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Everybody wants to be wanted. Everybody does *not* want to be the jam in a 300-pound dog sandwich. [Oona](#) and [Oisin](#) have started competing for my attention. I couldn't have this much fun scooting a cardboard box on little wheels out into the middle of a demo derby.

Like every love triangle, it's chemistry. The kind like in high school science lab where you mixed a little of this and a little of that and all of a sudden it's just you and the bomb squad looking at each other through black smoke.

Oona took my breath away the first time I saw her. She was 13 weeks old and already a force to be reckoned with. Lithe, serene, afraid of nothing. She knew exactly who she was as a tiny puppy when she claimed me as her human. I just thought I'd loved dogs before Oona...

It's only gotten stronger and deeper ever since. Sure, I've developed a flair for sailor talk from her snatching my things and doing nothing she doesn't want to do at her own speed in her very own time. But we *know* each other. I admire her, deeply respect her and, strangely, I trust her, as much as anyone can trust somebody who flies the black flag and says "Yaaaaaar!"

She comes from a magnificent family of quirky, freethinking giants. When I had a chance to bring her nephew home, I leapt. And I loved Oisín very deeply, too, right from the start.

She adopted him instantly and he was crazy about her. Then at ten months when the hormones hit, he was mostly just crazy. Crazy with a *plan*.

This I did not expect. Oisín is incredibly sweet natured. You expect him to trail puffs of confectionery sugar when he walks. Which isn't very often these days. Mostly he skitters and leaps. If you can catch him between blurs, he's all smiles. All 150 pounds of him.

But he's no pushover. He had two lovely sisters. When they

took his things, he took them right back. Oona must have been incredibly intimidating to him as a puppy. But he knew she loved him so he swung from her beard and danced on her head. She trained him to be a pirate, too.

Despite his being a furry ball of kinetic crazy, he's strangely tender. Sweet, tender and unstoppable. He presses his face to mine on the couch. Then he leans in. Then he creeps into my lap. Then my legs go numb and I see stars. But I hate to move because he's so darned *sweet*.

Competitive, too, as it turns out. He knows Oona and I have a special bond. He decided he wanted one, too. Only better.

I go to work every day at 4 a.m. I leave the lights out so I won't disturb anyone. That's Oisin's job. I tip-toe over the mounds of giant bodies and here he comes, grinning, slamming into me, leaaaaaning....One day I noticed I couldn't get to Oona to say goodbye because there was a furry mass in my way. Oisin was herding me. Every time I reached out to her, he slid between us again. Oona snorted, rolled over and went back to sleep.

Because he's, you know, *crazy*, I work with him a lot to tame the hormones. He gets extra socialization walks in town. We talk a lot. The bond deepened. And he's not big on sharing.

When I come into the room with Oona, our eyes meet and we smile. Oona's secure in her place. But when she comes over to say hi, she can't help noticing Oisin subtly slamming her away. We haven't talked much lately. She's noticed this, too.

So the other morning as I pivoted and high-stepped across the living room in the dark, here came Oisin. And Oona, too,

rushing to reclaim her human. It was a dark tide rising, a wolfhound tsunami. I rode it to the door and then jumped out.

Now, simply sitting on the couch is just asking for a pile-on. Oisín's faster. Oona's heavier. And the couch swallows the quick and the big and me.

Now they watch each other like gunfighters in a spaghetti western. If one sees any hint that the other is about to come get back rub or lick my face, the other leaps. This is 300 pounds of leaping. Earthquake monitors in three states start clattering.

Naturally, Oisín, bless his heart, leaps with more zeal. The boy's like Baryshnikov. He's the youngest. He tries harder. And he's so darned *cute*! So yes, he gets hugged. And then I glance up at Oona. She has a look that will freeze blood. Luckily, I'm ambidextrous. I pet them both. As long as I have circulation and can wiggle a finger slammed between two slabs of dog.

You'd think they wouldn't sleep at night, afraid the other one will superglue them to the floor to claim the prize. But sleep they do — together. Long legs entwined. The pads of their paws touching. They love each other. And if they can't split me in half, they have each other. And I think they always will....