An Eloquent Silence
by cleflink

Summary

This was not what Jared had expected of a witch doctor.

Notes

Look what I found! This was written for gluedwithgold in the 2017 round of spn_springfling on livejournal. Organized, I am not. orz

There was no part of this situation that Jared wasn't entirely discomfited by.

"What can I get you?" asked the long-haired, heavily tattooed bartender, yelling a little to be heard over the screaming band on stage. His expression as he took Jared in was more than a little dubious, which Jared couldn't blame him for. His collared shirt and tie weren't exactly the normal dress code in a goth club.

Hoping his embarrassed flush wasn't visible in the dim lighting, Jared held out the cue card that he'd prepared before coming over.

The bartender arched an eyebrow, as he took the card. His eyes skimmed the simple five words that Jared had written - I'm looking for Jensen Ackles - before coming back to Jared's face for several long, weighing moments.

Jared fought the urge to squirm. He wasn't really sure how a guy who barely came up to his shoulder managed to seem more intimidating than the human mountain that had been masquerading as a
bouncer at the front door, but he couldn't deny that that gaze was making him decidedly nervous.

He steeled himself, half-expecting to get thrown out, but the bartender merely shrugged and jerked a thumb to his right. "Over there."

Jared glanced over at the lone figure the bartender was pointing to: slim, dark-haired and casually dressed in a t-shirt and jeans, Jensen Ackles looked impossibly young and ethereal under the strobing lights. He was tapping his fingers on the table in time with the beat of the band onstage, his entire being focused on the music.

Nodding his thanks to the bartender, Jared started over towards Ackles. Although there was no way the man could have heard his approach amid the cacophony, that dark head turned immediately towards him. Eyes that were almost colourless in the dim light met Jared's with a calm certainty that was like nothing Jared had ever experienced before.

Which was totally unnerving, and he had to concentrate harder than he really appreciated on not tripping over his own feet as he crossed the intervening distance to Ackles' table.

"Hello," Ackles said, when he got close enough. "What can I do for you?"

Wordlessly, Jared held out another cue card. Ackles arched an elegant eyebrow, but took it without protest. His fingernails, Jared couldn't help but notice, were as black as his hair.

"Let's see now," Ackles said, squinting to read the words that had been so stark and embarrassing in Jared's office.

Mr. Ackles,

the card said. I've been hit with a silence curse. I've been told you might be able to break it. Jared Padalecki

Ackles snorted. "Man, no one calls me 'mister'. Just Jensen is fine."

Which was all well and good, but not really what Jared cared about right now. He waited with as much patience as he could muster, fingering the few remaining cue cards in his pocket.

Jensen looked Jared up and down, and seemed to come to a decision. "Let's go to my office."
Picking up his glass, he drained it in one long, smooth swallow, then stood and turned to go.

Jared had no choice but to nod and fall into step behind him. Jensen threaded like a dancer through the crowd and scattered tables, hair shining intermittently red and blue under the strobing lights.

The bartender eyed them narrowly as they went past, but Jensen waved an unconcerned hand in his direction that kept him from doing anything more than staring. The glare he directed at Jared was more than enough to convince him that he was as good as dead if Jensen gave the word.

None of this was making Jared any less uneasy.

His trepidation ratcheted up even further when Jensen pushed through a curtain that led to a staircase spiraling down into the basement. Apparently ignorant of Jared's nerves, Jensen led the way down, obviously trusting him to follow.

Which, unless Jared wanted to remain mute forever - which he most manifestly did not - was a pretty safe bet. He took a deep breath, then followed him down.

There was a dingy, narrow hallway at the bottom of the stairs, lit by a motion sensor light that clicked on as they reached the bottom step. Jensen headed for the door on the left and spoke a quick
unlocking charm.

"Just ignore the mess," he said, as he pushed the door open. He gestured for Jared to go ahead, and Jared did so, looking around curiously.

Given the clothes and the fact that Jensen's waiting room was a goth club, Jared had been expecting lots of velvet curtains and macabre candle holders. Instead, the room reminded him a surprising amount of his own office, crammed full with papers and artefacts from his travels around the world. Granted, Jensen's office contained the more esoteric tools of the magic trade - scrying glasses, animal bones, and what looked like an entire apothecary's worth of herbs and remedies in a huge curio cabinet - but it was a scholarly sort of clutter. On the wall, half-hidden behind a particularly insistent climbing woodbine, hung a framed diploma for the Magic Arts.

Jensen, he couldn't help but note, had graduated magna cum laude.

The door closed, muffling the noise from the bar upstairs so completely that Jared staggered in the sudden silence.

Jensen turned towards him. "Sorry about the dog and pony show," he surprised Jared by saying. His smile was unexpectedly bashful as he added, "Gotta maintain my image, you know? People don't tend to believe witch doctors who don't look the part."

Under the stark lights, Jensen was older than Jared had realized, with fine lines spidering in the corners of his eyes that spoke of life experience and easy smiles. It was an unexpected relief.

"Right then," Jensen said, his smile shifting into something more professional. "Let's take a look at you."

He flicked the fingers of his right hand and muttered something under his breath. Jared nearly jumped out of his skin when a purple mist melted through his skin and hovered in the air in front of him.

Jensen whistled. "That is old magic," he said, leaning in for a closer look at the mist. The expression on his face was fascinated. "What the hell were you messing with to get hit with something like this?"

Jared fumbled in his pocket. I was examining an Egyptian heart scarab at the museum, his next card said.

"Cool," Jensen said, most of his attention still on the mist. "You work there, or just bad at not touching the exhibits?"

Jared hesitated. He hadn't expected that question.

He was just about to use charades to ask for a pencil when Jensen glanced up at him with an air of realization.

"Oh, no need for that. I can lip read," he said, as though that was a normal skill. Up close, his face was startlingly pretty; Jared wondered how he hadn't noticed earlier.

'I work there,' Jared mouthed obediently, because it was better than thinking about how Jensen was totally his type under the hair dye and nail polish. 'I'm an archeologist.'

Jensen grinned. "Like Indiana Jones?"
Jared made a face at him, and Jensen chuckled.

"Sorry, I couldn't resist." He gestured at the mist. "It certainly explains this, though. There's definitely a Mediterranean flavour to the spell work."

'Can you reverse it?' Jared mouthed nervously. Gen had promised that Jensen was the best curse breaker in the city, but that didn't necessarily mean he was equipped to deal with a 3000 year old death ritual.

"Of course," Jensen said easily. "Spells this old are pretty brittle to begin with, so they're even easier to break than the modern stuff. I can whip up a counter-curse tincture right now, if you're not busy."

'Oh thank God. Please yes.'

"No worries. Sit down," Jensen said, waving at the desk chair. "This'll only take a minute."

Gingerly, Jared took a seat. Jensen started flitting back and forth across the room, collecting jars and sprigs of plants that Jared couldn't recognize by sight. Once he'd gathered everything he needed, Jensen took up a bowl and pestle and started grinding the ingredients together. Jared watched curiously, not used to seeing witches at their craft.

"I can explain if you want," Jensen said. He paused in his work to offer Jared an understanding smile. "It makes a lot of people nervous."

Jared shook his head. He might be a bit of a luddite, but he wasn't that superstitious.

"Suit yourself." Jensen busied himself with the spell crafting, and Jared settled for enjoying the confident motions of Jensen's hands while he waited.

Perhaps five minutes later, Jensen had turned his collection of ingredients into a thick green paste. He picked up the bowl and crossed over to where Jared was sitting. "No, stay there. It'll be easier to reach with you sitting down."

Jared almost swallowed his tongue when Jensen knelt on the ground beside him, unselfconscious and graceful.

"Could you loosen your tie?" Jensen asked, tilting up to look at him in a decidedly distracting fashion. "I need to apply this to your neck."

Nodding, Jared yanked the knot in his tie loose and undid the top few buttons on his shirt. He felt his breath grow shallow as Jensen rose up on his knees and leaned in close.

"This is going to tingle," Jensen warned, dipping two fingers into the bowl and coating them with the tincture. "Just try not to move too much, okay?"

Before Jared could decide whether or not he was supposed to nod, Jensen was there, his face level with Jared's collarbone and his fingers spreading the tincture all over Jared's throat.

As promised, the tincture started tingling immediately, but Jared was more distracted by the feeling of Jensen's fingertips, calloused and gentle, dragging across sensitive skin. Jensen was muttering under his breath as he painted the stuff on Jared's neck, his expression intent. It was a heady experience, to say the least.

Jared was feeling more than a little turned on by the time Jensen finally finished, setting the bowl aside and sitting back on his heels.
"That should about do it." Jensen looked up with a devastating smile. "Try saying something?"

"Do you want to go to dinner with me?" Jared blurted, and promptly flushed scarlet.

Jensen's eyebrows flew up. "That's the first thing you thought of?" he asked, though he didn't sound upset. Quite the opposite, in fact.

It gave Jared enough courage to offer a smile of his own. "I figured it was a good idea to lead with the most important thing."

Jensen smirked. "I do like a man with priorities. When were you thinking?"

Whenever you want, was the obvious answer, but Jared didn't want to sound quite that desperate. "You busy now?"

That earned him a laugh. "Not even a little bit. Just let me wash my hands first."

Jared had never in his life been so happy to get cursed.

~fin

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