

These are the first pages of my novel **Rye**. Please visit ryethenovel.com and join the email list.
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Rye

Sam Rosenthal

I love our bodies together, the way Rye feels beneath my hands.
Strong lean muscles. The slightest curve of breasts. The smell of her sweat.
I've often imagined my ideal girl having the body of a guy on the college track team.
A boyish face, tousled hair, tousled clothes.
I've found it in Rye.
There is something delicate in the way our bodies mix. The blurring of male and female.
It draws me in, makes me hard.
Red and blue lights speckled across my bedroom, a fire truck screamed in the Brooklyn night.
Rye said she always felt more like a boy, preferring male pronouns.
I'll try to keep this straight.
I kissed Rye's chest, pulled at the barbell piercing through his erect nipple. The metal against my teeth, my breath on his skin; I was mesmerized.
"Go slow, Matt," he said. "I haven't been with a male in years. I'm at an unfamiliar place in my life."
I took Rye as he requested, pressing him to my bed, fingers tight around his biceps. He watched my every move with a devilish smile. Cropped dirty blond hair fell across his eyes. I brushed it aside, his face damp.
His groan mixed with a little snicker, my body against him. I raised his arms above his head, my face buried in his armpit.
A wet, moist, earthy smell stung up in the back of my nose.
I kissed his skin. His collarbone. Throat. Chin.
He looked into my eyes, whispered, "Fuck me like we really are two boys!"
I rolled him onto his belly and pulled down his pants, kneeling between his legs. I admired his ass, and the soft cunt down below. My fingers spread on his back, tracing the bones of his ribs. We're similar in height and weight.
I want to see him naked beneath me in the woods.

~ ~ ~

Rye found me on-line. I'm thankful for the power of that dating site algorithm. A thirty-one-year-old androgynous female interested in a forty-year-old male? I can work with that.

Rye's profile stated he was gay and yet our messages told me we were flirting. I tried not to overthink the contradiction, the pixels were staring me in the face.

Our first kiss was on my couch, my hand on the back of his neck pulling him to me. I still wasn't sure if I was what he wanted, having this cock and all. He smiled and eyed my crotch. Curious. Hungry.

He explained that when he listed as 'gay' he meant that he dated women. But he kind of started thinking that being gay meant maybe he should try guys, seeing as how he felt so much like a guy himself.

He pointed to himself, then to me. "Boy plus boy. Gay. Get it?"

That's what he is: genderqueer.

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I walked to the coffee shop with Rye. Unlike our first evening, this time we spent the night.

"Oh yeah, Matt," he said, "I'm sure feminine guys like you get hit on all the time."

"I'm not feminine!" I said, pushing him away.

He laughed. "Come on, don't deny it. You're sensitive and perceptive. And I totally dig your body. Hot and thin and that cute round butt. I understand why they want to deflower it."

He made a grab for my ass.

"It's just how I was built," I said.

I spun out of his grasp and stood in the snow, glaring at him.

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Just last week, I got a text from Rye: Waking up without you this morning was tough. Why are you so far away? I absolutely adore being in your bed, your tender mouth and strong hands on my skin. Your cock in my cunt. I miss you so much. I miss talking and processing with you. I wish I could be sneaking into your bed at the end of the evening. Kisses, your boi.

Part I

| 1 |

The computers hum in the small editing room in my Brooklyn apartment. My nine-year-old son Mischa sleeps down the hall. He lives with me half the week, with his mom the other half. Elena and I divorced before Mischa's third birthday.

I tap my chin as I watch the footage of Ruth's interview for my documentary. The smoke of her cigarette twirls in the light, curling in waves. Her German-accented voice rises above the music.

"It ist nice when one gets a more sophisticated definition of their gender. Life ist a continuous process of understanding and so, too, sex and gender ist a never-ending process of discovery."

The camera slowly pans to Ruth's angular face glowing against the dark background. She takes a drag, the textures of smoke obscure her engaging smile.

"I love persons who reflect upon sexuality and gender and open up for wondrous meetings with otherness and keep on smiling. Laughter ist a key to fluidity and life. It ist wonderful to let the river of joy pass warmly through you."

There's a chirp.

I lean forward in my chair and hit the space bar. The image freezes. The computer chirps again as I dig down through the open windows on the screen.

I'm hoping it's Rye, I've been waiting days to catch up with him.

It's been three months since we met; these video chats are often the closest we get to being together.

A crunchy, crackling image pops onto my monitor. The image shakes, Rye's body a lagging blur, digital static.

His laptop is positioned on his back porch table in Chicago. The camera shows a string of chili pepper lights mixed in with the plants, the iron handrail, and behind that the darkness of his yard.

He falls into frame on the wooden bench with a squeak and a scrappy smile.

I feel a rush in my chest at seeing him again. He's wearing that one-piece wrestling outfit I love, the tight spandex revealing his thin, muscular body.

He's beautiful. Handsome. Boyishly good looking. Hot as fuck. I miss him.

"Hi Rye, how you doing?"

"I got a new haircut!" he says, excitedly. "As you requested."

I forget that his voice is sweet and high. It's not the voice one expects from a body looking like that: well-defined chest, sinewy arms, square jaw, puggly nose, his chipped

front tooth.

I'm getting a hard-on watching him, thrilled to see him again.

The last time I saw Rye in person was when we said goodbye three weeks ago. We kissed on the subway platform as he left for JFK Airport.

Chicago is eight hundred miles away.

He twists in his seat, runs his hand up the stubble on the back of his neck. "Want to touch it?"

I wave my hand in front of the camera. "I'm reaching through the screen now..."

He looks down. "Yeah, but do you like it?"

"It's perfect."

"I was in front of the class today running my fingers along the short hairs, it reminded me of you."

Mmm, his long fingers.

"I miss holding your hands when we talk," I say, "holding you to the bed when we fuck, looking down into your eyes."

He blinks at the camera.

"Exactly. Those lovely grey eyes."

An irresistible smile pulls at the corner of his mouth. I've seen that expression on his face before: half smile, half awe.

A shrill noise crackles in the speakers and feeds back.

"Did you hear that?" he asks eagerly.

"That distortion?"

"Cold, cold. Try harder!" He tightens his lips and lowers his chin. "Listen carefully."

"You mean that arooing?" I ask.

"Hot! Hot!" He puts his elbows on the table, climbs forward and grabs the laptop. The image jitters as he aims the camera toward the floor.

His dog Genie peeks up. Circling her, one of Rye's chickens tiptoes daintily, stretching its wings, cluck-clucking. The two of them collaborate on that strange, obnoxious song.

Rye joins in with a howl on the chorus.

"So, you're thinking it's a good idea interrupting my work with dogs and chickens?" I ask, with an amused smile.

For someone who claims to be a bottom, Rye sure has a habit of taking control. He's unruly and undisciplined. I find it attractive, and a hell of a lot of fun.

He puts the laptop back on the table, a sheepish grin on his face. "Working?"

"Yeah."

"What're you working on?" he asks.

"What am I usually working on when I'm not editing the paying stuff?"

"Dunno? Your retirement planning?"

I laugh. "Not with my pitiful income."

"Then what already?"

"My genderqueer documentary."

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We identify as 'genderqueer.' GQ isn't about who I fuck or my sexual orientation but rather my gender identification. Rye and I each see our genders existing

somewhere along the gradation between male and female, somewhere outside the gender binary.

Having a boi like Rye as my lover somehow feels right.

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Genie and the chicken continue their racket.

I watch him on the monitor. “Mischa asked me about you at bedtime. He likes distracting himself from his homework with that photo I shot of you and Genie. It’s in a frame in the living room. We talked about what to say if he meets somebody and he can’t tell if they’re a boy or a girl.”

“Wow! You talked with him about genderqueer?”

“Well, not in those exact words. I told him it’s respectful to ask people what pronoun they prefer.”

“That’s very astute of you. You should introduce us. You know, I’m pretty good with kids...”

The chicken jumps onto the bench next to him, flapping its wings.

He snickers, tilting his head. “And chickens.” He looks at the bird then quickly back at me. “Bring Mischa to Chicago and I’ll introduce him to Red and the others.”

Red hops onto the table, strutting between Rye and the camera.

“Rye, can you get that chicken out of the frame? I want to swoon at you, not some overgrown egg!”

He looks up, surprised. He’s nuzzling the bird’s neck, brushing its feathers.

“Ok Red,” he says, sympathetically. “You have to get down. You’re distracting the cute man there in Brooklyn.”

He taps the chicken on the butt. Wings flap. He picks Red up and sets her down on the porch.

His voice swings up half an octave. “My kids finished building the chicken coop today. This weekend I’m buying them three hens. I’m so glad the administration is letting us do this. Working with live animals is such a great way to spark kids’ interest, hands-on like that.”

Rye teaches seventh grade gifted science at a magnet school in a rough part of town.

“I bet they’re loving that,” I say.

“I adore it. Kids from all backgrounds working together on the coop. Seeing pride in their eyes when they figure out a problem. Thirteen-year-old tough girls telling me how great the Science Center is. It fills me with hope.

“I have a poster in my classroom.” He traces his fingers in a large rectangle in the air. “‘An infinity of possibilities!’ My kids like thinking about that.”

“Mischa thinks infinity is a number, not a concept. Which is it?”

“It’s so much more than a number. It’s that numbers are endless. They can’t be counted. There are an infinite number of numbers. And there’s also an infinite quantity of numbers between zero and one.”

“Mischa would argue that point. He’s bugged by the whole idea of decimals.”

Rye laughs. “It will be fun talking with him about the infinite.”

“I bet it is a great teaching concept. Many people want there to be only one, or maybe two, choices.”

“Like male and female,” he says with a shake of his head. “But that’s a societal construct of the domination culture, designed to reduce our options, limit our thoughts.”

“You’re saying genderqueer is infinite?” I ask. “There’s a good subtitle for my documentary.”

He smiles in awe, a twinkle in his eye. That’s it! There’s the meaning behind that look: opening up to the infinite.

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“I told Mischa that you like to go by ‘he.’ I wonder if that makes him think his dad’s seeing a guy?”

“Did he seem upset?” Rye asks.

“Not at all, he mainly talked about how cute Genie is in that photo. What would you do?”

“He’s nine?”

“Exactly.”

“Kids are smart. Intuitive. Right now it’s just a photo and what you tell him. If he doesn’t seem distressed or bring it up, I wouldn’t worry. Based on what I see with my kids and their parents, as long as he’s got your love and good healthy attention, he’s doing fine.”

“I’m glad I can talk with you about this kid stuff.”

“I wish all my parents were as involved.”

“That’s nice to hear you say, Rye.”

“Just the facts, ma’am.”

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“You look hot in that wrestling outfit.”

It shows off his ribs, his pecs, his nipples poking into the cloth.

“I could take you,” he says, his voice a growl.

“Not gonna happen.”

“Yeah, I’ll pin you! It’s not that I want you to lose, I’m merely letting you know you will. I want you to wrestle me and to work your way into me. Try to fuck me while also trying to pin me. And I am going to struggle against you, because I don’t want to lose. But I do want to be fucked.”

“I need index cards to keep track of these fantasies of yours.”

“You got your cock in your hand?” he asks playfully, trying to get on my nerves.

“Nope,” I say, sliding back in my chair. “Shit, Rye, look at the time. I have to get back to work.”

“Couldn’t we sex chat for a while?” He wobbles his head, scratches his chin. He gives me that devilish smile.

Here we go.

When he gets that tone in his voice and that look on his face, he wants me to top him.

Rein him in.

“Didn’t I just say I have to go? You need some rules!”

“I like rules, Matt. I do. But I think you dig it when I keep you from your work.”

“Rye?”

He lowers his eyes. “You like stroking yourself and perverting on my body when we sex chat, don’t you?”

“A boi usually listens to what he’s been told to do,” I say.

“I think you dig being interrupted. Maybe a lot?”

“Maybe... maybe I’m going to turn on the grab, and put you and Genie in my video.”

“And the chickens,” he says, spinning and kneeling in the chair. He reaches behind the railing, his hot, spandexed ass aimed into the camera.

“Rye!” I shout.

“Don’t forget the chickens.”

He pouts as he sits into the chair with a squeak. “Almost caught her.”

“Rye.” I whisper, laying on the tough-guy about as heavy as I get.

He sits up straight, hands in his lap. “I like that you’re strict with me. Training me so one day you can take my gay ass.”

The screen goes to static. He cut off the chat.

I stare at the blank window. He’s feisty, but he is a fun boi to top. I’m lucky I found him.

| 2 |

I husk corn for Mischa’s dinner. He’s in the living room doing his homework.

I love my six hundred square foot rent-stabilized two-bedroom, three if you’re the realtor including the little roomlet I use for my studio. I’ve lived here ever since Mischa was in kindergarten; he’s now in third grade. The place has some pre-war charm saved from eighty years of landlord’s whitewash: dark wood window frames, parquet floor, smoked glass transoms into the hallway. Not as classy as his mom’s massive apartment in Manhattan, but it’s our home.

“Dad,” he calls out. “Do you think that life is but a dream?”

I stop. That’s an odd one.

“Yes, Mischa, I do.”

“How? This pencil is real. It just made a line on the paper.”

I walk into the living room. “Remember what I was reading to you last night?”

“Yes. Hm? No. Which part?”

“Remember the idea that everything we experience is an illusion?”

“Uh-huh,” he says, doodling on his homework. “But does that make life a dream?”

“You know how when you’re dreaming, everything seems real. Then you wake up and realize it wasn’t real at all.”

“Like when I can fly, but then I wake myself up shaking around in bed?” He flails his arms in his chair.

“Exactly. And when we wake up from life, we’ll realize that we’ve been telling ourselves a story all along, rather than experiencing things as they really are.”

“Dad, you can’t wake up from life.”

| 3 |

“This is huge for me,” Rye whispered our first night on the subway steps. Our bodies brushed together as we said goodbye. “Kissing after sex. And with a guy? Yet somehow kissing and coming, and your cock, it feels so hot and right. What is it with you?”

I liked him. Not just his body and the fucking, but the way we could talk about everything. I was hooked, but I worried that things were over before they had even started. As he walked away down the steps, a thought hit me. He had the straight experience he came looking for and now it would be back to doing-the-gay-thing-in-Chicago for Rye.

He was in New York for an education conference. He had searched the profiles on the dating site for a local GQ male to hook up with. A guy in Brooklyn was a lot more discreet than fucking someone in his circle of friends at home.

“I found that profile picture of you with Mischa intriguing,” he said. “How a dad looks with his son tells me a lot.”

In his mind, I was probably a one-night stand. And I was thinking about a relationship!

The next day I dropped him a friendly text and got a quick reply. My follow-up went unanswered. I wasn’t going to push it. This was something he would have to initiate.

The silence that followed seemed to prove my hunch correct.

But that weekend, a text arrived from Rye: Matt. I can’t stop thinking of your hard cock. The feel of it in my mouth. I want it now!

And a day later: Finished my workout at the gym, the sweat is dripping. It reminds me of your skin on mine, the taste of salt, you fucking me.

| 4 |

I fly into Midway Airport to meet Rye for the trip down to New Orleans. Escorting him to our first vacation seems like a sweet touch. We both have to fly down there, right? Why not do it together?

As I walk off the plane, he’s standing at the gate grinning, excited to see me. He took the CTA to the airport directly from school.

We kiss.

I finger the collar of his houndstooth check sweater as we walk to the departure gate.

“Did I ever tell you how cute you are when you’re dressed up like a school teacher?”

“I’m not dressed up like a teacher,” he says with a scowl. “I am a teacher!”

I look at his chest. “Why are you wearing a bra?”

“My nipples are sensitive. I think they’ve been anticipating what you’re going to do to them.”

I scan the people around us, nobody watching. I cup his chest as I kiss him.

“Anyway,” he says, shifting back, “a bra seems proper at school, don’t you think?”

“I’m used to seeing you as an androgynous boi. It’s a hot gender fluid thing when you’re dressed as a woman.”

“‘A woman?’ That’s unusual to hear you say about me.”

“You’re not offended?”

“Not in the slightest. I am any one of those things and all of those things, too.”

“Did you always think of yourself as a guy?”

He smiles his crooked smile, pulls me over to sit on the rug by the window.

“Yeah, that’s an interesting question. My parents never expected us to follow typical gender roles. They encouraged me to play sports, my brother was always making art projects, and Dad did a lot of the cooking. They wanted us to find ourselves. I was on the wrestling team for a while, and I was the smart kid who was good at science. I asked my mom to cut my hair short and of course she did.”

“I never had anything like that,” I say, shaking my head.

“Well, you have it with Mischa.”

“Of course, he can be whatever he wants to be. I can’t believe the things I heard from my friends as a kid. Parents kicking out their sons when they turned out different. Or, god forbid, gay!”

“Did your folks give you shit?”

“They split when I was five.”

“Ok, so that’s a yes?” he asks.

I never passed for an ordinary guy. People tend to assume I’m a dancer. I can’t understand why. Because I’m in shape? Because I stand out a bit? Curly hair rolls along the top of my head and falls to my brow, but the rest is trimmed down to half an inch. It looks as if I’ve got two different haircuts going on at once. Or maybe my barber lost track of what he was doing midway through.

That’s just my non-traditional side coming out. Doesn’t make me gay.

“Yes, they gave me shit,” I say. “I’ll tell you about it, but we were talking about you.” I pull him close. “How’d you go from liking science as a kid to teaching it?”

“I grew up poor, but my folks were never going to let that stop us. They encouraged me to apply to college and I got a buttload of scholarships. That and my grades got me into a great program in Champaign. Teaching really called to me. I wanted to make a difference for kids like me.”

“That’s why you’re in the public system?”

“It’s where I can make a difference.”

“I’m with you. Mischa’s mom could afford private, but I fought against it. I like all the kids together, rich and poor. Black and white.”

“Exactly, Matt.”

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They call our flight.

Rye digs into his bag, pulls out a container, pops two pills and washes them down.

“What are those?” I ask.

“Theanine,” he says. “I feel like a wimp telling you this, but I get anxious, a little panicky. Those take the edge off. It was so nice of you to fly out and meet me here. You’re going to notice me holding your hand a lot on the plane, snuggling with you. That’s going to help me out a lot.”

“Anything else I can do?”

“Be as sweet as you always are with me.”

I wrap him in my arms. He sits between my legs, back to my chest. I rub my cheek in his hair.

## | 5 |

The Civil War-era headboard at The Skully House in New Orleans’ French Quarter softly thumps the wall. I fuck him, pulling him tight.

He opens his eyes and springs off me, mid-orgasm, looking down at his crotch. “I think we need to give her a little break. Enough of this sweetie pie sex, Sweetie Pie.”

He points to his mouth.

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He lies naked, belly on sheets, up on elbows, shoulder blades nearly touching. The candlelight sharpens his facial bones.

“Rye, looking down at you it’s hard to tell if you’re a boy or a girl. Either way, your mouth sure feels good around my cock.”

I’m kneeling on the bed, rocking a few inches in and out. His warmth and softness engulfs me.

Rye gazes up at me, mouth full. He catches my smile.

The shine in his eyes.

My palm against the stubble on his head.

My cock nearly touches the back of his throat.

This is only my fourth time with Rye since meeting in Brooklyn three months ago. Brief moments spent in each other’s arms... six hours... eighteen hours... a whole day! Now seventy-two hours to fuck in all the ways proposed in email, text, and chats.

The king-size provides plenty of room for a weekend of fucking and laughing. The past two days mainly spent in bed.

Index cards sit on the nightstand; many ‘to-do’s’ have been checked off.

He moans as I use his lips and mouth; taking him the way he likes it.

I reach down to his upthrust ass. I dip the tips of my fingers into his shaved cunt.

His eyes flash ferocious.

I push his face off me.

“I wasn’t enjoying that, anyway,” he says. Coy smile.

He adjusts his bangs across his forehead like a cat licking its paw, nonchalant.

“Naw, you’re just a weary boi passing time...”

“Tick tock.” He looks at his wrist, sighs. “When will that El get here?”

I wait.

He smiles.
 He's done.
 We begin again.



I fuck him with three fingers. He's soaking. He grits his teeth and bears down onto me, grinding into the bed, gripping the sheet and clenching his jaw.

I whisper, "This is mine."

He stares into my eyes, feeling me inside. "Uh-huh."

I slip my fingers deeper between his legs. "All mine, Rye."

He rotates his hips, slowly orbiting my hand.

"Yes?" He pleads, nodding slightly, parting his lips, begging me to fuck them. I finger his rough, spongy inside, he moans. "Yes?" his voice a whisper.

Hungry seconds tick by.

"This?" I ask, wagging my semi-erect cock in front of his face.

"My mouth needs..."

"When I'm ready!"

My fingers move fast inside him. Sweat glistens down the furrows of his spine, his ribs tight against his skin.

He glares. "I'm being good enough." He rolls his eyes. "Fuck my mou..."

"Why are you so controlling?" I ask, quietly.

I step off the bed and slap his cheek.

He smiles, oddly pleased.

I stand on the worn rug and grab him by his armpits, dragging him to the edge of the bed.

I sniff my fingers.

I crouch down. We're eye-to-eye. I put my hands gently around his throat.

He twitches, uncertain.

"Now listen," I say. "We can get dressed and go out if you prefer. No? Ok. I'd rather finish with you anyway. Knock it off."

I linger on his throat, I'm very delicate with him now. I wait and watch.

He smiles sweetly, nodding in agreement. Good boi.

I grab his hair, shove my cock between his lips. He looks me in the eyes as his tongue finds me. I grow hard again.

I reach over his back to his wet cunt, plunge my fingers within. Two inside, I hit his clit with a third. He writhes, twisting on them. I feel his come, wet and warm on my fingers. He rolls into his orgasm as he sucks.

I focus on his mouth now.

I hold his head as I fuck him deep, cutting off his air for long moments. In the candlelight, my cock disappears into him. Our bodies so similar. Just like two guys. Except that my boi has a girl's body; and yet he is not completely a girl.

I fuck his face. He is here for my pleasure and he knows it. I slam into him. Using Rye's mouth rough is hot, unacceptable, and beautiful.

"I'm going to come," I whisper, my voice raspy.

I rock his head quickly, sliding his lips on my cock to finish off. His nose against my stomach. I gag him as I thrust one final time. And I come. He drinks me in. Swallows

me.

When I'm drained, I pull away, my cock falling from his gorgeous mouth.

Arching his back, he lifts off the bed. I kiss my come off his lips. Lick his mouth, kiss his forehead. His face.

I push him down into the sheets, crawl onto him. I wrap my arm around his chest and hold him; it's sticky between us. I'm tired. Fulfilled.

He kisses my hands.

We're lost in dreams.

~~~~

A half hour later, I stand behind him at the mirror, dressing Rye up in my black button-down shirt. I tie his purple tie. Our eyes upon each other.

I adjust the knot. "When we're on the street, do you think people see us as straight, or as two guys?"

"I get so fuckin' turned on by that," he says, beaming. "When we're together, our genders come through so well. There's no question, we really are two gay boys."

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We're out the door into the warm night. Arm in arm.

"How will you feel," he asks, "if somebody calls us fags?"

"I'll laugh and shout back, 'I'm not a fag, my boyfriend is.'"

He chuckles as we pass beneath a flickering gas lamp. Purple tie and black button-down shirt... I want to hold him like this forever.

Rye is available for Kindle at
<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00A2F1VS8>
and in paperback at
<http://www.ryethenovel.com>

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