



Daddy's Picky Eater (Blue Collar Daddies in the City #8)

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Category: LGBT+

Description: Augie likes what he likes, but trying to explain himself to others almost never goes the way he plans

Augie has been slow to start dating since his attack last year. He's physically healed but still nervous about trusting new men. When Ethan, his friend's Daddy, introduces him to a chef friend Dexter, Augie is smitten. The only problem is that chefs like to cook, and Augie is a picky eater. Like, he can't trust anyone to cook for him because it's never right.

So he tries to hide his true feelings.

Dex is intrigued by the sweet boy Ethan introduced him to, but he gets the feeling there's so much he doesn't yet know. Other than the fact that Ethan likes to have Little playdates with Ethan's boy and a few other friends, he isn't sure how much of what Augie shares is true or half-truths.

But he has every intention of finding out.

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DEX

I was elbow-deep in buttercream when my phone buzzed. I considered letting it go to voicemail, but when I saw it was Ethan calling, I hit the answer button with my elbow and kept frosting. "Hey, man. What's up?"

"Dex! Got plans tonight? The boys are having a playdate, so I was thinking you could come over for some cards and beers. Or we can watch a movie that Brayden considers too scary." I could imagine Ethan making air quotes, even though I couldn't see them. "So, you in?"

I glanced at the clock and considered my options. It was almost five on Friday evening and I had nothing else planned. "Yeah, I can stop by for a bit. What time should I be there?"

"Does seven work? I'll grill steaks for us and leave the nuggets and tots for the boys."

I chuckled. "A steak sounds great. I can bring a cake and cookies. I've tried a few new recipes that I could use some taste testers for."

"Bray will love you forever if you bring him cake." Ethan was quiet for a moment. "I'm not sure what Augie likes but who doesn't love cake and cookies? Just bring whatever you want."

My interest was piqued at the mention of another "Little." I'd met Brayden a few

times, and he was adorable when he trusted someone. And thankfully, he trusted me enough to relax and be vulnerable around me. "Perfect. I'll bring a variety so everyone's happy."

"Awesome, see you then!"

I hung up as a mix of excitement and nerves fluttered in my stomach. I loved hanging with Ethan, but being around him and his boy was a stark reminder of what I didn't have...but deeply desired.

Still, I was looking forward to seeing my friend.

At 7:05, I pulled up to Ethan's place with a box of vanilla cupcakes, oatmeal cranberry cookies, and a chocolate raspberry cake beside me. Something for everyone, or more likely, two little ones in particular.

The bubbly laughter that echoed through the front door when I knocked made me smile. Brayden was a sweetheart, and I could already feel the longing begin to tug in my gut.

"Hey, bud." Ethan pulled the door open wide and waved me in. "Just in time. Our steaks are almost done."

I followed him inside and immediately noticed the two young men sprawled on the living room floor with their eyes glued to the TV. Brayden, Ethan's boyfriend, was wearing dinosaur pajamas and swinging his bent legs to the tune of a silly monster song. The other, Augie, glanced at me and then quickly turned back to the TV. He had messy brown curls and wore a onesie covered in rocket ships.

"Boys!" Ethan hit the pause button on the remote. "Say hi to Mister Dexter."

They both looked up, and I waved. “Hi, guys.”

"Hi, Mister Dexter!" Brayden hopped up and came to give me a quick hug before running back and flopping onto the floor by his friend.

“It’s good to see you again, Brayden.” I always felt so much lighter when I was around Littles. “And you must be Augie.” I turned my attention to the shy boy who was peeking over the top of a stuffed frog. "It’s nice to meet you, Augie."

“Hi, Mister Dexter.” His voice was barely audible, but his gaze stayed locked on me. “Nice to meet you too.”

I winked in his direction before following Ethan to the kitchen. “Have the boys eaten yet?” I held up my goodies. “I brought dessert.”

Ethen popped the top off a bottle of beer then handed it to me. “I’ve been told they’re eating in courses tonight. They started with the nuggie course and will have the cheesy-noodle course after their show is over.” He waved to a set of red bowls that were shaped like train cabooses.

“The cheesy-noodle course sounds pretty good.” I was a sucker for a good mac-and-cheese. Experimenting with recipes was one of my favorite weekend pastimes. “What’s after that?”

Ethan shook his head. “I heard something about an ice cream sundae course, but I think they might reconsider and make it a pastry course.”

I chuckled. “I noticed there wasn’t a salad or veggie course.”

“Yeah, I noticed too.” Ethan pulled a large salad out of his fridge and waved me toward the back patio. “Apparently, playdates don’t include produce.”

“Good to know.” The smoky smell of our steaks made my mouth water as soon as Ethan lifted the lid of his grill. “Damn, that smells good.”

“Medium-rare good for you?” He used his tongs to lift one of the steaks up for inspection.

“Perfect.” I watched as Ethan plated our steaks, baked potatoes, and foil-wrapped corn on the cob then accepted the plates while he turned off the gas. “Thank you.”

“Thank you.” He joined me at the patio table a minute later. “Bray likes to have some space when his friends are over, but not too much space.”

"Those two are quite the pair." I glanced over my shoulder to where they were watching TV, but I couldn't see them from where I was. “You're a lucky man, E.”

He sighed and leaned back in his chair. "Yeah, they're pretty adorable together. It's nice for Brayden to have time with his friends...and I think Augie appreciates having a caretaker now and then."

“He’s alone?” I was surprised by that. He was cute and polite. If he wanted a Daddy, I couldn’t imagine it would be hard for him to find one.

Ethan dug into his steak and nodded. “Yeah, most of the boys in their friend group have hooked up with Daddies...Dylan even has two.” Ethan waggled his eyebrows and popped a piece of meat into his mouth before talking with his mouth full. Something he probably wouldn’t allow Brayden to do, but Brayden wasn’t around to witness it. “Augie is the last of their crew to find someone, so they all take care to include him as much as possible.”

“He seems like a nice kid.” I didn’t want to seem overly curious, but since Ethan brought it up... “What’s the problem?”

Ethan took a drink of his beer and sighed. “They had an incident a while back. Augie was hurt by some assholes who dosed them with something, and he’s been a little hesitant to date or spend time with strangers since then.”

“Fuck.” I inhaled deeply to keep my composure. “I hope they caught the guys.”

“No, unfortunately. And that’s part of why we tend to keep them on a short leash. They can go out, but one of us is always nearby and the official driver.”

I added salt and pepper to my potato as I considered the other side of caretaking for someone you loved. The constant worrying. “But he’s okay now?” I nodded toward the house. “Augie?”

“He’s getting there.” Ethan leveled me with his teacher gaze, reading my expression. “Why do you ask? You curious...or interested?”

“Maybe both.” I shrugged and shoved a big bite of food into my mouth. “He’s cute.”

Ethan smiled. “He is. Shy but with a mischievous side that is adorable as fuck.”

Before we got too deep down that rabbit hole, we changed the subject to work and finished eating. By the time we went back inside, the boys were inhaling mac-and-cheese from their train cars in a race to see who would finish first.

“Slow down or you’ll be seeing who pukes first.” Ethan put a hand on each of their shoulders to make sure they heard him. “Got it?”

They each made some kind of grunty/moany sound as they slowed down a tiny bit, still watching each other as they shoveled pasta into their mouths.

Ethan loaded our plates into the dishwasher and then leaned against the counter. “I

know you're busy with this course, but before you get too committed to an ice cream course, you might want to see what Dexter brought."

Both boys went still and looked at me. "Does anyone here like cookies or cake or cupcakes?"

"Cookies!" Brayden exclaimed with wide eyes. "My favorite."

"What about you, Augie?" I slipped my hands into my pockets to seem less threatening and leaned back, similar to Ethan's stance. "Do you like cookies or cake?"

He swallowed hard and sat back in his seat. "Um, both, but it depends." He bit his lip and looked down at his caboose bowl. "What kind are they?"

"Do you like fruit?"

Augie nodded. "Yes, sir."

"What about chocolate?"

He smiled. "Yes, that's my favorite."

"Well, you're in luck because the cookies are orange and cranberry and the cake is chocolate with raspberry."

His smile dropped, and then he caught himself and went directly into fake enthusiasm mode. "That sounds yummy. Thank you."

Brayden reached for Augie's forearm and gave him a squeeze. "Ethan bakes real good. You'll like those, right?"

Augie shrugged. "I'm a little full right now, but maybe later."

While they finished eating, my gaze was continually drawn to Augie.

For a few minutes, he seemed upset about something, but by the time they went back to the living room, he was laughing at Brayden's silly jokes and dramatically reenacting scenes from the cartoon they'd been watching.

His joy was infectious and made me want to hug him and make sure he always felt cared for.

Ethan had cleared the table and held up a deck of cards. "Texas hold 'em?"

"Sure." I grabbed the box of chips he kept in the hutch against the back wall. "You deal."

He sat across from me and shuffled the deck. "You're being quieter than usual. Everything okay?"

I nodded, realizing I'd been lost in thought. "Yeah, just...thinking."

Ethan raised an eyebrow. "About?"

I hesitated then decided to be honest. "About how nice this is. Your life. Everything you've got going here."

"Yeah, it's pretty great." Ethan sighed and put the deck down before he leaned forward with his elbows on the table. "You thinking about trying it for yourself?"

"I mean, yeah. Of course. But it's not exactly easy to find someone compatible." Deflecting, I decided a joke was in order. "It's not like I've got access to single kids

like you do.”

He chuckled and flicked a poker chip at my head. “Nothing happened when he was my student. He’s an adult now, as you well know.”

I shrugged as if I didn’t quite believe him, even though I knew it was true. “Says you.”

"Anyway, you do have access to plenty of single guys. Through me and Brayden. Through Primal. If you’re ready to get out there, you just have to do it."

My gaze strayed to the living room where the boys were giggling about something. I couldn’t hear details, but we heard enough shushing and whispering to know they were probably planning some trouble. “Yeah, maybe you’re right.”

“Trust me, I am.” He whistled and raised his voice. “Bray, tell Dexter I’m always right.”

Brayden belted out a laugh. “No way, Daddy. You’re right half the time. I just pretend you’re right the rest of the time.”

Ethan rolled his eyes. “In other words, I’m always right, and I’m definitely right about this.”

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AUGIE

Brayden and I decided to build a fort before our dessert course, but while we collected all the cushions and blankets, my attention kept drifting to the kitchen where Daddy Ethan and Mister Dexter were talking.

Every time I looked at Dexter, it seemed like he was looking at me too, but I was too shy to make double sure, so I just turned away and secured the blanket roof with some pillows.

After we were hidden inside the walls of our fortress and less exposed, I said what I'd been thinking about all night...and for the past few months. "I wish I had a Daddy like yours." I used my whisper voice, but I made sure it was loud enough for Brayden to hear me. "He's so nice and makes the best dinners."

"Yeah, he's the best at everything." Brayden turned on a flashlight and pointed it up at the ceiling then made a shadow bunny. "You'll find a good Daddy someday too. Maybe one who also bakes cakes and cookies."

"Shh!" My eyes went wide, and I looked toward the kitchen even though I couldn't see through the blanket wall. "He'll hear you!"

Brayden smirked. "Who will hear me? The baking Daddy you keep checking out?"

"I do not!" I put a pillow over my face and hid behind it. "And is he even a Daddy?"

Maybe he doesn't like Little boys. Maybe he's just nice to you and doesn't like?—"

"Maybe you shouldn't make assumptions." Dexter's deep voice filtered through the fort. "And I like Little boys and big boys just fine."

I gasped and panicked. "Uh-oh."

Brayden's eyes were big for just a second, and then he erupted in laughter. "He heard you, Augs. You need to whisper better."

"Clearly." I pursed my lips together to keep from saying anything else. "Weren't you gonna get cake or something?"

"Cake!" Brayden hopped to his feet and tore off all the walls of our fort to get to the kitchen. "Dessert course, Daddy!"

I stayed on the floor, hugging my frog. I wasn't sure I'd like any of those desserts, and I didn't want to be rude by refusing to try them. "I'm full for now. I'll have some later."

"If I don't eat it all..." Brayden was lucky because he could eat anything. He could even stomach yucky stuff without throwing up. I, on the other hand, had a very short list of foods I liked and a giant list of things I didn't like. I couldn't even pretend to eat yucky stuff to be polite, so lots of people thought I was rude before they got to know me.

I didn't want Mister Dexter to think I was rude, so avoidance was the best option. "It's okay if you do. I ate lots of noodles. I'll be stuffed till breakfast."

"Are you sure, Augie?" Daddy Ethan took a step toward me, but Mister Dexter stopped him. "I've got this."

I watched nervously as Mister Dexter put some of each dessert on a plate and brought it to me.

“Are you sure you don’t want to try one bite of each?” He sat on the corner of the couch and held the plate over his knees. “I made them myself.”

They looked beautiful, but I knew I wouldn't like the flavors. “Um, no, thank you.”

Dexter cocked his head and looked at me with furrowed brows. "Are you feeling okay, sweetheart?"

“Yes, sir.” I sat up and peeked closer to the plate. “The cupcake looks good.”

He smiled and held it up for me. “It’s all yours.” He pinched the side of the paper and tugged it away from the cake so it would be easy to peel off. “Or if you’re too full for a whole one, I can share it with you.”

Food sharing wasn’t usually my bag but it sounded good when Mister Dexter suggested it. “Um, okay. I’ll try a bite.”

“Excellent.” Dexter beamed with approval, clearly passionate about his craft, as he peeled back the other half of the wrapper. “Okay, first bite is yours.”

I slowly leaned forward, and when Dexter held up the cupcake, I opened my mouth and took a small bite with an equal ratio of frosting and cake. “Mmm, it’s good.” I didn’t even have to fake it. His cupcake was delicious. “Delicious, even!”

“Glad you think so.” He held up the cake again. “Another bite?”

As much as I loved being hand-fed by this man, my tummy was hurting from being so nervous, and I didn’t want any more. “No, thank you. You can have the rest.”

“Okay. And I’m proud of you for trying it. Sometimes it’s scary to try new things, isn’t it?”

“Yeah, I guess.” People always assumed I was picky because I didn’t like the way food looked or smelled, but that wasn’t true at all. I wanted to eat everything that looked good and my friends loved. There were just so many flavors that were yucky, and no matter how badly I wanted to eat like everyone else, I just couldn’t keep most things down.

He opened his mouth wide and ate half of it in a single bite. “Mo’ fo’ me.”

I giggled and rolled back onto my bottom. “You’re silly, Mister Dexter.”

He caught my ankle and tickled the bottom of my foot. “And you’re adorable.”

My cheeks heated up as I tucked my chin to my chest, feeling warm all over from his compliment and touch. “Thank you.” When I peeked up at him through my lashes, the look in his eyes made my breath catch.

"Augie." His thumb brushed over the back of my heel. "I hope this isn't too forward, but I was wondering if you'd like to go out with me sometime?"

"Really?" My heart leapt. “Like, on a date?”

Dexter nodded, a hint of uncertainty in his expression. "Only if you'd like to, of course. No pressure at all. And if you want to think about it, you don’t have to answer now."

"I'd love to," I said quickly, not wanting him to doubt my interest for a second. "What do you have in mind?"

"Well, the weather's supposed to be nice this weekend. How would you feel about flying kites in the park tomorrow?"

"Kites!" I gasped at the suggestion. How did he know that was one of my favorite things? I had a lot of favorite things, but kites were way, way up on the list. "That would be amazing! I love kites...and parks."

Dexter's eyes sparkled as he smiled brightly. "Then it's settled. I'll pack us a picnic, nothing fancy, and we can spend the afternoon in the sunshine."

"It's a date!" Warmth spread through my chest as I peeked over at Brayden. He had chocolate smeared on his cheek as he gave me a thumbs-up.

Dexter stood up and brushed my hair off my forehead. "I'm looking forward to it, little one."

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DEXTER

I ran my hand through my hair and glanced in the mirror after pulling to a stop in front of Augie's apartment building. My carefully packed picnic basket was secure in the backseat next to the kites I'd spent all morning assembling.

There was no real reason for me to be so nervous for our date, but I totally was.

Maybe it was because Augie was so close to Ethan and Brayden, and if things went south, that could be awkward. But I had a strong suspicion that the reason my heart was racing with anticipation was because Augie was special. He was sweet and kind and...Little. I was trying not to put so much pressure on our first date, but I hoped everything went well because I really wanted Augie to trust me enough to fully open up around me so we could get to know each other on a deeper level.

I'd barely put the car in park when a blur of green caught my eye.

I hit the window button on the passenger side as Augie came bounding down the steps toward my car.

His face was lit up with an eager grin that made my chest tighten. Damn, he was adorable. "Hi, Mister Dexter. I was looking out my window so you didn't have to wait for me." He yanked open the passenger door and tumbled inside, breathless as he reached for his seatbelt. "Thanks for coming."

“Of course.” I reached for his wrist and gave him a gentle squeeze before restarting the car. “And you can call me Dex or Dexter.” Or Daddy. But that would take time and more getting to know each other. “Unless you prefer the mister.”

He cocked his head as he buckled in. “I think I do like it. For now, at least.”

For now. That was promising. I could work with that. “Okay.” The rest of what he’d said finally sank in. “Wait, how long were you watching out the window?”

"I've been ready for hours because I'm so excited. I've never been on a kite date." His head snapped toward me, and he bit his lower lip. “This is still a date, right?”

"Of course, sweetheart. I've got everything packed up for a nice picnic lunch too."

His eyes went wide, but instead of the joy that had been oozing off him, he looked slightly terrified. "Oh, you did? That was nice of you."

"You bet. Turkey-and-swiss sammies." I smiled and pulled away from the curb, proud of myself that I'd remembered some of the lingo Brayden liked to use. "And I brought some other snacks too, in case you're not in a sandwich mood."

“Oh, yay!” Augie clapped his hands, his happy demeanor instantly back. “Thank you.”

Warmth bloomed in my chest from his genuine enthusiasm. “It’s my pleasure.”

As we drove, Augie asked a hundred questions about the kites we were going to fly, which one was my favorite and how high I thought we could get. He was practically vibrating with energy, and it was contagious.

I answered each question, laughing when he did, while sneaking fond glances at

Augie. He looked absolutely precious in his pastel-blue sweater and gray jeans with his hair slightly tousled.

When we arrived at the park, Augie was out of the car before I could even unbuckle my seatbelt. He licked his finger as if testing the direction of the wind. "Oh, it's perfect right now. We should hurry!"

I grabbed the picnic basket and kites from the backseat and hurried to catch up as he headed to the large field. "I'm coming, I'm coming. Don't get too far ahead or I might get lost."

As the weatherman predicted, the day was perfect for flying kites. A nice breeze while the sun shone, keeping us warm when we stopped to rest and cool as we ran behind our strings. More than an hour passed of us running and laughing and racing across the grass before we decided to take a break and dig into our lunch.

As we passed the playground, Augie's steps faltered slightly. The area was packed with shrieking children and watchful parents, all enjoying their playtime.

I gently steered us in another direction. "Hey, buddy. Want to eat in the gazebo? There's a nice bench swing we could try."

Augie's face lit up. "Ooh, yes please! Can you push me super high?"

I chuckled. "I'm not sure if it'll go very high, but we can try."

The gazebo was empty when we arrived, so Augie immediately plopped onto the bench swing with his legs swinging. "Push me, push me!"

I set down our things and moved behind him, giving a gentle push to start. My heart swelled seeing him so carefree and happy, especially since he'd seemed so nervous

most of last night. Now that he was comfortable with me, he was a completely different person. Like he trusted me even when he was in a more vulnerable state.

After a few minutes of swinging, Augie hopped off and leaned against the wall of the gazebo. "That was fun."

"You hungry yet?" I pulled the tablecloth from the basket and spread it on the floor beside him before unpacking the food.

"Yep." Like a switch was flipped, his smile immediately dropped. "I mean, a little. Not super hungry."

That wasn't convincing at all. "Well, we've got turkey-and-swiss sandwiches, some chips, grapes, and sodas. What would you like?"

Augie bit his lip, looking uncertain. "Um...can I just have some grapes, please?"

I frowned. "Are you sure? I thought you said you like turkey."

"I do like it." He nodded but averted his gaze. "But I'm not very hungry. Just grapes is okay."

Something felt off, but I didn't want to push him. Not when he was just starting to open up to me. "Alright, if you're sure. I brought some crackers too if you want something salty."

Augie perked up at that. "Ooh, crackers too, please!"

I passed him a handful of grapes and some saltines, trying not to worry over the fact that he didn't want a proper meal.

As we ate, I recounted a funny story from the bakery around a fallen souffle that looked suspiciously like a cow patty, hoping to push Augie back into his happy place. He giggled in all the right places, but he was popping grapes into his mouth almost faster than he could chew.

"Whoa there." I reached for his elbow to remind him to breathe. "Slow down there, champ. I don't want you to choke."

Augie ducked his head sheepishly. "Sorry. They're just really yummy."

I ruffled his hair affectionately. "I'm glad you like them, but if you're that hungry, maybe a few bites of a sandwich would fill you better?"

"No, thank you." He shook his head but continued eating the grapes until the entire bunch was gone. Then Augie reached for more crackers.

"Hey now, I think that's enough for now. We don't want to get tummy aches before taking out the kites again, right?"

Augie sucked in a deep breath and pushed the package of crackers away. "Yeah, you're right."

We packed up the basket and headed back to the field with the kites.

As I was showing Augie how to make the kite dive and soar, I noticed he was rubbing his stomach with a grimace.

I reached for both strings and held them still. "You feeling okay?"

Augie nodded but turned his head away from me. "M'fine."

“Augie?” I waited for him to turn back to me and studied him for a moment, concerned by the pallor of his face. “Are you sure? We can take a break if your tummy is bothering you.”

“Yeah, maybe.” Augie’s shoulders dropped, and he looked miserable. “I don’t feel so good.”

Guilt filled me as I placed my hand on his cheek. “I’m sorry, sweetheart. Let’s get you home, okay?”

Augie nodded and his lower lip trembled.

I gathered our things and led him back to the car with one arm around his shoulders. He leaned fully into my side, gripping the side of my shirt in his fist as if it were the only thing keeping him upright.

The drive home was quiet, with Augie curled up in his seat and his eyes tightly closed.

I kept sneaking worried glances at him, guilty because I’d screwed up our first real outing together.

When we got back to his apartment, I walked him inside and got him settled on the couch with a glass of water.

“I’m sorry you’re not feeling well, sweetheart. Is there anything else I can do?”

Augie shook his head, not meeting my eyes. “No, thanks, Mister Dexter. I’ll be fine in a little while.”

My heart sank at his subdued tone. “Are you sure? I don’t mind staying in case you

need anything."

He shrugged listlessly. "I'm sure. Thanks for taking me to the park. I had a lot of fun."

I hesitated, unsure what to do next. I wanted to stay and make sure he was alright, but Augie seemed to be shutting down, and I didn't want to overstep. "Okay, then. You get some rest, alright? Text me later to let me know how you're feeling."

Augie nodded, already curling up on his side. "Bye, Mister Dexter."

I barely heard his goodbye as I let myself out. Something was clearly bothering Augie beyond just an upset stomach, but he wasn't ready to open up to me, and I respected that. I didn't like it, but I respected it.

I texted Ethan to let him know I'd just left Augie because he wasn't feeling well, and then I drove myself back to my empty house. My empty life.

4

AUGIE

Well, that was an action-packed weekend. I'd met the nicest Daddy in the world, insulted him by not eating his pastries, had a fun time playing kites, swung on a swing, and then gorged myself on grapes and ruined it all.

I really was the king of making bad decisions.

I'd imagined so many ways our date could have gone and none of them involved me stuffing myself until I had to barf. At least I was able to hold it together until Dexter drove away. That was lucky because when I got sick, I got really sick. Like I needed a shower and a lot of alone time afterward.

Which I had. Lots and lots of alone time. Probably for the rest of my life because no one understood what it was like to have the kind of food issues I had. The kind that were in my head and my palate but not a biological sensitivity. Medically, I could eat anything I wanted. I wasn't actually allergic to anything that I knew of. But there were a lot of flavors I didn't like and even more smells that made me gag without even getting near the food itself.

No regular man wanted to be with someone who lived on white carbs and chicken for no real reason. And a chef like Dexter wouldn't ever be happy with someone like me. Ethan was amused by Brayden's food preferences when he was Little because Brayden was a good eater the rest of the time. But I was never a good eater. I liked bagels and white toast and plain pasta and French fries. I'd eat a salad a few times per

week but only because my tummy had a different kind of pain if I didn't eat any veggies. But I didn't need variety or options or experimentation.

I liked what I liked, and that was oddly offensive to most people. Dexter deserved a boy who didn't offend him.

The screen on my phone lit up with another text from Dexter. I hope you're feeling better today, Little one?

My stomach fluttered from his concern, but I pushed the feeling down. After ruining our date, I didn't deserve his kindness. Yeah, I am.

There was so much I wanted to thank him for and apologize for, but none of that mattered now. We both needed to just move on. It was better that way, at least for Dexter, so I tossed my phone aside and tried to ignore how fast my heart raced from those few words of concern.

I'd spent the rest of my weekend moping and replaying how great our kite-flying date had been until I made myself sick. Now I just needed to forget Dexter entirely.

But as I curled up on the couch, wrapped up in a fuzzy blanket, all I could think about was how gentle Dexter had been with me. The way his strong arms had practically carried me to the car, cradling me against his broad chest. If I hadn't felt so sick, I could have savored that moment more. I could have appreciated the firm muscles beneath his soft skin and breathed in his warm, comforting scent so much more.

As I pulled up my nausea-tinged memories, my phone buzzed again. I didn't want to look at it, but I couldn't help myself.

So glad you're doing better. I was worried about you. Can I bring you some soup later?

I squeezed my eyes shut, fighting the urge to say yes. Everything in me wanted to let Dexter sweep in and take care of me like he was my Daddy and I was his boy. But I wasn't the sweet boy he deserved. And I couldn't hide my food issues if he was constantly trying to feed me things I couldn't eat. No, thanks. I'm fine.

His response came back almost instantly, like he had anticipated my response. Augie, it's no trouble. I'd feel much better if I could check on you for myself.

Thank you, but I'll call Brayden if I need anything. Take care. I tossed my phone across the room, ignoring the pang in my chest from truly ending things with Dexter before they even had a chance to get started. It was better this way. Dexter would realize soon enough that I wasn't worth his time.

Tears streamed down my cheeks as I huddled under my blanket. I couldn't stop thinking about how safe I'd felt in Dexter's arms. He would have done anything for me, even after making a mess of his perfect date. I dozed off with pretend words of comfort floating in my mind.

"It's okay, little one. Daddy's got you." Even though I knew it was just a dream, I wanted so desperately to believe it was real. The fantasy of having a Daddy like Dexter had started to take root, and it wasn't easy to let that go.

I jolted in that weird stage between being asleep and awake. Those dreams about having a happy ending with Dexter felt silly and childish now. That wasn't how my story would end. I wasn't meant to have a Daddy to cuddle me and make everything better, at least not one as kind as Dexter.

My eyes opened and went straight to where my phone lay silent on the floor. Part of me longed to pick it up and beg Dexter to come over. I wanted to let myself be vulnerable with him to see if he really meant all those sweet things he'd said.

But I knew better.

Eventually Dexter would see the real me. The parts that were damaged and difficult to accept. The parts that made other men want to hurt me. It was better to push him away now before either of us got too attached.

I pulled the blanket over my head and tried to block out thoughts of Dexter's gentle touches and silly words. I tried to forget how badly I wanted to curl up in his lap and let him put all my broken pieces back together.

But I couldn't quite silence the tiny part of me that wondered if maybe he was different. What if Dexter was strong enough to handle all my issues and not get mad because of them? What if he really did want to be my Daddy?

5

DEXTER

I stared at my phone, hurt and disappointed that I'd done something to really upset Augie, especially when he wasn't feeling well. I didn't understand what I'd done, and I couldn't stop beating myself up for it.

After two days of single-word responses or being left on "read," I decided to get some real answers...from Brayden.

And that meant a text to Ethan. Can I bring your boy dessert and see what he knows about Augie? I think he's mad at me but I don't know why.

Ethan read it quickly but took a few minutes to respond, probably checking with Brayden first. Yeah, come by. We're having spaghetti and meatballs for dinner if you want to join us. Dinner at 6. Dessert after 6:30.

I'll be there at 6.

Bray says he doesn't know much, but he'll call Augie to make sure he's okay.

I wasn't sure how to feel about the fact that Augie hadn't shared his concerns with Brayden. It could have meant that Augie wasn't that upset and he just wasn't into me. Which I would respect. But it could have also meant he was so upset that he didn't want to tell Brayden out of fear it would get back to me. Either way, I wouldn't rest until I had a real answer, so I packed up some eclairs and headed home to shower and

change before meeting my friends for dinner.

Ethan was a decent chef. He didn't use exotic flavors, but everything tasted good, and a giant plate of pasta was exactly what I needed after the past few days. By the time I was fully stuffed and Brayden was itching to see inside the pink box, I couldn't keep my questions at bay any longer.

"So, has Augie mentioned anything about our date on Saturday?" I opened the box of eclairs and shoved them toward Brayden as a bit of incentive to start blabbing.

"Ooh, chocolate canoes!" He reached in and pulled one out before I could snatch the box back. "Thank you, Mister Dexter."

I grinned and nudged the box toward Ethan.

He took one, but I didn't expect him to take more than a bite. Ethan was one of those healthy types. As an actual chef, I didn't have that kind of restraint. I loved food and liked to try everything. As it was, I spent way more time in the gym working off what I taste-tested than I wanted to...and still had a nice layer of padding around the middle.

"You're welcome, Little one. So, have you talked to Augie?"

Brayden huffed dramatically and leaned back in his chair with a smudge of chocolate on his cheek. "He had the best day of his life, okay!"

"He did?"

"Brayden!" Ethan spoke deep and quiet in his Daddy voice. "Manners."

Brayden flinched and looked contrite. "Sorry, but yeah, he had a great time with the

kites and really likes you. A lot.” He glanced at me and shrugged. “So much that he can’t see you again.”

“What?” Ethan and I both asked the obvious question at the same time.

“Why, Brayden? Did I do something to upset him?” Not only was I confused by that, but I hated that Augie felt like he couldn’t see me again. “Please tell me what he told you.”

“It’s cuz you’re a foodie.” Brayden popped the last bite in his mouth and reached for another, before Ethan shook his head to stop him.

“You can take the rest to work tomorrow to share with your friends there.”

I ran my palm behind my neck and considered that. “Why does being a foodie matter to Augie? Does he not like...foodies?”

“Augie has...food issues. Like, he’s picky. And not in ways that make sense. He thinks it makes people mad or something.” Brayden reached for his juice and finished it off. “I don’t get it, but he’s weird like that.”

Ethan rolled his eyes. “He’s not weird. He’s just...particular about what he likes to eat. It’s not a big deal.”

I scoffed. “Well, Augie thinks it is since he never wants to see me again.” I tapped my fingers on the table and considered my options. “Is there something he does like that I can try to win him over with?”

Brayden thought about it for a moment. “Well, he loves French fries, but not the crinkly kind. Or the skinny kind. Just the regular kind.”

“The regular kind?” That was wholly unhelpful. “Okay. Anything else?”

“Um, bagels. But only the plain kind and plain cream cheese. But not too much or too little, so let him spread it himself.”

“Okay, I can work with that.” I finished the water in my glass, ready to excuse myself so they could get on with their evening routine. “Anything else?”

“Bananas and grapes are fine. But not grapes with seeds. And...” He scrunched his eyes up as he worked really hard to concentrate. “Oh, oh, oh. Pancakes and butter. No syrup.”

“No syrup, huh?” That was surprising, but I was starting to understand why Augie was acting the way he did. Kinda. “Well, thank you so much, Brayden. I really appreciate your help, and I just hope Augie is willing to give me one more chance to at least be his friend.”

Brayden nodded enthusiastically. “I’ll tell him you’re nice and won’t get mad at him. Bagels will help.”

“Of course I wouldn’t get mad at him for not liking some foods. That’s the last thing he has to worry about.” I pushed back from the table and stood up.

“Actually, it’s the first thing he always thinks about.” Brayden turned to Ethan. “Right, Daddy? Right? He always thinks you’re gonna get mad at him.”

Ethan looked up at me with a sad smile. “Yeah, he kinda does. But if you let him choose his foods, you should be okay.”

“I can do that.” I grabbed my dishes and carried them to the sink. “Thanks so much for dinner, Ethan. That was delicious.” I walked over to Brayden and squeezed his

shoulder. “And thank you for the intel. I hope the eclairs are sufficient payment for your services.”

“Yup. I work for snacks anytime you want, Mister Dexter.” He briefly hugged my waist. “Good luck with Augie. He needs a Daddy like you.”

“Thanks, I’m gonna need some luck with him.” Because I needed a boy like him too.

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6

AUGIE

“That’ll be twenty-two dollars, Mr. Johnson.” One of my favorite customers at the barber shop I managed liked to share his comic books with me. He went through them like water and always brought me a few during his weekly shave.

He laughed as pulled out some cash. “Woo, it’s getting expensive to be bald these days. Give the change to Maurice.” He dug into his bag and pulled out a Fantastic Four and...

“Absolute Batman!” I reached for it with grabby hands. “For me? Really? Thank you, Mr. Johnson!”

He chuckled as he handed them both over. “You’re gonna like that one. And I might have the next one coming in the mail, so be ready for it when I see you next.”

I wanted to jump over the table and give him a hug, but Maurice told me I wasn’t supposed to hug customers unless they initiated it and I agreed, so no hugs for Mr. Johnson. “Thank you so much! I’ll read it tonight and have it ready for you next week.” Oh, that reminded me. “I have last week’s books here for you.” I reached under the counter and grabbed the comics I had waiting for him. “Now I can’t wait to get home and read it.”

Mr. Johnson chuckled as he walked out the door.

I turned away to go sweep up the stubble hairs that were shaved off Mr. Johnson's head when I heard a throat clear behind me.

"Excuse me, Augie."

My spine straightened, and I froze for a moment before slowly spinning toward the deep voice I'd been hearing in my dreams for the past several nights. "Oh, Mister Dexter. Hi."

He held up a cardboard box. "I was just getting bagels for lunch and was thinking that maybe you'd like some too."

"Bagels?" I was excited for just a brief second, and then I remembered that most people liked gross bagels. "Um, what kind?"

"Plain. With plain cream cheese. But you'll have to put it on yourself. They aren't pre-creamed." He winked when I looked up at him.

"Just plain? Or are there other kinds in the box? Blueberry or onion, maybe?" Those flavors were the worst offenders of cross-contamination. It was bad enough they had to share a display case. I couldn't handle when they touched in the box and my plain bagel suddenly had sweet or sour spots.

He furrowed his brow like I might be upset by his choice. "Yeah, just plain. Is that okay? Do you prefer a different flavor?"

"No, not at all." I finally relaxed. "Come into the break room." I waved to Maurice as we passed. "Maurice, this is my friend Mister Dexter. He brought me bagels, so I'm gonna take my break now."

Maurice looked Dexter up and down and then nodded to me. "Take your time, Augs."

I'll handle things out here."

I went into the breakroom with as much controlled anticipation as I could handle. Getting my hopes up was the natural response but it was also the response that always got my heart broken. And in one case, got me in a very dangerous situation with my friends.

But Dexter wasn't a bad guy, and I didn't need to think about bad things when he had a box of yummy plain bagels in his hand. "What do you need? A knife? Plates?" I reached into the cabinet and pulled out two plates.

"Yup, that should do it." Dexter put the box in the center of the table and pulled out the container of cream cheese.

I brought out the rest of our supplies and waited to see what he wanted me to do next.

Dexter stepped aside and waved his hand over the box. "You can pick your bagel first."

"Okay." I was glad he let me go first because I liked the lightest color ones, and I wanted to make double sure there weren't any other flavors touching the one I picked. When I peeked inside, he was right and only a mountain of plain bagels waited for me. I picked one right in the middle because it looked extra fluffy and delicious.

Dexter chose one too, and we both sat down.

"Would you like me to cut yours in half or would you like to do it yourself?"

I could cut mine just fine, but it was nice to have somebody offer to do it for me, so I pushed my plate toward him. "You can do it, please."

Like the expert chef that he was, he sliced down the center of the bagel in two saws and gave me back exactly even halves. He did the same for his own and then handed the knife back to me. “You can put your cream cheese on, just the way you like it.”

“Alright.” I put on a thin layer that covered the full flat surface of each side, not too thick but enough that I could taste it.

Dexter put on a thicker layer on his pieces and then he closed them together like a sandwich while I ate mine in two halves.

After a few bites, I had the courage to ask what he was really doing there. “Did you know that these are my favorite kind of bagels?”

He glanced at me and smiled. “I hope you don’t mind, but I asked Brayden what you might like. I really enjoyed our date the other day, and it seemed like maybe I did something to upset you when you didn’t respond back to my texts.

“I responded. Mostly.” I looked down at my bagel and sighed in frustration. “You didn’t upset me. I...upset myself.” I didn’t really know how to explain why. It doesn’t make sense to me, so it definitely wouldn’t make sense to him, but I figured I owed Dexter some kind of explanation. Especially since he brought me yummy bagels. “It’s just that...I’m a really hard person to date. Guys are usually fine going out once or twice, but then they get really tired of dealing with me so...I figured it was better to end things on a high note.”

DEXTER

Well, that fucking broke my heart. “Augie.” I reached across the table but then hesitated with my hand hovering just above his forearm. “Is this okay?”

He looked at my hand and nodded before I gently gripped his arm.

“I can promise that I’m not gonna get mad at you for things that aren’t important or that are out of your control. And if I do get mad sometimes, like every person gets mad sometimes, that doesn’t mean I don’t care about you and that we shouldn’t be friends. Does that make sense?”

He nodded but then shrugged. “Everybody says that at first. But if you really wanna try, we can try.”

Fuck. I’d heard about Augie being in a pretty serious attack, but it seemed like there were lots of other hurts in his past as well. “Thank you, Augie. I would like to try.”

He took another bite of his bagel and looked at me. “If we just do bagel dates, we should be okay.”

I chuckled. “Well, are there other things that you also like? Maybe you can give me a list.”

He blew a breath out of puffy cheeks. “Yeah, lots of things. But it’s not just an easy

list. Some things are okay with other things. But not in certain form factors.”

Now I had to laugh. “Form factors?” I’d been in culinary arts for a long time and didn’t hear that term very often...and probably not in the way he meant it. “Can you give me some examples of what you mean?”

“Yeah, but it’s complicated. For example, onions. I hate onions. Chunks, flakes, dried, cooked, pickled. Eww, just...no onions.” He held up his finger. “But...powder is okay. I’m okay with onion powder. Like...the flavor, I guess. Because I like sour cream and onion potato chips. But I don’t eat sour cream, and I don’t eat onions.” He threw his arms up dramatically. “See? Complicated.”

I nodded. “Okay, I’m understanding these form factors. Are there other examples?”

He cocked his head and smirked. “Only a million. That’s the problem. I can’t just easily make a list and say these are good and these are bad. Every single one is different, and it’s really annoying to people.”

“Why is that annoying? I mean, I’ll have to be more careful when I order for you, but as long as you know what you like, it doesn’t really affect me.”

He threw up his hands. “I know. That’s what I’ve been saying. But it seems to affect other people’s meals if I don’t eat what they like. I don’t get it.”

I didn’t either, but at least I knew what he was worried about. “Fair enough. How about we make a deal? I promise not to ever make you eat something you don’t like. As long as you make healthy choices, I won’t question what you want to eat when we’re together.”

He raised his eyebrow. “What do you consider healthy choices? I do eat vegetables, but...only certain form factors.”

I held in a grin. “You seem like a healthy young man, so I think you’ve been doing just fine all this time. I’d say you know how to make healthy choices.”

He smiled as he looked at his second half of bagel. “Thanks.”

“By the way...” I didn’t want to ruin all the progress we’d made, but I also wanted to continue to make progress, so I pushed forward. “Brayden said you enjoyed our day flying kites. Is that true?”

He looked at me with big eyes. “It’s so true. That was the funnest day ever. Thank you, again.”

“Anytime. In fact, I saw a flyer for a maple festival this weekend, but...you don’t like maple syrup, do you?”

He flinched as if I were crazy for suggesting such a thing. “Of course I do. It’s delicious. Don’t you?”

“I do. I just thought...” I wondered if maybe Brayden had mixed up something in his transfer of information to me. “Do you like syrup on...pancakes?”

Augie cocked his head as if confused by the oddly specific question. “I guess I do. But usually, I just eat pancakes with butter because they’re so delicious that way. But on waffles, I like lots of syrup.”

“Okay, that makes sense.” And as surprised as I was, it really did. I was actually starting to understand his way of eating. At least a few of his ways. “What about French toast?”

Augie thought about it for a minute. “Depends on the bread. If it’s really thick bread that’s a little bit dry, then yes on the syrup. But if it’s skinny bread that absorbs butter

well, then maybe not.” He shrugged. “It just depends. This is why I’m such a problem.”

“You’re not a problem, sweetheart.” I moved my hand up to his shoulder and wrapped my thumb across his tense muscles. “I promise. None of this is a problem. I just wanna get to know you. And maybe you’ll wanna get to know me too.”

His eyes went wide as he nodded quickly. “I do. I have lots of questions for you too.”

“Oh yeah? Like what?” I was happy to know he’d put enough thought into our time together that he wanted to know more about me.

“Like, are you a Daddy like Ethan?” Augie was completely stoic, not giving away his preferences at all.

“Yes, I am a Daddy Dom like Ethan. But most of my experience has been through scenes at the club. I’ve had partners that I’d meet with on a regular basis over the years, but it’s been a long time since I’ve been in any kind of relationship.”

He took a moment to ponder my response and probably to think about what his would be back. “Do you like Littles like Brayden?”

I could almost sense him beginning to regress right in front of me. If we weren’t in his workplace break room, I would’ve pulled him onto my lap and cuddled him, which reminded me that this was not the place for us to have this kind of conversation. I needed to bring things up so he could finish his workday off on a good note. “I do like Littles like Brayden. Very much.” I let my hand slide down his arm and then tickled his side.

Augie giggled as he arched away from me. “Oh. That’s good.”

“Augie, I really do want to have a much deeper conversation about this with you, but not when you’re at work.”

“Oops.” He looked at his watch. “Yeah, I need to get back.”

“Can we have dinner tonight? I can pick something up and bring it to your place.”

And just like that, his happy mood dropped, and I could already see the worry lines forming in his face. “Like what?”

“Like, you order anything you want from any restaurant you want and just tell me where to go. I will pick it up, pay for it, and bring it to your house. Does that work?”

“Really? Anything I want?”

“Yeah, that’s our deal, isn’t it?”

He blew out a relieved breath. “Yeah, I guess it is. Okay, I can do that.”

“Excellent. It’s a date then.” I popped the last piece of my bagel in my mouth and then cleaned up while Augie took his last few bites.

I wanted to give Augie a hug on my way out the door, but I wasn’t sure if we were there yet, so I reached out and gave him a gentle shoulder shake before I said goodbye and headed back to work myself.

Getting to know Augie and his preferences was actually gonna be a lot more fun than I had anticipated.

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8

AUGIE

As soon as I had a few minutes of downtime in the shop, I pulled out my phone and texted Brayden. You told Dexter I like bagels!

It took a while for him to respond, but Brayden worked in a car repair shop, so sometimes he could be busy for hours before looking at his phone. Yeah, is that OK? Are you mad at me?

It's amazingly OK. He brought me bagels and said he's a Daddy like Ethan and he likes Littles and he wants to have dinner tonight.

That's great news. I'm really happy for you. I thought that was the end of his message when another text bubble popped up. Where are you going for dinner?

I get to pick. He told me to order what I want and he'll pick it up and bring it to my house so we can talk. I'm thinking of sending him to Papi's Pies for a cheese calzone. That sounds so yummy.

Oh, that's good. Dylan's Daddy Cayson will make sure your order is right.

Exactly. I just wanted to say thank you, but I need to get back to work.

Yeah, me too. Let's plan another sleepover soon. That was fun.

I responded back with a thumbs-up emoji and then put my phone away. I had a stack of accounts payables to take care of. Maurice was a great boss, but he was very old-school in the way he ran his barbershop. No automatic payments of any kind. Although, if everything were automated, I probably wouldn't have a job anymore, so I guess it was good that he was techno-phobic.

I called Papi's Pies on my way home and told Daddy Cayson about my order. "I have a date with a Daddy prospect who is Ethan's friend, and he told me to order what I want so it's correct, and he'll pick it up."

Daddy Cayson hummed into the phone. "Okay, good. I think I like him already."

I giggled. "Me too. And I know you'll get my order right, so I'm gonna tell him to call you and order whatever he wants and then he's gonna pick it up. Is that okay?"

"That's perfect, Aug. I'll make sure that even if the date doesn't go well, your tummy will be happy."

"Thank you, Daddy Cayson. Tell Daddy Finn and Dylan I said hi."

"Sure will, kiddo. You'll have to come visit us soon."

After I got home, I texted Mister Dexter to let him know where he could pick up our dinner. Dylan's Daddy knows my order already. You just need to tell him what you want and when you'll pick it up.

That sounds great. If I pick it up at 6:15, I'll get to your place around 6:30.

Perfect. I'll take a shower now and put on jammies.

I texted a link to Papi's Pies and then quickly hopped in the shower. By the time I got

home from work every day, I always felt like I was covered in little bits of hair, which made me itchy. I didn't actually get very much hair on me on a daily basis, but in my head, I still needed to wash up first thing when I got home.

As I soaped up, my mind kept drifting to Dexter maybe wanting to be my Daddy, and that made me hard. But I wanted to be good, so I decided not to touch myself. Also, there was a tiny chance he would want to do that. I didn't actually think we would get that far after a couple calzones, but just in case, I wanted to make sure I was fully ready for him without any delays or extra effort on his part.

When I was choosing pajamas, I went with a two-piece set instead of going full-on Little. The PJs I chose looked like a sweatsuit, but were super fuzzy on the inside. I didn't put on underwear because I liked the way the fuzz felt all over my whole body, but as soon as I ran to the door to open it, I realized what a bad idea that was.

Between my excitement to see Mister Dexter and the extra soft fuzzies on my cock, I was instantly hard and not able to hide it at all.

I opened the door and hid behind it, only poking out my upper torso as I waved Dexter inside. "Come on in. I was just making lemonade."

"You're making lemonade?" He raised an eyebrow. "From scratch?"

"Oh no, no, no." I laughed and reached for one of the bags. My plan was to hold it in front of myself to hide my erection, but he was too nice and refused to let me carry anything. "It's a mix. It's a little bit sweet, so you might not like it, but I also have Truly, water, and Coke."

"Okay, well, I'd love to try your mixed lemonade, if that's all right. But a Coke sounds good too."

“Cool.” I waved him toward the kitchen and let him walk ahead of me, trying not to let the fuzzies feel so good. “You can put everything on the table. I already set out our places.”

Dexter placed the bags of food in the center of the table and began unpacking them. “You did a really nice job with the table, Augie. Thank you for having everything ready.”

“Thank you for picking it up.” I rushed to the pitcher of lemonade and added the ice cubes then brought it with some glasses to the table and pulled out a Coke for Mr. Dexter, too, just in case. I’d been told that Crystal Light was an acquired taste and not everyone liked it, but it was one of my favorite drinks to make for myself. And if I was having grown-up drinks, it went well with vodka too.

Once we had everything ready, I sat down at the table, and Dexter sat across from me.

“Well, I got to meet Dylan’s Daddy.”

I giggled, wondering if he got grilled by the feisty Italian. “Was he nice to you?”

Dexter chuckled. “He was nice. Had lots of questions...and warnings for me.”

My jaw dropped. “Warnings? Did he tell you any bad stuff about me?”

“No, not at all. I can’t believe there’s any bad stuff to tell about you.”

Well, that definitely wasn’t true, but I was happy Daddy Cayson hadn’t said anything to scare Dexter away. “What kind of warnings?” I picked off the edge of my calzone, so it was just crust and popped it into my mouth.

“Mostly that I better treat you right, and if I hurt your feelings or your heart, he and his cop partner would come after me.”

I smiled. “Okay, good. But they’re just teasing. No one will come after you.”

“I know, sweetheart. And I’m happy you have good people watching out for you. That’s very important.”

I swallowed hard as I looked up at Dexter. “Yeah, my friends have all found very loving Daddies. They’ve all promised to look out for me until... Well, you know.” I looked away, unable to hold his gaze.

“Until you have a Daddy of your own?” Dexter’s foot found mine under the table.

I glanced under to see that he had kicked off his shoes and was rubbing my foot with his socked one. That made me smile and relax a bit. “Yeah, if I ever do find a Daddy. Like I said, I’m not easy to be around.”

Dexter cut into his calzone and waved the steam wafting from it into his face as he inhaled deeply. “Man, this smells good. And you are very easy to be around. I’ve loved every second of it, and anyone who has ever told you different was a...” He shook his head, searching for the right word.

“Stupid head?”

His eyes met mine, and he smiled. “Exactly. A stupid head.”

“Do you like your calzone?” I put a big bite of cheesy goo in my mouth and almost moaned out loud.

“It’s delicious. What about yours? Is it the way you like it?”

“Exactly the way I like it. Bread and cheese only. No sauce. No meat. Just cheese.”

“Is that how you like your pizza too?” Dexter asked as we continued to eat.

“It’s my favorite way to eat pizza, but I can eat regular cheese or pepperoni or black olives. If there’s a lot of sauce, I’ll usually scrape it off or just eat when I get home.”

“I see.” Dexter reached for his lemonade and took a drink. “Oh, this is good. Thank you for sharing your lemonade with me.”

I beamed with pride at having made something Mister Dexter liked. “Glad you like it.”

“So, do you usually choose not to eat around other people and wait until you get home?”

“Yeah, it’s easier. Everyone’s always trying to make me try things because they think I’ll like them. Maybe I will like it, but usually I won’t, and sometimes I just don’t want to try. It’s okay if people don’t like some things, but not everyone thinks so.”

“Well, I think so. And remember our deal. I’ll never make you try anything you don’t want to.”

For the next several minutes, we ate in relative silence until I was too full to finish. I leaned back in my chair and sighed. “That was so good.”

“It sure was.” Dexter scooted back and looked over at me. “I was hoping we could finish our conversation from earlier. Is that alright with you?”

“Yeah, of course.” I took my plate to the dishwasher and refilled my lemonade.

When I offered Mister Dexter a refill, he finished what was in his glass and then held up his Coke. "I'll just have this."

And then we went and sat on the couch.

DEXTER

Augie looked fucking adorable in his little sweatsuit pajamas. I wanted to tell him that, but I also wanted to be careful not to put too much pressure on him or try to influence our talk in any direction.

As much as I wanted to pursue the potential of a relationship with him, we needed to take things slow, and that meant I needed to understand all his needs and limits before we got too far.

Augie sat in the corner of the couch and pulled one of the throw pillows over his lap, likely trying to hide the erection I'd noticed when I first arrived.

The same one which still seemed to be present after we ate. Or maybe it had just come back.

I reached across the back of the couch but didn't touch him. "Earlier, you asked me if I like Littles, and I told you that I did."

He bit his lip and looked up at me. "Yes. I remember."

"Well, I do, and I'm hoping to find a Little for myself. Someone who will let me love him and play with him and tickle him." I reached down and tickled the bottom of his foot that was resting on the cushion between us. "What do you think about that?"

Augie's shoulders drooped, and he looked at me with so much longing and desire. "I think I wish you were my Daddy, but... I'm not easy like Brayden."

"I don't need easy like Brayden. I need sweet like Augie. And honest and open and... Well, I guess there's a lot of things we'd have to figure out along the way, but I guess I'm asking if you're open to seeing me and considering whether we might be a good match?"

"Well, of course I want that. It just makes me so sad to know that someday you probably won't want me anymore, and then I'll be by myself again. Right now, I only know what it's like to be by myself and not to have a Daddy all the time. But after I do have that and you're gone..." He just shook his head as if he didn't have the words to finish the sentence.

Even though I'd made rules for myself and limits on how physical things would get, those disappeared when I saw how much he was struggling. "Aug, would it be okay if I scooted closer to you? I feel like I need a hug."

He swallowed hard and nodded his head. "Yeah. I think I do too."

I slid across the couch and slipped my arms under him, lifting him just high enough for my leg to slide underneath, so it was hooked behind his back and around his opposite side.

He instantly fell against my chest and wrapped his arms around me.

"I know it's gonna take some time for me to earn your trust, and I know you've been hurt by bad people in the past, but I promise I'll do my best to always be one of the good guys. I'll be there for you no matter what and always put your needs first."

He nodded against my chest. "I'd like that."

“Do you know what I would like?”

His body went tense and then he slowly pulled back and looked at me. “What?”

“I’d like you to stop thinking—or at least saying—that you’re difficult or a problem. If I have a problem or difficulty, I’ll let you know. Until then, I don’t want you to tell me that you’re a problem. Can you agree to that?”

He shrugged. “I’ll try, but I might forget sometimes.”

I nodded. “And I also need you to be honest with me. If you’re worried about something or curious about something or would like to try something. Basically anything you’re thinking or feeling, I want you to feel comfortable sharing it with me. Nothing is embarrassing and nothing will scare me away. How do you feel about that?”

He grinned. “Um, terrified.”

I chuckled. “You’re not supposed to be terrified. You’re supposed to be relieved. That’s what a Daddy’s for. To take all those worries and fears and burdens away from you.”

“Yeah, I guess that’s true.”

“Maybe I should have asked this first. What do you want out of a Daddy?”

“I guess everything you said. It’s just gonna take me a while to believe I might have that.”

“Well, if I promise to keep earning your trust, do you promise to keep opening up to me?”

“Yes, I can promise that much.” He pressed his forehead to my chest, hiding his face from me. “And I want other stuff too.”

“I’m all ears.” I cupped his neck and rubbed along his jawline. “I want to know everything.”

“It’s just the regular stuff. Like, the stuff Brayden and Ethan do.”

I had a feeling I knew what he was referring to, but I needed to hear him say it. “Like what?”

He turned deeper into me, pressing his nose into my armpit. “Like bedroom stuff.”

“Augie.” I waited for him to exhale and pull back, barely peeking up at me.

“Yes?”

“We just agreed that nothing is embarrassing. And if you can’t talk about it or ask for it with words, we can’t do it. Does that make sense?”

He squeezed his eyes shut. “Like sex and kissing and stuff.”

“Okay, I like sex and kissing and stuff.” I grinned when his eyes finally opened wide enough to look at me.

“You do?”

“Of course I do, sweetheart. And I’d love to explore that with you. In time.”

“Time?” His smile dropped. “How much time?”

Excellent question. One I didn't have a real answer to. "We'll know when the time is right. There's no rush to jump into anything physical. Maybe we can start with..." I placed my other hand on his neck and tilted his head slightly. "A first kiss?"

He swallowed and his lips parted as he nodded subtly. "Yes, please."

10

AUGIE

The first kiss with any new person was always scary, but as soon as Dexter's soft lips gently touched mine, I forgot about being scared and just let myself be into it. His mouth closed around my upper lip, allowing his lower lip to briefly slide inside my mouth, where my tongue teased across it.

He pulled off and came back again, this time closing around my lower lip.

I decided to be bold and licked the seam where his lip met mine, and it was so smooth.

I moaned softly and pressed closer to him, desperate for more.

Knowing it would be okay, I took the lead and kissed him next, sucking his lower lip into my mouth before sliding my tongue over it.

The sexiest sound vibrated out of Dexter's chest before his big hands slid down my sides, and he easily lifted me up and onto his lap so I was straddling him.

That was the perfect spot for me to finally get the friction on my hard dick that I'd been needing all night. The best part was that friction came from Dexter's hard dick. I rocked against his length, circling my arms around his neck and kissing him until we were both panting and out of breath.

I squeezed him even harder. “That was the best first kiss ever.”

Dexter pressed his forehead to my shoulder and scoffed. “That was more like the best ten kisses ever.”

“Agreed.” I smiled, hoping that meant what I wanted it to mean. “Does that mean it’s time?”

Dexter turned and kissed my jaw. “Time for what?” He kissed me again, this time closer to my chin until he was back at my mouth.

My lips magically fit in all of his curves and angles. When his tongue went one way, mine fit right up against it, like they were perfectly in sync. Two halves of a single whole.

Once again, we didn’t pull away until we both needed oxygen, and I was rutting so hard against him that I was ready to come. “For the sex stuff. I’m about to do it, so I think it’s time.”

Dexter’s hands went to my hips, and he gently scooted me back, breaking contact and holding me in place. “Maybe we should slow down.”

“Why, Daddy?” Oops. The second that endearment was out, there was no taking it back. Not that I wanted to, but he hadn’t officially told me it was okay to call him Daddy yet. Although, he had officially told me I didn’t have to call him Mister Dexter, and since he said he wanted to try being my Daddy, I quickly reasoned it was fine. If it wasn’t, he said he would tell me. I wasn’t going to create a problem that didn’t actually exist. With my eyes tightly closed, I whined at him. “Why are you making me stop?”

His finger slid across my brow and then over my cheekbone, outlining my eye socket.

“Look at me, sweetheart.”

I found my courage and opened my eyes, looking right at him. “Is it okay that I called you Daddy?”

“Absolutely.” He nodded, and I could see the sincerity in his eyes. “You’re an adult, and if you’d like to move forward physically, I trust you to make the right decision for yourself. But I want you to know that I’m not expecting us to have sex tonight. This can go however you feel comfortable.”

“What do you mean? I was feeling really comfortable and then you made me stop.”

Daddy pressed a chaste kiss to my lips and smiled. “I just wanted to do a quick check to make sure it was a conscious move. If you’d like to get off by rubbing against me, I’m good with that. If you’d like to touch yourself with your hand, that’s okay too. If you’d like me to touch you, all you have to do is ask. Whatever you want is okay, Augie. Do you understand that you’re in control here?”

I’d never been in control of sex before. Truthfully, I didn’t actually want to be, but it meant a lot to me that Daddy was willing to go at my pace. “If we kiss some more, and you’re okay with me rubbing on you, I’ll definitely come that way. And if you use your hand on me, that would be even more okay.”

Dexter raised an eyebrow. “I said you had to ask, sweetheart. This isn’t the kind of thing where hints and hypotheticals count. I need to hear the words.”

I sucked in a deep breath and slowly blew it out. “Will you kiss me and help me come against your skin, Daddy?”

“I’d be happy to. Truly.” His eyes closed and his mouth found mine as if it were a magnet landing on steel.

Daddy and I kissed more gently this time, slowly and taking our time as he pulled me back flush with his body. As soon as I started rolling my hips against him, Daddy pulled down my pajamas, so the waistband was tucked under my butt and my cock was fully exposed.

Then, to my surprise and absolute delight, he unzipped his jeans and let his own bare dick pop free.

“Yes, Daddy. One more second like that.”

His wide palm cupped around my dick, holding it flush against his as I continued to rock, rubbing against his rock hard length without risk of losing contact. “That’s it, sweetheart. Take what you need. Daddy’s got you.”

That was all I needed to hear. As soon as he called himself Daddy, I was a goner. I came in long ropes of cream as waves of pleasure endlessly rolled through me. Well, not endlessly, but it was a long time before I finally stopped twitching and collapsed against Daddy’s chest. “Wow.”

He wiped his sticky hand on his shirt and then used it to clean me up before he pulled it over his head and tossed it on the ground. “How do you feel, sweetheart?”

“Melly. Like chocolate that was left in the car on a summer day.” I waved my shoulders like I was a windsock. “That was the best orgasm I’ve ever had.”

Daddy kissed my cheek and then scraped his teeth down my earlobe. “Me too.”

I pulled back and looked down, realizing that he had come as well. I didn’t even notice because I was so caught up in my own feelings. “Your hand is very strong.”

He shook his head and kissed along my jaw until he was at my chin. After one final

kiss, he pulled back and looked me right in the eye. “Not from my hand, Augie. From you. Feeling you against me. Hearing you. Smelling you.” A shiver ran through him. “Fuck, I need to stop or I’m gonna get hard all over again.”

I nodded my head enthusiastically. “Yeah, Daddy. Do that.”

DEXTER

It wasn't easy, but I was strong and limited the rest of our physical interaction to cleaning up Augie and myself, and then lying beside him in bed. We talked about his job at the barbershop and some of his favorite customers, and I told him about my work at the bakery.

My stories weren't as interesting as his because I rarely interacted with the public. When the front got really busy, I was happy to step in and do my part, but most of the time, I was in the back, hidden away in my baking cave.

Before I started naming off ingredients as a way of boring Augie to sleep, his soft snores made it clear he was out.

I carefully slid out of his bed and arranged a large stuffed owl in his arms so he had something to cuddle against, and then I slipped out of his room to clean up the kitchen and let myself out.

We'd had a great night, and I felt good about the progress we made. The Daddy in me carried a bit of guilt for letting things move faster than they should have, but Augie was an adult and had needs like any other man.

As long as he was comfortable, I wasn't going to deny him anything.

I couldn't stop smiling as I drove home from Augie's place. The night had been

nothing short of perfect. We laughed, talked, and the sexual tension between us was unreal. And then there was the way Augie had looked at me when I put him to bed. It was a look of trust that I hadn't realized I'd been desperate to see from him.

And fuck if those wanting eyes weren't addictive.

I parked my car and practically floated into my house. Even though it was just as empty as ever, I finally had some hope that it wouldn't be empty for long. After grabbing a beer, I slumped onto the couch and replayed every moment of the night in my head.

Augie was a beam of sunshine I never could've anticipated shining down on me. He was everything I thought I wanted in a partner, and his vulnerabilities made me even more committed to taking care of him. Suddenly, learning every food he liked and didn't like became my highest priority. The chef in me wanted to feed him but only foods that would bring him joy. I never wanted mealtime to be stressful for him.

Not only was he sweet, but Augie looked at me as if I could solve all his problems with a single touch. It was both inspiring and loaded with responsibility.

I drained the last of my beer and barely resisted the urge to text that I was thinking of him. Tonight was a success, in more ways than one. Not only had I made a connection with the most amazing boy I'd met in a long time, but we also started to explore each other in a more physical way.

The image of a blushing Augie as he asked me to touch him sent a shiver of arousal down my spine. He was shy and quiet most of the time, but he was finding his voice with me, and I fucking loved that.

Soon, he'd be able to tell me exactly what he wanted, and I'd be there for it. Ready to truly meet his needs in every way he allowed.

I woke up in my king-sized bed alone, but the memory of Augie's sweet face and whimpered words still lingered in my mind. Last night, our physical chemistry proved to be off the charts. Which made it even harder for me to be patient as our emotional connection developed.

After making sure it wasn't too early, I reached for my phone and sent a quick text to my boy. Good morning, sweetheart. Did you sleep well?

Amazing . His first response was quick, but the writing bubbles immediately popped up. Everything was better than I thought possible. Thank you.

Agreed. I found a meme of a dancing calzone holding a pepperoni stick and sent it to him. And the food was good too.

Augie responded with a laughing owl gif that I immediately hearted.

For the rest of the day, we exchanged cute messages and silly memes. I sent him a picture of my lunch—a big salad and steak fries—and asked for his approval.

He responded with a barrage of questions. What is the dressing on the salad? Is there any seasoning on the fries? Is that sweet tea or unsweetened in the background?

I couldn't help but chuckle at his playful conversation. Caesar dressing, a mix of dry seasonings, and sweet tea. Sometimes I get unsweetened and add stevia, but today I decided to indulge in all the sugar. Would you eat any of this?

No dressing on salads, but I love seasoned steak fries and...definitely sweet tea. 8/10 for your lunch choice today.

Eight out of ten felt like a win, and that put a huge smile on my face as I ate at my desk. Thanks for sharing your preferences.

For the rest of the day, we continued our flirtatious banter, sending each other random pictures and memes. Even while I was working, I kept checking my phone to see if any new messages had come in. It had been a long time since I had this much fun texting someone, and I knew it was 100% because of the sweet boy I was talking to.

12

AUGIE

Texting with Dexter was more fun than playing with my friends. But that was all we did. For the next few days, Dexter sent lots of messages to check on me and say nice things that made me feel special, but he didn't ask to get together.

Not until Friday afternoon.

I was sweeping up after our last customer when my favorite beep sounded in my pocket. The tinkling-bell ringtone I'd attached to Dexter's contact elicited a Pavlovian response that made me jump with excitement. I immediately hooked my elbow around the broom to hold it up as I checked my phone.

Hey, sweetheart. Just wondering if you have plans for dinner tonight? Maybe we eat out? Your choice, of course.

My grin was wide and goofy as I responded back with lightning-fast thumbs. Dinner would be great. Are you in the mood for anything in particular? Just because I was picky didn't mean he only had to eat at my favorite restaurants. I could usually find something to eat at most places.

I'm fine with anything. Pasta. Chinese. Sushi. Steaks. Your choice.

Hmm, I didn't love making decisions, but I appreciated what Dexter was doing. Giving me control. And the fact that he offered a few options made it much easier for

me to come up with a suggestion. There's a mac-and-cheese bar at the mall that sounds interesting. Do you like mac and cheese?

I love it. That sounds great. Is 7 too late for me to pick you up?

7 is perfect. I'll see you then. It was almost five, so that gave me plenty of time to shower and prep myself for a sleepover if I could talk him into staying overnight. I wasn't sure he'd go for it since he was big on waiting for the right time, but he'd relented on Monday night, and if I played my cards right, maybe I could have a Daddy for real by the end of the weekend.

I smoothed down my shirt and checked my teeth one more time as I waited for Dexter to arrive. When I finally heard a knock at the door, my heart skipped a beat. Finally!

Taking a deep breath, I opened the door and saw the most handsome Daddy smiling at me.

"Hey there, little one. Ready for dinner?"

Butterflies fluttered in my stomach at the pet name. No one had called me that before, and we weren't even in a scene. "Hi, Da— Um, Mister Dexter. Yeah, I'm starving."

"You look great." Dexter's eyes sparkled as he looked me over. "Like an angel."

I blushed and ducked my head shyly. "Thank you."

He gently lifted my chin. "No need to be shy, sweetheart. And if you feel inclined to call me Daddy outside of the bedroom, you are welcome to. Whatever you want."

"Oh, okay." I nodded as a wave of relief filled me. "I'd like that. Sometimes, at least."

“Me too, sweetheart.” He held his arms open for a hug. “I’ve missed you this week.”

The tender gesture made me melt inside. I wanted so badly to be his good boy as I walked into his chest and wrapped my arms around his middle. “I missed you too. A lot.”

Daddy held me tightly, and I think he pressed his nose into my hair and took a deep breath. Let’s go get some mac and cheese.”

"Yes, please!" I stayed connected to his arm as we walked to his car. “I checked the menu online, and I’m super excited to try it out.”

"Me too." When we got to the car, he opened the door and then helped me with my seatbelt. It wasn’t necessary, but I loved that he was willing to take care of me.

I squirmed excitedly in my seat during the drive, sneaking glances at Daddy’s strong hands as he gripped the steering wheel. When we pulled up to the mall, I rubbed my hands together. “I hope it’s as good as the pictures looked.”

"If it’s not, we’ll go somewhere else. We’ll keep trying places until we find something my boy loves." Dexter winked and then turned off the engine.

I swallowed hard, loving that he was willing to call me his boy.

Daddy led me inside the mall to a place called Cheesy Mack’s. I’d been meaning to come with my friends for the past month, but they were always busy, and I didn’t like to do things by myself if I could avoid it.

It was even better than I imagined. There was one line along the left side of the restaurant and you had to walk past the display window and choose your toppings. It was the perfect restaurant for me.

My tummy rumbled as I read the list of all the delicious options.

Daddy stepped behind me and wrapped his arms around my shoulders as he leaned close to my ear. "Order whatever toppings you want on yours, sweetheart. And I'll do the same."

I bounced on my toes, excited and slightly overwhelmed by all the choices. "So many things look good. It'll be hard to choose."

"Want me to order first? Give you an extra minute to decide?" He stepped to my side and slightly ahead of me.

My chest warmed at his indulgent tone. "Yes, please." I carefully studied the case and picked my favorites that I was sure would all work together. I just had one question.

Dexter ordered fusilli with alfredo sauce, andouille sausage, and a bunch of veggies. It looked delicious but not my style at all.

Finally, I decided on white cheddar mac with crispy bacon and parmesan crisps. Nothing else.

"Excellent choice, baby." Daddy paid for our food and let me choose a bottle of sparkling apple juice then we sat down at a table by the window.

Dexter watched as I took my first bite, ready to fix any problems that arose. "How is it?"

I put a big scoop in my mouth and moaned. "Mmm, delish." I finished that bite and then looked over at him. "How's yours?"

He took a big bite and rubbed his tummy. "It's so good. Great recommendation."

I glanced down at all his toppings and noticed he skipped a few of the usual suspects. "No onions?"

"Well, I was hoping for some kissing later. Wouldn't want my baby to taste yucky onion breath." Dexter leaned in close with his fork poised over my bowl. "Can I taste yours?"

"Yeah, of course." A shiver ran through me at the reminder of what might happen after dinner. "And maybe we can have a sleepover tonight? If it's time..."

Daddy's eyes were heated as he put a small bite of my food in his mouth and nodded. "If you think it's time, then I'd be happy to stay over."

I did my best to keep my cool as we ate, but it was hard not to scarf it down just to get back to my house. I took a big bite and let out a happy noise.

"It's yummy, right?" Dexter took his last bite and pushed his bowl back.

I nodded and looked down at my half-eaten bowl. "It's so good, Daddy. Thank you for bringing me here."

He reached across the table and took my hand. "I'm just happy to see you enjoy your food."

His gentle touch made my insides turn to mush. If we were alone, I would have curled up in his lap and stayed there forever. I felt so safe and cared for in his presence, even if we were just eating mac and cheese at the mall.

When we finished, Dexter wiped a bit of cheese from the corner of my mouth. "Got a smudge there, baby. Good thing Daddy's here to clean you up."

I giggled and imagined him cleaning me all up. "Thank you, Daddy."

On the drive back to my place, I worked up my courage to ask the question that had been on my mind all night. "Daddy, is it okay if we do some Little stuff tonight?"

Dexter glanced at me, his expression unreadable. "Of course, baby boy. What do you have in mind?"

I shrugged. "Maybe playing and a bath...and cuddle time in bed."

He reached over to squeeze my thigh. "That sounds like the perfect evening, sweetheart. Should we stop at the store for anything before we get back to your place?"

After a moment of thought, I realized there were a few things I didn't have at home. Things I'd never actually purchased in my life. "Um, well, maybe we could stop for...supplies."

Dexter's thumb rubbed along my leg. "What kind of supplies?"

I didn't know if he was genuinely asking or if he knew what I meant but just wanted me to say it, so I screwed my eyes shut and took a deep breath. "Like, condoms, lube. Stuff like that. I don't have anything at home."

His grip tightened on my thigh. "Good idea. And we can pick up snacks too. Maybe popcorn or cookie dough."

"I have lots of snacks, but if there's anything you want, we can get that too."

Daddy pulled up in front of a chain drug store, and we quickly went in and grabbed the bedroom supplies I mentioned...and a few other things that Daddy put in the

basket but I didn't pay much attention to. "What about bubbles for your bath? Do you need anything for that? Some toys, maybe?"

I grinned as my eyes widened. "I could use some more torpedoes. I lost mine at the lake the last time we went."

Dexter kept his arm around my lower back as he guided me toward the toy aisle. There wasn't a huge selection of water toys in the middle of winter, but there was one pack of colorful torpedoes in the clearance bin.

"These are them. They're like my other ones." I held the pack against my chest and looked up at Daddy. "Can we get these?"

"Absolutely." He held the basket out for me, and I dropped them in. And I noticed a pack of edible paints in the basket, but I didn't say anything. Maybe Daddy wanted some play time too.

13

DEXTER

From the moment Augie asked me to sleep over, I'd been half hard and anxious to get back to his place. The courage he showed in asking me to stop for supplies just made my hopes for the night ratchet up even higher.

Anticipation bubbled in my chest as we walked up to his apartment in silence.

Augie must have been just as nervous as he unlocked the door with trembling hands.

"Hey, sweetheart." I pulled him into a hug as soon as we were inside. "There's nothing to be nervous about. Tonight we'll play and have fun and just see what happens. If nothing more than you falling asleep in my arms goes on in your bed, that's perfectly fine with me. I'm just happy to spend time with you tonight."

He inhaled deeply and then exhaled as he nodded. "Me too, Daddy. I just don't want to scare you away."

"Baby." I placed both hands on his cheeks and leaned down to kiss him. "You won't scare me away. I promise. Just be yourself, and let me worry about the rest."

Augie melted against me with adoration in his gaze. "Thank you, Daddy. I just want to be a good boy for you."

"You are good, baby. So, so good." Our lips connected in a tender kiss that quickly

deepened. Augie whimpered softly as my tongue teased his.

When I pulled back to take a breath, his eyes were dark with desire. "Are you ready for your bath or do you want to play first?"

He swallowed hard and held my gaze. "A bath sounds nice, Daddy."

I nodded eagerly as my whole body tingled with excitement. "Would you like to pick out your jammies while I get the water ready?"

"Yes, please." Augie smiled and took my hand, leading me toward the bedroom. "Will you help me choose what to wear?"

I grinned as I watched Augie pull out two adorable pajama options from his drawer. One was a full-body pajama with footies while the other was an adult-sized onesie that just covered his crotch with a snap and had short sleeves. He held them both up and looked at me expectantly, waiting for me to make a decision.

My heart melted at how he deferred to me, trusting my judgment. "Well, both are absolutely precious, but I think I want to feel more of your skin tonight, so how about the onesie?"

Augie's cheeks flushed pink as he lowered his gaze shyly. "O-okay, Daddy. I think that's the best one too."

I couldn't resist leaning in for a quick peck on his forehead before I held up the onesie. "Would you like to wear anything underneath, or should we keep it...well, breezy?"

Augie hesitated, biting his bottom lip as he contemplated his answer.

I could tell he was conflicted about something, and I wanted him to know he could always be open with me. "You can tell me anything, little one." I held him against my chest, speaking as softly as possible. "Just like with food, you can be honest about what you like and don't like. Nothing will scare me away."

Finally, he released a shaky breath and his shoulders relaxed. "I don't know if it's too soon to bring it up, but I kinda like...diapers sometimes. I mean, usually just when I'm with my friends, and we don't have to but..." He shrugged and turned away.

My heart swelled with pride at his vulnerability. I cupped his cheek in my hand and looked him in the eyes. "Sweetheart, if you'd like to wear a diaper later, we can certainly do that. Let's see how you feel after your bath, okay? And you can always change your mind, alright?"

He nodded with relief washing over his features. "Okay, Daddy. Thank you."

I smiled, grateful that he was already so trusting with me. "Now, let's get you cleaned up, and we'll worry about the rest later."

Augie practically dragged me into the bathroom.

I turned the faucet on to the right temperature and then helped him out of his clothes. As I slid his pants and briefs down his legs, I did my best to keep my gaze above the waist. But it was hard to ignore his erection pointing right at me.

My boy was ready for more, and I needed to be the strong one to pace us for the night or I'd end up fucking him in the shower and missing out on all the playtime we were both excited about.

As soon as Augie was fully naked, he slipped into the bubble bath and lowered down to his neck. Bubbles exploded into the air and drifted back down as he leaned forward

and searched for his hidden torpedos.

For the first several minutes, Augie played with his torpedos, showing me how fast they could get from one end of the tub to the other. Then he pulled a bathtub crayon off the soap dish. “Daddy, guess what I’m drawing.”

“Okay, baby.” I crouched beside the tub as he carefully sketched on the white tile. His regression was swift, and I was curious to see how the rest of the night went. “Let’s see what you can draw.”

Augie’s tongue poked out of his mouth as he drew the outline of an animal. After a minute, it became clear he was drawing a bear of some kind.

“Is that...a polar bear?”

He shook his head and then filled in the arms and legs with his crayon so it was obviously a panda.

“Oh, I see. That looks like a panda bear.”

“It is a panda bear!” Augie threw his wet arms around my neck. “You got it right, Daddy. It’s the panda at the zoo.”

“It looks great, Augie.” I ran my fingers through his hair, brushing it away from his eyes. “Nice work. Now, are you ready to wash up so you can get out?”

He nodded and handed me the washcloth draped over the side of the tub. “Yeah, can you do it?”

“Absolutely.” I soaped him up, massaging the suds into his skin and then washing them away. I kept it clinical, merely grazing his body from toes to neck with the

sudsy cloth.

Augie's eyes closed as a soft sigh escaped his lips. His body was completely malleable as he leaned back, allowing me access to every part of him. No part of him was tense except his growing erection. I gave it a cursory scrub with the towel and then slid down below his balls to his crack before declaring him all clean.

When Augie finally got out of the tub, I dried him off with a fluffy towel, making a game out of checking every corner with tickling fingers. Augie's sweet giggle brought a smile to my face that was more genuine than I could ever remember.

I slipped the onesie over his head, taking care not to catch any of his delicate skin when I snapped it over his thickened dick. "How does that feel? You good without a diaper for now?" I ruffled his hair, making sure he knew any answer was okay.

Augie blushed but couldn't hide the smile creeping onto his face. "It's good, Daddy."

I hung the towel on the hook behind his door and held my hand out to him. "You know what else is good?"

"What?" He took my hand and followed me toward his bedroom.

"You." I bopped his nose. "You're a very good boy for Daddy."

14

AUGIE

I squirmed with excitement when Daddy tucked me into my cozy bed. As he pulled the covers up to my chin, my heart fluttered because I knew what was next. Dexter slid into the bed beside me, his warm body so close to mine that I wanted to cuddle up against him and never let go.

"Are you ready for sleep, sweetheart, or would you like to watch some TV first?"

I suddenly felt shy about asking for what I wanted, but I wasn't going to miss this opportunity. "I'm not sleepy yet, Daddy. But...don't wanna watch TV." My thumb went into my mouth and I hooked my finger over my nose, peeking up at him over it. After a few seconds of building up courage, I pulled my thumb out enough to use the words I knew he was waiting for. "Can we...do sexy stuff instead?" My cheeks burned hot, but I didn't look away. I needed him to see how much I wanted this, even if I was still feeling Little.

Daddy's eyes darkened, and his hand moved across my hip. "Are you sure, sweetheart? We don't have to rush anything."

"I'm sure, Daddy. Want you." To prove it, I wriggled closer and pressed my body against him, making sure my hard cock poked against him.

Daddy kissed me tenderly and then pulled back just far enough to cup my cheek. "Fuck, baby. You make me want you so badly."

I relaxed and reached around to cup his ass so I could pull him even closer to me. "Um, but we gotta use all the protection, though. I get tested lots, but doc says two more months 'fore I'm all clear."

His eyes narrowed, and I hoped he wasn't going to ask for more details. Not now. Neither of us wanted to ruin this moment. When he kissed me and pulled my body on top of his, I completely gave myself over to my Daddy. "I know, sweetheart. Daddy will always be safe with you. For you." Dexter's big hand wrapped over my ass cheek and then slid lower until he was toying with the snaps. "You look so damn cute in this thing, it's a shame to take it off..."

A shiver of excitement ran through me as I sat up and straddled Daddy's hips, loving how big and solid he felt beneath me. "I'll put it on after. Promise." Leaning down, I captured his lips in a hungry kiss, then giggled when his stubbly chin tickled as I licked into his mouth.

Daddy's big fingers slipped between the snaps and teased my balls, sending spikes of electricity straight to the tip of my dick and making it drip with excitement. I whimpered and ground my hips down, more than ready for him.

Daddy's cock had swelled too, pressing against my ass as making it hard for my brain to form sentences. "Ready. Now."

"Such an eager little boy," Daddy murmured against my lips. "So hard and desperate for Daddy's big dick."

I rocked against him, ready to tear my onesie open myself. I tugged at the fabric at my chest. "Off, Daddy. Off."

Dexter's pupils were dark as he yanked open the snaps and released the annoying cotton separating my body from his. His fingertips trailed down my crack, rubbing

over my smooth pucker. "Is that better, baby boy?"

"Yes, Daddy!" I nodded frantically. "Inside me. Please."

His palms slid up my sides and his thumbs brushed over my nipples.

The touch was both soft and deliberate, like he already knew how to make my body sing in ecstasy. I gasped and arched into the touch. "More..."

"My good boy is so sensitive." Daddy pinched lightly, making me cry out and grind down harder. "Does that feel good, sweetheart?"

"S-so good, Daddy!"

He sat up suddenly and wrapped an arm around my waist to keep me on his lap. With a slight shove backward, his mouth latched onto one of my nipples.

Fuck! I threw my head back with a moan. The wet heat of his tongue sent sparks of pleasure through my body and almost made me come right then.

I clutched Daddy's shoulder with one hand as the other went down to my cock. While his mouth lavished attention on my chest, licking and sucking and gently biting me, I started stroking against him. "D-Daddy! I'm gonna come without you in me. Please! I wanna feel you inside me."

Dexter pulled back and reached for the bag of supplies he'd discreetly left beside the bed. "Don't worry, baby. Daddy's going to take such good care of you." He lifted me and laid me on my back.

As I lay there naked, the hungry look in Daddy's eyes became even more intense as he blindly dropped a dollop of lube onto his hand and leaned over me. "Just let me

get you nice and ready first. Don't wanna hurt you."

I spread my legs wider as Daddy settled between them. The first touch of his slick finger against my hole made me gasp. It was cool and slick but felt so damn good.

"That's it, sweetheart. Just breathe."

I took deep breaths as Daddy slowly worked me open, praising me the whole time that he stretched me out. By the time he had three fingers inside me, I was a writhing mess with precome pooling on my belly.

"M'ready, Daddy! Want you now."

"Yes, sweetheart. You've been so good for me." He pulled his fingers out and then rolled on a condom as he softly kissed me.

My heart raced with excitement and nerves when he finally lined himself up at my opening and pressed against me.

"Tell me if you need to stop, baby."

I reached up and cupped his face. "I trust you, Daddy."

He pushed in slowly, stretching me in a way I hadn't felt in months. It burned a bit, but Dexter was careful, pausing whenever I tensed up until he was fully inside me.

"Baby, you feel incredible. So tight for me."

I clenched experimentally around him, and we both moaned. "F-feels so good, Daddy."

He chuckled breathlessly and pulled back just an inch. "Think you're ready for me to move, baby?"

"Yes, please!"

He started with slow, shallow thrusts that took my breath away, leaving me panting for air. The burn faded quickly and was replaced by waves of pleasure that seemed to come from every nerve ending.

I wrapped my legs around his waist, urging him deeper with my heels in his back. "Harder, Daddy. Make me feel it."

"Fuck, baby." The sound of skin slapping skin filled the room, almost drowning out our low moans.

I clung to Daddy's shoulders as he pounded into me, hitting that spot that made me see stars. "I'm almost gonna come."

"Let go, baby. When you're ready, I want you to come on Daddy's cock."

Overwhelmed by all the gentle touches and attention, I tried to focus on how good it all felt. Just having a Daddy who wanted to take care of me and make me feel good.

Dexter's hips snapped faster, driving into me relentlessly. The pressure built and built until I was tumbling over the edge.

With a broken cry, I came hard, clenching around his cock while jolts of pleasure crashed over me in waves.

Daddy groaned loudly, and his hips stuttered as he came inside me, filling me with warmth, even though the barrier kept it from coating my insides the way I wanted.

Someday .

For a long moment, we lay there panting and just holding each other. Finally, Daddy pulled out, leaving me empty for just a second before he gathered me into his arms and peppered my face with kisses.

"You were perfect, baby boy. How do you feel?"

I snuggled into his chest with a contented sigh. "Amazing. That was better than any other time in my life."

"Me too." He kissed the top of my head. "Me too, baby. Now let's get you cleaned up so we can have some cuddle time."

I nodded sleepily, already drifting off in the safety net of Daddy's arms.

Was this for real? Was he for real? It all felt too good to be true, but whether it was or wasn't, I was going to enjoy every second I had.

15

DEXTER

Sunlight streaming through the curtains woke me the next morning. I blinked away the light, momentarily disoriented by the warm weight on my chest. Then memories of the best night of my life came flooding back, and I smiled.

Augie was still fast asleep with his mouth slightly open and his thumb resting on his lip where it had slipped out of his lips.

The urge to wake him with kisses was strong, but I was content to simply watch him for a few moments. When he finally stirred, my sweet boy burrowed into my armpit for a moment and then stretched like a cat. "Mmm, sore but good sore." He pressed his lips to my bare chest.

"Good morning, sweetheart." I brushed a lock of hair from his forehead and kissed it.

Augie's eyes fluttered all the way open, and he beamed. "G'morning, Daddy."

"Did you sleep well?"

He nodded, stifling a yawn. "Best sleep ever."

"I'm glad. Are you ready for breakfast? There's a diner I really like that I can take you to. They make a delicious blueberry coffee cake." I lifted him slightly off my chest so I could carefully watch his face. "How do you feel about blueberry coffee

cake?”

“Oh, um.” He bit his lip and looked toward the window. “Real or imitation blueberries?”

“Real, of course.” I chuckled at the question. “Is that okay?”

“Um, no thank you.” He sucked in a deep breath. “Is that okay?”

“Of course it is.” I patted his back then pulled up the covers when I felt his cool skin. “You don’t like blueberries?”

“Not real ones.” He rested his head on my shoulder. “But there’s a mix in a blue box with imitation blueberries that I really like. I know those aren’t supposed to be good, but they kinda taste like candy.”

“Oh, I loved those!” I knew exactly what he was talking about. “I ate them every weekend when I was a kid.” I thought about our options. “If you don’t mind waiting, I can run to the store and buy the mix. Or we can go out and get pancakes or waffles and I’ll have the mix ready for tomorrow.”

His eyes lit up as his breath hitched. “You’re gonna be here tomorrow too?”

I cocked my head. “If you’d like me to.”

“I would! I do.” He sat up and straddled my waist. “Will you, Daddy? Please?”

I wrapped my arms around him and sat up so he was pressed against my chest. “I think I can arrange that, sweetheart.”

Colorful Lego bricks were scattered across the floor, forming a rainbow around us as

Augie carefully placed another turret on our growing castle. Like in the bath, his tongue poked out in concentration, lost in his childlike focus.

"What do you think, Daddy?" He sat back on his heels and inspected our masterpiece. "Is it big enough yet?"

My heart swelled at the innocent question. "I think it's perfect, baby boy. You're doing such a good job."

Augie beamed at the praise, and his cheeks flushed pink. He reached for another handful of bricks and hummed softly to himself as he continued building.

I loved how easily he slipped into his Little headspace with me. Ethan had warned me that Augie was reserved, but from that first night, he seemed to open right up. It was humbling and reminded me of the immense responsibility I was taking on by becoming his Daddy.

Augie was sweet and gentle and deserved all the best things. I just hoped I was strong enough to give him everything he ever dreamed of.

After playing for a while longer, I glanced at the clock and was surprised to see the afternoon had gotten away from us. "Let's get cleaned up for now, sweetheart. It's almost dinnertime."

"Aww, do we have to?" Augie pouted adorably even as he started organizing the loose bricks into piles by color.

"I don't know about you, but I'm getting hungry."

"Yeah, me too." He reached for his phone and snapped a picture of our castle. "I'mma send this to Brayden. It's way bigger than his castle."

“Great! So, what sounds good for dinner? I’d love to cook for you, but only something you really like.”

Instead of the look of terror I’d become accustomed to seeing whenever I mentioned food, he smiled. "Oooh, can we have 'sgetti?"

"Of course." I was surprised by that. “Regular marinara or meat sauce?”

“Um, I like plain noodles with butter. And sprinkle cheese.”

I grinned. “Like, parmesan cheese?”

He nodded. “Yes, please and thank you.”

I kissed the top of his head and headed to the kitchen.

A few minutes later, Augie came in and washed his hands. “I can help, Daddy. Just tell me what to do.”

“Well, I was thinking we might like to have a salad with our pasta. Would you like to wash the lettuce?”

“Okay, but...no dressing for me, please.”

I winked. “I remember, sweetheart. No dressing for my sweet boy.” As I started boiling water for the pasta, I noticed him fidgeting more than usual.

"Augie, is everything okay?"

He nodded quickly. "Uh-huh. I’m fine." Augie retrieved the romaine lettuce I’d bought earlier and took it to the sink, but his movements seemed stilted and

uncomfortable. It looks highly reminiscent of the pee-pee dance I'd seen on more than one occasion.

"Sweetheart, do you need to use the potty?"

"Nope." He shook his head emphatically. "I'm helping now."

I hid a smile at his stubbornness. "Alright, but let me know if you change your mind."

He worked diligently on the salad, even dicing tomatoes into perfect cubes. But as he chopped, his squirming only intensified.

Finally, I couldn't ignore it any longer. "Come on, little one. Potty break."

"But Daddy..." He waved at the mess of tomato juice on the cutting board. "I'm working."

"No buts. Let's go."

He pouted as he rinsed off his hands and let me lead him to the bathroom.

"I'll be right outside if you need me, okay?"

Augie left the door cracked while he peed, and a minute later, he came out looking relieved but sheepish.

"All better?"

He nodded, not quite meeting my eyes.

I had an idea but had to tread carefully not to put any pressure on him. "Sweetheart, I

was thinking... Would you like me to help you into a diaper? That way you wouldn't have to stop playing or helping when you need to go potty."

His eyes went wide as he looked up at me. "Do you think I should?"

"Only if you want to." I gripped his shoulders so I could watch his expression. "There's no pressure at all."

Augie bit his lip, clearly conflicted. "If you're okay with it, I'd like to try it, Daddy."

My heart soared. "Of course, baby boy. Let's go get you into something more comfortable."

Augie pulled out the pair of footed pajamas he'd considered wearing the night before and a diaper from his dresser then stood awkwardly by the bed, fidgeting with the hem of his shirt.

"It's alright, sweetheart. There's nothing to be nervous about."

"I know, Daddy. This is happy quiet, not nervous quiet."

I grinned as I guided him to the bed. "I'm happy too, sweetheart."

Augie was compliant and eager as he lifted his hips so I could slide the diaper underneath him. As I carefully secured the fasteners, I had to carefully arrange his erection so it wasn't in an uncomfortable position. "Is this okay?"

"Yeah, sorry." He covered his eyes with his face but was smiling. "I think my dick is happy too."

I finished redressing him in his pajamas, and he squirmed a bit as he got used to the

new sensation.

"Does it feel okay?"

"It's...nice. Different from when I do it myself." He glanced up at me shyly. "Better."

I pressed a kiss to his forehead. "Now, shall we finish making dinner?"

He nodded excitedly as some of his earlier enthusiasm returned.

Augie finished up a dry salad, and we sat down for some buttery noodles and grilled chicken on separate plates so they didn't touch. I added a few more spices to mine but was happy to indulge in the simple meal.

After dinner, I pulled out a box of cereal and held it up. "Who wants to make dessert?"

"Me, me, me!" Rice Krispie treats were Augie's favorite, and he'd made them several times on his own. "Can I stir, Daddy? Pretty please?"

"Of course, baby. Just be careful with the melty marshmallows. They're hot."

He nodded solemnly, accepting the wooden spoon. As he stirred, I noticed him squirming against the counter.

"Everything alright, sweetheart?"

Augie bit his lip and then inhaled deeply. "Um, well...I'm a little wet now."

I smiled reassuringly. "That's okay, sweetheart. That's what the diaper's for. Do you need Daddy to change you?"

He shook his head and blushed. "Not yet. Can we finish the treats first?"

"Of course." That was the whole point of the diaper, so he didn't have to stop having fun to run to the bathroom. "We're almost done, and then they'll need some time to cool."

Augie nodded and returned his focus to evenly covering every bit of cereal with the sticky, buttery mess. When we finally pressed the gooey mixture into the pan, Augie leaned against me and sighed happily. "Thank you, Daddy."

I wrapped an arm around him and pulled him closer. "For what, sweetheart?"

"For taking care of me. And...for everything."

16

AUGIE

When I opened my eyes the next morning, Daddy was fast asleep beside me. His chest rose and fell with deep, even breaths as he filled up my bed.

A smile tugged at my lips as I gazed at his handsome face. How had I gotten so lucky?

My body tingled with arousal as I admired Daddy's big muscles and the patches of hair on his chest. After a moment, I decided to wake him up in the best way ever. Careful not to disturb him, I slid under the covers and found my prize.

Daddy's cock was thick and full as I nuzzled against his crotch, inhaling his musky scent. I wasn't sure if he'd woken up, but I slipped my fingers around his length and sucked his tip into my mouth, gently suckling it.

Daddy tasted so good as I licked him up and down. The erotic moment got me extra excited, and I accidentally moaned out loud while I worshipped his cock with my lips and tongue.

Above me, Daddy's breathing changed, and his hips rocked slightly, pushing deeper into my eager mouth.

I increased my pace and went even deeper, wanting to wake up Daddy in a way that might make him want to stay with me forever. Wake up next to me forever.

"Well, good morning, sweetheart." Dexter's sleepy voice rumbled through me as his hand wrapped around my diapered bottom. "A great morning, in fact."

I hummed around him, sending vibrations up his shaft. I loved making him feel good.

"Can Daddy get a taste too?" Dexter reached for the lower zipper on my jammies and opened them up until my diaper was exposed.

I scooted closer so my hips were near his shoulder. It took a bit of maneuvering but Daddy managed to release me from my diaper and get my cock into his mouth.

I moaned around him as I pushed into his touch, craving more of his wet warmth.

Pleasure shot through me as Daddy sucked my cock, and I sucked him. His strong hands kneaded my ass, urging me to rock my hips. I braced myself on his thighs, overwhelmed by sensation.

Daddy's cock seemed to grow even thicker and longer as we enjoyed each other in tandem, with moans muffled by wet flesh.

I lost myself in the extreme sensations of Daddy's skillful mouth on me and the weight of his cock on my tongue. Heat coiled in my tummy, and I knew I was getting close to the edge.

Daddy could already recognize the change in my movements, so he picked up his pace and a slick finger pressed against my opening. The added stimulation of him sliding into my ass pushed me over the brink. I came with a muffled cry as my hips jerked against Daddy's face and I shot down Daddy's throat.

Waves of pleasure and joy rolled through me, and when they finally subsided, I focused on Daddy. I took his cock as deep as I could and swallowed around his thick

shaft.

"I'm gonna come, baby." His thighs tensed beneath my hands, and his pelvis tilted as he filled my throat.

I swallowed quickly, not wanting to waste a drop of his offering. When he finally softened, I let him slip from my lips and scooted up into Daddy's arms.

For a moment, we just lay there, catching our breath. Then he kissed me deeply, mixing our flavors on our tongues.

Dexter pulled back and brushed my sweaty hair off my brow. "Such a good boy for Daddy."

I preened at the praise, snuggling closer. "I did it to show you how I feel."

"Thank you, sweetheart." He rubbed my back as he looked me in the eye. "Do you have words to say how you feel?"

I nodded, nervous about what I wanted to say but hoping Daddy wouldn't get mad. "Well, I just...love you, Daddy."

His breath hitched as he held me tighter to his chest. "I love you too, sweetheart." He pressed a kiss to my forehead and held his lips there for a long moment. "Thank you for trusting me with your heart. I promise to take care of it."

I pulled back and looked at him. "I know you will. You take care of all of me, heart included."

Daddy chuckled. "Speaking of taking care of you, how about some breakfast? I believe I owe you some blue box blueberry pancakes."

My stomach rumbled at the mention of food. "Yes please, Daddy!"

Dexter gave me one last squeeze before climbing out of bed. I admired the flex of his muscles as he stretched. My Daddy was so sexy, I didn't know if I could ever let him go home.

17

DEXTER

"So how's it going with Augie?" Ethan asked, nudging me with his elbow as we shot some pool in his basement.

I couldn't help grinning as I sank the eight ball and won the game. Again. We hadn't been hanging out as often since Brayden came into his life, and now I usually spent every spare moment with Augie, but the boys were watching movies upstairs, so I had some time to open up to my friend. "Great. Really great. In fact, even though we haven't been together long, I think we both know it's real."

Ethan chuckled as he racked the balls. "Damn, you're already whipped."

"Shut up, man." I couldn't keep the grin off my face because it was true. I was head over heels for my boy.

"I'm just messing with you. Honestly, I'm happy for you, dude." Ethan clapped me on the back. "And if you're that into him, why aren't you shacked up yet? I practically moved Brayden in after our first date."

I hadn't thought about it that way, but he had a point. I was still worrying about following arbitrary rules that didn't mean anything to me or Augie. All that mattered was having more time with him. "I guess I just don't want to scare him off."

"Dude, if you're both feeling it, just ask. Life's too short to wait and wonder."

Ethan's words stayed with me as I drove Augie back to his apartment. Ethan was right. I was tired of only seeing my boy after work and on weekends. I wanted to wake up with Augie every morning so I could take care of him in every way. Every day.

When Augie and I were curled up on the couch, watching Scooby-Doo reruns, I decided to grow a pair and do what Ethan suggested. I just needed to ask.

"Augie, sweetheart?" I paused the show to get his full attention as my heart thumped in my chest.

"Hmm?" He looked up at me with those big doe eyes, and I almost lost my nerve.

"I was thinking..." I took a deep breath and changed my words. "Well, hoping really, that maybe you'd want to move in with me." The words came out in a rush, and I held his gaze, carefully watching his facial expressions.

The room was silent for what felt like an eternity as his body tensed up in my arms. "You want me to move in with you? To your house?" Augie's voice was barely above a whisper as he summarized my question.

I searched his face for any sign of what he was feeling. He looked both surprised and uncertain, and I wondered if I had been too presumptuous. "I mean, there's no pressure if you're not ready." I ran my fingers through his hair to make sure he knew I wasn't upset by his reaction. "It's just something I've been thinking about lately."

Augie stared at me for a moment before a small smile appeared on his face. "Of course I want to. I wanna be with you all the time, Daddy. But are you sure?"

I took a deep breath then raised his hand to my mouth and kissed it. "Being with you makes me so happy, sweetheart." I swallowed the lump in my throat. "And waking

up with you every day would make me even happier.”

Augie leaned in and kissed me gently, erasing all the doubts and fears that had been growing in my mind.

“Can we start packing now?” He stood up and tugged at my hands. “Hurry, Daddy. We need to get home.”

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AUGIE

I woke up to the sound of Dexter's soft snoring next to me and smiled. His arm was still wrapped protectively around my waist as it usually was when we slept.

I snuggled back against Daddy's warm body and just listened to him breathe. Nothing in the world was better than waking up with my Daddy every day.

It had been a month since I moved into his house, and each day still felt like the best dream ever. Daddy took such good care of me and always made sure I had everything I needed and wanted...even before I knew I needed or wanted it.

After a few minutes of just admiring his handsome face, I carefully slipped out from under his arm. I hardly ever woke up first, so I wanted to make the most of this special occasion as I tiptoed to the kitchen.

Dexter opened his eyes and stretched just as I returned to the bedroom with a breakfast tray. "Good morning, Daddy!" I said cheerfully. "I made you breakfast in bed!"

"You did?" He sat upright and leaned against the upholstered headboard. "That was sweet of you, baby boy." He smiled sleepily at me and then inspected the tray. "What a nice surprise. Come cuddle with Daddy while I eat."

I put the tray down over his lap and carefully climbed back under the covers beside him.

Daddy picked up a piece of the buttered toast I made for him and took a big bite. "Mmm, delicious. You used the cinnamon bread that I love. Such a good boy."

I beamed with pride, feeling a warm glow inside at making Daddy happy. Every time he praised me was like winning the lottery. Which, I kinda did as far as Daddies were concerned. "I love you, Daddy. Thank you for being my winning ticket."

"Um, you're welcome." Dexter chuckled and held up the center bite of his toast to my mouth. "I love you too, Augie. My precious boy."

I was bustling around the kitchen when the doorbell rang. "I'll get it!" I ran to answer it. It was my friends for a cupcake decorating party. Daddy baked them for us and put out a huge assortment of decorations. He even said we can make as big of a mess as we needed without any consequences. I just had to help clean up, which was fine with me. I loved helping Daddy in the kitchen.

Brayden walked in first and gave me a hug. "Hey, Augs."

Dylan and Max were right behind him and each gave me hugs too.

"Hey, guys! I'm glad you all came." I closed the door and ushered them toward the kitchen. "I've got all the supplies already set up for us."

The four of us took over the kitchen, and within minutes, the quiet space erupted in giggles and silly songs as we carefully frosted and decorated our cupcakes. It was a bit of a mess, and there were sprinkles scattered everywhere, but we were having so much fun that I didn't even worry about the cleanup.

It was worth the effort.

"Augs, you're so lucky to have a Daddy who doesn't mind us making a mess like this." Max licked frosting off his fingers. "My Daddy doesn't like sticky messes." He

giggled and then made a funny face with his eyebrows up high. "Well, some sticky messes are okay, but not the kitchen kind."

I chuckled and then sighed in contentment. "I know, Daddy Dexter is the best. He takes such good care of me and never gets mad." I looked at each of my friends. "I finally get why you guys love your Daddies so much."

"Aren't we the luckiest boys in the world?" Dylan grinned. He had two Daddies, so he was doubly lucky.

"Definitely."

Just then, Dexter appeared in the doorway. He grimaced at first and then just smiled and shook his head as he surveyed the chaotic scene. "You boys having fun?"

"Yes, Daddy!" We all responded in unison. A stranger would have thought we had rehearsed it, but we were just used to answering the Daddies in sync.

"Good." He came in and took a closer look. "They look amazing. Good enough to eat." He poked my side in my ticklish spot.

"They are!" I giggled and arched away from his poking finger. "Did you see the special one I made for you?"

I pointed to a cupcake decorated with a big red heart.

Daddy's eyes shone a little brighter as he smiled. "I love it, baby. It's perfect." He kissed the top of my head. "I'll leave you to your party. Just give a shout if you need anything."

As Dexter left the room, I looked around at my friends and never felt more at home. My heart was bursting with happiness because I had the most caring Daddy and the

best friends anyone could ask for.

“Daddy!” I shouted, just like he told me.

He appeared just a second later. “What, sweetheart?”

“Just wanted to tell you I love you.”

He smiled and nodded as he held my gaze. “I love you too, baby boy. Always.”

Living on the edge has its advantages. Like feelings that come without anyone else’s help.

Johnny Sutter is bored ninety percent of the time. His job is boring. His friends are boring. His life is, you guessed it. Boring AF. But ten percent of the time, he’s scaling mountains, jumping off cliffs, or flying through the air on a dirt bike. Those are the times he lives for because they’re the only time he feels anything. Excited. Happy. Alive.

Sawyer Maddox is over the apps. Meeting guys who just want to sneak in and out of his house in the dead of night is not his idea of finding love. But what else is there? He’s a bit of a loner and can’t just walk up to a guy and drop pickup lines as if he had game. He didn’t.

So when Sawyer is out for a walk in the park and an out-of-control boy comes flying down a hill on roller blades, he doesn’t expect a simple save to turn into anything real. But when it becomes clear the boy needs a Daddy to keep him from doing dangerous stunts for attention and affection, he’s ready to step into the role.