

A promotional image for a project featuring two young men in futuristic suits. The man on the left wears a blue suit with glowing orange lights, while the man on the right wears a red suit with glowing orange lights. They are facing each other in a dimly lit room with blue ambient lighting. The man on the right has his right fist raised. The background is dark with some blurred lights.

TOMMY LINARCOS

**OF CARDS
AND CASTLES**

OF CARDS AND CASTLES

Story #9 in the ***Cutting School and Playing Games*** series.

TOMMY LINARCOS

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I woke up first, realizing where I was. I was home, in my bed. My red-and-black *The Batman* and Sydney Sweeney posters confirmed that. Something was different, though. I wasn't alone. Rory was with me. Rory was naked. Rory was the little spoon in my bed.

Then I remembered. My arm was loosely hanging by our sides, by my thigh and his ass, but I draped it back over him and pulled him closer. I let my hand stroke his skin, and felt him curl his back into me in reaction. He was probably in that morning twilight, like I had been — just sensations, no active thought. My hand drifted south and I found he had morning wood, just like I had. I began to stroke him awake.

"Johnny..." he groaned, "it's my turn. Let me fuck you..."

"Not yet," I replied.

I listened to the house, trying to decide who was up and who was where based on its creaks and any muffled voices. I didn't hear anyone. I looked at the clock; it was after 9:00am. It was a Sunday. Dad would be out doing dad things, already, and Mom would have just left to do the weekly shopping. Scott was probably asleep, which wouldn't matter, anyway. And Olivia lived in another state, now.

I moved and rolled Rory onto his back and gave his cock a good sucking, just enough to get him interested and reaching for me, but then I pulled off and sat up, rolling to the bedside. Rory looked at me like I'd betrayed him. "It's after nine. Time for us to get in a shower."

Rory scrunched his brows, trying to figure out why the time mattered, or why he needed a shower, or why he needed a shower *now*. "I can shower when I get home."

"No," I corrected him, swiping at his bed-head blond hair sticking up. It had caught a ray of sunlight, and looked pretty cool, kind of a halo effect. The sun was hitting him just right and, though his chest was hairless, you could see all the little vellus hair glowing across his front. He stretched a bit, then, elbows up, and I noticed his sparse pit hair was lighter than his pubes. I don't know why I noticed that; I just did.

I leaned in and kissed him. He pulled the back of my head in tight and kissed me harder. A full minute later, I broke the kiss. "No, it's time for *us* to get in the shower..."

I pulled his arm but he just slid across the bed, until it hit him what I'd said, and he did his best to follow me. Then he stopped me. "I'm still naked," he said, noting his blond cock was still hard and pointing the way.

"That's the best way to shower," I snarked, not answering his concern. "Only Scott's home. Mom might've looked in on us before she left, so now she's seen you naked, anyway."

That seemed to satisfy him and concern him at the same time, and we both left my bedroom and went across the hall to the washroom, remembering to pull fresh towels from the linen closet. Rory was first inside the glass shower enclosure, trying to figure out the on/off temperature handle, but he got it.

I stepped in and slid the door closed. Rory took ahold of me and pressed my body to him, as if he needed to remind me that we weren't just there to freshen up. He wanted to kiss me some more. Last night, I finally gave in and kissed him. It just felt right. It was during a time of passion, and it felt right. I don't think I could do it in front of anyone else, and I don't think he would, either, and I don't think I could ever do, like, hello and goodbye kisses, but while we were together, it felt right, and I wanted to.

He started by kissing my neck, and my ear, and my shoulders, and my chest, while we got thoroughly wet. And then we just made out under the hot shower for a while.

We backed away from the spray. I took the bottle of Old Spice Nightpanther body wash and shot a helping on my chest, which Rory immediately caught before it slipped down and off my body, then he spread it and lathered me. I shot some on him, too, and mirrored him. In the soccer team showers, we might smack each other around, but we would never have done this, the way we caressed each other, loving the slickness, making sure our pecs and arms were clean sliding across each other, making sure the other's ass was very, very clean, and certifying that we had the cleanest cocks in the whole county.

"Nightpanther," Rory recognized. "Now I'll smell like you. That's gonna confuse the hell out of Mia when I fuck her silly, later."

"It'll bring back good memories," I said, thinking I was joking, but I caught the pause in Rory's action. "I meant that in a good way, or something," I stammered. "I didn't mean, like... I was just trying to be... Ah, *fuck*."

I had to look at him. He had to see my eyes to know that I didn't mean that like it sounded, that I was sorry. When I saw him, his eyes were big — bigger than normal now that his hair was wet. And so blue. And there was a hurt, still, in his eyes, and a suspicion. I was undoing all the progress we'd made last night.

"I'm sorry," I told him. "I meant what I said yesterday. Mia's yours. I know you're in love, and I'm sorry."

Rory seemed to nod, or it might have been him just letting some water roll away from his face. He turned me around, shot some more Nightpanther on his cock and on my ass, and fucked me.

I took it.

It had been a hell of a week.

On Monday, we had the day off from school, and everyone gathered at my house and we played a sexy game of *Clue* — going in pairs into different rooms to investigate the "murder" with each other. Some pairings were a tease, some were sexual dreams come true. It ended on a bad note, and I had to leave or someone was really going to get killed.

But honestly, it was me who got killed. When I couldn't get Lyla, I wanted to steal Rory's girlfriend, Mia, but they declared their love, and I was convinced to put away my feelings and let them be. I have such real feelings for Lyla, though, and... it was a great day for us, for me and Lyla. Even with the pairings and sexual escapades, we were... *so close*... I could see it in her eyes. God, even my brother said he saw it in us. How we *were* together. But it all ended with her fucking her "boyfriend" Conor, right in the frontroom in front of everyone, right in my face. And it just tore my fucking heart out!

My brother and his girl, Fiona, tried to run interference and handle damage control, but I just hid in the basement until everyone left. The next day at school, I stayed away from the group, didn't join them in the cafeteria or anything. I had to see Lyla each day in Spanish, Health, and Geometry, but I was quiet.

It was Wednesday when Mia caught me and pulled me to their table — *our* table — in the caf. "Come on, Johnny. You can't hide." I came with and sat down — because I really wanted to.

I wanted my friends. There was this guy Costa there, too, and this chick from Belgium named Silke; I didn't have them in any classes but I'd gotten to know them this past month. I wanted to see Rory, again, but I didn't want his parasite friend Conor around. I wanted Lyla, and I wanted her to get rid of Conor, too. And even though I promised to lay off wanting Mia, I still wanted her. We kind of ended our *Clue* round together by promising to sneak off sometime and take a day out together, without Rory, without Lyla.

"Where've you been?" Lyla asked. "We missed you."

Did you really miss me? Lyla? Did you? Get rid of fucking Conor and you won't miss me! I wanted to say. I wanted to, but I didn't. "Just had to concentrate on my work. We're doing *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* in Alpha English and I have to memorize part of it, and analyze all of it..." I rambled.

But I think they knew I was making up a story, and they let me get away with it. They all remembered how the day ended on Monday. Conor probably didn't, though, he was so high.

Lyla was in the other Alpha English class, so she knew I might not be lying. "The big poem with the guy with the albatross around his neck?"

"The albatross around *your* neck, you mean..." I said quietly, nodding toward Conor for her.

I brown-bagged it that day, so opened my lunch and dug in. It shut me up. I let them talk around me.

But then Lyla brought out a little plastic box with a deck of cards in it. She showed it to me. "What's that?" I had to ask. She obviously wanted me to.

"*Old Maid*. My mom gave this to me when I was little. It was actually my grandma's, then it was hers, and now it's mine," she said proudly, like it was Show-n-Tell. She then lay all the cards face up on the lunch table, and we made room for her when she needed more space. They were all pictures of funny-looking people, all in their work uniforms, or specific modes of

dress, anyway. She put identical ones on top of each other until she had 21 pairs and one card with an old lady on it.

"I deal out the cards, and you have to make pairs. If you have a pair, you put it down. If you don't have a pair, you have to take a card from someone. We keep going in turns until all the pairs are gone, and whoever still has the Old Maid is the loser," she explained. It was a simple game.

I picked up one pair of a character called Milkman Mo. He was in a grey uniform carrying some milk bottles, and a bunch of cats were attacking him, begging him for some milk. "These are funny," I said. "And worn. Did you, like, *play* with them...?"

Lyla knew what I meant. "I used to make up stories about them, like characters, like they were paper dolls. Like Fifi Fluff and Greenthumb Gert." She held up a young, rich lady wearing a fur stole and walking her dog, and a woman working in her garden wearing a big, floppy hat. "I imagine they're like the Country Mouse and the City Mouse. Fifi comes to visit her cousin in the sticks, and meets all the country boys. Dopey farmer Hayseed Hank has no use for girls, and Lasso Louie, the sharp cowboy, figures she wants him because he's the greatest, but she really likes Arnie Angler, the fisherman - a real man!"



"I don't know - look at the size of Lasso Louie's cock!" Conor said, getting into the story.

"That's just the crease in his bluejeans," Mia shook her head.

"I don't know. Why would you draw a crease like that? Guy's huge!" Conor pointed.

Rory noted the rich lady was kind of cute, but snobby. "Fifi is what Scott calls my sister, Fiona. That's her nickname."

"That doesn't look like her, though," I said. "All fancy with furs and a French poodle..."

Rory pointed to another card. "No. Tumbledown Tess looks more like Fiona. A real cute blonde."

"But Fiona has grace," I reminded him. "Tumbledown Tess has fallen off her skis!"

"Still looks like her, and that little expression on her face?" Rory was really studying the cards. "I can hear her saying, 'Ooof!' when she falls. Look at her mouth..."



"You *are* in love with your sister!" Conor poked him.

"Shut up," Rory said and slapped Conor's head. I wanted to do that.

"Milkman Mo is cute!" Mia pointed to the card I first picked up.

"He likes Careless Carrie, the waitress," Lyla informed us.

"She's cute. Kind of skinny but cute," I said.

"She's dropping everything!" Mia didn't see it.

"That's because Milkman Mo has come to deliver the milk to the restaurant, and the cats follow him in!" Lyla said, reliving her stories. "It's all funny while they try to catch the cats and shoo them outside, and they both wind up on the floor, and he steals a kiss from her!"

"What about Postman Pete? Doesn't he visit the restaurant every day?" Mia asked.

"Yeah, and he likes Carrie, too, but he's a cheater," Lyla said, a grim look on her face. "Look at his porn 'stache. He's actually married but he pretends he's not."

"The creep," Mia pronounced.

"Which one are you?" I asked, figuring she had to have a favorite, a stand-in for herself. "Alto Annie?"

"The opera singer in the red dress?" Rory asked, pointing.

"Yeah, she's blond like you, and has big boobs," I kidded.

"She has *huge* boobs!" Lyla laughed.

"Fifi Fluff has nice boobs, too! Can't see Tumbledown Tess's, but maybe *you'd* know," Conor said, slapping Rory.

"Shut up." *C'mon, Rory, hit him back...*

"Alto Annie goes with Freddie Falloff because he dresses fancy," Lyla explained. Freddy was a rich guy dressed to go fox hunting. "I used to think he was a ringmaster from the circus in his top hat and red coat. I didn't know he was all *Downton Abbey* and riding hunting horses until later, but he still gets to kiss Alto Annie."

"So, which is your favorite? Which one is you?" I asked.

"Ballet Betty," Lyla admitted with a smile.

"She's got your hair," I said.

"And your boobs," Rory noticed.

"And she has nice legs," Lyla pointed out. "You might think she's heavy, but that's just the angle of her tutu. She's got a good figure. But she's not perfect. She's lost one of her slippers."

"So, who did you match her up with?" Mia asked.

"She and Alto Annie are fighting over Freddie Falloff. See, the circus is in town and that's why we have Clancy Clown, but he's one of those silent clowns and never says anything. He likes Betty, too, but it's not gonna happen because he'll never tell her. So sometimes, Ballet Betty walks the tightrope at the circus, so that's when she sees Freddie Falloff." Lyla's whole fantasy was coming back to her.

"But Alto Annie gets him?" Mia asked, involved with the soap opera, now.

"Yeah. Billy Blaze the fireman likes Betty, too, though," Lyla said like a secret.

"He certainly has a big hose!" Conor pointed to the card.

"Yeah, but it doesn't shoot much," Mia said, scowling at Conor.

"This is a kids' game? Look how he's holding that hose! You see that, right?" Conor said.

"Hard to miss!" Rory agreed.



"Might not put out a fire, but that's a huge cum load!" Conor laughed. "Tell me you never saw that?"

"Yeah..." Lyla sighed. "I thought it was like he was peeing. I didn't know about cum when I was little."

"Which one did you want to be your boyfriend?" Mia asked.

"Milkman Mo," Lyla smiled. "But the Indian boy Heap Big Talk has the best body. He has a cute butt. And I can imagine him when he gets out of the buckskins. I think he's sexy."

"So does she wind up with him?"

"No. No woman owns *him*," Lyla said dramatically. "He has his way with her and rides off into the wind. She probably winds up with Lasso Louie."

"Not with the fireman?"

"Well..." Rory picked up the story, "Billy Blaze lives at the firehouse for two weeks at a time, right? And Lasso Louie goes out on cattle drives. So they balance each other out."

"Which one loves her?" I asked.

Lyla thought on that.

"She doesn't know," Mia answered instead of Lyla.

“Is she in love with either one?” I asked, for clarification, both of the game and real life.

“She doesn’t know,” Mia answered, again, with a warning in her eye.

This was obviously code. But was Mia warning me about me, her, and Rory? Or informing me about Conor, Lyla, and me?

There were seven of us at the table. Lyla shuffled the cards and dealt us each six or seven cards, and we played the game. Lyla gave us more story tidbits as pairs were put down on the table.

“So, what’s the sexy version of this game?” Costa asked, placing down a pair of Crazy Cops.

All play stopped.

Rory took to consider that. “Well, we’ve done a bunch, but it’s no fun when fooling around is just a reward for winning.”

“It’s no fun?” I asked.

“You know what I mean,” he rolled his eyes. “Like when it’s not a part of the actual game. Like when we did *Clue*, it was part of the investigation.”

I didn’t want to think about Clue Day with Conor sitting on the other side of Lyla. Same damn black Superboy t-shirt. He’d better have a fleet of them...

I whispered into Lyla’s hair, “I prefer when we played *Operation*...”

“That was fun. So was looking for clues in the closet, though...” she added, quietly.

“You’re ripping my heart out. You know that.”

Lyla just took a breath. Then she addressed Mia and Rory. “The sexy version of *Old Maid* is sexy improv.” She held her lips tightly pursed and looked like a cat-and-canary deal. “We draw cards and have to act out a sexy scene.”

“As the characters, of course,” Mia agreed.

“Of course,” Lyla confirmed.

Mia continued, “Your entire storyline is sexy. We could dress up, put on a play, and then...”

“This is like a podcast,” I recognized. “Each episode deals with different townsfolk, and there’s a cliffhanger... Lyla needs to write all her stories down and script it out. Then we all do the voices!” I got a few amazed looks from around the table. It was a good idea, though Lyla gave me a look like she didn’t want to have to do all the writing!

Costa wound up being stuck with the Old Maid, that first game. We wanted to play again, but there wasn't enough time before the next class.

After school, we met up by our tree. I was still mostly quiet. It was Wednesday, so I didn't have any after school rehearsal, and soccer was over. I miss soccer practice, and the matches. I'd find a winter sport, but it's hard enough balancing Orchestra with Soccer and then with Baseball in the spring.

Anyway, Mia and Lyla had an idea that we could go to Mia's place and try to play *Sexy Old Maid* before her mom got home from this charity thing she does. Like we could take on characters from the deck and act out stuff, and Lyla could maybe use it for her podcast story. She really liked my idea, I'd found out.

So, we got there, settled in and got to it. We weren't exactly sure when her mom would be home, but Mia assured us it would be no sooner than five o'clock.

I'm not sure what I expected, but... I was at least hoping to play someone who would kiss Lyla. Kiss her in front of everyone. In front of Conor. Maybe I could join Rory and Mia, again, if it did actually get sexy, and we had time to do something.

Lyla put the stack of cards on the coffee table. We were going to pick random cards and invent a scene for the characters, like improv.

Mia picked the top card. It was Diver Dan. Rory drew Clancy Clown. Both tried to think of how to handle a scene — and how to make it sexy.

"You said the clown doesn't talk, right?" Rory asked.

"That's right," Lyla confirmed.

They took the "stage" in front of the TV.

"Hey, Clancy..." Mia began.

Rory said, "*Honk, honk!*" pretending to squeeze the bulb of a large horn.

"Yeah, I'll be going down into the ocean again, real soon. You want to go for a ride with me?" Mia had no real clue, but gave it a try.

"Honk-honk?" Rory asked. "Honk-honk honk **honk** honk-honk..." he said with a big grin.

Mia didn't quite know what he said, but the way he 'honked,' she was sure it was dirty. Rory dropped to his knees and raised Mia's skirt, then started drawing down her panties.

"Hold it, hold it, hold it," Mia warned and stopped the action. She looked to Lyla. "Is this really what you want?"

"No, you guys are doing it wrong," Lyla shook her head.

"I think I do it pretty well..." Rory told Mia's skirt.

"No, you can't just say 'Hi! I'm the clown! Let's have sex!'" Lyla complained.

"That's exactly something a clown would say!" Conor said.

"I didn't say anything," Rory reminded her. "I *honked*."

"No, that's like those dirty stories Conor is always reading online. 'Hi, I'm Trixie and I just moved in next door,' 'Great! Let's have sex!' And where the guy writing them says at the end 'What should I do next? Send me your ideas.' And then what was a good story suddenly has the mom come in, then there's a dog with socks on, and grandpa pees on everybody..." Lyla devolved.

"What? Those are good stories..." Conor said, perturbed by the attack on his lack of taste.

"Sounds like you've read a few," Rory kidded her.

"I like the love stories with sex, not the..." Lyla visibly shivered.

"Rory likes the brother-sister ones..." Conor kept at it.

"Shut up," Rory muttered.

"Maybe don't make the characters random, then," Mia advised, getting back on track. "Let's do the waitress and the milkman," she put to Rory.

"Careless Carrie and Milkman Mo," Lyla confirmed. "Ready positions... and... scene!"

Rory had run out the front door and came back in. "Good morning, Carrie!"

Mia picked up a magazine like it was a tray, and put empty cups and leftover Halloween candy on it. She looked at Rory. "Mo! Oh, my! Boy, am I glad to see-..." and she tripped, tossing the contents of her tray in the air and all over Costa.

"Costa! You are Arnie Angler — you just came in for a bite before you head off fishing," Lyla directed.

"Carr-rrrie! Not agaiiiin!" Costa/Arnie whined comically.

"Oh, Arnie! I'm sorry!" Mia said, starting to wipe Costa's head with a couch pillow.

"It's alright. I was bound to get wet today at the river, anyway."

Lyla ran into the scene and sat beside Costa. "I'll take care of it, honey. You get those cats out of here or they'll eat all of Arnie's bait!" Then she whispered aloud to Silke, "I'm Greenthumb Gert. You're Fifi Fluff."

Rory/Mo reacted. “Oh, golly gosh darn it! Those fuckin’ cats!” He spun around until he was face-to-face with Mia/Carrie. “Let me help you, my darling. Are you ready for today’s... ‘milk’ delivery? Any ‘cream’ today?”

“Mo, you’re terrible!” Mia/Carrie said. Rory/Mo got down on the floor to help her pick up the candy and stole a kiss from her. “Mo! What will people say?”

“They’ll say ‘Hey! Look! It’s that cowboy and the city cousin with the poodle!’” Rory called, then got down to making out with Mia on the floor.

I knew my prompt, then. I was going to be Lasso Louie. I jumped up and took Silke’s hand. I talked like this cowboy called John Wayne. “Wellll, Fifi, this here is what we like to call our chuckwagon, but we don’t usually have to eat off the floor like them two is doin’.”

Silke was on top of it. “Louie, oh my. Do they serve cat here?”

“Waaal, our new president likes to think so. I’ll run ‘em off.” I took out a finger-gun and aimed.

Lyla jumped up. “No, don’t shoot ‘em!”

“I was just gonna scare ‘em...” I said.

“Hello, cousin,” Lyla/Gert said to Silke/Fifi. “What brings you to town?”

“I was looking to hire someone to take me on a cruise of your majestic river. I was told there was a man with a boat for hire here. A *real* man,” Silke/Fifi said.

“Yes... you got it!” Lyla whispered.

“This here is the man you want, Miss Fifi,” I said, pointing at Costa. “I’ll take my leave and talk to Gert, here, about... ‘planting’ things in her garden.”

Then Conor ran in, a little upset that he wasn’t given a character, yet. “Hey, what asshole’s been shooting up the town?” he demanded. “I’m the fireman, by the way.”

“Don’t you mean Crazy Cop?” Lyla asked quietly.

“No, the fireman, with the big hose for a dick,” Conor corrected. He picked up the fireplace poker and held it between his legs. “And you should be that ballet chick with the boobs, ‘cause the fireman likes her, not the garden chick.”

I thought Lyla was going to argue, but she did spin into a pirouette. “Billy Blaze! There’s no fire here. Don’t go getting in a fight over little ol’ me.”

“Miss Betty, you do yourself a favor and stay away from this character,” I warned. “There was a fire at the theater, remember? And he showed up pretty damn quick. Suspicious, if you ask me.”

“Well, no one fuckin’ asked you,” Conor said to my face. “Now get outta my way. The ballerina and I have a naked date in Mia’s bedroom.” And he pushed me.

I saw red. I grabbed him by his shirt with both hands and pulled him away from Lyla. “We don’t talk that way about our women folk in public. You seem to make a habit of it.” I don’t know if I was just ‘staying in character’ or if that was really me talking, but I was gonna haul off and belt him — hold him with my left and punch him with my right, even with my brace on that arm.

Lyla got back in-between us. Even Mia got up from her make-out with Rory to pull me away.

I picked up my jacket and backpack, and headed out. I didn’t need that shit, again. I don’t know how the rest of their skit went, or if they even continued, or had an orgy in character. With Conor there, I wasn’t going to be alone with Lyla, anyway. So, I said fuck it, and went home.

In my room, I took off my wrist brace and whipped it against the wall. Then I picked up my guitar and tried to play something to calm down, but I was still too angry. I pulled out my cello and played out my anger with “Eye of the Tiger” along with the 2cellos video on YouTube, and practically destroyed my bowstrings, picturing myself punching Conor in the nose. Then I practiced Vivaldi’s “Winter” for our winter concert. I calmed down. My brother was home, by then, and had Fiona with him; she said my cello sounded good and liked my intensity. Great, now I’ll need to picture Conor when I play the concert.

The next day, I gave lunch another try.

“Hey, Johnny,” Lyla said, sliding next to me at our table, a nice curl to her hair today.

God, she was killing me. As soon as she sat down, I could smell her. Something soft and powdery. Not a perfume or post-PE body spray, but... maybe a mix of whatever she put on plus... just her. Maybe there was a perfume on her sweater that landed there when she sprayed, but I knew her scent. If I hadn’t been looking, I would still have known she was beside me. I could not see her for a whole year, but if I smelled her scent, I would recognize it instantly and look around for her.

“Hey.” I wanted to say something like ‘Good afternoon, beautiful,’ but I’m just bangin’ my head against the wall.

“Game of *Old Maid*?” she asked, taking out her deck from her fashionable pink lunchbox.

“Of course, but we need to get these two in,” I said, referring to Rory and Mia. “I don’t want to win too easily,” I told her with a wink.

“What makes you think you’d win?” Lyla asked for fun.

I was speechless. My mouth opened, I smiled, but I couldn't say it. Because I knew I wasn't going to win. Not where I wanted to.

Rory saved me. "Here. Let me shuffle, this time."

We were joined by the others, but didn't play until we were done with sandwiches so we could hold the cards.

"I'm sorry about yesterday at Mia's," I told Lyla. "Did the rest go okay, or...?"

"Ah..." she thought about it. "Not really. Not as far as story ideas go, no." If there was any sexy business, she figured I wouldn't want to know about that, and she'd be right. "But I did like seeing people actually being my characters, so it gave me a couple ideas. I'm gonna try writing a ten-minute episode, and see how it goes."

"That's cool," I said. "You're a great writer. You can do it. Let me know if I can help."

"You can write a funny commercial for me until I get a sponsor!" she laughed.

I meant it about her being a great writer. I've seen some of the stuff she's written for her Alpha English class, and I remember stuff from last year when we had that class together. Her friend Ava stopped by right then, and at first it looked like Conor thought she was there to see *him*, but Ava and her spoke about Lyla joining the school newspaper and what article she might have on her mind.

"See? You *are* great," I commended her.

When we got to playing, I don't know if I predicted it, but everyone got rid of their cards but me and Lyla. I had Diver Dan, the deep-sea guy getting attacked by an octopus, and she had the other Diver Dan and the Old Maid card. I had to pull a card from her. Would we switch ownership of the Old Maid? or would I get Diver Dan and win?

I got Diver Dan.

"I'm sorry," I told her. "I didn't want you to lose."

"It's okay, I'm the Old Maid..." she sighed, yet smiled at me. That big, bright, toothy, Lyla smile.

I put my hand on hers. "You'd never be an old maid if I have any—"

"Cut it out!" Conor butted in, knocking my hand away. "I let you fuck her once, so what d'you..."

That was it. I stood up and smashed Conor in the face.

Because he was half-standing — one knee on his seat — he flew backwards and careened across the aisle into another lunch table. It was close to the end of the period, so there wasn't a lot of food knocked around, but it made a lot of noise, and a lot of fuss. Girls jumped out of

the way, and guys started chanting “Fight! Fight! Fight!” but Conor didn’t get up too fast. Mr. Keating and some teacher lady I never met came running over. Mr. K held me back, and the lady and some guy from Track picked up Conor, who was bleeding from his nose.

I was taken to the Office, and Conor to the nurse. I explained how Conor insulted Lyla and deserved the punch. The Principal called my dad, and my dad was like, ‘If my son hit him, the kid probably deserved it.’ I love my dad.

I spent the rest of the day in ISD, and was suspended for the next day, Friday. Principal said I should be out for three days, but said he would pretend Saturday and Sunday counted, and hinted real hard that I shouldn’t have hit Conor “in school, at least.” Principal’s cool, too.

I kept my distance from “the gang” after I got home. There were a couple texts about what happened to me and how Conor was. The thing that got me was that Lyla was stuck having to baby Conor since he was the one that got hit. What did I want to have happen, anyway? Her to jump up and say to him, “Good for you! Now, I belong to Johnny!” Yeah, maybe I did. She had to have heard what he said, or at least how he said it, though. *Fuck.*

Friday morning, I was home. Off from school. Suspended. *Oooo, what a punishment! No school for you!*

Yeah, I brought my books home. I did most of the work I was going to miss while I was in ISD, anyway, so I really didn’t have much to do that weekend, at all. And *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* was, honestly, weeks ago — I did lie about that.

So, I was in the kitchen in my sweats, waiting for my mom and dad to go to work, and Scott to go to school, when I got a text from Mia.

What are you up to today?

**What do you think?
Eating Cocoa Pebbles
and watching cartoons.**

What ya watching?

**Old school stuff.
Dexter’s Laboratory
and Powder Puff Girls.**

That’s Powerpuff

You sure?

Believe me

**Must’ve been autocorrect.
I would never make that
mistake.**

That all you got planned?

Why?

**You want to cut school
and liven up my day?**

Yes

That single word sent an electric shock through me. I caught my breath, but I'm not sure why since I didn't have to say anything, just type.

Who else?

Just me.

Fuck yes! I knew instantly that she was talking about making today into "our day together" — that one day we'd talked about to see if we could hang together for hours and still like each other, talk about nothing and everything, and be better than her and Rory. And fuck each other blue, but that goes without saying.

Coast will be clear by 8:00am.

I'll start walking now.

I had to think. What did I need to do to prepare? I got another text.

**Don't shower or shave.
I want to know it's you.**

**Don't walk and text.
That's dangerous.**

Okay, so skip the shower, and I knew why, but I still wanted to be clean, and my hair was a mess. I took off my wrist brace. I had to wear it even when I was sleeping, but I wasn't going to put it back on today. Maybe I was done wearing it, for good. Season was over, and I had feeling in all my fingers. I was fine, I decided.

I went in the basement with my shampoo and stuck my head under the laundry sink faucet and washed my hair, toweled dry, and made myself look like me. I went into the washroom and cleaned what needed to be cleaned down below. I threw on my comfy navy blue terry cloth robe I got for Christmas a couple years ago, and went to Scott's bedroom. I borrowed his lube from his nightstand, just in case. Then I opened his sock drawer and took what remained of his condom supply. It was only three, but it was three more than I had.

What are you wearing?

Just a robe.

**Just a robe?
Better stay that way.**

Mia knocked on the door. I knew it wouldn't take her long. I opened the door and there she was. Beautiful, as always, her long dark-brown hair a little tousled from the wind, but that just made it better, I thought. I almost forgot to let her in, but I did, and looked around the street to see who would have noticed. Of course, no one did. Who really pays attention to stuff like that?

Mia took off her jacket and stepped her shoes off. "Are we alone?" she asked.

“House is ours.”

She pulled me down to her and we kissed like we hadn’t seen each other for a month. It was then that I realized I hadn’t gotten to brushing my teeth. I must’ve tasted like Cocoa Pebbles, if I was lucky. She was post-minty, but she liked Extra spearmint gum, so it might’ve been that.

She pulled back from me and looked me up and down. “Just a robe.” She pulled my belt and the sides fell open, revealing the naked me in all my glory, my cock pointing right at her. She sighed. No, not really a sigh, but a breath, a soft exhale that I could hear the word “Yes…” inside of. Can I help it if she loves my cock?

One of her hands grasped my cock, and the other pressed against my upper abs and she started pushing me backwards. She couldn’t have knocked me over with any amount of force, but I started walking backwards, and she guided me toward my bedroom. Once we were inside, she shoved harder and I fell backwards onto my bed for her. That was her mission, and I wanted her to complete it.

She could have done a slow strip to tease me, but she just stared at my naked body, then up to my eyes, then back down while she took her clothes off one piece after another. When her panties and socks came off, she climbed onto the bed and just kept coming, straddling me. I straightened my lie a bit, head on pillow, and pulled my arms out of the robe, though the robe was still beneath us. That was fine, it could soak up all her cum; we could fuck on it and then toss away the wet spot.

She was on me, knees at my waist, rising up to handle my cock and put it into position under her pussy. I watched her thick, dark landing strip start to move forward, then felt her slippery lips wet my cock. Her eyes closed as she glided back and forth, up and back on my cock, flicking her clit on my cock head. “*Ffffff...*” she breathed in. I waited for the rest of the word, but didn’t get it until she hooked my cock on a downstroke and lifted up to start impaling herself on me. “*Ffffffuck!*” There it was.

I was back inside Mia.

I had dipped my cock inside her a few times when we were playing our round of *Clue* on Monday, but that didn’t work out — it was a very different feeling, then, mentally, between the two of us. Before that, I had fucked her in her bedroom, with Rory right next to us on the bed, then in another threesome at Lyla’s. This time, it was just her and me. I liked it this way.

I rose up and my hands found her breasts, those dark red nipples with the thin ring around the edges of her areolas just inviting me to suck on them. When my lips were around one, my hands were free to roam her backside, stroking her soft skin, and holding her to me.

She bounced up and down, continually piercing herself on me, moaning softly. I pulled off her tit and fell back, bringing my hands to her hips and riding with her rhythm. “*Mia. Fuck me, Mia,*” I told her out loud, reminding her that no one was home. Hell, we’d even left my bedroom door wide open, and I wanted her to be as loud as she wanted.

Her eyes opened and she found mine; she still had that mean look of desire she had at the front door. Her *"Oh-ohhhhh!"* wasn't a moan, it was a sob, and she fell forward onto me, her breasts on my chest. *"Johnny... ah, Johnny, I want you so bad... god, I..."* She wrapped her arms around my neck and just increased her speed down below. Now, I knew she wasn't on birth control, but man, I wanted to cum in this girl.

I hadn't had time to jerk off this morning because my folks wanted to make sure I was up. They didn't give me a punishment, *per se*, for the suspension, but did make a short list on a Post-it for me to do on my day off. I'd get it done, later. Two of those things were 'Do your homework,' and 'Check school email for assignments.' Like I said, I did all that in ISD. 'Practice your cello while no one's home' was another I'd get around to later.

But here I was, deep inside this beautiful dark-haired girl, holding her like she was mine and mine alone. *"I've wanted you, too, babe,"* I told the top of her head. *"You belong here with me."*

Now, that might have been the wrong thing to say. We'd just gotten started and I didn't want her to be thinking about the Rory situation, whether she belonged with me or him. I just wanted her to want me. I guess I kind of knew that she had to have considered that all morning and on her walk here to my house, and she was good with whatever was going to happen.

"You feel so good, so fucking good, Mia," I moaned, kissing her shoulder. She picked her head up from my chest and kissed me, hard, like it was something she couldn't take back.

"Oh, Johnny,... I want you... I want this body... I want this cock... I want this-" I cut her off with another make-out session before she continued her list and started wanting my knees. She was keeping the sex talk to sex talk, I noticed — which was a good thing. There was no 'I love you' or 'I'm yours' or anything, yet. She wanted this first time to be just about the fuck, about desire, and I was good with that. We had all day to get around to our relationship.

"This cock is yours, baby. Fuck me, keep fucking me..." I told her.

She slammed down on me twice, quite hard, and started to cum. She cried out an *"Ah-ahhhhh! ... I'm cumming I'm cumming..."* and her hold on my neck went slack as her hips shook.

She was weakening, I could tell, and slowing down as I could feel her wetness spreading across me. Now, I've found that I can last a lot longer with the girl on top, like I'm not doing all the thrusting, like I'm not in as much control, so I was happy to let her bounce on me as long as she wanted. I knew I wouldn't cum too soon. Or at least I was *pretty sure* I wouldn't cum too soon. But I knew I had to flip her to keep the action going, and take control. We'd see how the timing went.

I held her tight and rolled us, staying inside her, though once on her back I did have to pull out and reset, anyway. But it was so easy going back in. So wet and smooth. I pushed up on my arms above her and pounded that cute little pussy, looking down below to see my pubes mash with her thick landing strip. I loved her bush, and could only anticipate getting down in there and licking her pussy to another crashing orgasm, later.

She was still a little dizzy, whisper-moaning, “...*fuck me... fuck me... fuck me...*” It was what she’d wanted since our first time. It was what she wanted now.

Now that I was on top, though, and pounding away, I knew my time was growing shorter. Do I stop and put on a condom? Or just pound away and cum inside this cute little pussy? I fucked and fucked, and it was time to decide — I could feel the tingle inside my butt growing and the static reaching my forehead.

I took the third choice and pulled out, rose up, and shot my cum all over her tits, spasming and calling her name as I did, so it wasn’t a real well-aimed salvo. When I opened my eyes, it was all over the place. And I mean all over her and all over my bed. It was on her stomach and it was on her tits. It was on her face and hair — and I don’t like doing that, I just don’t. It was on my Spider-Man pillow and my Batman pillow. And it was on my robe, but that was easy to take care of. I didn’t think about it then, but later I realized I hadn’t cum since Wednesday night — I was upset about everything, still, but got off thinking about fucking Fiona, something I’d never get to do again except in my fantasies, so I’d jerked myself to sleep that night. But nothing on Thursday, at all. The evidence was in front of me and all over Mia.

Our eyes met, and we both started laughing. Good, we were good.

I dropped down lightly on top of her and we kissed, spreading my cum between us, my cock rolling through her bush and squeezing out any more I had left.

I wanted to tell her I loved her. I didn’t. I’m not dumb. We weren’t in love, and I knew she didn’t want to be in love. I knew she loved Rory, and this whole thing was messing with her. It was messing with me, too. It just seemed like the right thing to say after such a great fuck. But I didn’t.

I slid to her side and we found a position, holding each other, her leg locking over mine. I looked at her and wiped away some cum from her face. “Lick me clean?” she asked. So I did, but just off her face. She liked the cum on her tits, and spread that around. We both knew there was a visit from a warm washcloth in our future. And I wondered if we could do a shower?

We stayed like that. Didn’t talk. Holding her felt right. But thoughts of Lyla crept into my head. Holding Lyla like this would feel right-er. And could I do this to Rory? Could we do this to Rory? I looked at Mia, her eyes closed in my arms. She was the one who came to me to break up with her boyfriend, not Lyla. Maybe it was supposed to happen this way.

We actually fell asleep for a bit. It was warm in the house, we were warm together, tired from waking up early, tired from the fuck, so we napped. Or we slept and woke and slept and woke. It was going on ten-thirty when we decided to actually move.

“No one’s home, right?” Mia asked me, rolling to the edge of the bed.

I had to laugh. “If they are, there are no secrets, anymore.”

Mia kissed me, knowing the question sounded kind of stupid, but she wanted to make a trip to the washroom and didn't want to dress. It was kind of a natural question. It was really cool to watch her walk naked out my door and into the house, seeing her nice ass pass the doorframe and disappear little by little...

Mia is naked in my house, wandering through it, and when she gets back, I'm going to fuck her again, was what I was thinking.

I took the time to straighten up, a bit. Hung up my robe. Made sure all my socks were inside the hamper. No Kleenex that had missed the trash can. Then I headed out to the kitchen and just as I got there, I heard Mia open the washroom door. "I'm in the kitchen," I called out to her. "Want something to drink?"

Naked Mia walked into my kitchen, her red nipples leading the way. "What'chya got?"

"How about a Fresca?" I asked, kind of silly.

"Do they still make that?" she asked me.

"It's a line from *Caddyshack*. Never mind. Don't worry," I waved it off.

We looked at what was available to drink, which wasn't a lot. There was always milk and OJ, sure. Mia turned down a can of Mountain Dew Baja Blast, but noted, "Oh, Rory likes that one." She accepted a glass from a 2-liter of Orange Crush and took a long drink, then stifled a burp, which was cute. "Needed the fizz to clear my throat."

She noticed my arm. "Hand okay, now?" she asked. I don't know if she was talking about my missing brace, or if my knuckles were okay after smashing Conor's nose, but either way I just nodded.

She put the glass down and put her hands on me. She let them roam up and down and onto my ass, then she slowly dropped to her knees and began sucking my cock. There was a little chill in the kitchen, being naked and all, but she started generating the heat in my body all over, again.

I loved her hair. I ran my fingers through it and pulled it away from her face so I could see her. She glanced up at me and winked. *Fuck.*

"Get up," I told her.

She stopped and looked up at me again to be sure I really wanted her to. I mean, why would anyone stop a blowjob?

"Get up on that table and fuck me right now."

She stood and I could see a fire in her eyes when I gave her that order, like in a movie when someone turns evil and their eyes glow yellow. She turned and leaned over the kitchen table. "Like this?" she asked, sticking her ass up in the air.

“No, I said to get up on the table. I want to see you when I fuck you.”

She made a growl as she put her knee up and climbed on top of my mother’s kitchen table. I helped her turn over and bring her pussy to the edge.

“Oooh, it’s cold!” she squeaked, with a smile, but I wasn’t laughing. I picked up her ankles, set them on my shoulders, moving in close. My cock felt that she must have cleaned and dried herself in the washroom, so I hocked some spit in my hand and quick-lubed my cock head, then got about pushing through her labia.

There she was! I took several dips, pulling her juices outside, again, then pushed my way deep inside. Once my hands were free, I could hold her ankles or play with those tits as I fucked her so hard the table started moving, each thrust a bang in her pussy and a squeak on the floor.

We’d fuck-shoved the table in front of the pantry door — a few more feet and we’d be solid against the wall when the far chair fell backwards. I didn’t stop fucking her, though.

“*Oh, Johnny... oh, fuck... Gotta say I’ve never been fucked on a kitchen table before!... come on... come on... give it to me...*” she encouraged. I was only too happy to give it to her.

Her left foot was in my hair, tickling my ear. I kind of got out of its way and then her toes were on my chin and lips, so I bit those piggies and took them inside. That’s when Mia squealed and said something in her breath about how she likes when Rory does that for her. It hit me she’d done that twice, now, and it kind of stopped me. Not like in anger, but a speed bump in the road.

I held her steady and made my excuse. “I need to calm down or I’m gonna cum in you.” She understood that. I let her legs off my shoulders, but I stayed inside her, picked her up, and carried her, holding her ass, back into my bedroom.

I eased her onto the bed and fell out of her. She rolled away to find a better spot on the bed and opened up my comforter, putting herself inside. I realized it was getting colder in the house and excused myself to go hit the thermostat, which was on a timer. I fixed the kitchen table while I was away and brought our drinks into the bedroom, and joined her inside the covers.

Mia rolled on top of me, sitting up, and I helped her find her way to rubbing her pussy up and back along my cock.

“*Mmmmm... Rory loves when I do this,*” she said, then stopped dead, realizing what she said. She’d brought him back into it, again.

I brought her back down and off of me.

I could feel Mia take a nervous, deep breath.

“So, you really thought they were the *Powder Puff Girls*?” she asked me, wrapping an arm and a leg around me.

“Um, it makes sense,” I guessed. Hell, I don’t know if I typed it wrong, or if it auto-corrected, or if I really thought it was Powder Puff.

“But you wouldn’t have messed up *Dexter’s Laboratory*? Right?” she poked me.

“Because he’s a boy, or because I’m smart?” I poked her back.

“Are you as smart as Dexter?”

“I’m probably like Mandark. Smart and evil.” Hell, did I mean that? I was kind of feeling that.

“You’re not evil,” she told my chest. “I am.” That was the guilt talking. I knew it. I had to get us off of that.

“So which Powerpuff Girl were you?” I asked. “Buttercup because of your hair, or Blossom?”

“Buttercup,” she admitted. “But wait, you don’t think I could be Bubbles?” she smiled.

“All blond and sweet and innocent?” I teased. “Not likely. Was Lyla Bubbles when you played?”

“I didn’t know Lyla back then, when I was little. Met her in middle school, way after my ‘pretending days,’” she said. “I played Powerpuff Girls in my yard and at school with some other girls. I see them, now and then, in school, but it’s not the same.” Mia got a distant look in her eye. “But Lyla *would* be Bubbles, if...!”

“But she’s smart like Blossom, too,” I finished.

“You like Lyla. Don’t you?”

“Yeah. You know I do.”

“So why are we doing this?”

“Because we wanted to.” My arm was around her, and I pulled her in tighter. “We get along fine. We’re good friends. We could make this work...”

“But we’re not going to,” she told my chest, again.

“No.” I kissed her hair.

We stayed like that for a bit.

“But...” I said as I slipped under the covers and headed down, “we’ve got four more hours until you get out of school...” I took my time sucking on those breasts, again. Then my tongue travelled lower.

“We could just play a game,” she suggested with a giggle.

I wanted to shove my cock right back inside her, then, and keep going, but didn't chance it. I lay on top of her, chest-to-breasts, and spread my cum around, letting my cock rub up and down in her pubes. I loved that feeling, and her little carpet is so thick. Then I rolled to her side and we held each other, again, until we were too warm.

It was past lunchtime when we finally roused ourselves. "You want to take a shower and go out to lunch?" I offered.

"Take a shower? I love how you and Rory smell after a game. That's why I told you *not* to shower. Your season's over, I got to get my fix..." she said.

"Yeah, but we're both sticking to the sheets. Just to get clean, I swear," I told her, hand raised.

Mia agreed, but was concerned about getting her hair wet. She had 1st Hour PE and was worried that if her hair were wet this late in the day... I rifled through the washroom drawers and pulled out a shower cap in a little cardboard tube from a hotel we stayed at. My mom always took all the free shampoos and crap from the hotels any time we traveled. Mia tried it on and looked at herself in the mirror and laughed. I had to take a picture. I went and got my phone and she posed. She decided she could live with damp hair and tossed the thing in the trash.

I set the phone to video and set it against the toothbrush holder just before we got in the shower.

"I thought we were just going to get clean..." she reminded me.

"Who are we kidding?" I asked. "You know I'm going to fuck you, again."

"I was hoping so," she said and closed the glass door.

There are few pleasures in life like soaping a girl's ass and feeling her titties slide along your chest as you make out with her under a gentle, warm shower. Guaranteed we were going to fuck.

Her hands roamed over me like she couldn't before, squeezing my ass as she kissed me, two fingers sliding up the water running down my spine, washing my pecs and abs. She slid down my body and just held my thigh, like worked her hands around it, like judging its size and strength, then did the same to my calf and my ankle, and then the top of my foot. Places she'd never explored before. But she stopped and did not cross over to my right. Instead, she rose up on her knees, again, and jacked my cock, watching the water run off its top, and played with my pubes, judging how the water matted them down.

I knelt down to her and looked her in the eyes, trying to determine if there was any mood change to be aware of. She just took my head and kissed me and we stood back up.

She turned, and I caressed her breasts under the water, then found her hourglass. She backed her ass into me. Then, for the first time, I fucked her from behind, pressing her titties against the glass so her red nipples were nice and clear for our video. We turned sideways, and even

she kept clearing the glass when it got wet or fogged. She wanted to watch it someday — some night — as much as I did. And when I came on her body, this time I was able to wash her back clean instead of leaving her sticky, again.

We took our time drying each other, and when I got to her feet, knowing now she liked the toes thing, I took each toe in for a quick suck. I got a look from her that I've come to recognize as her getting wet inside, so I dried her feet and we headed back to my room to dress.

She was sitting, putting on her socks and I stood in front of her when she grabbed my cock and went to town trying to suck me off. I wasn't going to stop her. But when I was good and hard, I pushed her down on the bed and shoved my cock inside her.

"This what you want? You want me to fuck you, again," I demanded.

"...yes..." she squeaked.

"And it's not gonna be the last time, is it?"

"...no..."

"I'm gonna fuck you again, even if we have to play Monopoly right in front of Rory," I said.

I was having to work harder to get to cumming this time, but she didn't. Mia started shaking and I did what I could to keep fucking her while she did. When I blew, I shot in my hand and used a Kleenex; my load wasn't going to be as much as before, anyway, so I kept her clean.

We finally finished dressing, and walked over to this Greek family restaurant down the street everyone calls The Meg — it has a real Greek name, but it's just The Meg to us. We had a couple hot sandwiches and talked for an hour about stuff, about Rory, about Lyla, about school, about college, about the news, about nothing, about everything.

We knew we could make it work. But not today. Not now.

It was seven hours later that I got a text from Rory that he needed to see me. *Fuck.*

Rory came by on Saturday afternoon. I was ready for him as much as I could be. We went in my yard and sat on the garden bench. My dad had just stacked the deck chairs in the garage. We looked at the bare tree and the leaves I'd have to rake if the wind didn't pick up and blow them into the neighbor's yard.

"So," he said.

“So,” I said.

We sat like that for a while. Probably only a minute and a half, but it was tense.

Sky was grey. No rain, just the real end of autumn.

I heard Rory take a breath. He turned to me. “What the fuck, man?”

I knew he’d already spoken to Mia. Maybe had a fight with Mia. She’d texted me, too. I didn’t want to start at the beginning. I wasn’t going to be able to talk my way out of this. But I wasn’t going to give him any of that ‘It just happened — we didn’t mean to hurt you’ crap.

“We had to know,” I said.

“What?”

“We had to know how we’d be together if... if I broke you up. If *you two* broke up and she went with me.”

Rory closed his eyes. If they’d been open, I’d have seen his reaction to betrayal. I didn’t know if he was... I don’t know, sad? or starting a slow burn.

It was quiet, and like an idiot, I had to fill the silence. “You know I like her. You were part of that when we were all together. You, her, and me. How can you not love Mia?”

“I do love Mia,” he spat. I thought he was going to say ‘and Mia loves me,’ but he didn’t. He was doubting that.

“I know. And she loves you. I don’t know if you believe that, now, but she does.”

He was still quiet.

“On *Clue* day, we talked about this, me and her, and she told me to forget her. Scott and Fiona even told me to forget her. Lyla told me to forget Mia. But it was still there. We had to know.”

He was still quiet.

“So, if you hate anyone, let it be me. Because, yesterday? You were all she could talk about. We were supposed to find out if we could get along for hours — like you two can — and talk about anything and everything, go places and eat things. But all she could do was think about you. And, honestly, it wasn’t all with... guilt or whatever... she kept telling stories about how Rory does this, and how Rory said that.”

He made some noise. A quiet snort or an interested hum, I don’t know.

“And we found out what we had to know. We could be good together, but not good enough. Not like you two. Not enough for Mia to leave you. Not enough for me to...”

Rory stood up and came at me. “So, it was all for nothing! You could have let it be, but you had to go and fuck her behind my back!”

I got up and backed away. Rory was totally telegraphing a punch. I had loads of time to duck or dodge or just plain get away from it, but I stood there and took it. I let him punch me in the face. I turned with it, I’m not dumb, and took it on the cheek and jaw instead of the nose. His punch didn’t have enough force to knock me over, but I moved with it, like it took me off-balance. He barely noticed that he hit me. He just started whaling on me, fists flying.

“You son of a bitch, I hate you, you’re fuckin’ right I hate you, what the fuck did you do that for!” It all just poured out as he smacked me. None of the punches did any damage, they were all body blows — shoulder, chest, side, whatever he could hit, and I was wearing my bomber jacket. Rory hasn’t been in many fights; he grew up with a sister — I grew up with a brother. One strike clipped me on the chin and caught me off-guard, and that’s when I closed the gap. I just grabbed him, stopped his arms, and held him.

“I’m sorry, Rory. I’m sorry.” I put my head right next to his, holding him steady. “I can’t take it back. And I’ve probably lost you as a friend. But she loves you. Know that. She loves you.”

Rory seemed to lose the fight in him, and I let him go, but was ready in case he went for one more punch once he was free. He didn’t. He just started walking away.

I followed him.

“Where you going?” he asked me, over his shoulder.

“With you. Wherever.”

We just kept walking. He let me catch up with him, but we didn’t talk. It didn’t look like we were heading to his house, just somewhere, just north, I think.

I directed our walking toward a 7-11 store, and he came with. We went inside and got a couple Slurpees; mine was Coke, he took Cherry. I paid. We left and kept walking until we found a bus stop and had a seat.

“Why?” he asked.

“We’ve been there, man,” I reminded him, but we were talking.

“How many times did you fuck her yesterday?” he asked.

“I’m not answering that. You don’t want to know that stuff. Don’t start putting pictures in your head,” I warned him for his own good.

“You were my friend,” he said.

“I hope I still am. Maybe we can fix that. I love you. And I love Mia, and Lyla. I’m not ‘in love’ with Mia, though. I’d like to be ‘in love’ with Lyla, but that needs her and she’s... I don’t know.

I'd do this again and break her and Conor up in a heartbeat if I knew she'd go for it. I don't love Conor." A bus came by and we waved it on, like it was the wrong number.

We got up and started walking again, toward my house. Rory laughed a little. "You said you loved me!"

"I do," I told him. "You guys are my friends. Last year, my best friend since middle school moved away, right in the middle of the year, and I was just hanging with the people I met in Orchestra, but not, like, best friends, you know? Then there were guys on Soccer, had a couple girlfriends, and... But you three mean something to me. And if I've destroyed that, that will hurt the most. I'm not always a nice guy. Maybe that's my punishment."

"I'd rather punish you other ways," he said. I think the Slurpee was working on his mood. Slurpees always work.

"Like what?" I asked.

"Kicking your ass at *Crash Team Racing*," he said, in all seriousness.

"But you suck at *CTR*!" I challenged.

"Then, I'll fuck you in the ass," he said, again in all seriousness.

I had to grab any straw I could. "Let's get home, then." We walked faster.

We sat in my room, playing *CTR* for the next, I don't know, hour? and Rory's mood had improved considerably. Unless this was going to be a 'last time we're friends' session, I thought that I might be forgiven. Not off the hook, but on the road to forgiveness.

At one point in our gaming, Rory just said, "Mia pretty much said the same thing, but in her way."

"Will you forgive her?" I asked, wiping out. I was Neo Cortex, the bad guy, because I'm the bad guy, today. I let Rory be Crash Bandicoot.

"I love her. That's why this hurts. It's weird, like, because I didn't know, because you guys kept it secret," he said, looking only at his game controller.

"It wasn't something we could really tell you. Even we didn't know if we were serious about this, or if we were just..." I petered off. What was I going to say — horny?

Rory looked at the posters on my wall. "I mean, it's weird because... I fucked you. You fucked me. We both fucked her. Mia and I traded one time and I fucked Lyla and she fucked Conor..."

“*You let Conor fuck her?*” I interrupted. “Fuck! I don’t feel so bad anymore...!” I was joking, but... I don’t know. Was I?

We switched to *Jedi Power Battles* — I was happy to have someone to play against in actual two-player games instead of these MMOs. Still, Rory’s Jedi Knights were fighting with a ferocity like they really wanted to kill my characters.

“Want to switch games?” I asked him after a good many battles. “I’ve got *Tekken* if you want to keep fighting?”

Rory put down his controller and stretched, rolling on the bed to each side. He spotted something across my room, got up, and put my *Rock ‘em Sock ‘em Robots* on the floor. He looked directly at me. A silent challenge.

I closed my eyes. He still wanted to fight. I put down my controller and joined him on the floor. He took Red Rocket, I was Blue Bomber. I didn’t try to beat him, I was just pressing the handle buttons kind of randomly, but I knocked his head off first.

Rory stared at my arm. “Your hand okay, now?” he asked. We’d been playing my Playstation for an hour, but he hadn’t noticed my hand until we were playing *Rock ‘em Sock ‘em Robots*. I just nodded. Then he nodded.

Rory reset the robots and we went again. He knocked my head off that next time. He reset it, again. Tie-breaker. I barely moved my guy’s hands and he knocked my head off. Rory stared at me, knowing I’d thrown the match.

He pushed the yellow boxing ring away, a little frustrated with me. Then he flopped forward, his hand on my thigh.

“*Stratego?*” I offered.

“That’s a board game. You know what happens to us when we play a board game,” he laughed a little and smiled at me. His hand went down to my knee and back up.

“Maybe that would help.”

I got the game down out of my closet. It was then I saw the shirt he’d left in my room on Monday, when he’d changed into Mr. Green. “Hey, you forgot this here.”

“Thanks,” he said, taking the navy henley and putting it aside. “I’ll get your Sandman shirt back to you.”

“I said you could keep it, if you want. You like Spider-Man more than me, probably.”

“No, I like you more than Spider-Man,” he said.

I was going to correct him, but realized I’d made the mistake in how I said it. I never would have written it that way. So, he was being honest. He still liked me. I just nodded.

We set up the board on the floor. He was red, I was blue, again.

I won't bore you with telling you about which piece I moved and where, and take up a bunch of time, but it was like every time Rory moved, he said something to catch me up in a lie, or something.

"If you like Lyla, why would you go after Mia?" he'd say, and move forward.

"Haven't you ever liked two people?" I answered, and moved.

"Yes." He looked at me, but did not move. "Did you agree to... *play*... with me just to get to Mia?" He still didn't move.

He was talking about our first threesome. "No. That all kind of happened at the same time. I was interested in you, but that probably wouldn't have happened without Mia. I had Mia in a couple classes last year, but we weren't friends until you became my friend, first, on the soccer team. But I was interested."

"Are you really done with Mia?" Then he moved.

"Yeah," I said. "But she's my friend, like you. So, I'm hands-off — unless we all get together and play *Sexy Yahtzee*, or something." I moved.

"What about that Kiki girl. Do you still like her?" he moved.

"I remember what I liked about her. But she's out of the picture," I moved.

"Why not put your efforts into Lyla?" he asked and moved.

"She pretty much told me on Monday that she isn't going to break up with that Jughead, Conor," I said, and moved. "Tore my fuckin' heart out. Again."

"Do you just plain hate Conor?" he moved.

"I don't *hate* him," I moved.

"He can be an ass, sometimes," Rory allowed, and moved. "He's my friend, so I can't *tell* him to break up. It has to be up to them."

"He treats Lyla like crap," I moved.

Rory almost said something, but just moved, instead.

"You *know* something... Don't you?" I observed and moved.

"I shouldn't say," he moved.

Rory's attack plan was coming to a head. I didn't surround my flag completely with bombs — I wanted to give him a chance to win. But he was certain that a distant bomb was actually my

flag, and got his last good piece blown up. My miners took out his bombs and his flag was mine. Even though I really didn't want to win, I couldn't help it — he was wide open.

Rory fell backward, his feet hitting the game board. "Winner puts away."

I put back all the red and blue castle thingies while his feet kept trying to kick my hand as I went back to pick up more. I grabbed his foot and he pulled it out of his sock. I looked at his dirty sock and asked, "Where were you today?"

"Yard," he said. "Talking to Mia. Didn't need shoes until I came to see you." He put his hand out for me to give him his sock back, but I just grabbed his other foot.

"Why don't you stay? Crash over here, tonight?" I asked, pulling his other sock off as I rose to sit on my bed.

Rory rolled up to his knees and flopped his head onto the bed, next to me. The hand that had been on my thigh before found its way there, again. "Got anything to get drunk with?" he asked.

"Yeah. My dad won't even know," I told him. "Let's get something to eat, we'll raid the fridge, watch a dirty movie, jerk off a few times..."

His head was on my thigh, now. "Can I fuck you?"

"Yeah," I said quietly, running my fingers through his hair.

He shifted between my legs and pulled open my jeans. I lifted my ass and helped him get them down to my knees. He stopped there, though, and just took ahold of my cock and started stroking me, slowly, his other hand raking my pubes. I was half-hard and he got me full-hard in just a few strokes, and he kept going. He glanced up, and it looked like he was going to say something, but decided against it and just put my cock in his mouth.

He worked my cock like he was enjoying it, savoring it, like it was special to him, not just a fast bob to get me off. And he kept going, sucking me slowly, not just priming me for action, either. His tongue was working my sweet spot.

"Shouldn't I be doing this to you?" I breathed. "I don't want to lose you."

Rory pulled off me. "I don't want to lose either of you." He sat back and pulled my jeans and boxers all the way off, taking my socks with. I pulled off my shirt while he did. He stood and took off his own shirt and threw it at my closet. I laughed and threw his blue henley back in, too. I guess I was collecting his shirts. He turned around to take off his pants and boxers, showing me his ass as he did.

I did like the sight of Rory naked, front or back, and figured I'd fuck him, too, sometime tonight. When I'd fucked him at Mia's that first time, it was new to me, but I liked it because it was with Rory. I'd looked right in Mia's eyes when I'd fucked him, but I couldn't do that, this time.

Rory crawled onto the bed with me. He didn't bend me over or anything. He just started kissing his way up my body. I put my arms around him when he got to my chest and neck. I gave in to wanting his body. We were alone, and nobody could judge me. I ran my hand up and down his back. His skin was so soft. I mean, this is nothing I'd ever actually tell anybody, but I guess I'm safe saying it here. Rory looked good. I'd already confessed to him that I'd noticed him in the showers, but his body was smooth and soft and his colors made him look, I don't know, like I just wanted to hold him. The word 'cuddly' comes to mind, but, fuck, I don't want to say that. But I guess I just did. His summer tan had faded long ago, so there were no swim trunk lines; his muscles weren't as pronounced as mine; his blond hair and pubes just looked so natural, so a part of his body and coloring, and his blue eyes... I had to hold him. I had to feel his body.

Maybe he felt some of the same, because he was all over me, too. We moved as we wanted, rolling over my blue-and-white comforter, learning each other's bodies like we really couldn't do in front of Mia those times. We were just finding parts of each other to lick and suck and kiss, now. I still hadn't let him kiss me proper, though. But I knew I might. I was feeling it, I think.

I was also feeling mighty horny. And however we wound up that way, he was face down as I slid down his back. I was struggling with the ultimate insult of kissing his ass when I decided to try and lick his hole. We'd avoided it, so far. So, I tried it. Rory shivered like he'd touched an open socket. It made me smile, so I did it again. Rory started rolling his hips to give me a better angle of attack, and the roll continued up his back like a wave.

I wasn't sure how long I was supposed to do this. *Supposed to?* I don't know. He was clean, and I dipped my tongue inside, but I didn't really want to push the taste issue. Then I remembered something — I looked to my nightstand and saw the little black bottle of lube I'd stolen from my brother's room. Mia and I didn't wind up using it, but I hadn't put it back. I got up on my knees and reached for it, and squirted some on me and him.

He kept that rolling going as I pressed the lube inside him with my thumb. He moaned some into my sheets, just sounds, no words. He wanted me to fuck him. I wanted to fuck him. So, I did. I lined my cock up and pressed inside him. I didn't know about prepping him with a couple-few fingers, going wider, or whatever. It's just the way we did it. I wanted to be inside him, and he wanted me.

He pressed against my cock, and actually made it easier to get all the way in, and soon I'd begun a good, easy, slow rhythm, fucking him in and out. I leaned over and wrapped my left arm around his chest and lifted him, supporting myself with my right. I needed him to be at the good angle we'd found, but I wanted to feel his skin on my chest, I wanted to kiss his neck, I wanted to smell his sweat the way Mia said she liked us.

I was at his ear, inside his hair. "Is this okay? You like this?" I whispered.

"I fuckin' love when you fuck me," he breathed. "I never felt like this when Conor did it to me, or I did it to Conor. You do it right," he confessed.

"Don't mention Conor to me," I grumbled.

“Sorry.”

I don’t know if I knew how to fuck someone in the ass correctly, I just knew I didn’t want to hurt him. I wanted to love him. I wanted to feel good and wanted him to feel good, too.

“Johnny?”

“Yeah?”

“You can go faster. Fuck me harder...”

So, I did. Given the opportunity, sure I did. And if anybody was listening to the house, they might’ve heard the noise of thighs slapping together as I fucked Rory so I could cum, still holding him tightly to my chest until I blasted inside him for the first time. We’d fucked a couple times, but I’d never cum inside him. Then, we collapsed forward. We were still for a while.

I pulled out of Rory, and kissed down his spine as I backed away. I fell to his side, and he pulled me to him, wrapping his arms around me, this time. I liked being there. It was peaceful in Rory’s arms.

Eventually, Rory stirred. “Wait,” he said, breathing to clear his head, “wasn’t I supposed to fuck *you*?”

“Call your mom. Stay the night,” I told him from his armpit.

He looked for where he’d stashed his phone. I saw him check his messages, and saw that a bunch of them were from Mia. I saw one that said “Please talk to me” on it before he swiped that screen away. Then he called his mom and told her that he was crashing here overnight.

“No, I’m not at Mia’s house. Call Johnny’s mom and ask. Besides, Mia and I had a fight, so I... yeah... Yeah, guy talk. ... No, it’ll be okay, just need a day to cool off,” I heard him say. How could I not — he was right next to me.

But I grabbed my phone off the nightstand and texted Mia.

**Rory’s at my place.
He’s spending the night.
Give him some time.
He still loves you and
that’s why he’s hurt.**

Get him to call me.

**Tomorrow. Give him the
night.**

Please!

Rory saw me texting, and easily figured out who I was talking to. I didn’t hide my screen from him. I waited for his reaction, but he just sat silent.

	Seriously. You guys will be fine. He needs to hurt me a little more.
Hurt you?	Hit me.
He's still mad.	Hurt. He thinks it's because you didn't want to be in love.
Please let me talk to him!	

Again, I waited to see if Rory had any reaction. Would he take my phone and do a "This is Rory," or start texting on his own, or...? He just kind of looked down and thought for a bit. He shook his head.

	He's feeling better. Let me keep working on him.
Tell him I love him.	I have. I will walk him to your house tomorrow morning.
I'm trusting you.	He misses you. But he needs to clear his head.
Please tell him I love him.	I will.

He looked me dead in the eye. He held out his hand. I gave him the phone, thinking he was going to call her or text, like I thought before. I was dumb to do so. He read the conversation again, but he had to move it up to see the whole thing, and I realized I was an idiot because the conversation from Friday morning was still there and Mia's panicked messages after Rory found out.

"You greeted her wearing just your robe, huh?" he said, disappointed.

"Fuck, don't read that. I told you not to put pictures in your head," I said, taking my phone back and putting it away.

"Too late. I think I need to hit you, again."

I felt bad and stupid enough to say, "Go ahead," and prepared myself for another punch. I figured he was sitting and wouldn't get much power, no windup or anything, and I could take it like before. But Rory pulled his arm back and hammered me right down flat in the gut, which I was *not* ready for.

I doubled over and turned on my side, trying to breathe, and muttering how that fuckin' hurt.

Rory spooned onto me, his arms around me from behind, his cock at my ass, but he wasn't hard.

"Should I call her?" was what he asked.

"Give yourself some space. Give her some space," I told him when I could breathe. "You didn't break up," I reminded him. "You know, you and me, we're guys — a couple of punches and a Slurpee, and we're good. You can't do that with her."

He kissed the back of my neck. "The Slurpee did help."

"Come on," I said, rolling and getting up. "Put your shirt and boxers on and let's go get some grub. I've got some cans of Mountain Dew Baja Blast. Mia told me *all about* how you love that stuff."

"I do enjoy Baja Blast," he said to the pillow. "Okay."

"After we eat, you can still hit me, but no more punches in the stomach," I warned.

We hit the kitchen. My mom saw us and I waved, letting her know Rory was staying. She waved back. When we came back through, she asked if we had enough supplies — our arms were freaking loaded! — and I said we were probably good until midnight.

On Saturdays, my mom makes a big lunch for the family and doesn't cook dinner because we're all usually going out somewhere, but Rory hadn't eaten since I don't know when. We took all the leftovers and he polished them off, then moved onto the snacks. I'd snagged a bottle of tequila and we'd turned the Baja Blasts into margarita-like things.

So, we did as I promised. We ate, watched *Caddyshack*, got a little drunk, laughed our asses off, put on some porn, and jacked each other off. Rory really has a thing for sister-brother porn.

We were watching one Rory liked where a sister and brother have to share a hotel room. I've seen a couple of those where the sister was some tattooed slag, but this one was pretty good. The sister was really nice looking, and they were quiet, which actually made it kind of believable.

"If Fiona was my sister, I'd be trying to hit that every night," I moaned as we watched and jacked.

"She's so fuckin' hot..." Rory moaned.

"Now, I got the gift of a lifetime from her on Clue day, but I don't know how you don't sneak into her room every night and lick that pussy, man..." I jerked him a little faster, knowing he'd copy and pick up the pace on me.

"I've never licked her pussy, yet," Rory moaned.

Yet? *"You gotta taste it, man. Such a pretty pussy, all golden, like Lyla's..."* I moaned.

"Yeah, but Fee's is feathery, so pretty..." he said. Did he know what he was confessing?

"And those tits..." I led on.

"I love her tits," he said.

"You gotta fuck her one day, man..."

"I have fuc-..." he started and stopped.

Both of our hands froze and he turned to me, *"I... I didn't..."*

"It's okay," I told his eyes. *"I know."*

"You know?"

"I figured it out. It really wasn't that hard to figure out. You guys have got to shut up about that stuff," I said, quietly, like a secret. *"I'll never tell anyone,"* I assured him.

He breathed easier, visibly, then started working my cock, again. *"She felt sssssso good..."*

"Fuckin' tell me about it..." I said, referring to my own once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, but he answered me.

"She caught me jerking off, but she took her clothes off and joined me and did it for me. She sucked me off, man, and I came in her mouth, and she kept sucking, and I was still hard, and she climbed on top of me and fucked me... she fucked me, man... and I came so fast, I had to fuck her again... I fucked her twice that day..."

"Me, too, on Clue day..."

"Johnny?" he asked, stopping all motion.

"Yeah?"

"Don't make me cum. I want to fuck you. You said I could fuck you," he pleaded.

I let go of him and guided him on top of me, opening my legs for him.

"You don't want to turn over?" Rory asked.

"No. This way this time," I told him.

"Thanks."

I scraped my cock for any remaining lube and slathered it on my ass. Rory put some more on, anyway.

He fit his cock head inside me and I relaxed, kind of pushed down on him like he did, and he got in much easier than our last time.

He closed his eyes and started a slow in and out. From kneeling and holding my legs, he stretched over me, little by little, letting my legs go so I could wrap them over his back. This felt so much better than the last time, my first time. It still felt huge in me, but that's just how you feel or... perceive... how things are, I guess. He didn't pound me, he just kept fucking me, nice and slow. I was actually enjoying this.

Rory's arms folded down and he began kissing my body where he could, starting on my chest and my shoulders. He took time to lick and suck at my nipple, which sent a *zing* through me. That was when I realized I was hard — not all soft and frightened from Rory's invasion. I reached a hand down between us to give myself a stroke and keep my cock that way.

Rory made his way to my throat, kissing up to under my chin, then circled onto my neck and near my ear. "Johnny," he whispered, "I love this."

I let go of my cock and held his ass with both my hands, not pushing him or dictating a speed or rhythm, just feeling the softness of his ass and the muscles working inside it as he fucked me.

I let out a little groan when he said he loved fucking me, just a reaction, and not a negative one, more like a 'me, too.'

"I don't..." he started. He wanted to say something but was judging it. If he stopped himself from mentioning Conor, then he was right to do so.

I moved one hand from Rory's ass up his back, between his shoulder blades. "That's because we actually like each other. Not just doing it because we don't have girlfriends. You're the only guy to ever fuck me, really, and I love letting you do it. I really liked fucking you, too, and it's not because... I don't know... It's because it's you and me doing it," I told him to his face.

Rory's arms went around me and under my back, wrapping me tightly to him. "I love you, Johnny."

"I already told you I loved you," I reminded him. I wasn't sure I meant romantic love, like I would if I said it to Lyla or Mia, but I kinda did, too. It was confusing, a little, but I didn't want to spend any time thinking about it. I wanted to feel it like he had. "Now fuck me."

Rory picked up the pace down below, still not slamming into me, but fucking me faster, moving the lube. He licked my ear and resumed kissing my neck. His kisses moved onto my jaw and cheek. I knew where he was going. He's wanted to kiss me — really kiss me — for a while, now, and I'd never let him. I was going to let him, now, though. Fuck, I wanted to, too.

"Johnny, I..." he started. But I shut him up and met his lips. Then he took over, kissing me with a passion that either of us would only ever have used with Mia or Lyla, before. I've made

out with a number of girls (a number somewhere around eight or nine), but most were just fun, kissing in the basement rec room, the back seat of a friend's car, or with Kari Tanaka when she'd sneak in to fuck me. But kissing Rory felt different. Not because he was a guy, but maybe because I really liked him. It was like kissing Mia. It was like kissing Lyla.

Kissing me became Rory's main focus, now. His thrusts slowed down, like he had to remind himself to fuck me. His tongue pushed at my lips and I let it through to join mine. Finally, I interrupted him.

"If you're not going to fuck me, I'm going to flip you over and fuck you, instead," I threatened.

Rory got the message and lifted above me, still looking directly at me, and finally started a harder and faster way of fucking. He was looking at me, and kind of *through* me. I wondered briefly if he was imagining fucking Mia instead of me. "I don't want to hurt you, Johnny," he said.

"Fuck me and cum in my ass, already," I growled, this time putting my hands on his ass and demanding some force.

Rory closed his eyes and started fucking me like he wanted to. I could see his neck and face muscles tightening, his teeth clenching, his shoulders and arms becoming columns as his cock slammed into my ass. And it was hurting, but I didn't whine. I wanted him to do it.

Finally, he blew out his breath and his slams got erratic before he held completely still and shot his cum inside me. I gripped his ass as I felt each shot. Rory convulsed each time he shot, like a ripple from his waist up his spine to his head, his head kicking back each time.

He had given all he had, for now, and slowly let his elbows break and I pulled him down onto me.

After a while — I don't know how many pornos auto-played in the background this whole time — he started kissing my neck, again, and made his way back to my mouth. I gave him exactly one big kiss before I spun him onto his back.

"That was fun, but it's my turn to cum, again," I told him. Then I did my best to do exactly what he did, copying nearly every move, as I fucked my friend, looking into his eyes, this time.

We fell asleep. No surprise. My laptop had gone to screen saver and auto shutdown. Rory and I had shifted, consciously or subconsciously, and were now under my covers, holding each other, legs kind of tangled, our balls on each other's thigh. His face was so close to mine, we were sharing the same breath. It's cute to think about that, romantic-like, but his breathing was warm, and I needed to move my nose above his to get some cooler air. I didn't want to move away, or roll over, so I guess that was cute or romantic of me, in some fashion.

But I looked at my friend. His peaceful face, cheekbones, his blond hair, slightly darker eyebrows — it was almost pitch-dark in my room, but I knew his colors and filled them in

inside my mind. I could probably reach his lips, if I wanted to, without moving. He was close enough for me to lick them, for sure.

I tried it, and I could. His lips were dry, so when my tongue touched them, he involuntarily sucked his lips in, wetting them, like I reminded him to do that in his sleep. Then I leaned in that much further and kissed him.

At first, I just kissed him, but on the second try, he was kissing me back. I don't know if he was asleep, or just awake enough, but each time I went back in, he was kissing me as much as I was kissing him.

I knew I'd awoken him when his hands found my back and pulled me to him, and his foot started running up my leg. My hands grabbed his back and ass, too, but then Rory pulled me, kind of gently guided me, on top of him.

Our cocks found a spot on top of each other's as we rubbed them together. Since I was on top, I was holding in position over him so this could continue. It felt good. I couldn't stay airborne, though, much longer — from sleep, I was feeling heavy. Our cocks slid next to each other, but we kept humping, and I guess we had just enough live lube on us, yet, to make it worth it.

I held Rory like Mia. I wasn't imagining Mia, though, just that I was mounted on him like I would be on Mia or Lyla. Our humping was getting serious, and I was sliding in his pubes and thigh crease like it was a pussy. My body just reacted like it was one. I wanted it to be a pussy. Not his anus, I wasn't looking for that. I wanted to just fuck Rory like he was a girl, like I was inside his pussy. And he was doing the same to me. I wish we'd had more lube, but under the covers, it was warm, and we were both generating some sweat, so it was working. I wanted to be inside him.

When one of us sped up, so did the other, by default, and I knew I was going to cum, again, soon. We'd never stopped kissing. And we were fucking. And I was going to cum.

Rory came first, though, and when I felt his jizz being pumped onto my belly, it triggered my own, and we were able to use that stuff as more lube as we continued toward our completions. My heart was still pumping fast, though; I could feel the pulse in my ears, and I could hear Rory's heart thumping away, too, until we slowed down.

I slipped to the side, but we remained locked together. Rory made sure of that. We continued kissing, when we weren't trying to breathe. And just when I thought I was asleep, Rory kissed me again, and I'm sure I'd done the same thing a couple times, too, like we woke up suddenly and remembered that we were supposed to be kissing.

That brought us to the morning, when I woke Rory up and told him to hop in the shower with me. And I put Nightpanther on him and said the wrong thing after making so much progress. I let him fuck me in there, but he didn't take my mistake out on me. He really just wanted to fuck, again. And when he was done, he turned me around, slid down my legs, and sucked me

off. In the warm water, with his warm mouth around me, I felt like a prince, but didn't deserve to do so.

We got dressed. I gave Rory some clean socks and underwear. I was going to loan him a fresh shirt, but didn't want him to look any more like me when we went to Mia's house. He wore his left-behind navy henley, figuring he hadn't worn that too much that one day.

"You good?" I asked. I thought I was asking about if he needed or wanted some hair product, or my or Scott's after shave, or something. But he turned it on me.

"Are we good?" he asked back.

I sighed. "That's what I should be asking you." We got our jackets and headed out. I texted Mia that we were on our way.

"You know," I started, still feeling the need to explain or apologize, "there was no evil plot to break you up, no strategy."

"No *Stratego*?" he kidded.

"Even that game, I wasn't trying to win. Just play. I played with her. Then I played with you. It was more like Lyla's *Old Maid*, all of us. Lasso Louie sneaking off with Careless Carrie just because they could, but Milkman Moe wins the day. And Carrie loves Milkman Moe." I stopped walking and took his shoulder. "You're gonna forgive her, right?"

"I already have," he said.

"And I won't get in the way of that. I mean it. Ever. Unless we're all playing *Monopoly* and she's the Community Chest, or something..." I tried to kid with a weak smile.

"No one likes *Monopoly*, you know that," he reminded me. "But..." He turned and had a fun look in his eye. "Now, *Mousetrap*... now there's a challenge!"

I'd have to think about that one.

"So, remember what you really want," he said. "Ballet Betty. If you pull her away from that weird Postman Pete, I won't get in the middle."

"I thought Conor was Billy Blaze?" I thought of his hose jokes.

"No. He's the Postman. Think about it." He was telling me something, but I couldn't think of what, at that point.

We got to Mia's house. She was in the window, waiting, watching.

Rory gave me one last punch, a soft sock in the shoulder, instead of good-bye or a bro hug. Then he was up the stairs and through the door. Mia didn't even look at me.

And then I walked home.