

COUNTING THE DAYS

A COUNTING
SHORT STORY

KELLY JENSEN

Author's Note

With two months to fill between *Counting Down* and the conclusion to Henry and Marc's story, *Counting on You*, I decided to do something a little different. This short story is comprised of texts I imagined the guys sending back and forth over that period.

People don't really pay attention to grammar when texting. I know I don't—and even when I do, my phone plays tricks on me, substituting words and turning commas into everything but.

For this story I decided to stick to the rules, mostly, for the sake of readability. Also, maybe it's an old person thing, but I tend to text in full words because I find them easier to type (or Swype) than an abbreviation. Marc and Henry probably know all the shortcuts, but we're going to pretend they're business-minded young individuals who value clarity over brevity.

Some of you will notice that I've often dropped the period off short phrases and the final sentence in a paragraph. I did this because that's how texting tends to work. I actually scrolled through my own texts to verify this and was sort of astounded to notice all the periods I *did* use. I don't usually remember using them. But I guess I do—and that's probably a good thing. ;)

Finally, Marc is always on the left and Henry is always on the right.

Okay, that's it! I hope you enjoy this extra peek into Marc and Henry's life.

<3 Kelly

The Counting series:

[Counting Fence Posts](#)

[Counting Stars](#)

[Counting Down](#)

Counting the Days

[Counting on You](#)

January 5, 8:47 PM

Marc

So, I was thinking about the BJ in the laundry

Henry

Hey, Henry. How was your day?
You still there?

Waiting for you to answer your question

What question?

How was your day?

You're so weird

You're the one who answered my text by saying
hello to yourself and asking *yourself* how
your day was

Because that's what you usually say when you
haven't talked for 3 days.
Not: I was thinking about the BJ in the basement

Laundry

Helloo!

Auttenberg

I was bashing my head against a wall

Not recommended

What about the BJ in the LAUNDRY?

I was more thinking about after.
When Luke walked in

Yeah?

How I freaked out

I was there

It's not that I was embarrassed

We talked about this. It's cool.
I get it

I just hadn't been in that situation before

Believe me, I know

What do you mean, you know?
Was it really that bad?

No

You can tell me if it was

Marc

What?

Not doing this right now

Not doing what?

Just tell me what you've been thinking about.
We can critique your technique another night.
When it's *not* night and I'm not tired

Not a great day?

Not really

Want to talk about it?

No, I'm fine

Maybe this isn't a good time

Are you banging your head against a wall again?

No, I was just thinking

I'm doing this all wrong. Going to start again:
Hey, Henry. How's things?

Things are good. Long day.
Was just about to go to sleep when this guy
started texting me

You think you're funny. Also, seriously?
It's like 8. Why were you going to sleep?

It's now *like* after nine and I'm tired

Let's chat tomorrow, then

We can do that

Night!

NN

Unless you really need to tell me something
about the laundry

Go to sleep. We can talk tomorrow

January 6, 6:14 PM

Hey

7:23 PM

Hey! Sorry, was at the gym

Working out?

Practicing my lock picking skills

??

Yes I was working out!

Did you silently append moron to that statement?

Why would I do that?

It's your tone. I always imagine you mentally insulting me after you state the obvious.

Hah. I guess I might. Sometimes.
I don't think moron, though. More like, duh

Huh

So what's up? Got time to talk, or are you
already in bed?

Haha. No. I'm always tired on Mondays.
Even more when I have to travel

Hell yeah. I know what you mean.
So how's Charlotte?

Surprisingly not warm

January

Yeah. Client feels good, though. You know how
sometimes you get this feeling they're not going
to work with you? Not getting that here

Even had a desk set up for me and a PA I can
share. He's an idiot and it's sad because he's
probably older than me. But what can I say,
he's gainfully employed

I ever tell you about the woman who insisted on
getting lunch for me when I was in NYC last
year?

First day I was like, sure, and gave her my order and maybe an HOUR later she gets back to her desk with a muffin. She's peeling the wrapper back and looking at the thing like it's going to come alive when I ask her about my sandwich. She forgot.

Offers me the muffin

So, 2nd day she asks again and I'm thinking, she can't forget 2 days in a row? I ask for tuna salad and she brings back chicken salad.

Chicken salad!

I like chicken salad

Chicken salad is disgusting

3rd day I head out 15mins early and get a tuna sandwich. I get back and there's a muffin on my desk.

A muffin! And the damn wrapper is peeled back on one side

Ew

Right? She was old, like grandma old.
I never saw her do any work

The PA is maybe 30 something? I dunno.
I'm bad with ages. He seems to work for the
whole floor.

I probably won't use him

That's because you're a nice guy. I'd have him
getting me sandwiches and muffins and files
I didn't need.

Yep

Because I am NOT a nice guy

It's okay, you can agree with me

I was trying to think of a way to say you're nice
without using the word nice

Because...

Don't worry about it.
Hey, I need to catch up on some work

Chat later?

Sure. Night!

NN

January 7, 2:35 PM

So about the BJ in the laundry...

3:07 PM

OMG, I was in a meeting with Shelly.
Nearly LOLed

Hah! Too funny
Got time to chat?

Sure. Let's talk BJs on B+Ms time. Did you send
your PA out for chicken salad?

No. Got my own lunch
So, the laundry. Sorry I forgot last night

It's cool. I was just, you know, thinking stuff
through. Like, what was going through my head
when Luke showed up. Or what wasn't?
Complete stand still.
Sort of

And then being such an ass

Which is kind of like you

Yeah. Anyway, I was thinking more about what you said. About how going upstairs probably wasn't a good idea.
But I wanted to do it anyway

We did go upstairs

It's been bugging me that we went upstairs.

Should we have just... not? You were really quiet after that. Then we didn't talk for 2-3 days? So...

It was my choice. I said we should go upstairs

Was it really your choice?

What are we talking about?

You thinking you bullied me into going to a party we nearly missed because of a broken elevator?
Or the fact someone nearly caught you with my dick in your mouth?

Both. And me using the B word

B?

Boyfriend

Hellooo?

6:23 PM

Hey, just got back to the hotel

And it's nearly your bedtime

Ass
Listen, about before. You're not the asshole
you think you are. Okay? And I might be...
Quiet. But you can't make me do anything
I don't want to do

You spend all afternoon figuring out a way to
tell me I'm nice without using the word nice?

Sending you the bill for the dent in this wall

Aw. Did you bash your head again?
I'll kiss it better for you
xx

January 9, 2:57 PM

Hey, looks like I'll be out of here tomorrow afternoon.

9:10 PM

Awesome. Want to catch up on Sunday?

January 10, 8:10 PM

Not sure when you'll get this. I'm packing for Atlanta. Flying out tomorrow. Earlyish

12:54 AM

How early is earlyish?

1:35 AM

You still awake?

1:47 AM

Just got home from the airport

OMW over

January 12, 4:50 PM

Okay, you've had two Winning BJ's now.
Can we talk technique?

7:31 PM

Capping Winning wasn't a mistake, was it?

You've met my ego

So...?

Are you thinking of ways to say nice without
saying nice? Coz if you are, don't. BJ's aren't
supposed to be NICE

It was really nice

OMG

What is your deal with nice?

Honestly don't know. Just...
I dunno

Throw me a bone here. This is all new to me and I want to know if I'm doing okay

Because I get BJs every Sunday morning at 2:30 AM. Lots to compare, right?

Hey, I don't know what your social life is like

Yeah, you do

Okay, I guess. You should go out more

Well, I would? But I have a boyfriend

What was that? Did you try to send me a picture?

Yeah. Doesn't your piece of crap phone do pictures?

Always gets messed up on text for some reason. Send an email?

Don't worry about it

What was it?

Oh God. Did you try to send me a dick pic?
Don't send that to my B+M account

Did you append moron to that statement?

FU. What did you send?

It was nothing. So, are we going to talk BJs?

What did you send???

I'm sighing so hard over here the whole hotel
can hear me. Concierge is banging on the door
asking me to quit sighing so loud. Seriously.
I made the hotel sway

Okay...

It was a picture of me smiling

Now I really want it.
Email it to me. Use my gmail account

nosociallife@gmail.com?

heyauttenberg

It's a stupid picture

It's a great picture! Why are you smiling?

Hellooooo?

Bec you said you had a boyfriend

January 14, 12:30 PM

So, BJ technique

1:04 PM

You knew I was in a meeting, didn't you?

I thought you might be at lunch.
I did think about texting you at 10 ;)

And you call me an ass

7:35 PM

Hey

Hey! Just picked up my phone

Busy day?

So so. You?

Kinda whipped

O.O

Whipped. Wiped. Same thing

Not really

And you would know?

Because all these random BJs I'm getting usually start with a little bondage

Know what I'm really interested in?
Why your mind went there

Right there

Instead of thinking I just felt like I'd been whipped. Which I kinda did in a metaphorical sense. Or thinking autocorrect might have been playing dirty with me

So are you into that sort of thing?
Just, you know, if you are,
we should maybe talk about it

Are you?

I asked first

Fine. No. I dunno. No. I mean...

No

I'm sensing some hesitation

Really?

Hehe. So, no?

Let's go with no

But you've thought about it?

I guess. In an abstract sense?
What about you?

My mom and my sister went to see that movie.
The 50 Shades one.

And you snuck in there with them.
Lurked in the back?

Did you touch yourself?

Who did you sneak in with?

I would rather choke on a dildo. Which I can't
imagine would be all that pleasant. Wow, can
you imagine having to go to the ER with a dildo
stuck in your mouth? If you got that far.
Like, you'd probably die first

You there?

Sometimes it's like I don't know you at all

We don't really know each other very well.
Not yet

I do know you can be...

Nice

OMG. Duck you. &*^%\$\$\$

You're laughing, aren't you?

:D :D :D

January 16, 8:04 PM

So, are we ever going to talk about my Winning Technique?

When you stop using the word Winning

Aw. Also, we never finished our 50 Shades discussion

We were having a 50 Shades discussion?

As one does

Hehe. Okay, answer is NO.
I did not sneak in. But I heard ALL about it.
Dad and I were... Sunday lunch isn't the place
to talk about stuff like that

I can so picture it. Your mom. Your dad. LOLOL

Right? They're pretty free thinking, but. Yeah.
Anyway, no, it's not my thing. Abstract sense?
Maybe. Like, I think I can see what it's about.
But I'm pretty content as I am. I just want...

To be with someone

I hear you. Same

Boring can be good, right?

Boring can be really NICE

We have so ruined that word. Meaning we should talk about your BJ technique now

Yes. By all means. Tell me how LOVELY it all was

You're a riot

TY

Both times have been really, really good. First time I came so hard I thought I was going to pass out

That's kind of hot.
It'd probably been a while, tho

Why do you do that?

Do what?

Talk yourself down or whatever.
It's not very Winning of you

Heh. I know. I don't know. I'm anxious

Yeah, it'd been a stupidly long while, but that
wasn't it. It was you, Marc. On your fucking
knees in front of me

How come your phone says ducking. Fucking!
Fucking phone. I had to add that to my
dictionary

I know. So dumb. Like they think if the phones
come with no language in the dictionary no
one will swear. Ever. Stupid fucks

You don't really swear. Much

Neither do you. Much. For someone who
wanted to talk technique, you sure change
the subject a lot

So me on my knees...

You have to know what that's like. To look
down at someone. See their mouth wrapped
around your dick. I don't know what it is.
The kneeling. The looking up. The whole deal

It's hot

So it could have been anyone down there

So insecure

All part of the Winning Technique ;)

Okay, this might sound stupid or whatever. I haven't been with a lot of guys. Not because I'm shy. So shut up. Because I've been too busy trying to be you. Remember that conversation? But for me it's always been about the person I'm with more than technique. If I cared about the person, a sloppy BJ would still be better than doing it with some random dude who sucked on billiard balls all day as practice

Before you get your nuts in a twist over the sloppy comment... that was not you. You were good. I knew you'd be good. You were hungry for it and you were curious and you have a cock. You know what feels good.
It was good, Marc. Really good

Second one was even better

TY

YW

January 15, 7:30 PM

You ever go to karaoke when you're out of town?

No one does karaoke like Mulligans.

January 16, 8:46 PM

So that's another week done. Got plans for the weekend?

I'll probably visit my folks. Mom hasn't done my laundry for a while. She's probably in withdrawal

LOL

You?

Probably work. This hotel sucks. Three cable channels with good reception. ALL ESPN. Kill me now

Is there a porn channel?

On demand. Dare me to?

How would it show up on the bill? Can you expense porn?

Good question. I'm going to do it. See what happens. Worst they can do is say, don't expense porn. I'll pay for it. Done and done

Ugh, this selection is really bad

Like... so bad. And none of it is even remotely gay

Well, duh. That's what the internet is for

Obvs. So what are some of your fave sites?

I don't have a fave. Read the titles you have on demand

They're dumb. Let's both watch something from your fave site

I love how you assume I have a favorite

Still waters

Mmmhmm. Sending you a link

Okay. Wow. I got hard looking at the front page. This stuff is seriously hot. Do you pay for it?

No, I don't watch enough. I usually just look around at the clips. Use my imagination and hand for the rest

Have you got toys and stuff at home?
OMG, do you travel with... stuff?

No I do not travel with STUFF

So when we're talking stuff, what are we talking about?

You're the one who brought up stuff. What are you talking about?

Hmm?

I'm researching so I don't sound like a total idiot when I list all the STUFF I don't have. Also really turned on right now

Yeah?

You're right. I don't need to watch any of this. Just thinking about it. Thinking about you. Are you hard?

Yeah

You're touching yourself, aren't you?

Yes

Shorts on or off?

Pushed down. You?

Pants off. Shirt off. Take your shirt off

Done

One hand on your cock. Other hand on your stomach. Move your fingers up and down. Obsv. on your cock. On your stomach too. Up to just under your pecs. Down to your hips

Not getting why this feels so good

Because you're not touching what needs to be touched. Except your dick. How are you stroking? Short and fast or long and slow?

Long and slow

Thinking about your hood. Sliding up and back. Squeeze there. Play there. Up and back. Just there. Cup your balls

What are you doing?

Same. With my naked dick. Fuck. Pretending it's your hand

Me too

Playing with my nipples now. Guy nipples are so tiny

Pinch one. That's my teeth

This would be better on speaker phone

Next time. I'm too close

Me too

10:20 PM

That was hot

I know. Fuck. Never come that hard on my own

Me neither. I'm going to pass out now

Me too. Night. xx

NN. xx

January 25, 12:30 PM

Did I leave my iPod at your place?

I didn't see it. Did you check the front pocket of your case?

1:30 PM

Aha! How did you know it would be there?

2:57 PM

Saw you put it in there when you got out of the cab

You watched me get out of the cab? Like, from the window. Were you waiting by the window for me to arrive? Or just randomly passing by?

I admit nothing

You were totally waiting

January 26, 10:03 PM

That was...

Even better on speaker phone

Who said we needed to be in the same city?

It'd be better in the same city. Same room, even

So now I'm picturing us sitting on opposite sides of the same room, jerking off, but telling each other what to do

And you're not thinking that would be weird?

No. It's not like we couldn't touch if we didn't want to, but not being able to touch, telling each other what to touch, could be a real turn on

Yeah, okay. I could see that

Just thinking about it is making me hard

Again? You just nutted

I'm picturing you sitting on the bed, dick in hand. Just the idea I can't touch you is getting me there

Tell me what to do

Lean back. Like on your elbows. Spread your knees. Long strokes on your cock. Root to tip

Can't believe how hard I am

Are you leaning against the headboard?

And trying not to think about who else has leaned here. Naked

Not now, Autzenberg
Spread your legs. I want to see your balls.
Under there

You mean my ass

Yeah. What should I call it?

My ass

Isn't there, like, a word?

Ass

You're a lot snarkier over text than you are when we talk

It's my super power

LOL

Okay, Super Snark. Show me your hole

Fuck

Touch it. Just your fingertip. Circle

Am I still stroking myself?

Yep. Is this what you do at home?

And in random hotel rooms

You've got lube with you, right?

Yeah

You know what to do

Don't want to get my phone all greasy.
Text you in a bit

I want ALL the details

We could do another call

No. I want it in text. How you touched yourself.
What you were thinking about

10:55 PM

I had to lay back. I did that, knees up and spread. Wide. I imagined your voice guiding my finger. Lubing it up. Touching myself in slow circles until the flesh around my hole puckered tight. Pushing inside. Feeling the grip and give. Do you know what that feels like yet? Have you touched yourself? You have, I know you have. I pushed in slowly. Just one finger. Still stroking. Up and down. Up, twist and squeeze, down. Squeeze. I got so close

You told me to use a second finger, so I did. ;) Came hard. Feel like a flat plastic bag right now. Which isn't... sexy. Whatever. DED

Also, if there's an emergency in the night and I die in my bed because I was too fucked to hear the alarm, I'm coming back to haunt you

BEST. BOYFRIEND. EVER.

January 27, 2:53 PM

When you get back to your room, shower thoroughly. I mean thoroughly. Soap up a finger and clean everything

Then get on the bed. On your back. Naked. Lube and a hand towel beside you. Lie back, knees up and spread. WIDE

Wait like that for five minutes. Imagine I'm looking at you. Telling you what I like

What I want to do
I want to suck you
Suck your balls
Lick your hole. Stick my tongue inside

Think about that. But **DON'T TOUCH YOURSELF FOR FIVE MINUTES**. Then lube up a finger. Circle. Push

You've done it before. I know you have. Even before we went to Chicago together, you were touching your ass. You wanted to know what it felt like, didn't you? Pushing your finger inside

Stroke your cock. It's really, really hard, isn't it?

Call me when you're done

4:10 PM

Holy fucking shit, Auttenberg. I nearly busted a nut in my meeting

Call you later

February 2, 6:30 PM

Hey, I'm kinda tired tonight. Going to call it early. Chat to you tomorrow

February 4, 9:37 PM

Just so you know, I haven't jerked off this much since high school

This is more fun, tho

February 10, 7:37 PM

I am wiped. Notice I did not say whipped.
Can't remember if I called you last night or
if you called me

Check your phone log. I called you

So you did. Hey, feel like just chatting tonight?
Not sure I could get it up if you were standing
naked in front of me hard as the proverbial
whatever and a list of instructions ten pages
long

Hehe. Sure. I'm kinda wiped too.
Notice I did not say whipped

How's it going over there? Where are you
again?

Back in Boston this week.
Probably for the rest of the month

I can dream

You're back in Atlanta?

Yeah. I think they sent me your PA. Wasn't he
down here somewhere? Late 30s. Looks like he
plays D&D in his spare time

I used to play D&D

Did you go to the park with your dorky friends and swing a sword around?

That's LARPing and one does not LARP in Dorchester

I have no idea what you just said

LOL

My friend and I dressed up for a ren faire once. It was cool. Do you ever wonder what it might have been like to live back then?

Then? I'm assuming you mean like medieval times

Sure

We wouldn't have been able to sleep together, right?

I dunno. I sometimes think people are more hung up on stuff like that now than they were back then. I mean, sure, there's been periods of history where homosexuals have been killed and tortured for even thinking about it

But there have also been times when people just didn't care, right? When it was natural to love your best friend in all the ways because life was short and it was up to you to find comfort where you could

Because that's what it's about, right? Being who you are. Why should that upset anyone else?

Because people are fucked up. Especially men. We have this idea of what it means to be a man and it's... when you pull it apart and lay the pieces down, it's ridiculous. It's stupid

Women have their rules too and... I get it? I mean, I know I'm a product of my society and a lot of what I think is stuff I've been taught to think, you know? It's really hard to deconstruct some of that

Yeah

So what did you dress up as?

Huh?

For the ren faire

Traveling bard. I wore purple pants. PURPLE. And carried a lute that was a seriously butchered guitar I bought from a thrift shop

Got a picture?

I'm sure my mom does. She has pictures of everything

I want to see it

I'll ask her this weekend

Do you visit your folks every weekend?

Not every weekend, but a few times a month.
Is that weird?

Nope. If I had folks like yours I'd live with them

No you wouldn't

Would. Get that picture for me

Yes, sir!

February 14, 6:30 PM

I can't believe you sent me flowers

Happy Valentine's Day

Thank you. Sorry I didn't send you anything except that stupid gif this morning

I liked the stupid gif and it's the thought that counts, right? I should have told you to take a picture of your face when you saw the flowers

Why?

The only picture I have of you is 14-year old Henry wearing purple pants

You have it on your phone??

It's my wallpaper

Please tell me you're lying

I wish I could

...

14-year old Henry is adorable. You weren't kidding about that guitar, though. Looks like someone sat on your lute and tried to glue it back together

Yep

Send me a picture of you now. Smiling

I just got back from a run

In February? Are you nuts? It's dark out there

It's never dark in the city and yeah I'm nuts

Still waiting for my picture

I said smiling

This one is worse. You look like someone stuck a finger up your ass

No I don't.
Unless it was an ice cold finger

That's better
You look like someone told you to smile, tho

And that would be because...

Okay, go take a shower and try again

8:25 PM

Hey, I like that one. Yes! Your smile is great

I look like a dork

Newsflash: you are a dork
Purple. Pants.

Don't make me regret sending you that picture

Aw. Don't be like that. I wouldn't have made it my wallpaper if I didn't like it

I'm really hoping you're lying about the wallpaper

Check your email

OMG MARC

:D

Dying

I hope that's laughing dying and not throwing yourself out the window dying

I'm imagining you explaining your wallpaper to someone who doesn't know me
Or even better, someone who knows me. OMG

Hehe. Okay, contact picture set. You are no longer Mr. Anon Gray Head

Yay?

You still have that picture of me?

Yep

Is it your wallpaper?

No, it's your contact picture

So it's my face on your phone when we're jerking off

And when we just talk. Yes

:)
So, wanna play?

Seeing as I can't thank you for the flowers in person...

February 16, 6:57 PM

Thanks for the book. You're such a dope

Read it cover to cover. There will be a test

Reading the kidnapping chapter now

Why would anyone need to know that tanks have a blind spot? It's kind of obvious, tho. Jesus, the main gun can kill with percussion only? Henry, why do you read books like this?

Hah! Found the trapped in the snow chapter. You were right about the seat covers!

;)

The self-defense chapter is really informative. Do you have any training?

Not really. Judo in high school?

We should do a class together

If we're ever in town at the same time, you mean?

It'll happen, Autzenberg. We just need to get through whatever hell this is. Shelly knows I want you on my team. We'll make it happen

Have you thought about why we've been sent everywhere separately since NYE?

I have

Do you think Luke said something about what he saw in the laundry?

I don't care if he did. We were on our own time

Are you having 2nd thoughts?
I thought we were having fun

We are. Shelly is probably just clearing our schedules, right?

She's testing us. It's what she does. We'll prove we're up for it. Whatever, wherever

Over, under, around or through?

You know it

You do that

I'll look into classes

February 20, 9:55 PM

Hey

Hey :)

That was...

Yep

Ever thought about trying to do it over video chat?

Yeah, but then I get all paranoid about someone hacking our laptop cameras or whatever

I wondered about that too

Just want to see your face when you come

Me too

Lots of people do the long distance thing

Is that a question?

It's me trying to figure out what we're doing

10:25 PM

You still awake?

We're doing what we want to do, right?

Are you asking if I want to do this?

Maybe we should talk about it when we don't have fuzzy orgasm brain

We could. Or I could just say right now that this isn't what I want. It's what I have right now

That sounded bad. Sorry

So, you're the one who usually does this. I'm probably going to mess it up. But... this isn't how it's going to be forever. I believe that. B+M likes us and when a company likes someone, they work to make them happy

We get good results. We just need one job together to show them what we can do, and we'll be a team

You know this
I know this
Shelly Flores knows this

Just one job, Marc

Until then, we have this. It's not perfect. It is what it is. But it's more than I've had in a long, long time. Even when we're not jerking off, I like chatting with you. I feel like...

We're friends. And that's important to me. I really like being your friend, Winnamore

What happened to the B word?

Boyfriend

Do you like being my boyfriend?

I just made a gesture here
My thumbs are sore from all that gesturing

You should use swype

Are you trying to piss me off?

No. Sorry. I'm...
Processing

Process away

I like this too. You're right. About all of it. I've never talked to anyone as much as I've talked to you over the past couple of months. And I like it. It's weird, but I like it

I like playing with you too
I just want more

But you're right about that as well
Damn I hate it when someone else is right

Because you're a Winner?

Hah

10:57 PM

Hey

I was nearly asleep

Sorry. Just wanted to say goodnight

I'm counting the days until I see you again,
okay?

Me too

And thank you. For listening. For talking.
For doing this with me. For all of it

YW

I'm kissing you softly. With tenderness that's
stupidly embarrassing, but it's just us. Only you
know I'm kissing you like this

Pulling you close. Letting you snuggle with me
xx

Night, Henry xx

Night, Marc xoxo