Epiphany

I had tried to never think of him as a man because it would have been too hard to stay just his friend. But I pushed that aside and in that moment let myself really see him like any other man would. Broad shoulders, wide chest, sculpted abdominal muscles, and the six-pack that others coveted. He was covered in thick, hard muscle from the daily workouts, the weight training, the swimming, and the running. And I knew why he pushed himself even if he wouldn’t admit the truth to himself. He wanted to make sure no one could ever overpower him physically as his mother had been, as he had been when he was young. His foster care experience had been a nightmare of abuse in many sadistic forms and had made him vigilant about power, wielding it and possessing it. To be the strongest was a constant goal in his life that I doubted would ever change. The reason for the beauty was sad but I responded to the hardness of his body and the warmth in his eyes. I slid my arms over his shoulders then wrapped them around his neck, holding him against me. I felt his hand on my back and he eased me down on my bed.

“I love you Joe.”

I looked up into his eyes and saw how tenderly he was looking at me. There was a warm glint there and I got that too. “I love you so much Luke, sometimes I think I’m gonna just burst with it.”

“It hurts huh?”

“Yes.” I was amazed that he understood that.

“Me too.” He said simply, and then I saw his jaw muscle tighten like he was worried or scared or both. “I don’t wanna hurt you.”

“Why would you hurt me?”

“I’ve been told... I guess I can be a little rough and—”

“You’re so stupid,” I laughed and grabbed him, pulled him down and kissed him hard. There was a year of wanting that I was ready to give him from the moment we had met and I realized that he needed a friend more than a lover. Now that everything had changed, now that he had made it clear that watching me date was slowly driving him crazy...now things could change. We had built a relationship built on trust and I was happy but scared for it to be more.

“You look spooked though.”

I smiled at him. “I just don’t want you to run out of my life if this doesn’t work.”
“Oh it’s gonna work,” he assured me, easing me down with a hand on the back of my neck. “Gonna keep you.”

Later, he was lying still, arms stretched wide, watching me as I came back to bed.
“What? What’s wrong?”
“Nothing,” he grinned at me, yawning.
“Something,” I prodded, sliding into bed, pulling the covers up with me, snuggling down beside him.
“You’re fuckin’ wild in bed Joe. Holy shit, who knew?”
“Shut-up,” I tried to pinch him but there was no fat anywhere on the man.
“Jesus, you bit me.”
“So?”
He shrugged and I rolled over onto his chest, looking down into his face.
“I was worried I might hurt you but I shouldn’t have.”
“No,” I agreed, smiling at him.
He put a hand on my cheek and stared into my eyes. “I figured since you were quiet out of bed, you’d be the same way in it.”
I arched an eyebrow for him.
He chuckled and his eyes fired. “I should know better than to make assumptions where you’re concerned.”
“Yes you should.”
His hands moved to my face, pushing hair out of my face, his thumbs tracing over my eyebrows as he smiled up at me.
“Can I ask an awkward question?” I asked.
“Yeah, what?”
“Should we maybe have used protection?”
He looked at me, concerned. “I’m clean, you don’t have to worry. I have a piece of paper I can show you when we go to my place.”
“I have one too,” I assured him. “But do you sleep with—”
“I’ve always used a condom with other people.”
I nodded. “Thanks for clearing that up,” I teased him, tracing his bottom lip with my finger.
Quick breath. “Good.”

I sat up, straddled his hips and I saw his eyebrows raise. His grin was lazy and his eyes sparkled silver. “So now that we’ve established that we’re both fine…” I trailed off suggestively.

“I’m tired.” He grinned, his hands going to my waist, trying to move me away.

“No you’re not ya big liar. I can see for myself you’re not.”

“Joey you can’t want—”

“But I do want,” I said huskily as I shifted so I could take him inside me, still slick and stretched from earlier.

“Goddamn,” he groaned, as I leaned over and bit his lip.

“I’m thinking you have no idea what you’re in for.” I smiled down at him, loving the look of astonishment on his face. “There’s a big difference between being in bed with someone who loves you and someone who doesn’t. I love you Luke Costa and I mean to show you how much.”

“Fuck yeah,” he swallowed hard, his eyes closing as I moved against him. “Show me.”

And I did.

When my cell phone rang later that night, I apologized to Brent and explained that something I had thought was never going to start had just begun. I was in love with somebody else and since we had just met and have never even been on a date, we could be friends if he wanted but nothing more. He told me I was sleep deprived and said he was on his way over. I was surprised and when Luke got out of the shower the look on my face made him smile.

“You look weird.”

“I think Brent’s coming over here.”

“Oh yeah?” His tone was so casual, but icy at the same time.

“Yeah. I mean I told him I was in love and—”

“You said you were in love?” He grinned wickedly.

“Yes,” I said, giving him a long fake sigh of exasperation. “Even though right now I’m not positive who I was thinking about.”

He lunged for me and I dissolved into a fit of laughter, letting him grab me and throw me down on the bed.

“God you feel so good,” I murmured against his chest. “I knew you would.”

“You knew I would?”
“You have no idea,” I groaned, wrapping my legs around his thighs, grabbing the towel from around his waist, tugging it loose.

His grin widened, turned his eyes quicksilver. “You’re gonna wear me out.”

I did try.

Brent showed up around four and was met by Luke who was sitting outside on the stoop. He was drinking a cup of cocoa that I made him with cinnamon and lot of mini-marshmallows. Luke never got up and I don’t think he even raised his voice. He explained who he was, explained that he was a SWAT sniper, and explained that yes, he was idiot, but that he had finally figured out that the guy who had become his best friend, was going to be his lover.

“He’s mine,” he told Brent and looked him dead in the eye when he said it.

Once he was done speaking, he let Brent draw his own conclusions as to what would or could happen if he didn’t just walk away.

Brent walked away.

Luke came back into the apartment and asked me what I wanted to have for dinner. I rushed forward and told him again how happy I was with him. Strong arms were wrapped around me as he crushed me to his chest. He liked the fact that I was almost naked and he was completely dressed. It kind of did it for him. I told him we could have something delivered and he agreed that I was brilliant before he sealed his mouth over mine.

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