

HAPPY DICK'N

By

Adam Zend

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PROLOGUE

In 1991 two stories intertwine; first as a series of murders in Hot Springs, Arkansas, forces two newly partnered homicide detectives — ‘Donald Smith’ a gay, preppie upper-class male and ‘Angel Jones’ a tough, street-savvy lesbian—to solve the murders while trying to come to terms with their own self bigotry, and second the ruminations of Detective Smith's grandfather concerning ‘Frank Turner’ and his K-9 German shepherd ‘Jack.’

CHAPTER ONE

Her hearing not as keen as in her youth, Agnes Blakewood strained to hear through the apartment wall what the two male voices were arguing about next door.

She could only make out a word or two when she heard the loud noise. The bang startled not only her, but her mangy cat Horace.

12:11a.m. the dusty round-faced clock on the wall displayed as she took note.

Going into her eighty-ninth year, she was a widow for more than twenty of those years. She and her companion Horace were still clinging to life, such as it was.

Agnes sat motionless, not sure what had happened. She didn't care for the young man in the adjacent apartment; it was the downstairs, corner unit, number twelve. He treated cats badly, and to her, that was a sin. Finally making her way over to the window, she peeked out, but couldn't see anything from her angle.

The apartment stairs were located directly in front of the building. Straining her weak eyes, she now spied someone standing on the stairs, about a third of the way up; he was looking toward her neighbor's door.

Slowly the figure descended and emerged into the soft glow of the only street lamp near their complex. It was Ryan Wily, the young college student who lived directly above unit twelve. Agnes took an instant liking to Ryan when he helped her with her groceries one late afternoon a few months back.

She went and cracked her door open a few inches, and Ryan was now

standing only a couple of feet away, staring intensely at apartment twelve's door, which was ajar. His attention now turned to the light coming from Agnes' doorway.

Squinting, he made out her small frame peering at him in the darkness. "Mrs. Blakewood, are you all right?" He spoke louder than normal due to her hearing impairment.

Agnes pushed the door wide and ventured out. "Ronny, what was that loud noise?"

Ryan didn't mind that she sometimes called him by the wrong name. Overlooking it mainly because of her age, and he didn't have the heart to correct her.

"I think it came from apartment twelve," he stated pointing toward the door.

"Well young man, the Christian thing to do is knock and make sure the man is okay, even if he is a jerk," she said in her straightforward manner.

Leaning forward, Ryan pressed the door buzzer and held it for several seconds before releasing it. "I didn't hear anything, I think it's broken."

Agnes pulled her nightgown tighter around her narrow shoulders to ward off the night air. "Never mind the fancy buzzer, just knock on the damn door. Horace is waiting for his treat," she said in her sassy tone.

Complying, several hard knocks were applied, yet no response came forth. He now peered through the half-opened door.

"Well, what do you see?" she asked impatiently.

"I can see a man's leg," he said as he turned to face her.

Agnes took Ryan by the arm and pulled him from the doorway. She pushed the door open herself, she observed the half-naked body of her neighbor lying face up on the living room floor. His eyes were open and staring at the ceiling.

Agnes moved in for a closer examination, at which time she spotted the hole in his chest, near his heart. A thin line of blood had trailed toward his neck.

"Better call the police; this man has kicked the bucket for sure," she said with no sympathy in her voice.

Ryan stood frozen, unable to take his youthful eyes from the ghastly sight.

Agnes turned from the body, and seeing his facial expression, waved her petite hand in front of his face to break his trance.

Startled, he stepped back a bit, but Agnes seized his wrist and shook it. "Pay attention Robby! Go call the police right now! You hear me, boy?!"

"Ah, yes...call the police...ah...yes, right now...I'll go call them," he mumbled as he finally took off up the stairs heading for his phone.

The neighborhood was usually quiet. There had never been such excitement in this area of the city in over thirty years.

Ryan headed straight for his phone, whose headset was designed in the shape of a football. For a college student, his apartment was the typical mess; beer cans and empty pizza containers thrown everywhere, piles of unwashed clothes lying in small mounds, bugs galore all over the dirty dishes in the sink. Dialing 911 into the phone he noticed sweat had formed on his brow.

Agnes glanced up at the digital clock resting on the counter-top in the kitchen; time was 12:38 a.m. It seemed longer, but even now she could make out the approaching sirens.

"Nine-one-one, what is your emergency?" the female voice asked.

"I...I...think he's...shot, he's...got a hole...in...in...his..." Ryan stammered in his out-of-breath and frightened voice.

"Just relax son," the calm female voice said. "Now take a deep breath, and tell me your name?"

Ryan filled his lungs with air, and then choked, coughing out the old air, while gasping to take in fresh air.

"Can you hear me?" she asked, listening to his episode on the other end of the line.

Ryan regained control. "I'm sorry..."

"Everything will be fine. My screen shows you're calling from 2218 Park St, apartment twenty-four. Would that be correct?"

Ryan coughed a few more times, and then cleared his throat. "Yes...that's my apartment."

"And what is your name?" she continued.

His mind went blank as he stood staring out through his open door.

"Sir, I need your name?!" she hollered into the phone.

"Ryan...ah, Ryan Wily...I'm sorry," he said snapping out of his daze.

"All right Ryan, just relax for a moment. When you're ready, please tell me who has been shot?"

"The guy in apartment twelve; he's just inside his door."

"Okay, do you know who shot him?"

"No, I heard a loud noise, and I went down to check on Mrs. Blakewood, and his door was partially open. I saw him lying on his back. Mrs. Blakewood told me to call you guys," he rattled on.

"Who is Mrs. Blakewood?" the dispatcher asked.

"She lives downstairs next to apartment twelve."

"Okay Ryan, I have units responding. Can you tell if the man is still alive?"

"I think he's dead; his eyes are open, but he's not moving...maybe he's still alive...I'm not sure...he might..." Ryan couldn't think straight anymore, the shock had brought on confusion.

"All right, just relax. Do you know the man's name?"

"Yes, it's James Butler, I think."

"Okay then, just go wait for the officers to arrive, and don't touch anything inside apartment twelve, understand?" she asked still typing on her emergency screen.

"Yes," he said hanging up and proceeding down to meet the officers.

Agnes could now see the flashing lights turning onto Park Street. She turned just as Ryan was descending the stairs. "I'm going to tend to Horace. If the police need anything, just tell them to knock."

Ryan stood, hands in his pockets, nervously awaiting their arrival.

"Ray, did you hear what I just said?!" she raised her voice.

"Yes Mrs. Blakewood, I'm sorry. If the police need to see you, just have them knock," he recited.

The first to arrive were Officers Brenda Dearborn and her rookie partner Jamale Johnson, from the Hot Springs City Police Department. Behind them was Sergeant Harold O'Leary from the sheriff's office. Fire rescue Unit 319 and Ambulance Unit 73 arrived within seconds of the others.

Officers Dearborn and Johnson entered first to establish all was safe for the paramedics' entry. Sergeant O'Leary came in next, followed by the others.

"He's as dead as they come," O'Leary said, leaning over the body as he observed the entry wound to James Butler's chest.

After the paramedics verified for themselves, they agreed it was now a job for the coroner's office. They packed their gear and departed.

“Radio in and tell dispatch we’ll need homicide and the coroner’s office notified,” Officer Dearborn instructed her rookie partner.

“Just hold up there, missy,” O’Leary stated as he placed his hands on his rotund hips. “You’re out of your jurisdiction; this is the county’s homicide, not the cities.”

“Don’t try that macho shit with me. I’m no rookie, buster. This is in the city limits, so it’s our jurisdiction, not yours,” Officer Dearborn lamented.

“Well, rookie, maybe not, but you don’t know a damn thing about where the boundary line starts and ends. It ends at Park Street for the city limit,” O’Leary said, trying to stare her down.

“Back off fat man!” Dearborn commanded in her stern voice.

“Hey, we’re all on the same side, right?” Officer Johnson interjected as he stood closer to his training partner to show support.

“You better listen to your boy, missy, before you get in over your head.”

“Boy! Who you callin’ boy?” Dearborn demanded. “And don’t call me ‘missy’ again, understand?” She was riled up now, and ready for a fight.

“Now you know what I meant when I said boy, and it has nothin’ to do with color, and callin’ you missy ain’t no put-down neither. So let’s simmer down a bit; all it takes is one call and we can clear this all up,” he said with a slight grin on his face. “Now, do you really want me to call and wake up your chief at this time of night?”

Brenda Dearborn looked over at her partner, and then back at Sergeant O’Leary. He had called her bluff, and she knew it. Not completely sure as to which department had jurisdiction, she figured she could con O’Leary. She gambled and lost, so it was time to retreat.

O’Leary assumed command of the crime scene and radioed his dispatcher to send out the forensics team, coroner’s crew, and the homicide squad. Most of those called out at this time of night would surely be asleep. The first person didn’t arrive on the scene for nearly an hour.

Jake Elderman and his assistant Ed Gorman of the county morgue came first. They approached the open door and were met by O’Leary who was just inside, smoking a fat cigar.

“Who’s that with you, Jake?” O’Leary asked, squinting as he peered into the darkness.

“That’s Ed Gorman, you remember him from your daughter’s wedding

last month, don't you?"

"Oh, now I can place him, sure, he was an usher if I recall correctly."

"That was me, all right," Ed said smiling.

"What? Forensics ain't here yet? Those guys are a bunch of lazy shits. If I had a dime for every time I beat them to a crime scene, I could be sittin' in my condo in Miami about now," he said as he slapped O'Leary on the shoulder, while wearing a big grin on his rather thin face.

Meanwhile, several deputies had cordoned off the crime scene area around the apartment building.

Lieutenant George Milhouse pulled up. The place took on the appearance of an active beehive, he thought as he approached Sergeant O'Leary.

"So, Harold, tell me what you think you're doing?" he said anxiously as he flashed a cross look.

O'Leary took note of his superior's facial expression and his tone of voice, trying to discern his true demeanor, which he failed to do.

"I'm not sure what you mean by that, George," he said, still trying to figure out if he was serious or just fooling around.

"Harold, I was told that you threatened the Hot Springs city officers. Would that be a true statement?" He glared at his old friend.

"Who told you that?" O'Leary asked rather sheepishly.

"Never you mind who told me, just answer the damn question!" the lieutenant shot back, clearly agitated now.

"Well, not in so many words, but I held my ground," he said, almost sounding apologetic. "Why, what's the problem?"

Lieutenant Milhouse rolled his eyes and threw his hands into the air. "Why don't you ever listen to what is said in roll-call? Not once, not twice, but three different times it was announced that the city boundary line now extended to include Park Street. You're out of our jurisdiction. The county prosecutor can't touch this case. Son-of-a-bitch! How many times am I going to have to cover your ignorant ass? Shit!" The lieutenant's face was blushing red as he stood shaking his head in disbelief.

"Sorry," was all O'Leary could bring himself to say in his most pitiful-sounding voice. Staring at the pavement like a small child who had just been scolded by an angry parent.

"Sorry my ass! I'm not about to make the call. You're going to call the

Hot Springs police station and apologize for the mix-up. Then you're going to gather all the crime scene evidence and personally hand it over to their detectives when they arrive. You understand me?" he got right up into O'Leary's face. "Look at me! Did you hear what I just said?"

O'Leary moved back a half-step and looked at his old friend. He knew he had pushed him too far this time. "Lieutenant, I'm very sorry I put you in this kind of position. I will apologize and straighten this mess out right now, sir."

"You're damn right you will," he said as he turned and headed for his cruiser. The lieutenant's tires squealed and smoked as he sped away.

Sergeant O'Leary tried to relax and regain his composure as he started directing everyone to stop what they were doing. Once he had all the evidence he told the others to go on home, he listened as Ed and Jake from the county morgue whined and complained as they left. Now it was time to make the call to the Hot Springs station and apologize for the misunderstanding. It would be one of the hardest calls he ever had to make.

CHAPTER TWO

Spring of 1991 and the city of Hot Springs, Arkansas, had a police force of only seventy-seven officers. They managed to handle everything from jaywalkers to homicides. Their basic problems were along the same lines as the bigger cities, such as Little Rock.

All had their problems to contend with, such as the one facing Chief of Police Rachel Temme. A feisty lady in her early fifties, with long auburn hair, she was tall, just short of five-eleven, with a lean, athletic build. Didn't believe in wearing make-up; just natural beauty was her style.

Joining the department as a self-defense instructor some twenty-seven years ago, she worked her way up through the ranks. Decorating her office gave her immense joy, as it had been an earlier hobby for her just out of college. Her office was ultramodern, sleek, and contained a glass-topped desk with a stainless steel frame. It was accompanied by a black designer desk chair.

Located behind her desk were six large file cabinets painted in dark shades of pink. On the right wall was a large smooth, glass-paned window, out of which one could glance and view the police cruisers in the side lot. Over on the other side was a small, black cloth sofa with stainless steel legs. A series of small photographs hung over the sofa depicting blue jays in various settings. The floor looked to be white marble which was highlighted by the pastel mix of yellow and orange covering the walls and ceiling.

She had come in early due to a rather strange phone call she had received earlier. The call was patched through the city dispatcher and transferred to her home. A Sergeant O'Leary of the sheriff's department had a rather odd story concerning a homicide, and how a mix-up had occurred concerning who had jurisdiction. It was followed by an apology, which she accepted gracefully.

She already notified the city forensics and coroner's office to send their personnel to the crime scene, along with several city police units. All she needed now was to assign a detective team to get the ball rolling, but therein lay her dilemma. All her detectives were already assigned other caseloads except Detective Donald Smith, who currently had no partner. He had received her '911' page and was just now arriving at the station.

Detective Smith knocked on the glass door with the stenciled 'CHIEF OF POLICE' displayed boldly on the glass.

"Please, take a seat, Detective." She pointed toward the sofa.

As he entered, he experienced the same impression he had the last time he was called to her office, that all the odd colors just made no sense. It seemed to him, some psycho had run amuck with a multicolored spray gun.

Donald Smith, who preferred to be called Donny, stood just barely five feet seven inches and maintained the body of a welterweight boxer. He had the chest and abdominal muscles of a wrestler, and the biceps of an Olympic discus thrower. Being an avid jogger kept his thigh and calf muscles toned and ready for action, not to mention his rock-hard buns.

Young, only thirty-three, he was astonishingly handsome for a detective; nothing like the old, over-the-hill types that made up the rest of the homicide division.

Stylish short black hair complemented his strong cheek bones and chiseled jawline. Clean shaven, with smooth skin covering his entire almost hairless body. Had it not been for his career as a police officer, he could have easily been a male model in one of the current women's fashion magazines. Dressed in a navy blue suit, a red and white pinstriped tie only added to his masculinity. The very image of a 'man' women wait their entire lives trying to catch.

In the all-male homicide squad, he was the youngest by far to reach the rank of detective. Openly gay, and proud of it, not only broke the hearts of the local female population, it left him without a partner, as the other homophobic officers refused to team up with him. This was the chief's problem. Who would be assigned to work with Donny and not be offended by his obvious sexual preference?

Chief Temme had already heard the whispers—'fag' and 'queer'—as the other detectives passed her doorway. Alas, she finally came up with the perfect solution to her puzzling dilemma.

"Good morning, Chief," he said with a sleepy expression on his boyish face. "What's up with the '911' call?" Donny flashed his famous smile.

"Save the charm, we've got a problem as you're well aware. None of the other detectives feel comfortable working with you," she said frankly.

"Yes, I know, it's the homosexual thing, isn't it?" he said still smiling.

"I should say it was a problem, but I've found a unique solution," she stated, now grinning herself.

“Hey, I’d rather work by myself than with one of those pot-bellied bigots.”

“You know departmental regulations; no detective works alone, period. But, as I just said, I have the perfect answer to our little problem of you needing a partner who won’t mind if you’re gay.”

“And what did you come up with?” he said, as he leaned forward on the edge of the sofa. His curiosity was now piqued. Knowing Chief Temme was a very intelligent woman, he also knew she had a sinister sense of humor.

Rachel sat at her desk with her hands clasped in front of her, showcasing her long, slender fingers. Clearing her throat, she began, “As you may or may not know, Alvin Korba has resigned and been hired over at the State Police Post. I interviewed an applicant just yesterday, and found her to be the perfect one to replace Alvin. She’s from a small town, just over the Arkansas border in Texas. Her arrest record speaks for itself. She’ll be arriving any minute now, and starts today as your new partner.” Rachel observed Donny’s face for his reaction to the news she dropped in his lap.

“A female detective, I should have thought of that,” he said, easing back on the sofa. A feeling of relief washed over him, as now he wouldn’t have to contend with the old guard and their hatred of gays. Fear of being thought of as a ‘fag’ or ‘cock sucker’ by a new partner had caused him some sleepless nights, but now, he could relax. A female partner would be more understanding, he felt, especially since women have been treated poorly by the old male establishment for decades.

“Oh, it gets better; she’s also a lesbian and proud to be one. Actually, she’s damn proud of it. As I’m sure you’ll soon discover for yourself,” she said with a short laugh.

Surprised for a moment, Detective Smith sat stunned. Regaining his composure a few seconds later, “You put me with a lesbian?”

“That’s right, and I expect you to show her around, get her familiar with our procedures. Understand?” she said in her official ‘chief of police’ tone.

“Yes, I fully understand. When do I...” Several raps on the glass door interrupted him in mid-sentence.

“To finish your question, you get to meet her right now,” Rachel said as she waved her new detective in.

“Detective Angel Jones, I’d like to introduce your new partner, Detective Donald Smith,” Chief Temme said.

“Just call me Donny,” he said standing and extending his hand.

Grasping and shaking his hand, “Okay, Donny, you can call me Angel.”

Donny was momentarily caught off-guard. Angel Jones stood a good three inches taller than him, and outweighed him by a good twenty pounds, all muscle, with little body fat. Angel’s yellow-blond dyed hair was short and spiked on top, with a tight razor cut on both sides. Yet it was shoulder-length in the back. Her right ear contained seven piercings; the left ear held only three. A diamond nose-stud adorned her left nostril and while she spoke it was evident her tongue had been pierced as well.

The black sleeveless jacket and black zip-up motorcycle boots matched her outdated red leather mini-skirt. Each forearm contained an obvious tattoo; one of a lion’s head on the right with the ominous beast baring its fangs, and the other containing a winged angel.

Donny was rubbing his hands together, trying to get the blood circulating again after the bone-crushing grip his new partner had just delivered.

“All right, now that you two have met, I have a case already in progress for you to investigate. It’s over on 2218 Park Street, apartment twelve. A man named James Butler was shot once in the chest.” Chief Temme handed a slip of paper with the name and address on it to Detective Smith.

“James Butler? What’s this guy’s story?” Donny asked, looking up from the paper slip.

“Why that would be your job to figure out, Detective Smith, isn’t that in your job description?” Chief Temme said while shaking her head in disbelief at his silly question. “Forensics and the medical examiner are already there waiting on you two.”

“We’re on it Captain,” Angel said as she pulled open the office door.

“Its ‘Chief,’ not ‘Captain,’ Detective Jones,” she said in her official stern voice.

“Yes ma’am, I hear ya. Okay, let’s go Donny,” Angel said as she went into the hallway.

Donny glanced over at Rachel and rolled his eyes.

“I knew you’d like her,” she grinned, then waved him on.

“I’ll get you for this,” Donny said as he shook his finger mockingly at her.

“Just do your job, and remember it’s her first day, so be nice. That’s an order.”

Donny caught up with Angel, who was standing at the edge of the parking lot, looking over the cruisers.

“We’re the dark gray one over by the fence,” he said pointing. “Tomorrow we’ll sign out a set of keys so you’ll have access to everything at the station.”

“Sounds great, I can’t wait.” Angel headed for the old Ford LTD, followed by her new partner. She was a go-getter from the start.

“So, how long have you been on the force?” she asked as they drove from the parking lot heading to the crime scene.

“Twelve years now. I made detective less than a year ago. But I haven’t had a steady partner, none of the bigots wanted to team up with me.”

“Oh yes, the ‘fag’ issue. I’ve run across the same shit in Texas. Good ol’ boys just love to fuck with the gays and lesbians down there,” she said in a somber voice.

“I’ve just got to ask, where do you carry your gun?” Donny’s curiosity got the better of him. He just couldn’t see, with such a tight outfit and a mini-skirt to boot, where on earth she could conceal it.

“Well nosy, I don’t carry a big 9mm like you tough guys. I carry a small .22 Magnum in my see-through panties,” she answered with a big grin.

“In an emergency, can you pull it out fast enough to protect yourself?” he shot back.

“Honey, you’d be damn amazed how fast my panties come off when the need arises,” she said without blinking.

“Yeah, I’ll just bet they do,” he replied sarcastically.

Donny wasn’t impressed with his new partner so far. The profanity and sexual innuendos he felt were crass and a sign of poor upbringing.

The over-the-top piercing, tattoos, and the gaudy outfit she was wearing embarrassed him personally and professionally. Nevertheless, he was determined to bite his tongue and keep his thoughts to himself, if at all possible.

“You live with someone, or do you do the bar scene and pick up young boys?” Angel asked.

There came a long silence as Donny was taken aback for a time at how rude and intrusive Angel’s questions seemed to be getting. Sure she was

just trying to get a feel for her new partner, he surmised, yet her questions were crossing the line of decency, or at least his understanding of it. There were limits, he felt, to even what a partner should know and have access to concerning one's private life.

"Look, I don't feel comfortable talking about certain things, if you don't mind?" He figured she would understand, especially since they shared a common background, with both being gay.

"So, you a bottom or a top?" Angel persisted in trying to pry personal information from him. She was very adept at getting under people's skin, and he was no exception.

"What?" Looking over at her in disbelief. "Obviously you have a hearing problem, or is it some kind of learning disability?"

"Fuck, what's your problem? I'm tryin' to get closer to you so we can be a fuckin' team...back each other up when the shit goes down. You hear what I'm sayin' pretty boy?" she shot back.

"I don't care for your negative attitude, and for your profanity that spews from your potty mouth. I don't know why lesbians feel the need to be so macho," he said, now turning onto Park Street.

"You can kiss my tight ass, sissy boy. This is who I am and I'm not changing my ways to please your dumb ass, you hear me?" The agitation was evident by the stare she was giving Donny.

She felt he was just like all the other male pigs she'd come across in her lifetime, stupid and selfish, and only seeing her as some kind of freak.

Donny pulled up to the curb about a half block from the apartment building, since all the parking spaces were occupied by forensics, medical examiners and police cruisers. They exited the car, and as Donny came around the front of the vehicle, he spied Angel standing on the sidewalk with her arms crossed in front, glaring at him.

"So, we gonna conduct ourselves as fuckin' professionals or what?" Angel said as he came up to her.

"Whatever," he said as he walked past her heading for the crime scene.

Angel turned slowly and watched Donny, then finally proceeded to follow his lead. Giving him time to adjust to her abrasive personality was what the situation called for, or so she thought.

Officer Dearborn and her partner Officer Johnson were securing the outside area when they spotted the detectives coming up the street.

"Good morning, Detective Smith," Dearborn said. Leaning over to get

a better view of the female following him, she whispered, "Who's the crazed-looking hooker following you?" She asked in earnest.

Donny had to smile at that question; it confirmed that it wasn't just he who thought Angel was creepy looking. "Officer Dearborn that would be my new partner, Detective Jones."

"A bit on the flaky side, huh?" Dearborn said as Donny shook his head in the affirmative.

Officer Dearborn explained the earlier situation concerning the boundary line dispute with Sergeant O'Leary, and that they were then sent back several hours later to re-take the crime scene per Chief Temme. When they arrived, O'Leary handed her the crime scene info and just walked away, never said a word.

Donny read over the information and made his way to the apartment. Angel was already leaning over the body, making mental notes to herself. She didn't believe in writing things down; she had a photogenic mind.

The city forensics unit had already been given all the evidence collected by the county squad, and had gathered what little more they required. The coroner's crew was waiting for permission to take the body.

Donny put on his rubber gloves and gave James Butler's body a good going-over before giving the nod to the coroner's boys. As they bagged up the corpse, Donny approached Angel to see what conclusions she might have come up with; he wanted to compare notes as it were.

"Well, Angel, what are your thoughts on this homicide?" His tone was soft and informal.

"I'd say, Detective Smith, the bastard's dead, how 'bout that?" Her tone was harsh, and it was evident she was still upset over their conversation from the ride over.

"Okay, so we got off to a rocky start. I'm willing to apologize and to start over. Can you at least meet me halfway?" Donny asked in his most sincere voice. His priority was to solve the case, not get into a battle of wits with his new quirky partner.

Angel stared at him for a few moments then extended her right hand. "I'm Detective Angel Jones. It's nice to meet you, Detective Smith. May I call you Donny?" She followed her mock re-introduction with a warm, personal smile.

Clasping her hand, he shook it gently. "Yes, you can call me Donny, and may I call you Angel?"

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