

Fresh & Fancy

460 words | Established Relationship, fluff

Catria helps Artem shave, and then they kiss again.

Catria giggled, slightly breathless as she pulled back.

Artem had her pressed gently against the kitchen counter, his hands resting on her waist. Up until then, they had been kissing - slow and unhurried - but his stubble brushed against her skin, and she was unable to stop a soft laugh from escaping her swollen lips.

A little dazed from the kiss, he furrowed his eyebrows. "What's so funny?"

She bit her lower lip, looking up at him with wide brown eyes. "Your stubble. It tickles."

Artem exhaled through his nose, tilting his head to the side. "I shaved yesterday."

Catria grinned. "Well, it's back with a vengeance."

He huffed, but there was no real annoyance in it. Stepping away, he touched his jaw. "I suppose I should take care of it."

As he headed for the bathroom, Catria called after him. "Do you want some help?"

Artem paused mid-step, looking at her over his shoulder with a curious expression. "You want to help me shave?"

She shrugged, pushing off the counter and walking up to him. "Why not? It could be fun."

He hesitated for a moment, but didn't resist when she took his hand and pulled him along.

In the bathroom, Catria had Artem sit on the closed toilet lid while she stood between his legs, carefully lathering shaving cream onto his jaw. The foam was cool against his skin, and he watched intently, captivated by the way she focused on her task.

"You're taking this very seriously," he observed.

Catria smiled. "Of course. I don't want to mess up my masterpiece."

The corners of his mouth twitched upward. "Masterpiece?"

"Your face," she stated matter-of-factly. "It's a work of art."

Artem blinked, the tips of his ears reddening. "Flattery won't distract me from the fact that you've never done this before."

Catria sighed, rolling her eyes. "I *know* how to shave, Artem. Trust me."

He *did* trust her.

She reached over to the bathroom counter for the razor, tilting his chin up with a gentle hand. Sitting perfectly still, as if getting his photo taken, he watched. She moved deliberately, every stroke and flick of the wrist done with care.

Artem found the intimacy of it unexpectedly... pleasant.

Catria, however, was clearly enjoying herself far too much.

She hummed in satisfaction as she finished, dipping a towel into the warm water in the sink. Wiping away the remaining foam, she stepped back to admire her work. "Done."

Artem ran a hand over his jaw, testing it. "Impressive."

Her smile widened at the compliment. "See? I told you—"

Before she could finish, he leaned forward, capturing her lips in a kiss.

This time, when she giggled, there was no stubble to tickle her - only the warmth of his freshly shaved skin.