What's In A Name?

by LeedlingwithRageHappy

Summary

Where Michael convinces Joel that Ray's name is something else and no corrections are made

Ray knew Michael was up to something when he entered the Rooster Teeth building for the very first time. Besides the fact he was a new employee and it had been months since he had seen his best friend, Michael seemed to be giddy for another reason.

"Alright, lay it on me," Ray sighed, his curiosity getting the best of him.

Michael beamed at this and sidled up next to Ray. "Well, you see," he started lowly, nudging Ray towards the AH office, "There's a couple people here who don't know your name yet and I want to see how easily we can convince them your name is something else."

Ray raised his eyebrow at this, but found it amusing at the same time. "What name did you come up for me?"

"Dude you're in?" Michael asked excitedly and plopped Ray down at his new desk. "Can't reveal the name to you yet, I want to see your improv skills." This was followed by a wink and Ray scrunched his face up.

However Michael pulled out his best puppy face, causing Ray to give in almost instantly. "Fine, fine," Ray sighed and began setting up his things. "Just don't go overboard, 'kay?"

"I'll do my best," Michael finished with a thumbs up and left Ray to his work.

Unfortunately for Ray, he missed the sly smile on the Jersey man’s face as he raced out of the
room to begin his follies.

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A few introductions (without Michael) and one computer set up later, Ray was excited to officially begin his day. The low hum of the electronics around him set Ray into a calming mood and he decided to play some games before Geoff started up a Let's Play. Ray's peace did not last long though as a commotion by the door caught his attention, followed by the sharpness of Michael's voice and Gavin's squawks. Suddenly, none other than the voice of Caboose was shoved into the office and he looked rather upset with the situation he was in. Ray's heart sped up as he looked on at Joel Heyman, who, though he would never admit it, was one of his top favorite RvB voice actors. One might say Ray had developed a small crush on the man and it dawned on Ray what Michael's intentions truly were. The Jersey man had no trouble finding out about Ray's infatuation and relished in every teasing moment.

"Why did you drag me here?" Joel mumbled, clearly tired and irritable.

"You have to meet the new guy," Michael answered and pushed the reluctant Joel over to Ray while Gavin guarded the door with a wide grin. "Joel, this is Tigre," Michael introduced.

It took every ounce of Ray to not start laughing and correct Michael but between Michael's glare and Joel's tired look, Ray did his best to roll with it.

"Tigre," Joel repeated quietly where upon hearing that name said, Ray felt himself melt as he let out a lazy smile.

"Yup, and you're Joel," Ray held out his hand, thankful Joel wasn't too asleep to shake it.

"Always nice to meet a fan," Joel joked and Ray realized how his words must've sounded, but before he could answer, Michael interjected.

"Oh yeah, man. Tigre loves Caboose. Favorite character, right?" Michael shot Ray a smug grin and Ray felt his mouth drop open at this point.

"I-I mean, sure but-" Ray began stuttering out until Joel held out his hand to stop him.

"It's okay," Joel said reassuringly. "I'm happy you like the show and my character. Glad to know he gets the love he does from fans."

Ray nervously met eyes with Joel and the two held their stare for what seemed like hours before Joel snapped out of the trance first, gently untangling himself from Michael's grip.

"I better get back to work. See you, Tigre."

With a short wave, Joel left the scene, practically lifting Gavin out of the way of the door and the three men were left in a thick silence.

"Tigre? Really?" Ray spoke in disbelief.

"Hey, thought you'd enjoy Joel calling you 'Tiger', even in another language."

Even though he had been able to hold it back before, Ray knew his face had turned deep red and he curled into himself. "Well, I'm not saying I hate it~"

"He really does like Joel doesn't he?" Gavin cut in.
Ray tried to defend himself but Michael only added more fuel to the flame. "Completely in love," the Jersey man grinned, hands proudly on his hips. Then, the office turned into a large ruckus of teasing and harsh defending until the gents walked in, saving Ray from more embarrassment for the day.

The next time Ray saw Joel was in the lunch area where the older man was sipping on coffee right by the microwave. Ray pursed his lips, looking down at his cold container and breathed in deeply as he made his way to the microwave.

"Tigre," Joel nodded and then turned his focus back to his coffee cup.

Ray shivered at the sound of the name, finding himself not minding it as much as the first time. "Joel," he returned the greeting and shoved his food into the microwave.

The older man didn't seem one to converse, which resulted in the two employees listening only to the microwave and neither making eye contact. Ray fidgeted around, trying to not make it obvious that he was nervous and contemplating whether or not to reveal the joke. However, Michael had said it was to fool a few employees despite Joel being the only one he was introduced to. Saving him from his thoughts, a beeping went off and Ray rushed to grab his food before choosing a far away table. Ray kept his eyes on the container, making it seem as if the food was his one desire but found himself looking up just as Joel sat down across from him. Ray froze and it was only when Joel cleared his throat that Ray went back to his food.

"I'm not that scary am I? Or is it that I'm really boring and no one has told me?" Joel asked over the rim of his cup.

Ray wasn't quite sure how to answer and regretted the word that squeaked out of his mouth. "Both?"

Seeing the confusion on Joel's face, Ray coughed and hastily redeemed himself. "I didn't mean to say that. I mean you're a little scary sure but you are Joel Heyman and Caboose, which means you're certainly not boring, so I'm contradicting myself-" Ray could hear himself rambling so he shoved his food into his mouth, not bothering to complete the paragraph he had started.

"That's a first," Joel chuckled. "But flattering I suppose."

Ray's cheeks heated up and he had put so much food in his mouth that replying was certainly not an option at that moment.

"Well, back to work," Joel sighed, pushing up from his seat. "Take care, Tigre."

"Yeah, see you," Ray mumbled out as best he could with the remaining food in his mouth.

It was only after Joel's departure that Ray finally breathed and he sank into his chair. "Fuck me," he groaned as he buried his face in his hands, trying not to smile at Joel's remarks from earlier.

Perhaps someday he'd tell the man his real name, but for now, Michael was right. Ray was definitely enjoying the sound of "Tiger" leaving Joel's lips.

After a few weeks of the fake name, Ray had ultimately become too lazy and perhaps polite to even correct Joel whenever he saw the older man. Ray was as much Tigre as he was Ray Narvaez Jr. so in the end, he didn't feel like he was faking a persona. Sometimes, he would even joke to
himself that Joel just had a little pet name for him, which made Ray furiously blush at the worst times and was unfortunately always noticed by a certain Jersey man.

"I should've never told you," Ray mumbled out during editing, remembering back to their times in New York. For some reason, drunk Michael was very persuasive and Ray had given in to his friend’s curiosity.

Michael's grin turned into mock hurt and he dramatically fell back in his chair. "Oh Ray, are you saying you don't like that I'm setting you up with Joel?"

Ray shushed Michael, nearly getting up from his seat to tackle the other man, but the damage had already been done.

"Wait, what?" Jack was the first to respond until Geoff jumped in with a, "Ray's gay for Joel?"

"Yeah!" Gavin unhelpfully answered and that's when Ryan began cackling from his spot.

Ray mumbled insults to himself and curled up in his chair to get away from everyone. Noticing this, the calamity stopped and suddenly Ray was bombarded with words of encouragement from each side.

"Joel will fall in love with you in no time."

"You guys are like two peas in a pod."

"Yay, gay Ray!"

All in all, Ray was grateful for the kindness of his coworkers but was also quickly losing his patience with all the talk of him and Joel.

"Tigre's leaving for lunch now!" Ray loudly announced and shot up from his chair only to be whiplashed back down from the headphones still around his neck.

After a few laughs, Ray untangled himself from the mess and somehow managed to make it out of the office in one piece.

As he left, he couldn't help the grin that formed on his face when he overheard Jack question, "I thought his name was Ray?"

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"Yo, Tigre!" Michael greeted and tossed an arm around Ray's shoulder. It was a mild Austin night and the two were currently at one of Geoff’s parties with Michael already a few drinks in.

"Michael," Ray began to scold, but the Jersey man shushed him loudly and placed a finger on Ray's lips.

"Don't want to spoil it for old Joel now, do you?"

"Please stop reminding me of his age," Ray sighed out, grimacing as Michael blew his alcohol breath into his face. "And it's not like he's here yet."

In fact, Ray had kept an eye out for the older man, but to his disappointment, saw no sign of him.

"What?" Michael slurred out. "He's over there."

Slowly following Michael's half-pointed finger, Ray gulped as his eyes landed on Joel's figure
hovering near the grill where Geoff was currently flipping hamburgers.

"Shit," Ray whispered and ducked under Michael's arm but to no avail.

Despite being drunk, Michael's reflexes were still lighting fast and Ray found himself stuck in a hug of sorts as Michael dragged him over to Joel.

"Michael, stop!" Ray hissed out hoping someone would notice. However, no one seemed none the wiser, or it may have been the fact that they were used to Michael's antics so no one paid mind to Ray's struggle.

Once near Joel, Michael practically threw Ray onto the other and sped off, leaving a confused Geoff looking on at Ray in Joel's arms.

"Should I give you two some privacy?" Geoff said in a voice that Ray wasn't sure was serious or not.

"No-"

"Yes-"

Ray hastily shoved himself out of Joel's grasp and stared at the older man who had let the yes escape from his mouth. Joel began to look increasingly uncomfortable as Geoff awkwardly took the rest of the burgers off the grill before scurrying off, leaving Ray and Joel to solve their own problem.

"So..." Ray began, rubbing his arm and avoiding eye contact. "How about this party, huh?"

Joel shrugged and then drank deeply from the bottle in his hand, causing Ray to become mildly concerned when the older man finished the bottle that was full only a minute ago.

"Yeah," Joel breathed out. "How about it."

Ray cleared his throat and swung his arms around trying to think of a way out of this. "Well, I better-" He stopped as a hand fell upon his head followed by Joel looming over him. If he didn't feel small before, Ray certainly did now with his and Joel's bodies only centimeters from each other.

"Do you have plans tonight, Tigre?" Joel said lowly.

Ray shook his head no and wondered how many beers Joel exactly had before they were thrown together.

Joel leaned in closely causing Ray to shiver as he felt a warm breath near his ear. "Care to go on an adventure?"

Hearing Joel's voice so close and inviting fogged Ray's mind. Any clear thoughts he had before were now muddled, only registering enough for Ray to nod his head slowly. Grinning, Joel moved his hand from Ray's head to the younger man's wrist and the two slipped out of the party.

"Don't worry. I'm not going to drive. Too drunk for that," Joel commented as he veered the two of them to the sidewalk.

Ray was relieved and yet suddenly worried because even though Joel was smart enough to not drive, he still was drunk and leading Ray towards an unknown destination. Of course, Ray wasn't putting up a fight so he was probably be encouraging at the very least.
"One, two...here we go." Joel took a sharp turn into a clearing in the woods.

Ray glanced at the stars and figured if this was the night he was going to be murdered, at least it would be under a beautiful sky. The stars stilled and it was then Ray realized Joel had stopped walking. Turning from the sky, Ray nearly jumped when he saw Joel staring intensely at him.

"You look beautiful when you're lost in thought," Joel murmured, his head tilted to the side.

"Uh..." Ray replied and cast his gaze to the ground. "Thanks?"

Joel let out a small laugh, pulling Ray in close to him. To Ray's surprise, he allowed Joel to hold him with no protest.

"Joel," Ray began quietly. "Do you like me?"

Again, Joel laughed though more breathy as he gave Ray a squeeze. "Of course. Took a little bit, but I think you won me over, Tigre."

"Actually..." Ray took a deep breath, his mind swirling with the thought that Joel actually liked him. "My name is Ray."

Silence hung in the air before Joel let out a large sigh. "Michael did this right?"

Ray pulled back from the hug slightly and looked up at the older man. "How...?"

"It isn't the first time," Joel shook his head with a small smile. "I don't like meeting new people much. There're still some employees whose names I've only just memorized."

Ray stood in an amused, yet confused state but before he could do much else, Joel's lips had found his own.

Wide-eyed, Ray didn't dare move and was surprised Joel kept the kiss going. Seeing that the older man wasn't going to end the embrace anytime soon, Ray closed his eyes and made a decision he wouldn't regret until the following morning.

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When Ray awoke, his first thought was an exciting one followed by dread as he rolled over and indeed confirmed that he had slept with none other than Joel Heyman. The dull pain in his backside should've been an indication as well causing Ray to let out a groan while rolling out of bed.

"Mffhhhhrr," came from Joel and Ray paused, his hand hovering over the abandoned pile of clothes.

"Tigre?"

Grabbing the closest article of clothing, Ray covered himself as best he could and turned back to Joel. "Hey." He waved which only seemed to confuse Joel.

"What...happened last night?" Joel asked, running a hand down his face. "I mean I remember us doing it, but how did we get to that point?"

Ray sighed, feeling his spirit fall a little and he explained the evening minus his actual name, though why he left that part out, he wasn’t sure. He blamed it on his nerves, plus the reasoning that it wasn’t the most important part of that night.
"Ahh," Joel mused. "I hope you enjoyed yourself at least."

Ray smiled and nodded his head, grateful Joel wasn't some jerk who would kick someone out after sleeping with them.

"You didn't feel rushed, did you?" Joel's voice filled with worry as he pushed himself up into a seated position. "I mean, truth be told, I was pretty attracted to you the first day we met. Michael also mentioned you liked me too."

Ray's brain was devoid of words as he stared at Joel, hardly believing what the other man was saying.

"Coffee?" Joel suddenly asked, leaving Ray no option but to give a half-shrug, half-nod that soon turned into a gaping look as Joel got out of the bed with no shame.

Ray's face heated up as well as other parts of his body while Joel moved around the room as if Ray wasn't even there. Or he was just showing off as he got dressed.

"I'll see you in the kitchen then," Joel winked.

Again, Ray was speechless and he remained on the bed for a few minutes even after the door closed. Finally collecting himself, Ray quickly put his clothes on, momentarily wondering if escaping out the window would be the better option at this point. However, the smell of food became too much and Ray drifted into the kitchen.

"Hey, Tigre," Joel greeted, waving a wooden spoon.

Ray's mouth twitched but he held back from correcting Joel, feeling as if telling him now would be pointless. The younger man settled down at the island and idle conversation began between the two with Ray thinking all the while what would be the outcome of this morning.

Over the next few days at the office, Ray was jumpy towards any noise or movement. He also started avoiding Joel as neither discussed that night again after Ray left Joel's place. Ray's thoughts were betraying him causing the young man to assume it was nothing more to Joel than a one night stand despite Joel mentioning several times that he liked Ray. Soon enough, Ray's new attitude cause a domino effect and the whole AH crew was getting sick of it.

"He said he likes you, Ray. Why are you so riled up?" Michael prodded.

Ray looked up from his keyboard, trying to think over his answer. "I've never rushed into anything like this. Hell, I don't even know what made me sleep with him."

"Gross," Michael mumbled and then flashed Ray a reassuring smile when the dark haired man gave him a glare.

"I don't know," Ray finally sighed. "I'm probably just overthinking."

Michael let out an affirmative noise and turned his chair more toward Ray. "Just talk to Joel. He's probably just as nervous. If he cares about you, he'll listen to what you have to say."

It was moments like these that Ray was thankful to have Michael in his life. The man offered another perspective that Ray wouldn't have even considered, calming down the younger man’s nerves.
Glancing at the clock, Ray figured he could take an early break and left the office as quietly as he could. As he made his way to the break room, he kept an eye out for Joel in case he were to run into him before then, all the while repeating a miniature speech in head. However, fate seemed to look kindly on Ray for when he entered the break room, there was Joel, sipping on coffee near the microwave.

Breathing in deeply, Ray summoned all the courage he had and approached the older man. "Hey," Ray began, which seemed to surprise Joel as the older man jumped, spilling coffee on his hand. "Shit," Ray mumbled and grabbed the nearest napkin, automatically wiping Joel's hand. "Didn't mean to scare you."

"'s fine," Joel said quietly.

Pulling away, Ray crumpled the napkin in his hand and looked down at his feet. "I'm sorry I've been avoiding you," Ray spoke slowly to avoid messing up his planned words. "I guess I got cold feet. I mean, not like that, just...we rushed into things and I was hoping we could maybe take a few steps back?" Ray exhaled feeling very out of breath not to mention his nerves. It was agony waiting for Joel's reply especially since the man had just taken to staring at Ray.

"I'd like that."

Ray's head shot up and he let out a small laugh. "Really?"

"Yeah," Joel nodded. "I thought you were avoiding me because you hated me or something, but I'm glad to know you just felt the same as me, Tigre."

Again, Ray laughed and shook his head. "You know my name is Ray, right?"

"Yup."

"Uh...what?" Ray was taken aback, making no effort to hide the facial expressions that matched his confusion.

This time, Joel let out a wide smile and he patted Ray's head. "I didn't forget everything from that night. I just like calling you Tigre. Seems to make you blush which makes you even more adorable."

Ray's face turned a deep red though from Joel's touch or comment, the younger man wasn't sure. "So, date then?" Ray squeaked out.

"Thursday night work for you?" Joel leaned in closely causing Ray to have flashbacks to the fateful night.

Ray nodded his head, too captivated to do much else.

"Alright, we'll go after work," Joel said in a husky voice and then stood back, giving one final pat. "Tigre."

Ray felt like he bristled as he swallowed, half tempted to hold Joel's hand down in his head. However, Joel glanced at the clock and Ray knew their interaction was going to be cut short. "So-

Ray's sentence didn't have of a chance to finish as Joel pulled the younger man in for a deep kiss. When Joel broke the kiss, he gave Ray a wink before refilling his coffee cup. "I'll see you around, Ray," he toasted and left, with the younger man still frozen in place by all that had just happened.
It wasn’t until Joel was completely out of sight that Ray collected himself. Date? With the Joel Heyman? Not to mention what else they did with each other. Ray blushed at the thought, chewing on his lip and certainly not out of nervousness. In the end, Ray knew he had Michael to thank because whether he was Tigre or Ray, the younger man had ultimately ended up with Joel Heyman’s heart in his hands and all because of a stupid, silly introduction.

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