

British school systems – Just for the benefit of readers outside of the UK, here is some information about the structure of schooling here.

There are regional variations, mainly around dates of breaks, but for the purpose of this story, the school year at Kingswood is split into three 'terms'. Each term consists of six weeks at school, one week off (known as 'half-term') and then another six weeks at school. The first term runs from the beginning of September and concludes for the Christmas break, with two weeks off. The second term runs from January to March/April, often concluding around Easter depending when it falls, again with a two week break and the final term runs from April to July, after which there is a six week break.

Primary School starts from nursery school (Year 0) and runs up to Year 6, concluding with most kids aged eleven. Secondary School then begins, with the eleven-year-olds starting 'Year 7'. Usually, Years 7 to 9 cover a large variety of subjects, at the end of which, the students will choose the classes they wish to study for Years 10 and 11. These classes will normally include mandatory subjects such as Maths and English, with additional subjects chosen from a range of categories. These subjects are then studied and conclude with exams called GCSEs, often held in June/July, with results being published during the Summer break.

After Year 11, there is often a choice between moving to college, often for more vocational subjects, or remaining at school to study a smaller number of subjects in Years 12 and 13, which conclude with exams known as A-Levels, also carried out at the end of the school year with results published in August.

Dorm 101 – Chapter 1

“Please follow the road to the car park,” a voice announced over the intercom as the large gate swung open.

“Geez, is this a school or a prison?” the man in the driver's seat muttered under his breath, receiving a swift smack to the arm from the woman beside him.

“Oh my God, it's so big!” the boy in the back seat said, staring in wide-eyed amazement as the buildings ahead of them came into view. Eleven-year-old Daniel was distinctly average for his age, the last visit to the doctor's confirming him to be exactly the expected height and weight for a boy of eleven. With dark blonde hair that matched his father's perfectly and his mother's piercing blue eyes, he was an attractive young man, as was often commented on by others. His smile lit up his entire face, although that had been distinctly absent during the morning's drive.

“Fuck me!” the man driving declared as the trees gave way to open grounds and several large buildings.

“Language!” the woman snapped furiously, smacking her husband again.

“Sorry,” the driver quickly apologised, flashing a cheeky grin to his son in the rear view mirror. “It's just... the pictures didn't do it justice!”

The family fell silent as they continued the slow drive up the road towards the car park. Two cars passed them going in the opposite direction, both apparently with parents in the front, and nobody in the back.

“See, Daniel, I told you we wouldn't be the first ones here!” the woman said smugly.

“Still too early!” the boy in the back seat replied glumly. He had not been looking forward to this day and with every moment it was becoming increasingly real.

“Don't pout!” the boy's Dad said with a slight smirk.

“Yeah, d'you have any idea what it took to even get you into this school?” the Mum added.

Daniel rolled his eyes. He had already heard the speech several times about how much the school was costing, and how his name had been on the waiting list for most of his life, and how many meetings his parents had attended to secure his place at Kingswood Boarding School.

As they reached the car park, a young man in the school's uniform directed them where to park then waited patiently while they got out.

“Welcome to Kingswood,” the student said cheerfully, tightly gripping a clipboard in one hand. He looked to be about fourteen. “I hope you had a good journey.”

“Yeah, not bad thanks,” Daniel's Dad said back as he slammed the car door and headed to the back of the car to retrieve the luggage.

“So polite,” Daniel's Mum said softly to her soon who had stood beside her. “You could learn from him!”

The older boy blushed slightly as he overheard the compliment. “My name is Joseph. May I take your name, please?” Joseph asked, directing the question to the boy.

“Daniel,” he replied, then realised he probably needed the full name and repeated, “Daniel Davies.”

Joseph quickly scanned down the list, then ticked off the name as he found it. “Ah, excellent. It looks like you're in Dorm 1.01. If you head inside the building, there will be someone in there to show you up to the Dorm. Would you like any help with the luggage?”

Daniel's Dad was about to speak up when his wife answered, “No, he's fine. Thank you!”

Shaking his head, the man passed a smaller case to Daniel, then lifted the two larger ones himself and headed across the car park to the building as directed.

“Dad, do I really have to go here?” Daniel moaned, hanging back with the over-laden man as his Mum rushed off ahead.

“We've been over this. I know you're not keen, but education is important and this school is the best.” the man replied. He didn't sound too convincing and Daniel knew they were his Mum's words just being parroted.

“But what if I don't like it?” Daniel asked shakily.

The man stopped and grinned. “Getting away from your Mum for six weeks at a time, I'll be amazed if you think it's anything less than paradise!”

Daniel burst into laughter along with his Dad, getting disapproving stares from ahead.

The building itself had been impressive from the driveway, but up close it was downright imposing. Best described as an Elizabethan mansion, it towered up four stories tall, with wide, stone steps up to the massive double doors.

Inside the building, the flagstoned atrium was huge, a grand staircase immediately drawing the eye on entry, which spiralled up the multiple floors, a colossal two-story chandelier hanging down the centre. They were greeted by more polite, uniformed teens. One was sat at a small table, with a checklist similar to the one the boy out front had ticked off, while the other two were milling around close by. A fourth teen was heading down the stairs accompanied by a middle-aged couple who were chatting quietly, seemingly admiring the architecture.

“We're looking for 1.01, it's Daniel Davies,” the boy's Mum said before the teens could greet her.

“No problem. Timothy will show you up.” the teen at the desk said as he ticked off the name.

Daniel glanced at the list on the way past, noting that only about a quarter of the names were ticked off so far.

At the mention of his name, one of the two teens nearby approached, smiling cheerfully. He too looked about fourteen, but was well developed and easily stood as tall as Daniel's Dad, although distinctly lacking the bulk and musculature of an adult frame. “Welcome. It's just up this way,” Timothy directed them towards the stairs. “Can I help?” he added, gesturing to the two cases.

Daniel's Dad gratefully accepted the assistance, considering the huge number of stairs that seemed to await him. They stood aside as the other couple came down, exchanging pleasantries.

“So at the moment it's just us Year 10s here, with the Year 7s arriving today,” Timothy began to explain as they walked up the first stretch of the stairs. “Over the next few days, the rest of the students will be arriving, with classes due to start on Monday.”

“See, and you thought your holidays had ended early!” Daniel's Mum said, referring more of Daniel's complaining earlier that his Summer break had ended four days earlier than the rest of his friends.

“We do it this way to give the new students the chance to get used to the school before really getting stuck into the school year.” Timothy explained. “There's a lot to learn here at Kingswood so the right start is essential.”

Daniel noticed the older boy glance round at him as he said that and could have sworn there was a mischievous glint in his eye. He wasn't quite sure whether he found the look exciting or terrifying.

As the slow march up the stairs continued, Timothy went on. “So the ground floor is the dining hall, kitchens, laundry and study rooms. First floor is dorms for Years seven to nine, there's eight students to a dorm there. Second floor is Years ten and eleven, they just have four to a dorm and then Year twelve and thirteen dorms are up on the top floor in twin rooms.”

“I gotta share a room with seven other people!” Daniel said in shock, looking at his parents in dismay.

Timothy grinned. “It's not as bad as it sounds, you soon get used to it.” he explained, before adding, “And it has its up sides too!” He flashed Daniel that look again. “You're in luck though, you're only the second one in your dorm, so you'll pretty much have the pick of the bunks. You have your own

storage space labelled up, but the bunks are first come, first served.”

“Don't say it!” Daniel blurted out, before his Mum could be smug about being early again.

At the top of the stairs, they turned into a large hallway that stretched off ahead as well as to both sides. Turning left, they arrived almost immediately at a room labelled '1.01'.

“So this is you,” Timothy said. The door, like all the others they could see, was wide open giving them an immediate view into the room.

Daniel had not been expecting much from the accommodation, but since Timothy's comment about sharing with so many others he had built a picture in his mind of a cold, dilapidated room, with four rickety-looking bunk-beds and not much else, so the reality that greeted him was somewhat surprising.

The dorm was bright, with the far wall almost entirely floor-to-ceiling windows. Either side of the door stood four wardrobes, each bearing the name of a student. Slightly further down the room stood the bunk beds Daniel had expected, but they looked modern and quite comfortable. They were positioned so they stretched out into the middle of the room, a four-foot gap between them, the next pair of bunk beds a short way further down the room.

Beyond the beds, there were two large desks on either side of the room, presumably meaning they would be shared as there were half as many desks as beds. In the large space between them though, sat four two-seater sofas, two facing the window and the others opposite.

The walls were painted a clean-looking off-white, with occasional stripes of light and dark blues, which perfectly matched the sofas and bedding. While one bunk, the top one furthest from the door on the left, had clearly been claimed, the room was empty.

“Looks like your roommate is off exploring,” Timothy said with a grin, placing the suitcase down near the wardrobe. “Anyway, you've got time now to get yourself unpacked and claim a bunk. Leave your cases in the hall when you're done and we'll put them in storage until your next visit home. There's nothing planned until 5, so the time is yours, but I wouldn't wander too far, it's easy to get lost, plus there'll be a tour as part of this evening's activities.” Timothy now addressed the parents directly. “I'll wait in the hall and escort you down when you're done, we're not allowed to leave visitors unattended. And, erm...” he paused, glancing back at Daniel for a moment then smiled, “It's best to get it done quick!”

The two parents nodded, knowing exactly what he meant.

As Timothy moved outside, Daniel looked back from the end of the room where he had wandered.

“So this is home for a while,” his Dad said, nodding as he looked round.

“Well it's nicer than I thought,” Daniel said, surprised to find a positive.

“Look, champ, I know this wasn't what you wanted, but this seems like a good place and I think you'll do well here,” his Dad said, sounding entirely sincere.

“And you know we'll miss you so much, but half-term isn't really that far off,” his Mum added.

Daniel nodded, sniffing as he tried to hold back tears.

The two parents approached the eleven-year-old and held him in a tight hug, all three shedding a few tears. A couple of minutes later, the two adults were gone, accompanied by Timothy back down the stairs, while Daniel stood staring at the empty room. He sighed, waited a few moments then dashed to the top bunk on the right, furthest from the door. Throwing a few of his things on to make sure it was clear it had been claimed, he set about unpacking his cases.

“Cutting it close,” Timothy said as he guided the last family towards their dorm.

Behind him were Mr and Mrs Wilson, who had been squabbling about several wrong turns since arriving, and their two sons, eleven-year-old Robert and eight-year-old Milo. As they reached dorm 1.01, Mr Wilson and Timothy placed Robert's suitcases in front of his wardrobe before the teen gave the family the instructions on what to do.

The dorm was fairly quiet, with two boys sat on opposite sofas at the far end of the room and two of the bunks occupied. It was apparent that all but one bunk had been taken.

“That'll be yours, neighbour!” a boy laying on the near, left-side bunk said, gesturing to the unoccupied bed on the opposite side of the room.

“Thanks,” Robert replied quietly, unsure if he should introduce himself. Robert had always been a little shy. Being one of the youngest in his year meant he was usually one of the smallest too, standing a few inches shorter than most classmates, yet still carrying a little puppy fat. His pale brown hair was almost the same colour as the smattering of freckles spread across his nose and cheeks, emphasised by his narrow-framed glasses.

“Well we should get going or it'll be gone midnight before we get home,” Mrs Wilson said, slightly tearfully.

“Mum, don't make a scene,” Robert grumbled, worried his Mum was about to burst into hysterics as she had that morning before leaving the house.

The woman sniffed, but smiled, not wanting to embarrass her son in front of his new classmates. “Fine, I guess I'll just say goodbye for now, then.” she said, hugging her son. “You be good!”

“Like that'll happen,” Mr Wilson said scornfully, getting a giggle from the boy's younger brother. The man grinned though and said, “If you can't be good, at least don't get caught!”

“Don't worry, you taught me well,” Robert said, grinning at his Dad, especially as he heard a tut from his Mum. He hugged the man then looked to his little brother and said, “Gonna miss ya, squirt!”

Milo looked sad. As much as he fought with his big brother, he was his best friend and it was hard to say goodbye. He began to cry as the older boy hugged him. “Don't want ya to go,” Milo sniffed quietly.

“I know dude, but I'll be home in a few weeks. And hey, give it a couple of years and you might be coming here too!” Robert said optimistically. Neither boy saw the expressions on their parents faces at the thought of paying for another son to attend the school.

A few moments later, with Milo still sniffing, the Wilson family left, leaving Robert behind in the dorm. He stood for a moment watching the empty doorway until he was disturbed by a voice from behind him.

“Tough, innit!” It was the boy who had directed him to the empty bed, now sitting up on the side of his bunk. “I’m Josh, by the way. Well, Joshua, but I totally hate being called that, so Josh it is.”

Robert smiled. “Yeah, I getcha. I’m Robert but I prefer Rob,” he explained.

To Rob, Josh looked like the kind of kid he usually would have avoided in his old school. Tall, well built, cheeky glint in his eye and doubtlessly popular. With his black hair shaved down one side and stylishly messy on top, complimented by almost-impossibly-dark brown eyes, he looked fairly intense, but the impish smile softened the look.

“Nice to meet ya,” Josh said happily. “You should probably get unpacked quick. They said they’ll come get us at five and you’ve not got long!”

“Okay, thanks,” Rob replied. He quickly started unpacking, with Josh helpfully pointing out the space that was his. While unpacking, Rob noticed three more boys enter the dorm, but didn’t have the chance to speak to them other than a polite hello.

Just as Rob was placing his cases out in the hallway as directed, a small group of Year 10 boys were approaching, splitting off for one to head into each dorm. It was Timothy who entered 1.01 just behind Rob.

“Okay lads, follow me, it’s time for the tour.” Timothy announced.

The eight residents of dorm 1.01 followed the older boy out and down the hallway. Their floor was laid out quite simply, with dorms 1.01 to 1.06 down the west side of the building, housing all of Year 7 and half of Year 8 and dorms 1.07 to 1.12 down the east side, for the other half of Year 8 and Year 9. In the middle were two blocks; one housing toilets at each end, for the east and west sides of the floor respectively, and a large communal shower room in between, the other housing a huge common room, four quiet study room’s and a teacher’s apartment.

“We’ve got a new teacher moving in on this floor, so I’ve no idea what they’ll be like,” Timothy explained to his group as they went round. “When I was on this floor we had Mr Pemberton, he was strict as hell, but he’s retired now thankfully. Whoever we get, they’ll live on this floor with you and be the man in charge. Or woman, I suppose. Person on charge, yeah, that’s what I meant.” He chuckled at his own correction.

Timothy gave a quick explanation of the differences with the higher floors, mostly with having more dorms to allow the Year 10 and 11s to have four boys to a room and the final two years, 12 and 13, having two to a room. The basic facilities were pretty much the same.

The ground floor was home to the massive Dining Hall, which Timothy said they’d see a little later at dinner time, along with the kitchens and laundry room, which he joked they’d only ever have to see if they misbehaved! The rest of the floor was taken up with a few small, private meeting rooms, the infirmary and a large common room that was usable by any years, unlike the ones found on the relevant floors above.

“This place is massive!” Rob exclaimed to nobody in particular as they made their way round.

“You think this is big, wait til you see the actual School Building!” Timothy replied as they headed out the main doors.

Most of the boys had looked around briefly on the way in but not really taken in the magnitude of the buildings. The 'Home Building' (as Timothy had explained it was called) was fairly impressive, but the building across the large courtyard was even bigger. They made their way over, with Timothy blurting out random facts on the way.

The ground floor of the 'School Building' was dominated largely by a huge assembly hall, a massive open room with a low stage at the front lined with seats and a single podium. The room seemingly doubled as a performance space too, as the back of the room was taken up with a much larger, curtained stage. The rest of the floor was taken up by the school's library, a massive collection of literature filling endless rows of shelves with occasional desks and seated areas.

“I didn't know there WERE this many books!” Josh said in astonishment as Timothy showed them around the library.

Working their way up the building, they saw the various classrooms for the array of subjects they would be starting either this year or in future terms. Thankfully, although classrooms were known by which subject was taught in them, they were also numbered and clearly signposted, otherwise the new boys would likely never find where they were supposed to be.

Thinking that the tour might be over as they stepped outside, Timothy led them in the opposite direction from the Home Building. Rounding a corner, they found themselves looking at a massive open area. The spaces were clearly laid out for different sports, with football and rugby goalposts visible, as well as Tennis nets, basketball hoops and a wide range of others. Alongside them was another large building, not anywhere near as large as the others and looking thoroughly modern in design compared to the Edwardian architecture of the other buildings.

Timothy explained that this was the sports complex. He didn't take them all the way over, just explained what was there as well as details of the swimming and diving pools inside the building, as well as the facilities in the gymnasium.

“Right,” Timothy finally said, glancing at his watch, “I think that's all the important stuff, now it's time to head back for dinner.”

Some of the boys had been quietly chatting on the way round, particularly the ones who had seemingly introduced themselves in the hours since arriving, but the group was far from lively. Being in a totally new place with nobody they knew was somewhat of a shock to most of them and they were still taking it all in.

Back in the Home Building, the residents of dorm 1.01 followed Timothy in, apparently the second group of Year 7s to arrive. The room was laid out with 28 long tables, in four rows of seven. Each one looked like it could seat around eight to ten students.

There were rows of fridges and hotplates down one side of the room, where some of the students were lined up getting their dinner, others already had plates in front of them at their tables. The eight boys were hesitant as they approached, wondering what quality of food they were going to be eating while they were stuck at the school. What greeted them was a pleasant surprise as it all looked delicious. Hot and cold options, fresh looking fruit and vegetables, decadent desserts.

Timothy directed them to a couple of posters that set out the 'rules' of mealtime, dictating the

amount they were allowed (to discourage both over-eating and reduce waste), but also setting out the essentials they had to have each meal (to ensure a healthy, balanced diet). It seemed a little strict, but there seemed to be plenty of freedom to pick stuff they could enjoy.

A few minutes later, they were heading to a table together as the final two groups filed in behind them. Timothy left the group to join some other Year 10s, of which there now looked to be a full class-load. There were also three men present, one looking to be in his mid-twenties, one in his thirties and the final one approaching fifty.

Talk over dinner for the boys of 1.01 was subdued with occasional moments of excitement as they discussed the school and the things they had seen so far. Being the one thing they all knew they had in common, the school simply made for an easy-to-talk-about subject.

As they were all finishing, the elder of the three gentlemen stood up and called out, "Your attention please everybody."

When the Year 10s fell immediately silent, the new boys immediately followed.

"Welcome, Year sevens, it's wonderful to have you here. I'm Mr Tyson, the head teacher of Kingswood," the man explained. "Thank you to you Year 10s for the excellent job you've done of welcoming and organising our new arrivals. Give yourselves a round of applause for a job well done."

Mr Tyson began clapping and everyone else quickly joined in. As it died down, the head teacher continued. "Now I understand that you've been shown around today, but these are unfamiliar surroundings, so it will take some getting used to. This is why we like you here a few days before the start of term to help familiarise the place. We also like to take this opportunity to have you get to know the faculty as well as each other. Over the next few days, you will meet the rest of the teachers and we will also be running some activities to let you all get a little more familiar with each other. Kingswood is probably an intimidating place to you right now, but I can assure you that you can have a wonderful time here, and build relationships that will last you a lifetime. Going to school together can be a bonding experience for boys your age, but living together too will bring its own rewards as well as challenges."

The boys were listening intently, some looking nervous and scared, others looking genuinely hopeful.

"Now I'd like to introduce you to the fine gentlemen beside me," Mr Tyson said, gesturing to the other two men, who stood. He first indicated the thirty-something man and explained, "This is Dr Weston. He's the school's doctor and can help you with any health concerns you may have. He can usually be found in his office beside the infirmary during normal school hours."

"Pleasure to meet you, boys. Hopefully I don't have to see too much of you," the Doctor said with a gentle chuckle. "And just to add to what Mr Tyson said, please be assured that we are fully equipped to maintain your wellbeing, be that physical, mental or emotional."

Mr Tyson cleared his throat slightly, giving the impression that he was slightly dismissive of Dr Weston's comments. Next he gestured to the other man. "And allow me to introduce to all of you, our newest faculty member, Mr Trent. He joins us this year to replace Mr Pemberton as both English teacher and Master of the first floor.

"Thank you, Mr Tyson," Mr Trent said with a smile. "I'll be taking some time to get to know each

of you over the next few days. As it's my first day here too, I'm learning just as much as you are, so let's learn it together."

"Wonderful," Mr Tyson said, nodding to the new staff member. "Now, you may be wondering why we have the whole of Year 10 here already. As well as the support of your teachers and classmates, we run a scheme here called the Mentor Programme. As part of this, we will pair each one of you up with a Year 10 student who will act as your mentor throughout your time at the school. They will continue in this role right up until they leave the school after Year 13. We encourage you to think of them as somewhere between a big brother and best friend, someone who can help you out or provide you with advice. Students of Year 10, you have had your own mentors for three years now, so I am sure you understand both the importance and responsibility of mentoring these new students. Now, I'll hand back over to you. Enjoy getting to know each other and have a good first night. I shall see you all bright-eyed and raring to get started in the morning."

With that, Mr Tyson, along with Mr Trent and Dr Weston left the room. Immediately one of the Year 10s stood up. "Right, lads. First things first, clear your dishes away onto the trolleys over by the wall," he said, gesturing to the trolleys by the door to the kitchen. "This is something you will do after every meal. This, like most rooms in the building, is a communal room and that means you will treat it with respect and leave it in the condition you found it. The staff who work here have enough to do without picking up after a bunch of lazy kids. Understand?"

There was a murmur of agreement from the Year 7 boys who immediately got up and started clearing their plates, alongside the older boys who were doing the same. With the plates clear, the Year 10 spoke up again. "Okay, when I call out your names, pair up. Once you've found your partner, you can leave."

He began calling out names. Most of the boys were just as busy trying to listen out for the names being called as they were listening for their own names.

"David Brown and Robert Stevens. Jeremy Clark and Mark Dawson. Timothy Clarke and Aaron Pearce." the names started. Boys were raising their hands as their names were called to allow their partners to identify them, before approaching each other, greeting by various means and then heading out of the dining hall. Within a few minutes, every boy was paired and the room was empty.

Dorm 101 – Chapter 2

Daniel had been glad his surname was so early in the alphabet. He was anxious about who he might get paired up with, so finding his partner quickly was quite a relief. The name that had been called out was Joseph Hunter. The fourteen-year-old who stood up was grinning goofily at Daniel and as soon as they got near each other, greeted the younger boy with a quick hug, which caught him distinctly off guard, but made him smile once he got over the shock of it.

The older boy was tall and slender, the kind of teen whose weight had not yet been through the growth spurt his height had. His hair was a mop of floppy ginger waves, while his hazel eyes looked kind, which was a relief for the younger boy.

“Alright, I'm Joe,” the older boy introduced himself, casually draping an arm round the smaller boy's shoulder as he guided him out of the dining hall. “Daniel, was it?”

“Err, yeah,” Daniel replied. While he wasn't exactly averse to physical contact, to be hugged by this teen and now have an arm around him all within the first minute of meeting felt a little alien to him, but realising it was actually nice rather than uncomfortable, just accepted it.

“You like that, or you prefer Dan, Danny maybe?” Joe asked as they headed to the stairs.

“Erm... I dunno,” Daniel replied. He had always just been Daniel.

“Danny it is then!” Joe said cheerfully.

'What's happening?' Daniel asked himself as they walked, confused by the whirlwind of physical and verbal affection.

“So, excited to be here?” Joe asked.

Daniel shrugged. “Didn't really wanna come, if I'm honest.”

Joe laughed and nodded. “Yeah, that was me too. Describes about half the boys who come here actually. The rest are either glad to get away from family or just indifferent to the whole thing. Nobody seems to WANT to come here. At least, not at first!”

Daniel looked round at Joe quizzically, his expression asking the question for him.

“This place is scary at first, but once you're settled in, it's amazing. Not saying it's perfect, but it's a good school and if ya get things right, those lads you're rooming with are gonna be your new family!” Joe explained. The smile that followed looked beyond sincere, he genuinely seemed to have such fondness for the school and his classmates that it actually put the younger boy slightly at ease.

“Where are we going?” Daniel asked as they turned at the top of the first flight of stairs and continued onto the second.

“My room,” Joe explained. Once again he got a look from Daniel that prompted his response. “What Tyson said about mentoring was right, it's big and it's important, but above all else, it's discrete. That's why we're all going to separate areas for this. Privacy matters.”

Daniel was unsure what to make of that. What could be so important that it required such total

seclusion from the rest of the students. Should he be worried?

At the top of the stairs, they turned left, the layout seemingly matching the first floor as they passed 2.01, stopping outside the next door along, labelled 2.02. "This is us," Joe said, pushing the door open and gesturing Daniel to walk in ahead of him.

The dorm was smaller than Daniel's own, but still far from cramped. Whereas the bunk beds in his dorm stretched out into the middle of the room, the beds in Joe's room were aligned against the wall, two on each side, end-to-end. Beyond that, the room was simply his own on a smaller scale, four wardrobes instead of eight, two desks instead of four and just two sofas in front of the window facing each other.

The room was surprisingly tidy too. While there were clearly personal items by the beds, on the desk and in the wardrobes, it was all very neat. The younger boy wondered whether that was just a personal preference of the occupants, or a strict standard required by the school.

"Grab a seat," Joe said, pointing over at the sofas.

Daniel complied, heading straight over and flopping down onto the sofa with his back to the windows. He had expected Joe to sit on the one opposite, but wasn't surprised when the older boy took the seat beside him.

"So, Danny," Joe started, "Let's get the formal stuff out of the way first – the rules! Rule number one, what's said and what happens between us, stays between us. Doesn't matter what it is, how big, how bad, how good or how exciting, it's confidential. That's rule number one because it's the most important."

Daniel was a little taken aback by Joe's sudden change in tone. His casual demeanour was gone, replaced with someone stern and determined.

"Rule number two, respect and trust. You show me respect at all times and you'll get that same respect back. Same goes for trust, the more you trust me, the more I'll trust you." Joe explained. "And that's it, there's only two rules but they matter. Do you understand them?"

Daniel nodded, but quickly figured it required more and said, "I understand."

Joe suddenly smiled again. "Good, I hate being all proper like that. But seriously, mate, your classmates and dorm buddies will become like brothers to you, but the relationship with your mentor can be on a whole other level. I tell mine things I'd never dream of telling anyone else and..." He stopped, and sighed, smiling softly. "Really, he means the world to me. I don't wanna come on too strong, but I'd love to be that for you too."

"Umm," Daniel mused, thinking for a few moments. Joe was right, he was laying it on thick, but it was obvious this guy wore his heart on his sleeve and it was painfully obvious he meant every word. Daniel considered playing it cool, downplaying the potential relationship, but in reality it sounded amazing. So he smiled, turned slightly to his side to face Joe and held out his arms.

Joe almost bounced out of his seat he was so excited as he pulled the younger boy into a tight hug. "I'm gonna be the best mentor ever. I promise!" he said softly.

Chuckling quietly, Daniel replied, "I don't doubt it!" Holding onto Joe, Daniel thought to himself, "This isn't how I imagined today going, but I like it!"

Eventually, Joe pulled back, looking almost serious again. "Right, what's your plan for tonight?"

"For... for what?" Daniel asked nervously.

Joe shook his head. "First night in your dorm. These first few days are SO important, they set the tone for your dorm for your entire time you're together," he explained. "Dorms tend to go one of three ways. You either become a room of best mates, a room of squabbling miseries or, worst of all, a bunch of total strangers who just kind of exist in the same space."

"Wow, no pressure then..." Daniel said, only half joking.

Rob felt like he was being interviewed as he sat across the table from his new mentor. Jason Fletcher was his name and he had remained entirely formal from the second they met down in the dining hall. He had greeted Rob with a firm handshake before leading him, in silence, up to one of the first floor study rooms. What followed was a splurge of information and flurry of demanding questions.

In a lot of ways, Jason was much like an older version of Rob himself, with his light brown hair brushed tidily into a side parting virtually identical to the younger boy. While he wore glasses too, his were thicker-rimmed in black. His complexion was clear too, no freckles, just a few random spots of acne.

"So are you a good student?" Jason asked frankly.

"I... I think so," Rob replied cautiously.

"You'd better be. Your performance at the school is a direct reflection of the support you receive, and that means me in a large part. I've worked hard since I came here and I don't want to risk you messing up my reputation."

Rob was already a little intimidated, but that last comment sounded almost like a threat. His lip trembled but he managed to hold back tears as he replied softly, "I'll do my best."

"No, you'll do MY best!" Jason insisted. "And if not, we'll be having words!"

That was too much for Rob whose shoulders trembled a little before he burst into quiet sobs.

Jason tried to speak, but his jaw just flapped, unsure of what to say. "S... STOP!" he shouted. "Stop crying. Crying achieves nothing!"

The words only spurred the younger boy on to cry harder.

"Fuck this!" Jason said, shaking his head before getting up and moving round the table to take a seat beside Rob, who flinched away from him. "Robert, I'm sorry." He pulled off his glasses and put them on the table, his demeanour physically changing as he leaned closer to Rob.

"I... erm..." Rob stuttered, but his sniffing and crying prevented any further words.

"That's not me," Jason insisted. "I swear I'm not like that."

Rob wiped his face with the back of his hand, sniffed again and looked at Jason curiously.

“That stuff about your performance and all that shit. That's not me. That's just...” Jason started, then shook his head again. He reached out and rubbed Rob's back a few times. “That's how my mentor started things off with me.”

“And that worked?” Rob asked incredulously.

Jason shook his head emphatically. “Fuck no, bawled my eyes out, just like you!”

Rob sniffed one last time, his tears seemingly stopped now. “Then why do it to me?”

Jason stood up and took a few paces away, thinking. He was clearly deliberating something. “Okay, can I be honest?” he asked without looking back.

“Yeah, rule one, you know I won't tell anyone,” Rob said, smiling at his ability to use the rules he had been told about.

“I have no fucking clue what I'm doing,” Jason said, turning around. He moved back to the seat beside Rob again. “I'm meant to be, like, mentoring you, but I've got no idea what I'm supposed to do. It's, like, all the others are... so grown up and ready to... I dunno, take someone under their wing and I'm still fucking clueless.”

Rob was grinning.

“It's not funny!” Jason snapped.

“Kind of is,” Rob replied, still smiling. “You're clueless and so am I. I think we're a perfect match!”

Jason's anger and confusion lingered on his face for a moment, then melted away as he began to laugh. “I think you're right.” The two smiled at each other before Jason added, “Look, I can't promise I'll be amazing at this, but I CAN promise I'll do my best.”

“No, you'll do MY best!” Rob replied, doing the best impression he could of Jason.

“You little fucker!” Jason said, half angry, half amused as he pulled the younger boy into a playful headlock.

The dorm was surprisingly quiet, just a few of the boys chatting between themselves as they sat on the sofas waiting for the last occupant to arrive. As the boy walked in, he looked at the seven boys gathered at the end of the room and frowned. “What's going on?” he asked.

“Come have a seat,” Josh called out.

The boy walked over and took the final empty seat, prompting Danny to stand up.

“So,” the boy started, nervous to be addressing them all so formally. “It's about an hour til lights out and... I thought it might be good for us to get to know each other a bit better. We're gonna be sharing a dorm for a while, so I wanna know who I'm sharing with.”

The gathering had been Joe's idea, a way of getting things off to the 'right start' he said was needed. Right then, though, Danny hated it. He had never felt so exposed, with the other seven boys all staring at him expectantly.

"Guess I'll go first then," Danny said, when the others all sat in silence. "I'm Daniel Davies, or Danny, if you like." He wondered where that last bit had come from. An hour earlier he had never been called it before and now he was requesting it! "I'm eleven... but I guess we all are. Erm... I like football and, erm... I'm good at Maths. Oh, I suck at video games and erm... when I grow up I wanna be a policeman!" There was silence again. "Any questions?"

"Where ya from?"

"Any brothers or sisters?"

"Who's your mentor?"

All three questions came at once, but after having them repeated one at a time, Danny answered, "I'm from Norwich, I've got an older sister and my mentor is Joe Hunter. So, who's next?"

Danny sat down and nudged the boy beside him who shrugged and stood up.

"Okay, well, I'm Michael Corbyn, or Mikey to me mates. As you can probably tell from the accent, I'm from South London," the boy introduced himself. Michael was a little shorter than Danny but a similar build. His strawberry-blond hair was cropped short, showing off the freckle-covered face, accented with a slightly upturned nose and deep blue eyes.

He thought for a moment about the things Danny had said and tried to offer similar information. "I like football too. Millwall fan and proud! I'm good at most subjects, but prefer the more hands-on ones. I'm gonna be an architect one day. I got two little sisters and a little brother, all under four, so being here might be the best nights sleep I've had in years! And my mentor is Andrew Jenkins."

With no follow-up questions apparent, Mikey sat down and the next boy round stood up. It was Rob. "So, I'm Rob Wilson. I... err..." His mind went blank.

Josh who was sat beside him muttered, "School subjects!"

Rob smiled momentarily and quietly thanked Josh before going on. "I love English and Science, but I suck at History. Erm... I'm more of a rugby fan than football and when I grow up... I don't know yet what I wanna do." He thought for a few moments and went on just before Josh had to prompt him again. "I have a younger brother, Milo, who's my best mate and I miss already. Erm, what else... oh yeah, I'm from a place near Southampton and my mentor is Jason Fletcher."

"My turn," Josh said, jumping up before Rob had even sat back down. "Ladies and gents, I'm Josh Williams and I'm from Manchester. I don't like studying, but I'm good at it if I try I s'pose. That's what my teachers say anyway. United fan here," he said, looking to the first two boys, but then nudged Rob and added, "But I like a bit o' rugby too! Fuck knows what I'm gonna be when I grow up, but I know I'll have fun doing it. My mentor is Brian Pearson. I've got..." he paused, his enthusiastic energy faltering for just a second, "I've got two older brothers, both at this school, Ryan's in Year 12 and Mark's in Year 13."

"That's so cool that you got your brothers here," Danny said with a smile.

Josh's near-permanent smile vanished for a just a moment, too quick for most of them to notice, but picked up by a couple. "Yeah, it's, err... it's great! Anyway, guess you're next," he said, sitting down and nudging the boy on the next sofa.

The boy who stood was raven-haired and pale. So far, he had barely said a word to anyone in the room and looked fairly terrified. He was a little chubby, close to being overweight rather than just the puppy fat of boyhood. "I'm David Brown. I... I don't really like sports, but I'm good at most subjects. When I grow up I'll probably work in my Dad's business. I'm from Kent, my mentor is Jonathan Stevens, I don't have any brothers or sisters and this place scares the crap outta me!" He immediately sat down, seemingly glad to have his part out of the way.

"Relax buddy, no need to be scared. We got ya!" Josh said, reaching out and patting the smaller boy on the back. There was an enthusiastic murmur of agreement with Josh's sentiment, which made David smile momentarily.

Danny smiled too, knowing Joe would approve of what Josh had just done and glad that his idea seemed to be paying off. He looked to the boy sat beside David on the sofa, who looked back at him. He had obviously seen the other boy during the day, but had been so caught up in the new surroundings that he had not really taken the time to look. Their eyes met and Danny felt frozen in place. The other boy winked and grinned, making Danny blush and look away.

"I'm Chris Smith," the next boy said as he stood. His most prominent feature was undoubtedly his emerald green eyes which seemed to sparkle as he cast them across the group. His chocolate-brown hair flopped down in front of his face as he turned, prompting him to brush it aside with his hand, tucking the ends behind his ear. Standing as one of the tallest boys in the room, his build was already showing the first signs of development into manhood.

The accent was unmistakable. "I'm from Dublin," he said proudly. "Rugby fan here too, I can show you English lads how to play properly some time!" he flashed his cheeky grin, getting a laugh from the others. "I love Music and Art, more a maker than a thinker. When I grow up I wanna do something like that too, which probably just means being unemployed! I got seven brothers and sisters and my mentor is Ryan Barker."

Danny found himself staring at the Irish boy as he sat back down and was only shaken from it when the boy sat opposite him began to speak.

"I'm Matthew Jones, everyone calls me Matty, which I hate... and probably shouldn't have just told you all...." the boy started.

"I don't know what you mean, Matty," Josh called out.

"Yeah Matty, why would you say that?" Chris added, the whole group now laughing, even Matty.

"Fine, I'm still Matty then," he said with a shrug. His dark brown hair was a similar style to Chris', but with a natural wave to it, nowhere near as neat. Almost as tall as the previous boy too, he must have been about half the weight, looking almost unhealthily skinny. "I'm from Blackpool, I like Geography and English, I can play the guitar and I think I want to be a teacher when I grow up. I've not got any brothers or sisters and William Butler is my mentor."

Matty sat back down and the last boy stood. "I'm James Taylor," the boy started, another unmistakable accent. "I'm from South Wales, don't like football or rugby and I love to read. I love

science and I wanna study Physics when I'm older. I don't have any brothers or sisters and my mentor is John Dixon.” He was a mousey little boy, both short and slim, average looking, and aside from wearing glasses, had almost no outstanding features. The sort of boy who could easily be lost on a crowd.

All eyes fell back on Danny who still felt a little out of sorts because of Chris. He shook it off and smiled, then stood. “Right, well that's everyone. Who's forgotten all the names already?” he joked, but got a few raised hands and laughs back in response. “I'm kidding, I think I've got it.” He went round the group again, starting with himself. “Danny, Mikey, Rob, Josh, David, Chris, Matty and James, right?”

Everyone nodded.

Danny suddenly looked nervous. Joe's first idea had been a great success, but the next one just sounded crazy and he wasn't sure he could go through with it. “Okay, well... erm...” All eyes were on him, making the pressure build even more. “Look, there's something I'm gonna do that could be really helpful, or it could... really mess things up. I'm just hoping you'll all... fuck... I dunno, respond well.”

“Get on with it!” Josh heckled, getting a laugh.

Danny took a deep breath. “Okay, so here's the thing. We'll be getting ready for bed soon and then, like, every day we'll be getting dressed and stuff in here and it could be really awkward trying to... I dunno, cover up and be shy.”

Some of the boys immediately caught on to what he was talking about, others just looked confused.

“I guess what I'm saying is I don't wanna spend the next few years being awkward,” Danny said, as he grabbed the bottom of his t-shirt, pulled it over his head and tossed it on the floor. “So I'm just gonna put it all on show,” he went on, undoing his jeans as everyone stared in astonishment. “So that you've all see it before and I'll have nothing to hide.” In a single motion, he pushed his jeans and underwear down to his ankles and stood up, trembling and fully naked.

Silence filled the room for what felt like an eternity. As expected, it was Josh that broke it. “Woo! Way to go Danny-boy!” He jumped to his feet. “You got the right idea!” Quickly he pulled his clothes off too and tossed them down, standing as naked as the other boy.

What followed was a flurry of flying clothing as Mikey, Rob, Chris, Matty and James did the same. Moments later, seven boys all stood naked and grinning as their gaze fell onto David who looked terrified.

“It's okay, we're not gonna make you!” Danny said softly.

“But you should,” Chris added.

“Really?” David asked nervously.

“You're chubby!” Josh said, looking down at the sitting boy.

“Josh!” Danny snapped.

Josh shrugged. “What? I'm not being mean, we've all got eyes. He IS chubby,” he looked at David

and addressed him directly. “You are. But you know what, who fucking cares!”

David looked round the group, still nervous.

Josh pointed to Matty. “He's skinny!” He pointed to Chris. “He's tall.” He pointed to James. “He's short.” Then he gestured to his own crotch. “My dick's small! But I think that's Danny's idea with this whole thing. None of us are perfect,” He leaned forward and looked sideways at Chris and winked playfully, “Although some of us come pretty close. Nice job dude!”

The rest of the boys laughed, even David.

“So come on, get naked with your buds. We don't care and neither should you!” Josh encouraged the boy.

While everyone else was looking at David again, Danny stared at Josh. He had immediately dismissed him as a loudmouth showoff, but that speech was exactly the sort of thing he wished he had thought of, and it was clearly effective as David had stood up.

First pulling down his trousers and underwear, David stood half naked, shakily holding the bottom of his t-shirt. Josh reached over and patted him on the back again, prompting him to remove his final piece of clothing.

The move got a cheer from the group who immediately rushed the boy, all momentarily forgetting, or not caring, about their nudity. Forgetting clothing caught around their ankles, most of them staggered and moments later there was just a heap of naked, laughing boys on the floor.

They lingered for a moment, the quickly forming bonds enhanced by the innocent intimacy. Once again, it was Josh who spoke up.

“I don't know if that's a finger or a boner, but it's going somewhere it shouldn't!” Josh called out.

Everyone jumped up, laughing and making disgusted noises at the comment. A couple of them pulled their underwear or trousers back up, but the others remained sitting naked as they broke into general chatter for several minutes before deciding it was time to get ready for bed.

Several minutes later, all eight boys were clad in their nightwear, some in pyjamas, other in just shorts or their underwear. Danny's idea, or Joe's, as it really was, had already proven fruitful. The boys had changed with no fuss, no awkwardness. Danny made a mental note to thank Joe for the advice.

As the nine o'clock lights out drew close, they began to climb into their respective bunks. It soon dawned on them that their choice of beds was not something they had discussed earlier so they all took a few moments to figure out who was where.

The top bunks had Chris and Danny on one side with James and David on the other side. The bottom bunks were Matty and Rob below the first two with Josh and Mikey below the others.

What struck Danny right away was just how close the other set of bunk beds were to his side. There could only have been about two feet between them. He would have been able to reach across and touch it without falling out. That meant Chris was laying right there, virtually beside him. He felt the breathlessness again as he saw the other boy look across at him and smile.

“Hey neighbour,” Chris said, grinning.

Danny made a noise that vaguely resembled words, but wasn't quite coherent. Cursing his own ineloquence, he rolled onto his back and stared at the ceiling.

“This is gonna take some getting used to!” Matty said aloud to nobody in particular.

“What is?” Josh asked from the other side of the room.

“Sleeping in the same room as someone else,” Matty explained.

Chris leaned over the side of his bunk and looked down. “You soon get used to it. I share with two of me brothers back home.”

“Yeah, I shared with one of my bros for years. You get used to the noises!” Josh added.

“Noises?!” Matty asked, sitting up looking worried.

“Yeah, moving around,” Chris answered.

“Snoring!” Josh added.

“Belching!” Chris said back.

“Farting!” Rob chimed in, getting a resounding 'eww' from the rest of the room.

“Jerking off!” Chris called out.

The final point got a shocked silence from the rest. A couple were surprised to hear anyone mention it so freely, the others had no idea what it even meant.

“What's that?” Mikey asked cautiously.

“Well, it's when...” Josh started, but was cut off by the door opening.

Mr Trent was stood in the doorway. “Excellent,” he said, seeing the boys all in bed. “You're my last dorm on the rounds and the first one that's been so organised. Everything okay in here?”

“Yes Sir!” a few of the boys responded together.

“Wonderful. Keep up the good work boys. Nighty night!” Mr Trent said as he clicked the light off and closed the door behind him.

Once again silence filled the room. For a few moments, it seemed everyone was just going to go straight to sleep until Mikey asked again, “So what's jerking off again?”

“Well, it's...” Josh started, before getting cut off for a second time, this time by Chris.

“Let's... leave that for another night!” Chris suggested. “I'd like to get at least one night's peace!” He laughed, with Josh joining in, but the rest remained thoroughly confused.

“Ugh, bed this early sucks. I'd still be up for hours if I was at home!” Rob complained into the

darkness, glancing up at the glowing digital clock above the door.

“Yeah, me too,” Josh agreed. “We should do something!”

“Be careful,” David warned. “Jonathan told me about the sorts of punishments kids get for doing stuff after lights out.”

“Like what?” Matty asked, sitting up and looking across in David's direction. It was dark in the room, but enough light was filtering through around the main door to make out a vague picture of the room.

“Like proper old school stuff. Canings and spanking and stuff like that. Or cleaning duties in the kitchen, or doing laundry. He even said one time a boy got caught out of his dorm after hours and caned out in the main atrium with everyone watching!” David explained quietly, not wanting to get caught talking and incur the very punishment he was explaining.

“No way. They don't do stuff like that any more,” Danny insisted. “I think your mentor's winding you up!”

“Ask Josh!” David insisted. “He's probably heard it from his brothers.”

The room fell silent, all of them expecting Josh to chime in immediately.

“Josh?” Rob asked, concerned about the uncharacteristic silence.

A sigh came from the boy's general direction. “That's what they told me too. And much worse on top of it!” Josh explained in a whisper.

“You serious?” Danny asked, unnerved by the revelation. It seemed hard to believe. Everyone here had been so nice, so well behaved. It suddenly dropped into place. Maybe this was exactly why everyone behaved so well – fear of the punishments.

“Whatever. Doubt it's that bad,” Mikey said confidently, getting a whispered murmur of agreement.

“Have any of you ever actually been spanked?” Danny asked in response.

“Yeah, but never as a punishment!” Chris replied. Even in the darkness, they could hear his grin.

It took a few seconds for the comment to register, eventually triggering more quiet conversations and giggles around the dorm as Danny just stared at his neighbour in surprise.

“I'm just teasin' 'em!” Chris whispered to Danny, then winked and added, “But that does sound kinda fun, don't it?”

Danny just made another incoherent mumble, getting a laugh from the Irish boy who lay down quietly.

“We should sleep, before we really do get in trouble!” David insisted. Reluctantly, the others agreed and one by one they began falling off to sleep.

When Rob opened his eyes, he hoped it was almost time to get up. He felt wide awake and knew he likely wouldn't be getting back to sleep any time soon. A quick glance over at the clock was met with a groan of disappointment, it was shortly before 2am.

Rolling over and closing his eyes, he found himself distracted by every single sound. The building, though sturdy, was old and made occasional creaks or clicks. Beside him Matty was breathing rhythmically as he slept, while most of the others were drowned out by David who was snoring. The final discomfort came from his bladder. Although he suspected he could hold it until morning, he figured he may as well go as he was up.

As quietly as he could, he climbed out of bed and crept over to the door, cursing every creaky floorboard and promising himself to figure out the quietest path for future nights. Opening the door let in a sudden burst of light, so he quickly closed it behind him as he stepped out into the hallway. Thankfully, the toilets were right across the hallway from their dorm so he didn't have far to go.

Opening the door a little more confidently, without roommates to disturb directly, he stepped inside where the lights flickered on, clearly set up with motions sensors. He heard a noise at the same time. It sounded like crying but it stopped as soon as the lights came on. One side of the room was taken up with a line of twelve wash basins, backed by mirrors, the opposite side had four cubicles one side of the door and a line of six urinals the other.

Glancing in the mirrors, Rob could see one of the urinals was locked. Someone was in there and they were crying, although based on the sudden silence they didn't want to be disturbed. He considered honouring that desire, but his conscience got the best of him. "Hey, you okay in there?"

Silence.

Rob sighed, then went to the urinal and relieved himself, all while listening out for any more noise. When he finished, he deliberately went to the sink directly opposite the occupied cubicle. Looking back at it in the mirror, he could see the shadow of someone through the small gap under the door, so he tried again.

"You okay?" he called out.

After a few moments, he heard a voice call back, "Rob?"

The boy immediately recognised it. "Josh?" he said, more in surprise than recognition. He hadn't even noticed the empty bed on his way out of the dorm. He approached the door and pushed, but it remained locked. "You gonna let me in?"

There was a further pause, the silence broken suddenly by the sound of the door being unlocked. Rob pushed the door immediately, to see Josh moving back. He was sat on the toilet with the seat down, knees pulled up to his bare chest and his eyes red and puffy. Rob squeezed in and shut the door behind him. There was really no need. Nobody was around and there were no sounds to indicate anyone nearby, but it just felt like the best thing to do.

"What's wrong?" Rob asked quietly.

Josh opened his mouth to answer, but shook his head. He just couldn't speak. Instead he dropped his feet to the floor, leaned forward to place his head against Rob's pyjama-clad stomach and wrapped his arms tightly around him before bursting into tears again.

Rob was unsure what to do, so for now he just put one arm around Josh, allowing the other to stroke his fingers through his hair. After a few minutes, that seemed to calm him as he sniffed a few times and pulled back, clearly avoiding eye contact.

“I'm sorry, nobody was s'posed to see me like this,” Josh said sheepishly.

“If something's up, you can tell me,” Rob insisted, his hand still resting on the other boy's shoulder.

Josh tilted his head to the side, his cheek resting on the back of Rob's palm. He sighed. “I didn't wanna come here,” he said dejectedly.

“Neither did I,” Rob agreed.

“No, I REALLY didn't,” Josh insisted. It seemed like he was about to elaborate, but he just shook his head again. “Never mind.” He grabbed some toilet paper and wiped his face before standing up to drop it in the toilet and flush.

“You can talk to me, mate,” Rob said, now looking up at the taller boy.

Josh just looked back for a few seconds, then smiled. “I know. I will, just... not tonight, 'kay?”

“Okay,” Rob said, pulling the door open and backing out.

They headed for the door out to the hallway, but stopped as Josh grabbed the smaller boy's arm. “Erm... about this...” Josh stuttered.

“I won't tell anyone,” Rob said with a warm smile.

Josh smiled back but shook his head. “I appreciate that. I was... just gonna say thanks.”

Rob just continued smiling as he reached back and placed an arm around the other boy's waist, leading him out into the hallway. As quietly as they could, they opened the door to their dorm and crept in. Thankfully, nobody seemed to stir.

Rob let go of Josh and took a step towards his own bed, but felt Josh's hand grabbing his own, pulling him back.

“Could you stay with me a minute?” Josh whispered.

Rob didn't hesitate, he followed Josh as he climbed into bed, getting in beside him as the bigger boy threw the covers over them both. As Josh lay on his side, with Rob's back to him, he slid an arm under the other boy's neck and draped the other one over him, spooning with him.

Although he knew he was there for Josh's comfort, Rob felt a pleasant warmth as he lay with the other boy wrapped around him. It took barely more than a minute before the two drifted off to sleep together.

Dorm 101 – Chapter 3

Danny woke up needing the toilet and seeing it was only ten minutes until the alarm was due, decided to go now before the inevitable post-alarm rush. Climbing down the steps, he glanced first at the sleeping face of Chris, feeling a strange fluttering in his stomach that seemed to happen every time he looked, then to the bunk beneath him, noting Rob's absence.

It was only when he headed for the door that he noticed Rob was actually in Josh's bed, the two spooning together, sound asleep. While he wondered what was going on, he figured he had the opportunity to save the two some potential embarrassment. Crouching down in front of Rob, Danny gently nudged him, waking him up.

“You'd best move before the others wake up,” Danny whispered, then turned to head out to the toilet.

When he returned a couple of minutes later, Rob was back over in his own bed, looking like he had been there all night. Nobody would be any the wiser. The boy gave Danny a thankful smile as he crept back towards his own bunk.

It was only five minutes until their 7am alarm was due to go off, but Danny figured he could enjoy a few more minutes in bed. It was only when he rolled over onto his side that he noticed Chris' eyes were wide open, staring straight at him.

'Fuck!' Danny thought to himself. He felt like he should look away, but Chris wasn't, so why should he? 'Why's he staring at me? Why can't I breathe? You can, just take a breath. That's it. In. Out. In. Wow it's like you've done this before! He's still staring! Maybe he's asleep with his eyes open, that can happen, can't it? Smile at him. If he smiles back you know he's awake!' Danny smiled and got a huge grin back.

'Oh my God, that smile!' Danny thought to himself. He felt like his heart was about to burst out of his chest and he had absolutely no idea why.

When the morning bell rang, Danny almost jumped out of the bed he had been so fixated on Chris. The other boy burst into laughter at the panicked reaction, making Danny blush as the rest of the room began to wake up.

One-by-one they began to head out of the room, most wearing just a towel as they headed towards the shower room or toilets. David was stood near the door, clearly hesitating. Josh approached and put his hand on the shorter boy's back, nudging him towards the door.

“Can't hide forever,” Josh said quietly. “Told ya, bud, nobody cares, or at least nobody who matters!”

“Thanks,” David said, striding purposefully down the hall towards the shower room.

Josh grinned, happy to have helped, but stopped as he heard his name called from behind.

“Wait up,” Rob called out, catching up. “Hey, erm... just wanted to check you're okay?”

Josh looked at the other boy cluelessly as boys from the other three dorms passed by. “Yeah, why wouldn't I be?”

“Well, erm... last night, you...” Rob stammered, unsure if Josh was being deliberately evasive or

really didn't understand what he was asking. "Nothing. Never mind." he said, shrugging as he walked on, somewhere between hurt and confused.

In the shower room, the boys were quite relieved to see that the two dozen shower heads positioned along the walls and from posts in the middle of the room had all been partitioned off, allowing them some privacy as they showered. Most of them had imagined some large, open communal area where everything would have to be on show, so it was a pleasant surprise. It was already quite busy in there though, and that was with just the Year 7s. Over the next few days, sixty-four more students were due to join them in the dorms on that floor. It was going to be like a cattle market.

Danny was first back to the dorm, quickly followed by Rob who seemed keen to speak to him alone. "So, erm... about this morning..."

Danny shrugged. "None of my business. Just thought you might not want everyone seeing you together like that is all."

Rob considered telling Danny what had happened. Danny seemed so responsible and mature, but he had promised Josh he wouldn't mention anything. "Okay, thanks," Rob said, deciding to keep Josh's confidence.

Mr Trent, who had been near the shower room and trying to maintain some semblance of order eventually popped his head into the room and called out, "Only a few minutes to get downstairs, breakfast starts at half seven!"

"Yes Sir!" he got in response.

Thankfully the boys did not have to start wearing their uniform quite yet, so the day already felt quite relaxed. Danny strolled along to the stairs with Matty and David, talking quietly. As he got there, some of the Year 10s were heading down too, including Joe. The two rapidly made a beeline for each other.

"How'd it go?" Joe asked eagerly.

"Oh my God, so good!" Danny said excitedly. "Everyone seems to be getting along great!"

Joe pulled the boy into a quick hug. The younger of the two felt a little awkward being involved in such an openly public display of affection, but the boys passing didn't seem to care, so he just tried to enjoy it. Letting go, Joe asked, "Did you do," he lowered his voice to a whisper, "the naked thing?"

Danny nodded. "Yup. Everyone did it and just like that, no awkwardness. Well, a little, but we dealt with it. You're a frickin' genius!"

"Guilty as charged," Joe said, flashing a toothy grin. He started down the stairs gesturing for Danny to follow.

"There was something I did wanna ask you about, something someone mentioned last night..." Danny said gingerly. With so many other boys around him, he didn't want to say it aloud, so he added, "But in private."

"That's okay. Part of today's plan includes a bit more one-on-one time for us, so ask me then. For now, I'm starving. See ya later!" Joe said, then dashed off to join his classmates in the breakfast

queue.

The day was as busy as the boys had expected, with a range of sports and other activities intended to let the new Year 7 group get to know each other and work together. While it was clear that the boys of 1.01 were the closest so far, the other dorms seemed to be doing okay too, with the exception of 1.04 which seemed to have some distinct tension between a few of the boys.

The Year 10 students were mostly involved in the day's activities too, although half a dozen were elsewhere, dealing with other new arrivals. By mid-afternoon, following a distinctly lively Year 7 vs Year 10 football match, the boys heading back to the Home Building found it much busier, with the Year 9 and Year 12 dorms pretty much full.

The hour before dinner had been set aside for one-on-one time with mentors, not just for the Year 7s, but also for the newly arrived Year 9s whose mentors had also arrived that day. With the building beginning to fill, it was somewhat harder to get absolute privacy. Fortunately, Joe had managed to secure a private study room, curious to know what Danny had wanted to ask about 'in private'.

"Had a good day?" Joe asked as Danny joined him in the room.

"Yeah, it was fun," Danny said happily. "It was a shame you couldn't join us."

"I know," Joe said with a shrug, "But if I wasn't there to organise everyone coming in, nobody would find their dorms!" He grinned, getting a polite chuckle from the younger boy. "Things still good with your roommates then?"

Danny nodded emphatically. "So good. We all get on great. I mean, some are a lot more... erm... lively than others, but we seem to have a good bunch."

"So what was the thing you wanted to ask me about?" Joe asked, his curiosity finally getting the best of him.

"Oh yeah," Danny said, the earlier conversation having slipped his mind in the excitement of the day. "Well last night the others were talking about noisy things that can happen when you're sharing a room and Josh mentioned jacking off."

"Ohhhh!" Joe said knowingly, grinning and blushing very slightly.

"So what is it?" Danny asked, even more curious because of the teen's reaction.

Joe leaned in across the table, his voice lowered even though he knew nobody could hear them. "Whadda you know about sex?"

"I know it's how you make babies. And I know that's what porn is, but it just looks.... messy" Danny replied matter-of-factly. He blushed a little too and added, "Before I came here, Dad told me all about how men and women have sex and that can make a baby. He talked about puberty too, which by the way, sounds awful!"

Joe laughed aloud at the comment. "It is. But it's got its good points too. So... jacking of is... kinda like sex, but on your own!"

Danny just looked even more confused.

“You play with your own dick until you spunk,” Joe said, still a little embarrassed, but determined to get the younger boy to understand.

“Play with it how?” Danny probed. He shifted a little in his seat, for some reason feeling his dick swelling a little.

“Well you, erm... I guess you stroke it,” Joe explained awkwardly.

“Like a cat?” Danny asked, frowning.

“No, more like, erm...” Joe was stuck.

“Show me!” Danny suggested.

Joe stared at the boy wide-eyed. “Wh... what?”

“If you can't explain it, show me!” Danny insisted.

Joe shifted a little in his seat.

“Come on, it's not like I'd tell anyone. Rule number one, remember!” Danny said, grinning.

Joe thought for a moment. Then shrugged. “Fuck it, why not. But you're doing it too. Take your clothes off!” Joe turned around and dragged the table in front of the door. People tended to respect the 'occupied' signs on study rooms, but he wanted to be doubly sure they wouldn't be disturbed. As he turned back to face Danny, the younger boy was already completely naked.

Danny stood eagerly awaiting what was next. He felt a little self-conscious being naked in front of the older boy, especially as he was sporting an erection and nobody had seen him in that state before. He was quite proud of his boner, pointing straight up to the ceiling. Before he came to the school he had measured it in that state and had recently reached 3 inches.

“Fuck!” Joe exclaimed at the sight of the naked boy. “You know, we really shouldn't be doing this!”

“Shut up and get naked,” Danny said with a grin.

Joe pulled his t-shirt off over his head and dropped it to the floor, then kicked off his shoes and began to undo his belt. He could feel Danny's eyes on his body, taking in every inch. He wondered how obvious his own erection was, trying his best not to think about why he had it in the first place. He dropped his jeans and underwear in a single move and stepped out of them, revealing the rest of his body to the younger boy.

“Wow!” Danny said aloud.

While the older boy's body was much like his own, slim with very little muscle mass yet, the big difference was further down. Firstly, he had a sizeable patch of dark ginger hair at the base of his cock. The next thing was the size of the cock itself. It was easily double his length and significantly thicker.

“So we're naked. What now?” Danny asked eagerly.

Joe's cheeks were blazing red, which spread right down his neck and onto his shoulders. “Well I grab my cock like this,” Joe explained, wrapping his fingers around the thick shaft. As he looked at the younger boy and his undeveloped tool, he added, “But you may just want to use your thumb and finger.” He held up the two digits to demonstrate with his free hand.

Danny complied. It felt good. He had touched himself before, but not this deliberately and certainly not with the intent of making anything happen.

“Then you stroke it up and down, like this,” Joe said, beginning to move his hand back and forth. He shuddered, his breath shaky. He had done plenty of things with other boys since being at the school, but this was a new experience for him, teaching a younger boy about his own body, demonstrating such a pleasurable activity.

Danny began to copy. “Like thi... oh!” He suddenly realised just how good it felt. “Fuck, that's good.” He closed his eyes momentarily, enjoying the new sensation, then opened them again, slightly embarrassed to have gotten so lost in it in front of his mentor. “So this is jacking off? I've seen this on the internet, I just never knew that's what it was called... or why they'd bother doing it!” he exclaimed innocently.

Joe nodded, still stroking. He wondered if he should stop, now that he had explained it, but figured he may as well go all the way and finish the boy's education. “Yeah, and you keep going until... well, you'll see!”

“Okay,” Danny said eagerly. He took a couple of steps closer to the older boy, wanting a better look at his bigger cock.

The two stood in charged silence, stroking their cocks, eyes roaming each other's bodies, breathing getting increasingly laboured. Joe actually slowed down, feeling himself getting close. He wanted to make sure Danny had finished before him so he could demonstrate the one part he suspected the younger boy was not yet capable of.

“Oh, yeah, oh, it feels.... feels kinda like I need to pee,” Danny said, a little confused.

“That's okay, that's normal,” Joe said reassuringly. “Keep going, you're nearly there!” He virtually stopped stroking, the thought of the younger boy on the verge of his first orgasm almost enough to make him blow his load.

“FUCK!” Danny suddenly yelled out, letting go of his cock as it began to twitch and spasm frantically. His eyes were wide, staring at Joe in a mix of fear and revelation, mouth agape as he gasped for breath. He leaned forward to steady himself and found his hand pressed against the older boy's chest.

“Shit!” Joe gasped, the boy's orgasm taking him to the brink and his touch pushing him over it. Not wanting to cum on Danny, he turned to the side and let the cum fly. Several heavy spurts shot across the room, the older boy now the one in need of steadying as he grabbed Danny's shoulder.

The two stood in serene silence, both catching their breath, both mildly in awe of what had just happened.

“That was...” Danny started, but just shook his head, a wry grin on his face.

“Awesome!” Joe offered to complete the sentiment.

“And the stuff you shot?” Danny asked.

“Cum... or semen it's really called, but only teachers call it that. Anyone normal calls it cum... or spunk... or jizz.” Joe explained, suddenly feeling a little awkward as he came down from the orgasmic high. “We should probably get dressed.”

Danny nodded, grabbing his underwear. As they dressed quietly, and without looking, he asked, “Joe... could we... do this again some time?”

“Sure,” Joe replied, his cock twitching already at the thought.

Rob was first back to the dorm after the mentor one-on-ones. It seemed Jason still had no idea what they were meant to be doing so the session had run short. He lay on his bed reading, but glanced over as he heard the door open. He could hear the echo of noise from the opposite end of the floor where the Year 9s were still settling in, but it was Josh that walked in.

“Hey,” Rob said, immediately going back to reading.

“Hey,” Josh said back quietly.

Several times over the next few minutes, Rob put the book down to talk to Josh, then changed his mind and raised it again. Eventually, on the fourth try he managed to speak. “I get that you don't want to talk about what's up, but I'm here when you do. Just wanted to... I dunno, make that clear.”

Josh shrugged. “Nothing's up. It's all fine.” He lay down on his bed, hands behind his head.

Rob sighed. “Okay, whatever.” He was just considering saying more when there was a knock at the door.

“Joshua, you in there?” a voice called through the door.

Josh sat up, looking panicked. He rolled off the bed onto the floor then shuffled under Mikey's bunk, just as the door opened.

Rob had observed the sudden move and was about to ask what was going on when the door opened and two young men walked in. The resemblance was uncanny. Rob knew instantly that he was looking at Josh's older brothers, Ryan and Mark.

“You seen Josh?” one of them asked, seeing only Rob in the room.

Rob unintentionally looked Josh's way. From where he was laying, he could see the youngest sibling, but knew the elder ones couldn't. The look on Josh's face was similar to how he had looked last night.

“No, sorry. Not sure where he is,” Rob lied. “Want me to pass on a message?”

“Yeah,” one of them replied. “Tell him we'll see him soon!” He grinned, getting a laugh from the

other one as they left, shutting the door behind them.

Once he was sure it was clear, Rob walked across the room, got on the floor and shuffled under Mikey's bunk. Tilting his head to the side, he looked at Josh. "Hey Josh," he said flatly.

"Hey Rob," Josh said back.

"What we doing under the bed?" Rob asked frankly.

"Just... hangin' out!" Josh said calmly.

"Cool," Rob replied in a similar tone. He could feel Josh's hand right next to his own. Without another word, he took hold of it. Immediately he felt Josh squeeze it, so he just lay there by his side. It was clear that whatever was going on, Josh wasn't ready to talk, so for now he would just be there for him in any way he could.

The dining hall was beginning to show signs of just how busy it would be when the school was at full capacity. The staff were quick in dishing out the food, so the queue went down quickly, but the tables rapidly filled up. Whether by intention or chance, the boys tended to organise where they sat based on their year group, with the Year 7s filling the first row of 4 tables, being the first in tonight, while the Year 10s who followed filled the middle row, leaving space for the Year 9s who came in shortly after, while the Year 12s took the penultimate row when they joined.

The dorm 1.01 table were just chatting excitedly about the things they had done during the day, including their individual 15-minute meetings with Mr Trent. The teacher in charge of their floor had promised to get to know each of them and was making good on it. The talks weren't too in-depth, mostly just a quick chat about interests, behaviour and expectations. For the most part, they all seemed to have the same impression of the man – new, but fair, reasonable and, above all, approachable.

The chatter was interrupted by two hands grabbing Josh's shoulders from behind, one belonging to each of his brother's.

"Joshua!" Ryan, the Year 12 middle brother said with a grin.

Rob immediately noticed two things. Firstly, Josh went pale. The second was the name. Josh had categorically stated that he hated being called anything other than Josh. His brothers had to know that.

"Yeah, here he is, little Josh-U-R," Mark, the Year 13 elder brother said, visibly squeezing Josh's shoulder, deliberately emphasising the unwanted part of the boy's name.

"Hey guys," Josh said timidly, looking back at one of his brothers then the other.

"Starting to think you was hidin' from us!" Ryan said with a smirk.

"No, just... settling in," Josh said shakily.

"Where's our manners, bro?" Mark said, letting go of Josh's shoulder and gently smacking Ryan's arm. "We didn't introduce ourselves." He looked round the table at the boys who had mostly

stopped eating. "I'm Mark. This is Ryan. We're Joshua's big bros. Nice to meet ya!"

"How ya findin' the school so far?" Ryan asked, smiling.

"Fine." "Nice." "S'ok." None of the boys were too emphatic about their responses, a little weary of the much larger, older boys.

"Well if you're friends of little Joshua here," Mark aid, smacking Josh on the back, "Then you're friends of ours. You ever get any problems, you just let us know."

"Thanks," some of the boys said, appreciating the kind gesture.

"No big," Ryan said. "C'mon bro, I'm hungry."

"See you soon, Joshua!" Mark said, messing Josh's hair as he walked away.

Conversation quickly resumed as they finished eating, except for Josh who mostly just pushed the food around the plate while listening in to what the others were saying, but not really joining in.

After dinner, Mr Trent had organised an event in the first floor common room for the Year 7s, providing some information about the various sporting and extracurricular activities that were available for the students to get involved in. The expectation was that they were all select at least some, not only to fill their time, but also to build up skills and experience for whatever University they might choose to apply to after leaving Kingswood.

There had been a lot to take in and most of the boys came away with various flyers and leaflets. They were all still excitedly talking about the things they wanted to do as they got back to the dorm. Most gathered on the sofas, while a couple lay on their bunks, still chatting with the others.

"Hey, your brothers seem nice," Mikey said casually, glancing over in Josh's direction.

"Oh," was all Josh said back, flatly.

"They're good lookin' lads," Chris said, casually flicking through a book.

"What? They look like Josh!" Matty said back.

"Exactly!" Chris looked up now, glanced over at Josh and winked.

While Josh laughed it off and the others began to tease both of them, Danny looked on from his bunk. He felt like he had been punched in the stomach. Chris had winked at him the day before and it had made him feel almost giddy, which he had been unable to explain. Now he felt bad that Chris was winking at someone else and he had no idea why.

Meanwhile, at the mention of Josh's brothers, Rob had sat up on his own bunk and looked across at the group. There was clearly an issue between Josh and his big brothers. Perhaps that was the cause of Josh's behaviour in the early hours of the morning. Being a big brother himself, Rob couldn't imagine what it was. He had never been anything other than best friends with his own little brother, but he knew many siblings fought. For now he just sat and observed the group.

“You heard what they said, too. We ever need anything, they'll be there,” Mikey said with a grin. “Sounds like Chris can think of a few things he'd like 'em to do!”

“You have no idea!” Chris said back with a devilish twinkle in his eye.

“I always wanted a big brother,” James said quietly.

“Me too,” Matty agreed.

“You're lucky, Josh,” James added. “Not just having bros, but having them close by too.”

“Yeah,” Josh said coldly, getting up from the sofa, “I guess I am.” He headed over towards his bunk, but instead sidestepped towards Rob. Glancing back to the sofas, he made sure nobody was paying attention but forgot about Danny behind him on the top bunk. “Rob, could you... I mean... tonight... you know... what we did... last night,” he said disjointedly.

Rob immediately knew what Josh was asking, but instinctively looked up at Danny who had overheard the request. Rob's gaze drew Josh's, who turned and saw the other boy looking down at them.

“I... erm...” Josh stuttered.

“It's okay,” Rob said, reaching up to grab Josh's wrist. “He... saw us this morning. He's cool with it.”

Danny smiled, gave a thumbs up and hopped down off his bunk to join the others and give the two some privacy.

“So... can we?” Josh asked hopefully.

“We might have to wait til everyone else is asleep, but if we can, then sure,” Rob answered. While he was happy to offer the other boy more support, in reality he had enjoyed sharing the bed with the other boy and was keen to do it again. Back home, there had been many nights Milo had climbed into bed with him, after a bad dream or sometimes just for fun, so it felt almost like home.

Meanwhile, on the sofas, talk of siblings had moved onto Chris as Danny came and took the empty seat beside him that Josh had not long vacated.

“Yeah, eight of us in all. Oldest is my big sister, she's 21, youngest is my newest brother, he's only 2,” Chris explained.

“Wow, big age gap. Your parents like having kids then!” Mikey chuckled.

“Irish Catholic,” Chris said bluntly. “Ma and Pa don't believe in johnnies, so pretty much every time they shag, I get another brother or sister!” The comment got a mixture of laughter and repulsion from the other boys. Grinning at the reaction he had got, Chris leaned to side against Danny and tilted his head so it rested on the other boy's shoulder. “What about you, Danny. You say you've got a sister?”

Danny found himself flooded with bizarre feelings again. The position felt strangely intimate. He had felt the other boy's breath on his neck as he spoke, he could feel the warmth and weight of his body pressing against his side. He let out the same unintelligible gurgle that had become his usual

reaction to Chris before clearing his throat and replying, "Yeah, older too. She's away at a school like this one, but for girls. Has been for a couple of years!"

"Wow, now there's some parents who want rid of their kids!" Mikey joked.

The others laughed, but Danny just looked distraught. It was a thought he had had himself on more than one occasion since he found out about Kingswood. It was one of the many things he had argued with his parents about, although they always vehemently denied it. To hear it from someone else though, that suddenly made it feel very real.

"Oh, erm... I'm sorry," Mikey said, seeing the reaction it got from Danny. "I was... I was just kidding."

"It's okay," Danny said, entirely unconvincingly.

Mikey looked lost for what to say, but it ended up being Chris that saved the day. Pulling back a little, he threw his arms around Danny. "Even if that were true, it wouldn't matter. We still love ya, Danny-boy!"

Danny's brain went crazy at the sudden physical and verbal affection, but his first reaction was to laugh. "Thanks mate," he said, shaking his head.

Presumably not wanting to linger on the comment too much, Mikey added, "Geez Chris, you're so... huggy!"

Chris sat back in his seat and shrugged. "I mean, that's not a word, but yeah, I am. I'm a hugger and I'm not ashamed of that!" he said proudly. His eyes widened. "Wait, are you just saying that cos you're jealous. D'you need a hug too?"

Chris got up and moved towards Mikey who jumped out of his seat. "No way, back off!"

"Yeah you do. Get back here and hug me!" Chris called out. The others began to laugh and cheer Chris on.

Mikey dashed across the room, first taking shelter on his own bunk, then rolling off of that and vaulting over Josh's towards the door as Chris followed him. He circled back round, diving across Rob's bunk between Josh and Rob who were talking quietly, then over Matty's back into the sofa area.

"Someone keep this lunatic off me!" Mikey called out jokingly.

Matty stood, holding his arms out to the side. "I can take one for the team. I volunteer as tribute!" he joked.

Chris accepted the gesture, diving onto the other boy. Although they were similar heights, Chris easily outweighed the scrawny Matty who toppled backwards onto the sofa, Chris on top of him, slightly breathless.

"See, this is nice, isn't it?" Chris asked, laying on top.

"I kinda can't breath. But that aside, yeah, lovely!" Matty said sarcastically.

Chris growled as he rolled off and landed heavily on the floor. He immediately popped back onto his feet and in mock annoyance, stomped back to his original seat and called out, "Maybe none of you like my hugs, but at least Danny does!" He sat down, his arm around Danny. "Don't ya, bud?"

Not wanting to revert to the embarrassed mess he had been previously, Danny smiled and actually moved towards Chris, snuggling against him. "Yeah I do."

"Danny's got a boyfriend, Danny's got a boyfriend!" Matty teased.

"You two want some privacy?" Mikey added, grinning at Matty as the two ganged up playfully.

"We could always push your bunks together so you can cuddle all night!" Matty went on.

Rob and Josh had both come over following the interruption by Mikey's sudden dash around the room, taking the empty sofa. They looked at each other awkwardly as the two boys teased. If they were like this to Chris and Danny, just for sitting together, what would they say if they actually found Rob and Josh sleeping together?

Shortly after nine, Mr Trent had popped in to check they were all in bed and had left, pleased once again at his 'top dorm' as he had called it. He wished them a good night, clicked off the light and headed on with his rounds.

While conversation continued a little after lights out, it was far from rowdy. However, it seemed like it could go on for a while. Danny could see both Rob and Josh's bunks from where he was laying and, having heard their plans, could see they were both keen to lay together. He very nearly considered just speaking up and telling them to do it, but he could understand why they were seemingly reluctant to be so overt, regardless of how innocent it was.

After several more minutes with no sign of sleep from the rest of the dorm, Danny decided he had to help. Something Matty said earlier rang through his head, his comment about pushing the bunks together. He knew that wasn't actually a realistic idea, not only for the weight of them, but the noise it would make. Instead, he climbed down from his bunk and headed for the sofas.

"What you doing?" Matty asked as he saw Danny's feet descending from above him. The question drew the attention of the whole room.

"Last night was a good start, and I feel like I know you all better after today, but I think we can do more," Danny said, using his previous activities as a basis for this fairly flimsy excuse he was building for Rob and Josh. He began pulling the seat and back cushions off of the sofa, covering the ground in the large square space between them. The space was almost the perfect size, the cushions forming a kind of large mattress, with sofas on two sides.

"Chris had the right idea. We shouldn't be scared to be in contact with each other. We're gonna be rooming together for a long time, so we may as well get used to it. So I'm gonna sleep here and I invite anyone who isn't scared of being close to their mates to come and join me. He reached up to his bunk and grabbed his pillow and duvet before heading back to his makeshift bed area.

When nobody made an immediate move, he called out, "Anyone interested? Rob? Josh?"

That was when it suddenly hit the two boys what Danny was doing. This was the perfect excuse.

They jumped up almost in unison and headed over carrying pillows and duvets.

“I ain't scared. I'll cuddle the fuck outta any of you!” Josh said confidently with a snigger.

Josh had taken a position against one of the sofas. Rob and Josh sat down opposite him, right up against each other.

“Screw it. Why not!” Matty said, getting up to join the other three.

David headed over too, but remained characteristically silent. He sat down right beside Danny, while Matty joined Rob and Josh on their side.

“I'm not being left out,” James said, heading over and sitting down a couple of feet away from Danny.

Next came Chris, who stood looking down at the group in the moonlight flooding through the windows. “Mind if I squeeze in, lads?” he asked, stepping over James to slip in between him and Danny.

“Come on, Mikey,” Matty called out.

“I'm good thanks, but you all enjoy... whatever that is!” Mikey called out derisively.

“Your loss!” Josh called out.

Danny didn't want bad blood, so he added, “But come down and join us any time you like.”

“Yeah, I don't think so. Night, ladies!” Mikey called out.

Danny shrugged to the others, then began shuffling down into a laying position. The others began doing the same, but what became abundantly clear very quickly was the actual lack of space. It had seemed so big when Danny laid it out, but had quickly filled with all the bodies and bedding.

Rob and Josh, now with no reason to hide, quickly shuffled onto their sides, this time with Rob behind and Josh in front. He slipped an arm under Josh's neck and draped the other one over him.

Seeing the other two get comfortable, the boys on the other side looked at each other for a moment. “Shall we?” Chris asked, and got nods in response.

Danny's journey through new feelings was striding across new territory now. It was so strange to be cuddling up to David, who he seemed to know even less than the rest of the group. It wasn't unpleasant. Despite the whole exercise being a smokescreen for Rob and Josh, he genuinely was enjoying the close contact with his new friends.

The truly new sensations came when he felt Chris' arms slip around him and the bigger boy's body press against his back. This triggered a whole new dilemma for the confused boy. His cock had swollen almost instantly at Chris' close proximity, but spooning as they were, he knew that David would likely feel the erection against his butt. However, pulling back from David meant pressing his own butt against Chris' crotch, which only seemed to make the swelling worse.

Danny eventually settled precariously positioned between the two. In that moment, all he could think about was Joe, and the amazing jacking off he had learned to do. He suddenly wanted to do it

again, so badly.

Shortly after they had fallen asleep, Danny awoke to the sound of movement. Glancing over towards it, he saw Mikey dragging his pillow and duvet over to join them. He paused as he saw Danny was awake.

“Don't make a big thing of it, okay?” Mikey whispered grumpily.

Danny remained silent, but reached up with his free hand, fist clenched. Mikey smiled, fist bumped him and got himself comfortable.

Dorm 1.01 – Chapter 4

The first week seemed to be over in a flash. Classes had begun Monday morning and the boys soon settled into their new life. The school always encouraged the boys to get into a routine with their time and the boys of 1.01 had done just that. In the hour after classes finished, they gathered in one of the Common Rooms or their dorm to do their homework together, partly to make doing it easier (and more fun) but also to ensure that the rest of their evening was free.

All of the boys had signed up for various activities and begun settling into them, excitingly figuring out who else from the dorm was in the same clubs. What else became quickly apparent was who didn't have any clubs each night.

Friday evening was not the most exciting for Rob, as the only dorm 1.01 boy with no clubs during the slot before dinner, or after. The only bright side was that Josh also had no club to attend before dinner and the two of them had been able to hang out together in the dorm. After dinner though, Josh headed off to football, leaving Rob alone in the dorm.

In a way, it had been nice. Living with seven other boys and going to school with them too, solitude could be hard to find, so at first the peace and quiet was somewhat pleasant. After the first hour, though, Rob began to feel a little lonely, missing not just his roommates, but his little brother too. He wondered what Milo was doing, if he missed his big brother, if he even cared that Rob was gone.

Rob was glad once the boys started returning to the dorm. Chris and Danny were first to return, having been at drama club. They both came sniggering as they greeted each other back and forth in as many different ways they could think of, the remnants of a Drama Club activity they had been doing. It continued even with Rob attempting to engage them in conversation, the two boys laughing hysterically and Rob's lack of amusement.

Matty and Mikey were next back. "Mate, you gotta pick one and commit!" Matty insisted as they walked in.

Mikey shrugged. "Nah, it's only Fridays they clash. I can do Football and Basketball. The teacher said I can just alternate which one I go to on Fridays." Their discussion continued as they flopped onto their bunks, oblivious to the ongoing greetings between Chris and Danny.

A few moments later, with towels slung over their shoulders, James and David got back from Swimming Club, talking quietly together.

Rob looked round, slightly confused. "Hey Mikey, were you at football tonight?" he asked, interrupting the other two.

"Yeah, why?" Mikey replied.

"Just noticed Josh didn't come back with you. You seen him?" Rob asked, leaning over the back of one of the sofas.

Mikey shrugged. "Nah, he wasn't at Football. I figured he couldn't be bothered and stayed here."

Rob paused for a moment, wondering where his friend could be. "Hey, have you guys seen Josh?" he asked, turning back round on the sofa and addressing Chris and Danny.

“Ah, good day Sir,” Danny said, sniggering.

“Top o' the mornin' to ya, laddie,” Chris replied, hamming up his accent and grinning as Danny burst into laughter.

“Ugh, you're so annoying. I'm serious!” Rob snapped.

Chris and Danny looked sombre for a few seconds, but then burst into laughter again as Danny replied, “Good morning, serious, I'm Danny!”

Rob huffed and climbed off the sofa, marching across to stand between James and David's bunks, the two boys having climbed up onto them once they returned. “You guys seen Josh anywhere?” he asked, hopeful to finally get a serious answer.

“Sorry, we were in the pool. Didn't see him on the way back,” David answered.

“Yeah, sorry,” James added.

Rob looked round at the door, then at the clock. It was ten minutes to nine. While they were able to stay up an hour later on non-school nights, they were still expected to be back in their dorms by nine, so Josh was cutting it close. Rob wondered whether he should go out and look for Josh, but he had no idea where to start and it was nowhere near possible to search even one of the buildings in the ten minutes he had, let alone all of them. Instead, he just returned to the sofas, ignoring Danny and Chris greeting him, and sat down staring at the door.

The clock had just hit nine as the door opened and Josh wandered in. The others were still caught up in their own conversations and barely registered the arrival, but Rob was immediately on his feet.

“Are you okay, where've you been?” Rob asked urgently as he got close to Josh.

Josh just shrugged.

“You were supposed to be at football,” Rob said accusingly.

“Yeah, well... I wasn't,” Josh replied, defensively, but clearly not wanting to say too much.

“Then where were you?” Rob demanded.

Josh frowned. “I... erm... I don't wanna talk about it.” He reached out and took Rob's hand, squeezing it gently.

Rob's expression softened. “Josh, where were you?” he asked again, this time much more softly.

Josh looked conflicted, as if he were stuck between what he wanted to say and what he should. After thinking for a few moments, he just asked, “Can we just go and sit down? I'm knackered!”

Rob sighed. “Okay,” he said, shaking his head. Josh had been doing so well. He had slept alone every night since the one by the sofas, and he had been his usual, lively, cheerful self for most of the week, but now suddenly he looked withdrawn and subdued again.

They joined Chris and Danny on the sofas, sitting closely together, Rob's arm casually around Josh who was sat sideways, leaning on Rob with his legs up over the arm.

“So Danny, what's the plan?” Matty called out, standing up from his bunk and hopping over the back of a sofa.

“For... what?” Danny asked a little confused.

“Tonight,” Matty answered as he was joined by Mikey. “You always seem to have some idea or plan for stuff we can all do. So what's tonight?”

Hearing Matty's question, James and David both climbed down from their bunks and filled the last two spaces on the sofa as all eyes turned to Danny.

“Erm... erm... I don't know...” Danny stammered. Joe's plans for getting the group to know each other had all played out, or at least, all the ones he had shared. Perhaps he needed to ask for more. For now though, his mind was blank.

“Truth or dare!” Chris said, grinning giddily.

“No way!” Mikey insisted.

“Why not? It's fun!” Chris argued. “Unless you're scared...” It was such a transparent attempt to goad Mikey into doing it, everybody knew that, but they still all turned to him

“Ooh, challenge made!” Matty teased, poking Mikey in the ribs.

“No I'm not scared, it's just stupid,” Mikey said moodily, sitting back in his seat with his arms folded. “But fine, whatever!”

“Excellent. So let's play,” Chris said happily. “Rules as follows. We go round in order, pick truth or dare, not allowed three truths in a row cos that gets so dull so quickly. Once you pick, the first question or dare someone shouts out is what you gotta do or answer.”

The others mumbled amongst themselves, some looking more keen than others, but all seemingly up for it. “Fine, but you first!” Mikey insisted. “Truth or dare?”

“Truth,” Chris said, grinning round at the group and wondering who would ask him something.

The room suddenly fell silent, all of the boys either at a loss for something to ask, or too afraid to ask things that might open themselves up to similarly embarrassing questioning.

“Come on, somebody pick something!” Chris urged them all. “Make it juicy. This game's only fun if it's something you wouldn't normally ask.”

“Fine.” Mikey said, rolling his eyes. “If nobody else will ask something, I will. Have you ever kissed anyone? Ya know, like, not your Mum or something.”

Chris shook his head. “Nah, not yet,” he said, then looked round the group and grinned, “But who knows. It could be any day now!”

The comment got a mix of laughter and disgusted noises from the others.

“Danny's up next!” Chris said, looking to his side. “So what's it to be, Dan my man? Truth or dare?”

“Truth as well,” Danny said, wondering if he might just get the same question.

“Do you wanna be Chris' first kiss?” Matty immediately shouted out, getting a similar reaction to the comment Chris had made. It only lasted a few seconds before the room fell silent.

All eyes were on Danny who had turned a bright shade of red. Even Chris was staring at him, grinning widely.

“Well?” Mikey asked. “And you gotta tell the truth, remember!”

“I... erm...” Danny stalled. The thought had never actually occurred to him, but then, a first kiss was not something he had even thought about at all. “I...” he paused again, then suddenly smiled. “Chris is great. I'd be lucky to be his first!”

The other boys burst into a chorus of cheers and hollers.

“No, that's not an answer!” Mikey insisted, but was drowned out by the others who seemed willing to accept it.

“James, you're up. Truth or dare?” Chris asked as the noises quietened, his arm casually round Danny's shoulder.

“Erm... truth,” James said, hoping nobody would notice it was the third one and in breach of the rules set out by Chris.

“Nuh-uh,” Rob called out. “Can't have three in a row. You gotta choose dare.”

“Not really a choice, then, is it?” James asked, pouting slightly. He shrugged and said, “Okay then, I guess I CHOOSE dare!”

“You gotta lick David's bare feet, both of them, on the bottom!” Chris called out before anyone else could say anything, pointing to the boy sat beside James.

It was hard to say which of the two looked more shocked.

“Ugh, that's disgusting!” James said. “I'm not doing that.”

“Refusing a dare? That's bad form!” Mikey said with a grin. “I'm sure there's a forfeit for that, right Chris?”

The Irish boy beamed. “You bet ya ass there is!” Chris replied excitedly. “Anyone who refuses to do a dare or answer a truth will get stripped, tied up in the dining hall and left there for everyone to see in the morning!”

The announcement got a new round of hoots and hollers, while James just looked terrified. “You wouldn't?” he asked nervously.

“Jimmyboy, truth or dare is a sacred ritual passed down over millions of years,” Chris said, deliberately exaggerating. “To break the sanctity of the game is taken very seriously, so yes, we would! So what's it to be?”

James sighed. "Fine. David, get your socks off!"

David complied in silence, looking almost as nervous as James who slid off the sofa onto the floor and grabbed David's right foot, lifting it up. He examined it for a moment. Squinting, he poked out his tongue and moved closer. As the tip came into contact with the other boy's heel. He slid it up along the sole, making David squirm and giggle.

"Eww!"

"Gross!"

"Yeah, lick it!"

The range of shouts was as amusing as watching the boy reluctantly do the task. It continued as he grabbed the other foot and did the same. Task done, James got up and sat on the sofa, shrugging nonchalantly. "Wasn't that bad. Tasted like the swimming pool!"

"Bugger, shoulda picked someone else!" Chris said, only just realising that David had been at Swimming Club, so his feet would be the least disgusting. "Anyway, Davey, you're up. What's it to be?"

"Can't you use anyone's actual name?" David asked, smirking slightly.

"Sorry Davey," Chris teased back. "So Davey, truth or dare?"

"Truth!" David said immediately, glancing briefly to James and glad that he had not been the one forced to take a dare.

"You ever jerked off?" Danny asked, feeling quietly proud to actually know what it meant after the first night's confusion.

It seemed most of the room remained just as clueless as they had been on the first night, based on the confused noises and blank expressions from most. It was only Chris and Josh who reacted knowingly.

"I... don't know what that is," David said, blushing with embarrassment.

"So that'll be a no then!" Danny laughed.

The other boys immediately burst into conversation, trying to figure out what it was, a lot of eyes turning to Josh.

"Been doin' some extracurricular learnin' have ya?" Chris whispered to Danny, then grinned cheekily at him.

Danny blushed, realising that his sudden knowledge of it was likely even more revealing than David's lack of knowledge.

"So what is it then?" David asked bluntly.

"Ah, you wanna ask a question, you gotta wait for a truth!" Chris said before either Danny could answer. "Robby, you're up next. Truth or dare?"

Rob thought for a moment, but having seen James forced to lick another boy's feet, he opted for the safer option and replied, "Truth!"

Mikey quickly called out, "Would you rather eat poop that tastes like chocolate, or chocolate that tastes like poop?"

The question drew an immediate response from the other boys, a chorus of disgusted jeers and laughs. Rob look repulsed by the whole idea, but after giving it some thought, replied, "The first one. At least that way you don't get left with a bad taste!"

The answer drew similar responses to the question itself as the boys briefly burst into little arguments about which option was best, before unanimously agreeing, playfully, that Mikey was twisted and disgusting.

"Whatever," Mikey said dismissively of the accusations. "Anyway, Josh is up!"

"Guess I have to go with dare," Josh said quietly.

Danny shot Rob a questioning look. Josh had been uncharacteristically quiet since returning to the room. Rob had rapidly become Josh's closest friend in the dorm, so if anyone would know hy, it would be him.

Rob just gave a gentle shrug back.

"Josh, I dare you to demonstrate what jacking off is!" Chris said with a snigger. It got a chorus of oohs and a few nervous laughs.

Josh just looked pale as he took in the instructions. Eventually he just gently shook his head, remaining silent.

"Pay up or get punished!" James called out, keen to ensure the rules he had been given were followed for everyone.

"No!" Josh said quietly, looking increasingly uncomfortable.

"That's a refusal. Time to pay up!" Chris said, standing up and prompting some of the others to do the same.

Josh jumped to his feet, his withdrawn quietness suddenly replaced by something else, his eyes wide, fists clenched. "Any one o' ya lays a hand on me and I'll knock ya fucking teeth out!" he snarled furiously.

Most of the others immediately sat back down silently, but Chris remained standing. Rob reached up and grabbed Josh's arm gently, but he flinched and pulled away, eyes still fixed on the bigger boy.

Chris raised his hands submissively. "Easy mate, we're just 'aving a laugh," Chris said jovially. "Didn't mean any harm!"

Josh's anger quickly faded, seeing how scared everyone apparently was, especially Mikey and David who were actually cowering behind the other boy on their respective sofas. He grinned and

said cheerfully, "Just... er... just kidding," he said, sitting back down.

The tension was palpable. Nobody really believed he was just joking, but nobody wanted to challenge it and make things worse, so the silence just hung heavily in the air for several seconds as Chris sat back down too.

"Really regretting licking Dave's feet now..." James pouted moodily, folding his arms.

The others weren't sure if he was being serious, or just trying to break the tension, but the group burst back into chatter and laughter. Even Josh joined in, seemingly trying to act like his outburst had never happened, though he had grabbed Rob's hand and was squeezing it tightly, concealed from the rest of the group.

The game of truth or dare never resumed, the boys instead just messed around and talked a lot until Mr Trent showed up to prompt them that it was almost time for lights out. They began to get ready for bed, heading out to use the toilet and brush their teeth.

Rushing back ahead of most of the others, Rob had intended to discretely ask Josh if he wanted, or needed, to share a bed again. It seemed to have helped him feel better before, so it felt like a good idea. Unfortunately, Josh was already in bed, either asleep or doing a damn good impression of it. Rob just sighed softly and headed for his own bed as the others filed in behind him.

Talking often continued long after lights out, usually between boys in adjacent bunks. It wasn't just Danny who had realised how close the boy next to him was, the others had picked up on it too, making it easier to have whispered conversations without other in the room or more importantly, Mr Trent on his regular patrols, overhearing. Tonight though, with Josh already asleep and Rob too preoccupied with worrying, the bottom bunks were relatively quiet, falling asleep quickly. James and David had spoken for a little while, but when David teased James about the dare he had done, the conversation had ended abruptly and now they too were fast asleep.

Danny was laying flat on his back, staring up at the dark ceiling. The whole thing with Josh earlier was weighing heavily on him, so sleep was slow in coming. He was just starting to drift off when he heard something beside him.

"Hey," Chris whispered. As he did it, he shuffled right to the edge of his bunk, as close to Danny as possible, leaning heavily on the rail designed to stop sleepers from falling out by mistake.

"Whassup?" Danny whispered back, taking a similar position facing the other boy. Chris still very much had an intoxicating affect on Danny, making his stomach churn when their eyes met, or his chest flutter when the affectionate boy casually made contact, but at least he had regained the ability to speak to him.

"Did I take things too far before? With Josh, I mean," Chris asked.

While tone was harder to pick up on when talking in whispers, Danny couldn't help but notice the heaviness of doubt in Chris' question. It was something he had not heard before. After Josh (on a normal day), Chris was probably the most confident boy Danny had ever met, so it was clear the matter was really bothering him.

"No," Danny replied bluntly. "I think... I think he's got other things going in. I reckon that was more about him than it was about you!"

“That's a relief. Gonna apologise to him in the morning anyway, just to clear the air, but I just wanted to check,” Chris whispered. He reached across the small gap between the bunks and stroked Danny's arm. “Thanks,” he said as he did it, smiling warmly in the darkness.

Danny just smiled back. He wondered if that was all and considered rolling onto his back again but held, captivated by the other boy.

“Hey, as it's just us now... dish it. Who's been educating you about jacking off?” Chris asked. The mischievous grin would have been obvious even with Danny's eyes closed.

“Oh, erm...” Danny stuttered, then realised he had the perfect, and completely honest, answer ready. “Can't say. Sworn to secrecy!”

“Huh, so your mentor then? Sounds like you got a good one,” Chris said, almost laughing.

“What... no... I don't...” the nervous boy stammered.

Chris reached out and grabbed Danny's arm. “Relax. It's just between us.” He kept hold for a few seconds until Danny nodded back his understanding. “So was it a theory lesson, or more... hands-on?”

Danny struggled to find words, his jaw just flapping as his mind raced. How was he figuring this stuff out? Why was he asking? Was it a bad thing that he knew? Danny trembled, but couldn't help noticing his cock had stiffened almost instantly.

“You're so fun to mess with!” Chris whispered with a quiet snigger. “But sorry, I know it's none of my business, won't mention it again.”

“Thanks,” Danny whispered back, grateful that the pressure was off.

“But what IS my business,” Chris replied, pausing to watch Danny squirm, “Is that question you got asked earlier. Mikey was right, what you said wasn't really an answer!”

Danny was stunned for a moment, seconds away from heading into another round of stammering, when he remembered his own thoughts from earlier. “Well I figured if you didn't answer yours truthfully, I didn't have to either.”

“You calling me a liar?” Chris demanded, sitting up. He sounded genuinely offended.

Before Danny could respond, a voice came from below them. “Shut up and sleep or go somewhere else!” It was Matty, who they had learned in their relatively short time together did not like having his sleep disturbed.

Taking that as his excuse, Chris lay back down, turning his back on Danny.

Not wanting to leave things like that, and terrified that he had just said something irreparable, Danny reached across the gap between them and grabbed Chris' shoulder. “Study rooms. Please, I'm sorry!” he whispered, not wanting to incur Matt's wrath. He pulled back and climbed down from his bunk. He headed to the door and opened it, glancing back at Chris who was watching him but made no sign of moving. Danny went on anyway, shutting the door behind him and hoping the other boy would follow.

While they were allowed out of bed for using the toilets, the rest of the building was off limits after lights out, so it was risky to even be out of bed, but there was no sign of Mr Trent as Danny crept along the corridor and into the space outside the private study rooms. He felt a momentary twinge of excitement as he remembered what he had done in one of them with Joseph, but remained focussed on Chris.

Several moments later, he heard footsteps coming his way. He hoped it was Chris, but knew it could just as easily be Mr Trent. Thankfully, the tall Irish boy appeared moments later, clad only in his boxers which was how he slept. Still worried about getting caught, they ducked into one of the rooms but didn't turn the light on. As the door closed, they were plunged into total darkness.

“Chris, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to call you a liar!” Danny said, louder than a whisper, but still much softer than it would have been if they weren't hiding.

“Yeah, but you did. I don't mind being called a lotta things, but I'm always fucking honest!” Chris said angrily.

“I know, I know, I'm sorry!” Danny said. “It's just, you said you'd never kissed anyone and I found that... hard to believe!”

“Why?” Chris asked, his tone clearly now one of confusion rather than anger.

Danny knew that answering that honestly would reveal a lot more than he had intended, but answering dishonestly would just lead to more trouble. He opted for the honesty and explained, “Well you're, like, really good looking and outgoing and confident and everything. Plus you just seem to flirt with everybody who looks at you. I figured... that meant you'd have more offers than you can handle!”

“Okay, first of all, thanks. That's mostly compliments, so I'll take it. But you should know, there's a big difference between flirting with someone and actually wanting to... ya know... be with them!” Chris explained.

“Oh,” Danny replied, suddenly feeling like he had completely misunderstood everything about the Irish boy. The winks, the hugs, the playful touches... they were all just completely innocent. It felt like his heart dropped into his stomach.

“Plus, just because I flirt with someone, that doesn't mean they want me either. Most guys our age don't even know what flirting is anyway!” Chris went on.

“Yeah, good point,” Danny conceded, feeling like the last comment was aimed directly at him.

“Where are ya?” Chris asked.

Danny felt a hand reach out. It made contact with his wrist and grabbed on.

“Let's try testing you on it.” Chris said, then chuckled slightly. “So let's say I'm talking with someone and I flash 'em a cheeky wink. Flirting or not?”

Danny hoped it was, but answered, “Not!” knowing it was right.

“Correct. How about sitting next to someone on a sofa and resting your head on their shoulder. Flirting or not?” Chris went on, slowly moving Danny round a little as he spoke.

Danny sighed. "Not!"

"Correct again. Last question," Chris replied. "Following someone to a private room in the middle of the night. Holding them up against a wall," he gently pushed Danny against the wall as he spoke, "And whispering things to them, right up close..." by the time he finished, his lips were almost touching Danny's ear.

Danny was completely caught off guard. He had thought this was just Chris' way of convincing him he hadn't been flirting, but now it seemed to have gone completely the opposite way. "Th... that's... probably flirting!" Danny whispered back.

"Perfect score, Danny," Chris said, allowing his hand to press on the other boy's shoulder and slowly slide down his chest. "So do you believe I was telling the truth now?"

"Y... yes," Danny mumbled.

"Good, then that means it's only fair that you answer your question... Do you..." Chris started, leaning in so his cheek brushed Danny's, "Want to..." his lips grazed the smaller boy's ear, "Be my first kiss?" He pulled back and rested his forehead on Danny's, their noses touching, their lips mere inches apart.

Danny could smell the toothpaste on Chris' breath, feel one of the taller boy's hands on each of his shoulders. "Yes!" he answered in a barely audible whisper.

"Then there's really only one thing you can do about that..." Chris whispered seductively.

"Wh... what?" Danny asked, feeling the answer was quite obvious.

Chris suddenly pulled away and opened the door, the light of the hallway flooding in. "Wait and see what happens!" he said with a devilish grin, knowing exactly the state he had left Danny in. As the door started to close and Chris disappeared, he leaned back and added, "And THAT... may have been flirting!" He gave a cheeky wink and dashed off down the hall back to the dorm.

"That fucking tease!" Danny muttered, shaking his head as he was engulfed by darkness again. His cock was so hard he knew he had to take care of it or he would never get any sleep, so he pushed his shorts down and grabbed hold of it, stroking it rapidly. Thoughts of Chris intermingled with memories of jerking off with Joseph, the dual images speeding Danny towards the inevitable.

The orgasm that quickly rippled through him almost made his knees give way. While he was eagerly looking forward to the day he could jizz like his mentor had, his dry orgasm certainly was easier to clean up after. He simply pulled his shorts back up, waited another minute for his cock to subside then crept back down the hallway to the dorm and climbed back into his bunk. He was soon asleep along with the rest of the room.

Chapter 5

Another Friday night approached for the boys of Dorm 1.01. They had truly settled into the Kingswood way of life now, getting used to the daily routine, the shared living space, the comings and goings of their roommates throughout the evenings and weekends attending various extra-curriculars.

“Ugh, thank God someone's back,” Rob said happily as the door opened.

Chris paused, thought for a moment, then nodded. “I've had worse greetings. Bit bored are ya?”

“Totally,” Rob said, shaking his head.

“Coulda taken the time to finish Bilbo's vacation!” Chris said jovially as he headed over to his wardrobe. The two boys, along with David, were part of the Year 7 Book Club. This week they were reading *The Hobbit*.

“I usually hang out with Josh before dinner on Fridays, but football got moved earlier, so I finished it then.” Rob explained.

“You already finished? I'm barely halfway through,” Chris moaned, holding up his copy of the book to show the position of the bookmark. “And that's with half the cool stuff from the movies cut out! This is why I hate books of movies.”

Rob frowned so hard his eyebrows almost merged into one. “No, that's not...” he started, but Chris cut him off.

“Wait, did you say football got moved earlier?” Chris asked, tossing the book onto his bunk to try and get through a bit of it later. As the other boy nodded, Chris looked confused. “It didn't. I was trying to convince Danny to come with me to Drama Club, but he said the coach had some important stuff to cover so he had to do football.”

“Oh,” Rob said dejectedly. “I guess... he got confused... or something...” he trailed off.

Before they could discuss it any further, Mikey, Matty, David and James all returned, having walked back from the Sports Complex together. Mikey and Matty were chattering about an apparently amazing shot one of the other boys had made during practice, while David appeared to be teasing James once again about the dare he had been made to do the previous Friday.

Chris, still standing quite near the entrance greeted each of them individually, giving all of them enthusiastic fist bumps, except Mikey who he pulled into a tight hug.

“Oh fuck off, will ya!” Mikey grumbled as he pushed Chris away.

“Nope, not until you accept hugs are the best!” Chris insisted. The affectionate boy was prone to hugging most of the boys in the dorm, and had even started on some from the other dorms, but Mikey seemed strangely resistant to them, so Chris had made it his personal mission to hug him into submission eventually.

“Give in to the hugs, Mikey!” Rob called out. “They're annoying but inevitable!” The comment prompted a laugh from Mikey, Matty and James.

Chris let go of his grumpy victim and turned to face Rob, giving her the sternest look he could manage. "Annoying, are they?"

Rob raised his hands as he stuttered to try and defend his comment, but Chris was already moving. The bigger boy leapt towards Rob's bunk, landing on top of him, arms wrapping around him.

"This isn't annoying. It's fucking delightful!" Chris called out manically, deliberately acting crazy to get more laughs from the others.

"Oh my God, get off!" Rob said, trying to struggle away, laughing just as much as the others.

The two continued to wrestle, eventually falling off the far side of the bed just as the final two members of the dorm arrived back.

"What's going on?" Danny asked as he walked in, hearing the raucous laughter.

Rob's head suddenly popped up from behind his bunk. "Nothing!" He said, blushing a little.

Chris suddenly appeared beside him, seductively wrapping an arm around the smaller boy. "Don't deny our forbidden love!" he said, puckering his lips and pulling Rob close. It got more laughter from the others as Rob squirmed to escape.

Looking across at the door, Rob saw Josh stood beside Danny, smiling along with the others, but not laughing. He pulled free of Chris and shoved him back as he climbed to his feet. Both Josh and Danny were carrying their football boots.

As the rest of the boys went about putting things away or on their bunks, Rob cautiously approached Josh. "I guess... football didn't.... erm... get moved then?"

Josh looked stunned for a moment, visibly aware of having been caught out. "Oh, erm... no, my mistake. It was normal time."

Rob looked round, not wanting to be overheard by others, so he lowered his voice and said, "Look, if you don't wanna hang out with me or... I dunno, you feel weird about... ya know, the first few nights, it's okay. You don't have to make excuses!"

"No. No, definitely not," Josh insisted. "It's just... I... I had to... to be... somewhere!"

"Somewhere you didn't want me to know about, obviously," Rob said with an accepting shrug. "I get it, it's okay. Sorry to... bother you or whatever." He turned to walk away.

Josh was just about to call him back when he heard a shout from the opposite end of the dorm. "FOR FUCK'S SAKE. JUST LICK HIS FEET OR SOMETHING!"

Whether intentional or not, the yell dropped the rest of the room into stunned silence. The five boys hanging out near the wardrobes and bunks quickly rushed to the sofas. The yell had come from Mikey, aimed at James and David who were sat on opposite sofas.

"Problem, lads?" Chris asked with a smirk as the others gathered behind him.

"Yes, them!" Mikey said, gesturing to the other two. "Ever since that fucking dare last week, it's the same argument over and over. David teases him, James gets pissed and says it was unfair, David

insists it wasn't. Every day. I'm so sick of it!"

"You're cranky, maybe a hug would..." Chris started, holding his arms out and moving towards Mikey.

"Don't you frickin' dare!" Mikey said, backing away and scowling angrily.

Josh glanced at Rob, who still looked a mix of angry and hurt then vaulted over the back of one of the sofas to land in the seat next to James. "Ya know what guys, James is right. I screwed up the game last week, so I say we finish it off, just to even things up. Anyone who had a truth gets a dare, anyone who did a dare gets a truth and anyone who never had a go gets both. All fair and square!"

The rest of the boys looked at each other, most of them shrugging. With nothing better to do, it seemed like as good an idea as anything else.

"Can you wait for me to shower? I didn't get to do it after football?" Danny asked.

"Oh come on, you can do that before bed, don't make us wait!" Josh insisted, so Danny shrugged and headed to the sofas.

"Mate, you sure you're okay with this?" Chris asked Josh in a whisper from behind as the others all made their way round.

Josh smiled and nodded. Chris had apologised for how things had gone down the previous week and Josh had apologised in return for his own behaviour, so the air had been cleared. Josh was still grateful for the other boy checking on him though.

"Okay, let's get the truths out of the way first. We all know this is all about the dares!" Chris said, excited to have the game going again. "So hands up who had one last week" He raised a hand, along with David, Danny and Rob. "So who wants to go first? How about Mr Shoutyface?"

All eyes turned to Mikey, who just shrugged. "Sure, whatever," he said casually, although the look in his eyes was the same one of potential dread at what he may be asked.

"Okay, let's start nice and easy then. Who's your favourite person in the dorm?" Chris asked, then grinned and added, "Not counting yourself!"

"Oh you're funny," Mikey said flatly. "Well it's definitely not you!" He began looking round the group who all stared back expectantly. He was finding it harder than expected, more for the fear of openly sharing feelings rather than deciding who it was.

"Welllllll?" Chris asked, grinning at how awkward it apparently was.

"Fine," Mikey said, shrugging and trying to look casual. "Matty, I guess." he said, gesturing to the boy at his side.

Matty giggled and grinned, the feeling apparently mutual.

"Aww, so sweet. Hug it out!" Chris said to Matty, who turned to Mikey and began raising his arms.

"Back off, or that answer can change!" Mikey snapped.

Matty froze, pouting immediately.

“Ugh, fine,” Mikey said, gesturing for him to continue. Matty immediately grabbed him happily as he looked to Chris and growled, “I hate you!”

“Hugs, one, Mikey nil!” Chris said, flashing a toothy grin, triggering more laughs from the rest of the group.

“Get off. Your turn. Someone ask him something!” Mikey said, pushing the other boy away but flashing him just a hint of a smile as he did it, which the other boy eagerly returned.

“Matty, what's it like being Mikey's boyfriend?” James asked with an impish grin.

“Screw you, foot-licker!” Mikey said back, mocking James' grin.

“Wow, abusive partner. Matty, do you need help? Blink twice for yes!” James clapped back instantly, triggering excessive laughs from the boys on the opposite row of sofas.

“Come on,” Chris said, not wanting the game to devolve into teasing and name-calling. “Who's got a real one for him?”

“Oh I know!” Rob said, sitting up eagerly. “What's the most embarrassing thing that's ever happened to you?”

Matty immediately turned bright red. “Erm... nothing. Can't think of anything like that!”

Chris cleared his throat and stood up. “May I remind you, young Matthew, that lying in a game of Truth or Dare is a capital offence under paragraph 14b, sub section a2 or the criminal code!”

“It is?” Matty asked, staring in wide-eyed horror.

“No, you tit,” Mikey said, punching him in the arm.

Chris chuckled and added, “But it's not very sporting of ya, and you're clearly lying. So out with it!” He jumped back into his seat beside Danny.

Matty let out a sigh. “Fine. It was...” he paused for a moment, thinking. “Last Summer, not long after school had broken up. I went to a water park with some mates from school. We decided to try out the biggest water-slide, queued for ages to get there. We're finally to the top and they said I could go first, but as soon as I stepped forward, they yanked down my shorts and pushed me down the slide. So I go flying down, totally starkers. Nobody else really saw, so I kinda lingered in the pool at the bottom, figuring they'd give them back when they came down, but they never came down the slide. I waited, just, like, hiding as much as I could and eventually I see them across the other side of the park. They'd walked back down the stairs from the slide. I ended up having to climb out and make a mad dash for the changing rooms.”

As Matty finished his tale, the others burst into laughter.

“Mate, that's so funny. Obviously not for you, but still...” James said, nudging him playfully on the arm.

Still blushing, but trying to look unbothered, Matty just said, “Well I'm glad my embarrassment

brings you all so much joy, but can we move on?"

"Fine, guess I'll go. That way I've done both and I just get to sit back and watch you lot humiliate yourselves!" James said smugly.

"Okay, okay, quiet down or we're gonna run out of time!" Chris said as the others continued laughing at Matty's story or chattering amongst themselves. "Who's got one for James? Nobody? Okay, here's one then. James, from all of us in here, you have to choose one to snog, one to marry and one to kill. And why!"

"You dick," James said, laughing as he shook his head. "That's awful. But I guess," he looked round the group. "I'd kill David for never shutting up about the dare I did. I'd marry Rob, because he's so obsessively tidy at least I know I'd have a tidy home!" The comment got more cackles from the group.

"Hey!" Rob said, annoyed.

"Mate, he's not wrong! You keep your books alphabetised!" Josh teased, nudging the boy beside him and making the others laugh louder.

"Hey, at least he didn't kill you!" David said, pouting. "I'm probably buried underneath your obsessively tidy patio!"

"Okay, Josh's turn," James called out through the noise.

"Nuh-uh!" Chris called out. "You're not getting off that easy! You didn't choose who to snog!"

"None of you!" James called back moodily.

"If you don't pick, we'll pick for you... and then make you do it!"

James rolled his eyes and sat back in his seat, arms folded as the rest of the group went quiet. "Whoever I pick, I know that'll end up being their dare. This is so unfair!"

"Okay, okay. If we promise not to make that your dare, then you answer... honestly!" Chris offered.

"Deal. Then I'd pick you, just because I feel like you'd know what you're doing better than most of these gits." James answered with a forced smile.

Chris raised his hands and shrugged. "Where's everyone getting this idea I'm some sort of... kissing slut?" More laughter kicked in as Chris continued to protest. "We covered this last week, no experience. None at all!"

Danny leaned forward and whispered to him, "Yet!" then winked and chuckled.

Chris elbowed him gently. "Now who's the tease? You're learning fast!" he said back while the group's attention turned to Josh for the final 'truth' of the game.

"Right, let's hear it then," Josh said, looking round for whoever was going to ask him something.

"I know," Danny said, grinning at Chris before looking to Josh. "Are you brothers into younger guys, cos Chris totally thinks they're hot!"

Chris grabbed Danny in a headlock. "Ignore him!"

Rob had been doing his best to ignore Josh since they sat down, but as he sat there now he couldn't help noticing the other boy's shoulders tense, his fists clenching, despite joining in with the laughter of the rest of the group. It seemed nobody else had managed to pick up on how Josh seemed to shrink into himself at the mere mention of his big brothers.

"That's something you'd need to ask them yourself," Josh said, trying to sound casual.

"Okay, a proper one then," Matty said. "Same one I got. Most embarrassing moment!"

"Easy. Bit dull, but at school I got pantsed, except they managed to get my underwear as well as my trousers. So I ended up half-naked in front of most of the pissin' school!" Josh said. He clearly wasn't as embarrassed by re-telling his story as Matty had about his.

The boys began talking amongst themselves, comparing the two embarrassing stories, though it was mostly a way to just delay the dares, so it was James who called for quiet this time rather than Chris. "Onto the dares!" he said happily.

"David," Mikey said flatly to the smaller boy. "I think the only way we'll really shut this dickhead up," he gestured to James, "Is for you to have the same dare he did. So James, socks off, David, down ya go!"

"Ugh, really? I know where his feet have been!" David muttered.

"Pucker up, footboy!" James was finally able to taunt back.

David screwed his face up as he leaned in closer, tentatively poking out his tongue. James did the rest for him, pushing his foot closer, making his sole make contact with David's tongue.

David immediately recoiled, but as he looked round the group, he steeled himself for it, not wanting to let his new friends down. He leaned in and licked James' foot, heel to toe. Moments later, he was back in his seat desperately wiping his tongue on the sleeve of his t-shirt, making gagging noises.

"Now that that's done, let's cover the other unfinished business, just to get it out of the way..." Chris said, slowly turning to look at Josh. An awkward silence hung over the group as the two boys stared at each other sternly.

Danny and Rob were both about to intervene when the other two suddenly burst into laughter.

"That's your fault!" Chris said, shaking his head. "I was fine til you smirked!"

"I didn't smirk, that's just my face!" Josh said back, grinning. He looked round at the rest of their roommates and said reassuringly, "Don't worry, no freak outs, I promise!"

The group still seemed cautious, so it appeared to be up to Chris. "Okay Josh, I dare you to go to the door and the first person who passes, you have to tell them they have a nice butt!"

Josh smirked, but stood up and headed for the door while the rest of the group cheered him on. He pulled it open and waited. Fortunately, everyone in dorms 1.02 to 1.06 had to pass their door to get to their own dorms so Josh was only waiting a few seconds before someone passed.

It was another Year 7 boy that walked by, not one from dorm 1.02 who they shared classes with. His name was Brian, if Josh remembered correctly, a fairly plain-looking boy with messy blonde hair and glasses.

“Hey,” Josh said, loud enough for the others to hear, prompting a sudden hush. “Nice butt!”

The other boy heard the laughter from inside the room and seemingly figured out the sort of thing that was happening, so he just smiled at Josh and said, “Thanks,” as he carried on walking.

Josh closed the door and returned to the group, hands raised in triumph. “Easy one. And turns out he actually does have a nice butt, so I didn't even have to lie!” Josh beamed, triggering more laughter.

“I'll go next,” Mikey volunteered.

“Pick a number between from 1 to 7,” Josh called out, as nobody else seemed to come forward with any ideas.

Mikey frowned, wondering why, but answered, “Three!”

Josh started from Mikey and counted round three people, Matty was one, Josh himself was two and Rob was three. “Okay, you chose Rob. You have to lick his nipples, 30 seconds on each!”

Mikey looked unhappy, but had figured out it was pointless to argue, so he shrugged and stood up.

Rob was less inclined to comply. “How come I gotta do stuff if it's his dare?” he demanded moodily.

“Hey, you saw it was random, coulda been any one of us. So get those nips out, Robby!” Chris said, trying to sound impartial.

Rob huffed, but lifted his t-shirt anyway. Feeling a bit self-conscious about the slight rolls as he sat hunched up, he stretched his legs out and leaned back in the seat to stretch his torso more taut.

Mikey blushed as he accidentally made eye contact with the other boy for a moment, then leaned down and started licking Rob's left nipple. He counted to thirty in his head, but realised he had counted quickly when he heard the rest of the boys giving him a countdown and still had ten to go. Rather than argue, he just went on until they reached zero. To reach Rob's right nipple for the second half of the dare, he had to lean across the other boy's body, one hand resting on Rob's stomach, the other gripping his shoulder. Again his count of thirty ran quick, so he waited for the others to finish counting before pulling away.

He wiped his mouth and tongue with his arm and the back of his hand as he stood up. “That's nasty,” he said, then looked at Rob and added, “No offense!”

“Looks like Rob enjoyed it more than Mikey!” James called out, pointing to Rob's crotch.

Rob looked down in horror, having been distracted by wiping Mikey's saliva from his chest. The way he had sat already made his small bulge more prominent, but now it was quite clear he was at least a little hard. “No I didn't!” Rob insisted, jumping back to a hunched position and crossing his arms over his lap.

“Rob got a boner, Rob got a boner!” James called out.

“Shut it, dickwad,” Josh said back harshly. “You're probably just trying to distract us so we don't notice your boner. Like a bit of boy-on-boy action, do we?”

James looked ready to argue back, but blushed and lowered his gaze to the ground. “Whatever,” he mumbled.

“Matty, you go next,” Mikey said, nudging the boy next to him as he returned to his seat.

Matty nodded, then looked round the group, visibly nervous about what he would get.

A couple of the boys went to call things out, clearly getting into the swing of things now, but it was James who made himself heard first. “Pick a number from 1 to 7.”

Knowing what had just happened, Matty looked round the group and smiled as he replied, “Three as well!”

Clearly knowing that Matty was trying to target him, James had planned for it and started counting from himself. Two was David, sat next to him, which meant three was Chris. The count got the others laughing, seeing how Matty had been tricked, although Chris looked slightly nervous to be targeted.

“Okay, you and Chris, swap clothes!” James called out.

Matty looked decidedly unhappy but Chris was on his feet in moments, pulling his clothes off and tossing them to the boy opposite. He didn't even flinch as he pulled down his boxers and handed them over. Matty was much slower, leaving Chris stood there naked for a several moments.

“Like what ya see?” Chris asked Danny quietly as the others jeered at Matty to speed up. The other boy had been staring at Chris' pale butt, two perfect milky white orbs.

“No... yes... erm...” Danny stuttered, then shook his head as Chris grinned and added, “Fuck off and get dressed!”

Still laughing at catching Danny out, Chris was finally able to start dressing. Although Chris and Matty were similar in height, Matty was excessively skinny while Chris was substantially more muscled. As a result, Chris' clothes hung off the slimmer boy loosely, while Matty's clothes were skintight on Chris, leaving absolutely nothing to the imagination!

A couple of the boys whistled as Matty sat down, relieved to be dressed again, but Chris posed and milked the attention for all he could before sitting back down.

“Who's left?” Josh asked. “Rob, Chris and Danny, right?” He got a nod from the others. “Rob next then!”

Having sensed the tension between Rob and Josh, Danny decided this was a perfect opportunity to try and force a resolution. “Pick a number,” he stole the idea from the others.

Rob knew the starting point would likely be messed with again so he randomly chose, “Seven!”

Danny looked for a moment but fortunately the choice made it easy to work out. He started next to

Rob, counted round the group and ended up on Josh for seven. “Josh it is. Okay, tonight, you have to sleep in his bunk instead of your own!”

Any other day, Rob would have been delighted with the dare, not only to be close enough to try and look after Josh, but just for the enjoyment of being close to him, something he had quickly come to enjoy when it had happened before. Now though, it felt like the most unwelcome idea in the world.

The dare got a new round and jeers and jibes from the rest of the boys, James asking if they needed a condom, Chris adding that they made a cute couple of a couple of the others just making fake kissing noises.

Josh looked to Rob but was confused by the angry glare he got back. He genuinely thought he was helping.

“Two to go,” Rob called out. “And I've got a good one for both of them!”

Josh and Chris looked at each other in nervous anticipation, then at Rob.

“You two have to hold hands and remain in contact like that until the morning! No separation for anything. You can swap hands or touch other parts... if you need to. If you fail, you get... punished!” Rob called out.

The dare was a clear hit with the rest of the dorm, triggering even more raucous comments than Rob's dare had received. Josh looked terrified, but Chris seemed entirely unfazed.

“Fine by me!” Chris said with a grin, grabbing Josh's hand and holding it up.

Feeling Chris' hand on his own sent shockwaves through Danny. The fact they had to remain in constant contact for the whole night filled him with equal measures of dread and pure excitement.

“Well if that's everyone done, then I'm gonna get ready for bed,” Mikey said, vaulting over the back of the sofa and heading for his wardrobe.

Chattering amongst themselves, the boys began to follow Mikey's lead, eagerly discussing the events of the game they had finally concluded. Seeing Rob was still upset with him, and more-so since Danny gave him the dare, Josh decided to try and lighten the mood a little more. “Hey Danny, didn't you say you needed to shower before bed?” he reminded the other boy, making sure everyone else heard.

Danny, already blushing from the brief hand-holding now turned bright crimson. “Oh... well... it can... it can wait til morning!” he stammered nervously as all eyes fell on him.

“Eww, no way. Remember that 'dorm meeting' you held and made such a big thing about the rules of living together?” James asked, happy to have someone else to tease. Danny had gotten the rest of the boys to agree to some basics, again at the insistence of his mentor Joseph. “Commandment number 2, wasn't it? Thou shalt not stink!”

The taunt got a round of laughter, partially for forcing Danny into the awkward situation, but also for the way James had paraphrased the rule.

“You heard them. Let's go, stinky!” Chris said, marching towards the door, pulling Danny behind him.

With the sounds of the dorm fading behind them, Danny was relieved to see the hallway was mercifully empty. While he and his roommates were not shy about physical affection, something others had tried to tease them about, but soon found themselves backing down to the united force of the eight boys, Danny still wasn't keen to be seen like that.

As they neared the shower room, they could hear running water. It was normally fairly quiet in there in the evening, partially due to the tendency of most boys to shower in the morning, but also because of the amount of boys who showered in the Sports Complex following evening activities. There were always a few people knocking around in there though, more-so on the Year 9 side of the floor, as the showers were, unknown to the Year 7s, used as a handy private spot for a little before-bed 'relief'.

As Chris led the way in, he grabbed two towels from the supply near the entrance and carried on towards the cubicles, seemingly oblivious to the strange look he got from another boy who was just leaving.

"In ya go!" Chris said, gesturing towards a cubicle he had opened.

Danny stepped in, and moved back to allow Chris to join him before shutting the door. The cubicles weren't huge, but there was just about enough space for both of them to move around fairly freely. "You could wait outside," Danny said, "None of them are here, they won't know if we let go for a bit!"

"Yeah but I'd know, Danny, and I am a man of my word!" Chris said with a stern look, before returning to his usual grin.

That was when Danny noticed Chris had two towels. His eyes widened. "Are you... showering too?"

Chris shrugged as he started pulling his t-shirt over his head with his free hand. "Figured I may as well while I'm in here!" He leaned in close, much as he had the previous week when they had been alone together and added, "And maybe you can help me scrub the heard-to-reach areas!" He began to struggle as he was still wearing Matty's clothes which were excessively tight on him.

As Danny nearly got an elbow to the face in the struggle, he decided it was best, and probably safest, to accept what was happening and make it go as smoothly as possible. "Here, let me help. Just keep a hand on me while I take care of it."

Chris smiled as the two made brief eye contact, then grabbed hold of Danny's shoulder. The smaller boy took hold of the tight garment and peeled it upwards, slowly revealing Chris' toned torso. He pulled it over Chris's head, who swapped hands as necessary to get the t-shirt free before Danny hung it on one of the hooks behind the door.

"My turn!" Chris said eagerly, taking hold of Danny's top, ensuring his fingers stayed in contact to honour the dare. Moments later, Danny was shirtless too. Seemingly eager to continue, Chris slid his hand down the length of Danny's body and stopped at the waistband of his jeans.

"Wait," Danny said, grasping at the other boy's hands. He had managed to reach a new level of blushing he had not even imagined possible. "You should know, I've got... I mean... it's... erm..."

Chris grinned. He knew exactly what Danny was nervous about. "That's okay. Me too!"

“You...” Danny started, but stopped, unsure exactly what to say. Instead he just grinned and said, “Okay!” He stood, smiling but scared as Chris undid the jeans, slipped his fingers inside the waistband of them along with his underwear and squatted, pulling them down with him.

Danny's eyes were fixed on the ceiling as he felt his three-inch erection spring free. He felt Chris pulling his socks off, compliantly lifting each foot as needed until the clothing was pulled free, his bare feet touching the cold, tiled floor. Sensing no further movement, beyond the hands on his thighs, he looked down.

Chris had been happily taking in the view, but as he saw Danny look down, he looked back up and grinned broadly. “You're really cute!”

Danny felt like his heart was going to beat right through his ribcage as he heard the compliment from the half-naked boy before him. Eventually Chris stood and Danny repeated what had just been done to him, gulping nervously as his fingers touched smooth skin at Chris' hips. Squatting down, his eye fixed on Chris' crotch, watching as inch after inch of his cock was revealed.

“Holy shit!” Danny exclaimed quietly as five inches of boner sprang free.

“Early developer!” Chris said proudly. He knew in the grand scheme of things, five inches was below average, but on a boy of soon-to-be-twelve, it was monstrous.

“You've got hair too!” Danny said in surprise. From a distance, as he had always seen it before, they had not been visible, but now, mere inches from his face, he could see a few wispy hairs beginning to sprout above his cock.

“Yeah, but I might shave it. I like smooth!” he said casually.

Danny couldn't even comprehend having hair there yet, so the thought of shaving it had never even occurred to him. He stood and hung the last of the clothing on the hooks.

Chris reached out behind Danny and pushed the button to start the shower. Unfortunately, it seemed that particular shower had not been recently used, meaning the initial spurt of water was icy cold, flowing straight down Danny's back.

Danny managed to stifle a yell, but out of pure reflex, jumped away from the cold water, slamming his body up against Chris' as the bigger boy tried to hold in a laugh.

“Sorry about that!” Danny whispered, keeping clear of the water as it warmed up.

“Oh I'm not complaining!” Chris said back, letting his hands slide up and down Danny's sides. He reached a hand back under the spray and said, “Feels like it's warmed up. Ya know, just to make sure we stay in contact, why don't I wash you and you do me?”

Danny was trembling now, almost completely overwhelmed by the unexpectedly intimate moment. He just looked up into Chris' deep green eyes and nodded.

Chris wasted no time in getting started, getting a large glob of shower gel from the dispenser on the wall as he nudged Danny back under the shower. The two boys were both covered in lather in no time, Danny unable to wait for Chris to finish before starting on him. Whether by some unspoken agreement, nervousness or respect for each other, neither ventured a hand towards their ever-present

erections. Despite the intense eroticism of the exchange, the moment was entirely about exploring each other's bodies, ensuring to touch and caress every inch.

They could have quite happily stayed there for hours, but they knew time was short and Mt Trent would definitely hear a running shower, so once they were rinsed off, they grabbed the towels and proceeded to dry each other.

When they came to leave the cubicle, they were glad to hear nobody else in the room, so they would not be spotted. Each of them wore just the towel wrapped around their waist, their clothes bunched up in one hand, the other maintaining the contact mandated by the dare. When they got back to the dorm, most of the others were already in their bunks, but all called out some light-hearted jabs at the two as they entered.

“Here's the happy couple!” Josh called out.

“Did ya get him pregnant?” James teased.

“I support your right to be out and proud!” David called out. While the other comments all got laughs, the timid boy's comments drew sudden silence, all eyes falling on him. “What?” he said defensively. “Sometimes it's nice to be nice!”

Chris beamed happily. “Someone hug him for me, I'm stuck with this guy!” he said, lifting Danny's hand.

Josh, who was on the bunk below David, jumped up and called out, “I'm on it!” He reached up for David who backed away, prompting Josh to climb up to try and deliver the hug at Chris' request.

Meanwhile, the two boys pulled off their towels and tossed them into the laundry hamper. Chris pulled on a clean pair of boxers, while Danny opted for a pair of shorts, foregoing the usual t-shirt as it was a warm evening.

“Hug deployed, Sir!” Josh said, saluting as he dropped to the floor.

“At ease, soldier!” Chris said, playing along.

“Guys,” David called out, seemingly recovered from the forced affection. “What I said, I... really mean it.” It was unusual for David to speak to the group as a whole anyway, normally opting for quiet one-on-one conversations, so he easily had everyone's attention. “My Dad told me about what it was like when he was at school, and you hear about kids our age killing themselves for being bullied and... I never want to be part of anything like that. My parents taught me that it doesn't matter whether you're straight or gay or bi or anything else, people are people.”

“David, are you coming out?” James asked with a snigger.

Mikey kicked him through the mattress from the bunk below. “Don't be a dick!” he called out.

“Sorry,” James said sheepishly, sending the tone in the room.

“I'm not saying anything about me, because I don't know yet, but we're gonna be together a long time and... I don't ever want anyone to be scared of being honest. I can't speak for all of you, only myself, but... you can all always be yourselves with me!”

“David, come here,” Chris requested.

In silence, with the rest of the room watching, David climbed down. The small, chubby boy looked tiny next to Chris, a look of mild trepidation on his face.

“That was probably the nicest thing I’ve...” Chris started, his voice cracking a little, it was only a squeeze of his hand from Danny that kept him going. “I’ve ever heard. You’re fucking awesome, you know that, right?”

David looked relieved, worried he had spoken out of turn initially.

“And what he said, goes the same for me!” Chris added, looking round at the others. He let go of Danny’s hand and pulled David into a hug.

“And me!” Josh said.

“And me!” Matty added.

Within moments, all eight boys had promised the same thing and piled into a giant group hug. When they eventually pulled apart, they all headed back to their bunks. Rob conceded that the tender moment was justifiable reason to take a momentary break from the bet, but insisted it resume once the two boys were on their bunks. They had tried to maintain it while climbing up, but it just seemed unsafe, so once they were both in place, they each reached out a hand across the small gap and grabbed hold.

Rob was less keen when he was reminded of his own dare and reluctantly approached Josh’s bunk, climbing in to a renewed chorus of comments from the others. Unlike previous times they had shared, they lay back to back, not speaking.

They had learned by now that so long as the lights were off and they were all in bed, Mr Trent’s final check of the night was excessively brief, so much so that he didn’t notice (or at least comment) on the shared bunk. Once he had been in and left, they knew they were safe to talk again.

While the others talked quietly about nothing in particular, Josh turned over to face the back of Rob’s head. “Why are you ignoring me?” he whispered.

“I’m not,” Rob replied without turning to face him. “You’ve just made it pretty clear you don’t want to be around me, so I’m just making it easier for you.”

“Come on, you know that’s not true. Usually you’re the only person I actually do want to be around!” Josh insisted.

“Then try being honest with me and tell me where you keep going off to!” Rob demanded.

“I...” Josh started, but couldn’t say any more, he just sniffed, clearly trying to stop himself bursting into tears.

Rob rolled over to face him, suddenly feeling bad for being so accusatory.

“I can’t,” Josh whispered.

“You can!” Rob argued back. “Please Josh, just tell me.”

"I can't. I can't. I don't want you to hate me, but... I really can't!" Josh replied, barely loud enough for even Rob to hear.

Rob could feel the other boy trembling, so he grabbed a hand and replied, "Its okay, I don't hate you. I'm sorry, I'm here when you want to talk, but I could never hate you."

Josh leaned forward and shuffled down the bed, burying his face in Rob's chest as the other boy held him.

It had been about half an hour since lights out and most of the conversation had died down, but it was apparent from the lack of snoring and heavy breathing that nobody was asleep.

"Hey guys," a voice came through the silence. It was Matty. "You know what David said earlier, ya know, about accepting people and stuff. Do any of you... I dunno, have any other thoughts... on all of that..." his voice railed off a little, almost like he was regretting starting to even say it.

"Oh, I'm gay!" Chris called out.

"Wow, no shit!" James called back. For once his bluntness was actually appropriate, getting some laughs from the others.

Chris laughed too. "Fair enough. I know it's not like I hide liking guys, but.. ya know... I just... I've never actually said it aloud before." He felt Danny squeeze his hand, so he squeezed back happily.

"How did you know?" David asked from across the room.

"Well in Ireland we have to take this test. They show you a buncha boobs and see how you react!" Chris explained.

"Shit, really?" Mikey asked in shock.

"No ya daft bastard, I'm kidding!" Chris replied, making the others laugh. As it died down, he went on, "But seriously, I guess I just started seeing people who I wanted to... ya know... be with or do things with, they just happened to be other guys. Just always seemed normal to me, then one day I learned what 'gay' meant and I was like, hey, that's me!"

"Is it weird if I don't know yet?" David asked curiously.

"Look, just cos I know my own feelings doesn't make me an expert, but I don't think so," Chris explained. "We may like to think otherwise sometimes, but we're still just kids, we got loads time to figure stuff out. But thanks to you, Davey, at least we all know we got a safe place to figure everything out."

There was a general murmur of agreement and thanks again for David's speech earlier.

"You know, I read a thing before that said nobody's really gay or straight," Danny called out. "They said it's like a sliding scale and we're all just somewhere on it. Don't know if I believe that, but it kinda makes sense."

"That just sounds to me like someone who wants to think they stand a chance to shag anyone!" Josh called back, having pulled himself away from Rob a little as the conversation picked up.

There were some quiet laughs, but it clearly gave them all something to think about.

Meanwhile, Danny was trying to reposition himself to support his arm. His hand had already gone dead, dangling over the rail and grasping onto Chris'. The other boy seemed to be having the same problem.

"Nope, can't do it!" Chris said angrily, giving up on trying to find a good angle.

"What are you..." Danny started to say, but stopped as he felt Chris moving towards him.

"Come on, budge over," Chris insisted as he climbed across the gap between their bunks.

Danny chuckled at Chris' idea. The bunks weren't exactly big so it was going to be cramped, but at least it was better than having a dead arm all night. As Chris settled into place, he reached back and pulled Danny's arm over him. The two lay in silence for a few moments, their bodies pressed against each other.

"No, this isn't right," Chris said, shaking his head.

"Oh, okay," Danny said, audibly sad. He had been quite enjoying it and was more than a little disappointed Chris was giving up so quickly.

Much to Danny's delight, instead of moving away, Chris just rolled over, nudging the boy beside him and saying, "Roll over!"

As Danny complied, he felt one of Chris' arms slip under his neck, the other one draping across his body as he felt the warmth of the boy's torso against his back. Chris pulled him close, nuzzling his face into Danny's neck as he whispered, "Oh yeah, that's better! This okay with you?"

"Definitely," Danny whispered back contentedly.

"So it doesn't bother you? What I told the others just now?" Chris asked softly.

Danny shook his head, but quickly realised Chris probably couldn't register the gesture, so he replied, "No, why would it? I mean, I kinda guessed anyway!"

Chris squeezed Danny happily, sighing softly. He had never been overly worried about coming out, mostly because he was not really the sort to care too much what others thought of him, but it was still an amazing feeling to be accepted so freely. "So... how about you?" he asked nervously.

Danny shrugged, but again realised he needed to verbalise it. "I really don't know. I mean, before coming here, I hadn't even thought about it, but... well... I know I like you and I think I mean, ya know, LIKE you like you, so that probably means I'm not entirely straight, but I'm kinda... unsure."

"That's okay, I'm not pressuring you, just curious," Chris whispered back reassuringly. "I like you too, by the way," he paused to nuzzle his face into Danny's neck. "But again, no pressure. You figure out you're straight, or not interested, we'll still be friends, I promise."

"Friends who cuddle," Danny replied with a quiet giggle.

"And shower together," Chris added.

“Yeah, that was fun,” Danny said happily. As he felt his own cock stiffen a little at the memory, he felt exactly the same happening with Chris, whose crotch was nestled against his butt. “Oh, look who's back!” Danny said, wiggling his ass just enough to make clear what he meant.

“Sorry,” Chris said, without sounding even remotely sorry.

Danny pulled away slightly and rolled over. With his back pressed against the guard rail, and Chris the same on the opposite side, there was a gap of just a few inches between them. The mixture of moonlight and light leaking round the door from the hallway, it was just enough for the two to see into each other's eyes.

Chris raised a hand and placed it on Danny's cheek, getting a soft, almost imperceptible mew of pleasure. Danny did the same, but only kept it there a moment before letting it trace slowly down his neck, then under the covers onto his chest.

“You don't have to do this,” Chris whispered shakily.

“I want to,” Danny replied, letting his fingers graze the other boy's nipple as it continued down his torso. As his fingers met the waistband of Chris' boxers, he deliberated which way to go, but opted to keep his hand outside them for now, sliding down until they made contact with the solid five inches within.

Chris let out a shaky breath, but decided he didn't want to miss out and let his own hand follow the same route down Danny's body. As his fingers felt the firmness on his shorts, it felt strange, almost like a flashback, to feel a cock so small. It had only been a few months since he had been a mere three inches, but it felt like a lifetime ago. Danny gasped at the contact.

They lay for a few minutes, silently rubbing each other, revelling in the first, exciting moments of contact. Again, Chris allowed Danny to take the lead and made no progression until he felt Danny's fingers slide inside the waistband of his boxers. He grinned as he felt Danny playfully stroking the few wispy hairs for a moment before taking hold of his boner. He did the same, reaching into Danny's shorts.

Chris reached down with his other hand and pushed the boxers down to mid-thigh, giving Danny full access. The smaller boy copied. In a tangle of limbs, they now each had two hands on the other, one exploring the cock, the other gently teasing their balls. Again, the difference in size and development was a source of intrigue for them both, Chris remembering himself at the stage and Danny imagining what it would be like to be that big.

Whether through a lack of experience, sheer excitement or a mix of both, they were both close to orgasm within minutes. The sound of the gentle hand movements were not hard to conceal from the other boys in the dorm, but what they struggled with was stifling their moans and laboured breathing.

“Danny, I'm gonna cum,” Chris eventually gasped.

“Wait, you can...” Danny started, shocked that the other boy was already capable of shooting jizz as he had seen Joseph do a few times now. Before he could finish the question though, he felt a few, thick globs of spunk shoot onto his hand and arm.

The sound of Chris pleased, soft moans, the twitching of his cock, the warm wetness of his spunk,

it was more than enough to push Danny over the edge and his cock convulsed its way through a toe-curlingly-intense orgasm.

Laying there, catching their breath, eyes locked on each other intently they just enjoyed the post-orgasmic bliss for several moments before Danny grinned and whispered, "Fairly sure I'm not straight!"

Chapter 6

When Rob awoke, he could feel the weight of Josh's head on his chest, an arm draped over his stomach and the heat of the boy's body beside him. Unlike previous times they had shared a bed, there was no rush to get out and try to hide it. Being there because of the dare from the night before gave him the perfect excuse.

Glancing down, he could see Josh's eyes were open, just staring blankly across the room at the morning sky visible through the top part of the windows, above the curtains. While Rob felt quite content laying there with the boy who was rapidly becoming his best friend, Josh looked substantially less happy.

“Hey, been awake long?” Rob asked softly, not wanting to disturb the rest of his roommates.

Josh flinched a little, presumably caught by surprise. He looked up at Rob in confusion for a moment, then his lips curved into his usual smile. “Oh, no, not long. Hope I didn't wake you.”

Rob shook his head. “Nah, I'm always up early. I like the quiet before everyone's up,” he whispered with a slight smirk.

Josh raised his head a little and looked round. From his bunk at the bottom, he could see Danny asleep on the top on the other side, an arm presumably belonging to Chris hanging loosely over him as he slept.

“They're really cute together, aren't they!” Josh said with a gentle sigh, gesturing in the direction of the two boys.

“Yeah, they are. How long d'you reckon until they make it official?” Rob replied with a broad grin. While his dare for the two to remain in contact over night had been a reflex, a petty attempt at revenge for Danny's forcing Rob and Josh together, he was glad he had done it.

“You totally know they'll all be saying we're a couple too, soon enough,” Josh said, lifting his head from Rob's chest and resting it on the pillow beside him.

“B... but I'm not... I mean, I'm straight,” Rob mumbled nervously.

Josh shrugged. “Yeah, me too... probably. Won't stop 'em talking though.”

“Are you saying.... do we need to... be round each other less?” Rob asked, frowning.

“No, I don't care what any of 'em say. We're mates, mate. Ain't nothin' gonna change that!” Josh said bluntly.

Rob let out an involuntary sigh. “Good. I like you Josh,” he replied honestly, then gestured over to the sleeping couple, “Just... not in that way!”

“Likewise, mate. Fuckin' likewise,” Josh said, his smile beaming again, but this time it lit up his whole face. He nestled back down against Rob to enjoy the few moments they probably still had before the others awoke.

Danny was still half-asleep when he felt the lips on his neck. "Mmmmm," he mewed happily as he felt them gently kissing his nape. "And good morning to you too!" he mumbled dreamily to the boy wrapped around him.

Chris didn't reply, his lips were too busy, but his hands spoke for him, one sliding up to caress Danny's cheek, the smaller boy nuzzling against it, the other sliding down to stroke the smooth firmness of his stomach.

"It's nearly time to get up," Chris said, finally removing his lips from Danny's neck.

"Thanks to you, I'm already UP!" Danny whispered back. "This we could..." he started, then pushed his butt back against Chris' crotch.

"In the dark with everyone asleep is one thing, but broad daylight with others awake... maybe not!" Chris answered, deliberately keeping his hand above Danny's waistline.

Danny glanced round briefly and could see some movement from the others. He let out a quiet sigh and whispered back, "Reckon we can get that dare again tonight?"

Chris just chuckled as he pulled the other boy tighter against him.

Saturday was football day at Kingswood. Most Saturdays consisted of some brief practice sessions for each year's teams, but also a range of matches. While the Swim team also met on Saturdays, this too was spread throughout the day to ensure that any boys who pursued both sports could attend both.

The Year 7s practice was first thing in the morning and today they had been paired up to face the older and much more experienced Year 9 team. It was always made clear that while winning was nice, it was about good sportsmanship and improving skills, primarily because the older teams always had a greater advantage. That didn't stop the younger teams from trying their hardest though and today was no exclusion.

The matches often drew quite big crowds, many of the students not interested in playing at least enjoyed watching. Currently, Danny and Mikey of Dorm 1.01 were on the pitch, while Josh was on the sidelines, ready to be subbed in as needed. Chris, Matty and James had all come to watch and cheer on their classmates, although one spectator in particular was proving more hinderance than help.

As Danny stood in goal, the ball comfortably engaged at the far end of the pitch, he could barely keep his eyes off of Chris, who kept staring. Knowing the mischievous Irish lad, it was as much to distract and mess with Danny as it was a result of their mutual attraction.

Having almost completely missed the ball working its way down the pitch and only managing to save it at the last second, Danny tried to shake it off and told himself to remain focussed on the match. As the ball once again worked down towards the Year 9 goal, Danny forced himself to look the other way, over at the players area rather than the spectators.

Danny noticed Josh standing there and smiled, but the other boy appeared not to notice. He too seemed fixated with the spectator stand, although he looked substantially less happy than Danny did when looking. The goalkeeper looked across, trying to follow his friend's line of sight and it seemed

he was watching a bunch of much older boys, presumably Years 12 or 13 based on the presence of Josh's older brothers.

Josh finally broke his gaze and glanced round. Seeing Danny looking his way, his regular smile reappeared instantly.

The match went on and concluded, as expected, in a loss for the Year 7 group, but it was close, 2-1 in favour of the Year 9s. The coach had called both teams in after the match while the Years 8 and 10 teams took to the pitch to warm up and congratulated them all on a good match. He had actually singled out Danny for praise, the young boy having saved several goals and Adam Martin, a Dorm 1.03 boy for scoring the only goal against the older team.

Danny was following the rest of the team round to the spectator stand, eager to join Chris, but noticed something strange as he got there. The football pitch was at the far reaches of what was considered the main school grounds, the spectator stand almost the boundary line before several metres of empty space, eventually giving way to thick shrubbery and trees. While the boys were not forbidden from wandering the grounds, few tended to venture beyond the areas around the buildings and the designated social areas dotted around. That was why it seemed really strange to see Josh, along with his two big brothers disappear around the stand and wander beyond the treeline.

He made a mental note to subtly ask about it later, wondering if the three siblings were up to no good, remembering fondly the mischief he used to do with his big sister that their parents would never know about. He settled in next to Chris to watch as the next match began.

As always, the crowd got really into the match, especially as it seemed the two teams playing had started somewhat of an extreme rivalry the year before, caused by the younger team achieving victory over the elder on their very first match.

As much as Danny was enjoying himself, engrossed in what was becoming a really tight match, with the boy he liked beside him and friends all around, something kept gnawing at the back of his mind. He kept glancing back at the treeline but the Williams siblings had yet to emerge. Unsure whether it was more concern or simply curiosity, Danny finally succumbed to it and excused himself from the group.

“Just gotta do something, back soon,” Danny said, sounding deliberately casual.

“Don't be too long,” Chris said back, then leaned close and said, “We got swimming soon and I do NOT wanna miss you in swimwear!” he winked as he said it, making Danny blush as he walked away down the steps.

Looking round for an opportunity to slip behind the stand without being noticed, Danny quickly realised all eyes were on the pitch anyway, so he ran back and jogged across to the trees. Being careful to ensure he kept a good sense of direction, as he had no idea how big the forest was, he slowly made his way through. While the part the three siblings had gone through was not exactly a fully-formed path, it showed enough signs of use to make an easy-to-follow route.

Danny stopped as he heard a yell, but it came at the same time as a loud cheer from the stands in the distance, mostly blocking it out. He continued on down the path and eventually stopped when he saw movement ahead. He ducked behind a tree, worried that he may be intruding on something he should not have been and actually considered just turning back to respect their privacy. Then he heard a yell again and realised it was more akin to a scream... from Josh.

Peering round, Danny saw his roommate pinned to the ground in a small clearing, Ryan, the middle sibling straddling his brother's chest, arms pinned to his sides, while Mark, the eldest, stood over them.

"No, no please, no!" Josh yelled out, squirming in vain against the much larger body on top of him.

Squinting to make out exactly what was happening, the area shaded by the heavy tree coverage, Danny crept a little closer and soon managed to see that Mark was lowering something onto his little brother's face. It appeared to be a bug of some sort.

Josh's yells suddenly muffled as the creature was held right above his face. As Mark pushed it off of his hand and onto the smaller boy's forehead, Josh let out a momentary scream, before Ryan covered his mouth to silence him.

"It's just a little spider, bro, stop being such a pussy!" Mark laughed at the sobbing boy beneath him.

"And stop fucking screaming!" Ryan added, keeping a hand over his mouth.

"Bro, move your hand," Mark said, eyes wide as a horrific grin spread across it.

"He'll just scream!" Ryan said angrily.

"I said move it!" Mark snapped, smacking his brother round the head. "Let's really give him something to scream about!" He retrieved the spider from Josh's face and held it up as Ryan removed his hand.

As expected, Josh screamed again but immediately wished he hadn't as Mark grabbed his jaw, holding his youngest sibling's mouth open and dropped the spider inside, promptly covering it with his hand.

Josh's previous squirming was nothing compared to what came next. He bucked so wildly he almost managed to throw off Ryan, despite being half his size.

Shocked, appalled and terrified of what he was seeing, Danny shook himself from his daze and yelled out, "GET OFF OF HIM!" He ran forward into the clearing.

The two teens stared at Danny in shock, Ryan looking guilty but Mark just looking pissed.

"Just playing with little Joshua," Mark said, trying to sound casual but visibly furious at the interruption. "But we got better things to do. Let's go, bro," he said, heading for Danny, gesturing for Ryan to follow.

Ryan, who had covered Josh's mouth as soon as Mark had stood up held in place for a moment, but then jumped off and followed.

"See ya later, Joshua!" one of the two called back as Danny rushed to his friend's side.

Josh had tried to spit out the spider as soon as the hand was gone, but now, laying on the ground whimpering, his entire body convulsed as he threw up. At first it gargled in his mouth, but then exploded out as he rolled onto his side, spitting it up.

“Fuck. Josh... I...” Danny started as he knelt beside the prone boy.

Josh glanced up for a moment before a second convulsion rocked through him and he threw up another mouthful. Thoroughly emptied out, he flopped onto his back, still catching his breath shakily.

Danny looked at the boy, usually so smiley and confident, laying there now. His hair was a mess, specked with dirt and debris from the ground, remnants of vomit around his mouth and down one shoulder, his face and hands smeared with mud and his sweatpants darkened around his crotch, suggesting he had wet himself at some point. Danny could have cried at the sight of him, but held it together as he moved to his side.

“Josh, what were they... why would...” Danny started, but no question seemed to quite make sense.

Josh just stared straight upwards, almost catatonic.

“Josh?” Danny asked, tentatively reaching out a hand and placing it on his shoulder. He stayed like that for a few minutes as Josh's breathing began to calm a little.

Danny knelt up and slid his hand under Josh's back, raising him into a sitting position. He lifted one of the boy's arms and placed it around his shoulder, then grabbed him round the waist and began lifting him to his feet. It was clear he was in a fair bit of pain too from the reluctance to put his full weight on his left leg.

“Come on mate, let's get you cleaned up,” Danny said, amazed at his ongoing ability to stop himself from sobbing out of sheer sympathy.

Josh remained silent, but let Danny help him up. As they headed to the path, Josh mumbled, “No!” As Danny looked round at him, he added, “People!”

Danny nodded, understanding what he meant. He didn't want anyone else to see him like that and Danny could understand why. He continued down the path a little, but then started walking round, just beyond the treeline so they could not be seen, circling the school grounds to get clear of the Sports Complex.

Thankfully, the grounds were deserted, everyone either watching the football match, or off doing their own things elsewhere, so the walk from the woods to the Home Building went unobserved. As they stepped inside, Danny looked ahead and saw the stairway was clear.

As they climbed the stairs, Danny could feel his friend holding onto him tightly, though he was unsure whether it was for fearing of toppling down the stairs or simply for comfort. As they reached the hallway, he considered leading Josh straight to the dorm to undress, but realised some of the others might be there, so they headed to the shower room instead.

The room was silent as they arrived, so Danny grabbed a towel as they passed the supply and took Josh to the cubicle furthest from the door. It felt so strange to be going in with him. Just last night he had been doing this, but with Chris and for very different reasons.

“There ya go, bud,” Danny said as he positioned Josh in the cubicle and stepped back.

Josh just stood there, staring at the floor, visibly shaking.

“Do you... want me to help?” Danny asked, not wanting to over-step or do something to upset him further. When Josh nodded, without even looking up, he stepped into the cubicle and shut the door.

Danny quickly undressed Josh, removing his wet sweatpants first, along with his trainers and socks, helping support him when he had to stand on the left foot. That was followed by the football shorts underneath and then football shirt, leaving him in just boxers. Danny paused for a moment, looking up, but when Josh didn't even react, he pulled them down.

Reaching out, he went to press the button to start the shower, but pulled Josh towards him as he did so. “It's cold,” Danny explained his reasons softly, although Josh continued to appear unresponsive.

Once the water warmed, Danny gently pushed Josh back under the spray. He considered removing his own clothes, but decided against it, just accepting that he would end up wet.

The hot water flowed down Josh's body, dark rivulets of grime flowing down as the loose dirt and grime washed off from Josh's head and face. Realising Josh was still showing no signs of doing it for himself, Danny took a large glob of shampoo and began to wash the other boy's hair. He pushed him back again, so the spray hit Josh's head and the shampoo flowed away.

Pulling Josh forward once more, Danny wiped the water from his face, but quickly figured that it was not all from the shower. Tears had begun to stream silently down his cheeks.

“Josh?” Danny enquired again.

Josh looked up this time, their eyes making contact, remaining fixed for several seconds as the naked boy's crying grew more intense. He staggered back, leaning against the tiled wall, then slid down it, curling up and pulling his knees up to his chest as he sobbed helplessly. Danny knelt in front of him and pulled him into a hug, the distraught boy gripping on tightly.

Danny had never heard crying like it before. It was a heartbreaking wail of such absolute misery that finally broke Danny's ability to hold back his own tears, letting them stream down his cheeks silently, washed away by the shower as he knelt holding his friend.

Josh had stayed in that state for several minutes before eventually calming down enough to stand back up and finish cleaning himself off. When they turned the shower off, Danny offered him the towel.

“I think you need it more than I do!” Josh said weakly, the first proper words he had spoken.

Danny smiled. He knew it was just an attempt to cover up the awkwardness so he chuckled and said, “Yeah, but I'm not the naked one. You sort yourself out, I can grab another one.” He reached for the lock on the cubicle door, but felt a hand grab his shoulder.

“Danny. Please... please don't tell anyone,” Josh asked quietly.

Danny nodded. “I won't say anything to the others, but... you're gonna report this, right?” Danny asked, ensuring he had understood correctly.

Josh shook his head emphatically. “No, nobody. Please Danny, please!” he begged.

Danny just stared at him for several moments. He was torn. He knew that someone being bullied, or whatever this was, needed to be addressed, but at the same time he wanted to respect his friend's

wishes and keep his trust. Against his better judgment, he nodded and said, “Okay, not a word!”

They unlocked the cubicle and left, Josh with a towel round his waist and clothes bundled under one arm, Danny dripping wet but with a towel round his neck to dry off in the dorm.

As they stepped in, they found Rob sat on the sofa with a book and David putting swimming gear into a bag.

“Hey guys!” Rob called out as he saw the two enter. “What happened to you?” he asked, seeing the soaking-wet Danny.

“Over-excited football celebration!” Josh called out with a broad grin.

Danny frowned for a moment. The distraught, beaten, upset boy he had been with moments before was suddenly gone, replaced with the usual cheerful-looking Josh. It was like a switch had been flipped. When he said he didn't want anyone else to know, he was obviously being serious, because looking at him now nobody would ever guess what he had just been through.

“Are you... okay?” Danny asked, following Josh over to his wardrobe where he began pulling out some clean clothes.

“Yeah, fine,” Josh said, like nothing had happened. “Think I'm gonna grab some kip. That match really wore me out!” he said, loud enough for the other two to hear.

“Yeah... the match...” Danny said, eyeing Josh up and down. He stepped closer again and said softly, “I'm here if you need to talk!”

“Bout what?” Josh asked with a shrug as he pulled on a t-shirt. “I'm good!”

“Okay,” Danny said, now more concerned than he had been when Josh was crying. “Well I... guess I should get to the pool then...” Danny pulled off his wet clothes and dried off while Josh moved over to his bed to lay down.

“Hurry up, you'll be late,” David said, lingering near the door. “I thought you were going straight to swimming after football.”

With dry clothes on, and David hurrying them along, Danny was soon back over at the Sports Complex where Chris and James were stood waiting for them.

“What took ya so long? I was about to come looking,” Chris said as they headed inside.

“Yeah, sorry,” Danny mumbled as they walked. The entire ordeal with Josh just kept playing over and over in his head.

“Oh my God, I can't believe we pulled that off!” David said excitedly, almost running circles around Danny as they slowly made their way into the main atrium of the Home Building. “Jaxxar is awesome, not like Yodd, all he gets to do is hide and heal people!”

“Hey, don't be like that. The healer keeps the whole party going. Can't pull off the heist if we're all dead in the first round!” Joseph said reassuringly. “If you hadn't chucked that HP my way at the end

I'd have been down, maybe for good!" he added, patting the younger boy on the back.

The three boys had not long finished playing Dungeons & Dragons, their usual Friday evening activity. Danny had been delighted in the first week when he found out that not only someone else from his dorm, but his own mentor was also part of the club. The three had created their characters together and now played in the same campaign.

"I guess so. But still Jaxxar was amazing tonight," David said, complimenting the older boy's character.

"Thank you. Yodd was a literal life saver," Joseph returned the compliment as they neared the stairs. He looked to Danny and said, "And Strider was..." he paused, waiting to see if Danny even responded to his character's name, "... well he was there... almost." The concerned teen sighed and looked back to David. "Hey mate, I need to have a chat with Danny."

David nodded happily. "No prob, I'll see you next week," he said, starting up the first few steps. "See you in a bit, Danny."

Danny didn't even respond, his eyes glazed over.

"Spill it," Joseph said, swatting Danny gently round the back of the head.

Danny looked round, shaken from his thoughts. "Spill... what?" he asked, frowning.

"You've been distracted all night. Seriously, you needn't have even bothered being there tonight, you were useless and that's not like you. What's going on?" Joseph asked directly. He had quickly learned that a very direct approach worked best with his young mentee.

"I... can't say," Danny said, shaking his head.

"You can tell me anything. I thought we'd covered that," Joseph insisted, leading Danny away to a bench in the adjoining corridor.

"We did. It's just... it's not mine to tell," Danny replied, feeling bad for keeping things from Joseph. The older boy really had become important to him, guiding him through his first few weeks in the school amazingly well. Their occasional mutual masturbation had cemented their bond even further, the sharing of such an intimate act bringing them closer.

Joseph nodded, thinking for a moment. "Okay, then... tell me about without telling me. Like, give me the general idea, but leave out anything specific like names or things like that."

Danny considered the request for a few moments. It did actually make sense. Just at that moment, he spotted Josh walking along the hallway above with Rob, but quickly looked away, keeping his eyes fixed on Joseph to avoid giving anything away. He took a breath and started, "Okay, well... I saw someone doing something to someone, something bad and I helped, but I feel like the something and the someone's needs to be reported to someone like a teacher, but the someone it was being done to asked me not to do anything and is now acting like it never even happened so I'm torn between keeping the trust of... someone, or doing what I think I probably should do and reporting the other someones for what they did and then because I've been so distracted thinking about the something that I kinda totally ignored someone else all day who I should probably have been a lot more focused on."

“And the award for longest run-on sentence is...” Joseph started, then mimed opening an envelope. “Oh my God, it's Danny Davies. Come on up and get your award, Danny!”

Danny scowled. “If you were as funny as you think you are, I'd be laughing. Do you see me laughing?” Danny said coldly. “And stop joking around. This is... serious!”

“I know, I know, sorry,” Joseph said apologetically. “Okay, I think I followed most of that. So let me ask, if you don't tell anyone, what do you think will happen?”

Danny thought about it for a moment, then shrugged. “I don't know. I guess I don't really know any of the someones that well, or if it's happened before... or why it happened.”

“Fair enough. And what happens if you do tell someone?” Joseph went on.

“Well if... J... the someone,” Danny started, almost saying Josh's name. “Doesn't back me up, it's my word against theirs and nothing happens. Plus he'd probably never forgive me.”

“Look, unless you can tell me specifics, I can't really say for sure what I think is right here, but on that vague crap, I think you know your answer,” Joseph said, wishing the boy would give him more.

“I suppose I could keep quiet, but keep an eye out for any other trouble,” Danny said, actually feeling mildly relieved to have offloaded some of the load.

“Good plan. You know I'm always around if you need any support with it,” Joseph offered. “Oh, and ignoring your boyfriend, just apologise to him. Chris sounds pretty cool from what you've told me, I'm sure he'll understand.”

“Er... erm... no... it's not... I mean, Chris is... he's not my...” Danny stuttered. He was completely caught off guard. The things that had happened, or might be happening, with Chris he had not really shared with Joseph.

“Relax. I know you, little buddy. The way you talk about him, it was pretty obvious.” Joseph said with a grin. “And you know I'm cool with anything.”

“Yeah,” Danny said, smiling despite his blushes. “But we're just friends.”

“Oh,” Joseph said with a broad grin slowly creeping across his face. “So does that mean you

The First Floor Common Room was shared by all of Years 7 to 9. It was a huge open area with a mixture of booths and sofas down one side and tables and chairs down the other. A long row of bookshelves separated it down the middle, while the end had a small kitchen area with drinks and snacks.

It was used for socialising as much as for school work, but most of the boys who had been using it that evening were just hanging out. While it could get quite lively in there, Mr Trent tended to spend a lot of time in there. He seemed content to leave the boys to their own devices as long as nobody got excessively rowdy.

Josh and Rob were probably two of the only boys who had been working, sitting together huddled in a corner booth, plotting. They were both in the Debate Club, usually paired up by their own

choice. They had been working on their plan for their next debate at the club's Tuesday night meeting.

Satisfied that they had both content and presentation down perfectly, as well as a good range of rebuttals for what they anticipated being asked, they decided to head back to the dorm. "G'night Mr T." Josh said cheerfully as they passed by the teacher on their way out.

"Night lads," the teacher said back without really looking up from his book.

As they headed along to the dorm, they met David who was just coming up the stairs. Glancing down, they saw Danny talking to Joseph, but they were clearly too engrossed in conversation to notice them.

"So did you save Narnia?" Josh asked, knowing where David had been for the evening.

"It's not Narnia!" David said sternly.

"He knows," Rob said, shaking his head as Josh held back a smirk. "He's just messing with you!"

"Yeah, I know it's all set in Middle Earth," Josh said, trying to sound serious.

David scowled at him. "That's not it either!"

"David," Rob said bluntly. "He's teasing. Don't pay him any attention!"

The smaller boy's angry scowl continued. "Josh, you're such a dick!"

"Did someone say Joshua?" a voice called out from round the next corner, beyond the door to their dorm.

Josh froze at the sound, his smile dropping instantly.

"Hey, little bro. We were waiting for you!" Josh's eldest brother, Mark, said, stepping round the corner.

Ryan, the middle sibling appeared right behind him. "Alright lads," he said cheerfully, looking to Rob. "You must be Rob, right? Joshua's told us so much about you. And which one is this?" he asked, looking to the third boy.

"I'm David," David said with a polite smile, holding out his hand.

Ryan took it and shook it, smiling. "Good manners, you'll do well here little man!"

"Thanks," David said shyly.

"Mind if we steal our bro away for a bit?" Mark asked, strolling up casually and putting an arm around Josh's shoulders.

Rob didn't say anything, but knowing the way Josh reacted to his big brothers, looked at him questioningly.

"Go ahead," Josh said, nodding to the dorm door. "I'll be in shortly."

Rob nodded and headed in behind David. He looked back to see the three siblings disappear around the corner.

As Danny entered the dorm, he couldn't help smiling. His post-orgasmic high was lingering pleasantly long after he and Joseph had snuck off into a quiet room to jerk off together. He felt a slight quiver of guilt as he saw Chris, feeling like he had been cheating on him, but they had both been quite clear in that, for now, they were just friends, so he pushed the feeling aside.

Four of the boys were on the sofas, while Mikey and Matty were sat on Mikey's bunk, joining in the conversation from above.

"Danny, you can settle this. Your match this morning against the Year 9s, Mikey insists he's to thank for the goal you scored, even though it was Adam that kicked the ball. How wrong is he?" James asked with a mischievous smirk. He always loved to stir up trouble between the boys.

"I'm not saying I scored it. I'm saying he was only able to score it because I set him up for it!" Mikey insisted, rolling his eyes.

"Yeah, but that's like saying the coach scored it because he set your positions or because he organised the match," James argued back.

"I dunno, I'm just the goalkeeper," Danny said with a shrug as he moved round the sofas and, as always, chose the seat next to Chris, who smiled happily as he sat down.

"That's right. You just stand there looking pretty, don't you!" Chris said, half-teasing, half-complimenting as he put an arm around the other boy playfully.

Danny blushed, and tried to keep a straight face but the smile was irresistible. "True," he accepted. "I just mean, maybe ask someone else who was on the field a bit closer to the action. Josh was in for the second half, what do you..." he paused, glancing round to ask Josh his opinion, then frowned. "Oh, I thought I saw him come back with you guys."

Rob glanced at Danny. He had been watching the door ever since he came in, waiting for Josh to return but had remained silent, not wanting to give away what he knew. Attempting to sound casual about it, he said, "Oh, yeah, we bumped into Ryan and Mark outside. They wanted him for something."

Danny's eyes widened, but he just managed to prevent himself jumping out of his seat. "Okay, cool," he said, feeling his heart pounding. "Oh, I need to the toilet. Be right back!" He got up and got a strange look from Rob, but avoided looking back for too long, as if he were afraid that the other boy would be able to see Josh's secret in his eyes. Trying to still act normal, as he neared the bunks he looked up to Mikey and said, "If you didn't kick the ball, you didn't score the goal. Sorry mate."

Danny's comment, presumably intended to end the discussion only made Mikey argue back against James more. He could hear them squabbling as he got to the door. Closing it behind him, he felt panic kick in. He had to find Josh, but he had no idea where he might be and asking about it would have given away his real motives for leaving the dorm.

He wandered along to the hallway at the top of stairs, looking up and down for any sign of the boy. As he heard movement behind him, he looked round but it was only Kyle, a dorm 1.04 boy who Danny had spoken to a few times. "You okay?" Kyle asked, seeing the visibly nervous Danny.

"Oh, yeah," Danny said, trying to compose himself. "Was just looking for someone. Erm... Josh. Josh Williams, from my dorm."

Kyle thought for a moment. "Erm, if he's the one I'm thinking of, I think he's back that way with some older boys," he offered, gesturing back the way he had come from. "But I might be wrong. I'm so clueless with names. So many new people here, right! How you finding it? I'm finding it kinda... erm... rough."

"Oh, erm... I've gotta..." Danny mumbled, rushing past the other boy. He looked back briefly while he was walking and added, "Sorry, not being rude... I've just got to... it's important. But hey, let's chat some time!"

"Sure," Kyle said, eyes lowering to the ground as he turned away.

Danny had just got the corner past the dorm when he heard voices. Taking a breath, he stepped round to find Josh and his older brothers walking towards them.

"Oh, speak of the devil..." Mark said jovially as Danny appeared.

"Yeah, we were just coming to find you," Ryan added.

"Are you... okay?" Danny asked, looking straight at Josh who looked tiny compared to his much larger siblings.

"Yeah," Josh replied with a nod.

"Danny, isn't it?" Mark asked. "Look, about what you saw earlier, we just wanted to clear the air."

Ryan nodded. "Yeah, we get how it probably looked and... we did take things a bit too far."

"A bit!?" Danny exclaimed, a knot forming in his stomach.

"That's fair. Yeah, we took things way too far. It was just... brother stuff that got carried away," Mark said, sounding sincerely remorseful.

"See, I told you it was nothing," Josh chimed in.

Danny looked at his friend, then at the two older boys and back again, clearly suspicious.

"We actually wanted to thank you. Josh told us how you looked after him. Not many kids your age would have been able to do that, and even fewer would have had the nerve to stay quiet about it like he asked," Mark said, moving away from Josh and placing a hand gently on Danny's shoulder. "You're a good friend and a great person. I'm glad our little brother has friends like you."

He sounded sincere, but what really convinced Danny was the use of the name Josh. It was literally the only time he had heard the teens use Josh's preferred name rather than the formal Joshua.

"We've already apologised to our little bro, and now we just needed to apologise to you," Ryan

added. "So are we cool here, big man?" The sixteen-year-old held out a fist and as Danny eventually nodded, he added, "C'mon, bump it! Don't leave a dude hanging!"

Danny smiled reluctantly and reached out to fist-bump the Year 12 boy.

"Cool. So we're all good," Mark said, taking his hand off of Danny's shoulder and holding it out as Ryan had. When Danny bumped it, he turned to Josh and said, "Sorry again, bro. Catch ya later."

"Yeah, see ya around," Ryan added to his brother, then patted Danny on the back as he passed. "And you, stay cool!"

The two boys remained there as Ryan and Mark disappeared up the stairs towards their floor and once he was satisfied they were completely gone, Danny looked to Josh. "Was that... real or are they just frickin' good actors?"

"Real. Totally real," Josh insisted. "They apologised and everything so we're all good."

Danny nodded, the two boys standing in silence for a moment as a Year 8 boy passed heading to his dorm.

"Thanks for... coming to check on me and for... earlier. Sorry I... erm... cried on you," Josh whispered the last part, "I feel like such a pussy." He was blushing heavily now. "You won't... erm..."

"Secret's safe with me," Danny reassured him. Wanting to end the awkwardness, he smiled and said, "Come on, let's get back. Mikey's trying to take credit for Adam's goal this morning!"

"What? Oh my God, he's such a dick!" Josh laughed as the two boys headed for their door.

Chapter 7

The first half-term was rapidly approaching and most of the Year 7 boys were looking forward to it eagerly. As much as many of them complained about overbearing parents or annoying siblings, being away from them for six weeks, usually for the first time, was harder than expected. For many, the hardest part was being away from their phones.

Kingswood had a very strict, and often controversial, rule that Year 7 students were banned from bringing mobile phones to school for their first term. It had been established over the years that total seclusion from friends and family, while tough, acclimated the boys to the school atmosphere much quicker. Before the ban, there were students who would be calling their parents several times a day, either through homesickness or simply dependence. While there were still facilities to make contact, the Year 7 boys were encouraged to use it only in emergencies.

The half-term break meant that, at least for a week, the boys would regain their connection to the world. While there was the option for the boys to stay at the school during half-term breaks, very few actually did so.

It was Thursday night, the evening before the break officially started. Most students would not leave until Saturday, but there were often occasions when they would need to leave Friday night, usually when flights were involved for any families going away on holiday for the week.

Thursday night also happened to be Danny and Chris' favourite time. After dinner, Josh and Rob would go off to Rugby, Mikey and Matty to Basketball and David and James to Astronomy Club, which meant they had the dorm entirely to themselves.

The evening always started the same, the two boys rushing up after dinner and, once they were sure everyone else was off to their activities, their clothes would come off. Tonight was no exception. They had undressed each other and now stood facing each other, each looking the other up and down hungrily, both sporting a raging erection.

Through their Thursday evenings together, and the occasional night when Chris had slipped across into Danny's bunk, they had quickly learned what the other liked. Chris was very straightforward, he liked it hard and fast, always encouraging Danny to pump his little fist as fast as possible, his other hand usually caressing the more developed boy's balls. Chris would always stop him, right before cumming, normally several times, forcing Danny to wait and start again, edging him several times before finally shooting his meagre load.

Danny was very different. So intoxicated by Chris' touch, he would often ask the bigger boy to hold him from behind, their bodies pressed together for maximum contact, with one hand stroking his three-incher delicately and slowly, the other wandering his torso, with particular attention paid to his nipples which Danny noticed were becoming increasingly sensitive to Chris' touch. He enjoyed the slow build-up, the prolonged moment of near-ecstasy as he felt the orgasm imminent, but just out of reach.

“Oh fuck!” Danny gasped, trembling. Chris had made him cum, as usual, but tonight had decided to continue touching the younger boy after his orgasm, keeping him as aroused as possible and starting to stroke his eager tool again mere minutes later. Sensitive as it was, Danny could feel another orgasm would not be hard to achieve, so he allowed himself to melt into Chris' arms and just enjoy it.

Chris happily nibbled away at Danny's neck as he pushed the boy closer and closer to his second

climax, grinding his own cock against the smooth, firm mounds of his buttocks.

“Chris.... Chris... oh, ah.... fuck...” Danny moaned, attempting to tell the boy behind him that he was close, but not quite managing to get the words out. The meaning was clear though.

Chris sped up his stroking to push Danny over the edge and felt his entire body tense for a moment, before his legs started trembling, his whimpers getting higher and more intense. As it began to subside, the boy finally starting to catch his breath, he turned round and hugged Chris, mewling happily as he leaned his head against the taller boy's chest.

“That was... wow...” Danny said dreamily.

“Well I figured I won't be seeing you next Thursday, so I'd give you an extra one to make up for it!” Chris explained happily.

“Well if that's what we're doing...” Danny said, letting his hand slide between them to grab Chris' erection.

“You don't have to!” Chris said, worried Danny simply felt obliged.

“I know, so the fact I'm doing it...” he said, letting his fingers slide up and down as he leaned back and looked Chris in the eye, “Should make it clear that I want to!”

Chris leaned back, grabbing at the end of one of the bunks. They had intended to settle on the sofas, but they had started stripping each other as soon as they entered the dorm and had only got halfway down the room before the need to touch each other had got too great to resist.

It didn't take long before Chris's cock was throbbing out its second load in half an hour. Considering his normal load was barely more than a gentle spurt, this second one was barely a dribble, but to Danny, who had yet to develop beyond dry orgasms, it was mesmerising.

Finally spent, the two boys wandered happily to the sofas. Chris sat down, while Danny lay with his legs over one arm, his head resting on Chris' lap. The content Irish boy looked down at the boy on his lap, letting his fingers casually caress through his dark blonde hair.

“What ya thinking?” Danny asked softly, staring up into Chris' deep green eyes.

“Just... how much I'm going to miss you next week,” Chris answered honestly, his tone betraying just how much he meant it.

“Yeah, I'm gonna miss you too,” Danny replied, raising a hand to Chris' cheek. “But hey, catching up with all your brothers and sisters and the rest of your family, you're not even gonna give me a second thought!” he added with a grin, trying to put a positive spin on it.

Chris nuzzled his cheek against Danny's hand, closing his eyes for a second as he let out a sigh. “Yeah, that's not gonna happen,” he said, shaking his head.

Danny lowered his hand and frowned. “Why not?”

“Turns out my parents are gonna be away on 'urgent' business,” Chris said, adding air quotes around urgent. “And with my brothers and sisters already taking up space at my Aunt and Gran's place, they said it was just easier if I stay here for half-term.”

“That really sucks, I'm sorry!” Danny said, sitting up. He put an arm around his friend and leaned against him, resting his head on the other boy's shoulder for a moment before popping back up to say, “Oooh, I could stay too! We could have a naked week!”

Chris laughed and shook his head. “Sounds hot, but you can't just skip out on your family to hang out with me. Even if they were okay with it, I wouldn't be. I know how much you've missed them.”

Danny nodded. “Yeah, I know,” he said reluctantly. “Still sucks though.”

“On the subject of home, before you came here did you have... like... a... a friend... like a best friend.... someone you were... like... close with?” Chris asked, sounding uncharacteristically timid.

“Oh yeah,” Danny said, nodding. “So many!” He had to stop himself laughing at the distraught look on Chris' face. “A whole army of them actually. Totally Mr Popular, I was!”

The worried look dropped from Chris' face as he realised Danny was just messing with him. “You're such a dick!” he said, only half serious, smirking reluctantly.

Danny sat up and span round in the seat so he was facing the other boy directly. He reached up and pinched Chris' cheek. “Aww, is widdle Chrissy worried he's got some competition?”

“Piss off,” Chris said, batting the hand away. “And no, who could compete with this?” he asked, standing up and gesturing from his head to his feet.

Danny stood and faced him, looking up slightly at the taller boy. “You're right. Nobody could.” He leaned forward and wrapped his arms around him.

“Damn right!” Chris said confidently as he held Danny close, then mumbled quietly, “But seriously, please don't replace me!”

“Never!” Danny whispered back.

“Oh my God,” Rob groaned, leaning against the wall and slowly sliding down it until he was sat on the narrow bench against it. “I'm glad we're off next week. I'm gonna need it just to recover!”

Josh let out a heavy sigh. “Yeah, tonight was... brutal,” he said, shaking his head.

Rugby practice was always quite tiring, but tonight the coach had pushed them extra hard because he didn't want them, in his words, 'going soft over half term'.

“My parents are due tomorrow night,” another boy said beside them, slumped on the bench. His name was Nicholas Edwards, or Nick as he was to most people. He was in dorm 1.03 so Josh and Rob had no classes with him, but had got to know him over the last six weeks during Rugby practice and matches. “Tell them I died doing what I loved!”

“Sitting down and bitching?” Josh offered playfully.

Nick looked to Rob. “Mate, do me a favour. Lift my hand up and slap him with it, would you?”

Rob laughed at the request but shook his head. “Nah, it's not often he's funny, let him have this one!”

Nick laughed back as Josh just scowled comedically at both of them. Wanting to change the subject before he was the butt of any more remarks, Josh asked, “Why you leaving tomorrow? I thought Year 7s were leaving Saturday morning.”

“We're going away for the week. Got an early flight Saturday,” Nick explained. “I'm just hoping my Mum doesn't come when Dad picks us up.” As he got a quizzical look from the others he added, “Oh no, my Mum's great. It's just if she's in the car, then I gotta squeeze in the back between Dickhead and Fuckface.”

Dickhead and Fuckface were the less-than-friendly nicknames Nick used for his two older brothers, twins Scott and Nathan. It was one of the things Josh and the other boy had bonded over, when they realised that Nathan was roommates with Ryan, Josh's older brother.

“Ugh, sucky,” Josh said, shaking his head. “I'm lucky, my parents got a big car that seats eight, so even if Dad comes along with Mum, I can get away from my two,” he explained, referring to his own two siblings.

“On the bright side, once we're home they'll fuck off with their mates and I won't see them for most of the week,” Nick said with a grin.

Josh shook his head. “I don't get why you're so mean about them. I think Nathan's great!”

“Meh, brothers, innit! Who actually likes their own?” Nick asked, laughing, but quickly realising he was doing it alone. Josh just looked lost in his own thoughts and Rob had raised his hand.

“I do. My little brother's awesome. I can't wait to see him!” Rob said, feeling like he was supposed to join in with the brother-bashing, but unable to speak badly of Milo.

“Ohhh, well yeah, little brother's are awesome, obviously!” Nick said with a self-aggrandising grin.

“Yeah, definitely!” Josh joined in, both boys being the youngest of their siblings.

Finally accepting that they needed to move if they wanted to get showered and back to the Home Building before lights out, the boys began to undress.

“Actually, I'm gonna have to shower back at the dorms,” Josh said as the others undressed, picking up his bag. “I... erm... forgot to bring other clothes.”

Rob's eyes narrowed suspiciously. Nick didn't seem to give it a second thought, already half undressed. As Josh went to leave, he called out, “Yeah, the showers are way better over there, I think I'll do the same.”

Josh looked mildly alarmed, just for a second, then grinned as usual. “Well hurry up then, ya little stalker!”

Rob quickly grabbed up his stuff and ran out after Josh, both boys bidding Nick a quick goodbye.

The two boys walked in silence away from the Sports Complex, waving a brief goodbye to the coach who wished them a happy half term, getting only an over-dramatic moan of pain from both

boys in response.

Once they were about half way between the buildings, with nobody else around, Rob asked, “So what was that about?”

“What was what about?” Josh asked, shrugging as he walked, not looking round.

“You've totally got other clothes in there,” Rob said, nudging the bag Josh carried at his side. Noticing that it wasn't thrown over his shoulder like usual was, it was like a final piece clicked into place.

“Yeah, but...” Josh started, but before he could say any more, Rob had grabbed his rugby shirt and lifted.

“Get off!” Josh snapped, jumping back and covering himself.

“I saw that, on your back! Show me!” Rob said accusingly.

Josh shrugged again. “It's no big deal,” he said, pulling up the back of his shirt and turning his back to Rob. Half of his back was covered in a giant bruise, the other half peppered with smaller ones.

“No big deal? What happened?” Rob demanded. “Who did that?”

“Yeah, no big deal. Look, we were at football and we were messing around while the coach was busy and I ended taking a hard tackle,” Josh explained, but seeing the incredulous look on Rob's face, reiterated it. “A REALLY hard tackle. I just didn't want anyone there to see and make a big deal cos I don't want Danny to get in any trouble for it.”

“Danny... did it?” Rob asked with a frown.

Josh nodded. “And he's a mate, so keep it to yourself please. Unless you want him to be, like, expelled or something.” He waited a moment until Rob nodded, then gestured to the Home Building and said, “Now can we keep going, or do you want me to take more clothes off?”

While he remained concerned, Rob laughed at the comment. “Nah, I'm not Chris,” he joked. Chris had become somewhat known for his love of nudity... at least on others. Any time there was a dare, bet or forfeit, he would be calling for some kind of clothing removal.

Still chuckling, the two boys continued on.

Rob and Josh had just emerged from the showers and were heading back to the dorm when Danny came running up the stairs behind them.

“What you doing out here? I thought it was date night with Chris!” Josh teased.

Danny rolled his eyes and shook his head. It was a source of continual frustration that his roommates couldn't comprehend that he and Chris were just friends. Admittedly they were best friends who spent every available minute together, jerked off together and cuddled at every opportunity, but friends none-the-less.

“Firstly, not date night, just a night away from you dickheads,” Danny said with a sly smirk. “And I've been off arranging a surprise.”

“For your boyfriend?” Josh asked, flashing Rob a quick grin.

“Yeah,” Danny said excitedly. “Wait, no. Fuck you,” he corrected himself, then finally added, “But yes, for Chris.” He dashed off ahead but was only in the dorm a few seconds before the other two.

As soon as he was in the dorm, he spotted Chris sitting right in front of him, sitting up on David's bunk beside him. They each had a copy of the same book in hand, the one they had been tasked with reading over half-term by Book Club.

“Whatever you're talking about, stop it, this is more important!” Danny said to the two boys.

“Daniel,” Chris said, using his proper name for comedic affect. He held up the book, “This is To Kill a Mockingbird, allegedly one of the greatest literary works of all time!”

Rob and David both smirked, recognising it as a direct mockery of how Mr Trent had described the book at their last Book Club meeting.

“Are you really saying what you've got to say is more important than this immortal masterpiece?” Chris asked, getting more laughs from the other two Book Club boys.

“Well that depends,” Danny said, ignoring the intended mockery. “How important would you find spending half term at my house?”

“What!” Chris exclaimed, eyes wide, staring in shock.

“Careful mate,” Josh said, filling the sudden silence. “If TV's taught me anything, it's that first vacations with new boyfriends always end in disaster!”

“Josh, you make one more joke...” Danny started to threaten the other boy, turning to scowl at him, but was stopped when he felt a hand on his shoulder. Turning back, he saw Vhris had jumped down from the bunk.

“Are you serious?” Chris asked in disbelief.

Danny smiled and nodded. “Obviously you've gotta clear it with your parents, but if they're cool with it then we're good to go! If you want... that is.” He trailed off slightly, suddenly realising he had no idea if Chris would even want to.

“Of course I want to!” Chris said happily, then pulled Danny into a tight hug.

“Aww,” Josh said, tilting his head mockingly as he stood beside Rob. He looked to his best friend and said, “Isn't young love sweet!”

“Josh!” Danny snarled angrily, pulling free of Chris to try and swipe at the other boy.

The room burst into laughter and cheers as Danny started chasing Josh around the dorm.

Saturday morning rolled round and the grounds filled up quickly with cars and families. Thankfully, it was a dry and unseasonably warm morning, so most of the boys had taken their cases outside to chat and hang out, waiting to get picked up.

The dorm 1.01 boys had just waved off James, with Matty and Mikey both leaving shortly before that. David had just run off at the sight of a car arriving, but had not taken his bags with him or said goodbye, which confused the others.

A few moments later, David made his way back over, followed by two men. As they got close, David gestured to Rob who was sat on a low wall and said, "This is Rob," next he pointed to Josh who was sat on the floor a short distance from Rob and added, "And that's Josh." Finally, he gestured to Chris and Danny who were standing close together, hands occasionally touching. And this is Chris and Danny! They're all from my dorm!"

The four boys all said hello politely.

"Guys, these are my Dads!" David said, suddenly looking slightly nervous.

"Your..." Chris started, then just looked at the two men and smiled. "Ohhhh!" It suddenly clicked in Chris's head, mere moments before the others. David's speech a few weeks earlier about acceptance and being a safe place suddenly made so much more sense.

"Well that's a reaction!" one of the men said with an amused frown.

"Sorry Sir," Chris said apologetically. "We just..." Chris paused, composed himself and cleared his throat. "I just wanted to say, David's really a credit to both of you." Unintentionally, he glanced sideways at Danny, then back to the man and blushed a little.

"Ohhhh!" David's Dad said, realising why his son had been so keen to meet these two in particular and taking the opportunity to tease the boy a little. "Well thank you very much, Chris. We're very proud of him!"

"You should be. Little dude's fucking awesome!" Josh said as he stood and slapped David on the back, then realised he had just sworn in front of an adult and stared in wide-eyed horror.

The two men looked at each other before one replied, "Relax. We think he's fucking awesome too!" He winked at Josh who looked visibly relieved.

A few minutes later, David and his parents were gone and the boys were back to waiting. It ended up being Josh's parents who arrived next.

"Well boys, it's been fun. Catch ya later!" Josh said, jumping up as he saw his big brothers heading over to their parents' car.

"Hey, I don't think so!" Chris called out. As Josh paused and looked back, Chris bound forward and pulled him into a hug, just as he had with every other boy who had left. As he squeezed, Josh winced a little. Chris went to ask if he was okay, but he had said goodbye and run off to his family before he got the chance.

"D'you guys see that?" Chris asked as he moved back to join Danny and Rob.

"See what?" Danny asked as they watched Josh climb into the back row of seats of the car, his

brothers sat in front of him, a man and woman sat in the front.

“When I hugged Josh. Sounded like he was in pain!” Chris said with concern.

“Oh, yeah,” Rob said, shooting an involuntary glare at Danny.

“He just got hurt playing rugby,” Danny said.

“Football!” Rob corrected him.

Danny frowned at Rob. “No, I saw he'd got a bruise on Tuesday at football. He said it happened the night before when you tackled him too hard.”

“That's... exactly what he told me, but he said you did it at football!” Rob said, wondering why Danny was so reluctant to accept responsibility. It had only been an accident after all.

“Wait,” Chris said, shaking his head. “If neither of things happened... what did?”

Rob and Danny could only stand and watch as the car drove off.

The drive home for Danny was a long one, approaching five hours. That had been extended even more when they stopped off for lunch. The two boys had been inordinately excited when they pulled into the McDonalds car park. The food at Kingswood was excellent, but it was always inherently healthy. Even their snacks were encouraged to be healthier ones, so the opportunity to binge proper junk food was a very welcome one.

Danny's parents, or Mr and Mrs Davies to Chris, had sat and watched in amused amazement as the two boys engulfed what appeared to be their own body weight in burgers, fries and milkshakes.

The first part of the drive had been taken up with what felt like a monologue from Danny, telling his parents all about the school, his classes, clubs and friends, so while they sat eating, the subject had turned to Chris who the two adults were keen to get to know. Between mouthfuls, Chris had politely answered all of their questions, telling them all about his parents, his many siblings and his own experience so far at Kingswood.

As they returned to the car, it seemed it was Mrs Davies' turn, filling Danny in on what he had missed over the last six weeks with their family and friends, his big sister Bethany and life at home in general. Although it was mostly for Danny's benefit, Chris still listened attentively. Mrs Davies seemed like a nice Mum, in her mid-thirties and baring a striking resemblance to her son. Mr Davies, also in his mid-thirties looked less like Danny, but did share the same blue eyes, though his were framed by a slightly more rugged face.

By the time they passed Ipswich, still a good hour and half from home, they were all talked out and comfortable silence filled the car.

Eventually, Mr and Mrs Davies began chatting to each other, leaving the two boys in relative peace. Danny looked to his friend for a moment, then turned away. He repeated it a few times.

“What's up?” Chris asked, seeing Danny glance his way for the sixth time.

"I..." Danny started, then shook his head. "Nothing."

Chris reached down and took hold of the other boy's hand, although it actually made him look even more nervous as he stared at his parents, seemingly expecting them to look round in horror.

"Danny?" Chris urged him.

"Look, if I tell you something, do you promise not to tell anyone?" Danny asked quietly, looking to check his parents' conversation was keeping them from listening in.

"Yeah, of course," Chris said, slightly worried.

Danny sighed softly, then explained to Chris what he had witnessed Josh's brothers doing to him that day after their football match. He left out some of the more embarrassing details. Even though he knew Josh would never know he had told Chris, he still felt honour-bound to protect the other boy's pride and privacy at least a little.

Chris looked horrified and once again grabbed Danny's hand, squeezing it gently. "That's awful," he said, devastated to have been so oblivious to a friend's suffering. "But he said it was all cool?"

Danny nodded.

"And you've not seen them do anything since?" Chris continued to probe.

"No, nothing," Danny answered.

Chris thought for a moment and nodded. "Then he shows up covered in bruises and lies to you and Rob about how he got them?"

"Yeah," Danny said, his face screwed tightly into a frown.

"But Josh seems okay and hasn't, like, asked for help or anything?" Chris went on.

"No, he seems fine," Danny said, wondering whether he was overthinking it.

Chris shrugged. "You're a good friend," he said reassuringly, "But if Josh is okay, perhaps you're just being overprotective. I mean, Rob knows him better than either of us and they do, like, everything together. If something was up, he'd speak up for sure."

Danny smiled, feeling better for having shared the secret he had been carrying, even more-so for being assured that there was probably nothing to worry about. "Yeah, you're probably right," he said happily.

By the time the car finally pulled into the driveway of the Davies household it was almost six o'clock. After helping Mr Davies with their cases, Mrs Davies said to them, "You go get settled in. I've made up the guest room ready. Dinner will be about an hour."

"Oh," Danny said downheartedly. "I thought Chris might be able to stay in my room!"

"Just thought he might want a real bed instead of that little mattress," Mrs Davies said, referring to the small pull-out mattress under Danny's bed.

"Oh, anything's good for me," Chris said with a polite smile.

“My room it is then!” Danny said happily. He dashed off up the stairs.

Before following, Chris looked to the two adults and smiled. “Thank you again for letting me stay!”

Danny was stood by his door waiting as Chris approached. “Welcome home,” he said with a chuckle as he opened the door.

Chris walked in and immediately started checking out the surroundings. He had been looking forward to seeing the room, knowing it would let him see a side of Danny that nobody else at Kingswood would be able to see. Looking at the various posters of footballers on one of the walls, he smiled. “Oh, I see why you like that team. They're hot!”

“That's not why they're...” Danny began to object, but stopped himself as he saw Chris smirking. “Shut up!” he finished, before hopping onto the bed and grabbing his phone from the nightstand. “I've missed you so much!” he said to the little device before turning it on.

Chris continued nosing around the room, looking at the various little trinkets and toys dotted about, a few photos and random pictures dotted around the wall behind his desk. He kept hearing notification sounds from Danny's phone, one after the other. “You're popular!” he said flatly.

“Sorry, I should...” Danny started, lowering the phone, then raised it again, “I mean, I'm n... not...” he was stammering now. “It's just apps and stuff. Not people. Well, some is, but... sorry.”

Chris tilted his head and sighed at the nervous boy. “Danny, you've got to learn to take a joke.” He moved over to bed, knelt on it then shuffled forward so he was right in front of Danny. “I was just kidding. You don't need to apologise!”

“I know. I know.” Danny said, nodding, gulping slightly as Chris grew closer. “Honestly, being alone with you still makes me... kinda nervous!”

“It does? Why?” Chris asked, curious but mostly just amused by the admission.

Danny shrugged momentarily. “Dunno, it's just... a feeling. I can't help it.”

Chris moved away, sitting cross-legged at the other end of the bed. “Is this still because of the gay thing? Or the stuff Josh keeps teasing? I've told you, I'm happy to just be...”

“No!” Danny insisted. “I love...” he paused to think what he was trying to say, but realised what it might have sounded like and turned bright red. “What we do!” he finished. “I love the things we do together. I'm not saying it's a bad thing. I kinda like being nervous around you.” he said, blushing more.

“That's insane, but sweet,” Chris said with a grin. Happy he didn't need to keep his distance, he asked, “So how does it feel?”

Danny thought for a moment. “It's like... like this fluttery feeling on my tummy,” he started.

Chris reached out and pushed Danny a little, making him lay back. He let a hand slide underneath the other boy's t-shirt, his fingers making delicate contact with the warm, smooth skin. He let his fingers dance across Danny's stomach lightly. “Like this?”

“Mmmnnnh!” Danny moaned, breathing a little deeper. “Yeah.”

“And what else?”

Danny reached down to pull his t-shirt up, revealing the whole of his torso. He placed a hand on his chest and explained, “Like a heavy beating.”

Chris let his hand slowly slide up, revelling in the little whimpers it was getting from Danny. He began to simulate the feeling he had mentioned, ensuring to make sure his fingers caught the boy's nipple.

“We should... we should stop. What if someone comes?” Danny asked breathlessly, looking over at the door.

“That was pretty much my goal!” Chris said with a playful wink.

Danny glanced nervously at the door again, but figured they still had time before dinner, so he smiled, raised his hand up and put them behind his head and said, “Come on then, make me cum!”

“Hey!” Chris said with an amused frown. “I was meant to be the one in charge. Now it's like I'm your...” he paused, trying to think of the word.

“My bitch!” Danny said, grinning broadly. “So get to it, bitch. That cock's not gonna stroke itself!”

Chris gave the other boy's nipple a playful pinch before shaking his head and sliding a hand down to the waistband of his jeans.

Danny moaned happily as his cock was released, Chris's hand eagerly caressing it while his head came to rest on his lover's chest.

“Good thing I don't shoot yet, or you'd be in for a right eyeful!” Danny joked as he felt Chris' eager fingers pushing him closer and closer to climax. Moments later, his hands, still under his head, were involuntarily grasping at handfuls of hair as he suppressed a loud moan.

Still gently caressing Danny's cock several seconds after the orgasm had subsided, Chris sighed happily.

“That was a good one,” Danny said before taking a deep breath. He reached down to ruffle Chris' hair, the bigger boy's head still leaning on him, then slid off the bed and pulled his t-shirt back down.

Sitting up and watching as Danny re-fastened his jeans, he waited a moment and realised it looked like Danny was going to head back out of the room. Chris cleared his throat to get the other boy's attention and said, “Aren't you forgetting something?”

Danny looked back and shrugged.

Chris pointed to his own crotch with both hands. His erection was blindingly obvious in his sweatpants. “My turn?”

“Aww,” Danny said, moving back and placing a hand on Chris' neck, letting it slide up a little so his fingers caressed his hair and his thumb on the boy's cheek. “Is my little bitch feeling left out? You

wanna cum too?"

Chris was torn. He wasn't keen to let the 'bitch' thing catch on, but he was so horny he just wanted to feel Danny's hands around his cock. "Don't call me that, but... yes!"

"Pants down, t-shirt up, laying down!" Danny directed as he looked down at the seated boy, enjoying feeling like the taller one for a change.

Again Chris was reluctant to comply so willingly, but his cock was in charge now, so he raised his butt off the bed enough to push his sweatpants and boxers down to his ankles, pulled his t-shirt up and lifted the front of the neckline back over his head, then lay down.

Danny smiled and sat beside him, taking several seconds to run his hands up and down the exposed flesh before finally wrapping his hand around Chris' throbbing boner.

"Fuck, that won't take long!" Chris moaned, his eyes closing.

"Just let me know when you're close," Danny said. It was common request he made. He had come to enjoy edging Chris as much as the other boy enjoyed having it done to him, possibly more-so. By now, he could usually tell when Chris was near to orgasm based solely on his movements and noises, but there was something about making him say it that added to the experience.

As promised, it didn't take long before Chris moaned and uttered, "I'm close!"

Danny continued stroking for just a second, then let go and allowed his hands to wander again, sliding up either side of his stomach until his fingertips gently grazed Chris' nipples, stiffened from the slight chill in the room as well as his own excitement.

"That was one," Danny said, enjoying Chris' compliance and wanting to see how far he could take it. "Say it aloud. We're going to ten!"

Chris eyes opened and he looked at Danny with a mixture of surprise and anticipation. "What?!"

"You. Count!" Danny said bluntly.

Chris nodded, rested his head back on the bed and said, "One!"

Danny's hands returned to the solid tool and began stroking once more. He hadn't waited long, so it was barely thirty seconds before Chris warned him again. Once more he continued a few seconds, then let go, this time moving his hands to stroke up and down the boy's legs, caressing his smooth thighs and feeling the soft, fine hairs beginning to show around his shins.

"Two!" Chris called out after a few seconds, just as Danny was about to remind him.

On this went three more times. As Chris called out five, on his fifth edge, he reached for his own cock and said, "Fuck, I gotta cum!"

Danny slapped the hand away and said, "No touching!"

After six, Chris tried again but this time Danny ordered, "Hands behind your head. Move them before we finish and we go to fifteen!"

Chris stared the smaller boy in the eye, caught somewhere between petulant resistance and aroused compliance. As seemed to be happening more and more, his cock won out and he placed his hands behind his head.

The edging resumed and as Chris called out, "Nine!" He was a quivering, sweating wreck. "P...please," he begged, desperate to hit ten and get release. "Ah yes," he groaned excitedly as he felt Danny's hand on his cock once more.

Danny could feel the other boy was mere moments away from release and let go, waiting for him to say what was necessary.

"T... ten!" Chris whimpered.

Danny paused for a moment, letting the anticipation build... then stood up. "Right, get dressed," he said with a calm smile.

"But... but I didn't..." Chris said, staring in confusion, gesturing down to his cock, still throbbing in time with his pulse.

"I know you didn't and you're not going to!" Danny explained.

"You said..." Chris started, but was cut off.

"I said we were going to ten, I never said I'd make you cum at ten. Now get dressed, we gotta go down for dinner!" Danny said. In reality, he wanted to make Chris cum. He loved doing it and he had never looked sexier than he did right now, hard and pleading, but he resisted.

"Fine, I'll do it myself!" Chris said, grabbing his cock.

"Don't!" Danny said, firmly but without snapping.

Chris stared again, hand on his cock, desperate for release. "Why not?"

Danny smiled. "Because I said so," he used the words he hated hearing so much from adults, but then added, "And I have a feeling you like doing what I tell you, don't you?"

Chris scowled. Being called bitch was bad enough, but being deprived of cumming, just on Danny's word, that just felt... he wanted to think it felt wrong, but the shudder of excitement that rippled through him said otherwise.

"Look, it's up to you," Danny said with a quick shrug. "You either do as I say and get dressed, or you don't do as I say and wank yourself off now. What's it to be?"

Chris gulped. "Fuck," he muttered angrily as he sat up and pulled his t-shirt back down.

Danny moved up to him as he pulled his sweatpants back up. Standing over him, he placed a hand on each shoulder and smiled. "This week is gonna be so fun!"

Dinner was a strange experience for Chris. While he had got used to eating in the dining hall at Kingswood, back home dinner was usually eaten in front of the TV and almost never done as a

family, mainly because his parents and many siblings always seemed to be in and out at different times. So sitting at the table with Danny and his parents was unusual. It felt even more surreal for the fact that he couldn't focus on much other than his on-and-off erection and his aching balls.

They would have been joined by Bethany, Danny's older sister, but she was staying over with a friend and wouldn't be back until the morning. While the two adults had gotten to know Chris a little on the drive home, they continued over dinner, impressed by his good manners.

"This food's great," Chris said with a polite smile. "Who's the good cook?"

"That'll be me!" Mr Davies said proudly.

"Yeah, defo not Mum, she could burn water!" Danny said mockingly.

Mrs Davies gave him a look that stopped him smirking instantly. "Stop showing off to your friend!" she said sternly, then looked to Chris and said, "He's not wrong though!"

Chris laughed, partly at the comment, but largely at the way she had shut Danny up. After finding himself seemingly at the other boy's mercy, it was nice to see him on the other side.

"How about your parents? They handy in the kitchen?" Mr Davies asked.

"Oh... erm... I... I don't know," Chris said, not quite sure how to respond.

Mr Davies looked awkward, glancing from his wife, to his son and then back to Chris. "Oh I'm sorry, are they..." he wasn't quite sure how to ask what he was thinking tactfully.

Chris grinned. "No, sorry, no, they're not like... dead or anything. They just don't do that sorta stuff. But we do have a..." he paused, unsure whether to share but figured there was no other way now. "A chef!"

"You have your own chef?" Danny asked in surprise. "Why, can't the housekeeper cook?" he joked.

"No, he mostly just cleans and does stuff like that," Chris said, without even realising Danny wasn't serious. Seeing the amused look on Mr and Mrs Davies face at Danny's confusion, he added, "Oh, you were being... sarcastic. Okay." He blushed heavily.

"You're loaded? How has that never come up?" Danny asked his friend, elbowing him gently.

Chris just shrugged, clearly not wanting to talk about it.

Mrs Davies quickly tried jumping to the rescue by asking, "Seven brothers and sisters then? That's got to be interesting!"

Chris smiled and nodded. "Yeah, can be pretty hectic, but I guess it kinda prepared me for Kingswood. Living in our dorm is kinda like having seven brothers."

Conversation continued as the family finished eating. Shortly after, Danny had excused them so they could return to his room, under the guise of being tired from all the travelling. In reality, he just wanted to be alone with Chris again.

The two boys had been in Danny's room for a while, Chris sat on the bed, Danny laying with his

head in Chris' lap, just chatting about nothing in particular when Danny brought up their dinner conversation. "So how come you never mentioned your family's rich before?"

Chris shrugged again. "I dunno. I never used to know if people really liked me or if they just wanted stuff. I wanted to make friends at school just by being me," he explained.

Danny thought for a moment. "Makes sense I s'pose," he agreed.

"Besides, I think most kids there come from money. Most families could never afford that place!" Chris added. He didn't know exactly how much it cost to attend Kingswood, but he had picked up from things he had overheard that it was far from cheap. "That's why I was kinda surprised to see this place. I thought it'd be bigger!"

Danny looked round. He always felt that his family's home was pretty nice. "Erm..." he mused for a moment, sitting up and looking at the other boy.

"Oh, no..." Chris said, raising his hands defensively. "I don't mean anything bad. I just meant that I thought your family would be like a mansion, private chef, chauffeur kinda family too!"

Danny frowned. "I think... my parents do pretty well for themselves, but I think they mostly spend everything on me and Beth." He felt momentarily uncomfortable as he thought about how much his parents had presumably spent on his education, and what sort of lifestyle they may have given up to do it. He made a mental note to show them his gratitude some time.

"Can I... tell you a secret?" Chris asked, blushing. He looked nervous. Danny nodded so he went on. "Our housekeeper... is the one who taught me about jerking off!"

"What?!" Danny exclaimed in shock. He knew Chris was more experienced than he was, having known about such things before going to Kingswood, he had just never stopped to think how or why.

"I... caught him one day, jerking off," Chris explained. "He's older... obviously. Not that old, only, like, twenty something, but he's pretty cute, ya know, for an older guy." He hesitated, unsure whether he should go on, but Danny's eager expression made it clear that he should. "So I caught him, ya know, doing it so I watched for a while but then he spotted me and stopped. He was so scared he'd lose his job but I told him it was cool and asked him what it was he was doing, so he explained it to me."

"Did you... do stuff with him?" Danny asked, entranced by the story.

Chris pursed his lips, thinking. He knew he probably shouldn't tell anyone, but Danny seemed like he could be trusted with it, so he nodded. "Yeah, I asked if he minded if a tried it, so I did, and then asked him to carry on while I was doing it. I was only nine, so I was, ya know, pretty small, so I asked if I could touch his and see what it felt like."

Danny smirked. "Yeah, been there!"

"And that was it. I made him cum, which I had, like, no clue about so he told me all about that stuff too and then we were done. Been doing it ever since," Chris explained.

"And have you two...." Danny started, nodding to indicate his meaning.

Chris shook his head. "Nah, he's cute but I didn't like him and I don't think he was really into me... or anyone my age actually, he's not like that. It was just one of those right place, right time things."

"Well... I'm officially horny again!" Danny said with a grin.

After a quick trip downstairs to advise his parents they were turning in for an early night, Danny was back in his room. He was confused by the sight of Chris pulling the mattress out from under his bed.

"I thought the idea of you staying in here was... ya know... sleeping with me!" Danny said with an amused smirk.

"Oh I know that," Chris said, "But do you want your parents to know that?"

"Good point," Danny said.

With the spare bed decoy set up, they both stripped to their boxers and climbed into bed as Danny turned off the main light and clicked on his bed-side lamp. The two happily cuddled up together, enjoying the skin-on-skin contact as they nuzzled against each other. It didn't take long for hands to start wandering though.

"Don't be starting it if you're not gonna finish it again!" Chris said warily as he felt Danny begin to tease his cock again.

"Oh, so what if I said it's either teasing without cumming, or no touching at all?" Danny said, curious whether their encounter earlier had been a one-off fluke or whether Chris really did like being told what to do.

"Well... I mean... out of those two, the first one. But I'd still rather..." he started, but was silenced by a finger on his lips.

"Shhh," Danny said softly. "You chose teasing, so teasing it is!" He grabbed Chris' cock through his boxers.

"I didn't mean..." Chris started, but was again shushed.

"Shhh, speak again and I may have to gag you," Danny said, only half-serious. He felt Chris' cock throb and wondered if the other boy had even realised.

Chris visibly wanted to protest, but remained silent as Danny once again stroked him eagerly. Seeing what he considered a loop-hole and potential way out, he remained silent as he felt his orgasm approaching. He hadn't been ordered to say when he was close, so he didn't. Just as he was about to hit the point of no return, Danny pulled his hand away.

"Oh come on, I was so close!" Chris moaned. Despite being his tormentor, pressing himself against Danny's body was giving him some comfort as he felt the frustration growing again. He reached down for his straining tool, but had the hand batted away just like earlier.

"Right, we're having none of that tonight!" Danny said, pulling away and opening a drawer beside the bed.

"What are you doing?" Chris asked, intrigued and worried in equal measure.

Danny popped back up, grinning and holding a navy and maroon tie. It was certainly not the Kingswood one. "I knew this would come in handy again some day!" he said happily. "It's my tie from my old school."

"What are you..." Chris started, then stopped as he caught on to what he thought Danny had planned. "No. No way!"

"Give me your hand," Danny said, ignoring the protest. He held out his own hand, waiting for Chris to comply. He thought he may have to ask again, but, visibly shaking, Chris offered his hand. With a reassuring smile, Danny secured one end of the tie around his wrist. Pushing the other boy into a laying position, he pulled the tie to raise his hand above his head, looped it round part of the headboard and then ordered, "Other hand!"

"Danny, I'm... well... are you sure?" Chris asked.

It was unusual to see the confident boy so cautious, but Danny could understand why. While he wouldn't exactly be entirely helpless, this was handing over a lot of control. He smiled, stroked his fingers through Chris' soft blonde hair and said softly, "I promise I won't hurt you!"

Although he still looked scared, Chris raised his other hand above his head and allowed Danny to loop the other end of the tie around it. Secured in place, he pulled on the tie gently. It certainly felt sturdy. He let out a moan as Danny wasted no time in beginning the teasing once again. It felt insane. Knowing he was stuck, every touch seemed intensified, every stroke of his cock like a jolt of electric. "Mmmmmnh... I'm close!" he grunted, not even intending to, it was simply force of habit. "One!" he offered hopefully.

Danny grinned. "Don't bother counting. I doubt you can even count as high as I'm planning!"

The comment got a moan that could have been either frustration or pleasure. Either way, Danny loved it. He settled down into place, keeping one hand on Chris' cock to continue teasing and edging, the other grabbed his phone and started scrolling through notifications and messages.

Chris felt like he was little more than casual entertainment for the other boy, no longer even warranting his full attention. The worrying part was, though... he liked it. It continued late into the night and when Danny eventually untied the restraint, Chris didn't even attempt to touch or ask to cum, he just happily cuddled up to his friend. The two quickly fell asleep.

Chapter 8

"Morning squirt," a cheerful voice called as she entered the room.

The boys woke with a start, alarmed at the sudden intrusion. Caught completely by surprise the two boys could only stare in horror at the girl standing at the door. Glancing down Danny felt extremely conscious of his exposed chest and grabbed the covers, pulling them up over himself.

"Beth!" Danny exclaimed in surprise. "I... I can explain!" They jumped apart, as if Beth would not notice that they had been cuddling together in their sleep.

Danny 16-year-old sister stared at the two boys. "Oh my God, this is amazing!" Beth declared closing the door behind and bounding across the room.

"It is?" Danny asked in confusion.

Beth jumped onto the foot of her little brother's bed, bouncing with excitement. "Does this mean what I think it means?" Beth asked excitedly. "Are you two together? Are you gay? Are you too gay together? Is he your boyfriend? Oh my god! This is so cool!"

"Danny?" Chris asked in confusion, barely awake.

"Erm..." Danny mused for a moment. "Chris, this is Beth, my sister. Beth... Chris!"

"So?" Beth asked expectantly.

"I don't... I'm not sure... Beth it's stupidly early," Danny complained, trying to buy time rather than explain what was happening.

Beth shook her head, ignoring her brother's complaint. "Don't worry I'm not going to tell anyone, it's just that this is so cool! Gay friends are so in at the moment and the gay brother is just like ultimate cool points!"

"Beth, get out. This isn't what it looks like and you need to calm down," Danny insisted.

The teenage girl frowned, frustrated at her little brothers resistance to what should have been an extremely cool moment. Climbing off the bed she looked back at the two boys and said, "sorry, I get that this was sudden, but I really do think it's cool whatever it is. I'll leave you to whatever this is, but... You can talk to me any time little bro!"

"Just go! Danny insisted, but after getting an elbow to the ribs from Chris, quickly added, "But thanks Beth." The boy smiled at his sister as she left.

Once the door was closed, the two boys looked at each other and burst into laughter. "Did that really just happen?" Chris asked, shaking his head.

"Yeah... That's Beth!" Danny said with a grin. "She can be a bit full on sometimes, but she means well."

Chris just lay back on the bed, smiled and shook his head. "I've been here, like, 12 hours and we've already been caught. So much for our secret!"

Danny rolled onto a side, propping his head up with one arm, looking down at Chris. "It's okay, she

means it when she says she won't tell anyone. We don't always get on perfectly, but we've always kept each other secrets." Danny thought for a moment, then added, "It's not like she knows anything for certain anyway."

"Oh yeah," Chris said sarcastically. "We are only bed together, cuddling, half naked. That doesn't prove anything!"

"Whatever!" Danny said, shaking his head. He shuffled back down the bed and rested his head on Chris's chest. "I've got more important things to worry about right now."

Chris avoided looking directly at the other boy. But cautiously said, "Like maybe letting me cum?"

Danny let his fingers slide up and down Chris's chest for several moments, thinking about what the other boy had said. It was actually attempting idea, he did love letting Chris cum. The delightful whimpering noises he made, the way his toes curled and his fists clenched, but most of all purely contented look on his face right after. Just the thought of it made Him want to... Danny froze, realising just what it needs and want to do. "Hmmm," he mused for a moment, "Maybe... Maybe not."

Chris pouted can immediately. "Come on, just let me do it." He slid his fingers up and down Danny's back casually and smiled at him. "Let me do it and I'll do anything you ask," he offered.

Danny grinned broadly. "You'll already do anything I ask!"

Chris was stumped. He wanted to object, or argue, or say anything to try and prove the other boy wrong, but somehow he felt that Danny was right.

A short time and several edges later, having both showered, separately despite Danny suggestion, the two boys headed downstairs for breakfast. As they headed into the kitchen they found Mr and Mrs Davies sitting at the table. Danny's dad was reading something on his tablet while munching on a slice of toast while his mum was tapping away on her phone.

"Morning boys, sleep well?" Mr Davies asked on seeing the boys.

The two boys glanced at each other and giggled briefly before Danny replied, "Yes thanks."

The two adults shut each other a look, somewhere between amusement and understanding, though neither of them voiced their thoughts. "Your sister's home, by the way," Mrs Davies said, looking back down at her phone.

Danny rolled his eyes. "Yeah, I noticed, she introduced herself earlier.

"You talking about me, squirt?" Beth called out, approaching from the hallway.

Chris notched Danny slightly, and said quietly to him, "Squirt? You wish!"

Danny elbow the other boy back, looking round the alarm, wide-eyed. Thankfully his parents seemed not to have noticed, or at least not reacted to the comment. Beth ruffled Danny's hair as she walked past towards the table.

"You're so annoying!" Danny said, shaking his head.

“You know you missed me really!” Beth insisted as she poured herself some cereal.

Mr Davies knew this routine all too well. As much as they bickered, he was happy knowing that underneath the facade, Danny looked up to his big sister while Beth was always protective of her little brother. Regardless, he knew his wife had a much lower tolerance for it and stepped in before it escalated. “So do you boys have any plans for today?”

Danny went over to join them at the table, Chris tagging along behind. “Hadn't really thought about it yet,” he said with a shrug. He knew what he wanted to do, he wanted to go back upstairs and get back into bed with Chris.

“And you?” Mr Davies added, looking to Beth who currently had a mouthful of Corn Flakes.

Not wanting to speak with her mouth full, Beth just shrugged too.

“Well I was thinking today might be a good day for a return visit to Splash Kingdom...” Mr Davies said casually.

Danny almost dropped his spoon as he stared at his Dad. “Seriously?” he asked excitedly.

Mr Davies smiled and nodded. “Whadda you say, kid?” he asked his daughter, who hadn't reacted quite as excitedly as Danny, but still looked quite happy about it.

“Definitely!” she said happily.

Chris frowned. “What's Splash Kingdom?” he asked quietly.

“Oh my God, it's amazing!” Danny said, virtually bouncing in his seat. “It's this water park that has everything. These crazy slides and rapids and a lazy river and wave machine and it's seriously the best! We haven't been in forever!”

“We went last year!” Mr Davies said, shaking his head.

“Yeah, like I said, forever!” Danny said, smirking.

“And Chris, I get that it's probably not as exciting to someone who has his own pool, but I'm sure you'll have fun,” Mr Davies said, straight-faced.

Chris looked at the man and started to ask, “How did you know we...” He stopped himself and had to suppress a smile. “You're teasing, aren't you?”

“Little bit,” he replied with a laugh.

“You coming, Mum?” Danny asked, his mother having remained quiet.

She shook her head emphatically and smiled. “No chance. Today's your Dad's turn to keep you occupied, I get the day off!”

Once they reached Water Park, they all headed into the changing rooms. The two boys had worn their swim shorts for the journey so getting changed just meant removing their footwear, coats and

t-shirts. Having not anticipated the need for swimwear when packing for the week, Chris had not brought any of his ones he used for Swim Team. It was a good thing really. The school swim uniform was speedos, whereas most boys their age at the pool were wearing shorts. Instead he had borrowed some of Danny's. Though they were a little on the small side and felt quite snug, they were at least less revealing than a speedo.

While the two boys were keen to rush off and have fun, they waited while Mr Davies got ready. As he stood chatting with Danny, Chris couldn't help letting his eyes wander onto the older man. He already knew Danny's dad was a fairly good looking man, but as he removed his clothes he just got more and more attractive. His well-muscled chest and firm stomach were covered in a fine layer of neatly-trimmed hair, his arms were bulky with dark tufts of hair in the pits, while his legs were covered in fine, dark hair, disappearing up into his amply-bulging swim shorts.

Between having Danny half naked, the attractive older man and the repeated edging he had been subjected to, he could feel his cock swelling. As much as he willed it not to, it swelled to full firmness before they had even got out of the changing rooms, so he stayed ahead of the others.

As soon as they were into the main pool area, Chris immediately jumped into the water.

"I guess we're starting here," Danny said with a snigger.

"Okay, I'm gonna wait for Beth. We'll catch up with you later," Mr Davies said, wandering over towards the exit of the womens' changing room.

Danny jumped into the water and smiled at Chris. "Bit keen, are we?"

Chris was blushing, but with it now concealed felt a little more willing to joke about it. "Had to hide... this," he said, taking Danny's hand and placing it on his erection. The moment he did it, he regretted it.

The look on Danny's face was nothing short of devilish.

What followed was a day of erotic torture for the horny Irish boy. At every opportunity, Danny did what he could to turn him on. A grab of the dick, a nipple tweak, a pinch of his buttocks, a whisper of something sexual.

Moving between the different pools and attractions normally meant getting out and walking a short distance. Every time they did, Danny had made sure to get Chris aroused before they climbed out, sniggering as he had to awkwardly try to cover up, blushing heavily any time he found someone looking at him.

The water slide had been the worst. As they queued on the stairs, moving up a step or two every few seconds, Danny leaned back a little against Chris, letting his leg make casual contact with his bulge. While it was not visible to anyone ahead or behind them, it was pushing the fraught boy closer and closer to cumming. By the time they were at the top, Danny had actually managed to edge him a couple of times.

A few times, Danny even joked about re-enacting the embarrassing moment Matty had described to them a few weeks earlier, where he had been stripped of his shorts by his friends and left stranded naked. Fortunately, the terrified expression on Chris' face was enough to convince him not to do it.

While Danny and Chris had spent large chunks of the day together as just a pair, they would often

meet up with Mr Davies and Beth. It was getting late in the day and the four of them were hanging out in the wave pool, splashing around as large waves rippled towards them. It was Beth who started the pushing, shoving Danny just as a wave hit so he flew off from the force of the water.

After making his way back, Danny had returned the favour, leaving Beth floating away in a wave. Chris had quickly joined in while Mr Davies just kept his distance. Beth had just gone floating away after a push from Danny, when he turned his attention to Chris again. Letting a hand reach down, he groped at the boy's cock, sniggering as it swelled beneath his grasp almost instantly.

"I hate you!" Chris moaned, pushing Danny away.

"Hate you more!" Danny said back with a grin, then gave him a shove just as a huge wave struck them.

Helpless against the current, Chris felt himself pushed along by the water and quickly saw Mr Davies standing in his path. Unable to do anything about it, he collided with the older man, going chest first into him.

Instinctively, Mr Davies grabbed the boy, the impact making him stagger backwards, going under the water. Regaining his footing, he stood, still holding Chris who was flinching from water in his eyes and coughing up what seemed like half of the pool.

"You okay there, bud?" Mr Davies asked.

Chris was mortified. Not only was he held tightly in the man's arms, and holding him back just as tightly, he could feel the man's firm chest against his own, but the truly horrific part was that his erection was pressed into the man's stomach. There was absolutely no way he couldn't feel it. He tried to speak, but just coughed again, but nodded.

"Sorry about that!" Danny called out, swimming over to them, nearly floating past them thanks to a rogue wave.

"It's okay, no harm done," Mr Davies said. "You okay now?" he asked Chris.

Chris coughed again, but managed to say, "Yeah, I'm good." As he let go, Mr Davies grip loosened. Instead of just pulling away, he ended up sliding down the man's body, essentially rubbing his boner down his hip.

"Bit too lively here for me. I'm gonna go for another lap of the lazy river," Mr Davies said to Danny as Beth joined them. He looked to Chris and gave a knowing smile. "Have fun!"

Chris wanted the ground to open up and swallow him... yet his erection remained.

It wasn't much longer before the four headed out to go home. In the changing room, Chris had tried to sneak a glance at Mr Davies while he was changing, but having to face into a corner to hide his own arousal, he missed seeing anything beyond what he had already seen. It was a relief in a way, he didn't need anything else turning him on!

It was just over an hour's drive back home. Having worn themselves out, Danny was nodding off almost right away, ending up leaning over sideways with his head on Chris' lap. Chris had soon followed, his head tilting sideways and resting on Danny's shoulder. They slept like that the whole way home.

Danny's ongoing torture of his house-guest continued through Sunday night and well into Monday. They had met up with a couple of Danny's old school friends on Monday morning and then gone to the cinema with Mrs Davies in the afternoon. For the evening, two of Danny's friends came over and the four boys hung out, just chatting and messing around. As soon as they were gone though, Danny had stripped Chris and edged him once again.

Although it had only been two days since the abstinence had started, it felt like longer and Chris was almost in tears by the time Danny stopped edging him. In a moment of mercy, Danny finally conceded.

“You ready?” Danny asked with a grin as Chris lay naked on the bed, panting and sweating. The impatient glare he got in response answered more clearly than any words could have.

Danny took hold of the desperately hard cock and started stroking, slowly. Just because he had decided to let Chris have some relief, that didn't mean he had to make it easy. He stayed slow, watching excitedly and playing with his own erection as the other boy writhed at his touch.

It took several minutes, but eventually Chris' toes curled, his hands clenched, grabbing at handfuls of bedding, his breathing getting so fast and high-pitched it was almost a continuous whimper.

“FUCK!” Chris yelled out as his cock erupted. His normally small spurt of several drops was replaced with a heavy jet of spunk that shot right over his head and hit the wall behind him. Biting his lip, a couple more much smaller spurts followed, then several dry convulsions as Danny continued stroking.

Worried that the yell may have drawn attention, Danny looked over to the door and listened, but there was no sign of any activity, so he turned back to Chris who was just laying there, staring at the ceiling, panting, his chest heaving. There was that look, that expression of pure contentment that had played on his mind.

Their eyes were fixed on each other. Danny moved closer and closer, just a little with each sharp intake of Chris' breath. Their faces were just inches apart now, then it happened. Their lips made contact.

For Chris, the orgasm had been more insanely intense than any he had felt before, quite possibly the greatest feeling of his life, but it paled in comparison to feeling Danny's lips on his. It was brief, their mouths remaining closed, almost like they were testing. The other boy pulled up a little and they opened their eyes, staring into each other again. Moments later, a huge grin spread over both their faces and their lips met once more.

The tentative caution of the initial contact was gone, now it was just pure passion, the obvious attraction of the last six weeks finally able to be expressed fully. Danny lay down on the bed, with Chris rolling onto his side as they embraced, oblivious to the remnants of cum smearing from Chris' chest onto Danny's t-shirt.

Time seemed to lose all meaning as they lost themselves in each other. It was genuinely hard to tell whether they had been kissing for seconds or hours but they eventually parted, remaining in place, faces inches apart, both smiling giddily.

"I'm ready," Danny said softly. "I... I want you to be my boyfriend!"

Chris sniggered and shook his head. "You absolute moron. I already am!"

As the week drew on, the two boys could barely keep their hands off of each other. Whenever they were alone, kissing happened. Whenever they were with other people, they would sneak quick kisses any time they looked away, giggling about it quietly to each other after.

While they had the option to wait until Sunday to go back, it was preferred that most students arrive back at some point on Saturday, so the intention was to drive back early Saturday morning. Danny had seen his old school friends a couple more times throughout the week and promised to meet up again when he returned home at Christmas, now the only other thing they had planned was one last family dinner.

Beth was also due to return to her school over the weekend, but hers was much closer to home and was able to go with a friend who lived relatively close by, but it was her last night too.

"So you looking forward to going back?" Mrs Davies asked the boys as they sat eating another great meal prepared by Mr Davies.

The boys looked at each other, shrugged, then nodded.

"It's weird," Chris said, "But I am. It feels like going home, not going back to school!"

"That's sweet," Beth said with a smile.

Mr Davies nodded. "It'll soon be Christmas though, then you get to go home to see all the servants!"

Chris shot Mr Davies an angry glare before the two burst into laughter. Danny's dad had teased Chris all week about his family's wealth, to the point where it had become their own private running gag.

"Ya know... about Christmas..." Danny said, looking thoughtful. The teasing of Chris had reminded him of a train of thought he had found running through his head during the week. As his parents looked at him inquisitively. "You know I asked for a PS5?"

Mr Davies rolled his eyes. "Yes, don't worry, I got the pre-order in early."

"Is it.... too late to cancel it?" Danny asked, looking thoughtful.

"Oh, decided to go Xbox?" Mr Davies asked.

Danny shook his head. "No, it's just... well, I'm hardly gonna be here to use it and we're not allowed them at Kingswood, so it doesn't really make sense."

"So you'd prefer something you can use at school?" Mrs Davies asked, surprised by the unexpectedly mature request.

"Actually, I know I wasn't keen on going to Kingswood at first..." Danny started.

Mr Davies laughed. "Wasn't keen? We had full-on screaming tantrums!"

"Daaaaaad!" Danny moaned, blushing at Chris.

The man laughed. "Sorry kiddo."

Danny pouted. "Well it turns out I actually kinda love it there... and I know that place isn't exactly cheap..."

"Don't you worry about that," Mrs Davies said dismissively.

"Oh... I'm not. I know that's your business, but... well you already got me something I like, so I was thinking you could take what you were going to spend on me and get yourselves something nice." Danny explained, feeling incredibly self-conscious about the request.

Mrs Davies smiled at Danny, then her husband and back to her son. "That's so kind, but really not needed."

"Please Mum, it'd make me really happy. Kinda my way of... saying thank you," Danny insisted.

"You know if he doesn't want it, I wouldn't mind a pony!" Beth interjected, getting a laugh from everyone.

Mr Davies looked at Danny for a moment, then nodded. "We'll think about it."

Mrs Davies reached out and placed a hand on Chris' arm. "I think this one's a good influence on you!" she said jovially.

"He's my boyfriend!" Danny said. It was unplanned. He hadn't even considered coming out to his parents yet, let alone telling them about his new relationship with Chris. It had just slipped out.

Silence filled the room. Danny looked shocked by his own words, Chris didn't know where to look, Beth just grinned while Mr and Mrs Davies exchanged glances.

"Beth... could you.... erm..." Mrs Davies started.

"It's okay, she knows... I think," Danny said, avoiding eye contact with his sister.

Beth nodded. "I do. Good on ya, little bro. Out and proud!" She raised a fist into the air.

Silence filled the room again for a few seconds before everyone burst into laughter at the gesture. As it slowly faded and quiet returned, Mrs Davies looked at her husband and nodded, then turned to Danny and asked, "Are you sure?"

Nervously, Danny reached to the side and took hold of Chris' hand, nodded and said, "Absolutely!"

"Well..." she said, then paused to clear her throat. "I guess... welcome to the family, Chris!" She reached out and grabbed her glass, raising it. Beth and Mr Davies copied the gesture.

"Th... thank you!" Chris said shyly.

Danny felt like he had stopped breathing throughout the whole exchange, all of the tension piling so heavily onto his chest that he couldn't even take a breath. His mother's words pulled the weight away and everything just rushed in. Not quite sure, he just burst into tears.

Chris turned to the side and pulled him into a hug, holding him for a few seconds as he regained his composure.

“Sorry,” Danny said weakly, pulling away and wiping his face with the back of his hand. “Thanks Mum,” he said, smiling as more tears ran down his cheeks.

Later that evening, just as the boys were about to get ready for bed, Mr Davies had come in to speak to them. Much to Danny's horror, he was there to give them 'the talk'. Despite Danny's protests, he had done his best to educate them about sex and the importance of staying safe. As embarrassing as it had been, Danny thanked his Dad, as did Chris who actually commented that he couldn't even imagine his own Dad being that cool about everything and getting a hug from the man.

For the drive back to Kingswood, Danny had wanted to sit in the middle seat so he could cuddle up to his new boyfriend, but as accepting as his parents appeared, it still felt weird to be affectionate with the other boy in front of them, so he remained at the side, their hands held together on the middle.

They stopped at the same McDonalds they had visited on the way home the previous week. When Chris had thanked them again but commented even the best McDonalds was nowhere near as good as Mr Davies' cooking. The comment had been rewarded with a box of 20 McNuggets for the boy to 'smuggle' back into the school with him.

By the time they arrived at Kingswood, unloaded their bags and bid Danny's parents goodbye, it was late afternoon. Heading into the Home Building, they found themselves surprisingly keen to get back to the dorm.

The mood in the dorm was mixed. Everybody except Josh and James were already back and settled in and while they were all glad on some level to be back, some were keener than others. Mikey made it clear he already missed his other friends, his phone and having his own room, while Rob had found it hard leaving his little brother again. Matty and David were both just glad to be back among friends, it sounding like neither of them had got up to much of anything over half-term.

Danny and Chris' arrival had been very well received, with David eagerly climbing down from his bunk to greet them, hugging each of them excitedly. Even Mikey accepted a hug from Chris with no significant resistance. The two boys had finished unpacking and dumped their cases in the hallway to go into storage when they approached the sofas where the other four had gathered.

Chris stood with his arm around Danny's shoulder, who in turn had an arm around Chris' waist. “We were gonna wait until everyone was here, but... erm... we have some news,” Chris said with a grin.

The other four looked at them. It took seconds for them to figure out what the news was, neither Chris nor Danny actually needing to say it.

“So it's official?” Rob asked happily.

“Yup, he's my boyfriend,” Danny said proudly.

“Bout fucking time,” Mikey said dismissively, but the reluctant smile betrayed how happy he was for his friends.

David ran up for another hug, throwing an arm around both of them. “My dads were right. I said you were just friends, and they said that wouldn't last long!”

As Danny and Chris laughed, Mikey and Matty looked at each other in mild confusion. “Dads?” Mikey asked as David turned to head back round to his seat.

“Oh... erm... well...” David stuttered. He had introduced them to half of his roommates, the ones he suspected would be less likely to tease him about it as so many had at his last school.

“Cool,” Mikey said, then shrugged and nothing more was said about it, much to David's relief.

As the new couple joined the other four sitting round on the sofas, Chris pulled out his other surprise – the box of McNuggets. The way the others reacted, you'd think he had just thrown some priceless artefact down.

“Oh my God, I haven't had Maccy Dees in so long!” Mikey said excitedly as he helped himself to one.

“Me neither,” Matty said. “My parents don't let me have it usually!”

“David?” Chris offered, holding out the box to the only boy who hadn't taken one.

“Excellet,” David said happily, grabbing two.

Once they were almost gone, not wanting to get stuck in the squabble over who got the last one, Danny excused himself to go wash his hands. As he entered the toilets, he saw another Year 7 boy stood near the sinks, seemingly doing nothing. By now, he knew all of the Year 7 boys vaguely, but struggled with the names of boys in Dorms 1.03 and 1.04 who he didn't share any classes or clubs with. Although he had no shared activities with this boy, he recognised him anyway. “Hey.... Kyle, right?”

“Well remembered,” Kyle said, with a visibly forced smile. “Danny. Danny Davies.” he said, showing he knew him too.

It took a few seconds for Danny to figure out how he knew Kyle and he was drying his hands when it came to him. That day! The one with Josh. He had been looking for his roommate when he had spoken briefly to Kyle. It was like a sudden gut punch that he remembered the encounter. 'I'm finding it kinda rough.' That was what he had said, but Danny had been too much of a hurry to find Josh and had just brushed it off as he rushed off, saying they could 'chat' some time.

The whole time Danny had been washing and drying his hands, Kyle hadn't moved. He wasn't doing much of anything, he just seemed to be waiting. “You okay?” Danny asked.

Kyle shrugged. “Yeah,” he said softly, then returned to silence, eyes lowering to the ground.

“Wow that was... not even remotely convincing,” Danny said, hoping a touch of levity would be appreciated.

Thankfully, Kyle chuckled. "Yeah, sorry. But you've probably got... ya know... other things..." he said shyly, realising his words were probably more pointed than he meant them to be.

Danny stopped and moved over to him. He shook his head. "Not this time!" he said with a smile. "You wanna come grab a drink in the Common Room?"

"You sure?" Kyle asked timidly.

Danny nodded and placed a hand gently on his back, urging him to start walking. They headed down the corridor but stopped briefly outside 1.01.

Leaning through the door, Danny called out, "Hey, I'll be back later!"

"Okay," Chris said, with a smile

Danny blew Chris a kiss, prompting a comment of, "Puke!" from Mikey. The laughter that followed was muffled as Danny pulled the door closed and continued along to the Common Room with Kyle.

The room was far from empty, but couldn't exactly be called busy either. After both grabbing a drink from the kitchen at the far end, they took a seat in one of the booths, Kyle seemingly looking round carefully for who was close by.

As they settled, awkward silence hung between them. Danny had felt the need to talk to the other boy, but now had no idea what to actually say. Seeing he was getting restless, he figured he had to say something. "So... you said you were finding things... erm, tough, I think you said. You still... erm... feeling that way?"

Danny wasn't quite sure what he was expecting. Bursting into tears and wailing helplessly about his problems, denial of any issue, maybe even a happy smile and a story of how he had turned things around and now loved the place. All he got was a brief, sad look from the boy and a reply of, "Yeah," before he turned his gaze back down to the table.

Danny thought for a moment, pursing his lips thoughtfully. "Well... tell me about it. I'm not going anywhere," he said, but felt bad because in his head, all he could think about was getting back to Chris. After their week together, this was now the longest they had been apart.

Kyle looked almost like he hadn't heard the request, keeping his eyes downward as he took several deep breaths. "I hate it here," he eventually said, so quietly Danny almost missed it. He finally looked up. There was no sign of tears in his eyes, just a heavy sadness that felt like a gut-punch to the boy across the table. "I hate being away from my friends and my family. I hate sharing that room with those... those pricks. I hate spending every minute here alone. I just... I hate it all."

"I... I'm sorry," Danny said, not sure what else to say.

"You should be!" Kyle said, scowling.

"What?" Danny asked, taken aback by the sudden anger.

"You. Your... your dorm, your little... group or whatever. You're, like, sunshine and rainbows and everything and all... like... happy and being besties and stuff!" Kyle said sharply, his words dripping with venom. "I could maybe live with this stuff if I knew that, ya know, this is just how life is here,

but... but seeing you all like that just makes me think why? Why do you get to be like that and I'm stuck with seven guys who'd rather make my life miserable than say hello."

Danny was lost for words. Was he supposed to apologise... for being happy? Or maybe tell him it would get better, even though that may not be true?

Kyle raised his hands to rub his face, shook his head and looked at Danny again. "I'm sorry, that's not fair of me. I just... I hate it here so much and I never get to say it because if they knew how unhappy I was..."

"Yeah?" Danny asked, waiting for Kyle to say what would happen.

The other boy shook his head. "I dunno, they'd probably make my life miserable."

"They already do!" Danny said, bluntly. "Talk to them, explain how you feel. They don't change and you haven't lost anything, but if they do... great, life gets better. No harm in trying, right?"

"I... guess so," Kyle said, feeling bad for having aimed so much of his bad mood at Danny.

"And hey," Danny added, with a smile. "You don't have to be alone, even if things don't get better in your dorm. We can totally hang out!"

"We can?" Kyle asked, looking slightly hopeful for the first time since they started talking.

Danny nodded. "Sure," he said, then gave a wry grin and added, "If you can handle all the sunshine and rainbows!"

Kyle chuckled awkwardly. "Okay, I totally deserve that," he said, looking mildly sheepish.

After sending a much more positive Kyle on his way, the two having chatted for a while about life at Kingswood, Danny headed back to 1.01. The second he stepped through the door he heard, "Oh, here comes the bride!"

"James is back then!" Danny said to Rob, who was sorting through some items nearby in his wardrobe.

"Yeah, lucky us!" Rob said, shaking his head.

Annoying as he was, James was part of the group and, when he wasn't being a dick, he was actually pretty fun to be around. "Alright mate," Danny called down to him, moving side to side to see him and the others on the far side of the bunks. He frowned and looked to Rob. "No Josh yet?"

Rob let out a hearty sigh and shook his head as he closed his wardrobe, wandering subconsciously towards Josh's bunk. "Not yet."

"D'you think... we should talk to him when he gets back. Ya know, try and find out how he really got those bruises?" Danny asked. Although he knew something Rob didn't, had had to concede that the other boy definitely knew Josh better.

"What, like, together?" Rob asked, looking unsure. "That might feel like we're ganging up on him!"

Danny shrugged. "Well we are, aren't we? I mean, he lied to both of us separately. We talk to him together and he can't do that again, can he?"

"Let me think about it," Rob said, seeing Danny's point but still worried about overwhelming Josh.

It turned out he didn't really have a great deal of time to think. It was barely ten minutes later that the door opened and the final member of the dorm returned. As soon as Josh got inside, he went straight to his wardrobe and began pulling out clothes from his case, while the rest of the dorm shouted their greetings at him.

"Josh, you were right," James called out. "Guess who's officially a couple!"

"Geez, let him get in before you start bombarding him!" Chris said, shaking his head but grinning at being referred to as a couple.

"You may be the boss of your wife, there," James said, gesturing to Danny, "But you're not the boss of me!" He grinned playfully. "I'll tell Josh whatever I like!"

"Ignore him." Rob called out. "Take your time!" He was mildly concerned that Josh hadn't even spoken yet, but figured he may have just been worn out from travelling.

"Ugh, Rob, you're so boring," James said, shaking his head.

"And you're annoying!" Mikey said, before Rob could respond.

"Hey, who asked you?" James said defensively.

"So glad you're back, Josh. The kids are driving us mad!" Chris called out with a smirk.

Mikey and James both looked offended now. "We only seem like kids compared to you, you freakish giant!" James said with a grin. It was clear to all of them he was just playing.

"Well you're..." Chris started, but was cut off by a yell from the other end of the room.

"Oh my God, shut up!" Josh snapped.

At first, the others laughed, but as Josh turned, his expression was pure rage. Their faces dropped.

Josh marched halfway down the room, stopping between the second pair bunk-beds. "Seriously, all of you just shut... the fuck... up!"

"Josh, are you..." Rob started, but then the other boy's glare turned straight to him.

"If you ask me if I'm okay, I swear I'll knock you out!" Josh snarled furiously, his face contorted and red.

"Woah, not cool," Chris said, standing up and holding a hand out towards Josh.

"Oh sit down," Josh said dismissively. "Always jumping the rescue, you... fucking homo!" As Danny went to speak up in his defence, Josh pointed to him and said, "And keep your little fag out of this too!"

“Josh, why are you being like this?” James asked, looking as confused and scared as the rest of the boys.

“Because I'm sick of playing nice with you.... you arseholes. Nobody likes you, James, so just shut up. And don't you start, you... twat,” he directed at Mikey, then looked to Matty beside him, “And you, get a fucking personality. At least he has an opinion on something,” he snarled, pointing at David. “Even if it is wrong. Love and peace and equality!” he said on a mocking tone. “Load of old shit! Put down the pies and take a look at the real world, you fat, little prick!”

While the others sat in shocked silence, Matty and David actually in tears, Rob stood up and approached the angry boy.

“Back up or I'll make you!” Josh said, fists clenched at his sides.

“No,” Rob said calmly. “Josh, something is clearly wrong. Please, let me help!”

“Oh you know what's wrong? You! You're the fucking worst of this whole pathetic lot. Do you know what it was like, pretending to be your friend, spending so much time with you and hating every second, just to try and keep the peace? Well fuck it. You're a cunt, so are the rest of you, so do me a favour and don't speak to me. Don't even fucking look at me!” Tirade over, he stared at Rob breathlessly for several seconds. Despite the vicious verbal attack, Rob didn't look angry, just worried. “FUCK OFF!” Josh screamed at him, then turned away, grabbed his case and slammed the door open. He threw the case against the wall with a loud bang and disappeared down the hallway.

The silence in the room was only broken by the sound of other students down the hallway through the door Josh had left open, accented with the rhythmic sniffs of David and Matty who were still crying softly.

“I'm guessing... we're not friends any more,” James said, unsure what else to say.

Rob had moved across and sat on his bunk, staring at the open door. While Chris worked with James to try and console the others, Danny walked across and sat beside Rob.

“You okay?” Danny asked, looking to the side.

Rob nodded momentarily, then changed it to a shake as he sniffed and then buried his face in his hands. Danny put an arm around his friend and held him while he cried, trying to understand what had just happened. Somehow, in the space of two minutes today had gone from one of the happiest of his life, to the absolute worst.

'So much for sunshine and rainbows,' Danny thought to himself.

Chapter 9

To say the first week back at school was strained for the boys of 1.01 would be a substantial understatement. Josh had been out of the dorm before the others were up in the morning and only returned minutes before lights out. When he was in the dorm, he stayed in bed, covers pulled up over his head.

Nobody but Rob had even dared to try and speak to him, and that had just been met with a steely glare before Josh just turned away.

Meanwhile, his words had taken hold of the others like a virus, spreading and multiplying in their minds. Chris and Danny, while still happy in their new relationship had been reluctant to show even the slightest hint of it around others. James had been so obsessed with the thought that nobody liked him that he had gone so ultra-nice that he was now annoying in an entirely different way.

Matty had completely withdrawn into himself, barely speaking a word to anyone. He had even dropped out of debate club for fear of seeing Josh there. Mikey was just so angry with Josh and the whole situation that he had thrown himself entirely into his sporting activities, spending more time over at the Sports Complex than in the dorm. David had withdrawn even more-so than Matty, going so far as to even avoid going into the Dining Hall when the rest of the dorm were there.

Rob was like a ghost of his normal self, seemingly at a loss for what to do, so desperately wanting to figure out what was wrong with Josh but unable to make even the slightest progress. The day after Josh's outburst, he had tried approaching Ryan and Mark. He knew Josh was no fan, but if something had happened during half-term to make Josh so angry, he thought they might know.

"Sorry dude," Ryan had said with a shrug. "Nothing to tell. That's just what Josh is like, he doesn't like anyone!"

"Yeah," Mark had agreed. "You got pretty lucky having him keep it up for those first few weeks, but I guess he got sick of pretending."

Rob's requests for them to talk to Josh, to convince him to talk to the boys in his dorm, fell on deaf ears. They wanted nothing to do with it, claiming that they were long past that 'Year 7 drama bullshit', as they had put it.

It was late on Friday night, long past curfew, when Danny reached over and shook Chris awake.

"What's wrong?" Chris whispered, looking round in the near-total darkness.

"Nothing. Just come with me. And bring a blanket!" Danny said before carefully climbing down the ladder from his bunk.

Intrigued, Chris climbed down too, grabbing a blanket as instructed, then followed as Danny crept out of the room. Silently they made their way down the hallway but Chris gave his boyfriend a very strange look as he started up the stairs.

"Where are we going?" Chris asked, but was quickly shushed by the other boy.

Even more curiously, they continued up the next flight of stairs too, taking them to the Year 12 and 13 dorms. At first Chris thought they may be going to see Josh's brothers, they had talked about speaking to them but not bothered after the way Rob's encounter went.

They stopped at a door positioned between two of the dorms, labelled 'Roof Access'.

“Don't bother, they keep it locked!” Chris whispered. He had explored the whole building in his first week and found a few locked doors dotted around, one of which was this one to the roof.

“Not if you know the secret!” Danny whispered back and flashed Chris a cheeky grin. “It's broken. If you lift the handle instead of pulling it down...” he completed the gesture as he spoke and the door swung open.

They rushed through, pulling it closed behind them. It was pitch black and fairly creepy, so Danny grabbed hold of Chris' hand. Feeling their way along, he placed a foot on the first stair, then gradually crept his way up, his lover right behind. He felt around at the top and found the door handle. As the door opened, they felt a slight gust of wind as the moonlight flooded in.

As they stepped out onto the roof, they looked round in amazement. At some point many years ago, the roof had been home to a magnificent garden, but over the years it had fallen into disrepair. Now all that remained in the large planters were dead shrubs and overgrown weeds. Dotted around were various statues and benches, even a couple of wooden archways, now looking bedraggled and covered with nothing but dead vines.

Despite the state of the roof garden, under the moonlight on the perfectly clear night it looked almost magical.

“Wow!” Chris said as the two cautiously wandered round.

“Yeah, I thought you'd like it,” Danny said, glad his surprise had been well received. “This way,” he said, leading Chris along a route he had planned.

The path took them near to the edge of the building. Chris peered over but quickly leaned back. “Fuck, that's a long way down!” he exclaimed. Although it was only a four-storey structure, the building had extremely high ceilings, meaning they were getting on for almost a hundred feet up.

They moved round past a heavily weathered statue of an old man and stopped at a blanket spread out on the floor. “Ta-da!” Danny said happily, gesturing to the blanket, a small pile of sweets, snacks and drinks piled in the middle.

“What...” Chris started, looking at Danny in confusion.

“Well since we're, ya know, dating, I wanted to try and have a proper date,” Danny explained, sitting down and gesturing for Chris to join him. “I wanted to wait for the right night.”

Chris sat down but looked confused. “What's so special about tonight?”

Danny shifted round and moved into a laying position, once again indicating for Chris to copy. As the other boy got into position, cuddled up to Danny, he realised what he meant. Looking up, it was the most perfectly clear night and being in the middle of nowhere, with virtually no light pollution from the school, the sky was a blanket of stars.

Chris stared. He had never been a fan of astronomy, David had tried talking to him about the things they did at astronomy club and he just kinda of phased out, but the majesty of the view was undeniable now. He lay there for several moments, taking it all in and nuzzling against his boyfriend.

“Danny, this is...” he started, but he had no words. He just looked to the side, moonlight glistening in the other boy's eyes as he looked back. A few moments later, their lips met. It was a slow, gentle kiss, just their way of sharing the moment.

After making out for a while, they sat up and broke into the snacks, which Danny confessed had been provided by his Dad. Sharing them with Chris just felt like the right thing to do though. They sat for well over an hour, wrapped in the blanket Danny was glad he had the foresight to make Chris bring, casually grazing while talking and occasionally kissing some more. It was as relaxing as it was romantic, the drama of the last week and the situation with Josh feeling like it was a whole world away.

Eventually, as their kissing became more passionate, hands began to wander. Despite the chill in the air, their clothes were soon off. Naked under the blanket, they enjoyed the feel of each others' body. At one point Danny had thrown the blanket aside, wanting to know how it felt to be fully naked and exposed outdoors. While it had felt truly liberating, the temperature was against them and they were soon under the blanket again.

As Danny lay atop the bigger boy, kissing him as their bodies pressed together, cocks sliding against each other, he pulled away a moment and smiled. He shifted down a little, kissing Chris' shoulder, then moved a little more and let his lips encircle the boy's cold-stiffened nipple, getting a very enthusiastic moan in response. He had lingered there for a few minutes, alternating between nipples, teasing them both and curious about the fact his right one seemed to bring more pleasure than the left.

Finally moving on, Danny continued his way downwards, kissing Chris' stomach, letting his tongue tease his navel. Just as he started down towards his final destination, he felt a hand on his shoulder, the blanket thrown back.

“You don't have to...” Chris said with a gulp, suspecting what was about to happen.

“I know!” Danny said back with a grin, then proceeded to poke out his tongue and slide it from the tip of Chris' cock all the way down to his balls.

“Holy shit!” Chris gasped at the new sensation. He writhed with pleasure as he felt his cock slip into Danny's virgin mouth. Inexperienced as he was, he only took a couple of inches in, but it was more than enough to please Chris. The boy eagerly got to work, sucking on the solid tool, letting his tongue slide around the head several times. Out of sheer habit, Chris called out, “I'm close!” When Danny showed no signs of stopping or pulling off, he repeated, “I'm close.... ugh, I'm about to...”

It was too late. No edging this time, Danny clearly meant business. He happily continued his sucking as the cock throbbed between his lips and belched out a few thick spurts of cum into his mouth. It was a strange taste, not entirely unpleasant but strangely thick, a texture he had not experienced before. Regardless, he swallowed it, not letting a single drop escape as he finally stopped sucking and sat up, grinning.

“You're amazing!” Chris said, breathlessly. He leaned in and kissed the boy without thinking, then pulled back and said, “I think I just tasted my own spunk!”

Danny laughed and kissed him again, deliberately giving plenty of tongue to share the remnants of the load. When he let go, Chris pushed him down into a laying position. He knew what the other boy was intending. “Just cos I did it doesn't mean you have to if you don't want!” he said sincerely.

“You avin' a laugh? I've wanted to do this for as long as I've known you!” Chris explained, then leaned down and took the boy's cock into his mouth. While he had never measured it, so couldn't be sure, he thought the boy's cock had grown in the short time he had known him. Regardless, he happily sucked on the smooth boner, letting his hands caress the boy's tight ball sack and smooth pubis, although he did notice with some interest a few wispy hairs seemed to have sprouted.

Even quicker than Chris, Danny soon called out, “I'm close!”

Chris pulled his head away, not to avoid swallowing, because he knew the boy was still shooting blanks, but simply because he loved to watch the small cock spasm and twitch when he came. One final lick was all it took.

“Ugh... fuck!” Danny grunted. Something about it felt different, presumably the fact it had just been in another boy's mouth and, covered in saliva, was now incredibly sensitive to the wind blowing around them.

“Danny!” Chris said, getting his lover's attention as he revelled in the post-orgasmic bliss. “Look!”

Danny looked down at his stomach, the firm expanse of smooth, pale skin. Glistening in the moonlight were several globs of liquid. “Is that... what I think it is?”

Chris looked close, but without better light it was hard to be sure. “It might just be pre-cum,” he said, “But either way... it's new!”

Danny reached down and scooped up a glob on one finger. With a shrug, he said, “Well I just tasted cum. This is one way to test it!” He licked the finger clean and grinned. “Yup, tastes like spunk!”

Chris stared in delighted shock. “That's so hot!” he said, almost laughing.

The two cuddled up again under the blanket, enjoying the night sky with their bodies entwined. They stayed there for as long as they could before conceding to the cold. A few minutes later, they were back down in the dorm, climbing back into bed with their room-mates none-the-wiser.

Having lost a big chunk of the night to their date, Danny struggled to get up in the morning. Wanting just a little more sleep, he insisted on Chris going to breakfast without him. He knew he would have to get up soon as the Year 7 football team were playing the Year 8 team, in what was expected to be a very close match. Worrying he would end up being late, he eventually gave up on sleep and sat up in his bunk.

As he climbed down and pulled on his football kit, then packed his swimming gear and a change of clothes for after, he noticed he wasn't the only one left in the dorm. Josh was still in bed, covers pulled up over his head.

“You're gonna be late for football,” he said flatly, but got no response. He considered shouting at the other boy. They had not spoken since the first day back and he was still carrying a lot of rage over what the other boy has said, but he couldn't do it. With a sigh, he cautiously took a seat on the end of Josh's bunk.

Noticing movement, he flinched slightly, fearful that Josh might lash out, but he seemed to remain

still. Awake, alert but very much ignoring him. "I don't believe you meant it, all that stuff you said. I just thought you should know that. Don't get me wrong, I'm pissed as hell at you for it, but... Josh, I know something is going on. I don't know what, but I suspect it's got something to do with your brothers. I don't think they stopped hurting you after that day I saw, but if you won't talk to me, I can't help." He paused, hoping his pleas would get some kind of reaction, but Josh remained still.

"I know you don't want me to, but I think I have to tell someone about what I think is going on. It's the only way left I can think of to help you!" Danny explained, voicing the thought that had been forming all week.

That seemed to be enough. The covers were tossed back and Josh sat bolt upright. "Keep your faggot nose out of my business. I'm not... I'm not in trouble, I'm not some... I dunno, helpless charity case you need to save. I just don't fucking like you. God, what's wrong with you that you can't just accept when someone doesn't like you? Must be a gay thing, you're like a whiny little girl!"

Danny was visibly infuriated by the comments, but he knew that if he reacted now, it would likely be with his fists and not his words. His parents had always been extremely strict about teaching him that violence was never the answer and it was only their voices in his head right then that stopped him from hitting Josh for what he had said.

"Okay then," he said through gritted teeth, then stood up, grabbed his bag and left Josh alone in the dorm.

The football match was nowhere near as tight as expected, ending up with the Year 8 team victorious by three points. After the third goal, Danny had actually been subbed out, something that had very rarely happened before, the coach admonishing him for not having his head in the game.

By the time he got into the pool, he had shaken himself out of it a little, mostly cheered up by the sight of Chris in a speedo. It was nice to see David there too. The timid boy still kept to himself, but at least seemed to enjoy his time in the pool, actually beating his own lap time record fairly substantially.

After lunch, Danny headed off to the Common Room to meet Kyle. They had arranged to hang out at least once a week. If nothing else, it felt nice to be doing something with someone who was unburdened by the Josh situation. Danny was first to arrive, but just a few minutes later Kyle appeared.

Instead of grabbing a drink, he just made his way straight to where Danny was sitting, looking round nervously the whole time.

"Hey, you okay?" Danny asked, frowning.

"Erm... yeah... I just... erm... I can't stay. I have to... erm... go do something!" Kyle said shakily.

"Oh... okay," Danny said, worried something more serious might be wrong, but not wanting to push as he already looked dreadful. "Guess we can catch up another time!"

"Erm... I don't think... well, we shouldn't hang out again," Kyle said, still glancing round at others nearby.

"Kyle, is everything okay?" Danny asked, shuffling forward to stand up, put pasing as Kyle held

out a hand gesturing for him to stop.

“Look, I wasn't gonna say anything cos I didn't wanna hurt your feelings, but you've been really nice to me so I think I owe you the truth,” Kyle said in a hushed tone.

Danny frowned. “Which is what?”

Kyle peered round again, then looked to Danny briefly before staring at the ground. “I already get picked on enough without being seen with... erm... well... The last thing I need is everyone else thinking I'm... gay too!” He almost whispered the last couple of words, seemingly scared to even say them aloud.

“Wait, how did... I mean... why would...” Danny stuttered, so taken aback by the comment that he simply didn't know how to handle it.

“I'm sorry, Danny. I'll see you around!” Kyle said, backing away a few steps before turning and dashing out.

Danny sat there in a state of shock. He didn't know what was worse, having others know he was gay or having another boy not want to be around him because of it. What had happened, on top of what Josh had said earlier just felt like too much and he felt tears welling in his eyes, but then a sudden fear gripped him.

He was not 'out', not officially. Sure, the other boys in the dorm knew and him and Chris, but that was a safe space, nobody outside knew the secrets they shared in there... or so he thought. If Kyle knew, then who else did? Maybe the whole school knew. Maybe they were all talking about him right now. Looking round the Common Room, he felt like all eyes were on him. He couldn't cry there, no matter how bad he felt, not in front of them all, so he stood up and walked out as calmly as he could manage. He was just able to hold it together long enough to make it to a toilet cubicle, tears running down his cheeks the moment he slid the lock across.

“Ugh, this is so bad!” Chris complained, dropping the book into his lap.

Rob sighed. “I know, you already said that!” he replied, not even glancing away from his own copy.

The two boys were sat in their dorm, both working on the book they needed to finish for Book Club the following night. They would normally have been joined by James and Josh, but Josh was still staying away from the dorm where possible and James had gone to 'support' Mikey and Matty at Basketball practice as part of his ongoing campaign to be nice to everybody.

“I can't read any more of it!” Chris said, shaking his head after getting through just a few more lines. “It's so stupid. Vampires aren't meant to sparkle in sunlight. They're supposed to die... or re-die... or whatever!”

Rob mused the comments for a moment, then offered, “Maybe you can just take it as an alternate option to the one you usually know. I mean, vampires aren't real anyway, so who's to say what they would or wouldn't do?”

“Fine. Vampires sparkle. Okay. Then this book just plain sucks!” Chris said, closing the book and tossing it onto one of the other sofas. “Think I'll get in trouble for not reading it?”

“Well it's not a regular class, you choose to be there, so probably not,” Rob said with a shrug. “Besides, saying you didn't finish it and giving a reasonable answer as to what you found so bad is still an opinion, so I reckon Mr Trent'd be okay with that!”

“Great, then I'm finished!” Chris said happily. “What to do now?” He glanced over at the clock on the wall.

“They're not due back for well over an hour,” Rob said with a knowing smile.

“Shut up. I wasn't even thinking that,” Chris said, entirely unconvincingly. Rob just shot him a wry grin, so he conceded, “Fine. I was. I was thinking about seeing my boyfriend. Is that such a crime?”

Rob just shook his head. “No, it's sweet. It's just nice to see someone in the dorm not being miserable!”

Chris smiled briefly but it quickly faded. Thinking about his own happiness just felt like it was emphasising everyone else's misery. Chris sighed, glancing at Rob. “I still can't believe he turned out to be such a twat!” He hadn't said who he was talking about, but it was easy to figure out.

“He's not!” Rob said defensively. “I mean...” he paused, frowning, knowing it was difficult to explain. “Something's going on. That's not him, I know it.”

Chris raised an eyebrow, just looking at Rob. With a shake of the head, he replied, “In the case he should join us at drama club because he is a professional at staying in character! That character being... ya know... an absolute twat!”

Their attention turned to the other end of the dorm as the door opened. “Oh hey,” Danny said glumly as he walked in and saw the two boys.

Rob looked at the clock and frowned. “D&D finish early?” Rob asked, knowing their game more often than not went right to the last minute.

“I...” Danny started, sighing heavily as he wandered across to join them. As Chris held out his arms, Danny looked for a moment, then sat on a different sofa. “I just... wasn't in the mood for it.”

“Hey,” Chris said, already slightly worried by having his affections ignored. He leaned forward and asked, “What's up?”

Danny glanced at Chris, then to Rob and back. After Chris, Rob felt like the boy he was most able to trust in the dorm, but the day had just shaken him so much that he found himself suspicious of even him. Someone was talking about him and Chris, telling others about them, outing them and he had no way of knowing who, or even if it was just one person. Maybe it was all of them. He just shook his head gently. “Nothing, it's just... it's been a long day.”

Rob caught the glance, brief as it had been. He stood up, stretched and said, “I'm gonna go for a walk. I'll see you guys in a bit.”

Chris felt bad, knowing the other boy was clearly leaving because of Danny, but at the same time he knew Danny was upset. As much as he always wanted to look after his friends, Danny was more than that now, so he was the priority. “Okay, see you soon,” he said as Rob passed, offering a fist bump.

Once Rob was gone, Chris stood up and flopped down beside Danny on his sofa. Putting his arms around the other boy, he kissed him gently on the cheek. "You wanna tell me about it?"

Danny sighed again, raised a hand to grip onto Chris' arm and leaned against him. "No," he said, knowing that Chris would likely be upset as he was about the gossip and wanting to spare him from it as long as he could. "But thanks," he added, nuzzling his head against him.

"Okay," Chris said softly. He was silent for a moment, then asked, "So did you think any more about telling someone about Josh's brothers?"

Danny rolled his eyes without Chris seeing. That was exactly what he didn't want to talk about, but then he had no way of knowing that. He had avoided lashing out earlier, but the other boy's words had been bubbling away in his mind all day, just waiting for a chance to burst out. "Fuck him!" Danny snapped. "He's not my problem any more. If his brothers ARE picking on him... good! I hope they keep it up and I hope it hurts!"

"Woah," Chris said, pulling back, turning the other boy to look at him. "That's a bit harsh, isn't it?"

Danny could barely look Chris in the eye. "Maybe," he said, already regretting it a little. "But I don't care. He deserves whatever he gets!"

Danny refused to talk about it any further and Chris didn't want to push it, so they just spent the rest of the evening sat quietly together until the others returned.

Danny's mood remained almost as bad as Josh's over the following week, although he did his best not to inflict it on the others. It was Friday night again when the mood finally broke, after he was awoken by Chris and led back up to the abandoned roof garden.

"I like the thought that we have a spot that's just ours," Chris had said when the two were again alone. The night was cold and cloudy, but dry so they had been able to cuddle under a blanket and keep each other warm as they enjoyed the peace and solitude.

"Me too," Danny had said, actually smiling for a change. "Although it's not really ours. Other people come up here, but it's usually during the day. I think a lot of them smoke up here."

"So maybe we should start calling it the fag garden!" Chris joked. When Danny didn't laugh, he went on, "You know, fags as in cigarettes, but also fags as in... us!"

Danny got the joke, he had just found the word, even used in a loving carefree way, just reminded him of the hurtful things Josh had said to him. Still wanting to spare Chris from Josh's bile, he forced a smile and a weak snigger. "Yeah, maybe,"

"Well either way, we should do this every week, at least until the weather gets too bad," Chris suggested.

Danny smiled again, but this time sincerely. If it wasn't for Chris, he wasn't sure he would be able to keep going. The fear and mistrust over who had been gossiping was still eating away at him, so Chris was now almost the only boy in the school he actually spoke to. The only other one he had said more than two words to was his mentor, Joseph, who had been trying his hardest to coach

Danny through a troubling couple of weeks.

“You just want me to suck your dick again!” Danny said, teasing playfully.

Chris shrugged, as he cuddled against the other boy. “Do you blame me? It feels amazing!”

“So you'd like me to do it now?” Danny asked, his arousal quickly overtaking any other thoughts in his head. He nibbled at Chris' neck.

“Mmm, well if you're offering...” Chris replied dreamily.

“I'm not!” Danny said abruptly, pulling away with a wicked smile. “At least not until you suck mine!” He lay down with his hands behind his head. “Get to it, bitch!”

Chris smiled reluctantly. “You know it's actually kind of annoying how much I like doing what you tell me to,” he said, moving down to free the other boy's cock. As he pulled Danny's shorts down, he looked at the rigid cock in the low light and added, “I think you've grown!”

“That's the wrong kind of sucking up!” Danny said, reaching down and ruffling Chris' hair. “Now shut up and do it!”

“Mmmm, yes sir!” Chris said happily.

The third week back after half term was finally a little calmer in the dorm. While Josh's words still played on their minds, the boys had begun to settle into what felt like the new normal for them. While they were far from the games and gatherings of their first few weeks in the school, they were at least all more willing to be around each other.

Chris had continued to do his best to keep Danny's spirits up, although just the thought of their Friday night date was enough to keep them both going. Rob had made a couple more attempts to reach out to Josh, but reported back to the others that he simply refused to engage, either walking away or ignoring him completely. Even Rob was beginning to get tired of trying.

On Friday evenings, Danny was always triple-booked, with Football, Swimming and Drama Clubs all taking place at the same time. He usually cycled through them on a 3 week pattern, but tonight had chosen to choose Swimming when really it should have been football's turn. It was partly because Chris, who himself was double-booked with Swimming and Drama, was going swimming, but also because David would be there.

The timid boy had been the slowest to recover from Josh's verbal assault, having barely spoken a word to anyone or hung out with them since it happened. He had even started to look as withdrawn as he was acting, looking paler and smaller every day. It had been Danny and Chris' hope to cheer the other boy up a little throughout the evening.

They were stood together at the side of the pool, waiting for their turn to swim a lap, the coach timing them and watching their form.

“Looking forward to book club on Sunday?” Chris asked the smaller boy.

“I guess,” David said back, not even looking.

"I've actually read the whole book this time," Chris said with a smile. "Not like that crap vampire one!"

"Mmm-huh," David replied quietly.

"Do you..." Chris started, but that was when the coach called David up for his turn. He turned to Danny. "It's like he's not even there!"

"That's cos half of him isn't!" Danny said, watching David prepare for his lap. "I'm sure he's lost weight."

Chris nodded his agreement. "He's been hitting the pool pretty hard lately. His best time's waaay better than it was before half term."

"S'pose it's more fun than hanging round in the dorm," Danny said with a shrug.

They turned to watch David finish his swim, floating by the edge as the coach came over, stopwatch in hand.

"That was awful!" the coach said. His tone wasn't harsh, he never was, he was the sort of coach who relied on positive reinforcement rather than just screaming at everyone. "Miles off your best, David. You can do waaaay better than that!"

David climbed out of the pool via the nearby steps, but slipped on the top one and fell back in, getting a laugh from the rest of the boys. He started to climb out again, but paused about halfway up, looking like he was struggling.

"Is he okay?" Danny asked, nudging Chris and gesturing over to their room-mate.

David just shook his head and continued up, walking along as the next boy went up.

"Never mind, mate," Danny said as the boy came close.

"Yeah, everyone has off days!" Chris added.

David blinked several times, then looked at Chris and asked blankly, "What?"

Danny and Chris exchanged worried looks. Chris reached out and placed a hand on the shorter boy's shoulder and asked, "Dave, buddy, you okay?"

Again the boy was slow to respond, shaking his head weakly as he looked up and said, "Yeah, I'm just... erm... I'm... erm..." his voice just trailed off.

"COACH!" Danny called out, making the nearby boys look round in surprise.

The man continued watching the boy in the pool, John Evans from 1.02. The moment he clicked the stopwatch to finish timing the swim, he looked in Danny's direction. "What's up?" he called out.

"Sir, I think something's wrong..." Danny started, but he never got to finish.

David's legs gave way and he collapsed to the side. It was only thanks to the quick reactions of

Chris that he managed to avoid slamming his head against the tiled floor.

“David!” Chris called out, still cradling the boy's head.

“Out of the way!” the Coach called out, running towards the prone boy.

The atmosphere in 1.01 was tense, though for the first time in weeks it was not because of Josh. James had headed back there after Swim practice had been called off, while Danny and Chris had insisted on going with their friend and the Coach to the infirmary. Rob had been the only one there at the time, so he had filled him in, doing the same with Mikey and Matty when they returned from Basketball.

When Josh returned, the four boys had been sitting quietly, trying not to speculate too much about what was wrong with David for fear of freaking themselves out.

James turned to Josh who had gone straight to his bunk and called out, “Not that you'd care, but David's in the infirmary!”

While the other three went back to chatting, Rob couldn't help looking over at his friend... or ex-friend. One thing was very clear from his expression, James was wrong, he very clearly cared.

Mr Trent had come in to check on the boys a couple of times, urging them to get to bed, but conceding that it was pointless until they had any news about their friend, so he had let them remain up until anything happened.

It was about half an hour after lights out when the boys heard approaching footsteps, accompanied by what sounded like raised voices. As the door slammed open, they heard Chris shout, “Danny, don't!”

As soon as he was in the dorm, Danny lunged towards Josh. He swung his fist, getting the other boy right in the face, even as he tried to back away. Trying to escape Danny's fury, he fell off the bunk. Fortunately, Chris had grabbed his boyfriend now and was holding him back.

“What's going on?” Mikey demanded, all of the boys gathering round.

“Is it David? He's not...” Rob started, terrified of the worst case scenario that they had discussed a couple of times while waiting.

“No, he's gonna be fine!” Chris insisted, struggling to keep Danny under control.

“Yeah, no thanks to him!” Danny snarled, gesturing at Josh who was stood up, holding his jaw.

“He wasn't even there!” James said, surprised to find himself defending Josh.

“I'm gonna let go now, okay?” Chris whispered to Danny, letting go as he got a small nod back. He closed the door to avoid disturbing the others or drawing Mr Trent's attention too easily.

Danny's fists remained clenched, but he was visibly calming down. “It's starvation!” Danny said sharply. “It turns out David has barely eaten anything since we got back from half-term.”

“What? Why?” Mikey asked, confused about how something like that could even happen, a sentiment visibly mirrored by everyone else.

A slow look of realisation spread over Josh's face.

“Oh, yeah, remember now, do you?” Danny asked, almost angry enough to lash out again. The others looked at him questioningly. “Josh's little.... whatever that was. How did you put it Josh, put down the pies you fat fucker?”

“No... I... I...” Josh stuttered as every eye in the room fell on him.

As hurt and upset as they had all been from what Josh had said to them, every bit of pain they felt was now directed back at the boy.

“What, nothing to say now?” Danny asked, looking at him in absolute disgust.

There was a knock at the door which swung open. Mr Trent stepped in but froze as he saw the stand-off. He looked round for a moment but decided not to probe too deeply. “Ah, you're back!” he said happily at the sight of Danny and Chris. “I'd just heard David's going to be okay, but I'm guessing you've told them all already.”

Danny just nodded silently.

“Great. Well it's getting late so time to get to bed,” the teacher said firmly. As the boys began moving to get ready for bed, he added, “I know this has been a tough evening for you all and you're probably still worried about your friend. You'll all be able to see him in the morning and I'll be available if any of you need to chat about it, okay?”

“Yes Mr Trent,” several of the boys chorused.

Not one of the boys spoke as they got ready, but every one of them had shot Josh furious stares several times before the lights were turned out. Josh had retreated once again to his bunk.

Chris was unsure whether or not to wake Danny. It was their date night, which he had been so looking forward to, but with everything that had happened throughout the day he considered just letting his boyfriend sleep. He had even nodded off himself for a while, but had woken up again and now couldn't stop thinking about the other boy.

He reached across the gap between their bunks and gently nudged Danny. Seeing him stir, he whispered, “Hey, you still want date night or d'you wanna sleep?”

“Mnnnh,” Danny moaned, coming to his senses. Once he realised what he had been asked, he smiled and said, “Let's go!”

Less than a minute later, they had crept through the darkness of the dorm, surrounded by the heavy breaths and gentle snores of the snoring boys and gotten out into the hallway. The two boys held hands as they made their way silently up to the top floor, quietly lifting the handle to the roof access before slipping inside, relieved to be away from the riskier areas where they might get caught.

As it was a clear night with a near-full moon, it was fairly bright when they opened the final door to

the roof. They had barely got a few steps out with Danny leading the way when he stopped.

“Is someone there?” a voice called out.

Panic gripped the two boys. They had not yet been caught, and so far were mostly unaware of the punishment should it happen. They considered turning and running, but they would almost certainly be caught if they made that much noise. Instead they remained still and motionless.

“I can hear you!” the voice called out.

Danny frowned. The fear of getting caught had been replaced by something else – recognition!

“Josh?” he called out, taking a step forward and letting go of Chris' hand.

“Danny?!” Josh called back in surprise. “Leave me alone. I've got to do this!” he added, his voice audibly wavering.

“Do what?” Danny asked. He took another step forward and the answer became apparent. Josh was standing on the low wall that surrounded the edge of the roof garden, looking down at the ground below.

Chapter 10

Danny felt a chill run through his entire body. Josh hadn't said it, but the way he spoke, where he was stood, it was obvious what he was there to do. He reached back and grabbed Chris' hand. Without even thinking, he whispered, "Go find a teacher. Now!"

Chris nodded and squeezed Danny's hand then let go and crept back to the door, having not been seen by the other boy.

"Please, just... go back to the dorm!" Josh pleaded.

Danny's head felt it was going to explode. He had never been so scared in his life. He wanted to run away and hide. He wanted to scream at his friend... former friend... whatever he was. He wanted someone to come and help, anyone, but he knew for now it was just him. He knew he had to speak but his mouth refused to work. He just stood there, staring at the boy stood on the roof edge, tightly gripping onto the blanket he had intended to wrap around himself and his boyfriend as they made love.

"I... I can't do that," Danny finally managed to say, although it was weak and croaky. His whole mouth had dried up.

"Nobody was meant to see!" Josh said weepily. "Please just leave me alone. If you're here, I can't..." he stopped, unable to say the words.

"Then I'm definitely staying," Danny said. Regardless of the situation, of the fear he felt, he was still severely pissed at the other boy and disagreeing with him was almost instinctual.

For several moments, the only sound was the gentle night breeze blowing round dry dead leaves on the rooftop.

"Fine. Then you're gonna listen. I didn't... I mean... I couldn't leave a... a note, but I have some things I wanted to say, so I'll tell you instead," Josh said, still staring down over the edge. "Stay back!" he snapped, his head turning as he saw Danny step towards him.

"It's okay," Danny said, raising his hands defensively. "I'm just coming to sit down, I won't come near you." he gestured to a bench closer to Josh.

"Okay," Josh conceded, returning his eyes to the ground far below.

Danny sat down, looking round in the direction of the door, desperately hoping Chris and a teacher would appear soon. With no sign of them, he asked, "So what did you want to tell me?"

"I never meant for David to get hurt, I promise!" Josh said with a sniff. "It was meant to stop him getting hurt. All of you, actually!"

"What was?" Danny asked, not quite following, but weary of annoying the distressed boy.

"The... the... all of it," Josh rambled. "The things I said... this whole... this whole thing. It was... if I did it, then they wouldn't... they wouldn't hurt anyone else! That was what they said."

Danny stared for a moment. He knew he should have asked who, but it seemed quite obvious to him. "You mean your brothers?"

Josh looked round momentarily. "I figured you knew, you always seem to know!"

Danny nodded as Josh turned away again. A plan formed in his mind. It was quick, rough, but it was the best he'd got. "Josh, why don't you, maybe... tell me more!" he suggested. He figured talking about it might help the other boy, calm him down a little, but even if that failed, it would buy some more time for help to arrive.

"You know, I actually liked it. At first I mean. It was like a game we played and it was fun," Josh said wistfully. "I was seven, the first time they did it."

"The first time they hit you?" Danny asked when silence had hung between them for a few seconds.

Josh looked round again, the moonlight catching his eyes as he stared at Danny. "The first time they fucked me!"

Danny took a sharp intake of breath. It felt like he had been punched in the stomach. He knew, or suspected at least, that Josh's brothers bullied him, but he thought it was just the sort of thing eh had witnessed in the woods. The thought had never even crossed his mind that they might be doing... that!

"But... like I said," Josh went on, turning away. "Back then it was fun. They were nice to me. They made it a game, and gave me sweets and just, like, played with me and it was all just part of the fun. I mean, it hurt, but I trusted them and they said it wouldn't hurt for long. They told me I'd enjoy it and... and... they were right. I did. Maybe that makes me... ya know... like you and Chris."

Danny couldn't speak. The cold detachment of Josh's tone was only making it worse. It was like he wasn't even in there any more, it was just some sad, empty vessel using his voice to let out all of its secrets.

"But I guess they... they must have got bored... of... of me, of it being fun, I dunno. But they stopped playing and there weren't games and sweets and cuddles any more, it was just... just fucking as much as they wanted, whenever they wanted. Like, most nights I'd wake up with one of them... or both of them... just... just grabbing me and... and holding me down and... and it hurt again. They always made sure it hurt. That... that seemed to be the bit they liked now, when I'd cry or... or beg them to stop. That just... it made them go harder... it made them... get harder!"

"Josh, I'm... I'm so..." Danny tried, but words failed him.

"But it was okay, because then the holidays would end and they'd come back here. I loved Kingswood, because every time they came here, I knew I was safe, at least for a while," Josh went on. "I could live with it... I could keep quiet, like they told me to, because I knew eventually they would come back here. But... but then Mum and Dad told me I'd be coming here. I begged them not to make me, but they thought I just... ya know... didn't want to leave my friends or be away from home."

Danny looked round. Still nobody in sight.

Josh suddenly laughed. A cold, almost delirious laugh. "You know, when I was packing to come here, Dad actually said to me, 'You don't need to worry, you'll have your brothers there to look after you!' Can you believe that? They... they were so... so fucking clueless."

"Couldn't you... tell them?" Danny asked nervously.

“How could I? Ryan and Mark, they told me, they said nobody would believe me. They said nobody would believe me over both of them. And... and they told me if I did, all that would happen was everyone would find out I was a little... pervert... who liked getting fucked. They said I enjoyed it, and that meant nobody would ever believe me.”

Danny didn't know what to say, but thankfully Josh went on.

“Then... then I got here and at first... just... that first day I felt what it was like... having all of you around me. Having... having brothers who cared instead of brothers who just.... just enjoyed hurting me and it was... it was great, but then they got here. I... some part of me... hoped that they wouldn't do anything here, that maybe I could just... just be here and not be their little faggot... that's what they call me, their little faggot, but no, they were even worse here. It was like, I was in their territory and they knew every secret spot they could.... they could fuck me and every second that I was free for them to hurt me.”

“But that was when you showed up. You know, that day in the woods, if you hadn't showed up when you did, do you want to know what they were planning?” Josh asked, glancing round at the other boy.

“Josh... I...” Danny stuttered.

“They were just getting started with the spider, you know. They've told me it feels better doing it when I'm scared. So after they'd finished scaring me, they would probably have made me strip and then I'd have to beg them... that got them off too, hearing me beg, I'd have to beg them to fuck me and as soon as one of them was inside me, I'd have to beg the other to... to fuck my face. And then, if I got hard, they'd stop, then they'd make me, like, squat then they'd take turns kicking my balls until my cock went down and then I'd probably have had to beg them to start all over again.”

Danny put his hand over his mouth. He was crying, and while he could not stop the tears, he could at least silence himself.

“I really wish you hadn't found us that day. They were already pissed at me because Rob kept hanging around me and messing up their plans, so having someone else show up... they were seriously pissed. But I was okay with that. I could handle them being pissed because when I wasn't with them, I was with you guys and I actually got to be happy. But I'm guessing they knew that,” he laughed coldly again. “They're good at that. They know when I'm happy and they always find a way to stop it. They told me that if you or Rob got in the way again, then they'd start doing to you what they'd been doing to me and that it would be my fault.”

Still no sign of anybody and Josh sounded like he was almost to the end. Danny kept staring round at the door, praying for anyone to show up.

“You know, they were usually so careful not to leave any marks. They knew if people saw them, they might... they might start questioning things, or they might start looking into stuff, so they never did anything that would cut or bruise.” Josh explained.

Something clicked in Danny's head. “So what happened to your back? What did they do?” he asked, worried that he had in some way contributed to making things worse.

“Nothing,” Josh said, leaning over to stare at his landing point. “They didn't do that, I did! I... was so... I was so happy with you and the others and... and I knew you all cared, so I thought... maybe if

you saw something, you'd.... I dunno.... something might happen, so I... I hurt myself... but then I got scared. I... I thought about them hurting you or Rob or one of the others and I couldn't say anything so I tried to... to cover it up.”

“And we didn't do anything,” Danny said, feeling like he was about to throw up.

“No... but they did! They were... they were more angry than I'd ever seen them over half-term. They... they found whole new ways to make things hurt, but when we came back... they told me I wasn't allowed friends any more. They told me I had to... to stop you all sticking your noses in.. and... and make sure none of you would ever get involved. They said if I didn't hurt you, they would!”

“So you... you said those things...” Danny started, trailing off.

“So you'd hate me. Yeah. I'd rather you all hate me and be safe than like me and.... and have them... hurting you,” Josh explained, then sniffed as his breath went shaky. “But I couldn't even do that right. David nearly died because of me. Even when I try to help, people get hurt. That's why I have to do this!”

“You don't!” Danny snapped, a lot firmer and louder than he intended.

“I do. I have to. You... you know everything now. So I have to do it. If I'm around, you'll all just get hurt more so I need to go,” Josh said, leaning out again.

“No!” Danny said calmly. “You're right. I know now and that means you're not in this alone any more. I won't let them hurt you!”

“You can't stop them!” Josh said back, sniffing heavily, trembling. Shaking his head, he sat down, legs dangling over the edge.

Danny looked down at the blanket still clasped in his hands. “Hey, it's cold up here at night. Take this,” he held it out.

Josh looked back and shook his head. “I'm not... I'm not falling for that. You just want em to move away from the edge. You're not talking me out of it!”

“I'm not trying to,” Danny said honestly. “I just want you to be warm! Here,” he said, tossing the blanket towards him. Being cautious not to knock Josh accidentally, the throw was quite weak, the blanket falling to the ground in front of the wall.

Josh looked down at it and shook his head, then turned back round to look down between his legs at the stone slabs below.

Danny stood up to retrieve the blanket, but stopped as Josh's head shot round to stare at him.

“I'm just... I'm gonna give you the blanket, that's all!” Danny said, edging slowly towards him.

Josh kept watching, but seemed to be allowing it. Danny crept closer, finally able to reach the blanket which he picked up and stood slowly. He held it open and reached towards Josh with it. His intention really had been to keep the boy warm, making sure he was still alive when help came and not dead from hypothermia, but as he gently wrapped it around Josh, he acted on pure instinct.

In the blink of an eye, Danny had wrapped his arms around the other boy, then heaved himself backwards, pulling Josh off of the wall. The distraught boy struggled against him the moment he realised what was happening, but it was too late. They both fell to the floor heavily and Danny quickly rolled on top of him doing his best to pin him down.

Josh screamed out at him. "GET OFF! LET ME GO! I'VE GOT TO DO IT!" he insisted, but even if he had been able to get free of Danny, who clinged to him tighter than seemed humanly possible, Chris and Mr Evans, the Year 12 and 13 Floor Master came rushing out of the shadows by the door and helped grab Josh.

By this point, Josh was sobbing hysterical tears, held tightly by Danny who just kept whispering, "I'm sorry!" over and over again.

The next day, the school gossip-mill had been running overtime. Nobody beyond Josh, Danny, Chris and the faculty actually knew what had gone down. The whole matter was being handled away from the school, so both Josh and Danny were gone, with Chris going along, adamantly refusing to leave Danny's side.

Speculation was only made more wild when the police came to arrest Ryan and Mark, Josh's older brothers. There were wild, obscure rumours flying around, from the Williams brothers committing a series of murders and finally getting caught, to a death in the family.

James, Mikey, Matty and Rob had been filled in about some basic details of what was happening, if only for their own mental wellbeing. With David still in the infirmary, half of their dorm was just gone and it was a scary and confusing time for all of them. They had been spared the more vivid details of what had happened on the roof, simply being told that Josh was not well and had not been told exactly what Josh's brothers had done.