Michael's Pet Theory

by Clarounette

Summary

Michael has been away for far too long, and James is feeling lonely. But maybe Michael has a solution.

Notes

A little something written for two reasons: McFassy Tuesday, and to say goodbye to the writer block that had been bothering me for a couple of weeks. (sorry for the bad pun in the title, I wasn't much inspired)

James opened the door quietly. It was useless: no one was waiting for him.

It was late – the night a little less dark just because streetlamps were lit. But James had no doubt about the hour, midnight had passed and gone. And still an eerie silence welcomed him, heavy like a leaden weight. It squeezed his guts, leaving him breathless and anxious. The house was too big, too empty, and has been for too long.

James threw his bag in a corner of the dimly lit hall and walked to the kitchen. He opened the fridge, its light casting shadows in the dark room, and grabbed an odd bit of cheese, tonight’s diner. He wasn’t hungry when he was lonely.

The feeling was even more unsettling since it wasn’t usually the case. But Michael had run from one movie set to another for the past three months, and hadn’t had time to come home. His phone calls...
and emails lacked the warmth Michael’s body could bring to him at the end of a hard day of work. James’ break had been necessary – he was on the verge of a breakdown, really – but Michael’s growing fame needed to be fed. Cancelling contracts was out of question. And James hadn’t tried to force him, he understood their work’s obligations.

But since then, James had come home to an empty house and it was starting to get on his nerves. One day he would spend the evening crying alone in their bed, the next he would angrily throw things at the wall. Hopefully he was able to hide his frustrations from Michael, but he wasn’t so sure anymore – his lover asked more and more how he felt, and if he wanted him to ask for a few days off. He had refused every time. James wasn’t so selfish. But it was yet another night alone, and he doubted he could stand it much longer.

He sat on the sofa, gnawing at his chunk of cheese in front of the TV, muted because the screeching voices of reality TV stars were even more annoying than silence. The show ended, followed by another one, but James didn’t notice, the images moving before his blind eyes – he was lost in his thoughts and drowning in self-pity.

When the cheese was nothing but a memory – a tasteless and greasy memory – he turned the TV off and headed to the bedroom, where he crashed on the bed face down and still dressed. In a blink of an eye he was asleep.

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Morning came eventually, a timid sun peeking through the curtains at the relaxed form spread on the bed. Facing the wall opposite to the window, James stayed asleep until he felt a weird pressure on his back. It progressed to his shoulder blades, where it stopped, weighting on his spine. It mewed.

James’ eyes opened immediately. The thing resting on his back mewed again, a high-pitched noise but not unpleasant. Of course James knew what it was – the mystery was how it had ended up on his back.

Careful not to crush the kitten under him, he turned around. A little ball of grey fur was looking at him with large blue eyes, crying once again – maybe to say hello this time. James stretched out his hand, reaching for the kitty, and petted its small head.

“Hello there,” James said, his voice still hoarse from sleep.

“Are you getting acquainted with Marble?”

Michael was standing in the doorway, leaning on the jamb with his arms crossed.

James hadn’t seen him for weeks, and he looked more handsome than the last time they were together. All his frustrations, his bursts of anger, his sad feelings, vanished in an instant in front of that arrogant man. Disheveled and rumpled, James rose from the bed and ran to Michael. The kiss they exchanged was full of longing.

Their embrace was heating up when a small whimper came from the bed, where Marble was sitting, looking abandoned. They turned round to the kitten, laughing.

“If it’s acting like that when we’re only kissing, it’s banished from the bedroom,” James said.

“She,” Michael replied.

“What?”

“It’s a she. But I agree with the banishment.” He pecked James’ lips.

“But why?” James asked.

Michael didn’t answer right away. He grabbed James’ hand and took him in the kitchen. The table was set and breakfast was ready. James sat in front of a plate of eggs and toasts, his stomach rumbling happily.

“I know you’ve been lonely,” Michael eventually replied. Before James could protest, he added:
“I’ve missed you too. And I was even more upset knowing you were all alone at home.” He served James with the strong coffee he liked to drink in the morning.

“I thought Marble could keep you company while I’m away.”

If it was possible, at that exact moment, James fell in love again with Michael. He would cherish that lovely kitty – which was still waiting for them in the bedroom, undoubtedly sleeping amidst the sheets now. And he would wait for Michael himself. The love they shared deserved at least that much.

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