



*A
Furry
Matchmaker*

A SHORT STORY BY

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Screeching brakes and shouts from the park stopped Alice in her tracks. What kind of grown woman ran into the street without looking? Another of her typical public blunders. Staring at the van lurching to a stop mere inches from her legs, she almost forgot her goal. Just in time, she picked up the troublesome ball of fur before he scurried off again.

The driver's door opened and out came the man of her dreams. His wavy black hair framed familiar blue eyes and wide lips. Alice froze. Her former best friend, the secret crush from her school days. A ten-year-old memory threatened to surface, one she hated, from the night they argued about her feelings for him. There was no way she'd ever forget his face.

Even with that deep scowl.

Right. She'd almost caused an accident.

He flung open the van door, looking both ways before climbing out. “Did I hit you? Are you okay?”

“Hi, Malcolm. I’m fine, thanks. I didn’t know you were back in town.”

Recognition lit his face, and his frown slowly morphed into a wide grin. “Alice. I should have guessed—a woman running in front of a moving vehicle could only be you.”

Stepping close, he wrapped his arms around her. Remembering the rogue hamster in her arms, Alice stiffly leaned into Malcolm’s hug. Those muscles were a sure sign he’d started working out. What else had changed since they’d last seen each other?

“I’m so sorry. My niece and I brought her hamster into the yard, over on the other side of the park. We only lost track of him for a minute, but Piglet ran clear out here. I chased him without thinking.”

Malcolm laughed, a deep, masculine rumble that resonated in her chest. “That sounds about right. Like the time in high school—”

Unwilling to relive the awkward school days that had revolved around her unrequited love for him, Alice blurted out the first thing that came to mind. “So you’re back for good? I heard you had a great job in the city.”

Reaching out, Malcolm stroked Piglet’s wiggling head. “Dad needs me. Since Mom died, his health isn’t what it used to be. It seemed like a good opportunity to move closer to him and be my own boss for a change.”

He waved at the van, and she took a closer look at the logo. “Oh, you’re behind ‘Catch-A-Cab’? I must’ve seen that commercial a dozen times.”

There was the self-conscious smile she remembered, the one that appeared any time he received praise for one of his many accomplishments. “Yeah, that’s me. It isn’t

glamorous, but it's better than the stress and long hours in the corporate world. Now I get to relax and spend time with Dad when I'm not picking up customers."

How sweet. He'd always been close to his dad, but changing his whole life took it a step further. "Your dad must be thrilled."

Something shifted in his eyes, growing deeper and intense. He moved closer. "He is. But to be honest, that's not the only reason I'm back."

Swallowing hard, she squeaked out a response. "Oh?"

He slid his hand around hers, twisted in Piglet's fur. "I missed a certain redhead. Couldn't stop thinking about her cute smile and kind heart. I wasn't ready for a relationship back then, but that's no excuse for the way I acted. I'm hoping to remedy that."

Warmed by his words, Alice hoped she hadn't misunderstood. She was the only redhead in town. Except... "I hate to disappoint you, but Mrs. Thompson started coloring her hair brown years ago."

His chuckle sent shivers through her. "Alice Wright, I'm trying to say I came back to apologize to the only woman crazy enough to run in front of a van to get my attention."

Alice joined his laughter, not bothering to correct him. He was right. Given the chance, she might have done it on purpose if it meant spending more time with Malcolm Donovan.

About the Author



Abbey Downey started writing inspirational romance stories during naptime when her kids were babies and found she couldn't stop. Several of her short stories have been published by Spark Flash Fiction, along with two books (written under the name Mollie Campbell) published by Love Inspired.

After growing up throughout the Midwest, Abbey settled in central Indiana, where her family has lived since the 1840s. She fills her days with fixing up a few acres in the country and hanging out with her husband, two kids, and one rather enthusiastic beagle.

You can connect with Abbey and find out more about her writing at www.abbeydowney.com.