

New Men: Bonds of Brotherhood

By Mario Dell'Olio

Excerpt

One afternoon, Anthony had barely laid his head down on the pillow when he heard a light knock on his door. He got up and opened it. There was a sweaty man, dressed in running shorts and a t-shirt standing before him. Kevin looked enticingly sexy with the smooth shine of sweat gleaming off his muscular legs. *Stop it, Anthony!* he told himself. *You're in Rome, you can't go jumping into bed with every hot seminarian.* At the same time, he reasoned, there was no harm in enjoying the view, and Kevin was one of the best he'd seen since his arrival. It didn't hurt that the two of them had settled into a flirty banter whenever they were alone. Anthony wasn't sure if he was reading him wrong, but he got a charge out of the game.

"Ciao, bello," Anthony said with enthusiasm. "What? No nap today?"

"No, I had to work off all that pasta I've been eating. It's not in my Irish blood like you Italians. I could feel the inches adding to my belly."

"I don't know, your stomach looks pretty flat to me," Anthony replied with a wink. "Did you have a good run?"

"Yeah, but man, it's hot out there. I had no idea that Rome was so humid," Kevin replied breathlessly.

"Yeah, well, that's why I don't do anything athletic. Why should I submit myself to such torture?"

"Because it's almost a natural high, and when you're finished, it feels really great."

"So, I should torture myself so that I'll feel better when I stop? No thanks," Anthony exclaimed. Kevin shook his head and laughed.

“I could use some water,” Kevin said as he walked over to the sink. “Can I use your glass?”

“Help yourself,” Anthony said as Kevin turned away, savoring the vision of his butt outlined in his sweaty running shorts. “Are you sure you don’t want some Bailey’s instead?”

“No thanks, I’m completely dehydrated, maybe later.”

With that, he gulped down a couple of glasses of water and collapsed onto the bed right beside Anthony. Then he picked up a familiar book from the nightstand.

“What’re you reading?”

“Actually, before my eyes got heavy with sleep, I was trying to read the book on spirituality the rector assigned. I can’t believe he gave us homework before classes have even started.”

“Yeah, it really sucks. But I’m pretty far into it. If you want, I can walk you through it,” Kevin offered.

He scooted himself so he was seated right next to Anthony on the narrow twin bed. Their arms and legs were touching with Anthony almost pinned against the wall. Kevin opened the book and held it between them so that Anthony had to lean into him to see it.

“Give me that highlighter,” Kevin said as he proceeded to go page by page, marking relevant passages. “See, this way, you’ll get the main ideas without reading the whole text.”

“Thanks, Kev. You’re the best. How can I thank you for this?”

“Don’t you worry, I’ll figure out some way for you to make it up to me,” he said, putting down the book and squeezing Anthony’s thigh. “Let’s finish the rest later. I need to close my eyes for a minute—and I definitely need a shower.”

“I’m a little tired myself. I was just starting to drift off before you came in,” Anthony replied.

“Want some company?” Kevin asked as he raised his eyebrows suggestively.

“Do you snore?” Anthony asked.

“I don’t know. There’s only one way to find out,” Kevin said as he slid down onto the bed and lay his head back onto Anthony’s pillow. “What do you say we take a nap together?”

“That’s the best offer I’ve gotten since we’ve arrived in Rome,” Anthony responded tentatively. He wasn’t sure if this was an actual invitation or only their playful banter. The seminary code was so difficult to decipher. He scooted himself so that his head was on the pillow right beside Kevin’s.

They were quiet for a moment, and the silence was ripe with possibility. Anthony could hear Kevin’s breathing regulate and relax. He could feel the heat emanating from his body and was awash with desire. As Kevin’s arm rested at his side, his index finger made gentle circles on Anthony’s thigh. It was a simple, affectionate movement, but the atmosphere was charged with sexual tension. Anthony could feel his heart rate quicken as he began to get aroused. Through his thin nylon shorts, he could see that Kevin was as well, but he was afraid to move. The silence seemed to last forever. He knew that he probably shouldn’t, but he was finally overcome by his hunger and took a chance. Anthony said nothing as he turned his face toward Kevin and gently kissed him.

Kevin felt himself give into the warmth of Anthony’s full lips upon his own. The attraction was clearly mutual, and their lust simmered just below the surface. Kevin had wanted this from the moment they met that first day. Everything about him screamed sensuality, and he

wasn't merely taken with his sexy body. Kevin fancied everything about Anthony. And Anthony suddenly felt as if we're not alone as a gay seminarian in Rome.