

THE BUFF BUSINESSMEN BUREAU
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Nolan saw the first one on the hotel elevator. Tall, black suit, face like a brick - the kind of face people called a mug. Nolan assumed the guy was security; he certainly had the build for it, with shoulders so broad that no one else could stand beside him in the elevator.

But then Nolan saw more and more guys like that. They weren't clones of each other - in fact, most of them didn't look alike - but after a couple days at the hotel, he could pick one out instantly. A suit was the biggest giveaway, and it was always a *nice* suit, one that was perfectly tailored and looked expensive as hell. The man inside the suit always looked strong, in one way or another: even if he had a belly, or if he was old, none of the suit guys looked like they were skipping the gym. The strength showed in their faces too. A lot of them were classically handsome with sculpted features, but even the ones who weren't still carried themselves with confidence. Even if the man was bald or had a big nose, it somehow worked for him. Nolan had only recently started to notice confidence and how it affected people's behavior. These men had muscles that looked like they could flip cars, but moreover, they were *confident*. They stood tall and spoke with conviction, like Nolan's principal.

The biggest one Nolan saw was at breakfast by himself, wearing a full suit at 8 in the morning. He looked like a bigger, younger Dave Bautista, with groomed stubble and slick hair like a stockbroker. Nolan didn't want to gawk, but he'd never seen so much muscle on a person. Not even the layers of the man's suit could hide his size and definition, and when he leaned back in an early morning stretch, the top half of his shirt burst open and didn't even merit a reaction from him, as if it were the most normal thing in the world to let your pecs hang out at the breakfast table. They were still bulging out from his shirt when he met two other suited friends, shaking hands and talking business over coffee.

That was another thing all the men did: talk business. Whenever Nolan overheard a conversation, it was always about budgets, or the stock market, or key performance indicators, or a story involving a boardroom. For men at a nice hotel, they didn't appear to be doing much relaxing. Just work, and talking about work. Nolan saw a couple of them by the pool - two bodybuilders standing under the afternoon sun in full suits - and overheard part of their discussion: debates over which hair product provided the best hold, and where to buy the best pocket squares.

One person who was not concerned with such things was the guy sitting under a cabana next to the two hunks. He had to be the palest person Nolan had ever seen - the same shade as the cream-colored cushions surrounding him. Everyone else around the pool was stretched out to tan, but the pale guy was fully hidden from the sun, white-blond hair dangling in his eyes as he tapped away on a laptop. Every now and then, he'd look over in irritation at the two men. It wasn't long before he gave up trying to work, closing his laptop and shuffling back inside the hotel. For the brief moment he was standing, Nolan noticed two things about him. One, he was so white he literally glowed in the sunlight. And two, the size difference between him and the two suited businessmen was astonishing. They both towered over him and were at least three times his width, if not more.

After a leisurely swim with as much eavesdropping as he could get away with, Nolan toweled off and headed back inside to go to his room. The elevator doors were about to close when a pale hand stopped them, and in walked the blond guy from the cabana. The two young men briefly made eye contact, so Nolan instinctively muttered “Hey” while the other guy just nodded.

“Weird how those suit guys are everywhere, huh?” Nolan said as the elevator began its ascent.

“Huh?” The blond guy took out one AirPods. Nolan hadn’t noticed they were in.

“Those guys in suits. Just weird how many of them there are.”

“Oh. Yeah. It’s like a convention or something, I saw a sign somewhere.”

Nolan got the impression the guy wasn’t keen on small talk, but it was either keep the conversation going or stand in awkward silence. He opted for the former. “Well, I’m glad there’s someone else my age here. I’m Nolan.”

“Marshall. They’re fucking annoying.” Marshall rocked back and forth on his heels, staring at the wall instead of making eye contact. “They talk too loud and take up too much space. The kinds of douchebags I avoid.”

“So I take it you’re not a Finance major,” Nolan joked.

“I’m not going to college. I just want to make stuff.”

“Make stuff?”

“Like, edit videos, take photos.”

“Oh, cool. I’m planning to be a teacher.”

Marshall nodded politely as the elevator dinged and he stepped off. “Have a good one,” he said, vanishing down the hall. Nolan rode up two more floors to his family’s room, wondering if he was the weird one or if Marshall just wasn’t great at conversation.

The elevator doors opened and there stood a Black bodybuilder in a white dress shirt and pinstripe trousers, his suit jacket slung over his arm. He smiled at Nolan as he dabbed at his bald head with a handkerchief. “Afternoon, young fella,” he said as he allowed Nolan to pass.

“Hi,” Nolan said, squeezing by. He looked in astonishment at the man’s arm being choked by his shirt sleeve, the buttons ready to pop off over his enormous chest. How did all these guys get so big?

But then the elevator shut and Nolan was alone again. He thought about asking his aunt and uncle if they knew anything about the bodybuilding businessman convention, but that would probably just make them think he was gay, so he let it slide.

The next day at breakfast, Nolan saw the huge Bautista-looking guy again, dressed exactly the same save for a different color combo: purple shirt, gray suit, both looking ready to explode with one wayward move of his muscles. His hair and stubble were still immaculate, and he read the morning newspaper - a physical copy - while sipping an espresso. Nolan wasn't gay, but something about this man was impossible to look away from. He was simply captivating.

Two more suited muscle men walked into the breakfast area and greeted the man as "Mr. Ernst" as they shook his hand. Nolan noticed that even though they all seemed pleased to see each other, as friends would be, none of them smiled. But that was just business, he reasoned. Congenial, but professional.

"Everything set for today?" Mr. Ernst asked, in a voice as manly as the rest of him, as he stood and buttoned his jacket.

"Yes, everyone is talking about the 4:00 session."

"Of course they are, it's an annual highlight. I'm excited for it myself." Mr. Ernst reached out and straightened one of the men's lapel pins, slapped him on the back, and then led them out of the breakfast area.

Nolan knew it was just a boring business convention. He knew that all the narratives he was making up in his head about the bodybuilders in bespoke suits were just fantasies borne from boredom. But he couldn't help but be fascinated by the men. What were they meeting about? Why were there so many of them? Did they all get together so they could work out all day? Or were they just sitting in a big room listening to speeches about...well, whatever businessmen talked about.

His aunt and uncle were off at the spa. Nolan could meet up with them whenever he wanted, but was finding the conversation strained after three days of travel together. Finding out about the big businessmen was a more appealing prospect than laboring through discourse about old family drama with his aunt.

But first, he had to find out who they were. He charged breakfast to his aunt and uncle's room and moseyed out looking as innocent and nonchalant as he could, hoping to see a trail of black suits leading in one direction. When he didn't, save for one muscled Asian guy having a conversation on his phone, he took off in a lap around the first floor.

At the bottom of a set of stairs was a sign directing people to the second floor: "GRAND BALLROOM: International Society for the Advancement of Excellence in Business." That had to be them. What a dumb combination of words, Nolan thought. 'Advancement of Excellence,' what did that even mean? Should've just called themselves the Buff Businessmen Bureau, that was snappier and seemed to be what they cared about. They had to all be in there working out right now. Although maybe not, since they were always in suits...that would get sweaty. Nolan didn't know a lot about exercise but he at least knew that.

It wasn't like he could barge in anyway, so Nolan went back to his room and put on his swim trunks, keeping the 4:00 time slot in the back of his mind. What would be happening then that could be exciting? A special guest speaker, probably, or some kind of group activity. He was so curious, he began formulating a plan to sneak in so he could find out for himself.

But there were hours to kill in the meantime, so he watched some TV and then went swimming. There were no 'Advancement of Excellence' guys until right before Nolan was planning to leave, when two rippling Adonises in bikini briefs sauntered in and made every head turn as they swam around the pool. They looked straight off the cover of a muscle magazine, white-toothed and broad-shouldered, and Nolan briefly heard one of them mention being on lunch break. What did guys like that eat for lunch? Porterhouse steak every day?

He was obsessing over these guys like he was gay for them, so he jumped out of the pool and went back inside, passing more beautiful men in beautiful suits until he was safely sequestered in his room. He texted friends back home, watched YouTube videos, raided the minibar, and did whatever else he could to distract himself from his interest in the suit guys. Only three-and-a-half hours until 4:00...was he really going to sneak in? Would they even care? It was just a business conference, after all. Maybe they wouldn't notice an interloper.

Nolan dozed off on the bed. He woke up at 1:15, fell back to sleep. Then slept til 1:45...then 2:10...

Waking up again at 2:30, Nolan realized he smelled like chlorine, so he headed to the shower feeling like he'd properly wasted some time. Once he was in a fresh tee and shorts, he headed out of the room to go downstairs, get a snack, and monitor the situation.

The elevator stopped mid-journey and on walked Marshall, who acknowledged Nolan with a nod.

"Make anything today?" Nolan asked.

Marshall snorted. "Not with those Neanderthals everywhere."

"Yeah, they're..." Nolan almost said 'fascinating' but second guessed it. "...a lot."

“At least they ignore me. I’m too small and weak for them to bother with. Just wish they didn’t have their loud alpha male bro talk right next to me whenever I’m trying to edit photos.”

“Crazy that they wear suits every day,” Nolan said.

“I hate that stuff. Just dress normally, no one wears suits anymore.”

“Yeah, I don’t even own one.” This was the last thing Nolan said before they reached the lobby and parted ways. He knew he’d probably own a suit eventually, for weddings and funerals and stuff, but wearing one every damn day? Not likely. He didn’t have the brain for finance or law.

He walked into the small resort cafe - they had really good rice krispy bars - and was greeted by the surreal sight of a dozen tall bodybuilders standing and chatting. All were in suits, most with their jackets over their arms, their muscles straining their dress shirts to translucency. One of them was in front of Nolan in line and had a back so wide Nolan couldn’t see the counter. Where did guys like this buy clothes?

As Nolan got his snack bar and flavored water, he eavesdropped on the men around him. They were all abuzz for the next session, and on break at the moment, so once Nolan paid he scuttled in the direction of the Grand Ballroom. The doors at the top of the stairs were propped open. Just a quick peek...

Nolan looked back and forth as he scaled the staircase, then poked his head into the Grand Ballroom, fully prepared to issue an excuse about being lost. But only two people were in there, one man and one woman, and both of them were hotel staff: the woman was picking up used water bottles, while the man was straightening the chairs. Emboldened, Nolan strode in to poke around, ready to leave whenever the hotel employees asked him to. But they didn’t acknowledge him.

There was nothing too noteworthy about anything Nolan found. There were notebooks that bore the society’s seal: two brawny hands locked in a handshake, encircled by the words “International Society for the Advancement of Excellence in Business.” A few suit jackets were left draped over the backs of chairs, along with a tie or two that had been unsurprisingly removed, since the room was pretty warm. Nolan had that thought right as he heard the male hotel employee radioing someone: “They’re asking to crank the a/c again, it’s too hot in here.”

Nolan checked his phone: 3:53pm. He had seven minutes of freedom before he’d have to sneak out. So he kept wandering around, looking for clues as to why these men *really* gathered here, but all signs indicated that it was for the most boring reason: to talk about business.

Then he heard the voices.

Nolan’s head whipped around, and he realized the hotel employees were gone. The sound of voices was coming from the grand staircase, drawing closer. Nolan panicked and looked for a

side door, but there weren't any, so he hid behind the first thing he saw: a folding screen at the side of the stage. Once he was back there, he realized it was propped up to hide all of the room's bulky sound equipment.

He checked his phone - 3:56 - and cursed himself for not realizing a 4:00 session meant they'd be back minutes early so the session could start on time. Now he was stuck, wedged between a sound system and a folding screen. At least the screen had decorative holes in it that allowed him to peek through - he sat on his knees and watched as the suits filed in, talking in their loud, confident voices as they dabbed sweat off their exposed chests with handkerchiefs. As the businessmen sat down, Nolan noticed that the chairs in the room were all set a foot apart from each other, to allow extra space for the men's broad shoulders.

Crap, how long was this going to go? Were they going to be in here for hours with him stuck by the sound booth the whole time? He had his phone, maybe he could text his uncle or someone, get them to get him out. But he didn't know what story to tell yet, so he squatted and spied while he tried to think of one.

One of the last men to enter was the man from breakfast, Mr. Ernst, wearing a big smile on his face and carrying a microphone. Even surrounded by fellow musclemen, he managed to look large and in charge. "I hope everyone had a relaxing break," he said into the mic, bass voice smooth as silk. "I was worried we'd have some dropoff in attendance since it's so late in the day, but then I remembered...no one ever misses this part."

The men all exchanged smiles and chuckled politely.

"Give us a few moments to make sure everything's ready. Let's get the microphone stand in the middle, can we?" Mr. Ernst motioned to a young lackey, who hustled over a mic stand from against the wall and placed it in the center aisle.

An older man stood and walked over to the mic. The guy looked like a Godfather character on steroids: black pinstripe suit, slicked hair, mustache, prominent Sicilian nose. A few other men lined up behind him, and Nolan began thinking that this could be a Q&A section, with the question askers lining up to talk to the responder - likely Mr. Ernst - onstage.

"All right. Is he ready?" Mr. Ernst asked a blond stud in the back, who gave a thumbs up. "Bring him in, then."

The ballroom doors opened and in walked a small, skinny person being led by two massive men. It was only when they took a step back after reaching the room's small stage that Nolan was able to see who they were with: Marshall, the grouch from the pool.

Nolan couldn't look away. What the hell was Marshall doing here? Marshall, who barely spoke unless it was to diss the very men who now surrounded him? This was bizarre.

“Please welcome our newest member,” Mr. Ernst said with a grand gesture toward Marshall, who looked at him curiously. “What is your name?”

“Marshall Durning.” The answer was monotone. Marshall seemed bored instead of his usual irritated.

“Here, Marshall.” Mr. Ernst handed something Nolan couldn’t see to Marshall, but the way Marshall held it to his mouth and tipped his head back indicated it was some kind of drink. Nolan was surprised Marshall was willingly consuming anything these guys gave him, but maybe he was being paid for it. Even more surprising was that, as Marshall drank, a purple cloud gathered around his feet, the vapor swirling up and around his body and enveloping him in a fine, transparent mist. It was a weird special effect, and Nolan couldn’t see where the cloud was coming from - presumably there were some holes in the stage piping it in. Instead of rolling across the stage like Nolan had seen dry ice do at concerts, the cloud clung to Marshall and Marshall alone. All eyes were locked on him.

“Did you enjoy that?” Mr. Ernst asked.

“It’s the best thing I’ve ever tasted!” Marshall exclaimed. So he was capable of positivity.

“Tell us a bit more about yourself.”

“Um...I’m 18, senior in high school, living in Florida but I was born in Iowa. Not gonna go to college. That’s it, really. I’m not very interesting. I just sit inside and draw and stuff like that.”

“We find you interesting, Marshall,” Mr. Ernst said, to murmurs from the crowd. “We’ll bring out the best in you, the very best. You’re in for a treat.” He turned to the audience and spread his arms wide, pulling his shirt further open. “We all are!”

“I don’t care about business though.” The cloud around Marshall billowed thicker and wider, and Nolan thought it strange that Marshall wasn’t reacting to it at all.

“You will. But no need for you to speak further for now - let’s cede the floor to these gentlemen, the lucky ones who will determine what sort of member you turn out to be.”

Nolan expected Marshall to issue a mouthy response, but Marshall didn’t answer. He and Mr. Ernst both turned and looked at the big mafioso at the mic, who was licking his lips with excitement.

The man spoke. “He is to be...Italian!”

Someone in the room muttered “oh, of course,” and several others groaned, but all turned and looked at Marshall, as did Nolan. Marshall’s face twisted up, as if he were holding back a belch, then his head snapped back and forward hard enough to make Nolan wince. But when Marshall

found his balance again, he looked different - his skin had taken on a deep olive-hued tan, and he was wearing a wig. At least, Nolan assumed he was. There was no other explanation for how Marshall's hair - once so blond it was nearly colorless - was now raven black and wavy. His lips were fuller; his eyes round and dark. Nolan couldn't get the big Godfather man's words out of his mind - it really did look like pale, mousy Marshall had been replaced with an Italian version of himself.

The crowd clapped politely, with a few words of encouragement shouted out from the group. Marshall smiled bashfully.

The next man was at the microphone. "He is to be tall and well-built. An Italian stallion!"

Marshall didn't open his mouth but emitted a long, low whine - he put one hand on his lower back and arched his spine, and his whole body lurched up as he breathed in and out. Nolan watched in shock as Marshall's small frame stretched out, limbs lengthening, neck stretching - his hands grew, and his shoes peeled back as his feet tore through the front - not only was he getting taller, but his underfed frame was filling out into the form of an athlete, with broad shoulders and thick veins. Marshall sprouted up to look eye-to-eye with Mr. Ernst.

This amped up the crowd much more than Marshall's first phase. Several stood and leaned forward, too excited to stay in their seats. Others clapped. Nolan was frozen. How had that happened...how was that possible? And so seamless. Marshall's clothes were hilariously small on him, like he'd accidentally shopped in the kids section, and there were no stretch marks on his exposed skin. Nolan had stretch marks from growing four inches his sophomore year. How did Marshall not have any after growing twice that in thirty seconds?

The Black man who'd greeted Nolan on the elevator was next to speak. "He is to be muscular - as muscular as possible without impeding his movement."

Nolan whipped his head to Marshall, who was rolling his body and running his hands over his abdomen, fingers already thickening, shoulders beginning to bulk.

"As muscular as possible without compromising his beauty," the man continued.

Marshall's back was twisting back and forth, like he was shaking out a cramp - maybe he was - but each contortion made it bigger, broader, until it resembled a wall, with wideset lats that swooped down nearly to Marshall's chiseled waist. His sleeves shredded apart like tissue paper as his biceps knotted up, bulging into perfect spheres covered in veins. Seams were bursting all over - over his traps, around his thighs. Those two areas were getting the most growth at the moment, because Marshall was turning X-shaped. His shoulder just kept flaring broader and burlier, and every twitch of his thighs added more mass to them. Calves the size of footballs strained on the backs of his legs.

The loud, sensual rip of the seat of Marshall's pants made the temperature in the room rise. Some men moaned with admiration. Up from the cut muscles of Marshall's hamstrings swelled a pair of glutes as big as basketballs, latching onto the small of his back to form a double-bubble butt that no pants could ever hide. It only looked normal sized because it was balanced atop the muscled pillars of Marshall's thighs, strong enough to crack a coconut between them.

Marshall looked bizarre as his body grew at different rates. His biceps were briefly the only bodybuilder-sized muscles on his arms, until his forearms suddenly grew as big as his calves, then his triceps bulked out and thickened his arms into barrels that smashed helplessly against his torso. His back had to keep widening to meet the preposterous breadth of his shoulders, while his spindly neck was one of the last parts to grow, muscles bulging out behind his ears and connecting to the trap muscles that jutted out from his shoulders.

Once the whole frame was built, it was time for Marshall's chest to develop. This appeared to be the pièce de résistance for the audience, judging by their reaction. The moment Marshall's nipples tugged slightly outward, every neck was craning forward to watch his pecs grow, even Mr. Ernst's - even Marshall's, who dipped his chin downward and watched with big, curious eyes as the view of his body slowly vanished, blocked by his chest advancing forward...and forward...and further forward still...

Marshall's pecs undulated while they grew, kind of like tits - that's what they looked like, big muscular tits juggling and bouncing and swelling, getting bigger and broader and shoving Marshall's huge arms out to the side. Everything about them was becoming extreme: the line of cleavage sinking deep into their center; his nipples turning downward until they sat beneath the swollen wedges. The muscles developed into huge, cumbersome plates that briefly pulled Marshall's neck forward, until his traps and back swelled a bit bigger to realign his posture. His abdominal ridge was like a podium balancing his monstrous chest on top of it. Despite jutting outward as far as his butt did, Marshall's tits never looked out of balance. In fact, they brought the rest of his body into extreme focus, making him look like a sculpture, an idealized man. He massaged his right pec with one hand - it barely covered half the muscle - as he stared down in what Nolan assumed was shock. Marshall's mouth hung open for so long that a trail of saliva dribbled into his new cleavage.

The expert bodybuilder couldn't breathe without sending a ripple of power through his entire body. Every muscle twitched in anticipation of their next order.

"He is to be proud and virile," said another man into the mic, "a walking testament to testosterone, and to his..." The man turned and witheringly said to the Godfather man, "*apparently* native Italy."

Nolan, for a moment, thought nothing had happened, until Marshall turned to admire his bicep and revealed that the lower half of his face, from his cheeks to his Adam's apple, was now covered in heavy black shadow. The skin straining over his pectorals lined itself with short, dark bristles as Marshall broke into a sneer and began to flex his new body as if he'd had it for years

- every pose effortless and practiced, fluidly moving from one to the next as his limbs cut through the purple mist surrounding him.

“He is to be handsome,” said a big-bellied man with a full head of silver hair and a cane in his hand. “A fearlessly beautiful man, full of youth and vigor.”

Marshall’s five o’clock shadow rippled as his jaw squared into angles so sharp, it was a wonder they didn’t break the skin. His cheekbones hardened into ledges as his eyebrows curved to match his natural cocky smirk. The expansion of his features gave him a prominent nose and big chin with a cleft that matched the one between his pecs. The testosterone masculinizing his face made him look older - not *old*, but no longer college-aged, or even in his twenties. The sparkling white teeth, arched brow, and cleft chin all conspired to enhance the expression of a man who knew he was hot shit. Nolan was so distracted by the man’s - by *Marshall’s* - face that it barely registered that the guy was naked, his underwear long since destroyed. Between his thighs hung a true Italian sausage, foreskin freshly regrown. It was there that many of the men stared, including the next one who spoke.

“He is to be a peacock! He is Pitti Uomo! He is sophisticated and suave. He dresses to show himself off and to proudly display his body. He dresses to be noticed. He is the embodiment of Italian style.”

Marshall’s huge body was writhing in ecstasy as brightly colored fabrics roped around his muscles. He continued to not make a sound, but the expression on his face conveyed how much he was loving the sensation. He shivered as silk twisted around his body like creeping ivy, white around the torso and dark orange around his legs, a warning shot that he was to be dressed as ostentatiously as all the rest of the men he’d looked on disdainfully. The white strips fused together over his 8-pack and bulging arms, clinging to the squirming muscles in his back - the shape of an expertly tailored shirt could be made out now, all the clearer when a towering shirt collar unfolded around Marshall’s neck, and sharp French cuffs unfurled at his wrists. The orange silk lining was still in the process of forming when it was joined by vibrant green wool, stitching together to build a gorgeous emerald suit around Marshall, with wide peak lapels and perfect construction. His shirt collar stretched three inches high to further enhance the grandiose look, while the sapphire blue accents - cufflinks and pocket silk - completed the instructions to a tee. The color combination made him look like a literal peacock, ready to strut and show off his wares.

“He is to be serious! A true businessman with a creative and strategic mind,” said the last man standing at the mic, who Marshall completely ignored as he drank in the sight of himself. “He is intelligent, cunning, charming, arrogant, and unrivaled in his masculinity.”

Marshall was standing firm now, feet planted on the ground like the Colossus of Rhodes, his chin thrust forward in a defiant leer. He looked like the world’s most beautiful man. Outrageously confident and cool. He swatted the purple mist away and turned to face Mr. Ernst, cocking his hip and puffing his chest, pecs hoisting through the open buttons of his dress shirt.

“What is your name, my friend?” Mr. Ernst asked.

“Mariano di Bella.”

“Where are you from?”

“Italy. I was born in Assisi. I now live in Milan.” Mariano’s voice was deep and sultry, his heavy Italian accent giving the words a naturally musical inclination. Nolan couldn’t believe his ears. Or his eyes.

“What do you do?”

“I am an advertising executive.” Another clipped response. All business.

“You are among the most impressive men I have ever seen.”

Mariano didn’t say thank you. He simply nodded in agreement. As the men applauded his beauty, he fussed with his pocket square to make sure it was flowering properly out of his jacket. The way he stood was well-practiced, designed to show off every angle of his incredible body: back flared so it looked three times wider than his waist; one leg bent to prop out his ass; left arm pulled slightly back to display the mass of his bicep through his jacket sleeve. Nolan was entranced by him. He...couldn’t actually be Marshall, could he? It was some weird illusion, though it had looked so real. Mariano the Italian stud didn’t look, sound, act, or move like Marshall. Even the way he stood, peering down at his fellow suited men as if daring them to find one thing wrong with his appearance. Marshall had mocked the guys in suits; the man in his place was born to wear them. His pecs bulged out through the lapels of his--

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Nolan’s adjustment to get a better look at Mariano knocked the folding screen down, even though he’d barely touched it. And now every single man in the room was looking at the teenager crouched by the sound equipment.

There was silence for a brief moment. Nolan locked eyes with Mariano, who stared at him with amusement. “A stowaway,” the Italian smirked.

Nolan was red from his forehead to his toes, his whole body burning with the flush of embarrassment. He took a couple steps as a hundred eyes glared at him. “Sorry...” he squeaked, shuffling toward the door, wishing the floor would swallow him up.

A handsome Indian man with lapels made of yellow brocade stepped up and, in one quick motion, roped one arm around Nolan to subdue him. “Hey!” Nolan thrashed, but the man was

intensely strong, hulking biceps visibly flexing against his clothes. He held Nolan's arms and forced him forward toward Mr. Ernst.

"This is a surprise, gentlemen," Mr. Ernst said, walking off the stage to tilt Nolan's chin upward. "What brings you to our humble gathering?"

"I-I just was curious..." Nolan stammered, eyes wildly shifting between Mr. Ernst and Mariano. "I didn't see anything."

"Oh, I hardly believe that." Mr. Ernst looked at Mariano, then back at Nolan. "He's magnificent, isn't he? Our newest member."

Nolan nodded.

"Would you like to look like that?"

Nolan shook his head. Behind him, some of the men chuckled.

"Come now. We all know that's not true." Mr. Ernst reached over Nolan's shoulder to a man standing behind him. "This is an unexpected interruption," Mr. Ernst continued to the men, "but a welcome one. Sadly, we don't have time to prepare another set of Callers as we did for Mr. di Bella, so I will handle it on my own this time around." He smirked. "We wouldn't want any carbon copies."

"How did you...do that?" Nolan asked, his eyes falling on Mariano's cleavage.

"Magic, my dear boy. Magic and a little collaboration between my fellow members, as you saw. The power of suggestion." Mr. Ernst produced the bright purple potion he'd just been handed. It was the exact same color as his dress shirt. "Drink up."

Nolan shook his head again.

"Not thirsty? That's alright." Mr. Ernst stirred the elixir with his finger. "It only takes a drop."

And then he stuck his finger in Nolan's mouth. It happened so quickly that Nolan couldn't even turn away. A tiny droplet of liquid reached inside his lips and was absorbed into the lining of his mouth.

"He's so lucky," someone in the crowd behind him said.

"I don't feel any different," Nolan said.

"Not yet. But aren't you craving something?"

Nolan was. Somehow he wanted that purple drink. He wanted it badly. His mouth was watering, and his hands were shaking. He felt like a drug addict. The more he told himself he didn't want it, the more it consumed his thoughts, until all he could do was hear the voice in his head yelling, "Drink drink drink drink drink..."

He grabbed the potion from Mr. Ernst's hand. "Nothing's going to happen to me," he said defiantly, and then he chugged the liquid just like Marshall had, the taste flooding his throat and filling his senses. It was the most wonderful thing he'd ever had. He couldn't describe the taste - "heaven" was the only word that came to mind. It was fluffy and robust and sweet and tangy, and it was so divine that he drank every last drop of it, as the purple cloud began gathering at his feet, tendrils swirling up around him.

"What's your name, young man?"

"Nolan. Nolan Vonn."

"It's a pleasure to make your acquaintance, Nolan Vonn. I look forward to being your friend and mentor. Tell us about yourself."

"I'm 18, senior in high school, uh, I...I...I'm going to go to school for education, I like...hanging out with my friends, I dunno...I'm just here on vacation but this resort is kind of boring, and I kept seeing you guys around."

"We stand out, don't we. We're proud of that. We want to be noticed and admired. Don't you?"

"Yes, but people don't."

Mr. Ernst smiled. "They will."

Nolan smiled back. He didn't want to, but he just felt happy. And he couldn't make himself run. He felt the potion's taste running through him, dripping down his throat and filling him from the ground up. He felt like he was radiating its essence. He thought back to Marshall's transformation, and how different he was now, but instead of fear, Nolan felt anticipation. Excitement.

"Come up with me, Nolan. Everyone, please welcome our new friend." The group cheered as Nolan obediently followed Mr. Ernst up the step to the small stage, where Marshall had stood. Mariano was a few feet away, watching closely. And around Nolan, the purple cloud was growing darker and thicker.

"You don't need to worry about speaking for now, Nolan. Instead of bossing this young man around," Mr. Ernst said to the crowd, "I will issue blessings to him. And since we've already met one swarthy member today, why not switch things up? May Nolan be fair-haired and tan, with clear skin and a healthy glow."

Golden blond curls burst out of Nolan's scalp like a jack-in-the-box, styling themselves into thick waves atop his head, with a single spit curl bobbing down over his forehead. His eyes became bright and blue, while the pockmarks of teenage acne flaked off and faded away, his skin smooth and perfect. A ruddy tan spread over him from head to toe - he tanned in the sun, he didn't burn, he remembered. That always surprised people because he was so blond, but he spent enough time outdoors that he was never pale. And his hair...he'd finally figured out how to tame all that volume. He had thick, beautiful hair, everyone said so, but it did take work. He went to the salon a lot, but image was key.

Key to what, Nolan wondered, looking at his suddenly flawless fingernails, which were trimmed and buffed. Business? Was it important to have good hair and nails for business? Of course it was...men noticed those things right away. Nolan had impeccable grooming. He had a dermatologist, esthetician, manicurist, and barber on call. He always wanted to look his best. He knew that wasn't quite accurate, but he couldn't remember it any other way...

"May he be tall and athletic, designed to keep off fat and develop muscle..."

In his head, Nolan was moaning an embarrassing amount, but he was externally mute save for a visible erection that did all the talking for him. He was growing...tall and strong. Taller, taller - he could see his perspective of the room shifting - he remembered darting down the soccer field on his long legs, his parents beaming with pride from the stands. He'd shot up his freshman year, started developing all the good characteristics: broad shoulders and a thick neck, powerful arms, a wide chest. His boyish stick figure body morphed overnight. He'd grown to 6'3 by the end of high school, a true athlete. That was a different Nolan, but it was a great Nolan. He loved that Nolan. Everyone did.

"And for a body that receptive to muscle, may he always strive to add more, always wish to be stronger - to be a large, powerful man who revels in his physique..."

This was the muscle. Holy *shit*, this was the part where he got muscles. His entire body felt like one big heart, ventricles pumping into every tissue. He could feel his heartbeat in his legs, his arms, everywhere.

His biceps lurched a bit bigger. He felt them solidifying. He felt his chest tighten, harden, and then contract, a deep breath made from steel. He felt his lats tremble and his thighs tense and his traps cramp. And it all kept happening over, and over, and over. Everyone was staring in awe, including Nolan. He could see his expansion peripherally: the slow broadening of his shoulders and projection of his chest, like he was being pumped full of air.

It was glorious.

It was *fucking* glorious.

It was the best thing he'd ever felt in his entire life. He loved having muscle. He wanted more of it. He'd always want more, no matter how big he got. And he was big. Always athletic - "strapping," his dad called him - but careful nutrition and arduous workouts had turned him into a true bodybuilder. He made his naturally wide upper body wider and his naturally slim waist slimmer. He squatted his way to a traffic-stopping ass that pants struggled to contain. He grew his biceps so big that his arms were the same circumference as his hat size.

Were his arms really THAT big? Nolan looked down in silent shock at his pipes. They'd shredded his sleeves so easily that he never felt it happen. And his t-shirt was hugging his chest like a sports bra, baring an 8-pack as knotted as a loaf of challah, though he couldn't see it since his pecs blocked the way. Fuck, he loved his big tits - they were giant and pendulous, and they grew so easily. Groping them was the best. He'd lie on his back and watch them rise and fall, or send gym pics to his lovers with the camera angled so low you could barely see his face, just two eyes staring over mountains.

Bigger...fuck, he needed to get BIGGER...

He was beginning to look freaky, and he loved it. His triceps were like croissants implanted under his skin; his delts looked to be in a contest with each other to see which could get bigger faster. His t-shirt ripped open as his pecs burst forward, as buffed and smoothed as freshly polished wood, monstrous in size but beautiful in appearance, with nipples that got men's mouths watering. His muscles were godly. He remembered it started in high school, people straight up telling him "you're a god," and as he got older and his face got prettier and his muscles grew, he started to believe them.

It wasn't real, he heard a voice in his head say. The memories of his teen years weren't real, and what was currently happening wasn't either. But he wanted them to be. He wanted to have a life spent being worshipped, the hunky jock made good, the tall muscle god everyone stared at with awe. What man didn't want that?

The hormones and magic swirling through Nolan's body kept growing him, changing him, altering his physique into something superhuman. His lats pulled wider still, propping out his massive arms, his lower back tightening inward to further emphasize the curve of his muscle ass. His underwear finally tore open, a thin shaft dangling between his legs. Nolan felt no shame. He wanted them all to see.

"May he be well-endowed, a stud who relishes in his sexuality, free of shame and proud of his prowess, with sensitive skin that provides him with instant arousal..."

The girth was instantaneous. Nolan's slender penis gained beer bottle thickness and grew nine inches long, his balls swelling big as plums. Horniness invaded his thoughts until he could think of nothing else but sex. He wanted to mate. He was a hot young stud born to fuck and that was what he wanted to do, provide pleasure and get it returned back to him. And be worshipped...he loved to be worshipped...he was pre-cumming like crazy just thinking about it, his hard cock

lubing itself up. One look at his body had people on all fours. And he swore he had more nerve endings than the average person. He spent most days aroused by...by...

“May his style reflect the type of man he is - overconfident, macho, successful, and beautiful. May he be determined to be the best dressed man wherever he goes, even if it’s in his home. May his body love the feeling of luxury fabrics against it, to the point that nothing else will compare...”

The inside of Nolan’s brain was just one long moan now. He couldn’t think anymore. Strips of cornflower blue poplin shot around him like chains, crossing over his nipples and making them hard, stimulating his skin, turning him on. He watched the fabric spread over him and fuse together, and nearly came when he saw brilliant white French cuffs pop out around his wrists, and felt the high collar of his business shirt stretch up around his neck. There was nothing like the feeling of a tall shirt collar holding his neck high, making him stand up straight. And his shirt fabric was so thick, so glossy, but so light too - like his skin was constantly being kissed by a lover. He wore custom shirts every day. Custom suit too...he woke up every morning and put on a suit, even on the weekends. But they were never boxy; no, his suits were like armor, molded to his incredible body, enhancing every line and angle.

Life was business. He’d built a career on his looks - the studly jock turned studly businessman, shamelessly vain and proud of it. He never thought he’d be a suit, but now he was, and he loved it. He loved how he filled out a shirt and how he got his way in the boardroom. Standing up in front of a table of fellow moneymen, pecs on display, dick rigid in his suit pants...he never wore underwear so he could feel the silk lining against his cockhead. He felt it now, as his bespoke suit formed around him, with wide peak lapels and thick chalkstripes over the shimmering black wool. A white puff of silk erupted out of the front pocket of his new suit, drawing the eye to his chest just as he wanted.

“And his face - may it be his crowning glory, the most indisputably male part about him, a collection of every feature that men envy...”

Nolan’s chin burned - it felt like the bone boiled down to a molten state - then it lengthened and widened and reformed with a big dimple in the center. It pulled Nolan’s jaw longer and broader, reshaping his skull into angles as severe as his physique. The perfect jawline made him stunningly handsome, but he only improved as his brow ridge lowered and his lips filled into a smirking pout. He was a Tom of Finland fantasy, too masculine to be real, even before his granite jaw covered itself with heavy gold stubble and his eyebrows thickened. Men in the room moaned as they looked at him. He had to be older to be as manly as requested, so he aged, skin toughening to put him close to 40. The moaning in the room increased. Virility poured off of Nolan, floating around him.

“May he be as intelligent as he is charming; a bon vivant with a mind for business and the bottom line...”

The new Nolan's mind trembled with activity, ravenous intellect invading every corner of his thoughts - he was educated, well-read, witty, the kind of man who gathered a crowd off the strength of his name and then entertained them once they were there. He loved being the center of attention and fed off of others' respect for him. And he was smart. Really smart.

Mr. Ernst was issuing more blessings, but Nolan wasn't listening to him anymore. He just floated on a sea of his own overwhelming ecstasy, allowing the waves to crash around in his brain, understanding now just how wonderful it was to be this kind of man, wondering why he'd ever resisted it. It was intoxicating, and he welcomed it, allowing himself to morph and absorb all his desired traits until-

"What is your name, my friend?" Mr. Ernst asked.

Nolan looked over at the man. Once so incomprehensibly huge and handsome, now a peer and an equal. "Noble Vandervelde," he said.

"Vandervelde. Dutch?"

"Yes. Why I'm so tall," Noble smirked, and the men laughed.

"But you didn't grow up there?"

"No, I'm American. I grew up in Connecticut, mostly."

"And what do you do for work?"

"Venture capital." Noble let these words hang in the air.

"Ah. High risk."

"And high reward," Noble smiled. It wasn't lost on anyone that the suit he wore looked like it cost as much as a car.

"Have you met Mr. di Bella, our other new member?" Mr. Ernst gestured to Mariano, who returned Noble's look with a smolder.

"We haven't," Mariano said.

"But you do look familiar," Noble replied, admiring the embodiment of 'tall, dark, and handsome' standing before him.

Mr. Ernst watched the exchange with a gleam in his eye. "How about you two go to the bar and acquaint yourselves? We're recapping the last year in this next session, and since you weren't members yet it won't concern you."

"I could go for a drink," Noble said with a dashing grin. Mariano simply nodded curtly.

They floated out of the ballroom, past admiring peers and thunderstruck guests, suddenly used to the attention that they would always receive. Noble listened to Mariano's jagged breathing and enjoyed catching his eye as they walked. The man was horny, they both were. What he'd do about it, Noble wasn't sure yet.

"What do you want?" Noble asked Mariano.

"Negroni."

"How Italian." Noble sidled up to the bar and ordered for them: a negroni and a whiskey on the rocks. The ice rocked as he set them on their table. "Cheers."

"Salute," Mariano responded, knocking their rims together with a crystal clink. Each stole a glimpse of the other's chest as they drank.

"Interesting group in there," Noble said after they'd swallowed their first sips.

"Yes. But a lot of powerful men."

"Did you always want to be a businessman?"

Mariano nodded, his heavy accent dancing across the words. "Always. Since I was a little boy. I'm everything I ever dreamt of being."

"Me too." Noble took another drink. "Not married?" he asked, motioning to Mariano's bare finger.

"No. Nor you."

"Nope. I'd like to be though. I'd like to have a family." Noble swirled his ice.

"Me too. A man like me should be a father." It was an odd statement to make, but Noble knew exactly what he meant. Still, it felt too personal to open with, so he pivoted.

"So what do you do, exactly?"

Mariano explained his job and how he'd reached that level in the advertising business. It was dry, like him, but interesting nonetheless. Noble talked about his own career - how his father was an investment banker and raised him to be one too. They talked about all their favorite topics, like budgets, the stock market, key performance indicators, and tales from the boardroom.

“Advertising is such a visual business. Do you find that how you look has helped you in your career?”

Mariano’s eyes flashed. “What do you mean, ‘how I look’?”

Noble raised his glass and gestured toward his companion’s face with it. “You’re handsome.”

The dark eyebrow cocked upward. “Am I?”

Noble couldn’t believe his ears. The stiff Italian was flirting. So fuck it, he’d flirt back. “I’d say so. It’s certainly a nice view from here.”

“I have...” Mariano rubbed his hand across his whiskered chin. “I have a nice view of the beach from my suite.”

“Do you?”

“Would you like to come see it?”

“I would like to come, yes.”

Mariano ran his tongue over his lips as he stood. He was so tall and so broad, and just being in his presence made Noble want to stand straighter and wider too. They buttoned their jackets and strode to the elevator, putting on a professional front as always, but there was no ignoring the heaving of their chests from the deep breaths they were taking, or the sweat gathering on their foreheads. And as they walked, their stubble thickened...and thickened...

Mariano leaned against the wall in the elevator. He slid his jacket off once the doors were shut, exposing nipples straining against the inside of his shirt. Noble, feeling bold, reached out and gripped one. Mariano didn’t resist.

“You have...” Noble pulled himself closer to the huge Italian, close enough to run a hand over Mariano’s jaw. “You have a beard.”

And Mariano did, now. It was dark and dense and curly. “Yes.”

“You didn’t have a beard in the bar.”

“I guess...being with a man like you...” Mariano cupped his palm on Noble’s cheek. “Being with a man like you makes me more of a man too.”

Noble reached up and put his hand over Mariano’s, realizing that he too was sporting a beard, golden blond and thick. They both took in deep breaths at the same time, their huge chests pressing together - the next buttons snapped off their shirts, and they both moaned -

The elevator doors opened and they snapped back to business mode, striding off and past an elderly couple who gawked at the two big bodybuilders. Noble's right pec was fully exposed, but he didn't care. He was too busy watching Mariano's beard get bigger and fluffier, just as his own was doing.

"Open the door," he grunted as they stood outside Mariano's room, while the Italian struggled to find his key. "Open the fucking door..."

"Cazzo, I'm trying," Mariano muttered, as Noble stroked his beard and reached inside his shirt to play with his pecs. There was a beep - the door opened - they were having trouble thinking -

"I'm an animal, you make me feel like a fucking animal," Noble grunted as he stumbled into the room, giant muscles ready to burst out of his clothes. He reached to take off his jacket but Mariano stopped him.

"No, I...flex...you flex out of it," Mariano growled, tripping over his English.

Noble threw the big man down on the bed and loomed over him, erection tenting his suit pants. "You see what you fucking do to me? You see what you're turning me into?" He raised an arm and flexed it, splitting open both his jacket and shirt sleeves as a big tan bicep crested through them. "I'm losing control - I'm too much of a man to be contained -" The rest of the buttons popped off his shirt, giant tits hoisting themselves free above a cobbled abdomen.

Mariano arched his back, sweating through his dress shirt, bursting his own buttons as he groped his chest and moaned. "Si...yes..."

"Look at all your fuckin' chest hair..." Noble launched himself on top of Mariano, the seat of his pants ripping open to expose his big muscle ass, his bespoke suit in tatters around his mass.

"All of yours-" Mariano sputtered, massaging Noble's furry pecs. He flicked off pieces of Noble's suit as Noble did the same to him, yanking his pants free to reveal the dense muscles in his legs.

"NNnnnnngggrrrAHHH..." Noble flexed and bucked and tore free from his suit, flexing proudly as Mariano reached and tore off his briefs, exposing a gorgeous dick encircled by thick blond pubes. Noble bit down on Mariano's nipple, grunting and groaning as he fellated it, then he reared back up and pulled on Mariano's underwear to reveal the big Italian cock sporting its foreskin. "Jesus...so fuckin' beautiful...you're so FUCKING beautiful..."

"I don't..." Mariano could barely get the words out. "I don't bottom-"

"Me either, whatever, I'll cum just looking at you. Fuck. I wanna know what your cum tastes like-"

And then they kissed, tongues pressing together, beards entwining, deep bass voices buried in throats as they mauled each other. The bed sank lower to the floor, almost breaking under the weight of nearly 600 pounds of muscle mass, as the two huge bodybuilders rolled and wrestled and explored. Mariano stuck his finger inside Noble, and Noble couldn't get enough of the Italian's nipples - they were so big and so sensitive and the noises they made Mariano make were indescribably hot. So he clamped his fingers on them and buried his face in Mariano's pubes, deep throating the man's cock until neither of them could breathe - he loved hearing Mariano moan and swear in Italian, until the man let out a high-pitched wheeze and Noble's mouth filled with potent seed, which he gulped down like it was the first drink of water after one of his bodybuilding contests.

Noble sat up, flexing proudly, cock hard as granite. He straddled Mariano like he'd just conquered him, and Mariano obligingly took Noble's dick and began stroking it, pre-cum soaking his hand.

"C'mon, motherfucker," Mariano growled. "Cum for me. Cum for me, big daddy."

"Ohhh ffuuuu..." Noble pumped his hips and flexed. Sometimes he had to imagine things before he came, but this time, all he needed to do was stare at the huge man beneath him - those giant muscles, that fucking FACE...how was he so goddamn handsome... oh fuck! "Oh FUCK! Oh FU-"

Noble shot all over Mariano, soaking the man's pecs with brilliant white spunk that sat on the dark chest hair like morning dew. He slumped forward, panting, and pressed his mouth against Mariano's, exchanging breaths before kissing him gratefully, the makeout segueing from passion to tenderness as the exhaustion hit them.

"I love being a man," he panted. "I love being a man with you."

"It is a gift from above, to be a man," Mariano said.

"Whoever marries you is never going to not be pregnant," Noble grinned.

"Never not?" Mariano had to parse out the double negative. When it hit him, he smiled, white teeth shining through his beard - his first smile of the day. "Even after we have done our duty as men, promise me you, uh...promise me we can still do this. At least once a year, at the meetings."

"That's an easy promise. I'll have trouble staying away from this body." Noble rested on top of Mariano and hugged him, feeling his own cum pressing against his chest. Mariano hugged back, and they lay there quietly, relishing the hardness of their muscles until Noble looked at the clock and realized...

"We'll have to shower before dinner."

“Let’s shower together. To save water.”

“Right. To save water.” Noble stood up and helped Mariano to his feet, and they kissed again, walking to the bathroom in each other’s clutches. They made out under the head of the shower, water rinsing off their sex as they soaped each other up, two beasts grooming each other.

“Let me shave you,” Noble said as they toweled off, and Mariano agreed, standing still as Noble turned on his clippers and guided them through the Italian’s burly beard, shearing it back down to sleek stubble. Mariano returned the favor, kissing Noble between swipes, until their feet were covered with a pile of blond and black whiskers.

“Your jawline,” Mariano admired, running his finger over it. “The beard is good, but this shouldn’t be covered.”

“It’s your fault it got covered. You bring out the monster in me.”

“Not a monster. Just even more of a man.” Mariano tipped his head against Noble’s and kissed him.

“I like you like this. Tender,” Noble said between kisses. “Who knew you were a sweetie deep down, huh?”

“Don’t tell on me.”

“I won’t. Doesn’t it feel like we’ve known each other longer? Like maybe we met in another life. You just feel...*familiar*, to me.”

“Yes. But nothing could be better than this.” Mariano ran his big hands over Noble’s frame, sending shivers down the blond man’s spine. “This incredible body. I want to dress it.”

“Style me. I’ll be your doll.”

Mariano’s lustful sigh said it all. He kissed Noble again, then broke free and began gathering the strewn pieces of clothing from around the room. When he picked up Noble’s beautiful jacket, he paused. “Didn’t you rip this?”

“I’m magic. We’re magic.” Noble meant it as a joke, but it prompted a question from Mariano.

“Do you think we’ll get to see them make a new member?” Mariano made Noble raise his arms and slid his vividly white shirt over his shoulders, buttoning it to the base of Noble’s jutting pecs.

“Oh, that thing they said - about turning someone into a member? I felt like that was a joke. That can’t really happen, can it?” Noble smiled as he stepped into the tight trousers Mariano laid in

front of him. "Imagine, just turning into one of us instead of earning it. It wouldn't feel the same, would it?"

Mariano ran Noble's belt through the loops, which required his hands to rest on the blond man's waist. A kiss was inevitable, only broken so Mariano could put in Noble's cufflinks. "These are beautiful."

"Thank you." Another kiss. "These are beautiful," Noble said, groping Mariano's pecs, letting his crisp cuffs brush against his skin.

"Wait until they're in a suit." Mariano massaged Noble's cock through his suit pants. "You're hard thinking about it."

"How could I not be." Noble stuffed his huge arms into the sleeves of his jacket, shrugging it onto his shoulders before Mariano fixed his collar. Then he returned the favor for his friend, dressing Mariano in his elegant suit, all the way down to folding his pocket silk. He brushed a lock of hair back from Mariano's forehead and admired the view. "You're even hotter now that I know what all is under there."

"When we're down there networking, just know...I'm thinking about your nipples," Mariano said.

"I don't think they're on the menu, though."

"My own private dessert menu, then."

"They're your midnight snack."

Mariano slid his hand inside Noble's open buttons and gave his nipple a twist. "Not the last time I'll do that tonight."

"We're gonna have a lot of fun. I'm glad the Society put us together." They gathered their wallets, phones, and keys and headed out of the room. As they walked down the hallway, Noble cupped his hand under the beautiful curve of Mariano's ass.

"Careful, you'll make me cum."

"Already recharged? What are you, some teenager?"

"I wish," Mariano said as they stepped onto the elevator. "Haven't been a teenager for a long time." As the elevator doors closed and their hands returned to each other's crotches and chests, Mariano reconsidered. "Actually, no...I don't wish that."

"I was gonna say," Noble murmured. "I don't want to be anything other than the man I am."

And they kissed again.