

HARBORVIEW IMMORTALS EXTRA

Like Fathers, Like Son

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Like Fathers, Like Son A Harborview Immortals Story

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This story contains mild adult content.

July 2008

Xan wasn't sure if the pink spot on his left cheek was the result of an impending zit or due to his repeated poking and prodding in search of any blemish on his otherwise flawless skin. Either way, he decided that it was best to leave it alone for now and check back later to see if anything developed. If so, he would take the necessary steps to vanquish the unwanted intruder, using various washes and creams designed for such a purpose or, in a pinch, using a

dab of vampire blood. The latter was only in case of an emergency, and getting a zit on the night before the biggest party of the year definitely qualified as one.

He turned away from the mirror and exited the bathroom. Then, after accidentally stepping on the sharp edge of a black Lego piece and cursing a blue streak, he plopped down on his old but comfortable bean bag chair. It was normally the spot where he would read comics and manga or play video games, both for hours on end, but tonight he was too excited to do either.

For someone who had never once stepped foot inside any of Harborview's five high schools, Xan Dawson was becoming quite the guy to know among

the older teens of the city. Then again, with his outgoing personality—a rarity for one who had been homeschooled his entire life—and stunning good looks that were courtesy of a biological mother and father he would never know, it was little wonder that everyone wanted a piece of him. Literally, when it came to Ryan Douglas, the seventeen-year-old athletic *and* academic superstar of Harborview High who was, to borrow one of Becky's phrases, sex on legs. He also happened to be the reason for Xan's present excitement.

They met last month, two weeks after Xan's sixteenth birthday, in the gaming area of the city's largest theater. Xan was at the skee-ball machine as usual; it

was a game he had grown remarkably gifted at playing over the many years that his daytime guardian, Luca, escorted him to the movies while his fathers slept. Ryan was playing right beside him, and what started as a mutual respect for the other's skill quickly turned into a competition that attracted the attention of all the other teens in the area who had been looking for ways to waste their money and time before the start of whatever movie they were there to see. Xan won by a scant twenty points, and after using all of his tickets to get a cheap plastic trophy that wasn't worth nearly the amount of money he had spent, he decided to pass up drooling over James McAvoy in *Wanted* to eat greasy

slices of pepperoni and sausage pizza while getting to know his new friend.

And so began his journey into local high school society. Everyone wanted to know more about the charming and mysterious kid who had never graced the school halls with his presence. The fact that Ryan had taken an interest in him only further fueled their fascination. Before Xan knew it, he was being invited to all the places around Harborview where most of the kids spent their summer vacations in lieu of staying home. The mall, the bowling alley, the ice skating rink, even the zoo. His new Facebook account—something he was finally allowed to have now that he was sixteen—was constantly

bombarded with followers and friend requests, and he got so many text messages on a daily basis that he was contemplating changing his phone number.

However, Xan didn't care about any of that. All he cared about was hanging out with Ryan, who was just as much of a geek as Xan underneath the brains and the brawn. Having only ever spent his life around vampires and Luca, Xan was thrilled to have met someone close to his own age who shared a number of his hobbies.

Two nights ago, when a fierce round of *Mario Kart* led to some playful teenaged frolicking all over Ryan's bedroom floor, which then led to some

not-so-playful making out, Xan realized that there were other benefits to this new friendship that he was eager to explore. Benefits that might have been explored at the time if not for a little sister who picked that exact moment to barge in and demand that they attend a tea party alongside esteemed stuffed toy guests.

Benefits that Xan had every intention of exploring tomorrow night at the much-anticipated summer bash for Harborview's upperclassmen.

Despite his newfound popularity, he hadn't expected to be invited to the exclusive gathering because he didn't attend any of the schools in the area. But when Ryan extended the offer with a promising look in his dark brown eyes,

Xan knew that he had to go. And so he would... if he was able to overcome the only possible obstacle in his way.

He had to get permission from his parents.

Surely they would say yes. They almost always said yes to whatever Xan wanted. And as long as he was honest—without being *too* honest—about the types of things one might expect to find at a party attended by a bunch of high schoolers with raging hormones, then they would most likely say yes to this, too.

After half an hour spent staring into space and imagining all the things that two guys could do together—then cringing in disgust when he remembered

that his dads were also two guys—he decided to go ahead and get the asking done. With that out of the way, he would be free to spend the next twenty-four hours wallowing in anticipation. He got up and stepped into the hallway, where the smell of simmering spaghetti sauce hit his nose and made his stomach growl. One of his favorite things about Fridays were the lavish Italian meals that Dominic prepared for him; Xan felt lucky (and occasionally amused) to have a vampire father with such incredible skill in the kitchen.

He found both his fathers in the office, their heads almost touching as they leaned in close to each other and read over the single sheet of paper

between them upon which, Xan presumed, were figures pertaining to one of their two businesses. There was the homeless shelter that was named after Xan, the Dawson House, and their nightclub, the Rising Sun, where Xan planned to work one day. He hadn't yet broke that bit of news to his folks and doubted it would go over well, seeing as how it was a vampires-only establishment. But much like the legion of tattoos he was going to get once he turned eighteen, he knew what he wanted and was fairly positive that he would be able to get it without too much complaint.

“Knock, knock,” he said, lightly tapping on the doorway. He almost hated

to bother them because while the thought of them having sex made his insides shrivel and rot, seeing them together like this always gave him a warm and fuzzy feeling.

“Hey there.” Jacob smiled and waved him in. “I assumed that you would have your nose in one of your anime books until dinner.”

Xan groaned and entered the room. “Why do you call them that? You know it drives me crazy.”

“Because I know it drives you crazy.”

“Thanks, Dad.” Grinning, Xan took a seat in an empty chair in front of the desk. “Speaking of dinner, how much longer will it be? I’m starving.”

“About twenty minutes,” Dominic replied. “Do you think you can make it that long?”

“I’ll try.” Drumming his fingers on the arms of the chair, Xan took a deep breath and continued as casually as he could, “So... I was wondering if it was okay if I went to a party tomorrow night.”

“What kind of party?” Jacob asked. “Will it be chaperoned?”

Xan mulled over how much he wanted to reveal. He decided that broad strokes were the best way to go. “It’s a yearly thing that the high school kids do. To celebrate summer and all of that. And I don’t think there will be a chaperone but most of the people going are

eighteen.”

“Where is this party taking place?”

Dominic asked.

“The Lamonte Hotel.”

When Xan saw them exchange glances, he had a feeling that he was somehow screwed, though not in the way he wanted to be come tomorrow night.

“You mean the Summer Fuck Fling,” Jacob said, sitting back in his chair.

“Wh-What?” Xan sputtered. Not because of the party’s unofficial nickname, which was well-known among the young adults who attended, but because Jacob also knew about it.

“We’ve had a professional relationship with the owners of that hotel for years,” Dominic explained. “We are

well-informed about everything that happens there, including these annual high school events and the illicit activities that take place during them.”

“The sex, the alcohol, the drugs...” Jacob shook his head. “I don’t suppose you were aware of any of that?”

Xan debated feigning ignorance but opted against it. One of the disadvantages to having vampires as parents was that their senses were sharp enough to immediately detect any minor change in his movements, his breathing, even his heartbeat. They would have known in an instant if he was lying.

“I heard some rumors,” he admitted.

“Did you hear the one about the kid who almost overdosed last year?” Jacob

asked.

“No.” Xan actually *hadn't* heard about that but he was hardly surprised considering some of the stories he had been told. “I don’t plan to do any drinking or drugs myself. That’s got to count for something.”

He purposely left off the sex part and could tell by the vampires’ expressions that doing so had not gone unnoticed.

“Alexander...” Dominic began.

Feeling a rejection coming, Xan immediately interrupted with a last-ditch effort to plead his case. “I promise I won’t do anything stupid. Don’t you trust me?”

“Yes, we trust you,” Dominic replied. “That doesn’t mean we trust the

ones you'll be with. That kind of environment is hardly appropriate for you."

Jacob nodded in agreement.

"Besides, you just turned sixteen. You will have plenty of opportunities to attend plenty of parties in the future."

Xan sighed loudly. This was not at all how he had hoped the conversation would go.

"I don't want to go to plenty of parties. I want to go to *this* one."

"We can't let you do that, Alexander," Dominic responded.

"You understand, don't you?" Jacob asked.

But Xan didn't want to understand. He wanted to hook up with Ryan and do

all of the things that he had fantasized about and he didn't want anyone, not even his dads, to get in the way of that.

He could feel irrational anger bubbling to the surface, steamrolling over the small voice of reason within him that knew damn well that Dominic and Jacob had every reason to refuse his request. It wasn't just about being told no, a word he almost never heard from them. As far as Xan was concerned, this party was going to be his best chance to have some alone time with Ryan without little sisters ruining the fun. With his parents' denial, that chance was slipping right through his fingers. And it pissed him off.

“This is so much bullshit,” he

snapped, folding his arms and scowling at the vampires. Their lack of reaction over his use of profanity only agitated him further.

“How so?” Dominic asked calmly.

“You’re holding things that other people have done or might do against me.” Xan stared defiantly at the duo, feeling justified in his explanation. “I don’t think that’s fair.”

“I’m sorry you feel that way, but that doesn’t change our answer,” Jacob stated. “You’re not going.”

In a fit of fury, Xan got up and stormed over to the open door. Then, as if it would have made a difference, he spun around and said, “I could have snuck out or lied to you about where I

was going.”

“You could have, but you’re smarter than that,” Dominic told him.

“Xan.” Jacob scooted forward in his chair, his arms resting on top of the desk. “I know you think that this is a grave injustice, but once you’ve calmed down, you’ll see that we’re only doing what’s best for you. That’s what fathers are supposed to do.”

“You’re not my fucking fathers!”

Xan had wanted a reaction from them, and with those words, he got one. Dominic stared at him with a slightly raised brow that, for one so sparingly expressive, was akin to open astonishment. That was bad enough. But it was the look of shock and dismay and

hurt on Jacob's face that did Xan in. Whatever measure of triumph he thought that getting a rise out of them would give him was immediately negated by a sense of regret unlike anything he had ever felt before.

Suddenly, going to a party seemed like the most insignificant thing in the world.

"I... I didn't mean to say that."

Dominic stood up. "I need to check the sauce."

He rounded the desk and left the office without saying another word.

Xan stared at the vampire's retreating back until he could no longer see him and then turned to face Jacob. "Dad—"

“You should help Luca set the table,” Jacob said quietly.

The teen stood his ground, not wanting to leave but also knowing that no good could come from staying. Neither vampire wanted to talk to him right now, and he could hardly blame them. With an ache in his heart and the sting of tears in his eyes, he slowly made his way into the dining room where Luca was waiting for him with a handful of silverware and a sympathetic look.

“You heard?”

“Not all of it,” the big man answered. “Just the worst of it.”

Xan lowered his head. He was starting to feel physically ill from the shame and revulsion over his childish

behavior.

“I’m an asshole, Luca,” he mumbled. It was not an attempt to solicit pity, but a genuine assessment of his character as he—and Dominic and Jacob, undoubtedly—saw it.

“You’re a teenager,” Luca countered. “Being an asshole comes with the territory every now and then.” When the doorbell sounded, he handed the silverware over to Xan and ruffled his stylishly messy blond hair. “Now chin up. We’ve got company.”

Xan finished setting the table while Luca left to answer the door. He found some comfort in knowing that the older man would never judge him. It was one of the reasons he still had a crush on

him, a lifelong secret he planned to take to the grave.

He was hardly in the mood to be social, but he also didn't want to make a terrible situation even worse. Therefore, he gave his best imitation of a smile when Becky and Demetrio entered the dining room and took turns smothering him with hugs and kisses.

“How's my little Xanadu tonight?” Becky asked as she took a seat at the table.

“I'm good.” Xan saw by the tilt of her head that she didn't believe him but was thankfully spared further interrogation when Jacob arrived to greet their guests. He sat down next to Becky while Demetrio launched into a

highly explicit account of his latest conquest involving another vampire, a bottle of lube, and some very large anal beads.

Jacob rolled his eyes as he poured red wine for the adults and water for Xan. “Come on, Demetrio. Not in front of my kid.”

The statement gave Xan hope. If Jacob was still willing to refer to him as his kid then maybe he didn’t completely hate him after all.

Demetrio winked at his nephew. “I’m sure he won’t be scarred for life by a little anal bead talk.”

“You better not let Dominic hear you talking like that,” Jacob warned him.

“Too late.” Dominic stood in the

dining room doorway with a large serving bowl filled to the brim with spaghetti and meatballs. He glared at his twin brother—his standard way of greeting him. “If you would be so kind as to refrain from sharing tales of your whoredom, it would be greatly appreciated.”

“I’m not a whore, Domenico,” Demetrio insisted. “I prefer to think of myself as a sexual connoisseur.”

Becky snorted into her wine glass while Jacob held a hand to his mouth to hide his grin. Even Xan couldn’t help but crack a hint of a smile at his uncle’s ridiculousness.

As Demetrio and Luca followed Dominic into the kitchen to help with the

rest of the food, the teen risked a glance at Jacob, who was now conversing with Becky. There were no signs of the emotional devastation that Xan had witnessed not even ten minutes ago. Was he imagining what he thought he saw back in the office? Had he overestimated the effect his verbal eruption had on Jacob?

No, that wasn't it. While it would have been easier to believe that his words had rolled off the vampire like water, the truth was that Jacob was simply being a good host. The Friday family dinners were a big to-do in their house, and had been for quite some time. Of course Jacob would see to it that the occasion wasn't ruined because of Xan's

tantrum.

Once everything was in order and everyone was seated around the table, Xan and Luca dug in as the vampires contented themselves with blood. Xan no longer had much of an appetite but he managed to eat just enough not to draw attention to himself while the others chatted about current events and politics. The hot topic of the night was some biracial Senator from Illinois who stood a good chance at becoming President. Jacob, being biracial himself, was especially interested in him and expressed his disappointment that vampires were unable to vote.

After the meal was finished, Xan remained at the table for what he

considered to be an acceptable amount of time before excusing himself to escape to his bedroom. He dutifully said his goodbyes and ran upstairs, then went into his room and—after stepping on that damned Lego piece once again—fell facedown on the bed. He didn't even bother checking his phone for missed calls and messages, which was usually the first thing he did after dinner since cell phones were not allowed at the table. Now that he was alone and no longer had the burden of putting up a brave front, he replayed those appalling words in his head over and over until he was certain that he was going to cry or throw up or, most likely, both.

About twenty minutes later, Xan felt

someone watching him from the doorway. He knew who it was even before the soothing sound of an English accent hit his ears.

“What did you do?”

Xan turned to regard Becky and felt like even more of a jerk. He much preferred her playful insults and endless teasing to the worried countenance he saw now. “I fucked up.”

“How?” She crossed the room and, after nudging his legs out of the way, sat down on the edge of the bed. “Tell me.”

There was no way around it. Xan closed his eyes and swallowed hard. Then he told her everything.

“Xan!” Becky exclaimed in horror when he was finished. “I ought to smack

you silly. It would hardly be the first time, but this time you would deserve it.”

Xan buried his face again. “I know,” he muttered into his pillow.

“Short of calling Jacob the N-word, that is the *worst thing* you could have ever said to either of them.”

Upon hearing Becky liken what he had said to something he would have *never* said, no matter how upset he was, the dam finally broke and the tears came forth. He thought about all of the things his parents had ever done for him, how he wouldn't even be *alive* if not for them, and sobbed even harder into the pillow. Nothing, not even the hand that was now gently stroking his back, could

ease the pain he felt over having acted like such a spoiled and ungrateful shit.

“What will you do now?” Becky asked as she pulled him up and hugged him tightly. “Sit up here and mope for the rest of the night?”

That was precisely what Xan had planned to do because he wasn’t sure if Dominic or Jacob even wanted to look at him, let alone talk to him.

“Come on, love.” She rose from the bed and helped him to his feet. After taking a handkerchief out of her bra—she didn’t carry a purse—she wiped his tears away, her expression stern but loving. “Now you need to go set things right. Like I always say, never let the sun rise on an argument.”

“You don’t say that.”

“Well, I’m saying it now. Here, clean your nose. You’re getting snot all over the place.”

Xan took the offered handkerchief and blew his nose. Afterwards, he shoved the soiled cloth back down the vampire’s low-cut top because he still had an obligation to annoy her.

“Oh, that’s just gross. You’re lucky I love you.” Becky removed the handkerchief and tossed it on top of Xan’s bed. After a moment, she thoughtfully added, “They love you, too. No matter what asinine things you say.”

Xan nodded and ducked his head. A slender finger slid beneath his chin and lifted it back up.

“Never say that again.” Becky’s tone was polite but also dead serious.

“I won’t.” Xan couldn’t promise not to say stupid things from time to time, but as for implying that the two vampires who had taken him in weren’t his fathers? Never again.

They went downstairs. Luca and Demetrio were gone. Dominic and Jacob were nowhere to be found but Xan had a good idea where they were. After Becky punched him on the arm for luck and left, he went to the door that led out to the rear deck. He couldn’t see them yet from where he stood but he knew that they were there.

Xan took a minute to compose himself before moving on. As he drew

closer to the seats that were positioned to look out on Lake Erie, he saw the couple sitting on the patio sofa. He stopped a few feet away from them, his hands curled into fists at his side and his heart racing.

“Your heart sounds like it is about to burst out of your chest,” Dominic said, breaking the silence. “Just like that grotesque alien movie you enjoy so much. What is it called?”

“*Aliens*,” Jacob answered.

“*Aliens*?” Dominic was unimpressed. “That isn’t very original.”

“It gets the point across.”

Xan didn’t know how to process the two of them nonchalantly discussing one of his favorite movies while he was

standing there in the midst of his inner turmoil. Weren't they angry with him?

He spoke up before he lost what little courage he had mustered. "Um... can I talk to you guys for a second? Please?"

"Of course," Dominic replied.

Xan tried not to fidget as they watched him expectantly, waiting for him to continue. "I just wanted to say that I'm really sorry for the way I acted before dinner," he started, studying his bare feet. "And for what I said about the two of you... not being my fathers. I didn't mean it. I would give anything to take it back."

His voice had started to waver by the time he got to the last sentence, and

he bit his quivering lip in an attempt to stave off a fresh round of tears.

Frowning, he steeled himself for whatever might happen next, be it a firm lecture or scolding or whatever unpleasantness would surely ensue.

“We know you’re sorry,” Jacob began.

“And we forgive you,” Dominic concluded.

Xan raised his head and gawked at them. “... You’re not mad at me?”

To the teen’s complete amazement, Jacob chuckled. “You almost sound disappointed.”

“No, but... I don’t know. Don’t you want to yell at me or ground me or *something*?”

“I don’t see any reason for that,” Dominic said. “Besides, I suspect that you’re punishing yourself more than we ever could.”

That was certainly true. They were apparently willing to forgive him without so much as a harsh word, but Xan knew that it was going to be a while before he forgave himself for the way he had behaved.

Jacob scooted over and patted the empty cushion between him and Dominic. Normally, Xan would have balked at joining them because it made him feel like the kid he no longer wanted to be, but he resigned himself to making an exception for tonight. It was the least he could do.

He sat down between them with a drawn-out sigh of relief masquerading as inconvenience. When arms wrapped around him from both sides, he was too delighted to pretend that he hated it.

“It *did* sting a little, the way you lashed out at us,” Jacob admitted. He reached out with his free hand and tugged on one of the four platinum hoops in Xan’s right ear. “But we weren’t mad. We just needed some time to absorb it.”

“Who is the young gentleman?” Dominic asked. “He must be quite the individual to inspire such an outburst.”

Xan grinned. He wasn’t surprised that they had figured it out. “Ryan Douglas.”

“The nerdy jock?” Jacob inquired.

“Yeah.”

“Is he your boyfriend?” Dominic wanted to know.

“No, we’re just friends,” Xan replied with a firm shake of the head. “I don’t want to go out with him. I just want...”

“Sex?” Jacob suggested.

“Ew, Dad!”

“Ew, what? Sex is a perfectly natural thing to want. I want it constantly.”

“Yes he does,” Dominic agreed.

Xan shuddered and let loose a series of gagging noises. “I thought you guys weren’t going to punish me.”

With an evil snicker, Jacob squeezed his son’s shoulder. “Not that I want to think about it, but you will have plenty of

opportunities for *that* in the future, too.”

Xan craned his neck and stared at the crescent moon high above them. It awed him to know that it was the same moon that had shone down on Dominic and Jacob so many centuries ago.

He still wanted Ryan, and if all went well, he would have him. Not tomorrow night, as it turned out. But eventually.

“I guess,” he conceded, putting the matter to rest for now. “So can I hang out here with the two of you or do you want me to go inside so you can get back to whatever you were doing? What *were* you doing, anyway?”

“We were discussing which one of us is responsible for your stubbornness.” Jacob cast an accusatory glance at his

partner. “Dominic thinks it’s my fault.”

“Because it is,” Dominic said.

“What about you?”

“I’m not stubborn.”

Both Jacob and Xan laughed at that.

“I hate to burst your bubble, Domi, but you *are* pretty stubborn.” Xan twirled a lock of the vampire’s long black hair around his fingers—something he hadn’t done since he was a child—and jerked his head toward Jacob. “You just hide it better than this one.”

“He is rather theatrical at times, isn’t he?”

“He sure is.”

Jacob cleared his throat.

Theatrically. “I’m right here, you know.”

Xan smiled as they continued their debate. After adamantly stating their respective opinions, they turned to him for a final answer.

“I think I get it from both of you equally,” he decided. “Like fathers, like son.”

“That works for me,” Jacob said after thinking it over.

“I guess I don’t mind sharing the blame,” Dominic added, nodding.

Xan kissed them both on the cheek. “Good.”

He looked ahead, admiring the tranquility of the lake. His eyes were stinging again, although the tears that threatened this time were happy ones. Xan was thankful that his foolishness

resulted in what he would one day look back on as one of the most perfect moments of his charmed life, sitting there snug between the two vampires. His parents. His fathers.

Because they *were* his fathers. Maybe not by blood, but in every other way that mattered.

Thank you so much for reading *Like Fathers, Like Son*. For more information about the *Harborview Immortals* series, future projects, and random geekery, please follow me at www.emmapetersonwrites.com.