

I Knew It From The Start (Friends, Sexcapades, And Love Affairs Side Story, Patreon Exclusive)

By Laura S. Fox

“Shane, right?” The bartender winked at him and leaned over the counter, displaying her quite generous bosom.

Shane offered a large genuine smile. “Sorry, darling, you might think it presumptuous of me, but I don’t want you barking at the wrong tree.”

The bartender flashed an amused grin at him. “Right. Your friends told me as much. I was just checking. But what’s a handsome gay dude like you doing in a bar like this? I’m not saying none of the boys hanging around here could be what you’re looking for, but that’s exactly what I’m saying. We’re not exactly popular with the pretty boys’ crowd.”

Shane chuckled. “I’m here to have fun. And this place is popular with me.” He suggestively wiggled his eyebrows.

The bartender giggled. “Stop flirting with me, cowboy. I might think it all a ruse that you go around telling everyone you’re looking to get hitched with some beautiful young man. You know, to keep all the womenfolk from jumping you.”

“Ah, it’s nothing like that,” Shane drawled the words. “And I got a good feeling about you and your bar. I feel like this is where I’m about to get lucky.”

“Get lucky, huh? I thought you were all serious, about getting down on one knee and all that, once you find a boy you like.”

Shane pushed back his hat. “That’s how my momma taught and raised me. Before I left, she told me: ‘Shane, you don’t go around messing with boys’ heads. You find the one, bring him home and do right by him.’ Yeah, that’s what she told me, I fool you not.”

The bartender laughed and waved. “I like your momma. But here’s a piece of advice from an old city girl like me. You might have to dip your sausage in more than one place until you find, you know, the winning combination.”

“Nah, I won’t do that. My momma wouldn’t like it.”

“As well intended as she is, she cannot stop you. Really, Shane, you’re a good guy. You should know that a lot of them city boys,” she joked, “only like to have fun. Don’t get too invested and all. You might just end up hurt.”

“Don’t you worry about that, darling. I’ll know I found the right one the moment I set my eyes on him.”

The bartender offered him a fond smile and pinched his cheek. “If you’re so set on that, it’s not like I can do anything to change your mind. If anyone hurts you, you’ll have here a shoulder to cry on.” She patted her left shoulder. “And just point the asshole to me, and I’ll rip him a new one.”

“That’s good to know. But I won’t need it,” Shane said with determination.

“All right,” the bartender replied with a shrug. “But I can help you with a pint, right?”

“Sure thing.”

He knew what people must be thinking of him and his decision to find a man to marry in such a big city. But his mom had never been wrong in her life, and she had sent him off with those words. Shane knew that he would recognize his future husband from a hundred of thousands.

The bar door opened, letting two new patrons walk in, a slender man in his mid-twenties and a redhead. Shane rested his eyes on the duo. What was the bartender saying about pretty boys never visiting that place?

The redhead was cute in a nerdy way, but Shane’s eyes were drawn to the other. He watched the stranger as he ran one hand through his long chestnut-colored hair and smiled at his friend.

His heart skipped a bit. Shane was damned sure that he had never seen a man as pretty as that guy. Even from a distance, he could tell his lips were soft. When he smiled, he looked like the sun was smiling with him, too.

“Your beer is getting warm.” The bartender pulled him back to reality.

“Yeah,” Shane murmured, finding it hard to unglue his eyes from the stranger.

“Have fun. It looks like the heat is picking up.”

The bartender hurried to serve the two newcomers. The bar was full, but Shane felt as if he could only see the long-haired man in all that crowd. The guy and his friend took two pints with them and sat at one of the tall tables around the dance floor.

Shane had a mind to go and ask him to dance when Marlene, one of his friends, hanged from his arm. “You promised me this dance, Shane,” she said and pulled him toward the dance floor.

He followed her, but all the while, he tried to keep the pretty man in sight. Maybe it would be a stupid idea to go and ask a man for a dance. He could be straight, for all he knew.

No, he couldn’t be. If he were, he wouldn’t be able to make Shane’s heart beat like a drum.

“Shane, I think there’s a guy checking you out,” Marlene said and giggled.

“What guy?” Shane pretended not to know, but he had been aware of the pretty man watching him all the time while he had danced with Marlene.

“Don’t tell me you didn’t feel his eyes on you. Especially since you’ve been looking at him all the time.”

Shane grinned. He never denied it when he was caught with his hand in the cookie jar. “It’s that obvious?”

“Yeah. You almost stepped on my foot.”

“I didn’t. I’m a perfect dancer,” Shane protested.

“Just kidding. But seriously, I’m surprised to see a guy like him in a place like this. He and his friend are way too cute for the bitter beer in here,” Marlene said and laughed.

“Yeah. I should go talk to him.”

A heavy hand landed on his shoulder. Neil, another friend he was there with tonight, grinned at him. “How about some pints?”

“Hey, leave Shane alone. He’s in hunting mode now.”

Neil’s face was a picture of confusion. “Hunting what?”

Marlene gestured vaguely with her head. “Booty, what else?”

Shane ran one hand over his eyes. “Marlene, I swear, you have a mouth on you.”

Neil seemed to catch up. “Ah, he saw some dude he likes? In here?”

The bar attendees were a pretty tight-knit group, so Shane could see why no one thought he would be able to find his sweetheart there.

Marlene pulled Neil closed and surreptitiously pointed at the stranger sitting at the tall table. “That’s who Shane got his eyes on.”

“I’ve never seen that guy here,” Neil confirmed.

“You two have fun while I go talking to him,” Shane said.

“Talk to him? Do you wanna look like a wimp?” Neil asked.

“A wimp? How’s my talking to him making me look like that?”

Neil puffed out his chest. “You’re just gonna scare him away. Guy walks in here, he doesn’t want to get hit on and all. So you’re gonna have to make him stay, you know, have a drink with you.” He dug one finger into Shane’s shoulder to emphasize the point.

“How do I do that?” Shane asked, now puzzled.

Neil began gesturing. “You go casually by his table and bump into him. He spills his beer, and you offer to buy another. Don’t tell me you country boys don’t ever use that.”

Yeah, he had used it when he still chased girls, but it didn’t seem like the same methods would work with a man like the one he had set his eyes on.

Shane looked at Marlene, asking silently for confirmation. She shrugged. “That’s how my last boyfriend got me to drink with him.”

“Your last boyfriend? What happened to him?”

Marlene smiled sweetly. “He’s still my boyfriend.”

“So, it worked?” Shane asked.

“Yeah,” she confirmed. “It totally did.”

If both his friends endorsed that, it was worth a try. If he got the chance to talk to the pretty man over a drink, it was all for the better and definitely a way not to get rejected from the start.

He was even prettier from up close. And mad as hell, as the beer was dripping from his t-shirt. Still, Shane could only stare at his kissable lips. That was his man, no doubt about it. “So damn sorry about that. Can I buy you, boys, another round?” He added a grin on top of that.

The long-haired beauty looked not one ounce impressed. “No, it’s all right. We were just leaving, anyway. Mike, let’s go.”

Damn, he was slipping through his fingers.

“Hey, don’t leave on my account,” Shane drawled, pumping up the charm to the max.

“We’re not leaving on your account. We’re just leaving, period.”

Pretty eyes shooting firebolts. Shane could swear his stomach was home to a bunch of crazed butterflies.

“Ah, that’s too bad. And I ruined your t-shirt, too. Can I get your number? I should pay for the dry cleaning.” It was an excuse as good as any to get the guy’s number.

The pretty man exploded. “It’s a frigging t-shirt! It doesn’t need dry cleaning! Mike, let’s go.”

That hadn’t worked as planned at all. The guy brushed by him and walked purposefully toward the exit.

“Come by again,” Shane called after him.

A shout was the reply. “Not in this life!”

Shane stared after him. No way this guy was getting away. Marlene and Neil appeared beside him all of a sudden.

“What did you do to him?” Marlene asked.

“I listened to your silly advice,” Shane replied. “Does any of you has a pen or a pencil or anything to write with?”

Marlene rummaged through her purse and offered him her black eyeliner. “Will this do?”

Shane grabbed it and began to paint his number on a napkin.

Marlene looked over his shoulder. “It’s all right,” she murmured, somewhat vexed. “I got bored with it anyway.”

Shane handed her back the eyeliner, grabbed the napkin, and rushed out of the bar. If he were lucky, the pretty man wouldn’t be far by now.

He saw him right away and ran after him, without caring how it would look like. Hopefully, he didn’t come across as some crazy stalker or anything. What he needed to do right now was to behave as he had intended in the first place.

The stranger and his friend stopped and stared curiously at him. Shane tipped his hat. “Sorry about earlier. My friends told me it would be the perfect pick up line. They’re a bunch of assholes when they want to be. So, here’s how I usually do it.” He offered his hand. “I’m Shane.”

The redhead elbowed the long-haired cutie, making him take Shane’s hand. “Jared.”

“Nice to meet you, Jared.” Shane held his hand for a while, enjoying its warmth. As pissed as Jared had been earlier, he now seemed relaxed and almost smiled.

Shane had no intention to press his luck. Not tonight. He offered his hand to the redhead, whose name was Mike, as he had heard Jared say it repeatedly. His assessment was that they were only friends. Plus, if he read the signs right, Mike was pretty happy with his running after them.

“Here is my number,” Shane added and handed Jared the napkin. “Just in case you change your mind about that dry cleaning.” And then he winked. “Sorry about ruining your night. I hope you guys will come again. Have a good evening.”

He didn’t insist and walked back into the bar after bidding Jared and Mike farewell.

Jared would call.

Or else, his mom might have to hear about how she was wrong for the first time in her life.

I’ve had enough of two-timers in my life.

So, there was some bad history right there. It was hard to get down with both feet on the ground after that night. Jared had surprised him by wanting to do it all, right from their first date, but Shane couldn’t complain.

It had been a rush. His first time getting his cock sucked, his first time fucking a guy. And Shane was pretty damned sure that it was also the first time falling in love.

His friends laughed at him all the time, asking him how he could wait so stubbornly for the right one. But he wasn’t stubborn. That was just the way he was, and he knew it to be right because his mom had told him that, and she was never wrong.

And there was also his gut that never lied to him. Jared was a sweet guy done wrong by some asshole. In due time, Shane would learn everything about it and make sure no one would ever do wrong by Jared.

It was as simple as that.

Now, he needed to send Jared a picture with his pigs in a blanket. No one could resist his cooking, and that was a fact. One way or another, he would get Jared to taste it, and then he’d be hooked for life.

Yeah, that sounded like a bulletproof plan.

If he had been struck by lightning or run over by a herd of cattle, he wouldn’t have felt as bad as he did. Hook up? Was that really all? Shane paced the sidewalk, his hands clenched into fists. How could he be so wrong? How could Jared look so sweet and still be a damned jerk like that?

Shane pinched the bridge of his nose. It would be a pain to get over this guy. He didn’t even have to let time pass to know it was true. It was enough to close his eyes, and sometimes not even that,

for what had happened between them to come rushing back to him. That night had been everything he had dreamed of.

For Jared, it had been nothing but a damned hookup. For him, it had been completely something else. He had made love, not whatever these slick city boys thought they did whenever they met someone new.

He was about to begin walking, not having the patience to wait for a cab when Jared rushed out of the bar. Shane watched him, the pain still fresh right in the middle of his chest. Even right now, he wanted to walk over there and run his fingers through that long hair and kiss that lying mouth.

Lying? If he were honest, it wasn't quite that. Jared just behaved like a city guy, not a country bumpkin like him.

"Shane," Jared began murmuring, "I feel that I must apologize for tonight. I didn't mean to --" He stopped for a moment. "Shane, hi. I'm sorry for being a scumbag. I shouldn't have talked like that to you in front of my friends. It's just that I --" He stopped again. "Shane, it's me, Jared, from ... before. No, earlier tonight. I feel like I fooled you into thinking that I – Ah, goddamnit, why is it so hard to say the right words?"

Shane got closer and listened to Jared in complete silence. It looked like someone wanted to apologize. He felt his blood rushing down from his head. Suddenly, he wasn't as pissed as before.

"Maybe it's not what you want to say," he replied to Jared's rhetorical question.

Jared jumped. "Fuck, you scared me! Shane, what are you doing here?"

Shane moved toward Jared. "I got mad a little, so I needed to walk it off. I don't get mad often," he began. "It's usually serious when I do that. But you're a slick city boy, so I should have known it."

Jared sighed. "It's not like that. I mean, slick city boy? I'm not ... I mean, I obviously made you have the wrong impression of me. Adrian and Mike gave me an earful inside, so I'll try to apologize as I should."

"No need." Shane waved. "I heard you trying to find your words earlier. I don't think you really want to apologize."

Jared stopped for a moment and sighed. "You know what, Shane? You're right. I don't want to apologize. Not because you don't deserve an apology, but because I've been bottling up something inside, something that had absolutely nothing to do with you, and it has made me mad."

“What is it? Can you say it?” Shane asked.

Jared pondered for a moment. “I just went through something unpleasant. I was involved with a married guy. I had no idea he was married, and when I found out ... well, he was really unpleasant toward me.”

“You keep saying the word ‘unpleasant’. But it must have been more.”

“Yes, it was,” Jared said. “He insulted me. I thought we had a relationship, and I was nothing to him but an affair or even less than that. I slept with you for all the wrong reasons. I wanted to prove myself that I could be in control. I could just choose to hook up and feel good about myself. I had no intention to hurt you, but I am at fault for not stopping one moment to think about you and your feelings.”

So, he had been right about that bad history all along. Not that it could make him feel better, but he now had a clear picture of what had happened in Jared’s life to warrant that kind of behavior.

He was lost in thought, and Jared surprised him by coming closer. “I can be your friend, Shane. I can show you around the city. I may be awful hookup material, but, as a friend, I can be nice. Really nice. At least, that’s what Adrian and Mike keep telling me.”

A friend. Not exactly what Shane was looking for. “A friend?”

“Yes. I’m so sorry I mislead you. I just kept telling myself that you must be a charmer and a playboy since you’re such a hunk. I’m sorry about that. A lot of guys in this city would be happy to have you. I can introduce you to the scene here, so to speak. And then, I can assure you that you can have your pick.”

“Have my pick, huh?”

That was precisely his intention.

“Sure. Have you looked at yourself in the mirror lately?” Jared asked with a small laugh.

Jared could run his mouth all he wanted; his eyes were saying something else. They lit up when he looked at Shane. And the way he licked his lips... if that wasn’t a sign of what he really thought, Shane was ready to swallow his hat.

“So I can pick anyone I like, is that what you’re saying?”

“Sure thing,” Jared confirmed.

“I’ll keep you to that,” Shane said playfully.

That meant that they were in agreement. Surely, Jared wouldn’t be so surprised with Jared’s final choice.

At first, Shane had thought that dragging Jared into that friends with benefits game would be at least a bit difficult. But Jared had jumped to the opportunity like his pants had caught on fire, and it didn't take a wise guy to figure out why that was.

What Shane had feared more was that it would hurt to have him so close, make love to him, and pretend that he didn't care. Yet, whatever they did, they fit like a hand in a glove, and he wasn't talking only about the sex.

Now Jared's friends were asking him about his end game because they had guessed the truth. To be completely honest, it was a relief, but truth be told, he now enjoyed the game a little. That would be something about the courtship period he would never tell his mom about, but he kind of liked to tease Jared and play-pretend only to savor how his so-called friend with benefits melted in his arms each time they hugged or kissed.

Jared was a bit of an airhead. Shane could see why some people would think it easy to take advantage of him. For that reason, he wanted even more to be the only man ever in Jared's life. The guy deserved better, and Shane, with the risk of lacking modesty and all, was that better thing he needed.

Tonight, he had taken a big step. He couldn't think of a precise point in time when he had thought that he would be versatile, but it was something he had to put to the test.

Lying on the bed, his eyes on the ceiling, and Jared's head resting on his chest, Shane could still feel his lover deep inside. It wasn't just physical. Jared was comfortable around him, and if they were to get any closer, they would fuse into a single being.

There was nothing else Shane wanted. But that brought an important matter to light.

He would have to tell his folks back home and prepare them for the big moment. On the other hand, Jared looked like he needed more time, and Shane was unsure of the right moment to end the game and get real.

They were real. Everything they did was real. But Shane liked how things were and didn't mind a long courtship like before. His mom could be old-fashioned all she wanted, but Shane was a city boy, too, now.

Which meant that he got to enjoy making love to his beloved as often as he wanted before marriage. Of course, she wouldn't hear about that, either.

"Are you regretting it?" Jared's voice was sleepy.

"What? That I let you pop my precious cherry?"

“Yeah.”

“No. Why would you say that?”

“I can feel when you’re upset.” Jared wrapped one arm around Shane’s chest. “Or worried.”

Not upset, but a bit in a conundrum of sorts. Still, it made Shane happy to hear that Jared was so in tune with him that he could feel whatever he was feeling without hearing a word about it.

“What would you like to eat tomorrow?” Shane caressed his lover’s back with the tip of his fingers.

Jared snickered. “You don’t even know what I have in the fridge. We’re not at yours, in case you’ve forgotten because I fucked your brains out.”

“I can go and buy what’s needed before you wake up.”

“Early riser, huh? Then I should give you my key. Even better, I’ll give you a spare.”

Jared got up and began searching through a drawer. Shane liked to watch him, all naked like that. There was a natural grace in how he moved and brushed his hair to one side so that it didn’t bother him.

“Here.” Jared handed him the key.

Shane took it and stared at it. He hoped his smile didn’t give him or his thoughts away.

Shane stuffed his hands in his jacket pockets and bounced on his heels as he waited in front of his building. Coleman was taking his sweet time after refusing to get picked up from the airport. He wasn’t surprised that his folks back home were sending his older brother to check up on him, but it was too soon for him to let them know about his plans.

The problem was simple. He couldn’t lie to Coleman. Once, because his brother could smell a lie from a thousand yards, and twice because the entire family would burn him to the stake – figuratively – for keeping something like that away from them.

He would just have to be direct and spill the beans once he and Coleman got to his place, and there was no other way around it.

Jared had called earlier when he was taking a shower, and he had just seen the call. Shane looked at the phone with a tiny bit of dread. His brother would appear any moment if he hadn’t given the wrong instructions to the cab driver, and it wasn’t a great idea to hear him talk all lovey-dovey with Jared on the phone in case he called again. Coleman had to be eased into things. Otherwise, he might just say something before Shane had a chance to explain the situation.

The best way to prevent that was to call first, and before Coleman was here.

“Hey, Shane,” Jared’s pleasant voice came through.

“Hi, Jared.”

“I was just wondering what you would like to eat tonight.”

Shane noticed a cab getting closer. He recognized his brother’s bulky shape in the back right away. “Something came up. Rain check?”

“Sure,” Jared replied brightly. “Tomorrow then?”

“I’ll give you a call.”

Damn, just in time. Coleman was getting out of the cab.

And he wasn’t in the least ready to explain to his brother why he wasn’t on his way back home with his husband-to-be in tow.

“You’re looking fine. I would have imagined you would go all skinny, not eating right and all,” Coleman commented the moment they set foot in Shane’s apartment.

“Didn’t momma teach me how to cook? Why wouldn’t I eat right?”

Coleman laughed and patted him on the back. “I bet there’s something else going on. Momma told me, ‘Hey, Coleman, your brother seems to have forgotten his way back home. He surely found a cute boy by now and he needs someone to remind him that he has a family.’ Yeah, that’s what she told me. Her exact words.”

Shane chuckled and rubbed his chin. “I don’t doubt that. I bet you’re hungry. Let me fix something for you. Feel free to watch TV while I do that.”

For the moment, Coleman didn’t press the matter, but he accepted the remote control with a sly smile on his face. Shane was debating whether he should prepare a three-course meal only so that he could postpone talking to Coleman about Jared.

His brother had announced his visit at the last minute. Actually, he had called from the airport, leaving no room for Shane to come up with a good story.

He grinned as he shoved the chicken into the oven. It was a good story, and he didn’t need to come up with another. Only that Coleman, just like their mom, wouldn’t take lightly that Shane chose a long engagement period while tasting the goods to the fullest.

He could bet they were all suspecting he had found someone. There was something about the McKays. They stuck together, but there was this weird thing. They could tell if something, good or bad, was happening to one of theirs. The family's matriarch must have wakened up one morning and said to Coleman she could tell Shane got himself a boyfriend.

“So, are you going to tell me about your significant other already and do I have to wrench it out of you?” Coleman asked as soon as they finished eating.

Shane chuckled and rubbed the back of his head. “Am I that obvious?”

“To me, you are. Who’s the lucky fellow?”

Shane drew one long sigh. “He’s a good man. Pretty, too.”

Coleman nodded solemnly and waited for more information. “That’s all?”

“Well,” Shane started and swallowed hard. “Please don’t get mad, but he and I, we tumbled a little in the hay.”

Coleman snorted. “So you finally got to test if you really have it bad for them pretty boys?”

Shane nodded. “Yeah. And it’s all true.”

Coleman didn’t need a picture to understand what he meant by that. “And you’ve been with him for how long? What’s his name?”

“Jared. And we’ve been together for several weeks now.”

Coleman nodded while pondering over his next question. “I hope you didn’t try half the city to get to him.”

“I didn’t,” Shane protested. “Jared’s the only one I’ve been with.”

His brother offered another nod of agreement. “And is he the one, too?”

“Yeah, he is. He totally is,” Shane replied with conviction.

“What does he do for a living?” Coleman questioned.

“He’s an artist. He takes --”

Someone knocked on the door, quite impatiently, at that precise moment. Who could be? Maybe they were from the bar, needing something. But couldn’t they call first? If there was something Shane had learned since coming to the city was that communication was carried on mostly through messages, even when two people were in the same room.

His face fell when he saw Jared.

“You sounded worried over the phone. I was in the neighborhood and thought about dropping by to check on you,” he said. “The bartender told me your brother is here. Don’t worry, I won’t say a thing about you know what.” Jared moved his head in a suggestive way. “Is your family all right?”

“Everyone’s fine,” Shane replied, incapable of pulling more words out of himself.

Jared sighed in relief. “Great. You scared me. Won’t you introduce me to your brother since I’m here?” He lowered his voice. “And I’m no one else but a friend.”

Why was he here? Shane couldn’t send him out of there so that he could have enough time to explain the situation to Coleman. He stepped out of the way to allow Jared access, no matter how reluctant he was to do that.

Coleman threw a quick look at him and grinned. It looked like introductions were nothing but a formality at this point.

“Hi,” Jared said. “I’m one of Shane’s friends. Jared,” he added and offered his hand to Coleman.

“Coleman. You’re a friend, you say?” Coleman shook Jared’s hand while Shane observed the scene. Any moment now, his brother would start yapping his mouth and asking uncomfortable questions.

“Shane told me you took these pictures. I think they’re amazing. And I’m a photographer. I should know.” Jared let out a small chuckle. “Is it the first time you’re visiting Shane here?”

Well, that was good in a way. Jared seemed to be at least a bit nervous, which meant that he thought that meeting Shane’s brother was a pretty big thing.

Coleman nodded. “I was sent to check on my little brother.”

Shane shrugged slightly and hid his smile. He could tell that Coleman approved of Jared, and that made him happy.

Jared began talking quickly. “I think that’s awesome, to have an older brother. I wish I did. Well, I was just in passing and thought of saying ‘hello’. I should leave you guys to catch up.”

“But you just got here. Shane was making coffee. If he didn’t forget all about hospitality, he would invite you to stay himself.” Coleman threw Shane a pointed look.

The ball was no longer in his court. Shane went to the kitchen, but after setting the timer on the coffee maker, he leaned against the wall and began eavesdropping.

“So, how do you feel, now married and all?” Shane asked.

They walked hand in hand, swinging their arms like kids. The honeymoon was over, but life together continued to be sweeter than honey. Shane had expected to be happy with Jared, but all his expectations had been surpassed. He had seen happy couples before, especially in his family, but he was damned sure he was the happiest of them all.

“Do you really have to ask? I’m starting to wonder if I’ll ever put my feet on the ground again,” Jared replied. “You’re an amazing husband, Shane.”

They stopped to share a quick kiss. The evening had yet to set, and they weren’t the kind to scandalize the passersby. It was enough that they had, indeed, scandalized the neighbors, so it was a good thing that they were moving to a house in the suburbs. With neighbors like their closest friends, they didn’t have to worry about scandalizing anyone.

“Jared?”

Shane turned to see who was calling his husband’s name. An elegant man in his forties, with a young man hanging by his arm, was checking them out with curious eyes.

“Chris, hi,” Jared said and stiffened in Shane’s arms. “Where’s Andrew?”

Chris’s young companion moved slightly away from him and then threw Jared a dirty look.

Chris offered a plastic smile. “Who knows?” he said airily.

“Ah, you two are no longer married?” Jared asked.

Shane wrapped one arm around his husband and kept him close.

“We’re separated at the moment. Not divorced,” Chris replied. “You’re looking good, Jared. I see you got yourself a boyfriend.” He measured Shane up and down with assessing eyes.

“Not a boyfriend. A husband,” Jared said.

“Husband?” Chris smiled, showing teeth.

“Yes.”

“And how’s married life? Bored already?”

Shane wanted to give the asshole a piece of his mind, but one look at his husband told him not to intervene. Lasers were flying out of those pretty eyes.

“No,” Jared replied and wrapped his arm around Shane’s waist. He relaxed as he turned his head and looked into his husband’s eyes. “And I’m sure I’ll never be.”

“Famous last words,” Chris said from the tip of his tongue. “If you ever get bored, I hope you still have my number.”

Shane was so quick that Jared didn’t have time to stop him. Chris’s young companion gasped in shock as Shane took the asshole by the front of his shirt and stared into his eyes. “I hope you didn’t just proposition my husband.”

Jared hurried to drag him back. “Let him be, Shane. He’s not worth it. And I don’t have your number anymore,” he told Chris. “But I do want to thank you.”

Shane let go of Chris’s shirt and turned toward Jared in surprise. His husband looked at him, although he was still talking to that bastard. “It was partly because of you that I finally looked in the right direction.”

Shane grinned and pulled Jared into a hug and kiss. They didn’t stop as Chris and his boy toy hurried away, probably scared of another bout of violence from him.

“Shane,” Jared cooed, “you were so cool and sexy when you shook him. He turned all white.” He giggled and hid his face into the crook of Shane’s shoulder.

“Good. I was afraid you’d think I crossed a line.”

“Nah, he deserved to piss his pants a little. Only a little. We don’t want trouble with the police.”

“We don’t, huh?”

“We don’t because I want us to go home already so that I can enjoy my cool and sexy husband,” Jared whispered into his ear.

Bored already? The nerve on the guy. Shane was sure he wouldn’t get bored if he lived to be a hundred.

THE END