

# Naked But



“If it wasn’t for straight married men,  
there wouldn’t be a gay sex industry.”

## Naked But.

This book arrived the way most true things do—not by design but by accumulation. Decades of rooms. Decades of men. Decades of questions asked in the particular quiet that follows nakedness, when the performance has stopped and something more honest has taken its place.

I didn’t set out to write it. I set out to keep the door open. The book is what happened when I finally wrote down what I’d seen on the other side.

A word about what this is and isn’t.

It isn’t therapy. Nobody is being healed of anything and I’m not qualified to heal anyone and wouldn’t try. It isn’t self-help, which would require me to believe you need help, which I don’t. It isn’t a manual or a method or a programme with steps and outcomes and a certificate at the end.

It’s an account. Honest, specific, occasionally funny, sometimes explicit in the way that honesty sometimes requires.

Written by a man who has spent sixty years being himself—not always comfortably, not always gracefully, but consistently and without much apology—and who has spent a significant portion of those years sitting with men who were still finding their way to that.

You don't need to find yourself in every page. You don't need to want what the men in these pages want or feel what they feel or arrive at where they arrive. Read it the way you'd listen to someone tell you something true about a world adjacent to yours. Take what's useful. Leave what isn't.

Or take nothing. Just read it.

It's yours. Pass it on if you think someone else needs it.

One more thing.

The “but” in the title is the word this book is about. The hesitation. The qualifier. The thing that has been sitting between a man and himself for longer than he can remember.

Naked *but* ashamed. Naked *but* uncertain. Naked *but* not sure what it means. Naked *but* wondering what happens next.

The book doesn't remove the *but*. It just sits with you while you find out whether you still need it.



I've been doing this long enough to know the man who finds his way here.

He's not broken. He's not in crisis. He's not looking for a therapist or a support group or a careful conversation about his feelings. He's looking for something harder to name—permission, perhaps, or opportunity, or just a private afternoon where the part of himself he keeps most carefully hidden gets to come out and breathe for a while.

He's often fitter than he thinks he is. More attractive than he believes. The problem isn't his body—it's that his body has never had anywhere safe to go.

He's curious about men. Maybe he always has been. Maybe it's new, or newly urgent. He's watched porn and wondered what's real and what isn't, what other men actually do together, what it would feel like to find out.

He has fantasies he's never told anyone—not because they're dark, but because there's never been anyone to tell. He keeps his desires the way you keep something valuable in a drawer you don't open in front of other people. Not shameful exactly. Just private. Just his.

What holds him back is usually the nakedness.

Which is interesting, because the nakedness is also part of what draws him. The idea of it. The freedom of it. He's seen men who inhabit their bodies without apology and felt something that might be envy, might be longing, might be both. He wants that ease. He just doesn't know how to get there from here.

So he arrives. A little terrified, a little excited, full of anticipation and the particular alertness of a man about to do something he's been thinking about for a long time.



I should say something about who I am, because it's not incidental to any of this.

Not a label—I don't have one that fits and I've stopped looking. What I am is a man who has always been comfortable in male bodies, trained early in the arts of sex by men who

knew things and were willing to pass them on, a nudist since before I liked my own body, genuinely curious about men and their desires, which turn out—underneath everything the culture piles on top of them—to be fairly simple.

Sex, in the world I've inhabited, is just something you do. Readily available in the right circles, honest, uncomplicated, no larger meaning required. Anonymous when that suits, intimate when that suits, always just two people in a room who want the same thing and are willing to say so. I didn't construct this world. I just grew up in it and absorbed what it knew.

Which gave me something I only understood the value of when I started spending serious time with men who didn't have it.

Not gay men. Gay men, broadly speaking, already have what I'm describing. They've built entire communities around the ease of male wanting—spaces where desire is straightforward, where the body doesn't have to apologise before it's allowed to feel anything, where another man's body is just a body, interesting and available without metaphysical weight attached. Gay men have rarely needed what I offer because they already live inside a version of it.

The men who find their way here are different. Not straight in the uncomplicated sense—or if they are, something in them has outgrown the available script. Not gay in any self-identified sense. Somewhere between categories, which is an uncomfortable place to live, made more uncomfortable by the fact that the culture doesn't have a comfortable name for it.

What they share is this—a wanting that has nowhere obvious to go. No community built around it. No language that fits without either overstating or understating what it actually is. Just the wanting itself, managed carefully, expressed privately, carried for years sometimes decades with a low-grade patience that looks from the outside like contentment and feels from the inside like something else entirely.

These are not men who are missing out on gay sex. They are men who are missing out on the ease of honest wanting. On a body that doesn't require justification. On the simple animal pleasure of being present in a room with another man without a performance running.

That's what the room offers.

I didn't invent it. I just kept the door open for men who didn't know doors like this existed.

I'm sixty and the door is still open.



Thirty years ago I trained as a remedial masseur. Partly because I recognised something in the men around me—a need to be touched without agenda, to be in a body without managing it, to relax in the full sense of the word rather than just the horizontal one.

Partly because I needed it myself.

Before I offered anything to anyone I did my research. I visited erotic masseurs the way a man visits restaurants before opening one—to understand what existed, what was missing, what could be done better. What I found was dispiriting.

Masseurs who wouldn't work in the nude. Men who charged extra just to be touched. Others who turned clients away—too old, not their type, not worth the effort—with a rudeness that left no ambiguity about where the power sat. Few had social skills. Fewer still seemed genuinely interested in the man in front of them.

I decided to do it differently. Professional rather than sleazy. Honest about what was on offer. Present with whoever arrived, regardless of age, body shape, nationality, or the particular configuration of his desires.

Carl Rogers called it unconditional positive regard—the radical practice of accepting a person as he is rather than as you’d prefer him to be. I adopted it not as a therapeutic principle but as a basic standard of human decency.

I became an erotic masseur because I love exploring men’s bodies. I still love male bodies but I no longer massage them the same way.

That’s the whole of it. No more complicated than that.



I had a business. It was a different kind of business, though not entirely unrelated in what it required of me—presence, patience, a body comfortable being looked at, an honest relationship with male desire.

Over the years, alongside that work and then beyond it, something else kept emerging. Men who wanted something I couldn’t quite name and neither could they. Who stayed longer than the transaction required. Who asked questions that had nothing to do with why they’d come and everything to do with why they’d actually come.

I paid attention. That’s all.

Decades passed. The men kept arriving with the same unspoken cargo—the curiosity, the wanting, the body held at arm’s length from its own life, the question that had been waiting years for the right room. And I kept noticing that

nobody else seemed to be offering what they were circling around. Not in any form I could find. Not with the combination of frankness and ease and genuine interest in men that the thing seemed to require.

So I kept the door open. Widened it slightly. Made it clearer, for the men who were already finding their way there, what they were actually walking into.

It wasn't a plan. It was just what happened when you pay attention long enough to what's needed and are honest enough to provide it.

The need was always there. Submerged, unnamed, carefully managed by the men who felt it. It still is, in most places.

Just not here.

A word about what I claim and don't claim.

I don't have a thesis. Only observations—and observations made from one particular vantage point, which is mine and nobody else's. What I've seen in these rooms is true for the men I've seen it in. Whether it's true for you, whether any of it maps onto your life or your body or your wanting, is something only you can know.

I'm not in the business of telling men what their experience means. That's theirs. Always was.

What I can do is describe what I've witnessed with as much honesty as I can manage and leave the rest where it belongs—with the man reading.



Men reach for different words for what *this* is. None of them fit exactly. All of them fit partially. That's not a problem with the words—it's a problem with the categories, which were built for other things and don't quite stretch to cover this.

Some men call it sex work. Two naked aroused men on a bed, fondling each other—yes, that's what sex work looks like in their experience, and they're not entirely wrong. Twenty-five years as an m2m sex professional taught me most of what I bring to this room. The ease with male bodies, the absence of alarm, the patience, the willingness to be present without agenda. That's not nothing. That's everything, in a way.

What it doesn't reproduce is the transaction. The session with its clean edges, the service rendered, the provider and the recipient. What happens here is reciprocal. Both men are present. Neither is performing for the other. Or rather—one of them arrives performing, and somewhere in the first hour stops, and after that it's just two men in a room being honest with each other.

Some men call it a boyfriend experience. The warmth, the physical ease, the sustained attention of a relationship offered without the relationship's weight. There's something in that too. What develops between two men who meet honestly over time has a quality that a single encounter never produces. It accumulates. It becomes specific. The second session knows things the first one didn't. The third session knows things neither of them did.

It is not a relationship. I don't want it mistaken for one.

Some men call it friendship. Because what they feel in the room is the ease and honesty they associate with their best friendships, combined with a physical closeness most friendships don't include and never will. This is the closest of

the available words. But friendship implies a symmetry—a reciprocal claim on each other’s lives, an account that needs to be kept—that this deliberately doesn’t carry.

A man can vanish for a year and come back to find me exactly as he left me. No explanation required. No absence to account for. He doesn’t owe me the year and I don’t need it. He comes back when he comes back and we pick up where we left off because where we left off is still there, waiting, exactly as he remembered it.

The truth is that this borrows something from each of these things and reproduces none of them exactly.

It is warm without being romantic. Physical without being purely sexual. Ongoing without being a relationship. It involves genuine care without involving obligation.

I’ve never found a better way to say it than that. I’m not sure one exists.



I often leave with more than I arrived with. I’m not sure I can fully account for that. I don’t do very much, in the way that doing is usually measured. I don’t fix anything or guide anyone toward a predetermined destination. I’m simply myself—which turns out, in this context, to be enough. More than enough.

What I seem to have is something I can’t entirely explain and am not sure I could teach. Not the knowledge—that can be passed on. Not the boundaries or the patience or the understanding of how men work when they finally stop performing. Those are learnable. But the particular combination of history and temperament and hard-won indifference to the mirror that makes a man comfortable enough in his own skin to

make another man comfortable in his—I don't know how you arrive at that except by the long route.

I have a finite amount of time. That's the only thing about this work that gives me pause.

Because the need is not finite. The men are everywhere—on the cusp of something, carrying their questions, waiting for a room that doesn't exist yet in their lives. Most of them will never find one. They'll manage, the way men manage, which is to say they'll carry it quietly and competently and at some cost that nobody around them will ever quite see.

The book is for them. Not a substitute for the room—nothing is that. But the next closest thing. A place where a man can read himself clearly, perhaps for the first time, and find that what he reads isn't shameful or strange or in need of correction.

Just a man. With a body. With wants. With questions he deserves to have answered.

That's all. That's enough.



He'll arrive thinking he knows the shape of the afternoon. Most men do. There's a narrative so deeply embedded it runs automatically—arousal, climax, conclusion, done. Everything else is either buildup or aftermath. The actual experience, in this model, lasts about ten minutes. The question he can't answer is what happens in the other hundred and ten.

He'll find out. Not because anyone explains it to him. But because at some point in the first hour he'll stop checking.

That's when it begins.

He doesn't know where to look.

He came in confident enough—handshake, a joke about the traffic, the performance of a man who has decided he can handle this. Now he's sitting on the edge of the chair with his coat still on and his eyes finding the window, the floor, the middle distance. Anywhere that isn't me.

I take my clothes off.

Not slowly, not ceremonially. Just the way you do when you're getting changed. Shirt, trousers, everything. And then I don't sit back down. I move around. Stand by the window. Bend to pick something up. Make coffee. The ordinary things a person does in a room, except without clothes.

I let him look wherever he wants to look—and after a moment or two, he does. Openly, the way men rarely let themselves look at another man's body. And then, almost always, some version of the same comment.

*You seem very comfortable.*

Not quite a compliment. Not quite a question. Somewhere between admiration and confusion, as if comfort in a male body is a phenomenon that requires explanation. Which, for most of the men I've worked with, it does.

He stays dressed. That's fine. There's no hurry and no requirement. I might be the only naked man in the room for the next thirty minutes, or the whole session. It happens.

A man can get a great deal from simply being in the presence of a body that isn't performing, isn't apologising, isn't sucking anything in. Sometimes that's enough for one day. Sometimes that's enough for several.



When he does undress—if he undresses—he usually does it quickly, like jumping into cold water. The decision made, then done before he can think about it again.

And then the thing that nobody warns him about.

He's aroused. Not necessarily fully, not necessarily for long, but enough that he knows it and assumes I don't. He angles away. Sits down sooner than he needs to. Finds something to hold. The strategies are different but the impulse is the same—to manage, to conceal, to get through this particular moment without it being acknowledged.

I may be aroused too. I don't hide it. Not because I'm making a point, but because hiding it would be its own kind of performance, and we've had enough of those already. If he notices—and he does—something in the room changes. Not into something sexual. Into something more honest. Two men in a room, bodies doing what bodies do, nobody pretending otherwise.

I don't draw attention to his embarrassment. I don't name it or reframe it or offer reassurance. If he wants to talk about it he will, and some men do, often with a laugh that's only partly a laugh. But mostly I just let it pass through the room like weather. In my experience that's what it needs—not attention, but space. The embarrassment is looking for a reaction to feed on. When it doesn't find one it tends to get bored and leave.

He relaxes. Gradually, unevenly, sometimes with a setback. But he relaxes.

After a while we sit down together. Usually the sofa. Close enough to be companionable, not so close as to be pointed. And we talk about nothing in particular. The weather. The news. How long the journey took. The kind of conversation men have been having forever to fill space while something else is happening underneath it.

He's still looking. Not the open curious gaze from earlier—that was the first surprise of me, and it's passed. This is more careful. Covert. The eyes moving and then returning, moving and returning, like a man trying to read something over someone's shoulder without being caught. There's something specific he wants to see more closely. I usually know what it is before he does, or at least before he's decided whether he's allowed to want it.

So I ask.

Not as an offer exactly. More as an observation. *Do you want a closer look?* And the relief on his face is something I've seen enough times now that it no longer surprises me, though it still interests me. The relief of having been seen wanting something. Of not having to pretend the wanting wasn't there.

It's usually my cock or my bum. Sometimes both. He'll look, sometimes from inches away, with a concentration that has nothing erotic in it by this point—or not only that. It's closer to the way a person looks at something they've been told is dangerous and have discovered is just a thing. Just a body. Just flesh arranged in a particular way that turns out, on close inspection, to be neither remarkable nor shameful.

Just a man. Looked at by another man. Both of them still breathing.



Whether he wants to be looked at is harder to say. He's naked and we're close and so he is seen whether or not he's ready for it. But he may not feel it.

By this point his attention has turned inward—to his own body, his own responses, the fact of himself sitting unclothed on a sofa next to another man, which is not a situation he has been in before and which is producing feelings he doesn't yet have words for.

What I notice is a particular quality of stillness. Not relaxation exactly. More like a man taking stock. Running some internal inventory he didn't know he needed to run.

And underneath that, a question he hasn't asked yet. You can feel it in the room the way you can feel a word someone is about to say. He's trying to work out how permissive this is. What's available. What the edges are. Not because he wants to transgress them necessarily, but because he's a man and men like to know the shape of a space before they settle into it.

So I notice and I ask. Not *what do you want*—that's too large and too loaded. Something smaller. Something that opens a door without pushing him through it.

And sometimes what follows is a conversation about intimacy itself. What the word actually means to him. Because most men, when they try to locate it, find it in sex—which means they've experienced very little of it, and they know it, and that knowledge sits in them like a stone.

This is intimate. Two men, naked, close, honest. No agenda beyond presence. And it has nothing to do with sex, except that sex is the only container most men have ever been given for this kind of closeness, which is most of the problem, and possibly why he's here.

The question of touching comes up the way the other questions have—not asked directly, not at first. It’s there in the way he shifts slightly closer, or lets his eyes rest on my arm or shoulder a moment longer than looking requires. The question underneath the question is always the same: *is this allowed, and if it is, what does that make me?*

So I make it easier. I ask.

And what comes out, when it does, is sometimes surprising in its simplicity. Not anything elaborate or charged. He wants to know if he can touch me. Or whether we might hug.

Just that. A hug.

The word lands in the room with a weight that tells you everything about how long it’s been, how much he’s missed it without knowing that missing it was permitted. No one hugs him.

He says it almost as an aside, the way men mention the things that hurt most—briefly, without eye contact, already moving on before you’ve had time to respond.

We hug. Or I take his hand, or I let him put a hand on my back, or we sit with our shoulders touching. Whatever is asked for and feels right in the moment. Because the visual is only one sense and the body knows this even when the mind has forgotten it.

Touch is grounding in a way that looking isn’t—it confirms that something is real, that you are real, that another person is genuinely present with you rather than simply near you.

And men are so starved of it.

Not of sex. Of this. Of contact that isn't transactional, isn't building toward something, doesn't require anything in return. The kind of touch that says *you are here and that is enough*. Most men haven't been touched that way since childhood, if then. Some not even then.

He wants to know what else might be possible. Not sexually—he's understood by now that sex isn't what this is, and most men arrive at that understanding more easily than you'd expect once the anxiety settles. What he's asking is something harder to name. Whether there are other ways to be close. Other ways to be known by another person through the body rather than around it.

We talk about what intimacy actually is. It's a word that has been so thoroughly colonised by sex that men can barely use it to mean anything else, which is a quiet kind of poverty. Intimacy is just this—being known, being present, being in contact with another person without a performance running. It can happen in a conversation. In a long silence. In the fact of two people sitting without clothes on a sofa talking about nothing, which turns out to be talking about everything.

He's trying on a different idea of himself. A man who can be close to another person without it meaning something he's not ready for it to mean. A man whose body can be present in a room without apology or agenda. It's not a transformation. It's more like a memory of something he didn't know he'd forgotten.



Something loosens.

It doesn't happen at a particular moment you could point to afterward. It's cumulative—the nakedness, the touch, the

permission to look and be looked at, the absence of judgment about any of it. Something that has been held for a long time, held so long the man has forgotten he's holding it, begins to come loose.

And then he starts to talk.

Not about what's in the room. About what's been in his head. Sometimes for years. Sometimes for decades. The questions he has never said out loud because there was never a person, never a context, never a moment that felt safe enough and unsurprised enough to receive them.

The thoughts that loop at three in the morning. The thing he did once that he's never told anyone. The fantasy that frightens him a little, not because it's dangerous but because he doesn't know what it means about him, and he's never been able to ask.

He asks now.

Sometimes it comes out almost formally, like a man who has rehearsed the sentence many times and is finally using it. Sometimes it arrives sideways, attached to something else, so that you have to hear what's underneath it rather than what's on top.

Sometimes it comes out wrong—clumsily, too bluntly, in language that doesn't quite fit the thing he's trying to say—because he's never had to find words for it before and the words don't come ready-made.

I listen. I answer when I can. Not as a therapist parsing his history, not as an educator delivering information, but as a man who has spent a long time around male sexuality in all its complexity and has very little left to be shocked by, which turns out to be exactly what he needs. Not reassurance. Not reframing. Just an honest answer from someone who isn't frightened of the question.

The questions are rarely what you might expect. Or rather, they are and they aren't. There are the obvious ones—about his body, about what's normal, about size and function and whether what he experiences is experienced by other men. Those come early, still wearing their embarrassment. But underneath those, given enough time and enough of whatever this afternoon has created, come the others.

Whether it means something that he finds certain men attractive, or certain situations, or certain things he can't quite categorise. Whether the fantasy he returns to makes him a particular kind of person. Whether the thing that happened when he was younger shaped him in ways he can't undo. Whether other men feel as disconnected from their bodies as he does, as lonely inside them, as uncertain about what they're for beyond function.

These are not small questions. They are the questions a man can spend his whole life not asking, filling the silence with work and noise and the performance of having it together. And here, in this room, with no clothes on, having been touched and seen and not found wanting, he finally asks them.

I don't always have answers. But I have this—I have sat with enough men in enough rooms to know that the asking itself is most of it. That the question spoken out loud is already a different thing from the question circling silently in the dark. That a man who has finally said the thing he thought was unsayable tends to look, afterward, like a man who has put down something heavy.

Not transformed. Just lighter. Just more himself than he was when he arrived.



There is something these men need that precedes everything else in the room.

To know that what happens here stays here. Not as a policy, not as a contractual assurance, not as the professional confidentiality of a therapist bound by obligation. Just as a fact about the person they're dealing with.

*I have many friends, one man said, but they're not the kind of people I could talk to about my gay fantasies.*

It's a common observation. Possibly the most common. These are men with full lives—relationships, careers, social circles, communities built over decades. Men who are liked, trusted, relied upon. Men who have everything except somewhere to put this particular part of themselves.

Their secret lives need to stay compartmentalised. Not because they're ashamed exactly—or not only that. Because the architecture of everything they've built depends on certain walls remaining in place.

Some of them frame it lightly—*just a bit of fun with a bloke, like going to the shed*. The lightness is protective. It keeps the experience from having to mean anything that would complicate the life surrounding it.

I don't require it to mean anything. I don't require anything.

I learned discretion before I learned most things.

Not professionally—that came later and confirmed what was already formed. I was born into a world where certain things were simply not said. Not because they weren't known—they

were always known—but because the architecture of that world depended on the unsaid remaining unsaid. You learned this the way you learned everything in those circles.

Not by instruction but by atmosphere. By the quality of silence that followed certain subjects. By understanding, early and without being told, that knowledge and its expression were entirely separate things.

I walked away from that world. From the class and its aspirations and the particular constraints of a life lived inside its expectations. That was its own kind of secret for a while—the man who was supposed to become one thing becoming several other things instead, none of them on the original list.

But the discretion came with me. It's not something you leave behind: it's too deeply formed for that.

What it means practically is this. The men who come here on Sundays exist nowhere outside their own lives and this room. Nothing is shared, nothing is stored, nothing becomes a story I tell to illustrate a point. Their names, their faces, their questions, their wants, the things they said in the particular quiet that follows nakedness—all of it stays where it belongs.

I don't say this as reassurance. Reassurance implies the possibility of the alternative. There is no alternative. This is simply how I am.

A man trained from childhood in the architecture of the unsaid knows better than most that some things are not his to use.

The men who come here figure this out quickly. It's in the room before either of us has spoken. Just part of what this is.

They came to put something down somewhere safe.

This is safe.



I am tall, slim, smooth skinned. Blue eyes. A former catwalk model, which sounds more glamorous than it was and taught me less about my body than the years that followed it.

I don't trust the mirror. Never entirely have. What it shows me is not quite what others see—I learned that early, in rooms not unlike this one, when it became clear that my own assessment of myself was among the least reliable available.

Some men find me attractive. Some do not. Both are looking at the same body and seeing something different and neither of them is seeing me, exactly. Just their own version of me, which is all any of us ever sees of anyone.

What I have is not confidence in how I look. It's something quieter than that. An indifference to the mirror's verdict that took years to arrive at and feels, now, like the most useful thing I own.

It's what I notice most in the men who come here. Not the ones who dislike their bodies—that's almost everyone, at least at first. But the ones who are waiting for the mirror to change before they can begin. Who have made their own comfort conditional on a reflection that will never quite cooperate.

The mirror doesn't have to be trusted. It just has to stop mattering so much.

That takes longer for some men than others. But it's remarkable how quickly it can happen when someone else is looking at you without an agenda and finding nothing wrong.



What I haven't said yet, and should, is that it's funny.

Not occasionally, not as relief from the serious parts. Consistently, warmly, sometimes helplessly funny. Two men without clothes on trying to remember the words to a song, or arguing about something completely inconsequential, or one of them walking into a doorframe because he was looking somewhere else. Bodies are inherently comic. Men who have forgotten that about their bodies are men who have been taking them far too seriously for far too long.

Pleasure is a faster road to relaxation than any amount of careful processing. I've known that for thirty years of teaching men and the sessions confirm it every time. A man who is laughing is a man who has stopped monitoring himself. His shoulders drop. His voice changes. He takes up more space.

We might dance. Not formally, not as exercise, just because music is on and bodies want to move and there's no one here to perform for so why not. Two naked men dancing badly in a living room is one of the more purely joyful things I can think of. Or we move around each other—not choreographed, not therapeutic, just the natural physical looseness of people who have stopped being careful. A hand on a shoulder. Bumping into each other and laughing about it. The easy animal pleasure of being in a body that isn't under surveillance.

From the outside, if you could see it, you might expect something solemn. Two men sitting in careful silence working through something heavy. And yes, the heavy things are there—the questions, the release, the long-held shame finally getting some air. But that's not the texture of it.

The texture of it is warmth and noise and movement and laughter and the specific cheerfulness of men who have temporarily stopped pretending.

It's the best fun. That's not incidental to what this is. It might be the whole point.



Not every man who comes here is looking for what he thinks he's looking for.

Some are. Some arrive with a want so specific and so long-held that the afternoon is simply the occasion for it—the right room, the right person, the right permission. They know what they came for and they leave having had it and the look on their face afterward is the straightforward satisfaction of a question finally answered.

But some men come out of curiosity. Not desire exactly—or not only that. More the particular restlessness of a man who has wondered about something for long enough that the wondering has become its own kind of weight. What would it be like. What does it mean that I think about it. What kind of man does that make me.

These are not men with problems. They are men with questions.

And there's a difference, which matters enormously and which most of the available culture gets completely wrong. A problem requires a solution—something to be fixed, resolved, moved past. A question just requires an answer. Which may be yes, or no, or something more complicated than either, or simply: now I know.

I've had men thank me at the end of a session because the experience proved it wasn't what they wanted. Enjoyable, they

said—sometimes genuinely, sometimes politely—but not what they needed more of. Not the thing. And they left lighter than they arrived, not because something had been given to them but because something had been resolved. The question that had been quietly using up energy for years had been met honestly and had answered itself.

That's not a failed afternoon. That's exactly what the afternoon was for.

What placed these men outside their ordinary lives in the first place was the curiosity itself. A man whose wanting runs in this direction—even briefly, even uncertainly, even just as a question he can't quite dismiss—has already stepped, in some private internal way, outside the default script. Not dramatically. Not publicly. Just in the small hours, just in the part of himself he doesn't show anyone. And that step, however small, can feel like it means something permanent and defining about who he is.

It doesn't have to.

Curiosity is not identity. Wanting to know something is not the same as being something. The question doesn't determine the answer and the answer doesn't determine the man.

He came to find out. He found out. That's all it needs to be.



I should say something about age. Not as reassurance—I'm not in the business of reassurance—but as a correction of something that gets repeated so often it has acquired the status of fact.

My oldest regular client was ninety-two. He was still coming to see me at ninety-five. Still curious, still present, still perfectly capable of the full range of what the afternoon offered. He was not unusual among the men I've worked with—merely the furthest point on a curve that extended well into the eighties for many of them.

Statistics mislead. Not intentionally, not maliciously, but effectively. The average becomes the expectation. The median becomes the ceiling. A man reads that sexual activity declines significantly after sixty and files it away as a fact about his future, not a fact about a sample, and adjusts his expectations accordingly.

The less you expect the less you pursue. The less you pursue the less you find. The statistic becomes self-fulfilling.

My brother told me sex ended at fifty. He was reporting his own experience as though it were a law of nature. He was fifty-something, faithful, married, the less you get the less you get—and he had arrived, without drama, at a place where wanting had become so quiet he could no longer hear it. He assumed everyone had.

They hadn't.

What ends, for most men, is not the capacity. Not the wanting. Not the body's ability to feel pleasure or sustain arousal or arrive, given time and attention, at something worth having. What ends is the opportunity. The context. The person in the same room who is honest and present and genuinely interested.

Remove those obstacles—which is all I do, really, remove the obstacles—and you find men in their eighties who have more to say about pleasure and curiosity and the body's surprising persistence than most men half their age.

The ninety-two year old was not a miracle. He was just a man who had never quite accepted the story he'd been told about when it was supposed to be over.

He was right not to.



I understand sexless marriages.

Not as a failure of love or commitment or even desire. As a structural outcome. Something that happens gradually, without decision, to two people who are otherwise doing everything right.

She's tired. Not as excuse—as fact. The children, the work, the maintenance of an entire life. The body that was once primarily hers becomes primarily functional in a different way—used up by the day before the night begins. Sex requires energy and attention and a particular quality of presence that exhaustion makes genuinely unavailable. This isn't rejection. It's arithmetic.

And he—faithful, patient, unwilling to betray what they've built—waits. Not dramatically. Just waits, the way you wait for weather to change, and the waiting becomes the condition and the condition becomes the marriage and somewhere in there the wanting goes underground the way wanting does when it has nowhere to go.

The less you get the less you get. Not just physically—though that's real, the body finding its own level, recalibrating downward until a man in his fifties genuinely believes that what he has is what's available. But intimately too. The less you are touched the less you expect to be touched. The less you expect

the less you ask. The less you ask the less you know what you'd ask for if you could.

And then there's the community.

A man doesn't just marry a woman. He marries a life—a set of relationships, obligations, social coordinates that organise everything from Sunday afternoons to how he's perceived at work. The marriage is the keystone of an entire architecture. Pull it and everything shifts.

Which means the man with odd sexual proclivities—and I use the word odd only in the sense of outside the expected, not deviant, not wrong, just not what the architecture was designed to accommodate—has nowhere to put them.

Not because he's ashamed exactly, though shame is usually present. But because the question *who am I going to tell* has no good answer. Not his wife, for reasons too numerous and too tender to list. Not his friends, who are also his community, which is also his marriage's community. Not his colleagues. Not his brother.

My brother told me once that I'd have to stop sex work after fifty. That was the age men stopped having sex. He said it with the casual certainty of a man stating something obvious—not advice exactly, just the way things were.

He was telling me about himself. About his own marriage, his own recalibration, the level his wanting had found after years of the less you get the less you get. He had no idea that's what he was doing. He thought he was describing a biological fact.

I didn't argue. But I thought about the men who had sat on my sofa that year. Men in their fifties, sixties, seventies. Men who had been told, by the accumulated weight of their lives if not in so many words, that this part of them was over. Who arrived not knowing whether what they felt was normal or

aberrant or simply embarrassing, and left knowing that their brother had been wrong about them, even if their brother had been right about himself.

Sex doesn't end at fifty. Wanting doesn't end at fifty. What ends, sometimes, is the opportunity. The context. The person willing to be honest in the same room.

That's all that ends.



Let me tell you about surprise.

Not his—though there was plenty of that, and I've described enough of it already. Mine.

I've been doing this long enough that very little catches me off guard. Men's wanting, men's questions, men's capacity for both tenderness and awkwardness in the same afternoon—none of that surprises me anymore. I've made a kind of peace with the full range of it.

But occasionally something stops me.

A man—not young, not inexperienced in the way the world measures experience—lying on the bed while I ran a hand lightly across his chest. A small involuntary sound. Then stillness, the particular stillness of a man who has just felt something he didn't know he could feel.

His nipples were sensitive. He hadn't known.

I didn't say anything immediately. Just noted it, the way you note something that requires a moment to absorb. Then I moved lower. The inner thigh. The shift in his breathing. Then,

carefully, the testicles—and the look on his face of a man receiving entirely unexpected news about himself.

He hadn't known those were sensitive either.

He had lived in this body for the better part of five decades. He had had sex, relationships, a marriage. He had a body beyond his penis—had always had one, had been carrying it around all this time—and had never once explored it. Never been curious about it. Never had a reason or a context or a person willing to show him that there was more to find than the part he already knew about.

*How could you not know?* I thought. Not unkindly. Just—genuinely. The way you might wonder how someone has never tasted a particular food, never heard a piece of music, never stood in front of a painting that stops you in your tracks. How does a person move through a life and miss this?

But I knew the answer before I'd finished thinking the question.

Because nobody told him. Because the script he'd been given—sex as a focused, goal-oriented, time-limited event organised around a single outcome—left no room for wandering. For curiosity. For the slow discovery of a body as territory worth exploring rather than equipment to be operated.

He hadn't been negligent. He'd been faithful to the only map he'd ever been given.

It just turned out the map was almost entirely blank.



Men say things in these rooms that stay with me.

Not the questions, though those are often remarkable. Not the confessions or the fantasies or the things finally said out loud after years of careful silence. The things that stay with me are simpler than any of that.

*I wish my wife could do what you do.*

I've heard versions of this more times than I can count. And I've learned to hear what's underneath it, which is not a criticism of the wife. Not really.

It's the sound of a man becoming dimly aware that somewhere between the wedding and now, sex became a procedure. Familiar, functional, negotiated without words into something that meets a need without particularly expanding it. Neither of them planned this. Both of them consented to it, gradually, in the way you consent to things that happen slowly and without announcement.

His wife isn't doing anything wrong. She's following the same map he is. It's just that the map, it turns out, was drawn a long time ago by people who left most of the territory blank.

*I never realised I could last so long.*

This one stops me every time. A man who has had sex for decades—hundreds of times, thousands maybe—discovering in an afternoon that the duration he'd always known wasn't a physical fact about himself. It was just the container he'd always used. His body was capable of something else entirely. It had always been capable of something else entirely. There was simply never a context in which he could have found that out.

*I didn't know I could blow four times in three hours.*

Said with the particular wonder of a man who has just discovered a room in his own house he didn't know existed.

Not a room that was hidden. Just one he'd never had reason or occasion or permission to enter.

Four times in three hours is not a performance. It's not even unusual, given time and attention and the willingness to stay in pleasure rather than rush through it to its conclusion. What's unusual is that most men never find out. The script ends at one and they fold the map and put it away and that's that.

Edging—the practice of extending pleasure by deferring conclusion, staying at the edge of climax rather than crossing it, learning the body as territory rather than a machine with an on and off switch—has acquired a name now and a following and a thousand online tutorials.

Most of them miss the point: it isn't technique. It's time.

The radical proposition that your body is worth staying in. That pleasure is worth inhabiting rather than concluding. That the thirty seconds most men have always allowed themselves was never a physical limitation.

It was just the only story they'd been told.

I am, if I'm honest, something of a grandmaster at this. Not a boast—just a fact, the way it's a fact that I'm tall or that the mirror has been wrong about me for sixty years. It's a thing I know how to do and have spent a long time knowing how to do and have watched change men's understanding of their own bodies more reliably than almost anything else I've offered.

Because it's not about sex. It's about time. About a man in a body that turns out, given half a chance, to be a far more interesting place than he knew.



There are men who arrive already knowing what they want. They've known for years, possibly decades. The wanting has been there so long it's become part of the furniture of their inner life—present, unexamined, never acted on.

Not because the want is wrong or dangerous or even particularly complicated. Simply because there has never been a place safe enough, a person trusted enough, a moment permissive enough for it to become real.

One man came several times before anything shifted. Mild, pleasant, curious in the way most men are curious—looking, touching, asking the questions that float to the surface once the room feels safe. Nothing that suggested what was underneath. Or perhaps everything did, and I simply waited.

Then one afternoon, without preamble, something changed in him. He looked at me differently. And in a voice that was nervous and commanding at the same time—as though he'd decided and was going to say it before he could decide not to—he told me to kneel on the bed.

So I did.

What followed was straightforward enough. What interested me was his face afterward. Not relief exactly, though there was that. Something more complete than relief. The look of a man who has wanted something for a very long time and has finally, simply, had it. The wanting and the having, both present at once, neither cancelling the other out.

For me there was pleasure in it too. The particular pleasure of giving someone something that costs you nothing but means everything to them. Of being the person—perhaps the only person in his life—who could be trusted with what he actually wanted.

That's what I mean by wanting.

Not desire in the abstract. Not sexuality as a category or an identity or a problem to be managed. Just a man, in a room, finally doing the thing he came to do. Finally knowing, from the inside, what it feels like to want something and be allowed to have it.

Most men don't know what that feels like. Not because their wants are impossible or shameful or too large for the world to accommodate. But because wanting itself—open, admitted, acted on—has never quite been permitted. The wanting went underground early. It learned to disguise itself, to wait, to surface only in private where it couldn't cost anything or reveal anything or require anything of anyone.

Nudity accelerates all of this. You can't be naked and fully defended at the same time. The body has its own intelligence and its own honesty and given half a chance it will tell you things your mind has been successfully avoiding for years. Three sessions, four sessions, spread across a year or two—not to complete a programme or achieve an outcome but to give the wanting enough air and enough safety to finally show itself.

And then—this is the part that still interests me after all these years—to find out that the wanting was fine all along. That it didn't destroy anything. That the world didn't end. That the man on the other side of it was still himself, still intact, just—lighter. More legible to himself. More his own.

That's what this is. Not therapy. Not a service. Not a cure for anything.

Just a place where wanting is allowed.



The men who come here have usually had sex. Some of them have had a great deal of it, within the narrow corridor available to them—monogamous, heterosexual, private, the same body for years or decades. They think they know what sex is. They learned to ride the bike and they've been riding it ever since without particularly questioning where it goes.

What they haven't had is this.

Another man's body in the same room, unhidden, unremarkable, just present. Another man's wanting visible and acknowledged and not immediately translated into a transaction. The simple fact of male bodies together without a script running, without a conclusion scheduled, without the bike and its familiar route.

Some of them have never seen another man's erection. Not in person, not outside of pornography, not in any context that was real and present and mutual. They say it plainly, with a kind of wondering embarrassment—*yours is the first erection I've ever seen apart from my own*—as if they're only now realising how extraordinary that is. How narrow the life. How much has been managed and avoided and kept carefully separate.

They don't know what to do. Not because they're inexperienced in the way the young are inexperienced—uncertain, unformed, still finding their way. But because everything they know about sex has been learned in one room and this is a different room entirely. The procedures don't apply. The script doesn't run. The bike is useless here.

Which is precisely the point.

This isn't about sex in any understanding they arrived with. It's about something that precedes sex and underlies it and has been missing from their lives without their quite knowing what was missing. Presence. Honesty. The body as something to inhabit rather than operate. Another person who is genuinely there, genuinely curious, genuinely unbothered by any of it.

They're not gay virgins exactly. They're men who have been living in one room of a very large house and have just found the door to the rest of it.

Most of them stand in the doorway for a while before they come in. That's fine. The door stays open.



*You're only young once but you can stay immature indefinitely.*—Ogden Nash

I've thought about that line often. Not as a joke exactly, though it is funny. As a quiet argument against the story most men tell themselves about age and what it means and what it closes down.

A man is the way he is no matter his age. The curiosity doesn't change. The wanting doesn't change. What changes is the accumulation of reasons not to act on either—the marriage, the career, the community, the architecture of a life that has been carefully constructed around a particular version of himself. Age doesn't diminish the wanting. It just adds more weight to the reasons for keeping it quiet.

I've worked with men of twenty. Still assembling themselves, still at the beginning of the body image battle that most men will fight quietly for the rest of their lives. Twenty years old and already uncertain about the body they're in, already

managing the wanting, already aware that some of what they feel doesn't fit neatly into the available categories.

Men in their thirties who have done everything right. The career, the relationship, the broad-minded progressive life that was supposed to have resolved all of this. And underneath it, still, the question. Still the loop. Still the thing that didn't get resolved by doing everything right because it was never about doing anything wrong.

The largest group—the men I've seen most consistently across the decades—sit between forty-five and sixty. Men at a hinge point. The career ending or changed. The marriage ended or changed or simply arrived somewhere neither of them planned. The children grown and gone and the house suddenly quiet in a way that makes space for thoughts that the noise had been keeping out.

Something happens in these years. An event, sometimes—a divorce, a redundancy, a loss, a birthday with a zero in it. Sometimes nothing so definable. Just a morning when a man looks at the rest of his life and thinks: *maybe I should try men*.

Not necessarily because he's gay. Not necessarily because the marriage failed or the life was wrong. Just because the door has been there his whole life and he is suddenly, acutely aware that he is not going to live forever and he has not yet opened it and he would like to know what's on the other side before he runs out of time to find out.

That's not a crisis. That's not a breakdown. That's a man paying attention to himself, possibly for the first time in decades, and deciding that the question deserves an answer.

He's right.

And then there are the men in their seventies, their eighties. My oldest regular client was ninety-two, still coming to see me at ninety-five, still himself in every way that mattered. Not an

exception. Just the far end of a curve that never really flattened the way the statistics said it would.

A man is the way he is no matter his age.

That's not optimism. That's just what I've seen.



Younger men are different.

Not in what they carry—the wanting, the curiosity, the body held at a slight distance from itself—but in how recently it all began and how little time they've had to build the walls that older men spend afternoons dismantling.

A man in his twenties or thirties who finds his way here is a particular kind of man. Not every young man wants to spend a Sunday afternoon with someone forty years his senior. The ones who do tend to know why, or half-know, or are here partly to find out.

Some are attracted to older men. Have always been, in the way that attraction works—not chosen, not constructed, just there. They've been told this is unusual often enough that they've started to believe it, which is why one of the first things they want to know is whether they're unusual. They're not. But being told so by a contemporary lands differently than being told so by the man they're attracted to, who is living proof that the attraction makes sense.

Some come because they believe—and they're not entirely wrong—that older men are more grateful. Less available, less pursued, more appreciative of what's offered. There's a generosity in that assumption, even if the assumption itself is

only partly accurate. Older men aren't grateful exactly. They're present. There's a difference.

Some come to learn something. To find an edge, as though desire were a competitive sport and experience confers advantage. I understand the impulse but I've largely stopped trying to deliver on it directly. What I've found is that the only thing worth saying to a man in his twenties about what lies ahead is that life does improve as you age—which lands exactly as well as it did when adults said it to you as a child. Which is to say, not at all. He'll find out. That's the only way anyone finds out.

What younger men share with older men, and what surprises them when they discover it, is the body question.

His body is owned by the media in a way that previous generations weren't quite subjected to. The images are everywhere and they're not neutral—they're aspirational, curated, filtered, performing a version of the male body that almost no actual male body resembles. He has grown up measuring himself against something that doesn't exist and finding himself wanting in ways he can't quite articulate because the standard he's failing to meet was never real in the first place.

So he wants to know if his body is okay.

The same question as the man in his fifties. The same uncertainty underneath it. Just arrived at by a different route—not through decades of a sexless marriage and a body quietly forgotten, but through twenty-something years of images and comparison and the particular cruelty of a culture that has decided the male body is now a project to be optimised.

It is okay. It was always okay. The answer is the same regardless of age.

What the younger man has that the older man sometimes lacks is time. Time for the *but* to fall away gradually rather than all at once. Time to find out slowly, without urgency, what his body is and what it wants and what it's capable of given the chance.

That's not nothing. That's everything, if he uses it.

I don't tell him that either. He'll find out.



And then there are the beautiful ones.

Men who are naturally attractive, or who have worked themselves into a shape the culture approves of, and who carry the assumption that this confers something. Confidence, perhaps. Ease. The solved problem of the body.

It doesn't.

I've sat with men whose bodies were remarkable by any objective measure—naturally proportioned, effortlessly attractive, or gym-built to a standard that represented years of daily discipline—who were as uncertain in their skin as any man I've known.

More uncertain sometimes. Because the body that everyone assumes is confident has its own particular burden. The assumption itself becomes a performance to maintain. People don't ask if you're okay when you look like that. They assume the answer and move on.

The man who spends every spare hour at the gym is in a conversation with his own image of himself that has no natural conclusion. The body is never finished. The mirror is never

finally satisfied. Each improvement reveals the next inadequacy. It's not vanity exactly—or not only that.

It's the same disconnect as every other man in this book, just expressed through discipline rather than neglect. The body as project. The body as problem to be solved. The body as anything other than simply—his.

Having a beautiful body guarantees nothing about the relationship a man has with it.

Which is the whole point, if there is one.

The man who arrives here after years of training, who has never once been looked at without being evaluated, who has performed his body for so long he's forgotten what it feels like to simply inhabit it—that man needs the room as much as anyone.

Maybe more.

Because he's worked the hardest to avoid needing it.



There's a moment I've seen enough times to recognise it now, though it still pleases me every time it arrives.

A man I've seen a few times. We're on the bed, both naked, talking about something inconsequential—the way you do when the body is comfortable and the mind has stopped its monitoring.

He's been tentative up to now. Trying things carefully, checking as he goes, the way a man does when he's not sure where the edges are. We've cuddled. He's touched and been

touched. Nothing has been refused because nothing has required refusal.

And then, mid-sentence, mid-laugh, he simply rolls and lies on top of me.

Not as a move. Not as a proposition. Just as the next natural thing, the thing his body decided without consulting the part of him that worries about such decisions. And we keep talking. As if it's normal. Because it is normal. Because in this room, at this point, it has become normal.

That's the moment I mean.

Not the first nervousness, not the relief when something is allowed, not even the satisfaction of a want finally acted on. This. The moment a man stops waiting to be told it's alright and simply does the next thing. The moment consent—already given, already present, already mutual—stops being a concept he's managing and becomes just the air in the room.

He didn't need permission. He never did. What he needed was a context in which his own wanting was already legitimate before he'd done anything to earn that legitimacy. A room where the answer wasn't going to be no.

Not because anything goes—it doesn't, and he knows it—but because what he actually wants, it turns out, is well within what two people can honestly offer each other.

This is what I mean when I say my permissiveness has boundaries but those boundaries almost never matter. Because the men who find their way here aren't coming to transgress anything. They're coming to find out that they didn't need to transgress in the first place. That the wanting was ordinary. That the body lying on top of another body, talking and laughing as if it's normal, is just two people in a room who have agreed to be honest with each other.

No gatekeeping. No dispensation. No one granting anyone anything.

Just consent. Which was always enough. Which was always all it needed to be.



We haven't spoken for a few minutes. Haven't needed to. The conversation has gone somewhere below words and we've let it stay there.

He's touching himself. Slowly, without urgency, the way a man does when he's stopped thinking about what he looks like. His hand moves to me as well—my arm, my leg, the simple contact of another body present and warm and not pulling away. And then a certain quality enters the silence. A question that hasn't been asked yet.

He looks at me with the expression I've come to know well. Slightly sheepish. Hoping I'll understand without him having to say it, because saying it out loud would require him to want it out loud, and he's not quite there yet.

So I ask. *Do you want to blow?*

The words matter. Plain, direct, his language not mine, no clinical distance and no performance of sensitivity. Just a question between two men in a room. And the effect is immediate—not the release itself but the permission for it. His whole body settles. The sheepishness leaves his face and something simpler takes its place.

He comes in his own time. Sometimes quietly, turned inward, private even now. Sometimes noisily, more physical than he's been all afternoon, as if something that has been

contained for a very long time is finally done containing itself. I say what feels right—not much, just enough. A voice in the room that isn't alarmed, isn't performing, is simply present with him while this happens.

Afterward, fresh towels. A shower if he wants one. The ordinary practical kindness of that.

And then he sits back down and the room is different. He is different, though he might not have words for how. The conversation resumes easily, naturally, often with a lightness that wasn't there before. He's cheerful in a way that surprises him.

Talkative. Unhurried.

The questions have quieted. The performing has stopped. The body that arrived apologising for itself two hours ago is just his body now—present, ordinary, sufficient.

He has become his body. He may not know that's what happened. But it's what happened.



Men ask if it's safe.

They usually don't mean what they appear to mean.

Yes, there are the straightforward questions—about transmission, about risk, about what we do and don't do and what that means for the life they go home to. These matter and I answer them honestly.

The men who find their way here tend to be largely celibate, their lives organised around a faithfulness that has cost them

considerably. What we do together carries no meaningful risk. I take my own health seriously and always have. That's the short answer to the short question.

But the longer question—*is it safe*—is asking something else entirely.

Is it safe to want this. Is it safe to be here. Is it safe to say the thing out loud that I've only ever thought in private. Is it safe to be seen wanting something and find out that the world doesn't end. Is it safe to go home afterward and still be myself.

Yes. To all of it.

What surprises me still, after all these years, is how little men know about their own sexual health. Not for lack of intelligence—these are often sharp, accomplished, worldly men. But the questions they ask, sometimes after the fact, are the questions of men who have never had a safe place to ask them before. Who have been managing their health and their wanting in parallel, separately, without ever quite connecting the two.

Before Covid changed the general level of awareness, the gaps were astonishing. Basic questions. Fundamental things that any honest conversation between two men could have answered in minutes but that had somehow never been answered in decades.

Because there was no conversation. Because there was no room for it. Because asking the question meant admitting the wanting and admitting the wanting meant—what, exactly? They were never sure. So they didn't ask.

I take sexual health for granted the way I take discretion for granted—not because it's unimportant but because it's so thoroughly part of how I operate that it doesn't require thought. It just is.

What I don't take for granted is the man asking. Who has finally found somewhere to ask. Who deserves a straight answer without judgment or alarm.

He gets one.



Getting dressed takes longer than you'd think.

Not because he's reluctant exactly, though there's something of that. More because the clothes go on differently than they came off. He's not armouring up the way he arrived. He's just getting dressed, the way you do in your own bedroom, without an audience in his head watching him do it.

We talk while it happens. About nothing in particular, about everything that came up, about something he's just thought of that he wants to say before he goes. There's always something. The conversation that opened up this afternoon doesn't close just because the session does. It goes home with him, sits with him, surfaces at odd moments during the week.

He'll think of a question he forgot to ask. He'll notice something about his body he hasn't noticed before. He'll find himself standing differently in the bathroom mirror, or in the gym, or just going about his day.

That's why this isn't a single afternoon.

One session like this could be mistaken for a service—something purchased, consumed, complete in itself. That's not what it is. What it is, is the beginning of a man getting more comfortable inside his own skin, and that's not a process that concludes neatly at the door. He'll come back.

Not because something is wrong or because he needs fixing but because this is now part of how he thinks about himself—as a man with a body that deserves some uncomplicated attention now and then. As a man who has somewhere he can ask the real questions. As a man who gets to laugh and move and be touched and be seen without it costing him anything he isn't willing to give.

What builds over time is harder to name than what happens in a single afternoon. A kind of ease. A lower baseline of shame. The questions get asked sooner because he knows now they can be asked. The body stops being something to manage and starts being something to inhabit.

He might start noticing other men differently—not sexually necessarily, but with more generosity, more recognition. *He's probably carrying something too.*

Most men are.

I'm not easing him toward anything in particular. Not a new identity, not a revelation, not a better version of himself according to someone else's specification.

Just easing his mind. About his body, about his desires, about the thoughts that loop, about the fact of being a man in a body in a world that has never quite given him permission to be both fully and without apology.

That's all. That's enough.

# Naked but.



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