

March, 2005

"You're the reason I'm alive," Brian said, voice cracking as he finally spoke.

Michael body stiffened against his own. "He hit you because of me. Over me. It's my-"

"-Shut up and listen to me, Mikey," Brian whispered. He pressed his face into Michael's ebony hair and inhaled the musky scent of his best friend, his lover, his life-long partner. He knew Vic was right, dreams or no dreams. It was now or never, and Brian would not accept never. Michael had been there through fights and explosions and deaths and births and concussions. Maybe it was time to trust he'd be there forever. "I have something important to say and I'm not waiting any longer."

Michael's heart raced and he swallowed hard as Brian let him lift his head to stare down into Brian's hazel eyes. Moonlight poured into the windows over them as they lay on the large white sofa, Brian in his old soft jeans, Michael in his T-shirt and boxers leaning over Brian's body. In the white light, his own fair skin seemed to glow against Brian's bronze.

"You saved my life more times than I can count," Brian began. The words came from his lips as easily as they had been denied so many times before. The fear he expected to overwhelm him ebbed and withdrew and the words kept coming. "You kept me from dying when Jack beat the shit out of me. You kept me from killing myself more times than you even know about." He saw the gun, the scarf, the pills, the bomb, the bottles of empty Beam, the dangerous looking tricks, the stupid risks, the many bridges he'd considered leaping from.

Michael felt his eyes widen and sting with tears. He swallowed again, trying steady himself as he felt the Earth shake. Brian's walls dropped, every single one, as his voice returned to him.

"You loved me." Brian's voice cracked again, just slightly as he spoke the words. His eyebrows drew together and vulnerability radiated from him in waves. He watched as Michael's eyes filled with tears and denial.

Michael swallowed hard as a tear dropped from his cheek onto Brian's bare chest.

Brian lifted a hand and brushed the tears from Michael's flushed cheeks. "Even when no one else did." The truth escaped from Brian's exhausted form in a sigh.

Michael shook his head, squirming, trying to pull away. "You're tired, and you-"

Brian pulled him back down until their foreheads bumped and their lips brushed.

Michael could taste Brian's breath, feel the man's strong arms holding him against his firm, hot body. "Brian," he whispered. His heart beat fast in his chest, booming, racing. Surely Brian could

hear it.

"You loved me. But I knew," Brian hesitated before finishing. "-you could do so much better." Brian swallowed the sawdust in his throat. In the back of his mind he heard his father's disgust, his mother's apathy, Debbie's warnings. But before him he saw Michael, felt Michael's body on top of his own, smelled Michael in the air, tasted Michael on his tongue. "And I couldn't lose you."

Fear danced in Michael's eyes as he still struggled weakly against Brian's grasp. Michael tried to argue, tried to open his mouth to speak, to say anything.

Brian cut him off before he could. "But I'm not that damaged kid anymore." Brian felt his lips curl into a small grin as his heart raced in his chest. "Thanks to you." His voice sounded hoarse.

Michael shook his head quickly, trying to push away from Brian's body. "You have a concussion," he babbled. "You need more painkillers. Or maybe you had too many. You-"

Brian stopped him with a kiss that sent a wave of heat and weakness through Michael's body. Brian's lips seared his own, Brian's fingers in his hair gripped his mind, and Brian's heart raced against his own, their chests pressed so tightly together.

Brian heard Michael's voice in the back of his mind, saying the words he relied on like oxygen over and over. I love you. I love you, Brian. I'll always love you. I always have. Brian's heart grew on the words, fed on them, his soul patched and healed by them, his useless life saved by them.

Brian broke the kiss.

Michael rested his forehead against Brian's.

They held each other, hands gripping, hearts racing. Hazel eyes and brown eyes met as they panted, anxiety crackling in the air between them like static.

"I love you," Brian breathed. "You're the love of my life."

Michael sucked in a sharp breath. His eyes stung again. His heart stopped.

"Do you hear me?" Brian asked, his voice a low rumble. His grasp in Michael's hair tightened and Brian felt his own body begin to shake. Now or never. Now or he's lost. Now or he's back with Ben tomorrow, or gone to Tibet, and you'll never be inside him again, never feel his body holding yours, or feel him laugh against your neck, or hear him read another comic aloud, or taste pizza on his lips, or taste him when they shared a joint.

Michael jerked his head up and down. "Yes," he replied, his voice as weak as his body suddenly felt. Was he floating? Was he sinking?

Brian shifted them, sitting up, pulling Michael into his lap so they faced each other. His grasp on Michael's head relaxed and he slid his hands down, gripping the back of Michael's neck, fingertips teasing the soft hair at the nape of his neck.

Michael's whole body flushed with heat. He tried to breathe, but there was no air. He straddled Brian's lap and drowned. He was drowning. He was drowning in Brian Kinney in the moonlight.

"I told you that before but you didn't believe me." Brian felt the words burn his throat, but he exhaled them anyway. He dragged a thumb across Michael's full lips, savoring their heat.

Michael shook his head weakly as he watched the fear fill Brian's eyes.

"I love you. I'm in love you, Mikey."

Michael shook his head harder.

Brian held on tighter. Desperation crept into his voice. "Always have been. Always will be."

Michael's mouth opened and Brian waited for his reply.

Brian waited as Michael's gaze stared into him and slowly ice water filled his veins.

Michael wasn't responding.

Brian felt his grasp go limp and the hope in his lungs exhaled in a silent 'oh', of recognition.

Michael didn't love him.

It made sense now. Why else would Michael have gone along with this? Because he'd given up. The confession of love? That was just confusion. Now that Ben was back... First dry humping at Babylon, then jerking each other off at Kinnetik, and finally making love- but it wasn't making love, was it? It was fucking. It was fucking, and it meant nothing. Just like always. Because Brian Kinney didn't make love. He didn't. Ever. Not even to Michael.

Brian let his head drop, his eyes shutting, his chin hitting his chest.

He was a fool.

"-I love you, too," Michael breathed out-

-and Brian inhaled, jerking his head up to meet Michael's gaze.

Eyebrows raised in shock, eyes wide, Michael shook his head slowly. "I've always-"

Brian didn't need the rest of the words. He didn't want to hear them. He wanted to taste them. He wanted to feel them. He wanted to drink them like fine wine from Michael's lips. He kissed Michael deeply, breathing them in as Michael moaned softly into his mouth.

Sliding his hands up Michael's sides, Brian teased the edge of the T-shirt up, then drew it over Michael's head, throwing it aside. His lips found Michael's again as Michael's hands slid down his body, down his muscled abs, around his slim hips, just under the waistband of his jeans, then back to the front, tugging buttons open, sliding denim down hot, smooth flesh.

Michael fell onto his back as Brian shifted, shoving his own jeans down and kicking them aside, all the while pulling Michael's boxers down, dragging them down his muscled thighs and bare legs to the floor where they belonged.

Then they kissed again, neither one sure who began it, only certain they'd never stop. Brian sucked on Michael's lower lip, nipping at it, before sliding his tongue into Michael's mouth, mapping every inch of it, claiming every taste for his own, no room for air.

Michael's back arched off the white leather and Brian slipped his right hand beneath him, dragging his fingertips down the curve of Michael's ass, until they traced the tight entrance they sought out.

Brian drank down every moan, every whimper Michael exhaled as he pressed his fingers into Michael's waiting body. Their lips moved slowly, searing each other as Brian's two fingers reached Michael's core.

"Brian," Michael moaned as his head fell back, his eyes shutting.

"Look at me, Mikey," Brian breathed, into Michael's ear, nipping at it and panting against it.

Michael gasped and his eyes were open when Brian lifted his head again.

Brian spread his fingers, teasing Michael's willing body open, then slid them out.

Michael reached up, pulling Brian's lips back to his own as Brian's hand slipped between the cushions, seeking out a lubed condom.

Brian's hands shook as the condom ripped between his fingers. He reached down to slide the condom onto his own impatient cock when he felt Michael's take it. Moaning into Michael's mouth, he felt his best friend's hand slide the condom onto him, sheathing him. Before Michael's

hand could move away Brian grabbed it, wrapping his own around it, and stroked himself once with Michael's hand.

Their bodies trembled in unison.

Then their hands were gone, and Brian's were on Michael's hips, and Michael's were on Brian's shoulders, and their lips parted only to allow their foreheads to press together, harder, as Brian's cock sank slowly into Michael's waiting body.

"Oh," they both moaned, their fingers digging into each other's bodies, leaving scratches and claw marks as they dragged their nails against each others flesh.

Brian silenced another moan by sealing his lips to Michael's. Their bodies rocked in unison, Brian's cock sliding out, just enough for him to push in again, deep, filling Michael completely as the other man's body squeezed him, held him tight. With each slow roll of the hips their bodies shook, Michael's dick throbbed between their stomachs pressed tightly together, getting closer, with each full thrust their lips and tongues met, then broke apart to let out escaping moans and sighs, before meeting again in another desperate kiss.

Michael's arms and legs wrapped around Brian's form, holding him in tighter, longer, as Brian's own grip around Michael's body almost kept him from breathing. They moaned, sighed, panted as Brian's hips rolled forward again, again, filling Michael again, again, until there was no out, but only in, and in, and in, and-

"Brian!" Michael moaned, his head falling back. "Brian- I-"

"Michael," Brian growled, eyes open, staring into Michael's as their bodies began to tighten, flush, peak.

"Brian," Michael panted. His ass tightened, his nails dug into Brian's shoulders, his eyes struggled to stay open.

Brian growled, thrusting faster, faster, faster, and as he felt Michael's body take his own, pulling them over the edge together, he heard two voices moan.

"I love you."

Brian's mind surfaced, warmth encompassing his entire being. He breathed in, tasting the remaining lust in the air. His lips parted, tingling, swollen from use. His chest rose and fell, a comforting weight on his body, pinning him down, but he felt so safe.

Was it real? Had it been real, the searing, overwhelming pleasure? No, pleasure wasn't the word. He'd felt pleasure. His whole life had been nothing but a desperate search for pleasure.

If he'd known it would be like that—completion, absolute wholeness, until his chest felt so full he swore that every time he came it felt as if his heart came too, pounding, flooding his very being with endorphins and hormones and—

Love.

"I'm in love with you."

"You're the love of my life."

Had he really said it? Had they really done it, he and Michael, finally, not just fucked, but—

Made love?

Is that what they mean by making love? Is that what making love feels like? Is that what—love feels like? To be loved? Unconditionally?

Brian's throat tightened, his heart pounded, his mouth went dry, and his eyes fluttered open.

Brown eyes met his own, with flecks of copper and gold, and long, black lashes fluttering against flushed cheeks.

Brian drew his tongue against his raw lips, shifting only a bit, Michael's body heavy against his own.

Michael's chin on Brian's chest, one of his legs tucked tightly between Brian's firm thighs, his eyes darkened, his flush spreading.

Michael's red lips parted and he breathed in to speak.

Brian lifted his head and cut him off, sealing his lips with a firm, slow kiss. Michael's lips parted, giving Brian's tongue entrance. Michael tasted of lust and come, salty and sweet. Their tongues met, pressing together, sliding against each other's, no breath in their lungs as they swallowed each other's souls.

Brian's hands lifted, his left sliding down the sweet, smooth curve of Michael's back, his right tangling in Michael's hair, grasping the thick black locks between his fingers.

Michael moaned as their lips parted with a soft smack.

Brian's hand slid from Michael's hair down the side of his face. He had no idea what to say. Nothing was left. Now Mikey really had him, fuckin' heart and all.

Brian's eyes stung at the thought, just for a moment, emotions almost taking hold of him. He blinked the almost-tears away and saw the same in Michael's eyes. He wasn't sure why. Maybe it was fear. Maybe it was just love. Maybe they were the same.

Brian's chest raised with a deep, full breath, and he exhaled out the last of his anxiety. Michael had really seen him, now. He'd seen him in ways no one had, not even the boy that had almost wed the infamous Kinney. Hell, he'd never even seen himself that way, he'd never felt that way, totally safe, totally free, totally forgetting about how he looked, how he sounded, how he must protect his heart, his emotions, his very self from the other man he chose to bed on any given night.

But Brian wondered now if Michael had already known him that well. Maybe Brian himself was the only one who hadn't.

Michael nudged his nose against Brian's, lifting one hand to Brian's hair.

Brian moaned, shutting his eyes, pressing his head into Michael's hand. Christ, that felt good. Michael's fingers stroked through his hair slowly, each time sending little shivers of pleasure through Brian's body. His eyes fluttered open, he wanted to see the man that lay on him, the man able to make him feel like this.

Michael's lips were curled into an amused grin, his eyes sparkling now not from tears, but from hidden laughter.

Brian grumbled, nuzzling his head into Michael's hand, wanting more.

That was too much. Michael began to giggle, softly at first, then louder.

Brian's gaze shifted to Michael's face and he frowned. What the hell was so funny, and why had he stopped?

"Brian Kinney is in love with me," Michael whispered, his voice light and almost laughing. "And he cuddles."

Brian's eyebrows shot up and he stared into Michael's eyes, wanting to give him a sharp retort, he didn't cuddle, it just felt good!

Michael smiled, giggling a little again, grasping Brian's hair tightly.

And then Brian snorted with repressed giggles, and Michael began to laugh in earnest, and

Brian's giggle fit completely took over.

Michael laughed, then silenced them both with a firm kiss, holding Brian's head in place with a firm grip in his hair.

Brian sighed as Michael released him, smiling down at him.

"I love you, too," Michael whispered, his eyes squinting with happiness from the huge smile on his face.

He shouldn't have, but Brian felt a pleased flush warm his ears, then his neck, then right across his cheeks. "Always have," Brian whispered.

"Always will," Michael finished. He ducked his head, kissing Brian softly.

Brian tasted lust in Michael's mouth, full of life, the life force he'd relied on for pure survival, for joy, for meaning, forever.

Michael's eyes squinted almost shut when they parted again. His full lips curled into a smile so sweet it sucked the breath from Brian's lungs.

Brian smiled before he realized it, and shut his eyes as Michael brushed the tips of their noses together.

"Mm," Brian grunted. His hands rested on Michael's slim hips, sliding down over the rounded globes of his ass.

Michael shifted, his thigh firmly trapped between Brian's legs, his dick hardening against Brian's hip.

Brian's cock twitched in response, heat and ache flowing through his body with a passive lust.

"How is your head?" Michael whispered. His smooth, warm palm brushed Brian's hair back, revealing the subtle stitches.

Brian's head jerked away and he grunted. "M'fine," he mumbled, trying to hide his pleased smile.

Michael fussed over him, looking closely at his forehead before placing a kiss loudly in the center with a smack.

"Hey," Brian grumbled, wiping the wet mark away.

Michael smiled, laughing softly. Yellow light filtered through the shut blinds, a glowing halo around Michael's muscular, firm little body.

Brian tightened his grip on Michael's ass.

Michael's eyes darkened.

Brian rolled his hips against Michael's, their bodies rutting against each other's, firm muscles against throbbing cocks, thighs soft, slight hair on heated skin against each other's legs.

Michael bit his lower lip, the swollen red flesh teasing Brian until he raised his head to capture it between his own teeth, then sucking on it as he kissed his lover breathless.

Then Michael's hands grabbed Brian's wrists, gripping them tightly, jerking his hands from Michael's ass and pinning them at Brian's sides.

Brian's cock throbbed hard once, his breath catching in his throat. He jerked against Michael's grasp weakly, enjoying the way it felt to be pinned down, to be held down by Michael's firm weight.

Michael's eyes darkened and he straddled Brian's thighs, his tongue dragging across those red, swollen lips Brian wanted to bite and suck and maul. His gaze dragged down Brian's body and Brian could feel it just as he could still feel Michael's hands all over his now trembling form.

Michael finally leered at Brian's deep red cock, his eyes narrowing and his black lashes fluttering against his cheeks. He bit his lower lip again and leaned over Brian's pinned body, then ground his own thicker erection against Brian's longer 9 inches.

They both moaned, eyes fluttering shut and open again. Lips sought each other, but Brian's wrists stayed pinned. Michael's tongue plunged into his mouth, air exhaled, nothing but soft, hot, wet, yielding flesh. Michael's tongue filled his mouth, his hands gripped his wrists, his cock rutting against Brian's throbbing, desperate dick.

"God," Brian moaned as Michael's lips ripped from his with a loud smack, surprised by the desperation in his own voice.

Michael leaned over him, panting, rolling his hips slowly, tilting his head to watch as a bead of precome dripped from his cock onto Brian's.

"Michael," Brian growled, feeling it, jerking on his wrists again, this time less playfully.

A smile danced over Michael's flushed expression and he ducked his head, their foreheads just touching. He released Brian's wrists, whispering against his lips, "Stay. Let me."

Brian's fingers flexed, then gripped the sheets, digging into the mattress. His chest jerked in response to Michael's request.

Let him what?

Whatever it was, Brian was horny enough to play along. At least, for the moment. He watched as Michael reached over to the bedside table for lube and condoms. He lifted his right hand to touch Michael's hip, to slide down his thigh where feather-light hair grew, only accentuating his fair skin.

"Brian," Michael exhaled as Brian's hand caressed his thigh, running down to rest on his bent knee.

Brian's gaze lifted and he stared up at the heavy-lidded eyes of his best friend and admitted love of his life. Michael's firm, flat stomach flexed as Brian gripped his knee tightly, accentuating the muscles just under that smooth, soft skin. Brian dropped his hand.

Michael gripped Brian's cock.

"Nngh," Brian grunted, jerking his hips into the sudden grip of Michael's heated palm.

Michael tilted his head and stared down at Brian, and Brian let his lips part, his head fall back against the pillows, his chest rise and fall in gasps of pleasure as Michael watched him, slowly jerking him off.

Brian's lips curled into a slow smile and he only gripped the sheets tighter as he saw lust building in Michael's eyes. Brian dragged his tongue against his lower lip before biting it, smirking slowly at Michael before arching into his touch, back curved off the bed, hair mussed against the pillow.

Brian knew how to be beautiful and wanton and nothing but lust and sex. He was ready to show Michael.

Michael's breath came in short, rough rasps, although Brian's cock was the one being caressed, stroked, teased as Michael's thumb circled the tip, spreading slick come down his shaft.

With each stroke Brian's cock throbbed, and he kept his eyes locked on Michael's. His jaw dropped and his slight control over his own breathing quit.

At this rate he'd come all over himself before anything even happened!

Michael gripped Brian's cock tighter, then ducked his head to lick the tip, just once, and their

gazes never broke.

So close, Brian though, jerking his hips again, his hands fisted in white-knuckle grips to the blanket.

Michael released him, lifted the condom wrapper, biting the edge of the black paper.

He tore it, the rip of the wrapper the only sound filling Brian's ears.

Michael bit his lower lip, and finally broke Brian's gaze, looking down to watch as he slid the slick condom onto Brian's now visibly throbbing erection.

Brian's hands lifted now, to Michael's hips, he couldn't not touch him, not while Michael leaned over him, reaching down to hold the base of Brian's sheathed cock as he pressed the tip to his own ass.

Their gazes met again. Brian's fingers dug into Michael's hips.

Michael exhaled and pressed down. The tip of Brian's cock pressed in, then pushed into him, inside of him, and he sank down lower, lower, until he was completely full and all he could do was let his head roll back, eyes shut, as he began to roll his hips, filling himself again, and again.

Mouth open as he breathed in the lust in the air, Brian's hands held Michael's hips hard, and he watched as his cock disappeared into Michael's body, and he looked back up Michael's firm stomach and chest and neck and jaw and back down to where his thighs parted, to where his own cock jutted out, ignored and needy as Michael's ass took Brian again and again.

He wanted it to last, Christ, he wanted it to last. He'd never seen Michael like this, not like this, in control and yet giving up control completely. Brian's fingers dug into Michael's silken skin, and he thrust his hips up, meeting Michael's form hard as Michael lowered himself.

Michael let out a helpless cry and opened his eyes again. Lips parted and red and moist, he quickened his speed, reaching down to grasp Brian's hands on his own hips, gripping them tightly.

Brian thrust up again, and again, and now all Michael could do was hold on and pant and moan as Brian's cock filled him again, again, stretching him more than their slow, sensual lovemaking the night before had, burning that satisfying burn that filled him completely, until his toes curled into the sheets and his head fell back again, and Brian's right hand released his hip and grasped Michael's jutting cock and Michael came, came hard, crying out again, Brian's name on his lips.

"Michael," Brian growled, stroking Michael's cock even as he came, hot come shooting across

Brian's chest, marking him as Michael's body took him again, again, not stopping even as his orgasm peaked, his thighs flexing, the soft dark hairs above his cock leading up to his smooth, firm stomach and broad chest and that vein, the one in his neck that pulsed as his blood rushed through his body, and that was all Brian could take. His jaw dropped and he moaned, bringing Michael's hips down hard, burying himself completely in Michael's body, "Michael!" he called out again, the name only arousing him more, reminding him who he was fucking, who he was going to come inside. And then he was, and Michael was so tight, and so hot, and their eyes met, and Brian actually heard himself whimper as he came, and he didn't care. He didn't care at all.

Panting, Michael's hands slid from Brian's hands, down his firm, muscular arms, to his shoulders, wide and broad and masculine.

Brian's chest rose and fell in fast gasps as he swallowed down air, pleasure still running down his body like drops of hot water.

Michael shut his eyes and leaned forward, over Brian, and brought his forehead down to rest against his lover's.

Brian's chest rose and fell with a long, satisfied sigh. Reluctantly he released Michael's hips, sliding his hands down his trembling thighs, then grasped the base of the condom.

Michael whimpered now, raising his body, gasping as Brian's slowly softening dick slid from him.

Brian pressed his lips to Michael's, tingling shivers running from the sensitive flesh down to his cock, his balls, to the bottom of his feet.

Christ, is this what it would be like every time?

Michael sighed as he pulled away, rolling off of Brian's body to lay next to him on the mattress, still catching his breath.

Brian rolled onto his side and rested his head on his hand, propped up on his elbow. He dragged his gaze down Michael's exposed body, nude and flushed and fucking fabulous, if Brian did say so himself.

"Mmmmm," Michael practically purred. He smiled up at Brian, lying on his side and bending his leg, effectively covering his cock and balls.

Brian's smile faded just a little in disappointment.

Michael stared at Brian, smile in place, saying nothing.

Brian blinked at him once, feeling his smile return. How could it not? Michael lay next to him,

soaked in his sweat and come.

Michael lay next to him.

Too far.

Far too far away.

Brian Kinney did not cuddle.

He reached over and gripped Michael's hip, yanking his body close, until they were flush, and their softening cocks pressed, wet and hot, against each other's bodies.

Wet and sticky.

Brian smirked.

Michael beamed at him, sliding his hands up Brian's chest, resting them on Brian's shoulders.

Brian opened his mouth to speak, and his stomach interrupted with a loud, long growl.

Michael laughed, nose wrinkling. "I wore you out?" he asked with a cocky wiggle of his hips.

Tongue in cheek, Brian cocked an eyebrow at him. "Is that a challenge?"

"No! No, no, I'm hungry, too, I'll admit it!" The grin on Michael's face was contagious. "Want me to go get us something?"

Brian snorted. "I'm fully capable of going out to breakfast."

"You have a concussion-" Michael began.

"Two concussions," Brian corrected him with a huff.

"Twice the reason for you to stay in bed!" Michael gave him an impertinent scowl. "I can go get-"

Brian sat up, pulling out of Michael's grip. He slipped out from the bed, standing and stretching with his back to Michael, giving him a good, long look of his firm, lanky back, muscles rippling, ass firm and pert. "You could. Or you could join me in the shower."

The knock on the door interrupted them.

"I don't know about this," Ted muttered as he followed Debbie out of the lift.

"Well you shoulda said that earlier," Debbie said, patting his cheek.

Ted grunted and shifted the huge pile of hot dishes in his arms. "I did," he muttered.

Debbie lifted her hand and knocked on the door. "Somebody's gotta check on 'em."

"Why me?" Ted huffed, shifting his weight. The dishes grew heavier.

Debbie shot him an amused look, eyebrow raised. "Because I can't carry all this alone."

"Why not-"

"Who? Em?" Debbie laughed. "Lindsay? Bless her, Melanie?"

Ted frowned. She had a point. He was the only one Brian might not hate seeing.

"Besides, I know you're worried about him."

"Of course I'm worried about Michael," Ted said, frowning.

Debbie banged on the door harder. "I meant Brian."

Ted sighed. Yes, he was worried. His already emotionally unstable boss and friend had had two concussions in two days and the husband of his best friend turned lover was back. Ted groaned at the thought, shifting the pans in his arms again.

"Where the hell are they? Fuckin' so hard they can't hear us?" Debbie banged again on the door with her fist.

"We should just go, they're probably sleeping," Ted said.

"It's past nine, they can wake up," Debbie said.

The door slid open with a rusty metal groan.

Brian Kinney glowered at them, wearing only his dark blue robe, mussed hair, and at least three hickeys Ted could see from there. "What the fuck do you want?" he growled from inside the darkened loft.

Debbie smiled and shoved past him inside, flicking the lightswitch as she went.. "Put the food

over there," she said, pointing Ted towards the kitchen.

Brian turned his glare to Ted, squinting from the sudden light, and Ted ducked his head a little, wincing. "Sorry," he mumbled as he slipped by to follow Debbie.

"We had to check on you," Debbie said. "Lord knows you didn't answer the damn phone all morning."

"Em was worried you'd convince Michael into a double suicide!" Ted joked, laughing.

Brian's glare turned into a snarl.

Ted averted his gaze. He needed to learn when not to make jokes.

"It was either the two of us or everyone," Debbie said, winking at Brian. "Don't worry, we won't be long."

Brian sighed and ran his hand through his hair, turning to go back towards the bedroom.

Ted glanced up towards the closed glass slats, wondering. "Where's Michael?"

Brian stopped and turned to face Ted, giving him a slow leer. "Sleeping. I wore him out last night."

Ted wrinkled his nose and looked away. The image of Brian violating Michael's body was as irritating as it was hot, which just irritated him more.

"You're not supposed to be fuckin' with a double concussion!" Debbie barked. "Couldn't you wait one more night?"

Brian blinked and tilted his head. "No. I couldn't."

Ted frowned. Were they still talking about sex?

"Clearly." Debbie's eyebrow arched and her gaze traveled down Brian's body, eyeing the hickeys. "You don't usually let 'em mark ya, do you?"

Ted averted his gaze again, feeling weirdly embarrassed just by being in the room with them.

"And was my son the one that left those lovely little marks on you?" she smirked.

Brian frowned and looked down. He saw the hickey on his chest. He pulled the top of his robe open enough to look down into it. His eyes widened. He pulled it shut again. "I guess he wore

me out, too."

Debbie barked a laugh. Then her expression turned serious again, a slow frown coming over her usually happy features. "You know he's not going to give up that easily, right?"

Ted watched as Brian's easy posture stiffened.

"Ben may have left last night, but he's still in town."

Brian lifted his chin and stared into Debbie's eyes. "And what the hell am I supposed to do about it?" he asked sarcastically, trying to deflect her seriousness. "As you can see, I'm a lover, not a fighter." He dramatically touched his wounded head.

"I expect you to tell Michael what you were supposed to tell him when you were fourteen years old," Debbie snapped.

Brian's eyebrows shot up. "What? Nice comic collection? I believe I had that covered." Was Debbie seriously mad at him for not telling Michael sooner? After his whole life, was Debbie finally on his side? Christ help him, their side?

"That you're in love with him, asshole!" Debbie said, her face flushing. "Do you know how long he's loved you? Do you know-"

"Ma," Michael said, distracting them all. He stepped down the bedroom steps in a too-big T-shirt and sweatpants, clearly Brian's. "C'mon," he said sheepishly.

Brian's entire body seemed to sigh in relief and he turned to face Michael.

From the back, Ted could see Brian's back relax as he approached his friend.

Michael smiled a slow smile, his eyes squinty and sparkling, a flush coming over his cheeks.

Back to Ted and Debbie, Brian ducked his head to peck Michael lightly on the cheek. "I love you," he said simply.

Michael's grin parted into a toothy smile. "Love you, too," he said breathlessly.

Ted's jaw dropped as he watched them.

"Well, that was easy," Debbie muttered.

Brian walked past Michael up the steps, heading towards the bathroom.

Michael followed him with his eyes, wrapping his arms around himself and sighing happily.

"What the hell happened?" Debbie asked.

Michael smiled at them, then bit his lower lip. "He said he's in love with me."

Ted swallowed hard.

Debbie frowned. "Well, I saw that much." Debbie's frown slowly faded. "You think he's serious? It's not just the shock, like last time?"

Ted's jaw dropped again and he couldn't believe the words he'd just heard.

Michael's glow evaporated and his smile disappeared.

"Well, after the bombing," Debbie began.

"Debbie," Ted said, grabbing her arm firmly.

She shot him a befuddled look, her red wig slightly askew.

Ted reached up and adjusted it for her, sighing. "Don't be ridiculous. Of course he meant it. Everyone knows Brian's always been in love with Michael." He loved Debbie. He did. But sometimes the woman was completely clueless and her words could really hurt his sweet friend.

Michael's smile returned, though not so brightly.

Debbie shrugged. She turned and went to the kitchen to fill Brian's fridge with carbohydrates and calories. "I just worry about my baby," she said.

Michael's gaze met Ted's and Michael's wobbly smile broke Ted's heart.

"I'm happy for you, Michael," Ted said, pulling Michael into a tight hug.

Michael sighed in relief and melted against his friend's body. He hugged Ted and even through his pressed polyester shirt Theodore Schmidt could feel the unique, comforting warmth that was all Michael's.

"The hell is this?" Brian grumbled, grabbing Ted by the back of his shirt and yanking him away.

"Whoa, I was just telling him I'm happy for you," Ted said, raising his hands in defense, laughing nervously.

Brian's gaze didn't flinch.

Ted supposed he hadn't forgotten his own crush on their adorable ebony-haired friend.

Debbie turned and smiled at them. "Who wants spaghetti?"

Brian groaned.

"Ma', we just woke up! We'll eat it later. Just go home," Michael said, walking towards her.

Brian slipped his right arm around Michael's waist and yanked him back, flush with his own body. "Yeah, get out of here and leave us alone."

Debbie snorted. "I've heard that from you more times than I can count, Brian Kinney. You'd better not fuck things up this time."

Brian felt Michael's body tense in his arms. "Ma'. I'll talk to you later." His voice came firm, hard, and Brian knew he was two seconds from exploding at his mother. He seemed even more protective of Brian than usual, and it made Brian hard to think about.

As Ted reached the door, sliding it open and trying to pull Debbie out of it before Brian got really irritated, he heard his boss' voice.

"Theodore," Brian snapped.

Ted glanced back and his stomach dropped. Michael's head lay against Brian's chest, his eyes half-shut, his body practically glowing.

"Theodore!" Brian snapped again.

Ted frowned at Brian. "What is it, Bri?"

"Take care of things at Kinnetik. I'll be busy this week."

"You've been busy," Ted muttered, watching as Brian's hands rested on Michael's hips, and how Michael leaned into the taller man. "Are you ever coming back to work?"

Brian ducked his head and whispered something softly to Michael, who lifted his head and laughed, making Brian chuckle.

"Bye, baby! Take care of him, Brian!" Debbie shouted.

Ted shoved her and slammed the door behind them.

"Well, you're in a hurry," Debbie huffed.

"They want to be alone," Ted said. He shoved his hands in his pockets, staring down at the ground.

"And what about Ben?" Debbie asked, the question hanging in the air.

Ted sighed and walked to the lift, Debbie following him. He slid the grating shut and pressed the button, waiting for the slow thing to lurch downwards.

"Well, if this is gonna work they're gonna have to move somewhere nicer," Debbie muttered. "My son deserves a nicer love nest than this crummy old building."

Ted grinned. "Try not to mother hen them too much, Deb. At least not until things are settled. We want this to work, remember?"

Debbie snorted. "Yes." After a long pause, she sighed. "I guess."

Ted chuckled. Yeah, he thought. I guess, too.

Brian watched as Michael pulled away from him, a mischievous light in his eyes. "Now that we're alone," he purred, pulling the too-big t-shirt from his body and letting it fall to the floor. "Let's take a nice, long, hot shower."

Brian smirked and followed Michael as he backed up the steps to the bedroom, the sweatpants slipping from his hips and falling to the floor as he stepped out of them.

Michael turned and Brian groaned at the sight of scratch marks on his side, of the bruise from his grip on Michael's ass.

The shower hissed on and steam filled the bathroom as Brian slipped the silk robe off, its slinky fabric fluttering to the floor.

Michael stepped backwards into the shower, his eyes fixed on Brian's, the hot water running down his firm, toned body. "Coming in? The water's fine," he teased, his voice low and sultry as he flicked drops of water at Brian.

Brian growled and pressed his hand to Michael's chest, shoving him back as he stepped under the streaming water.

Michael's back hit the slick shower wall and he exhaled in surprise as Brian ducked his head to lick the streams of water from his sensitive skin.

Brian's hands found Michael's hips, then his ass, and pulled him flush against his own body, their cocks grinding together in one slow roll of his hips.

"Brian," Michael moaned, his arms wrapping around Brian's shoulders.

Brian practically purred as he loosened his grip on Michael and began to slide to his knees.

Michael sucked in a hard breath as he watched Brian kneel on the wet, rough floor of the shower, licking his reddening lips. His hazel eyes gazed up at Michael from under his long lashes, droplets of water in them.

Brian reached for Michael, wrapping his long, sure fingers around the base of Michael's cock. He squeezed and moaned along with Michael as he felt the dick in his hand throb with heat.

Michael gripped Brian's shoulders to avoid falling, his lips parted, his hair wet and slick. His gaze never left Brian's face, and Brian's gaze never left Michael's, even as Brian's lips parted and placed an open-mouthed kiss on the tip of Michael's weeping cock.

Brian licked his lips, then dragged his tongue up the length of Michael's hardened dick, lapping the water from it in rough, quick licks. He grasped Michael's hips as the other man began to squirm, holding him still. Brian pressed his face into Michael's lower stomach, nuzzling his nose into the soft curls just above his hard cock. He inhaled the scent of musk and lust and Michael. Then he ducked his head and took Michael's cock into his mouth in one fast motion.

"Ah!" Michael called out as the tip of his cock hit the back of Brian's throat. "Ohgod-"

Brian hummed around the length, his cheeks hollowing as he sucked, enjoying the burn in his jaw as his mouth adjusted to the width of Michael's perfectly shaped dick.

Michael's hands gripped Brian's hair and it slipped through his fingers, wet and slinky. "Oh, ohgod, Brian..."

Brian growled, the sound of his name being moaned in that tone Michael used, that new tone he'd never heard until they'd begun fucking, sent heat to his already throbbing cock. Brian pulled back slightly, sucking hard on the tip of Michael's dick, running his tongue around the edge before licking up the sweet taste at the tip. He held Michael's hips and lifted his gaze.

Michael's eyes widened, his pupils already dark and full, as Brian's gaze met his own. Brian's eyes narrowed in a smirk and he felt rather than saw the shiver of lust that went through Michael's body. Without breaking the gaze, Brian swallowed him again, ducking his head lower,

until the tip of Michael's cock just slipped past the back of his throat.

Brian swallowed around him, feeling the smooth, throbbing length of Michael's dick fill his mouth, his throat, his very being.

Michael moaned, his body stiffening as the sudden sensation pushed him over the edge.

Michael's cock pulsed and the hot, sweet, salty stuff filled Brian's throat and mouth. Brian waited for the shivers to stop, for the trembling to end, and then sat back, lifting his fingers to his mouth to give them long, wet licks, purposefully leaving drops of come on his lips as he leered up at Michael, their gazes never parting.

Michael just panted, watching him, his hair wet and in his face, his light skin flushed rosy with lust. Brian licked his lips again, kept Michael's gaze, and swallowed the mouthful of come.

Michael moaned and his cock began to harden again.

Brian smirked, grasping him again, stroking him once as he climbed back to his feet. "Good boy," he purred into Michael's ear as he stroked him.

Michael's nails dug into Brian's shoulders and his whole body shuddered.

Brian added that one to his list of words, phrases, little things that aroused Michael. Somehow, even after a lifetime of friendship, Michael's body still held so many secrets.

He wanted to find every single one.

Michael nuzzled his face into Brian's neck and moaned against him, gripping his shoulders. "Fuck me," he moaned, his voice suddenly lower, rougher.

Brian sucked in a hard breath.

"Fuck me, Brian," Michael moaned again, slowly fucking Brian's hand, all his previous inhibitions suddenly evaporating.

Brian's eyes shut and he felt fire fill his veins.

Michael was begging to be fucked. Without his asking. Without his teasing. Without his even trying to get him to.

"I need you," Michael whispered against his skin.

Brian growled, pushing Michael against the wall before turning him roughly.

Michael pressing his palms to the wet glass, pushing his ass back against Brian's body.

"You want my cock?" Brian purred into Michael's ear, nipping it as he reached into the soap dish for an unopened condom.

"Please," Michael moaned, letting his head drop back against Brian's shoulder.

Brian lubed two fingers with lube, kept in the shower for just such occasions, and dragged them down the rounded curve of Michael's ass. They slipped down Michael's crack until they reached the tight, hot hole.

"Ah," Michael panted, trying to shove himself back on to Brian's fingers.

"Slowly, Mikey," Brian purred against his ear as he pushed one, then two fingers into him. "Don't wanna hurt you, hmm?"

Michael hesitated before letting out a long, shaky breath. He pressed back against Brian's invading fingers, rocking against them.

Brian teased him, opening him slowly, letting each knuckle slip into his tight entrance, pushing past each ring of muscle, until Michael's entire body trembled with need.

"Brian, Brian," Michael mewled, rocking his hips back against Brian's hand, his fingers so close to that place that would make him scream in pleasure, but just not quite there.

"Tell me," Brian purred into Michael's ear, ripping the condom open with his teeth and rolling it onto his own aching cock.

"I want you," Michael gasped, riding Brian's fingers as he slowly rocked his hips.

"Just want?" Brian teased him, beginning to pull the fingers out.

"Need! I need you!" Michael called out. "Please! Fuck me!"

Brian's purrs turned to growls, and he pulled his fingers out, using both hands to spread Michael's ass, leering down at his already red hole. He pressed the tip of his sheathed dick against Michael's ass and watched as he pushed into his best friend's body.

Brian exhaled a shaky breath as he watched his own dick disappear slowly, so slowly into Michael, feeling Michael's body tighten around him, until he couldn't tell where his own body ended and Michael's began.

"More," Michael commanded with a gasp, thrusting back on Brian's cock, impaling himself on it.

Brian growled and shoved Michael's hips against the glass. He lifted his gaze, staring through the foggy, wet shower wall at the mirror across from them. Michael's chest and stomach pressed against the glass, his cock hard and red against it, and Brian thrust into him again, hard.

"Brian!" Michael called out again, dragging his nails down the slick glass.

Brian ducked his head, biting Michael's ear, as he slammed back into him, pressing Michael's body back against the glass wall.

"Brian!" Michael called again, squirming against the glass, pushing his ass back against Brian's body.

Brian stared through the glass, their eyes meeting in the reflection as Brian thrust faster, harder, his cock squeezed so tightly in Michael's ass. He inhaled a sharp breath, trying to hold on, trying to make it last.

"Brian," Michael moaned again, his eyes sliding shut. "So good... feels so good... more... please... fuck me..."

Brian's breath came in shaky, rough pants. "Yeah? Harder?" he growled into Michael's ear.

"Yes! Brian... harder... I want... please..." Michael moaned, his words becoming more and more indiscernible.

"Gonna come," Brian growled against his ear again, licking and biting it as he thrust, harder, harder, harder.

"Yes!" Michael called out, his ass tightening even more.

"Want me to come in you, Mikey?" Brian breathed into his ear, his balls tightening, his cock throbbing, so close to falling over the edge.

"Yes!" Michael gasped, reaching back with one hand to grasp Brian's head, his fingers digging into Brian's hair. "Brian..."

White light filled Brian's vision and all he could see was Michael's face in the reflection as he moaned, shuddering, slamming into Michael once more and coming hard, the condom filling with scalding heat.

Michael shuddered, letting out a trembling gasp. "Brian-" he moaned.

Brian reached around, his body still shaking, and grasped Michael's cock. "Come for me, Mikey," he purred.

With a hard gasp Michael did as he was command, coming into Brian's hand as jets of hot white come hit the glass wall.

Then they stood, panting, steaming water running down their exhausted bodies.

Brian wrapped an arm around Michael's waist and held him up while he reached down with his other hand, holding onto the condom as he slowly pulled out.

"Oh," Michael moaned in disappointment. "Not yet," he sighed.

Brian hesitated, swallowing hard. Christ, he wanted to stay in him, just like this, until he got hard again, and never pull out.

But that wasn't possible.

"C'mon, Mikey, I'll wash your hair," he murmured as he pulled out.

Michael moaned again and shivered against Brian's body as Brian peeled the slick condom from his dick. He tossed it out into the trash before wrapping his other arm around his best friend's body.

Michael let out a long, satisfied sigh as his head lolled back against Brian's shoulder. "That was..."

"Amazing? Stupendous?" Brian teased.

"Good enough, I guess," Michael responded, trying to hide a smile.

"Good enough?" Brian's fingers dug into Michael's ribs, right into familiar, ticklish spots.

Michael squealed, bursting into giggles, struggling in Brian's arms. "Stop! Stop!"

"How good was it?"

"Okay, I guess!" Michael laughed, wriggling against Brian's body.

Brian growled, lifting his fingers to Michael's armpits, going for the most sensitive place of all.

"No! Nonononono!" Michael shrieked, trying to yank away.

"Admit you loved it!" Brian said, teasing him with a light brush under his arms.

"Fine!" Michael gasped. "Fine! It was amazing! Fantastic! Stupendous!"

Brian grinned a cat-like grin and released his hostage. "That's better."

Michael turned in his arms and beamed up at him, his eyes squinty with joy. "Like you need the encouragement."

Brian smirked. "I like to think of it as positive reinforcement."

Michael laughed again.

"Of course, so was your, ah," Brian pretended to seek for a word. "-verbal encouragement."

Michael's eyes widened and a virgin flush appeared across his cheeks and nose.

Brian pressed his lips together hard, watching as the familiar sweet, sensitive Mikey and the newfound horny, slutty Michael battled inside his friend's body.

"Yeah, well, you make me slutty. That's not news. You're always a bad influence," Michael muttered, rolling his eyes, pretending it was no big deal. He turned, reaching for the shampoo.

Brian snatched the bottle of shampoo away from him and squirted some into his hands before massaging it deep into Michael's thick, black hair. "Oh, so it's my fault? You don't always beg for cock like that?"

Michael huffed, turning his head to glare at Brian. "You wanna know the truth?"

Brian hesitated. Did he? Images of Ben fucking Michael in hard, long thrusts, Michael tied to the bed, begging for Ben's dick, flashed through Brian's mind.

"No," Michael finished. "Not like that."

"Oh, really?" Brian said, almost disgusted at the affection he heard dripping from his voice like honey. Christ, he hoped no one else would notice.

Michael wrinkled his nose and smiled, relaxing again under the streams of hot water.

"It's only fair," Brian finally replied. "Everyone knows you're the only person I'm remotely comfortable around. I hate everyone else. I don't get on my knees for just anyone," Brian teased, lightening the mood.

Michael laughed, trying to turn his head to look at Brian. "Oh? I thought you were just secretly a cock-hungry bottom."

Brian snorted, brushing some shampoo from Michael's face to keep it out of his eyes. "You wish."

Michael's eyes sparkled. "So I guess you just love my cock," Michael teased.

Brian's eyebrows arched. "I told you. It's perfect. Perfectly shaped."

Michael's face flushed again, all the teasing blown out of him.

"Now hold still," Brian said, turning Michael's head again. He pressed his fingertips into Michael's scalp and rubbed in slow circles.

Michael sighed again, then shivered with pleasure. "You're good with your hands, Mr. Kinney," he murmured.

"Why, Mr. Novotny, has it really taken you so long to notice?" Brian replied, tugging Michael's head back by his hair.

Michael just smiled as Brian grabbed the shower head and guided the water to the soapy black hair, rinsing it clean.

Brian replaced the shower head and reached for the conditioner.

"Are you going to wash my hair every day?" Michael teased as Brian massaged the conditioner into his hair.

"No, tomorrow you do me."

Michael paused for a long, silent moment, and Brian sighed, waiting for Michael to notice how that sounded.

"I thought you said you aren't a bottom," Michael finally said, giggles almost bursting through his words.

Brian huffed and released Michael, grabbed the shower head, and squirted him directly in the face.

Emmett watched Brian enter the diner, his arm around Michael's shoulders. They looked almost

the same, except for the way Brian's fingers stroked Michael's shoulder, the way Michael leaned into him, and the peaceful smiles on their glowing faces.

"Christ," Ted muttered, stabbing his salad with his fork.

"Be sweet," Emmett whispered, nudging him.

He himself had the instinct to groan, to tense up, to remember the years of Michael's tears for the other heartless man. But that was years ago, and the man before him resembled little the cold, ice man of years prior.

"Hey, guys," Michael chirped, beaming.

Brian slipped into the booth, tugging Michael in by the belt loop.

Emmett couldn't help but smile, pushing his concerns aside. He sipped his soda to hide his grin. "How are my favorite love birds?"

"Fabulous," Brian drawled.

Michael just smiled with a flush.

"And your concussion?" Ted asked.

"Fine, Theodore," Brian said, uncharacteristically patient sounding. "Nothing's changed since breakfast."

"I'm watching him," Michael said.

"I bet," Ted mumbled.

"He won't let me drive," Brian grumbled, rolling his eyes as sarcastically as possible.

"Good," Emmett said. "You've been in enough car accidents!"

Brian just reached across the table and stole a french fry from Emmett's plate.

"Boys," Debbie said, nodding and smacking her gum. "Wasn't the pasta enough? Should you be out? Your head's-"

"I'm fine. Mikey's a great nursemaid." He smirked.

Michael beamed at his mother. "Hi, ma!"

"Well, I'd say you should be in bed, but I bet you'll get more rest out of it. I see it took ya `till noon to leave the house."

"Ma!" Michael hissed.

Brian snorted, giving her a cocky leer. "Like I said, Mikey is taking good care of me."

"Brian!" Michael mumbled, his blush darkening.

"Teddy said you said the L word," Emmett said, smirking across the table at Brian.

Michael's eyebrows arched and he glanced sidelong at Brian before looking down at the table with a secretive smile.

"Oh?" Brian asked with as much innocence as he could muster. Tongue in cheek, Brian glanced down at Michael before making eye contact with Debbie. "Maybe I did."

Debbie huffed. "I heard it myself," she said.

Emmett squealed. "Now you're really boyfriends!"

"Aren't they a little old to be boyfriends?" Ted asked, teasing.

"Speak for yourself, grandpa. Mikey and I will be young forever, right?"

Michael looked up into Brian's eyes. The wide smile on his face relaxed, softened into one Emmett had never seen on his face before.

The men stared into each other's eyes silently and Brian's fingers stroked Michael's shoulder through his wool coat.

Their gazes didn't part.