

~~Antoinette~~

She combed her hair over chest, and sighed. She was still dressed in the suit she wore, though she had dismissed the jacket, more comfortable in the white shirt and gray skirt. Sitting with one leg resting upon the other at the knee, she leaned back upon the couch in one of the many lounge rooms of her Elysium tower, and looked up at the ceiling. The holes had been drilled into the marble to house LEDs, and the wires that powered them hidden in the black and white stone. A ridiculous expense, and one she was glad to have spent. What use was immortality and fortunes upon fortunes, if one was unwilling to indulge.

Sighing all the more, she refolded her legs, and waited. Not long ago, her thoughts had been on how to share this indulgence with her love for years to come; him being a member of the Invictus made their relationship a touch complicated. Now, her thoughts were on hunters, monsters, werewolves, territory being fought over by short-sighted vampires, and the pain her love was suffering. Such was the ups and downs of ruling a city. There would be times of tranquility, such as after the death of Viktor and Tony, and again after the death of Lucas. And there would be such times again, once these hunters were dealt with, and this looming threat in her city crushed.

It seemed unlikely the Begotten would ever leave, even if Azamel died of her age. And the Uratha, she had to admit, were more equipped to deal with both the strange Azlu entities that had infiltrated her city, but also Black Blood. Oh, how she hoped Avery would end that infernal entity's existence. Could it be done? She did not know, and she dared not ask. Eyes and ears were everywhere, and she did not wish to let anyone know of her desire, lest they plot to undo them.

Far better for her to do as she always did, and manipulate the individuals and circumstances involved. Black Blood was not invincible, and if Antoinette gently nudged events into confrontation between the werewolves and Jacob's alien friend, perhaps her desire would be satisfied. If not, she could simply try again in the future. Such was the joy of indirect tactics and careful misdirection.

The hunters were the larger threat at the moment, and Avery's aid in hunting them down was paramount. The introduction of this shaman woman Elen had rendered the more passive approach futile, if she was capable of hunting targets with seemingly magical means. The introduction of a Begotten as a member of their group was even more problematic, as the monsters had many ways to both infiltrate, and affect places in ways the others could not. She could not rest until she had dealt with them, or had at least surmised a foolproof plan to deal with them.

And then, of course, was her love Jack. He should be here soon, and she could both inquire about the proposal to the Uratha, and perhaps gently nudge him to expose his secret to her.

She could ask, and the boy would tell her; such was his way, and his honest soul was part of why she loved him so much. But like a creature breaking free from their hatching shell, learning to break free of one's own barriers is important for growth. She would give him more time. For now.

The boy waved to her from the labyrinth hallway, and walked up to join her before sitting on the couch.

"Hi," he said.

"Hello," she said.

"I talked to Avery. She's down with pairing a pack member with these sweeper teams."

Smiling, Antoinette raised an arm, and let the boy snuggle into her side. "That is good. Impulsive and aggressive as she is, she is intelligent."

"She did demand to be the one who picks which Uratha go with which team of Kindred."

"Naturally."

"And... she demanded that the Begotten get involved."

Antoinette raised a brow. "That, I did not predict. She trusts the Begotten?"

"Eh, more of an enemy-of-my-enemy situation."

"And you spoke with Azamel?"

"I did. She's not happy about the idea, but she agreed. Fiona, Mark, and Athalia will help some of the sweeper teams."

"I see." She was happy the boy had taken initiative, bringing Avery's proposal to Azamel. And no doubt the boy had already reported this to Julias and the rest of the Invictus council. But, perhaps, not as content about the prospect of Begotten becoming yet more involved in their affairs.

"I think I got my work cut out for me, making sure everyone gets along." The boy nudged his nose and cheek into the side of her breast, and nuzzled into her. "I think it'll be alright, except for maybe a few of our louder Kindred causing a fuss." Again he nuzzled into her side, and brought in a hand as well, using it to touch her thigh as he pressed his cheek and nose into her closer breast.

The boy was being awfully forward with his desire, compared to usual. Ah, yes, she had enjoyed his touch earlier this evening, while also teasing him of awaiting pleasure in the future. Talk of

emotional trauma would salt the very soil she had seeded six hours ago; not a terribly fair thing to do to her poor little Ventrue.

Or perhaps, she was running from the inevitable pain of the conversation, and how she would be forced to look the boy in the eyes, his deep, honest, powerful eyes, as he confessed his rage and agony to her. And that could wait until tomorrow night.

Grinning down at him, she turned on the couch to face him, one leg hooked over the other as she leaned over him, and began to undress him. His face lit up like the fourth of July. “Interspecies romance grows in the city. Perhaps the tension between monster, wolf, and vampire, will not be as large as I fear.” With practiced hands, she slid him out of his jacket, tie, and shirt. The sight of his lean, defined form, his muscles and abs, and the way the Blush of Life brought color to his skin, earned another smile from her. She Blushed Life as well, and grinned down at the boy as she motioned to her chest.

Jack tried to undo her buttons as quickly as she had his, but his fingers fumbled on a few of them. Cute. And when he reached behind her to try and undo the clasp of her bra, he fumbled a few times as well. Adorable. Laughing, she waited and watched, and scratched his head as he at last freed her breasts. His eyes devoured her, and a groan escaped him, as he buried his face in the heavy teardrops.

“Which Kindred do you think most likely to cause problems?” she said, as she reached down and started undoing his pants.

“Jessy, undoubtedly. I know Joe from the Carthians has a big mouth. It wouldn’t surprise me if Hella causes problems, too.” With a big grin on his face, he helped her get him out of his pants and boxers, sliding them both off at the same time, and exposing his shaved-smooth pelvis, and growing erection. Out in the open, the lounge, with no walls to hide them, and the boy was ready for sex in seconds. She had utterly destroyed the sexual barriers he once had; delightful. She was sure there were more barriers to find, and break if she desired, but now, she could indulge in the sexual openness she craved.

She still wore her skirt, but tonight was about pleasing the boy; and there was a certain joy in remaining half clothed, while her partner was nude.

Smiling her best devil’s smile, she slid off of the couch, and got down onto her knees between his. She set her hands underneath her breasts, lifted the heavy pillows up onto his lap, and buried his raised member in the softness. Immediate groans from the boy, each sending a small shiver through her, spurred by the sight of his pleasure-laden face. In the past, he may have been overwhelmed by something so simple, and let his eyes close and head roll back, lost to delirium. Now, he stared down at

her and where her breasts pressed snug to his pelvis and thighs, as if looking away for a single moment would rob him of witnessing lightning in a storm.

“The three you listed, if you did not realize, are Gangrel.” She pressed her breasts together harder for a moment, and pulled another groan from her love. “They are quite a handful, I admit.”

“Handful... lot bigger than a handful.”

She rolled her eyes, and laughed. The look of almost desperate desire in his face was too precious, and that he managed a joke as he gawked at her, was equally wonderful.

To reward him, she leaned down, scooting her butt a little further back so she had the angle to encompass the swollen head of his length in her kiss. She tilted her head to the side, and looked up at the boy, as she both kept her breasts pressed into the groove of his pelvis and thighs, overflowing much of his body, as she suckled on his cock. Soft, gentle kisses, meant to build the pleasure, slow and tasting the sexual need that radiated from him.

Movement drew her eye, and she almost let the impulse to look spoil the moment. But, no, she kept her eyes on Jack as she lifted her head up, and leaned in forward, to completely engulf his cock with her breasts.

Natasha was watching.

The Mekhet had likely finished her work, and was going back to her room to read. Sunrise was soon, after all. She must have been walking past when the two lovers had drawn her attention, and like any Mekhet was prone to do, she cloaked herself in her Cloak of Night, and sneaked in to see what was happening. Mekhets, forever attracted to secrets.

But Antoinette’s habits with her love were no secret. If Natasha wished to watch, she did not need to cloak herself. Still, if that was what the girl needed, in order to find the courage to watch, then that was fine with the Prince. The little creature was a good fifty feet away, and only poking her head out from around the room entrance enough for her to watch. She likely thought she was far enough, and her discipline strong enough, to not be seen by a Daeva, even one as old as Antoinette. Silly girl.

“Do you know what the teams will be for the Invictus?” she said, before she leaned down, and again set her lips onto the boy’s cock, keeping it wrapped in her breasts so only the glans was exposed.

“I uh, probably either a Nos or Mekhet in each team, for Obfuscate. They’ll probably keep us Right Hands together, and have us exploring the more suspected zones.”

She nodded as she kissed and licked, before she started working her head up and down. Keeping her mouth tight and snug on the sensitive head of his cock, as she forced her kiss to work back and forth over the base edge of its swollen girth, was enough to have the boy trembling in moments. Precum leaked from the boiling glans, and she kissed it away.

Perhaps it would be fun to put on a show for Natasha? Smiling around his cock, she lifted her head, and used both hands to begin kneading the heavy pillows together. Large as they were, and her so close to Jack's body, kneeling between his knees, each time she pressed her breasts together as a forward wave, they spilled over her hands, and onto his thighs and abs. Each forward press buried his cock completely, causing gentle friction of her silk skin along his glans. In minutes, the boy began to orgasm, and he reached out to hold onto her shoulders as he did. His first gush of cum managed to squirt upward with force, and she licked her lips as she felt the thick warmth coat her neck and under her jaw. The next was lost to her breasts as she squeezed them together with her hands, burying his glans proper, and ensuring each new gush of cum coated them from within. Several more waves followed, each contained and hidden between her breasts, until it began to drip down her stomach.

"I... I'll try and... stop Jessy from... getting into fights with whoever we're working with." Poor boy, panting and squirming with pleasure, completely unaware Natasha was watching.

"Come, stand for a moment, so I may lie down for you," she said as she let go of her bust, leaned back so the cum-soaked, heavy breasts slid off of him and impacted against her with gravity — as intended — and stood.

The boy hopped up, big grin on his face. A prime moment for Antoinette to turn, and glance Natasha's way.

Oh? The girl's head was inching about, easing back and forth a bit. And her shoulder were lifting up and down ever so slightly. Ah, yes, it was a motion Antoinette recognized immediately. The girl was touching herself, masturbating, using the wall as a barrier to hide what her hand was undoubtedly doing underneath her skirt.

Natasha's eyes went wide when she realized Antoinette saw her, and wide again, when she realized Antoinette knew what the little creature was up to. The power of a little eye contact, and a subtle grin.

As Antoinette sat down, she offered Tash two unspoken words, each single syllable, each easy to read upon silent lips: come watch.

She did not wait to see how the little Mekhet reacted. A little suspense, a little mystery, it all added to the joy and thrill of such open expression. Grinning all the more, she rolled onto her back, set her head upon the arm of the couch, and held out her hands for Jack. His grin was equally large, and he climbed up onto her so he could straddle her waist.

To her lover's delight, she brought her hands up to her collar, setting them over top where her breasts connected at the top of her chest. This way, her elbows were brought in, and each arm forced her breasts up to sit on top of her chest, instead of falling to the sides with gravity. More than enough of a signal for Jack to lean forward, his knees outside her arms on the couch, and slip his length into the crevice underneath and between her breasts. With his own cum as lubricant, the boy let out an obvious groan as he set his hands around the outside of her breasts near her elbows, and held them, pushing them together, as he sank his cock balls deep into the crevice.

"My love," she said, smiling up at him, "how goes your training with Julias?"

"It... it's um... going well. Getting better at Resilience. Should be able to use vitae to keep my body together a bit easier." His eyes drifted between her gaze, and where he was easing his cock back and forth between her bosom. With his torso leaning forward somewhat, he managed to keep the angle of his shaft aligned with her chest, and the pressure of her breasts pressed together by both her arms, and his hands, was enough to keep it secure. It would not slip out, giving the boy the leeway to gently fuck her breasts without anyone having to hold his cock in place.

"That is good. Julias is quite the master of Resilience. It takes much to damage him properly." She licked her lips as she watched her lover rock his body back and forth, the tip of his length appearing for only a moment, whenever his pelvis pressed against the undersides of her bust. He was moving hard enough to make her breasts ripple with each impact, gentle but not overly so, and she chuckled at the feel of it. The heat of his cum and girth along her skin was pleasant, but it was the look of rapture on the boy's face as he stared at her body, that had her cravings for more build.

Movement, in the corner of her eye. Oh? Antoinette kept her eyes on the boy in front of her, on his beautiful, naked form, and the joy dripping from his gaze, while peripheral vision allowed her to track the movement of the spying Mekhet. Natasha's masterful use of Cloak of Night was enough to fool all eyes except for another Mekhet using Auspex, or a Kindred as powerful as Antoinette. She'd have no trouble hiding her presence from Jack as long as she did not get too close.

This was quite a growing moment for Natasha. The girl was standing off to the side, maybe fifteen feet away, and was staring, jaw dropped and unable to close. She was no longer masturbating, but that

was undoubtedly too far a leap out of Natasha's comfort zone for the little Mekhet to handle. Perhaps, in the future, the Prince could change that.

“Coat my nipples, my love, when you cum.”

Groaning again, the boy nodded, and started thrusting faster, both his hands holding her breasts snug around his cock, their size spilling over and around his hands and wrists. After another minute of consistent, gentle thrusts, he let go of one of her breasts, though it remained where it was, kept snug by her own arms. The free hand took his cock instead, and guided it up onto one of her breasts, to begin rubbing his dripping, engorge glans upon her swollen areola.

Immediate sparks pulsed out from the swollen nipple and into her chest. Antoinette half closed her eyes, and made a deliberate moan, picking the right pitch, the right timbre, the right volume, to have the boy melting. He continued to rub his glans against her nipple, and did not stop as a gush of his thick cum washed over it; less of a squirt, and more of a heavy wave tonight. She watched the ripe head of his shaft let loose another wave of his hot, thick cum, and another, coating her nipple as he circled it with his length's tip, before he slid his cock along the silky skin of her breasts, and onto her other nipple to continue the same treatment. The touch of his wet glans pressing and rubbing against her aching nipples was heavenly, and she sighed joy again as his rubbing earned a few more gentle, warm sparks of bliss that reached into her chest, and inched their way down toward her sex.

“Now, resume as you were before,” she said.

“Yes ma'am.”

Perfect. With her puffy areola thoroughly coated in cum, she eased her elbows down a little, and her hands down her bosom farther, before taking her nipples into her palms. With almost milking motions, she squeezed around them, lightly pinched her nipples, and put pressure around the whole of her areola, before she eased up, tracing her fingers around the aching buttons. With the boy's hot, white fluid coating it all, it made her touch divine, and she offered the boy another calculated moan, to entice his arousal yet again, as she masturbated with her breasts.

He leaned in, took her breasts into his palms on the outside, and again pressed them together as he guided his cock into the crevice they created. As he resumed fucking her bosom, she pleased herself with them, knowing exactly how much pressure, and exactly what motions to use, to make the tingling waves build.

Natasha moved in closer. Her mouth was still open, her whole head blushed beet red, and despite herself, one of her hands stroked one of her nipples through her shirt. Wonderful. Sometimes Antoinette

wondered if her student realized her Prince's attempts to spread sexual openness were not empty words. No doubt the child would be terribly embarrassed later, and Antoinette would again have to explain there was nothing to be embarrassed over. Jack would not mind, if she told him; and she eventually would.

"And Dominate, my love? How do you practice?" She shivered as the waves of pleasure built up more, and she eased off of her play for a moment, before she resumed. Squeezing, milking motions around the whole of each areola were delicious when her breasts were wet, and she pulled her hands forward onto the nipple, where she traced and teased, circled, and ever-so-gently pinched.

"I... I've been... having mental battles with Julias every so often. I still can't get him."

"It would be a wonder of the ages if you could dominate your sire at your age, my love. Your skill grows rapidly, but temper your expectations." Once she resumed caressing her nipples, it did not take long to earn the sparks again, and upon that, the waves that coursed down into her chest, down further to her sex, and then outward. She licked her lips as she met Jack's hypnotized gaze, and a few quivers worked up and down her thighs and arms, as the pleasure tremors spread into her thighs. Despite herself, she closed her eyes for a moment as the unique sensation echoed through her chest and core, before she looked up to Jack and his enraptured gaze.

Natasha's eyes widened, perhaps more than Jack's, and she stared all the more. To orgasm from breast play was perhaps a unique concept to the little Mekhet.

"Y-Yeah, but... I still wanna." Jack slid his length out from between her breasts, and once again set his glans upon her nipples. Smiling down at her, staring at her, drinking in her gaze, his eyes slid down to watch himself as he masturbated slowly, and took the time to rub his boiling hot glans around her swollen areola. "I... I think I... think I could use some practice with you, too. With my Disciplines, I mean."

The sparks hit her immediately, skin sensitive from orgasm, and radiating pleasure all the more as her love pressed down on each nipple, taking the time to half bury the head of his cock into the softness of each breast.

"I will take that challenge, my love." Chuckling, she pressed her soaked breasts together as she buried her nipples with her white-covered hands. "Again. And this time, keep your eyes closed."

"Um, yes ma'am." With a moan, he set his hands outside her breasts again to hold them in snug against his thighs and pelvis as he hid his cock between them. "Three times? Thought you'd want me to try and stop using my vitae so much to fuel sex."



“Three is not so large a number to worry over. And tonight is special.”

“It is? Why?”

“I will tell you in the future.” Chuckling, she lifted a knee and nudged it against the boy’s back. “Eyes closed.”

With a nod, he closed them, and began to gently rock his body back and forth, fucking the very well lubricated sleeve of flesh he made of her breasts. Perfect.

She looked Natasha’s way, and smiled. The girl was still dumbfounded. Why were so many so shocked by sexual expression? There were cultures in the world that had sex in public as often as they ate their meals. The absurd notion that nudity and sex had to be kept behind closed doors bothered her to no end.

Antoinette could order her student to come closer, but that would be crossing a line. If Natasha wished to explore sexual boundaries, it was something Antoinette could only encourage, not force upon her.

The order to have Jack close his eyes bolstered the girl’s courage, though, and the tiny Mekhet took a couple steps closer. Now, she stood only five feet away, in front of the couch, and her eyes were locked onto Jack. He was an attractive man, to be sure, and his defined muscles and lean frame were on quite the display as he worked toward his third orgasm. Slow, controlled thrusts, that had both women admiring how his defined musculature flexed with each motion, and how delicious a sight it was when he took a moment to keep his cock balls deep within the crevice of her breasts.

The Mekhet’s eyes drifted down his body, and glanced Antoinette’s way a few times with skittish eyes, before they stopped on her breasts. Jack was clutching them snug to his body, and large as they were, his hands had almost disappeared into their softness. Much of his inner thighs were covered in them, and so too was the entirety of his pelvis. It made the ripples his thrusts sent into her bosom quite blatant, and Antoinette made another purposeful moan, as she looked the body’s flexing body up and down. As old as Antoinette was, with a long second life that had been filled with sex of every sort, there was something still terribly arousing about the sight of a man’s abs, easing back and forth, and burying his cock into her sex; or in this case, her breasts. Arousing became carnal hunger, as she looked up to his face, to find his mouth dropped and head aimed downward, pleasure etched into his closed eyes.

No longer tingling with the blissful remains of climax, she set her hands about her large, cum-soaked nipples once more. As she began to masturbate with the swollen points, gentle milking motions that squeezed from areola toward her nipples’ tips, she offered Natasha another smile. The little Mekhet

was fucked with aggression, heat, mass, depth, and wild abandon, nigh every night by her boyfriends, no doubt. It was a joy to show the tiny creature that sex could be much different. It could be soft, gentle, slow, and focus on a man enjoying the unique softness of a woman's body, rather than the woman being overwhelmed with pleasure by hard, ravenous men. Instead of burning heat, it could be calm, soothing, and a quiet moment between two lovers — or more — wishing to indulge in nothing more than the tender touch of each other. It was sex that could last hours.

They did not have hours before sunrise, but Jack, perhaps psychic, decided to slow down anyway, and eased his thrusting to tempered speeds. He kept himself balls deep within the crevice of her breasts, and breathed deep as he no doubt focused on the silkiness of her wet skin pressed snug around his cock and its swollen, dripping tip. He inched his knees a little further forward, causing her breasts to rise higher up on his thighs, pelvis, and against the base of his abs, as if the boy were desperate to feel the weight of them upon his body.

His hands drifted over her bosom, and found hers. Ah, he wanted to use his thighs to keep her breasts together. With eyes still closed, he mingled his fingers with her own, found her wet nipples, and offered them small pinches, pinches she had long taught him to master with correct pressure and softness. And as he massaged them, caressed and teased them with his fingertips and his cum, she milked her areola from outside his touch, working her hands around in subtle circles, as she slid her grip in toward her nipple with gentle, squeezing hands. The tingling waves of bliss built once again, and she sighed joy as a tiny quiver worked down her body and into her thighs.

She came. With another perfected, practiced moan, she smiled up at the boy's shut eyes as she felt the sparks work into her chest, and down toward her dripping sex. She kept her eyes open, but only partially, enough so she could both watch the boy continue fucking her breasts with his slow, controlled motions, and so she could watch Natasha. As she teased herself, continued to caress her her nipples, careful to keep her touch light as the sparks of bliss danced along them and into her chest through her climax, she offered a gentle grin for Natasha. A student of hers, of the Ordo Dracul, and perhaps, if the small woman was open to it, a student of sexuality.

Not that she planned to invite Natasha to her bed, but with how the tiny Mekhet was staring, frozen, entranced, it was clear to see the woman was interested in sexuality and sexual expression far more than the old Natasha would have ever admitted. To see her watching, from only five feet away, eyes locked and body almost trembling at the sight of Antoinette masturbating with her breasts, was delightful. She would have to thank Jessy, for opening her new student to new worlds.

When a wave of white began to leak out of the crevice of her breasts, and flowed up onto Antoinette's neck, Natasha quivered, and stepped in a little closer. Her eyes were locked on both Jack's lean body, and down where his glans poked out a sliver with each gentle thrust. Each time it did, a heavy gush of his white cum flooded up onto Antoinette's neck, around her collar, and down around the top curve of her breasts.

She let go of her nipples, and instead used her hands to push her breasts together tighter, earning a groan from her lover as he continued thrusting. The friction of her breasts along his length and glans, wet and tight, was more than enough to have the boy cumming more, and releasing his fluid over her body with each thrust. It pooled underneath her throat, in the dips of her collar bone and shoulders, and between her breasts, before it overflowed and spilled past her shoulders and onto the couch. Natasha leaned forward, and stared down at the mess of cum that now coated the Prince's neck and shoulders, completing the coating of white, and painting her a heavy necklace. The boy's sex drive was vast, and his ability to use his Kindred body as a conduit for it, divine.

If she was not careful, she would have him addicted, as per the stories she had described.

She nodded toward Natasha; more than enough signal for the Mekhet to run away. The little creature slipped away, Cloak of Night masking her footsteps. Only once she was back out in the hall, did she peek around to look at them again. Smiling like a child who had stolen a cookie, she offered Antoinette a small finger wave, before disappearing. No doubt on a quest to find her boyfriends and indulge. Antoinette had expected the look of embarrassment to be glued to the Mekhet's face, not be replaced with a smile of wonder, awe, and mischievousness. Miss Vola had grown quite a bit, in mere months.

Antoinette sat up. "You may open your eyes, my love."

Jack's gaze looked up to her, and she met his green, deep, overwhelming eyes with her own. "Eyes closed? Was someone spying?"

Oh my. Perhaps she had been a fool to expect he would be oblivious.

"Indeed. Natasha was walking by, and I created the opportunity for her to witness our love making. Does that offend you?"

Laughing, he shrugged. "Nah. I think you've destroyed any shyness or shame I may have had." The boy slid off the couch, and spent a moment looking down at his body and the cum that coated his length, testicles, and pelvis, before he turned to look at her. Even as his length grew flaccid, he licked his lips as his gaze devoured the sight of her torso dripping with his seed.

“My love, only when you and I perform such an act in the center of one of my banquets, for all Kindred, and Begotten and Uratha, to witness, would I consider that true.” And even then, she was sure there were more barriers to destroy, if they ever desired to. Chuckling, she ran a finger down her breast, from neck to nipple, trailing through the layers of cum, before she lifted the digit.

“I uh... m-maybe... in... decades?” The boy was hypnotized, staring at how his fluid connected to her, from fingertip to nipple in a long strand. So precious, her little Ventrue.

This boy, young man, her little Ventrue, had an angry side to him? It was difficult to imagine Jack, as he stood there with his deep, green eyes staring at her topless body with hunger and wonder, could summon such depths of rage.

But she did have to ask. Later.

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~~Julias~~

“I love you.”

“I love you too.”

“Awww!”

Julias and Triss looked over at the other Ventrue in the bed, and both rolled their eyes. The three of them were on his bed in the bunker, and despite Julias and Jen having been thoroughly satisfied, the two Ventrue had just finished making sure Triss was satisfied, too. Probably a good idea. She’d been ready to sink her claws into the two of them, if they didn’t.

Now, he was spooning against Triss, holding her close to him, one arm pressing elbow down into the bed so he could hold his head up on his palm. His other arm hugged the scary woman to his chest, and a finger gently traced lines up and down her stomach, sternum, and around each pierced nipple. He leaned in, planted a kiss on her neck, earning a quiet mewl from her, before he lifted his head, and resumed smiling down at the amazing woman.

The three of them were under the covers, too, though they only had the blanket pulled up to their hips. No need to care about getting cold or uncomfortable, especially when the sun eventually decided

to rise and knock them out. You didn't feel anything in torpor, except for the most extreme disturbances. But by the time you realized you were on fire, it'd be too late to do anything about it. Hence, the safety bunker.

Jen was on her side, facing them, big smile on her face, eyes filled with wonder as she watched Julias lean down again, and kiss Triss. He used his hand to guide her chin up to him, and she smiled before their kisses met; though she kept her snake eyes open a bit, so he could see the joy in them. Happy as a clam. And the sight of her being so damn happy, such a huge change from how she was just over a year ago, filled him with joy. Felt like a fluttering in his chest.

His fingers drifted down to her crow skull necklace, and he nudged it a couple times, appreciating the weight of it. "Creepy."

"You mean badass," she said.

Jen nodded. "Very." The Ventrue slipped in a little closer until she was almost touching chest-to-chest with Triss, before she leaned in, and planted a kiss on her friend's chin. "You need the necklace on all the time?"

"Just for the one ritual. Which reminds me." Sitting up with a bounce, Triss gave Jen a slap on the butt, before she hopped off the bed and walked over to the door. Both Ventrue sat up and watched her, though as she started working a knife on her hand to split the skin, Julias turned his attention to the woman beside him.

Jennifer Denver. Four secrets down. He smiled as his eyes drifted up her body, and took a moment to admire her heavy breasts hanging underneath her chest like teardrops, as Jen was sitting while leaning forward, elbows on her knees. Raven hair to her shoulders, like Triss's, and similar height. They could be sisters. Beatrice was the sister who went to beaches and worked out a lot, got a tan, abs, tattoos, and piercings. Jen was the sister that went to balls and banquets, and made friends with the rich and fashionable.

Two sisters. Was that one of his kinks? He didn't think it was, and yet here he was, sitting next to someone who looked quite similar to his love. It was so decadent and indulgent a fantasy, he almost felt guilty.

He slid back a foot, and crawled in behind Jen.

"Oh?" She looked over her shoulder at him, and grinned a succubus grin. Yeah, she'd get along with Antoinette, if the two ever tried.

He put his legs around hers, and wrapped his arm around her torso, while the two of them watched the naked Triss paint his door frame with her blood. She wasn't small, but he was a tall man, broad, and had no trouble putting his chin on top of her head as he squeezed her close.

"You seem to adore romance," he said. Every time he kissed Triss with his 'I love you' kiss, if Jen was nearby, and she often was, she made that 'awwww' sound.

"I do." Nodding, she leaned back, and rested the back of her head against where his shoulder and collar bone met. She offered him dreamy eyes, too, though he could see they weren't for him. They were for something else. Not someone else, but, something else. "Wanna know secret number five?"

"Hit me." If he had to guess, she was going to tell him about where she picked up her love of romance, and why she found it so intoxicating, despite not wanting it for herself. First woman he'd ever known like that.

"When I was a young woman, I read a lot of romance novels. It was good escapism. But, I always found the characters terribly idiotic."

"Same," Triss said, changing from post to post of the door frame. "So I stopped reading them."

"I didn't." Nodding, Jen leaned back as she set her legs straight out on the blankets between his, and nudged her nose into his jawline. "I always found it magical, enchanting, and addicting, to read about two people falling in love. But, I never put myself into the shoes of whoever I was reading about. I don't know why, honestly, stupidity of the characters aside. I didn't want to be the princess rescued by the knight, or the college girl who discovers love with the college boy. Didn't want to be the cold business woman who finds she'd be happier in the arms of the poor guy. Didn't want to be the queen who seduces a demon, falling in love by accident."

"Some of those sound specific," Triss said, finishing up with the door.

"Yeah, I was addicted, and read a lot of those trashy books. Then I discovered erotica, and those quickly replaced most of my romance novels." With a long sigh, she pushed her back against him a bit more until he was sitting a bit straighter, and then she guided his hands off her arms, and onto her breasts. He should have expected that. "And, there was this one particular story, that turned me on so god damn fucking much."

He smiled down at the Ventrue in his arms, still with her head in the nook of his shoulder and neck. Triss crawled onto the bed, and lay on her back between Jen's legs, head resting on Jen's pelvis so she could look up at them. The smile on her lips grew to a grin, as Julias started to gently massage the heavy, soft pillows filling his hands. The three of them had spent a long while having sex and

satisfying each other, and now was a good time for relaxing; Jen just happened to like having her breasts massaged, and her nipples caressed, when she relaxed. Pampered princess.

“What story?” Triss said, staring up at Jen, green snake eyes wide and waiting.

“It was about a king and queen, and a slave girl. In the story, the king and queen were a loving couple, running a nice kingdom, in a medieval world. They didn’t know a slave market existed under their noses, and when they found out, they dismantled it and saved the slaves. The girl’s parents were dead though, so the king and queen took her into their service. And as the story progressed, the girl, a very young woman by this point, sort of ends up in their bed.” Sighing again, eyes closing as she waltzed through her memories, she reached down for Triss, and started caressing her neck and shoulders. “I was fifteen when I read that book, and it awoke my sexual appetite like an erupting volcano. Something about a loving couple with a healthy sex life, pulling in someone inexperienced into their bed, someone young and impressionable, someone like I was then? I masturbated the whole day away first time I read it.”

Laughing, Triss reached up and poked the girl in one of her breasts with a claw. “Not sure Julias and I really fit that description. Or you, for that matter, slut.”

Jen slapped her hand away, and set both hands flat on Triss’s face, covering it. “Back then, I was an innocent flower.”

“Uh huh,” Triss said from underneath her new finger prison.

Julias smiled down at the woman as he continued caressing her soft skin. This was an aspect of a Kindred-on-Kindred relationship he rarely experienced. Talking about their pasts, coming to terms with who they used to be, and who they were now? It was a powerful topic for Kindred, comparing who they used to be and who they had become, a topic lost to them as they got older and their memories blurred.

He said nothing. Jen could remember her past in great detail, young as she was, and he wouldn’t rob her of the opportunity to talk about it.

“I don’t know why I never wanted to be the couple, to be the queen or wife or girlfriend or whatever. But when the story described the young girl, a virgin and terribly uneducated in the ways of sex, getting caressed and fondled by the king and queen, it was like a fire lit inside me.” She leaned a little higher to kiss Julias on the neck, before she slid her hands off of Triss’s face, and one idly plucked at some of her crocodile teeth. “I remember a scene in particular. The girl, sitting, leaned back against the queen’s stomach, head between her tits. In the story the girl was really tiny, so when the king started to penetrate her, the author took the time to describe in excruciating detail every aspect of the very large

man penetrating the tiny woman. And as she's slowly getting penetrated by this enormous cock, her hole stretched to the limit, the king's being super slow and gentle the whole time, while the queen's caressing her body, teasing her nipples and clit, and being very affectionate." The woman shivered in his arms, kissing his neck and jawline again as she groaned with the memory. "First time I'd ever read a romance story where I wanted to be one of the characters."

"Surprised you never found ghouls who were a couple," Triss said. "Lot of couples in Dolareido you could ghoulify, and maybe indulge that fantasy with."

"I didn't think I was strong enough for ghouls while I was a Carthian; and it took years to develop the courage to make some. And in the Circle, I figured it'd be a bit... awkward, to indulge that fantasy, with ghouls."

Indulging any romance with ghouls was often a mistake. The addiction and reliance on Kindred blood wasn't the issue, it was the way it altered the mind. Ghouls loved their masters, obsessively, and that didn't always end with a devoted servant. It often did, but Julias knew of Kindred who tried to turn living romantic interests into ghouls, and it not end well. Obsession never did, and love was dangerous at the best of times, deadly at the worst. Turning two people who loved each other, into devoted ghouls to a Kindred, definitely seemed like playing with fire.

Antoinette likely kept her two ghouls as friends, and made it clear that they would forever be only that. If he had to guess, she'd probably made the mistake when she was younger, romantic attachments to ghouls, and had learned from it.

"But this," Jen said, gesturing to Triss and to Julias, "is pretty damn close." Chuckling up at him, she kissed his neck again, a smaller, playful kiss.

"I know, right?" Triss said. "Love the feel of a big dick stretching me open."

Rolling her eyes, Jen set her hands on Triss's face again. "I meant that you two love each other, and you let me get inside that. Like, letting me in on a precious little secret."

"Besides, Triss," Julias said, "you got toys a lot bigger than me." He was a big guy, well endowed and happy to be, but Triss had an appetite, and the two of them had had fun trying to fit very large things into her very tight holes. And they'd succeeded, too. Joys of being a vampire, no aches to worry about for the next day.

Jen reached up and gave him a gentle pat on the cheek, and then a not-so-gentle pat to follow. Ow. "Yes, the sex was a big part of what made the fantasy addictive when I was a teenager. Then I got older, and realized it wasn't the sex I was craving."



“You sure?” Triss, peeking through the cracks in Jen’s fingers, reached down for Jen’s feet by her hips, and pulled them up onto her thighs, before she idly stroked and caressed the smooth skin. “You were getting laid more than I was, when I first joined the Circle.”

“Sounds like everyone in the Circle embraces hedonism,” he said.

Jen laughed and shrugged. “Yeah, you could say that. Othello and I in particular.”

“Mmhm.” Triss sat up and turned around, sitting on her butt and pulling her knees up to her chest as she scooted in closer to sit between Jen’s and his legs. “Had a bunch of times where I was trying to talk to Jen, and she was in the middle of a threesome. And Othello, couldn’t find him without his dick up some kine’s ass. At least Aaron keeps it in his pants.”

“Ah, Julias, you should have seen it. Poor Beatrice was struggling like a child in a candy store who made a promise to their mom to not touch. You should be proud of her, resisting us.”

“Power of love,” he said, chuckling. “I have to admit, I’ve been in a lot of sexual situations since I accepted becoming a Kindred, but never in an environment like that.”

Nodding, Jen stuck her feet out, and Triss took them. Foot massage, for the pampered Ventrue. “If the Prince has her way, I’m sure that time will eventually come, and everyone will lock legs no matter where they are. The banquets alone are driving us in that direction.”

That was very true. Even with all the shit befalling the city lately, the Prince seemed intent on pushing her agendas, both her personal ones and her grander ones. Maybe some day the city would actually legalize public sex? Probably not without a major reform of the country at large, but there were stepping stones he was sure the Prince was working toward, to make it an eventual reality.

“I... I was in complete control, the whole time,” Triss said, nodding, and staring down at Jen’s feet. Obvious to see she was avoiding eye contact, and she carried guilt on her face like a flag. “Come on! Othello’s new ghoul is fucking gorgeous. The dark skin, the huge tits, and that ass, fucking god. And he was fucking her, in the ass, and with her pussy on display and everything. And he was doing it night after night after night, and... yeah.”

Shrugging, Julias slid his hands down underneath Jen’s breasts, cupping them and letting them spill over his fingers, before his fingertips drifted around to caress the heavy, silk teardrops.

“Just meant a very horny Triss showed up at my mansion nearly every night, demanding sex. I was pretty happy with the arrangement.” Nodding, his fingers slid a little higher, offering slow, teasing touches along the underside of Jen’s nipples, and she moaned quietly as she pressed her back into his chest. Triss was massaging the woman’s calves too, doing her best with claws anyway, and she grinned

at Jen, and at Julias and what he was doing to Jen's breasts. That was half the fun, playing with his fellow Ventrue's bust in a visually appealing way, so Triss stared, hypnotized.

"Fuck you, too." Groaning, Triss switched Jen's legs, throwing him glares when she managed to pull her eyes away from Jen's bosom. The girl was such a tomboy; damn, he loved her. "I visited Damien. Apologized for feeding him some of my blood." Julias and Jen both raised eyebrows, and Triss shook her head. "Don't worry about it, it's not important. All's good. What is important though, is Maria came by, and... and I don't think she likes me."

"She doesn't like anyone," he said. "Don't take it personally."

"I don't know. I can understand universal dislike, but this felt personal. Like, she hates me because of... well, cause I got people like you." She gestured toward them before resuming her massaging. "A guy who loves me and my Nos freaky shit. A friend who wants to fuck crocodile mouth, too."

"In terms of your Nosferatu features not being too invasive," Julias said, "yeah, you have a step up on most Nosferatu. Liliana still hides out in the tunnels with Bob, and their deformities really hit hard." Bob looked like a classic Nosferatu from fiction, with the pointy ears, pale skin, bald head, fucked up sharp teeth, the works. And Lil had extra eyes covering half her face. "That said, they were both in good shape when they were embraced. I think they overestimate the impact of their features. Liliana could wear a Phantom of the Opera mask without too much trouble. And Bob probably looks fine naked; pale as fuck, but if he finds a girl — or guy — with a kink for the creepy fangs face, he's set. And he could wear a mask, too."

"And Maria, how would she deal with her deformities?" Triss said.

"She... can't." Julias shook his head, and let go of Jen's breasts. Dark, somber mood now, not the time to be fondling. He set his hands on her arms instead, thumbs stroking them as he looked at Triss. "Don't mention it to her, don't bring it up with her, don't even look at her like you might be wanting to talk to her about this. Only two people she'd be willing to talk to about this are Tash and Damien." If them at all.

The Nosferatu set Jen's leg down, and sighed. "And Lucas. And, that's part of why I'm bringing her up." Leaning in, she looked left and right, as if checking for eavesdroppers. Secure as Julias's bunker was, especially with Beatrice working her ritual magic, there was always the chance a paranormal was eavesdropping somehow. "There's more rumors going around about Maria, and that she's doing something... something."

Sighing, both Ventrue nodded, and Julias raised a brow as he glanced down at Jen.

“Yes,” he said, “but I don’t know what it is. People know, a lot of people by now, that she’s up to something, but no one knows what. I know some people are thinking she’s trying to revive Lucas, but I have no evidence. I can’t act on that rumor. And besides that, have either of you known anyone who’s ever been, done, or seen, or knows someone who knows someone who’s done a resurrection?”

Triss lowered her head, like it’d grown heavy on her, weighed down by something. “No, and... I suppose if it was possible, Jacob would have succeeded by now.”

“Succeeded?” Jen said.

“Yeah. I mean, I don’t have the slightest clue what he’s done with that goal, but I assume it’s a goal of his. Maybe it isn’t? Maybe he’s given up. But if I was a fucking ancient vamp with all sorts of knowledge about the dark arts, and my white knight died? Yeah, I know I’d do whatever I could to bring him back.”

He winced with her words, but nodded. It was a painful thought, being separated from Triss. As Invictus, he’d just assume she was dead and there was no fixing that; and likely would suffer the extreme depressions that came with losing the one you loved. If he was a witch in the Circle of the Crone, if he sacrificed animals and his own blood to some mysterious godly entity, if he flirted with forces beyond his understanding, then yeah, he’d pursue that outcome too.

“Minerva died decades ago,” he said. “I’m going to assume Jacob has given up on that pursuit.”

“Maybe.” Frowning, Triss climbed over the side of Jen’s legs, came around behind Julias, and hugged him from behind, sitting high on her knees so she could put her chin on his shoulder. Feeling a bit clingy with the subject matter, maybe. He was, too. “Lucas didn’t die decades ago, though. I wonder what sort of shit Maria’s doing, because he died so recently. She’s damn old, too, and I assume she has the patience and drive of any other elder.”

“Except, shit’s different now,” Jen said. “We have nightmare monsters in our tunnels, and a pack of werewolves. Both groups know how to do strange things. And Black Blood...” The woman shivered in his arms, before she turned around, and pushed on Julias.

Like dominoes, Triss fell back and sat on the blankets, while Julias fell onto her body, head resting between her breasts. Triss had to spread her legs wide to fit him. With a sad sigh, Jen climbed onto Julias’s stomach and chest, and lay there, cheek on his chest and face toward him.

“Worried?” Julias said.

Jen nodded, and rubbed her cheek into his chest. “Very. I just want the hunters gone, and everything back to status quo. Even if the monsters and werewolves stick around, fine, we can live with that. But I want things to go back to normal otherwise. Not being able to walk the streets anymore is...”

“It’s what a lot of other cities have to deal with,” he said. “And we’d still be fine to do that, if it wasn’t for Azamel.”

“Still blaming her?” Triss said.

“... I guess I am, a little. But, then again, if I was her, and I knew there was a city that had other paranormals, in a better position than others, I’d probably go to them for help, too.” He groaned and shook his head, shrugging as he looked up at Triss. “Except, I’m not that person. I’m the person that has to clean up her mess, and it’s a giant mess. People are going to get killed.”

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~~Eric~~

“Fuck me! Fuck me fuck me fuck me fuck me fuck me.”

Eric blinked over his shoulder at the woman. In his apartment, she’d stripped, gotten under the covers with him, and was pressing her body against his back. For a second, he’d thought she was angry about something. But, nope, she was literally asking him to fuck her. Again.

“Looks like you’re the big spoon here. You fuck me.”

“I don’t think you understand how sex works. Unless you were looking to get a strap-on up the ass.” She set her chin on his shoulder, and tilted her head enough to look down at him.

“Not my thing.”

“Yeah, Vincent didn’t like it either.”

“Oh Jessy, you didn’t.”

“Hey! He is my ghou, and I can do whatever I want with my ghouls. They’re always happy to oblige.” Rolling her eyes, she grabbed his shoulder, and yanked him over onto his back, before sliding her body onto his and pressing her chest down onto his stomach, head hanging off onto the blankets. “I

mean, I still managed to make him cum, but I got the impression he'd much prefer cumming a different way."

"Me too." He'd never understand the strange relationship between vampires and their ghouls. It was brainwashing, and clearly a form of control. But was it unwanted? Did Kindred turn the unwilling into thralls and ghouls? Probably. Did any in Dolareido? He had no idea, and he was afraid to go down that rabbit hole.

He'd yet to see a ghoul or thrall that was unhappy with their owner, and it certainly seemed like Jessy treated hers well; surprise pegging aside. Did being brainwashed mean all ghouls and thralls were automatically happy? Again, no idea. And again, a little afraid to tug at that thread.

She punched him in the leg, gently. Loved her buddy punches. "Well, if you don't want it up the butt, why you always looking to stick it up a girl's butt? We both have butts."

"You're the one asking for anal," he said.

"Yeah, cause I like it. It's awesome, and my ass is amazing. But, I mean, guys everywhere, always wanting to stick it up the pooper, but the moment you propose sticking something up their pooper, they get all grossed out and shit." She rolled over. He oofed with the less-than-gentle impact of her throwing her self onto her back, draping herself over his body, her back on his stomach and her body perpendicular to him. Like a god damn cat. "A guy can cum buckets from a good prostate massage, especially if you're sucking him off at the same time."

He wrinkled his nose. "I dunno. Just, doesn't seem like something I'd enjoy."

"Well, you're a prude." It took her a few more flops and flomps, before she finally settled on a position on his body, lying on her back on his chest, her head hanging down over his shoulder beside his.

"You think everyone's a prude."

"True." She reached over, picked up Kat from her eternal slumber on bed corner, and held her up in the air. Kat didn't care. She meowed a couple times, and Jess laughed as she dipped the cat from side to side. And as if that wasn't cute enough, Jessy started making vroom sounds, and dipped Kat further from side to side, like she was an airplane.

"... you should buy a cat." If she'd also used her feet, and put them under Kat's belly while lifting her into the air, he'd have suggested she adopt a child instead.

“I’m afraid they’ll hate me, like my last cat did after I changed. Kat here is clearly brain damaged, or somehow high on catnip all the time. So this is much better.” She brought Kat back down to her chest, and squeezed her, earning a meow and purr from the lazy freeloader.

“Yeah, I got lucky with her.”

“And you named her Kat.”

“I did.”

“Were you trying to be ironic or funny?”

“I... just named her the first thing that came to my head.”

“Then you clearly have an empty head.” She set Kat down on the corner of the huge bed by their feet, before she rolled over, and straddled him. Naked girl, straddling his stomach. Half a second was all it took, half a second of looking at the gorgeous woman, before he felt some blood start shifting toward his dick.

Kindred could ‘Blush Life’, or not, and keep their arousal under control. He, on the other hand, had no such defensive mechanism against the manipulations of a beautiful woman, especially not a naked one straddling him.

She Blushed Life, bringing color to her once pale skin, and filling out her body with more of the width caused by blood flow and functioning organs. Grinning at him, heart beating steady and confident, she reached down to her sex, and started to lightly stroke her clitoris. Yeah, no defense. He was hard in seconds, cock rising and pressing against the back of her ass, fueled by werewolf vitality. It was almost unfair.

“Talk to Azamel or her goons lately?” she said. Her hand on her clit eased down further, and underneath her as she leaned forward to take his cock. But instead of pointing it up at her, she flattened it against his abs, and sat on it. Grinning down at him, she started rocking her body back and forth, rubbing her soft pussy lips against the base of his shaft, while avoiding touching the swelling head of his length.

“Just that quick visit I made with Jack, earlier tonight.” Sunrise was soon, and he’d gone to bed after returning from that trip. Jessy had showed up not long after that.

“Ah yeah, he texted me the result of that.” Laughing, she set both her hands onto his shoulders, and started rocking herself back and forth faster. Wet, warm juices coated in his shaft in no time. “I still think you should play all the fields. No one’s forcing you to pick one group and work only with them.”

“Yet. No one’s forcing me yet.”

“Good point.”

“I’m still—” His jaw dropped as he watched the woman turn around. Straddling him reversed, she guided his cock up toward her slit, and lowered herself down onto him. He quivered for a moment as her clenching insides enveloped him, squeezing him with far more force than was legal, and he stared at the sight of her large, toned ass pressing against his pelvis and hips as she got comfortable. “I uh... still trying to... figure out the politics.”

“I mean, I know they’d all prefer you only stick to one group, but they’re not forcing that situation; probably afraid to, in case it makes an enemy out of you. I say fuck em, do whatever you want. S’long as you’re working at Bloodlust and keeping an eye open for hunters, I’m sure I can convince the council you deserve your salary.” She looked over her shoulder at him, and grinned an evil grin, when she noticed he was staring at her ass. Slap. She gave her butt a hard enough slap to make it ripple with the impact, and he groaned as he watched.

He was surprised she didn’t ask for anal, considering the conversation. But, lubrication would have been required, and awesome as anal was, it didn’t make for quick, spontaneous sex.

“Everyone else seems convinced the groups can’t get along.” He reached out, and set his hands on her ass. Fly to honey. The girl was built like a lean Colosseum gladiator, and that meant the sight of her back, the defined-yet-feminine muscles that highlighted her shoulders, was intoxicating. The slim waist against the large ass and built shoulders and spine made her hourglass figure almost ridiculous, and he gawked at the sight of it.

“Things are different this time. A lot different, with Tony, Viktor, and Lucas dead. And Jack, the little twerp, is a great at keeping everyone happy.” She leaned forward toward his legs, grabbed his shins, and started rocking her body back and forth, each dip an opportunity for her to grind her hips down toward his legs, and then grind her ass toward his abs. Holy shit.

“I... guess I’ll try and be friends with everyone. For now.”

“Sounds good to me.” Nodding some, Jessy lifted her ass up a few inches, and slammed it down onto him, hard enough it landed with an audible, quiet slap, complete with a momentary jiggle. She grinned at him over her shoulder again; damn woman knew exactly what she was doing, and what he was hypnotized by. “Everyone’s cooperating with the sweepers idea. What’ll you do?” Without skipping a beat, she clenched on his cock, and started dipping her hips side to side, dancing on him.

“I... I think I’ll... take a visit to Avery’s, I guess. Learn a thing or two about Uratha, before I”—she clenched on him, and he winced as the woman started rocking faster—“before I see about helping out. And I would like to help out, before that fucker tries to kidnap me again.”

“I hope he does, so I can tear that fuckers throat out.”

He smiled at the salacious beast riding him. Yeah, he didn’t doubt it.

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The beeping of the heart monitor was slower. Drugs had a habit of doing that, apparently.

Eric looked over the bed, past the curtain, and out to the sunlight. His father’s chest rose and fell, adjusting the blankets ever so slightly with each slow breath. Wake him up? Nah, let the man sleep. Better to let him have his rest when he got it; maybe wake him up before you leave, so as to not waste the visit.

Did he want to waste the visit? It’d make things easier, if the old man was told Eric had visited, after he’d already left. Something like ‘sorry sir, he visited but didn’t want to disturb you.’ Nah, that wouldn’t work either. His father would just get angry at him next visit for not waking him up. Then again, his father would get angry if he did wake him up, for having the nerve to do so. No winning in this situation.

Nothing he could do, but sit there, and wait for his dad to awaken on his own. Even then, he’d probably get a ‘you just watching me sleep? The fuck is the matter with you’ or something.

His new sleep schedule was weird. He thought he had it down, but lately he’d been staying up every hour of the night, instead of getting up before work specifically. Jessy.

She hadn’t lied, or exaggerated. She really did want to fuck, a lot. He was happy to oblige, but it was making it difficult to find time to do the stupid shit that he didn’t want to do, but had to do. Maybe that was a sign? Stay home and fuck the insatiable fox, and don’t hang out with your dying father who has given up on life.

He could do both, he supposed. He didn’t have any hobbies anymore, or goals. An hour or two a night for Jessy, a shift at Bloodlust, the occasional visit for his father, and taking care of his cat. Much as he wanted to think he didn’t have free time, he did. A decent amount of it, too. Maybe he should get a hobby? He could get back into fighting.



Nah. He wanted to, with his knee feeling good again. But there'd be no sport in it, his new strength and regenerative abilities putting him clear outside the ability of any other human in his weight class. Maybe he could learn a new skill, build a new hobby? Drinking and eating enough crap to give himself diabetes was the only one he learned from his father, after their mother died. That wasn't fair, and he knew it wasn't. But memory was a fickle bitch, picking and choosing what to remind him of at its whim.

But his mom, what did she do? Fuck, that was an old memory.

She liked to sing.

Oh, right. When he was a little kid, he'd been a good singer. Any of that talent still there? No. He didn't even sing in the shower anymore, after she died. That part of him left with her. And with puberty.

Maybe he could pick up writing. Ugh, no. He had nothing to write about, just things to bitch about. Maybe drawing? He was garbage with a pencil; or whatever the fuck it was people used these days. No one used fucking pencils anymore, it was... it was... tablets and stylus pens, was it? Something ridiculous. The fuck was wrong with the old, proper shit, like pencils and paper? Like—

He slapped himself in the face. Groaning, he shifted around in the hospital chair, adjusted his suit and tie, got up, paced around a bit, and sat down again. He was sounded like his father, saying stupid shit like 'back in my day' and crap. Like someone had tossed some napalm at him, his skin set on fire, and he had to breathe deep to wipe the rage away. What shitty impulse.

Just breathe.

What did that Jack kid say? Flip the switch? From the context of the conversation, the kid meant being cold and logical about shit. That was important to do in a fight, usually. But emotions were useful tools sometimes; rage, in particular, was a powerful tool, if controlled. He was used to letting it boil up inside him, overflow, splash, and scald. Yeah, the scalding was the problem. Maybe the kid was right, and he should ignore his impulses.

Sound advice, if impulses took you down bad roads, like they did for most people, him especially. Dating Sheryl? Impulse, he supposed, a feeling in his gut that told him she was the one. Nothing but hormones. Getting his knee ruined? He told himself he'd gotten tired in a fight, but truth was, he was getting angry and frustrated, and let that rage drive him into an easily exploited position.

But, an impulse was an impulse for a reason. It hits from out of nowhere, and stopping it in time is borderline impossible. And that really fucking sucked for shit holes like him, who had dozens of shitty, self-destructive impulses piled on top of each other. Good luck changing any of those by his age.

Sighing, he looked at the TV. On, and muted, as per usual. Would his dad wake up if he turned up the volume? Probably. Man would likely sleep through the apocalypse, but god forbid he accidentally hear the fucking TV.

His condition wasn't getting worse, or better. The man was old, had done major damage to his body, and wasn't doing much to fix it. The drugs, the machines, the hospital food, that was preventing him from deteriorating. But the fucker refused to get up off his ass. Christ that pissed him off, got under his skin, really—

“Eric?”

He sat up with a jolt, and turned to the door. “Fiona?”

Radiant and full of life as ever, she grinned at him and slid in. Slid. As if walking might make too much noise, she slid her sneakers over the floor, thankfully not making any squeaks, and she got in close to him.

“Aye. How are ye?”

“I'm good. I...” He looked over at his sleeping father. Still sleeping, good. “Let's go to the cafeteria to talk.”

She nodded, and slid out of the room, hands in the small of her back. She wasn't wearing her usual jacket this time, but some blue jeans and a white t-shirt and bra. Of course he noticed the bra, cause the t-shirt was a bit tight, she had a stacked little body, and he'd seen those breasts naked before. He'd seem them bounce and jiggle, ripple as he fingered her until she came on his fingers, seen the contrast of her pale skin and freckles, and how her breasts had far fewer freckles below the cleavage line.

Three seconds and he was already horny, just remembering it. Yeah, he and Jessy were made for each other, if this was all it took to get him borderline erect. Not just the memory of her either, but the smell of her, the smell of her juices, the smell of her sweat, the smell of her everything. Like a hound dog, he was never going to forget it, and it'd now be forever distinct in his mind. It'd make talking to her difficult for forever, far as he could tell.

But he was an adult, he could control his hormones. Besides, she was dating someone else: the emo kid.

A tall, slender woman with dark skin waited for them down the hall. He should have known Fiona found him thanks to Athalia. She was in black jeans and a white shirt, buttons done up, and wearing

more feminine shoes. He'd prefer sneakers, honestly. He hated the shoes he was wearing, how uncomfortable they were, and he knew for a fact her shoes had to be worse.

"Surprised to see you here," he said. "Feeling better?"

"I am."

"We came by yer apartment, but ye werenae there." Nodding, Fiona stepped between him and Athalia, and bounced with each step as they moved into the cafeteria.

"Yeah. I try to visit my dad every so often."

"Kind of ye to take care of em like this." She found a table for them, and sat down. The silly girl probably didn't even notice she'd decided to take charge and choose where they were sitting, despite her being the youngest in the group. It was fun.

Sitting down by the window, Athalia sighed and looked out to the sunlight. She may have been healed enough to be out, but she still seemed weak. Her human body wasn't injured, but the nightmare creature she was attached to, Eric had no way of knowing how that thing was doing. Or she was just depressed; understandable, given the situation.

"Invictus pay me a lot, more than I really care to spend." Not that he necessarily wanted to sink money into the broken machine that was American healthcare, but he did anyway, for some stupid reason he still didn't know.

"We wanted to talk to you about what you said to Azamel," Athalia said. "And, talk to you about... where you stand."

Fiona didn't look convinced. With a shrug, she got up, got herself a salad, and came back to start munching on it like a rabbit. Nibble nibble.

"I'm still thinking about it." Just like he was still thinking about what to do about his dad. He'd never thought of himself as indecisive, but that seemed to be the running theme in his life lately. Frustrating.

"Mark and Fiona got the impression you were done thinking about it, and had decided to side with the hand that feeds you."

"Would you be surprised if I did?" Groaning, he got up, and got some salami. Not exactly the sort of meat his body wanted these days, but close enough he could stomach it.

“It’s not like if you sided with Azamel, be willing to help her out and protect her, it’d mean that you have to give up your job with the Invictus. Just means that when it comes to the real shit”—paranormal scary shit she meant—“that you throw your bid in with us.”

“And you expect the vamps to agree to that?”

“Maybe.” Shrugging, Athalia looked out the window, sun striking her skin and long, smooth black hair. Jessie would be dead in minutes, or seconds, in this room, but the deadly reaper skeleton monster was fine. The sun gave no fucks. “You trust the vamps to just keep paying you? Sooner or later they’ll want you to do more than just bounce at Bloodlust. And aren’t they demanding you see Avery, and learn a thing or two from her?”

All things he didn’t want to do. The Avery point though, he was starting to agree with Jack on. Information was power, and the more he learned from Avery, the better off he’d be with whatever decisions he made. But he couldn’t shake the feeling he’d be signing on a dotted line with his blood.

“All you can offer me is a safe place to rest my head away from that shit.” He leaned in, and frowned at the woman, not Fiona, only Athalia. “And last I checked, your homes aren’t exactly foolproof safe. You broke into that gargoyle’s home, and I expect he can do the same to yours.”

“Azamel, mine, Fiona, and Mark’s lairs are connected. He’d be a fool to enter our home, and invite death on himself and his worthless human comrades.” She snarled at him, took a piece of his salami, and ate it. Someone else might take that offensively, maybe view it as a display of aggression and dominance. No, she was trying to be nice, and that asshole attitude was how she played nice, like a fucking kid who picks on the boy she likes cause she doesn’t know better. If she wanted to be a genuine asshole, she’d be cold and quiet.

Just like he would.

He chuckled despite himself, and shrugged. “If you have to know, I’m not making a decision yet, because I don’t have to yet. I will go see Avery, I think, and learn about what I am. And if you guys need my help for something, ask, I’ll see what I can do.”

“I’d prefer if you made it clear, and make things official. None of this half yes-no bullshit.”

“You don’t trust easily.”

“Neither do you.”

“I trust you well enough,” he said. “You rescued me.”

“I joined a recon mission to learn about our enemy.”

“I expect things will be similar circumstance if I have to rescue you.”

Sighing, she sat back, and nodded to Fiona. “I don’t like Uratha, or Kindred. But Fiona here insists on fucking both of them.”

“Tae fuck!?” Fiona stopped nibbling and glared up at her. “Fuck ye, ya bawbag. I never slept with Eric! Just... very... touched things...”

“Uh huh.” Rolling her eyes, Athalia took another slice of his salami, and a piece of Fiona’s spinach. Closest the woman would ever get to being nice and sociable, Eric figured. “Got a dog and leech’s fingers inside you, and now you’re working another leech. Go fuck a human, if you need to get laid so badly.”

Another cat fight. Did he attract these situations? Was it a canine thing?

Blushing — from anger, not from embarrassment, far as Eric could see — Fiona frowned her squirrel frown at Athalia, before returning to her salad. “Yer just jealous.”

The corner of Athalia’s lips twitched. She wanted to smile. She didn’t. Woman was good at keeping distance from emotions that might expose herself.

“If I was captured,” Athalia said, “what reason do I have to believe you’d try and rescue me.”

“Like I said, the circumstance would lend to it, wouldn’t it? Enemy of my enemy.”

“And if it’s my daughter?”

He stopped for a moment, and looked at Fiona. She grew quiet, chewing slower, trying to disappear, as Athalia yanked the conversation into the most painful area possible.

“... I’d try and take that into consideration. I owe you, and I’d make sure to not kill her.”

Her turn to sigh again, as she looked back out the window. “I suppose that’s the most I can hope for. I’d... I’d... prefer to capture her, detain her somehow. Just a stupid fantasy, that I can change her mind.”

“Changing the mind of a relative is never easy.”

“Preaching to the choir.”

Sighing, he sat back, and looked out the window as well. A strange thing to bond over, he supposed. He had a love hate relationship with his dad, she had a love hate relationship with her daughter. To try and compare it was ridiculous, but there it was.

“She came ‘ere for that. I came ‘ere to ask ye a question.” Fiona leaned in, looked left and right like she was checking for spies, and held up a hand to her mouth to block any spectators from seeing it side on. “How do ye... seduce a man.”

Athalia choked on a noise, a chuckle, before she regained her composure, and kept looking out the window.

“You mean that vamp Damien?” he said.

“Aye! He’s very reserved, and I’m afraid I’ll scare him off if I do something stupid.” The redhead groaned and looked down at her salad. Stirring it randomly with her fork, she bounced a cherry tomato around the plate, frowning at it as if the tomato were her enemy.

“I uh... think you’d be better off asking a woman, like Athalia here.”

“Ha.” Athalia laughed again, and shook her head. “The fuck do I know about seducing men? Angela is the product of me being a moron, not a sexual conquest.”

He winced, and shrugged. This conversation was so damn awkward. “Ask Jessy. She works with him, and she’s been seducing men for decades.” Just mentioning Jessy brought his mind back to that night with her and Fiona. It did for Fiona too, based on the look she made, a shy grin and blush.

“I dinnae ken if that’s a good idea. Knowing Jessy, she’ll scare the poor lad.”

“Yeah, that’s true. But I mean, I don’t know shit about this guy, except that he seems a bit reserved like you said. And shy, I’m guessing.”

“Aye.”

“I knew a shy guy in high school who never noticed how much a girl liked him, despite him liking her too.” Shrugging again, he leaned in, mirroring Fiona’s sneaky demeanor. Might as well.

“Sounds like he has no confidence,” Athalia said. “Total turn off.”

Groaning, he rolled his eyes and dismissed the other with a wave of his hand. “Ignore her. Just because a guy isn’t confident with talking to a girl or flirting with her, doesn’t mean he lacks confidence in general. You know who does have an easy time being confident flirting with women straight on? Assholes and morons.” Starting to sound like a fucking dating expert, fucking horrible. “Only thing I can suggest is to just not take it personally if he doesn’t reciprocate you being flirtatious with him; dude probably doesn’t have the slightest fucking clue how to. Be aggressive, just... not Jessy aggressive.”

“I think I can do that.” Nodding, smile returned, she stabbed the tomato and ate it in a single bite. Voracious. Maybe she was another Jessy, waiting to emerge from her cocoon. “I wonder, how the Prince managed to catch Jack?”

“Ask him. Or her, if you can arrange it. Though, if that kid had a shy side, he’s changed since then.” Shrugging, he reached out for a piece of her lettuce, and took a bite. Fucking. Disgusting. He forced it down, but fuck, lesson learned. His new body didn’t want plants. Not that he didn’t already know that, but didn’t cats and dogs chew on grass sometimes, too?

“He seemed a bit shy at the banquet,” Athalia said.

“Jessy described the banquet to me. Sounds like going there would trigger anyone’s shyness.”

Athalia took another piece of his meal, and bit into the meat with only parting interest as she continued looking out the window. Seemed like she was thinking about things, things that weren’t the current topic. “Bunch of leeches — and dogs — looking to fuck anything on two legs at that party.”

“I was there!” Grumbling, Fiona elbowed her fellow monster in the side. “And I dinnae gae any loving!”

The two adults at the table laughed. God damn it, Fiona was cute.

“I suppose it’s easy for vamps,” he said, “to do shit like that. They own the city.”

“Vamps own most cities,” Athalia said, “but Dolareido definitely dials up the sex content, compared to the other cities I’ve seen. That white-haired bitch really would have everyone fucking on the streets if she could get away with it.”

“Ye could do with a wee bit of fucking yerself!” Leaning in again, Fiona held up her hand, this time blocking off Athalia from seeing her lips. “She’s a cold fish.”

The reaper bone monster slapped Fiona’s hand down. “I didn’t come here to get laid, Fiona. I’m here to lie low.”

“Good job on that,” Eric said. Mistake. She took the rest of his meat, and started eating it. God damn it.

“I am impervious to Slut City’s influence.”

That was sort of admitting to being a cold fish. Or she was asexual.

“Ye told me just last night ye’d have sex with Chadwick Boseman if he ever so much as entered your peripheral vision!”

He got the impression she was the former.

“To be fair,” he said, “Boseman is gorgeous.”

Giggling, Fiona nodded as she munched on more food. “Aye, but—” Athalia slapped the girl upside the head. “Tae fuck! Ya fuckin knob, ah’ll—” Interrupted again as Athalia grabbed her head, and pointed it at the television on the wall. The news, muted, captions on.

A news reporter was speaking. Looked like there’d been an accident. Daughter and mother stabbed. Daughter dead, mother still alive, taken to the South Center Hospital — oh hey where they were — and the mother was in critical condition.

“Pretty bad,” Eric said, sighing as he looked back down at his empty plate. Right, shit, empty. “Don’t hear about shit like that too often in Dolareido.” Huge city, but brutal murders were pretty damn rare.

“It said the girl was Mary Terry, and the mom was Samantha Terry.”

“People you know?” he said.

“... someone Jack might know.”

He raised a brow, and looked at Fiona. Her jaw slowly dropped as her eyes stared at the reporter.

Oh, right. Jack Terry.

Fuck.