

Where Were We

Kyle Holmquist

“Whoa, easy there, Moxie!” James exclaimed as the leash suddenly tightened and he was jerked forward. The dog’s snout was pressed deep into the grass as its long ears brushed the unkempt lawn. James had to hurry to keep pace behind the stumpy basset hound, but took care with each step.

“Come on, Moxie – you know I don’t want to step in anything,” James reminded the dog as he finally returned to the sidewalk. “I really don’t know what’s gotten into you all of a sudden,” he said, looking at the bottoms of each of his gleaming black leather shoes. But Moxie paid him no mind as she continued obsessively smelling the grass.

“Let’s go!” James said, yanking the leash. The chain collar tightened around Moxie’s neck as she was jerked back onto the sidewalk. “Damn dog,” he muttered. He carefully lifted each foot to check the soles and let out a sigh of relief when he saw there wasn’t any waste on them.

“We do this every night!” he said, “Why are you being such a pain all of a sudden!?” He continued pulling the dog along the side walk, but she kept resisting and trying to smell the grass. It took a moment of James pulling at the leash to little effect before he finally gave up and let the dog sniff to her heart’s content.

As time passed, James checked his watch; he let out an audible sigh of frustration.

“You know, Moxie,” he said, “I originally got you to be the perfect wingman – or wing... girl, or whatever. But at this point, you’re kiiiiinda cock-blocking’ me, you know? So, let’s go!” he yanked at the leash again, and this time Moxie followed his commands. But she followed them too closely, it would seem, as the dog ran so quickly that the leash’s handle was pulled right from James’ grasp.

“Hey – Moxie, what the hell!? Come back here!” James sighed and lifted his arms in exasperation at Moxie’s antics.

“Stupid fucking dog,” he muttered as he started to go after her. A sudden noise behind him made James look back over his shoulder.

“What was that?” he said as he stopped in his tracks to listen. “Sounded like a wild animal or something... But there’s no way – not this deep in the city,” he said as he turned to face forward again.

“Moxie!” James yelled out. “Come on...” He continued to head in the direction Moxie had run, but once again heard a noise behind him. He turned to look and saw a large pair of glowing eyes shining at him through the darkness. Eyes wide with terror, he scrambled along the wet grass and started to run. He heard the pounding of bestial limbs on the ground and a deep, guttural growl before he felt a tight, agonizing pain at the base of his neck.