



KISS

L.C. CHASE

Free Short Fiction

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ABOUT KISS

Lead singer for the popular rock band Splinter 7, Heath Ryder loves pushing the boundaries between play and outright sex on stage with his bandmates. Male or female it doesn't matter. It's all in good fun and the crowds eat it up; he's just giving his fans what they want.

But all that changes when his original guitarist takes a nasty spill of a stack of Marshalls, and replacement guitarist, Brett Blackwood joins the band. Brett is aloof, mysterious, and won't play Heath's games, even though he plays with the other musicians. Normally that wouldn't be an issue, but something about Brett calls to Heath and awakens a side of himself he didn't know existed.

Now Heath is on a mission, but is a simple stage kiss enough?

For Julia.

*With thanks and love to my crew:
Alec, M.C., M.J., Thorny, and Will.*

OPENING



“Kiss! Kiss! Kiss!”

The chant reached a fever pitch that threatened to drown out the driving beat of electric guitars and double bass drums, making Heath’s ears ring—even through the protection of industrial-grade earplugs.

His bassist, Kianna, stood closest to him, completely lost in the music with her head down and rocking to the rhythm, long, white-blond hair obscuring most of her face. Between verses he grabbed her by the guitar strap and pulled her in for a raunchy, NC-17 kiss, then picked the song back up on point. But the crowd was rabid and the chanting didn’t die down. He should have known. Club X-Bar had a wild reputation, and was the stage where it had all started for his band, Splinter 7. They always wanted more and Heath was always willing to give it to them. Kissing Kianna had only amped up the sexual haze in the small venue, but it was far from satisfied.

The audience stomped their feet, jumping up and down and making the floor bounce. Rumor had it there were thousands of tennis balls beneath the polished hardwood. Heath often wondered if that was what gave the two-hundred-seat club such amazing acoustics.

Heath grinned. He would never let his fans' demands go unanswered, but he wasn't past making them work for it. He threw a little swing into his step and, still singing, sauntered casually over to the drum riser. He stopped and pointed at Alan, who raised an arm and twirled a drumstick through his fingers, all the while flashing a blinding smile. A mess of jet-black hair was plastered to his forehead, and a glistening sheen of sweat coated his bare tattooed torso. But the audience volume remained the same.

The song launched into its solo and Heath turned his attention toward the two guitarists, Kurt and Brett, who stood back-to-back. Heath pointed with the microphone and the chant became a cheer. So, they wanted to see a little boom-chicka-wow-wow with the guitarists, did they?

Heath's grin morphed into a crooked smile. *I could go for some of that.*

Kurt was facing him, his head tilted back against Brett's, eyes closed, mouth moving in some strange twisting pattern that somehow mimicked his fretwork. Unruly hair spilled over onto Brett's shoulders, and eyeliner ran down his cheeks, making him look like a blond Alice Cooper.

Tipping his head to the side and raising his eyebrows, Heath projected his expression as deep into the audience as possible. He strode toward the guitarists then paused. The discordant chorus increased. Another stride, another pause, another rise in volume. He stopped in front of Kurt and looked to the crowd for guidance. The cacophony of voices collected itself into a unified, crystal clear bidding. "Kiss! Kiss! Kiss!" became "Kiss Brett! Kiss Brett! Kiss Brett!"

Heath smiled. Three months Brett Blackwood had been on tour with the band and Heath had yet to faux-fuck him on

stage. Or even kiss the musician. His smile faltered. Surely he'd at least kissed Brett, hadn't he? He kissed everyone else during their live performances, and more—even the roadies—and he was pretty sure he'd seen Brett kiss the other band members.

Eyes on the crowd, taunting them, Heath reached out and placed his free hand on Kurt's upper thigh. He slid it upward, the smooth leather of the guitarist's pants hot against his palm, and cupped Kurt's crotch. Kurt rocked his hips forward, but didn't lift his head off of Brett's shoulder, and his fingers didn't miss a string. Kurt knew the game. Heath gave the rhythm guitarist's package a squeeze before letting go.

Heath stepped back and raised his arms to the crowd, stirring them up. "You want more?" More cheers and foot stomping met his question. "What do you want?"

The "Kiss Brett" chant started again, so loud he felt the reverberations in his chest.

Heath walked around to stand in front of Brett. "You want me to kiss *him*?"

The chant fell apart and all Heath could hear was white noise, wailing guitars, and the steady backbeat of bass and drums.

Brett's face was mostly obscured by the hood of the thin sleeveless shirt he wore—like he always wore. Heath didn't know what it was with their replacement guitarist, but in the few months Brett had been on tour with them, not once had he seen the man wear anything else. Long sleeves, short sleeves, no sleeves, but always with a hood. It was like the guy bought stock in Quiksilver or something. He didn't even know if Brett had long or short hair, or what color it was, with the way those hoods seemed glued to his head. One thing he did know, however, was the dark intensity with which Brett

glared at him from under the red-accented black hoodie he currently wore.

Heath reached out for Brett, but just before he made contact the guitarist spun around, setting his back to Heath and pressing his shoulder against Kurt's. The two fell into a practiced head-banging rhythm.

What. The fuck.

Every thought in Heath's head vanished, his body froze, and all noise ceased. When his vision started to blur around the edges, he sucked in a ragged breath of air—only then realizing he'd stopped breathing, too—and with it came the world around him, large and loud, blasting him into action.

Heath pressed himself up against Brett's back, snaked an arm around his waist to hold him close, and then rocked his hips into Brett's ass. He humped into him three times before the song's solo ended. Pushing away from the guitarist with deliberate flare, he launched into the song's verse with an aggression he hadn't given the tune in years. The audience seemed placated by the short bump and grind, but Heath was far from satisfied. There would definitely be a talking-to with their newest band member after the show.

VERSE



When Heath arrived in the pressroom for their routine post-concert meet-and-greet with their local fans he immediately zeroed in on Brett . . . who was sequestered in the corner with an attractive, but scantily-clad woman. Flirting. Brett raised those fathomless eyes to meet Heath's just then, his expression hardening for a split second before he focused his attention back on the adoring fan. The dismissal tweaked Heath in a way he couldn't have ever predicted, and refused to identify. All he knew was that the odd tightness in his chest was not a welcome feeling.

"Oh my God, Heath!" The exuberant voice shot a spike into his already abused eardrums, but he managed to swallow back a wince. "You are so gorgeous and I'm like, so in love with you! You're like my favorite singer *ever*."

Heath smiled at the girl. Well, he shouldn't call her a "girl". She was probably in her early twenties, not much younger than him, really. It was her exuberance that made her seem younger. "Thank you." She didn't need to know his gratitude was for giving him a much-needed distraction from puzzling out why Brett's dismissal had tweaked him so much.

She thrust one of his CD jackets at him, along with a pen. "Can I please have your autograph? And a photo?"

“Of course. What’s your name, doll?”

“Jenna.”

He signed the jacket with flourish and then tucked her into his side for the standard “look at me with the rock star!” photo. Just as the flash went off she stood up on her toes and planted a full contact kiss on his lips. Her hand slid into his front pocket and he knew he’d find her phone number in there later. “Call me,” she whispered against his mouth. Then she giggled and wandered off with her friends, tittering away.

He shook his head. The last thing he wanted then was to go home with one of their groupies. He glanced back to the place he’d last seen Brett, but the corner was empty. He scanned the small crowd. Brett was gone, and so was the girl he’d been talking to. *Talking* being a relative term.

“How about some company tonight?” The owner of the deep voice was close enough for breath to ghost over Heath’s neck. He turned and stepped back at the same time. The young man standing before him was just his type. Normally. Slender, tall, long dirty-blond hair, charcoal eyeliner that made gray-blue eyes pop. But nothing stirred inside. Heath wasn’t one to turn down an offer like that—male or female—but the way Brett had been acting, and the way he’d been reacting to Brett lately, had him off kilter.

He gave the man a rueful smile. “Any other night I’d be all over your ass, but tonight is not the night.”

“I can make tonight the night.” The man practically purred, but still Heath’s libido remained dormant.

“Sorry, dude. But if you’re not particular about which band member you bang”—Heath looked around the room and pointed—“you might want to try Alan. He’s a switch-hitter.”

CHORUS



Heath didn't want to think he'd been avoided on purpose, but he couldn't seem to help it. Brett hadn't returned to their tour bus until the wee hours, had gone straight to his bunk and not stirred until they'd reached the next stop on their destination three hours away. He'd slipped out while Heath had been getting breakfast and had been absent all day, showing up just in time for sound check before disappearing again until fifteen minutes to curtain. Not having had an opportunity to speak his piece rankled, but he refused to explore the *why* of it. Sure he messed around with his bandmates on stage, but it wasn't like it meant anything. Just stage antics designed to whip the crowd into a frenzy and give them something to talk about afterward. Plus, it was fun to shock people. He wouldn't be a rock star otherwise. And yes, he sometimes took his groupies up on their offers for a little time between the sheets, regardless of gender. Sex was sex and it was all part of the Heath Ryder persona and Splinter 7 experience. So why he now found his gaze constantly straying to where the man in question was currently blasting out an ear-splitting riff didn't set well.

And then the damn chants started. It didn't seem to matter what city they were in or what venue they played,

at some point during the performance the audience would demand to see them kiss—and more—and tonight was no different.

A growl rose in his voice, giving more power to the lyrics he sang, as he watched Kurt saunter up to Brett and lay a kiss on him that involved a hell of a lot of tongue. A collection of bras, and a few jock straps, made their way to the stage, landing at the feet of the necking guitarists, and electric heat zinged inside Heath's lower abdomen and groin. His leather pants shrunk in relation to his growing hard-on, and when Brett looked up and met Heath's stare, the gleam in his eyes was defiant.

Fuck this.

Heath strutted across the stage, determined glare never wavering from Brett's. Just before he reached the lead guitarist, Brett broke off the kiss and turned his back to Heath. His long legs ate up the stage until he reached the far side, where he climbed up onto a stack of amplifiers. Not once did Brett look back.

Not wanting the audience to think the brush off was deliberate, nor even the slightest trace of disappointment to show on his face, Heath reached out and grabbed Kurt by the back of the neck, pulling him into a short but punishing kiss. Then he stepped up behind Kianna and ground his pelvis into her backside. She turned her head to the side and kissed him while Kurt came up behind him and did a little bump and grind of his own.

Breaking away from them, Heath pulled what was left of his shirt over his head and tossed it into the crowd, which earned another massive roar from the audience. The rough threesome did its job.

A few songs deeper into the set, Brett and Kurt came up on either side of him, guitars dueling, and Heath refused to be dissed yet again. He grabbed a handful of Brett's shirt and tugged him forward, but Brett managed some kind of crafty ninja twist and just like that, Heath was grasping air. In the space of another quick breath, Brett had put ten feet between them. Brett pivoted and shot a killing glare at him, so intense Heath's voice caught in his throat and he missed a couple of words before getting himself back on chorus.

The second the last chord of the last song rang out, Brett was gone. Heath scowled but directed his focus on the people who really wanted to see him. He threw souvenirs into the crowd, thanked his fans for coming, smacked hands, and then after a final bow, exited stage left.

VERSE



When Heath walked into the dressing room, Brett had already changed into a dry shirt—another damned hoodie—thrown on his leather biker jacket and packed up his guitar. He turned and spared Heath a brief icy stare, then looked past him and made for the door.

“You can’t leave before meet-n-greet.” Heath side-stepped to block Brett’s path, not quite sure why he’d felt a panicked need to say something, anything, to keep Brett from leaving.

Brett stopped only a foot away from Heath, but his gaze remained fixed on the door.

“Fully aware of that, thanks.”

They stood close enough that Heath could see flecks of rich brown and gold in Brett’s eyes, and angry sparks shooting in their depths. “What the fuck is your problem, man?”

“Don’t know what you’re talking about.” The flat tone of Brett’s voice grated on already agitated nerves.

“Really? Then what’s with the fucking attitude?” Heath fought back an overwhelming urge to yank the hood from Brett’s head. Instead he just stared at the man, who still looked straight ahead. His whole body thrummed with a tense energy that vibrated the air around them. “We’re putting on a show out there. Playing it up for the crowd. They love the flirting

and making out and shit, but it's just entertainment. Nothing more. So what's your fucking problem?"

Dark eyes slid to meet his and his pulse quickened, the walls in the small room closed tighter around them. "And I have been playing it up. So what's *your* problem?"

Heath opened his mouth but snapped it shut. What could he say that didn't make him sound like a nelly girl, whining about not being picked for a dance at the sock hop? Yes, what *was* his problem? Brett was doing exactly as had been expected of him when he'd joined the band, after their original lead guitarist fell off a stack of Marshalls and shattered his wrist. Make out on stage with his bandmates. Nothing specified that he had to make out with *all* of them—or Heath in particular—but it was his band, dammit. His show.

And why the hell did he care so much that he was the only one Brett *hadn't* made out with? Tightness clawed at his chest again, but with effort he kept his expression indifferent. He hoped.

The light changed in Brett's eyes, they softened for just a second. So fleeting Heath figured it had just been the lights flickering. The corner of Brett's mouth tipped down.

"You just don't get it, do you?" Brett's voice was low, but the tone was somehow . . . pleading.

The way Brett stared at him sent all kinds of sensations running through his body. Things he'd never felt before. Things he wasn't so sure he was comfortable feeling. No, strike that. Things he *knew* he wasn't comfortable feeling. What they did on stage was all an act, and it started and ended there.

"Get what?" The broken whisper of his voice didn't concern him as much as the urge to reach out and pull Brett closer to him, to not just kiss him, but taste him, savor him. His gaze dropped to Brett's mouth, and he licked his lips.

The door flew open, banging loudly against the wall, and they both jumped.

The tiny tornado that was Kianna stormed in. “Time to make nice with your ador—”

Finally Brett tore his gaze from Heath, shook his head and then he was gone.

“What did I just break up?” Kianna walked across the small room and grabbed a bottle of water from the mini fridge in the corner.

“I have no idea.”

“Liar.” Kianna gulped down half the bottle in one shot then wiped her mouth with the back of her hand, her stare firm on his the whole time.

A rush of something that felt suspiciously like guilt flooded hot into his cheeks. *What the hell?*

“Dude’s being a dick,” he said, but the tone of his voice didn’t match the hard words.

Kianna shook her head and tossed the now-empty water bottle toward the trashcan—and missed it by a mile. “You can be so dense.”

“What?” But she’d shouldered past him and left the room before he’d had a chance to pull his jaw up from the ground. “Is everyone around here on drugs?”

CHORUS



Another city, another show. One more song until the encore set. Two weeks since the weird argument Heath had had with Brett, and still he didn't know what was going on. The only thing he knew for sure was that now he was obsessed with kissing Brett. But not just kissing him. He'd been having dreams about the guitarist—naked in his bed, doing things he had no right to be imagining. And still Brett kissed everyone but him. Brett and Kurt even did an erotic bump and grind that had Heath stumbling over his lyrics yet again. Damn the man. And his fucking hoodie.

Brett rubbed against Kianna and looked up, his stare colliding with Heath's. Then he tipped his chin up and turned his back. Baiting him. Again.

Heath watched his hand grab onto the back of Brett's shirt before he'd even realized he'd stormed across the stage. Brett tensed and Heath could feel the man's resistance spiking like a living thing between them. He didn't try to turn Brett around, he just pressed up behind him and growled the lyrics into the mic, into Brett's ear.

It may have been his imagination but he didn't think so. Brett's head dropped back for a heartbeat, rested against his shoulder, relaxed. And then as if realizing he'd let his guard

down, he straightened up and elbowed Heath to push him away. He leveled a dark glare over his shoulder as he walked away.

Half an hour later Heath stood in the middle of the dressing room with his arms crossed over his chest and a fire burning behind his eyes. He didn't have to say anything to the guitarist currently packing up his gear and acting like Heath wasn't even in the room.

A long sigh and finally Brett caved. "Don't play with me on stage, Heath."

Heath dropped his arms to his sides. "Seriously. What the fuck is your problem with me?"

"Just leave it." The hard edge in Brett's voice was a clear warning, but not one Heath cared to pay any heed to. Physically, he and Brett were a match, but he didn't want to pit them together that way. Horizontally, though . . .

"Not until you tell me what the fuck is up your ass. We have four months left on this tour so we need to clear the air right fucking now."

Brett stepped closer, his nostrils flaring and eyes sparking. "It's all just a game to you, isn't it?"

Heath threw his hands up. "Of course it is! That's why it's called a *stage show*."

"Exactly."

"*Exactly* what?"

Brett closed the gap between them another foot. "I don't play with peop—"

"You do! You play with everyone else excep—"

Brett blinked and leaned back. Heat charged up Heath's neck and spread throughout every inch of his body. Voices echoed in the hallway, something crashed, a clock in the room ticked loudly.

“You’re jealous.” But instead of the accusation and ridicule he’d expected to hear in Brett’s voice, it sounded more like . . . shock. Awe.

Yes. “Hell no. I don’t give a fu—”

Kianna with her perfect timing walked into the room. Alan and Kurt on her heels. She looked between them and snorted. “You two at it again?”

“At what?” Kurt and Alan both spoke in the same, eager “ooo, gossip” voice.

“Lovers’ spat.”

Both sets of eyebrows rose. “Really?”

Heath glared at them, daring them to say just one more word. “Shut up.”

When he turned back to Brett, the man was gone.

“Fuck.”

BRIDGE



Tension thrummed through Heath the second he stepped back onto the stage the next night. Encore time. Finally. *This night can't end soon enough.*

Brett stood to his right and watched him from under the veil of a gray and frayed, seen-a-few-too-many-washes hoodie. Alan kicked off the first of three songs in their closing set and the double bass drum reverberated heavily in Heath's chest. Kianna joined in on bass guitar followed by the ear-piercing wails of Kurt and Brett's guitars, and the electric symphony had begun. Heath pushed all thoughts of Brett and what the man was doing to him from his mind, focusing only on the lyrics and the crowd.

But Brett didn't make it easy for him to do his job, what he loved. Where every night up to that point Brett had all but ignored him, now every time he glanced Brett's way the guitarist was watching him. His expression was unreadable, but unnervingly intense just the same.

The crowd began their "Kiss!" chant as if by some psychic cue. Every show. And all because Heath had a thing for kissing anyone within grabbing distance every time the music pounded hard and heavy in his veins. It was some sort of erotic drug and he just needed the connection of another human

being to share it with. He couldn't explain it, but it was only when the music played, only when his band performed. But then along came Brett and Heath wanted to kiss him all the damn time. And not just that. He wanted *him*.

The crowd's chant grew louder, but Heath didn't feel like playing along. Enough was enough. It had all been fun and games when it didn't mean anything, but now that he couldn't kiss the one man he wanted to? It seemed like change was on the horizon for Splinter 7.

Heath turned away from Brett. Turned away from all of his bandmates and walked to the end of the short catwalk into the crowd. He sang out his frustrations. Sang out his anger and confusion. Threw everything inside himself at the crowd, and still they demanded their kiss.

Making a point of no eye contact with anyone, he turned away from the audience and swaggered toward the other end of the stage. The crowd roared, like they knew something he didn't. Probably Brett and Kurt making out again. He frowned; pissed at himself for caring, pissed for being jealous of something he had no right being jealous of. Unable to curb his curiosity—and pissed about that too—he turned to see what the crowd was fussing about just in time to catch Brett charging for him. The expression on the man's face was one of fierce determination and...desire? No, not possible, but the man was clearly on a mission.

Heath's boot caught on a coil of cables and wires just as Brett's body made contact with his, and the two of them went down heavy. The mic fell from Heath's hand and the air raced from his lungs. His back would hurt later, but right now he couldn't feel anything other than shock and arousal.

Brett stared down at him, still playing his solo without having missed a single note. He rocked his hips and Heath

felt the hard length of Brett against his own growing erection. Brett rocked into him again, fingers steady and flawless on the fret board, eyes burning with unabridged lust.

Holy fuck. Brett wanted him. Bad. And Heath wanted him right back. Wanted Brett to take him. His eyes widened. Never had he wanted that, but the thought of Brett inside him, *owning* him . . . He shivered. *Yes*.

Brett seemed to have read his expression, because he smirked, all cocky and knowing, the son of a bitch. Then he leaned down like he was going to kiss him, but just before their mouths met Brett shifted to the side, his breath hot against Heath's ear. "My hotel room."

The command sent another tremor through Heath that blew his mind as much as it aroused him. He'd always been the one in control. People did what he said, not the other way around, but in those three ground out words he wanted nothing more than to completely surrender to Brett. He nodded. Brett grinned before he jumped up and took to the front of the stage. Hands reached toward him like sea grass stretching heavenward for the sun.

It took Heath two more bars before he could pull himself off the ground. He kept his back to the audience and tried to adjust his leather pants to give his hard-on a little more breathing room. Which was another shock. Since when did he have any sense of modesty on stage?

Thank fuck this is the last song.

OUTRO



Heath stood outside Brett's room, nervous as a damn kid on prom night about to get laid for the first time. What the hell? He wasn't sure he liked the way he was feeling where Brett was concerned, but at the same time he craved it—and the craving had been growing harder to resist by the day.

He swallowed a deep breath and held it until his lungs started to complain, then released the pent up air slowly. He smoothed the front of his T-shirt down then dropped his arms deliberately at his sides. Again, what the hell?

Without giving one more thought to what was going to happen inside that room, and how oddly nervous he felt about it, he rapped on the door three times with the knuckle of his middle finger.

The door swung open and before Heath managed to get a single word out, Brett hauled him inside. He slammed the door shut, pinned Heath against it, and wedged a knee between his legs, right under his balls. A rush of adrenaline coursed through his veins at the manhandling and left him both eager for more and confused that he'd enjoyed it so much. No one had *ever* taken charge with him, never even attempted it, but Brett . . . Good God, Brett just ran into the burning building full speed ahead. And Heath wanted

more of that confidence and power to wrap around him, burn him.

Brett leaned in and Heath licked his lips, but just as he'd done on stage, Brett changed course so his mouth brushed against the shell of Heath's ear. "Do you want me?"

Heath nodded, but apparently that wasn't good enough.

"Speak." The dominance in that one word made Heath's knees weak. One more time, *What. The hell?*

"Yes."

Brett leaned back and his dark gaze bore into Heath's eyes. "So, let's get a few things clear here."

Brett released him and walked casually across the room, but Heath couldn't peel himself away from the door to follow. Somehow he'd lost the ability to command his own body to move.

Picking up a glass from the top of a bureau, half-full with a translucent gold-colored liquid, Brett took a drink before turning back to Heath. He raised an eyebrow and nodded toward a chair at the small table. Without question or thought Heath obeyed. He'd think about that later. Or not.

"So here's the deal," Brett began. "I'm attracted to you. I want you. But I don't play games. Sex is real to me and only with someone I care about, who matters to me. Do you understand?"

Riiight. "What about the groupies you always leave with?"

Brett smirked and light glinted in his eyes. "Have you ever *seen* me leave with any?"

Heath opened his mouth to say that he had, just a couple weeks ago even, but the words died on his tongue. He'd seen Brett with groupies but always in a crowd, and then the guitarist would disappear. But no, he'd never actually seen the man leave with them. And Brett never talked about his "scores" like the other guys did.

“Right.” Brett took another swig, and the bob of his Adam’s apple drew Heath’s attention. “As I was saying . . . Do you understand?”

Heath started to nod but cleared his throat, tearing his gaze from Brett’s neck. “Ye-es.” Funny how a single syllable word could break like that, but he didn’t feel embarrassment, only . . . anticipation. Brett could tell him to jump off the balcony into the pool below right now and he’d do it.

“You and me?” Brett motioned between them with his glass, barely one sip left in it. “If we do this it’s not part of the stage show. But if this is just part of the act for you, then you can turn yourself around and march right on out of here. I’ll honor my contract until the tour is over, but you will not fuck with me on stage again. Are we on the same page here?”

Heath just stared at him. *God, he’s hot, all bossy and in charge like that.* And fuck if that didn’t seriously turn him on.

“Can you just shut up and fuck me already?” His eyebrows shot up. No brain-to-mouth control whatsoever. He couldn’t tell if Brett’s did too or not because only his eyes were visible under the brim of yet another hoodie. But Heath did notice those rich brown eyes widen. He was pretty sure he’d meant to say *he* wanted to fuck *Brett*. He hadn’t bottomed since . . . since so long he couldn’t remember, but right now, with this man, it was the only way he could imagine being with him. The only thing he wanted. Except for . . . “And take that *fucking* hoodie off.”

Brett smiled. It was genuine and warm and seemed to color the whole room in a peachy-orange glow, softening everything in it—except Heath’s dick, which was now two seconds from combusting inside his way-too-snug jeans.

Brett placed his glass back on the bureau then moved to stand before him. He reached out and gently traced the line

of Heath's jaw with his thumb, eyes following its exploration. Then he dropped down onto his knees between Heath's legs. Brett's gaze met his but instead of the fire he'd expected to see, he saw uncertainty in their depths. And that vulnerable look tilted everything on its side. Or maybe it righted everything, because in that moment it all became clear to Heath. Brett was right. He was more than a stage act, more than a means to rile up an audience. Brett mattered. To *him*.

Heath cautiously reached out, as if afraid his hand might get smacked away or Brett would run, but Brett remained still. He paused before making contact with the hoodie, and Brett gave an imperceptible nod. Heath pushed the material off of Brett's face, over his head, until gravity took over and it fell back to rest on broad shoulders.

Whatever he'd expected to find hidden under the staple clothing, it hadn't been this.

Brett's hair was brunet and shorn close to his scalp like a high and tight, but without much "high". It wasn't the color or the cut that seemed to make the world around them pause, but the ragged scar on the side of Brett's head where no hair grew at all. The scar looked well healed, which meant that whatever had caused it happened some time ago.

Heath had to clear his throat three times before he could trust his voice to carry words, and still they croaked out. "What happened?"

Brett shrugged and looked down. "Let someone play with me."

Then their gazes met and all those things Heath hadn't wanted to face, hadn't wanted to name, no longer seemed quite so daunting. He slid off the chair and knelt before Brett so they were eye-to-eye. He gently traced the scar with

his fingertips and then cupped the back of Brett's head. The buzzed hair was soft as peach fuzz under his palm.

"I get it now. I do."

Brett searched his eyes and then his entire composure seemed as if it breathed a sigh of relief. He slid one hand around the back of Heath's neck and the other around his waist. Every nerve ending in Heath's body sang hallelujah when Brett pulled their bodies flush and their mouths met for the first time.

In the past Heath would have taken control of the kiss, would have demanded his partner follow his lead, but with Brett he found it . . . refreshing to give that up. As though his own body had been waiting for someone to change the music, and he eagerly fell into the new rhythm.

Brett's lips were warm and soft, moving over his unhurriedly, reverently, and Heath realized then that Brett hadn't been hating on him, but instead had cared too much to "play" on stage. That it would have complicated his life on the tour; cheapened what he felt. And with that understanding came shame, snaking up his spine cold and sharp, for all the times he'd pushed Brett for no other reason than to get a rise out of a few hundred people he would never know beyond a blur of nameless faces under flashing lights.

He gasped, breaking their kiss. "I'm sorry."

Brett shook his head. "Don't go there." His voice was firm, if not a little ragged.

He pressed his mouth back to Heath's preventing him from speaking further, and he didn't argue. He was in Brett's hands now, metaphorically and literally, as those hands slid up underneath his T-shirt, set fire to his skin, and pushed the material up over his head. A hand fisted in his long hair and tugged his head back, and then sensual lips were on his neck.

Kissing, nipping, licking, and his eyelids dropped. Without sight the world narrowed and cocooned around them. Nothing else existed.

Then those lips were gone, and he shivered from the sudden absence of rousing heat. He snapped his eyes open to see Brett sitting back on his heels, watching him intently.

“I can’t wait to see how you look when you come.” The deep timbre of Brett’s voice sent another shiver through Heath, but this time it was from longing.

“Oh, my God . . . Yes.” Heath wasn’t sure if that made sense. Words fell from his mouth but he didn’t hear what they were, and right then he really didn’t care. Not when Brett was looking at him like he was going to swallow him whole—oh, and *that* thought didn’t induce all kinds of erotic images that spiked his pulse even more. Brett stripped off his hoodie to reveal a smooth, nearly hairless chest, defined abs . . . and nipple rings.

Heath couldn’t resist hooking a finger in one of the silver rings and giving it a little tug. The moan that bubbled up Brett’s throat echoed in Heath’s cock. He leaned in to kiss Brett while still playing with the ring, but he needed more contact. Needed to feel skin against skin, and it seemed that Brett did too, because he grabbed him by the arms and guided them backward to the floor with Heath on top, kicking his legs out so Heath could settle between them while their torsos notched perfectly together, and *oh God*, skin and heat and everything perfect.

Brett squeezed a hand between them, working both of their pants open and pushing them down as far as he could, but it wasn’t far enough. Heath lifted his hips and helped, squirming out of his pants using one hand, knees and feet, because the last thing he wanted to do was break their kiss

even for a second. Brett had other ideas, though. He pushed Heath back and lifted his butt off the floor.

“Get these off me.” There was a note of panic in Brett’s voice that Heath felt in his own gut like a spinning cluster of ball bearings. Any second it would break apart and spray buckshot around the room, if they weren’t fast enough. He yanked the jeans down long, toned legs, over feet with the sexiest toes he’d ever seen, and tossed them aside, then he took in the man sprawled before him—from toes to knees to a nest of dark curls that cradled a thick and heavy, mouth-watering cock. He licked his lips.

“Suck me.”

Hell yeah. Don’t have to tell me twice.

Crawling forward on his hands, Heath dropped down to his elbows and took that big dick into his mouth, and it was every bit as delicious as he’d imagined—which he had more times than he could count in the past weeks. Why that didn’t shock him now, when he’d rarely given head . . . People sucked *him* off, *he* topped, *he* was the man in charge always, but here he was on his hands and knees with a mouth full of Brett Blackwood. Damn if that didn’t feel exactly right.

Hands fisted in his hair, holding him still while that beautiful cock slowly pumped deeper into his throat. Heath looked up and met Brett’s stare, his lips were parted and his breath huffed out in harsh, short pants. Heath ached for touch, for relief, but he couldn’t pull his eyes from Brett’s, didn’t want to ever let go of the bittersweet salty lollipop in his mouth.

Except Brett had other ideas. He tugged on Heath’s hair until Heath released the shaft with a pop that echoed in the room. His jaw felt a little sore, but it was one of those “in a good way” kind of aches that he was more than happy to bear.

Brett sat up. “Come up here.”

“Shit, who knew you were such a bossy son of a bitch?”
But Heath smiled as he straddled Brett’s lap.

Brett threaded callused fingers into his hair. “I think you like it.”

“Like I’d ever tell.” Heath settled himself so Brett’s cock rested hot and still wet from his ministrations between his butt cheeks.

“Don’t have to. I can see it all over your face.”

Heath leaned in and tugged Brett’s lower lip into his mouth until Brett opened for him. Tongues met and danced together, heads tilted to deepen the kiss, and then a fire exploded in Heath’s belly. The kiss became an all out battle to devour one another, get deeper inside, taste more, feel more, and *fuck*. For the life of him, Heath could not remember ever kissing like this. He couldn’t get enough, didn’t think he’d ever get enough, and for a brief fleeting second that scared him. It wasn’t just the all-consuming kiss, it was Brett himself who was seducing him into an addiction he’d never be able to give up, even if he wanted to.

Brett released Heath’s hair and cupped his ass, pulling his cheeks apart as Brett slid his cock over sensitive skin, further heightened by desire and anticipation.

“On the table,” Brett said against Heath’s mouth, his voice reedy. “Condom and lube.”

Heath raised an eyebrow and looked over his shoulder. Right there, clear as day at the edge of the table, were two pillow packets. How had he not seen them earlier when he’d been sitting right beside them? Oh, right. Easy answer. He’d been so completely mesmerized by Brett from the second the guitarist opened the door that he hadn’t been able to see anything else. He leaned back to grab the supplies and dropped

them into Brett's waiting hand, then scooted forward to give Brett enough room to suit up.

Their eyes met. Heath wrapped one hand around his cock and placed the palm of the other flat on the middle of Brett's chest; Brett cupped Heath's ass and tapped his cock against it. Light glinted in Brett's deep gaze and a lascivious grin tipped up his mouth on one side. "Have a seat, Ryder."

"Funny man." But he slowly lowered himself. Their smoldering stare remained locked as he accepted Brett fully inside his body. Heat flushed over the surface of his skin and a low growl-like groan scraped over his vocal chords. Brett's eyes darkened, his lips pursed, and the pulse in his neck jumped fast and hard.

"God, you're so tight."

"Feels so . . . good. Please . . ." Heath leaned down and kissed Brett, then rolled his hips forward and wondered why he hadn't bottomed in too long to remember. But he already knew the answer—it was because of the man underneath him he hadn't known he'd been waiting for. "Hard. Fuck me hard."

Brett lifted him a little and pumped up, pulled back, all in, almost out, again and again, quickly setting a steady rhythm. The backbeat was as old as time, but the song was brand new, and Heath knew the music composing between them now was destined to become a classic.

Their bodies strained against each other, skin flushed hot and glistening with sweat, and a harmony of grunts and moans and nonsensical words filled the air, until the song reached its inevitable crescendo.

All it took was Brett's grip on his cock and a few quick strokes to send Heath over the edge, tumbling off the stage only to surf on a sea of waiting hands. A light show played behind his squeezed shut eyelids, his hearing faded and then

the echo of the most incredible music he'd ever heard brought him back to straddling his guitarist on a hotel room floor.

"Oh . . . my god . . ." Heath gulped for air. "That was . . ."

"Mmm . . . yes." Brett ran his fingers through a trail of cum on his stomach then lifted them to Heath's mouth. He sucked them in, tasting himself along with a hint of Brett. "It was." Then he pulled Heath down and this time their kiss was languid, content, and full of promises.

Heath lifted himself off Brett and winced. He'd be feeling that for a while, but he'd enjoy every second of it. Brett tossed the condom in the vicinity of a trashcan and Heath lay down beside him, resting his head on Brett's shoulder while their breathing slowed. "Why didn't we do this on the bed?"

Brett chuckled, twirling a lock of Heath's hair around his index finger. "No idea."

"I've got rug burn on my knees." Heath lifted a leg into the air to reveal an angry patch of red skin on his knee.

"I have rug burn on my shoulders. And probably my ass too, so we're even."

They both laughed then fell into a sated silence. Heath really couldn't think of anything else he'd rather be doing than lying in Brett's arms, and he felt no desire to talk or move.

"Speaking of the bed..." Brett stood up and grabbed Heath's hand, pulling him to his feet. "I feel an encore coming on."

Heath laughed. Hopefully there would be more than one encore at the end of every night from here on out.



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Cover artist by day, romance author by night, L.C. Chase is a hopeless romantic and adventure seeker. After a decade of road tripping on three continents, she now calls the Canadian West Coast home. When not writing tales of beautiful men falling in love, L.C. can be found designing book covers of said beautiful men, reading, drawing, hiking the trails with her goofy four-legged buddy, and ~~giving in to~~ fighting her root beer addiction.

L.C. is an EPIC eBook award finalist for *Long Tall Drink*, and an Ariana eBook Cover Design award finalist.

Find out what else L.C. has in the works on her website, www.lcchase.com, and on her blog, lcchase.blogspot.com.