Some men are destined to be heroes. Some men are chosen by fate to do great things. Some men even get the girl and live happily ever after when it's all over.

Most of those tales don't quite involve fucking your way to victory though. Neither do they involve you being transformed into a nine-foot-tall green Orc outfitted for pure lewdness and combat. They certainly don't regularly include forming an accidental harem of beauties either. Still, if our hero wants to save the world he's going to have to get used to "P-orcing All the Girls."

My first, actually popular try at doing an SI! A subversion of multiple tropes and full of fun! Maybe!

Read to find out!
Chapter 1

I hauled ass down the street, my fancy dress shoes beating the hell out of the sidewalk as the screeching of tires and the screams of true, feminine anger echoed in my ears.

“COME BACK~~~!”

I had no idea what I’d done to get her acting like this. I’d just met the girl a week ago, this tiny, cute Asian girl that had flagged me down at a Starbucks once. Just to ask me some questions as she waited for her coffee. Questions that had started to become a little personal...in a good way. We’d kind of just connected, after that.

Or at least that was what I had thought. Fuck me, right?

A truck, a barely in control eighteen-wheeler, just barely missed sideswiping me and took out a row of parking meters instead when I ducked into a Chinese place. A Chinese place that did not look happy about what had just happened outside, and what was still—Ah, shit.

“What does it take to kill you!?”

I ducked around the counter with my jacket up in a weak attempt to hide by covering the side of my face, following everyone else out a side door while silently screaming about how she’d, somehow, found a car, another truck, and drove it right through the glass front of the shop. Not that it worked, seeing how she called out my name and, after seeing how close I was to leaving her in the dust... Her lips curled up into a sneer. Her eyes got even wider. She reversed that truck of hers, then drove back forward like she was on a Nascar parking lot and I was in her space.

That counter hadn’t stood a chance. Neither had the wall behind it...or Usain Bolt’s record.

I seriously had no idea what I had done to make her like this. I thought the date had been going well. Like, sure, I wasn’t exactly all that up-to-date when it came to the dating scene, but I hadn’t messed up that bad, had I? I’d met up with her at a nice place, something fancy, but not too fancy so that we could eat, just before we went to the movies. She picked. I paid. Hell, I even got a peck on the cheek for the wonderful date I’d brought her on.

Needless to say, I’d been flying high...up until the first truck had almost run over my foot, and the next had definitely taken out my date. The date that I had thought had just been shocked at the time... It had kind of gone all downhill from there, with her actually coming back from getting front-ended by a fully-loaded moving truck—I was seeing a pattern here—in a truck of her very own while foaming at the mouth and screeching obscenities.

I’d thought that ‘Yandere’ shit had just been a genre you saw in comics. Manga or whatever. A fetish for people who were into possibly getting their organs extracted while they slept in return for sex... Even if that was an exaggeration. I don’t know. That wasn’t my thing. Never would be my thing now, especially not after today.

“Oh, fuck!” I screamed after an upwards glance. A scream that caused everyone around to scatter with screams of their own. Just in time to evade the truck that had, somehow, found its way on top of a nearby building and had decided to make its way back down on the express route. Gravity-assisted. With her showing her teeth and cackling the whole way down while I hugged the wall and wheezed,
completely out of screaming air. This was it. This was how I died.

Before she hit, I closed my eyes and looked away from my impending doom. Hopefully, it would be quick...and fuck! I never got to write my will! No one would know that they had to put my computer in a microwave!

Whoever got to use it next, most likely one of my sisters, was going to be in for a hell of a surprise.

The rush of air. A crash. The sound of breaking glass. Said glass pinging off of my slightly over large glasses and my winter coat without issues...then silence. Relative silence, other than the running of a badly treated junker of an engine. I opened my eyes with a shuddering breath.

I fear vomited in my mouth a little.

Climbing out through the shattered windshield of her slowly burning ride was my ‘date’. She was bleeding from a head wound. Blood was pouring down her face while she used a giant sword, which I had no idea of where it might have come from, stabbed into solid cement so that she could lean on it. Her once nice dress was smoldering, and I could only watch in stunned horror as she straightened herself, her eyes never breaking contact with mine all the while.

Hate. So full of hate.

“Why. The fuck...” Melly, short for Melinda, snarled at me, venom positively dripping off of her tongue with each word. “Won’t you die!?”

“Why won’t I die?!” I replied incredulously. I couldn’t help it. What kind of question was that?

I’d seen her get taken out by a speeding, multi-ton vehicle. She had, somehow, got a goddamn eighteen-wheeler on top of a Chinese restaurant. then made it do a belly flop off that same building. She had survived that. Both of those things, just before she’d capped it by crawling out of the burning wreckage of her last ride...and she had the sheer bloody cheek to ask why I wasn’t dead?

Who the fuck did that sort of thing? Who... No. What the fuck had I been dating!?

“You just had to make this difficult, didn’t you!? All year!” She screeched, then swung her sword at thin air making the slow sideways motion I’d been in the middle of slow to a stop. “I’ve been trying to kill you for a year!”

“I...” I licked my suddenly dry lips. Not that it helped much, seeing how my mouth was as good as Death Valley when it came to moisture at the moment. “What?”

“I’ve been trying to kill you for a year, you dumb shit!”

Now...now that was just hurtful. Uncalled for even.

“What did I ever do to you!?” I asked loudly, and slowly continued edging away from the crazy lady with the sword...and damn. A whole year? I hadn’t noticed a thing. “Why would you want to kill me!?”

I was a decent guy! I paid my taxes! Called my elderly mother at least three times a week! I had a pet cat that I loved, and that loved me back! What was wrong with that?
“You won’t die!”

“Well then!” I shot back, “that just clears everything up then, doesn’t it!? You crazy, bug-fuck insane, buck-toothed—”

She screamed again and charged forward before I could tell her off something fierce.

Throwing myself to the side in reflex, I somehow avoided all of the glass and shrapnel covering the floor without even a scratch, even as everything went sort of...dream-like. As I scrambled for cover, I paid attention to things that weren’t exactly all that important. Shock and panic doing their work, most likely. There was a shoe. Over there was a phone. Someone had left their purse behind.

I don’t blame them...but it would all go towards a worthwhile goal. This I promised as I gathered the mess up in my arms.

“It was supposed to be an easy job! I arrange an accident! You die!” She easily batted the high-heel I’d just thrown at her out of the air. Then the phone. Shit! “You get reincarnated where you need to go and I get to take a vacation! BUT NO! You had to be difficult!” A beat. “Fuck!”

As she continued to rave, I snuck a peek out from behind the table I’d stuck myself behind and then started crawling for another spot of cover. She’d got her sword stuck in a wall. I might have started giggling hysterically, even before I jumped out of the window she’d driven through and started running down the street again and towards a nearby officer busily waving me over.

The screech that followed that was inhuman. The one that occurred when a red circle appeared in front of me, forcing me to come to a teetering stop while I tried to catch my balance was even worse.

I could feel liquid coming out of my ears. Vertigo. A lack of equilibrium due to my inner ear getting a beating...and I tipped forward into the swirling, red, and fucking obvious magical portal.

“DON’T YOU FUCKING DARE!”

I fell, and I began to pray as the last thing I saw on her face was horror.

“No!”

My balance had never been the best…but the bird I flipped her before the portal closed behind me was in fine form.

And then, things went bad again.

When I didn’t hit the ground within the first second I started to worry. When I didn’t hit it within the next two, I started to panic. Then, after some flailing that led to me rolling over in mid-air, I saw that I was over a city and that I hadn’t, suddenly, gained the ability to fly... Well. I didn’t exactly react all that well, to say it lightly.

You could have heard my oddly deep death scream, one that I chalked up to fucking up my throat while running, from miles away. I splayed out. Caught as much air as my bulk could take...and started praying to whatever higher power that could hear me as I clenched my eyes shut.

Jesus, Buddha, Flying Spaghetti Monster, glorious leader Lenin! I didn’t care, just someone, anyone, save me! I did not escape a year of really subtle truck related murder attempts, only to die from a fall...
at terminal velocity!

“FUCK FUCK FUCK FUCK!” I opened my eyes again, the wind forcing tears from my eyes before, in what had to be the most confusing moment of my life, I looked into the eyes of a blonde. A really, really shocked blond, just before I fell by, then past her, clipping her on the way down in the worst way possible.

My eyes crossed. I stopped splaying out. I clutched myself with a whine and I let out a roar of discontent and manly defiance.

Right in the junk, just before my death...the sheer humiliation… It could make a man cry, it could... The purse that had just wrapped around the front of my face, the one I had taken from the Chinese place for ammunition, was just mean.

When I hit the truck coming up under me, crumpling the hood under me like a cheap bit of plastic and bringing in the dark...it was almost a relief.

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“I just got cock slapped by the Jolly Green Giant.” Vicky rubbed her cheek and grimaced as she found something moist and sticky on her skin. A something that she didn’t think anything about for the sake of her own sanity while she wiped it off on her skirt, and observed the nearly ten-foot tall, muscle-bound beast that had, somehow, ended up pelvis deep in some poor guy’s engine block. “That’s nice.”

The giant groaned. Shifted his hips…and the truck made one last sputtering noise, then gave up the ghost with a puff of smoke.

The crowd started taking pictures. That would, most likely, be a meme before the day was out.

Vicky didn’t need to be a mechanic to know that thing was totaled. Neither did she have to be a doctor to know that he probably needed an ambulance… Which is why, even as she continued to rub her quickly warming, most likely bruising cheek—that shockwave had been tough enough to bring down her field for a good three seconds—she was hitting the first few numbers to call for the local PRT.

Really... What else could she do with a new C53? Bring him home?
“Hello? Hello, sir?” I got the impression of someone over me, shining a light in my face. Through my eyelids, with a suspiciously green hue. “Can you hear me? Do you understand me?”

By the Premier’s glorious mustache, please. Please put me out of my misery. I tried to crack open an eye only to regret it horribly. Yep. Concussion. Fun. There was something else. Me grunting. A response.

“As I said. Concussion. A bad one. He won’t be up for the next few days.” Soft. Female. Tired.

“Ah… I see.” Strong. Male...kind of a douche. “Disappointing. You’ll call me when he’s cognizant?”

“It depends. His form… How he’s built. I don’t think he’ll be a good fit for the—”

I started to lose clarity. Finished. Someone said something else. Probably important. Mostly likely important... But I wanted to sleep. Sleep good.

Wait. I had a concussion. Wasn’t going to sleep with a concussion a bad—

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The next time I woke up and cracked open an eye...things were better. Not perfect. Not even close. But it was better. Less flaming razor wasps with chainsaws in my brain and more lethargic, normal bees. Still hurts like a motherfucker but, just to repeat, noticeably less.

Enough that I managed to keep my eyes open for long enough to see someone in white standing over me with a washcloth.

He? she? I didn’t know, ran that cloth down my chest. Moist. Warm. Soft as I grabbed their hand, completely covering it in my own as their heads shot up and they looked into my, probably still a little unfocused, eyes with a blink of shock.

Light brown. Surprised, but dull. Not quite...there? That was something to say when you were the one with a concussion. Sad.

“Did anyone tell you…” I paused for breath. “That you need a hobby?” That sounded important...and then my head hit the pillow again, and I was out like a light.

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I woke up, again, while I was being rolled over onto my side. Apparently, from the view the window afforded me, it was nighttime now. What could the doctors be doing? At night? With the lights off? With a smooth, latex—the brush of a hand against my butt cheek answered the question. Nothing good.

I knew where this was going.

I grunted a bit and tried to turn my head. My head made its opinion on that move known. The wasps
were back. They had brought friends, and I was starting to black out again… So I just laid down and hoped they didn’t stick anything up my ass. If they did though… I’d always wanted to win a lawsuit. It was on my bucket list and everything.

“What are you doing, Doc?” I managed to force myself to say.


I wouldn’t give them the satisfaction of my reactions!

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Finally. Finally, I was awake. Up and ready. Ready for life. Not asleep. Completely, mostly, maybe fine as I used my huge, green hands to change the channel on the tv in front of me to the news while a pretty, young nurse shyly waited on me and… Wait.

There was something wrong here. Obvious, in hindsight.

I nodded to myself, then changed the channel to Cartoon Network. Who watched the news while they were sick? Not me…and damn. I’m not sure where they’d hid this episode of ‘Billy and Mandy’ but I’m not complaining.

“Are you still hungry, darling?”

A hand on my arm tore me away from the screen for the moment, leading to me looking down on that same nurse fluttering her lashes at me…and man. Was it just me, or were all the girls I met like five feet tall at most?

“Just say the word and I’ll get you whatever you want to eat.” She bit her lower lip and took a deep breath. “Anything. Anything at all.” After that, actually, sort of touching offer of food, she let go of my arm and took a step back with a smile. “Hell, if you want,” She played with the collar of her scrubs while I looked on with interest. “I’ll let you have me… If you just stay still for a moment and let me get comforta—”

“I must warn you, Miss Militia. This particular…individual…isn’t the most eloquent. If you had waited a while, maybe called ahead first, I could have told you. We could have set something up.”

Miss Militia? Why did that sound familiar? TV?

The nurse adjusted her collar with a pout and took another step back just before the door opened and let two new, people, in. My own, personal, doctor. The one with the bad combover, a not too subtle habit of casual racism, and a liking for barely legal interns and cheap liquor… Don’t know how I know that stuff about him, but I do... And he’d come with a woman as well. A woman with a red, white and blue bandana over her mouth, while the rest of her was covered in olive, well-fit BDUs.

“That’s fine, Dr. Gale.” Her eyes crinkled up in a smile…and now, I didn’t need to see what was under that bandana of her’s to know that she was pretty. It was just obvious…and she was so authentic. “As long as he can understand me…?”

“He can.” Gale nodded, and I used the time where there were no eyes on me but MM’s wisely. I flipped Gale off. With both hands. Subtle, I was not…and I could see that I’d got the point across
when her eyes crinkled up even further. “He is still a little confused, due to the concussion he has, but he seems to understand simple, short instructions well enough...”

He’d called me a mindless animal in hearing range once. I knew what he was saying now. What he meant. Seriously, fuck Gale. I was pretty sure he was a Nazi and this hospital was ass.

“In other words, he is cognizant.” Gale finished that part of his explanation. “Although, there are some abnormalities that we must—”

“I understand.” Miss Militia (that was a strange name) nodded firmly. “But, please. Allow us some privacy, Doctor.” She then turned to the nurse. “Also, that’s a nice fit. Very close.”

My nurse started to sweat as she gave MM a weak smile.

“A bit too close for hospital regulations I think.” She stepped to the side. “You should get something new. Think about it.”

The nurse nodded, then left like the hounds of hell were after her.

Gale left after her with a sheen of sweat on his forehead. The door closed...and the eye crinkles normalized. I lamented the loss of what could have been with my nurse, just before I said my first words...the first that I could remember so far anyway.

“The good doctor is an asshole.” I nodded. “And I’m not sure, but I think using hospital medical supplies like he does is illegal. Maybe. I’m not a doctor...but injecting me in the middle of the night with enough stuff to make me black out, without my consent, sounds kind of skeevy, and I want to know if those are grounds for a malpractice suit. Besides that though...” I nodded again. “Sup?”

She continued to smile at me. Just long enough that I started to feel uncomfortable before she sighed. “I’d hoped that Panacea (What? Who?) might have fixed that issue of yours before our conversation.” Her tone turned dry. “She’s busy with other, more critical, patients at the moment.”

I frowned and she waved a hand at me, looking for calm. I wasn’t really sure why though. The context here was missing.


“I guess?” I grumbled, not really meaning it. From what I could tell, I still had all of my bits. I could move my toes, and things were going well enough...also, still no context. “Who’s Panacea though?”

“I’m sorry, but...” She paused again and took a step towards me to give my hand a pat. “I can’t understand you. No one can.”

I gave her a look.

She stood firm.

How could she not understand me? She was speaking English, right? I was speaking English too. This should be easy.

“Your vocal cords are unable to create the sounds necessary to forming most languages...and you’re
speaking something completely different from anything anyone has ever heard of.” She stroked my arm, the crinkles around her eyes gone to be replaced with pity. “I’m sorry.”

My jaw went slack. I…couldn’t talk? That was…I could hear myself! I was speaking English, damn it!

“It’s not exactly uncommon for those like you, Case 53s, I mean.” She kept patting my arm, even when my jaw clicked back together and my hands turned into fists. “To have some form of impediment. Or change. Whether it be their looks, their minds…or something else.” She sighed. “But that’s fine.” She left my side, leaving me alone in the cold. Tiny hands or not, she had been deliciously warm. “There are programs to help those like you. Groups. We can get around this.”

I picked up the remote and turned off the tv. Serious time now. Serious face activated.

She quickly backed up, then cleared her throat as her hand twitched towards her side.

… Less serious face activated. I didn’t need to get tased today. Still. I was feeling pretty manly right now!

“One of these groups, the one of those that I am currently representing, is known as the PRT. A charter objective of theirs is to provide oversight, guidance, assistance to new parahumans that might feel a little ‘lost’ or ‘confused’ about their places in the world.”

Her stance loosened slightly. Relaxed as something that she was used to talking about, something that she believed in and felt safe talking about was brought up… I couldn’t help but admit that I found it attractive, weirdly enough…and something was starting to niggle at me, right in the back of my head.

The PRT, huh? It sounded okay but at the same time, it was kinda…off? Shaky? Not right. Yeah. Sure. I’d go with that.

“And, of course, in its affiliate organization, the Protectorate, you’ll be able to find others like you. People who can understand what you are going through, and give you the support you need to get yourself back on your feet.” She nodded quickly. Her breasts bounced lightly in her top. Her hips swayed lightly.

An erection started rising and, like the gentleman I was, I stuck a pillow over it. Close one. Phew.

“The memory loss is something that we are still working on fixing,” She admitted, seemingly unaware of the struggle I was in the middle of to keep myself decent. I’d had some seriously strong ragers in my time (I think) but I was actually fighting to keep it together here. “But, something like your issues with communication can be managed through translators or through the use of text-to-speech devices.” She shrugged, her eyes crinkling again even as her breasts bounced again even as her breasts bounced. “You never quite know what our Tinkers will think up.”

That crinkle was quick to disappear in favor of her brow furrowing when the sound of slowly tearing fabric began to sound. Then, there was only terror as my pillow, the greatest defender of decency man had ever known, was torn in twain. Stuffing flew. Half of the casing hit her in the abdomen, while the other half found itself in the ceiling fan… and things got awkward.

Hospitals, especially crappy ones like the one I had found myself in, didn’t exactly lend itself to carrying underwear in my size… So I was just kinda showing it all right now. The full monty…and,
if I thought I had been embarrassed… MM’s bandanna did nothing, absolutely nothing at all, to hide the fact that her mouth had fallen open to its fullest extension. Neither did it hide the sound of her gasp or the instinctive reach behind her back before we locked eyes.

Awkwardly.

The clock ticked. I lost count after five because that was about when her chest began to heave and her nipples started to tent her shirt… Someone had to say something because this was getting weird as fuck.

“This sort of thing doesn’t normally happen to me.” I whispered and, now that I was actually bothering to pay attention to myself, it sounded like I’d been gargling gravel and nails since I was a child… It was kind of cool, actually. “I swear.”

MM shuddered. Her eyes flickered...and then spun around on her heel like it was a dime to walk out the door. Without saying goodbye even!

“... Rude.” I muttered to myself as I flopped back down on my bed. And regretted that. I had just ripped my pillow. With my dick… Is this what they call, ‘being blessed with suck’? It must have been.

You gotta deal with the cards life hands you, I guess.

I sighed and sat upright then, after reaching around for a bit, I managed to find the remote again. Thankfully I hadn’t sat on it, seeing how I was pretty sure that my fat, green ass would have crushed it. I flipped through the channels. I was disappointed.

Daytime television was the same no matter what dimension you were in. Boring and trashy. Rosalita! I love you, mi amor! Urghh.

I flipped through all the channels, all two-hundred plus of them, several times. Seen that episode of Spongebob. Ugh. Johnny Test. How the hell did that show get six seasons? Eventually, I stopped on the news channel again after giving up.. Might as well learn something about current events, seeing how the Network had failed me.

“Cornell Bomber still on the loose, huh?” I repeated the CNN headline out loud. “Lung should be picking her up soon, the dumb bastard... Couldn’t happen to a nicer guy though...” I trailed off. I blinked. I thought about what I just said. What I’d been thinking.

Green ass? Dimension? Cornell? Lung? What the hell was I—oh no.

I stopped seeing. I stopped breathing. The remote dropped from my numb fingers. My heart stopped and my stomach dropped. Then, just to add a cherry on the top of the whole mess, I started to hyperventilate.

I glanced down at my hands. They… These weren’t my hands. This wasn’t my body! This wasn’t me! I was a fucking Orc! I was a fucking Orc in Worm! A fucking Orc, in Worm, without health insurance!

Fucking concussions! I should have just let Melinda kill me! I couldn't afford any of this!

The door opened again, this time letting in an actual nurse. An older one. One that pulled a Militia
and just kind of started staring at my junk without even a hint of shame. Then another. And another... And then they all started reaching for my dick. At the same time.

… This was going places.

“I think we need a semen sample.” Nurse one breathed.

“And we can’t wait for even a second longer.” Nurse two added.

“This is for your health.” Nurse three licked her lips and snapped on a long, rubber glove. “So...just relax.”

Nope.

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Hannah’s eyes were closed. Her face pressed up against her arm, which was pressed up against the wall outside of the room she’d just left... With an arm around her middle to hold back the ache.

“Good going, Hannah.” She mouthed to herself. “Just leave like that. Don’t say anything. Don’t assure him. Don’t say goodbye. Just leave.” She sighed. “Damn my memory...and...and thank god I didn’t do what I’d thought about doing.”

This wasn’t the first time she’d cursed her memory. It wouldn’t be the last either... But she’d never done it for a reason like this. She never would be able to get that magnificent sight out of her head for the rest of her life.

Strong. Virile. Perfectly sculptured masculinity, created just for the sake of filling her up like she was a water balloo—

She gave herself a crack across the face with the flat of her palm and ignored the orderly that was now giving her funny looks. None of that. No thinking about that. Suppress. Repress. ‘Forget’.

She took in a deep breath and exhaled with what sounded almost like a sob.

Okay. Alright. She was feeling better now. She...she just had to go back in there, apologize, and continue her explanation. That’s all. Easy. She owed him that much at the very least...and she was here for a reason. He’d fallen out of orbit, from what Armsmaster could tell, and was still alive. A Brute rating like that, harsh as it may sound, would be quite the help...and the local Protectorate needed all the help it could get.

He couldn’t help his reactions...and they could...talk about this, about what she was feeling, later.

That was the plan she had had in mind anyway. A plan that she was forced to throw out the window before it was even completely born at the first roar. She immediately went from an embarrassed and debilitatingly horny woman—she could admit it—to a battle-hardened soldier in mere fractions of a second after the sound of breaking glass.

She had already barreled through the door, then through the crowd of nurses that had, somehow, slipped by her with a SAW in her hands before he disappeared out of the broken window completely, allowing her to see his bald head before he sank out of sight. Then, when she ran to that window to see where he was going she caught sight of him in an instant… Which is where she froze.
Her eyes tracked him still, of course. Just not in a way that the PRT handbook would have recommended... At all... Damn. Just...damn.

“Well. At least we know where his tattoo is,” She muttered to herself, her face hot as she watched his naked backside vanish into the distance. “I need a shower...” Something dawned on her as she turned around. “And M/S containment...maybe.”

“He’s got an ass on him.” One of the nurses whispered in agreement.

The interest he got from her, and from the nurses, was just unnatural.
“I’ve never been happier in my life that it’s January on the seaside. Shrinkage is a gift, and I’m sorry it took so long for me to see it.”

After a long, long time in an alley, longer than anyone should ever spend in an alley unless they were a cat or something, I had finally put my sheet together into something usable. A cheap, but thankfully solid white toga that hid the important bits well enough that I felt somewhat safe to walk out without getting picked up for public indecency...which would suck.

I gave a peek outside of the alley and came face-to-faces with a whole row of people at a bus station. I waved. Most of them waved back. A pair of girls giggled behind their hands at me, and I hid again by going into a crouch and behind a dumpster. A necessary sacrifice.

Once you got put on that sex offender list, you were never getting off of it. Being green and poor wasn’t going to help with that at all either. So, gotta stay mindful, especially when it was the far end of the afternoon! Or, in other words, it was sunny as hell. Sunny enough to make my toga a dangerous proposition, no matter how thick it was because, quite frankly... I was thicker. Enough said. And man. I’d never thought the day would come when I considered that to be a bad thing.

The things you learn about yourself, huh?

When people stopped looking at me, I stepped out from behind the dumpster and took a moment to think. Then, I nodded as I came to a decision on what I should do. Instead of walking down the alley and out into the heavily populated street I’d looked at before, I began making my way towards the opposite end, all in hopes that no one there was quick enough on their phones to take a picture. Even if I was mostly sure that all the important parts were covered, I felt enough of a draft that I couldn’t be completely sure. I wasn’t going to test it.

One sexual assault was all I needed for the day, thank you very much.

A couple of overfilled trash bags, and a near miss with a pile of what might have been human feces next to a cardboard box and a moldy pizza later, I made it. Found out that the other side was, indeed, much less populated...and found myself in the middle of a gigantic stereotype. One that made me wonder if, besides the magical portal and the ability to survive things that would have killed a normal person, if Melinda hadn’t just been talking out of her ass about that reincarnation thing.

I took it all in in just a moment. Five skinheads. Tattoos, chains, pipes and, even, what looked like a machete in a much too loose pair of jeans. Circling a little old Asian lady, eyes half closed with age as she held a bag of groceries loosely in her wrinkly little mitts. I couldn’t say whether the tremble in her limbs was due to age as well...but considering the situation, I doubted that was it...and here I was. Nine feet tall, stacked with muscle, and ready to help.

I was pretty sure I knew my own, personal, genre by now. Superhero. Yeah. Had to make sure, considering what had happened to me...and this wasn’t ham-handed at all. It was working though. I heard one of them say something rude. Another made to take away the old woman’s groceries, while the rest kept themselves at her back to block off any escape while throwing garbage at her. They were having fun.

It was just too bad that I didn’t think that what they were doing was funny. It was also too bad that I
was at their backs… Christ. If this had been just a few days ago, this would have been a terrible idea. My days as a gym rat and amateur boxer were long behind me.

A quick step out. Two skinheads. Two hands completely palming their heads. The laughter stopped real damn quick.

But this wasn’t a few days ago. So they were shit out of luck.

“Oh, fuck me…” I felt more than heard through my right palm. “A cape’s got me, hasn’t he?”

Just before one of them decided to swing a pipe at my gut, I smelt urine. Most likely from the guy on my left. Then, I smelt metal and felt, well...not much at all when the pipe rebounded off my abs, causing the asshole to let it go with a swear when the rebound came at him.

I moved my jaw from side to side. Took a moment to appreciate my abs...and grinned as my foot rocketed towards his gut.

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After what was the most anti-climactic fight of my life, one where I’d beaten my enemies into the ground and left them defeated and completely nude on the street, I was feeling pretty damn good. I’d done my good deed for the day. I’d beaten up some actual, real life, neo-nazis. I’d got a couple of wallets worth of loot too. And, above all, I’d gotten a new pair of shorts!

“Now take a right,” Granny Yugao, the woman I’d saved ordered, her hands on my wrist to help her along as she gave me directions. “Go straight past those three houses, then make a left. We’ll be at my home then, young man.”

Well, they were actually extra, extra, extra large sweatpants...but it was the principle of the thing. I had pockets now, and an extra layer of cloth to hide my dick from the eyes of the world. It was pretty great, having pants again, I won’t lie...and helping the elderly was pretty good too. Yep.

“Don’t move so much. You’ll jostle the eggs! I will not have them break after those”—she said something sharp in another language. It sounded like 'assholes' to me—“tried and failed to do the same!”

I grunted but forced my arm to stop swinging. She was eighty years old. She was old and had just come out of a dangerous situation. She deserved some consideration at this point. I could indulge her for a little while, even if I thought it was silly...which I did.

We walked slowly down the sidewalk, stopping every once in a while for her to catch her breath before we went on. People in green and red, ABB, gave me dark looks, fingered their guns and such, but otherwise did nothing with them when they saw I wasn’t doing anything of note. Or, at least, nothing worth getting their asses sent to the hospital for.

Just escorting an old lady here. An Asian old lady. Carrying her groceries. That’s all. Nothing to see here besides a couple of radishes and a bag of rice...and I was glad for it. The rank and file would be easy. Oni Lee, since this was before the gang picked up Bakuda, I could deal with. Maybe. Lung though? … Eh. Let’s not and say we could.

Yugao stopped for a little while to talk to another elderly woman sweeping a storefront. I had to admit, for the next ten minutes I was completely lost when it came to what they were saying and out
of my mind with boredom, but it sounded like, since I kept getting fingers pointed at me and smiles, that it was probably good. Awesome.

Some more talking. Some more standing… Another piece of me died as I stared off into nothing.

“It’s time to go, boy.” Yugao gave me a slap on the abs, then started walking away without me.

“Fucking finally… That took forever.” I groaned as I straightened up from the wall, caught up to her, and gave her my arm again. She didn’t say anything, but I could tell she was grateful. “I’m not going to find Oni Lee or something when we get to your house though, right?”

“You talk funny. Learn the language! I did, and I’m old! What’s your excuse?”

I sighed and, from then on, it was a straight shot to her home. I had to stare a little, wondering just how the fuck I was going to get through the doors with the groceries before she gave me another slap.

“Don’t worry about it. I have grandchildren that can do it for me. Useless, lazy things that they are.” She pointed at a window and said something harsh. The window twitched, and I heard feet hitting hardwood at a run. “But thank you.” She patted my arm. “You’re a good boy.”

I just nodded and patted her back in commiseration. I’d never had kids of my own, but I had a niece and nephew that I babysat sometimes. Close enough.

“Here.”

I blinked when she forced a radish into my hand.

“For your trouble.” She gave me a stiff nod and left while I examined my reward… not exactly gold pieces, but I was pretty hungry… Meh. Couldn’t be ungrateful.

I’d already come out ahead as is. Mob loot is sweet loot.

I shoved the whole thing in my mouth, and just enjoyed it. Spicy… and it was a hell of a lot better than I thought it would have been, but it wasn’t exactly meat. Meat which I could no longer eat. You wouldn’t think that an orc could, or would be an obligate vegetarian, but you’d be wrong…

Twas a sad yesterday when I found that out. A bad time for my nurse as well.

“How much do you want to bet that PHO is already talking about you on a hundred page thread?”

I turned around, cheeks full of radish and eyes full of surprise.

“I’m giving you 10:1 odds. Limited time offer.” The freckled, pretty, green-eyed blonde continued dryly as she gave me a slow up and down. “Place your bets now, because the books are closing in the next five minutes.”

I swallowed my radish in one go and continued to gawk. Was this seriously happening? Was my life really this contrived?

“If you wanted to lay low, you kind of screwed up already. The Protectorate is already on the way, as is the 88. I’m pretty sure that Kaiser wants you dead for some reason.” She held a hand out and
moved it from side to side in a half-and-half motion. “Part of what you did barely half an hour ago, part...something else.” She shrugged. “Either way. There’s your freebie for the day. Enjoy it.”

Yes. It seemed that my life totally was this contrived. Was I going to see Taylor watching me if I looked up?

Lisa, because this was totally Lisa, cocked her head at me. “You’re a hard one to read, you know that?”

I shrugged and took a step forward. Several ABB members who were nearby, for some reason, suddenly stopped walking in my direction and to somewhere else entirely in a scatter. Weird. “It’s probably the whole, ‘not being human’ thing.”

I’m not sure what I had been expecting...but, her being able to understand me was probably in the middle of the list. Lucky me, huh?

She moved her head to the other side. Mouthed something real quick and her eyes cleared up. “I think that’s a bit much. You might not look human, but you totally are. Or you think like one at least. Close enough.” She stepped off and started walking towards a suspicious looking white van. “Now come with me and keep your freedom and life... Or don’t.” She gave me a sassy look from over her shoulder. “I’m not the boss of you...but I could be.”

I had someone to translate for me now. Awesome.

I stopped and thought about that while licking a tooth. Spoke. “... You’re offering me a job?”

“Yes.” She popped the p as she popped the lock of her van.

“What for?”

“General live in dogsbody,” A turn of the key and the van started up. “Bodyguard, maid, roommate, plumber. Whatever I need you to be. With pay of course. Besides decent conversation anyway. You won’t be getting lots of that where you’re going.” Lisa raised her eyebrow at me and stuck her thumb in back. “Get in or don’t. I’m leaving in a—”

I went around back at a jog, opened the doors, and jumped in, making the whole van quake and the suspension squeak.

“—Well, shit. That was quick...and you’re a heavy son of a bitch, aren’t you?”

“Like you said,” I replied as I heard the sound of sirens start to build up nearby. “Conversation is a pretty damn good incentive…” As was a lack of potential jail time, “and you try being light at nine foot something with how built I am. And you’re one to talk.” I snorted. “I bet you don’t even lift.”

She parsed that for a while, then snorted back at me. “Smartass.”

“Yes.”

I had no illusions here. I know she wasn’t telling me everything...but, hopefully, whatever plan she had in mind that she wanted to slot me into wasn’t too bad...
All Lisa had wanted to do today was pick up her meds. That’s all. Just a quick in and out at the corner store for a couple of organ killing pain pills and a case of soda. Just like she did every other week. But she hadn’t today. Normally, that would have had her throwing a passive-aggressive fit with everyone around her.

That was fine though. No passive aggressiveness today. She was A-ok. Lisa had gone out to do some errands, and she’d come back with the closest thing to the motherlode. She had her own bodyguard now. Her own cape. Someone that wasn’t under Coil’s thumb, but under hers… Picking him up had been totally worth her throwing off her schedule for the day.

The new cape, the C53 that, from what she could tell, had yet to even pick a name before she’d found him, was looking around her living room. Not surprised or overwhelmed. Just with a general interest before, after giving one of her couches a considering look, he took a careful seat with a sigh.

“Remote is over there.” Lisa pointed and waited until she got a nod before she left to the kitchen to crack open one of the last of her sodas. “Make yourself at home!”

“Alright!”

She winced, tensed up as she expected pain to come after her power finished translating whatever... that was... and was pleasantly surprised to find herself feeling only a dull throb instead. Her power must be adjusting. Sweet.

Anyway, he’d been totally worth picking up. He was stupidly tough and unnaturally strong. Kind of sweet, handy, patient, not all that easy to anger, and willing to do extreme amounts of violence at the drop of a hat when he thought it was necessary. All good traits to have in a roommate/bodyguard...even if the low-level Trump effect he had on himself wasn’t nearly so nice.

She could catch his personality. Follow the gist of whatever he said with a bit of effort...but she couldn’t get a read on him otherwise. What he was thinking at the moment and whatever, other, skills and abilities he might have had seemed...garbled.

She got something out of the whole mess, but none of it made any sense. It was really fucking annoying...but she guessed that not everyone was perfect.

“I’m ordering pizza to celebrate!” Lisa hollered, phone in one hand and coke in the other as she toed open the lower freezer. Today was an ice cream day. “What kind do you want!”

“Veggie, please!”


“Obligate vegetarian!”

“... Really?”

“Yes!” His voice took on a tone of sorrow. “Meat tastes good but… it doesn’t do good things to me.”

“Well, alright then.” Lisa shook her head and moved past it. That sucked, but she didn’t really want to know. She still had a deposit she was hoping to get back one day. “Veggie it is.”
After the quick call to her favorite place, Lisa effectively pranced over to the couch, ignored the wide-legged stance her guest was using with a well-practiced flex of her will and took a seat on the opposite end with her bowl of chocolate… And wow. She was feeling pretty good today. Really, really good. Giddy even!

She could feel her forehead! Just her forehead! Without a migraine! It was like she could actually see after she’d been blind her whole life! Colors were colors again!

“What are we watching?” Lisa flashed her guest a lazy smile, one that got a self-conscious grin back… Poor guy. He had self-esteem issues. He had nothing to be self-conscious about. Lisa actually found his smile kind of relaxing. “Horror, action, mystery, thriller, romcom?”

“Princess Bride.” He made a slow, worried nod. “Are you… fine with that?”

Lisa gasped. “Of course I’m fine with that! What kind of question is that even? Like, god. What kind of monster do you think I am?” Lisa started kicking her legs for no other reason than because she could…she was feeling great. “Who isn’t fine with ‘The Princess Bride’?”

“Monsters. Duh.” He gave her a slightly wider smile, one that she couldn’t help but return with her own toothy grin. “Also, where am I sleeping tonight?” He looked around. “Do you have a guest room or…?”

“The couch.”

Her guest gave her an especially expressive eyebrow, looked down at the couch they were sitting on, then back at her. A weird thing to see from someone who didn’t have any hair. Yet. She might see some stubble growing in…but she got the point.

He was taller than the couch was long. Oops.

“…I’ll get you the spare pillows and sheets. Just strip the couch and you can take the floor.”

“Thank you.”

Now, with that done… it was time to sit back, relax, and watch tv. Eating her ice cream and plotting her escape from Coil, one step at a time. Also, jeez. Greenie radiated heat like a goddamn furnace. Her ice cream was starting to melt.

Maybe she could start turning the heat off, every once in a while? Save on that energy bill?
“Maybe turning off the heater during the winter wasn’t the best idea I’ve ever had.” Lisa shivered lightly but constantly as she trudged her way into the living room in her blankets. Plural. A pair to keep her skinny white ass in one non-frostbitten piece. It had to have been, at least, below thirty inside. Fucking ridiculous. “What was I thinking?”

Just because someone could melt ice cream through sheer proximity to it did not mean that they could heat an entire apartment. That was simple thermodynamics. Going without feeling like her head was about to split open because of a bad question posed to her power at the wrong time had made her sloppy… Stupid. Which is why she was up at almost seven in the morning to make coffee. Hot enough to melt the roof of her mouth, and black enough to tar someone’s driveway. Like she ‘liked’ it.

There was nothing good about this to be found, but it woke her and warmed her like little else. That was a gift beyond measure for a working girl like her. Uh-huh.

Lisa grumbled, quietly, to herself as she stepped around the solid mass that had taken up the center of her living room. At least three blankets, six different pillows, the cushions of one couch and half of another, along with seven-hundred pounds of gently snoring green muscle had gone into making it. She didn’t want to be the one to change something about it for the worst. For example, finding out that the C53 she’d invited into her home was a morning person would have just ruined the day for her. If she had to be miserable, so did everyone else. That was how it was. Suck it, everyone else.

Her slippers proved their worth as she hit the linoleum. A deep, pervading cold began to make their way into them in the short amount of time she’d taken to fill up the pot. It had almost taken over completely when she’d turned on the machine, a cup of industrial brand French Roast in the strainer. She then fled before she was overtaken completely, letting out a sigh of relief as she found the safety of carpet under her toes and the sound of percolation echoing in her ears.

Worst. Idea. Ever. But, at least, it had been an idea. A dumb one, but an idea with a somewhat understandable goal of lowering her bills. Right now though? As she turned the heat on and up to a nice, balmy 75 degrees? She had none. None at all…and that was why she was now just standing there, staring at the hateful machine as it did it’s work far too slowly.

The hell was she going to do now? Her bed was stone cold. The coffee wasn’t nearly done. The heater would take maybe an hour to get up to speed to something she could call ‘comfortable’…and she didn’t feel like putting on Winter clothes. Because of pure deep-seated apathy.

This wasn’t her greatest moment. Not at all. Not her worst though, and that was good enough.

She shuffled over to the pile in the middle room, and sniffled lightly, her nose feeling like it’d been dunked in ice water as she gave the slowly breathing pile of blankets a considering look. He wouldn’t miss one of them, would he? One of the smaller ones, nice and toasty with body heat instead of the cold, stiff mess that she was using…? Wait.

What was she thinking?

She bent down, blankets still wrapped tight around herself, as she started pulling at one of his. One
that felt almost *scorching* hot under her fingertips when she tried sliding a corner of it out from under his bulk.

These were *her* blankets. Not his. Of course she could take them. He’d just have to suck it up if he didn’t like it. Simple… Not that she thought that he’d mind all that much though. He was nice like that.

Finally pulling that corner out, Lisa lifted the blanket and was hit by the warmest, *sweetest* wave of air she’d ever felt, or smelt in her life. Like cinnamon, dark chocolate and vanilla, mixed in with coffee… and she took it in deep, her mood instantly lightening by an order of magnitudes. Her lips twitched, turning up into a smile without her prompting as, all of a sudden, the near-crippling cold was kept at bay and she felt *awake*. Like she’d just mainlined five triple espressos and suddenly needed to *act*.

The blonde, instead of dragging the blanket away with her to wait out the mini-ice age her apartment had become in her room, dropped her blankets, fell to her knees, and crawled into the warm, safe cave she’d made in her new best friend’s sleeping pile. She had no idea why she’d done it… but fuck it. Why not? She was warm now, and that was all that mattered… well. Besides one other thing.

Fuck you, mornings! She’d won again!

Lisa cackled in her head, just being polite to the sleeping person she was sharing her space with, up until she came up against a wall. A large dark wall that had about as much give in it as an Endbringer shelter, but was a hell of a lot more welcoming. At that point, she stopped cackling but kept on going. Face first, her nose leading the way into what she thought might have been *abs*.

A gentle rub of her cheek against that brilliantly hot wall, just as she decided to see if it was possible to put her arms around it, just because she could, confirmed that suspicion without a doubt. Yes. These were abs. A six-pack that you could bounce a cannonball off of without even leaving a dent.

Lisa giggled, feeling kind of silly when she found that she *couldn’t* hug the delicious smelling wall and giver of warmth. Of course not. It was huge. Much bigger than her. She’d never be able to do it by herself… Still, it had been a good try.

Giving up her quest to give out hugs to her savior and defender against the evil cold, Lisa decided to start exploring instead. Hands stretched out, her face still rubbing against her minion’s body without even the slightest hint of shame while she began tracing every little curve and contour that she could find…and there was quite a bit to find indeed.

Six-pack part one. Six-pack part two. Six-pack part three to six and what might have been the curve of his hip… Might have been. She couldn’t tell, and that just wouldn’t do. This called for… drastic, measures. The best kind of measures!

Still using her hands to blaze the trail in the dark and gloom of the underside of the sheets, Lisa followed them with her face and lips. Gentle brushes of soft skin against hard muscle making her pulse pound and blood heat. Higher, ever higher as it forced her to start fighting for air, huffing and panting, near desperate for another breath to fill her lungs. Another taste of sweet and bitter to run over her tongue.

He was her best friend. The bestest, best friend she’d ever had, yes he was… The best heater as well. Good enough that she could feel her sleeping clothes begin to stick to her skin. Her bra feel tight against her breasts. Her panties feel like they were plastered on and… She felt so *hot*. 
Lisa, after what felt to have been miles and miles of solid stone and metal...found a hint of softness with her hands. A length of throbbing velvet, wrapped around a core of hot and pulsing iron.

But not hot enough. Not nearly... She could make it hotter if she tried... That was Lisa’s last thought as she made to nuzzle what she had found and give it a little smoo—

A snort. A shifting of an unstoppable force that forced Lisa to freeze, her heart feeling as if it were about to explode as she let go of what had to have been at least a foot of cock like she’d just been shot, then crawled her way back out of the blankets in shameful retreat. And just in time too.

Big and green grunted, then rolled over onto where she’d just been. The likelihood of her surviving that would have been...best not to think about it. She had more important things to deal with right now.

Lisa, still crawling, only stood again when she had finally turned the corner and away from him possibly seeing her like this. Then, she just leaned against the wall, a hand against her heaving chest as she stared at the ceiling and tried to ignore the feeling of streams of moisture drying on her thighs.

Lisa had—she’d almost put her lips on that thing! She’d... she’d given it a sniff! A long one! What the fuck had she been thinking!? Hell, how did she even expect to fit that in her mouth?!

She took a peek around the corner and flushed as he gave himself a scratch in his sleep.

He was dangerous… So, so dangerous, even if he didn’t mean to be, and she couldn’t let that happen again. She wouldn’t let it. She could do this. She could control herself around him. She wasn’t an animal. Besides, being able to turn women into cooing idiots just by standing near them could be useful in the future. Somehow.

Lisa looked at her hands. Still the same as they’d always been. Still warm, like a fresh cup of coffee that she had just emptied even as she made to wash her hands.

Whether he was doing it on purpose or not… She wouldn’t lose to him. That was final… Well. Almost final. She’d just remembered something.

Lisa dried her hands with a shiver, her already painfully hard nipples turning to diamonds in an instant.

It was still cold as balls out here, and her blankets were probably like the grave by now...which meant that she’d lost to him. Shit.

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The birds were chirping. Vehicles were starting. A train rolled by, and I had the one boner to rule them all. Putting all of those things together, I came to the most likely conclusion for all of those things happening at once.

“Fuuuuck...” I mewled with righteous fury, kind of sounding like a bucket full of razors that someone had put in a washer and put on the spin cycle... With the bucket. Note to self. Never do that again. “It’s morning. Yay.”

Good job, Sherlock. You’ve done it again. Do you want a cookie?
Still on my back, I stretched. Arms up above my head, legs straining with tension until I felt a couple of pops and probably gained an inch of slack in my back before I sat up. More stretching. More popping...and there went my morning routine that didn’t involve something out of a cardboard box.

First thing I saw in the morning that wasn’t ceiling was Lisa. Wrapped up in a bathrobe, hair still damp from the shower. A cup full of coffee cradled in both hands as she faced me with an unreadable expression on her face from her seat at the breakfast table. One that I understood perfectly when I followed where her eyes led.

Without saying anything, and with my eyes still locked on hers while I wore my own flat expression I put a couch cushion on my lap. Using it as more of a shield from sight than a suppressant. I’d learned my lesson the first time. Breaking my boss’s stuff was bad.

Her expression didn’t change in the slightest, but at least she was looking me in the eyes now.

“Morning.” I waved, still pretending that I wasn’t about to die from embarrassment. “How are things? Good?”

Instead of responding her eyes tracked away from me and she took a sip from her mug as her cheeks began to darken.

“Great. Awesome.” I coughed, hoping that she just wasn’t a morning person and that I hadn’t somehow traumatized her with the oaken club that my dick had become overnight… Irony. There was none. “Could you tell me where the bathroom might be?”

She pointed down the hall and continued not to look at me as I found my feet. Which was a damn good idea, honestly. My sweatpants, nice as they were, weren’t going to be holding this monster anytime soon. They were actually kinda hanging around my knees at the moment, to be even more honest.

“I needed a tailor or something. Jesus. What was I, an animal?”

“Thanks,” I said quickly as I shot off even faster. Sure. I was waddling the whole way with a pillow in front of my crotch and my pants falling around my legs, completely without a shred of dignity to my name...but at least it was quick.

I heard something heavy fall to the floor with a clatter, and Lisa loudly swear as she was forced to confront my big green butt in what was probably far too early a time for her to be dealing with my shenanigans… I can’t remember a time when I’d been more embarrassed than I was now, and I wasn’t sure how it could get any worse.


Then, I looked down at myself. Not tiny. Protruding. Obvious. Probably a lethal weapon in most States and a chargeable offense when it came to Interpol...and I was just talking about my ass.

… I’d been wrong about that embarrassed thing. It could still get worse.
“I need to go to work,” Lisa commented, still not quite looking at me as she did. She was doing better than she had been but it wasn’t quite perfect yet. Eye contact was important! “And I need you to stay here.”

I look up from my mixing bowl of cornflakes and milk, cheeks puffed out and ladle in hand as I watched Lisa put some finishing touches on her hair. A stroke of the brush at the ends and an application of a scrunchie to turn it into a quick and dirty ponytail. Not exactly business chic when compared to her all-white winter ensemble of sweater, skirt, and leggings, but it got the job done.

“Now, I know that things are probably going to be kind of boring without me around, as expected,” She continued, the smug coming through strongly even with the scarf, also white, over her mouth and nose, muffling her voice. “But there are people looking for you. Either to cage you up or kill you.”

I nodded, still chewing as I did so… And damn if tusks didn’t make this shit strange. Eating, I meant. I kept thinking I was about to cut myself whenever I opened my mouth. It was like every moment was absolutely fraught with peril, and it was making me kind of paranoid. Anyway, I swallowed eventually, cornflakes with sugar having become an almost religious experience that needed time to enjoy after my change, and responded. “And that’s a bad thing, right?”

“Of course.” She picked up a purple pack and slung it over her shoulder with a spin, inadvertently showing off how good her calves looked in those short heels of hers as she did. “I just hired you. You’re an investment. Losing you on the first day on the job would look bad on me for being such a shit judge of quality.”

I chuckled and got another ladleful into my mouth with a groan of contentment. “You’re all heart, Boss.”

“And don’t you forget it, minion.” Lisa opened the door, gave me the impression that she had just given me a cheery smile with an over the shoulder look, then slammed the door shut a little harder than necessary, leaving me alone.

Alone, and still hungry even after my mixing bowl ended up completely empty of everything that had been in it. Flakes, milk, and the little deposits of sugar that always ended up at the bottom of the bowl that stubbornly resisted removal if you didn’t rinse the bowl right off. None of them had a chance in hell against my stupidly long tongue.

I just kind of spun it around the bowl, made a slurping noise, and it was clean enough to eat off of. Like Gene Simmons Ultra. Easy… And now I kinda wanted a pudding cup. Emptying it out with a single lick sounded like a hell of a trick. Good at parties…and now I was bored, and I couldn’t ignore the rumbling in my stomach.

It only took me a good ten minutes to see what I should have all along.

Even if Lisa was rather mature for her age, having her own apartment and van and everything, she was still a teenager. A teenager that wasn’t a vegan…and she ate like one too. Lots of junk food, but not quite what I was looking for. Some jerky, eggs and bacon. A crapload of cheap ramen cups that had me gagging for some unexplained reason, probably something in the spices that didn’t agree
with me, and a near empty box of cornflakes.

I tried to stay inside. Of course I did. I saw the point of her argument as to why I should stay inside… but my belly sounded like it was trying to imitate a roaring engine, even as I finished off the last of the cereal and milk in the house.

I was going to have to do something, and I kind of had an idea as to what.

The door got a thoughtful look.

A quick jaunt outside for some munchies wouldn’t hurt anyone now, would it? This had worked once already and all that… So why not?

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“He’s a good boy you know,” Grandma Yugao commented pleasantly to her little circle of friends, most likely for my benefit as she placed down a tile in her outdoor Mahjong game. It was, supposedly, a weekly thing that they did. It was nice, seeing that being old didn’t mean that you had no friends. “The youth these days. All about money, money, money.”

“Lazy too.” The old woman to her right agreed easily, with more than just a hint of an accent before she pointed a gnarled old finger at me. “But look at him.”

I pretended not to hear anything they said as, without even a grunt, I ripped a tree stump out of the ground, roots and all, and placed it to the side. After that, all I had to do was fill in the hole with a convenient pile of nearby dirt that some contractors had left behind as was their wont. Should have had this done weeks ago, but nope. Contractors.

“My grandson can’t even get something off the shelf without crying about how I’m a slave driver who hates him. He just ripped a stump out of the ground, and all he wants is rice. Doesn’t talk much. That’s good.” She cracked a grin, showing off her surprisingly whole set of teeth as she placed down her own tile. “He’s not bad to look at either.”

“Oh, yes.” Yugao sighed. “If I’d only been fifty years younger. I still have my mother’s shrine maiden outfit. Never got much use but if he’d been around… Well, you know.”

My smile had frozen on my face at this point, but I kept on working. Come on menial drudgery. Do your work. Block it out.

“I understand your pain.” The friend to her left chimed in. “Some Oni blood in the family would have been nice. Get a real man to make the next generation something to be proud of.”

I started to blush at the round of laughter that got, and hope that my skin color didn’t let it show while I continued to work. They were totally screwing with me. I knew it, but still… I wasn’t exactly used to getting compliments like that. Sue me.

It was nice though. Satisfying in some way I couldn’t put my finger on.

“Well, it might be too late for us,” Yugao gave her friends a conniving smile. “But I do have a granddaughter. Very nice. Good hips.”

“Good enough hips for Oni? You’re crazy. She’d tear like wet rice paper. My granddaughter though

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“We’ll see who’s crazy when my great-grandchildren have spirit blood in them, you old bat.”

If I hadn’t already been given an actual bucket of rice already, I would have left as they started to bicker in their native languages, giving me the idea that they might have been serious. Swear to god. Too much of a good thing was a thing. It felt like my face was going to explode.

“Boy!”

My head snapped around like I was a deer in the headlights. I couldn’t help it!

“You better not get mixed up with those cape hooligans, you understand?” Yugao snapped some tiles together with a clack. “You are doing real work. None of this… ‘Cops-and-Robbers’ game. Yes?”

I nodded. Sure. Whatever she said.

“Good.” She huffed. “Granddaughter has bad taste in men. She needs a dependable man. None of that face on, face off shit.”

Oh god. What was my life now? A tiny, frail, wizened old woman was lecturing me on my life choices, and offering her granddaughter to me in some mistaken idea that I was a spirit. This was new. So new…and I wasn’t sure how to handle this. Not at all.

I was putting down how scary she was to some sort of secret grandma magic. That was final.

A sudden cry that carried the impression to me that someone had just called a foul rang out and started the bickering again, harder than ever.

I looked up at the sky and hoped for lightning.

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Another bucket of rice that finally quelled my hunger and a completely cleaned gutter later, and I was done. I was just standing there with a rake in hand, next to a pile of leaves as I looked upon my works. Yugao’s place hadn’t been what I would have called a mess, but it had carried a sort of neglected air. An air that had lightened up with some elbow grease and a load of sweat. Enough so that I had been forced to take off my toga to keep it from getting stained.

Couldn’t help the sweatpants though. At this point, they might as well have been capris with how tightly they clung to my skin. I was probably looking kind of pool boyish right now, considering how tight it was against my package. Not that the Mahjong squad seemed to mind or anything.

Their bickering just got louder and they started excitedly pointing fingers. It kind of reminded me of an auction.

But, yes. A good day’s work and full belly makes a happy orc… I was so glad I didn’t have body dysphoria. It sounded terrible and, if anything could bring it on, it would probably be something like this and…meh. Don’t think about it.

Today was a good day. Or so I’d thought, up to the point when someone said the sort of thing that
no one wanted to hear.

“The PRT wants to talk to you.”

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“Nothing big.” Victoria continued, her arms crossed and her head at the same height as the C53 that she’d met for all of a moment a couple of days ago. Just long enough to get a ‘loving’ caress across her still oddly sensitive cheek before he’d been gone. It had made Dad laugh when he’d heard, which was the only good thing that had come out of that time so far. Mom had been pissed. “Just some questions about how—”

“No! None of that!”

Victoria floated back in shock when an old woman stood up from her chair, a tiny thing that could barely have reached Vicky’s chest if she’d been on the ground that was, quite frankly, not at all happy to see her.

The shaking fist was pretty clear on that matter.

“I know how this works! You just want to talk, and then the roses are on fire!” She then pointed at said bush. It was a very nice bush, even if the ground around it was a little darker than it should have been with ash and it was on the small side. “You are not welcome here!”

The other two old women just stared her down, as if daring her to do something about their disapproval.

Wow...that was straightforward. Victoria couldn’t remember a time in recent memory that she’d gotten told off like that by a civilian, let alone by an old lady and her friends. That was new. Also, kind of hurtful.

When things broke around her, it wasn’t always her fault. It just kind of...happened. If the villains would just hold still when she tried to hit them...

The old woman’s face pulled a complete 180, from angry to happy as she dismissed Vicky and turned to face the green giant with a smile. “I’ll see you tomorrow, yes? Maybe you can show my grandson how not to be so useless, hmm?”

He grunted with what might have been a smile of his own, and nodded before he started walking away and onto the street, acting as if he’d forgotten that Victoria was still there. Forced to follow him, Vicky fumed. A state of affairs that only got worse when she saw that, when the ABB didn’t give him a wide berth, they gave him nods of what might have been respect.

Had he already gone villain? So quickly? He’d only been out of the hospital for a day!

Vicky took a breath, counted to ten, and let it out. Calm. Peace. Don’t judge. Yet. “Where are you going?”

He grunted and pointed somewhere. Nothing else but the general idea of ‘over there’ as he continued to walk, somewhere, without giving her more than the barest of glances as he did.

“What’s over there, hmm?” Vicky asked as she felt the tension rise a little. Just enough to get her
blood pumping and give her certain expectations of where this was going to go. If so, then he was going to be sorry. “Do you live in the Trainyard or something?”

He shook his head and grunted again. Kept on walking and gave her a wave for her to follow.

She was starting to get mad.

“Hey! Don’t ignore me!” She barked before she grabbed a shoulder and forcefully spun him around, forcing him to look her in the eyes for once. “Don’t you walk away from me when I’m talking to you!”

When he brushed off her hands, just swept them aside as if she was being stupid as he made to turn, she decided that enough was enough and popped him one. Right in the nose, with just a little oomph behind it to catch his attention.

He grunted. His head rocked back slightly, but then came right back without issue as he gave her a glare. He acted more like she’d just pushed him a bit, rather than given him a full on punch to the nose.

She’d been right about him then. He was a big boy. He could take it. Good.

“So what’s it going to be?” Vicky asked as she cracked her knuckles and watched his brow furrow even further, her aura going at full blast to offset his actually intimidating visage. She’d seen Lung ramping up, and he hadn’t been half as bad. “Are you going to talk to me and the PRT? Or are we going to fight and have me drag you there?”

His frown deepened. He set his stance in a mirror of Victoria’s. He then flipped her off, giving her the answer she’d wanted to hear.

“Alright then,” Vicky put her fists up as she felt her heart start to pound in her ears. “Bring it!”

He’d cockslapped her after all. Accident or not, that needed some payback. Her womanly pride demanded that recompense was taken!

He roared, a sound loud enough to cause her hair to blow back in the breeze. A roar that left him completely open for another strike to the chest that cut him off with a cough...and, if she thought he looked scary before, well. That evil eye he was giving her now was something else.

Victoria thought she might have seen a hint of red in those orbs before she went fully on the attack. Bob, weave, duck. Anything that he threw at her only clipped her, dropping her shield for less than a second at most before she fed him a little of her home cooking. Bite-sized knuckle sandwiches, all he could eat.

She was picking him apart, leaving bruises and welts with ease...or so she thought. Adding a bit more strength to her every blow, relying on her ability to fly to keep him on his toes. It was a slow way to do it, but she could tell it was working...up until he got one of her legs in his hand and whipped her into the ground.

Even through her invulnerability, all she could see was leaves, dirt, and stars before he brandished her. Held her up like a flail and did it again, causing the ground to quake as her body left a crater, a perfect imprint of her body into the soil. It was only a kick at his wrist, a solid hit that forced him to let her go with a roar that freed her.
She floated up and away, giving herself some space to pick the shit she’d picked up from that out of her hair as she reconsidered things. He might not have been as tough as her, but he was definitely as strong. Maybe even stronger, actually… She’d have to watch herself. Getting pulped by accident in a ‘friendly’ fight was not how she wanted this day to go.

“You’re stronger than you look.” She said, sounding not nearly as wary as she actually was. She had to pat herself on the back over that while she drifted down to the ground, so low that her feet almost touched it. “But I’ll bet you can’t do that again.”

He shrugged and gave her a toothy grin as he scratched his abs. Also, yes. There was a definitely a red glow to those eyes that hadn’t been there before. Spooky.

“Come on then.” Victoria beckoned him forward, almost bouncing on her toes to add to the show as she did. “Or have you had enough?”

In a rush that actually had her eyes opening in shock, he was in front of her, his fist flying at her in a straight jab that would have killed a normal person outright. It was only the training she’d gotten from her uncle Neil that forced her to duck without a thought, leaving it to fly past her with a hiss while she chambered her fist and—

WHAT THE FUCK WAS THAT!?

—flew up towards his chin with an already flying, picture perfect, uppercut. One that she couldn’t find any pleasure in like she normally would as she processed what she’d just seen.

It had been like he was smuggling an extra large kielbasa in the leg of his shorts. It had only been a quick, midair correction that had kept her cheek from meeting it again. Holy shit, how was she even still alive after getting hit with something like that...and then the uppercut connected perfectly. He rocked back on his heels and spit flew everywhere.

Everywhere. Thick, slick, sticky. Her face, her eyes, her hair...her mouth.

“Oh my god!” Vicky shrieked. “Oh my god, what the fuck!? What did you do!?”

And then it started to burn, forcing her to paw at her own face in a panic and rocket skyward to get away as something happened. Her lips started to feel like they’d gone up ten sizes all at once and the soft, fleshy insides of her mouth felt like they’d found themselves inside of a sauna. Hell, her heart was pounding like a hammer and her limbs were shaking, only getting worse as she felt that burn slide down her throat like an oil slick.

She was pretty sure she’d just been poisoned and this wasn’t fun anymore. She was done fighting. She needed to see Amy! Right now!

She’d never flown home so fast in her life.

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As soon as I walked in through the door, Lisa handed me the ice pack she’d had on her own forehead without prompting and patted the seat next to her with a bright smile. Man. She was a lot nicer than I’d thought she would be. Awesome. “Had a bad day?”

“Yeah.” I nodded slowly, careful of aggravating my bruises as I took both of those things. “You
could say that.” Bag against eye, rear on couch. Eyes on tv to watch alternate reality television. “I got beat up by a girl.”

Lisa mulled that over. Nodded. “Glory Girl, huh?”

“Uh-huh,” I grumbled as I ran my tongue over one of my tusks, wondering if it was actually loose or if it was just in my head. That uppercut at the end had really sent me for a loop. “Collateral damage barbie took me being effectively mute as an insult. Guess she didn’t know that was a thing. I’m not too happy about it.”

A beat. A moment where we just sat together and watched TV. Then, someone spoke.

“... Collateral damage barbie, huh?” Lisa’s smile turned absolutely devilish, her shoulders shaking with barely contained mirth as she reached for her laptop on the side table. “I don’t think I’ve heard that one before, and it’s not fair that I’m the only one to have heard it, right?” Her eyes began to dance with an evil light as she started to type like a madwoman. “Let’s share the love~!”

Lisa began to cackle, and I was stuck with the feeling that I had just done something very, very bad.
“Spandex shorts and muscle tees, Boss? Really?” I asked my boss incredulously after I’d just finished emptying out the boxes and bags of clothing she’d bought for me under an assumed name...and that was it. No underwear, no variations. There was probably someone out there, right now, thinking that a contender for the world’s fattest human had decided to take up lifting. “Where the hell did you buy all this? And why just this?”

It wasn’t that I didn’t appreciate it or anything, seeing how my stolen pair of shorts had been getting kind of...musty...in recent days. But this was a bit much, wasn’t it? The number of them was closer to twenty than not.

This was a hell of a thing to spring on someone in the middle of cooking stir-fry. Cabbage. Yum, yum...and I was starting to wonder where my sweat shorts had gone. Probably the trash, knowing Lisa.

“It’s called the internet, you Luddite. You can buy just about anything on it.” Lisa sniffed, completely focused on her laptop as she proceeded to turn Glory Girl’s new nickname into a meme for the ages. Adding some strength to her shitposting was the GG hero doll (with kung fu grip) that she’d bought with specialty clothing before she’d surrounded it with a scattered lego set. “Though, sadly, just about anything doesn’t mean that it’s instant. I’m still waiting for your casual wear. Which was expensive, by the way.”

“... How long is that going to take?” A flip of the pan sent its contents flying upwards, amusing me more than it should have when it all came back down without a drop spilled. Chef orc. Heh. That was probably heretical somewhere. “A week? Two? And how expensive?”

This was important. I was already living here as is, and she’d bought me food, even if it wasn’t quite enough for my needs. She was going to make me self-conscious.

“How long does it normally take to make quintuple extra large t-shirts, pants and sleepwear?” Lisa shrugged as she did some last minute adjustments to her camera and the scene. The ‘burning’ car was a nice touch. “Think of it as an extension of the investment I’m putting into you.”

Another flip was done, and I started poking at the mess I’d made with a spatula while mulling that one over.

I had no idea what she expected of me, but it had to be pretty big if she was spending this much on me so early in the year. From what I understood, from talking to her and half-remembered knowledge, the Undersiders weren’t actually a thing yet. They existed, but they did some seriously small time, low-risk, low pay stuff. Comparatively low pay, anyway, when split amongst four people.

They were essentially a non-entity when it came to rep.

Lisa had the cash flow of someone that worked as a manager in a fast food restaurant that had, just recently, gotten a raise. This wasn’t a year from now when she would be, supposedly, rolling in cash and influence with her own private army. This was Lisa, struggling teenage girl under the thumb of a total douche… I was going to have to start making money, it seemed. This was starting to get me nervous.
Being homeless was no joking matter.

“Hey, when you’re done playing Iron Chef I need you over here.” Lisa’s camera light flashed once, twice. Both times from different angles of the surprisingly artistic scene she’d set up, only to destroy for authenticity. Shitposting was serious business in this household it seemed. “Because of reasons.”

“You’re a real smooth talker, Boss.” I chuckled as her order came at just the right time for me to turn the oven off and start finishing up. “Got a tongue made out of diamonds.”

“With gold and silver filigree,” She chimed in pleasantly. “Got to keep adding to that value, don’t ya know?”

“Of course.” A pot of steaming hot stir-fry in one hand and a pair of forks planted in a bowl in the other, I left the kitchen, cloaked in culinary glory and a tiny, tiny apron that I’d worn for laughs. Kiss the Cook, a classic. “I bet it’s a Faberge original and everything.”

“Damn right it is.” She stuck her tongue out at me cutely, slightly reinforcing the slowly burgeoning idea that something had happened to her in between the time when Taylor went out on her first night and now to turn her into the kind of bitch she was in canon. “Now stop admiring my tongue, you weirdo, and watch PHO explode with me.”

Doing just that, I handed her a fork that she took without comment. She just kind of rolled it about in her fingers a little with a sheepish smile, also taking her own bowl to eat while we watched the comments roll by at a lightning pace. Something that proved to be a distraction when, while I was making my way down to the halfway point of my pot, just enough for me to feel like I wasn’t starving to death, I got a picture taken of me.

Dazzled, and maybe choking on my food a little, I couldn’t do much of anything when Lisa uploaded it onto her laptop and started typing, making what looked like an account… With my picture as the avatar. Me with a fork in my mouth, wearing my silly apron and hat and—the hell?

“Greens for gains?” I asked dully.

“Chef 53. You are now a meme.” Lisa sounded painfully satisfied with herself as she took in my disgruntled expression. “Congratulations.”

“... But I don’t wanna be a meme,” I grumbled, covering up the fact that I was actually sort of flattered behind my strong, masculine features. Never let them see you sweat...like now when, after a page refresh, my new thread already had ten replies. “Oh, Jesus. Why?”

“He can’t help you now, Moss. You’re on the web.” Lisa pointed at the name of my account as I mouthed the name she’d suddenly given me with my input. Another page refresh, turning ten replies into thirty made me choke on my food again. “Your prayers fall on deaf ears.”

“... Moss?”

“Yep...and damn this is good. I’m not into greens but this is something else. Good job.” Lisa took another bite of her food with an expression of relish. “Anyway, you’re green, right?”

“Yeah?”
“And you’re built like a boulder, right?”

“Go on.”

“And what grows on boulders?” Lisa swiped the flat of her hand down my stomach, making me chuckle as her hand bounced over the bumps of my abs. “Moss!” She nodded, looking proud of herself. “Thoughts?”

I thought that one over for a moment. Just a moment before I had my answer. “That sounds painfully contrived.”

“Well. If you’re going to be like that.” Lisa pouted. Badly. I could see her trying to fight back a smile. “Screw you, you jerk. Shows me what I get when I try to do something nice for you.”

I stuck my own far more impressive tongue out at her and laughed when Lisa almost fell off her seat when she jumped away from me with a playful scream.

I was pretty lucky, wasn’t I?

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Today had been a day of ups and downs. Highs and lows.

For example, her work had been total ass. One of those days where, if you’d known that it was coming, you wouldn’t go at all because fuck you. Fuck your boss, fuck your coworkers, and fuck your job. Like she’d just contracted something life-threatening and she wasn’t feeling up to working today because of her slow onset of delirium… One of those days.

She’d barely walked into the loft before Coil had started blowing up her phone. Asking her questions, some of them stupidly inane, one after the other while everyone else got to jerk off somewhere… It was probably a sign of just how good her quality of life had become lately when she hadn’t reached right for the Tylenol.

She had something better than Tylenol these days. Much better.

“How mad do you think Glory Girl is going to be when she sees the thread?” Lisa asked sleepily, feeling full and warm and safe in a way that she couldn’t ever remember feeling before. “On a scale of one to ten.”

Even with all the issues that came in this giant ball of fluff and meat, keeping him around had been the greatest idea she’d ever had by far. When he was right next to her…her mind was awhirl. She didn’t know how else she could say it.

“Twelve. Easy.” Moss (Fuck you. That was a great name.) answered without even thinking about it. “Three hundred pages on PHO in two hours, Lisa. It’s on all the Chans too. She might as well just get rebranded at this point.”

Lisa snickered and didn’t say anything more as continued to use her minion as the recliner he was. Warm. Toasty. Friendly. That said recliner all over. Sure, the arm that had somehow found itself around her shoulder was a little stuffy, but she didn’t mind it much. Not while it was washing away all her troubles anyway.
She was lucky, having found such a mellow and useful parahuman. So, so lucky.

Lisa, after watching the laptop for far too long, turned it off and moved onto something else, dragging Moss along. ‘Who Wants Dis Guy’ to be specific. A ‘reality’ dating show where a bunch of what were probably ‘former’ mobsters looked to win a new trophy girl on national television.

The last thirty years hadn’t done anything good to the families, to say the least...and Lisa was fine with that. It was fucking hilarious. Also, fuck those guys. They were assholes. Something that her friend agreed with as he roared with laughter whenever Vinny did something stupidly macho that blew up in his face.

Literally. If he had been just a couple seconds early to the parking lot that car bomb would have got him. Next time, Lucca. Next time. There was always another chance... Wait. No. Lucca was probably going to die next episode, seeing how Jackie was looking at him. Never mind.

Laughter was had. Time passed. Starts and stops occurred that she attributed to just how tired she was. Snapshots in time where she found herself in different positions without her even thinking about it.

Example. Her past. Her hands over his shirt, rubbing his stomach, fiddling with it just as she would a remote. An arm around her waist, holding her close as she put her face into his chest with a gentle sigh. A hand on his thigh. The feeling of spandex, flat and smooth under her fingers.

Example. Her present. In his lap. Her head fitting neatly into space between his shoulder and neck. Arms wrapped around the back of his head in a tight hug. Her breasts aching under her old hoodie as she pressed her chest against his, grinding against it to soothe and calm...and she couldn’t remember if she was wearing a bra.

Had she been when she’d come back from work? Had she ever? ... Whatever.

“Have I ever told you,” Lisa whispered into Moss’s ear. Giggled. “That you’re my best friend? And that...that you’re a nice guy?”

And he was. He totally was. They’d known each other for all of two days but...it was like they just connected, you know? She’d known people for years that didn’t get her like he did... They’d... They’d shitposted together. He’d cooked her dinner. He made the pain go away. BFF’s for life.

“I don’t think so,” Moss replied slowly, sending a shiver down Lisa’s spine and...other...places as the vibrations from his chest met her body. “But thank you. It’s nice to know I’m appreciated.”

“I appreciate you. I really do.” Lisa giggled again, feeling a little sad, but not too sad, about Moss’s lack of hair as she began gently stroking the back of his head. She could feel the stubble coming in though, so all she had to do was wait. “You have no idea just how...” Lisa rocked her hips. Just a little to get herself comfortable as her seat got increasingly hard...and she let out a breathy moan when something brushed at that spot in between her legs just right. “Much!”

She rocked her hips again. Then again. Then again. Then again, again, again, again, again, again, again—

“Whoa! Hey!”

Lisa found herself moving without her input, her head lolling back for a moment before she forced it
back on straight. Her eyes as well, letting her see the wide worried ones of her friend who was now holding her at arm's length… Why though? Was there something wrong with her?

“Lisa? Are you…what…” He swallowed audibly, his Adam’s apple bobbing like a ship at sea as he gave her a quick up and down. “Are you high?”

Lisa frowned. Found this question to be irrelevant to what really mattered here…and she was going to make that clear in the only way she knew how.

Being as straightforward as possible even when, especially when, it made someone uncomfortable.

“I dunno. Maybe…but that isn’t important.” Lisa’s voice lowered, becoming the closest thing to sultry that she could think of when her heart felt like it was going to explode. “Are you going to fuck me now, or what?”

The look of mortified shock on his face. The sputtering and half-hearted denials… It cracked her up like nothing else had, or ever will, again.
“There’s nothing physically wrong with you. Nothing I can find anyway. Mentally is a different issue entirely.”

Vicky shivered and slipped her tongue back into her mouth as soon as Amy let go and started wiping off the tips of her fingers with a nearby rag. The final embarrassing act in a string of acts that had gradually escalated over a period of twenty minutes. From Amy starting off by grabbing her hand only to find nothing wrong, to her sticking her fingers in Victoria’s mouth to feel it out for abnormalities.

Not many people knew that Amy’s medical skills went beyond just her powers. Even without them, she was fully capable of filling in for an accredited physician. She should have been giving out prescriptions and scheduling appointments with just a wave of her pen. The only difference between her and actual doctors was that she did better without gloves than with, and she could get away with it without a malpractice suit… She also didn’t have a degree. That too.

She didn’t have time for that noise. The qualifications were insane.

“But...Ames,” Vicky said carefully as her sister doused her hands in Purell, on edge as she felt her own words pass her lips. It was weird and embarrassing, and it kept making her shiver and...never mind. “How do you explain my face? The burning feeling and...things?” The chances of Amy not noticing that she had almost had an orgasm when she’d had her face palpated were slim to none...but she wasn’t going to say anything about it.

You just didn’t talk about something like that with your sister. That was all.

“There is nothing wrong with your face,” Amy said in exasperated reply. “Visually or not. Your lips are the same size, your bones haven’t formed up in strange new ways and the nerves on your face are the same as they’ve always been.” Then the mousy brunette’s lips pursed with pure frustration. “I have no idea why they light up in a stiff breeze or what to do about it though and it’s pissing me off. What even happened to you anyway?”

“... Remember that one Case 53 that fell out of the sky and cock slapped me?”

Amy’s frustrated expression got even worse. It was nice that she worried about her, but she really needed to lighten up. “Why do you have to keep saying it like that?”

“Because everyone that already knows, knows exactly what I mean when I say it, Ames. It’s not exactly forgettable so I’ve got to own it before it owns me.” Vicky rolled her eyes, glad that she didn’t have to worry about that setting her off at the very least. That would have sucked...and she really hoped this shit was temporary. “Anyway, Dean told me how the PRT has been looking for him after he escaped from the hospital. Something about how he mooned Miss Militia and jumped out a window to go streaking in the middle of the day before he disappeared.”

Amy took a seat on Vicky’s desk chair, clasped her hands, and put them in front of her mouth. The very picture of close attention.

“So, while I was flying around ABB territory, looking for something to do… I saw him. Standing there.” Victoria raised her arms up high above her head, not even close to reaching his height but
“... What was he doing?”

“I... I guess he was raking leaves? I don’t know. He had a rake.” Vicky shrugged and felt a tingling feeling start up in the back of her head. “Either way, there he was. Standing there. Rake in hand and a pile of leaves nearby when I came down and I told him about how the PRT wanted to talk to him about what had happened the other day.”

She didn’t say anything about the old ladies though. That wasn’t necessary. Nope. No one needed to hear that.

Amy raised an eyebrow, “and then that’s when he punched you, right?”

“No.” Vicky frowned. “That’s when he started his ‘Tv dad watching the Super Bowl’ routine and blew me off. That asshole.”

“Tv dad watching the Super Bowl routine?” Amy asked dully.

“Grunting whenever I asked him a question!” Vicky threw her arms up again, this time in frustration. “Wearing a toga, sweatpants, and pointing at random things and in random directions while not talking to me!” Bringing her arms down, she clenched one into a fist. “So I did something about it.”

“Oh, god.”

“I popped him one right in the nose.” Vicky nodded. “And told him that if he didn’t start talking to me I’d—”

“He’s mute, Vicky,” Amy whispered.

Vicky felt a cold sweat start building upon her back. “... Huh?”

“That Case 53 you beat up?” Amy pulled her hands away from her mouth to start rubbing her forehead, revealing the grimace that she’d probably been hiding since Victoria had begun her story. “He’s mute. He can’t talk.”

“You’re...” Vicky chuckled nervously as she felt that cold sweat begin to spread. “You’re kidding, right? Because... well he still escaped from PRT custody right? So... It wasn’t like I beat him up for no reason...?”

“From what I was told by the doctor in charge of the floor at the time and not some random fucking nobody that had no idea what he was talking about—”

Victoria began to wilt when Amy stood up and began to pace, her hands waving angrily in the air as she did.

—he jumped out of the window, naked, because a couple of nurses had, for some reason, decided that it was a good idea to corner him and demand a semen sample! With them in charge of extraction!”

Amy spun around, this time to give Vicky a jab in the chest that made the blonde grab at her right tit
with a yelp. “Now, besides the M/S procedures everyone on that floor is going through, just in case, the entire hospital is being forced to sit through seminars on sexual harassment and why you shouldn’t do it! So you did beat him up for no reason, you fucking moron!”

Vicky cringed, then forced herself in a bad attempt to lighten the mood. “... That was mean, Ames.” Really bad.

Amy, after continuing her glare for a long while and causing Victoria to sweat what felt like a couple of buckets worth, she sagged. Her face took on a tired cast and she started to rub her temples like a woman possessed. That headache must have been a monster. “I’m...I’m going to go study...relax...and hope that you won’t beat up any more disabled capes when I let you out of my sight.”

Vicky nodded as she, carefully, eyed Amy making her way out of her room. “I won’t.”

“And you better tell him you’re sorry when you see him again or I swear to god, Victoria...”

“I will.” Vicky tried a smile. “Can you not tell Mom and Dad before I do? Please?”

Amy paused at the doorway for a beat...then left, leaving Victoria with the idea that she’d said something wrong again. Today just wasn’t her day. Well. It seemed that she was just going to have to make sure that tomorrow was better.

Vicky fell back on her bed and pulled out her phone for the daily check of her social media presence. The one constant in her life besides her hatred of Nazis and love of designer clothing.

That was all she could do...and...1400 messages?

“What the fuck?”

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Victoria couldn’t say whether she should be happy that someone had taken the time to make a meme about her, or angry that someone had taken the time to make a meme about her... But she was definitely leaning towards angry, considering what the meme was about. What they’d called her...and the hundreds of pages that the meme had bred on her thread.

Collateral. Damage. Barbie. What kind of name was that? A catchy as hell one, she guessed, seeing how her thread hadn’t been half as active even during her debut. There was a good chance that she’d never be able to live it down now...but she had to try. She’d been trying for the last few hours actually. It had led to some...difficulties.

Vicky ignored the buzzing of her phone getting a text and continued to type her rebuttal.

She’d had to break off today’s date with Dean to deal with this. Clean, succinct, to the point. He knew the importance of PR for a cape and, at the start, he’d been understanding about it. But, then, he’d come out with something that had thrown any cred he’d built up with her that day down the toilet.

“Don’t do anything crazy, Vicky.” She said out loud to the empty air just as she finished putting VoidCowboy on report. Hopefully, this time, he’d get banned for longer than a week...asshole. “Don’t make it worse for yourself, Vicky.”
Get fucked, Dean. She knew what she was doing.

So, she set about doing it. She complimented the right sorts of people. Subtly shut down the wrong types of people. Made jokes and turned what could have been a devastating PR-nuke into a case of someone having just a little too much time on their hands and a hardon for making her look bad. Difficult, but possible.

It was impressive how much effort had gone into this though. The setup. The picture quality. The fucking lighting… This would probably follow Victoria for the rest of her life after this. New Wave as well. She suspected the E-88 had done it herself. They were the only ones that bothered playing with PR and the media…but it wasn’t as bad as it could have been without her, and that was enough.

After doing all that she could do without her own team of lifeless nerds, Vicky gave it up and hoped for the best. Still seething, but not feeling particularly violent as she continued trolling her way through PHO and it’s many, many boards and memes.

*Especially the memes.*

She blinked and had to stop. Had to consider that while she was getting burned online on the altar of public opinion, the C53 she’d fought was busy dragging in the accolades...as the most pumped Chef 53. The advocate of all things scrumptious, nutritious, and fabulously muscled everywhere...and damn. She hadn’t exactly been paying attention to how good he looked during their fight because, you know...fighting.

She licked her lips as she followed the line in his arm. The gently bulging veins, popping out from his muscles as he fed himself a good helping of whatever it was that was in that pot. The way his pecs bulged and strained against that little apron of his and that wide-eyed look of surprise on his face. Even if the fact that his only similarities to humanity were that he had two arms, two legs, a torso and a head… This was actually pretty good. He looked...approachable. Huggable even.

It was a complete turnaround from how he’d looking during the fight. Like he was a *person* instead of a monster in parahuman flesh. That was just her opinion anyway. An opinion that had taken a huge step back from what it had been before.

“I really fucked up, didn’t I?” Vicky rubbed the back of her neck, sighed, and started rummaging around in her purse for some gum. “I should probably bring him a novelty pencil and a notebook as an apology… Yeah. That sounds good.”

Finally, with a stick of gum in hand, Vicky barely wasted anytime unwrapping it before it was at her mouth. Touching her lips. Sliding in...and she spasmed in place, almost choking on her gum in surprise as she darkened the front of her yoga pants in arousal and ‘almost’ fell out of her seat. An ‘almost’ that had led to her slumping forward instead, her head hitting the edge of her desk where it stayed and kept it propped up.

When she accidentally kicked her chair out from under her with another spasm, that desk was the only reason she was able to take a knee instead of outright falling on her ass...but she continued to chew anyway, even though she knew it was probably a really, really terrible idea, considering how this had come to be.

She’d heard people say that this cake was ‘orgasmic’. That eating this thing had been like ‘an orgy in their mouth’. They had no idea what the *fuck* they were talking about. The texture of the gum in her
mouth. The flavor. The way it shifted over her tongue and along the edges of her cheeks...it was a
sexual experience. Enough to give a girl an oral fixation for the rest of their life if they weren’t
careful.

Vicky tried to stand again. Got part of the way up, and failed and fell once more. This time with the
feeling of the soaking wet material of her pants biting deep in between the lips of her pussy. Giving
her a vicious cameltoe that, when her first orgasm washed over her only made it all the better...almost
too much so, prompting her to start pulling at them as if they’d actually given her a nip, forcing them
away from her crotch and down over the swell of her ass to leave them both bare and ‘safe’ as she
began to dirty the floor.

Thank god for hardwood. She’d have never been able to get it out otherwise… A strange thought,
considering the hand she’d stopped using to hold herself up and stuck in between her legs. Just a
little something to push her along as she allowed her eyes to go out of focus when she sunk as many
of her fingers as she could fit into her slit. Just two, at the moment, but when it was up to the second
knuckle it was enough for her to really draw it out.

It was like she was thirteen again. Like she’d just discovered masturbation for the first time all over
again as she continued to chew. Drooling all over her arm like some kind of idiot as she forced
herself to hold back every sigh and groan. When she moved her arm a little and gave her fingers a
little bit of a curl though...she just stopped chewing and bit her arm. Enjoying the feeling that was her
giving the ball of mint and happiness in her mouth a tongue lashing as she felt the puddle beneath her
reach her knees.

She had never been a gusher. She couldn’t have been said to have even been exceptionally ‘juicy’
when she did something like this...masturbation or otherwise. She wasn’t a desert. She wasn’t a river.
Just somewhere in the middle where she’d been happy to be.

Something about this though, something that she couldn’t quite put her finger on had changed that.
The situation. The moment. Whatever it was that Jolly Green had done to her before she’d run
away… She didn’t know. Things had changed though, and that couldn’t be denied.

She was the ocean now. A never-ending tide of lubricant and wetness that had her fingers gliding in
and out of her at a breakneck pace. Far faster than she could ever remember going before the friction
started to get to her...and now, she had to laugh about that dildo she kept under her bed.

She’d spent twenty dollars for a single sex toy when she could have spent one dollar on twelve. She
wanted her money back!

She almost choked again when she tried to laugh at her little joke, her eyes refocusing for the first
time in (Seconds? Minutes? Hours?)on a single, large blur of light in response. Details started to fill
themselves in. Colors. Contours. Understanding as she came to see that C53 again, up close and
personal...and the ocean suddenly got a great deal wetter.

Those muscles. Those eyes. That vulnerable expression on what might as well have been a mountain
made of nothing more than metal and stone. That dick of his...that dick...it was something else.
Something that would never be able to fit if she tried in a million years...but there was nothing wrong
with a bit of fantasy, was there?

She added another finger. Made it into three in a poor attempt at recreating what she had seen, what
she had once felt for all of a moment… It was one more than she’d ever done before, and she could
feel the difference. The uncomfortably pleasurable feeling of her being forced to stretch around
something bigger than she’d ever taken before as she stared up at that picture. Lost himself in his pecs. The curves of his arms and the dips of his stomach.

And then she saw a welt. One of the many she’d left him, directly over his heart, not hidden by his apron...a mark that she’d left on him...and then she just completely lost it.

The gum she’d been playing with disappeared down her throat as her vision went white and her throat started to swallow reflexively. Completely opaque, with the sight of him and his body little more than a memory. An imprint on her mind that she’d hold onto for years to come as an example as to what made sex satisfying...and all of that to the sound of liquid falling. Spattering and spraying across her floor and hand as her super strong insides clenched and rippled around her fingers hard enough to bruise.

Her legs seized violently. Her arms beat as lightly as they were able to against anything nearby as the rolling waves or her final orgasm tried to wipe her mind of everything in it... It felt less like an orgasm and more as though someone had set off a bomb inside of her, with much the same effect. She tensed. She writhed. She was brought to tears as her toes curled so hard that she heard them crack and, for the briefest of moments, Vicky found she couldn’t even breathe anymore.

To say she was terrified while this was going on was an understatement. It just went on, and on, and on, even as she fell onto the side, soaking the rest of her body in the puddle she’d made as she jerked about like a fish. Gasping, choking...feeling barely alive as she found herself looking at the swinging blades of the fan on the ceiling above her head, surrounded by spots of dark and wet. A ruined, soaked ball of pink yoga wear on her stomach while her toes began to cramp.

“... Holy fuck.” Vicky moaned, her throat like sandpaper as she did. Sandpaper and fire. Stupid screaming. “Did…did I just squirt?” She pushed her pants off of her and ignored the squish that came of it. Several drops audibly fell all over the room and she had no idea where the air freshener was… Meh. “I thought that only happened in porn.”

Well. Now she knew different now, didn’t she?

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Lisa looked up at the ceiling. Eyes open. Wide awake. Blanket tucked up to her chin and finally sober again after Moss had forced her into the shower, thinking she’d been hit with a dose of ecstasy. Today had been a day of highs and lows. Lows and highs… The sensation of a dick against her lower lips.

“I think I might have screwed up somewhere.”

But, above all, it had been a learning day. That was what was important.
Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

The first half of a sex scene! Move onto the second chapter for the continuation!

“I’ve been spending a lot of money lately… Maybe I shouldn’t…” Lisa spoke out loud to no one in particular.

Maybe herself. Maybe the burned out old man running the register reading a magazine. Perhaps the bisexual male couple in the corner looking over a pair of assless chaps that might have been a size too small. Or maybe, she was speaking to the giant cowboy sex doll at the entrance to the store that had scared the shit out of her when it had told her to fart in its mouth. Who knew?

“Maybe I should just leave.”

Lisa had been making some hard choices in the last few days. Being the hard girl, making hard decisions that could affect the entirety of her life, and the life of her minion for years to come. Her wallet had never exactly been what anyone could have called flush before. Thin, edging into plump, maybe? The fabled skinny-fat wallet… But now though?

It was just skinny. Almost sad in its nearly flaccid, card-carrying state...and payday was so far away.

Lisa bit her lip as she turned her head from side to side. Wondered whether the tub of lube or the gallon of lube had a greater value for her money. On one hand, the tub of lube was a tub of lube. It had staying power. Presence. The taste of artificial strawberry.

She then turned to the gallon.

On the other hand, the tub was twenty bucks more expensive and weighed almost fifty pounds. The gallon, just as its name suggested, just weighed a gallon. It also had the taste of strawberry and, even if it didn’t quite have that feeling of effectively limitless lubrication that its cousin did...it should be enough for a couple of sessions, right?

She’d thought that she could handle her time with Moss... No. Wait. That sounded defeatist. Again. Try again.

Breathe in. Breathe out.

She knew that she could handle her time with Moss, as long as she took the time to blow off steam first. She hadn’t had a good, relaxing, orgasm in years and it was not helping her deal with what her life had become at all. All of that stress, those feelings that had been forcibly suppressed under a hill of power related issues and enlightened self-interest just...they’d been at the front of her mind lately.

The last few days had not been kind to her.

Lisa picked up the gallon, tucked it under her arm, and pretended not to notice the appreciative look
the teller gave her when she made to open her wallet. She then denied his offer of half-off on a
vibrator, leaving him disgruntled as she hustled out of the first sex shop she’d ever walked into and
right back to her van.

She was going home. She was going to hide in her room. She was going to lay down a towel, pour
enough lube on herself to blind a plane on a sunny day, and wear Moss’s pants on her face (She
might have had a problem) like a mask while she jilled herself stupid… Which sounded kind of
wrong-headed, until you thought about it.

Poison could be a cure. A cure could be poison. The same basic principle except it was being applied
to masturbation...and no. She wasn’t doing this just because she missed a quick afternoon fingerbang
after a bad day.

Lisa buckled the gallon in, her face shamefully warm as she did so, before she set off to her
apartment, glad that Moss had left for the afternoon to do whatever it was he did in the afternoon.

That was just a nice bonus. That was all. Yes.

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“You are stupid!” Granny Yugao continued to beat me around the head and shoulders with a
bamboo switch, uncaring of how I covered them with my arms and cowered. Where had she got that
thing from anyway! It hadn’t been there, and then it had! “Stupid! Stupid, stupid, stupid!”

“Jesus! Stop!” I waved my hand about lightly and got a rap on my knuckles that taught me the error
of my ways. Seriously. I’d been hit with a pipe before, and stabbed with a knife only to have it
snap...but this hurt like a motherfucker. “What did I do!?”

“Your gibberish words will not help you!”

I yelped when she caught my ear directly with the tip. Was I bleeding? I might have been bleeding…
I shouldn’t have told her about what happened, or my worries about Lisa’s physical or mental
health...and I definitely shouldn’t have brought up how I suspected she abused party drugs to deal
with her difficult job. It hadn’t made her happy with me at all...also, I needed a bigger pencil and
notepad.

These fingers were not made for golf, I tell you what.

“When a girl wants to climb the mountain to its peak for the first time, sometimes they need extra
courage!” Granny Yugao aimed low this time, dropping me to my knees, hands on my crotch when
she whipped the head of my dick after she missed my actual head far too many times for her liking.

I screamed a little. I might have cried. I won’t lie...but she was merciless in the face of my garbled
pleas.

“She is a gentle valley! An unspoiled flower in the garden! You are the mighty Fuji! The longest
spear in the armory!”

I started crawling back and away, not that it helped my position any. She just kept hitting me
wherever she could see green.

"If I was in her position I’d have done worse than a little white pill! I’d look for magic, and go on
pilgrimage for the blessings of at least three different gods!”

Finally, after giving my head one more whipping in punctuation, she stopped. Dropped her switch and put her hands on her hips to give me an angry glare. One that burns my very soul in a way that only a grandmother could hope to do before she whipped her arm out to point to the street. “Leave!”

I stared at her, shocked. I…I still had chores to do. The boiler still needed a new seal and—rice.

“No! I know that look! No chores!” She hit me again, this time with her hands, forcing me to my feet with the closest thing to a whimper that I possessed in this body. “Go! Bring her the spoils of war to lay at her feet! Beg for her forgiveness and hope that she takes mercy on you! I will not!”

I power walked out and away from her house, fearfully looking back every few steps to see if she was still hobbling after me...she was.

“My hopes of not useless descendants rest on you!” She continued yelling at me, easily ignoring the weak protests of her shiftless layabout of a grandson that I was, halfway sure, was actually an ABB money man… She had a point though. He was kind of useless. “Stop being such a bitch!”

Holy fuck, Yugao! I got it! Stop! I’m going!

==========

Was this really a good idea?

That was something that Lisa had to ask herself when she stepped into her closet and started digging through the artificially large pile of dirty clothes on the floor. Down, down, down. All the way to the bottom of a sea of summer clothes that she’d probably never wear again...and then she found it. The treasure within. A Tupperware container that had once held a series of smaller containers, repurposed for something greater.

Okay. She was being dramatic. It was actually just a pair of old sweatpants that she’d, twice so far, cracked open and let sit somewhere to deal with Coil’s bullshit. That was all it was... Had been, she meant. That was all it had been.

Or had it?

She rolled the Tupperware container around in her hands a little in silence. In nothing more than a large, white tee and a pair of ankle socks. All great clothes for a relaxing evening in, with her old stuff lying around the sink in her private bathroom...and the lube already warm, because she wasn’t an idiot… Wait.

She wasn’t an idiot. What was she waiting for? She was pretty much done!

Dropping the container on the bed after cracking the lid a little, just a little to get her going, she shyly padded over to the only window in the room and made damned sure it was closed. Partly her stalling for time, partly her being seriously concerned about her privacy. The number of people around her apartment that had a long lens camera was just crazy. Bunch of perverts…

Anyway, after she was done wishing that she had the money to move somewhere a little more upscale, something that faded away quicker than usual as the pants took their toll, she got the lube. The cup that she’d warmed up in the microwave a little before she filled it with oil...it was a crappy
cup. Chipped. Worn. It might have said ‘#1 Dad’ on it at some point or another.

It was a hell of a thing to have nearby when she was about to touch herself. Not exactly romantic.

Taking that moment of distraction as what it was, she flipped the Tupperware's top off completely. Took it in slow, deep, and even breathes as she felt her worries wash away, one by one. A hand in the cup was quick to follow. Just to moisten the tip of her fingers before she pulled them back up and watched them drip.

Another dip. Thoughtful this time as she rubbed her fingers together and had them slide without a whisper.

When she slid that hand under her false dress though and between her legs to give it a bit of a glaze to start things off though...“Oh...” Lisa’s eyes fell slightly before closing completely. “Oh, that’s nice...” There was most definitely something a tad louder than a whisper.

This wasn’t so bad... Or so she thought just before her door shook under the weight of a meaty fist, causing her to drop her cup all over the floor and wreck her deposit.

“Lisa!” Moss hissed through the relatively thin material of her front door. “Are you there?”

She had to stifle a scream as she started hiding things under her bed. Things, meaning pants, and a really sticky cup. The stain on the carpet was just going to have to stay though...as did her state of undress.

She had to let Moss in before someone saw him. A little bit of nudity was a small thing compared to having uncomfortable questions asked later on about the C53 hanging around her door... Maybe. It was a half-and-half.

“Thanks, Lisa. Today’s been a day if you know what I mean.”

After opening the door, Lisa hid everything but her face behind it. The upper half so that all he could see was her eyes as he strode in while carrying a couple of plastic bags and what looked like a six-pack of beer... If he’d been shopping out in public, she was going to kick his ass.

“Found out there’s a bounty on my head today...or, at least, that’s what I heard from some E-88 that tried to collect. Worth it though.”

When he sat down and slumped, allowing his head to rest on the highest part of the couch as he closed his eyes and looked at the ceiling, Lisa slipped by him. Right into the kitchen so that she could hide behind the island that now separated them. “Yeah? How so?”

“I got shot a couple of times. It was kinda nerve-wracking at first, all those automatics.” Moss scratched himself lightly as Lisa looked at him in alarm. “There was nothing to worry about though. Didn’t even tickle.” He gestured at the bags in front of him just before, without even looking, he got a can of beer and popped it open. It was gone in an instant. “I found out that I could probably live off of alcohol if I drank enough. The harder the better...also, you should probably check the bags on the table.”

“Why?” Lisa asked cautiously.

“Just check em’.” He smiled around his second beer. “It’s a surprise.”
“... What kind of surprise?” Lisa took a step around the island, enticed by the very notion that there was something in front of her that she didn’t know about. Curse her easily caught curiosity.

“A good one.” Third beer. Not even nearly enough to affect his faculties at his size...but he was definitely feeling it somewhere low. All that energy going where it was needed, Lisa supposed... “I promise.”

Lisa licked her lips but continued to hide as she wondered whether being compressed like that hurt. It looked like it did... It was just a little while. A minute or so while he continued to keep his eyes closed, most likely to wait for her to say something about his gift that led to Lisa feeling safe enough to walk out into the open.

She wasn’t slow about opening the bag and looking it through… Curiosity was a hell of a thing. Her heart fluttered. A physical thing. A palpable sensation. The feeling of a burning, near caustic blush growing on her chest and face.

Money. Almost completely in small bills, interspersed with twenties, fifties, and hundreds. Close to five thousand dollars, all-in-all...and that wasn’t even bringing up the many cards he’d brought. A mixed assortment of credit and debit cards that would, hopefully, double what he’d brought home. Maybe, even triple.

She, carefully, closed the bag as she took a look over her shoulder. Still looking up. His arms along the back of the couch, showing off just how good he looked in the outfit she’d bought for him on a whim.

Muscle shirts and spandex. The bare basics. The result of her looking for a cheap, quick deal and not having to worry about that thing with his bare ass hanging out in the wind happening again… The whole set clung to his body like a second skin, leaving pretty much nothing to the imagination.

She bit her lower lip again. For what had to have been more than the tenth time that day as she gave him a once over, just to make sure she wasn’t imagining things. That she couldn’t read every vein and wrinkle under those shorts of his… and she hadn’t been imagining it.

This. This whole...thing. It was making her life, really, really hard. The money. The safety. The relief and companionship... The promises of sexual gratification, just out of reach.

“Hey.” Lisa started with a swallow as she caught the hem of her shirt in between her fingers. She began to rub, nervously drying them off on the fabric. “Moss?”

“Yeah, Lisa?” He replied, sounding smug. So, so smug… Like she’d fall all over him and praise him to the skies for what he’d done without her. For her...he wasn't wrong, per say. “How do you like it?”

“I… I guess you could say I like it.” She nodded. Not for him, but for herself just as she pulled her shirt up high. “I like it a lot.” Up past her stomach and over her breasts, leaving her completely naked… Still wet with lube that she could feel drying in the open air. “Now, look at me so I can tell you how much.”

A lot of women had settled for a lot less than all of the things that Moss offered her…and, once you thought about it, it was the third day since they’d met. The third day they’d spent together in the same house.
When Moss’s head finally came down his eyes went from lazy to fully awake in a moment. A number so minute that she couldn’t quantify it if she wanted to as he took her in. Her breasts, her stomach, her hips...the little patch of hair over her crotch and what lay beneath as she forced herself not to look away from him.

Third day. Third date. Same thing in this case... She might as well just go for it.

Male. Female. Size difference notwithstanding they took the view in, in the way it was meant to be taken… She could see he got where she was coming from. What she wanted from him.

“I’m not high,” Lisa said in a tight whisper as she took a step forward. Breasts high, shirt even higher. “I’m not drunk.” The spot between her legs twitched, wetly and audibly clenched as she witnessed an erection in progress. An obvious growth of what had once been something terrifying to her. “I just really want you to fuck me.”

There could be no misunderstandings here. Not another cold shower and sleepless night in the dark. She wouldn’t let there be another.

“So give me all that I can take and then just a little further...and I know I look young, that I am young and all that shit. Also that you’re worried about it. It’s okay though. You won’t get in trouble.”

Lisa’s forced stare finally broke and her head turned to the side in embarrassment. She was...outspoken, sure. But she was still a virgin. This was a little much, but damn if it didn’t give her a thrill.

“My fake ID says I’m legal. And that’s good enough, right?”

Lisa shivered when Moss’s tongue poked out of his mouth. A huge, red muscle that he ran across his lips, just as she did her own. There were thoughts there. Unaddressed worries.

He leaned forward slowly. Painfully slowly as he put out a hand to her. A hand that she stepped into, leaving her right hip snugly cupped in the palm of his hand. His warm, rough hand...

She grinned. Hard and true as she put a hand on top of his and cocked her hip. Made sure she looked good before things got rough...and they would get rough.

“You’re a confident one, aren’t you?” Lisa raised an eyebrow. The surest and most confident looking thing she’d done all day by far, spent on this moment… Worth it. “Not using two hands to ride this ride is a little much, don’t you think?”

That it was going to get rough wasn’t even in question. It was the how rough part that left her a little fuzzy though… Hopefully, not too rough of course.

A sneeze could snap her in half. She knew it.

Just as she had asked he added his second hand and placed it on the opposite side of the first. Just as large. Just as rough and warm when he picked her up by the hips, his thumbs firmly pressing into the sides of her waist in a particularly...suggestive...manner.

An insinuation, a promise that, if he’d wanted to he could have completely encircled her waist with
his hands instead...and it made her feel so small as she found herself in his lap again. Her hands on
his chest as she looked up at him and him down at her...and she found herself looking away again,
her blush renewed as a hand found itself at the back of her neck for support.

Lisa’s eyes flickered up, then down again as she gave her lips another lick.

Support for something that she could only guess at doing, never having done it herself...but she
supposed she could at least try.

“You’ve never kissed anyone before, have you?” Moss rumbled as he, gently, brought Lisa’s gaze
back to his, leaving her stunned like a deer in the headlights as she saw a spark in his eyes. A flash of
red that left her feeling safer than she’d ever felt in her life as he lowered his lips to hers. “I can tell...”

His lips brushed against hers just once...and it felt like she was suffocating. She was already fighting
for air, even before she returned that touch with her own. She could taste it again. Taste him. Dark
chocolate. Vanilla. Ground coffee and honey...and that was just his breath.

Another brush. One that led to their lips pressing together. Soft. Firm. The best of both in an oddly
chaste kiss for the moment...and it was just a test. Something that she only found out when they
separated and he allowed her to breathe for a second. Just a moment before they started again.

Long enough that she didn’t have to worry about blacking out when she felt his tongue at her lips,
requesting entrance. A straight line in between them that would have allowed him to see her eyes
rolling in her head if she hadn’t had them closed...not that hiding it mattered any as to whether he
understood what had just happened.

He’d have to be an idiot to not have noticed that she’d just cum. Just a little bit...and, even if he
didn’t know it from her more subtle reactions… She was sitting on his dick, with only a thin layer of
spandex keeping that from becoming something much more. He’d be able to feel it if nothing else.

It didn’t stop him though. Not for long. He just gave her another taste of his tongue with hers rising
up to meet it, tip to tip. One flick, two, and she was gone again. The first orgasm she’d had in years
got just a little bit harder. Just enough to make her seat a great deal less dry before he pulled away,
leaving her weak and shaking everywhere it counted, just before she begged for a break.

“You’re...sensitive,” Moss said in dull surprise, telling Lisa exactly what she already knew. "Cute."

She’d known it had been a long time...but she hadn’t known it had been this long. If she had she
might have been more careful. Asked for less, even if just a little. But she’d already offered. So it
was a moot point...even if her teeth chattered a little when she tried to stop shaking. Especially if.

Backing down from a deal now would just be...it just wasn’t done. That was all. Final say. Shut up.

“If you need to rest a little, I don’t mind.” The green man offered. Smug. Assured. On top and loving
it as, right after she’d told herself she wasn’t going to back off, he tried to give her an out. Dick. “We
live together. We’ve got all the time in the world to make sure that you can last.”

Lisa, in response, reacted in a most mature and appropriate manner when you were in the middle of
your first intimate encounter with someone more than twice your size.

“Why don’t you bite me?” Lisa challenged him with a pout. “Minuteman.”

“You went there?”

“I went there,” Lisa affirmed...and then she squealed when she found herself flipped around by her waist, her hair flying into her face as Moss threw her onto his shoulder and stood up. He then started power walking towards a room, a man on a mission as she laid there, too stunned to even beat at his back. “H-huh? Wha—” A spank on the ass and a full handed grope cut Lisa’s protestations off with a lusty groan. Before she could try again, because of course she would, she found herself dropped onto her bed. “Hey!”

“I’ll show you Minuteman…” Moss snarled, forcing a tremor to run down her limbs as he joined her on the mattress, causing the whole thing to groan and shake like it was barely holding on. “You smug little…”

Rather than climbing on top of her like Lisa had sort of hoped/feared, he came down beside her, grabbed her, and flipped her around until she was dizzy and she couldn’t tell up from down. Down from up. Cabbages from kings...but she could tell what her face was touching without something as paltry as sight.

“I’ll show you why saying that was a bad idea, Lisa. Real goddamn soon.” Moss said, just as the blonde girl's dress' found itself flipped over her back. “But I think you’ll need some loosening up first before I make you eat your words.”

Lisa just needed to not be an idiot to know what warm, moist air washing over her pussy meant...or what the feeling of a hard, throbbing piece of spandex meant when it was touching her lips. Whatever fatigue she’d been feeling up to this point was washed away, replaced with a soul-deep excitement as she sank her fingers into the material under her and began to tear at it with tooth and nail, just as her power began to blare at her for the first time in days—

**Dang—Chance of—Likely to impr—**

—with too little, too late. The shorts were already open. Ripped. Savaged. His cock had already bounced free, splattering her with sweat...and she felt *ecstasy*.

The first thing Lisa noticed, was that it was *green*. The second thing she noticed was that the head was *purple*. The third thing she noticed was that it was *ribbed*. The fourth and final thing, just before latched onto it with her fingers and started laying kisses all across the shaft and glans—

“You’ve given me *incentive*.”

—was that it was *perfect*. All hers. All these little ridges and bumps and hole pleasing rough spots… This sack, this one...no. These two gigantic testicles that she could barely fit in her hands, swollen with sperm. Hers. Hers. All of it. *This cum was for her*—

Lisa wrapped her arms around the massive log of meat in front of her with a mad zeal. A single arm almost strangling it to keep it still while she stroked along the underside, along the single route his seed could take when it was time for it to vent wherever it may.

—and *she needed to get it out*. 
Chapter 9

When I’d first discovered the smell of beer in this body I’d thought that there would be nothing that would be able to compare. Not pizza, not stir-fry, not Grandma Yugao’s rice. Nothing would ever be able to top that smell again...and the taste was even better. I’d been hooked. The whiskey I’d lifted as well had been just as mind-blowing.

My nostrils flared when I dipped my head lower in between her slender thighs, my nose just an inch away from touching them. An excuse to examine her tightly closed, weeping and swollen slit turned into an excuse to breathe her in like she was a blossoming flower. To wallow in the scent of the single greatest thing that God had put on this earth for the good of Orc-kind.

Fuck beer. Fuck alcohol. Just give me a warm, tight pussy and I’d be happy for the rest of my life. It was all I needed. All I wanted… All I’d ever wanted and just never known.

Lisa cried out, the tight grip of her arms around my dick disappearing in the blink of an eye when I slipped her a little tongue. A swipe from clit to bottom that had her jerking around in my hold like a fish that had just found itself hooked and out of water while her lips began to contract. Hard enough that they almost looked like they were breathing as liquid, clear and thick, escaped from her gap.

I could taste strawberry. A minor thing. A contaminant in what was already the greatest food in the world. A food that tasted like...everything. Everything I loved. Things I had no name for and things that I did with one flavor standing out above the rest. The most important of all. One that could only be called, because there were no words in a language I knew to explain it, virgin blonde.

I could taste her virginity. That she’d been untouched by any male before me and that, after this, there would be no male after. She was as good as mine now and all I needed to do was work that into her, body and soul to make it stick… It was a gut feeling.

A gut feeling that I followed to the best of my ability by trying to eat Lisa, my boss, my friend, out like she was a double deep pudding cup that was going to disappear at any moment. The top layer first, forcefully splitting those cute little lips with the flat of my tongue with hard, long strokes. Strokes that started losing precision after the very first one, leaving them flying a little wide at times.

Different places. Different flavors. Her thighs. The point where legs met her groin. The meat of her ass and the delicate cushion of her mound. All of them were an experience that I would never forget even when I was old and grey.

An experience that Lisa would never forget either now that she’d stopped talking. Stopped using real words anyway. She was still vocal. Emitting girly screams and moans and broken sobs, interspersed by periods of intense silence as she came repeatedly on my tongue and moistened my face.

That was when I went deeper. When I grabbed her ass with both hands and hiked her up. Put her legs over my shoulders with her still lying there, unresisting beyond a throaty grumble even as her gentle grip on my nuts was broken and she found herself mounted on my face. Her ‘lips’ against mine in a kiss as I prepared to use her like a feedbag who was just about done.

The top layers were done and gone, and her sweetest juices lay deeper in. Now, it was time to empty her out.
I’m not ashamed to say that I lost track of time as soon as I really got in there. An act that required some preparation of its very own, the need to fold my tongue up to get past her narrow entrance before I allowed it to decompress. No doubt it had stretched her far more than she’d probably ever considered to be a possibility before today as I began to fuck her with my red mouth muscle.

To her, it must have been as good as the real thing, if not better when the organ inside of her explosively release, unfurling to its full length and width in a moment before it gave her cervix a little lick… To me, it was like I’d been starving my entire life and had finally, finally, begun to feel full.

I switched it up every once in a while of course. Did it slow and gentle so that she could rest. Quick and hard when I thought that she might have had too much rest. I even read out the alphabet to her, from the entrance to her womb to the point where her pussy met my lips, with a repeat at every inch. Writing my boss a love letter sent solely through taste and touch.

It was only a glance at the clock on her bedside table that stopped me from continuing to feed. The realization that she had stopped moving at all and that I should probably be worried about that came next, leading to me pushing her aside and flipping her over to see if she’d passed out...only to see I shouldn’t have worried at all.

Lisa had passed out alright, but she was fine. Better than fine actually.

Her face was covered in spit and sweat, her hair plastered to whatever part of her it happened to be touching. Her eyes had halfway closed, with only the whites showing as they flickered back and forth and tears continued to fall. She was drooling freely, her mouth open in a wide and distant smile with just a hint of foam at the edges of her lips...and she was still cumming up a storm, little more than a leaky faucet that couldn’t be fixed, just plugged.

If this wasn’t the greatest moment of her life so far, I’d eat my own shorts. She looked ecstatic and completely wrecked.

“Minuteman, huh?” I asked her, shaking my head even as I picked her up and took a seat on the floor. With her in my lap and her head over my shoulder as I stroked her hair and started sliding my cock along the crack of her ass. I had to wonder if I could convince her to start working out a little more. Just some squats every now and then so that I could really feel her cheeks around me, even if this was nice as it was. “You’re a funny one, Lisa.” Fun to hotdog too.

I continued to stroke her hair for a while. Sometimes, I wiped away some of the drool that had built up at the corners of her lips and was starting to build upon my shoulder. Otherwise, I just waited for her to wake up as I kept my erection solid so that, when she woke up again, it was to something nice.

At five minutes, just when I was starting to get worried again she gasped, then snorted. A watery thing that had her coughing as spit ran down the wrong pipe and I started to pat her back and leaned back a little, just enough to see her face as her eyes started to refocus in starts and stops. She whined every once in a while. Her legs kicked feebly even as I started to murmur softly to her.

Aftercare wasn’t just for the end of the act...and she needed it. A lot...maybe I’d been a little rough. I wouldn’t be surprised to find out I was going to have to deal with this in the bathroom after she came back to herself. Honestly, no matter how long it took it was more than worth it. Her legs were probably separate entities at this point.

Lisa’s eyes focused. Finally and completely, with just a hint of glaze to them as she looked up at me again. The light came back in seconds, as did recognition. Her tongue ran across her lips as she
gathered herself and looked for something to say.

I just continued to stroke her hair, and enjoy the way she leaned into my hand without thinking about it. She really trusted me. We’d be fine.

“What the fuck...was that, Moss?” She croaked at me as her index finger found my lower lip and tried to pull it down. Failed when the tremor in her hands caused her to let go, letting it fall back into place with a slap. “What did you do to me?”

I didn’t answer. Just stuck out my tongue and let it out from the side of my mouth. Away from her, just so that she could see exactly what had been writhing inside of her slit until it had knocked her out. Then I gave the pretty blonde a jaunty wave with it like I was greeting her at the airport.

“... That has to be at least a foot long.” Lisa, instead of freaking out about it like I’d kind of expected her to, caught the tip and rubbed it in between her fingers. “This was really all inside me?”

With a slurp, I sucked it back in through her fingers and smacked my lips a little as her head fell against my chest. I could still taste her a little…and yes. She was still delicious. “Yep.”

Lisa nodded. Bit her lip and placed a hand just below her stomach. The general location of where I’d just been before she started to press down. She shivered but continued. Spot after spot with the tips of her fingers, doing something that I just found confusing. She almost looked like she was in pain.

“It’s hot...” Lisa whispered, almost as if she were answering me before she looked up at me again, her eyes wide and moist just as she tried to stand up. “It burns... but it hurts so good.” She didn’t even get all the way there before she fell and her forehead met mine, leading the both of us to start looking at each other eye to eye. “We’re. Not. Done.”

“... Are you sure, Boss?” I had to ask. I just had to. Even if I didn’t want to, because of course I didn’t, but because I had to. She was a mess. Barely able to sit upright on her own. “You don’t have to push yourself.” I couldn’t even be sure if she knew that she wasn’t even standing on her own two legs and that I was the one holding her up. She looked that far gone. “I’m a big boy. I can take a rain check.”

Miss Rosy Palms and I were just going to have to get acquainted for a while. That’s all. No big deal... I could taste the salt. Still, better a lonely night then a broken boss lady.

Lisa’s mouth split into a grin at my words. One that completely went against what she said next.

“Fuck no. I’m not sure. I’m not sure at all.” Her hands cupped my cheeks. Firm. Barely even shaking as she gave the tip of my dick a taste of the good life. A little dip of her hips that coated the top and front sides of my head in her cum. “I’m actually kind of terrified...but I’m a big girl. I’m your boss. You said it. So come on.”

Another nudge. Another crack in my already weak resolve.

“What am I paying you for? Why do you live in my house? I told you that you were going to do anything I wanted if you came with me.” She rocked her head back and took in a deep breath before she flipped her hair over her shoulder as she made to sit. “So do this for me.” Her green eyes were locked on mine as she made her soft demands. “Please.”

How could I possibly say no to that?
Her knees began to bend...and I was there to meet her. The fat, purple head met her little pussy in a lewd kiss. One that lasted even as Lisa continued to add weight to it, her face turning gradually more red as her outer lips split and hugged the roughly textured tip but she refused to dilate. Her body continued to resist her even as she stomped her feet and grit her teeth.

“... Do you need some help?”

She shook her head stubbornly at me, still looking in between her legs even as she put her hands on my shoulders and straightened up a little. “I got this.”

What a little go-getter she was. A real trooper.

Right after that was when she dropped. Outright dropped, giving up her stance on the floor with an all-out attack...one that worked. One that led to every inch of purple on my body disappearing like the world’s hottest magic trick as her lips snapped closed around the glans...which is when she ducked her head into my chest and started to twitch while thick streamers of spit began to pour from her mouth.

“Congrats, Boss,” I said, feeling somehow as if it were the right thing to do even as her head rolled around and she started to wheeze. It was only then, when I realized that she wasn’t appreciably sinking lower on my shaft, that I put my hands around her waist and held her up. “And thank you for giving me your first time. I’m honored.”

Lisa nodded, her head still rolling as, with a click, what I assume was her mouth closed. The drool slowed to a stop with only a single, long strand dangling from her lips when she tried to sink again. Got stuck, then stepped back up under her own power and getting nowhere fast...until I stepped in.

I started to help her, just as she helped me. We worked in sync, as close to it as physically possible when one of us was barely there and the other was working hard not to give into their instincts and force their partner into a brutal mating press. Every time she went up, she went up until I could feel her catch on ridges of my cockhead, causing her to cum more often than not as she got pulled out a bit. Every time she went down, we pushed her until she stopped, then just a bit more, causing her to cum once more as I claimed virgin territory.

A simple, effective system...but far too slow. Far, far too slow.

That mating press was starting to look better and better as time went on. The thought of using my own bodyweight, all of seven hundred pounds to wrench Lisa open and wreck her for the rest of her life... It was tempting. But the thought never got strong enough for me to take it as an actual option. Just an interesting one.

This was Lisa’s first time. She deserved the chance to do what she wanted to do, how she wanted to do it. Even if it left just about every inch besides three out in the cold, this was what she deserved.

After suppressing that line of thought, it was almost like magic just how quickly Lisa started to slide down in comparison to before. How much more of her snug, tight walls I found myself surrounded by as she started making noises, sounding more like an animal than a human and drooling again as she found herself holding a good eight inches...and I started to think she might have been squirting. Just a thought after feeling a hot high pressure wash repeatedly hit my head and shaft. I couldn’t tell for certain though. I had no visual cues.
I’d plugged her up far too well for it to escape. We were just going to have to find out after I pulled out. Which might be soon, considering how Lisa had just blacked out again.

“Shit!”

I tried to hold still and let her wake up again. I really did. It was impossible though. All the effort of forcing my hips not to buck was for nothing when my arms started moving Lisa up and down my massive length in little fits and starts. More tiny tremors than any sort of thrusting, but each one just fed into the act, and kept it going in an endless cycle.

I just couldn’t stop.

Slowly, but with growing force I moved my little blonde boss up and down my cock, forcing increasingly wet and lewd noises out of both sets of her pretty pink lips. Even knocking her unconscious wasn’t enough to get her to be quiet it seemed. Finally, I had built up enough speed to approach the end I was craving so badly when a deep-seated instinct I couldn’t hold back or name forced me to shove my hips up with far more force than I’d ever intended.

This was just enough to get us to the end when she fully came down on my erection like it was an oil-coated slip-and-slide. All at once her muscles loosened and I had to stop pushing to keep her from ripping in half by accident...and then I froze as I touched something wonderful. The goal. The purpose of my goddamn existence, kissing the tip of my dick.

I’d found her cervix. The entrance to her womb...and I thought I might have felt it suckle at my urethra before Lisa woke up and started screaming. Clawing at the back of my neck as her walls rippled, hard enough that I thought I could feel myself bend and slow on the pullout, even as my balls jumped up close to my body and I started to pulse, making my job even harder.

As I fought to get Lisa off my dick before I blew, with her seemingly fighting me the whole way in return, I had to deal with my dick becoming thicker. Harder than the steel that it had already been and only getting worse as Lisa’s pussy milked me like I was a neglected cow...and then I got stuck at the exit. My head caught at the last checkpoint...and that was it. That was all I needed to break as I tried to extract myself without tearing something important.

My cock jerked. Once...and then I felt a surge. A hard one. Boiling hot. One that was doing it’s damnedest to wipe my mind of anything but diving back in and finishing deep inside her. Another jerk and I was halfway done with the second by the time I’d pulled Lisa off of me and got her onto her back facing me.

A face that I was now glazing like a fancy doughnut. A splash across her cheeks. Another in between her breasts and along her stomach before she’d been flipped over, leaving me to glaze those buns and the small of her back as well before I was done with the third and final pulse...and now, I was just sitting back.

That was all I could do.

With only my hands on the floor to keep me up, I warily watched Lisa flop around in a puddle of my spunk. Examined her slit and just how red and raw it looked as she oozed what might have been mistaken for pancake batter if you didn’t know any better...and I tried not to move when she finally got onto her knees and gave me an unreadable, blank-eyed stare. I could see thick globs of cum dribbling from between her legs, splattering on the ground as she trembled, still aroused, still climaxing. Just like I was.
My new anatomy seemed determined to extend this nut to a truly ridiculous level.

“...Okay... And sorry for whitewashing you, Boss. It just kinda—”

She stopped in place. Turned. Held out her hands tiredly... “Shower.”

And then she pouted, and I felt like I was, probably, going to be okay...even if this was, most definitely, not canon.

“...and Lisa wasn’t the only one that hadn’t stopped climaxing, even now. I’d slowed down and now it was more of a dribble...but my balls kept clenching and forcing the experience to go on and on. That poor carpet would never be the same. “For a week.”

“... Okay... And sorry for whitewashing you, Boss. It just kinda—”

She stopped in place. Turned. Held out her hands tiredly... “Shower.”

And then she pouted, and I felt like I was, probably, going to be okay...even if this was, most definitely, not canon.

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“You’ve been holding out on me, Lisa.” I exhaled, feeling content as I was doused with the hot spray of the showerhead. Just laying down, reclining and relaxing. Washing Lisa’s hair for her as she reclined and relaxed on me in turn... Sure, I was still cumming and my feet had to hang out the end of the tub because I was too damn big, but I was feeling pretty good about things right now. “I was starting to worry that I was going to have to use the hose.”

Starting to. Had forgotten. Didn’t matter, had sex.

“The perks of being management, Moss. Sorry that I had to lock you out.” Lisa, being Lisa, just shrugged as I dug my fingers into her scalp and turned the gel in it into a lather. Lisa, also being Lisa, didn’t even bother pretending she actually cared as she continued to use the dick standing out from between her legs as a bath toy. She’d been giggling about how good she looked with a dick of her own for a while now. She was still kind of out of it, but when she squeezed her thighs together around me it did kind of look like she was packing all of a sudden. “But I had to. If everyone had access to a fuck awesome shower, then what’s the point of being the Boss?”

“Wise beyond your years.” I chuckled as I brought the showerhead down low and waited for her to bend her head before I washed her off and started ruffling her hair. “A real philosopher.”

“And a scientist.” Lisa didn’t deny as she gave me a couple of soft pumps, causing the endless stream to thicken a little just before she stuck a finger under it.

“And where are you going with that?” I asked, honestly curious and feeling as though if I wasn’t already rock hard and still blowing my load, I’d be doing it again when she used that finger to redirect that white stream into a cupped hand. “Are you going to test for viscosity? Color variation? What?”

She shook her head at me and held out her cum coated finger at me for silence. A silence that she got when she tipped her head back and put that pool of cum in her mouth in a single go.

I was speechless as I watched her swish my sperm from cheek to cheek in her mouth, almost as if she was testing a fine wine before she stopped. Raised an eyebrow and switched up by starting to chew. Loudly and messily, sometimes showing me the strings that bridged the gap between her upper and
lower teeth as some of it slipped down her chin.

“Goddamn.”

She held out her finger to me again for silence, and drew it out for what felt like forever but, eventually, she swallowed. Her hand at her throat to help the mess down before she clicked her teeth a couple of times and started to poke her tongue around...and I just had to ask.

“What did we learn there?” I asked, listening to her report as if it was the secret to life, happiness, and all that was good...which it actually might have been.

She was very convincing.

“Well, I’ve found out that not only is this big dick made for fucking me and fucking up my carpet…” Lisa, after scraping her tongue on her teeth and shaming me, grabbed hold of my prick in both hands and nodded to herself. “It is also a drink dispenser.”

And that was when Lisa started tonguing my urethra like it owed her money.

That was also when the shower drain got clogged with built-up jizz because we’d forgotten to force it down...but honestly. No one cared.
Chapter 10

Sweat fell to the floor. Drop by drop. One by one as Hannah’s muscles screamed. Begged. Pleased for a rest that she had denied it ever since she’d started her exercise routine for the day while locked up in this cube of metal and glass.

She’d been holding this extended plank for the last forty minutes or so. A bit of a cooldown after the full regime she’d put herself through for the sake of work and the search for a distraction… She wasn’t having all that much success, sadly. Part of her circumstances, she assumed.

Oddly enough, Master/Stranger containment cells didn’t have much to distract you that you couldn’t do yourself. Exercise or sleep were your only options. Worries over the prisoners using the entertainment items to hurt themselves and someone else was the main concern. Mostly. Using boredom to break whoever was in that cell was the rest…or so it felt. The PRT wasn’t in the habit of torturing their patients and prisoners without a reason.

She knew that.

“Hey. Hey, Militia.” Hannah’s guard for the day said in a gruff voice, sounding like every seedy security guard and prison warden to ever appear in a porno ever…with a Brooklyn accent. Damn it, Ethan. “Why did the chicken cross the road?”

But, sometimes, she had to wonder if she’d somehow found herself in hell when she wasn’t paying attention. Ethan had been making jokes for hours. Trying to get her to crack while in the middle of an exercise or when she tried to ‘sleep’…and she hadn’t yet. Cracked or ‘slept’. Not once.

“But get to the other side!”

She’d been holding this stance for the last forty minutes, and there was no way that he could break her from it. Even with the sudden turn his jokes had taken, going for shock through mediocrity. The last few had actually been sort of sophisticated and she’d had to think this one over for a bit thanks to that.

After he didn’t get the reaction he was looking for Ethan, in costume as Assault, stepped off the wall with a sigh. “You’re no fun, you know that?”

Hannah hummed but continued to otherwise ignore him.

“Fine. I know when I’m not wanted.” He sniffed. “I’m going to go check on those nurses. At least they can appreciate my brand of humor… Join the Protectorate they said. Make friends they said… I should have gone to clown school like momma wanted.”

She had to admit that one almost got her to laugh. Would have if she’d been a little less tense. A little less preoccupied with these thoughts and feelings she’d been carrying around for the last weeks...as well as the near constant warm and buzzing feeling she could feel just below and to either side of her stomach. A constant presence that never left her alone.

She was glad she couldn’t sleep. That she didn’t need it. She wouldn’t have been able to over the ticking of the clock that had started.
Hannah wasn’t old. Not by a longshot...but, she wasn’t young either and she was only getting older. She’d been married to her job since she’d been a child and never seriously considered being anything but being married to it. It was what she was used to. What she’d decided to devote her life to after she’d found herself plucked off the killing fields as a child to thank the country that had done it.

But now, lately, she’d been considering if that was something that still she wanted to do. To keep doing to the exclusion of all else. She hadn’t seen her parents in years. She had no brothers or sisters. She had no children.

She had no husband. No one to hold her at night...what kind of life was she living...? And was this really how she wanted to spend her last years as a young woman? Moving from urban battlefield to urban battlefield, and fighting against city-destroying monsters every three months?

This was what she’d been thinking about, non-stop for the last few days in the cell...and today was the last. Today was the day she got out. Today was the day she put on her old uniform. Today was the day she started doing the paperwork that Colin couldn’t be fucked to do while she was gone.

“Hey! Prisoner! Wrap it up!” Ethan beat his palm against the transparent wall hard enough to make it shake in its frame. “You’re getting out of solitary in an hour and I don’t want any lollygagging!”

Today was the day she started looking for that Case 53 she’d failed so badly. Badly enough that he'd felt that he had to run...so that she could apologize.

Just as the clock finished ticking and the door opened, declaring that it had been an hour so far since she’d started, Hannah stood up with a tired sigh. Smoothed her shirt and flicked the sweat out of her face while Ethan pretended to pound a baton against his hand in a threatening manner. A baton of her own stopped that real quick.

And thank him. He’d given her a lot to think about.

==========

“You’re looking good, Moss.”

“Course I am,” I said in gruff reply as I buttoned up the last button of my new shirt. An actual shirt, not just another muscle tee. Who would have thought? “You bought it for me. Might as well be tailored.”

“Close enough, you flatterer.” Lisa shrugged slightly as she continued to look through the clothes she’d bought and pick at her teeth with the edge of one of her nails. She then smacked her lips a little and shrugged again when she didn’t find anything from our last sexual encounter and held up a pair of slacks with a jacket. All in black, as expected. “Now. Put these on. I have to make sure my bodyguard looks the part.”

“Whatever you say, Boss.”

Not a lot had changed in the last few days since Lisa and I had gotten intimate. Not really, besides the little things. She was still laid back. Still a joy to talk to...and she’d stopped taking E to catch my attention, something that I’d just kind of chalked up to her being a teenager. Being dumb, not knowing how to talk to someone you liked… Yeah. She could be surprisingly dumb. But at least she’d promised not to do it again after we'd talked about it.
Anyway, we’d just gotten closer in general. We shared the same bed, ate the same meals, took the same baths… Sometimes we even traded oral after a long day, which was always a good time. I had to admit I was worried about her though. Accidentally giving her a big shot of cum where it really mattered did that sort of thing.

That was a problem that she didn’t seem to think was a problem though. She’d taken me cumming inside of her surprisingly well. Maybe a moment of consideration, at most, was put into the possible consequences of what had just happened before she’d moved on with her day, and asked me to make her some coffee. Yet another thing that I had to chalk up to being a teenager. That whole thing where they thought they were immortal but really, really weren’t.

That was okay though. I had enough worry for the both of us… I wondered if I’d be going bald if I wasn’t already bald as I slipped on my jacket and marveled at the fit of my slacks. They were miraculous. You could tell they’d been made for conceal-and-carry and… and that was all I would say on the matter.

They were really good pants.

After getting the whole thing on, I did a slow spin with my arms out. Got some clapping and canned cheering, straight from Lisa’s laptop that I assumed she kept just for occasions like this while she trolled the net. Doing what I wasn’t quite sure… but she sure spent a lot of time on PHO, telling people they were wrong on the internet. I helped sometimes.

“You clean up good. That’s…good.” Lisa trailed off with an appreciative nod and a soft smile in my direction before she turned back to her computer. “Great, actually. We’re going to have work soon. You’re going to need to be ready.”

“For what?”

Another shrug. “For whatever. I don’t know. I’ve just been getting some weird vibes from my boss lately and…” She trailed off again, this time suggestively instead of the vaguely flirty manner she’d used before. “Think about what I’ve told you about him.”

“Ah.” I winced. Yeah. Didn’t matter whether you worked retail or you were a supervillain. If your boss wasn’t having consensual sex with you they were probably better off dying in a fiery car crash. Coil was, sadly, even if he had superpowers, not that special in this case. “He’s probably going to throw you in over your head.”

“Eventually.”

“Shit.”

“Yep.”

Anyway, beyond all that ominous shit Lisa had just dropped on me, it was Monday. That day had finally come around again and I’d been living here for a week. Now came the expectations and prodding for me to start pulling my weight… even though I thought I already was.

Supposedly, giving out hot dickings to management wasn’t in the contract we’d made so it didn’t count towards my work hours… I hadn’t even known I’d had work hours until Lisa had told me. I probably should have expected it though, even if it was a joke.
Capitalism was bullshit like that.

“You don’t need me for anything else today, I’m guessing?” I asked before shucking off my work uniform and moving on to my old standby of muscle tees and shorts. I was surprised to find that I had actually kind of missed them while they were gone. The monkey suit had been kind of restrictive...that was probably why. “Don’t need me to pick up a car or anything? Help you cook?”

“Nah. I’m good.” Lisa flapped her hand at me before giving her laptop a closer look. “I can feel my legs again, you beast. Take a break from ravaging jailbait for a little while and go have some fun helping old ladies or something…” She then, finally, looked up from her computer with a completely serious look. “And watch out for flying blondes.”

“Can do, Boss. Should be easy, seeing how I like my blondes earthbound.” I gave the startlingly pleased looking girl a salute...and then I was gone before this started getting sappy and I didn’t want to leave.

Newlywed syndrome was a bitch like that.

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Victoria fell face first into her bed with a scream. Not over anything that had happened today. Of course not. Today had been great. She’d had fun. She’d had some lunch and a movie and a new bracelet and things had been wonderful.

The problem was what hadn’t happened. Her...oral fixation (a polite way of saying that gum had become a situational tool) hadn’t worn off yet. Not even close. She’d been managing for a good part of the week easily enough...but it had kind of gotten out of hand at the end of the date.

Soda was fizzy and wonderful. Popcorn was crackly and savory. Dick tasted like sweet taffy and cum was a creamy cake filling. Dean had been appreciative when she'd unzipped him in the theater and went to town. Very, very appreciative. So much so that neither of them could remember the movie or what had been about. A shame. The people on the way out had nothing but good things to say about it...but that happened when the both of you were cumming your brains out, she guessed.

Things just kind of fell by the wayside like that. Like their date had when she’d, maybe, been just a little pushy in the car when she tried to get Dean’s pants down again. He had not been appreciative that time. Not at all.

Vicky started kicking her legs out behind her. Not throwing a tantrum or anything, just expressing her discontent in a childish manner. That’s all.

Anyway, she’d kind of forgotten that guys needed time to rest sometimes. That she’d probably already sucked him dry for the day and that there was nothing she could do to get something out of that particular tap...at least not without a nap, a sandwich, and an hour or two.

She hadn’t reacted well either, even if that made sense in the end. A good day had gone down the drain. Not with yelling and screaming like it normally did when they had an argument but just...cold. Silent. Filled with a quiet fog of shame and frustration before she’d flown back home without even a kiss goodbye.

She knew she was being stupid. That there was no reason to feel this way or have these expectations...but she did. She expected Dean to be ready to deliver at any moment. She expected to
be able to get him to rise without a bit of a tug and some mouth action.

Something had changed and she didn't know *what*...but she had a good idea.

“There’s something wrong with me.” Victoria said into the mattress as she sunk into reflection...and was pulled out of it when her phone buzzed with the telltale sound of a text. She paused. Thought about it. Pawed at her side without looking for a while and eventually gave that up to look, and pick up the phone like a normal person.

What she saw after some fumbling got her blood pumping in an instant. She was off her bed and in her closet in less than a second once she finished parsing the message she’d just received. She needed her costume on.

She needed her apology gift!
Chapter 11

After popping out the SIM card from her phone and sliding it into a foil bag, Lisa sat down. Fell over onto her side. Closed her eyes.

The TV was blaring. The heater working. The pleasant feeling of having done a most nefarious deed warmed her heart while the perpetual contentment she’d been feeling ever since she’d lost her virginity and begun a relationship soothed her mind… And she just felt good.

It was a state of affairs that she was actually starting to get used to. Feeling good, she meant… It was almost startling just how quickly her life had turned around for her. She’d gone from a headache-ridden mess to a well-sexed mess, in over the course of a week, and she found herself greatly enjoying the difference.

She hadn’t realized just how much of her time had been taken up with her just trying to tiptoe around the possibility of giving herself a power-induced stroke before then…closer than she would like. Getting rid of that chance by itself was worth the possible price she might have to pay in a couple of months.

Lisa carefully did not caress her stomach. It was still too soon to tell anyway. It would just make her anxious.

Anyway, her current standard of living and its eventual uplifting was totally worth the price she had to pay… Or others had to pay as the case may be. Moss, as wonderful as he was as a Brute, wasn’t using himself to his full potential. Even if he had known what he was capable of doing, which he didn’t, he wouldn’t have used it. The ability to turn women to his side. Body, heart, and mind by just interacting with them for extended periods of time would have been something that he’d find disturbing.

He was a big softie like that. Sweet, and part of why she continued (and loved) sleeping with him, but it wasn’t helping when it came to improving their situation.

Lisa did know what he could do though. She also knew that good as her life was now, it wasn’t perfect. She wasn’t rich. She wasn’t powerful. Coil was alive and still pointing a gun at her head to force her to do his bidding… More capes could only help with that. All of that, as distasteful as it sounded.

She’d been following Glory Girl for a while now through her profile. Ever since the Collateral Damage Barbie debacle, actually, just to see how she’d react for curiosity's sake. The helpful addition of extended amounts of power use that she would have found soul-breakingly painful before now just added to the fun. Because why not?

Victoria’s visits to a very select few pages in the Meme thread had been attention-grabbing. Her more than constant visits to the Moss thread had been amusing. The sporadic walkthroughs of a more explicit PHO thread featuring large, hulking, well-endowed men that had only lasted a day or two before being discarded had been hilarious...and confirmation that her fellow blonde was standing on a knife’s edge. That all she needed was a push one way or another to end up as Lisa’s sister-in-arms.

Hopefully, Victoria would be getting that text anytime now.
Anyway… It was better this way. For everyone involved… Especially for Vicky’s boyfriend, that Lisa actually felt a little sorry for. Not sorry enough to stop what she was doing or anything, but she did. He was probably being forced to live up to standards that he just couldn’t reach and it was sucking him dry.

Literally. The guy was probably a walking corpse by now. Victoria’s problem was the exact opposite of Lisa’s. The Brute heroine had a libido far above that of her partner’s. Lisa had a partner with a libido far above hers.

It was like they were made for each other… Or at least, that Victoria was made to be the perfect side girl. This plan was perfect.

Lisa’s eyes snapped open in the middle of her self-congratulations when she heard something fall behind her. Over the back of the couch. One that had her reaching for one of the guns in her house that she’d hidden in the cushions of her seat. Safety off, she spun around in said seat and zeroed in on just where that noise had come from with her power running at full blast.

Almost nothing different. Almost everything in its place. Not even a dip in the carpet or a shadow to give someone’s position away. Just a leather satchel on one of her tables, replacing one of her lamps that had fallen on the floor.

Someone had been in here. Someone might still be in here…which is why, instead of acting like one of those morons in a horror movie, she kept her gun up and started checking the rest of the apartment as soon as she was sure the satchel wasn’t a bomb. Just a glance was necessary for that. It was the search that was going to be a bitch.

Strangers had never been her favorite classification of cape. She hadn’t exactly met all that many in her time, but the few she had…it grated on her. Having to work a little harder for an answer that should have come easy was frustrating and it hurt and she sometimes felt the irrational urge to shoot them. They were almost as bad as Tinkers in her opinion.

Only after clearing every room in the place, twice, did Lisa feel safe to say that her surprise visitor was no longer in the building. Not safe though. Not at all. She didn’t know how they’d gotten in or who they were, and this was going to be fucking with her for what might be months.

She could already feel her paranoia rising, even as she tried pulling up the lip of the satchel with a pair of salad tongs. When nothing exploded after she hid behind the couch again, just in case, only then was Lisa satisfied that the bag was what it looked like. A bag full of things.

A longsword sized for a human male. A one size fits all set of leather armor. Three bottles that carried a label that said ‘healing’ across the sides in large font and smelled of cherry cough syrup. Two oregano herbs, whole and fresh, and a bundle of papers. All somehow contained in a bag the size of a purse.

Things that made no goddamn sense…fuck, the bag by itself made no sense…until she read the papers anyway. Or tried as the case may be.

*Congratulations, prospective hero. You have been selected to save the universe (long string of numbers and symbols that made Lisa’s head hurt) from an impending calamity. If all has gone well then, after your sudden shuffling off of your current universe’s mortal coil, you will have found yourself...*
“What the fuck?” Lisa whispered loudly before, after completely skipping the scribbled, actually scribbled, mess that was the rest of the boilerplate she flipped a page. Then again. Then again. The once more, with an extra flip for good measure. That was when she got to the meat of the whole thing.

“Race: Orc. Age: 27. Sex: Male. Class: Hero. Genre...” Lisa’s mouth snapped shut with a click as a great many things suddenly made a lot of sense...then made a great deal more sense when a comic slipped out of the clip tying it to the rest of the bundle and fell to the floor. A comic that had little more than a post-it note that said ‘Good enough’ written on it with red office ink.

It was a porn comic. A compilation of giant, meaty non-humans dominating helpless, young, and nubile heroines with their massive, throbbing dicks. It was...surprisingly familiar. Recognizable almost. Relatable. A couple of those girls even looked like her if you squinted.

After giving the book a quick flip through that allowed her to come to the conclusion that Moss wasn’t exactly a typical example of his species, seeing as how he hadn’t turned her into a broken breeding sow yet, Lisa nodded. Stood up with papers and porn in hand and made her way towards her room to pick up her laptop and scanner and hide the rest. If she ever planned on letting Moss see this stuff it was going to have to get some editing first. The papers, she meant. The porn was for personal use...as was some of the other stuff.

That leather suit might look good on her. Who knew? It wasn’t like Moss was going to be wearing it after all so she might as well give it a go...
“She just wants to say she’s sorry, Moss. Nothing else.” Lisa assured me before she gave my arm a pat, looking as cute as she could possibly be as we ambled our way through the park. Me in my good clothes and her in her white winter get up. “She found out about your problems and what she did to you has her feeling terrible about it.”

“I hope so.” My jaw wiggled slightly in remembrance of the last time we had met. “I just got done with worrying if my teeth were loose. Having it happen again would suck so much ass…”

“Well, you don’t have to worry about it this time.” Lisa gave me a nudge-nudge and a wink before she pointed out into the little clearing she’d brought us to. Not too bad a place…but not too good either once you took a look around the edges. It had that ‘urban decay’ feel, trash in the bushes and such. The nervous-looking Glory Girl, fluttering around the area with a wrapped package in her hands made up for it though. “If she was planning on kicking your shit in she wouldn't have bothered with the gift.”

“... That makes sense.”

“But, just in case this is some kind of setup that she wasn't let in on,” Lisa said before she started pushing me in the back with both hands and what I thought might have been her forehead. It was adorable. “I’ll be hanging back and taking footage for PR reasons and lookout.”

I gave her a look from over my shoulder. “Down with the man, huh?”

Lisa just held up a fist with a smile and gave me another push. This time, I allowed her to succeed and made my way into the clearing like the man I was. Head held high, arms swinging as I walked towards destiny and apology prezzies.

My stride quickly ended when I found my vision full of brilliantly blushing teenage girl and badly wrapped blue packaging. In fact, I almost fell on her. I would have if she hadn't backed up.

“I got you a novelty notepad!”

I swear I could hear Lisa laughing from here…but at least, this time, I couldn't feel that fear-inducing noise bearing down on me. What was there...well. It was actually kind of nice.

I guess Lisa was right. I had nothing to worry about.

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“I’m really, really sorry about punching you in the nose,” Victoria said, almost a touch too excited for the moment as she continued to hold out her present. “And all the other places I punched you.”

The Case 53 (Moss. His name was Moss. Get it right.) carefully took the present and started just as carefully unwrapping it while he continued to give her his attention. She'd kind of hoped he'd rip the wrapping off or something, just to get this over with, but it made sense. His hands were gigantic. Not exactly made for playing the piano, let alone the delicate process that was the ripping off of powder blue wrapping.
Well, until he was done she’d just have to do all the talking for the both of them.

“...had some bad information.” Vicky gave him a weak smile. “About the why's and how's of your ‘escape’ and I jumped to conclusions when I heard about how the PRT was looking for you. I’m especially sorry about the punch to the jaw. That was probably a little much.”

He just snorted and continued to unwrap his gift.

“Okay. A lot much.” She then ducked her head and kicked her feet in the air as if she was doing it against the dirt. It was only partly for show. Mostly, she just felt like crap… This wasn't going as well as she’d hoped. Which is why she said what she did. “At least you aren't missing any teeth though, right?

He froze. Things got tense.

“Right?” She asked hopefully. Really. It would be just her luck if he had. Her allowance only went so far. Not nearly enough for a dental fix… She'd owe Amy a favor. Again.

When she heard a rumble she had to look around for a moment. Either Squealer was around or...and then she had to fall back when Moss laughed. A sharp bark that was more of a sensation that she could feel in her bones than a sound.

The shiver that it caused to run down her spine, just as he finished pulling open his gift was delicious. The sound of him scratching something on that notepad filled her with anticipation. Excitement. A need for a thing she couldn’t put her finger on.

He turned it around.

She held her breath.

“Can you believe that I didn't? You really made me worry though. That right of yours is mean.”

… She couldn't say if she was disappointed to have finally found out what he'd written, or relieved. Either way though.

“That's great! Also, I like your clothes!”

She was so happy that she hadn't accidentally maimed him that it was ridiculous.

He smiled at her. Bared his teeth in a way that she’d found particularly unnerving little more than a couple of days ago… She now thought it was actually kind of nice, funnily enough, just as he finished scribbling something new.

“Thank you. My roommate got them for me. She's pretty great.”

“... She?”

“Of course.”

Victoria spun around, startled and somewhat thankful about the distraction she’d just been given. That sinking feeling in her chest had been just… It had hurt. Enough so that she’d almost grabbed herself before she remembered she had company.
“The poor thing wouldn't know the difference between purple and puce if it bit him on the ass and told him to give it a call in the morning.” The blonde that had suddenly joined them gave Victoria a bright smile as she put a couple of strands of hair behind her ear. “I'm the big lugs roommate and charades translator. Lisa Wilbourne. Pleased to meetcha.”

“Victoria Dallon.” She replied back with a smile of her own. Just as bright as she gave the other girl a good up and down...then felt slightly off when she realized what she was doing. This wasn’t a competition. “It’s a pleasure.”

She was just trying to make a friend. That was all. Whether he was in a relationship or not was none of her problem… Calm your tits.

“That it is,” Lisa responded, sounding pleased as she gave the nearby bench a considering look. One that ended with her shaking her head and her still standing. “Anyway, yeah. I’m glad to see that we won’t be having any problems over what happened last Tuesday. You have no idea how much—”

“Oh, no. I’d never...” Victoria interrupted her fellow blonde with a light giggle and a couple flaps of the hand. “It was an accident, that’s all. I don’t have any problems with him now that I know the situation.”

“Once again. So glad.” Lisa started to nibble on her lip while Moss fiddled with his new pencil and notepad, testing different ways to hold the both of them in what looked like an attempt to look for the most comfortable position. “Like...he’s not bad, you know? But when that villain designation gets slapped on...” She shrugged and continued to nibble. “The government isn’t going to listen to the civilian when things go down, you know? I was worried.”

Victoria made a non-committal sound and tried not to show that the thought had made her uncomfortable. She hadn’t heard of something like this happening often, mostly just rumors...but supposedly it wasn’t uncommon for a case of mistaken identity to blow up like little else in the cape community. Heroes against new heroes that might have made a mistake.

Those rumors didn’t end well for the new guy most of the time, but that was all they were. Just rumors. Nothing to worry about, even if they did sound kind of familiar...

“Now that we’ve got that done,” Lisa said, the dark cast her tone had taken completely gone as that smile returned in full force. Just a little plastic, but so much so that Victoria thought she was trying to fake it. Just enough for it to be an obvious recovery smile. “Who does your hair? Because, you know, damn.” Lisa caught a couple of strands and held it up to the light with a pout. “Your hair beats mine by a mile and I’ve not exactly been skimping on the conditioner, you know?”

Finally. Familiar territory. Safety. Grab it with both hands and never let it go.

“Well... It’s kind of exclusive,” Victoria drawled, “but I have this little place down at the boardwalk that might be able to help with that.” A flip of the hair and a little bit of exposed tongue just to show she was joking when she got a pout later, she continued. “I think I could get you in with a little bit of incentive...?”

Lisa cupped her chin, looking as if she was seriously considering Victoria’s joke for a moment (Because that was what it was. The incentive part anyway. It was a joke.) before she gave Moss an elbow to the side. “How much do you think having hair as good as hers would cost, Moss?”
After a considering look at her that caused Victoria’s face to warm as she forced down a vapid giggle, he wrote something down. “I’m thinking 300. 500 at most. That’s some damn good hair.”

“Right?”

“It was only fifty…” Victoria muttered, feeling pleased with herself while the other two quibbled. Over something she couldn’t quite catch…and damn was Lisa good at this charades thing. Sure it took her awhile, but the number of times Moss used the notepad instead of some gestures and vocalizing was astonishingly few…almost too few. “Nothing special, really.”

“Well, Moss and I think having hair like that—”

Moss ran his hand over his bald head with a pout.

“—is totally worth just about whatever price you can ask of us.”

Moss frowned at her.

“Within reason,” Lisa amended at his glare. “Now, at the moment between the both of us, I think we’ve got about twenty dollars in small bills, a tube of half-used strawberry lip gloss, a wrapped lettuce and tomato footlong, and an open bottle of water.” She then gave Victoria a shrewd look. “The lip gloss is a limited time offer though.”

Victoria cracked up a little. Just a little. Good enough for a squeak of laughter and a pleased look from the rest of the group…and it gave her an idea that might be either really good…or really, really bad. If they were willing to play along though…

“It’s all very tempting. My purse is feeling kinda empty these days, this is true.” Victoria agreed. “But I’m not looking for something like that. I’m looking for something bigger.” Vicky, for the first time in what might have been days, allowed her feet to touch the floor before she whipped a finger out to point at Moss. “I want him.”

Lisa blinked and Moss’s eyebrows shot up his forehead like they were attached to a rocket...also, phrasing.

“Give me a rematch. No blindsiding. No cheap tricks or low blows.” She licked her lips and as she felt her blood began to throb within her veins. It was like her bones were singing. “Just him and me in a spar…and I’ll be taking you out to get your hair done tomorrow.” She gave the both of them a confident smirk. “How does that sound?”

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“Are you sure this isn’t just another excuse to beat my ass like a drum again?” I grumbled while I handed my over clothes off to Lisa to stuff into her pack, leaving me with just a pair of expendable spandex to protect the important bits. It was necessary though. I’d just got the other stuff, and ruining it on my first day out wearing them was just sloppy. “Because this feels like an excuse to beat my ass again.”

“I’m sure, you big baby. Don’t worry about it.” Lisa gestured with her head in Victoria’s direction. “Look at her.”

I did…and saw her dancing around on the ground, lightly boxing at the air in preparation for what
was about to happen. Then, when she realized we were watching her, she stopped, blushed, and waved all at once before she started flying again instead...then behind a tree.

That was weird...and oddly ominous.

“She’s excited is all,” Lisa said just before she gave me a slap on the ass, giving me cause to give her a look. “Now go out there, have fun, and show her a good time. My new hair guy depends on it.” Another slap and the only thing keeping me from jumping Lisa right here was the fact that Victoria was nearby and that we didn’t have a bed nearby. “As does that blowjob I promised you if we came out here.”

“Foul temptress,” I muttered darkly when Victoria flew back into view, slapping her hands against her cheeks.

“Yeah,” Lisa echoed smugly as she held out a closed fist straight out in front of her. Nice to see that was going to start with some manners. “Why don’t you come and get me, big guy?”

One second!” Lisa called out, stopping me just before I could touch my fist to Victoria’s so that she could fiddle with her camera a little more. At least another ten seconds before she hefted it and gave us a thumbs up. “Alright, go!”

With a quick bump of knuckles and a step back, the fight was on and—MY FUCKING NOSE!

Victoria might have felt just a little bad about how she’d opened up their little spar. Just a little, when he gave her a betrayed look. A question of why...but that guilt hadn’t lasted long. Not in this atmosphere. Excitement. Joy. The feeling of something unknown that she’d been anticipating for all of her life, finally becoming real.

Her fist met his gut, smacking against it like lead on lead. In return for that blow, he grabbed her by the head and forced her into a tree. Or tried to anyway. She evaded. Her face grazed the trunk, taking out a hefty piece instead of cracking the poor thing in half...and then he threw her at the ground again like a replay of their greatest hits.

Also, he was giving as good as he got. No need to feel guilty after that.

Victoria had sparred with people before. Of course, she had. With her family. With her peers in the Wards. But it was controlled. Contained. Not real...nothing like this moment, this match of body against body, strength against strength. One where she didn't have to worry about someone trying to kill her or the safety of innocent bystanders.

When he picked her up again she came up with a branch in her hands. Good, solid oak that broke over his knees until it exploded in a cloud of splinters and sawdust. Then was when she was spun and let go, ending up with her skipping on the dirt like a rock in a pond before she forced herself up into the air for another go.
The closest thing she’d ever had to this was a match with Aegis. One that had lasted for only two rounds before it had ended with the match being called in her favor. Aegis was a tough guy. A nice one too...but a Brute of her caliber he most definitely was not. He was a survivor, sure, but he wasn’t going to be bringing her down anytime soon if it came to a slug-fest.

That had been...almost depressing when she had found that out. But she felt better now.

Victoria, in response, tackled him around the middle. Arms wide open, her teeth grit as he went skidding along the ground on the heels of his feet instead of falling down like he should have...and then his hands were on hers and things came to a stop. Their fingers had interlocked. His huge, rough ones with her small smooth ones...and he wasn’t letting go.

*Much better.*

Their heads clacked together like stone. Like an avalanche, as they went in for a headbutt at the same time...and neither of them gave. They just looked into each other’s eyes. Her into his red. Him into her blue...and they roared at each other, all while Victoria tried not to break down into hysterical, giggly laughter.

Another headbutt. Another deadlock...and then she spun and tried to get him in a hip throw, forgetting just how much *bigger* he was compared to her normal targets. She remembered when he was brought to the ground and he dragged her along with him.

Victoria couldn’t remember the last time she’d ever been in a ground fight. But she knew one thing. The last time it had happened hadn’t been so—

As she tried to force one of his legs into a submission hold, she pretended that she couldn’t feel his package against her breasts or his hands against her waist. The feeling of a quickly growing erection and a thumb buried deep in the meat of her ass as he tried to do the same she was trying to do to him.

—*intimate.*

She wasn’t sure when things changed, but they eventually did. Their fight, the constant flipping and struggling for dominance made way for something that well...one could call horsing around. Less roaring, more laughter—

“No! Stop!”

—and now, she was just kicking her legs around, flailing and screaming as Moss’s fingers dug into her ribs. The bastard had gotten on top of her and started tickling her and now she couldn’t get away. Everything had fallen apart and now she was worried she might piss herself.

“You know what you have to do Victoria~” Lisa singsonged from somewhere out of sight as she, most likely, continued to record Victoria’s humiliation for posterity. “Just cry Uncle and it’ll stop~”

“NEV-OH FUCK ME!” Vicky choked when the fingers at her sides went into overdrive, turning that worry she’d had about wetting herself into a disturbing eventuality. “UNCLE! UNCLE!”

Just a couple more strokes after that and Moss was off of her. He just left her on the ground, laughing at her while she was curled up into a ball and sucking in air...that dickhead. That big, fat… “You don’t...play fair!”
“All’s fair in love and war, Vicky. You got your spar,” Lisa piped up again as she put away her camera with a smile, filling in for Moss while the big guy towed himself off. A good thing considering how he was drenched...and so was she by proxy. She was soaked in enough man sweat to make her own, paltry amount seem like it had never existed. It was hard to mind though, considering how it had come about. “And I’ll be seeing you tomorrow at the Boardwalk.”

“Sure… You came through with your end of the deal.” Vicky flew back up into an upright position. Still wheezing a little, but no longer seeing stars as she gave out a hand for Lisa to shake, forgetting that it was covered in sweat. Not that the other blonde seemed to care, seeing how she took it without even a hint of disgust. Nice of her...and was it starting to get hot or was it just her? “I’ll see you there.”

“Awesome. And thank you. But really. All I did was hold the camera. Someone else did all the work.” Lisa pointed off in Moss’s direction and, almost as if he’d heard them (which was a possibility, Vicky had to admit) he turned and gave them a wave. “Maybe you should…?”

“Oh. Yeah.” Vicky coughed into her hand. Took a couple of rapid blinks as she caught the scent of what exactly she was covered in and shook her head before she started floating towards the big Case 53... That was some strong stuff. A long shower was in her future. “Of course.” A hug around the neck. A peck on the cheek and a pleasantly surprised Moss later, and Vicky started making her way home. Slowly.

Everything was so...wobbly. Wobbly was the word. Wobbly flying was bad. She had to be careful...
Lisa looked into her bathroom mirror with pride. Pride in herself. Pride in her appearance. More than just a little pride in her own good judgment, it was almost wafting off of her as she slowly rolled a light purple silk stocking up her slender leg. Something new that she’d bought for ‘special occasions’. Occasions like anniversaries and repaying favors.

Today was, obviously, one of those occasions.

After watching Moss manhandle Glory Girl like he had, so easily that it had only taken a couple of minutes before Lisa’s fellow blonde had been left essentially helpless beneath him… Why wouldn’t she be happy about it? She had a cape, a minion, a...boyfriend, weird as it was to say it, that was capable of throwing down with one of the strongest capes in the Bay in a straight fight. Beating them.

… Once she thought about it though, him beating Glory Girl wasn’t all that impressive, physically at least. She didn’t doubt that Vicky, at this point, would take just about anything he said as something just short of the word of God. A few stern words from him would probably be enough to drop her on her knees. Everything was going according to plan.

Everything.

Lisa puckered her lips and started laying down her first layer of lipstick. Bright red. Thick and only getting thicker as she continued to apply it again and again. At least five times before she thought it might have been enough for it to hold up to the night she was going to have...then a sixth time, just in case. Then the same with her mascara, this time purely for the sake of later ruining it. Having it run down her cheeks in dark streaks as the tears began to fall...it sounded like fun.

She’d taken a nice hot shower. Her lingerie was on nice and tight. Her pumps high. Her makeup, tarted up to perfection...and Moss was in the other room with the heat turned way up. Sweating by now. Dripping all over her couch, naked as the day he’d been born and with his huge hands behind his head as he waited for her to come back and get their little party started…and Christ.

Lisa pulled out the front of her underwear, a tiny also purple thong to give herself a look. Just a quick one before she let it snap back into place, her suspicions confirmed as she caught sight of the thick, wet strings pulling away from her slit.

Just thinking about him was enough to get her ready. Not just wet. Ready. And it was only going to get worse while she breathed in the tainted air around him and drank his...it was going to get completely ridiculous, but that was just how it was.

Lisa stared at the mirror for a moment longer. Long enough for her to decide that, even if having her hair fly free was convenient, that wasn’t what she was going for. Hot. Not easy...not that kind of
easy anyway. A duo of scrunchies and a set of twintails later though and she gave herself the nod.

… Why was she even thinking about this anyway, really though? She knew what she was getting into. This wasn’t her first rodeo. More like her fifth, even if she hadn’t dressed up nearly as much before. She should be used to this by now.

It was time for Moss to get his employee bonus. Nothing new… Not even with him being exactly how she’d imagined he’d be when she stepped out of the bathroom with a robe tied tightly around her body. All she could see was his back. The TV on and showing a movie as he unknowingly choked her with his scent and ruined her couch for anything that wasn’t raunchy, bareback sex.

… Oh well. She’d needed a new one for a while now anyway.

“I’m ready, Moss,” Lisa said as she, slowly, made her way around to the front of the couch with Moss’s dark eyes following her the whole way…and if he got any more excited, he’d start bouncing on the couch and end this whole thing before it even began. “Thanks for waiting.”

“It wasn’t that hard, considering what you promised me.” He took a deep breath when he saw her face. Her hair. The stockings and pumps she was wearing. Items that hinted at more and better under the robe. “… I’d have done a lot worse than wait if it meant I’d get the chance to see my girl dress up.”

“Always such a flatterer.”

He shrugged. “Just saying what I think.”

… Lisa guessed that was true enough. With an erection like the one he was sporting now when she finally got in front of him and blocked the tv with her body… Well. Besides his dick having the honor that was being able to pound nails into wood with a good hard smack, it was a damn good lie detector. Not that she needed one, but it did make things easy.

Lisa, after she gave that prick of his a good, hard look, gave him her most dangerous grin then. A dark, smug thing that she’d practiced in the mirror for her evening job whenever she wanted to show that she knew more than everyone else... Then was when she untied her robe and let it pool around her feet.

With a hand in her hair and a pose reminiscent of a fifties era pin-up, she puckered her lips and took in Moss’s reaction. The increasing pace of his breathing, his heart, and the harder, faster pulses of his cock as he scanned her entire body, following every curve and line until he hit her pouty, red lips. He never blinked. Not even once. Good. Lisa had already decided that she was going to be going all out tonight, and so let the floodgates open up. Gave her power full reign and freedom as she enjoyed the feeling of Moss’s eyes on her before she fell to her knees and started a crawl towards him.

She made sure to lock eyes with her minion. To throw some extra sway into her thong-clad ass as she approached her goal for a good part of the evening and well into the night. He wanted her. He was aching for her. It took most of his willpower to just resist the urge to leap out of his seat and fuck her into the ground.

Later. Later tonight for sure. After what he had done today, he deserved nothing less.

“Do you have any idea how wet you make me, Moss?” She slowed her approach just enough to
make him lean forward a bit more in anticipation. Just enough that he listened before he took her. “Any earthly idea of how good it feels for a girl to have a dick like yours at her beck and call?” She was almost there now, and the musk was so strong that she felt dizzy. Out of touch in the best of ways. “No… No. I don’t think you do.”

Only a foot away from her goal she dropped her eyes from his face to the real object of her affection at that moment. His dick stood like a monolith to all that was male and good. A purple capped pillar of green female subjugation. So close up the smell was overwhelming. Breathtaking…but that was nothing compared to the rush of information that had suddenly hit her over the head like a lusty brick.

‘Is capable of sensing nerve bundles in female flesh and concentrating chemical releases upon those locations. Head and shaft can alter its shape on the fly to best stimulate and satisfy individuals. Secretions contain the following mix of chemicals; euphorics, antibodies and growth hormones, as well as several substances that promote tissue elasticity and the advancement of female sexual characteristics.

*Rest of the chemical load’s purpose is unknown. Classification, unknown.*

*Testicles are capable of holding more than ten times the amount of fluid as should be possible for their volume. Virility and potency almost unmeasurably high. Chance of pregnancy- high. Chance of orgasm- statistical certainty.*

With that, Lisa shut her higher brain functions off by putting her face in front of Moss’ quaking, churning sack and taking a deep breath. It burned her nose and made her eyes water, but a second later an almost vacant smile swept over her pretty face. Then, with a titter of laughter, Lisa puckered up and gave her minion’s enormously backed up, grapefruit-sized nuts a suckling kiss apiece. The red, puckered ring that marked each one as if they were a laser marked target to be hit made Lisa laugh again because, well… That was pretty much exactly what they were.

They were *targets*...and she was going to see how many licks it took to get to the gooey, salty center of this lollipop, or so help her god...

“I’m gonna mark this big dick all up, minion.” She gave the spot between his shaft and balls a hot lingering kiss, then gave the space that separated his nuts a gentle lick. “Everyone is going to know that you’re already taken. Owned.” Another application of her lips, this time directly to the shaft punctuated her claim nicely…but she still had to add something more. “And that it’s a prime piece of jailbait that’s got you by the balls.”

He let out a low rumble of laughter and the sound went right to her lower belly, leaving her with a sense of joy and fulfillment that she knew wasn’t natural…and didn’t really care. She’d been miserable before...and she wasn’t giving this up for *anything.*

Lisa, for once in her life, shut up for a little bit and concentrated on giving her man a good time.

A peck here. A peck there. A firm, closed mouth kiss to mark a spot, then a few wetter open ones to give that spot a little polish. She was methodical. Clean as she could be when saliva was working its way down her chin while she worked this monster over, bit by bit. No spot was left unkissed. No cranny was left unlicked...and the massive orc dick in her face soon began to take on a surprisingly holiday themed appearance. Like a big, green and red candy cane.
“It’s like a Christmas cock, Moss!” She had to giggle again. Just had to, even if it sounded, felt like she’d been drinking… So she did. Because why not? No one was judging her except Moss. “I think I know what I’m putting the presents under this year~”

The raised eyebrow he gave her almost made her start choking with laughter. Almost, before she went back to giving the slab of meat in her face the longest, wordless love letter of her life. A happy little nuzzle and a tight, upwards tug from the base to the middle… It just…it made things, her life, so much easier.

A low, nearly subsonic groan from Moss had her clenching up in a small orgasm. One that had her answering with a groan of her very own as a thick, clear stream gushed from the tip of the dick in her hands to run down off the head and down the sides…and, without even a moment of hesitation, Lisa stuck her tongue out and gave that rivulet of pre a taste.

Just that one was enough to rock her world.

As soon as her tongue hit the stuff she felt herself freeze. She blinked. Saw everything before her eyes become brighter, louder, better as she stared at nothing, but saw everything… It was forever. It wasn’t even a second.

That bit of precum had been the best damn thing she’d ever tasted in her life. Ever…and then she swallowed and forgot everything.

It started from her toes. A sudden shiver that ran up her legs. Past her thighs and not her belly that lit a fire inside her...a need. Which is when, almost before she even knew what she was doing, Lisa was messily making out with every square inch of the leaking dick she had in front of her. Moaning and drooling as she did her best to lick up and swallow every drop as fast as she could.

This got her every time, with every time just as good as the last.

With a groan of primal need, Lisa got fed up with sweeping up the drips and dregs and tasty little bubbles and went right for the source. Humming a tuneless melody. Sighing. She sat up straight on her knees, her legs straight all so that she could meet Moss head to ‘head’.

She nearly fell over. Fainted when she made eye contact with that fat, purple bellend. Just nearly...if not for a big, fortifying whiff that gave her the fortitude she needed to pull away and look her boyfriend in the eye.

“... This is unfair, Moss.” She looked down at it and gulped, her saliva already flowing in anticipation. “How could any girl be confronted with this and not just fall in love on the spot.” Her small soft hands sought out his enormous nuts and gave each one a gentle caress. The dick below her chin almost fountained another thick stream of clear sticky fluid in response as he continued to look down on her from on high. “It’s not fair....” Lisa dropped her head. In playful shame. In want. In need.

A second later her smeared ruby lips made contact with the purple, spongy flesh of Moss’ dick... and her power winked out like a roofied sorority girl on spring break. The scent, taste, and sheer terrible heat flooding her mouth pushed her over the edge. Instinct took over…and she didn’t regret it a bit. It was like liquid candy. A shot of brandy. A mug of chocolate. A deep, intense warmth that burned her from the inside out and derailed her thoughts before they even began...but she still needed more.
Lisa let something escape from her mouth. A soft animal noise that was half happy moan and half frightened whimper before she simply opened her mouth as wide as she could and pushed forward and down. With steady pressure, a lack of care about the pressure in her jaw and more than a little pre-laced saliva, she managed to pop the whole apple-sized head in a few seconds later.

Moss, as expected, sounded as if he enjoyed it. He groaned, almost putting a hand in her hair before he remembered what she’d said as the tip of his dick disappeared into her mouth. Her only weapon, normally a source of snark and vitriol that had become, at this moment, little more than a tool to make him happy.

She then started humming. Keeping it random, but constant as she attempted to force another inch down her throat… She must have been a sight, with her lips stretched like they were. Almost comically so over the tremendous girth she was feeding on. Her lightly running mascara and the thick, perfectly round streaks of lipstick she was leaving to mark her progress.

But, she could always be more of a sight. She just needed to work harder. Go deeper...get more lube.

Another, harder squeeze of his churning nuts, and another rocket of scalding hot pre cascaded out, hitting the back of her throat like a normal man’s money shot. Even expecting it, that big blast of natural lubricant took Lisa completely off guard. Her mind began to fog. Understanding started to leave her.

She had to admit. It was hard. Really, really hard to not let the flow take her. To not just let it sweep her mind away into her own little world... A world where all she had to do was suck orc cock until she passed out.

She didn’t though. Because of course not.

Lisa was a tough girl. The smartest bitch in the room. A badass supervillain and this hulking brute’s boss, landlord, and high maintenance girlfriend. If she was going to suck dick, she was going to do it mostly in her right mind, damn it!

With an act of will, she refocused her eyes on her minion’s panting face. He was clearly loving this. So much so that she could see himself straining, his fingers twitching as he forced his hands away from her head. Just like she’d requested. Good boy.

He deserved a bit of a show for his obedience.

If Lisa could have smiled at that moment, she would have as she pushed down as far as she could go and tensed, hard, deliberately forcing blood to her face to make her features turn a brighter, cherry red. Then, at the same time, she brought out an old childhood trick and let her eyes cross absurdly in front of her nose.

He snorted with laughter. Lightly, in a way that you could barely hear it over the sound of his panting...but he hadn’t seen anything yet.

After Lisa let go of his throbbing sack with great reluctance, she brought both her hands in closed fists to either side of her face. Stuck out her little pink tongue as far as she could so that it was visibly sticking out from under the side of his fat, green shaft...and extended the middle and pointer fingers of both hands to make a double peace sign.
“Cweshew!” Lisa burbled happily. Sure, it was supposed to be ‘cheese’ but with so much dick in the way, it was impossible to understand her… Good enough.

She held the pose for a while longer. Then another while...which is when the laughter started.

Moss gaped at the ridiculous, and honestly kind of hot, display his girlfriend and boss lady was giving him, before doing the closest thing an Orc could do to howling with laughter. He honestly had to pound the sofa cushions to keep from moving too much. The low noises of mirth he was making made the whole thing worthwhile as they seemed to transmit themselves down his mighty shaft and right down Lisa’s throat, terminating in a spot a few inches below her belly button and stoking the fires even higher.

That little comedic trick was actually useful after all. Awesome.

Just another moment longer and she dropped the silly look. Pulled back with a long, wet slurp until the head escaped, leaving more than a few strings of saliva behind as a bridge between that purple helmet and her swollen red lips.

“What is it, Moss? Does it amuse you?” She kissed the head again, this time just doing her best to drool. To weep. To make as big a damned mess as possible while she fought for breath. “Watching me get drunk on your cock?” She playfully bit down right on the head. A careful nibble that left a tiny indentation in the purple that left her positively dripping with pride and other, darker things when he hissed. “Does it make you feel good, knowing that you’ve got your own personal teenage cocksucker and cum dump?”

Moss’s mouth fell open. Partly in shock, part something in what was most likely in an attempt to say something silly before she took him back into her mouth, now far past playing at trying to get him to bust.

She adopted an almost mechanical rhythm. Push, swallow, repeat. Keep doing that until she could no longer advance, then repeat the whole process in reverse. It would have almost been clinical, heartless if it hadn’t have been for the eye contact they were sharing as they went in.

Two bright red rings of color. Nearly glowing in contrast to Lisa’s own green. Like a pair of suns, burning a hole into the darkest, deepest parts of her heart and mind. There were no words. There were none needed. He knew exactly what she wanted and, thankfully, it was what he wanted as well.

Lisa wasn’t stopping. Not until he gave her exactly what she wanted, and the renewed rolling grip on his twin semen tanks made what that was very clear.

Then was when her eyes flicked up to his hands. Another message, sent even as she started grinding her crotch against the hardest part of his leg... and so in tune were they right then that he did exactly what she’d requested of him.

With almost absurd care and attention, Moss dropped his enormous hands down and gently stroked Lisa’s pretty blonde hair while she sucked him off. The sides of her face and her shoulders as well now that he was finally allowed to touch.

Almost there...

Her own hands left his swollen undercarriage. Just long enough to reach for his own hands, grab
them firmly, and position them to grip her twin-tailed hairdo like a set of handlebars. The second he was in place her little digits returned to weighing and examining the pair of orbs that had so fascinated her.

She’d done her hair up like this for a reason. It was about time they fulfilled their purpose besides making her look cute.

Moss, after some thought, gave the hair handles just the slightest downward tug. Just some gentle encouragement to go deeper than anything truly forceful. He obviously wasn’t expecting her to moan and let loose a wave of wet all over his leg when he did.

The almost desperate ‘Mmm hmm’ she gave him was enough to make him start moving her head up and down in earnest. Still being gentle, but slowly speeding up as he realized that she could actually take him somewhat now and that he was just a hair away from fucking her face until her eyes rolled up into the back of her head.

The part of her that was still thinking clearly was sort of amazed that she was pulling this off. Almost a full foot of really hot, hard, and girthy dick was sawing in and out of her face at a pace that, while not exactly what anyone would call fast, couldn’t really be called slow either. The amount of force Moss used and the way the thick meat in her throat made her relatively narrow neck bulge should have at least been uncomfortable, but all Lisa could feel was a slow building buzz that wrapped her head in pink fluffy cotton starting with her overstuffed mouth.

She swallowed hard as he pulled back, and managed to force her beloved minion to pause and grumble some sort of aborted prayer up to the sky. Why did making him moan make her feel so fucking powerful...? It didn’t matter. What did matter was the building thirst in her belly. Lisa needed more than just the endless, thin trickle of delightful pre he was watering her with.

With a sudden trio of taps at his leg, Lisa was allowed to go free. To back up off his mighty phallus and catch her breath with a hand at her neck. By now, her makeup had to be an absolute ruin. Her lips were a mess a red mess of spit and lipstick, and her teary eyes had spread trails of black down her cheeks.

From the look on Moss’s face, she looked completely fucked...and yet the smile on her face was almost devilish she was so pleased.

“Hey, buddy.” Lisa croaked. The only thing she could do, thanks to the beating her vocal chords had taken in the last...fifteen minutes? Damn. “I know you’re a big softie at heart, but when a girl half your age dresses up like a high-class hooker and begs you to fuck her face you don’t act like a gentleman anymore.”

She grabbed the base of his dick with both hands and squeezed hard enough to make him groan in the audible range of hearing and somehow got him even harder.

“You fuck her face until she begs you to stop or she stops making noises.” A flick of her right hand’s index finger against his cockhead, a hard one, got her a surly grunt. “Got it, minion?”

After he nodded, still as grumpy as ever but getting better as soon as she sucked the head down once more, she put her arms demurely behind her back. Batted her lashes at him like she could do no wrong and hummed a bar from ‘The Good Ship Lollipop’ for kicks.

It was almost frightening how quickly he reacted to that.
His hands, so large that they could crush her in an instant seized her twin tails once again and pulled her down...hard. The huge and bloated head was pouring even more fluid down her gullet now and seemed to be bullying its way deeper in with an almost magical ease. Farther than any ring that Lisa had left so far, there was no doubt.

After a brief moment of vertigo, Lisa slowed just before she hit a wall. Something hot and yielding pressing against her chin, with only a second later resulting in her nose hitting something firm. It wasn't hard for her to figure out what had happened to her, thanks to her search for blankets so long ago.

Those were his abs against her nose. Those were his testicles on her chin. Moss had hilted himself in her face completely, and she had no idea how.

It was enough for her to come back to herself, just a bit.

This should have been impossible. The size disparity between him and her made what she’d already accomplished a near miracle and...then he yanked her head back and slammed it back down, and Lisa knew she’d made a teensy mistake when she’d asked him to get rough with her.

She still had a gag reflex.

Lisa’s throat rebelled. Spasmed and twitched. She gagged hard around the cock still planted firmly in her face, only...to find that it didn’t feel bad at all. In fact, when she choked and sputtered like that her whole body thrummed with a strangely pleasant feeling. One that she wasn’t allowed to contemplate while Moss continued to use her throat like his own personal fleshlight.

“Sorry, Lisa. I guess I was treating you too much like glass.”

Lisa could only blink agreeably up at him as he held her down to the base, seemingly uncaring of things like the fact that she needed to breathe or that he was pulling her hair a little too tight...and that was fine. She’d already creamed her panties once from this alone.

“You’ve got such a big mouth, I should have known that it could take a good fucking.” With that, he gave her a full-on leer, tusks and teeth and all. The explosion of sensation and affection that his praise filled her with was obviously unnatural...but this still felt too damn nice for her to give a damn.

Everything came in waves now as he used her face like his own personal toy. The musk was everything, an inescapable incense of lust that filled her head completely. The pre filled her up, warmed her like spiced wine and made her twice as drunk even as it gave her clarity. Lisa couldn’t remember ever being so happy, not even in the last week, and a few tears of actual joy might have mixed in with the regular ones that simply came with the act...an act that she could feel was about to come to an end.

*This felt so right.*

Lisa ended up messing her panties one more time, just dealing with the sensations of the dick ravaging her throat as much as it did her mind before he let loose. With a roar of dominate affection, Moss plunged every inch of his titanic dick into down her throat...then let out a terribly undignified hiccup when Lisa’s forgotten hands snatched the balls at her chin and began to knead them like they were made of a delicate pastry dough.
The river became a flood. A stream of boiling hot and gooey orc cum poured into Lisa’s belly like it was trying to fill up a gas tank. A straight line to her stomach that made it so that even though the volume of seed she was being forced to take was, quite frankly, inhuman she managed to take all of the initial rush without spilling so much as a drop. Unfortunately though, for both of them, she couldn’t hold her breath for the twenty minutes or more it would take for Moss to finish. She had to pull back. She had to breathe...but, she supposed that didn’t mean she couldn’t make a show of it.

Lisa started to slowly pull back. A swift clench of the jaw, just to give him a little nip when he tried to pull her back down without thinking got him to back off in a hurry... Then, she gave him a wink as she reached the halfway point to show there were no hard feelings, not that he was paying much attention, considering the situation... The same situation that had just shattered her own focus as soon as she pulled back far enough to get a full and proper taste of his cum on her palette.

To say it tasted good was a lie. It didn’t taste of anything at all besides salt and sweet...but she wasn’t talking about the physical.

The word, the sense...what she was feeling had no name in any language she could think of. It was like swallowing lightning. Like drinking directly from the breast of a goddess of love. It didn’t overwhelm her senses, it overwrote them utterly. It was pure heaven. Joy condensed into a delicious white liquid that she never wanted to stop drinking...but she had to. Her vision was graying out at the edges, and she needed air.

Another forlorn suck later and she pulled off, at last, letting him cover her face with his spectacular gift while she desperately fought for breath...and continued to jerk him to completion.

Sore throat or no, her hands were perfectly fine. Just because she was satisfied didn’t mean it was fine for her to stop. She wasn’t going to ruin her sweet boy’s orgasm by quitting halfway through, no matter how long it took. Lisa kept cranking away, allowing the mess to either hit herself or the couch until it began to slow and she got her breath back at last...and asked her still cumming roommate a very important question.

“So...best blowjob you’ve ever had? Or just best blowjob ever?”

“... I know we’ve known each other for all of a week…” Moss audibly licked his lips while Lisa started lapping at his cum slit like it was an ice cream cone. “But I think I’m in love with you.”

“The very best then.” Lisa gave him that dark grin again, just for kicks… Foxy. Yeah. It was a foxy grin. Focus on that instead of the feeling of your heart trying to bust out of your chest… Love. Heeeeee... “But I think I can make it even better, you know?”

“... How?”

“Just give me a moment to get dressed.”

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“Halt right there, you foul corruptor of innocent mai-” Was all Lisa got to say before she was hit by what might as well have been a freight train. A freight train that had already dragged her into bed, and forced her ankles up over her head.

She might have made a mistake. Again...but damn if this wasn’t going to be fun~
Chapter 14

I had a wonderful life.

This was not up for debate. Not really. Here, in Earth Bet, I had everything I needed. I had a home. I had a job. Financial security...a girlfriend/boss that might just might, be a hair shy of this state’s age of consent laws. Maybe.

I wasn’t sure if she’d just been playing up the jailbait card for fun or not. Hadn’t asked or looked it up either. Partly because the idea of it had been hot as hell, true or not...and partly because I had just found out I was starting to grow hair again. I didn’t need the stress and I really didn’t want the fun to end.

Lisa was funny. She was hot. She was nice... She sucked like a vacuum (terrible as it was to say it) and was a hell of a lot better as a person than I’d ever expected her to be. Giving all of that up over something as small as age would be stupid.

Anyway, life was roses now. Far better than it had any right to be for someone whose last attempt at random social interaction had led to a year of murder attempts and transportation into one of the worst places to be outside of anything owned by Games Workshop. Maybe. Anything, things could still be better of course. I could do with fewer Nazis in my life, useful cash dispensers that they were...but still. I wouldn’t give it up for anything.

I couldn’t give it up.

When she’d told me she could make this whole day better than it had already been, I hadn’t believed it. She’d already made this day better than all of my birthday’s combined as it was. I couldn’t actually imagine it getting any better. Neither did I actually believe it. But, just in case, I’d played along. Waited. Thought about possibly getting a rubber sheet or something for the floor so that when we did this again the mess wouldn’t be quite so...catastrophic...and then she came out of her room...and I’d lost it.

I’d pinned her down to the bed and put her in a mating press. No escape. No respite. No words for either of us after the first five minutes of this had come and gone and Lisa had lost most of her ability to talk or make any sounds besides those that might have been recognizable as cries for more, or maybe, mercy. The both of them seemingly interchangeable between alternating breaths.

Lisa caught her breath. Shrieked. Screamed in a wordless, animalistic howl as I hilted myself deep in her sopping wet body. Repeatedly hollowing her out with my dick from the bulbous tip to the extra wide base while her heels beat feebly against my broad lower back. Her eyes rolled in her head as if she were possessed and she clawed at my chest and shoulders in ecstasy… All while she flashed those damn ears at me, driving me to ever greater heights of lust and a deep, primal, instinctual fury that just wouldn’t let me go.

I wasn’t sure where Lisa had got the idea that wearing fake elf ears was going to make this better...but she hadn’t been wrong, per say. I’d been going on at full blast for what had to have been the last ten minutes without even feeling anywhere near short of breath...and I was pretty sure it was the ears that were doing it. It was a strange, yet bone-deep feeling that I had no reason to disbelieve.

The skimpy leather armor, mixed with sexy silken underwear and golden jewelry on her neck and
fingers had been icing on the cake. The sheathed, upraised sword and the declaration that she’d ‘punish’ me for some unknown crime had just been overkill of the very worst sort...and that was what got me thinking about things. About myself and my relationship with the tiny blonde acting as if she were dying over and over as I bred her into the ground...and there was no other way to say it and still be honest.

I was breeding her right now...and I couldn’t stop myself. It wasn’t just me saying it either. Not like you’d hear from some douchebag that couldn’t help but bust in a girl after rawing her, uncaring of the consequences as long as they had a good time. I was in the throes of a goddamn unstoppable biological imperative. I literally could not stop myself...and I thought that I might have some idea as to why.

I’d seen enough hentai in my day to figure out what was happening here. I might have been a little...absent when it came to noticing details, important or not, but I wasn’t an idiot. Not a complete one anyway. I was capable of something as simple as basic pattern recognition and logical thinking. A step up from...just about every variation of my newly acquired species that I could think of, let alone the one I was now pretty damn sure I was a part of.

I started to pull my blonde busting dick out of Lisa again. All the way to the crown before I stopped for the sake of more brooding. However, this time it didn’t take long for Lisa to complain about it. Not with words, seeing how far past those she was. Instead, with yet more noises and the desperate bouncing of her hips attempting to take me back in as a reminder that she was still there...and I took it as it was. A reminder. I rapidly pushed myself back into her.

I wasn’t going to be able to stop myself for a good long while...brooding could come later. Keeping Lisa happy came first. Satisfying myself came first.

I gave her a couple more slow pumps, just enough to turn those pleading mewls and sobs into high-pitched pleasured screams once more before I sped up. Ramped it up until the poor young thing could do little more than gurgle and convulse while the oozing mess I’d made of her slit, still unbearably tight even after what I’d put her though, attempted to wring every drop of cum that I had out of my balls. Even more than it had already tasted in the leftover coating of such on my shaft...and the greatly slowed release that Lisa had left me with before she had gone to change into the worst possible outfit she could have chosen if she hadn’t been looking to make a play at becoming an orcish brood mother.

Lisa was full of enough cum to get a hundred women pregnant by now, with more sluggishly pouring into her with every thrust. Then quickly pouring out of her as the near solid jelly was forcefully, and audibly, displaced with every hammering blow I gave her, her womb seemingly forever ago filled to capacity...or near enough that it didn’t matter in the end as I felt her noticeably rounded belly bounce against my stomach.

It was loud. It was messy. It was proof that, when something met an unstoppable force, something had to give...and, this time, it was in more ways than one.

The first time this had happened, the first time she’d got a good and heavy rope of cum to the guts, hoping that we’d get lucky enough to squeeze on by without getting serious might have been forgivable. Just a little bit...but now, it seemed that, after all was said and done, Lisa and I would need to talk about things. Important things. Things like options and what she wanted to do in the aftermath.

One of us had to be the responsible one in this relationship and, as long as you ignored what was
Another attempt at stopping, or to at least give Lisa a bit of a rest, was met with yet more complaints. Yet more of that infuriating indecisiveness as her legs locked around my waist and her palms pushed against my chest. Infuriating, mostly, because it egged me on. It made me pound her just a little bit harder with an instinctive growl in an attempt to turn her into a puddle of orgasmic, insensate jelly. Barely a step lower from where she stood, but it was a goal that my instincts told me to reach for anyway.

—it looked like it was going to have to be me. I was going to have to be the adult in this mess...not that I wasn’t already, physically, but that wasn’t the point, alright? The point was that there might have been a reason why I had a cat, and it wasn’t because I was looking for responsibility. This was kind of a big step up.

Lisa, after far too long, finally stopped screaming and focused on breathing, getting air whenever she could. In. Out. Harsh. Frantic. Loud enough that I could hear it even over the rhythmic thunderclap of my nuts slapping against her pale and cushy rear. Over the thick, wet noises that was me wrecking her comparatively dainty little hole, ruining it for life when it came to anyone that wasn’t me as I laid my claim...and gave into my instincts at a single point.

This girl, my boss, my lover, whatever label you wanted to give her...she was mine. Mine and mine alone. Lisa, and the child she would surely be carrying now were the end of my hopes at having a quiet, peaceful life. A tiny apartment in the ghetto was no place to raise a child. It was no fortress or, god forbid, cave like my instincts were screaming at me to find, but still. It didn’t change anything. Coil was a dead man. Had been before, actually...now though? He was dead twice over and I was finding it hard to care about the fact that I didn’t care that I was plotting his murder while in the middle of a warm, vocal, and oddly still conscious female.

For the first time in what had to have been closer than not to half an hour, I sat up. Just a little. Just enough that I no longer had Lisa pinned completely understand my bulk and I could see her face...and I found that the aftermath of the decadent blowjob she’d given me was nowhere near as far as she could fall.

Even with an arm over her eyes, she couldn’t hide the mess I had made of her. Not even if she tried...and an arm across the face wasn’t nearly good enough to qualify. Her mascara had continued to run, getting everywhere and anywhere it could in a streaky wash of black lines and marks. All over her wrist and the pillow to either side of her face. She was wheezing as well, coughing like a badly tuned engine as her little pink tongue darted out to lick...suggestively...at the corners of her spit slicked mouth while milky, thick drool ran over onto her cheeks.

And that wasn’t even bringing the whorish babbling into it. The quiet, barely sensible noise coming from her mouth in between licks. The whispers for more and how she was cumming before I ran a thumb across her cheek. Just a quick, gentle wipe to clean her up a little that ended up with her quieting down with a whimper...before catching my thumb with her lips to suck on it as if it were a pacifier.

From how she acted after, obviously a great deal calmer as she tried to deep throat my finger, that was exactly what it was to her. A pacifier. A tool to calm herself while I just to not blow my load all over her already white-washed insides.

It was a fight that I lost when she pulled that arm away and allowed me to see her eyes. Weeping, trembling, and wide. Moving madly from side to side, up and down as she looked at me.
Looked *through* me through an island of pink in a sea of black...through heart-shaped lenses over heavily dilated orbs.

She was completely *gone*...and I couldn’t hold back anymore. Physically couldn’t as the familiar pressure started building up at the base of my shaft. Familiar, but not, as it felt like my soul was coming out through my dick...and I understood the difference between an orgasm and an *orgasm* when it came to my anatomy.

I was made for pleasure. Mind Breaking. Soul Melting. Heart stealing. I was made to give it and take it in equal measure and I couldn’t be truly satisfied with half measures. Neither could Lisa for that matter, whose eyes had rolled back so far in her head that I could only see the whites as soon as I fed into her body the first of the newest batch of me. Thicker, heavier, and *hotter* than any load before.

I growled. Roared. Held her close and declared my place at the top of the fucking food chain to everyone that could hear it even as each fresh shot of cum pushed the old back out of Lisa’s quivering pussy, ruining her bed and consigning it to the dumpster out back as the blonde sank her teeth into my shoulder with an utterly broken wail.

Another pump. Three. Four. *More*. Long enough that I lost count and I felt that I was starting to run close to empty for once before I gave Lisa the full hilt to let her gulping pussy milk out the last few drops from me...and I have to admit that Lisa’s response to that actually had me feeling more than a little nervous.

She let go of me, tooth and arm and fell, stunned. Completely limp with the most insane and pleased smile on her face that I’d ever seen on anyone before, one that was even wider than that time I’d eaten her out, hard as it was to believe…and then her eyes slid forward. Instantly. Abruptly. Without even a hint of a warning to look at me, to *see me* as her lower stomach lit up with a dark purple light and started to fill in the starts of a design—

“Oh, *fuck* me,” I whispered to the background of Lisa’s ecstatic, almost hysterical laughter.

“Nuh-uh, Daddy... You got your roles mixed up. I don’t *fuck* you,” Lisa whispered smugly back as she locked her hands behind my neck, all smiles and teeth and *those damned fake ears* as she came down from her moment of absolute joy. “You *fuck* me.”

—that looked to be a stylized heart made up of watercolor and fractals.
Chapter 15

Amy laid back under the shower spray, eyes closed and body near boneless as she waited for the twitching in her legs to stop. For the momentary wash of fuzzy little endorphins to run their course and kill her afterglow even faster than they had brought it on.

Seriously though. If there was any reason to thank Carol for anything, anything at all, it would probably be for getting the detachable shower head with variable settings. The really fancy one, with all the trimmings. It was just the thing after a long morning, afternoon, night...any time at all actually, these days, considering how goddamn high her libido had been running lately.

Her and some near hour long TLC were close personal friends these days. They saw each other at least three times a day, four if she felt she had the time or was having a particularly difficult day...and Victoria wasn’t helping in her own special way, as always. With a little twist to things now, but still.

Victoria wasn’t helping.

Amy wasn’t an idiot. Her fingers had been in the blonde’s mouth. She knew how things worked with her now. Even if she hadn’t known though, she still would have been suspicious about the value packs of gum her sister had been bringing home by the metaphorical truckload, only to disappear to her room with them.

One a week would have been fine. Two a week would have been a little much, but okay. A whole pack a day though? Sometimes more? That sounded suspiciously a lot like an addiction. An addiction that drove Amy mad every time she touched the other girl, skin-to-skin.

If Amy thought her libido was a little too high, then Victoria’s taught her otherwise. Compared to her metaphorical skyscraper of sexual needs, Vicky’s was Mannequin’s unfinished base up on the moon. It was a goddamn miracle she could even function, seeing how even something as small as having someone pinch her tongue was enough to make her juice herself, barely an inch away from orgasm in reaction.

She wasn’t sure whether she should be thanking that Case 53 or cursing him...but she knew it was his fault, somehow. Everything was. Her own, personal issues with her hormones and control and Vicky’s as well... That asshole.

When her legs finally got some strength back into them, just enough that she didn’t have to worry that she’d be eating bathroom tile if she made to leave, Amy turned off the shower. Listened to the dripping for just a little while longer before standing up and drying herself off. Just a quick toweling and some time with the hair dryer while she tried to ignore the light tingling in between her legs that had started up again.

She had a couple of hours before it became unbearable. Four to six. A great improvement, considering her first few days in dealing with the aftereffects of contact with Moss. That hand-to-hand contact that he’d initiated, only to mumble something unclear to her and fall asleep, had nearly dropped her to her knees with the pure, nearly overwhelming need to finger herself until she blacked out...but she was better now.

Much better.
Whatever he’d done to her, to Vicky, was slowly wearing off. Hopefully, by the time next week came around, it would be completely gone. Vicky a little bit later, another week at most. There was no need to make a big deal about things if she didn’t have to. No questions had to be asked about the focus of the little fantasies his touch had brought up in her. Questions that would be asked. Possibly forced out of her and dissected by Protectorate Thinkers.

Amy closed her eyes. Placed her hands over her face and took a deep breath.

And it would be because she was Panacea that she’d have all of that attention on her… Which was why she wasn’t going to say anything.

No one had to know that she couldn’t get Victoria out of her head as long as she kept her mouth shut. Easy. All that she had to do was wait this mess out and avoid further contact. She’d also have to have a talk with Vicky to make sure she understood the consequences as well.

In the end, someone else could figure him out. Everything could still work out for her as long as she hid behind her once absolute freedom from biological dependency. Everything would be fine…or so she thought, up to the point when she stepped out into the hallway in little more than a towel to see her sister just inches away from crashing into her. Neither did Vicky when those mere inches became full-body contact and dropped them both to the floor.

“What the hell, Vicky!?”

“Hi, Ames…”

The lack of cries didn’t last all that long though, obviously. Neither did the lack of writhing as Amy came to the realization that Vicky was covered in dirt and leaves and enough pungent sweat to make parts of her costume become transparent… It was partly due to the fact that Amy now had to take another shower…and partly because, from what she could tell, Victoria’s nipples were poking through her bra and Amy thought she might have felt them against her skin, thanks to her towel falling away and…and there was the crippling guilt. Right on schedule.

“How’s your day been?” Victoria asked as she, slowly and shakily, shifted on her own personal axis and pulled herself upright with a viciously embarrassed and mostly naked Amy in her arms. It was only the brunette’s frantic clutching at her towel that kept her from baring all, not that Victoria seemed to be capable of noticing at the moment, considering just how glossy her eyes were as she looked into Amy’s eyes. “Just asking because, you know….”

Amy kept quiet, her outrage forgotten when Victoria let out a deep, moaning, almost orgasmic sigh and licked her lips. Another lick made it so that there was no ‘almost’ about it, causing the blonde’s every nerve to light up like a New York skyline as she added a bit more fluid to the mess she was already covered in...all for Amy’s viewing pleasure from the fingers on her shoulders.

Victoria was masturbating right in front of her. While in nearly see-through clothing and with her most definitely naked sister in her arms… Amy had had dreams that started like this.

“My day was fucking great,” Victoria continued without even a shudder as orgasm after orgasm popped off inside of her like a chain of firecrackers. All small, all quick. Barely noticeable. Only the prelude to something bigger and better as the blonde’s face dipped dangerously close towards hers. Close enough that the brunette could feel her breathing against her face, fast and shallow. “I apologized, you know?”
“...Yeah? That’s good.” Amy responded carefully, her suspicions a good part of the way towards vindication as she started gently prying at Vicky’s fingers. Ignoring the feeling that her heart might just explode and the subtle, spreading burn all along her front...and the tingling between her legs as it quickly became a wildfire. It looked like her recovery time was going to be taking a little longer than she’d expected. “How did he react?”

Amy’s breath caught in her throat when Victoria finally went a little too far and pressed her nose against hers. A funny little Eskimo kiss that the blonde dove into when Amy, without even thinking about it, or much of anything else for that matter as her brain sputtered and died, returned it.

“Oh, he loved it. All of it.” Vicky whispered, acting as if she was telling Amy about a secret instead of how her day had gone. “The notepad. The pencils. Those ones that are too damn big for anyone to use but you buy them from the gift store anyway because they’re funny and cheap.” Vicky was rambling now, absentmindedly talking as her hands moved up from Amy’s shoulders and up to her cheeks. “And...and he’s a really great guy, you know?”

Amy felt something inside of herself strain under the pressure when Vicky’s lips brushed against hers in mid-speech. Her heart. Her mind. Her morals. She couldn’t say...but it was something important.

“We sparred. Wrestled. Rolled around in the dirt. He forgave me for attacking him the first time...and...and I think I made a friend. A friend besides him, I mean. Lisa.” Victoria’s already wide smile grew the slightest bit wider as her voice dipped even lower yet. “We’re going to the spa tomorrow, Ames. You, me, and our possible new bestie~”

Amy’s eyes fluttered. Almost closed in anticipation when she Victoria’s lips brushed against hers once more. Not a simple graze like the last time, no. It felt, almost, like it had been a press...but she couldn’t trust herself at the moment. Time was...fluid right now. As was the space between her thighs.

She couldn’t say just how long they’d been standing in the hallway. She couldn’t trust that this was reality and not some sort of wonderfully fucked up fever dream that someone had crafted to fulfill a good quarter of her fantasies...thankfully just a quarter.

Her fantasies weren’t exactly what anyone could call family friendly. Some went even further than that and they didn’t deserve the chance to see the light of day...and then, there was the other stuff.

“You’ll love them, I think,” Vicky said in what Amy, even in the midst of whatever this was, could tell had been an accident. “They’re good people.” A slip of the tongue was all it was. A result of whatever unknowable chemical it was that Case 53 had dosed her with, forcing her to say whatever first came to mind. “And did you know your freckles really work on you? You’re adorable.”

Amy had to blink at that non-sequitur. Just that. She didn’t even get the chance to deepen her blush before Vicky’s lips met hers. Not in a graze. Not in a hesitant press...but a full-on kiss.

Her entire world went white. While she couldn’t see her own brain, she could guess well enough from what was happening to Vicky’s. Synapses flaring. Massive amounts of Endorphins. Oxytocin. Dopamine flooding it. Every chemical and hormone the body could give out to say that what was happening was worth doing further...even as she lost all feeling in her legs.

Even as she felt her mouth begin to warm, almost burning as Vicky’s tongue touched hers. Confident. Sure. A practiced act that Amy could only barely compete against by relying on the sort of enthusiasm that only an amateur could have. An amateur that had just had one of their longest
held, and most taboo fantasies, come true… Possibly.

*Possibly come true.* She couldn’t forget that.

For all she knew this could be a dream. It would make sense if it was. If this was real life, this wouldn’t be happening. *Couldn’t* be. Victoria’s tongue wouldn’t be in her mouth, showing her just how much she had to learn when it came to kissing, French or not. Victoria wouldn’t be holding her up in the way she was, with a hand around Amy’s waist and another at the back of her head to hold her close.

Amy *moaned* into Vicky’s mouth as, with just that, she came. She couldn’t confuse it for anything else as the floor took the brunt of that fact while her towel took the rest…and it just kept going. On and on while Victoria’s little firecrackers turned into bombs and started pulling Amy along for the ride.

The almost sweet smell that had been covering her like a cloud started to take on a new ‘flavor’. The feeling that it had been in some way incomplete, the one that Amy hadn’t even realized was a thing until just now started to fade…all while the scent of feminine arousal joined it. All while Amy, in the middle of what was quite possibly the greatest thing in her life so far, was carefully pushed away from her sister... Her blushing, wet mess of a sister…and everything came crashing down again, just as her towel fell to the floor for something a little *heavier* than just a kiss.

Amy had never felt so *alone*.

“…I need to take a shower. Before I forget.” Victoria nodded shakily before leaving a nearly insensate Amy up against a wall. Shivering, horny, and naked as the day she was born while the obviously dazed blonde opened up the towel closet. “I’m a mess. I’ll try to be quick.”

Amy’s eyes tracked her the whole way. From her start at the closet to her meandering journey into the walls and furniture, and then, finally into the bathroom before she closed the door and turned on the shower, leaving her sister all alone. Alone, with not even something as small as a towel around her to hide her shame as she dripped with at least three different types of bodily fluids from at least three different people…and then she was gone, almost at a run to her room to work this whole thing out.

In other words, she was going to masturbate until she blacked out…or the world made sense again. Whichever came first.
Chapter 16

Now, you may wonder how I, Moss the Orc, had found myself up on this rooftop on a cold January afternoon. Surrounded by chips of dirty slushy ice, old dead greenery and a large even more dead pigeon that had somehow gotten itself trapped in said ice as I carefully sat down for a bit of a brood. Fist to chin. Not hands to face. Had to keep that in mind, for multiple reasons.

For one, this pose was manlier than the other and I was kind of in public… For another, tusks really made that whole exasperated/frustrated face-scrubbing thing a lot harder than it should have been. The two fresh pinpricks in my palm could attest to that. Goddamn were they sharp.

Anyway, I was brooding. Thinking about things as I glared in the general direction of what I believed to be the middle of Brockton’s downtown district. The center of Coil’s operations. The focus of the animal inside of me, telling me to go out and do what I did best. Conquer. Rape. Pillage. Breed. An orc’s favorite past times…or, at least the type of orc I’d found myself to be. The chill it gave me was horrifying. If I’d had any hair worth talking about it would have been standing on end.

Excitement. Anticipation. An inhuman disdain for Calvert and an upwelling of sheer, unadulterated greed and want for everything he called his… I’d known from the beginning that he’d have to die eventually, sure. I’d been resigned to it as a certainty, but last night had changed things. Obviously.

Lisa might have said that she was fine. She might have said that her new tattoo was more decorative than anything and that she thought it was actually kind of pretty and that she’d be able to walk without waddling again before the end of the day was out, but I knew that I couldn’t just let it—

“I told you to clear the ice! Not stand around and feel sorry for yourself!”

I jolted in place and started to slide down the roof with a startled, coarse yelp as my internal narrative to a non-existent audience was broken by a snowball to the jaw. A snowball that led to me scrabbling for a handhold for only a moment before I found myself hitting the ground. Hard.

I didn’t even get a moment to get the ringing and quickly melting powder out of my ears before I found my vision filled with disappointed Asian grandmother...the stuff that nightmares were made of.

“You did it! You cleared all the ice! That is good at least.” Yugao continued to scold me while her grandson dusted his hands off and pretended he had nothing to do with my fall. “But then you cleared the streets by driving all the neighbors away!”

I quickly covered myself with a flinch when her cane whipped out towards me and my junk… Thankfully, she didn’t hit anything important and was just using the damn thing for emphasis, but still…terrifying.

The first time had been a traumatic experience, alright? Shut up.

“You did it! You cleared all the ice! That is good at least.” Yugao continued to scold me while her grandson dusted his hands off and pretended he had nothing to do with my fall. “But then you cleared the streets by driving all the neighbors away!”

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“Intimidating to them you are, standing out in the open like that! Almost had two cars crash!” Yugao, after a couple more seconds of the evil eye, huffed and replanted her cane on the ground. “Grandson feels like less of a man now!”
Instead of saying anything, the poor guy just closed his eyes and pinched his nose before he started walking away and towards the house…and I felt for him. Kinda. Maybe. Eh… It wasn’t like we exactly talked all that often and he worked with the ABB.

That last bit wasn’t exactly common ground that we could connect over, to say the least.

“See?” Yugao said. “Such a child! He won’t even let me clear the ice myself! As if a little fall from the roof could hurt me!”

Whoa. Wait. She was like...over seventy years old. Cleaning ice and animal carcasses off of a roof was hard work. I couldn’t just keep quiet about that. I started to raise my finger and reach for my notepad... However, she interrupted me before I could even sketch out the first letter.

“I survived Mao. I survived the rise of the CUI. I survived Leviathan. I can survive falling off a roof!” With that, she turned around and started to hobble away, leaving me speechless...and still concerned.

It was rather hard to argue against that logic, yeah. That never stopped anyone from discounting it though...like I did right then while picking myself up and brushing myself off.

Just because she could do it herself didn’t mean she should do it herself. She could afford to kick back for once.

“Now! Come here! I have your vat of rice all ready for you!” She snapped at me as she walked into her home, causing me to perk right up.

She could be as snippy as she wanted with me. Say whatever, do whatever, I didn’t much care when there was food involved… I knew that that sounded kind of shallow, but I really needed a lot of food with this body. It was a matter of survival for me...and I missed meat. A lot.

Something had to fill that steak shaped hole in my life...and it might as well just be more food, right?

After some ducking and weaving to get my fatass through her door, I followed her in and wiped my feet. My bare, bare feet. Even if I could find shoes that could possibly fit me, I didn’t actually see the point. I’d stepped on broken glass before. On stone and gravel. I’d literally soaked them in a puddle of freezing water and didn’t really feel it. I mean...I could tell it was cold, yeah, but it was more of a mental thing than a physical. It didn’t matter to me.

Either way, my shoes had gone the way of the dodo as had my underwear and bachelorhood...and, once again, I found myself following my nose towards a gigantic pot of food. Rice, doused in spices and oils that had my mouth watering at the very thought of them before I’d even fallen to my knees and scribbled out a ‘thank you’ before I dug in.

“Grandson at least have proper table manners! You eat like a pig!”

I felt Yugao smack me a couple of times with a broom, thankfully not that hard. It was noticeable, sure, but it didn’t hurt a bit. And even if it had I was so famished that stopping would have been an issue all by itself.

I’d skipped breakfast. Mostly. A single pancake wasn’t exactly a meal… Part of the price you had to pay when things were awkward at home and you needed to get away right now so you could think, I supposed.

An untold amount of time later I finally took my head out the vat, a proper SI unit, of rice and found Yugao shaking her head while her grandson only blinked in awe… I guessed that I’d been a little
sloppy, seeing how a hand across my lips ended with more than a few grains of rice on my palm.

How embarrassing.

“Why are you so hungry?” Yugao asked, her voice carrying the sort of tone that any man with a grandmother had to stop and listen to... Which really was all of them when you thought about it. The only thing that differed was the methods...but not by much. “You have a girlfriend with good job and good apartment. She keeps you fed. So why are you so hungry?”

They were insidious. Each and every one...which is why I froze, lost.

What could I do? What could I say? It wasn’t as if I could express my concerns. I mean, for one, there was no way I could explain everything on a paper in any reasonable amount of time. For another, I didn’t want to tell her everything.

Telling her that I was, most likely, some sort of rape monster from the worst parts of hentai hell wasn’t something you told people for obvious reasons. I didn’t need anyone to get a heart attack or for...whatever his name was to call somebody and start up the rumor mill...so I kept quiet.

Yugao stared at me. Uncomfortably close. Uncomfortably long as her knuckles turned white over the head of her cane.

To say that I was feeling uncomfortable at the moment was to say that England was sort of rainy...and it only got worse when her eyes lit up. When a surprisingly straight, ivory grin erupted on her face and she took one of my hands in hers.

She had a surprisingly strong grip for her age, I’d say that.

“You did it, didn’t you? You got her pregnant, yes? You stopped being such a bitch, yes?” She giggled, sounding like the schoolgirl she’d once been as she started patting that hand she’d taken captive like it was a wounded animal, ramping up that uneasy feeling I had by a couple of notches as she did. “Now all I need is my grandson to grow up and get some kids of his own so we can start adding some Oni blood to the family.”

A beat of silence.

“Christ, Baachan…” Her grandson whispered, his palms pressed to his face to cover his own eyes in dismay, “you don’t say that sort of thing out loud.”

“Why not?” Yugao shot back, miffed. “We are a good family. Nothing wrong with helping each other, yes?” She turned back to me, all smiles. “So, how about you tell me your story while my grandson calls Lu about that job opening of his.”

“Baachan…” He whined, “I already have a job.”

“You don’t have a job! You’re a thug!” She snapped at him. “Also, job isn’t for you!”

Wait, what?

“My Oni friend needs a job to support his new family.” Yugao’s fingers locked around one of mine in an iron grip. A grip that I could not escape...at least, not without being a total cock about it anyway. So, yeah. I wasn’t going anywhere. “He can’t rely on a woman to take care of him all the time, yes? That is not manly. He needs to set a good example.”

Well… When she put it like that… Beating up criminals for their money wasn't exactly something to
brag about to the kids, now was it? … Plotting Coil’s terrible, horrible, no good death could come later, I guess.

I kinda wanted to see where this went.

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Lisa snapped her phone shut, a wide grin on her face as she lifted her pancake and syrup laden fork to her mouth. The amount of smug she was currently expressing didn’t lessen in the slightest, even as she took a bite of her breakfast in bed.

Couch. Bed. Same thing.

Anyway, Coil had just spent close to an hour asking her questions...about Moss. Questions about the obviously fresh and impressionable Case 53, and his abilities. Questions about where he stood on the power scale, Brute or otherwise. Questions about his particular tastes and needs and points where Coil could apply pressure...and she’d fed the asshole a bunch of shit.

I don’t know. I need more data. Yeah, lasers would do fine if you wanted to put him down and no your suit didn’t make your butt look fat. Bullshit. All of it, bullshit...and he had no idea. None at all, and all it had taken to keep that way was a spot of inspiration. A moment in time where she’d finally understood what his power was after months of headaches and near ceaseless toil.

That fucking coin flip. It had been so obvious in hindsight. It had literally been right in front of her this entire time...and all it had taken was an offhand comment from Moss about how she wanted to have her cake and eat it too. A comment that had been stuck in her head for a good few hours before everything had come together.

She’d known he was using his powers, because of course he was, seeing just how well things worked out for him from day-to-day...but what they were had always evaded her. His near-daily calls to her that had left her little more than a living migraine hadn’t helped either...and then Moss’s comment had stuck, and given her the last bit of insight that she needed to pin the fucker to a wall.

Binaries. Every time her own power had hinted he’d used his, those brief pauses before he gave her orders, there’d been a binary choice. Yes, no. Forward or back. Left or right.

Heads or tails.

Whatever the core nature of his power was, Coil could not lose a binary decision. He always made the right move—for him, at least. Not so much for herself.

Lisa would have mentally kicked herself for never realizing that, but she was in too good of a mood after reaffirming her genius.

Apparently, getting fucked so hard that you lost your mind, gained it, lost it, then found it again was good for her thinking and deductive skills. It was like that thought had just come out of the blue and... She should get fucked like that more often. Maybe before the lottery. Or an IPO. Or whenever she felt like it.

Lisa didn’t really need an excuse to have her brains fucked out, but a good excuse was always welcome. Her taking the initiative every once in a while was fine. Doing it all the time though would just give Moss a swelled head and, possibly, more anxiety when the thought that she literally couldn’t resist an orc dicking came to him...also, weird as it was to believe it, she still had something resembling dignity.
If he wanted any more of her, he was going to have to beg for it or wait for a holiday. Or a special occasion. Or a day off. Or when there was nothing on the tv… Okay. Maybe not that last one. Either way, she was a hot commodity now and she should act like it.

Her fork clattered to her plate as she stretched, a thick layer of almost painfully sweet syrup on her tongue as she put her plate on the coffee table. Flung off the blanket that Moss had covered her up with. Gathered up her phone and swung her legs out…and then almost ate shit when she found that her legs were still just about as strong as a wad of soggy, well-fucked tissue paper.

Lisa had been thinking about going for a jog today. Just because. Mostly to get a little more fit and trim before she couldn’t do it anymore… But she guessed that wasn’t happening today, seeing how it was taking all of her focus just to get to the bathroom without breaking something fragile. Like her nose.

Anyway, after a few more near-death experiences she found herself at the counter and in front of the mirror…and she looked like death warmed over. Sexy, sexy death…which is why, as soon as her ass found the toilet seat, she set in for the long haul with some phone games and PHO shenanigans. Mostly trivia games and feeding Void Cowboy’s obsessions and conspiracies for lolz, mixed with building a more than friends, less than lovers relationship with Miss Militia through Moss’s account.

That last one had been surprisingly easy to do. Lisa knew Moss better than any other person in the world at this point and the older cape had it bad. Really bad. Bad enough that Lisa actually felt kind of offended about it when MM just ate it up.

If all it took for Moss to seduce a woman was a single meeting, then what the fuck was she going to do with her time? … Besides trolling the internet she meant. That was a given…which reminded her. Today was the day she was going to the spa with Victoria...and she was covered in semen, spit, and fucked up makeup.

Going out like this wasn’t an option, obviously. She didn’t want to give Vicky the right/wrong idea here.

Lisa, carefully, set her phone aside and got a towel off of the nearby rack...then forced herself to flop like a stunned fish into the shower before she turned it on to a temperature just below boiling.

Sure, she was fucking Moss… Sure he’d given her a bitching tattoo and some, so far unknown extras...besides the baby—

Lisa’s heart leaped up into her throat as she touched the mark he’d left on her. The spot directly over her womb, covered in a slowly growing and filling heart motif. A heart motif made up of swirling blues, hard greens, and sharp purples.

Impressions. Ideas. A peacock’s feathers. A fox’s grin. Her eyes flashing with excitement and joy…it was more of a mental thing than a physical, and just thinking about it...thinking about the tattoo, the baby, and how close she was to being her own woman (plus two) choked her up. Made her glad that she was in the shower and alone so that she wouldn’t have to wonder or have anyone ask if the moisture sliding down her face was tears or water.

—and an enhanced sense of taste and touch...but that didn’t mean that there wasn’t room for another girl or ten. It was going to take a while to bring Vicky over to the Moss side as it was, thanks to her boyfriend being a thing.

So why make it hard on herself?
Lisa hissed as she felt the slowly rising hot water start loosening her muscles...and grinned a very different sort of grin than the one she had when she thought about Coil. An almost *obscene* thing as she thought about the safe under her bed and the vials within.

Everything was going according to plan.

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This isn’t what I’d expected to happen.

I wasn’t sure *what* had happened in the thirty minutes since I’d left Yugao’s house that had led me to this...but, after another little old lady, Mrs. Lu, handed me a tiny apron and a rather jaunty hat and put me behind a counter for teenage girls to gawk at—

A group of five waved and giggled madly at me...and I pretended not to see it while I pulled down a box for my new, other, boss. I already had one teenage girl in my life at the moment, thank you very much. I wasn’t exactly looking for another.

—the thought that I’d just been turned into a teahouse mascot came to mind… Eh. It was a living. A living that only got better when some ABB toughs swaggered in, saw me, then power walked right back out.
Chapter 17

Lisa couldn’t say whether she was in heaven or hell.

On one hand, she was at a spa. A good one even, one where she was getting her first treatment since she’d left home. A full-body one, from head to toe, with a massage at the end...and it wasn’t just her and Vicky like she’d expected. Amy had come along too...and she had been Moss’ed up, as well. Recently. The opportunities that resulted from that, the chances it brought up were positively delicious.

Years of stress was about to get stripped from her. Lisa had all the leverage and advantages she needed to make this into a cape family special: get one flying tank, get a healer for free, and all that. Right now, she was floating around in a gently steaming saltwater soaking pool and just talking. With girls.

It was nice...and no offense to Rachel (or Moss) but they just didn’t get it. She was having fun...and she should be having a lot more of it than she was now, except for one thing.

Amy had her on edge. The girl herself was on edge. That was the nicest way that Lisa could think of to say it, even in the privacy of her own mind. For one, Amy was gay. Not that there was anything wrong with that, of course. Actually, the looks she kept sending Lisa’s way when she thought no one could see her were actually kind of flattering...to a point. She’d never thought about another girl that way herself...anyway, personally, Lisa had no problem with it.

The issue here was that Amy did have a problem with it. She was in love with her (adopted) sister and it wasn’t helping any of her many, many problems. Her mother was a bitch. Her father was useless. Her sister, even when she tried to help, only made everything worse and the hospital...if it didn’t kill her, she was going to kill someone.

It was almost like Lisa was looking into a mirror. A weird, fucked up mirror that had her sucking in a deep breath between her teeth before she sank deeper into the pool. Almost up to her nose before she stopped and swallowed the lump in her throat.

It still hurt, thinking about it. Her family. Rex...but it wasn’t the same anymore. It was blunted. Lessened. That forever fresh, jagged, bleeding wound in her psyche no longer felt like there was glass in it. It bled sluggishly now, no longer free-flowing waterfall that it had been before.

“Bullshit,” Lisa repeated to herself with a burbling noise, grimacing at the taste of salt even as she rubbed her lower stomach, over her swimsuit. “Such bullshit.” The whole thing. Bullshit.

You didn’t heal from a trigger event. You just...you just didn’t. Fucking Moss...

“You okay, Lisa?” Vicky asked, causing Amy to look over at her as well instead of staring at nothing and dealing with her own, personal demons when her sister’s head rocked forward to give Lisa a searching look. “You’re not drowning on us, are you?”

Lisa was quick to wave her off before Vicky thought it would be a good idea to drag her out of the pool. Physically by actually waving her off... “I’m fine.” Symbolically by pulling the bottom half of her face out of the water and responding, even if her voice was a little tight. “Just thought of something personal.”
“... Huh.” Victoria leaned forward, still giving her fellow blonde that same damn searching look. Maybe even a little harder than it had been before, now that she’d heard Lisa speak. “You sure? Because if you want to talk…?”

“Seriously, Vicky. I’m fine.” Lisa assured the girl before she’d even finished trailing off in earnest. “It’s nothing you can help me with anyway.” Lisa shook her head with a small grin. “But I appreciate it. Really.”

A beat of silence. A pause where the both of them tried to get each other to crack in the world’s most polite staredown. A stare down with a still quiet Amy, her eyes flicking back and forth, in the middle… A staredown that ended when Vicky looked away with a click of her tongue when Lisa refused to break. The flash of shame Lisa might have seen told the rest of the story easily enough.

She was competition. A squatter on a prime piece of maleness that Victoria, subconsciously, thought that she had a stake in...and, with Moss’s mojo trying to get Victoria to wet her panties damn near 24/7, riding it out like she normally would just wasn’t cutting it anymore.

Honestly, if it had been Lisa in Vicky’s place, she probably wouldn’t have been able to keep herself from being worse than just a little catty… Nosy was another thing altogether though.

That was more of a natural state than anything. Lisa could relate.

“...If you’re sure.” Victoria replied doubtfully before she leaned back again. Then her face smoothed out and she turned a bright smile on her sister who was now in the middle of doing a half-decent if subdued impression of a plant that had just seen the sun. “How about you, Ames? Got anything you want to tell the class? A funny anecdote? An amusing tale?” Vicky’s smile took on an impish tilt. “How your last date went?”

“It was great, Vicky,” Amy said darkly, her tone nowhere near as nice as her words. “I had a wonderful time. The best.”

“... Really? Because you don’t sound like you had a wonderful time.”

“No. Not really.” Amy sighed the sigh of someone that had argued over something a hundred times over and had long ago given up. “He was another vapid, rich asshat that thought dinner at Fugly’s might be enough to get in my pants.”

“It couldn’t have been that bad… Right?”

Lisa wasn’t sure what could have sucked the energy out of the room faster than that last question, but it would have probably involved a Cape whose power involved hard vacuum...and Vicky had no idea. Literally no idea that her sister might have, you know, not wanted to talk about how her date had gone. Or even gone on a date in the first place for that matter… How many of those things had she been on to sound like that? Ten? Twenty? Fifty? More?

“You’re right. It was worse.”

Didn’t matter. It had obviously been far too many...and did Lisa have to do everything? If not, it sure as hell felt like it, seeing how everyone else but her seemed to be doing their best to make everything worse, knowingly or not...and fuck was that weird, being on the other end of things for once.
“You do know that Amy is gay, right?”

Victoria looked to Lisa again, this time with her jaw hanging loose while Amy turned a particularly interesting shade of grey.

Now, before Amy got the idea in her head to see how far she could twist Lisa's neck until it snapped like a strand of dry spaghetti...

“Because, if you didn't, I have no idea how that slipped by you. She's been checking out my ass pretty much since the first time we met.” Lisa continued to take one for the team by shaking her upper body suggestively, turning Amy’s shade of gray into a much more interesting shade of splotchy red. The wink that came after just made it worse, turning Amy into a spluttering mess whose last thought was wringing Lisa's neck, all just as planned. “And when she isn't doing that she's checking out my tits. It's adorable.”

“I...no? I didn’t... What? No way. Really?” Victoria’s head swiveled creakily towards Amy once more, seemingly, no, definitely on the edge of an epiphany that had been a long time coming. “You're gay? That wasn’t just a really weird dream I had?!”

Thanks to Moss doing what he did best and some quick thinking on Lisa’s part, a blown kiss and some cleavage outside of Victoria's sight was enough to keep the token brunette from jumping straight into denial...or into much of anything for that matter. When Amy’s eyes glazed over and she didn’t say anything one way or another though, it ended up the only way it could have.

With Vicky palming her face with an embarrassed groan, duh. There was really no other way it could have gone. The very thought that Amy might have actually been sexually attracted to her didn’t even parse to the flying brick and...a lot of things about Amy didn't exactly parse with Victoria, once Lisa thought about it. Probably a mental block of some sort.

“That’s why you were always so uncomfortable with the dates I kept pushing on you...they were all guys. Or how sick you looked when I took you out lingerie shopping and asked you how my butt looked in a garter.” Victoria paused. Her face turned red. A weaker, less colorful mirror of Amy’s stop-sign red that looked like it’d be at that point, if not worse, any second now. “And that kiss I pushed on you yesterday probably didn’t help either, did it?”


“It wasn’t like it was bad or anything,” Victoria coughed, “and it’s not like you're related to me by blood...so...I wouldn't mind if we—”

Amy moaned like a dying animal. It was the only warning either of them had before she ducked her head under the water, acting as if she had no intentions of coming out until she started to float.

“Christ, Amy! It was just one kiss! Stop being dumb!”

Oh god! They had! They actually had!

This was perfect! Beyond perfect! This whole situation, she meant! Well, besides the fact that Amy was trying to drown herself and was actively fighting Victoria’s (and Lisa’s) attempts to get her to stop anyway. That wasn’t so good, and neither was Lisa being a little wrong about something for once...but she supposed that not everything could be perfect. Like the choice she’d just been presented with, now that she knew that she had her two new friends in the bag.
Today or tomorrow. When was she going to bring them home? *That* was the question.
Chapter 18

“Is it just me, or am I the only one that isn’t into this new cape? Chef 53 or whatever?”

Hannah, in a state that happened to be the closest thing she ever came to actually *sleeping*, dreaming even, jolted upright. Ramrod straight. Eyes wide open with the little crinkles at the corners that she’d perfected for the sake of PR before she spun around in her seat at the console.

Today had been a slow night so far. That was all. She wasn’t bored or anything. Just...distracted.

“I...I guess he’s kind of cute? Maybe? If you squint?” Missy made a halfhearted shrugging motion. One that could only be called a real shrug if you were particularly generous or blind, just before she flipped her phone around to show Hannah a picture. “But it’s kind of like he’s a dog, you know? A really mean looking one that’s actually kind of a sweetheart. Like that kind of cute.” Missy paused for a moment. “Not… You know.”

“Hmm…” Hannah hummed and smiled a little more. Just a bit, this time with real emotion as she took the sight in. The sight of Moss in a tiny apron and hat at a counter, looking as bemused as anything. Understandable, seeing the jar full to overflowing with dollar bills at his side and the pair of teenage girls, just a little older than Missy, swinging on his arms and laughing... Good with kids too, huh? How nice… “I don’t really follow social media, but go on.”

“Allright. Can do, Miss.” Missy, unlike some people that Hannah could name, (just about anyone that didn’t have to actually *stay* at the console, which was a lot of names) took a seat when Hannah asked. A close one, for the sake of sharing in what anyone who had ever worked in an office would be able to recognize, was the start of the age-old work ritual that was ‘cooler talk’. “That Case 53? People are talking about him. A *lot*.”

“How so?” Hannah asked, her thoughts turning to towards Missy’s question as she did.

“The E-88 hates him. There is no other way to say it.” Missy started flatly while giving the screen a couple of flicks to scroll it down. “They want him dead.”

Hannah, if she hadn’t been giving Missy her full attention before, was doing so now.

“I have no idea what he did, at first anyway, but he did something to them that’s got them running around like someone kicked over their little racist anthill.” With a couple of taps Missy showed off a long string of death threats and cries of revenge...and some of those cries actually made Hannah wince. The thought of empty bank accounts and ruined credit would do the same to anyone that wasn’t off the grid. “Lately though, just to rub it in, he’s been, allegedly, knocking over their deals and stealing their cash. All of it. Done it more than once too. Allegedly. No one else wants to back them up, since they have no evidence, so everyone has been kind of just ignoring them.”

“In comparison, the Merchants have no idea who he is beyond their new weed mascot and don’t really care to know, just in case it harshes their buzz... While the ABB…”

A beat. Another tap on the screen. A new set of pictures that made Hannah stall, unsure of what she was looking at.

“Among the younger members, he’s avoided.” The youngest Ward continued. “At all costs.
Crossing the street, leaving the shops. That sort of thing. They don’t even really talk about him...when you get to the elderly folk that live in their territory though, that’s a completely different thing.”

Hannah eventually said as she forcefully suppressed a coo at the picture of a grinning Moss helping the elderly across the street while completely covered in grocery bags. “... That’s adorable.”

“Yeah… It kinda is.” Missy admitted before she cleared her throat to cover up her embarrassment at admitting anything was adorable, let alone the wall of meat they were talking about to pass the time. “Anyway,” Missy started once more, this time pointedly at the life lesson on the tip of Hannah’s tongue about wanting to grow up far too soon and how being an adult wasn’t all it was cracked up to be. “Anyone older than forty loves him. He’s almost a pillar of the community at this point, from what I understand...except for one thing.”

“What?”

Missy shuddered. “Moms attempting to make memes.” Hannah blinked at that. They couldn’t be that bad. She looked over, winced, and instantly regretted it.

She’d never be able to forget it now. Damn them.

“Yeah. The puns are horrible.” Missy agreed. “The word green should never be used like that. It doesn’t even come close to a rhyme...anyway, then there are the women under 40.” Missy added an awkward giggle to the end of her sentence. “The ones that will let him ‘walk into their Mordor.’”

Hannah couldn’t help the laugh that slipped out of her at that one.

“Anyway, besides that, it’s a lot of ‘Does he have a girlfriend’ questions and a lot more talk about how big his dick is and wondering if they can buy a replica. I don’t see why anyone would want one though. It looks like it would hurt more than anything.”

Hannah glanced at Missy, the younger girl’s face set into a confused frown behind her mask...she wasn’t wrong. It did look like it would hurt. Hell, it looked like it would probably kill her...but it also looked a great deal like it was worth it in the worst of ways. A risk that Hannah would be happy to take...and Hannah was happy that Missy was such a smart girl for her age. In control of herself as well. Having to explain just why she couldn’t give that beast a ride would have been difficult, to say the least.

Somehow, telling Missy that she would pop like a gory red balloon if she tried didn’t sound all that pleasant.

“And then there is this comment…” Missy sighed, “I want him to pick me up and use me as a Fleshlight...God. Some people have no shame, right?”

Hannah sucked in a quiet breath at that, then contented herself with staring at the console so that she wouldn’t have to face that she’d just been insulted by a thirteen-year-old girl... Admittedly, that might have been a little much to put down online...but at her age, sometimes, you had to be a little direct to get people to understand where you stood when it came to a prospective relationship.

Damn that man for being so...so… Him.

Thankfully, before she had to face being lambasted by someone that had no idea they were doing so
without even being able to defend herself, Dean walked in. Slowly. Painfully. At more of a limp than a walk as he wheezed his way towards the Wards lounge...and Missy suddenly had much more important things to do.

As did the Rig’s medical staff, who Hannah was already calling before he hit the ground.

She knew a severe case exhaustion when she saw it...a sort of exhaustion that Dean shouldn’t be anywhere near with his schedule. The PRT made very sure about that.

“I can’t do it anymore.” He coughed the cough of a dying man. “She...she’s killing me. I...I can see the...”

“Gallant! Stay with us!”

… What the hell was Dean doing with his time?
Chapter 19

After some thought, mostly during the time in-between the facial scrub and the deep-tissue massage… Lisa decided that tomorrow would work better. For her. For Moss. For the two girls that she’d actually come to like in the short time they’d known each other.

It gave her time to prepare. To put everything where it belonged. Some food here. A drink there… A dash or two of Moss’s sweat in the humidifier to get them excited. Things like that.

Anyway, before they’d even left the spa, she’d extracted a promise from the both of them (Amy had been weirdly easy) that they’d meet her sometime tomorrow. A little past midday at her apartment so that they could hang out, just the three of them while Moss was at work, doing whatever it was he did when he helped the elderly. Watching TV, eating pizza, drinking soda. Just a normal, safe girl’s day in. Fun.

Now, she hadn’t been lying about any of that. About where they had to go, when they had to be there, or what they were going to do...but she hadn’t told them everything either. Probably a good thing, seeing how things were working out so far.

They were working out great.

“Dean broke up with me,” Vicky informed Lisa dejectedly, angrily even, with her chin in one hand and a bucket of popcorn in the other as she let out a sigh. “Over the phone, like a dick, because, supposedly, I haven’t been all that considerate when it came to his needs lately,” then, she grumbled, “good luck finding someone that’ll give you head more than twice a day, asshole.”

Alright. Wow. Admittedly, Lisa’s own views and experiences when it came to sex might have been a little skewed...but she was pretty sure that that might have been why Dean had broken up with her. Lisa, with her ability to read between the lines like she could, knew what Vicky really meant when she said ‘head more than twice a day’.

She meant head more than twice a session, at the least…and if there was only one session in a day, then Lisa would eat Moss’s shorts. She didn’t say anything about it though. Because, even if she might have had a minor case of ‘bigmouth’ with a hefty side piece of ‘superiority complex’, she wasn’t stupid.

Anyway, forget that...what were the words you used for this sort of thing…? Ah. That’s right.

“Yeah. For real,” Lisa agreed with her eyes on the tv, watching a B-movie that they’d put on for the sake of making fun of it while she rummaged through her own bucket of buttery goodness, carbs, and starch. Lair of the Psycho Cannibal Strippers. Part three… The fodder was real. “He didn’t know a good thing while he had it.”

Amy, who had started dozing off around halfway through the movie and put her head on Lisa’s shoulder, (a sure sign that she was as relaxed as she could be) made a soft, agreeably smug noise.

Lisa allowed the nuzzling that came after. The poor thing’s work at the hospital didn’t do her any favors...and Lisa honestly didn’t mind being used as a pillow. Not nearly as much as she’d thought she would have anyway. Not for the short amount of time that it would last.
When Moss was around, there wasn’t exactly a lot of time for sleeping. Need she say more?

“Right?” Vicky mumbled angrily around her current handful, bringing Lisa back to the present. “Like...we’ve been together for years. Off-and-on, yeah...but, considering how far I was willing to go for him on average lately, you’d think he’d be happier. That he’d have a sense of loyalty.”

“Totally.” Lisa nodded as, on screen, someone died unconvincingly. The acting was faker than the lead’s breasts. “What an ungrateful dick.”

Amy hummed and started rubbing her face against Lisa’s arm in a manner that made the blonde think of a particularly affectionate cat… A particularly affectionate cat that seemed to think that the person it was clinging to hadn’t noticed that it was, stealthily, trying to get itself a handful.

Even without Lisa’s powers, Amy’s breathing, as heavy as it was, was the farthest thing from stealthy that she could think of… Also, damn if the healer didn’t have it bad. Not quite as bad as Lisa had had it in the three days before she’d given in to Moss’s charms, but bad, and the ambiance, the smell of Moss that filled every corner of the apartment, wasn’t making it any better.

… Had Vicky even taken a shower before that kiss they wouldn’t talk about? Because, if she hadn’t when they’d done it...then Amy was holding up surprisingly well. Even with the whole thing where, after some more pretending there was nothing going on, she, finally, grabbed onto Lisa’s right breast and held onto it like it was life itself.

Lisa, in response, started to try and gently push Amy’s hand away. She wasn’t the target here. Moss was... Sadly though, Amy wasn’t having any of that and just switched her hand to the left side, starting the snuggle struggle once more.

“I mean...look.” Vicky set her half-empty bowl down on the coffee table, just at the corner of Lisa’s eye, and put her chin in her hands. “He’s not a bad guy. Not at all...it’s just…” She sighed. “He could only go two or three times in a row before he was done.”

“No way...” Lisa muttered as, after the third time she’d tried to quietly get rid of her newfound limpet led her nowhere, she got a little louder. Pressed both hands against Amy’s head and squirmed... And then, she found her arms pinned by her own shirt as it got pulled over her stomach and things got a great deal more difficult. “That’s terrible.”

“Then, after he’s done, he falls asleep. Tells me he’s too tired to go on, closes his eyes, and then I’m left with nothing. Not even a cuddle.” Vicky flicked her fingers sadly at the screen. “Why is it that guys never want to cuddle? Why?”

“I don’t know what to say,” Lisa said mindlessly, just as a quiet snap sounded. A quiet snap and a lack of back support that told her that Amy had, without a doubt, somehow, just unsnapped Lisa’s bra with her teeth...and Lisa couldn’t help but be a little impressed. Half the time, she couldn’t even get the damn thing off by herself, let alone with her teeth. “But I’m sorry.”

The less said about that one time Moss had tried to do that, the better… All she could say was that she’d been down one bra from then on. One bra, and an hour of her life trying to untangle it from around Moss’s tusks.

“He tried though... He really did...” Vicky sighed a very different sort of sigh. One that had Lisa worriedly looking over at the other girl for the first time since she’d started talking, taking attention away from Amy that the brunette exploited for all it was worth. “For every one of his, he gave me
three...but it wasn’t enough” Vicky turned her head towards the two of them, her eyes dilated so far that they were little more than pools of black and, suddenly, Amy wasn’t nearly so important. “Never enough.”

“Oh shit.” Lisa’s voice squeaked as she realized that she might have pushed just a little too hard. Her fellow blonde was gone. Kaput. Out. Just slouching down on the couch, more a puddle of goo than a girl with her shirt pulled up to a point just under the swell of her breasts...and then, with a shimmy, it was gone. On the floor, out of sight, out of mind as she shook out her hair. “C-can we talk about this?”

“... Sure we can.” Vicky licked her lips. Cocked her head. Shivered, and let a hiss of air pass through her teeth. Through a smile framed by swollen lips and a hard blush even as she started fiddling with the straps of her own bra. A lacy, white number that had looked like it was barely holding onto Victoria’s heaving chest before it was gone...and holy fuck those were some nice breasts. “But I always did like to talk while I worked…”

A drop of sweat on Lisa’s forehead became three when, just as Amy found a nipple of hers to suck on, Victoria started migrating from her end of the couch to theirs. To their side, with the only thing that Lisa could see still on her being a much-too-short skirt and a pair of calf-high socks.

This wasn’t right. This wasn’t what was supposed to happen. This hadn’t been a part of the plan. Hell... It hadn’t even been a variable, part of the reason why she had missed this growing development happening at all.

Victoria, instead of joining her sister in molesting Lisa (thankfully?), started molesting Amy...and Lisa admitted to herself, just as the first button on Amy’s pants gave way under Victoria’s fingers, just as Amy started trying to pull down her pants...that she was in over her head. Way, way over.

When was Moss coming home!? 

============

I licked my lips. My dry, dry lips as a bead of sweat ran down my back. As the subtle, deathly feeling that was working in retail started to wear away at me and I rang up another customer. Then another. Then another. Face after face, bill after bill, drink after drink. Monotony nearly without end, if not for the times when the children decided they wanted to play with the ‘Oni’.

I wasn’t even being dramatic this time. No. Nope. Nein. Just to make it clear how fucked I currently was...the line didn’t start in the store. I’m not sure where it started...but, from what I could see from a nearby window, it wasn’t anywhere closer than a block.

A police car pulled up outside then...and after some fiddling to fit themselves into a nearby parking space, started to vent officers and equipment. Sidewalk barricades and brightly colored jackets appeared as they started redirecting traffic and directing individuals to the end of the line...and, at that, I had only one thought. One thought that might very well be my last that actually mattered that day.

“Can I have a mocha latte? Skim milk, hold the foam? With chocolate sprinkles? And after that...can I...” The girl in front of me, barely older than eleven, if even that, fluttered her lashes at me as she spread her arms out. “Can I hug you? Please?”

Her mother, three tables away, made a little noise that sounded suspiciously like an ‘awwww’...and,
suddenly, a great many people looked *interested*.

… I was going to die here, wasn’t I?
Chapter 20

Now, Lisa liked to think that she was intelligent. That she was smart. Hell, she liked to, if not say that she was a genius, believe that she had a little less space in her head that needed filling when you compared her to your average Jane on the street… And, considering just how well she did on an average day-to-day, making it on her own before Moss had started bringing in his own slice of the bacon…she was more right than she was wrong.

That whole ‘being homeless’ thing? A setback. A stepping stone on the way to greatness. Totally part of a plan that…she couldn’t remember all that well at the moment. Not while she was fighting to keep her pants on in the face of Amy’s need to get at what was in those pants anyway…but there had been a plan. A good plan. The best plan.

Now, she had to make a new one. A new plan. A plan that would get her, hopefully, out of this mess with her sapphic virginity, and her assumption of dignity in front of someone that wasn’t Moss (that ship had sailed back in the age of steam), still intact.

Lisa continued to weakly slap at Amy’s head. Weakly because just the touch of Amy’s fingers and her skin gave her chills. Chills and shivers as the very tips of those magical digits sent trails of fire running down her god fucking damn it, was there a cape out there whose powers couldn’t be used to make sex better!?

“Damn it, Amy! Quit it! This isn’t the time!” Lisa snapped when her power told her, in no uncertain terms, that she was one of those capes. As silly as it was, her sudden switch from ‘somewhat aroused’ to ‘deeply annoyed’ gave her the strength she needed to start the struggle once more. To sit up and start looking for her top after a whining Amy’s lips separated from her nipple with a ‘pop’ and a cheeky flick of the tongue. “Go play with Vicky or something while I go and call—”

A flash of light in the corner of her eye. Glass through glass. A shift in tension…and it took her less than a second to know that search for her top had probably just saved her life.

“GET DOWN!” Lisa shrieked just as she, without even a moment to think about what she was doing or how much it was going to fucking hurt when she did it, threw her arm up. Held it just right as she pushed a screaming Amy over the back of the couch…and caught the round that had just come through her window.

*Non-mortal wound in the right forearm; caused by .45 round from a converted hunting rifle. Through-and-Through. Trajectory shift in round sufficient to prevent worsening of wounds/injuring/death of Amy Dallon. Amy Dallon has a minor, non-mortal wound along right side of the face. Host is still—*

Before her power had even finished with its analysis she had already joined Amy in the back. Screaming, bleeding…pissed and scared as hell as she started digging around under the seat of her couch. Past the fluff. Past the stuff. Right to the feeling of cold, hard metal and…there it was—

“FUCKING NAZIS! NOT AGAIN!” Vicky roared before she, still mostly naked, flew through Lisa’s window and right at a very surprised Victor with a hate-filled shriek… With a sudden increase in automatic fire and Stormtiger’s exploding air blades. In other words, all the things you’d like to hear when you were in the safety of your own home. Great stuff. “NEVER AGAIN!”
—and there went Vicky. Right into an ambush/lesson (It hadn’t taken her long to figure out what this was about, even with the pain she was feeling. Neo-Nazis weren’t what anyone would call complicated) that had been targeted at Moss. Meant to kill him or, if failing that, hurt him...by hurting her.

That last bit might have even worked too if their intel hadn’t been so shit. If they hadn’t chosen exactly the wrong time to do this.

They’d just shot at a New Wave gathering. In a private home. Right at the core of the movement. The face of New Wave’s next generation and the world’s greatest healer… Yeah. Even if they hadn’t known just who they were shooting at from their vantage point, with their general plan being just to make the C53 hurt in any way they could...that didn’t matter.

*What they had just done was fucking stupid.*

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I’m not sure why I left the cafe like I did. Without a word. Without even a note to my boss as I passed a woman her still giggling daughter and walked out the door.

I’m not sure why I, as soon as I got some clearance, started Doomsday jumping my way through the city. I’m not sure why I’m as pissed as I’d ever been in my life...but, seeing as the urges I’m getting are leading me in a straight line towards Lisa’s apartment—

Whipping a hand out, I pulled a nearby sign from the ground before I made another jump. A nice, big, hefty sign with a bit of concrete still on the bottom. Good for swinging. Stabbing too if I twisted the top just right.

—I could guess. And, if my guess, was right...well. I was about to practice my god given right to self-defense and the defense of others.

… The poor bastards wouldn’t know what hit them.

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They’d gotten away from the consequences of a New Wave murder once. Just once. That shit wasn’t going to fly a second time. Even if it had been just attempted murder. They were so fucked once this got out it wasn’t even funny.

There went that thin veneer of civility. There went that propaganda over how they were just looking out for the white man in a world gone wrong. Attacking three white teenage girls with automatics and high-powered weaponry while they were watching movies (that was Lisa’s story and she was sticking to it) really blew that sort of talk out of the water. Funny how that worked.

Lisa came out from under the couch with a pair of handguns, five mags worth of ammo, and a face full of Amy. A face full of Amy that was looking a great deal more lucid, a lot more scared, as a line of blood starting just under one of her eyes began to run down her cheek and onto the collar of her blouse...and she grabbed Lisa’s wrist.

A cessation of pain. The slowing of bleeding...the focus required to start taking potshots at anything that moved and didn’t have tits above a D. All hers in just a moment...and Lisa realized that Amy was holding back. Holding back a *lot*. What she did wasn’t just *healing*. What she did was
outright biokinesis!

Couldn’t do brains her pale, perfectly shaped ass!

“Thank you! Thank you so fucking much! Oh my god, holy shit...” Lisa hissed with relief as she shelved her little epiphany somewhere dark and deep and so well-hidden that she’d, probably, never be able to find it again. Which she was fine with, honestly. That was a landmine right there that she didn’t particularly feel like touching, even if their current situation wasn’t what it was. She liked the world she lived on, thank you very much. “Getting shot fucking hurts!”

“No fucking shit, Sherlock! Of course it hurts!” Amy yelled as she watched Lisa, who had long ago given up the ghost of pretending that she didn’t have powers in the face of what might have been certain doom, tracked her first target through a wall. Boots stomping. Yelling. A slight echo...and she put a round in his knee. Maybe. There was a lot less stomping now, there was that. “It bounced off the fucking bone… And where the flying fuck did you get a gun!?”

“You poor, poor summer child. This is Brockton.” Lisa sniffed, took another joint shot into what might have been someone’s elbow, then ducked. Just in time too as she felt a series of thuds against her back as her couch gained a few new holes…and not a round came through. She’d thought they’d been asking for a little too much at the time when she’d bought it, but now she knew it was worth every penny. “I got it from the same place I buy my lingerie.”

“From where!?”

“That’s a secret!” Lisa answered as she scooted back on her bottom, her head still low as she got herself a line on her front door. A front door that had, at most, ten seconds before someone tried kicking it in...and it was a damn good excuse for Lisa not to say anything about where she’d got it from... It wasn’t like she could say Walmart, right? That wasn’t exciting enough. “And now isn’t the time! Just reload the guns when I run out!”

“I don’t know how!”

“Press the switch here,” Lisa said tersely as she gave it a tap, “and slide in a magazine after the empty one falls out! Easy!”

After that, there was no time for talk. No time at all when some bright spark decided to put a breaching round right through her security door...and boy, after he caught the second round to the gut did he regret it… He didn’t even get the chance to fall all the way down before the skinhead that had just stumbled over his now screaming friend got a bullet to a rotator cuff, crippling him for life. He was in good company though. Lisa would say that much as she emptied her current magazine into the hallway, half in suppressive fire, half in blown out joints and exploded gonads before she put her current gun to the side. Replaced it with its partner, then cursed as she found that the morons had thought to find cover.

Her powers may have been able to carry her this far...but she was no combat Thinker. Shooting through thin walls was easy. Bouncing bullets off of loose change and perfectly angled mirrors so that she could cap someone behind a corner was a little beyond her. Now, she was reduced to looking out for Victor from the corner of her eye as a buffed up Stormtiger got himself slapped around the yard by an utterly furious Glory Girl. Taking cheap shots and spacing them out, badly-aimed or not, so that Amy, who had never loaded a gun before in her life, had the time she needed to do so.
It wasn’t long before she was down to her last few bullets. Six in total, with eight skinheads still outside and getting bold as her rate-of-fire started to slow...and there were yet more of the thugs outside, still shooting, explaining just why Victoria wasn’t here to help them right then.

Things had been going so well today...but that was how the world worked, she guessed. Nothing good could happen without something bad and all that. A quick look around the corner and the coast was clear enough for her to risk what she had decided she was going to have to do. Even if it sounded stupid as hell, once she thought about it, it was kind of their only choice now...so she did it.

After grabbing Amy by the hand, Lisa pulled the girl up and started running. Sprinting, actually. Pretty much dragging a near mindlessly cursing and panicking Amy behind her as, without even thinking about it, she emptied her gun behind her, threw it aside...and hoped really, really hard that they wouldn’t get shot in the back before she made it to her room and locked the door so that she could get at the guns under her bed and, if needed, her bathroom sink.

She liked to be prepared. What could she say? What could she say besides, you know...she’d fucking called it! Brian had called her paranoid for putting at least a pair of guns in every room in the house. At least. Well, who was paranoid now, Brian!?

Lisa felt a bullet whistle through her hair. Right in front of Amy’s face before she just about slid into her room in sock-clad feet, threw Amy further into the room, into the bed, and slammed the door shut.

Admittedly she’d been expecting someone else to come in through that door one day... But still. Assholes were shooting at her either way. People really were out to get her.

“Bathroom, Amy! Guns under the sink! Shoot anyone that isn’t me or Vicky! Go!” Lisa barked, forcing a dazed Amy to scramble up and onto her feet as she, herself, dove for the cache under the bed… A dive that she ended up falling a little short of completion when her bedroom window shattered and a lance of white-hot pain shot through the back of her calf.

She’d just been shot. Again...and fuck if it didn’t hurt worse than it did the first time. Enough to drop her on her face. Enough to make the first tear of the day escape her eyes... Thankfully though, not nearly enough to stop her from crawling under the bed in its entirety as she scrambled for assumed safety.

She’d got it from the same place that she’d got the couch...and it showed. If she’d thought her couch had taken a beating, her bed was getting put through the wringer. She could feel the bed bounce. See its stuffing fly. Smell the cordite under the ever-present musk of Moss’s sweatpants that she’d been forced to, regretfully, move to the side to get at her gun case...and use as a makeshift bandage for her leg.

This was a day of many regrets. Some big. Some small...and being forced to use her ever faithful workday companion to cover up the hole where a good part of her calf used to be was one of them...and fuck her if that wasn’t a lot of blood.

Man...you never knew what you were missing until it was gone...but that whole ‘teenage immortality’ thing had been really nice while it had lasted.

Another shot going through the drywall above her snapped her back to reality. Reminded her that pondering her impending mortality was all well and good but that, right now, if she was going out—
A quick pop of the case latches and she was in business. She pulled out the AR-15 style rifle (all completely legal, surprisingly enough) out of its case, slid in a fresh magazine, and pulled back the charging handle.

—she wasn’t going out alone. Fuck that.

“Motherfucker,” she hissed as she flipped over on her front and put pressure on her wound. She ignored Amy’s questioning cry of just where that gun had come from as she lined up the sights, focused her power, exhaled…and the Nazi that had shot her found himself without a good part of his pelvis. “I hope you like pissing in a bag for the rest of your life, you piece of shit.”

… It was kind of funny just how good she was at this. She was no Miss Militia or anything…but, maybe, she could have been a sniper in another life… Nah. She liked shopping too much to go through that. Staying out in the wilderness for weeks. Letting bugs crawl all over her. Pissing in a jar… Going without her soaps. Fuck that.

One squeeze. Two. Another pair of Nazis down…which is when her power screamed at her and she found herself scooting back under the bed, just before where her head used to be went up in a shower of old carpeting and foundation.

Another shot, too close for comfort, led to her pushing herself deeper back under her bed.

It looked like Victor had, somehow, found the time to come back and try again. How nice. That would explain the high powered rifle and just how close he’d come to decisively taking her out. He was probably the only member of the gang that needed one and could actually use it properly…. Shit.

Lisa kicked. Ignored the fresh wave of pain she felt as she forced herself to move…and that movement, painful as it was, proved to be its own reward when the spot where she’d been found a couple of rounds embedded in it. Her mattress, trooper that it was, was falling apart…and it wouldn’t be able to keep going like this forever.

Lisa, her face set into a pained frown, contented herself with staying as still as possible and preserving whatever energy she had left.

She was good, sure. Good by the standards of a near complete amateur as long as you didn’t add her powers to the equation, sure…but there was no way in hell she was going to get a bead on a professional before she got her head taken off, stolen skills or not. She knew when she was beat.

The only good news here was that, as long as she didn’t move or continue to fire, there was a good chance he would think that he had gotten her. The bad news was that he was going to maintain his bead until he saw more of his gang canvassing the room… Which, judging from the sounds of boots and shouting she could hear from the next room, was going to be very soon.

It was funny, just how much could happen in five minutes, wasn’t it? Also, what the fuck had Moss done, had any of them done, that warranted this much firepower? Fucking ridiculous was what this was.

Lisa sighed, feeling surprisingly calm about things as she ejected her current magazine and slapped in a new one before she rolled over on her back and sighted on her bedroom door… She supposed there were worse ways to go out than fighting Nazis with a full magazine. That was probably it.
The thought that, as soon as Moss found out what happened here, that he was going to brutally avenge her death was a nice thought as well. Streets running red with the blood of racists and the skyline alight with fire and flame. All very cinematic... There was that too.

The thought gave her warm and fuzzy feelings...or was that the blood loss...? Eh. One or the other. The distinction wasn’t all that important at the moment.

When a black blur came in through her window, smashing whatever glass that might have been left over as it pinwheeled into the opposite wall and, from what she could tell, got stuck, Lisa nearly had a heart attack…

The green blur that followed after, making her window a good three sizes larger than what it used to be turned that around real quick though. So much so that Lisa thought she might have heard a crack when all of the tension in her body disappeared. When that eerie, intense calm she’d been feeling left her and she started to shake and her vision began to fade in and out.

Adrenaline crash; blood loss and lack of tension causing a lack of consciousness in five to thirty seconds. Condition, serious.

Moss, his teeth bared and eyes glowing a deep, bloody red, roared...and brought his makeshift club down on Victor’s body. Repeatedly. Too fast for her to see even if she’d tried. Unnecessary as the sound of breaking bone began to sound.

Immediate medical attention required.

“No…” Lisa slurred as, out of the corner of her eye, she saw Amy begin a tense crawl out of the bathroom and towards her location. She shook a little, just a little when one of Storm Tiger’s air bombs went off nearby, but kept on going. “You don’t say…”

Moss, with one last whack of his piece of concrete on a stick on Victor’s broken body (How was he still alive?), perked up, turned around, and dropped that stick with wide eyes so that he could catch Victoria with both hands. Like a baseball player that had just caught an unexpected line drive...if that unexpected line drive had actually been 115 pounds of superpowered blonde, mostly naked bombshell in the midst of a berserker frenzy that would have easily qualified her for a spot in Valhalla.

Victoria hadn’t exactly made it easy for him to catch her. Neither was she making it easy for him to hold onto her. Her teeth were bared, face red, legs kicking, her whole body writhing as she fought to get back into the fight... All while being covered in little more than a tattered skirt, socks, and dust after her close acquaintance with what Lisa assumed had been that air bomb she’d heard going off a little while ago.

She was so…not happy...that she’d completely forgotten how she looked right now. Actually, at this point, Lisa would say that she was beyond ‘not happy’. Beyond angry. Beyond furious... She was absolutely enraged. Murderous, actually.

Good feelings those. When it came to them versus the Nazis, Victoria really had the right idea here. Go, Vicky.

As soon as Amy finished navigating the broken glass and put her hands on Lisa’s body, the blonde
sighed, closed her eyes...and allowed them to roll right into the back of her head as she passed right the fuck out.
Chapter 21

Not for the first time, Lisa wished that she wasn’t quite so jumpy when there was someone else in the room when she woke up. For reasons.

“You punched me! In the nose!” Vicky, who had found a sweater and a pair of jeans to put on sometime while Lisa had been busily sleeping off a minor case of exsanguination and having more holes in her body than was recommended at any one time, complained loudly as she held her nose in shock. “Who does that?”

Reasons like making sure that people liked you. That was a reason… As was not having to deal with that general feeling of embarrassment that often came with punching people in the nose when you didn’t mean it…okay. Damage control. Doing it.

Also, punching Victoria in the face had been like punching a brick. That too. It was just a bad idea all around.

“Come on, Vicky. Cut me some slack. Last thing I remember before I passed out from blood loss, I was practicing my Second Amendment rights.” Lisa said with a hard smile as she rubbed the ache out of her punching hand. As she sat up in the bed she’d found herself on, feeling lighter in some way that she couldn’t quite put her finger on at the moment, but tacked it on as a possible aftereffect of Amy’s particular brand of absolute bullshit. “Also, you do. You do that.”

Victoria snorted, then backed off and up to give Lisa some space as her fellow blonde started to move her feet in a testing manner. “Well, yeah. To Nazis. Nazis and…” She trailed off, her face gaining a good bit of color to it as she came to a conclusion. “Uh…”

“You know…” Lisa drawled. “Moss didn’t get all that far into explaining how you guys met, but I could have sworn…”

“Okay then!” Victoria interrupted with a near shout and a clap of her hands. Score one for Lisa. “Before Amy went to take a nap, she told me to ask you some questions if you woke up before she did.” Vicky cleared her throat as, with great aplomb, she took a crumpled sheet of paper and a pen out of a back pocket. “So, let’s start with...lightheadedness. You feeling that?”

Lisa shrugged. “Can’t say that I am.” That giddy feeling she had, she was pretty sure, was more psychological than physiological...as was her need to find Moss and ride him like a pony... Near-death experiences were funny like that. Hilarious. Really. Ha-ha. “Feel a little lighter in general though. Is that normal?”

“Yeah. Yeah, it is. Comes with the territory of losing some of your mass due to trauma, then having the holes close over in less than a minute.” Victoria nodded, the tip of her tongue sticking cutely out of her mouth as she crossed her legs in mid-air and used it as a relatively flat surface for her to start writing things down. Near-illegibly from what Lisa could tell, sure, but she was writing things down. “Amy kind of...rearranges things? Redistributes?” She hummed thoughtfully but continued. “Anyway, she moved some stuff around, turned fat and useless stuff into new mass, and now your body is adapting to the changes... Or something like that.”

“... Redistributes?” Lisa asked dully as she, forcefully, kept herself from looking down the front of her shirt. As long as she didn’t check, everything was the same as it had always been and she
wouldn’t have to go shopping for training bras again. “That’s nice.”

“Isn’t it? Totally worth the short time where you have to...recuperate, even if it takes a while,” Victoria replied in a diplomatically pointed manner and smirk, not helping Lisa’s worries in the slightest as she did so. “Alright. Moving on... Any tingling in your extremities, especially your legs?”

From there, things went how they normally did when you went and got yourself checked out after a surgery and had a not shit doctor. How do you feel, is there any pain, move your fingers and toes. Things like that, in the end, led to Vicky just screwing with her for laughs...and to get her mind off of things after what had happened earlier that...day? Yesterday? An undetermined amount of time? Whatever. That probably wasn’t important.

Not important at the moment, she meant. It was totally important in that ‘bigger-picture’ way. Unlike Lisa, Victoria didn’t have a magical buffer keeping her from getting a bad case of PTSD...or exacerbating it as it might be...because of that whole Fleur thing. Also, this might have been the first time that anyone had ever actually tried to kill Amy, so that wouldn’t be doing either of them any favors... Lisa was going to have to step up her timetable again.

Anyway, after the second time that Vicky had asked if that third nipple on Lisa’s back in between her shoulder blades was normal, an obvious sign that she wasn’t really thinking about what she was saying, Lisa couldn’t hold herself back from asking the big questions anymore.

“What happened while I was out?”

Victoria, right in the middle of yet another ‘joke’ (are you pregnant or currently planning to become pregnant?) stuttered. Trailed off with a worrisome grimace before Lisa, who had been considering if she should answer Vicky’s question honestly, just to see the look on her face, could stir the pot that she was oh so tempted to stir.

Shame. It probably would have been the funniest thing Lisa had ever done or the worst... Now, she supposed she’d never know... Once again, shame... Maybe later though? She’d have to see.

“Where am I right now? What happened to the 88? Where was the PRT while I was fighting for my life? Am I going to get charged with something?” Lisa kicked her blankets off and swung her legs off the edge of the bed and made to stand. “And where the fuck is Moss?”

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A quiet night. The crackling of flame. The smell of burning rubber. Faux leather. The remnants of a couple of gallons of gasoline, a couple kilos of drugs...and more than a little fresh urine.

“I don’t fucking know anything, you crazy motherfucker!” My current...guest...from the E88 yelled as he found himself dangling in the air. By the leg. Upside down... Over the edge of a five-story building and the burning wreckage of his delivery car down below as his own piss started making its way down his body and towards his face. His squat, pimply, boozed up and broken-nosed face.

… I’ll just say that he wasn’t exactly what anyone would put on an Aryan-supremacy, or any sort of supremacy that didn’t involve the benefits of living out of a shady bar, poster and leave it at that... I wasn’t sure what else I could have expected.

“I just drive the car!” he continued. “No one ever tells me shit! Not that I’d fucking tell you anything anyway, even if they did!” He weakly spat at me, doing little more than getting dribble all over his
face as he did. “Let me go! Let me go right fucking now you fucking subhuman piece of shi—”

I frowned at him and, after tossing him straight up straight up into the air a good twenty feet or so, I flipped the pages on my notepad full of prearranged questions. A couple. Five to eight, before we moved on from ‘Where, is Kaiser’ to ‘Where were you going’ and, with a quick move at the air, I had him again. By the leg, still dangling over a fire and a lethal drop...and with him screaming obscenities like a little bitch as he began to cry.

How Batman was able to pull this kind of shit off and, somehow, actually get answers I had no idea...but I guessed it involved a lot of practice. Ah, well...maybe I should shake him a little instead? Make my way up to the tossing instead of doing it right off…?

… Nah. Fuck this guy and all his friends. I was being too nice to them as it was… Shoot my Lisa, will they?

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“Ah… He’s doing...stuff.” Victoria started nervously rubbing the back of her neck. “Also, would you like that in order of questions asked, or…?”

“That would be nice, yes.”

“Okay.” Victoria cleared her throat. “First off, the short story is that, after you got knocked out, Moss spiked Stormtiger into the street like he was a volleyball before he used me as a flail to take out the rest of the gang and their vehicles. It...umm...” She coughed and plucked at her shirt as a flush started to creep up her neck. “It was...interesting.”

Lisa raised a brow as she found herself in the middle of witnessing Victoria imitating a waterfall. How there wasn’t a damp patch on those jeans yet, she had no idea. “I bet it was.”

“It’s not exactly something that I’d like to see someone put online. That’s all I can say.” Victoria coughed again. “Anyway, after we were done making sure that the Nazis weren’t going anywhere, I led Moss to my house...” Victoria twirled a finger. “So that I could lay you up in the guest room and put you under the protection of New Wave.”

“... Protection?”

“Of course,” Vicky said with a quick nod. “You took a bullet for my sister. Not once, but twice. That’s kind of a big deal, and giving you a place to stay was the least we could do in return.” Vicky gave Lisa a questioning look. “You didn’t think that we’d just leave you standing around, high-and-dry after everything was said and done, did you?”

Lisa, not feeling up to explaining that she actually sort of had, just rolled her hand in a not so subtle motion for Victoria to keep the ball rolling… Maybe she was a little cynical, yeah, but she was only the sum of her experiences...which really sucked, once she thought about it.

Personally though, on that point, she blamed her parents. That was all.

“Alright then,” Victoria said slowly as she caught onto the subtext in Lisa’s non-answer. “Okay. Anyway… The PRT. Right… From what I understand on that front, we finished up before they could even get to us. So they’re kind of a non-factor beyond some of the troopers we saw moving in before we left the scene.”
“So…” Lisa started flatly. “You’re saying that it took them around ten minutes after everything was
done, maybe longer, for them to show up at all?”

“Yes?”

“... Wow.” Lisa’s voice, already flat, became something as close to two-dimensional as it was
possible to be when it wasn’t a computer doing it. “I am so glad that I got to see my tax dollars in
action.”

The fact that she didn’t actually pay taxes didn’t matter. The government thought she did and that
should really be enough.

“Well, to be fair,” Victoria countered grudgingly, repeating something that someone had told her no
doubt, “it takes most quick response teams ten minutes just to suit up and get in the car. Then, once
you factor traffic and the number of gang members that we had to deal with—”

“Don’t care. Almost died.” Lisa shut that line down with aplomb as, after testing the ground with her
feet for the last three minutes or so, finally stood up. “They can suck my nonexistent dick...and they
can do it twice if they want to pin something on me.”

“They don’t. God no.” Victoria scoffed at the thought of it as Lisa looked herself over. Pajama wear,
all plaids and a little loose for her liking...but good enough. “Not that mom would have let them over
an open and close case of self-defense... Or any lawyer worth a damn for that matter once they found
out you have permits for all those guns of yours…” Victoria paused. “Also, eleven guns? Really?
Don’t you think that’s a little much?”

“Think about what happened today, Vicky, and get back to me on that when you’re ready to
comment some more,” Lisa grumbled with a shrug as she found herself rolling up the ends of her
pants over her ankles...and still with no Moss… At this point, she was starting to get the idea that he
was doing something that might have been just a little illegal, with just a pinch of stupid, and a lot
of heart-meltingly sweet… In a weird way. He was like that. “And is Moss beating up Nazis and asking
them questions so that he can break their stuff? Besides their bones, I mean?”

Vicky’s lips twitched upwards. Almost into a smile before she forced it back into the grimace that
looked a great deal less convincing than it had before as she clutched her papers to her chest like the
badly crushing teenage girl that she was. “New Wave can neither confirm nor deny what Moss, a
cape that isn’t affiliated with New Wave in any shape or form, is doing at this time.”

Lisa, after a quick parsing, snorted. Victoria might as well have said yes, for all the good that little bit
of half-assed denial did. “A guy after your own heart, huh?”

As Lisa made to make her way out into the hallway, either to use the bathroom or get some breakfast
(she hadn’t decided yet), Victoria didn’t say anything. She just shrugged...and smiled as she followed
Lisa out.
Chapter 22

Chapter Summary

A short addition to chapter 20. A little extra from Moss's side...as he shows what Victoria meant by 'he used me like a flail'.

Read and enjoy!

This was what they’d meant when they’d said that independents didn’t last long, wasn’t it? What they’d meant when they’d said that loners tended to just stop showing up one day. Either at the same time as one of the gangs got a new member...or just a sudden disappearance. An absence. A quick and quiet moment of violence that led to you being forgotten before the week had even ended, just like every other noob before you.

They’d meant that, in the end, if you were alone or didn’t have the strength or numbers to back them up...the Unwritten Rules were worth as much as the paper they weren’t printed on. No killing, no permanent damage, no going after people’s homes and daily lives... They didn’t mean shit if you couldn’t make whoever broke the rules hurt. If you couldn’t make them bleed...and oh could I make them bleed.

I knew them. I knew their names. Max Anders, Kayden Anders, Jessica and Nessa Biermann, Dorothy and Geoff Schmidt, Brad Meadows, Melody Jurist, James Fliescher... The Hurren clan and Medhall. Today was the day they’d chosen the hill they wanted to die on...and that was fine by me.

With Vicky still in hand, still fighting but slowing down even as I stuck her under my arm, I stuck a foot under Victor’s body. A foot that, with the sort of movement that you’d use to put a ball in the air, sent him flying. Spinning. Bonelessly ragdolling up to my chest with a pained gurgle that ended in a welter of blood and teeth. The crack of a whip as he met the back of my hand and bounced off the pavement outside like he was a pebble on the surface of a lake.

If this was how they wanted to play...if they wanted to come and attack my girlfriend, my friends in what was left of my goddamn house... I was perfectly happy to return the favor. To do unto others what was done unto me and all that noise as was right and proper.

Fuckin Nazis.

A deep, shuddering breath. A push off the ground...a blur and a spin on my heel. A hiss and a gout of red-tinged steam from in between my teeth and Victor, in the middle of his third skip, met the ball of my foot. Rebounded off of it like a squishy, liquid filled hacky sack that, somehow, ended up with him flying over a building and out of sight instead of exploding like he damn well should have...ah well. It had done something at least.

Suddenly, no one here, not even Stormtiger, looked like they thought this was a good idea anymore...and it showed. It showed in the sudden quiet. The lull in gunfire. The flickering of the average douchebag’s eyes and the shuffle of their feet as Stormtiger, his arms cocked back to throw his blades in a completely different direction, froze. Stayed where he was in a moment of shock that lasted for far too long as a balled up fist met the top of his skull and shot him towards the ground like...
he’d been fired out of a cannon.

A loud splat. The crack of concrete and other, softer things shattered twice over when I landed on his back and ground my heel in for good measure later...and the gunfire started again. Like raindrops. Feathers against my skin as I grabbed a viciously smiling Victoria’s hands with my own and, as if she were a living club, swung her against a nearby car in a fit of inspiration.

Inspiration that panned out in the best possible sense as the car we’d hit might as well have never existed in the first place when she kicked out with both feet. Turned it into little more than a hail of fluff and metallic shrapnel that tore up the street in front of us, and everything in it, like it was made of wet paper with a hate-filled cry of joy.

It was the sound of catharsis finally being allowed to come to completion. Of vindicated, justified revenge against the monsters that had taken her aunt and broken the New Wave movement before it had even begun, allowed free reign. After what they had done today, there was no need to hold back anymore. No need to hide it, to call Amy to cover it up… She could do what she wanted now...and she didn't let that chance go.

No. Let me rephrase that. We didn't let that chance go. This was our moment. Our time to do what we felt like doing instead of what was expected of us... The gloves were off and we were going to milk it for all it was worth.

From that point on, together we were a wall of pain and suffering. Of crushed cars, broken bones. Pulped organs, slowing gunfire and screams that, more often than not, didn’t finish on their own.

“RUN!” One of the smarter gangbangers said as they finally realized that they were alone. That their Capes weren’t getting up. That all they had was enough guns and ammo to outfit your average third-world army and not much else...and the smarter ones heard him. Scattered. Ducked behind any cover they could find on their way to the nearest alley while the stupid ones stood their ground and went down under the windmill...and those were the ones on foot.

Some of them, wonder of wonders, actually thought about getting into a car. Not that it helped them much or anything...but it was interesting, in an anthropological sort of way.

A parked, white panel van, before the doors had even closed, came to life and reversed with a screech of burning rubber. Or, at least, tried to. Tried and little else as it only got as far as the start of the next building...before I threw Victoria like a fastball straight into, and through their engine block. Right into the interior where she was free to wreak havoc with a peal of mad laughter.

A predatory grin grew across my face as, just before the van swerved with whatever momentum it still had left into a thankfully abandoned building, I saw the impression of a couple fists, and of someone’s face, form on the outside of the vehicle.

Seeing as how, from what I could see, she had everything locked down over there…I found myself free to run amongst the herd. Right up to the front where I clasped the shoulder of the biggest, toughest looking guy there...and laughed. Low and deep as I turned his shoulder and collarbone into little more than kindling...and Vicky cut down four of them with a pre-bloodied van door and a cackle...and I looked away.

Not out of any sense of sympathy. Decency. Whatever word you could use that, in the end, meant you felt something for someone that wasn’t a sort of soul-deep disgust… None of those words applied here. The only reason I looked away was so that I could help with clean up.
Watching something, no matter how enjoyable it might have been, didn’t help get that thing done. Idle hands and the devil...that was the idea.

The last skinhead still standing, still running actually, found himself doing backflips as a thrown trash can lid took his feet out from under him... If his ankles, and his nose when he hit the ground, hadn’t been broken I’d… Nah. They were definitely broken. One of his feet were actually pointing in the wrong direction...and, now, Victoria and I were alone.

Lost. Directionless. Looking at each other as we found ourselves surrounded by the quiet (besides one guy who tried to crawl away, only to get a brick in between the eyes for his trouble) of a battlefield where the ending had been decided long ago.

Even as adrenaline still ran high, as our heartbeats continued to pound while we shared a smile over the growing sound of faraway sirens... I was surprised. Caught completely off guard when Victoria...beautiful, blood-covered, nearly-naked Victoria...grabbed me by the face, pressed her body against mine and gave me the most passionate kiss I’d ever received in my life.

It was short. Sweet. Without even a hint of tongue...but the feeling in the act took my breath away. Set a fire in my lungs that burned even brighter, even hotter than what had filled them during the fight—

Victoria’s lips separated from mine. Softly. Reluctantly. With bright eyes and little breath. “You don’t even know how bad...” She sucked in a desperate breath. “I want to fuck you right now… For you to fuck me, right here, right now.”

—even as my heart felt like it had just been filled with ice.

“But I can wait a little to suck you dry. I have to. Priorities.” Victoria pulled away from me, giving me a taste of relief even as that smile on her face disappeared as if it had never been. Now, she frowned...and it was a dark, and hateful thing as she looked around at what we had done. “We need to get Amy and Lisa out of here before this gets any worse...” After she was done looking around, she looked down at herself with an expression of distaste and, funnily enough, embarrassment. Finally. “And I need a new top before I lead you home.”

Before she had even finished, I was already on my way back to the apartment. By the time she’d arrived, I’d already scooped up a passenger, Lisa. By the time Victoria had fashioned herself a top out of a now ruined bedsheet, I’d found myself with an oddly still and wide-eyed Amy who, it seemed, couldn’t look away from my face while I cradled her in the crook of my left arm.

… I really hoped she hadn’t seen what Victoria had done. I really, really did...and, also...what the hell was I going to tell Lisa when she woke up?

How the fuck was I going to tell my girlfriend that, not only were we at war with the 88...her new friend was looking to take her spot?
Chapter 23

Somewhere between the fourth and the tenth (I’d lost count a while ago. They all just kind of blended together) interrogation of a hapless skinhead, I’d remembered something kinda important. Something that was definitely on the lower end of the scale in terms of priority when you were dealing with people shooting at you and the people you knew, sure, but still important in its own way. Especially now, after Lisa and I had been left effectively homeless.

Even if our apartment hadn’t had more holes than walls, the landlord would have refused to allow us back in either way. Besides the whole thing where the local Nazis wanted us dead, which was bad enough by itself and a totally understandable reason as to why they wouldn’t let us come back...Lisa had broken her lease just by letting me live with her without informing management. I wasn’t exactly all that keen on telling her that she wasn’t getting her deposit back. She’d really been looking forward to getting that back when her lease was up.

Anyway, I’d remembered that I had a job… A job with a, thankfully, very understanding boss. All I’d had to say to them was that I had a Nazi problem and I’d got myself leave, my first payday of 1500 dollars in tips, and an open invitation to return when everything cooled down… I hadn’t expected it to go nearly as well as it had, seeing how this was retail on my first day...but I guessed that the large stack of twenties Mr. Lu had been counting out before I’d walked in had really given me some slack.

Hopefully, that was going to be the sort of slack I’d get from Lisa when I told her that Victoria had propositioned me so fucking hard, the only way it could have been any more explicit would have been if she’d shoved her hand down my pants... I wasn’t going to hold my breath or anything, seeing how I was only bringing Lisa a grand (so far. That stash house I’d heard about was going to get a visit soon) in tribute when I knocked on the door to the Dallon household...but there was hope. A shaky, fragile hope that almost died completely when the first person I saw was a frowning Lisa in a much too large set of flannel sleepwear...and a cheerfully smiling Victoria who, with an arm under her breasts for maximum lift and exposure, gave me a little wave.

Almost died. That was important.

I have to say though, I was actually kind of proud of myself when, instead of standing there like an idiot as I processed how far over my head I was, I acted like nothing was wrong. Victoria got a wave back and a nod, Lisa got a stack of money and a quick hug, the house was temporarily ignored… Yeah. Completely normal. Not awkward at all, as long as you ignored the pouting Vicky was doing before she hovered into another room and the meaningful head flick Lisa made at her back.

The fact that I was just sweating just a little instead of spilling my spaghetti all over the really expensive looking hardwood floor at that was seriously impressive… Jesus. Besides the relationship issues I was dealing with right now, just walking in here was like walking into a minefield. A very, veryexpensive minefield made out of fine china and crystal chandeliers that were just at head height.

This was more money than I’d ever seen in my life outside of...no. Never mind. This was the most money I’d ever seen in my life by far. This place was doing wonders for that burgeoning case of anxiety I had. Really. This was great stuff, just the sort of thing to top off my day...and that was when I wasn’t even considering the fact that Lisa was a small time supervillain in a house full of
“Let’s go, Moss. Now. Before she comes back,” Lisa said as she grabbed my hand and started pulling me down the hallway to what, I assumed, was her room… Thank god. Somehow, I hadn’t been forced to walk up any stairs yet…and testing whether they could hold me or not, let alone the handrails if I fell for some reason, while in an unfamiliar house sounded like a really dumb idea. “We need to talk about what we’re going to do with New Wave, us being homeless, this whole Nazi thing, and how Victoria wants some of your personal brand of protein in her food pyramid.”

“Christ, Lisa. Say it for everyone to hear, why don’t you?” I whispered as I tiptoed around a nearby vase on a stand. “Not like that’s a sensitive topic or anything.”

“No one else can hear us, you big dummy,” Lisa shot back as she rolled her eyes so hard I could hear it. “We’ve got at least another ten minutes before Amy wakes up from her nap and Vicky’s head is so deep in the freezer right now, I’d give her good odds on missing an Endbringer siren… Actually, you know what?” Lisa, after ‘forcefully’ finagling me through the doorway and shutting the door, took a seat on the bed and beckoned me over. “Let’s talk about that first.”

“... Are you sure that’s what you want to start with?” I asked carefully as I slowly took a seat on the floor, much to Lisa’s visible displeasure, and crossed my legs. It wasn’t that I didn’t want to get on the bed...it was because I wasn’t sure it could take me. Damn this world of cardboard and far too small doorways... “Because, you know, I think I have a pretty good lead on one of the Empire’s distribution centers and I could really use your input.”

“Yes. I’m sure. I have no idea how long we’re going to be here and, believe it or not, how she feels about you could, in the worst case, really fuck us over. Seriously,” Lisa confirmed before she paused, looked at the space between us, frowned, and held out her arms in a quiet demand for cuddles. A demand that ended up with her in my lap, with my fingers in her hair and her sighing in contentment before she spoke again. “Impulse control isn’t one of her talents… So, in one of the few spots of privacy we’re probably ever going to get while we’re here, I’m going to tell you what to do about it.”

“I think I can guess where this is going.” The hand that wasn’t tangled up in Lisa’s hair found itself on the back of my head as I let out a sigh. “Let her down easy and, if that doesn’t work, we move out and I slowly cut contact until she understands it's not happening?”

This wasn’t my first relationship. This sort of shit didn’t come up often but when it did, this was the default option. One that I didn’t always follow to the letter because, you know, I was my own man and letting anyone tell you who you should or shouldn’t know was fucking dumb...but this time around, the stakes were a little higher than they normally were so if I had to do it, then I had to do it.

Also, that whole thing where Lisa could do the next best thing to mind-reading really made keeping unwanted female friendships harder than it should have been. That was a factor too. Couldn’t forget that.

“What? No! Fuck no. She’s kind of my friend too, you know? I’m not that much of a bitch...besides, burning a bridge with New Wave like that would be stupid.” Lisa scoffed, overturning a tradition that had been years in the making with just a couple of words. The number of girlfriends I’d had in my life that could think beyond the moment like that and stick with it, even if it was only that far, could be counted on one hand… It was kind of refreshing… Also, I might have, formerly, had shit taste in girlfriends. That was a thing. “I want you to give her what she wants.”
… What?

“Hell, not only do I expect you to go balls deep inside of her the first time she asks for a ride, I expect you to go the extra mile. The full course.” Lisa continued to gleefully tear a couple of holes into my hold on reality and our relatively normal, assumedly monogamous, relationship with every word that came out of her mouth. “Her boyfriend just broke up with her, and I think she could do with a new one...and I'll even give you a reason as to why you should go for it. It's a real doozy so, don’t take this the wrong way, but...”

After finishing on that note, a note that left me with a lot of questions and not a lot of direction as to where I should start, or if I even should start, she leaned against my chest and tilted her head back. Far enough so that, when I looked down, I could see her face. Her expression, completely flat. Neutral in a way that I honestly couldn't ever remember seeing on her before. Ever.

If it hadn't been for her eyes, moving searchingly among my features, I could have mistaken her for a statue...and that wasn't right. Lisa was...expressive. Open even, as long as you knew what to look for...but now I was completely lost. I couldn't tell what she was feeling one way or another...and it made me nervous. More nervous, if I was honest...and it was only getting worse as she took her time telling me why she wanted me to take Victoria as my girl on the side.

… If this was all just a really long setup that ended with her saying that she wanted to break up, nicely, Kaiser was a dead man twice over. I was going to have a lot of stress to bleed off...and Victoria was going to have to wait for a little. Relationships on the rebound weren’t fair to anyone.

“I'm not breaking up with you, doofus. Calm your shit. You’re still in my good books. Fuck, my best books. All of them,” Lisa finally said, instantly dealing with one of my biggest worries as she gave one of my cheeks a pat. “I was just trying to think of how to say ‘I can't handle you by myself’ without making this weird.”

I blinked. “What?”

“Yeah. It needed work, but fuck it. It’s true,” Lisa admitted grudgingly as she poked at the hand on her head until I started running it through her hair again. “How many hours do we spend, per day, fucking or preparing to fuck? On average?”

“You know I’m shit at math, Lisa,” I replied with an absent mumble as, even with my inability to do...whatever equation it was you needed to do to get the answer to the question she’d just asked me, on the fly, I kind of saw her point. I couldn’t even remember the last time I’d gone without my morning quickie, let alone all the rest of the stuff we did together throughout the rest of the day. “But too much, I guess?”

“... An understatement if I’ve ever heard one,” She answered near tonelessly. “I’ve spent nearly forty hours, just this week alone, on the nearest flat surface with you inside of me. Forty. Hours. Moss.” Lisa chuckled after that little bit of emphasis and ran a finger affectionately over my lips as I shifted uncomfortably under her. “Give me another two hours and I’m pretty sure that you’d owe me overtime.”

The wad of cash I’d given her as soon as I’d walked through the door was quietly forgotten and never brought up again. The sharp glint that appeared in her eye when I thought about it wouldn’t have allowed anything else.

“You’re running me into the ground, Moss...and, now that I’m recuperating after getting shot—”
“I will salt the fucking earth they stand on, I swear to God.” I growled.

“—you’re not going to be getting any from me for at least a week.” She shrugged and smiled, ignoring the sudden, noticeable shiver that had just run down my spine at that thought with ease as she made to stand up. “You have needs. I have needs. She has needs. We all have needs. As long as you do your part, everyone wins.” A quick peck on the lips, just as she stood up, took the sting out. “So go do your part while I do mine...and I like to think my job is harder than yours.”

With a little spin that caused her clothes to flutter fetchingly around her body (was she smaller than she used to be?) she fell on her bed, crawled under the covers, and tucked them up to her chin in the clearest conversation ender I’d ever seen. A thump from right above our heads and a lot of cursing explained the why of it... Doctors could be mean when they thought you might have been screwing up their work...also...

“I’ll try to get you at least an hour free, big guy. I might need to do some padding here and there, but I’ll try.” She snickered at me as I, dazedly, started trying to fit myself through the doorway to her room. “And when you get back from testing Victoria’s bedsprings, I expect details!”

There was that. There was definitely that...what even was my life when I couldn’t even expect my girlfriend to freak out about me sleeping with other girls? The natural order of things had been disturbed and I didn’t think they would ever—

“Hey, Moss! Guess what!” Victoria, who had just turned the nearest corner in ambush and forced me to take a step back in shock as she did so, slid around to my back and started pushing me towards what smelled a lot like the kitchen. “I baked you a cake! Wanna eat it with me in my room with the TV turned up real loud and the blinds closed? Because I do!”

… You know what? Once I thought about it a little, it was probably better if I just didn’t think about it. That was Future Moss’s problem now.
Victoria placed her empty glass of milk down on the table, feeling as nervous as she’d ever been in her life. More nervous even than the first time she’d ever had a boy up here, sitting on her bed, with the TV on real loud and without any chance of her parents showing up within the next few hours… Far too nervous for what had, so far, been exactly what she’d said it was going to be when she’d accidentally blindsided Moss in the hallway.

They were eating (double chocolate) cake. The blinds were down. The TV was, once again, really fucking loud…and no one had made a move so far. Nothing concrete besides the hand Moss had running up and down the side of her waist, turning her insides into goo as sweat began to bead and run on her skin.

She hadn’t felt like this in…since…no. She had never felt like this. Not even once. Not even when she’d first started dating. So small. So weak and frail… It was like her heart was going to explode out of her chest if she made a move. That she’d forget to breathe if she tried to speak.

For once in her life, she didn't even have a gut feeling to follow. A hunch, a hint, an impulse. Anything, she’d take it. One and all, as long as they gave her back her confidence. That will, that after-battle high that had led to her confessing to the most dateable man she’d ever met in her life.

The way they’d torn those skinheads apart... How close they’d been at that moment, close enough that they might as well have been one person… It had been better than any love letter she’d ever gotten. Better than any words, flowers, chocolate, jewelry, or clothes. They just didn’t compare.

Victoria breathed out, and after giving Moss a coy look from out of the corner of her eye, put a hand on his thigh. Barely inches away from the head of his cock, so very obvious through the thin fabric of his shorts…and slowly closing the gap. Fractions of an inch, eaten by the seconds as she felt his fingers start a light, upward pull at the hem of her top. A tight, red shirt that had once ended just above her navel, now nearly to the underside of her breasts as she hesitantly, teasingly, reached for it.

Nothing compared anymore. Nothing stacked up to what Moss had made her, continued to make her feel with every moment he was here…and she didn’t know what to do about it. She didn’t know how to deal with being the damsel. She didn’t know how to deal with the idea that, for once, she might not be the one in charge.

Dean had been a great guy and all, but her time with him hadn't exactly given her a lot of experience with this sort of thing. With changing roles and stuff... A lack of control had never been something that she’d had to worry about, thanks to him being perfectly happy with giving it to her without a fight…and him not being nearly twice her height or even a tenth as strong… Either way, control had never really been an issue in her relationships with people that she liked—

Victoria found herself leaning against Moss's side, and in what felt like no time at all she was almost laying in his lap. Her teasing momentarily forgotten as Moss gently pulled her shirt over her head, and for the second time within the last two days, she found herself blushing while Moss looked down at her. Blushing, and feeling unaccountably embarrassed. Enough so that she almost covered herself when Moss took the time to commit the sight of her breasts, of her, with her nipples already as erect and rosy as they could get, to his memory.

—until now…and she was not prepared in the slightest.
"Nice huh?" Vicky said in challenge as she gave her chest a side-to-side shake, "but how about, instead of drooling over my tits, you take a picture or something so that we can get to the good parts?"

When Moss, after some actual thought, nodded and reached for her phone with a smile...she froze. Just for a while as the heat in her cheeks reached entirely new levels as he started fumbling with the screen. Fumbling, and little else as she stopped acting like a deer in the headlights and smacked it out of his hands, scattering it across her room in two separate pieces, battery and casing before she grabbed him by the face and hungrily put her lips to his with a growl.

Her nerves were shot as it was. Having to take the time to pose for a cheesecake picture would have shattered them completely...a phone was a price that she’d been more than willing to pay as long as they got to the action. To the point of this whole thing, what she’d been waiting for ever since their fight in the park.

Like a switch had been flipped, Moss changed. No longer passive. No longer soft. No longer even pretending to treat her like a lady as he put a hand on her back and pulled her to his chest. Put another hand under her skirt to grab her ass and play at the lace of her thong with his fingers… Flicked his tongue against her lips in return, then slid it into her mouth.

At that, Victoria realized that her affair with gum was done. Over. Kaput...yet another thing that just didn’t stack up to the real thing...and boy did it not stack up.

He teased her. Nibbled. Prodded. Explored every square inch of her mouth even as she ‘resisted’, returned the favor in the only way she could. Muscle against muscle, mouth against mouth… She gave all she had. Everything she could, just to stay in the moment even as her vision began to blur. Even as her fluids started to run down her legs in streams and her panties started to audibly tear at the seams under the stress Moss was putting them through with his massive fingers...which was fine with her.

At this point, she was leaking right through the stretched lace. Having them torn off of her like wrapping from a present wouldn’t bother her much… Not at all, actually. If they broke, they broke. No point in worrying about it.

With a loud snap, almost as if the universe had heard her thoughts and given her an answer, a frilly string gave way completely. The first of many that led to it sliding wetly down her right leg and to her knee, a ruined, useless mess that could do little more than dangle as Moss just about mauled her ass with his hands while he plundered her mouth.

The similarities between what had happened to her underwear and what she suspected Moss was going to do to her were obvious. Not that it bothered her all that much, same as before. Hell, she was looking forward to it...and she could only say what she’d told herself before as they separated with a wet pop, with strings of spit bridging the space between them as she panted for air and her eyes stopped trying to look into the back of her head.

If she broke, she broke. No point in worrying about it. Words to live by...or so she thought as she put her face in the crook of Moss’s neck. Shivered and quaked as she tried to pull herself together in the short time for rest that she had while Moss kicked off his shorts and murmured comforting, meaningless nonsense into her hair and ear.

Meaningless or not though, it was exactly what she needed to hear. It was what kept her sane, what
kept her *herself* instead of a gibbering mess when his length, finally set free of it’s spandex prison, hit her lower back and the space in between her cheeks with a heavy clap. With a familiar wetness, a heft and weight that she’d never been able to forget, even when she’d *tried* to in the month and change since their first, momentary meeting in the skies over Brockton.

That was his *dick*. It was *dripping precum* and it was touching her *skin*. Moss was going to use what might as well have been a *sledgehammer* on her insides and she had no fucking idea if it would even *fit*. All she had going for her right then was a lot of spit, a fuckload of prayers, and enough lubrication to drown a small animal…and she was seriously worried that it wouldn’t be enough.

“J-just…” She swallowed. Hard and dry as she pulled up her skirt that little bit more. “Jam it in.” Far enough that she thought, if she only looked down, she could see the gigantic puddle she had made on her bed. “I... I don’t… Just…” Victoria whined with frustration as the words refused to come out how she wanted them to. A frustration that led to her pounding a fist against his chest hard enough to crack concrete, at solid ground went nowhere.

“*Fuck me,*” she mouthed, unsure if she’d even made a sound at all as, with those two words, she came. Clenched around nothing but air as she just about cried into his neck. *Marked* him like some kind of animal as she found herself squirting mindlessly into his lap, into the empty air before she found herself on her back, the sight of the eggshell white of her room now replaced with a ceiling of rumbling, beautiful *green*. “Fuck me!”

If he hadn’t heard her the first time, he certainly heard her then. Something that he proved beyond a doubt as, when she bucked her hips at him, he was there to catch it. To keep her still even as her every instinct told her to *move*, to get what she came for no matter what she had to do, while he ran his shaft straight up and through the middle of her slit, just the once to get himself nice and wet before he pulled back and, well... *jammed it in*.

Vicky’s eyes crossed. Her mouth parted into a soundless ‘O’ as, just by having that fat, textured, purple tip pop into her, she lost every bit of air in her lungs that she might have had. All of it, gone in an explosive gasp as, with the sort of painful clarity that only came to madmen and the truly, utterly, *fucked*, found out that she *could* take him. That, in the end, even if her body was physically incapable of taking in the entirety of his length... *he could make her take it*. He was bigger than her, stronger than her, heavier than her...there really wasn’t much that he *couldn’t* make her do if he put his mind to it.

… *Fuck* if that didn’t get her engine running like nothing else had. He was spoiling her. Sexually ruining her. Turning her off of other men, just by *existing*.

Her last, truly coherent thought done for the day, Vicky found herself scratching divots into the posts of her bed. Digging in her heels and gritting her teeth as best as she could as she pushed back against Moss’s slow, steady advancement. An inexorable progression into the deepest parts of her body as it fought him for every inch.

She was no virgin. Not even close...but she might as well have been as, in just the first few seconds of her almost being tossed off the end of her bed just by having Moss gently feed her his cock...he’d touched her in places she hadn’t even known existed. Stimulated nerves. Smoothed out wrinkles… A G-spot crushed so hard that she wasn’t even sure how she hadn’t *fainted* yet, especially when every new vein and artery that even *grazed* it had her honestly wondering if that was when she was going to die, just from how hard she came each time it happened.

… If it had been anyone but her, that last part might have actually been a problem. But she *was* her.
She was herself. She was Victoria Dallon. She was Glory Girl. She was unbreakable. Unbeatable. Goddamn invincible. The number of girls in the world that had the advantages that she did at the moment could be counted on one hand, and one of them was fucking Alexandria...and she should fucking use them.

Under Victoria’s suddenly tightened grip, her bedposts splintered. Crumbled into dust under her palms before she, just as suddenly, let them go. A necessity, seeing as she could no longer reach them from where she was. Where she’d forced herself with an impulsive application of flight, sick of just how long things were taking as her pussy insisted on being difficult about things.

… And, on second thought, it might have been a mistake. Probably. Most likely… Definitely...not that something as small as a mistake had ever stopped her before.

Victoria gritted her teeth, closed her eyes and set her mouth into what might have been a cocky grin. Might have been. Unlikely though, after she ended their little stalemate with the cracking sound of her hips hitting his. The only thing keeping her up at this moment, pretty much kept her melded to the base of his cock while she gurgled and spasmed was him.

Him, and the last of her mind that wasn’t stuck on how she’d probably just busted her womb, kept her focused on flying. On committing a holding action when, after a beat where Moss didn’t do much of anything out of shock, he pulled out. All the way to the head, with her helping by pulling back as well...then moving forward to meet his returning thrust in an explosion of escaping fluids and almost painful orgasms, stretched out into a torturous chain.

A chain that never weakened. Never slowed or stopped while she continued to contribute to her own destruction. The devastation being wreaked upon her body and mind as she stubbornly persisted in being true to herself, even in something like this. Especially in something like this.

She was smaller than him. She was weaker than him. The very sight of him left her weak at the knees and a touch had her dripping like a faucet...but those things only mattered as much as she let them. Lying back and thinking of England while she was ravaged was all well and good for some girls...but not her.

If her and Moss were going to be an item, she was going to be a participant. A partner. Not a doll. Even if it meant that she broke, she’d never stop pushing for the top. For agency. For control. For the sake of the struggle.

She was a fighter... What else could she say?

As Moss’s thrusts started to lose their rhythm in a very familiar way, just before he started to slow down, Victoria’s lips turned up into a snarl. A needful one, desperate and angry in equal turns as she locked her legs behind his hips and began bucking into him, just about dancing on his rod as it became strained and swollen under the churning weight of his oncoming load.

The flood of white that she'd been working towards, hungering for since she’d first taken the risk of going all in on taking him for herself… The flood that she could feel making its way up and out in deposits the size of golf balls, all in a row and far too many to count, shot up his length. Up his length and out In a direct shot to her womb that had her wailing. Mindlessly kicking and crying as she put her hands to her face, over her eyes at the first signs of her stomach starting to round out with Moss's seed…and she started to wonder if the pill she was on could handle it...and found that she didn't really care if it did or not.
Honestly, right here, right now, not even sure if she was foaming at the mouth or not...the thought of carrying his child to term for the next nine months didn't sound that bad.

“What the fuck Vicky!?”

Not that Amy seemed to agree as she just about kicked down the door, shocking Moss so badly that he jumped back, leaving Victoria cold and empty and so very alone as he pulled out of her completely...and fired the tail end of his orgasm straight at Amy's face.

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White. The entire world was white. White, hot. Blinding and sticky and steamy as her hands, numb and shaky, went to her face. To the biological mask she’d found herself wearing, as thick as any bottle of glue and a hundred times as intoxicating... To the touch. To the smell...and, she suspected, to the taste.

Amy breathed in through her nose. Light and quick as she wiped at her eyes and her face began to heat up. To tingle and burn as her power told her in exacting detail just what it was that she’d been hit with...not that she needed it. She had eyes. She’d seen it coming at her, straight from the source. She wasn’t stupid, even with the growing haze at the corners of her mind working towards her center. Amy knew where she stood here.

She’d barely handled touching Moss’s fucking hand. Now that she’d found herself plastered with enough semen and aphrodisiacs to get a thousand women pregnant and loving it, she had a couple of minutes at most. One at the least before before she shoved both her hands down the front of her pants or begged for a rutting.

Lisa had been very clear about that. Very clear. Almost obscene in the short amount of time she’d spent waxing-poetic on Moss’s good points...and she found, if anything, Lisa had been understating things.

She could already feel the buzzing under her skin...it was too late for her. Too late for Vicky as well. Far, far too late... God damn it, Vicky...why couldn’t you have just waited?

Another breath led to clogging. To a snort and a gasp that led to an off-white bubble growing. Popping. Giving her left eyelid and, thanks to her gasping, the tip of her tongue a deliciously fresh new coat of paint.

If this wasn't as good as Lisa had implied it was, Amy was going to turn her ass inside out.

With another pass of her hand across her face, she could see again. Well enough that she could take in the view that was her sister, of Victoria, her hair and face drenched with sweat as she slowly drained onto the bed. Waved. Gave her a shaky, dopey smile and a wave before her head fell back onto a pillow and a golden, starry pattern finished filling itself in on her mound.

Inside out.

She didn't even stop to think about it. She swallowed. Let the reproductive goo tamp down on those feelings of guilt she carried around on a near constant basis. The stress of the hospital. Her jealousy. That feeling that she just didn't belong. All quickly forgotten when she put her hand to her mouth, the one that she'd been using to wipe her face, and did her damndest to lick it clean.
After the first lick, it wasn’t nearly the chore that she thought it was going to be. Far from it.

She just couldn’t get enough. If she’d been trying to clean her face before, she was desperate to do so now. Shaking near uncontrollably as fire lined the insides of her throat. A fire that only grew with every new handful that she poured into her mouth. Up to four. Just enough of a high that the thought of fucking the same guy that had just fucked her sister didn’t bother her. Not enough of one that she seriously (that was the important part) considered eating her sister out like a creme-filled doughnut.

In other words, it was just right and...how did you unbutton pants again? Fuck. Maybe not. If this was going to be as regular a thing as she thought it was, she was going to have to figure out the doses here. Three handfuls? Three and a half? Where was the cutoff? Could she overdose? Did she have to chew before she swallow—aaaand Moss was helping her get her pants off. Normally.

That was nice of him, letting her keep her buttons like that instead of tearing them right off her… It was funny how nimble his fingers were, and just how quickly he’d figured out her zipper. Less than ten seconds after he fell to a knee, still towering over her by a couple of heads even then and... It was probably all that practice he’d been getting lately. Lisa did seem to be the type to wear jeans…

Amy briskly shook her head. Slapped her cheeks until they were nice and red and she could ignore the way the room swam like her thoughts. Focus. Focus. She was the captain of this ship and Moss was a passenger. She owned this fucking ride, and she had to make sure he knew that.

“Welcome to Amy Dallon’s Wild Ride.” Amy, finding herself without pants or any fucks to give, stumbled over to Victoria’s dresser, put her hands on it for leverage, and stuck her still panty-clad ass out at him with a huff. “Keep your hands on and dick in at all times...unless you’re a little bitch.”

Fucking nailed it.

After that any waiting, any romantic shit was as good as done. There was a snort. The thud of feet. The back of her cheap cotton underwear getting balled up in a meaty fist, then torn off of her so quickly that she didn’t even feel the bite before, with what might have been a laugh if a dryer had done it, she found herself becoming little more than five pounds of needy slut in a one pound bag.

Having something as delicate as her slit get so viciously broken in for her first time had her jaw going slack. One of her eyes almost closing completely without her input while a thick line of drool ran down her chin. Her tongue poked out with an involuntary twitch, then right back in as she heard what sounded a great deal like a suspiciously chunky waterfall start up between her legs and splash all over the floor.

She was so fucking glad that Victoria’s dresser didn’t come with a mirror. She probably looked like an absolute moron.

“Motherfucker,” Amy screeched as she felt Moss go from right at her entrance, to all the way in with a grand slam right into her cervix. Straight on. A blow that should have hurt like said motherfucker, if it didn’t rearrange all of her organs right out of her mouth...but fuck it. She was needy, stressed, and no think too good right now. As long as it didn’t kill her, she was planning on riding this one all the way down.

Not that he got the memo, it seemed, considering how he had stopped. Probably feeling all concerned about her safety. Feeling regret that he’d been so rough with her and wondering if he should call an ambulance. What a joke. What a fucking laugh.
She was the hospital. Those jokers in the scrubs and coats could suck her clit.

“Did I fucking tell you to stop?” Amy hissed like a snake as several bottles of makeup fell to the sides. Some from the blow she’d just taken. Some from her sweeping an arm across the top to vent her aggression and regret that, in the end, she wasn’t facing him so that she could sweep that hand across his face. “DID I TELL YOU TO FUCKING STOP!?”

That wasn’t all that hard to understand, now was it? Not exactly a lot of room for misunderstandings here. Not that it had ever stopped people from fucking up...thankfully though, proving that he was actually somewhat smarter than one of her patients, he didn’t fuck it up. Instead, he fucked her up, nearly driving her face first into whatever was left of Vicky’s makeup and Amy’s dignity.

She moaned, her face twisting in pleasure with just a hint of faux-discontent as the next quick, yet powerful thrust started up a pattern. A rhythm that involved him battering her insides, literally and metaphorically with the tip of his dick. Spreading and working his fluids into her deepest walls with every repetition in an ever-thickening coat as his hips slapped against her ass and she ate her screams.

She could barely even touch the ground now. It was only the tips of her toes that could, and only when he pulled out of her and pulled her back as well, purely through how strongly her body, her rippling, clenching insides refused to let him go as her every moment was filled with data. With a garbled, incomprehensible noise that was her power’s attempts to make sense of the nonsense that was breaking Amy down into her basest self. The animal, the rabid cavewoman looking for someone powerful to share a den with.

“HARDER!”

And doing a damn fine job at it...in all respects. The animal inside was as good as purring at this point—

Yet another thrust pulled the dresser out from under her hands. Forced her up and over, with her face only inches from the wall now that she was on top of her sister’s furniture instead of using it as support...and she slapped her hands up against that wall. Felt the shock that was his next ball-slapping thrust into the ruin that he was making of her insides travel all the way up, then into said wall, causing trickles of dust to fall from the ceiling.

—and the cavewoman just wanted someone to fucking pull her hair some more.

“THAT’S MORE LIKE IT, YOU LIMP DICKED PIECE OF SHIT!” Amy roared, physically, not mentally, physically, unable to give a single fuck about much of anything that didn’t involve the fucking she was getting as the dresser she was on rocked like a ship in a storm. As she swore like Skidmark at his worst the few times she’d ever heard him talk and how her fingers were starting to crack the paint and sink into the wood. “FUCK ME UNTIL I CAN’T SEE STRAIGHT IF YOU’RE A FUCKING MAN!”

Besides the whole thing where she’d done the next best thing to mainlining enough aphrodisiacs to kill a small mammal...the stress that left her with every brutal, womb-busting, orgasm-causing, pussy-molding, hammerblow wouldn’t have allowed something as normal as caring. Her addled mind wouldn’t have allowed anything as normal as manners or logic or...or even worry that she might be biting off more than she could chew if she continued to push. About how, before the ride had even started, Moss had still been cumming...which, in a part of her mind that she could never quite get to shut up, she understood might have been a bad thing.
Another hit led to her arms giving out. To her falling, with the last thing she saw being the imprints she’d left on the wall before she got pulled off of the dresser completely as her legs kicked for purchase. Up and into the air where, after she was spun around, she found herself seeing stars burst before her eyes when her face ran painlessly into Moss’s chest.

But fuck that part of her mind that she couldn’t ever get to shut up. What had it done for her lately, besides give her anxiety and tell her no one was ever going to love her, let alone her sister? Fucking nothing, that’s what. If she got pregnant, she got pregnant. Lisa, Victoria, and her could make a little club where they sat around, watched tv, and knitted little booties for all she cared.

Moss slammed her down, pushing every thought out of her head along with what might have been her lungs as her back arched. As she saw just what Lisa had meant when she’d said that getting fucked by Moss was going to change her life. She still liked girls. She still had a crush on Lisa. She still loved her sister more than anything else in the world. She was still almost as gay as Legend… Just a little less so, now that she’d found herself an exception.

She didn’t know much about Moss yet. Not personally. Just the admittedly biased ramblings of her sister and the girl he’d been fucking into near catatonia for the past month or so… But she had to admit that he was better than any dildo she’d ever had. Far better. Impossibly so, which was enough reason for her to stick around and get to know him.

Moss’s starting twitches and throbs. The heavier, thicker flow of sexual fluids. the barely understandable readings she was getting, and the heavy, panting breaths that were coming out of his mouth as his face began to twist told her what was coming better than any Endbringer siren. The end of the ride. That moment when the safety bar came off and the illusion of danger became very real… That he’d been nutting in her from the start didn’t mean shit. Not with her being who she was. The whole package had been dead on arrival, as sterile as the surface of the moon.

But, now that her hold on her powers, on what made her Panacea and not just Amy started to noticeably tear at the seams…well. That was a completely different sort of thing. One that Amy had to get across. Made to as, on one of her travels upwards, she grabbed onto the collar of his sweat-soaked shirt and looked him right in the middle of his glowing red eyes.

“Amy’s Wild Ride doesn’t do refunds or returns. You break it, you buy it and, because of you, this ride is completely fucked,” Amy warned him with an eerie sort of calm, her voice hoarse, but remarkably steady for someone who was in the middle of orgasm and high as a kite. “So, if you do what I think you’re going to do, you better make it fucking count.” Amy balled her fist in his shirt and glared. “Just like the other two, it needs a new paint job.”

He blinked. Curled his lips up into a bemused smile as he let out a snort, nodded, and, in clear answer to her demands and without a care for the hand in his shirt, brought her back down the entirety of his length and right to the base. His shirt now ripped nearly in half from the neck down, thanks to her grip, he started in on the now howling girl like a man possessed. Like a jackhammer more than a living thing as he bounced her ass off his pelvis like she was a tennis ball and he was a wall.

She thought that she could hear something. Churning. Writhing. The cum in his balls moving about, doing everything it could to get at her, to impregnate her before it was their time…and, silly as it might have sounded…that might have been exactly what was happening. She could believe it.

With how he was built…with the things he did to her, how he got around her, the greatest healer in the world…he might as well have been fucking magic for all it mattered.
The first spurt of fresh, Amy induced semen inside of her caused her to go blind. Completely blind as her vision went from black, to grey, to white as her every limb either went limp or began to shake uncontrollably. Her head rolled. Her teeth came together with a crack, then just as quickly loosened as the oddly wonderful feeling that was bloating with seed replaced all others, even the first.

This was a new high. A better one...like...like what she thought love might feel like, to finally have a friend to talk to over a warm, gooey meal and...she didn’t have the words to explain it. Terrifying... Beautiful... Complicated was as close as she could get before he withdrew from her. Uncorked her and allowed her womb to finally begin to drain. Her eyes to get heavy as he placed her on the bed, right next to a peacefully sleeping, still somewhat leaky Victoria that was quick to pull Amy to her in a hug at the first touch.

“Thank you for choosing to visit Dallon park today. Your patronage is important to us, and we hope you come again after it reopens in a day or two,” Amy muttered, happy to get in the final word, even if it was pretty much all in metaphor, as a pillow was placed underneath her head. “But, remember. The third ride is closed until further notice.” Followed soon by a furnace worthy blanket and a hand running through her hair that had her yawning...then smiling, even if it was a small thing. “That one is a total bitch. And married...not that that ever stopped anyone before...”

And, with that, she buried her face in the crook of her sister’s neck and closed her eyes...as she felt a tingling start up on her lower stomach and her power start to freak out.

… Eh. Worth it.

=========

Lisa, with a cup of coffee in one hand and a tv remote in the other, suppressed the sudden urge she felt to cackle as a plan a month in the making (with revisions as necessary) finally came together... As did the urge to find a ball of yarn and some knitting needles, oddly enough.
“So, girls,” Lisa began as she crossed out yet another possible club name in her notebook, GIRTH having proven to be a bust. She’d only gotten as far as ‘Girls Into Ravishment’ before she’d thrown it out, already stuck on the T. It was a work in progress. She’d figure it out eventually. “How about, while Moss is working really hard at making money and suppressing some very personal issues through the use of extreme violence against the local criminals...”

Trailing off for a moment as she pushed the book to the side, she looked up. At Amy, sitting uncomfortably on her ice pack. At Victoria, uncomfortably looking down the front of her pants... At the hill of pancakes that Moss had made for them all, towering uncomfortably at head height and dripping with syrup.

The general feel to the room could only be called ‘uncomfortable’...and Lisa, having sort of expected that (and thriving in that sort of environment, if she was honest) ignored it. Got herself some of that buttery, sticky-sweet goodness on a plate, and continued working on damage control. “How about we talk? Clear the air? Get some things straightened out before the paranoia sets in?”

“I kind of already know some of it, which is the only reason I’m not calling the PRT right now,” Amy added grumpily as she, reluctantly, got herself a pancake of her own. Then Vicky, feeling kind of left out now that she was the only one without her own piece of breakfast for lunch, did so as well with a lot less grump and a great deal more quiet alarm. “But how about you tell us the story again so that Vicky can hear it?”

“Yeah, sure. Short version. Need to pick up my safe for the long one.” Lisa shrugged as she started spearing at her food like it was a living thing. Too much syrup and too much time had made it slippery. Stupid awkward moments. “First thing though. Try not to take this the wrong way. Fists down, minds open.” Lisa gave the drippy bit at the end of her fork a thoughtful nibble. Still good, sweet. “But that tattoo isn’t coming off and, if you’re on the pill...you might as well stop taking it. Save your money. It didn’t do shit.”

Vicky, fork halfway up to her mouth, dropped it. Amy just rubbed her cheek, her bullet wound already little more than a thin, white line and kept on eating.

“When I say ‘permanent’, I mean that not even Amy can get it off. It’s soul deep, and yes I mean soul deep...and useful. Super useful. Understated regeneration, higher stamina, mental resilience...an immunity to outside, unnatural influences, better powers and a better figure.” Lisa having said all that with a nearly full mouth, swallowed and shrugged again. “They might be a little gaudy, and Moss might subconsciously know where you are every second of every day...but you can’t have everything, I guess.”

“... Can we get back to the part where I should stop taking the pill?” Victoria asked weakly, with just a smidge of misplaced hope that maybe, just maybe, she’d heard incorrectly. “Because that doesn’t sound like something I should do if I’m going to be intimate with...”

“Vicky. Honey.” Lisa cut her fellow blonde with a slow shake of the head that had Victoria sinking in her seat, her hopes as good as dashed with just those two words. “Don’t worry about it. It’ll just stress you out. And, besides... You’re in good company.”

“She’d know.” Amy sighed, set on frowning as she adjusted her pack and bit into her second
pancake... For someone that supposedly didn’t like them all that much, she was really laying into them. Denial was a hell of a thing. “She’s about a month into her pregnancy and, now that I can actually think about it, it’s the weirdest fucking thing I’ve ever seen. They’re growing big, they’re growing fast and, I swear to god, they’re already strong enough to wrestle a grown man to the dirt and they don’t even have arms yet...and that isn’t even getting into the really weird shit.“

Lisa continued to eat while Victoria leaned forward, deeply interested as something that had just become very important start getting lined out for her.

“There’s the nutritional needs to sustain a pregnancy like hers should be ridiculous. She should be showing already, even if only because she was eating like a fucking pig. But look at her. Look right at the bitch.” Amy jabbed a finger at the smugly grinning girl at the table across from her. “She eats, at most, just enough for a girl her age, height and weight to keep herself stable, even after the healing I gave her. She doesn’t have a noticeable bump, her breasts aren’t visibly swelling, and the normal hormonal effects are so tightly regulated it almost intimidates me. That should not be happening with someone who’s carrying twins.”

Lisa’s sarcastic response, a real zinger, something about how it was (most likely) magic and she didn’t have to explain shit, dried up in her throat as she started choking on her food.

She’d known she was pregnant, but she hadn’t really looked into the whole thing. What was done was done and she was perfectly fine with that. A couple of months from now, after a hell of a lot of practice in bed, she’d be passing something the size of a football or so, and she’d be happy with it… Now though? Now that she had to pass not just one football, but two?

Holy Christ on a cracker, she was going to have to think on this one for a while and… Ah, shit. She was still choking and, probably, turning interesting new colors, judging from the look on Vicky’s face as her hands fluttered at her sides, unsure whether she should grab Lisa or not...which was funny, in its own way. Lisa had choked on...things...that had been larger than her arm before. Multiple times. Hell, she’d made it the highlight of her day at some point...but this was what got her? A piece of pancake? Oh, the irony...

“Not so funny anymore, is it? Not so smug, are you?” Amy pointed out with a biting smile before she stood up, hid the hitch in her step and the wince, forced Lisa to stand up with her, and started giving her the Heimlich. “Turnabout is a real bitch, ain’t it?”

… Man. Amy had really been holding back a lot, hadn’t she? Meh. At least Vicky and her sister were taking it well, which was good. As was the one, last heave that ended up dislodging the food in her throat all over, with some careful aiming, Amy’s plate.

Last word. Last regurgitation. Same thing. Turnabout went on and on...and Amy couldn’t do anything about it, not if she wanted an explanation any time soon.

“... Next time you’re choking to death I’m just going to let it happen. I hope you’re happy.”

“Ames! No!” Victoria cried out just before she gave her sister a slap on the shoulder and a pout. A look that got Amy’s smile to turn up just a little higher and give Lisa the knowledge that, well…the brunette’s sense of humor could be mistaken as a legitimate death threat, if only by heart attack. “You can’t just go and start giving out casual death threats like that! I thought we had something special!”

Sometimes, Lisa thought as she listened in on the other girls cracking up as she blinked the tears out
of her eyes and wiped her mouth... it was good to be her.

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“How do they keep finding me?” I whispered to myself as I took a peek over the edge of the building I’d jumped on top of after I’d noticed that I was being followed. I wasn’t sure when it had started, or how...but it wasn’t being done by the normal suspects this time. Not for the normal reasons either. “Where are they even coming from...and what the fuck are they doing?”

After the third time you caught a group of crackheads with vacuums and air cans popping up wherever you’d been just been...you had to ask these sorts of questions, even if the only one that could hear them was yourself. Because seriously...what the fuck?

There was weird and there was weird. Guess which one that was?
Chapter 26

“Fuck me, man,” Jerry started as he caught himself just before he scratched at that new tattoo on his arm without thinking about it. Fucker was itchy, and he needed a distraction or something. That was all. “Hookwolf is a creepy motherfucker, ain’t he?”

That he had something to think about other than the dozens of beady, glass eyes following him all around the room while he was on patrol was just a bonus. He wasn’t scared. Fuck you. Just a little jumpy was all.

“Jerry. Dude. You need to watch your mouth.” Billy, Jerry’s partner, had no idea how just close he’d come to getting his head blown off right then, if only because he was looking at the ceiling for some reason. Billy had always been a weird one. “You keep talking like that and someone—“

“Fucking snitch,” Jerry muttered instinctively.

“—might decide that Hookwolf needs to hear it.” Billy shrugged. “Not saying it’d be me. Just saying that you probably wouldn’t do too good if you got in the ring with the guy.”

“Fuck you.”

“... Whatever, man. It’s your skin.” Billy gave Jerry another shrug before wandering off to the other end of the room to look at a different half of Hookwolf’s collection of creepy shit, forcing Jerry to shake his head at his back.

How someone that laid back and easy going had made it into the Empire he would never know. Fuck, he wasn’t even sure if the guy hated the Jews and the Spics or not, and had just joined the Empire because he’d walked into one of the meetings by accident.

Fucking weird.

After thinking on whether or not he’d ever heard Billy say even a harsh word about anyone, ever, Jerry gave it up and started doing his job. Peering into every shadow, nook, and hidey-hole as he worked his way through the trophy room...and when he meant every shadow, he meant every shadow.

Hookwolf could afford to bring in all these exotic animals for him to fight and kill in the ring but, apparently, it was too damn much to replace the fucking lights in here. They could still see with the table lamps and shit that Joe had brought in, but that still left far too many blind spots for anyone’s liking.

His eyes glanced around. Probably more than was normal, but fuck it. He really didn’t like blind spots. Especially after some of the higher-ups decided to try and disappear that newest subhuman. The green one... In public. While fucking Glory Girl was nearby. He had been jumping at his own shadow since, just waiting to be put into the fucking hospital by Collateral Damage Barbie.

Of course, no one had told him that was a thing he had to worry about until he’d already got the fucking ink. He had a cousin that Glory Girl had cornered once. The stories he told about her and that fucking healer bitch that followed her around gave a man chills... Having your legs spin around and back into place after they’d been broken was some sick shit.
He started to round the corner when, out of the corner of his eye, he saw something. Something that
didn’t belong and had him pivoting on his heels as he lifted his rifle.

A box. A fucking box. He knew for a goddamn fact that there wasn’t a goddamn fridge box just
sitting there in the corner the last time he’d looked. Especially one that was perfectly upright with
holes to see out of, and a trail of disturbed dust behind it.

He’d played video games before. He knew how this shit worked. No walking around in circles and
following the footprints here, no sir.

He slowly and carefully stepped towards it, keeping a bead trained on the box the entire time. He
could almost pretend that his hands weren’t shaking when, after some waving, Billy saw him and
hefted his gun as well. He felt his heart pounding in his chest, the blood rushing in his ears. That rush
that came with every fight he’d ever got into, but tenfold.

Once he was close enough, he stopped. Gave Billy a nod and, after checking his footing and the
chances he might shoot himself by accident, finding them good, he kicked the box with a shout,
flipping the whole thing over as he got his gun back up...and the box collapsed. Into pieces, sharp
and clean that he could, even in the dim light, tell had been done by a box cutter, even as he gave the
mess a nudge with his foot...and remembered what day it was.

“Scared the shit out of me, Jerry.” Billy exhaled loudly while the other male gave him the finger.
“Fucking shit, dude.”

The box had been just a box. They’d replaced one of the fridges today. The one in the security room,
which really wasn’t all that far from the trophy room. Someone probably took the fridge box out of
the way to cut it up before the shifts changed and didn’t get the chance to finish. That made perfect
sense.

Jerry couldn’t help but chuckle at that as he flipped the safety back on. This room was getting to him,
all the fucking tigers and wolves and bears and shit. That was all. Shit man, if he’d actually
shot that
box, the chewing out he would have got would have been fucking legendary.

Then, with a loud klonk and a thud, all that tension came racing back.

“Billy! The fuck are you doing!?” He yelled out with actual anger in his voice as he made towards
where his partner had gone. For all that talk about not snitching on him for what he said, if Billy
somehow damaged one of Hookwolf’s trophies or something, Jerry would rat him out in a goddamn
second. “You fucking jackass!”

Hookwolf might actually skin and stuff the person who did that as a replacement trophy. Jerry didn’t
doubt that at all. There was probably a person in here somewhere, if he looked around long enough.
Not that he would.

That glass eye shit was disturbing as a motherfucker on an animal. On a person...that was a thought
to keep him up at night.

“Billy!” he shouted again, starting to get worried as he power walked over, stepping around trophy
after trophy in the same way someone would step around a landmine. “The fuck are you, Billy! This
shit isn’t funny, you dumb motherfucker! If I find out you’re playing with me, I’m going to kick your
ass until you get brain—”
With the sound of broken plastic and the feel of something sharp under his boots, Jerry looked down, and felt his heart drop into his stomach. Underneath his boot was Billy’s radio, broken. The one assigned to the pair of them, all yellow and shit with sparkles.

Once again, Billy was fucking weird.

He didn’t think about it then. It wasn’t even a conscious thought on his part. One moment he was looking at the radio, the other he was bolting for the nearest door and fumbling for his radio. A radio he dropped, and didn’t go back for as he cleared the room and started working at the doorknob as his gun in hand…and then he was done.

A giant, furry mitt had slapped down onto his shoulder, grasping him in an iron vice. A hold that broke his bones as easily as his foot had broken the radio as another hand slapped across his mouth and he was turned around…and he realized something. Had one, last thought as he started to grey out from the pain that was his other shoulder getting ground into powder as he looked at the hill of fur that had him.

Hookwolf had a stuffed Black bear. He had a stuffed Grizzly bear. He had a Stuffed Polar bear. He even had a stuffed Honey bear, and damn if he wasn’t proud of that one…but he didn’t have a stuffed Panda bear.

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I have no idea how I’d pulled that off. Like… Holy fuck. I’d literally followed these two assholes around for, at least, the last ten minutes and they hadn’t noticed a thing before I’d broken all their joints. I could understand that it might have just been a case of ‘missing the forest for the trees’…but I didn’t even look all that good. I’d just found an ill-fitting giant panda outfit and put it on before standing with the rest of the animals, just to see if it would work.

At this point, I was just wearing this thing as a bad attempt at plausible deniability…and a good attempt at laughs... I was easily amused. That was all.

After making sure that my current victim wasn’t going anywhere, both because he was unconscious and because he didn’t have working kneecaps or shoulders, I broke his radio. Stood up to my full height, or as far as I could go without tearing the suit…and slipped into a nearby closet as soon as I heard footsteps… It was only after I’d already done that that I considered that maybe, just maybe, I should have brought him with me. He was kinda obvious, all out in the open like that.

Look. I was new to this stealth thing. I was so big that I had, literally, been mistaken for a stuffed bear just now. I was doing a lot better than I should have been, alright...? Anyway, as soon as I heard that walking stop, then turn into a run, I knew what I had to do.

I forced the closet door open, just as they started to run by me…and I wasn’t gentle about it. Neither were they, seeing how the door just about shattered on impact, leading to whoever it was (not that I actually cared or anything) ending up sprawled out on the floor on their back. Surrounded by shards of wood and with a with most likely broken nose before I was upon them. Both shoulders, both knees. A karate chop or a squeeze to each part and a trio of bodies being forced into a closet later, and I was off into the main part of the building, ready to see how far I could milk this before someone figured I wasn’t what I seemed to be.

Personally, I expected it to take a while. But, what did I know? It wasn’t like the levels of perceptiveness and caution that I’d seen so far had been wanting or anything—
Seeing no closets nearby the second time I heard footsteps, I just froze. Opened the costume's mouth as far as it could go, hunched over, and held my arms up high in a threatening manner. You know, like you'd expect a taxidermied bear to do...and another pair of skinheads, a lot more grizzled looking than the last two, walked right past me without even blinking an eye.

—but you’d think that a central depot in 88 territory would be better taken care of. Once again though, what did I know? I was just the guy knocking the place over, not the head of security.

After putting the two of them down without even a scream, at most a grunt when I dropped a fist on the top of their heads... I started dragging them along. Either to find a closet or to use them as bait, whichever came first... Which sounded really disturbing, once I thought about it. I’d probably played a little too much ‘Manhunt’ when I was younger or something… Nah. Crazy talk.

I was just pissed off and dealing with some serious shit at the moment. Not a psychotic, even if the whole cosplay thing was a little...off. So far, from what I could tell, I hadn’t killed anyone here. Just made it so that they’d never play sports again or go through a rainy day without complaining about their aching bones...less than they deserved, considering that whole genocide thing...but anything worse was more than I was willing to do when it wasn’t in the heat of the moment or in self-defense.

… I tried not to think too hard about what I’d done to Stormtiger and Victor, personally, just like I preferred not to think of lots of things. I had no idea if they were dead or not, but I wouldn’t be all that surprised after what I’d done to them or all that sad about it. Was going to have to talk to the girls though and see how they were holding up, of course, but I thought I was doing fine as I was on that point. Traumatic or not. Probably part of being an Orc. Probably. Couldn’t say.

What was getting to me right then though, more than the possibility of accidental manslaughter, was that I’d had sex with both of the Dallon sisters...and the very thought of how it had come to be had me breaking out in a cold sweat in my ultra-thick padded suit.

I was a nice guy, yeah, but I wasn’t perfect. I’d never thought I was, and nothing had changed on that point. I was big, green, and muscly, but I was still the same guy...and, even if I had done okay for myself before (ignoring Melinda), I knew that there was something off. I wasn’t the sort of guy that all the girls wanted to have, let alone the sort of guy that fucked a pair of sisters within minutes of each other while they were in the same room and got away with it...and god if that didn’t make me sound like an asshole.

After stuffing the pair of Empire goons into a random bathroom stall, girls only, I continued on with my normal way of doing things. Hugging the wall, tip-toeing, and half-heartedly listening for boots on the tile while I got all introspective.

Anyway, there was some seriously whacky shit going on with me...and I was starting to consider my options here. Like, fuck. Was I mastering these girls into having sex with me? Was there something in the way I looked, how I smelled, how I did my hair? Was it a universal Worm rule that orcs were the sexiest fucking thing on the block? I didn’t fucking know...and the thought that the girls didn’t like me for me hit me somewhere real fucking tender.

I had feelings and stuff. Enough of them to fill a bucket even, instead of the standard issue spoon...and damn if that didn’t hurt right now… Oh, well. Time to bury all that stuff under man/orckind’s favorite pastime, violence, until I couldn’t ignore it anymore. In a couple of hours. In private. Like a man. Yep.
I sighed and started working my fingers under the suit, almost content when I found myself in front of another door. Not wood. Not even plywood. Metal and, possibly, as thick as one of my nails from the top to the bottom. The sort of door you’d expect to see on a vault. The sort of door that you just knew had all the best kinds of stuff inside. Things like...like drugs. Drugs, money, and Nazi gold. All the things, except the drugs, that a girl liked to get, just before I asked them some really hard questions.

Just before I put my fist through it or, at least, tried to, I was forced to pause as soon as I heard something. The voice of the man that had been haunting my every waking moment, since I’d seen Lisa bleeding out on the carpet of our house.

“The Empire is in need of manpower, Johnson,” Max Anders stated loudly, pretty much yelling actually, leading to his voice coming through amazingly clearly through the vents as he did so. “Has she been receptive to our advances so far?”

The only thing that kept me from punching my way into the room was the obviously tinny sound of his voice. He wasn’t here. Probably a video conference… I’d just have to wait for another time. Until then though, it was time to gather intelligence.

“No, sir. Not at all, sir,” Another man, assumedly Johnson, answered. “When some of the men came around to give her a talk-”

“A talk?” Max snapped.

“Yes, sir,” Johnson continued without even missing a beat. “The normal recruitment pitch. Not the hard sell, as per your orders. She still threw them out on their asses. Didn’t even let them get to the benefits package, sir.”

If anything sounded ominous, that was it…and damn if the pronoun game wasn’t just as annoying in real life as it was in the movies. Who was ‘her’...? Another thing to ask Lisa when I got back, I supposed.

“... I see.” Max said after a long pause. “Next time you try, I’ll make sure that Cricket and Hookwolf are there to help you roll out the carpet for them...” Another pause. “Why do I hear an echo while I’m talking to you?”

“... You’re on speakerphone, sir.”

This time, the pause stretched for what felt like forever. Long enough that even I was starting to feel awkward, and I wasn’t even the one that had fucked up.

“Are you telling me that, for the last ten minutes, you’ve been letting me broadcast actual business to anyone who could hear us...and that it never occurred to you that I might have wanted you to show some discretion?”

“Well, sir... I’ve heard that, if you hold a cell phone up to your head for too long, you can get brain cancer, and-”

“I'll be seeing you soon, Johnson. Don’t you fucking move.” Was the last thing Max said before, with the slamming noise of a phone being put down way too goddamn hard, he quit the conversation.
“Oh, fuck me with a rake… I’m so screwed.”

… Well. If that wasn’t an invitation to do something extremely painful and possibly violating to his person, I didn’t know what was.

When he came out of the room, his face red and sweat pouring down his face, the first thing he saw, besides the nine-foot-tall panda bear, dotted with blood all along it’s front, was the notepad. The notepad that said one thing, and one thing only.

“Did someone ask for a rake?”

“OH FUCK ME, NO!”

That was never going to get old, was it?

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“You know what I just realized, girls?” Lisa asked, her head hanging back over the edge of the couch as she watched TV with her fellow members of…whatever it was they were members of. God damn it. Why was this so hard? “We have sinned. Not just sinned. Super sinned.”

“... Is polygamy a sin? Or is it the whole thing where we are all pregnant out of wedlock, or whatever?” Victoria asked seriously. “I don’t really go to church, so…”

“No. Well, yes, that last one is, technically, a sin. But no. Worse. In fact, you did it just now,” Lisa replied, just as seriously. Seriously enough that Amy, who had been ignoring them so far in a snit after Lisa had choked up a ball of slime all over her plate, looked up from her book and gave Lisa a look. “Girls...we’ve failed the Bechdel Test.”

Victoria blinked. “The what?”

“Lisa is saying that, whenever we get together, we talk about a man. Dean, Moss, whatever. Even if indirectly.” Amy snapped her book shut and spoke up before Lisa could, just to spite her, the bitch. Made her drop a cup size, and now this? “And she’s right. We’re always talking about them. We’ve failed the gender equality test. Our book sucks, and so does the movie it’s based on.”

Victoria’s brow furrowed as she thought on it...and then her eyes shot open wide as she realized that it was true. Pretty much everything they talked about and did involved a man at some point or another...and how there was something wrong there. “Holy shit.”

“Uh-huh. It’s a trip, ain’t it?” Lisa nodded. “So, who wants to talk about their Non-Moss related hopes and dreams first? Not it.”

“Not it,” Amy said right after, leaving Victoria holding the bag...and she didn’t look happy about it at all.

“You guys suck,” Vicky murmured, ignoring their chuckles as she cleared her throat. Then cleared it again, before she looked up at the ceiling and started playing with her hair. “Alright...it’s nothing big though. Kind of whatever, actually. Boring, really...”

“Still want to hear it anyway.”
“Honestly? I just want to go to college. All the way. I'm already taking classes as is.” Victoria admitted, visibly embarrassed as she did so. “I want to get a degree in something, don’t know what, but a degree. A BA at least. I want to graduate, with my family there to cheer me on when I do it.” She shrugged listlessly. “I know I’m hot and super strong...but I don’t want to be that ‘airhead’ on PHO forever, you know?”

“Yeah. I get you.” Lisa blinked quickly, her voice tight as she caught onto what Victoria hadn’t said… Going to college implied that she’d still be alive to go there at all. That everyone would… A lot deeper than she’d been expecting, definitely, but okay. “And that isn’t a bad dream at all. Nice.”

“Thanks,” Victoria acknowledged before she turned on Amy with a speed that caught the brunette visibly off guard. “Your turn, Ames.”

Amy, instead of answering promptly, flicked her eyes between her sister and Lisa. Then, with another flicker, she looked down at her hands with a frown. “Don’t really have anything I want right now… Nothing solid,” she said as she started playing with her fingers, rubbing at a light yellow stain on her right index that just didn’t want to come out. “My own house would be a good start. Otherwise, I’m good at the moment.”

… Lisa didn’t even want to get into that one. She was going to have to though, eventually, and Brandish, Carol or whatever, had a lot to answer for…and why was Lisa the well-adjusted one here?

“And I thought I was boring.” Vicky gave her sister a friendly thump on the shoulder with a huff, seemingly oblivious to the undertones of what Amy had just said before she, at last, turned on Lisa. “What about you?”

Lisa, taking a page out of Amy’s playbook, paused. Just for suspense, really. She already had her reply ready. “Alright. Now bear with me.”

“Bearing,” Amy piped up as she reached for her, actual, book again.

“But, when I grow up, all big and strong cuz, you know, I eat my Wheaties... I want to be rich, powerful, and with an army of mercenaries at my beck and call. And a wardrobe made of nothing but shoes. That too. Nothing big. Just what everyone wants.”

Amy snorted as Victoria choked on her own spit.

“Which reminds me…” Lisa slowly slid down to the floor, back first. Just because she could. “I know some guys that could use some assimilating. You guys up to a field trip later? For intimidation reasons?”

Amy, after she realized that Lisa might have been serious and stopped laughing, threw her hands up in the air. “I fucking guess.”

Victoria, still coughing and getting increasingly redder, just nodded.

“Good talk, guys. I really feel like we’re connecting.”

“Oh, shut up.”

“And there it is!”
It was a cold February day on the seaside. A day where the sun didn’t shine. A day where the wind blew. A day that would freeze your nose shut at the very first sign of weakness… Something I now got to experience for the first, and hopefully last, time in my life while I stood in someone’s backyard, naked except for a pair of shorts, while a tiny blonde girl sprayed me down with a hose.

“This is degrading. Inhuman,” I said what everyone there already knew before I snorted, clearing the ice that had lodged itself in my nostrils. Not that they seemed to mind much as even Amy, who was idly kicking her legs on the porch swing with a mug of coffee in hand, gave me an appreciative up and down as the ice-cold water on my body turned to steam. “There was a reason why man stopped bathing outside, and this is it.”

I could actually feel how cold it was right now. Not just the dull, yet refreshing chill of standing in ice water. Actual cold...which meant only one thing and one thing only… It was really fucking cold out here...and I wanted a blanket. I hadn’t needed one of those in months, holy fuck.

“Oh be quiet, you big baby. You can take it,” Lisa said with far too much glee in her voice to be natural, just before the hose’s spray hit me in the face full on, clogging my nose again with wet and the closest thing to the deathly chill of my impending mortality and mid-life crisis that she could get...and now I felt old. Shit. “Hold your breath!”

… Valentine’s day was coming up, and Lisa was making it really hard for me to not ‘forget’. I swear. You bring someone 200k in assorted bills, a briefcase full of sensitive documents, and some barebones info that basically led up to Max being desperate as fuck...and all that goodwill goes up in smoke as soon as you hug someone in a bloody, soot-covered panda suit.

People could be so ungrateful...and cars filled with drugs and guns were surprisingly flammable. I’d learned things today.

The hose moved out of my face and I didn’t even get the chance to get back into complaining before I started windmilling my arms and shrieking. Pretty much flailing, if I was honest, as a full-blast stream of frigid water blasted me right in the sack. Turned my junk into the closest thing to an innie that I could imagine this body of mine ever doing as I tried not to fall...and I tried to breathe through the ice crystals that might have been forming in my nose and melting a little too slowly for me to be comfortable with.

“… I’m not sure how to feel, now that I can see your anatomy at something approaching normal, human, size,” Lisa mused about my current...dilemma...before running the hose over my legs. “On one hand it’s normal. Still porn-star sized, but normal. I could deal with that realistically. On the other hand…”

“Fuck realism!”

“Right,” Lisa easily acknowledged her fellow blonde, whose head had been sticking out of the kitchen window before she’d pulled back to make some more hot chocolate, with a nod. “What Vicky said. Fuck realism. It’s boring. You don’t get to see stuff like this every day, and it’s not like I needed working hips in my old age or anything anyway.” Lisa started tapping her chin. “Or do I...? You always make me ask the most interesting questions.”
With another snort, I readied myself to say something as scathing as I could possibly get away with without being banished to the couch...and found myself coming up empty when Lisa gave me the gimlet eye. A piercing stare that reached right into my soul as the clothes she’d been wearing, and my panda suit, dripped and fluttered on the line behind her for emphasis.

Some people. So ungrateful.

“Hey. Lisa. Stop messing with the guy, and let’s go inside before body parts start turning blue. He’s clean enough. You can’t even smell the kerosene anymore,” Amy, my savior, said as she forced the porch swing to a stop and kicked right off of it, with an empty mug in hand. “I can fix frostbite, sure, but I can’t fix stupid. If I have to treat anyone for the first, that implies that the second is a pre-existing condition. Get me?”

I blinked at that and, for a dark moment, I expected to see Lisa’s face pulling up into that foxy smirk she took on before she got cruel. Before the secrets came out and her words flayed Amy alive. Just a moment, come and gone as she laughed at what Amy had said and waved her off, waiting for the brunette to get inside before she started turning the nearby tap, leaving me to steam in peace.

… Lisa had grown up. A lot, if canon (and wasn’t that timeline dead and gone) had been any clue... How dense was I, that I’d missed this happening? How had it happened at all? In that other timeline, it had taken her months, years, to get even a fraction of this sort of maturity and self-control.

Once again I had to admit, if only to myself, that I was a decent guy. Not a great influence or role-model. What had I changed? Beyond the obvious?

A giant splash as the almost slush on my shoulders slid down my arms and onto the floor. Droplets turning to what might as well have been pea-sized, liquid daggers as they hit the ground... And promptly bounced back up into my body to start the cycle once more, all while Lisa laughed at me. All nice and dry in her thick, blue jacket and a pair of Amy’s jeans with Victoria’s boots...and I considered rolling face down into the nearest puddle as the embarrassment tried to melt my face.

It was only the fact that I knew that it would disappear as soon as I tried, due to evaporation, that kept me from doing it at all. Stupid, magical, far above boiling body temperature...making me face my problems. Oh well. If all else failed, I could get a job as a water heater or something. On hand tea boiler. Something.

I sighed again as I made my way to the back door, with Lisa already there. On the welcome mat, with a towel at hand as she finished cleaning her feet and turned right around on her heel, grinding the mud that she’d left there into the material with a grin as she handed me said towel.

Warm. Fluffy. Probably fresh out of the dryer. “Thanks, hon.” She knew just what to do to make my day better, I swear. “You’re an angel...”

“I’m having twins.”

And, suddenly, that feeling that I had water in my nose completely vanished. Most likely because it actually had, seeing as the towel in my hands was now completely soaked as I tried not to die of shock. Because, seriously, what? Who just came out and said it like that!? And twins?

“You didn’t think I was kidding when I called you ‘daddy’ that one time, right? Because, if you did…” Lisa wrapped an arm around her middle and moved some hair behind her ear, chewing on her lower lip and looking painfully vulnerable in a way I’d never seen from her before. “Surprise.”
She gave me a weak shrug. “Amy says they’re doing well, by-the-by. They kind of scare her, actually.”

“They?” I croaked. “Scared?” Lisa was just stacking on the damage at this point. If this had been a game, I’d be well past the yellow and deep into the red. “Why would she be…?” Oh, god. Did I…?

“It’s just that fear people have when something smaller than them could probably pop their head off if it tried. But that’s not important, beyond the fact that you have scary strong kids.” Lisa poked me in the side, walked around me, and plopped her butt down on the porch swing where she kicked her legs. “Take a seat. Let’s talk.”

My eyes flicked down to the porch swing, made of wood and base metal, then right back to her. I was in shock. I wasn’t catatonic.

“It’s Vicky-proof, Moss.”

… That was okay then.

“You’ve got questions. Lots of questions. Worries,” Lisa said, her legs still fluttering in the air even after I’d gingerly taken a seat at her side with my heart in my throat. “Let’s talk about them.”

“How!?” Was the first thing to come out of my mouth. It was stupid, but it was true, and it was a question that I had to ask even as Lisa gave me a half-lidded, exasperated look. Shock was funny like that. Made you dumb...er. That. Yeah. “I mean…”

“You know how, Mr. Full-Time.” Lisa, for visuals, made an O with one hand and pumped three of her fingers through it, rapidly, with the other… How crude. Not wrong though. “They don’t make condoms in your size, the pill wasn’t made to handle you, and I didn’t put on elf ears and leather because I hate having sex with you. Being what might as well be a different species doesn’t matter for jack or shit in this equation. Next question.”

Instead of blurting out the first thing that came to mind, like an idiot, I stared at my hands. Big, green, lightly calloused. Not human, like she’d said...and, yeah. At this point, it didn’t really matter, beyond how it had come to be. I liked being what I was now. The whole strength, toughness, and being able to live off of beer thing was pretty sweet.

Not being able to eat bacon anymore sucked, but the trade-offs were worth it. Not really much else I could say about that… Depending on whether one of my bigger worries was actually something I had to worry about or not. I’d see...after a few more questions.

“Amy. Victoria. Are they pregnant too, or...?” The second biggest question of the day. By far.

“From what I understand, they’ve dealt with it in their own way,” Lisa admitted, the casual way she’d said it making something hot and irrational burst into life in my chest before I tamped it down with the emotional equivalent of a warhammer. Right now, my inner orc could fuck right off...and the raised brow on Lisa said that she hadn’t missed it. “They’ve got an Amy, so it wasn’t hard.”

“Oh, thank the Lord.” I was already sweating my balls off over Lisa. Having to take care of two other girls (more than I already was) as well would have killed me. It wasn’t like gang money just fell out of trees, you know? “Alright. Great. Super.” I clapped my hands together probably just a little too hard, seeing how the tree ten feet in front of me swayed in a different direction to the wind. “Okay…” I blinked, feeling lightheaded all of a sudden. “Wow. Okay.”
“A real load off your back, huh?”

“You have no idea. I think I almost threw up,” I murmured as I ran a hand over the top of my head, just sort of enjoying the feel of growing stubble as Lisa quietly scooted a little closer to my side of the bench. Not all that far, seeing how much space I took...but close enough for me to feel the heat of her body, slight as it was. “I’ve got a hundred problems, and Nazis are one.”

Lisa, with one more scoot, so that she could mold herself to my side, snickered. “Those guys are so f**ked... Did you know they’ve been raising funds by stealing Medhall vehicles and equipment and then claiming the insurance?”

“I might have had an idea, yes. I can read, you know?”

“...‘See Spot Run’ isn’t exactly high literature, yeah, but good job,” Lisa said, the amused tone of her voice all I needed to know she was making a joke at my expense. “I always knew you could break through that glass ceiling if you just tried hard enough.”

“Hey. No. None of that. No dumb Brute jokes. That’s capist.” A boop on her nose made her squeak and slap at my hand...and almost make me forget that I still had, at least, one more question to ask. “One last question, alright? A big one.”

“Uh-huh...”

“Am I a Master?”

Lisa stiffened up like she’d just touched a live power line and said something under her breath that sounded a lot like ‘shit’...and here came the sweats and existential fear. Again. “Okay. Look. Hear me out. Full transparency.”

“... That isn’t what a man who’s wondering if he’s an accidental rapist wants to hear, Lisa,” I said tightly as I indulged on a nervous habit I’d thought I’d broken years ago, pulling on the fingers of my hands until they popped. Each one went off like a gunshot, with the first even making Lisa jump...and now I felt even worse. Didn’t know that could happen, but that really showed me, huh? “Please. Explain.”

“... Alright, first off, before you decide to go live in the nearby woods and stir up the bigfoot hunters, it isn’t as bad as you think!” Lisa said hurriedly as she grabbed at one my hands, pulling it down before I could get started on that set of fingers. “It’s like a social lubricant! A drink or two during dinner! Not a roofie on the rocks!”

“You’re not helping, Lisa!”

“Forget I said that then! Think back, okay? To a month and a bit ago, when I picked you up off the side of the road. Got that picture in your head?”

I nodded, not trusting my voice at the moment.

“How long did it take after that for you to get into my pants? A week? Two?”

I held up a single finger...and she blushed.
“Okay. Just one week,” Lisa caved. “But I had four years worth of sexual frustration built up and you’d brought me money. I have a price, I’ll say it...and it starts at five digits and basic human decency.” Lisa sucked in a deep breath, then let it go. “I don’t get much of either of those and, in my opinion, it was totally fucking worth it, just for the end of my headaches.” She shivered. “I can’t even believe I used to live like that... I should talk to Amy about my liver, not even kidding. That many painkillers couldn’t have been healthy.”

“What about Victoria? Or Amy?” I interjected. “Was it worth it for them?”

“... Honestly? Yes. Even if they hadn’t thought it was, and I hadn’t pushed them as hard as I did, it still would have been.”

All I could do for a moment was stare at her. Was she trying to make this worse? “Are you saying you were trying to make me a harem!? What the hell is wrong with you?!”

“No! I’m saying that I can only spend so much time with my ankles over my head, Moss! I have things to do! I! Have! A! Job!” Lisa snapped at me as she returned my stare without even flinching. “At first, that was pretty much the whole point! Get some friends, introduce you, let nature take its course so that I can keep my legs! But that changed really fucking quick!” Then Lisa started speaking under her breath with a glance at the open kitchen window, forcing me to strain to hear her every word. “And do you know how close Amy was to killing us all? Really close, Moss!”

My heart, which had been lodged in my throat since I’d come home, sank into my stomach… That was right, wasn’t it? Canon Lisa had just sped up Amy’s unraveling, not started it. The girl had been on a timer from the get-go, and it had only been getting worse.

“It was a two-for-one, Moss! One or none!” She started jabbing me in the chest with the tip of her nail, not allowing me the chance to get a word in edgewise. “If Vicky had come with by herself, which she would have if we’d only just asked, it would have broken Amy’s heart like a strand of spaghetti, setting her off! If Vicky hadn’t joined in then Amy wouldn’t have, and she’d still be low-key planning the genocide of the entire eastern seaboard! I’m thinking zombies, personally! If Bonesaw can do it, and I know she can, Amy can do it better!”

I rolled my eyes as soon as I was sure she couldn’t see me. Canon was shot to hell, but I knew Amy, as well as anyone that had read about her, could have. It had taken Lisa deciding to run her mouth, an Endbringer, the goddamn Slaughterhouse 9, and a couple of lost fingers before she’d broken. And, even then, Vicky had been okay. Physically. Mostly. I think… I’d never gotten the chance to look up Ward before Melinda had tried to cut my head off with a katana like a giant weeb, so I couldn’t say that with complete confidence.

Blargh… I’d just have to hope that I’d inadvertently prevented the Vicky Blob, at the very least. Lots of hope. Besides that though, Lisa was exaggerating and the post-apocalyptic zombie future could wait a little while longer...at least long enough for me to understand just how fucked I was.

“Alright, fine. Whatever.” I sighed, cutting Lisa off before she could get herself into a rant as I rubbed my face. If there was one thing Lisa liked to do, even with my existence, it was talk. I knew that well. “I’m not happy about it, but I can see where you were going with that. I think...”

“Also, Carol’s marriage isn’t doing too well, partly due to Mark’s depression. She’s got untreated PTSD and is just a massive bitch as well, which is a big part of the reason why Amy was planning on mass murder, besides hospital burnout. I’m thinking you could help them with that, get some of that stress out of both their lives. So, I’m thinking that I can get Mark out of the house for a while,
“We’re getting a hotel room. Today.” I cut her off, full-stop while continuing to rub my face. If I’d cut myself on my tusks more than once while I did so, I considered it well worth it. “I’ve already slept with both the man’s daughters. I’m not blonde, or tanned, or asshole enough to sleep with his wife as well.”

That was a level of NTR I just wasn’t comfortable with. At all. Mark wasn’t Max. Fuck Max...and besides. This was Carol. Brandish. Even if I had been comfortable with...whatever it was I had going on, which I really fucking wasn’t, holy shit, I wouldn’t have brought her in. That sort of evil energy could have only brought bad things to the mess that was my life.

… What even was my life now that my problems were actual problems? This was just like one of my Japanese animes, I swear...

“You’re no fun,” Lisa said with a pout and a hum before, after a short pause, she gave me a bemused double take. “And what does being blonde and tanned have to do with anything? That makes no sense.”

“Don’t think about it too hard, Lisa. It’s not important… Unless you meet someone like that and they’re being weirdly friendly or close. Tell me if that happens and I’ll beat them to death, for the greater good of relationships everywhere.” I pulled my hands away from my face with another sigh, ignoring the scratches I’d left in my palms as I did so. Couldn’t be too careful these days. “Anyway, last question.”

“You already said that, Moss,” Lisa pointed out dryly.

“Yeah, well… I guess I lied. I just have to ask.” Another sigh slipped past my lips as I forced myself to sit up straight, making the supposedly Vicky-proof swing creak loudly under the stress that simple action had put on it. “What do we have here? Between us?” I pointed at her then at myself for emphasis. “What is there besides sex and me ‘socially lubricating’ you? How do you feel about me? Honestly?”

“... That’s a lot more than one question. And you’re not making this easy, you know? But, sure. I’ll be honest.” Lisa cupped her chin in both hands and did little more than stare out at the yard and the miniature ice rink forming there, seemingly uncaring of just how ominous she’d sounded just now. “At first, you were what I said the first time we met. My Bodyguard. Someone I could use when I broke off from Coil or Coil decided I was too much of a problem to keep around...but things changed.”

“You were nice to me, stupid as it sounds. You cared, and that’s more than I can say for anyone I’ve ever met, let alone my parents, all by itself.” Lisa, her legs still kicking fruitlessly, patted me on the leg until I started doing it too, finally getting the swing to move under our combined weight. If it broke, that was fine. The money I’d brought in earlier could buy a thousand of the damn things if it had to. “Then you started laying it on. Being all emotionally supportive and crap. Providing for me, making me laugh...being willing to kill for me if you had to.” Her lips turned up into a full smile, that sharp grin she took up whenever she was about to say something mean or embarrassing, often both at once. “And then you made me a woman and it was all uphill from there.”

With one last kick, she slid off the bench at almost the perfect time. Almost, if only because she wasn’t able to get out of the way before it smacked her in the bottom, nearly pushing her down if not for the railing in front of her… If we hadn’t been having such a serious talk I would have laughed,
that glare of hers daring me to do it or not… But we were talking, and so I didn’t. Simple.

“We just met a little over a month ago. I don’t love you. No matter how good you smell,” Lisa continued in the face of the pang that gave me and the painful twisting of my features. Didn’t matter whether you were expecting it or not. Didn’t matter if that was actually what you wanted to hear. Words like that hurt. “But you make me happy. You make me feel safe. Marriages, let alone cape marriages, have been built on a lot less than that… Families too. We’ll see what happens.”

With those last, promising words, Lisa started tugging insistently at my hands. “Now, come on. Let’s go before the chocolate gets cold or Amy does something weird to it.” Pulling at me until I stood up, then again when I didn’t make it towards the back door fast enough for her liking. “We can look for a hotel after that, I guess.”

“… A good one, right?” I mumbled, choked up as…not everything was how I wanted it, but enough that, as Lisa had said, I didn’t feel like riling up the Bigfoot hunters at the moment. “Honeymoon suite?”

“We have over two-hundred thousand dollars just lying around, Moss. Think big. After something like this, we’re getting the penthouse or bust.”

“Thought so.”
“From our spare bedroom to a penthouse suite in a day. Just a day,” Vicky commented brightly, her envy obvious as she rolled around in the insanely plush carpet that said suite had come with. As white as the driven snow and a thousand times more expensive… Lisa, with her shoes off, probably might have found more pleasure in that last part than she should have. “Those vigilante laws are really working out for you, huh?”

“You have no idea, Vicky,” Lisa said with an explosive sigh as she wrapped herself in her sheets. A set of pure silk, multi-thousand thread count decadence that soothed her in ways that not even hours of crazy, hours-long sex romps could do, hard as it was to believe. “Things are so different now it’s like a whole new world.” It was like being home again except for, you know...the lack of douchey parents and high-class expectations. So, nothing like home. It was better. Money fixed a lot more problems than it didn’t, this was true. “Have you felt these sheets? It’s like wearing water.”

At three-thousand dollars a night, it better fucking feel like water. If it hadn’t…it wouldn’t have been nice, she’d say that.

“... Eat my ass, Lisa.”

“You’d be so lucky,” Lisa retorted easily as she continued to make herself into a very expensive and comfortable burrito. “And besides. It’s not my fault your mom registered New Wave as a non-profit organization and stuck your cut of donations into a damn near untouchable college fund...or that, as a Case 53, Moss doesn’t have to worry about keeping the spending between his civilian and cape life separate, and likes the finer things in life.” She gave the platinum blonde a smug smirk at that. “I was just really lucky. Tough break, honey.”

Ignoring the thunderous expression that was growing on Victoria’s face with the ease of water running off a duck’s back, Lisa turned to the other two people in the room, stuck doing much the same thing as they had been since the Dallon sisters had landed on their balcony. “Any progress, Amy?”

“... Some,” Amy grunted, as good as saying that she hadn’t progressed at all just from the sheer frustration that was in her voice. “The tattoo makes it easier—”

“Told you.”

“—but easier doesn’t mean all that much when I’m looking at doing something impossible with something that shouldn’t exist.” Amy pounded her fist between Moss’s shoulder blades before she crossed her legs and put a fist to her chin. After the first hour of holding hands, Amy had just said fuck it, had Moss lie down on his front, and sat on him… Personally, Lisa thought it was kind of cute. “I’ve worked with Case 53s before. Hell, I’ve even made a couple look human again, even if it was only for a minute...but this…”

Amy’s brow furrowed as she looked for the right words to say what she wanted to say while Vicky, tired of glaring ineffectually at a smugly uncaring Lisa, went over to the couch and started digging around in the cushions for the remote. Something that Lisa agreed with, and would have done first if it wasn’t for the occasion.

That 60-inch HD tv was calling her with its siren song...but so was the chance to hear Moss
speak *English* for once. The first could be done at any time. The second? Not so much. It was an
easy choice...especially when there was a good chance that just hearing him talk like a *human* would
knock the lot of them on their asses.

It didn’t’ make much sense. Lisa knew that much...but not much about him did, once you thought
about it. It was best to be prepared, just in case his voice became a weapon of mass ovulation. It
would be hilarious if it did...and she kinda wanted to see if the people a floor down from them would
be able to hear Amy’s orgasmic screams. For science...and possible internet exposure. Blackmail and
public embarrassment. That was how you knew they were friends, really.

“Okay. The closest thing I can think of to describe him is...” Amy sighed. “A fusion reactor mixed
with one of those agricultural thresher things if you stuck it on two legs and gave it the ability to eat
fucking *trees* to keep it going.” She paused. “I’m not kidding about that. I’m pretty sure that Moss’s
diet should, normally, consist of literal trees...and that he shouldn’t be anywhere as well fed as he is.
Or in this sort of climate...not that it seems to matter.”

“... Trees? Well fed? Not this sort of climate?” Moss asked, audibly shocked in a way that Lisa
couldn’t get across in her translation, even if she had tried. Lisa had to admit that she was actually
kind of surprised herself though. Fucking *trees*? Seriously? “The hell does that mean?”

“I was simplifying. Really, as long as it’s organic and a plant, you can eat it. Trees are just your best
bet for a full meal.” Amy answered dryly. “Also, anything that needed the kind of evolutionary traits
you have probably did their evolving in a blasted hellscape, made up of nothing more than dirt, sand,
dead trees, and cacti while surrounded by predators they had no real hope of taking down
themselves...at least, not enough that whatever you are was able to work meat into their diet, which is
more than a little horrifying to think about, considering what you can do.” With that ominous bit of
news, she waved her hand in front of her face to immediately dismiss it. “It’s not important or
anything. I just think it’s interesting.”

“Anyway, what I’m getting at here is that Moss here has as much in common with a normal human
as I do with a bacon sandwich.”

“Yeah. Makes sense. The difference here is that he’d actually enjoy eating you,” Lisa replied at just
the right moment to catch Amy’s lips twitching up into an actually surprised *smile* before she
forcefully suppressed it and flipped Lisa off. Moss and Victoria, in contrast, didn’t bother to hide
their chuckles...even if Moss’s were a little tight. A work in progress. “Also, that’s an idea. Moss’s
lawn care service.” Lisa wriggled an arm out of her wrap to use it in an expressive wave as she took
on a fake-awed expression. “Tree-Be-Gone. Locusts don’t have shit on us!”

Yeah. That was a good one. If this whole gang busting thing didn’t work out, Lisa knew what Moss
would be doing instead.

“... You should probably just stick to stealing from Nazis, Lisa,” Victoria, remote finally in hand,
said as she stuck her feet under Lisa’s cocooned form and gave her a nudge. Enough of one that Lisa
ended up rolling, her sheets winding tighter around her body in a way that she couldn’t fix before
Victoria used her as a footrest... “You’re sort of shit at advertising...and acronyms. It’s kind of sad,
actually.”

If Lisa wasn’t halfway sure that biting Vicky would have ended with broken teeth, she would have
nipped her right then and there. Her toes were just inches away. It wouldn’t be all that hard. “Fuck
you!” It was just taking a while! That was all! “No, I’m not! Also, stay out of my stuff!”
“You weren’t exactly hiding it, Lisa. I didn’t need to dig through your stuff... Also, here I go.
There. Simple.” She nodded. “Took me all of three minutes.” She then bounced the edge of her hand
suggestively off of her inner thigh with a ‘manly’ grunt. “Suck it deep, Lisa. Partial college education
for the win... Also, a club name? Really?”

“Oh, god,” Moss said, horrified. “There’s a club name?”

“Yeah. It looks like we have one now. No thanks to Lisa.”

Without even looking at her sister, Amy got a nearby pillow, cocked her arm back, and threw it like
a goddamn ninja star to strike Victoria across the face. Hard enough that the blonde’s head rocked
back slightly while Amy smugly went spreadeagle on Moss’s back, as close to full body contact as
she could get without stripping completely nude as she used his mass for cover from retribution.

“Holy shit…” Victoria, after a period of silence, said with an awed tone. “These pillows are so
fucking soft.”

… Cover that didn’t look to be at all needed. At least, not while Victoria had her face buried in a
pillow worth as much as a normal person’s monthly salary… Not that it stopped Amy from trying to
wrap her arms around Moss or anything, just for the assumed edge it would give her when it came to
analyzing him...but that was how it was.

It was going to take a while for affection to overwhelm Amy’s pragmatism, but it would eventually.
Moss was just the sort of person to slip through the cracks in your barriers...and Lisa was happy with
that much. They had time.

“Can I get up now, girls? As nice as this carpet is, it’s not that interesting...and it doesn’t look like
Amy is doing anything anytime soon.” Moss grumbled as he flexed his back warningly, causing a
ripple that had Amy moving like she was a dinghy that had just hit a wave. “I appreciate what you’re
trying to do for me, but really… I do need to go out and kick some more E-88 ass…”

“Nope,” All three girls said in resounding unison.

Vicky, after teasingly tickling the tip of Lisa’s nose with her toes, kicked her feet up and floated over
to where Moss laid, not removing her face from the pillow the entire time, even as she flopped onto
the floor and propped said pillow against his torso.

Lisa, as quick as she ever was, instantly realized what was going on and did a remarkable impression
of an inchworm going somewhere fast. An impression that ended with her curling up against his side
and headbutting his arm until he brought her in for a hug.

“... Really?” Was all Moss could say when Amy joined in, doing a damned good impression of a cat
as she stretched and just about curled up on his back. “Is this what we’re doing now?”

“Yup.”

“Uh-huh.”

“You’re warm and comfy...and...and...” Amy said drowsily before she stiffened and sat up, going
from zero to a hundred in an instant as she grabbed at Moss’s throat with both hands from behind.
She didn’t even get close encircling it, but it was the thought that counted. “Did you just talk!?”
“I…” Moss nervously licked his lips as he found himself the center of attention. “I guess? Good jo—"

“**DID YOUR VOCAL CHORDS JUST RESTRUCTURE THEMSELVES WITHOUT MY CONSCIOUS INPUT!?!?**” Her jaw went slack. “Wait. No. I… I did it but I didn’t? I… I’M ON AUTOMATIC!?!?” And that was when the real screaming started…as did Lisa’s deep and abiding disappointment. **“WHAT DID YOU DO TO MY POWERS!?!?”**

Hearing Moss like this was like hearing him talk normally. A bass rumble that shook the chest more than it did the inside of a girl’s panties (although it did that too)... It looked like she wouldn’t be getting those friendly blackmail pictures after all. Shame...oh well. This was worth it as it was.

Now that he could talk...it was time to call up the team.

==========

“**Friends through eternity, loyalty, honesty! We’ll stay together through thick or thin!”** The essence of the 80’s blared through the night, forcing Mouse Protector to stop in her dramatic rooftop walk in mid-step.

There weren’t all that many people that had her phone number. Five, at most, not that the government counted for much...but, maybe, just maybe, it was the Mayor, calling to tell her she was doing a damn fine job keeping his city safe and that he was going to wear the mouse ears she gave him for once?

… What? It could happen one day.

“Hello! This is Mouse Protector Central, home of the friend and protector of all!” She said, fully in character before she’d even flipped open her phone. That wasn’t anything special though. She was **always** in character. It was a point of pride for her, actually. **“How may I direct your call?”**

“…” Mouse Protector?” A deep voice full of bass and warmth hummed through her phone, rattling her bones and adding some blush to her cheeks.

“One moment, please.” She just about purred as she started making beeping noises. Threw a boop in, just twice, and considered humming elevator music before she clicked her tongue in a very convincing imitation of a phone being picked up before she answered… All within five seconds. And Hannah said she took too long. Ha! **“This is Mouse Protector, how may I help you today, Mr. Sexy Voice?”**

“Third time today,” The man on the other side muttered before clearing his throat. **“Alright. Listen closely. This is serious. Life or death.”**

“Listening!” She chirped, as serious as she ever got while in costume. **“Speak up, citizen!”**

“I don’t know where you are,” he continued with a sigh, “or what you’re doing...but I want you to drop it. It isn’t worth your life.” A pause with only the crackle of the line to break it… **“Ravager hired the Nine to kill you...and we both know they are not going to make it quick. I doubt they made it quick for her.”**

Mouse Protector felt her heart drop. The sudden rush of adrenaline flooding her system. Ravager was exactly who she was going to see...after said villain hadn’t been seen in close to a month...only to
pop up somewhere secluded. Away from the city proper.

That wasn’t like Ravager. Not at all. She liked to have people see her, even if it meant she failed. She fumed and sulked each time she got put down, but she always did the same thing after. Most of the time, within days...and she had changed. In little ways that Mouse hadn’t picked up on until this was brought up.

The slightly off gait she had. The thicker costume. The full mask and body covering...and the fact that, when Mouse had done her usual spiel when it came to bringing her in through video call… Ravager hadn’t told her to go fuck herself.

Hindsight was a bitch.

“How… How sure are you?” She said, her act temporarily broken as she stepped out of character. “Because if you’re playing with me…”

“Deadly.” That was enough. The certainly in that voice and the tone was enough… It was enough for her to break out into a cold sweat.

She had faced a lot in her life. Endbringers, Villains, criminals. Almost the worst that the world had to offer... She had and would (that was the important part) mock death and danger with a quip and a jaunty wave...but she wasn’t crazy enough to jump into that kind of mess. Fuck that.

She’d thought that Ravager and her would be playing this game forever...but she guessed that wasn’t how it was going to be anymore… God freaking damn it, how did hiring the fucking Nine seem like a good idea to anyone!? What was her damage!?

“You need to run. Just run. I have no idea how close they are to you, and how much they know about you...but you can’t take any risks. Just run. Stay with someone far away that you trust. Don’t go back to grab anything. You need to go.”

“... Yeah. Yeah… Thank you.” She said, wiping her mouth. “I’ll do that.”

“Thank me when you’re safe.” The voice said before he hung up.

Mouse Protector closed the phone, she didn’t feel like she had the energy to make one of her customary quips or even give a goodbye. In her head, she was already running… Hannah could hold her up for a while, right? Of course, she could. They were besties.

Also, she still had Legend on speed dial. That part of town was getting bombed ASAP.
Chapter 29

Tattletale had changed lately. Undeniably. Quietly. In little ways that, when Thomas thought of them in an attempt to put them together, left him...unsettled. Disquieted for no real reason that he could discern beyond a creeping feeling that he was missing something. That she knew something he didn’t...and that, for once in her life, she might have actually been right.

There was something wrong with him. A slowly growing headache had been building up behind his eyes for months.

It had been barely noticeable at first. Just a feeling that had been easily disregarded while he’d gone about his business. Running what was, in essence, a shadowy cabal that had its hands in every pie a city possessed wasn’t easy. Two timelines were more than anyone else had, that was true, but even that didn’t give him all the time he needed to do everything he wanted...and the headache that never stopped just made it impossible.

It hurt too much now. Far, far too much...and he was worried.

It wasn’t cancer. Or high blood pressure. Or whatever medical issue he could think of on his own, let alone what his doctors had looked for. Panacea wasn’t even an option for obvious reasons... But there was a cause. And the slowly, but surely, growing levels of self-assured disrespect he’d heard and seen in the girl’s voice and actions when he was at his worst... It had just added yet more weight to his suspicions that she knew what was wrong with them.

If it hadn’t been for what he was going through these days, he would have taken his frustrations out on her weeks ago. What he was dealing with wouldn’t allow for it though. The pain only lessened when he stopped using his powers. Lessened. That was all...and he had no idea if it would go away if he just stopped. If he toned down how often he used his powers even further yet.

He’d never know though. His goals and ambitions wouldn’t allow for it. That was a fact of life.

Until he found what the issue was, fun was off the table...but he hoped it wasn’t a Thinker Headache. Dearly. He hadn’t even known that it was possible for him to get those, if that was even the problem. Years of near constant power use without pause had given him the idea that his belief had been fact...but now he had to wonder. And he was also starting to wonder if he should spend the time and effort to bring Tattletale in anyway for a round of interrogative torture. Like the good old days, except with an actual point to it this time.
Yes. Yes, that would do nicely for his headache. He knew where she was, there were only so many penthouses. Not to mention that he knew exactly where her ‘bodyguard’ was at all times. Not that it was hard.

That failure of Cauldron’s was nine-feet tall and a PR masterstroke. If Coil hadn’t had someone keeping tabs on him, or anyone that could have possibly been a threat to him, he wouldn’t have come as far as he had.

Anyway, all he had to was give the order and his troops would be all over that Penthouse while ‘Moss’ was away at that cafe he worked at...for some odd reason. It would be smooth sailing from there on. Tattletale would be strapped to a chair in his office before this ‘Chef 53’ would even be off for his first break.

He was already starting to think of what to ask of her. And what to do to her... She’d grown out her fingernails recently. She also still had all her teeth. That would do nicely for a star-

Coil paused in his thoughts about that day’s entertainment to take a look around. It felt like there was something off...in his lair and he couldn’t put his finger on it. He spun in his chair, his eyes looking back and forth...and, eventually, it came to him what was wrong.

“Did one of the pipes burst?” He wondered out loud in disgust, a hand to his nose the only thing that kept him from breathing in the wholly pervasive stench that was an open sewer line... Which shouldn’t have been possible. He’d paid good money for the place. Damned good money. A weak infrastructure was a liability. Weak plumbing was a special sort of liability.

It looked like, after he was done with Lisa, he was going to have to have a long, painful talk with his maintenance team...

He spun around in his chair to page his staff and have the men move out... Only to see a wall of deep, dark green in his way.

“What the fu-” Was as far as he could get before his world was pain...and his ribs were turned to powder, decisively ending the timeline.

==========

“GAH!” Thomas shouted intelligently, leaping up from his seat with a once full cup of coffee in his hand. A cup of coffee whose thankfully cold contents were now all over his shirt and lap as the other patrons at the cafe gave him odd looks. One woman even pulled her child closer to her, looking at
him as if he was diseased.

Even in Brockton, a man in business casual going from calmly reading a paper to wide-eyed paranoia wasn’t normal.

“Are you okay, sir?” A deep, bassy voice asked. A voice so deep that a nearby window buzzed like an angry wasp under vocal assault. “Do you need any help?”

Calvert’s head rapidly pivoted to where it came from. His eyes widened and his heartbeat quickened as he saw who had said it. Green!

“Sir?”

He had to get out of here. Now. He had already died in one timeline thanks to this Case 53. He wasn’t doing so again.

He split the Timeline.

In one he pushed past the line of customers and out through the front door. In the other he pushed past the Case 53 and through the employee exit.

He shuddered as the second timeline ended with a flash of green. Not again. He was out of the Cafe now. He just had to-

His head snapped to his side as a horn blasted in his ear. The horn of a large, red Semi that was barreling towards him.

He split the Timeline...and got to feel his ribs break in his chest, twice, before it all went dark.

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“Boss. Can-” I choked back the nausea with an effort of will and a painful gulp. “Can I go home for the day?”
It was a horrible mess out there. That man had just...walked out. Pushed right past me, jaywalked into the street at a near run and…splat. Done. Gone. Kaput.

The only good thing about this was that I had blocked most of the window. Pretty much every point of view leading to the scene of the accident so that none of the kids were traumatized by seeing it... But, in return, it meant that I had to take it all in so that they wouldn’t.

Unless you’re a Brute, when it comes to Truck versus Person, the truck is going to win. That was all I was going to say.

“Yes. Yes, of course.” He shook his head, visibly stunned and nonplussed as he finished pushing the last of the customers out the side door and away from the carnage that had happened out front. “Just help me close up and you can go. We’re not getting customers after that, no.” He shook his head again as he wiped some sweat from his forehead with a paper napkin. “No more customers today. You’re a good employee. I’ll give you your tips and you can leave.”

“Alright,” I replied. Chewed clumsily on my lip and fidgeted in place as I actively avoided looking over at that cordoned off spot in the street. They’d missed some blood splatter. Terrible. “Sounds good, Mr. Lu.” Time to go back home and see if I could find something strong enough for me to get drunk...or I could just hang around the girls for a while, to get my head on straight… Either or, I needed it.

At this rate, that truck-related PTSD that had passed me by the first time around was going to drag me into its clutches with a vengeance.
“Thank you for being here for me, Amy.” I sniffed, holding back my manly, trauma-related weeping with the sort of willpower that could have only been forged in the fires of a bakery. The one just across the street from your house that put a little too much sugar in their product than necessary. You know the one. “I really appreciate it.”

“Don't mention it, Moss.” Amy sighed, clearly uncomfortable as she patted my hand with about as much interest as your average, angsty teenager ever did...anything, really. Considering who I was talking to, that pretty much meant I was the most interesting thing in her life at the moment. How nice of her. “Please. Don’t.”

“Like...I know that this wasn't exactly how you wanted to spend your day, telling me that everything is going to be okay—”

“I didn't though. Also, don't say things if you don't want an answer that you don't want to hear.”

“—but after what happened today,” I continued, all while accepting Amy for who she was and her odd way of showing concern… That wasn't denial or anything. Shut up. “I really think I need to talk about it. Get it off my chest.”

“I should have never given you your voice back,” she murmured to herself as she continued to pat my hand. That she hadn't taken my voice yet though, showed that she was all talk. “But go on. Not like I can stop you...”

Taking the invitation for what it was I continued once again. “It was just a normal day at work, you know? Just me, the cash register, a full tip jar and a dozen small children on my back.”

Amy blinked. “... Wait. You have an actual job? With children?”

“I work at a cafe. Make about two-thousand dollars in tips a day. It's nice,” I explained in an off-hand, if embarrassed manner, “and of course I have a job. I can't just steal from the Nazis all the time. They're a finite resource and, as the breadwinner, I have to keep my girlfriend in the way she's accustomed… Or is it girlfriends? What are we anyway?”

Amy blinked again, speechless.
“...I’ll let you decide that one... Also, food is expensive. I eat a lot.” I coughed, my momentary reprieve from trauma done with as Amy stopped her patting to process that. Ah, well. At least she kept it on. “Anyway, it was just a normal day at work. Customers, tip jar, kids. The works...and then, one of my customers just...” I looked for the words, my jaw working from side to side as I fingered one of my tusks and stared at nothing in particular. “He freaked out. Screamed and...”

Amy, showing that she was still there, started playing with my fingers. Pulling at them, one by one in testing motions. Base, first knuckle, second. Weird, but strangely soothing in its own way. Touch and all that.

“He just...” I started moving my fingers, quickly alternating them from forward to back to give Amy the impression of someone running as I felt a lump in my throat. “Right into the street when I asked if he was okay.” That hand that I’d been using to simulate a run went up to my head to start rubbing at the stubble on my head...and found myself without the comfort that knowing I wasn’t permanently bald or balding normally brought me. “He didn’t stand a chance when that truck hit him. It was horrible.”

“Okay. I think you should probably just not -”

“It was...it was like a water balloon filled with red paint, busting open all over the cement. Like someone had had the bright idea to put a tomato in a juicer without the lid.”

“Christ, Moss. Why?”

“When I left with my jar of tips for the day...something crunched under my foot,” I whispered as a disgusted, horrified tremor swept through my limbs. “I didn’t look to see what it was.”

When the elevator to the penthouse sounded off, it was like a siren had gone off in Amy’s ear. Like she’d been burned as she jumped away from me. Hopped around on her bottom at least two cushions down before she picked up the remote, turned on the tv, and fell in on herself. Acted like nothing had happened between us at all in favor of pointing at me as soon as a darkly smiling Lisa came in along with a visibly upset Victoria. “He saw a man die today.”

Wow. Thanks, Amy. Smooth. Now I knew where all those awards for best bedside manner came from.
Lisa’s smile disappeared as if it had never existed as her eyes flickered from me to Amy, then back again. All in the space of a moment while Victoria flew over and around me, poking at every bit of me that she could get at without going below the belt in concern. “What? How?”

“Truck. Man.” I clapped my hands together, then slowly spread them apart and up. After the first time I’d explained it, I wasn’t really feeling like doing it again. Not right now. “Boom.”

“Oh… Oh, crap. Okay. Alright. Shit.” Lisa grimaced as she pulled at the scrunchy in her hair and shook her hair loose, not nearly as graceful as normal (as the wincing clearly showed.) as she did so. “How are you holding up, Moss? Okay?”

Amy, Victoria, and I just sort of... looked at her.

“... Yeah. Dumb question. Realized it right after I said it,” she grumbled as she rubbed a hand uncomfortably against her denim-clad hip and smacked her lips. That she was able to make eye contact with me after that, even with that blush moving up into her ears, was admirable. And adorable. Admirably adorable. “You do know that it wasn’t your fault though, right?”

“I do. I do know that. I do know it wasn’t my fault...maybe.” I shrugged when Vicky, satisfied that I wasn’t hurt, took a seat right next to me. The constant jerking of her head at me, directed at a studiously oblivious Amy, who was watching the news, was ignored. “Considering how he ran into traffic after I asked if he was okay-”

“Moss. You are many things. Psychic is not one of them,” Lisa interrupted reassuringly as she walked up to me, turned around, and settled down on my lap. “As much as I like to pretend to be when I mess with the gullible, I’m not psychic either. You honestly had no way of knowing that was going to happen. Why he did what he did is his business. It’s not your fault.”

I sighed, my hand automatically going to her head to start playing with her hair.

I knew. Once again, I rationally knew that I was not at fault for this in any way, shape, or form. But it was something completely different to feel it. To keep my mind from whirling with what-ifs or could-have-beens.

Amy, after enough prodding from Victoria to break down the Great Wall, joined with the rest of us. Sat down with Victoria who pulled the mousy girl against her side. As close as she was going to get when my other hand, and its fingers, gently dug in at the base of Victoria’s neck, where skin ended
From that point on it was almost like I had a pair of cats with how hard they pressed against me. I was already feeling better. Hard not to, considering.

“It’s okay, Moss. Really. I know how you’re feeling. I’ve been there and I know how it.” Lisa drifted off. Her eyes flickered to the TV and lost focus like they did whenever she lost herself in her powers while her jaw fell open.

A quick look to see what she was so interested in made me shudder. They were talking about a local figure. A pillar of the community that had met an early end due to the front bumper of a Merchant vehicle. Hell, there was even a photo. A photo that I’d expected. A photo that even had a name...on… Wow. Alright.

“**MOTHERFUCKER!**” Lisa screeched, just about flailing in my lap as she pointed at the TV and proved that she’d caught onto the same thing I had. “**THAT’S FUCKING COIL!**”

I wasn’t feeling bad anymore. There was that. Couldn’t say the same about Lisa but I wasn’t feeling bad anymore.

“All this fucking time!? All this planning!? And he gets creamed by a fucking truck!? I spent five hours convincing my old team to go legit and help me raid his base!” Lisa grabbed a pillow, slapped it over her face, and started screaming. “For no reason! God fucking damn it!”

“And she brought me along to help. It wasn’t fun. Bitch is a bitch and Regent is a total dick.” Victoria clicked her teeth as she talked for the first time today. That I’d heard anyway… I assumed that she had said something before but... Pedantic. I was that. Stopping now. The relief I was feeling was messing with me. “I can get why she’s mad though. I’ve met Calvert before. The guy always felt like he had candy in his pocket if you know what I mean.”

Amy winced at that. “He does, actually. Did. He offered me a Kit-Kat once.”

“Jesus.”

Lisa, after another minute of leg-kicking and screaming, stopped. Went limp and, just as I hesitantly
made to tug the pillow off her face to check if she’d screamed herself unconscious, threw the pillow to the side and stood up with an eerie calm. “Girls.”

All three of us eyed her warily as she paused and started nervously flexing the fists she’d made of her hands.

“Get home. Get dressed. Get your costumes on. Moss...” She exhaled loudly as her shoulders, high and tense, were forcefully relaxed. “You come as you are. I’m going to give the Undersiders a call. We’re going to go do some good and make some money while doing it.” Lisa, after some struggle, forced her hands open. “We are going to steal everything of his that isn’t fucking nailed down, and that’s only if we can’t rip it out of the ground...” She finally turned around, clearly fresh off of a good cry. “After I get a hug.”

She didn’t have to say anything more after that. My arms were already around her before she even finished saying ‘hug’. Victoria and Amy, after a quick back and forth made up of nothing but eye waggles and shrugs, joined in.

“Whose hand is that on my butt?” Lisa muttered into my chest.

A very good question, that.

“Mine...” Amy muttered back shamelessly.

Damn it, Amy.

“Oh... Makes sense. Nice to know you think I’m hot. Time and a place though.”

Amy, with a grumble, shifted...and that was... Wait.

“Who’s that cupping my-”

“Me,” They all said in unison with varying levels of enthusiasm...and that was okay too.
“Wanna fuck?”

Not expecting that in the slightest, considering the mood we’d left the Penthouse in that had followed us the whole way to our destination, I balked. Plugged up the back of the van, leaving Amy to stare at my butt for a little while longer than she strictly had to as I stared into a new face. Hard, flat, and about as expressive as a wall, yes, but a new face. “What?”

“What? Fuck do you mean, what? Are you hard of hearing or something?” Rachel, or who I assumed to be Rachel, what with the dog mask she was wearing, crossed her arms over the front of her surprisingly nice looking fur-necked jacket. “Wanna fuck or not?”

“Not,” Victoria answered for me, no give in her glare as she stared the other girl down. “He’s already got something going on and it’s already standing room only.” The blonde then squared her jaw and hitched a thumb over her shoulder. “Beat it, bitch.”

“I didn’t fucking ask you.” Rachel scowled, ratcheting the aggressive tension up a couple more notches as she did. The dogs around her, their lips curled up over their teeth in a snarl and their bodies already a size between a sedan and your average minivan, wasn’t really helping with that. “Fuck?”

“Uh…” I winced, broken out of my current state of shock by Victoria giving me a good thump on the arm. “No. No, I’m not up to it right now. Thank you.”

Rachel, whose scowl had reached epic proportions, just grumbled and walked off, taking her dogs with her to look up at the camera with everyone else. The camera that happened to be right next to a nondescript elevator in a nondescript building in a nondescript part of the Bay’s downtown area.

“Do you watch the news? No? Well, start. Look up a Mr. Thomas Calvert. You’ll find him in the obituaries, right under vehicular manslaughter. I’ll wait.”

Well...that wasn’t completely true. Not everyone was staring at the camera and looking vaguely threatening. Lisa, being herself, was attempting to persuade the mercs in Coil’s base to open up before someone had to get hurt… Like them.
We had seven capes here. Seven. That was more than some gangs ever boasted at their best. More than the ABB and the Archer’s Street Merchants had combined...and we had some seriously heavy hitters here. Victoria, for one. I wasn’t exactly all kinds of cuddly looking either, once you thought about it. Not someone you ever wanted to get in a wrestling match with.

That I’d picked up a piece of rebar and started stretching and spinning it like a piece of taffy in my fingers, in easy sight of the camera, just helped that sink in. Anyone with bright ideas would have to shelve a few.

“You found him? Great.” Lisa smiled at the intercom, her smile about as humor-filled as Thomas had been when he’d gone under a truck’s wheels earlier that day... Goddamn. I’d really turned around on that one, hadn’t I? “That’s your boss. You know. That guy that pays your checks? Keeps you outfitted, housed, and in the money? Coil? Any of that ring a bell?” With that, Lisa slapped both her hands against her chest then spread em wide in an almost hilarious show of thuggishness... To me, anyway. Whoever was behind that intercom was probably shitting themselves. “Hell, do I ring a bell? You’ve seen me before, right?”

The silence at that was painful.

“Look. I get that you guys are working men. That you have a reputation to uphold. But you aren’t getting paid for this. You have no cape support. I fucking know you don’t. Don’t you even try to fucking lie to me.” Lisa bent over to put an eye up to the intercom’s camera and began speaking in a tightly controlled and positively furious whisper. Coil’s death, happy as it had been for her, hadn’t been how she’d wanted it to go... He’d never get to see her destroy everything he’d ever worked for, and it ate at her. “If we have to break in there to get our paycheck...how do you think that’s going to go?”

The intercom crackled. “Are you threatening us?”

“I’m threatening you with a change in employers, dipshit,” Lisa snapped. “We get in without any problems, you get paid. We get in with problems, we’ll tear you apart and leave you with nothing but a burning base and a lot of questions from the Feds. Which is it going to be?”

Another round of silence. The crackle of the intercom. “... I need to kick this up the chain.”

“Five minutes.” Lisa held five perfectly manicured fingers up for perusal. “You’ve got five minutes before I have my big green friend do some landscaping.” Holding her hand up for a second longer, just to make sure they’d had a good look at it, she stood up. Backed away and crossed her arms over her chest. “Clock is ticking.”
One minute. Two. Three...and the elevator beeped...then opened...and I felt kind of let down, honestly.

“Smart choice, men.” Lisa sighed as she rolled her neck around on her shoulders and made for the elevator. “Smart fucking choice.”

“That’s it?” Amy groused as she patted off some imaginary dirt on her robes. “All that build up for nothing? Fucking...should have just stayed home today. With my soaps and snacks.”

Now, what with me being who I was, I knew when to keep my mouth shut...but she’d taken the words right out of it.
Chapter 31

It was funny, just how little fanfare there was over their sudden change in circumstances. Over Lisa’s (and friends.) sudden upward rise on the metaphorical ladder that was life.

Lisa had, over the course of a single day, done everything that she’d needed to do for the foreseeable future. Everything she had to do and quite a bit she didn’t, with the rest of what she had now just being gravy. Sweet, sweet life goals gravy. She was rich. Coil was dead. She had an army of mercenaries and her former team under her direct command.

At this point in things, all she was missing was the wardrobe filled exclusively with shoes...and she really regretted that she hadn't done this sooner. If she had, it would have meant that she’d have had to burn a lot less paperwork. A lot less equipment as well.

The near-obsessive level of detail he used to describe just what he’d done to her, and everyone else he’d ever used his powers on, in writing, was absolutely disgusting. Disturbing in a way that, even with him being dead as a doorknob, had her feeling cold. Physically, with chills and everything.

She’d suspected that he wasn’t exactly using his powers to pet puppies and eat cheesecake on his off time, but getting confirmation was just... Fuck it. Don’t think about it. He was dead. She wasn’t. It was better that way and, now, she was glad she’d never got the chance to make sure that he was able to see the end before it got him.

It just wouldn’t have been worth it. No matter how good of an idea it had sounded like at the time.

With the help of the profile she’d built on him, now complete, she could see that him working to get revenge was a certainty...and the chances that he might have succeeded were higher than Lisa liked them to be. He had all the chances in the world while Lisa only had one and all that. Not exactly good odds...if not for Moss.

If Coil’s power had reacted to his presence anything like Lisa’s had, it was little wonder he’d ended up dead. This was a man that took pride in his control over himself and his surroundings. Having things start going wrong like they had, up to the point it had led to him becoming road pizza, must have been hell… Good. Lisa hoped that it had been nice and toasty.

The intercom on her desk buzzed and Lisa, suddenly, found her spectacularly dark mood lightening up as she came to the realization that she had a secretary. Her very own, personal secretary. Wow, Golly-gee, and Jeepers was that nifty. “Miss Tattletale?”

“Listening,” Lisa replied faux absently as she got herself a stack full of papers and started shuffling them. Busy, busy, oh so busy don’t ya know? So far, Lisa had found, this sort of thing was all in the spirit and the face you showed the world. Not that hard at all. “What is it?”

“A Mr. Grue is here to see you?”

“Send him in,” Lisa said without a hint of hesitation, pretty sure that she already knew where this was going. Ninety, ninety-five percent. She, no matter how much she wished it was so, wasn’t perfect. “Also, when you have time, could you send me the blueprints for the place? I feel like familiarizing myself with the decor.”
Lisa had seen how Moss was looking at the place. Like a kid in an amusement park, but worse. If he had his way, the penthouse was going to go the way of the dodo. If that was going to be the case, she might as well start up on making the place livable, right?

“At once, Ma’am.”

Lisa continued to shuffle the papers as time passed and Grue was put through each checkpoint. Patted down, had his identity confirmed and his power tested to see if he was carrying weapons and if it was really him. That sort of thing. All things that Coil had skipped out on at some point or another, trusting in his power to protect him. Another point against him, now that Lisa was left with a good twenty percent of her forces that could barely do a decent Stranger check without referring to a fucking guidebook.

That made her anxious. That was totally normal. A Stranger had, at some point, broken into her house after all...and Moss, while being Moss, was an excellent fix for many of her problems...sometimes it was just better to be a little more ‘proactive’ about said problems.

Hammers, nails...the twisty screwdriver thingy and that one ruler with the bubble in it that she didn’t actually know the name of...fuck it. Not the point. The point was that everything had its place and its time and, sometimes, crippling someone for life by turning their joints into a gelatinous goo wasn’t a good substitute for a military-grade laser to the forehead.

Lisa, feeling that the time was right, tapped a button to her side...and she was proven right when the door slid down into the floor to reveal Brian, his hand up and ready to knock. Her smirk, ever-present that day (if this wasn’t a day to smile, what was?) grew just a little wider. It was always nice to know she still had it. “Hello, Grue.” She flicked her hand at the seat across from her as he came into the room, already off his game. “Heard you wanted to talk. So, let’s.”

“I didn’t sign up for this, Lisa.” Grue then, after coming into her office and rudely refusing her offer of a comfy seat, waved his arm around the room. That it ended up on the new, even if empty, aquarium before it dropped was just a funny coincidence. “Any of this. New Wave? Soldiers? Underground bases? Taking down Coil, our boss? The guy that gave us or jobs?” Smoke began to curl out from under his helmet. “You fucking lied to us!”

In the face of Brian’s anger, Lisa found herself completely unphased. Cool as ice as she pulled up his mental profile and started dissecting.

Brian, nice as he was, had never been one to think outside the box if he didn’t have to. And, as long as it got him custody of his sister, he didn’t much care to try. This change in things, their former dynamic, with him as the boss and her as the Thinker, was making him nervous. Nervous, and possibly, dangerously so if she didn’t deal with it as soon as possible.

If it was just a case of nerves though, that was too fucking bad. If he didn’t like it, he didn’t like it. He just had to be a man and suck it up. This whole thing, with her at the top and him at the bottom (phrasing), wasn’t changing anytime soon. Now, to explain that. Somehow. Nice, not nice. It didn’t matter.

She wasn’t looking for him to like her. They weren’t friends. This was business...and business did whatever worked.

“Lied? No.” Lisa clicked her tongue. “I just told you what you wanted to hear and left out all the rest, Brian.” That paperwork shuffling came to an end when she let it fall to the desk with a
loud *clap*. That it landed with his name at the very top was *not* a coincidence. Not all of that paperwork had gone into the incinerator... “You’re still getting paid. A straight million split between you, Alec, and Rachel. You’ll still be getting jobs and you’ll still be getting that help you need. The management just changed for the better, is all.”

At that, she flipped the papers around and pushed them across the desk before leaning back in her rolling chair and putting her hands behind her head. “Your last employer had some disturbing hobbies. Read, and be educated.” She shrugged. “Or don’t. No skin off my nose.”

Brian, after some more glaring while Lisa continued to impassively smirk at him, picked up the papers she’d pushed across as curiosity got the best of him. The first page, detailing his true name and place of residence. Extended family, known associates, blood type, high school grades. Disquieting stuff all by itself.

Second page. Pressure points. The things that would get him to crack in the way that Coil wanted him to crack. For fun or work, whichever, with Brian’s sister coming up as the bastard’s go to...and driving Brian completely insane was, supposedly, pretty easy if you had no soul.

Brian didn’t even get all the way through the third page, the one with the little margins in the middle detailing what Coil considered interesting reactions before he dropped it on the table and just *stared* at her, furious. Murderous, actually. Not at her, thank god, but he was inches away from wrapping his fingers around someone’s neck and going to town.

If Coil had still been alive, Lisa would have just made someone as obsessed with killing the man as she had been, if not worse. Good feelings, those. Now, to press.

“I know how you feel.” Lisa’s smile turned into a grimace. “Sadly, the man that did all those things died just earlier today in an accident. None of us are going to be tearing strips out of his hide anytime soon.” She brightened slightly right after. “I do know where his grave is going to be if you want to desecrate it later though?”

Cementing that she wasn’t the enemy in his subconscious with some simple commiseration, Brian calmed down slightly. Not in a visible manner, but enough that Lisa no longer worried about him jumping across the table at her to take out his frustrations...but that could still change. Would be a shame if it did. “... Why didn’t you tell us?”

“Couldn’t. For multiple reasons,” Lisa said in a candid reply as she resisted the urge to start spinning in her seat. Not the right time for that. “I had no idea what his power was at the time, for one. That was a big one. For another, we’d all just met. None of us knew each other, and the only thing you guys could be sure of was that this one man was making all your dreams come true. If I’d fucked up in trusting someone...” A finger rose to her temple. “That would have been it.” The finger came off her skull with a pop of the lips. “So, excuse me for being cautious.”

Some more quiet while Brian thought things over. Rearranged his worldview in what Lisa could consider one of the right ones while Lisa got up and padded over to the mini-fridge with a soda on her mind. A pair of cokes later and she returned to find Brian in his seat, without his helmet and looking *tired* as he rubbed a thumb at the corner of his eye.

The coke was accepted, even if it wasn’t with a thank you...and Lisa had to raise an eyebrow slightly when he lifted said coke and poured it straight down his gullet. Half a liter, gone in a single go. It was like looking at the extra-fit poster boy for adult diabetes… Lisa carefully didn’t snicker at that, even if it *was* a funny thought. Still serious. Shush.
“You want me to burn those?” Lisa asked with a nod at the stack full of nightmares. “And have me explain where we’re taking this little enterprise of ours?”

“Please… If you could.”

“It’s simple. Or, at least, easily summarized.” Lisa admitted as she pulled the papers away for later disposal. “The Undersiders, with the help of Coil’s former assets and a tenuous partnership with New Wave and friends, is going independent.”

Brian blinked. “Friends?”

“Well, more like one friend and his social media presence,” Lisa admitted once more. “Moss, the Case 53 you saw earlier, has a blog.” That he hadn't been the one to make it, or that Lisa hadn’t been the one to make it for that matter, was irrelevant. He had fans and that was what they needed. “It’s well on its way to becoming the most viewed Cape Blog in America and it gives us some legitimacy and social currency that we really need right now. That he just so happens to be able to wrestle an enraged Glory Girl into the dirt and survived a fall at terminal velocity while weighing half a ton is just a bonus.”

That he might have actually been getting stronger didn't need to be said. Later, maybe. To Moss, yes, but not now. What she'd said was enough to play him up as a serious asset and that was enough.

“... I don't really use the computer all that often, so I can't say much about that blog besides it sounding impressive,” Brian slowly said. “But you’d think that someone would have brought all of that up earlier.”

“You'd think that, wouldn't you?” Lisa agreed with a noncommittal nod.

“How did you even meet him anyway?”

Lisa's face went completely flat in what was to her, complete fun, even as it put Brian on the back foot. “Do I ask you about your sex life?”

“Wha- I don't see how... Are you serious?” Brian paused and Lisa swore she could see the math being done behind his eyes when she nodded again. He wasn't angry anymore, she’d say that. She had this in the bag. “How does that even work?”

“Pretty damn well. Now, shoo. Talk to my secretary so she can hook you up with your pay.” She flapped her hand at him and spun her chair around to face...the wall. She then noted to herself that it might be a good idea to put up a screen or something. A fake, animated skyline would make dismissing someone by turning a lot more impressive. “I’ve got some calls to make.”

New Wave for one, to see about making that partnership official. Faultline’s crew to set up a possible preferential treatment deal or retainer. Picking up that new girl, Spitfire, wouldn’t go amiss either… Rachel wouldn’t be allowed to go to any of the meetups or recruitment pitches, as was only common sense. The PRT as well, to alert them to the formation of a new group of heroes and the causation of such… Also, PHO hadn’t heard from her and ‘Moss’ for a while. They were probably getting anxious by now, and Militia…and… And she’d forgotten to tell Moss about that, hadn’t she?

… He’d understand, right?
“Hello, everyone, and welcome to the first meeting of our, as of yet, unnamed hero group... What a
great day to be alive, huh? Breathing? Doing life stuff?” Lisa smiled cheerfully at the lot of us, the
group that she’d pulled together solely for the sake of scaring the shit out of a bunch of trained killers
and a single fifty-four-year-old office secretary… Overkill, we had most definitely been. “Now, you
might be wondering where I’m going with this.”

“Was there a bomb?” I interjected absently as I rolled one of Bitch’s dogs, Angelica, around in the
palm of my hand. My actual palm. An easy thing to do when she was, comparatively, the size of a
puppy to me… I hadn’t even felt her nibbling at my fingers the few times she’d attacked one before
I’d started giving out the belly rubs. Adorable. “It was a bomb, right?”

“Good guess, Moss. And, yes. It was a bomb. A daisy chain of them, actually, in every load-bearing
part of the base...and more besides.” Lisa nodded, affirming what I’d already known to the rest of the
room as she started expertly shuffling papers around like an eighties television banker, cocaine
optional... It looked like she’d found another way to vent stress. Good for her.

The paper shuffling, I meant. Not the cocaine. Thank god. I don't think the world would have been
able to handle Lisa on cocaine.

“It was half-an-hour from going off when I found and defused it.” Her head took an inquisitive turn
towards Victoria and Amy. “How much cred do you think we’ll get with the PRT if we let them
know that we kept a good eighth of Downtown from falling into a hole, you think?”

“Cred? For an eighth?” Amy blinked, stunned. “That’s...a hard question.”

“It’s the PRT, Lisa. A government organization.” Victoria stepped in to complete the answer that
Amy had started, the brunette of the two giving her a grateful look as she did so. “PR is their life.
Their bread and butter. Keeping a part of the city safe like that is kind of a big deal...and, considering
how slow things have been lately, with them not having caught even a single member of the 88 since
the war began...” She shrugged. “Mom fights with them sometimes over stuff like that.”

“Seriously?” I rose an eyebrow at her, honestly surprised. I didn’t remember that being a thing.
“They pull that shit on New Wave too?”

“Something like that.” Amy quietly sighed. “It’s never actually serious though. Just dick
waving...even if they wouldn’t be all that torn up about it if they actually won.”

“... Yeah. Sounds like the government alright.”

“So they’d take the credit in a heartbeat if they thought they could get away with it, is what you’re
saying.” Lisa hummed as she pulled a couple papers from her stack and put it to her side. “That’s
pretty much how I thought it was going to be. Not exactly ideal, but we have some leverage to
burn.”

“Leverage?” Brian spoke up with a question from his place at the back, his voice hollow as it
escaped from his helmet, along with a few wisps of inky black smoke. “What kind?”

“Good question,” Lisa said with yet another nod. “Coil, before his well-deserved death, had been an
advisor for the PRT for the better part of a decade. He’s got some skeletons in his closet, not all of
them his.” Another sheaf of paper joined the first. “As some of you might know, new New Wave
and friends.” She coughed. “I’m looking for legitimacy. Like New Wave and the Protectorate except, you know...we’re going to be actually trying.”

Victoria’s fingers began to leave an indentation in the table...and my nice new suit creaked when I put Angelica down, letting her scurry away I while readied myself for a possibly necessary intervention.

Vicky was a sweet girl...but she could be a little rash at times. It was probably a good idea either way.

“The last time a Villain went to jail in this town and stayed there...I think I might have been three.” Lisa said wistfully, staring up at the ceiling and sounding like she was just a rocking chair and a spittoon away from talking about the good old days as she did so. “Marquis and his crew, gone. The Teeth, banished to Boston. The Archer’s Bridge Merchants, suppressed. The E-88, smaller and weaker after the ‘disappearances’ of Allfather and Iron Rain and the rise of a still young Kaiser.” Lisa raised a fist. “The economy was still working and the future was bright.”

The fist slowly opened, accompanied by a low bwoosh from Lisa’s mouth. “And, then, the heroes got complacent. They stopped pushing. They stopped trying...then some dumbass rioters fucked the local economy and the status quo set in, leaving all of us holding the fucking bag that is this shithole of a city more than a decade down the line.” She gave us all a listless shrug, her smile suddenly missing as she continued sorting out the paperwork into piles that only made sense to her. “It’s time for a change...and if they don’t like it?”

“They can get fucked.” Rachel, surprisingly, growled in support.

“T ook the words right out of my mouth. Thank you, Rachel,” Lisa easily acknowledged her former teammate as, with the click of a button on the intercom, a man came in with a tray loaded with steaming hot coffee...and accompanying condiments with sides. Finger sandwiches even, with little cucumber slices in them...sweet. “So how do we do the fucking without getting fucked, you may ask?” Lisa did some jazz hands. “PR, of course.”

A beat passed as we sampled our drinks and waited for the delivery guy to leave the room. They were delicious and that stupidly expensive Espresso machine in the lounge was really proving its worth.

“... Just wondering here.” Alec raised a hand, the motion almost as lazy as the slouch he was doing in his chair. “I’ve got to ask. Are we allowed to say ‘fuck’ as much as we want in the new world order?”

“Only if it makes grammatical sense. Otherwise, feel free. It makes you relatable to the youth.”

He nodded. “Fuck yeah.”

“We’re just starting out, so it’s going take a while to build up the steam we need to bulldoze the local PRT EN E when the inevitable pushback happens.” Lisa forged onwards. “No one likes being made obsolete, the establishment more than most. We’re going to be eating all kinds of red tape to start with, mixed with outright slander. Claims of how we’re ‘dangerously disruptive’ and ‘provoking the gangs’. Fear mongering, in other words, before they start looking for excuses to slap villain labels on us when it doesn’t work.” She scratched her chin thoughtfully. “I give them fifty-fifty odds of giving up and creating fraudulent charges at some point after that.”
Yeah… I could see it. Considering all the things that never quite made it into the history books around here, I could definitely see it...

“Don’t you think that’s a little paranoid?” Vicky, ever a fount of optimism and trust in the rule of law, asked. “Like, as long as we keep doing good…”

Amy, somehow, just managed to look even more tired at that question. She needed to sleep more or something...or at least relax… Now, I had to wonder if I was any good at giving out massages.

“God no. I fucking wish.” Lisa replied with a dry bark of laughter. “I know that this might come as a surprise to you, but the people at the top of this heap would rather we’d all die in a nuclear fire than have us exist without them.” Taking a sip of her coffee with a satisfied sigh, she gave her friend a shrug. “Take it from a born rich Cali girl with a Thinker rating. Sorry to burst your bubble.”

Victoria, taking a sip of her own drink, let out a depressed sigh and shrugged back. “Yeah…”

“Anyway, enough of that. Stop distracting me with the deplorable state of the human condition and world affairs, people. Back to business. I called you all here for a reason.” At that, Lisa pointed at my face just as I was shoveling a handful of triangle sandwiches in my mouth. No one was impressed, clearly. “Until we’ve built up our brand enough to start getting bootleg merchandise of us, Moss here is going to be the Public Relations flagship of our little operation.” She started counting off on her fingers. “Big, strong, good with kids. All that good stuff.”

“Thank god for that...” Vicky muttered absently as she gave me bedroom eyes.

Brian raised a finger out of Lisa’s vision, thought about what he was going to say, and decided that that wasn’t worth getting into with a shake of the head. Smart man. Smarter than me.

I was in the middle of this whole thing and I still had no idea how it worked.

“Besides that though, our short-term goals, currently, are going to involve a new kid on the block program. For new capes. Just us offering to help with problems they might have, keeping them safe from getting snapped up by the gangs. Things like that, without any expectation of them joining. Letting our actions do the talking while we build up some goodwill.” With that, she passed a short stack of (laminated) papers to Amy with a request to pass them around. “When they ask about whether they should join us or the Wards though, that is when we’ll strike.”

“With pamphlets, Lisa?” I asked, deeply amused as I looked at all of the bright colors and pretty pictures of heroism in action, interspersed with factoids that even a layman could understand. “Really?”

“Information is the greatest weapon we have against the lies of the man,” Lisa agreed without even a hint of shame. “Quite frankly, the Wards fucking suck. Only basic insurance, subpar therapy, they get paid minimum wage—without hazard pay—into a trust fund...and I’m amazed that none of the local hero juniors have died yet. The level of oversight that they have to deal with is crippling, both in and out of patrol. The only reason that they are an option at all is that they’re an established and well-known presence and they’re not as bad as everyone else.”

“And how are we better?” Amy asked curiously, nose deep in her pamphlet as she did so.

“Well, for one, we offer dental.”
Amy looked up from her pamphlet with her eyes narrowed, instantly on guard.

“From a dentist. Multiple dentists. You know those guys with actual degrees and years of training to work with teeth and not an unpaid volunteer? We’re getting those.”

“You fucking better…also, fuck you.”

“With the mouth you got on you?” Lisa scoffed as she looked over the pamphlet with a critical eye. “In your dreams.” Lisa’s eyes flicked back up towards me as Amy’s mouth puckered like she’d just tasted something sour. “Now, this is more of a general sort of thing. We’re all going to be doing this at some point when it applies… Moss though has an appointment later today. A little meet and greet with a member of the Protectorate to assure them that we mean no harm.”

“... We don’t?” I asked cautiously, the glint in Lisa’s eye giving me the urge to ask where the cameras were.

“You don’t.” Lisa gave me a conspiratorial wink and checked her, non-watch bound, wrist. “And you should probably get to our old Penthouse before they get tired of waiting, don’t you think?”

I blinked. “Why there?”

“We’ve still got a day on the lease and it gives the impression that we have money to spend.”

“Oh. That makes sense.”

“Stick around a little first though. After the meeting is over. I’ve got some stuff to tell you that you’re probably going to want to hear…”
Chapter 32

“I am now...The Tallest,” Lisa started grandly with an outflung hand, a single limb pointed out into the distance as her hair fluttered dramatically in the wind. “She who is Most Tall. Bow before me, mortals of Brockton Bay, and desp...hey! Quit it! I’m having a moment!”

“Yeah, no. Not happening. I am most tall, pretender,” I dryly retorted as I tried plucking Lisa off my shoulders. A lot easier said than done as she locked her legs around my neck like she was trying to choke me out and started slapping at my hand... Oh well. I just had to wait for her to get tired. Shouldn’t be long now. “I’m never letting you have stilts. You get weird when you have a height advantage.”

“Betrayer! Oathbreaker!” Lisa cried out, completely without anything I could possibly call shame as I, finally, pulled her off of me and put her down on the ground in the alley next to the Hotel we’d been staying at. “Kinslayer!”

“Someone’s hyper. A little too much, I think.” Amy came down from the sky in Vicky’s arms, like a frumpy angel to give Lisa a poke on the forehead and force her to relax for the first time since we’d left the base and stop bouncing on her heels. “And no wonder. Hormones are all over the goddamn place.” She frowned. “I think you hit a developmental milestone in your pregnancy or something. Hell if I know what it is though.” Her frown deepened, as did her tone. “Came out of nowhere...”

“... Sure. Yeah. It does that.” Lisa took a deep breath, the slightly manic look in her eyes totally gone. “Hormones. Might have been the change in environment, what with the base and all. Been riding high all day too and it adds up. It’s just been...”

“Nuts. People don’t get money, an army of mercenaries, and revenge every day. Their life goals, all-in-one,” Victoria finished Lisa’s sentence with a frown as she jostled Amy a bit, checking her bridal carry for any weak spots in her grip without even thinking about it. “They don’t normally tell people that they’ve been stringing along a well-known public figure and hero through their boyfriend’s PHO account for the last month or two either.”

Yeah. None of us were happy about that last one, Victoria more than most. Surprisingly, she was the most territorial of the lot when it came to...whatever this thing was that we had. I’d have thought it was going to be Lisa from what I knew about her...but, yeah. That I was, personally, more exasperated than angry about what Lisa had done said something. Not sure what though. Good, bad. Somewhere in between.

She had a tendency to make plans that backfired on her. She tried, sure, but she wasn’t all that good at it. That was obvious and she never let me forget it.

Lisa groaned. “I forgot, alright? I’m sorry, again. I got shot twice, Amy took a cup size off me and I found out I was pregnant with twins.” She threw her hands up in the air with a sassy twist. “Excuseeeeee me for not remembering my hobbies and Moss’s media presence while I was coming to terms with my impending mortality, the lack of a weight I hadn’t even known I was carrying and the idea of motherhood.”

“Oh. I see. So that’s how it is.” Vicky nodded. “I also see that you forgot that Air Victoria can only take one passenger at a time.”
“Wha-” Lisa gaped at the other girl in shock. “You’re making me walk to my old apartment!!?”

“It’s just three blocks, you baby. You can take it. You’re not that pregnant. Also, safety first. What, you think holding two people under my arms like they’re luggage is safe?"

… That was actually a very good point.

“You could walk more,” Amy chipped in helpfully, wearing a small smile in the face of Lisa’s betrayed gasp. “it won’t hurt you any. Take it from the healer.”

“You could just make me healthy!”

“And go without watching you sweat? Never.” Amy took on a sad pout and balled a fist up right next to her eye before giving it wiggle up and down. “Can’t believe you even brought that idea up, you monster.”

The look on Amy’s face when Vicky landed on the ground and dropped her like a bad habit was hilarious. Enough to make my face twist while I held back my laughter and Lisa to point and guffaw. And, yes. Guffaw. She did that and, boy, was she going to get it later. Something so unladylike as a guffaw couldn’t go without comment forever.

Vicky, as the most socially adept among the people who had heard her do so, was probably already setting up the roasting party in her head.

“You’ve been building up a little chub around the middle too, Ames,” Victoria said with a drawl, her nose in the air and hands behind her back as she started to drift away in the general direction of Lisa’s apartment. “And, last I checked, your powers don’t work on you.”

“… Yet.”

“What kind of sister would I be if I just let you fall apart like that?” Vicky continued, running over Amy’s comment without a care in the world even as it made me think. Would she be able to affect herself if we continued sleeping together? … I guessed that we’d just have to see. “I love you, Ames, and I want to see you grow up healthy and strong and-”

With a tug on Victoria’s leg from me, she met the ground for the first time this week with a yelp. “If it wasn’t for Amy you probably wouldn’t even have legs.” I pointed out simply. “Those who live in glass houses shouldn’t throw stones, Miss Dallon.”

“But… I… What?” Vicky’s jaw flapped, unsure about just how to take this turnaround as the other two girls jeered quietly at her back. Sticking out their tongues, laughing. You know, girl stuff. Girl stuff when one of you can beat up an elephant, sure, but girl stuff. “I can fly.”

“And Amy needs a break from keeping your legs from falling off from disuse,” I said, not unkindly as I knelt slightly and ruffled her carefully made up hair. That she hit me hard enough for me to feel it in response just, somehow, made her glare and the attempts at fixing the mess I’d made even cuter. Orc things, am I right? Or just strong women things. One or. “Just like you told Lisa. It’s just three blocks. It won’t hurt you none.”

“Alright, Dad.”

“Stop that!”
The last few days had been hard. Worse than hard. Just sleepless night after sleepless night for everyone in the PRT, all hands on deck as one of the Bay’s greatest nightmares came to pass. Hannah was, not for the first time, glad that she couldn’t sleep. She wouldn’t have been able to even if it had been something she’d wanted.

Lounge coffee, these days, was worth more than gold. She wasn’t joking. Hannah had seen a Rolex, the same one even, passing hands more than once in return for a hot cup when the brew was taking too long or the beans ran out. No one had time to sleep. Not when it meant the entire city could burn down.

That wasn’t a joke either. Not at all.

The Empire had gone insane. New Wave had shown itself to be more than willing to do the same right back. The ABB was interested in expanding what territory they already had and the Merchants were circling like the coked-up vultures that they were. It was a clusterfuck of such proportions that, the last time anything like it had been seen, the Teeth had still been a presence in the Bay.

All of this, all this trouble, over an attempt to ‘send a message’ to the wrong Case 53… The Thinktank had been debating whether this was the work of a Thinker or not and, so far, all they could say was that it was ‘inconclusive’ (or red over vomit yellow, whatever that meant)...and that was one of the most worrying things that anyone in the ENE could remember hearing in recent memory that didn’t involve an Endbringer.

It would be just their luck if there actually was someone behind all this...but that would be too easy, wouldn’t it? The doctors would finally have someone to blame for the reason as to why they were loaded with patients and Panacea was refusing their calls...and they couldn’t have that, now could they?

They had nearly forty people, Stormtiger and Victor included, that were taking up beds...when they should have been taking up space at the closest cemetery.

Just about every man there should have been a corpse five times over. Multiple cases of powdered bones. Pulped, non-vital organs. Dislocated extremities, massive abrasions, deep tissue bruising, blood loss and actual castrations (there were quite a few of those, most of them caused by a small caliber gun) and more, often on the same person...and a single case of a man that had had his head twisted so far around he could see his back. They were all still alive, somehow, if in horrific pain.

No one had any idea what to do with them besides pumping them full of morphine and hoping for the best, and it didn’t look like that was changing anytime soon.

Panacea, when asked to come in and see what she could do when it came to healing them up just enough that they could move under their own power, had been highly unsympathetic. There might have been laughter involved and some surprisingly on point directions to the nearest ditch to leave them in. Either way, she was no longer taking their calls and had been clear that she wouldn’t be doing so until the Empire was ashes.

People weren’t happy about it but it was understandable. The Empire had already tried to kill her once. Giving them another opening so soon, especially after the last one, was something that she wasn’t willing to do. The graze on her face and the bad state her friend had been in before she’d been spirited away spoke of just how close that assassination attempt had been as it was.
When it came to making sure that the greatest healer in the world and, often, one of the major
deciding factors in an Endbringer fight continued to be a deciding factor… If she wanted to hide
away for a while, stay out of the line of fire, no one that mattered was going to say much about it.
The very few people who had ordered her to be brought in anyway, whether they had the authority
or not, had been quickly subdued and, depending on what they said or did after, were given a tour of
the local holding cells/really long stairs.

That Doctor Gale’s nephew had been one of the skinheads wasn’t as much of a surprise as it should
have been. Unpleasant man. Sadly, after he’d been dragged away, anyone else with views opposed
to the current climate knew better than to open their mouth. Ah well. A mole was a mole…and he
hadn’t seemed to be all that brave at first look.

He’d probably topple like a domino. Some insinuations about how he might be joining his nephew in
the long term without their protection would probably do it…and not so much insinuations if Moss
found out about him. The big guy, it seemed, had never heard of a soft takedown. That no one had
died yet from the things he did to them, even if only from the shock that came with having your
shoulders and knees crushed into splinters, was enough to get him a Shaker classification of one…
And a strong reputation for getting things done.

He had an uncanny knack for finding depots and warehouses while the 88’s Cape support was
away. Getting in, disabling the guards, burning the merchandise and absconding with anything and
everything that might have been made of paper, cash or otherwise. Either he deserved a Thinker
rating to go with everything else or someone was directing him… Anyway, what it led up to, in the
end, was that the Empire was finding their little war a lot harder than they’d thought it would be.

Break the supply lines, break the army. In war, it was the little things that mattered. That he knew
that much was...interesting. At the very least, it was surprising how many Capes thought that just
going out and punching the nearest enemy in the face was the pinnacle of tactics and strategy.
Hannah tiredly leaned back in her chair and closed her eyes for a moment. The shiver that went
through her at the very thought of him, pushed back through sheer will. A forceful tensing of her
body as her core filled with a dash of heat. A spark that she let out through her mouth in a long, slow
breath.

A lot more interesting than console duty was anyway…and Missy, as the youngest Ward, wasn’t
holding up all that well with that particular duty either. She hadn’t been happy being left behind to
share console duty with her while the rest of the Wards were out and about. Not at all. Thankfully
though, she’d stopped grumbling about how she should have been out there five minutes ago and
was now happy to give the CCTV screen in front of her a sulky glare.

She didn’t know how lucky she was, being able to afford the privilege that was being bored. In times
like these, not being bored was not a good thing… Of course, as soon as she finished that thought,
her phone started to ring. The first thing to come out of her mouth, to her shame, was a weary sigh.

Missy, seemingly completely unable to recognize that her mentor wasn’t looking forward to
whatever call was coming her way, expecting nothing good, just about bounced in her seat with
excitement.

A button was pressed without looking. Hannah took the plunge. “This is Miss Militia.”

“Piggot here. Listen closely. Neither of us has the time for questions.” Hannah’s superior said tersely,
causing the career hero to stand up straight in her seat. “I just finished up a call with someone who
claims to represent a new hero team. One composed of the, former, Undersiders and an unknown. They expect to be gaining in numbers sometime soon and are in negotiations with Faultline.”

Hannah’s back went from ramrod straight to something close to steel. “Is it legit?”

“We don’t know yet. Leaning towards yes, thanks to Panacea and her sister’s ringing endorsement. And...” Piggot exhaled audibly through her nose, the sound like static over the line. “Lady Photon has been persuaded as to a tentative partnership with this new group for the course of the current conflict and Brandish is...hopeful...as to the success and continuation of said partnership.”

“... Brandish?” Hannah’s eyebrows, slowly, came together in confusion while she attempted to parse that last part. Hopeful was not a word that anyone that actually knew the woman past the surface would ever attribute to her. Damn it, the woman was a lawyer for a reason. “Are we talking about the same person? Carol Dallon?”

“This mess has been stressful on everyone involved,” Emily explained without explaining anything at all before moving on. “This new group has requested a meeting with a member of the Protectorate in good standing to start setting up relations. And, thanks to everyone being far too busy putting out the trash fires that were laid out on our porch before they take us all, you’re the only one available. The location will be messaged to your phone and an officer will be sent to relieve you. Do you understand?”

“Crystal, Ma’am.”

“And don’t forget to take Vista with you. Several roads are out due to the fighting and I’d like to get this finalized as soon as possible if you wouldn’t mind.”

“Will do, Director. Will do.”

Missy, close enough to hear, pumped her fist in celebration, just in the corner of Hannah’s eye...and the older woman felt a stress headache begin building up just behind it as well as a grim acceptance. These were hard, hard days...

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Far too soon, yet not nearly soon enough, they arrived at their destination through the fine art of roof hopping through the spatial distortions. Hopping, if only by technicality as they took more than a single step. The horizon bent and light became little more than streaks in the air. Feet, blocks, miles were eaten up in the blink of an eye.

Vista’s style of patrol, thrown to the side in favor of pure speed and that ever-persistent feeling that you were about to fall while you were, in fact, on solid ground...and nausea. Definitely nausea. A moment where Hannah had to close her eyes unless she wanted her breakfast to come up for another go as things just seemed to snap into place while Missy took up a pose; completely fine as her mentor did much the same, just so that she could get the chance to compose herself with a fist at her mouth.

The only good thing about this was that this feeling was a universal one for anyone not called Missy Biron. The first time Ethan had gone through it, he’d lost it all over his shoes. Dennis had nearly drowned in his helmet and Colin still had to use the auto-injectors in his suit before an emergency hop. Smart of him.
She kept forgetting to bring the Dramamine herself. He never had to worry about something like that, the lucky bearded bastard.

“We’re here,” Vista said as she spun on her heel with a dash of flair, framed by the polished gold look of the revolving doors behind her as she looked up at her superior. “So what now?”

“We meet our contact.” Militia nodded, her voice low as she spoke into her mike. “Do a meet and greet, build up a rapport and a line of communication, then withdraw.” While stepping into the revolving doors, Vista bent the space in that partition and joined her for the ride. “A quick in-and-out. With the way things lately, we can’t afford to take longer than that.”

The revolving door finished its turns and Militia forgot how to breathe...or to move, actually, much to Vista’s vocal chagrin as she ran into the unmoving woman’s bottom with her face.

“Ow!”

Moss, knees tucked politely up to his chest, snapped his magazine closed and stood up from the lobby’s couch, much to its relief...and stood...and stood some more…

“Oh my god,” Vista whispered, awed in a way that Hannah couldn’t ever remember hearing from the much younger cape. “Oh. My. God.” It was giddy, almost. Like some of the more excitable fans she’d had over the years but not quite. “He’s huuuuuggгееееее!”

“You aren’t wrong, no,” Hannah agreed absently, her panties well on their way to complete transparency by the time he stood at his full height, dressed to the nines in a suit and tie. Gave them a wave and, then, he started walking towards them and it took everything she had just to wave back at him. “He’s very...noticeable.”

“Yeah...and I think I get it now.” Vista nodded fervently to herself, just before she gave Hannah a hopeful, soulful look through her visor. “Do you...do you think he gives out piggyback rides?”

“It never hurts to ask.”

That Hannah wanted a very different sort of ride didn’t need to be mentioned out loud or in company...but that sounded like good advice.

“Hey there, MM.” He smiled at her, wide and toothy. Perfectly white and even as he, slowly, held out a hand to shake. “Been a while.”

Asking never hurt indeed…

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“Fuck me, guys…” Victoria groaned as, directly after they’d finished removing the police tape from the front door, she fell on top of Lisa’s still (somehow) perfectly intact couch. “I can’t feel my legs.”

Her hair was a mess, her shirt was covered in sweat and her face was a cheery red...all-in-all, she looked like hell...it was so sad that no one could laugh at it. “Never walking again, no. Fuck that noise. Fuck it so hard...”

“What happened to ‘three blocks isn’t that far’, huh? Tell me.” Amy, chin in her hands as she watched Lisa crawl around on her hands and knees to disarm her living room safe booby traps, said in a somewhat confrontational manner. “Was it before you realized you were wearing heels or after? Inquiring minds want to know.”
“Don’t be mean, Ames…”

“You called me fat. I’ll say what I want. For one, your shoes have no arch support and are just made to look pretty. They’re shit and you deserve what you’re feeling.”

“You take that back!”

“Ladies. Ladies. You’re both very pretty,” Lisa interjected cheerily as she dusted some debris off the knees of her (technically Vicky’s) jeans…that was going to change though. Soon. Hopefully. She was still waiting on her secretary to fill up the wardrobe and delegation was a wonderful thing. “Now, Vicky, could you pull this out of the floor for me or something?”

Vicky slowly lifted her head off the couch, looking a great deal like she was hoping for a second trigger that involved laser eyes.

“You’re going to be using your arms. Not your legs.” Lisa rolled her eyes. “I can’t open it because, thanks to me having the twigs of your average teenage couch potato, I can’t pull the lever. So, come on. If you want to see my deepest, darkest secret, stop being pissy for a moment and help.”

“… Fine,” Vicky grumbled as she forced herself into verticality. “You had me at darkest.”

“That’s the part that gets most people, yeah. It’s all that forbidden knowledge that does it,” Lisa acknowledged as Amy joined her at her side with a sort of morbid curiosity. “And, trust me. It’s a doozy.”

Victoria opened the safe.

Lisa, a presentation on her tongue, nearly choked on it. Nearly was the word though. She didn’t. Couldn’t, no matter how much she tried. Right now, death would be a blessing. She always forgot the worst things.

“Wow, Lisa. You’re right.” Amy nodded while Victoria held a gun in between her fingers. A gun that just so happened to be one of Lisa’s many secret shames. “This is a doozy. I’d had no idea that people made guns in hot pink.”

“Or that they made Legend keychains that you could attach at the grip,” Victoria continued. “And look at all these stickers…is that glitter?”

“I remember when I was a twelve-year-old girl. I’m sorry it took me so long to realize you haven’t hit puberty yet. I’m a terrible healer.”

“Forget the gun,” Lisa hissed as she hit Victoria’s hand hard enough to make her drop the gun back where she’d found it. She got bored easily. There was nothing wrong with that. Nothing. “The paperwork is what’s important. It took me a month just to translate the fucking thing, but I did…and it makes sense. A lot of sense.”

“Girls. We aren’t just heroes. We aren’t just three people and a really big Case 53.” Lisa, her face still burning like a bonfire, stood up straight with her folder and cleared her throat before she continued. “We’re a movement now. An organization like this world has never seen.” Lisa cleared her throat again. “We’re going to save the fucking world.”

A beat of silence.
“Fucking what?”
“You’re shitting me.”

“No. No, I’m not. I swear to god.” Militia said with her hand held up like she was an Eagle Scout. From behind her second glass of bubbly something or other. A vintage that cost more than most people’s monthly salary with every glass. Mine as well for that matter, before I’d started working at that cafe and punching Nazis and...and now my head hurt just thinking about it. Moving on. “C-excuse me, Armsmaster wasn’t always a total stick in the mud, you know? Everyone was young at some point.”

“Well, yeah. I get that. I’m not that out of touch. But…” I popped the cork back into my bottle of brandy as I leaned forward, the paint-thinner already a good part of the way to being done as I leaned forward in my seat. “You’re telling me that Armsmaster, the face of justice and the world’s most boring man, used to party? On school nights?” I wagged a finger playfully. “You’re really stretching my suspension of disbelief here, Milly.”

“He didn’t use to party. He used to get totally wasted. Those are two different things.”

“Okay. Now I know you’re fucking with me.”

The corners of her eyes crinkled slightly more, an act that I hadn’t thought was possible with how far they’d already gone. Someone was having fun...and thank the lord that our talk about how she hadn’t been talking to me for the last month or so had gone as well as it had. I wouldn’t have been at all surprised if she’d have just walked out after getting my contact info. That she was spending the time to actually talk to me instead, over a couple of drinks, was freaking wonderful. “If that’s how you want to take it, then sure.” She then shook her head. “What has the world come to when a hero of my caliber has their word doubted at every turn?”

“Well, maybe, if you’d wanted to be believed, you shouldn’t have started off with MP being a straight-A student who ditched Prom to go to the library.”

“The local library had an extensive collection of what Aleph would call ‘golden-age’ comics. The good grades just got her the slack she needed from Legend to indulge in her habit.” She sighed, most likely remembering better days. “She took more than a little inspiration from this one hero named ‘Squirrel Girl’, that I remember. Called her an inspiration.”

“That...huh.” I probed one of my tusks with my tongue while I thought that over...and wasn’t SG a 90’s thing? Fuck if I knew. It wasn’t like Wikipedia was a thing around here. “Really?” I popped the cork off my brandy again, finding that I wasn’t nearly as done with it as I’d thought. “That explains a lot.”

Militia gingerly lifted her bandana to take another sip. Maybe another two before she let it fall and she gave me a questioning tilt of the head. “You read comics?”

In the middle of taking a swig of brandy, I snorted. Nearly wiped my mouth with my sleeve before I remembered that the suit I was wearing was worth more than both our drinks combined and reached for a napkin instead. MM’s laughter, light and airy, brought a (hopefully) invisible blush up to my cheeks. “You could say that, yes. I’ve got a kind of...passing interest?”

I wasn’t lying either. There’d been a period of time where I’d looked up the Hulk for tips on dealing with my new ‘condition’...not that it helped much or anything. Whatever existed was all pre-eighties
stuff, about as deep and meaningful as a puddle that had been left out in the sun. Still though. It had been something to do while I wasn’t working and while Lisa had been away.

I was easily amused. Thank god for that. Seriously, I’d have probably gone insane otherwise.

“The Hulk, right?” She laughed again, this time at my incredulous stare. “Don’t act so surprised. I did say that Mouse liked her comics, right? She isn’t exactly the type to stay quiet about her interests... And I’m not blind. I can see how he might interest someone in your predicament and with your...” She gave me a slow look from top to bottom that actually made me feel kind of uncomfortable. In a good way. Good, bad way. Baddish. Shit. “Stature.”

Damn it, Lisa. I have no idea why I still listen to you. Really, why? I already know you think this is hilarious. ‘Just tell her what happened’ and ‘she’ll totally understand’ and ‘she’ll be totally professional’ my gigantic, green, tattooed ass...and boy, was asking Contessa what that one was going to be a fun time.

I was just kind of low-key hoping I wouldn’t get to experience how it felt like to wake up dead for the sake of a plan I had no hope of understanding at this point, actually. And, yes, I knew that that was long-winded and didn’t make sense. The waking up dead thing, not the plan thing. The other, other thing is though, we were talking about Contessa here. Fuck your sense and logic. If she really wanted me to wake up dead she’d find a way...and it would probably really fucking hurt.

Also, I really needed to stop doing this ‘introspection’ thing while I was in the middle of a conversation. Twas rude and I, sometimes, missed things that I really shouldn’t have while I was lost in my own head.

Things like how Militia had finished half of her bottle of champagne and was in the process of pulling her shirt up. You know. Just the little things that made my day to day a lot more difficult than it should have been... I’d just come here so that I could help lay down ties with the PRT before the inevitable hostilities between us started. You know. Civilly. That one thing that didn’t involve people fighting each other to the death on the streets when they didn’t have a common enemy...but I couldn’t do that without someone getting naked, could I?

All I could do was look away, say something, and hope that she came back to her senses before things got weird. Sure, Missy had left like an hour ago to go ‘reconnoiter’ after I’d given her a short piggyback ride, but that didn’t mean we could just do what we wanted. I didn’t want to add any more mental scars to the collection she already had if she came back and, I’m pretty sure, seeing the two of us in mid-coitus would be something special.

“Hey, hey, heylllo.” I hunched my shoulders and quickly averted my eyes just as her shirt made it over the first row of what had, from what I’d seen, looked like some damn impressive musculature. Like, fuck. Mine weren’t bad or anything but I kind of, you know, cheated. Also, these were on a woman. It just didn’t quite compare. “I know you might have had a little much to drink but, maybe, instead of doing whatever you’re thinking of doing, you should just, you know, not-”

“Shush. I’m looking for an opinion here. Now, I know I’m not exactly as tall as SheHulk...I think. That’s never come up,” Militia started in what was, to me, an extremely odd tangent that wasn’t quite meshing with her actions right then. Whether I’d missed something or she was so drunk that that, somehow, made sense to her... Man. I said I had no idea a lot, didn’t I? “But I think I’ve got the body to make up for it... What do you think? Am I exaggerating?”

I couldn’t help it. I whimpered. Internally. In the deepest, darkest parts of me where I tried to put all the reactions I had that might tear at the ragged remnants of my tattered and seldom used machismo. That just wasn’t fair...she just wasn’t fair...and I wasn’t getting out of this without a bottle upside the
head or yet another case of nudity in a place that wasn’t mine, was I?

Knowing my luck, it would be both at once. God damn it, Lisa.

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This wasn’t what Hannah had been expecting today. None of it was. That went without saying, but she said it anyway.

To hear that she hadn’t been talking to the genuine article that was Moss, the highlight of her day, had been a blow. She wouldn’t deny it. She might not have been Colin, the king of overworking and social avoidance, but her personal life was...lacking. A consequence of her just being too busy to do more than shoot the shit around the water cooler or in the cafeteria during daylight hours while her nights were, to be clear, not exactly action packed.

Crime slept, even if she didn’t. Criminals, contrary to the thoughts of many (even her, sometimes, after seeing some of the things they did on the daily.), were human too. They had jobs. They needed sleep. They weren’t always available to join in on the next push into so-and-so’s territory or to gather protection money. That was a fact of life that not many people considered when they said she was ‘lucky’ to have so much time to herself.

While everyone was asleep, she was up and about. Alone or as good as, often with a book in her hand, contemplating thoughts, or just staring at the ceiling until she pulled out some of the paperwork that Colin had passed onto her; all part of being his Second.

Moss had become a sort of...touchstone, after their first meeting. Something to keep her grounded, a steamy penpal. Someone to talk to, passing messages back and forth like she was one of her Wards that had just found a crush. Like Dean, before whatever it was that had caused him to break up with his girlfriend...and it had been for much the same reasons if she was honest with herself.

She wanted somebody. She wanted somebody to want her. Simple. Human...and she’d found what she’d been looking for every time she talked to ‘Moss’. Just two consenting adults, tossing banter and innuendo back and forth, sometimes even into her off hours. It had been...nice...while it had lasted. Although, she was coming to find that actually talking to him made up for that loss.

Whoever this impersonator was, they’d gone to great lengths to keep their ‘voice’ as close to the real thing’s as possible. His opinions. His likes. His dislikes. His penchant for using the word ‘anyway’ when he wandered off into a somewhat related tangent...or his strangely smooth diction, translated into stark reality.

… Strange for someone that had just regained the power of speech, she meant. Not that it was strange or… That didn’t matter. What did was that she’d been pleasantly surprised to find that her loss hadn’t lasted past the end of their negotiations, if that.

It had been like picking up an old conversation. One that you knew nearly by heart...and the fact that, when Missy hadn’t been able to hold back her request for a piggyback ride, he’d actually given it to her? That had broken the ice between them faster than that one iceberg had broken the Titanic.

And, yes. She understood the irony of that statement.

The twist he’d added near the end, with Missy cheering and hollering the entire time, had been one of the funniest things that Hannah had ever seen. Not because he’d started spinning in an attempt to make Missy dizzy or anything, no. What had been funny was that he’d failed, miserably, and he’d
been forced to bow his head and take a knee in an attempt to not be ill while Missy had laughed at him.

The girl broke space over her knee on a daily basis. Some spinning wasn’t going to make her dizzy, no matter from how high up it was done… She was going to have to talk to Missy about using your powers, without permission, on someone that had just been trying to fulfill a request of yours though. Even if he’d brushed it off with some laughter of his own after standing, along with an easy acknowledgment of his defeat, it had been rude and, most likely, a lot worse than he would admit.

People could barely handle three dimensions in a, mostly, rational world. Pushing someone over those three dimensions while they were already dizzy and spinning on their heels was just cruel… Also, these Penthouse floors were surprisingly sturdy, considering what Moss had put them through in that short time he’d been stomping around with Missy on his back. Too sturdy.

Another Shaker power, perhaps? An extension of the one that kept his victims alive to keep inanimate objects in one piece? Something to consider…when she wasn’t a push away from yelling at him to just fuck her already!

… She couldn’t say that though. Dear Lord, no. She had her pride, her dignity. She had to be subtle, no matter how long it had been since the last time she’d slept with someone (five years or so? Longer?), she could control herself. Had to. She could tease and prod and suggest, yes. Maybe push it a little with the innuendo and flirting…but she couldn’t just demand that he take her right this second, right up against the glass sliding door for everyone to see.

She had her pride, her dignity and…and damn them both to hell for existing. Also, Glenn might kill her. Actually kill her if she, somehow, scared off the greatest surprise PR hit of the decade. A secondary consideration, yes, but a serious one with all the memos and almost threats he’d been dropping on Emily’s desk…and here she went to make a fool of herself.

Then again, maybe not. It might work. She wouldn’t know if it would work until she tried it...and who dares, wins… Right?

“I think there’s a lot that can be said about hard work. Pushing yourself to your limits,” she said conversationally as she ran her left hand, her ring finger, slowly from one side of her waist to the other. Right through the thin line between bumps as she flexed them into perfectly obvious visibility.

“Self-improvement for the sake of it, just because you can.”

“Oh-huh…” He replied faintly, bringing that smile right back up onto her lips as he did.

“My job requires a certain level of fitness in order for me to be effective. Something just above the local SWAT teams in terms of intensity at the least. Of course, as one of the first Wards…” A finger flick against her stomach caused a dull thud to sound and Moss to flinch. “I guess you could say that I knew the importance of a healthy body better than most...or maybe I’m just saying things?” She looked up just in time to see Moss’s eyes nervously flicker away from her body. A light sheen of sweat had built up on his forehead while she’d been away and the clean-cut lines of his short, black hair just made it stand out all the more. “What do you think?”

“I...Uh… I think… I’m definitely thinking of something, yeah.”

She had him tongue-tied and thinking of sports. That was better than almost any compliment he could have given her...almost. But now, time for the clincher.

“Want to touch?”
As his back went ramrod straight, a small part of her brain realized that she might have been just a bit too drunk. Tipsy, maybe, as she began to feel something she hadn’t felt in a long time.

Fear. The pain of rejection. She’d survive, yes. Her attraction to him didn’t define her...but going back to feeling like she’d had at the start wasn’t something that she was looking forward to. Disappointment was never fun...and she swore that the impending doom was burning away some of the buzz.

Some people didn’t like muscles. Some people didn’t enjoy scarring, which she most definitely had...but oh well. If he didn’t like it, he didn’t like it. She couldn’t do anything about it.

“... Huh.” Moss asked slowly as he brushed a hand over his head, the bristles on it being moved making her hair stand on end. Him standing up, just before he started walking towards her just made that even worse. “Are you sure about this?”

And just like that. The fear evaporated.

“Very,” She said, trying to keep her voice level as she looked up at him through lowered eyelids, the bandana over her mouth taking away more than a few of her options in expressing her interest...that she could think of. It had been a while. “Seeing is nice and all but, if you really want to understand something…”

She held her breath, whatever she’d been about to say completely lost as he knelt in front of her. Scanned her, every inch of the visible flesh on her face in a way that had her olive cheeks lighting up with a blush. Her heart stuttering in her chest at the surprising amount of intimacy that came with it as he, gently, ran a warm thumb over her side.

“You have to touch it,” He finished for her with a low rumble. Like rolling thunder, the feeling of pure bass shaking you down to your bones. Peaches, the minor bite of alcohol on his breath a soft and inconsequential underlay to his blind exploration of her body, now as stiff and tense as whipcord while his eyes never left hers. “You have to take the time to know it. Like this.” He brushed one of her scars, just under her arm, and he stopped. “Tell me about this one.”

… Was he trying to kill her? It felt like it, with how fast her heart beat now. Like a rabbit’s, scared out of it’s wits.

“That one is sort of recent...” She answered, proud of how solid her voice was as he traced the mostly healed wound. Safe to touch, if still a little red. If she hadn’t known any better, she’d have assumed that she wasn’t internally screaming. “Got it just before you showed up.”

“It’s obvious,” He said, only to pause and pull back when she hissed when he pressed down just a little harder, the heat of his thumb sinking into the muscle like a warm bath. “Are you alright?”

“It’s...fine,” She reassured him before she trailed off, slightly confused at the lack of hurt that came with his touch. A pleasant one, seeing that this one ached if she just walked or sat wrong. “It can be a little sensitive sometimes.” She continued, not quite believing what she was saying. “That’s all.”

“Hmm...” Was the only sound Moss made, clearly too busy tracing the stitch marks on her side to really add any input...that, or he was waiting for her to continue talking.

That reminded her... He’d asked her how she’d got it, right?

“You can thank Hookwolf for that one. Hellhound got him riled up one day, attacked one of his dog fighting rings, and we had to clean it up. When offered the chance to come quietly, well...” She shrugged. “He decided that the best course of action was to pick a fight with the law instead.”
“He’s a Nazi. Bad judgment is sort of a prerequisite.”

She laughed, honestly laughed at that. It was nice. It had been far too long since she could just relax.

“You aren’t wrong. When he cut me, Armsmaster was already there to take him down. I swear I’m still blinking the spots out of my vision from how brightly he lit the bastard up. Some kind of super-taser.” She giggled, then lowered her voice. “He hadn’t even tested that yet, you know? He was pissed that I’d got hurt.”

“I know that feeling,” Moss muttered darkly, his grip tightening slightly on her waist.

A light flick on the nose made her laugh as his nose scrunched up with the shock. “Quit it. That was a while ago and he got what he deserved.”

“... Right.” He nodded as he started feeling a few more legacies of her job. He didn’t look, not even once, but he was unerring when it came to finding them...had he memorized where they all were with just that one look? “Right...”

Before he’d even run out of parts of her to touch, her hands were already at work. Pulling at the buttons of her shirt when it became too uncomfortable to pull it up anymore, thanks to the fabric bunching up...and she was starting to get mad. Frustrated, definitely.

And, with those two feelings backing her up along with the old adage of fortune favoring the bold, she decided to deal with the problem in the most direct way possible...and it seemed to work. Moss didn’t even seem to notice the buttons flying everywhere, his eyes now the size of dinner plates as he took in the view.

“You can thank Leviathan for this one,” She said as if nothing had changed, all while rubbing her left breast unconsciously. The half dollar sized divot in it made the reason as to why obvious. “His water echo hit the Space Needle, the bastard. Enough to cause shrapnel to rain down on my position, along with several others. As the only one injured, even if impaled, that was chalked up as an overwhelming success.”

“I woke up a week later in the Hospital and only realized how close I came to dying when someone brought out what had got me. A piece of metal lodged fractions of an inch away from an aorta. I didn’t undergo proper surgery until a few days after the attack due to the number of injured and Panacea having fallen unconscious from exhaustion hours ago. It took twenty hours to get out.” She snorted. “I still set off some of the more sensitive metal detectors on the Rig, if you can believe it... That’s nothing special though. Fillings do that too... Tinkertech is like that.”

She looked up at Moss, this time to see him staring at that scar like it had personally offended him. “And you can touch it too, you know?”

His teeth clicked together audibly from behind his closed mouth as he began to work his jaw while he thought that over. Hemming and hawing until she decided to end that as well, by taking his hand and placed it directly onto her. Pulling at it until it fell on her breast...and she shuddered. Enjoyed the moment and soaked in the heat, her hands on top of his the entire time...a time that ended far too soon; lasted just for a moment as she brought up the fortitude required for her to go all in.

Quid pro quo. Tit-for-tat. She knew his face. She knew his name...so...

Her heart, somehow, sped up further yet as, with more than a little trepidation, her hands up. Around. To the back of her head where, with fumbling fingers, she undid her bandana and let it fall. “This
one came from one of my first nights out,” She said, amused by just how much bigger his eyes had become as she ran a finger along the almost invisible scar running left to right across her lips. “This was before the Ward program had anything resembling protocols or standards.”

“It was just us. Just three dumb kids in Halloween outfits wandering the streets. Getting candy. Having fun. You know, kid stuff…but we turned a corner, and startled someone. Someone younger than we were, the little punk. A quick draw of the knife and I was bent, hands over my mouth and wondering what had just happened. Me...Mouse Protector had tackled him and was savaging his legs, all while Armsmaster was already smacking him with his very first Halberd. The poor kid was crying, apologizing for everything.” She shook her head.

“I didn’t even press charges. It was hard to when all I had were a couple of butterfly bandages and he couldn’t see through the black eyes they gave him.” She snorted with a nostalgic look on her face. “I probably should have though. He messed up my classic good looks.”

“And, yet, you’re still beautiful.” He interrupted, clearly amused. “Funny how that works.”

She was his now, just with that. He was hers. Just for today. Just for right now…but that was the truth of it as she saw it.

She could see it in his grin. In her own reflection, the mirror of his eyes as he cupped her face and lifted her chin… Gave her a kiss, the taste of peaches and him as a full body shiver hit. A natural consequence of the lightning that resulted from the first touch of their lips against the other. The electric current, using her spine like Jacob's ladder to scatter her thoughts and set her core ablaze… No. That was far too tame.

She was crashing. Burning. Her little game gone completely off the rails as he continued to play with the breast she had offered to him.

He was impossibly gentle. Nowhere near as rough as she’d (hoped? Feared?) imagined him to be as a hand large enough to palm the entirety of a breast, a tit larger than Hannah could ever hope to have, found itself content to continue in its earlier play. Tracing and prodding and, just the once, pulling at a nipple without a care in the world even as she pushed herself into it with a needy whimper...and she came to a realization.

He’d barely done anything. He hadn’t even started to do what he could do and, yet, she was just inches away from orgasm. Just a nudge away from a release that she’d been waiting for since the first time they’d met…and that was terrifying. Gratifying. Both. She had no idea if he’d be able to knock her unconscious, to force her into her yearly sleep a couple of months early...but, once again, fortune and the bold.

That, or just the unbearably horny. That might have been it. It wasn’t like that didn’t have its place in the old stories…

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As soon as I got home, Lisa was going to get it. I wasn’t sure how she was going to get it or when, but she was going to get it. Not in a fun way either, seeing as that would just encourage her. Actually, fuck it. We were going couch shopping, first thing when I got back, just so she could be banished to it for a good part of a week. Then, after that, we’d go and do a bunch of things that I liked to do but she hated. You know. Just for starters.
Gender equality was a thing, alright? I thought so and Hannah seemed to agree as she pawed at the buttons of my shirt, thick discs of good plastic that she couldn’t quite get a grip on. Understandable, seeing as they’d been made for someone with much bigger hands...but, when she paused and gave the front of it a questioning tug, something had to be done before she did something...rash.

I’d seen what she’d done to her own shirt. Room keeping would be finding buttons for days. Even if it had been hot as hell from my perspective, having it happen to me wasn’t something I was looking forward to...this shirt was the most expensive thing I’d ever worn in my life. More expensive than that old Rolex I’d used to wear before I’d changed...and it had been a gift.

I missed it. Hadn’t realized it till now, but I did. I was going to have to pick up another one, I guess. Just something to help me keep my mind on the prize.

I began to pluck at my shirt with a single hand, the pop of the buttons going off in the closest thing to a staccato as I beat her to the punch. Something that she wasn’t at all put out about as she slipped her hands into the gap of my button up and started to feel me up directly. With both hands on both sides of my chest in a way that wouldn’t have been out of place when it came around for me to stop teasing her and return the favor.

… It was nice to feel wanted, as expected. The day that changed was the day I died.

As soon as the last fastener was done my shirt was thrown to the side. To where, I had no idea. Didn’t really care either, beyond the fact that it was somewhere safe as I broke the kiss and pulled Hannah up to her feet; the lack of a squeal when I swept her off her off of them right after was unexpected. The sort of thing that pattern recognition, Pavlov if you wanted to be (metaphorically) exact, had taught me to expect whenever I did this sort of thing.

Sweeping a girl off their legs tended to make them weak in the knees. That Hannah had just let out a startled gasp, a delighted coo, and put her arms around my neck while I carried her to bed was different from what I was used to...and I liked it. Don’t get me wrong. I enjoyed some noise and a little kicking before getting down to business; it was just that there was nothing wrong with a little dignity from time to time. Surety. That feeling that I wasn’t the only one that knew what they wanted.

The other girls were getting better about that sort of thing but, sometimes, they just fell apart. Even if they were, all in all, legal, no matter what Lisa had let me think for the first month we’d been together, they were still growing. Still coming into themselves and finding their place in the world. Superpowers could only go so far when it came to that sort of thing...and Hannah was showing why that was in spades, right off the bat.

What mattered here, I think, was that she had experience...the sort that came through dealing with life and all its ups and downs. Not the other kind of experience, of course. I couldn’t speak for her in that case...didn’t really know anything about that, now did I? And, even if I had, that wasn’t my place… Anyway, her two decades of heroics were showing and I had to get my pants off before I started testing its integrity. That—

When I laid Hannah down she put her weapon aside, glowing green and shifting, onto the nightstand. That it ended up as a knife didn’t escape me.

—or she did it for me. She wasn’t looking all that picky about it happened. Not exactly a tough choice to make for me though, if I wanted to be able to leave this place under my own power and with my modesty, mostly, intact.

‘Mostly’ was as much as I could hope for, really. At some point, I’d come to recognize that clothing
was an almost ephemeral concept in my daily life and had, somewhat, come to terms with it. One didn’t go around in commando while wearing tight spandex and ‘capris’ shorts if they were completely cockshy, after all...that was no longer something I could afford though. There was a face to me now, a reputation that wouldn’t be helped by me sporadically flashing the locals.

The pants came off, faster and easier than the shirt had, showing exactly where Lisa’s mind had been when she’d commissioned them as Hannah’s eyes visibly lit up. Memorably. I didn’t get much time at all to categorize it for what it was, anticipation and satisfaction before she kicked her pants off...but whatever. I knew what I’d seen and another look wasn’t going to change anything.

She was waiting and I was stalling. The man in me, the orc, both, were screaming at me to jump into this situation I was in head first. It seemed that an attraction to strong, fit women was, if you weren’t a totally insecure little bitch, universal. So, with every part of me now in total agreement about what I should do, I continued to hold onto the initiative for all it was worth.

I stepped forward, got onto the bed, and kneeled in front of a languidly reclining Hannah. Laid back on a hill of pillows with a thread count in the thousands with her arms at either side of her, looking a great deal like what I imagined a queen would look like even as her legs parted before me. Strong, confident. Helpful in an almost patronizing manner as I kept pressing on and into her space. I towered over her. Pushed even further, far as I could go until she was holding her thighs up by her ears and my cock could flop down and slap right onto her slit...if we both weren’t still wearing our underwear.

Underwear with a matching set of damp spots, right on the front for much the same reason.

She was so incredibly eager. Maybe even more eager than Lisa had been at her most stressed and desperate. The noble Miss Militia had been aching for this since day one from what I’d understood...and ‘enthusiastic’ was one of the sexiest things a girl could be.

My Orc brain went crazy. Snarling and demanding to know why I hadn’t just given her what she wanted yet, and I couldn’t really think of a good excuse. Especially because of...well. Lisa was first. My first. The bearer of my children and the holder of my purse. We had a bond, a genuine connection, something special... But Miss Militia had an advantage over her. A clear and obvious advantage in one important area. An advantage that Lisa would, as time permitted, eventually grow into but was a long way away from.

This right here, displaying herself for my enjoyment and preening harder than any peacock or bird of paradise, wasn’t a precocious teen that might break if I handled her too roughly (no matter what she thought of her endurance.). This was a warrior. A fighter. A matriarch. An individual who could survive the worst anyone could ever throw at her. Who had survived the worst anyone could throw at her and was carrying the scars to prove it.

The dull roar of blood began to sound in my ears. Like the ocean but heavier. Deeper. A great deal hotter as I reached for my partner for the night with no more compunctions about what I was about to do. There was absolutely no reason to not fuck her for as long and hard as I could possibly manage, was there? She was an eager...just waiting to be claimed. All I had to do was reach out and…

Take my goddamn underwear off. Right. Down, boy. Lisa would kill me if I tore up some of the clothes she’d just bought me.

I fight down the Orc with some difficulty, keeping my eyes on the prize as I rocked back from a pouting Hannah and pushed my thumbs through the waistband of my briefs. But, funnily enough,
before I could pull them down and actually get rid of the fucking things, Hannah stopped me. Let her legs drop to either side of me, sat up, and put one of her hands on mine; her body pressing tight against mine as she did.

“Please...let me.”

… I was fine with this.

Hannah, taking my silence as permission, rolled over. Got onto her hands and knees right in front of where I was kneeling with her head at crotch-height, mere inches from the bulge in my surprisingly durable underwear...and she stared. Long and hard, burning that cloth covered mass into her already perfect memory...before she closed the distance. Turned those inches of separation into nothing at all when she fell forward. Letting gravity take the wheel as she guided herself, unerringly, directly into my sack with her face with a nearly silent and definitely guttural, “Fffu...uhck.”

Her tongue darted out, seeking the source of her excitement in the most primal possible way...only for her to suddenly twitch backward with a cough and a sound that lightly reminded me of a cat with a hairball as she started picking cotton strands off of her tongue.

I couldn’t help the laugh that came up because of that. I just couldn’t. I’d never been all that good at hiding when I was happy or amused or excited. It was one of my flaws. Feeling all those good feelings at once was just the stuff that pushed me over the edge from a smirk into full-blown laughter. The sort to make the olive tone of her skin turn a shade darker with a blush as, with a light-hearted scowl, she spat one more time, hooked her fingers into the front of my boxer briefs, and pulled them down.

When my dick sprung out of its cage like a pissed off python with an extremely fortunate case of gigantism, she was ready for it. As ready as anyone could ever be when something like that happened anyway. What that meant, in this case, was that, instead of taking it to the chin like a champ, like a few people that I knew would have done (Amy had some fight to her, I’d admit) she’d dodged. Flicked her head to the side and twisted her torso like a boxer whiffing a jab, the sound of air being displaced and all, only to be there when it came back from saying hi to my gut.

“Oh fuck, oh god, was that too much? Did I push over his comfort zone? Was that too far under his
comfort zone? I have no idea! He’s just staring at me and he hasn’t said anything and he smells and tastes and feels so fucking good what do I do?!

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—and I was going to have a lot of fun showing her just why that was.

When three people were just barely enough to take the edge off of me while giving everyone time for their own lives and interests… Hannah was really going to get it. Really no other way to say it than that. The relatively gentle hand I was using to work her panties down, getting over her muscled thighs and as far as the knees before I had to push her over to get the rest, was a clear enough sign of my intentions and what I was going for.

A good blow, much like the one that Hannah looked like she had been about to get into before I’d interrupted her as rudely as I had, was all well and good. Great, actually, but it was the sort of thing that you did when you had time. We were busy people. There was a war going on and, from what I remembered, she was still on the clock. Having Armsmaster track her all the way here, into my room while in the middle of a deeply intimate moment did not sound like how I wanted to end the day.

“Hey! I’m back from the gift store! I’ve got gifts! Dibs on the chocolate!” Vista called out cheerily, making the both of us freeze as we were suddenly confronted by one of the major issues that came with being responsible for children. “… Wait. Where’d you guys go? And what’s that smell?”

The lack of privacy, or tact when that privacy was invaded, was a killer.

I closed my eyes and swore. Internally. Hannah, in contrast, was happy to make up for the deficit as she slid out from under me and slipped her pants back on. Pretty much the same thing I was doing, if only quicker because

“And why is there clothes on the…floor…” Vista, who had been rummaging around in the living room up to that point, went completely silent for a long while. A good twenty seconds at the least. “Do you guys need a moment?”

“That would be nice,” Hannah called back, her voice tight and her already deep blush now a full body condition thanks to us being found out. “Come back in ten minutes.”

“Sure. Can do.” Vista coughed, loudly, and then there was silence once more.

A silence that only lasted as long as it took for Hannah to write something out onto a note, give me a kiss on both cheeks, and shove that note into one of my hands.

“My home address and number,” She growled, her tone pure disappointment and the set of her lips the picture of frustration. “If I don’t see you tonight, so help me…” With that done with, she forced her hand, the hand carrying her underwear, into one of my pockets. That it was empty when she pulled it out was nowhere near subtle…and the dry cleaning bills were going to be horrendous. Oh well, Lisa’s mess, her problem. “I’ll hunt you down like a dog and take you on the streets. I’m not joking. Don’t forget.”

“Y-yeah.” I nodded, fist in front of my mouth as a part, deep inside of me, started screaming with rage…and maybe a little curiosity, wondering just what she would do if I didn’t show… No. That was fucking stupid. Shut up, orc brain. Your ideas are shit. “I’ll see you then.”

Fuck my life. I was going to be feeling an ache for days.
Chapter 34

So. This was it. The start of my becoming part of something bigger than myself. Something better...ish, than my solo, old-fashioned manly ways. Definitely something different, considering all prior acts of daring-do and brutalization had been done under the banner of self-defense and keeping Lisa and I in the style we were accustomed.

Well, that she was accustomed to.

I was, admittedly, used to much poorer living conditions. I wasn’t complaining about how things were now, or anything, but it really was a different world on the other side of the tracks. Still though. As long as I had my way, there wasn’t going to be any of that elitism shit in my house, material or otherwise. No sir. If we were going out to eat, we were going out to eat at a Fugly’s or something. Caviar was for the fucking birds and there was no difference between a twenty dollar steak and two-hundred dollar steak and... I missed meat.

… I was stalling. I knew I was. The change in clothes to something cheaper, and easier to move in, as well as the extra pair of such just in case what I was wearing met a grisly end, had been understandable. If Hannah was anything like Victoria was, then it was actually kinda necessary. The thing was though, staring at someone’s house from across the street for ten minutes wasn’t necessary...and I needed to suck this up before Hannah decided that she wasn’t going to wait any longer... Or someone called the cops. That was always a possibility.

I’d looked into her eyes when she’d told me that she’d hunt me down like a dog. She hadn’t been kidding...and, even if I couldn’t speak for her, I really wasn’t feeling up to my face appearing on a celebrity porn site somewhere. My heart wasn’t ready for that kind of attention. Hell, I could barely handle what attention I was already getting. Most watched Cape Blog fucking what? Damn it, Lisa, you don’t just tell that to someone without preparing them! I have anxiety and you made it even worse...and I was stalling again. Fuck.

Plastering a smile onto my face that might have been a little more practiced than any smile should have been, I power walked across the thankfully empty street at a pace that would have, on a normal person, probably have been as good as a full out run. A heavy jog at the least as a lull in traffic, foot or otherwise, gave me the opening I needed to quit being such a bitch and make it to my destination...and it wasn’t much to look at. Just a small two-story with a white and black paint job that didn’t need replacing for another couple of years. Completely unassuming. Normal even.

It was the most intimidating thing I’d ever seen that hadn’t been directly attached to Lisa and one of her less sensible plans. If there hadn’t been so much riding on this, I might have cried a little. Instead of doing that though, I forced a stiff upper lip on my face, put my head up and shoulders back, and pounded the pavement like my feet were made of lead. Strong, aggressive, a real go-getter. I was here for a reason and I wasn’t going to leave until that reason no longer existed.

I was here to fuck. For America. For the dream. For the land of the kinda free and the really, really big...or something like that. It sounded like something that Hannah would appreciate from me, so that was my mission. Nothing more, nothing less.

I gently rapped my knuckles against the door, the sound that resulted from such more like an outright pounding. Twice, and in rapid succession, before I looked down at myself to see if I was still presentable. Then, I winced when I saw that I’d played up the ‘feet like lead’ angle a little harder
than I should have, the proof of such being the spiderweb cracks in the concrete just under my feet. Some part of me realized I’d need some stand-in for shoes, if only for presentability.

I didn’t look back, of course. I’d just see more of the same and it would make me feel bad. Not much point there except if, you know, feeling bad was what I wanted to do. Which I didn’t… God help me, how was I even still alive?

I waited a couple of minutes. Just looking around. Turning my head slightly from side-to-side as I scratched the back of one of my calves with a foot. Normal waiting stuff, including the growing urge to either peek into a nearby window to see if anyone was home or to just, you know, *leave*. The only thing that kept me waiting, besides the threat of getting myself hogtied and used like I was a super realistic sex doll by a sexually frustrated lady of war, of course, was that I could hear movement. *Feet*. Shuffling, slamming drawers. Someone running around in there, just out of sight…and I felt better. Instantly.

That was the sound of someone who was dealing with things worse than you were. If I was nervous, she was most likely inches away from outright panicking and then hiding under the bed until I went away. That, or someone who had just realized that their house was a total pigsty and they needed to clean it all within the space of five minutes or less. It put me more at ease than I realized at first, knowing that she didn’t have it as collected as she seemed either.

It was nice to know that I wasn’t alone in being an awkward mess. Simple.

Approaching footsteps, purposeful even, snapped me out of any thoughts of home before they even really started. The chances of it happening again anytime that day went up in smoke when the front door flew inwards and my eyes tried to pop out of their head so that they could get a closer look at Hannah… Hannah and what she was *wearing*...if it could even be called ‘wearing’.

I hadn’t even known that they *made* tank tops that small. Tank tops small enough to show the very beginnings of the undersides of her perfectly tanned, perfectly shaped, dusky and large breasts. To draw the eye to a woman’s torso and limbs, showcasing that the woman currently wearing it had a body that might as well have been made of stone. All sharp lines and contours, broken up only by the rounding of her chest and the curve of her hips where and when it mattered most to accentuate her femininity.

And it was *camo-patterned*… *Freaking camo*.

My eyes drifted further downward. Down to her stomach and the heavy separation of muscle there, her abs flexed for presentation. Further yet to the thin, black strip of fabric at her waist and crotch whose ambitions at being underwear, or anything that could slow me down, had found themselves forever out of their reach by virtue of being little more than tooth floss…and…and it just wasn’t *fair*.

It wasn’t fair to my Orc programming. It wasn’t fair to *my* programming. It wasn’t fair to the programming of everyone and anyone who was *remotely* attracted to women! She was, well…*sexy*.

… And neither was all of that fair to my shorts, for that matter. I could feel the ticking of fibers popping against my skin when my dick decided to skip half-chub entirely and go all the way to full. That I hadn’t been hit by vertigo could only be attributed to the shot of sexually-charged adrenaline that had just hit me right in the heart.

I was going to hit that. I was going to wreck that. I was going to *ruin* that like God ruined Sodom and Gomorrah, so help me…
“My eyes are up here,” She said in good humor, the sound of her voice, loaded with a confidence I was pretty sure she wasn’t actually feeling, all I needed to tear my eyes away to look her in the face.

That, I had to admit, was a feat of sheer willpower that I hadn’t thought myself capable of...but I was glad that I’d been wrong. Her face, if not as prepared as her outfit had been, was no less breathtaking. Her loose hair was almost wild behind her head, with thin strands of it stuck to her forehead from a tiny amount of sweat.

Whatever makeup had been applied had been done with a steady but inexperienced and hurried hand. Her mascara was slightly runny. Her lipstick hadn’t been fully blotted...and the only thoughts I had in my head involved the various ways I could make that better. Most of them involving my cock, of course.

“Why don’t you come in?” She stepped to the side with a flutter of her lashes, her voice husky with anticipation as I took the invitation for what it was and fit myself through her far too small door... A definite metaphor for what was about to happen that I couldn’t have missed if I was blind and dumb. “Make yourself comfortable?”

Whatever Lisa had paid for my briefs, it wasn’t nearly enough. That they’d hung on this long had been a miracle... But, of course, miracles don’t last forever. Only as long as you needed them to, a time that was coming fast... That Hannah just kept on walking instead of doing what I’d expected her to do, leading me further into the house and acting as if nothing had changed even as she walked off with a little more sway in her step, was new.

… I liked new. I was pretty sure this was going to go places, yeah, but I just had to say it. Not having someone grinding on me as soon as the pants came off was kind of refreshing in a novel sort of way. Definitely different… Did I already say I liked different? I forgot. The dusky-toned ass I was following to places unknown was kind of making it hard to think beyond some very particular and narrow lines of thought.

I could bounce quarters off of that ass. Half-dollars, even. An ass I could be happy with just grabbing and kneading, an ass that I was going to love watching slam into - or slamming into me, however things worked out.

“I’m pretty sure that it is customary to offer hot coffee for this sort of thing,” Hannah mused as our journey ended in the middle of her living room...and forced me to reveal how much of a nerd I really was as I fought back a puerile smile… I felt old now. Old, and immature. That was an interesting feeling. “But, you see…” She turned around to give me a slow shrug. “I’m all out of coffee.” A crooked grin. “Such a shame.” And her arms were raised high over her head, reaching for the ceiling as her top rode up to her collarbone and stuck there when she let them drop. “Is there anything I can do to make it up to you?”

Women. They drove me to drink.

“... I can think of a few things,” said I with a roll of a neck, the sound of bones popping as I took a careful seat on her couch... Bones, or the legs of said couch as it took on a half-ton of weight. Semantics. “But, seeing as you’re hosting me, I don’t want to be rude.”

“Like making the women do all the work, do you?”

“I prefer to think of it as handing you the lead.” I leaned forward in my seat; elbows on my thighs
and hands clasped, amused as all hell as I noted that, mask or not, her eyes continued to crinkle at the corners when she smiled. “But, of course, I understand that some people aren’t able to handle that. I didn’t take you for the type.”

“So you think I can’t take charge?”

“I don’t know,” I started in challenge, “how about you tell me?”

She said nothing. Did nothing but give me a look. That look that women gave you when you’ve just said something stupid and were about to take you to task for it.

The foot that came smashing flat and into my right pec hadn’t been what I’d expected at all. It was enough of a shock that her legitimately strong hit, a blow that had about as much of an effect on me as getting hit by throw pillow, pushed me back into my seat. That she rode that shock all the way down, in no way looking as if she were going to lose her balance even as her center of gravity shifted with her foot still on my chest, just made an already hot thing even hotter...and damn if this wasn’t a good view.

That thong of hers was riding up pretty high right now...and I was thinking that letting the lady take command, in this case, wouldn’t be so bad. Nothing wrong with a change in pace. I didn’t have to be in control every time...and I don’t think I would be for as long as she could keep that fire.

“I’ve always preferred showing to telling,” Hannah answered coolly, putting words to her aggressively physical riposte as she ground her heel into my chest. “I’ve come to learn that the lessons I teach stick around for longer that way, you filthy tease.” Her lips quirked up into a tight smile, the thin scar that ran there all that was needed to send a thrill through me. Sex and danger, all the same coin. “No one is getting in the way this time, big boy. No one is going to save you from me.”

… Well now. Definitely not bad at all.

“Oh, my.” I smiled back, the very act carrying all the danger it needed to. If it bothered her, she didn’t let it show. Not even a little. “The things you’re saying… Should I be worried about my virtue?”

She snorted, snorted at the very idea I had any virtue at all as she took her foot off me and planted her hands on her hips. “Lose the shorts.” … Or maybe it was because I had had the temerity to ask something so obvious? “And I’ll keep control until the sun goes down. What do you have to say to that?”

“Oh. Not much. Just two words,” I sassed back with a drawl as I hooked my thumbs into my shorts, rolled them down and kicked them off to somewhere dark and forgotten. My cock, now suddenly free, slapped against my stomach with a sound not all that different from a drum getting hit; a dull thud. “Yes, Ma’am.”

“... If I didn’t think that you’d just break out of anything I tried to use to pin you down, I’d have gone and hogtied you by now, funny man,” Hannah, the light in her eyes the farthest away from offended that I could imagine, threatened casually as she dropped her panties in delayed mirror to what I’d done, dark corner and all. “But enough talk. We’re past that now. Well past that.” With a quick hop that had her standing on my thighs and just above my knees, she shooed my hands off with a slap before I could lay a single one on her. “You’ve got a dick like an unbroken horse and I’m going to treat you like one. Understand?”
Coming from someone without a Brute rating, that should have been laughable. Should have been, if not for the ever-present amorphous green blob at her back, shifting from shape-to-shape and never sticking to one for longer than a second. Going through its options. Thinking. Scheming. Plotting. Deciding just how it was going to fuck my shit up today in the context of this conversation...and if it turned into the Penetrator or something, I was gone.

Had more than enough of that in college...and the relief I felt when the shifting weapon stopped at a bullwhip was shocking in its depth. That she didn’t use it when she had the chance, instead being perfectly happy to look me in the eye as she stepped over my dick to press herself flat against my chest, was barely anything to comment on in comparison... That she went then went back and down, leading that drop with her ass to lower my erection with her weight so that she could take a seat on me, was.

Velvet soft. Wet. The feeling of rock-solid muscle moving under a layer of fat that, to me, was just the right amount for her to have.

A twitch of my hands, restless with her so close, got me a warning look.

With her legs tucked in and knees on my thighs as she took her seat near the middle of my shaft… I was starting to get an idea of what she was planning to do. And, there was very little she could do to be any more obvious that she was getting payback for whatever I might have done. The start of her rocking and rolling her hips over the throbbing veins and pulsing mass of my erection, just confirmed it.

She’d just committed us to the path that was the messiest and most teasing sort of foreplay. Intercrural sex. The good ol’ slip-and-slide, with me taking the place of the slide. For now, and until she finished, I was primarily here as a vent for her frustrations, it seemed. A living, breathing sex toy with accessories included...with kung-fu grip and powerful thrusting action, to be exact. That was my thing...and hands off, in this case, was going to be a special kind of hell.

That was kind of the point though, wasn’t it?

She hadn’t been all that coy about how this was going to be, about what her plans were for the evening and how I fit into them. I was her unruly steed, she was my rider, and that bullwhip of hers could get put into use at any time she felt like it… For someone that I’d taken as a submissive through-and-through, she was proving to be surprisingly aggressive. The Orc in me was laughing, roaring, stomping his feet at the sheer challenge this woman represented… And I probably should have finished with getting my psych degree before I started analyzing someone that I’d effectively just met today.

Her fingers, thin yet calloused in that way you’d only ever see on soldiers and athletes, touched upon my collarbone. Spread out on the very lowest parts for stability. For the intimacy that came with the touch of hands on flesh; a different sort from sex in and of itself as she continued to move her waist into me. Back and forward, forward and back, the cadence of her breathing following as close as it could with her every move as she refused to meet my eyes...and if I’d thought she was wet before, she was positively dripping now.

It took no time at all for the ‘slip’ in slip-and-slide to make itself apparent. Half a minute maybe. A minute and change at most for whatever rough friction there might have been to disappear in its entirety, the only feelings left on my end being the sensation of her lower lips dragging along and clinging to my skin, along with the slowly cooling layers of drying feminine moisture. Moisture that
was quickly building up, starting to run down my length in steaming, actually *steaming*, lines and streams.

I’d never had that happen before. Not that I’d noticed anyway, even it explained some things. Things like how quickly the smell of sex (a smell that seemed a hell of a lot better than it had any right to be these days.) filled any room I was in and how it refused to completely leave, no matter what we did to try and remove it. It had been *steamed in*. Good luck getting that out anytime soon...especially seeing as I’d been leaking all over the upholstery of this couch since before Hannah had even started...and that reminded me.

Not all of the fluid was hers. Some of it was mine, leftovers from that short period of time where my cock had been free to stand and ooze in preparation for Hannah’s incoming ravaging. I could see it in the thickening froth, the sexual lather building up between our bodies as a milky spider web in the relative clarity of her nectar. Like oil and water, refusing to mix...and then she gasped, and even that was gone. Overtaken by a small tide of femcum that refused to stop completely, thanks to her refusing to stop at all.

Pushing past what I could see was a vision-flickering orgasm, something that I’d learned to identify on sight thanks to so much practice, like it had just been a speed bump...she rode it out like a champion. With a deep inhale to suck back the scream as my fingers dug into the fabric of the couch like it was made of marshmallow, yes, but she pushed past it with an effort of will equivalent to my own at that moment as I resisted getting ahold of her and showing her what a *real* orgasm was. To turn her into a shrieking, twitching, mindlessly cumming mess of a woman that had forgotten what it meant to be a human.

… Wait. No. Too mindbreaky for the moment. Pull back a little. Bad orc. Bad. Not on the first date. That was more of a fourth date thing.

I finished kicking that idea away like a bad football when a now panting Hannah lifted her head to look up at me. Sweaty. Tired…but unbroken and unsatisfied, even as the red glare of my eyes reflected off of hers. Then, on shaking legs and without a word, she stood up. Separated from me with a wet *schlick*...and a great many takeaway strands, hanging from her crotch in a thick liquid, snapping veil while yet more of said liquid visibly trickled down her legs.

“Are you trying to make a complete mess out of me...or is this normal for you, big guy?” She asked with a lick of her lips and a grin, clearly trying to compose herself after her attempts at teasing me had led to a thigh-melting ‘O’, the gentle heaving of her splendid, caramel colored breasts keeping me entertained enough to let this play out... Even if that whip was still making me a little anxious.

“What can I say? I’m a complete slob when it comes to gorgeous women. We all have our failings,” I teased, waggling my eyebrows the entire time in order to show that I was just being playful...which made the sudden, stinging whip-crack across my heavily muscled abs a complete surprise...

Making a sound that was most definitely not a very deep squeak, I looked down at the thin line of slightly darker green skin that Hannah had just marked me with. It didn’t really hurt but...wow, she was *not* playing around.

“I see. That does sound like something you would do, just because you could.” Her tone was steady despite her obviously hyper-aroused state but, by the way her heavily dilated eyes watched in fascination as the minor scuff on my green flesh faded away like something that could have been mistaken for time-lapse photography, made the implicit lie of her calm delivery very apparent. “Clean me up then, Moss... A big, strong guy like you must be getting hungry by now.”
Before I could formulate a proper rejoinder that made sense with half the blood in my body busy doing important things way down south, the chocolate-skinned heroine stepped up and onto the back of the couch with an athletic little hop. Wrapping the conjured whip behind her own neck as she looked down on me (and can I just say that after towering over everyone and their mother’s for the past few weeks that the change in angle was a very nice change of pace?) Miss Militia reached down with two fingers and spread her bright pink slit wide open for me to see.

Still dripping with our partially combined fluids, it was easy to see how the pleasure-enhancing aspects of my pre had affected her. It caused her clit to swell into a throbbing pearl of desperate feminine need, and the muscles of her lower abs and inner thighs to tighten. Just enough for it to be visible as the scent of her arousal filled my mouth with drool.

If it was anything like it normally was, that was the only response I could have had. Pussy was delicious.

“Do I need to encourage you more? Or do you get the picture?” Tightening her hands on the glowing whip and pulling produced a surprisingly realistic sound of tightening leather. “I suppose if you need yet more of a reason to get to work, I could always-”

Whatever else she’d planned to say would forever be a mystery to me and the world at large as I threw my head forward, mouth open and tongue extended, and dove directly into her exposed snatch with all the ravenous thirst of a man that had been lost in the desert for weeks on end.

Something between a hiccup and a laugh escaped her lips as the woman I was tongue-fucking threw a leg over my shoulder and half stood over me, half sat on my face while I messily gave her the cleaning of her life...and processed the taste. The flavor that, whenever I thought of her, would be right at the forefront of my mind.

She was spicier than Victoria. Not quite as sweet as Lisa, and not nearly as tart as Amy...but it was delicious all the same. I still wanted more either way and, so, I got it. That was all there was to it as the flexible length of my tongue swept the whole of her outer lips and inner thighs clean in seconds; the more important, deeper, parts something I wanted to get to as soon as possible.

In a move that straddled the line between slurping and sucking, a line that was so blurred as to be nearly indistinguishable when I did it, I did my level best to envelope the whole of her sex with my mouth.

Something that might have been an attempt at more words, pleas for salvation or prayers to a higher power, tried to pass through Hannah’s teeth as the single strongest muscle that my body had stole the air from her lungs. All that came out was a series of rapid-fire gasps and gurgling that drove me to greater and greater heights of pussy eating. World-class and around the world. My own form of payback for the teasing she’d put me through.

A hand came down atop my head, grabbing hold of the short hair I’d been growing out in an attempt by her to try and control the intensity of my ministrations...or maybe just so that she wouldn’t fall over from the minor sexual seizure she was currently going through. One or the other.

Looking up at the now trembling body of one of the city’s most stalwart defenders as she slowly came undone was enough to get my already dripping cock to start leaking like a broken faucet. The living room began to fill with an even greater amount of the musky, powerful scent that Lisa told me had most likely caused the hero in my grip to become infatuated with me in the first place... Having
the superpower that was hyper virility was just neat like that, I guess.

“Moss! M-Moss! That’s- Oh, oh-” A spiraling suck directly to her throbbing clit and a rough go at carving the letter ‘A’ big and small into it made her legs go limp and her voice die out before she could complete her thought. It forced me to grab hold of her hips with my hands just to hold her up… Even more or less queening me like this, she wasn’t the one in the driver seat anymore, her time in the spotlight done and gone… and something deep within me smirked at the ease of the reversal.

Then again, this was probably pretty close to what her true plans had been all along. Maybe the domineering act was just her trying to get me to step it up? If I’d learned just one thing from forming a sort of harem (Whether it was mine or Lisa’s could be debated) of superpowered women, it was that I still didn’t understand what girls were planning half the time.

A strong rush of clean, clear, female fluids filled my mouth with the flavor of freedom… Well, freedom flavored pussy anyway, and I slowed my speedy suckling at her canal in order to savor it for a moment or two. Just long enough for the wonderful woman I was devouring to start to compose herself a bit and take a deep breath inward to steady herself as I readied myself to perform some mischief… Namely, waiting for the second before she was about to speak, then shoving every single centimeter of my tongue inside of her that would fit.

In case you didn’t know… that was a lot of tongue.

An explosion of air came from between her still painted lips as I stole the initiative right out from under her. A squeezing inhalation followed as I corkscrewed around inside of her like I was drilling for oil. Her head instantly fell back with a moan as she tried to adjust to the sudden intrusion; an act that by my very nature made that a losing proposition from the start. All she could do from there was hold on for dear life as she was devoured by a starving, provoked monster in the midst of a feeding frenzy.

Her second leg came up. Pawed at me. At my neck. At my shoulders in what I, at first, was an attempt to push me away… until she slipped it over my shoulder. Put it behind my neck and started trying to pull me closer, to push her crotch into my face so that I could get even deeper than I already was.

What she was trying to do didn’t really make much difference in this case (Brute ratings are bullshit and I was already touching on spots no other tongue could have hoped to reach.), but it did let me know in no uncertain terms that, despite having gone entirely nonverbal, Hannah was more than fine with how I’d chosen to approach this particular challenge that she’d set for me. The only downside that I could see was that, between her inability to form coherent syllables and her arched-back posture, I wasn’t exactly getting a lot of feedback here.

The fantastic angle I had on her heaving breasts from below mostly made up for that though. Seriously. How did anyone over the age of twenty stay that perky? It was like magic or something... Whatever the case was, I wanted to see what they looked like bouncing in time with the pounding I was about to lay out for her.

Pulling away from her twitching insides took a minute or so, a minute well-spent as the vice-like grip that her inner walls had on my extra-long tongue did their best to keep me inside... but, soon enough, I managed to escape it. Not without one last goodbye though, the delivering of one last searing kiss to Miss Militia’s throbbing clit that pulled a low and needy growl from her. A growl, and some drunken noises a few seconds later that I was able to recognize as laughter when she sat forward
enough to look down on me and meet my eyes once more.

“T-that was…” She seemed to stall out with a shake of her head, her tired mind trying to think of an appropriate point of comparison for a moment before, with a simple up and down of her shoulders, everything below the neck went limp. “I never even considered…” She trailed off as her now languid form slid down from the seat she’d taken on my broad shoulders, forcing her legs to lift and straighten in yet another show of impressive flexibility.

Hannah’s calves were still pressed to my collarbone when the tip of my raging prick stopped her slow descent. An event that left me with a lusty heroine all of a centimeter from impaling herself on my massive green shaft…and the hope that that was what was about to happen. “We’ll have to do that again sometime. Later.” Her eyes crinkled in that alluring way of hers, the heat behind something as simple as that hot enough to burn. “You still have work to do.”

With a toothy grin (and when you had tusks like mine that was a hell of a thing), I used the grip I still had on her waist to force her womanly hips into the perfect angle for a devastating upward thrust that would spear her wide open with one blow. A cocky wink and the subtle tension in my shoulders made the gorgeous woman in my arms bite her trembling lower lip and try to prepare for what this meeting had been building up to since she’d left the apartment... I let the anticipation grow for a few heartbeats, then bucked my hulking hips up in a sudden hump that could have split a tree stump in half…and missed.

It was an intentional miss, of course, and her reaction was all that I’d hoped for.

Ready as she was for the punishing insertion that would have ruined her for any other man right then, the sudden rush of hot green cock across her lower lips instead of through them caught her completely off guard. My gigantic purple bell-end of a tip slipped past her hard clit with a flicking action that made the once again weak-kneed woman convulse in surprised pleasure, before the return stroke caused her to audibly gasp in one of the strangest mixes of contentment and disappointment I’d ever heard.

“Well, see, here’s the thing about that,” I started, nice and slow as her eyes started to widen with surprise and desperation. “If you want to take it all in one go, no doubt what a tough lady like you would want...” Three more quick thrusts across her dripping slit stole any reply she could have made from her lungs before she had any chance to respond. “We need a little more lube. Just a tad.” The smirk that crossed my lips was so smug that even Lisa would have been impressed…or she’d have just thrown a pillow at my head. With a brick in it. Or not. She liked to keep me on my toes. “I hope you understand.”

A rapid-fire series of meaty slapping noises from the cum-bloated sack that hung just below my Hannah’s rear marked the punishing pace of the front-sided hot-dogging I was subjecting her to. A primal soundtrack, the perfect thing to add to the scene... The situation of her clenching pussy gently squirting and adding yet another layer of lube to my length as I returned her earlier teasing a hundredfold. Then she leaned forward again, pressing her forehead to mine as she did so with a dull clonk of bone against bone.

I thought she might have fainted, up until the point where she opened her eyes. That wild-eyed stare wasn’t the look of someone that had tapped out...and I really hoped that the flash of red in them was just my own eyes reflected in hers.

I wasn’t too sure about that. A problem for another time.
“Stop…” She panted out. “Teasing me. You…” She sucked in a deep breath with a shudder. “Jerk.” Miss Militia’s legs strained and her abs tensed hard enough to become visible as she tried to fight. To slip out of my steel-like grip in an attempt to more or less force herself onto me... but it wasn’t enough. After a minute or so of her struggling to envelop the dick she’d been dreaming of for weeks now into her desperate, hungry pussy she gave up with a tiny wail of disappointment and her whole body going limp once more. “J-just give it to me already, you big green asshole!”

Something dark and primitive in my hindbrain rose up and sniffed the air at the smell of prey. With a shake of my head, I banished those thoughts back into the recesses of my consciousness, promising to bring it back up during an anniversary or something, and decided it was time to stop drawing this out.

She was ready. I was more than that. At this point, I was just punishing the both of us and masochism wasn’t my kink.

“... You know what? Sure. On one condition.”

Her head started bobbing like a broken drinky-bird before the last word was even out of my mouth. Without my hands around to keep her grounded, I had no doubt that she’d have fallen over.

“You don’t get to stop until I get off. That’s it. Not that hard, is it?” What could I say? Getting whipped had made me feel like I needed to take charge of this situation more and, at this point, Hannah was in no state to refuse. True to my assumption, she never stopped agreeing with me. The idea of haggling was probably the last idea that would ever cross her mind. What I was offering to her was more than enough...and kind of what she’d been getting at since the very start. “Thought so.”

Hannah, visibly on the very verge of losing her mind as the bottom of her left eye twitched, dropped all her weight on me the very second I let her go. Every physical ounce of her. Every pound of leverage. Every iota of grace that she still possessed, focused on a single point, right between her legs...and there was resistance, just like there had always been. A struggle that would have passed me by if I’d even blinked, done with when the head lurched inside of her sopping insides with a slick pop and an explosion of musky fluid.

That she didn’t fall over onto my chest, even as her eyes rolled up into her skull, made her the toughest person I knew right then and there.

I didn’t push her beyond that though. I just let her quiver and shake as her orgasms broke over her, no matter how felt about it. No matter how much I wanted to start pounding into the woman on my lap. To grab her hips and truly ruin her...that was fine though. There was always time for a bit of teasing.

“Had enough?” I prodded.

I heard a groan from her, then heard her teeth come together with a hard ‘clack’. One arm tensed, flailed aimlessly for a moment, and then slammed down on my chest. It wasn’t nearly enough to hurt me...but then it splayed open as she pressed that hand into me. Then the other before she pushed, and stabilized herself with bared teeth and trembling muscles

When she raised her head, eyes looking straight into mine without the glaze I was used to, and I could only let my jaw go slack.
She was absolutely furious. She was still clenching around me, still shaking, sweat dripping down her body as she snarled at me…”I. Am. Not. Done,” and growled. She forcibly stilled herself, closing her eyes for a moment.

I didn’t shift but to rest my hands behind my head, tilting it up slightly and raising an eyebrow at Hannah as she swallowed.

Then, her legs tensed, and I felt the pressure increase around my cock. Then was when I realized that the woman I was with wasn’t just impaling herself on me as the other girls would have. No. Gravity was just a supplement here. She was pulling herself down with her thighs, forcibly burying me inside of her body as her fingernails dug into my chest.

I didn’t move. I couldn’t move. Watching this, watching the sheer strength of this woman, was more than I could have asked for... And definitely a top-five contender for the single hottest thing I’d ever seen. Every muscle in her body was under strain but still under her command as, inch-by-inch, she pulled herself down what Vicky had once called the Bitch-Breaker. Not once losing control, not once losing focus as she set her own pace.

She paused halfway down, finally opening her eyes to take a look in between her legs at the length still remaining, a length running with our combined arousal as she continued to work herself down. The other girls had almost broken from just the tip...but here Hannah was, acting as if she was offended that she hadn’t taken me to the hilt yet.

I didn’t say anything, of course, content with watching as her clenching, rippling walls continued to envelop me. I could see the bulge rising in that toned, tight stomach, and I knew that, if her vision hadn’t already gone out, as was likely, she could see it too… The feelings were probably what mattered most here though, in the here and now. How it was getting hotter, tighter, smoother. All signs that experience had taught me how to recognize.

It meant I was starting to reach the end of the line. The very deepest parts of her...and she recognized it too as heavy, deep groans came rolling out of her mouth when the head of my cock nudged her cervix. Pressed itself perfectly against and into that tight ring of muscle as if they’d been made for each other...and there she stopped, still supporting herself even then with narrowed eyes and a sweat-drenched body.

I didn’t even blink when one of her hands came up to pat my cheek.

“T-That’s a good boy…” She managed to slur. “Stay ri-iiii-” She cut off as she trembled around my cock, chest heaving as she came yet again. “-Right there.” Her tongue darted out to wipe away the sweat over her mouth as she replaced her hand on my chest, nearly slipping as she did so when she began to rise, her pussy giving its all to pull me along with her, to keep me lodged as deep in her as it could. She was grunting and groaning with the effort involved, but she still hadn’t broken. Still hadn’t shattered like the other girls had.

Hannah was in control of herself. She knew herself, she wasn’t going to let her own body tell her what to do. The sheer will, the discipline, it was… I can’t even begin to describe it.

Bit by bit, Hannah’s legs straightened as she pushed herself up, her eyes gradually coming unfocused as she worked her way back up to the head. About halfway up was when she started to flag, nearly falling more than once, only for her to push back that weakness and bear it.

When she reached the top, she wriggled her hips. Adjusted her knees. Sucked in a deep breath...and
confronted by the difficulties of trial that she’d taken upon herself. She hung there, panting, thinking...and then she began to whisper. “Alright. T-three…”

… Oh jeez. I think I know where this is going.

“Two.” She breathed again. Swallowed as she tossed a strand of sweat-matted hair behind her head.

I readied myself to catch her if I had to. I wasn’t about to stop her though. This was her ride, after all.

“One.”

And then Hannah slammed her hips down as hard as she could, the distance she’d struggled to take at the beginning now gliding into her. It took all I had not to bust a nut right then and there when she ran into my tip with the force of a freight train… How I didn’t punch into her womb was beyond me, but Hannah’s response to that was nothing short of ecstatic.

And that was what really mattered, wasn’t it?

She didn’t scream, or shout, or make any noise at all. She just stopped, eyes flying wide open and jaw dropping as her face went slack and tears began to roll down the side of her face. It didn’t take long for me to see just the whites of her eyes as she shook, clenching onto me tighter than anyone ever had before while she squirted all over my lower half of my chest, her curling, lashing tongue nearly falling out of her mouth as she did her level best to absolutely break herself on my cock.

She rose and fell again with a choking cry. Not nearly as hard as before as she almost smoothly moved me in and out, eyes fluttering as she subconsciously found her balance. There was no real thought here. Just the sexual equivalent of fight or flight...where she’d chosen to fight. How she was still moving at all, I had no idea...but she was.

Up, and down, up, and down, breasts swaying in time with her motions as she fucked herself through climax after climax, now and then loosing yet another wave of her juices… And I couldn’t help but sit back and enjoy it - the sight of a well-formed woman enjoying herself, allowing herself to relax and find release in the closest thing to heaven on Earth.

I grunted and reached out to her as soon as I felt the pressure begin to build at my base. I was getting close and, hard as it was to believe (ha) she might appreciate the warning.

I didn’t even get close before she slapped my hand away once again, instinctively knowing exactly what I’d meant by that action and refusing it with all her heart. The rolling of her hips became a blur, her doing her best to drive me towards the edge while keeping me as deep inside of herself as possible. It was pretty clear what she wanted - what was in my balls to fill her womb and god, I really wanted that too...but that was too much.

“Hannah. That’s enough,” I said, my voice tense as I reached forward again, this time serious in my attempts to grab her and pull her off even as I lamented what could have been. “You’ve won. So just - get off.” I yelped when the whip made a comeback, cutting across the skin of my chest twice in a flash of green that broke my focus like...like me in a China shop, if a great deal more messy.

Seizing her and pulling her down to the base was reflexive. What I assumed to be an Orc’s response to getting hit, and my sack deciding that now was the time to do its job and pull up into my body. My prick swelled, as good as locking a smugly smirking Hannah into place with my sudden increase in girth...and she said something. Mouthed it at me even as a molten hot deposit of seed came rushing
up my shaft and my vision began to white out from just how hard this nut was going to be. Easily enough to bloat Hannah up like a balloon, to make her look like she was nine-months-pregnant with triplets and had a little bit of an eating problem. Just two words that had me welling up with outrage while this was going on.

“I win.”

And then she slumped forward onto my chest, flush with victory and more semen than some sperm banks (with yet more to come), and my revenge was postponed for another day...and oh, was that day going to be a day to remember.
A sleepy murmur escaped Hannah’s throat. Something that didn’t really mean anything besides her being half-awake before she twitched. She kicked one of her legs, just the once, and made a go at burying her face in the couch cushions; pulling the sheet she’d found herself covered in up to her chin.

The process she went through to make both things happen was surprisingly awkward. And difficult. There was a lot more flailing of feet involved. Some rolling. Those weird little caterpillar jumps that people did when they were trying to get at something they were lying on top of but couldn’t be bothered to get up. She’d drooled on herself too. A lot. Loads even.

Rubbing her face into the seat as she had might have been a bad idea. Hannah could feel it drying in her hair right now, actually...and the smell of food being made a room away wasn’t helping with her problem. Not hurting, but definitely not helping as spit started to build up in her right cheek and the urge to get up and do something about it started to poke at her.

She was hungry...but she’d also just got up from the best sleep in her life. The nap she’d just taken, way ahead of her annually scheduled eight hours, had been completely dreamless. It didn’t sound like much, not dreaming, but when closing your eyes came with a blow-by-blow account of just how you got your trigger event - things changed. She’d ‘forgotten’ just how much fun sleep could be… what real sleep actually was. What it was like to just... rest. Free from all those memories and able to slip off into impossible worlds whenever she liked.

Also, sex. She’d had sex. Dirty, kinky, toes still tingling hours later sex. Yet another first in the last decade and the entire experience had been...something else. Her powers, her ability to remember everything she’d ever seen, heard, or done, was just overkill. Even without it, she’d have never been able to forget.

She’d thought he was unnatural the first time she’d met him. This just proved that her suspicions had been true all along. His Trump rating needed an update, asap...after she pulled herself together. And thought about whether that update was worth the Master/Stranger lockup while things were like they were.

She’d think about it.

Hannah made another limp-muscled roll, this time towards the edge of the couch, and fell out of it with a solid, carpet-dulled thump and a groan. She laid there for a second. Sighed. Forced herself up to her knees with a sheet around her shoulders and the eternal question of bathroom or food in her
head; like a college morning without the lingering headache. Another experience she’d never be able to forget, if only because of just how often her and the toilet bowl had gotten acquainted.

Colin might have been the one to burn out in a never-ending bender, but she’d had her fun as well. She wasn’t boring. Katherine had no idea what she was talking about. So what if she didn’t think that riding motorcycles into pools was fun? That didn’t make her boring. That made her safety conscious.

Getting up and off her knees and onto her feet was a much quicker process than the last. It was all about the momentum in this case...really. If she stopped moving, the chances of her just falling where she was and taking another nap were pretty high right then, and only movement could save her now.

She shuffled along like the living dead, her dilemma resolved as she quickly and quietly made her way to the bathroom while rubbing at her eyes. Taking care of herself was a quick affair, and a moment later she was fumbling around in the medicine cabinet for a box of morning-after pills. There was no telling if she and Moss could even…but it wouldn’t hurt to take some basic precautions. Throwing the pill in and downing it with water straight from the tap and a shudder thanks to the metallic taste that came with it, Hannah blinked blearily at her reflection and then frowned.

Naked as she was, or as good as, there was nothing hiding the mark that had appeared on her abdomen - an elegant, swooping design over her mound that rolled over her hips. Thin, wispy bands of ink-black and grays, twirling and swirling in an elegant, smoke-like design. Her hand brushed over the mark without conscious input and a shiver ran through her...and her eyes widened. She gripped the sink, bit her lip. Counted to ten and forced herself to remember certain facts and figures, attempting to sort her personality out as she checked for holes or things that should have never been.

… Nothing. The field Master-Check didn’t do anything. That didn’t mean the mark was nothing, only that her preliminary check here and now indicated that she wasn’t affected...or that whatever had been done to her was hellaciously subtle. Something that had already put its hooks into her perceptions... Right. Enough of that. It was starting to get hard to breathe.

Dealing with that last issue was easy. She let out a breath, took another and looked back up at the mirror; simple, the mark on her stomach still in the corner of her eye the entire time she did so.

Whatever the case was, she couldn’t do anything about it right then. Not without getting into a fight that she was in no way prepared to handle if he was more of a problem than she’d ever thought; He was making her breakfast, or so it smelled like, and she was starving. What was done had been done. Worrying about it wouldn’t help her keep a clear head or get the taste of sleep out of her mouth.
After winding the sheet into a pretty decent toga, Hannah found herself pleasantly surprised when she recognized just what was being made.

Pancakes. Pancakes were what it turned out to be. Not that it was all that hard to tell, thanks to the sad sight of a hill made of nothing but instant-mix boxes and butter wrappers sitting on the counter… She could also see a bowl of sliced fruit already sitting out, the coffee pot percolating away… Really, it was more than she could have expected to see on a good day, to be fair.

Three MREs a day, instant oatmeal, and office coffee so strong that it was almost a solid did not a homemade meal make.

Moss, somehow hearing her over the sizzling of bacon and the hiss of pancake batter, glanced over his shoulder and gave her a smile. “Morning,” He rumbled. “Hungry? I know I am.”

She felt herself clench slightly in response, and hid the wince as she realized just how sore she was. It was like a jackhammer had just gone through her legs… in a good way. Still, she returned the smile with a murmured ‘morning’, took a ginger seat at the table… and wondered where all the food had come from. Just a little. She already had a decent explanation for it.

He must have run out and gotten the mix while she was asleep, given she’d never got it herself. Unless someone had been refilling her pantry when she wasn’t looking, that was the only option there was. As it was, she had a box of survival rations that were good for the next decade in the closet and some other long-lasting things. Most of her time was spent at work, after all.

She wasn’t home all that often. Or at all. Honestly, this place was only under her name because of tax reasons. She’d needed a place of residence to slap down on the paperwork and they wouldn’t allow her to write ‘office 212, PRT ENE, comfy cot in the supply closet’ like she’d wanted to the first time they’d asked. She’d gotten the home for a song though, so it wasn’t all that bad.

Owning things, being able to say she owned something that she could fall back on if she had to, was nice.

Moss hummed as he worked over that hot stove, a calming, relaxing sound that tickled at parts of her in all sorts of pleasant ways. Not the raw ecstasy of last night. More of a lullaby, coaxing her back to sleep. She closed her eyes for a moment, just to enjoy that. It was nice, to just sit there and soak it in for once. To relax.
Her eyes opened up again as she heard a plate clink down in front of her, and her lips pulled into a more genuine smile as she saw the stack of fluffy, sweet-smelling pancakes with small pieces of fruit sprinkled over the top and drizzled with…strawberry syrup. Welch’s... Maybe Moss liked it on his own, but a part of her suddenly wondered if she should have forced Katherine to be more forthcoming about where she was living and what she was doing.

She’d been quiet lately. That the Nine had been confirmed to be in her area, thanks to the scattered corpses of Ravager, Shatterbird, and Mannequin being found at the scene after Legend had bombed the area, had really shaken her up. That Legend had handed her the relevant bounties hadn’t seemed to help either. Hannah would have to give her a call later. Today. Tell her that a bottle of strawberry syrup had been Hannah’s reminder to do so.

Kat would get a kick out of that. That, and a good five minutes of material if Hannah knew her as well as she thought she did… The sex could stay a secret though. There was always such a thing as too much of a kick. That would probably be it, yes.

“Thank you,” She offered Moss a smile of her own as took the offered silverware and started in on the, also, offered breakfast...and she had to say. He made good pancakes. Hannah’s standards when it came to pancakes weren’t exactly high or anything, but these were good. Nice and airy, fresh from the skillet and with no crunchy bits.

She couldn’t even taste the eggshell in it. Madness. Sheer, beautiful insanity. What kind of pancake didn’t have bits of eggshell in it? Or weren’t slightly slimy? Where had they been all her life?

Moss, looking proud as she dug into her meal like a starving woman, turned back to the stove and continued to add to his own rather tall stack of pancakes. There was also an even larger bowl of fruit next to it, larger than hers, as well as a mixing bowl sitting next to a family-sized box of Lucky Charms…god damn it.

It was like everything was reminding her of Katherine today. She was going to have to call her after breakfast. And maybe a nap. Definitely after breakfast though - these pancakes were really good… No. She knew this game. If she didn’t call now she wasn’t going to call at all. Or, at least, not anytime soon… This whole thing with the gangs that was currently going on wasn’t going to help with that either.

She’d been busy. A weak excuse for not giving her friend a call when she didn't sleep, but true.

With one last loud slurping noise and a chuckle from Moss that brought some heat into her cheeks, Hannah picked up her phone. Dialed a number she knew by heart (from it blowing up her phone
every day for the better part of half a decade.) and readied herself for shenanigans and tom-fool-

The dulcet tones of the eighties hit parahuman band, ‘Dragon Sound’, started playing right behind Hannah’s head and she nearly had a heart attack. Not that Mouse Protector cared as she slipped by with a yawn. Shuffled around the table with a pair of Hannah’s slippers, a bathrobe, and her fucking helmet to steal Moss’s mixing bowl while he looked on with bemusement; His mixing bowl, the entire box of Lucky Charms, and a gallon of milk before Kat slipped back around them and towards the stairs without acknowledging either of them.

… She must have been really tired.

“You’ve got a roommate, I take it?”

Hannah groaned at Moss’s question. That explained where all the food had come from. Damn it, Kat. “Yeah. Yeah, I guess I do. She...likes to do cosplay.”

“Cosplay,” He replied flatly, this time with a clear undertone of amusement to it. “Really, Hannah?”

“She’s super into it. Obsessed.” Hannah sullenly pushed another piece of pancake into her mouth after a short silence. It could have been worse. She had to remember that. “Just let me have this, Moss. Please.”

“ Heard nothing, saw nothing. God’s own truth.”

“I’ll hold you to that.”

Her phone, the one she’d forgotten (as much as she forgot anything) was still making a call, chose right then to make a clicking noise. The music, which had moved to somewhere just above their heads, turned off.

“Yeah, hello,” Kat answered, her trademark pep nowhere to be seen so soon after her waking up. “Sup, hola, bonjour. This is the House of Mouse, no relation, please don’t sue, how may the Mouse help you today?” The yawn that came through the ceiling, mirrored by the one that escaped from Hannah’s phone, made Moss crack up out loud. Hannah just wanted to strangle someone. Most likely herself. She should have expected this. “If it’s to get a cat out of a tree, you should probably wait for Scion or your local firefighters. The Mouse don’t play like that and you should be ashamed
of yourself for asking. Species dynamics, have you heard of it?”

Hannah shot a well-practiced glare and point at Moss. The universal ‘Not a fucking word’ gesture, practiced to perfection by working with Ethan and Dennis for longer than was healthy. Moss only nodded back to her and popped a hunk of orange into his mouth, not bothering to keep the smirk off his face as he did.

“I was just calling you about how breakfast was ready, but you literally walked by me,” Hannah said lamely, picking up something or other and tossing it at Moss when his shoulders began to shake; the muscles of his back tensing and coiling in all sorts of interesting ways under his shirt as he did... And there went her keys. A worthy sacrifice. “Long night with your friends? You were still wearing the helmet and you’re still in character, so I’m just assuming...?”

“... Long night? Friends. Helmet.” Kat paused, her tired brain audibly latching onto the last word as she did. Her switch to overenthusiastic cosplayer was nearly instant. Not that there was much difference between that and her Mouse Protector persona, but there was a difference. Sort of. “Try longest. Had a lot of fun last night with the guys. They really didn’t want to let me go and you might not have seen me come in. I kind of just dropped when I got back. Sorry about that.” Another yawn erupted from both sources, the second being much closer to the stairs. “By the way...when did you replace your fridge? I didn’t know that 70’s Avocado green was back in style... Oh well. Now you can’t give me crap about my 80’s things anymore.”

“I think I’m more of an emerald, actually,” Moss said, playfully miffed.

Now it was Hannah’s turn to stifle her laughter when Kat walked back into the room with her trademark early morning shuffle; her phone still at her ear and a gallon of milk under her arm as she clutched her mixing bowl tight to her chest. The cereal box though was nowhere to be seen. Acceptable losses...and if Kat had taken her helmet off, which she hadn’t, Hannah had no doubt her eyes would have been huge as she heard the ‘fridge’ talk for the first time.

“Mr. Sexy Voice? Is that you?”

Moss started at that question while in the middle of flipping a pancake and, with a loud cry of ‘shit’, dropped the cast-iron skillet on his left foot and fumbled the pancake onto the burner. The short sizzling that sounded after, and the even louder swears as the pancake began to smolder, was the most alarming part of the whole thing...if it hadn’t been for the questions that Kat had just brought up.

Moss would be fine. His Brute rating was high enough for him to walk that off without much of an
issue… If there was anything to actually worry about here, if there was anything to worry about at all, it was him slapping at the small fire that had just started up on her stove.

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‘Morning Sickness and in-depth character reflection were never meant to mix.’ Lisa thought to herself as she hung her sweaty head over her wastebasket. A wastebasket that had become her constant companion over the last couple of days as the less comfortable parts of an ongoing pregnancy started to take their toll. Thankfully, the cleaning staff around here were rather thorough in their jobs. Discreet too, just as they should be with how much she was paying them.

The lack of not-so-mysterious stains and ancient chunky bits as she stared into the abyss was deeply appreciated.

“Fuck you, Burger King breakfast. You’re shit compared to McDonald’s,” Lisa groaned out as her mind started tentatively turning back to navel-gazing... And she instantly regretted doing so as that caused her stomach to rally its forces in the worst way possible. With dry heaves and foam and low-key simmering anger that Amy wasn’t there to make it all go away. Stupid New Wave, needing her help... That Moss wasn’t there to hold her hair back either, at the least, wasn’t helping her mood either. “Oh god - it tastes like cancer… What am I doing eating fast food anyway? Jesus…”

Shaking it off, Lisa gave her stomach a pat. Right on the slight bulge that was starting to show just above her pelvis, the surest sign there was that new life was growing inside of her. It was alien, strange, but…comforting, somehow. Stupid hormones and soppy feelings… She chuckled. It was a watery, weak thing that was closer to a gurgle than laughter, but it was still a chuckle.

“You’re going to deserve all the hell I’m going to give you as you grow up, you ungrateful little shits. Let me just get this last one out and—” The somewhat tangential thought of Fugly Bob’s doing anything like ‘breakfast’ seriously started the beginning of the end. A short experience of what Hell might have been like before there was relief and she could finally put the much heavier basket down. “—I’ll get back to work.”

Planning the hostile takeover of Medhall wasn’t easy. Neither was realizing that you were kind of, sort of, somewhat, a total fucking bitch and that you should probably tone it down a bit before you found yourself alone while paddling up Shit Creek. Doing both at the same time was just impossible…and that was why she was dealing with the easier of those two problems first. Or trying to.

Relationship problems had a disturbing tendency to pop up when you were in the middle of doing
anything else. Especially criminal things.

That Moss was starting to get sick of her shit, of her using him to cement her hold over the Bay while helping with her now pretty much defunct (by necessity) hobby of harem feeding, wasn’t exactly the easiest thing to handle. That she actually felt guilty about that wasn’t either. Moving millions of dollars around to pad the couple thousand shares of stock and blackmail that Moss had picked up for her was easy though, in comparison… She was going to have to internalize this though. Work it out. Eventually. Giving a shit about people and what they thought sucked.

The things you did to make sure your kids grew up better than you did and… Man. She was learning all sorts of things about herself today, wasn’t she? ... Being an adult also sucked. As did the data that she’d given over to her power to mull over while she was thinking deep thoughts.

“Fuck me with a cactus, why don’t you? It would be the same fucking thing,” Lisa hissed as she reached for her phone and started texting like mad to everyone she knew. “What the fuck is wrong with people?”

What it had come out with was nothing good. A ‘welcome’ distraction from her problems, but nothing good.

Collectively, the forces of ‘Good’ in the Bay had overplayed their hand. Gesellschaft was leaning on the Empire like a ten-ton weight, Moss and her had been hitting them where it hurts far too often; the other gangs were nipping at them and now they were desperate. Beyond desperate. Like cornered rats with rabies. All it would take for them to go all out on burning the city down was an order from on high, an order that Max was all too willing to give if it meant he got to stay out of one of his patron’s reeducation camps for another day.

It was only a matter of time before the powder keg exploded. Days at most. Hours at the least. Her workload had just tripled in seconds. If her plans when it came to cutting this off at the pass didn’t work out, quintupled… Lisa had been observing and adhering to the fiction of the Unwritten Rules up to this point, mostly to keep her hold on her image as the innocent party in this mess firm, but this was far too much.

Lisa lived here, damn it, and she wasn’t going to let a bunch of sore losers shit all over it as a last hoorah. They’d started this. She was going to end it… A couple inches off the top should do it.

Now texting one-handed with no appreciable loss in speed, Lisa hit the intercom button. “Mrs. Vickers?”
“Yes, Ma’am?”

“Can you send the list I just messaged to you to the PRT in - three hours or so? You’ll be getting another in thirty minutes. Send that one first at the two-hour mark. Anonymously. Be ready to send them out early if needed.” With a final click on her phone, she dropped it on her table like it was a brick and started rubbing anxiously at her cheek. “Tell the men to suit up and open the Endbringer shelters as well. Things are going to heat up and they’re about to earn their pay.”

“Of course, Ma’am.”
“So,” Hannah started, looking a great deal like half of a very suspicious chipmunk as she spoke around her mass of unswallowed nibbles. It was adorable. Of course, if we’d taken the ‘suspicious’ part of this mess out of the equation, it would have been even better. You couldn’t have everything though, I guess... “Do you two know each other? It sounds like you have some history.”

Me, being myself in my current circumstances (falling, hot, cast-iron cookware to the big toe fucking hurts, even if just for a second) turned out to have nothing constructive to say. Lots of swear words under my breath, mostly, as I attempted to smother the fire that I’d accidentally started on the stove with my bare hands. You know. Like the genius I was.

A maker of two-hundred IQ plans and plays, I most definitely was not. How anyone thought I was in charge of my life was beyond me. For all the crap I gave Lisa, as I do when I see a problem in one of her schemes (which are a lot, when she bothered to fill me in on them), I needed her more than I liked to admit.

And, no. That wasn’t a reference to sex or companionship, even if those were very nice. I was being quite serious.

I wasn’t actually an idiot. Far from it. I just had impulse control issues and, at the end of the day, this world wasn’t mine. It was similar in some ways, sure, but it wasn’t mine. A better part of three months of native living or not, the half-remembered stylings of a very prolific writer or not, I was surrounded by pitfalls and landmines.

An imperfect navigator was better than no navigator at all, yeah? Yeah.

Anyway, I was the proverbial five-year-old advisor. With some differences, obviously. I needed help getting dressed (clothes in my size weren’t exactly off the rack), sure, but any five-year-old with even half of the perks I got on the daily was going to need a caseworker and a therapist... Considering how Coil had existed as a person at one time before he’d got himself turned into an extra-fine jam spread, that thought was a great deal more depressing than it should have been.

“Oh, yeah. We got loads of history,” Kat breathed as she took a seat at the table on the chair closest to her friend then started moving. Shuffle-hopping even closer, invading the dusky woman’s personal space with her exuberant personality and most of a mixing bowl’s worth of breakfast cereal... I was missing it already. “There’s a story there I’m not sure you’re ready to hear. A lot of shit went down the last time we talked. Big day, that one. A real beaut.”

Finally remembering that this was a gas stove as drama continued at the corner of my eye, I turned it off and went back to smothering. I suddenly found myself drastically more successful in my attempts at keeping this house in one piece. Go me.

“Oh, god,” Hannah whisper-screamed, about as subtle as you’d expect anyone to be when you learned that your roommate and someone you’d just been with had a history. “You didn’t sleep with him, did you?”

And, suddenly, I found that I’d be happy if I was anywhere else but here. Awkwardness. Every time, I swear... That I’d just licked my hands for extra smothering power just made it worse somehow. Not one of my best ideas, considering how ashy they were. The ten seconds of quiet right...
after that as I sucked it up and swallowed just seemed to rub it in.

“What? I don’t see how that would even-” Cereal sloshed as Kat broke the silence and did a double take at Hannah. The way her mask was built, the round ears standing tall at either side of her head, added a special sort of comedic emphasis to the motion, one that I suspected was entirely intentional…and I thought it was nice. If there were more heroes like her and less like Shadow Stalker, the world would be a better place… Now, admittedly, a rabid koala in spandex would be better than Sophia, but it was the thought that counted. “No! Of course not! What kind of question is that? You act like you don’t even know me!”

“You called him Mr. Sexy Voice! You never do that!”

“I’m allowed to appreciate pretty things, Hannah! Have you heard the man speak? I’ve never even seen him in person till today and it was the best way I had to describe him at the time! It stuck! Thanks for screwing up my story before it even started, Colonel Killjoy! Here it goes!” She gestured angrily at me with her spoon as the fire was brought under control. Soggy marshmallow bits fell to the floor to celebrate my victory like a gentle, sugary rain. “He’s the guy!”

“The guy?”

“The guy.”

“... The guy.” Hannah’s head turned towards me, eyebrows raised near into her hairline as I turned to join the conversation, the palms of my hands as black and ashy as a CEO’s heart. Verging into vantablack, to be specific. “The one that-”

I held a hand up to interrupt before she could ask the question I knew was coming. “That was me, yeah. I was the one that made the call.” I reached for a nearby dish towel to wipe off my hands with, giving up the game before it could get going. How I sounded wasn’t exactly common, so no real point in denying what I’d done...and it had been the right thing to do. No shame in owning up. “Heard some stuff on the grapevine and I didn’t have it in me to let it happen without a word.”

“The grapevine? That’s a little vague, isn’t it?” Hanna probed further, the words accompanied by a visible relaxing of her shoulders and the shift of her power from an unhealthily large, drum-fed shotgun to a police baton… How horrifying. “Does the grapevine have a name?”

Not really. Not one they could accept without me spilling my guts anyway. I wasn’t feeling up to that right now...or probably ever. Giving people an existential crisis, then working them through it, wasn’t exactly my idea of fun.

“It might,” I said in airy reply while Kat made a humming sound and scrunched her nose at me over her bowl of increasingly soggy, and greatly lessened, breakfast cereal. “But, seeing as it would probably be a good idea if I talked to them first before I started handing it out…” I tossed the towel to the side and took a, careful, seat on the floor directly across from the two to start picking at my meal with my fingers. “But, seriously.” I gave Kat a nod. “I’m glad you’re okay.”

“Oh, yeah. For sure. I’m doing great. I’m still alive and that’s pretty awesome. Thanks bunches for that, not even kidding.” Kat then let out a snort in between shovelings. “The problem here is that I’ve got two million dollars in bloody money and the IRS breathing down my neck. I can’t even use any of it in my civilian life without legal complications. Bless Legend for giving me the reward, but it’s about as useful to me as tits on a bull. How’s that for okay?”
… This had taken a turn I hadn’t seen coming. For some reason, I’d expected more thanks... And more attempts to attach herself to my face. I wasn’t complaining or anything though, the change in my circumstances, in this case, being greatly appreciated, but I had to admit that it had put me off my game.

People could get used to anything if it went on long enough.

“Uh… Shit. I just meant physically, but okay. That’s pretty fucked up.” I blinked and mulled that over as best I could while I chewed on about half of a melon. I hadn’t even considered that would have been an issue. The bounty, I meant. That, and how she’d be able to spend it on stuff she wanted without getting outed. Goddamn. Fuck the government for making shit complicated. “I can see your problem. I’m not a Thinker or anything, but it sounds like you need a lawyer.”

“And there goes my money. Up and away. I knew thee well.” Kat did a fluttering motion with her left hand to give it the impression of wings. “You aren’t wrong though.” Her tone took a turn towards the whimsical. “I think I’ll be giving Calle a call.”


“If you didn’t want me to hire him, you shouldn’t have talked him up so much.”

“I was complaining to you! And that pun was terrible!”

“Complaining. Complementing. When you’re talking about a lawyer, that’s the same thing.” Kat laughed and dropped her spoon, her bowl now empty of anything but dregs as Hannah’s expression soured. My attempts at hiding my own good cheer could have been better... “And punning is a science. I wouldn’t expect a layman like you to understand.”

Hannah sighed but didn’t fight it. Smart. If anything sounded like a lost cause, it was a pun battle when only one of you was armed and it wasn’t you.

“It hasn’t been all bad though. I’m mostly whinging for the sake of it, really. I carry my home with me. Don’t need all that much besides a roof over my head at the end of the day… I might have got fired from my job though. For not calling in. I don’t know.” Kat chewed on her cheek some. “Haven’t exactly been checking my mail lately.”

“Ah…” I shifted uncomfortably in my seat, the reminder of my own sporadic workplace attendance a metaphysical itch… Did I even need to work anymore, really? I carry my home with me. Don’t need all that much besides a roof over my head at the end of the day… I might have got fired from my job though. For not calling in. I don’t know.” Kat chewed on her cheek some. “Haven’t exactly been checking my mail lately.”

“Ah…” I shifted uncomfortably in my seat, the reminder of my own sporadic workplace attendance a metaphysical itch… Did I even need to work anymore, really? It wasn’t like I was hurting for money now...and that was a question I’d never had to ask myself. I felt strange for even having that as an option. “Sorry to hear it. Again.”

“Nah. S’okay. It was just soulless cubicle shit anyhow. If anything, it gives me time to think and do something productive with myself.” She waved me off and took a stand, bowl and spoon under her arm as she shuffled towards the sink. “I actually met this kid a couple of days ago, a new Trigger if you can believe it, poor thing. She’s nice. Cynical, if still a little naive where it counts. She’s got the heart though if anyone does.” Dropping everything with a clatter that somehow didn’t end up with the lot exploding into a bunch of ceramic, she spun around with her arms spread open wide and dramatic. “My brush with my own mortality hath opened mine eyes! The future lies not with us old biddies—”

“Speak for yourself, hag,” Hannah interjected tiredly while I looked on with rapt attention.
I’d never met anyone that acted like this as a matter of course...and so easily at that. It was fascinating.

“—but with the youth!” Kat pushed on heedlessly over her friend’s words and my stunned bemusement. “The young and the impressionable, looking for someone to show them the face of true heroism! Of style, grace, and snappy banter that doesn’t come out the other end of a social enhancement program! Hear ye, hear ye, foolish evildoers! You face your doom!” Her head tilted up towards the ceiling as her arms reached towards the heavens, with a faux-rapturous expression on her face that was as serious as a can of silly string. “The Mouse hath found an apprentice!”

“... Does she know that she’s your apprentice?”

Kat held her pose a while longer, the popping of her elbows under the bathrobe, and a breathy sigh, her signal to let them drop... If it hadn’t been for the loose sweater she was wearing under the bathrobe, this would have been a lot more awkward. Just a thought. “No. But it wouldn’t hurt to take her under my wing anyway, even if it isn’t official.”

Considering the casualty rate for new Capes in this city, that was as good of a reason as any I’d ever heard.

“Or you could direct her to the Wards, instead of leading her into the hard and thankless life of a heroic vigilante.” Hannah pushed her plate to the side, the creamy expanse completely empty of everything but a single drop of syrup (I still had it!), and put her elbows on the table to leer at the rodent-themed superhero over her interconnected fingers. “That’s an option.”

“And let her turn into yet another one of you stuffed shirts without a fight? Never!”

Feeling as if I had to say something, just to throw my hat in the ring as might have been expected of me, I raised my hand and started digging around in one of my pockets. “My team would be happy to take her as well. We aren’t picky and we’ve already got the ground rules set up and everything.”

They both turned their heads to give me a blank stare as a pair of pamphlets were spread out over the table’s surface. That neither of them had expected me to have a stake in this at all was implied.

“I have educational material if you’re interested?” I flipped one of them open and pointed at the first page, this one with a caricature of me on the cover. It was actually pretty good and I had to wonder who the artist was. “It’s got pictures even.”

… It’s got pictures even? The hell was that? Had I picked up a concussion without noticing or something? Hadn’t I just told myself that I wasn’t an idiot? Jesus...

“Pictures, you say? How devious of you.” Putting a hand out until a pamphlet found its way into it, Kat began her perusal just after Hannah did. “Did you put one of those coloring mazes in the back? A crossword, maybe?”

“No?”

“Shame,” she murmured sadly, even as she continued to flip through it anyway. “You should add something shiny and plastic to this as well. Maybe both at once. Just saying. People love free stuff, especially if it lights up or clicks. Just a suggestion.”

Hannah chuckled and put down her material, a quick glance from front to back all she needed to
know everything on it. “She would know. If she’s stopped buying Happy Meals for the toys, I’ll eat my bandanna.”

“I get it for the value, capitalist scum,” Kat replied normally, as normally as one could when you’d just called someone ‘capitalist scum’ anyway, before she started speaking out of the side of her mouth at me and at a whisper. “Don’t listen to a word she says about this. She’s biased; jealous of my gold-plated, limited edition, super rare and completed promotional trading card collection...and my burger flipper Barbie.”

A bark of laughter that had Hannah jolting right up in her seat with interest (and only Hannah, oddly enough) was my response to that. There would have been more, a declaration of how I thought that was pretty cool, mayhaps, before I was interrupted by the great mood killer itself.

My new phone was doing its thing, and damn if it wasn’t making a show of it. I appreciated that Lisa had taken the time to get me a custom but, well…

“Your pants are vibrating,” Hannah helpfully pointed out, the quiet rattling of the dishes; the jittering of her chair and the ripples in the contents of a pitcher full of orange juice like something out of Jurassic Park adding further weight to her wide-eyed observation. “And so is everything else.”

That. It was that. How embarrassing…

“Big guy problems, big guy solutions. Sorry.” One apologetic grimace and some light teasing from Kat about how my smartphone was the size of a King James Bible later, and any chance of me being able to relax for the week went up in smoke… And here came unexpected work’s best friend, anxiety. “Shit. Gonna have to cut this short. Got some team stuff to do.”

“Team stuff, huh? Anything big?”

“Honestly?” I ran my fingers through my hair and stood up with a groan. “I have no idea. Our team Thinker thinks this is important, so-”

“Say no more. I understand.” Hannah stood with some haste, causing the bedsheets she’d tied around herself and draped over her shoulders to flare, somewhat alarmingly, outwards… Not for me, of course. Any further though and Kat would have gotten herself an eyeful. “Thank you for the breakfast.” She beckoned me down, her face tilted invitingly towards my own as I gave her a quick peck on the lips. “And for the, uhm...” Her eyes flickered towards her erstwhile, and extremely nosy (She wasn’t even trying to hide it), teammate as some anxious color rose to her cheeks. “The time we had. Yes.”

A wide, teeth-baring smile spread across my face without prompting as, for a second, I was able to forget about work and whatever it was that Lisa had done that needed me to keep it from blowing up. “Anytime.”

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My all too cool and suave, manly man swagger lasted long enough for me to get out the door, down the street, and into an alleyway; the first shortcut of many that didn’t involve me jumping blindly across several city blocks. I was riding high on life. Life, and the afterglow, and the feeling of a plan gone right for once.

So, of course, that was when a horrifying revelation took its chance to whack me over the head.
Because, with me, there was no such thing as a plan going right.

That this realization had happened in a dirty, garbage-strewn alley was almost poetic.

My hand shot out to the wall for support, fingers sinking through the brick like they were clay as my breath ran ragged and I pulled out my phone. “Dial, Lisa.” I gasped into the mic, a confirmation beep my soothing reply… It was a security hole, yes, but there wasn’t much we could do about it yet. The big boy solution to my fingers on a touchscreen had yet to be solved to satisfaction.

Four rings. Another beep and Lisa’s voice rang out, loud and clear. “Hey, baby. Miss me already?”

“Yes. Yeah, I did.” I exhaled deeply through my nose as pressure started to build at my temples, like a giant… an even bigger giant had got me by the head and gave a go at using it like a stress ball. “I think I screwed up. Maybe. I don’t know yet.”

She paused, the movement of paper in the background going completely silent. “… How? Why? What did you do?”

“It’s hard to explain.”

“Try.”

How was I to explain that I believed that Taylor Hebert, the last hope of humanity and the future Slayer of Zion… might have been snapped up by Mouse Protector first? Or, horror of horrors, starter of heart attacks… that I’d forgotten all about her.

“Send Amy first, please.” I croaked, feeling faint all of a sudden as my not at all metaphorical and as to now unknown medical issue came to light. “I think I’m having a heart attack.”

Silence. The rattling clicks of a pen being dropped on the other end… These were some really good speakers. “… I’m - pretty sure that’s impossible? With you, I mean. Never thought about it before, and I’m not a doctor, but… yeah. It's very unlikely that you’re having a heart attack.”

“Is it really?” I coughed, interested in this despite myself. It was a good distraction if anything, I thought I might have been feeling a little less faint, actually. More ashamed at my, very slight, overreaction… White lies were what kept civilization together and, if I had my way, my forgetfulness would follow me to my grave. “I don’t have to worry about heart problems?”

“And a lot of other things. You’re not human, Moss. You’re a nuclear-powered sex machine that runs on tree bark and fruit salad. Is a lack of the biological capacity required to have a heart attack really all that surprising? Now, stop being dumb and come home so that you can tell me about what’s got you spooked. That sound good?”

“Yeah. Yeah, it does.” I sighed. “And what did you call me for again?”

“Come home and I’ll tell you. Like I said. Quid Pro Quo. Give and take. No need to air our dirty laundry in public if we don’t have to.” She raspberried me, the tense undertone to her voice forcing me to stand up straight and prepare for a jump. “There’ll be a briefing in thirty minutes. I have the buffet table set out and everything if you’re hungry.” Her tone lowered further yet. “You shouldn’t be. We’re going to be working today.”

Well. That wasn’t ominous at all.
“... Can we make it forty so that I can catch my breath?”

“We’ll see.”

=""This is a lot more overhead than I remember there being. Sweet.” Was the first comment to come out of my mouth when I didn’t run my forehead into the very first doorway in the base. My greatest foe, low-hanging architecture, had been laid high… Most people would have thought that sounded overly dramatic. Of course, most people hadn’t repeatedly, and accidentally, headbutted a steel wall hard enough to leave a dent. The tiny folk had no idea what they were talking about. “How long have I been gone? Two days…one? Something like that?” I gave the nearest man in grey coveralls and a hardhat a nod, and got a salute in turn. “Maintenance does good work.”

It wasn’t just that department, admittedly. The general level of competence around here, after Lisa had done some weeding, had really made a difference. That the survivors of the purge were glad to still have a job at all, and that none of them had got their shit wrecked by Super Barbie and Friends, was doing wonders for company morale… As were the bonuses (never forget those) that had been taken from the impending paychecks of those happy few that hadn’t quite fit the company image for some reason or another.

We were following OSHA guidelines now. OSHA. That hadn’t even been a thing before we’d come in...and neither had the HR department; the very basics of the workplace, non-existent. Coil had been an even bigger bastard than I could have ever believed. I honestly wouldn’t be all that surprised to find out that there was a pit somewhere in here. Bottomless, maybe, or filled with a bubbling green acid that required full MOPP 4 gear and a prayer to whatever God you believed in to breathe near.

… I really hoped that they’d filled that in by now. If anyone was going to fall into it, it was probably me. My situational awareness could be better. That I’d noticed all the new workplace posters hanging around the place, most of them featuring kittens, didn’t mean anything. It just meant I was a child of the internet that really needed a custom keyboard.

Sitting behind one of the girls while they did whatever it was they did on the net only got me so far. It just wasn’t the same as doing it myself. My physical needs might have been met, but my intellectual? Not so much. I missed my fanfiction, damn it! Man did not live on bread and sex alone!

Oh, god. Idea. Was Harry Potter a thing here? Naruto? MLP? Because, if not, then I had my niche(s). Working for my girlfriend was great and everything, really, but relying on her for everything in my life up to food and shelter was a little far… I’d forgotten. That was the reason I still had a job. The trophy husband life wasn’t for me, nawp.

Nice to know that I was doing things for a reason and not just because I was full of life and whimsy. I had to ask myself about that more often than was probably safe, maybe, and...and I’d just realized something. Something big.

Japan was underwater. Nothing was being made. None of my shows were being made.

I stalled, just five feet away from the cafeteria door while I allowed myself to take that in. No more ‘One Piece’. No more ‘Jojo’. No more ‘Bleach’...no. Never mind. Fuck that one. ‘Boruto’ wasn’t worth it either. Try again… Oh, yeah. No more Konosu...ba... Okay. Here came the truck flashbacks. Again. Fuck.
Today was a day of many horrors, many of which were positively Lovecraftian in scope. How anyone dealt with shit like this on a day-to-day basis was beyond me… Anyway. Yes. Related. Back to my day-to-day.

I opened the door, gave the room full of momentarily staring employees (and a weirdly serious Lisa at her really tall podium, with what was left of the Undersiders in the wings) a wave before making a beeline towards the buffet table and taking a seat. Still on the ground, as always, which made it kind of hard to get comfortable while I picked out the choice bits for the workday that was coming at me…but that was fine. The chair was in the mail. I could be patient. To a point.

That all depended on how bad this shitshow was going to be. Width, depth, general saturation. The average criteria involved in determining whether or not you should pull a fuck-the-world lever or its equivalent.

That was all really important stuff to know. Basic, actually. How would I know how far, and how deep, I had to dig to wait it all out without them? … That was a metaphorical question. I’d be here either way, up till the point when someone hit what remained of the self destruct; just enough to collapse the base without taking the surrounding area with it.

Coil had been compensating for something. That was the only explanation I could think of as to why he’d focused so hard on emulating every Bond Villain that had ever existed, fluffy white cat not included. My money was on a shit childhood. A British kid had stolen his lunch money one too many times or something, that team-killing cockbite.

Any and all conversation in the ranks, what there was of it that hadn’t been Alec before Brian had punched him in the shoulder, ended as soon as Lisa tapped her microphone.

Me, having been content to empty the general area in my field-of-view of tasty things, turned my attention to the important things.

“Alright, you lot.” She began, suspiciously warmly. “I’ve given everyone more than enough warning to get here on time. If there is anyone missing still, I expect their respective officers to inform these individuals that they are, from this point on, without a job.”

The warmth had been a lie, as expected. If there weren’t people missing from the lineup, I’d eat my recently tailored and gifted fancy hat. I had no idea what it was called, the style, but it was definitely fancy. Posh, even. Eating it would be a real shame.

“They aren’t getting a favorable review from me, just to be clear, so it would probably be a good idea to keep me out of their resumes from this point on.”

She took a sip of water from a nearby bottle and cleared her throat as the lights began to dim and a projector came to life with a telltale whirl. A picture of the city in its entirety, covered in lines and numbers and dots sprang into existence at her back, completing the scene I’d found myself in. “This meeting is a briefing; the beginning of your first combat action with me as your employer. I don’t think I need to explain why that is important, do I?”

… Well, shit. Something like that, and what it implied, made my worries sound positively petty, didn’t it?

“Our moles in the Empire have all been reporting the same thing. Being a skinhead isn’t what it used
to be.” A click from the projector, one that I suspected was purely for effect, turned the picture behind her into a pair of bedbound, bemasked wrecks in traction. “The loss of Victor and Stormtiger, along with forty of the rank and file to a prison that isn’t the revolving door of the PRT’s holding cells, hurt them. A lot. Not in terms of manpower or anything, not really, but in morale. Public perception…and New Wave being forced to get up off their ass for something that wasn’t an anti-drug statement.”

Another click. Another picture. One with a glowing-knuckled fist uncomfortably close to the lens and a snarling Brandish’s features in the upper-right corner… Whoever had taken that one had gone above and beyond the call of duty. That their face and the camera, or whatever they’d used to capture that moment in time, was now a part of their face was a given.

“As you can see, they didn’t take the Empire’s attack on Glory Girl and Panacea all that well,” Lisa continued at a drawl, the periodic clicking and flashes of Parahuman on neo-fascist brutality a strong backdrop to her dry observation. “The PRT isn’t happy either, of course, but they’re out of the running when it comes to most arrests these days.”

A graph popped up, a very simple one with PRT/Protectorate statistics on one side and New Wave’s on the other. Across the board, the government was doing pretty well. Captures, confiscated contraband, destroyed weapons. Normal stuff. New Wave, on the other hand, had a ‘broken limbs’ and ‘ruptured organs’ column, with a capture rate that was threatening to break through the roof of the screen.

“These are the people that are all about accountability, just to be clear. Not that any of that matters anymore. The kid gloves are off. The rules of engagement no longer apply. Any chance our enemy had of salvaging something from this mess without a fight has come and gone.” With one last click in the now uncomfortable quiet of the room, the city made its return. “Kaiser’s Rome is falling down all around him and he’s thinking about setting the fire himself before he pulls out the fiddle.”

… Yeah. I could see that. That sounded like something Max would do if anything was. He’d always struck me as that one douchebag that flipped the board on a game of Life on a bad spin. Making the city worse than it already was, was just board flipping made large… If this was going anywhere near where I thought it was, we were finally going to be doing something about him.

Finally…not that I’d been told not to, or anything. It had just never come up for some reason. I couldn’t help who I did or did not meet when on one of my trips, now could I? No. Of course not…no longer having that excuse was going to be nice.

Lisa exhaled loudly through her nose at that, right into the mic, interrupting my thoughts like normal as she reached for her bottle again. “While our Parahuman assets do their thing, all squads from Alpha-1 to Kilo-7 will be our civilian protection details; their primary positions will be assigned to them through their commanding officers. Lima to Tango will be responsible for non-powered enemy asset suppression, while everyone else will be on Base to defend our primary fallback point and the Principal as they direct the men’s efforts to best effect.”

That the horde of grizzled men (and women) that I’d been tangentially attached to, the disillusioned vets and private sector jumpshippers all had nothing to say about this said a lot about the world, post-powers. Good, bad. It was what it was. You couldn’t get all that much different than having a company’s worth of hired killers take a teenage girl in a purple spandex costume seriously… A teenage girl with absolutely no military experience or inclination in such that I’d noticed.

Being in the same boat as her, my family’s long history of military service no substitute to actually
being in said military… I had to wonder just how badly she was mangling this speech. Not like I minded because, you know, no experience worth a damn, but there was most likely more than a few people in this room that were thinking real hard about their next paycheck and whether it was still worth it.

… Now I had to wonder if Brian was grinding his teeth or not. The sound-eating smoke slipping out from the bottom of his helmet was doing a good job of hiding if he was. Suspicious.

“Any questions? Reservations? No?” Lisa’s bottle, now more than half empty, loudly hit the podium for emphasis. There was no response. “Good. I appreciate your candor. Your Parahuman support will be the Undersiders, New Wave, and local law enforcement. Try not to shoot them even if they shoot first. Them non-lethally attacking their allies isn’t a good look for them and hazard pay will be doubled for any one of you willing to play it up for the camera.”

With a twirl of the finger in the air above her head, she checked her wristwatch… which was new. And more than a little sparkly. “We’ve got two hours or so till op start. More than enough time. Let’s get on it, people, and remember your training.”

Taking that as the signal that it was time to stand up, I stuck to the edges of the room while the men began to file out in orderly lines; almost duck-like, if not for the jingly bits and the sound of mil-spec boots on metal flooring. If the situation weren’t so serious, I would have laughed out loud. That it was so serious though limited me to a smile, which was good enough… somewhat.

I probably wasn’t treating this whole thing like it deserved to be treated. Just a thought.

I’d never really considered this thing with the Empire to be a war for some reason. Whether that was something with me, or if it was just that I’d gotten complacent after being entirely unchallenged so far, I couldn’t really say. The urgency and anxiety that other people felt about this was almost entirely absent… I think this was called ‘being emotionally detached’.

Maybe things would change as soon as I get stuck in there. Who knew? No point in worrying about it until it happened, I supposed. I was going to have to take this as it came.

When I walked up onto the stage, I didn’t even hear a creak. Good construction. Good enough for me to not worry about being careful as I power walked up to Lisa while she was in the middle of stepping off the podium with a ‘Military Lingo for Dummies’ book in hand. “We’ve got two hours, you said?”

“Hi, Moss. Yeah. We’ve got two hours. About that much. I could push it back a little if I need to… maybe. Privileges of power only go so far.” She looked up at me with a wry grin, away from her foot and its tentative hovering over the more than one-foot drop she’d been debating taking. Why it was as high as that, or the podium as big as it was, I had no idea. A burgeoning Napoleon complex, maybe? “Help me down? This is kind of freaking me out.”

“Sure, sure. Whatever you need me to do, I’m here to save the day.” I put my hands under Lisa’s arms with a laugh, lifted her, and put her back down on the solid ground where she let out a sigh of what might have been unfeigned relief. “We do need to talk though. I’ve got some stuff to say.”

“I wasn’t expecting anything else… and I might have been looking forward to this a little.” Lisa stuck her tongue out at me, took me by the hand, and started ‘dragging’ me towards the direction of her office. “Just a little… I’m thinking its sharing time.”
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