



Sample Chapters From

**MORE THAN EVER
(More Book 3)**

Sloan Parker

Chapter One

"Oh God. Just hang on. I'm coming to get you. Just hang on. Please, God."

I awoke with a start, those words still echoing in my head, the feel of the harsh ground and sharp tree limbs still jutting into my back. It took a moment for the soft mattress and warm comforter of our bed to overpower the nightmare.

It was the same dream as the night before.

And the night before that.

I exhaled a long, shattered breath.

I didn't want to think about that dream—or who was featured in it—for one more second. I lifted my head off the pillow to check the clock on the nightstand. 5:00 a.m. Too early for Luke or Richard to get up, but there was no way I was drifting off to sleep again.

Now for the hard part.

The best thing about being in a gay polyamorous relationship? Sleeping between two gorgeous men every night.

The worst thing? Sleeping between two men when I had to get up first. It was hell slipping out of bed without waking either of them.

With my hands propped on the mattress beside me, I shimmied my ass up the bed until I had my back against the headboard, then folded the blankets down as far as I dared. After I had my knees tucked to my chest, Luke shifted beside me.

I paused, waited, making sure he hadn't woken. It took some awkward bending, but I managed to get my feet out from under the blankets one at a time without straining something.

When the three of us had first moved in together, I'd suggested we ditch the top sheet and each sleep under our own blanket so it would be easier for me to get up during the night without disturbing them. Richard had merely grunted out the word *no*, and that was the end of that discussion. He was all about the touching, and each of us under a different blanket would get in the way of that.

Not that I minded one damn bit.

Luke and Richard were the first men I'd met at the Haven who made me feel like I didn't have to hold back, like I could kiss and touch and simply be close to them as much as I wanted without it seeming desperate or needy or clingy. From the very beginning, they'd both loved to stroke and kiss and caress every inch of me as often as they could as if they needed that contact—needed *me*—to survive.

If only they were awake now, distracting me from that dream with their touches, their kisses.

I squeezed my eyes shut and, with my elbows propped on my knees, covered my ears. Such a childish thing to do. As if that could make the words rushing through my head disappear, could make the sound of that voice fade from my memory.

My entire body trembled.

All this time and my reaction to his voice, to that day I'd nearly died, was still so visceral.

Or maybe I was just cold.

Maybe the fresh fruit I'd eaten at dinner hadn't been so fresh.

Maybe... nothing.

I glanced down at Richard. With the bright moonlight seeping in through the bedroom windows, I could see him clearly. He lay on his back, the blankets folded down to just above his groin. One hand was propped on the hard cuts of muscle across his abs. Trixie lay curled up at his hip. His other hand was resting on her side as if he'd fallen asleep in the middle of petting her. His eyes were closed, lips slightly parted. Stubble covered his jawline, a hint of gray in the blond facial hair that hadn't been there when I'd first met him. His eyebrows were lifted ever so slightly, as if being asleep allowed him to relax in a way that his waking hours didn't offer.

I smiled at him. He was always so focused and meticulous, always in control. Except when he slept.

Leaning over him, I brushed the tip of my forefinger along one of those blond brows. Even after all this time, I couldn't believe he was mine, that they both were.

I dropped a soft kiss on his forehead and then carefully turned toward Luke.

His brown hair was a disheveled mess, jutting out all over on the white pillowcase. He wore his hair longer now than when we'd first met. A lot of things about him were different now. He was less guarded and enjoyed life more. He also slept in longer, slept heavier, even without having sex beforehand.

He lay on his side facing me, one hand tucked under his chin, the other resting on my pillow beside the indent where my head had been. I bent over him and pressed my lips to his forehead in the same soft kiss I'd given to Richard, taking in the warmth of him, the masculine scent, wanting to crawl back under the covers and pull them in close until I was wrapped up in them, in their touches.

And their love.

But I didn't want to wake them. Or scare them. If they got up right then, there'd be no hiding the flood of anxiety rushing through me.

That would just freak them out.

It was nothing to worry about.

Nothing.

Reluctantly I turned away from Luke, got on my hands and knees, and carefully crawled down the center of the bed. Trixie lifted her head to watch me, then got up and followed, stopping to lie beside me at the foot of the bed.

Since we'd gotten her several months earlier, she'd grown significantly, but she was still very much a puppy with long legs and giant paws. She had yet to find that balance of agility and speed that looked graceful on other dogs her size. The majority of her coloring pointed to the German shepherd side of her lineage, but her ears were as floppy as they'd been when we'd brought her home.

"Shh," I whispered as I patted her on the head. "Go back to sleep, baby girl." I gave her another stroke and a kiss on the top of her snout, then got moving for the bathroom.

Once I had the door shut behind me, I flipped on the low lights over the bathtub, hoping that wouldn't clue either of my men in on the fact that I was awake this early. Leaning against the closed door, I dropped my head back to the surface behind me and drew in a deep breath. It was the third time that week that I'd had the dream. Nightmare. Memory. I wasn't sure what to call it. I just knew I wanted to be done with it.

I'd tried so hard to move past that part of my life, to leave it all behind.

Yet here I was, engulfed by it once again.

Well, no more. I wasn't letting anger or pain or anxiety run my life. Not today of all days. I had too much at stake.

My meeting later had to go well.

I stood taller. "You can do this."

Wearing only my underwear, I went to stand at the bathroom sink. I cranked on the faucet and splashed my face with cool water, exhaling a long breath as I straightened. Droplets of water dripped from my hair and chin to the sink below. My dark wavy hair was longer than I normally wore it. That, along with the additional curls from the extra length, had me looking eighteen, not twenty-four. I needed to do something about that soon. I'd just been so swamped lately with my college classes and work and everything else.

I shifted back a step and examined myself in the mirror again, trying to imagine how I appeared to other people.

Young. Naive.

Inexperienced.

Maybe someone would see past all that and give me a break.

“Yeah, someone will. It’s just stupid hair.” I laughed at my reflection. “You got this. You can do this.”

But...

What if I fuck it all up?

Racing through everything that could go wrong, I bit at the edge of a thumbnail, then forced myself to stop the habit I’d had since I was a kid. I couldn’t ease the rapid breaths pouring out of my chest, though. If I didn’t knock it off, I’d be hyperventilating before long. I’d probably pass out right there in the bathroom. Richard would walk in later and find me with my ass in the air and my face pressed into the bath mat. Talk about freaking him out. That was all I needed. To scare the hell out of him, give him a heart attack or something.

I couldn’t stand that thought.

I returned to the sink and cranked on the water once more. I scrubbed my face and the back of my neck, then grabbed a hand towel and buried my face in it, trying to slow my erratic breaths.

“Hey.”

That deep voice immediately cut through the unease.

I lifted my head from the towel and there was Richard’s reflection in the mirror, concern evident in those bright green eyes gazing back at me.

When he got a good look at my face, he came forward without delay. Stepping up behind me, he laid his hands on my shoulders and studied me in the mirror. “It’s going to be okay, Matthew.”

I stared back at him, as in awe as I ever was. At forty years old and well over half a foot taller than I, he was one of the most unbelievably gorgeous men I’d ever met. All broad, hard, muscular flesh and focused strength, wearing only a pair of snug black boxer briefs.

He kept those compassionate eyes locked on mine as he circled both thumbs over my shoulder blades, working the knots from my stiff muscles. “You’re going to do great today.”

His words, his touch, they all brought to life a shiver.

I smiled at him in the mirror, then tossed the towel on the counter, spun around, and wrapped my arms around his middle, the side of my head connecting with his bare chest.

With a heavy sigh, as if he’d been dying for me to do that very thing, he enveloped me in those strong arms. “They’d be crazy not to want you.”

“You really think so?”

“I do.”

“Okay. I’ll try not to worry so much.” I wasn’t just referring to my appointment later that day. I was talking about the three of us. I think he got that.

After everything we’d been through together, he knew what I meant.

We continued with the quiet embrace, his warm hand caressing my back. I was so very aware of him. Of his touch. His scent. His heat. His heartbeat.

His hand stilled. “It might help if you talk about it.”

Before I could say anything, Luke staggered through the open bathroom doorway, his eyes half closed. I turned to face him as he squeezed between us and the vanity.

Richard pulled me backward to lean against his chest, and together we watched Luke make his way to the toilet. He didn’t say anything or even acknowledge us. He wrenched up the seat and did his business, all the while his head tipped backward, his eyes closed as if he was falling asleep standing right there with his dick out, pissing in the toilet. When he finished, he tucked himself back into his underwear, stumbled to the sink, and washed his hands.

Richard bent to whisper in my ear. “Do you think he even sees us?”

I laughed. “No.”

Luke lifted his head and squinted into the mirror as he dried his hands. “Very funny. I’m not unconscious.” He chucked the towel aside and spun to face us, resting his ass against the counter, his arms folded across his chest. “What the hell are we doing up so damn early? It’s the weekend.”

“We’re up,” Richard said, “and we’re staying up. I don’t think Matthew’s going to be getting any more sleep until this interview is over. He’s really nervous.”

I sighed and sank back against him. “I’m okay.”

Despite my words, Luke stepped forward, instantly awake. Holding my face, he lifted my head. “You’re gonna do great.” He searched my eyes, then ran his fingers through my hair, studying the movement of his hands as if getting to touch me like that was the most amazing experience of his life. “You have such a good heart, Matthew. Just be yourself, and they’ll be impressed.”

Richard tightened his arms across my chest and kissed the side of my head.

Luke stepped closer. I laid my head on his shoulder as he slid a warm hand tenderly across my upper back.

And just like that, the last of my unease slipped away as they held me. It was always that way with them.

“I really love what I’ve read about this place. It’s different than anything else I’ve applied for.” I lifted my head. “I know it’s only an internship, but I want this so much.”

Luke nodded. “I can see why. Seems like they do good work.”

“Yeah,” Richard said. “They sound right up your alley.”

I figured he also thought it would be dangerous, but he had yet to comment on that aspect of this particular job.

Instead he added, “You went above and beyond with all the studying this past week. You’re ready for this interview.” He turned me to face him. “But no matter what, you’ve accomplished a lot already. You should be proud of yourself.”

I shrugged. “It’s just one year of vet tech school.”

“Don’t belittle that. You worked your ass off, both at your classes and the kennel.” He swept the backs of his fingers over my cheek. “You’re doing an amazing job.”

Without thinking about my actions, I launched myself at him, standing on my toes and circling my arms around his neck in a fierce embrace. I needed him to know how much those words—and the physical contact they’d both offered—meant to me.

When we eventually parted, Richard dropped a quick kiss on my lips. I wanted more than one kiss, but I couldn’t get the words out. Or make a move that would clue him in.

Apparently I didn’t need to say anything. One look in my eyes, and he stepped closer. Cupping my face in his large hand, he kissed me again, more passionately, more deeply this time.

The mix of strength and tenderness in the press of his lips was exhilarating. I wanted more.

He understood. He always did.

He parted his lips and swept his tongue across my lower lip. I whimpered at the contact. In response, he deepened the kiss, tugging me closer, drawing me against his solid body with desperate urgency. His tongue brushed mine, and that was all I needed. I was instantly aroused, aching for him, wanting—*needing*—for us to take things further.

It hadn’t been like this between the three of us for weeks.

Who was I kidding?

Not since that night at my mom’s months earlier.

We’d had sex since then, but it was different. Strained. Restrained even.

Luke’s hands were at my hips, his strong body coming in close to mine again. The feel of both of them against me brought out the raw truth. It always did. The anxiety slammed into me once more. It battled with the desire.

Richard jerked back, his eyes scanning mine. “What do you need to feel better about the interview? You want to do some practice questions? Or forget about it for a while, maybe watch TV to take your mind off everything? Crawl back in the bed and talk?”

I tipped my head forward until I had my forehead pressed to his chest, right over the wide, grim scar from his college days. I blew out a huff of air. “I don’t know.”

He ran his hands up and down my arms. “Why don’t you hit the shower while Luke and

I fix breakfast? We'll indulge ourselves, make chocolate chip pancakes. After we eat, we'll see how you feel, maybe go over the questions you have for them."

"Okay." I raised my head. "That sounds good."

He gave me a last kiss and then went to turn on the shower while Luke got towels out of the cabinet and laid them on the vanity. When they had everything ready for me, they headed for the open doorway.

Luke ticked off items on his fingers. "You make the pancakes, cut the fruit, and start the coffee. I'll set the table."

Richard snorted sarcastically. "Yeah, that sounds fair."

"You're right. That's not going to work." Luke pointed at him. "You should set the table too. I'll just watch that fine ass of yours move around the kitchen." He smacked one of Richard's underwear-clad ass cheeks and took off.

"Hey." Richard hightailed it after him.

I laughed as I watched them go. How the hell did I get so lucky to be a part of them, to be a part of what we all had together?

I would never—*ever*—take that for granted.

I knew part of the reason for the distance between the three of us lately was how busy we'd all been, but the rest of it... I blamed myself for that. They said I shouldn't, but something had changed that night Richard said I'd lied to him about what I wanted in bed, or more precisely, what I didn't want.

I could still hear his wounded voice when he'd said, "*How can I trust that everything I've done to you—every time I've touched you—that it was something you wanted, not something you were doing for me?*"

I also knew neither of them could stop picturing that moment I'd flinched from his touch.

Chapter Two

Showered and dressed, I headed downstairs. One look in the kitchen and I came to a sudden stop in the doorway, the breath catching in my throat.

Even after all this time, seeing them together, spotting any physical contact or intimacy between the two of them, left me spellbound.

Luke stood at the stove, a spatula in hand as he inspected a pancake cooking on the griddle before him. Richard was directly behind him, his arms encircling Luke's waist, his chin resting on Luke's shoulder. He also had his focus on that pancake on the stovetop as if there was nowhere else he'd rather be.

I knew the truth. It wasn't the pancake that captivated Richard.

Both men were still clad in only their underwear. The entire front half of Richard's solid, muscular body was pressed against the back of Luke's, his groin nestled against Luke's ass. Luke had his free arm snaked around behind them, his hand splayed across one of Richard's ass cheeks, holding him close.

Damn, they were beautiful together, obvious passion and devotion and love passing between them as they stood there doing something as mundane as cooking.

Those same emotions washed over me, had me feeling like a part of the moment—a part of them—even from across the room.

Richard turned his head and kissed the side of Luke's neck. In return, Luke raised his arm and laid a hand across Richard's nape. Then they were kissing over Luke's shoulder. A wild, frantic kiss right from the start. Their mouths open, tongues brushing in greeting again and again, the rough, unshaven skin of their chins scraping as they kept the kiss going, Richard slowly, deliberately circling his hips, grinding his body against Luke's ass.

This wasn't their first kiss since they'd come downstairs.

Luke ditched the spatula on the stovetop and spun around, wrapping both arms around Richard's broad shoulders. With that move, Luke's hip hit the handle of the griddle pan, and the entire thing went sliding off the burner and along the front edge of the stovetop. They didn't even notice. They just continued on with that electric kiss, Richard tightening his hold on Luke, pinning him in place against the edge of the stove.

I laughed and started forward.

After rescuing the pan so it didn't fall to the floor or burn one of them, I picked up the spatula and flipped the pancake. It was ruined, the entire surface as black as charcoal. I moved the pan aside and reached around them to click off the burner.

Beside the stove sat two platters, each with a stack of pancakes. One pile looked edible. The other not so much. It was a sloppy mess of charred and uncooked batter that we'd have to throw out.

I laughed again.

Without a moment's hesitation, or a break in their kiss, Richard reached out for me. Wrapping a hand around the back of my neck, he tugged me to him. Only then did he tear himself from Luke's mouth. "Come here."

He brought our mouths together. His lips were warm and wet from the kisses with Luke. He slid his hand around to the side of my neck, then up to cup my cheek, never breaking the contact of our lips as his thumb caressed my skin.

Luke gripped me by the hips and drew me sideways so I stood between them, just how we'd been in the bathroom earlier. Only this time, Luke leaned over my shoulder and ran his lips up the side of Richard's neck, Richard moaning into the kiss. Luke clutched my hips tighter, and Richard tugged me even closer, both of them erotically, blatantly rubbing their bodies against mine, urgency building between us.

Richard kept kissing me, drawing out each swipe of his lips, each brush of his tongue against mine. It was exquisite, beautiful.

When he pulled back, I leaned forward, my body instinctively following his. He gave me

several soft, sweet kisses. Then he went right from my lips back to Luke's, kissing him in the same drawn-out, sensual way he'd been doing with me, still cupping and stroking my cheek as he loved on Luke.

He also ended the kiss in that same tender press of his lips, one chaste kiss after another, on Luke's lower lip, then his upper, then his lower again. He held Luke's gaze for a moment. Then he looked to me. "Thank you."

Luke snorted out a laugh.

I asked, "For what?"

"Not giving up on me. I know I can be a controlling ass who worries too much."

That brought out another sputter of laughter from Luke.

I shook my head. "You're worrying too much about how much you're worrying."

"Oh my God!" Luke tipped his head back. "Are you two trying to kill me here?"

That had all of us laughing.

But I wasn't done with this conversation. I waited until Richard met my stare again. "I'm serious. You don't have to worry so much about doing the right thing or saying the right thing. Every moment doesn't have to be perfect. We just have to talk about stuff when there's an issue, and everything will be fine."

"I know. I'm working on it."

"I am too," I said.

Leaning in, he rested his forehead against mine and let out a long breath. I heard the relief in that exhale. "I could still spend all day kissing you."

"Uh-huh. I want more."

"Me too. Tonight?"

I nodded. "Yeah. Tonight."

We held the stare for a lengthy beat. I knew what specifically we'd be doing before the weekend was up. Or at least, I hoped that was what he'd been implying. It was definitely what I'd meant.

He straightened. "We better eat before the food gets cold. It took us forever to cook the pancakes. Luke kept burning them."

Luke's jaw dropped. "It was hardly my fault. You kept distracting me."

"I certainly did not."

"Well, then your hands and mouth did, whether you wanted them to or not."

"Are you saying I have no control? Because I thought we've established I try to have too much control. You're not making a lot of sense here, Luke." Richard grinned at him. "But you're right." He grasped Luke around the waist and dragged him forward in one swift move, then ground his groin against Luke's in a blatant lust-filled motion like he'd been doing when they'd kissed earlier, only this time they were facing each other.

Richard repeated the action once more, the taut muscles of his ass clenching as he rotated his hips. Then he held still, his body tight against Luke's. "Since the day I met you two, I've had no self-control when it comes to wanting you." He gave Luke a last smoldering kiss. Then he let go of him and reached for the stack of more appetizing pancakes. "Now let's eat, and then we'll go over Matthew's questions for today." He started for the table they'd set earlier, leaving Luke standing there, panting, the bulge under his underwear impossible to miss.

I threw a pointed look at the stretched fabric. "You shouldn't tease him."

"Yeah." He gulped down a hard swallow. "When the fuck will I learn that?" Choking out a laugh, he shook his head, then went for the bowl of fruit and the syrup sitting beside the stove. Before heading to the table, he paused at my side. His blue eyes held a more serious note as he whispered, "Those were some unbelievable kisses."

I ran the tips of two fingers over my lips. "Yeah."

"It was different, like it used to be."

"It was."

"It seems like he's really letting it go."

“It does.” I drew in a frustrated breath but held back on saying more.

Luke turned toward me. “What?”

“Nothing. You’re right. It was great.”

“I told you. He just needed some time.”

“Yeah. I guess so.”

He went to join Richard at the table.

It was hard to admit, even if only to myself, but despite what those kisses had been like, something was still wrong.

Something very wrong.

I just couldn’t get the words out, couldn’t make myself say it to Luke.

There’d been a noticeable difference in both of them since that day several months earlier when I hadn’t exactly been truthful about not wanting Richard to fist me in bed. Despite talking it over on several occasions, Richard admitted that moment still left him feeling uneasy when it came to intimate contact with me. He’d promised me that nothing had changed between us. That we just needed some time, that *he* needed time and distance from that moment.

The one good thing was that he hadn’t altogether stopped touching me. In fact, sometimes he seemed to go out of his way to reach out for me, offer a caress or a kiss. It was like he wouldn’t allow himself to put too much distance between us.

I appreciated that, but...

There was still one moment when everything about his touch—both of their touches—felt wrong: in bed.

I could see it in their eyes, feel it in the brush of their lips, the little hesitations, the clasp of their hands as if they were holding back. They were afraid they’d do something I didn’t want, afraid they’d hurt me.

I had done that to us. By letting them think I wanted something I didn’t, I’d broken a part of us that I’d come to rely on more than I realized.

Which left me aching for more of their touches, for them to grab hold of me and kiss me, touch me, fuck me with that same passionate intensity they’d had since the day I met them, like they couldn’t wait to get inside me and make us both feel so damn good.

I tried repeatedly to show them how much I wanted that—wanted them. I wasn’t sure what else I could do to fix things for us. But I knew there had to be a way, something I’d missed, something I hadn’t tried or said yet.

And I was going to find it.

Because everything was going to be okay between the three of us. More than okay. I wouldn’t accept anything else.

Continued in [More Than Ever \(More Book 3\)](#) by Sloan Parker

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