

Excerpt from "Dog Friendly" by Victoria Schade
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"Hey Morgan Pearce!"

The shout startled her. She stopped in her tracks, frowning as she looked around the crowded sidewalk.

"Over here!" A bike bell sounded off.

Morgan turned to the cobblestone street and froze when she realized it was Nathan the soda guy, pedaling his bike cart down toward the dock where she'd met him the day before. He slowed down as he smiled and waved, not seeming to realize that he was holding up a parade of cars behind him.

Holy crap he's perfect. Even riding that dorky bike cart.

She waved awkwardly. "Hey there!"

"You should come visit me later! Same spot," he bellowed so that the few people who hadn't been watching now turned to stare.

It was like they were old friends and he wanted to catch up with her, until she realized that it was probably part of his sales pitch. Make everyone feel like a buddy then get them to open their wallets for juice that costs as much as a glass of champagne.

He'd slowed down to almost a stop waiting for her to answer. Morgan couldn't believe the cars lined up behind him weren't honking.

"Okay, I'll try!" She offered, hoping he'd move along and everyone would stop watching them.

“Cool!” He stood up on the pedals and leaned forward, his calves straining at the effort to move the heavy cart on the bumpy street. He threw another glance at her as he gained momentum. “I like your dog.”

“Oh, she’s not mine . . .”

“Huh?” He slowed down again.

Morgan realized that she was now part of the reason for a major downtown backup. The Volvos and Land Rovers were stopped all the way to the imposing brick building at the top of the street. “Nothing! Bye!”

He waved at her again and finally pedaled off.

He’s like that with everyone, just stop.

Morgan found her way to the closed-off side street crowded with farmers market merchants but still relatively free of other shoppers. She kept an eye on Bernadette as they headed in, watching to make sure her posture didn’t change. The little dog’s maiden voyage in town on four paws had to be as positive as possible. Morgan snapped a quick photo of Bernadette standing at the entrance to the market near a flower merchant and sent it to Eugene and Karl.

“We’ll do a quick walk-through, Miss B,” Morgan said to her. “Then maybe we’ll stroll down to the docks.”

Duh, of course you’re going down there. To see him.

They kept to the middle of the street and Morgan peered at the goods for sale from a distance. She made a mental note to check out the handmade jewelry and natural soaps and lotions with a cute mermaid logo another time since her first priority was focusing on Bernadette. The dog was too busy sniffing and exploring to let her ponder which Nantucket bracelet to buy.

“Hey, I know you!” A voice called out from behind her.

What is it with this island?