The Motel 9 in Crossroads City had a reputation. For one, some of the more immature punks living in the nearby suburbs liked calling it the ‘Motel 69’, on account of many things.

For one, the joke made too much sense not to make. Second, the price for a single night made the risk of illicit hookups worth each nickel and quarter, especially when most of the money would be better spent paying for a hustler’s ass. I remembered taking my senior prom date—a punk feline like myself—up there into one of the rooms up on the second floor and giving her a fucking good night to remember. She certainly gave me one, but not compared to me and John’s first time.

The Motel 9 had few cars parked in the lot but hearing a police siren in the distance did put me on edge a little. Clenching my paws into fists and quickening my pace up the wooden staircase, I ignored the quiet, brooding vixen in tight shorts smoking a drag against the balcony railing. I ignored the enticing smell of weed escaping from one of the rooms, as well as paid little attention to a loud moan coming from Room 21.

No, my attention lay on Room 28.

 I exhaled a hesitant sigh.

“Get a grip, you fucker…” I muttered to nobody but myself. A shriveled part of me sought to turn tail back to the Old Rainbow, back to Harley’s burly arms as he rode his motorcycle off into the sunset, but I didn’t. “You’ll regret it for the rest of your miserable life…”

 He didn’t answer the door after I knocked three times in succession. He didn’t yank the door open and pulled me into his strong canid arms while giving me a Hollywood kiss. John was too cautious for his own good. Rather, he just simply unlocked door with a loud clank, then gave me a courteous nod before quietly inviting me into the motel room. Seeing the heavy bags under his once-bright eyes shone into by pale moonlight creeping inside, the sad smile etched on his muzzle like a jester’s mask, it broke my heart.

John closed the door behind us as I awkwardly placed my leather jacket on the nearby hook. His lay discarded on a chair in the corner facing the disused bed. An engagement ring glinted on his left hand. The same one he used to pull me into a hug I reluctantly yet contentedly accepted. That was when a smile crept up my lips.

“Happy Valentine’s Day, big guy.”

John sniffled into my shoulder, then returned the sad smile to me when he pulled away, holding my arms in his. His deep exhale tickled my whiskers.

Picture this: a punk mountain lion and a Mormon timber wolf, both in their early twenties. The mountain lion’s most prized possession were his fangs and a leather jacket with metal spikes and the most garish anarchy pins imaginable, his thick skill topped off by dirty blonde, unkempt headfur that used to be a wild mohawk.

The punk mountain lion grew up in the foster system, spending his days with the wrong crowds and getting into trouble. Then, he met a timber wolf in high school. They became friends due to circumstances (and the poor-ass school district) forcing them to be in the same classes together. A few years down the line, the timber wolf went to Utah State, meaning they could still hang out while the punk mountain lion made a living bartending between niche establishments.

Then one day…they both realized they’d fallen in love. The punk fell in love with the wolf, but somebody else caught the timber wolf’s gaze. Or rather, something else did.

“H-Happy Valentine’s Day, Travis…” He spoke uneasily, eyes flicking between the bed and me. “How…How are you?”

“Quite fine, quite fine.” I cleared my throat, and I sat down on the bed. “Harley told me he’s ready to leave by either morning or tonight.” A scoff and a laugh escaped the back of my trembling throat. “He-He said, and I quote, ‘You wanna fuck him, that’s fine by me.’”

“Really?” John guffawed as if he hadn’t considered it too. “He actually said that?”

I nodded cheekily.

“Yeah, Harley’s open-minded.” A shrug led me to hugging my elbows. “He’s real sweet too. He uh, he understood that you…you were an important part of my life. He said he won’t hold it against me if we end up doing anything.”

“And you two are…” He paused, “…like, actually happy together?”

Giving up a deep sigh, I couldn’t stop myself from forming a smile. The thought of me and Harley starting over in San Amaro, leaving behind the arid city, and making a life together in California, while John planned to sacrifice freedom for stability and getting into Heaven. Or rather, the Latter-Day Saints’ version of Heaven.

“Yeah. We are.” I answered, leaning back until my head bounced off the mattress, and I stared up at the ceiling. “He’s a great guy, but…there’s still gonna be a part of me that always loved you, y’know.”

>>>small talk, discuss wedding plans and Movies

He set the ring on the nightstand and started undressing.

>>>>>1.5 pages spent holding, cuddling and caressing on bed.

 “>>>>>>>>nice guy, if a bit eccentric for a biker.

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 The walk from my past to my present felt like an eternity, until the Motel 9 finally disappeared around the corner, and a certain row of bars came into view. The lack of much February snowfall was made up for by an evening windchill that made me hug my arms closer to my body. It made me thankful for the jacket.

 Kiss biker boyfriend.

 Harley’s Harley revved to life, and we sped down the road.

 Spring could already be seen making its scenic way to Crossroads, the arid city. Pitiful piles of snow were gradually replaced by sandy slush and the out-of-place Christmas lights.

 Show physical affection of Harley??????????????

 I swiveled my head to catch one more glimpse of my past. It’s outline already disappeared over the horizon, and as I squeezed tightly around my boyfriend’s stomach, feeling his chuckles vibrate into my wrist, I rested my chin on his shoulder. Together, we stared off into the unknown.