“Truly?” His deft fingers explored his King’s face, searching. “You are back, they let you come back, you are truly alive?”

“Yes, Ignis, I am here, they gave me the choice and asked what it was that I wanted in return for my sacrifice.” Noctis choked back tears as he embraced his oldest friend, “You will see again Ignis, you will be here to see the world and see each dawn and probably see me stuff it all up.” He gave a rueful laugh at the grin that spread across Ignis’ face.

“Well…” drawled the chamberlain acerbically, “You will have me there beside you to make sure that does not occur Majesty.”

Notes

I’ve NEVER written anything like this before but the game had me so engaged with the
characters I kind of HAD to. I also noticed that of the four bros, Ignis would always put his hand on Noct's shoulder or the small of his back and it struck me as something intimate, which got me thinking, this being the result. (Also Ignis' accent and voice just do things to me, lol) I started typing and found I had around 50,000 words and still going. Please be kind, please.

There are also a couple of songs that I have used the words of, because they seemed to fit. The first part of the wedding vows comes from the Corpse Bride.

Any mistakes are my own, I don't own FFXV

PS. I have gone into a complete meltdown over the Assassin's Festival and Ignis' robes

*whispers* I can see his chest and nips and abs and OMFG his bare hands

*goes down on knees* thank you square, thank you

work in progress
return, reunion and recovery

Prologue

“Walk Tall...my friends”

It had been the last thing he’d been able to say to the three men who were closer to him than brothers could possibly have been. It hadn’t come close to what he wanted to convey to them, they just hadn’t had time for him to truly let them all know what they mean to him, he’d tried the night before as they camped overlooking Insomnia and that had been hard enough. Prompto sniffling quietly, Gladio trying to act like he wasn’t crying like the rest of them and Ignis…Ignis sitting closest to him had been trying to appear as stoic as always but Noctis could see through the façade. Ignis was struggling. It had thrown him and he’s stumbled over his words and finally he had breathed out “what can I say, you guys...are the best.” Giving up on holding his tears back, he’d simply let them fall as the silence had grown. Four men around a camp fire, attempting to face the impossible and trying to believe that they might actually achieve it.

And once they were in Insomnia he’d had to turn away from them and walk up the steps of the citadel alone, knowing what was to become of him, knowing he’d never see them again, knowing that he would bring back the dawn for them to live in.

That had nearly undone him. It was only knowing that he could be the King that he’d wanted to be by doing his duty that kept him trudging resolutely up those endless steps. His legacy would be the dawn.

What had torn his heart out was the moment he’d called the Kings of Lucis to come to him and had seen his father’s spirit standing beside the throne, his throne, with his back to his son, not being able to bear seeing what was to happen next, not being able to bear what he himself would have to do, not being able to bear the guilt that this was his only beloved son. That he was to be the one to kill his own son, the one to thrust his own sword through his son’s chest and end his life, a life cut far too short, a life where ten years had been stolen already.

“Dad…trust in me”, he had pleaded, his strength failing from the onslaught of the dozen other kings who had entered him, his hand slipping from The Sword of the Father as he tried to push it towards his father’s spirit, bowing his head. He’d met his father’s incredibly sad eyes for just a moment before the blade had been thrust through his chest.

NYX

Ignis Scientia is beautiful. Not just handsome like King Noctis Lucis Caelum, with pretty storm blue eyes, raven hair and a soft smile. Not the cute looks of their constant companion Prompto
Argentum, a cheeky smiling blond whose bright blue eyes twinkled with fun. Nor the rugged handsomeness of Gladiolus Amicitia with his amber eyes and shaggy long dark brown hair who could possibly shred vegetables on his abs alone. No, Ignis was truly beautiful with teal green eyes that could pin you to the spot, a wry little smile that could twist your guts in knots, cheekbones and jaw that were sharp enough that you might cut yourself if you were to stroke them, a brain that was scary amazing and his body was...well, Nyx had never seen a physique so godsdamned faultless. He was six-foot-tall, lithe and muscled like a swimmer or acrobat. Long deft fingers that wouldn’t have been out of place on a pianist and a graceful way about him that made watching him practise with his daggers a truly entrancing experience. He reminded Nyx of a large cat in the way he moved and approached his opponents when in the training room, stalking them, waiting for the precise moment to pounce. The man was deadly efficient in each and every movement. Most of the staff around the citadel thought he was cold, calculating and just a little (or rather A LOT) intimidating with his calm competence and ability to read people with seeming ease. His tongue was biting and sometimes sarcastic, but Nyx had heard him slipping puns into his conversations with his King and their companions a little smile playing over his lips as they groaned at his silliness. And the voice that delivered them was just a little like having warm caramel drizzled in your ears, cultured, seductive and oh so sexy. It really didn’t matter to Nyx what the man said, that deep accented voice, it was just intoxicating. It had been a revelation to the former Kingsglaive, now Lucian Glaive Commander. Another revelation had been the man’s relationship with the king.

Nyx now knew the stories, the Fall of Insomnia, the journey, the forging of the Covenants – especially the Leviathan, the cruelty of the Six in making Noctis their slave to the crystal, the ten long years of darkness and finally the triumph and tragedy of the King of the Dawn, but it was the epilogue to the whole story that was beyond any wildest dreams. Nyx had awoken in the plaza after only the gods knew how many years, not having aged a day, he’d looked around him to see Noctis walking at the head of a large crowd of very confused and bewildered Crown City citizens. On the steps of the citadel awaiting the returning king were his three beloved companions and Nyx had noticed Ignis immediately. He’d stood holding onto Prompto who was whispering in his ear, the shock blatant on the taller man’s face. His visor glinting in the new sun, mouth open in shock, unable to even ask his friend if what he said was true. When he felt the touch of his king’s hand on his shoulder, Ignis had crumpled, breathing hard and fast. Noctis had knelt beside him, raising him from the ground and embracing him, then holding his face in his hands, the King had gently wiped the tears from his chamberlain’s face. Nyx had been close enough to hear the King tell him that he was to be rewarded.

“Shiva herself, Ignis, she told me she would do this for you, so that you can truly enjoy each dawn.”

Ignis had grasped the arms of his King and lowered his head to Noctis’ shoulder.

“Truly?” His deft fingers explored his King’s face, searching. “You are back, they let you come back, you are truly alive?”

“Yes, Ignis, I am here, they gave me the choice and asked what it was that I wanted in return for my sacrifice.” Noctis choked back tears as he embraced his oldest friend, “You will see again Ignis, you will be here to see the world and see each dawn and probably see me stuff it all up.” He gave a rueful laugh at the grin that spread across Ignis’ face.

“Well...” drawled the chamberlain acerbically, “You will have me there beside you to make sure that does not occur Majesty.”

“You made demands of the Gods? You actually did that?” Prompto was practically bouncing on the spot at the temerity of his friend. “how...what...HUH?”
Noctis had practically giggled and shot Prompto an incredibly sly grin, “Kinda thought they owed me something for fixing their stuff up.” Gladio snorted at that. “That’s not all, but I’ll explain later.” He turned to the crowd around him and raised his voice so they could all hear him, “I know you are all confused right now, but I will explain what is going on, I just require a moment longer if you will all be patient”.

“Damn, we waited ten years the first time and you’ve been…gone…gone for six months, I think we will be fine with a bit longer”, put in Gladio, as he smirked down at his King. Noctis’ eyed widened, “yeah, six months”. Noctis Lucis Caelum, shook his head and grumbled under his breath about bloody gods earning him a chuckle from the other three.

“Are you ready to see again? Do you wish to do this here and now, or would you rather some privacy?” Noctis’ voice had dropped an octave, to almost a whisper to give Ignis the chance to regain his sight away from the curious prying eyes of the hushed crowd.

“No, no, Noctis, I want to see your face, I want to see my King, it’s been too long.” Nyx watched as Ignis mouthed the word raven and the King smiled sweetly, it obviously meant something very special to him.

Noctis Lucis Caelum, let out a shuddering breath and nodded, resting his forehead to Ignis’ he whispered something that no-one else could hear, however the smile that lit Ignis’ face was radiant as the dawn itself. Prompto was watching them both, his eyes sliding from face to face and then grinning like a child at Gladio over their heads. Gladio was grinning back, tears running down his face. Keeping his head pressed to Ignis, Noctis reached out his hands to either side and beckoned his other two companions close, grasping their hands in his. “Thank you.” The four men wrapped their arms around each other and suddenly tears turned to joyous laughter, “We did it.” Noctis gasped, out of breath.

“Hell yeah we did,” chuckled Gladio.

Taking a deep breath Noctis raised his face to the sky and called out quietly “Gentiana.” He kept his eyes on the sky as the temperature dropped several degrees, the crowd shuffling and shivering.

“Noct..?” Ignis queried hesitantly, “What...what is happening?”

“Shhhh, my friend”, he lent forward and whispered something into Ignis’ ear again, something that made Ignis settle and smile. “You will see for yourself very soon, just trust me.” He continued to watch the sky and smiled in a satisfied way when he spotted a star seeming to be born at that moment. He lifted his hands and with long fingers grasped the sides of the visor that hid Ignis’ blinded eyes, the scars that ran down the right and almost completely covered the left. “Trust me.” He repeated softly as Ignis inhaled sharply and nodded again.

Nyx had watched in confusion like the rest of the crowd, apparently he had been brought back to witness the new beginning, he’d had no idea how long he’d been, well… dead quite frankly, at least ten years from the sounds of things and all this was just so overwhelming, but he was not going to miss a second of what was unfolding before him. He’d wait like the rest for his answers.

Snow began to fall from a sky that was still as clear as the note from a bell, the crowd muttering but not breaking out into anything other than a hushed whisper.

“Noct… it’s s.. snowing.” Prompto stuttered.

The King of the Dawn, glanced at his friend and smiled a secret little smile.
And then Shiva was there, or rather, several Shiva’s, Nyx had no idea how many as they began to swirl around Noctis and his companions. The Glacian was the blue-white of ice, a breathtakingly beautiful woman. Shiva created a large ring around them and Nyx could only just glimpse the Kings face as he raised his head to nod at the Goddess, eyes glowing magenta and hand gripping Ignis’ shoulders to keep him steady. The snow was falling heavier now, ice upon the ground, the citizens of Crown City were shivering and huddling together for warmth, but not one was leaving, not one was going to look away from the miracle that was seeing Shiva.

One of the Shivas touched the Kings face, cupping his cheek bestowing a swift kiss to Noctis then Ignis and a soft golden glow emanated from the King and enfolded Ignis as his King’s forehead met his own. Nyx heard the blind man gasp as the glow shifted from the Dawn’s King to the chamberlain. It grew brighter and brighter as more snow fell, soon making it nigh on impossible to see what was happening.

“Oh my Gods”, Prompto gasped, “Look Gladio, LOOK…the scars…”

“Shit”, was all that Gladio could manage.

Nyx shielded his eyes from the glare, sinking to his knees as had the rest of the crowd in the open expanse before the citadel steps, completely silent, mesmerised.

The glow grew brighter still and suddenly it was gone, the Glacian had departed. The snow stopped falling and the icy ground thawing quickly in the returning sunlight’s warmth. Everyone blinked furiously trying to regain their vision and see what had happened.

Noctis and Ignis had also sunk to their knees, arms around each other, Gladio and Prompto shielding them from the view of most of the crowd. Nyx could see tears on Ignis’ face, flowing freely as his sobs shattered the quiet. Noctis pulled back from their embrace and cupped his chamberlains face in his hands once more, smoothing the tears away, sweeping his fingers over the now clear skin around his eyes, over his nose where the gash across his nose used to be and finally to the plump bottom lip that was free of the split that had adorned it just moments before.

“Open your eyes Ignis, look at me…please, please look at me”, Noctis pleaded.

Ignis took in a shuddering deep breath and slowly open his eyes. Green eyes locked with stormy blue and he smiled.

IGNIS

Ignis was happy, deliriously, almost giggling. He’d struggled to compose himself at first, ingrained habit trying to force itself through, but he’d simply shrugged it off and let himself feel. It was a long time since he’d felt this blissful. He knew people thought him cold, despite the entomology of his name, but what they had no way of knowing was the Ignis had always tightly controlled the fire that was beneath the surface. He had an awful temper, passions that ran deep and had only learned to keep them in check through years of practise. Noct’s first return had been tinged in sadness, knowing as he did that he was to lose him again and this time it was to have been permanent. Only then it wasn’t. Each moment of happiness previously had been snatched and cherished, privately relived over and over in his mind. Moments he’d had to keep to himself. Each instant since his King, his King, had returned for a second time had been as if a dream. He’d stood upon the citadel steps not daring to believe what was unfolding before him, he’d thought that he’d awake to near darkness
again the next morning as he’d done every morning since Altissia.

He’d drunk in the sight of those beautiful sapphire eyes staring back into his own, taking in the new version of Noctis’ face and he didn’t think the quite frankly goofy smile had left his lips since. His face was healed of the scars that he’d known were unsightly, his eyes, GODS, his eyes, he could see again. But most of all, his heart was whole, truly whole again for the first time in over a decade.

Standing atop one of the towers of the citadel, he gazed over the ruins of the city they would have to rebuild and smiled even wider. Yes, it would be hard, yes, there would be problems, but he knew now that it was not insurmountable. He would be beside his King every step of the way.

He raised his eyes to see the last of the pink and gold fade from the first dawn he’d been able to see in years and hugged the man at his side, brushing his lips over the soft raven locks of his hair and inhaling Noct’s scent.

“Thank you”, he whispered.

Noctis chortled, “You don’t need to keep saying that you know”.

“Yes I do, Noct, I am so very grateful for what I have and I will spend every day, every dawn, thanking you for what you have done. Not just for me, that is just…it is a dream come true, to be here with you, to be able to see you with my eyes and not just in my mind, but also what you did for everyone in Eos. It is a legend come to life.”

Noctis huffed amused at his chamberlain’s words, “I still think I’ll be a shitty king, Ignis” alluding to their conversation of the night before.

“And I know that you will be glorious, you already are glorious”, Ignis asserted turning to look at him, eyes sweeping over the embarrassed grin that was plastered on Noctis’ face.

“You keep saying that too, I’ll get a big head”.

Ignis roared laughing, “too late for that, Noct”.

“Hey! No teasing your King”.

“Who said I was teasing you, my beloved, you’ve always been a little shit”. Ignis laughed again at the obviously pretend frown that Noctis was struggling to keep on his face.

“IGNIS!”

“Now, none of that mock indignation, I’ve told you that numerous times as well”. Ignis chuckled deeply as his King wrapped his arms tighter around him.

“Yeah, and you’re the one who loves me, what’s that say about you?” Noctis snuggled his face into Ignis’ shirt, hiding the grin that was impossible to contain.

“I would say that makes me a totally besotted idiot to be frank. Honestly Noct, you have completely ruined any reputation I ever had after last night, whatever will people be thinking of me after you dragged me so publicly to your rooms? I am sure they are quite scandalised”. He chuckled again, “but what’s more of a wonder is that I no longer care, I have you back and to me, that is all that matters and all that will ever truly matter, that is my true reward”.

“You, not caring about your reputation!?! Who are you and what have you done with my Ignis?” was Noctis’ sardonic response.
Ignis sighed happily. “Your Ignis, I like the sound of that”.

“Yeah well, you are, and I am yours”.

“Always”.

Noctis nodded getting very serious all of a sudden, “yes, always”. He tilted his face up to catch Ignis’ lips with his own, almost chastely after all their shenanigans the night before this first dawn together in over a decade. A little mewl growled its way from Ignis’ throat into Noct’s mouth as he nibbled on the other man’s bottom lip, tongue flicking out to gently find his lover’s and just like that the conversation was over. Mouths open, exchanging breaths, their tongue flicking together, curling and dancing together, more and more passionate with each passing second. “I am never going to get enough of you”, Noct breathed against Ignis’ mouth shrugging his jacket off and onto the floor.

Ignis growled low in his throat as he pulled Noctis closer so he could feel just how much he wanted him. He ground his hips forward and Noct answered with his own groan, his hands fist ing into Ignis’ hair pulling their mouths closer and rolling his own hips forward. He felt like his blood was on fire through his veins. Noct felt Ignis grip his ass forcefully lifting him up onto his toes to grind their hardened cocks together, heat rising between them. Feeling Ignis whimper into his mouth he reached between their bodies and began to scrabble at the buttons of Ignis’ shirt wanting to feel the smooth muscled chest under his fingers.

Ignis was in lost in bliss as he shifted his mouth to Noct’s neck, nibbling and licking, worshiping the skin of his King. Noct tilted his head back and let out the filthiest groan he’d ever heard. It just made Ignis more determined to have him, to savour every single inch of skin. “Ohhh Gods, Noct” Ignis moaned in Noct’s ear as he felt warm fingers pushing his shirt apart and start to stroke his fevered chest. Ignis slipped a hand lower onto the back of Noct’s thigh and hitched his leg up around his hip so he could grind into him harder.

“AHEM, get a room you two!” Gladio’s gruff voice startled them, but it still wasn’t enough to make them pull apart guiltily as they would have done years ago. Faces flushed and breathing heavily they turned their heads as one to look at the shield and the gunner who were interrupting what was promising to become an exceedingly interesting morning on the tower top.

Prompto’s mouth popped open as he took in the sight of the normally straight laced advisor, bared chest heaving, pink flushing high cheek bones, his eyes dark and hooded, while Noct was up on the toes of one foot, his leg wrapped around Ignis’ hip, hands splayed over the flushed skin of his lover’s chest, a similar look in his blue eyes, lust blowing the pupils so wide they were almost black.

“Fuck…” he muttered under his breath running his hand through his blond hair absolutely wrecking the careful styling he’d only just done.

“Already did thanks and it was absolutely fucking GLORIOUS!” Ignis answered in a decidedly husky, sexy voice following it up with a flick of his wrist and extended his long middle finger in Gladio’s direction.

“Woah, too much information dude!” came Prompto’s embarrassed squeak while Gladio outright laughed at the normally stuffy chamberlain swearing, flipping him the bird and still clinging to Noctis while the king was dissolving into a fit of very unkingly giggles at his lover’s response. Ignis smirked.

“Come on! Haven’t you two had enough?”

“Nope”, answered Noctis recovering from his giggles as he looked up into the sparkling lust
darkened green gaze of the man he loved, “better get used to it, coz you’re gonna see a lot more of it and you’re gonna see a lot more right now if you two cockblocking assholes don’t piss off real quick”, as he captured Ignis’ mouth again. All Ignis could do was groan, there was no stopping this, even had he wanted to, which he decidedly did NOT.

“DUDE, again, too much information, I’m gonna be traumatised!” Prompto was now having a very hard time containing himself watching the two men practically devour each other, a blush flushing his freckled cheeks. He positively choked when Ignis lifted Noct and the man who was King was now wrapping both legs around his boyfriend baring his throat for more of Ignis’ kisses. Ignis was only too happy to comply.

“Ugh, come on Prom, let’s leave them to it”, Gladio grumbled as he tugged the blond gunner back to the doorway of the tower. “We’ll give you an hour!” he shot back over his shoulder, raising his eyebrows as he saw Ignis grip Noctis’ hips in his long fingers and ground into him eliciting a deep grunt from the King while he hung off Ignis, looking like he going to fucking climb him like a tree.

“Ignis’ bleary thought as he could now use his hands in exploration of Noct’s beautiful form. “Tell me again, say what you said in front of the citadel”, Ignis begged his king, he wanted to hear it again, especially while they were like this, wrapped up in each other.

Noctis gazed up at Ignis, eyes locking together, he bit his lip as Ignis rolled his hips again, his own reflexively lifting to meet and apply more pressure.

“I love you Ignis, marry me”, breathed out Noctis huskily, not breaking eye contact, waiting for the answer that Ingis had yet to give him properly in their rush to get explanations finished and finally get to a long awaited proper reunion.

“Yes, yes, I love you Noct, I love you”, the last of it came out as almost a growl as he bent to kiss his king.

PROMPTO

Prompto stood in the hallway to the roof top and fanned his face furiously, while sneaking a peek at Gladio. He needed a moment to compose himself after what he had just seen and heard, and well, fuck, he was going to have work hard to get that out of his head. The King and his chamberlain were definitely making up for lost time. It was not like he’d never been privy to intimate moments before but there had been a certain restraint between the two men in public, not this just out and out lust.

“Phew!” He puffed out a breath that lifted his fringe off his hot face. “Those two…how can well
let them be seen in public, big guy?” He was only sort of joking.

Gladio grunted, obviously as uncomfortable as Prompto. He crossed his massive arms and looked down at Prompto. “I think…fuck, I HOPE, Iggy is still Iggy under all that”. He paused musing and Prompto glanced up at him.

“Well, I mean, Iggy is like THE most in-control person we know right? He’ll pull it together”. He breathed out again, starting to regain some focus. “Noct told me once that Iggy was very different underneath, but I just couldn’t see it man, not Iggy, he’s just so ‘Ignisy’ all the time, yanno…?”

“Yeah, I getcha kid, but I have seen him pissed off a coupla times, and I tell ya, it weren’t pretty”, Gladio noticed the interest on the gunners face and the shield decided it was ok to enlighten him. “You know I got this scar protecting Noct, right?” He gestured to the long scar that ran down his left cheek.

Prompto nodded, he’d heard the story a few times, but something about it had always seemed off in the telling, particularly when Iggy had been present during the story, Prompto realised now that Ignis would quietly take himself away and out of ear shot of the conversation.

“Well, what you don’t know is that the whole thing coulda been avoided had Ignis not lost the plot, man justa ‘bout had steam comin’ out his ears. Iggy just don’t have an ounce of sense where Noct is concerned, well, he does, but ya know what I mean, he gets so fuckin’ protective ya know?”

Again Prompto nodded up at the shield again willing him silently to continue.

“Well, there was the guy who was mouthin’ off and Noct was getting’ a bit heated himself, that kid could never listen to someone talkin’ shit about his dad without getting’ all pissy. I was makin’ my way over to them and could see Iggy there, so I thought things would calm down pretty quick, but, fuckin’ hell kid, how wrong I was. The dude pushed Noct and I think Iggy just kinda…snapped. I only had time to blink before he had those friggin’ daggers out. I’m still strugglin’ through the crowd tryin’ to get there, Noct’s tryin’ to pull Iggy away, talking right into his ear, but Iggy weren’t havin’ none of it, he wanted blood and he was gonna get it, while Noct was pulling Iggy away, the dude thought he’d retaliate, I got there just in time to feel the guys knife slide down my fuckin’ cheek before grabbing him in a head lock and pulling him to the ground. I kinda blacked out while I still had my arms around the dude, and when I came to I was being bandaged up in the medic’s station behind the training grounds. Iggy was there looking so ashamed of himself that I thought he was gonna cry. I’ve only ever seen Iggy cry twice in all the years I’ve known him and both those times were 6 months ago, well, except for yesterday when he was being healed, so yeah, three times actually”.

Prompto knew he was talking about; the night of their last camp when Noct had been trying to tell them how he felt about everything and the moment Iggy knew that Noct was...dead.

Gladio drew in a shuddering breath, “Noct told me later that the guy had not only been bad mouthing his dad, but he’d…made comments to the effect that Noct was a little gay boy who had no right to the throne and that he’d only ever be good as a fuckboy”. He looked back down at Prompto, “this was all way before they actually got together, Noct was pinning after Iggy, Iggy was tryin’ to deny what he felt, I mean yanno how Iggy is about protocol, and it all just bubbled over”.

Prompto was aware that the incident that Gladio was talking about had happened when the shield was 16, so Iggy had been about 15 and the then crown prince had just been 13, but he knew from his own experience that at that age, hormones and feelings had a tendency to be seriously intense. He also knew that the two men hadn’t started their romance until Noct was almost 17 and Ignis 18, so
those feelings had continued to bubble under the surface for a long time.

Noctis had confessed to his friend soon after the two had finally allowed their feelings to be voiced, he didn’t know the full details and hadn’t needed to, the look on the crown prince’s face had told him everything he needed to know. They were happy and Prompto had been thrilled that his best friend finally had the man he’d been wanting for years. He knew they had taken things slowly and had gone to Noct’s father Regis to explain very early on so as to assuage Ignis’ guilt that he might be leading the prince astray from his duty and indeed failing in his own. That had been a revelation to them both, Regis had approved, he’d always approved of anything that allowed his son to experience real life, to have joy. Prompto realised now that the deep seated need for his son to be happy stemmed from the fact that King Regis had known for a very long time what the prophecy had said about Noctis.

Even when Chancellor Ardyn Izunia had dropped the bombshell about a marriage to Lunafreya, Regis had still allowed the relationship to continue, only asking Noctis to ensure that his bride knew what she was getting into. He remembered how Noct had laughed and told his father that Luna had been one of the first people he’d told and that Luna herself thought it was cute. He explained that both knew that their marriage was to be one of convenience, a political necessity, and that they thought of each other as more like siblings. With a surprisingly adult tone he had informed his father that he and Luna had discussed ways to provide an heir without compromising their close friendship or his relationship with Ignis.

Regis had almost choked on his glass of wine and Prompto just knew that Noctis had waited for precisely the right moment to tell him that bit of information.

“Luna will be my wife, yes, but Ignis will be my consort, my husband, I had him check the archives for precedent”. Noctis had informed his father airily like he’d just told him that he was going to have cake for desert.

The shocks for King Regis had not stopped there.

“Ignis and I would also like to have children together, through a surrogate if Luna does not wish to carry them, and I intend to have the law changed so that those children will be considered as heirs to the throne too”.

Prompto remembered the look that Regis had shot to Ignis and then his son, who had been nonchalantly sipping his own glass of wine while Iggy had merely smiled at the king to indicate it was the prince’s wish.

“I…I see”. Regis had coughed politely trying to smother the grin on his face. “You have thought this through in a very adult manner, Ignis’ influence no doubt”.

Prompto watched his friend’s eyes narrow at that, knowing that he hadn’t truly pulled off being adult in the situation and poor Prompto had had to smother his own laughter behind his hand while Gladio had actually sniggered. The departure dinner for the four men was turning into a farce very quickly and the best of it was that Regis seemed to be enjoying the situation.

Lost in those happy memories for a moment he smiled to himself.

“I think they will be ok Gladio, they just need to readjust to not having to hide what they are to each other”.

The big man looked down at his friend and just said “yeah, probably”.
And yanno, I think Iggy is just enjoying having Noct back, not having to grieve anymore, he’ll be ok”. He paused for a moment, “I think they both deserve that”. He could feel Gladio relax against the wall beside him and they stood in companionable silence for a moment.

At least they were until a decidedly loud moan could be heard from the roof top terrace through the door behind them.

Both men glanced at each other and flushed as they heard Ignis almost scream the kings name in a hoarse voice followed by Noctis yelling “YES!!!”

In silent agreement they both moved off further down the hallway to guard the privacy of their two closest friends.

“I am soooooo gonna be traumatised” Prompto whispered under his breath.

Crowe Altius had stood in the plaza before the steps of the citadel listening to the now King of Lucis explain what had been happening to the very confused populace before him. She had just been witness to the extraordinary healing of the King’s chamberlain and was still attempting to get warm after the Glacian’s departure. She wrapped her arms about herself and shuffled on the spot trying to regain some feeling to her toes. She kept her eyes on the King as he cleared his throat and addressed his people, the ruins Insomnia all around them.

“After the Fall of Insomnia, I undertook a journey to gain the covenants of the Astrals, which is a whole story in itself. That can wait for another day, so for now I will just give you the facts as they stand”. Noctis looked older than Crowe remembered, this was definitely not the 20 year old that she had last seen rushing to weapons practise in what seemed only weeks before to her.

“The Nifelheim army tried to stop us, they had their magitek soldiers follow and the daemons grew stronger after they stole the crystal. I managed to forge the covenants through the intervention of the Oracle, who sadly fell during the covenant with Levithan in Altissia.” The shot a quick look at his chamberlain and then at his other two friends at this point and she knew they shared memories between them in that moment. Ignis had bowed his head, Gladio had scowled and Prompto was shuffling his feet nervously. “But we continued on to Gralea to retrieve the crystal. It did not go as was expected, but then nothing had gone as it should since the Fall of the city. The crystal…absorbed me”. A muttering broke out before the King raised his hand to silence them. When quiet fell again he resumed. “As part of the Provenance and to energise the Ring of the Lucii I needed to commune with the Astrals in the heart of our star. The darkness that fell for 10 years was the result of me having to do this. I learned as Bahamut made his revelations that I was the Chosen and needed to… I needed to defeat Ardyn Izunia as he was known to us. Ardyn was actually of the line of Lucis, his true name being Ardyn Lucis Caelum. He had forged a covenant thousands of years ago, however in absorbing so many daemons he became…corrupted. He and Ifrit sought to destroy everything, Ifrit merely because he hated mankind, Ardyn because he had been slighted by the other Astrals. They rejected him because they deemed him impure, even though he had done a great deal of healing for our people, he had been considered a great man in his original time”.

Crowe shook her head trying to reconcile what she was hearing with her own memories. Nothing
seemed to fit, the pieces of the jigsaw clashing and not fitting together.

“Ardyn colluded with the Empire to bring us down using the daemons to enhance their military capabilities which most of you were witness to. The Empire simply wanted to defeat us, Ardyn had his own motives. The remaining Astrals had set the prophesy of the Chosen King in motion thousands of years ago by giving the power of the ring and crystal to the line of Lucis and bringing into being the line of the Oracle so that at the right time we would both be strong enough to forge the new covenants. I myself am not fully aware of what happened when I was inside the crystal, but I saw the results when I awoke on Angelgard. 10 years of darkness and the spread of daemons to horrifying proportions. I joined my…my Crownsguard, my friends, in Hammerhead and we set out to Insomnia soon after. We defeated Ifrit first, at the steps of this very citadel, the Glacian and the Draconian coming to our aid. When we entered the throne room…Ardyn was waiting”.

Crowe could tell there was so much more that the King was not revealing, she could hear it in his voice, see it in the faces of the three men who flanked him.

“I had to then defeat Ardyn on my own, on this physical plane, before I had to bring the prophecy to completion. It could only be done by a blood sacrifice…mine.”

The crowd gasped and looked distressed. The King raised his hand again.

“I then needed to defeat Ardyn once more, but in doing so I would die in that plane too. In the heart of the star. This I did and I…died”. The King took a deep breath. “I had been resolved on my course, I did not begrudge it, at least not entirely…” He gave a wry grin. “But I awoke in the throne room, seated as King with Lunafreya by my side…and I was given a choice. The Astrals did not wish to make the same mistakes again and they asked if I wished to join my loved ones in the beyond, be reunited with my father, with my mother, with Luna…or I could return to you and take the throne properly, take the reins and bring our city back to life, make Lucis whole. This I chose to do, I did not want to leave you all”, he glanced at his friends, his eyes resting on those of Ignis for a second longer. “I then had a few things I wanted from the Astrals, the first was the healing of my…chamberlain, he’d been badly injured in Altissia”. Noctis cleared his throat again, “then I asked them most respectfully to grant me another request”.

Crowe saw Ignis biting his lip to stifle a laugh and Prompto covered his face entirely, while Gladio snorted loudly to which the King glared and said “I did ask nicely thanks, shut it”.

“What I asked was that anyone who had served the Line of Lucis, anyone who had given their life to protect us in those last days, anyone who had struggled to keep the hope alive in the days of darkness, that those people be given the same choice that they had given me. To come back, to live again.”

“Woah”. Prompto was open mouthed in his shock.

Ignis’ eyes had widened as he regarded his King in a new light while Gladio had nothing to say for once.

Crowe meanwhile felt something click inside her, this, this was what had happened to her, she remembered a voice in the darkness asking her something urgent. She’d said yes. It was the last thing she knew before she had awoken outside the city. Crowe glanced around her and she saw understanding on the faces around her, until her gaze fell on a familiar figure who was running a hand over his face, Nyx.

She was barely listening to the King now as she made her way through the crowd to the man who was like a brother to her.
“Some chose to stay, they felt they had done their duty and it was their time to rest, Lunafreya and my father were two such.”

Crowe wove through the last of the crowd between her and Nyx and she placed her hand on his arm, Nyx’s eyes were almost bulging out of his head, taking in the sight of the woman standing in front of him. He grabbed her arms in his hands and pulled her in for a bone crushing hug.

“Crowe…” she heard him murmur. “You said yes?”

Crowe could only nod. They were broken from their reverie by the voice of the King ringing out over the plaza. “Is Nyx Ulric here?”

Nyx swung his head to look up at the King and coughed to clear his throat, emotions struggling beneath the surface. “I am here”, he answered hesitantly.

“Would you come forward please”.

Nyx grabbed Crowe’s hand in his and pushed through the people in front of him to stand before the King and his retinue.

“I had hoped you would say yes,” the King grinned, “I spoke to Luna about you, she told me what you did. Without you, King-for-a-night, we would never have succeeded.” The King looked back out over the people gathered before him, “this man is Nyx Ulric, of the Kingsglaive, a man who convinced the Astrals to give him the power of the Lucii for a night to raise the old wall and allow Luna to leave the city with the Ring so she could keep it safe and then deliver it to me. And so while I may be Noctis Lucis Caelum CXIV, he is in my heart the one hundredth and fourteen King of Lucis”.

Crowe gripped Nyx’s hand as he bowed low to the King of the Dawn, she was really going to have to hear THAT story. She nearly keeled over as Noctis then returned a bow just as deep as Nyx’s, a bow conferred upon a King.

“Please your Majesty, I only did what I had to do, what any man would do”.

“No, Nyx, you went so far beyond that, you are the ONLY man in the history of the Line of Lucis that has done so, I don’t know what you said to the Old Kings to convince them to raise the wall, but it must have been pretty good”. The King smiled down at him.

“I kinda told them they were being idiots and they would lose the ring if they didn’t do something.”

The King burst out laughing in an unseemly display, yet it seemed to fit this King to do so. “A man that I am going to get along with I can just tell”.

“I must add that your father also had a hand in it”, Nyx saw the King still suddenly, “He put in a good word for me”.

A tear rolled down the king’s cheek, “that sounds like something my dad would do, I thank you for telling me this Nyx. We will talk privately later”. Struggling to compose himself, Noctis addressed the crowd again, “for now, that is all I shall say, more information will come, but now I would like you all to join us in the citadel, I am assured there are enough rooms and supplies for everyone to be at least somewhat comfortable. We will sort out everything else later”.

“Everything else being such a small matter your Majesty”. Ignis quirked his lips up in wry smile that had Gladio chuckling and Prompto bent over in a fit of high pitched giggles.
“And that’s enough from the peanut gallery,” the King grabbed his chamberlain’s hand dragging him away, completely losing his kingly composure. “My boyfriend and I need to go…discuss his insubordinate behaviour in my…our rooms”.

Crowe just knew this King’s rule was going to be something completely different.

NOCTIS

Noctis lay in the arms of Ignis atop a tower of the citadel and he felt complete, sated. Well, at least for now he thought with a smirk. He could feel the taller man’s breath on his neck, inhaling and exhaling peacefully. These hours with his love were some of the most amazing he’d ever had. He knew they had to get up soon, but he just wanted to lay here holding the man who was everything to him. Ignis’ utter abandon in their lovemaking was so arousing, so…beautiful that it had spurred them both on to new heights. And the way that he’d not pulled away from him when Prompto and Gladio had interrupted them earlier had been…the hottest thing ever. He giggled to himself thinking that Ignis’ name was very apt, the man had certainly set his body on fire. He was used to Ignis’ passion when they had been able to find time alone, but for Ignis to display his feelings like that…was just…fuck.

Curling his fingers through ashy brown hair, he felt Ignis shift in closer and wrap his arms tighter around Noct. Turning his head a little he planted a soft kiss on the forehead of his lover, thanking the Astrals for what he could now simply enjoy, rather than snatch in moments when the two had found themselves alone. He thought back to how they had begun, how they had finally admitted to each other what had been growing so steadily over the years of their youth.

He’d been stealing sly peeks at Ignis for years and he’d begun to notice that his adviser had been looking at him with an odd look for a while, the casual hand on his shoulder or the one placed gently on the small of his back had stopped suddenly and for no reason he could discern. Ignis had seemed to be distancing himself from his charge, maybe trying to allow him more of the independence that his father had granted him when he’d allowed Noctis to have his own apartment. Ignis had lived in the same building a few floors down and he always felt comforted by the fact the adviser was so near. Specs, as he’d come to call him over time, eschewing the nickname Iggy as he just felt it didn’t fit him somehow – besides he liked the way Ignis rolled off his tongue, would drop by of an evening to cook him something that inevitably had vegetables in it and make sure he was up to speed with his school work. But this one night, things had been…strained. Noct had seen footage of his father using a cane to walk on the TV which had been upsetting and Ignis had been badgering him about some political portfolio that he’d wanted him to read and summarise, he’d been skipping out on training with Gladio too which definitely hadn’t gone down well with the Shield, but he could deal with Gladio being annoyed, in fact, he enjoyed it. And to top it all off his apartment had been an absolute pigsty, yet when he came home Ignis had cleaned it moving his comics of all things. Things had escalated quickly, ending in a shouting match and Ignis had left dejectedly. Noctis had followed him down to the garage of the building, and his heart had dropped when he saw Ignis in his car, head on his hands across the steering wheel, crying silently. He’d backed away not wanting to intrude or worse, start another fight. He’d go to him later, explain, give the older man time to calm down and compose himself. He couldn’t lose Ignis, he couldn’t let this stupid fight get to them. He knew his feelings were clouding how he felt about the man, but he couldn’t let go of Ignis, couldn’t let their friendship deteriorate into just a professional relationship, it would kill him.

So he’d swallowed his pride and had gone down to Ignis’ apartment later that night. He stopped
outside the door, music swelling out into the hallway and gods did it sound sad. He knocked hesitantly and got no answer. Then he heard it. Ignis was singing along with the song, his deep voice sounding so broken that Noctis had taken his keys out of his pocket and used the spare he had to enter. He’d halted at the sight in front of him. Ignis stood in front of the large window of his lounge room, his spectacles resting on a small table by the couch, glass of red wine forgotten in his hand as he tilted his head back and sang his heart out, obviously not knowing Noctis was watching.

_Turn down the lights_  
_Turn down the bed_  
_Turn down these voices inside my head_  
_Lay down with me_  
_Tell me no lies_  
_Just hold me close,_

_don’t patronise Don’t patronise me_  
_‘Cause I can’t make you love me if you don’t_  
_You can’t make your heart feel something it won’t_  
_Here in the dark, in these final hours_  
_I will lay down my heart and feel the power_  
_But you won’t, no you won’t_  
_‘Cause I can’t make you love me, if you don’t_  
_I’ll close my eyes, then I won’t see_  
_The love you don’t feel when you’re holding me_  
_Morning will come and I’ll do what’s right_  
_Just give me till then to give up this fight_  
_‘Cause I can’t make you love me if you don’t_  
_You can’t make your heart feel something it won’t_  
_Here in the dark, in these final hours_  
_I will lay down my heart and I’ll feel the power_  
_But you won’t, no you won’t ‘Cause I can’t make you love me, if you don’t_  

Noctis felt his heart shatter a little and shoved his fist in his mouth as he watched Ignis’ shoulders shake, he took a long gulp of his wine and then next track started, almost as maudlin and morose as the first.

_Somebody said you got a new friend Does she love you better than I can?_
Noctis frowned at the words, she he thought, did Ignis love a man

There’s a big black sky over my town I know where you’re at, I bet she’s around

And yeah I know it’s stupid But I just gotta see it for myself

I’m in the corner, watching you kiss her, oh, oh, oh

I’m right over here, why can’t you see me, oh, oh, oh

And I’m giving it all, but I’m not the guy you’re taking home,

ooh I keep dancing on my own.

The words hit Noctis like a hammer to the head, it seemed Ignis was in love with a man, a man who didn’t know, a man who didn’t love him back.

I just wanna dance all night

And I’m messed up, so out of line,

yeah Stilettos and broken bottles

I’m spinning around in circles

And I’m in the corner watching you kiss her, oh

I’m right over here, why can’t you see me,

oh And I’m giving it all, but I’m not the guy you’re taking home, ooh

I keep dancing on my own

And oh no So far away but still so near

The lights come up, the music dies

But you don’t see me standing here

I just came to say goodbye

And I’m in the corner watching you kiss her, oh

And I’m giving it all, but I’m not the guy you’re taking home, ooh

I keep dancing on my own

And oh no Sit down in the corner, watching you kiss her, oh no

And I’m right over here, why can’t you see me, oh no

And I’m giving it all, but I’m not the guy you’re taking home, ooh

I keep dancing on my own

So far away, but still so near T
he lights come up, the music dies

But you don’t see me standing here

Ignis was so obviously weeping uncontrollably now that Noctis didn’t even think as he crossed the apartment to his friend wanting to just comfort him.

He halted a few steps behind Ignis as he saw his reflection in the window, he couldn’t do this, he couldn’t intrude like this, it would mortify the adviser to know he had let his guard down so absolutely in front of his charge. Thankful that the soft carpet and the music swelling around the room muffled his steps as he made to retreat before Ignis spotted him in the reflection. The next song started and Noctis again halted as Ignis brokenly sang the song, but this time he emphatically changed a certain word.

No I can't forget this evening or your face as I were leaving
But I guess that's just the way the story goes
You always smile, but in your eyes
Your sorrow shows
Yes, it shows

No I can't forget tomorrow
When I think of all my sorrow
When I had you there but then I let you go
And now it's only fair that I should let you know
What you should know

I can't live If living is without you
I can't live
I can't give anymore
I can't live If living is without you
I can't give
I can't give anymore

Well, I can't forget this evening or your face as I were leaving
But I guess that's just the way the story goes
You always smile, but in your eyes
Your sorrow shows
Yes, it shows

I can't live If living is without you
I can't live
I can't give anymore
I can't live If living is without you
I can't live
I can't give anymore

No no no no I can't live
If living is without you
I can't live
I can't give anymore
I can't live
Oh fuck. Ignis had turned to look at Noctis so sadly as he’d left his apartment earlier, the image of his adviser standing for a moment in his hall way was now burned in his memory. His heart hammering in his chest, he whispered Ignis’ name.

Ignis startled and moaned brokenly, running his free hand through his hair. “Now I am hearing you, what the hell, am I really going mad?” He must have opened his eyes because he was pressing his long fingers to the glass where Noctis was reflected back at him. “Definitely going mad”, he whispered at the reflection.

Noctis decided to be brave. He reached out to touch Ignis on the shoulder, whispering his name again, “I’m really here Ignis”.

At the touch on his shoulder Ignis almost screamed and the glass of wine, now almost empty rolled across the carpet. “Oh please, no, let me be dreaming, let me be mad, anything but this..”

The taller man had still not turned around so Noctis wrapped his arms around him and pushed himself flush against warm muscled flesh. “I’m really here Ignis” he repeated only to have Ignis sob in his arms. “It’s ok Ignis” murmured Noctis trying to soothe him.

“It most certainly is NOT ok” was the broken reply. He felt the tall man stiffen in his arms. “Oh yes, pining after the prince is just so perfectly normal and…and then for you to hear THAT, oh gods I am completely mortified.”

“Please Ingis, turn around, look at me”. “I…I can’t”.

Noctis placed a soft kiss on the shoulder in front of him, “please”, he begged Ignis.

All Ignis could do was sob more, his shoulders shaking, so Noctis forced him to turn around, pushing on his shoulder until Ignis stood facing him, head down so Noctis couldn’t see his tear stained face. Noct reached up with his hand hesitantly and with one finger under that beautiful chin he raised Ignis’ head, and with daring he didn’t know he possessed pressed a light kiss on damp lips. Ignis froze, his eyes going wide forgetting to even cry, staring down into the blue depths of his prince’s eyes, seeing something there he’d never expected to see. Acceptance, understanding and… love, not just love between two close friends, but real love. Oh GODS.

“Oh my little raven…” Noct flushed at Ignis using the nickname he’d given him when they were little, knowing the older man hadn’t used that term for a very long time, but he loved it, made him feel special to the green eyed man.

Noctis could see what was going through the older man’s head and wanting to reassure him, he cupped his cheek and leaned in to kiss him again. Ignis pursed his own lips in an echo of a kiss, not even able to stop himself from doing so, all the reasons he shouldn’t be doing this suddenly silent in the wake of that first tentative press of lips on his own.

Noctis curled his arms around his adviser and pulled him closer, letting Ignis feel his warmth. “I have loved you for the longest time Ignis, I don’t even know when it started”. Noct instinctively knew the only way he would get Ingis to open up to him right now would be to confess his own feelings. And he was right. Ignis had lifted his arms from his sides and embraced his prince.

Noctis smiled to himself, snuggling closer to the man who lay beside him, that night so long ago had been the beginning of an enduring love affair that had never waned, the passion and the love still
as fresh and deep as it had ever been. They had taken things slow after that first night, not even consummating their love until they had been together for over six months, but they had told Regis almost immediately, Noctis had suggested it, knowing that Ignis would feel incredibly guilty if they tried to keep it secret. The smile that Regis had bestowed upon them had stayed with Noctis, but his words of congratulations and acceptance after had warmed him. Ignis’ fingers had tightened around his own and he’d felt him relax. Noctis had glanced at the man beside him and then back to his father and mouthed the words thank you unable to speak for the extreme happiness that was welling up.

Telling Prompto and Gladio had been just as affirming. Prompto had flown across the room to hug them both, happy that his best friend had someone who would love him. Gladio had chuckled and smacked him on the back, then turned to Ignis and said “FINALLY!” Poor Ignis had choked and just stared at the Shield, speechless for once. Gladio had apparently picked up on the unresolved tension and was far more perceptive than he liked to admit.

Noctis chuckled to himself and felt Ignis stir beside him, “hmm, what are you laughing at my love?” was his sleepy query.

“Just remembering Speccy, come on, we should get up before we get interrupted again, this time I think Prompto will be even more traumatised if he finds us like this”. Both of them naked and entwined on the blanket. He pushed himself up bringing Ignis with him, who tangled his fingers in his hair and brought him close for a gentle kiss.

“Yes, poor Prompto,” he chuckled.

They both stood and started to search for their clothing when a loud knock sounded on the door to the tower top.

“You two decent?” Gladio shouted through the door.

“Ahhh, no, not yet, give us a minute”, Noctis hurriedly stepped into his boxer briefs and grabbed his trousers while Ignis scrabbled into his own now very rumpled clothing. It was cute.

“DUUUUUDE!” came the plaintive wail from Prompto through the door and both Noctis and Ignis laughed quietly together.

GLADIO

The King’s Shield strode down the hallway that led to the King’s chambers having deposited the King and his Chamberlain in the rooms with a sharp push, “Go shower and get yourselves ready for some meetings…And NO muckin’ around”, he had put a mock frown on his face as Ignis had rolled his eyes at him.

“Those two are gonna be the death of me,” he muttered to himself as he made his way to the council chamber lower down in the citadel. He’d requested that any remaining Kingsglaive, Crownsguard or attendants meet up in the Council rooms to discuss moving forward and he needed to assess just what he had to work with. The group was likely to be pitifully small and he’d put in a call to Monica to round up anyone else she could find in Lestallum and arrange for them to make their way to Insomnia. He’d given Monica a brief explanation and had been happy to note that the Crownsguard attendant had taken it all in stride assuring him that they would be there in a few days.
Tugging his Kingsglaive uniform straighter he entered the Council chamber and assessed what he saw before him. Milling around together at one end of the room were a handful of Kingsglaive, while the Crownsguard and their attendants were standing together near the Council table. That was something he was going to have to put right immediately, they would need to become one cohesive unit rather than two separate units. Old resentments would need to be put aside.

“The King will be with us shortly” he announced as he moved to stand beside the chair that sat at the head of the table. Heads turned to look at him and he cleared his throat, best to get this out in the open straight away he thought to himself. “There’s been a longstanding problem between the two forms of guard and I intend for that to end now”, he glared at both groups and he motioned for them all to stand together on one side of the room. “We don’t have the luxury of allowing past shit to cloud what we need to do”. He took a deep breath, “we are ALL citizens of Insomnia, ALL citizens of Lucis and I will not have the time or patience to deal with stupid crap”. He glanced down at where his father had used to sit at the table, praying to the Astrals to give him the strength he knew he was going to need. “Do we have any of the Council member’s attendants here?”

Three men stepped forward and Gladio motioned for them to sit at the table, “You will be taking over the positions of your former masters at the moment, we will have to replace more as we go along”. The Shield was pleased to note that the men sat down without asking any questions, “we may have more coming from Lestallum with Monica shortly, but we’ll have to wait ‘till they get here to see what positions still need filling. What we DO need to do now is show our King that he has people ready to assist him in putting our country back together. Up ‘till his return we were mainly focussed on just sortin’ out what the Dawn would mean. Re-plowing farmland and so on, but now we can move on to the business of making our country whole and prosper”.

He took another deep breath, “we have a Grand Chamberlain at the moment, but I’m not sure if he will be continuing in that role, there might be a conflict of interest. As the King made painfully obvious, he and his chamberlain are…in a relationship. It’s not a new thing, even King Regis and Lunafreya knew of it, but now I think the King intends to make it official.” Gladio looked up to see grins on a lot of the faces. “And hopefully they will be a little more…circumspect from now on”. He got snickers at that comment and he smiled ruefully in remembering what he’d been witness to earlier.

Gladio looked around at the men and women assembled around the table and his gaze met a pair of beautiful brown eyes, losing his train of thought. The woman belonging to them was standing with Nyx Ulric and the Shield was not pleased to note she was clutching his hand. Damn, he thought, the most amazing woman I’ve seen in years and Nyx has her already. He coughed into his hand trying to regain his thoughts, and he could feel a blush forming. Crap, I’m as bad as Iggy.

“Ahhh, anyway, that’s all I have to say for now,” he waved his hand uselessly, “we’ll wait for the King”.

Voices rose and fell around him as the Shield looked down at his hands and tried to focus. Normally he was confident around women, knowing they found him attractive, but this woman had his thoughts running around in circles. He glanced up at her again and was shocked to see her and Nyx approaching him while she whispered in the glaives ear urgently. Gladio looked back down quickly SHIFT.

He tried to appear in control and calm when Nyx coughed, “Gladiolus Amicitia, I would like to introduce you to my friend and fellow glaive Crowe Altius”. He lifted his head and met those brown eyes again. She was smiling at him shyly and extended her hand to him. Gladio put his own out and felt a jolt go through him as he clasped her hand in his large one.
Ohh, shit, I should say something, yep definitely, I should say something.

“Ahhh, um, yes, hello Crowe, I’m Gladio”. Urgh, she knows that, Nyx just told her who I was. Shit, let go of her hand you bumbling idiot. He hastily dropped her hand and shuffled his feet. Crowe was looking at her own feet before she lifted her gaze to meet his again. Damn, those eyes!

“Pleased to meet you Gladio, I’d heard of you before but I was with the mages of the glaive so I wasn’t around the citadel much”. Her voice was soft and Gladio thought he just might melt into a puddle on the floor. Something registered in Gladio’s memory, oh she’s CROWE, the mage that almost defeated the Diamond Weapon, single-handedly, the one the Niffs sent before the Fall. He’d heard about her. She was seriously powerful.

Nyx was flicking his eyes from one to the other in amusement. He thought to himself that he’d put the Shield out of his obvious misery, he’d seen the frown that had crossed his face when he looked down and saw Crowe’s fingers laced through his own.

“Crowe was always like a little sister to me and when I saw her alive in the plaza it was like I’d been given the best present ever”.

“You were one of those given the choice?” Gladio’s eyes widened in surprise, tucking away the knowledge they weren’t in a relationship in his mind like a prize. It made him feel warm all over.

Crowe nodded, “I was given a commission to escort Lady Lunafreya to Altissia, but well…I didn’t make it”.

“Oh…well I am glad you said yes”. CRAP, make it obvious why don’t you. Gladio was mentally kicking himself and could have smacked himself in the head when he saw Nyx’ shit-eating grin. He could see that Nyx was thoroughly enjoying his discomfort. “Umm, anyway I am glad we have you here, I’m sure Noct will be pleased to know we have a mage around”. Hopefully that had sounded a little more normal, but he then realised he’d called the King by his nickname, “Ahh, I mean the King, sorry, new to all this”. PROTOCOL Gladio, protocol!

Crowe’s beautiful brown eyes twinkled in amusement, “I think you are doing fine Gladio”.

Oh Gods, hearing his name on her lips made him want to hear her moan it in his ear. SHIT, keep it together!

“Ahhh, thanks…” he muttered finally and the look he shot Nyx as he laughed softly could have felled the glaive if looks could do such a thing. SHIT, hurry up Noct and get your ass down here so I can go crawl into a fuckin’ hole somewhere.

It seemed that Noctis had heard his silent plea as the door to the council chamber opened to admit the King, his chamberlain and Prompto who was still looking like he was going to be traumatised. He rolled his eyes to the ceiling as he noted that Ignis’ hand was clasped tightly in that of Noctis’.

“Shit”, he muttered, “at least they’re dressed”. The amused glance Crowe shot him made his stomach flip over. He grunted moving towards his King and the men and women in the Council chamber turned to watch the King enter. He glanced once more at Crowe as she covered her mouth to hide the grin on her face and Gladio was lost in his thoughts again enraptured by the smile on her lovely face.

IGNIS
Ignis stood in the bathroom of the King’s rooms and was trying to again reconcile what he saw reflected back at him with what he knew. His face looked much as it had the last time he’d seen in that morning long ago in Altissia, a little older perhaps, not to be unexpected after over ten years, but his hair had turned to an ash brown, darker than it used to be. He closed his eyes pushing his glasses back up his nose, knowing it was a nervous habit more than a necessity. At least that hadn’t changed, his vision, though restored was just as myopic as it had ever been. When Noctis had discovered this he had disappeared for a few minutes returning with Ignis’ glasses. They were his spare pair, his originals having been smashed when he’d been injured. It was a sound he still heard in his nightmares.

“I had these in the pocket of my jacket, I kept them after Altissia, like a…keepsake I guess”. Noctis had shuffled his feet then tapped the toe of one foot on the floor, another gesture that was so familiar to Ignis that his heart swelled in his chest. There were so many little quirks of his love that he was seeing again after so many years that he thought he’d never get to experience again.

“Thank you my love”, he whispered softly as he cupped Noctis’ cheek and kissed the tip of his nose. As Noctis smiled up at him, he traced his fingers over the smooth jaw, marvelling at how lovely his King was.

After the meeting in the Council chambers he’d taken a moment to pull Prompto aside while Noctis discussed the forming of the new guard with Gladio and Nyx.

“Do you have your photos with you Prompto?”

“Ahh, yeah, ‘course, do you want to see some?” The gunner had grinned up at him.

“I would very much, do you have some of Noct from when he returned…the first time?”

“Yeah, Iggy, not many but I do have a few, why do you wanna see those?” Prompto looked a little puzzled by the request.

“His face feels…different from then, I know the beard is gone, he’s gone back to shaving, but something else is different”, Ignis explained, maybe seeing photos of that time would clear it up for him.

“Ahhh, yeah, he does look different, but it’s a good different, here” he replied as he pulled out his trusty camera. Flicking the on button he scrolled through the stored memories and found the ones he was looking for. He handed the camera to Ignis and moved away to sit down and let Ignis look through them on his own.

Ignis drew in a deep breath, pushing the pain of those memories down so he could focus on the screen of the camera.

The very first picture made him gasp and he noticed Prompto look up sharply, “He looked like Regis!”

“Ahh yeah, he did, Gladio and me, well…we saw it too, guess it was the ring and all that”.

Ignis nodded and looked back down at the screen. The beard was there that he had felt the first time he had touch his King’s face again, but the face itself looked older than the one Noct had now, he was darker around his eyes, a haunted look about them, still the same arresting shade of blue he’d always gotten lost in, but harder and determined. His raven locks hanging about his face no longer styled in the organised mess that Noct had liked were shot with streaks of grey. There were lines on
his face that weren’t there now, frown lines and worry lines on his forehead. His bearing spoke of a man who was holding the weight of the world, but he was holding it like a king would. Ignis glanced over to where Noctis stood now and then back down at the camera, the bearing of a king still there, but now he was more relaxed, whereas the Noct in the camera screen seemed…dangerous maybe, Ignis was not sure what words would encompass it. The resemblance to King Regis was so pronounced in the photos that he scrolled through that he wished the departed King could see it himself. Regis had been heard to moan once or twice that his son didn’t really look like him much, taking more after his mother, who had been small with the same almond shaped eyes and delicate features.

The next photo Ignis stopped at was one Prompto had taken of the King standing looking towards the road to Insomnia, in his Royal battle attire. Oh my, how handsome he looked. It looked perfect on him, Noct had worn it beautifully and it enhanced the resemblance to his father even more being of a similar style and cut to Regis’, with gold embellishments and tassels enhancing the black cloth.

The next photo was one of Noct with his hand on Ignis’ shoulder, the look on his face full of sadness and longing. He was looking into Ingis’ face and it was obvious to Ignis that he’d been wishing that Ignis could look back at him. Oh my love, I wanted nothing more at that moment than to gaze upon your face again.

Ignis turned his attention to his own visage. The visor he’d worn covering his eyes, the one on the left fused shut and covered in a massive scar that stretched from high on his brow to down his cheek. His right eye was a clouded pale green with another scar dissecting his eyebrow and ending just below the eye. Another crossed the slight bump in his nose and that looked deep, almost through bone. The one on his bottom lip had healed so as to be almost invisible in this photo, but he’d always felt it. He lifted a hand to touch his face, still marvelling that the scars were gone and he could see again.

He became aware of a freckled face looking towards him and he quirked his own lips up in a wry little smile knowing he’d been caught looking at himself. Never a particularly vain man, that was Gladio’s area of expertise, clothing had been more his thing, his face he’d been ambivalent about, he’d nonetheless been ashamed of his scars and was more relieved than he could express that they were gone.

Ignis looked over to Noct and his eyes traced the features of his King. He looked younger than the photos, a little softer, more mature than the young 20year old man he remembered so clearly, but still so handsome it made his breath catch in his throat every time he looked at him. He’d not bothered to style his hair, letting it just hang in long dark locks about his face and Ignis had to admit he liked the change, he could see more of his face like this. He smiled to himself as Noct reached up to tuck some of it behind his ear and their eyes met as Noct looked over to him. The smile that spread over his King’s face shot a thrill through his whole body. That smile was full of promise.

Later he’d mouthed at Noct and chuckled when Noct frowned slightly, Ignis flipped his hand at him in a go-back-to-work gesture shaking his head when Noct pouted. Some things really did not change. What had changed was Noct’s energy levels, he seemed to have unending amounts of energy, a sleepless night and all their passionate activity since his return seeming to have had no real effect on him. He’d not even fallen asleep in the Council meeting as he was wont to do during boring meetings before.

Ignis thought he just might enjoy this particular change.

Looking back down to the camera again he flicked the button for the next photo and his heart almost broke, Prompto had taken a photo of Noct as he ascended the step of the citadel for what they
had thought would be the last time. He flicked the button again, not wanting to relive that moment and was awarded with a photo of himself raising his face to the new dawn, tears streaking through the dirt on his face. He remembered that moment all too clearly and it was still too painful. Even having Noct back could not erase that pain, though now it made him all the more grateful to have him back and to be able to hold him in his arms. He could feel tears welling up and took in a shuddering breath to calm himself when he felt arms wrapping his waist from behind.

“Whatcha looking at Speccy?”

Ignis immediately felt more at peace with Noct’s arms around him, his head resting on his shoulder. He flicked back through a few photos before turning to his King, “have a look, I asked Prompto to show me some of his photos from when you came back last time”. Noctis gave him a confused look. “You never saw how you looked then, I hadn’t either”.

“Oh”.

“I knew something was different but I think you ought to see for yourself”. Ignis found the photo that reminded him of Regis and handed the camera to Noct.

Noct took the camera from him and his eyes widened in shock, “I look like…” He swallowed, the emotion plain to see.

“Yes, you did, my love and I think he would have been so proud to see the man you had become”.

Noct was struggling to not cry and he swallowed again, adam’s apple bobbing in his throat. “He…he did get to see me, he was there in the throne room. He was the one…the one who…oh gods Ignis, I could see what it was doing to him to have to do it and I could only ask him to trust in me”. Noct gave up trying to hold back the tears, to him it had happened so recently. Ignis pulled him close and shielded him from the remaining people in the Council chamber, and cursed himself under his breath. He should have thought about this.

Ignis had been with Gladio and Prompto when they had entered the throne room to retrieve the body of their King, instead all they had found was the Sword of the Father thrust into the back of the throne. Ignis had fallen to his knees, caressing the blade that had taken his King from him before he had grabbed the hilt yanked it forcefully from where it was embedding in the throne and threw it across the room. He’d heard it clatter to the floor, he’d heard Prompto’s gasp of surprise and then had felt Gladio’s hand on his shoulder. He’d stood shakily and stormed out of the chamber, never to return. He had hated that room. He still loathed it with a passion, though he knew he’d have to enter it again at some stage, it would be unwillingly.

“Come, love, I’ll take you upstairs” he whispered into Noct’s hair, his own tears threatening to fall. Waving Prompto over he took the camera from Noct’s hands and handed it the gunner who was hopping from foot to foot nervously. “We need to get him out of here, now!” Prompto nodded and waved his arm to gain Gladio’s attention, the Shield moving quickly to their side and shooting them both an enquiring glance. “Later” was all Ingis said as he ushered the king to the door. Thankfully Gladio simply nodded as he and Prompto created more cover for their retreat.

Entering the elevator outside the Council chamber Noct had collapsed in Ignis’ arms and he lifted him to cradle him close as his king’s sobs filled the small space. Prompto’s lip quivered and Gladio was stern but worried as they rode up to the floor where Noct’s rooms were. When the doors opened Gladio peered out into the hallway and indicated to Ignis to indicate the coast was clear. They made their way down the hall quickly, Gladio throwing open the doors so Ignis could carry Noct inside. Both Prompto and Gladio nodded at him and closed the doors behind them leaving Ignis alone with the sobbing king. He gently lowered Noct to the bed and settled in beside him,
stroking his hair and kissing his forehead, knowing that Noct needed this release and that trying to
stop it right now would do no good.

“I’m here, my love, I’m here” was all he could murmur.

It had taken quite a while for Noct to cry himself out, falling asleep in Ignis’ arms.

Once he was assured that the King was fully asleep and would not wake, he covered him with a
quilt to keep him warm and headed to the bathroom to compose himself.

He didn’t know how long he’d stood there staring at himself in the mirror and lost in his musing,
but he shook himself out of it eventually and went to the doors of the suite of rooms to speak to
Gladio and Prompto, shutting the door to the bedroom quietly on the way, they deserved an
explanation. He motioned them in with a flip of his hand taking them to the sitting room. He seated
himself in one of the chairs and crossed his legs waiting for the other two to sit down.

He looked over to them and registered the pain and worry that was written on both their faces.
Gladio rested his elbows on his knees and had clutched his hands together. Prompto was struggling
to keep himself together, blue eyes bright with unshed tears.

“I think I need to explain first what brought this on, I stupidly showed him a photo of himself where
he looked like Regis, he misses his dad and it was Regis who had to…complete the blood ritual, he
started remembering and…well, you saw the result”.

“Oh shit” Gladio muttered.

“The three of us are really the only ones who truly know what he’s been through and we’ve had
time to process, first that awful ten years and then the last six months, but to him, it’s just days since
he entered the crystal”. Ignis took a deep breath before he continued. “He’s not had time to just
remember, not had time really to even grieve his father properly, or Luna, or grieve the time he lost.
All these things have rained down on him so fast and he needs time to process. As much as the
realm needs him, he needs this time more, or he won’t be able to function. I should have foreseen
this; I blame myself entirely.”

“No Iggy, not your fault” broke in Prompto, “you’ve made him the happiest I have ever seen him”.
He flushed a little remembering just how Ignis had done that and Ignis blushed himself.

“Yes, ahem, well, ahh…”

“Don’t sweat it Iggy, we get it”. Ignis shot Gladio a thankful look for saving him more
embarrassment.

“As I was saying, to him it is a matter of days since the crystal, and even before that was all that
time wandering around in Zegnautus alone before we found him again, Gladio and trying to locate
you, Prompto, he didn’t even really get time to have his best friend back before the crystal absorbed
him and took him from us.”

“It’s ok Iggy, really, we had a talk together about that in Zegnautus, I know he felt guilty about
pushing me off the train, but that was Ardyn’s fault, not his. He told me then that he wanted to break
down the borders and make Lucis whole, bring everyone together. It was the first time I’d heard him
speak like a king”. Prompto smiled softly as he remembered that conversation. “When he came
back and he was so…kingly, I saw what sort of a man he would have been on the throne and I was
just sorta pissed at the gods for denying him that, for denying US that”.

“Yeah, kinda felt bad for all the bitchin’ I did, telling him to shape up”. Gladio muttered.
“You, feeling bad about giving Noct a hard time, no, never”, quipped Ignis lightening the mood a little.

Gladio chuckled deeply at that, “yeah, true”.

“Indeed”. The shield quirked his eyebrow up and Ignis just knew he was about to receive a ribbing from the big man if he didn’t continue quickly. “He’ll be ok, we all know him better than anyone and I know you’ll agree that he will be a wonderful king, however he needs to deal with everything first, which means that our workloads are going to be quite hefty for a time. We need to get his Council in place and the new guard will have to be put through some very intensive training, then will be diplomatic matters, envoys to Accordo, and we will need to assess what remains of the Empire. The last thing we need is for some sort of resurgence of hostilities. And on top of all that we need to get the city in order, it may seem a small thing in the scheme of things, however I believe that having our city back will create a feeling of confidence in their new king’s rule”.

“Phew,” huffed Prompto shooting an amused glance at Gladio.

“Welcome back Iggy”, chuckled Gladio.

Ignis lifted one eyebrow at the two of them, “and what are you implying, pray tell?” He swung his teal gaze from Shield to gunner.

Prompto laughed and lifted his hands in a gesture of mock surrender.

NYX

Nyx was having a hard time focusing and very soon it was going to become a major problem. What had possessed him to agree to a training session with the man who was pacing in front of him he really had no idea.

He gripped his kukris in both hands, the King having returned them to him earlier in the day at the same time telling him he was now to be commander of the new guard. The hilts of the wickedly curved blades felt so familiar in his hands and it grounded him a little, that was, until he looked up at the tall form in front of him again. This just might prove to be embarrassing.

His opponent’s matched elaborate gilded steel blades winked in the sunlight streaming into the training arena as the man wielding them twirled them deftly and started his stalking approach. He blinked the sweat out of his eyes and tried again to focus. Adjusting his stance, he crouched a little, one blade raised to strike, the other in a defensive position in front of his chest. The man opposite nodded and moved closer slowly before lunging quickly in to engage their blades.

Nyx had always considered fighting with this type of blade to be more of a dance, a fast and furious paced dance where both opponents moved so quickly it was hard to track. And so it was now, blades clashing and ringing together, the sound echoing off the walls around them. Fighting like this required vast amounts of training and once proficient, instinct needed to take precedence as one had no time to consider each move. For a time Nyx lost himself in the dance, moving without really thinking, defending, striking, twirling around behind his opponent to try and gain an advantage only to have the other man spin quickly to parry his attack. He was good, he was very good.

They fell into a sequence of attack and defend more furious than before, his opponent breathing almost as heavily as himself, chest raising and falling beneath the tank top he wore to expose his bare
muscled arms. His reach was longer than Nyx’s so he’d had to adjust for that, sweeping in lower under the man’s guard to try and press any advantage he could. But it wasn’t working. Every move he made was countered with a precision that was scary.

He spun swiftly, striking quickly with the blade in his right fist, bringing the left up quickly to halt the blade coming towards his chest. Blade to blade, both men held their positions for a moment before they both spun away to engage again and again. Nyx’s muscles were beginning to protest at this extended session. No-one else had ever given him such a challenge.

The dance continued until finally both men had started to tire. He noticed his opponent’s eyes narrow in determination and prepared himself for another onslaught. Blinking more sweat of his eyes he moved to advance, searching for any weak spot in the man’s defence and finding none. He struck hard and fast, his opponent flipped backwards and resumed his stance waiting almost patiently for a new attack. Well, shit he thought not expecting acrobatics like that. Seems the man in front of him had a few extra tricks in his arsenal. Although, it may mean that he was actually pressing the man to use everything he had to beat him. The thought pleased Nyx and with renewed resolve he closed in to press another attack. This time the man flipped over the top of him and before he could react had kicked his legs out from under him. He blinked in surprise as the man straddled him and pressed a blade to his throat.

“Yield?”

“Yeah, ok, yield”, Nyx breathed out hard and really hoped his sudden arousal was not noticed by the man above him, that would be even more embarrassing than losing. The man’s blades disappeared with a flick of his wrist and a flash of blue sparks and then he was extending his hand down to assist Nyx to his feet.

Once upright Nyx collected his kukris from where they had scattered and sent them away with a flick of his own wrists. He lent over, hands on his knees and sucked in a few deep breaths.

“Thank you Nyx, I have not had such a worthy opponent in a very long time”. The deep voice of the other man made him look up and see a slight twinkle in his eyes, his lips quirked in a wry little smile and Nyx was now VERY glad he was no longer under the man.

“Not so bad yourself”, which earned him a deep chuckle in response. “Those flips threw me”.

“Just as I had intended”.

“Yeah figured as much”. Nyx stood up straight again, “you need to be training our new recruits, those flips are something else”.

“Alas I fear I will not have much time for that, although perhaps I could come in and instruct them every so often. Once they know how, it’s a matter of practise and instinct, much like the rest of the art of blade work”.

Teach me, teach me his body screamed at him, no really, REALLY bad idea, his brain reasoned.

“Well, thanks, I’m gonna head for a shower, see you around”.

“You too, Nyx, I have to stretch and cool down before I shower”.

Nyx retreated to the showers quickly, stripping and jumping under the stream of warm water. He leaned his head against the tiles and restrained the urge to touch himself, that would certainly make things worse, the last thing he needed would be for the other man to come in and find him in the midst of stroking his cock to orgasm.
When he was finished and he thought he had himself sufficiently under control he exited the showers to find that the other man was still in the training arena. His eyes widened as he watched him lift one leg above his head and hold himself in that pose for a moment before switching legs, then bending completely from his slim waist to place his hands flat on the floor and flick his legs over his head. Completely balanced on his palms, holding all his weight above him he lowered his legs so that he was bent in half but backwards, head resting against the backs of his legs. *Fuck the man is agile, how can someone even do that.* Nyx watched absolutely mesmerised as he the flicked his legs over his head and landed upright, both feet planted firmly on the floor. Nyx’s mouth fell open as he then slid his legs apart and lowered himself with perfect control to the floor. Once his ass met the floor he then reached his arms out in front of him and lowered his torso. Tearing his eyes away and adjusting his pants, Nyx quietly left the training arena.

Ignis Scientia, beloved of the King, was definitely going to cause Nyx a lot of problems.

PROMPTO

Prompto was trying to remember everything Cor had taught him in weapons training, the problem was when it came to using his guns he worked on instinct and teaching instinct was something he found he had no real words for. Noct was relying on him to impart his knowledge to these new recruits so he scratched his head and rolled his eyes at himself. *Just concentrate on the basics first.* These young men and women had been chosen out of the pool of new recruits for their aptitude. Gladio and Nyx had sent them to him after a short session of firing at targets. The ones he had before him had managed to hit the targets with a higher degree of accuracy than their counterparts.

“Does anyone here have any experience with these sort of arms?” Prompto eyed the recruits in front of him, two hands shot up, two out of fifteen, *oh Astrals, this is going to be so much fun.* He sighed and cursed his luck. “Ok, well, you two, show me how to strip down and clean your weapon”.

The two guard recruits took their weapons in hand and painfully slowly went through the process. Prompto groaned to himself at the pace they were setting.

“Right, the rest of you watch my hands carefully, I will do this a couple of times so you can see what I am doing and then I want you to try.” Forcing himself to slow down what was normally a very quick exercise, the gunner set about pulling his favourite gun apart. Most of the students glanced at each other in thinly disguised horror. *Still too fast Dude!* He did notice one young woman watching him intently, her hands making the motions he was demonstrating, her bottom lip caught in her teeth. Going through the motions again, slowing himself to what he felt was a ridiculous crawl he began to notice some of the others nodding in understanding. Feeling relieved, he stripped down his quick silver again.

“Sir, can you show us how fast you can do it?” said the woman who had been ghosting through the motions along with him.

Prompto looked up in surprise, *sir? Ugh, no, not going to be able to cope with that.*

“Ahhh, ok, yeah sure, but everyone, do me a favour and just call me Prompto, not your *SIR* kinda guy”. Well, he was officially, but to him, he’d always just be Prompto.

He heard a few chuckles from the students around him and grinned at them all.
“Ok, here we go, umm, and not expecting you guys to do this any time soon, you need to know that I kinda picked this up really quickly when Cor was training me and I’ve had well over ten years to perfect it”. He didn’t want to demoralise them with his proficiency, Cor had told him back then that he’d never seen anyone pick it up so quickly, that and the fact he’d been able to hit the centre of the targets within minutes of picking up a gun the first time. He considered himself to be an anomaly in that regard and had often thought it might have something to do with his origins.

Reflexively scratching at the barcode tattoo on his wrist, he then picked up his weapon and with a fluid set of motions had his quick silver pulled apart and looking up his students put it back together without even glancing at what he was doing. Loading it just as quickly, he lifted it up in his dominant hand, sighted the target and fired off five rounds, all hitting the target dead centre. Reloading, he then switched to his other hand, shifted his weight to his other foot and fired off another five rounds with the same pinpoint accuracy.

“Shit!” was the awed response from one of the men.

“Ok dudes and dudettes, give it a go yourselves, once you’ve done it, do it again and again. Trust me, practise makes perfect, and if you need a hand sing out”. He paced around behind the students, watching with a certain amount of pride that they were all able to take their weapons down, albeit with varying degrees of speed.

After an hour of this Prompto decided to switch things up a bit to give them all a rest.

“Ok, now, I want you all to work out what your dominant hand is, you’ll learn to shoot with both in time, but for now it’s best to concentrate on whichever is the hand you’re most comfortable with. And…it’s not necessarily the hand you might write with or whatever, it’ll be the hand that feels best holding the gun and firing it”. He got them all to line up in front of the range and aim at the targets along the back wall, swapping hands until they found the one that was most comfortable. He showed them all a proper stance and got them to brace the hand holding the weapons with their other hand and ran them through how to sight a target. Once they had that he got them to dry fire, getting used to the pressure on the trigger.

Pleased with the progress they had all made, Prompto decided it was time to finish up for the day, not wanting to overwhelm them.

“Once you guys are all ready, I’ll take you to the armoury and sort of getting you guys your own personal weapons, but for now that’s a wrap, head out and I’ll see you all here tomorrow, bright and early”. Shooing them all out the door he turned to finish tidying up. Once he was done he picked up his quick silver, flicked the button to set the targets moving, flicking his other wrist, blue sparks surrounded his gun so that he wouldn’t need to reload and started peppering the targets flying around the room with bullets. Examining the results he flicked another button. The paper targets vanished and were replaced with several goblin holograms. The goblins moved around the room and Prompto rolled to the floor firing up at two of them before bouncing to his feet and taking out the third. “I never miss” he muttered to himself.

Huffing in satisfaction he turned to find the young woman watching him.

“Ahh, can I help you with something?”, hopping from foot to foot, Prompto was STILL nervous around people he found attractive. He’d found he was fine in a group situation but one on one, man or woman, he still could end up a stuttering mess, all blushing freckled cheeks and needing to fidget with his hands, which he was doing now, unconsciously stripping down the quick silver.

“No, no, I just wanted to say thank you, when I was accepted I was worried I’d never find something I was good at, I am hopeless with a blade of any kind” she laughed in an embarrassed
"Ahh, don’t feel bad about that…um, what was your name again?"

“Amara, my name is Amara”.

“Well, Amara, I’m pretty bad with blades myself, give me a gun or machinery weapons and I am fine, but blades I’m like a…complete idiot”, Prompto chuckled a little.

“Machinery? What sort of machinery?” The woman looked at him curiously.

“Here, I’ll show you if you like, we’ll get to this stuff later on in training”, he replied as he led her to the machinery room. He picked up an Auto-crossbow, “stuff like this, rather a nasty piece of work this, or this”, he placed the bow back and picked up a drillbreaker. “Now these can create a LOT of damage, most daemons would drop pretty quick when I used to use this on ‘em”.

“Did you fight a lot of daemons?” she asked him, peeking up at him through a fringe of dark brown hair. Her eyes very a very pretty blue, almost exactly the same shade as his own.

“HA, far more than I ever expected to, when I went with Noct on the journey to Altissia, or what was meant to be just a journey to Altissia, we seemed to be fighting them all the time. And then was the ten years of darkness, bloody daemons everywhere.” He looked over to her and found her eyes wide.

“You were with the King, you’re one of his Crownsguard?” she looked rather impressed. “That means you’re a hero, you were in the prophecy, in the painting in the audience chamber”.

“Ahhh, I guess, the likeness isn’t that good though, haha, they didn’t paint my hair right”. Hair that he was now running his hands through, mucking up the styling. “I’ve kept my camera and I have a heap of photos that I took back then, did ya wanna see?”

“Ohh I would love to Prompto”. She smiled up at him shyly.

“Well, make yourself comfortable then, there’s a lot of ‘em”. Prompto settled his ass against one of the tables and Amara positioned herself beside him, leaning in when he pulled out his camera and flicked the screen on.

One of the first photos was of the four friends posing around the Regalia, “That’s Noct’s dad’s car, he gave it to Noct to take on the journey, awesome car that was, she was like another member of our little party, couldn’t have got very far without her”. He smiled wistfully remembering just how many hours they had all spent travelling around in that car, Noct sleeping in the backseat beside Gladio as he read one of his trashy romance novels, Iggy beside him in the driver’s seat sipping his cans of Ebony.

He stopped next at one of him and Noct, throwing peace signs at the camera.

“You look more like friends than just his Crownsguard” Amara observed as she studied the photo.

“Yeah, he’s my best friend, Noct’s awesome”.

The next photo was a selfie shot with the other three in the background fighting a coeurl, the Shield with his great sword raised, Iggy with daggers at the ready and Noct was flashing through the air with his engine blade in hand and he chuckled remembering Gladio shouting at him to wake up. Next came one that Noct had taken of Prompto firing at that same coeurl a few moments later. He was twisting in the air one arm outstretched the flash of the gun bright orange.
"Woah, you were awesome, I mean, you are awesome, umm, you are all awesome" Amara blurted.

"HA, Noct would agree with ya on that one, lost count of how many times he’d say something like ‘yeah I’m awesome’ haha”, and he continued to flick through the photos slowly. When a photo of him with Cindy in Hammerhead came up Amara she stopped him.

"Is that your girlfriend?"

“What? Ahh, no, that’s Cindy, she runs the garage at Hammerhead, I had a major crush on her back then, but we’re just friends”. He remembered how painfully enamoured he’d been.

“Oh, ok” Amara replied, looking down at the photo. Prompto couldn’t tell what the comment meant, she sounded almost…relieved. Yeah, right, like that’s even a possibility you stupid Chocobo!

He flicked through a few more photos growing increasingly aware of how close Amara was sitting next to him and Prompto decided abruptly that he needed to leave before he disgraced himself.

“Ahh, listen, I gotta go now, I have a…meeting with…Gladio, ahh, so yeah, I’ll see you in the morning”. Fuck Prompto, you’re a gibbering mess, GET OUT NOW!

“Oh, um, thanks for showing me your photos Prompto, see you tomorrow”. Laying her hand lightly on his arm, she stood and moved to the door before she turned back and gave him a little wave as she departed the machinery room, leaving Prompto flushing.

He watched her retreating back a slight swing in her hips as she went.

What the Astrals was that?

NOCTIS

Noctis stood on the tower top, looking out over the city and ran his hands through his hair and then down his face. SHIT; SHIT; SHIT. Trying to calm down and breathe normally he wondered what he was going to do. He’d come up here a few minutes ago, storming out of his suite leaving Ignis standing in the middle of the sitting room.

They had been in the middle of a shouting match, or rather, Noct had been shouting, Ignis had been his usual calm self and that had only spurred Noct on to more heights of childish anger. He knew Ignis was right and he was being a shit, but he’d been unable to help himself which only proved just how well Ignis knew him and could read the situation. It was a week since he’d collapsed in Ignis’ arms and he’d been trying to assure his lover he was ready to get back to work, but Ignis had shaken his head and told him no. And then it was on.

He couldn’t even remember half the things he’d said, shouted, at Ignis. And Ignis knew he was right, Noct knew he was right and the advisor was going to be insufferable until Noct made his apologies. And knowing Ignis as he did, the man would only make it all too easy to say he was sorry (even if he hadn’t been) and would gloss over the incident afterwards. Noct didn’t want to do it that way, he wanted Ignis to know he truly was sorry and that he trusted him.

He sighed and decided that it was best to just be completely honest. Turning away from the view he slowly made his way back down to his chambers. Gladio was standing arms crossed, lips in a thin line, one foot propped on the wall opposite his door.
“Back for another round Majesty?” Noctis rolled his eyes at that, the Shield had obviously heard him railing at Ignis that he was the KING and he’d damn well do as he pleased.

“Shut it Gladio, I came back to fix this, not get into it with you too”.

Gladio raised an eyebrow at him and grunted, “well, don’t let me stop you”.

“Wasn’t going to”. He looked over his shoulder with his hand on the door knob, “can you clear our schedules, Ignis’ schedule I mean, this could take a while” he said morosely. He ignored the clearly amused grunt that came from the Shield and pushed the door open.

He closed it behind him and looked up to see his lover, glass of red wine in hand observing him with a look that could only be described as cautious. The combination of the look and the glass of wine spoke volumes of where Ignis’ head was at. Ignis did not generally drink during the day, indulging in a glass or two only at night on occasion.

“Back so soon, are we about to begin round two, your majesty” was Ignis’ sardonic drawl.

“Ignis…I” he faltered not knowing just where to begin.

“SIT, you ARE going to listen to me”, when Noct obediently sat his ass with a plop down on the couch he continued, “I am not trying to rule you, I am not trying to stop you being King, I AM your advisor, I am the person who knows you better than anyone and I thought you trusted my judgement”. Ignis drew in a halting breath and made to continue.

“I do trust you…”

“The reason I said no to you going back to work is I know you have been through a great deal recently and as much as you may feel ready I do not wish to see you falter, you have been pushing yourself too hard, not that I don’t have faith in you, you should know I do”.

“I do Ignis”.

Ignis continued again as if he’d not heard him and perhaps he hadn’t, he was in fine form, obviously having prepared what he was going to say, but Noct could see the flush high on his cheeks and the telling bright green of his eyes. “I am your lover, yes, but I am also your advisor and I have been able to consolidate those roles for many years, compartmentalise them if you will, I had thought you understood that, I had thought you trusted me, I thought you knew I would never…never do anything unless I thought it best”. Noct heard his lover’s voice crack over the words.

“Oh Ingis, I do trust you, I do know you would never hurt me, never steer me wrong, I was being a complete ass”. It came out in a rush and Ignis looked at him in consternation. Noct got up and crossed to his lover, taking the glass from him he put it on a table and took Ignis’ hands in his own. Looking directly up into those lovely green eyes, he took a deep breath, “I love you, I was frustrated I guess and you bore the brunt of it, but I need you to know that I DO trust you, I DO have faith in you and I DO know you were not trying to stop me ruling, you always have my best interests at heart. I am so sorry, really, truly sorry”.

Ignis was silent for almost a whole minute.

“You really are different in a lot of ways”, marvelled Ignis finally as he stared down at him. “I keep forgetting that you have matured despite those ten years, or maybe because of them, I don’t know… however I do need to stop treating you like the young petulant 20 year old that you were”.

“Does this mean I’m forgiven?” Noct risked a little grin.
“Hmmmff, we shall see”, came the slightly amused response and Noct felt himself relax, it was going to be ok. He didn’t bother to ask about going back to work, he’d let Ignis delegate for now.

Shifting his hands to the front of Ignis’ shirt he pulled him in close and planted a soft kiss on his lover’s mouth. He was almost knocked off balance when Ignis fisted his hands in Noct’s hair and crushed their mouths together forcefully, thrusting his tongue into his mouth.

Noct whimpered into Ignis’ mouth and pushed his own tongue to meet the other’s, he reached his hands down to cup Ignis’ ass and squeezed, to which he received an appreciative growl. Noct lifted himself up on his toes so he could grind their hardening cocks together, loving the friction between them. It felt so good, it had been too long, Ignis keeping him at arm’s length for the last week. Noct moved his lips to Ignis’ neck, nibbling in the way he knew the taller man loved, licking and biting gently, rolling his hips harder and harder. He could feel Ignis’ chest heaving, his head thrown back enjoying what Noct was doing, lost, then he could feel those wonderful long fingers roughly pulling at the buttons of his shirt pushing it down over his arms, feeling that warm touch over his chest and he gasped when Ignis twisted a nipple sharply, fuck, he loved that. It was like an electric shock shooting through his veins and then straight to his cock. Releasing Ignis’ ass he moved to remove his shirt completely and then started on his lover’s, “Skin, need…need your skin”. Ignis found his mouth again as their bared chests met and for a moment it was enough. Noct felt muscles flutter under his fingers as he stroked the chamberlains back, up and down dragging his fingers over that hot silky skin. He dug his nails in and scratched them down before slipping his hands into the waistband of Ignis’ trousers to cup his ass again.

Gasping raggedly for air, Noct moaned into Ignis’ mouth as the taller man’s hands drifted over his arms, down his back, pulling them impossibly closer. Noct thought they were going to fuse together through the heat and closeness. His cock was twitching in his pants, rubbing against Ignis’ length. He knew he was leaking pre-come and was pretty sure his lover was in the same condition, especially considering the positively filthy moans coming from the brunet.

Noct looked up into lascivious darkened green eyes when Ignis pulled back a little to gaze down at him. “Fuck…need…need…your mouth…your fingers…tongue…your cock…your ass…NOW!” Ignis’ voice was a shuddering husky whisper and Noct thought he was going to melt, he always loved it when Ignis said something filthy but hearing that deep voice, lust roughened and gasping out a litany of need sent his body into overdrive.

“Ohhhh Fuck!!” Noct was moaning and grinding hard against Ignis.

“Yes, yes, NOW!”

Noct nodded and they stumbled their way to the bedroom falling onto the bed in a heap of tangled limbs, mouths locked together, tongues dancing over each other, hands reaching for trouser buttons and pulling down zips, legs kicking to free them from clothing before tangling together again. Noct felt the heat of Ignis’ bared length against his own and thought he just might come right then and there. Fighting for some semblance for control, to make this last as long as he could Noct kissed his way down Ignis’ chest, shifting his body to slip between the tall man’s long muscled thighs, ignoring his own now painfully hard cock to apply himself to the fabulously glorious cock in front of him. Gripping the base in his fist he rubbed and stroked for a moment, glorying in its heat, it was like steel clad in velvet, all long and thick and pulsing. He glanced up to lock eyes with his lover, Ignis having lifted himself up on his elbows to watch. He licked his lips watching as Ignis’ eyes traced the path of his tongue, licking his own lips in response. Dropping his mouth open wide, Noct used his tongue to massage the underside of the cock in his fist eliciting another of those beautiful mewling moans from Ignis. He tongued the slit of the head tasting the man’s arousal, tasting a little salty and oh so Ignis, swirling his tongue to circle the underside of the head before he sucked it slowly into his mouth,
enclosing him in warm wetness. Hollowing his cheeks, he pushed his mouth down the length, tongue pressing against the underside, massaging the vein there, sheathing his teeth behind his lips until he had the tip of Ignis’ cock bumping the back of his throat. He forced down his gag reflex, swirling his tongue and sucking hard. His eyes met Ignis’ again as he kept the suction consistent while he moved back up to the head. Ignis’ mouth dropped open and he growled low in his throat. Noct hummed happily as he sucked back down again, taking almost all Ignis had to offer into his mouth. He used his free hand to reach up and cup the balls of his lover, massaging and squeezing gently, one finger slipping under to stroke the perineum. He felt Ignis’ hips lift to meet his mouth and he set to work in earnest, bobbing his head, alternating between sucking and licking. When he felt his lover was getting close, he squeezed the base of his cock tighter in his fingers, pulling his mouth off with a filthy wet pop. Blowing a soft breath over the flushed head Noct moved lower to nuzzle the balls and Ignis moaned softly.

“Ohhhhh Gods!”

Noct revelled in his lover’s moaning response to him reaching the puckered hole and swiping over it with his warm tongue, teasing and gently pushing at the dusky pink opening, forcing it inside. He felt Ignis shift a little, the sound of a bedside drawer opening and a few seconds later he was presented with a bottle of lube. He knew exactly what that meant. Ignis could not wait any more. Pressing his tongue through the tight ring of muscle he used his hand to grip hold of the bottle, flicking the cap open. He pulled back to coat his fingers, warming them before he teased around Ignis’ hole gently. Ignis was panting on the bed above him, cheeks flushed and eyes impossibly dark.

“Oh fuck, you are beautiful”, Noct breathed out at the arresting sight of his lover.

Pushing the first finger in slowly, Noct watched as Ignis threw his head back, lowering his back onto the bed, hands scrabbling for the headboard. There was nothing he loved more than seeing his lover like this, lost in his passion, losing control. Working his finger into his lover deeper, he started to slide in and out, Ignis beginning to writhe under his ministrations.

Another finger joined the first, pushing in and then curling until he found the spot he was looking for, Ignis crying out his name hoarsely. He stroked Ignis’ prostate relentlessly, almost ruthlessly driving his lover almost wild, Ignis thrashing around on the bed, wanting to pull away, wanting to feel more. Shifting so that he could position Ignis’ thighs over his own, he reached for the lube again with his free hand, coating his cock and stroking quickly in time with his other hand as it thrust against his lover’s ass. Twisting his fingers, scissoring them to stretch the hole wider, he felt Ignis’ groan through his hand.

“Want you…please” Ignis begged. “Fuck me!!!”

Never one to deny his lover, Noct withdrew his fingers slowly and gripped slim hips in his fingers to shift into position. Taking hold of his cock in one hand he guided it to Ignis’ twitching hole. Taking a deep breath, he pushed his hips forward and felt Ignis open to let him in. He paused once the head of his cock was encased in the hot tight walls of Ingis’ ass.

Noct let out a ragged moan as he pushed in further, his vision almost whiting out as his balls hit the cheeks of his lover’s ass. He didn’t take top position as often as Ignis did, but whenever he did it was just amazing. He opened his eyes to watch Ignis grip his own cock and tightly wrap his fingers around the base holding off his orgasm. Throwing back his head, Noct knew what that meant, this was not even close to being over regardless of how close he was to coming. He started to slowly rock his hips revelling in the feel of this beautiful man who was wrapped around him.

“Tight, so fuckin’ tight…nnnghhhh” Noct began to move faster, thrusting harder and harder, “not
Going to last baby”.

“Mmmmmmm, your…turn…next”.

Ignis was bucking against him rising to meet each thrust, Noct could feel his release coming on hard and fast. His fingers gripping those sexy hips were blanching the skin white, Ignis was going to have some fingerprint sized bruises there later. The thought tipped him over the edge and he was yelling Ignis’ name as he came hard inside him. Noct lent back on his hands thrusting a last few times in the aftermath of his mind blowing orgasm.

Pulling his softening cock out of his lover Noct found himself pulled up to straddle Ignis’ hips, “lube” he had whispered in his ear and he scrabbled his hand around on the bed behind him to find it and pass it to Ignis. He watched his lover quickly coat his fingers before he reached down to Noct’s ass. Noct fell forward and pressed his chest against Ignis, both of them panting. He gasped as he felt Ignis’ long finger slide confidently inside him. And Gods it felt good. Noct rocked down onto Ignis’ finger, fucking himself. He felt another finger teasing around his entrance letting Noct know he was about to get another alongside the first. Eager to feel both fingers pumping into him he moaned and writhed, “do it…please…”.

Ignis complied and stroked both fingers against his walls, opening and closing, scissoring, then expertly finding his prostate. Noct drove his hips down harder needing even more, knowing Ignis understood every move he made when he couldn’t voice it. He could feel his own erection returning with gusto. A third finger entered him and Noct gasped from the twinge of pain before the intense please took over and he was grinding down again. Now fully prepped for Ingis’ cock, Noct reached behind to stroke it and coat it with lube, slipping his fist up and down the length firmly.

“Ready my love?” Ignis asked him huskily. Noct looked down at him and could only nod quickly, biting his lip.

Ignis grabbed his hips and positioned Noct over his cock where it was still being fisted in his hand. Ignis’ fingers slipped out of his hole and he tilted the cock so that he could feel the head begging for entrance. Ignis lifted his hips slowly, pushing, Noct ground down and groaned loudly, “oh fuckin’ Astrals baby, that’s…sooooo good”. Noct was losing his mind, he couldn’t focus on anything but the way his lover felt, not even his own hard cock laying on Ignis’ stomach, only focusing on the white hot heat stroking the walls of his ass. His lover started to thrust slowly, letting him get used to the feeling of fullness, but Noct was more than ready. He started lifting himself using his thighs to balance as he slid back down over the length of Ignis’ cock. His lover groaned and started to match his pace, arching his back and Noct reached down to caress his chest, flicking his nipples before Ignis grabbed him and pulled their bodies flush together, Noct rocking his hips in time with each thrust, their tongues darting in and out of each other’s open mouths, sharing breath, panting, chests heaving together. He could feel his orgasm coming on again and it was not long before he was spraying Ignis’ stomach and chest with his release. Faster and faster, he could feel Ignis’ thrusts becoming erratic, a sure sign he was getting close to his own release. Noct rocked harder encouraging him, “come for me baby” he whispered against his ear, nibbling the lobe and calling out Ignis’ name when his lover pumped into him harder.

Ignis answered by shouting a hoarse “NOCT!!” as he came deep inside, shuddering and clutching him tight.

They lay together panting, trying to calm down as the sweat started to dry on their skin. Kissing each other slowly, luxuriously, tracing fingers over heated flesh.

Noct eventually rolled off Ignis to sprawl beside him, he looked over to find emerald green eyes staring into his. Long fingers reached up to stroke his cheek and he captured them in his own
bringing them to his lips. He rolled again, snuggling into Ignis’ side.

“Ya know Specs, make up sex is fuckin’ awesome” and he yelped in indignation as Ignis gave his ass a hard swat.

“You are such a little shit!”

GLADIO

Gladio decided he just might need to get some earplugs. Listening to those two screaming and moaning was unbelievably frustrating. The whimpering for gods sake. Hearing two people enjoying each other so intently when he was lusting after Crowe was just…ugh.

He’d sent off Prompto earlier to a meeting that Ignis was meant to attend, telling him to record it on his phone and take some notes on what the new envoy from Accordo wanted to discuss, that way the chamberlain would be up-to-date when he eventually surfaced from the king’s chambers. Whenever that might be. After sending the thoroughly annoyed gunner off grumbling, he’d grabbed out his phone and checked Ignis’ schedule, only one other meeting was in the calendar and that one could be put off ‘till tomorrow – at least it could in Gladio’s opinion. Ignis was in no position to argue with that decision. Gladio decided he didn’t want to think about what exact position Ignis was actually in. Yep, definitely didn’t want to think about that.

He was happy for them, happy that they finally got to be together after everything they had both been through. He just kinda wished he could be as happy himself. Jealousy pure and simple.

He was broken out of his reverie by the buzzing of his phone. Pulling it out of his pocket he checked the screen and was pleased to note it was Cindy.

“Sup Cindy?”

“Hey there Gladio, got ya some good news ‘bout that thing ya asked me ta do.”

“Really? Awesome, what’s the deal Cinds, did ya find it?”

“Yes, sure did and even better, that Aranea chick helped me pick ‘er up and she’s at the garage right now”.

“Cindy you are a marvel!” Gladio pumped his fist in the air. “Can you fix it?”

“I think so, but ya might need ta help me with some parts from the city, iffin I text ya a list do ya think ya can check some of the garages around there, I warn ya though, it’s a long list”.

“Send it through and I’ll do the best I can”. Gladio grinned and thought to himself that if he could pull this off it was going to be an awesome surprise. “Thanks Cindy, really owe ya one”.

“Yeah, ya do, catchya soon, big guy”.

Gladio put his phone away and crossed his arms, leaning against the wall in his customary pose for waiting outside this door, and he let out a deep sigh. Who knew how long he’d be stuck here. He chuckled to himself as he thought that perhaps he should have made Prompto wait here and listen to the sounds that had been coming from the King’s chambers and he himself could have taken the
meeting instead, but then thought better of it, he hated dealing with diplomats.

Hearing footsteps approaching he narrowed his eyes and peered down the hallway, pleased to see Crowe and not so pleased to see Nyx with the lovely mage. *Ugh, just what I need, more shit from Nyx.*

“Hey Gladio”, Nyx greeted him.

“Nyx, Crowe, what brings you both here?” Gladio fought to keep the stupid grin off his face as he looked Crowe over, *Gods, she looks good in that uniform.* She was in her glaive attire, form fitting body suit and thigh high boots with a cropped jacket and a red gemstone strung about her neck. He figured that must be something that the mages wore, he’d not seen it on the other female glaives.

“Needed to speak to Ignis, was wondering if you knew where he was, Crowe wants to talk to him and the King about setting up a division of mages for the Crown” Nyx explained as Crowe nodded enthusiastically.

“Ahhh, yeah, umm, great idea, problem is Ignis is…Ignis is indisposed at the moment”.

“Oh?”

Gladio could hear the query in Nyx’s tone but he was NOT going to explain what was happening in that chamber right now.

“Yeah, indisposed, he’ll be available later, I think, meanwhile I’m stuck here watching a bloody door”, he tried to divert attention from what was keeping Ignis indisposed.

“You come for a drink” Crowe piped up and then immediately looked like she wanted a hole to appear and swallow her.

“Yeah, I wish, but someone’s gotta be here to guard the door while the King’s in there. Can’t leave it to just anyone and don’t have many I can pass it off to, Prompto’s already busy with an envoy from Accordo”.

There was only a pitifully small amount of senior guard at the moment, the intensive training could only go as fast as it was because Nyx, Crowe, Prompto, Ignis and himself had taken on some of the training, although Ignis didn’t have that much time to spare for it, he was better placed with the diplomats and the business of actually running the realm, when he wasn’t with the King, that was.

“Hey, I got time, why don’t you and Crowe grab a drink, and I’ll watch the door for you”, Nyx offered.

Gladio thought about it for a moment, it could work, Nyx was qualified, he had time apparently and that meant he could have some time with Crowe without the Commander of the Guard hanging around, giving him shit. That decided it.

“If you’re sure?”

“Yeah, go on, I’ll be fine here, go have fun”. Nyx practically smirked at him.

*Ugh*

“That ok with you, Crowe? If you’d rather go have a drink with Nyx I can stay here”. Gladio glanced quickly to see if she was ok with the idea.
“No, I mean, yes that’s fine”.

“Ok, I’ll just send Ingis and Prompto a quick message and let them know about the change. It’s about time I got a break from this shit anyway”. He saw Nyx give him a confused look. Gladio lowered his voice, “just ignore any weird sounds coming from in there, pretend you didn’t hear ‘em. Come on, Crowe, let’s get out of here while the gettin’s good. Thanks Nyx”, he shot over his shoulder as he made his way back down the hallway with Crowe, tapping away on his phone. Messages sent he turned his attention to the mage walking beside him.

“So you two have known each other a long time then?” he asked her.

“Yeah, for years, we came here after Galahd was left to the Empire, Nyx was almost immediately picked for the Glaive, along with Libertus, another friend of ours, I ended up with the mages, we got to hang out a lot though”, she grinned, “they were very protective of their ‘little sister’, bloody annoying most of the time”.

Gladio gave a little laugh, “I’ll bet, I’ve always found Nyx to be annoying, he was always a pain in my ass in the training arena, him and those blades of his. Only person I have ever seen who might match him is Ignis”.

“Well, I think it’s really great we have a King who is the way he is, he’s not stuffy or standoffish, I think it’s going to make his reign really different, more… compassionate maybe, but definitely a good change. I mean Regis was great, he did a lot for people like me, but King Noctis seems more like he’ll be a King of the people”.

Gladio hadn’t thought of it quite in that light, Crowe was a very astute woman he was discovering.

“Hmmm, yeah, you could be right, I’ve been so worried about what everyone else was thinking about those two being so… obvious that I didn’t think of that side of it. I mean I am not bothered by them being together like I know some will, that’s not my style, plus I’ve known about them since it started, or actually before it started, oh my Gods, the angst between those two was bloody awful”.

He chuckled remembering how painfully obvious it had been to him at the time. “But they are happy now and that’s great, kinda makes me wish everyone could be that happy ya know?”. A wistful tone had crept into his voice and Crowe smiled at him softly.

“Yeah me too”.

Gladio felt all mushy inside at her smile and decided he just might try and test his luck and ask her
on a date sometime.

**NYX**

Nyx was daydreaming.

He knew he should be concentrating, knew he should be focused on his duty, but gods it was difficult to get the chamberlain out of his head. He knew this crush was completely doomed, it couldn’t go anywhere. He’d heard whispers of a wedding in the future and just seeing how the King was around his chamberlain it was obvious that the two loved each other. Nyx was definitely not going to interfere with that, and besides he was fairly sure there might be a law against it, or it was treason or something. That was enough for him to keep his distance, but it didn’t stop his body wanting the tall man. He didn’t think his heart was in danger, he’d never been in love, he wasn’t in love with Ignis, he just really found him sexy and arousing. So a crush, purely a physical crush.

All his previous relationships, if they could be termed that, were simply sexual affairs that had been mutually beneficial to him and his partners. He had seen how messy an emotional attachment could be and he really thought he either wasn’t capable or he just hadn’t met that person who could thaw his heart.

And so here he was, daydreaming about Ignis wrapping those long legs around his waist and found himself wondering if the man preferred being pounded hard or if he liked it nice and slow. Or perhaps he was the type to take control and lost himself in those thoughts for more than a few minutes. Definitely not conducive to maintaining focus.

He was a little startled when the door was wrenched open and the King poked his head out.

“Hi Nyx, wasn’t expecting to see you there, where’s Gladio wandered off to?” The King gave him a wide smile.

“Ha, he was bitchin’ about standing here when I came by with Crowe earlier so I sent him off with her to have a drink downstairs.”

“Ahhh, right, was there something that you and Crowe wanted him for, or me?” the King asked, coming around the door more, revealing his bare torso still damp from a shower, towel wrapped around his shoulders to catch any drips from his still wet hair. He reached up with the towel and rubbed it over his hair making it a disorganised mess. He flipped his hand to indicate that Nyx should enter the rooms to talk to him.

Nyx followed the King and shut the door behind him. The King sat himself down on the couch and Nyx found himself admiring the slight, but still well-honed physique of his King. This wasn’t a man to stand still, this was a man who knew how to fight and could hold his own, more than hold his own as the stories attested.

“Not exactly, your Majesty, we were looking for Ignis, thought Gladio might know where he was, he said he was busy. Crowe wants to talk to him about instigating a school for mages to learn their arts and she wanted to run it by Ignis and then you, I mean, you’ll be the one who has to awaken any skills they might have anyway.” Nyx was again struck by just how approachable this King was. Regis had always been unfailingly polite, but he was…distant mostly.

“Well, I think that’s a great idea and I am sure Ignis will agree, I’ll ask him in a minute.” The King
grinned at him, pleased with the idea.

“Oh, so he’s coming here then? I can run it by him later if you have something else you need to discuss with him.” Nyx asked, kind of hoping to get away before Ignis showed up.

“No, no, he’s here already, he’s in the shower, but he never takes very long in there, his hair is another matter.” The King laughed at his chamberlain’s expense and Nyx’s stomach dropped, guessing what the two had been up to before he’d been admitted to the chambers. Now he understood Gladio’s odd comment before leaving with Crowe and thanked the Astrals he hadn’t heard anything.

The King grabbed a shirt off the back of a chair and shrugged it on, buttoning it up quickly before he sat back down again.

“Still haven’t had the chance to talk to you much, how are you finding being commander?” Noctis asked him politely.

“Ahh, not sure yet, will be interesting I’m sure, especially when we get the rest of the contingent that’s coming in with Monica, she rang and told me they were delayed while she rounded them all up, I think she’s scoping out a few new extras too.”

Nyx and the King talked amiably about the new guard for a few minutes, discussing the fact that Gladio had made him aware of just how important he felt them all being cohesive now was. It turned out that Noctis had talked to his shield extensively about this as it was part of his wish to make the country whole and to bring everyone together in a way they never had been before. Nyx was liking this King more and more.

They were interrupted by the appearance of Ignis in the bedroom doorway. Nyx almost choked. Ignis was in a crisp white shirt, half buttoned, smooth muscled chest on display, sleeves rolled up to expose his forearms, tight dark blue cotton boxer briefs peeking out under the hem of the shirt showing off his long legs with their muscular thighs, his hair unstyled and still damp a towel in hand as he rubbed at the ash brown locks.

“I thought I heard voices, who were you talking to, my love?” asked a deep accented voice from under the towel.

“Nyx and he’s still here” was Noctis’ response and it was followed by a cheeky snigger as Ignis gasped and lowered the towel. The green eyes narrowed as they glared at the King who was enjoying Ignis’ discomfort at being caught half dressed in front of the commander.

The towel was thrown at the King, “you could have warned me, you little shit. Appologies, Nyx. His Majesty had not made me aware we had company, I certainly wouldn’t have been wandering around in my underwear had I known, I shall rejoin you in a moment.” He threw Noctis another glare, “where are my pants?”

“Ummm, I think they are on the chest in the corner, put your glasses on and you might be able to find them.”

“Capital idea Noct,” was Ignis’ sarcastic reply as he left the sitting room going off to find his pants.

Nyx had been silently trying not to stare. That and not to laugh at Ignis calling the King a little shit. Noctis threw the towel at Ingis’ retreating back and laughed.

Nyx coughed.
“It’s ok Nyx, don’t stress, he’s not upset you’re here, he’s pissed at me, but I just love teasing him,” the King chuckled. Noctis looked over to where the commander of his guard was trying to keep the flush off his face and not look towards the bedroom doorway. His eyes narrowed a little and then he shrugged off whatever it was he’d been thinking.

Nyx tried to cover his discomfort by bringing their conversation back to normal matters as the King watched him closely. He started to tell Noctis about the events of the Fall of Insomnia. There was a lot that Noctis was not aware of and he was able to shed light on a few things, the two main ones being Drautos’ betrayal, being Glauca and how Regis had entrusted the Ring of the Lucii to Luna before he had taken her and tried to get her out of the city.

Noctis turned serious and was asking some very pointed questions about what had happened, his thoughts obviously a bit scattered as his questions seemed a bit random.

“So Ravus tried to put the ring on, I wondered what had happened to his arm. And who ended up escorting Luna out of the city if you were battling Glauca?”

“That was Libertus, your Majesty, he took your car after Drautos left it running when he tried to retrieve the ring, so after I took it off I gave it to Lunafreya and asked him to get her out of there.”

“Always wondered what happened to that car, dad gave it to me for my twentieth birthday, it was awesome. Well, I’m glad it was put to good use, Luna only had the time to give me a basic run down on what happened, she mentioned Libertus, but I had to go before we could have a proper conversation about it all, she said you’d explain what I needed to know.” The King paused. “Bloody Drautos, always gave me the creeps that guy, so he had a treasonous contingent in the glaive? Not going to let that happen again, Nyx. I remember standing on the fuckin’ steps of the citadel telling Drautos my dad was in his hands. And he killed him,” the king said quietly as he crushed his hands into fists.

“I don’t think I was ever more pleased to kill someone, your Majesty. Your father was a very astute man, I think he knew there was someone close who was passing on information, that’s one of the reasons he got you out of the city before they could do anything about it, I didn’t understand a lot of the conversation he and Lunafreya had, but I could tell they knew a lot more than they were letting on.” Nyx was glad he could give the King the answers to these questions and help him understand what had happened.

Ignis in the meantime had returned in the midst of their discussion about Drautos and was seated next to the King, his legs crossed one hand reaching over to grasp Noctis’ watching him closely.

“I must extend to you my most sincere thanks Nyx,” the chamberlain said as he looked over to him, “there were so many unanswered questions and you have filled in much of what we did not know.”

“Ignis is right as always, you have my thanks as well. Your father was a very astute man, I think he knew there was someone close who was passing on information, that’s one of the reasons he got you out of the city before they could do anything about it, I didn’t understand a lot of the conversation he and Lunafreya had, but I could tell they knew a lot more than they were letting on.” Nyx was glad he could give the King the answers to these questions and help him understand what had happened.

Nyx laughed, he kind of hated that title, but who was he to disagree with the King who stood before him. “It was my pleasure, your Majesty.”

“Oh please, enough of that majesty shit, please, it’s just Noctis, you might have noticed I’m not exactly one for protocol.”
Nyx laughed again, “yeah I kinda had noticed that, but the people like it…Noctis.” The King looked pleased when Nyx used his name. “Now, if I may, I should get back to my post or Gladio will be pissed.”

Noctis laughed with him at that, “don’t worry about that oaf, he’s worse than anyone I know when it comes to protocol and besides I like having people around me who treat me like I’m normal, isn’t that right Ignis?”

“Indeed, Prompto himself has only ever called you by your title a handful of times and usually sarcastically.” Ingis quirked his lips in a wry grin.

“HAHA, anyway Nyx, my thanks again and we will talk again soon I’m sure.”

Nyx turned to leave and Ignis added “I’d like another chance to train again soon, Nyx, let me know when you might be available.”

“Will do,” he replied as he left, not trusting himself to look back at the chamberlain, memories of their last encounter far too fresh in his mind.

Ingis Scientia was still causing problems for Nyx and he was going to have to deal with it very soon.

Preferably before he ended up on the floor with the spectacular man straddling him again.

IGNIS

“I think you might have an admirer, Specs.”

Ignis glanced at Noct with complete surprise, “what? Who?” He was baffled.

Noctis raised his eyebrow at him, “what, you didn’t notice how flushed Nyx was when you came in in your underwear lookin’ all sexy like you do? I know you didn’t have your glasses on but you must have noticed how he won’t look at you.” Noctis grinned at Ignis who was trying to think, surely not.

Ignis shrugged nonchalantly, it was of no real consequence to him, he couldn’t very well help how other people felt. “I had not noticed anything untoward, my love, and besides that I am far too enamoured of you to notice anyone else. I am sure you are just imagining things regardless. Nyx does not strike me as a man who lets himself get carried away by anything like that.”

“No probably not, but was just…it’s just I kinda like it when people notice how gorgeous you are and that you are completely unaware of it. Does remind me how I’m so out of your league, but that makes me feel lucky to have you.”

His King was so very sweet when he was like this and Ignis could not resist planting a kiss on the tip of his nose earning him an amused giggle.

“How could I possibly be ‘out of your league’ I wonder, look at you my love, you are just so lovely, or are you fishing for compliments?”

Noct grunted at him, “you really have no idea how awesome you are, do you? Smart, sexy,
gorgeous, and just so…IGNISY.”

“That is not a word Noct,” Ignis lifted one eyebrow at the raven haired man.

“Is now,” Noct grumbled, “I’ll make a decree or something. I’m serious Ignis, if I weren’t like the King, people would be wondering why you bother with me.”

“Oh my beautiful little raven, you sell yourself short,” he took his lovers face in his hands. He really needed to address this and make Noct realise what he meant to him. “I would not care who you were or what you did, you could be a fisherman for all I care, it’s who you are as a person that makes me love you, how you look is a complete bonus, being king is irrelevant to this, to what we are, your only flaw is your lack of confidence in yourself. Others are starting to notice what I have known for years; you are worthy of so very much.” He bent his head to capture Noct’s lips with his in a soft tender kiss that he tried to make convey just how much he loved this beautiful man.

“I’m better with you beside me Spec, always have been and always will be.”

They enfolded their arms around each other for a moment, happy and content.

“How are you feeling now, my love? After hearing what Nyx had to say.” Ignis hoped that it had helped put some of the pain to rest and had made Noctis more comfortable.

“Yeah, ok, I think, it’s still a lot to take in, but he gave me some answers…and that makes it easier, ya know.”

“I do Noct, I was going to ask him to come see you soon and I am glad that he did so without me having to go find him.” Ignis had been thinking that the Commander could be of great assistance in helping Noct find his centre again and start to process everything and he was pleased to note that he was right.

“Oh shit, I forgot, he came up with Crowe to talk about a mage school, but we got sidetracked.”

A school for the training of mages. Ignis pondered that for a moment, yes, that would be a capital idea.

“No matter Noct, I’ll confer with Crowe and we will find some suitable applicants, once we’ve tested their affinity we will then get you to share your magic with them. Incidentally, I have not had the chance to ask you about your magic, is it still the same? Has it changed with the destruction of the ring as a focus?” He knew Noct still had some magic as his healing had shown, though Shiva had been the one to activate it.

“I…it’s different Ignis, I’m stronger in some ways, without the ring and crystal I…think I am the focus.” Noctis seemed to be struggling to convey what his magic was like now.

“You are the focus? That is…” Ignis was flabbergasted, he simply did not know what to say to that. “You are magic, is that what you mean?”

“Kind of, Ignis, my blood magic doesn’t seem to be much different, at least as far as I can tell, but the magic that the ring and crystal used to contain and direct is now just…part of me. It’s like the power of the old kings is now inside me all the time and I can use it at will.” Noctis drew in a deep breath and closed his eyes. When he opened them again, Ignis gasped. His eyes were glowing magenta and Ignis could feel a crackling energy emanating from the King as he stood calmly before him. “I think I can use it in ways we never would have thought of before, I think I can construct things, like the old Kings could. There are so many things I want to try…”
“Do you think that wise?” The last thing that he wanted was for Noct to overtax himself, but he realised that this version of his lover was a great deal stronger physically than he’d been in the past. It was emotionally and mentally that would be the concern.

“I’ll take things slow Ignis, I don’t want to risk what I have now. I just want to be able to help our world heal and be better than ever.” Noctis took his hands in his own and Ignis could feel the energy of the magic, feel everything that the King wanted to do, but most of all he could see just what Noct was now, he was light and beauty and hope. He was wonder and compassion and love.

He reached a tentative hand to touch Noct’s cheek, caressing the jaw and running his fingers over his lover’s lips. “You are…ohhh.” Ignis’ eyes widened as he felt the magic flowing through the King and into him. “What just happened?”

“I don’t know!” Noct looked as surprised as Ignis.

“You have imparted a little of yourself to your chamberlain, O King of the Dawn.” A soft voice came from behind them and both Ignis and Noct swung around to find Shiva in her guise as Gentiana standing in the room with them.

“What…wait…what?” Ignis was tripping over his words, not understanding, he was still trying to recover from the feeling of the magic and the shock of Gentiana making another of her odd appearances. He’d always felt a little annoyed when the Goddess showed up suddenly, she seemed to enjoy startling people.

Gentiana smiled sweetly, “you will now have some of the King’s abilities, much like the Oracle.” Ignis could feel his mouth drop open. “In this new Age of the Dawn, Eos will again have two who can protect and heal the world.” She smiled benevolently at the two who looked at each other in surprise.

“But how…how did this happen? WHY did it happen?” Ignis spluttered at Gentiana, years of ingrained composure had flown out the window.

“It could not have occurred had there not been such a bond between the King of the Dawn and the Light of his Life. Your devotion and love for the King shines like a beacon, O Oracle of Light. You shall now become as a beacon of hope beside your King.”

Noct was grinning like an idiot beside his chamberlain. Ignis was in shock. He stood like a statue staring at Gentiana. And then blinked as she was gone.

“Gods I hate it when she does that!” Ignis came out of his startled state and shook his head ruefully.

“Oh Specs, that’s all you have to say about everything?” Noct doubled over laughing, “that’s hilarious!”

Ignis frowned at the King and then amusement covered his features as the absurdity of his comment hit him. He started to laugh and grasped his sides. Noct was still laughing uncontrollably, it was the only thing either of them could do in the face of what had happened. Noct flailed his arms around, looking a bit like a startled chocobo and it made Ignis laugh harder until one of Noct’s arms connected with his face.

“OWW!” he squealed clutching his now bleeding nose, “no need for violence.”

Noctis tried to rein in his laughter but couldn’t as he saw the disgruntled look on Ignis’ face. He fell to his knees and doubled over, “sorry Specs…HAHA…but you’re the fuckin’ oracle, you fix it.”
Ignis snorted and then groaned as pain shot through his nose. “Not very helpful. I’ve only just become the oracle; I don’t know how to fix it.”

Noct giggled at him again, “Oh Astrals, what a pair we are, me an idiot on the throne and an oracle who can’t heal himself!”

Ignis glared at him over the top of his hand holding his throbbing nose. “Get up, you foolish man, and get me something to stop this bleeding. I don’t want to ruin a perfectly good shirt.”

Noct laughed harder as he tried to get up off the floor and fetch a towel from the bathroom. That was when Noct slipped and smacked his arm on the edge of the couch. Collapsing beside Ignis they both groaned.

“We’re hopeless!” Ignis shook his head.

“Ahhh, but at least we’re hopeless together,” groaned Noct.

Both men looked up as the door flew open to reveal Gladio, Crowe and Nyx.

“What the fuck happened here? I thought you two had made up,” a slightly drunk and dishevelled Gladio grumbled. Crowe swayed on her feet a little as she squinted at the King and Chamberlain collapsed on the couch. Nyx just looked dumbfounded.

“Well…” drawled Ignis, regaining some of his composure. That was until he glanced at Noct. A smirk twisted his lips and he fought down a very unseemly fit of giggles that were fighting their way out.

“Gentiana…magic…Ignis…Oracle…nose…” gasped out Noct between giggles and Ignis couldn’t hold it in any longer and bent over laughing just as hard as before.

The other three shook their heads in confusion as they regarded the mess that was King Noctis and his bleeding Chamberlain laughing uproariously on the couch.

“We’re doomed, I tell ya, totally doomed” Gladio muttered which set them off even more.

“No, no, Ignis can fix it…maybe…oracle…HAHA.” Noct leaned against Ignis laughing so hard tears were rolling down his face.

Ignis tried hard to control himself and rested his back on the couch, trying breathe deeply through his mouth. “We’ll explain in a minute, Gladio, it’s all just…so…”

“Hilarious,” broke in Noct and Ignis lost it again.

It took Ignis a full ten minutes to control himself. In the meantime, Crowe had staggered to the bathroom and brought back a damp towel to apply to Ignis’ throbbing nose.

Bunching it up, Ignis delicately applied the towel to his face and peeked up abashed at Gladio who was struggling to stand upright. “Drunk are we?” Ignis observed.

“Yeah, no diverting the attention from what the bloody hell was goin’ on in here.”

“Tch, no picking on my Ignis,” Noct grumbled as Crowe tended to the bruising on his arm with an ice pack. Ignis could see Gladio roll his eyes at that and he turned his gaze to the chamberlain.

“I’m not sure we can fully explain what we don’t understand ourselves, Gladio.” Ignis flipped his hand at the others to indicate they should sit. “Can you get Prompto up here, I think he should hear
“He’s already on his way, Iggy,” Gladio informed him sipping a cup of coffee.

Ignis straightened himself when Prompto arrived and launched into as coherent an explanation as he could give under the circumstances. He could see the others were just as confused as he and Noct were.

“Dude, so you’re the new Oracle…don’t think you’re gonna look as good in that dress as Luna did.” Prompto said trying to appear serious. Noct started to giggle again, followed by Gladio snorting into his coffee cup.

Ignis cradled his head in his hands, oh Gods and winced as more pain shot through his poor nose. They really were doomed.

CROWE

Crowe had really been enjoying her evening with Gladio. The big Shield was so easy to talk to and she found his company set her at ease. What had started as a simple drink had turned into a full blown date. They’d started out talking about general subjects, mainly sticking to work and their comrades, creating the new guard and such, but after a few beers, the conversation had turned a little more personal.

By the time they decided to have a meal and soak up some of the alcohol, she’d been telling him about her life in Galahd, being an orphan and how she’d been found by Nyx and Libertus. They’d taken her under their wings, becoming brothers, protecting her even when she didn’t need them to.

They’d continued to be protective even after she’d become a mage of the glaive, her aptitude for the King’s magic being something she’d been proud of. That pride had grown the more she learned and she had discovered she was very good at it. Gladio could relate to her pride in her position and she’d loved listening to him recount how he’d felt when he’d been made Noctis’ shield.

The way his eyes shone as he described the ceremony and how he’d felt about his duty had entranced her. Gladio was a stunning specimen of masculinity, but those gorgeous amber eyes were soft as he described how much he enjoyed being Noctis’ shield and the friendship he shared with Ignis and Prompto. It was those eyes that attracted her, they spoke to her of the man who was under the muscles and that intrigued her.

He’d laughed along with her as she told him of her love of trashy romance novels and was frankly shocked when he confessed that he loved them too. It had made her practically giggle girlishly, something she never did.

When Gladio suggested they grab a pack of beers and head to the gardens she had agreed wholeheartedly, she didn’t want the night to end. They’d seated themselves on the edge of a fountain in the citadel gardens, looking up at the stars.

“I like coming here of night, especially just before dawn. I watch the stars fade and the sky changes, going all pink and gold as the sun comes up. Those ten years taught me to appreciate every dawn, it reminds me, ya know, not to take anything for granted.” His voice was a deep rumble that thrummed through Crowe as she sat close beside him, it thrilled her.
She’d leaned down to grab another beer at the same time Gladio did and their sudden proximity had made her breath catch in her throat. She’d looked up into those expressive amber eyes and saw he was struggling to control some sort of emotion. They’d both sat back, still close, beer forgotten as he reached a large hand to cup her face, leaning closer Gladio had pressed his lips to hers in a tender kiss. Closing her eyes, Crowe accepted that kiss and had lifted her hand to his hair. She twirled her fingers through its length and smiled into their kiss as he growled his pleasure at her touch.

They both pulled back and searched each other’s gaze, his warm hand still holding her face, her hand still in his dark hair. Leaning forward to meet him, they kissed slowly, savouring each other’s lips. The big man was so much more gentle and tender than she ever would have imagined, their kisses sweet and promising. Crowe hummed happily as his other hand grasped her shoulder lightly and he turned his body towards her more, heat radiating from him, warming her through.

Pulling their mouths apart, she lent her forehead against his, they breathed together, her eyes still closed, she whispered “woah.”

“Crowe…” Gladio groaned softly, “I…that was…”

“Yeah, it was…” Crowe was fighting to control her heart which was threatening to beat its way out of her chest. She opened her eyes to stare straight into his. She could see he was affected as much as she was.

“Kiss me again, please…”

His plea went right through her and all Crowe could do, wanted to do was keep kissing him until she forgot everything else. She kept one hand in his hair, the other snaked it’s way to his chest landing over his heart. Tilting her face a little she pressed her lips to his softly, as his arms encircled her pulling her flush against him, trapping her hand between them. He moved his lips against hers and his breath came faster.

Crowe opened her mouth and flicked her tongue over his bottom lip, tasting him. His tongue slipped between his own lips to meet hers and open mouthed the explored each other’s tongues. Suddenly the nature of their kiss changed as Crowe thrust her tongue into his mouth and he responded in kind, she moved her hand from his chest to twine with her other in his hair, pulling him closer and deeper into their kiss, trembling as he growled again. She moaned into his mouth, feeling him grasp her tighter, still gentle. She could feel just how strong this man was, yet he was treating her like she was precious.

When they eventually pulled apart this time, she glanced up at him through her lashes shyly. His amber eyes were almost black now, pupils blown wide. His chest rising and falling quickly in time with hers. She smiled sweetly at this man who had made her feel so alive and wanted. One arm still trapping her against him, he reached one hand to stroke her neck, fingers working in leisurely circles. One hand still fisting in his dark locks she stroked his back, feeling his shoulders, tracing his spine. He shuddered at her touch.

She slipped her leg over his and straddled his lap, Gladio lifting her to sit over his large thighs more comfortably, his mouth finding hers, the passion between them palpable. Crowe became lost in each and every kiss, each time the other pulled away for breath they would chase the other for more. She could feel the soft prickle of his beard against her face, spurring her on to experience more of this man. When his lips trailed soft kisses down her cheek, jaw and to her neck, Crowe threw her head back to allow his unrestricted access and he nibbled at her throat gently, softly. She felt her blood sing at each touch of his lips and moaned in bliss as both his hands found her slim waist.

“Gladio…”
He hummed against her neck at the sound of his name, his lips moving lower to her shoulder, pushing her jacket back so he could find more skin to kiss and nibble. He kissed his way across her clavicles, moving to the other side of her neck and she wrapped her long legs around his waist pulling them closer. She could feel the heat of his arousal between them, feel the control he was trying hard to maintain and she loved him for it. His fingers ghosted up her sides, thumbs circling below her breasts. Her hand came forward to trace the scars on his face and brow, as he kept kissing her neck. She tilted his face back up to hers and this kiss was urgent, tongues dancing against each other’s.

“Not here,” she whispered.

“No, not here, my rooms?” He searched her face seeking a yes.

“Yes, yes, please.”

Gladio lifted her easily from his lap, both of them missing the contact immediately. Crowe wanting nothing more than to be back in that lap, kissing him again, tasting him. He reached down and grabbed the remaining beers with one hand, his other finding hers to tangle their fingers together they walked slowly towards the citadel and then to his rooms that were just below the King’s.

Once they were safely in his rooms, Crowe looked around at the complete order, the bookshelves full of books, weights stacked against one wall, serviceable furniture, very little in the way of decoration. Gladio moved gracefully in his kitchenette, putting the beer in the fridge and moving back to Crowe slowly, his eyes on hers again. They stood face to face, inches apart, before she grasped his shirt and pulled him to her forcefully.

“I want you…but I don’t want this to be just a one-time thing…I want more than that, I need to know you want that too.” His deep voice thrummed through her whole body, setting her heart racing all over again. His words were music to her ears.

“I do, I do,” Crowe reassured him before she pushed him against the wall and pulling his face down to hers, she captured his lips with her own, their tongues soon melting together. She’d never felt this way before, never this excited, never needing to feel someone so much. And she could tell from his groan, that Gladio was feeling the same.

She reached between them to unclip the gemstone across her breastbone, it’s clips to her jacket following, the zip moving down slowly as Gladio watched her with hooded eyes, drinking in the sight of her. Her jacket fell to the floor, leaving her standing in front of him in her form fitting leather suit and boots. He trailed his fingers up her bare arms like she was something sacred. He shrugged off his own jacket to meet hers on the floor and she grasped his hand in hers as he started to tug her to the bedroom.

It was then that she collapsed to her knees, her hands going to her head.

“Fuck, Crowe…what’s wrong?” Gladio held her shaking form on the floor, “talk to me, what is it?”

She could hear the concern in his voice but all she could do was open her mouth uselessly.

He scooped her up into his arms and deposited her onto his lounge and she sank back into the cushions gratefully. The magic that she had felt was dissipating slowly and she blinked trying to clear her head.

“Magic…very strong magic.” It was all she could manage.
“SHIT!” Gladio ran his hands through his hair and kneeling in front of her quaking body he glanced around the room in distress. He raised up and grabbed both their jackets from the floor, slipping his own back on before helping her with hers, fumbling with the gemstone clip with now clumsy fingers. She curled hers around them and stilled him, nodding to show him that she was able to fix it herself. He sat back on his heels watching her closely.

“I’m ok,” she whispered and she tried to stand, wobbling before he took hold of her arms to steady her on her feet. She looked up at him gratefully. “Thanks, that rocked me off my feet, never felt anything like it.”

“I think we need to get our asses up to Noct’s rooms.” Gladio looked towards the bedroom and gave her a rueful smile, “looks like we will have ta leave this for another time,” he said as he gestured between themselves.

“Yes, later…” Crowe replied as she smoothed her hands down her front as she made her way to the door.

“Definitely,” Gladio bent to give her a swift kiss on her cheek as he shut the door behind them and they made their way to the elevator at the end of the hallway.

He clasped her hand in his as they arrived on the floor that held the King’s rooms and Nyx glanced at them as they made their way to the Commander, still stationed outside the doors. He flicked his gaze down at their hands and lifted his brow at Gladio, who only gripped her hand tighter and stared a challenge at the man.

Crowe mouthed a not now at her friend and his look turned to concern.

“What’s up?” he asked her, his eyes flicking between her and Gladio.

“Magic, a lot of it and stronger than anything I’ve ever felt.” Crowe knew that Nyx would understand her concern, he knew what she was capable of and if it was enough for her to consider it strong, it was something to be worried about.

“What’s up?" Gladio questioned him.

“Only some laughing, didn’t sound like there was a problem.” Nyx looked at them oddly.

Gladio simply tugged Crowe to the doors, the two of them a little unsteady on their feet from copious amounts of alcohol and unresolved lust, as Nyx followed, when they pushed the doors open they discovered the King and Ignis seated on the couch together. Noct was rubbing his arm and Ignis was holding his bleeding nose in his fingers.

“What the fuck happened here? I thought you two had made up,” Gladio grumbled at them as Crowe struggled to remain upright, she squinted at the King and Chamberlain and could see something odd about the two. The residual magic in the room was making her woozy again.

After an attempt at explaining both the King and chamberlain collapsed against each other laughing. When finally Gladio got them to settle, Crowe handed Ignis a damp towel and went and retrieved an ice pack to apply to the kings arm, placing it over the large bruise that was appearing on the skin. It was then that Prompto rushed into the room, his head swivelling on his neck as he tried to gauge what was occurring.

When Noctis and Ignis were finally able to explain as well as they could under the circumstances, it was the mention of the Oracle that comprehension dawned for Crowe. She’d felt the transfer of power, it had been strong enough that she’d been knocked off her feet. She glanced at Ignis, the
chamberlain obviously trying to hide the pain he was feeling, he’d been embarrassed to admit he
didn’t know the first thing about this type of healing. He was adept at handling the magic of the
Lucii when casting spells, but that was second hand magic, passed on by Noctis, this was a whole
different situation. The mage thought about it, her mind working furiously, surely she could assist
somehow. She had been considered powerful in her own right, being able to utilise Regis’ magic in
ways that had been unheard of, creating a fire tornado to defeat the diamond weapon that the Niffs
had unleashed upon the Insomnian border, directing it on her own as her fellow mages fell under the
strain.

Thinking about the way she had directed the magic then gave her an idea.

“Perhaps I can help...will you let me try Ignis?”

The chamberlain looked over at her, blinking behind his glasses in surprise and then he nodded
slowly, “what do you wish to do?”

“I’m going to try to direct the magic within you, teach it the paths to take if you will, show your
mind how to apply it.” She glanced at the others in the room, “I’ll need complete quiet and a little
room.”

Gladio, Nyx and Prompto moved the table from in front of the couch, giving Crowe room to kneel
in front of the King and his Chamberlain. She smiled reassuringly at the King who had gripped
Ignis’ hand tighter, not wanting to move.

Crowe tried to explain to Noctis what she was going to do. “His barrier will need to come down
fully then I’ll find the magic within him, get it to find the pathways and direct it for healing, when it
flows towards me I will mirror it back at him. By doing this the magic should be directed to heal his
nose and thus create a link within himself. I may need you to assist me, just help me control the
flow. And then a new barrier and ‘door’ will need to be created as well as a ‘key’ for him to use.”
The King nodded in understanding and drifted his fingers over Ignis’ cheek, she could see the love
between them and nodded, pleased. It would be easier with the bond these two shared. “Gladio, can
you sit behind me, make sure I don’t fall back?”

When she looked up at the Shield he was nodding back at her, not wanting to speak. She could see
how worried he was for her.

Turning back to the two men in front of her, she centred herself, finding her core. Feeling at peace,
she reached both hands out and took Noctis’ in one and Ignis’ in the other. She nodded at the King
and felt him gathering his magic within, his eyes glowed back at her, the magenta colour bright and
the crackle of magic filling the room. Then she directed her gaze to the green eyes of the
chamberlain. She felt Gladio settle behind her, his hands on her hips, ready to catch her should she
fall back and it made her feel so safe.

“Inhaling, gathering the magic to her centre, exhaling she focused on Ignis, searching for the paths
the magic needed to take. “Ahhhh.” She sighed contentedly, she’d found it. Ignis’ eyes widened as
he felt the connection. “Yes, that’s it, relax, let it flow, it won’t hurt, it will just feel warm. Keep
your eyes on mine.” He nodded and kept his gaze fixed on her.

The natural barrier in Ignis’ mind had been breached by the King transferring his power to the tall
man and Crowe used that as a way in to his mind. She kept herself focused on her tasks, knowing
that Ignis would feel if she happened across any memories or thoughts, it would be the height of
rudeness to rummage through someone’s head and she let him feel that thought to reassure him. A little smile quirked his lips and he inclined his head a little in thanks. Returning his smile, she bent to her task. Melting the barrier with her augmented power, she swept it aside gently and cleared the path for his magic to begin its flow.

Placing a barrier up around her own mind she created a mirror for Ignis’ magic to reflect off and within a few moments she could see the swelling and redness around Ignis’ nose dissipate, his relief evident. The man had been holding back a great deal of the pain, trying to ignore it. Crowe recognised a man who was devoted to another and had not wished to admit his own pain. He was tightly controlled and she could feel the passionate man that existed below the surface. Once his nose was healed and Ignis could focus, she set about creating a permanent path and then instructed his mind in the creation of his own barrier, that he could raise and lower at will, she showed him how to open himself to the magic and how to direct it and felt the King join the communion, adding his strength to them both, augmenting the barrier with his own power to protect his lover. She sent a wave of thanks to the King as she was beginning to falter. Ignis’ eyes glowed the same colour as the Kings’ and she vaguely registered the Shields hands gripping her tighter as she slumped against him, still holding the King and Ignis’ hands in her own. Gently she pulled her mind back from them both and allowed the King to smooth the last of the barrier, leaning against Gladio’s chest, he cradled her. The warmth was inherently comforting. She watched as the King created the doorway through the barrier and give Ignis the key he needed to access it. The process was complete.

Crowe began to drift in and out of consciousness, but she felt Gladio lift her into his arms and carry her out of the King’s suite. When her eyes opened again she was laying in his bed, a soft quilt tucked around her and the Shield sleeping in a chair beside the bed.

Crowe felt loved and cared for and the happiest she had ever been.

PROMPTO

Noct’s bruise faded from purpling to green to yellow and then it was gone. Right before his eyes, it was gone.

“Well, shit!”

“Quite,” Ignis replied sardonically to Prompto’s outburst. The three men were now alone in the King’s chambers, Gladio carrying Crowe out and Nyx taking up his station outside the doors again.

Ignis had insisted on attempting to heal the King’s bruised arm once everyone else had left, wanting to practise a little and knowing he was unlikely to cause any damage in such a small healing. Noct had been only too willing a participant. He generally was very receptive to anything Ignis suggested, but then so was Prompto. He trusted Ignis with his life if need be.

“Prompto, there is something else I would like to try, if you should wish it. I know your barcode still...bothers you a little. I think I may be able to...not necessarily erase it from your skin, but maybe fade it so that it’s not so obvious to you. Again, only if you wish me to, I will understand if you do not want me to try.” Ignis deep voice was gentle and Prompto looked up at the green eyes that stared back at him in surprise, he’d not even considered it a possibility.

He looked down at his wrist. He never bothered to cover it up consciously any more, it was just there and the people he cared about most in this world knew what it meant and had never made him
feel awkward about it. He’d been the only one who had been uncomfortable about it. When both Noct and Ignis had seen it before they knew it’s significance they had simply passed it off as something he would tell them about when he was ready, that moment coming when they were in Zygnautus Keep. The relief from the acceptance he’d received from these two and Gladio had filled his whole soul.

“It doesn’t define you to us, Prom, never has, never will, but we both know how you feel about it.” Noctis wrapped his arms around his best friend and all Prompto felt was the warmth of feeling from the King. Ignis enfolded them both and planted a soft kiss in his King’s hair and then another on golden locks.

“Of all the people in this world, you are most important to us both, we have shared so much with you and you have only ever been giving, been a ray of sunshine in our lives. If I can do this one small thing to show you what you mean to us, I will do it in a heartbeat and I know Noct feels as I do.”

Prompto nodded and without considering it further, he decided he had nothing to lose. He held out his arm to Ignis. Teal eyes met his and he inclined his head in acknowledgment. Ignis gestured to the couch, Noct kept hold of him and settled him in between his thighs so he could embrace him while Ignis settled in front of the gunner and gently laid his hands on either side of the barcode. Noct swept his hair out of his face a softly pressed his lips to Prompto’s cheek.

“Yeah, don’t be doing too much of that, don’t want to be thinking of sex right now,” Prompto huffed at his King, whose blue eyes twinkled back at him.

“Oh I don’t know; it might distract you from what I am doing.” Ignis smirked at him in a way that Prompto knew well.

“Don’t you start too Iggy, well…maybe later…” his voice trailed off as he started remembering other occasions when the three men had been alone like this. He had never wanted to intrude on their relationship but they had assured him that what they did with Prompto was enjoyable and in a way enhanced their own relationship. They loved him and he loved them.

He remembered the very first time it had happened, he and Noct had been eighteen, Ignis twenty. They had been out in the city having drinks and decided to go back to Ignis’ apartment as it was the closest. Prompto had been laughing about a story Noct was telling, a school dance that Noct hadn’t wanted to go to as he didn’t want to ask a girl to go with him. It had been before Noct and Ignis had gotten together. Prompto had informed his prince, much to his amusement that he should ask him to the dance and he would dress as a girl to fool everyone. Dressing up was one of his little kinks.

“You see, Ignis, Prom and I had been fooling around, I didn’t know how to kiss and he had a little experience and he said he’d show me, said that’s what friends were for, HAHA, so it didn’t seem that much of a stretch to take him on a date, and I tell you he made a very pretty girl. So anyway, everyone is watching us, wondering who this girl was that I had with me and we thought we’d show them what we’d been practising. I know you saw that, you didn’t even know it was a guy I was kissing, but it was months later that we got together and I could explain it.” Prompto had flushed from his chest right up over his freckled cheeks. He and Noct had never been romantically involved, it had just been two young men trying to work things out and he knew how Noct felt about Ignis. Ignis himself in the meantime was eyeing them both with a slightly glazed look about him. He watched as those green eyes had flicked from his to Noct’s.

“Could you…would you…show me?”

“Woah, Speccy!” Noct had almost fallen on the floor.
“Really, Iggy?” Prompto had squeaked out, apparently Iggy had a voyeuristic streak that his boyfriend wasn’t aware of, but looking at Noct, he could see that it was something that the prince might enjoy. And if he admitted it to himself he was rather turned on by the thought of Ignis watching them together, turned out his kink list was longer than he thought.

“Really, Prom, I would very much like to see you two kissing…” Ignis’ eyes had gone very dark behind his glasses.

Noct had swallowed and turned to Ignis, “we can stop this any time, right, if you get uncomfortable baby.”

“I assure you, my love, I won’t be at all uncomfortable, I will very much enjoy it,” Iggy asserted kneeling on the floor in front of them. He leaned up and placed a soft kiss on Noct’s lips and then much to Prompto’s surprise had done the same to Prompto himself.

“Ohhh.” Prompto had sighed quietly after Ignis pulled away.

“Woah, that was hot!” Noct was wide eyed and blushing.

“Mmmmhmm, your turn, my little raven, show me…please.” Ignis sat back on his heels to watch as Noct had lent in slowly, cupping Prompto’s cheek and softly, so softly, their lips met and he could hear the satisfied hum that came from Iggy on the floor. He felt Ignis’ hand in his hair and heard him whisper in Noct’s ear, “use your tongues.”

Noct had groaned and pulled Prompto closer as Iggy stroked their hair and backs, encouraging them. They had nuzzled their cheeks together and then Prompto had tilted his face towards Noct more, opening his mouth slightly to flick his tongue over Noct’s lip. Noct’s tongue slipped between his lips to touch his own and then they had crushed their mouths together, tongues dancing. They both heard the low moan that came from Iggy as he watched them fight for dominance. It turned him on more and he grabbed the prince’s shirt to pull him closer. He felt Ignis’ hand move from his back to high on his thigh, felt Noct groan into his mouth. Iggy gasped quietly as his prince pushed Prompto back onto the couch and had knelt over him, their mouths still fused together.

“Oh yes, like that…like that,” came Iggy’s hoarse voice.

Prompto had thrown his head back when he felt Ignis’ hand brush over his cock and Noct had taken the chance to latch onto his neck, suckling and nibbling. While Noct was busy with his neck, Iggy leaned in and captured Prompto’s lips with his own, stroking him through his jeans.

*Oh Astrals, that night had been awesome.* He could remember very well the tangle of naked, sweaty limbs in Ingis’ bed. He could remember every time since then, even one time in the tent on their journey when Gladio had gone off on his own for a few weeks. That had been the last time. It wasn’t something they had done all that often, but it was enough that Prompto almost considered himself to be part of their relationship.

He shook his head trying to focus on what was happening right now, watching Iggy’s head as he bent down and placed his forehead to Prompto’s wrist and a gentle golden glow emanated from the chamberlain.

“I can feel you getting turned on, your heart is pounding, what are you thinking about, Prom?” the King asked him stroking his chest.

Prompto lent his head back on his King’s shoulder, “that first time we were all together, remembering how hot it was,” he whispered.
“Mmmmmm,” Noct agreed, “watching you take Ignis while you were in me, that was fuckin’ hot, very hot.” And Prompto gasped as he got a flash in his mind, the image of Iggy’s impressive cock drilling into his spread ass as he looked over Prompto’s freckled shoulder down at Noct with his head tossed back as Prompto slid in and out of him.

“Oh shit, Iggy, did you do that?”

He heard a little hum in agreement and Noct looked at him puzzled.

“He just showed me what it looked like from his point of view.” Prompto looked back down at Iggy bent over his wrist and darkened green eyes locked with his. Ignis apparently had a new talent to add to his arsenal. “Oh shit!” he exclaimed as Noct reached his hand down to toy with his belt buckle, then the button on his jeans, slipping his hand inside his boxers to grab hold of his cock. He lent his head back again as Noct began to stroke him.

“It’s been too long, Prom, since we had you and you had us, far too fuckin’ long.” Noct whispered against his ear his breath ghosting over his cheek.

He opened his mouth to moan and felt Iggy’s tongue searching for his own, oh gods could that man kiss, kiss him until he couldn’t think, kiss him until he was lost. He didn’t even know how he made it to the bedroom. He couldn’t have said how they all ended up naked and he had no sense of time as they all got lost in each other.

He fell asleep between the two men who were his lover’s and it was only when the sun rose the next morning and bathed his face in gilded tones that he awoke.

Another awesome night he thought as he stretched between the sleeping forms of Noct and Iggy.

Then his eyes fell on his wrist. He shot up, sitting and staring at the place where his barcode used to be. In place of it was a lovely filigree vine, just like the decoration that the Insomnians loved, just like Noct had on his swords and other weapons. It was beautiful.

He felt tears start to fall as Iggy and Noct stirred beside him. He spun around in the bed and sleepy faces met his own as he opened and closed his mouth, not knowing what to say. Ignis caught on first and had a little frown on his face.

“Is it ok? I could not remove it, but I could change it. I can adjust it if you don’t like it.” Ignis reached for his glasses and slipped them on his face, then reaching for Prompto’s wrist.

“NO, no Iggy, it’s…perfect, I love it.” He kissed Iggy hard on his lips and then did the same to Noct who wrapped his arms around him, “it’s just perfect.”

“I thought it would remind you of where you belong.” Ignis smiled at him gently.

“It’s really cool Specs,” Noct grinned at his lover.

“It’s not just cool, Noct…it’s…home.” Prompto blubbered overcome, as he was wrapped up in their embrace.

NOCTIS
He’d been home now for a few months, very busy months.

The city had been cleared of debris, rebuilding was underway, Monica had helped Gladio and Nyx integrate the guard with those she’d collected up from Lestallum, Crowe was teaching the new mages and they would be given the gift of his magic at a special ceremony where they would pledge fealty in a few weeks. They had a new contingent of staff around the citadel that seemed to be working out really well, a lot of the refugees from Insomnia were returning, shops were re-opening and the crops from the farms were faring well. Prompto’s recruits were coming along well with their arms training, their relations with Accordo were on track and Noct felt he was getting the hang of this King thing. With Ignis by his side, he felt he couldn’t go wrong. Lucis was healing and becoming whole.

And very soon, Ignis would be by his side at a different ceremony. Their upcoming wedding was something he was really looking forward to. His official crowning was something he wasn’t looking forward to so much. Ignis had insisted that they have his conferment as King made official, even though everyone thought of him as the King, his lover had explained that they didn’t want there to be an issue in any official way and Noct had to concede he was right. With the silence coming from Nifelheim he didn’t want any trouble sneaking up on him, not in this the first proper year of his reign. So he had agreed. On one condition.

“As long as our wedding is held straight after,” he’d told the taller man as they stood on the roof of the tower watching another sunrise.

Ignis had huffed at him, “there is no rush, love, I’m not going anywhere and neither are you.”

“Don’t care, want it to be official, want you to be mine and for everyone to know it,” he grumbled into Ignis’ chest.

“I am yours already, always. And everyone does know, it would be hard to miss.” Ignis chuckled into his hair affectionately.

“Yeah, yeah, I know, but I want us to be able to start our family and we can’t do that until we are married.”

“Hmmm, you know I have been talking to Crowe about surrogates and such…and she mentioned she may be able to help us a little in that area – not be a surrogate,” he added hastily as Noct looked up at him.

“Yeah don’t think Gladio would be too impressed with that.” Noct brushed his lips over Ignis’ lightly.

“She thinks she can…ahhh…mingle our ‘essences’ to create children that are completely ours and not just yours or mine, a surrogate would need to carry them still, but they would be ours.”

Noct widened his eyes as he stared at Ignis, “truly, they would be of both of us?”

“Yes, she thinks so,” Ignis grinned at him, knowing this was his King’s greatest wish.

“Well, when Crowe thinks she can do something it usually means she can. That woman is a wonder.”

“Yes, Crowe is a very capable woman and she has Gladio twisted around her little finger, the man is almost as besotted with her as I am with you. It’s actually lovely to see.”

“Yeah, now if we could only find someone for Prom.”
Ingis laughed at him, “my love, the matchmaker,” as he ruffled his lover’s hair. “He is a little enamoured of one of the recruits, but it’s not gone beyond flirting apparently, you know how shy he can get and it seems that her advances have him tongue-tied.” Ignis paused, thinking and Noct could practically see his mind whirring.

“What is it, Specs, I know you, there’s something bothering you.” He held Ignis’ gaze willing him to continue.

“I am loath to take any happiness from Prom, you know that, but I am not so sure about this girl, something about her is…off.”

Noct immediately paid more attention, Ignis was very troubled. Not many people would have been able to tell, but Noct could see a tightening around those verdant green eyes and his hesitance to say much was telling.

“It’s a few little things, my love, her name is Amara…just Amara, no family name, she says she was an orphan from the Galahd region and that’s just a little too close to Niflheim for my liking, yes, I know that’s where Nyx and Crowe are from…” he paused and Noct closed his mouth, silencing what he was going to say. “They don’t know her or of her and she looks nothing like Galahdian natives. Crowe doesn’t like her evidently, not that she would make that known. And I would never say this in front of Prom, but she has the same colour eyes exactly as his, no-one from Insomnia has eyes that colour or Galahd. His are a result of his parentage. Blue that colour are a Niff trait. It could be that her parents were Niff refugees perhaps, but still…And then there is her proficiency with guns and machinery, just like Prom. While I trust our lovely Prom with my life and with yours, she…concerns me.”

“Hmmm, yes, Prom grew up with us and he feels he is Insomnian, this is home. But this girl, if we don’t know anything about where she has been before now…Do you think we could ask Nyx to keep an eye on her, maybe ask her about Galahd, see if she is actually from there, I mean, she should be able to talk to him about their home if she’s really from there…”

He heard Ignis sigh deeply and relax against him, “yes, that is a good idea, Noct, I will do that.” He paused and planted a kiss in his lover’s hair. “Given how we both feel about Prom, I’d hate to see him have his heart broken.”

“I know Speccy, I know, I’d have him with us all the time if I didn’t think he deserves to have his own happiness.” It was something they had discussed extensively, both he and Ignis loved the chococbo haired gunner deeply, but they both felt it only fair to allow Prompto to lead his own life.

It was then that the two men had their thoughts interrupted by the very person they were thinking of as Prompto burst through the door.

“Hey dudes, umm, not about to be traumatised again am I, just got over the last time,” he giggled nervously.

“HA! You love it.” Noct chuckled as the gunner flushed crimson under his freckles.

“Shut up, anyway I’m not here for that.”

“What are you here for, Prom?” Ignis asked him.

“There’s a delegation of stuffed shirts from Niflheim in the Council chamber, they say they would like to discuss a treaty.”
Noct frowned and looked to Ignis. The strategist in him would know what to do with this information. He could see Ignis’ brain in action, the thin line of his lips as he pressed them together, given what they were just discussing, this meeting would be important to them both. He leaned close, lifted his mouth to Ignis’ ear and whispered “text Nyx that I want to see him now, you head to the Council room.”

Ignis nodded and motioned to Prompto that he would accompany him back down stairs. Noctis waited a few moments and then headed for his chambers, greeting Gladio who stood outside his door waiting for him.

“You heard about the Niffs downstairs?”

Noct nodded and opened his door, “Nyx should be here in a minute, can you let him in and make sure no-one comes in.”

“Sure,” was the rumbling response from the Shield, a curious eyebrow raised at the King.

“I’ll explain later,” Noct told him as he entered his suite.

It was only a few minutes later that the Commander appeared and he stood silently waiting for the King to tell him what he wanted.

“We have Niffs waiting downstairs, Ignis is stalling them, I need to ask a huge favour of you and you can’t tell anyone about it. There is a young girl that Prompto has been training…and both Ignis and I are concerned about her…she…she says she is from Galahd, but both Ignis and I are not sure, Ignis feels like something is…not right. She has been kinda throwing herself at Prom, and while that’s not a problem exactly, her origins and actual intentions could be. Ignis thinks she may be more than what she lets on and with the Niffs here now…we want to keep an eye on her, maybe find out a little more about her without Prom knowing. If she is who she says she is, then great, but if she’s not, we don’t want Prom hurt and we don’t want a risk to the country, not when everything is just coming together…”

Nyx nodded, quickly grasping the situation. He’d been apprised of Prompto’s heritage by Gladio, who had sworn him to silence, not that it was a secret as such, but it was a sensitive subject to the gunner.

“You feel she might be a plant…trying to insinuate herself with Prompto because he was meant to be an MT?”

Noct smiled at the Commander of his guard, “knew you’d catch on, yes, that’s it, but mostly…it’s worry about Prom, he’d never betray me or Insomnia, but if she is a plant, as you say, then she may get information from him without his knowledge. Or she may want to get to me through him, or…well, there are too many ‘or’ scenarios for our liking. Her name is Amara, she’ll be at the firing range in about half an hour for training, maybe you could befriend her, use the Galahd connection as an excuse.”

“I can tell you now, she’s not from Galahd, I know that already, I’d heard she was from there, so Crowe and I were naturally interested, but she didn’t respond when either of us spoke to her in our native language.”

“Hmmm, ok well, that answers one question. Anyway find out what you can and report to either Ignis or myself. Walk with me, I have to get down there and see if Ignis has worked out what these Niffs really want yet.” Noct led Nyx out into the hall and Gladio fell in step with them as they headed down to the Council chambers. Nyx nodded to him as he left for the firing range, Prompto in
The moment he stepped into the room, Noct knew something was wrong. He could feel it. Ignis stood ramrod straight next to his chair and Noct knew he felt it too. He was glad to see that Ignis had summoned Crowe and a few others from the Guard as well as his Council. If what he was feeling was correct he wouldn’t be able to use his bloodmagic, but he had a hunch that Crowe could still be useful, her magic being something inherent to herself and not tied completely to his blood. Ignis was another matter, his abilities being tied to his, intertwined. He wasn’t sure the other side of his magic was affected as that was different, but he didn’t want to tip his hand while the Niffs were here.

He inclined his head politely to the Niflheim delegates who had bowed as he entered and he flipped his hand to indicate they could be seated. As he took his seat at the head of the table where Ignis stood he glanced up at his chamberlain and lover, “I see Iggy has made you comfortable, I apologise for my tardiness.” He saw Ignis’ eyes narrow at the use of the nickname, it was a form of code between them. It made Ignis aware that he knew something was wrong without alerting the delegates.

The Niff delegates nodded and Ignis pressed his hand to his shoulder lightly and lent close to his ear, “did your Majesty sort out that other problem, the raven must be kept from the garden else the photographer will not be able to do his work.” Noct, nodded, understanding that Ignis would not speak of the raven in public and that the photographer meant Prompto. The rest of the sentence spoken quietly in his ear was irrelevant, it only served to cover the main words Noct needed to hear. Ignis was worried about the magic and what the Niffs meant in regard to Prompto and Amara.

He flicked his eyes to Crowe and back to the delegates, “gentlemen, what is it we can do for you?”

Noct sat quietly listening to the delegate drone on about a possible treaty between nations while his mind worked furiously as he tried to probe the magical barrier that had been erected in the room. He saw Crowe frown and then a small smile lifted her lips, she tilted her head slightly and Noct felt a ‘pop’ in his ears as his blood tingled in his veins. Crowe had found a way through.

Without changing his posture in any way, Noct attended to the conversation and kept himself from stiffening when one of the delegates mentioned the Oracle.

“I am afraid I must inform you that there is no Oracle.”

“We are saddened by that, your majesty,” the slight inflection on the word made Noctis glare at the delegate who shrugged as if he didn’t care what offense he caused. Noct knew they were referring to the fact he hadn’t been crowned yet. “We had hoped a new Oracle had been found, as Insomnia’s King has been so miraculously returned.”

The man’s sarcasm and lack of deference grated on Noct’s nerves. “And what would you want with a new Oracle, pray tell?” Ignis’ deep voice came from behind him.

“Ahhh, my esteemed chamberlain,” the man’s tone implied Ignis was anything but esteemed in his opinion and Noct felt Ignis bristle, his lover’s anger flowing through him. “We were merely hoping that one had been discovered so we might avail ourselves of her, or indeed his as the case may be, talents for some of our people.”

“Apologies that we must disappoint you on that issue, sir, however if one such does make themselves know we will endeavour to let you know in a timely fashion. Perhaps we may send you one of our medical staff to attend to your people in the absence of any Oracle.” Ignis’ voice was strained to Noct’s ears but he knew he appeared as unruffled to anyone else as ever. “As to the issue of a treaty between our nations, you will undoubtedly understand that we must confer privately with
our Council on that matter.”

Noct was pleased that Ignis was by his side in this, the man was impeccably polite yet could still convey his disdain for the delegates without giving them a reason for feeling slighted.

Ignis vented his frustration when they arrived back in his rooms with a swift kick to a small table, sending it careening across the room. Noct waited for it to pass and sat calmly on the couch as the others took seats around the room. Ignis took a deep breath and righted the table before he sat beside Noct, crossing his long legs and smoothing the creases in his impeccably pressed pants.

“So…the Niffs think they can blunt my magic and seem to want antagonise us all at the same time,” Noct stated dryly giving Ignis side eye. “Thanks Crowe, you are proving to be invaluable. The Niffs will feel overconfident if they think they can hold me back and we will have the advantage.”

“Exactly my thoughts on it too.” Crowe’s eyes twinkled, she obviously liked being able to fool the Niffs.

Gladio huffed his amusement and grinned at his girlfriend.

“The less we let them know the better, they must not be allowed to know the true nature of your abilities…or mine, nor should we brush off this offer of a treaty, at least not immediately. And…we need to get you crowned as soon as possible. I will not have them using that as a way to insult you,” Ignis was speaking calmly, but Noct knew his lover was still furious.

“And I will not allow them to insult you either, our wedding will be set for a week after the coronation. If they wish to try to insult you further after that they will be causing hostilities. I am not going to put up with homophobic asses, particularly asses who caused the Fall, asses that stole the crystal, asses that brought on the Darkness, asses who used humans to create an army of MT’s.” He looked around at the others in the room. “While I don’t want a resurgence of war, I don’t want a treaty with those people, at least not until they understand that we are not weak and will not be tolerating any shit from them. We need an army.”

NYX

Nyx was enjoying himself. He kept telling himself he was getting to know the object of his quarry’s desire, but the more he’d tailed Amara, the more he realised he needed to take a new approach. One approach being to be around Prompto more, something he found to be an enlightening experience.

He’d found that Amara was definitely trying to use Prompto, her flirting attitude around the gunner was dropped the moment she didn’t need him to see it. The second Prompto wasn’t looking in her direction a look of something like disgust would cloud her features. He’d also noticed that while Prompto had seemed flattered and nervous around her to begin with, now her attentions seemed to make the blond uncomfortable. He’d yet to catch her out doing anything particularly untoward or traitorous, so he’d asked Noctis if he could employ someone else to watch her while he focused on Prompto. The King had agreed to the new version of the plan, particularly when Nyx had told him that he felt he could protect the gunner from her advances while also getting to know the blond.

Nyx hadn’t wanted to admit that he was enjoying keeping Amara away from him, thwarting her attempts at flirting and keeping herself close to Prompto. It gave him immense satisfaction whenever
he saw the look of dismay on her face when she would try to corner the gunner and Nyx would insinuate himself between them.

This particular instance was when he’d turned up to training just before the end of a session, keeping himself to the shadows so he could watch before he made his presence known. Amara had been pulling her usual trick of trying to monopolise the cute gunner, attempting to get Prompto to help her with her stance and Nyx could see she was angling to get him to place his hands on her and show her the correct way to line up her targets, but he was inordinately pleased to see that Prompto was not falling for it and had turned to another of the recruits to do the task while he focused on another student. Her frown after had made Nyx grin. That was when he’d decided to saunter forward and place a hand on Prompto’s shoulder, “you really have these guys under control. I was going to ask if you needed help, but you don’t need it.”

Prompto’s slight flush under his attention and praise had made him feel warm and protective. The more time he spent around the man, the more he liked him. Prompto was so genuine and was like a ray of sunshine when he smiled. “Thanks dude, getting the hang of this teaching thing, finally.”

“You’re a natural.” Nyx smiled at him, “feel like a drink after you’ve finished up?” He could practically feel Amara throwing daggers into his back.

“Yeah, sure man, nearly done here, wanna wait or I can meet ya there?” Prompto’s bright blue eyes met his eagerly.

“I’ll wait, might pick up some teaching pointers,” he winked at the blond who flushed again and Nyx liked the way it made his freckles stand out. Giving Prompto a cheeky grin he stepped back a little to lean against a bench and cross his arms over his chest and watched the rest of the session, finding himself pleased whenever Prompto would turn to find him watching and would smile a little shyly.

When he could see that the session was over, Nyx moved over to stake his claim on Prompto’s attention before Amara could move in. The young woman huffed a little then stormed out of the firing range and Nyx flicked his eyes up to the gallery above, watching as his accomplice slipped out to follow her. “I think me being here pissed someone off,” he pointed out to his friend.

“Oh what, who?” Prompto looked over to him puzzled as he put the last of the practise weapons away.

“The young girl trying to get you to help her all the time.” Nyx watched Prompto’s reaction carefully. The gunner shrugged and grinned.

“Her, yeah, that’s Amara, thought she was getting a bit…too close, I was kinda flattered and thought I might be interested myself, but I’m just not that into her, makes me uncomfortable.”

“Oh?” Nyx glanced at him, “not your type?”

“Umm, well, yeah, but no, not really, I mean I like her kinda, girl can shoot well, but…”

“But…she makes you uncomfortable.” Nyx turned to him as they headed to the dining hall, Prompto locking the range as they left.

“Yeah, I mean, I used to be a mess around people I find attractive, but I’m better with it now, but that girl just…she’s too hands on I guess, well, no that’s not exactly it either…dunno what it is really.”

Nyx was intrigued, Prompto was more perceptive than he’d thought.
They made their way into the dining hall and found themselves a table in the corner. Ordering their meal and a couple of beers they sat back, enjoying being off duty. Over the last few weeks, Nyx had found himself thinking more about Prompto and less about Ignis and it was a welcome change. Nyx chuckled to himself, maybe he was just horny, after all it had been over ten years since he’d been with anyone.

Their conversation turned to their other friends, Gladio and Crowe being the first of topics.

“HA, I like making Gladio squirm, he thinks I’m gonna kick his ass for being with Crowe, but between you and me, I am happy she found someone who treats her right, just don’t tell him that.”

Prompto laughed into his beer, “yeah the man is shitting bricks, I can see it every time you are mentioned. It’s so funny, he is like one of the most confident dudes around when it comes to women, but she’s got him twisted in knots and then watching his face when you are around is like watching him suck lemons, fuckin’ hilarious man.”

Nyx chuckled and reached for more fries from their shared plate, Prompto reaching at the same time, their fingers brushing together lightly. He registered the touch in Prompto’s eyes and looked away as he felt his own body respond. Yeah, definitely horny, keep it together.

Trying to cover the moment, he asked the gunner about his other friends, “how long have the King and his chamberlain been together?”

“Ahhh, those two, man, they’ve been obsessed with each other since as long as I can remember, definitely as long as I’ve known them. Ignis could cover it better, he’s Ignis after all, but Noct used to moon over Iggy and would moan to me about it all the time. They got their act together when Noct was 16, nearly 17, so Iggy was nearly 19, yeah that’s about right. Gladio and me, we were like finally. Poor Iggy was mortified that everyone else could see it.”

“HAHA, yeah I can imagine, Ignis is very…”

“IGNISY…” Prompto finished for him, “there’s really no better way to describe him. Dude’s amazing though, really amazing, but so is Noct and they are really good together. And talk about hot…those two could light a room on fire when they are…” Prompto flushed again and looked over at Nyx, “sorry dude, I shouldn’t really talk about that…”

“What do you mean, you can talk to me, not gonna go tell anyone man.” Nyx assured him, curious at the tone that had crept into his companion’s voice. And if he was truthful with himself he really liked the husky way he’d spoken. That was definitely doing things to Nyx.

“Uhh, yeah, but seriously you can’t tell Gladio, I mean the four of us are all close, but this is something that he doesn’t need to know about, it’d make him…feel weird I think…”

“No problem, I can keep my mouth shut,” Nyx winked at him and grinned.

“Well, it’s not some sort of state secret, but it’s private, ya know…”

The drinks were obviously loosening Prompto’s tongue and it made Nyx more determined to find out what had Prompto squirming in his seat. Nyx decided that some shots were in order and waved over a waiter to fetch them some. Maybe it would make Prompto more comfortable.

“I won’t say a word.”

“Yeah, ok…look, I need to explain something first, I…umm. I swing both ways if ya get what I mean…but I find myself more attracted to guys.” Prompto tossed back his drink and glanced over at Nyx, who was trying to hold back his sudden interest in the gunner’s confession.
“That’s cool, I am…I think I am the same as you, dunno what it is exactly that makes me really want someone, but…I find that guys do it for me more than women.” He wanted to make Prompto feel at ease and a confession of his own might make the gunner more comfortable.

“Really? Wow…that’s cool. Don’t feel like so much of a weirdo, HA.”

“Definitely not a weirdo, Prom. I think you’re pretty cool.”

“Ahh, thanks man, anyway…look, this might sound strange, but as much as Noct and Iggy are wrapped up in each other, I am really close to them…I mean really, really close. And I’m not ashamed of what we’ve all done together, but Gladio would be…weirded out and I just sort of pretend that…well, that them being so open around us makes me…uncomfortable.” It came out in a rush and Nyx’s eyes widened as he caught on to what Prompto was implying.

“You mean…you’ve…been with them…like…when they…?”

“Ummm, yeah,” Prompto’s face was now bright red, obviously embarrassed.

Nyx reached his hand out and grabbed Prompto’s in his own, “that’s…wow, Prom, that’s really hot, man, really…you’ve had…them both…and at the same time?”

“Ahhh, yeah at the same time, you don’t think that’s…ya know…weird?” Prompto had his eyes fixed on their hands folded together on the table.

“No, like I said, Prom, hot!” Nyx asserted as he squeezed the other man’s hand gently and he was being entirely truthful. “Kinda jealous, actually…those two are…fuckin’ gorgeous and you…you are so…fuck, sorry, don’t want to make you feel weird about me, but I think you are seriously awesome, not to mention pretty hot yourself. They are some lucky men.” Nyx was flushing as badly as Prompto at this point, he never usually had an issue indicating his interest in someone, but Prompto was making him wriggle in his seat.

“REALLY?” It came out as a squeak.

“Yeah, really, I mean look at you…who wouldn’t want to…Gods, I hope you don’t feel weird me telling you that.”

Their hands were still clasped together across the table and Nyx made to pull his back, giving Prompto space, but he felt the blond hold on tighter. “No, no man, I mean…wow…umm, I think…you are sexy as all hell, Nyx, just never thought you’d even look at me like that,” Prompto blurted out and gave him a shy smile.

“Well, I do…” Nyx laced their fingers together, stroking his thumb over Prompto’s lightly, enjoying touching the blond and the reaction in his pretty blue eyes. He leaned forward and kept his voice low, “I gotta confess, been watching you in training and I was far more interested in just watching the way you move than what was going on in the class.”

Prompto licked his lips nervously and Nyx traced its path with his eyes, licking his own in response, fuck, I want that tongue.

“Ummm, you realise I wanna jump over this table right now,” Prompto broke their heated gaze and flicked his eyes around the room.

Nyx glanced around the room himself, “yeah, but not the best place, Prom, want to go somewhere else?” He looked back to see there was definitely interest in his suggestion, watching that pink tongue flick out to lick lips again. Nyx groaned, “I want…”
“Me too…let’s get out of here before I disgrace myself.”

Nyx nodded, not trusting himself to speak, he tugged Prompto to his feet, their fingers still entwined he tried to stroll casually out of the dining hall. Leaving by a side door they made it out into a quiet courtyard and Nyx found himself pushed up against a wall with a very enthusiastic Prompto flushing at his own rising lust.

“I want to kiss you…can I?” he asked the blond quietly, tracing his finger over his jaw.

“You better, before I explode or something.”

At Prom’s answer, Nyx tilted his head and leaned in, feeling the gunner’s breath as he panted harshly. Pressing his lips to the other man’s, Nyx felt all his tension flow to his groin and he growled his pleasure as Prompto slipped his tongue between their mouths. Their kiss turned from exploratory to passionate in an instant as he felt Prompto tug at his braids and pull their mouths closer, their bodies heated and pressed together. He reached down to cup that gorgeous ass in his hands and the blond slipped his legs between Nyx’s own to press into his hardening length.

“FUCK,” Nyx breathed out as he pulled their mouths apart.

“Mmmhmm, yeah, let’s do that.” Prompto pulled him close again and this time their kisses were urgent as their hands started to explore.

Nyx moved his mouth down to Prompto’s lovely neck and felt him purr in response to the nibbles he placed there. He growled deep in his throat as the blond’s quick hands found his belt and tugged it open before moving to pull his pants open. The relief he felt at being released from the constriction of his leather pants was replaced with pure desire when he felt a warm hand grasp his cock, his hips twitching forward wanting more and more. When Prompto dropped to his knees and looked up at him with his blue eyes dark, Nyx could hardly contain himself. His head fell back against the wall as he felt Prom’s tongue flick over his swollen head before he was taken in to the depths of a warm mouth. He fistied his hands into blond locks gripping tightly to stop himself from thrusting into his throat.

“Ohhh, Six, Prom!” He gasped as Prompto proceeded to suck and lick at his length, head bobbing back and forth, root to tip, hand fisted around him where his mouth couldn’t reach. “SHIT...not gonna last long if you keep that up.” He looked down to watch as Prompto pulled back, swirling his tongue around the head of his cock, before he was released to the cool night air.

“We better get you inside me then,” Prom winked as he stood before Nyx.

Nyx could only agree with that, tugging the gunner’s pants down, he stroked the other man’s cock and twisted him around so that he could place his hands against the wall. Moving his hands down over a taut freckled ass, Nyx groaned his appreciation and slipped a finger down the crack to tease his hole. Prompto wiggled against his finger, it was an open invitation that Nyx couldn’t turn down. Slipping his fingers into his own mouth, he knelt behind Prom and pulled his cheeks apart, humming at the feast before him. He dipped his head closer and flicked his tongue out to probe and push against the dusky pink puckered hole. He felt Prom groan and push back onto his tongue as he delved deeper, teasing with both tongue and finger. Pushing his finger into that tightness, he squeezed the ass cheek in his other hand, pulling back to watch as Prom took his finger in, ass twitching in pleasure.

Nyx couldn’t watch for long though, he wanted to be inside this gorgeous creature who was writhing on his finger. He grinned when Prompto passed him a small vial of potion, taking it from him, he popped the top open and coated his length, slipping his hand over the head.
“I wanted to take this so slow and make it last, but that’s not gonna happen right now,” he teased his cock around the hole that was begging him to push in.

Prom moaned, pushing back to encourage him. “Hard and fast, we can worry about slow later… just fuck me.” He arched his back, giving Nyx a better angle, looking over his shoulder, he bit his bottom lip as Nyx pressed in, pausing when the head was nestled in.

And it was hard and fast, Prom pushing back for every thrust of Nyx’s hips. Rocking desperately together, each thrust deeper than the last, Nyx gripped slim hips in his fists as he fought for control, but Prom wasn’t having it. The blond pushed back harder and faster, squeezing around him and Nyx could feel they both were going to be coming quickly. He slipped one hand from Prom’s hip and reached around to grasp hold of Prom’s cock, tugging in time with each snap of his hips.

They came at almost the same time, Nyx feeling Prom’s seed coating his hand as he released his own into that willing tightness. Pulling out slowly, panting, he spun Prom around, their pants pooling around their ankles, as he captured the blond’s mouth for another deep kiss, their tongues dancing together.

When they came up for air, leaning his forehead against his lover’s, he gasped for breath, “fuckin’ six, that was good.”

“Mmmm, yeah and I think it will be even better next time,” said Prom, staring deep into his eyes.

“Keep lookin’ at me like that and next time won’t be very far away.” Nyx licked over Prom’s lips, loving the way Prom was so responsive, loving the way he was so responsive to Prom.

“Better find us a bed then, coz I ain’t gonna stop lookin’ at you like this any time soon.”

**GLADIO**

Gladio was in his element.

Nyx was training the new recruits for the Guard while he had Monica helping him sort out a new army. The two entities would work together eventually, but Gladio needed to get this army functioning as quickly as possible. He had engineers working on weaponry and armour that they army could use which would be different from what they Guard would utilise. The Guard would be much as they had been before the fall, made up of men and women who could draw on the blood magic of the King while also being warriors in their own right, whereas the army would be different. More of a conventional army. This meant that he was going to be training them in traditional arms and defence, something he was expert in. Prompto was doing double duty, training the Guard recruits still while running the new army recruits through a special round of drills to bring them up to speed as quickly as possible. Once they were at an acceptable level Gladio would continue to hone them and start to pick new officers and commanders for each new battalion. He would need men and women who could think independently while under pressure. He had a few possible candidates marked on the piece of paper in his hand, watching them closely. All new members had been thoroughly vetted and tested. Crowe had searched their minds for any troubling memories or affiliations.

Thoughts of Crowe threatened to disrupt his focus, but he still smiled at his girlfriend as she nodded at him, indicating this new lot were acceptable. She’d found nothing untoward.
Gladio grabbed out his phone and flicked through the numbers stored there. Selecting the one he wanted he waited for it to answer.

“Hey muscles, what do you want?”

“Ha ha, Aranea, just wanted to know when you and Biggs and Wedge can be settled into the bases?”

“Oh we are already on our way, Biggs will be getting his battalion there in a few hours, Wedge, probably tomorrow and I will have mine all tucked up in their beds by nightfall.”

“Five hundred in each, right?”

“Yep, might even be a few that are officer material too.”

“I’ll make the trip in a few days to come see ‘em, check if you’ve whipped ‘em into shape.”

“Oh you are hilarious, muscles, ‘course they are in shape, this is me we’re talkin’ about here.” He could hear Aranea Highwind laughing at him. “How’s pretty boy and his boyfriend, oh and can’t forget shortcake?”

Gladio chuckled deeply, “Noct’s getting’ crowned next week, Iggy’s stressing about the details and Prom’s just being Prom as usual.”

“In other words he’s bouncin’ around like an excited chocobo. Give the little sweetie a kiss for me.” Aranea purred down the phone.

“Yeah, sure, like I’m gonna kiss him, dunno where his mouth’s been lately,” Gladio replied sarcastically.

“Ohhh, I sense a story there, spill the beans, muscles.”

“Nope, you’ll have ta wait ‘till ya get here, you are still comin’ for the coronation, aren’t ya?”

“Yeah, yeah, keep your pants on, I’ll be there and I will be stickin’ around for the wedding too, got my invitation and all.”

“You’ll get to meet my girlfriend, think you two will get on just great, you both like givin’ me shit,” Gladio laughed ruefully.

“Ohhh the muscle man been tamed has he? I’m liking the sound of this woman already.” Aranea was clearly loving teasing him.

“Me, tamed, as if.” Gladio huffed as he grinned, not wanting to admit to Aranea that he was indeed on Crowe’s hook and he loved it.

“Aww like a big pussy cat,” she cooed down the phone at him.

“Naw, I’m a more of a couerl, bitch, don’tcha forget it.”

Aranea roared laughing, “couerl on a leash more like.”

“Ugh, on second thoughts, stay at your base, don’t need more shit.”

“Nope, not happenin’ muscles, since when have you known me to pass up a chance like this?”
“That’s exactly why.” Gladio was only half joking. Aranea was known for her biting tongue and he had been on the receiving end more times than he cared to count.

Aranea chuckled at him and ended the call with a “catcha soon, muscles, don’t get a rash from that leash.”

Grumbling to himself Gladio turned his attention back to the recruits going through their drills in front of him, pleased they had continued diligently while he was on his call. He made a few notes next to some of the names as he noted strengths and weaknesses, picking out at least two who would need more intensive training to bring them up to his standard.

Tapping his pen against his mouth he looked up to see Prompto and Nyx arriving and waved them over. The two men had been almost continually together lately, and it seemed to Gladio that Prom was pretty comfortable around the commander. His eyes narrowed as they approached, Nyx draped his arm over Prom’s shoulder companionably and whispered something into the gunner’s ear, who laughed at whatever Nyx said, both sets of eyes on Gladio. He had a feeling he was about to get more shit from the former glaive and Prom was in on it.

Although he and Nyx were on par as far as command was concerned, Gladio was aware that the other man would skin him alive if he thought he was treating Crowe badly, it put him on edge around Nyx and he found he just couldn’t shake the feeling that those light blue eyes were watching every move he made around his ‘little sister’. Crowe had tried to assure him that Nyx was just messing with him for fun, rather than any malice, but the Shield wasn’t so sure about that.

“Hey Prom, Nyx, what ya doin’ here?” he asked shifting his eyes back to his notes.

“Oh nothin’ much, finished for the day, thought we’d see what our resident shield was doing. You and Crowe up for a drink later?” Nyx casually leaned against the wall and Prom parked himself on the bench.

“Got plans later, taking her for diner.”

“Oh, you are, how nice.” Nyx’s slightly sarcastic response made him glare at the other man.

“Lemons, dude, lemons,” Prom chuckled and Nyx grinned at the blond, nodding.

“What the fuck are you on about, Prom.” Gladio frowned at his friend totally confused at the comment.

“Nothin’ man, don’t bust a vein.” Prom laughed

“Ugh, if ya got nothin’ constructive to say, I got work to do, you know that thing we all have to do during the day,” Gladio grumbled.

Prom held his hands up, “no need to get all defensive, big guy.” He raised himself up from the bench and turned to leave.

“Hey, Prom, did ya get that part for Cinds, she’s only got a little time left to get that present sorted.”

“Yeah, yeah, all done, said she’d let us know when we could pick it up, reckons it’ll only take her another day or so.”

Nyx strolled off for a quick chat to Crowe and Prom watched him leave, then turned back to Gladio who was still pissed at being made fun of.
“You two are thick as thieves lately, gotta say didn’t see you guys being friends.”

“Nyx is cool, big guy, he really is just messin’ with ya,” Prom grinned, “you just make it so easy for him.”

“Yeah, I know, kinda can’t help it,” the shield admitted.

“Anyway, how’s Crowe?”

Gladio’s face lit up, just as it did whenever he thought about the lovely mage that who was becoming so important to him. He glanced over at where she stood chatting in an animated fashion to Nyx. “She’s awesome.” His voice was soft and a gentle smile crossed his features.

“Awww, is the big guy actually in lurveee?” Gladio responded with a cuff to his head, “hey watch the hair dude,” Prom screeched as he smoothed his hair back into its usual carefully styled spikes.

“Yeah, well don’t you start with your shit, getting’ enough from Nyx and Aranea.”

As he expected Prom was distracted by the mention of Aranea Highwind. “Oh you been talkin’ to her?”

“Yeah she’ll be here in a few days for the coronation and said she’s stayin’ for the wedding too, told me to send you a kiss.” Gladio laughed at the annoyed look that crossed Prom’s freckled face and noted the lack of blush. *Hmmm, maybe he’s over his crush* he thought. Prom had always been awkward around the former High Commander of the Niflehiem Army, as he was around anyone he found attractive, but then Aranea was kinda scary too.

“Have you seen Noct or Iggy today?” Prom asked suddenly.

Gladio shifted uncomfortably, “ahh, saw Iggy in the middle of a hissy fit yesterday, he was looking for Noct, I think they had a fight.”

“Shit,” breathed out the gunner, “Noct was not himself when I saw him at the range yesterday afternoon. Brooding, like he does, yanno.”

“Iggy’s in his office, has been all day as far as I know, haven’t seen Noct today, ‘cept when he was leaving his room early this mornin’.” Gladio thought about that for a minute, “ok somethin’s not right, Noct up early shoulda been the tip off.”

“Think we need to say something to them?” Prom glanced up at him nervously, the shield knew he worried about his friends when they were out of sorts.

“Umm, not yet, give them a bit longer, I’m sure it’ll be ok.”

Both men sat in silence for a moment, thinking about how stubborn both Noct and Iggy were. That and the fact that the couple never really argued. The two men were so in synch with each other that they didn’t even need words sometimes, the precision of their link strikes when in battle, the way they moved together and were in agreement over almost everything. If they were fighting over something…Gladio didn’t want to think about what sort of ripples it would cause.

“This could be bad, big guy.”
Ignis woke in a cold sweat.

A nightmare, the same nightmare as always. The sound of breaking glass and darkness falling around him. Altissia. Ardyn. Luna’s death. Noct being hurt. He sat up in bed, running his hands through his hair, then back down his face.

“Shit,” tucking his knees up, Ignis wrapped his arms around them and lent his head forward. Noctis was curled up on the far side of the bed. It just made him feel worse. The fight had been two days earlier and Ignis had still not been able to apologise. He was being stubborn, he could have tried harder to fix things, he was being completely stupid if he was honest with himself and he just didn’t know how to open his mouth and say he was sorry to the man who meant the world to him. He rolled his eyes at himself, it seemed the adage about couples taking on each other’s personalities was true. Being tongue-tied was something Noct had been known for, not being able to express how he felt, being stubborn – well, that was a trait of Ignis’ as well, but it seemed worse at the moment.

Ignis guessed that he might be reacting to all the change that was raining down around him. He thrived on order. A secretary and assistant had been thrust upon him, without his knowledge or input, Noct thought he needed them, so he got them. Then his lover decided he needed a decent office to work from, so the rooms across the hallway from Noct’s chambers had been converted into a large office for himself and an outer office for his secretary and assistant. Noct had then told him he had been renovating the throne room, Ignis still didn’t want to go in there, but he had to inspect the work for Noct, who was unaware of just how much Ignis hated that room. His little raven had enough to deal with and Ignis felt that explaining it would just bring up things that would be better left alone just now. The King was trying to change the room so he didn’t have to be reminded that he had died in there, that his father had wielded the blade.

And then, two days ago, he’d walked into his new office and his assistant had presented him with a sheaf of parchment, patents for nobility. The first was one for Prompto, to be officially a count. That had made him smile, Prom already hated being a sir, now he’d be a count. He looked over the next, Gladio was being moved up to count as well, and that point Ignis had had a bad feeling about what the last parchment was. Crowe and Nyx also had new status; Crowe was a duchess and Nyx a duke. Ignis rubbed his temples, the headache forming even before he read the last patent. He’d taken a deep breath and looked at it.

“Bloody Six!” Noct had made him Duke of Insomnia. DUKE of INSOMNIA! The shout had brought him the attention of his assistant who poked his head through the door. Ignis had raised his hand in a very clear don’t talk to me gesture at his assistant and stormed out through his offices, out the door and across the hallway. He wrenched the door open and shook his head at Gladio who was wide eyed and ready to move forward. Slamming the doors, he turned to search for Noct. The king wasn’t in the suite anywhere, so he stormed back out into the hallway and demanded to know where he was from Gladio.

Gladio’s eyes flicked towards the double doors of Regis’ suite. That halted Ignis’ full flight in search of Noct, he didn’t feel comfortable intruding, he needed to see Noct, but not in there. “Tell him I am looking for him, tell him I need to see him immediately!”

“Is everything ok?” Gladio ventured quietly.

“No, it bloody well isn’t,” he nearly shouted as he slammed his office door behind him.

He paced in front of his desk, back and forth, fuming. The temper that he had fought so hard his
whole life to control was rising to the surface and he found he couldn’t hold it back. It was too much, he had no desire to be anything but what he was. He hadn’t been consulted, it was his job to be the consultant, the advisor, the strategist, not a bloody duke and certainly not the Duke of Insomnia. It was a position second only to the king himself. He was going to have to deal with the sycophantic imbeciles who would curry his favour. The thought sickened him.

“Ignis?”

The king’s voice interrupted his pacing and he swung to fix blazing green eyes on Noct. His lover stepped back at the look on his face, he could feel the colour heating his face, his heart pounding uncomfortably in his chest. He couldn’t hold it in, “WHY? Why would you do this? You didn’t even ask me, you just went ahead and impetuously decided to do this without so much as a single word to me!” He snatched the patent from his desk and threw it at the king who was shrinking back at the venom in his voice. He saw Noctis pick up the patent and regard him with a confused look on his face as he resumed his pacing back and forth.

“I thought…”

“NO, you did not, you did not think, you just DID. I have no wish to be a duke, let alone the bloody Duke of Insomnia, I do not want the attention, I do not want idiots fawning over me to get to you, I have enough of that already.” He was shouting, his words spewing forth like a fountain of bile.

“Ignis…please.” Noct tried to plead with him, but Ignis wasn’t listening.

“What is the point of me, I am your advisor or am I not? Perhaps not, considering you did not ask me!” Ignis tore off his glasses and threw them onto the desk, rubbing his nose fretfully. “Shall I resign my post, Majesty? You certainly don’t seem to need me.”

“Ignis, stop it…I need you, you know that.”

“Oh do I? I think not,” was Ignis’ acerbic reply.

“Ignis.” Noct’s voice held a tone of warning, “I was trying to make things easier for you.”

The advisor thought that was absurd, “making things easier, are you joking?”

“No, I’m not.” When Ignis snorted indignantely, Noct threw his hands up, “there’s no talking to you when you are like this.” And with that Noct had spun on his heel and left, Ignis staring at the door as it shut quietly behind him.

He paced around the room before finally seating himself at his desk and cradling his face in his hands. How long he sat like that, he could not tell, but it was dark when he managed to move. He stalked to the door and was surprised to find that his office was empty of assistant and secretary. Making his way through the king’s suite, he noted the silence and when he entered the bedroom, he found Noct, curled up, far on his side of the large bed, his face hidden by the quilts piled up around him.

Ignis tugged at his hair, feeling like pulling it all out in frustration. Sitting on his side of the bed, he sighed deeply. Finally calm he could recall Noct’s words, why would he think he was making things easier? He tried thinking it through like his lover would and it dawned on him what exactly the King was trying to do. He hadn’t wanted the public to scorn Ignis for not being of high enough nobility to marry, he was concerned for what it would put Ignis through, the possible lack of support for one who was practically a commoner despite his position as Grand Chamberlain and Advisor to
Gods, I’m actually an idiot! Ignis scolded himself. He glanced over his shoulder at the hunched form of Noct, reluctant to wake him, he decided to apologise in the morning.

But that hadn’t happened, when he awoke Noctis was nowhere to be found in the suite and Gladio was missing from the doorway outside, a sure sign that the King was out somewhere, busy. Or avoiding him.

It turned out it was the latter, as he found after a long day in his office, he’d gone back to the suite to find Noct still missing and though he waited Noct didn’t return until Ignis was asleep. He had sleepily felt his lover climb into the bed, tugging at the quilts and turning on his side away from Ignis. When he reached out to touch Noct’s shoulder he felt him stiffen and pull away and Ignis’ heart broke.

The next morning was the same as the one before, alone in the bed again he awoke and groaned. Noctis was obviously hurt by his words and was hiding himself away, burying himself in work to keep himself from brooding, which if Ignis was any judge meant that he was still doing just that. And so it was that he found himself that night troubled by nightmares and unable to seek any comfort in the one person who could console him.

“You are a fool, Ignis Scientia, a total fool,” he muttered brokenly as his eyes burned with unshed tears. He lay back and stared at the ceiling. Closing his eyes again after a time he tossed around on the bed trying to fall back to sleep, only to find himself back in his nightmare.

He woke himself screaming, crying out, “NO, no, please NO,” the sound of breaking glass ringing in his ears he tried to shut the sound out by clutching at his ears. He felt arms wrap around him tightly, anchoring him in reality as he sobbed.

“I’m here, I’m here, it’s ok, my love.” Noct stroked his hair, pressing soft lips against his cheek. Ignis could only cry harder, he didn’t deserve this.

“I’m sorry, so sorry…I’m a fool…I’m sorry,” he repeated it over and over, rocking back and forth, his lover’s arms holding him close. He rubbed the heels of his hands over his eyes to brush away his tears. “I do not deserve you…I would understand if you wish to…call off the wed...” he got no further as Noct, pressed a finger to his lips, silencing the rest of what he was going to say.

“Don’t you dare finish that sentence, Ignis.”

All Ignis could do then was hiccup through his sobbing. Noct cradled him closer, kissing his hair, his cheek, finishing with a gentle press of lips on lips.

“I am sorry…” Ignis tried hard to find the words he needed to say. “I should have…I should have known what you were trying to do.”

“Ignis…don’t, you don’t need to,” Noct whispered in his ear. “You were right. I should have told you. But it still wouldn’t have stopped me wanting to protect you in any way I can. The people have accepted that I want to marry another man, but, the issue of nobility may be a step too far. We’ve had royalty marry other royal men, but…I…felt I couldn’t…let you go through more pain because of me.”

“I know, and I love you for that, but I reacted terribly.”

“Ignis, you are allowed to lose it every now and then, you know, you don’t have to be perfect for me, you know that, I love you as you are, everything about you. And you deserve the very best, you
deserve the light, the colours of this world…”

Ignis wrapped his arms around the love of his life, and they sat together in their bed, embracing, his head resting on Noct’s shoulder. “I love you.”

“Always,” Noct whispered against his lips.

“Always,” Ignis agreed.

**NOCTIS**

Noctis stood facing Ignis on the Citadel steps.

It felt like the whole population of Lucis was gathered below, watching. Noct's coronation a week before had been a far more private affair, conducted in the newly renovated throne room, a simple ceremony involving him pledging himself to his people, something he felt he had already done. A signing of elaborate parchment, a seal affixing the traditional black ribbon. And finally the delicate silver horns that made up the Crown of the Lucii. Each King's horns were slightly different, being made especially for each king. Noctis had requested that his be made to be similar to his father’s but reaching further around the back of his head so he felt it rested more comfortably, not that a crown should ever be comfortable, it was a reminder of his task, his pledge. The King always wore them to the right, twisting and held in place with a simple clip that was hidden under the locks of his raven hair.

Behind him on the steps were Prompto and Gladio, standing as his Groomsmen. Prompto held a white silk pillow in hands that he could see were a little shaky. On the pillow rested a simple black onyx band with a blue sapphire, filigree engraving setting it off. Gladio held a similar small pillow that held the silver horns that he would wind through Ignis’ ash brown locks, to be worn on the left.

Behind Ignis stood Crowe and Nyx, although only the mage was holding a pillow. A ring the same as the one Prompto held was nested on it, only the colour of the stone different, this being a green that matched the shade of green of Ignis' eyes. The rings and stones were chosen by them both especially. Noct would wear the green, Ignis the blue.

They had chosen their suits with similar themes in mind, Noct wore Insomnian black as was the custom, but he had paired it with a white ribbon, crossed below his throat and pinned with a green gem that matched the stone of the ring that he would wear. Ignis wore a simple elegant white suit with a black ribbon, a blue gem winking at his throat.

As was the tradition for Lucian weddings, there was no one officiating, those who were to be wed simply standing facing each other, in front of witnesses with their attendants behind. All that was really required was that they pledge themselves to each other. A royal wedding was in essence the same, the only difference was the location. Lucian Royalty always wed in public, before the populace, on the steps of either a palace, or since the building of the Citadel, on its steps so that those in attendance could watch the ceremony.

What was very different about this particular Royal wedding was that both men wanted it, both men loved each other, a thing almost unheard of in a royal match. Most were politically motivated, which wasn't to say that the parties involved didn't find a semblance of affection, but for the most part the matches had been simply political and a grudging respect was all that had really been between them.
Regis and his Queen had been a little different, the King had genuinely loved his Aulea, they had been close friends since childhood and he had been devastated when she had passed soon after giving birth to their only son. He had treated her personal rooms as a shrine of sorts not allowing anyone in there, keeping the key in a drawer in his suite, tidying her rooms himself. Noct himself had never entered the suite that belonged to his mother, only knowing her from paintings and the photographs that had adorned his father's suite and office. He'd always been reluctant to ask his father much about her, the sadness in his eyes when he spoke of his beloved wife too much for the young boy to bear and in the later years he'd taken to asking Claurus and a few others for little details about her.

Regis had tried desperately to be a good father to his son, had tried to give him the love he knew Noct needed and had made sure to give him as a normal a life as possible. This had been especially evident after he learned what his son's role in the Prophecy was to be. Noct had not known it at the time, but now he was grateful that his father had tried so hard to let him have happiness and joy.

What the result had been however was that Noct had never really fully felt that he was prepared to be a ruler. Poor Ignis had tried to instill that in him, but Noct had mostly been apathetic to the idea, knowing as he did that his rule would only take place after the death of his father.

But now he was indeed King, something he knew he was never truly meant to be. He had only needed to be king long enough to rid the world of the starscourge and defeat Ardyn. Pyrrhic though it had been, the Astrals had stepped in to make it a true victory.

So here he stood, known as the King of the Dawn, ready to pledge himself to Ignis. His head was swimming, he was drowning in the gravity of his life and it was only when his eyes met those of his lover, soon to be husband, that he exhaled slowly and felt himself relax. This was what he wanted, something that he had wanted for so long. It felt as if the wedding itself was a sort of formality, he'd felt bound to Ignis for so long. But now as he stood there, he felt the emotion of the wedding threatening to overwhelm him. His heart felt full.

Arenea Highwind ascended the steps and held forth a silver goblet and a single candle. When she stood before them, Noctis Lucis Caelum turned to Prompto and took hold of the ring he would slip onto Ignis' finger. Holding it gently in one hand he took hold of his lover's in the other. Staring directly into Ignis' eyes he made his pledge.

"With this hand,
I will lift your sorrows.
Your Cup will never be empty,
For I will be your wine.

With this candle,
I will light your way in darkness.

With this ring,
I will ask you to be mine."

The King of the Dawn smiled softly as he slipped the gleaming black band onto a long dexterous finger and stroked the back of his hand. Ignis kept hold of his hand in return and glanced at Crowe who held the pillow out to him so he could take the other ring from her and speaking the same words that Noct had said, he recited them softly as he placed the ring on Noctis' finger.
Speaking together they recited the next part of their vows in unison.

"On this day I give you my heart,
My promise that I will walk with you
Hand in hand wherever our journey leads us
Living, learning, loving
Together, forever."

Staring at each other still, happiness glowing on their faces, they both whispered, "Always."

It was their own personal pledge, regardless of anything else, it was their was of letting the other know that it was indeed for always and in all ways that they would be there for each other.

Noct reached for the horns gracing the pillow that his Shield held and gently wove them into the ash brown locks on the left side of Ignis' head. He pulled back a little and his eyes twinkling with joy, lifting his hand he stroked his partner's cheek and tilted his face to press his lips to those of Ignis, sealing their union, hardly hearing the roar that came up from the crowd below.

The next moments went by in a blur, all Noct could remember was holding his husbands hand, facing the crowd as flashes went off and people cheered. When they finally sat together at the main table in the banqueting hall, he was finally able to give Ignis a more thorough kiss and he felt Ignis hum deeply in response.

They’d sat and eaten, what was on the menu, Noct couldn’t even say, toasts were given, speeches and then it was announced that the couple would have their first dance. The strains of the song were struck up by the small band and the tall reddheaded woman who was to sing for them waited for them to make their way to the centre of the hall before she began to sing. Noct took Ignis in his arms and looked up into his eyes.

“When the night has come
And the land is dark
And the moon is the only light we’ll see
No I won’t be afraid, no I won’t be afraid
Just as long as you stand, stand by me
So darlin’, darlin’, stand by me, oh stand by me
Oh stand by me, stand by me
If the sky that we look upon
Should tumble and fall
Or the mountain should crumble to the sea
I won’t cry, I won’t cry, no I won’t shed a tear
Just as long as you stand, stand by me
And darlin’, darlin’, stand by me, oh stand by me
Oh stand now by me, stand by me, stand by me, yeah
And darlin’, darlin’, stand by me, oh stand by me
Oh, stand now by me, stand by me, stand by me, yeah
Whenever you’re in trouble won’t you stand by me, oh now stand by me
Oh, stand by me, stand by me
Oh, stand by me, stand by me.”

They had swayed together, eyes for no-one else, lost in the moment as the song swept over them.

“When can we leave?” Noct’s eyes were still locked with those of his husband, who was smiling at him indulgently.

“Soon, my love. Just a little longer, apparently Gladio and Prom have a surprise for us, they have arranged a night away for us, I don’t even know where.” Ignis chuckled, “they managed to do it without my knowledge and neither of them will reveal what they have planned.”

“Sneaky, and I’m a bit shocked you couldn’t get it out of them, Specs.”

“To be perfectly honest I did not try that hard,” Ignis winked at him and Noct grinned back. “I do not care where I am, as long as it is with you.” He felt Ignis’ warm palm cup his cheek and felt soft lips capture his.

“Ahem, if I might interrupt for a moment, Majesty, my lord Duke.” They heard a slightly raspy voice to the side and both turned from their kiss to find Cor, the Immortal, standing close by them.

“Cor, hello, glad you could make it. What’s up?” Noct questioned.

The Immortal graced them with one of his rare smiles, “wouldn’t have missed it, Regis would have been very proud to see this.” Laying a hand on each of their shoulder’s he turned them towards where Prompto and Gladio were standing by the doors to the banquet hall. “Those two were wondering if you are ready to depart? I think they have something up their sleeves.”

Ignis grinned, a little quirk of his lips as he looked down at Noct, “seems we may be about to discover what this mysterious surprise is. Knowing those two it could be anything.” Turning to the Immortal, he held his hand out in a lead-the-way gesture and they followed him across the room to where the shield and gunner were waiting, wide grins on both their faces.

“Oh, you guys look like you’re gonna burst, what the hell have you got planned?” Noct tried to be serious, but found he couldn’t. Prom was bouncing, like a puppy. Gladio had a sly look in his eyes.

“Can’t tell ya, gonna have ta show you first.” Gladio winked at them and led them out into the hall and then down to the private garage below the Citadel.

In the far corner of the garage, they halted in front of a large screen. Ignis looked over at him in confusion, what did they do? Noct shrugged and looked to his two friends, then gawked as he saw Cindy and Aranea arriving behind them.

“Oh, this is…what is this?” He waved his hand at the screen.
“It’s ok, dude, you’ll like it I swear.” Prompto clapped his hand on his back and nodded to Gladio, who moved over the screen.

“Right, guys, we wanted to do somethin’ that we knew you would love, somethin’ different.” Gladio paused with his hand on the screen ready to roll it out of the way. The shield was grinning from ear to ear. “Cindy and Aranea had a big hand in it, been keepin’ it secret so we could all surprise ya.” Prom was fishing in the pocket of his glaive’s coat, looking for something. Both Noct and Ignis heard the distinct tinkle of metal. They were both swivelling their heads between Gladio and Prom, hardly able to bear the suspense.

At a nod from Prompto, Gladio slid the screen back and watched both men’s faces intently.

Noct was wide eyed, he thought he was in shock. He looked at his husband who was in the same state. “HOW?” It was all he could say. Ignis was still speechless.

There before them sat the Regalia in all its former glory, polished chrome, gleaming metal, plush leather seats.

Noctis and Ignis slowly circled the car, both trailing fingers over the upholstery, the beauty of the paint job that obviously Cindy had done. Noct watched as Ignis lovingly caressed the steering wheel. They both looked at each other in blatant amazement.

“How?” Noct repeated as he longingly gazed at his father’s car, restored from the twisted, creaking hunk of metal that had been the last glimpse he’d had of it.

“Aranea found it for us, Cindy, once she got us to find the parts, fixed her up and Prom and I decided it would be the perfect wedding present.” Gladio sounded inordinately pleased with himself and Noct had to agree with him, he’d done the impossible.

“It…it looks perfect Gladio, Prompto.” Ignis’ words were choked out, he had loved the car, loved the way it felt under him as he’d driven it around Lucis. The thrum of power when he put his foot on the accelerator and the purr of it as he’d steered it down each and every road. Remembering Noct leaning forward to whisper in his ear and growling at him to get down off the back and sit in his seat behind him. Noct was remembering much the same thing. Ignis glanced at Noct and he caught a flash in his mind of his advisor peeking at him in the rear view mirror as he slept in the back, the vision was accompanied by an intense feeling of warmth from his husband. Noct grinned at him shyly and wrapped his arms around him.

“Think you can remember how to drive, Specs?”

Ignis snorted indignantly, “of course.” Ignis was a bit of a car fanatic and driving one of his great passions, he might be a little out of practice but he wouldn’t take long to reacquaint himself with the sensation of being behind the wheel again.

“Well, you will need these then,” Prompto held out his hand with two sets of keys. “One for you, Iggy and one for you, Noct.” He placed the keys in their hands and Noct looked down at them, each had a tag engraved with something. He brought it close to see that on his tag were the letters NLC CXIV. He grinned at Prompto and hugged his best friend fiercely, before he turned and engulfed Gladio in a similar hug.

“Come here, you two, you get hugs too,” he gestured to Cindy and Aranea who were both watching with undisguised amusement. Kissing their cheeks, he turned to Ignis who was staring down at the keys in his hand, turning them over and reading his own inscription on the tag.
Ignis had tears threatening and Noct moved over to read what was engraved on his husband’s key tag. ISLC, the initials of Ignis’ new name. Ignis Scientia Lucis Caelum. When Ignis turned the tag over for him, he saw that the back of the tag had two daggers crossed with a little raven in flight in front. Noct glanced back down to his own and found the same on the back of his tag.

“Thank you…I don’t know what to say…” Ignis lifted his face to look over at Gladio and Prompto, then Cindy and Aranea.

“It was a pleasure, Specs,” Cindy winked at him, pecking his cheek with a quick kiss, as Aranea grabbed him and gave him a very uncharacteristic bear hug. Noct chortled softly at the startled look on his face. The Chamberlain then swept Prompto and Gladio into a hug of his own, earning him a surprised squeak from the blond and a huff of appreciation from the shield.

“That’s not all guys, Coctura has a surprise waiting for you both at Galdin, so ya better get going.” Prompto was bristling with excitement. “The regalia is already packed and fuelled up, there’s even a case of Ebony in the back for ya, Iggy.”

Noct pulled his best friend in for another hug. “amazing, thank you.”

“Go on now, go have fun.” Prompto whispered in his ear, “you deserve this. We promise not to burn down the Citadel while you’re gone.”

Noct laughed and grabbed Ignis hand, tugging him back to the car. When Ignis slid behind the wheel, he moved around and sat in the passenger seat. He knew how much Ignis loved to drive and he wasn’t going to deny him this opportunity. Prompto pointed to the centre console and Noct opened it to find a pair of soft leather driving gloves. He shook his head at how thoughtful his friends had been and handed them to his husband.

“Perfect fit, Prom.” Ignis flexed his hands inside the gloves before he turned the key in the ignition and the Regalia roared to life.

“You’ve got a week, and yes, Iggy, we will call if anything important comes up.”

Ignis laughed softly beside him, Noct loved that sound.
had both loved that feeling.

“As long as you promise not to get up out of your seat,” Ignis chuckled.

Noct rested his hand on his thigh and squeezed gently, Ignis feeling a warmth spread through him, his lover’s touch always evoking the same response in him. As they passed through Longwythe and turned down the road to Galdin, Noct’s fingers began to stroke up and down his thigh leisurely.

“Noct, my love, I’ve not driven for over ten years, please do not distract me, I would prefer not to have an accident.”

“Hmmm, I guess I can wait a little longer,” Noct huffed, his hand not moving from Ignis’ thigh, but he did stop his exploring fingers, now just resting his hand there.

“Gods forbid I should make you wait, my love,” Ignis rumbled as he pressed the accelerator down a little further. He found he didn’t want to wait long either, but he did still want to make it in one piece. This gift of the Regalia was wonderful and so thoughtful. He found himself humming along with the songs on the stereo, the joy of being behind the wheel again, the lascivious gaze Noct was throwing his way, the stars above, the wind in their hair, it was a glorious feeling.

By the time they hit the turn off to Galdin Quay Ignis was singing along to the amusement of his husband beside him.

“I love it when you sing, you sound happy.”

“I am, my love, how could I not be.” Ignis voice had grown husky as he stole a glance at Noct beside him, he’d twisted in his seat to watch as Ignis sang. When he met those lovely blue eyes, his breath caught in his throat. As they drove under the last stone arch, Coctura was waiting and directed them to a temporary boarded drive that ran parallel to the beach, towards the haven at the end of the beach. The beach that end had been fenced off from behind the tackle shop up to the grassed area and then back along to the rock outcrop and as they drove under another stone archway they discovered why.

A generous white pavilion now stood upon the large flat stone that marked the haven. The two men looked at each other in consternation. It was tucked away between to outcrops with several large boulders hiding it from full view of the rest of the beach. Below the pavilion on the sand sat a camp kitchen, a dining table and chairs for two, folding chairs near the water for lounging in and behind the haven was a covered area for the Regalia. Ignis could make out another small pavilion set up on the grassy area behind the haven. Looking around as they exited the car, they noted a small tent near a tiny gate along the fence, with two guards standing at attention while another two sat outside the tent relaxing.

“Looks like we have this part of the beach all to ourselves.” Noct scratched his head, tapping his foot on the ground.

“Indeed, and I believe we may have Prom to thank for this one, I really can’t see Gladio setting up something so…romantic.” Ignis, peered around the set up and started to make his way to the pavilion when he noted Coctura was making her way up the beach to them. He halted and waited beside Noct as she arrived and bowed.

“Your Majesty, my Lord Duke, welcome to your home for the next week.”

“Ahhh, thank you Coctura, but please, it’s Noctis and Ignis, no titles while we’re here,” Noct grabbed his hand and gestured around at the pavilion, the little camp kitchen, and everything else,
“who do we have to thank for all this?”

“That would be mainly Prompto, he rang me a few weeks ago and he and Nyx have been setting it up for the last week. Gladio came down two days ago to set up the pavilion. Prompto has also organised a personal attendant who will bring any meals you require, if you wish to go on walks or use the boat, he will also set that up, you can of course fish or just relax, anything you like. If you would like to cater your own meals we can organise anything you need from the restaurant, just call and we will send it over.” Coctura paused and gestured to the guards down the beach. “Gladio organised your security detail, they have been instructed to keep your time private, and will keep their distance, but are close enough to assist you should you require it. Inside the pavilion you will find a laptop and everything is solar powered, so you have lighting and so on. Your attendant will take any laundry you have and will deliver it back to you. I think they have thought of anything you will need, but should you require anything else I will be a call away.” Coctura bowed, “I’ll leave you to explore and congratulations, I hope you enjoy your stay.”

“Many thanks, Coctura, I am sure it will be wonderful.” Ignis gripped Noct’s hand tightly and watched her depart. They made their way up to the pavilion, through a walkway lined with lamps high up on poles driven into the sand. Standing at the doorway was a young man who bowed low as they approached.

“Welcome, my name is Aeneas, I am your personal attendant while you are here. There is a bathroom set up outside. Your luggage will be with you shortly and I will leave you to enjoy your surroundings, I shall be staying in the caravan down the beach should you need me, my number is noted down next to the laptop inside.” Aeneas stood back and opened the canvas that made up the door to their pavilion.

“Wow, they really went all out.” Noct was spinning around looking at the large four poster bed with silk curtains pulled aside, the plush carpets on the floor of the pavilion, a chest of drawers sat in one corner with a large free standing mirror for dressing beside it, champagne and glasses on the bedside table, a small desk held the laptop and he flushed as he noted a camera on a tripod in another corner, “Yeah, definitely a Prompto thing, Ignis.”

Ignis chuckled as Noct gestured to the camera. He inclined his head as Aeneas bowed and left them alone. “Yes, that is most assuredly something Prompto would think of,” he gave Noct a little quirk of his lips, “I am sure we will find a use for it.”

Noting a box wrapped with a ribbon on the bed, Ignis went to investigate its contents. Pulling the ends of the ribbon, he gasped as it revealed its secrets.

“What is it?” Noct tried to look inside over his shoulder and inhaled sharply. “Ok, that’s definitely Prom. Gladio would never put together something like that.” His eyes went dark as Ignis reached in and pulled out the riding crop, leaving the silk scarves and…other things in the box for now.

Ignis flexed the crop in his hand and Noct hummed. “Remind me to thank that sweet chocobo,” Ignis grinned, ideas spinning through his head.

“I have a better idea,” Noct grabbed the camera off the tripod and held it up, “smile for me, baby, gonna send him a little photo.”

Ignis thought that would be a fabulous idea. He raised one eyebrow and stared right into the camera lens, bending the crop in both hands, head tilted a little to one side as he let his imagination run wild. This week alone with his husband was going to be very enjoyable indeed.

“Mmmm, that look is perfect,” Noct fired off a few photos and plugged it into the laptop,
downloading them and sending off an email to Prom’s phone, adding a quick thanks man to the bottom of the file.

While Noct was busy with the camera and laptop, Ignis took the chance to put the crop back in the box and move it to the chest of drawers, removing the horns from his hair, he felt hands slip his jacket off his shoulders. He felt lips pressed to his cheek, soft little nibbles along his jaw and Ignis lent into his husband’s gentle touches. He turned in Noct’s grasp and faced the man he loved, smiling tenderly. Gently he untangled Noct’s horns from his midnight hair and placed them beside his own. Combing his fingers through the raven locks he felt Noct moan a little at the caress. Slipping his driving gloves off, they landed beside the twin horns, now he could really touch his lover properly. He got lost in the feeling, tracing his fingers over Noct’s jawline, down his throat, unpinning the ribbon around his collar, next moving to ghost his fingers over the buttons of his shirt. He felt Noct begin to copy what he was doing. This felt just right, nice and unhurried, savouring each other in every way.

Tonight was all about them, a gentle, slow, relaxed time to just be together. The items in the box could wait for now.

**PROMPTO**

It was three days since the wedding and Prompto was laying back in bed.

He was trying to decide what it was exactly that he and Nyx had. He really enjoyed just being around the former glaive, but their time alone was something else, something just a little…he couldn’t explain it. There was certainly chemistry between them, something they were keeping to themselves for now. The thing was, Prompto didn’t think he wanted to keep it quiet anymore. He glanced down at the man who lay beside him, his blue eyes roving over the naked back, down to his ass.

He ran his hands through his sweaty hair, sighing deeply.

“Hmm, what’s on your mind sexy?” Nyx muttered, turning his head in his arms to stare back up at the blond beside him.

“Umm,” Prom glanced down, getting a little lost in Nyx’s light blue gaze. “I…ahhh…was just thinkin’”

“Mmmm, sounds serious, c’mom, spit it out, you know it’ll just bother you ‘til you say it.”

Prompto’s eyes widened, Nyx knew him better than he thought, maybe he should just say what he was thinking. “I was thinking about…this.” He waved his hand between them, “wondering just what it is, ya know.”

“Well…” Nyx did that sexy low growl that did things to Prom and that Nyx knew did things to him. He rolled his eyes. Sexy, arrogant bastard.

“No, not that, well, not exactly,” he huffed.

“Stop…don’t over think it. We are…we are good together, really good.” Prom shivered as Nyx trailed his fingers up his calf to his thigh. “Do you want to be a little more…public, like proper dates and stuff?”
“How do you do that?” Prompto grinned at Nyx, “you always seem to know what I’m thinkin’”

Nyx shrugged, “dunno, Prom, I just do. You didn’t answer me, though, do you?”

“Ahhh, yeah, I think…yeah I do.” He paused, “I don’t wanna sneak around so much anymore,” he watched for Nyx’s reaction. Slipping down the bed so they were face to face, running his hand up the Commander’s side gently. He saw his touch register in Nyx’s darkening eyes, felt him hum.

“Yeah, well, sneakin’ around has been fun, but…it’s getting’ a bit…hard to keep it quiet, hard to keep my hands off in public, ‘specially when all I wanna do is grab you and…”

“Mmm, yeah, know that feeling.” Prompto’s fingers began to explore a little further, over Nyx’s stomach, tracing his abs, up to his chest.

“You are makin’ conversation a bit difficult, gorgeous,” Nyx, grabbed his hand and kissed his palm. “And here I am tryin’ to ask if you’ll be my…boyfriend, totally exclusive, totally out in the open.”

“HA, who knew you could be so easily distracted, I wasn’t even trying.” Prompto gripped Nyx’s palm and pressed his face into it. “And that’d be a ‘yes’ by the way.”

“Mmmm, that’s good, wouldn’t want to think I was losing my touch.”

“Your touch is the last thing you need to worry about,” Prom laughed. “So…we’re a thing now, a couple, I mean?”

“Yeah, Prom, baby, we are…think we have been for a while.” Nyx leaned in and kissed Prompto’s nose.

Prompto giggled, “you’re gonna wreck your badass rep if you keep that shit up,” he sat up as his phone buzzed on the bedside table, “hang on.” He grabbed his phone and flicked at the screen. “Message from Noct and Iggy,” he informed him as he lay back down. “Ok, they sent a photo…woah.”

Nyx glanced at him in surprise, Prom could feel his freckled cheeks flushing.

“What?”

Prompto showed him the screen on his phone. Noct was lounging back in front of the bed, taking a selfie, the screen angled so that Prom could see his friend’s naked torso, Iggy laying on his stomach to the side of him, his bare, very red ass shamelessly displayed, one foot in the air with a silk scarf dangling around his ankle, the riding crop he’d left for them in Noct’s other hand. Iggy and Noct both had very glazed expressions. The text under the photo was short, thanks for the present. Nyx groaned beside him and Prom could totally understand the Commander’s feelings about seeing the photo.

The phone buzzed again, this time with an audio file and Prompto was almost hesitant to open it. But he did, he couldn’t really help himself. He grinned at Nyx and waited a second before clicking on the file to start it playing.

“Ohhhh, fuck” Ignis was moaning.

THWACK! The distinct sound of leather on skin.

“That…”
THWACK!

“Feels…” Ignis’ voice was getting a little strained and very hoarse.

THWACK!

“NGGHHHhhhh…”

THWACK!

“More, baby?” Noct’s voice sounded just as hoarse as Iggy’s.

“HARDER!”

Iggy sounded so insistent that Prompto glanced at Nyx, his eyes wide and he felt the other man growl in the back of his throat. The audio file stopped playing and the two men just stared at each other, both turned on.

Prompto had an idea, “hey you wanna get a little payback?”

Nyx’s eyes narrowed, “what are you plotting, blondie? I can practically see your mind churning.”

Prompto giggled and shuffled closer, pulling Nyx’s body flush with his, they tangled their legs together and he angled his phone up so they were both displayed clearly naked on the phones screen, he clicked a few photos as Nyx nibbled his neck.

Opening his messages Prom attached a photo with the text ‘getting inspired here’ and at a nod from Nyx he sent it off to his friends before he could change his mind.

“Hell of a way to go public, sexy,” Nyx mumbled into his ear as he licked the lobe. Prompto dropped his phone back onto the bed and reached for his lover.

“Hehe, yeah, but I can just picture the looks on their faces, besides, it’s just Noct and Iggy, not like they’re gonna be showing that to anyone.”

Prompto leaned in and licked his tongue over Nyx’s bottom lip, the former glaive opening his mouth to let him in. The room was quiet for a moment as they explored each other’s mouths, only broken by the sound of Prom’s phone ringing beside them. Nyx fumbled around beside Prom’s head and handed the phone to his lover as the gunner propped himself up on one elbow. A video call from Noct’s phone.

He giggled, “think we’re about to get an earful, baby.” He pressed the green button to answer and held the phone out so he could get them both on the screen. Nyx moved his mouth and tickled kisses up Prompto’s flushed neck. “Ahhh, hey guys,” he grinned into the phone at Noct and Iggy who were laughing back at the sight of them.

“Hey, yourself, ahhh hey Nyx!” Noct was trying to compose himself and Ignis was hanging over his shoulder, his arms dangling over Noct’s chest.

“Mmmm, hey.” Nyx was still attached to Prom’s neck, his voice muffled as he flicked his eyes up to the screen.

“Uhhhh, how long…have you two been…ahhh, together?”

“Mmmm, stop that,” Prompto chided Nyx, who grumbled back at him, “a little while,” he answered Noct’s question as he tried to concentrate while Nyx was refusing to give up his place on his neck.
“Seriously, dude,” he squeaked as Nyx’s hands drifted lower, down his stomach and over his inner thigh, “tryin’ to have a conversation here.”

He heard Ignis’ amused chuckle, “I think we are interrupting, my love.”

“Your fault,” was Nyx’s mumbling response. “Sending Prom photos like that.”

Noct laughed into the screen and Ignis stroked his chest, “yeah, well think you’re getting your own back now, Nyx.” Promoto wriggled as Nyx laughed softly against his neck.

“Would I be correct in assuming that means no more…ahem…” Ignis paused not knowing how to phrase his question without giving away their prior relationship.

Promoto picked up on what Ignis was referring to. “It’s ok, Iggy, he knows.”

Promoto was caught off guard when Nyx raised his head and answered Ignis’ question himself. “Who’s to say it can’t continue…with a bit of an addition, if ya want.” He winked at Prom who had his mouth hanging open, “if you’re gonna have your mouth open like that I have something you can do with it.” He wriggled his hips suggestively. “Not like we haven’t all seen each other naked already.”

“Very intriguing suggestion, Nyx,” Ignis drawled as Noct’s eyebrows almost snapped up into his hairline, but Promoto could see that both his friends were interested.

“I think we’ll let you get back to…yeah, we’ll talk when we get back.” Noct was squirming and Promoto realised that he couldn’t see what Iggy’s hands were doing, but he could guess from the blush spreading over his best friend’s face.

“Yep, we will, now go have fun, we got things sorted here.”

“We can see that…” Ignis sardonic reply had him giggling as he ended the call and tossed the phone out of reach.

“C’mere,” Nyx dragged Promoto down the bed and hard up against his twitching erection. The gun-slinger groaned, feeling himself responding quickly. Gripping Nyx’s braids he pulled him close for a messy, sloppy kiss, Nyx’s stubble scratching his cheeks. The groan that the Commander gave worked its way from his throat straight to Promoto’s cock. Nyx worked his hand down between their bodies and slid it over the hot, hard flesh, before twisting his fist around it and tugging.

“Oh SIX…more…” Promoto groaned thickly.

“I intend to…wanna hear more of those moans baby, where’s the lube gone?”

“Ahhh, on the floor over behind you, I think.” He shifted onto his back as Nyx searched for the bottle, delighting in the ass propped up beside him. He reached out his hand and stroked the cheeks, slipping his finger down the crack, teasing his finger around the tight ring of muscle and grinned slyly when Nyx flicked a lusty gaze over his shoulder. Prom licked his lips and watched Nyx’s eyes go dark.

“Mmmm, put that tongue to use.” He twitched his hips from side to side in open invitation. The gunner moaned as he shifted to lean into Nyx’s ass, pulling the cheeks apart, he flicked his tongue out, probing the hole that was waiting for him. Nyx’s growl encouraged him to push his tongue in deeper, fucking him with it. Intentions went out the window at that point.

He hummed into his boyfriend’s ass knowing Nyx could feel the vibration of it, knowing it would
drive him nuts and was rewarded with the bottle of lube thrown beside him. “Eager are we?” he said as he pulled back, teasing the wet hole with his finger, pushing it in slowly up to his knuckle.

“Stop teasin’ and fuck me already,” Nyx demanded.

Prompto used one hand to flick the cap open on the bottle and squeezed a generous amount of lube over his cock, slicking himself up, dribbling some more over Nyx’s ass. Lining himself up he teased the slippery hole with the head of his cock, pushing at the ring just a little, waiting until he felt his lover relax and let him in. It was going to be tight, without them bothering with much preparation, but neither of them could wait. Knowing just how much Nyx could take, he shoved his hips forward and pushed the head in, pausing to let his lover adjust. When Nyx nodded, he pushed further, not stopping until he was fully seated. “Oh shit,” he breathed out, it was so tight and hot and Prompto knew this was not going to last long. He tried to hold back, but Nyx wasn’t going to let him as he rolled his hips back and forward, fucking himself on Prom’s cock.

Giving up on slowing down, both men rocked back and forth, Nyx meeting every thrust from Prompto with a push back to meet him. The tempo increased faster and harder until both of them were grunting and groaning louder and breathing harshly. Nyx leaned down on one elbow, his other hand reaching for his own cock, sliding his hand up and down his length as Prompto lunged into him with a punishing pace.

“Close,” Prom warned him, knowing he really didn’t need to.

“Mmmhmm, me too.” Nyx’s voice was soft, hoarse, “Oh fuck, PROM” he shouted and the gunslinger felt him clench around him which tumbled him over the edge, he gripped the former glaives hips tightly and thrust deeply, spurting his come as far in as he could get.

“Nyx, NYX,” Prom growled collapsing on his lover’s sweaty back.

Crowe

Crowe tracked the progress across the room of her two friends, Nyx and Prompto, watching the sly little glances they were giving each other, the gunner’s cheeks pink. Her eyes trailed down to where their hands were twined together and she let out a satisfied chuckle. She knew it.

Gladio sat opposite her and frowned, “what?”

Crowe winked at him and pointed to where Nyx and Prompto had headed for their own table and laughed when the shield sputtered in shock. He’d looked around just in time to see Nyx plant a quick kiss to Prompto’s cheek before they sat down. He swivelled his head back around and gaped at Crowe, his amber eyes wide.

“Ha, you didn’t know,” she accused him in a sing-song voice, “Mr ‘I know everything that goes on’, had no idea,” she teased him delighted that she had got one over her boyfriend. Gladio grumbled annoyed at her tone and glared at her. “Don’t you glare at me, just coz you were too blind to see what was under your nose.”

“Whatever,” he rumbled, “how long have you known?”

“I didn’t know for sure, but I guessed, wondered how long it would take them to make it public,” she admitted and it soothed Gladio’s ruffled pride a little. “The little looks they’ve been giving each
other, almost always in each other’s company, touches they thought no-one saw, that and the way they would sneak to each other’s rooms of a night when they thought no-one was watching.” She giggled quietly, “playing cards wasn’t on their agenda.” Gladio huffed, remembering Prompto’s excuse for being late to an early meeting.

Gladio’s face brightened after a moment, “thinks this means he’ll stop giving me shit?”

Crowe laughed, she knew he was referring to Nyx’s campaign of torture, giving Gladio a hard time whenever he could. “Not likely, sweetheart, Nyx don’t give in that easy.” She watched his expression darken, “but, it does mean you have a way of fighting back now.” His amber eyes twinkled at that. She could see that this was going to be a long drawn out war of words between the two men, neither would ever give an inch of ground. As long as it remained good natured, she was happy enough to let Nyx have his fun, he wasn’t likely to get nasty about his teasing of the big shield, but now she felt that the playing field had been evened out a little. Both men could stand to be taken down a peg or two, their egos were both capable of withstanding a little blow now and then. Their complete confidence in themselves was something she liked about them both, although it made them insufferable at times. When Nyx was getting too big for his boots, she would simply ignore him for a bit, walking away in disgust. But Gladio, she had other ways of taming that behemoth. And he loved it.

Gladio might grumble about Crowe giving him a hard time, but she saw the gleam in his eyes and was very aware of just how much he loved it when the mage took the initiative to take him in hand and chastise him, no matter what form it took. And quickly he’d become adept at reading how far he could push the boundaries before she would bite back. Their caustic exchanges were fun.

“I should go over and give my congratulations.” Gladio’s grin gave away his intentions. He was going to start his campaign of ‘give Nyx shit’.

“Oh, no you don’t, keep that ass in your chair.” She stared at him pointedly, extending her finger in admonition. He narrowed his eyes at her, licked his lips and she just knew he was going to push it.

“And just what are ya gonna do if I don’t?”

Crowe rolled her eyes, “can’t help yourself can you?” She wagged her finger back and forth in his face, “naughty!” Gladio hissed breath into his lungs, perfect thought Crowe, she had him just where she wanted him. He squirmed in his chair and she decided to draw it out, toying with the stem of her glass of wine, she signalled for a refill. Gladio’s lips pursed into a thin line, announcing his displeasure at being made to wait just as clearly as if he’d said it out loud.

The waiter delivered her new glass and she downed it quickly, and quirked her brow at Gladio, who stood and waited for her to stand, grasping her hand. She raised herself slowly, smiling at him and nodding. The shield slipped his arm around her waist and guided her from the room, heading for her quarters. Once they were inside, she pushed him against the wall and claimed his mouth, feeling his groan.

“Go get ready.” She was pleased to note he was behaving himself as he strode to the bedroom, slipping his coat off as he went. Crowe retrieved a box from her closet and headed to the bathroom to change. A lovely black lace corset that pushed her breasts impossibly high and tempting, thigh high silky stockings and a pair of spike heel stilettos. She appraised her reflection quickly, it would be perfect for this evening. Withdrawing the thin rope from the box she lay it on the counter and searched for a blindfold. Once she had what she was looking for Crowe gripped the handle of the flogger that was tucked at the side of the box and drew the suede strands through her fingers. He’d like that, she knew from experience, and so would she. Tonight would be an exercise in touch deprivation also keeping him from seeing when she would drag the strands of the flogger over his
skin, teasing touches that drove him madder than if she had simply whipped him with it. He loved both, but the light touches would make him try to squirm, which he would not be able to do.

The muscled shield had discovered that he loved giving all his control over to Crowe, he loved what she would do to him and trusted her to never go too far. Crowe loved that she had found such a willing submissiveness in her lover, loved how he would beg her for more and they had both had a lot of fun exploring the depths of that trust.

Stalking her way to the bedroom, she found her lover, kneeling on the bed, head tilted down, hands on his knees, naked and aroused. Oh he looks so good like that, she sashayed to the bed, knowing he could see her feet and legs, seeing them clad in her skyscraper heels and stockings.

She trailed her fingers over one bicep, smiling softly as he shuddered under her light touch, she was right about being more gentle tonight, it was what they both needed. Placing the items from the box beside him on the bed she heard his sharp inhale and exhale before she tilted his face up with one finger under his chin. Placing a soft promising kiss to his full pout she grabbed the blindfold with her other hand. Depriving him of his sight, she pushed him gently back to lay his full length on the bed and dragged his hands above his head. Tying his hands together she used the left over rope to secure his bound hands to the hook that was hidden behind the pillows. She cocked her head to one side and surveyed her work, her lover. Leaning down she kissed him passionately, slipping her hands down over his chest, down chiselled abdominals, down to his hip. Light teasing touches that had him groaning under her. She glanced down to his groin and was pleased to see him twitch. With one finger she allowed herself a single touch, dragging her nail up his length.

A soft whimper escaped his mouth and she chuckled. So responsive. Shifting to her knees beside Gladio, Crowe reached for the flogger. She began by stroking it lightly up his arms, over his face, down his neck, before she worked her way down his chest, flicking it quickly over his nipples, watching him arch his back into it. His toes clenched as she dragged the strands of the flogger over his stomach, flicking at his hips, then a light flick to the cock that was drooling between. Leaning down she licked at the head, blowing soft breath over it and she glanced up to see Gladio biting his bottom lip, trying to hold back his groans at the sudden touch. She continued her way down his body, staying to her plan of light, lingering touch, tickling suede strands arousing every inch of his beautifully sculpted form. She loved his body, she loved his mind, she loved him.

Finally discarding the implement of torture, she rewarded his patience with her mouth and fingers, kissing over his legs, hips, abs, heaving chest, nibbling his neck at the junction of his shoulder, over his bristly jaw and finally to his open mouth. Slipping her tongue in to meet his, he arched up again as far as he could, chasing her mouth as she pulled away.

Standing by the edge of the bed she slipped her panties down over her thighs and kicked them away. Crowe then unhooked the rope from where it was secured, massaging Gladio’s arms, soothing the muscles. Bringing his hands down she unlooped the rope from his wrists and stroked the pale red ligature marks she found there, kissing them softly.

“So good sweetheart,” she whispered in his ear and nuzzled his cheek. “You can touch now.” He gasped and immediately she felt his large hands stroke her neck, over her shoulders, teasing fingers over the swell of her breasts. He bit his lip again as he slipped a finger into the top of the corset to swipe it over a sensitive nipple and Crowe mewled softly, earning a grin from her lover. She grasped hold of the blindfold tugging it off over his head and he blinked quickly, adjusting to the light. His heated amber eyes met hers as his hand skirted down over the corset, down to her hip, slipping across quickly, eager to feel how aroused she was. Slipping a finger into her heat, he brought it back out and raised it to his mouth, sucking it in to taste her.
Gladio grasped her hips and coaxed her to straddling his face, burying his face into her, swiping his
tongue over swollen lips, between to taste again and then he began to swirl his tongue over her clit,
massaging and flicking it, holding her still as he savoured her. Crowe felt the heat building in her
groin and rocked her hips forward into his mouth. She loved her lover’s oral fixation.

Gladio moved his hands to her ass, pulling her closer and she moaned thickly, she knew he wanted
to make her come before he entered her, slicking her up completely, ready for his girth. Crowe was
totally willing to comply with that. She felt his hands grip harder as he nibbled and sucked at her clit,
rolling it between his lips, just like she loved.

“Ohhh, yesss.” Crowe hissed out grasping at the wall, coming hard and Gladio held her close,
sustaining her orgasm. He didn’t hold her there for too long though, lifting her and shifting her down
his body so that she was poised above his cock. One hand reached down so he could guide himself
into her, slipping the head in and groaning over how hot she felt around him.

Crowe pushed her hips down to take him in fully and they both moaned as he was fully sheathed.
“Ride me, baby…” He pushed his hips up as she rolled down, finding a nice slow pace. They
clenched their hands together and Crowe leaned down over his chest so she could capture his
tongue, sucking it into her own mouth. Gladio let out a deep groan. He pulled their mouths apart,
“Gods, I love you.” Crowe released his hands and cupped his face, kissing him again, trying to
convey just how much she loved him in return. He slid his hands around her back and flicked each
clip open on the corset, pulling it off her so he could explore her heated skin, leaving her only
wearing the silky stocking and her shoes. She shivered as his fingers found her nipples and tweaked
them to hard peaks, grasping her breasts in his hands, he massaged and brought one to his hot mouth.

Suckling her nipple, they picked up their pace, faster and harder, chasing down their joint release.
It became erratic as they got closer, panting against each other’s mouths. Crowe could feel herself
clenching around his thickening cock, knowing they were reaching their peak. Gladio’s hands
shifted to her hips again and thrust up into her deeper and harder. When it came, they both shouted,
Crowe exploding around him as Gladio filled her.

She slumped down onto his sweat beaded chest, wrapping her fingers in his messy hair, chasing his
lips, mumbling her love for him. They stayed that way, his cock softening inside her, their combined
essence dribbling out to coat their cooling skin.

Finally calming down and coming down from her high, Crowe whispered in his ear, “I love you.”

NOCTIS

Noct had his fingers laced through Ignis’.

It was the fourth day of their time away and it was blissful being alone together, nothing to worry
them and they could do as they pleased, when they pleased. The freedom was amazing. His
husband was amazing.

They were lazing together by the shore line, snuggled on a blanket, watching the waves roll in,
enjoying the warmth of the sun beating down on their skin. They’d had a light picnic lunch, washed
down with a glass of champagne. Noct cracked his eyes open and his gaze roved over the lightly
tanned skin of his lover, taking in his beautiful form. Reaching out his hand he trailed his fingers
over a hip bone, caressing lightly. Ignis hummed in appreciation, twisting his head to the side to
stare straight into Noct’s eyes. They both rolled together, onto their sides, facing each other, and Noct felt the warmth of his husband’s chest against his own. It ignited something deep within his gut, making him mewl softly.

“Insatiable,” Ignis mumbled against his lips.

“If I’m insatiable, what’s that make you?” Noct countered playfully nipping at a full bottom lip.

“Debauched, lecherous, depraved…decadent, thoroughly indulged.” Noct felt his own lip tugged between sharp teeth.

“Mmmm, I’m feeling like a little indulgence right now…” he licked at Ignis’ lips and he smirked as his husband stroked his back. Then he pouted as that same hand snaked around and pushed him away.

“I would like to be able to walk by the end of the week, my love.”

“Take a potion,” he tried chasing Ignis’ lips with his own only to have them pulled away after a very chaste kiss.

“And that is a thoroughly inappropriate use of a potion,” a thin perfectly shaped eyebrow quirked up at him. “Perhaps a walk is in order, or a little jaunt on the boat.” He glanced out to the dock where his father’s boat waited bobbing slightly with the swell of the tide.

“Yeah, ok, taking the boat out sounds good, call Aeneas, I’m getting the fishing gear,” if he couldn’t indulge in Ignis he could at least partake of his second favourite past-time.

Ignis headed for the pavilion while he made his way to the Regalia where Prompto had stowed his old tackle box and favourite rod. Once he had them both he sat them down at the edge of the haven and headed in to grab a shirt and some shoes, finding his husband had had the same idea. Grabbing his old cap, he nestled it over his hair, tugging the front down to shade his eyes better.

“Coctura will have a hamper ready for us to take, in case we stay out late.”

“Sounds good, Speccy.” He was momentarily paralysed to the spot as he watched Ignis slip a t-shirt over his head, he watched the play of muscles under smooth skin as he tugged the shirt down over them, smoothing his hands through ashy hair, letting it flop over his forehead then flicking it to the side. Ignis looked just like he had when they started dating, he was gorgeous. Inhaling deeply, he composed himself and tried to pretend he wasn’t thinking about dragging him back to bed. Although he thought, the boat might be just as fun. While Ignis was preoccupied he tucked a potion and the bottle of lube into the pocket of his shorts. Better to be safe than sorry.

They strolled down the boardwalk hand in hand, and met Coctura at the boat. Aeneas loaded the hamper and tackle box for Noct as he went to start the motor. Ignis went to investigate what the chef had prepared for them as their attendant jumped back down to the dock. They would be heading out to anchor off Cape Caem, totally alone, something the Aeneas and their guards had grumbled about, but seeing that they were out on a boat and Noct knew what he was doing and they wouldn’t be going to shore until they returned it had been grudgingly accepted. They had radio for contact if necessary, GPS for positioning, Ignis had checked the forecast for any troubling weather so they were good to go.

When they anchored off Cape Caem, the sky was changing, pinks and purples spreading over the horizon bathing the landscape in muted tones.

Noct radioed back to Galdin and informed Aeneas that they had arrived and would be spending the
night then make their way back after noon the next day. When he turned back he spotted Ignis sprawled comfortably on the long seat on deck, relaxing back and enjoying the sunset. Noct smirked and grabbed his fishing gear, thinking he’d try to reel in some dinner for them, or if not at least indulge in his favourite pastime, or rather, his second favourite after making love to his husband.

Ignis watched him contentedly, coming to wrap his arms around him and rest his head on his shoulder, “anything biting?”

“Nothing much, just little nibbles,” he responded, not actually all that disappointed, he was just enjoying the act of fishing in such a peaceful place. “Think I’ll give up soon, just nice to be able do this after so long.”

“It is good to see you so relaxed,” Ignis murmured against his ear, “I’ll make up something for us to eat.”

“Sounds good, I’ll be there in a bit.” Noct let his thoughts wander a little as he reeled the lure in, musing about his ten years away, something had been niggling at the back of his brain, something that Talcott had said about what his friends had been doing while he was stuck in the Crystal. Putting the rod and tackle box away he descended the ladder down to the galley kitchen and found Ignis pottering about, placing plates down on the small table, retrieving cutlery and glasses, a meal of stacked toasted sandwiches, a favourite of Noct’s. “Looks great,” he gave Ignis a quick kiss to his cheek and sat down. Taking a bite, he hummed appreciatively and Ignis smiled knowing he’d pleased him. “can I ask you something?”

“Of course, what did you want to know, my love?”

“Ummm, while I was…in the crystal, I know you were…readjusting to having no sight and you taught yourself to fight again, cook again, do everything again, and I know Prompto and Gladio were out doing hunts and you were exploring the dungeons and tombs with Talcott, but why didn’t you go on hunts with the guys? You were more than capable from what I saw.”

Noct watched Ignis, he placed his sandwich on his plate and took a deep breath, adjusted his glasses and…was silent. The King could see that his husband was struggling to find the right words, so he went to speak again, reassure him he didn’t need to say anything if he didn’t want to if he was uncomfortable, but Ignis stopped him by shaking his head. So he waited.

“It’s difficult…” Ignis began, “after I was injured and everything went to total hell, things were…strained, I know you remember and I thought I had made my position clear when we were in Cartanica. However, Gladio and I, the relationship never quite recovered, he was never able to completely trust in my abilities. Prompto was fine, he was more than fine, he treated me just as he always had, he believed I would be able to function much as I had before. Gladio, though…while he never came out and said such, he didn’t trust in me.” Ignis sighed, “I have kept it to myself, I did not want to create more conflict, so I let it lie.”

Noct frowned, he had thought he had settled that problem. After Ignis had asserted that he would stay with them until the very end, and the other two men had made to leave, Noct had stopped them, he felt he needed to make his own position clear. Ignis had never wavered in his belief in his ability to take the throne, but Gladio…Gladio had doubted him, called him a coward. He thought back to standing in the murky water of the mine.

“Ignis, Prompto, bear witness for your King,” he called out in a clear voice and both men turned to him, concern on their faces. Gladio had halted, his back to him still.

“Noct?” Ignis said quietly. Noct put his hand on his lover’s shoulder and waited for a moment.
Prompto was squirming, confusion plain across his freckled face in the dim light of the mine.

“Gladiolus Amicitia, you are my sworn Shield, do you feel you have fulfilled that role properly to this point?”

Gladio had spun around and glared at him. “What?”

“Address me properly, Gladiolus.” Noct had adopted a harsh tone, and he heard Ignis gasp. “And answer the question…carefully.”

“I do…your Highness”

“I asked you to address me correctly, Amicitia.” Noct glared straight back, straightening his spine.

“…Your Majesty…” Gladio’s answer came hesitantly, the man before him had never insisted on the use of his titles before and certainly never as King, it made the big man nervous.

“You have seen fit to question my Chamberlain’s ability to perform his duty, is that correct?” Noct asked, voice radiating a deadly seriousness that had Gladio swallowing uncomfortably.

“Yes…Your Majesty, he’s not able to protect you, I can…” The answer was still arrogant, belligerent, typical of the Shield.

“In view of your opinion, how do you feel about a Shield that abandoned his King in the midst of an invading force searching for him? Would your father have ever abandoned his King; DID he ever abandon HIS KING?” Noct let his anger spew forth and watched as Gladio visibly crumbled. “Would Claurus approve of what YOU did?” Gladio hung his head at that, he knew his father would NEVER be more than a few steps from the side of his King. “It is my RIGHT to remove someone from my retinue if I wish to, it is NOT for you to decide that, it is NOT for you to question anyone else’s role. It is NOT your role to question ME? Do you hear me, Amicitia?”

“Y…yes, your Majesty.” Gladio kneeled in the water before Noct, head bowed.

“Do you wish to remain as my Shield?” Noctis looked down upon the man who knelt before him whose eyes had widened in shock, mouth twisted into a grimace of shame and guilt.

“I do, your Majesty.”

“In that case, you may retain your position, but know this, Gladiolus, I never want to hear you question the abilities of Ignis or anyone else for that matter. And this is NOT because of the relationship between him and I, I want to make that clear to you. Ignis has NEVER given me reason to distrust him, he is not only my Chamberlain, he is also invaluable as my strategist and we would not be standing here now had he not found a way to defeat that Malboro.” Noct’s voice was still cold, a tone of command ringing out through the mine, his pose regal.

“Yes, your Majesty.” Gladio stared down into the water around his knees, a picture of abject misery.

“You may stand…” Noct turned to the other two men and smiled thinly, “now let’s get out of this godsforsaken stinking hole and make the Empire pay for what they have done.” Prompto and Ignis nodded glad to hear their King’s voice return to its normal cadence, Gladio sighing in relief as he pulled himself to his feet. “Oh…and Gladio…” the Shield glanced at him, “you’ve got Malboro egg all through your hair.”

Noct shook his head, dispelling the memory, “How are things between you now?”
“...Amicable, as I said, I have never brought it up and in all honesty I do not wish to,” Ignis replied, “Gladio and I were...we never reached the same level of friendship that I did with you or Prom, we were thrown together, our roles ensured we needed to be around each other a great deal. With you...gone, I...Prom would visit, but Gladio would only ever visit when it was the both of them, never on his own.” Noct could tell that it hurt his husband, but he could also see that he was resigned to it, he'd accepted it and in his own way had moved on. “And now, well, we’re not around each other a great deal. After that first dawn, we went our separate ways again, we were only back in the city the day you came back to survey the damage and report back to Monica and the others.” Ignis paused and gave him a rueful smile, “I also went up to your rooms, I just wanted to be close to you again, and as it turned out, I got you back.”

“I'm sorry, Ignis.” Noct grasped his hand tightly, “I wish you hadn’t had to go through any of it.”

“No need for you to apologise, my love, it was not your fault.” Ignis gave him a small smile and picked up his sandwich again. “Losing my sight, losing you, it gave me a greater appreciation for everything. Having them both back, I am simply grateful.”

They ate in silence, Noct brooding a little and he was startled out of it when Ignis cupped his cheek, stroking his thumb over the smooth skin. Noct smiled ruefully, his lover always could see through him.

“Don’t worry about it, Noct, everything has been fine so far, and I am sure that Gladio is fine with it as it is. Besides I have you, I do not need anything else.” Ignis tried to reassure him, “he respects you as King, he’s good at what he does, he is oblivious to the finer details, such as emotional depth, but that is how he is, Crowe has been good for him, though.”

“Yeah, there might be hope for him yet.” Noct chuckled. He wiped his mouth and settled back in his chair. “Enough of this serious shit, let’s go to bed.”

Ignis quirked his lips, “one track mind.”

“You love it, can’t fool me.”

“Guilty as charged,” he reached out for Noct’s hand.

NYX

His accomplice was missing.

Nyx had sent him off to follow the young woman after another round of firearms training. He’d not reported back. Amara had been acting a little strangely the last few days, seeming to know she was being watched, disappearing for short periods of time that Cadmus hadn’t been able to account for. When he had reported to Nyx about these little jaunts the Commander had decided to let Noct and Ignis know. They had been concerned as well, particularly when he told them that she seemed to be making sure she wasn’t tailed. The consensus was that they needed to let Prompto know that his student was being cagey and it was left to Nyx to explain. The King had tried to reassure him that the gun-slinger would understand and that if he had an issue with what they had done, he was to contact Noct directly. It had been their idea in the first place and they didn’t want Nyx to bear the brunt of Prom’s ire. But now Cadmus was missing and he hadn’t been able to locate Amara either.

Nyx ran a hand through his hair and took a deep breath before heading to the firing range. Things
were great between him and Prom and he really hoped that wouldn’t change. As he walked down towards the door to the range he thought back to how things had developed, he cared about the blond, enjoyed every minute they spent together and found himself thinking about him when they were apart. He wanted to see him smile, loved to make him laugh and the cheeky look in his eyes when he had an idea that he knew Nyx would like just made his heart race. The thought of maybe losing that…he didn’t want to think about it, not at all.

Pushing the door open, he had to grin at the sight of his lover in his element. He was running through firing drills with his class, all of them attentive and engaged with the bubbling energy that Prompto brought to each session. With one notable exception. No Amara. The look that the blond shot him when he realised he was being watched was accompanied by a quick wink. Nyx smiled back and settled in to watch him at work.

He had to admire the way he captured the attention of his group, well, he had Nyx’s attention fully too. While he waited for the lesson to finish he sent off a message to the King telling him of Amara’s absence and the fact that Cadmus was missing. Noct replied that he was getting Gladio to set up a search detail for them both, he wanted answers. That done he settled back to watch his lover who was bouncing back and forth between the recruits, checking on their progress. It seemed he was pleased, clapping one on the back here and fist bumping another, receiving answering grins from each member as he praised progress. He really was a joy to watch.

It was when Prompto finished that his heart leapt in his throat. When the gunner frowned at his pained expression, he pulled him into the machinery room for some privacy, closing the door behind them. Prom didn’t even joke about getting him alone, he was acting nervous and fidgety that made Nyx feel worse.

“It’s about Amara, I…Noct spoke to me a few weeks ago about her, him and Ignis were worried, are worried. Some stuff about her doesn’t add up.” Nyx swallowed and glanced at Prompto, who was frowning, looking a little concerned.

“Ok, babe, just spit it out, what’s got you so…antsy, you’re worrying me.”

“They asked me to try and…watch her, get close and find out about her past, some of the stuff she told everyone when she applied…hasn’t added up. She said she was from Galahd, but she’s not.” He inhaled deeply, this next bit was what he was worried about the most, he desperately hoped Prom didn’t think that their relationship was a lie, or that he’d been using him to get close to Amara. Because that definitely wasn’t the case. “So I started to watch her movements, and I noticed that she was trying to get your attention…Noct and Ignis were worried about you, they didn’t want you with someone who would…hurt you, or use you. And I didn’t want that either, I don’t want anyone to hurt you, Prom.” He looked into Prompto’s almost purple eyes, he was still frowning, his expression closed off and Nyx’s gut clenched. “As the weeks went by, I…I let a friend of mine take over watching her, I was around you so much that it was hard for me to…keep track of her, so Cadmus has been following her.”

“Wait…so, you were around me…because you had to be?” Prom blurted.

“NO, no, I wasn’t, I…listen, I was here initially to watch her, but after a while I felt drawn to you and I really was enjoying just being around you…I started liking annoying Amara by interfering with her attempts to get your attention, I guess because I wanted it to be on me instead. And I wanted to protect you from her…Prom, you didn’t see what I did, I think she was asked to get close to you, she’d act one way when she saw you looking, but changed her tune when your back was turned and you are so…you, trusting, you want to see the good in everyone.” He paused waiting for a response, Prompto eyes were glued to the floor and he tried to take his hand, only to have the gunner pull
“…Right, so no-one trusted me with this. And it doesn’t matter that I’m not remotely interested in her, or was that your plan all along?” He looked up from the floor, eyes bright with unshed tears.

“No, baby, no, we all trusted you, but like I said we thought…we thought she’d hurt you.” Nyx took hold of a resisting Prompto and held him so he couldn’t turn away. “And what I feel about you is real, it’s not part of a plan, I could never fake this…please, I need you to know that.”

“I…maybe, I mean…I think I do…I just really wish I’d been told.” Prom bit his lip nervously, shifting his feet.

“Yeah, we all should have told you…but…that’s not all, Prom.” Seeing the look of terror on his lover’s face he rushed on, “Amara is missing, and so is Cadmus, he’d been trying to track her, she’s taken to vanishing and trying to lose anyone following her…I don’t think we are going to find Cadmus alive, but I’m not sure we’ve seen the last of her, I have a bad feelin’ about it all.”

“Right…ok, not gonna say I’m not pissed.” Prompto ran his hands through his hair and exhaled sharply, “what now?”

“Gladio is on search detail, he’ll take some of his new army guys to try and find Cadmus, maybe they’ll pick up the trail on Amara too, but I want to make sure you are safe…I don’t want anything to happen to you.” Nyx was breathing a little easier, Prom hadn’t outright pushed him away and was seemingly content to stay close, allowing Nyx to keep hold of him, he ran his hands up Prom’s arms to his shoulders. “I get it if you don’t want to…be around me…or don’t trust me, but if you give me the chance…”

“Wait…stop…I’m not sayin’ that, I’m just pissed at you, pissed at Noct and Iggy too. Is there anyone else I should be pissed at? Besides Amara.” And Prompto did look pissed off, a dangerous glint in his eyes. Nyx was reminded that this man was more than capable and cursed himself for not telling him sooner.

“No, was just the three of us, Gladio won’t know why he’s looking for Cadmus or Amara, other than the base details. I promise you that.” He felt Prompto nod as he leaned against him and relief flooded through his whole body. “And I promise you, I’ll never keep anything from you again, you can handle anything, I should have known that.”

They stood quietly and Nyx almost melted when he felt Prompto’s arms encircle is waist.

“Can we get outta here?”

“Sure,” he tilted his head to look at the blond, “anything you want.”

Prompto was about to answer him when the door flew open and an agitated Gladio stood in the doorway. “Ahhh…we have a problem, need you two down in the cells.”

Both men frowned, “ok, what’s going on?” Nyx asked, immediately tense, Gladio hadn’t even commented on them getting a room or any other snide comment.

“We found a Niff spy.”

“Fuck,” Prompto whispered.

“Have you told Noctis and Ingis?” Nyx asked the Shield. Gladio nodded. “Are they coming back?”
“Yeah, they were about to pack up and come home anyway, they’ll be here in a few hours.” Gladio scratched his head, “Noct is furious.”

All three men headed out and Nyx pulled the door shut behind them.

“Any sign of Cadmus? Or Amara?” Nyx hurried to catch up and Prom slipped his hand into his, twining their fingers together.

“Nope, not yet.” Gladio was brusque, intent on his current task, “still got the guys looking. Cor’s down in the cells with the Niff, not sure it’s a good idea to leave him alone with the guy for long. The Immortal was…lookin’ a bit deadly…more than normal.”

“How’d you find the spy?” the gun-slinger questioned.

“Aranea, contact of hers.” The former mercenary for the Niflheim Empire apparently still had people she could call on, maybe it would be a good start for their own spy network, Nyx pondered that thought as they almost ran to the cells ignoring the curious looks they got as they went. Skirting around several buildings, they headed for the prison, passing several guards on the way who nodded them past.

When they reached the room where the spy was being held, Gladio knocked sharply and the three were admitted when another guard opened the small screen in the door to check who was outside. They found the Immortal standing over the Niff, blade to the man’s throat, firing questions at him. The shield pulled Cor back and spoke to him in a low voice.

“We need to move him to another room if we are going to question him,” Gladio muttered fiercely.

It seemed Cor agreed, he tucked his blade away in his jacket and stormed out, calling for more guards to form a prisoner detail around the man.

Nyx decided he wanted to ask the Niff a few questions of his own.

The man turned out to be a cocky asshole, taunting them and then his eyes fell on Prompto.

“Well, well, if it isn’t our errant child, your father would be very disappointed to see you here.” Prompto stiffened beside him, glaring at the spy as he smirked back. Nyx stepped forward to block the spy’s line of sight to his lover, but Prom pushed him aside and leaned into the man’s face.

“I killed him, so do ya really think I give a shit what he would have thought, and he was NOT my father,” the gun-slinger spat at him. “He was the emperor’s puppet, Ardyn’s puppet, destroying children’s lives just so he could make those…THINGS.” Nyx grabbed his arm and pulled him back.

The spy laughed and then choked as Gladio’s hand circled his throat, “scum, that’s what you are.” The shield’s voice had become menacingly soft as he towered over the man. He pushed back and the Niff rocked in his seat, hands shackled there was little he could do.

Nyx stalked forward, ice blue eyes locked on the spy as he circled him, “what is Amara’s purpose?” He leaned in and spoke quietly in the man’s ear, “she failed, you know, we spotted her almost immediately.”

The spy’s gaze flicked to his and Nyx was pleased to see a tiny bead of sweat roll down his face.

“She…”

The spy never spoke another word, there was the softest whisper of sound, like someone shifting
and a muffled cough, the man’s head snapped back, bullet hole pouring blood down his face. Nyx moved on instinct, crouching, scanning the room, the other’s following suit, weapons at the ready. Nyx’s gaze caught the barest hint of gleaming metal protruding from an air vent in the corner of the ceiling. He sprang up and pulled Prompto in front of him as he spun around, his back to the vent as he heard another cough, the sound of the silencer on the pistol. His back burned, his stomach, then his shoulder, his leg as he went down with Prompto under him, cracking his head on the concrete, screaming in his ear. Gladio was shouting and then another cough of the silencer and the Immortal crashed down beside them. Nyx’s vision blurred, his hearing going fuzzy, he hurt all over, but he could hear his lover taking in pained gasps. Nyx tried to lift his head but he couldn’t make his body move.

He tried to answer Prompto who was screaming his name, but all he could manage was a choked “Prom,” before everything went black around him and he knew no more.

GLADIO

Gladio rushed to where Prompto and Nyx had fallen, blood pooling below them both.

“Get medics here NOW,” he ordered the guards who rushed in. He stripped off his shirt and ripped it in two, pressing one piece to Nyx’s back where it seemed most of the blood was coming from, pulling out a potion from his pocket he smashed it over the former Glaive, but blood was still flowing out from under him and Prompto. He shuffled and tried to move Nyx off the top of the gunner, rolling him as gently as he could. That was when he knew things were even worse than he thought. Nyx had stopped most of the bullets hitting Prompto, but one had gone straight through his back and into the blonde. Cor crawled to his side and stripped his own shirt off, handing it to Gladio so he could tend to Prompto’s wound low in his side. Cor used his pants leg to create a tourniquet around his own thigh before he held the shirt fragment to Prompto so Gladio could tend to the unconscious Nyx. Prom was moaning quietly, trying to reach his hand out to Nyx, choked sobs breaking through the panting of Gladio and Cor.

More guards rushed in with the medics and he sent them off to search for the assailant, as the medics started to work on the two wounded men, Cor waving them off. He would be fine for now, the other two needed their help more than he did. Gladio sat back and felt like screaming in frustration.

“Call the King, we need him where we can protect him.” Cor’s raspy voice broke through to the Shield and he immediately pulled out his phone and dialled.

“Yeah,” Noct answered.

“Yeah,” Noct answered.

“You need to get back NOW,” Gladio growled into the phone. “Get the guards with you and leave, we will organise for the road to be clear, Prompto, Nyx and Cor have been shot, the spy is dead and we have someone on the loose.” He heard Noct gasp.

“Are they ok, is Prom ok?”

“Prom’s been shot in his side. Nyx is more serious, he shielded Prom from the worst, he’s been hit in the back, it went through him into Prompto, another in the shoulder and leg, Cor’s been shot in the leg, but he’s sorta ok, the medics are with the other two now, we’ll be at the hospital I’m guessing.”
“We will be there as soon as we can, Gladio,” Ignis shouted.

“It’ll take you at least three hours, I’ll have the road to the hospital blocked off so you can get there.” Gladio knew he would never be able to persuade them to head for the Citadel, so he didn’t even try.

“Keep us updated, the car’s packed already, we were about to leave so we’ll be on the road in less than five minutes.” Noct’s voice was strained and he could hear Ignis issuing orders in the background.

Gladio ended the call and looked up as Monica entered with Dustin hot on her heels, “turn on the GPS on the Regalia, I want to track the King’s progress, we need to get the roads clear for them, they’ll go straight to the hospital...” he held his hand up as Monica made to protest, “he’ll never sit around at the Citadel while Prom’s in surgery, they will want to be there.”

“I’ll organise extra guards for them there and an escort to the hospital once they hit the city limits,” Monica said over her shoulder as she left taking Dustin with her.

Gladio looked down at Nyx and swore, pulling his phone out again he dialled Crowe.

“Hey,” she said answering within a few seconds.

Gladio took a deep breath, “I need you to stay calm for me...there’s been a...look Nyx has been shot, Prompto and Cor too, but Nyx is pretty serious, I have medics here, he’s being taken care of, we’ll be heading to the hospital, I’ll meet you there...but be careful...the person who did it has taken off, they were in the air vent.”

“SHIT,” her voice was shaky.

“Noct and Ignis are on their way, Iggy might be able to help when he gets here.”

“I’m heading out now, I’ll see you at the hospital soon, you be careful too, please.”

“I will baby; I love you”

“I love you too.”

He tucked his phone back in his pocket and helped the medics lift Nyx onto a stretcher, before he turned back to Prompto. The medics had stemmed the flow of blood from his side but informed him they would need to extract the bullet. He’d guessed as much but hearing the patient, calm voices of those attending his friends help soothe him a little. The medics lifted Prompto onto another stretcher and carefully they all made their way out, Cor limping behind him. Gladio turned to the two guards still on the door and told them to keep everyone out. There was nothing to be done for the spy right now, it could wait for later.

They made it to the hospital in record time, Monica had already cleared the way for them. He enfolded Crowe in his arms when he found her waiting outside the emergency department. She was shaking and Gladio tried to calm her, stroking her back. It was then that he noticed the dried blood all over his hands, he pulled back and he was covered in it. Knowing whose blood it was made him feel light headed and nauseous.

“I need to...clean up,” he pulled back from Crowe and tried to wipe his hands off on his pants, but it made no difference.

“Here, this way,” she grabbed his arm and took him down the hall to a restroom. She moistened
some paper towel and wiped his face as he ran cold water over his hands, watching the bloodied mess run down the drain.

His phone buzzed as he dried off his hands, Monica was calling him.

“Gladio, they’ve just passed Longwythe, Hammerhead is clear and the Bridge is blocked off, the city limits will be clear for them soon, they’re moving pretty quick from what I can tell.”

“Thanks, keep me posted.”

“Of course.”

He checked the time stamp on his call to Noctis and had to check the current time twice. They’d made it to Longwythe in half the time it normally took. Bringing up the GPS on the Regalia he grumbled at the top speed of 150 miles an hour. He watched the small red dot on his screen as it sped along the line marking the road to Hammerhead. “Gods, I hope that’s Iggy behind the wheel,” he groaned as he showed Crowe the screen. His panic skyrocket as he thought about that, Noctis could drive, though he wasn’t an expert, but Iggy hadn’t driven in over ten years. He raked his fingers through his hair. “I think I better call them…”

“In a minute ok, come out and sit down,” Crowe coaxed him out of the restroom and into the hall. They sat down heavily and she grasped his hand. They sat in silence for a moment and Gladio tried to relax, but it was impossible.

The red spot was fast approaching Hammerhead and he dialled the King’s phone.

It was picked up straight away, “You’re on speaker, we’re about to go through Hammerhead,” Noct’s voice came through the phone.

“I know, I can see you, who is driving?” He held the phone out so he could track the dot as he spoke.

“I am, Gladio,” came Ignis’ strained voice.

“Fuck, be careful, DON’T CRASH.” He watched the dot swing around and head down the road to the old checkpoint, it didn’t seem to slow down as he heard the squeal of the Regalia’s tyres. “How’re you getting ’round the corners so fast?” He knew it was a bit of a stupid question, but his brain couldn’t function properly.

“Handbrake,” was Ignis’ succinct reply. “Any news on Prompto and Nyx?”

“Not yet, they are both in surgery,” he answered a bit perplexed as to what Ignis meant about the handbrake, he wasn’t a very good driver, he didn’t understand the finer points of handling a vehicle, but he noticed that Crowe had nodded at the Duke’s response. He’d get her to explain to him what it meant…later.

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“You hear that?” he asked Noctis and Ignis.

“Yes, we will be there in about an hour.” The call ended and Gladio turned back to the doctor.

“Is Nyx going to be ok?” Crowe softly questioned the doctor.

“There is a lot of damage, but we are optimistic that we can fix it, I’ll be able to tell you more later, right now I should get in there and assist.”

“Thanks, doc, when can we see Prompto?” Gladio just wanted to make sure for himself that the blond was ok.

“We’ll move him into a private room once he’s out of recovery, that will happen once we are able to rouse him, it can take a little while.”

“Can they be in the same room, please? They would want that,” Crowe was struggling to hold it together.

“Mr Ulric will need a lot more care…” the doctor paused as he saw Crowe’s pleading look, “but I will try to arrange it.”

“Thank you,” she whispered and they both watched the doctor as he strode purposefully back down the hallway to the surgery suite. They sat quietly, watching the clock on the wall, second hand ticking, ten minutes, twenty, thirty.

Gladio started pacing the hall, he couldn’t sit still anymore.

His phone buzzed again, Monica calling him.

“It was Amara, we cornered her on top of the prison complex. She jumped off, broke her neck,” she informed him.

“Shit, did she say anything?” He needed answers.

“Nothing, sir, I think she jumped to avoid being interrogated. I also think she killed the Niflheim spy to stop him saying anything.” She paused for a moment, “the King and Duke are in the city and will be arriving shortly.”

“Right, I’ll head down to meet them, thanks Monica.” He turned to Crowe, “Noctis and Ignis are almost here, I’m gonna go down and wait for them, will you be ok here for a minute?”

“I’ll be fine,” she waved him off and resumed her clock watching. Gladio looked her over before he turned and strode down the hall and out to the main entrance. He noted the guards waiting for the Regalia to pull up and stood at parade rest. He only had to stand there for five minutes when he heard the squeal of tyres and looked up the street to see the car speeding towards them, another car behind, one of the royal fleet vehicles tailing the King. He stepped back in surprise when Ignis wrenched on the wheel sliding the car up to the curb and both men jumped out, running to the door.

“What’s the latest news?” Noct demanded as he brushed past.

“Prompto is still in recovery, Nyx in surgery, Cor has been patched up. Monica called a few minutes ago, it was Amara, she jumped off the top of the Prison building and broke her neck.”

He noted the look that Ignis threw at Noctis. It looked to Gladio as if they had suspected as much.

As they made their way up the hall to where Crowe waited, Prompto was wheeled out and into a
room further down, across from the nurse’s station. Gladio twisted around and motioned for two guards to take up position either side of the door. As he rushed into the room, the King and Duke were waiting against the wall of the room Prompto was being settled in. The gunner was pale and his eyes were closed. The nurses fussed around his bed for a few minutes. When they left, Noct and Iggy immediately made their way to his side, the King taking Prompto’s hand in his, careful of the drip that fed pain relief into the blond’s veins.

Gladio watched them, arms crossed as he leaned against the wall. Noct turned his head, focusing his pained expression on Ignis, who nodded.

“Gladio, can you get one of the doctors in here please?” Ignis’ voice was quiet. “And make sure to close the door when you come back.”

Gladio went off on his errand, grabbing the doctor he’d seen earlier and explained that he was wanted in Prompto’s room. When they got to the room, he shut the door behind him and took up his position by the wall again.

Ignis guided the doctor to a corner of the room and commenced a hushed conversation. The doctor looked rattled and then nodded to whatever the duke was telling him. Noct moved away from the bed and allowed Ignis to take his place, the doctor stood behind him, watching the monitors that Prompto was hooked up to. Ignis bent his head and placed his hands over the site of the gunner’s wound, his eyes started to glow magenta and he frowned in concentration. The doctor murmured to Ignis softly and the Duke nodded to whatever he said. A soft golden glow surrounded Ignis and Prompto, the gunner’s eyes moving under his lids.

Ignis rocked back and the glow dissipated quickly, his eyes returning to their normal green. Noct crossed to his husband’s side, running a hand up his back. Ignis smiled a little weakly and the doctor inclined his head, the two other men moving out of his way as he check over the wound in Prompto’s side. He checked his vitals on the monitor and shot Ignis a shocked look.

“The wound is healing; his vitals are stronger.”

“Can you take me to the surgical suite where they are working on Nyx Ulric? I think I can assist there too.” Ignis glanced down at Noct, who looked worried, “I’m ok, I’ll just help them.”

“Ok, but don’t overdo it, please,” Noct pleaded, squeezing his hand.

“I won’t,” he bestowed a swift kiss to the King’s cheek and he followed the doctor out of the room.

Noctis turned back and resumed his place by the gunner’s side, gently pushing blond hair back and stroking his hand. “You’re gonna be ok, Prom,” he whispered, “Ignis is going to help them with Nyx, you know he will do what he can.”

It seemed that Prompto was at least semi-conscious as Gladio could see a slight movement of the gunner’s lips, a ghost of a smile. The Shield breathed a sigh of relief, seeing some reaction from the normally exuberant blond, it was unnerving having him be so still.

“I’ll be outside, with Crowe,” Gladio said quietly to Noctis.

The King just nodded and turned his focus back to his best friend laying prone on the hospital bed. “Thanks for getting him here so quick.”

“Just wish it never happened,” he replied.

“So do I.” Noct took a deep breath as Gladio reached the door, “this shit has to stop, Gladio.”
Gladio could only agree.

NYX

Nyx was drowning in blackness, floating through it like it was treacle. He couldn’t move, he couldn’t see anything, hear anything. His brain felt fuzzy, he couldn’t get his thoughts to stay focused, didn’t know what had happened to him.

Most of all, he felt panic. All the worse because he couldn’t say why he felt that way. He probed that feeling, trying to grasp it and explore it, but nothing would stay, it was like his thoughts were just out of reach, flitting close every so often to tease him, only to disperse when he tried to hold on to them.

He’d lost all sense of time, of space around him when he started to feel a warmth spread through his body and a muffled sound like someone trying to speak to him, but he couldn’t understand what they were telling him.

He sank back into the complete blackness, losing all sensation of self.

When he found himself back in the limbo place that he’d been occupying for gods knew how long, he could feel something was different. He could feel his body, not able to move it, but just sense that he was laying on something. And there was niggling pain, a throbbing in his head, his back, stomach. A feeling like an intense itch in his thigh and shoulder. He found himself thinking that at least he could now feel that and then it struck him that he could think more clearly despite the insistent throb that seemed to work in conjunction with the beat of his heart. He tried to open his eyes, but they felt like they were glued shut.

Trying to will his limbs to move he found it was like he was paralysed. Was he paralysed, is that what had happened, was he locked inside the prison of his own body?

He was scared.

A monotonous beep, beep, beep broke through and he could hear other muffled sounds around him, he struggled against the fuzziness he felt to try and bring things into focus, the beeping noise getting faster. He felt a soft brush against his arm and tried desperately to reach back for it, to latch on and keep it close.

A familiar voice seemed to be whispering in his ear, calling his name urgently. Prom, it was Prompto talking to him.

Nyx struggled all the harder, he needed to get to Prompto.

One of his eyes was prised open and a bright light shone, blinding him, he tried to blink it away and couldn’t. So frustrating. The light vanished and he heard muffled voices, several voices, but what he could hear most was the worried tone of his lover.

He sank back into the blackness.

The next time he came back to himself, he felt he was waking up in degrees. The pain he was feeling was still a dull throbbing through his body, but he could move his fingers, a vast improvement he thought. He tried to move his toes and could feel the rasp of something heavy
across them move slightly. Ahhh, not paralysed then. At least not fully. His eyes still wouldn’t open and he couldn’t speak to let anyone know he could hear them.

There were several people in the room, he could distinguish the sound of different voices, though still not clear. Only some words were reaching through the cotton wool of his ears.

“…swelling…brain…stimulus…” This voice was measured and calm. He couldn’t identify the speaker.

“…ok?” A query, a female voice, Crowe.

“…coma…back and stomach…improved…” The same calm voice that spoke before, a doctor perhaps, or nurse, maybe.

“…wake?” This voice was the one he was hoping to hear, Prompto. But he sounded further away than the other two. He wanted to reach out and find him.

“Soon…reacting…much faster…assistance invaluable…” The doctor again.

The blackness took him again.

This time when he came back, he could almost open his eyes, he was able to twitch his limbs, but stopped when pain shot through him, not such a good idea. He could feel a warm hand clasping his.

“Nyx…,” a hand stroked his cheek and he wished so hard that he could turn into it, but his traitorous body just wouldn’t comply to his demands of it. He knew it was his lover, so close, sounding so worried that his heart leapt, the beeping noise stuttering and increasing in pace. His brain supplied the answer to the riddle of the beep, a heart monitor, so definitely hospital.

“Keep talking to him Prompto, I think he can hear you.” Crowe’s voice came from the other side and his other hand was grasped.

He could, he could hear them, he just couldn’t reply. He tried to squeeze their fingers in his, focusing all his might on doing just that to reassure them both. Nothing. Damn it, he attempted time and time again. And failed.

“I’m here Nyx,” Prompto spoke close to his ear, he could feel the warmth of breath on his cheek. “Can you hear me, baby, I’m here.”

Nyx struggled through the fogginess, focussing all he had on squeezing the hand in his and finally his fingers twitched, the lightest of pressure. He heard Prompto gasp and felt those clever fingers grip his tightly. And fell back into the blackness again.

His next waking moment came with silence, but the pressure of Prompto’s calloused fingers in his were a comforting presence. His eyes flickered, and finally, finally he could open them. Everything was blurry, but he didn’t want to close them again yet, in case he slipped back under. Gradually he could make out a clock on the wall across from where he lay and he watched the time slip past as he came to himself more and more. He slowly turned his head and smiled as he saw a tousled blond mop of hair resting on the bed near his arm. He tried to move his other arm to reach out and stroke his lover’s hair, but winced at the pain that pulled at his shoulder.

“…Prom…” he rasped out, hardly even a whisper. The gunner shifted in his sleep and Nyx noticed that he had a hospital tag around his wrist, obscuring the vines tattooed there. He looked behind the blond to see an empty bed, the covers pulled back. Oh, Prom, he realised that his lover had been hurt and suddenly it all came back to him. Why he was here and the death of the Niff spy, trying to
protect Prompto, the feeling of being shot, the screaming and Prom calling his name.

As much as he wanted to let Prompto rest, he needed to make sure he was alright more, “Prom.” His voice was stronger this time and the blond shifted, murmuring softly.

“Hmmm,” was his sleepy grumble.

“Prom,” Nyx said again, squeezing the hand that held his.

Sleepy blue-purple eyes blinked open as the gunner turned his head and owlishly looked up at Nyx. He smiled softly when those eyes opened wide and Prompto gasped loudly.

He noticed that the blond moved carefully, putting his hand to his side as he shifted so that he could lean in and plant a kiss on his cheek.

“You’re hurt, are you ok?” Nyx, swallowed, his throat dry.

“Thanks to you, baby,” Prom chuckled, “trust you to worry about me being hurt when you’ve been out for days.” Prompto reached up to the bedside table and found a small glass of water, pressing it to his lips, “just sip.”

The water soothed his throat and made speaking easier. “How long?”

“We were brought in three days ago, hang on, I should let the doc know you’re awake.” Prom leaned back and pressed a small button near his bedhead. When moved back, Nyx motioned him closer and using the hand he could move, slipped his fingers into Prom’s hair and pulled him close, pressing his lips to his lover’s. Prom hummed softly.

“Good to see you awake, Mr Ulric,” the same voice he remembered from before broke him and Prom apart, this time a tinge of amusement coming through. The doctor strode into the room and checked his chart then the monitors that were hooked up to him, flashing a light in his eyes and listening to his chest. He hummed softly as he made notes on the chart.

“How’s he doing, doc?” Prom piped up, following every move the doctor made, gripping Nyx’s hand.

“He’s coming along nicely, Mr Argentum.”

Prompto rolled his eyes, “Prompto, please, why do ya keep insisting on calling me Mr Argentum?”

“Habit.” The doctor grinned. He looked down at Nyx. “Your boyfriend is very good medicine I see, and keeps the nursing staff on their toes.”

Nyx tried to laugh and ended up wincing as his stomach and back contracted.

“Yeah, no laughing for you,” Prom scolded, a ridiculous frown plastered over his freckled face.

“I agree, you’ve come a long way quickly, but your wounds were rather nasty and you had swelling on the brain, we want you to stay still and just heal. In addition to the concern we had over your head, you had a bullet wound that went straight through from your back and out your stomach, as well as a bullet lodged in your shoulder and another in your leg. With the help of the Duke we were able to repair all the damage, but you still have a lot of healing to do before you’re back to normal.”

“Ignis helped you?” Nyx frowned and glanced at Prom.
“It’s ok, doctor-patient confidentiality and all that, they won’t say anything.”

“That’s correct, Lord Scientia Lucis Caelum made it very clear that it was of utmost importance that no-one be informed of his…assistance.” The doctor smiled ruefully, “The King also made that rather clear too, something about a royal decree.”

“HA, yeah, baby, Noct put his scary face on.” Prom giggled and Nyx smiled, feeling weary all of a sudden despite only just waking, he stifled a yawn, but the doctor saw it and quirked an eyebrow up.

“Time for some rest and Mr Argentum, back to bed for you too. I have no wish to stitch you back up again.”

“Ugh, alright, in a minute,” Prom tried to be serious, “I promise.”

“Just see that you do, or I’ll send in Nurse Targo.”

“Ahhh, please don’t, she’s scary,” the gunner replied in mock fear.

The doctor chuckled as he left and Prom leaned in to give Nyx another kiss, cupping is cheek. Nyx sleepily responded giving a quiet mewl, “Prom, back to bed before I get any ideas I can’t follow through.”

Prompto grinned when he pulled back and slipped into his own bed, snuggling into the covers, twisting onto his side so he could watch as Nyx’s eyes slipped shut.

CROWE

Crowe grinned in satisfaction at Sania Yeager.

The professor wasn’t exactly an expert in this area but Crowe had convinced her to assist, after all, the mage would be the one to do most of the work, Sania would only be doing a similar task to one she had been doing the last ten years. She’d been using her scientific knowledge to keep various species alive, so Crowe had felt she was the perfect candidate to help her with this.

‘This’ being helping the King and the Duke start their family. Crowe didn’t pretend to understand the first thing about human biology or what Sania was doing, but she knew what she had to do in the magical sense. And they had succeeded. The surrogate that they had helped the King and Duke pick was pregnant.

The two women looked at the ultrasound and then back at each other. They’d kept their possible success quiet, waiting until the first twelve weeks of the pregnancy had passed, hoping that nothing would go wrong. And now they were able to relax a little, the main danger period had passed, although this pregnancy was higher risk than normal and they would monitor it until the very end, however they both felt confident, the woman who was carrying the future of the line of Lucis would be given the very best of care, would want for nothing.

Once they’d finished the appointment with Kyrsia, the surrogate, Crowe and Sania headed to the Citadel and sought out Noctis and Ignis. It was time to give them the news that they had been waiting for. The couple had been understandably nervous about the whole process, that and the timing, however, as Crowe told them, if they waited for things to settle down, they might never have children, the time was now. Security had been stepped up around the Citadel, Kyrsia would have
the best care with her own guard detail. The Niffs had backed off it seemed, no new spies had been detected, not that that meant that they had given up, or that they hadn’t sent others, however the King had created a new type of wall around Insomnia with a similar secondary wall around Lucis itself. Crowe had helped him with that, creating an alarm system that would sound if anyone entered Lucis that would be a major threat. It wasn’t infallible, but it was a start. Both walls acted like an early warning system, rather than defensive. They had learnt from the decline of the past Kings, and right now that type of wall just wasn’t as necessary. They had a functioning army and the guard, or as they were being referred to, the Lucian Glaives – an elite branch that were specifically for the protection of the Citadel, King and Duke of Insomnia. A city guard had been made up of an influx of new guard recruits, overseen by Cor. Combined with the Aracheole Stronghold, Fort Vaullerey and Formouth Garrison being manned by Aranea, Biggs and Wedge, Lucis felt relatively safe.

The women came upon Aeneas on duty outside the Duke’s office, Gladio was still very much occupied with the new armed forces, his shield duties taking a back seat for the moment, Nyx, Prompto and Crowe herself taking up the slack as their own recruits were a much smaller group and had therefore taken less time to get sorted. That had left time for Crowe to work with Sania and now they were to present the King and Duke with the ‘fruits of their labour’ as it were. Thinking that Ignis was the more likely to be found readily they entered his outer office and enquired of the secretary as to whether he was in. He was, busy as always, but he made time for the two. When they entered he raised up from behind his desk and welcomed them both.

“Sit, sit, please, what can I do for you?” Grand Chamberlain, Chief Strategist and Duke of Insomnia Ignis Scientia Lucis Caelum was unfailingly polite as usual.

“Can you find Noctis, we need to speak to you both? It’s important.” Crowe asked him, not willing to give away the good news just yet, this was something she wanted to tell them together.

“I think so, yes,” he crossed to the door and poking his head out asked his assistant to call the King for him and ask him to come to Ignis’ office as Crowe and Sania had requested a meeting. He asked his secretary to bring them all refreshments while they waited. When the King entered a few minutes later, he greeted the two warmly, before striding over to Ignis and bestowing a swift kiss to his husband’s cheek. He settled himself against the desk beside Ignis and both men turned curious gazes on the two women before them.

“We have news for you. The pregnancy is progressing well, very well. Kyrsia is now twelve weeks.” Sania announced as she grinned at Crowe.

The mage pulled out a copy of the picture from the ultrasound and handed it to Noctis. Both men beamed and looked extremely relieved. They’d been quietly optimistic since their surrogate had been implanted, waiting for this day. Whenever they could they’d been present for all her appointments and had arranged for her to stay close by in the Citadel. She would be attending her proper twelve week prenatal check-up later in the day and both of them would be there, but Crowe and Sania had wanted to check in on her progress for themselves. Ignis peered over Noct’s shoulder and his inquisitive gaze wandered over the picture.

Crowe and Sania gave each other a knowing glance and waited for the two men to pick up on what the ultrasound showed.

“Oh…” Ignis looked up at them, a soft smile on his face and Noct was grinning.

“Yep, two…you’re going to have twins, guys,” Crowe confirmed.

“One of each if I’m not mistaken,” Sania said with a wink.
Ignis’ office erupted in laughing and crying, Noct rushing to Crowe and Sania, enfolding them both in a huge hug, Ignis was transfixed by the picture in his hands, running his fingers over the image. The King turned back to his husband and noted how quiet he was, taking in a man who was simply entranced. Crowe could see that they were both so happy and she was glad she’d been part of it.

“Babies, Ignis, BABIES!” Noct exclaimed.

Ignis suddenly sprang into action, moving across the room, hugging Sania and Crowe, whispering “thank you,” before he turned to his husband and physically lifting him up making Noct laugh harder. When he put Noct down he gazed at the picture again, “oh look at them, my love, our babies.”

Noctis could only nod as they both had their eyes fixed on the ultrasound.

Crowe smiled as she watched them, seeing their reaction was so gratifying, all the hard work that she and Sania had done to help them with their dream was paid back in full. She had no doubt that they would make very loving parents to these babies, giving everything of themselves to make them happy and cared for.

“It’ll be very likely they will arrive a little earlier than we anticipated, twins generally do,” Sania put in and both men turned to her.

“Oh, we’ll be ready, Sania, the nursery will be sorted out soon, and we’ll bring in a couple of wet nurses if Kyrsia doesn’t want to do it herself, or can’t as the case may be, I’ve been reading up,” Noct winked at them. “And I’m not going to deny that I will be very happy to do a lot of it myself, we both are, this is something we’ve both thought about and wanted for a long time.”

Crowe chuckled, trying to picture Noctis Lucis Caelum changing nappies in the middle of the night. And though it might seem a ridiculous image, she found herself thinking that it wouldn’t actually be that odd. While they may decide to have staff to help them as undoubtedly two men in their positions might, she knew Noct was rather hands on, wanting to be as involved as he could, Ignis even more so. After all, he’d been experienced in raising children, looking after Noct while he was only a child himself. While the more mature of the two, they had still grown up together.

“Indeed,” Ignis confirmed, “we have plans in place, we were only waiting for this news to go ahead.”

“Trust you to be totally prepared, Iggy, and hey, they’ll have a heap of uncles and aunts to dote on them too.”

“Yeah, can you picture Prom’s face when he hears about this?” Noct asked his husband whose eyes twinkled at the thought of the gunner’s reaction. “Can you two keep this to yourselves for a couple of hours, I think a little celebration is in order tonight,” Noct paused and Ignis smiled ruefully, “just a small one.”

“Hmmm, just a quiet gathering of friends, we will keep an official announcement for a later date.”

Crowe found herself agreeing with Ignis on that, it wasn’t public knowledge that the King and Duke were starting their family as soon as possible. It would keep things quiet for Kyrsia.

“Well, guys, I need to get back to work, congratulations and let me know when this little celebration will be,” Sania gave a wave of her hand as she left.

“So, where will you put the nursery?” Crowe asked the King and Duke.
“Ahhh, that’ll be in my chambers, Ignis and I will be moving into my father’s suite, so that’s going to be fixed up for us at the same time that my old one is being done, will keep down on the talk, no-one will notice it being done if I tell everyone I’m remodelling Dad’s chambers.”

She nodded at the wisdom of that, it would deflect suspicion and Regis’ old suite was much larger for the two of them to occupy, while Noctis’ rooms would be perfect for the twins until they were older and needed rooms of their own. With all the other works going on in the city, the fixing up of the King’s suite would be a relatively small blip on the radar of the public consciousness. And if the burgeoning media in Lucis got wind of it and wanted to make a fuss over it, Ignis would no doubt have something up his sleeves to distract them.

Crowe made to leave explaining that she needed to go speak to Gladio about something and Ignis gave her a knowing look, “ahhh…I’ll walk you out Crowe, I’ll be just a moment, my love,” he threw over his shoulder as he led her out of the offices. They walked down the hall towards the elevator and Crowe was cursing the tall man’s perceptiveness.

“How long have you known?” She didn’t bother to deny it.

“I became aware a few days ago, you are going to go tell him now?”

“Yeah, not sure how it will go down, we haven’t discussed anything like this yet.” In truth she was rather panicked.

“He’ll be fine, Crowe, you’ve been together what…about eight months now, yes?”

“Yeah, but…we only moved in together a few months ago…he might not be ready.”

“If I may say so, you are the best thing to have happened to him, he is a different man with you and I feel that he may have been waiting for you to come along, now that you’re here I don’t think he wants to dilly dally any longer.” Ignis placed a hand on her shoulder comfortingly, “and you will have our complete support.”

“Thanks Ignis, means a lot,” she said as she entered the elevator.

He inclined his head and moved off back down the hall as the doors closed. Crowe leaned against the wall of the elevator as it descended and thought through what she was going to say to the Shield.

She fought down a bout of nerves, Ignis was no doubt right, he usually was, but she couldn’t help but be worried. After all she was about to tell Gladio he was going to become a father.

PROMPTO

Prompto glanced down at his phone screen again, for like the tenth time in as many minutes.

He and Nyx were making their way through the corridors of the Citadel to the private dining room, Noct had sent out a group message a few hours ago requesting the two men and quite a few others to join him and Ignis there for a dinner, asking them all to keep it to themselves. He read off the list of people that Noct had sent it out to, seemed to be a pretty select group. As well as himself and Nyx, there was Gladio and Crowe, Cor, Monica, Dustin, Aranea, Sania, Cindy, and Iris, Gladio’s sister. He was pleased to see her on the list as he’d not seen her in a while. But he was a little perturbed as to what this dinner was about. What he noted about the list was that they were all people that Noct
trusted, that he considered friends, not just Glaive, Army, or Council, particularly with the inclusion of Cindy and Sania. It had him scratching his head.

“Any ideas on what this is about?” he asked Nyx.

“If you don’t know, I’m not likely to have any better ideas, Prom.” Nyx glanced across at him, fixing his icy blue eyes on his lover.

“Yeah, yeah, I guess, but it doesn’t seem to be somethin’ official.”

“No…it doesn’t.”

They met up with Gladio and Crowe as they were about to enter the dining room, the Shield looking a little shell shocked, but smiling and Crowe was positively glowing beside him. Ok, that’s a bit odd, he thought.

“Do you two know what’s going on?” He noted the small smile that Crowe gave them, but Gladio just shook his head.

“Guess we’re about to find out,” he huffed as the doors were pushed open and they found themselves milling about with the other guests. Noct and Iggy were standing heads together as they waited for everyone to be seated around the table. His two best friends were looking rather pleased with themselves. Actually so did Sania and Crowe when he took in everyone around the room, yeah, somethin’ is definitely going on, he thought to himself as he sat beside Nyx, with Iris on his other side.

When he thought about it more, he realised that Noct and Iggy had been a bit weird the last month or two, like they were waiting for something, a nervous energy about them both. But whatever it was it didn’t look like it was bad news, not if the silly grins on their faces was any indication, so he just sat back and waited.

“Thanks for coming, everyone, just wanted to make a couple of little announcements and thought a dinner would be a good way to do it,” Noct swept his eyes around the room.

“Yeah, yeah, get on with it,” Arenea called out and Noct gave an amused chuckle.

“Don’t get your knickers in a twist, Lady A, at least you’ll get fed,” Noct shot back at her. Arenea poked her tongue out at him, which caused more than a few giggles around the room, except for Cor who rolled his eyes at the former mercenary and Dustin who simply shook his head.

“Get on with it, Pretty Boy,” she dead-panned at him to which Noct just gave her a mock glare.

“’Kay, first off, Ignis and I will be moving into my Dad’s old rooms in a few weeks, so there will be a remodelling crew on that floor,” Noct began, most of his guest confused as to why this would cause a dinner. He held his hands up, waiting for the muttering to stop. “My rooms will be done too, they will be needed for a couple of new residents.”

He glanced at Gladio, who just gave him a confused look, he obviously didn’t know who these new people would be.

Prompto narrowed his eyes as he looked back to Noct and Iggy, both men looking proud, happy. And while the blond was the first to admit he wasn’t the sharpest crayon in the box, that was Iggy’s role, he swung his head back and forth, staring at first Sania, who was looking like the cat that got the cream, Crowe beaming, and back to the looks of pride and joy on the faces of his two best friends, thinking of the new ‘residents’ who would be occupying the same floor that was reserved for
the royal family. His eyes met Iggy’s across the table and the Duke gave him a grin. Prompto clapped a hand over his mouth and his bright blue eyes went wide as his brain supplied the answer to the riddle, a conversation from years before ringing in his ears. It was a piece of deductive reasoning worthy of Ignis himself.

“Gods, Prom, if we could do that, it’d make everything perfect, I’d have him, married to him and… it’d just be complete, ya know?”

Prompto felt his eyes prick with tears and he shot up out of his seat, locking eyes with Noct he rushed around the table. He heard Nyx gasp at his sudden flurry of activity and heads swivelled as they watched him sweep Noct into a laughing bear hug.

“SERIOUSLY?” he yelled and giggled as Noct winced. When the King nodded, he let out a ‘WHOOP’ and punched his fist in the air. He slapped his hand over his mouth again as Ignis put a finger to his lips and Prompto looked at the other confused faces around the table. He grinned at Iggy and almost lifted the other man off the ground as he hugged him before he raced back to his spot beside Nyx, who was looking at him in bemusement.

“Well, it appears that Prom has worked it out, so we won’t draw this out any longer…Noct and I, we…we are going to be parents…” When Ignis dropped that bombshell it took every one a second or two to actually register what he’d said. And then the room erupted.

A big booming laugh from Gladio, Cindy and Iris squealed, Cor was offering his congratulations, Monica approached the two men and bowed, Dustin clasped their hands and beamed, Arenea pumped her fist in the air. Nyx gripped his hand and tugged him back around the table to where Noct and Iggy were surrounded.

“I’m guessing Crowe knows about this from the look on her face,” Nyx shook Noct’s hand, then Iggy’s as he glanced back at the mage who was grinning from ear to ear.

“Ahhh, yeah, we were getting to that bit…” Noct, flushed from being hugged and kissed and slapped on the back, mumbled, not even upset that Prom had stolen his thunder.

“Yes, we must thank both Crowe and Sania for this,” Ignis raised his deep voice to be heard over the rumble of noise in the room, “without them, it wouldn’t be possible for us to have our twins.”

“TWINS?! Dudes, that’s awesome,” Prom shouted.

“Yeah Prom, you’re gonna be an uncle…to a boy and a girl.” Noct was grinning at him, obviously delighted by his best friend’s response.

“OH.MY.GODS!” Prom, bounced up and down on the spot, unable to contain himself and Nyx chuckled at his boyfriend. “But wait, I get Sania being of help, but ummm…how did Crowe help?”

“We will explain that…if everyone could sit back down, we’ll go through how this came about.” Ignis raised his hand to get everyone’s attention. “Twelve weeks ago, Sania and Crowe were able to implant a fertilised egg into our chosen surrogate, her name is Kyrsia. Sania handled the biology side of things, doing the actual procedure, but Crowe was able to give us something we never would have dreamed possible. Our twins will be OURS, not just either Noct’s or mine, but OURS. If you were to analyse their DNA you would find that they have both ours. It was something we did not think possible and had thought that we would simply do the normal IVF route with a surrogate, but she…Crowe came to us with an idea, a way to use her magic and combine our DNA and…” Ignis faltered, “bloody hells, it doesn’t matter…” the strategist beamed at his husband and swept him into a hug, kissing him, pulling back to regard the faces around the table, “we are having twins,” it came
out as a little whisper, Ignis overcome with emotion.

Prom heard Gladio’s amused rumble over the swell of voices, “Astrals, woman, you sure know how to keep a secret.”

Crowe blushed under all the sudden attention and shrugged, “I just wanted to help, I thought it might be something they wanted, so…” she trailed off and ducked her head.

Prom, bounced over to her and kissed her cheek, “thank you for making them so happy. You’re awesome, Crowe.” He pointed at Sania, “And you…seriously, AWESOME.”

The dinner after that was a boozy mess. Crowe and Gladio had left long before then, pleading an early morning and they were soon followed by Cor, Sania, Monica and Dustin. The remaining group heading to Noct’s suite and sprawled themselves around the room. Iris, Cindy and Arenea found themselves in a corner of the room in a heated discussion about who could drink more, Prompto was waging it was Aranea, Nyx had money on Cindy. Noct and Iggy were sitting back, sipping at glasses of a some rather fine scotch, both men well on the way to being extremely inebriated. When Prompto thought about that, which was a difficult prospect, he had to admit that he was probably in a worse state than his best friends. He leaned into Nyx who slung an arm around his waist, stroking his side. Prompto moaned a little, he was really feeling lazy and warm.

The three women suddenly decided that they needed to take their argument down to the main dining hall, waving as they left. Noctis and Iggy hardly noticed them leave, busy shooting each other heated glances. Prompto watched them getting increasingly handsy, Iggy peppering Noct’s neck with feather light kisses while the King stroked his husband’s thigh, higher and higher with each circular motion. But then he was distracted as Nyx’s hand moved to his hair and tilted his head back.

“Gods, I love your neck,” he murmured in the blond’s ear, slipping his lips lower to sample it.

“Mmm, that feels good,” said Prompto thickly, twisting his fingers around one of Nyx’s braids, pulling him closer. If he’d been in any other company than his best friends, he would have been embarrassed by what he and Nyx were doing, but it was Noct and Iggy and they were caught up in each other at the moment. Prom figured in his bleary state that he and Nyx would move this on to one of their own rooms later. With that thought, Prom turned around against Nyx and straddled him as they slipped to the floor. “Kiss me,” and he groaned into his boyfriend’s mouth as he complied with the request. He moved his hands to Nyx’s face, flicking their tongues together, as his boyfriend pulled him closer. Nyx pushed his jacket off his shoulders and Prompto shivered when he felt those warm hands stroking his arms. Prom decided that Nyx was far too dressed for his liking and shoved Nyx’s jacket down too. His quick fingers danced over the new scar on the Commander’s shoulder, caressing it lightly, Nyx had taken it for him, protecting him. To Prompto, every inch of Nyx’s flesh was sacred, but the scars he’d earned saving the gunner were to be worshiped.

“You are beautiful, Prom,” Nyx whispered against his lips and Prompto groaned. “You are sunshine,” Nyx continued as he rubbed his back under his shirt. Prompto locked eyes with Nyx’s light blue ones and he watched entranced as his pupils dilated. “I love it when you look at me like that,” his boyfriend growled.

“I love looking at you, but you know that,” Prom mumbled, flushing from cheeks and down his chest. “specially like looking at all of you.” He flicked his eyes down to Nyx’s groin and Nyx pulled his hips down, grinding them together so Prom could feel what his comment did to him.

Prompto crushed their mouths flush, pushing his tongue into Nyx’s, tasting him.
“Fuck, I…I want you.”

“Mmmm, totally mutual, babe,” Prom whispered. He’d almost forgotten where they were and that they weren’t alone, but that was brought to the fore when both men heard Noct moan deeply behind them, Nyx stared over his shoulder as Prom turned his head and his breath caught in his throat. Noct and Iggy were laying on the couch, the Duke between his King’s legs, hand disappearing between Noct’s thighs. Noct had his head thrown back, his shirt pulled up so Ignis could nibble at his nipple. Prompto felt Nyx shudder beneath him.

“…Shit…they’re hot…we should probably…leave,” Nyx gasped out.

Prom nodded, while he and Nyx had discussed their possible ‘interaction’ with the other two and intimate photos had continued to be passed between them all, they had yet to act on it. Prom lifted himself from his boyfriend’s lap and held a hand out to help him to his feet, their movement brought them to the attention of the two on the couch. Both Prom and Nyx stood stock still as the other two roved glances over them with lust darkened eyes, both of them panting and Noct licked his lips.

“Leaving so soon?” Ignis drawled still palming Noct’s cock through his trousers.

Prom’s gaze followed Ignis’ hand and he gulped audibly, “ahhh, yeah…we…we probably should leave you to it.” Nyx’s breath hitched beside him and he felt his hand cup his ass and squeeze.

“Don’t have to…mmmm, you could…get over here and…oh shit…join in…” Noct licked his lips again and both men followed the path of his pink tongue over swollen bottom lip.

Prompto and Nyx shared a glance, trying to decide if they should. It was obvious they kind of, really wanted to, but it wasn’t something they had been expected to be doing tonight.

“Do you require incentive?” came Ignis’ deep accented voice, grown husky with lust as he pulled back from his exploration of Noct’s lithe body.

“Mmmm,” Noct moaned, “good idea.” Prompto watched as both men disentangled themselves and approached them slowly. He saw them flick a quick gaze to each other and he just knew they were doing some sort of silent communication. He was right. Ignis stalked towards Nyx and Noct watched as his husband leaned in to capture the Commander’s mouth with his. Prompto was dazed as Ignis slipped his tongue into Nyx’s startled mouth. He knew what that felt like and lost himself in watching Nyx melt into the kiss, his eyes slipping shut. Nyx had hold of Prom’s hand still and the gunner could feel his lover trembling. Prom’s heart rate kicked up several notches as he felt Noct’s hand on his chest.

“You don’t have to, Prom, we won’t mind…but if you do want to…” Noct left his offer hanging in the hot heavy atmosphere of the room. Ignis had pulled back from Nyx, rubbing his thumb over a bottom lip that was hanging open. Nyx’s eyes met his, unsure, dazed and Prompto, leaned in to kiss away his doubts. He knew Nyx had been crushing on Iggy before they got together and didn’t want his lover to have any doubts, didn’t want him to feel any guilt about being turned on by these two incredibly sexy men.

“I’m game…if you are?” Prom whispered, watching Nyx’s reaction.

“…I…” Nyx stuttered.

“We will leave you two to talk about it, if you decide you’d like to join us we will be in the bedroom,” Ignis stated calmly, pulling his husband towards the door. Prompto and Nyx locked their eyes on each other and the Commander exhaled shakily.
Prompto kissed his lover on his flushed cheek, “I promise it won’t change anything between us, no matter what you decide. We can go in there and fuck those two and that’s all it will be…a stupid hot fuck, but a fuck…Or we can go downstairs and make love to each other, nice and slow, hard and fast…I promise you, baby, it’s not going to matter to me if we walk out that door and we never take them up on it, but I can tell you I won’t do anything without you.” Prompto kissed Nyx’s fingers, feeling his lover relax under his touch.

Nyx drew in a shuddering breath, “I know we’ve talked a big game about this, but now that it’s…a reality, I just…I don’t ever want to lose what we have. As long as you and I are ok…nothing else matters…so…” he flicked his eyes to the door that the other two had gone through. “So let’s go fuck their brains out.” He turned his gaze back to Prom, cupping his face in his hands, “and then later, you and I…we can make love all day tomorrow.”

“That sounds like an awesome plan, babe,” Prompto said as he pulled his lover towards the door.

IGNIS

Ignis pushed his husband back onto their big bed as Noct fumbled with the buttons on his shirt, ripping it off as quick as he possibly could. He roved his bright green eyes over that taut form beneath him and whipped his glasses off, tossing them over to the bedside table. Removing his own shirt, he threw it to the floor and turned his attention to his partner’s pants, flicking the button open and tugging down the zipper, slipping his hand in to curl his long fingers around the hard cock he found there.

“Oh fuck…” Noct groaned, “we’re still wearing too much.”

“Let me remedy that situation,” Ignis muttered, pulling Noct’s pants down as his husband lifted his hips. His boxer briefs swiftly followed as Noct reached up to reciprocate. When he was naked too he crawled up the bed and tugged open the bedside drawer, fishing out their lube and tossing it on to the bed before he climbed over Noct, lining himself up so he could grind their erections together, eliciting a deep moan from his husband and shooting fire through his own veins. They started trading messy kisses, chasing each other’s mouths when the other would pull away for breath. Rutting together, Ignis felt a familiar calloused hand stroke his ass cheek on one side and another hand slipping between Noct’s chest and his own to stroke the King, he smiled knowingly into his husband’s mouth and pulled back, lifting up a little to allow Nyx to explore as he grabbed Prompto and kissed him deeply. He’d kissed the gunner enough to know exactly what the younger man liked and he used that knowledge to draw shuddering moans from him, twisting on top of his husband and lacing his fingers into the blond’s messy locks, pulling him closer. He pulled away as Prom lifted his shirt over his head, and he slipped a hand down to divest the gunner of his trousers. He felt the mattress shift beneath him as Nyx moved over Noct and heard them trading kisses, he could hear them panting as Prom’s trousers hit the floor. Prom shifted and Ignis could feel the quick beating of his heart as he pressed against him ghosting his hands up his sides. They both twisted around when they heard a low guttural moan from Nyx, Noct’s hand gripping the other man’s cock, fist slipping up and down its length. Ignis turned to gauge Prom’s reaction in the dim light of the room and was pleased to see the gunner biting his bottom lip, his eyes locked on the sight the King and Commander made. He looked hungry and Ignis stroked the blond’s chest lightly, dragging his nails over fevered flesh.

“Perhaps you could show us what he likes,” Ignis suggested and he glanced at Noct who nodded.
his agreement. They’d both discussed this and wanted to make their new lover as comfortable as possible, having Prompto show them what Nyx liked would help with that. They all shifted positions as Prom laid his lover down on the bed, crawling up over him and Noct gasped as Prom aggressively captured Nyx’s mouth with his. The King trailed his hands up both their flanks from one side, as Ignis settled behind the blond, nestling his hard cock between the freckled cheeks in front of him. Nyx and Prom fought back and forth, trading the dominance of their kisses as the Commander stroked his hands over his lover’s thighs, throwing his head back eventually as he submitted to the gunner’s touch. Ignis leaned back and watched Prom’s hand sneak down and cup Nyx’s balls, rolling them and stroking his fingers lower to tease at the dusky pink ring of muscle.

Ignis hummed appreciatively and Noct traded a glace of pure lust with him before they both continued to watch Prompto please his lover. Ignis sidled closer to Noct and crooking one long finger urged his husband to come sit in his lap. Noct settled himself with his back flush to Ignis’ back, tilting his head back against his shoulder exposing the line of his neck for teasing little kisses that Ignis could pepper there. With one hand he stroked down his husband’s stomach to reach between Noct’s legs and started to lightly drag his fingers over the hardened length of him. His other hand reached for the bottle of lube and flicked the cap open, drizzling the liquid over his husband’s cock and then leaning a little to drizzle some over Prom’s fingers.

Ignis heard a mumbled “thanks” from Prom and a groan from Nyx as the gunner put his slickened fingers to good use. Ignis hummed in response as he continued to stroke Noct, latching his teeth to his husband’s shoulder. They both felt the bed shift beside them and turned to see Prom hitching Nyx’s legs around his waist, propped on one hand above the Commander and the quick sharp thrust of his hips as he entered Nyx, both shuddering as Prom bottomed out and held there, straining. Nyx threw his head back and arched up off the bed, a long drawn out moan escaping his throat and Ignis inadvertently gripped Noct’s cock harder at the sight eliciting a growl of pleasure from the King. When Prom withdrew and halted with the head of his cock nestled inside, he leaned towards Ignis and shoved his tongue into his mouth. Ignis reached his free hand up to grip Prom’s hair tugging him closer to thrust his own tongue against the gunner’s, feeling him rock his hips forward to fill Nyx again before he pulled away and Ignis could see his darkened blue eyes settle back on the man beneath him. The Duke felt a wave of affection and love emanating from Nyx as his ice blue eyes locked with Prompto’s and he tried to pull his own mind back from it, letting them have that private moment, he could tell they hadn’t voiced it yet, but it was obvious to him that the two men loved each other. He concentrated his sharp focus on his husband, fist slipping up and down Noct’s length, twisting and then palming over the flushed tip. He nibbled Noct’s earlobe, nipping and sliding his tongue over it, murmuring his love for the King into his ear and could feel each little shudder of acknowledgment from him.

Prom’s hips were snapping back and forth as he pounded into Nyx, the Commander writhing on the bed under him, groaning with each forceful thrust.

“…fuck…” Prom mewed through gritted teeth, “…nngghh…”

Ignis’ ears caught Nyx’s whisper of “harder…” and his mind lost focus as Noct ground his ass back down onto his cock as it slid between his cheeks. He was definitely going to come more than once if this kept up.

“…Noct…help Nyx out…fuck…” cried Prom as he picked the pace up and was fucking Nyx into the bed. Noct reached over and began to tug and then glide his hand over the thick length of the Commander, groaning deeply as Ignis copied the motions on his own cock. Ignis could feel the deep coiling in his gut signalling his own release as he watched Nyx lifting his hips to meet the now frantic thrusts of Prom while Noct pumped his hand harder and faster to bring the Commander to
Ignis gripped hold of Noct’s hips and ground into the King’s ass cheeks feeling himself spill his own come all over them and the bed beneath as he watched Prom’s ass cheeks clench as his hips stilled, Nyx groaning brokenly as he came over his own stomach and Noct’s hand. Prom flopped down over Nyx and withdrew his softening length from the Commander, capturing his lover’s lips in a searing kiss. When he pulled his mouth back his lips twisted in a cheeky grin, panting he turned to Noct and Ignis, “I think Noct should fill him now…then you, Iggy…would ya like that babe?” he turned his attention back to where Nyx was moaning on the bed below and grinned wider when his lover nodded his agreement.

“Hmmm…well I am certainly going to need a moment before I can, so Noct…get busy,” Ignis drawled breathlessly as he lifted his husband off his lap. Prom eyed the come dripping between the King’s ass cheeks greedily and pulled Noct around so he was positioned over Nyx and he could swipe his tongue over the mess that Ignis had left there. The Duke felt his cock twitch, so perhaps it wouldn’t take him too long to be ready again. He stroked a hand through Prom’s golden locks as the gunner cleaned the King’s ass, Nox wriggling appreciatively.

“Kinky fuckers…” Nyx grumbled a second before he was silenced by Noct’s mouth.

“Ready, Nyx?” the King mumbled as he pulled his mouth away sitting up so he could line his flushed cock up with the dripping hole.

“Yeah…fuck me already…”

Ignis chuckled, “getting a little mouthy there, Nyx, perhaps I should keep you quiet.”

Nyx’s eyes went wide as he followed the movements of the Duke’s hand as he stroked himself suggestively. His mouth popped open just before Ignis settled beside his head. He reached down and lifted Nyx’s head, using his other hand he guided his length towards that open mouth, teasing over the tongue that slipped out to lick the head as it started to swell.

Ignis shot his husband a quick glance and Noct nodded as he slowly pushed himself inside Nyx’s slippery ass. Ignis quirked his lip as he copied the motion with his own cock into the Commander’s mouth and gasped as he felt lips clench around him.

Prom giggled from behind Noct, “he’s really good at that, Iggy, gonna have to watch this.” Prom shuffled around so that he was snuggled against Ignis and could reach over to tease Nyx’s nipple. Noct started to move in and out at an excruciatingly slow pace as he watched his husband’s hardening cock slide between Nyx’s lips, biting his lip as he watched Ignis throw his head back and try to stifle the low moan that was threatening to burst forth.

Ignis was starting to feel overstimulated, the feel of Nyx’s velvety mouth around his cock, the sight of Noct rolling his hips into the Commander, Prompto’s lips questing from earlobe to neck to shoulder while his quick fingers tweaked Nyx’s nipples. And then he snapped his head back when Nyx grasped his balls in hand and rolled them between his fingers.

“Ohhh…” The husky moan that Ignis gave was almost unrecognisable as his own.

“Beautiful…so fucking beautiful,” whispered Noct as he thrust hard into Nyx his deep blue eyes locked onto his husband’s bright green. Ignis could only agree with the statement as he roved his gaze over his husband’s body, watching the flex of muscles as his hips twitched back and forth. “Don’t make him come yet, Nyx,” the King instructed the Commander as he writhed beneath him, fucked by both Ignis and himself. “He’s gonna wreck you…even after me and Prom…oh shit…
Ignis will fill you up so much…you’re gonna scream…he’ll hit that spot…make you cry out…for more…”

Ignis was almost drooling as he watched Noct’s hips speed up, his fingers gripping Nyx’s hips tight for more purchase. He felt the Commander groan, the vibrations making his cock pulse. Ignis pulled himself out of the heat of Nyx’s mouth and leaned back, Prom grabbing him to flick their tongues together, open mouthed, panting. Their kisses turned lazy as Ignis calmed down, his heart rate slowing a little and the need to orgasm subsiding.

Beside them, Nyx and Noct were breathing hard, the King was close, muscles straining, ass clenching, thighs quivering. Ignis loved it when his lover came undone, watching his mouth drop open, his face flushed down to his chest.

“Come, my love, come for him…” Ignis whispered as he reached out to weave his fingers into those soft raven locks, his other hand tangled in the gold of Prompto’s hair. He looked down to Nyx, who had his fist clenched tight around the base of his own cock, holding back for now as Noct pumped into him, spilling his seed deep inside.

When Noct flopped backwards on the bed, Ignis crawled over to him, stroking his chest and nibbling his bottom lip. His husband curled his fingers in the ashy brown of his hair and pulled him closer, murmuring his love into Ignis’ mouth. Once his lover was calmer, Ignis turned his attention to Nyx who lay panting behind him. Prom had moved over his lover to kiss him deeply, and was now nibbling a nipple, Ignis could see his pink tongue flick over the hard little nub, drawing broken groans from the Commander.

“Flip him over, Prom,” Ignis commanded.

Prom grinned at him, all sunshine and deviousness, “hands and knees, babe,” he instructed Nyx as he helped him roll over onto his stomach. Nyx shuffled so that he was propped up on his hands, his knees spread, exposing his ass to Ignis. He trailed a single finger down Nyx’s sweat beaded back, all the way down to the nicely toned ass. He watched as Nyx’s opening clenched and contracted, Noct’s come dribbling out, it was an enticing sight to Ignis and he wanted to taste it. Leaning down he pulled Nyx’s ass cheeks apart and ducked his head to swipe his tongue around and into the hole.

He hummed his appreciation of the taste of Noctis, uniquely his, one of his favourite things in the world. Probing his tongue deeper into Nyx, he drank down his lover’s come, cleaning the reddened ring, being careful in his ministrations of the over sensitised flesh, Nyx quivering beneath him. When he finally sat back to admire his cleaning skills, Prom was waiting beside him, eyes bright and keen, holding the bottle of lube. Ignis smiled his thanks and lent back for the gunner to administer it to his flushed length.

It was Prompto who took him in hand and as Ignis leaned over Nyx, he guided him to the entrance.

“Ohhh, that’s hot…” Noct growled from where he lay propped on one elbow beside them, his dark eyes fixed on his husband’s cock in Prom’s fist, the tip probing Nyx’s rim.

Nyx arched his back, “oh shit…,” he moaned brokenly as the tip pushed in.

“Told ya,” smirked Noct as he traded a knowing look with Prom. The gunner moved his hand out of the way as Ignis gripped Nyx’s shoulders to push himself full inside the tight heat of Nyx’s walls.

Once he was fully sheathed, Ignis lent over Nyx and whispered in his ear, “feel good, Nyx?” He smirked when the Commander could only nod, his mouth hanging open, ragged gasps filling the room. “You know you want it…tell me…say it.” Ignis commanded him in a deep growl.
Nyx turned his head to gaze at Ignis, he licked his lips, eyes locked on the darkened green of the Grand Chamberlain, “fuck me…please…” he stuttered.

Ignis pulled his hips back so that the head was just cocooned inside, holding there for a moment before he slammed forward knocking Nyx down onto his elbows, his head hanging low between his shoulders. Leaning back on his knees, Ignis grabbed Nyx so that he could push and pull, effectively making the Commander fuck himself on Ignis’ cock. He smiled at the broken whine that erupted from Nyx and said in a cheeky tone, “want some cheese with that ‘whine’, Nyx,” which earned him a guffaw from Prompto.

“Not the time for puns, dude,” was his wry comment.

“Just give him the ‘cheese’,” came Noct’s giggling response.

“Ugh, not you too, seriously, dudes, you’re as bad as each other,” Prom grumbled.

The two men went quiet as the sound of slapping flesh filled the room, Nyx’s gasps becoming more and more laboured as Ignis shoved him forward and back, starting to meet each thrust with one of his own, driving in deeper and deeper.

“Oh GODS,” Nyx screamed, “more…MORE…”

Ignis could feel the man clenching around him, the tight white hot heat of him as he reached the point of no return. His own body responding to the cries of Nyx under him, around him, gut tightening as he sensed his own climax rushing upon him.

Nyx’s elbows gave out, face planting the bed as he came, gripping Ignis tight inside himself, groaning brokenly, fighting for air. Ignis snapped his hips forward, twice, thrice and a last shuddering heave forward had him over the edge, clenching his eyes shut, teeth grinding as he came.

Gentle hands pulled him back and he found himself laid beside his husband, arms wrapped around him, kisses planted in his completely dishevelled hair, “fuckin’ gorgeous,” cooed in his ear.

And Nyx? Nyx was indeed a wreck, sprawled like a starfish on the bed, Prompto smoothing the hair that was plastered to his brow.

“I think we knocked him out…” Prom breathed out slowly, looking at the other two owlishly over Nyx’s back.

A grunt came from Nyx, “…not quite…but babe, don’t think I’m gonna walk for a week.”

Noct chuckled beside Ignis, “did warn ya, Nyx, and hey that’s what potions are for.”

“Noct, that is NOT what potions are for…” admonished Ignis, stroking his husband’s cheek affectionately, “although we can’t have the Commander of the Glaive walking oddly for the next week…” he trailed off at the smirk Noct gave him. He just knew that his husband was remembering their week in Galdin, particularly the morning after Cape Caem when Ignis had succumbed to the need of the restorative so he could walk off the boat.

“HA, next time, he can fuck all of us, walking problem solved,” said Prom pleased with himself.

Another grunt came from the prone Commander, “next time? Fuck, you guys are gonna kill me.”
Gladio rolled over to find the other side of the bed empty.

His hand quested over to the space where Crowe usually was and found it warm, so she’d not been gone long. Bringing his hand up he raked it through his mussed hair, wondering where she was. It was still too early for them to be up and off to their duties. Then he heard a low strangled moan from the bathroom, followed by retching and he winced. Morning sickness. Crowe pregnant. He was going to be a father. The knowledge smacked him in the head and he groaned. He wasn’t sure he was ready, despite what he had told Crowe when she had sat him down and told him the day before. He’d put on a brave face and made sure that Crowe knew he was ok with the news, and he was ok, just not sure of his own capabilities. Would he be a shitty father? He didn’t know and that freaked him out.

Another retch sounded through their rooms and he pulled himself up out of bed, stumbling his way to the bathroom to check on his girlfriend. He found her curled over the toilet, a picture of misery and he knelt beside her, pushing her drenched hair from her face.

She tried to wave him away, “you don’t need to see this.”

“Takes two to tango, babe,” he muttered as he held her steady. “Want some water?”

She nodded and he released her carefully to get her a glass from the kitchen and winced again as he heard her retching again. When he returned she was slumped against the wall, arms tucked around her knees, head down. He touched her arm gently and helped her sip at the cool water, noting how pale she was. She smiled weakly at him in gratitude and made to stand, wobbling a little, so Gladio put the glass down and scooped her up. He gingerly laid her down on the bed and pulled the covers over her before he sat down and stroked her hair.

“Sorry,” she mumbled.

“What for?” he asked her confused.

“For this…” she gestured her arm down herself. “We didn’t plan this…SIX, I didn’t even think it was possible.”

“I know…” Crowe had told him months ago that during one of her medical check-ups for the original Glaive they’d discovered that she was most likely infertile due to the intense magical training she’d undergone. When she had been initiated with King Regis’ magic it had knocked her out. Upon waking she had been crippled with severe stomach cramps and the doctors and other older mages had given her the news sadly. It was something that happened to new initiates sometimes, especially the women. And given the aptitude that she later displayed in wielding the magic, it had seemed to affect her more so, the ease with which she had pulled at Regis to accept the gift had not prepared her for the agony that followed as it coursed through her veins. It had been, as she told him, the price she had had to pay for her abilities.

“Sorry,” she said again.

“No, stop it, Crowe, it’s ok, I told you that. A shock, yeah, but, it’s ok, we’ll do this together.”

She peeked up at him as he hovered over her, trying to gauge if he was really ok with it and he tried to give her a reassuring smile. He must have failed from the frown that crossed her face however.
“I don’t think you are ok.”

“Shit, look, it’s like this…the whole idea of us having kids, I am definitely ok with…it’s when I think of me being a father, actually doing it, that’s what has me worried, I’ll probably be crap.” He paused and thought about how he’d been with Noctis as a child. “I treated Noct like crap, I was really hard on him, didn’t even like him for a long time…I just don’t want to be like that with our kid.”

“That was different, you were there to train him, not raise him. What about how you were with Iris?” She trained sharp eyes on the Shield, not letting him shy away from her gaze.

He thought back to when his little sister had been born, to when she’d been a constant presence in his life. There were enough years between them that he’d taken on some of his Dad’s role in taking care of her, their mother gone and Claurus so busy with his duties as Shield to Regis. “Hmm.”

“She turned out pretty ok, sweetheart, in fact more than ok. And you had a hand in that.” Crowe sat up gingerly and stroked his bristly cheek. “Why don’t you ask her what she thinks about it, I’m sure she’ll tell you that you did a great job.”

“Yeah, maybe…”

“No maybe about it, do it, it’ll put your mind at ease and we can get on with working out how to be parents to ours together.”

Gladio smiled ruefully, she was most likely right, she usually was about most things. He looked her over as she sat beside him, hair mussed and sweaty, pale, sick with his child inside her and all he could think was how lovely she was, how wise, how perfect.

“Marry me?” he blurted out without thinking. Her eyes went wide in shock.

“What?” She frowned at him again.

“You heard me, I want to you to marry me, please.”

“Are you asking me because I’m pregnant?” Her eyes were pleading him to be honest, a vulnerability in them that he didn’t often see.

“No, I was gonna ask, hadn’t found the right time…”

“And this is?”

He had to concede it probably wasn’t the best way to do this, certainly nowhere near the romantic setting he’d been trying to picture, but that was him all over, just going with his gut and saying the first thing that occurred to him. It often got him in trouble and earned him the ire of his fellows, but he usually shrugged it off and got on with things. But this felt so right, despite the fact that Crowe had been throwing up a few minutes ago. So he sank to one knee beside the bed and took her hand in his large one.

“It’s not me doing the ‘right’ thing, it’s me asking you to be my wife ‘coz I want you to be. I just want to be with you…I know it’s not romantic, I tried to plan how I would do it, but I kept drawing a blank…oh wait, I’ll prove it.” He jumped up and crossed the bedroom, yanking open the top drawer in the dresser and riffled around till he found the little velvet box. When he knelt beside the bed again he presented it to her, “see I was sorta prepared.”

Crowe looked from the box in her hand to his face and back again. “You really had been thinking
about this?"

“Yep, now are you gonna open it or just stare at the box all day?”

Crowe lifted the lid on the little box and stared down at the silver ring with a single perfect diamond. “Oh, it’s lovely.” She smiled up at him and he took the box from her hand, slipping the ring out and held it over her finger.

“So does that mean ‘yes’?” he asked.

“Ummm,” she looked as shocked as he had felt yesterday.

“Wanna run that by me again…”

“Oh you, big idiot, yes…” she lunged at him and wrapped her arms around him.

“Well it’s official,” he said quietly as he pushed her back and slipped the ring on her finger and stole a chaste kiss. “So, future Mrs Amicitia, do you think you could cope with breakfast yet?”

Crowe laughed a little, “ugh, not yet, wouldn’t want to spoil this thoroughly romantic proposal of yours by throwing up again,” she teased him and Gladio chuckled.

“Ok, I’ll take you to dinner tonight and try to do the romance thing, but you know I suck at it.”

“I wouldn’t have it any other way, sweetheart, love you just the way you are.”

A ponderous thought struck him and he grimaced, “Iris is gonna go nuts, you realise she’s probably gonna move to the City permanently when she hears about this.” Crowe laughed, “And there is no way we’re gonna be able to keep this from her for long, she’s like a bloodhound on the scent. Shit, she knew about Prom and Nyx before you did, and she was in bloody Lestallum.”

The uproarious laugh that spilled from Crowe brought colour back to her cheeks and Gladio chuckled. “Well, we’ll tell her straight away then, save her the trouble of sniffing it out, then we can tell everyone else. But she won’t be able to brag about being the first to know…Ignis guessed.”

“What the actual fuck, really?” Gladio looked at her shocked, “seriously?”

“Yeah, he cornered me yesterday after I gave him and Noct the news about the twins, seems his Oracle-ness gives him more insight than ever.”

“Like he needs more, man’s freakin’ scary when it comes to knowing shit,” Gladio grumbled. “Ugh, you realise, they will probably want to announce this, make a big deal of it.”

“Maybe, they can announce whatever they like, but I just want a small wedding.”

“Yeah, me too, nothing like what Noct and Iggy had with every one gawking, just friends,” he agreed.

“They had to do it that way, Noct told me he would have much rather have something private, but who he is…well it got in the way of what he and Ignis wanted.”

“We won’t let that happen to us, babe, I promise.”

Crowe lifted herself from the bed, “good, now I’m going to shower, I feel gross.”

Gladio laughed again, “seriously, we must be like the most unromantic pair ever.”
“Oh shut up and message your sister, see if she can meet us for breakfast, we’ll tell her then.”

That did shut him up, but he did as he was told reaching to the bedside table for his phone. Tapping out his message, he checked the time, almost time to be up anyway, he hoped that Iris wasn’t too hung over to meet them, or maybe he did, thinking about the squealing that was in his future.

GLADIO: hey kid, wanna meet me and Crowe for breakfast?

IRIS: sure, any reason? And stop calling me kid.

GLADIO: fuck off, why would I need a reason?

IRIS: coz you never want to just see me about anything

IRIS: I smell gossip

GLADIO: brat

IRIS: oh no denial

IRIS: that means there IS something

GLADIO: just meet us in half hour, dining hall, ok

IRIS: whatever

IRIS: you know I’ll get it out of you

GLADIO: I’m flipping you off right now

IRIS: like I don’t know that

GLADIO: you’re poking your tongue out at me aren’t you

IRIS: yep

GLADIO: BRAT!!!!

IRIS: whatevs asshole

IRIS: see you soon

IRIS: oh and I’m hungover so you are getting me something greasy to eat

GLADIO: nope, gonna shout at you instead

IRIS: like I said

IRIS: ASSHOLE

GLADIO: BRAT!

IRIS: you’re flipping me off again aren’t you????

GLADIO: not telling
GLADIO: see ya there

GLADIO: and put your tongue back in your head

IRIS: ASSHOLE

Putting his phone down he looked up to see Crowe was out of the shower, rummaging around in the closet for some clothes to wear, “I’ll just be a minute,” he told her as he headed for the bathroom to have a quick shower of his own.

When he was done and dressed they both made their way down to the dining hall and Gladio scanned the room for his little sister. She wasn’t there yet so he and Crowe made their way to an empty table to wait. They didn’t have to wait long however as Iris came bounding into the room, hangover seemingly forgotten, she made her way straight to them, plonking herself down in the seat opposite and eyeing them over suspiciously.

“Ok, out with it, or do you want me to force it out of you, because you know I can.”

“Ugh, what’d I tell ya, bloodhound,” Gladio grumbled as Crowe laughed at the siblings.

“Whatevs, just spit it out already.” Iris fixed him with a glare the shield knew well.

Gladio was only half right about her reaction, the news that they were going to get married was met with a roll of the eyes and a “well, duh, of course, congrats, but what you see in him I don’t know.” But when Crowe delivered the other piece of news Iris did shriek, scaring the other people in the hall and garnering curious stares from onlookers. She bounced up to give them both a huge hug.

“Shhh, keep it down, kid,” Gladio muttered.

“OH.MY.GODS! I’m gonna be an auntie, seriously, what’s in the water around here, first Noct and Iggy and now you guys, this is awesome!” Iris proclaimed at a slightly lower volume, though it still wasn’t quite enough for the shield who felt like cover his ears to protect them.

“SHhhh, no-one knows about this yet, and no-one knows about Noct and Iggy, so settle down a bit,” he warned her and was gratified to see her slump in her chair and try to be calm.

“I know, I know, I promise I’ll keep it to myself for now, but you gotta tell everyone soon or I’m gonna burst, like seriously, burst, all over the place and it’ll be your fault.” She poked a finger in Gladio’s direction and fixed him with the same glare from before. This time it was Gladio rolling his eyes at his little sister.

“Fine…we’ll tell ‘em later,” he knew he wouldn’t hear the end of it if he didn’t so he just agreed. The spitfire that was Iris wouldn’t be denied.

NOCTIS

Another council meeting, another boring round of arguments.

Ignis had insisted that they both attend, as usual, and as usual the outcome was less than satisfactory. Though his council was now filled, they had yet to reach a conclusion regarding the Niffs, war or treaty. Now, the current status quo was to do nothing, wait, watch and let the Niffs
stew in their own juices. At the behest of Nyx and with Ignis’ agreement, a spy network had been established, their main objective being to discover the capabilities of Nilheim. So far, the information was patchy at best, confusing at worst. They were still hiding Ignis’ abilities and very few knew the King was more powerful than he had been. Amara had been outed as a spy, however the infiltrator that she had killed was not common knowledge, they preferred to let the Niffs think that they weren’t aware of him. What information they had been able to garner told them that there was a burgeoning population, those that had escaped the infestation of the star scourge and the daemons, had emerged with the dawn from underground bunkers. Though a small enough number, it was enough to cause trouble should they wish – and it seemed that they did indeed wish to do so if the sending of spies and their obvious disdain of Noctis as King and now Ignis as his husband and Duke of Insomnia were any indication.

Their relations with Accordo were an entirely different matter. The Accordan refugees that had sought safety in Lestallum had returned to their homeland within weeks of the dawn to try and rebuild, though it would be many years before Altissia was anywhere near its previous beauty. Both Noct and Ignis had bittersweet memories of the city, though lovely when they visited, it was the place where Luna had died and Ignis had been blinded. To this day, Noct did not know exactly how it had happened, his husband wouldn’t talk about it, but if his nightmares were any indication, the memory was horrific. The only thing he had ever said about it was that one of the last things he saw before going blind was seeing Ardyn’s airship heading for the Altar of the Tidemother. Noct himself had seen Ardyn stab Luna at the Altar. She’d used the last of her failing strength to help him forge the Covenant with Leviathan and by the time he’d finished the battle he was unconscious. When he awoke, Ignis had told him she was gone.

Insomnia and Lucis itself were starting to flourish.

He couldn’t be prouder of the way everyone was pulling together to rebuild and create anew their home. They’d celebrated the first anniversary of the returning Dawn several months previously with a celebration, something he had been happy to preside over, for once not minding the pomp and ceremony. And in a personal sense, things were wonderful. He and Ignis were still deliriously happy, and still causing the shield embarrassment. Kyrsia was due to deliver their twins soon, within several weeks due to the likelihood that they would arrive early, and both men, and most of Lucis it had to be said, were waiting very impatiently for them to arrive. Gladio and Crowe were married and very settled, their own child due to be born a month after the twins. Prompto and Nyx were happy, almost nauseatingly so, much to his amusement. And despite a concerted effort on all their parts, they hadn’t killed Nyx, though he did complain of not being able to walk on occasion.

So, all things considered, Noctis Lucis Caelum was a happy man.

If only the weird dreams of Bahamut would stop. They were only fleeting images, like the Astral was attempting to speak to him but was unable to break through. Gentiana had not come to him, though he had called her, which in and of itself was not completely unusual. However, combined with the odd dreams of Bahamut it was a niggling annoyance. It was like waiting for the other shoe to drop.

“Daydreaming, my love?” Ignis’ deep voice broke through his reverie and he turned to find him giving him an affectionate smile, the teal eyes behind his ever-present glasses bright.

He gave his husband a half smile, “just thinking.”

Ignis raised a thin brow in question at him, but Noct didn’t answer, he merely crossed Ignis’ office to his husband and wrapped his arms around his waist. Ignis didn’t press him, knowing that he would tell him if he needed to. “Come see the nursery, my little raven. They finished moving all the
furniture in this morning while we were with the Council.” Noct gave him a big grin. “We can unpack all the boxes of things we’ve collected for the twins now.”

Noctis could hear the excitement in Ignis’ tone and he grabbed his hand to tug him out of his office and across the hall to the nursery that was situated in the Dawn King’s old rooms. The both stood in the centre of what had been the sitting room, now a playroom for the two babies that would be coming soon. Ignis inclined his head and gave Noct a soft kiss against his lips and smiled softly.

The king reached into his pocket and pulled out a small pale blue-green figurine, his old Carbuncle, “this needs a new home, where should we put it, Gorgeous?” He waved the little figure in front of his husband whose eyes gleamed with amusement.

“Ahh, now that should definitely have pride of place, my love.” Ignis’ long finger slid over the back of the Carbuncle and he looked around the room. He quirked his lip and Noct wondered what he was thinking. “May I?” Ignis held his hand out for the lucky charm and Noct placed it in his palm. His husband strode to the door to the twin’s bedroom and placed the Carbuncle on the small lipped ledge on the door, in the centre as a sentinel to the nursery. “It has protected you all these years and now it can protect our darlings.”

“Trust you to think of the perfect spot for it, Ignis.” He pressed himself against the taller man’s back, his arms encircling his slim waist to clasp his hands in front and Ignis brought his hands up to cover the King’s. They stood like that for a long moment, just enjoying being quiet together. “Let’s unpack these boxes,” Noct said eventually, disentangling himself and heading for the nearest crate. Ignis followed him and they spent the rest of the afternoon deciding where to put toys and folding clothing for the twins.

When they emerged, it was dusk and Gladio was stationed outside the doors to the nursery ready to escort them to dinner.

“How is Crowe doing?” Ignis asked him as they all headed to the elevator.

“Complaining about being fat and bitchin’ at me coz I think she looks beautiful,” said the shield with a rueful grin.

Dinner itself was another boring affair with Council and two visiting dignitaries from Accordo, rather dry dusty conversation that Noct struggled to follow, far more concerned with running his hand up Ignis’ thigh under the table. When he felt his husband’s long fingers twining into the hair at the base of his neck he shot Ignis a quick glance and received a heated look tinged with a touch of annoyance. It made him grin and wink at the Duke who huffed in response.

“Insatiable,” Ignis whispered when he leaned over. Noct chuckled and ran his hand higher on Ignis’ thigh, dangerously close to the swelling crotch trapped in his perfectly pressed pants. “Can you not wait just a half an hour?”

“Maybe, maybe not,” Noct teased, one finger gliding over Ignis’ length.

Ignis hissed between his teeth and tried to focus on what one of the Accordans was saying, pulling on Noctis’ hair in warning. The King lifted his other hand to his mouth and pretended to yawn behind it.

“I apologise, my lords, I think I must cut our evening a little short, can we continue our discussion at our meeting tomorrow?” Noct struggled to keep a straight face and deliberately kept his eyes forward, not looking at Ignis who would no doubt be shooting him an annoyed glace.
“Of course, your Majesty, my lord Duke, we bid you good evening,” said the dusty dignitary that Ignis had been conversing with over…whatever it was that they were talking about.

Noct inclined his head and Ignis stood swiftly, turning himself so that he stood behind the King’s chair effectively hiding the signs of his arousal. The Accordans and Council stood as Noct raised up out of the chair and he grasped his husband’s hand heading for the side door rather than the main one so that they could leave through a more private route. Noct didn’t feel like encountering too many bowing idiots and wanted to save Ignis at least some embarrassment in his current predicament, particularly as he was the one who had caused it.

Once through the door and in a quiet antechamber, Ignis shoved him up against the wall and slammed his lips down on Noct’s knocking the breath out of him. Noct’s eyes slipped shut as he surrendered to the force of Ignis’ kiss, revelling in the heat of his husband’s muscular frame contrasting with the cool of the wall behind him. He brought his arms up to rest on Ignis’ shoulders, shoving his hands into the locks of hair at his neck. His heart rate kicked up as their teeth and tongues clashed together, breathing raggedly through his nose, the blood racing through his veins a blazing fiery heat, his lips bruising under the pressure of their kisses. Long deft fingers twisted into his hair at the back of his neck pulling his head back as Ignis deepened the kiss, his tongue probing further and Noct met it eagerly, mewling into his husband’s mouth.

The King grasped at Ignis’ back, dragging his nails over the shirt covering the heated muscular frame that he was desperate to feel without the restriction of the silky cloth, his husband quivering under the attention as he pulled back to lock his teal eyes on Noct’s stormy blue. The Duke was panting heavily, licking his kiss bruised lips, cheekbones accented by the deep rosy flush that was spreading over the rest of his face, highlighting the little moles doted on his skin. Noct’s eyes broke away from Ignis’ to map each one that graced his lover’s face, there were only a few, but he loved each one, reaching a finger to trace over them, entranced. Each little thing that Ignis deemed an imperfection made him more perfect in Noct’s opinion, the little moles on cheeks and forehead, the slight bump in his nose, his over bite that made his top lip that bit more prominent, the man’s tightly controlled passions that would spill over like they were right now.

Ignis captured his hand in his own and twisted it over to place a soft kiss on his palm, another to the ring on his finger sending a shiver down Noct’s spine. He tore his gaze from their entwined hands to meet his husband’s eyes again, drowning in teal pools, flecked with sky blue and little hints of gold. Others may not be able to read the emotions in those eyes hidden behind his glasses, but to Noct he knew every nuance of his gaze. To others, his husband was unreadable, something Ignis found useful, but not to the King. Noct could read him like a well-loved book, each page etched in his memory as surely as if it had been chiselled in stone. People may call the tall man cold, but he knew the fire he was named for that burned just beneath the surface. An inferno that few discerned.

The previous urgency forgotten as they stared at each other, Noct lost himself in the tenderness of Ignis’ expression, his breath hitching, oh he’s so beautiful, he thought as he brought the hand that wasn’t caught up in Ignis’ to trace a finger over a reddened bottom lip.

“Take me to bed, please,” he pleaded, voice husky with emotion. Ignis nodded, pulling him through back corridors to the elevators, the ride up quiet yet filled with the promise of time alone, time to lose themselves in each other. His husband curled his arm around his waist to hold him close as they made their way to the end of the hall where their new suite was situated, a single guard moving back to stand by the elevator now that the King and Duke were retiring for the night. It added another layer of privacy for them, being able to close the double doors and know that there was no-one on the other side.

Noct felt like they were gliding through the suite to their bedroom, floating on the feeling
thrumming through them both. He flicked his eyes to their massive custom made four poster bed and back to Ignis, the prospect of indulging in the wonder of his lover’s form engulfing him. Ignis tugged him to the side of the bed and slowly slipped his long fingers down his chest, undoing each button of his Noct’s shirt like he was unwrapping a prize. The King fingered the little skull necklace around Ignis’ throat, caressing the skin under it at the open collar before reaching up to pull Ignis’ glasses from his face and place them out of the way. He let those deft hands divest him of his shirt before he was able to move his own limbs to start undressing his lover, lethargic under the darkened teal of Ignis’ eyes. Dragging the shirt from the waistband of his lover’s pants, Ignis shrugged it to the floor behind him, the whisper of the silk as it fluttered to the floor lost in their slow breaths. He toed his shoes and socks off as his husband reached for the button on his pants, slipping the zipper down, using his thumbs to glide them down over his hips. Ignis nudged him down onto the bed, standing in between Noct’s thighs as he slid his own pants down, leaving them both in their underwear. The King shuffled himself further onto the bed as Ignis crawled up over his body, letting out a breathless groan as their bare chests met, the heat of the Duke’s skin sending an intense burning desire to deep in his gut.

When things were like this between them it was like the very first time they had made love, learning every inch of skin, discovering dips and valleys, exploring the play of muscles with fingers devoted to showing the extreme love the felt.

Noct brought his hands up to caress Ignis’ face, leaning up to press his lips to his lover’s delicately, softly savouring the lingering taste of the wine they’d sampled over dinner. He felt intoxicated, not from what they’d imbibed, but from the love, the desire he felt. It was heady, overwhelming. He drew in a shuddering breath and Ignis met his gaze with concern. Noct kissed it away, reassuring his husband, moving his lips over his jawline, up his cheek, capturing his lips with his own, open mouthed kisses, sharing breath between them. His slipped his tongue into Ignis’ mouth to massage and curl against the other’s, slow, exploratory touches. Ignis’ fingers skittered over his chest, one finger swirling around a nipple, teasing it to a turgid peak, Noct arched his back up into the touches, a low, deep moan coming from Ignis as he increased the intensity of their kiss. That moan vibrated right to his soul, the passion it evoked burning in its wake. He moved his hands around to glide over the smooth planes of Ignis’ shoulders, muscles fluttering as his husband rested himself on his elbows over Noctis, deepening their kisses, fusing their mouths together with a white-hot heat, a smouldering fire that would burn for always, forever, eternal.

Noctis felt that this night was different from what had been before, something deeper, soul affirming, an awareness of each other’s devotion, the completeness of their union that he knew Ignis was feeling too. It was not that they had never taken things this slow, never savoured in this way before, however there was something distinctly beautiful about this night that captured them both in its web.

Breathing in time, their bodies moving in a concert of passion, Ingis slid down his body, leaving burning kisses in his wake pausing only to remove Noct’s underwear and his own, freeing their erections to the warmed air of the room. He gasped breathlessly when he felt his husbands hand curl around his length, his tongue flicking around the head to taste his arousal. Throwing his head back, Noct lost himself in the sensations of Ignis’ mouth and hand, teasing him to hardness, making him twitch his hips up when he felt the wet heat of the mouth that suckled him down. Ignis was moving his mouth up and down slowly, heightening the feeling. Every bob of the Duke’s head sent a jolt through Noctis, eliciting harsh little gasps. When Ignis finally released him with a final long lick up the underside he shuddered and groaned feeling bereft. It was the snap of the bottle cap of lube that brought him out of his dreamlike state, the slow circling of his rim as Ignis coated his hole, he could hear the sinful squelch of Ignis' hand sliding up his own length. When Noct felt one then two fingers slide inside to prepare him his whole body arched, toes curling, fingers gripping the bed covers beneath him, a soundless sigh slipping from his lips. He cried out when those fingers brushed
his prostrate, rocking his hips down onto Ignis’ fingers as they moved in and out slowly, widening him, stroking him.

When Ignis finally entered him, Noct wrapped his legs around his husband’s slim hips and pulled him closer, the Duke dropping down to curl his arms under Noct’s back and his hands gripped his shoulders, their mouths meeting again and again in slow delicious kisses as Ignis rocked into him equally slowly, extending this moment, savouring the beauty of it. Noct surrendered to every motion, every slide of his lover’s length, every clench his own body involuntarily made that earned him a low growl from Ignis’ throat. They spiralled up together, a creeping ascent to the heavens, their foreheads pressed together as they breathed as one, the room melting away around them until it was only their bodies moving in synch, sweat slick, flushed and burning. Noct’s nails dug into Ignis’ back, dragging down the skin, leaving welts in their wake, Ignis groaning deeply in response. Their pace increased a little pulling them both higher, their panting breaths coming faster as they spiralled up towards the crescendo. Noct held Ignis to him as tightly as he could, moaning softly overcome with coiling grip of release building in his gut. Ignis delved into him deeper and faster, driving them closer to the edge, Noct’s cock trapped between their stomachs, sliding over sweat covered skin.

A crackle of magical energy swarmed about them as their simultaneous orgasms burst forth, Ignis spilling deep within his King, Noct’s coating their stomachs, both crying out wordlessly, twin magenta gazes meeting in surprise. Panting together, their bodies slowed their rhythm as they slumped, exhausted, spent.

Long moments passed as they stared into each other’s eyes, marvelling at what they had experienced. The magic gradually dissipated, leaving a tingle over cooling skin. Ignis rolled them over onto their sides, still nestled inside, legs tangled, arms wrapped around each other, hands stroking backs, shoulders.

“That…that was…” Ignis whispered reverently, unable to finish the thought, the first words that they had spoken since Noct had asked Ignis to take him to bed.

“Yeah…it was…” Noct knew, no words were going to be able to convey exactly what had just occurred between them, no words were needed.
battle lines

Chapter Summary

The tall man went down on one knee, his elaborate white coat flowing out around him, his head bowed and he crossed his chest with one fist, scarred and ashy in colour, saluting the King, “your Majesty,” absolute deference in his tone. Noct sat silently, as did Ignis, “my lord Duke,” he said as he raised his head, still kneeling, one blue eye the colour of ice over a frozen lake, the other a pale mauve, fixed on the two men above him.

“Ravus…?”

Ravus Nox Flueret bowed his head again, his white hair falling around his face, “I come bearing serious tidings, from the Astrals.”

Chapter Notes

I hit the character limit, so have had to divide this, can’t actually believe my ramblings have gotten so far, and THANK YOU for those who have commented and given Kudo's, you make me so very happy.

I also realise there is an issue with the part about Noct in Pitosss, as we now know why Ifrit turned on humanity and the relationship with Shiva. *shrugs* call it poetic licence, although I might change that passage a little to reflect the new information, I tend to be a stickler for that shit.

NYX

Nyx hadn’t said the words yet, they’d danced around it, saying the word love in other contexts. They would say they loved things about each other, loved things they did, but not the definitive I love you. It wasn’t that he didn’t feel it, he did, the Astrals knew he did, but he’d never said it before. Prom hadn’t said it either, somehow knowing that Nyx wanted to be the one to confess first, knowing that Nyx felt it but hadn’t found the right time to say those three little words.

Nyx sensed the way his boyfriend felt, it mirrored his own feelings perfectly. But he still wanted to say it, he had tried to, several times. Each time, he would falter, change the subject or deflect and Prom would give him a quiet little sideways glance and duck his head. It wasn’t disappointment he read in his boyfriend’s hunched shoulders at those times, more like embarrassment. And Nyx would lean in and kiss it away.

At other times, Prom would stroke his clever fingers over each and every tattoo on his skin and Nyx would feel like he was going to burst, his heart fluttering like a caged bird. Or when the blond
gunner would kiss the scars on his back, stomach, shoulder and thigh, glancing up through bright hair to fix him with his blue-purple eyes and Nyx would lose his breath for a moment. It was there in every movement his lover made, every kiss, every touch, and especially every smile that lit up his freckled face. Yet he still couldn’t get his mouth to form around the words. If he could smack himself on the back of his head and spit the words out he would do it in a heartbeat. If he were honest, he was probably making it harder on himself the longer he waited to say it. For Astrals sake, they’d been together well over a year.

Nyx nuzzled into Prom’s neck, the gunner tucked between his thighs as they sat watching the sunset from high atop the old wall of Insomnia. They’d found this spot by accident, both on a late patrol, and since then, every chance they could, would watch the sun slip below the horizon, wait for the stars to come out and just…sit. Usually wrapped around each other, much like they were now. It was quiet time for them away from the organised chaos of the Citadel, training the Glaives, meetings that they tried to get out of whenever they could – though Nyx had discovered exactly how hard a task master Ignis could be on that point, much to Prompto’s amusement.

“Dude, I can’t believe you used ‘puppy dog’ eyes on Iggy and it worked,” the blond chuckled.

“Babe, ya gotta know when to use ‘em, not push it, besides he knew we hadn’t had time away for ages, think he’s got a soft spot for couples who need time alone,” Nyx answered as he stroked Prom’s golden locks. The gunner sighed contentedly at the touch.

“Yeah, I guess, that and I think Noct had plans to sneak away early from that dinner. He hates that shit as much as you do.” Nyx snorted, everyone knew how much the King hated stuffy dinners and how Ignis would drag him to one at least once a week. The staff around the Citadel would look at the schedule for the week and start betting on which dinner would be the one that Noctis would actually attend. It wasn’t that the King was shirking his duties, he was particularly diligent, going to council meetings, conferring with any delegates that were visiting, attending ceremonies and such, but ‘boring fucking dinners’ as he called them, were to be avoided if he could. When Noct dug his heels in and refused Ignis knew the battle was lost and would concede defeat. Or at least he let Noct think he’d won, but would then pull out his trump card. The Duke would generally sigh and tell the King that he wouldn’t be able to spend time with him until later as someone had to be there. This tactic often made Prom and Nyx laugh, they could see the annoyed look that would cross Noct’s face and the barely disguised glee that Ignis’ eyes betrayed. Noct would grunt and huff, Ignis would shrug as if to say ‘it’s out of my hands’ and the King would cave in. Like this evening.

Prom and Nyx had almost wanted to stick around and attend themselves to see just how Noct would get out of staying for the full dinner, almost.

“Would much rather be here, with you,” Nyx whispered in Prom’s ear.

“Mmm, me too,” the blond said as he snuggled closer.

They stayed on top of the wall for another hour, watching the stars make their appearance, the moon-rise above the horizon, before they reluctantly headed back.

They were strolling back through the quiet streets of the Crown City, Nyx gripping tightly to Prom’s hand when the blond gasped and pointed to the sky behind the Citadel.

“Look at that, babe,” the gunner’s excited tone drawing his eyes skyward.

The Citadel seemed to be glowing, a meteor shower spraying across the black velvet of the sky. Nyx watched in wonder and then chuckled as Prom whipped out his trusty camera and was clicking off shots in a manner that reminded Nyx of the way his boyfriend handled his guns. Without a doubt
Prompto had a great eye for detail, but he stared transfixed when the blond showed him the shots he’d taken, framing the Citadel with the shower of light behind it.


The gun-slinger shrugged, “just shoot what I see.”

Nyx shook his head at how blasé Prom was about his skills, the man could do it professionally if he wanted, but to him it was a hobby and like everything he did well, he played it down. The Commander knew it stemmed from Prom’s belief that he was never really good enough, attention was something that embarrassed him and he would laugh off compliments or question if they were really meant. It made Nyx feel conflicted, part of Prom’s charm was his lack of ego, yet he so wished that the blond was more confident in himself. Well, not exactly that, Prom knew he could shoot and had a quiet pride in his ability to hit whatever he aimed at, but he would never come out and say that he could do it to other people. There was not an arrogant bone in his slight form. Nyx had heard his lover when he was at the range practising, the mutter of ‘I never miss,’ that came when target after target would be hit dead centre, regardless of how the targets were set up, moving or not, whichever hand he decided to use. Prom teaching at the range had made him be a little more up front about how good he was and Nyx found himself cheering about that silently, genuinely proud of how the blond handled his students.

As they drew closer to the Citadel, Nyx wrapped his arm around Prom’s shoulders and they bumped their hips together as they walked.

“Ya know, I think ya should have like a…showing or something, let people see all the cool photos you take,” Nyx said and Prom stopped short, gapping at him.

“Huh? Who’d want to see my shit? I’m not good enough for that, babe.”

“Are you serious? Your stuff is amazing, I’m not the only one who thinks so, Prom,” he turned to face a confused Prompto who was shuffling his feet in that way that told Nyx volumes of how unsure his lover was. “You could do one with the shots from the trip with Noct, or if you don’t want people to see those, maybe all the scenery stuff you do, like those ones you just took. I bet you could sell heaps if you wanted to.” They were walking through the subway near the Citadel now and Nyx stopped at an old poster advertising a gallery that had an event titled ‘The Empty Throne’, “you could do something like that, Prom. Maybe call it ‘The Dawn King’ or something about the renewal of Lucis, or…hell, babe, anything you wanted.”

Prom scratched his head and looked at the ground at his feet. “You mean it, I mean, really, mean it?”

‘Yeah, I do, you have mad skills, babe,” Nyx tilted Prom’s face up so he could meet his eyes, “really.”

“Um, ok, I’ll think about it,” he muttered.

“No, do it, if you think about it, you’ll convince yourself that it’s not a good idea,” Nyx told him, “ask Iggy, see if he thinks it’s a good idea, I reckon he’ll jump at it, make it part of his cultural revival stuff.” The Commander smiled gently down into Prom’s blushing face. “You’re good, really, really good, Prom.”

“You are biased,” Prom grumbled.

“Nope, well, maybe a bit, but it’s still true. Promise me you’ll talk to Iggy about it.”
“Not gonna give up ‘till I do are ya?” Prom grinned up at him and gave a little laugh.

Nyx winked at him, “maybe it’s coz I want everyone to see how awesome my boyfriend is.”

Prom huffed again and they continued out of the subway and up into the street to the Citadel gates, nodding to the city guard stationed there. They were waved through and wandered up the plaza to the main doors.

The blond paused and looked up the steps. “After Noct walked up those steps I thought…I thought that was it for him, that someday he might be remembered as the one that brought back the sun, but here we are…he’s back and I have you and…life is great, ya know?”

Nyx felt speared to the spot by Prom’s violet eyes, “yeah, I know what ya mean, for fucks sake, I’m alive and…I’ve got you, couldn’t be better,” he scratched his head and shuffled. SAY IT, tell him. He took a deep breath and…chicken out, again.

Prom flicked his gaze away and tugged Nyx up the steps, going quiet. Nyx’s stomach fell through the floor. It was getting ridiculous. Prom saved him from his inner monologue by dragging him to the dining hall and getting them something to drink. They were snuggled in a booth in a corner of the room, able to watch everyone else but still a little removed and private. Nyx began to feel a little more comfortable and leaned into Prom, wanting to be close and take away the anxiety that was eating him. His boyfriend always had a soothing effect on him when he got this way. Considering how confident he was in the rest of his life, feeling unsure was disconcerting and confusing.

The stupidest part of it all was that it was Prompto who strived to make everyone feel happy and good, yet it was telling the sunshine man that he loved him that had his gut in knots.

He found himself watching the way Prom’s mouth moved as he smiled and told some silly story about almost getting Noctis killed for a photo, how he’d not even told the then Prince that what they were going to do might be dangerous, but he’d convinced him to tag along and then at the last minute made Noct stand in front of the gigantic monster in the lake holding fucking mushrooms.

“You are bloody mad,” Nyx laughed.

“Here, look, I got proof,” Prom chuckled and pulled out his camera, he flicked through the collection and found the one he was talking about, holding it out for Nyx to see. Noct was standing on a rock, arms crossed, obviously uncomfortable and about to bolt while the massive beast was lumbering through the water behind him. “Literally two seconds after I took that we were hightailing it out of there, Noct was pissed and I thought he was gonna kill me, couldn’t help but stir him up and tell him the shot coulda been better,” Prom giggled and wiped his eyes. “He still gives me shit about it now, haha, and Iggy had no freakin’ idea what we were doing either, he’d kill me if he knew I’d put Noct in so much danger for a photo, but I just couldn’t help myself.”

“haha, Prom, you are nuts!” Nyx ruffled his hair and shook his head, “is there anything you won’t do for a good photo?”

“Nope, check this out,” the blond flicked through some more to show Nyx another photo, this one of Prom taking a selfie as a dualhorn bore down on him in the background.

“What the actual fuck?” Nyx stared at the photo, “balls, dude, that thing looks like it’s about to kill you.”

Prom sniggered, “I can’t tell ya how many times Gladio would shout at me when I did shit like that, or when I’d grab Noct in the middle of us battling some badass beast and take a shot of us, like this,”
Prom showed him another shot, Noct popping up behind the blond as he held the camera out and Nyx could make out Gladio swinging his greatsword around while Iggy was throwing his daggers at a coeurl in the background.

“Gods, Prom, I’m in love with a complete nutter,” he laughed and then his mouth dropped open when he realised what he’d said. He hadn’t been thinking about it, it just slipped out and Prom was twisted around to look at him, his eyes wide. “Umm…”

“Oh, shut up and kiss me, you idiot,” Prom grabbed his face and planted his lips on Nyx’s, silencing his stuttering. When the blond pulled back, he fixed his blue eyes on the Commander’s and searching his gaze, “you know I love you too, right?” Nyx could only nod and chew at his lip.

“I…ah…I wanted to do this different…find the right time…”

“Aww, we’re not the romantic types, babe, if you were waiting for that sort of thing, you woulda never said it,” Prom teased him and Nyx grumbled, giving the blond some serious side eye.

“Yeah, but blurtin it out like that…” he started before Prom cut him off.

“Nope, not gonna let ya do this to yourself, I would rather the way it happened than you work yourself up over it, ya know, the way you have been…”

Nyx pursed his lips, disgruntled by his boyfriend’s insight, “maybe.”

“Dude, we made fun of Gladio suckin’ lemons, you’ve been way worse. And, babe, if you never said it, it wouldn’t matter, I know how you feel, how I feel, that’s all that’s important.”

“Yeah, what gave it away?” Nyx asked.

“You’re kinda Mr Obvious, babe.”

Nyx rolled his eyes and wrapped his arms around his lover, “hey, Prom?”

“Yeah…”

“I love you.”

Prom smirked up at him, “I love you too.”

IGNIS

Dawn was breaking and Ignis had not slept.

He lay with his arms around the King, still sheathed inside the King. They’d made love all night, reaching out for each other again and again after that first time, not wanting the intensity to wane. Noct was rubbing his cheek against Ignis’ chest, both men too exhausted to move much at this point and the Duke honestly didn’t think they’d be capable of much today. He ached all over and was sure that Noct was the same.

He’d have to make some excuse for them both, cancel appointments so they could rest, soothe sore muscles and as much as he hated such subterfuge, it couldn’t make him regret a single second of the night. His eyes felt like someone had thrown sand into them, his lips bruised, his throat scratchy, he
could feel the welts Noct had left down his back, his thighs burning, arms like spaghetti, and he was sure he looked like death warmed up, yet it was all worth it. He looked down into the deep pools that were Noct’s eyes, a deep sapphire that he often got lost in. He loved the way the colour would change and shift with the light, sometimes a dark stormy blue, others the blue of a summer sky, or like now, the beautiful blue of a clear sapphire. And those eyes, peeking up at him through thick dark lashes, framed in a pale, clear complexion, with his raven hair falling messily about his face, Ignis could wax lyrical about them all day.

He brought his hand up lazily to stroke Noct’s jawline, down the sharp line of his nose, over the little mole to the left of his mouth, to the other above his right eyebrow, and finally down to the perfect bow of his lips. He paused there, running his fingers over top and bottom as Noct pursed them to kiss his fingers and it drew Ignis’ gaze back to his eyes, sleepily blinking at him. Oh, how lovely he is. The King captured his hand in his own and pressed feather light kisses to his palm and then over the ring on his finger sending a shiver down his spine as their eyes met and held again. Entranced as he had always been by this glorious creature, even before he’d known what his feelings were for Noct, he’d been drawn to him, moth to flame.

Ignis had been fifteen when he realised he was gay, fifteen when he admitted to himself that he loved the Prince and thought it was a hopeless love that couldn’t be returned, shouldn’t be spoken of, and never to be acted on. He had tried to pull away, had spent three years denying his feelings, hiding them under duty, even though what he did for the Prince went above and beyond what a normal retainer or advisor would do. He always cloaked it in his desire to do well, to be the best he could be for Noctis. He had tried to get over it, tried to push the thoughts of the Prince out of his head, but it was the one thing he’d never been able to do. Attempting to date other people had been an abysmal failure, when those others had tried to kiss him, he’d felt nothing of what he had heard one was supposed to feel, no spark, no heartrate climbing, their ineffectual groping nothing more than an annoyance that had turned to a sort of shame when the others had become a little miffed that he wasn’t responding to their touches. The only one who could evoke that sort of response from him was Noctis, sweet, gentle Noctis. Crown Prince and therefore out of his reach.

By the time he turned eighteen, Ignis had resigned himself to never finding anyone else who could make him feel the way Noct did, make his body react to a light touch, touches that Ignis would go over in his mind in the shower of a morning, or at night alone in his bed with no-one to hear the strangled moans falling from his lips as he pleased himself to thoughts of Noctis. He’d had to stop reaching out for the Prince, stop laying his hand on his shoulder or resting his hand on his back, the desire to touch more becoming a need that he was finding difficult to control. If it hadn’t been so painful to think about he would have considered a change in career, but being away from the Prince was a worse prospect than being around him and not being able to kiss him or run his hands through his raven locks. At least being around Noct mean that he could protect him, it was the only comfort he had.

So, when the Prince had found him crying, drinking and singing sad songs in his apartment, lamenting his unrequited feelings, his reason flew out the window at the first touch of those soft lips on his own. Every single objection he had, he found he couldn’t voice, he couldn’t even think what they were, his brain was a blank canvas that kisses with Noctis were painting over. That Noct loved him, obliterated everything else. His little raven seemed to know just what the situation called for, proving himself to be far wiser than anyone would have guessed under that shy, apathetic exterior. Noct had coaxed Ignis into a meeting with his father, assuring him that Regis would be fine with them being together, and wonder upon wonder, he was.

Ignis had felt like he’d been given the most fabulous of treasures. He’d felt blessed by the Astrals that he was able to touch, kiss, hold the Prince, tell him he loved him, hear the words returned. When they had finally given in to the intensity of their desire for one another, Ignis had thought his
heart might burst. He’d discovered that he couldn’t get enough of Noct, sex being something they knew they would get to eventually, but the reality of making love to each other was overwhelmingly beautiful. The complete trust they had in each other, the surrender they experienced, the absolute pleasure of being one, was addictive. Ignis had not known he was capable of such lust.

Losing his sight in Altissia had wounded his soul more than he had ever admitted, he thought he would never get to see Noctis again, felt that he should pull away, he couldn’t be what he needed to be to protect his lover, now King. Gladio’s words had cut to the bone worse than his wounds, but Noct would hear none of it. He had found Ignis cooped up in the train cabin and had taken hold of his hands, running them over his face and telling the advisor to learn to see with his hands and fingers. But even that had been taken from him when the Crystal claimed the King.

He’d cursed the Astrals then, railing at them for stealing the beauty and grace that was his lover. And then he had learnt the full role the Chosen King was to fulfil and he hated them for it. He was to lose the love of his life forever, all because they had made a mistake in using Ardyn to clear the scourge. Ten long years he had waited to hear Noct’s voice again, only to hear that he was resigned to his fate. Ignis had heard the emotion that Noctis was trying to keep at bay and it tore at his whole being that this had to be and there was nothing he could do to change it. He couldn’t protect him. He would lose him all over again and it would be forever.

When the dawn broke, Ignis wanted to die.

In the weeks after the first dawn, he made his plans. He would help Lucis get back on its feet and then he would withdraw, hide himself away, wait for death to take him. His reason for living was gone and he felt he’d done enough, he’d given too much. Prompto tried to lift him out of his despair, yet it wasn’t something the blond was capable of, the gunner was grieving too. When Monica had asked the three men to assess the damage to the Crown City he had wanted to say no, yet the tug of needing to say a last goodbye made him agree finally. Before he left Lestallum, he’d given away his rooms, he would never return to them, his plan had evolved, Lucis didn’t need a man who was so broken, they would be fine without him. Talcott had been confused as to where he would be and Ignis had lied, telling the young man that he was going to move to Hammerhead and would be more useful there, close to the City. He’d made the trek to Insomnia in virtual silence beside Prompto and Gladio, pleased that they didn’t try to draw him into conversation after their first attempts had been rebuffed so soundly. Ignis didn’t want to give away what his real intentions were. He would help the other two with their reports for Monica and then once he had said his goodbye to Noctis he would make his way to the throne room, rest his head where his lover had sacrificed everything and take his own life.

He spent an hour or more in Noct’s old rooms, running his hand over things that his lover had touched, making his way to the bedroom, trailing his fingers over clothing that had been left behind and Ignis thought he could just make out the delicate scent of Noct’s cologne, a gift from himself, lingering in the fabric. He’d let the tears fall, let the ache of loss wash over him as he whispered his goodbye. Finally, he had started to make his way to the throne room, but was intercepted by Prompto, the gunner’s voice thick with emotion, telling him there was something going on in the plaza before the Citadel steps. Resigned to putting his plan on hold for a moment he let Prompto lead him down to the steps. When they halted Ignis had been confused by the odd behaviour of the gun-slinger, who was bouncing beside him.

“He’s back, Iggy, please, just wait, he’s coming,” Prom had whispered.

When Ignis heard the tired footfalls ascending the stairs, his ears were surely deceiving him, they were too real, this had to be some sort of delusion. It was the touch of that familiar hand that made
him crumble, his breath catching in his throat. And then that voice, telling him things his brain wouldn’t register. All his remaining senses told him that Noct was standing there with him, holding him, saying ‘I love you, marry me,’ and then asking him if he was ready to see again.

“Truly?” He’d used his fingers to search over the King’s face, feeling those familiar lips. “You are back, they let you come back, you are truly alive?”

“Yes, Ignis, I am here, they gave me the choice and asked what it was that I wanted in return for my sacrifice.” He could hear the tears that Noctis was trying to hold back, “You will see again Ignis, you will be here to see the world and see each dawn and probably see me stuff it all up.” And Ignis had smiled for the first time in what felt like an eternity

“Well… You will have me there beside you to make sure that does not occur Majesty.” Not the most intelligent or appropriate thing to say, however Ignis could not think straight at that moment, he still felt he must be dreaming. Noct asked him if he was ready, did he want privacy for this, but Ignis just wanted to see him again.

“No, no, Noctis, I want to see your face, I want to see my King, it’s been too long,” he lowered his voice so only Noct could hear, “my little raven.”

What came next was still confusing to Ignis, he’d felt the cold, then an odd warmth that spread through his whole body and then Noct was begging him to open his eyes.

The first thing Ignis saw after over ten years of darkness was the bright light of Noctis Lucis Caelum smiling at him and it took his breath away, he was gloriously beautiful. That soft smile was answered by one of his own and he felt complete, whole. Ignis drank in the sight of his King before him like a man who’d been deprived of water, his memories overlaid with the reality of the changes he could now see, all he could do was smile and stare, mapping Noct’s features, etching them into his mind, his reason for living restored to him. When he eventually tore his eyes away he’d found Prompto crying beside him, his eyes on Ignis and his gaze said he knew what Ignis had intended to do. No-one ever gave Prompto enough credit, he was far more intelligent and knowing than anyone would ever guess. Ignis had ducked his head, hiding from that perceptiveness and turned his gaze back to Noct, a reverence in his look that he’d never be able to hide.

Ignis realised that this was something that he would always do now, savour the gift of Noctis, of being able to see him and he would never take that for granted. Fierce in his loyalty and protection, enduring in his love and desire for the man that lay entwined in his arms. He would never let anything come between them, nothing would ever be strong enough to divide them. Noct was his and he was Noctis’, always.

He was brought out of reverie by the chiming of the alarm on his phone, groaning and forcing tired muscles into action he finally withdrew from Noct and fumbled for his phone, the sing-song chime grating on his nerves. The King flopped onto the bed beside him, too exhausted to move and Ignis could see he was fighting the urge to sleep. Ignis found the number for his assistant and sent off a message informing him of his intention to rest, due to illness, the best he could come up with under the circumstances. He added that the King was also ill and that they both required complete peace and quiet, only to be contacted by message and that if anything dire came up, they were to email him the details and he would assess what needed to be done. He felt a little guilty about what he was doing, but he knew that neither he nor Noct would be able to function. He sent Monica a message to ask her to deal with the delegates from Accordo and pass on their apologies for not being there in person, to explain that they were both ill and were unable to attend. His next message was for Gladio, asking him to keep everyone away and to ask if he could arrange food to be sent up from the kitchens. The more he thought about hiding away with his lover for the day, the more he felt it was
alright, they’d been working almost non-stop since the King had returned, had accomplished a great deal. A single day could not hurt, surely.

He poked Noct in the side, earning him a quiet grumble, “I’m going to run us a bath, my love, put that tub to the test at last, should help soothe these aches, stay awake, please.”

“No makin’ any promises, Specs,” Noct mumbled.

“We have the day off to sleep, so stay awake, I don’t think I could carry you in this state.”

Noct rolled over and quirked a brow up, “a day off? Are you picking up my bad habits?”

“Little shit,” Ignis threw over his shoulder as he limped to the bathroom, “I’d be falling asleep through every meeting today, even with Ebony.” He turned the taps on and sat naked on the edge of the bath, pouring something fragrant into the water, watching the swirl of the liquid in the bath as it filled. Noct padded into the bathroom and leaned down to give him a kiss on the cheek, groaning as he straightened.

“Gods, if I didn’t feel so sore I would have said last night was a dream,” the King said as he tilted his head, stretching his neck. Ignis hummed in response, it had been extremely dreamlike, the magical energy crackling around them only added to the thought.

When the bath was ready they both lowered themselves into the warmth of the water, Noct settling between his legs and laying against his chest. Ignis sighed deeply letting the water and the comfort of Noct flush to his chest soothe the numerous aches spread through his body. He sloshed the water over their bodies washing away the sweat that coated them, slowly rubbing his hands over Noct’s arms and chest, both almost dozing in the warmth. Ignis’ eyes felt heavy, feeling like he could slip into sleep right there. Noct laid his head on his shoulder, relaxing.

“Better, my love?”

“Yeah, feels good,” Noct’s voice was a hoarse whisper against his neck. The two men drifted in and out, holding onto consciousness.

Ignis’ eyes drifted open and he shot up half out of the bath, dislodging Noct making him splutter and then gasp as he saw what had startled his husband. Gentiana standing at the end of the bath.

“Bloody hell,” Ignis shouted, “are you trying to give us heart attacks?”

Gentiana shook her head sadly, flickering in and out of view, she held her hand out and her mouth moved as if she were speaking, but neither of them could hear anything.

“What? What’s going on? I can’t hear you,” Noct sounded frantic, Shiva had never appeared like this before, something had to be wrong. “Gentiana, SHIVA! What is it?”

The Astral shook her head, her eyes pleading, tears like icicles flowing down her cheeks. And then she vanished leaving both men shocked and dripping.

“What on Eos was that about?” Ignis asked Noct, the King frowning as he stepped out of the tub reaching for a towel. He passed it to the Duke and grabbed another for himself, not answering and Ignis felt dread wash over him.

“That’s the second Astral that’s visited me and couldn’t speak.”

“What?” Ignis was dumbfounded by his husband’s statement. “The second Astral?”
“Uhhh, yeah, Bahamut has turned up in a couple of dreams, but I didn’t think too much of it, I thought they were just dreams, but now with Shiva…” Noct trailed off, waving his hand trying to express his thoughts.

“Shit,” Ignis swore softly, “I think something is very wrong.”

CROWE

Crowe, Ignis and Talcott sat in the library of the Citadel, pouring over parchment and tomes older than anything the mage had ever seen before. They were turning pages carefully, the books delicate from age, the ink faded and difficult to make out. Crowe’s six month pregnant body complaining at having to sit for so long and she rested her hand on the small of her back, massaging the knot she felt there. Ignis had removed his glasses several times to rub at his nose and clean the lenses of the dust that was stirred each time a page was turned. Talcott was recording any information they found, which at this point was precious little.

They’d been at it for two days now, the King trying to reach out to any Astral he could, Bahamut had not entered his dreams and Shiva had only flickered in and out as she had before, still unable to make herself heard. Noctis had even tried Ramah, the Fulgurian being somewhat more willing to help Noct in the past, but nothing had come of it. Trying to summon Titan had given him a headache, much as it had previously. As a last resort, he’d tried to call Leviathan only to be met with overwhelming silence. It was beyond frustrating, Crowe could feel it thrumming through the King and Duke, both men tiredly staring at each other in defeat.

When she’d been called to their suite two days earlier, they’d been obviously exhausted, dark circles beneath their eyes, shoulders slumped. It was a stark contrast to what she’d felt through the night. She had no wish to embarrass the two men so had not mentioned the magic she had felt swirling around the Citadel throughout the night, the intensity of the love and passion that had flowed about her. That was something private and Crowe knew that telling them that she had felt it would make them uncomfortable. She was sure that it had been felt by everyone else in the immediate vicinity, although not many would know that the desire for human contact was directly attributed to an incredibly passionate night between the King and Duke. She idly wondered if there would be an influx of children in nine months and found herself mentally chastising herself. She needed to focus.

The main problem was that they were unsure as to what they were looking for. Anything regarding the Astrals was to be noted, what importance each piece of information held was another matter, something they would have to ascertain later. Crowe knew Noctis and Ignis were hoping that Shiva would be able to contact them again, or perhaps the Draconian, and give them something to work with, but until then they were stuck. The Duke had insisted they compile their information in groupings, including details of where they had found it in case they needed to reference it later. Every little scrap was noted by Talcott, who was trying to keep the papers before him in some semblance of order, but Crowe could see that they young man was faltering after two solid days of sitting in the library, in the same chair.

Crowe got up laboriously from her chair, the need to walk around for a moment taking over. She felt Ignis’ eyes on her and turned to give him a weak smile, signally that she was alright, if uncomfortable with the swell of her stomach held before her. She paced back and forth for a few minutes and watched as Ignis scratched at the paper beside him, before handing it to Talcott.
“Anything interesting?” she asked him.

Ignis removed his glasses and cleaned them, “a treatise on the Astral’s weaponry, it may be pertinent, it may not be, it’s a little disconcerting not knowing what will actually be useful.” Talcott snorted beside him and Ignis threw him an annoyed look. Crowe just grinned.

“I think we need a break, my brain is mush,” the mage said, pulling her phone out. The Duke nodded and Talcott was up out of his seat in a flash, heading for the door. He was as dedicated as the other two but he really was beginning to feel cooped up in the library, being a social person, the need to just chatter to someone other than Crowe and Ignis overtaking everything else the moment a break was proposed. Ignis rolled his eyes and she laughed as she sent Gladio a message, letting him know they were having a break. She knew if he were able he’d be there soon to spend some time with her. The Duke had his phone to his ear and she noted the soft smile on his face, no prizes for guessing who he was speaking with. She was proved right just a few minutes later when Gladio entered escorting the King, Noct moving across to Ignis quickly to take his hand, nodding to Crowe as he swept past. Crowe stifled a grin, those two really couldn’t keep their hands off each other, it was all little touches in public, a kiss to a cheek, fingers twined together, the staff of the Citadel all knowing that to interrupt the two men of an evening once they had retired to their rooms was to be avoided. The nightly guard rotation was now stationed well down the hall near the elevator instead of directly outside the doors to the suite, it allowed them more privacy and saved the guards from embarrassment.

She felt Gladio’s large hand stroking up and down her back, infinitely protective and soothing, immediately relaxing into his touch. She smiled when Nyx and Prompto entered leading a few kitchen staff carrying a platter and plates and cutlery, Ignis raising his brow at food being brought into the library, no doubt questioning whether it was wise. She chuckled when he moved the precious books and papers to another table, making sure they were safely out of the way.

“Is this turning into a party?” Crowe asked Gladio, who grinned at her indulgently.

“Hardly the appropriate setting,” came Ignis’ drawl from his place at the table beside Noctis, “Prompto don’t touch that,” he added giving the gunner a stern look as he made to pick up an ancient parchment. The blond pursed his lips and then stuck his tongue out at the Duke making Nyx laugh and pull him away from his exploring.

“It’s just a bit of paper, Iggy,” Prompto said sitting himself down with a plop.

“It is a one thousand year old account of a sighting of Bahamut, not ‘just a bit of paper’, and I will flay you alive if you get wine on it,” Ignis warned him.

Prompto raised his hands in a conciliatory gesture, showing Ignis he wasn’t touching anything and Noct and Nyx laughed. Crowe settled herself back in her chair and Gladio sat beside her, reaching to fill a plate for her, then one for himself. She ate heartily and then shot Nyx a disgusted look when she noticed him watching her amusement plastered on his face.

“You say one word about me eating for two and I will smack you into next week, or turn you into a toad, Hero,” she growled at him, Gladio snorting into his wine glass.

“That would be ‘toadally’ ridiculous, Crowe,” Ignis put in, making Noct groan.

“I don’t know what you mean,” the Duke said hiding a smile behind his glass as Noct rolled his eyes.
“Dude, are you ‘hopping’ mad?” Prompto giggled.

“Crowe, while you’re turning Nyx into a toad, do Prom too,” Noct said, pointing his fork at the gunner who was trying unsuccessfully to look innocent.

Crowe laughed and continued eating, Gladio chuckling beside her. The mage really felt like she was part of the inner circle with these men, getting to see a side of them that they generally hid from the public, a silly, genial side, teasing each other. She was pleased that they had welcomed both her and Nyx so easily. Prom and Nyx were elbowing each other, sniggering over something, the King teasing his Shield, Ignis making queries about Crowe’s pregnancy, the conversation flowing easily, everyone included. The meal was over far too soon, a bright spark in the midst of a dull day. Gladio excused himself to continue training with the new officers for the army, while Crowe found she needed yet another toilet break, something she discovered was a bane of the pregnant woman. She left the four men laughing around the table and headed out a side door to find the closest restroom.

Crowe re-entered the library quietly and halted as she was about to pass between to bookshelves that concealed her from the men in the room, a low moan making her frown. She peeked around the corner and her eyes went wide as she took in the state of the King, Duke, Gunner and Commander. Ignis was pressed up against the table with Prompto flush against his chest, the blond gunner nibbling the Duke’s ear while Noct and Nyx were sharing what was obviously a heated kiss beside them.

“No fair, babe, share Noct,” Prom whined and tugged Nyx away from the King as Ignis chuckled.

“Nuh huh, more,” was Nyx’s low response as he chased after Noct’s lips, only to be pulled away by the Duke who pulled him close and thrust his tongue into the Commander’s mouth. She heard another low moan as Prompto settled himself between Noct’s legs and stroked the King’s chest, watching the other two fighting for dominance. Well, shit. This was something she really wasn’t meant to see. Crowe pressed herself flat against the bookshelf and tried to reconcile what she had seen and was still hearing.

“There was something very familiar in the way they were all behaving, it spoke to Crowe of previous encounters, and she certainly didn’t want to make her presence known when they were like this, she backed up and silently made her way back to the door, opening it and closing it loudly to announce herself.

“Ignis, do you mind if I call it a day? Don’t think my ass can cope with sitting in that chair for the rest of the day,” she called out as she made her way back between the bookcases, relieved to see that they four of them had rearranged themselves around the table, but now she could see that Prom was blushing furiously and not looking at anyone, devoting himself to his wine glass, Nyx was watching the blond closely, his own face a little flushed. Noct and Iggy were shooting each other heated glances, the Duke’s normally perfectly styled hair a little out of place, like he had tried to fix it quickly, the tips of his ears pink.

Ignis cleared his throat and looked up as she rounded the corner, “no, that’s perfectly fine, Crowe, go rest,” his voice still holding some of that husky quality she’d inadvertently heard moments before. “I think we could all do with some time off from this, we aren’t exactly making much progress, perhaps Gladio would like the afternoon off too,” Ignis added and she noted the looks the three other men gave him, decidedly hungry looks.
“Sounds like a plan, Ignis, I might just drag him away somewhere nice, have fun you lot,” she couldn’t help but add as she collected her jacket and left the library via the main door.

Just before she closed the door behind her, she heard Nyx whisper furiously, “that was close, guys.”

One thing Crowe had discovered about being pregnant was that she was incredibly horny, despite how ungainly her body was becoming. What she had just witnessed made her heart race and she felt flushed, pulling out her phone she sent a message to her husband.

CROWE: get yourself to our rooms ASAP

CROWE: and get naked

GLADIO: WHAT???

CROWE: just do it, we have the afternoon off

GLADIO: um, ok, give me a few minutes

CROWE: you have 10,

CROWE: don’t make me wait long

GLADIO: <3

Crowe wove her way through corridors and to the elevators, still flushed and waited impatiently as she climbed higher up the Citadel to the floor where she and Gladio resided. She was very pleased to find her husband laying back on their bed, stark naked and stroking himself. The sight made her mouth water and she started shedding her own clothes, whipping her shirt over her head, the loose pants she’d taken to wearing slipped down over her hips easily. Climbing up onto the bed she nestled beside her husband who immediately helped her out of the rest of her clothing, running his large warm hands over her bare flesh. She threw her head back as Gladio suckled on one breast then the other, alternating back and forth, his hand gliding down over her swollen stomach and between her legs.

“Gods, you’re so wet…” he moaned as he slipped a finger into her, she bucked up against his digit, needing so much more. He slid another in, fucking her with his fingers, providing her some relief from the burning need she was feeling. When he wiped his thumb over her clit she writhed and cried out and Gladio groaned his appreciation. “Fuck…” he whispered hoarsely and moved between her open thighs, Crowe reached down to tug on his heavy dick, guiding him closer to where she wanted him. She wrapped her legs around him and hooked them behind, pulling him into her with one swift push, arching her back on the bed as he stilled above her.

“More, more,” she whined, pleading with him to give her what she needed, she didn’t want slow or gentle, she just needed him to impale her, fuck her into the mattress. He started to snap his hips back and forth, a punishing pace, sweat beading on his skin and she placed her hands flat on his chest, feeling his heart racing beneath her palms, gasping with each thrust. She was throbbing with the need to come, pulsing around his girth as it was pounding in and out, clutching him tight as she felt her body climbing closer and closer. Gladio grunting and gasping as he reached his own peak, Crowe crying out as she came around him, her thighs gripping him tight as he spilled inside her. He slumped down onto his hands, holding himself above her, careful of crushing her under his weight as she panted below.

“Damn…” he groaned pulling out and flopping down on the bed beside her.
“Mmmm, I needed that…” she reached out her hand and combed her fingers through his sweaty hair, pulling him close for a searing kiss. “I love you,” she whispered into his mouth, stroking his chest, down his abs. He groaned as her hands found his hip and traced lazy circles.

“You’re not done, are ya?”

“Nope…”

“Astrals, wife, you’re gonna kill me,” he moaned as she gripped him in her fist.

IGNIS

Ignis wiped the sweat from his eyes, replacing his glasses on the bridge of his nose and pushed his hair out of his face.

He’d managed to find a little time to train some of the Lucian Glaives in the finer use of polearms, showing them how he had adapted his technique with blades to finesse his movements with the longer lance. Long sweeping arcs and using the lance as something to balance himself on as he propelled his body up and flipped over it to land behind an opponent, then using the weapon to take out their feet from under them. He showed them how to use it as an extension of their own arms, or as a spear, the blade on the end swishing through the air as he described large arc and then shifted to swing it behind his back, creating a defensive space around his body. Planting the tip in the ground he spun around the lance and landed lightly, twisting it around over his head to bring it down on an imaginary opponent.

He stood upright, holding the lance out perpendicular to his body and sent it away with a flick of his wrist, blue crystalline sparks showering around the space where it had been. He bowed to the Glaives assembled before him and beckoned Nyx closer from where he was waiting.

“Nyx Ulric is an expert with the smaller blades, he uses his Kukris as an extension of his hands and I would like you all to watch very carefully as we spar. Dagger work is more akin to a dance between you and your opponent, you will not have time to study their moves, so it requires a certain level of proficiency which brings instinct to the fore, as you become more adept, you will find you can anticipate their movements and react accordingly. I confess that I much prefer these smaller blades, they can be thrown at a target, or indeed kicked, and using the armiger can be retrieved without entering the danger zone. While not an expert, I am somewhat proficient enough to wield them with skill, even when I was blind, finding that I could listen for the movements of my enemy,” he informed the Glaives.

Nyx laughed, “don’t let him fool you, guys, he’s the best I’ve ever come up against.”

Ignis smirked at the Commander as he called his favourite blades to his hands. “We could always make it more interesting?”

“How?” Nyx asked, frowning.

“Does anyone have a scrap of fabric we can use as a blindfold?” he asked the group, one young woman stepping forward pulling a scarf from around her neck. “Ahh, that will do nicely, thank you. Would you tie it for me, please.” Removing his glasses and handing them off to another Glaive he bent his head down to allow the Glaive to effectively blind him, pausing for a moment to orient
himself, listening intently and feeling the air move around him. The gravel on the ground would alert him to any movement Nyx made with his feet, air currents swirling giving him notice of the blades moving through the air, the slight whistle they made as they came close. Knowing how Nyx moved would also assist him in this demonstration.

“Ready?” Nyx asked, giving away his position and distance from Ignis. Taking position, he nodded and waited for the Commander to make his first move. He may not have done this for a while, but he’d had ten years to learn how to wield his daggers without sight. The collective inhaling breath of the Glaives gave him extra warning of Nyx’s approach and he was able to hear the whistle of the Kukris as they descended, enabling him to bring his own blades up to defend. Their blades engaged and the scrape of gravel alerted him to Nyx trying to spin around behind. He countered with a spin of his own and with a swipe of his blade in one fist made the Commander jump back and swear softly. It made him smile and move to engage again.

What followed was a demonstration of skill that the Glaives were frankly astounded by and Ignis was pleased that he had not lost any of this particular ability. It would still be useful if he found himself in a fight in the dark. When they finished both men were breathing hard and the Glaives applauded. Ignis pulled the blindfold from his eyes and blinked to readjust to the light reclaiming his glasses and returning the scarf.

“It would be wise to remember that you will not always fight in a well lit room or arena like this one, if you were to find yourselves attacked in a dark environment, being able to listen and feel what is going on around you will be a useful skill to add to your repertoire. As I said earlier, instinct will be your main guide with both polearm and daggers. Thank you for your attendance.” He inclined his head to the Lucian Glaives and then turned to Nyx as they shuffled out. “Thank you for your help, it is always easier to show them blade work than to instruct verbally.”

Nyx grinned, “you’re kinda scary, you know?”

Ignis quirked his brow up and glanced at the Commander, “I do not intend to be, I assure you.” He paused, “although it is useful keeping certain people in line,” he allowed himself to grin a little.

“Yeah, and fuckin’ sexy as hell,” Nyx laughed.

“Flatterer,” Ignis teased right back. He tossed a towel to Nyx and grabbed one for himself to wipe away some of the sweat from his face and neck. Picking up his phone he draped the towel around his neck and opened his messages finding one from his husband asking him if he would meet him in their rooms after the demonstration. It made him flush, Noct telling him not to shower as he had plans to make him even more sweaty. And to bring Nyx, Prom would be there waiting with him. “It appears we are summoned, my dear Nyx,” he winked at the Commander, making his voice low and watched as Nyx swallowed, hearing the promise in his voice.

“Have to say, they have great timing, was gonna ask if we could commandeer the showers and get them down here,” Nyx gave him a little grin.

The relationship between the four men was an easy one, there was no jealousy and there was no question of creating tension by separate assignations, it just wasn’t something they had ever wanted. If anything were to happen it was with all of them, or it was the two couples on their own. If one felt the need, they would voice it and see if the others were in agreement, if not, then it simply didn’t happen and no-one was uncomfortable with that. They had all agreed early on that they did was for fun, and if it was no longer fun for one, it would not happen. It had to be that way or problems would occur and Ignis and Noct loved Prom and were finding that Nyx was now starting to occupy a similar place in their hearts that the gunner held, their own relationship was an entity on its own, as was the relationship of Prom and Nyx. It worked for them all, who knew why exactly,
but it did.

As Ignis strolled through the Citadel with Nyx they spoke about general matters, knowing that their positions garnered them a certain amount of attention and they had no wish to bring notice to any behaviour that would cause comment. Both men were pounced upon as they came through the doors of the King and Duke’s suite, dragged to the bedroom. Ignis found himself laughing at how enthusiastic the pair were to see them, his laugh silenced by Noct’s mouth and very quickly he was moaning quietly under the touches of his husband as Prom made a complete mess of Nyx.

“I gather you missed us,” Ignis gasped between kisses as Noct pulled his sweat pants down.

“Mmmmm,” Prom hummed in response as he took Nyx’s cock into his mouth and sucked all the way down, the Commander groaning deeply as he flopped back on the bed.

“I…ohhh…Noct, please…I can’t be here too long…shit…” Ignis moaned as Noct groped him through his boxer briefs.

“You won’t be…” Noct whispered into his ear and Ignis melted in his grasp. “Just need a quick taste…”

And that was exactly what it was, the two other men had planned this to be a fast, furiously passionate encounter that left Nyx and Ignis in a moaning, panting mess just fifteen minutes later. Ignis rolled his husband off his softening cock and stared at him in amazement. “What brought that on?”

Noct chuckled and glanced at Prom who was slumped over Nyx, “we were talking about how Nyx gets so worked up after a session with you and it kinda developed from there, thought we’d take advantage of it.”

“Yes, well, you did that, my love,” Ignis pressed a kiss to his husband’s forehead. “I am going to shower and get back to work…as should you, all of you.”

“I left some clothes for you in there,” Noct smirked at him, “I’ll join you if you like.”

“No, you will not, I’ll never leave if you do,” the Duke admonished as he raised himself from the mess of quilts and sheets. Noct pursed his lips in annoyance and Ignis couldn’t help but kiss it away, pulling back before the King could grab him and keep him entwined on the bed. “You are expected in a meeting in half an hour, I will see you there.”

Ignis padded to the bathroom and found one of his perfectly tailored suits laid out for him, towels ready and had to smile. His husband had known he wouldn’t want to be delayed too long. He was drying his hair when Noct came in and he gave him a swift kiss, “thank you, my love.”

“Hmmm,” Noct hummed into the kiss before he jumped into the shower himself and Ignis dressed quickly, styling his hair, straightening his tie before he left the bathroom. Nyx and Prom were lazing on the bed together and he left them with a kiss each before he made his way downstairs.

Aeneas met him at the elevator and rode down with him, passing him the papers he needed to overview before his next meeting. He sighed to himself, wishing he could have stayed with his husband, but knew that he couldn’t put off his duties for long and resigned himself to a long afternoon. Noct joined him right on time and sat beside him in the Council chamber as their attendants went through the agenda. They exchanged a few glances over the afternoon as it wore on, and Ignis knew that Noct was aware that he hadn’t wanted to leave. He reached under the table
and squeezed the King’s thigh gently, a small smile playing on his lips.

The whole room was startled when Gladio rushed in and whispered in his ear, “there’s someone at the eastern gate, the guards thought he was odd, he’s being brought in, he wants an audience with the King and you, said it was important, wouldn’t give his name.”

“Hmm, did they give a description of this person?” Ignis queried the Shield.

“Yeah, tall, white hair, white coat, frowning a lot, intimidating looking apparently.”

Ignis looked up at the Shield, “well…that’s not exactly helpful, I guess we can meet him regardless, the throne room would be appropriate I believe, you will be there, yes?”

“Yeah, not likely to be anywhere else, don’t know who this guy is, there will be other guard on duty outside as well. Do you want Prom, Nyx and Crowe on hand?”

“That would be wise, perhaps, Cor, Monica and Dustin should be available nearby as well,” Ignis added as he scribbled a note and passed it to the King. Noct glanced up and nodded.

“Ladies and Gentlemen, we have an unexpected meeting to attend to, could you please finalise the contract on the automotive plant and begin working on the details of the secondary water treatment facility in our absence,” the Duke announced to the Council, throwing Cor a quick glance. Monica and Dustin were moving towards them as they stood. “Could the three of you be available, we have an unusual guest coming who has requested an audience with the King and myself, we would like for you to be nearby.”

Monica inclined her head and motioned for Cor to join her and Dustin in the antechamber to the Throne Room. Gladio was typing furiously on his phone, sending messages to the other three that they wanted near as they met with whoever it was that was coming.

“Aeneas, could you collect our horns from our suite, please, I believe they may be called for in this situation,” Ignis asked the young Glaive. Aeneas nodded and sped off to do the Duke’s bidding, knowing he didn’t have long to complete his task.

“Crowns, Ignis? Is that really necessary?” Noct asked him, hating having to wear them.

“I feel it may call for the trappings of royalty, I would rather err on the side of caution than not, my love.” He straightened Noct’s tie a touch, laying his hand over the King’s heart, a gesture of reassurance to both of them and they walked out a side door to a private hall that led directly to the Throne Room without having to go through the main chamber. Ignis drew in a deep breath as he always did before entering this room, though Noct had changed it quite significantly, it still was a room that he hated. The landing where the throne used to be was hidden behind a false wall, twin thrones now sitting on the lower landing, allowing them to be closer to those who would approach. The walls were painted in lighter tones, filigree still present, white and gold now being the dominant colours throughout the room, making it less oppressive than it had been in Regis’ day. The marble floor now softened by a long red runner that led from the doors to the first step below the thrones. Aeneas entered and held out the velvet boxes that held the horns and Ignis quickly fastened Noct’s in place before slipping his own into his hair on the left. He twisted his wedding ring nervously and took his place beside Noct, gripping his hand in his own. Gladio placed himself on Noct’s right beside the white marble throne of the King, in his place as Shield. Prompto, Nyx and Crowe were placed near the door at the rear, keeping out of sight, but still available. Crowe nodded towards the antechamber to indicate that Cor, Monica and Dustin were in place. Noct inclined his head to the guards on the main doors and the two Glaive synchronised their actions to open the doors in tandem.
Gladio swore under his breath and both Noctis and Ignis held their breath as the man who wished an audience was ushered in, his long stride bringing him to the steps quickly. Ignis glanced at the three who stood to the back of the room and could see Prom was white as a sheet under his freckles, Nyx staring confused, his gaze flickering between the guest and where they sat, frozen on their thrones, not quite believing who they were seeing.

The tall man went down on one knee, his elaborate white coat flowing out around him, his head bowed and he crossed his chest with one fist, scarred and ashy in colour, saluting the King, “your Majesty,” absolute deference in his tone. Noct sat silently, as did Ignis, “my lord Duke,” he said as he raised his head, still kneeling, one blue eye the colour of ice over a frozen lake, the other a pale mauve, fixed on the two men above him.

“Ravus…?”

Ravus Nox Fleuret bowed his head again, his white hair falling around his face, “I come bearing serious tidings, from the Astrals.”

NOCTIS

The man who knelt before him was dead, twice dead.

He’d reclaimed his father’s sword from his body in Zegnautus, later having to kill him in his daemon form. The man before him had pleaded with him to kill him, end it, it had been a sad end to a proud man from a proud family. A family that had died with him. He’d been betrothed to this man’s sister, a man who had risen to be high commander in the Niflheim army, his loyalty misplaced due to an abiding need for revenge. Ignis had told him of the footage that he and Gladio had found in Zegnautus, that the man had repented of his misguided hatred and had called Noct ‘his King’.

“No, your Majesty,” Ravus answered fixing him with his unnerving stare. If there was ever a man who had the same sort of cold composure that his husband had, it was Ravus Nox Fleuret. Noct was struck that the two men were very similar in many regards, both highly intelligent, cool under pressure, impeccable in both dress and manner, graceful and efficient. And deadly when provoked. Ravus was a man who commanded respect, had demanded absolute obedience from his subordinates and was quick to address any slight to his person. Noct had found him to be infinitely intimidating, the almost lazy drawl of his voice grated on his nerves, yet Luna had loved her brother and for that the King had wanted to understand the man before him. Even though Ravus had been part of the effort to capture himself and in turn keep Luna from performing the Covenants that gave him the Astrals blessings, he understood that it had stemmed from his desire to protect his younger sister. Lunafreya had been healing people of the scourge and then the forming of the Covenants had sapped her failing strength, it was slowly killing her, something that Noct had not known until a brief conversation within the heart of the star before he had been brought back. Initially Ravus had resented that his sister had to perform the callings for Noctis, not seeing his potential, believing him to be unworthy. It was one reason that the son of Tenebrae had tried to wear the ring, feeling that his own bloodline was acceptable. It wasn’t and his arm had burned from the fire of the ring and the old Kings disapproval.

“Luna? Is she…?” Noct paused, not sure how to phrase his question. Ravus glanced at Ignis, a quick flick of his eyes that most would have missed.

“No, your Majesty, my sister remains in the heart of the star, she did not feel that it was necessary
for her to return, her duty fulfilled. She is content. And there can only be one Oracle, such it has
been and must be, for all eternity,” Ravus intoned.

“I did not see you there when I spoke to Luna…”

“No, I was not deemed worthy…though I may join her if I fulfil my task well.”

“And what is your task, Ravus?” Ignis broke in, a frown bringing his thin brows together.

“My lord Duke, the Astrals brought me back to pass on a message to you and the Dawn King, they
require his help and have been unable to request it themselves. Their power is…weakened.” Ravus
looked very worried if Noct was any judge.

“Weakened? How?” Noct gripped Ignis’ hand tighter and tried to calm the beating of his heart.

“They imprisoned Ifrit, as you are no doubt aware they do not require corporeal form, but to
imprison Ifrit in his current state took a great deal of their power. That would not have been enough
to drain them as they have been, however something else has occurred to weaken them to such a
state that they are unable to manifest themselves to you,” explained Ravus. “Someone in Niflheim
entered the prison somehow, seeking to free the Infernian. An alarm of sorts was triggered by their
entry and the remaining Astrals converged…and were themselves trapped. The warding of the
prison effectively drained them, it is designed to do so, they had just enough power to bring me back
from my darkness and send me to you.”

“But…how can I free them if they can’t? Where are they? What do the Niffs want with the Ifrit?
He hates humans, he’s not likely to do what they want.” Noct blurted, Ignis nodding to his words in
agreement. “You can’t just control the Astrals, they’re gods, they do what they want.”

“The Infernian’s sword was recovered by them, it holds enough of his residual power to transfer to
Ifrit himself. If he were to regain his power he would be a formidable force. I suspect what remains
of the Niflheim Empire wishes to perhaps forge a Covenant of sorts with the Astral, though as you
say, Ifrit does not bear any love of humans, it may not work as they would wish, however it is
enough of a problem regardless.”

“Indeed, we have been researching anything we have been able to find pertaining to the Astrals and
their weapons work as a conduit of sorts, without his sword, Ifrit would remain weak,” was Ignis’
comment. “Even should the Niffs fail in forging a covenant with him, if he were to regain the sword,
he could free himself, I would imagine.”

“You are correct, when the other Astrals went to the prison, they hid their own weapons to
safeguard the possibility of Ifrit using them, it means they cannot utilise them to free themselves.
They were not aware that the interloper had remained within and set off an additional warding to trap
them when they entered. Apparently Ifrit gave them that information, so he has at least worked with
them to a point. I have no doubt he had his own ends in mind,” Ravus said folding his hands behind
his back as he paced back and forth.

“So where is this prison?” Noct asked, rising from his throne to descend the steps and walk with
Ravus, Ignis close on his heels. Gladio remained by the throne at parade rest, indicating that the
other three should come closer now that there was no immediate danger from their visitor.

“I am not sure, they were not clear on that point, but it is called the Pit of Eos and it is in Lucian
territory.”

“I believe we have discovered the source of that interference to your magic, Noct, Ifrit’s sword
would be able to do such a thing,” Ignis muttered. “Perhaps they were hoping to simply use the sword in that way and when it did not work as they wished they decided to take this path.”

“I think you could be right, Specs, you usually are, but they still don’t know about the rest,” Noctis replied, eying Ravus and deciding to trust him. “My magic is different now, stronger and easier for me to access, I don’t need the ring or crystal. When they tried to blunt my blood magic, they weren’t able to touch this other side of it and Crowe was able to force a way through.” He indicated the mage who had settled herself on the steps below the thrones.

Ravus turned to regard the mage and smiled ruefully, “Ahh, yes, I have heard of you.” He bent his head forward in a gesture of respect and Crowe grinned. “His Majesty is lucky to have you at his disposal.”

“No, Ravus, Crowe is not at my ‘disposal’, we don’t work like that here,” Noct put in, not quite annoyed at the implication, he knew the tall man had meant it to be a compliment, but he needed Ravus to understand that things were very different here than they had been in the Empire, he did not use people. “We help each other, I don’t order, I ask.”

“I apologise, my King,” Ravus inclined his head.

Noct waved it off, “all good, I’m sure you’ll find that no-one around here does anything they really don’t want to, especially Crowe.”

“Ain’t that the truth,” came a grumble from Gladio which caused the mage to chuckle.

“Shut it, Gladio, or I’m sure your wife won’t mind turning you into a toad,” Noct pointed at his Shield. Ravus’ eyes went wide as he witnessed the easy manner that was apparent between the King and his retainers.

“Noct, we are getting of topic, as usual. Ravus do not pay them any mind, this is simply how it is here, protocol has been somewhat relaxed since my husband began his kingship, now would you please tell us what the King can do to help free the Astrals,” Ignis said as he steered them further down the room and away from the mutterings of Gladio.

Yeah, speaking of protocol, please call me Noctis,” he paused for a moment and then pulled the horns from his hair, “here, Prom, can you take these bloody things back to Aeneas.” Ignis rolled his eyes and removed his own to hand them to the gunner who bounced up and gently took hold of the crowns carrying them carefully to the antechamber.

“Ahh, yes, freeing the Astrals will require a twofold approach. Their weapons need to be recovered so that they cannot be used by anyone else and secured. Then the King…sorry, Noctis will need to enter the Prison and disable the warding that holds the other Astrals while making sure that those that hold Ifrit are still in place. They will deal with the Niflheim forces after they are freed, Bahamut was particularly disgruntled by the temerity they displayed,” Ravus said.

“By disgruntled, I would guess you mean pissed,” Noct put in and Ignis rolled his eyes at him again. Noct just shrugged back amused by his husband.

“Why does it need to be Noct to enter?” Ignis asked and Noct could hear the slightly fretful tone in his deep voice.

“It’s ok, Speccy, I think I get it,” he said quietly, running his fingers up Ignis’ arm, “the warding, am I right, Ravus?”

“Yes, you are correct, it requires someone from your bloodline to deactivate the wards and Ignis…”
you will be required as well. The prison is full of traps, it will not kill the King…” Ravus paused when he saw Noctis frown, “it will not kill Noctis,” he corrected, “it is taxing on both mind and body to navigate the prison and he may need healing when he emerges. Shiva and Bahamut were very clear on that point, they assured me that the wards will protect you from death, but it will not be easy.”

“When is anything ever easy when it comes to Astrals?” Noct grumbled. He glanced at his husband, the Duke looking distinctly worried, “I’ll be ok, Ignis.”

“You had better be, my love, I refuse to lose you again, I’ll let the bloody Astrals rot before I let that happen,” Ignis growled and Ravus shot Noct a surprised look. “Luna died, I lost my sight, I lost you for ten years and then you died and all because the bloody Astrals fucked up when they used Ardyn to remove the scourge.”

Ignis swearing in the company of Ravus alerted Noct to just how stressed his husband was, “excuse us a moment, Ravus,” he said pulling Ignis aside. “Hey, I promise it’ll be ok,” he stroked the Duke’s hair and trailed his fingers over the jaw that was clenched tight. He looked deep into the teal eyes that were locked on his own and saw the terror that he was holding back.

“I…I can’t lose you…” Ignis took in a shuddering deep breath, “I don’t want to be without you, I don’t want to be a single parent…I don’t want our twins to grow up without you.”

“You won’t, they won’t, I’ll be right there with you, driving you crazy, I promise you,” Noct whispered against Ignis’ neck, holding him close. He felt his husband lean into the caress of his hands on his back, some of the tension leeching away. When he pulled back he could see the maelstrom of emotions subsiding as his husband got his breathing under control. He turned to see Ravus studiously not watching them and grinned, “c’mon, I think poor Ravus is getting embarrassed, we better find out how long he’ll be around and if he’s hungry, all that sort of polite shit,” he nudged Ignis and was pleased to see an annoyed frown on his face, that being a much better prospect than an Ignis who was upset. He could deal with annoyed, his husband was perpetually pissed about something and it was almost comforting.

“Gods, I am a terrible host,” Ignis moaned.

“Easy to fix, babe, organise a dinner, you’re good at that,” Noct smiled, when his husband huffed. “He can stay in a suite on our floor, see, no problem.” The King pleased with himself he drew Ignis back over to where Ravus was waiting. “You said your task was to deliver the message, Ravus, does that mean you have to leave immediately?” he asked the Prince of Tenebrae.

“They were not clear on that point, I do not know if I need to stay to see the task fulfilled or…” the man faltered, obviously concerned.

“Well, you are most welcome to stay with us,” Ignis informed him, “we shall retire to the dining room for a meal shortly and we can settle you in a suite later, unless you wish to rest first.”

“I would appreciate the chance to clean up, if that is amenable,” Ravus replied looking relieved to have the topic of what would happen to him sidestepped.

“Gladio, could you ask Monica to organise a room on our floor for Ravus, please, and perhaps some additional clothing, we will have dinner in the private dining room, can you have everyone join us,” Ignis called out to the Shield who nodded and escorted Prom, Nyx and his wife out by the side door, leaving the King and Duke with Ravus. “If you don’t mind, I would appreciate some help with our research tomorrow, Ravus, your help could prove invaluable.”
“I would be pleased to do so,” the tall man answered and Noct was rolling his eyes at how polite these two men were with each other, it was like listening to an old-fashioned play with two chivalrous gentlemen. “Noctis, I have a request, if I may?”

Noct looked up at Ravus, “yeah, sure, what is it?”

“I would like to pay my respects to your father.”

“Umm, yeah, ok…I can take you down to the tombs…” Noct was a little taken aback by the request and it must have showed, Ravus looking distinctly uncomfortable.

“I laid to rest my animosity towards Regis well before I died, I know he did what he could, I am sorry that I was so blind for so long, Lunafreya was right, I became their lapdog and I am ashamed of the part I had to play.” Ravus lowered his head, his hair hiding his face for a moment, when he looked to Noct, his eyes were softer than he’d ever seen them, “he was a good man, Noctis and he raised a good son, a good King.”

Noct flushed under the praise from the proud man who stood before him, unsure of what to say, “thanks, Ravus,” he said eventually. Ravus inclined his head and again saluted the King, fist to his chest. Ignis saved him from his uncertainty, leading Ravus through the side door, into the antechamber so they could exit and make their way upstairs without going through the reception chamber and away from prying eyes. They met Monica coming back down the hallway and she bowed to Ravus as she indicated which suite of rooms would be his to use, several doors down from the King and Duke’s, next to Ignis’ offices. The Duke introduced the Prince to Aeneas and informed him that the young man was training to be a chamberlain, so he could function as an assistant to Ravus should he need anything.

“He is very good at his job, I am sure you will find him satisfactory,” Aeneas smiling under his boss’ praise.

“Thank you, Ignis,”

“Sir, the rocking horses arrived today, I put them in the nursery,” Aeneas told Noct and the King grinned. He and Ignis had found a craftsman that had moved back to the city, his work was wonderful so they had commissioned him to make special rocking horses for the twins. Ravus was moving his gaze from Noct to Ignis, perplexed by this conversation.

“I want to see,” Noct clapped his hands together, “would you like to join us, Ravus, it’s just a door up the hall.”

“What am I seeing exactly?” Ravus raised a shaggy white brow at the King.

“Oh yeah, you probably don’t know, Ignis and I will be parents soon, our twins are due in around six weeks or so, accounting for the month early that they most likely will be.” Noct informed the stunned man.

Ravus’ mouth dropped open, “Ahhh, congratulations,” he said recovering quickly.

“Another of Crowe’s little miracles, she helped us, they’ll be our twins, a combination of us both, you’ll probably meet our surrogate later, she sometimes joins us for dinner when she feels up to it, Kyrsia is pretty private, she thinks Gladio is freakishly big and Cor is scary, HA HA.” Noct laughed as he opened the doors to the twin’s suite.

“I am beginning to see why Lunafreya was so happy for you two,” Ravus commented, looking about the playroom as Ignis cooed over the rocking horses. Noct loved how mushy his husband got
when it came to their babies.

“She always knew, Ravus, she was like a big sister to me, she was happy to let me have Ignis and if we had married I would have encouraged her to find someone to love, we knew what we were getting into. I just wish she’d had the chance to experience what I found with Ignis,” Noct said wistfully.

“She did in a way, she became enamoured of a young Glaive, but apparently he died the night Insomnia fell, she said he was a hero, he was given the chance to come back and took it and she says he is happy.”

Ignis had stilled and stared at Noct, they both knew who it was, Ravus frowning at the two men. “Ahh, we know him, he is a hero, I call him King-for-a-Night, he was in the throne room with us earlier. Nyx Ulric, he gained the blessing of the Old Kings to use the ring to activate the old wall, it allowed Luna to escape the city. From the way he speaks about Luna, I think he was in awe of her.”

“The man with your blond friend, the one with the tattoos? He looked familiar, I think I saw him for a moment with Luna.” Ravus looked from Noct to Ignis.

“That’s him, he’s a good man, Ravus, I’m not surprised Luna liked him,” Noct said, placing his hand on the tall man’s arm. “Is that why she didn’t want to come back? Because he is in a relationship with Prom?”

“I do not think so, Noctis, she told me that she was content and I believe her, she’s happy for him. She is happy for all of you, proud of the King you’ve become.” Ravus took a deep breath, “I do not think it will serve any purpose to inform him of this, I have no wish to make him uncomfortable.”

Noct was surprised by the softer side he was seeing of the former High Commander, he wasn’t sure if this was something new or if he’d always been this way, but the King decided he liked it. Maybe this is the side that Luna saw and loved.

“I agree, Ravus, let him keep his memories of Luna as they are, he doesn’t need them tainted by ‘could have been’s,” Ignis put in, Noct hearing a note of sadness in his husband’s voice. They’d talked about their own ‘could have been’s and regrets about their missing ten years, it was one reason they were living life to the fullest and allowing themselves to be happy now.

RAVUS

Ravus stared at himself in the mirror.

He looked much as he did when he last saw himself, the only difference being his arm, he had it back, the mechanical magitek arm gone, along with the enhanced strength that had come with it. He flexed his hand, noting that it was weaker than his right, the ashy colour and an underlying heat a result of his attempt to wear the Ring of the Lucii. He grimaced and thought of his folly. It had been based on revenge, misplaced he knew that now. Shiva had told him she could restore him, however the damage to his arm would remain, a reminder. He honestly did not care, he would take this time to atone for the part he’d had to play.

When he had snuck in to see Lunafreya before the Covenant with Leviathan, he’d told her he would accept Noctis as King should he succeed and he’d kept that promise to his ailing sister. He just wished he’d not succumbed to Ardyn’s slithering smoothness, believing the lies poured into his
ear from the moment the Niflheim chancellor had found him alone after his mother had sacrificed herself to save him. Then sixteen, Ravus had wanted a direction and Ardyn had given it to him, sly whisperings that fuelled the hatred he felt for Regis and the line of Lucis.

Ignis’ words echoed in his head, ‘could have been’, such simple words, yet they evoked a hatred of himself that he couldn’t quell. Perhaps had he not gone the route he had, his sister may have lived longer, they may not have been estranged as long as they were. He’d tried so hard while with the Niflheim army to keep her safe, the Emperor telling him to kill her, but swift thinking from Besithia had put a stop to that, something he would never have done anyway. His whole purpose in being in Altissia had been to kill Leviathan so that his sister didn’t have to forge the Covenant that would drain her further, but Ardyn stepped in and killed her. That was when his allegiance to the Niffs had ended. He told Maria, his old servant at Fenestala that he would keep the Sword of the Father for Noctis to claim, from that moment working for his King, not the Empire. He’d never wielded it, only wearing at his side, except the night that Aldercapt had ordered his execution, sending daemons to do his dirty work. Ravus held them off as long as he could, but he’d fallen.

The Astrals had weighed the sins of his heart and found him wanting.

Coming back was confusing, yet he felt that he could somehow make up for his past mistakes. He could see now that Noctis was a King he could follow, if he were allowed that chance, he still did not know how long he would be given to make good on this new promise to himself. If Noctis would have him, he would spend whatever time he had working for him, wholeheartedly. He could see now what his sister had always seen. The King was a good man, a worthy man.

Ravus slipped on the shirt that had been provided for him, one of Ignis’ if he wasn’t mistaken, the Duke being of similar build to himself. It felt good to wear something that wasn’t of the Empire, or a reminder of Tenebrae. The man had good taste, he had to admit as he smoothed the fabric over his torso, perfect tailoring, a little tighter on himself than it would be on the Duke, but it fit. He’d been provided with a simple but elegant suit jacket too and slipped it over his shoulders. Noctis had told him they would visit the tomb of his father before dinner, so he ran his fingers through his hair and went to meet with the King and Duke. He threw a last glance at the white coat he had discarded on the chair in the corner, shedding it like an old skin. That life was done.

“I must thank you for the clothing, Ignis,” he said as he met the two men outside their suite at the end of the hall.

“It is my pleasure, Ravus, we would like for you to be comfortable.” Ignis was very like himself, using protocol like a shield, yet he’d seen the façade slip when he was with the King.

They made their way into the depths of the Citadel, weaving through back hall ways to avoid prying eyes, something that Ravus was grateful for. He didn’t have answers to questions that would inevitably be thrown his way. He noted the way Noctis paused and took a deep breath before they entered the catacombs below the Citadel.

“I can do this alone, should you wish it, my King,” Ravus tried to say, but he was cut off by Noctis.

“No, it’s ok, we will stand back, but I want to be here,” Noctis said quietly.

The three men moved silently through the tombs to where Regis lay, the effigy of the King resting peacefully on the top of the sarcophagus, a rendering of the sword he’d wielded in his hands. Noctis bent his head and stroked the image of his father’s cheek before he stood back with Ignis and allowed Ravus some privacy.

He nodded his thanks to the two men and turned to Regis’ resting place. Kneeling beside it he
bowed his head and began to speak quietly to the man he’d wronged for so many years.

“I come to pay you my respects, sire, and to give you my apologies, I was wrong, so very wrong. Lunafreya and your son showed me just how wrong I was. You understood the importance of what they had to do, you tried to save my sister, for which I will be eternally grateful. She made her choice, it was not your fault, though I blamed you for so long.” He drew in a deep breath, “I will follow your son, he is my King, he has my loyalty, for as long as I draw breath again, he will never need doubt the totality of my devotion to his cause. He is my chosen King, I wish you to know this. And I am sorry, Regis, I let the Empire worm it’s way into my heart and cloud my judgement. Lunafreya called me their lapdog and she was right, I realised my error too late, I was not able to help Noctis more. I have many regrets and I wish to put them right as much as I can, while I am able. Rest peacefully in the Heart of the Star, sire,” he said as he knelt. He stayed in this position a little longer, head bowed in respect to the man he had wronged. It was cathartic to speak his words to Regis, finally. When he raised himself from his knees, he turned to Noctis and extended his thanks again, the smile his King gave him soft in the dim light.

They walked in silence back up to the higher levels of the Citadel, each man lost in his own thoughts until Ignis spoke up.

“I believe I have a way to discover the whereabouts of the Pit of Eos,” the Duke announced.

“Trust you, Specs, always thinking,” Noct nudged his husband playfully and Ravus had to admire the man.

“How, if I may ask?” Ravus turned to Ignis as they headed to the private dining room.

“If we scour the oldest maps of Lucis, we may find where it is, names change over time, corrupted and obscured, if we find some from the Solheim Age, we may be able to discern what it is called now, or where it was.” Ignis paused, “the Astrals are sure it is in Lucis territory, Ravus, yes? So, we have a considerable area to search, but I believe by doing this we may narrow it down a little.”

“Noctis, don’t ever let this man out of your grasp,” Ravus told the King, the idea with the maps something he would never have thought of.

“HA, don’t intend to, Ravus, he’s stuck with me,” the King chuckled, grinning at Ignis who gave him a smirk in response.

As they sat down to eat, Ravus paid attention to the King’s companions, noting the scowl that Gladiolus threw his way. Something he noticed was that while Noctis would tease his Shield, he wasn’t quite as open as he was with Prompto or even Nyx, and Ignis hardly spoke to his husband’s shield at all, only general comments about work. It was an interesting dynamic. They were obviously all close, however he could sense that while there was respect and friendship, Gladiolus wasn’t quite as included. He did realise that the Shield was someone that had been thrust on Noctis and perhaps if he hadn’t held that position they may not have developed the trust they shared. These things were not obvious, but he had learnt to observe, to pick up on undercurrents. However, he was new to this group of people, so therefore it was not his place to say anything. As long as the Shield was good at his job he had no issue with how their relationship dynamics worked.

He was aware that Gladiolus did not trust him, however he did not care. It was not the Shield that he needed to prove himself to, it was the King and by extension, the Duke. Possibly even Prompto and Nyx if he were correct in his assumptions of the inner circle. Crowe was an anomaly in his thinking, she was obviously comfortable around Noctis and his friends, wife of Gladiolus and therefore a kind of bridge over the gap. He sighed, none of his musings really mattered, it was the opinion of Noctis and Ignis that was of importance and he wanted to prove his worth to them.
He spent the balance of the dinner conversing with Ignis, the man was intelligent and well versed on a vast range of subjects, it was a delight to listen to what he had to say. He listened to the joking of the blond gunner and the Commander of the Lucian Glaives, finding himself almost laughing out loud at their ridiculous antics and his eyes went wide in shock when the king threw a dinner roll at Prompto in retaliation for some teasing that he had missed. Ignis tutted beside him and he raised his brow in question.

“Pay them no mind, Ravus, I am afraid this sort of thing is common, it is a little like herding cats at times.”

Noctis rolled his eyes and gave his husband a distinctly annoyed side eye, “cats, Ignis, really?”

“Yes, my love, I have never met anyone who is more like a feline than yourself, you certainly sleep like one,” Ignis drawled in all seriousness and Ravus ducked his head to hide the smile threatening to break his composure. He’d not experienced this sort of ease and teasing around a dinner table since he and his sister were little.

“Iggy’s right, Dude, you could nap anywhere,” Prompto put in as he retrieved the errant dinner roll, tossing it back at the King.

“Yes, and it could prove catastrophic,” Ignis sniggered behind his wine glass.

“And now I’m feline put out,” Noct grinned, pleased with himself as Ignis groaned.

“Sheath your claws, my love,” Ignis added as he tried to cover his giggles, Ravus finding he was doing the same and saw Noctis giving him a querying glance.

“Sorry, but this is just like it used to be with Lunafreya when we were little, she could be merciless in her teasing.” Ravus covered his laughing with a cough and tried to compose himself.

“Gotta say, never picked her for the teasing type,” Nyx spoke up and looked to the tall man in surprise, “she struck me as the brave, silent type.”

“Ahh, but she was a precocious child, Ulric, stubborn, strong and yes brave, but also delighted in making me uncomfortable,” he informed the Commander.

“Yeah, she told me about that and she used to tease me about Ignis in our notebook,” Noctis added.

“I can believe that,” he said to the King, smiling softly remembering Lunafreya. He regaled them all with tales of his sister when she was young for the rest of the meal and found himself feeling relaxed and welcomed as the laughter around the table erupted with each silly story. When Gladiolus and Crowe made their apologies, and left the rest of them, the talk degenerated to more laughing and drinking and he found himself snorting when Prompto bounced up and did an impression of Ignis telling him off the Duke grumbling, Astrals, he thought, I actually really like these people.

It was very late when Ravus retired to his suite, bidding the King and Duke goodnight, he closed the door and leaned against it, weary. He strode across the room and stood looking out his window at the new Insomnia. The ‘wall’ that Noctis had constructed around the city was less obtrusive than the previous one and he could see stars through it quite easily, though he’d seen more on his journey here, out in the countryside, away from city lights. It was still a pretty sight. He stood there a while longer before he started to unbutton the shirt Ignis had lent him when a quiet knock sounded on his door.

He opened it to find the Duke, a little dishevelled, holding his phone to his ear and grimacing.
“Yes, I am at his door, yes, I will put him on…” Ignis cupped his hand around the phone to muffle his next words, “I am sorry to disturb you, but I have Arenea Highwind on the phone, she called and demanded to speak to you and she won’t wait until morning.”

“Damnit,” Ravus muttered, he motioned for the Duke to enter and took the proffered phone from his hands. He indicated to Ignis to make himself comfortable, “I doubt this will take long,” he said to the man as he made his way to the bedroom for a little privacy. He pushed the door shut behind him and inhaled deeply before putting the phone to his ear, “Aranea?”

“How long were you going to wait before you bothered to contact me?” she spat down the phone at him.

“Ari, please…”

“Don’t you ‘Ari’ me, Ravus Nox Fleuret, I thought you would consider me a friend still at least, but no, I have to hear you have come back from someone else,” she was yelling down the phone.

“I am not here on a jaunt, Aranea, the Astrals sent me to…” he tried to break in.

“Do you think I give a shit about the Astrals? How freakin’ hard is it to call me and let me know you are ALIVE?”

“I do not have a phone, Aranea, be reasonable…” As soon as the words left his mouth he knew they were precisely the wrong thing to say.

“FUCK YOU, Ravus, put me back on to Ignis, NOW,” her voice had gone deadly soft, despite her invective and Ravus knew he was in dire straits with the Dragoon.

He opened the door and handed Ignis the phone, “she wants to speak to you,” he said morosely as he slumped in a chair and stared at the floor. He had no idea what to do at this point. He only half listened to the one-sided conversation.

“Aranea?…yes, I can do that…oh…ahhh…and if you think it best…i realise you are angry, but there is no need to swear at me…fine…in the morning, then,” the Duke grumbled, looking very harassed as he ended the call.

“I am deeply sorry you had to deal with that, Ignis,” Ravus met the green eyes of the Duke, who was giving him a rather confused look. “I…Aranea and I were friends…of sorts…I pushed her away after I lost my arm. I saw her the last time when I was headed for my execution, she urged me to run, escape…She turned her back on the Empire and left, I thought I needed to stay and try to repair the damage somehow…”

“Ahh, I think I understand her anger now, you were close…before things ended?”

“You could say that…” Ravus muttered ruefully and stared at the floor again. “Ignis, may I ask you a personal question?”

“You may,” the tone was polite but it held the unspoken statement of ‘you may ask, but I may not answer if I don’t like the question’ and Ravus understood it perfectly.

“How did you know…that you loved Noctis?”

Ignis looked at him owlishly, surprised, “it wasn’t any particular thing, we had grown up together and I loved him as a child loves another…I…I was fifteen when I realised it had grown into something else and I pushed the feelings down as best I could, I had a duty, he was my Prince and…”
well, I thought he was…honestly I thought he was too far above me to ever return my feelings, I thought it was ridiculous for me to feel as I did…” he paused and smiled, a wry little quirk of his lips. “I was monumentally stupid, Ravus. For three years I loved him from afar and I started to push him away, distance myself, he was the one who came to me and told me how he felt.”

“Ahh,”

“Ravus, if I may offer you some advice…from someone who spent far too long worrying about duty and the appropriateness of certain behaviour, don’t let it come between you and happiness, everyone deserves love and happiness,” Ignis said softly. He reached over and gripped his arm, “if you love her, tell her, from what I gather of her anger, she may actually feel the same.”

“I do not wish to force her into a situation she is not comfortable with, Ignis, I do wish to repair our friendship at the very least,” he replied, his tone as low as how he felt.

“No-one makes Aranea Highwind do anything she does not wish to, Ravus, you would be wise to bear that in mind, that and the fact that she called to find you, she wants to see you, I think that says all that you need to know.”

“Thank you, Ignis, I will think about what you have said,” he said as the Duke stood and made to leave.

“Think on this too, then. Despite whatever is going on around you, however the world might be going to hell, love is what matters, the only thing that really matters in the end.” The Duke bowed his head and left Ravus to his thoughts.

PROMPTO

Prompto didn’t like the atmosphere that was swirling around the Citadel.

Tension in the air, pursed lips on those around him, anger and the threat of pain were palpable. It reminded him far too vividly of how he’d felt in the days leading up to Noct entering the Crystal, the days that followed, so many days they had amounted to ten years. Days of fighting for survival, trying to keep everything together, battling daemons day in, day out, wishing the sun would just rise, though he knew it wouldn’t. It wouldn’t shine until Noct returned to bring it back. And even then, wanting it to rise meant his best friend would die. Ignis had discovered that fact in his expeditions with Talcott. He’d gone on one of his visits to find the advisor hunched over a table, running his hands over the papers in front of him, braille giving him answers he hadn’t wanted to know. He’d kept his head bent over the sheaves of documents before him, hardly acknowledging Prom’s presence as he spoke quietly, in a monotone of pain that told the gunner so much. He’d never heard Ignis sound so flat, so empty. He’d asked him to get Gladio to come, they all needed to know and he had no wish to repeat what he had to say. Prom’s stomach had dropped through the floor, maybe even into the soil beneath. He knew it wasn’t going to be something any of them wanted to hear.

In the two days it took Gladio to arrive he watched Ignis closely. The tall independent man had stuck close as if he couldn’t bear to be alone, couldn’t trust himself to do the tasks that he’d relearnt in his darkness. Ignis had clung to any semblance of company he could. He understood why when Iggy explained. He felt lost. His anchor to life was only tentative, the one thing that had kept him going in his blindness through the dark days of the world in ruin was the knowledge that Noctis would return. It had been taken from him and he couldn’t bring himself to believe it. Prom had tried, he really had, but he had no comfort to give to someone who couldn’t be soothed of the ache that was in his heart. Prompto knew that ache and knew it had to be so much worse for Iggy. He’d
lived for Noct since he was six years old. His constant in all those years until the Crystal took his lover.

And here they were again, doing work for the gods and Prom felt like telling them to go to hell. If that wasn’t kind of where they were already. Did they owe them anything? He wasn’t sure. Yes, they’d let Noct live again, but that was in return for what he’d done, did they need to go ‘round in circles, repaying each other. Perhaps it was selfish, but he just couldn’t help how he felt. He was aware that Gladio was cursing Ravus for showing up, but it wasn’t his fault, he was just the messenger. “Don’t shoot the messenger,” he muttered to himself as he sat in the library beside a weary Ignis.

Ignis raised his head and gazed in his direction, “what was that, Prom?”

“Nothin’ Iggy, just talking to myself,” he assured him. Ignis nodded absently and returned his attention to the maps in front of him, spread across the table. They’d yet to find anything that would point to where the Pit was. Frustrating wasn’t the word. He scratched his head and tried to focus on the pile of maps in front of him. He ran his finger over the lines fading on the old paper, little criss-crossed indications of rivers and old roads, old borders and the dots of townships long gone. An empire long broken up into parts, parts that were now disparate in their ideologies, some gone now forever.

He was possibly the worst person to be helping with this search, he wasn’t the intellectual that Ignis was, or Ravus for that matter. Now there was a scary man, though he’d seen a different side of the white-haired man the night before and Noct seemed to be warming to him, the Duke as well. Gladio probably never would. He respected him, but liked him? Yeah, not likely.

Ravus wasn’t with them now, he’d been called away, who by, well, Prom wasn’t informed, but it looked like Ignis knew and that was good enough for the blonde. Nyx was at his duties and Noct was pacing in the space between the bookshelves. Gladio was with the army recruits finalising some training with Monica and Dustin in preparation for any possibility. They needed to be ready to protect Lucis from the Niffs.

He was startled an hour later when Ignis grunted and shifted in his seat. “Do you have that map with the location of the ancient ruins, the tourist one?” Ignis asked, a tone of urgency.

“Ahh, yeah,” he shuffled the maps around until he found the one Ignis wanted, it was relatively new, a points of interest map, visit here and take photos type thing, Prom really wasn’t sure what Iggy would want with it, it was the newest thing in the stack of papers they had. “Here,” he handed it the Duke who almost snatched it from him.

He watched Iggy smooth it out and set it beside another map he had, green eyes bright behind his glasses as he flicked his gaze from one to the other. He looked up at the blond, “I may be actually stupid, Prom, I cannot believe I did not notice this earlier.”

“What, c’mon, you’re killin’ me here, what is it?”

“The new map is relatively well researched, fortunately they had other libraries and references to use when they compiled it. What they have done is take legends and try to show where things were meant to take place, something for tourists to use mainly, but it’s given me a clue. Here,” he pointed to an area near Ravatogh, “near the volcano, is a point that corresponds to a story about the Draconian, how he was seen for many days ‘communing’ it says, but on this older map is a spot that calls the place the Pitioss Ruins.” Ignis looked up as he said the name and Prom frowned. “Names get corrupted over time, maybe once people knew the spot as the Pit of Eos, but it became Pitioss. It’s not on the newer maps because it is so removed and desolate, perfect place for a prison for gods,
I would think.”

“So, it could be what we are looking for?” Prom asked, and Ignis nodded enthusiastically.

“I do, in fact I am rather sure about this, it feels right,” the Duke stated.

“Well, that’s good enough for me, dude,” Prom grinned and shuffled in his seat. “What about the Astrals weapons?”

“That, I am afraid, I have not been able to work out yet, the only thing I remember reading about them is that they could be hidden in plain sight, not exactly helpful,” Ignis sighed, pushing his glasses up his nose.

“Hmmmm, like the way the old Kings were hidden around the city as statues?” Prom muttered. He’d always thought they were just that, statues made of the old protectors, but they were in fact the Kings, waiting for the moment the old wall was activated. “Or like how the Noct’s ancestors were holding the weapons in the tombs?”

Ignis was staring at him open mouthed, gasping like a fish out of water, “Prom, I could kiss you, that is exactly right, that’s how they are hidden,” he snapped his fingers.

“Umm, wait…I actually was helpful?”

“Yes, you were,” Ignis smirked at the blond and he flushed.

“Woohoo,” Prom yelled as he fist pumped the air. Noct stopped his pacing and raised an enquiring brow at his husband.

Ignis chuckled, “seems Prom has been hiding a superior intellect.”

“Iggy, not nice,” Prom grumbled at the slight sarcasm he heard in the Duke’s tone.

“Ahh, someone want to fill me in?” Noct looked between Ignis and Prompto.

“The Pit is most likely now called Pitioss Ruins, it’s near Ravatogh, and the weapons are possibly hidden as statuary nearby,” Ignis raised his hand when Noctis frowned. “I know ‘likely’ and ‘possibly’ aren’t finite, but it is the best we have and I do feel that it’s right,” he added.

“I’ll call Ravus, Nyx and Gladio then, we need to decide who is going with us and who will stay behind to safeguard Insomnia and the rest of Lucis.” Noct said pulling his phone out of his pocket and thumbing at the screen.

“I would have liked Crowe to accompany us, but she’s too close to her due date and I feel that Gladio would be better utilised here,” Ignis mused, rubbing his temples, “I know your Shield won’t like that, however.”

“Depends how we put it to him, babe,” Noct answered as he waited for his call to be picked up. “Ravus isn’t answering, I’ll text him to meet us in our suite.”

“Hmm, Ravus is busy with Aranea currently, he’ll attend when he can,” Ignis said and looked down at the maps quickly, hiding his expression.

Prom narrowed his eyes at that, Iggy was keeping something to himself. He hadn’t known that the former mercenary was in the city, she usually made her presence felt quickly. He shifted his glance to Noct who was attempting to look like he had no idea what was going on, a dismal effort as Prom
had known him for far too long, noting the shifting of his eyes. He pursed his lips, obviously he
wasn’t meant to know and it didn’t bother him too much, they’d tell him if they needed to, he
guessed. Noct turned his attention back to his phone tapping the screen quickly.

“Nyx will be there in half an hour and Gladio will finish up and be with us as soon as he can,” the
King said quietly.

Prom felt his own phone buzz in his pocket and shifted so he could grab it. It was his boyfriend
asking if he knew what was going on. Prom rolled his eyes as he replied to the message, telling him
that it had to do with the whereabouts of the Pit. Nyx sent him a thumb’s up and Prom stood as Noct
and Iggy made to leave. He followed them quietly to the elevator, the ride up silent which made him
fidget as he always did, watching the numbers climb as they passed each floor.

He sat in the couple’s suite watching the sun go down through the large bay window, waiting for
the others to arrive, bouncing his foot up and down, flicking through his camera, trying to occupy his
mind and halt the flow of rubbish that would have spewed forth. He knew he could be a touch
annoying when he was nervous, chattering away without thought. He’d learnt to keep his hands
busy which in turn kept his mouth shut.

Thankfully, he didn’t need to wait too long, the others arriving within twenty minutes or so, Gladio
and Crowe sidling up and planting themselves in chairs beside him, Nyx plonking himself at his feet
and Prom immediately started combing his fingers through the longer hair on top, twisting the braids
in his fingers. It calmed him somewhat. Cor settled against a wall, arms crossed, his perpetual blank
look in place, watching the others. Monica and Dustin were speaking quietly with the King and
Duke when Aranea made her way into the room and Prom looked up in surprise tinged with
annoyance when she hailed him with her typical moniker for him, “Hey Shortcake!”

She looked him up and down grinning at the cheeky blond who rolled his eyes, “Hey Aranea,
what’s up?”

“Absolutely nothing, sweetie, how’s this sexy boyfriend of yours,” she said giving Nyx a wink as
she crossed her legs and sat on the floor.

Nyx grunted and elbowed her good naturedly, “I’m fine.”

“Yes, yes you are,” she replied in her customary teasing tone leaning over and stroking her finger
up Nyx’s arm.

“He’s mine, lay off,” Prom chuckled at her, he knew she was only trying to rile him up, although
her flirtatious tone was grating on him a little now that it was directed at his boyfriend, maybe he was
a touch more possessive of Nyx than he thought, after all, he certainly didn’t get like this with Noct
and Iggy and they’d done a hell of a lot more than flirt with the Commander.

“Don’t get ya knickers in a twist Shortcake,” she pouted a blew him a kiss. She looked up as
Ravus entered, nodded to those assembled and made his way over to the King and Duke, she
watched his progress for a moment and turned away quickly, “he’s safe, I much prefer being
footloose and fancy free.”

Ignis moved to the centre of the sitting room and proceeded to go through what he and Prom had
discovered, the blond flushing over his involvement and Nyx nudged him, “knew you were more
than a pretty face, babe.”

Gladio, as was expected, raised objections to being left behind, “I’m your Shield, I should be by
your side,” grumbling, arms crossed, frowning.
“You can’t be with me while I do this, Gladio, only I can enter, everyone else will be just waiting around while I sort it out, I need you here to look after our army, they need to be prepared, I don’t have anyone else I can leave with this. Ignis has to go, Shiva requested that he be there, Prom and Nyx will be enough security.” Gladio was still frowning and Crowe shook her head at him.

“IT’s fine Noct,” she said as she laid her hand on his arm and pulled him to the corner to talk with him quietly.

Noctis, Ignis and Ravus made their way out on to the balcony, Monica and Dustin making the excuses left to attend to the details of the King’s trip to Ravatogh. It had been decided that Aranea would meet them at the outpost near the volcano and using her airship would drop them close to the location of the Ruins and keep the Regalia safe.

“So, where’s the good stuff,” Aranea said waving her empty glass at Prompto.

The gunner grinned and pointed to the cabinet in the corner, “they keep the good shit on the bottom shelf.” He watched her saunter over to the cabinet and rifling through the bottles found a full bottle of scotch and proceeded to pour a generous amount of the amber liquid into her glass making Prom wince when she downed it quickly, tossing it back with a practised flick and poured herself another. He glanced out to the balcony to see if Iggy had seen her drinking his best scotch like it was water and grimaced at the blatantly disgruntled face the Duke was pulling. He was not impressed. Prom glanced at Noctis who was speaking intently to Ravus as the tall man rubbed his hand over his face in an exasperated gesture, shaking his head.

Aranea seemed to be in fine form, but it struck Prom that something was not quite right with the Dragoon, her laughter brittle, comments more biting that usual, she was generally narky and sarcastic, but she was down-right caustic tonight. The gunner grimaced and Nyx shrugged, he didn’t know what to make of Aranea’s attitude either, both shaking their heads as she downed glass after glass in quick succession.

They both watched the Dragoon when she stood a little unsteadily, grumbling under her breath as she wove her way to the door and left without another word to anyone. Prompto noticed Ravus tracking her movements, his features set in his customary scowl, Noct laying his hand on the Prince’s arm in what looked to be a restraining gesture and Ignis quirking his lip in displeasure.

“Ok, babe, somethin’s not right, everyone’s actin’ all weird,” Prom muttered to his boyfriend.

“Yeah, what the fuck is up with that? Aranea is bitchier than usual, Noct and Iggy look worried and Ravus looks like he’s eatin’ glass, I mean things aren’t great, we have shit we need to do, but this is just…” Nyx trailed off, not sure what to say next.

Something was not right with the people around him and he did not like it. Not one bit.

GLADIO

Gladio stormed out of the King and Duke’s suite with Crowe grumbling behind him.

He was Shield, he should be going with the King, where ever he went, not left behind, even though looking after the army was something he was responsible for and they did need to be ready. He shook his head. The King’s arguments were sound, but he still felt…left out? No, not that exactly.
Maybe he was just pissed because Ravus was going and he didn’t trust the man, at all. He still remembered how Ravus had demoralised him so easily, how he’d made him feel inadequate to protect Noctis and though he had gone on his own quest to assure himself that he was worthy, seeing the man again had brought it all back. He’d felt pity for Ravus when he learned of his execution, a sad end for a proud man, yet now…Ravus being back brought up those feelings all over again. Noct had not really understood why he’d left and to be honest it had not been the best time for him to undertake his quest, beating Gilgamesh had made him realise that he was good enough. Although he should have known that anyway and Noct’s berating him in the mine near Cartanica had been fully justified. He’d abandoned his liege when he was most needed. It was all stupid, idiotic. He hadn’t thought it through and that was typical of how he acted, brash and arrogant. Gladio sighed, ashamed that he was letting it all get to him again. Noct had not really understood why he’d left and to be honest it had not been the best time for him to undertake his quest, beating Gilgamesh had made him realise that he was good enough. Although he should have known that anyway and Noct’s berating him in the mine near Cartanica had been fully justified. He’d abandoned his liege when he was most needed. It was all stupid, idiotic. He hadn’t thought it through and that was typical of how he acted, brash and arrogant. Gladio sighed, ashamed that he was letting it all get to him again. Noct was right, he wasn’t needed on the trip, Prom and Nyx would be enough, more than enough in reality and he had other duties that required his attention. From what Ravus had said about the Prison it wasn’t dangerous per se, just taxing, finding the weapons would be somewhat difficult, but again, not dangerous, especially not for the men going. Hardened fighters, experienced and more than capable of defending themselves. It was not likely that the Niffs would have a large force near the prison, more a token than anything, having too many close would arouse suspicion.

He turned to his wife and grimaced, he was stalking down to the training grounds and had left her trailing behind, ignoring her discomfort. Gods, I’m a shithead! He mentally smacked himself in the head over how insensitive he was. He slowed his pace and waited for her to catch up, Crowe throwing him a bemused look.

“Sorry, I’m a dick,” he grumbled when she stood beside him.

“Yeah, you are that, good thing I know it and love you anyway,” Crowe muttered as she caught her breath. “So, what exactly has you so pissed?”

“Ugh…just being…insecure, I guess, it’s more Ravus being here than anything, I’ll get over it,” he answered bowing his head and avoiding her gaze.

“Out with it then, explain it to me,” she demanded. He should have known she wouldn’t let him off easy, she always called him on his crap and made him accountable for his actions. This would be no different. He launched into the story, not glossing over what he’d done, that he’d left Noct exposed to capture all because he felt weak.

“Well, yes, it was monumentally dumb to go off when you did, but nothing happened to Noctis and he pulled you back in line from the sounds of things. But, my dear husband, did you even bother to tell Iggy you were sorry for doubting him? That man is deadly efficient, justifiably proud of how he pulled himself together when he was blind, though he’d never say it, and I imagine he was dealing with a shit load and you go and tell him he’s useless, all after essentially feeling the same way.”

“I…ahhh…yeah…I mean, I think I did,” he stared at her in shock, had he apologised?

“In other words, you probably didn’t. In fact, if I had to guess, I think you hurt him very badly, but knowing him, he’s brushed it off,” Crowe drilled her eyes into his, pinning him with her stare.

Ignis was someone he respected and thought of as a friend and he’d let him think he didn’t trust him, let him deal with it all on his own. He’d never even bothered to visit him in Lestallum unless Prom dragged him along. He’d let Ignis think that he thought he was a liability. He thought back to the trip back in to Insomnia, fighting their way to the Citadel. Watching Iggy fight had been scary, he was so precise, focused, deadly in his accuracy, something he had always been, even before being blinded. He realised just how hard the advisor must have worked to get that back. In the same position Gladio didn’t think he’d be able to do the same. He was a sucky friend. He tried to think
about how they’d been since then and he had to admit to his shame, that Ignis had treated him politely, but never with the same degree of friendship that they’d had prior to Altissia. They’d always been thrown together as Noct’s Crownguard, and had found a measure of closeness, not as close as Iggy and Prom, those two, although an odd combination, had shared jokes and silly moments that he’d not been in on, but they’d gotten along, sharing stories of Noctis being a pain, having similar backgrounds as being part of Noct’s retinue from young ages. And Gladio had thrown that away.

Why had he not noticed this before? Probably because he never really noticed this sort of shit.

“I’ll fix it…somehow,” he assured Crowe who gave him an incredulous look.

It took him a couple of days, but he thought he’d come up with a way to show Ignis that he cared and was sorry. The Duke was seriously busy, like boss level busy and Gladio figured he needed to have some more time to himself, or with Noct. So, he spoke to Aeneas about maybe taking over the chamberlain position and then to a young mage called Reuel who Crowe said had a crazy smart brain, perfect for a tactician or strategist. Iggy was Duke and the husband of the King, not to mention Oracle, surely he could pass on those other duties to someone else now and it might show him that Gladio gave a shit about him. It kind of showed how talented Ignis was that it took two people to take over roles that the Duke was handling with seeming ease for years. Once he taught them what he knew, they would be perfect replacements. Gladio was very pleased with himself.

He really shouldn’t have been.

The Shield went to Ignis a day or two before their departure for Ravatogh, wanting to put things right and tell him what he had planned. He pushed open the door to Ignis’ office to find the secretary and assistant up to their ears in paperwork and trying to get ahead on some things so that Ignis being gone would have less impact. Gladio was sure that the Duke would have organised for them to email him and call should they need confirmation on certain things, the man was a workaholic, dedicated and thoroughly efficient.

“Is he in?” he asked the assistant.

“I will check for you, sir.” The assistant picked up his desk phone and dialled the Duke, spoke to him for a moment and then indicated that the Shield could enter.

When he closed the door behind him he found Ignis seated behind his desk, tapping away on the keyboard of his laptop, scanning a document beside him before he looked up and gestured for Gladio to take a seat. He pushed his glasses up with one long finger and regarded the big man seated in front of him.

“What can I do for you, Gladio?” he asked in a smooth measured tone.

“Ahhh, actually, it’s something I can do for you, been thinking, you do so much, and I figured you could do with some help, I mean it would give you more time…” he trailed off as Ignis narrowed his eyes and tipped his head to one side a little.

“What are you trying to say?”

“I…look, I’ve spoken to Aeneas and Reuel, he’s Crowe’s protégé, and well, I reckon they can take over as chamberlain and strategist for ya, then you can concentrate on being Duke and…” he trailed off again as he watched the frown that plastered Ignis’ face, the flash of his green eyes. Uh oh.

“What are you implying, Gladiolus?”
That was bad, the full name treatment, maybe he’d misjudged this. “I was just trying to…”

Ignis slapped his hand flat on the desk with a sharp crack. “are you really doing this again?”

“Wait…what?” Gladio stammered.

“How dare you?” Ignis’ voice was cold, icy and the Shield shrank back from the restrained force of it.

“Ignis…”

“How dare you, you are treating me like I am not capable all over again, or is it that I am only suited to being Noct’s husband, not capable of doing anything else…” he paused, lips a thin line as he pursed them, silencing Gladio with a glare. “Get out,” his voice barely above a whisper as he spun in his chair, his back now to the Shield.

“Ignis…” Gladio tried to plead with the man.

“I said GET OUT.”

Gladio rose to his feet and quickly left, not wanting to irritate Ignis further. Well, that was a total fuck up! Not only had he not apologised, he’d made things worse. He had no clue what he was going to do now, he had to make things right, but how. Shoulders slumped he made his way down to the training arena, seeking out his wife, maybe she could help him sort this out.

He was half way there when his phone buzzed in his pocket, taking it out he groaned when he saw the name, Noctis. This day was just about to get worse, he knew it. He slid his thumb over the answer icon and held it to his ear.

“Noct.”

“What the hell, Gladio?” Noct was livid.

“I take it you spoke to Ignis?”

“He is furious, and you know what, so am I. What did you think you were doing?” Noct demanded.

Gladio ran his hand over his face, “I was trying to do something nice for him, I thought…shit, Noct, I was trying to say sorry for…makin’ him feel useless after Altissia,” he muttered dejectedly.

“So, let me get this straight, you wanted to make up for making him feel useless by taking away what makes him feel useful.”

When Noct put it that way he understood just how stupid he had been. “Fuck, I know, I shoulda thought it through better, I was just tryin’ to lighten his workload.”

“Ignis thrives on a heavy duty, Gladio, he needs to be busy and useful, if he had wanted to delegate or resign his positions, he would have by now.”

“I just wanted him to know I’m sorry…”

“Then why the fuck didn’t you just tell him that?” Noct sounded frustrated with the Shield and he couldn’t blame him, he was frustrated at himself.

“I know, I’m a dumbass,” he mumbled.
“Well, you got that right, at least,” Noct snapped back at him.

“I gotta tell him I’m sorry, for this and for everything else.”

“I’d leave it a bit, Gladio, he’s really not in the mood to listen,” the King said quietly.

“But...”

Noctis cut him off, “no, I mean it, don’t, you hurt him after Altissia, he needed you in the years of darkness and you weren’t there for him. And now this...He was fine with how things were, well, not fine, but he had decided to let things lie. And you brought it all back up.”

Gladio groaned, “can you talk to him for me, explain I didn’t mean to make him feel that way, please, I...I really am sorry.”

“I will explain, Gladio, but don’t expect that to fix it, you’ll have to try and do that yourself...when he’s calmed down.” Noct sighed, “and I’m not sure that will make things better even then.”

When Noct hung up, Gladio stared at his phone for a moment, still kicking himself. Breathing out slowly he continued on to the training arena to find Crowe. She raised her brow at him when she saw his dejected look.

“What’s wrong?” she asked, concerned.

“I fucked up, really fucked up,” and he proceeded to explain to her what he had done and the result. Crowe crossed her arms across her chest and regarded him with a mixture of annoyance and amusement.

“What am I going to do with you, you great big Behemoth? Why didn’t you talk to me about what you were going to do? I could have told you it was the wrong way to go about it,” she shook her head at him and rubbed a soothing hand up his arm. “Noct’s right, honey, wait for a bit, Iggy will tear you a new one if you try to approach him while he’s pissed, you know that.”

“Yeah, I know,” he sighed, head bowed and Crowe folded her arms around him. Strong as Gladio was, he definitely wasn’t the subtle type, totally a smash and bash type, whereas Ignis, well, he was assassin style deadly if he wanted to be and if he’d angered him this badly, he would be wise to just keep out of the green-eyed man’s sight for a while. For the first time he was glad he wasn’t going to Ravatogh.

IGNIS

Ignis shot up out of his chair after Gladio left.

He needed to move, to expend some of the pent-up adrenaline that was coursing through his system, let it dissipate and allow him to think clearly. Pacing wouldn’t be enough, he knew that, but it was something he couldn’t stop himself doing. He looked at the door that the Shield had disappeared through and made a low growl of displeasure in his throat. He might actually have hated Gladio at that moment. Rationally (because Ignis was nothing if not rational) he knew that the big man hadn’t wanted to evoke this response, had probably intended something entirely different, however what he had done was bring up feelings better left alone. His furious pacing stopped suddenly as he tried to still his mind and halt the maelstrom of his brain. This wouldn’t do. He was
perfectly capable of controlling himself, he just needed to focus. Breathing deeply, he let the air out of his lungs slowly. After a few moments he had himself sufficiently under control and was able to think clearly. The conclusion he came to after processing what had transpired was that he didn’t care what Gladio had been trying to do, it was the man’s complete lack of sensitivity and tact that made him angry. He’d lived with it for far too long and though he knew the man had a tendency to take action first before thinking through consequences, this was the final straw for him. Surely after all this time Gladio should know to take just a second to think before he did something. He was in his thirties for Astral’s sake, he wasn’t an impetuous child.

When Noct entered his office he hardly registered that fact as he stood stock still in the middle of the room, breathing slowly, rubbing his temples.

“Ignis?” Noct spoke quietly as he strode across to where his husband stood. “What’s wrong?”

The Duke sighed, a sound tinged with annoyance and anger, “it appears Gladio still doesn’t think, my love, he’s decided all by himself, that I need to resign my posts as Chamberlain and strategist and taken it upon himself to recruit my replacements.” He gritted his teeth as he forced back down the invective he felt he really wanted to spew forth as he saw Noct narrow his eyes and shake his head in disbelief. He sympathised with how his husband reacted, he felt much the same.

“He did what?” Noct spat, frowning.

“He quite calmly came in here and told me he thought I needed help.” Ignis could feel the flush of anger rising again and struggled to keep it in check. “All over again, he’s trying to tell me I can’t handle everything.”

“Dumbass!” was Noct’s only comment.

“I realise he most likely didn’t intend for it to come out the way it did, but, Noct, I don’t care, I have had enough of it, I am so tired of pretending that it doesn’t bother me, that it doesn’t make me furious when he just assumes that he is competent and no-one else is.” He pushed his glasses up and met Noct’s exasperated gaze. “He should know me better than that, yet he doesn’t.”

“Oh, Ignis, I’m so sorry,” Noctis wrapped his arms around his waist, resting his head on his chest and Ignis knew he’d feel the racing of his heart, feel the tell-tale tension and would know just how angry he was. He sighed into Noct’s hair as he brought his own arms up and his fingers trembled as he stroked them through raven locks, it soothed him somewhat.

Noct pulled away gently and looked up at him, his blue eyes concerned, “I’ll be back in a minute, we don’t have a dinner or any other shit tonight, yeah?” He nodded, glad their agenda was clear for the evening, he didn’t think sitting through a discussion of some mildly boring issue would help his state of mind. “Ok, well I have a phone call to make and I’ll meet you back here then,” Noct said as he stroked Ignis’ cheek and the Duke quirked his lip. He had a feeling he knew who his husband would be on the phone to.

“I’ll be here, my love, I have a few last-minute things to sign and I’ll be done.”

Noct nodded and left to make his call, Ignis turning back to his desk as his assistant poked his head through the door, clearing his throat delicately to announce his presence, “ah, sir, Aeneas is here asking if you have a moment, said it was important.”

Ignis inclined his head and gestured that he could be sent in, he knew this would be about what Gladio had tried to organise.
“Sit please, Aeneas,” he said when the young Glaive entered and he noted the grimace on his face.

“Boss…I…I have been approached by someone about something I am not entirely comfortable with…”

“I am aware, Aeneas, Gladio asked you to replace me, yes?” Ignis watched the discomfort flick across his features. “It’s alright, I am not displeased with you, however Gladiolus did not consult with me or anyone else for that matter. I have been training you as chamberlain and you will make an excellent one, however, I had intended that you would eventually be the twin’s retainer, then take over as Grand Chamberlain when I felt ready to step aside.”

Aeneas flushed and smiled, pleased that his boss thought him capable, “I would like that, sir, but I don’t want the position yet, you have far too much to teach me and I would rather remain under your tutelage for as long as I can, I do hope you won’t be resigning.”

“No, I won’t be, it was…ill-advised of Gladiolus, I am quite capable of fulfilling my duties for a long time yet,” he smiled in response to Aeneas’ obvious relief. “Do you know Reuel at all? Apparently, Gladiolus approached him as well and I would like to talk to him.”

“Ahh, yes sir, I spoke to him about it, I hope you don’t mind,” he looked to Ignis to make sure that it was acceptable for him to have done so. When the Duke nodded, Aeneas continued, “he wasn’t comfortable either, he kind of thought he had to do it, because of who had asked him, but he thought it was strange.”

“Indeed,” Ignis drawled. “Do you think he would feel amenable to a discussion with me?”

“I think it would be wise, sir, he’s Crowe’s best student and he wants to devote himself to the Mages, that’s his passion I think. Not being a tactician and strategist.”

Ignis hummed, “could you ask him to come see me, any time is fine, I will accommodate him whenever he is able, and please assure him that he will not be made to take a position he does not want. And that I am not angry with him, I have no wish to have him feel he is in trouble.” Ignis was very aware that he could come across as intimidating, and while useful at times, this wouldn’t be conducive in this instance.

“I will, Boss…and thanks,” Aeneas said as he stood and left Ignis alone in his office.

He focused his attention on the paperwork in front of him and signed his name with his customary flourish, reaching for his seal as Noctis returned. He glanced up to see a fond smile on his husband’s face and gave him one in return. Noct perched himself on the edge of the desk to wait while Ignis finished up, idly reading through the reports and commissions that the Duke was finished with and grinned as Ignis pressed his seal onto the last one, retrieving the others from the King’s hands to neatly file them in the ‘out’ tray on his desk.

“All done?” Noct asked.

“Yes, my little raven, all done,” Ignis grinned back at him. Noctis’ cheeky smile at his words put all thoughts of Gladiolus out of his head, but then Noct always had that ability with whatever he was dwelling on.

“C’mon then, dinner in our rooms and some ‘stress relief’ await,” the King winked and pulled him up out of his chair so that he was nestled between his thighs. Ignis hummed as he was pulled into a deep kiss. “Unless…” Noct looked around the room, appraising surfaces with a little wicked gleam to his eyes that Ignis knew well.
“No, most definitely not, you little shit, we are not having sex in my office,” he leaned down to capture Noct’s plump bottom lip between his teeth and chuckled when the King moaned, “I will never be able to get work done in here if I am imagining taking you on this desk…or my chair…or against the bookshelves,” he murmured kissing his way along Noct’s jaw before pulling back to see blue eyes blown out to almost black, a flush on pale cheeks and mouth dropped open. A most delicious look, if ever he saw one. “Let’s go, my love.”

“R…right,” Noct agreed pushing Ignis towards the door in a thoroughly eager gesture that had the Advisor laughing. When they were through the door, Ignis halted to speak to his secretary, informing him of a possible meeting with Reuel and he could feel Noct almost vibrating with need beside him, frustrated that the Duke was able to speak so calmly while all he wanted to do was drag him to their rooms and strip him naked. Ignis skimmed his eyes over his lover and found that as nice as delayed gratification was, he really wasn’t in the mood for that right now. He bade a goodnight to both assistant and secretary and chuckled when Noct grabbed his hand and dragged him out in the hall way, hearing the smothered laugh from his assistant.

He draped his arm around his husband’s shoulders as they strolled down the hallway to their rooms, planting a kiss in his hair as they entered. And then gaped at Noct when he found their little dining table ready for them to eat, candles, wine, cloches covering the plates waiting for them.

“You can be ridiculously romantic, my love, thank you,” he murmured as he pulled Noct in for another kiss, this more tender and affectionate than the kisses in his office earlier. Obviously, his husband had decided that Ignis needed this, a quiet night for the two of them and when Noctis grabbed his phone and turned it off, stashing it in his own pocket so that he couldn’t turn it back on, he knew that work, troubles of the day were off the list of topics of conversation.

He smiled softly at Noct as they sat across from each other, the small table allowing him to reach over and grasp his hand, caressing his husband’s wedding ring. “Just want you to relax, baby, no stress in here, it’s banned.” Noct pulled the cloches off their plates with a flourish and big grin, and Ignis had to grin in return, the King had really done well, tomato filled dumplings, one of his favourite dishes.

“I am assuming you didn’t cook," he said quirking his brow up and receiving a lopsided smile.

“Ahh, no, don’t want you getting sick, I supervised, from my phone…a long way from the food. You know how much of a disaster I am in the kitchen,” he said with a wry little smile. “You’d be eating charcoal if I cooked.”

Ignis laughed, “yes, well, I am rather pleased I’m not eating charcoal.” He picked up his fork and started eating, thoroughly enjoying the dumplings. He took a sip of his wine, “this is very good, my love.”

“More to come, Gorgeous,” Noct told him grinning, pleased he was able to do something nice for Ignis. He bounced up out of his chair and collected their plates, heading for their little kitchen and returned with another course, a seafood paella, yet another favourite.

“You are spoiling me, this is delicious.”

Noct blushed a little, “well, you deserve it,” he replied as he sat back down and tucked in with gusto, seafood being something he loved too. Ignis had been a little surprised to see him tackle the dumplings, tomato being something he usually avoided, unless it was in the form of a base for pizza toppings. It seemed Noct was doing his utmost to please him tonight, forgoing the usual teasing and half-hearted argument about vegetables and picky eating habits.
When Noct brought out the fluffy chiffon cake for dessert, Ignis was feeling rather loved and happy, letting the days issues drain away, the tension in his shoulders eased and he was finally able to truly relax. He knew Noct could see it, feel it. He crooked his finger at Noct, urging him to come around the table and settled his husband in his lap, nuzzling his neck, “thank you,” he whispered into his hair and Noct snuggled in closer.

“Not over yet, we have two nights to enjoy our bed before we go away, want to make the most of it…and you,” Noct’s voice had grown husky and Ignis felt his body responding to the low tone.

“My King,” Ignis breathed out quietly, not remotely an acknowledgement of Noctis’ role, his royalty, but entirely speaking the reality of how Ignis felt about the man in his lap. A man who knew exactly how he meant it, by tone, by inflection, by experience. “My love, my little raven,” his words a song of praise and devotion that Noctis responded to by cupping his face in his palms and pressing plump lips to his own.

The Grand Chamberlain licked his tongue over Noct’s lips, seeking entrance and gaining it, delving in, flicking against teeth and tongue. Noctis squirmed in his lap, pressing into the heat of Ignis’ lap and making him groan thickly. Oh Gods, he thought blearily, deepening the kiss and tilting the King’s head back to take more, Noct eagerly willing to give him anything he wanted. When Noctis pulled back, he nuzzled Ignis’ chest, “I think my gorgeous husband should come to bed.”

“Mmm, yes, excellent idea. I don’t think this chair was made for two, my love,” Ignis mumbled into Noct’s neck making him squirm again. Both men’s eyes went wide and they stared at each other in shock when the chair gave out an alarming groan. Ignis shot up out of the chair, dislodging Noct from his lap and grabbed him before he could fall to the floor. They both glared at the offending dining chair and back at each other, “well, now that the chair has voiced its displeasure, I think we should leave it to recover.”

Noct giggled, “that was a close call, baby.”

“Indeed.” Ignis tugged on his husband’s hand and pulled him to the bedroom, shuffling their way to the bed while they exchanged kisses and started shedding clothing. Shirts fell to the floor and Ignis dropped to his knees in front of Noct, unbuckling belt, sliding it through the loops on pants, whipping it away with a flick of his wrist earning him a chuckle from his lover who watched above. Ignis smirked as he slipped his fingers into the waistband of his husband’s jeans and pulled them down, boxer briefs and all, freeing an eager cock for his mouth. Noct shuffled his feet free of his jeans and underwear, groaning when he was encased in Ignis’ mouth.

“This was meant to be about you tonight…ohhh…” he threw his head back as he felt the hot wet heat of Ignis’ mouth and tongue massaging his length. Ignis hummed around his husband’s cock, sucking all the way down till his nose met the dark trimmed hair at the base. Noct was coming apart above him, held upright by Ignis’ arms around his thighs, he could feel him trembling, moaning. He pulled off with a sloppy, filthy pop and grasped hold of those quivering thighs and lifted Noct off the floor, spinning him to deposit him on the bed. Noct gasped and gave him a cheeky grin, making the Advisor all the more determined to wipe it off his face and replace it with an entirely different expression. Pulling his own pants off, slipping his boxer briefs down he crawled onto the bed and settled between Noct’s thighs, nudging them apart to lean down and take the dripping length into his mouth again, glancing up Noct’s torso to see him open mouthed and panting, eyes locked on his. Mmmm, perfect, Ignis thought as he set to work, using one hand to cup and roll the balls in his fingers, gently stroking and teasing, listening to each gasp and moan from above.

While Noct had meant for this night to be for him, what the raven-haired man didn’t realise was that pleasuring his husband was high on Ignis’ list of favourite things and immensely gratifying.
In fact, he mused as he suckled at the head of his husband’s hardened cock, it was most likely his favourite thing in all of Eos.

NYX

Ravatogh sucked.

It was fucking hot and he had to climb cliffs and kill or avoid stupid Thunderocs and Spiracorns and Wyverns and fucking WASPS, this place was awful. Despite wearing a set of fireproof inners under his cargo pants he was sweating buckets, panting each breath out felt like it was on fire. At least he wasn’t the only one who was suffering. Ravus had never been up the volcano either, he looked as out of place as Nyx felt. The other three were fine, they’d been up this stupid fucking ash-covered monstrosity several times on bounty hunts and knew what to expect and the best places to stand and rest.

“You could’ve warned me, Prom, seriously, this place is shit,” he gasped after climbing up an even higher cliff-face.

“I did warn you, or did ya forget me tellin’ ya to pace yourself.” Prom muttered, sounding a little out of breath, which Nyx had to admit, made him feel a little better, at least his boyfriend wasn’t coasting up the volcano. He sucked down some water from his bottle and leaned over dragging air into his lungs before he extended a hand to Ravus, pulling him up over the ledge while Noct and Iggy discussed whether to stay at the campsite or continue on to the tomb in the fading light. Nyx really hoped they would stay at the Haven, perched high on the volcano though it was.

This whole trip had been an exercise in disguises and hiding their intentions. He’d almost choked when he saw Noct and Iggy emerge from their suite the morning before. Noct had his hair tied back in a short pony-tail, pulled back from his face in a way no-one had seen before, brown contacts to cover the distinctive blue of his eyes, his clothing scruffy and brightly coloured, very different from what he usually wore, black being a staple of his. His skin glowed with a fake tan, so completely obscuring his normally porcelain skin he looked like he belonged in Galahd. Nyx also noted the built-up soles of his boots raising him up another two inches in height. It looked like he had several extra layers on, bulking his normally svelte frame. While not greatly different, it was enough to keep people around the Citadel from noticing, he seemed to blend in.

Ignis looked like…well, the normally impeccably dressed and elegant man looked like he belonged in some sort of hard rock band. Blue contacts covered the green of his eyes, prescription most likely as he was devoid of his glasses, eyeliner making the blue stand out even more. His hair though, Nyx thought that was the thing that changed his appearance the most. It was black, jet black and hanging around his face in waves, parted in the centre. It was longer than Nyx had realised, styled up and back in its usual pompadour disguised how long it actually was, right now it was brushing his jaw. And stubble, he’d not shaved and darkened the burgeoning beard with something so that it matched his now black hair. He was clad in a loose pair of blue jeans – although no-one else would term them loose, they just weren’t hugging his long legs and ass like everything else he wore did, t-shirt and a pair of biker boots, leather jacket slung over one shoulder as he slouched against the wall.

Ignis raised a brow at Nyx and Prom and smirked. Well fuck, Nyx thought, how the hell does that man do it, if anything he was sexier than normal. It wasn’t fair.

Ravus was already down in the garage, settled into the back of the van they were using to get them
to Aracheole Stronghold where they would meet Aranea who had taken the Regalia on ahead. The King and Duke joined Ravus in the back, hidden from view and Prom and Nyx upfront, driving them out of the city and out into the countryside of Lucis. They escaped without notice with relative ease, their way smoothed by Monica, who had called ahead to alert the Insomnia Border guards that they were coming. No media had caught on. It was imperative that this trip be kept from the papers and tv crews as long as they could, making sure that no-one from Niflheim knew what they were up to. They didn’t need to tip them off before they got the chance to reach Ravatogh. Once they were there, subterfuge wouldn’t matter as much as it would be too late for the Niffs to do anything much.

Once they arrived in Aracheole, things had gotten weird and awkward. Noct and Iggy going very quiet, Ravus acting like a startled chocobo, which was so entirely different to what the man was normally like that it was a stark contrast. Aranea was bitchy and short-tempered, snapping if she had to speak to Ravus, something it appeared she did not want to do, avoiding it at every opportunity. Prompto and Nyx just sat back and tried to stay out of it all. The tall man from Tenebrae was trying to maintain a polite demeanour around the former mercenary, but it seemed that Aranea just wanted to push at his buttons. And if Nyx was any judge, it was working. Every time Aranea snapped at him, Ravus would slink away like a kicked dog. Ignis looked like he wanted to step in, but Noct kept holding him back, shaking his head. So, by the time they were ready to leave Aracheole, Nyx was bouncing with anxiety and Prom was worse, fidgeting and spouting absolute nonsense whenever conversation faltered.

The moment they pulled out of the stronghold in the Regalia, Nyx sighed in relief. Iggy was driving, Noct up in the passenger seat beside him, both reverting to more normal looks, the black washing out of Iggy’s hair slowly, glasses back in place, Noct’s skin back to its normal pale colour. Ravus was behind Noct in the back, Prom in the middle and Nyx found himself behind Ignis. Aranea would meet them near the prison in two days, enough time for them to head up the volcano and make their way to the tomb. It was where Ignis thought they had the best chance of finding the weapons of the Gods.

At the entrance to the path up Ravatogh they had spied two Imperial Guards, another two hidden in a small tent behind a rock outcrop. It was then that Nyx and Ravus got a hint of what the other three men were capable of. Ignis had signalled Noct and Prompto, motioning to circle around and approach the two in the tent from behind, taking them out silently before the Duke would take out the Guards at the entrance. Once they were dispatched, Ignis summoned his daggers and threw them simultaneously, taking the two men out at once and then nodded to let the others know that they could proceed. It had all been done silently and with so little fuss that Nyx raised a brow at Prom who simply shrugged.

At the bottom of the first cliff they found a slightly larger contingent, ten Guards. Nyx summoned his Kukris and perched on the ledge that led to the cliff. Noct summoned a blade and handed it to Ravus, “Balmung,” he explained, “it’s lethal, but it’s strength wanes if you tire, best for quick strikes.” Ravus nodded in understanding as he took the blade from the King, testing its balance in his hand expertly. Ignis had his daggers out, twirling them and watching the enemies below. Prom had summoned his Quick Silver, a flash of blue sparks around it meant it was enchanted to keep it loaded no matter how many times he fired it. “I’ll warp in and give them a surprise, you guys follow and pick them off, we need to do this quick and keep them from contacting anyone.” They all nodded and waited for Noctis to warp from his position higher on the ledge.

“Go,” Ignis whispered motioning for them to start their descent and a second later they saw the blue streak of Noct warping in. Nyx spun as two Guards approached him and he caught both in the back with both Kukris, noting Ignis making a similar manoeuvre and then dispatching a third in a quick flurry of movement. Ravus had downed one man and was advancing on another, while Prompto
held back, not wanting to fire unless absolutely necessary, the racket of the Quick Silver sure to alert any other Guards nearby. Noctis had downed three and was moving to assist Ravus with the final man, but didn’t need to as the white-haired man swept the blade in a lethal arc, slicing his opponent in two. Ravus wiped the blade down and made to hand it back to the King, but Noct shook his head and indicated he should keep it.

“You might need it,” the King said as he sent his own blade to the Armiger in a flash of blue.

They made the first climb quickly, it wasn’t very high, but when Nyx got his first glimpse of the second cliff-face he groaned, “seriously?” he questioned no-one in particular. And no-one answered him. Noctis and Ignis moved up the cliff-face first, scaling it fairly quickly. Prompto gave him a grin as he swung himself up to the first hand-hold. He gave a resigned sigh and followed, Ravus not far behind him.

Now they were all waiting while Noct and Iggy discussed the merits of continuing or halting.

It seemed the King was defeated in this round, Ignis had argued that it was getting dark and too dangerous to be heading down the path that led down the eastern side of the volcano. “We can’t even see if there are any more Guards down there,” Ignis waved his arm towards the edge of the haven and down at the large open depression in the rock below.

“I’m with Iggy on this, waaaay too dark to be headin’ into Zu’s nest Dude,” Prom said.

“Wait, what the fuck is Zu?” Nyx asked.

“Oh, it was a freakin’ huge bird thingy, but ya gotta slide down into its nest before you can get to the area down there,” Prom explained.

“It was a large species of Bennu, Nyx,” Ignis clarified, “and Prompto is correct, we need to be able to see to get into the nest and then down to the clearing.”

“Fine, who’s putting up the tent?” Noct grumbled, he just wanted to get to the tomb and see if Ignis’ theory was correct.

Nyx pulled at Prom’s arm, “c’mon, let’s get this thing up before they change their minds.” Prom winked and started pulling out poles for the tent.

“Umm, you realise I have like no clue how to put this thing up, the Big Guy always did it,” his boyfriend grinned at him, scratching his head. Nyx rolled his eyes. This would be interesting.

It was full dark by the time they got the stupid thing up, Ravus watching them in amusement as he tended the fire, Ignis at the camp kitchen with Noct helping, or hindering more like, with the making of a meal for them all. Nyx could hear the King grumbling about being told his slicing skills had deteriorated while Ignis pointed with a ladle and shook his head, “you would think someone who handles blades like you could cut a bloody vegetable the correct thickness.” Nyx burst out laughing at the blush that formed on Noct’s face and then ducked his head when he found he was being glared at.

Prom started laughing, his cheeks going pink, “dude, he’s givin’ you the ‘look’, don’t think he thinks it’s all that funny.”

“Shut it,” came from Noct as he turned back and tried to slice the vegetables to Ignis’ exacting demands. And failed if Ignis’ roll of the eyes was any indication.

“Bite me!” Nyx retorted and ducked as a carrot flew over his head.
“Herding cats,” Ignis muttered and Ravus chuckled.

“Meow!” Noct said and skipped away from a ladle being swiped in his direction. “Hey, what was that for?”

“Astrals, you are ridiculous!” Ignis grumbled, stirring the stew he had bubbling away in the pot over the camp stove, minus the carrot that now lay next to the tent.

When he was presented with his bowl of stew Nyx was very impressed, “this is awesome Iggy, really, really good. What’s in it?” And was then bemused when Ignis launched into a detailed list of ingredients.

“You asked,” Prom giggled, poking him in the ribs.

“Yeah, won’t be doin’ that again,” he whispered, not wanting to offend Ignis. “I mean, it’s great, but I don’t need to know how to cook it.”

Prom laughed and leaning in, kissed his cheek, “you’re worse than Noct in the kitchen, babe, I really don’t wanna die from food poisoning.”

Nyx grinned cheekily, “I have something else I could feed you.”

“Tasty,” Prom flushed, freckles occupying Nyx’s attention. He swallowed thickly and nodded, licking his lips and watching how Prom’s eyes followed the movement. “Damnit, can’t here, if it were just Noct and Iggy, hells yeah, but Ravus is here too. gonna hafta wait ‘till I can get you alone.”

“Maybe if we’re realllllll quiet when they all go to sleep…” he trailed off, running his finger up Prom’s thigh.

“Babe, I’m not the one who can’t be quiet,” Prom giggled and shifted in his seat while flicking his gaze around the campfire, checking to see if they were being watched. And it seemed that Noctis at least had some idea of what they were talking about from the quirk of his lips. Prompto stuck his tongue out and flipped his middle finger at him to which the King just shook his head in amusement.

“You could always fill my mouth with somethin’, that should do it…” Nyx smirked.

“Ahhh, no, you’re just as bad then too,” Prom said turning his blue gaze back to Nyx and his breath hitched when he saw the look he got in return. “Although…” he murmured, looking back down the path to the ledge near the cliff-face. Nyx followed his gaze and turned back to give his boyfriend a decidedly lusty grin. “Maybe later, ‘kay?”

“I can deal with maybe,” he chuckled and Prom flushed again.

It wasn’t long after they had eaten and cleared up that Ravus made his way to the tent bidding them all goodnight, the climb up had wearied him far more than he wanted to say, his weak arm giving him more trouble than he’d thought. That left Noct and Iggy on one side of the fire snuggled together whispering quietly and Prom and Nyx fighting the urge to run off to the ledge and fuck each other silly. Nyx decided to just be brazen about it now that Ravus was in the tent. He stood slowly and reached his hand down to pull Prom to his feet who sniggered at him when he was pushed towards the ledge. Noct and Iggy hardly noticed them leave.

Once they rounded the corner Nyx was pushed up against the rock wall and Prom thrust his tongue into his mouth making Nyx moan deeply.

“Shhh, babe…”
“Make me,” Nyx taunted, licking his lips again. And then gasped when Prom shoved him down on his knees, “ooff…”

Prom fiddled with his belt and shoved his cargo pants down around his ankles, “let’s see how quiet you can be,” he murmured as he pulled Nyx’s head forward, tangling his fingers though the long hair, tugging on the braids to urge him closer. The Commander decided he wanted to see how quiet the blond could be with his mouth working at his cock. “Shit,” Prom hissed through his teeth when Nyx took him in and flicked his tongue around the flushed tip. He grinned around Prom’s cock as best he could with his mouth stuffed full and started bobbing his head back and forth, bringing his hand up to cup his balls and roll them in his fingers. Prompto’s hips twitched and he groaned.

Nyx pulled back and let the cock slip from his mouth, “thought you said somethin’ about being quiet, Gorgeous,” he teased.

“Oh, shut up,” Prom growled and dragged him back up to his feet. He felt the Gunner’s clever fingers work at his belt and fly of his pants, pushing them down roughly.

When Prom’s fist curled around him he groaned and brought his hand up to bite his palm, desperately trying to be quiet.

“No lube, no potion…this is gonna hafta do,” Prom whispered in his ear. Nyx slipped his hand down and matched his boyfriend’s pace. Their lips crashed together, panting into each other’s mouths, tugging in time, heart rates climbing. It was needy, it was desperate, it was messy, but neither man cared. Nyx leaned his head on Prom’s shoulder, fighting the need to cry out, feeling the blond quivering, he knew Prom was the same. They both climbed towards their release quickly.

“Shit, shit, shit,” Nyx chanted quietly as he got closer.

“Fuck…” Prom moaned lowly, “close…close.”

Nyx nodded, he could feel Prom’s cock pulsing in his fist, feeling his own responding the same.

He felt Prom’s hand grip his hair and pull his head back meeting his mouth with his own, he cried out into the heat of Prom’s mouth, muffling it as he came hard, the Gunner following seconds later. They rested their foreheads together, panting quietly, coming down from their high.

They cleaned themselves up as best they could and hands entwined made their way back to the haven, slowing as they heard soft strains of music.

“Aww, those two are gonna rot my teeth,” Nyx sighed as he took in the sight at the campfire.

Noctis and Ignis were swaying together, moving slowly to the music playing on the phone propped up in a camp chair, Noct with his head on Iggy’s shoulder, the Duke resting his head against the King’s, both with their eyes closed, arms wrapped around each other, oblivious to everything around them. Nyx grabbed Prom’s hand and they snuck past them to the tent, leaving them to their dance high up on Ravatogh.

RAVUS

Ravus winced.
After the failure to find the God’s weapons up on the volcano, the atmosphere between the group had been tense enough. Now Noct had to go into the Pit without having found them and it was pressing down on them all. Ignis was fretting, pacing and cursing the Gods with every breath. They all knew it was a long shot, but when they got to the tomb, they hadn’t been able to find anything. It had looked so promising, six statues around the old King’s sarcophagus, but nothing more than that, no sign that this is where the weapons were hidden. Prompto looked deflated, Nyx trying to cheer him up, and the King? He looked grim. It wasn’t vital that they find them, the main objective being the trip into Pitioss, the disabling of the wards around the remaining five Astrals and ensuring Ifrit was still secure. But it would have been helpful to find the weapons and ensure their safety.

Then they came down and Aranea had been waiting. The last thing Ravus needed was her ire, but it seemed that was exactly what he was going to get…again.

Aranea’s scornful voice made him feel like crawling away into a hole somewhere. She hated him, that much was obvious to the former Prince, but why she had to continually berate him at every opportunity he didn’t know. She made him uncomfortable and it earned him sympathetic glances from his other companions. Ignis in particular. He could see the Duke narrow his eyes at the Dragoon every time she would insult him and it was only a restraining hand on his arm and a quick whisper from Noctis that would stop him saying something. While Ravus appreciated the Duke’s concern, it only made him feel worse in a way.

Ravus stood and made to move away when Aranea’s voice rang out again, “yes, go on, slink away like the dog you are.”

“That is enough, Aranea!” Ignis’ voice cut through the tension sharply, a tone that brooked no argument from the former mercenary. Ravus hadn’t heard him approach, the ash around Ravatogh muffling his footsteps. He looked towards the Duke and grimaced at the expression of anger and disgust on his face. “Is it not enough to shatter the man, do you need grind the pieces beneath your heel? When did you become so cruel and callous? And it begs the question of why do you bother? If you detest him so much, why persist, hmmm?”

Aranea glared at Ignis and made to spin on her heel and leave, but was halted when the Duke grabbed her arm. “Let me go,” she spat.

“I will not, not until you sort this out, properly. I will not suffer this in silence any longer. You are being petty, Highwind, bitchy and petty and it is beneath you.” The Duke, still holding Aranea in a firm grip turned to Ravus, “and you, Ravus, need to tell her the full story, not just the edited version, she needs to understand.”

He glanced at the Duke in consternation, the many conversations they’d had over the past few days spinning through his head. He’d spilled out his full story to Ignis, but had balked at telling Aranea, he didn’t feel that she needed to know, but the King’s Advisor had disagreed vehemently. When he flicked his gaze to Aranea she was frowning and no longer struggling to get free.

“What don’t I understand? What hasn’t he told me?” Her voice had gone quiet and Ignis released her.

“When you yourself, Highwind, it’s not my story to tell.” Ignis smiled encouragingly at Ravus, “tell it all, Ravus, you need to and she deserves the truth.” He laid a hand on his shoulder as he stalked away toward the camp.

Aranea watched him walk away before she turned her gaze back to Ravus, tension holding her shoulders and back rigid, “so, talk, explain.”
Ravus took a deep breath, “sit, please,” he motioned to the rock where he had been sitting, “this could take a while.”

She frowned but the former Prince of Tenebrae took it as a small victory when she settled herself down and waited for him to begin expectantly. “Go on, not getting’ any younger here, Fleuret.”

“…I was four years old when my sister was born…” He began his tale, explaining how the Oracle was always female, born into the Fleuret family – until Ignis, and males were superfluous in a matriarchal society. He’d hardly known his father, the man’s death in a border skirmish coming soon after the birth of his tiny, perfect little sister. His mother, though she loved her son, had been focused on her daughter, sensing that she would be The Oracle, the one who would help the prophecy come to fruition. And so, Ravus knew from a young age that his sister was born to die. He told the story of how Regis had come to Tenebrae with Noctis, seeking the help of his mother, Queen Sylva, for the injuries that the Prince of Lucis had gained through a Marilith attack. It was at the end of this stay that the Niflheim army attacked. Ravus was sixteen and he watched his mother stand in front of him, shielding him from the flames Glauca spewed at him, then horrified when the sword erupted from his mother’s spine and halted just inches from his face. She had sacrificed herself to keep him safe. Regis had tried to drag his sister away, to save her, but he’d failed, Lunafreya pulling back while Ravus screamed at him to save them, help them. He knew now that Regis had been unable to help. The King had known what Noctis’ role was, he was Chosen King to Lunafreya’s Oracle status. Noctis had to survive.

“It was then that I met Ardyn…and I have never wished so much that I had never set eyes on that man, that I had never listened to him. He took a boy’s anger and an imagined need for revenge and twisted it. It wasn’t Niflheim that was to blame, it was Lucis and Regis he told me, he had ways to help me get my revenge, he could assist me in my endeavour. He could make me stronger, he would help me reach my goals. It was years he was pouring his venom in my ears. He forced me away from my sister and we became estranged, she viewed me as a traitor to Tenebrae and the True King. She was right, Ari.” He took in a strangled gasp of air, “I loved her, I always loved her, I did what I could to protect her from the Empire, but it was never enough. I was a failure as a brother, failure as a Prince of Tenebrae, failure as a man. Ardyn, he…inflated my ego in ways that I am ashamed of, he would tell me I could be a great man in the Empire, that I was a great man, that perhaps I deserved to be the one to wear the Ring of Lucis, not Noctis. The day Insomnia fell, I tried to wear the Ring of the Lucii.” He’d had his head down through most of the story so far, but now he met Aranea’s eyes and was shocked to see her holding back tears. He ducked his head again, he didn’t deserve her sympathy.

“I almost handed the Empire my sister on a platter, Iedolas wanted her dead, he wanted no obstruction in his desire for Crystal and Ring, but she escaped, with the Ring. I really started having doubts about everything then, about the Empire, about…myself. I…pushed you away, I wasn’t even a full man, my arm replaced, my resolve destroyed, I became angry at everything all over again. I lured Noctis into a trap and would have killed him, again directing my anger in the wrong direction.” He continued on, explaining how the Covenants hastened his sister’s end, draining her, and of her conviction that Noctis would be the one. They began to exchange letters, he begging her to give up, she steadfast in her faith. With each report of Noctis that came in, he began to understand what his sister saw and with it came the shame. He’d been so wrong. “It was around that time that you decided to leave, you didn’t say anything, but I could see it. Iedolas demanded your execution, Besithia agreed, but I refused…I had better things to do, I told them. I directed their ire, holding my own in check and finally it was clear to me. I started working for Lucis, for Noctis and for my sister. When Lunafreya told me she was going to be going to Accordo, I urged her to meet with me, she was…she was so weak, Ari, she was fading before my eyes, she begged me to take the ring, take it to Noctis, but I couldn’t, it was her task, and…I was scared to touch it. I told her I would follow Noct if he gained the Leviathan’s blessing, that he would be my King. I tried to keep the Empire’s
forces away from the Covenant, give her the chance to complete it and pass on the ring. But I
couldn’t keep an eye on Ardyn, that man was…slippery and vile. He killed her and there was
nothing I could do to stop it,” he wiped away a tear and paused, gathering his thoughts.

“You told me to leave, wanted me to run…and I wanted to, but I had to hold the Empire back long
enough for Noct to get to Gralea, I had to pass his father’s sword on to him. Ardyn interfered in that
as well. I knew I was going to my execution, I couldn’t change that and at that point I was ready for
it. The thing I regret about that time was not telling you why, you deserved it, but I was a coward.”
He looked up at Aranea, “I am sorry, so very sorry that I pushed you away, sorry that I couldn’t tell
you everything that was going on, sorry I didn’t trust that you would understand.”

“So am I, Ravus.” She shook her head sadly, “I could have helped you.”

He settled himself on the rock beside her, “no, I don’t think that would have been a good idea, they
were already focused on you, I wanted you to be safe. I couldn’t save Lunafreya, but at least you
were away from them.”

“No, Ravus, I don’t mean like that. If you had told me all this from the beginning I could have
helped you see what they were doing to you…I knew something was wrong, but you wouldn’t talk
to me. And you losing your arm didn’t mean you were less than what you were, it was just an arm.”
She took his hand, the one given back by Shiva, ash coloured and weak though it was, he felt her
fingers curl into his, “I’ve been so angry with you, pissed that you hadn’t bothered to tell me why,
but I get it now.”

“You do?” he asked her surprised by the admission.

She smiled at him ruefully, “yeah, I do…” She sighed, “I’m still a bit pissed though, you were my
friend, despite everything else, Ravus. Despite the fact we weren’t together anymore, I still wanted
my friend. I would have been ok with that.” She grimaced, “I mourned you when the guys told me
you were dead. Ignis and Gladio saw footage in Zegnautus, they told me you had changed
allegiance, that pretty boy was your King,” she chuckled, “was kinda proud of you then, the way
you stood up to the Emperor, that was the man I’d been in love with. It was like I had you back in a
way, and then when I found out you were alive, I sorta lost it…”

“Mmm, yes, I got that…”

“Oh, shut up, Ravus,” she poked him in his side, “tryin’ to apologise, you big dumbass.”

“Gods forbid I should interrupt Arenea Highwind apologising!” He gave her a lopsided smile,
teasing her lightly, testing this newfound peace between them.

She rolled her eyes at him, “just for that, you don’t get one.” And Ravus laughed at that, it was
classic Arenea, the woman he had loved, the woman he still loved if he were honest with himself,
but for now he was just glad he could sit like this with her.

“So…friends again?”

“Yeah, friends.”

NOCTIS

Pitioss Ruins was hell.
When Noctis had entered the Gods prison, he’d thought it would be bad, but not this endless wandering, constantly on the look-out for the traps that Ravus had told him about. Five days. Five long days and nights of jumping to avoid tumbling pillars coated with fiery spikes, leaping from rails, activating weird warp tiles that opened a new door to a new fresh section of hell. The place was odd, more than odd, it really was hell.

It could only be entered at night and only by him alone. They had yet to discover how the Niff spy had gotten in, but they had a suspicion that Ifrit’s blade may have something to do with it. When he’d jumped across the gap to the entrance, his companions had come up against some sort of invisible wall, Ignis calling out to him as Prompto and Nyx smacked their fists on nothing. Noct jumped back across without problem and stared at where the obstruction was. His husband and friends couldn’t even wait in the shelter of the entrance. Ignis’ anger and panic was rising, this was going to be just as hard on him as it was on the King.

Prom, Nyx and Ravus moved away when he sent a silent plea to his best friend, he just had to have a few minutes alone with his husband before he entered the prison. This would be the first time they had been apart since his return, and though he would be close by, they would be separated by the stone walls of the edifice behind them. It was causing them both anxiety, but it was exacerbated in Ignis’ case. The tall green-eyed man was fretting, going over details, pacing, his glasses shoved up his nose at every opportunity, he was snapping at everyone, eyes narrowed, frowning, lips pursed in a thin line of annoyance. “I’ll be ok, I’ll be ok,” he’d whispered into Ignis’ neck, stroking the broad planes of his back and shoulders, feeling him tremble beneath his fingers. But right now, he wasn’t ok, this place was taking far more of a toll on mind and body than he had expected. He was thoroughly exhausted. There were so few places to rest and when he did find somewhere he could only curl up into a tight little ball and hope he wouldn’t roll off a ledge and hear that fucking gong noise go off.

Every time he slipped he would think that he was done for, but then that noise would sound and he’d be…back up where he’d been, staring at the impenetrable depths of the prison, disorientated and sick to his stomach.

The first time it happened was after he had released the five Astrals, moving through the door that led into the prison proper. He’d fallen off a pillar after a mistimed jump and then after an interminable amount of time falling through nothing he found himself back at the ledge staring at the pillar he’d fallen off. The next time came when he had to drop through a small gap in a rolling circular drum thing and land between a set of glowing spikes. He’d missed. And found himself back where this little section of hell had started. This was so not ‘cake, baby.’ And what was the deal with the fucking blue butterflies? And the black goo all over the walls?

Then there was a long room with a multitude of doors on either side and at the end, discovering he needed to clear each one in the right sequence in order to move on. And of course, he couldn’t just open the door and walk through, oh no, he had to find a freakin’ ledge or pillar or some bloody stupid thing to get to the door first. More moving platforms and spinning pillars, and of course there had to be more of those bloody fiery spikes. Oh, and the room where the floors moved, yeah that was just great. The final room in this area was a hell unto itself. A room within a room that moved of its own accord, a set of maze-like passages in its centre that he had to traverse before he could get to the top and look down at the daemonic head that reminded him of the Infernian.

Ahh, but then came the room, or cavern if he thought about it – which he really didn’t want to, a room where every block was tilted on its own axis and he was running up and down walls, for fucks sake, sliding into nothing when he mistimed it. And maze-like passages inside it too, but not bloody spikes this time. Small mercies really. But what did the Astrals think he was, he wasn’t some sort of Lucian Mario, his life wasn’t a fucking platform game, he just wanted to get back out, get back to
Ignis.

No such luck.

The room (cavern? Ugh, who gave shit what they were called at this point) he entered next gave him pause. A gigantic statue of a woman with broken shackles around her wrists. He had hardly any time to register that fact when the floor tilted and the sound of stone grinding on stone filled his ears. Oh joy, more tilted stone blocks to navigate. He was seriously going to give Bahamut – or should that be Bahassbutt – a stern talking to when, if he ever made it out of this bloody place. Yeah, definitely going to yell at the Astral, he thought as yet again everything started moving under his feet. Oh, and he was going to outlaw gongs, if he never heard another gong in his life it would be far too soon. He got the shock of his life when he landed on the statues chest and it shifted back, the sound of stone on stone ringing in his ears. What now?

He found the answer to this particular puzzle when he traversed her arm, over the shackle and onto…whatever it was she was holding. There was a long thin stone ledge below, so, ok, he had to jump onto that then. Yeah, not great, he fell down the length of it and had to sit and tend to the multitude of aches and bruises that were the result of that little endeavour. Or he would have had the floor not rocketed upwards. When it finally stopped he thought maybe he was close to done with this hell. He pulled out a potion and cracked it feeling relief as it began to work on his scrapes and cuts, healing some of the bruising on his body. Didn’t help with his state of mind though. He glanced around, nothing else moving or shifting, a good a place as any to take a rest. He pulled out his phone to check the time and groaned, three days so far. And still no reception. Ignis would be frantic, and it was impossible to ignore the fact that he was as well. This place was oppressive. He missed the sun, he missed fresh air, he missed Ignis, he missed Prom and Nyx, he even missed Aranea being a bitch to Ravus.

When he felt rested he made his way to the end of the room he was in and found a long iron walkway, a little wider than what he’d been using so far, so he jumped down and made his way along it. And then dropped onto a series of interconnected rails. Just great. Making his way through the maze of rails, he spied something in the gloom to his right. A hunched figure. Ifrit, encased in the form of a statue. The Infernian’s eyes burned into him, malice in his gaze, his eyes the only thing he could move, and Noct held back for a moment, glancing around to make sure there was nothing going to pop out and scare the shit out of him. It was kind of sad seeing the Infernian like this, he wondered what had made him hate humanity so badly, what had turned the God into a monster. He sighed, he would probably never know and it wasn’t like Ifrit would tell him. He doubted the other Astrals would be any more forthcoming. They hadn’t even revealed his role in the prophecy until they had to. Shaking his head, he tried to refocus on the task at hand. Leaping across onto the back of the imprisoned Astral seemed to be the only way forward. Taking in a huge gasp of air he landed on Ifrit and could feel the swell of rage that came from the God as he knelt on his back. He apparently wasn’t appreciative of the human that had defeated him standing on his back. Come to think of it, he really couldn’t blame him for that. Noct stood slowly and probed the air around the Infernian, feeling the wards and testing to see if they held.

“Well, Bahassbutt, seems like he’s still trapped, and his little helper is no-one where in sight, can I go home now?” He’d found himself talking to himself more and more in this hellhole, the only company he had, and if he admitted it, it was piss poor company at that.

Sighing deeply, he jumped off the back of the Infernian, feeling a roll of intense hatred wash over him, and onto another set of interconnected rails and blocks that quickly turned into another maze, until he came to a set of stairs and then another of those warp tile locks. He moved through the door way and paused, this area looked suspiciously familiar. “Ugh, here again.” He was in a room that he’d found near the very start of this crappy trip to the centre of hell. Another room of doors,
obviously he couldn’t take the path he’d initially taken or he would end up back in this spot again. Trial and error led him to a slim path hidden around a corner from one of the doors and he was back to jumping across platforms and avoiding glowing spikes again. Each time he rounded a corner he would get glimpses of the same room from a new angle and he would pause to take a good look, trying to ascertain his path and he thought he just might have worked it out. He could just make out a really long rail, high up on the far wall the opposite side of the room, if he could make it to that he might have found a way out of this area, but he still needed to get to it. He glanced up and saw pillars placed just so, and the tell-tale glow of a tile that would unlock something. Now to get to it.

He rounded a corner and saw the white of one of the tiles in front of him, ahhh, so that one first, then the red one above the door and then…he let out a whoop of elation when tripping the tile opened a door and allowed him to jump onto it so he could reach the red tile on the wall above. The opening of another door gave him the path he was seeking and he traversed the rails up until he could leap to the first pillar, then the next and finally he could see the last one. He paused and jumped, turning quickly at the sound of metal on stone. The last door he needed to open was jerkily lifting. He had his path to the railing. Quickly dropping down he raced down the steps and up onto the middle door, across a metal ledge and then onto the rail that he hoped would lead him out of this room. Teetering along its length he jumped down onto a stone platform at the end and took in a ragged breath. Looking left he found another set of stairs and climbing them wearily was confronted with another of the white tiles. Activating it, the floor shifted raising higher and higher until it shuddered to a stop. He checked his phone again, five days so far, ugh. In front of him was a small gap and as moved towards it he swore he felt fresh air.

It was fresh air, the caress of it over his bruised and battered flesh like a balm to both skin and spirit. He was out, he’d finally made it out. Ifrit was still imprisoned, the other Astrals free and he was out.

Jumping down, he turned to find the exit was hidden above the entrance, behind a rail fence that he had slipped under. Noct squeezed through another fence and rounded the corner to see his husband curled up on his side facing where he knew Noct would emerge from, most likely passed out from the exhaustion of waiting. It looked like he hadn’t shaved in days, probably maintaining a vigil outside the prison. He smiled softly as he watched the rise and fall of Ignis’ side, moving quickly to the ledge and jumping across, the sound his leather boots on the stone quiet, but still enough to stir his husband from his slumber. Within seconds he was engulfed in Ignis’ embrace and he felt better than he had in days. There was the familiar warmth of Ignis’ arms, his chest, the press of his lips to his hair, the choked sound of relief. He felt safe again. Ignis was home, his sanctuary.

Ignis eventually pulled back and roved his green eyes over Noct’s form, taking in the torn clothing, the bruises and scrapes and the haunted look in his eyes. Noct smiled shakily and pulled the Duke back into his arms, this would help more than anything. This was what he needed.

“I’m back,” he muttered redundantly and Ignis could only nod, clasping him tight and then pulled back at the involuntary grunt of pain that escaped his lips. Ignis grabbed his hands and lent his forehead to his, Noct feeling the warmth of his husband’s healing flow through him. It took care of his physical hurts, but his mind…that was still in Pithoss.

There was only one thing that could chase away the memories of the prison. Ignis. He pulled his husband in close, melding their lips together and Ignis moaned low in his throat.

“No,” the Duke whispered. “You need…”

“I need you, Ignis,” he broke in before he could finish the sentence, his voice low and husky with the need he felt.
“Please, please, Ignis, nothing will make me feel better right now, nothing but you,” he pleaded, pulling him in for another soul affirming kiss, silencing any further denials.

“Noct…” Ignis breathed into his mouth, the tone different and needy now, capitulating to his husband’s desire as he threaded his fingers into the raven locks of his hair and tilting his head back to plant kisses along his jaw and down his neck, leaving fire in their wake, the scratch of his stubble awakening something deep inside the King. Noct shrugged off his jacket and pushed Ignis’ off his shoulders, shoving it down over his arms to drop to the ground, and then pushed Ignis back against the wall, pressing him between stone and flesh. “Ohhh,” came the little growl of pleasure from his husband as he snaked his hand between them to cup at his crotch, stroking him through his pants. Ignis was suddenly all action, hands moving deftly at belts and buttons, exposing them both to the cool night air. Noct placed his other hand on his husband’s fevered chest, feeling the racing of his heart and tracing lazy circles around a peaked nipple. Noctis groaned thickly when Ignis wrapped a long leg around his hip, pulling him impossibly closer and ground into him, their bared lengths rubbing together, the dribble of pre-come slicking them both, creating a delicious glide that made them both pant. Noct inhaled sharply when Ignis pushed him away and fished around on the ground for his pants, retrieving his wallet and pulling out a packet of lube. Always prepared for anything, his Ignis. He had the packet pressed into his hand and that impossibly long leg was wrapped around him again. His husband tilted his hips just so and gave Noct access to his warm, tight, begging ass. Noct wanted nothing more than to be buried to the hilt inside the man he loved.

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The Duke shook his head when Noct made to slick his fingers to prepare him, “no…just get inside me, please,” Ignis growled, fixing his darkened eyes on Noct’s. The King obliged by covering his shaft with the lube and nudged the tip towards its goal, pausing to capture bruised lips with his own and pushed, slowly invading that tight heat. Ignis gripped his hips, shuddering against him, tilting his head back and let out a delightfully filthy moan. His husband clenched around him, holding him in place and Noct trembled, trying to keep still until Ignis was ready for him to move. He braced himself against the wall behind his husband, hand scrabbling at the stone for purchase and Ignis arched his back. “Gods, baby,” Noct groaned, lost in the feeling of being cradled inside the white-hot heat of Ignis’ walls. He moved his other hand from Ignis’ hip and grasped his cock, sliding his fist up and over it, cupping the head in his palm before sliding back down. He thrust up into the Duke, tilting up and down, revelling in each and every movement, every gasp that Ignis made, watching him come undone. They slid down the wall until Noct’s knees hit the ground, still embedded deep, Ignis wrapping both legs around him, locking them together, rocking his hips as the King held him close. He mouthed over the adam’s apple bobbing in Ignis’ throat as he panted, licking the salty skin, nibbling as he rushed closer and closer to orgasm, his lover’s cock gliding against his stomach, dripping and pulsing.

When Ignis clenched around him again he gave up on holding back, rocking his hips up erratically, feeling his gut tighten as he reached his peak, the Duke gripping him tight as he came all over their stomachs, Noct following a bare second later. Chest heaving, their breaths mingled, Noct felt tears on his own cheeks, he’d not even realised he was crying, he’d been so lost in Ignis. His husband wiped them away tenderly, swiping his thumb under his eyes, searching his face, soft kisses to his lips.

They didn’t notice the two pairs of eyes watching them. One friendly, one not.
Prompto woke to shouting.

He shot up out of his sleeping bag, summoning his Quick Silver, and sprinted off the haven and up the path towards where Nyx was yelling for help, Ravus hard on his heels and he heard Aranea’s steps coming from the airship where she had been sleeping. The three of them ran together up the path to Ptioss.

He looked up quickly to see the Dragoon had launched herself into the air, pointing her lance in front of herself as a guide and watched her spin above where the entrance to the ruins began. He was filled with trepidation at what he would find. Was Noctis back and wounded, had something gone wrong? Sprinting harder he reached the corner where Nyx had said he would watch from, giving Ignis some privacy at the entrance where he had maintained his vigil. Nyx wasn’t there. He peered through the dark and could just make out his figure as he ran back to where Prompto and Ravus were rounding the corner. Nyx looked panicked. He held one kukri in his hands, the other no-one to be seen and it wasn’t in the sheath across his back.

“What is it?” Prom yelled as he reached him, skidding to a stop.

Nyx pointed back up the back to where Ignis was laying beside Noctis, both prone on the stairs. “Niffs!” was all he gasped out. Ravus sprinted past, pulling the Balmung from his scabbard and raising it, ready to strike as he ran towards the King and Duke. Prompto grabbed Nyx in his free hand, brandishing the Quick Silver as he pulled the Commander along with him. This was bad.

Aranea let out a screech and with a flourish high above descended quickly to a spot next to the bottom step, bringing her lance down with a sickening crunch and Prom’s eyes went wide as he heard the mechanical cry of an MT dying. “What the Astrals is going on?” He hadn’t seen an MT since they were in Gralea, he thought that they had been wiped out.

“Ambush!” Nyx growled, “I was waiting down here and suddenly Ignis was crying out, Noct was down, I think Ignis healed him, but…now he’s out too and there’s more of the bastards coming, I got the one that attacked Noctis…I think…”

“Noct needed healing?”

“I saw a glow, so I think so, I’ve been fending off Niffs, I haven’t been able to check on them.”

“SHIT!” Prom swore as he reached the steps where Ravus and Aranea were taking out several MT’s. It was chaos, Ravus swinging the Balmung with deadly efficiency, while Aranea was spinning up in the air again, demonstrating just why she was called the Dragoon. The bodies of spent MT’s littered the ground around the steps and as he looked up he could see Ignis crumpled over Noct and another body with Nyx’s missing Kukri imbedding in its throat. There was blood coating the steps and Prom felt a little sick. He hoped it came from the King’s assailant and not Noct himself, but if he had needed healing then…

He looked up when he heard a whirring noise, dust being kicked up, he shielded his eyes and hear Aranea calling out, “Dropship!” More MT’s dropped down from the sky and he started firing, felling three as Nyx swiped at another taking its head off. The air was filled with the sound of mechanical screaming and the crunch of metal as they dispatched the last of the newest influx of the troopers only to have more drop down. Nyx raced up the steps and pulled the other kukri out of the throat of the dead man and took up position over the King and Duke, spinning swiftly to create a
protective barrier around the two men. Ravus was silent as he swung the Balmung in deadly arcs around him, felling MTs as they attempted to mount the stairs, Aranea yelling fiercely as she dispatched two more further down. Prompto was firing at anything he could, hardly even thinking about it as his body took over. He risked a glance at Noct and Iggy and relief flooded him as he saw some movement, the Duke bringing his hands to his head, pushing his hair out of his face as he leant back down to see to Noct who had rolled over behind Nyx.

“Ahh, my errant child,” Prom heard a voice from above and froze. Ice coursed through his veins.

“No, it can’t be,” he whispered, he knew that voice, it sent shivers down his spine and Aranea ran to him, looking up at the ship above.

“You killed him, how’s he here?” she pointed at the open rear cargo door and Prom nearly fell to his knees when he saw the figure standing on the edge.

It was Verstael Besithia, or it looked like him, sort of, he seemed…younger. It certainly sounded like him. The drop ship lowered and the figure jumped down to land on the ground further back down the path with a puff of volcanic dust obscuring his vision. When the dust cleared he almost vomited. If there had been any doubt who Prompto’s ‘father’ had been, there was none now. Prom shook his head in denial, the man that stood there had died when he shot him in the first Magitek Facility, he’d then taken down the Immortalis that Besithia had put his consciousness into, effectively killing the man twice, yet here he stood, grinning in a parody of Prom’s smile, wearing clothing the same as he wore. It was like looking into a mirror. The same eyes, freckled cheeks, same jawline, even the hair.

Prompto lost it.

He screamed and launched himself at the man, grappling with him and trying to get his hands around a neck that was all too familiar. His companions all halted, fear etched on their faces, Iggy scrambling to his feet and leaning against the wall, Noct blinking in confusion as he watched his best friend lose control and try to kill…himself. Nyx had sunk to his knees and was watching eyes wide in shock, his kukris clenched tightly in his fists, unsure of what to do. Aranea was holding Ravus back, her hand on his chest amongst the littered remains of the Magitek Troopers. Things were moving too fast and they couldn’t tell who was who in the flurry of limbs and blond hair.

“We have to help Prom,” Nyx yelled, his voice hoarse and low.

“We can’t, we might hurt the wrong one,” Aranea shouted before anyone could move.

“Nyx!” Ignis shouted, “the vines!” He pointed to his wrist frantically.

Nyx nodded in understanding, raised his kukris, watching the two men as they rolled in the ash and threw, pinning one of the men to the ground by his hand. Prom rolled away and jumped to his feet, kicking the man on the ground, lost completely to the fury that was coursing through his body. He felt strong arms encircle him and pull him back. “He’d dead, I killed him, I killed him…” he moaned over and over.

Besithia groaned on the ground, trying to move before Ravus levelled the tip of the Balmung at his throat, “don’t move,” he instructed coldly. When Besithia glared and tried to pull Nyx’s kukri from his hand, “I wouldn’t,” Ravus growled lowly, “I will happily slaughter you right here and now,” as he pushed the tip into the flesh at his throat.

“I think that honour should go to my son,” Besithia spat.
“SHUT UP! Shut up,” Prom screamed trying to launch himself at the man again. Noctis groaned as he got to his feet, Ignis assisting him and he stumbled over to his best friend where he was held by Nyx.

Noct grabbed Prom’s face making him turn away from Besithia on the ground, “Prom, Prompto, he’s not worth it,” he dropped one hand and grabbed at the Gunner’s wrist, “this is who you are,” he rubbed his thumb over the vines, circling slowly as Prompto struggled to get free of his boyfriend’s grip. The blond tore his gaze from the King and looked at the man who called himself his father. “No, don’t do that, look at me,” Noct commanded gently. “You are Lucian, you are not him, he’s not you, he can’t hurt you,” Noct whispered as Prom looked back to his King, his friend. Nyx held him tighter and leaned his head on his shoulder feeling the Gunner begin to relax in his grip. Prom slumped against both Noct and Nyx, letting his breath out in a long sigh. Noct was right, he knew that, but…

“He’s a failure, that’s what he is,” Besithia ground out, squirming in the dust at Ravus’ feet.

Prom twisted to get free, struggling in Nyx’s arms, he wanted to kill him all over again, end him, make sure he was dead, that he couldn’t taunt him anymore. “SHUT UP!” he screamed pounding his fist into the ash.

“Take him away, Ravus,” Ignis said quietly, “we’ll deal with him in a moment.”

Aranea helped Ravus get the man to his feet, twisting the Kukri to release it and cause as much pain as possible before she handed it back to Nyx, who slipped it into the holster on his back, keeping his other arm firmly around Prom. He watched them drag Besithia from his sight and he crumpled in Nyx’s arms.

“He must have cloned himself, uploaded his consciousness into another body,” Ignis whispered to Noct, but it was still loud enough for Prom to hear and he winced. The Duke noticed and kneeled next to him in the ash, “Noct is right, he’s not you, you are Prompto Argentum, sweet, gentle Prom,” he ran his fingers through the blond hair that was plastered to his forehead and he felt Nyx nodding his agreement at the Duke’s words. And Prompto broke. He started sobbing, tears streaming down his face, gasping for breath.

“Oh, baby, it’s ok, let it out,” Nyx murmured in his ear and Prom twisted around to latch on to his lover, seeking comfort and solace in the warm arms around him. Nyx lifted him into his lap and stroked his back as he cried out his torment.

“I killed him, I killed him, he was dead,” Prom chanted to himself hardly aware of anything around him, only just registering that he was being carried by Nyx away from Pitioss and down to their camp. He could hear the murmurs of voices, not able to distinguish who was speaking.

When he did regain some semblance of consciousness he was in the tent he shared with Nyx, staring at the wall with his boyfriend’s arms still locked around him, holding him close, letting him know that he was there. Ignis was beside them, eyes worried and exhausted, he was speaking but Prompto wasn’t hearing him. It was as if he were in a fog.

He began to cry again and Nyx stroked his hair, crooning in his ear, pleading with him to calm down, to breathe, to relax, that he was ok. But he wasn’t ok. He was in shock. He couldn’t think, he couldn’t focus. He accepted the bottle of water that Ignis pressed to his lips and sipped. It was an automatic response and he was unable to even offer his thanks for that. Nyx rocked him back and forth, still murmuring in his ear and eventually he made out the words, “I’ve got you, I’m here, you’ll be ok, Prom, you’ll be ok.”
Prompto wasn’t so sure about that.

He drifted in and out, eyes fluttering shut for long moments, closing out the world, the knowledge that was sitting in his gut like a burning stone.

His eyes shot open when heard Nyx yell, and he watched Ignis slip sideways onto the floor of the tent, green eyes rolling into the back of his head and his body collapsing boneless beside him.

**IGNIS**

Ignis woke slowly, his head pounding and his eyes felt gritty.

There was a weight on his chest, pinning him in place. He glanced around, disorientated. He was in their bed at home, in their suite. How did he get here? The last thing he remembered was being in Ravatogh. He opened his eyes wide and sat up, dislodging the weight which turned out to be Noct who grumbled and rubbed at his eyes sleepily. Ravatogh. Noct going down in the ambush. The MTs. Besithia. Prompto’s breakdown.

“You’re awake!” The air was knocked out of his lungs as he was engulfed in a hug, Noct wrapping his arms around Ignis tightly.


“Don’t ever do that to me again!”

“I cannot promise to do something when I don’t know what happened, my love,” Ignis answered rather indignantly.

“You collapsed, you’ve been out since the night before last.” Noct was searching his face, eyes betraying his worry and Ignis stuttered.

“But…what?”

“You healed me twice, twice Ignis, then you helped with Prom half the night…AND you hadn’t been eating properly or looking after yourself while I was in the prison. You had a bit of a fever as well…” Noct placed his hand on his forehead. “It feels like its broken.”

“You wound…” Ignis immediately reached out to check Noct’s side, wanting to check the gash that the Niff had given him. He remembered them making their way down the steps after they got dressed and hearing something from behind. Then Noct was crying out in pain and the whistle of metal through the air as Nyx threw a kukri at the man who was readying to strike again. He made to pull up Noct’s t-shirt but his hands were batted away with an annoyed huff.

“I’m fine,” Noct gave him a bemused look, “seriously, relax…please. You healed it.”

“At least tell me what’s been happening, how is Prom?” He made a little mental note to check it later.

“He’s…better. Nyx hasn’t left his side. Besithia is in the cells, he’s under constant guard. We used the Niff dropship to bring him back, Prom refused to have him on board Aranea’s airship with
us, so Ravus brought him back.” Noct paused and looked concerned. “He wants him dead and he wants to go to the facility and destroy it. I think he wants to make sure the lab can’t be used again.”

Ignis grabbed his glasses and slipped them on, running his hands through his hair, he felt distinctly awful and hearing what Prom wanted to do had him worried. He was aware that the blond was less than rational when it came to Besithia and his history, but he had never seen him lose control like he had when confronted with the man in a form that was almost identical to their friend.

He rubbed his temples trying to ease the pounding in his head, he was never sick, he hated feeling so weak. Ignis sighed deeply, conflicted. He wanted the facility destroyed too, it was too dangerous to exist and that the Niffs had been utilising it again gave him a sense of dread. But Prom wanting to outright murder Besithia was…it wasn’t like him. In self-defence, yes, Prompto was capable of killing, they all were and had. But to kill someone like this…

“I agree about the Magitek Facility, that needs to be brought down, but…Noct, this isn’t like Prom, I understand the impulse in theory, however I think that if we allow this to happen, it will destroy something in him. When he shot Besithia and then took down the Immortalis he was fighting for his life and trying to get back to us…”

“Actually, Specs, I think he’s right…sort of…it’s hard.” Ignis looked at his husband in surprise. “Wait, hear me out…He told me more about what Besithia was doing, he read reports when he was in there…it’s disgusting…the man is evil, he was injecting babies…infecting them with the scourge…experimenting…” Noct swallowed thickly and Ignis clapped his hand to his mouth, fighting the urge to vomit. “When Prompto was rescued, he was slated to be injected…he was one of the clones, but born to a human mother. He was the only one that survived.” Noct shuddered and pulled Ignis close. “He had a measure of peace after he killed him…now, now he’s a mess.”

“I thought you said he was better,” Ignis said.

“He is. Compared to how he was when he saw that bastard in Ravatogh. But he’s nowhere near like what we know, he’s quiet, it’s like he’s forgotten how to smile. Nyx is frantic.” His husband sighed in his arms, “I don’t know what to do.”

“Does anyone know we have Besithia?” Ignis asked. Noct shook his head. “I think it should remain that way, my love, until we know what we will do…” He was beginning to understand Prom’s desire to end the man’s life. “Any word on the Niflheim situation? The Astrals?”

“Total silence from the Niffs, communication lines have been dropped. The Astrals, I didn’t even get to tell you about that stuff…They got out ok, I think, I released them anyway, Ifrit was secure.” A haunted look came over Noct’s face and Ignis frowned, it was a similar look that had crossed his husband’s face when he’d first come out of the prison.

“Noct…?” He stroked his face. Noct tried to put on a brave smile to reassure him, but Ignis saw straight through it. He opened his mouth to speak again and was silenced when Noct interrupted him.

“You need to eat and drink, are you hungry, I’ll get you something,” Noct slipped from his arms and out of the bed before Ignis could grab hold and keep him in there. He exhaled deeply. He would have to tackle this later, his husband obviously didn’t want to talk about it. He’d distracted him at the prison and he was deflecting now too. He pushed back the covers and padded barefoot to the bathroom. He looked terrible, scruffy, his hair looked and felt greasy.

“I’m going to shower,” he called out to Noct as he turned the taps and warmed the water. He slipped his silk pajama bottoms down and stepped under the spray, ducking his head under it to wet
his hair. The shampoo felt heavenly and reviving, letting the suds run down his back as he let the spray hit his chest as he scrubbed his hair clean. Ignis rinsed his hair and commenced using the body wash to clean his skin, turning he found Noct leaning against the door frame watching him, eyes dark and slight smirk on his lips.

“I wanted to do that,” his husband said, voice low as he looked up and down Ignis’ wet form. He raised his brow as he ran his hands over his stomach watching the way Noct’s eyes followed every move his hands made. “Tease,” the King huffed. Ignis crooked his finger and beckoned him close, capturing his mouth for a kiss, then pushed him away.

“Is breakfast coming?”

Noct laughed, scooping up a handful of water and tossing it in his face making Ignis splutter, “hungry?”

“You could say that,” Ignis answered as he turned the water off and stepped out to find himself well and truly kissed senseless. “Oh…” he gasped and watched as Noct sauntered out the bathroom door leaving him dripping and breathless. “Oh…” he gasped and watched as Noct sauntered out the bathroom door leaving him dripping and breathless. “Little shit!” he muttered to himself. Towelling dry, he wrapped himself in a bathrobe and inspected his reflection, deciding it was time for a shave and possibly a trim elsewhere. He knew Noct would appreciate that – and he preferred to be tidy, he had a slight aversion to excess body hair, thankfully he wasn’t particularly hirsute, his torso relatively smooth apart from the little ‘treasure trail’ as Noct called it, that started below his navel. Lathering up his face after he tended to his trimming lower down, he proceeded to shave, taking his time to ensure he got it all. Having the stubble for their trip to Ravatogh had made him realise that he hated wearing a beard, it was itchy and messy and irritated him immensely. Turning his head back and forth, he felt and looked for spots he’d missed only leaving the bathroom once he was satisfied.

Foregoing dressing for eating he made his way into the sitting room to find Noct shooing a kitchenhand out the door and pushing a cart over to the table. “Perfect timing,” Noct laughed as he took in Ignis’ smooth face, “I knew that wouldn’t last long.” He walked over and stroked the now perfectly shaved jawline and hummed appreciatively. “How do you feel after your shower?”

“Much better, my love, although I am ravenous,” he answered with a rueful grin.

“Well, let’s fix that, c’mon,” Noct grabbed his hand and pulled him to the table. “Omelettes ok?”

Ignis’ stomach growled, “apparently, yes,” he chuckled as he felt his cheeks heating from a slight flush as he sat. He paused his devouring of his breakfast, fork halfway to his mouth when he felt a socked foot traveling up his calf. He raised a brow at Noct who pretended innocence. Two could play at this little game. His fork resumed its ascent to his mouth and he moaned a little as he tasted to lovely light texture of the omelette earning him a bemused look, leaning back in his seat a little and let the neck of his bathrobe gape open. Noct watched his finger as he trailed it down the opening in his robe and narrowed his eyes at Ignis who feigned nonchalance and absolute innocence.

“This is eggscellent, a really eggstraordinary breakfast,” he deadpanned at Noct who groaned, distracted from Ignis subtly pulling his robe open more, exposing most of his chest. He crossed his legs and noted that the robe was only just being held closed by the sash.

“Ignis…” Noct trailed off as he spotted the gaping robe and expanse of skin that it revealed. He swallowed and his eyes explored his husband’s bared chest.

“Yes, my love?” Ignis asked, eyes wide and a sweet smile on his face, watching Noct shift in his seat. He speared a sautéed mushroom off his plate and used his tongue to pull it off his fork, licking a little oil off his lips and giving a little growl of pleasure at the taste. Noct’s eyes went dark as he
watched, reminded just what Ignis was capable of doing to him with that tongue. He sipped his coffee, peeking over the rim of his cup and watched Noctis wriggling uncomfortably in his seat. Time to accelerate his plan. He wanted Noctis thoroughly aroused and in such a state that he would demand what he wanted.

Ignis rolled his shoulders, stood slowly and placed a chaste kiss on Noct’s cheek adding a stroke of his finger along his husband’s jaw and sauntered into the bedroom. Throwing a just slightly sultry glance over a half bare shoulder, “thank you for breakfast, my love. I’m just going to stretch a little, feeling a touch stiff.”

He heard Noct’s pained groan from behind him and smirked to himself, dropping the robe onto the chest he reached into a drawer for some underwear, leaving his usual sweats aside. Rolling out his yoga matt he proceeded to go through a routine of stretches. He was arching his back in a cobra pose when Noct made an appearance in the doorway and Ignis held back a grin at the little choking noise he made. When he moved into a bridge pose, raising his hips off the floor, he heard Noct coming closer, “do you have to do that now?”

He opened his eyes and blinked slowly, “is there a problem, my little raven?”

“Ugh, if you call a raging fuckin’ boner a problem, then yeah.”

Ignis grinned to himself and moved into a plow, keeping his legs together and controlled he lifted them over his head and touched his toes to the floor. “And what might have brought that on?” he asked from his position on the floor. He spread his legs wide keeping his balance and turned his head to look at Noctis, noting the tented pants and flushed cheeks.

“Gods, Ignis…”

The Duke allowed himself a low chuckle as he righted himself and lifted from the matt. Stalking towards Noct he reached down to palm the tent in his pants, the King hissing through clenched teeth. “Pants off,” he commanded, voice low, turning away and heading to the chest of drawers, knowing Noctis would be following every movement. He heard the rustle of fabric, then warm hands ghosting over his bare back and down to his ass. Twisting around he grasped Noct’s hair in his fingers and tugged his head back giving him full access to the line of his King’s throat, nibbling his way from shoulder to the sensitive spot behind his ear then along his jawline, using his tongue with the same finesse he wields his daggers in parting Noct’s lips to slip inside and flick and curl the muscle against his lover’s. Releasing him slowly he brought his hand up and dragged his thumb over a spit slicked bottom lip. Glazed blue eyes blinked lazily back at him. Oh, that was a sinfully beautiful look. He could get lost in that gaze all day.

“You are really feeling better, aren’t you?” Noct breathed out, his voice husky and coming out more like a groan than anything else.

“Mmhmm,” he nodded, “does anyone know I am awake?” he asked softly.

“Uhh, no, only the one who made and brought your breakfast up…why?” Noct asked confused.

“Go lock the door,” he trailed his finger over Noct’s chin, and turned back to the chest of drawers while the King went out to lock the door as he was asked. Ignis reached in for a set of silk scarves that they both preferred for securing their ankles and wrists with. The scarves were far more symbolic than they were restraining devices. He tossed them onto the bed and shimmed his boxer briefs down over his thighs and stepped out of them as Noct returned. He slipped his glasses off and placed them on the bedside table, blinking to adjust.
“Ohhh…” he heard his husband say quietly as Ignis knelt on the bed and extended his hands. “You’re sure?” Noct asked as he approached the bed, his eyes hungrily sweeping over Ignis’ naked body.

The Duke kept his head lowered as he motioned with his wrists to the scarves beside him, “please…” he whispered, “take me, make me yours…please,” a pleading tone entering his voice. He needed this. He was sure Noct had thought this was going to go an entirely different direction, but Ignis needed to give his control over to his husband, feel safe in his arms and this…this was the perfect way to feel what he needed so desperately. He’d been so tightly wound lately, he had to release it, let it out, let go.

“Mine…” Noct growled low in his throat as he captured Ignis’ wrists and bound them with a scarf, the silk just tight enough to hold, bind. He had his hands shoved above his head and held there in warning not to move them.

“Yours,” Ignis agreed, licking his lips as he lay back on the bed, arms stretched above his head, exposed for Noct’s touch. He watched every move his lover made, stroking him with eager eyes as he couldn’t with his hands. Noct wandered over to the chest of drawers where the scarves came from and retrieved something that he hid in his hand. The Duke swallowed quickly wondering just what Noct had grabbed out of the drawer of goodies. One thing it wasn’t was a blindfold, of that he was sure.

While Ignis would submit to being blindfolded in the training arena and had indeed suggested it in the interests of enhancing his teaching of some of the Glaives, he would never, could never sacrifice his sight when it came to Noct. He had to be able to see him, to gaze upon his form, look deep into his beautiful blue eyes. This was never more apparent than when they were alone, making love to each other. Noctis inherently understood this without words, it was in the way his husband would drink in the sight of him, never let his eyes wander far, only close his eyes in bliss for scant seconds before those bright green eyes would find his again. And so, when they played little games, deprivation of sight was well and truly off the menu. Restraints were another thing entirely. When restrained like this, Ignis needed touch more than ever, craved it like a man needs water in the desert, but he loved it, loved the sensation of being held back.

Noct crawled up over his body, leaving kisses to his chest, butterfly light to his lips, enough that he chased after more. “Soon, my sweet Ignis, soon,” Noct crooned in his ear, nipping at the lobe gently. His arms were straightened as Noct pulled on the scarf, pulling his hands closer to the elaborately carved headboard of their bed.

He shivered in expectation when Noct’s hands glided their way down his sides, brushing over the ‘v’ above his hips, down the muscles of his thighs, over his calves, gasping when those same hands pulled his legs apart and Noct nestled inside the gap he created. He heard his husband give a soft little sigh before his balls were cupped gently, the ghost of warm breath over his now hardening cock. He tried to bite back the moan that was strangling him, trying to hold his hips still. Gods, he wanted this, remembering their all too brief reunion outside Pitioss.

His stomach clenched at the tentative warm breath, then the heated wetness of Noct’s mouth engulfing him quickly, giving him no warning or time to prepare. A tongue gliding up the length, pressing into the sensitive spot just under the head. “Oh…ohhh,” he moaned tossing his head from side to side, mouth dropped open. He watched Noct’s head bob up and down, felt the heat of his mouth as he suckled him in, blue eyes fixed on his green. It was an overabundance of riches as far as Ignis was concerned, over stimulating his senses. Just as he felt that first inclination that he was reaching a precipice, Noctis backed off and let him slip from his lips. He widened his eyes when the King shuffled up and straddled his chest, leaning down over him, pushing his own cock into Ignis’
more than willing mouth, he curled his tongue out to catch and keep it, draw it in and perform his own form of devotion. Noct thrust his hips down, shoving into Ignis’ mouth further, bringing tears to the Duke’s eyes as he hit the back of his throat, an ache coming to his jaw as Noctis fucked his face slowly, inexorably, keeping him in place with a hand tangled in his hair, the other curling around his throat, feeling the distending as his cock invaded then retreated. It was gentle pressure, enough to know the long-fingered hand was there, could feel the cock as it slid in and out of his exposed throat, but never enough to cut off his breath. He was pinned, restrained and Ignis loved it.

Noct pulled back again, shuffling until he was back in his previous position between Ignis’ thighs, but this time his mouth crashed down and Ignis flicked his tongue against the King’s, moaning his pleasure into the kisses, letting his teeth sink into Noct’s bottom lip, keeping him close for a little longer. Noct’s groan into his mouth sent a shock through his whole body, his hips rocketing upwards seeking friction between both their lengths. Ignis practically purred at the touches and Noct, chuckled lowly.

“Is my kitten wanting some attention?” Noct nibbled on his ear and Ignis arched up, his back lifting off the bed, the endearment making him positively vibrate with need. He shamelessly mewled and keened his rising passion, desire firing his blood as Noct bent down between his legs, lifting them to rest on his shoulders opening him for the swipe of wet tongue over his entrance. He hissed when Noct pushed his tongue inside, his hips held firmly. The king’s hand reached up to curl around his cock and Ignis shuddered when he heard the ‘snap’ of the cock-ring closing around his base. Ahh, that answered the question of what Noct had hidden from him. He wouldn’t be allowed to come until Noct released him. “Oh, Gods, y…yes…” he stuttered as Noct assaulted his hole relentlessly, shoving his tongue deeper and deeper, a finger joining to push into him, open him up. Noct hummed as he tongue-fucked him, working him open wider with his finger, brushing over his prostate making Ignis cry out hoarsely as he struggled to keep his hands above his head.

“So good, my kitten,” Noct muttered as he replaced his tongue with another finger and Ignis mewed again. The slight burn, the stretch had him panting and writhing, biting down hard on his bottom lip as he threw his head back against the pillows, stomach clenching. “Gorgeous…” Noct groaned. His eyes fluttered shut for a moment when Noct thrust his fingers in deeper and curled against his prostate again.

“Fuck…” he growled and looked through his long lashes to watch as Noctis twisted his wrist and pushed in again. He clamped his legs down on Noct’s shoulders and lifted his hips into it, pulling the fingers into him further, needing more, pleading with his body in a way that he couldn’t voice.

He was left panting and whining when Noct eventually pulled back withdrawing his fingers and leaving him bereft, empty.  “Hands and knees,” Noct growled low, but Ignis only blinked.  “I…” he tried to speak, tell Noct no, not like that. His husband planted a reassuring kiss to his lips, guiding him onto his knees then twisting him around and gently pushing him down, letting him balance on his elbows. He was facing away from the pillows, angled across the bed and in front of him was the full length mirror they used for dressing. Oh, he watched as Noct met his gaze in the mirror and gave him a soft smile. He could still watch, still keep his husband in his sight. And watch he did, tracking the King’s movements as he reached into the bedside drawer and pulled out a bottle of lube, tossing it down beside Ignis’ knee.

Watching in the mirror he saw Noct crawl up behind him, reach a hand out to stroke the curve of his back, shivering as he felt that hand trace its path across his fevered skin. The twin experiences of seeing it in the mirror and feeling the caress were confounding his senses, he felt a little dazed as he saw Noct dip his head down and then the warmth of his tongue as the King licked at his ass again.
He felt the hum he gave and it vibrated through his whole body making him shake and groan lowly. Green eyes met blue in the mirror and Ignis was mesmerised, his back arching as Noct delved into him deeper. He was exposed and open for every flick and swipe of wet tongue, fingers pulling his ass cheeks wider for more access.

“N…Noct…” he moaned, wriggling under his husband’s ministrations.

“Soon, baby, soon,” Noct promised him, reaching for the bottle of lube. The action made Ignis bite his lip as he anticipated the slick of Noct's fingers delving his ass. Thankfully he didn’t need to wait long, watching Noct concentrate as he slid two fingers in, a flick of his wrist finding the sweet spot and Ignis cried out, gripping the covers tightly in his fingers, head dipping down to brush the tips of his hair over the strip of silk still binding his wrists. Noct’s other hand caressed his balls, gliding over his perineum and he clenched around the intrusion of the fingers in his ass as they stroked his walls.

He was painfully hard, cursing the cock-ring wanting to throw himself flat onto the bed to grind against the quilt and have some much needed friction. He looked up to see himself, intense, debauched, eyes almost black with the desire he felt and he blushed harder, knowing this was what Noctis saw, lips bruised from kisses and his own teeth clamping down. He looked higher to see Noct watching him.

“Beautiful, Ignis, absolutely beautiful,” Noct whispered, planting feather light kisses to his lower back, over the little dimples there. The King straightened up and shuffled closer between Ignis’ knees, grabbing the bottle again to coat his length, shooting him a lascivious gaze as he stroked himself. He felt the head of Noct’s cock rub gentle circles around his rim, he keened with need, pushing his hips back to encourage his husband to enter him. “Greedy,” Noct growled as he finally pushed, breaching the hole and holding there, head nestled inside.

Ignis was panting and moaning, thoroughly incoherent as Noct slowly slid in all the way, it felt so good this way, why on Eos hadn’t they thought to use the mirror before? Noct gave a little grunt as Ignis clenched around him and he felt the sting of his ass cheeks when the King smacked his hand down sharply, making him gasp and clench tighter.

“Shit…” Noct hissed and shoved in deeper, pulling back and waiting a second before rocking into him again and again. Ignis pushed back on his knees forcing Noct into a faster pace, hitting him square in the prostate sending him to dizzying heights. Now that he had Noct inside him, pounding into him, he lost himself in sensation, the stretch, feeling so full and out of control. His husband’s grip on his hips tightened as Noct sped up, pulling him back as he thrust harder and all Ignis could do was pant, breath harsh, sweat dripping from his skin. He watched Noct’s blissed out face as he thrust back and forth. “Nnnghhh,” he heard him grunt as he swirled his hips and adjusted the angle.

“Fuuuuckk…please…” Ignis ground out through clenched teeth and then he felt Noct’s hand groping around his cock, springing him free of the cock-ring and he let out a relieved moan when his lover started to stroke in time with each hard rock of his hips. He clenched around the King’s length as he felt a thumb stroking around the head of his cock, probing the slit and sending him into the stratosphere. Noct slowed his thrusts and stroking to a very deliberate deep delving that had Ignis teetering on the edge.

“Undo the…fuck…untie youself…nnngghh,” Noct growled harshly from behind him and Ignis bent his head to his hands, worrying at the tied silk with his teeth until he felt it give way, parting his wrists to let it fall away from his skin. He pushed up onto his hands and rocked back harder onto Noct’s cock earning him a deep groan, an answering mewl falling from his own lips as he did. Noct grabbed his waist and pulled him back, so that he was in his lap grinding down. The King flopped
down onto his back and Ignis shifted his knees so that he was straddling his husband and started riding him, bouncing up and down, his own cock whacking against his stomach leaving strings of fluid all over himself. He planted his hands back behind himself next to Noct and felt the King grip hold, tangling their fingers together, rolling his hips, listening to the harsh gasps behind him. “Turn around…please,” Noct gasped.

Ignis lifted himself off Noct’s cock, feeling empty for a moment while he spun around and straddled him again, his hand reaching down to guide his length back to where he wanted it, needed it. They both groaned when he sank back down so that his ass was flush against Noct’s thighs. The King captured his hands and pulled him forward so that they could flick their tongues together, matching the roll of Ignis’ groin. They stared at each other, faces red with exertion and lust, Noct pushing up each time Ignis rolled down onto him. “Ohhh,” Ignis moaned feeling his release coming on so strong there was no way to hold back, his motions becoming more and more erratic, “I’m…N…Noct…”

“I…know…let go…come…for…me…” Noct moaned between gasps as he got closer and closer to coming himself. It tipped Ignis over the precipice and he came hard in long streams all over their stomachs, tightening around Noct as he cried out. Noct pulled him in closer and pumped into him, filling him with his come and yelling Ignis’ name with each pulse of his cock deep inside.

He crashed his mouth down onto Noct’s as they rode it out, their movements gradually slowing, breathless, messy kisses, tongues clashing and warring. Ignis pulled back and glanced into the mirror, watching Noct’s glistening length slide in and out, come dribbling down to coat his thighs and he couldn’t help but bite his lip at the sight of his rim red and swollen around him.

“Looks good doesn’t it…love seeing you like this…” Noct whispered.

“Mmm,” Ignis hummed, rubbing his nose against his lover’s, “I love having you fuck me so hard my brain goes blank,” he kissed Noct softly, “when you fuck me so hard I feel it all day,” another kiss, “I love it…I love you,” he drawled, voice husky as he kissed him again.

“Gods, baby, when you talk like that…”

Ignis felt Noct’s cock twitch inside him and he quirked his eyebrow up at the man under him, “I’d say we’re not done yet, love.”

CROWE

Crowe watched Ignis as he made his way across the Council Chamber to sit next to the King.

She noted the slight limp in the Duke’s gait and the darkness under his eyes, face gaunt as if he’d lost some weight. He’d been brought back from the trip to Pitioss, carried upstairs, Noct holding his hand, and had apparently slept throughout a day and night, not emerging from their suite until this afternoon. Prompto still hadn’t been seen since their return and Nyx was keeping close to him, refusing to leave him alone.

The Astrals had been released, Ifrit secure, but everything else had gone wrong from there. They could get no information from Niflheim, they’d had no word from the Astrals since their release and it was making everyone even more tense than they had been before the trip. Ignis was still avoiding Gladio, or Gladio was avoiding Ignis, at this point she couldn’t even tell. They had Verstael Besithia
in a cell below the Citadel, Cor was stalking around the city like a thundercloud and Monica was frowning all the time. She hadn’t seen Duncan for days. Aranea and Ravus seemed to be at least on speaking terms now, but they were just as taciturn as everyone else. Crowe wanted to scream.

At least Kyrsia hadn’t gone into labour while Noctis and Ignis were away, she was only a week or two off the tentative accelerated due date at this point, five or six weeks from full term. Crowe had a feeling that the twins and her own baby would be born very close together, they’d fallen pregnant within weeks of each other. She stroked her swollen stomach and tried to soothe the very active baby and move it away from her bladder. She didn’t relish the idea of having to waddle out of the room to pee in the middle of this meeting.

She looked around at the other Council members and noted the disgruntled faces, the trip to Ravatogh had been on a need-to-know basis and most of them hadn’t been in that loop. Crowe was sure that was what this meeting was about. Both Gladio and Cor had spent the week that the King and Duke were gone fending off questions, luckily she had avoided that, mostly because she had been short-tempered and no-one wanted to cross her. That and she had occupied herself with her mages. Reuel was proving to be almost as adept as she was and she’d had years of training. If things continued like this, he’d surpass her in no time. She felt inordinately pleased and proud of that, not that she’d had a great deal to do with it. He was a natural talent. Once she had assured him that Ignis definitely didn’t bear him any ill-will for Gladio’s misguided attempt to turn him into a strategist for the Crown, he’d relaxed again. After his meeting with the Duke, Reuel had sought her out and asked her if he could really believe that Ignis was telling him the truth. She’d laughed at that.

“Iggy doesn’t say anything he doesn’t mean, Reuel, he’s direct and straight to the point, particularly about this sort of thing. You’ll work that out, I’m sure, but for now, take my word for it. The only person he’s pissed with is my husband and rightly so, bloody idiot that he is,” she said fondly. She truly adored Gladio, but thinking things through was not his strong point. Reuel had grinned at her. It was well known amongst the mages that their leader was besotted with the Shield, but she wasn’t adverse to letting her frustrations over his antics out. They’d been regaled with tales of his behaviour during their lessons. Often it was a ‘don’t pull this shit’ type of thing. If Gladio knew of his wife’s penchant for making fun of him, he wasn’t letting on.

Reuel sat beside her now, she’d made him her second so she deemed it appropriate to start bringing him to Council meetings so that he could get accustomed to the frankly tense atmosphere that pervaded this room. Noct could be really stubborn when he wanted something he thought was important, yet the Council were quite capable of arguing over every little detail. That was generally when Ignis would step in and with a few quiet words cut through to the heart of the issue and objecting mouths would shut. It was part of the reason that most of the Council hadn’t been informed about the trip. Noctis and Ignis didn’t want to have to put up the belligerence.

Right now, the two men were explaining what had occurred and the results. Everyone around the table jumped when Ignis smacked his hand down on the table as voices were raised in protest.

“That is enough, it was necessary! Only the King could go! Are you going to argue with the requests of Astrals?” He glared at the dissenting Council members who shrunk back from Ignis’ vehemence. There was silence and Crowe almost laughed at Noct’s amused expression. “I thought not. Now, if you don’t mind, can we please continue?”

“As Ignis was saying before he was so rudely interrupted, Ifrit is secure. What we do need to think about is the fact that his weapon is still in Niff hands as far as we are aware. It can’t stay like that. The other Astrals can deal with the whereabouts of their own, but I feel that we need to locate the Infernian’s and ensure it is made secure.” Noct glanced around to make sure there were no objections. “This whole situation arose because of that damned blade, it’s too dangerous to leave it
“Are we sure that the Niffs are all in on this, or is it perhaps a small group that are working against us?” one of the Council piped up nervously.

“We are not sure, that is the whole point of Duncan trying to reach Niflheim. Hopefully he can bring us back intel that can give us a clearer picture.” Ignis paused, “given the involvement of certain high-ranking individuals, their government is implicated.” Ignis glanced at Noct who nodded, “Verstael Besithia is involved, of that we are certain, he was believed dead, however this not the case. He launched an attack on his Majesty…” The Duke held his hand up for silence when the room threatened to erupt again, mutters swelling around the room like a pack of angry voretooths. “He didn’t succeed and the danger from this individual has been neutralised. He will no longer be a problem to us. Alas this does not mean there are not others within the remnants of the Empire that are still working for our downfall.”

“Why didn’t Ravus or Aranea go?” another member asked and was thrown an incredulous glance from Ignis that made him scrunch down in his seat. Even Crowe knew that was a stupid question.

“Aranea Highwind was on the list for execution when the Darkness fell, she defected and it is well known that she now works for us in a military capacity. It would be the height of stupidity to send her. She’d be killed on sight.” The Duke turned to Aranea who looked like she wanted to protest that. “I am not slighting your skills, but you are distinctive and your style is easily recognised, Aranea, furthermore, you are vital to us now, we cannot afford to squander one of our best.” Placated somewhat she frowned but remained silent. “As for Ravus…that situation is even more dangerous.” Both Ignis and Noctis glanced at the former Prince of Tenebrae. Ravus frowned and looked down at the table in front of him. “Ravus is of no threat to us, he has pledged himself to Lucis and to the King. I can vouch for his loyalty in this matter if there is any doubt.” Ignis held the gaze of each Council member in turn, skipping over Gladio's eyes quickly.

Crowe frowned as she saw Gladio’s tense jaw and noted his glance to Ravus. She sighed, he still had a problem with him. She herself wasn’t sure of why Ignis was so convinced of the former Niflheim High Commander’s loyalty, but she trusted the Duke’s judgment and would defer to him in this. Thankfully, Gladio kept his mouth shut.

“Ravus would be in grave danger in Niff territory, even more so than Aranea. He was executed by Aldercapt for the events in Accordo,” Ignis flicked his gaze to Ravus and something passed between the two. Crowe heard the low grumble of annoyance from Gladio beside her and she reached out her hand, placing it on his broad arm, quieting him. “Now, can we discuss the actual issue and not get side-tracked again?” It seemed that talk about Ravus was at an end, “as I was saying, Duncan will bring us back what information he can, hopefully something about the blade will be part of that. In the meantime, we need to adopt a war-footing, there is no possibility of treaty now, and not in the foreseeable future.”

“One other thing we need to do is send a contingent to the Magitek Facility and it must be destroyed. It cannot be allowed to exist in any form, all their research contained there has to go. Any and all MT units there need to be destroyed, all experiments have to be wiped out. It needs to be as if the place never existed. This is NOT up for discussion.” Noct glared around the table almost daring someone to disagree. “Aranea and Ravus have given us what information they can on the Facility and its position, this will be passed on to the three squadrons that will be sent.”

“Overkill,” one of the Councillors muttered.

“OVERKILL? They were, and possibly still are, experimenting on babies, you ass! I want that place wiped off the map, do you understand me?” After Noct’s initial shout, his voice had gone
dangerously low. Crowe fought down the need to vomit. She knew about the experiments, but on babies? That was…evil. Gladio clutched her hand, squeezing it. She ran her other hand over her stomach, caressing the bump and feeling their child within stirring again. She shot her husband a pained glance as she did so, knowing he would understand what was swirling through her mind. The Niffs could not be allowed to continue to exploit children, not if she wanted their baby to be safe. While it continued, no child would be safe. If they were experimenting on their own children and infants who was to say they wouldn’t resort to kidnapping in order to have a steady supply. The population of Niflheim was small now, they certainly wouldn’t have enough for their needs amongst themselves. The obvious solution to that problem would be to steal more. Crowe could feel the anxiety that was coming off Noct and Iggy like waves, they had the same thought. Their twins wouldn’t be safe from the Niffs and their desire to squash Lucis, if they were taken it would be a two-fold victory for the Empire. They wanted this over before they were born, the threat to the heirs to throne quelled.

“All children of Lucis are in danger if this…abomination is allowed to continue,” Ignis swallowed down the ire that threatened to overtake him, the Council sitting around the table, wide-eyed at the implication. “Varras,” Ignis addressed the Councillor that had spoken up just moments before, “would you wish to explain to your wife that your objection to how many squadrons we sent on this task was the reason it failed and that you own children were then at risk because of it?”

Varras went white as a sheet and shook his head, “I apologise, my Lord Duke, I did not fully understand.” He bowed his head.

Ignis was disgusted if Crowe was any judge in the matter, “then I suggest in future, you wait to voice any objections to anything before you ‘fully understand’, we will not tolerate fools on this Council.” The threat of removal had Varras hanging his head. Gladio beside her shifted in his seat uncomfortably earning him a quick glare from Ignis. The Shield still hadn’t made his apologies to the Duke over his own foolhardy actions and Crowe could feel that he was wishing he had at this point.

The meeting continued for another hour, the soft light of dusk settling over the room before they were all dismissed and Gladio grabbed Crowe’s hand helping her from her seat. “Meet me outside,” she told him and he nodded making his way out behind the King. Ignis was shuffling papers at the head of the table and he glanced up as she approached.

“How are you, Crowe?” he asked sorting the papers into separate piles and making a quick note to one before it went into the folio.

“I’m ok, Iggy, fat and uncomfortable, but ok. Are you ok?” She eyed the Duke carefully, though dressed impeccably as always, she could see the strain on the man.

“I am fine,” he said quietly, picking up on her concern, “nothing to trouble yourself over,” he corrected, knowing she could sense the lie.

She pursed her lips and rested her hands on her hips. “This stuff with the Niffs has you freaking out, I can tell, and you are not as recovered as you want Noct to think,” she poked him in the chest, “don’t keep it from him.”

“I am not ‘freaking out’ as you so eloquently put it, I am concerned, how could I not be,” Ignis muttered defensively.

“Ignis, you are roiling just below the surface, I can feel it.” She frowned at him as he turned his face away. “Tell Noct, I’m sure he’s sensed it too. Trouble shared, trouble halved, all that, c’mon, you’ve got good people around you, you don’t have to be the only one shouldering it…and that is
not me making a subtle comment about what my idiot husband did, that was beyond fucking stupid, it was bordering on moronic.” She sighed, “we all know how capable you are, this bloody kingdom would be in tatters without you, but you can’t do it all alone, no-one can.”

“You husband seems to think I can’t do it at all,” Ignis huffed.

“Petty, Iggy, petty and you know it, he was trying to help, he thought he could ease the burden, but he forgot what a control freak you are,” she tempered her words with a little smile reaching her hand out to touch his hand on the papers on the table, “I think I understand what he meant by it, it wasn’t malicious, nor was he questioning your ability, I think he just thought you’d be able to be with Noct more, he thought you deserved that. He forgot you enjoy this stuff,” she waved her other hand over the papers he held. “It was coming from a good place, but he did the usual thing he always does, rushed in without really thinking it through. I’ve talked to him about that, he knows he has to change, use his brain more.” She paused a moment, letting her words sink in, “I also know this started a long time ago, he does too, he was trying to put things right between you. What he should have done is just apologise to you properly.”

“Yes, well…” Ignis faltered and she could see he was processing her words, reshuffling what he thought about it all, analysing it.

“Just think about it, when he does try to talk to you again, let him, please. I’m not asking you to forgive him, just to listen to what he has to say.” She smiled at him softly. “Now, how’s Kyrsia?”

Crowe was rewarded with a big toothy grin from the Duke, “she’s doing so well, I went with Noct to see her before the meeting, she says she feels pretty good, looking forward to delivering the twins. We talked about what she wants to do after. She’d like to stay in touch with them once they’re born, be like an aunty,” he chuckled, “she’s made it very clear that she sees them as our babies, not hers, however she would like to form a relationship with them. We made sure she knows that she will be welcome, wanted in their lives and Noct has organised for her to have her own home, here in the city so she can be close.” Ignis looked very much like the proud father-to-be, beaming at Crowe who found it infectious, grinning back at him. “She’s artistic, did you know that? Noct wants to set up a studio for her to paint in, he’ll do anything he can for her, we both will.”

“I know, I’ve known that from the minute you met her,” she told him. “Anyway, I’d better go find that Behemoth I married and make sure he’s not getting himself into more trouble.”

Ignis’ deep chuckle as she left had her hoping things would be ok between the two men. “He doesn’t deserve you, Crowe,” he said as he escorted her from the room, shaking his head in amusement.

“Oh, I know, I tell him that daily,” she quipped and Ignis laughed outright at that.

**NYX**

Three and a half weeks they had been home and Prompto still wasn’t himself.

Nyx had hardly left his side, so tied up in knots he thought he was going to lose it. The sunshine that was his lover was so dulled he didn’t know if he’d ever shine again, if he’d be perpetually under this black cloud that surrounded him. There were little glimpses that peeked through, a laugh - though it was tinged with bitterness - had burst from the gunner a few days ago when Nyx told him
that Iggy and Noct were pacing around waiting for Kyrsia to deliver. A gentle smile when Nyx reminded him he’d be an uncle soon. Another when he told the blond he loved him.

The King and Duke had given them both whatever time they needed and Nyx had pounced on that like a coeurl after prey. He would do anything for Prompto, anything to ease the hurt and anger that had engulfed his lover since Ravatogh.

He’d asked Noct about Besithia and when he saw the King purse his lips and frown, he said “no don’t tell me, I don’t want to lie to Prom, I promised I wouldn’t keep anything from him, so I don’t want to know.” Noct had nodded at the wisdom of that and he’d not asked anything further. But then, neither had Prompto. Nyx wasn’t sure if that was a good thing or not.

He held the blond every night, letting him feel his warmth, letting him know he was there through the nightmares that plagued him, running his fingers through his hair to soothe him, pressing gentle kisses to his brow to take away the frowns. He made sure he ate, dragged him into the shower and held him when he sobbed. It was heartbreaking to see him this way.

The night before had been a step in the right direction he thought. Noct had visited, holding a folio in his hands. He’d spoken with Prom about trivial stuff, trying to cheer him and Nyx had been relieved to see signs that his lover was still in there, deep though he was hidden under his cloud. As Noct left he handed the folio to Nyx.

“I think he should see these, but only if you think he’s ready, it might help,” the King glanced at his best friend sadly. Nyx opened the folio to find several photos. He picked the first one up and studied it while Prom sat and stared into space, lost in his thoughts. It showed a building reduced to rubble. He turned it over to find Ignis’ elegant script on the back. *First Magitek Facility destroyed.* Each photo showed a similar scene, smoke billowing from blackened buildings that were nothing more than piles of stone and cement amongst the snow. He turned over the last photo to find Ignis had left the note *the lab is gone, nothing remains.* Maybe this would help.

He walked over to where Prom sat and kneeled in front of him to catch his attention. “I have something that you should see,” he told him gently. Prom met his eyes and nodded. He pressed the folio into the gunner’s hands and waited.

Prompto glanced from him to the folio with a little frown. Nyx nodded at his lover to encourage him. He watched as Prom opened the folio and raised his eyes from the first photo in what looked like confusion. Nyx reached up and turned the photo over so he could read what the Duke had written. He watched those lovely blue eyes go wide in shock as he looked back up at Nyx. “It’s… gone?”

Prom had his eyes back on the photos as he rifled through them, reading the back of each one. “Yeah, it’s all gone,” he told Prompto. “They can’t hurt anyone ever again,” he whispered into the golden locks of Prom’s hair as the gunner launched himself out of his chair, scattering the photos on the floor as he held tight to Nyx. “It’s… gone?”

Prom had his eyes back on the photos as he rifled through them, reading the back of each one. “Yeah, it’s all gone,” he told Prompto. “They can’t hurt anyone ever again,” he whispered into the golden locks of Prom’s hair as the gunner launched himself out of his chair, scattering the photos on the floor as he held tight to Nyx.

“It’s really gone, it’s gone,” Prom chanted under his breath over and over, holding onto Nyx like a life line. The blond was shaking in his arms and Nyx pried him loose to look into his face. He was crying but there was a tentative smile of relief there too. “I’m real, right? I’m real?” The look on Prom’s face nearly shattered Nyx’s heart.

“Oh baby, of course you are,” he started peppering kisses to his lover’s tear stained face. “Mmmfff,” came out as Prom launched himself at Nyx, smothering his mouth with his own. “Woah, slow down, you ok?” Nyx pulled Prom back and searched his face.
“Make me feel r…real, please…please,” and anything Nyx might have replied was lost as Prompto kissed him hard, desperate to feel. The plea cut through his soul, he was conflicted, should they be doing this? But he couldn’t deny Prom and the way the blond was clawing at his clothes to remove them, there was no stopping him. Nyx groaned, it’d been weeks since they had last been intimate in this way and his body was responding of its own volition.

“Gods…let me…get you to bed…Prom!” He gasped as the blond bit down hard on his neck and writhed against him.

“No! Now!” Prom made his demand breathlessly and as a result Nyx had carpet burn all up his back and across the back of his hips the next morning. That mattered little. The little gasps and moans that had wrung from Prompto above him had been music to his ears, the brightness back in his eyes as he rode Nyx and chased their orgasms was heavenly.

He’d even gotten a smile this morning when he’d woken to find Prom watching him. Not the full megawatt smile that he was missing so badly, but it was close and it reached his eyes too. Nyx decided it was a good sign, he wouldn’t let anything tell him otherwise. He was desperate to have his lover back. He knew it might never happen though, Prompto could be changed forever, but he had to hope that the man he fell in love with was still in there. The little glimpses he had were encouraging.

That and the way that the little blond was looking at him right now. It was a look of desire, of love, need. He bit his lip and watched entranced as Prom’s almost violet eyes locked on to the movement. It was like the bursting of a dam, after the weeks of Nyx keeping watch over him, caring for him and now all of a sudden Prom was awake again. He hoped that it wasn’t some sort of coping mechanism, that Prom was really wanting him, not wanting to ignore his feelings about what had occurred in Ravatogh. Nyx sighed and grimaced making Prom frown.

“Prom, baby, I…I want to talk to you…about stuff,” he spoke tentatively, trying to ease into the conversation.

“Ugh…can’t we just…” Prom halted when he saw the look of worry on Nyx’s face.

“No, I think we need to talk about things, baby, I’m worried about you.” He took hold of Prom’s hands and forced him to look directly at him. “I need to know how you are doin’ baby, I need you to talk to me.”

Prom pursed his mouth into a little line and looked down at the floor between their feet. “I feel better knowing that place is gone…” Nyx lifted Prom’s face so he could look into his eyes again. He nodded his encouragement. “At least I can feel, right? I got away before they turned me into…”

“Oh, baby,” Nyx said gently, stroking a freckled cheek.

“I am human, right, I’m not a machine, I’m real?”

“Prompto Argentum, you are the most ‘human’ human I have ever met, the most caring, loving person, you are definitely not a machine. He can’t hurt you, they can’t do it to anyone else, you’re safe and real and I love you,” he pressed his lips to Prom’s forehead and brushed his hair back. He rubbed his thumb over the vines on Prompto wrist, “the way you live your life defines you, baby, not where you were born or…anything like that, it’s what you do with your life, and I think you have done fucking amazing, you are amazing.”

“You have to say that, you love me,” Prom tried to joke, but it came out more like a sort of lament.
“Yeah, I love you, but do you know why? It’s because of who you are, how you are, the way you look at life, the way you carry yourself, despite what’s going on in that head of yours, you always have something good to say about someone or to someone that’s having a bad day, you see the good in everyone, even me. I adore you.”

Tears sprang to Prom’s eyes and he hugged Nyx before he started blubering. Nyx curled his arms tightly around his boyfriend, grounding him in reality, feeding whatever strength he could through touch. He felt Prom relaxing in his grip and his breathing settled, no longer rasping, tears drying on his cheeks.

“Thanks,” Prom mumbled into Nyx chest.

“Hey, it’s just one of my many talents,” Nyx teased, lifting Prom’s face and kissing him on the tip of his nose.

“Arrogant bastard,” Prom giggled and Nyx’s heart was overjoyed to hear it, that his lover was joking around again, teasing him. It would take Prom some time, but Nyx was sure he was going to be himself again. Someone like Prompto Argentum didn’t get where he was by giving in to what was going on in his head, he pushed on and smiled at the world.

“Been thinkin’,” Nyx said, wanting to broach the subject of Prom’s origins gently.

“Don’t think too hard, might hurt something.”

“Hey!” He whacked Prompto on the arm lightly, “not funny, I have a brain, I can think. Anyway, as I said before you insulted my thinking powers…”

“They’re thinking powers now, are they?” Prom giggled again.

“I’m tryin’ to be serious here.” He grumbled and Prom gave him a wide-eyed innocent look, the type of look that the blond was an expert in. “I think you should maybe talk to Cor, I think if anyone is going to know more about how you got here, who got you out of Niflheim, he might. I mean, he was around then, he was one of Regis’ best, he’d been around when Mors was on the throne. He could have some info about you, or know something, maybe…” he trailed off, watching Prom’s expression carefully. It was thoughtful.

“Yeah…I think that could be a good idea. I mean, I know virtually nothing, only that I was adopted when I was about six months old, but even that makes me think, I don’t think my ‘parents’ were the typical couple adopting a child. They weren’t around much once I was able to look after myself a bit, it was like...like they were asked to look after me, but had no real idea how to...it’s hard to explain, but I...before Noct and the guys were in my life I was pretty much on my own. I went to see them before we all left for our trip and I never got to say goodbye coz they weren’t home...I shouldn’t have been surprised, but it hurt, they knew I was leaving and they didn’t bother to hang around to see me off...and then the Fall happened.” Prom paused and gave Nyx a lopsided sad little smile, “I never knew what happened to them, whether they were in Insomnia that day or if they had gone off on one of their trips away.”

“I didn’t know about this, baby, I’m sorry.”

“No, don’t be, I was pretty much used to it by the time Noct and me became buddies, him and Iggy and Gladio became my family,” Prom shrugged. “I guess I realised later that if they hadn’t been in Insomnia that day then they never tried to find me, I mean it was known who I was with and where I was, I had my phone on me, they had the number...so I guess it was easier to think that they were in the City that day. It was one less rejection from them.”
Nyx realised that this was part of the answer of why the Gunner could be so insecure, why he had fought so hard to be better, why he never touted his abilities loudly. The other part lay in the origins that he’d hidden for so long and been ashamed of. And the man who called himself Prompto’s father.

“Maybe Cor knows about that, can’t hurt to ask, right?”

“Yeah, probably, although he’s pretty…close mouthed, doesn’t say much. He was a great teacher when I joined the Guard though, always encouraging.” Prom frowned and Nyx had to agree with that. The Immortal was someone that simply inspired a respectful distance. No-one messed with Cor, not even Nyx and he’d known him since he started training with the Glaives. Although Nyx had never found the man to be the encouraging sort, more the silently judging type.

“I think he’ll talk to you about this, he’s not an asshole, just…scary.” Nyx grinned and pulled out his phone, scrolling through until he found the Immortal’s number, sending him a text asking him if he could talk to him about something important. It wasn’t long before he got a reply. “He says yes.”

It was only an hour before Nyx found himself answering the door to Cor. The Immortal was the type of man, though taciturn and solemn, who took over a room by simply being there. Nyx was always on his best behaviour around the man completely aware of the fact that Cor could snap him like a twig or slice him in half without breaking a sweat. He shifted in his seat, trying to act at ease while totally not being at ease. Prom wasn’t much better, hardly even looking at him. Cor just took it in stride, he was fully aware of the impact he had on other people and simply didn’t care.

“So why am I here, Nyx?” The raspy deep voice made Nyx almost sit at attention in his seat like an errant student about to be told off.

“Ahh, he asked for me, sir,” Prom squeaked. “I kinda want to know about some stuff that you might know.”

“Ok, what would you like to know, Prompto?”

Nyx’s mouth fell open, he’d never heard Cor speak so softly to anyone, it was gentle, caring. He noticed that Prompto had relaxed and was smiling shyly. It put Nyx on edge for no reason that he could pin down.

“Uhh, well, I wanted to know…it’s about how I got to Lucis, how I got out of Niflheim, my parents. I don’t know anything and….I….well Nyx thought it might be something you know,” Prom flicked a quick glance at the Commander and he nodded encouragement.

“I do know something about it, Prompto.” Cor smiled and Nyx thought he might fall off his chair. Cor smiling, actually smiling. “Regis and Clarus asked me to infiltrate the Magitek Facility to gather intel. So, I went in solo. They couldn’t send a whole battalion or anything like that, it had to be undercover.” Cor leaned forward and rested his elbows on his knees. “I got in ok and was trying to find any information I could, but I found you instead.”

“It was you? You got me out?” Prom was practically speechless. Nyx’s head was on a swivel, turning between Prompto and Cor. The Immortal still had that soft smile on his face and Nyx thought he understood what brought it to his face.

“I couldn’t leave you there, you were a baby, they’d marked you…I took you and left. I never did go back, I wish I had, but that doesn’t matter…” Cor took hold of Prom’s hand, “I wanted to keep you when I got you back here, but I was in no position to be a father, Regis and Clarus arranged for you to be placed with a couple. We thought they would be perfect for you, they were former
Crownsguard that had gone into business for themselves. They could protect you in case the Niffs tried to get you back and we thought they would be good parents.” The Immortal paused, “I’m sorry they weren’t what we thought, they weren’t meant to be parents.”

“It’s ok, sir, that’s not your fault.” Prom’s voice was low, quiet. Nyx could see he was trying to process everything.

Cor sighed and shook his head, “I lost track of you a little until you started being friends with Noctis, I can’t tell you how happy that made me, Prompto, you were flourishing from what I could see. Then you joined the Guard and I got to see you learn to shoot, find something that you were really good at…besides your photography, yes, I knew about that,” Cor added when he saw the look the gunner gave him. “Clarus told me about your parents, how they didn’t…didn’t seem to look after you, but seeing you then, with Noctis, I knew you would be ok.”

“I always wondered why you seemed to treat me different, I thought it was coz you thought I was weak or something, but that’s not right, is it?” Prom was grinning and Nyx found himself grinning along, pleased he’d brought these two together to talk.

“You are far from weak, Prompto, you are very strong in ways that most people aren’t, you let yourself feel and then keep going. One regret I have is that I couldn’t be the one to care for you, you are a son I could be proud of, am proud of. Look at you, raised to nobility, best friend of the King, one of the saviours of Eos, best shot I have ever seen, talented photographer and you have found yourself a man that loves you like you deserve. Everything that has been thrown at you, you’ve handled and still you can smile, make others forget their troubles. You are a credit to Lucis.”

Nyx felt a swell of gratitude towards Cor, the man obviously had watched Prom and knew a great deal about the blond, more than he would ever have guessed. While Prompto had learned a little about himself, Nyx had learned a great deal more about Cor.

“Thanks for doing this, sir,” he said and was rewarded with another smile from the Immortal, he wasn’t sure if he’d ever get used to that.

As Cor turned to leave all three of their phones went off. The Immortal glanced up from the screen frowning, “Duncan is back.”

GLADIO

The Shield was staring off into space, navel gazing Crowe called it, but Gladio was contemplating the best way to approach Ignis and try to really set things right. It had been weeks now and the Duke, while not openly hostile, still refused to speak to him unless he absolutely had to. He had tried to talk to Noctis about it again, but had been told in no uncertain terms that it was his fuck up, he needed to fix it and he was not going to upset his husband further by taking Gladio’s part, especially as he felt that his Shield was to blame. The King had been brutal in his assessment of the situation, Crowe was correct, Gladio had done almost irreparable damage with the way he had handled things after Altissia, how he had dismissed Ignis as being useful, and then how he’d virtually abandoned him in the years of Darkness. The stupidity of his actions had been compounded by the way he’d tried to ‘make things easier’ for Iggy.

Crowe had spoken to him about it again a day or two after the King and Duke had returned from Ravatogh. She’d talked to Ignis briefly after the Council meeting and had said that Ignis might be
receptive to hearing him out, but it would be something he needed to be heartfelt about, honest and no bullshit. She had stressed that point. Absolutely no bullshit. That and it would be best to leave it until he could be sure about what he wanted to say, to really think about it. Hence the navel gazing. Gladio had only come up with lint so far.

He sighed, shaking his head at himself, he was all action, he didn’t know if he could really think this through properly. It was Ignis that he would have turned to for advice on this sort of thing. That thought stopping him in his mental rambling. He had kept turning to Ignis even though he had treated him as useless. Astrals, it kept getting worse. No wonder the man had had enough.

Gladio was brought out of his navel gazing reverie by the chiming of his phone, pulling it from his pocket to see the message.

Duncan had returned from Niflheim and all Council members were required to meet in the main chamber. The Shield shoved his phone back in his pocket and motioned for his second in command. The man trotted over from where he’d been supervising a training exercise and waited for instruction.

“I have to leave, emergency Council meeting, can you have these guys do some battle drills?” Depending on what Duncan had to say, the army might need to be on high alert and ready to deploy.

“Yes, sir,” his second replied turning sharply on his heel to head back to the battalion as Gladio left the training grounds.

The Shield quickly made his way through the maze of buildings at the back of the Citadel to the rear entrance, light on his feet despite his bulk. He ignored the staff in the back corridors, intent on his destination. He spotted his wife with her protégé, Reuel, by her side, Monica ushering Council members into the large chamber, Cor lingering to speak to Noctis and Ignis before they entered. Gladio made his way inside and took up his customary place beside the King’s chair, watching as the room filled and seats were taken. The room was almost silent except for the shuffling of feet and rustle of fabric. Faces were grim and serious, worry painting more than a few. Gladio understood that. Whatever Duncan had to say could send Lucis to war.

It had been in the air almost from the very moment that Noct came back to properly claim his throne, or claim it again, the Niffs becoming bolder and bolder with each move they made, the first stealthy, but their latter moves had been openly hostile, including an attack on Noctis while he was in Ravatogh freeing the remaining five Astrals and making sure the sixth was secure in Pitioss. Besithia was still ensconced in the depths of the Citadel under constant guard. No decision had been made as to what to do with him. Noctis had briefed him on what had happened and Prompto’s reaction, and what the gunner had wanted to do to the man who called him his father. After what he knew of Prom’s experience in the facility before the Darkness fell, the reaction seemed pretty justified as far as he was concerned, but Ignis had apparently had some reservations, telling Noct that it could be detrimental to Prom’s well-being. Noct said his husband was in two minds about it, which worried Gladio. And Noct wouldn’t discount anything his husband had to say about it, so Besithia stayed where he was.

Gladio looked up when Noct and Iggy came in, Cor close on their heels. As everyone settled around the room in their accustomed places, Dustin appeared from the rear door way. Gods, he looked exhausted, worn down. Then he noted Prompto and Nyx. It was the first time that the Gunner had been seen since his return from Ravatogh, Nyx staying close to him and refusing to answer most people’s questions. Gladio had only had a few chances to ask how his friend was doing and Nyx would shake his head sadly. That had hit Gladio like a fist to the gut. Nyx was almost as changed as Prompto. There was no teasing arrogance, no shit-eating grin and easy
laughter from the Commander. So, seeing them both made the Shield sigh in relief. Prom looked…

if not happy and bouncing, he was at least out and about, Nyx sticking to his side.

Prom gave Gladio a slight smile. While not the face splitting grin he usually wore, it was a start.

Noctis stood in front of his chair and waited for everyone’s attention, glancing around, making sure

that no-one was missing.

“We have several pieces of important intel that we need to discuss,” Noct announced and everyone

leaned forward, waiting. “First of all, last night we had information come in regarding the hit on the

Magitek Facility,” the King glanced at Prom who ducked his head to hide his face, Nyx, gripping his

hand. “It’s been destroyed completely, Ignis is going to pass around some photos for you all to look at. Every experiment and piece of paperwork contained there is gone, all MT’s are gone and the man who ran it is in our custody until a decision is made about his fate.”

Gladio glanced at Prom again, noting the thin line that his mouth made.

“At this point we are considering putting him on trial for his heinous crimes, the verdict would certainly be death. However, another option is to use him for information, he may think we will trade him his freedom, I can tell you all now, that will not be happening. What that man did is too… disgusting to allow him to be free. There will be no bargaining with him, not now, not ever.”

Gladio saw Prompto relax a little at Noct’s words and a glance passed between the King and his best friend. Ignis passed down a sheaf of papers and they were distributed to the rest of the table, eyes flicking between the photos and the King where he leaned against the table. When the papers came to him, he took a page from the top and handed it on to Crowe beside him, and she in turn took one and passed it to Aranea. He looked down at the photos reproduced on the page. Blackened stone, plumes of smoke rising from snow. The First Magitek Facility was rubble, there was not one stone left untouched, complete.

“Our troops infiltrated it, tore it apart, every scrap of paper, every disc destroyed. They were instructed to go through it with a fine-toothed comb and they have done so.” The King paused and turned to Ignis, “Ignis has analysed the information they sent us and it appears at this point that they had stored all their data in the facility, however we are unwilling to take this at face value. The intel that Duncan will give you all will allow us to consider our next move. For the good of Lucis, for the good of Eos, as a whole, we cannot allow this to happen again, will not allow it to happen again.”

Noctis looked towards Ignis, who stood and waited for the King to take his seat before he took over.

“Duncan will speak in a moment, however we wish for you all to understand that we are on war footing from this moment, all those in Command will need to meet shortly to receive orders, our engineers have been working at our behest to ready weaponry suitable, they have backwards engineered our own drop ships for transportation of larger forces quickly. Pilots have been trained and are ready to deploy. The ultimate aim of this meeting will be to determine if we are indeed to send a declaration of war. Right now, we are ready, by the end of this meeting we will know if we are to start sending our troops. This war, if it happens will not be fought on Lucian soil, it will be taken to Niflheim. I cannot stress enough that it will be military targets only, we will not subject their civilians to what our people had to endure, no hospitals, no targets other than military ones.”

Ignis paused and looked around the room, “this is not something we take lightly, and we wish to ensure that innocents are not harmed, to minimise the destruction of their cities and towns. We are not cruel and will not stoop to the level of our enemy. Our aim is to ensure that Niflheim are not able to destroy human lives the way they have previously. Zegnautus is our main target.”

Ignis nodded at Duncan, who moved forward to stand beside Ignis’ chair.
I have been in Gralea the last few weeks, moving around amongst the populace, listening. The people themselves are tired and quite a few are disgruntled with the current regime, they want change, they want peace, they resent the political posturing and there is talk of rebellion. The Niffs in charge still have Ifrit’s blade, it’s being kept in Zegnautus according to most of the intel I could gather. A large number of their human soldiers are…dissatisfied. There is still a significant contingent of MT’s in the city proper, however they stay in the city, they do not move around the rest of Niflheim. This will work to our advantage. Most of their population is situated in outlying areas, close to the bunkers where they hid during the Darkness.” Duncan took a deep breath, “the people are hungry, sick, the powers that be are ignoring them.”

“On that point, the Crown would like to have it put out that we are willing to take in refugees, that we would let them become part of us, that we can help them and want to help them, that they can receive medical care and they can start new lives here. Start new lives, open businesses, have homes here, schooling for their children, safety. That we understand that the people didn’t want the hostilities that their leaders undertook, we will not blame them. We will lay that firmly at the door of those in charge.”

One of the Council members spoke up, “we have had their spies try to infiltrate us, how do we know that these refugees are genuine?”

“Crowe will have her mages assist with that,” Ignis said.

“People are returning to the Galahdian and Tenebrean regions, they are particularly interested in either self-government or returning to the fold of Lucis and I would suggest we send a delegation to speak with them,” Duncan added. “The Niffs are basically ignoring their outlying areas and people are drifting back, they are receiving no help from the Empire and are essentially looking after themselves.”

“Ravus? Would you be willing to be part of that, having you there could show them that we are sincere in our efforts, show them that you are trusted within Lucis, that you can speak for us and for them?” Noct looked to the former Prince who nodded.

“Yes, your Majesty, I would be honoured to do so.”

“Nyx, as our Commander of the Glaives, we cannot spare you at the moment to travel to Galahd, but do you know of someone who could do so, I think if we can send someone that has been here with us, that would be beneficial, and then later, when things are more settled in the region you could go and help in the recovery efforts if you wish.”

“Yeah, I think I know of a couple who could be spared from the Glaives, they would be happy to go our homeland and help out, now that it is possible,” Nyx spoke up.

“I hope you don’t mind not going yourself just now,” Noct said, frowning.

“No, of course not, Lucis is home now, I will always love Galahd, but this is where I have made my home. I’ll visit, of course, but I’d always come back here,” the Commander answered, still holding Prom’s hand.

“Thank you, Nyx,” Noct said smiling knowing exactly who was keeping the Commander in Lucis. “Now, shall we discuss the main topic of this meeting? In addition to our relief efforts and diplomatic missions, will we go to war or seek to aid a rebellion?”

“If I may,” Ignis put in, waiting for Noct to nod, “in both cases, we have the opportunity to retrieve the Infernian’s Blade, however a rebellion means that a great deal less damage may be caused than if
we go to war. We can send troops to aid them in those efforts, they will know where to direct them for best effect and minimise the impact to the populace.”

“The Lucian assets that I met with could be better utilised in a rebellion, they could pass on information and organise our troops there, conferring with the rebels,” Duncan said.

Monica indicated she wished to speak, “I feel that aiding the rebellion could be our best chance to achieve our aims, all-out war may turn some of the people against us, if they are as unhappy as Duncan feels, then it might be the best way. Combined with us helping refugees, aiding the rebels will show that we want to help them help themselves, rather than take over. Perhaps then, we could undergo new peace talks with new leaders.”

The conversation flowed back and forth for another hour or two, discussions of the best way to go forward vital to everyone in the room. No-one wanted war, yet they all understood that if it came to that they had to be prepared to do so. A few of the Councillors expressed a desire for revenge but were shot down by the King, who stated emphatically that it was not about revenge, that he wanted his reign to show that he wanted peace for all Eos.

Gladio remained silent throughout the discussions, arms crossed over his chest, observing proceedings, making sure his wife was comfortable, or as comfortable as she could get. He smiled at her when she rolled her eyes at a round of bickering that erupted suddenly between two minor Council members and outright laughed when Nyx called them dickheads, much to Ignis’ annoyance.

He was brought out of his musing when he heard the Duke calling his name, his eyes going wide at being addressed by him.

“Gladiolus? You have not given your opinion, Noct wishes for us all to have our say,” Ignis said cutting through the babble that fell silent at his words.

Everyone looked between the two men, knowing that there was a rift and waiting to see if fireworks would break out. Gladio was going to disappoint them.

“Ahh, I’m not exactly qualified to comment, my Lord Duke, I’m just a sword with legs, but I do think that aiding the rebellion might be the better way to go, I’d rather the army be used for rescue, rebuilding, stuff like that. I’ll go along with whatever you decide,” he said keeping his tone low and respectful and noted the brow raise from Ignis at his words, then the sharp nod before the Duke looked away.

Crowe gave him an encouraging smile and a discreet thumbs up. Even Noct was eyeing him thoughtfully, most likely wondering where his usual brash arrogance had gone.

In the end, rebellion was approved, they would assist the rebels in Niflheim to take over and rule themselves, deposing the Empire. Duncan volunteered to return as soon as possible to help get things underway, Gladio was told to pick several units to be set to aid them, Nyx giving Ignis the names of the Glaives he wanted to send to Galahd and it was then that Ravus spoke up.

“I will go to Tenebrae in the morning, I would like to help them pick a new government, or assist if they wish to join Lucis, either would please me. If they approach me to take the throne I will decline, I am not the man to lead them,” he stated quietly. Gladio frowned, he had been certain that Ravus would go back and assume leadership, to hear him say otherwise confused him. He saw Ignis give the man a sad smile and nod, obviously the Duke had some idea that the former Prince would do that.

“Perhaps we could create a position for you as Ambassador, or Diplomatic Envoy, Ravus, I am
sure you would be excellent as such,” Ignis said.

“All right, I think that’s enough for now, let’s aid a rebellion, people,” Noct said as he stood and grinned.

Noct and Iggy both looked down at their phones at the same time, both chiming simultaneously. Noct’s eyes went wide and he looked at Ignis who was open mouthed and they both raced out of the room. Gladio shouted, “what?” as he made to follow.

Noct turned, “Kyrsia!” Prompto and Nyx were up out of their seats and following in seconds, Gladio helped Crowe out of her chair and held her hand as they made their way out.

The twins were on their way.

**NOCTIS**

Sania met them at the door to the delivery suite, two guards flanking either side. She handed them surgical gowns to put over their clothes and a little paper cap each. Noct grimaced at the cap but slipped it over his hair, grinning when he saw how Ignis looked in the get up, ridiculously cute and as nervous as he’d ever seen him. He slid his arms into the gown and turned for Ignis to lace it up for him, doing the same for his husband.

“They’re coming, Gorgeous, they’re really going to be here soon,” he muttered into Ignis neck as he hugged his husband tight before they entered the room.

“Oh Gods, the bag, we left the bag at the Citadel,” Ignis moaned. He’d been so flustered when they got the message that they’d left without picking up the carefully packed bag, full of things for the twins, soft blankets, lovingly picked clothing, little pairs of booties, whisper soft caps to keep their heads warm. Both men had been ridiculously overjoyed to pack that bag and now felt stupid to have left it behind.

“I’ll get someone to grab it for us, don’t stress, I forgot it too, kinda excited to get here, it just slipped my mind,” Noct chuckled.

“And the bag for Kyrsia, ask them to fetch that too, Oh Astrals, where is my head?” Ignis had a panicked look on his face and Noct had to hold him still as he tried to pace a trench in the space before the delivery suite door.

“Shh, you’re going to give yourself a heart attack, deep breath, Baby,” Noct was rather surprised that the situation wasn’t reversed, him being a mess and Ignis being calm, collected and in control. He took hold of his husband’s hand, stroking over his wedding ring and pressing a kiss to Ignis’ cheek. “Let’s go in and see Kyrsia, she’s likely just as nervous as we are,” Noct leaned his head on Ignis’ chest, hearing the thumping of the heart underneath and smiling at it. It was racing like a herd of stampeding garula.

“Indeed,” Ignis said, slipping his arms around Noct’s waist as they turned and entered.

The two midwives in the room, halted their bustling for a moment to incline heads respectfully before returning to their duties, fussing around Kyrsia where she lay propped in the bed, a belt to monitor the babies’ heartbeats wrapped around her enormous middle. She looked tired but relieved. Finally, the twins were coming. Three weeks off their proper due date, they’d hung around in her
womb as long as they could before deciding it was time.

“Are you ok?” Noct grabbed one hand while Ignis settled on the other side and took her other hand in his. “Do you need anything, water…?”

“No, I’m good, stop fussing you two, women do this every day,” Kyrsia scolded them much to Ignis’ delight. He loved the way she was so relaxed around them both, it had taken her a little while but now she treated them like normal people.

“Hey, we’re allowed to fuss, you’re doin’ all the work,” Noct laughed giving her hand a squeeze.

“Don’t remind me,” she panted as a contraction took hold.

“Seven minutes,” one of the midwives said, noting it down on a chart as the other lifted the blanket over her spread thighs to check the progress of dilation, taking the chart from the other to record it. “Everything is going according to plan, the doctor will be around shortly to check in.”

Noct’s phone buzzed and he pulled it from his pocket, smiling when he saw the message, it was from Nyx, “Nyx and Prom are getting the bags for us, they saw that we’d left without them,” he told Ignis and Kyrsia. His husband quirked his lip at that, while Kyrsia laughed.

“Bit excited were you?”

“Yeah, can’t you tell?” Noct asked, grinning at her.

She laughed again, “you two have been excited from the second we started this, I can’t wait to hand them over to you, see you go totally gaga over them, then I can have my body back,” she smirked.

“You’ve done remarkably well looking after them for us, my dear, you know how grateful we are,” Ignis said quietly, pushing her hair back off her forehead.

“Just an incubator, Iggy,” she said, giving him a cheeky grin.

“Hardly, my dear, you’ve helped a dream come true,” he admonished and Noct laughed, knowing Kyrsia had said it purely to get a rise out of him. “Oh,” he muttered when he realised why the other two were laughing. “I stand by my statement,” Ignis grumbled.

“I know, Iggy, I know, but it was a joint effort, we’ve all had a part in this,” Kyrsia said gesturing to the baby bump.

Several contractions and about a half hour later a knock sounded on the door, one of the guards poked his head in, “Argentum and Ulric are here, you Majesty.”

“Right, I’ll be back in a sec, don’t go anywhere,” he wagged a finger at Kyrsia who scoffed.

“Ahh, bit hard to walk right now, Noct,” but she knew he was just being silly. He placed a kiss on her cheek before making his way around the bed and running his hand up Ignis’ arm giving him a wink.

He found the two men waiting outside, bags in hand and grins on their faces.

Prompto dropped the bag he was holding on the floor to sweep his best friend into a bear hug, “dude, you’re gonna be a dad soon, are ya shittin’ bricks or what?” the blond almost squealed at the King. Noct was so happy to see Prom acting much more like himself that he forgot the question for a moment. He glanced at Nyx who was grinning from ear to ear, relaxed into his usual smug pose
and Noct laughed to see it. With Prom’s sunshine dulled, Nyx had been…he’d been so quiet and worried for his boyfriend. “Is Iggy fussing?” Prom’s voice brought him out of his reverie.

“Yeah, he wanted to kick himself for forgetting these,” he gestured to the bags, “he’s totally being a mother hen right now, Kyrsia is givin’ him shit,” he chuckled. “Thanks for bringing them, Prom,” he hugged the blond again, then pulled Nyx in, “you too, ya big ass.” He leaned in close to Nyx’s ear, “good to see him happy, you as well.” Nyx nodded and looked over to Prom who was trying to peek into the delivery suite. “He looks like himself.”

“Yeah, nearly, the photos helped, then Cor spoke to him.” Nyx’s voice was soft as he watched over Prompto.

“Cor? Huh?” Noct said.

“Ahh, yeah, he was the one who took Prom out of Niflheim when he was a baby,” Nyx clarified for the King.

“Right, I should’ve guessed that,” Noct frowned. “He’s always been extra…careful around Prom, asking if he’s ok, praising him,” he added. “It is so not Cor to be like that, he usually scares the shit out of everyone.”

“Yeah, he wanted to adopt him, but he couldn’t, so, he’s kept track of him, said he was proud of how he’s turned out.” Nyx shook his head, “got to see a totally different side of the Immortal.”

“Everything goin’ ok in there, Noct?” Prom turned back from his peeking to ask.

“Yeah, all on track, still could be a while though, Kyrsia is doin’ great,” he grinned at his friend. “She’s got two midwives in there with us and the doc will be there for delivery, just to make sure it all goes ok.” Noct took a deep breath, “it’s really happening, Prom.”

“You and Iggy will be great, dude,” Prom said still grinning, eyes bright.

It was infectious, just as it always was when Prom was around, Noct grinning back at him. It was great to see the gunner acting more like himself and it helped dispel the image he had of Prom breaking down and then his morose expression when he visited over the past few weeks.

Four and a half hours later their dream became reality.

Noct and Ignis sat side by side, each holding a little bundle. Kyrsia watched them with a soft weary smile on her face. The King held their daughter, peering down at her face, while Ignis held their son, his long finger held tight by tiny ones, blinking away tears. Both men were totally besotted, enraptured by the little humans they held.

Their daughter had a shock of jet black hair like Noct’s, the little boy a soft swirl of brown like Ignis and it was causing Kyrsia no end of amusement to see that the twins were reflecting their parents so clearly. It would be interesting to see how they would look as they grew, which man they would favour, what their personalities would be like. They were tiny, but healthy, something that Ignis had gone over with the doctor and midwives several times.

“Thank you, Kyrsia,” Noct choked out for about the fifth time since the twins had been born. He just couldn’t stop himself. He was brimming over with love for the tiny little bundles. Kyrsia just smiled at him.

Over the next two weeks, the King and Duke spent every moment they could at the hospital, learning to bathe the twins, feeding them as Kyrsia couldn’t breastfeed, changing them, doing
everything they could in the peace of the room set aside for the twins. The media were camped out on the paths outside the hospital waiting for a glimpse of the babies, an announcement had been made the day after they were born causing a frenzy. Thankfully they were unable to enter the wing that Kyrsia and the babies were in so there hadn’t been any intrusions. If there had been Ignis would have positively murdered anyone who dared come to close. Their friends had been to visit several times, cooing over the twins and congratulating the two men who were bursting with pride over their children. Prompto had declared them perfect and all Noct could do was agree with that. They were.

They were still trying to decide on names for them both having whittled it down to a few choices for each, but they just couldn’t quite decide, going back and forth, testing the names out on both the little boy and girl, but none of their choices seemed to fit. They still had a few days before the names needed to be registered, so they had a little time.

Kyrsia was ready to go home herself, having recovered enough to move around well and as she wasn’t breastfeeding she didn’t need to be so close, but Ignis had insisted she stay if she wanted to, so she did, enjoying the time with the twins and their parents. Noct was still amazed at how she was handling it all, calling herself ‘aunty’ rather than mother, though she was their birth mother, she insisted that they were their children, not hers. It was why she had done it she’d told them, she had wanted to help give them what they desired, not to become a mother. She’d be a part of their lives, but it was up to Noct and Ignis to raise them. And she could see they would be wonderful, attentive parents.

The first time they tried to swap who was holding who was comical but they had worked it out, Ignis ever the strategist had suggested that one would sit with one twin and have the other transfer the other twin to the other arm, then take the first, making it so much easier than trying to juggle them and transfer at the same time, and infinitely more satisfying than putting one down to pick the other up. Neither man wanted to ever let them go.

Noct could see at times that Ignis was struggling with the concept that he was now a father to two children, he could see the man’s brain whirring with possibilities and worry, but Noct would reach a hand out and stroke his cheek, smiling and his husband would settle, looking back down to the baby in his arms. They’d started to wonder what colour their eyes would be, who they would look like. They had all the time in the world to find out.

The day they were to take them home, Kyrsia left early to settle into her room in the Citadel, her new home ready and waiting for her when she eventually moved out, but Ignis had said he wanted her to go only when she was ready and then he had started discussing visiting schedules and regular dinners and Noct had laughed. He just couldn’t give up on planning things, even this. So, with Kyrsia settled at the Citadel, Noct called Gladio and asked him to have the Regalia brought over. It had been fitted with two carriers the moment the twins arrived and now they would use it to transport them home. The only pictures the media got of the babies was a darkened image through the tinted windows as Noct and Ignis drove out of the underground garage of the hospital and then again as the entered the Citadel. There would be time for official pictures later, for now they just wanted time to enjoy these first days at home in privacy. Thankfully, the media seemed to understand and for the most part left them alone. Although the Citadel press office was inundated with questions hourly.

Prompto and Nyx came by the morning after they got home and settled in finding them in the nursery, the first night in a new place was a little unsettling for the twins and they seemed restless, unable to calm for long, so the King and Duke had had a long night, but even with that they still were blissfully happy, Noct holding their son to his shoulder, patting his back gently, rocking back and forth in the age old pose of a parent, while Ignis was soothing their daughter in much the same way pacing with her perched in his arms while she half-heartedly attempted to keep crying.
“Look at you two, aww,” Prom cooed when they came in, “daddies in their natural element,” he giggled and Nyx smirked.

“So, do they have names yet?” Nyx asked once both babies had settled and were sleeping contentedly in their parent’s arms.

“Not exactly, no, we keep going over the list of names we had picked out, but nothing is working,” Ignis said quietly, tucking the blanket around his daughter and stroking back her hair.

“Can I see the list?” Prom piped up and Noct fished it out of his pocket while still hold his son carefully as to not jostle him too much.

“Impressive,” Nyx said grinning as he watched the way Noct handled holding the little baby boy while using his free hand. Noct poked his tongue out and held out the list for Prom to take.

“Wow, there’s like twenty names in each list here, no wonder you’re having trouble, you’ve got too many choices here.”

“We have narrowed it down a little, Prom, check the ones with the marks beside them,” Ignis said as he shifted their daughter to his other arm.

“Right, ok, that’s a bit better, I guess,” Prompto said surveying the list again. “Hmm, have ya thought about combining two names, like your names mean…night light in the sky or something, Noct? And your is fiery knowledge, Ignis, yeah? Did I get that right?”

“Essentially, yes.” Ignis answered interested to see where this was going.

“Wellll,” the gunner drawled, “what about doing something similar with these two?” He looked up from the list to Noct, “he’s going to be king one day, so why not show that in his name? You’ve got two names here that might work, hmmm, Kaius means lord, so almost like king right? And Lexus is defender, wait…Alexander, defender of mankind, Kaius Alexander, that works better than Kaius Lexus.”

Noct looked down at his son, testing the name. “Yeah, I kinda like that, he could be Kai for short. What do you think, Baby?” he asked his husband.

Ignis strolled over to where Noct stood and peered down at their son, “yes, I think that fits,” he said softly. “Kaius Alexander,” he said, testing the name on his tongue.

“Oh, baby name genius, what about this little one?” Noct said gesturing to the little girl in Ignis’ arms.

Prom peeked in at the tiny little girl, “she’s so pretty, can tell she’s gonna be a gorgeous princess,” he grinned and looked down at the list, his mouth silently going over the names, forming combinations. “Hmmm, I’ve got a couple of suggestions for ya. Sweet Dawn, Sabia Aurora, that’s really pretty…or Phaedra Estella, Bright Star. And Phaedra could be shortened to Phae, that reminds me of faeries, she’s pretty like a little faery.”

“Estella was my mother’s name,” Ignis murmured and Noct looked up, Ignis hardly ever spoke of his parents, they’d died when he was a child, not long before he came to the Citadel to live with his uncle and entered the schooling programme for gifted children.

“That settles that then, I want to name her for your mother, and I really like Bright Star as the meaning.”
“Well, my love, it appears that our dear Quick Silver has helped us name the twins,” Ignis smirked using the meaning of Prompto’s name.

“Did you actually name your favourite gun after yourself?” Nyx laughed.

“No! It was already called that, I just thought it was…” Prom flushed bright red highlighting his freckles.

Nyx snorted and ruffled Prom’s hair, “just teasing ya, babe.”

Noctis and Ignis took the twins into their bedroom and settled them into their cots, watching them sleep peacefully, oblivious to the fact that they now had names. Kai and Phae.

**RAVUS**

Ravus stealthily made his way to the edge of the city, taking note of the red airship hidden at the back of the building that was his destination.

She was already there, just as she usually was.

Since coming back from his diplomatic mission to Tenebrae, he’d been going there most nights for the past few weeks, no-one knowing that he was not sleeping in his suite in the Citadel, except Ignis. The Duke had told the guards that he was not to be followed, allowed to come and go as he pleased, that it was of no interest where he went each night. No-one ignored a direct instruction from Ignis. And he was always back early in the morning, as if nothing had happened.

The night was almost still, very little breeze, stars little diamonds on the inky blanket of the sky above as Ravus entered the small garden outside the secret door to his lover's abode, jasmine in bloom scenting the warm air, the white of the flowers standing out like little stars amongst the foliage surrounding the large weathered oak door. Stepping up close he inserted the old key, the lock in the middle of the door, formerly disused the lock releases freely a result of its recent frequent use. The door swung open wide, allowing him entrance to their private sanctuary, a place of abandon and release.

Once inside, he closed the door gently and allowed a soft smile to cross his lips.

The briefest of suggestion of her perfume lingered, candles and lanterns softly reflecting in the large gilt-edge mirror opposite the stone worked fireplace. The bed beckoned to him through the bedroom doorway, the carved mahogany posts supporting the canopy draped in dark blue silk and velvet held back with thick golden ropes tassels hanging almost to the floor. It was a glorious frame for the woman in the bed waiting for him. Ravus approached the side of the bed, feet sinking into soft carpet, muffling his steps and finding her curled on her side hair fanned across the pillow, her naked back exposed by a sheet tossed in slumber, arm flung back behind her, the soft curve of breast visible and a little twinkle as the metal from the ring through her nipple glinted in the flickering light. Leaning over and placing his hands on the soft sheet, he pulls it back whisper quiet, the satin gliding down over Aranea’s pale warm skin, slipping off the curve of her hips.

Ravus paused a moment, watching the gentle rise and fall of her side, breath soft in the quiet of the room, shut off from the world the only other noise the crackle of the fire and his own breathing and heartbeat as it began to pound through his body, his gaze wandered down to take in the dip in her
back above the rounded cheeks of Aranea’s ass. Releasing the sheet to fall at her feet where they lay tangled together, his hands moved quickly to undress, kicking off shoes and slipping his clothes to the floor, then carefully easing in beside her, not wanting to wake the Dragoon from her dreams just yet. Reaching down with his hand slowly to softly caress her toned thigh as he nestled in behind her, feeling the warmth of her skin radiate to his fingers, soft, silky, and as Ravus’ fingers glide up and over her hip to dip down at the curve of waist she stirred a little, shifting to mold her body against his, curling her arm above her head.

As she rests her back against Ravus’ chest his hand makes its slow journey to the side of Aranea’s breast, his finger trailing around and then across the curve to her slightly hardened nipple, the pad of his finger brushing the tip gently, then pinching hold of the ring pierced through it, he tugs a little, gently. A little smile crosses the Dragoon’s face as she continues to dream, body responding to his gently tugging fingers, her hips roll back and ass rubs against Ravus’ hardening dick as it slips between her cheeks, nestled, he pushed forward firmer, sliding lower till he felt her warm lips slipping over the shaft, clit dragging over the head. She sighed and her arm lowers, fingers digging into the flesh of his hip, slowly coming awake, not sure if she is dreaming or not, in the in between state. Teasing them both with each roll of his hips, a moan escapes and she bit her lip, eyes flickering open, feeling him hard and hot, sliding a little and parting her lips, her pussy warmer and moistening, a heat radiating though her as she gasps and realises it's not a dream, it's much, much better. Ravus’ lips travel over the skin at Aranea’s throat, a tiny shiver vibrating through her with every lick and nibble, with every thrust forward. Shifting his hips back, his cock slides back and tilting he circles a little, the wet head probing at her puckered asshole, her back arched, shoulders pushed back she shifts against him raising one leg and responding by curling her ass back to him more. The angle improved he pushed a little, wiggling, grasping her raised leg and pulling her to him, opening her up, head stuffed in, resisted for a second before he can push his slickened shaft right in, her ass surrendering to him, encasing him tight and hot, both moaning together as he fills her completely, stretching her to accommodate his size, letting her get used to him.

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Aranea’s arm curled around to hold Ravus’ head to her neck, his lips a fiery trail across her skin as she pushes back, heart beat pounding in her ears. Grasping her hips tighter he wriggled his hips and the hard cock delved deeper, buried, slowly he pulled back holding her still, her ass dragging around the shaft until the head is gripped tight. A low moan growled out of her throat, so ready now for him to slam back into her, pound his hard, hot cock right in deep over and over again. A shiver rippled through her whole body, instead of thrusting hard he slowly, inch by inch pushed in again, a smile creeping over his face feeling her response, smile soon forgotten as he makes his way right in to be squeezed by her ass, he bit down on her shoulder to stop the groan that wants to worm its way out of his mouth. Holding himself buried deep, Ravus’ hands guide her hips to roll, grinding her ass cheeks to his hips, stretching her more, making a little room. Shifting Aranea onto her knees, keeping his cock as far in as he can, her ass now suspended in front of him, back a curved bow, her elbows pushed hard into the bed, pillows normally a dark shade of blue now glowing golden in the candle light, are tossed aside scattering around them as she grasped the sheet in front of her. Gripping her tight, fingers digging into her hips he started to thrust, forward and back, delicious in its slowness, tormenting them both, he’s encased tight, she’s filled to capacity. Aranea threw her head back, hair cascading in a silver river over her back, as he dragged his cock back again he released one hand to pull back and land a firm slap on her ass cheek, the imprint starting to glow red almost immediately, she gasped in surprise and wiggled her ass back and forth a little to issue a challenge. Laughing, Ravus plunged deep fast and slapping again harder, her ass cheek tingling, hot and red, she thrusts back and with both hands back to grip her hips hard, pulling her to him more, he rocked into her, back and forth. The former Prince of Tenebrae heard her groan, felt her groan as he pounded harder and harder, then suddenly slowing the pace of each thrust, teasing again. Aranea’s skin was afire beneath his hands, pulling her with him as he lays back, impaled on his cock, her bald pussy lips wet and grazing over his balls as she rolls her hips lazily around and around, then back and forth, hands
on his thighs for balance as she leant forward a little pulling his hard dick down with a thrust of her hips. Ravus’ fingers dig in to her hips as she rolls back then down again. Pushing right down, stuffed into her tight and hot. Aranea moved one hand to her clit to rub, needing to touch. Her hand brushes his balls as she does and he knows what she’s going to do. Reaching around with his own hand and sitting up behind her, his fingers meet with her and together they slide over her clit then lower to both dip inside the velvety soft moist pussy that was crying out to be touched. He felt the jolt that traveled through her body as together they probed, flicking and twisting, deeper and deeper into her wetness. Matching thrusts with fingers they rocked together on the bed in the candlelight, their shadows cast in all directions.

Harder and faster, they thrust together, skin aflame as their bodies met, twisting her head around to kiss him again and again, their hands entwined probing, slipping into her pussy where it's tight and so very wet, his cock stuffed into her ass, pounding deeper and deeper. Balanced in Ravus’ lap, lost in the feeling of it all, surrendered to it, crying out as her body tingled from his cock, his touch. Slowing down a little in their movements, easing the pace, they fondled and stroked. Lifting her slightly, he pulled his hips back, withdrawing from her ass as it drags around the shaft then widens to release the swollen head. Suddenly spinning Aranea around and pushing her back, he lazily made his way up her body with his mouth, light gentle nibbles and the occasional nip with his teeth, pausing to taste where their fingers have been, so slick and wet with her juices, the lips of her pussy hot and tingling, his tongue slips over the lips and up to the clit, begging for him to nibble and bite and lick and suck. Aranea edges up against him as his tongue flicks over her clit, the sensations his tongue created sent fireworks through her, his hands held her down, fingers dug in to maintain control, keeping her still as he drove her wilder. Aranea’s legs hooked over Ravus’ shoulders he delved in with his tongue, searching and flicking, devouring her with his mouth spurred on by her whimpers of intense pleasure, cheeks flushed as she tossed her head and writhed. Her hand reached for him, curling around his neck, then grasping in his hair as he probed his tongue deep within the folds, flicking and tasting. Humming, licking, creeping one hand over hot flesh, his finger found her nipple and was soon tweaking, teasing, again pulling on the ring, his other hand caressing her inner thigh. A low moan escaped from deep in her throat, a shiver coursing through her as her mouth again honed in on her now swollen clit, his fingers stroked up her thigh closer and closer to the wet heat of her pussy. The pads of his fingertips brush along the slick pink lips and wiggling in two fingers he parted them to slip them slowly into her warmth. She bucked against his probing fingers as they slid deeper and he looked up to find her eyes watching every move, a lazy flick of her tongue across her swollen lips. She tugged. Enjoying making her writhe beneath his touch Ravus nibbled and sucked a little longer, his fingers delving deep, seeking, twisting driving her to bite down hard on her lip. Looking up to find her watching again he suddenly decides that it's time, time to bury his cock deep within, time to fill her. A little smile crosses his face as he rises to crawl up over her, pausing to flick his tongue around the barbell through her navel before his mouth latches on to one nipple then the other pulling on the rings with his teeth for a few moments before he continued to kiss and nibble up her body more, her legs still raised and hooked over his shoulders, pussy waiting eagerly while he slowly made his way with his mouth to her. As their lips connected he positioned, head just parting the lips of her pussy and waiting for a second as they kiss, he then gripped hold of Aranea’s thighs and rolling his hips, pushed deliciously slowly making her groan, vibrating through their mouths as their tongues danced together fervently, it felt so good to have the head of his hard, hot cock gradually forced deeper, encased tight inside, swollen lips of her pussy dragging over the shaft, sliding, slowly filling her. She grips hold of his hips, digging in with her fingernails, pulling him into her completely, lifting her hips to him, eager, a long deep moan escaped her lips, lost in the intense pleasure of having him buried, enfolded within the warm, wet, tight confines of her pussy, feeling her jolt as his cock presses hard against her g-spot, a tightness building in her groin, urging her to thrust and grind, back and forth, rolling around, slowly.
Lifting a little Ravus moved his hands up her thighs then calves to her ankles and pushing them, he leaned into her, pulled back quickly with his hips, then back in hard and even deeper now as Aranea was opened to him even more.

Still gripping her hips, pushing into her harder with every stroke, her back arched pushing her breasts up between her thighs, knees at her shoulders as he thrust, urging him on, her pussy hot around his cock, her breath came in little gasps at each stroke, needing to have this fire eased before she could give him even more. Her whole body tensed and her finger nails dug into his hips as she felt it taking hold of her, crying out, shaking as she came, pulses trembling through her as he thrust harder in response to the tightened grip of her pussy, cock completely buried inside, then slowing his pace a little as he felt her relaxing a little, holding back from thrusting really deep, knowing she'll be ready for much, much more in a moment.

They have so much more time to indulge in each other and he didn’t want to miss a single second.
Chapter Summary

“I take it you were listening, my little Raven,” Ignis drawled at Noct, bemused.

“Just makin’ sure you didn’t kill him,” Noct answered, handing him Phae so he could liberate Nyx from Kai’s wriggling, the Commander giving him up reluctantly.

“I wouldn’t have done that…maimed possibly, but he’s your Shield, he serves a purpose,” Ignis said slyly giving Prom a wink as the gunner snorted. Noct watched his husband blow a raspberry on Phae’s cheek as she wriggled and giggled in his arms. Noct chuckled and pressed a kiss to his husband’s cheek.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

GLADIO

Panic.

Absolute, blinding, heart-racing, sweat inducing fucking panic.

Gladio stared at his phone screen, wide-eyed and gaping. *Shit shit shit SHIT!!* The message from his wife had his gut clenching and if he were completely honest, his ass too. And he thought he might vomit. Yeah that was definitely a possibility. His second in command frowned at the expression on the Shield’s face, moving as if to speak, but held firm when Gladio raised his hand up. He needed a second to process before he could even say anything. He ran a shaky hand through his messy hair, making it stick up at odd angles. He ran that same hand down over his face and glanced over at his second.

“Umm, I gotta go, just…yeah, ummm…just give ‘em somethin’ to do, dunno when I’ll be back,” he said absently waving towards the squadron that were standing at attention, not really concentrating on anything but the life altering words on the screen.

CROWE: get your ass to the hospital

CROWE: our child is coming, NOW

CROWE: I mean it, NOW!!!!

Gladio spun on his heel and raced out of the training arena, not caring about the curious looks and disgruntled staff as he sped past. He tapped out a response as he skirted around a kitchen hand wielding a trolley like it was a dangerous weapon and she might set it off at the slightest jostle, the young woman shrieking as he swirled past, teacups rattling ominously. Legs and arms pumping he exited the Citadel complex at a sprint and took a short cut through the gardens, dodging a Council member and a lady walking a dog, pounding his way along a path to exit the garden and run up the street to the hospital. He skidded to a halt outside the door and took a deep breath, smoothing his wayward hair and trying to appear calm. He knew he wouldn’t fool his wife, but he had to attempt to look somewhat professional, he was still Shield and Commander of the Lucian Armed Forces.
And about to be a father. *FUCK.*

And double fuck.

He’d forgotten to stop by their rooms and grab Crowe’s ‘special’ bag, the one with her clothes and stuff, and things for their baby. She was going to tear him a new one, maybe render him incapable of fathering more children in the process. He groaned to himself. He loved Crowe dearly, but she was fuckin’ scary when she was pissed. He didn’t mind admitting to her that he was well and truly under her thumb. Everyone else was another matter. He had a reputation to keep. One that was about to be thoroughly smashed on the floor and squished under Crowe’s heel in a few minutes. Could he fix this, was it possible for someone to collect the bag and bring it to him before he went into the delivery room?

His phone dinged and he was saved from making a decision.

**CROWE:** *GET YOUR ASS IN HERE NOW!!!!*

That was a command he dare not disobey. She’d remember and she would take her revenge for disobedience at a later time, most likely when he had totally forgotten all about it. Crowe could wield a paddle like a bloody daemon. He wouldn’t be able to sit comfortably for a few days that was for sure. He’d love it though. He always did. Sometimes he acted like a dick just so he could experience her special brand of discipline.

Shaking his head at the turn his thoughts were taking, he entered the hospital and made his way to the nurses’ station in the maternity ward. They’d been here for several of Crowe’s check-ups, so he knew where he was going, he only needed to check which delivery suite she’d be in.

He poked his finger on the button for assistance repeatedly gaining him an annoyed grimace when the nurse stalked to the desk, pointedly moving the button out of his reach to the other end of the counter.

“Yes?” “Amicitia…my wife…Crowe, she’s here…” he blurted.

The expression on the nurse’s face softened a little and she smiled at the big man who was shifting nervously behind the desk. First time father nerves right there. She pointed down the hall, “delivery room number three, Mr. Amicitia.”

“Uhh, thanks,” he shot over his shoulder as he headed off again, a little slower than his headlong flight to the hospital. He paused at the door, should he knock or just go in. Grimacing at himself he pushed the door open and halted at the sight of his wife writhing on the bed, pained gasps falling from her open mouth. Gladio made it to her bed in a few bounds, grabbing her clenched hand in his large one and reaching up with the other to push her sweaty hair from her brow.

“I’m here, Babe, I’m here,” he murmured softly.

“I…can…see…that…” she panted.

The midwife he’d not even noticed spoke from behind him, startling him, “Mrs. Amicitia is in full labour, it won’t be very long sir, she’s fully dilated and the baby is almost crowning.”

“Huh?” was his less than intelligent response.

Crowe rolled her eyes, “the head, you made it just in time,” she growled as she pushed herself back on the pillows, gripping his hand with enough force to make him wince. He stared at her, comprehension dawning, the baby was almost here. If he’d stopped at their rooms to grab the bag,
he might have missed the birth entirely.

“It came on so fast…this baby is…just as impatient…as you,” Crowe gasped, another contraction wracking her body. She bore down, gritting her teeth, the midwife, pushing the sheet back and working between his wife’s thighs.

“Again, Mrs. Amicitia, a nice big push for me now, we have the crown presenting,” she said authoritatively. Crowe nodded and bore down again, Gladio’s hand blanching white under the force of her grip, his gaze shifting from his wife’s face to the midwife and back again. Crowe collapsed back again and the midwife gave a satisfied hum.

“The head, some lovely dark hair,” she murmured, “another push for the shoulders, dear, then this baby will be here.”

“You’re doin’ great, Babe,” Gladio whispered, pressing his lips to her damp brow and bracing himself as she poised for another push.

Crowe gave a long deep grunt and bore down hard, eyes squeezed shut, face red and then flopped back, the midwife praising her and hands grasping the bloody body of their child as it slipped free. A mewling cry that was followed by a louder bellow made his wife smile weakly. Gladio had tears running down his face as he watched the midwife check the baby over, wiping it down and cut the umbilical cord before weighing the little squalling bundle and wrapping the baby in a soft blanket.

“A boy,” she smiled as she handed the baby over to Crowe, who immediately unwrapped him to check him over for herself, the little baby protesting loudly.

Gladio was speechless. He met Crowe’s tired brown eyes and smiled goofily.

The midwife was still doing something between Crowe’s thighs, murmuring to herself and Gladio frowned at her.

“It’s all fine Mr. Amicitia, just cleaning her up, she won’t need stitches, Mrs. Amicitia has experienced some grazing, but no tearing,” she informed him as she pulled the sheet back down over her legs. Crowe nodded at the words and kept her attention focused on their baby boy who had quieted. “If you would like, place him against your breast, Mrs. Amicitia, he may try to feed, it won’t matter if he doesn’t, just let him get used to your smell, your heart beat will soothe him.”

Once Crowe had the baby against her bare breast, she looked up at Gladio who was watching in wonder as their son nuzzled at the nipple, mouth pursed. His eyes were wide watching the little boy try to feed.

“Thank you,” he whispered brokenly in Crowe’s ear, completely overcome as he lent down, he kissed her cheek, then gently pressed another to their baby’s head, pulling away to watch him yawn and squirm a little before falling asleep. “What are we going to call him?”

Crowe smiled, “I had a thought about that,” she murmured, stroking the baby’s cheek. “Jacinthus,” she said as she stared dazed at their little boy. “Jac for short.”

“Jacinthus?” Gladio went over meanings in his head, *hyacinth*, a flower like his own name and he grinned foolishly at Crowe.

“Jacinthus Hector,” she said, adding a second name.

*Defender*, Gladio thought, grinning even wider. “That’s kinda perfect, Babe.” He glanced at Crowe, “I forgot the bag, sorry,” he added sheepishly waiting for the berating he was due.
“No matter, sweetheart, you can get it later,” Crowe said sleepily.

Gladio gaped at her in shock.

Crowe giggled softly, “Gladdy-Daddy.” And then laughed louder when she saw the look of annoyance on his face.

**IGNIS**

He dozed quietly in one of the rocking chairs in the nursery, Phae in his arms, peaceful now after being fed and changed, her black hair stark against the white of the soft blanket wrapped around her. Another broken night of sleep, yet both he and Noctis were the happiest they had ever been. Kai was nestled in his crib, already a deeper sleeper than his sister.

Ignis was woken a little later when Noct reached down to take their daughter from him and place her in her crib, looking down to check on Kai before he grasped Ignis’ hand and helped pull him up.

“You fell asleep with them again, Ignis,” Noct whispered redundantly, amused at how often this happened. They were both up through most nights, feeding and changing then soothing the twins back to sleep, yet it was Ignis that most often was found in the rocking chair, baby in arms, dozing as he rocked back and forth, the motion of the chair lulling father and babe to sleep.

“Indeed,” he yawned behind his hand as he peered down at the twins, peaceful.

“C’mon, still a few hours before we have to be up, back to bed,” the King said leading him from the nursery and along the hall to their suite.

Some of the Citadel staff had been surprised when neither Noct nor Ignis had employed nannies to look after the twins, only hiring one to care for them when they were in meetings. Their friends weren’t. She went home in the afternoon when the King and Duke took over, often to be found in the nursery, towel over shoulder, baby held lovingly. Noct particularly was adamant about being hands on with his children. Though Regis had tried, he had often been pulled away and had entrusted his son to other’s care, most often Ignis when they were a little older, but even as a small child he remembered needing his father to find that he wasn’t there. It had been Ignis to soothe him after nightmares, Ignis that had tended to scraped knees and elbows, Ignis that had cuddled him when he wanted or needed it. He wouldn’t trade that for anything, but he still wished his dad had been there for him more. It wasn’t resentful, far from it, he admired the King he had been, yet he wanted it to be different for Kaius and Phaedra.

Ignis understood this need in Noct very well. His uncle had tried much as Regis had, but with both men so busy around the Citadel, the two lonely children had turned to each other for solace. He had vague recollections of his own mother and father, blurred at the edges from long years, but he could still see him mother’s soft smile, her green eyes so like his own, bright above him. He could still sometimes feel the warm safety of his father’s arms around him, the hugeness that was his father making him feel so tiny, but never insignificant. He wanted that for the twins.

He sighed as he slipped beneath the covers of their bed, snuggling against Noct, the King resting his head on his chest, legs tangled together, a familiar pose for them sleeping, never far from the other’s reach. He let his mind wander as he waited for sleep to claim him.

In the two months since the twins’ birth, the rebellion in Niflheim was going well, the bust-a-base operations in full swing. Ignis had objected to the name, but Prompto had insisted, reminding the
Duke that he had named their incursions into the Niff bases around Lucis that years ago and he wasn’t letting it go. Noct had laughed remembering and Ignis relented. Refugees were trickling in from the remnants of the Empire, several of Crowe’s best mages discreetly checking them over as they entered. They were taken to several specially set up centers around the city before they were allocated accommodation, and tended to. So far, no issues had arisen.

Still no word from the Astrals, but then they were Gods, they didn’t exactly move on human time, or bend to human whims. They would do whatever they wished regardless of anything else, they always had, always would no doubt. However, it would have been nice for them to acknowledge their release from Pitioss. He sighed, Astrals didn’t do nice either.

Ravus had returned from Tenebrae a few weeks ago and seemed so much more at peace that it was pleasant to see. He’d been a tortured soul for so long. Ignis pondered whether his excursions to the edge of the city each night had something to do with it, he suspected they did. That Aranea seemed less narky lately virtually confirmed it for Ignis and he smiled. Ravus hadn’t come outright and said that they were together, but he hadn’t expected him to. Tenebrae was moving towards self-government, pulling away from the Empire and aligning with Lucis. Apparently, the people had asked Ravus to rule, but as he had indicated at the meeting before he left, he declined. He did wish that Ravus had taken them up on the offer, he was the former Prince, yet he understood why he didn’t. Ravus was happier in his new role around the Citadel, expert and Ambassador of Tenebrae. His intelligence in the Council was something Ignis welcomed.

Ignis and Noct woke several hours later when Kai and Phae started to make small noises as they stirred, the baby monitor announcing their impending screams of annoyance and hunger.

They both pulled themselves out of bed and wandered down the hall back to the nursery, opening the door to gurglings and little noises from them both. Some experts had told them it was ok for the twins to be allowed to scream but the sound of it tore through them both and so they usually made it to them before it got to that stage. Maybe they would be a touch spoiled, but Noct had been a rather indulged child and he turned out quite well, his inherent kindness and compassion shining through.

Ignis gently picked up Kai from where he was wriggling around in the crib arms flailing around ineffectually, and immediately Ignis cooed, murmuring soft sounds Kai turning his face towards Ignis’ face and opening his eyes to stare up at him. Ignis chuckled and watched the almost smile that crossed the little one’s face. It would not be long before they were smiling properly. He looked over to see Noct with Phae in his arms, doing much as Ignis was with Kai. He turned back to smile at his son and paused a little as he noted his eyes. He had thought with Kaius having his brown hair that he would eventually have green eyes like himself, yet the colour seemed to be more blue than the slate grey on a newborn.

“Come look, my love, Kai’s eyes are starting to change,” he said quietly and chuckled again when the little boy tried to smile at the sound of his voice.

Noct brought Phae close and peered down, Kai shifting his gaze to look up at him as he bent down, “yeah, they’re bluer than before, but look at Phae’s, hers seem to be going green,” and Ignis lent his head to look closely. Noct was right, there was a tinge of green to the dark grey, little flecks of it.

“Well, looks like they are indeed a blend of us both, my love,” and grinned when Phae made the same attempt to smile that Kai had done. “They’ll be smiling soon, our little ones.”

“Ignis, what are they going to call us?” Noct asked, frowning a little and then giving a little guffaw when Phae seemed to try and copy the look. “If we are both ‘daddy’ or ‘dad’ it might get confusing.”
“Hmm, well, I am sure they will have their own way of naming us, but I did call my father ‘papa’, perhaps that might be something,” he murmured as he transferred Kaius to his shoulder and rubbed his back, heading to the kitchenette to ready a bottle for both twins, Noct following close behind.

“Aww, that’s cute, Ignis, I didn’t know that, whenever you did say something about them, you always said ‘my father’ or ‘my mother’, did you call her ‘mama’ too, or something else?”

“She was ‘mum’, or more often ‘mummy’ as I recall.” Ignis started warming the bottles and turned to Noct, “I know I never talk of them much, but I would like to when these two are older and can understand, I’d like them to know about them.”

“So would I, Gorgeous, I want them to know everyone who is important to us, even if they aren’t here anymore.” Noct’s face had gone pensive, “I think I’d like to…to go into my mother’s rooms soon, I’ve never been in there, Dad kept them locked. Will you come with me?”

“Of course, my love.” He reached out to stroke Noct’s arm with his free hand. He knew Noct’s mother was a very sensitive subject for his husband, even more than his own parents were for himself. The only picture he had ever seen of the Queen had been the portrait that still hung in their chambers, in Noct’s little private office, kept from when it had hung it Regis’ bedroom. She had been lovely and he could see so much of her in Noct, especially when he was younger, he had her eyes and delicate features, though more of Regis was making itself known in his husband’s face now. Aulea had been beautiful, and looking at Phae, he wondered if the Queen’s granddaughter would look like her as she seemed to have more delicate features than Kai.

There was a soft knock on the main door and the twins’ babysitter poked her head around the door. She generally came early, not to take over, but to assist if they required it, just lend a helping hand so to speak, retrieving clothing and nappies, cleaning used bottles, while Noct and Ignis did the actual main tasks. Today would be a little different though. It was official first portrait day, the pictures would be distributed to the media to help quell the frenzy for information about the little Prince and Princess.

“Good morning Melita,” Ignis greeted her as he sat in one of the rocking chairs and started giving Kauis his morning bottle as Noct settled with Phaedra to do the same for her.

Melita gave them both a big smile and a slight bow, heading for the twins’ bedroom, readying their clothing for the pictures.

“Shall I run the baths for them once you are done feeding them, my lord Duke?” she asked peering around the door.

“Yes, thank you, Melita, that would be helpful.” Ignis answered, “you got the little white outfits out for them, I presume,” he added.

“Oh yes, they will look lovely.”

The cute little jacket for the Prince was an embroidered white, with little black buttons as a nod to his Lucian heritage, while the Princess had a lovely lacy dress with a black silk ribbon woven at the waist. Both Noct and Ignis had decided to be a little casual in the photos, opting for plain white shirts with simple black pants, no suits for this, nor horns. They wanted it to be more a simple family picture than a royal portrait. It would still be most likely hung in the Citadel somewhere, but both the King and Duke had organised to have smaller versions made for their offices, to sit on their desks.

Noct had wanted Prom to take the pictures, but he’d said no, deferring to a professional who was coming from Altissia and was due in the Citadel in about an hour. The gunner had already taken
plenty of candid shots and both men loved those as they were all relaxed. Prom said he wanted to be their private photographer, not their professional one, he’d rather see them as they were, not as posed royals. Noct had given in after that.

Once the twins were fed, bathed and dressed in their finery, they left them with Melita for a few moments while they got ready themselves. It didn’t take them very long, getting the twins ready took far longer, which made Ignis chuckle.

The twins were always a little more active and awake in the mornings which is why they had scheduled the photos for then and it proved to be a good decision. Ignis making sure that the man taking the photos knew that he wouldn’t have long, Kaius and Phaedra wouldn’t put up with the fussing of the man for very long. They were content enough in their parent’s arms but when he tried to get them on their own they made their displeasure known, so the photographer adjusted and had Noct and Ignis hold each one, then swap so that he got quite a few. It was the group shots that were the best in Ignis’ opinion. He liked those, their smiles natural and the twins doing their best almost smiles, eyes bright and fixed on their parents. Rather cute, he thought. But then, he was biased.

Melita held both twins for a moment when the photographer asked if they would like a shot of the two of them on their own, the idea apparently struck Noct as a good one and Ignis went along with it, thinking he might like a copy for his desk to join the ones with the twins and the shot that Prom had taken at their wedding that already sat there. He grinned to himself, if he wasn’t careful, his desk was going to get very crowded with photo frames leaving no room for him to work.

It was when the session had actually finished that the photographer took what he thought was one of the best shots of the couple, Ignis had slipped his arms around Noct and leaned their foreheads together, both had their eyes closed, just enjoying a hug before they had to go off on the business of running Lucis. It was that shot and one of them with the twins that went viral on social media, re-blogged over and over much to Ignis’ bemusement.

Yet it was that impromptu photo of them together that he ordered to grace his desk along with the others, ignoring the more formal posed ones.

PROMPTO

The little blond gunner sighed in satisfaction.

He felt all the tension in his body bleed away at Nyx’s touches, some light, others more forceful, kneading the muscles in his back and shoulders as he lay on their bed, the Commander’s ass settled on the back of his thighs, oiled hands working their magic over his skin.

He’d been feeling much better lately, but sometimes…sometimes he would find himself sinking under his thoughts, drowning under their weight and Nyx would give him a look. He knew that look and he hated it, it was a sympathetic tortured grimace that he always wanted to wipe off his face the moment he saw it. Often his solution was to kiss it away and lose himself in Nyx, forget all the shit and scream his lover’s name, but Nyx was annoyingly insistent that sex wasn’t the way he wanted Prom to relax in these situations. So, they had taken to other measures. Hence the massage. Hence the lengthy talks about things. Nyx knew he wasn’t the best at getting it out of his system, yet his reticence didn’t deter him, he seemed to take it as a challenge. Which when Prom thought about it was totally a Nyx thing, he thrived on challenges. It was one of the things he loved about him, that and his casual arrogance, his smug grin, the tenderness that hardly anyone else saw, the way his ice
blue eyes would crinkle at the corners when he laughed, the way the little tattoos on his face would dance as he spoke, everything really.

And now he could add the way Nyx would bring him out of his little funks, carefully, tenderly, lovingly and completely unashamed of displaying his heart to Prompto in every gesture.

He twisted under Nyx to lay flat on his back under him, smiling softly as he gazed up at his wonderful lover. The answering smile he got still made his stomach flip pleasantly. He thought it probably always would. He reached his hands up to tangle his fingers with Nyx’s oil slicked ones and dragged him down for a slow, lazy kiss, his tongue sliding over the Commander’s as he hummed his appreciation. Nyx always tasted fucking fantastic.

“Thanks Babe,” he mumbled against Nyx’s mouth, knowing he would understand what he was trying to say.

“Anytime, gorgeous,” was Nyx’s quiet response.

“Mmm, do we have to go?” Prom grumbled, much preferring to stay put than head to a meeting with some of the Council. Noct and Iggy would be there, of course, so he could distract himself from the boredom by teasing his friends, but having to sit and behave drove him nuts. At least it wasn’t a full Council today, just essential members, so the atmosphere wouldn’t be as bad, just boring. Although watching Gladio squirm when Ignis looked in the Shield’s direction would liven things up. He wondered how much longer the standoff would last. He knew Iggy wouldn’t crumble, he simply wasn’t the type, he’d keep up his façade of cool competent disinterest until the end of time. Gladio on the other hand was far too hotheaded to last much longer. The Shield’s obvious discomfort was becoming ridiculous and Prom had found himself wondering if he should say something, so far holding back. Noct had told him that Gladio needed to be the one to approach, the one who needed to apologise and put things right if he could, so Prom had held his tongue, as much as he wanted to blurt shit out at the great big dumbass. From what he knew, Crowe and just about everyone else had already berated him for his stupidity. Even Noct. And Noctis wasn’t one to usually bring his Shield to heel, he could only remember one other time. That had involved Ignis as well. Ugh, Cartanica wasn’t a great memory for any of them, but the tense ‘conversation’ after the defeat of the Malboro had been seriously awkward. Hearing Noct speak like he had to Gladio had been a shock. Watching the Shield crumble had been worse.

Noct was right, though, Ignis shouldn’t be the one to capitulate. He’d done too much of that where Gladio was concerned.

Nyx was grinning at him, that slightly devilish smile making his stomach turn over again, “yeah we gotta go, Babe, don’t ya wanna know how the last ‘bust-a-base’ went?” The smirk that accompanied the comment making Prom giggle. He’d insisted on that to annoy Iggy, the total lack of professionalism in the name for the incursions making the Duke almost visibly cringe when he had to say it. Prom knew it, Nyx knew it, Noct knew it and Ignis was disgusted. It was hilarious. After the first time they had watched the Duke curl his lips in annoyance over the phrase, Prom had burst out laughing and Iggy had been trying desperately to conceal his disdain ever since. It wasn’t working to those who knew him well.

Prom groaned theatrically, “yeah, I s’pose, and hey we’ll get to see Ravus and Aranea pretend they aren’t fucking each other, and Gladio trying not to dig himself into a bigger hole with Iggy,” he snorted.

“Are you really sure that those two are doing the horizontal tango, Babe? Aranea was trying to tear him to shreds not long ago.”
“Totally sexual tension, dude, have you seen the looks they give each other, I swear Ravus blushed the other day.”

“Aranea could make anyone blush, even Cor,” Nyx grimaced, knowing exactly how easily the Dragoon could make a man flush. He’d been on the receiving end of her teasing tongue far too many times to be comfortable around her and he was, well, he was Nyx, he didn’t exactly get embarrassed easily.

Prom snorted again, “they are definitely doin’ it, Babe, trust me,” he said.

“Whatever,” Nyx grumbled, lifting himself off Prompto and reaching a hand out to help him up off their bed. “Shower,” he instructed the blond who huffed back at him, cheeky grin plastering his face. Nyx frowned, “no, I can guess what devious thoughts are goin’ through your head, we’ll be late…again.”

Prom pouted, it was truly annoying how easily Nyx could read his mind, but he headed for the shower, swinging his hips just a little to try and entice Nyx into joining him. He heard the grunt of frustration that his lover gave and laughed.

He gave a squeal of surprise when Nyx’s hands ghosted over his bare ass a few minutes later, then leaning into the touches that were growing increasingly heated under the fall of warm water in the shower.

“You are a fuckin’ tease, you know that?” Nyx murmured into his freckled shoulder making Prom shiver in response as his lips nibbled along to his neck.

“You love it!” Prom accused lightly, grinding back into Nyx’s hard cock, letting it slip between his ass cheeks, a sinful glide through the water.

“You love it when I do this…” Nyx growled thrusting a finger in quickly making the gunner gasp thickly. It was soon followed by a low groan when another joined the first, Nyx prepping him swiftly, twisting both fingers around and pressing against his prostate expertly. Nyx shifted him to the wall, Prom bracing himself, palms flat against the slick surface, ass pushed back and Nyx took the opportunity to shove home roughly causing a cry of joy to slip from the blond’s lips at the sudden intrusion.

They both stilled as the water cascaded over them, reveling in that first moment of joining. But not for long, Prom pushing back to encourage his lover to fuck him hard and fast. Nyx obviously got that message loud and clear, pounding into his ass relentlessly, grunting with exertion, muffling the noises he was making by biting down hard on Prom’s shoulder. Nyx’s fingers were almost painful gripping his hips to hold him steady, Prom grateful for that as his ass was stretched and filled, the intensity quickly turning him to a puddle of goo. He mumbled incoherently at each thrust of Nyx’s hips, the slap of skin loud over the sound of the water.

He clenched tight around Nyx’s cock as he reached his peak, squirming as he came over the tiles, panting harshly as Nyx chased his own orgasm ruthlessly behind him, overwhelmed by the sensations of his own still coursing through him as he felt Nyx’s hips start to stutter erratically, Nyx growling low in his throat as he bit down again. Prom leaned his head back, dropping it to rest on his lover’s shoulder, panting as Nyx hit his prostate again and again as he got closer. He could feel the swell and pulse of Nyx’s cock deep inside as the Commander stilled and released his seed, moaning thickly.

Nyx crushed him against the tiles as they let the water wash them clean, neither man able to move for a moment, lost in each other’s closeness. Prom eventually turning in Nyx’s grip to press their
chests together, going up on his toes to kiss him deeply, tongue searching for Nyx’s.

When they untangled themselves and got dressed, they were only a few minutes late, racing from their rooms to head for the Council Chamber. Prom grinned up at Nyx as they rounded the corner of the hallway to spot Aranea and Ravus sharing a heated kiss in the corner, watching them pull apart swiftly at the sound of Prom and Nyx’s footsteps and sheepishly entering the Chamber before the little gunner could start teasing them. Nyx just raised his eyebrows and Prom giggled.

When they entered the room and closed the door behind them, Ignis was glowering at their lateness already having graced Aranea and Ravus with a glare as they took their seats. Prom frowned when he saw the extra person in the room.

Gentiana.

“Well, shit,” Prom thought as he looked the Astral up and down. He knew who she really was, most of the people in the room did and now he understood why it was a reduced Council around the table. These people might be aware, but the rest of the Council weren’t. When he looked around he thought that only two or three present may not know, he had a feeling they were about to find out though. Aranea, Cor and Monica were looking a little puzzled, while Gladio was frowning at the Astral, Noct and Iggy just looked resigned to whatever the Goddess had to say.

“We have convened this closed Council due to a request from our guest,” Ignis spoke quietly to which Gentiana gave an enigmatic smile and slight tilt of her head. The Duke glanced at the Astral in her human form and she smiled again. “Gentiana, as some you know is far more than a messenger to the Gods, she may look human, however, she is not.” Prom noted the little grimace that Ignis gave, he knew the Astral annoyed him, especially with the way she would show up and startle them. He saw a flicker of amusement cross the Goddess’ lips and he thought she might just enjoy the consternation and flurry she caused with her sudden appearances. “Gentiana is Shiva, the Glacian,” the Duke stated flatly and raised a hand when Aranea gasped. “She comes to bring news apparently,” he added sardonically.

“The Beacon of Light speaks correctly, O Friends of the Dawn King,” Gentiana intoned her voice sending a chill through the room. “My Brethren and I wish to convey our thanks to the Dawn King for our release from the Pit of Eos.”

Noct shrugged, “your wish is my command evidently,” he mumbled earning him a frustrated glare from Ignis.

Gentiana chose to ignore the sarcasm in Noct’s tone, “I also bring news of your enemy…and ours.” That comment froze the frown on Noct’s face. “The Empire wished to make a Covenant with the Infernian, this will not be borne by Us. They have sought to do this, O Dawn King, to undo the good you have done. Their selfish cause reminiscent of the humans who turned the Infernian to evil, their cause is doomed. The Draconian shall ensure this will not occur.” Gentiana’s tone was mournful and low. “Humanity scorned the gifts that the Pyreburner gave them, his wrath was terrible to see, even to Us. The Accursed twisted it to his own gain and this sort of abomination will not be allowed to happen again.”

“How, pray tell, will the Astrals do that?” Ignis asked sounding a little nervous if Prompto was any judge and he winced at the thought.

“O Beacon of Light, We shall do what We shall do, it is your part We wish to inform you of.”

That sounded…ominous to Prompto and Nyx squeezed his hand, making him glance up at his lover. Nyx looked stressed.
“Your forces must continue their ‘incursions’ on the outer regions of Gralea and the Empire,” Gentiana said quietly, glancing at the Shield who bristled under her gaze uncomfortably. “The City must be left to Us. Your task is to ensure the safety of those who have had no part in the abominations of the Empire, just as you have been doing. The rebellion must cease, the participants made safe and settled elsewhere. O Beacon of Light, it is your time to shine, secrecy shall no longer be required.” She inclined her head towards Ignis and smiled softly.

Prompto shuffled in his seat earning him a swift gaze from the Astral.

“Speak, O Sunshine,” she smiled at him benevolently, making him squirm more, sunshine, well, fuck, I have a name now too he pondered darkly.

“My…Besithia? What about…him?” Prompto blurted ducking his face and hiding from the attention of everyone at the table.

“He is to be punished for his crimes against humanity, O Friend of the Dawn King, We shall ensure he will never harm anyone again,” she informed him moving a little closer, the finger she trailed over his cheek icy yet leaving him flushed from the knowing gaze she levelled at him. Nyx slumped in his chair in relief and Prom sighed out the breath he’d been holding. She turned to the King and Duke, “you shall release him to Us.” The was no question in her tone, a simple command.

Noct nodded and gestured to Cor, “can you have him brought up and held in the antechamber of the Throne room,” he asked glancing at Prompto. The gunner knowing that Noct didn’t want to let him see the man who had caused him so much pain and anguish.

“One last subject, before I depart, O Dawn King,” Gentiana spoke again, turning to Noctis. “The Blade of the Infernian. We shall recover it and it shall be destroyed…It shall never be used for nefarious purposes again, neither by its wielder nor by humans for gain. Its power shall be lost to Eos for eternity.” Her voice sad, a tear rolling down her cheek. “The Pyreburner’s power will forever be quenched by its loss.”

“Will Ifrit ever be released?” Noct asked her quietly.

“O Dawn King, you already have released him from the Accursed and his influence, that the only freedom he will know now, his imprisonment in the Pit of Eos shall only end if I can bring him back to the light, a task that may take many millennia.” Another tear fell from the Glacian’s eyes and the room was silent. “If I can accomplish that, my love shall still be reduced, his fire smothered for eternity, such is the decree of the Draconian.”

Prompto’s mouth dropped open. He now understood why the Glacian’s kiss outside the Citadel had shattered the Infernian’s corporeal form. He understood Shiva’s tears and the saddened gaze she swept over them all.

Even Gods can love.

**NOCTIS**

Noct watched out of the corner of his eye as Gladio approached Ignis cautiously, the Shield’s head lowered a little, shoulders not held in their usual belligerent pose, feet shuffling along the floor. He saw his husband stiffen as Gladio got closer, his lips tightening into a thin line, eyes narrowing as he
waited for whatever the big man had planned. Noct surreptitiously sidled closer to eavesdrop. He knew Ignis would give him a blow by blow account later, but he couldn’t help but listen. It was about bloody time the behemoth of a Shield tried to properly apologise and he wanted to make sure that he was doing it without being an ass.

He glanced over to where Crowe was sitting with their son, Jacinthus, Prompto and Nyx holding the twins and trying to amuse the three children, little shrieks of unbridled joy heard from across the room as Prompto pulled silly faces and made fart noises. Crowe raised her brow at him, tilting her head towards her bumbling husband and Noct smirked. He turned his gaze back to Ignis as he slipped a little closer, twirling the glass in his hand as he tried to appear as if he wasn’t sneakily inching towards the two men. They both appeared uncomfortable, Gladio obviously so, Ignis hiding it behind his glasses as he pushed them further up his nose with a long middle finger, then spinning his wedding ring, a nervous gesture he’d developed and found hard to suppress. Noct smiled a little at that. As much as Ignis had stated that he was done with Gladio, wasn’t particularly interested in whatever the Shield had to say, Noct saw straight through it. Ignis still gave a damn. It was just who he was.

Noct was aware that almost everyone in the room was watching the events unfold, while trying, as he was, to act disinterested. Cor was smirking from the other side of the room, while Ravus looked ready to step in. That amused him no end. The former Prince, now Ambassador was close to Ignis, finding his company enjoyable and it looked like he felt rather protective too, couple that with his apparent dismissal of his Shield it was an interesting dynamic. He knew Ignis was a confidant for Ravus and it seemed they shared a friendship as well, not that Noct minded, he’d found Ravus to be a very interesting man, especially now that he’d settled in to life in the Citadel. He was still an imposing figure, but then so was his husband, so it didn’t bother him much. He loved to listen to the two of them discussing anything, the passion for whatever subject they talked about bubbling forth. In a polite, cultured way that would often make Noct grin.

Ravus inclined his head, asking silently if he should intervene and Noct just shook his head. Ignis could handle himself, very well, and Gladio was aware of that too, so he wasn’t concerned on that front. Gladio might have bulk on his side, but Ignis was stealthy and fast. It was Ignis’ heart that worried him. And so, he slipped a little closer as Gladio stopped in front of Ignis, effectively halting any escape the green-eyed Duke might have made, useless really, as Ignis could simply flip over the top of the man’s head. But it looked like Ignis had resigned himself to the conversation.

“Can we talk for a minute, Ignis?” Gladio asked quietly and Noct had to strain his ears to catch the respectful request, the tone of it surprising him and Ignis too if the little widening of his eyes was any indication.

“What is it you wish to discuss, Gladiolus?” he heard Ignis reply, only a little ire bleeding into his voice. The full name treatment still made his Shield wince a bit and he could see Ignis wasn’t going to make this comfortable and easy.

“I...ahhh…” Gladio stumbled over his words, scratching his head. “Look, first off, I am a dumbass, a complete dick,” he rushed through the words and Noct noted the little smirk that pulled at Ignis’ lips. “I gotta say I’m sorry, Ignis, and I mean it, I am really sorry.”

“What are you sorry for exactly?” Ignis did his little brow quirk and Gladio met his eyes, abashed.

“E...Everything, m’sorry for everything, Ignis.”

“I am afraid you will have to be more specific, ‘everything’ covers an awful lot.” Ignis drawled, his deep accented voice low in a tone of warning.
Noct was right, Ignis was not going to make this easy at all. He was starting to feel sorry for the big man, watching his shoulders slump further. Ignis crossed his arms over his chest and regarded the Shield skeptically, waiting for an answer.

“M’sorry I treated you like shit after Altissia, made ya think that I…that I thought you weren’t useful…” the Shield began and Ignis’ eyes narrowed further, lips pursed.

“If I recall, you didn’t just ‘think’ it, you stated it rather emphatically,” Ignis spat out making Gladio wince with the disdain in his voice.

“Yeah, I know, but I was wrong…really wrong and I am sorry.” Gladio’s eyes were doing the sad puppy dog thing that most people couldn’t resist. Except Ignis who was staring back, unperturbed. Waiting. “You could handle anything and I shoulda known that, like I said, m’a dumbass. You were sufferin’ and I made it worse.”

“Yes, well…is that all you wanted to say?” Ignis eyed him implacably, not moved an iota.

“No…I’m sorry about leaving you alone…when you were tryin’ to learn everythin’ again, I’m a shitty friend, I shoulda been there to help you. You deserved better than that. I was…I was scared of seeing you fail, but I shoulda known you’d get it all back. I’m sorry ‘bout that too. Seein’ you fight again was awesome, scary, but seriously awesome.”

Noct held back the gasp of surprise and glanced at Crowe who was looking serenely pleased. He looked back to gauge Ignis’ reaction and noticed a little thawing in his expression.

“I…thank you, Gladiolus, it’s good to hear,” Ignis said finally.

“I’m not done, Ignis…” Gladio said quickly and Noct groaned to himself, here it comes, the moment he fucks it all up. “You’re one of the most capable guys I’ve ever known and I made ya think I don’t feel that way, I’m sorry for that, I’m sorry I was a dumbass yet again and tried ta take away stuff that you like doin’. I respect you, like really respect you, love ya like a brother and I didn’t show you that, instead I…I fucked up, Iggy, really bad, I didn’t think, I know I never do, but…I’m tryin’ to.”

Noct’s mouth dropped open, he’d never expected Gladio to lay it all out there and expose himself the way he was. Ignis looked dumbfounded, at a loss for words.

“I want ta show ya that I can change, that I’m not a complete fuckin’ loss as a friend, show ya that I trust you, that you can trust me, that I won’t let ya down again, ever.”

Prom sidled up beside Noct and nudged him, passing Phae over to him, “are they gonna kiss and make?” he whispered.

“As if, ha, but I think Ignis might not kill him at least, now shut it so I can hear them,” he whispered back as he settled Phae on his hip, letting the little girl reach up and tug on his hair.

“Oh…I thank you for being so…honest, Gladio.” Ignis shifted his gaze down for a moment before he looked back up and gave the Shield a small, tight smile, not quite forgiveness, but not the cold indifference of before. Noct let out a sigh of relief.

Nyx came up to stand beside Prompto still holding a wriggling Kai in his arms and Noct leaned down to rub his nose against his little boy’s making him giggle. Then Phae let out a little squeal of delight and reached out to grasp at her brother. Noct was distracted by the twins for a moment and almost missed the bear hug that Gladio gave Ignis, but he did hear the undignified ‘Ooff’ of shock that his husband gave, nor the flush of embarrassment on his Shield’s face as he slunk away to join
Crowe and their son.

“I take it you were listening, my little Raven,” Ignis drawled at Noct, bemused.

“Just makin’ sure you didn’t kill him,” Noct answered, handing him Phae so he could liberate Nyx from Kai’s wriggling, the Commander giving him up reluctantly.

“I wouldn’t have done that…maimed possibly, but he’s your Shield, he serves a purpose,” Ignis said slyly giving Prom a wink as the gunner snorted. Noct watched his husband blow a raspberry on Phae’s cheek as she wriggled and giggled in his arms. Noct chuckled and pressed a kiss to his husband’s cheek.

“Thanks for listening to him,” he whispered in Ignis’ ear.

“Hmm,” Ignis hummed, nuzzling Noct’s cheek. “I thought I should at least hear what he had to say, my love.”

Noct smiled at Ignis, taking in his relaxed stance, the way he held their daughter, the bright twinkle in his teal eyes behind his glasses and his breath hitched in his throat. “Well, now that’s over with… how about we get these two little munchkins to bed and get busy in our own?”

He heard the chuckle that came from Nyx and turned to give the Commander a wink. Nyx raised a brow enquiringly, Prom shuffling beside him as he looked over his shoulder to see if anyone was watching the four men talking quietly.

“Mmm, sounds like a rather interesting suggestion, my love,” Ignis answered Noct flashing a sultry gaze in Nyx’s direction, “it’s been a while since we had company…” he trailed off leaving the implication open for the other two to decline or accept.

“Hmm,” Nyx murmured quietly, “seeing as the twins are sleeping all night now…we wouldn’t have to worry about interruptions,” he added giving Prom a quick glance to see if his lover was on board with a little fun and games. The bright cheeky grin all three men got in answer said all they needed to know.

NYX

“Can I help put the twins to bed?” Nyx asked Noct and Iggy as they headed up to the King and Duke’s suite.

“Getting clucky, Babe?” Prom asked him, flashing his teeth in a cheeky grin.

“Shut up, am not…they’re just cute,” he shot back, “well…maybe,” he admitted, mainly to see the look of shock on Prom’s face, but partly because the idea intrigued him a bit.

“They are adorable,” Iggy agreed, smirking at the two men who stared at each other, Noct laughing at the look of puzzlement on Prom’s face.

All thoughts of kids and babies were soon out of his head as they made their way into the sitting room of the King and Duke’s suite after the twins were safely fast asleep, Prom plonking himself down on the couch and dragging Nyx with him. Nyx heard Ignis give his little deep chuckle and saw Noct ghosting his fingers over the front of Ignis’ pants. He was soon distracted by Prom
nibbling his ear.

“Drink?” Noct called out after he finished teasing Ignis, heading for the cabinet that held their alcohol supply.

“Yeah, sure,” Prom said bouncing up from the couch suddenly, displacing Nyx and making him laugh. Prom was replaced by Ignis, giving him one of his patented ‘I’m going to fuck you till you scream’ looks, head tilted, eyes dark. Nyx swallowed on instinct, Ignis watching the motion his throat made, licking his lips as if Nyx was something he wanted to devour. And maybe he was, Nyx couldn’t help but think about that. He glanced up to see what Prom was doing and had to stifle the choked noise that wanted to worm its way out of his mouth. Prom was on his knees in front of the King, nosing at Noct’s crotch while Noct himself was standing slightly dazed, head thrown back a little, bottle of scotch hanging forgotten in his hand. Ignis followed his gaze and smirked.

“It appears they are a little busy, dear, shall we catch up,” a little teasing lilt drawing his eyes back to the man beside him.

“Mmm, great idea,” Nyx murmured thickly, launching himself at Ignis and shoving him so he lay flat on his back, Nyx straddling him before he leaned down and thrust his tongue into Ignis’ open mouth. He groaned when Ignis snaked his hands up to grip Nyx’s hips and pull him down closer, rubbing their clothed groins together. Then those hands were working at his button and zipper, pushing his leather trousers out of the way so he could cup his ass. Nyx threw his head back at the fire in the touch of Ignis’ talented hands. Nyx shifted so he could divest Ignis of his pants, shoving them down roughly as Ignis kicked his feet to free them, pulling Nyx back in to rut against him again. “Fuck,” Nyx exhaled, rubbing his nose against Ignis’ cheek, “you are ridiculously sexy, you know that?”

“If you say so,” Ignis murmured licking the shell of his ear.

“Mmhmm, I do, you both are, you all are, how the fuck did I get so lucky?” Nyx captured Ignis mouth for another searing soul sucking kiss, barely hearing the sound of Prom sucking Noct’s dick.

“You are very sweet, in more ways than one, darling, I can see why Prom adores you so,” Ignis whispered in his ear as he pulled back from the kiss, stroking his cheek with one hand as the other continued its exploration of his ass. “We both love Prom dearly, to have him so happy with you is wonderful, for you to be ok with all of this as well is…” Ignis trailed off distracted by the look in Nyx’s eyes.

“I… I love Prom, more than anything, you know that, right?” Nyx paused and looked over to where his lover was reducing Noct to a complete mess, and turning his head back to gaze into Ignis’ green eyes, “it’s just that this is… I dunno, something a bit more than just fun, I know it is to Prom, he’s been honest about that and I think I get it, I mean…yeah.” He broke off from what he was going to say, lost for the words to convey it.

“I believe I understand, my dear Nyx,” Ignis whispered, his voice tender, “but perhaps we should all be in this particular conversation, if I am correct, it involves us all.” Ignis’ eyes shone and Nyx flushed under his gaze. “I am assuming you’ve talked with Prom about how you are feeling?”

“Yeah, sorta, it’s hard to put in words though, Iggy, and I don’t… I don’t want him to misunderstand what I’m trying to say.”

“He won’t, Nyx, I can assure you of that, and I can also assure you he probably knows what you’ve tried to say.” Ignis nuzzled his cheek, both hands now stroking his back reassuringly. “I do however still think it is better a group discussion is had, this only works when we are all on the same
Both men on the couch turned to look over at their other lovers, noting the way they had stopped and were regarding them oddly.

“What’s up?” Noct asked concerned zipping his pants back up, Prom moving over to the couch, worry crossing his features at how serious Nyx and Iggy seemed. Noct followed Prom and they both kneeled beside the couch, Ignis lifting Nyx so they could sit and face the other two, despite his state of undress.

“Nothing bad, my love,” Ignis said quietly as he disentangled himself from Nyx to stroke Noct’s face, pressing a light kiss to pursed lips. “Nyx is getting himself worked up over things a little, I think he may be a touch confused about how he feels about us, all of us.”

“Oh, Babe,” Prom said dropping himself into Nyx’s lap, “is this about what you were trying to talk about the other day?”

“Y…yeah,” Nyx muttered looking down and trying to hide the thoughts that were racing through his head.

“Babe, you love me, I know that, but you love these two sexy fuckers too, I can see that, don’t be ashamed of it, I love ‘em to bits as well,” Prom said quietly, forcing Nyx to look up. All that Nyx saw in Prom’s pretty blue eyes was understanding. “They love each other, we love each other, it’s just that there’s something between us all as well.”

“Oh…” was all that Nyx could say.

Noct reached out and took Nyx’s hand in his, “Ignis and I have talked about this, hells, we talked about Prom being part of our relationship a long time ago, but we thought that he should have the chance to find what we have…now that he has and well…you’re ‘you’, it’s like the most natural thing in the world,” the King stated emphatically.

“This needn’t change what you and Prom share, darling, just as it doesn’t change Noct and I, the simple fact of the matter is, it couldn’t, there’s no jealousy in this room,” Ignis stated. “And you don’t need to express it any further if you are not comfortable with it, we won’t press you that way, there will always be parts of our individual relationships that are separate, however, and that is only right.” Prom nodded to that and Noct smiled at him. “But, Nyx, darling, we all feel as you do, and it’s ok.”

“It is?” he asked, looking up at Prom in his lap.

Prom nodded again, “yeah, it is.” The gunner leaned close to Nyx’s ear, “go make love to Ignis, I know you want to, Noct and me, we’ll be in soon, I promise,” he whispered. Nyx blinked in surprise at Prom’s words and when his lover pulled back he silenced Nyx’s tumbling thoughts with a long kiss. “Igs, can you take Nyx to the bedroom? We’ll be in in a few,” Prom said turning to Noct and giving him a little wink, “wanna work up Mr. King here a bit more.” Noct just laughed at his best friend.

Ignis nodded and gave his husband a tender kiss, nipping at his lips a little, “save a little something for me, my love,” he murmured.

“All good, Gorgeous, I always do,” Noct replied huskily and Nyx flushed at the heated glances between the two.

Prom rolled his eyes, “seriously guys, you’ll be fuckin’ like rabbits when Nyx and I leave later.”
Ignis chuckled, “nothing wrong with a healthy sex life, Prom.” He grabbed hold of Nyx’s hand and gave it a little squeeze, “shall we, darling?” Nyx bit his lip and nodded, not trusting himself to speak.

“Healthy? Yeah, no wonder you two are so fit,” Prom added sniggering as Ignis led Nyx to the bedroom, and he heard Noct give a little stuttering laugh that turned into a sigh. Turning back, he saw Noct laying back on the couch they’d just vacated, Prom tugging the zip of his pants back down and fishing his cock out. His boyfriend never wasted time when he could be busy sucking cock. Or anything else for that matter.

Ignis directed him to the bed and lay him down gently, crawling over him, to plant kisses on his jaw, cheek and finally lips, tender little presses, little flicks of his tongue. “Are you feeling better now, Nyx?”

The Commander moaned a little at the touches, nodding as he reached a hand up to pull Ignis closer again, fingers curling in the hair at the nape of the Duke’s neck, other hand scrabbling at the buttons on Ignis’ shirt. Once he had the fabric parted, he slid his hand over Ignis’ muscled chest, teasing a nipple between thumb and forefinger as they traded soft little kisses. He chased after Ignis’ mouth as the tall man pulled away, watching him reach over to the bedside drawer and produce a half empty bottle of lube, depositing it on the bed beside them. Ignis crooked a finger at him beckoning him close. Nyx knelt in front of the Duke and felt warm hands pull his shirt over his head, then move to the waistband of his briefs, teasing a little by pulling him forward.

“Lovely,” Ignis murmured, voice low, eyes roving over his near naked body slowly, tracing his other hand over Nyx’s tattoos lightly, the two on his face, the tiny one on the shell of his ear, tracing the lines down his neck, his other fingers slipping into the waistband of his under wear to stroke over his half hard length. Nyx’s head dropped forward, eyes fluttering shut as he lost himself in Ignis’ appraisal, little murmurs of praise making his cheeks redden.

Sucking in a deep breath, Nyx pushed the shirt off Ignis’ shoulders, letting it fall to the bed, one hand slipping down to palm over Ignis’ groin, a little groan falling from his lips as he felt it twitch under his hand, Ignis growling in pleasure at the touch. “I want to take these off,” he whispered, not trusting his voice to speak louder.

“Of course, darling,” Ignis replied, leaning back a little to allow Nyx to slide them off, cock springing free. “Now, your turn,” he murmured as he sat back up, gripping at Nyx’s underwear, thumbs grazing down his hips as the fabric was pulled down slowly. Both now completely naked, Ignis pulled Nyx forward so that he was straddling the Duke’s lap, face to face, and Nyx wrapped his legs around the Duke’s waist as he lent in for a deep, tender kiss, slow and exploratory. Ignis gave a pleased hum, smiling into the kisses, their tongues curling together languidly.

A distinctly loud moan from Noctis in the other room caused them to break apart and laugh, Ignis taking the moment to remove his glasses and toss them up towards the bedside table, well out of danger. Nyx’s breath hitched when the Advisor turned back and their eyes locked. Ignis always looked so different without them to hide behind and right now he was hiding nothing from Nyx, adoration in his gaze. He locked his arms around Ignis, leaning in for more kisses as the Duke slid his hands down Nyx’s sides and down to his hips.

Ignis groped beside them for the bottle, flipping the cap and coating his fingers, rubbing them together to warm the liquid and Nyx’s eyes followed every little movement, shifting forward in Ignis’ lap so that he had better access, their lengths grinding together, hearing Ignis inhale sharply at the contact.

Usually Ignis was so dominant in all their previous encounters, not overtly so, yet still so in control,
although Nyx knew that it wasn’t like that all the time between the King and Duke, the difference in his motions and caresses was stark. It seemed to Nyx that the married couple switched around who was in control easily, the ease of years and absolute love being the overwhelming factor. Tonight, with Nyx, Ignis was simply worshipful, gentle, allowing it to develop naturally, firing Nyx’s desire in a completely different way. It was sending his head reeling, heart racing and he tried to ground himself in the moment, snaking a hand down between their bodies to stroke Ignis’ cock as the tall man pressed the first long finger into his ass.

Nyx tilted his head back as Ignis slid his finger in and out, wonderfully slowly, the feel of warm lips on his throat making him moan deep. A second finger slid in beside the other, twisting and scissoring, opening him up, and then the press against the bundle of nerves. His hips stuttered forward at the first brush over his prostate, Ignis using his free hand to hold him steady.

“Prepare me, please,” Ignis whispered hoarsely and Nyx nodded, groping beside them for the bottle that Ignis had discarded earlier. Ignis’s growl was deep and needy when Nyx closed his slickened fist around his length, turning to a hiss as Nyx’s warm palm rubbed over the head. Nyx shifted, lifting up in Ignis’ lap, resting against the defined chest in front of him, keeping up the slow slide of his fist around Ignis. The fingers withdrew and Nyx tilted his hips so that he could guide Ignis’ cock towards its goal. Ignis fisted his hands in the quilt, head thrown back as Nyx pushed down on the head, keeping himself relaxed so that it could probe the rim. When it was held tightly inside the ring of muscle, Ignis lifted his hips and Nyx ground down, seating himself fully on the hard length on the Duke. They both groaned low, hardly noticing the extra hands that caressed their warm skin.

Nyx found his head turned by familiar calloused hands, the lips of Prompto seeking out his own, Ignis similarly occupied by Noct. The two newcomers were naked and pressed flush to either side of Nyx and Ignis, helping Nyx to rock on Ignis’ cock. Prompto shifting behind Nyx, holding his hips and guiding his movements, Noct slipping behind his husband, hands stroking Ignis’ hair and shoulders, kisses pressed to the Duke’s flushed cheeks. Enfolded in the embraces of the two youngest men, Nyx and Iggy rocked together slowly, letting it build, a smoldering fire. They both started to pant quietly, little moans punctuated by the slide of skin on skin, murmurs of encouragement from Noctis and Prompto. And then the two younger men moved away, settling together on the bed beside them to watch, curled together, stroking each other languidly, occasional kisses traded between them.

“They look good together like this,” Nyx heard Prompto say as the two of them watched with glazed eyes.

“Yeah, they do,” was Noct’s breathy response before he flipped Prom over and trailed kisses down his chest.

Nyx tore his gaze away from them and turned back to Ignis who stroked his stubbled jaw and leaned in to kiss him again. Nyx slid his hands down Ignis’ smooth back, gripping when their thrusts were particularly good, gasping into the Duke’s open mouth, his hands eventually curved around Ignis’ ass, holding on for dear life as their pace increased. Soon all the Nyx could concentrate on was how full he felt, Ignis driving up into him with complete abandon, hardly hearing the gasp of pleasure that Prom gave when Noct entered him, their position mirroring the Duke and Commander.

It didn’t take Nyx long to come, streaking Ignis’ stomach and his own with the hot fluid, Ignis filling him several harsh thrusts later, their foreheads pressed together until Ignis pulled back and gave him a look of total contentment that brought a brighter flush to already reddened cheeks.

“Nyx,” Ignis murmured and kissed him deeply, the Commander getting just a little lost in their kisses again. He wrapped his arms tight around the Duke, hoping it could express what he couldn’t
say, Ignis stroked his back lazily, the sounds of Prompto and Noctis growing louder beside them. Nyx grinned and Ignis returned it, turning their heads to see what they had missed while being caught up in each other.

Both men watched, still entwined as Noct rocked Prom’s hips forward and back, chasing their own releases before collapsing in a messy heap. As rushed and frantic as it was, it was no less sweet than what he and Ignis had just shared.

Ignis chuckled deeply and withdrew from Nyx, letting him move to Prom and fold him in his arms. Prom mumbled against his shoulder and nuzzled his neck, Nyx running his hand through sweaty blond locks.

It was the two others that eventually drew their attention again however, and Prom went wide eyed. Nyx had seen something similar the night that Noct returned from his trials in Pitioss, but he hadn’t told anyone what he’d witnessed. Now he was watching as Noct tenderly, sweetly stroked at Ignis’ ass as he lay back on the bed, their eyes locked on each other. Neither Nyx nor Prom had ever taken Ignis like this, and Nyx assumed it was something that the Duke would only ever let Noct do, something for the two of them to share, yet they were letting Prom and Nyx watch.

“Woah, do you think we should…” Prom began, whispering in Nyx’s ear, but he was silenced when the King and Duke both looked at them. Their eyes were glowing, twin magenta gazes that silenced them both. Prom swallowed thickly and all Nyx could do was hold his breath as he watched them turn back to each other. “Shit,” the gunner exhaled shakily, and Nyx let out his breath in much the same way, sentiment shared. Maybe it was their way of showing that no matter what, no matter how much Nyx stressed about being an extra wheel, or ruining things with how he felt, that what Ignis had said about there being things that were shared between the individual couples was true. Nothing would divide Noctis and Ignis, just as nothing could come between Prompto and Nyx, yet they were willing to let them in, let them see what it was that was between the King and his husband. It was show of trust. It was also magic in a way the two other men didn’t quite understand.

Watching Ignis arch his back like a sinuous cat as Noct entered him was like watching poetry in motion, the way they clasped hands and refused to look away from each other, the colour of their eyes burning bright in the dim room, the reverence in each touch, the devotion of it rolled towards Nyx and Prom like a wave crashing, taking them with it. Although they were not making love themselves, they were carried away on the bliss and love in the air around Noct and Iggy, pulled into the magic and swirling with it. Slow and sensual, Ignis pulled Noct into him with each roll of his hips as the King rocked down to meet him. Neither Nyx, nor Prom could tear their eyes away as Ignis gave himself to Noct, Noct not taking from Ignis, he was giving as well. Simultaneously hands were pulled to mouths, kisses placed over their wedding rings and Nyx felt Prom shiver a little and give a muffled sob. It was too beautiful to watch, but they just couldn’t stop.

It was their breathy cries of “always,” that undid Nyx, finding himself with hot tears rolling down his cheeks, pulling Prom closer to hold him tight against his chest, overwhelmed.

And then, dear Gods, Ignis rolled them both over so that he was riding Noctis, Nyx and Prom getting a very clear view of the King’s cock driving into Ignis’ ass and they both groaned at the sight, the Duke’s back a sweating plane of muscles dancing under the skin as he raised and lowered himself, thighs working to keep him steady, Noct reaching up to caress his husband’s face, chest, stomach, languid strokes to the heavy cock that slapped his own stomach, Ignis mewling weakly, his hair falling about his face. They’d never heard those sorts of sounds coming from the Grand Chamberlain before.
“Fuck…that’s…hot’s not the word,” Nyx choked out and Prom nodded eagerly.

RAVUS

Aranea was curled around the Ambassador’s body, arm flung over his chest, legs tangled with his, her silvery hair falling over her face and Ravus reached up to tuck it behind her ear, stroking her face gently and smiling to himself.

He wasn’t sure why he was awake, normally he would be sleeping peacefully beside her, years of restless sleep well past him. Since the reawakening of his relationship with the Dragoon he’d learnt that he could sleep a whole night through without ending up pacing hallways, a ghostly figure that startled those still on duty.

Which was why he was wondering why tonight he couldn’t drift off.

Sighing deeply, he untangled the prone form of Aranea and slipped from the bed, pulling the covers up to keep her warm. He pulled on a pair of pants, shrugged on a shirt and resumed his old practice, strapping the scabbard that held the Balmung that Noctis had gifted him with to his side, quietly exiting his suite and nodding to the guard as he passed and rode the elevator down to the lower depth of the Citadel.

The gardens were peaceful and cool at this time of night, the stars spread across the sky and he sat himself down on a bench near a fountain. The Citadel above glowed golden against the sky, ethereal and seemingly eternal, soothing in its permanence. He hoped he could be part of this place for many years to come, earn his place, assist the King and Duke with the running of Lucis, the joining of other nations, like his former home. Tenebrae would always occupy a place in his heart, yet he considered Insomnia to be where he wanted to be and Noctis had embraced his willingness to remain. He enjoyed a friendship with the Duke, a closeness that he had never expected, yet it was very welcome. The two men easily able to spend hours discussing so many subjects that they never ran out of things to talk about. He knew it amused the King to see Ingis and himself lost in deep conversation, not that he didn’t converse with Noctis either, yet it was Ignis that he found an affinity that was gratifying. Noct thought it had all developed when he had come back and that their mutual interests had brought forth a friendship and confidences that Ravus knew he could trust in. What Ravus was aware of though, was that Ignis had never really told the King about his role in Altissia. Ignis never spoke about what had happened there and the Ambassador respected his wishes on that. He had tried to get Ignis to open up, to disclose the full story to his husband, yet so far, the Grand Chamberlain and Duke of Insomnia remained firm. He’d witnessed that stubborn streak in Ignis before. He wouldn’t be moved unless he was ready and apparently, he wasn’t. The only thing Ignis had said about that time was that he still experienced nightmares and would wake expecting to be blind again.

When he’d asked what he had told Noct, the Duke had disbanded, pushing the subject away, stating that his husband didn’t need to know, that talking about it wouldn’t help. Ravus disagreed, but deferred to his wisdom, he knew Noctis better than anyone. Ignis thought it would bring up memories better left buried, that Noct already blamed himself for the injuries he’d sustained then and now that he was healed, mostly, it was a moot point. Ravus thought that the mental injury still pained Ignis even if he’d never say it, hence the nightmares.

It was useless to ponder it, however, until Ignis relinquished the need to protect his husband from the truths of that day. Pride and stubbornness, Ignis had them in spades.
He looked over the gardens, the tranquility soothing until he noticed a small movement in a
darkened corner. Frowning, he lifted from his seat on the bench and headed over to investigate.
What he spied was the figure of an elderly man, silver beard long and shining in the depths of the
garden. The old man was facing him, staring at him implacably and Ravus moved closer only for the
man to turn in a swirl of embroidered robes, planting a spiracorn-headed staff firmly in the grass and
he silently walked across a gravel strewn path. Long, deep sleeves revealed gnarled fingers gripping
the staff as the man moved away and Ravus felt a jolt of recognition. He’d seen this man before, yet
he couldn’t bring to mind where he knew him from.

Curious, he followed, the man glancing back every so often to see if Ravus was still doggedly
tracing his progress through the garden. The man slipped behind a hedge and Ravus hurried to catch
up, turning the corner to find the man had vanished, leaving him alone in a private courtyard, devoid
of anyone else. The temperature had dropped and Ravus stifled a shiver that ran through him
involuntarily, rubbing his hands up his arms. Even his scarred arm was cold, its usual warmth fled in
the cold of the courtyard.

Consternation crossed his features, grimacing he turned to find the courtyard was no longer empty
of anyone’s presence but his own. In front of him now stood five figures, hidden in shadow.
Immediately he drew his Balmung, entering a defensive stance brought on from years of practice,
challenging the intruders.

“There is no need for that, Lord Ravus,” said the elderly man as he stepped out of the shadows,
staff planted firmly in front of him. “We mean you no harm.”

“I am not accustomed to strange persons accosting me in the middle of the night in the gardens of
the Citadel, I wish to know if you mean the King harm, stranger.”

“We do not, O Price of Tenebrae, We come for an accounting.” The woman that spoke and
stepped forward made Ravus lower the weapon, tip hitting the ground with an icy clang. Gentiana,
or rather Shiva stood before him.

Then the others stepped forward, a large grey skinned man, yellow markings over his body, stern of
face, with crystalline protrusions sprouting from his stone-like skin. Another woman, almost naked,
skin glistening oddly in the moonlight, her expression disdainful. The last figure moved forward to
take a place at the head of the group, blue and gold armour shining, kindly eyes gazing at Ravus
from beneath an intricate helmet, wings made of swords bristling at his back.

If the woman he recognised was Shiva, then the others…

Ravus stood stock still.

He was face to face with the remaining Astrals, Titan, Leviathan, Ramuh, Shiva and lastly, the
Draconian, Bahamut, leader and warrior of the Gods.

He dropped to his knees, prostrating himself before them. “I apologise. I did not realise.”

Bahamut held a gauntleted hand up for silence. “We come to speak to you of your future, We
come to weigh your actions since your conversion to one who follows the Dawn King. Your past
held you from entering the Heart of the Star to abide alongside your sister. We have learned from
Our own mistakes, Lord Ravus. The Accursed was not allowed to ascend as We considered him
unclean. Many lives were destroyed as a result of that decision, one of Our own brethren corrupted
and now imprisoned.” Bahamut paused and glanced to Shiva who bent her head in sorrow. “We
wish to ensure you have a choice. Your actions have redeemed you, Ravus, O Son of Tenebrae.
We see into your heart, you wish to serve your King, you wish to aid the new Oracle, and so, We
have a request of you.”

Ravus’ eyes went wide as he regarded the God of War. “What do you wish from me?”

“We wish you to speak to the remaining civilians in Gralea before We enact our retribution. We would have no innocents harmed.”

“But…how?” Ravus frowned.

Bahamut bowed his head, “you must come with Us, now, Lord Ravus, if you wish to aid Us.”

The Ambassador inclined his head and nodded, fist over his heart.

When he looked up again, he visibly startled.

He wasn’t in the gardens of the Citadel anymore.

Ravus glanced around himself and found Shiva standing a few meters away, regarding him impassively, Ramuh behind her. The other Astrals were not in sight. He blinked a few times to orient himself. He was in a square in Gralea, the capital of the Empire.

“O chosen follower of the Dawn King, my brethren seek to find those to whom We wish you to speak, We wish for you to convince them to leave with Us. Those whom our wrath shall fall upon shall not know of Our presence until We wish it.”

“Will you be here when I speak to them?” he asked.

“Yes, We shall stay, but is you who must speak to them.” Ramuh stepped forward and stood in front of Ravus. “Our presence may frighten them, We cannot force them, We wish for you to convince them that leaving with Us is the right course of action. They will be taken to your King.”

Ravus mused on the Fulgurain’s words. It appeared the Astrals wished to be…kind to the citizens of Gralea. “What will happen to the city? To those who remain?”

“Once the innocents leave, you shall stay to bear witness and then you shall have another choice to make.”

The answer the Astral gave him was not entirely satisfactory to Ravus, yet he didn’t question it further. One didn’t argue with Gods. Instead, he sank to his knees and started to reflect on what he would say to the people, it was imperative he convey the situation concisely.

He looked up from his meditations when he heard the scuffling of hundreds of feet and was greeted with the sight of the remaining citizenry of Gralea. Ramuh and Shiva stepped back, allowing Ravus to take centre stage.

“Citizens of Gralea, heed me now, I am Ravus Nox Fleuret and I am here at the behest of the Astrals. The Empire is to be punished for the atrocities it has visited on their own people, you, and for the horrors that their actions created. Your leaders have not cared for you as they should, they have destroyed too many lives for it to be forgiven. They attempted to forge a covenant with the Infernian. And in trying to do so they did much harm. Yet they failed. I was there. The Astrals do not wish for you to be harmed and they have asked me to convey to you that you must leave. I trust their intentions. I was brought back by them so that I could aid the Dawn King. Noctis will welcome you, he will aid you in new lives, and the new Oracle will help heal your hurts. I know them well and they have expressed a desire for you to be part of Lucis. You cannot stay here. The Astrals do not wish for you to be here when they enact their retribution. You have been oppressed
under the Empire’s regime, but you will find peace in Lucis. I know the rebels have tried to help you, and now is the time to leave. Please, believe in what I say. I know I was part of that regime for a long time, however, before I was put to death, I came to understand the value of Noctis, he is a good King, a kind King and I see what he is trying to do in Lucis. He wants to make Eos whole, not just his own Kingdom. He wants for your children to be safe, for you all to be safe. His people are happy, and you can be too. As he once said to me, he asks people to aid him, he does not command obedience. He knows the value of good people and treats them accordingly. He does not punish those who do not wish to do what he asks, he merely finds another. He has helped his people heal, his husband, the Duke, is another good man, his new role as Oracle allows him to heal those who need it. You will find them fair, as I do. They took me in, forgave me and now I act as Ambassador of Tenebrae for them.” He paused and looked around him at the people assembled before him.

“What if we don’t want to go to Lucis?” someone called out.

“Perhaps you can go to Tenebrae or Galahd, but you cannot stay here. From what I understand, Gralea will not be a place you want to be. I can assist with those who wish to go to Tenebrae and I have a contact who can assist those who wish to relocate to Galahd. King Noctis is already taking in those who wish to go to Lucis. But I reiterate, you cannot stay here.” He turned to the two Astrals that had remained with him, “can they collect their belongings?”

Shiva approached, and the citizens shuffled back watching her carefully. “Only what they can carry, O messenger, they shall be transported directly to where they wish to settle. We do not have time to transport everything they may wish to take, essentials only, Lord Ravus.”

He nodded and turned back to the men, women and children assembled before him. “Go to your homes, collect those things that you truly value, only what you can carry and return here post haste, the Astrals will not wait for too long. Then you will be taken to where you wish to settle.”

The citizens murmured and shuffled away, some moving faster than others. A few dozen stayed and told Ravus they were ready to leave now, they had nothing they wished to take.

Ravus glanced at Ramuh and Shiva, the Glacian beckoning them to come forward. Hesitantly they did so and Ravus moved away to let Shiva do her work. She asked each one quietly and gently where they wished to go, the majority choosing Lucis, the remainder wanted to go home to Galahd and in a blink of the eye they were gone, the Astrals with them. It left Ravus standing in the square on his own.

While he settled in to wait he watched the sun rise and hoped his absence in Insomnia wasn’t causing panic.

CROWE

Jac was sleeping peacefully.

When she turned to her husband he was smiling at her with a goofy grin on his face. He crooked his finger at her and she sauntered over, wrapping her arms around his shoulders, lifting herself up on tiptoe to kiss him. He growled deep in his throat and picked her up, Crowe muffling her shriek of surprise in his chest.

“You bloody behemoth, put me down.”

“Nup, not gonna,” he said and carried her to their bed. He deposited her on it and crawled up over
her, hands palming her tender breasts.

She hissed and pushed him away, “careful, Jac didn’t want a full feed, I’m still full.”

He hummed thoughtfully and stripped her shirt off, unclipping her bra and whistled appreciatively, “can we keep these, they’re fuckin’ gorgeous?” He bent down to nuzzle at them and chuckled when milk began to leak from her swollen nipples. She tried to swat him away but stopped when his amber eyes met hers, the pupils blown wide and she gave him a wicked little grin.

“You look like you want a sample, babe,” she murmured cupping her bared breasts and squeezing gently. More milk dribbled out and he traced the path it took, licking his lips.

“Can I? Jac won’t…”

“No, he’s out, he won’t want another feed for ages now. Besides, he’s been having a little solid food now, he doesn’t need this so much, so have at ‘em if you want it.” She shrugged her pants off and gestured that she wanted him naked too. He grinned and stripped off, hauling her into his lap and she impaled herself on him, moaning and throwing her head back. Gladio bent his head and she felt his warm mouth gently enclose a nipple as she rocked on him slowly. He kept his teeth sheathed behind his lips and began to suckle, a deep growl coming from him as her milk flooded his mouth. She felt the pull of his mouth and the tingle in her breast as he drank from her. Gods it felt good, so different from their son, this felt…carnal. The tingling sensation travelled down into her stomach, to her groin, her clit pulsing as Gladio rocked up into her, his mouth still latched to her breast. Her orgasm hit like a wave and took her by surprise and Gladio groaned, pulling of her nipple with a wet pop as she clenched around his girth.

“Fuck!”

“Don’t stop, drain me dry,” she commanded breathlessly, writhing in his lap and he bent his head back to her breast again, intent on drinking all he could from the first before he moved to the second. She gasped as he suckled harder, gripping his shoulders to keep herself steady. When she felt she her breast was empty she pulled back and palmed her other one, directing his open mouth to it and squeezing to squirt the milk into his open mouth. He swallowed it down and looked up at her greedily, mouth closing around her nipple and suckling again. She tipped her head back again, rolling her hips as he drank deeply, a satisfied hum thrumming through her as he caressed the nipple with his tongue before latching on again. “Oh fuck, baby, yes,” she moaned as he suckled harder.

Gladio’s fingers tightened around her hips as he ground her down onto his cock, growling and sucking, Crowe holding on as she felt the warmth in her groin building again. She was moaning incoherently, writhing and rocking back and forth, clenching around her husband as he drained her. He finally pulled back and licked at her nipples, pressing little kisses to her sternum and her throat as he pulled her down onto him forcefully. When she came the second time she cried out hoarsely and lifted herself off his still hard cock. Gladio grumbled and she grinned at him.

“Hands and knees, baby,” she ordered, and her husband’s eyes went wide. “Time for me to have a little feast.”

“Oh shit!” he moaned as she shuffled around behind him pulling his ass cheeks apart, smiling at the sight of his glistening cock hanging heavy between his open thighs. She dipped her head down and swiped at his rim with her tongue, knowing it drove him crazy when she did this. She drove her tongue in, her fingers blanching the skin white as she kept his ass parted for her ministrations. When she pulled back he whined and she stuck her fingers in her mouth before sliding one inside him.

“You like this, don’t you baby, feels good, doesn’t it?”
“Fuck yeah, nngghhh...” he moaned as she slid a second in and sought out his prostate. Twisting her fingers, she slid down so her head was between his thighs. Her tongue flicked over the head of his flushed cock, tasting her own juices and he shuddered above her.

“Time for me to suck you dry,” she murmured and Gladio growled as her fingers brushed his prostate again, her mouth encasing him. She hollowed her cheeks and took as much as she could into her mouth, feeling the vein pulse under her tongue.

“Shit,” he cried out as he shivered and writhed above her, “baby...I’m gonna...shit...shit,” he groaned, and she hummed around his cock, her fingers still working inside him. She pressed against the bundle of nerves more forcefully and he tried to bite back his shout as he came down her throat. She swallowed down his hot release and pulled off, shuffling up under him so she could kiss him, the mingling of milk and come on their tongues.

When he rolled over he star-fished on the bed and eyed her owlishly, blissed out and breathless. She grinned back and stroked his chest. “Mmm, I love this look on you,” she murmured and moved her hand to cup his cheek, rubbing her palm over his beard.

After a few minutes she went to clean up and slid one of his t-shirts over her head, jumping back into the bed and snuggling with him under the covers. He was almost asleep and mumbled at her as she curled beside him.

They were woken several hours later, not by Jac, but by his phone buzzing insistently on the bedside table.

He groped around for the phone and swiped at the screen to answer it, “yeah?”

He shot up in the bed and Crowe rolled onto her back, brushing her hair out of her eyes, listening to Gladio’s side of the conversation.

“When?...What about surveillance?” She watched him listening to the replies intently. “Yeah, ok, I’ll set up a search of the grounds, talk to you soon.”

He ran his hand over his face wearily and faced Crowe, “what is it, baby?” she asked.

“Ravus is missing, he went for a walk in the middle of the night and the cameras caught him last in the gardens, but there’s no sign of him after that. Aranea is screaming blue murder and Ignis has been scrambling to find out what he can. They need me to set up a proper search detail.” He slipped out of bed and padded to the shower.

When he came out, he dressed quickly and pressed a kiss to her lips, “do you need help?”

“Umm, maybe, can you call a coupla mages to see if they can pick up on anything?” he replied as he shoved his feet into his boots, reaching for his jacket and phone.

“Yeah, sure, I’ll get Reuel on it.” She got up and thumbed at her phone sending her second in command a quick message. “I’ll take Jac up to the twin’s nursery and see if I can help Ignis and Noct.”

“Kay, I’ll talk to ya later, baby, be safe, love you,” he shot over his shoulder as he left, and Crowe headed in to the shower before she got Jac up and fed, dressing him, she then settled him on her hip and headed up to the nursery.

Noct and Iggy were already there, Melita fussing in the kitchenette.
“Hey, Gladio told me about Ravus, can I help?” she said as she deposited Jac on the play mat in the center of the room. He immediately crawled over and grabbed at some blocks.

Noct settled Kai on the floor with Jac and Ignis jiggled Phae on his hip, making the little girl giggle.

“Any help would be appreciated, Crowe,” the Duke answered as he wiped a little of Phae’s breakfast from her mouth. “He got up, and the cameras tracked him through the Citadel, then he entered the gardens. He sat on a bench near the fountain and then he got up, it looked like he was following someone or something, he had a cautious stance, hand on the hilt of his weapon. Then he rounded a hedge and the camera lost sight of him. It didn’t pick him up anywhere else.”

“His phone?” she asked.

“Aranea has it, he left it in his suite.” Noct replied and sat on the couch.

“Oh, this sounds really weird, he wouldn’t just leave…” Crowe sat down on the couch with Noctis as Ignis paced with Phae.

“Indeed, he would not leave, not without telling someone, especially Aranea. She’s frantic, though she won’t admit it.” Ignis cleared his throat, “one possibility is that the Astrals took him.”

“Oh,” she said quietly. It was something they had hoped would not happen, but they couldn’t be sure of that, not yet.

“I am loathe to give in to conjecture, however I cannot think of another explanation.”

Ignis sounded sad at the thought and Noct hung his head.

“I hoped they would let him stay,” Noctis murmured. “Do you think I should try and call Shiva?”

“She has not come when you’ve reached out to her recently, I doubt she will do so now, however you could try, my love.”

“I’ve asked Reuel to take a few mages and see what they can discover, maybe if the Astrals did… take him, they will pick up on it.” Crowe shook her head. Ravus was a good man under all his stiffness and controlled manner.

“Thank you, Crowe, that could prove useful.” Ignis lowered Phae to the floor and she quickly joined the other two babies playing on the mat.

All three adults watched the children play for a moment, lost in their thoughts.

“I hope he is alright,” Ignis said quietly.

IGNIS

Aranea was making life very difficult for Ignis.

Since the sudden disappearance of Ravus in the middle of the night, she’d been practically camped out in the Duke’s office. The first day she’d paced back and forth, demanding Ignis send out a search party, which he had already done. The second day she had wept on his shoulder, rumpling his favourite shirt. The third and fourth day she’d been sullen and silent, something Ignis had found unnerving, though admittedly less so than her crying. And today, the fifth day, she had stomped in and slammed the door before berating him for not giving a shit about Ravus.

That had been Ignis’ breaking point.
He’d rounded on the Dragoon and spat at her to sit and close her mouth.

Wonder of wonders, Aranea plonked her ass in a seat in front of Ignis’ desk and gaped at him.

“If I knew where to look I would be looking, Aranea, he’s a friend, don’t you dare suggest that Noct and I are not concerned for his safety. There is nothing to point to him being abducted, he was not attacked, there are no signs of that, no signs of a scuffle or fight. We may have to accept that the Astrals had a hand in it. He has never known how long he would be allowed to stay.” He held his hand up for her continued silence when she made to interrupt him. “I know, I hate this as much as you, and if we get any information we will act on it, I can assure you of that. The cameras around the Citadel recorded him leaving his suite and heading into the gardens. After that, nothing. And there was no-one on the footage entering the area before him.” He sighed. “You have his phone, so he can’t contact us that way and it points to him not expecting to leave it behind. He had his weapon with him, but he always took that with him where ever he went, so we can’t deduce much from it. I don’t know what else to tell you, you know as much as we do.”

Aranea visibly slumped, “I’m sorry, I just…” she waved her hand uselessly and Ignis understood.

She was frustrated and worried.

Ignis was too.

He didn’t know what had happened to his friend and he hated not knowing. It grated on him. He didn’t want to believe the Astrals had taken him, especially as they had let him stay so long after the expedition to Ravatogh. That didn’t seem fair. To give him a taste of life and redemption only to remove him without a word. He wanted to believe there was another explanation.

There was a knock on his office door and his assistant poked his head around to speak to Ignis.

“Phone call for you, sir, Duncan is on line one.”

“Thank you,” he said and quickly picked up the phone, “Duncan?”

“Yes, sir, I have news, it’s all just rumor at the moment, but I thought you should hear it.”

“What is it?” Ignis asked waving Aranea to remain when she stood to go.

“It’s about Gralea, or more specifically the people, we are hearing reports that the remaining citizens are turning up, some in Galahd, some in Tenebrae and we have an influx of them at the gates of the city here, they are confused and can’t seem to explain how they got here. Some spoke of a Goddess, though and others of a man with white hair, but that is all we have been able to get from them. They apparently are only carrying a small amount of possessions with them, at least the ones here are, we don’t know much about the others. We haven’t received any information about Gralea itself. Does appear as if it’s only the normal citizens, none of the ruling hierarchy or military personnel.”

“Can you ask the men at the gates to send a few of the more coherent ones to the Citadel, I think Noct and I should speak to them ourselves.” He ran his free hand through his hair, “are any injured, do you know?”

“Yes, my Lord Duke, immediately and I will attempt to get more information from the other regions. I am not sure about their physical wellbeing, but I will have them sent to the hospital should any need it.” Duncan hung up on his end and Ignis replaced the receiver on its cradle.

He ran his hands through his hair again and sighed deeply. Aranea gave him a quizzical glance and he grimaced.
“What?” she queried and moved to stand in front on his desk, leaning over it and frowning.

“Something is going on in Gralea, the common people are…well, some have turned up in Galahd, others in Tenebrae and we have a number at our own gates, they don’t seem to know how they got here and have only brought what they could carry apparently.”

Aranea stood up straight, “right…that’s a bit weird.”

“Indeed,” he drawled, the rancor he’d felt earlier returning. He thought about Duncan’s words for a moment. “Some spoke of a Goddess, others of a man with white hair, Ramuh, perhaps…or,” he broke off, brain racing, “I wonder…the man with white hair…Ravus,” he glanced up at the Dragoon who had commenced pacing in front of his desk. At his mention of Ravus she spun and faced him again.

“Do you think…”

He cut her off, “sorry, I am just thinking out loud.”

Aranea’s lips pressed into a thin line as she regarded him, “I’m goin’ to Gralea,” she announced and glared at him, daring him to tell her no.

“Please, just wait until Duncan calls again, he’ll have more information, I have no wish to see you visited with the retribution of the Astrals, you were there when Shiva spoke, you know they intend to…do whatever it is they see fit.”

Aranea bristled and then slumped on the couch again. “I hate this.”

“I know, I as well, however one does not interfere with the wishes of Gods.”

“Yeah, whatever…” she waved her hand around uselessly and stood, “call me when you get news, anything…”

He nodded and Aranea stalked out of his office. He could feel a burgeoning headache and glanced at his coffee cup, empty. Damnit all. He strode out of his office and informed his secretary and assistant that he was heading downstairs, he needed a moment and sitting cooped up in his office was starting to drive him a little batty.

He met Noct coming down the hall and waited to press a kiss to his husband’s cheek.

“Duncan called a few minutes ago, the citizens of Gralea have apparently left, all turning up suddenly in Tenebrae, Galahd or here, I’m having some of them sent to us so we can ask what happened. Though I am afraid we may not get much out of them,” he said as they both made their way to the elevators.

“Why?” Noct asked.

“They seem confused and some of them are unable to say how they got here, Duncan said some spoke of a Goddess, others of a white-haired man. Aranea was with me when I received the call and I was thinking, I…I may have given her the impression that the man with white hair referred to Ravus, I was just sort of thinking out loud,” he sighed. He must be more exhausted than he thought to have slipped so badly.

Noct frowned and took his hand, “hey, don’t worry about it, she’s gonna do what she’s gonna do,” he told him.
“Yes, and that’s exactly what I am afraid of, she wanted to go to Gralea immediately, hopefully I convinced her to wait until we had more information.”

Noct huffed, “Aranea Highwind does what she wants, but she’s not stupid, and she can take care of herself.” He wrapped his arms around Ignis’ waist, resting his head on his shoulder, “I know you’re worried, we all are.”

Ignis relaxed against his husband as they rode the elevator down, “do you have a moment to have a coffee with me?”

“Yeah, I got time, but no coffee for me,” Noct nudged him and Ignis rolled his eyes, his husband’s aversion to the drink was something he had tried many times to change, so far, no such luck. “Grab your liquid crack and I’ll meet you in the courtyard, we can get a little fresh air.”

Ignis chuckled and went to grab his coffee, giving Noct a light swat to his rear while no-one was watching. The King gave him a sly wink and headed out the side door while Ignis made his way to the dining rooms and ordered a coffee for himself and a something sweet and fizzy for Noctis.

With both in hand he made his way out into the sunshine and found Noctis lounging back on a bench. How someone with his husband’s inherent grace of movement could sprawl so lazily was beyond him. “Here,” he said handing Noct his drink, “and do you think it at all possible for you to at least act like royalty in public,” he said with a quirk of his brow and a little smirk on his lips.

“Nope,” came the cheeky reply and then a giggle as he watched Ignis sip his coffee reverently. “You are addicted, you know that don’t you?”

Ignis grumbled indignantly, but didn’t say anything, he knew Noct was right, so he simply took another sip and then gave his husband a sheepish grin.

“You’d go crazy without that shit,” Noct murmured.

“It is not shit, Noctis Lucis Caelum, I’ll have you know it’s excellent coffee. I must admit I did go a little stir crazy when they ran out of Ebony in Lestallum though.”

Noct laughed uproariously and poked Ignis in his side, “I’ll bet you did, and I’ll bet you hoarded your own stash like a dragon protecting gold.”

“And how do you know I had my own stash, pray tell?” Ignis laughed.

“Ignis Scientia Lucis Caelum,” Noct retorted using some of Ignis’ own full name treatment, “I know you, you lost it when we went to that outpost and they’d run out, after that you would buy up large quantities and make me keep some extra in the armiger.” Noct waggled his brows at Ignis, “I think I still have some in there.”

Ignis almost spat out his mouthful, almost. He looked at Noct in surprise, “are you joking?”

Noct roared, clutching his sides as he saw the hopeful look on Ignis’ face, “if I had some it would be so out of date it’d probably make you sick.”

“It would not, the armiger kept everything fresh indefinitely,” Ignis retorted, “so if you do have some, don’t you dare keep it from me.” He levelled Noct with a feigned malicious gaze and Noct held his hands up in mock surrender. Ebony was as rare as hen’s teeth and even he had trouble procuring a fresh supply. He’d been amazed that Prom had located a case of it for their wedding vacation.
“Wouldn’t dream of it, baby,” Noct concentrated for a moment then let out a soft ‘ahhh’ and a flash of blue sparks surrounded his hand. A can of Ebony materialised in his fingers and he bowed and presented it to Ignis.

“Ohhh, come to papa,” Ignis reached for the can greedily and frowned when Noct pulled it away.

“Don’t I at least get a kiss for helping you indulge in your addiction,” Noct waved the can just out of Ignis’ reach, teasing him.

Ignis pouted and grabbed Noct’s face, smothering his face in kisses and then snaked his hand out to grab the can while Noct was occupied, smirking triumphantly when he had it in hand. “Ahh, my precious,” he stroked the can and Noctis lost it. He shot his husband a goofy grin. He loved making Noct laugh like this.

“You’re such a nerd,” Noct gasped through his laughter.

NOCTIS

Noctis and Ignis sat in the throne room, not on their thrones themselves, but on the step in front of them.

Before them were half a dozen of the people who had presented to the gates, now former citizens of Gralea and the Empire. They were a tired group, weary and wide-eyed, staring around the room they found themselves in. Duncan herded them closer and encouraged them quietly, being gentle and soothing. Ignis glanced over at Noct and the King stood, stepping down to stand directly in front of the group. He didn’t want to frighten them more than they already were.

“Please, we want to know what happened to you, we want to help you, can you tell me, tell us what happened, how you left Gralea?”

One man stepped forward from the back of the small group, “I…umm, well, I remember a man talking to us, he told us that the Astrals wanted us to leave, that we had to leave, we wouldn’t be able to stay. There was a woman, a weird woman with him and an old man with some sort of…cane… stick thing, it had a funny head on top, they stood back while the other man spoke.” The citizen of Gralea paused and looked to his fellows, who nodded in agreement. “He said we could go home and collect only what we could carry, but he asked the woman first, I think he was talking for them or something. Then…it was…well, then we were at the gates of the city, that’s all I remember.”

Noct nodded, “thank you sir, I was wondering if you could describe the woman at all.”

“I can,” a woman spoke up, “she was cold, no…kind of blue looking, like ice, and almost butt naked, long white hair tied back behind her head, some of it braided, I think. I stood before her and she touched me and then I was standing in front of the gates.”

“Thank you, can anyone tell me about the man that spoke, what did he look like?”

Ignis came down to stand by his side and moved towards the woman who had just spoken, he reached a hand out to her and led her to the step, gesturing for her to sit down.

“He was tall, tall like him,” a young man said pointing to Ignis, “he had…white hair, kinda silvery, he said that the Astrals had asked him to talk to us, I don’t think he was one of them, he seemed different to the other two, like he was…they were in charge. He had funny eyes, they were different colours,” he added.
Noct looked to Ignis and the Duke grimaced. It sounded liked Ravus, but they weren’t sure if the Ambassador was alright now. He may have been in Gralea to speak to these people, but where was he now?

“Did he give you a name?” Ignis queried.

“He did when he first started talking but it was a long name and I can’t remember what it was,” the young man said.

“What was he wearing? Do you remember that?” Noct asked. They’d seen what Ravus had on when he’d disappeared from the gardens.

“Umm, he had a sword at his hip, I remember that,” the man said, and a few others nodded.

“His name had something to do with flowers, I think,” an older lady added.

“Please, everyone, sit down, I can see you are weary,” Ignis said quietly from his position on the step. The men and women shuffled and slowly sat themselves down. Noct smiled at Ignis gratefully.

“Duncan, can you ask Monica to arrange something for these people to eat and drink?”

“Yes, your Majesty,” answered bowing and heading to the side door to find her.

“Are any of you hurt at all?” Ignis asked the group. He’d already been to see those who had presented at the hospital to help as much as he could.

“Not really, sir, just the usual aches and pains, but it’s warmer here than Gralea so my arthritis isn’t as bad,” the older lady chuckled.

“That is good to hear,” Ignis smiled at her. “We will do our utmost to make sure you are all comfortable, the King and I want you to make yourselves at home here and we will do what we can to assist with that. Accommodation, clothing, jobs when you are ready, healthcare as needed, anything, if you have children we will see to schooling as well. We already have quite a few people living here from your previous home, so we may be able to reunite you with family and friends, let us know and we’ll do what we can to facilitate that.”

“We want you to be happy and safe here,” Noct added. Duncan returned and whispered to Noct that the dining hall was ready to serve the citizens. “We have a meal organised for you, if you would follow Duncan here, he’ll show you the way, and thank you all again for helping us.”

Once they had all been ushered out, Noct turned to Ignis, “it sounds like Ravus is working for the Astrals and I think they may be about to enact their punishment on Gralea.”

“Indeed, my love, though some of the reasons why he hasn’t returned…I don’t want to contemplate.”

“Me either, Speccy, I know you’re worried and he’s your friend…”

“It’s a little more than that, I feel I owe him a great debt…he…he assisted me in Altissia…the day of the Covenant.” Ignis looked up sadly at Noct who gaped at him in surprise. This was more information than he’d ever heard about that day from Ignis. “He asked me to tell you everything about that day, and what happened…he thinks I need to…but I am afraid I’m not ready, my love.”

“Ignis, you don’t have to tell me anything you’re not ready to, but you know I will listen. I know
it’s a…difficult subject for you and I get that, and I know that…you losing your sight is because of…”

“No, don’t blame yourself, I told you, it was not your fault. I made choices that day that…” Ignis looked at the floor, unable to continue.

“Baby, don’t, you’re not ready, I can see that.” Noct sat beside his husband and took his hand, “I’ve heard you crying out in your sleep, the nightmares…Look if Ravus, no, when, when Ravus comes back, if you want to talk to him about it, I think that might help, if he was there for some of it, it might be easier to talk to him first.” Noct leaned into Ignis, “I could see you took to him quickly, and now I think I understand a bit about why.”

“He deals with a great deal of guilt, I know you have forgiven him and embraced him as a member of our court, as Ambassador, as a friend and…he’s a deserving man, a good man. He was…he was helping us long before any of us realised. He had told Luna before the Covenant that he would follow you, he’d seen your worth back then, and then in Zegnutus…” Ignis drew in a shuddering breath, “he’s difficult to get close to and complicated, but his heart is true. He despises himself for ever listening to Ardyn.”

“Ardyn was very good at…he got under your skin and into your head, I don’t blame Ravus, Ignis, I see what Luna saw in her brother, what you see in him.” Ignis grimaced at his mention of Ardyn and Noct frowned. But he didn’t ask if Ignis had personal experience of the Accursed’s mind tricks. Ignis wasn’t ready and he would respect that. “I now understand why you trust him so much, and Ignis, I do too, he deserves to be happy and have the chance to live a good life.”

“I wake up from the nightmares scared I won’t be able to see and I am ashamed of that…but Noct, if I could go back and do it all again, I would still do it, not because I had to, but because I wanted to. And now that I can see again…” Ignis’ voice broke and Noct hushed him, rubbing his hand over his back.

“Ignis, shh, baby, I know, I know, I can see how you look at me.”

Ignis nodded, twisting to wrap his arms around Noctis. He felt the Duke take a deep breath and calm himself, pulling back and pushing his glasses back up his nose he gave Noct a shaky smile.

“C’mon, it’s been a long day, we’ll go up and play with the twins, I bet they’re missing their papa and daddy,” Noct grinned and stood, extending his hand to Ignis and pulling him to his feet. “I miss them too,” he chuckled and Ignis gave him a more genuine smile then.

Playing with the twins, feeding them and just being with them pushed away all other worries, they were growing so fast, crawling around, smiling and laughing, and Noct swore that Kai was trying to walk. Ignis just laughed, shaking his head.

“It’s a little early for that, my little Raven, I think. But they are doing so well, I think we’ll hear first words soon. The sounds they’re making are becoming more pronounced and distinct. It sounds like they’re trying to talk to us,” he laughed as he lifted Phae and bounced her on his lap, the little girl squealing in delight and babbling away at Ignis.

“Yeah, well feeding them is certainly more…of a challenge,” Noct sniggered, wiping Kai’s fingers.

“They are just becoming more independent, they want to do what we do, love, feeding themselves is part of that, and our gorgeous little Phae here likes to drink out of her cup all by herself, don’t you darling?” Ignis cooed at their daughter.
Noctis chuckled at his husband and watched as Kai crawled to the little table and grasped his phone, “uh oh,” he said making to grab at it then stopped in his tracks when the little boy lifted it to his ear and babbled into it. “Papa, look, he’s on the phone,” Noct pointed and Ignis threw back his head laughing.

“See, little copy-cats, Daddy.” Ignis bounced Phae and pointed to Kai, “look Phae, Kai is on the phone like Daddy and Papa.” Phae squirmed and pointed to the floor, she wanted down. Before a mini argument broke out, Ignis waved his own phone in front of Phae and she grabbed at it, copying Kai.

Noct snorted laughing, “I need a camera, but they both have our phones.”

Ignis smirked and went to the twin’s bedroom, coming back with a small digital camera, he waved it at Noct and turned it on, taking a few snaps of the twins pretending to have a conversation on the phones. He showed Noct the screen and the King shook his head in amusement. “Always prepared, my love.”

“Wub, wub,” Phae babbled and Noct and Ignis looked down at her.

“Is she…is she trying to say love?” Noct gaped at Ignis.

“It’s possible, we do say it a lot,” Ignis chuckled, “but I don’t think we can quite count that as a first word.”

Both their phones chimed, and the twins were delighted, babbling at the sound and Noct and Ignis spent several minutes trying to distract them long enough to retrieve them.

“I think it might be prudent to get them some toy phones of their own, my love,” Ignis sighed as he replaced his phone with Phae’s favourite teddy bear watching her hug it to her chest.

He swiped at the screen and was watching Noct trying to unsuccessfully trade his phone for a toy with Kai. He shook his head, the little boy was a touch stubborn. Noct thought he should try a book, that might be better, Kai seemed to love books. Then he saw Ignis freeze when he read the message.

“Ravus is back,” he said quietly as Kai squealed in annoyance and held tightly to Noct’s phone. “He’ll be back in Insomnia in a few days.”

**PROMPTO**

If this wasn’t the single most embarrassing conversation he’d ever had, he’d eat his gun, his favourite at that.

The only thing that made it better was that Gladio was just as, if not more so, embarrassed as he was. Why Gladio thought he was the one he could come to with his problem, he had no idea. And he’d been sworn to secrecy, he wasn’t allowed to talk to Nyx about it. Gladio had threatened him with vast amounts of pain. And once he had heard what the Shield had to say, he understood the big man’s reluctance to speak to anyone about it. He asked why he hadn’t talked to Ignis, Ignis would be better he thought, but Gladio had shot him a look of complete disdain.

“He’s only just stopped glarin’ daggers at me, I can’t take this to him, seriously, Prom, you’re the
only one I can talk to about this.”

“What about Noct?”

“Ugh, you don’t take this sort of problem to the King, blondie, I need someone who kinda gets where I’m comin’ from. I mean, you do like both, right?”

“Well, yeah, duh, but I’ve never had that problem, dude, this is a new one for me too.”

“Fuck!” Gladio exclaimed and bent his head in his hands.

“How in Ifrit’s balls did it even get to this point, dude, I…I can’t even…”

“Prom…” Gladio growled in warning.

“Dude, don’t get shitty with me! I gotta know what brought this on.” Prom crossed his arms across his chest and regarded the Shield. “Why haven’t you talked to your wife about this? I mean she is…”

Gladio cut him off with another glare.

“Right, well, if ya ain’t gonna talk to the one person who it involves and you ain’t gonna confide in Iggy, you got me and that means spillin’ the beans, dude. I’m not goin’ into this blind, need some sorta context.”

“Ugh, fine. Again, you don’t breathe a word…”

“Already said I won’t, just spill it.”

“I’m Crowe’s submissive, she…” Gladio mumbled, blushing bright red under his tan, amber eyes on the carpet.

Prom choked, “you’re what now?”

“Submissive. Don’t make me say it again. Please tell me I don’t need to explain what it means.”

“Umm, yeah, I know what it is, but you? Gotta say, I never saw that coming.”

“Yeah, yeah, laugh it up, blondie, I happen to like it, so fuck you.”

“Not laughin’ dude, just never pictured you as the type is all, but each to their own, so go on, what’s that got to do with you thinkin’ you’re…”

“Don’t say it,” Gladio cut in, “please.”

“Nothin’ to be ashamed of, dunno why you would even talk to me if you feel that it is.” Prom frowned and glared at Gladio.

The Shield shook his head, “no, didn’t mean it like that, it’s just…fuck…this is hard enough as it is, can I just get on with it?”

Prompto waved his hand and indicated that the big man should continue.

“Right, well, the other stuff, I’m good with, like the paddles and bein’ tied up and…yeah.” He paused and looked up at Prom quickly to see the little gunner was listening intently, but not judging. “So, anyway, she’s been doin’ other stuff to me lately, and I like it, like really like it…”
“Uhh, like what?”

“Umm, with her fingers and tongue…in my…” he stuttered.

“Right, get ya,” Prom saved him from saying ass. He could see why Gladio had approached him now. “But that still doesn’t mean…”

“No, I kinda get that, but now she’s…she’s fucked me with a strap on,” he blurted. Prom’s blue eyes went wide and Gladio flushed harder. “And I…I came harder than I’ve ever done in my life.”

“You liked it?” Prom watched Gladio squirm in his seat, almost like he could still feel it.

“Fuck…yeah, I did, I mean, I want her to…I want her to do it all the time, but it…does that make me…gay?”

Prom wanted to laugh, but held it back. How the Shield could reach his age and not get that anal sex could be pleasurable without it meaning he was changing his sexual orientation, he didn’t know. He didn’t know how to explain it so the Shield would understand either.

“Look, dude, I don’t think so, but I’m just gonna text Iggy, he’ll know how to explain this better than me,” at Gladio’s panicked pace he rushed on, “not gonna say who it is I’m talkin’ about but he’s better at explainin’ shit.”

“Fine,” Gladio grumbled.

Prom took out his phone and sent a text to Ignis.

PROM:  Dude, gotta ask you somethin’
It’s a bit sensitive, need your advice for a friend

SEX GOD IGGY:  Go ahead, I shall help if I can

PROM:  right, well, this guy, he’s been straight all his life
Like super straight
He’s in a relationship where his girl has just started using a strap-on
And he likes it. And he likes rimming
A LOT
He thinks he might be gay
I know he’s not, but how do I explain it to him?

SEX GOD IGGY:  well this is not what I was expecting

PROM:  I know, I’m sorry, but I don’t want him freakin’ out
He’s already tied in knots, literally
He’s her submissive
I think he’s more worried than he’s letting on
He’s used to being the macho dude, ya know?

SEX GOD IGGY: right.

I’m going to call you

Give me a moment

PROM: Sure, thanks Iggy

Prompto looked up at Gladio and smiled, “he’s gonna call me so he can talk me through it.”

Gladio nodded, yet he still startled when Prom’s phone rang.

“Hey,” Prom chirped down the phone.

“Is he there with you now?” Ignis asked, sounding a little worn out and hassled.

“Yeah,” Prom answered.

“Can he hear me?”

“Don’t think so.”

“It’s Gladiolus, isn’t it?” Ignis drawled and Prom wanted to fall through the floor.

“Umm, maybe…” he hedged, carefully not looking at the Shield. He should have known the Duke would work it out.

“Put me on speaker, Prom,” Ignis demanded.

“Umm, ok,” the gunner swiped at the screen and put the phone in speaker mode, “ahh, done.”

“Right, now then, Gladio, you are not gay,” Ignis stated flatly and Gladio gave Prom a glare.

“I didn’t tell him,” Prom squeaked.

“Indeed, he did not, I surmised from what he did tell me,” Ignis drawled down the phone and Gladio crumpled. “Enjoying anal sex does not mean you are gay, you silly man, you are not attracted to men, are you?”

“No,” Gladio mumbled, humiliated.

“You still enjoy sex with your wife?”

“Yes.”

“You still find her attractive?” Ignis continued.

“Yeah, ‘course,” Gladio answered. Prompto fought down a fit of giggles at the discomfort of the Shield. It wasn’t often he got to see Gladio uncomfortable, especially to this degree.

“Right, then. Listen to me very carefully, as I will say this only once; Prom and Nyx are bi-sexual, they enjoy both sexes and are attracted to both sexes, Noct and I are gay, we don’t find women sexually attractive, exclusively men. It has nothing to do with what we enjoy in the bedroom, it’s about who we want to do it with. You do not find men sexually attractive, you just enjoy anal sex, you are not gay.” Ignis sighed, “as a submissive man, you need to understand that this is relatively
common, your ‘dom’ wants to do things that you will enjoy, and I think you should probably do a little research if you won’t take my word for it, I am sure you will find a few groups online that can help you. If you ask them, they will tell you the same. A lot of men and women enjoy anal sex or anal stimulation, it has nothing to do with sexual orientation.”

“Ahh, thanks, Iggy, sorry you got dragged into this,” Gladio mumbled.

“Yes, well, as I said to Prom, it was not a conversation I was expecting to have, but I am happy to assist. Gladio, talk to your wife, she could have explained this to you, I am sure. Furthermore, you are an adult, you need to get over any embarrassment about this, especially in your position, as a submissive it is your duty to let your ‘dom’ know when you are uncomfortable, about any aspect of your sessions, or relationship. A scene is about trust, as is a marriage.”

“Right,” the Shield bit his lip and stared at the floor, feeling stupidly relieved.

“And Gladio, this conversation goes no further, I have no wish to explain why I know the things I do, in any context.” Gladio bit his lip as he thought about that, a look of comprehension crossing his face. He could see the implications swirling in Gladio’s brain, wondering who was the ‘dom’ and who was the ‘sub’ in the King and Duke’s relationship. He knew the Shield’s mind would fry if he knew even a little about what those two got up to. As Nyx said, they were kinky fuckers. He didn’t pretend to know half of what they got up to when alone, he’d seen some of their paraphernalia, some things he wasn’t even sure what they were for and he wasn’t about to ask. The leather harnesses and whips were one thing, but he had no idea what the long silver rod thing was for, obviously something...kinky as it was in among the cock rings and cuffs, but...what they did with it...yeah, he had no clue about that one. And then there was the bar with cuffs attached at either end, he had an idea about that, but he’d never seen them use it so...He shook his head at himself and turned his attention back to his phone.

Prom switched off the speaker and held the phone to his ear, “we’re off speaker, thanks, I just didn’t know how to explain it that way.”

“That’s perfectly ok darling,” Ignis purred down the phone and Prom gave a little grin at the sound, “although I did have to hold back from explaining in great detail exactly why I find anal sex so satisfying, I don’t think he’s ready to hear about the sexual antics of his King.” Ignis chuckled, “I know you can’t respond so I’ll leave you with the silly Behemoth.”

“Yeah, thanks, Iggy,” Prom said sarcastically and Ignis laughed as he ended the call. He turned to Gladio and gave him a wicked grin, “so, about this strap-on…”

“NO! Do not finish what you were gonna say,” Gladio warned him.

“Awww, come on, you gotta stop bein’ embarrassed, dude,” Prom whined.

“I said NO,” Gladio grumbled.

“I just wanna know what colour it is, how big it is?” he said quickly before the Shield could stop him.

“Prompto Argentum, I will end you if you don’t shut up.”

“Can’t, Iggy knows you’re here,” he chuckled. “Now, piss off and go see your...wife.” He paused just long enough so Gladio knew he was going to say ‘dom’.

“I’m gonna regret this, ain’t I?”
Prom just gave him another wicked little grin and shoved him out the door.

RAVUS

The long trip back to Insomnia had been grueling.

And now he stood at the gates and waited for them to let him through. He was worn down and filthy, still wearing what he’d put on when he left his rooms a week or more before, and that was enough to make him cringe. Combine that with what he’d seen after the citizens departed with Shiva and he was sure he would be having nightmares for years to come.

On top of all that, he would have to deal with Aranea’s anger. Not a pleasing prospect. He hoped she’d not been too hard to handle while he was gone and that he’d not caused trouble for the King and Duke. Probably a futile hope, particularly where his lover was concerned.

Despite it all, however, he was alive.

Alive and permitted to stay.

He’d made his choice and now he would be able to make good on his promises to himself. To live a life of loyalty and honor. Maybe he would ask Aranea to marry him, now that he knew his life was out of the purgatory it had been stuck in since his return. He needn’t fear the Astrals judgement over his head any longer. He was free of that burden.

The gates to Insomnia swung open and he was greeted with the sight of Aranea Highwind in full flight, running towards him. It gave him pause, would she smack him in the jaw, or scream at him, or…

He was infinitely relieved when she grabbed his face and kissed him, his eyes wide in surprise before he bent his head and kissed her back, his good arm snuggling her close, feeling her warmth.

“Thanks to the Gods,” he breathed out when they parted and Aranea gave him a confused glance.

“What?”

“I had thought you might punch me for leaving without telling you. I would have Ari, however I wasn’t given the choice.”

“Bloody Astrals, yeah I worked that out, or rather, Iggy did. They scoured the footage from the security cameras and there was no sign of a fight or anything. We knew you had your sword, so… And then people started showing up from Graleia, some of them were mentioning a tall guy with white hair. Noct and Iggy questioned some of them and it made them pretty sure they were talking about you, but that was days ago, what’s been going on?”

“Rather a lot, and I think I should explain to the King and Duke immediately,” Ravus responded and tried to cover a yawn. “I’ve been walking for a day and a half, they left me somewhere outside Alstor, I think, it was hard to get my bearings until I got to Hammerhead.” Unfortunately, there had been no-one heading in the direction of the Crown City, and Cindy was away so she couldn’t bring him. Walking had been his only option. He’d spoken to a man near Alstor when he’d been deposited there by the Astrals and asked him to call the Citadel to let them know he was on his way back, but that had been the best he could do. As he hadn’t known his exact location, asking them to
send someone for him would have been nigh on useless. Besides a little walking wouldn’t hurt him.

“Right, then, let’s get you back to the Citadel so ya can talk to pretty boy. And Iggy has been pretty worried, at least from what I can tell anyway. Tense, ya know?” Aranea slipped her hand around his waist and led him through the gate, waving at the guard to let them know all was fine. They saluted her, and she grinned back.

Ravus sighed, he did indeed know what Ignis would be like. Tense wouldn’t quite adequately describe it, he was sure of that. “How have they been since they knew I was returning?”

“Better…kinda, they’ve been talking about what might be happening to Gralea and the Empire.”

“The Empire is…no more.” He made the statement flatly and Aranea raised a brow at him in question. He held his hand up, “I’ll explain when we get there, I have no wish to say what I have to more than once.”

She grimaced and led him to the Regalia, “look, they let me bring this, Noct wanted to come himself, but Iggy insisted that I do the honors, and handed me the keys, fastest car in the city, he said.”

Ravus gave a small smile and slipped into the passenger seat, eyeing the baby seats in the back. It was a damn sight more comfortable than walking.

Aranea had them at the Citadel within a half hour, as there still wasn’t a great deal of traffic in the city, cars were fairly rare, most people walked around the city or took to the public transport that Noctis had set up. It was free so almost everyone took advantage of it.

He limped up the steps, his muscles seizing up on him a little during the drive, Aranea noticed and made to assist him, but he waved her back. He had made it this far, he could walk a few more steps. She frowned, but didn’t protest, allowing him to retain his pride.

“Where will they be?” He asked her as they moved through the first entrance hall.

“Upstairs, said they’d be in their suite, probably Noct’s study. Iggy reckoned it would be the most private place to talk,” she answered, and they headed to the back of elevators.

He kissed her when the doors shut and they were alone, “I missed you,” he whispered into her silvery hair, toying with the little braids at the back.

“I went a bit nuts without you,” she said, holding him tight as they rose up through the Citadel. “Please don’t do that again, not sure I could handle it.”

“Nor I, Ari.” He leaned against the wall outside the elevator when it stopped and collected himself before he hobbled towards the King and Duke’s suite, giving Gladio a brief nod as he reached the place where the Shield was stationed.

“Good to see ya back, Ravus,” Gladio said quietly and the Ambassador startled at being spoken to in such a manner by the big man. He’d never been so polite before, at least not to him.

“Thank you, Gladiolus, it is good to be home.”

The Shield gave him a little grin at the mention of home and opened the doors to the suite for him and Aranea to enter, he pulled them shut behind him and motioned to the sitting room while he went to inform the King that Ravus was here.
Ravus sat gratefully and leaned back, weary and covered in dust. He did hope the men he was about to see didn’t mind his appearance. He felt that what he had to tell them could not wait for him to shower and change, regardless of how uncomfortable he felt. Unbuckling the Balmung, he settled it on the floor as Noctis and Ignis came in. He made to rise to his feet before them but Noct gave him a frown and shook his head.

“Stay where you are, you look like shit, Ravus, are you ok?” the King said frankly and sat across from him, Ignis moving to sit beside his husband, eyeing the Ambassador’s condition critically.

Then Ignis was on his feet before Ravus could reply, and took his hand in his own, “let me, it is the least I can do.”

Ravus nodded and watched as Ignis bent his head, the golden glow familiar and a sad remembrance all at once. He felt the warmth flow through him and Ignis smiled up at him, his eyes magenta, which took him off balance. Luna’s eyes had not done that. He had to remind himself that while Ignis was technically Oracle, he wasn’t quite the same as his sister. His wasn’t a blood gift, it was passed on by Noctis and the Astrals. He felt his feet soothed, his muscles relaxing, and he let out a small sigh.

“Thank you, Ignis,” he said clearing his throat and settling back in his seat more comfortably. “The Astrals brought me home, however they left me somewhere outside Alstor from what I could make out. They had other things to do apparently.”


He smiled weakly at Noct’s interjection, Ignis rolling his eyes as he sat back where he had been beside the King.

“Please, ignore him and continue.” Ignis grabbed his husband’s hand and shot him a look that made the King roll his own eyes in defiance.

“I gather you surmised I had been taken from here by them, it was Ramuh that I saw in the gardens that night, he took me directly to Gralea where I met with the others. Bahamut spoke to me and told me I needed to speak to the citizens remaining and convince them to leave. They were not given much time, only long enough to grab things that were precious to them and then they would be taken by Shiva. Then they made me watch their retribution.” He paused and gathered his thoughts. “It was…Gralea is gone…there is nothing there to even indicate it ever existed. They wiped it off the map in the blink of an eye. One moment there was a city and the keep, the next, grasslands.”

“Woah, completely gone?”

“Yes, my King, gone, along with all the soldiers and their masters. Vanished. Besithia was there, I saw them take him. I could not comprehend what I was seeing at first, I thought it some sort of dream, or nightmare…but it is gone entirely. The only thing left of the Empire are a few outlying towns and villages, and those are mostly empty. The Astrals visited those too and had me speak to any inhabitants left, explain what had happened, offer them refuge here as I had done with the others, tell them of the city’s demise and that of their overlords, that it had been enacted due to their evil acts and that they would not abide it again. It was a warning to any who may seek to rise.” Ravus glanced at Aranea who squeezed his hand. “Ifrit’s blade was destroyed, it’s shards melted and cast into the sea, it’s fire quenched. It can never be used by the Infernian or anyone else ever again. Pitioss is to be sealed so that no human will ever be able to enter again. Not even you, Noctis.”

“Right,” Noct murmured still trying to process that Gralea had been wiped off the map.
“And you, Ravus, what of your situation?” Ignis queried delicately.

The King, Duke, Aranea and Gladio watched him intently, waiting for his answer.

He took a deep breath and returned the squeeze to Aranea’s hand clasped in his.

“They…they held an accounting, weighed my deeds in the past,” he said quietly, glancing at Ignis, “all the bad against the good. They spoke of how they had been mistaken when they cast out the Accursed and that they would not make the same mistake again. They gave me a choice in the end. They asked what it was that I wanted, and if I were to stay, what was my intention for my life, how would I live it. I told them what was in my heart, I confessed my sins, laid my actions at their feet for them to judge, I told them I wanted to stay. I told them my wish it to serve you, Noct, that you are my King.”

“And…they let you?” Ignis enquired, voice low, urgent.

Ravus glanced at Ignis and smiled, his mismatched eyes bright, “yes.” He let out a decidedly undignified ‘oof’ when Aranea engulfed him in a hug and let the tears he’d held back for years roll down his cheeks. “I’m home to stay.”

Aranea pulled back and looked at the others on the room, “ok, that’s done, I’m taking him to get out of these dirty things and into a dry martini,” she stated and leaned towards his ear, “and into me,” she added in a whisper that only Ravus could hear.

His cheeks coloured delicately and he coughed to cover his embarrassment, then he threw caution and propriety to the wind and kissed her, barely hearing the cheer the King let out. Ravus made a decision and he slipped to his knee before her, Aranea visibly startled at his action.

“Ravus?” she asked him, wide-eyed.

“Marry me, let me be yours?” he implored her, taking her hands in his. Aranea looked at him speechless. “Please, Ari, do me the honor of becoming my wife.”

“I’m not washing your socks…”

He heard the amused snort that came from Ignis, but he didn’t look at anyone except the Dragoon. “Is that a ‘yes’, Ari?”

“Get up, you big ass, of course it is,” she answered, forcing him up off his knees and into her arms for another kiss.

“Don’t swallow her,” Gladio chuckled from somewhere behind him, but Ravus paid him no mind.

He was finally truly happy, and he didn’t care who saw it.

NOCTIS

Ever since the return of Ravus, Ignis’ nightmares had plagued him every night.

Noct wasn’t sure if it was brought on by their conversation in the throne room, or exactly what had done it, but whatever it was, it was torturing Ignis.

Having his husband thrash around in the bed, crying, begging, clinging to Noct when he shook him awake, head buried in his chest or shoulder, holding on as if he needed to make sure Noct was real, it was hurting him to watch it, but Ignis still wouldn’t elaborate further. And Noct refused to push him.
Whatever had happened in Altissia during the Covenant had scarred Ignis in a way that went far beyond physical.

He knew his husband almost as well as himself.

Ignis seemed to feel guilty and shamed and Noct couldn’t for the life of him understand why that would be. He’d spoken about choices he’d made, that he didn’t regret what he had done, that he had wanted to, and it was all a puzzle Noct felt ill-equipped to solve without further clues.

Instead, he sought out Ravus to speak to him, to ask him to talk to his husband and plead with him to reveal what was causing him so much pain and stress.

“Ravus, please, he’s not ready to talk to me, but he told me you were there that day, that you helped him, he’s never told me that before and now he’s…the nightmares…I can’t watch him be like this.” Noct sat across from Ravus, hands clasped in his lap, blue eyes sad and distressed.

Ravus sighed, “I was there for part of it, Noctis, the worst part, the part I am sure he feels guilty about, though, I don’t think he should. I have never met a man so willing to sacrifice so much for another,” he paused and looked up at Noct, his mismatched eyes unwavering. “We found Luna and you at the Altar of the Tidemother. Luna was…already gone. She had tried for so long to get me to see that you were the one, Noct, she was dying before the ceremony, but she wouldn’t…And seeing Ignis, the utter devotion to you, his desperation…every last vestige of doubt left me then. If a man like Ignis had so much faith in you, I…I couldn’t let doubt cloud my judgement.”

Noct sat in silence, taking in what Ravus had said. It was obvious he didn’t wish to betray Ignis’ confidence and he wouldn’t ask anything further, the details he’d been given so far…

The thought of Ignis and Ravus finding them both at the Altar, Luna dead and from what he had gathered about his own state after the fight with Leviathan, he hadn’t been far from the same fate. He’d never known how he got back, who had found him. He hadn’t known that Ravus had collected his sister’s body, like most everyone else he had thought her lost to the waves. But he’d never said anything and Ignis had kept his own counsel on the subject. But it did answer the question of how Ignis had known she was gone when everyone else said she was missing.

Knowing Ignis had found him like that, remembering how distressed he’d been at Ravatogh, how he still looked at him in a sense of wonder and amazement as if waiting for him to vanish. He could only imagine how his lover had felt that moment.

“You know better than anyone how proud he is, Noctis, and not without justification. However, I do feel that pride is somewhat a front, he hides behind it, much as I do myself, we are…very alike in many respects.”

Noct nodded, “yeah, I know, it’s like the thing with Gladio, that had cut him to the core, yet he tried to brush it away and pretend it wasn’t important, which only made it fester and hurt more. I have come to learn that a man like him, he feels so much more than a lot of others, I’d guess you’re the same, you both hide it pretty well, but I see it when you’re with Aranea.”

“Indeed, as I see it in Ignis when he is with you, it spills over, almost bleeds out of him, I recognise the signs,” Ravus smiled softly. He reached out and took hold of Noct’s hand, “he will talk to you, eventually, he’ll come to understand that he needs to, that the nightmares won’t stop until he does.”

He smiled shakily at Ravus, “I hope so.”

“i will talk to him myself, see if I can’t convince him somehow, whatever guilt he feels about
Altissia is not justified, it’s never going to be enough to tear you apart, he needs to know that.” Ravus paused, “I will say this, however, Ardyn got the shock of his life that day.”

Noct pondered Ravus’ words. He frowned, did Ignis really think that whatever it was would change how he felt about him. Ignis wasn’t stupid, he should know that wouldn’t happen. It made him think about what would cause that, and he honestly couldn’t think of any scenario that Ignis would be capable of that would do it. He’d never cheat, there was no need to and he was so…the word Ravus had used was devoted and it fit, but it was so much more than that. Ignis had called him his other half, the part that made him whole. He felt the same way. The thing about Ardyn though, that made him frown. He’d never wondered if the Accursed had tried to pull mind tricks on Ignis, but from what Ravus said, it sounded more like Ignis had done something to Ardyn.

These things still running through his mind, here he was, several days after that conversation with Ravus, rocking Ignis in his arms, running his hands up his back, murmuring in his ashy hair, trying desperately to soothe his husband, echoes of his own name, cries of ‘no’, angry growls of Ardyn’s name, all circling in his head. It was the earnest shout of “I will protect him,” that made the hairs on the back of his neck stand up and hold Ignis even closer.

“Oh, Ignis, it’s alright, I’m here, shhh,” he crooned softly through Ignis’ harsh hiccups and sobs.

Ignis’ nails were almost painfully tight against the skin of his arms, “forgive me, forgive me, I tried, I tried so hard,” his words a chanted lament murmured into Noct’s chest.

Noct pulled back from Ignis and forced him to look up, “there is nothing to forgive. I know you, Ignis. You are incapable of hurting me, what ever it is that’s got you tied up in knots, what ever it is you did, it’s not ever going to be enough to make me hate you or…anything like that.” He pressed a soft kiss to Ignis’ wet cheek.

Ignis drew in a shuddering breath and turned his face away, “it all began when I became separated from Gladio and Prompto…”

Noct sat and listened quietly as his husband spoke, his tone hushed, pouring out his story, voice breaking as he came to the part that tore his heart out. Ignis had been willing to do everything for him, to give up his own life to save him, had convinced the Old Kings that he was worthy, that he could help Noct. The ring hadn’t taken his life, but it had burned his sight away and though he hadn’t defeated Ardyn, he had tried, and he had weakened him considerably. All he felt was sorrow that Ignis had given so much, had tried so hard and still felt that he had failed. Noct didn’t think he had, not even remotely.

“You are amazing, Ignis, truly, don’t you see? The ring could only be worn by someone worthy, pure of heart and motives, someone who had sworn themselves to the Caelum line, to serve, protect, to love. That is you.” He stroked Ignis’ cheek as swollen green eyes met his incredulously.

“I failed…I didn’t protect you…I let Ardyn escape,” he murmured, confused.

“You did no such thing, you won, Ignis, you beat him, he had to run away and lick his wounds after you were done with him. You protected me from him, you went up against a man who had two thousand years to learn all he could and you beat him back and had him turn tail.” He rubbed Ignis’ back gently, little circles that his husband leaned in to. “You did not fail.”

Ignis frowned and bowed his head, a sure sign he didn’t want to accept what Noct was telling him.

“No, look at me, I mean it, Ignis. I know what it took to put that ring on, I know the toll it had, still has on you,” he said, lifting Ignis’ face so he could meet his eyes. “You convinced Ravus through
that act of devotion, he sees it for what it was, please don’t feel guilty anymore.”

Ignis sighed, “it could have been so different, Ravus accompanied me at first to meet his own ends, to find Lunafreya, I watched him kill Caligo in front of me, we fought together to the Altar…grief does strange things to people, Noct…he wanted to kill you himself until I fought him off and Ardyn ambled in pretending to be Gladio…but when Ardyn had a knife to your throat it was Ravus that distracted him.” He grimaced, “he called me reckless for putting the ring on then, I didn’t know he feels the way he does now…I felt…I don’t know, it is hard to explain.”

“Wait, let me get this right, Ravus, the guy that shoved Gladio aside like he was swatting a fly, that Ravus? You beat him and then Ardyn? Shit, Ignis, you are a serious badass, you know that?” Noct said in an awed voice, shaking his head.

“I can assure you, I didn’t feel like one, Noct,” Ignis mumbled, a slight flush highlighting his cheeks.

“You are, though, I mean I always knew that, but baby, you’re…awesome. I love you.” Noct planted a kiss on Ignis’ lips. The Duke melted against him and Noct felt all the pent-up tension leave his husband, finally. “I know I should be pissed that you could have died, but…you didn’t.” He was more than a little awed by that fact.

Ignis sighed and nuzzled Noct’s neck, “I just wish…” he started but Noct hushed him. He knew what Ignis wanted to say, but it was done and nothing could change it, they had each other now, that was what mattered.

“Ignis, listen to me, it took me ten years in a fucking crystal, two Astrals helping us defeat Ifrit, and then two deaths to kill Ardyn properly, without you weakening him on your own, it might have meant me being in the crystal twenty years or who the fuck knows how long, and I came back. I’m here, I’m not going anywhere.”

Ignis nodded into his neck, fresh tears wetting his skin, but they were tears of relief rather than anguish now, his husband clinging to him, and he felt damp lips pressing kisses to his neck, jaw and finally his mouth.

Noct dragged Ignis back down into the sheets, tangling their limbs together and let Ignis revel in the fact he was here and that he’d never leave.

IGNIS

Ingis smiled a secret little smile.

He watched Aranea sway in Ravus’ arms, her simple wedding dress floating out behind her as she was spun and threw her head back laughing. Her husband twirled her out and then pulled her back in, flush against him and laughed along with her, a deep rasping laugh that not many had ever heard. Their wedding had been a hastily put together affair, but it was joyous all the same, private and attended only by those that Ravus and Aranea considered friends. Biggs and Wedge travelling from their bases, Cindy and Iris beaming that the normally dour and sarcastic Dragoon was letting loose, Ignis standing as groomsman for his friend, Prompto standing for Aranea, Noct, Nyx, Crowe and even Gladio watching with grins as they had exchanged their vows.
He chuckled as he remembered Aranea telling Ravus it was the one time he’d ever see her in a dress so he had better enjoy it while he could, and the look on his face when he saw her in her finery for the first time had been priceless. His jaw had dropped, soon replaced by a slightly goofy and thoroughly uncharacteristic grin.

Holding out the ring for Ravus to take and place on his wife’s finger and seeing the held back tears in his mismatched eyes, Ignis had given him a beaming smile and Ravus grinned back at him.

It had been infinitely pleasing to Ignis to see them both so happy.

When he and Noct moved to congratulate them, Ravus had pulled him into a hug, his weaker arm slung over Ignis’ shoulder as he leaned down and whispered “I hope we will be as happy as you and Noctis.”

“I think you will be, my friend,” he replied before he planted a kiss to Aranea’s cheek. “You have a good man in Ravus, Aranea,” he’d told her as she flushed under all the attention.

“I intend to remind him of that whenever I can, Iggy and that I am awesome,” she smirked and Ignis could only laugh at that.

He was feeling a touch fuzzy around the edges by the time Ravus and Aranea were ready to depart, several glasses of champagne coursing through him and bringing a slight heat to his face and he glanced at Noct by his side, smiling broadly when he saw a similar flush to his husband’s cheeks.

He reached for a glass of water, he had plans for Noct once they reached the privacy of their bedroom and he didn’t wish to delay them because he was too drunk to follow through. When he handed Noct water as well, he received a slightly incredulous look, but Ignis only smiled enigmatically and urged it into his hands. Noct shrugged and downed the glass of water and waved it at Ignis, who smirked back at him, green eyes pinning Noct to the spot and his husband swallowed thickly, flushing brighter under his gaze.

“Dance with me, my King,” Ignis drawled, holding out his hand and pulling Noct to his feet once the two lovebirds had made a hasty exit, leaving the rest to drink or dance the night away. Once they were in the centre of the little space that had been cleared for dancing, Ignis tugged Noct close and placed his hands on his hips, drawing him in against him. Noct tilted his face up and met his eyes, half smile plastered on his face and slipped his arms around Ignis’ neck. They swayed together and Ignis slid his hands down to palm Noct’s ass lightly, the King flashing him a shy little glance as he bit his lip.

“What are you planning, I can tell you have something in mind, Gorgeous,” Noct said as he watched Ignis trace his features hungrily.

“Perhaps, you will have to wait and see, my love,” he answered, giving Noct a quirk of his lips and Noct’s breath hitched. He ignored the catcalls that came from the sidelines as he claimed Noct’s mouth rather viciously, delving his tongue in and smirked when Noct groaned, his hips stuttering up to grind against Ignis’. His hands on Noct’s ass gripped tighter and held him tightly in place, the sway of the dance creating a delicious friction that made his head spin a little.

Years they had been together, years that had never dampened the rising lust he could feel every time they touched, or a heated glance was exchanged.

He moved his lips to Noct’s neck and his tongue flicked out to taste the lovely taut skin of the King’s throat, removing one hand from its claim on Noct’s ass and he extended a long middle finger in the direction of a call of “seriously, you guys are already married, aren’t you sick of that yet?”
crowe threw her head back and laughed, swatting the shield on the ass and pointing to a chair, gladio ducking his head and shuffling over to where she had pointed and sat, primly on its edge. it made ignis chuckle darkly watching the obvious display of dominance that the mage had over the big man and how quickly he’d obeyed her. submissive indeed. ignis saw the little smile that played on gladio’s lips as he watched his wife and ignis could see that the shield did things like that deliberately, just to get crowe to react the way she had.

“Insatiable,” noct murmured when ignis’ hand returned to his ass, cupping and squeezing. ignis grinned, ever since his midnight confession, it seemed he’d been unable to hold back anything and though it resulted in a great deal of exhaustion each morning, there was nothing he would trade for it.

“Oh, yes, very much so,” ignis agreed and sought noct’s mouth again. the little whine that crawled out of his husband’s mouth and into his own made him deepen the kiss further. “Did you wish me to stop, my love?” he said quietly when he pulled back, eyeing the slightly flustered face of his lover.

“Don’t you dare, ignis,” noct groaned, eyes glittering dangerously and ignis threw back his head and laughed.

he swatted noct’s ass with one hand, his other still squeezing, “just so you know, i have no intention of stopping…ever.” noct gulped audibly and ignis watched the adam’s apple in his throat bob with the movement.

“Bed?”

“Hmmm, yes, i think we have provided enough of a floor show, my little raven.”

“Good,” noct answered and grabbed ignis’ hand, pulling him to the door sharply, “i’m about to explode.”

ignis tugged on noct’s hand once they reached the empty hallway and shoved him against the wall, pinning him with his own body, hands extending noct’s above his head, he dipped his head down and ravished his husband’s mouth roughly.

“Mine,” he growled when he pulled his mouth away, noting the spit slicked, reddened lips of his lover.

“Oh, fuck, yes,” noct could only agree with that statement, catching on to what game ignis was playing.

“Come…” he commanded and without checking to see if he’d been obeyed, he turned on his heel and stalked to the elevators. when he stepped inside and spun, noct was right there, and then slipped to stand behind him. ignis allowed himself a little grin. outside the elevator and under the watchful gaze of the guard, they resumed their customary positions, side by side, hands clasped and strolled to their doors without a seeming care. the guards nodded and moved to the other end of the hall and left them alone as ignis pushed the door to their suite open. once inside, things changed again, noct falling to his knees, head bent as he waited for what ignis would request of him.

“Go shower, my little pet, then wait for me on the bed, you know how i want you, yes?”
“Yes, sir,” Noct said with a swift glance up when Ignis’ finger found his chin and lifted it. Oh, it was soooo very wrong for Noct to address him like that, but here, now, it was just right and Ignis revelled in it.

Ignis busied himself in the bedroom, listening to the water run in the bathroom, he retrieved the spreader bar and extra cuffs for Noct’s wrists, laid them out on the foot of the bed and then grasped their favourite whip, running the keeper over his palm, he brought it down sharply and grimaced at the sting. Yes, definitely the whip. He turned to the cabinet where they kept their ‘toys’ once more and eyed the sounding rod, hmmm, perhaps…no, not tonight, the restraints and whip would be sufficient he thought. Reaching in he pulled out what he would be wearing with a little smirk. He knew this particular outfit drove Noct nuts, all straps and silver rings, at the last second, he paused and his fingers ghosted over the black kohl eyeliner that had been left over from their ‘escape’ from the Citadel in disguise. Snatching it up, he placed it with his costume for this evening’s entertainment and waited for Noct to turn the water off.

Once Noct was out he watched as he slipped past, head bowed and smiled softly when his husband laid himself out on the bed, knowing he’d seen the items he’d left there, knowing the anticipation of what was to come would be coursing through his veins, keeping him on the edge of arousal while he waited for Ignis to return.

Ignis showered quickly, his own desire to begin forcing him to hasten, towelling dry he then reached for his costume and began to fasten the straps of soft leather about his torso, the criss-cross they created over his skin left his nipples exposed, outlined his abdominals nicely, and then he slipped on the soft fabric of the pouch, snug against his cock and balls but little else. He adjusted the strap to sit lower on his hips and reached for the eyeliner, ringing his eyes with it carefully, then smudged it a little for a slightly smoky, sultry effect. He hummed to himself in satisfaction and swiped up his glasses. Instead of settling them on his nose he merely held them as he padded barefoot back into the bedroom, placed them on the bedside table and ran a cool finger over Noct’s muscled thigh, tantalisingly close to where he knew the King wanted him to touch.

He crooked a finger at Noct, knowing his eyes were waiting for any indication of what Ignis wanted and Noct sprung up onto his knees before him.

“Face the mirror, hands and knees,” Ignis commanded softly, knowing Noct would have to strain to hear his words.

Noct spun to do as he was asked, hands planted firmly on the bed in front of him, knees spread, ass presented shamelessly, and he twisted his head to see if he’d done it correctly, eyes dark and wanton, lips parted just a fraction as he waited for either praise or discipline.

He got both, praise in the form of a searing kiss for assuming his position so well, discipline for the look in the form of a sharp swish of the whip applied to his ass. Noct tried to stop himself from rocking forward onto his elbows and dipped his head, biting his bottom lip and averting his gaze.

Ignis licked over the quickly rising welt to the pale skin and he heard a tiny sigh escape Noct.

Laying the whip down where he could reach it easily, Ignis clambered onto the bed behind his husband and grabbed the spreader bar. He nudged Noct’s thighs further apart and swiftly snapped the cuffs around his ankles, the bar forcing him to keep his legs spread. Ignis knew from experience that the position was slightly uncomfortable, but not painfully so.

He moved around so that he was standing in front of the King, his crotch at Noct’s eye level, his eyes fixed directly on it and Ignis smirked. One track mind.
Waving the remaining cuffs in Noct’s line of sight he was gratified by the little whimper that his husband gave and smiled when Noct presented his wrists. The cuffs were, again, soft leather, held close by a small chain that allowed a little movement, but not much and Noct watched them as they snapped around his wrists. Ignis slid a finger under the leather, reassuring himself that they weren’t too tight. Light ligature marks could be covered, but harsh welts on the King’s wrists might raise some eyebrows should they inadvertently be seen. No-one would be seeing his ass however, so Ignis could do to that as he pleased.

The thought made his own cock twitch and Noct licked his lips, not daring to look up, not yet. Not until Ignis told him he could.

“You like being like this, don’t you? All spread open for me? You’re not wearing your gag, you may speak, but…” he paused and stroked Noct’s cheek, almost tenderly. “Only when I say you can.”

“Yes…s…sir,” Noct stuttered, tongue caressing his bottom lip.

“Have you been naughty, Pet?” he asked, tone deceptively soft. Noct shook his head, eyes fixed on Ignis’ as he mouthed ‘no’.

“Oh, but I am sure you have, you can’t help yourself, Pet, can you?”

Noct whined, a small sound in the back of his throat and Ignis frowned.

“No, sir,” Noct rasped out, trying to correct the mistake.

Too slow for Ignis’ liking, however and he reached for the whip, trailing the keeper over Noct’s plump lips, “kiss it.”

Noct pursed his lips and kissed the worn leather, eyes locked on Ignis’ as he flicked out his pink tongue to taste it.

If Ignis had been looking in a mirror he would have seen his own eyes dilate at the hint of pink tongue, but he definitely felt his cock jump and strain in the pouch. Stalking around the bed he clambered up behind his husband and their eyes met in the mirror.

“How many, Pet?” he asked, his own voice thick and hoarse.

“Ten,” Noct said hopefully, his ass wriggling just a little.

“Hmmm,” Ignis pretended to give some consideration to Noct’s suggestion. “That’s what you want, Pet, but how many do you need?” Noct’s head bows, his raven hair falling about his face, the sound of Ignis’ ire making him flush a very pleasant pink to the Duke’s eager eyes. “Answer me,” he demanded when Noct remained silent.

“Tw…twenty, sir,” he eventually answered, his voice not quite petulant, closer to contrite.

“Precisely,” Ignis nods in affirmation. “Count,” he says as he pulls his arm back and readies to strike the first blow. Noct tenses, yet he nods his head to let Ignis know that he understands, then raises his head to watch in the mirror.

The first blow is vicious, calculated to make Noct cry out, but he bites it back, just like he should and Ignis hums his praise, raining the successive four blows quickly, precisely, raising little welts over Noct’s backside.
“Five…sir,” Noct gasps.

Ignis licks his lips and watches Noctis in the mirror. Trust is what he sees in those deep dark pools of blue. Noct knows he will never truly hurt him, just like Noct would never hurt Ignis in the same position. He rewards it with five lighter strikes to the backs of his thighs, the King counting each blow with a little gasp.

“T…ten, sir,” he moans. Writhing when Ignis reaches out his other hand to stroke over the welts rising on porcelain skin. He can see Noct struggling against the cuffs of the spreader, desperate to close his legs, aching to do so, yet need and desire hold him, the cuffs at this point only a reminder that he can’t. He drops the whip for a moment and grasps Noct’s ass cheeks pulling them apart roughly, diving in with his tongue and Noct cries out, louder than he has prior, despite the blows applied to his pale skin. Ignis dips his tongue into the tight ring and flicks, Noct keening.

The King drops to his elbows, his ass up in the air, begging Ignis for more and Ignis feels inclined to give it to him before he finishes with the whip. Noct’s cock is a drooling, twitching mess when Ignis pulls back and retrieves the whip. He strokes it lovingly and returns his attention to Noct’s reddened ass and thighs.

Blows eleven and twelve are applied to Noct’s balls, light little flicks to the tender skin that makes Noct squeal and writhe, groaning their numbers hoarsely.

Three more to the backs of his thighs and Noct is panting, mouth hanging open, his eyes begging Ignis for more, harder.

“Fifteen, sir,” he rasps.

The ‘thwack’ of leather on skin rings out, Noct swearing harshly.

“Sixteen…fuck…sir…”

Another loud ‘thwack’ and Noct’s eyes start to water.

“Seventeen, sir…harder, please…” he begs.

He’s crying openly when the eighteenth blow lands and Ignis has to strain his ears to hear the whispered count. He rains the last two down hard, in quick succession, tossing the whip aside, he unclasps the cuffs around Noct’s ankles and the King flops onto the bed.

“Twenty…sir,” he pants, his ass cherry red, stinging, tears rolling down his face, but his expression is blissful.

Ignis coos his praise in Noct’s ear, fingers carding through sweaty raven locks, “beautifully done, my love, so very good for me.”

Noct turns his head and his smile is euphoric. Ignis undoes the cuffs at his wrists and kisses over the faint red marks, bestowing love and praise with every feather light touch of his lips.

He pulls away and rises from the bed, Noct keening quietly in question.

“Shh, my love, I’m not going far,” he purrs and Noct settles at the calm words, still watching Ignis in the mirror. He withdraws a potion from the bedside drawer, and then tosses their favourite lube onto the bed by Noct’s knee.

“I don’t need that,” Noct whispers hoarsely as Ignis brings the potion closer.
“Perhaps not, but I want to take care of you,” Ignis said as he pours the viscous fluid of the potion into his palm. He settles beside Noct and carefully soothes it over the welts he’s left on Noct’s rear and thighs, the marks fading a little and Noct hisses as he goes over the worst of them.

Ignis knows that once the endorphins and adrenaline have left his system, Noct would be hurting and he can’t abide that, no matter what the King says about it, no matter that they’ve been doing this for years and know each other’s limits inside out and backwards, no matter how many times Noct will tell him it’s fine, that he likes the sting, Ignis won’t let it stay for too long. Even if it’s Noct’s palm that’s red from smacking Ignis’ ass, he’ll still reach for a potion to take the worst of it away. Not all of it, or what would be the point, but just the pain, leaving a dull ache as a reminder.

Once he’s applied it, Ignis settles on the bed beside his lover, and Noct immediately starts running his fingers over the leather straps the criss-cross his skin, pressing kisses to the bare parts, tongue flicking over his nipples. He grasps at the leather and pulls Ignis closer for a deep searing kiss that leaves them both panting.

“I want you…” Noct whispers into his mouth and Ignis kisses him again, rolling him onto his back and pressing him into the mattress.

“I always want you,” he murmurs as he kisses his way down Noct’s chest.

“C’mere, I want to take that off you,” Noct says pulling on the leather straps again and Ignis chuckles. He knows Noct loves to unwind the leather bindings, unwrap him like a present so he pulls on Noct’s hands and tumbles them back so Ignis is on his back with Noct above him.

He folds his hands behind his head and watches Noct pull the leather off his skin, his mouth kissing over the parts he exposes, arching his back off the bed when Noct needs him to.

“Don’t you dare, you little shit,” he warns when Noct dances his fingers lightly up Ignis’ sides and Noct pouts, but stops the feathery touches and instead scrapes his blunt nails over the skin and Ignis arches up off the bed into it, hissing between gritted teeth. “Oh fuck,” he groans when Noct’s hand cups him through the pouch.

“I like you in this, it’s fuckin’ hot,” Noct murmurs against his mouth, “and so is this,” he says running his other hand under Ignis’ eyes, “you look…dangerous…really sexy, what made you think to put it on?”

Ignis shrugs, “just thought it might be…different.”

“Mmmm, well, I like it.” Noct reached for the lube with one hand and shoved the last bit of fabric covering Ignis down and out of the way, Ignis lifting his hips to assist. Then a hand curls around his length and coats him with lubricant, Noct’s other hand out of view, and Ignis tilts his head to see into the mirror, breath becoming ragged as he watches Noct’s slick fingers circle his rim. He eyes it greedily and frowns when Noct repositions above him without a finger entering to prepare.

“Noct,” he growls as the King settles just above the head of his cock, it’s all he has time to say before his lover starts to lower, the head of his cock forced through the ring of muscle and he groans at how tight it is around him. “Shit, love, you didn’t…fuck,” he bites off the rest of the sentence when Noct shoves himself down roughly and hisses in pain. Ignis’ hands grip Noct’s hips to hold him still and he looks up at him in wonderment and salacious need. “You’re like a…fucking vice, my love,” he growls.

“Yeah? I want to feel it Ignis, feel that burn…shit…you took away the…fuck…sting of the…whip, so I wanna feel thisssss,” He groans back at Ignis as he rocks on the full cock inside him.
Ignis threw his head back and moaned, Noct’s ass so tight around him he could hardly move. Noct grips hold of Ignis’ shoulders and rolls them so Ignis is above him, leaving the leather bindings behind on the bed. Ignis shoved the pouch down his legs and kicked it away so he can move his legs more, needing more purchase and freedom with how tight he’s encased inside Noct.

“Gods,” he whispered through his gritted teeth and Noct whimpered, nodding his agreement.

“Fuck me…into the mattress, hard…”

Ignis shoved in as hard as he could, considering the restriction he felt and Noct groaned below him, writhing on the bed, sending little jolts of pleasure up Ignis’ spine. He sinuously rolled his hips before he starts the punishing pace that Noct wants, listening to the grunts and pants that tumble from his lover’s lips. Every thrust had Noct crying out, urging him on and Ignis bites his lip to hold on as best he can. He knew he was hitting the sensitive bundle of nerves with every rough stroke and Noct wouldn’t last long like this, neither would he, it was just so deliciously tight even if Noct was relaxing around him a little.

“Your…ass…is perfect…so fucking tight,” his voice coming like a rumble of thunder from his throat, Noct’s feet on his back pushing him harder and harder. His hair starts to flop in his eyes, sweat plastering strands of it to his brow, his face hot and he can feel the drops of sweat that bead then roll down his back, all the while he has his eyes locked with Noct’s, watching how debauched his husband is.

“I…I’m gonna…” Noct moans. “SIR…please…”

“No, Pet…not yet…not ‘til I say…” Ignis ground out, thrusting harder and faster and Noct curls his hand around the base of his own cock, holding off his orgasm until he’s allowed to come, clenching around Ignis even harder. His hips shove forward roughly, each groan coming from Noct making the coil in his own gut tighter as he reaches the edge. Noct keens desperately and Ignis gives it everything he has, growling above his husband harshly, “now, Pet, come…fuck…Now!” Ignis shouts as he feels himself tumbling over the edge. Noct releases his hand and Ignis feels the hot, sticky fluid hit his chest and stomach as his own spills and spurts inside Noct’s ass. He flops down over Noctis, holding himself up a little on his elbows so he doesn’t crush his lover and pants raggedly, his chest heaving in time with Noct’s, his hips still rolling forward as he rides out his orgasm.

Noct hisses a little as Ignis withdraws his softening length and he rolled over to starfish beside his husband, shooting him an owlish look. The King curled into his side, ignoring the sticky sweatiness of their bodies, seeking out Ignis and Ignis twists so that they are facing each other. He reached up and runs his fingers through the damp locks of hair, Noctis humming contentedly.

The kiss that follows is sweet and almost chaste, their mouths flush.

Noct stares up at Ignis, “that was amazing,” he mumbles and Ignis can only nod his agreement, lost completely in Noct’s eyes.

“It always is, my King,” he murmurs eventually, his eyes slipping closed as he tugs Noct closer.
Noct paused in the doorway and drank in the glorious sight of his husband.  

The warm night was a boon to Noct, if it meant coming in to a sight like the one that presented itself to him now. Ignis lounged back on the couch, propped on one arm, glass of wine held in his hand as he toyed with the rim, long finger circling and Noct could hear the faint whine of the crystal ringing out. Ignis’ torso was bare, slightly glistening in the heat, bared feet to match, his black dress pants perfectly pressed as always hugging his legs. The humidity had undone the styling his lover preferred, several locks escaping the pompadour to caress his forehead and rest above his glasses.  

Ignis was almost forty now, but like any fine wine, he got better with age. Slight little lines around his eyes that deepened when he smiled, hints of silver threading through his hair, the still toned body and smooth smile that often sent Noct reeling.  

Noct himself was thirty-eight and he didn’t feel he was faring as well as Ignis, his hair had far more silver in it, though Ignis said it was distinguished. He was darker around the eyes now, a few lines on his brow and face. He was really looking like his father now, but Ignis didn’t seem to mind at all. He said it lent him gravitas that suited a King.  

Noct would counter that Ignis was becoming a sexy silver fox.  

Despite changes to their appearance, little hints that they were getting older, but then almost six-year old twins seemed to have that effect. Kai and Phae didn’t allow them time to slow down. It amused both their parents how much of a blend the two children were. Kai with his blue eyes like Noct and hair the same shade as Ignis’ had been when he was a child, Phae with her bright green eyes like Ignis and Noct’s black hair, their personalities taking as much from both parents as they did their looks. Ignis had been right about Phae resembling her grandmother, apart from the colour of her eyes, she looked just like Aulea.  

Life was good, better than good, Noct thought as he ogled Ignis from the doorway, unnoticed as yet. Lucis had flourished, probably Ignis’ influence more than his own, and expanded to include the Tenebraen territories eventually, Ravus helping the transition with no small amount of pride that he could see it. Prompto and Nyx were still as playful and ridiculous as ever, not married, but then they didn’t seem to need any validation that way. They just were. And there were still plenty of nights that all four men spent together, a secret they had managed to keep relatively quiet. Those in the know could be trusted and it was a small circle. Crowe knew and had known for some time apparently, but she wouldn’t disclose how. Gladio stumbling onto the secret quite accidentally, and had back pedalled out of the room faster than anyone had ever seen him move. Noct had sat him down later and tried to explain, but the Shield had waved it off, he didn’t need to know, as long as everyone involved was on board and happy, he had nothing to say about it. Ravus had spoken to Ignis one evening and asked if there was any need for him to protect four men instead of two. When Ignis quietly enquired how he knew, Ravus gave him a small smile and told him that there was a certain look he got when he was around Prom and Nyx that he’d seen when he looked at Noct, not quite the same, but it was there, and he’d seen the look returned. The white-haired former Prince shrugged when Ignis asked if he was ok with it. Aranea had opened his eyes to a whole range of possibilities and as long as his friend and King were happy, he didn’t care what they did in privacy.  

“Someone once told me that one shouldn’t let duty get in the way of love, because love is what is important, I am glad to see you are still abiding by that principle,” Ravus had said and walked away leaving a rather speechless Ignis to be rescued by Noct. The King had appreciated Ravus all the more after Ignis told him what he’d said.  

“Are you going to stand there all night, my love, or are you going to join me?” Ignis’ accent drifted over and pulled him from his thoughts.
“Just appreciating the sexiness that is my husband,” Noct retorted as he made his way over, dropping to his knees and settling so he could rest his head in Ignis’ lap.

“If you are referring to that Gods-awful magazine poll, I will tell the kitchens to only feed you carrots for a week,” Ignis threatened in a tone that brooked no insolence.

Ignis Scientia Lucis Caelum, had been voted sexiest man in Eos for the third year running, much to his chagrin and mortification. Noct found it perfectly apt and hilarious how much Ignis hated it. Vyv was persona non-grata as far as Ignis was concerned and if he so much as spied a copy of Meteor he was likely to pitch a fit, or as much of one as Ignis was capable of. It usually involved a lot of pouting, frowning and swearing. Staff often spun on their heels when they heard that dulcet tone raised in ire and spewing forth about that ‘bloody Vyv and his blasted magazine.’

“Wouldn’t dream of it, Babe,” he tried to sound placating, but it came off rather more like amusement and he found a glare levelled at him. “Hey, I had nothing to do with it, don’t glower at me.” Noct trailed a finger over Ignis’ bare chest, “but with you like this, it’s not hard to see why.”

Ignis huffed, not entirely in annoyance now. He did enjoy the fact that Noctis still found him attractive. Noct hummed happily when Ignis started running his hands through his hair, massaging his scalp.

“You are far from chopped Garula liver, my love, I don’t see why they fixate on me,” Ignis sighed.

“You are gorgeous, that’s why, Ignis,” the King mumbled as he felt himself sinking under Ignis’ talented fingers. Ignis set aside his wine and started using both hands to run through the black and silver locks of his husband’s hair earning him a deep groan of contentment.

“And you are still the most beautiful creature I have ever laid eyes on,” Ignis whispered into Noct’s ear and he shivered as warm breath tickled his neck. “I have a mind to enquire as to why you didn’t make the list.”

Noct tried not to stiffen, but Ignis, observant bastard that he was, felt it immediately.

“Ahh…” Noct began, trying to think what to say.

“I knew it, how did you get to Vyv? What did you threaten him with?”

“Taxes,” Noct mumbled under his breath.

“Noctis Lucis Caelum, of all the underhanded…you do realise I will speak to Vyv and inform him that no such thing will occur and from henceforth our esteemed King is most certainly fine to be nominated. If I must suffer the ignominy of being in that bloody magazine then so can you, my darling husband.”

“Fuck.”

“Later,” Ignis promised in a dark tone that sent shivers down Noct’s spine, “now, you will explain to me why?”

“I hate my photo being taken, I mean I don’t mind Prom doing it, but…” he trailed off as Ignis gripped his hair and tilted his head back.

“You are a terrible liar, my love.”

“Ugh, fine…I didn’t want to be compared to you and I wanted you to win,” he confessed.
“Compared…oh, darling,” Ignis said hoarsely, all annoyance gone from his tone. “How often do I need to tell you how adorable and lovely you are?”

“Yeah, but, that thing online, I read the comments, Ignis and you’re just so…Ignisy. Smart and sexy and so much better at stuff than me…”

“Stop it, come here,” Ignis demanded and pulled Noct into his lap, “you…Noct, you are amazing, those people commenting on that horrendous thing don’t know you, you are glorious and kind and compassionate and, yes, smart and sexy in a way that drives me to distraction. And, darling, most of all, you are a wonderful father to our children, we adore you. We love you, Prom and Nyx love you and I…I love you so much it’s impossible to describe. You are my other half, I’m whole with you, my little Raven.”

Noct felt tears forming in his eyes and Ignis took hold of his face and pressed a soft kiss to his lips, nibbling lightly in a way Noct loved and melted into.

“I’m sorry, Specs,” Noct whispered.

“Hush, let me kiss you, you foolish man.” Ignis’ tongue snaked its way into Noct’s mouth silencing them both. Ignis’ pleased growl vibrated through Noct and he moaned in response, their tongues dancing together as hands held heads in place. When Ignis pulled back and fixed his bright green gaze on Noct, he gasped at the fierceness in his eyes. “You…are…wonderful…glorious…beautiful,” Ignis murmured between kisses pressed to his jaw and cheeks, “you…are…mine…and I, Noct…I…am…yours,” he continued as he made his way down Noct’s throat, to the little dip at the base. He pulled back again and met Noct’s stormy blue eyes, “do you know why they bother to comment the way they do?”

Noct shook his head.

“Because they are bored, we are at peace, a peace you provided for them, they need to occupy their boring lives with something. You are our most successful King, Noctis, they can’t disparage your reign, so they try to find ways to make you less than you are. And they are wrong. You are the King that brought the Dawn, a new age, you restored Lucis, my love.”

“Ignis…” Noct moaned, embarrassed.

“You did,” Ignis stated emphatically. “Now, come here and kiss me again.”

“Mmm, I can do that,” Noct said quietly, leaning into Ignis, moving their mouths together. It reminded him of something. “Do you remember when we first got together, and we’d spend hours just kissing, me in your lap like this?”

“I most certainly do, my love,” the Duke said thickly, “I particularly remember how sore my lips would be after and how bloody hard it was not grabbing you and dragging you to the bedroom.”

Noct chuckled, “yeah and I remember how hard you got, digging into my thigh.”

“Cheeky little shit,” Ignis growled fondly, “I don’t think I have ever masturbated that much in my life as I did in those six months before we…consummated our relationship.”

“Hey, that was your idea to wait that long, I’d have taken you to bed that first night,” Noct laughed, “but I am glad we waited, those nights just kissing were…awesome.”

Ignis stroked Noct’s cheek, fingers soft against his skin, “yes, they were,” he agreed.
“Can we do that now, just kiss for a while?”

“Mmm, of course, although I do not know how long it will last before one of us gives in.” Ignis murmured nuzzling Noct’s neck.

Noct laughed darkly, “is that a challenge?”

“Perhaps…” Ignis replied and then captured Noct’s lips with his own.

Noct knew he would most likely lose this challenge, his husband was the most controlled of men, but he still pulled out every little trick he knew to wear down his composure, curling his hands into Ignis’ hair and pulling him closer, their mouths fusing together, his tongue seeking Ignis’ as he squirmed in his lap, smiling to himself as he felt the Duke respond, his hardening length pushing into his thigh insistently. Ignis moaned deep in his throat as Noct nibbled his top then bottom lip, tugging his hair gently. Ignis retaliated by driving his tongue in deeper, devouring Noct and he couldn’t help but writhe a little, the Duke running his hands up Noct’s side, dragging his blunt nails up Noct’s back, both their breaths coming harder and faster. Noct could feel his own arousal pushing against his pants and he forced himself to keep his hands in Ignis’ hair, pulling on the soft strands harder to tilt his head back. Noct broke the kiss for a moment, taking a deep breath raggedly, staring into Ignis’ darkened green eyes. They were both panting harshly and Noct dove back in, moving his hands to Ignis’ bared chest, running his hands over peaked nipples, smirking a little at the broken groan that wormed its way into his mouth from his husband. He shifted so that he could straddle Ignis’ thighs and rolled his hips down.

Ignis’ hands moved up to pull him back and hissed, “that’s cheating, my love,” his voice rough.

“Is it?” And rolled his hips again. Ignis threw back his head, exposing his taut throat, Noct taking the opportunity to press light teasing kisses to the skin, dragging his tongue up to the sharp line of his jaw. The shudder from Ignis thrilled Noct, he knew the Duke was fast losing his perfect composure, but then, so was he. Knowing what was to come, what they could do to each other, made it all the more difficult to stay on the couch and not drag his husband to the bedroom, or even forgo that and strip his clothing and ride him into the cushions.

Ignis gripped his hips and thrust up into Noct and they both broke apart and groaned.

They stared into each other’s eyes for a long moment and reached silent agreement, Ignis rising from the couch, Noct clinging to him as his husband carried him to their bed.

It didn’t take long for cries of pleasure to fill their chambers.

In the end, they both considered it a win.

CROWE

Funerals sucked.

Crowe stood beside her husband, Noctis, Ignis, Prompto, Nyx, Ravus and Aranea standing as honour guard, the highest accolade they could give to a man who had seen the rule of three Kings, had seen three Kings die and one return.
In the end Cor the Immortal wasn’t as infallible to death as everyone claimed. No-one was entirely sure how old he had been, sixties or perhaps even seventies, his official Crownsguard paperwork was missing. Or stolen. But everyone knew of his exploits.

He was the man who had faced Gilgamesh at the Tempering Grounds and walked away with his life, earning him his title of Immortal. He was the man who had accompanied Regis and walked away from more battles than anyone else. He’d helped train Gladiolus, Ignis, Prompto and King Noctis himself. During the Darkness he’d become unofficial leader of the hunters and remaining Crownsguard and Kingsglaive. He was the one who had helped Ignis regain his skills in his blindness.

Monica was standing at the head of the coffin, trying to appear stoic, but tears were rolling down her cheeks. She’d known Cor the longest, serving with him in the Crownsguard and it had been Monica that found him in his room. She had been the one to find the note he’d written stating his wishes, the one to organise the funeral and the one to deliver the eulogy.

After all those battles, it had been a heart attack that had taken him.

But, from what Monica was saying about her friend, he’d had a very fulfilling life and had never regretted much. He’d done what he could to ensure the safety of his Kings, enjoyed training his recruits and in his later years had simply loved the fact he could watch Noctis rule with Ignis by his side, Gladio as his Shield and Prompto, the man he considered a son, taking over as primary trainer.

Crowe smiled as the men mentioned all stood remembering. She tightened her hand in Gladio’s, giving him a consoling squeeze. She felt him squeeze back in acknowledgement of her support.

She noted her son, Jac, standing off to the side, attempting to mirror his father’s poise. He was training to become Shield to Kai, but it was Phae that he was close to. As evidenced by the fact that he had her fingers entwined with his, eyes continually seeking hers. Jac and Kai were close enough, having a similar relationship to their own father’s, friends, but still that hint of distance, which was something that had never really changed, though Gladio was more relaxed these days without much of a threat to guard Noct against.

And Ravus had taken up a similar role for Ignis, though they were much closer and friendlier than Noct and Gladio. Whenever Ignis had to venture forth without Noctis, Crowe would spot Ravus by his side, subtly searching for danger. She could see Ignis’ amused eye roll every time. He indulged Ravus, however. Even if Ignis was still very much capable of looking after himself if need be.

It felt like the end of an era, with the death of Cor, the last of Regis’ personal guard and close friend.

It was inevitable, she knew that. As one who had been given a second chance, she understood better than most. Glancing at Nyx, she could see how he was clinging to Prompto, knowing he was probably thinking the same thing.

**PHAEдра**

Every time she looked down, Phae’s breath caught in her throat. She glanced at her brother Kai, pleading, mouth forming the words ‘I can’t do this.’
Kai reached up and tangled their fingers together, reassuring his twin, “yes, you can,” he whispered.

She hung on to Kaius, scared to let go, scared she’d lose every last scrap of the composure she’d been clinging to for the last few days.

Later, once all the guests had gone, once she was alone with her husband and brother and his wife, then, and only then, would she let everything she’d been bottling up escape.

Papa had taught her that.

Daddy had been more inclined to hide how he felt at all times, but Papa, Papa had been a different story. No matter what everyone else thought of Ignis, that he was always composed, calm, cool, Phae and the rest of the their family knew a very different man.

A man of easy smiles, sudden laughter, unashamed tears…and anger. Phae had seen very little of Ignis’ anger, but her Dad, Noctis, had told her of it.

Of course, Phae and Kai had grown up with the stories and knew that their fathers were both dangerous men in their own right. But together, together they had been a force of nature.

And now…

Phae held back the tears that threatened.

“Daddy,” she whispered.

Kai squeezed her hand.

Phaedra looked up, glancing at the filled aisles, all faces turned towards her and she began to speak.

A eulogy.

A public goodbye to the man who had saved Eos.

As she spoke she remembered how she had woken before the dawn several days before, unsure as to what had woken her. Jac was still slumbering quietly beside her, so that wasn’t it.

There had been no scream of anguish like two years before that had compelled her to run headlong to the suite her fathers lived in.

She had risen, exiting her own suite to find Kai standing outside his own door, worry painting his features as they both looked towards the double doors at the end of the long hall. Without a word they both had grasped hands and walked together. Kai had pushed the doors open to silence.

Somehow, they both knew what they would find.

As they entered the bedroom, they found Noct in the dim light, curled up on the side Ignis had favoured, a worn piece of paper tucked in his hand against his chest.

A weak hand beckoned them forward, a gentle smile on a lined worn face.

“Dad,” Kai murmured as he and Phae settled on the bed and both reach out to him.

“Hey kids,” Noct rasped. “Glad you’re here. I wanted to say goodbye.”
“Daddy,” Phae sobbed.

Noct pulled her close, pressing papery lips to her cheek, “c’mon kiddo, it’s ok, my time to go.”

Phae had choked back a laugh at being called kiddo, despite her own advanced age. She and her twin were both well into their sixties with children of their own, grandchildren too, yet her father still acted like they were small children.

“You’ve been a great dad,” Kai murmured, pushing back silvered hair from Noct’s face.

Noct chuckled, “I was the fun parent.”

“Papa was fun too,” Phae snickered.

“Yeah, yeah, he was,” Noct agreed with a soft smile. “I’m going to see him again soon.” He pushed the piece of paper into Phae’s hands, “here, he left this for me…the night he left. I think you two should read it, but bury it with me, please.” He toyed with the small skull around his throat, once Ignis’.

Phae’s hands trembled as she unfolded the paper, Papa’s familiar handwriting leaping from the page. She glanced at her dad, “are you sure you want us to read it?”

Noctis sighed, “yes, and I want you both to know that of everything your father and I did, everything we achieved, it was you two that we felt our most important legacy.” He paused, gathering his breath. “We love you both so much, and we’re so proud of you. Watching you both grow…have children of your own.” He coughed, a wry smile on his face, “not long now.”

Phae let the letter drop to the bedcovers, gathering her father in her arms. Kai settled beside her, arms around them both.

“We love you, Dad, tell Papa we love him too,” Kai whispered to Noct as he breathed his last.

“Goodbye, Daddy,” Phae sobbed.

Noctis Lucis Caelum, King of Lucis, King of the Dawn, died quietly with a smile, his husbands name on his lips.

But Phae never mentioned any of that in her eulogy.

She spoke of what her father achieved, what he felt was important, what he valued. She spoke of what a good father he had been, about the love of her parents.

It was then that her voice broke.

She dipped her head, clutching her speech in her hand, crumpling the paper.

Hours later, tucked securely in her husbands arms, Phae handed the letter from Ignis to Kai.

“You read it to them, I don’t think I can.”

Kai nodded. He understood. They’d sat together after their father had passed, holding on to each other, letting the tears fall when Phae had spotted the discarded letter.

Reading it had been…it had been so many things.

Most of all though, it reminded them both how much love had been between their parents and let
them know that Ignis was waiting for Noct. For a new reunion and one that would last eternity.

Kai cleared his throat, “before…before Papa died, he wrote a letter to Dad, left it to comfort him and then Dad gave it to us to read. It will be put in the…coffin with him, as he wished, but before that happens Phae and I thought we should read it to you all.” He swallowed thickly and cleared his throat again.

“My darling Noctis,

My little Raven, my beautiful love, my sweet husband,

The first thing that I want you to know is that I love you. I have loved you since I knew what it was to love and that loving you has been the single most defining factor in my life. You have been my everything, my love. My always. I loved you as a child, I loved you as a teen, I loved you as an adult and I love you so desperately in my old age that it overshadows all else.

Shiva has given me these few moments to write to you, before I go. I do not wish to leave you, my love, I would never leave you willingly, you know this, however it is my time. She tells me my heart has weakened beyond healing and cannot sustain me any longer. Know that I await you in the beyond, that I will wait for you however long it takes and while I will long for you to join me, I wish for you to live on as long as you can, for you to be with our children and grandchildren. Please, my love, try not to mourn, though I know you will, just as I would have should it have been you to leave me first, just as I did when the dawn came and you were gone. I am thankful that we had the chance to eclipse that pain with the joy we have had in our many years since. I am eternally grateful for that. Every day, Noctis, every single day has been a revelation, waking beside you in the morning, curling beside you each night, being able to touch you, kiss you, hold you close to me has brought me so much happiness, you know this, I know you have felt it.

My life with you has been filled with moments that I will never forget, the moment you told me you loved me, the moment I could let myself believe that my deepest desire could be fulfilled, the moment I could tell you I love you in return. The first time I felt your lips on mine, then our first real kiss, the taste of you, the feel of the first time I held you knowing that I was loved by you. The true ecstasy of making love to you, of you making love to me, being as one with you. It has never faded, my love, never. Each and every single time I got lost in you, lost in your eyes, lost in your touch has been as fresh as the very first time. In the days when we had no place to call our own, you were my home. The moment I knew that you loved me still, despite my blindness, my terror, my insecurity, you kept me alive in those days. The overwhelmingly beautiful sight of you again after so very long, to look into your eyes and see that love reflected, to hear you ask me to always be yours, Noctis, you took my breath away. The immense pride I felt the day you truly became King, watched you take your rightful place and reign with compassion, with intelligence and poise. I told you once you would be glorious and you were, you are. The day you made me yours in front of the populace of Lucis made me whole in a way I had not thought possible. For years I had considered myself bound utterly and irrevocably to you, however that day…how do I even find words, my little Raven? I am not sure that I can encompass that feeling. It was pure bliss, a feeling of completeness, of home. And the day our twins were born and we could hold them in our arms, a dream made flesh. Feeling those little fingers curl around my own, my heart swelled with love. I remember looking to you and seeing the tears in your eyes, that lovely soft smile, I could feel how happy you were that day, I knew how you felt, my darling. I felt the same. Watching them grow into the wonderful adults that they are has been gratifying and I am so very proud of them both. Now we are grandparents, and oh, Noct, it brings me such unending joy to see our own children experience the happiness we have had. For them to be able to find love such as we did, for them to not be restricted as you once might have been, it’s truly your legacy for the royal line. Lucis will never be the same for having you as its King.
We have experienced joys and sorrows, together, facing whatever came our way and with you beside me I have been a much better man than I could have ever been without. When we lost Prom and Nyx so suddenly, so cruelly I thought that our hearts might shatter, yet we were there for each other, just as we always have been, just as it should be. We grieved and then finally we were able to celebrate their lives and what we shared with them. I know that I shall see them both soon, I’ll give them your love and thanks, just as we talked about back then.

You have always seen through to the man I am underneath, directly into my heart, my soul. It has been my privilege and honour to be yours, to fight beside you, to protect and cherish you, to love you and be loved by you. I wanted to excel in all I did to be the best I could be for you, you deserve the best in all things, my love.

There are so many things I want to tell you, yet my time is running out and Shiva is urging me to hurry. I hope that in my eighty-nine years on Eos I have managed to express even just a small amount of what I feel for you, of what you have done for me. I love you Noctis Lucis Caelum.

When you find this letter and read it, press your fingers to your sweet lips and know that I gave you one last kiss before I left you, that I leave thinking my last thoughts of you and that I will be waiting to hold you once more. And while I may not be with you physically, I will be watching over you, the habit of a lifetime could not end simply because I am absent. Tell Kaisus and Phaedra and our grandchildren that I love them, kiss them for me, please. Let them console you, let them be there for you. Show them what it is to walk tall, my darling.

You are my first, my last, my only true love, Noct. You are the fire in my blood, the beat of my heart, the song in my soul.

I love you.

Yours

Always

Ignis”

In the silence after Kai’s voice died away, Phae let her father’s words wash over her, then lifted her face, tears streaming down her face. Jac held her tight, face buried in her shoulder. She patted his hand.

“I’m alright darling, they’re together again now.”

She had no doubt about that at all.

IGNIS

Ignis lifted his head, a soft smile breaking over his face.

Prompto noted the action from his position in Nyx’s lap. Gladio stirred, dislodging Crowe’s head in his lap. Ravus placed his hand on Ignis’ shoulder and pointed.
He followed Ravus’ hand and smiled wider as he saw Regis strolling towards the little party.

Since being here in the Astral plane, Regis’ visits had been rare. He most often came with Clarus and Cor, and Ignis smirked as he spotted the two men wandering along behind the old King.

“Your Majesty,” Ignis said quietly. “It’s time.”

“Yes, Ignis, it is.” Regis settled on the grass beside Ignis, “will you go guide him?”

Ignis ducked his head, smile still on his face, “if you don’t mind.”

Regis laughed, “of course not, I know you miss him.”

Oh, yes, how Ignis missed him. He glanced at Prompto and Nyx, seeing them grinning at him. They’d been the ones to come find Ignis when it had been his time, the ones to hold him and tell him he’d be alright, that he just needed to wait a little before they’d all be together.

He’d fallen into their embrace with gratitude.

It had hurt so badly, losing them both, so young still, so suddenly.

Prompto had shaken his head, “it was my fault, Igs. And we were together right at the end, it’s ok.”

Nyx had kissed Prom’s cheek, “you don’t know how many arguments we’ve had about that. I distracted him, but it happened so quick, there was no recovering from it. And there was no pain, not really, we could see it was going to be bad, so we held onto each other.”

Ignis remembered how their bodies had been found, arms around each other. That was how they had been pulled from the wreckage of their truck, and that was how they had been buried.

Sixty years old was too young to die.

Ignis sighed, lifting up from the ground, “he’s almost ready.”

“Go get him, Iggy, we can all wait to see him, not like we’re goin’ anywhere,” Gladio called out. Crowe shook her head and nudged him in the stomach.

Ignis rolled his eyes, but everyone was gesturing for him to go, so turning on his heel, Ignis stepped through the threshold.

When he arrived, he was in their bedroom, Kai and Phae at their father’s bedside, holding each other and Noct.

“Noct,” Ignis whispered.

Noct’s eyes found his, “Ignis,” he whispered with his last breath.

Then the King was standing beside him, looking down at his old form on the bed. Phae and Kai sobbed quietly in each other’s arms.

“They came to say goodbye, I gave them your letter to read, then they’ll put it with me later,” Noct told him.

“They will be alright, my love, we raised strong children,” Ignis murmured, pulling him close and placing a kiss to hair black as jet again. “I’ve come to help you cross.”
“I knew it would be you,” Noct whispered into his neck. “I missed you every day, but I tried to do as you asked.”

“I know you did, Noct, I was there, watching.”

“I felt you.”

“And now, we never need be parted again, and there are so many people waiting for you, to say hello,” Ignis said softly, still cradling Noct in his arms.

Noct hummed against his neck, lips pursing in a kiss, “do we have to see them right away, I kinda want to just be with you for a bit, especially with you looking so hot like this.”

Ignis laughed, “yes, well, you look rather like you did when you came back to me. So regal and beautiful you took my breath away.” He tipped Noct’s face up to look at him properly, “and I am sure everyone is expecting us to take a little time to ourselves first.”

Noct smiled up at him, blue eyes bright, “I like the sound of that.”

Ignis tucked him close to his side and guided him away, “well, my love, we have all the time we could ever want now, to do whatever we wish.”

They both cast one last glance back at their twins, then smiled at each other as they moved away.

Chapter End Notes

I thank every one that read this, my first foray back into writing in a very long time. I am eternally grateful for all those who took the time to read it, comment or kudos, especially those who stuck with it after such a long break. There was more I wanted to write in this, however I lost my way with it. What I have posted is a slightly shortened version, and I wish you to know that the ending is still how I originally saw it. Ignis' letter is something I wrote when I was still only about half way through.

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