

Not Looking For Love (Friends, Sexcapades, And Love Affairs Side Story, Patreon Exclusive)

By Laura S. Fox

*Fuck.*

That four-letter word was the best choice to sum up the situation. Mike, of all people, sweet, nervous, amazing kisser Mike, had to be his employee. Ryan pressed his index fingers against his temples and pushed until he could feel them digging into his skull.

Last night, he had gone out for a drink without even thinking of hooking up. But then that young man had walked in and placed himself on a tall stool by his side, looking like a fish out of the water. Ryan had expected him to be an out-of-towner who had chosen that particular bar by accident.

One look had been enough, and a decision had been taken. He hadn't planned on hooking up with Mike, but they had clicked so well and ended up in that dark, comfortable bar where –

No, for the sake of his sanity, he needed to stop. What were the chances? What were the frigging chances? He never learned, damn it.

Ryan groaned and leaned back in his chair. On top of it all, he had been an asshole to Mike, insulting and accusing him of wrongdoings.

He had told Mike last night that he appreciated honesty in people. And his employee had done nothing wrong. Micah Cavanaugh was a loner, the type of guy who didn't get along with his co-workers, and he didn't have to be scolded for that.

Life like that could be difficult. Ryan pressed the heels of his palms into his eyes. He was getting ahead of himself. He knew nothing about Mike. He was a cute guy, shy and nervous – yes, totally Ryan's type – and he gave great head.

Ryan wanted to punch himself in the face. Last night had been a mistake, one that had happened because of his own lack of caution. Mike was right. He hadn't directly asked Mike about his workplace, and the young man was free not to want to socialize with other people working there.

It wasn't impossible to think that of young people today. Not that he was old or anything, but there was about a seven-year difference between them, not to mention one of status.

Last night, he had gone out for a drink, not a hookup. He had ended up drinking his fill and hooking up, too. And both experiences had been more than satisfactory.

He tapped the desk, lost in thought. He had found a guy who was just what he liked most, and fate had decided to pull a prank of him. Such things were of no consequences, and he had to be a grown-up about it.

He would go and apologize to Mike, but then they would be nothing but employer and employee. Mike worked in the server room, a long way down. They didn't even have to see each other. After all, Mike had told the truth about his co-workers not noticing him. While Ryan had been in a hurry to blame him for not saying the truth, if he thought about it, others hadn't come up to Mike to greet him, either.

It wasn't difficult to understand why things were like that. Mike wasn't the cocksure type, dressed to the nines, and eager to climb the corporate ladder. Ryan had read enough about his activity to know that he was a dedicated employee who loved his job.

At the same time, he had mentioned two friends, so he was the type of person who preferred close-knit groups. Ryan himself wasn't crazy about being surrounded by sycophants or too many so-called friends. His buddies came from different walks of life, so who was he to blame Mike for not cozying up with other people working for the same company?

It was unfortunate, he began giving himself the speech, that Mike was such a cute and sweet guy, but there couldn't be anything between them. The simplest, cleanest solution was also the wisest.

Now, he needed to focus on work, and later he would drop by the server room to talk to Mike about security issues. He would use the occasion to apologize, but that would be all.

He exhaled slowly. Mike had given him no reason to distrust him; his behavior at the workplace was exemplary, according to HR, and Ryan had to be one major asshole to hold it against him that they had hooked up by accident.

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What was truly special about Mike? Ryan shifted in his bed and watched dejectedly at the bright red numbers on the nightstand. It was well past midnight, and he couldn't sleep.

It was Saturday night, and any of his friends could tell him that an eligible bachelor such as he should spend more hours outside the house, looking for love.

The thing was, he wasn't looking for love. Not even for a hookup. Ever since that faithful time when he had met Mike, he hadn't found himself interested in such encounters. He had blamed it on having too much to work, on still being new to the city, and myriad other reasons.

But the truth was one and one only. He couldn't get Mike out of his head, try as he might.

It would go away with time. All things did. Ryan was too much aware of having to learn from his past mistakes. As alluring as the idea of holding Mike in his arms again was, it was out of the question.

Now, he needed to grab a glass of milk or whatever insomniacs did when they couldn't sleep. He padded through the house until he reached the fridge. Should he warm the milk? What was he? A kitten now?

He could get himself a stiff drink and call it a night the old-fashioned way, but that idea didn't appeal to him either.

In the end, he decided that it had to be through sheer power of will that he would go to sleep. There would be no more thinking of Mike, he told himself with all the determination he could muster.

The sound of an incoming message on his phone made him hurry back to the bedroom. If someone sent messages so late into the night, it could only be an emergency.

Ryan grabbed his phone and stared incredulously at the screen. There were actually four messages, and all from Mike.

*"I'm not the one who should be sorry. You should be sorry."*

"I should be sorry?" Ryan murmured to himself. He pinched the bridge of his nose in an effort to focus. His heart had skipped like a teenager's the moment he had seen who was sending him messages at that hour.

*"You should be sorry for being so handsome. Really, who talks like that? It's like you're from a hotline ad or something."*

Ryan chuckled. Well, he had been told before that he had a sexy voice. But learning it from Mike, cute and awkward Mike, was a different thing. It made him laugh for no reason.

*"You should be sorry for messing me up. FYI, two hot men are waiting for me right now so that we could have a threesome. A threesome, do you get it? I shouldn't be thinking of you!"*

Ryan felt his good mood disappearing. A threesome?

*"So you're not saying anything? I guess for you it was just another blowjob. But for me, it wasn't. For you, it was just another Monday night, going around seducing the shy and nervous type. What did you even mean by that? Shy and nervous is nobody's type! I will go and have that threesome now."*

That was so not going to happen. Ryan didn't think twice.

"Come on, pick up," he ordered in a strained voice. "Mike?"

Good, he wasn't rejecting the call.

"Yeah." Mike's voice was hesitant, and a small snuffle followed.

The shy and nervous type didn't send messages in the middle of the night, taking Ryan by the collar, as metaphorically as that might be.

Therefore, a single explanation was obvious.

"Are you drunk?" Ryan asked.

"Probably," came the mumbled reply.

Ryan silenced all the judgmental little voices in his head telling him that it wasn't a good idea to do what he was about to.

"Where are you?"

"Some club."

Mike needed a bit of shaking up.

Ryan pressed his lips hard, but his voice came out measured. "Name, address, your exact location."

A whisper followed after Mike offered the information. "I'm in the bathroom."

"Stay there. Don't you dare get out of there and go with those people. Understood?"

"Yes."

Good thing he hadn't drunk any alcohol earlier. Ryan had no idea how he ended up behind the wheel. He threw himself a pointed look in the rearview mirror. "You don't know what you're getting yourself into," he told his reflection before igniting the car engine.

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Ryan rushed into the club and searched for Mike with his eyes. "Can you point me to the bathroom in this place?" he asked one of the people who seemed to be personnel.

The man just pointed with his chin in a vague direction. Ryan began walking purposefully. Mike was in for an earful, for sure. A threesome? Of all things, a threesome?

Nobody liked a judgmental asshole, but Ryan knew that Mike wasn't the type to get involved in such situations. On top of it all, he felt guilty. Even if the words from the earlier texts belonged to a drunken person, they contained plenty of truth in them.

Why did he have to be an employee? He couldn't tell Mike to search for work somewhere else only so that they could see each other without the threat of sexual harassment hanging above his head. It was selfish, ludicrous, and he couldn't ask such a thing, mostly since Mike was an excellent worker and an asset to the company.

Still, it didn't mean that he couldn't stop Mike from doing something he would come to regret in the morning. That was the least he could do.

He pushed open the door to the bathroom. "Mike!" he called.

The door to one of the stalls was wide open, and two guys stood in front of it. None of them was Mike.

"Mike!" he called again, hoping that he wasn't too late.

From the open stall, someone emerged, and Ryan let out a small breath he was holding. "There you are."

Mike looked like a tiny, scared rabbit. Ryan frowned and gave the other two guys a cursory glance. They were probably the other two in the threesome Mike was talking about.

One of them, tall and muscular and with a smug look on his face that asked for punches, stared at Ryan with unhidden disdain. "And who's this guy?"

Ryan could feel his frown deepen. Did this asshole think he could get his hands on Mike? His Mike?

"He's my --" Mike started.

Ryan stopped him by placing a hand on his shoulder. "I'm Mike's boyfriend. Do you have a problem with that?"

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At least he had stopped at the right time. The kiss had been sweet, as he had expected. And Mike was the kind of guy you didn't just allow to get away.

"What am I going to do?" he asked himself and pressed his head against the wheel for a moment.

He was outside Mike's apartment after leaving him with a kiss and that conversation that was supposed to be the end of everything between them.

What he had to do now was to start driving, go home, sleep, and wake up in the morning, all the while pretending that it didn't burn, somewhere inside his chest, that he had to try so hard to forget.

One part of him kept telling him that he should go back, grab Mike, kiss him, and then make love to him all night long.

But that part of him didn't know what was good for him. He was responsible for his family's good name, for a company that had been built through the effort of his predecessors, and for not disappointing everyone who cared about him.

The scandal from before had left him pretty shaken. Hadn't his trust been betrayed before? He only had to remember Mike's huge eyes looking at him with an unhidden desire that he was willing to damn the consequences and dive right in.

He turned the key. That was foolish thinking. He had promised he would never again get entangled with another employee in his life. It was just his luck to find a young man like Mike the moment he had taken the reins of the company.

Just his fucking luck.

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It was only appropriate that he would ask Mike for a dance, seeing how they tended to dance around one another, none of them capable of saying 'no' all the way. Ryan was acutely aware of playing with fire, so he had to find a way to stop whatever continued to happen between them. For the sake of their happiness and sanity, he had to identify that thing that would convince them both that they would be better off without thinking so much of each other.

There was a bit of comfort in knowing that Mike felt the same, but it didn't make things any easier. On the contrary, it was the most important thing that prevented Ryan from interrupting their courtship dance for good. They had only had one evening together, a few passing hours, so to anyone looking, they had to be crazy to believe that they had found the perfect match.

It was impossible to doubt that, nonetheless. They were a perfect match. But the dance tonight, it would serve as the best opportunity to make things clear. Mike deserved a proper explanation, and Ryan had to be ready to give it to him.

He went through the rooftop door only to meet a sight he was sure he would remember for a long time. Mike was staring at the sky through one of the stargazing binoculars installed on the roof.

The hopeful look in his eyes when he turned made Ryan's heart falter in his decision.

"Can I have this dance?"

Nothing would easily equal this feeling of holding Mike in his arms tonight. More than ever, he had to confess to his past misdeeds and make Mike see why they couldn't see each other. Otherwise, he would just seem like someone directed by whims. He didn't play, and he wasn't

into games. He had never been. But what he had been doing these last few weeks with Mike wasn't fair to either of them.

As he began to tell Mike why they couldn't see each other, he looked at the other, anxious about learning what such a confession could mean.

And Mike didn't let him down, which made things all the more difficult. Ryan had dreaded, yet somewhat hoped, that Mike would become apprehensive of being in the company of someone accused of having taken advantage of a subordinate.

Nothing like that had happened. Mike told him straight to his face that he believed Ryan was innocent and that he would never do such a thing to him.

The temptation was strong, but he couldn't let some wrong-doer drag Mike into a scandal. At this point, it didn't matter if they knew their feelings to be true. It was enough for someone with ill intentions to catch a whiff of their affair that they would blow it out of proportion and cause another scandal.

He had promised his family nothing like that would happen ever again.

So why did his words sound so hollow now?

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They had done such a good job not bumping into each other at the workplace they shared. But Ryan couldn't just go and ignore that Mike was having fun at a table not far from him. Their eyes had met for a moment, and it had been enough.

He excused himself and walked after Mike. Even if he didn't know exactly what he wanted to say, he didn't want to pretend.

He grabbed Mike's elbow, and the other turned with an anxious look on his face.

"Oh, hi, Mr. Armstrong. Fancy meeting you here."

It was so like Mike to come up with a funny thing to say. Ryan felt warmth spreading from the middle of his chest to the tip of his fingers. Suddenly, he didn't feel as apprehensive about approaching his employee slash faithful dweller of his dreams.

"Hmm, that should be my line," he teased.

"Right, because normal people totally talk like that."

Ryan couldn't care less about how ordinary people talked. "Have you finished your conversation?" he asked.

“What conversation?”

“I was under the impression that you were talking on the phone. But it must have been my imagination,” Ryan added quickly. “Are you here with someone?”

“Yeah, friends. Jared, and someone new. He’s called Shane, and he’s a real cowboy. He even knows how to herd cattle.”

“An important skill that highly recommends him as a cowboy,” Ryan said.

“What about you?”

“I’m with a bigger group than yours. But no cowboys, I’m afraid,” Ryan said playfully.

For moments that stretched, they stared at each other.

“Well, it was nice seeing you, Mr. Armstrong.” Mike stiffened as if he had just been asked to give a full presentation of his server room.

“Yeah, you too, Mike. Do you come here often?”

Anything, anything to keep him talking.

“No. It’s the first time.” Mike looked ready to bolt at any time.

Ryan hated to make him uncomfortable. “For me, too. I was hoping you could show me around.”

“I’m afraid I don’t even know where the toilet is,” Mike said.

“Maybe we can find together.”

“The toilet?”

Ryan laughed. “Around. That was what I meant.”

“Yes. I mean, I think you must be busy with your friends,” Mike said quickly. “They must be wondering where you are right now.”

“I don’t think so. They have already ordered drinks. With that bunch, I know for sure they won’t notice my absence once they get some booze into their systems.”

“Old friends?” Mike asked.

Ryan nodded. “Have fun, Mike.”

“You too,” Mike replied.



Had he any right to keep this young man for himself? Without promising anything? Ryan shook his head and dragged his feet back to the table.

“Who was the cute redhead?” Matt, one of his friends, asked.

“Just an employee,” Ryan replied.

His friend threw him an ambiguous look and grinned. “For real? We could sense the sexual tension from here.”

Ryan stared at his glass. “Please, Matt, don’t joke with that.”

Matt’s smile faded. “Sure. My bad. Just consider that I’ve already had way too much to drink.”

Ryan just nodded. It was clear to everyone he and Mike had the hots for each other. If they continued like this... where were they going to end?

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He had had a terrible weekend. After Mike’s declaration at the club, Ryan had thought a thousand times of calling him and having him say that it had been nothing but a prank or a drunken dare.

If Mike were to leave the company, it would mean that whatever they had, it was over. Granted, they had basically nothing since they couldn’t afford to get entangled in some scandal –

No, it wasn’t Mike’s problem. It was his problem and no one else’s.

Mike had been a bit drunk, and he was just blowing things out of proportion. On Monday, surely he would come and present his apologies in that awkward, nervous fashion of his that Ryan loved so much. He would accept them politely, and that would be all.

Like on cue, the phone on his desk rang. His assistant’s voice came through, professional as always. “Mr. Cavanaugh from IT wants to have a word with you, Mr. Armstrong. He promised he would be quick.”

Ryan could easily imagine Mike withering under his assistant’s glare. “Send him in,” he said in a measured voice.

Here came the apologies, and Ryan had all the time in the world for them because it would simply mean that Mike would stay with the company a while longer, hopefully until Ryan could push him away from his thoughts without hurting too much.

The thought that Mike was unhappy was enough to send him into a spiral of doubts. He should have never thought of Mike that way, and just tip-toeing around each other was bound to take a toll.

And still, he was selfish and wanted to keep Mike around, even if they couldn't be together.

The young man walked through the door, looking a bit disheveled and worse for wear but as yummy as always.

Ryan schooled his face into a frown. He needed to let Mike know he couldn't play with his heart like that, and without letting him know how affected he truly was. This little meeting would be as professional as it could and should be.

"I hope you're here to tell me that you just thought it would be funny to pull a stunt like that on me." Ryan kept his eyes on Mike.

"Um," was the only immediate reply.

*Just rip the Band-Aid.*

"Apologies accepted. You don't have to make more of it." He could only hope his voice sounded much calmer to Mike's ears than his.

There was no reply this time. Mike looked lost and forlorn, and it was enough to look at him to know how devastated he must be feeling inside right now. For an upstanding employee, in his own eyes, he must have done the unthinkable by presenting his resignation while drunk.

"Mike?" Ryan quirked an eyebrow. "You're forgiven." He allowed some of the warmth in his heart to creep in in his voice. "I mean it."

"No." Mike faced him with a stubborn look on his face.

That wasn't at all what he had been expecting. "Do you have anything else you want to say to me?" Ryan asked.

Mike walked to the desk and placed something on the desk. "I quit," a whisper followed. And then, he started searching his pockets.

What was the meaning of that? Was that, indeed, a letter of resignation? Ryan stood abruptly and leaned over the desk, making Mike yelp and jump one step back.

"Mike, please, I don't have time for jokes."

This time, he had no intention to hide his hurt. That letter of resignation better be a prank.

Mike continued to search his pockets until he produced something that looked like a blank piece of paper.

"I'm terribly disappointed," Ryan started.

"No." Mike put one hand up. "I had it all right here," he moaned.

“Can I ask you what could have made you so unhappy to take this decision?” Ryan asked, his pain more and more visible.

“You,” Mike replied quickly.

“I made you unhappy?” Ryan asked slowly.

“No! I mean, yes! No,” Mike bit his lips. “I mean, I quit --”

“Because of me.” Ryan sighed and ran one hand over his face. “Look, Mike, what happened was --”

“Everything to me,” Mike said.

Ryan stopped. What was Mike saying? “Everything?”

“So I have to quit.”

“But I need you here,” Ryan said softly. “We’d be lost without you.”

Mike said with determination, “It’s about me and what I want.”

Ryan felt the hope from earlier waning. “Of course, of course. I will make sure that you will take some great recommendations with you.” It was the least he could do. Acting like a possessive jerk with no rights to the other person’s feelings was out of the question.

“Thank you. I mean, I still have stuff to say.” Mike squeaked in the most adorable fashion.

No, Mike was an employee. He wasn’t adorable, and he had just announced that he was leaving the company. The conversation was over, and he had to get out of the room. Ryan grabbed a folder from the desk; he had a business meeting to attend, which was as good a reason as any to run away without allowing Mike to see what their little talk had done to him.

On purpose, he chose to walk as far from Mike as possible. Still, to reach the door, he had to move past him. Mike took him completely by surprise when he grabbed his arm. Ryan stopped, not knowing what to think.

There wasn’t much time for that, though, because next thing, Mike took him by the back of the neck and kissed him on the lips. The folder needed for the meeting slipped from his hands fell on the floor with a soft sound.

Just as fast, Mike let go. His eyes were big and shiny, and then he said the most important words in Ryan’s life to date. “I quit because I love you.”

He couldn't move. His feet were glued to the floor, his whole body was suspended, and he wanted to ask everything about what Mike had meant by that, and if he had truly meant that, and if yes, what followed?

A knock on the door made him both jump slightly. The assistant stuck her head in. "Mr. Armstrong, I don't want to interrupt, but --"

Mike crouched and started gathering the papers gone rogue from the business folder. He handed them to Ryan with a barely kept-in smile. "Here, Mr. Armstrong. Go knock them up; I mean, out. Knock out, that is what I mean," he babbled.

"Sure," Ryan murmured.

"Have a great day."

"You'll still be around for the two weeks' notice, right?" Ryan asked quickly as he tried to put the papers in his folder in order.

"Yes. I will help with whatever I can," Mike promised.

"Mr. Armstrong," the assistant interrupted them.

"Then, I will see you around," Ryan said stiffly.

He walked out of his office as if he was walking on cloud nine.

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Mike had managed to stop him from giving a piece of his mind to his parents right away, but that didn't mean that he would postpone that conversation indefinitely. Ryan walked over to his parents with a determined look on his face. He had dropped by his folks' house only to talk about that.

"Hi, darling. I wasn't expecting you this morning." His parents were having breakfast outside, taking advantage of the nice weather.

He kissed his mom on both cheeks, but that was where the pleasantries needed to stop. "So, you believe my soon to be husband is a gold digger."

His mom's face fell in an instant, and a snort let him know his dad wasn't surprised by the chosen topic of conversation.

"A gold digger? No, no, we don't think --" his mom started. "Please, have a seat. Would you like something to eat?"

“Mom,” Ryan warned but sat down and accepted the plate placed in front of him. “Mike is not like that.”

“Still, Ryan --”

“Mom, no. Not this time. I know what you must be thinking, but Mike quit his job to be with me. He works for only a fraction of what our company used to pay him because he didn’t want to get me into any trouble. And he’s not after my money. Have you seen him? Truly seen him?”

“Darling, we only want what’s good for you. And a boy of his station --”

Ryan frowned. He hadn’t come here to start a war, but it looked like his mom had taken his soft position as a sign of weakness. “What station? Are we still living in the nineteenth century? I wouldn’t care if he were homeless and in rags. Look, if that’s what you think, I give up on everything. I don’t want to be part of all this heir business. At all.”

“You can’t mean that,” his mom protested. “Dear, why don’t you say anything?” That was directed to his dad.

“Ryan is right. I looked a bit into Micah, and I, personally, believe that he’s a good match for our boy,” his dad said matter-of-factly.

“You did? And you didn’t think of sharing that with me, did you?” His mom was obviously annoyed with his dad.

Ryan leaned back to enjoy the show. He had thought his dad would just want to have none of it, but it looked like he had decided to become an active player.

“Oh, your mind was set on the prenup. I didn’t see why I should struggle with heartburns last night. Not contradicting you meant that I could enjoy a good night’s sleep.”

“Then why talk now?” His mom exclaimed.

“I took a digestive. No danger of heartburns.”

Ryan pursed his lips not to laugh and looked away.

“So, Micah overheard us?” His dad asked directly.

“He did,” Ryan confirmed. “He wanted to leave me on the account that he had to prove he was no gold digger. Imagine my surprise. I had to get it out of him, and it wasn’t easy.”

His mom instantly stopped. “Oh, he heard us?” She looked away and began to play with a napkin. “That must have been quite awful for him,” she added quietly. “Are you sure about this boy?” She turned again toward her husband.

Ryan's dad nodded gravely. "You'll have to apologize to Micah."

She threw the napkin on the table and pressed one hand against her mouth. "It looks like it." She wasn't happy, but if there was one thing Mrs. Armstrong cared a lot about was how other people perceived her.

By now, she must be thinking that Mike saw her as petty and a cheapskate. Ryan had no power over his mother's convoluted mind, but, in this instance, he needed he could count on it to provide her with a satisfactory solution.

"And no prenup," Ryan added.

His mom threw him one last belligerent look. "It would be just a formality."

"It would be a sign that I don't trust my husband. I won't walk into marriage with that kind of distrust hovering above my head. I'd basically ask him to sign a license to walk free out of it whenever he feels like it. I want him to commit fully."

"Do you understand this boy's logic?" his mom asked his dad.

To point out that his role in the conversation was over, his dad picked the newspaper from the table and opened it.

Ryan grinned. He was beyond pleased and had expected to fight more. But his dad was on his side, and his mom wouldn't ignore his opinion, no matter how much they still quarreled.

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He smiled as he felt someone tickling his nose with something. "If I open my eyes, there will be hell to pay," he said in a cavernous voice.

While Mike and Bran seemed to have bottomless energy to waste by running and playing on the beach, he was more into catching a tan and enjoying a well-deserved break. It could be because he had wasted all of his stamina on making love to his husband all night long, as appropriate for their honeymoon.

Mike giggled and insisted. Ryan opened his eyes. "Unless this is some kind of foreplay, I can't say that I'm into tickling."

"You're not?" Mike's eyes shone with mischief. He curled his fingers, ready for an attack.

Ryan grabbed him swiftly and ended on top, immobilizing him. "What are you going to do now? What if I'm going to tickle you?"

"Don't! I might pee myself!" Mike protested.

“Ah, we can’t have that.” Ryan released Mike from his hold.

He sat on his butt and rested his forearms on his knees. The beach was amazing, and there was not one cloud in the sky. But the most amazing thing was that he was there with his husband.

Mike embraced him from behind, his skin hot from so much playing in the sun. “You know, I can’t believe I’m here.”

“Believe it. Or better said, let’s make the effort together.”

Mike laughed into his ear and then kissed him on the cheek. “It’s just that, you know, it’s like only yesterday I was pining over you --”

“Pining, huh?”

“Yeah, I mean, ever since that evening we met, I could only think of you, and you only.”

“Really? So come you wanted to get into a threesome if you only thought of me?” Ryan teased.

“What threesome?” Mike asked, feigning confusion.

“You know what threesome. But, just so you know, you really spurred me into action with that. I couldn’t let you.”

“I don’t think I would have gone with it, anyway,” Mike replied in all honesty. “I was drunk and so nervous. I would have probably ended up throwing up on the guys.”

Ryan chuckled. “That might have detracted from the excitement of taking part in an orgy.”

“What orgy? It would have been only a threesome. But, seriously now, I’m glad I didn’t go along with it. And Jimmy left that asshole Gino not long after that.”

“Jimmy was the bartender?”

“Yeah. I went for drinks one night before the wedding with J and Adrian, and he was tending the bar. He told me that he got rid of that zero. His words, not mine.”

“So Gino was pressing you two to get into that threesome that night.”

“It looks like it. Anyway, he wasn’t that good. I mean, he was, but then you came along --”

“Wait, wait, what did you say about this Gino fellow?” Ryan turned his head to stare at Mike.

His husband blushed and looked away. “Ugh, didn’t I tell you? I kinda hooked up with Gino by accident. Before you. Way before you.”

“Do you kinda hook up with guys by accident? Wasn’t I the first for you to do that with?”

Mike moved his lips like a fish out of water. Ryan burst into laughter and grabbed him by the back of the neck.

“Good thing I stopped you, then. No more hookups by accident from now on, okay?” he whispered tenderly and pulled Mike into a kiss.

“Okay,” Mike whispered back as soon as he was allowed to breathe.

He still looked guilty as hell.

Ryan narrowed his eyes, but only to tease Mike some more. “What aren’t you saying?”

“I also topped him... But you’re better! Much better! The best!”

Ryan smothered him with another hug and kiss. “I don’t really care. I’m the only one for you now, and you’re stuck with me.”

Mike snickered and hid his head into the crook of Ryan’s shoulder. “I can live with that.”

“Really? Even if it’s for the rest of your life?”

“Especially because it’s for the rest of my life.”

Ryan brushed his lips against Mike’s forehead. That was the best answer he could hope for.

THE END