A Day at the Races

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A Day at the Races

by SaltyRedhead

Summary

> “You thinking, what I’m thinking?”
>
> “We’re attendings now. That’s childish.”

Notes

> I saw a clip of S2E14 on tiktok and was immediately inspired. I dropped my various other projects to write this one. Enjoy!

See the end of the work for more notes

Alex and Cristina scrubbed out of their joint cardio surgery on a ten year old. They watched the nurses roll the patient out, their residents a step behind them. It had been a routine surgery that went well.

The silence was broken by Cristina's stomach rumbling over the noise of the faucet. She sighed and continued washing her hands, a bored expression on her face.

"Lunch?" Alex asked, he turned the faucet off with his knee and dried his hands. He tossed the paper towels over her head and crossed his arms, waiting for her response.

"Sure, why not." Cristina shrugged as she dried her hands.

They stood side by side, looking over their choices for lunch when Alex tapped her shoulder. "It's hot dog day. You thinking, what I'm thinking?" He pointed at the fresh pile of hot dogs.

"We're attendings now. That's childish." Cristina crossed her arms and side eyed him.

He shrugged and put his hands in his pockets.

"What the hell." They said at the same time, matching smirks on their faces.

"I'm gonna win, Evil Spawn."

"In your dreams, Yang."

Cristina grabbed multiple plates and placed them on a tray. She made a beeline for the end of the line. Alex was fast on her heel with a tray of his own. Both feeling years younger, they waited in silence as memories of the intern year flashed through their minds.

Cristina tapped her foot, impatient for the line to move so they could get the hot dogs. To her dismay, everyone in front of them was *also* getting them. People filed in behind them, the lunch rush hour had started.

The line slowly moved enough and they grabbed the rest of the hot dogs, not caring that they didn't *need* that many. The cafeteria server, Gretchen, scowled, she just pulled out a sign that said, 'out' without saying a word to either of them.

"Cristina," Teddy yelled, a couple people behind them, "I wanted a hot dog." Several others groaned behind her at seeing the food of the day gone.

"Sorry, honey."

"We need a timer." Alex quietly murmured.

"Right." Cristina nodded.

"So, we give *one* hot dog to your girlfriend as payment."

She shrugged, “Sure, but who is going to pay for all of this?”

Alex scratched the back of his head, thinking, and then he suggested, “Split for now and—”

“—and the loser pays the winner back—” She interrupted, following his train of thought.

Alex finished, “—the *whole* thing.” He held his hand out.

Cristina shook his hand, a gleam in her eyes, “Deal. I like the way you think, Evil Spawn.”

Alex shook his head at her, and he helped her quickly divide the hot dogs between the two of them—a nurse behind them huffed and tapped their foot, Cristina waved her ahead.

“Hot dog thieves.” She grumbled under her breath when she passed them.

Alex led the way outside, it was a rare sunny afternoon—something they needed to take advantage of after an endless week of rain. A slight breeze in the summer time air was refreshing.

Cristina and Teddy were right behind him. Teddy’s tray had a bunch of water bottles for the competition, along with her lunch.

Once, they had divided up the hot dogs, there were six plates with five hot dogs. A water bottle with each plate. Their trays were on the ground next to them to make room for everything.

“There’s only two of you.” Teddy pointed out, she said around a mouthful of a half-eaten hot dog. She sat across from Cristina with the clock app open on her phone.

“We’re thinking, Altman.”

“We could sell what we don’t eat.” Cristina suggested.

“You think anyone is gonna touch a hot dog after you put your grubby hands on them.”

“Hey,” She made a face, “My hands were clean while touching them. Yours were barely clean.”

Teddy interjected before they could really get into their petty bickering, “Why don’t you text people about it?”

“Good idea,” Alex said and turned to Cristina. “*You* text the group chat.”

“Me?”

“Yeah, I hate my phone blowing up.”

“And you wonder why you always miss out on going to Joe’s?”

Alex scowled, “Would you text them already?!”

“I’m doing it, don’t get your panties in a twist.” Cristina pulled out her phone and sent a group text.

“I cannot believe this is what you’re doing for lunch today.” Teddy finished her hot dog and reached for another.

Cristina slapped her hand away. “The deal was one.”

“Some girlfriend you are.” Teddy winked.

“I’ll make it up to you *later*.” Her eyes softened slightly for her girlfriend, a rare smile on her face.

“Ew.” He threw a wadded up paper towel and hit Cristina in the temple.

“Shut up, Evil Spawn.” She hissed, elbowing him in the gut.

“Altman, you saw that. Yang is interfering.” He pointed at Cristina. “Damn, why are your elbows so pointy?”

“Oh God, I need another grown up at this table.” Teddy muttered under her breath, rubbing her temples, already feeling a headache forming from their squabbling.

Mark plopped himself in the seat next to her, a crooked smile on his face, “I’m a grown up.”

Teddy stared at him, “Don’t make me laugh, it’s debateable.”

“Rude, Blondie.” He blinked, finally taking notice of the plates. “What uh, what are you doing with all the hot dogs?”

“Hot dog eating contest,” The other three occupants of the table said.

“That’s creepy.” Mark said, he took a sip of his soda. Chewing on the straw, his eyes lit up when Jackson came outside. “Avery, my man. Get over here and do Plastics Posse proud.”

“But I—” Jackson held his tray up.

“Avery, get in the chair.” Mark pointed at the table, his tone stern.

Jackson sighed and sat down next to Alex. “What are we doing?”

“Hot dog eating contest!” Everyone but Jackson said.

“Why?”

“Old times sake.” Cristina said, mysteriously, refusing to elaborate.

“Not cryptic at all, Yang.”Jackson mumbled under his breath.

“We need three more.” Alex complained, “Did anyone else respond?”

“No.”

“Not even Kepner?”

“*You* text them, then.” Cristina testily glared at him.

“Fine.” He dug his beaten-up phone out of his lab coat, and texted the group. A smirk on his face when he hit send.

Everyone's phones beeped.

Teddy curiously checked her phone, and she let out a snort. “Did you seriously text everyone, ‘get your asses in the cafeteria for hotdog day’? And with three exclamation points.”

“Yeah,” Alex shrugged.

April and Lexie came out together, no trays in hand. They walked over to the quickly overfilling table.

Lexie said, “There are no hot dogs.”

“Yeah, the cafeteria lady pointed us out here when we asked.” April scanned the table, noticing all the hot dogs. “Oh, you guys have them. Are you guys having a hot dog eating contest?”

“Yes, we are.” Jackson said and patted the seat next to him. “Wanna join?”

“What’s the bet?” April asked as she took the proffered seat with a smile.

Lexie sat to Mark, and she bashfully smiled at him when he dropped a hand on her thigh. She scooted her chair closer to his.

Cristina and Alex shared a look, silently making faces at each other. She tilted her head, and he sighed. “The losers pay the winner with how much money the hot dogs cost.”

“*Each* loser?” Lexie clarified.

Alex nodded. “It’s $90.”

April cackled, “I’ll play.” She got quiet, silently coming up with a strategy, waving off Jackson’s arm around her shoulder.

Jackson sighed and let her be.

“I’m sorry, you *spent* $90 on hot dogs?” Teddy said, her eyebrows furrowed.

“We went half n half. It made sense at the time when it was just the two of us.” Cristina said, not understanding the issue.

“We need one more,” Jackson said.

“We know.” Alex and Cristina said, exasperatedly together.

“Actually, you’re going to need two more. I’m not playing.” Lexie said, apologetically. “Food competitions aren’t my thing.”

“Seriously, Little Grey.” Cristina stared.

Lexie shrugged and offered. “I’ll eat any leftovers.”

“I can’t believe you two bought $90 worth of hot dogs without making a headcount first.” Teddy shook her head at them in disbelief.

“Let it go, Blondie.” Mark said. “The baby attendings want to have fun. You were young and reckless once too.”

“Oh, bite me.” Teddy snarked.

Mark raised his eyebrows, a suggestive smirk on his face, he leaned in towards Teddy, “I didn’t realize you and Yang—ow!” He whipped his head to Lexie, rubbing his upper arm. “You pinched me.”

Lexie narrowed her eyes at him. “Not even in jest.” She punctuated each word with a poke where she pinched him.

“Whipped.” Alex called out, a rare grin on his face.

“Shut up.”

April finally looked up from her plate, “We doing this or what?” She tied her hair up in a ponytail.

“Uh we’re waiting for people to get out here, Kepner.” Cristina said.

April tilted her head, “Well Arizona, Callie, Bailey, and Derek are in the middle of surgeries, Hunt is off, Meredith and Montgomery are in the pit doing consults, and Webber already had lunch.”

Teddy clapped and threw her head back laughing, “You two are so dumb.”

“How do you know that?” Cristina demanded—ignoring her girlfriend’s comment, she’d get revenge *later.*

“I checked the board and saw Meredith, Montgomery, and Webber on my way down here. Now, c’mon, I only trust residents so far with running the pit.” She impatiently tapped the table.

“Oh, calm down, Apes. What’s the worst they could do?”

April rolled her eyes At the nickname. “Let a trauma pregnant patient roam around the hospital without getting their c-spine cleared first.” She smiled innocently.

“That was one time.” Alex complained, pinching the bridge of his nose. “Who even told you that? It was before you two showed up.”

“Montgomery did. It was over at Joe’s.”

“Of course she did. She’s only too happy to point out stuff like that when she’s drunk.” He sighed.

“Hm, no.” April shook her head, “She was sober. She just likes complaining about you.”

“Why?”

“Because you’re annoying.” Cristina loudly whispered.

“You know what—”

Teddy whistled sharply, startling everyone, “Enough, you two.” She shot a withering glare at Alex and Cristina. “I have surgery in thirty minutes. I am opening the clock app and starting the timer, get your shit together.”

“Alright.”

“Jeez.”

Jackson grabbed a hot dog.

“Hey. No, touching.” Cristina scolded. Her game face was on and she wasn’t about to let any rulebreakings slide.

His blue eyes widened and dropped it back on his plate. “Yeah, sorry. Never done this before.”

April shot Jackson a predatory smile, and her eyes had a dangerous twinkle. She scooted to the edge of her seat, fingertips tapping nonsense as she waited for the go ahead from Teddy.

Alex taunted, “Don’t puke this time, Yang.”

Teddy looked up from her phone, her face etched in concern. “What…”

Cristina elbowed him again, “*Shut up,* Evil Spawn. Don’t worry about it.” She waved off Teddy’s concern.

Addison followed Meredith outside—a step behind her. “Why would they text us about hot dogs if there aren’t anymore left?”

“I don’t know.”

“It just doesn’t make sense. What if I wanted a hot dog?”

“Addie,” Meredith sighed, “You don’t even like the cafeteria hot dogs. Why are you so worked up about it?”

Her reply was lost as Meredith took in the scene before her.

Alex and Cristina taunting each other. Mark behind Jackson rubbing his shoulders, who was trying to shake him off. April had a serious look on her face. Lexie was just happy to be there, a soda in hand as her eyes moved from one person to another—committing this moment to memory. Teddy had her phone out.

But it was the piles of hot dogs that stopped her in her tracks. She remembered another time she had stumbled across her friends like this.

Addison bumped into Meredith’s back. “Hey, why’d you stop?”

“In three, two—”

“What are you guys doing?” Meredith said.

“Hot dog eating contest.” Everyone yelled together. Various glares were leveled at her for the interruption—ranging from mild annoyance to full irritance.

Addison popped out from behind Meredith, “They’re doing *what*?” She took in the scene that she had missed. Her upper lip curled when she saw all the cheap hot dogs piled in front of people, along with two plates filled with hot dogs belonging to no one.

“Mer, come on.” Cristina complained.

“You are so late, dude.”

“Big Grey, I had finally wrangled them into submission for this stupid thing—”

“—and you messed it all up.” Mark finished for Teddy. He straightened up and shook his head at Meredith. He rested his hands on the back of Jackson’s chair.

“Seriously,” Cristina turned to face her person, “How did you manage to arrive late both times we’ve done this?”

“And interrupt the start.” Alex complained, and he leaned on the back two legs of his chair.

“Wait, again?” Addison asked, she got out from behind Meredith and stood next to her. “You mean to tell me, they’ve done this *before*?”

“Yeah, our intern year, Satan. Keep up.”

Addison smiled mischievously at Alex, like she knew she had somehow already gotten under his skin—despite not seeing him since earlier that morning at Meredith's. "My, my, aren't you just a ray of sunshine, Karev. Did someone spit in your cornflakes again?"

Meredith laughed when Alex abruptly sat forward, the front two legs making a sharp noise on the cobblestones. "You two kept me up for hours with your giggling and—"

"Oh, ew." Cristina interrupted and put a hand over his mouth. "No one wants to hear that."

He licked her palm.

Cristina snatched her hand away. "Evil Spawn germs," She grimaced and wiped it off on his face.

Meredith shrugged unrepentantly, "Get some ear plugs." She grabbed Addison's hand and pulled her along to Mark's empty chair. She sat and tugged the redhead by the hips down onto her lap.

Addison went without a fight, a small pleased smile curved her lips when Meredith wrapped her arms around her waist. She relaxed into her warmth and curiously glanced at everyone.

"We doing this or what?" Mark barked.

"What's this *we*?" Jackson pointed out. "*I'm* the one doing this that *you* dragged me into."

"Details. Details." Mark rubbed his shoulders, he whispered in his ear, "You got this buddy."

"Let's go." April snapped her fingers. She raised her hands up, primed and ready to go.

"Alright, three, two, one. Go." Teddy started the clock.

Meredith propped her chin on Addison's shoulder and watched them with thinly-veiled disgust.

April and Cristina had similar ideas, they put two hot dogs in their mouths at the same time without the buns. Rapidly, chewing big bites and swallowing.

Alex ate half of the hot dog in one bite—bun included.

Jackson realized half-way through his first small bite that they were serious. His eyes were huge as he took bigger bites.

"Big bites, Avery." Mark said, he put his hands up in his own hair, a worried look on his face.

"Are you coaching him?" Teddy asked, a bewildered look on her face.

"He's my boy."

"Mark, he's a grown man."

“Red, you wouldn’t understand. We,” Mark gestured back and forth between him and Jackson, “have a bond. It’s sacrilege. It’s Plastic Posse. We’re gonna win.”

“Seriously,” Addison scoffed.

“You’re just jealous of the alliteration and not having a mentee.” He stuck his tongue out at her. “Yours would be Gynie—”

Addison scowled. She reached for a free hot dog and hurled it at him—before he could finish his sentence—hitting him square in the chest with a satisfying smack. She smugly grinned at his wide-eyed expression.

Mark caught it. He threw it back at her but Addison swatted it away from her face. It fell on Teddy’s lap, she had a look of thunder on her face at their audacity.

“Hey, no interference from you two.” Teddy scolded. “I cannot believe I got excited when she sat down.” She mumbled.

“Sloan, don’t provoke her.” Meredith chuckled and shot him a warning look.

“She makes it so easy.”

Addison made to get up but Meredith pulled her back down.

“Nope, you’re staying put.” She whispered in her ear.

Addison huffed, giving Mark one last glower before she glanced away. She winced when April shoved two more hot dogs in her mouth again. She had one left and all the buns on her plate.

Cristina had only picked up one that time, shooting intimidating glares at her competitors while she chewed. A fourth hot dog was in her other hand.

Alex was red-faced and a third of the way through his third hot dog.

Jackson was almost finished with his second when April grabbed her last hot dog. She ate one-handed and placed a water bottle between her legs to open it. She dumped half of the water over the buns, haphazardly putting it on the table—not bothering to cap it. She tore the buns into smaller pieces with her free hand.

Cristina’s eyes widened at April’s actions, making a protesting noise. She started doing the same actions with the bread—a hot dog behind her as she put the fourth one in her mouth.

Mark was biting his nails, bouncing on his toes. “C’mon Avery. Chew faster.” He muttered.

Lexie said, “Babe, let him be.”

“No. Plastics Posse doesn’t give up. We support each other to the very end.”

Addison scoffed and was about to open her mouth to comment when Meredith gently squeezed her sides in warning. “Fine.”

Avery looked green around the gills as grabbed his third hot dog. He hurriedly stuffed it in his face.

“Two minutes have passed.” Teddy announced to the competitors, “Who won last time?”

“Cristina,” Meredith answered, “Though barely because she puked it back up.”

Cristina glared at her person. She shoved the fifth hot dog in her mouth, quickly chewing as she tried to catch up to April.

“It’s true and you know it.” She pointed at Cristina.

April started grabbing the torn up buns by the handful, barely chewing them before she’d swallow.

Alex groaned at seeing her almost done as he ate his fourth hot dog, taking even bigger bites.

“They are insane.” Teddy whispered to herself.

April grabbed one last handful and shoved it down her face, not bothering to chew. She just swallowed. Around a mouthful, she crowed, “I did it. I won.” She stood up—the chair falling behind her—and waved her empty plate around for everyone to see.

Mark cried out, “No.” He placed his hands on his prodigy’s shoulders—roughly squeezing.

“Time. Two minutes and thirty-one seconds.” Teddy said.

Cristina’s protests were barely incoherent as she talked around a mouthful, “No, no, Kepner couldn’t possibly have won.”

April cackled, “I won, I won, I won.” She kicked the chair out from behind her as jumped up and down in a circle, waving her arms around and hitting Mark in the process.

Mark dodged away from the excited redhead only to find the other redhead of the group eyeing him again—he gave her a wide berth, staying out of her reach. He took refuge on Lexie’s other side.

“Big baby, I wasn’t going to hit you.” Addie said, a sly smirk on her face belied her words.

“I don’t believe you for a second.” He defensively crossed his arms.

Lexie suddenly had a worried look about being caught in the middle of them. “Hit him later. Not while you're next to me.” She glanced at Meredith and said, “Mer, hold her arms down too.”

Addison lowered her eyes, she said, “I can keep my hands to myself, Little Grey.”

“You famously can’t when he’s pissed you off.” Lexie shot back.

“Rude.” She crossed her arms.

Meredith quietly chuckled, “Sorry baby, she knows you well enough.” She kissed her cheek.

“I won.” April interrupted and took a swig of water, swallowing it, she gasped out, “Pay up.”

Alex and Cristina just looked at each other in utter defeat.

Teddy snickered, “You two lost so much money on this.”

Cristina shot her girlfriend a fierce glare, ignoring her, she muttered to Kepner, “I’ll pay you back tomorrow.”

Alex nodded, “Yeah tomorrow. We spent all our cash on the hot dogs.”

“Idiots.” Teddy said, a fond smile on her face.

Jackson grimaced, holding back a gag. He reached into his wallet and handed her a hundred dollar bill. “Keep the change.”

April snatched it and placed it in her pocket.

“Well done, Apes.” Addison congratulated her with a cheeky smile.

April stared, “Uh, thank you?”

Alex let out a loud snort, “Nicknames catching on.”

April pursed her lips, she had fire in her eyes.

Mark gave Jackson sad eyes, “I can’t believe you lost to Apes.”

“Seriously.” April waved her hand, staring incredulously at everyone.

Jackson sighed. “I don’t do food competitions. You know that. Apes…I mean April won fair and—”

It was too late. April punched him. “Shut up.” She was about to say more when her pager blared. “We’ll talk about this later. Residents did something stupid in the pit. The Trauma Team won.” She stuck her tongue out at Mark and stomped off.

“You two better pay her tomorrow.” Jackson threatened.

“Chill, Romeo. We will.” Alex said.

Teddy asked, “What are you gonna do with all the hot dogs?”

“I don’t know.” Cristina rubbed her forehead.

“You're such an idiot. I love you anyway.”

Cristina complained. “Not the mushy stuff in public.”

End Notes

Don’t lose your sparkle in the name of being a grown up with adult responsibilities. Stay whimsy and have fun.

Anyway, I just want everyone to know that while I was writing this, I did indeed have a hot dog over a campfire. Just in case anyone wanted to know.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!