been fucked like that...

I needed to sleep – just for a bit – and then I'd get up and get back to work...

Should have told Josh to insist to Margaret that *no one* bothers me for that hour... I must have *just* shut my eyes when the door opened again. Strange that they didn't knock first – must have been Josh realizing he'd forgotten something or–

"Leo..."

That wasn't Josh's voice! "John, what the hell are you doing in here? I'm trying to get *some* sleep..." I tried to sit up, but before I could, he was kneeling at my side.

"Just stay there, Leo," he murmured, and the next thing I knew, his mouth was on mine, kissing me desperately. Jesus!

Reluctantly, I pushed him back and sat up. This was the first time we had kissed and for some reason it went straight to my cock, but this was NOT the place... "Not *now*, John, we're at *work*..."

"Stop me, then," he purred, and then he was leaning forward, pinning me back against the couch.

Don't push me, John...

His hands were everywhere, inside my jacket, rubbing up and down my chest, fingering my nipples through my shirt – he was trying to drive me wild, and damn it, he was succeeding. I had to stop him, and I didn't really want to. There was something thrilling about the risk of being caught.

Obviously I was going insane...

He kissed me again, and I knew if I didn't stop this now, we'd both be in trouble. I grabbed his shoulders and forced him back. "John, *stop* it!"

I stood up and continued to push him back, and his eyes went wide. Maybe he didn't expect me to actually be this strong, or maybe it surprised him that I dared to stop him. Obviously, he didn't remember what I told him last night...

I figured the least I could do was remind him of it. I slid my grip down to his arms and pushed him back into the door, smiled as his lips parted and I heard his gasp. That,

too, went straight to my cock. All of a sudden, I was pinning him against the door and kissing him hard. He gasped into my mouth, sagged back against the door in surrender. I thought I'd seen something in his eyes a couple of times last night; I'm glad I wasn't wrong...

I broke the kiss and took a step back, then smiled at him. He seemed to like my smile, so...

"On your knees, John..."

He glowered at me and continued to stand. Until I glowered back at him and repeated, "On your knees!" Then he got on his knees so fast I thought he might hurt something. I could see him swallow hard, could see his pulse pounding in the vein in his throat.

"Unzip my pants and suck me, John..."

Oh god, that look he gave me... He wanted me to pin him down and fuck him right through the floor. I thought I was right; Mr. I-Get-Off-On-Making-Jed-Bartlet-Beg wants to find someone who'll dominate him! I can do that. I have no trouble with putting him over my knee and paddling his ass until *he* can't sit down... It's been a while since I really indulged, and considering Jed's medical problems I'd never, *ever* try to take him as far as I can take this boy...

God, that mouth – oh damn, he was a lot better at this than I'd expect in someone who likes to top... But then again, I had him helpless when I sucked him. And then my brain took a walk and left things up to my body...

I think I must have grabbed his hair – not sure. But I fucked his mouth hard, the little moans he was making driving me wild. God, just wait until I had him somewhere private with a bed!

"Jesus, John, I'm gonna–"

Knock Knock Knock

Oh shit–

"Leo? You okay in there?"

Oh shit oh shit oh shit! "Yeah, Margaret, I'm fine," I answered, trying to catch my breath. God – where in the *hell* did that dream come from?!

Oh, gee, Leo, I don't know, where do you *think* it came from?

I sat up and grabbed one of the small pillows, putting it in my lap & then leaning my arms on it, then asked, "You still out there, Margaret?" The door opened and she popped her head in. "Has it been an hour already?"

"Fifty-eight minutes, actually, but Toby and Josh need to talk to you. Do you want me to tell them you'll be there in a few minutes? It'll give you a chance to splash some water on your face and–"

"Thank you, Margaret. Tell them to give me ten minutes and I'll see them in Toby's office." She nodded and left; I took a deep breath, moved the pillow and then

looked down at my crotch. Great. This day just got better and better...

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Instead of staying late, I stuffed a bunch of files I had to review into my backpack with my laptop and headed for my apartment. With luck, they'd finally let Josh go home so he could eat and get *some* rest before he had to fly out with the President and Toby for the emergency summit. I called for delivery and got us some Thai, and then curled up on the couch to read.

Five minutes later, I realized I'd read the same paragraph about ten times, and still hadn't retained more than two words. I was too worried about Josh and the others going into a potentially dangerous situation. I'm pretty sure Leo was in a similar mindset, since he was being forced to stay home just the same way I was. Of course, I was being forced to stay home because Toby wouldn't trust me to be able to choose the *exact* right words, while Leo was being forced to stay home because if Josh was here running things, we'd implode before they got back in three days.

I love him dearly, but Josh is a walking PR disaster. Absolutely adorable, but really not the person you want handling things while the President is out of the country...

On top of the concerns for their safety, there were other things on my mind. Pretty puzzling things, considering the people involved. First, there was Leo's odd behaviour. Josh told me that he'd explained away his stiffness as having slept funny. Except that he hadn't been acting like he had a crick in his neck, he'd been acting like someone had given him a really, really good fucking. Believe me, I know the signs...

But I had a really, really hard time thinking that the President fucked Leo so hard he couldn't sit down – the President is a *total* Sub. Again, believe me, I know the signs... Now, since it was obvious that Leo *loves* the President, I couldn't figure out who he'd been with. Not that it was any of my business, but – well, they're always nosing into *my* sex life, why the hell shouldn't I return the favour?

I figured it had to be someone in the staff – Leo wouldn't trust anyone outside to keep it quiet – but I don't know too many people who are, well, either brave enough or dumb enough to top Leo. As a matter of fact, the only person I could think of was someone Leo wouldn't touch in a million years...

Of course, that same person was the one I'd been hearing certain rumours about recently. Rumours – and other things – I really didn't want to think about, and wasn't entirely sure I wanted to discuss with the other person they involved.

That same person who just pulled up outside and was going to get a big sloppy kiss as soon as he came in... I put the file away and got up to wait for him.

“Honey, I'm home!” Josh called as soon as he got in.

The instant the door shut behind him, I grabbed him and kissed him. I think we both fell back against the door, and I heard him fumbling around, then the deadbolt slid home. “I hope you already got dinner, because you're staying in here with me for the rest of the night,” he said, when we finally separated.

“There's Thai in the fridge. I got cold dishes because I didn't know how long they were going to keep you...”

He smiled at me and wrapped his arms around me, then nuzzled my neck and whispered in my ear, “Leo and the President know. They want us to be discreet, but they're behind us...”

“You asked?”

“Only *after* Leo told me to let you take care of me – he said you do a good job of it.”

“Well, I take better care of you than you do...” He smiled at that one – Josh is, thankfully, *aware* that he needs both Donna and I to run things for him. Even if I'm apparently incapable of taking care of myself...

“Thai in the fridge, right?” he asked, putting an arm around my waist and steering me back into the kitchen.

“Yeah. Hey – was Leo wearing a different pair of pants this afternoon? After the nap you said he took?” I was getting plates and bowls and the take-out cartons ready while Josh picked two bottles of beer from the fridge.

“Yeah, he said he spilled coffee on the other ones.”

“Huh. That's interesting.”

“What?”

“I dunno,” I answered. Spilling coffee wasn't out of the question... But, there were the things I'd heard... “Is there something going on with Hoynes? Because I hear things, and—” Oh my god, he just went white...

“What kind of things?” Josh asked, and I could hear that slight note of fear in his voice. Oh no – this wasn't good. This was really just *not* good...

“Uh – well, nothing, really,” I backpedaled. Suddenly I just got scared, and I didn't want to know. I finished dishing out the larb gai and garden rolls, and when I went to throw out the cartons, he grabbed my hand and turned me to face him again.

“Tell me what you heard, Sam,” he said, all serious and insistent.

I swallowed hard, trying to work some moisture back into my throat, which had suddenly gone completely dry. “I –ah– I heard that Hoynes is a bit of a B&D type guy, and that he's about as straight as I am.” That is to say, not very, by the way. Despite nearly getting married once, and sleeping with Laurie; oh – and that nightmarish almost-relationship with Leo's daughter, I really did prefer

men. Well – I really did prefer one man, and right now that one man seemed to be waiting for the other shoe to drop.

Come on, writer-boy, spit it out!

“I also heard that you slept with him when you were working for him...”

“God, Sam, where the *hell* did you hear that from?!”

Josh asked, and he seemed to be close to panic. He must have thought that someone in the staff knew and that it would be in the tabloids any day – I’d gone about this *all* wrong!

“Josh, love, please, don’t panic. I – uh– I heard it from you...”

...two, three, four... “What?!”

“You kinda talk in your sleep sometimes...”

“I’m going to be flying overseas with the President tomorrow afternoon and you just thought to tell me this *now*?!”

“Well, it’s not like you’re going to get to sleep on the plane anyway...”

“Oh. Well, you’re probably right...” He frowned, and then something seemed to click into place. “Oh, Sam – I’m sorry, I should have told you, but... I– It only happened while I was working with him, not while we were together... And I– okay, once after the campaign, too, but–”

“Shh...” I tried to soothe him. He still seemed so pale... “It’s okay – I’m just worried he’ll do something to hurt you–”

“He’d never do that...”

“–because you’re not exactly up on what to do on the receiving end of–” And then he pulled me in and kissed me hard. By the time we broke the kiss, I was panting and hard as a rock...

“He wouldn’t hurt me,” Josh repeated. “One time, after the campaign – that’s all. We ran into each other jogging, and it was just this kind of mutual sweaty guy thing. That’s it.”

“Not fair – you’re my sweaty guy...” Okay, so I happen to like the way Josh smells when he’s been working out or jogging. It’s a kink. So sue me...

“I know. Forgive me?” He gave me the patented Josh Lyman silly ‘I’m sorry’ face and I crumbled.

“Of course! Josh, I wasn’t mad, anyway, just worried...”

And suddenly his mind managed to make the connection to what I’d been talking about earlier. “Wait a minute – you were asking about *Leo* when this conversation started.”

I nodded, finally managing to toss the take-out cartons. “Yeah. There’s a rumour...”

“Oh?”

“And it’s just a little suspicious with the way Leo was acting today...”

“We don’t need people spreading more rumours

about Leo – Lillienfield was bad enough,” Josh said, picking up the plates and carrying them over to the table where we usually ate. I joined him a moment later with the utensils and beers.

“You said he told you he slept funny, that’s why he seemed to be uncomfortable. But Josh, didn’t he seem a little more like I do when you get really forceful?”

“Sam, what are you saying?”

“Josh, he spent all day acting like he got the fucking of his life!” God, you can be dense sometimes!

“But the President wouldn’t–”

“No, the President wouldn’t, he’s a total Sub... But the rumour I heard was that Leo went to the *Vice* President’s residence last night.”

“Leo and Hoynes?” Josh choked, almost spraying a mouthful of beer all over me, “Leo and *Hoynes*?!” He shook his head and said, “You’ve got to be wrong, Leo’d *never*– Leo and *Hoynes*?!”

“I know – but can you think of anyone else who’d be bold enough to try to top Leo?”

“Only other person I could think of who would be *bold* enough never would because he’s the one guy we work for I’m convinced really is completely straight,” Josh murmured around a mouthful of garden roll. I looked up at him, waiting to hear who he thought could top Leo. “Of course, it could always be the First Lady with a strap-on...” Needless to say, that’s an image that I find to be incredibly intimidating – which he could obviously tell from one look at me. He smiled, then asked, “So, aren’t you going to guess?”

Pain in the ass. Well, it couldn’t be... “Toby?!” I laughed, and he feigned a pout. “Toby couldn’t top Leo – he just *pretends* to be a hardass. But don’t tell him I said that...”

“Hmmm... It’ll cost you...” Josh mused. “But before we get into that, I don’t know what’s going on with Leo and Hoynes, if anything did – but we should drop it, Sam. It’s none of our business – *you* should understand that...”

“Okay, okay – enough with the guilt trip already. You win, I’ll keep my nose out of it – I’m just concerned about him and don’t want him to get hurt.” Okay, that was probably a little on the defensive side. I still wasn’t comfortable about what Josh had said about Hoynes, but I trusted Josh to tell me the truth about it. If he said nothing happened after that last time, nothing happened.

“If Leo *did* see Hoynes last night,” Josh said thoughtfully, “do you think someone talking about it is trouble, like when his personnel file got leaked?”

I shook my head and said, “No – I think it was actually an innocent comment, and I’ve blown it all out of proportion... It’s not like everyone is going to know what they’re seeing, you know?”

“Yeah, but you’re such a bad boy you would...”

Josh purred, grabbing my hand as I reached out for my beer. "I should spank you and make *you* spend tomorrow squirming in your seat..."

"Uh—" Oh, that was intelligent... God, the look he was giving me made me want to sweep everything off the table and—

"Finish your dinner, then we're going to bed..."

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I walked into the room, then realized that the First Lady was putting a garment bag down over the back of the couch. I nearly backed out, but she looked up and saw me... "I'm sorry, Abbey, I thought you were still in Europe," I explained quietly. "I'll go..."

"No, Leo, stay — please. I came back because—"

I have to admit for a second my heart tried to strangle me as it leapt into my throat. "Is he okay?"

"Oh, Leo, he's *fine* — I just wanted to see him before he left. In case— Probably for the same reason you're here now," she finally settled on, and we both knew what she meant. Just in case some maniac with a bomb decided that the emergency summit was too good a target to pass up. It was the same reason I'd ordered Josh to go home and spend the time with Sam before the flight tomorrow... The chance that someone *would* be dumb enough to try was minuscule, but that fear was lurking in the back of everybody's minds.

I nodded, then asked, "Can I talk to you for a minute? I've got something I really need to tell him, but I should tell you, too. You've accepted me into your family, and I'm really not happy hiding it from either of you..."

"Leo, I don't care *what* you do with John Hoynes as long as you don't hurt Jed and you don't get hurt yourself..."

How the—

"Abbey, you haven't even *been* here, how the—"
Damn, the woman is uncanny...

"If I tell you, I'd have to kill you..." she said with a smile. Then she relented and said, "Jed was worried about you, and to tell you the truth, I am, too. He told me about the meeting this morning. Can I get personal?" You know, she's one of only two people who can really make me blush, and she's done it again... "You're cute when you blush, Leo," she whispered in my ear, then gently kissed me on the cheek. Jeez...

"Abbey..."

"Sorry — I can't resist, you know. Seriously, Leo, are you in pain because you overdid it, or is there a reason to worry?" Suddenly she was back in doctor-mode, which was a relief considering how personal the question was.

"There's no reason to worry — it's just..." I cleared my throat and tried not to feel like a teenager whose stash of 'Playboy' got discovered by his mom. "It's been a long time since someone — y'know."

"Okay. One more question, and you're not going to like this one: did he do it to hurt Jed?" Her voice was quiet,

but the look in her eyes was steely — if she thought Hoynes was just using me to hurt the President, I'd really hate to be him tomorrow...

"I can't rule that out as *part* of his reasoning, but that's not all of it. I think he wanted a challenge..." I chuckled quietly and continued, "but he got a little more than he bargained for."

"You randy old man," she said, her eyes twinkling.

And then the door to the bedroom opened to reveal Jed standing there in his pajamas. "Hey — do I have to call the agents to arrest you two intruders?" Then he smiled and walked out to embrace Abbey. "I thought you were still in France until tomorrow evening..."

"I wanted to see you before you left," she explained. I took a couple of steps back while they cuddled and had a quiet discussion. I would have left, but Abbey caught my eye and shook her head. After a little while, she looked over at me and said, "I'm going to leave you two alone for a few minutes." She looked back up at Jed and said, "Leo wants to talk to you before your trip. When you two are done talking, if you want to spend the night, Leo, it's okay with me."

"Wicked woman," Jed said with a grin. He motioned for me to follow him and led me back into the bedroom, murmuring something about Abbey wanting to keep a harem. I wasn't sure I wanted to know the details about that one...

I followed him to the bed and waited for him to climb back into it and make himself comfortable, then sat down on the edge of it next to him. Almost immediately, he leaned back and wrapped an arm around me, pulling me close. "Oh, Leo..." he murmured, "She's worried. Are you worried?" He looked up at me and nodded, "You're worried."

"There are a lot of people in that part of the world who would think taking the leaders of the US, Israel, and the Palestinians out was a worthy death, Jed. Yes, I'm worried."

"I'd tell you not to be, but *I'm* worried. But I'll be careful — I promise," he said softly, "I have to do this, though. I can't just sit by and not try..."

"I know..." Then I took a deep breath and said, "I have a confession to make..."

"Is that one of my duties, too? I don't seem to remember that in the job description..."

"Smart-ass."

He smiled at me and said, "Better than being a dumb-ass."

"I'll whup your ass if you're not careful," I murmured, feeling him snuggling closer. I wrapped my arm around him, then said, "I'm not entirely sure you're going to want me in your bed after this, Jed."

I could feel him tense, and suddenly I felt

overwhelmed with guilt – how could I have done this to him... “What is it, Leo?” he asked, his voice losing the joking tone it had held a moment ago. “What did you do?”

“Remember I told you I talked to Hoynes last night; that he called me because he was having problems?” He nodded, but kept silent. “Well, he— ah—” Just spit it out, Leo, there *is* no delicate way to phrase this! “He fucked me, Jed.”

“I’ll kill him.” The way he said it, I honestly couldn’t tell if he was serious or not.

“I didn’t try to stop him – he didn’t force me or rape me or anything like that.”

“Okay, I’ll kill both of you.”

“Jed...”

“Leo, how *could* you? You know how I feel about him – that bastard made me *beg* him...”

“Yeah, made me beg him, too...” I admitted.

“I’m back to killing him.”

“Jed...”

“Is that why you’re so sore? He – Leo, how could you let him—” He stopped short and frowned, then looked up at me. “He made you beg – like you make me beg sometimes?” Beet red. I swear I turned beet red... “I don’t want to hear any more. And I don’t like you anymore.” Now I could hear a little bit of his humour returning – he thought it was funny that I was blushing. Wonderful. “He made you beg?”

“Am I going to have to listen to *this* every day, now?”

“I think it’s funny – now John Hoynes has screwed both of us – so to speak; and made us both beg. It’s *your* fault we’re stuck with him, you know.”

“I know... You want to hear what Abbey thought was funny?”

“Tell me you didn’t go into details about him – I do *not* want him joining the harem.”

“What *is* this with the harem?”

He smiled up at me and said, “Seems to be the result of a discussion some of her staff was having – something about who they’d want to keep tied up in their bedrooms. There was something about the Arabian Nights, too. Then she hears I’m going to the Mideast...”

“I’m *not* dressing up like Barbara Eden and calling her Mistress.”

“Don’t tell her, she’ll take it as a challenge...” he said, smiling again. We both knew who would win that challenge, too... “Okay, what did she think was funny?” he asked, then frowned and added, “You realize I might not think it’s funny, and then I won’t like you again.”

“I’ll take that risk... Okay – *part* of the reason he did it was to get to you. That was more than obvious.” He frowned, but before he could say anything I continued, “But from the way he was acting most of the reason was that he wanted a challenge. He wanted to see if he *could* top me –

and the only reason he did is because I *let* him...”

“You mean you were still the one in control – even though he made you beg, you were in control?” he asked. When I nodded, he smiled again. “Leo, *this* has potential... You’ll excuse me if I get a little vindictive, but are you going to –uh– talk to him again?”

I can’t say I was entirely comfortable with Jed turning the tables and using me against Hoynes, but there was a part of me that had been entertaining as much without his suggestion. “I dunno. Possibly – after all, I can’t let him get away with what he did without punishing him properly.”

“No, definitely not. You *have* to put him in his place...” And when he said that, the dream came flooding back to me and my cock jumped. Which Jed must have seen or felt, because the next moment his hand was on my crotch, feeling me through my pants. “I *see*...”

I couldn’t hold in the groan as he squeezed and massaged me into full erection. “Ohhgod, Jed...”

“What part of it turns you on so much, Leo?” he whispered, pressing himself against my side. “Being the one to control two of the world’s most powerful men?”

“I gotta tell you, it’s got its appeals...” I answered, turning to face him and pushing him back into the pillows, then leaning in for a kiss. Oh god – he grew pliant under me, his legs spreading to allow me to slide a leg between them and press against his hardening cock.

He groaned and surged up against me, wrapping his arms around me and pulling me into a near-frantic kiss. I ground my hips into his, relishing the moan that escaped when we broke the kiss. “God, Leo, you are a sexy bastard, you know that?”

Instead of answering I kissed him again, plundering his mouth as he writhed against me. God, he could drive me wild so easily, that willing body surrendering to me so eagerly. I wanted to be inside him, but the way he was moving his hips against mine, this was going to be over too quickly – and I was going to mess up the second pair of pants in one day... I slid my hands up under his shirt and stroked his sides, very gently tracing the pink scars from where he was shot. He shuddered against me and whimpered softly, pulling back to gasp for air.

“Oh – god – Leo!” He arched into me and suddenly we were bucking against each other and groaning as we came – seeing him helpless in pleasure like that gets me every time...

“Damn, you two are *hot*,” Abbey said, and I looked up to find her watching us.

Jed looked up at her and smiled, “There’s room here for you, too...”

“Honey, you need your rest,” she whispered, turning off the light and climbing into bed so that Jed was

snuggled between us. “And you're starting to drift off already, aren't you...”

He smiled up at her and murmured, “Yeah, guess I am...”

“That's okay, Jed, I'm tired, too,” she whispered, embracing him and settling into a comfortable position. “But you'd better not be too tired when you come home...”

I sat up for a moment, stripping off my shoes, shirt and pants and dropping them beside the bed, then slid under the covers and cuddled back up against Jed. “I'll get up to leave a little early tomorrow morning, give you two some time alone together...”

“That might be a good idea...” Abbey murmured, stroking Jed's hair and then reaching past him to touch my lips. “Go to sleep, both of you.” Already I could hear Jed's breathing slowing as he drifted into sleep and knew that I wasn't that far from it myself. Felt so good to be in bed with someone I cared for, curled up close to Jed's warmth with Abbey's hand resting on my arm where I'd thrown it around Jed's waist. I'm pretty sure she watched us until we were both dead asleep...

==**==

I don't think either of us could finish dinner fast enough. Josh kept looking at me with so much heat in his gaze I swear I would have let him fuck me right then and there. By the time we were finished and I'd put the dishes in the sink, I knew I'd let him do *anything* as long as I could feel his hands on me.

He took my hand and led me to the bedroom, then stopped just inside the room and ordered, “Get out of those clothes.” I eagerly obeyed, my hands shaking as I unbuttoned my shirt and shrugged out of it, then unfastened and unzipped my pants. Suddenly a hand fastened on my arm from behind, and Josh ordered, “Stop!” I froze, and he walked around to sit on the bed in front of me, then nodded, “Okay, continue.”

God, the look in his eyes! I slid my pants down and stepped out of the puddled fabric, then stood before him in just my briefs and socks, with his eyes drawn to my aching cock straining against the dark purple cotton. I was slightly self-conscious as I felt the air cooling the spot of dampness where my cock had leaked, but then Josh licked his lips and smiled up at me. “That's nice, Sam,” he murmured, “That's really nice...”

I smiled like a fool as he continued to stare at me, then he ordered, “Get the rest of it off, now.” I leaned down and slid off my socks, then straightened again and hooked my thumbs in my waistband – and waited. “Sam...” he warned, “don't be a tease, take those *off*.”

I smiled slyly and purred, “Make me...”

“Oh, you are *so* in trouble,” Josh growled, reaching out and grabbing one of my wrists. He pulled me in and tugged my underwear down, making an appreciative noise as

my cock sprang free. “I'm gonna have to spank you, aren't I...”

I managed to keep from gasping, but couldn't do anything about the way my cock jolted as he said that. God, I was *so* turned on, especially standing naked before Josh, who still wore everything except his jacket... Then he looked up at me and released my wrist; ordered, “Stand there and hold your hands out to me.”

Josh in full Dom-mode is – to me, at least – the sexiest person in the world. Sometimes I feel like he could order me to cum and I would, without his ever even touching me... It's not like we don't both switch, but when he's like this, unless I'm trying to push him I always obey.

So, there I was, standing beside him as he sat on my bed; holding my hands out in front of me and waiting. And then he loosened his tie further and slid it off over his head, then looped it over my hands and pulled it tight. “Oh god...” I whispered, before I could stop myself.

He must have caught the look on my face, because he smiled and purred, “That's okay, Sam, I want you vocal today. I want to hear how crazy I'm making you...”

I think I whimpered...

“If I put you over my knees and spank you, you'll get my pants all messy, won't you,” he mused, looking up at me as I stood there trying not to tremble. “Take one step back and wait – and *don't* touch yourself...”

I obeyed, watching as he stood up and began unbuttoning his shirt. I know I whimpered this time, but he was being evil-Josh, and that made him even sexier... The shirt flew across the room and landed on the lid of the hamper, and then his tank-top quickly followed. Even though I tried not to, my gaze went straight to the scar on his chest, so flushed with the increased blood-flow caused by his state of arousal.

That had definitely been the worst night of my life – finding out he was with Mandy, or that he was interested in Joey Lucas was *nothing* compared to those long hours of waiting to find out if he was going to live... We'd been together before I went to New York, and there were those crazy nights early in the campaign, but when things started getting serious we sort of agreed to step back and not do anything to risk losing the election. After that, we figured we'd have to behave to keep from bringing the wrath of the conservative right down on President Bartlet. Not that we weren't still causing trouble, with my relationship with Laurie and Josh's insults of the religious right on national TV, but we figured it was better than them finding out that gays and bisexuals were trying to take over the government.

The bullet that nearly killed Josh changed all that – I told him I couldn't stand the thought that I'd almost lost him, that he could have died without us ever being 'us' again. Being safe, not taking risks with our jobs – it wasn't

worth that pain; it just wasn't!

"Sam, love, come back to me..." His voice snapped me back to the present and I realized he was standing and looking at me with concern creasing his forehead. "I'm okay, Sam; I'm here – we're together and they'll just have to put up with it..."

I blinked up at him and felt the colour rise in my cheeks. "Sorry, Josh – I saw the—"

"Shh... Time to pay attention and get back to being a good boy, Sam..." he purred, unbuckling his belt and then unbuttoning and unzipping his pants. He knew he had my attention again, especially after he slid his pants down and I stared at his cock straining in his shorts. I think I licked my lips; I know I made a noise that he liked, because his cock twitched. And then he growled and pulled down his shorts, sighing as his cock sprang free. I swallowed, my mouth watering at the sight of it, then licked my lips again. I know he saw me do it, because he reached out and rubbed his thumb gently over my lips; then closed the distance and kissed me hard.

Oh god! I know I can be a slut, but I wanted him in me so bad I ached... With my hands restrained, I couldn't cling to him, so when he broke the kiss and backed away, I whimpered again. Then he climbed onto the bed and settled himself comfortably about midway down the side of it, then smiled up at me. "Okay, Sam, I want you to get on the bed and settle yourself across my thighs – if you want, you can slide your cock between my legs, but I want your ass raised so I can spank you properly..."

His voice sent a shiver through me – I was lost; totally lost... I climbed onto the bed and settled the way he'd wanted, and a moan escaped as I slid my cock between his hot thighs. "Josh, I need a pillow lower so I can lean on it," I said, realizing with my hands restrained I couldn't move it into the right place myself. He grabbed one and together we got me into a completely comfortable position, then he settled both hands on my back and chuckled as I jumped.

"You know, Sam, it's very nice being able to look at your sexy ass like this..." The hands slid down my hips and settled on my cheeks, and I could feel his thumbs gently spreading them apart as he leaned forward to look closer. "You want me up you *so* bad, don't you..." he said, his voice suddenly husky. I felt a jolt go through me, and he chuckled. "Guess that answers that..." He pressed gently against my anus and I gasped. "Oh, Sam, you are *such* a bad boy... Have to punish you for being so bad..."

One hand settled over my tailbone to protect it from any stray strike, and the other hand stroked over my ass, his touch growing lighter until I couldn't feel it any more and realized he had drawn his hand back away from me. Oh god...

Smack! He brought his hand down on my asscheek, hard enough to sting but not really hurt. I gasped and my

muscles tightened involuntarily for an instant, then I gradually relaxed again as I realized I only felt a tingling feeling; no pain. *Smack!* The other asscheek this time, lower on the muscle; I cried out but we both knew it wasn't in pain. My cock was throbbing between Josh's thighs and I couldn't keep myself completely still. Of course, this meant I was being a *very* bad boy...

Smack!

I moaned, and Josh's hand remained where it had landed, squeezing the muscle as I pressed back against it. I could feel his cock throbbing where it was trapped between us, could feel how amazingly hard he was... And then his hand left my ass again and *smack!* once more, slightly harder this time. I cried out and Josh grunted in response. We were both panting by this point, and my ass was starting to throb with the heat of blood flowing to the abused area – it felt incredibly good.

That was when Josh slid the hand protecting my tailbone down further between my cheeks and pressed one fingertip into me. Oh *god* it felt good – and even better when *smack!* he hit me again. "Josh..." I gasped, thrusting between his legs and then pressing back onto his finger, "please..."

Smack! So much heat – I felt like my ass was glowing with it...

Smack!! Oh god!

Less time between strikes gave me less chance to feel the sting fade into that delicious tingling heat, but it didn't matter by that point – every strike sent a jolt of pleasure through me, each more intense than the one before. I could hear Josh panting, could feel him straining to keep still – I wanted him to fuck me so bad and I could tell he wanted to fuck me, but he wasn't going to until he had punished me properly. I spread my legs as far as I could without falling off his lap or the bed and pressed back, knowing that I was being totally wanton and knowing exactly how it affected Josh...

He spanked me again and again, hitting me faster and faster, both of us getting so turned on that I'm not even sure when it started but suddenly I was paralyzed by spasms of pleasure, thrusting harder and harder between his hot thighs as he spanked me over and over. I think I screamed – I know Josh cried out, and suddenly hot cum was splashing between us as the sight and feel of me cumming pulled him along, too. Oh god, it was so good...

...We lay there, panting for breath, Josh flopped back on my bed and me still spread across his lap, until the stars dancing behind my eyes finally faded and I felt like I could move without passing out. *God!* It could be so amazingly intense sometimes!

"Hey," Josh murmured, trying to sit up. "You okay? I didn't– ooh, maybe I'll just lie here for another minute..."

“Yeah, I’m okay, Josh,” I answered, carefully slipping off his lap and standing up. I slid my hands out of the tie and laid it down on the nightstand, then climbed back onto the bed to kneel beside him. “You okay?”

“Dizzy...”

“Big surprise there,” I answered with a smirk. He gave me a cross look I know he didn’t feel, then tried to sit up again. I helped him, and together we got into bed the right way around. I knew it wasn’t worth cleaning up yet, because there would be more sex as soon as we had recovered – Josh had wanted to be inside me, and I still desperately wanted him there, it’s just that my reaction to the spanking was so intense it caught him by surprise... Hell, it caught me by surprise!

We settled comfortably under the covers, and then he reached out to trace my lips with a finger. “You are an incredibly hot, sexy man, Sam Seaborn...”

“You’re not too bad yourself, Josh,” I murmured, lipping his finger and then catching it with my teeth. As I flicked the tip of my tongue over his fingertip, he groaned and I think his eyes actually crossed. His other hand, hindered by the fact that we were on our sides facing each other, stroked over what he could reach of my chest, pausing to pinch and tease a nipple. He shifted slightly to make it easier to reach me, and continued tormenting me as I gasped and released his finger.

“Hot, sexy, horny... you want me in you?” he asked, continuing to pinch. I could feel each little jolt zinging down to my balls and settling there as growing heat... His free hand slid down my side to my hip, then back to squeeze my asscheek, and then he kissed me, pulling me hard against him.

“Yes...” I whispered when he let me breathe again.

“You want me to fuck you so hard you’re squirming in your seat tomorrow?” he murmured against my cheek, turning to nip my earlobe.

“Yes...” I breathed, rolling onto my back and pulling him with me. God, I loved the feel of him pressing me into the mattress... We were both hard again, Josh grinding his hips into mine until I bent my knees and used one foot to stroke up and down his leg and the other to wrap around him. “Oh–”

“God, Sam...” he moaned, burying his face against my neck and nibbling up and down my throat, stroking his hands up and down my sides and trying to slide them under my ass. “You gotta let me go or I can’t get in you, Sam...” he murmured, all breathy and hot and guaranteed to get me even hotter.

He pulled free and kissed me, then nibbled his way down my front until he reached a nipple. Then he nipped, and I’m pretty sure I squeaked... “Josh!”

“Roll over, Sexy, lemme at your butt...” Josh ordered as he backed away enough to give me room. He

certainly didn’t have to tell me twice!

Every now and then I wonder if it says bad things about me that I can be so eager to be fucked. This wasn’t one of those times – I threw the covers back and flipped onto my stomach, then spread my legs and wiggled slightly. I knew I was being a total slut, but I really didn’t care. Josh was making appreciative noises and watching me as I settled myself. When he laid a hand on my recently-abused buttcheek we both sighed, then he murmured, “I know you don’t think you need it, but let me get the lube. I promise I won’t use too much...”

Oh god– I was lucky I was already lying down, because I swear my knees turned to water. Josh can be the sweetest, most gentle lover when he wants, but there are times when sweet and gentle just doesn’t do it – and he’s perfect then, too...

I felt him leaning over to fumble in the drawer, and a moment later – too long! – he was back with me, and his slick fingers were probing between my cheeks. Oh god, so good! He leaned across my back to keep me from moving, and then thrust one finger right into me; no gentle preparation, no working his way in bit by bit – I nearly came right then and there.

There was a sound – I realized after a moment it was me, moaning, begging him for more; pleading with him to pin me down and fuck me until I couldn’t walk... And Josh was panting, trying to stay in control of himself – and failing miserably because I can always get to him when we’re like this. He jammed another finger up me, and I groaned helplessly...

Suddenly the fingers were gone and Josh was shifting position, getting between my legs, sighing as I spread them wider. He used the small amount of lube still on his hands to coat his cock, and then his hands suddenly landed on my ass, squeezing the muscles hard and spreading my asscheeks.

“God, Sam, you are so damned sexy,” he purred, and then I could feel the head of his cock nudging against my anus. With a growl, he shoved into me, hard. There was pain, but it was a sweet, sweet pain; just enough to let me know that I would *definitely* be feeling this tomorrow.

And then he began to move – oh *god* it was so good!

Every time he thrust in pleasure exploded through my body – I spread my legs as wide as I could and writhed back into him on every stroke, trying to get him even deeper in me. Oh, Josh!

“God – Sam – oh *yeah!*” he panted, ramming into me now, sliding his hands under my arms to grab onto my shoulders and use them to give himself that extra bit of ‘oomph’ on each thrust. “Oh, Sam,” he groaned, nuzzling and nibbling my shoulders, “*damn*, you’re – so – *hot!*”

He punctuated every word with a thrust, pounding

into me while I writhed like the wanton slut I am, squeezing him occasionally with my muscles and groaning as our steady rhythm grew more erratic. It wouldn't be long now – I could feel my body being overwhelmed by the incredible sensations coursing through me as his cock pounded hard into my prostate.

Josh was getting so wild, so desperate – any moment and–

Oh god *yes!!!*

The sun went supernova and burned the world away, and all there was was the beautiful, glorious, all-consuming pleasure–

I think we both screamed...

...“Sam? You okay...?” I woke up to Josh's softening cock slipping out of my body and whimpered with the loss. It must have alarmed him, because suddenly he was climbing off me and leaning down to try and look me in the eye.

I smiled up at him – he's very silly upside-down – and whispered, “Josh...” Then I rolled onto my side to face him, and reached up to pull him into an embrace.

As he settled next to me and wrapped his arms around me, he murmured, “I was worried for a minute. I think you passed out...” And then he smiled slightly and kissed me, and whispered, “You are incredible, you know that?”

I smiled and nuzzled against him, feeling sleep starting to creep up on me. “You're the incredible one, Love – want you to stay in me forever...”

“It'd be kind of difficult at speeches, you know? We'd be upstaging the President until the novelty wore off...” Josh joked, settling into a comfortable position with me in his arms.

I giggled – I do that when I'm getting sleepy, or when I'm drunk – and said, “And state dinners would be interesting with me sitting in your lap.”

“Not gonna have you on display at state dinners,” Josh whispered, “You're all mine...”

We snuggled closer together and I whispered, “I love you,” then kissed him and let sleep steal over me.

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When I woke up it was still dark outside. I sat up to peer at the clock and felt Jed shift in his sleep next to me. I wanted so much to stay in bed and just curl up next to him again, but he had to be up in about 50 minutes... I leaned over to kiss him gently on the cheek, and Abbey woke up to peer at me.

“Leo?”

“Yeah, Abbey. It's morning, I gotta take a shower and get home to change, and you two have about 48 minutes before they're gonna be calling him to wake him up...” I explained quietly.

Jed shifted again and grunted, opening one eye and glowering up at us balefully. “Well, they won't have to

because you just did...”

“Honey, don't blame Leo,” Abbey soothed, “He wanted to make sure you and I had some time together before you leave today, remember?”

Jed groaned and squeezed his eyes shut, then stretched and rolled over to face me. “I'd really like to stay in bed today...”

“No can do, Jed,” I answered softly, sighing as his arms slid around me. “Stop that,” I whispered as he nuzzled against my chest and began nibbling gently. “This time is for you and Abbey – I have to take a shower, get back to my place and change, then come back here for work. *You* have to make love with your wife...”

Who obviously was groping something sensitive because Jed suddenly gasped and then chuckled. “I see your point, Leo,” he murmured, then he kissed me and said, “I'll see you at work...”

I reluctantly climbed out of bed as he turned back to Abbey, the two of them kissing passionately as I walked over to the dresser and opened the bottom drawer; reached into the back for my spare shorts, undershirt, and socks. I'd walk out of here in the same shirt and pants I had yesterday, and tell anyone who asked that I spent the night on the couch after a late night of strategy planning. Jed, Abbey, and I had this down to a science.

I shut myself in the bathroom and stripped down to shower, trying to ignore the sounds coming from the bedroom. God – the two of them could be *so* hot – by the time I stepped into the shower, mental images of Abbey straddling Jed and arching in pleasure had me as hard as a rock. It didn't take long to figure out that a cold shower just wasn't going to do the trick, so once I'd lathered up really good, I took my own cock in hand and started to stroke, leaning against the wall with one arm and resting my forehead on that arm to steady myself. I let myself think about the two of them, Jed thrusting up into Abbey as he stroked every part of her he could reach, wrapping his hands around her waist and pulling her down onto him as he thrust into her warm wetness...

Oh god, yeah – and Abbey going wild, squeezing her legs around Jed and riding him for all he was worth, arching in pleasure and throwing her head back; moaning, her hair flying with the motion as they both cried out and– oh *god* – YES!

As the spasms faded and my legs stopped trembling, I shook my head and chuckled quietly, then finished my shower. Here I was, jacking off in my best friend's shower while I fantasized about what he and his wife were doing in the next room. I shut off the water and stepped out of the shower, grabbed the towel and started drying myself before I could really think about what that might say about me...

I finger-combed what there is of my hair into some

semblance of neatness, then pulled on the underclothes quickly. I hoped there wasn't anything too exciting going on out in the bedroom, because I still had to get the rest of my clothes and my shoes, and I didn't really need to get distracted again. I opened the bathroom door cautiously and saw Abbey and Jed snuggling under the covers. Thank god!

I walked over to the pile of my clothes and picked up my shirt, started pulling it on as both Jed and Abbey looked up at me. "Are you okay, Leo?" Abbey asked softly.

"Yeah, I'm good. I'll get out of your hair now, though," I said, dressing quickly. "You've got about 25 more minutes of privacy – If I run into anyone, I'll make sure they don't bother you, okay?"

"That sounds like an excellent idea," Jed said, doing something under the covers that made Abbey giggle. Abbey giggling was *definitely* my cue to go...

I finished dressing out in the living room, then slung my jacket over my shoulder and exited the Residence. The agent on duty at the door nodded a greeting but made no other comment, but I could hear Ron and someone else approaching – ah, it was Charlie. Good.

"Leo?" Charlie asked when he saw me, "Is something wrong?"

"Nah – although I wouldn't bother him quite yet. He's in there with his wife and I think he'd be a little upset if they're interrupted..." I winked at him and his eyes widened, then he smiled.

"Got it," he said, nodding.

Ron looked at me and said, "You really should have let someone drive you home last night, Mr. McGarry – you don't have to sleep on the couch."

"Ah, don't worry about it – I slept in worse places during the campaign – besides, it's a nice couch." I smiled, then pulled my keys out of my pocket, "So, give 'em a few more minutes, and I'll be back in a bit."

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Once they left for the summit the days were so busy, filled with things that had to get done despite half of the senior staff being out of the country. Fighting with Congress over the federal budget and other similar exercises in futility didn't stop just because one of the main heavy-hitters on our side wasn't here to do it. Instead, poor Leo had to split his time between keeping things moving smoothly in the West Wing itself and arguing with obstructionists on the Hill. He sent me over for a couple of meetings, mainly the ones where he knew I could argue circles around the others on the issues involved, but for the most part he handled any that couldn't be rescheduled.

And when the first footage of the summit hit CNN, all of us were glued to the tube. There was Josh, sitting in the back and looking like he was not only dying of boredom, but also pulling the rest of his hair out. It was only when he called me that night that I found out they'd been having

meetings around the clock... Poor Josh, no wonder he looked so frazzled!

Of course, I had to keep personal comments down to a minimum, not knowing how private an area he really was calling from, but I still told him I loved him before we hung up. He chuckled quietly and said, "Love you, too," barely loud enough for me to hear. Then I could hear Toby talking in the background, complaining about something, as usual...

On the third morning I came in early, giving up the pretense of trying to sleep. They'd be coming home today, and everything would be much better once they were out of danger. I knew everyone was just as tense as I was considering the situation, but I still felt a little silly. So I sat in the mess and watched the early morning CNN reports – and tried not to smile too much as they showed a clip of President Bartlet speaking to someone while off in the background Toby was whispering something to Josh, who seemed to be zoning out completely.

Poor Josh – when he was really ragged, he looked it. He just wasn't good at faking it like the rest of us. When he got home, I'd give him a nice backrub, feed him a tasty dinner and give him a couple of nice strong imported beers, then pour him into bed and make sure he gets a good night's sleep. He really looked like he needed it.

I watched a little more, then grabbed my coffee and headed for my office, suddenly struck by something on the way there. A little late to think of it now, but – I had to find CJ...

And lucky for me there she was, just arriving. "CJ!" I called, hurrying to catch her before Carol could monopolize her attention. "CJ!"

"Morning, Sam. Can this wait? I've gotta--"

"Actually, it'll only take a couple of seconds, CJ – your office?" and I walked right in and stood there waiting for her until she finally followed me in, glancing back at Carol with one of her 'let me deal with the puppy' looks.

"What?"

It's hard to be bold in the face of CJ in 'irritated because I was busy' mode, but I took a deep breath and said, "We weren't trying to send a message, CJ – if anyone asks, there is no message."

CJ's eyes widened and she peered down at me, then said, "Okay, that's good, Sam. Now, what the heck are you talking about?"

Oh. "The summit meeting," I explained, realizing that no, she obviously hadn't been reading my mind, "Both of the senior staff members who went along are Jewish. I just realized today, and some of the reporters might--"

"Sam, they're not going to notice that kind of thing," she said, her tone suggesting that I'd gone completely insane. "They haven't yet, and by today they're

going to be too busy asking about what's going to happen if there's no agreement."

"Just in case someone *does* notice – you know they ask crazy questions sometimes, like why are there fifteen pens when his name has thirteen letters. There is no message."

She sighed – I think she was going to call me 'Freak-boy' again... "Okay, Sam, there is no message. Man, you need to *relax*... Josh'll be fine, and he'll be home tonight. Stop drinking so much coffee and you'll feel better."

Josh'll be—? Oh boy... I smiled sheepishly and headed for the door, then said, "No message."

"I got it, Sam. Go!"

I hurried out of her office before she could throw something at me, and dropped my stuff off in my office before going to check with Leo for any specific assignments for the day. Then – after I drank more of the coffee CJ suggested I cut back on – I walked to Leo's office and stopped short when I realized that his door was shut and Margaret was standing near it.

"Margaret?"

"He's in there with the Vice President, Sam. They should be done soon," she told me, looking up at me and smiling that odd little smile she's got.

"Oh." Well, of course he's in there with the Vice President – they've got to take care of things while the President isn't here... "You weren't eavesdropping, were you?"

"I think they're talking about the budget..."

"Oh. That's good..." Damn, I'm glad Cathy and Donna don't do that... "So. I'll just sit and wait then?"

Margaret nodded and repeated, "They should be done soon." And then she watched me sit and reluctantly returned to her own chair when she realized I disapproved of her listening in. I hoped it wasn't something she did *all* the time – especially if Leo *had* been trying to catch a few winks and had an erotic dream the other day...

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"Leo? Did you hear what I said, Leo? I'm not any happier with this bullshit than you are..."

Oh god – here we were discussing another fight over the budget, and I was staring at his lips and wondering what it would feel like to kiss him. This was bad. Very, very bad. I needed to get myself back under control; I needed Jed back home in one piece – and I needed to figure out what the hell we had been talking about a moment ago...

"I'm sorry, John, my mind was wandering..." I admitted, dragging my stare back to his eyes instead of those lips.

"Leo, he'll be *fine*. They're going to agree to a cease fire that no one will listen to anyway, and he'll be flying home this afternoon. Stop worrying..."

"Sorry..." I stood up and started to pace – just

couldn't keep on sitting there with him looking at me like that... I was starting to find that slight drawl in his voice appealing, and *that* definitely couldn't be allowed to continue!

"Look, I'll make some phonecalls, see what I can do to try and break this stupid deadlock, okay?"

Oh – the HHS budget – that was it! "I'm not betting you'd have much better luck than I did, though. They're being stubborn mules and they're not going to move for *any* Democrat..."

"I know, Leo. But I want to try... I'll probably be back over here later, pissed off and ready to bust heads just like I heard you were yesterday evening. Wish I'd seen that..."

I spun and stared at him for a moment, realizing that gleam in his eyes was back. "No, you don't," I stated, and then he was suddenly on his feet and taking a step closer...

"Yes, I do," he purred quietly, reaching out to brush his fingertips lightly across my lips. "You can't imagine how seeing you in that kind of wild fury affects me..."

"John, *not* here – this is my office, and I will not compromise my position or embarrass the President by participating in that kind of activity here. Do you understand me?" I couldn't raise my voice, in case Margaret was listening again, but I could tell from the look in his eyes that not only did he understand, but he would obey any command I gave him at the moment. I desperately wished we weren't here right now, because memories of that damned dream hit me full force and suddenly more than anything I wanted to be fucking his mouth...

And then he swallowed and let his hand drop to his side, and when he met my gaze I could see how dilated his eyes were... "Yes, Sir," he whispered, "I understand you, Sir..."

Jesus!

Smug bastard knew exactly what he was doing to me!

And then he turned away and headed for the door, stopping before he reached it and looking back at me where I still stood with my hand gripping the back of a chair so hard my knuckles ached. "I'll make those calls and let you know if I have any luck." And then he flashed me one of his incredible smiles, and opened the door to walk out.

"Thanks, John," I managed to say, hoping my voice sounded normal. Then he was striding down the corridor, and Margaret was in the doorway with Sam right on her heels. I took a deep breath and finally let go my death grip on the chair, then walked to my desk and sat down.

“Yeah, Margaret?”

“Sam's here to see you.”

“Yes, I can see that. Thank you, Margaret... Sam, sit down – we've got a busy day...”

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By the time they arrived home, I was more than ready to tell half of Congress to just go fuck themselves I was so tired of idiocy. Couldn't they see that if they kept up this way we'd still be fighting about the federal budget by election day?! Even the President had made more progress than we had, at least managing to get the Israelis and the Palestinians to agree to further meetings and a cease-fire...

When Josh came in, I was sitting at my desk, staring at a copy of the latest version of the HHS budget as if it were written in hieroglyphics. “Hey,” he said in greeting, sitting down in a chair in front of me. “What's that?”

“Something that's going nowhere, and not even fast,” I grumbled. Then I let it flop closed and stood up. “I am so glad you're home safe, Josh – let's just go home, okay?” I walked around my desk to stand next to him.

He studied me for a long moment, then stood up and hugged me, not caring who saw through the blinds. “Don't let them get to you, Sam,” he whispered, “It's okay, Love, I'm here, now. I'll go beat their heads in tomorrow...”

I was so frustrated I started crying – I couldn't help it... Without another word, Josh sat me down in the chair he'd been sitting in and then drew all of the blinds. Then he returned to my side and knelt, and whispered, “Oh, Sam, I'm so sorry...”

“Not your fault,” I managed to say, and then the rest of it all came out in a rush. “I'm just so tired of it and so frustrated and I was so worried and wanted to take you home and feed you and then give you a backrub and pour you into bed but now you're taking care of me again...”

“Wow...”

“And Leo and Hoynes already tried beating heads, so they're not going to pay attention when you do it...”

“Hey,” he murmured, “I'm better at beating heads than the two of them, *they* still have to be tactful.” He reached out and gently wiped away my tears, then asked, “It's been a tough couple of days, huh?”

I sniffled and nodded, then asked, “Tissue?”

He gave me a tissue and I blew my nose, then took the next tissue which he already held ready for me. That one I used to dry my eyes, feeling like an idiot for crying on him like that. I took a deep breath and looked up at him; found him smiling down at me with the sweetest look on his face. “You okay, Sam?” he asked softly.

“Yeah. I feel like an idiot...”

“Don't feel like an idiot, Sam, you've been under a lot of stress and you're always keeping yourself so much in control. We're going to get you home, and we're gonna call out for delivery, drink a couple of beers, and then we're *both*

gonna pour ourselves into bed and *rest*.” Then he looked back at the bill on my desk and said, “And that piece of crap is going to stay *here*, all by its lonesome. It doesn't deserve to have a good night.”

The look on his face made me laugh out loud, and he smiled broadly in response. I felt so much better already that when I stood up I hugged him again. “I love you, Josh,” I whispered in his ear.

“Sam, I–” CJ's voice burst in, quickly followed by an “Oh,” and the sound of my door slamming closed again.

“Damn...” Josh gasped, trying to step back. I kept an arm around his waist and opened the door again.

“What, CJ? We're going home...” I said, finding her standing right outside my door. “I need to relax, like you said earlier.”

“Sam, you gotta be careful,” she said softly, looking from me to Josh. “Jesus, Josh, *breathe*...”

“CJ,” he whispered, “Can we help you?”

She noticed that I was refusing to let go of Josh, and heaved a sigh before walking into my office and shutting the door behind her. “You boys are asking for trouble...”

“CJ, I had a crappy day. My best friend was comforting me when I was having a little crisis,” I explained. “Now, we're leaving, so what did you need?”

“How did you know?”

“How did I know what?” I asked, totally confused now.

“How did you know Danny was going to ask about the message?”

“Because we're both freaks, CJ, you know that...” I answered with a smile, “And I didn't *know*, I just felt that someone *might*. So, it was Danny, huh?”

“Who *else*?” CJ answered.

“Did he believe you when you told him there was no message?” I asked.

“*What* message are you two talking about?” Josh asked, and I couldn't help laughing at his expression.

“The one they think we were sending by having you *and* Toby accompanying the President on a summit between Israel and the Palestinians...” I explained.

“Wha– oh. I never even *thought* about it!” Josh said, frowning. “There *was* no message!”

“We know,” CJ and I both said. And then CJ continued on, “Probably no one thought about it until Danny asked. Of course, he smiled when I said there was no message – I have no idea if it means he believed me – knowing him, he never thought there was one, he just wanted to give me a hard time...”

“That's Danny for you. Don't worry about it, CJ,” Josh said, “Go home, take it easy, put your feet up...I know *we* are. Goodnight...”

I smiled and said, “Seriously, CJ, don't worry

about it. Danny's being a pain in the ass – you told him we sent the best people for the job and he knows you're telling him the truth.”

“Well,” she hedged, smiling at me and glancing up at Josh for a moment, “I didn't actually tell him we sent the best people for the job – I told him Toby went because he was the best person for the job, and Josh went because we weren't about to have him here with both the President and Leo gone...”

“CJ!” Josh blurted, “Don't tell Danny that – it'll be all over the Post that I'm incompetent!”

“God, Josh,” CJ laughed, “You're more fun to play with than Danny is!”

Josh leveled a poisonous glare at her and said, “We're leaving now. Goodnight.”

“Party pooper,” CJ chuckled, moving aside and letting us go.

Josh stayed true to his word – after a tasty dinner of orange beef and General Tso's chicken and a couple of Sam Adams cream stouts, and a nice warm bath (conserving water, of course...), we climbed into bed and snuggled. I was wiped from my crappy day, and jet lag and 'round the clock meetings had taken their toll on Josh, so beyond a little kissing and cuddling we weren't up for much.

That was okay, though, because we were together and safe, and Congressional assholes aside, all was right with the world...

The next morning we showered together, soapy groping and all included. We had a limited amount of time to enjoy ourselves considering we had to be in for the Senior Staff meeting shortly, but it was nice to feel Josh's hands on me and just as nice to have my hands on him...

After fun, though, came real cleaning, and as I scrubbed his back I spotted something I'd often wondered but had never worked up the courage to ask about. Toward the upper part of his left shoulder, where the muscle is, were two very straight, thin, parallel scars. They were too straight and clean to be some kind of scratch, and I couldn't think of any kind of surgery they could have been from – usually I didn't even pay them attention, but occasionally my curiosity would get the better of me. When I ran my fingers over them, Josh tensed – every time... I went back to scrubbing and rinsing him, deciding, again, to let it drop without asking him about it.

When he scrubbed my back he managed to distract me from all thoughts, his soapy hands sliding much lower than they really needed to wash my back. “Oh, Josh,” I moaned as his hand slid between my asscheeks, “If you start that again, we're not going to get out of the shower until the water goes cold...”

“Sounds good to me...”

“Senior Staff, meetings with Congress...” I reminded, although I really didn't want to.

“Guess I can't just say 'screw 'em', can I?” he whispered against my neck.

“I swear I was just about there last night,” I answered, smiling and turning to face him. I kissed him, then scooted back under the stream of cooling water to rinse off the rest of the soap; shivering slightly by the time I was done. “But no, it wouldn't be a good idea.”

I climbed out of the tub and grabbed up one of the large towels, wrapped it around myself and tried to restrain a shiver as he shut off the water and joined me. “You're hopeless, California-boy,” he said with a smile as I tightened the towel. Before he dried himself, he pried the towel out of my hands and briskly dried me, taking special care to make certain my back was dry. Then he pulled the towel up to dry my hair, leaving it a spiky mess when he finished and wrapped me back up so that he could take a moment or two to dry himself. “You've got goosebumps,” he whispered when he was dry, wrapping his arms around me for a minute.

“I'm just a little cold – 's'okay,” I murmured. “Gotta get dressed, Love...”

He hugged me close for a moment, then reluctantly let me go, slapping me lightly on the butt before snatching the towel from me. “That'll give you some impetus to get dressed,” he said lightly, chasing me out of the bathroom and back into the bedroom.

“One of these days, we're going on vacation to some place nice and warm with white beaches and clear blue water,” I said, pulling on my clothes in record time. By the time I had dressed, I was warm again, but the thought of Josh and I vacationing in some place like the Bahamas had definitely taken up residence in my mind. By the time winter weather hit the DC area, he might be just as ready for it as I would be...

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Because we had surprisingly good weather for a DC late fall day, I ate lunch outside, staking out a bench along one of my usual jogging trails. I managed to convince the secret service agents to make themselves unobtrusive, and sat back hoping that the person I wanted to run into would also be taking advantage of the nice weather.

Lucky for me, a short time later he came jogging down the path. He was sweatier than he would usually be, and even before he reached me I could tell his breathing was laboured – he still hadn't been able to build his strength back up after the shooting... As he neared, I called out to him, “Josh!”

He stopped short, looking around, then spotted me and walked over. His chest was heaving with the effort to catch his breath, and he was sweating far more than one

would expect for a brisk fall day. “Mr. Vice President,” he puffed, then silenced again as he fought down a coughing fit.

“Whoa – easy, there, Josh...” I soothed, worried that he might be pushing himself too hard. “Sit down, have some water...” I offered, hoping he’d take me up on it. He sat down next to me and accepted the bottled water I offered, and I smiled as he took a couple of large swallows.

“Thank you, Sir,” he breathed once he could speak again.

“No problem – looked to me like you needed it more than I did. You’re pushing yourself pretty hard, aren’t you?”

He frowned, and I figured it was a question he’d been getting a lot recently, especially from Sam Seaborn... Just as I was about to apologize, he said, “Actually, I think I’m trying to burn off some frustration before I commit assault and battery...”

I smiled slightly and asked, “The HHS budget?”

“How’d you guess?” he grumbled. From his tone, it was definitely a rhetorical question.

“Look, Josh,” I started, looking him right in the eyes, “If you’re still on the Hill around dinnertime, give me a call; we’ll go somewhere and get away from the assholes for a bit, okay?”

He stared at me – I think he hadn’t been expecting me to make *that* particular move. So he and Sam were a somewhat well-known item – among certain circles, that is – it didn’t keep me from taking a crack at rekindling old flames. Besides, much as I loathed to admit it, I was feeling a need to top someone who wouldn’t try to top me back – the whole situation with Leo was too much to deal with at the moment...

He was still staring, trying to read me. He must have been wondering just how much of the bridge he had burned when he told me off during the campaign – it still smarted a little, but I’d gotten over most of my anger. To tell the truth, I had been a little too possessive, and had probably deserved the reaming out he gave me. I’m not sure what he finally saw there, but he answered, “Yeah – yeah, if I’m not in the middle of things, I’ll call...”

“Good,” I said, standing up. He stood, too, and offered the water bottle back to me, but I waved it away. “You hang onto that, and take it easy. I’ll see you later.” And then I and my agents headed off to the next meeting of the day, and I tried not to let thoughts of the possibilities this evening held distract me too much.

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I leaned back in my chair and sipped my water, watching Josh as he hit a speed-dial number on his cell phone and waited for an answer. Again, I felt a pang of guilt at what I was contemplating, but I was sure Sam wasn’t satisfying *all* of Josh’s needs. And besides, damn it, I wanted him...

I listened in to his half of the conversation, knowing

all the while that I shouldn’t be but unable to stop. “Hey,” he said by way of a greeting – neutral, no way for anyone eavesdropping to know who he was talking to; “I figured I’d better call and let you know I may not make it to your place tonight. I’m at dinner right now, and have to go *back* to the meeting when I’m done...” All perfectly anonymous and safe – it was funny how we all became so well-versed in the ways of ‘passing’.

Then he frowned a little and said, “No, don’t do that – you need your rest. I’ll just go back to my place and crash – if I don’t end up just staying here all damned night.” I had to smile at that – how many times had I done the same thing? Or even worse... “Yeah, or I’ll crash in my office...”

Then his face coloured slightly, and the image of Sam murmuring sweet nothings into the phone rose unbidden and unwanted in my mind’s eye. It was all I could do to keep from making a face, made all the more difficult by Josh glancing around and very, very quietly murmuring, “Love you, too...” before switching off the phone.

“Everything okay?” I asked smoothly, sitting up again and turning my attention to the Greek salad on my plate.

He looked up at me, then smiled and said, “Yeah, everything’s fine. I just don’t want to have to go back to that damned meeting and have to listen to them argue over crap again...”

“I know – makes you want to play hookey, doesn’t it...” I said, allowing a slight note of suggestiveness to slip into my tone. He blushed again, and looked down at the penne al vodka on his plate.

“Can’t,” he answered, spearing a couple of the penne and stuffing them in his mouth.

“You know you can always crash at my place when it breaks up – no need to go all the way back to yours...”

“I need clothes for tomorrow,” he protested. Interesting that that was the only deterrent he could think of right away – or was he trying to hide his relationship with Sam from me?

“If you were stuck at the meeting all night you’d have the same problem...”

“John, I can’t do that...” he protested, although his tone lacked conviction. I fervently wished we were on a wooded jogging trail, or in my office, or even in one of the White House’s basement corridors so I could do more to convince him he needed to take me up on my hospitality...

“Josh, I really think you should,” I said softly, smiling at him. For a moment, I allowed everything to show in my gaze – he gasped when he saw it, and then I drew the neutral mask back down as I watched his gaze lock studiously on his pasta for the next long moment.

“Think about it, Josh,” I purred, returning my own attention to my salad.

He'd probably be wondering how I knew the meeting had let out, but I wasn't about to tell him how many people on the Hill are willing to provide me with little tidbits of information. He'd probably think I'd been offering them things when I finally win the White House myself...

I climbed out of my car and leaned against it, waiting for him. Dennis and a couple of the others took their positions, keeping watch. I knew they hated when I'd do things like this, but there really was little danger in this area – there were more than enough Capitol police and other law enforcement personnel around. So, I waited, and nodded greetings to other people I recognized as they passed. Finally I spotted him, his curly hair looking even wilder than usual, as if he'd been trying to pull it out. He slung his backpack over one shoulder and ran a hand through his hair, trying to tame it, and then looked around.

I could see his eyes widen when he saw me lounging against the car. For a moment, he hesitated, and then he shrugged and trotted down the steps towards me. “Mr. Vice President,” he said as he reached the sidewalk, “I wasn't expecting door-to-door service.”

“It was the least I could do,” I answered, stepping away from the car and smiling. “It's pretty late – we could take you all the way back to your apartment, or you can spend the night at my Residence. Shorter drive, and it's a nice place...”

“Yeah, well...” Josh said with a grin, “our tax dollars at work and all that.”

I couldn't help grinning in response. I loved his sense of humour – he was so damned irreverent – it was refreshing. “C'mon, Josh, I've got all these guys hanging around who'd probably like to get a good night's sleep, too...”

He glanced over at Dennis and I'm not quite sure what he saw, but it decided it for him. “Sure, I'll crash at your place.” We climbed into the car, and discussed the fight over the budget all the way back. By the time we got there, we'd decided to take them all out and start anew – I hoped that anyone listening knew we were just blowing off steam and hadn't made notes...

I sent the agents off to do whatever it is they actually do at night, once again telling Dennis that there were to be no interruptions unless it was an absolute emergency. Then I led Josh into my private living room and made him dump his backpack, jacket, and tie on the couch. “You really, *really* need to relax, Josh,” I said, walking past him and heading for the bedroom. “I'd offer you a drink, but I'm a lousy host that way,” I added, coming back out sans my own jacket and tie. “There's water...”

“Water's fine,” Josh said, straightening and turning to face me, and grinning slightly in embarrassment as he

realized I'd been standing just behind him. Now, suddenly, we were face-to-face, and I could see nervousness begin to shine in his eyes. “Mr. Vice President–”

“John. You used to call me John...” I could see him shiver at the tone I used – I could always get to him with that. Then I took the half-step closer, and grabbed him, wrapping my arms around him and pulling him tight against me. He struggled for just a moment, and then I felt his body relax against mine, his lips opening to allow my tongue entrance. Oh yes!

I plundered his mouth, slightly surprised myself at how forceful I was being. This thing with Leo was really getting to me... I gentled slightly, allowing Josh to pull back and gasp for breath. He was flushed and his body was *hot* everywhere it touched mine – I wanted to crush him against me; wanted to pin him down and ravish him completely...

“John – I can't!” he panted, looking up at me and licking his kiss-swollen lips.

“Josh, I know about Sam – I know you *love* him and I can never take his place. I wouldn't try anymore than I'd– I'd never even try. But I want you, and I know he can't be giving you everything I can...” There – brutally honest, and liable to lose my chance because of it, but I had to say it.

Studying his face, I could tell he was conflicted – he knew I was right, but I could tell that he really did love Sam and didn't want to hurt him. Knowing it was unfair but unable to stop myself, I reached out and stroked his cheek, gently rubbing my thumb over his lips as he stared into my eyes. “Tell me, and I'll stop, Josh,” I whispered, drawing closer again and looming slightly. I barely managed to restrain my gasp as his lips parted and the very tip of his tongue darted out to taste my thumb.

Then he ducked his gaze, and I heard him whisper, “Sam, I'm sorry...” The next thing I knew, warm wetness engulfed my thumb and Josh began sucking on it like a starving man. *God!* My knees threatened to give out on me, and it felt like there was a huge nerve running straight from my thumb down to my cock.

Managing to make my legs work, I backed up, drawing him with me. We entered my bedroom and I stopped to let him close the door. Once the door was shut, I was on him, pressing him back against the heavy wood, kissing him desperately, rubbing my hands over every part of him I could reach. He moaned, his legs buckling slightly as his body surrendered to me, sucking eagerly on my tongue as I plundered his mouth. Oh yes, this was what I'd needed, to feel someone *truly* surrender to me...

I reached between us, unbuckling Josh's belt and pulling it free of his beltloops. He pulled back and gasped as he felt me fumbling at his waistband; unfastening and unzipping his trousers and then turning my attention to

pulling his shirt out of his pants and unbuttoning it. I really wanted to tear his shirt off him, but I knew he'd need it – he'd never fit in one of my shirts, and I certainly didn't need him showing up in the office looking as if he'd spent the night in drunken debauchery after getting into my car!

Finally his shirt was open – I tugged his undershirt out of his trousers and slid my hands up underneath the white cotton, rubbing my hands all over his torso. He was moaning and allowing me to take every liberty, tossing his head back so hard when I pinched his nipples that I thought he smacked it into the door. Finally, he managed to remember how to speak; gasped, “John – the bed...”

I couldn't help laughing – his hair was wild, his pants open and beginning to slide down his hips, his shirt pushed partway down his arms and his undershirt rolled up around the middle of his chest. And he had the most beautiful, amazed expression lighting his eyes – had he forgotten the way I could make him feel? He looked so totally fuckable it was all I could do to keep from turning him around and throwing him back against the door again... “Josh, you wouldn't believe how sexy you look right now... Get your damned clothes off and get on that bed, *now*.”

I stepped to one side to let him past me, and as he went by, I swatted his ass with the belt I realized I was still holding – his own belt... A thrill went through me as he gasped in surprise and looked back at me accusingly. “That's *my* belt!”

“That's right,” I answered with a smile, “and I'm going to whip your ass crimson with it...”

“God...” Josh breathed, peeling his clothes off so hurriedly that I was worried *he* was going to rip them. Once he stood naked before me, I finally unbuttoned my own shirt and shrugged out of it, then stripped off my undershirt. I took a step closer to him and shoved him back with one hand in the middle of his chest, licking my lips as he fell back onto my bed and lay there staring up at me.

His cock was so hard, bobbing with every beat of his pulse as I looked down at him and smiled again. He stared up at me with a tiny bit of apprehension, and I couldn't hold back a groan as my own cock throbbed. “Josh...” I purred, running the fine leather of his belt across my palm; folding it in half to make it easier to use. “Get on your stomach – grab a pillow and put it under your hips – you know the right angle...”

He obeyed eagerly, sending another shiver of lust through me – I wanted to keep my trousers on to keep that psychological advantage, but the constriction on my own erection was becoming quite uncomfortable. I walked around the bed to stand at the foot so that he couldn't see me, then stripped off the rest of my clothes, barely restraining my sigh of relief. I studied Josh as he lay before me, his leanly muscled body splayed across my bed awaiting my attentions. He was tall, but definitely on the slender side; a little bony,

even, around the knees and elbows. I knew he'd lost a little muscle tone since the shooting – our meeting during his jog was more than proof of that – but it didn't matter to me. His personality, his irreverence, and his willingness to allow me to truly indulge myself – those were what appealed to me the most...

“You're killin' me here, John,” he murmured, trying to look over his shoulder at me.

“Do not turn around,” I instructed, sliding easily into the role I loved to play with him. Immediately, he obeyed, dropping his head into the pillow he was clinging to. I smiled and licked my lips, then climbed onto the bed to kneel next to his thighs. Very gently, I stroked the belt up the near thigh, drawing it away from him to give a light slap when I reached his buttock. I repeated the same move on the other side, biting my lip when he gasped. Oh god, this was exactly what I'd needed to make me feel more like myself!

I trailed the belt up and down between his thighs, skimming them ever so gently and enjoying his response. He squirmed against the pillow, panting and trying not to speak because he knew when he did he'd be begging. He spread his legs more and twitched his hips, daring me to punish him.

Naturally, I had to – he couldn't be allowed to be so bad... I drew the belt back and smacked it down on his ass, relishing both the impact and Josh's surprised gasp. I repeated the move, gasping myself as arousal surged through me when he cried out. I had missed this – missed him... Bringing the belt down again, I smacked him firmly across both cheeks, and then again before he had a chance to recover. He groaned into the pillow and spread his legs slightly. I took full advantage, slapping him low on the buttocks, closer to the crease where they join the thigh; again and again until he was panting and gasping and thrusting into the pillow.

“God – John – yes!” he panted. I slowed slightly to let him recover, but he'd have none of that. “Please, more...” he pleaded, forgetting himself and looking back over his shoulder again.

“Face front, Josh,” I ordered.

His eyes widened and he turned back to stare at the headboard, and I heard a soft whisper, “I'm sorry, Sir.”

“Not good enough,” I said softly. “You've been bad again...”

“I should be punished...” he suggested, thrusting into the pillow again and daring me. Oh yes...

I brought the belt down again, harder than before across the already reddened skin of his buttocks; the feel of the impact and the sound of Josh's soft cry making arousal burn through my body. I knew he wanted me to be even rougher, but I kept a firm rein on my desire to accommodate – I didn't want to do anything to risk causing

him damage so soon after a nearly fatal gunshot wound! And, damn it, he *was* trying to goad me; wiggling his hips and raising up his ass slightly, rearranging the pillow.

With that beautiful display in front of me, who was I to ignore it? I raised my hand again and brought the belt down on his ass, again and again and again; hitting him just hard enough to make it sting intensely but not truly *hurt*. The blows continued, and I could hear him becoming more and more aroused; each slap of the belt sending a shock of lust through both of us, his breathing becoming more ragged...

He was so sexy, so beautiful – so willing... He had me so hot I knew it wouldn't be long now – there wasn't even enough time to pause to retrieve the lube and get inside him. Instead I continued to whip him – lighter blows, now, but closer together so there was a nearly constant stimulus of almost-pain. As we both drew closer, I realized the sound I heard harmonizing with his beautiful husky shouts was my own voice growling, "Oh god – oh yeah, Josh!"

One last, hard slap, and Josh came all over my pillow, his hoarse, lusty cry pulling me along with him. It felt like the orgasm began in my toes, building up momentum as it reached my balls and exploded out of my cock all over his back and his abused ass.

Even before the spasms faded, Josh was rolling onto his side and pulling me down into an embrace, covering my face with kisses. There were tears sparkling in his eyes and wet on his face, but he was smiling. "God, John, I really missed that..." he whispered between the kisses. "God..."

I held him close, knowing he needed some time to come down from the endorphin high – from the way we had both cum, I didn't think we'd be doing anything else tonight. The fact that he was starting to drift off in my arms confirmed that. "Josh, are you okay?" I asked, stroking his back and gently stroking over what I could reach of his abused ass. "Damn, that's going to bruise," I murmured, feeling the weals that had already risen on his flesh. "I'm sorry, Josh..."

"Sam's gonna kill me," he murmured against my neck.

"I didn't mean to cause trouble, Josh, if there's anything I can do..."

"I'll apologize to him, it'll be okay," he murmured. He looked up and I could see he was already half asleep. "Don' worry."

He smiled sleepily and dropped a kiss on my lips, then snuggled against me. He was snoring in moments, but I lay there for a long time, just holding him and trying to forget the feelings he had managed to awaken in me again.

Sex with Josh was like playing with fire...

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I didn't see Josh until I got to the office the next morning, running into him entering the office as I came in with my prerequisite huge cup of coffee. He looked

surprisingly well-rested, but he was wearing the same suit he'd had on yesterday. Not exactly the kind of thing male co-workers were supposed to notice, but I always did...

"Hey," I greeted him softly as I walked past him. I went straight to his office instead of returning to mine, and I could hear him telling Donna he'd catch up with things in a moment. Then he followed me and smiled somewhat wanly when he found me sitting on the edge of his desk.

"Hey," he said quietly, sniffing the air as I blew on the hot coffee. "What flavour today?"

"Vanilla toffee," I answered with a grin. Josh had a tendency to laugh at my liking for gourmet coffees – to him, coffee was coffee as long as it was strong enough to keep him awake. Today, though, he actually seemed interested.

"Smells good..." he murmured, dropping his backpack into a chair and shuffling through his inbox to make sure there were no surprises.

"You never made it back to your place, did you?" I asked, already knowing the answer would be no. I knew he hadn't spent the night *here*, and I was praying he hadn't spent all night in some office on the Hill. Maybe he went home with one of the Democrats on the committee he'd been meeting with all damned evening...

He looked down at himself and gave me a little self-deprecating shrug. "I'm going to change," he promised, checking his watch to see if there was enough time before Senior Staff.

I checked my own watch and nodded, "Hurry up, and I'll let them know you're right behind me."

He pulled off his tie and was shrugging out of his jacket as I turned away and made sure the door was closed. My hand was on the doorknob as he started unfastening his trousers and I found myself turning back, smiling, and watching as he began sliding them down. "Sam, we'll both be late..." he warned.

"Sorry – got distracted," I answered with a smile. I wanted to stay and watch him strip, but he was right, I really had to get into the meeting and let them know he was on his way. Reluctantly, I left, wondering if I was imagining the look of relief that briefly crossed his face as I closed his door again on the way out – or was it merely that he'd managed to get the pants off over his shoes without killing himself?

The meeting went as they usually do, too many people talking at once and too many things to cram into an already busy day. It never even registered that when Josh joined us, he remained standing throughout the entire meeting, leaning on the back of the couch directly behind me – I looked up at him and smiled when I first felt him back there, but the discussion of the budget and other

outstanding matters got me so involved I really didn't think about it until later.

Later... I had been working on fleshing out some of the arguments against 'don't ask, don't tell' when I realized I was starving. Toby was out in a meeting, but I heard what sounded like Donna harassing Josh about something. I figured I'd grab him and we'd get a quick lunch before I ate my laptop. As I headed for Josh's office, I heard Donna ask, "Are you going to sit down at all today? You're making me dizzy! Oh – the Vice President wanted to know if you're available for lunch."

I stopped in the doorway and said, "Actually, I was just about to ask if you wanted to get something with me, Josh." Donna spun to look at me, but my attention was focused on Josh – you know the way cats look when they've done something wrong and they're pretending to be innocent? That was the look he gave me – and then the colour drained from his face.

"Ah– Donna, can you get us a couple of salads, and tell the Vice President I –uh– I'm gonna eat lunch here today? Thanks..."

I smiled at her as she walked out, and I could swear she'd muttered something about Josh being weird, as if that were news to me... And then she left the office and closed the door on the way out, and I looked up at Josh again. "What's up?"

"Nothing!" he denied too quickly. Wonderful...

"Why's Hoynes asking you to lunch, Josh?" I knew I shouldn't be, but the thought of Hoynes going after my Josh was making me supremely jealous all of a sudden. Let him play his little power games with Leo and let the President have to deal with it; I wanted him away from Josh. "Is he harassing you?"

"What?" Josh asked, stopping what he was doing and staring at me. "No! No – he's not harassing me..." And then he trailed off and went thoughtful on me. I could tell he was trying to make his mind up about something. Suddenly I could feel my heart thumping in my chest and my throat constricting – nervousness made me feel lightheaded and I leaned against his desk to steady myself. He studied his desk for a long moment, then looked up at me again. The look in his eyes...

"Oh no, Josh..."

"I ran into him jogging during lunch, and he asked me to have dinner with him. So I did, then I had to go back to the meeting..." he started, then he took a deep breath and dove into the next part of it, "When it finally let out, he was waiting for me with his car..."

"He's stalking you?!" I blurted before I could stop myself. I felt like an idiot the second the words left my mouth, but I swear that was what it sounded like...

"No," he answered, "he's not – Sam, he knew how long the damned meeting went – he's been there too, you

know... He offered to have them drive me home--"

"And instead you went to his place!" Oh god – I was yelling...

"Sam, I'm sorry--"

"When you called me yesterday evening you were with him, weren't you! You said you--" My throat closed and I choked on the next word. I swallowed and took a deep breath, realizing something else while I was trying to make my body remember how to speak. "He was *waiting* for you? Do you realize how that *sounds*, Josh? He went out of his way to run into you – he *is* stalking you! You've got to stay away from him – he's dangerous!"

"God, Sam, he's *not* dangerous! He just... Oh god, I am *so* sorry. I should never have– Sam, I never intended to actually *do* anything. I was going to just crash at his place, and then he..."

"You didn't intend to do anything, but he sure as hell was planning something!" I snapped, looking up at him and trying to ignore the stinging in my eyes. Damn it, I was *not* going to *cry*! "Josh, he was *waiting for you*!"

"Sam, I'm sorry..." he whispered. He shook his head and said, "I really fucked up."

"You really fucked something," I said, torn between jealousy, anger, and a deep-seated *fear*. Everything had been so good, and all of a sudden it was crashing down around my ears again – and worse than the fact that I suddenly felt I could lose Josh to Hoynes, there was the nagging feeling that Josh was actually in some kind of danger that I just couldn't name. The Vice President would never do something to jeopardize his position, and definitely not to jeopardize his chance to be President some day, but I just couldn't shake the feeling that he was dangerous.

Josh stood before me, looking at me like he was about to get down on his knees and beg my forgiveness – and the door suddenly opened, Donna backing into the room with her hands full of salads and bottled sodas. She stopped short when she saw us, and blinked owlishly as she looked from me to Josh and back. "Uh – salads..."

I walked to her and took mine, said, "Thanks, Donna. You can call the Vice President and tell him Josh's free for lunch after all," and then I walked past her and headed for my office without looking back.

As I walked, I heard Donna ask, "What was *that*? Is something wrong? Joshua, what did you *do*?" Josh stammered something I couldn't hear, and then I shut my door. I put my salad and my soda very carefully down on my desk, and then I pounded my fist on the solid wood a few times, only stopping when I realized it hurt...

I collapsed into my chair and stared numbly at the salad – the rational part of my mind made a sudden reappearance as it dawned on me that if I lost Josh at this point, it would be my own fault. Storming out and telling

Donna to go ahead and call the one person I wanted to keep as far away from Josh as possible wasn't exactly the smartest move I could have made. I had to get back in there and fix this before it was too late...

Just as I reached for the doorknob, the door opened and I found myself face-to-face with Donna. She looked—she looked angry, but under that I could see fear lighting her eyes. “Donna?”

“I have to talk to you,” she said resolutely, walking in. I had to back up before she walked right into me; suddenly realizing that was her intent. She wasn't about to let me out until she had said her piece...

“Look,” I began quietly, “Don't call Hoynes – I was angry...”

“You have to talk to him, Sam,” she said softly. “You can't let this—”

“What did he tell you?”

“He's scared, Sam. He said he's ruined everything... you have to talk to him.”

“You know something,” I accused.

She shook her head, but I could see it in her eyes – she did know something. “You're good for him, Sam. You care for him – you take care of him as much as I do. He needs you... You have to talk to him...”

“I'm angry, Donna. He told me—” I cut myself off, realizing I had no idea how much she really knew about Josh... “I thought he and I—”

“Sam, please...”

“He told me it was just once after the campaign,” I said, the words coming out before I even really registered that it was happening. “I thought he – I thought...” Damn it, now the tears were back and when I tried to blink them away, they spilled over. This wasn't supposed to happen!

“Sam,” she whispered, looking confused and a little embarrassed, “talk to him...” Awkwardly she reached out and patted my arm, nudging me towards the door. “Please...”

I walked out of my office and headed for his, ignoring the curious look I knew Connie was giving me. I knew Donna walked over to her and distracted her with something – I had no idea what, but again I had to thank her for her uncanny ability to do exactly what was needed when it was needed. And then I opened his door and slipped into his office, closing the door behind me.

He'd been resting his head on folded arms on the top of his desk, but when I came in he looked up as if he'd been startled. “Sam!” he whispered, and I could see the tears in his eyes and hear them in his voice...

Oh god – even if he'd been a total idiot being with Hoynes, I couldn't bear to lose him! I just loved him too much... “Josh... I– Donna's got more sense than the two of us put together, you know that?”

“She called me a moron...” he murmured. “She never uses words like that – she's gotta be really pissed at me...”

“Well, you gotta admit...” I said before I could stop myself. I was still angry with him, but I didn't want to lose him – especially not over something as stupid as this! I decided honesty was the best way to deal with this. “Josh, I'm angry at you for being with Hoynes, but I don't want to lose you – I love you and I– I need you...”

“Sam... God, Sam, I'm *so* sorry! I was– I let my dick do my thinking for me, and I made a huge mistake...” Josh said quietly. His eyes pleaded with me, and I felt my anger fading...

And then my common sense took a walk. “Can I ask you a really personal question?”

“Yeah...” he answered with slight nervousness.

“Why Hoynes? What– what does he do that I– Why?” I couldn't bring myself to actually ask what I wanted to – I realized suddenly that I was afraid of the answer. What did Hoynes have that I didn't?

“Oh Sam...” Josh murmured, standing up and making an odd little pained noise. I looked up at him in shock – he was *hurt!*

“Josh? What's wrong?” I asked, rushing to his side. He waved me off, his face colouring and his gaze sliding away before I could meet his eyes. “Josh? Did he hurt you?!”

“Sam, I'm sorry...” he whispered. “I– you know how I am when I'm with you,” he paused to sit back down, definitely grimacing when his butt touched the chair.

“Yeah,” I answered, rubbing his shoulder carefully. God, what the hell did Hoynes *do* to him?

“Well, uhm... sometimes I kinda need to be– different.” He looked down and continued, “When you said you'd heard he was kind of a B&D type guy, you were right. He really gets off on it, and it kinda– it makes me... I understand how you feel when you give up control to me...”

“Oh.” Yeah, that was bright, Sam. Now you know. You can't be rough to him so he goes somewhere else. You *had* to ask... “Josh, I–”

“Oh Love,” he whispered sadly, “I'm sorry... I can't ask you to be something you're not – and it's not something I need all the time. It was just... He just– I was putting my stuff down on his couch and when I turned around he was there. He kissed me and I– I stopped thinking. And then he shoved me back against the door and I–”

“Okay, I don't need to hear this, Josh,” I warned. I was trying to figure it all out and failing miserably – my lover wasn't getting everything he wanted from me and he was going to someone else for it. Someone who I was still convinced was dangerous to him, no matter how foolish that concern seemed. So Josh was more experienced with the receiving end of BDSM than I'd thought – he still wasn't the type to realize when he was in over his head...

“Sam – I’m sorry, Love. I’d understand if you hate me...” he whispered. “I– I kinda lose it with him...”

“Josh, I don’t hate you. I *couldn’t* hate you...” I answered, turning his head to face me and looking into his eyes. “It scares me that you lose it with him though – I still think he’s dangerous to you and it scares me...”

“Sam, he won’t hurt me...” he whispered. He was so quiet I almost couldn’t hear him.

“Josh – he *did* hurt you...”

“Not in any way I didn’t want...” he answered, ducking his gaze in shame. “I’m sorry...”

“Oh Josh... Why didn’t you ever tell me?” I could’ve *tried*...

He smiled, a little self-deprecating smile that made me realize he was following my train of thought. “We switch, and you take me sometimes, and I love the way you make me feel when you do – but I love taking you more, and the way you respond really, really turns me on.” I could feel heat in my face, knew I was blushing now – the quiet murmurs about our sex life were starting to make my body react... “But I know you, and I know you wouldn’t be happy doing the things to me that he does.”

“We’ve never even tried...” I protested, painfully aware that his last sentence had completely deflated my improving mood.

“Sam, Love,” and now *he* was blushing, “there’s a difference between spanking me and flogging me.”

“Jesus – Josh!” I looked around, making sure the door was still shut, even though I knew it was, then whispered, “Is *that* what he’s into? I thought it was just B&D and power games – I never expected actual S&M...” I looked back at him and whispered, “Okay, you’re right. I couldn’t do it...”

“And I don’t want you to, either,” he murmured, reaching up to stroke my cheek. “I love you just the way you are, Sam...”

“Josh...” I said softly, touching his hand, “you know I’m still mad at you for being with him.”

He nodded and whispered, “I know. And I don’t blame you – you remember when you said I was too good to you? You’re being way too good to me – I don’t deserve it...”

I smiled sadly – part of me was screaming that no, he didn’t deserve it – but after everything we’d been through, there was no way in hell that I was letting this ruin things for us! While a few minutes earlier I had been feeling crushed and helpless, my anger had pushed the helplessness away and left behind the grim determination to keep Hoynes from ruining our lives...

He was *not* going to take my Josh away from me.

I leaned forward and kissed Josh on the forehead, then whispered, “I still love you, even if you were an ass. I’ve got to get back to work, and I’ll see you later... Your place tonight?”

I could see the question in his eyes, ‘That’s it?’ He’d been expecting more punishment, and perhaps I should have given him more, but somehow my brain had managed to rationalize this to the extent that someone else was the party to truly blame... So, all I answered his unspoken question with was a smile – and finally he nodded, “Yeah, my place.”

Good.

I was afraid it would be, but dinner wasn’t too horribly awkward. The main problem came later – after we’d settled down to watch a little tv and unwind before going to bed. I stretched out on Josh’s couch and patted the space in front of me where he’d be able to fit if we squeezed close. For a moment, he looked supremely uneasy, until I whispered, “Josh, I forgive you... Maybe I’m being too nice, but I don’t want this to ruin us. Please, sit down and snuggle with me?”

He smiled, then, and joined me, although I noticed he sat very gingerly. That sent a little spark of anger through me again and I nearly said something; except that Josh was leaning back into me and it felt so good to have him snuggled with me that I didn’t want to cause trouble. I wrapped my arms around him and pulled him close, sighing as he lay down on the couch against me; kissing him on the back of his fuzzy head.

With a little bit of awkward maneuvering, Josh managed to turn over so he was facing me – to make sure he didn’t fall off the couch we pressed close together, and it felt so good to have him in my arms. He smiled at me and kissed me gently, then rested his head on my shoulder and whispered, “Sam, I’m sorry. I don’t know what I’d do without this – and there’s *never* been anything like this with him. I wanted you to know that...”

Uh... What on earth was I supposed to say to that? I’m glad? Well, I definitely *was* glad – I’d be much more hurt if I knew he and Hoynes were doing more than just...fucking. But actually saying that I was glad just didn’t feel right; felt somehow like I was gloating. Gloating seemed so much more like something Hoynes would be doing... I finally settled for a smile and a quiet whisper, “Thank you.”

It was the right things to say – his eyes lit up and he smiled so sweetly at me it made my heart ache. I wrapped my arms around him and pulled him tight against me, kissing him and sighing as he pressed close, the evening news forgotten behind us. I maneuvered so that he was more on top of me and worked his shirt out of his waistband so I could slide my hands up underneath it. He slid a knee between my legs and sighed softly as I moved against it.

“Sam – want to move this to the bed?”

“What’s the matter, don’t like making out on the

couch anymore?" I joked. He burst out laughing and I grinned in response.

"Well, if you want..." Josh said, wiggling his eyebrows, "I can work with this..."

And then he licked down my throat and tickled my collarbone with the tip of his tongue – I melted. I groaned and sighed and arched up into him, sliding my hands down his back to his ass, first rubbing my hands over his buttocks and then grabbing and squeezing.

And he gasped. In pain.

Instantly I let him go and looked at him in shock. "Josh? Did I hurt you?"

"Ah– I think I'm a little bruised..." he admitted quietly. He looked at me, sad and slightly ashamed. "I'm sorry..."

"Let me see it," I said – I know it came out more like an order than a request, but he nodded and climbed off me, then started to unbuckle his belt. This time I shook my head and said, "Wait – let's go to the bedroom. You can lie down on the bed and I'll give you a backrub, after I see what he did to you."

Josh smiled, but it was a pale imitation of his earlier one. Then he nodded and took my hand, leading me back to the bedroom. He stripped off the shirt, then turned his attention to taking off his pants. I took my eyes off him long enough to get out of my own clothes, then climbed onto the bed to wait for him.

He finished undressing, then stood there, looking at me. Very softly he whispered, "It really doesn't hurt that much – I have no idea what it looks like, though. Just so you know."

"C'mon, Josh, get up here and let me see," I coaxed, seeing what looked like the glint of fear in his eyes. Whether it was fear of my reaction or fear of what I might see, I wasn't sure... And then he climbed onto the bed and lay face down, and my jaw dropped.

Right then and there, I decided that I was going to *do* something about this – Hoynes was not going to get away with what he'd done. I swallowed hard and took a deep breath, then carefully straddled him and began to give him a backrub. His muscles were knots, but gradually I managed to relax them – by the time I was done, he was snoring softly into the pillow.

I stood up and set the alarm clock, then returned to the bed and coaxed my sleeping Josh under the covers. He sort of woke up, at least enough to blink up at me and smile crookedly, then snuggle into the pillow and pull the covers up over his ear. I hurried to turn off the light, then slid into bed behind him and spooned up against him. And then I held him close and tried my damndest not to cry...

By the time Senior Staff was over the next morning, I already had a plan. The first stop was to talk to Leo...

I hovered around Margaret's desk, waiting for Leo to finish whatever briefing he had stayed in the Oval office for; going over the plan again to make certain I hadn't forgotten anything. I just needed to make sure Donna would help without mentioning it to Josh...

"Sam, I'm not sure how long he's going to be – do you want me to call you when he's done?" Margaret asked. I'm sure I gave her a totally blank look, because the expression on her face was at first concerned and then rather amused. "Sam?"

"What? Oh – no, thanks; I'll wait..." I smiled, but I'm not entirely sure it was a reassuring smile, because she cocked her head and studied me, and I think she was considering calling someone to 'assist' me back to my own office...

Thankfully, at that moment Leo opened his door and saw me standing there. "Sorry, Sam," he said quietly, studying my expression. I could see concern lighting his eyes now, hear it in his voice as he asked, "You need to see me?"

"Yeah."

"Come on in. Margaret, don't let anyone bug us, okay?" And then he disappeared back into his office expecting me to follow; which, of course, I did. Once I was in his office, he quietly added, "Close the door, Sam, and whatever it is, breathe before you pass out, okay?"

I let out a nervous chuckle and his brow furrowed, then he stepped back out from behind his desk and moved to my side. "Sam? Jeez, come on, sit on the couch..." He eased me over to the couch, and all I could think was, did I really look that bad? "You need a glass of water?" I shook my head, and Leo sat down near me, still studying my face. "Tell me what's wrong, Sam – is it Josh? You two haven't had a fight, have you?"

"No," I answered, suddenly snapping back to myself. I wasn't sure what had happened, and it made me a little nervous, but there was time to deal with that later. "No – we didn't really have a fight, but it is Josh... I need your help with something, but it's very delicate..."

"Tell me, Sam," Leo coaxed, his voice gentle and soothing. He always seemed to know how to get through to people – it was what made him so good at his job, and so good a person.

I swallowed hard and nodded, then said, "Josh was with John Hoynes a couple of nights ago. Hoynes was waiting for him when the budget meeting let out; took him back to his place, then seduced him." As I watched, Leo's expression shifted from concern to disappointment, and then into something that was almost anger...

"Sam, this isn't something I should be getting in the middle of – it sounds to me like it's between you and Josh."

"If that were all, I'd agree with you," I answered

softly.

“What else happened, then?” Leo asked just as softly. I realized, suddenly, that if what I'd suspected were true, I was putting him in one hell of a difficult spot. But, Hoynes had to learn that he couldn't get away with abusing other men's lovers!

“Hoynes whipped him black and blue...”

Immediately Leo's expression hardened, and he whispered to himself, “Damn it, John!” He shook his head and asked, “Is Josh okay?”

“He's worried that he ruined things with us; he's upset with himself... He said he loses it with Hoynes, and that's what I'm really scared about – he doesn't realize that he's in danger.”

“Now hold on, Sam, you really think John's a danger to him?” Leo asked, his tone indicating that he thought I was exaggerating.

“I'm not imagining it, Leo – I don't know what it is, but there's something dangerous about Hoynes' relationship with him. Josh isn't— isn't aware of – He doesn't know when he's in too deep. He doesn't understand when things are going too far...”

“And you think they went too far this time...”

“Leo, he was stalking Josh. He was waiting where Josh jogs during lunch; he took him out to dinner, and then he was waiting for him when the meeting let out. That's not normal – that's what obsessed people do...”

“Sam...”

“Leo, I don't know all the details – I was pretty busy working on speeches at the time, but I know there was a blow-up during the campaign. I know when Hoynes joined us that he thought he could just take Josh, and that Josh told him off... I don't know if this is some kind of payback or what, but I *do* know that Josh is at risk...”

“I'll talk to him,” Leo said, with finality. He'd talk to him – that was it. I was supposed to just drop the matter and leave it there? He must have seen the doubt in my eyes, because he added, “I don't want to hear that you went to talk to him, Sam – I don't want this to be like when you and Josh went to talk to that girl after I told you not to, do you understand?”

What could I say? I couldn't promise I'd stay away from Hoynes, because I was still going to follow the rest of my plan... I nodded, but kept silent.

“Okay, good. Look, I've got things I have to do, and I don't want this going on at work – I'm going to talk to him *after* work today,” he said. I nodded, and he continued, “You go back to your office and deal with whatever you need to deal with, and take good care of Josh when you go home tonight.”

“Leo, thank you for this – I'm sorry I'm putting you in this position...”

He looked at me for a long moment, and I think he

was trying to figure out what I knew. Then he said, “Nah – if you're genuinely worried about Josh and he's not recognizing he's at risk, I should talk to John.” Then he paused and studied me again, and asked, “Are *you* okay, Sam?”

“Me? Yeah, I'm... I'm okay. I guess I'm a little pissed off, but I'm more worried...”

“Do you want to talk to someone about things?” Again the almost fatherly concern – I wondered briefly if I should, but I just couldn't...

“No, I'm fine, really.”

“You two need a nice vacation together,” he said decisively. “You should think about going somewhere this winter.” I smiled, and he grinned in return, then said, “You've already been thinking about it – good. Let me know when you two need some time off, and I'll make sure you get it.”

“Thanks, Leo...”

“Yeah, now get outta here and let me deal with the rest of the messes...”

The first stop done, I went back to my office and worked on things for a while, until I heard Donna telling Josh she was going to take a break. I hurried after her and caught up with her in the hallway. “Hey, Donna...”

“Sam – did Josh send you after me? I told him I'm taking a break for a few minutes—”

“No, he didn't. I just needed to talk to you – I need your help with something, but *only* if you can promise you won't tell anyone...”

“Something serious – about Josh?” she asked, looking at me and studying my expression. “It is...”

“Yeah, it's about Josh. And it is serious – I need you to give me your word that you will NOT mention this to anyone...”

“Wow...” she whispered, her eyes going round. Then she nodded and said, “You've got my word, Sam – I won't mention this to anyone, not even Josh.”

“Good – *especially* not Josh. Can we go back to my office to talk?”

She nodded, and we turned around and returned to my office, luckily avoiding running into Josh on the way there. If we had run into him, I had an excuse prepared – discussing what to get him for the holidays – I was just glad I didn't have to use it...

Once we were in my office, I shut the door and closed the blinds while Donna sat in one of the spare chairs. Then I sat in the chair next to hers and took a deep breath. “Donna, you know about the little blow-up yesterday – do you know what happened that caused it?”

“I know the Vice President's involved, but I'm not sure how. Are you and Josh okay now?” she asked softly.

I studied her expression, glad that I could tell she

was okay with Josh and I being a couple. “Yeah, we’re okay, but I’m worried about what happened... Look, I’m not sure how much you know about Josh’s personal life – did you know he used to be involved with the Vice President before he joined the Bartlet campaign?”

She nodded, and I could see a glint of displeasure in her eyes – she knew about them, and the relationship didn’t sit well with her, either. “Yes, I knew about that. He never told me, but there were signs of it – and anyone who was close to Josh knew about the confrontation...”

“Hoynes thought he could just walk in and have Josh back whenever he wanted...”

“And Josh told him off. He thinks no one really knows about that,” she said quietly. “So, is that what happened? The Vice President thought he could just take him back now?”

“I’m not sure exactly – but he did seduce Josh. That’s not the problem, though. I can handle that part of it myself,” I said, wanting to make sure she knew that Josh and I were still together and that what I needed her help with was something even more serious than that.

“Did he hurt Josh?” she asked, anger sharpening her voice. “Is that why he spent the entire day on his feet? What did he *do* to Josh?! Are you going to hurt him? Can I help?”

Ah yes, Kipling had it right...

“No, I’m not going to hurt him, but I am going to tell him to keep his hands off Josh – and yes, you can help,” I answered, very glad that she was on my side. “I’m going to confront him, and I don’t trust him not to try something. So, I need someone I can trust completely for back-up.”

She nodded, and said, “I’m your woman then – just tell me what to do, and I’ll do it.”

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I waited in the outer office while Janeane told Hoynes I was waiting to see him. I could hear him saying something, his voice lowered enough that I couldn’t tell what he said. A few moments later, she returned and smiled at me sweetly. I wondered if she knew what a bastard her boss could be... “You can go in, Mr. Seaborn,” she told me, nodding as I thanked her and walked into his office, pulling the door closed behind me.

When I walked in, he was sitting at his desk, leaning back in his chair looking as relaxed as could be. He smiled up at me, and something in that smile sent a shiver down my back. “Afternoon, Sam, how can I help you?” he asked, his tone sounding just a touch too innocent.

“Mr. Vice President,” I began – last thing I needed was for him to say I was disrespectful from the start; “first, let me say that this has nothing to do with work.” His only response was a measured nod – he knew why I was here.

“I came here to tell you to stay away from Josh.”

He continued smiling and asked, “Sam, why don’t you have a seat?” with a gesture towards one of the chairs in

front of his desk. I remained standing, and at that point his smile faded slightly. “Don’t you think that request should come from Josh?” he asked quietly, his tone holding just the slightest bit of threat.

“Not in this specific case,” I answered, watching his expression and his body language carefully.

“And why is that?” he asked, still calm; still quiet. “Josh is an adult, he can make his own decisions.”

“With all due respect, *Sir*, you whipped him so hard it bruised, but he can’t see how bad it looks.”

“So because he can’t see how bad it is, he has no idea when to say when? He still has nerves, Sam; don’t you think he would have stopped me if he *felt* things were going too far?”

“No, I’m not so sure he would have,” I responded, and then I made the same mistake I always make – I don’t know when to keep my damned mouth shut... “Besides, I’m not so sure that someone who sat outside waiting for him to get out of the meeting would have *listened* when Josh said stop...”

Even as the words were leaving my mouth I knew I shouldn’t have said it. The smile remained on his face, but his eyes narrowed and he sat up straight. “I don’t have to defend myself to you, Sam,” he said evenly, but the threat in his tone was no longer veiled. “If Josh wants to be with me, that’s *his* decision. If he wants to let me whip him, that’s also *his* decision – if you can’t keep him--”

Before he could say it, I stepped up to his desk and placed my hands on the hard wood; cutting him off, “You hurt him badly enough that his assistant says he stood up all day. You’re an adult, too, *Sir* – as the dom you’ve got a *responsibility* to pay attention to the condition of your partner and make sure things don’t go too far!”

I’ve *really* got to stop doing that...

He was on his feet, glowering down at me. One very strong hand fastened on my right wrist and suddenly I was standing right in front of him, my mouth gone dry and my heart pounding its way out of my chest.

“Don’t you *dare* tell me what my responsibilities are, Sam; ever,” he warned as he loomed over me, his voice still sounding calm and all the more scary for it. Involuntarily, I tried to take a step back, and he held me immobile. He was a lot stronger than I’d given him credit for...

Fighting down the irrational fear that gripped me, I said, “I should warn you, I’ve asked Josh’s assistant Donna Moss to act as a silent alarm, just in case something happens. After what you did to Josh, she’s more than willing to call the cops on you.”

And then he laughed. *He laughed!*

And let me go with a shove, nearly sending me sprawling – it was the last thing I’d been expecting--

“Oh, Sam – you don’t know a *damned* thing about

me,” he said, still chuckling slightly. I could see he was still angry, but not furious as he had been a few moments earlier. “First, you are *so* far from my type it's not funny. Silent alarm – God, do you honestly think I'd be stupid enough to– Never mind.” He shook his head and turned his back on me, walking back to his chair. Once he was seated again, he said, “Don't come back in here telling me how to live my life, Sam. I won't mention this to President Bartlet – this time. But don't do it again. I'm sorry about Josh, but he said he'd apologize to you...”

I know I was staring, but what else could I do? He'd had me totally intimidated – it had seemed such a good idea to confront him when I was furious the night before, but after talking to Leo and Donna, I'd obviously cooled down enough to start using my brain instead of my adrenal glands once more... At that point, my subconscious, at least, realized that confronting the Vice President and telling him to keep his hands off my man was a pretty dumb thing to do. Too bad it didn't talk to the rest of my brain *before* I made an ass of myself...

I couldn't even think of anything to answer him with – I just nodded, then fled his office. The President's speech-writer, totally at a loss for words. Again. God – I hoped Leo had better luck than I did, and that tomorrow he didn't skin me alive for disobeying him...

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“You're back,” Donna said, glancing at her watch to double-check the time; “And 45 minutes early...” She almost seemed disappointed that I hadn't been detained – or worse. And then she looked at me and did that mind-reading thing that unnerves Josh so much – I could see why! “Oh. No, Sam, I'm glad *you're* okay, I just wanted to call the cops and have him arrested...” She smiled, and asked, “Can I call them anyway?”

“No, Donna, that would be a bad idea – as much as you and I may want to, at this point it wouldn't hurt him, anyway.” She was pouting, now; something that was also very effective. I felt a sudden need to explain it to her, although it's quite possible I needed to hear the reasons aloud myself, just to convince myself not to make an even bigger mistake...

“First, we wouldn't be able to prove any wrongdoing – Josh would have to be the one to press charges at this point, and we both know he won't. Second, it'll only hurt Hoynes a little, but it would really hurt the President, and that's the last thing we want to come of this! And third, it would hurt Josh...”

“Well, *that's* the last thing *I* want to do,” she said quietly, “I mean, I wouldn't want to hurt the President, either, but Josh is the one I'm worried about...”

“I know, believe me...”

“But I still want him to keep his hands off Josh...” she protested, lowering her voice even more as she saw Josh

enter the office and stare at the two of us. “Uh oh.”

I looked up at Josh and smiled, then turned back to her and quietly said, “There's still Leo – he said he was going to talk to him tonight. And then he'll kill me tomorrow for going to see Hoynes anyway.” And then I spoke normally, “So, you'll give me that list of suggestions for what to get him for the holidays, right?”

“Of course,” Donna said, nodding as Josh neared us.

“Of course what?” Josh asked, “What are the two of you up to?”

“Nothing, Josh,” I answered innocently, “Thanks, Donna...”

Josh looked at her for a long moment, then turned to follow me, asking “What kind of nothing?”

I sighed and answered, “Nothing nothing, Josh,” then smiled at him. I continued into my office, aware that he was following me closely.

“You're discussing nothing with my assistant?”

“Yeah.”

“Why?”

“Cause the holidays are coming up, Josh.”

“Cause the– what?” He blinked at me blankly for a moment, then a broad grin spread across his face. “Aw, *Sam...*”

I smiled at him and reached out to squeeze his hand, then asked, “So, you got things going this afternoon?”

“Yeah. A couple of meetings. You?”

“Yeah – got to work on some of these reports, got to write a position paper...”

“Sounds like we're both pretty busy – dinner tonight?”

“My place, we'll get something delivered?” I suggested, then when he nodded, “And maybe we can get something nice for dessert...” I leered a little at him and he smiled as he realized what I was suggesting.

“Sounds good – I'm *really* looking forward to dinner then...” He leered back and licked his lips, and suddenly I knew I was blushing. Then he leaned closer and whispered in my ear, “I know where we can get something nice for dessert – just need some chocolate sauce.” With a huge grin, he stepped back and said, “Gotta run to a meeting – see ya later!”

I watched him walk back to his office, wishing we could just take off right now but glad that we seemed to be okay – at least, until Leo ripped me into shreds tomorrow...

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“Yeah, Leo, I'm free for dinner toni–”

“Damn it, John, don't keep me waiting on the phone for so long when you already know you're going to say yes...”

“Leo, I had to check my calendar...”

I sighed and squeezed my eyes shut, then said, “You just didn't want to seem as eager as you really are. Next time, don't screw me around.”

“You sure? I thought that was what you wanted...”

God, he knows exactly how that tone affects me – smug bastard... “I'll see you at eight, okay?”

“Yeah, I'll be ready, Leo...”

Damn! Now was *not* the time for a hard-on. I still had to tell Jed I'd be busy tonight... “I bet you will,” I answered him, then hung up the phone. Okay, time for my body to behave itself – of course, thinking about cold New Hampshire winters only led to thoughts of other things, and *that* certainly wasn't going to calm me down... How 'bout speaking to a House budget committee – oh yeah, that worked like a charm.

That problem dealt with, I stood and walked out to Margaret's desk. “When you can, I need ten minutes with the President,” I told her. She finished typing the line she'd been in the middle of, then nodded.

“Actually, he's free now – he said to send you in whenever you were off the phone.”

“So you were gonna tell me this right away, huh?”

“As soon as I knew you were off the phone,” she answered.

Deciding it was easier to just let it drop, I shook my head and asked, “He's ready for me?”

“Yes.”

“Thank you, Margaret.” I walked back into my office and to the door that led into the Oval Office, then tapped lightly on the door before I opened it.

He looked up from whatever he was reading immediately, his glasses halfway down his nose and his hair starting to fall into his face. I couldn't help smiling – the slightly rumpled look was good on him...

“Leo! I'm glad to see you—”

“Boring report?” I asked, unable to hide my grin.

“No, they'd never give me a—” he trailed off, then took off his glasses and said, “Yes, excruciatingly...”

“Well, then I'm *really* sorry I have to do this, but I have to talk to John tonight...”

“Oh.” His face fell, and I felt terrible. I'd disappointed him – but I had to see John and find out whether Sam's concerns were valid. If Josh were truly in danger and I let it pass without checking, I'd never forgive myself.

“Jed... I'm sorry – All I can tell you right now is that it's important,” I explained.

He stood up and walked over to one of the couches, then sat and patted the seat next to him. “Sit with me a minute, Leo, please?”

I joined him readily, sitting far enough away that if one of the agents outside happened to look in, or if Charlie

had to come in for some reason it would look innocent enough; close enough for a gentle touch on an arm or a thigh...

“Tell me there isn't a problem, Leo...” he said softly. I realized he was worried for me.

“Not with me,” I answered quietly, “But there might be. I really can't say any more yet.”

He sighed, then, and asked, “You'll let me know if you need my help, won't you?”

“Aww, Jed, you know I would. Damn – you're makin' me feel bad, you know.”

“I am? Now you sound like a man with a guilty conscience, Leo,” he said, his tone one of feigned innocence. “Is there some reason you feel bad?”

“Just that I don't know where this'll end up – you know what happened last time...” I shrugged – actually, I was pretty sure I *did* know where this was going to end up...

“Leo, don't worry about it. You don't need to get my permission, you know.” He smiled, then; leaned closer, and said, “Just make sure you show him who's really boss this time...”

“Oh, don't worry, I'll definitely do that...” I said with a smirk. “You're not getting turned on by thinking about what I'm going to do to him, are you?”

“Maybe a little,” he admitted.

“You're a pervert, you know that?” I whispered to him.

He leaned closer still and kissed me gently on the cheek, then whispered, “And you like me that way.”

I smiled at him again, then we straightened and I checked my watch. “Damn – I've got to get some things finished up before I go. I'm really sorry to do this.”

“Leo, don't worry – I'm a big boy now; I've spent nights alone before,” he whispered to me. “You take care of whatever it is you need to take care of.”

“I love you, you know,” I whispered.

“Yeah. Now get outta here, we've got work to do.”

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“So,” he began, leaning back in his chair and sipping his cappuccino, “What exactly is it you needed to talk to me about?”

“I think it would be best if that waits until we're somewhere a little more private, John,” I answered, watching as the tip of his tongue darted out to lick some stray foamed milk from the rim of the cup. Jesus! This boy is asking for it...

“Ah, I see... So, your place or mine?”

“Well, yours is easier for your agents – if we go to mine, they'll end up standing out in the damned corridor all night scaring the neighbors,” I mused, realizing for probably the first time what a hassle it could be. No wonder poor Zoey complained about her pack of

protectors... “But, I'd like to stop home for a short while to pick up some spare suits to bring into work.”

Since we were in the restaurant at my hotel anyway, that was relatively simple – he and the agents could wait here, and I'd come down with the suits and we could take his car back to his place. He nodded, and, after another sip of the rich coffee said, “That's fine.”

Then, of course, there was the thought of topping him in his own bed – and suddenly my body was ignoring my better instincts again. I watched him savour his coffee, trying as hard as I could to keep my mind off his lips and tongue and that damned dream I'd had...

I turned my attention to my own coffee, nearly choking on the swallow I'd taken when I felt his toe nudge my leg and then slide gently up and down it. “John,” I warned quietly.

“Yeah, Leo? Something wrong?”

“Other than that your innocent act doesn't work for beans, nah...” I answered in a quiet growl. He was definitely in for it when we reached the privacy of his room... “Why don't you finish your coffee, while I go up and get my suits?” After he nodded, I counted out the money for the bill, then stood and said, “I'll be back soon.”

I headed off to my room, walking calmly even though I wanted to hurry. Thinking about changes of clothes I might need at work I picked out two suits, an extra shirt, and a couple of extra undershirts and pairs of shorts and socks; then added a pair of jeans and a casual shirt; packed all of it up, then headed back down to the restaurant. Luckily, John was just finishing up his cappuccino when I returned to the table.

“You ready?” I asked, stopping next to the table.

“Yeah,” he drawled, standing and sliding his jacket back on. The lead agent murmured something into his two-way, and a moment later, we were walking out to the car. We climbed in and he told the driver to take us to his residence.

We didn't talk during the trip, but I could feel his eyes on me – when I glanced at him, I could see the hunger in his eyes; could practically *feel* his growing anticipation. He was looking me up and down, his stare finally settling on my crotch. Feeling my own body beginning to respond to his attention, I shifted and stretched out my legs, making myself more comfortable. Then I turned to look right at him and smiled, letting him see my own hunger. He actually gasped in response and I could see the colour rise in his cheeks. I knew, right then, exactly where this was going tonight...

By the time we got to his residence, I could tell we were both trembling in anticipation. He dismissed the agents for the night while I settled on the couch and plopped my bag next to it, tugging off my tie and jacket and waiting for him to come in and lock the door behind himself. A few minutes later, he entered the room carrying a pitcher of

water and two glasses; once he put them down, he locked the door and stripped off his jacket and tie, tossing them on a spare chair. “Thank god,” he murmured, stretching luxuriously and looking down at me where I sat.

“Long day, huh?” I asked, smirking up at him. “I hope the last part wasn't too terrible...”

“Dinner was nice, but it took too long to get here...” he answered quietly, pouring a glass of water and holding it out to me. Once I took it and nodded my thanks, he continued, “Now, I get the impression that there's a reason you wanted to see me tonight *beyond* what I'm hoping it is. Please tell me the President didn't sick you on me for something...”

I shook my head and said, “John, I hope you don't really think that little of Jed – or of me...”

“No – no, I don't, honestly. But I can tell there's something you're not–”

“Yeah, there's 'something I'm not',” I repeated, standing up. I put my glass down on the table and took his out of his hand to put it down, too. Then I gently shoved him towards the couch and growled, “Siddown.”

With a gasp, he ended up on his butt on the couch, staring up at me with eyes wide and lips parted, obviously surprised at my boldness. “Leo...”

“I'm getting this out of the way first – if you want to kick me out afterwards, go right ahead. Now, tell me what the hell's going on between you and Josh Lyman.”

His eyes narrowed, and I knew he was about to tell me to go fuck myself, but then he looked away and said, “Damn it – is *that* what all this is about? Did Sam send you to talk to me, too?” The way he said it, this wasn't the first discussion he'd had about it today...

“Sam? Did he come to see you?” I asked sharply. At his nod, I sighed and leaned back against the wall. “God– maybe Toby was right about chaining him to his desk – it'll keep him out of trouble!” I grumbled, then continued normally, “I told him *not* to – aww, hell! John, did you whip Josh black and blue?” I looked up at him, hoping to see – I dunno what; shock, denial, horror? Instead, he ducked his gaze and colour rose in his cheeks again. If I hadn't been so pissed off, I might have found it kind of a turn-on.

However...

“It was just red when we finished, Leo,” he murmured quietly, then he looked up and met my gaze with a challenge. “Not that I see what business it is of yours – Josh consented, just like you did. He's a grown man, despite the occasional opinion to the contrary. He never asked me to stop – as a matter of fact, I held back from doing more because I don't think he's fully recovered from the shooting yet!” His voice had steadily grown louder as he went – not that I could blame him considering Sam probably accused him of all kinds of terrible things.

God! That boy could be incredibly stupid sometimes!

I hoped desperately that the walls and heavy wooden doors of this house were good enough sound-proofing... “John, Sam was worried – I had to ask. He thinks Josh doesn't know when—”

“Yes, I know. He thinks Josh can't tell when enough is enough – he tried to give me a lecture on my responsibility as a Dom. Believe me, if he were at all my type, I'd *show* him how seriously I can take my responsibility...”

“John, why are you still going after Josh, anyway? What, you got a thing for seducing other men's lovers?”

Suddenly he was on his feet, looming over me where I stood. “Josh was mine long before he was Sam's anyway, Leo!” he growled at me.

Aww, jeeze – he didn't know!

“No, he wasn't,” I said quietly. His eyes went wide and he looked down at me in surprise. God – he honestly didn't know – what the hell did Josh think he was doing not telling him?! “Josh and Sam first met when Sam was a Congressional aide and Josh worked for the House Minority Whip... The only times they *haven't* been together was when Sam was in New York, which was when Josh was working for you, and after the Bartlet campaign started getting really serious...”

“And you know this for a fact?” he asked quietly, looking unsteady as he sat back down on the couch.

“John, I was a friend of his father's...” He didn't really need to hear details about what happened when the relationship was discovered.

“Son of a bitch...” John murmured, leaning back against the cushions and staring up at the ceiling. After a long silence, he looked at me again and said, “Okay, so Sam's got a legitimate claim. Fine. Still doesn't mean he can tell me what I can and can't do if Josh and I *are* together.”

“Jesus, John, why are you asking for trouble?” I sat down on the couch next to him and lowered my voice, “Sam says Josh 'loses it with you' – are you *sure* there isn't a problem?”

“Leo, it's none of your business...”

“No, I think it is my business. John, he's my deputy and I can't afford the problems it's going to cause if there's some kind of scandal because you and he can't figure when to back off!” Now I was getting angry again – I knew his private life was his business, but if it threatened to affect my staff in some way, I had a right to get just as pissed as he did. “I need you to promise me there's no problem and that if Josh can't figure out when to say when, you can!”

“What would you say if I told you I can't give you that promise, Leo?” he asked. There was some odd light in his eyes that I couldn't figure out – some kind of regret and almost a hint of shame – and then just as quickly it was gone. He stood up again and started pacing, then turned to look at me. “Josh *gets* to me – he doesn't let go often, so

when he does it's really intense. He's so – eager. So willing... I have a pretty hard time saying no.” Then he paced a few more times and stopped at the other end of the couch, perched on the arm of it. It was amazing seeing him fold his long frame into such a compact position. “But I did stop this time, even though he'd been goading me to do more...”

“None of 'em have any damned sense,” I grumbled, not realizing I'd spoken aloud until he slid down onto the couch cushion itself and stretched his legs out, his feet practically in my lap.

“No, they don't. Guess they'll just have to be punished, eh?” he purred, looking at me with a raised eyebrow.

“You included, I think,” I answered, squeezing out from between his feet and the arm on my side of the couch. “Make yourself at home, there, by the way...”

“So, what are you going to do?” he asked, looking up at me with badly feigned innocence.

“I think I should punish you for causing this little problem among my staff,” I mused, walking around to his end of the couch. “Yeah, that's a good place to start...”

“And you think I'm going to just *let* you?” he asked, swinging his legs around so that he sat up properly. “I'm the Vice President of the United States of America – you think you can just push me around?”

He stood up and took a step towards me. Oh yeah, bring it on...

I backed away slightly, edging back around the couch in the direction of his bedroom, luring him in. Lust glinted in his eyes, and I could see that hunger he'd tried to bury the first time we were together. He obviously wasn't willing to give in to me without a fight, but it would make it that much sweeter when I mastered him...

He lunged at me, caught me against the wall with his arms blocking my escape to either side; leaned in closer. I could feel how hard he was, the heat blazing from him as he pressed me against the wall and brought his hands in to stroke up and down my sides. I couldn't help groaning and arching into him – and he thought it meant he had me. He definitely had a thing about trapping his lovers; against the wall, in the bed – didn't seem to really matter. I wondered how he'd feel when I trapped him. There were those soft cotton ropes in his little bag of tricks, and I was willing to bet he had more sturdy restraints, too...

And then he must have decided I was thinking too much. He leaned in and nipped his way up my neck, dragging another groan out of me before he fastened his teeth on my earlobe and gently sucked on it. Oh *god* – the things I wanted him to do with that mouth...

He released my earlobe and traced the path back down my throat. I felt fingers working their way up my

chest, unbuttoning my shirt and sliding it off as his tongue and lips kept up their attention to my neck and shoulder. He finally pulled back when I had to help him take my shirt off, standing there watching as I tugged it off and tossed it in the direction of the couch. "I don't see a lot of punishing going on right now, Leo," he murmured, diving back in to unfasten my trousers and tug them down.

"I'm in no rush," I answered with a smirk, allowing him to undress me. Once he had me down to my t-shirt and shorts, I looked up at him and smiled, then grabbed a handful of his shirt and pulled him close. "That's an expensive-looking shirt, John. I'd hate to rip it, so take it off, *now*."

I heard his gasp, saw that look return to his eyes; the hunger that I'd seen lurking beneath the surface last time, when he realized he'd found someone who was man enough to give him back what he dished out. The hunger that said if I could best him, he'd let me do *anything* to him... I let him go again, and as his gaze locked with mine his hands automatically went up to unbutton his shirt. I could see them trembling as he did so; could see him swallow convulsively. God – when his tongue darted out to moisten dry lips I felt my cock jerk in my shorts and it was all I could do to keep from gasping myself.

He stripped off the shirt, then tugged his undershirt out of his waistband and off over his head. Once he was naked to the waist, he moved his hands to his belt and I could see the question in his eyes. I nodded once and smiled, and immediately – obediently, he stripped off his pants.

I leaned back against the wall and studied him as he stood before me in his shorts and socks. "That's pretty nice, John..." I said, watching his cock strain in his shorts. "So, we going to take this into the bedroom, or do you want me to paddle your ass out here on the couch?"

"You really think I'm going to let you do that?" he challenged, but there was no conviction behind it this time.

"Yeah, actually, I think you are gonna let me do that," I answered with a smirk. Then I drew myself up as tall as possible and ordered, "But first, you're gonna get on your knees and suck me."

If anything, his cock got harder. His jaw dropped and he stared at me for a long moment, and I think he was trying to figure out how to tell me to go fuck myself when he so obviously wanted me to fuck him.

He stood there for long enough that I felt the urge to repeat myself. "I said get on your knees, John. On your knees and *suck me!*"

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God, Leo! Your wish is my command... That was the thought that ran through my mind when he ordered me to suck him the second time. He meant it that time, putting the full force of his personality behind it. He looked worried when I dropped to my knees so quickly – I think he was

afraid I'd bruise myself. The sight of me crawling closer sent a shudder of arousal through him, making his cock leap in his shorts, and when I reached trembling hands up to slide down his shorts, he couldn't restrain a groan...

"God, Leo," this time I whispered it aloud, staring at his cock with such hunger – my mouth was watering! Then I darted in, taking the head of his cock into my mouth and laving it with my tongue. I had to smile around my mouthful, knowing that he had to be wondering if doing this standing up might not have been the best idea – I could feel the muscles in his legs beginning to tremble...

I released his cock again and licked all along it, from the head to the root and then back; taking special care to trace over the throbbing vein with the very tip of my tongue. He smelled and tasted so good, and the amazing heat that rose from his crotch made my head spin. I slid my hands around his hips to grip his ass, then engulfed him again, beginning to suck very gently. He groaned and leaned back against the wall, sinking a little further into my grasp. I glanced up at him and could see a look of wonder on his expressive face – he was loving this!

I released him again, gently blowing puffs of air on his cock and relishing the groan he let out. God – he was so aroused... I dove in to nip his inner thighs, working my way up to his balls and then sucking first one, then the other into my mouth. I wanted to make him helpless; probed all the sensitive areas with the tip of my tongue – I could tell I'd succeeded when he groaned and spread his legs further. I chuckled around my mouthful and he shivered with pleasure.

I released his balls again and resumed nibbling at him, probably a hell of a lot more eagerly than I should have if I wanted to make him think I was as much of a top as I claimed to be...

"God, John," he groaned as I licked up his shaft and teased the slit with the tip of my tongue. His hips were thrusting forward, shoving his cock into my face – I'm not really sure he even realized he was doing it. And then I drew back...

"What, Leo?" I asked, definitely smartassed and too sassy for my own good. What the hell was I trying to goad him into doing?

He looked down at me and gave me 'that' look – the one that makes people jump and do what he tells them to, the one that can even get the President back on track when he's rambling on about something – and growled, "Suck me, John. *Now*."

Oh God!

He sighed as I deep-throated his cock, groaning helplessly – way down deep inside, I knew he had me, but I wasn't about to give up without a fight. I'd *make* him cum; hell, I'd make him *scream* with pleasure before he got

me into my bedroom and had his way with me...

I buried my nose in his crotch and sucked hard as I breathed in that wonderfully warm, musky, masculine scent that was all Leo. The groan I dragged out of him rumbled through his entire body and sent an answering shiver through me. I think I must have groaned in response because he gasped and thrust forward again, his hands suddenly releasing his death-grip on the wall and burying into my hair.

I kneaded his buttocks and sucked him as hard as I could, sliding my fingers between his cheeks and probing for the puckered opening. He gasped when the tip of one of my fingers rubbed over it, and his cock twitched in my mouth. I kept sucking, that incredible heat and musk making my head reel; making me so hot myself I wondered if I'd cum when he did. I tried to look up at him, saw his head tilted back against the wall, his mouth open and eyes glazed in pleasure. Just seeing him like that sent a jolt of arousal through me and made me *need* to suck him until he screamed and shot his cum down my throat...

Some top I was...

I kept sucking, kept probing; and realized the sounds I was hearing weren't just the groans and moans I was dragging out of Leo, but also my own moans of pleasure. Leo was losing control, which was exactly what I wanted. His fingers were tangled in my hair now, gripping me harder and harder as his hips started moving more freely.

I could hear him murmuring, now, that sexy growl of his, ordering, "Yeah, John, suck me. Use that mouth of yours the way it was made to be used..."

Jesus! How could he get me so hot by telling me I was supposed to be sucking him?!

Notice, though, that it didn't stop me any... I just sucked him harder, smiling around my mouthful when his growled demands turned into inarticulate sounds of pleasure. He was fucking my mouth like there was no tomorrow, sure – but I was still going to *make* – him – oh – GOD!

He didn't scream when he came, which in retrospect was probably for the best – last thing we needed was the agents barging in here thinking I was trying to kill him or something... But he made the most incredible sound – a mix between a growl and a groan that zinged through me, straight to my groin – and thrust deep, shooting his hot cum down my throat. I was probably more proud than I should be that I managed to keep licking and sucking even as Leo's loss of control sent me over the edge, too.

And then I had to release his softening cock, gasping in great lungfuls of air as I tried to catch my breath. I was glad to see he was similarly winded, and there was a slight tremor running through his legs – I looked up at his face and was inordinately pleased to see the look of amazement he was giving me. I smiled, and that's when he snapped back to himself.

"That was good, John," he purred, tightening his

grip in my hair again and pulling me up – I had no choice but to stand to avoid the pain; the result, of course, that he had been expecting. Damn it, why was I playing right into his hands again?

"Yeah, that was good all right – but don't think it gets you off the hook," he growled, his voice husky with desire. He pulled me in for a kiss, plunging his tongue into my mouth. For a moment I allowed it, then I tried once more to take control, pushing him back against the wall and battling his tongue with my own. Somehow, despite the fact that I'm taller, younger, and possibly even stronger than him, he managed to defeat me yet again; his rough kissing making my knees weak.

He released me suddenly, pulling me back with one of his hands still entangled in my hair. "Get outta the rest of your clothes, and then we're goin' into the bedroom," he ordered, sending a shiver through me. I realized, after the fact, that I had obeyed without question. I tossed my shorts in the general direction of the bathroom, then turned to see him closing and locking the door. "Ya look cute with the socks on," he commented with a smirk – I blushed and bent to slide them off but he added, "Keep 'em on."

There was an edge of steel in his velvet purr this time – it wasn't a request, it was an order. One I obeyed – again without question – although a part of me was still wondering how he dared order me around like that. I'd let him get me into bed and then turn the tables on him, wrestle him to the bed beneath me and show him *I* was the one in charge...

He leaned back against the door and smiled at me, then purred, "I see you thinking you're gonna get the better of me, John... You know that's not gonna happen, don't you?"

I smiled at him and said, "Why don't we see about that, huh?" but the look he was giving me made me feel he knew something I didn't...

"John, remember that little bag of goodies you got out last time?" he asked, taking a step closer.

I couldn't help it – I blushed and swallowed hard – just the thought of The Bag and what it held sent a rush of arousal through me. But was that because I was thinking of the cock strap and restraints on Leo, or because he might be planning on putting them on me? He didn't know what else was in there, and I wasn't entirely sure I wanted him to know – except that part of me was getting so damned turned on by the thought of it that–

"Be a good boy and get it for me."

Oh my god...

I could feel his eyes on me as I walked to the closet and dug into it for The Bag; watching my every move, especially when I bent over... "Hope you've got something in there I can paddle your ass with," Leo

mused, "Cause from here it's just begging for it..."

I straightened up with a start, turning to glower at him accusingly. He saw my hand clenched around the handles of The Bag and smiled smugly, choosing to ignore my indignant reaction.

"Good boy. Bring it here..."

Damn him, I was still doing everything he said! When I stopped one step away from him, he reached out and tried to grab The Bag – our hands met on the handles and I refused to let go. Instead, I smiled down at him and whispered, "That's *mine*, you know..."

"You think that's going to stop me, John?" The smile he gave me sent heat sparking through me, and then he closed the final step and pushed me back onto my bed. "I think we ought to get this started, don't you?"

I must have been staring up at him as I sat there, bracing myself on my elbows with my legs splayed wide... I know I was panting – and I was hard.

He licked his lips and looked down at me, studying me as if he were memorizing every line. I could *feel* his gaze on my cock... Then he pulled The Bag out of my hand and set it on the bed beside me. "You got any kind of gag in there? 'Cause we don't need you screaming and bringing the agents running in..."

I nodded, then swallowed and whispered, "Ball gag..."

"Good – get that out, and while you're at it, get out the restraints you want me to use on you."

God! I couldn't believe that being ordered to choose my own restraints would turn me on so much – yet here I was, my mouth suddenly dry and heat settling in my groin... And he knew it – he knew how much power he had over me and it was turning him on something fierce. I could hear his breath quicken as I sat up and opened The Bag, and pulled out first the gag and then the soft leather wrist restraints – the black ones with the crimson trim.

"Those your favourites, John?" he asked, pulling them out of my hands and stroking the soft leather. "Good workmanship..." Then he turned his attention back to me and ordered, "Hold out your hands."

I did as ordered, and he buckled the restraints snugly around my wrists, making sure they were neither too tight nor too loose. I think I must have gasped when he did the second one – by allowing him to put the restraints on me, I was giving him more power over me than I ever had before. I was growing more and more aroused, and part of me was actually becoming a little spooked. I was accustomed to being a top, and the feelings Leo awakened in me unnerved me. And yet here I was, helping him bind me; helping him control me...

He looked down at me and stroked my arms, lingering over the leather for a moment before he took my hands. "John, no games for a minute," he said softly, looking

me in the eyes. "You're not going to be able to give me a safeword if this gets too intense for you – and from the look on your face, it just might. We need a non-verbal signal – and since your hands will be restrained you won't be able to use them."

"I could tap my foot..." I ventured, thinking that *whatever* he did to me, I'd handle it – if for nothing more than to show him there wasn't anything 'too intense' for me...

"Let's make it three taps – something you're less likely to do accidentally," Leo said softly, reaching up to stroke my face. "Okay?"

I nodded and whispered, "Okay. Three times sounds good." And then he leaned in and kissed me forcefully. God – I wanted him so bad, no matter what he wanted to do to me... I felt his hand picking something up from the bed, and when we broke for air, he held up the gag.

"You got anything else to say, John?" he asked with a smirk. When I shook my head, he grinned and whispered, "Good. Now open your mouth."

I swallowed hard, then boldly met his gaze and opened my mouth, letting him slip the rubber ball between my teeth. He had it in place almost instantly, and fastened the gag in place with ease. I was certain he had never done this to the President, but wasn't sure how he seemed to be so practiced at it...

When he stood back and looked at me sitting there with the red and black restraints and the black gag marking me, he smiled and murmured, "Yeah, that looks pretty good. Hot – maybe we should keep you that way in your office – would keep you from acting up, huh?"

God! Lust sang in my veins at that – there was just enough doubt in my mind that he might actually *try* something like that, no matter what he said about keeping this out of the office... Images of him tying me to my chair flitted through my mind and I moaned around the gag. He sighed and his cock twitched, then he murmured, "Makes a nice image, doesn't it, John? So, why don't you get comfortable on the bed and let me look for some more goodies, huh?"

He gave me a light smack on the thigh, then, and let me climb further onto the bed – again I obeyed him. I was going to have to stop doing that! And then he opened up The Bag and peered inside. There were things in there I really didn't want him to ask about. Suddenly the gag was a very good thing – it would keep me from having to answer questions...

"Jesus, John, this is one hell of a collection," he murmured, looking through the various items. Many of them were ordinary, everyday household items that, taken by themselves wouldn't raise an eyebrow. Together, though, things like soft black cotton rope, paramedics'

scissors, saran wrap, and boot laces might make someone think twice. And, of course, the wrist restraints, floggers, lube, butt plugs, and dildoes (most of them realistic enough to be illegal back home in Texas, and each safely wrapped in its own individual ziploc baggie) were dead giveaways.

And then there was the small metal case marked with the red cross symbol – I prayed he just figured it was some kind of first aid kit and passed over it... Luckily – I think – he didn't comment; instead pulling out one of the dildoes. When he held up the bag to show me, I know I blushed crimson – I could feel the heat blazing in my face.

“Vibrating cock and balls, eh? And not just that, but variable speed, too. Shame on you, John – aren't these illegal in Texas?”

“Mmf fnou...” I grunted around the gag. Oh yeah, that told him...

He leaned in close and said, “You'd like to *try*...” and then he put the dildo down on the bed and pulled out a tube of lube to place next to it. “Now, let's see...”

I watched as he looked through the items again, saw him pick up the braided cat with the plastic-dipped tips, and for a moment was afraid he'd either choose it, or ask me about it. I really didn't want to tell him... And then he put it back and smiled, and pulled out the soft suede flogger – the one that was made of suede so soft it felt like silk when rubbed over the skin... “Ah, I think this would be just perfect for you,” he commented, running the soft tails through his hand. “Feels pretty nice.” And then he gave it a couple of test-whacks against his own thigh and added, “And has enough weight to give it a little bite, too, huh? I think you'll like it.” I shivered as he fished one last thing out of The Bag – a long leather strap that had clips fastened to both ends. I knew he would clip it to the restraints, probably passing it through the headboard to keep me from getting up or away... Then he put The Bag down on the floor, the flogger on the nightstand, and turned to me.

He smiled and said, “I'm going to need you on your stomach, John. Make yourself comfortable, because you're going to be that way for a while...”

Just that simple statement sent a thrill of arousal through me – I was so hard my cock was aching, and I was starting to feel just the slightest bit dizzy because of the gag and the way it forced me to breathe. Leo climbed onto the bed and knelt over me, running his hands all over my chest and abdomen, turning his attention to my nipples as I arched up into his strokes. “God, John, you should see how you look...” he murmured, pinching my nipples into hardness before he leaned in to nip at them. “You want anything I do to you, don't you – you'd let me inside you, you'd let me fuck you so hard – you're dying to have me touch your cock...”

Jesus – did he have to be right? With every word I could feel my hunger increasing – how could he make me so helpless, just by showing me he could control me?!

“Now, John, on your stomach. Put a pillow under your hips, because you know I want your ass in the air,” he ordered. I couldn't help it – I obeyed. When he used that tone, there was nothing to do *but* obey. I put a pillow under my hips and made sure I was in a position that would remain comfortable for a considerable time, arranging the other pillows to support me without having to worry about being able to breathe. And then, without him even saying anything, I slid my hands out to the side, where I knew he would want them.

“Good boy,” he murmured, stroking his hands over my back and shoulders with a heavy-handed touch. I squirmed, wanting his hands to slip lower and trying to fight that desire with every ounce of my strength. And then his hands closed hard on my left wrist, and the next thing I knew, the strap was clipped onto the D-ring of that restraint. He slid the strap through one of the openings of the ornate headboard, then shifted on the bed to reach through another opening and pull the other end of the strap back through. “I hope this bed is sturdy, John...” he murmured, a hand settling on my right wrist and closing hard around it.

I couldn't help it – I tried to struggle; tried to pull my hand free. God, he was strong!

“No, John, you're not getting away. Remember, I'm punishing you for being a bad boy...” And with that, he snapped the hook onto the D-ring on that restraint. “Much better.”

I could hear the smugness in his tone, knew he was smiling down at me, pleased to have beaten me so far. I had tried to struggle too late – I'd let him defeat me... And part of me wanted this so bad. What the *hell* was wrong with me?!

And then Leo picked up the lube...

I couldn't hear what Leo was doing behind me, but suddenly he tossed the cap onto the nightstand with the tube itself following just a short time later. I wanted to ask him what he was up to, but with the gag I couldn't. He had to be loving this...

And then I felt one hand settle on my left buttcheek, pulling over to one side as fingers slid into my crack and probed at my anus. I know I tensed – this was *so* far from someone working a finger into me while he sucked me... I was *not* going to be scared – I just was *not* going to let him have that! But again, he knew what to do, how to calm me...

He worked the very tip of his finger into me, and while he was doing that he used his other hand to slide between my legs and fondle my balls and perineum. Gradually my body relaxed, until it dawned on me that his finger had sunk in all the way. I moaned around the gag and squirmed as he began to very gently fuck me with his finger. I could hear him murmuring as my body began to

accept his invasion more eagerly, "Oh yeah, that's good, John... You ready for more?"

I strained against the restraints, the headboard creaking slightly as I pulled. That son of a bitch smiled and commented, "Guess you *are* ready, then," and pulled out of me, only to return a moment later with two slick fingers teasing at my anus. He rubbed over the opening, first teasingly light strokes and then more pressure, alternating until I moaned again and my muscles twitched. God – I couldn't believe it felt so good – this just wasn't something I– *did*. And yet, I wanted him to press into me – wanted to feel him penetrate me again.

I stopped myself before I could push back into his strokes – I wasn't going to give in to him that easily! And then he laughed and began fondling me with his other hand again. I moaned loudly and the next thing I knew, his fingers slid roughly into me, my traitorous body opening eagerly now to accept them.

"Having a good time, are ya?" Leo murmured, thrusting deep into me and then pulling back out only to thrust in again. I was glad, suddenly, that I was face down – that way he wouldn't see the colour blazing in my cheeks.

This time, he made sure to press against my prostate, sending a shock of pleasure through me that made me gasp involuntarily and buck up into his stroke. I knew, now, that he was getting revenge for what I had done to him; prayed that he wouldn't take me to the edge of desperation the way I had with him... And then he pressed again and the ability to think fled.

The next thing I knew, he was purring, "That's a good boy, John – spread 'em wider," and I was spreading my legs like a slut as he slid the two fingers out of me. I think I whimpered, and then I heard him grabbing the lube again. His other hand intensified the attention to my perineum, and suddenly he jammed three fingers up me.

If it hadn't been for the gag I would have cried out – for a moment my body clamped down and it hurt like a son of a bitch – and then just as suddenly pleasure arced through me as he rubbed over my prostate again. I was getting so lightheaded from breathing hard through my nose, and knew that my body was overriding my instructions to it. I was pressing back into his strokes, driving him as deep as I could get – he was winning; I wanted him to fuck me. I *needed* him to fuck me...

My god – he'd made me give in faster than I'd been able to get him to... Arousal was thundering through my body; I could feel the thump of my heart in the blood roaring in my ears; could feel the intensity of it in the throbbing of my cock... I wanted him to fuck me, and he knew it.

"Easy, there, John – we don't want this over with so fast, now do we?" he purred, his fingers continuing to stretch me but now steering clear of my prostate. I suddenly remembered one of the things he'd taken out of The Bag, and

a thrill of fear went through me. My bastard cock responded to that fear by getting even harder...

While he continued to stretch me, I felt the other hand leave me and reach for something else – I knew what it would be and part of my mind was screaming for me to fight, to escape... And I couldn't. Then the fingers slid out of me, leaving me empty and unfulfilled. I whimpered and twitched my hips before I could stop myself, and he chuckled knowingly. "Don't worry, you won't be empty long..."

I felt him reach for the lube again, and he was busy for what seemed like an eternity – and then the tube landed back on the nightstand, startling me. His hand settled on the small of my back and he murmured, "Shh, John, it's okay now..." and then I felt the head of the dildo probing at my asshole and I gasped.

He pushed it steadily into me, my traitorous body opening to accept it so eagerly. I spread my legs further, tilting my hips more to make it easier to slide the thick, unyielding rubber home. I heard Leo murmur again, "Yeah, that's so good, isn't it..." and then I felt the sculpted balls of the dildo nestled up against my ass and its entire length filling me. God – did he *have* to be right?

I was so full, but now it wasn't moving like his fingers had – I hated to admit it, but I wanted to feel more. I started moving my hips, gasping around the ball gag as I felt the dildo press in *almost* the right place. He was sitting back, watching me, and I heard him laugh.

"What's wrong, John? Not enough? You wanna get fucked pretty bad, don't you..." Damn him, he was enjoying this – he was getting off on my desperation... "This is getting pretty intense here – you haveta tell me what you want. If you want more, I need you to nod..."

He was going to continue, telling me to shake my head if I wanted him to back off for now, but before he had a chance to even open his mouth, I was nodding furiously. God, yes, I wanted more, you bastard!

And then he switched it on – on a low setting for the moment, but I could feel the dildo buzzing and vibrating inside me, and it felt so fucking good...

"Yeah, John, that's so good," he murmured, running a hand roughly over my ass. "And you know what's the best thing about it? I can keep both hands free..."

The hand on my ass settled protectively over my tailbone, and the part of my mind that wasn't overwhelmed by that throbbing buzzing fullness realized I was in for it.

"And you wouldn't believe how fucking sexy you are, splayed out before me like a wanton slut, John," he purred, that husky voice sending a thrill through me despite the outrage his words sparked. "You're mine to do with as I please – and you want everything I give you..."

Jesus! He turned the dildo up a notch and I cried

out, the sound muffled by the ball gag again. And then I felt something different – I couldn't place it at first, then I realized it was the tails of the soft suede flogger, rubbing up and down my thighs and tickling the backs of my knees.

“I oughta get out the one with the hard tips, and whip your ass bloody for what you did to Josh, you know,” he murmured, trailing the silky soft suede between my legs and making me quiver. I shook my head, and I felt the suede tickle my balls and slide teasingly up my crack to softly brush back and forth across my ass. I groaned and shifted on the bed, then gasped as the dildo nudged into the right position. God – it was right there, buzzing away mercilessly at my prostate, pleasure firing along every nerve until I thought I would die right then.

Whack!

I grunted into the gag, the sting of the flogger surprising me with its intensity. Damn, he put a lot of muscle behind that...

Whack!!

I grunted again – if the gag hadn't been there I would have yelled; if I hadn't been bound I probably would have rolled away from him and possibly slugged him. Instead, I had to lie there and take it, hearing his appreciative sigh. My ass stung, and tears stung the corners of my eyes – and still the dildo buzzed away at me, sending the most confusing messages to my brain...

Leo rested his other hand on my shoulder for a moment, the falls of the flogger brushing over my arm and making me shiver. “Remember,” he murmured softly, “three taps and you can stop this any time.”

No, he was not going to get that from me...

Whack!

It was starting to throb, the blood rushing to the site of the strikes, bringing an amazing amount of heat to my ass. The initial sting of each strike actually faded quite rapidly, leaving behind a sensation I couldn't really define – almost a buzzing feeling that gradually became just throbbing heat.

My heart was pounding in my chest, my blood rushing in my ears – it was almost as if I couldn't hear the outside world anymore. I'd already closed my eyes to block out the sight of the headboard and my bound hands, and now my attention seemed to be narrowing down to nothing more than the sensations coursing through my body with each cruel strike on my ass and the dildo's merciless buzzing...

I knew he was still hitting me, and for some reason all of the pain was gone now – each strike sent another thrill of arousal through me. I started working my hips, thrusting my aching cock against the pillow in an attempt to get off; feeling the dildo's bulk inside me and the constant stimulus of Leo's punishment. I was so hard, and so hot... If anyone had said earlier that having this done to me would have turned me on so much, I probably would have punched them!

I think Leo was saying something, but I couldn't make out words – there was some strange noise that I later realized was me whimpering and moaning around the gag – and then the dildo's buzzing and vibrating increased and I felt Leo push on it, making it press hard against my prostate. I think I writhed and spread my legs more, and this time I heard him say, “Yeah, that's a good boy, John. You beg so nicely!” The flogger came down on my ass again and again and really hard one more time–

Holyfuckingshit!

Blinding pleasure arced through me as I came so hard it nearly hurt, thrusting and spasming helplessly on the bed as Leo continued to manipulate the dildo with one hand and smack me with the other – he'd apparently dropped the flogger to keep from hitting his own hand. The incredible orgasm seemed to last an eternity, and as the spasms faded into trembling, blackness swooped down and claimed me–

“You're either braver than I thought, or dumber than I thought.” That was the first thing I heard as I resurfaced – Leo was kneeling over me, and he was naked. And so was I – in my own bed – with my ass feeling like it had been used and abused by god knows what. And Leo was gently removing my own wrist restraints from my wrists – he'd already removed the gag.

Oh yeah. Oh – shit...

“Leo...”

“You okay, John?” he asked, rolling me onto my back. God – every muscle in my body felt like water – I couldn't even move!

“I– uh... I think so.”

“Good,” he murmured, stroking my face and leaning in for a bruising kiss. When he backed off again, his face hardened and he said, “Now, you're gonna behave yourself if you're ever with Josh again, aren't you?”

“Are you actually threatening me, Leo?” I whispered, trying to wrap him in my arms and frowning as he backed out of my reach again. “What if Josh wants it?”

“You are *not* gonna hurt *any* of my employees, John. You got it? You and I both know who won this time, and I think you're smart enough not to push me, right?”

His softly growled threat sent a shiver through me – damn him, he'd managed to make me hand over control to him, and he wasn't about to let go of it now. He'd won – he'd beaten me... He could force me back over and ram his cock right up me, and I'd let him... And for now, I'd give him what he wanted regarding Josh. I couldn't make the same promise for Josh, though, and I'm sure he knew that...

“Leo...”

“I want your word, John!”

I swallowed, unable to look away from him.

“Okay, you've got my word, Leo...” I reached for him again, but he stood up and walked away from the bed, taking the dildo with him to the bathroom. I heard him running the sink and realized he was washing it for me. With some difficulty, I rolled to the edge of the bed and sat up, then stood on shaky legs. “Leo, what're you doing?” I asked, walking over to lean against the bathroom door.

He looked into the mirror, meeting my gaze there and smirking as he realized I wanted him to stay. Damn it...

“I'm gonna leave now, John. You weren't expecting me to stay the night, were you? You know I can't do that – no matter how much you beg and plead.”

“Did you hear me begging?” I challenged, getting a little angry as he pushed my buttons so damned easily. “You go ahead and leave, because if you don't, that dildo's gonna be up *your* ass in a moment.”

“Dream on,” he murmured, turning off the faucet and grabbing a towel to dry the dildo. “And you might want to take a nice warm bath – you're gonna be sorry in the morning if you don't...”

And with that, the son of a bitch turned and walked out of my bathroom, through my bedroom, and back out to where our clothes lay scattered. I followed him, frowning as he tugged his clothes back on, then sat on the couch to put his shoes on. “I'll –uh– I'll have my driver waiting.” I was *not* going to give him the pleasure of hearing me ask him to stay, no matter how much I wanted him to – I had already given in on so many other things; he wasn't getting this one.

Once I made the call to my driver and hung up the phone, I looked up to find him standing in front of me. “Leo?”

He grabbed my chin and pulled me in close, then whispered, “If you're a *good* boy, next time, it'll be me up that tight hole of yours, John. Just think about that if you get the urge to beat someone again; me riding your ass...”

“God...” I whispered before I could stop myself.

He smiled and said, “Nah, just Leo,” and kissed me again. I couldn't help myself – I tried to pull him in for a deeper kiss, and he pushed me back. “Behave,” he growled, reaching down to swat me on the butt.

“Ouch!” I hissed, realizing how sore I really was. His suggestion that I take a warm bath was a sound one, and I knew I'd be suffering tomorrow no matter what.

“Yeah, 'ouch' – now go take a bath and get some rest,” he growled, and with that he walked out...

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Noises in the office next door woke me up – I sat up on my couch and rubbed my eyes, then looked up to find the President leaning through the doorway and peering at me. “Mr. President?”

“Leo, tell me you didn't spend the night down here – why didn't you come to the Residence? You could've slept in a nice cozy bed...” he asked, frowning slightly. I could tell

he wasn't angry – it was his 'concerned' frown.

“Abbey would've killed me if I woke you up at the time I got in – I came here from John's place,” I explained, remembering even as I said it that he'd mentioned spending the night alone. “I'm sorry – she's not here, is she... Jed, it was almost four in the morning...”

“That's okay, Leo – did you deal with whatever the potential problem was?”

“Yeah, I think it's settled. What time is it now, anyway?” I asked, peering at my watch. “God – I've gotta get ready for Senior Staff...”

I stood up, and he stepped further into my office, then leaned close and whispered, “Did you fuck him?”

“Mr. President!” I said, feigning shock. “That's not appropriate talk for the White House, now is it?”

“You're right, Mr. McGarry – it's obvious that you're going to have to instruct me in the proper way to conduct myself...” he said, pressing his body close.

“Tonight, you can expect a very strict lesson,” I promised. I wanted desperately to wrap him in my arms, to kiss him – to be with someone who I didn't need to play these power games with. Someone I loved and who loved me, not just what he could get from me...

He smiled gently and kissed me on the cheek, then whispered, “I love you, Leo. Go get ready for work, and I'll make sure I've got time on my schedule tonight for that lesson...”

With that, he fled back into the Oval, and I hurriedly got ready for the day. With a short while to spare before the meeting, I had Margaret call Sam into my office.

By the time he got there, I was seated at my desk, looking – I hoped – like Leo McGarry, Chief of Staff and main butt-kicker for the Bartlett administration. I could tell I'd succeeded when I saw the apprehension in his blue eyes. “You wanted to see me?” he asked softly, stopping in front of my desk.

“Yeah, siddown, Sam,” I answered, giving him just enough of a frown to let him know I wasn't pleased. “I wanted you to know that I talked to the Vice President yesterday, and I don't think he'll be any problem.”

“I– ah– thank you!” he said hesitantly. He was a bright boy – he'd figured it out. “He told you I'd talked to him, didn't he...”

“Yeah.”

“Leo, I had to—”

“I told you I'd handle it – what *is* it with you guys, you just can't leave it up to me? Maybe I should just start telling you to go ahead and *do* something I don't want you to do – will that stop you?”

He smiled at that – a little guilty smile – and said, “No, probably not...”

I sighed – kids. “Yeah, probably not. Anyway, I

think he'll behave now. Just don't let Josh encourage any more... off-site meetings, okay?"

"Yeah..." He could tell we were done – he stood up and pushed the chair back where it had been, then looked up at me. "Leo? I– thank you."

"You're welcome. Now go on, get outta here. We've

got a Senior Staff meeting."

He hurried out, and I could hear him talking to Josh out in the hallway. Everything was again right in the world – at least for the moment.

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