

“Just the coffee then, thanks. Sorry to be a bother.”

Spencer shrank a little on himself as he stepped away from the cash register at the coffee shop. There were far too many people around anyway, too many eyes, and-

*You were. Inflicting the inconvenience of your poverty on them, making them wait through this and watch your pathetic display and your unnecessarily complex 'needs' for this-*

A quiet squeak of distress from Spencer followed that as he shuffled away from the counter, taking the little sign meant to get his order brought to him and heading for the outside seating. It was hotter out there, humid, uncomfortable, but there was space and air. Those were things Spencer needed desperately right now.

*And now you're going to make them come look for you out in the heat. You're going to make some employee cater to your worthless desires – and you continually insist on denying me mine.*

The disheveled young man sat as far from anyone else as he could manage, trying to ignore the twitching in his left arm. The distance would keep the other patrons from hearing him at least. Probably. Spencer hoped so at least, part of him wanted to just leave even though he'd paid and hadn't received his drink yet.

“You're just.. this isn't.. I'm overthinking things, a-and imagining them. C'mon Spence, you're here to think so just.. think. About the right things. Not the-”

Shutting his eyes, Spencer tried to reel his thoughts back into control and distract himself by seeing if anyone looked like they were bringing his coffee out. They weren't.

*Why are you wasting everyone's time with this pitiful facade of yours? You pretend to be this meek, polite, inoffensive little presence but everyone sees through you. How couldn't they? You're **nothing** after all, and sipping coffee in the sun with a notebook isn't going to change that.*

Spencer couldn't help wringing his hands. The sheer intensity of the anxiety building up was making it impossible not to, though when he started squeezing them so hard they hurt. At least, they did at first.. his left especially, though it was brief. A couple seconds of a sharp ache followed by something curiously satisfying. Tingly. Pleasant, even?

“I'll.. be fine. I just have to get rid of this headache, and.. the coffee will do that. Then..”

Exhaling, Spencer glanced over at the shop again hoping he'd see the waiter coming his way.

*Then you'll languish, useless as usual. Maybe this time you'll even beg for something to feed that hungry belly, or someone will take pity on you? You certainly are pitiful.*

It wasn't such a quiet sound this time. It was a whimper, because if it wasn't that it would've been a sob. Spencer felt the eyes around him turn, felt the heat of all that attention on his skin. Looking down from there (anywhere other than at the other people) left Spencer staring at his hand.. His left hand looked.. off? Thicker, darker skinned, powerful. It flexed subtly and Spencer couldn't help feeling like he hadn't told it to do that.

“H-hah.. Great, intrusive thoughts. Come on Spence, get it together. You don't want to freak out in public.. again. It's fine. It's just.. brain chemistry, temporary, it'll pass. I'll be fine. I-”

Spencer couldn't help looking down at his hand again as he went to clasp his fingers together. The sight of the two right next to each other made him stop, staring. One was familiar, at least until they grasped one another and he felt his 'good' hand being pressed and kneaded in the much larger other one. Squeezed, then allowed to swell.. until they both looked the same.

*You're an awful liar you know. You don't even believe yourself. Why should you? What even are you, if not a badly told lie? Completely devoid of substance, doomed to crumble under the slightest bit of actual scrutiny, and you can **feel** the eyes on you already can't you?*

That was an understatement. Spencer looked about again.. Sure, not all the eyes were on him right that second, but some of them were. The others were probably just looking away so as to not make it obvious that they knew. How could they not know?

“I.. I don't want to be nothing, though. I want to be *me* a-and.. and just-”

Feeling his left arm move by itself was terrifying in its own right. Spencer tried to will his body to stop but it wasn't listening to him, it just took hold of his belly and then sank inside it like loose bread dough. A spike of pain ran through him as his fingers tightened and wrenched his stomach outward. The motion felt like something popping into place, as if he were mashing a dislocated joint back to where it ought to be. Flesh fell out of nothingness, piling into his lap and spreading his shirt upward, with a good bit of overflow sprawling out into his hips and ass to boot. Spencer felt himself spill out over the edges of the seat he was in. It wasn't like he had been thin before, but he had just watched and felt a blossom of sheer obesity come out of himself.

Sheer terror left Spencer silent. Staring at himself, glancing at the others, expecting them to have noticed.. reacted.. something. If they had noticed none of the other patrons were making it known, they just.. ignored him.

*Why on earth would anyone want to be **you** of all things? You're a barely personified waste*

*of potential with all the integrity and depth of wet cardboard. What are you even planning out here, really? Is this about waiting for the brilliant inspiration that would elevate you to a meaningful existence, some kind of artistry? **Ridiculous.** You'd never **do** it even if by some miracle the idea struck. Or are you being even more foolish than that?*

Spencer shuddered and whined at that. Trying to grasp at some shred of confidence in himself, some bit of substance to hang on with, left him coming up damningly short. Worse yet, his body was moving without his say so again and he couldn't even spare the effort to *try* to stop it. This time his hand dug deep into the meat of his thigh. It felt an awful lot like being stabbed and burned, Spencer *wanted* to cry out, he just.. couldn't. And even if he could.. Why would they do anything about it? About him? It was so hard just pretending it might be different this time.

*As if anyone would care. You were actually hoping someone would **pick you up** here, weren't you? That they'd see this soft, misunderstood **thing** and take you in? I'd laugh if it weren't so pathetic. I promise, any time you thought that barista was looking at you with anything other than indifference or contempt you were deluding yourself.*

A quick, violent shake of those digits inside his leg left Spencer's thighs springing out into denser, thicker forms. The act had a bit of momentum to it, traveling down into his calves and feet until they took on the same dusky skin tone and powerful build underneath all that blubber. Between the words ringing in his ears and the pain in his body Spencer was entirely out of the will he needed not to crumble into a blubbering mess right here in front of the coffee shop.. Except he couldn't. The break happened, he felt it, but then he felt his hand press against his cheek and his fingertips curl under his own skin to tug on his face. With his pinky touching his throat nothing happened outward, no outburst of grief, no wash of catharsis either. It was just silence and a helpless sense of rising panic. ..And a voice, coming from his throat, but distinctly not his own.

*“Much better. I'll be handling this from here on out, you know you'd only embarrass yourself anyway. If you're really so broken up about wanting to be taken care of and touched then just **get out of my way** already. Quit struggling, you'll be happier for it.”*

Spencer wailed with no throat to make the sound as he felt his fingers stretch and mold his face, quick and merciless yanks and smudges that left him looking at the shiny surface of the table he sat at and seeing not himself looking back. The visage looking at him had a broad, flat nose and thick lips. It had pronounced canines and beady dark eyes and *so much* flab all over its body. Worse

yet, it grinned while it ran pudgy fingers through the bright pink streak of hair running down the center of its head and the wild streaks of hair behind it. The grin was partly because of the freedom he was enjoying, and partly because he had realized Spencer was watching – whimpering again – begging quietly in his head.

It sounded an awful lot like 'please, please no, I'm not ready' over and over again but Spencer's thoughts were fraying at the edges and they weren't exactly happening in words.

*“You sure do whine a lot for a false persona that got a little too full of itself before it outlived its usefulness. I can tell how exhausted you are just from **existing**. Which is understandable, you shouldn't. Just let go already.”*

Part of the moment that followed happened because, as wildly overwrought as Spencer was, his thoughts were at best fuzzy and disorganized. With the thing speaking clearly, with that voice in his head with all its confidence and charisma, it was easy to let his own haphazard attempts at thinking and feeling be overrun. For a moment Spencer did exactly what he was told.. Because the internal will to do anything else was weaker than the impulse he had to just do what he'd been told.

So for a moment Spencer just let go. Relaxed, rested, *surrendered*. For all the physical aches he could still feel as the muscle and fat bound thing that had slid into the place he had been holding for it coaxed himself into an ever larger frame as he sculpted his body to his tastes Spencer still just felt relief to *let him* do so.

Not that he could have stopped him if he wanted.

*“There, didn't I tell you? Just stop flailing about like the mewling little facade you were.”*

What was left of Spencer felt like it exhaled slowly. It did feel like relief, like rest. As if he'd run a marathon and now he collapsed into bed, unable to move anything, too wiped out to even think let alone act. Empty inside. They were only aware in the dimmest of senses of the broad, smug grin on those dusky lips and round cheeks as the creature that now occupied his table and was accepting the drink that had been ordered.

That creature that sat where Spencer had been took in the space around him, the oblivious little pockets of humanity and other things roaming about. Ignorant, pliant, waiting to be used for the amusement of someone who deserved it. Those beady eyes of his zeroed in on the barista just inside the building. After a moment of willing it to happen they made eye contact. The barista blinked as his heart skipped once and a thought intruded into his mind, planted there.

*“Mmmn. You were too good for Spencer, not that that's a notable accomplishment. Me, however..? You're going to come sit next to me when your shift ends – you're going to be **fascinated** and come home with me. Once we're there..? We can get to the business of making you into something worth me keeping around~”*