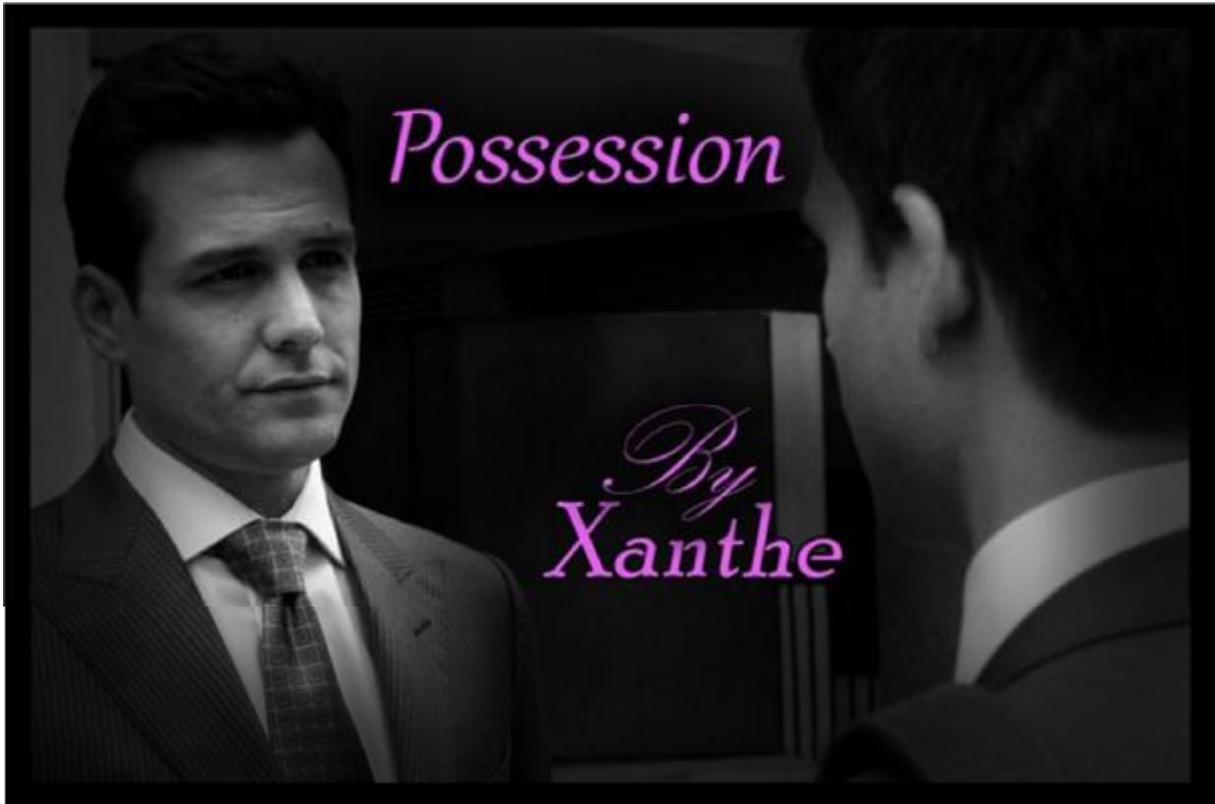


Possession by Xanthe



Story archived: <http://www.xanthe.org/possession/>
Story Notes:

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Part One: Hostile Takeover Bid by Xanthe

Possession

Part One: Hostile Takeover Bid

“You see, Mike, there are winners and there are losers in this world. And do you want to know how to make sure you’re a winner and not a loser?”

Mike stifled a yawn and handed Louis the big stack of files he’d spent all morning retrieving from the file room.

“I’m sure you’re going to tell me,” he muttered. His back was aching, and if Harvey had come looking for him at any point in the past few hours then his afternoon was going to be just as unpleasant as his morning had been so far. Not that Harvey had come looking for him much lately. He seemed to have been avoiding him since the Clifford Danner case, and Mike had no idea why.

Louis gave him a reptilian smile. “I am, Mike, yes, because I look at you and see myself.”

“Really?” Mike felt faintly alarmed by that.

“Yes – I mean, you’re not as bright or as good-looking, but I can see in you a paler, inferior version of myself, as I was at your age.”

“Really?” Mike injected more sarcasm into it this time. “Will this take long, Louis, only...” he gestured in the direction of Harvey’s office.

“Winners and losers, Mike! You want to be on the winning team, don’t you?”

“Yes, Louis, I do.” Mike nodded. If he’d learned one thing from the past few months working at Pearson Hardman, it was that losing was a disgrace you wanted to avoid at all costs.

“Well, the secret, my friend, and I tell you this as a friend...” Louis leaned forward conspiratorially, beckoning. Mike hesitated and then leaned in too. Louis moved in a bit closer, so their heads almost banged together; Mike drew back a fraction.

“The secret is to keep your eyes open and look around; spot the winners and make sure you’re always on their team. That way you’ll be a winner too.”

Louis sat back and gazed at him expectantly. Mike pondered that for a moment, wondering what he was being told. This was Louis, so there had to be an ulterior motive or hidden meaning in there somewhere.

Louis gave a theatrical sigh. "I'm saying, Michael...Mikey...uh...Mike...what I'm saying is - who brings in the big payloads around here?" He had the cocky look on his face that Mike always found faintly repellent. He was looking smugly expectant, his fingers tapping impatiently on the desk in front of him as he waited for Mike's answer.

"Uh...Harvey?" Mike ventured.

"What? No!" Louis's face turned sulky. "Harvey's showy, sure...he has the name, and the **reputation**." He said that sneeringly. "But in terms of the big bucks, it's me, Mike. Me. Moi. Numero uno. I'm the winner around here. So, if you want to be a winner too..."

"I should be on your team?"

"Now you're getting it." Louis gave a smirk. "That's right, Mike. I'm a winner, so if you're smart, you'll get into bed with me."

Mike hoped he didn't mean that literally, but he gave a shudder at the mental image anyway.

"See..." Louis beckoned him back again. "I know, Mike."

Mike felt his stomach flip at that. Did Louis know his secret? How? Only he and Harvey, and possibly Donna, knew about his lack of a Harvard law degree.

"What is it you know, Louis?" Mike asked carefully.

"I know you have an exceptional memory; almost photographic. I've been secretly testing you, Mike."

"Well, it's not really a secret..."

Louis waved a hand in the air. "See, facts, figures, dates...the devil is in the detail, but that stuff...well, it's dull. I'm bigger than that. I'm a mover. I'm a dealer. You get what I'm saying?"

"Oh yes." Mike nodded. He got it.

"Look, Mike, I've got a secret of my own." Louis beckoned him back again, and Mike went, more cautiously this time. Louis made a show of looking around his office theatrically, to make sure that nobody was there. Mike did his best to hide his eye roll.

"Jessica has made it known to me - discreetly - that I'm soon going to be a senior partner."

"Really?" Mike tried to sound impressed.

"Oh yes!" Louis looked like the cat that'd got the cream. "Really. And of course, when that

happens I'll be allowed to have my own associate – and I'd like to offer that prestigious job to you, Mike. We could be a great team. You could do the boring stuff, while I do the big, important stuff."

"When you put it like that, it's a hard offer to refuse."

Mike's sarcastic tone was lost on Louis. "That's right. And you don't want to refuse me, Mike." Louis's face turned suddenly ugly. "You really don't."

Mike tried very hard not to laugh in his face. "Yeah, see, thing is, I'm not sure what Harvey would have to say about that."

Louis's expression darkened even more. "Harvey has nothing to do with this. He doesn't own you. "

"Doesn't he?" a voice behind them said, and Mike swung around, unsure if he should be relieved or petrified to see Harvey standing in the doorway.

Harvey looked as smooth and unruffled as ever, but Mike had become attuned to Harvey's moods. He could tell by the slight drag of Harvey's eyebrow that he was amused, by the little curl of his lip that he was annoyed, and by the slight crease of his brow that his cunning brain was already machinating – although about what, Mike had no idea.

Louis looked like a kid caught with his hand in the cookie jar. Yet, despite being caught in the act, he clearly had no intention of relinquishing his hold on the cookie he coveted so much. Mike wasn't sure he liked being the cookie in this analogy, but there was something curiously hot about watching Harvey and Louis face off over him.

"If you want an associate to order around, go find your own. I believe Harold's available." Harvey jerked his head down the hallway, and Mike couldn't help grinning; Harold would hardly be anyone's first choice.

Louis scowled at him. "I'm just pointing out to Ross that he might want to think twice about who he **associates** with." He smiled at his little play on words. "Hooking up with you might not have been his best career move. Your risk-taking has earned you a certain reputation, Harvey, but when you fall – and we all know you will fall one day soon – then you'll take Mike with you on the way down. I'm just trying to look out for him."

"Hmmm." Harvey appeared to consider that. "No, I don't think that's it, Louis. I think this is just you, wanting whatever belongs to me, as usual."

There was something about the idea of belonging to Harvey that made Mike's stomach do a little flip. He ignored it because it was both presumptuous and arrogant for Harvey to act like he owned him.

"Uh...guys...I don't actually belong to anyone but myself," he interjected.

Harvey's laser-like gaze moved from Louis to him, and Mike almost regretted saying anything. Now the little drag of Harvey's eyebrow signalled that he'd gone from amused to **highly** amused.

"Is that so?" he asked, in a deceptively mild tone.

"Well, yes. I mean, I work for you, and for Pearson Hardman, and sometimes even for Louis. But nobody actually owns me."

Harvey appeared to ponder this, while Louis gloated, visibly. "He's right. He might be, for now, nominally your associate but remember he reports to me – because I'm in charge of all the associates. His contract of employment is with Pearson Hardman, and his services are for anyone's use. He's not exclusively **yours**, Harvey, and if he chose to be mine instead there isn't a damn thing you could do about it."

Mike wasn't so sure he liked the idea of his services being for anyone's use. That made him sound like a general whore rather than someone's specific courtesan. And he actually felt a bit dejected at the idea of not being Harvey's, despite what he'd said. He liked being Harvey's. He always got a little glow whenever Harvey referred to him as his puppy or his boy, although he never liked to examine **why** too closely.

"I'm sure you've both heard the term 'possession is nine-tenths of the law'," Harvey said smoothly.

"Of course," Louis replied. "But you don't possess Mike."

Harvey gave a slow smile, and Mike felt an exhilarating tingle of fear creep down his spine. When Harvey was in full danger mode there was nothing to do but hold onto the sides of the ride and scream for all you were worth on the way down.

"Mike, explain what the old adage, 'possession is nine-tenths of the law' means," Harvey instructed.

"Uh well..." Mike thought back to the relevant page in his memory. "It's not a legal precept as such. It's more just a general expression meaning that ownership is easier to maintain if one has possession of something, and much more difficult to enforce if one does not. "

"That's right." Harvey nodded. "Or, to put it another way: in a property dispute, in the absence of clear and compelling testimony or documentation to the contrary, the person in actual possession of the property is presumed to be the rightful owner. So that tie you're wearing..." Harvey glanced at Mike's tie with a wince. "Is presumed to be yours unless someone can prove that it is not, although why anyone would lay claim to such an ugly tie is beyond me. It's surely bad enough that you are claiming ownership yourself, via the express means of wearing it."

"It actually belongs to Trevor." Mike grinned at him.

“Really?” Harvey’s eyebrow shot up his forehead. “Well, I can see why he hasn’t sued to get it back.”

“The adage isn’t literally true,” Louis interjected, looking irritated by their banter. “The legal truth is that every claimant must succeed by the strength of his own title, and not by the weakness of his antagonist’s.”

“*Uti possidetis*,” Harvey shot back. “As you possess, so may you continue to possess, which, in Mike’s case, unfortunately, means he’s stuck with a very ugly tie.”

Mike laughed out loud at that. Louis looked annoyed.

“And in my case, as Mike is my associate, hired by me to do my bidding, I claim possession,” Harvey continued.

“Except Mike has free will. He’s not a tie or a piece of property!” Louis snapped. “You can’t possess him!”

“Oh, can’t I?” The look Harvey gave Mike sent the shivers currently running up and down his spine into overdrive. “Look, Louis, I’m tired of you constantly machinating to acquire Mike’s services. It’s getting old. I suggest we reconvene here at 10 a.m. tomorrow, when you will capitulate and agree to stop trying to weasel Mike out of my office and into yours, once and for all.”

“And why would I do that?” Louis sneered.

“Because then I will prove both ownership and possession beyond all doubt. Deal?” Harvey held out his hand.

Louis gave it a hostile look but shook it all the same. “Deal. Seeing as how you can’t.”

Harvey’s supremely confident smile indicated that Louis might just have made a bad bargain; it certainly left Mike wondering what on earth Harvey was going to do to prove his ‘possession’. As far as he could see, Louis was right; his contract was with Pearson Hardman not Harvey personally, even if he **had** hired him, and if he chose to be Louis’s associate instead of Harvey’s, there wasn’t a damn thing Harvey could do about it. Not that he intended to make that choice.

Mike sighed. “Haven’t we been here before?” he asked, looking from Louis to Harvey and back again. “And I said then that I’m not a chattel, and I’ll say it again. Could I also point out that last time you and Harvey made a wager over my services, you decided you didn’t actually want them when you got them,” Mike said to Louis.

“That’s because Harvey screwed up and let you run a case alone with the inevitable result that you created a total mess. I won’t be doing that, Mike. I’ll be a proper mentor and give you real help and advice, like a good mentor should.”

Harvey's eyes flashed darkly, and Mike knew Louis had hit a nerve. Harvey's history with his own mentors was complex, and Mike was sure that had affected their own relationship. Harvey had a tendency to blow hot and cold, sometimes giving him help and advice and other times leaving him to screw up all by himself. Mike resented that; Harvey **knew** he hadn't gone to law school. He might have a photographic memory and understand the law but that wasn't the same as knowing how to practice it.

"And if you fail to prove possession," Louis purred. "Then I get Mike, and you get..." he shrugged, a nasty grin on his face. "Harold."

Harvey's expression didn't falter, but a muscle in his jaw twitched. Mike doubted that Louis noticed it, but he did.

"Fine. Deal," Harvey said brusquely. He turned on his heel. "Mike, with me," he ordered, as he stalked out of the office.

~*~

"You bartered me? For real this time - not just for ten days but forever?" Mike said hotly as he ran after Harvey. "Damn it, Harvey, what the hell were you thinking?"

Harvey spun round. "I'm thinking that you spent all morning running errands for Louis when I gave you work to do, so right now you might as well be his associate and not mine."

"That's not fair! He told me I had to...he said it was urgent, and if I wanted to keep my job I should..." Mike took a step back, alarmed by the dark look in Harvey's eyes.

"Mike, he's playing you. You heard him back there. Do you **want** to be Louis's lackey?"

"No! I'd far rather be your lackey." Mike grinned, trying to calm the situation down.

"Really? Because I'm not seeing any evidence of that right now." Harvey didn't return his grin. He just looked intently into Mike's eyes.

Mike felt his grin fading. "Of course I don't want to work for Louis, Harvey!"

"It's not just about work, Mike."

Harvey's intent gaze bored holes into him, and Mike swallowed hard. "I just...look, Harvey, he told me to do something. He outranks me, so I thought I should do it."

"I asked you to do something too. Any reason why my work is still sitting on your desk untouched and his has been done?"

"He's meaner than you?" Mike suggested, which was partly the truth. Harvey was a tyrannical slave driver, but he wasn't a low-life like Louis.

“You don’t think I can be mean?” Harvey’s dark-eyed gaze made Mike feel like he was walking further and further into a trap with every word he said. Harvey moved in close, a little smile playing at the corners of his mouth. “Oh, I can be mean, Mike,” he murmured into Mike’s ear. “I can be mean, demanding and completely without mercy, as you’re about to find out this evening. Be at my apartment at eight p.m. sharp.”

“Your apartment?” Mike repeated, surprised. “But you never let me into your apartment.”

“Well, let’s hope that I do tonight, or you’ll be spending it on the floor outside my front door.”

“C’mon, Harvey! I said I’m sorry.”

“Actually, you didn’t.” Harvey looked frankly annoyed, and Mike had the feeling that he’d done something to really piss him off. He just wasn’t sure what precisely.

Was this really all about him spending the morning working for Louis? It seemed more personal than that, and Mike was confused as to what he’d done wrong. It was as if he’d unwittingly broken some special Harvey rule he wasn’t even aware of, and his confusion made him defensive.

“If you were around more often, maybe I’d have done your work instead of Louis’s, but I’ve barely seen you in weeks!” he snapped. “You’re right - I might as well be Louis’s associate and not yours for all the damn attention you’ve been paying me lately. At least Louis seems interested in actually **being** my mentor, which is more than I’m getting from you right now.”

The sense of danger skyrocketed as Harvey’s expression darkened. “So this is all about getting my attention?” He moved in even closer, so that Mike could feel the cool, silken interior of his suit jacket against his hand. “You want my attention, Mike? Well, you’ve got it; I just hope you can handle it. Tonight, Mike. And prepare for a long night. You won’t be getting much sleep.”

That sounded ominous, and Mike felt another flare of temper. He didn’t see how any of this was his fault, so why was he in so much trouble with Harvey?

“So, you’re going to make me stay up working all night to punish me for helping Louis this morning?” he asked petulantly.

“Oh, I expect there will be punishment, yes,” Harvey said silkily.

Mike’s stomach did a strangely excited little flip. “And how is working me into the ground all night going to prove your point about possession to Louis?” he demanded.

Harvey’s only reply to that was a laugh. He turned and began striding away.

"I'm going out for the rest of the afternoon. You will be at my apartment at eight tonight. Don't be late, Mike," he instructed over his shoulder as he disappeared around the corner.

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Louis marched up to Mike's cubicle an hour later, leaned on it, and flashed him a smarmy grin.

"Mike – let's get lunch."

"Louis, look, I'm flattered and all, but I have to get all this proof-read for Harvey by this evening," Mike replied, pointing at the massive pile of legal papers on his desk.

"Harold will do it. Harold!" Louis picked up the pile of papers before Mike could protest and threw them onto Harold's desk. "Proof that. You've got three hours. Fail, and I'll fire you."

Harold's pale skin flushed a dark red, and he grabbed the papers and immediately launched himself into the task. Mike almost felt sorry for him.

Louis turned back to him. "Mike – I've booked a table for us at Medici's for lunch."

"Medici's?"

"It's the hottest new restaurant in town. You've probably read the reviews. There's already a six month waiting list for a table, but I made a call, and they were falling over themselves to get me in for lunch today." Louis preened and adjusted his tie with a flourish.

"And you want to take me there?" Mike asked blankly.

"I do." Louis smiled. "I don't think you fully understand the deal I was offering you earlier, Mike. I want you to see how this could really benefit you."

Mike sighed. "Please, Louis, just let it drop. I'm in enough trouble with Harvey as it is, and..."

"Forget Harvey. He's just using you. Hitch your wagon to mine, and you'll find your career will really start to take off. Now, come with me."

Louis snapped his fingers and walked swiftly towards the door. Mike stared after him for a moment, but then he figured it'd do his ego good to have Louis fawning all over him, to say nothing of paying for him to eat lunch at the most expensive restaurant in town.

Harvey not only hadn't been around much lately, but when he was he always seemed to be doing his best to keep Mike at arm's length. It would be nice to spend some time with someone who actually appreciated him, even if Louis's appreciation was a double-edged sword.

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The food at Medici's was over-priced, frou-frou crap to Mike's mind, but he enjoyed choosing several of the most expensive items on the menu and watching Louis blanch in response.

Louis didn't waste much time; Mike was only halfway through his starter when Louis took out a sheaf of papers.

"Mike, I'm serious about this. So serious, I'm prepared to put it in writing. This is an agreement I've drawn up, between you and me. I'm suggesting putting you on a retainer – out of my own money – as a placeholder until such time as I make Senior Partner – which, Jessica has assured me, will be within three months. After that, you'll become my associate, and I'll give you 5% commission on any bonus Pearson Harman awards me. And, let's face it, I'm going to be earning some very big bonuses." Louis gave a confident grin.

"Commission?" Mike stared at Louis, open-mouthed.

Louis tapped his chin with his index finger to close his jaw. "Manners, Mike. I can see an entire mouthful of food."

"You're doing this just to win that stupid wager with Harvey?"

"Of course not. Well, not entirely." Louis shrugged.

"You two are insane, you know that? You both work for the same firm; this weird, competitive rivalry between you is crazy."

"No, it's not; it keeps us sharp. And don't call me crazy. As for the wager, I already told you I want you to be my associate and if this is the way to get you, then I'll happily play Harvey's stupid game with him – and win."

"And this is how you're going to win?"

"Of course." Louis gave an offhand shrug. "Look, I figure there's only one way to prove possession of someone, Mike, and that's to buy them."

"You're buying me?" Mike asked, still in shock.

"Yes, I am."

"And what makes you think I'm for sale?"

"Oh, everyone has a price, Mike." Louis smirked. "I bet Harvey hasn't offered you a cut of his bonus, has he?"

"Uh...no." Mike stared at the piece of paper in front of him. There was no doubt this would

help with a lot of his financial worries. His grandmother's nursing home wasn't cheap, and he still had considerable debts from his previous life. This would take care of all those worries in one go.

"All I ask is that you commit." Louis gestured at the papers on the table in front of him. "See, Harvey made a big mistake not locking you into an exclusive agreement. I'm not going to make the same mistake, Mike. I want you to agree to work as my associate, exclusively for me, on the terms I just laid out, and sign on the dotted line." He got out an expensive fountain pen and placed it on top of the papers. "Well, what do you say?"

"Uh..." Mike tried to swallow down the food, which now felt dry and tasteless in his mouth. He took a gulp of water, suddenly not feeling hungry anymore. "Well, first of all, I need to read this."

"You don't trust me?" Louis grinned at him.

"Well, you are a lawyer." Mike grinned back, playing for time. He needed to think this through.

"Takes one to know one, huh? Fine. Take it away, read it. But if Harvey offers you a better deal, I'll eat my hat."

Mike frowned. "Do you even own a hat?"

"No. You know what I mean. Look, Mike – if Harvey offers you a better deal, just give me a chance to counter-offer. Okay? Don't just accept without talking to me first."

"Hang on! You really think Harvey's going to offer me money to stay with him?"

"Of course." Louis looked surprised. "Come on, Mike – how the hell else is he going to prove his stupid point about possession? You take the king's shilling; you become the king's man. Everyone knows that."

"Right," Mike said uncertainly. "And you're the king in this analogy?" He picked up the papers, folded them, and placed them in his jacket pocket.

"If the shoe fits." Louis nudged him conspiratorially. "You and me, Mike – we're going to make a great team. I'll take you all the way to the top with me. I'm not like Harvey – I take care of my underlings."

"You think Harvey doesn't take care of me?" Mike felt the gnawing sense of insecurity that had been with him since he'd first met Harvey. He wanted Harvey to be proud of him and impressed by him, and he would work his ass off to make it happen, but he wasn't sure Harvey felt that way. He certainly hadn't showed it recently if he did.

They had these moments, when Mike felt as if Harvey liked and valued him, when they laughed, and joked, and wrangled their way around the law, winning cases and swapping

movie quotes...and then it was like a reset button was pressed, and Harvey was back to his usual inscrutable self. Mike didn't know where he stood with him.

Louis laughed out loud. "Harvey wants you because you make him look good, but he doesn't do enough to keep you. If he did, you wouldn't be sitting here right now, listening to my deal. Something's missing." Louis gave him another of those smug smirks, and Mike shifted uncomfortably. Damn Louis for so easily seeing a tiny piece of his soul.

Mike wasn't sure what it was he wanted from Harvey exactly, but he knew he wasn't getting it – or at least he was getting glimpses but not the whole deal. He also knew he wouldn't get it from Louis – but at least he'd get something else out of that deal, and he'd never again have to worry about his grandmother being thrown out of her nursing home.

"I believe the best way to ensure loyalty is to buy it," Louis told him. "I'll buy your loyalty with cold, hard cash. You do a good job for me, and you'll buy my loyalty in return. I'll see you do well out of it."

Mike stared at him, remembering Louis's words to him earlier in the day. Now he wondered if he'd been looking at this the wrong way. Louis had told him that the way to get ahead was to identify a winner and get on their team. Maybe that was what Louis himself was doing right now. He thought Mike was a winner, and he wanted to snap him up in order to further his own career.

Mike wasn't sure how he felt about that. At least Louis was viewing him as a winner, whereas Harvey seemed to view him as a puppy, to be ordered around at his whim. Inexplicably, Mike got that thrilling little shiver again. In a choice between being viewed as a winner or a puppy, it should have been a no-brainer, and yet somehow it wasn't.

Maybe Harvey was right, after all, and emotions had no place in business. Louis was offering him a good deal. Why should Mike let his loyalty to Harvey get in the way of his own career? If Harvey has been offered the same deal then he'd probably sign without a second thought. Hell, Harvey would probably laugh at him for hesitating.

Mike found he couldn't eat much more – his stomach was churning too much as he tried to figure out what to do for the best. He barely listened as Louis bragged about his latest deal and some woman he was supposedly dating, and he was relieved when the whole thing was over, and he could scurry back to his cubicle for some alone time to figure this out in his head.

"Do what's best for you, Mike," was Louis's parting shot as they returned to the office. "Put Mike Ross first – then you'll know what you have to do."

Mike wished he did. Those papers burned a hole in his pocket, and he felt guilty for even thinking about Louis's offer, yet he couldn't stop thinking about it all the same – especially when all he was getting from Harvey were stern words, angry looks, and the prospect of working an all-nighter as a punishment for something that wasn't his fault.

Mike went home after work and took a shower. He considered wearing a pair of holey jeans and a stained sweater to Harvey's place, just to annoy him, knowing how much appearances mattered to Harvey, but in the end he decided against it. If he was going to dump Harvey on his ass and get into bed with Louis (Mike shuddered again at the mental image), then the least he could do was to show up looking halfway decent.

He pulled on his best pair of jeans and layered a blue sweater over a white tee shirt in a way that he thought might just meet Harvey's exacting sartorial standards. Then it occurred to him that he'd need a suit for the following day if Harvey intended to make him work all night, so he packed one up in a garment bag with a shirt, tie and underwear, and attached the bag to the back of his bike.

He took one look around the place and saw Louis's papers lying on the bed. He hadn't signed them, but he was seriously considering it, and that bothered him.

"Judas," he told himself. "Harvey gave you your break. If it wasn't for him, you'd be doing time in prison, or lying at the bottom of the Atlantic with a bullet through your head courtesy of Trevor's drug-dealing friends."

Maybe he should mention this to Harvey and give him a chance to persuade him to stay. Maybe he should show him the contract Louis had drawn up. But he hated the thought of the look of betrayed disappointment he was sure he'd see in Harvey's eyes if he found out he was even considering it.

In the end, Mike grabbed the papers and stuffed them into his bag. He could decide later. He didn't have to decide now. He had until tomorrow morning after all, and maybe Harvey would say something tonight that would help him decide what to do.

Mike didn't think for a second that Harvey would offer him money, the way Louis had.

But how else was he going to win his bet with Louis tomorrow...?

End of Part One

Part Two: Counterclaim by Xanthe

Possession

Part Two: Counterclaim

When Mike got to Harvey's apartment building he found there was nowhere outside to chain up his bike. He stood there, looking around, at a loss as to what to do. He didn't think the highly fastidious Harvey would appreciate him bringing his bike into his no doubt perfectly decorated apartment, but he couldn't just leave it out here.

He dithered for a moment, until a tall man in a uniform stepped out of Harvey's building and approached him.

“Are you Michael Ross? I’m Jeff, the building superintendent. Mr Specter has left instructions for me to take care of your bike,” he said smoothly.

“Uh...yeah, I’m Mike Ross...uh...you wear a uniform?”

“I do.” Jeff smiled and took the bike out of Mike’s hands. “Mr Specter specifically said your bicycle was to be given its own parking space. I’ll show you where.”

“It’s own...? Uh...okay...” Mike followed the super into the building, then into an elevator and down into the parking garage.

“You can keep it here whenever you visit,” Jeff said, walking over to a highly polished car that Mike recognised as the one Harvey drove when he wasn’t being chauffeured around by Ray. Next to it, brand new and just as gleaming as the car, was a bicycle stand.

Mike stared at it. “That’s for my bike?”

“Yes, Mr Ross. Mr Specter’s specific instructions. Here is a card to access the garage.” He handed Mike a card, which Mike took, still trying to wrap his head around the idea that Harvey had, for some reason, bought a bicycle stand for him to keep his bike in when he visited his apartment, like it was going to be a regular thing.

He was still trying to figure it out as he rode the elevator up to the top floor and then walked along the hallway to Harvey’s penthouse apartment.

He glanced at his watch. It was eight p.m. exactly.

“As ordered, Mr Specter,” he muttered under his breath, knocking on the door.

Harvey opened it, and Mike stepped inside. “I don’t get it,” he said as he walked into the apartment, barely looking at Harvey. “Last time I came here, you wouldn’t even let me in the door, and now you’re giving me my own bike stand?”

“Last time you came here, you were drunk,” Harvey said.

“Yeah, but...” Mike turned and got a full look at Harvey...and found his mouth drying up for the second time that day.

Harvey was wearing a pair of perfectly fitted and probably very expensive dark blue jeans and a tight, tailored black shirt. He’d clearly taken a shower after work and his hair wasn’t slicked into position the way it usually was. It was natural, tousled, and Mike could see traces of lighter highlights that were usually obscured by Harvey’s zealous use of hair product. He looked stunning.

“You...” Mike felt his mouth opening and closing like a fish.

“I?” Harvey looked amused.

"Aren't wearing a suit," Mike finished lamely.

"I don't tend to when I'm relaxing in my own home," Harvey told him, rolling his eyes. "And neither are you...but I see you brought one with you." He nodded his head at the garment bag Mike had slung over his shoulder.

"Well, you said it was going to be a long night, so I figured you'd have me working all night while you went out, and that I'd still be here at the crack of dawn and then if I didn't get to work on time tomorrow you'd chew my ass out. So I thought I'd bring a suit to wear tomorrow to save time."

"Interesting." Harvey took the suit from him and went into another room. He reappeared without it.

"Wow...Harvey...this place is amazing." Mike dumped his bag on the sofa and glanced around the living room. They were on the top corner of the building, and there were floor to ceiling windows everywhere, giving a magnificent view all over the city. "I mean, I could tell it was sweet from what I saw of it over your shoulder that time, but it's really something!"

"Work hard, and you can have a place like this yourself one day," Harvey told him. "Drink?"

"Yeah...beer." Mike continued glancing around, wondering if there was even the remotest chance he'd be able to afford something like this one day, hard work or not.

"Uh-uh." Harvey shook his head. "Soft drink."

"Oh right...this is a work night. Forgot." Mike pulled a face at him.

"Don't pout, Mike. It's not becoming in a grown man."

Harvey handed him a bottle of Coke and then leaned back and took a swig from his own bottle. Mike watched, fascinated, as Harvey's lips sucked down hard on the bottle, and his Adam's apple bobbed up and down as he swallowed down the drink.

Harvey's shirt was open at the neck, and he looked strange and un-Harvey-like somehow, as a result. Usually Harvey's clothes were so buttoned up, to such exquisitely tailored perfection, that it was hard to get a glimpse of the flesh beneath. Now Mike could see the soft, tanned skin covering his collarbone, and he licked his lips and took a sip of his own drink, grateful for the coolness of the liquid as it hit the back of his throat.

"So, what are you going to have me working on all night?" he asked.

"Who said anything about work?" Harvey looked amused.

"You did! You said I had to work all night as a punishment for prioritising Louis's work over yours this morning."

“No, that’s not what I said. It’s what you assumed, Mike, and you know how I feel about you making assumptions without checking the facts first.”

“Then what am I doing here?”

Harvey shrugged. “You said you wanted my attention, Mike, so I’m giving it to you.”

Mike stared at him. “Is this some kind of joke?”

“What? No – and I’m hurt.” Harvey’s eyebrow shot a little way up his forehead. He didn’t look hurt; he looked amused.

“A trap then?” Mike asked, eyes narrowing.

Harvey laughed and shook his head benignly. “Mike, Mike, Mike...you’re so suspicious. I like it. And no, not a trap.”

“But you said there would be some kind of punishment?” Mike wasn’t sure why his voice broke a little as he said that.

Harvey gave him an amused smile. “I did, yes, and there will. But later,” he said firmly. “First...we eat.”

He reached out and put a hand on Mike’s shoulder, and Mike almost jumped through the roof at the electricity of the touch. Harvey’s fingers soothed his jitters, squeezing his shoulder gently, and Mike found himself calming down. Harvey’s hand was warm and firm as it guided Mike through the open balcony doors and out onto a deck.

“Holy shit.”

Mike stood there, the wind rifling gently through his hair, gazing over the city spread out below. He got a little insight into what it must be like to be Harvey, looking out over this city like he owned it, a king high up in his palace, looking down on all the lesser beings scurrying around on the ground below.

A sizzling sound caught his attention, and he turned to see Harvey standing beside a barbeque with little flames licking at the grill. Harvey slapped a second steak onto the grill and glanced over at him.

“How do you like your steak?” he asked. “I’d recommend rare, but it’s up to you.”

“You cook things?” Mike said stupidly. “You?”

“Yes, Mike. I cook things,” Harvey said with an impatient flick of his head. “These steaks have been soaking in a special marinade for the past few hours.”

“For me?”

“For us. You hungry? There’s salad and potatoes over there.” Harvey jerked his head in the direction of a table, laid out on the corner of the deck. Like everything in Harvey’s office and his apartment, and like all the clothes that graced Harvey’s body, it was exquisitely presented.

“I’ll leave it up to you. The steak. Just give it to me the way you eat it,” Mike said, still reeling from the strange turn the evening had taken. This was not what he had been expecting, at all.

It was a warm evening, and Mike took a seat and watched as Harvey seared the steaks expertly over the flame and then tossed them onto a plate.

“See if you like it first. I can throw one of them back on for longer if not,” Harvey said, cutting a piece off one of the steaks. He speared it on a fork and held it up to Mike’s lips. It felt strangely intimate to take food from Harvey like this, and Mike felt a warm glow flush through him. He opened his mouth and took the meat off Harvey’s fork.

The meat melted instantly on his tongue in a warm wave of delicious flavours and textures. Mike had never tasted anything so good, and he couldn’t help giving a moan of appreciation.

“Good huh?” Harvey had an entirely too smug grin on his face, but on this occasion, Mike thought he’d earned it.

“It’s fantastic. How do you get the meat to melt like that?”

“You pay for the finest fresh meat from the best butcher in town.” Harvey laughed, serving up the two steaks on plates. “You hungry? There are two more in the fridge.”

“Starving.” Mike began helping himself eagerly to salad and warm potatoes.

“Didn’t you have any lunch?” Harvey enquired smoothly, and Mike looked up, wondering if Harvey knew about his lunch with Louis.

“Louis took me out to some fancy new restaurant that just opened,” he admitted, deciding now was not a good time to lie, especially if Harvey had already found out. “The food was crap.”

“Medici’s? I went there last week. It was okay.” Harvey shrugged.

“Do you mind that I went there with Louis?” Mike asked carefully.

“Did you get my proofs done?” Harvey asked back.

“Harold did them. Louis insisted.” Mike shrugged. “I did go over them myself when I got

back though, in case Harold missed anything.”

“And did he?”

“Yes.”

“Which is why I asked you to do them.” Harvey sat back, looking at him thoughtfully.

“Which is why I double-checked them to be sure,” Mike shot back.

“Then there’s nothing to worry about, is there?” Harvey said pleasantly, raising his bottle of Coke in the air. “Let’s eat.”

Mike chinked his bottle of Coke grudgingly against Harvey’s, feeling un-nerved. “Why are you being so nice?” he asked as he began eating.

“I’m always nice.” Harvey gave another one of his smug smiles.

“No, you’re really not.”

Harvey’s eyes flashed, but his expression was unreadable. Mike wasn’t sure what that was about.

“Look, Harvey, what the hell happened?” Mike asked, deciding to tackle the problem head on. “It seemed to me like we were getting along well – I really loved working on the Clifford Danner case with you. It felt like we were...I dunno...friends?” He felt stupid for saying that, because he suspected that Harvey’s friends were in a different league completely – if Harvey actually deigned to bother with something as ordinary as friendships. “Or if not friends...just we worked really well together there. I even gave you the idea that got Cliff out of jail.”

“Well, technically speaking you stole it from *Mississippi Burning*,” Harvey pointed out.

“Aw, are you still bummed that I had the idea instead of you?” Mike grinned at him, wanting back the easy banter they’d had when they’d worked on that case.

“I broke one of my own rules and allowed my emotions to get in the way,” Harvey said, taking a thoughtful sip of his Coke.

“Aha!” Mike pointed at him. “So you admit you do **have** emotions!”

“Of course.” Harvey looked surprised. “I said I’m **against** having them – not that I **don’t** have them. And I have good reason for that. I learned the hard way during my time with Cameron that if you fight law cases with your emotions then you lose – and I don’t like losing.”

“So you try to suppress your emotions?”

“I try to think clearly and logically and emotions cloud that. They get in the way of my

brilliance and that makes them a luxury I can't afford."

"Okay. I think I get it. I'm just not sure it's possible."

"Look at the Clifford Danner case. When I got emotional, I started losing. I wouldn't have needed your help if I hadn't allowed myself to get in that situation in the first place. It was a lapse." Harvey looked annoyed with himself.

"Is that why you cut me out after the case?" Mike asked.

Harvey raised an eyebrow.

"C'mon, Harvey – you totally cut me out. Before then, we were working really well together, and you were being a real mentor to me, but then you suddenly became distant with me and it all stopped."

Harvey studied his food intently, making no reply.

"Did I get too close, Harvey?" Mike said softly. "Did you let me in too far? 'Cause after Jenny went back to Trevor I was really broken up. I could have used a friend, but you just cut me dead."

"Emotions should always be kept separate from work, Mike," Harvey told him. "They just get in the way and mean you can't think clearly and make good decisions."

"I don't accept that. I think they can be a strength, not a weakness. And I don't think you think that, either, not really."

"Don't I?"

"No – else why would you be cooking me dinner and talking to me like this tonight?"

"You'd be surprised." Harvey took another deep swig of his drink.

"I think you tried it that way, and you thought you could make it work, but you couldn't, not really, because nobody could, not even you. The Clifford Danner case freaked you out with how emotionally invested you were in it, so you cut me out because you want to try and go back to the way you were before you met me."

"Is that so, Sherlock?" Harvey sat back in his chair. "So why are you here right now then?"

"Because you realised you made a mistake, but being you, you could never admit to anything so human as that, so you're trying to make it up to me like this." Mike waved his hand at the dinner table.

"Ah, so what you're saying is that I was some robotic hotshot living a lonely life in my ivory tower until you came along and rescued me from a life of sterile, emotionless gloom with

your winsome, puppy-dog ways and cute, wagging tail?

Mike stared at him.

“And I crumbled and surrendered to the power of cute! Who could not when presented in the form of bad suits, skinny ties, and adorable naiveté? Thank you, Mike, for making me whole again.”

Harvey raised his bottle of Coke mockingly in the air and clicked it against Mike’s bottle on the table before raising it to his lips and taking a sip.

Mike laughed. “Hah! Mock all you like, Harvey, but the truth is you let me get too close, and I saw too much. You can’t turn the clock back now, so if this is damage control, forget it. I already know you too well.”

“Hmm...” Harvey appeared to consider that. “Shall we call it a draw and move on?”

“A draw? Aw, but you do so love to win.” Mike smirked.

“Oh, I think I won, but you’re my guest, and I don’t want you feeling bad,” Harvey shot back.

“Judicious overuse of sarcasm isn’t actually winning.”

“Neither is flashing puppy-dog eyes and pouting.”

“I don’t pout.”

“But I note you don’t deny the puppy-dog eyes.” Harvey raised an eyebrow.

“If it works, why not use it?” Mike shot him a sly grin.

“Aw, you think I’m actually susceptible to the big, mournful, puppy eyes.” Harvey gave an exaggerated impression of said eyes, and Mike couldn’t help laughing.

“It’s not fair if you’re going to make me laugh,” he complained.

“You’ll never win a case with that argument. ‘Objection, your honor – the opposing counsel made me laugh and threw me off my game. It isn’t fair!’” He stomped his foot theatrically, miming a tantrum.

“Oh shut up.” Mike rolled his eyes, still laughing.

“So, best Bond – Connery or Craig?” Harvey said suddenly, taking Mike completely by surprise with the change in conversation.

“Mike Ross,” Mike shot back. “One day, in another universe.” He grinned broadly.

“You think you could be James Bond?” Harvey looked amused.

“Totally! Don’t you?”

“Give me your Connery, and I’ll give you my verdict,” Harvey said, sitting back in his chair.

Mike launched into his best Sean Connery impression while Harvey chuckled, shaking his head the entire time.

“More Irish than Scottish,” he pronounced, when Mike had finished.

“Let’s hear yours then!” Mike challenged, and he laughed when Harvey launched into a full-throated impersonation that he had to admit wasn’t bad. “Is there anything you aren’t any good at?” he asked, a little wistfully.

“If there was, I certainly wouldn’t tell. Someone might use it against me.”

“Not me though,” Mike said firmly. “I’m not going to use anything against you, Harvey.”

“You might...” Harvey began. Mike stared him out. “No,” Harvey agreed. “Not you, Mike.”

Then Mike remembered Louis’s contract burning a hole in his bag on the sofa, and he flushed and changed the subject.

Dinner was fantastic...or perhaps it wasn’t so much dinner as having Harvey’s undivided attention, focussed solely on him. Mike revelled in it, loving the stories Harvey had to tell about his time at Harvard, which he mainly seemed to spend slacking off and getting up to no good as far as Mike could see.

Harvey could be amusing, relaxed company when he chose, and Mike felt himself relaxing too, even despite the lack of alcohol...and that reminded him of something Harvey had said earlier.

“That time you wouldn’t let me into your apartment – was it really because I was drunk?” he asked.

Harvey’s face was unreadable as he took a mouthful of food, chewed it slowly, and then swallowed. “I don’t like drunks,” he said finally.

“I’m not a drunk. Everyone gets drunk occasionally – doesn’t make them a drunk.”

“I don’t,” Harvey said.

Mike looked at him questioningly. “Never? You’ve never been drunk?”

“No. I drink, sure – but I never allow myself to get drunk.”

“Why not? It’s kind of fun.” Mike grinned.

Harvey didn’t smile. “Because it means you’re not in control, and if you’re not in control, people can take advantage of you. Same goes for when you’re stoned.”

“I don’t believe you. You must have been drunk or stoned at some point in your life,” Mike said, gazing at Harvey, intrigued.

“No. Never.” Harvey shrugged.

“C’mon, Harvey. At some point you must have let your guard down!” Mike protested.

“Let my guard down? Yes, and it was usually a mistake. But getting drunk or stoned are mistakes I don’t make. One only has to look at your life to date to see that drink and drugs don’t get you anywhere.”

“Ouch.” Mike winced, but he wasn’t sure it was a point he could successfully refute, especially against an opponent as good as Harvey, so he didn’t argue.

Harvey finished eating and sat back. The wind rifled through his hair, which, unfettered by its usual gel, shifted and moved gently in the breeze. He looked much younger without the gel and the suit, almost boyish, and yet there was something dark, brooding and powerful about him all the same.

Mike felt as if he didn’t want to talk anymore. He just wanted to sit here and drink in the sight of Harvey, sitting with his back to the city skyline, lord and master of all he surveyed. Mike liked that idea, and he wondered what it would be like to kneel before him and worship at that arrogant and yet strangely compelling altar.

It was such a vivid mental image that Mike shivered, wondering what the hell was wrong with him. He also wondered where exactly this evening was going. So far, Harvey had been amusing, entertaining and the perfect host, but he was Harvey, so surely there was something else going on. Maybe there was some lesson he wanted Mike to learn, and there was still the matter of that punishment...

“You said you were going to punish me,” Mike blurted out.

“Yes.” Harvey nodded slowly, gazing at him intently.

“This doesn’t feel like punishment. This has been great, Harvey. Thank you.”

“I said your punishment would come later.” Harvey shrugged. “And you’re welcome, Mike.”

Mike shivered again, wondering what, precisely, this punishment Harvey was promising would entail.

“You’re cold. Let’s go inside,” Harvey said, getting up. He held out a hand to pull Mike out of

the easy chair and to his feet, and Mike felt that same surge of shivery warmth when Harvey touched him that he'd felt earlier, when Harvey had put his hand on his shoulder.

They went back into the living room, and Harvey closed the balcony door, reached for a remote control, and flicked a couple of switches. Instantly, the drapes closed and the lights dimmed, creating a soft glow and a warm sense of intimacy in the room. Mike shoved his bag onto the floor and sat down in its place on the sofa.

Harvey crossed over to the other side of the room and selected a record from the collection gracing the far wall. He didn't have as many here as he did in his office, but he still had a huge collection. Mike watched, feeling a little hazy, as if he was drunk, even though he'd only been drinking Coke all night.

He felt high – high on Harvey and giddy from being the recipient of Harvey's undivided attention all evening. He'd never experienced so much Harvey focused only on him before, and it felt so good that he was a little drunk on it.

The record turned and some soft, smoky jazz filled the room, making him feel even more lazy and relaxed.

Harvey disappeared into what Mike assumed was the kitchen and returned with two cups of coffee. He placed one in Mike's hand, and Mike shivered again when their fingers touched. He had no idea why, or why that shiver seemed to go so deep, making him want something he couldn't put into coherent thought, let alone words. It was just a feeling – deep, melancholy, and full of yearning.

Harvey sat down beside him, one arm resting along the back of the sofa, so close it was almost touching Mike's head. Harvey's legs were relaxed and open, his left knee resting against Mike's thigh. It felt good there – solid and warm.

"I thought I needed drugs to feel this good," Mike murmured, putting his coffee cup down on the table and leaning back. The room seemed to close in to just him and Harvey, sitting on the couch.

"You don't." Harvey was gazing at him thoughtfully. "You can feel like this whenever you want, Mike."

"When I'm with you I can. Alone like this." Mike wasn't sure why he was talking this way, but he felt warm and full after the meal and completely relaxed in Harvey's presence. It was almost like...being seduced.

"So...how would you like to be punished, Mike?" Harvey asked quietly, looking at him over the rim of his coffee cup.

"Hmmm?" Mike blinked at him.

Harvey's fingers gently brushed the hair on the back of his head. "You keep talking about it,

so I thought I'd ask."

"I get a choice?" Mike asked.

"Tonight. First time. After that...not so much." Harvey grinned.

Mike frowned, trying to focus. How would he like to be punished? Why did even thinking about it give him that fluttery sensation in his belly?

"I could put you over my knee and spank you," Harvey said.

"Hah! You could try!" Mike laughed, because Harvey was clearly joking.

Wasn't he?

Harvey's dark eyes were fixed on him, watching him like a hawk, and Mike suddenly realised that Harvey was much more alert right now than he was. Harvey was studying him intently, as if looking for clues.

"I don't think it'd be much of a punishment, Mike. I think you might enjoy it too much," Harvey said softly, putting his cup down. "Shall we find out?"

His fingers crept down Mike's arm, along Mike's wrist, and fastened there...and then he was pulling Mike towards him.

Harvey was strong, and it would have been so easy to just go along with it. Mike was halfway to being laid out over Harvey's knee when suddenly the fog lifted and panic set in instead. He pushed himself off and landed in a heap on the floor.

"What the hell are you doing?" he demanded.

Harvey sat back on the sofa looking supremely unruffled. "What you want me to do," he replied smoothly.

"You think I want to be hauled over your knee and spanked like a naughty kid? No!" Mike protested.

"You sure about that, Mike?" Harvey leaned forward and picked up a file that was lying on the coffee table.

"What the hell is that?"

"See for yourself." Harvey handed it to him and then picked up his coffee cup and resumed sipping from it as if nothing had happened.

Mike opened up the file, flicked through the contents...and then froze. He looked up at Harvey, horrified.

“That’s right, Mike. That’s your other dirty little secret,” Harvey said. “Not the one about you not having a law degree. The other one – littler perhaps but definitely more dirty.”

Mike’s throat went dry as he gazed blankly at the file. “You have a file on me?” was all he could think to say.

“Of course. When we first met, you had a briefcase full of pot, and I agreed to hire you and lie about your qualifications. Of course I did some due diligence before I allowed you to step one foot inside Pearson Hardman. I might like to live a little dangerously, but I’d never put my firm or the people I work with in jeopardy. So yes, Mike, I hired a private investigator to make sure you were what my gut told me you were, and not some lowlife scum who’d try to screw me over.”

It made sense. In fact, it was so obvious Mike didn’t know why he hadn’t figured it out before. Of course Harvey had a file on him. And of course, this was in it.

“It was years ago,” he said defensively.

“It was two years ago,” Harvey pointed out.

“I did it for a joke. Someone talked me into it.”

“No, I don’t think it was a joke. I think you were curious.” Harvey was gazing at him broodingly over the top of his coffee cup. “You wanted to know how it felt to explore that big, submissive kink of yours, Mike, so you went to the Dungeon Club to find out.”

Mike felt himself flushing hotly.

“Now I’m curious,” Harvey said, in a conversational tone. “Did they have a real dungeon in there, Mike, or was it just that the name was supposed to inspire the right kind of mood in its patrons? I’m seeing bare brick walls and instruments of torture around the place. Was that how it was?”

Mike swallowed hard. “Yes,” he muttered.

“I didn’t hear you,” Harvey rapped out.

“Yes, that’s exactly how it was,” Mike growled angrily. “Are you satisfied now, Harvey? Christ, did you ask me here tonight precisely to humiliate me? Is this some kind of blackmail? If I don’t do what you say, you’ll expose me to Louis?”

The thought of Louis getting his hands on this information made him feel ill. He’d never be able to stay at Pearson Hardman if word got out. His life wouldn’t be worth living; the teasing alone would make it impossible. He could just imagine the jokes now and the handcuffs that’d turn up in his desk drawers and the paddles they’d leave on his chair. Louis would mock him to death and make his life a misery.

“Mike, you’re not thinking like a lawyer. If I wanted to blackmail you, I already know dirty secret number one, remember. Dirty secret number two, however embarrassed you feel about it, really isn’t anywhere near as bad.”

Harvey finished drinking his coffee and placed the cup on the table.

“So what? Is this how you intend to win that stupid wager you made with Louis earlier? You thought you could manipulate me because you think you know something about me? You don’t know jack shit about me, Harvey!” Mike threw the file onto the coffee table and stood up, his former mellow mood completely gone. He felt tense, angry and so betrayed that it physically hurt.

“I’m not trying to manipulate you, Mike. And sit down,” Harvey ordered.

“Then what was tonight about? All the food, and the conversation, and the feeding me with your fork thing, and the…” Mike faltered. “The being interested in me, Harvey? I thought we were connecting, but were you just trying to play me in some way?”

“No, and I told you to sit down.”

Mike crossed his arms over his chest and stared at Harvey, blinking furiously. “I’m not your goddamn puppy, Harvey!”

“But you like it when I call you that, don’t you?” Harvey said softly. “What is it you like about that, Mike?”

“Okay, you’re right! Yeah, I like the idea of it, Harvey, but in reality it’s all ‘Sit! Stay! Jump! Beg!’ It’s all fucking orders! If I’m gonna be your goddamn puppy, where’s the good stuff? Where are the long walks and the strokes? I should call the ASPCA because all I get is the rolled up newspaper rapped over my nose, and you yelling at me not to sit on the fucking furniture.”

Harvey grinned. “As a matter of fact, I’ve asked you to sit on the furniture twice now, and you’ve ignored me both times.” Harvey patted the sofa beside him. “Sit, Mike.”

Maybe it was the reasonable tone to Harvey’s voice, but Mike found himself doing just that.

“So, I know jack shit. Enlighten me.” Harvey spread his arms expectantly.

“I just went along to the club a few times.”

“Did you play?”

Mike flushed and looked away. “Yeah.”

“And?”

“And I didn’t like it.” Mike looked up.

“It wasn’t what you were looking for?” Harvey’s eyes seemed particularly dark and intense.

“No. It was stupid. There seemed to be all these weird rules, and the women...”

“The dommes? The dominatrices?”

Mike flushed again. “Yeah...I didn’t connect with any of them. They all seemed to think I’d get off on being ordered around, and told I was a worm, and having the crap beaten out of me.”

“Sounds rather like working for Louis.” Harvey gave a little smile, and Mike couldn’t help smiling a little too.

“Yeah. It wasn’t fun. It felt kind of cheap and sordid. I went a few times and never went back. Like I said, I was curious. And why did you assume I went there to sub? Where the hell did you get the whole ‘big, submissive kink’ thing from?”

Harvey shrugged. “Maybe because I have a big, dominant kink myself?”

“You what?” Mike looked at him, startled.

“Your submissive kink was obvious to me the day I met you, Mike, and you’re not the only one with this particular secret. I tried something similar myself a few years back – at a much more exclusive establishment, obviously – private members only, and not a bare brick wall in sight. It looked more like the interior of a bordello, not that I’ve ever been to one, but it’s how I would imagine one to look.”

“You went...I mean...what?” Mike struggled to get his head around this.

Harvey leaned forward. “There are many reasons I took you on, Mike, but one of them was that something in you speaks to something in me and vice versa. We both know that. We knew that the instant we met. You just didn’t like to put a name to it.”

Mike stared at him. Harvey sat back again, looking completely at ease.

“You like being my puppy, Mike. You like the orders, and the putdowns, and the little domination games I play with you every day. You love them. And you like playing along too. You enjoy flirting with danger by throwing out a smart-assed comment. You’re like a puppy nipping his master’s fingers, wanting the slapped nose in response.”

Mike swallowed hard, remembering the exhilaration of those moments.

“You like standing in front of me, dropping your head, and gazing up at me through your eyelashes. You get a thrill out of it, and you know I do too, and you love it, even if you

haven't asked yourself why," Harvey continued.

Mike couldn't hold that dark-eyed gaze anymore. He let his own gaze drop to the floor.

"Yes," he said, so quietly he could barely hear it. "So, what happened to you? At the bordello place?" He gave a little grin.

"It didn't satisfy me. I couldn't find what I was looking for. I came to wonder if that even existed. To be honest, I assumed it didn't. Then you walked into that job interview, and I knew immediately that it did."

Mike's head shot up, and he found himself meeting Harvey's intense stare again.

"I wanted it to be real," Harvey said. "Someone who wanted it like I wanted to give it; someone who'd enjoy my domination and enjoy surrendering to me without being a doormat or a pushover; someone strong and brilliant, who could stimulate and excite me; someone who presented a real mental challenge, as well as being physically attractive. Someone almost – but not quite –" Harvey grinned. "My equal."

Mike stared at him. "I'm a guy," he said eventually.

"Hmm, yes, I was aware of that." Harvey rolled his eyes. "Look, Mike – I find, where this is concerned, that it doesn't matter to me. In fact, I've found, from playing at the club, that what I enjoy most is dominating other men." He gave a slow, thoughtful smile. "It's what excites me at work too. It gives me that extra buzz. Women are for making love to, but men...men are for me to dominate – in the boardroom and in the bedroom. That can't surprise you, surely?" He looked startled by Mike's stunned reaction to that information. "You've seen me at work. I'm highly competitive, and I'm dominant. I told you I walked into Pearson Hardman and dominated from the beginning. I could see from your response that the idea excited you."

"You were testing me?"

"Often. I was intrigued by you. It seemed that my perfect submissive had fallen into my lap without me even trying to find him. I couldn't believe it. I couldn't help repeatedly pushing your buttons and watching your pupils dilate and your tongue wetting your lower lip...like it's doing right now."

Mike caught himself and grimaced. "I'm straight, Harvey. I've never even thought about..."

"Trevor," Harvey cut him off.

"What? No! Trevor was my best friend! He..."

"Dominated you all the time, and you let him because on some level you were getting something from it – you just didn't want to admit it to yourself. But Trevor's dominance was thuggish and brutal, and your submission is a gift you want to offer someone – you don't

want it used against you, trampled in the dust, and beaten down.”

Mike bit on his lip, remembering what had happened with Trevor when he’d finally stood up to him and told him where to go.

“He hit you, didn’t he?” Harvey’s voice was dark and compelling. He sounded tautly controlled but there was an edge of anger there too. “He punched you, yes?”

Mike looked up. “We had a fight. He won. I’m not that great at fighting,” he admitted.

“I don’t punch – well, I don’t punch people like you.” Harvey gave a dangerous smile. “I don’t lash out. I’m very controlled. I want to take only what you want to give. I understand how it works. Trevor didn’t.”

“People like me?”

“Puppies.” Harvey grinned. The grin faded, and he leaned forward. “People I’m sexually interested in, Mike. People I want to tie to my bed and fuck. People who want to submit to me as much as I want to dominate them: you.”

There, it was out in the open and it couldn’t be taken back. Mike swallowed hard. His head told him this wasn’t happening, that it wasn’t who he was, but his body and his heart told him something different. His cock was already half-hard, and he knew he found Harvey as attractive as any woman he’d ever slept with.

Harvey was right; there was something in him that spoke to something in Mike, and he’d never felt that so intensely before. It was what he’d been looking for in that club but never found. Like Harvey, he’d assumed it didn’t exist and had given up. Now Harvey was sitting there, looking so damn handsome, and telling him that it did, and he could have it, if he wanted it. And if he was prepared to take one giant risk...

“Why now?” he asked. “If you knew the minute you first met me?”

“You were so oblivious.” Harvey shrugged. “And then you kept pursuing submissive women in such a ludicrous way that I assumed you had no idea what you really were and wouldn’t welcome an approach from me.”

“Submissive women?” Mike asked incredulously.

“Jenny and Rachel.” Harvey shrugged again.

Mike gave an outraged laugh. “Oh, come on! Okay, Jenny, I can buy that...but Rachel? She walks all over me!”

“She’s a sub, topping from the bottom. Trust me, I have a feel for these things. I can always feel it – someone’s dominant or submissive energy – the minute I meet them. Donna and Jessica – those are dominant women, and they have my upmost respect. You’ll note I never

try to dominate them – they wouldn't appreciate it if I did. Co-operation and negotiation works best with other dominants."

"And Louis? What's he?" Mike raised a cheeky eyebrow.

"Oh, Louis wants to play with the big boys, but he knows I could dominate him in an instant if I tried. That's why he has to sneak around behind my back. But he knows you're important to me, Mike. He senses that energy between us, and it makes him crazy jealous. That's why he's always picking on you. He thinks you're my weak spot."

"And am I?" Mike asked quietly.

"I'm very much afraid that you are," Harvey replied. "You asked me earlier why I've been keeping you at arm's length lately. That's why. If I can't have you, I don't want to make myself weak by wanting you."

Harvey wanted him that much? Mike's heart did an ecstatic flip. "And what changed?" he asked carefully.

"I can't stand the thought of Louis getting his hands on you. It..." Harvey looked seriously dangerous for a moment, and Mike felt his cock twitch in interest again. "It twists something inside me, Mike, and makes me think very dark thoughts."

They sat there for a long moment, staring at each other.

"Think about it," Harvey said. "Because I'm not offering some one night deal here. I'm very serious about this – and I have to tell you, I'm almost never serious about sleeping with anyone more than once. That should tell you just how serious I am about this. Give it some thought – I'm going to get some air." He left the room, going out onto the balcony and closing the door behind him.

Mike sat there, staring into space, completely shocked by how the evening had turned out. He'd come here thinking his only problem was how to deal with Louis's offer – and now Harvey had offered him something else completely, something so big, special and unexpected that he was at a complete loss as to what to do.

"Think, Mike," he told himself. "What do you want?"

But thinking wasn't any good. He could think all he liked, because thinking was what he did – too much of it at times. What Harvey was offering was about feeling, and he'd never been very good at that. He could memorise all the pages in a legal textbook and parrot them back by heart, but ask him to negotiate his own emotions, and he didn't have a clue.

He got up and walked around the room. Harvey's apartment, unsurprisingly, was as tasteful, elegant, and utterly tidy as his office.

"Neat-freak," Mike muttered, looking at the rows of pristine records in their sleeves, all

lined up in alphabetical order.

On the set of shelves on the opposite wall was a collection of books, ranging from fiction to law texts via a considerable number of biographies and sport books. They were separated into sections by subject and stored in alphabetical order too.

“That’s just not normal.” Mike shook his head. “Who **does** that?”

Mike saw something, high up on the shelf, and he stood on tiptoes to get a good look at it. It was a photo, in a frame, of two boys, and Mike became even more curious when he recognised one of them as Harvey.

He looked about sixteen in the photo, but he was as different from the Harvey Mike knew now as night from day. This kid was scruffy and a little skinny. His hair was a honey-brown mess, much lighter than it was today, and he was wearing a cheap, black leather jacket. There was a ‘fear me’ expression on his surly teenaged face, and his arm was slung, casually but affectionately, over the boy beside him.

The boy was about four or five years younger than Harvey, but looked enough like him to be clearly his kid brother. His hair was blond, and he had a more open, trusting face. He was looking up at Harvey with an expression of adoration.

There was a sense of protectiveness in the way Harvey’s arm was slung around his brother’s shoulders, and it touched something in Mike. Mike wondered what it would be like to bask in all that Harvey protectiveness, if it was still there. It had been once, clearly, judging by this photo.

Mike had always sensed that the Harvey he knew now was a careful construct, a dazzling presentation of slick hair and expensive suits, designed to throw people off the scent and stop them seeing someone else. But who?

This kid in the photo looked hungry, street smart and just a tiny bit desperate. What had made him that way, Mike wondered? And how had he changed from this scruffy rebel into the sharp-suited, millionaire lawyer he now was? And where was his kid brother? What had happened to him?

None of this had any bearing on his decision – it all just added to the tantalising mystery that was Harvey Specter. Mike was longing to get a more satisfying glimpse of the man beneath the suits of armour and see exactly who Harvey Specter really was. Harvey talked about never dropping his guard, but could he really keep all his secrets from Mike if they were...

Mike wasn’t sure he could go where that train of thought was taking him. He couldn’t wrap his head around what it might be like to be in some kind of kinky sexual relationship with Harvey. He didn’t know what to do, so he went back to the sofa and sat down again, wishing he could turn off his brain for a second so that the answer would come to him.

He sat there for a long time, and he still didn't have an answer when he heard the balcony door open behind him, and the faint waft of cool air sweeping through the room.

He might not have consciously known the answer, but on some level he clearly knew what he wanted because, without even thinking about it, he found himself sinking to his knees on the floor beside the couch, head down, gazing at the carpet in a pose of submission that felt entirely natural and unforced.

A part of him was shrieking with surprise at what he'd just done and another part of him was waiting for Harvey to mock him, but he felt surprisingly calm.

Harvey's shiny shoes came into view in front of him and he heard a little sigh of satisfaction escape from Harvey's lips. Although he was completely petrified, Mike knew that this felt right, and that he was exactly where he belonged, on his knees, at Harvey's feet.

He felt a firm hand rustle through his hair and then the gentle pressure of Harvey's finger under his chin, making him look up. Harvey was standing over him, the kind of handsome, self-assured master he hadn't even realised he'd been seeking.

Harvey leaned down, pulled Mike forward, and lifted his face. Harvey's mobile lips, which could be sarcastic, amusing, cruel and utterly brilliant, were warm and forceful as they met his.

They pushed his mouth open, forcefully demanding entry, and Mike felt himself being claimed by a deep, dominating kiss.

End of Part Two
Part Three: Merger by Xanthe

Possession
Part Three: Merger

Mike had never been kissed by a man before, but he wasn't even conscious of how new this was because the taste, scent and strength of Harvey were all around him, intoxicating him all over again.

He couldn't think about anything else but the firm press of Harvey's lips on his, the way Harvey was exploring his mouth with his tongue, and the feel of Harvey's hands on his face, keeping him in place while he kissed him.

Harvey drew back, and Mike hung there, moaning softly, wanting to be kissed again.

"Looks like my gut was right." Harvey grinned down on him. "Come on, Pup...let's give you those strokes you want so much." He took hold of Mike's hand and pulled him to his feet. "With me."

Harvey led Mike into the next room – the one he'd put his suit in a few hours earlier.

Mike paused in the doorway, looking at a large bedroom with floor to ceiling windows making up two of the walls. The room was dark, the drapes were open, and the city was a brightly lit hub of bustling life beneath them.

Mike followed Harvey into the room and found himself drawn, irresistibly, to the windows. He looked out at the cityscape below, just as he had earlier on the balcony.

"Shit, Harvey – you go to sleep up here, looking down on all this?"

No wonder Harvey walked the hallways of Pearson Hardman like some kind of god. He slept up here as if he was on Mount Olympus, with his head among the clouds. It must be easy to think yourself invincible when you went to sleep and woke up in the morning looking at this kind of view.

"Mmmm, but right now I want to be looking down on all this." Harvey came up behind him and wrapped one arm across Mike's chest and the other across his stomach, pulling him back against his own warm, strong body.

Then he pushed Mike's head to one side and kissed his neck, slowly. Mike wasn't sure what to do in response. Harvey was taller than him and much broader and stronger. He had a powerful physical presence and being held by him was so entirely different to Mike's experiences with girls that he wasn't sure how to react.

He tried to relax against Harvey's body and felt Harvey's arms tighten around him, holding him close.

"That's good, Mike; you want to submit. I like that."

One of Harvey's hands went lower and slid down the front of Mike's jeans. Mike tensed, but all Harvey did was scoop out his tee shirt from the waistband and slide his fingers under it, so that his hand was resting flat on Mike's belly. Mike swallowed hard and put his hand over Harvey's to stop it moving around down there.

"Skittish," Harvey murmured in his ear.

"Harvey, I told you, I've never done anything like this with a guy."

"I know. That's why I'm going to take my time and enjoy it."

Mike gazed at his reflection in the window. He could see Harvey behind him, holding him, talking into his ear, seducing him, like Harvey was the devil and Mike was some innocent he was about to corrupt.

"Tell me your fantasies, Mike," Harvey whispered.

His fantasies? Mike thought he'd rather shine Louis's shoes every day for a month than calmly talk to his boss about what he jacked off to when he was alone at night.

"Uh..." he felt his neck flushing, the way it always did when he was embarrassed.

"Mmm, interesting. You knelt for me, and you let me kiss you, but now you're acting like you didn't just offer me your submission. You think you can choose what you give me and what you keep back? You can't. You're mine now, Mike; I own you – all of you – and that's what you'll give me. I insist."

Mike felt a wave of arousal, and he couldn't stop the low moan that escaped his lips.

"You liked that, didn't you?" Harvey whispered into his ear. "Being owned is one of your fantasies. Tell me more, Mike."

Harvey's hand was still flat against his stomach, just holding him, warm but firm. His other arm was across Mike's chest, keeping him pulled back against Harvey's own chest. Mike felt both captive and captivated at the same time.

"Is it being owned or wanting someplace where I belong?" Mike blurted. "I don't know. I just know I want to be taken somewhere..." He hesitated.

"Where do you want to be taken, Mike?" Harvey prompted.

"Wherever you want me to go," Mike whispered.

"And you don't want a choice," Harvey said, in that same deep, low voice. "You want to surrender that to me."

"Yes." Mike cleared his throat.

"But your head gets in the way. You overthink it. You can't let go. You want to fly, but your mind won't let you. You always take back control. You don't want to give into it – you're too scared to give into it. A part of you always has to be on guard, to make sure you don't get screwed over and hurt."

Mike stared at his reflection, shocked by how completely Harvey knew him. But wasn't that Harvey's particular skill? He'd seen it over and over again at work. Harvey knew people. He could read them, and he used that – sometimes against them and sometimes for them – but always to win and get what **he** wanted. Mike knew he was in the grasp of someone very dangerous, but he was too intoxicated by the sensation to want to escape.

"This feels crazy and out of control – it's kinda like being stoned," he said, wondering if he was exchanging one addiction for another.

"No," Harvey told him in a hard tone. "It's a damn sight better. I can make you fly and take you higher than you'd go with any drug."

Mike could feel Harvey's smirk against the side of his neck. The bastard was, in this as in everything else, so very sure of himself.

"What else?" Harvey asked. "What are your other fantasies? Pain? Punishment? Restraint?"

Mike hitched in a startled, faltering breath and then another. His cock was now pressing almost painfully against the tight fabric of his jeans.

"All of those then," Harvey murmured. "This is good, Mike. Your fantasies match my own. That gives me something to play with. Let's talk about how this is going work."

The hand on Mike's belly stayed where it was, keeping Mike in place, but Harvey's other hand moved down to Mike's ass and cupped his right buttock unexpectedly, making him gasp.

"I'll spank you here; with my hand the first time, but not always," Harvey whispered softly into Mike's ear. "Sometimes I'll use my belt and sometimes my paddle. It depends where we are, of course; I'm fantasising right now about taking you over my knee in the back of the limo and spanking your ass until it's red and hot." Mike closed his eyes and sighed at the mental image. "Ray's always been very discreet," Harvey added with a little chuckle.

Mike was breathing heavily now, finding it hard to take in enough air as the world swirled around him. All that was keeping him upright was the firm press of Harvey's hand on his belly and the warm solidity of Harvey's body behind him.

"I also have a flogger – the most expensive suede I could buy – nothing but the best for my boy," Harvey told him.

Mike frowned. "When did you buy that? If it's just for me?"

"This afternoon."

"You knew I'd say yes?" Mike turned his head and glanced up at Harvey.

Harvey caught his mouth with his own in another firm, demanding kiss.

"Yes, I knew you would," he said when he released him. "Besides, I like to be prepared for any eventuality."

That sounded like Harvey. Mike turned his head back towards the window and gazed at their reflections again, fascinated by them.

"I'll use the flogger on your back, on your shoulders, and here..." Harvey's hand left his belly and slid up his chest beneath his tee shirt, and he rubbed Mike's right nipple firmly with his fingers.

Mike gave a barely coherent gasp and twisted in Harvey's tight embrace.

"Uh-uh," Harvey chided in his ear, his strong arms making it impossible for Mike to escape. "You have to learn to take what I want to hand out, Mike. Let's do that again." He pinched down hard on Mike's nipple, and it was all Mike could do to stay in position. He annoyed himself by whimpering as Harvey teased those expert fingers over his nipple, squeezing it and releasing it over and over again.

"Good boy," Harvey breathed against the side of his neck. "But you can take more."

Mike was about to protest that he couldn't when Harvey's fingers closed over the nipple again and squeezed down brutally. He let out a holler but Harvey didn't release him – he just pulled him back even closer, holding him tight against his chest, talking to him the whole time. "That's good, Mike. Take it for me...because you're mine...that's good..."

Mike hung there, breathing hard, loving the praise and wanting desperately to please Harvey but equally desperately wanting the torture in his nipple to end...and then suddenly it did.

"Very good," Harvey purred. He moved his hand back down and stroked Mike's belly again, gently, calming him. Mike found himself relaxing back against Harvey's body.

Harvey moved his other hand down the back of Mike's jeans, under Mike's boxers, and stroked his ass. "I'm looking forward to fucking you," he said, squeezing one buttock firmly.

Mike swallowed hard, unsure how he felt about that.

"Are you a virgin, Mike? Hell, of course you are." Harvey all but laughed into his neck.

"With guys, yeah – I pretty much told you that already. I've slept with plenty of women though," Mike said defensively.

"Haven't we all?" Harvey sounded amused. "Do you want me to fuck you, Mike?"

Mike hesitated. He knew he did, but he was also scared. This was a long way out of his comfort zone, and he wasn't sure he was ready to let Harvey go that far with him tonight.

"I don't know," he muttered.

"Well, I won't fuck you until you want it, so you'll have to ask me when you're ready."

"I don't think that'll happen," Mike told him. "Honestly, I'm not jerking you around, Harvey...I just..."

"You just don't think you'll ever ask for something that terrifies you so much," Harvey told him, and once again Mike was surprised by how well he could read him. "You don't think you can lose yourself in the moment enough for that to happen."

“Yeah,” Mike whispered. “Something like that.”

“You’ll ask me to fuck you. You’ll beg,” Harvey predicted confidently. “What else do you want, Mike? Do you want to struggle? If I tie you up and play with you, do you want to struggle, and sob, and pretend it’s not what you want?”

Mike found himself wetting his lips with his tongue and then almost cursed himself for the knowing grin he saw on Harvey’s face, reflected in the window in front of them.

“If you want it that way, then you need to choose a word,” Harvey said, tracing circles on Mike’s butt with his fingers.

“A word?” It was hard to concentrate when Harvey’s fingers were doing that.

“A safe word because if ‘no’ doesn’t mean ‘no’ then I have to know what does,” Harvey explained. “You must have done this at the club.”

“Yes. Yes...” Mike shook his head, trying to think clearly, while Harvey’s hand continued to stroke his ass. “A word.”

“Any word. Just as long as it’s one you’ll remember.”

“And you.”

“I won’t forget.” Harvey sounded very sure about that.

“How do I know I can trust you to stop when I want you to stop?” Mike asked. “If I’m tied up and can’t get away?”

“You don’t trust me? I’m hurt.” Harvey’s hand stopped moving, and Mike immediately wanted it to start again.

It felt so strange being on the receiving end of all this sexual attention from Harvey of all people. When he made moves on a girl, Mike was used to being the more active one; kissing her, stroking her, moving in on her. Now the tables had been well and truly turned... and he was astonished by how much he liked it.

“I don’t know, Harvey. I sort of trust you. I want to trust you.”

“You’re scared.”

It wasn’t a question, but Mike nodded anyway, swallowing hard.

“I won’t hurt you beyond the extent you want to be hurt, Mike, but you’ll have to take my word for that. Unless you want it in writing? I could draw up some paperwork right now, if you do. We could both sign.”

Mike knew he was joking but that reminded him of the papers Louis had given him earlier and the guilt made him break free of Harvey's embrace. He pulled away and turned, and Harvey took a step back, his eyes narrowing as he gazed at Mike intently.

"What's that about?"

"Nothing. I just...I need to breathe. I need to think."

"No, you think too much, and it's driving you nuts. You need to experience," Harvey told him firmly. "This can be good, Mike. I can make this good for you, but surrender is implicit in the experience. If you refuse to let go then I can't make you, however good I am at dominating – and trust me, I'm good."

"No...see...I don't know that I **can** let go," Mike explained. "Damn it, Harvey, you're good, yes, I'll give you that, and if anyone can take me there it's you, but..."

"But?" Harvey leaned against the window, watching him.

"But my head always gets in the way. You don't understand what it's like! I can remember everything I've ever read. I can see pages and pages in my mind all the damn time. I remember the most stupid things: books I read once; billboards I passed by ten years ago; hell, the backs of cereal packets from when I was eight years old. It's all there, and I can't just shut it down."

"I think you can. You were halfway there just now," Harvey told him, and Mike was aware just how much he'd been played by an expert and skilfully led down the path towards submission and surrender.

Everything Harvey had said while they'd been looking out of the window had been about getting into Mike's head, finding out what he wanted, and using that knowledge to seduce him.

"It was never going to happen at just the click of my fingers the first time. In a couple of months, sure." Harvey gave a confident grin. "But not the first time. It'll take more work than that to get you there tonight, but I can do it, if you'll let me."

Mike bit on his lip. Could he let Harvey tie him up and fuck him? Did he want that? Could he trust Harvey enough? He felt a spike of anxiety in the pit of his stomach and knew that he'd regret it for the rest of his life if he didn't at least try.

"MacGyver," he said.

Harvey raised an eyebrow. "What?"

"MacGyver – c'mon, you know, the TV show from the eighties about the guy who put together gizmos that helped him get out of any dangerous situation. That's my safe word."

"I'm a dangerous situation?" Harvey crossed his arms over his chest, looking very dangerous indeed.

"Yes – very – from where I'm standing. You're the one who is gonna be tying me up, remember!"

"MacGyver." Harvey looked a little pissed. Then he nodded. "Fine. At least I won't mistake that for anything else. Use it if you want me to stop. I'll ignore any pleading, begging, or use of the word 'no', so let's be clear on that. The only thing that'll make me stop is that word." Harvey crooked a finger at him. "Now, come here."

Mike swallowed hard and took a step forward, and then another, until he was standing right in front of Harvey.

"I'm going to undress you. I don't want you to move."

Mike nodded, trying to get his head around the idea that they were really going to do this. So far, it hadn't gone further than a few kisses and some mild petting, but now...

"See, you're mine now," Harvey told him, circling him like he was prey. "And I'm going to inspect my property and find out exactly what I own."

He looked Mike up and down, an assessing gleam in his eyes.

"I'm glad to see you made an effort to look good tonight, Mike."

"I did think about coming here in torn jeans and a stained shirt," Mike told him with a grin. "Just to piss you off."

"It would." Harvey stared at him through narrowed eyes. "If you ever turn up at my apartment dressed in a disrespectful way, you'll be bent over the back of my couch taking a sound spanking the second you're through the door. Remember that; I won't warn you again."

"Yes sir," Mike said automatically, and then he flushed, feeling embarrassed. "Is that okay? Is that what I should call you?"

"Sir or Harvey are both fine." Harvey shrugged.

"How about 'Master'?" Mike asked cheekily.

"If it turns you on, Mike," Harvey said, with a roll of his eyes.

"Oh c'mon! Don't tell me it doesn't do something for that ego complex of yours!"

"Who said I had an ego complex?"

“You did. You said all lawyers have them.”

“Well, I was right. Obviously.” Harvey smirked. “Master’s fine too. Now take off your shoes and socks.”

Mike did what he was told and then stood upright again, looking at Harvey for further instructions.

“Arms up.” Harvey moved in and took hold of the hem of Mike’s tee shirt, removing it and the sweater over it in one swift move. He folded them carefully and placed them on a nearby chair.

“Neat freak,” Mike muttered under his breath, and then he panicked when he saw Harvey had heard him.

“Oh, the pup likes to play dangerously, does he?” Harvey grinned, moving in close. “That’s really not a good idea, Mike, when I’m about to do bad things to you; very bad things.”

He ran his hand over Mike’s chest, and Mike sucked in his stomach as Harvey’s fingers wandered lower. Harvey slapped him. “Don’t hold your breath. Now turn around.”

Mike exhaled and turned, shivering slightly but not because he was cold.

He felt Harvey’s warm breath on his shoulders and then felt a soft kiss being planted on the back of his neck. He shivered again, more convulsively this time.

“Don’t move. You belong to me now, remember?” Harvey told him.

“Yes sir,” he said, trying to recapture that earlier intoxicating headspace.

He felt Harvey’s hands on his body, stroking him, and he took a deep breath and tried to relax.

“Good boy.” Harvey pulled him back so that he was against him once more, and Mike could feel the cool silkiness of his shirt against his bare back.

Harvey’s dextrous fingers undid his fly, and Mike held his breath.

“Keep breathing,” Harvey said, and he sounded amused again. He undid Mike’s jeans, and Mike’s cock, liberated from its tight confines, jumped eagerly inside his boxers.

“Hmmm...Calvin Kleins – I approve,” Harvey said. He squeezed Mike’s cock through the boxers, making Mike gasp and put his hands back to hang on to Harvey’s thighs, so he wouldn’t fall over. “I’ve got you,” Harvey told him, although Mike wasn’t sure if that was reassuring or not.

“You mean in the same way that the spider’s got the fly he’s caught in his web?” he asked, searching for the usual banter he shared with Harvey but feeling too wrong-footed to find it.

Harvey gave a low, throaty chuckle. “Very like that, Mike. But I think you’re forgetting something: who do you belong to?”

“You, Harvey,” Mike replied helplessly. It felt so good to be standing here, his bare back against Harvey’s expensive shirt, leaning on someone strong and powerful who seemed to know how to tap into all his deepest fantasies. “I belong to you.” The words both thrilled and scared him but there was an essential truth to them that he couldn’t deny.

“That’s right. All of you, including this.” Harvey squeezed his cock again, and Mike thought he might be well on his way to passing out. “So, I don’t want you touching this tonight. It’s mine now, and I want to play with it.”

Mike nodded, trying to figure out how to breathe and not fall over at the same time.

Harvey’s warm fingers slid down inside his boxers and stroked Mike’s semi-erect cock with a firm, expert touch. “Remember how you wanted those strokes? Well, now you’re getting them, Pup,” Harvey told him, a grin in his voice. “Enjoying them?”

“What does it look like?” Mike put his head back and rested it on Harvey’s shoulder, moaning softly as Harvey played with him. The feel of Harvey’s hand on his cock, stroking him so deftly, soon made Mike hard, and he knew he wasn’t far from coming. Just a couple more, just like that, and...

“One more thing...I decide when you get to come,” Harvey said in a firm tone, right into his ear.

Mike jerked away. “Harvey!” he complained, swinging around to face him.

“Do you have a problem with that?” Harvey raised a dangerous eyebrow; Mike ignored it.

“Yes! I do have a problem with that! You can’t stroke me like that and expect me to hold it. I’m not frigging Superman!”

“Was that one of Superman’s special skills? I don’t remember it. Are we talking the movies or comic books here?” Harvey gave a sarcastic mock-frown.

“You know what I mean!”

“Yes, I do, and I don’t care.” Harvey was suddenly the hard, uncompromising taskmaster from the office, and not the silken-voiced seducer he’d been all evening. “I either own you, or I don’t. If I do, then I get to decide when you come, and I can tell you now that it won’t be until I’m inside you, fucking that tight virgin ass of yours so hard you’ll be seeing stars and screaming for mercy before I’m done.”

Mike stared at him mulishly.

“And if you disobey me on this, if you come any time other than when I’m fucking your ass, then I’ll take you out shopping tomorrow and buy the hardest, tightest, most restrictive chastity device I can find, and you’ll spend the next two weeks not coming at all while I fuck you to my heart’s content. Oh, and that’s after I stripe your ass with my cane.”

“You have a cane?” Mike felt his breathing hitch again and his stomach did a flip of excited terror.

“I do.” Harvey shot him a dark, wolfish kind of smile. “And I’ll use it on your disobedient ass if you’re not careful. Are we clear?”

He took a step forward, and Mike nodded quickly. “We’re clear, Harvey.”

“I expect to play with my boy all I like and for you to hold it if I tell you, even if it damn near kills you, and do you know why?”

“Because you’re the dom,” Mike said quietly.

“Damn right I am. Now, take off the rest of your clothes and come here. I’m done with all this teasing; I want to see what I own.”

Harvey strode over to the bed and picked up a remote. Within seconds the drapes were closing and the lights had come on, low and dimmed, bathing the room in a soft glow.

Mike did as he’d been ordered, leaving his jeans and underwear in a heap on the floor, and then went quietly over to where Harvey was standing, feeling kind of stupid. He’d been naked in front of guys before, but not naked like this, with a huge erection caused by this man standing right here. It was all he could do not to cross his hands defensively over his hard cock to hide it from view.

“Pretty boy.” Harvey grinned, and Mike glared at him. Harvey touched the side of his cheek. “Soft features.” His grin widened.

“Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha,” Mike said in a sing-song voice, still glaring.

“I like the way you look, Mike; soft and pretty with pale skin that I’m going to turn bright red with my hand. But first things first: I want you to wear this.”

Harvey reached for a box on the nightstand and opened it, and Mike found himself looking at a black leather collar nestled inside. It wasn’t any black leather collar, either. It was made from what was clearly the most expensive leather in existence – Mike could tell that just by looking at it. It was soft and unmarked, gleaming darkly on the deep blue velvet lining of the box. The collar’s padded silk interior was in the same shade of deep, vivid blue.

“You want me to wear a collar?” Mike asked incredulously. “Are you serious, Harvey?”

Harvey gave him a hard look. "Yes," he said firmly. "You'll find that I'm a very traditional kind of dom – and when I fuck my boy I want to look down on him and see my collar around his neck. I want it to be very clear to us both that you are the property of Harvey Specter, that you wear my collar, and that I own you."

Harvey's voice was fierce and possessive, and Mike got the shivers again. He wasn't going to argue – not when his cock was telling him that this was one of his deepest fantasies come to life.

He knelt down because it felt like the right thing to do, and Harvey stroked an approving hand through his hair at the gesture. He watched Harvey take the collar out of its case and then place it around his neck. It didn't feel tight or constricting – the silk felt soft and sensuous against his skin, and the sensation of it caressing his neck made him feel safe and secure.

"How does that feel?" Harvey asked.

Mike looked up, unable to give a smart-assed reply because he found, much to his surprise, that the moment actually meant something to him. "Good," he whispered. "Like...I have a place in the world. Somewhere I belong."

He waited anxiously for Harvey to mock him for his honesty, but there was only a dark kind of pleasure in Harvey's eyes, as if he'd said exactly the right thing.

Harvey tightened the collar so that Mike could feel it without being choked by it, and then he took a step back and looked down on him.

"That's all you ever need to wear to look good, Mike," Harvey said quietly, and Mike was surprised to see that he was visibly affected by the moment too.

"Yeah, but I think Jessica will have kittens if I show up at Pearson Hardman tomorrow just wearing this collar and nothing else," Mike said wryly.

"You're right." Harvey gave a regretful sigh. "But if I had my way I'd keep you naked, collared, and by my side, available for fucking day and night."

Mike stared up at him wordlessly, shocked by just how much that image turned him on. He wondered whether Harvey would ever play with him in the office, and he hoped he would, maybe late at night when everyone had gone home.

"Stand up," Harvey ordered, and Mike got to his feet, loving the sensation of being completely naked save for the soft band of padded leather around his neck.

Harvey spent the next few desperately humiliating minutes examining Mike's naked body. He looked like he did when he was studying a set of legal briefs; intrigued, preoccupied, and absorbed, like his brain was in overdrive.

He didn't touch – he just examined Mike with a look of intense concentration on his face. His gaze lingered for a while on Mike's still hard cock, and Mike found himself growing annoyed. He stood up straighter, trying not to show how unnerved he was by the scrutiny.

"Stand still," Harvey rapped out. Then he made a circling motion with his finger. "Now turn around."

"Turn around or stand still? Which is it?" Mike challenged. "Ow!" He didn't see Harvey's hand coming, but he sure as hell felt it making stinging contact with his ass.

"Don't be a smart ass, Mike. I know it's hard for you, but you should try or your ass really **will** smart."

The slap on his buttock stung and then warmed him, sending a wave of delicious tingling through his body, and, oddly, Mike found himself relaxing. Damn it, he was loving this! There was no need for him to feel shy, awkward and out of his depth. This was Harvey, and he'd worshipped the guy pretty much since the day they'd met. There was nothing Harvey could do to him tonight that wasn't precisely what Mike wanted him to do, even if he'd never admitted it to himself before now.

He found himself shooting a completely unashamed grin at Harvey and then turning slowly and deliberately so that his ass was facing his new dom. He stuck it out at a slight angle, teasing and provocative.

"Oh, you think you can play me?" Harvey laughed. "Think again, Pup."

Mike was going to reply when suddenly he found himself on his back on the bed. He'd hardly seen Harvey move, but now he was lying here, looking up at him, faintly winded.

Harvey had him pinned to the bed and was straddling him, his clothed body pressing into Mike's naked one. Mike wasn't going to make it that easy for him, and he pushed up against him, struggling with him, but Harvey easily held him in place, grinning down on him the whole time. His hands were tight around Mike's wrists, holding them effortlessly above his head.

Mike knew Harvey worked out, but now he had the realisation that Harvey could hold his own in a fight. He wondered where someone who dressed like Harvey and spent his time fighting battles in corporate boardrooms had learned how to handle himself. Harvey had all the trappings of the stuffed shirt combined with the street smarts of an alley cat, and Mike realised he'd made the same mistake he'd seen so many of Harvey's opponents make of taking him for an over-dressed, corporate operative who didn't know how to get down and dirty.

"Didn't I read somewhere that you were on your high school wrestling team?" Harvey raised a taunting eyebrow. "I'm not seeing that right now, Mike. Try harder."

Mike glared at him and struggled with all his might, but Harvey – damn him – was too solid a weight and had him in too firm a grasp.

“Poor pup.” Harvey mocked him. “Am I going to have to bring him to heel and **force** him to obey his new master?”

He leaned down and kissed Mike again, and Mike struggled to resist the kiss for a few seconds before melting into it; Harvey’s lips were too intoxicating for him to hold out for long.

Harvey kissed him until Mike was blissed out and relaxed, and then he slowly released him. Mike lay there, looking up at him, stupefied by just how much he was enjoying this.

“If you’re going to struggle, I’ll have to tie you up,” Harvey said, getting off the bed. Mike’s cock made an interested lurch at that news. “I have a nice set of fancy cuffs, but I think something more personal would work better,” he said musingly.

He walked over to the closet, where Mike’s suit was hanging from the doorknob, and he opened up the garment bag it was in, pulled out Mike’s tie, and began walking back towards the bed.

“No,” Mike said.

Harvey raised an eyebrow but kept on walking. “You don’t get to say no, Mike. You’re mine remember – and I can do what I like with you.”

“You’re going to tie me up with my own damn tie?”

“What did I tell you earlier about pouting?”

“Not to?”

“Precisely.”

Harvey straddled Mike again and took hold of his wrists. Mike considered struggling, but he was so intrigued by the prospect of finding out how it’d feel to be tied up and at Harvey’s mercy that he didn’t.

He watched instead as Harvey expertly fastened the tie around his wrists, knotting it neatly, and then pulled Mike’s arms over his head and slotted the tie into one of many discreet little hooks in the headboard of the bed that Mike hadn’t even noticed were there.

Now he really was restrained. He couldn’t pull his hands free, and they were tied well away from his body, leaving it vulnerable.

“Now I get to play.” The expression on Harvey’s face was positively satanic as he leaned down and stroked a finger over Mike’s chest. Mike’s breathing hitched as Harvey’s nails

gently scratched their way down his body.

Harvey paused at the scar on his thigh, frowning. "What's this?"

"It's nothing. Stupid accident when I was a kid."

"Tell me." Harvey's fingers gently circled the deep, curved scar.

"I was climbing a tree, and I fell."

Mike stared straight into Harvey's eyes as he said that. Harvey stared straight back at him. "Okay," he said quietly.

He dropped his head and kissed the scar, and then he continued his exploration of Mike's body, moving his hand down towards Mike's straining cock.

Mike gave a hoarse shout as Harvey took hold of his cock in one hand while at the precise same time lowering his head and sucking down hard on Mike's right nipple.

"Oh shit! Fuck...Harvey...fuck!" Mike yelled, struggling against the tie binding his wrists for all he was worth.

Harvey ignored him and just sucked down harder on his nipple, rolling it under his tongue and tugging on it with his teeth. At the same time as he was torturing his nipple, Harvey continued to work Mike's cock with his hand, and the combination of pleasure and pain sent Mike to the edge.

"Jeez, Harvey...you have to let me...oh shit...you gotta let me..."

Harvey didn't even acknowledge his whimpers; he just moved his attention to Mike's left nipple, while continuing to slide his hand along Mike's cock. He wasn't gentle with Mike's nipples; he sucked down hard, biting on them just a bit too fiercely, deliberately making it hurt.

Mike writhed, screamed and hollered, but Harvey was relentless. Mike was still screaming long after Harvey stopped torturing him and let go.

"Drama queen." Harvey looked down on him, rolling his eyes.

Mike took some deep breaths, trying to calm himself. "I am not a drama queen. That hurt!" he protested.

"I know. I liked it." Harvey gave a dark, satisfied smile. "And so did you."

Mike flushed at the truth of that comment, while Harvey just chuckled and got off the bed. "I think it's time to move this along," he said, and Mike watched in enthralled silence as Harvey began undressing.

Harvey took his time, although Mike wasn't sure if that was for his benefit, or if this was just Harvey's usual night-time regime.

He slowly unbuttoned his black shirt, gazing at Mike the entire time, a little grin on his lips as he worked, and then he removed the shirt and hung it up in the closet. Mike liked the view that gave him of Harvey's tanned chest and the long lines of his gym-toned body.

Then, just as slowly, he took off his shoes and socks, and then slid off his jeans, so that he was left wearing only a pair of black silk boxers.

Instead of taking them off, he then proceeded to hang up every single damn garment in the closet, or place it in the laundry hamper, to the point where Harvey's fastidious tidying habit was driving Mike crazy. He wanted to see Harvey's cock, to find out how big it was and whether there was even a chance he'd be able to take it.

After finishing with his own clothes, Harvey maddeningly turned his attention to Mike's, which were in a pile on the floor and on the chair. He picked them up and stowed them away too, muttering something that sounded suspiciously like "Messy pup" under his breath as he worked.

Finally, he returned to the bed and stood beside it. Mike could see the outline of his hard cock poking through the black silk fabric of his boxers, and he was pleased to get visible proof that Harvey was as turned on by him as he was by Harvey.

Harvey slowly peeled the boxers down his legs, and Mike craned his neck to get a good look at his cock. It was...somehow exactly as he'd expected, if he'd ever had an expectation of what Harvey's erect cock would look like. There was something elegant and yet forceful about it at the same time, just like Harvey. It was smooth, cut, and had a sweet curve.

It wasn't huge, but it was a nice size – big enough to make Mike wonder how the hell it was going to fit inside him. Now, more than ever, he couldn't see himself asking Harvey to fuck him. It just wasn't going to happen. He was annoyed with himself because he wanted to experience Harvey pushing inside his ass, claiming him and fucking him through the mattress, but he couldn't imagine losing himself in the moment enough to actually ask for it.

Harvey got on the bed and in one quick move straddled Mike again, but further up his body this time, so that his hard cock was bobbing in front of Mike's face.

"Suck," Harvey ordered, pressing his cock against Mike's lips, and Mike opened up and took a cock in his mouth for the first time. It felt smooth and solid, and Mike liked it far more than he'd ever have anticipated.

"Good boy." Harvey's knees were pressed into Mike's shoulders, and Harvey took Mike's head between his hands and held it in place as he rocked his hips back and forth, sliding his cock between Mike's lips.

Mike liked how Harvey had him pinned into place so that he couldn't move. He liked the feeling of being restrained by the ties around his wrists, and most of all he liked the sensation of that smooth, hard cock sliding into and out of his mouth.

Harvey didn't push too hard or too far down Mike's throat. He kept the pace rhythmic but slow, so that Mike could learn how to take it.

"No teeth. Lips. Good," Harvey murmured as he rocked into Mike's mouth. He stroked the side of Mike's face with his thumbs, encouraging him, and Mike lost himself in the act of servicing his dom. His arms were aching, and his wrists hurt, but still he kept sucking, doing his best to please.

His own cock was rock hard now; he found sucking Harvey such a turn-on. He liked how Harvey was using his mouth, giving him no choice but to suck him, holding his head while he fed his cock to him.

Harvey fucked his mouth for several minutes, and then he drew back and reached over towards the nightstand. Mike watched him get lubricant and condoms out of the nightstand drawer and place them on the bed.

"Aren't you being a bit presumptuous?" Mike raised an eyebrow.

"I want to be prepared for when you ask – because you will ask." Harvey stroked his hair, and Mike couldn't help leaning into the caress, loving being petted. If he were a cat, he'd be purring his head off by now.

Maybe he would get to the point where he'd ask Harvey to fuck him. He was still scared and unsure, but he'd loved everything they'd done so far. If he could just bring himself to trust Harvey a little more, enough to take that final step...

He was distracted by the realisation that his arms were seriously hurting where his tie was cutting into them, and he wondered if he should say his safe word. That would end this whole thing...but he didn't want it to end.

"Is there a problem?" Harvey asked.

"Yeah, my wrists really hurt." Mike pulled on the tie, trying to get comfortable.

Harvey leaned over and examined his wrists. "I'm not surprised. See, this is what happens when you wear skinny ties," he said sternly.

He didn't sound remotely sympathetic, but he walked over to the closet and got out two of his own ties. "You see, Mike, you're learning the difference between a good tie and a bad one the hard way."

"I didn't buy it thinking it'd ever be used to tie me up!" Mike protested.

“That just demonstrates a lack of forethought on your part,” Harvey said sternly, “And is therefore not a valid defence. Now, I’m going to untie you – but not until I’ve put you in a different kind of bondage. Can you handle the pain in your wrists for another couple of minutes?”

Mike thought about it and then nodded, suddenly understanding more clearly how this worked. It wasn’t a one-way street. He could tell Harvey if he was in pain or discomfort without having to use his safe word. Harvey would, clearly, listen and act, even if it was on his terms. This was a world away from his experiences at the Dungeon Club; this was what he’d been seeking all his adult life and failing to find – until now.

Harvey tied each of the new ties around Mike’s ankles and then pulled them up, over Mike’s head, and fastened them to the hooks in the headboard, so they were spread wide apart. Harvey placed a pillow under Mike’s back to support him and only then did he unfasten the tie around his wrists, throwing it onto the nightstand with just the faintest hint of a sneer.

Now Mike’s hands were free, but his legs were tied over his shoulders. This left his ass hanging in the air, dangerously vulnerable and exposed. It felt incredibly humiliating to be tied in his position, and it also made him acutely aware of his hole. Mike felt himself blushing.

“Damn it, Harvey, I’m not a contortionist!” he complained.

“Does it hurt?” Harvey demanded. “Is it uncomfortable?”

“No,” Mike admitted. The position, while humiliating, wasn’t actually either of those things.

“Then don’t whine.” Harvey delivered another one of those stinging slaps to Mike’s exposed ass.

“I get it...I’m not supposed to complain about anything my lord and master does to me, even when you’re trussing me up like a chicken,” Mike grumbled. “Ow!” he added, in response to another sharp slap to his buttocks.

Harvey picked up the discarded tie and held it up. “There are other uses for this – it’d make a good gag. You weren’t particularly attached to this tie, were you, Mike? I’m not sure how it’ll look hanging around your neck tomorrow after being crushed up in your mouth and covered in saliva, but we can always find out.”

“No...Harvey...please...” Mike struggled against the ties around his ankles. They hadn’t said anything about gags earlier. He hadn’t agreed to be gagged, and how could he say his safe word if he was gagged?

“Idiot.” Harvey dropped the tie on the nightstand with a roll of his eyes. “There are easier ways to shut you up.”

He proved that by pressing his lips to Mike’s mouth and kissing him again. Mike pushed up,

trying to take more of Harvey's kiss, but Harvey, maddeningly, drew back just as he was getting into it.

He sat down on the side of the bed and took hold of Mike's wrist, rubbing the circulation back into it with firm sweeps of his thumbs. When he was done with that wrist, he turned his attention to the other one, doing the same. Mike gazed up at him in surprise. Harvey went from being dominant to loving in a heartbeat – or maybe it was all part of the same thing?

When he'd finished, Harvey raised Mike's hand to his mouth and kissed the red mark around his wrist. "Better?" he asked.

"Yes," Mike whispered, feeling a lump rise in his throat. Damn it, it was going to be easy to trust Harvey enough to fuck him if he kept doing things like this.

Harvey settled down on the bed between his open legs, and Mike felt himself shivering in anticipation.

"Ssh..." Harvey placed a hand on Mike's belly through the gap in his legs and stroked until the shivering subsided. Then he flipped the lid on the lube, smoothed some onto his fingers, and a second later Mike felt something wet and cool press against his hole.

"Shit!" He tried to move but the ties around his ankles held him in place.

"Just a finger. You can take it." Harvey pressed his finger in, and Mike tried to relax around the intrusion. It didn't hurt; it just felt weird.

Harvey began finger fucking him, slowly at first and then faster, and Mike was surprised by how good it felt. He relaxed even more, enjoying the sensation of Harvey's finger working so expertly inside his body. Harvey pushed a second finger inside him, and Mike moaned softly, liking the added pressure.

Harvey looked like some kind of demon, working intently in the dimly lit room. Mike could only see the top of his head, but he could feel what he was doing.

Those cool, slippery fingers fucked him for several minutes, and Mike found himself loosening up even more and surrendering, giving up more and more of his soul to Harvey.

He had no choice anyway. He was naked, powerless, and his ankles were tied over his shoulders, leaving him completely exposed to whatever Harvey wanted to do to him – and that thought made his already hard cock twitch.

He loved the idea of being completely vulnerable to Harvey's caresses – or the firm slap of his hand. He liked having no control, surrendering it all to his demonic master who could be demanding, stern and yet curiously affectionate too, just when Mike least expected it. It was a massive turn on.

His cock was so hard that he wanted to put his hand on it and jerk himself off furiously, but Harvey had told him he couldn't. The sense of frustration was so acute that Mike groaned and clenched his fists in a desperate attempt to stop himself grabbing his cock.

"Problem, Pup?" Harvey asked, leaning through the gap in his legs so Mike could see him. There was a satisfied smile on his face, and he kept finger-fucking Mike vigorously as he spoke. It felt so...damn...good...

"Please let me jerk off, Harvey," Mike whimpered, annoyed with himself for giving Harvey the satisfaction, but unable to stop himself. "Please...I gotta come...I can't hold it..."

"No." Harvey's tone was firm. "You know the rules – and the consequences for disobeying them, Mike."

"But you're...shit...that feels so good..."

He threw his head back, wriggling in total frustration, and thumped his fists on the bed. He wanted to come! He wanted it so badly, but Harvey had promised him all kinds of unpleasant consequences if he disobeyed him.

"You only have to ask, Mike," Harvey said, grinning at him through the gap in his legs.

What would it be like to feel Harvey's cock inside him? He wanted it, but he was too afraid. He couldn't ask...he just couldn't...could he?

"Harvey, please just let me come!" he begged.

"You can come, Mike – any time you like – as long as my cock is in this tight little hole when you do." He wagged his fingers inside Mike's hole.

"You're such a bastard, Harvey!"

"It's been said." Harvey shrugged. "But if my sub ever calls me that again, I'll whip your ass so hard you won't sit comfortably for days."

"I'm sorry...I just...I want to come so much..."

Harvey leaned over him. "We can finish this right now, Mike. Is that what you want? You can say your safe word and go into the bathroom and jack off. "

"No! I don't want that!"

"Then while we stay in the scene, you don't get to come until I'm fucking you," Harvey said implacably.

"Please Harvey...I want...I really want..." Mike couldn't keep the whimpering tone out of his voice.

“What do you want, Mike?” Harvey asked, gazing at him intently.

“I want you to fuck me!” Mike found himself screaming. “Please, Harvey – please fuck me!”

Then he blinked, shocked into silence by his own words and surprised more than anything else that he wanted it so much that he’d beg for it.

“I knew you’d ask.” Harvey grinned.

Mike gazed up at him, expecting Harvey to immediately grab a condom and get on with it – but Harvey didn’t move.

“It’s good you begged so nicely, Mike, but I’ll fuck you when I’m good and ready and not before...so you’ll just have to keep on holding it,” Harvey said smugly. “And maybe next time you’ll remember not to call your dom names when he’s doing nice things to you.”

Mike groaned and thumped his head back on the pillow. “You’re enjoying this far too much,” he accused.

Harvey appeared to consider that. “I really am,” he agreed, nodding. “Having my own little pup naked, trussed up, powerless and completely at my mercy, begging to be fucked like the little slut he is. Yes, Mike, you’re right; I **am** enjoying this!”

Harvey removed his fingers and got up. He untied Mike’s ankles, rubbing the skin where the ties had dug in. “See – this is why broad, good quality ties are so much better than those crappy skinny ones you like so much, Mike,” he said smugly.

Mike examined his ankles, which had faint, pink smudges around them and then compared them to his wrists, which still bore deep, red indentations from his own skinny tie.

“Really? You’re turning a bondage session into a lesson on what ties to wear?” he grumbled, rubbing his wrists to try and get rid of the marks.

“There is never a bad time to learn that particular lesson,” Harvey told him sternly.

Mike was going to reply when Harvey took the wind out of his sails by getting onto the bed beside him, taking a fistful of his hair, and pulling him in close for another of those tantalising kisses that didn’t quite go deep enough.

Now he wasn’t in bondage anymore, Mike threw himself into the kiss with a passion, enjoying his chance to get a good feel of Harvey’s naked body. He ran his fingertips over Harvey’s butt and pressed his desperate cock between their bodies, rubbing hard, trying to get some friction going that way as he was denied the pleasure of touching his own cock.

Suddenly, Mike found his head pulled back by the fistful of hair Harvey was still clutching. He felt like a kitten being held by the scruff of his neck and was pretty sure he mewled like

one too, annoyed at being denied what he was seeking.

“Bad Mike.” Harvey tutted. “Don’t think I don’t know what you’re doing.”

“Then fuck me!” Mike yelled. “If that’s the only way I get to come, then please, you’ve gotta fuck me. I can’t hold on much longer!”

He felt Harvey’s hand land on his ass, sharp and stinging, and he loved the warm tingle that spread through his body at being overpowered by someone strong and dominant, who wouldn’t let him get away with anything. He couldn’t lie or cheat his way out of this, the way he was so used to doing when faced with difficult situations in the past. Harvey stood between him and his own weaknesses, and he loved it. It made him feel somehow...safe.

“I’m in charge,” Harvey reminded him. “Who owns you, Mike?”

“You do,” Mike agreed, his head still pulled back by Harvey’s fist in his hair.

“Say it again,” Harvey ordered.

“You own me. I belong to you,” Mike replied, feeling a wave of happiness sweep through him as he said the words.

“You need something to help you remember that,” Harvey said. “My marks on your skin will help you focus.”

Mike shivered in anticipation. Was Harvey going to spank him for real this time? The few sharp slaps he’d been given already made Mike hungry to know what that would feel like.

But Harvey didn’t spank him. Instead, he pulled the fistful of hair he was holding over to one side, exposing Mike’s neck, and then leaned in and sucked down hard, biting just a little. Mike whimpered and hung there, letting Harvey put his mark on him.

Harvey drew back and ran a finger over the sore skin.

“It’ll peep out a little above the collar line,” he said, looking pleased with his handiwork. “Just enough for me to see when you’re at work tomorrow. When you see me looking at it, it’ll remind you that I held you down and marked you because you’re mine, and I can.”

Mike shivered again, seriously turned on by that thought.

“And one more, a private one, completely out of sight. Only you and I will know it’s there.” Harvey moved his head down and latched on to the side of Mike’s thigh, just next to the curve of his buttock. He bit down hard on the fleshy area, and Mike found himself squealing as he struggled to take it without pushing Harvey away.

Harvey was relentless, holding him down while he bit him, making him take the bite. It hurt – God it hurt! – but somehow the pain felt good.

It was as if time had slowed down. All Mike could feel were Harvey's teeth in his skin, marking him, claiming him, making him completely his own – and then something unexpected happened.

A wave of relaxed pleasure swept through him and suddenly it felt like he was floating through the air. Mike gazed blearily into space, blinking in surprise. So this was what Harvey meant when he said he'd take him higher than any drug ever could. Mike had no idea that Harvey had meant it literally. He felt fantastic!

The moment passed, time sped up again, and Harvey released him. Mike was still floating as he looked down to see the red mark his dom had placed on his skin.

God, he loved having Harvey's marks on him! It was ridiculous, but his heart exploded with pride as he looked at that beautiful red bite mark. He ran his fingers over it, liking that he could feel the outlines of the mark, knowing that he'd be able to touch it at the office tomorrow and remember how Harvey had held him down and marked him, and nobody would know what he was doing. His cock gave a quiver of satisfaction, and he felt himself floating even higher.

Harvey was watching him, studying the expression on his face. "You like?" he asked quietly.

"Yeah, I like," Mike admitted, flushing wildly. "I really like."

"I thought you would. Me too." Harvey's fingers drifted gently over the mark on his thigh.

"Harvey...I feel amazing...like I'm floating," Mike told him stupidly.

"Good." Harvey took his face in his hands and kissed him, and Mike relaxed against him, surrendering completely to the kiss. Harvey was his master, his dom. He had placed his marks on him. He owned him. No – he **possessed** him, body and soul.

Harvey released him, and Mike flopped onto the bed in a relaxed heap.

"**Now** I'm going to fuck you," Harvey said in a deep, dark tone, and Mike realised he wasn't scared anymore. Harvey was his dom – of course he could fuck him if he wanted. Mike opened his legs obligingly, looking forward to being of service to his dom.

Harvey drew back, put a condom on his cock, and then he settled between Mike's open legs. Mike could feel Harvey's hard cock nudging his hole and braced himself, but Harvey took his time.

He gathered Mike's wrists in one hand and kept them pinned, using his other hand to stroke Mike's body. He sucked on one of Mike's nipples while pinching the other one with his free hand. He moved down and licked the bite mark on his thigh, gently lapping at it with his tongue, and then he slid his fingers into Mike's ass again, stretching him some more. Mike just lay there, surrendering completely to whatever Harvey wanted to do to him.

There was a pause as Harvey put lube on the condom covering his cock, and then he loomed over Mike again. Mike shivered, but from anticipation rather than fear.

“Ssh...just take it...you know you want it,” Harvey said, stroking his trembling body firmly.

Harvey pushed his cock slowly into Mike’s hole, and Mike gave a startled gasp at the sudden intrusion. He panicked, sure that Harvey was too big for him to take, and bucked up against him.

“Harvey...shit!”

It burned, and he felt as if he was being impossibly stretched. Harvey held him down, firmly handling his struggles, keeping him in place, waiting for him to calm down.

“Stay with me, Mike,” he ordered.

Slowly, Mike became accustomed to how it felt and the burning sensation faded. Harvey’s hands were hard on his wrists, holding him in place as tightly as the tie had done earlier, and somehow that helped. Mike’s breathing evened out, and he looked up at Harvey with a hazy smile.

Harvey pushed again, and this time he slid all the way into Mike’s hole until he was buried ball’s deep inside him. Mike felt filled, but it was a comfortable sensation.

Harvey paused, hanging there, looking down on him. “Who do you belong to?” he demanded.

“You, Harvey,” Mike whispered, allowing his body to relax around Harvey’s presence inside him.

“Good boy.” Harvey dipped his head and kissed him on the mouth, and Mike moaned and opened up eagerly.

He’d never felt more turned on or more submissive in his life, and he had to think the two were in direct correlation to each other. Harvey was dominating every part of him – his tongue in Mike’s mouth, his hands on his wrists, his body on top of him, and his cock deep inside him – and Mike loved it.

He was high on the sensation of surrender, and, that, finally was when his brain switched off and let him just feel instead of thinking. It was so breathtakingly simple that he couldn’t believe how easy it was.

“You’re mine, Mike, and I’m going to fuck you hard and make you scream,” Harvey promised, in a seriously dark tone of voice.

He moved his hips, and Mike gasped as it made his stretched hole ache. Harvey ignored his

gasp and thrust in and out, rhythmically fucking him. At first it hurt, but then Mike's body seemed to stretch to accommodate him, and then...then Harvey hit a spot that felt so damn fantastic that all his nerve-endings fizzed with pleasure at the same time.

"Oh shit...that's good...fuck me, Harvey, please..." Mike found himself babbling, and Harvey did just that, picking up speed and slamming into him with a force that Mike knew he'd feel tomorrow – and that he knew Harvey wanted him to feel tomorrow.

"You can touch yourself now. Come while I'm in you or not at all," Harvey said, releasing Mike's wrists.

Finally! Mike gratefully grabbed his rigid cock and stroked it hard in time to Harvey's deep, powerful thrusts.

Everything coalesced into a ball of sensation – Harvey inside him, fucking him; Harvey looming over him, and occasionally leaning down to kiss him; Harvey's dark, intense gaze, never leaving his face; Harvey's hard cock, claiming him; and Harvey's body pinning him in place. Harvey was relentless; in him, on top of him and everywhere, flooding Mike's senses with his sheer presence.

Mike could feel his orgasm building from the inside out, not just in his cock and balls but also in his ass, and a second later he was screaming, the way Harvey had predicted he would scream, and he pumped out his come over his own hand as he experienced the most intense orgasm of his life.

Mike watched, as if in a movie, while Harvey continued to thrust into him, long after Mike's orgasm had subsided. His body didn't belong to him anymore. It was Harvey's, existing solely for Harvey's pleasure. Then Harvey experienced his own orgasm, his face contorting as he thrust deep into Mike's hole one last time.

He hung there for a moment, gasping, and then lowered himself onto Mike's chest and dropped a heartfelt kiss on his lips.

"Thank you, Mike," he murmured, and Mike knew he was thanking him for his submission, not the sex. He felt it should be the other way around, and he should be thanking Harvey for the fantastic dominance that had made the experience so mind-blowing, but he was too wrung out to say anything.

Mike wrapped his arms around Harvey instead, holding him close, wanting to keep his dom's cock inside him forever. They stayed that way for a long time, but eventually Harvey shifted and withdrew, making Mike whimper.

Harvey rolled over, got off the bed, and disappeared into what was clearly an en suite bathroom. Mike heard the sound of running water, and then Harvey returned to the bed with a washcloth.

He cleaned them both swiftly, wiping the pooled come from Mike's belly. Then he threw the

washcloth onto the nightstand and got back onto the bed, pulling a sheet and blanket over them both.

Mike turned onto his side so that he was facing Harvey.

“That was fantastic,” he muttered, feeling wrung out and exhausted but very happy.

“Yes.” Harvey’s voice sounded as though it was coming from a long way off. His hand came to rest on Mike’s thigh. “Of course it was.”

Mike rested his chin on Harvey’s shoulder, grinning at Harvey’s entirely predictable self-belief, and within seconds he was fast asleep.

End of Part Three

Part Four: Reasonable Doubt by Xanthe

Possession

Part Four: Reasonable Doubt

It was an old, familiar dream; jumbled up images of screeching metal, orange flame, and the hot stench of burning. He was flying through the air, the cold wind stealing the scream from his lips as he headed towards the hard surface of the road below...

He woke with a gasp before he landed, his body jerking like a fish on a line, to find himself safely wrapped up in Harvey’s arms.

“Quiet, Pup,” Harvey murmured, sounding as if he wasn’t completely awake.

The usual post-dream emotions flooded in; the grief, the aching loss, and a deep sense of loneliness.

“Ssh.” Harvey stroked the bite mark on his thigh and the sense of loneliness receded.

He felt warm, relaxed, and safe in Harvey’s arms. He wasn’t alone. After nearly two decades, he’d finally found somewhere he belonged – and someone he belonged to.

“Go back to sleep,” Harvey said.

Mike couldn’t usually sleep after that particular dream. He usually got up and surfed the net until the memory faded. Harvey continued to stroke his thigh, lazily comforting him, and Mike nuzzled in against Harvey’s cheek and closed his eyes. He expected sleep to elude him as it usually did, but woke up three hours later after a deep, restful, sleep.

It was 5.30 – pretty soon it’d be time to get up and go to work. Mike eased himself out of Harvey’s arms and walked quietly into the bathroom. He closed the door behind him, turned on the light, and took a moment to admire the elegant stone tiles and gleaming chrome

taps.

He was about to turn towards the toilet when he caught sight of himself in the full-length mirror on the side wall. He was naked, and he looked so completely different to how he was used to seeing himself that the sight fascinated him. The collar around his neck was so soft and snug that he'd forgotten he was even wearing it, but now he saw himself as Harvey must have seen him last night; naked, collared, and submissive.

He moved closer to the mirror, startled by the change. His lips were still swollen from being so comprehensively kissed and from sucking on Harvey's cock; his hair was dishevelled from where Harvey's fist had held him down; and his body was covered in marks. Harvey's marks – the marks of ownership that he'd placed on Mike's body.

Mike traced his fingers over the red bite mark on his neck and the bigger, deeper one on his thigh. There were still faint smudges around his wrists, although the marks on his ankles had faded almost completely.

"Damn Harvey for being right about the ties," Mike grumbled, but he grinned at his reflection anyway, and then just stood there, gazing at himself. He was Harvey's now. Harvey had claimed him with his deep, dark voice, seductive words, strong hands, insistent lips, and the force of his powerful personality.

Mike hadn't anticipated just how sweet surrender could be. He felt as if he was someone different this morning but couldn't put his finger precisely on what had changed. He just looked... "Well fucked," he said, gazing at himself.

His body was loose, sated, and damn sore in places, but well used. It was a good feeling. His eyes were bright, and he felt...happy. It was like waking up after a long nightmare to find it was just a dream after all.

He used the toilet and then returned quietly to the bedroom. There was no movement from the bed, and he didn't want to wake Harvey, but he couldn't sleep anymore; he was too wide awake now. He knew Harvey had hung up his clothes somewhere the previous night, and he quietly opened the closet.

He couldn't find his own clothes without making too much noise, so he grabbed one of Harvey's shirts and put that on. It was a bit too big, reminding him of that time he'd worn one of Harvey's suits to work, and how he'd spent most of the day with a hard-on and hadn't known why; or hadn't wanted to know.

He tiptoed into the living room, wearing just the over-sized shirt, feeling like a kid playing dress up in his big brother's clothes.

He sat down on the carpet and studied Harvey's extensive DVD collection, arranged as neatly as his books and records.

He was still browsing through them half an hour later when the door opened, and Harvey

entered the room, wearing a navy blue, silk bathrobe.

“Morning,” Harvey said, glancing down on him. Mike was sitting on the floor dressed in one of Harvey’s own shirts and surrounded by a dozen DVD boxes that he hadn’t bothered to return to the shelf. Harvey winced.

“Morning.” Mike grinned up at him. He figured that if Harvey meant it about this not being a one time deal, then he was going to have to learn that Mike didn’t have the same neatness fetish that he had.

Besides, Mike thought it’d do Harvey good to unravel a bit. He was a bit too used to having everything on his own terms. Even last night had been Harvey having things his own way, and Mike didn’t think he’d once seen a chink in that handsome, composed mask, even when Harvey had been fucking him through the mattress.

That thought made him flush.

“Problem?” Harvey asked, sitting down on the couch.

“No. Just wondering what happens next.” Mike shrugged. “You said you didn’t want a one-night deal, but...”

“I don’t. Stop worrying.” Harvey frowned. “You’re wearing my shirt.”

“Yeah, I couldn’t find mine. Is it a problem?”

“I prefer you naked.” Harvey grinned. “But I like that you’re still wearing my collar.”

“I didn’t want to take it off.” Mike flushed again. “I wasn’t sure that was something I was allowed to do, or if it was something you had to do. I don’t know the rules here, Harvey!”

“The rules?” Harvey looked amused. “We’re not at work, Mike. There aren’t pages of by-laws for you to learn and remember.”

“But how’s it going to be? There are three of us in this relationship – you, me and Pearson Hardman – so how the hell is it going to work?”

“It’s simple. At work, you are obedient, hardworking, and do what I tell you. And at home...it’s exactly the same.” Harvey grinned, looking very pleased with himself.

“I come when I’m called, and I sit, stay, and beg on command?” Mike raised an eyebrow.

“Well, you are the pup, Pup. But no, it’s more than that. It’s not just sex. I do actually like being with you, despite your crappy taste in ties, cheap suits, and lamentable lack of interest in *Star Trek*.”

“Yeah, you really are a Trekkie, aren’t you?” Mike waved a hand at the boxed sets of the TV

shows and movies on Harvey's shelves.

"Like I said, Captain Kirk is definitely the man."

"Do you think he was fucking Spock, the way you fucked me last night?"

"What? No! That's just wrong, Mike!" Harvey sounded genuinely shocked. "Now come here; I want to give you something."

Mike couldn't be bothered to get up, so he crawled over to the couch and settled next to Harvey's knee – something that Harvey seemed to find extremely satisfying.

"This is for you." Harvey handed him what looked like a hotel room key card. "It works the private elevator." He jerked his head towards the corner of the living room. "So you can come and go without me being here to let you in. There are times I'll send you on ahead to get naked and ready for me, so I can fuck you when I get home."

"You have your own elevator? Seriously?" Mike whistled. "Damn it, Harvey, you don't need to act James Bond, you're living in your own James Bond movie here!"

"I worked hard for it." Harvey shrugged.

"Okay. Thanks." Mike fingered the card thoughtfully. "Not that I don't love the idea of lying naked on your bed ready for you to come home and fuck me, but I can't just be your puppy all the time, Harvey. This'll never work if that's all you want."

"It isn't. I told you last night, Mike; I want someone intelligent who'll challenge me. I don't want anyone predictable or stupid."

"I'll leave my stuff lying around your weirdly neat apartment." Mike glanced around the place. "I think you have some form of OCD, Harvey, because this place is freakishly tidy, and I'm not."

"I had noticed." Harvey glanced at the DVD cases strewn all over the floor with a pained expression.

"I'll drive you nuts."

"You already do."

"You think we can seriously make this work?"

Harvey's reply was to tilt Mike's head up and kiss him soundly on the mouth.

"Objection, your honour...leading the witness," Mike muttered feebly when Harvey drew back.

Harvey laughed. "Oh, I think the witness was easily led. Honestly, Mike, I haven't a clue where this is heading, but I do know last night was damn good – for both of us. As for making it work and your obsession with rules – the only rule I have is that you don't lie to me. Ever. About anything. Take the fifth if you want, but don't lie."

Mike shrugged. "I won't. I haven't."

"Really?" Harvey raised an eyebrow. "Remind me - how did you get that scar on your thigh?"

Mike sat back, feeling winded. "Look, Harvey..."

"You lie, Mike. That's what you do. You lie for an easy life – you always have. You lied to Jenny about Trevor, and you lied to Trevor about Jenny. You lied every time you went into an exam and sat it for someone else. You've lied to me at work to get yourself out of a tight spot, more than once. Now, I don't give a damn about you lying to other people. I don't care if you lie to Jessica, or Louis, or anyone else, but you do not, ever, lie to me."

Mike stared at him. "How did you know?" he asked finally. "About the scar?"

"I read people. It's what I do. Also..." Harvey waved his hand at the file that was still on the coffee table where Mike had flung it the previous night. "Due diligence, Mike. The police report on the crash is in the file, and I can fill in the gaps myself."

Mike wrapped his arms around his knees and sat there, staring at the file.

"I was in the back of the car when it crashed," he said quietly. Harvey leaned forward, resting his elbows on his knees. "I got thrown clear when it collided with that truck, and I landed on a piece of glass. My parents were still inside the car when it went up in flames. One minute we were a family, and the next I was an orphan. My whole life changed in just a few seconds. It took me a long time to wrap my head around the fact that can happen."

The sudden loss of the two people in his life he loved and depended upon the most had been a shock he'd never recovered from, no matter how good his grandma had been to him.

"And you had to move house and school to go live with your grandmother. You lost everything in that crash," Harvey said, with another nod in the direction of the file. "Your parents; your life as you'd known it up until that point; your house; your friends; your school...everywhere you belonged."

"Yeah." Mike shrugged. "That's just the way it was."

"And you've been looking for a new place to belong ever since."

Mike stared at him.

Harvey reached out and stroked his hair. "I told you – I read people. Hmm, your hair is a

mess.”

“Probably from where you had your fist in it last night,” Mike reminded him.

Harvey glanced at his watch and then at Mike. “I think it’s time for that punishment now, don’t you?”

“What?” Mike sat up, his stomach doing an anxious flip but his cock twitching in interest.

“Did you think I’d forget?” Harvey shook his head, making a tutting sound in the back of his throat. “Seriously, Mike? Did you really think I’d forget that?”

“I guess not.” Mike’s voice sounded like a croak to his own ears.

“Come here. You look too damn good not to spank, sitting there, wearing my shirt, with that ridiculous hair and with my collar around your neck. You can’t go around looking like that and not expect me to spank you. I’m only human.”

He reached out and took hold of Mike’s wrist, pulling him firmly, and this time Mike went eagerly, allowing himself to be hauled over Harvey’s silk clad knees.

It felt strange being in this position, but his body thrummed with excited anticipation at the prospect of taking a spanking from Harvey. He felt Harvey slide up the hem of his shirt to expose his bare ass and shivered.

“No underwear? I like you like this.” Harvey stroked Mike’s ass with his hand, and Mike found himself relaxing...only to yelp and jump into the air when Harvey’s hand came down, sharply, on his ass.

“That hurt!” he said accusingly, over his shoulder.

“It’s a punishment. It’s supposed to,” Harvey replied with a roll of his eyes.

“I thought you were going to start easy or something,” Mike grumbled.

“Like I said – punishment. I want your ass red and smarting to remind you who you belong to, and that my work takes priority over Louis’s every time. Also, you should definitely be disabused of the notion that he’s meaner than me. Because he really isn’t.”

There was a grin in Harvey’s voice as he said that, and Mike moaned softly and buried his head in his arms.

“I’m so screwed,” he muttered into the sleeves of Harvey’s blue shirt.

Another of Harvey’s sharp slaps made him yelp again, and then another, and then Harvey was raining down the spanks in quick succession. Mike tried to hold still but it was impossible, and he ended up wriggling and writhing to avoid the onslaught.

There was a pause, and he thought it might be over, but it turned out the pause was just to enable Harvey to pull him closer and hold him more firmly in position. After that, every single spank hit its target, and Mike found himself whimpering and moaning as the pain turned into a deliciously sexy warmth, spreading through the sensitised skin and making his cock harden.

Really, it shouldn't be this hot being over Harvey's knees, having his ass spanked hard and fast, but it was. Mike loved the feeling of helplessness. He loved not being able to escape those stinging slaps, of having to take them, feeling his ass turn into what felt like a brightly glowing beacon.

The burning sensation built up and now every single inch of his ass felt sore, and he didn't think he could take anymore.

"Please...Harvey..." he whimpered.

"Who owns you, Mike?" Harvey asked as he continued spanking, not letting up for a second.

"You do! Harvey...please! Ow...please!" he begged pathetically, but Harvey appeared to have no intention of letting up just yet.

"For the record – pleading doesn't work," Harvey told him.

Mike glanced over his shoulder again to find Harvey looking demonically handsome, his eyes dark and intent as he concentrated on spanking him to within an inch of his life.

Mike knew he could say his safe word, but he didn't want to. He wanted to prove to Harvey that he could take whatever he wanted to hand out, and that he trusted that wouldn't be more than he could handle.

Mike put his head back on his arms and surrendered completely to the spanking, and that was when the endorphins started flow in, just as they had last night when Harvey had been marking him. It hurt so much, but it felt so good too. He was Harvey's, and Harvey could spank his ass as hard as he liked. There was a kind of peace in that knowledge, and Mike found himself floating again, serene and content.

The speed of the spanks gradually slowed, and their severity lessened, and finally Harvey stopped spanking him and stroked his fingers languidly over Mike's hot ass instead. He slipped them between Mike's buttocks, and Mike gave a little yelp as he felt something cool and wet press against his hole. He realised Harvey must have brought the lube into the room in his bathrobe pocket, and he relaxed, letting Harvey's fingers in. Harvey didn't stretch him for long – he didn't need to after last night.

Then, suddenly, Mike found himself flipped off Harvey's lap and deposited on his back on the couch. Harvey loomed over him, undoing his bathrobe, and after a brief pause to get a condom in place he slid into Mike's hole again, pushing in until he was fully inside him.

Mike stared up at him, winded by how fast that had happened, his cock rigid between their bodies. Harvey's cock felt easier to take than last night, but it burned more because he was still a little sore. Mike liked the sensation – it made it more intense.

“**This** is where you belong now, Mike,” Harvey told him fiercely, thrusting into him again. “You belong here – to me.”

Harvey held him down as he fucked him, kissing him repeatedly. He never took his eyes off Mike, as if willing him to understand where he belonged by sheer force of personality.

Mike gazed up at him, transfixed by the expression in Harvey's eyes, truly believing that he did belong here. Harvey owned him, and it felt so damn good!

Harvey slid his hand between their bodies and rubbed Mike's cock in time to his thrusts until Mike came, all too easily, with a moan of pleasure, while Harvey finished off inside him.

Then Harvey took Mike's head between his hands and forced him to look at him. “Did you get that?” he demanded.

“That I'm yours? Yes. I got it, Harvey,” Mike whispered.

“I'll fuck you when I want and spank you when I think you need it – or just because I damn well please.”

Mike didn't have a smart reply; he just knew he was seriously turned on by what Harvey was promising. “Yes...please,” was all he could say.

“Good boy.” Harvey kissed him and then drew back, his cock sliding out of Mike's hole, leaving it aching both from the use and from the loss. “Playtime's over, Pup – time to get to work. I'll shower first.”

He got off the couch, adjusted his bathrobe, and tied it around his waist.

“Harvey – about work...” Mike remembered the bet with Louis and those papers still in his bag. “About Louis...”

“What about him?”

“I was wondering about our meeting with him this morning. I mean, how the hell are you going to win that bet?”

“I'm not. You are,” Harvey said confidently. “It always had to come from you, Mike. Possession is nine-tenths of the law, but Louis was right – you're not a tie – so only you can say who you belong to. Judging by what you just said, you're pretty clear on that now.”

“That's it? I go in there and say you own me, and Louis gives in?”

“Of course. If you believe it, Louis can’t argue with that. A case like this was always going to rest on what **you** believe, Mike.” Harvey grinned at him and then disappeared into the bedroom.

Mike stared after him, feeling vaguely uneasy. Surely Harvey wouldn’t go to all these lengths just to win a wager, would he? On the other hand, Harvey really did hate losing...

Mike thought about what Louis had offered him – money – appealing to his obvious need for that.

What else was there for Harvey to exploit but his **other** need, the one he’d always tried so hard to hide; his desire to belong somewhere and to someone? What was it Harvey had said? He **read** people. Had he read Mike and played him simply in order to win the wager?

Mike was distracted by the apartment’s phone ringing. He wasn’t sure if he should answer it, as Harvey was still in the shower, but he decided against it and the call flipped onto the answering machine.

“Hey, Harvey, it’s Bertha!” a deep, rich, female voice said. “I thought I’d call early to catch you before you left for the gym – I know how busy your day gets later! But it looks like I missed you already, sugar. Sheesh, all that working out will wear you out, boy!”

Mike wondered who on earth ‘Bertha’ might be. She didn’t sound like someone who would be friends with Harvey.

“Look, I just wanted to let you know we’ve finished the new Patrick Center, thanks to your generous donation. Now, I know you hate any kinda fuss, but you’d sure as hell better come see what we’ve done with your money! So get that skinny white ass of yours over here some time, so I can show you around!” She gave a raucous bellow of laughter and then the message ended.

Mike sat there, pondering what Harvey’s ‘generous donation’ might have been for.

“Probably the Harvey Specter Fund for Self-Promotion,” he muttered, getting up and going over to the bookshelves. He picked up the photo he’d seen the previous night of Harvey with his kid brother.

“Who are you really?” he asked, looking at the photo. “Are you the kind of guy who’d play me like that, fuck me like that, just to win a bet? Are you really that competitive, Harvey? Did you just play me like a fucking violin? If so, what kind of a stupid sap does that make me?”

The kid in the photo stared back at him from those dark, rebellious eyes, looking dangerous, delinquent, and disaffected. He looked like the kind of kid who’d do anything to get what he wanted.

Anything.

Anything?

Mike felt a cold fist closing in the pit of his stomach, clenching anxiously, and Harvey's blue cotton shirt felt suddenly icy against his bare skin.

The door opened, and Harvey walked in, rubbing his wet hair with a towel.

"Go take a shower, or you'll be late, and trust me, your boss will spank your ass for that," he said with a smirk.

"Why did you just spank me, Harvey?" Mike asked quietly.

"I told you. Did you forget already?" Harvey picked up his iPad and began downloading the morning papers onto it.

"No...why did you spank me just now? Instead of last night?" Mike asked.

"Hmmm?" Harvey glanced up.

"I was wondering why you didn't spank me last night. I thought you'd just forgotten...but like you said, you never forget. I think, even if I'd gone over your knee that first time, you wouldn't have done more than give me a couple of swats because you never intended to spank me last night. It had to be this morning, so I'd go into that meeting with Louis with your handprints all over my ass to remind me who I belong to."

Harvey put the iPad down. "Is that a problem?"

"You don't deny it?"

"No." Harvey shrugged. "That's precisely why I spanked you this morning instead of last night. I like the idea of you walking around with a freshly spanked ass, Mike. I like the idea of it glowing under your suit, and you feeling me every time you sit down. I want that hot ass to remind you who you belong to for the next few hours."

"Okay," Mike said quietly. "I'll go take a shower."

He walked into the bedroom, his stomach still churning. Harvey hadn't denied it, but it just went to show how much of what Harvey did was carefully planned. He'd even brought the lube and condoms into the living room in his bathrobe pocket this morning, knowing he'd fuck Mike on the couch after spanking him.

Then there was that file; due diligence he called it, but he'd used everything he learned to careful and precise effect, both last night and this morning.

Mike removed the collar and left it on the bed. His neck felt bare and empty as he went into

the bathroom. He looked at himself in the mirror again, examining his red ass in detail. He could see the outline of handprints, particularly around the edges, and he felt a sense of pride and arousal as he looked at them. And Harvey knew he'd feel that way, damn it!

He took his shower and then he went back into the bedroom, a towel wrapped around his waist, to find Harvey standing there, dressed in a suit and tie, minus his jacket, his hair slickly styled as usual. He was sipping on a glass of orange juice, reading his iPad, but he put them both down when Mike came into the bedroom.

"Lose the towel, Pup," Harvey ordered. "I want to get a good look at the marks I put on you before they get covered up."

Mike took off the towel, his cock twitching again as Harvey's gaze raked over his body approvingly. Harvey seemed to be committing the sight to memory, mapping every single bite mark and handprint on Mike's body. Finally, he seemed satisfied and nodded at Mike's suit, which he'd laid out on the bed.

Mike could feel that Harvey's gaze was still fixed on him as he got dressed, and he grimaced. "You're watching me get dressed? Seriously?"

"You're mine. I can watch you get dressed – and it's not too late to spank your ass some more, either, so watch that smart mouth of yours."

"I think you kinda like my smart mouth. You sure as hell seemed to like it when it was wrapped around your dick last night."

"It **was** at its finest then, yes," Harvey said musingly.

Mike finished buttoning up his shirt and was about to reach for his tie when Harvey brushed his hand away.

"Uh-uh. See, I like the way my collar looked on you," Harvey said.

"I can't exactly wear it to work, Harvey," Mike pointed out, although he had to admit he was pretty tempted. He loved how it'd felt around his throat.

"I know. But you can wear my tie to work. I bought this one for you." Harvey held up a steel grey tie, as skinny as Mike usually wore them, except this one was made from an expensive silk fabric that placed it far outside Mike's usual price range.

"You bought me a skinny tie? Really? The great Harvey Specter actually bought a skinny tie?" Mike teased. "That must have nearly killed you!"

"It seems to be your trademark, and I don't want to change you, Pup," Harvey said seriously. "I just want you to be the best you can be – and this is the best damn skinny tie out there."

He slipped the tie under the collar of Mike's shirt and fastened it in place with deft, expert

movements of his fingers. When he was finished, he smoothed Mike's collar down, adjusting the tie slightly, and then took a step back to admire his handiwork.

"That tie is your collar today – wear it as such," he ordered. "It will remind you who you belong to all day. I don't want you taking it off until I put your other collar on you this evening." Harvey gestured with his head in the direction of the black leather collar on the bed. "That way, you'll always be wearing my collar, day and night."

The tie felt good, filling the empty space around his neck, reminding Mike who he belonged to. He loved how it made him feel – and that made him doubt it. Wasn't this just another example of Harvey playing him? Knowing exactly what to do to keep him sweet and win the wager?

Harvey took hold of his chin and tilted his head to bestow a little kiss on his mouth. Then he took a step back and was suddenly transformed from the seductive dom of the past several hours into his work persona, the hard to please boss with the giant ego.

"I'll see you at the office. Don't be late – I want you to look at a pro bono case Jessica has foisted on me that I have absolutely no interest in," he said, picking up his jacket and shouldering himself into it. "It's more your level than mine, Mike." He grinned and adjusted his jacket in front of the mirror, then smoothed his hair down before disappearing into the living room.

Mike heard his cell phone ringing, and he patted his pockets, wondering where he'd left it. Then he remembered it was in the living room, so he followed Harvey in there and grabbed his bag, emptying the contents out onto the coffee table to locate the phone.

He got to it just in time before it rang off.

"Morning Mike."

Mike sighed. Louis. Harvey, on his way to the front door, heard the sigh and glanced back at him enquiringly.

"Who is it?" he asked quietly.

Mike placed his hand over the phone. "Nobody. It's fine. Uh, you go on ahead."

Harvey's expression darkened. "You know, I could have sworn we just had a whole conversation about lying."

"Mike – are you there?" Louis asked down the phone.

"Yeah...I...What do you want, Louis?" Mike said, making a helpless gesture in Harvey's direction.

Harvey's jaw tightened, and he crossed his arms over his chest, making it clear he wasn't

going anywhere until the call was done.

"I was just phoning to see if you'd had a chance to consider my offer,"

"It's early," Mike batted back, not wanting to get into this right now.

"It's 7 a.m. and some of us are already at work," Louis told him.

"Look, Louis, I really don't want to talk about this right now."

"Did Harvey counter-offer with more money? Because I told you, Mike, I'll better any deal he offers you."

"No! It's not that..." Mike rubbed his head, wishing Harvey wasn't looking at him right now.

"Look, it's not going to happen. It's not about the money. I don't give a shit about the money." He hissed that in an undertone, turning away to look out of the window, but there was no way Harvey hadn't heard it.

"Harvey got to you, didn't he?" Louis said accusingly. *"Listen, Mike, you have to remember that Harvey is the best closer in town. I don't know what he's offered you, but he doesn't mean it. He's playing you. It's what he does. He gets inside people's heads, worms his way into their souls, and corrupts them from the inside out. But you can fight it, Mike. You're smarter than to get taken in by one of Harvey's cheap tricks."*

Mike felt himself growing cold. *The best closer in town?* Yeah, that was Harvey. Was he part of a deal that had just been closed in typical Harvey fashion?

"I expect you're telling yourself it was just a stupid bet," Louis continued. *"And how far would Harvey go to win a bet? Well, let me tell you that he'd sell his own grandmother to win, Mike. You know that. It doesn't mean he likes you, or that he's the best option for you. He's just using you. You know that, in your heart."*

Mike's heart thumped anxiously. He turned to look at Harvey...to see Harvey looking down at the crap from his bag that he'd dumped out on the coffee table. And right there, in the middle of it, were those papers Louis had wanted him to sign. And Harvey's head was on one side, and he was reading them, and his expression was darkening...

"I have to go, Louis," Mike snapped, closing the phone and ending the call.

"He tried to buy you?" Harvey held up the papers. "Why the hell didn't you tell me about this, Mike?"

"I don't know. I was going to, but then we got side-tracked into all the hot sex stuff and..." Mike shrugged.

"Why did you bring them here? Were you going to see if I'd offer you a better deal?" Harvey raised an eyebrow. "Did you think you could play us off against each other to get the best

deal, Mike?”

“Why not? It’s what you’d do, isn’t it? Get the best deal for your client,” Mike snapped, angry that Harvey was judging him for something he hadn’t even done.

“If you can be bought so easily, you’ll never amount to being more than just a cheap whore, on sale to the highest bidder,” Harvey told him angrily.

“Oh, come on! Like you didn’t just try and buy me last night, only not with money, but with the way you used that file to get into my head and play me!” Mike retorted. “You’re just as bad as Louis. You were both playing me to win your stupid wager. Did I matter at all, Harvey? Or was I just another pawn for you to use in your insane, competitive, on-going game of ‘winner takes it all’ with Louis? Because you hate losing, and you hate losing to him more than anyone else.”

Harvey was glaring at him. “You really think I’d fuck you to get what I want?”

“Fuck me or fuck me over? Is there much difference? And yeah, I do. You said last night that you don’t get emotionally involved because emotions cloud your judgement. So either you were breaking your own damn rule, or you knew exactly what you were doing last night, and you went about it in the same cold, calculating way you go about everything.”

Harvey’s dark eyes were furious. “That’s what I’ve taught you? That’s what you think of me?”

“I don’t know, Harvey – but you were the one with the goddamn file on me, not the other way around! What the hell do I know about you but what you’ve allowed me to see these past few months, which isn’t much, by the way! The minute I started getting close, you clammed up and pulled away. You didn’t seem to give a damn about me right up until Louis showed an interest. Then I was like the toy you didn’t want anyone else to have, even though you’d lost interest in it yourself.”

“So I did due diligence...”

“Due diligence? Christ, Harvey, you were offering me a fucking relationship – not a business deal! Who the hell does due diligence before having sex with someone?”

“I didn’t do it for that reason! I got the file done months ago!”

“But you left it out for me to see for the first time last night, to show me precisely what you had on me. It was angle, a way to get into my head and get me into your bed!”

“Where you damn well enjoyed being!”

“Because I believed you!”

“Didn’t you do your own due diligence before coming to work for me?” Harvey raised a

bemused eyebrow. “Seriously, Mike – you didn’t? Damn it, I swear you really are too green to be allowed to walk around out there unsupervised. You didn’t even look me up on the internet?”

“No, I didn’t – I didn’t even know you’d worked at the DA’s office until Rachel and I Googled you when Cameron showed up. Why would I? You were offering me a job, not a contract to sell my soul.”

“It’s a law firm, Mike. Some would say it’s one and the same thing.” Harvey gave a little smirk.

Mike stared at him. “I can’t believe I actually fucking believed in you. You really are a bastard, Harvey.”

Mike reached up, pulled the new tie from around his neck, and then threw it dismissively onto the coffee table. “Here – go and find some other puppy to play fetch with.” He grabbed his bag, stuffed his belongings untidily into it, and made a run for the door.

“Don’t sign Louis’s papers, Mike,” Harvey said quietly behind him. “You don’t want to be mine, then that’s fine. But don’t make the mistake of being his, either, because you’ll regret it for the rest of your life.”

Mike glanced at him over his shoulder. “It’s none of your business, Harvey. I’ll sign if I damn well want. You don’t fucking own me.”

He yanked open the door and slammed it shut again behind him, then stormed furiously down the hallway to the elevator.

He stabbed his finger viciously on the call button, urging it to hurry up, hoping that Harvey wouldn’t come after him and secretly wishing he would, both at the same time.

But the door to Harvey’s apartment remained resolutely shut. The elevator arrived, and Mike threw himself into it. The door closed behind him, and now, finally alone, he stared at himself in the mirror.

Less than an hour ago, he had belonged somewhere, with someone, for the first time in seventeen years, and it had felt so good. Now that was gone, snatched away as quickly as his parents had been snatched away in that car wreck. And, damn it, it hurt all over again.

He banged both his fists into the mirror, violently and repeatedly, until it cracked and a small shard of glass cut into his left hand. That brought him to his senses, and he wrapped his handkerchief around it to stop the bleeding and then stormed out furiously into the parking garage.

His bike was where he’d left it, locked up in the shiny bike stand Harvey had bought for it.

That brought him up short. Harvey had bought him a bike stand. This wasn’t like those

seductive things upstairs – the collar, the tie, hell, even the steak dinner. This wasn't part of the Harvey Specter plan to get into his pants. This was something permanent. It wasn't something you did to get someone to sleep with you. It was something you did if you intended them to visit a lot, and you wanted to make that easy for them.

He stared at the bike stand uncertainly. Was he just trying to convince himself?

"Why is it so damn hard for you to trust anyone?" he asked.

Harvey might have his suits of armour, but Mike knew he had his own ways of keeping people out. Harvey was right – he lied his way out of things. He lied, and cheated, and skirted around the edges, always playing the odds, trying to find his way to the main chance. And because of that he always thought people were trying to do the same to him.

Supposing Harvey wasn't? Supposing he hadn't been playing him last night to win the wager with Louis? Supposing his offer of a relationship had been genuine, because he wanted Mike as much as Mike wanted him? Because they **did** fit together so well? No ulterior motive.

The problem was what it always had been: just who was Harvey Specter? Was he one of the good guys or the bad guys?

"Due diligence," Mike said to himself.

Harvey had been surprised he hadn't done any research on him before coming to work at Pearson Hardman. Well, maybe Harvey was right. Maybe it **was** time for him to do some due diligence, but where the hell to start?

Mike had no doubt that Harvey would have expunged any unwanted information about himself from surfacing on the internet, so there was no point just Googling his name.

Mike suddenly remembered that phone call. *Bertha. The Patrick Center*. It wasn't much to go on, but he got out his cell phone and tapped the information into Google.

"You wanted me to do due diligence, so I will," Mike said, flicking through the answers that came up. "Now let's find out who you are really, Harvey Specter."

End of Part Four

Part Five: Due Diligence by Xanthe

Possession

Part Five: Due Diligence

The Patrick Center was a half hour's bike ride to a rundown, poor part of town. Mike's ass hurt both from Harvey's hard spanking hand and his equally hard cock, and he pedalled most of it on the balls of his feet, so his ass didn't have to make contact with the bike's saddle.

“Damn you, Harvey. You knew it’d hurt like hell to ride my bike after all that fucking and spanking,” he grumbled as he cycled, certain that Harvey not only knew and didn’t care, but probably also liked the idea.

The Patrick Center was a newish looking building surrounded by railings, with a brightly painted mural on the outside.

Mike eyed his bike nervously – if he locked it up against the railings, he had a suspicion that he’d come out to find both the bike and the railings gone. It was that shady an area.

“You worried it’ll get stolen?” a voice called out to him.

He glanced up and saw a big, black woman, probably in her sixties, coming out of the center. She was wearing a bright tent of a dress and there was a colourful turban wrapped around her head. She was, in all senses of the phrase, larger than life.

“I am kinda.” Mike made a face.

“Well, it won’t.”

“How do I know that?”

“Because Bertha says so!” She gave a deep laugh that he recognised immediately from Harvey’s answering machine. “Ain’t nobody gonna steal anything from my Center, or they know they’ll answer to me.”

“You’re Bertha?”

“I am. Bertha Matthews – in person. And you are?”

“Uh...Mike...Mike Ross.” He held out his hand, wondering what the hell he was going to say to her now that he was here.

“Oh, so **you’re** Mike Ross.” She looked him up and down, a big grin on her face.

“Wait, you’ve heard of me?”

“I sure have, hon! Hell, I didn’t think it was possible for anyone to have a whiter, skinnier ass than Harvey, but it seems like he found someone who does!” She gave another warm laugh, pumping his hand heartily at the same time.

“Harvey talked about me?” Mike felt confused.

“Yeah. First time I ever heard him talk about a guy from work like they were a friend and not someone he was doing battle with. I’m pleased to see you, Mike. Did Harvey send you over to check up on how I spent his donation?”

“Something like that, yes.” Mike remembered what Harvey had said about how he habitually lied to make his life easier, but he decided that now was not a good time to work on that particular bad habit.

“Well, you tell him he needs to get his ass down here to see it for himself. We don’t see him often enough, and I miss mussing with that slicked down hair of his.”

“You muss with Harvey’s hair, and you’re still alive?” Mike gazed at her, awe-struck. “You either have a death wish, or you know him really well.”

She laughed again. “Oh, I know Harvey Specter well, for sure. I’ve known him since he was a skinny little kid running around this neighbourhood like he wanted to beat it into submission or get the hell out of it, and he wasn’t sure which.”

“Harvey grew up around here?” Mike glanced around at the graffiti covered walls, broken windows and filthy street.

“He didn’t tell you? Yeah. He grew up here. Of all the kids I’ve helped over the years, I knew he was the one who’d do something to make us all sit up and take notice. I thought he’d either end up doing life in jail, or get filthy rich. I’m glad he went for getting rich!”

“You thought Harvey might end up in jail?” Mike asked, shocked.

“Back when he was a kid, he was a little...wayward.” She grinned. “But that’s what we’re here for. That’s what the Patrick Center does. Now, it wasn’t called that back then, of course. That was two fires and a police raid or three ago.”

“What does the Patrick Center do?” Mike asked.

“Hell, boy - seems like Harvey didn’t tell you much at all. Why don’t you come inside? I’ll make us a nice cup of coffee, you can spill the beans on what Harvey’s up to these days, and I’ll give you some juicy gossip on what he got up to then – he hates it when I do that!” She laughed. “And riling Harvey is always fun, like mussing with his hair.”

Mike stood there, staring at her, wondering what on earth to make of her.

“Doesn’t do to let him forget where he came from, or who he is,” Bertha said with a wink. “He comes back here to have me kick his ass around. He knows I won’t take any of that lawyer bullshit from him, and I think he likes that he can always rely on me to tell him the truth.”

She clapped a hand on Mike’s shoulder and ushered him into the building. “I’m one of the few people in the world who isn’t taken in by the shiny suits, and the shiny hair, and the shiny car, and the shiny everything. I remember him when he was a snot-nosed kid who thought he could take on the world – but kept getting kicked back by a world that didn’t give a damn.”

She took Mike into a little office and filled a kettle with water. Mike glanced around the room, noticing that every square inch of wall space seemed to be filled with photographs of kids, going back years judging by what they were wearing and the faded quality to some of the photos.

“So you’re Harvey’s boy?” Bertha mused, glancing at him critically.

“Harvey’s boy?” He hated that his body reacted to the phrase, even though he didn’t want it to. He liked being Harvey’s boy, damn it!

“Yeah, Jessica mentioned you too.” Bertha shrugged.

“Jessica? You know Jessica Pearson?”

“I sure do! I’m her aunt.”

“Okay.” Mike sat down, trying to get his head around all this. “So...are you how Harvey met Jessica?”

“I am.” Bertha nodded proudly. “When Harvey was arrested, I knew I had to get Jessica to take his case. Nobody else would have gotten him off, and it would have broken my heart to see that smart, beautiful boy languish in jail for years on end.”

“Harvey was arrested?” Mike stared at her. This entire visit was turning out to be more and more surreal.

“Uh-huh. When he was seventeen. He didn’t tell you?” She raised her eyes heavenward. “Well, I guess he doesn’t like people knowing about that part of his life.”

“What was he arrested for?”

“Murder.”

“What!” Mike stood up. “Uh...he was innocent though, right?”

“Oh no, he did it.” Bertha poured steaming water into the mugs. “The man he killed was using Patrick as a drug mule – got him chasing all over town taking drugs to his dealers – thought the cops wouldn’t stop and search an innocent looking little kid like Pat.” She pursed her lips together angrily. “Well, Harvey found out and went nuts – he was always so protective of Patrick. He went over there, and this guy pulled a knife, and there was a fight. I’m not sure to this day whether Harvey meant to kill him or not, but Harvey always could handle himself in a fight.”

She stood there, looking thoughtful. “It wasn’t Harvey’s knife though. I know that. I always told Harvey that if he ever carried a knife I’d never let him back inside my place again.” She waved her hand around the room. “I know he never broke his word to me on that. He always preferred using his brain first and his fists second anyway. I never knew him to carry

a knife.”

Mike sat down again, wondering whether even his big brain could process this particular bombshell. He remembered Harvey telling him recently that murder was easier than perjury because nobody was watching, and there had been something about the way he'd said that which had stuck with Mike. He hadn't known what that was, but now he realised it was because Harvey was talking from personal experience.

“Jessica got him off – it was self-defence, or justifiable homicide, or something like that – I'm no good with that legal stuff.” Bertha shook her head. “She told the judge she'd give Harvey a job in the mailroom at her law firm – said she'd keep an eye on him and see that he stayed out of trouble. I had to sweet-talk Jess for days to get her to take on Harvey's case. Then, once she met him, he won her over with all that Harvey charm, the way I knew he would!”

She handed Mike a mug of coffee, and as he took it she saw the blood-stained handkerchief wrapped around his left hand.

“Lord, Mike – what have you been doing to yourself?”

“It was an accident.” Mike flushed, remembering his fit of temper in the elevator.

“Hmmm.” She gave him a look that made it clear she didn't believe that for a second. “Well, put it here.” She pointed at a space on the desk in front of her. “I'll clean it up.”

“You don't have to...”

“I do this kind of stuff all the time. Put it here,” she said firmly, and Mike obeyed her immediately. He wasn't surprised Harvey knew how to boss people around so effectively – he'd clearly learned from the best.

Bertha got a little bowl of water and set it down on the desk beside his hand. Then she got a first aid box out of her desk drawer. Finally, she sat down, put on her glasses, and opened the handkerchief.

“It isn't too bad. You won't need stitches; I can patch you up.” She washed away the blood gently and then dried his hand.

“So...who is Patrick?” Mike asked quietly as she worked.

She pointed at a picture on her desk, one of many, and Mike's heart thumped as he recognised the boy from the photo in Harvey's apartment.

“Looked like an angel. Swore like a demon, mind.” She picked up the photo and handed it to him. “He was such a sweet kid.”

“He's Harvey's brother,” Mike said quietly, studying the photo. “And this place is named

after him?”

“Least I could do, seeing as how Harvey paid for it after the first fire a few years back.” She shrugged.

“What kind of work do you do here?”

“We try and help the kids. Sometimes, it’s next to useless, but I figure that doesn’t mean we should stop trying. Look, Mike, you seem like a nice boy. I bet you had someone looking out for you when you were a kid, but the kids we help – they don’t.” She waved her hand at the walls. “They don’t have anyone.”

Mike glanced around at the pictures of the kids on the walls. “You’ve helped all these kids?”

“Well, some of them we didn’t help much at all, and some of ‘em really didn’t want to be helped, although God knows they needed it. We do what we can. Sometimes that’s just to feed them. The kids we see are the ones with the alcoholic dads, or the prostitute, drug addict moms, or the parents who just don’t give a damn.”

She put a Band-Aid over Mike’s cut hand and then began tying a bandage around it. “They come here, and what we try to do is re-parent them. We get them to a doctor if they need one, get them represented to authorities and allocated to social workers if it’s required.”

“And Harvey came here when he was a kid?” Mike had trouble wrapping his head around the idea of Harvey – he of the shiny suits and ostentatiously expensive tastes – ever being a disadvantaged kid like those lining the walls.

Then again...Mike had been wondering what lay beneath the suits of armour, and this seemed like precisely the kind of secret they had been constructed to hide. Who would ever guess that suited, shiny Harvey Specter, of all people, came from this kind of background? Hell, even the apartment made sense now, with its view over the city – visible proof for Harvey that he’d made it out of the ghetto. Then there was his obsession with neatness and order; coming from such a chaotic background that made a kind of sense too.

“Yeah – I don’t know that he’d have come for himself, but Patrick was hungry, so he brought him here. That’s how I got to know Harvey.”

She finished bandaging his hand. “There you go. All done.”

“Thank you.” Mike smiled at her. “So...what was he like back then?” Mike leaned forward, putting his elbows on his knees.

Bertha gave him a sharp look. “Is Harvey gonna kill me for telling you all this?”

“Probably.” Mike grinned. “But he’ll kill me first! Look, Bertha, me and Harvey...we’re close.” He flushed, remembering how very close they’d been just a couple of hours ago on Harvey’s couch. “You said yourself, he talked about me as a friend.” He glowed a little about that.

“Yeah, I haven’t heard Harvey talk about anyone that way since he split up with some girl who broke his heart, years ago. He must really like you.”

Mike nodded slowly. “I think maybe he does. So...tell me what he was like.”

Bertha gave a little chuckle. “Well, he was the same as he is now, I guess, in essence, but a lot less polished and in control of himself. He was a volatile kid. It’s not often you’ll ever see him lose his cool these days, but back then he’d go off on one and hoo boy!” She threw her hands up in the air. “It’d take me hours – days sometimes – to calm him down! He’s always had a passionate heart, but he hides it well now, so people can’t use it to manipulate him. He learned that the hard way, for sure.”

Mike remembered what Harvey had said about keeping his emotions under control. That was starting to make a lot of sense in view of what Bertha was telling him.

“And he could argue the hind leg off a donkey, that kid!” Bertha continued. “He and I used to have these stand up arguments, and he’d storm off, and I wouldn’t see him for days. But he’d always come back. Maybe for Patrick’s sake, but maybe, also, because I think he needed us too, even though he’ll never admit that, not even now.”

“Where were Harvey’s folks?”

“I don’t know about his mom – she was never around. But his dad was an alcoholic who drank away any money he earned. Harvey more or less had to raise Patrick himself.”

Mike looked at the photo again. Patrick had innocent, guileless eyes, and a sweet, wide smile. A bad feeling crept into the pit of Mike’s stomach.

“What happened to Patrick?” he asked quietly. “I figure he’s not still around.”

“No.” Bertha shook her head. “He wasn’t strong, like Harvey. He started taking drugs, like a lot of kids around here, and some bad heroin killed him. Harvey loved that kid – he was such a good big brother, always taking care of him and looking out for him. I thought it’d kill him when Pat died. They were so close.” Bertha took a sip of her coffee.

“What happened to Harvey then?” Mike prompted.

“Well, it was strange. Instead of falling apart, he seemed to turn into a different person, almost overnight. Suddenly he was all about the sharp suits, and the money, and the work, and the cars, and the conquests. He never wanted to come back here. He wanted to leave it all behind. I got in his face about that; man, that was another one of our huge fights!” She gave a soft little laugh of reminiscence.

“You won?” Mike watched her face crease into a big, triumphant smile.

“Of course I won, boy! I always did – hell, I still do! Harvey always says he never wants to

come face to face with me in the courtroom 'cause I'm the only person who can beat him in an argument! So yeah, he came back. He still does. Not often, but he does. And he always asks me to make sure that nobody finds out about the giant donations he gives us. That boy hates being found out doing anything good!" She gave a cackle of laughter.

Mike took a few gulps of his coffee, watching her over the rim as he drank, fascinated by the story he was hearing.

"Sometimes, he'll take me out to one of his fancy restaurants, and I let him show off for all he's worth because I figure he's earned it, and because I remember the skinny little kid who sat where you are now and stuffed food into his mouth like he hadn't eaten in a week – hell, he probably hadn't."

"So, he's one of the good guys?" Mike asked her, finishing the coffee and setting the mug down on the desk.

She looked at him sharply. "Mike, as far as I can tell you've been working with him for months now, and if you haven't figured out that he only wants people to think he's a shit because he doesn't want them using any of his good points against him, then you're not as smart as he said you were."

"He said I was smart?" Mike grinned.

"Hell yeah! The way he was talking, it was almost like he had the hots for you!" She gave another of her loud, raucous laughs. "But then I guess intelligence is always attractive to Harvey. Also...now, he didn't tell me your story, but Jessica once hauled him out of a whole heap of trouble, and I got the impression that Harvey might have done something similar for you."

Mike nodded slowly. "He did, Bertha."

"And then probably fobbed you off with some bullshit about how helping you was more of good deal for him than for you!" She grinned and sat back in her chair.

"Yeah, that's about right." Mike thought he'd found out enough – and far more than he'd been expecting. It had been a morning of surprising revelations. He glanced at his watch and winced; he was beyond late for work – that was if he still had a job. He stood up and held out his hand. "Thanks, Bertha. This has been great, but I gotta go."

"But I haven't shown you around the place yet!"

"I'll come back another time. Promise. But I'm already really late for work."

She got up and, much to his surprise, wrapped him up in a warm bear hug. He could see how a kid whose mom wasn't around and whose alcoholic dad didn't give a damn would enjoy being enveloped in the comfort of Bertha's enormous bosom. Had Harvey given in and allowed her to cuddle him like this? Mike had a suspicion that he probably had.

“You take care of Harvey – but don’t ever let him know that’s what you’re doing!” she said into his neck.

“That what you did, Bertha?” he asked, drawing back.

“I can be sneaky! Someone had to be on that boy’s side – he was his own worst enemy at times.”

Mike deposited a little kiss on Bertha’s cheek. “Thanks, Bertha. For everything.”

Then he ran out of the door and back to his bike, which, miraculously, was still there. Or maybe it wasn’t such a miracle; Mike doubted many kids would risk Bertha Matthews’s ire by stealing from her place.

He unlocked his bike and swung himself onto the saddle – and then yelped as his sore ass made itself felt again.

“Damn you **again** for that, Harvey,” he growled, but he felt a little frisson of arousal as he remembered how good it had been getting his ass to feel this way.

His cell phone rang, and he yanked it out of his jacket pocket and answered it while cycling.

“You’re late, and I don’t care what kind of hissy fit you’re having, Mike, but as of right now you still work for me, so get your ass into the office.”

Harvey ended the call before Mike could even squeeze out a reply. He rolled his eyes as he jammed the phone back into his pocket. That was so very...Harvey.

He glanced at his watch again. He was due in that meeting with Harvey and Louis in an hour, but he wasn’t ready to go there yet. He wasn’t sure what he wanted to do yet. He was still reeling from what Bertha had told him.

So, Harvey had killed someone once? Given the circumstances, Harvey’s age at the time, and the fact it had clearly been in self-defence, Mike wasn’t concerned about that. Bertha adored Harvey, and she had known him longer than anyone else. Jessica and Donna both adored him too. They all saw something in him that Mike saw as well. Harvey was more than just the ruthless closer Louis had made him out to be. Mike had always known that; it was just that his own damn trust issues had got in the way of what could have been a good thing.

Maybe it wasn’t too late. He did at least still seem to have a job, so Harvey wasn’t firing him. Yet.

But what did he want? Was it too late to accept Harvey’s offer? And if he did, could he really stay at Pearson Hardman after the intimacies they’d shared last night?

What Harvey had offered him was so big, scary and out of his comfort zone that it both excited and frightened him.

So what should he do?

He remembered something, and he pulled over to the side of the road, took out his wallet, and searched inside it until he found the card that Harvey had given him earlier; the one to his private elevator. Mike thought about it for a second...and then decided that Harvey was probably going to kill him anyway, so what did it matter?

He cycled back to Harvey's apartment building and found Jeff, who directed him to the elevator that would take him straight up to Harvey's apartment. The card key worked, and he found himself stepping out into Harvey's empty apartment a few minutes later.

It felt intrusive to be in Harvey's apartment without Harvey being there. Mike wasn't sure what he was doing there, what he was looking for, or what he might find here that would help him make up his mind.

He glanced around and his eye caught the photo on the bookshelf. He went over to it and picked it up. This Harvey, with his arm slung protectively around Patrick, was the one Bertha had known, and cared for, and rescued. She was right; he could so easily have ended up in jail. Instead, someone had given him a chance, and he'd worked hard to repay them.

"Looks like we both had fucked up childhoods," Mike murmured, still gazing at the photo. What was it Harvey had said last night? There was something in Mike that spoke to something in Harvey, and the other way around too. Now Mike could see that wasn't just about dominance and submission, and the kinky sex games. It went far deeper.

Mike wanted a place to belong, and Harvey wanted someone who belonged to him. They'd both had that once, and they'd both lost it. It had scarred them, but it was part of what drew them to each other, each unconsciously seeking what the other could give.

Harvey looked fierce, rebellious and protective of his little brother in the photo. He'd gone, empty-handed, to confront a dangerous drug dealer in order to protect Patrick. Mike knew that if he accepted Harvey's offer, Harvey would do the same for him.

Mike put the photo down and went and picked up the file on the coffee table. He flicked through it, reliving his own life through Harvey's eyes.

Harvey had used what he'd found out about him from this file – but not to screw him over and win his bet with Louis. He'd used it because Harvey, of all people, wasn't going to be clumsy about tempting Mike into his bed. Of course he'd done his homework.

Harvey had planned his seduction the way he planned a court case, not for cynical reasons, but because it was too important for him to screw it up. He'd taken the afternoon off and gone out and bought those steaks, and the collar, and the tie, and the bike stand, and God knows what else. He'd done it because he wanted Mike, and he wanted to impress him, the

only way Harvey knew how. Not because he was trying to play him.

Mike had always sensed that Harvey had withdrawn from him after the Clifford Danes case because they'd become too close, and it had freaked him out. Hadn't Harvey himself said that he tried not to get emotional because it clouded his judgement? Bertha had given some insight into why he was that way, and now Mike knew Harvey's story, it made sense.

Then there was the way Harvey had reacted when Louis had tried to steal him, and the look in Harvey's eyes last night when he'd admitted how that made him feel. Harvey had tried and failed to keep his emotions at bay, but, faced with losing Mike to Louis, had given into them instead, taking a risk and putting his heart on the line in the process.

Mike realised, with some astonishment, that this was for real. Harvey had meant every single word of what he'd said last night. He wanted Mike, not for a fling or just one night, but for a real relationship. It was that simple.

"What the hell did you expect, Mike?" he chided himself. "Some big, romantic declaration of love? From Harvey of all people?"

Mike glanced at the tie lying on the table where he'd flung it earlier and realised Harvey **had** given him that declaration, in his own Harvey-type way. He'd just been too stupid and too afraid to see it.

"Feelings never were your strong suit, Mike," he sighed. He'd always known that. His brain was able to gobble up information and regurgitate it years later without faltering, but he always felt like he was swimming against the tide in matters of the heart. It had never come easy to him.

Mike put his hand up to his neck, remembering how it had felt to wear Harvey's collar. Harvey had said this tie was his collar substitute – the one he could wear during the day, in place of the one he'd be wearing at night. It proclaimed him as Harvey's, but only they knew that. It was their secret, one they got to enjoy at work when nobody else would know what that tie really meant.

Mike picked up the tie and put it on, fastening it up tight against his neck so he could feel it, the way he could still feel Harvey's hand prints on his ass.

He liked how it felt. He liked the tingle of arousal it gave him. But more than that, he liked how it made him feel he belonged somewhere again.

Harvey wanted Mike, and Mike now knew that he wanted Harvey. It really **was** that simple. Harvey was right; he did always overthink things.

Mike didn't have any more doubts. He ran over to the elevator, went back down to the lobby, and got on his bike again.

He cycled as fast as he could. He knew he'd get to work sweaty and dishevelled, and that

Harvey hated him looking anything less than well groomed, but maybe Harvey had decided he didn't even want him now anyway, after the way he'd stormed out this morning.

He remembered throwing Harvey's tie on the table, rejecting the collar-substitute and the man who'd given it to him, and he groaned.

"Damn it, Mike, when you screw up, you really fucking screw up."

Then Mike remembered the way Harvey's gaze had raked over his naked body this morning, and he had a hunch that Harvey wasn't going to be done with him that easily.

He walked confidently into Pearson Hardman twenty minutes later. He was Harvey's sub. Harvey's boy. He wore Harvey's tie around his neck. This was who he was. He knew that now.

He walked up to Donna's desk, and she glanced up and shook her head at him disapprovingly. "You're late. No, you're beyond late," she said. "You do know that, right?"

"Yup! I know." Mike smiled at her cheerfully. "I had some research to do. Harvey knows all about it. He told me to do it."

"That would explain why he was pacing around his office looking pissed off all morning then," Donna said sceptically.

"Where is he?" Mike glanced into Harvey's office to find it empty.

"He's in with Louis. Louis kept calling. Something about a bet, and how the onus is on Harvey to prove his case, so in the event of a no-show Louis wins by default."

"Oh really?" Mike grinned; he was going to enjoy this. "Thanks Donna!"

He sauntered down the hallway to Louis's office and paused outside the door for a second. He could see Harvey inside, his hands resting on Louis's desk, his shoulders looking tense and strained.

"You know the rules, Harvey," Louis was saying. "You have to prove possession. You haven't – as I knew you couldn't. So I get Mike. It's that simple."

"Oh, I haven't lost yet, Louis."

"Then where's Mike? I don't see him. And it's now..." Louis checked his watch. "10:03. It would seem, Harvey, that you don't have possession of Mike Ross, morally, legally, or even physically right now. You don't know where he is, do you?"

"I was doing some research on him," Mike said, pushing open the door and stepping into the room. "I mean **for** him." He grinned. "Like he told me to."

Harvey straightened up and turned...and his gaze immediately went to the tie around Mike's neck. The tension visibly drained away from him and his shoulders relaxed. He gave Mike a grin that seemed to come straight from his heart and went straight to Mike's.

Louis looked at him sullenly. "Well? Where's this proof then?" he demanded.

Mike put his finger under his collar and loosened it slightly, revealing the top part of the bite mark on the side of his neck, which only Harvey could see from where he was standing. Harvey's grin widened.

"Here." Mike reached into his bag, pulled out the papers Louis had given him, and tore them up, slowly and deliberately. Then he placed them on the desk in front of Louis. "I'm not for sale, Louis. I belong to Harvey because I want to."

"Oh right. So you're agreeing with him now? You've changed your tune from yesterday! What happened to 'Nobody owns me' and 'I don't belong to anyone but myself'?" Louis sneered.

"I was wrong." Mike shrugged. "Harvey owns me. I belong to him." He felt a surge of happiness as he said that; after seventeen years, he finally had somewhere he belonged again.

"Do you really want to dispute that, Louis?" Harvey asked, one eyebrow raised. "Mike seems pretty clear on the matter."

Louis opened his mouth, as if to argue, and then closed it and made a face at the pair of them. "Whatever. Mike, I thought you were smarter than that. You've just made a big mistake."

"I really don't think I have," Mike replied, rubbing that mark on his neck with his index finger. "I think I just made the best decision of my life actually."

"To belong to Harvey? Really? I thought you had better taste. You'll be his slave forever now – is that really what you want?"

Mike laughed out loud. He couldn't resist meeting Harvey's gaze to find his eyes sparkling back at him, and he knew they were both remembering what they'd done in the bedroom last night.

"Oh yeah! That's really what I want," he replied, still laughing.

Harvey turned back to Louis. "I won, Louis, fair and square. Mike belongs to me, and if you ever try to set him up, or get him fired, then I promise you that I will resign, and when Jessica comes to try and talk me into coming back, which we both know she will..." He raised his hand to stop Louis's interruption. "Then the price for my return will be your resignation. So think about that very carefully, Louis."

“Oh please. Like I care. Mike’s just an associate and not even a very good one. Harold’s far better,” Louis snapped.

“And if you ever, ever...” Harvey didn’t raise his voice, but Mike felt a chill run down his spine at the tone, “Ask him to do something again without asking me first, then I promise you, Louis, you will regret it. He’s mine. The only way you even get to even speak to him from now on is through me. Clear?”

“Clear,” Louis mumbled, looking genuinely shocked by Harvey’s tone.

“Good! Then we’re done here. Thanks, Louis. It’s been a pleasure. The best man won, as usual!”

Harvey looked insufferably smug as he turned on his heel and swept towards the door. Mike rolled his eyes, but he ran after him anyway.

“Oh, one more thing.” Harvey turned and glanced at Louis, and Mike was so close behind that he almost bumped into him. “I had a word with Jessica, and she told me she has no plans to make you senior partner. None. Zero. Zilch. So you might want to re-think that particular ambition of yours, Louis.”

He gave a cheery little smile and resumed his swagger out of the office. Mike almost felt sorry for Louis. Almost.

He followed Harvey into his office, and Harvey turned and looked at him.

“You’re a mess,” he said. Predictably.

“I had to cycle fast to get here in time.”

“You went to my apartment first.” Harvey’s gaze was fixed on the tie around Mike’s neck.

“Obviously. You gave me the elevator pass, remember.”

“I do remember. I also remember giving you that tie, which you then threw back in my face.”

“I changed my mind.” Mike shrugged.

“Why?” Harvey looked intrigued.

“Due diligence.” Mike grinned. “I did some of my own.”

Harvey frowned. “Meaning?”

“Meaning you should check your answering machine messages before you leave for work.”

Harvey raised an eyebrow. "Hmm. Cryptic."

"You'll figure it out. Later."

"You're being interesting. I like it." Harvey gave a delighted grin. Then he saw Mike's bandaged hand, and he took hold of it and examined it, frowning. "What happened?" he asked. "And does it have anything to do with the cracked elevator mirror in my apartment building that Jeff was complaining about earlier?"

Mike sighed. "You're going to make me pay for it, aren't you?"

"Of course," Harvey replied sternly. "You'll apologise to Jeff too, later. He gets very upset when anything is damaged in his building."

"Later?" Mike smiled. "What's happening later?"

"You're coming around to apologise. It might involve some other, more private humiliations too." Harvey's tone held a whole world of promise, and Mike felt his cock perk up at the sound.

"Oh...I was thinking..." Mike dropped his voice. "That club you went to...did you have to wear, you know, special clothes?"

"Special clothes?" Harvey gave him a hard look.

"You know...leather?" Mike raised a curious eyebrow.

"You like that idea?" Harvey looked both smug and intrigued at the same time, which Mike thought was a look only Harvey could pull off.

"Hell yeah! I bet you looked hot...tight black leather pants...black shirt..." It was all Mike could do not to drool.

"Down boy!" Harvey rolled his eyes.

"You could give me a private viewing," Mike suggested.

"Maybe. If you beg."

"On my hands and knees," Mike promised.

"That will suit me very nicely," Harvey said in a satisfied tone. "You know, I think this particular acquisition..." He glanced at the bite mark on Mike's throat. "Is going to work out really well."

"Acquisition?" Mike pouted. "I thought it was more of a merger."

"I'm really going to have to spank that pout out of you." Harvey sighed.

"Aw, I don't think you will. I think it turns you on too much. That and my infamous puppy dog eyes." Mike turned his mournful, big-eyed look on, and Harvey gave a groan and swatted his ass. Mike found himself giggling, and he wished they weren't in the office. Still, they had later.

"Hey, I noticed you don't have the *Star Trek* reboot movie in your DVD collection," he said. "I'll go buy it and bring it along this evening. You can make dinner again; you're really good at that."

"I don't have it in my collection because it is a sacrilege. An abomination," Harvey told him in a tone of outrage. "There can be only one Kirk. There can be only one Spock. To suggest otherwise is heresy."

"There can be only one?" Mike rolled his eyes. "That's *Highlander*. Great movie."

"*Highlander*. Great movie."

They both said it at the same time and then gazed at each other with expressions of frank lust.

"See, your trouble is you're too set in your ways," Mike said. "Your apartment is too neat, your hair is too neat – hell, your entire life is too neat. You need someone to mix it up for you and introduce a note of chaos and disorder."

"And that would be you?" Harvey drawled incredulously. "The scared puppy from last night?"

"That was last night. Tonight I'll be a puppy who wants to play. Hard."

"Oh, that sounds even more interesting." Harvey moved a step closer, and his hand brushed the spot on Mike's thigh right over the bite mark they both knew was there. Mike shivered. "Oh good. I like that my pup still remembers who owns him," Harvey purred into Mike's ear.

"I'll never forget that, sir," Mike said, in a shaky undertone.

"Good boy." Harvey's breath was warm against Mike's ear. He drew back. "The *Star Trek* reboot?" He raised an eyebrow.

"Yeah. I haven't seen it, but Trevor and Jenny said it was good."

Harvey frowned. "I really don't know I'd trust the word of your previous paramours."

"Trevor wasn't...oh never mind!" Mike rolled his eyes. "You really get jealous, don't you?"

"I really do," Harvey affirmed. "Okay, Pup." He sighed. "Bring the damn DVD round. I

promise I'll watch it, although I don't promise I'll enjoy it."

"You will," Mike told him confidently. "And if you can explain to me why Captain Kirk is the man without sounding like a complete nerd, I might even sleep with you tonight."

Harvey laughed out loud. "Oh really? Dangerous talk, Pup; I think you're forgetting who you belong to."

Mike touched the tie Harvey had given him. "No," he said quietly. "I know exactly where I belong now, Harvey."

"Possession..." Harvey reached out, brushed Mike's fingers aside, and tightened the tie firmly around Mike's throat. Mike knew it wasn't because the tie needed adjusting so much as Harvey wanting to remind him that he was wearing his de facto collar.

Mike knew that Harvey's hands could kill, caress, hurt, and protect, but he also knew they'd only ever take good care of him. He smiled and leaned into Harvey's hands, trusting them always to catch him.

"Possessed," he said happily.

The End

Chapter End Notes:



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