

READBEAST

BEASTIALITY STORIES



Prologue

The town of Great Cross was named for a towering monument that never existed. The founders had talked of making a bid to become the state capital, and the cross was meant to be a declaration of their ambition. The ambitious talk was more fun than the actual work of building would have been, however, and no great cross ever materialized. The town reached a stable population of about four hundred, which varied up or down by only a few dozen as decades and generations came and went. Few who lived there would have traded their quiet, close-knit town for the founders' dream of a metropolis. Anyone who harbored that kind of dream had long since moved away.

Besides, there was a four-way intersection with a traffic light, which was arguably a pretty good cross, if not a great one. Everyone called it "the cross," in any case. The old country store stood on its southwest corner. On a fine day, if you sat on the bench there and waited, sooner or later you might see one of the characteristic sights of Great Cross: a collie with saddlebags padding up the sidewalk, around the corner, and through the swinging doors into the store. A few minutes later, you'd see him emerge again and return the way he came.

Rex, the big rough collie, would most likely continue down the sidewalk and across the green, then turn onto a narrow footpath along Little Jordan Creek, the waterway which defined the western boundary of the town. This path would lead him a mile and a half upstream to a field of apple trees bounded by a split rail fence: home.

Rex could not remember the time before this had become his home, but his owner could. Helen Auer still had pictures of the starved, muddy, matted and burr-ridden creature who had come home with her on a plaid blanket in the back of her station wagon. In those pictures, the only sign of the dog that Rex would become was the undimmed light in his dark brown eyes. Helen had given him fresh goat's milk, good food, shampoo, and hours of patient brushing and combing. Over the course of months, his body grew strong and his coat luxurious, a cascade of mahogany, white, and orange-gold.

She had also given him his name, and as he matured, she gave him increasingly complex jobs to do. He learned to open and close gates, carry buckets, drag the hose to the garden and turn on the water, pull a cart, and move goats from one pen to another. Eventually, he was trusted to carry a shopping list to the store in town and bring home a few items in his saddlebags. Rex could appreciate quiet moments in the shade of a tree, certainly, but he was happiest when he had a task to complete, or a problem to figure out.

There were not many salaried, nine-to-five jobs in Great Cross. Helen, like many who lived there, knitted together a living from various lines of work. She was a painter and illustrator, and had learned how to maintain a steady flow of commissions without getting buried by them. At certain times of year, she assisted Dr. Hartman at his veterinary practice. Goat's milk and garden produce brought in a few extra dollars, and in a good year, the apple harvest brought in quite a bit more than that.

She, too, enjoyed work, and she took pride in maintaining the land, the buildings, the animals, and the machinery. She was grateful for her parents' occasional help, and that of her neighbors; there were times when extra hands were indispensable. Four paws could be put to a lot of uses too, though, when creatively applied. It was a constant, pleasant puzzle to think up new jobs for Rex, and a joy to watch him study and master them. He was a dog, of course, and there were limits to what he could do. But she didn't feel they were anywhere close to exhausting the possibilities yet.

For his part, Rex also felt the world was full of possibilities. He awoke each morning expecting the

day to bring adventures. Perhaps due to his own boundless curiosity, he was rarely disappointed.

Chapter 1: Spring Fever

The cash register chimed in the old country store.

No change was needed. Rex had brought the exact amount, including tax, as usual. Lydia Martin tucked the receipt into Rex's saddlebag, alongside the small packages of oats, flour, and coffee that Rex had been sent to pick up. Lydia knew, of course, that it was Miss Auer who had worked out the right amount to send. Still, she found it was not much of a stretch to imagine the big collie doing the figures himself. He seemed capable of everything else. And if Rex decided to do arithmetic, Lydia felt certain he'd do it to the penny, scrupulously.

"OK, Rex. Take it home now," she said. "Home." He gave her a polite, affirmative wag, and she held the door for him as he headed out. She paused in the doorway. It was an early April day, warm, sunny, and dry. After a long, dreary March, the sunshine felt exquisite. There was color in the world. It would feel almost criminal to close the door on it and retreat inside again.

"Dad," she called. "Can I step out for a few minutes? I'd like some fresh air, and it hasn't been very busy in here today."

"You may," came the response from her father's little office in the back of the store. She heard his chair squeak as he got up and came to the counter. He had his reading glasses on, and a seed catalog still in his hand. Though not a short man, he still had to look up slightly when he spoke to his daughter. "Maybe you could bring me back a little something from the diner, too, if you wouldn't mind."

"Sure, I can do that." Lydia understood that "a little something" meant "a little something sweet and freshly baked, which is not strictly in accordance with my diet, so let's be discreet about it." She knew how her father enjoyed an afternoon treat, and didn't mind being part of a minor conspiracy. "I'll be back in... twenty minutes, OK? Thanks, dad."

She stepped outside and turned west. In the distance, she could see Rex on the footpath. The path was mostly shaded, but here and there, dapples of sun shone through the trees, and when he walked through a patch of light, his coat gleamed. Lydia jogged off in his direction. She liked Rex's company. He was easy to talk to, when she was in a mood to talk, and if she sometimes felt a little silly talking to a dog, she didn't feel quite as crazy as she would have felt talking to herself.

It didn't take her long to catch up. She slowed her pace to fall in line with him, and he looked up amiably. It wasn't the first time she'd joined him for some or even all of the walk home, and he considered her a friend. His first duty was getting his bags home safely and promptly as was expected of him, but he didn't see any problem with socializing along the way. He walked close beside her and quite deliberately made the top of his head available to her left hand. She smiled at the directness of the gesture and ruffled his ears with affection. "There you go, boy. I wish everyone could be so straightforward about what they want."

She looked down at the dog, who still had his head turned up toward her. He was watching her intently even as he maintained his steady gait along the path. Rex had learned the importance of eye contact from Helen. It had been the foundation for everything else he learned with her, and he found it helpful in his interactions with other people when he was out and about as well. It wasn't at all hard to figure out what people wanted, he found, so long as you kept your eyes in the right place. Sometimes you could even anticipate what a person wanted before she realized it herself.

Lydia picked up the pace to a jog again, and Rex matched her speed, always with his eyes up. There was a strong sense of connection as they moved together. She'd felt it once or twice before, as he read her moves, and this time it struck her that she'd been missing that feeling. His attention made her feel important, if only in a small way, and it felt nice. A thought occurred to her: "Does anyone else ever look at me like that? Like, really pay that much attention to me? Ever?"

Another thought followed: "He's really handsome."

That was a strange thought. It was true, certainly; anyone would agree that Rex was a handsome dog. That was just factual. So why had a blush come to her cheeks when she thought it?

Oh, the time! She'd been jogging away from the store all this time while her mind wandered. Allowing for a few minutes to run into the diner, too... that meant she needed to turn around now. It still seemed like a pity to go back, with the sun so warm and the companionship so pleasant, but work was work, and there'd be other pretty days. She stopped, knelt, and gave Rex a hug around his shoulders, her hands sinking into his thick ruff. He leaned into the hug, pressing his weight against her. "Thanks for the walk, handsome boy." Strange as the thought had been, it felt even stranger saying it out loud. "Come in to the store again soon, ok? See you soon?" She added a kiss on the top of his head, and ruffled his ears once more. "Now get on home."

With, again, a wag to signify that he understood "home," he continued up the path. Not too far ahead was the old millhouse that still stood on the creek, unused, and it wasn't too much farther after that until the apple orchard. He was looking forward to the satisfaction of completing his job.

Lydia returned the way she'd come at a brisk pace, hardly feeling the effort. A spring day could be so energizing! She jogged back past the store to the Bread Board diner, dashed in, and *****ed a cherry turnover from the rack of bakery goods at the front. She forced herself to walk back to the store, rather than run. For some reason, she wanted to look composed as she walked in the door, not hurried or out of breath. She still felt buoyant, though, almost wanting to kick up her heels as she went.

Her father was at the counter when she walked in, and she slid the turnover to him covertly, hiding it under her hand and letting her eyes dart to the door as if someone might be spying on the transaction. "Ah, well done," he said quietly, "mission accomplished." Then he put an end to the espionage fantasy by unwrapping his pastry from the napkin and polishing it off in a few bites, openly and unconcernedly. "Thank you. Did you have a nice walk?"

"Mm, yeah. The sun felt good. I wish I could be out the rest of the afternoon." To herself, she added silently, "...with Rex." She wished the hug had lasted a little longer, at least.

"Well, it looks like there'll be plenty of sun over the weekend. By the way, your old teacher was here. Miss Knox. She said to tell you hello."

"Dad, Miss Knox isn't old!" Jennifer Knox was twenty-four, in fact, and easy to recognize. She had moved to Great Cross to take the teaching job, and her black hair stood out in a town that mostly ran a spectrum from buckwheat blonde to corn silk blonde. She taught classics, and had encouraged Lydia's interest in languages in her last years before graduating the previous spring. Lydia was thinking of looking for work as a translator, work which she might be able to do from home. Over the past year, she had spent a lot of her evenings by herself, studying.

"Deine ehemalige Lehrerin, habe ich gemeint." Her father's German wasn't anywhere near as good as hers had become, but he had been delighted with her decision to begin studying the language. He made his best effort to learn what he could as well, and took any opportunity to show off a new

word.

“Ja, Vati, ich habe dich verstanden. War nur ein Witz.” Her father beamed at having been understood.

“Yes, well... as I said, she says hello. Other than that, though, it was pretty quiet. I think we can get things tidied up for the day soon, and leave on time today. We’ll still get some sun on the way home. I could use it too.”

“Sounds good.” It did sound good, but Lydia’s mind was beginning to wander from the conversation. Not much of her father’s subsequent talk about seeds and inventory and fertilizer sank in past the surface, but it probably wasn’t too important anyway.

Distraction proved to be more of a problem that evening as she tried to study. Usually, the time flew by and the only problem was that there wasn’t enough of it to do all the work she wanted. She had signed up for an exam in German which would be a big step toward working as a translator. The exam was intimidating, and also not cheap; she didn’t want to have to repeat it. Until recently, it had given her tremendous motivation. She would squeeze every bit of study she could into her evening hours — usually an hour and a half, to be accurate. Once she was immersed in her texts, the rest of the world blurred, and she worked in a small, private universe of her own, limited to the warm bubble of light from her desk lamp.

Lately, though, her mind had been wandering, and it was annoying. It was embarrassing, too, because the problem was — it was hard to admit this, even to herself — that her mind was turning to sex. She’d had an unpleasant experience a few years earlier with a boy from school whom she had been seeing, and since then, sex had been almost entirely a non-topic for her; she just didn’t think about it. But this year, during the tail end of winter and the early spring, when things had been terribly dull, certain longings had begun to creep into her thoughts, increasingly often. When she should be concentrating, she found herself daydreaming about how she’d like to be touched. And with her laptop at hand to help with research, there was a constant temptation to pull up what she would classify as a “saucy” story and waste time getting wrapped up in a fantasy... but that was frustrating, too, because she’d get worked up without getting any relief.

This particular evening, she felt especially scatterbrained. When her mind wasn’t thinking up interesting new combinations of words to try typing into the search engine, it was flitting back to her walk with Rex. It had just been a short jog, but it gave her such a warm feeling; he was such a good companion. She imagined him in her room, lying on her bed, watching her while she worked. When she needed a quick break from studying, she could give him another big hug and bury her face in his ruff. Or they could go out for a walk after she was finished; there was plenty of moonlight, and it would be shining on the creek. Cuddling up with him would feel even better in the cool night air.

She realized she’d doodled a collie on a page of notes about Schiller’s neologisms, which meant it was probably time to take a break and clear her head. After brewing a cup of tea and sipping it on the porch, she felt more focused, and returned to her desk with a renewed sense of purpose. There was still a muddle of thoughts churning at the back of her mind, but she was able to keep them in the background and concentrate on the pages in front of her long enough to call it a passable evening’s work. She bound up her notes, returned her books to their shelf, washed up for bed, and lay down.

Thoughts forced to the back of the conscious mind have a tendency to come to the fore at night,

however, and Lydia woke in the dark shortly past one in the morning with a vivid dream still fresh in her mind. It had been about Rex, and they weren't just taking a walk together. The dream had broken off, and she had woken up, just before the moment when... She closed her eyes and tried to picture it again. She wasn't sure if she wanted the dream to continue or not. Well, some corporal parts of her definitely wanted it to continue, that was clear, but another part of her felt troubled, and wished for dreamless sleep to finish the night.

Stilling the clamor of conflicting feelings and getting back to sleep wasn't easy, but eventually her eyes got heavy, and as it turned out, the rest of the night did pass dreamlessly; she didn't get to return to where she'd left off. When she woke again in the morning, it was with a pang of disappointment. The truth was, she really had wanted the dream to go on, very much.

She ate a moody breakfast, keeping a bland expression on her face and making the minimum amount of conversation at the table while her mind turned over the facts as objectively as possible: she'd had a dream about dog dick, and fundamentally, she hadn't been bothered by it. Quite the contrary. She'd wanted more. Questions arose: How much more? With a dog? Really? Was it something her waking self would actually consider, or just something to leave in the dream world? She crunched a piece of buttered toast, and washed it down with tea.

Was it even possible? Well, she read widely enough to know the answer to that one for a fact: Yes, it was possible. That was a thing that people, and dogs, actually did. Would she? No, she thought, not with just any dog, anyway... but Rex wasn't just any dog. He was gorgeous, he was smart, and above all, she trusted him. With Rex, maybe she might be willing to try a few things. However, she decided — as she polished off her egg and excused herself from the table — it wasn't even practical to consider. He wasn't her dog. She had no chance to be alone with him. She only ever walked with him along the footpath on his way home from the store, and she knew how devoted he was to doing his job. He wouldn't stop to play with her.

That didn't mean she couldn't hope for some more nice dreams, though.

While Lydia was cleaning up after her breakfast, Rex had long since finished his, and was lying in a patch of white clover with his head on his paws. He had accompanied Helen as she planted radishes and peas during the cool early hours, and got to fetch the cart of mulch from the shed, which was fun, because it was heavy and tricky to pull around the corner of the lane to the garden without tipping it. That was good work. But Helen was inside painting now, and wouldn't want his help with anything for hours.

He had checked the orchard for unwary ground squirrels snoozing in the morning sun, but hadn't found any. A walk around the fence line hadn't turned up any interesting tracks or unexpected smells, just the usual birds and small rodents, none of whom were in evidence at the moment. He had startled a muskrat on the bank of the pond, but it disappeared into the water and didn't surface again even after a long, patient wait. The spotted goat who sometimes liked to play chase was grazing and not in a mood to start a game, no matter how he tried to entice or provoke her. He considered opening the gate to let the goats out so that he could round them up and put them in again, but that had gotten him in trouble once before, and it wasn't worth it.

One furry ear twitched as a beetle buzzed up out of the clover. A trip to town would be ideal. The girl at the store who loaded his bags might walk with him, especially if he did a little pleading. He was sure that she'd wanted something from him on his last visit, and another walk together could afford him the chance to be of some service, perhaps. However, he never left the Auer property without

Helen's permission, and there was little hope that she would send him to town again the very next day after he'd just been. Store visits didn't come that often.

His ear twitched again. He stood up and shook off the wetness from the clover patch. No sense lying around there any longer.

As he padded up the slope toward the house, he weighed the options for what to do next but came up with nothing better than going inside to get a drink from his water bowl. Pestering Helen while she was painting was never a good idea, but it was possible that she might be doing something else by now. Or she might hear him come in and decide to take a break. He nosed open the swinging door at the back of the house and squeezed through into the mud room, where his bowl sat on a neat blue floor mat. After drinking his fill, he shook himself again and went to the kitchen to lie down and think.

The bag of coffee that he had brought back yesterday was on the kitchen counter, he noted. That was out of place. The coffee had such a strong smell that he was always aware of its location in the kitchen, and it was supposed to be up in the top of the tall cabinet next to the refrigerator. It only came out of the cabinet twice a day: first thing in the morning and then once more, later in the morning, when the sun was much higher in the sky. Each time, it was put away again properly in its place, leaving the counter tidy. Rex approved; he did not like leaving things out of place.

He knew that he wasn't supposed to take things from the counter; that was basic kitchen law. But he was bored enough that the misplaced coffee nagged at him, and his mind wouldn't turn away from it. He was about to go outside again, when something else sparked faintly in his collie brain. What happened when the smell of coffee in the kitchen dwindled, or disappeared?

Somewhat against his better nature, Rex put his paws up on the counter and grabbed the bag, which smelled overpoweringly strong so close to his nose. He couldn't put it up in the kitchen cabinet, but he knew another, similar cabinet with a door that he could open, outside in the shed. There were a lot of other strong-smelling bags and packages there. The coffee would be neatly off the counter and put away in the right kind of place, even if it wasn't exactly the right place. He shouldered through the mud room door and trotted out to the shed with the bag in his jaws, stowing it there among the bags of potting soil, lime, and cedar chips.

Satisfied that a problem had been solved, Rex took another lap around the fence line. A strange dog had come through the fence at some point that morning, but it was long gone, the tracks departing into the hardwood grove to the east. He left a mark on the fence, then headed back to the house again. As he approached the back door, he could hear that Helen was in the kitchen. Good. He could probably convince her to give him something to do, or at least exchange a few tricks for a biscuit.

Rex's tail was wagging as he came into the kitchen. Helen stood by the sink, and he pressed happily against her legs. "Hi there, boy," she said, giving him a scratch between the shoulder blades. "Busy morning?" He leaned his weight against her, angling for some continued backscratching.

She had a carafe of water in one hand, the hand that wasn't scratching him. "Rex," she said, "Sit. And watch me." He sat expectantly, his eyes turned up to her. His ears tipped forward toward her as well. She set the carafe on the counter.

"Rex, where's the coffee?" Helen's voice was gentle and measured, as it always was when she spoke to him. Rex could not possibly have guessed the mixture of amusement and exasperation that lay behind the polite question.

He did, however, know how to find things. And he knew the word "coffee." He started toward the

kitchen cabinet where the coffee should have been, realized that the smell wasn't there, then remembered. He went to the door, turned and barked once, then continued outside, confident that she would follow. Helen didn't waste words on questions; she just walked briskly after him as he led her to the garden shed, his coat bouncing all the way. When he sat down in front of the cabinet, his satisfaction was obvious. She couldn't help smiling.

"Good job, good boy. You found it for me." She reached down to pick up the bag from the bottom shelf of the cabinet, then added, "Oh! Damn!" as coffee poured out of a hole in the side of the bag. She set it down again. "Well, good job indeed, boy. You found the coffee, and you found out we have a mouse problem, too." She inspected the bag, the hole, and the pile of coffee, shredded paper, and mouse droppings on the floor. "I don't think I want to brew a cup of this."

Rex understood little of that, and waited for further instructions. Helen patted her left leg, signaling him to heel. He returned to the house with her, curious what she'd have him do next. Back in the kitchen, he lay and waited while she did something with a pad of paper. Then she lifted his saddlebags down off the peg where they hung by the door, and it took every bit of restraint that he had to stay down and not dash to her side immediately.

"OK. Come." He zipped to the door and stood, tense with anticipation, as she buckled the bags on him and tucked an envelope into one of them. "If I don't get some more coffee today, we'll both be sorry." She checked all the velcro fasteners. "Rex, watch me." He watched. "Good. You know what to do. Go on, go to the store, now." His nose was through the door as soon as it opened.

"Rex!" cried Lydia as the bell jingled and the collie pushed through the door. She hadn't expected to see him again for days. No sooner had she said his name than a memory of the previous night's dream flashed back to her. She did her best to stifle any reaction, but she felt warmth in her cheeks. That morning she had wondered if she would try anything with Rex, given the chance. Now that he was here — in the fur, so to speak — the question loomed larger. In fact, it was hard to think of much else.

"What can I get for you?" she said, pulling Miss Auer's note and a bit of cash out of his bag. "Coffee, again? And mousetraps. OK, you bet." Rex sat down to wait, and she stroked the top of his head before going to the shelves. Remembering her dream again, she snuck a peek under his belly, but couldn't see anything interesting, just long white fur.

It took only a minute to pick up the items, pack them into Rex's bags, and deposit the cash in the register. She felt a fresh surge of attraction and curiosity as she looked over the counter at him, sitting square and tall and attentive. She squeezed her eyes shut for a moment, and made a decision. He'd go, she'd stay, another week would pass, and she'd cool down and forget about the dream. "OK, Rex. Take it home now," she said, repeating the standard formula. "Home."

Normally, he would acknowledge her instruction and head straight to the door. This time, he remained sitting, but put his right paw up on the counter. That was unusual. Lydia wondered if she'd forgotten some part of the routine that he was expecting.

Rex tilted his head, implying a question: "Well?" One of his ears tipped over, giving him an adorably lopsided look.

"You want me to come with?" The plea in the collie's expression was unmistakable, or so it seemed to Lydia. Perhaps he'd gotten used to her company on the return trips, and enjoyed it. That was a flattering thought. It would feel unkind to let him down, if he was expecting it.

"Dad, can I..."

"You may, you may! Go ahead. It's Saturday, we'll be closing in a little while anyway. Just leave some time to help me clean up when you get back. I'll still be here."

"Oh, thanks, dad! I'll be back soon." Then, to Rex: "OK, let's take you home!" They walked out together into another bright day, with a breeze from the south rippling through the new spring foliage. Along the footpath, the wind stirred the surface of the creek into small whirls and eddies as it pushed lightly against the current.

The sun, the breeze, the splash of water, the chorus of birdsong and the perfume of spring blossoms: Lydia felt giddy and free, full of a coiled-up energy that simply ached to be released. "Spring fever," she thought. "I guess I've got a case." She looked at Rex, and he looked at her, bright-eyed and ready. They broke into a run.

Lydia couldn't say who'd started it, but they were soon in a good-natured race. Rex stayed close at heel but would push ahead just enough to challenge her. When she sped up and inched past the tip of his nose, he'd allow her the lead for a moment before pulling up level again. Lydia was sure the dog could have outdistanced her easily if he'd chosen, but he must be enjoying the game, and so was she. Indeed, if she'd been giddy before, she was euphoric now, with her heart pounding and her muscles warm, practically floating as the wind streamed by and tousled her honey-colored hair.

She was just admiring the fluid strength in Rex's shoulders and hindquarters, when he slowed quite abruptly and dropped to a sitting position. They were so in sync that she had automatically slowed too, and stopped only a few strides after him, though she had no idea why they'd come to a stop in the first place.

They'd really covered some distance; Rex was sitting opposite the wooden bridge that spanned the creek to the old millhouse. He barked at Lydia and gave her another questioning head-tilt.

"What is it, boy? Have you been watching old Lassie movies?" Lydia looked around but couldn't guess what, if anything, Rex was trying to communicate.

He barked again, stood, and walked to the bridge. He looked back over his shoulder. For a moment, Lydia had an eerie feeling that the dog was warning her of an unseen danger, but he didn't seem alarmed or agitated at all. Then, when she looked across the water at the millhouse a second time, a very clear picture came suddenly into focus for her.

The mill, together with the grounds on which it stood, was technically a park, preserved for historical interest. If Great Cross ever saw any tourists, it might in theory have been an attraction for them. As things were, a person could walk in and be nearly certain of seeing no recent signatures in the dusty guestbook, and no other visitors. On the far side of the building, facing away from the creek, was a strip of overgrown lawn shaded by poplars and the steeply-rising bank to the west.

Lydia felt on the cusp of something irreversible; she was very aware of two possible futures branching off just ahead of her. She wavered, then decided. The curiosity was killing her and it would be foolish to waste the opportunity to quench it.

"You want to show me something? Sure, let's go check it out." Under her breath, she added, "Mut macht Glück. Or something."

She let him lead her across the bridge, then they walked together to the sheltered side of the mill. They were alone, and out of sight... and she wasn't sure what to do next.

"What now, Rex? For all I know, you've got more experience than I have." She'd have been surprised to know how right she was about that. "Do you want to take the lead?" Her voice had dropped to just above a whisper.

Rex nosed her crotch, then looked up to check her response. She stroked his head, and he did it again.

"Right to the point, huh? OK, let's see if we're really reading each other right... oh, hell, this is weird."

She wore a loose-fitting skirt which was easy to raise up. She tugged her panties down and realized for the first time how wet she'd gotten. No wonder the dog had been able to sense her interest. To a nose like his, it must have been the olfactory equivalent of a flashing neon "FUCK ME" sign. She kicked off her shoes and pulled the panties all the way off.

Rex nosed under her skirt, and she lifted the front of it, hoping she wouldn't have to say anything more. He licked the insides of her thighs, where they were wet, and she shivered. The palette of sensations was more than she'd expected: not just the licks, which were an intriguing combination of warm, wet, soft and rasping, but also the thick plush fur, the stiff tickle of his whiskers, occasional cold brushes of his nose, and the barely perceptible currents of his breath.

Above all, she felt the heat of his attention, a bright beam focused entirely on her. There was no doubt that his mind and senses were full of her scent and her taste and nothing else.

Lydia stepped back to lean against the wall of the mill. Rex looked up once more for confirmation, then stepped close again and buried his muzzle between her legs. He lapped through her dewy blonde thatch and into the wet furrow which was so ready to open for him. He didn't hesitate, but ran his long tongue directly up the full length of her sex. Her hips bucked as he reached the top of his stroke, and he licked again, another long stroke, bottom to top, bringing a gasp and another involuntary jerk.

At first, she watched, somewhat awestruck by the sight of her canine lover's head so tight between her legs, as if he were made to fit there. But as he settled into a rhythm, she found it sweeter to close her eyes and give herself over to the other senses. She caught her own scent wafting up. It mixed with Rex's, hers delicately musky, his clean but emphatically doggy.

There was nothing delicate about the slurping noises they were making. She was very, very wet for him, and he lapped with enthusiasm. He held his rhythm, though he brought greater pressure to his tongue strokes as her pussy got wetter and warmer. Finally she reached down and held herself entirely open for him. "Please?" was all she was able to say, and even that was only a squeak, but it was enough. He went right where she wanted. She shuddered; her head tilted back against the wall, eyes closed tightly. She hadn't known her body could ripple all over like that.

She also hadn't known that a licking like this would give her such a hunger for more. In a way, she wanted to keep riding those waves as long as she could. In another way, though, it seemed like it was only a prelude. Relaxed, hot, and open, now, she wanted the big dog to fill her.

She slid down, letting her knees bend and her skirt pile up at her waist, until she was resting against the base of the wall. The grass was cool and prickly, but she didn't take much notice. Rex kept his head tight between her legs as she sank down, but he backed off when she finally sat. His mouth hung open with his tongue out and his teeth showing; the velvet fur of his muzzle was wet and white-flecked. She wondered how it would feel if he put those teeth on her neck, from behind.

"Hahhh... wow," she managed. "Rex, wow." She put a hand on her breast, and felt her heart pounding. She leaned forward and wrapped her arms around him. Her legs wanted to wrap around him, too, but the position was awkward and his saddlebags were in the way, so she simply squeezed him tight. His chest pressed against hers, and his head hung over her shoulder.

She was just working up the nerve to reach under his belly when a sharp bark right beside her ear interrupted her. A moment later she heard a creak of timbers and cables that could only be coming from the bridge. She jumped to her feet before considering whether her legs would hold her, wobbled, then steadied herself. She smoothed down her skirt, but not before Rex snuck in and goosed her from behind with one last tongue swipe right in the slicked-up crack between her cheeks. She yelped and gave him what she hoped was an admonishing glare, but he licked his chops unrepentantly.

Lydia patted her leg, as she'd seen Helen do, and Rex came to heel, looking as businesslike as a dog with spiky, cunt-soaked fur on his face could look. They walked around the corner together, and unbelievably, Lydia saw an out-of-town couple walking up to the millhouse. The man waved.

"Hi! Do you know if the mill is open? Can we get in to take a look?"

"Uh... it should be. It usually is. I haven't checked, though. We were just taking a walk out back." Lydia was aware of her tendency to blush and was trying, by some act of willpower, not to do so.

"Your dog is so pretty!" said the woman, as they drew near. "Can I pet him?"

"Oh, he's not mine. But yeah. Go ahead, he's friendly. His name's Rex."

She bent down and scratched all over Rex's chest and behind his ears, cooing as she did. Her husband looked embarrassed as she fussed over the dog, and it didn't look like she was going to get back up any time soon. Lydia, who really didn't want to stand around making polite conversation, coughed.

"I'd better be getting him home now. His owner's waiting for him, and I need to get back to my dad's store."

"Well, we won't hold you up," said the man. "Enjoy the day! Maybe we'll see you at that store later."

"Yeah, maybe. It's closed for today, though, so only if you're still around on Monday."

"Thanks for letting me pet your dog. He's so sweet!"

"You bet. See you around town, maybe." Lydia walked briskly to the bridge, and Rex stuck to her like velcro, back in the role of obedient and well-mannered sheepdog.

Halfway across the bridge, Lydia heard the woman's voice, which carried further than she might have intended. "Wasn't he just the prettiest dog? But he had a funny smell on him. I wonder what he's been getting his nose into."

At the end of the day, Rex lay contented and drowsy in the kitchen. He still had a residual warm feeling from Helen's welcome when he brought her the bags from the store. He'd run the last stretch home in long, loping bounds, and she'd met him at the door with bright words of praise and a large biscuit. She made her coffee and sat and talked to him as she drank it. It was all incomprehensible

but he enjoyed the familiar melody and cadence of her voice all the same. That sound was a part of home, as comforting as his favorite blanket.

In all, really, it had been a full and gratifying day. If certain parts of it hadn't quite delivered every last thing he'd been hoping for, that left all the more on the horizon to look forward to.

Just one puzzle made an ongoing disturbance in Rex's otherwise even-keeled life. He could tell when his owner was aroused, just the same as could tell with Lydia. Helen's state had been obvious to him when he came home. He couldn't foresee when she'd get that way; it happened at unpredictable times, for no discernible reason. But unlike Lydia, Helen wasn't receptive to his advances. On two occasions in the past, he'd tried, and he'd been chastised with the only harsh words she'd ever directed at him. It stung. After that, he didn't try again, but it was an effort to overcome his instincts. It left him feeling confused and remiss.

It was nothing to lose sleep over. He pulled himself to his feet, stretched his whole body from tongue to tail-tip, and walked to the door of Helen's bedroom. He didn't need the yellow nightlight to find his way, but he appreciated the reassuring glow of it in the darkness. She was already asleep, and he stood a minute at the door, listening.

Satisfied that all was well, he lay on the threshold and slept.

Lydia also found that she was looking forward to things, and that was a change. In the past weeks, not only the weather had been dull; her days had settled into a comfortable, but monotonous pattern. Little came along that was unexpected, and she fell asleep at nights with no curiosity or excitement about what the next day would bring. She had her exam to look forward to, but that was still off in the middle distance, too far off to rouse any real anticipation. And besides, that exam was one of the reasons her daily routine had gradually become so inflexible.

After she and Rex had gone their opposite directions on the footpath, she smoothed over the memory of their encounter just as neatly as she'd smoothed down her skirt. She returned to the store and finished her work as usual, though with a lightness of mood that made the time pass quickly.

She powered through her study time in the evening with excellent concentration, quickly finding her way to that state of effortless immersion that had been so elusive lately.

Only after the lights were out did her thoughts return to the adventure by the millhouse. It had been amazing, and if they hadn't been interrupted by that couple... oh, what she wouldn't do with that big collie boy if she had the chance. She rolled onto her back and spread her legs, imagining him between them again, right there in her bed. With one finger, she traced where his tongue had been, trying to recapture the feeling, but she couldn't get anywhere near it by herself.

Tomorrow probably wouldn't be the day, but she'd find a way to meet him again and pick up where they'd left off. Blushing in the dark was silly, but it happened anyway as she pictured herself on hands and knees with Rex atop her, his rough sable coat against her soft skin.

Maybe not tomorrow, but soon.

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## **Chapter 2: School Days**

It was a Wednesday afternoon. The last bell for the school day had rung at 2:55. The board was erased, the floor was swept, the benches were straightened, and Rex's dick was stuck full-length up the young schoolteacher's twat. His furry balls squashed against her and dripped with the overflow as he gave her everything he hadn't been able to give Lydia on the weekend, and four days' surplus besides. She squirmed underneath him, grinding against his belly and tightening her muscles around the big knot that locked them together, squeezing as if she meant to hold him inside her forever.

Jenny Knox loved Wednesdays.

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The day had begun more sedately. By the time the first bell rang, Jenny had been up for hours. Her mornings were full, but she rose early to make sure they weren't rushed. She always took ten minutes to simply sit at the kitchen window, watch the morning sky, and bathe in the quiet before heading to the bustle of the school day. For these few minutes, she tried to empty her mind and be truly still, but on a Wednesday, it was hard to keep from looking forward to the end of the day and thinking naughty, doggy thoughts.

On this particular Wednesday, she'd already been hot when she woke up, and the prospect of some sexy Rex time later in the day made it hard to sit still and keep her hands out of her pants, much less empty her mind. Her ten minutes passed far too quickly, and it was time to pick up her bags, put on her professional demeanor, and walk to school.

Jenny's home was a cabin just next to the school grounds. The school had been renting it for years to one of the more elderly teachers. When he retired and Jenny took the job as his replacement, they also offered her the option to take up the lease. The cabin looked like something from another era, which of course it was, and when they first opened the door for her, she had the uncanny feeling that she'd arrived home for the first time in her life. She accepted on the spot. In exchange for some minor responsibilities as the cabin's caretaker, she got a nearly unbelievable deal on the rent plus the benefit of being two minutes' walk from her classroom.

She entered the front door and waved good morning to the two secretaries in the front office. The school itself was an oddity for the day and age, with every grade from K to 12 housed in one low-roofed building. A modern brick structure, it replaced the old wooden schoolhouse, which had grown by sporadic accretions over the years from a single, open teaching space to a warren of oddly-sized rooms and corridors. They built anew after a fire damaged one wing of the building. Though the exterior was new, and the floor plan was streamlined, they had preserved the old slate blackboards and most of the long wooden bench seats that filled the older students' classrooms.

That included Jenny's room. She stepped in and turned on the lights with a frisson of happiness at the warm, polished shine of the benches and the smells of chalk dust and oil soap. Here she taught Latin, which the school still required of all its students. A century ago, this had signified prestige and aspiration; now, it was a tradition which the school upheld with a mixture of pride and stubbornness. Whatever their reasons, Jenny was glad they kept the tradition alive, and glad that the old Latin teacher had finally decided to retire at just the right time for her to step in to the job.

"Morning, Jennifer. Ready for another day?"

That was Dan Weber, a math teacher who saw many of the same students she did. Most mornings, he stuck his head in before settling into his own classroom across the hall.

"Yes, I think I'm good and ready for today. Looking forward to it, actually. I have some good stuff on the slate." She smiled. "You?"

"Maybe not quite so ready as that. By this time of year, I'm tired, you know? But after today, just twenty-eight more days to go."

"I bet they'll fly by."

"One can hope." If any hope registered on his face, it was only the hope for a swift death that would spare him explaining conic sections one more time. "Well, have a good day."

"I will! Thanks. You, too."

That's how it was: She was Jennifer to her colleagues, and Miss Knox to her students, and conversations dead-ended quickly into "have a good day." There was still no-one in town who would make the leap to calling her Jenny. She liked it there, and the people were friendly and earnestly helpful, but they were insular. It was easy to imagine that years down the road, when she was retiring, she'd still be generally known as "that school teacher, you know, the new girl."

Helen Auer was a case in point. Although they saw each other every week at a minimum, when Jenny picked Rex up for his school visits, their acquaintance had never advanced much beyond "Let me know right away if you have any problems with him," or, "Did he behave himself today?" or, "We'll see you again next Wednesday, I trust?" Helen rarely called her by name at all, and Jenny had the feeling that she'd be more comfortable using "Miss Knox" if she did. It wasn't that she was unfriendly, just that there seemed to be a barrier of polite formality which was hard to break through.

Jenny's morning class schedule was a blitz, with first, second, and third-year Latin back to back. Everything had to be ready in advance, because there was only just enough time between classes to put away one set of notes, get out the next, and have a quick drink of water. She stood at her high desk with forty-five minutes til the first bell and started moving a bundle of graded papers from her bag to her outbox. She flipped through them, reviewing the grades and the comments she'd written.

Her students were hard-working, as a rule. There were those like Hunter, in the second hour, whose ambition was to operate heavy equipment and who would always struggle to express himself in writing. There were occasional cases like Lydia, who had sponged up multiple languages with no evident limit to her capacity. From nearly all of them, she could count on a sincere effort, at the least.

Because of her age (and her waistline, she supposed), she could count on a few crushes and infatuations in each class, too, particularly among the seniors. It was mostly the boys, although she had once found a note on her desk with a surprisingly detailed fantasy from a girl who hadn't disguised her handwriting as well as she thought. It wasn't hard to shut that kind of thing down, though. Usually you just had to ignore it. Anyway, she'd sooner have touched plutonium than touched any of her students — she liked her job too much for that.

She couldn't help speculating, though. Given her own proclivities, and what she knew of growing up around animals, she had to wonder which of her students were exploring similar territory. There must be some. She paused at a paper with the name printed in thick, blocky letters: Noah Chrisman. He was a 4-H'er with an interest in raising livestock. She'd watched him showing his sheep in the livestock barn at the county fair.

Could be... but she didn't think sheep would be his thing. He had a pretty, golden-furred collie bitch of his own named Aggie and anyone could see how sweet he was on her. They'd given herding demonstrations on the fairgrounds, too. He and Aggie worked together like they could read each other's minds. He didn't have a girlfriend, and Jenny knew he took some ribbing from the other guys

about how much time he spent with his dog. There might be something to that.

Jenny put it at about a one in ten chance that Noah had been up in Aggie's furry hindquarters one way or another, and a dead certainty that he'd thought about it. Not only that, his family kept a pair of trail-riding horses, both mares. If a young man could grow to eighteen years, seeing horse pussy on a daily basis, and not take a lick at least once, Jenny thought she'd be very surprised indeed. And you wouldn't stop at one lick, would you?

She broke off that line of thought and got the rest of the students' papers sorted, ready to hand back. After that, she was all business. There were a lot of very unsexy administrative emails to wade through. Then it was time to run through the lesson plans one last time and conjure up the energy that would wake up the first-hour students and put life into what they thought was a dead language. She was still mentally rehearsing the lines from Virgil that she needed to open the third hour when the bell rang. The first students began to file in and fill the benches. Showtime!

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Three hours later, Jenny was seeing the last of her morning students out the door. She had a bit of a high — something like the buzz of walking off stage after a performance, mixed with the out-of-body sensation of long-distance running. It was certainly possible to teach a day's classes without putting quite so much of oneself into the effort. Some days the spark was just there, though, and when it was, she fanned it into a fire. There was a reason that students talked about the "passion" in her teaching. She drained the water bottle on her desk.

Speaking of passions, it was 11:00 — normally, time for her lunch and planning break, but on Wednesdays, time to pick up Rex. She grabbed her keys, latched her classroom door, and went back home to get in her car. The arrangement was pretty simple. A small but increasing number of students had specialized programs prescribing regular time with supportive animal companionship. Rex came one afternoon each week and filled the role admirably.

Jenny had maneuvered herself into a position as Rex's handler. That meant picking him up, taking him home, keeping track of the schedule and taking him to the rooms he needed to go to, toweling him off before he came inside on a rainy day, and so on. It hadn't taken a lot of maneuvering, really. The overburdened special education teacher who had been doing the job was relieved to hand over the responsibility. Jenny shadowed her for three weeks to get the routine down. She met Helen on two occasions for more specific instructions about Rex's behavior and the commands and signals he responded to. Helen had nodded approval as Jenny described her record as a junior handler in obedience trials with her own dog as a teenager.

Jenny had melted for Rex the first time she saw him. He reminded her so much of her own pup, whom she missed terribly. They didn't look much alike, superficially. Her boy Toby had been a mixed breed with a black saddle-shaped patch topping his shaggy fawn coat. He had been shorter and leaner than Rex, an entirely different body shape. The similarity was all in the way he moved — that confident, economical gait, always headed to the right place — and the way he watched, so perceptive and attuned to the motion and intentions of the people around him.

After her first afternoon fully in charge of Rex at the school — more than a year ago, now — they walked back to the cabin so she could set down her things and drive him home to Helen. She honestly hadn't intended to do anything more than that, but before opening the door to leave, she decided to sit down on the floor beside him, just to be close and maybe bond for a minute or two.

She had been stroking his fur when he licked her neck. Her eyes closed automatically and she

thought of how things had begun to warm up between her and Toby. It had been so similar. Rex licked the side of her face, and now she was aware of the tickle of breath by her ear, and the doggy smell filling her nose. She remembered how that smell used to surround her until she felt as if it were her own, as if an animal part of her were manifesting.

When she turned to give him a kiss, her lips parted, he licked inside her mouth, and she abandoned herself to the intimate feeling. She stroked and scratched the thickest parts of his fur; she lay back and let him lie atop her and lick her neck and face. With the afternoon sun behind him, she could only see the shape of his head, the long muzzle and tuliped ears haloed by the pale light of late winter, and she melted a bit more inside.

That day, they did nothing but kiss and cuddle and touch until it was time for him to go. Later that spring, when she first guided him into mounting her, it was clumsy; he was eager but unsure. Jenny had wondered if Rex and Helen might have more than a working relationship, but evidently not. His inexperience was obvious. Jenny was a teacher at heart, though, and Rex was a learner. By the time school ended for summer, they were well-practiced partners.

With the passage of a year, the big farm dog knew how to hold her down and make her scream for dog dick like even Toby had never done.

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Rex had no concept of "Wednesday," nor any other days and dates, but his ears swiveled when he heard Jenny's Subaru approaching. He knew what that meant. He sprang up from the bank of the pond where he had been lying very still and waiting to surprise any of the migratory ducks that might be so bold as to leave the water. When he spied one heading for land, he'd creep around toward the likely landing site, staying low in the grass. As soon as a pair of webbed feet stepped ashore, he'd charge up launching a volley of full-throated woofs. They'd flap away, startled, and splash into the water again, quacking an angry chorus at the affront. It was a small amusement, but it passed the time. Besides, he felt the mass of ducks was not to be trusted, and needed a collie's vigilance to keep them in check.

He stretched his legs, looked back to give the ducks a final admonitory bark, then one more really final one for good measure, and ran up the hill. He was just at the foot of the driveway as Jenny's car turned in and rolled up to the house. When she stepped out, he dashed to her side and pressed against her as she reached down and scratched between his ears. Rex loved no-one in the world more than his owner, but his heart was big, and brimmed with love for the schoolteacher and her kind touches too.

Behind him, the house door opened, and Helen came out. She and Jenny exchanged some words which Rex ignored as he sniffed the car tires. After just a minute, Jenny held the door for him. He lay down on the back seat, and they were off. The wheels kicked up dust on the wide, flat road behind them, and an open window let in the dark, earthy smell of the surrounding fields. Rex knew which direction home was, but he soon lost any sense of the distance. The speed of the car was more than he could reckon, and the rush of air was intoxicating.

He recognized when they were nearing the school, though, and sat up behind the driver's seat as they pulled onto the gravel beside Jenny's cabin. Here, the routine was not entirely predictable. Some days they went straight to the school; other days, they went to the cabin first. As he hopped out over the gravel and onto the grass, he looked to Jenny to see which way it would be this time.

She appeared uncertain for a moment, then called him to heel and went to the door of the cabin.



With the sun almost directly overhead, it was dim inside, but Jenny left the lights off and went quickly up the stairs to the open space of the top floor. Rex's nails clicked on the wood behind her. Upstairs, it was brighter, but the strange, thick glass of the windows blurred the outside world beyond recognition, letting only a diffuse glow into the room.

The waiting was hard to bear as he watched her sit on the edge of the bed, slip off her shoes, and pull off her slacks — taking time to fold them neatly and set them aside. The plume of his tail swished with barely-contained impatience. Socks came off, then underwear. At last, she gestured, and he plunged his muzzle gratefully into the source of the dizzying scent that was flooding his senses.

She yipped as he took a first lick. The noises she made had been hard to interpret, at first. They sounded pained. But she had helped him to understand, and now he sought to bring forth as many of those yips, cries, gasps and moans as he could. It was an easy job. She tasted so good, and below the surface of his refined collie brain, an ancient part of him dictated what to do. He almost stopped thinking entirely.

His nose pressed against the very lowest part of her belly as his tongue worked through the black curls and up the wet channel, over the little ridge — ah, there was a happy gasp. He licked the same path again, pressing his tongue in more firmly, so that it flattened out against her; she whined and pressed back against him. Her hands came down on the back of his head, holding him to her, and the sheen of wetness became an increasing flow. He wanted all of it, and he lapped faster.

His whiskers brushed her legs, and her fingers twined in his fur, but that registered only faintly as he immersed himself in the smell and taste of her. He drew his tongue up again and again. Her position on the edge of the bed, with her legs drawn back in the air, left little hidden from him. He found the opening and worked his tongue inside, pressing up firmly against the slick, gripping wall.

"Oh, REXY, yes! Get me deep, you sweet boy.... ahh."

He pushed his muzzle against her as closely as he could, licking far inside, and her words trailed off into a series of low grunts and groans. Her hips jerked and twitched. He had an urge to nip her and tell her to stay put, but suppressed it, doing his best to move with her and respond to the bucking spasms.

"Here, too, REXY." She sounded breathless. Her hands left his head and pulled her cheeks apart, as she rocked back further. Her voice bordered on a whine again now. "Please."

A trickle of sweet juice had run down the crack that she was spreading for him. He licked that out before trying his tongue against the little hole that was now exposed. There was a familiar resistance. This wasn't so easy as licking up into a ready wet cunt, but in a way, it was more rewarding when he felt the first slight relaxation that allowed his tongue-tip in.

Something tightened, and he had to slide back out. He licked her rim a few times, picking up more stray pussy dribbles before pressing in again. This time it was easier to get in. Then, just a little more pressure and there was a sense of gradual yielding followed by a lovely slide into her depths.

He set his tongue working inside the narrow confines. The girl from the store hadn't let him get to her backside, and he wondered what she'd taste like. He hoped he'd find out. But that was for another time. Right now he had Jenny's steamy little asshole right under his nose. She liked it when he pressed up hard — yes, that got a reaction. He heard a deep grunt and was aware that one of her hands was now moving rapidly just above him.

Experience told him she wouldn't hold still at all once she started rubbing herself. In a moment, sure enough, she was wiggling and thrashing in a way that made it very difficult to stay with her. The urge to nip, and to assert control, intensified, but it couldn't overrule the part of him that wished to please. He worked to follow her motion, as he heard her excitement reaching a peak.

"...uh huh, uh huhhh, oh my god Rex yes..."

His lips curled back and his teeth pressed against her skin as they pushed against each other and his tongue extended its soft wet friction to the farthest reaches.

Suddenly, she became quiet, and nearly still. One leg went down on the floor. Her body stiffened and trembled slightly. Rex withdrew from inside her, and lay his chin on her flat belly, looking up at her dreamy, closed-eyed expression. Her smell had changed, and her happiness washed over him tangibly.

He felt an urge in his hindquarters, but it wouldn't get satisfied til later in the day, he knew. That was the routine. The stout beams of the cabin muffled sounds from outside but Rex could hear the change in the schoolyard noises that meant Jenny would be walking him over there soon.

She sat up, and he moved his chin to her thigh. Her hand touched his head again, very lightly now, as she just barely brushed the fur of his head and neck. He ignored the ache in his balls and let himself enjoy the delicate sensation for now. A shiver went down the muscles on one side of his back, making his fur ripple.

"Ah, Rex. We've got to go now, pup. You'll get yours later. I'm going to drain you this afternoon, boy." She bent and scratched his chest. "Promise."

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Rex spent most of his first hour at school in Jenny's classroom. There was a cushion in one corner where he lay absorbing a sunbeam from the south-facing window and studying the incoming students with their melange of town and farm smells: grass and grease and soap and unnameable chemicals and pets and livestock. They arranged themselves neatly in the benches without his intervention, which he appreciated.

When they were all seated, Jenny gave him a basket with a padded handle that he could grip comfortably in his jaw. His job then was to walk down one side of the center aisle, and back up the other, pausing at the end of each bench to collect a stack of papers in the basket. This was usually accompanied by a head-pat or an ear-scratch. It was mostly girls who sat at the ends of the benches handing him papers, he had noticed. He didn't linger too long, moving on purposefully to complete his job. It wasn't bad, though, being the center of so much affectionate attention.

His nose detected a ham sandwich in one boy's bag as he returned up the aisle. After delivering the basket to Jenny and lying back down on his cushion, he considered how he might negotiate possession of the sandwich without causing a disruption that would get him in trouble. The bag was right at the end of a bench, but it was a tricky problem.

Jenny's voice filled the classroom. He was sure he heard his name more than once in the stream of babble, but it wasn't directed at him. All her attention was with the students for now. His head sank onto his paws with a sigh.

Rex was nearly snoozing when Jenny fumbled the eraser at the blackboard, but his eyes were open enough to see it bounce off her desk and into the aisle. He got up and went after it without thinking.

His path took him by the bag with the sandwich. Grabbing it was out of the question, but he did allow himself to slow and pause at the end of the bench. The stocky boy seated there ran his hand down Rex's back automatically. Rex turned his head up with the most endearing expression he could manage before moving on to pick up the eraser and bring it back to Jenny at the front of the room. She was pleased, but he wasn't sure it was worth the unpleasant feel of chalk dust sticking in his mouth.

He let himself drift on the border of sleep again until the end of the class, when he liked to sit by the door and watch the students on their way out. If he just sat politely, it usually earned him a few more head-pats, and he enjoyed hearing his name as they went past and said goodbye. Besides all that, there was simply something nice about watching the orderly motion as the room emptied.

Rex put his paw out as the stocky boy from the end of the bench approached the door.

"Aw, Rex, you're a worse mooch than Aggie is, and she's pretty bad."

Rex ignored the reproof and gestured with his paw in the air.

The boy slung his bag off his shoulder. "Miss Knox, can I give him a bite of my sandwich?" He was already fishing it out as he asked.

"Oh... well, just a bite."

"Sure, I'm too hungry to give him more than that anyway." He tore off a corner of the sandwich and gave it to Rex, who took it out of his palm and made it disappear in two bites.

"Now give me that paw again." They shook hands, then the boy shouldered his bag and slipped out into the stream of people in the hallway. A very decent young man, Rex judged.

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For the next two hours, Rex fulfilled his school duties in a cluster of smaller, less austere rooms. He had more freedom to move around and interact with the children — mostly younger ones — who visited him there. Some of them had jumpy, flighty minds like skittish goat kids. The thing to do was move slowly and cultivate an air of calmness... and, always, to watch, understand, and anticipate the movements of everyone around him.

Much of the time, that meant doing seemingly nothing at all, as when he lay on the floor between a child and teacher reading aloud together. Still, there was a knack to it. Maintaining the right measure of space was critical. Sometimes being directly in contact with a child was right; sometimes more distance was better. And the right thing could change suddenly. Rex felt tension in the room with a sense like a barometer, and when it rose, he adjusted instinctively.

The last visitor for the afternoon was a boy named Logan, who seldom talked, and usually carried a cloud of unhappiness around him as he came into the room. Rex couldn't guess the source of it. He just knew that the gestures that cheered up some children — wags, wuffs, handshakes, bows, all of that repertoire — would be out of place with this boy. All he wanted was stillness and close, snug contact.

Logan didn't like his teacher's voice, but she didn't realize it and Rex had no way to quiet her. He just lay with his head on the boy's lap, being mindful to keep even his breathing slow and steady. The hand on his neck clenched repeatedly, but less often as the time ticked by. When it was time for him to go, the cloud around the boy was not gone, but it had thinned. He said goodbye to Rex as he

left.

Rex stood and exhaled deeply. It was mentally tiring work. Resting his brain and giving his body some rough, hard play would be good — passing good.

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When the students were gone, and the classroom cleaned, and the papers packed to take home, Jenny stood on the lawn watching Rex zoom in huge circles around her. He maintained his poise to the last minutes of the last hour of the school day, but at the end of it, he apparently had things he just needed to let out. He streaked around her like a joyful orange and white comet.

In the prime of his life and showing it, he let the strength pour out of his shoulders as if he had unlimited reserves, and Jenny felt she could watch him run for hours. There was an appointed time to take him back to Helen, though. She whistled sharply and he broke off from the far point of his orbit, turning smoothly then doubling up to run the straight line back to her at top speed. Somehow he still managed to pull up gracefully at the end, coming to a sit directly in front of her with his nose four inches from her belly.

His tongue lolled, but he didn't seem tired at all; his expression was alert and keen. She figured he must know what was coming, and wondered if he felt anticipation for it the same way she did. That white-toothed canine grin suggested he might. Whatever he felt, though, he was waiting for her cue to tell him what to do.

How about telling him to fuck her right there on the lawn? She had stress of her own to release at the end of the day, and it was ever so easy to imagine stripping off and getting straight down on all fours. Never mind the passersby, she'd let his strong body cover hers right there under the blue sky and slam her til her knees dug holes in the turf. Her own tongue wanted to loll out at the thought of it.

She shook her head and came back to reality. Within two minutes, they were in her bedroom again and her clothes were off — not so neatly folded this time. She knelt beside him, stroking his back, then his sides. He stood patient but tense with reined-in energy.

Taking things slowly could be nice, but right now she needed him urgently. Her hand slipped down and ran over his sheath. She felt an immediate swell, and the first inches slid out. Ducking her head down, she saw that his fur was already damp with shiny little droplets. By the time they were finished, it would be sodden. With his leaky pink cock tip so close in front of her, she couldn't resist leaning in further and taking him into her mouth. Light strokes with her hand coaxed more of his shaft out. It slid through her lips til it tickled the back of her throat.

Jenny swallowed and felt the warmth run down her. Nature had played a funny trick on her earlier in life: she'd been slightly allergic to Toby's cum, and unless she took a Benadryl beforehand, sucking him off meant spending hours with an itchy throat afterward. Rex didn't cause her the same problem, though, and she'd know if he did. He'd given her a lot to swallow over the past year. Pints, maybe. Who knew? She tried to picture it all filling a series of pint glasses, and the thought of so much accumulated dog cum swishing around made her just about cream. She squeezed her thighs together hard, trying to prolong the sensation.

This wasn't the time for getting another bellyful, though. With her forearms on the floor and head down under his belly, her tail end was raised high. She was cunting up the air so strongly she could smell herself even with her nose buried in the fur at the base of Rex's cock. She pulled her lips off his shaft with a slurp. A well-timed stream splattered her face just as the tip came out. The thin liquid

rolled down to her chin as she straightened up and sat back on her heels.

She allowed herself one more admiring look over the length of his body, wiping her drippy chin as he stood waiting for her. She popped a finger in her mouth and sucked thoughtfully. Then she turned, presenting herself to him openly. She put her arms down again and said simply, "Okay."

Rex moved so quickly that his feet scrabbled on the floor. His breath was hot as he sniffed around and gave her a first, exploratory lick. She drew in her breath. Sometimes, for variety, they fucked face-to-face, and the view that way — looking up at his powerful jaws, seeing his body flex and his dark eyes shine — was better than a close-up look at carpet fibers. Still, there was something incomparably exciting in the wide-open vulnerability of exposing herself to him face down. She surrendered; he chose when and how he would take her.

As it happened, he chose to spend more time at her asshole; he must not have gotten enough earlier. His sharp muzzle fit easily between her cheeks and after a few broad licks, there came the strange squirm of his tongue working up into her. As she relaxed, bit by bit, the initial strangeness of the touch passed, becoming a warm, comfortable feeling like being bathed, quite intimately. Meanwhile, her lower legs got their own bath as Rex's cock squirted haphazardly in growing excitement, wetting them both and the whole area around them.

He withdrew his tongue, and for just a moment there was no contact from him at all. It was one of the moments Jenny loved best: that brief pause when you didn't know what would come next, and it seemed anything could happen. Then when it did happen, it was all the more intense for coming unexpectedly.

Rex's weight fell onto her, and her knees felt it. He carried a lot of fluff on the outside, but he was a big, solid dog underneath, and it felt like a pony landing on her back. His hindquarters were already moving. She felt the first seeking thrusts of his cock brush her thigh, and angled herself down slightly.

The next thrust went sliding up past her tailbone, and her breath sucked in again, involuntarily. He'd come very close to lodging it in her asshole, and when Rex hit a hole, he hit it hard. No easing in, no backing out. And she had a suspicion that, whatever his pedigree might say, the noble-looking dog was secretly a purebred ass-hound. He devoted himself to anal exploration with the passion of a connoisseur, and when he decided it was humping time, he went to the back door far too often for it to be accidental.

That was fine, generally. Jenny liked a good doggy reaming, but she hadn't readied herself for it today. A full-size serving of hot collie delivered abruptly up her unprepared ass would be unexpected, and certainly "intense" for both of them, but likely not a whole lot of fun for her.

It didn't come to that. After the near miss, he adjusted his own angle and slid smoothly into her wet, hot bitch-hole. She knew his actual size, objectively, and it wasn't extravagant, but his uncompromising entry always made him feel huge. Even a smooth slide in widened her eyes momentarily as her body adjusted to the sudden large volume of high-velocity dog dick.

She was built for dog fucking, though, or so she fancied. She braced herself and pushed back as he settled his footing and tightened the grip of his forelegs. As he got to full speed, any sense of rhythm dissolved into a continuous blur of slick heat and friction. Fur muffled his belly slapping against her, but the impact made her ass quiver. Her tits rocked and her arms absorbed the shock at the other end of her body.

Nothing muffled the lewd squish of collie juice churning with schoolteacher pussy cream. Jenny's

thighs were soaked; she wasn't sure how so much goo could pour out of her when she was stuffed so full, but nonetheless, it bubbled out like a spring. Rex made no sound himself, but as the core of heat kindled and spread through Jenny's body, she went from whimpers to wails, mixing his name in with wordless babble.

At last, he did grunt as he pushed hard and settled his knot with finality inside her. The reflexive squeeze of her cunt behind it stilled his thrusts and brought him to full size. The growing pressure brought her off and she collapsed onto her forearms, body quaking, raising her ass up higher and bringing Rex just a bit deeper inside her. He stood calmly, moving little except for occasional shifting of his feet, his brain presumably detached and his body given over to the merry business of pumping cum til his partner's insides swam with doggy seed.

For some time, they made a still life, poised just like that. Schoolyard noises were distantly audible — baseball practice, probably — as was the scraping of a branch against the metal cabin roof. None of that made it through to Jenny. A rift in the years closed and she was transported, back with her Toby again. She rubbed herself lightly and floated in a space where sparks of electric blue and gold made trails in the darkness behind her closed eyes.

It was over too soon. Rex pulled back and popped out with a gush that he hastily moved to lick up. When he finished cleaning her, she turned and ducked under him again, returning the favor and sucking his shaft clean with the softest touch she could manage. He wasn't quite drained yet, and she suckled gently until his erection subsided.

She swallowed, sighed, and laid her head against the side of his neck. There was nothing like a dog, she reflected, to nurse all the needs of a thirsty girl's body.

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Arriving home, Rex raced down the hill to check on the ducks. The thought of them had been worrying him during the day, but they were drifting harmlessly enough near the center of the pond. Perhaps they had learned their place, and he could let his guard down for now.

He walked back up to find Helen in the yard, where she rolled him over and tickled him. It was entirely different from the way Jenny touched him, and he rolled delightedly in the cool grass. She mocked biting his neck with her hand, and he snapped at empty space, fighting valiantly against a merciless and entirely imaginary foe. His paws pedaled the air.

The ducks were sorted. He and Helen would be going to the goat barn soon for milking time. And then was still supper to look forward to, and evening gardening, and some shrewd bargaining for a pre-bed biscuit.

School days were fun, but home was home.

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With Rex gone, Jenny's cabin seemed empty. She really did get a feeling of time travel when they were tied together, and coming back to the present felt harsh, sometimes. Even more so when she was alone afterward. He filled more than a few holes in her life.

There was a twinge of guilt about what she was doing with Rex, she had to admit. She'd been entrusted to shepherd him through the school day — not to empty his balls. She knew he was more than happy with the arrangement; they gave each other deep pleasure, but still... things didn't feel quite square. Not like it used to feel falling asleep with Toby beside her bed at the end of the day.

She sat in her favorite chair, alternately marking papers and casting her mind back to the sable-haired dog, so earnestly eager to please her. His taste was still in her, and it was mellow and good. It would be a hard habit to give up.