



Morning Walks & Midnight Talks (One More Kiss #1)

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Category: LGBT+

Description: Two Dog Daddies. One Unforgettable Night.

I've walked the same path with my husky, Pounce, for years and have never met anyone like Matt. He's gorgeous, funny, and just moved here with his bulldog puppy, Sora.

Our casual chats in the park turned into coffees, shared walks, and lingering glances that I couldn't stop thinking about. When he invited me to a trivia night at the local brewery where he works, though, I tried not to read too much into it.

Who would have thought that, by the end of the night, the heat between us would be impossible to ignore?

For the first time in a long while, I felt like I was holding back not just for myself but also because I wasn't sure if he was ready to take that leap with me...

Morning Walks Midnight Talks is a sweet and spicy gay romance novelette, following dog daddies Matt and Cato as they explore soft masculinity and a bi awakening together. Expect a quick-paced read with a meet-cute, set in a small town, and a Happy For Now Ending.

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POUNCE & SORA

After four years, I could tell the time by the dogs.

Milo and Daisy, the golden retriever siblings who usually dragged a half-asleep Mr. Carlos behind them, meant it was around 7:30. Bean, the dachshund? Closer to eight. And whenever my husky, Pounce, and I passed the schnauzer with the woman in the neon vest who never said hello, it was officially too late. We'd have to skip the coffee shop and go straight home so I'd be ready for work on time. But that only happened once every other month.

Most mornings, everything fell into place. Pounce and I would hit the path across the river at 7:40 a.m. and do a slow, looping circuit of the park until we reached Main Street. There, we'd make a short pit stop at The Morning Pup—the only coffee shop where every beverage comes with a complimentary dog treat—before walking all the way back in the opposite direction. By 8:15, we'd be home, just in time for a quick breakfast and the first Slack message of the day.

It wasn't exciting. But it was peaceful. Just how routines should be. Pounce got his exercise, and I got to nod at familiar faces, pat familiar dogs, and feel like I belonged to something, even if it was just the morning air.

Until one Tuesday morning in early October, when the pattern broke.

As we approached the bench under the maple tree where we usually stopped so I

could finish my coffee and Pounce could sniff a few desperate blades of grass, I spotted someone new .

A guy.

Maybe in his early thirties.

Bent over with his right foot braced on the ground, he struggled to untangle a leash from an overly enthusiastic bulldog puppy.

He let out a low, warm laugh, utterly unaware that Pounce had stopped walking and was now staring at the new dog as if it were love at first sight.

I held my breath, too.

The guy was gorgeous —dark curls pushed back from his forehead, an open windbreaker over a T-shirt with the vintage logo of our local brewery, Hops & Dreams, and the scruffy, effortless charm that looked like it came with its own playlist. In short, he was the kind of guy I'd like to play fetch with if I were a dog.

Fixing my eyes on him, I blocked out everything around me, which was probably why my next step forward caused me to stumble over a raised tree root that I knew was there , one that shouldn't have sent me flying after walking this path over a thousand times.

The guy looked up at the shuffle of my feet as I regained my balance, met my gaze, and... smiled. It was one of those broad smiles where the eyebrows shoot up, as if he were apologizing for the turmoil and begging for help at the same time.

My brain spun like a dog chasing its tail.

The bulldog puppy leaped toward us, its entangled legs causing it to plow into the grass nose first. The guy jumped right after it, dropping to one knee. His fingers moved quickly to loosen the leash, finally freeing the squirming bundle of energy from its misery. “I think she wants to say hi,” he said.

The bulldog yipped in agreement, and Pounce responded with a low, encouraging whine.

“Looks like it,” I croaked, finding my voice near the bottom of my stomach.

Pounce and I made our way over, and the dogs wasted no time doing the classic spiral dance—sniff, circle, tail wag, repeat. The puppy yipped again, its tiny paws hopping excitedly in place. Older and more measured, Pounce released a low chuff that seemed like approval.

“He’s beautiful,” the guy said, nodding toward Pounce. “Big softie, huh?”

I loosened the leash, allowing Pounce to lean into the sniff exchange. “Very big. Very soft. And luckily a cuddler, too.”

The guy chuckled. “I can’t say that about her. She’s more into tug of war. At least, that's what she's wanted to do most since she moved in.”

Out of nowhere, the puppy leaped backward and spun so quickly that she wrapped her leash around herself twice. Oblivious to the consequences, she pulled toward Pounce again and tripped over, looking personally offended by gravity. Pounce tilted his head slightly as if he had no idea what the rookie was trying to achieve.

“Sorry,” the guy sighed, crouching beside the wriggling puppy. “Did your husky always make it look that easy, or is my little one just hopeless?”

“They’ll figure it out eventually.” I chuckled. “She’s your first dog?”

“Yeah. This is also our first time in this park, our first week in this neighborhood, and apparently her first time walking on a leash.” He scooped her up with an embarrassed smile and untangled her leash again. “Come on. You’ve done so well until now.”

“She’s adorable.”

“And a little rascal,” the guy said, setting her back down, keeping the leash taut so it wouldn’t happen again. “Her name’s Sora.”

“I’m Cato,” I replied. “And this is Pounce.”

“Oh my god. What a perfect name for a dog!”

“He demanded it,” I deadpanned. “I wanted something serious and noble. But the minute he moved in, he tried to make love to, well, everything in my house. I could only take that as his way of trying to communicate with me. Funnily enough, he stopped as soon as he got that name.”

The guy laughed—bright and real. And I found myself smiling a little too long before glancing down to break the gaze.

Sora dropped into a dramatic play bow. Pounce responded with a slow, amused tail wag. They weren’t wrestling yet, but the potential was clearly there.

“We should probably keep moving before they get tangled up,” I said, even though I would have liked to stay longer.

“Right.” The man straightened, brushing a leaf off his jacket. “Maybe she’ll figure out how to walk on a leash by tomorrow so they can play without tying themselves

into knots.”

“We’re here every day. So, it’s a date,” I replied, surprised by my boldness. “Same time. Same bench. Otherwise, Pounce will cry all day.”

“We don’t want that.” He smiled again and tucked his left hand into his jacket pocket. “I’m Matt, by the way.”

“Nice to meet you, Matt,” I replied, my voice softening. We stared at each other uncomfortably for another second before nodding in opposite directions. I gave Pounce’s leash a gentle tug, signaling that playtime was over for now. “See you tomorrow then.”

“We will,” he called after me, dragging Sora along as she resisted, still eager to stay with her new friend.

A few feet away, I couldn’t help but glance over my shoulder. Matt was doing the same. Our eyes met for half a second—just long enough to feel a spark.

I didn’t expect to see Matt again the next day. At least, that’s what I told myself.

Taking the same route as always? That had nothing to do with him. It was just routine, like brushing my teeth and putting on fresh underwear. I certainly didn’t skip ten minutes of doomscrolling to be a little early. Not on purpose, that is. Not to bump into anyone. Just... to enjoy my coffee and the crisp fall air a little longer.

Yet, the closer we got to the bench under the maple tree, the faster my heart beat.

And sure enough, there he was, wearing the same windbreaker, this time zipped halfway up against the morning chill, while Sora chewed on a stick at least three times her size.

Eager to close the distance between us, I tugged Pounce forward. But he didn't need convincing. He'd already locked onto Sora.

"Hey," Matt called out, acknowledging our presence with a brief wave of his right hand. Meanwhile, Sora tossed the stick aside and lunged toward Pounce, her stubby tail wagging like her life depended on it. "I was hoping you'd show up. She's been looking for her boyfriend all morning."

"Boyfriend?"

"Look, I don't label her, but she's definitely into older men."

I laughed before I could stop myself. "Pounce will take that as a compliment. He likes someone who can keep up with his energy."

The dogs resumed their sniff-spiral, picking up where they left off yesterday.

"You weren't kidding about being here every day," Matt said, glancing around the park and then at my coffee. "You've got a whole routine, don't you?"

"If it's one thing I'm good at, it's coming up with a sequence of regularly followed actions," I said, realizing too late that the pun would make no sense to anyone who didn't know me and that it sounded a bit sad.

Matt didn't flinch. "Honestly? I kind of envy that. I haven't had a proper routine in months. But Sora's eager to help me establish one."

As if on cue, Sora nudged toward Pounce, wound around him and me, and looped back to Matt. Before I could even think to step away, their leashes twisted tight, trapping all four of us in a hopeless tangle.

Matt let out a helpless laugh and braced himself to keep from falling over. “Come on, not again.” He grabbed Sora and lifted her up, so she couldn’t make things worse. “Maybe it would be safer if we walked together instead of standing around,” he said. “At least until she figures out how that leash thing works.”

“You don’t enjoy getting hog-tied?” I joked and let go of Pounce’s leash, trusting that he wouldn’t run away.

“Not in the middle of the park, at least,” Matt replied. His voice was light, but there was something unintentionally candid underneath it.

I climbed out of Sora’s leash web, accidentally bumping against Matt’s butt with my right hand. Heat shot to my head, but there was hardly any time to acknowledge it. “Sorry about that,” I mumbled.

He gave me a quick, amused smile, clearly unbothered.

It took another thirty seconds of fumbling with clips and loops before we got everything back to normal.

The leaves rustled softly beneath our feet as we set off together, effortlessly ignoring the chaos from moments before. Somewhere above us, a robin trilled.

“So what do you do?” Matt asked once we turned the corner.

“I work remotely for a software company,” I explained, swallowing down the lump of embarrassment in my throat. “Some backend development. It’s very boring, as I usually spend all day speaking languages only computers understand.”

“That’s not boring at all,” Matt said, tugging on Sora’s leash to keep her from tying us all together again as she tried to slip under Pounce. “I dabbled in programming a

little, too, back in high school, but... Let's pretend the game I tried to develop didn't crash my computer so often that I had to buy a new one when I started college." He squeezed his right eye shut as he glanced at me. "Anyway, what do you work on right now?"

"You'll be disappointed. It's really unsexy."

"It can't be that bad."

"I'm developing an internal audit logging system for administrative actions , which is a fancy way to describe a tool that discreetly records all activities by an admin, such as updating an email address or adjusting permissions. It doesn't affect the user experience, has no cool interface, and will only be used if something goes wrong."

Matt pulled his lips into a thin line before chuckling. "Okay, maybe it's a little unsexy."

"I warned you. But it's an easy job with good pay, and I can take as many breaks as I want as long as I reach my goals by the end of the day." Pounce, trained by our routine, veered to the left to lead us around the clock tower that was the park's landmark. Sora dashed right after him. "How about you, Matt?"

"My job is boring, too. I've just started bartending at a brewery downtown."

"At Hops & Dreams , right?"

Matt squinted at me, clearly trying to figure out how I knew. "What gave it away?"

"Their logo on your shirt yesterday."

"I guess nothing escapes the trained eyes of a programmer."

“Guilty,” I said, grinning as I gave Pounce’s leash a light tug when he veered off to sniff a bush. I shot Matt a quick, playful glance before falling back into step beside him. “So, how do you like working at Hops & Dreams ?”

“Oh, I love it. Brian welcomed me with open arms. Until now, he’s the best boss I’ve ever had, despite his grumpy attitude.”

We reached the end of the path too quickly. I stalled, fishing treats out of my coat pocket. But as soon as Sora and Pounce gobbled them up, it was time to part ways again. “Guess I’ll see you tomorrow?”

Matt nodded. “Yeah. I’ll be here. Routine, right?”

“Indeed,” I said with a smile. But as I walked away, I realized that the route didn’t feel quite like my old routine anymore.

After that, we saw each other every morning. Whenever Pounce and I entered the park, he was there—either already strolling by the bench or arriving shortly after us, waving like it was all a coincidence.

Day by day, walk by walk, we got to know each other better.

On Thursday, we talked about cartoons we both used to watch and the best bad action films. Matt had strong opinions about RoboPolice Three , which I found both unforgivable and adorable. On Friday, with the weekend approaching, we discussed drinks. Matt liked dry reds, and I told him I enjoyed anything with citrus and fizz. Saturday was for trivial things—dogs, dreams, and how weird it was when birds seemed to walk on purpose like tiny people.

On Sunday, it rained. Not hard—just a drizzle that made the leaves on the path slippery and the air smell clean. I was sure I wouldn’t see Matt. He had mentioned

working a long evening shift for a wedding the day before. But, as if he enjoyed our morning walks as much as I did, he was already waiting at the entrance to the park.

“Guess we’re the only dedicated dog parents,” Matt said, flipping his hood up.

“Pounce has opinions,” I replied, holding out a paw-shaped umbrella. “Mostly that I shouldn’t be allowed to cancel on him.”

We walked slower that day, talking about games. Matt liked old-school co-ops. I admitted I enjoyed anything I could mod to ridiculousness. We argued about which took more talent: playing by the rules or bending them until they broke. He called me a menace with a keyboard. I told him he probably just needed someone to corrupt him properly. Judging by his grin, he didn’t seem too opposed to the idea. But we left it at that. No invitations. No words that went beyond the hypothetical.

After that, I stopped pretending. I looked forward to our walks the way I looked forward to new video game releases or the next seasons of my favorite shows. I enjoyed spending time with him and getting to know him better.

He was good-looking and pleasant to talk to. It also helped that Sora and Pounce became friends.

But something kept me from pushing for anything more.

Matt had plenty of opportunities to take things further, but he never did. For all I knew, he might not be into guys—or at least not into me. So, I settled into the comfortable rhythm of our new routine and convinced myself that it was enough.

But no matter how much you tell yourself you’re keeping things easy, one slip, one careless moment is all it takes to tip the balance. And the following Monday, I made exactly that kind of mistake.

It started rather innocently. I brought coffee from The Morning Pup. Just one more, no big deal, I thought. What harm could it do?

Matt blinked as if I had handed him an award. Sora was equally thrilled about the treat that came with it.

“You didn’t have to?—”

“I know,” I said. “It’s routine.”

Matt smiled over the lid of his cup. “Well, now I have to return the favor.”

“No, you don’t,” I countered, realizing what I had done without even wanting to.

“How do you usually spend your Friday evenings?” Matt asked, ignoring my last sentence entirely.

My whole body tingled as if I were seconds away from being sucked out of Earth's atmosphere and thrown into space. “Why?” I asked, instead of answering.

“Friday is trivia night at Hops & Dreams , and I'll be working the bar. You can get a cheap night out on me.”

I smiled, reluctant to agree, although I wanted to more than anything. Images of how a drunken night could end flashed before my eyes: Skin touching skin. Lips trembling. Hands exploring where they shouldn’t—at least not in a regular friendship.

“Come on, it’ll be fun,” Matt added. “Those are the wildest nights. People get competitive when you ask how many hearts an octopus has.”

“Three,” I said automatically.

Matt looked delighted. “See? You should come.”

I knew that giving in to that temptation came with risks. What if I misinterpreted things? What if he was just being friendly and didn’t have the same intentions as I? On the other hand, if I ever wanted to see another side of him, I had to break out of my routine. Sitting at home alone would never get me there.

I ran a hand through my hair and glanced down at Pounce, who sat at my feet, wagging his tail as if even he were waiting for my answer. “Okay, so, when does it start?”

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HOPS and, Demetrius, the more you beat me, I will fawn on you' ?"

"What programming language was famously invented as a joke but now has a fully working compiler, including support for exception handling, lazy evaluation, and even Unicode snowmen?"

At least, I knew the last one.

As I scribbled INTERCAL onto our sheet, Matt beamed at me. "I'm still waiting for the beer-related questions."

The further the evening progressed, the closer Matt leaned in whenever he talked to me. It might have just been to get a good look at the sheet in front of me, but I couldn't shake off the feeling that he enjoyed being close to me for other reasons, too.

When a question about beer came in—something about the hops-to-water ratio in an obscure Belgian ale—he snatched the pen from my hands and wrote down the answer. Eager to show off his expertise, he turned the paper toward me, grinning in a way that made my stomach do a weird little flip. We said nothing for a second. But when the host announced the correct answer, which was precisely what he had written down, I clapped my hands together, and he bowed.

"See? I'm good for something after all."

"Hey, we're a team. We win or lose together."

“Life would be easier if everyone saw it that way.” Matt chuckled, but his eyes lingered on mine a moment too long, as if he hadn't meant to say something so real out loud. I wondered if I should ask him about it. But when he stood up straight and reached for a bar towel, absently wiping down the spotless section of counter next to me, I decided not to press him for an explanation.

For thirty more minutes, we shared laughs, discussed some questions heavily, and, every once in a while, he poured drinks for thirsty guests.

In the end, we came in fourth, neither a good nor a bad placing, but enough to earn a high-five from Matt. Once the trivia portion of the evening ended, the bar became crowded again, leaving me to myself. Matt poured another round for some and closed out tabs for others. I settled for sneaking some glances at his butt, but after about twenty minutes, I wondered whether I should head home as well. Pounce was okay with being alone for quite a while. The longest he lasted without me was ten hours, when I was stuck in a traffic accident, but I felt so bad that I made up for it with an extensive visit to the dog park the next day.

As the line of guests broke up and the bar emptied back out to the number of tables that were filled when I arrived, Matt approached me again. “What do you think about getting some fresh air, Cato? I'll take a break in five. Sora is upstairs, probably pacing by now. How about you say hello and then we take a quick walk together?”

“How long can you take a break?”

His eyes wandered through the room. “It's quite empty now. Fifteen to twenty minutes, easily. Why?”

I leaned in just enough to make it seem like a secret. “That's enough time for Sora to meet her boyfriend.”

Matt blinked once, then grinned—slow and bright, like the thought had genuinely caught him off guard. “She’d love that. One thousand percent.”

Matt unlocked a narrow door beside the bar’s back hallway and motioned for me to follow him up the steep, creaky staircase. Even before we hit the first landing, I could hear the soft scuffle of paws above us.

“I think she knows by now when it’s me,” Matt said over his shoulder, smiling like he couldn’t help it.

When we reached the top, he pushed open the door and Sora practically launched herself into his legs with a happy yip. She gave me a quick sniff while her stubby tail wagged hard enough to knock into the doorframe. Matt dropped to one knee to ruffle her ears. His entire face lit up, different from the way he smiled downstairs. Softer. More real.

“Sorry for the mess,” Matt said as he stood up and kicked the door closed behind me.

The apartment looked like a storage room that had never quite given up the job—low ceiling, exposed pipes, and shelves still clinging to mismatched bar supplies and dusty glassware. A twin bed had been squeezed into one corner, covered with a tangle of blankets. The kitchenette was little more than a mini-fridge, a hot plate, and a coffeemaker balanced on an old crate. The apartment smelled faintly of hops and floor cleaner, but there was a dog bed by the radiator and a game console hooked up to a small TV, giving it just enough personality to feel like someone was trying to make it home.

Matt caught my stolen glances. “Brian was kind enough to let Sora and me stay here until we find a proper apartment. I’m actually going to check one out two blocks away tomorrow afternoon before my shift,” he explained.

“You had to move quickly, huh?”

“Yeah. It’s a long story,” Matt said, shuffling to the back, closely followed by the bulldog puppy. “My ex threw me out of the house. We split up months ago, but since we bought the place together, we decided to both stay until things were sorted out.”

“But then he met someone new and decided it was time for you to go?”

Matt blinked. “He?”

The air got heavier. I opened my mouth, then shut it again, feeling heat crawl up the back of my neck. That single syllable and the faint note of surprise in his voice were all it took to make it click. The guy standing in front of me was straight. Of course, he was. My gut had told me that from the start, but I’d chosen to ignore it. I’d let myself get swept up in his easy charm and friendly smiles that didn’t really mean anything.

I swallowed hard, forcing a smile that didn’t quite reach my eyes. “Sorry,” I mumbled. “I just... assumed.”

“Why did you think...?” Matt’s brow furrowed slightly. He shifted his weight from one foot to the other, glancing down for a second before looking back up at me, his mouth tugging into a half-smile. “I guess I give off a vibe or something?”

I shrugged, trying not to shrink into myself. “Maybe... open-minded?”

He let out a short, surprised laugh, running a hand through his hair before shaking his head. “Open-minded’s not a bad thing.” The corners of his eyes crinkled slightly, and for a second, I caught a glint of something lighter under the surface—amusement, maybe, or just plain relief. “Other than that, you hit the nail quite on the head. Her new fiancé was always around, and things got awkward quickly. So, I decided it was time for a fresh start.” He grabbed a leash from a hook next to the window, squatted

down, and put it on Sora.

I didn't know what to say without making things worse, so I said nothing at all.

With the leash attached, Matt got up. "Shall we?"

"Sure," I said, trying to sound casual despite my heart beating fast and erratically.

Matt pointed toward the door. "Lead the way."

We made our way back down and out the back entrance so we wouldn't have to take Sora through the taproom. Outside, it was surprisingly warm, but still damp from the afternoon rain.

The four-minute walk to my house felt like an hour. I walked one step ahead of him, remaining silent the whole way. It was only when we reached my street that I opened my mouth again. "Sorry about... assuming . I didn't mean to make things awkward."

"You're good, Cato. I'm honestly flattered, as I assume that this means you like what you see?" With a quick flick of his hands over his chest, he practically dared me to look at him.

I followed his movements with my eyes as his hands glided down his body. When they stopped right next to his bulge, I forced myself to look away and fumbled for my house keys. "Now you're just fishing for compliments."

Matt playfully bit on his tongue. "Maybe."

I climbed the five steps to my porch with a fast-paced strut, and the light above the door turned on automatically. I brought the keys to the lock but paused and, after a second, took my hands back down. "It's probably strange for me to say this now , but

since you asked, I suppose I'm allowed to admit that I think you're handsome, Matt.”

He followed me up the steps, stopping just a little too close behind me. “It’s not weird,” he said, glancing sideways at me. “I was fishing for that compliment, after all.”

“You’re also easy to talk to and fun to be around.” My hands fidgeted with the keychain as I turned to face him. “So, can we not let that come between us? I promise, I’ll keep things normal.”

Matt chuckled. “What does 'normal' even mean?”

“That I’ll only touch you inappropriately if you ask me to,” I joked.

Matt’s chuckle turned into laughter, loud enough to wake up the neighbors. “Deal.” Our eyes locked, and his brows softened to let me know this topic was officially resolved.

A scratch against the door made us both turn toward the house.

“It looks like Sora isn't the only one who knows when it's their human on the other side,” Matt stated, gazing down at the doormat and back up at me with a smile that made me want to break the rule I had just established and kiss him.

I thrust the key in the lock, turned it, and opened the door. Pounce stumbled back, his tail wagging as if he’d been counting the seconds since I left. “Hey, buddy,” I said, patting his head, “Look who I brought.” I pushed the door open a little wider, but before Pounce could look outside, Sora slipped past me and jumped at him with happy little yips.

“Wow, she missed her boyfriend more than I thought,” Matt said, watching Pounce

endure the puppy kisses.

I stumbled over to the closet on the left and pulled out Pounce's leash. When I turned around, I noticed the playful turn of Matt's lips. "Are you jealous that he's getting kisses and you aren't?" I teased him.

Matt looked up. "Why? You offering?"

"I'm gay, not a whore," I replied, squatting down to attach the leash to Pounce's collar. "But it's been a while since my last date, so don't blame me if I don't say no to a proposed make-out session."

"Yeah, I totally get that. I actually haven't been with anyone since the breakup either. I had several chances, but..." He finished his sentence with a shrug.

My heart gave a nervous thud. "I guess I made it clear where I stand. All you have to do is ask." As soon as the words left my mouth, I felt a flicker of disbelief twist in my chest. Where did I find the courage to be this open about it, like it was no big deal? I wasn't usually this forward, especially not with someone like Matt. Yet here I was, teasing and flirting without a filter.

Matt's eyes narrowed, and an unbelieving grin spread across his face. "It's that easy?"

"Not everything in life has to be complicated," I replied, making it sound like the easiest thing in the world. But I had to pull the brakes now if I didn't want to watch the train derail. I stood up, looped the leash around my wrist, and nodded toward the door. "I'm ready."

Matt didn't move a muscle. His eyes remained fixed on me, unafraid, not even suggesting that he wanted to avert his gaze. "To make out?"

“Don't you have to return to work in ten minutes?” I said, trying to keep things from escalating. As much as I would enjoy going further, I wouldn't want it to get awkward for him.

Matt's chin dropped to his chest, accompanied by a chuckle. “You're right. If we're going to do this, I'd rather have time to enjoy it. Maybe we should come back here once I've locked up the bar?”

Something inside me flipped. Perhaps it was the way Matt didn't flinch or how he met my teasing head-on, without retreating. Did he actually want this? Did he want me to bring out the big guns to see how far this would go? There was only one way to find out. I smirked and stepped before him, leaving barely enough space for air between us. “Are you sure?” I murmured. “Because if you're not careful, I might take you seriously.”

I expected him to back down and step away with a chuckle, playing it off to save face for both of us. But he stood his ground. His eyes lingered on mine, only glancing down briefly to look at my lips. His breathing increased. “Maybe I don't want to be careful.” He gulped. “Maybe I've thought about how open-minded I might be before, but never had a chance to act on it.” His lips parted slightly. “Maybe I feel comfortable enough with you to give it a try.”

“Is that so?” I whispered, still unable to fully comprehend what was happening.

Matt slowly nodded, his eyes twitching toward my lips again.

Without thinking, I leaned in and gently brushed my nose against his. “Would you like me to give you a taste of what it could be like?”

It was probably the dumbest idea ever, but the tension was just too intense to ignore.

A wave of heat washed over me, but I still somehow managed to slow down, stopping with only half an inch between our lips, giving him the chance to pull away.

But he didn't.

He inhaled sharply, closed his eyes, and pressed his lips onto mine.

A sharp jolt raced down my spine, lighting up every nerve like a live wire. His mouth was warm and soft. My fingers twitched with the urge to grab hold of him and pull him closer. For a few charged seconds, however, we hovered in that perfect, breathless space, caught between restraint and the undeniable surge crackling between us.

His hand found my jaw, steadying me, drawing me in deeper.

I leaned into it, into him, into the quiet hum that had been building between us since we first met, cautious not to go too far too quickly.

And it was utterly, breathtakingly perfect.

A soft whine and a scrape against our legs made us both chuckle. We broke apart, our foreheads bumping gently as we glanced down at Sora, who was staring up at us with wide eyes.

"Maybe postponing this to after midnight isn't such a bad idea," Matt said, taking a step back. But his smile stayed with me. "If you want to."

"You know where I live now. All you have to do is knock on the door."

He blinked at me and nodded, pulling his lips into his mouth as if he wanted to savor the taste a little longer. "Don't judge me if I do."

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The house was quiet. Having the whole place to myself was one of the advantages of being savvy enough to buy it in my early twenties when rates were still low. Everyone back then said I was crazy. Do you really want to settle in that small shithole? Shouldn't you save up a nest egg first? But after eight years, I had already paid off almost half the mortgage. I could be as loud as I wanted and invite anyone over at any time. Not that I had that many nightly visitors.

In the living room, Pounce and Sora were both knocked out on the rug, curled up next to each other as if they had been best friends forever. I stepped over their tangled legs on the way to the hallway, trying not to wake them, even though my heart was beating way too fast for how calm everything looked.

Matt had gone back to finish his shift. For some reason, we both thought it was a good idea for Sora to stay over, not thinking far enough ahead to realize that this would leave us with no easy way to back out if one of us had second thoughts—or at least not without having an uncomfortable conversation first.

I hurried through the hallway, as if walking faster would stop me from second-guessing everything. The bedroom was large enough for the king-sized bed, but not for my jittery nerves. I headed straight for the bathroom, turned on the light, and stared at myself in the mirror. My cheeks were redder than usual, maybe from the anticipation, but probably from the single beer I held onto all evening. I shook it off. Whatever was going to happen was meant to happen. If he just wanted to pick up Sora and leave, that would be fine with me. But I'd also be down to fool around all night.

I hopped in the shower. As I lathered up, my dick grew hard, letting me know it was

ready for action, whether with Matt or without him. After drying off, I brushed my teeth again, even though I'd already done so earlier. Then I changed into clean clothes—nothing fancy or obvious, just a black slip, khaki sweatpants, and my lucky shirt with a pixelated heart on it. I wanted to keep things relaxed while still being prepared for everything.

My fourth glance at the clock within thirty seconds told me it was still eleven minutes to midnight. There was nothing left to do but wait for him to show up.

I shuffled back into the kitchen and yanked open the fridge to see what drinks I could offer him. But before I could look, three knocks on the door sent shivers down my spine.

The dogs jumped up and rushed to the entrance before me. Surprisingly, they kept their barks down as if they knew who was on the other side. I followed them, grabbed Sora's collar so she wouldn't slip out, and opened the door.

There he was, windbreaker unzipped, hair slightly mussed, cheeks pink from the evening chill. He raised his hands, revealing two bottles of Hopsomnia . "I brought you a little something."

"Liquid courage?" I joked, my breath catching more than I wanted it to. "Or a consolation prize?"

He squeezed his right eye shut. "No, just beer."

He stepped inside and closed the door behind him. We stood there for a second, like the earlier kiss had cracked something open, but we didn't quite know how to handle the pieces yet. His gaze flicked to my lips, and mine dropped to his hands. His fingers tightened slightly on the bottles, mine on Sora's collar as if we were both waiting for the other to make a move.

Before either of us could, Sora let out a sharp yip and pawed eagerly at his leg. Matt gave me a soft, knowing smile, making it clear that he knew I wouldn't mind if Sora claimed his attention first, and squatted down to greet her.

I let go of her collar, and she leaped between his legs, spinning in happy little circles. His unoccupied hand brushed over her short fur. "Have you been a good girl?"

"She enjoyed some quality time with her boyfriend," I said, grinning. "They've been curled up together in the living room. It was cute as hell."

Matt's lips curled as if he had a cheeky comment on the tip of his tongue, but he swallowed it down.

I raised an eyebrow, half daring him to say it and half already laughing. "Want to come in?" I said, nodding behind me. "I can give you a tour."

"Definitely." He patted Sora one more time before he got up, slipped out of his shoes, and followed me light-footedly.

I led him inside and past the entryway, where he hung his jacket next to mine on a hook above a worn bench stacked with shoes and dog leashes.

Pounce trotted ahead, his tail wagging on autopilot. Sora followed close behind.

"This is the heart of it all," I said, gesturing around as we reached the living room.

Matt took it all in: the deep green walls that appeared nearly black in the dim light, the oversized leather couch covered with three throw blankets in different shades of gray, and a controller tangled in the cushions. "Cozy," he said, his gaze wandering over the wall of books in the back, the framed indie game posters, and the action figures standing guard on floating shelves.

The dogs found their way to the living room rug. Pounce slumped down with a huff. Sora curled into the crook of his body as if they had decided that was how they would spend every night from that point forward.

I pointed toward a glass door in the left corner. “That’s the home office.” A peek inside would reveal two monitors glowing on a clean desk, an excessive number of sticky notes, an abundance of cables, and a calendar so scribbled over that it could pass for abstract art.

We turned to face the open kitchen, which was tidy enough thanks to my last-minute, nervous cleaning spree before hopping in the shower. A string of fairy lights ran under the cabinets, bathing everything in a magical glow. “I’m not a chef, but I try,” I said. “I make good pancakes.”

Matt smirked. “Noted.” He put the beers on the counter and followed closely behind me as I strolled toward the back of the house.

We passed a hallway table stacked with old game controllers and a Raspberry Pi project I had never finished. “Bathroom’s here,” I said, flipping on the light so he could see the tidy mess of bath products and an embarrassing plush robe hanging behind the door.

Then came the bedroom.

The king-size bed took up most of the space. The covers were neatly tucked in—almost too perfectly—as if to say that I didn't want Matt to expect anything more than a simple tour. There were more books here, too, some clothes in a half-open dresser drawer, and a lamp on the nightstand casting a golden pool of light across the room.

I turned to him, trying to read his expression. “And... that’s the tour.”

He looked around, then at me. “I like it.” His gaze lingered—not on the room, but on me.

“So, should we open those beers, or...?”

He grinned, still not looking away. “Or...?”

I looked at the floor. Why was I, the more experienced guy in all of this, so much more flustered than he was? What was I trying to hold back? He came here. He stood before me in my bedroom, not stopping to grin. He had plenty of chances to back down. A chuckle escaped my mouth as I tipped my head back and met his gaze again. “Or we could explore how open-minded you are.”

His smile widened until it parted his lips, revealing his perfect teeth. “I like that you’re so blunt.” He stepped closer, his hands twitching as if they wanted to reach for me again. But he stopped just before he got there. “I wouldn’t mind continuing where we left off.”

A soft, nervous laugh slipped from my throat. “Then what are we waiting for?” Before either of us could overthink it, I leaned in and tilted my head. He did the same. Our lips met in a tentative yet electric touch. Though this was only our second kiss, we both moved carefully, aware that with no distractions or excuses left between us, we couldn’t just blame an interruption if one of us decided to pull away. His fingers slid over my waist, and I tugged him closer by the collar of his shirt. I opened my mouth, and he followed my lead. Our tongues joined the conversation. His hand found the back of my neck, and his thumb brushed over my skin as if he couldn’t stop reminding himself that I was real. Our kiss grew stronger and more lustful—the kind that didn’t need a finish line—making it clear that we were ready to take it further.

I guided us backward, his mouth still on mine, until my legs bumped against the edge of the bed. We stumbled, but his hands rushed to my back, catching me before I could

fall.

A breathless chuckle broke our kiss.

“Are we moving too fast?” I asked, feeling his fingertips brush against my back.

“Maybe,” he whispered. “But I really don’t want to stop.”

My hands curled into the fabric of his shirt. “Me neither.”

His lips parted with a shaky breath as he leaned in again, hungrier this time. His mouth found mine with a deeper urgency—no longer tentative, but tasting and claiming. Our chests pressed together, our bodies aligning in a way that left no room for doubt. His hands found their way beneath my shirt. First, his fingers splayed wide as if he needed to anchor himself to me. A second later, he tugged the fabric over my head, leaving me feeling both too exposed and aching for more.

His hands traced the lines of my back while his lips found my neck and collarbone. “You’re warm,” he murmured, his voice muffled against my skin.

“You’re overdressed,” I breathed, my fingers already teasing at the waistband of his jeans. He let out a soft, surprised laugh and let me undo the button.

I pulled the zipper down, revealing dark blue boxer shorts with a bulge more impressive than I had imagined over the last several nights. Biting my lips, I cupped his bulge, feeling him throb underneath the fabric. His gaze followed my hands, eager to take in everything I did.

“Still feel safe?” I asked quietly, echoing the question that had lingered between us all night.

“With you?” Matt’s lips curved up. “Yeah. It’s unfamiliar, but in the best kind of way.”

My heart raced as I held his gaze and let my hands drift to the waistband, sliding one finger underneath and teasing his skin. His lips parted as he inhaled slowly. I slipped another finger inside, deep enough to find the tip of his cock, twirling my finger around it. His teeth dug into his lower lip, a soft hum letting me know I shouldn’t stop. Distracting him with another kiss, I slid my whole hand inside, wrapped my palm around his shaft, and squeezed his erection with intent. His hands shot to my shoulders to steady himself.

“Want me to go further?”

“Please,” he whispered.

I kissed him once more on the lips, then let my mouth wander to his cheek, chin, and down the line of his neck. Slowly, I sank to my knees and pulled out his manhood. It stood straight and strong above me, ready for anything. I licked his smoothly shaved balls, then moved up his shaft to the tip, eliciting another hum. The fresh, clean smell with a hint of pine made my own cock tent my pants. I wrapped my lips around his glans and locked my eyes on his. He blinked heavily, as if his eyes needed a second to confirm what they saw. His right hand rushed to the back of my head, brushing through the short hair stubble. My tongue swirled around his glans, relishing the slightly salty taste. I felt up his ass, still hidden under the soft silk of his briefs, and, without warning, pulled him in closer until his full length disappeared in my throat.

A low moan slipped past his lips, followed by a delighted laugh hinting at how good it felt.

I bobbed my head up and down, trying to get him deeper into me each time. My right hand massaged his balls and taint, my left squeezed his butt. The longer I sucked him,

the louder his moans got and the more his knees buckled. I only took a break when his upper body collapsed forward so much that he had to brace himself on the mattress to keep from falling over.

“Wow, Cato, wow,” he panted, unable to move. “I had heard it, of course, but... wow . Guys really do know how to suck a dick better.”

“To be fair, I’ve got some practice,” I said, earning me a breathy laugh.

He pushed himself back up, his dick still hanging right above my face. I opened my mouth wide to take him back in, but his left hand shot to my chin, stopping me. “It’s my turn now,” he said.

Before I could protest or assure him that he should only do what he really wanted to do, he leaned down and shoved his tongue into my mouth. With a sudden urgency, he dropped to his knees and gripped my hips, guiding me up onto the edge of the bed. Once there, he stripped off his shirt, revealing more of his smooth, tanned skin and well-defined chest. But he didn't give me any time to admire it.

His fingers tucked into my pants, pulling them down until they slipped over my feet. My hard dick flopped out against my chest. His hands rushed up my thighs and pressed into my muscles as he stared at my throbbing dick, as if he needed to decide whether to go through with this. Before that worry could sink in, though, he wrapped his fingers around my shaft and brought his head closer to inspect my cock. His eagerness made me fix my eyes on him, not wanting to miss a moment of it.

Matt brought his nose to my balls and took a whiff that turned into a delighted groan. He moved his nose up to my glans and inhaled deeply, closing his eyes as if my pheromones were throwing a party in his nostrils.

He stuck out his tongue and hesitated for a moment before tentatively licking the tip.

But then came a second, followed by a third and fourth, each more eager than the last. With a low, hungry hum, he wrapped his lips around me.

The heat of his mouth drew me in. My arms weakened under the rush of sensation, and I leaned back, unable to do anything but surrender to it.

The tip of my cock disappeared inside him. It slid in about two-thirds of the way before it poked against his throat. To my surprise, he tried to go even further, but after a second, gagged.

He pulled his head back, coughing. "Sorry, I went too far too fast."

"Don't force yourself," I said, pushing myself back up.

Wrinkling his nose, he stared at my dick. "Practice makes perfect, right?" Without letting himself be dragged down, he took me back inside, now focusing more on the upper half of my cock as he sucked me. It took him a minute to get into a rhythm, but once he did, the way he moved his head sent waves through my body. I lay back, enough to be comfortable but still able to watch him suck my dick, and let out some encouraging moans to show him how well he was doing.

He opened his mouth wide, stuck out his tongue, and licked down my shaft to my balls, which made me moan even more. Encouraged by this, he licked again and again as he wrapped his fingers around my shaft and began stroking.

His eyes sparkled at me. "You like being licked?"

"The blowjob as well. You're a natural."

His eyes flicked up like he wanted to say something dirty but wasn't sure he'd get away with it. "I just try to do what I like having done to me."

“Keep doing all of it, and I will return the favor.”

“Deal. There is some stuff I’ve always wondered about,” he said, sticking out his tongue to lick my balls again. Instead of going up my shaft, he went further down. He let go of my dick, wrapped his arms around my legs, and lifted them up. I flopped back onto the mattress with a surprised squeak as he pushed me back far enough that my feet dangled in the air.

His breath caressed my ass as he grabbed my cheeks and pulled them apart.

A surge of pleasure washed over me as his warm tongue slid down my crack. I dug my hands into the blanket for support, my chest rising and falling unevenly.

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He licked up and down, each time going a little further, until he moved his tongue over everything, from my hole to my balls.

Just a minute ago, I told him he was a natural to encourage him to keep going, but now, my words have become nothing but the truth. He swirled his tongue around my pucker, and as if that weren't enough, he even slipped it inside a little.

A surprised cry escaped my mouth, causing his head to pop up between my legs.

“I like how vocal you are,” he said, pushing himself onto his feet. His hard dick appeared between my legs as if it were the next natural step, and he was ready to take it. “It makes me want to go even further.”

“That makes two of us, then.” I leaned toward my nightstand, but my arms weren't long enough. I glanced at Matt, who caught on immediately and jumped in the direction I was pointing. “Bottom drawer.”

His fingers curled around the silver handle, and with a faint scrape, the drawer slid open. He pulled out a condom and a bottle of lube and took them with him as he walked back between my legs.

With a soft rustle, he ripped open the wrapper and grinned at me. “That's always the weirdest moment, isn't it?”

I reached down and stroked myself as I watched him unroll the condom onto his dick. “I like the show. It's like an appetizer.”

“And you’re the main course?”

The fact that he still showed no signs of taking off his pants made my mouth water. “First course.”

Chuckling, Matt rolled the condom down to the base of his shaft. “I like where this is going.” He grabbed my hips and pulled me closer to the edge of the bed. With a quick hand, he reached for the bottle of lube, squeezed some in his hands and worked it onto his dick. He shot me a sideways glance, his lips quirking into a slow, knowing grin that sent a shiver of anticipation down my spine. Stepping closer, he brushed his hands through my crease and rubbed the rest of the lube over me. His fingers made sure to reach every inch, swirling around my hole briefly before being replaced by the tip of his cock.

Matt leaned down, pressing his arms into the mattress next to my chest as he pushed his dick into my hole. Without any concern, he went straight in— all the way.

A moan rippled from my chest as he stretched me open. No cock has ever felt as intense as his. Then again, most of my previous lovers didn’t waltz in there like it was an open house. Not that it was relevant. I was glad he didn’t hesitate. Still, I couldn’t help but thank myself for preparing for this in the shower earlier.

His lips searched my neck as he lowered his naked chest onto mine. “You feel so good,” he whispered, his breath tickling my ears.

“You too,” I moaned.

The first three thrusts were slow, each paving the way for the next. With the fourth one, he started to increase his speed. I wrapped my arms around his shoulders, pulling him closer as he pumped in and out of me.

Time blurred as we sank deeper into each other. His dick was just the right thickness to feel good without hurting. The way his skin rubbed against mine, the way his shoulder blades moved under my touch, the way he breathed into my ear, and the sloppy kisses he threw in every once in a while could have made me go on like this forever.

I reached my right hand to my dick and started stroking it so that we could come together, but after a minute—without stopping to fuck me—Matt grabbed my wrist, preventing me from going on. “You promised to return the favor. So don’t go too far just yet.”

My heart skipped a beat. “You want me...” I panted, “...to fuck you, too?”

“Maybe not as hardcore as what we're doing right now, but I'd at least like to know what it's like to have someone play with my ass.”

My dick throbbed, ready to explode at the mere thought of switching positions. “We c-can do that,” I stuttered, excited but also a little afraid that he wanted me to be his first guy in both ways.

He slowed down, but kept fucking me. “I’ve tried exploring my ass a little bit myself, but... The pleasure I see on your face... Having someone else do it must really be a whole new experience.”

“It is, but again, I’ve got some practice.” My hands wandered to his chin, caressing the stubble of his three-day beard. “Being fucked in the ass for the first time is a bit like having your first alcoholic drink. You might need some time to get used to it.”

“Everything we've done so far has been pleasurable, so...” He stopped moving, his face hovering over mine. “I trust you.”

Knowing that Matt trusted me this much—not just with his body, but with a side of himself he'd never shared before—made my chest flutter. I tilted my head slightly and nuzzled my nose against his as we breathed each other in. “I’ll do my best to show you a good time.”

Matt brushed a kiss over my lips before pushing himself up and pulling his dick out of me. He removed the condom, placed it on top of the wrapping paper, and a second later, he blinked at me, ready to follow my lead.

I pushed myself up, too, and rocked off the bed. “Let’s start slow. And you tell me whenever something’s too intense.” I stepped next to him, tracing my fingers down his arms and under the waistband of his jeans. “These have to come off now.”

He lifted his knees and, after some struggling, the pants landed on the floor. Our lips met. Briefly. Just a quick peck before I flipped him around and pressed my chest against his back and my hard dick against his ass. I felt up his nipples with my hands, swirling around them as I kissed his neck. Slowly, my hands made their way down to his erection, feeling his shaft and glans. I walked him toward the bed, and, without needing any instructions, he lay down, pointing his ass up.

I crawled on top of him and kissed the nape of his neck. One kiss at a time, my lips wandered over his shoulder blades and down his spine until they reached his ass cheeks. Matt smelled so fresh that I wondered if he had freshened up before coming here, too. But it didn't matter. I had fantasized about doing this with him since the day we first met. I wasn't going to back out now that he was lying naked before me, his ass wiggling in anticipation. I grabbed his cheeks and pressed my thumbs into them, pulling them apart to start loosening him up.

There it was—his clean, hairless pucker, waiting to be played with. I brought my face closer to admire his beauty. My hands ached to touch him, and my mouth to taste him. But underneath all that was a deep urgency to reward him for his trust and make

him feel wanted, cherished, and safe. He chose me to explore this side of himself with, after all. No one had probably ever seen him like this. He deserved the time of his life.

I opened my mouth, stuck out my tongue, and licked over his pucker.

His right leg twitched up a little.

I licked again, producing another twitch, this time accompanied by a moan.

“Oh wow,” Matt whispered.

“Good?” I asked, licking again.

“Uh- huh ,” he replied, the second syllable slightly higher than his usual tone.

I licked his left ass cheek, then his right, and then his left again. This time, I was close enough to his hole to make his left leg twitch, but far enough away to make him want more.

“This is... damn .” His voice was elated, as if he had just had an epiphany. He pulled his legs up a little to spread them further apart.

I buried my tongue between his cheeks, making sure to reach every part of his ass. The longer I kept going, the more his legs trembled and the louder he moaned. Hearing his cries of pleasure made my dick throb. I glanced up at his back. His head was pressed into the mattress, and his eyes were squeezed shut as he surrendered to this new experience. Matt’s jaw, usually set with quiet confidence, had softened. The sharp edge of control had melted from his face. If this made him look so satisfied already, what would it be like once I was inside of him?

My thumbs took over for my tongue and began massaging him in a circular motion. “Want to go one step further?”

Without lifting his head, he squinted his eyes open just enough to look at me. His parted lips trembled slightly, caught between a breath and a plea. “Yes...,” he whispered, and the quivering in his voice made my dick twitch again.

I picked up the lube that had rolled under the nightstand, squeezed some onto my left hand, and brought it to his hole. Unlike me, he couldn’t be ready to take a dick right away. We had to work up to it, which sparked a flicker of excitement in my chest. I swirled my left middle finger around his hole, then carefully pushed it inside.

His moan rose in pitch, trembling at the edge.

His insides were warm, and his hole was tight yet inviting. I moved in and out of him, each push eliciting a different cry of pleasure. I felt my way forward, searching for the small elevation that marked his prostate.

His whole body shook with ecstasy, and his voice broke as the moans wouldn't stop. “Oh my god, Cato, oh my...” He panted. I left my finger where it was, but paused to give him a breather. He turned his head slightly and blinked at me. “This is so crazy. I could already cum in an instant. Why? How?”

I couldn’t help but smirk. “More? Or should we stop while everything feels good?”

Matt’s breath hitched, and his eyes fluttered half-shut, as if he were savoring the moment. However, his brows knitted together. “This is... intense. I’m really close already,” he said, almost as if he wanted to apologize. “Is it okay, if we...?”

"Sure," I said, needing no more words from him. I slowly pulled out my finger, but just as only the tip remained inside, Matt whimpered.

“No, don’t pull it out ... please, leave it in...” He pushed his ass up higher—just enough, that his dick wasn’t trapped between his stomach and the mattress anymore. “...and help me get off .”

The improved view made my heart beat faster. “I’d love to,” I said, mentally slapping myself for not letting him finish his sentences.

I pushed my finger back in, reaching my right hand around his leg and wrapping it around his shaft. His dick trembled, and my touch alone was enough to make him cry out in pleasure again.

Syncing my moves, I stroked and fingered him at the same time. My eyes didn't know where to look. His puckering hole? His thick dick inside my hand? Or his red face, with his lower lip quivering with every gasp?

His moans swelled, just like his dick. “Keep going,” he begged. “ Please .”

I increased the speed at which I jerked him off.

His voice rose higher and higher until, at the top, it stopped, holding his breath for a brief second, before the loudest groan flooded the room.

His dick exploded in my hand.

One, two, three ropes of his thick white cream shot onto the blanket.

I slowed down, but kept a tight grip on his dick as it pulsed in my hands and more cum dripped out.

“ Cato ...” Panting, Matt’s voice dipped to a husky whisper. “This was so fucking hot.”

I pulled my middle finger out, watching his hole pulse as he showed no sign of wanting to rob me of that view.

Clinging to his hard-on, I shot my left hand down to my own dick and wrapped it around. Without wasting a second, I began to stroke myself. I wanted to cherish that moment and cum with his dick still in my hand before he decided he had enough.

Matt pushed himself up a little, but his upper body sank right back down to the mattress. "Cato," he whispered again. "Can I... one last thing?"

I glanced at him, my hand moving up and down my cock. "Yeah?"

"Can you cum on me? I want to feel it."

I let go of his dick. "On your ass?"

"My chest?" He pushed into the mattress again and managed to flip his upper body around this time. "I want to watch you... If that's okay." His eyes moved down, searching for my crotch.

Aroused by everything this evening had thrown my way, I climbed on top of him, moving closer until my dick was above his chest. "Like this?"

He bit his lower lip and nodded briefly, locking his eyes on me.

I stroked hard, wanting to give him the show he asked for and shoot my load on his hot body.

"Yeah, cum for me," he said, moaning as he watched me. His left hand searched for my ass and fondled it gently.

His touch was enough to push me over the edge. I closed my eyes for a second when I felt the first rope of cum rush up, but I opened them right away because I didn't want to miss the view. It shot all over his chest and covered his left nipple. The second rope flew even higher, with one drop hitting his chin and making him groan. The third and fourth spurts were smaller, dripping down only. But the way Matt looked at my cum-soaked cock, his lips parting slightly with lust, was an image I would never forget.

Our eyes met, still heavy with feverish lust, but as the gaze lingered, our brows lifted, and we both let out soft chuckles.

Clinging to my dick, I sat back on my ass as our laughter took over. Matt closed his eyes and opened his mouth wide as happy squawks escaped us both.

My chest buckled, and I flopped onto the mattress next to him.

Matt opened his eyes again, and an honest smile appeared. "We just did that," he said.

"True," I agreed.

He propped himself up on his left arm just enough to get a better look at me. He pursed his lips and pressed them against mine one last time.

I expected him to jump up straight away or at least avert his gaze and joke about what had happened between us, but he didn't.

He just lay there and smiled at me.

And so did I.

4

MIDNIGHT TALKS it was our new friendship, which I might have jeopardized by giving in to my horniness.

Trying to distract myself with games didn't help, so I ended up throwing on the first-best action movie I found online. I buried myself under all three throw blankets on the couch with Pounce's snout resting on my legs.

Shortly after midnight, my phone buzzed.

Matt

The shift went on forever. I'm wrecked. Just heading straight to bed now.

Something deflated in my chest. I stared at the message longer than I should have.

No 'want to hang out?' , no 'when can I see you again?' Just wrecked. Spent.

I told him to sleep well. He sent back a sleepy emoji.

For the rest of the night, I tried not to overthink it. I tried not to convince myself that it was a one-time thing, a moment that flared and burned out. Because the truth was, I didn't know yet. Only the morning would tell. If he stopped showing up at the park, if the invitation to trivia night turned out to be nothing but a gentle way to ease me toward goodbye, well... then I'd know.

It didn't help that my bedroom still smelled like him. The faint citrusy trace of his cologne was all over my pillows. I tossed and turned for two hours before finally slipping into restless sleep, and when morning came, my body resisted every urge to get up.

Pounce had another opinion on the matter, though.

He stationed himself at the side of the bed, nudging my foot with his cold snout. When I pulled my foot deeper under the covers, he made his way up, pressing his nose insistently against my face. I reached out and rubbed behind his right ear—his favorite spot—hoping to distract him and buy myself another five minutes of pretending.

It didn't work.

A quiet bark was my first warning, and I knew better than to wait for a second one.

The scent of damp leaves filled the crisp air. A few sunbeams peeked through the clouds and lit up the foliage with a golden glow. Still not expecting anything, Pounce and I took our usual route. We crossed the small pedestrian bridge separating my street from the park, walked up the pathway toward the bench under the maple tree, and... there they were—Matt and Sora—already waiting by the bench.

Matt stood there with two coffees. When his eyes met mine, a slight grin tugged at his lips, and he gave me a quick nod, beckoning me over.

Sora pulled on her leash and yipped when she noticed Pounce. He responded just as eagerly, pulling ahead and urging me to hurry.

My steps felt lighter, almost like the air itself had lifted me up.

“Thought you might show,” Matt said, holding out one of the cups to me, as the dogs

pressed their snouts together, tails wagging.

I couldn't help it. I grinned back. "Stalker."

"Can you blame me?"

Sora jumped back with a yip, stretching out her front paws as she raised her tail to the sky before barreling toward Pounce like a cannonball. Pounce barked once and leaped into play.

Matt and I stood there, both clinging to our coffees, watching them for a moment without saying anything. Then, without any warning, he pulled me into a hug. Not the kind we'd shared the night before. This one was awkward and slightly too hard. We were both laughing by the end of it, but it lingered just enough to mean something. "Sorry that I was so quiet yesterday," he said, pulling back slightly. "Had a lot on my mind."

"No worries," I reassured him. The fact that he was here now was the only answer I needed. "How did the apartment viewing go?"

"Good," he said, nodding vigorously. "Right size, decent price, close to work, the park, and... I actually signed a contract straight away."

I felt a rush of warmth bloom in my chest. With a place this close, not even that would become an obstacle. The quiet mornings and shared walks wouldn't have to end. "Congratulations."

"Thank you." Another brief silence settled between us, broken only by the soft thud of paws and rustling leaves as the dogs played nearby. Matt cleared his throat and scuffed his foot lightly on the ground as if searching for the right words. "So, uh ... what are you doing later?"

I glanced at him. “Why?”

He shrugged, looking a little too casual. “I have the day off and was thinking, I might come over. You know, hang out. See your Alley Fighter mods in action. Maybe...”

He hesitated, his smile tugging a little shy. “Figure out a new routine?”

“A routine,” I repeated.

“Yeah. You know... morning walks, coffee, dogs... maybe being open-minded together?”

And for once, I didn’t overthink. I just smiled and said, “I’d like that.”