

LOVE Has NO Boundaries



Don't Read in the Closet Event 2013

THE MENAGERIE

Ithra Reyes

Love Has No Boundaries

An M/M Romance series

THE MENAGERIE

By Ithra Reyes

Introduction

The story you are about to read celebrates love, sex and romance between men. It is a product of the *Love Has No Boundaries* promotion sponsored by the *Goodreads M/M Romance Group* and is published as a free gift to you.

What Is Love Has No Boundaries?

The *Goodreads M/M Romance Group* invited members to choose a photo and pen a letter asking for a short M/M romance story inspired by the image; authors from the group were encouraged to select a letter and write an original tale. The result was an outpouring of creativity that shone a spotlight on the special bond between M/M romance writers and the people who love what they do.

A written description of the image that inspired this story is provided along with the original request letter. If you'd like to view the photo, please feel free to join the [Goodreads M/M Romance Group](#) and visit the discussion section: *Love Has No Boundaries*.

Whether you are an avid M/M romance reader or new to the genre, you are in for a delicious treat.

Words of Caution

This story may contain sexually explicit content and is **intended for adult readers**. It may contain content that is disagreeable or distressing to some readers. The *M/M Romance Group* strongly recommends that each reader review the General Information section before each story for story tags as well as for content warnings.

This story is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are the products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

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THE MENAGERIE

By Ithra Reyes

Photo Description

A young green-eyed man in an oversized brown sweater holds a small tiger cub.

Story Letter

Dear Author,

A big thank you to Kim Alan for all her help, you are very kind.

He'd spent the day at the crappy little traveling zoo, but he'd spent it with his little brother, which got the little guy out from under "Uncle Larry's" thumb for the day, so it was totally worth it. Plus, he'd really been hung up on those cats. He loved cats. Not exactly one of his more manly attributes according to Larry, but whatever. He was drawn to them. Understood them, with their solitude and quiet strength.

However, he was not expecting to return to his car, after dropping his brother at home, to find a tiger cub sitting on his front seat. Stunned, he just stared at the little guy who just stared right back at him. He remembered seeing him scampering around the cages, trying to catch the interest of the big cats, but how in the hell had he gotten into his car? And what the hell was he supposed to do with him now? That traveling zoo had been packing up even as they left. Besides, something about that place had felt... off.

He did the only thing he could think of, at least once the cat nudged his hand towards the steering wheel, snapping him out of his stupor. He took him home, to his little studio apartment over the hardware store. He pulled into the parking lot and the cat climbed right into his lap to be carried inside. He was purring so loud, looking at him so adoringly, like he was his hero, or something. Taking the little one inside, he plopped into his thirdhand recliner, and petted, cooed, and soothed the cub until they both relaxed. He was

thinking that this was maybe the strangest night of his life. And then, things got really weird.

The prompt can be changed around, no BDSM, M/F and preferably no shifter please, but I will accept it, if there is no other choice. Also can the kitty cat have a major role. HEA is a must, thank you.

Sincerely,

Vio

Story Info

Genre: contemporary

Tags: enemies to lovers, interracial, flamboyant character, workplace, non-explicit

Content warnings: HFN

Word count: 6,040

Dedication

Thanks to Jen for having patience with me, to my wonderful event editors for making the story legible, to Vio for the inspiring prompt, and everyone who helped make this awesome event happen.

THE MENAGERIE

By Ithra Reyes

I was in the middle of a staring contest with the tiger in my kitchen when my alarm went off. The loud blaring *beeeeeep* announced it was time to go to work. Still, there was the small problem of the tiger currently sitting on my kitchen counter. Now granted, it was only a cub, but it was still a tiger. A tiger I had just cat-napped from the traveling zoo. I hadn't *meant* to do it.

Honest.

See, I had taken my little brother, Cody, to the crappy little traveling zoo earlier that day and this little fur-ball had been there, stuck in a tiny filthy cage, whining and crying until I started talking to her. She had pushed herself against the bars, her big blue eyes looking up at me sadly. She broke my heart. I had always had a soft spot for cats. She had begun to cry again as soon as Cody managed to pull me away to go look at the monkeys. We left the traveling zoo just as they had closed. They had already begun to take the whole tent down. I couldn't stop thinking about the little tiger cub.

When I came back to my car after dropping Cody off, there she was with her furry paws on my steering wheel. I had no idea how she had managed to escape and hide in my car that whole time but there she was. So I did the only thing I could do. I took her home with me. (In my defense, I've never claimed to have common sense.)

Thus my current dilemma. I knew I should call the traveling zoo and let them know I had their cub. Their phone number was on their flyer so I had no excuse, and if they found out I had taken her I could end up in jail. But watching the little fluff-ball happily explore my tiny counter made me hesitate. She had looked so sad in her cage that maybe it was better if they just never found her. Still, I couldn't just keep a tiger in my shitty little studio. My alarm kept ringing. I looked back at the fluffy tiger cub. "Want to come with me to work, Fluffy?"

She whined, crouched and before I could react, she pounced on my poor phone. I'd take that as a yes.

The scene at The Menagerie was the same as any other night. The hypnotic pulse of the music reverberated across the entire building, moving sweaty bodies against each other on the dance floor. Strobe lights slid across the sea of bodies, briefly illuminating the swinging vines from the roof and the dancers dressed in skimpy animal costumes wiggling suggestively in decorative gilt cages. It wasn't as packed as, say, a Friday night, but still enough bodies to get your grind on, if that's your thing.

Standing guard at the door, dressed in cargo pants and a jersey that showed off his impressive bulk, was a dark-skinned man with short buzzed hair and a five-o'clock shadow. That would be Oz. He's kind of scary, in a voodoo-man sort of way, but I guess scary is a requirement if you're a bouncer. He was currently glaring deep into the club where a similarly dressed, but sadly nowhere near as impressively muscled guy was shaking his moneymaker on top of the bar. That would be me. No, I'm not one of the club's dancers. I'm the bartender. The broke bartender that is not above shaking his junk for a larger tip.

It works. Sometimes. Okay, don't tell anyone, but I might also just be an exhibitionist at heart.

I did a quick twirl of the bottle and poured the clear liquid into the shaker. I had a good sized audience by then. I made eye contact with Ethan, my oh-so-delicious boss, and he shook his head in that exasperated way of his. I sent him my sultriest pout, before signaling to Ana in the pit. She rolled her eyes at my antics but placed the glass behind me.

Shaker in hand and feet placed firmly apart, I started lowering my body backwards to the pulsating beat until I could see the glass behind me. My audience cheered as I poured the drink into the glass.

"Get down here and start pouring, you little *puto*," Ana shouted over the thud-a-thud of the music. I quickly scampered down to help with the crowd of demanding drunks overtaking the bar like a pack of rabid zombies. I've learned many a hard lesson since I started working here, but the most

important one has been: don't mess with the Santos twins. That'd be Ana and Oz. Yes, they're twins, and, yes, that's terrifying. Oz may be big and muscular, but it's the Amazonian Ana you really have to watch out for. I'd managed to crack her kick-ass Mexican Wonder Woman exterior, but I knew better than to get on her bad side.

We were working on getting the zombies their drinks, when Ana not so quietly whispered in my ear, "I keep telling you, no matter how much you wiggle your little *culo*, Ethan's still not going to want it."

I shrugged, faking nonchalance. "You never know, I might be the one to change his mind about the whole vagina-yum thing." Truth is, I'd had a crazy unrequited crush on Ethan since the day I met him. He was just so nice to me no matter how much I screwed up, and he put up with all my flirty bullshit. I just wished he would return the shit, at least sometimes. Still, it was nice to keep hope alive.

"Look I just don't want you to get hurt. Ethan adores you, we all do," she continued, suddenly serious, "but he's not gay, Noah." The bar line was finally slowing down, and I turned to look at her.

"You know—" She hesitated. "Oz is single."

I frowned, wondering where she was going with this, when I saw a little black-striped golden fur-ball zip out of the back office.

Fuck.

I'd hidden Fluffy in the broom closet earlier that night. I'd felt horribly guilty about it, but she seemed happy enough with the old zebra plushy I'd found from one of our more kinky theme nights. Now she could be anywhere. I had to find her before anyone realized she wasn't part of the decorations.

"Uhm, Ana I'd love to stay and discuss the pathetic-ness of my love life, but I really need a smoke break," I quickly muttered before running out of the pit toward where I'd seen Fluffy disappear. I heard Ana shout, "But you don't smoke!" before the monster that is the dance floor swallowed me whole.

I shimmied and shammied my way across the dance floor to no avail. It was too dark and chaotic to see the little gal among so many animal prints. At

one point, I'd thought I'd caught the cat by its tail, only to discover the tail was attached to a very human cat-girl. Her very human boyfriend had not been happy. He was revving up to pummel me into the ground, while I chanted a mantra of "I'm gay, don't hurt me," when I felt a strong hand pull me back from cat-girl's boyfriend.

"What the hell are you doing, *pendejo*," asked Oz as he dragged me off the dance floor and into the back office. I flailed gracefully trying to escape. I had to find Fluffy. She was so little; she could get seriously hurt out there.

"Let me go," I grumbled, "I have to find Fluffy."

Oz just gave me one of his exasperated looks. I get those a lot. "Hasn't Ethan told you you're not allowed to drink on the job?"

"I'm not drunk. Fluffy is my pet tiger cub. I put her in the broom closet but she escaped and now I've lost her." I was shouting now.

I really hadn't meant to say that much, but Oz just had a way of riling me up. He looked at me as if trying to judge whether I was telling the truth or if I'd finally gone off the deep end. He let go of where he'd been holding my arm and I rubbed the tingly spot where his hand had been.

"You're not kidding," he said finally.

"No. I'm not. Now if you'll just let me out, I need to go find her."

"How do you even have a tiger cub? If there is a tiger cub out there we'll have to shut down the club and call animal control. And why the fuck you name a tiger Fluffy?"

"It's a long story. See, I may or may not have cat-napped her, but she wasn't safe where she was. If they find out I have her I'll end up in jail, so you can't tell anyone, okay? And there's nothing wrong with the name Fluffy. Now let me back out there."

With a heaving sigh, he dragged a hand over his buzzed head. "Fine. Where'd you last see it? I'll help you find the cub, but if you're fucking with me I'll kill you, *vale*?"

I nodded vigorously.

“She ran onto the dance floor,” I pointed behind him, “and I would never fuck with you. I swear.”

Oz gave me another of his long brooding looks before turning and going back out into the club. I scrambled to catch up with him.

As Oz channeled Moses parting the sea, I searched every nook and cranny for my little fur-ball. I was starting to think I would have to ask Ethan to close the club and call animal control if we couldn't find her. She had to be terrified and what if she'd left the club? I'd never find her. She could get hit by a car. I was about to start hyperventilating when I spotted movement under one of the empty dance cage platforms. I dropped to the floor immediately, my ass sticking up in the air as I called out, “Fluffy, darling, it's okay now. Please come out, honey.”

I felt Oz standing behind my ass. “Just grab it, *pendejo*,” he growled.

I ignored him as best I could, suddenly very aware of how close his cock was to my ass and how wrong it was to be turned on by Oz Santos of all people. Instead, I concentrated on coaxing Fluffy from her hiding spot. I reached my hand in for her to sniff. Was it only dogs that did the sniffing thing? I felt her wet little nose bump against my hand followed by a rough tongue scrape against my skin. Dear lord, I hoped this was Fluffy and not one of the giant mutant rats that sometimes snuck into the club. The thought made me jerk back my hand involuntarily. Then I saw a furry little face peek out from under the platform, old zebra plushy gripped tightly in its mouth.

Definitely a tiger cub and not a mutant rat.

I held my arms out and she quickly scurried into my embrace. I held her close, relief washing over me.

“*Mierda*,” I heard Oz mutter behind me as he looked down at the happily chuffing tiger cub in my arms. I turned my head to look back up at him, a silly grin on my face. It was hard to make out his expression in the dimness of the club, but then a strobe light slid across his face illuminating an unexpectedly tender expression. I opened my mouth to say something when I saw his eyes

look past me and into the crowd. A frown appeared between his thick eyebrows and I could see his body tense, immediately alert.

I followed his gaze to where two men were shoving their way through the crowd, obviously looking for someone. I recognized them immediately. They worked for the traveling zoo. The two thugs had hovered around the little tent as Cody and I looked at the animals. How did they know I had Fluffy? How had they tracked us to The Menagerie? My heart started racing when I saw the silver glint of a gun peek out of one of their jackets. I clutched Fluffy harder to me until I heard her squeak with indignation. I relaxed my grip. Oz leaned down, grabbed my arm and pulled me up. For once, I was not annoyed at being pulled around; instead, his large firm grip felt comforting. He held me close in front of him, using his body to shield me from the thugs' view.

“Forget jail, you’re gonna get yourself killed, *pendejo*. Keep walking straight and don’t look back,” he whispered into my ear.

I did not shudder, that was just the adrenaline.

We made our way back to the office as fast as we could without calling attention to ourselves. Once inside the office I felt myself being shoved in the direction of the closet. I struggled with a squirming Fluffy, while trying to keep calm. And failing.

“Oh my god, I have no idea how they found us. I mean unless they followed me home. Do you think they’ve been following us? And they have guns. What are we going to do now? We can’t let them take Fluffy!”

I was rambling. I knew I was rambling, but I was not properly prepared to deal with this type of situation. The only thing I knew was that I was not giving Fluffy back to those goons, even if I had to go to jail for cat-napping her.

“We are not going to do anything,” Oz said, after a final push into the closet. He stood outside holding the door open. I did not like where this was heading.

“You are going to stay here with the cat. I am going to go deal with your mess.”

I opened my mouth to protest, and Oz's hand covered my mouth. "Mmmgrmm," I mumbled, annoyed. Sure, I had no idea how to deal with two armed thugs, but I did not appreciate being treated like the village idiot. I bit down. The hand disappeared.

"*Fucking pendejo*," was all I registered before the door slammed in my face.

I heard the door lock and I fell to the floor, gently placing Fluffy on the ground. I was starting to think *pendejo* did not mean something very nice. I tried the door, no luck.

"Looks like we're in here for a while, Fluff." I felt her cold little nose nudge my hand as she whined. "It's okay, sweetie, nobody's going to take you away," I reassured her, although I wasn't that sure myself.

This whole situation was quickly getting out of hand. Those guys out there had guns and I didn't doubt they would use them. As much as Oz annoyed me, I didn't want him getting hurt. I dug my phone out of my pocket and turned on its dinky little flashlight. I aimed it at Fluffy who by now was happily dozing, wrapped around her zebra plushy. Poor thing, all the excitement had worn her out. Now, if I could just find something to pick the lock with.

There.

I quickly got to work on the lock with the pin I found in a dusty corner of the closet. I knew all those hours of studying lock-picking on YouTube would pay off someday. I was almost there when I heard the door to the office open.

I fumbled to turn the light off my phone, trying to be as silent as possible. Could the thugs have gotten past Oz? What if they had shot him? Surely someone would have called the cops by now. Ethan would never let anything happen to any of us. As soon as I got out of this closet and I made sure Oz was still okay, I'd go tell Ethan everything. Ethan would make it all better.

Well maybe I didn't have to go too far, as I heard Ethan's laugh as he entered the room. I was about to call out for him, when I heard a female voice.

"What you gonna do about it, boss man?"

I knew that voice. It was Ana's version of a flirty voice. Why would she be using her flirty voice on Ethan? My stomach started to turn in an uncomfortable way. I put my eye to the keyhole. I couldn't see very clearly but it was enough for me to confirm it was Ethan and Ana, and they were standing incredibly close.

"What do you want me to do about it?" answered Ethan in a sultry voice that would have made me instantly hard if it weren't being directed at one of my best friends.

I saw him put his hands around Ana's waist. I couldn't see from the way they were standing, but I could tell from their muffled moans there was some heavy kissing going on. I stumbled back from the keyhole. I had no desire to see any more than I already had.

Ethan and Ana.

Ana and Ethan.

When had that happened and why had nobody told me? Suddenly I couldn't breathe. I had to get out of that closet, but I couldn't bring myself to go out there and face them.

I covered my ears with my hands to drone out their sex sounds. Shame and frustration flushed through my body. Tears stung my eyes as I curled up on around Fluffy and I buried my face in her soft fur. I wasn't stupid, no matter what Oz said. I knew I had no chance with Ethan. It was the betrayal that really hurt. I knew I was a goof sometimes, and strangers never take me seriously, but these were my *friends*. At least I'd thought they were my friends. More than friends, I had considered them my family. Aside from Cody, my real family sucked big time. Ethan and Ana had taken me in with open arms and I had trusted them with all my secrets. It crushed me to know they had been hooking up behind my back for years, probably laughing at silly Noah and his hopeless crush.

I don't know how much time passed before I heard the door slam. The silence they left behind was deafening. I needed to get out. I dragged myself off the floor and finished fiddling with the lock. It was harder this time, my

hands shaking the whole time, but finally I heard the telltale click. I took a deep breath and looked back at the slumbering Fluff. I had to remind myself she was more important than my need to run as far away from my so-called friends. So I leaned over and gave her little forehead a quick kiss before leaving her safe in the closet and making my way back out to the office. I paced back and forth trying to decide on the best course of action.

There were two scary men with guns trying to take Fluffy away, except technically she was theirs to take. They hadn't been taking good care of her, though—she hadn't been happy locked up alone in that tiny cage. I knew what I had to do. I didn't need Oz, or anybody else, to solve my problems for me. Plus, who knew, with my luck Oz would live up to his scary voodoo-man persona and then we'd both end up in jail. I had to find him before things got out of hand. Not that they weren't already.

But first, I had a phone call to make.

Once I'd convinced an incredulous nine-one-one dispatcher that I was, in fact, in a nightclub called The Menagerie with a tiger cub whom I had accidentally stolen from a traveling zoo, and that two thugs from said zoo were trying to kill me, I quickly hung up on her and ran back into the club to let Oz know not to do anything incriminating in front of the cops. It was later now, and the club was packed with people doing the same old mating dance that went on every night as if the shit hadn't just hit the proverbial fan.

Out of the corner of my eye, I could see Ana at the bar furiously mixing drinks, her eyes searching the club, undoubtedly wondering where the fuck I'd gone. I didn't give a shit at this point. I scanned the club, but couldn't spot the bad guys—or Oz. Where had they gone? If nothing seemed out of the ordinary, that meant there hadn't been some sort of big showdown. Maybe Oz had just voodoo-ed them away. Hopefully.

Not likely.

I walked to the front of the club to wait for the cops. That's when I saw Ethan. He was walking right towards me, a small frown marring his beautiful face. The club was too loud to hear what he was saying but he was gesturing to the bar where I was supposed to be. I couldn't deal with him right now. It hurt

too much. I turned and headed toward the back exit, quickly losing him in the press of dancers. I pushed through sweaty grasping hands until the cool breeze of the alley hit my skin. I took a deep breath, instantly regretting it. I was standing downwind of the Dumpster.

Fuck my life.

“Where do you think you’re going?” Oz came out of the club after me, grabbing my shoulder.

“Let me go, Oz.”

I couldn’t deal with Oz right now either. Had he known all along? Of course he had known. Nothing happened in The Menagerie without Oz knowing about it. Plus, Ana was his sister. They were real family; of course Ana would tell him. I felt the familiar stinging in my eyes and I blinked furiously, hoping the darkness of the alley would hide my glistening eyes. All I wanted was for this night to be over and for Fluffy to be safe.

“Crying?”

I could hear the fake amusement in Oz’s voice.

“What’s your problem?” I couldn’t stop the words from coming out. I was so hurt and angry and my life was turned upside down and I just couldn’t take it anymore.

“Watch it, *pendejo*,” growled Oz as he hovered in the shadows of the alley.

“Or what?” My voice sounded more hurt than I intended. “I’m so tired of your shit. I mean, I get that you don’t like me, but do you have to be such a dick all the time?”

Oz cocked his head and mirrored my step forward. “What? You want me to give you a hug because the love of your life is off fucking my sister?”

“Fuck you.” I clenched my fists by my sides.

“Oh, did I hurt your feelings?” Oz wasn’t smiling anymore. I could have sworn he looked hurt for a second, but it was quickly covered by his usual scowl. “It’s time to grow up, Noah. Ethan doesn’t want you. He’s never going to want you. He and Ana have been going at it like bunnies for months now.”

The words hit me harder than a physical blow.

“Just let me go, Oz,” I whispered angrily and tried to push Oz out of my way, my hands barely moving the solid muscles beneath his shirt.

Oz grabbed me by the shoulders and pushed me hard against the wall, leaning close to my ear. His breath was hot and quick against my ear. “Not so fast.”

My mouth opened on a gasp as I felt Oz’s teeth capture my bottom lip. All my anger and frustration suddenly redirected toward where our bodies touched. I stopped pushing, dug my nails into the skin beneath his thin muscle shirt and dragged down. I felt the muscles beneath my fingers twitch and he drew back, only to smash his lips down in more of a maul than a kiss. His leg slid between mine, and my hips bucked against his thigh. His lips slid from my mouth down my neck, biting their way along my collarbone. My head fell back against the wall and I arched my body closer. I could feel his hardness against my stomach.

“*Bello*,” I heard him whisper against my throat. I pulled his lips back to mine. He tasted earthy, lemony, and oh so good. I was so lost in his taste and the feeling of his hard body against mine, that I never heard the door open.

“Fucking faggots,” came a faraway voice.

Oz was much faster to register what was happening. Instantly untangling us, he pushed me behind him and turned to the two thugs who stood a few feet from us, guns glinting in the shallow light of the streetlamp. I felt his body tighten in a much different way than it had been just seconds before.

“Oz, don’t do anything stupid,” I whispered into his ear. “They have guns. And anyway, the cops will be here any minute.”

“Just tell us where the tiger is,” Thug One shouted, agitated. Had he heard me say the cops were coming? Would that make him more likely to leave and cut his losses, or would it make him more desperate? Best not to risk it.

“I know the skinny one has it somewhere in there.”

He pointed to the club with his free hand; except, it wasn't free. He had a small black machine in his hand. He turned it toward us so we could see the screen. A GPS tracker. That's how they had been tracking Fluffy.

The tension in the alley was starting to nauseate me. I felt Oz begin to chant something under his breath. Oh my god, he really was a voodoo man.

"What the fuck are you trying to do man? Your little chanting don't scare us," said Thug One. "Now quit stalling and hand over the tiger, or lover-boy there gets it between those pretty green eyes."

He thought my eyes were pretty? Never mind.

Thug Two looked seriously creeped out by Oz's increased chanting, and even Thug One didn't seem as sure of himself. I didn't blame them. The chanting was starting to freak me out. What language was he even speaking? It sounded like gibberish.

His chanting got louder, but not loud enough to cover the sirens of the cops finally getting their asses to the club. Wait. It *was* gibberish. He was stalling, throwing the thugs off long enough for the cops to get there.

I'd known that.

The thugs must have heard the cops, too, because they seemed to snap out of their chant-induced daze. And that was when Thug Two decided to shoot us.

Oz pushed both our bodies to the ground. I swear the bullet missed us by less than an inch. I almost wet my pants. Thug One then surged toward Oz, who pushed me back against one of the Dumpsters and then ran forward, kicking the gun out his hand. I heard a sickening crack. Thug One fell to the ground with a howl of pain while cradling his broken arm. Oz and Thug Two were both aiming their guns at each other. Thug One grinned while holding his floppy arm.

What was he grinning about?

Then I felt an arm grab me around the waist. I let out a yelp.

Oh.

It was a third thug whom we hadn't seen. He must have been waiting outside and had come back to the alley when he heard the gunshot. I struggled against his grip, biting and kicking as hard as I could, but was no challenge for the burly guy who must have been as big as—or bigger than—Oz. He definitely didn't taste as good as Oz, though.

“Stop struggling, you little faggot,” he growled.

I ignored him.

I saw Oz hesitate, his gun still pointing toward Thug Two, while Thug One struggled to his feet. Oz looked over to where Thug Three was holding me. His dark eyes seemed to burn into mine. How had I never noticed that look in his eyes? It was an epically bad time to have an epiphany but better late than never, right? He still annoyed me, and I still thought he hated me. *but maybe, maybe* there was more to it. And Ana had said he was single. His look intensified, and somehow I knew he was about to do something stupid.

“Don't!” I screamed, closing my eyes, but it was too late.

I heard Thug Three cry out in pain, and his grip loosened. I stumbled forward.

“Grab the gun,” I heard Oz yell. I scrambled to snatch his gun from the ground and turned it on him.

Wait.

If Oz hadn't taken Thug Three out, who had?

I scanned my eyes down his body, only to see him struggling to dislodge a fluffy fur-ball that was biting down on his ass. Fluffy!

“This is the police. Drop your weapons. Everyone on the ground, hands where we can see them!”

About fucking time.

I dropped to the ground.

The others were slower to follow, but with some more shouting from the slowest cops ever, everyone was on the ground. Fluffy had finally let go of

Thug Three's ass, and he was rolling on the ground crying out in pain. The back door to the club opened, and Ethan and Ana, along with even more cops, burst into the alley. Ana started yelling at the cops to let us off the ground or else, while Ethan tried to calm her down.

Meanwhile, Fluffy happily made her way to my side, oblivious to all the commotion. She came over to my face and licked my nose with her scratchy little tongue.

“Good job, Fluffy,” I told her, but she had already turned and was making her way over to where Oz was lying on the ground looking toward me with his dark voodoo eyes. She nuzzled his stubbled jaw and I saw the corner of his lips curl up. I smiled back.

I wish I could say I got to keep Fluffy and that her, Oz, and I lived happily ever after, but this isn't one of those sappy online romance stories with the prerequisite cute little animal. After days of interrogation, and more than one court trial, Fluffy finally found a home at an animal sanctuary just outside of town. I started volunteering at the animal sanctuary, and I spend as much time with her and the other animals as I can. I even took Cody to visit her. It was love at first sight.

Speaking of love, I tried to stay angry at Ethan and Ana, but Ethan's constant groveling and Ana's threats finally wore me down. There was also Oz. Months later, we still drive each other crazy and we're as likely to be fighting as not, but when I showed up to visit Fluffy and found him chatting with her, a giant zebra plushy in hand, I knew I loved him.

Huh, I guess this is one of those sappy online romance stories after all.

THE END

Author Bio

Although Ithra is an avid reader of the genre, this is her first attempt at an M/M story. An erudite writer by trade, Ithra hopes to continue writing more M/M stories in the future.

Contact Info

[Goodreads](#)