

"Wait, let me get this straight," Deacon growled at Lang while they picked through an ocean of boxed up ornaments. "Your brother the dick is suing Angel?"

"Don't call West a dick. I just got Zig to stop saying it." Lang rolled his eyes at Deacon's huff of exasperation. "He's not suing Angel, he's trying to get Angel to sell him the bakery so he can develop the property around it. Not something I agree with."

"You going to give West some shit about it? Because if you're not..." The cutting look he got from Lang was worthy of West. "Look, I love you but your brother? He's kind of an asshole."

"West has... issues." Lang sniffed.

"He's an uptight prick who just happens to be hot because he's got your face. That's about the best thing going for him." He teased a smile out of Lang with a slow, simmering kiss. "Okay, so maybe he's a ruthless fuck but he's your brother. I get it. But trying to drive Angel Daniels out? The guy's working his ass off to make a living and West's trying to bury him. Dick move, babe."

"Less about West and more about what we want on the tree." Lang held up a wooden thing painted in garish reds and greens. "What do you think about this?"

"I think it needs to be burned before it lurches upstairs and kills us all in our sleep?" Deacon offered. "What the hell is it? Please don't tell me you made that in shop class or something and I've just insulted you."

"Not mine. My mother. It's supposed to be Father Christmas. I think." He studied the cobbled together blocks, pulling at his lower lip. "Or maybe it was the other one. Crap. I don't remember. God, I'm going to have to take a picture of it and ask her."

"Do you really have to?" Deacon shifted on the couch, edging closer to his husband. "Do you want to?"

Taking Lang's hand, he ran his thumb over the gold band, the twin to the one he wore on his own ring finger. It warmed under his touch, not like Lang's family. They'd not spent a lot of time with the Harrises. Oddly enough, it was Lang's cold-tempered twin brother who'd visited frequently, often ringing his brother up for a quick chat or sending along small presents for their family after a long business trip. For all the shit Deacon gave West, he knew he could count on Lang's twin brother to be there if they needed him.

“Not really. I guess...I’m trying to shove a lot of Christmas into too small of a space? I don’t know if that makes sense, Deke,” Lang confessed. “I think I want to make everything perfect. Maybe too perfect? For Zig. For you. Maybe even for me.”

Deacon pulled Lang against him, looping his arm around his husband’s lithe body. Kissing the back of Lang’s head, he murmured, “Is this where I tell you how family and love is all we need for Christmas?”

“Yes, this is exactly where you say that,” Lang chuckled.

“Well, I can’t. Because Zig’s a kid and for her, Christmas is all about the shiny and she’s a bit of a hoarder.” Deacon joined Lang’s chuckle with one of his own. “Yeah, she needs us to love her and she knows she’s our kid but when it’s all said and done, it’s about toys, food and—”

“Books,” Lang finished. “All of the books.”

“Every book,” he agreed. “And honey, seriously, no matter what she’s given or not given, none of this shit—the tree, the food, the books, any of it—it really is about me, you and Zig. Now, let’s find the prettiest ornaments we can and get this damned thing decorated so we can go to bed.”

“Maybe not all the pretty ones.” Bending forward, Lang pulled the wooden monstrosity out of its spot in the box then smoothed the white cotton thatch sticking out of its chin. “Maybe a couple of the ugly ones too. Just because not everything that’s important is pretty but they are all beautiful.”