

The image is a book cover for 'Friends or Lovers?' by Sara York. It features two men. The man in the foreground is larger, with short brown hair and light blue eyes, wearing a black suit jacket, white shirt, and black tie. He has a slight, enigmatic smile. The man in the background is smaller, with curly brown hair, wearing a dark blue button-down shirt, and is smiling broadly. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

FRIENDS OR
Lovers?

SARA YORK

Love Has No Boundaries

An M/M Romance series

FRIENDS OR LOVERS?

By Sara York

Introduction

The story you are about to read celebrates love, sex and romance between men. It is a product of the Love Has No Boundaries promotion sponsored by the Goodreads M/M Romance Group and is published as a free gift to you.

What Is Love Has No Boundaries?

The *Goodreads M/M Romance Group* invited members to choose a photo and pen a letter asking for a short M/M romance story inspired by the image; authors from the group were encouraged to select a letter and write an original tale. The result was an outpouring of creativity that shone a spotlight on the special bond between M/M romance writers and the people who love what they do.

A written description of the image that inspired this story is provided along with the original request letter. If you'd like to view the photo, please feel free to join the [Goodreads M/M Romance Group](#) and visit the discussion section: *Love Has No Boundaries*.

Whether you are an avid M/M romance reader or new to the genre, you are in for a delicious treat.

Words of Caution

This story may contain sexually explicit content and is **intended for adult readers**. It may contain content that is disagreeable or distressing to some readers. The *M/M Romance Group* strongly recommends that each reader review the General Information section before each story for story tags as well as for content warnings.

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Photo Description

Two men are in bed with an empty champagne bottle and two glasses.

Story Letter

Dear Author,

It was supposed to be my dream honeymoon with my partner of five years. Yeah, I knew that he was reluctant to make our partnership legal but I thought that he would eventually be as happy to be my husband as I was going to be his. Nick tried to warn me, though I didn't listen. It's funny how my best friend Nick seems to be right about a lot of things lately... like how I should go on the honeymoon that I spent forever planning even though Mark and I aren't together anymore. Taking Nick with me so that the extra ticket wouldn't go to waste was another great idea. Just wish I knew how we ended up in bed like this....

Sincerely,

Dionne

Story Info

Genre: contemporary

Tags: friends to lovers, vacation, tropics, HFN, jilted, left at the altar

Word count: 6,255

FRIENDS OR LOVERS?

By Sara York

Shane heard the pounding on the door and groaned. He didn't want to get out of bed. Warmth surrounded him and the pillow felt perfect half lodged under his chest and head. The noise sounded again and he feared he'd get a noise complaint from the hotel. He moaned and tried to move but was trapped.

“Fuck, what the—” Shane turned his head and panic filled him. His lungs seized and heat washed over him. *Nick!* Why the heck was he in bed with Nick, his best friend in the entire world? Then it came rushing back—the drinking, the dancing, and more drinking; cutting loose and partying until neither one of them could successfully navigate the dance floor. Then Nick led him back to his room and one thing led to another. *Pity sex.* He was sure he'd seen it in Nick's eyes and heard it in his voice, but he'd gone along because, damn it, making love to Nick had felt so good.

Now the sun was streaming in, and someone was pounding on the door. Nick was dead to the world, his arm thrown over Shane's back, pinning him to the bed and preventing him from moving. The knocking continued and Shane rolled his eyes, wondering which version of hell he was in for sleeping with his best friend. Forcing his way, he slid out from under Nick's heavy arm—the guy worked out and his biceps were huge—and grabbed a pair of pants, pulling them on.

They swamped him, the legs dragging on the ground, and he had to keep a tight hold on the waistband even with the button fastened. Wearing Nick's pants, he stumbled out to the main room of the suite, staring at the aftermath of his and Nick's night—beer cans, champagne bottles, their shirts, a condom—ah hell.

Shane closed his eyes, leaning against the door, thinking about Nick and his muscular frame. The man didn't seem that big when he was dressed, but when Nick had taken off his clothes, revealing his perfect ass, Shane had almost passed out. He'd slept with his best friend, allowing the man to take

liberties even Mark hadn't. Just remembering the slide of Nick's tongue on his balls, the way the man had held him down, licking and sucking where no one else had in years left him shivering.

A hard rap on the door made him jump as fear slid through him. "Shit." Shane grabbed the handle and pulled open the hotel suite door, not even bothering to look through the peephole. "What do—Mark?"

"Shane, I'm so glad you opened the—Whose pants are you wearing?"

Shane glanced down, noting how obvious it was that he was in another man's clothes. He pushed at Mark and stepped out of the room. The lock clicked, sending a sick feeling to the pit of his stomach—he didn't have the key card. He sighed and grabbed the pants tighter, hoping Mark would make this quick.

"Shane, I still love you."

Shane held up his free hand and shook his head. "Don't. I don't want to hear it."

Mark grabbed his shoulders, pushing him against the door. There was no way for Shane to escape, nowhere to run. "Babe, please listen." Mark leaned in, his lips trailing over Shane's neck, the familiarity rolling over Shane, leaving him dumbfounded. Mark took the opportunity to kiss him, sliding his tongue between Shane's lips, gliding along the side of Shane's.

Mark moaned, and Shane felt the first tingles of desire tug at him. Five years of history and love came rushing back, tempting him to hold on to Mark, wondering if they could have something again. But fuck, he couldn't, not after what Mark pulled.

Shane tore his mouth away from Mark's and stepped back. "Stop!"

"Babe, I'm sorry. I was wrong. Forgive me. Don't ruin this."

Shane couldn't take the apologies and pleas for forgiveness. Three days ago Mark had told him he was going to work late and would be home soon, that was the day before their wedding. The next morning there was still no Mark. Nick was right there, holding his hand the whole way to the small,

private dining room they'd rented above O'Riley's, their favorite Irish eatery. Nick had stood beside him for the most embarrassing two hours of his life while their friends debated whether Mark would show. Then when someone finally got a hold of Mark and revealed that Mark wasn't going to marry Shane, Nick had wrapped his arms around him, keeping him from flying apart.

Then last night, their first night in paradise, Nick had eased the ache in his heart, making love to him like he'd been doing it for years instead of it being their only time to do more than hug—Fucking shit, now Mark was at his door, begging to be taken back.

Five years. Shane stared at Mark, trying to decipher the mystery of what the fuck had happened. "I don't get it."

Mark dropped to his knees, his hands folded like he was in prayer or beseeching Shane to listen to him. Shane wanted to tell Mark to fuck off, that he'd hurt him too much, but the years together meant something—at least Shane thought they had.

"Please, just five minutes and I'll explain everything. All you have to do is listen."

Shane glanced back at the door to his room, wondering what would happen if Nick came out and saw Mark. Nick had been angry and hadn't said anything really negative about Mark, but what would he do if he saw the guy here?

A hotel employee was headed their way, the blue jacket indicating he worked behind the desk or higher up in the hotel hierarchy. Shane recognized him, realizing it was the person who'd checked him and Nick in yesterday. Shane turned to Mark, frowning as he weighed his options. "Go to the hotel lobby. I'm going to see if I can get back in my room."

Shane didn't wait to see if Mark did as he was told. He waved at the employee—Chris, he remembered. "Excuse me, Chris, I locked myself out."

"Oh, Mister Malone, didn't grab your key?"

"I forgot." Shane shrugged, holding the pants tighter, knowing he looked like a fool.

“Just give me a second to confirm which room you’re booked in. I trust you, but policy dictates...”

“No problem. I’m fine with that.”

Chris called in the query then hung up. He smiled as he slid his card in the slot, opening the door for Shane. “Just grab your key next time. I’d hate for you to have to walk to the lobby in someone else’s clothes.” Chris smirked before taking off.

“Sure, and thanks,” Shane called after him, his face burning hot.

The door clicked closed behind him and Shane heard the toilet flush. Fuck, Nick was awake. Shane froze.

Nick stepped out of the bathroom, his gaze zeroed in on Shane. He took four steps and was on him, pressing Shane up against the door. Nick bent close, his mouth closing over Shane’s, reminding him just how awesome last night had been, and how sorry a lover Mark was. But sex wasn’t everything. Mark had cared—Shane knew he had. But Nick had been there through the bad and the good.

He was about to step away when Nick placed his hands at Shane’s waist, shoving the pants out of the way, his fingers sliding between Shane’s butt cheeks, brushing over the tender pucker then wandering over his hips to his dick. Shane moaned, dropping all resistance to Nick’s touch. His fingers sought out Nick’s hips, curling into the firm mounds of flesh that were Nick’s ass.

Nick palmed Shane’s cock before sliding his hand over Shane’s balls, rolling them gently. The kiss ended and Nick pulled back slightly. Shane slowly opened his eyes, not sure if he would have remained standing had Nick not been there holding him up. Of course, if Nick hadn’t been here then Shane wouldn’t be so confused and that kiss never would have happened.

Nick narrowed his eyes, his brow furrowed. “What happened? Where were you?”

Shane couldn’t look at Nick, not with the load of guilt and confusion swimming through him. He closed his eyes and rested his head against Nick’s

shoulder. The man really was big. At least six inches taller than he, Nick's shoulders were broad, his body full of muscles from working out and from the excellent genes he'd inherited from his parents.

Shane sighed. "Do you remember that day back in ninth grade when we were running through the woods behind my house? I tripped on a limb and somehow my foot got caught between a rock and a tree."

"Yeah, I remember." Nick smoothed his hands over Shane's shoulders and down his arms, entwining their fingers.

"When we finally got my leg out, I couldn't walk."

Nick squeezed his hands. "You broke your ankle if I remember correctly."

"Yeah. You carried me for almost a full mile through rough terrain. I kept telling you to just leave me behind and go get help."

"I remember that day. There was a storm blowing in. I couldn't leave you behind."

Shane shuddered at the memory. Nick had always been stronger than he. "Yeah, you took care of me."

"What happened just now?"

Shane opened his eyes and met Nick's gaze. He didn't like the haunted look in Nick's eyes. "A storm is blowing in—Mark's here."

Nick didn't jerk back, but he might as well have. His body stiffened, his breath caught, his eyes narrowed just enough for Shane to register the movement and his lips tightened. Nick didn't like Mark, hadn't for a long time. It was the one thing that almost drove a wedge between them, but Shane had kept at Nick, forcing their friendship.

"I have to go talk to him."

Nick was a great guy, probably better than Shane ever deserved for a friend, and he was a hell of a lover—too bad Shane hadn't figured that out earlier. If their positions had been reversed, Shane would have thrown a fit but Nick didn't. He straightened, the features on his face relaxing. "I agree. You need to talk to him."

Shane hadn't expected Nick to be so understanding. Part of him wanted Nick to put up a fight. Maybe last night hadn't meant anything to Nick. So they fucked. It wouldn't be the first time friends hooked up to blow off steam, but it was a first for them. Hell, he had no idea how they'd ended up in bed together. Maybe too much booze and heartache mixed with desire.

Shane turned to get dressed, tossing a mumbled thanks over his shoulder when he heard Nick behind him. Then Nick pressed in close, forcing Shane against the wall. Nick's breath was harsh against Shane's ear, his fingers digging into Shane's flesh. "You go talk to Mark, listen to what he has to say, but don't forget this." Nick licked Shane's neck all the way to his earlobe, toying with the fleshy nub before biting down on it and tugging gently. "And this." Nick grabbed his own dick and grazed it over Shane's crack before reaching around to stroke Shane. "And don't forget this and what I did last night when you were in my arms, screaming my name as you shot your load. So go talk to Mark, hear what he has to say" —Nick spun Shane around, cupping his face with his impossibly strong hands—"but don't forget this." Nick leaned in close, brushing his lips over Shane's, delivering the sweetest kiss he'd ever experienced.

Nick licked at Shane's lips and he opened to him, unable stop himself. The slide of Nick's tongue against his own left him shaking. His dick swelled, leaving him wanting his best friend for more than just a friend. Nick pulled out of the kiss with a growl, his gaze intense. No words were spoken, just a heap of silent communication that left Shane more confused than ever. Five years of Mark had left Shane feeling like he owed it to him to be the good lover, to give and give, never once asking for something in return. Last night with Nick opened more questions than it answered. Nick pushed away from him, marched to the bathroom and slammed the door.

Shane waited a moment before finding his shorts and a shirt, pulling them on so he could find Mark and hear what the man had to say.

Before Shane left he put his hand on the bathroom door, wondering what the hell he was doing. An image from last night, of Nick buried balls deep in

his ass, Nick's fingers in Shane's hair as he hung above him, his eyes bright with caring—that's what he wanted. Mark had never looked at him that way.

The bathroom door whipped open and Nick gasped. "I didn't—I thought—"

"Shhh," Shane placed his finger on Nick's lips, noticing the red-rimmed eyes and the splotchy face. Shane's eyes burned. He hated that he'd made his best friend cry. "Nick," Shane groaned and pulled him into a tight hug. "Hell, buddy, I—crap, this is difficult. Please, don't leave. I'm going to need you here when I get back."

Nick nodded then buried his nose in Shane's neck, inhaling deeply. He'd been such an idiot. Now with Nick in his arms, and especially after last night's lovemaking, he saw things more clearly. But he didn't want to ruin everything. Slowly, that's the only way to proceed. This could make everything go to hell and he certainly didn't want that.

"I'm going to find him. I promise I'll be back." Shane leaned back and gazed up at Nick, wondering why the hell he hadn't seen the man this way before? He wasn't just a friend, there was so much more between them.

Shane grabbed the mouthwash off the bathroom counter and rinsed, then spit. Nick hadn't moved, which Shane took as a good sign. He snagged a key card, turning back to peck Nick on the cheek before rushing out the door and down the walkway to the lobby where Mark was supposed to be waiting for him.

Nick dropped to his knees after Shane rushed out the door then sank all the way to the floor, curling up into a ball, letting the tears flow. Fuck, he'd had Shane in his arms and spent the night making love to the man, showing him how much he cared. It was a one-time shot, an opportunity he'd never get again and Mark, the fucking bastard, was here to ruin it.

That night, five years ago, was forever etched in his mind. He and Shane had gone out dancing. They were just friends but Nick wanted them to be so much more. Shane had entranced all the men at the club, as usual, but one guy

took a shine to his best friend, secreting him off to the back hall and putting the moves on him, leaving Shane totally star struck. Mark was older than they were, he had money and threw it around, spiriting Shane off for a whirlwind courtship that weekend to British Columbia, staying in posh hotels and wining and dining the man, leaving Shane so thoroughly impressed that Nick hadn't stood a chance at making Shane his.

Had Mark been abusive or a cheater, Nick would have said something, but the guy was nice, always treating Shane good, but never really loving him. Everyone could see it—well, except Shane. The years ticked by and Nick took to sleeping around, never finding anyone who measured up to Shane. Of course Shane found out and teased him about it. Shane pointed out many times how awesome it was to be in a committed relationship and expressed his pity for Nick and his lack of having someone special.

Shane didn't share private details about their love life but Nick wondered about how close he and Mark were because of the way they acted around each other. Something was off. Mark had come to Nick two months before the wedding fiasco, begging him to talk some sense into Shane. That really tipped Nick off and he tried to tell Shane something was wrong, but he wouldn't listen and he didn't want to ruin their friendship. Nick hung close to Shane and he stopped going out to bars to pick up strangers. He wanted to be there if Mark did something stupid.

Of course the day of the wedding was tragic. Shane had been devastated but Nick didn't believe in wasting time. He hadn't meant to sleep with his best friend, at least not yet. They were just going to hang out and have fun. Fuck, he'd screwed up by tumbling Shane into bed and showing him how good it could be between them.

Now, if Mark and Shane got back together, it would destroy their friendship. Shane wouldn't lie to Mark, and Mark would demand Shane stay away from Nick.

The thing was, he knew Mark was hiding something, he just wasn't sure what. Little clues had been left behind, and though Nick hadn't even tried to put them together, now he knew there was more to Mark than he was telling.

Nick pulled himself up off the floor, and threw on some clothes. He went in search of his best friend, praying like heck that they *were* still friends after that amazing night together.

The resort was quiet with few of the other guests roaming around. He glanced across the garden into the pool area and saw Shane sitting with Mark at a table, plates loaded with breakfast. Nick's stomach grumbled. They'd eaten early last night then went dancing. They'd drunk more than their share of booze, which may have contributed to them sleeping together. He was worn out and hungry, and he should have grabbed some food before chasing after his dream, but he needed Shane more than he needed food.

Nick realized he looked stupid standing on the path and if Shane and Mark looked over they'd be able to see him too easily. He glanced around, not seeing anyone walking around, and moved to lean against a tree, trying to look as natural as possible as he watched Mark and Shane talking to each other.

He felt like a rat spying on Shane with his ex—fuck, he hoped they stayed ex's and Mark didn't sweet talk Shane into going back with him. Mark was pulling out all the stops. Nick noticed Shane's favorite breakfast foods along with an unwrapped package on the table. Mark had ordered champagne but the glass by Shane appeared untouched. He focused in on the food, thinking it too looked like Shane hadn't taken a bite, but he couldn't be sure.

Shane found Mark in the lobby and followed him to the outdoor eating area by the pool. Mark had already ordered their food. This was typical Mark, always trying to impress with money and buying things. In the beginning of their relationship Shane had liked receiving gifts but something was lacking and he'd always ignored that lack. Now that Mark had stood him up at the altar, he saw things more clearly.

Then there was Nick...

“Did you hear me?” Mark asked.

Shane hadn't been paying attention, his thoughts on Nick and what they'd done. He shifted in his seat, realizing that his dick was growing hard just

thinking about his lover—Good lord, he already thought of Nick as his lover—this couldn't be good.

“Please, I made a huge mistake. I didn't mean to be late.”

Shane held up a hand, stopping Mark's words. “Just a minute. You weren't late. You told Jen and Alec that you weren't coming then you sent me a text saying that it wasn't going to work. You broke up with me via text.”

“Baby, I didn't mean to—”

“Stop. I don't want to hear about your excuses.”

“Shane, I love you. Here.” Mark pulled a package out of his bag, it was beautifully wrapped with silver paper and a blue bow.

Shane took the box but didn't open it. The food was enticing but the glass of bubbly reminded him of Nick and the night they'd shared. “I appreciate the gifts Mark, but money won't buy your way out of this one.”

“Just give me a chance.”

“I did.”

Mark leaned forward, taking Shane's hand in his. “I promise it will be different. We can go get married when you get back. I'll reduce my hours and spend more time with you.”

“What about—” heat flooded Shane's face. He loved blow jobs but Mark wouldn't do them, said it made him gag. Just thinking about their lovemaking made Shane sad. Last night, Nick had blown him away, taking him somewhere he'd never been before. When he'd first hooked up with Mark, he'd been young and inexperienced. Mark had only been his third lover and he'd been too embarrassed to ask his friends about the blow job thing. Mark had overwhelmed him with his wealth, buying him loads of gifts and clothes, hooking him up with a good job and eventually paying off his student loan. He owed Mark—or he thought he did.

Shane was older now and the blow-off at the altar had matured him. Sure, it had only been three days ago, but being stood up in front of his friends and

co-workers had left its mark, cracking his sheltered shell and leaving him wiser. Money wasn't everything.

“What?” Mark asked.

“I need more.”

“Don't I give you enough?”

“Mark, there is more—” Shane didn't know what to say. He didn't know how to explain to Mark that what they had was nice, but Nick had opened his eyes and it was more than just sex that had changed him. “Mark, I need time to think.”

Mark grabbed his hand, squeezing twice before he leaned in and tried to kiss him, but Shane turned his head, only letting Mark kiss his cheek. He felt nothing. No wiggle in his stomach, no tingle across his skin. There was nothing.

That's when Shane realized he hadn't felt anything for Mark in a long time. Mark had been right in not wanting to get married. Hell, he shouldn't have pushed, but he had. He'd thought the marriage certificate would fix everything, make their lives more exciting, but nothing would fix their relationship. Now, he had no partner and no place to live.

Shane stood up and stepped away from the table before turning to face Mark. “I'll get my things when I get home.”

“You don't have to move out,” Mark begged.

Shane shook his head. “No, I need to leave. I need space to think. I'll talk to you when I get home, but please let me have some time.”

“Shane,” Mark paused, his gaze narrowed as he stared up, his lips pursed, “don't make this mistake.”

“Goodbye. Have a good trip home.”

The relief he felt surprised Shane, but he still didn't know what he was going to do. Confusion filled him. Where would he live? Would he even have a job when he returned, they were Mark's friends at his work, not his. Well, he

was a good employee, but still, fear and uncertainty swirled through him. Even if he ended up homeless and jobless, something had to change.

Shane stumbled back to the room, slid the key card into the slot and pushed when the lock clicked open. Nick was on the couch and jumped up when Shane entered but he didn't move a step. Shane stepped in far enough to let the door close behind him. They stared at each other for a long time, neither of them moving. Nick took a step toward him but Shane held up his hand.

"I need time."

"Okay."

"Last night was... amazing."

Nick nodded and stayed planted in his spot. Shane loved the way the man was giving him space. Part of him wanted to race over and snuggle close, allowing Nick to fill the empty spot in his heart, but he couldn't do that to his best friend.

"Last night was great, but I need some space."

"I understand. Do you want me to leave?" Nick asked.

"No." The word was said as a sob and Nick didn't hesitate. He rushed over, wrapping his arms around Shane, hugging him close.

"Cry it out, babe." Nick held him for a long time, not even trying to kiss him.

When Shane was done crying, Nick held him at arm's length and smiled. "Let's go grab some breakfast. You look like you could eat. Then how about we just hang out, maybe go snorkeling or out on a boat."

Shane nodded, wondering how he'd ever been lucky enough to have a friend like Nick. Another guy would have taken advantage of Shane's upset, but not Nick. When they left the room, Shane was half afraid Mark would still be hanging around but he didn't see him anywhere. He and Nick spent the day by the pool, sipping cocktails and talking about nothing and everything. They were walking back from dinner as the sun was setting. Shane glanced at Nick,

worrying about the sleeping arrangements. Hell, he wanted Nick again, wanted to feel the man's lips around his cock and his fingers doing wicked things to his body, but he'd told Nick he needed space.

"Hey babe," Nick slid his thumb over Shane's cheek, "what's wrong?"

"I feel like such a dick."

Nick wrapped his arms around Shane, his breath hot on Nick's neck. "Why?"

"Because I want you."

Nick drew back, his eyes grew darker and his nostrils flared. Then Nick took him by surprise and dropped his arms before stepping back. "No, you're hurting too much. I don't want you to regret us."

"Us?"

"If there is going to be an 'us'—any chance of an 'us' after we leave this place—you need to enter our relationship with a clear conscience and clear motives."

"Fuck."

Nick lifted his brow and smirked. Shane didn't push him. The man was right. He needed to take a break.

"Fine, if I hop into bed with you right now it wouldn't work. I am a mess and I need time."

"Yeah." Nick pinned him with a heated stare. "But don't think for a minute that I don't want you. I'm going to sleep on the couch tonight and tomorrow night, then it's back home. Where will you live?"

Shane shrugged. "No clue. I can probably crash at someone's house for a bit."

"I do have the extra bedroom."

He shook his head, "Too much temptation."

"Yeah, you're right there." Nick scrubbed his hand over his face. "Do I need to find somewhere else to sleep tonight?"

“No, I think we can keep our hands off of each other. We’ve been friends forever.”

After dinner, Shane suggested a moonlit stroll on the beach. It had sounded like a great idea to Nick at the time, but the way the soft light played on Shane’s skin made him horny as hell. Somehow he kept from molesting his friend. Now he was lying on the pullout couch, the sheets pulled up over his heated body, his hand palming his cock as he listened to Shane softly snoring in the other room.

Last night he’d been right there, his body wrapped around Shane’s as the man snored. He wanted that. Fuck, Shane was the most responsive lover he’d ever had—six times the guy had blown. He’d never had a guy go off that many times. Even when he’d picked up super-hot twenty year olds who looked like they were built for sex, they hadn’t come that much.

Nick groaned and rolled over, humping against his hand, trying like hell to ease the ache in his balls. He was close to coming as he imagined Shane underneath him. A noise interrupted him and he turned over, heat washing over him he clawed at the sheets, covering up. Shane flipped on the light and stood in the doorway, his hand on his cock.

“Don’t stop,” Shane whispered.

Nick met his gaze, reveling under the lust he saw in Shane’s eyes. He pushed the sheets away, revealing his hard dick. Shane didn’t move as Nick repositioned himself, shoving another pillow under his head. He wrapped his fingers around his cock then reached between his legs and grabbed his balls. He stroked a few times before lifting one leg, sliding his fingers over his hole. Shane gasped and Nick glanced at him, noticing how Shane stroked his own dick.

Nick wanted to tell him to come closer but he stayed silent, allowing Shane the pleasure of watching him. Funny that they’d never done the circle jerk thing when they were younger. Back then, Shane was with Mark, and Shane had vowed never to cheat. But now Shane was free—at least Nick hoped he’d

stay free long enough for Nick to show him how it should be. The thought of holding Shane close each night did him in and he came, shooting his load over his chest.

Shane moaned and Nick glanced at him, watching him come. It was so beautiful—Shane’s mouth was open, his eyes closed and his hand still stroking his spent dick. Nick wanted to go to Shane or at least reach out for him, but he didn’t dare. This had to be Shane’s decision. After the last shudder raced over Shane, he opened his eyes, his gaze seeking out Nick. The air between them was thick and Nick couldn’t help himself. He bolted off the pullout couch and into Shane’s arms, his lips seeking and finding Shane’s.

“Babe—fuck, tell me to leave you alone and I will.”

Shane clutched at Nick’s arms, his whole body shook, and for a moment Nick thought he was crying. But he wasn’t.

“Nick—God, I want you.”

Nick tilted Shane’s head back, licking at his lips, begging him to open. Shane didn’t disappoint him. Their tongues tangled as their hands grasped at each other, trying to gain purchase. Nick walked Shane backward to the bed but he didn’t push him to the mattress. With his last ounce of self-control, Nick broke the kiss and backed away from Shane. His friend reached for him but he jumped away.

“Shane, I don’t want this to be something you’ll regret in a few weeks. I can’t stand losing you as a friend... Fuck, I want you so bad. I want to hold you in my arms and make love to you, tasting every inch of your body and then do it all over again. I want to have hot, nasty, sweaty sex with you and sweet, cuddling sex. I want lazy sex and make-up sex and angry sex, but I don’t ever want goodbye sex. This” —Nick pointed at Shane then waved his hand between them— “this is more than just a lark. If we do this, if we go here, I need you to understand that I don’t take sex between us lightly.”

Shane nodded then swallowed hard. He sat down on the chair in the corner, staring up at Nick. Tears formed in his eyes, trickling slowly down his cheeks.

Nick wanted to dash those tears away but knew not to move, not yet. It would be so easy to take Shane in his arms and force a relationship, but he wanted their being together to be Shane's idea, not his.

"I'm sorry."

Nick felt like a balloon that had just been pricked with a pin. His heart stopped and his head spun. *Shane didn't want him.* Shane tilted his head then jumped up, his hands on Nick's arms. "Wait. That's not what I meant."

Nick drew in a jagged breath. "What did you mean?"

"I can't promise you forever now. I'm too—fuck, I'm messed up. But I—" Shane's face turned red and his breathing grew shallow. "Nick, what you did to me—" he closed his eyes and breathed in deep, tilting his head back in an alluring way. Shane groaned and leaned against Nick, his hot body so tempting Nick almost kissed him.

"Yeah," Nick whispered.

"I want to feel that again. I've never felt that before. You were amazing. Like totally and completely over-the-top amazing."

Nick couldn't help his smile or the pride he felt. He was good in bed and he knew it, but once they got together, there would be more than just a few booty calls and rolls in the hay, they would be partners because he'd be crushed if Shane ever had sex with another man. "Let me hold you tonight. No sex, just you and me in bed sleeping. No pressure, I just want to take care of you."

A sob escaped Shane's lips and he nodded, allowing Nick to push him to the center of the bed, wrapping his arms around him and cuddling him close. They may not have forever yet, but Nick had a chance and that's more than he thought he would ever get.

THE END

Author Bio

Writing is Sara's life. The stories fight to get out, often leaving her working on four or five books at once. She can't help but write. Along with her writing addiction she has a coffee addiction. Some nights, the only reason she stops writing and goes to sleep is for the fresh brewed coffee in the morning.

Sara enjoys writing twisted tales of passion, anger, and love with a good healthy dose of lust thrown in for fun. Almost a quarter of a century ago Sara met her lover, falling for him after knowing him for ten minutes. Sara's passion for him comes out in her stories, mixing with her passion for life, love, and good times, flowing onto the page and becoming tales from the heart.

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