



Mr. Kitty's New Friend

by Mayalaen

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Summary: Jensen's an adult baby who has been abused by the very people who were supposed to be taking care of him at the orphanage. Jared and Misha take him in, just like the other times they've fostered abused adult babies.

Mr. Kitty's New Friend

Jensen

Jensen shivered, another tear running down his cheek. He was sorry. He knew he was a bad boy. But now he was very sorry he'd cried because his tummy hurt. He knew better than to complain about being hungry, but it hurt so badly that he couldn't help it.

His diaper was wet and soiled, and he had no idea how long he'd been in the closet. He wasn't allowed to come out, though. He learned that a long time ago. He had to wait for Rick to come get him. Or maybe he'd have to stay in the closet long enough that Gary would be coming for him.

Jensen's bottom lip quivered. Gary was even worse than Rick. And if Gary found out Jensen had thrown a temper tantrum, he'd be in really big trouble.

So Jensen stayed quiet, waiting. Hopefully Rick would come to get him, and then maybe Rick would let him have a bottle.

He flinched as strange, loud noises came from outside the closet. He heard the other babies crying, and he heard voices that weren't the ones he was used to. But every once in a while new guys in scrubs would come to the orphanage, so maybe that's what was happening.

Jensen stayed as still as he could, sucking on his thumb and working very hard at being a good boy even though he was scared. He wanted to rip off his diaper. His skin was itchy and burned, but if he took it off, he'd be in a lot of trouble.

The door opened and Jensen squinted into the light, having gotten used to the darkness of the closet. He pushed himself back against the wall, not too sure about who it was that had come to get him and scared it was Gary.

“Hi, sweetie,” a man said.

Jensen whimpered, then caught himself, holding his breath in case the new guy didn't like pathetic little noises. He wasn't wearing scrubs, but he did have a blue uniform on.

“My name is Jared,” the man said, crouching down just outside the closet.

Jensen's eyes were adjusting to the light, and he sucked in a breath when the need for oxygen became too much. The man was smiling at him, but Jensen hadn't fallen for that trick in years.

“Hey, I was asking around to see if anybody else knew who this was,” the man named Jared said as he held up a stuffed cat. It was tan with white stripes.

Jensen started to reach out for the toy, then realized what he was doing and pushed himself back against the wall again.

“Would you like to know his name?” Jared asked, holding the cat up.

Jensen didn't fall for it a second time. Instead he just sat there shivering, looking back and forth between the cat and Jared.

“He's a friend of mine and he's kind of scared,” Jared said. “His name is Mr. Kitty.”

Jensen let out a little giggle, and when he realized what he'd done, his eyes widened.

Jared held Mr. Kitty with one hand and petted his head with the other. “I've taken care of Mr. Kitty for a while, but he asked me if you could take care of him today instead.”

Jensen looked at Mr. Kitty. Mr. Kitty looked very soft. And his eyes were a beautiful shade of blue. Jared slowly held Mr. Kitty out closer to Jensen.

“He's a nice kitty,” Jared said. “But he needs your help to stay safe.”

Jensen felt bad for Mr. Kitty. He knew what it was like to be scared. He didn't know why Mr. Kitty thought he'd be a safe place, but both Jared and Mr. Kitty seemed to be sure of it, so Jensen slowly reached out and wrapped his fingers around Mr. Kitty, then held him close to his chest. He dropped his chin to his chest and let Mr. Kitty's fur tickle his cheek.

“You already know Mr. Kitty's name,” Jared said, “and you know my name's Jared, but Mr. Kitty doesn't know your name yet. Can you tell him?”

Jensen nodded. “Jensen,” he whispered.

“Awesome,” Jared said, smile even bigger than before. “Jensen, Mr. Kitty and I both need your help now.”

Jensen looked back up at Jared. He'd already helped Mr. Kitty, so if Jared needed help too, why not? He nodded.

“Cool,” Jared said. “Mr. Kitty and I would really like it if you'd help us find the way out of here. See Mr. Kitty and I are really hungry, and we'd like to go get something to eat. But Mr. Kitty is too scared to do it alone, and I don't know my way out of here. Can you help us?”

Jensen shivered again. He hadn't been outside in a long time. And the last time he'd been out, he'd been bad and Gary had hit him. A lot.

But Jared and Mr. Kitty needed his help. And maybe they'd share their bottle with him if he was a really good boy.

Jensen nodded, and he hadn't realized it was possible, but Jared's smile got even bigger. Jensen liked the way the skin at Jared's eyes crinkled when he smiled that big. Jensen had never seen anybody smile so big their cheeks got little indentations, but it made Jensen smile just a little bit.

“Okay,” Jared said as he slowly stood up, “let's get going.”

Jensen got to his knees and started to stand, using the hand that wasn't holding Mr. Kitty to leverage himself up, but his legs gave out from under him and he fell back down onto his butt with a wet, squishy noise and an uncomfortable coldness leaking out and down his leg.

Jared crouched back down. “I've got an idea,” he said.

Jensen tried not to cry, but another tear made its way down his cheek. He hugged Mr. Kitty tighter to his chest. Mr. Kitty was scared, and Jensen wasn't helping by crying.

“Would it be okay with you if I picked you up and you pointed to where we should go?” Jared asked.

Jensen's stomach growled. It felt as if his stomach was eating itself. He was so hungry he wanted to curl up and cry. But Jared and Mr. Kitty were hungry too, and they were depending on him to help. Jensen held his arms up to Jared, his right hand still holding onto Mr. Kitty.

Jared reached down and picked Jensen up. Jensen squeaked as Jared's left arm braced across his back, hitting a sore spot, but Jared quickly moved his hold on Jensen to a spot that didn't hurt so much and Jensen wrapped his legs around Jared. Mr. Kitty was even safer now that he was between Jared and Jensen, and Jensen wrapped his right arm around Jared's neck.

“Okay, where do we go now?” Jared asked. Jensen pointed to the doorway. “Good boy,” he said as he headed through the doorway.

Jensen's fingers were digging into Jared's shoulder, but Jared didn't seem to mind, and he followed every direction Jensen gave until they were standing out on the front lawn of the orphanage. Jensen whimpered as he saw lots of strangers.

“Hey, hey,” Jared said as he looked to Jensen, a reassuring smile on his face. “Everything's okay. Everybody's getting adopted!”

Jensen's chest ached. It had been so long since someone was adopted. He gave up on it ever happening, and now all of them were getting adopted! But where were Jensen's new parents?

Jared walked over to an ambulance, and Jensen got excited. He'd never been this close to an ambulance before. The lights were flashing, but the siren wasn't going. It didn't matter. He was still excited to see it. He tried to peek inside, and Jared must've noticed because he walked around to the back.

“Pretty cool, huh?” Jared asked with a grin.

Jensen nodded, eyes taking in everything including the guy in a paramedic uniform standing just inside the ambulance. Jensen had never met an ambulance guy before.

“Hi, there!” Ambulance Guy said. He had pretty blue eyes just like Mr. Kitty. His uniform was a lighter blue than Jared's and it had a patch on the left arm.

Jensen shied away, resting his forehead against Jared's cheek and holding on tighter.

“Jensen, this is Misha,” Jared said.

“Hi, Jensen,” Misha said. His voice wasn't as loud as Jared's, but he seemed nice.

“Jensen helped Mr. Kitty and I find our way out from inside the closet,” Jared said, a funny tone to his voice.

“Oh, well that was very nice of him,” Misha said. “Thank you, Jensen.”

“Jensen,” Jared said softly. “Would it be all right if Misha changed your diaper and got you cleaned up?”

Jensen whimpered, pushing his forehead against Jared's cheek even harder. Jared had been nice to him so far, but he wasn't so sure about Misha.

“Hey, Jensen, check these out,” Misha said, and even though Jensen was scared, the excitement in Misha's voice had him looking before he realized what he was doing. “The diapers I have are pretty cool. There's race cars on mine.”

Jensen hadn't ever seen race cars on diapers before. He giggled before he could stop himself, then reached out and ran his finger over the little red race car on the tape.

“You wanna wear those?” Jared asked.

Jensen nodded, his lips twitching into a small smile.

“First we gotta get you cleaned up,” Jared said. “Can we do that?”

Jensen nodded again. He gasped as Jared stepped up into the ambulance. First he got to see an ambulance, then he was in one! Jared sat down on the bench and put Jensen on his lap, but Jensen was too excited to care that Misha had gotten even closer than before. He was sitting on the rolling bed in front of him.

“Ambulances are pretty cool, aren't they,” Misha said with a grin.

Jensen grinned. “Uh-huh,” he said.

Misha chuckled. “I get to work in here. This is my job!”

Jensen looked around at the equipment, eyes wide. He'd always liked going to the doctor. Dr. Morgan had always been really nice to him. In fact it seemed that was the only time he felt safe. If Misha was a doctor like Dr. Morgan, maybe he was nice too.

Misha set the diaper down on the rolling bed, then pulled out a box of baby wipes. He held up his phone and a flash of light made Jensen blink. “You wanna pull the tape off your diaper?”

Jensen whimpered and cringed, pushing himself back against Jared. He wasn't allowed to do that. Last time he'd done that, his eye had been too swollen to see out of for three days.

“Okay,” Misha said. “It's all right. I can do that. You don't have to.”

Jared ran his fingers through Jensen's hair while Misha pulled the tape from his diaper. Jared's fingers felt good. He combed through Jensen's whole head of hair, chuckling when Jensen leaned into the touch.

Jensen blinked when a flash of light came from Misha's phone, but then he set it down on the rolling bed again.

“Owie!” Jensen cried as the baby wipe touched his burning skin.

“I'm sorry, baby,” Misha said as he pulled the wipe away. “I'll try something else that won't hurt so much, okay?”

Jensen sniffled as Jared wiped his tears away. “K,” he said, trying not to pout.

“Hey, Jared,” a man said.

Jensen flinched and turned to look at the man standing just outside the ambulance. He had a funny accent and a scruffy beard. Jensen had felt so safe with Jared and Misha that he'd relaxed, and now that the man was standing there looking at him and had scared him, Jensen couldn't stop himself from crying.

He cried so hard he couldn't breathe or see. By the time he caught his breath, he sucked in huge gulps of air and let them out in a long sob. He felt Jared repositioning him on his lap, and by the time he'd calmed down a little, he realized the doors of the ambulance were closed and Jared was rocking him.

Misha was still sitting on the rolling bed, but he also had both hands on Jensen, one on his tummy and one on his left knee. Both men were talking softly to him, but Jensen couldn't tell what they were saying for a while.

“All gone,” Jared said. “Don't worry, Mark's not gonna come back, okay?”

“He didn't mean to scare you, baby,” Misha said. “You're safe in here.”

Misha gave Jensen a kiss on his forehead. Nobody had given Jensen a kiss since he'd been at the orphanage. The last time someone had kissed him was back when he'd had a mommy and a daddy. Mommy had kissed him before they all got in the car for a ride. He missed getting kisses and hugs. Jensen relaxed again, letting Jared gently wipe the tears away.

“I've got an idea,” Misha said, looking between Jared and Jensen. “I'm going to take us for a ride. We'll go to the house that Jared and I live in so that you can have a nice warm bath, okay?”

Jensen remembered taking baths. He liked them. His mommy and daddy used to give him baths, and

they'd let him play with toys as long as he wanted to. He hadn't had a bath in a long time, and showers weren't nearly as much fun. Jensen nodded, a small smile tugging at his lips.

“Cool,” Misha said. “You guys stay back here while I go up front and drive. You wanna hear the siren?”

Jensen grinned. “Uh-huh!” he said, nodding.

Jared and Misha chuckled. “You got it, kid,” Misha said as he headed toward the front of the ambulance. “I'll let the guys know what's going on, Jay,” he said as he looked over his shoulder at Jared.

“Thanks, Misha,” Jared said, then looked down at Jensen. “Have you ever had a ride in an ambulance before?”

Jensen shook his head, nearly vibrating with excitement. When the sirens started, Jensen jumped, but instead of crying, he chuckled at himself. This was so fun!

The ride was so exciting that Jensen gasped every time he saw something new outside the small window. It wasn't long before Misha was turning the siren off.

Jared carried Jensen into the house while Jensen waved goodbye to the ambulance, Mr. Kitty still held tightly against his chest. Jared walked through the house and into the upstairs bathroom. Jensen liked how Jared's house smelled. It was clean and didn't smell like dirty diapers.

Jared set Jensen down on the counter top. “I'm gonna take your diaper off while Misha gets your bath ready.”

“Toys,” Jensen whispered as he peeked around Jared's big shoulders.

Jared chuckled. “Yeah, we've got some toys for you to play with in the bath.”

Jensen grinned up at Jared, barely able to contain himself. It looked like Misha was dumping a whole bag of toys into the bath, and Jensen wanted to play with every single one of them.

“Jensen,” Jared said, getting his attention, “Mr. Kitty doesn't like taking baths. Is it okay if I leave him on the counter so he can watch you play?”

Jensen frowned down at Mr. Kitty. How could Mr. Kitty not like baths? They were so fun! But Jensen knew how awful it was to do things he really didn't like doing, so he handed Jared Mr. Kitty.

“Thank you, sweetie,” Jared said as he set Mr. Kitty on the counter, facing the bath so he could watch Jensen just like Jared had said.

“Ready for your bath, little one?” Misha asked.

Jensen nodded, swinging his legs and reaching out for Jared. Jared lifted him off his diaper, holding

him close.

“Misha is gonna clean your butt a little before you get into the tub,” Jared said as he stood in the middle of the bathroom.

Jensen whimpered and shook his head. When Misha had used the baby wipe on him before, it had stung. He didn't want that again.

“He's not going to use the baby wipes,” Jared said.

Misha kissed Jensen's back. “I'm just going to use a soft cloth to get you clean. If it hurts, tell me right away and I'll stop.”

Jensen nodded, squeezing his eyes shut and waiting for the pain. He felt Misha spread his cheeks and whimpered, but Misha was gentle, and there was just a slight burn as Misha cleaned him up. He never saw the flash of light as Misha took another picture of the abuse.

“Owie,” Jensen said, flinching as Misha wiped again.

“Okay, I'll stop, baby,” Misha said.

Jensen smiled at Misha, happy that he'd kept his word. He let out a little noise of excitement when Jared lowered him into the tub, then sighed. It felt wonderful. It was just right. Not too hot or too cold. Misha knew just how to run a good bath. Jensen just sat there for a moment, enjoying the way the water warmed him and made his diaper area stop burning.

But when Jensen looked down, there was something missing. He frowned. “Bubbles?” he said, looking up at Jared and Misha.

Misha got down on his knees next to the tub and swirled his fingers through the milky water. “We can't use bubbles right now. The bubbles wouldn't feel good on your owies. But as soon as your butt's all better, you'll get tons of bubbles.”

Jensen nodded. He didn't want bubbles if they were going to make his skin burn. But if Misha said he could have them soon, then he had something to look forward to.

Jared got to his knees beside Misha and picked up a washcloth. It was bright orange and yellow with ducks all over it. “Misha put this stuff in the water to make your butt feel better,” he said as he poured more of the milky stuff onto the washcloth.

“You wanna play with your toys or just relax for a while?” Misha asked as he picked up a squeeze toy that looked like a fish.

Jensen looked at the toy and grinned, which made Misha laugh. Jensen picked up another squeeze toy like the one Misha had and squeezed it, but nothing came out. It hadn't made noise either.

“Watch this,” Misha said as he squeezed the fish, then dunked him under the water. When he pulled

the fish back up, he squeezed it and the milky water squirted out of the fish's mouth.

Jensen gasped, then did exactly what Misha had done with his own fish. When he pulled it back out of the water, he squeezed it because he was so excited. The water shot out and hit Jared in the face. Jensen froze, eyes wide as he held his breath. None of the guys in scrubs had liked it when Jensen splashed them in the shower.

Jensen flinched as both Jared and Misha started laughing. It took Jensen a moment to realize they thought he was funny and they weren't going to punish him. Jensen smiled, then let out a little giggle.

Jared started to wipe Jensen down with the milky washcloth as Misha played with Jensen, and with all the fun he was having, he didn't mind when Jared ran the washcloth over his owies.

"I'm gonna wash your hair now," Jared said as he held up another bottle. This one had sheep all over it and Jensen could see fluffy white clouds behind them.

Jensen tilted his head back and closed his eyes, moaning as Jared massaged his head. All too soon Jared was rinsing his hair.

"Are you ready for something to eat?" Misha asked. Jensen nodded so hard he nearly fell over. Misha chuckled. "Okay, then let's get you out of the tub and dried off."

"Race cars!" Jensen said as Jared pulled the plug and the water started to drain from the tub.

Misha laughed. "Yes, I'll put the race car diaper on you."

Jared lifted him, and both Jared and Misha used soft, fluffy towels to gently dry Jensen, holding him up between the two of them so he wouldn't fall. His feet and legs hurt, so it was much easier to let the guys hold him up.

They lowered him to the floor on the rug and laid him on his back. Misha held up his phone again and there was a flash, but Jared shielded Jensen's eyes so it didn't hurt.

"We're gonna put some cream on your butt," Jared said as he held up a tube. "It's gonna be cold and it might hurt a little bit, but it's gonna make your butt better."

"Hold his legs out, Jay," Misha said.

Jared took a hold of Jensen's knees and spread his legs, holding them up. Jensen saw another flash of light, and then Jared was putting Jensen's feet down on the floor, this time his butt was resting on a fresh diaper. He really hoped it was the one with the race cars.

Misha crawled to Jensen's right side and took a picture of his tummy while Jared started applying the cream. Jensen whimpered, and as soon as Misha heard that he set his phone down on the floor and patted Jensen's chest.

"I'm sorry it doesn't feel good, baby," he said. "That stuff is medicine, so it'll make you all better

soon.”

Jensen closed his eyes and leaned into the touch as Misha ran his fingers through his hair. Jensen's daddy used to gently scratch at Jensen's head while he was falling asleep. It always felt so good. Jensen was about to fall asleep when Jared lifted Jensen's legs and started putting pajama pants on him. “Doggies!” Jensen said as he pointed to the pants.

“Yeah,” Jared said with a smile. “Do you like doggies?”

“Uh-huh,” Jensen said.

“Okay, let's get you to sit up now,” Jared said, reaching out for him.

Jensen took Jared's hands and helped pull himself up. Misha crawled around behind him and Jensen saw more flashes of light. He didn't know why Misha needed so many pictures, but if Misha thought it was important, then that was okay with Jensen.

“Arms up,” Jared said, and then slid a soft shirt down over Jensen when Jensen held his arms up. Jared picked Jensen up, this time avoiding all the sore spots on his back and legs. Misha passed by them and headed down the stairs in front of them.

By the time Jared and Jensen made it to the kitchen, Misha was pouring a can of high-protein formula into a bottle. There were also a few bags of veggies on the counter.

“Snack on this while I warm up your bottle,” Misha said as he handed Jensen a baby carrot.

Jensen didn't really like carrots, but he was too hungry to care. He snatched the carrot and shoved it into his mouth, chewing and moaning.

“Careful,” Jared said as he set Jensen on the counter top, legs swinging off the side. “You're gonna hurt your tummy if you eat too fast.”

Jensen quickly swallowed his carrot and reached out for the bag, whimpering when it was just beyond his reach.

“Here,” Jared said as he grabbed the bag and took out a carrot. “Take bites,” he said as he held the carrot firmly, not letting Jensen take it, but instead touching it to Jensen's lips. “Just take bites. I won't take it away from you. I just don't want you to hurt your tummy.”

Jensen wrapped his hands around Jared's forearm to hold it in place as he took bites from the carrot. He wanted to scream at Jared, demand the whole bag of carrots, but he didn't want to get in trouble.

But wait! Jared and Misha hadn't been mean to him so far. Even when he'd squirted Jared with water they'd laughed and had still been nice to him.

Jared pulled another carrot out of the bag, but instead of waiting, Jensen grabbed the bag, shoved his fingers in, and pulled out three carrots. Before he could shove them in his mouth, Jared stopped him, a

hand around Jensen's wrist. Jensen whined and tried to pull away from Jared.

“No,” Jared said firmly. “One at a time and slowly.”

“No!” Jensen yelled in Jared's face as he threw himself back, kicking at Jared as he lost his balance and went backward, smacking his head on the counter top.

“Fuck,” Jared growled.

Misha was lifting Jensen's upper body by the time Jensen realized what he'd done. He was too hungry to care before, but now he was scared. He'd hurt Jared and probably made both Jared and Misha mad. Misha wrapped his arms around Jensen and picked him up, having more difficulty with that than Jared had, but soon he was sitting Jensen down on a kitchen chair. Jensen looked for Jared, who was on his knees, curled up and cupping his crotch, panting and wincing.

“You okay, Jay?” Misha asked.

“I'll be okay,” Jared said through clenched teeth. “Just gimme a minute.”

Misha turned back to Jensen, and Jensen expected to get hit, so he flinched, covering his head with his arms and pulling himself into a ball, knees up to his chest.

“Jensen,” Misha said softly.

Jensen shivered, pulling himself into an impossibly tighter ball. “Sorry,” he said.

“Jensen, look at me please,” Misha said.

Jensen didn't want to put his arms down, but he felt bad for hurting Jared. Jared had been so nice to him, and Jensen had just kicked him. He was a bad boy. Jensen slowly dropped his arms and opened his eyes. Misha was on his knees in front of the chair Jensen was curled up on. He didn't look mad, but he really didn't look happy either. Jensen lifted his head from his knees.

“If you eat too fast, you're going to throw up,” Misha said. “I know you're very hungry, but Jared was only trying to help. We don't hurt each other in this family.”

“Sorry,” Jensen said, eyes welling up with tears.

“You need to tell Jared you're sorry,” Misha said. “We're not going to take away your food if you don't behave, so I don't want you to be worried about that. But it was very mean to hurt Jared, so you need to apologize. I'm going to go get your bottle. You can have it even if you don't apologize, but I'd really like it if you behaved and apologized to Jared.”

Misha stood up and walked over to the kitchen counter, where the bottle had been warming in the bowl of hot water. Jensen slid off the chair, wincing when his knees hit the hard floor, then he crawled to Jared and sat on his heels.

“I’m sorry,” Jensen said, a couple of tears running down his cheeks.

Jared was still cupping his crotch with his right hand, his left on his leg. “Thank you, sweetie,” he said with a small smile.

Jensen reached out and wrapped his arms around Jared's neck, hugging him. Jared grunted, but soon one of his arms was wrapping around Jensen.

“I know you're scared and really hungry,” Jared said. “You're going to get enough food here. You don't have to worry about stuff like that. We'll take care of you.”

Jensen didn't know if he could believe Jared. It had been so long since he didn't have to worry about whether he would get food or not. Whether he'd get a new diaper or sit around all day in a soiled one. Whether he'd get hit or locked in the closet.

But so far Jared and Misha had been nice to him. Maybe they were the good guys like Mommy and Daddy and Dr. Morgan.

Misha held the bottle out to Jensen. “Try to drink it slowly.”

Jensen took the bottle and immediately started sucking on it, still hugging Jared with one arm. It tasted so much better than what he got at the orphanage. It was warm and already he could feel it filling his belly.

Jared finally wrapped both arms around Jensen and kissed the side of Jensen's head. “Can you help us up, babe?” he asked.

Misha was there in a moment, helping them both up and making sure Jensen didn't fall back down as he concentrated on drinking his bottle. Soon all three of them were sitting on the couch, Jensen sitting on Misha's lap with his legs draped over Jared's lap too.

Jensen finished his bottle and held it out to Misha. “More?”

“Not yet,” Misha said as he took the bottle and set it on the table next to the couch.

“Please?” Jensen asked, eyes welling up with tears again.

“Jensen,” Misha said, gently scratching Jensen's scalp, “your tummy is too small right now to eat a lot of food. I know you're still hungry, but you've gotta let that settle before you can have more.”

“I want more,” Jensen said, bottom lip quivering.

“I know, baby,” Misha said. “And you'll get more later. Just relax and in a few minutes you'll feel full.”

Jensen started to cry softly. His tummy still hurt. It was still growling. They hadn't lied to him yet, but couldn't they see he was still hungry?

Jared leaned forward and grabbed a book off the coffee table. "How about I read you a story?" he asked, showing Jensen the book.

Jensen nodded. "K," he said. He'd rather have another bottle, but he liked books too.

"Hi! I'm the bus driver," Jared said as he held the book up so Jensen could see the pages. There was a man in a funny hat. "Listen, I've got to leave for a little while, so can you watch things for me until I get back? Thanks. Oh, and remember: Don't let the pigeon drive the bus!"

Jensen giggled as he imagined a pigeon driving a bus. That was silly!

"I thought he'd never leave!" Jared said in a funny voice as he read what the pigeon was saying.

Jensen giggled again, snuggling down against Misha and putting his thumb into his mouth. Jared was good at reading stories.

"Hey, can I drive the bus?" Jared asked in his best pigeon voice.

"Uh-uh," Jensen said, shaking his head.

"Please?" Jared begged in the pigeon's voice. "I'll be careful."

"No," Jensen said around his thumb, smiling.

Jensen was asleep before the end of the book. He dreamed that he was a pigeon who was driving a bus. Jared was the bus driver and Misha was the bus. Misha was a funny bus.

- Jared -

Jared fixed Jensen's shirt, pulling it down so it wouldn't bunch up and disturb him in his sleep. He looked up at Misha and sighed at the expression on his face.

"I'm not," Jared whispered.

Misha rolled his eyes. "Of course you're already getting attached," he said with a grin. "You always do."

"They all need help," Jared said, rubbing Jensen's belly, one of the few places the kid didn't have a bruise in various stages of healing. "They're all so dependent on others for everything, and it just kills me that people can be so cruel as to hurt them. He's a good kid. And they just..." he said, trailing off as he looked down at the bruise on Jensen's left ankle.

"It's a good sign that he's already falling asleep so easily on me," Misha said. "I think this one's gonna be okay. And he apologized for hurting you. How many of these little ones have we fostered who couldn't comprehend hitting was something to be sorry for?"

"Too many," Jared said, shaking his head.

“You're coming with me to the doctor's appointment tomorrow morning,” Misha announced. “He's already looking to you for protection. He feels safe with you.”

Jared frowned. “He fell asleep on you, not me,” he said.

“Yeah,” Misha said, “but I think he'd feel much safer if it was the two of us.”

“I want to go,” Jared said, “but don't discount the fact that he listened to you even when he was throwing a temper tantrum. He likes you too.”

Misha chuckled softly. “I like him already too.”

“Did you get enough pictures or is the doctor going to need to take more?” Jared asked, wincing.

“I think I did,” Misha said. “I have no idea how Jensen will react to the doctor, but he seems comfortable enough with us that I wanted to get the pictures out of the way.”

“He tried to get up when he was in the closet,” Jared said, looking down at the bruise on Jensen's ankle again. “He fell back down, so I picked him up.”

“The doctor will check him out,” Misha reassured him. “But if Jensen tried to get up and fell, that means he hasn't been immobile long enough to give up trying. Hopefully it's just because of the bruising.”

“Did you get any info on him from Mark?” Jared asked.

“Not yet,” Misha said. “I'm sure he'll call later. They're still going through all the records and matching the kids up with their profiles. I'm so glad you did that one last sweep. We were about to leave him there.”

Jared looked at Jensen's too small arms, his bony fingers, the way his face didn't have any fullness at all. “He's been there a while.”

“He's gonna get better, Jay,” Misha said with confidence. “He's been there this long and he's still a fighter. A broken kid isn't gonna kick you in the nuts,” he said with a grin.

Jared snorted. “For a kid that weighs as much as he does, I was really surprised how strong he was.”

“Should I kiss it and make it all better?” Misha asked, making a kissy face.

Jared chuckled. “Later. Right now I don't think I could get it up if my life depended on it.”

Misha smiled. They sat for a while, just listening to Jensen breathe, watching him sleep. “He likes baths,” Misha commented.

“And toys,” Jared said.

“And squirting you with those toys,” Misha said with a smirk.

“That was so cute,” Jared said. “I saw a little bit of his real personality coming out just before he realized what he'd done and got scared.”

“He's gonna be okay, Jay,” Misha said.

“I know,” Jared replied, nodding. “I'm just gonna enjoy him while we have him,” he said as he put his head down on Misha's shoulder, “and then I'm gonna convince you to keep him.”

Misha kissed the top of Jared's head. “And that right there is one of the many reasons why I love you.”

- Jensen -

Jensen woke up feeling warm and comfortable. He couldn't remember the last time that happened, and as he opened his eyes, he expected to find himself in a dream where he was back with Mommy and Daddy. Instead Misha was looking down at him, smiling.

“Hey, sweetie,” Misha said. “Did you have a good nap?”

Jared lifted his head off Misha's shoulder, obviously having been asleep. “Hey, baby boy,” he said, smiling.

Jensen's thumb had fallen out of his mouth while he was sleeping, so he pushed it back in. Then he reached up with his right hand and traced Misha's eyebrows. Misha didn't flinch, didn't pull away, and instead closed his eyes, letting Jensen do as he pleased. Jensen ran his finger down Misha's cheek.

“Om-nom-nom,” Misha said as he playfully nibbled at Jensen's finger.

Jensen jumped, eyes wide with surprise, but then he smiled when he realized Misha was only playing with him.

“Are you ready for another bottle?” Jared asked.

Jensen tried to sit up, so Misha shifted him so that Jensen's butt was on the couch cushion next to him, legs still draped over Misha's lap. “Uh-huh!” Jensen said as he nodded. “Hungry!”

“Okay, I'll make you another bottle,” Jared said as he got up. “Why don't you tell Misha what your favorite snacks are while I'm in the kitchen?”

Jensen nodded, leaning into the touch as Jared walked by and ruffled his hair. Jensen looked around, then his eyes widened.

“What's wrong, sweetie?” Misha asked.

“Mr. Kitty!” Jensen said, panicked as he flailed about looking for the stuffed cat.

Jared must've heard the panic in Jensen's voice because he came out of the kitchen saying, "Mr. Kitty's upstairs. I'll bring him down right now while the bottle's warming."

Jensen smiled. "Mr. Kitty!" he said, as if Jared might forget on the way up.

Misha waited until Jared came back downstairs, knowing Jensen wouldn't be able to concentrate on anything until he had Mr. Kitty. Sure enough, Jensen giggled and held his hands out as Jared came back into the living room.

"Here ya go," Jared said as he handed the cat to Jensen.

Jensen grabbed the stuffed cat and hugged him close, squeezing his eyes shut as he held the cat's long tail up to his face and rubbed the fur over his cheek. When Jensen opened his eyes again, Misha was reaching up, and Jensen flinched at first, but then when Misha started massaging his scalp, Jensen relaxed again.

"So what kind of snacks do you like?" Misha asked.

"Fishies," Jensen said.

Misha thought about it for a moment. "Oh, you mean the orange fishies that taste kind of like cheese?"

Jensen nodded. "Uh-huh. Fishies."

"We don't have any of those right now, but I'll get you some next time I go to the store," Misha said.

Jensen smiled. "K."

"What else do you like?" Misha asked as Jared came into the living room, testing the temperature of the protein drink on his wrist.

"Don't like carrots," Jensen said, pulling a face.

Misha shared a look with Jared, but Jensen couldn't figure out why. "Carrots are good for you, but we'll save those for dinner instead of snacks, okay?"

"K," Jensen said.

Jared sat down on the couch and handed Jensen his bottle. "You were just so hungry you wanted those carrots, didn't you, baby boy," Jared said with a sad look on his face.

"Mm-hmm," Jensen said around the nipple.

"Well," Misha said, smiling again, "we're gonna have a lot of things for you to choose from."

Jared was finally smiling again, which Jensen liked.

- Jared -

“He ate three bottles,” Jared said as he came out of the bathroom, taking his overshirt off.

Misha was undressing as well, having just gotten Jensen to sleep in the next room. They were all tired. It had been a long day.

“And carrots, celery, and an apple,” Misha said.

“I'm glad he went down when he did,” Jared said as he draped his jeans over the chair in the corner. “I hate telling him he has to stop eating when he's so underweight. I know it's better for him, but he doesn't care. All he knows is his tummy hurts.”

“He's already got you wrapped around his finger,” Misha said.

Jared frowned. “Why do you say that?”

“He's able to use his hands,” Misha said with a grin. “And yet he sat there looking between that apple and you until you cut up each piece and hand-fed him.”

Jared blushed a little. “Yeah, so?” he said as he climbed into bed. “He deserves a little pampering.”

“Yes, he does,” Misha agreed.

“So, I know you got the info from Mark,” Jared said, turning onto his left side so he could look at Misha as they stretched out in bed.

Misha sighed. “Yeah. I got it.”

“Rip it off like a band-aid,” Jared said. “Get it over with.”

“His parents, who were doting and adoring,” Misha said with a wince, “died in a car accident when he was seventeen.”

Jared sighed. “Was he in the accident too?”

Misha nodded. “Yeah, he was in the middle of the back seat, safe in his car seat. He came out of it with a few scrapes and bruises, but his parents both died.”

“He saw them?” Jared asked.

Misha shrugged. “I'm not sure. He didn't talk for a while after the accident and had trouble adjusting to life in the orphanage. The notes are few and far between, most likely because of the way they've been treating the kids at the orphanage.”

“How old is he?” Jared asked.

“He's twenty-four,” Misha said.

Jared closed his eyes and snuggled up to Misha. “He's been there seven years?!” he moaned into Misha's shoulder.

“I don't think the abuse started right away,” Misha said. “There was a changover about four years ago. New caregivers, owners, staff, and less government funding.”

“Has he had any serious illnesses or injuries?” Jared asked.

“Not that Mark can find,” Misha said. “There weren't many serious injuries for any of the kids so far.”

Jared snorted. “Well, they were good at smacking those kids around without necessitating hospital stays, I'll give those assholes that much.”

“More good news. No signs of sexual abuse in any of the kids, including Jensen,” Misha said.

Jared let out a sigh of relief. “I almost didn't wanna ask. Were there ever any foster parents or placements with adoptive parents?”

Misha shook his head. “No. Most of the kids were there long-term. The owners didn't feed the kids much, didn't change their diapers enough or bathe them as often as they should, so it kept their running costs down, then they pocketed the money from the government.”

Jared wrapped his arms around Misha. “I hate this,” he said softly.

“I know,” Misha said as he ran his fingers through Jared's hair. “But that's why we do what we do.”

“Love you,” Jared said.

“Love you too, Jay,” Misha said.

Misha turned off the lights, and they both fell asleep. Neither one of them slept hard. They both had an ear out for any noise Jensen might make on the baby monitor.

- Jensen -

Jensen woke to the sound of Misha humming. He opened his eyes and sat up in his crib. Misha hadn't heard him, too busy folding the clean clothes and putting them away, so Jensen got to his knees and whimpered.

“Hey, sweetie!” Misha said with a smile as he set the clothes down and walked to the crib. “There's a handsome boy.”

Jensen smiled and reached up. Misha picked him up, grunting a little as he situated the boy on his hip. Jensen wrapped his legs and arms around Misha as Misha headed for the changing table. He set Jensen down, then pulled out a fresh diaper and cream. He'd already set a wet washcloth on the table,

knowing that Jensen would be up soon. Jensen's skin was still too red and sore to use a baby wipe.

“We'll have to let you have some naked time later today,” Misha said, gently wiping Jensen clean. “Give your skin a chance to breathe.”

“Outside?” Jensen asked, looking hopeful.

Misha nodded. “Sure, we can do that.”

Jensen's smile lit up his face. He stayed still while Misha finished up, then grabbed on tight when Misha picked him up again.

“Jared's down there making you breakfast,” Misha said as he carefully made his way down the stairs. “Are you hungry?”

“Uh-huh,” Jensen said, nodding.

“Hey, baby boy!” Jared said, waving at Jensen with one hand while the other held the handle of the frying pan. “You like eggs?”

“Uh-huh!” he replied, smiling as Misha set him down in one of the chairs at the table.

Jared dished up all the food, then brought everything over to the table while Misha put a bib on Jensen. Once they were all seated, Jared put Jensen's plate in front of him. Jensen looked to Jared expectantly, and Jared smiled, shaking his head when Misha chuckled.

Jared ignored his own meal in favor of spoon-feeding Jensen his eggs, giving him bite-sized pieces of toast and bacon, and holding the Sippy cup of juice while Jensen had a drink.

“I'll clean up,” Misha said when he finished his breakfast. “You go ahead and finish your breakfast.”

“Thanks,” Jared said.

Jensen held still while Misha wiped his mouth and neck clean. Once the dishes were soaking in the sink, Misha sat back down at the table.

“All three of us are going to go somewhere today, baby,” Misha said, turning to look at Jensen. Jensen's eyes widened, a little scared. “It's nothing to be worried about. All three of us are going to go to the doctor.”

Jensen's smile must've shocked the two men because they let out relieved chuckles.

“Do you like the doctor?” Jared asked.

“Uh-huh!” Jensen said, bouncing in his seat.

“Oh, um, okay,” Jared said, smiling at Misha. “He likes the doctor.”

"Well, then how about you and Jared go pick out something for you to wear to the doctor's while I take a shower?" Misha said with a smile.

Jensen wiggled in his seat and held his arms out to Jared.

- Misha -

Misha knew that the doctor had all the reports, but he never was one to sit by quietly when he knew he could do something, so while Jensen and Jared sat in the waiting room playing with the stuffed animals, Jensen introducing all the new ones to Mr. Kitty, Misha went back and talked with the doctor.

Once Misha had filled the doctor in on everything he'd seen so far, he came back out to find Jared and Jensen on the floor together, Jared reading Jensen a book.

"Come on back, guys," Misha said, holding the door open.

Jensen was so excited he tried to stand up, but Jared was there for him and caught him when he started to fall back down. It didn't diminish Jensen's excitement one bit.

Misha led them down the hallway, then walked into the exam room. He was glad he went first because he was able to see Jensen's face when he saw the doctor. The biggest smile Misha had seen yet lit up Jensen's face and Jared almost dropped Jensen when he squirmed in Jared's arms.

"Hi, Jensen," Dr. Morgan said, smiling as he held out his arms and took the boy from Jared, nuzzling his neck and giving him a kiss on the side of his head while Jensen wrapped his arms and legs around the doctor like an octopus.

"Dr. Morgan was Jensen's doctor before the orphanage changed hands," Misha said to Jared.

"I missed you, kiddo," Dr. Morgan said. "I'm so glad to see you again!"

He set Jensen down on the examining table, but instead of leaving him there, he stood between Jensen's legs, caressing Jensen's face. Misha had prepared Dr. Morgan for what he would see, and he was glad he did, otherwise the man might have had a hard time putting on a brave face for Jensen.

"Are Jared and Misha treating you good?" Dr. Morgan asked.

Jensen nodded without hesitation, then held up his cat for Dr. Morgan to see. "Mr. Kitty!"

Dr. Morgan chuckled as he petted the cat. "Nice to meet you, Mr. Kitty," he said.

Jensen giggled as Dr. Morgan tickled Mr. Kitty's belly. "I got race cars!" Jensen said as he pointed to his crotch.

"He picked out his own diapers," Misha said.

"Race cars?" Dr. Morgan said, eyes widening. "I like race cars too! Can I see?"

Jensen nodded and held his arms out to the side so Dr. Morgan could open up his jeans.

"Those are so cool!" Dr. Morgan said as he pulled the jeans down enough to see the pattern.

Misha's chest ached as he watched the sheer excitement on Jensen's face. It was good to see Jensen able to be happy and thrilled about things. Misha knew the traumas he'd suffered at the orphanage weren't going to pop out of existence, but there was hope that Jensen could have a happy and fulfilling life.

Jared's smile was nearly irresistible. Misha walked up next to him and wrapped his left arm around Jared's middle.

"Jensen's mother was terrified of doctors," Misha whispered while Dr. Morgan let Jensen try out his stethoscope on Mr. Kitty. "She didn't want him to be afraid of doctors too, so she always acted like it was a treat to go. Dr. Morgan said Jensen was always his easiest AB to work with and he really missed him when he couldn't see him anymore."

Jared squeezed Misha. "Dr. Morgan needs to be his doctor from now on."

Misha chuckled. "I love you," he said, shaking his head.

"Okay," Dr. Morgan said, "it's time for me to find out if you have anymore ticklish spots since the last time I checked."

Jensen giggled, then set Mr. Kitty down next to him and held his arms up. Dr. Morgan took Jensen's shirt off and handed it to Jared. Dr. Morgan took a quick look at Jensen's back, then wrapped his arm around Jensen's middle, right where Jared had learned he had to hold Jensen to avoid the bruises, and lifted enough to get the jeans down.

Next came Jensen's sneakers, then his socks before Dr. Morgan took the jeans off and handed them to Jared.

"I think I remember this being a ticklish spot right here," Dr. Morgan said as he gently ran his finger over the crease between Jensen's neck and shoulder.

Jensen laughed, raising his shoulders and pulling away. Misha turned to look at Jared, already expecting the tears in his husband's eyes, and he wasn't disappointed. It was the first time they'd heard Jensen laugh that hard.

"Okay, can you be a big boy for me and lie down so I can get your diaper off?" Dr. Morgan said.

Jensen nodded, then scooted back, lying down on the examination table. It was wonderful to see the trust Jensen had in Dr. Morgan. He didn't look scared, didn't hesitate to spread himself out, and he wasn't looking to Jared or Misha for reassurance.

Dr. Morgan patted a spot on Jensen's leg that wasn't bruised. "You're being a very good boy."

Jensen smiled at the compliment, his body nearly vibrating with excitement. Dr. Morgan pulled the tape on the diaper, then gently peeled back the diaper.

"Oh, honey," Dr. Morgan said as he reached for a wipe.

"No! Owie!" Jensen cried out as he covered his crotch with both hands.

"Hey, hey," Dr. Morgan said in a soothing tone as he set the wipe down. "What's wrong?"

"Owie," Jensen said again.

"The wipes I used on him yesterday stung," Misha said. "I told him I wouldn't use wipes until his skin cleared up."

Dr. Morgan nodded. "Those were regular baby wipes?" he asked.

"Yes," Misha said, wincing. He really should've known better than to use them, but he'd wanted Jensen clean and didn't think about it before he did it.

"Okay, Jensen," Dr. Morgan said as he picked up the wipe again. "I promise you these are different wipes."

"Owie," Jensen said again, then pouted.

"These are special wipes," Dr. Morgan said. "Only doctors like me get these. They've got special medicine in them and they don't burn."

Jensen didn't seem all that reassured, hands still covering himself as he shook his head no.

"How about I make a deal with you?" Dr. Morgan said, getting Jensen's attention. "I'll use just the corner of this wipe on your leg where you're not as red, and if it burns, I promise I'll throw it right in the garbage and I won't use it on you."

Jensen thought hard about it, but considering everything that he'd been through, he came to a decision rather quickly. "K," he said, slowly pulling his hands away from his crotch and resting them on the bed again.

"Okay, I'm gonna wipe your leg now," Dr. Morgan said. "Remember that the wipe is cold."

Jensen nodded and watched carefully as Dr. Morgan wiped his leg. Jensen gasped, but didn't cry. When Dr. Morgan lifted his hand away from Jensen's leg, Jensen smiled.

"Did it hurt?" Dr. Morgan asked.

"Uh-uh," Jensen said, shaking his head and obviously relieved.

"Good," Dr. Morgan said, smiling down at Jensen. "I don't want to hurt you, little man."

Jared breathed a sigh of relief and Misha turned his face into Jared's shirt to stifle his chuckle. Jared was a big guy, people were sometimes intimidated by him. And if pushed, Jared could be a take charge, scary guy if he needed to be, but when it came right down to it Jared could be a big old softie. And Misha loved him for it.

"Are you ready?" Dr. Morgan asked as he held the wipe over Jensen's crotch. "I'm going to wipe everything down now, all right?"

Jensen nodded, not worried anymore. Dr. Morgan used gentle strokes to clean Jensen up, not wiping over any one area more than a couple times. Jensen never cried, though he did gasp a few times, especially when Dr. Morgan wiped under his balls.

"Does that hurt right there?" Dr. Morgan asked.

"I got a owie," Jensen replied, pointing at his crotch.

"I'm gonna take a look, but I'm gonna be real gentle," Dr. Morgan said, then cupped Jensen's balls and slowly lifted. "Oh, you've got yourself an owie, don't you, little man."

Jensen nodded. "Uh-huh."

Misha stepped forward. "I wiped under his balls, but I didn't lift them to look," he said, feeling horrible. Jensen had winced when he'd done it, but he figured it was just because the washcloth was cold and Jensen's poor skin was so red and sore.

"Did you fall?" Dr. Morgan asked.

Jensen shook his head no, pouting. "I was a bad boy."

"Did somebody hit you there?" Dr. Morgan asked. Jensen nodded, so Dr. Morgan balled his hand into a fist. "Did somebody hit you like this?"

Jensen nodded. "Owie."

Misha heard Jared snuffle behind him. "I'm sorry, sweetie," Misha said to Jensen, running his fingers through Jensen's hair.

"I'm going to put something on your owie," Dr. Morgan said as he pulled out a bottle. "It won't hurt, and it's going to make your owie better."

Jensen's lips twitched into a small smile as he reached out and took Misha's right hand in his, holding on tightly. Misha kept running his fingers through Jensen's hair. The boy seemed to really like it, and he could use all the comfort he could handle right now.

Jensen let out a noise of surprise as Dr. Morgan put the ointment on his skin, but by the way he was

smiling it was a pleasant surprise instead of a bad one.

"This is special stuff that's going to make the owie feel like it's not even there anymore," Dr. Morgan said.

Jensen gave Misha's hand another squeeze, but his body was vibrating with excitement again instead of fear.

"I'm going to give you guys a prescription for these wipes and the ointment I just used," Dr. Morgan said to Misha. "It's got lidocaine in it."

Misha smiled as he nodded. "Thank you, Dr. Morgan." He felt Jared come up behind him and rest his hands on his shoulders. Jared must've felt the need to be closer.

"I'm also going to give you a prescription for something to add to his bathwater," Dr. Morgan said. "What you're using is good, but this is even better."

"Bubbles?" Jensen asked, hopeful look on his face.

Dr. Morgan chuckled. "Sorry, little man. We can't do bubbles for a while. You gotta wait until you don't have owies anymore, okay?"

"K," Jensen said, only a little disappointed.

"Jared?" Dr. Morgan said, then nodded toward a table in the corner of the room with some books on it. "Would you mind grabbing the book on the top, please? Jensen really likes Guess How Much I Love You," he said, giving Jared a significant look.

Jared nodded and grabbed the book, then walked around to the far side of the examination table, putting him on Jensen's left side. "Hey, buddy, I've never read this book before. Is it a cool book?"

"Uh-huh!" Jensen said, nodding.

Misha saw Dr. Morgan pull a swab out from a drawer and set it between Jensen's legs. He then took Jensen's penis in his left hand and pulled the foreskin down. Jensen was too busy pointing at the rabbits with his free hand to care what Dr. Morgan was doing.

Dr. Morgan handled Jensen's penis with both hands, squeezing a little and turning it this way and that, and just as Misha was about to comment on how unnecessary it seemed to be that he was handling Jensen's dick that much, Dr. Morgan quickly picked up the swab and dipped it into Jensen's slit. With all the touching and moving Dr. Morgan had done before swabbing, Jensen never even flinched when the swab touched such a sensitive spot.

Misha was impressed. Dr. Morgan was really good at this. Dr. Morgan used two more swabs to take samples of the sore under Jensen's balls, which was numb by now, and also the red skin between Jensen's cheeks.

While Jared was reading and Jensen was pointing, telling Jared there were bunnies on the pages, Dr. Morgan gently ran his fingers over Jensen's legs and belly, checking for any problems. When he ran his fingers over Jensen's left ankle, Jensen whimpered.

"Owie," Jensen said, looking up at Jared as if Jared could help.

"Dr. Morgan is just checking out your foot, sweetie," Jared said.

"Can you wiggle your toes for me, little man?" Dr. Morgan said. Jensen nodded and did as he was told. "Good boy."

Jared started reading again as Dr. Morgan put Jensen's foot back on the table. Jensen quickly forgot about it and was back to pointing out the bunnies.

"I believe he twisted his ankle," Dr. Morgan whispered to Misha as he continued feeling up Jensen's legs, then over his tummy and ribs. "I don't feel or see anything that would warrant an x-ray unless you think the courts will need it."

"There's more than enough to prosecute," Misha whispered back. "Jensen isn't the most malnourished of the bunch and he certainly isn't the most traumatized."

"Does this hurt, little man?" Dr. Morgan asked as he very gently touched the bruises on Jensen's chest.

"Uh-uh," Jensen said, shaking his head and barely turning his head away from the book long enough to answer.

Dr. Morgan chuckled. "He's a good kid," he whispered.

Misha snorted. "My husband has already fallen for him," he said, rolling his eyes.

Dr. Morgan chuckled again. "It's easy to do. If my life wasn't as hectic as it is, I'd have taken him years ago."

"Yeah, we're pretty busy ourselves," Misha said, looking down at the happy baby on the table.

"You're really not considering it?" Dr. Morgan asked, surprised tone to his voice.

Misha frowned at him. "We both work."

Dr. Morgan stepped over to the counter and pretended to look through his chart. Misha followed him.

"You've both fostered ABs plenty of times," Dr. Morgan said. "I know it's different than having one of your own, but there's two of you, and you both have a lot of love to give."

"It takes more than love to adopt an AB," Misha said.

"You know full well that foster parents are prime candidates for adoption," Dr. Morgan said. "You

could get him so easily it's not even funny. And he's already bonded with you."

"He's just in need of care right now," Misha said, shaking his head.

Dr. Morgan turned to Misha and glared at him. "You really don't see that he's bonded already?" he asked.

"He warms up to people quickly," Misha said, shrugging.

"No, he doesn't," Dr. Morgan said. "Even before the abuse in the orphanage started, I couldn't let my nurses come in here with me when I examined him. He barely tolerated the caretakers from the orphanage being in here."

Misha snorted. "You're just trying to get me to adopt a sweet kid you fell in love with yourself," he said with a smile.

"Has he interacted with anybody since you've had him?" Dr. Morgan asked.

"We've only had him since yesterday, so no," Misha said.

"Okay, I hate to do this to him," Dr. Morgan said, "but this is how much I want you to take this seriously. I'm going to finish up my examination and call in one of the nurses. It's one he's never seen before, so there's no bad blood. I think you'll be surprised."

Jared finished reading the book and looked to Misha and Dr. Morgan, giving Misha a look that asked if he should get another book while they continued talking.

"All right, kiddo," Dr. Morgan said, "I'm going to take a quick look at your back after I get a new diaper on you."

"Race cars?" Jensen asked.

"Oh, I'm sorry," Dr. Morgan said. "I don't have race car diapers here. But I do have diapers with puppies on them. Would those be all right with you?"

"Yeah!" Jensen said with a big grin.

"Puppy diapers coming up," Dr. Morgan said as he pulled out a diaper and slid it under Jensen's butt.

"Puppies!" Jensen said as he pointed one of the puppies out to Jared.

"Pretty cool, Jensen," Jared said with a wink.

"Misha, would you mind making sure he doesn't fall while I check out his back?" Dr. Morgan asked.

Misha nodded and reached out, helping Jensen sit up. He turned Jensen so the doctor could look at Jensen's back, chuckling when Jensen gave him a quick kiss on the cheek. Dr. Morgan gave him a

significant look over Jensen's shoulder and Misha rolled his eyes.

"Okay, now we get to see what your blood looks like!" Dr. Morgan said.

Jared made a choking noise and Misha's eyes widened as he forgot to breathe. But before either man could ask why the hell Dr. Morgan was referring to blood tests like that, Jensen cheered, wriggling on the table and smiling. Jared looked to Misha, confused expression on his face as Misha shrugged.

"Remember there's just gonna be a little bit of a sting, but then we'll get to see what your blood looks like, okay?" Dr. Morgan said as he wrapped the tourniquet around Jensen's left upper arm.

"K," Jensen said, eyes on Dr. Morgan's hands.

"Ready?" Dr. Morgan asked, holding the needle just above Jensen's skin.

"Uh-huh," Jensen said, holding still.

"Pretty cool, huh?" Dr. Morgan asked as he pulled the tourniquet off and the blood filled the vial.

"Uh-huh," Jensen said, eyes on the vial.

Jared let out a relieved chuckle as he shook his head. "Wow," he mouthed at Misha.

Misha wished he could've met Jensen's mother. For someone who was scared of doctors herself, she must've been an amazing woman to turn a doctor's office into a place of wonder and excitement for her son.

"There it is," Dr. Morgan said as he pulled the needle out, then held up the vial, tilting it back and forth so Jensen could see the blood flowing back and forth.

Jensen grinned and pointed at it, looking at Misha. "That's mine!"

"Cool!" Misha said, grinning back at Jensen.

"Okay, I'm going to send this to the guys who like to look at blood too, and then we'll get you dressed," Dr. Morgan said.

"K," Jensen said, watching closely as Dr. Morgan dropped the vial into bag, sealing it.

Dr. Morgan walked to the door and opened it, then stuck his head around the corner. "Anna? Could you come here a minute, please?"

Jensen gasped, his body tensing so much so that Misha flinched. Jensen looked at the doorway, eyes wide as he took Misha's hand in his and squeezed tightly.

Dr. Morgan held the door open while a woman walked in. He handed her the bag with the vial in it and instructed her on where to send it. Jensen, on the other hand, scooted forward and pushed his face

against Misha's shoulder, wrapping his arms and legs around Misha and whimpering as he shivered.

"Hi, little one," Anna said, waving. "What's your name?"

Jensen had still been looking toward the door, even though he'd been pressed up against Misha, but no longer. He turned his head, pushed his face hard against Misha's chest and started to cry.

Misha looked up at Jared, eyes wide as they both stood there dumbfounded. Jensen had been doing so well. Sure, he'd freaked out over Mark the day before, but the poor kid had been scared out of his mind then. Right?

"Hey, sweetie," Misha said as he gently rubbed Jensen's back. "It's okay. She's not going to hurt you."

Anna tried to leave, but Dr. Morgan shook his head and then gestured for her to move closer to Jensen. She seemed a little confused, but he just gestured her over again.

"Those are pretty neat diapers," Anna said as he got a little closer. "I like puppies too."

Misha could tell she was good with kids, but Jensen was having nothing of it. His cries turned into sobs as he squeezed Misha so hard he grunted.

"Thanks, Anna," Dr. Morgan said softly.

Anna gave him a look and held her hands out at her sides, as if to say, "Why the hell did you make me do that?!"

"Tell ya later," Dr. Morgan said, reading his nurse well. "Thank you."

Anna shrugged and walked out, closing the door behind herself.

"Wanna go home," Jensen said as he pulled back and looked up at Misha. "Go home now?"

Misha looked up at Jared, who was just as shocked as he was, then back to Jensen. "Yeah, we can go now, sweetie."

"Can I have a hug before you leave, kiddo?" Dr. Morgan asked Jensen.

Jensen nodded, letting go of Misha long enough to turn and give the doctor a hug, then he was right back against Misha.

"I'm sorry you got scared," Dr. Morgan said, ruffling Jensen's hair. "Anna would never hurt you, honey."

"K," Jensen said, forcing a smile for Dr. Morgan.

"Let's get you home," Jared said as he grabbed Jensen's clothes, handing the shirt to Misha.

A few minutes later Jensen was dressed, the tears were gone, and he was smiling as if he'd never been crying at all.

"Bye, little man," Dr. Morgan said, waving as they walked out the door, Jared carrying Jensen.

"Bye!" Jensen said, waving back.

Misha took all the prescriptions Dr. Morgan gave them, surprised by just how much there was, and while Jared gave Jensen a bottle at home, he went to the supermarket to fill the prescriptions and pick up some groceries, including the fishies Jensen requested. By the time he got back home, Jensen was asleep on Jared in the living room, Mr. Kitty under his left arm.

"Dr. Morgan gave us a hell of a lot of stuff," Misha said as he brought in the last of the groceries. "He even gave us the prescription protein formula."

Jared wrapped his right arm around Misha's shoulders as they snuggled together on the couch, Jensen snoring softly on his lap. They were quiet for a while, just enjoying the relaxing time together.

"Misha," Jared said softly.

Misha sighed, then turned and placed a kiss on Jared's cheek. "I know what you're going to ask."

"He's not a stray dog," Jared said. "I know that. But he's already so comfortable with us and it's what we knew we wanted to do eventually anyway."

"He's only been with us a little over a day," Misha said. "He's been through a lot. There's going to be behavioral problems and a whole lot of shit that comes with victims of abuse."

"I know," Jared said. "You're not changing my mind so far. Work harder at it."

Misha chuckled. "What if I don't want to?"

Jared turned to look at him, so close his eyes crossed as he tried to focus on Misha. "Don't want to adopt him or don't want to work at convincing me it's a bad idea?"

Misha grimaced. "What if he doesn't want to stay here?" And that pretty much answered Jared's question anyway.

Jared rolled his eyes. "He asked go to home," he said. "He already thinks of this as his home."

Misha sighed. "And that asshole Morgan knew just how to get me by calling in Anna."

Jared snorted. "He did that on purpose?"

Misha nodded. "Asshole," he said without any real venom in his voice.

Jared chuckled as he shook his head. "Well, if it worked, then he's a hero in my book."

Misha put his head down on Jared's shoulder. "Can we do this, Jay?"

"I think it would be better for him if we decided soon instead of stringing him along," Jared said. "With all the foster kids, we made it clear they were here to wait for a new mommy or daddy. I don't know if you've noticed, but neither of us have said that to Jensen yet."

Misha groaned. "I suck."

Jared chuckled. "Yeah, me too. I wanted him from the moment he looked up at me from that closet with hope in his eyes, looking at me like he was just hoping I could be the one to get him out of that shithole."

"If we do this, we can't take it back," Misha said. "I can't tell him to call us Daddy and Papa, then send him away. I won't do it."

"I wouldn't do that to him," Jared said, almost hissing the words, as if it was something horrific to even think of.

"I know, baby," Misha said. "It's just a really big step."

"Then let's talk to him about it," Jared said.

"Huh?" Misha said.

"He's not stupid," Jared said.

"I know," Misha said, rolling his eyes.

"So let's talk to him about it," Jared said. "When he wakes up and he's all fed and ready for some naked time out in the backyard, let's bring it up and see how he feels about it."

"That's too big of a decisions for a baby," Misha said.

"He's an AB, not a baby," Jared said. "He's at whatever level he wants and needs to be. And if he's interacting this much already, maybe he's not at the age level we assumed he was. The way Dr. Morgan talked to him makes me think we could get his feelings on this and then make a decision. He's been traumatized, but he's not an idiot. He won't be making the decision himself, only letting us know how he feels about it all."

"Are you ready to become a full-time dad?" Misha asked.

"Yes," Jared said without hesitation. "I've wanted this since I was a teenager. You know that. I have no doubts that we can make this work. If you decide we shouldn't do this right now, I'll be okay with it because I love you and I want you to be on-board with whatever decisions we make together, but I'm one hundred percent ready for this."

"All right," Misha said. "We'll talk to him."

Jared leaned forward and kissed his husband's lips, then pulled back, looking him in the eye. "You're gonna be a great dad."

"So are you," Misha said with a smile.

- **Misha** -

"No!" Jensen yelled, frown on his face as his body stiffened in defiance, water splashing out of the tub.

Jensen had been with them for three weeks, they were officially fostering him and in the process of adopting him, but just as they'd expected, Jensen was having trouble adjusting.

It's not that he didn't like living with Jared and Misha, but he was having trouble finding a balance between getting everything he wanted and getting nothing he needed.

"It's time to get out of the tub now," Misha said calmly.

"I don't wanna!" Jensen screamed, hitting the water with both fists and splashing even more water out onto the floor.

Jensen had been without even basic necessities in life for years, and now that he was given everything he needed and a lot of what he wanted, he was flip-flopping between crying and scared when dinner was a little late and throwing temper tantrums when he didn't get everything he wanted and more.

It was normal, and even though it wasn't easy, Jared and Misha were trying to stay calm and deal with it. Jared had pulled a 36-hour shift because of another raid that took much longer than everyone had expected, and he had just gotten home a few hours ago. He'd been asleep seconds after his head hit the pillow.

Misha was hoping the noise wouldn't wake him, but Jensen was getting more and more agitated. Usually they didn't have a problem with Jensen staying in the tub until he was all wrinkly and ready to get out, but they had an appointment with the physical therapist.

"Jensen," Misha said, using a stern voice that would hopefully make Jensen realize he needed to knock it off, "that's enough. We need to leave in a few minutes and you need to get out and get dressed."

Jensen turned in the tub and got to his knees, hands balled into fists and body stiff with rage. "I don't wanna!" he screamed, even louder than before.

There was no way Jared had slept through that one. Misha leaned down and unplugged the tub, water swirling down the drain.

"No!" Jensen growled, then shoved Misha away from the tub.

Misha slipped on the wet tile and went down hard on his ass, arm smacking against the toilet as he

went. He sat up, face flushing with anger.

"You okay?" Jared asked as he walked into the bathroom and crouched beside Misha.

"I'm fine," Misha said, getting himself onto his knees.

He stood up, wincing as he did. His ass and arm both hurt, but he didn't want to miss the appointment with the physical therapist. Jensen was making good progress.

"Out of the tub," Misha said as he grabbed a towel and leaned down to wrap Jensen in it.

"I'm sorry!" Jensen screamed, backing up against the wall behind the tub, eyes wide and panting in fear.

"You okay to handle him?" Jared asked.

"I'm fine, Jared," Misha snarled, ignoring Jensen's struggles and cries as he wrapped the towel around the boy and started to lift him out of the tub, which no longer had any water in it.

"No!" Jensen yelled, squirming and flailing. "I'm sorry! Don't hit! Don't hit!"

Misha nearly lost his grip on Jensen, but Jared was right there and grabbed Jensen with a firm hold, pulling him away from Misha.

"Jared, I said I was fine," Misha snapped at Jared.

"You've had him for two days straight now," Jared said calmly as Jensen whimpered and squirmed in his arms. "Sit down for a minute and cool off while I get him dressed."

Misha sputtered as Jared walked out of the room, Jensen crying and begging to not be hit. It wasn't until then that he realized Jensen was scared. Misha had scared Jensen.

Misha wouldn't have hurt Jensen, but he was upset, and Jensen had picked up on it. Misha felt like shit. He'd known this wouldn't be all puppy dog tails and fluffy clouds. It was hard taking care of an AB. Rewarding yes, but hard.

He heard Jensen crying in the other room, heaving sobs as he begged Jared, "I'm sorry! I don't wanna owie!"

Misha knew Jared wouldn't hit Jensen, but Jensen didn't know that yet. He was still terrified whenever Jared or Misha looked even the least bit upset. Misha could hear Jared talking softly to Jensen, but he couldn't tell what he was saying.

He stood up and walked to the sink, wetting a washcloth and wringing it out. He'd been angry, but even as upset as he'd been, he wouldn't have hurt Jensen. But now Jensen was crying.

Misha walked into Jensen's room, sighing when he saw Jared sitting on the rocking chair, a naked

Jensen on his lap, the towel on the floor. Jensen was stiff on Jared's lap, sitting up straight even though Jared was gently running his fingers over Jensen's leg and back, talking quietly to him until Jensen ran out of steam.

Misha got to his knees beside the rocker, feeling even more like a sack of shit when Jensen saw him and flinched, bottom lip wobbling as a few more tears made their way down his cheeks.

"I'm not mad at you, sweetheart," Misha said as he slowly reached up and ran the washcloth over Jensen's face, cleaning up his tears. "I'm upset about what happened, and I'd much rather you behave yourself, but I'm not going to hit you."

"Sorry, Papa," Jensen said, more tears replacing the ones Misha had just wiped clean.

"I know you like staying in the tub," Misha said with a small smile, "but we have an appointment with Jim, and you don't want Jim to be sad when we don't show up, do you?"

"No," Jensen said, shaking his head.

They'd made a lot of progress from the first time they'd been to Jim Beaver. Jensen had done nothing but cry and hide his face in Jared's shirt the first few times they'd had an appointment. Now Jensen liked Jim enough that he was feeling bad about possibly showing up late to an appointment with the man.

"Okay, you need to listen to me and Daddy, even when you don't want to," Misha said. "We're not going to do anything to hurt you. When we tell you to do something, it's because it's going to help you. Like when I told you to get out of the tub so we can go see Jim."

"Sorry, Papa," Jensen said again.

"Can I have a hug?" Misha asked. Sometimes Jensen was too upset to be hugged after something like this, so Misha and Jared always asked.

"Uh-huh," Jensen said, nodding and reaching out for him.

Misha stood up and leaned over, wrapping his arms around Jensen. Jensen hugged him back, sniffing into Misha's shirt.

"Sorry," Jensen said as Misha pulled again.

"Jensen," Jared said, waiting until Jensen was looking at him before continuing. "Papa and I appreciate you apologizing, but you don't have to worry that we're going to take away your food or hit you when you do something wrong, okay?"

Jensen nodded, still not completely sure about it, and that much was obvious by looking at the boy.

"We won't send you away either," Misha said, running his fingers through Jensen's wet hair. "As long as you want to stay here, we want to keep you."

"K," Jensen said, again not sounding all that convinced.

"Will you let me get you dressed now?" Misha asked reaching out for Jensen.

"Uh-huh," Jensen said, holding his arms out, then wrapping his legs around Misha as he was picked up.

Jared got up off the rocker and headed for the door. "I'm going to call Jim and let him know you guys are going to be a little late."

"Thanks, Jay," Misha said as he put Jensen down on the changing table and pulled out a diaper.

His arm hurt, his tailbone was sore, but when he thought about everything that Jensen had been through, it was a small price to pay for the boy who was giving him little smiles as he spread out on the changing table, no fear in his eyes anymore once he realized Misha wasn't going to hit him like the caretakers had.

- Jared -

Jared wasn't sure what had been going on with Jensen lately, but he'd had more nightmares than usual. Three months in and the nightmares had become a rarity, but now he was waking up with them every night.

And then there was this new thing. Jared stood there with his eyes open wide in surprise as Jensen kneeled in the pile of clothes, toys, diapers, and wipes he'd thrown on the floor. All the drawers and closet doors were open.

He'd only left Jensen alone for a couple minutes while he ran him a bath, but Jensen had even managed to get into the baby powder, which was now decorating the rug, clothes, toys, and Jensen like icing on a cake.

Jensen didn't need constant supervision. Sometimes he was okay playing with his toys on the floor while Jared or Misha were close by and either doing chores or running a bath. Not this time.

Jensen realized Jared was standing in the doorway, and instead of crying or asking that Jared not hit him, as per usual, he smirked as if he'd known exactly what he was doing.

Jared frowned. This was new. He was nearly overwhelmingly excited that Jensen wasn't scared of him, but he had no idea why Jensen would do this on purpose and sit there so unashamedly gloating.

"Looks like it's time for a bath," Jared said as he walked over the toys and clothes and picked Jensen up.

Jensen was able to walk now, but Jared didn't want even more of a mess down the hallway. He stripped Jensen in the bathroom, then helped him into the tub. Jensen acted as if nothing was out of the ordinary and insisted upon Jared playing with some toys while he had his bath.

Misha got home from work just in time for dinner a few hours later, and Jared was still perplexed. Jensen had climbed out of his crib when he'd been put down for his nap and had pulled every towel out of the linen closet, then tossed them all over the stairs.

When Jared asked Jensen why he'd done it, Jensen had said it was fun, that same little smirk on his face.

"How are my boys doing tonight?" Misha asked as he unbuttoned his work shirt and draped it over the kitchen chair.

"Daddy's makin' fries!" Jensen said with a smile, giggling when Misha ruffled his hair.

"It's almost done if you wanna have a seat," Jared said.

Misha walked up to Jared and gave him a kiss on the cheek. "Everything okay?" he asked softly enough that Jensen wouldn't be able to hear him.

Jared forced a smile. "Long day," he said with a shrug.

Misha hesitated, as if he wanted to ask Jared for details, but instead he nodded and sat down at the table.

Jared brought the food to the table and sat down, putting plates in front of Jensen and Misha before setting his own down.

"Don't want juice," Jensen said, then pushed his Sippy cup off the table.

Misha turned to Jared, mouth open as if he wanted to say, "What the hell?"

Jensen was smirking. That same little smirk Jared had seen all day long. No remorse, no scared little boy who was scared of getting hit. Something was up, but Jared wasn't sure what to do about it.

"Jensen," Misha said.

"Yeah, Papa?" Jensen said, smirking at Misha.

"If you don't want juice," Misha said calmly, "then you should tell Daddy you don't want it. But pushing your cup on to the floor is not the way to tell Daddy that."

"Milk?" Jensen asked, as if Misha had only been asking what Jensen would like instead of the juice.

"You can have milk if you ask nicely," Misha said. "And you need to apologize for pushing your cup off the table."

"Milk," Jensen said again, picking up a French fry and shoving it into his mouth.

Misha stood up, grabbed one of the kitchen chairs, and set it in the corner of the kitchen, facing the

corner. He then set up a folding TV table next to the chair.

"You're going to sit in the naughty chair," Misha said as he picked Jensen up and set him down in the corner, "until you behave."

Jensen turned around in the chair, eyes wide. "Hungry!"

Misha picked up Jensen's plate and set it down on the TV table near Jensen. "You're going to eat over here instead of with me and Daddy. If you apologize, then you can eat with us again."

Jensen frowned and looked to Jared, as if Daddy would save him. Jared just shook his head and took another bite of food. "Wanna eat with you!" Jensen said, pouting up at Misha.

"No," Misha said, pointing at his plate on the TV table. "You're going to eat here."

Misha walked back over to the table and sat down, ignoring Jensen. Jensen was quiet for a moment, but then he started to cry.

"Wanna be with you!" Jensen said, voice so pathetic and sad that Jared started to move.

Misha grabbed Jared's wrist and shook his head just a little, so Jared stayed where he was.

"Please?" Jensen said, then sniffled. "Wanna be with you!"

Misha didn't pay attention to him, instead looking up at Jared as he ate. "How was your day, babe?" he asked.

Jensen's cries became louder, and Jared could hear the tears in his voice without even looking. Misha ran his thumb over Jared's wrist in a comforting touch.

"It's okay," Misha whispered.

"Daddy!" Jensen cried. "Wanna sit with you!"

"Um, oh," Jared said, trying to concentrate on Misha instead of Jensen. "After you left we finished breakfast and played outside for a while. Jensen had a bath after that because he got into the baby powder and dusted his room with it."

Misha's lips twitched into a small smile. "And what else did you two do today?"

"I stitched up one of his stuffed animals after he ripped open its belly," Jared said, "and then I cleaned up the hallway when he decided to redecorate with all the towels from the linen closet."

"I don't wanna be over here!" Jensen said, then started crying so hard he was sobbing.

Jared gave Misha a look that said, "Please let me get him! This is killing me!"

Misha shook his head. "Did you guys do anything else today?"

Jared winced as Jensen choked himself on his own tears, coughing a little before he started crying again.

"I taped up three of his books after he ripped out the pages," Jared said. "And then he played on the floor of the kitchen while I made dinner."

Jensen's cries died down to sniffles, and Jared could hear Jensen shifting on the chair.

"Papa," Jensen said, wiping at his face and peeking over his shoulder.

"Yeah, sweetie?" Misha said, looking over at Jensen.

"I'm sorry," Jensen said. "Want milk, please. Wanna sit with you, please."

"Are you going to behave?" Misha asked.

Jensen nodded. "Uh-huh," he said.

Misha stood up. "Okay, you can eat with us," he said as he picked Jensen up and set him back down on his usual chair at the table. He then went over to the fridge and poured some milk into a clean Sippy cup and brought it to the table.

"Thank you, Papa," Jensen said as Misha set the cup down next to Jensen's plate.

"You're welcome, sweetie," Misha said.

Jared let out a sigh of relief. He wasn't sure he was going to be able to take much more of the crying. Jensen had sounded so sad. He was glad Jensen had changed his mind.

Later that night when they crawled into bed together, Jensen asleep in the next room, Misha wrapped his arms around Jared and kissed him, sweet and slow before pulling back to look him in the eye.

"He's pushing," Misha said.

Jared was confused for a moment, then sighed as he rested his head on Misha's shoulder, wrapping his right arm around Misha and throwing a leg over his.

"Today sucked," Jared said.

"He's pushing you in particular to see if you'll give up on him," Misha said.

Jared whimpered. "Testing the boundaries?"

"I think so," Misha said. "But because of the abuse, there's a twist to it. He's pushing to see if there's a breaking point where you'll send him away."

"I wish I could just tell him I won't," Jared said. "Then we can just get back to him being my sweet kid."

"We knew things like this were going to happen," Misha said.

"Wait," Jared said as he lifted his head, eyes wide, "does this mean he's feeling comfortable enough here that he wants to settle in, but he's making sure he has a place here?"

Misha smiled. "I married you for more than just your good looks," he teased. "I think you hit the nail on the head."

Jared let out a huge sigh of relief. "Oh, I was so fuckin' worried that this was his real personality coming out, that it was going to be like this from now on."

"It might be," Misha said, shrugging. "But he's had more nightmares lately, which I think means he's working through something in his head. If he's happy enough here to settle in and accept that he can have this life, then that could be really scary for him. But that doesn't mean he can be allowed to misbehave. I know you want to just play with him, love him, and hold him, but he needs discipline too."

Jared whined as he pushed his face against Misha's chest. "I know. It's just so hard to listen to him crying."

Misha chuckled. "I know, babe," he said, ruffling Jared's hair.

"Especially after everything he's been through," Jared said, the sound muffled by Misha's shirt.

"Discipline is different than what he's experienced, you know that," Misha said. "And if we just let him do whatever he wants, he'll become a very unhappy kid."

"I know, I know," Jared said lifting his head and grinning at Misha. "We're not beating him, it's just time-outs, but Misha, his little face when he's sad! It's killer!"

Misha chuckled as he lifted his head off the pillow, then kissed his adorable husband. "I love you so much, Jared. And there's nobody I can think of I'd rather raise Jensen with."

Jared smiled, his dimples showing. "Love you too."

- Jared -

"Jensen," Misha said, getting the boy's attention as he sat on the floor in his room playing cars with Jared. "I want to show you something, sweetie."

Jensen eyed the papers in Misha's hand suspiciously, looking to Jared for reassurance. Jared gave him a smile and Jensen relaxed a little.

Misha sat on the floor and crossed his legs Indian style. "These papers are the ones we've been telling

you about," he said, holding the papers out between the three of them. "These are the papers that say you're part of our family. You're our son now officially."

"See that right there?" Jared said as he pointed to the paper, smiling when Jensen nodded. "That says Jensen Collins."

Jensen's eyes widened as he looked at Jared, then Misha. He looked down at the paper, then reached out and ran his fingers over his new name.

"And see right there?" Misha said as he pointed next to Jensen's name. Jensen nodded. "That says your parents are Jared and Misha Collins."

Jensen sat there for a moment, eyes darting over the page. Neither Jared nor Misha knew if Jensen could read. He'd point at words sometimes and say them, but it was always with books he knew, so it could be memory recall, but it didn't matter. The way he was looking at the page was something Jared didn't think he'd ever forget.

It had taken five and a half months for everything to go through, but only because of the huge backlog from the orphanage. Jared and Misha were both foster parents, a married couple with jobs and a home of their own, so all the agencies involved practically begged them to take Jensen.

"I can stay?" Jensen asked, voice monotone.

"You're all ours," Jared said.

"My house?" Jensen said, eyes still on the paper.

"All yours, sweetie," Misha said.

A smile tugged at the corners of Jensen's mouth. "I can stay," he said instead of asked.

There were times that Jared wished Jensen spoke as much as an adult, but the look on Jensen's face told him everything he needed to know. Jensen was content, happy. Jared and Misha hadn't even realized it, but this is what Jensen must've been waiting for. He hadn't believed he could stay until the adoption papers went through and he could see the proof.

"Mr. Kitty?" Jensen said as he held the cat up.

"Mr. Kitty stays too," Misha said.

"You're my papa," Jensen said as he looked at Misha, then he turned to Jared. "You're my daddy."

"I think this calls for a celebration," Jared said. "What do you say?"

Jensen nodded. "Ice cream!"

Jared and Misha laughed. "I like that idea," Jared said.

"I don't know, guys," Misha said, smirking and voice teasing. "We haven't had dinner yet. Ice cream might spoil your appetite," he said with a shrug.

"Papa!" both Jared and Jensen whined together. "Please!" Jared said, and Jensen followed soon after, both of them giving him puppy dog eyes.

"Oh, all right," Misha said, laughing when they both cheered. "I've got chocolate, vanilla, and Rocky Road ice cream. What flavor do you want, Jensen?"

"Chocolate," Jensen said without hesitation, "with sprinkles."

Misha chuckled. "Coming up," he said as he stood up and headed for the door.

"Hey!" Jared said as he stood up. "I want Rocky Road! A lot of it!"

Misha laughed. "Only if I don't eat it all first."

Jared turned to Jensen, eyes wide, pretending to be panicked. "We'd better hurry! Papa's gonna eat all my ice cream!"

Jensen giggled as he stood up. "Share, Papa!" he yelled as he took off after Misha.

- Jared -

"Daddy!" Jensen yelled as he ran into Jared and Misha's bedroom, jumping onto the bed. "Daddy, wake up!"

Jared groaned, blinking into the light. "What's wrong, baby?" he asked.

"Papa said time for breakfast!" Jensen said, bouncing on the bed.

Jared chuckled as he sat up. "Okay, I'm up."

"Papa made smiley faces!" Jensen said, grinning as he yanked on Jared's shirt.

"He did?" Jared said as he glanced at the clock. It was already after ten in the morning, but he'd pulled a late shift. He'd really been hoping to sleep until two in the afternoon, but he was a daddy now. Jensen came first.

"Yeah!" Jensen said. "Papa said I get sprinkles. You want sprinkles too?"

Jared nodded. "That sounds yummy."

"Hurry!" Jensen said as he climbed off the bed and started yanking on Jared's arm.

Jensen was much stronger now that he'd had a regular diet and exercise. He'd filled out and become too heavy for Misha to carry up the stairs. He looked healthy, happy, and he had a home.

Jared swore Jensen was even taller, and Misha grumbled about it whenever Jared mentioned that he was the shortest in the house, but they were both extremely proud of how well Jensen was doing.

"C'mon, Daddy!" Jensen said as he pulled Jared along.

"I hear there's sprinkles!" Jared announced as he stumbled into the kitchen.

"Daddy wants sprinkles too!" Jensen said.

Misha smiled. "Okay, Daddy's gonna get sprinkles," he said as he put another pancake on Jensen's plate. "Do you want sprinkles for the hair or do you want it to be the smiley face's puke?"

Jared laughed as Jensen thought it over. Misha waited, jar of sprinkles held over the plate.

"Puke!" Jensen decided.

Misha chuckled. "Good choice," he said, then dumped some sprinkles over the bacon, which formed the smiley face's mouth, then poured more of them down the bottom of the pancake and onto the plate. Jared and Jensen both laughed when Misha made a puking sound as he handed the plate to Jensen.

Jensen headed over to the table. "Thanks, Papa," he said. Mr. Kitty was already sitting on the table at Jensen's spot.

"You're welcome, baby," Misha said as he got Jared's plate ready. "Have a seat, Jay."

"Yes, sir," Jared said with a mock salute. He sat down with Jensen and watched his kid play with the sprinkles, making puking sounds like Misha had done.

When Misha finally sat down, they all dug into their food. Jared looked around the table at his family and felt his eyes well up with tears. He hated how emotional he was at times, but damn did he love his family.

It wasn't always easy, and sometimes Jensen still woke them all up in the middle of the night with a nightmare, but they made it work.

Jensen had settled in nicely. And it turned out that he was a little older than Jared and Misha had guessed in terms of what AB stage he preferred, but even at the equivalent of a three-year-old, he still liked being diapered and enjoyed a bottle from time to time. Though Jared and Misha both suspected that was because it was a quiet and special time he got to share with Daddy and Papa.

Jared and Misha were happy no matter where Jensen felt comfortable. And even if it changed on a daily basis, they'd happily go along with it. Jensen was a great kid and completed their little family.

"I really like it here," Jensen said.

Misha and Jared froze, eyes on Jensen. Jensen hadn't spoken in his normal carefree, child-like voice. He wasn't smiling too big or bouncing in his seat. He was looking between the both of them, a very

serious expression on his face.

"I love you guys," he said, a small smile on his face.

Misha recovered from his shock before Jared did and smiled back at Jensen. "We love you too," he said, just as serious as Jensen.

Jared's eyes welled up with tears again, but this time he couldn't stop them from falling. He wiped at his eyes, letting out a chuckle. It wasn't the first time Jensen had looked at them with eyes that were older than three years, but it was the first time he'd spoken to them like that.

"Can I have a cake for my birthday?" Jensen asked, grinning and cheeks flushing with excitement.

Jared laughed. "Lemme guess. You want my special carrot cake," he teased.

Jensen laughed so hard he snorted. "No, Daddy," he said, shaking his head. "I want chocolate and sprinkles!"

"Oh," Jared said as if he had no idea that's what Jensen would want. He'd already planned on making that cake for Jensen. His kid was going to be twenty-six in just a few days. "Well, I suppose I'll have to throw out the carrot cake I made for you and make a chocolate sprinkles cake instead," he said with a shrug.

"Give Papa the carrot cake," Jensen said pointing at Misha. "He likes carrots," he said with a sour look on his face.

Misha chuckled. "Carrots are good for you."

"But they're yucky," Jensen said. "Only bunnies like carrots."

"Maybe Papa's a bunny!" Jared said, voice a stage-whisper.

Jensen laughed so hard he had to hold his stomach. "Papa Bunny!" he said, still giggling.

"Call me whatever you want," Misha said, shrugging. "I'm just gonna eat all the carrot cake myself."

"Maybe I'll make a cake for each of us," Jared said. "What should I put on mine?"

"Gummy Bears," Jensen said without hesitation.

"Ooh, I like the sound of that," Jared said even as Misha groaned.

"Anything else special you wanna do for your birthday, sweetie?" Misha asked.

"Can I have a party?" Jensen asked, and by the look on his face he was a little unsure about the whole thing, almost as if he wasn't sure he even wanted a party, but he'd like to try it.

"We can do that," Misha said. "Who do you wanna invite?"

And that must've been the part he was unsure about, because the smile faded. Jared wanted to reach out and hug him, but instead he let Jensen work through it himself.

"Dr. Morgan," Jensen said, a little bit of a smile coming back. "And Mr. Sheep."

Misha chuckled. Jensen had warmed up to Mark after a number of visits, but Mark was persistent. He had always come over for game nights or movies and pizza before Jensen started living with Jared and Misha, and he really wanted Jensen to accept him. He said he would've been okay with it if Jensen couldn't handle him being there, but Mark loved kids, so he didn't give up.

It had taken months, but nowadays Mark was Mr. Sheep, because Jensen thought Mark's last name was really funny, and Mark came over on the weekends to watch movies and eat pizza again.

"That sounds like fun," Jared said. "I'll call both of them after breakfast."

"It's your birthday, so you can say no," Misha said, "but would it be all right if I asked Ozzy and Richard to come?"

Jensen thought hard about it. Osric had been one of the other kids at the orphanage, and a fellow EMT named Richard Speight had adopted him not long after they'd adopted Jensen. Jensen was still warming up to Richard, and Richard was working very hard at winning him over, but Jensen liked visiting with Ozzy.

"Okay," Jensen said. "But I don't want anybody to bring me presents."

Misha nodded. "Okay, we'll let them know."

Jensen was still shy, especially around people outside their family, and being the center of attention, receiving presents was something that was too overwhelming for him. That also meant they'd be skipping the birthday song and instead just inhaling their cakes. Which was fine.

"Is it okay if we get you presents and give them to you after everybody's gone?" Jared asked.

Misha tried to keep from laughing at the look of excitement on Jared's face. His husband loved giving gifts, and he was trying to contain himself so he wouldn't look disappointed if Jensen said no, but Misha knew him too well.

"Okay," Jensen said with a nod. "Can I get you presents too?"

"Like a gift exchange?" Misha asked. "We all get each other presents?"

"Uh-huh," Jensen said with a smile. "I wanna do that."

"You got it, sweetie," Misha said.

Jensen's smile didn't fade as he finished eating his breakfast, and Jared couldn't help but wipe at his eyes a few more times. Misha mouthed a quick "love you" to Jared and Jared tickled Misha's leg with his toes under the table.

End