Incredible Math

by Neebsandtatties

Summary

It just never adds up. And they're okay with that.

Complementary Colours [NSFW]

Chapter Summary

In which Jack borrows his girlfriend's knickers and looks fine as fuck in them. Rated NSFW for some Jack 'man handling' Featured Art by the fabulous sanzo-sinclaire

"She's so cold and human
It's something humans do
She stays so golden solo
She's so number nine
She's incredible math
Just incredible math"

- Yoko Kanno & Scott Matthew: 'Lithium Flower'

Yes. High thread count sheets were worth every single penny.

Well, every one of Jack’s pennies at least. Pampered little shit that he was. But she did adore him so.

Nisha stretched out with a blissful sigh. Yup, she could certainly get used to such luxuries, just as she could get used to sharing her bed with Jack.

Slow and sleepy from warmth and deep satisfaction, Nisha fumbled around for her bed fellow. She didn’t particularly feel like stirring just yet, but she wanted a handful of Jack. She always wanted a handful of Jack. Who wouldn’t want a handful of the president of Hyperion?

And a handful Handsome Jack most certainly was.

The spot where he should have been sprawled out was empty.

Nisha woke up properly at the discovery of the empty space. The sheets were warm beneath her hand from residual body heat. So he hadn’t been out of bed long, nor had he gone very far considering his sneakers were scattered across the floor. They were silly and impractical but just seemed to suit him far better than his heavy, Hyperion issued boots.

Nisha sat up, shedding the blankets from her body. She supposed she’d better go off and make sure he hadn’t gotten himself into trouble again. He was so very good at that. That was probably why he hired her in the first place.

She slid from the bed and scanned the room for her clothing. Her shirt wasn’t in a fit state to be worn. God only knew where the buttons had pinged off to. The zipper on her jeans was ruined as well. Jack could be so rough at times.

But damn if she didn’t love it. Nisha admittedly knew she probably wouldn't have been so attracted to him if he wasn't.

Jack’s patchy Hyperion sweater was strewn on the floor; vibrant yellow against the pale grey of the
carpet. She picked it up and held it against her frame. Yes. It would do nicely. He owed her for ruining her clothes. Nisha tugged it on over her head.

The jumper was too big and seemed to engulf her completely. It smelt of him; like spices and sandalwood from whatever ridiculous body spray he doused himself with in an attempt to seem trendy. She loved how Jack smelt, sexy and powerful. The law bringer especially loved how his clothes looked on her. There was something really satisfying about wearing Handsome Jack’s clothes.

She scouted around for her underwear – a decadent, purple satin and lace shorts that hugged her just right. She loved them. They were comfy and oh-so-sexy at the same time. Surely Jack had not destroyed them as well? She had given him express instructions (with a gun to his throat) that he wasn’t to ruin them, and made him take them off carefully. He’d probably stuffed them into his pocket again.

Commando it would have to be then. Not that she doubted Jack would even mind.
Jack’s kitchen smelt of coffee, vanilla and something she could only describe as wealth. Jack himself was spooning freshly ground coffee beans into a percolator, clad in only his jeans. He was not raggedly muscled like some of the other meatheads she’d tangled with. He was too lanky for that. There was a wiry strength in his frame and surprising agility. In the hue of Pandora outside and the dim lighting of his kitchen, he looked sleek and powerful. Nisha’s palms itched, longing to run down his torso again just to feel it quiver beneath her fingertips.

“Morning babe,” he said without turning around. She liked how ‘babe’ sounded when he said it. “Coffee?” He sounded so at ease in the kitchen that she didn’t want to spoil it for him. It was nice to
see him relaxed for a change.

“Yeah go on.” Nisha propped herself onto the kitchen Island, the marble cool against her bare thighs. "Kinda surprised to see you making your own coffee. Not got someone to do that for you?"

“Nah, I don’t trust ‘em to make it right,” Jack replied dismissively, meticulously measuring out the coffee. “They always fuck it up somehow."

Nisha had to chuckle. He would have never lasted on Pandora. “Fuck you’re such a pampered shit if that’s all you’ve got to worry about these days.”

He glanced over his shoulder at her, doing his best to look affronted. Nisha didn’t know why he bothered. She could see the amusement in his eyes, like he was trying very hard not to laugh. “Hey, I'm not pampered. I've been cleaning my own desk for weeks.”

“Aw, so hard done by.”

Jack hummed in agreement. He never missed an opportunity to be a drama king. “Oh babe, you have no idea how much I suffer under this torment.”

“Must be so exhaustin’, sitting around spending money all day,” Nisha replied, propping her chin onto her palm.

"Yup, it's a tough job but someone has gotta do it."

Nisha smiled at his back. "So where's that coffee gorgeous?"

Jack threw his hands up dramatically and it was an effort to stop herself from giggling at his antics. “I’m gettin’ to it alright? Geez, you’re so demanding.”

“And you love it,” Nisha retorted, because it was true.

Jack glanced over his shoulder again and had the decency to smile this time. “Heh, yeah. I’m a glutton for punishment,” he replied roguishly.

Nisha grinned. There was truth in the statement, considering the splotches of purple around his neck and the fine lines of red on his back.

She watched him bustle about, feeling very smug and satisfied. Here was the Handsome Jack, shirtless, wearing her bite marks and making her coffee. She still couldn't get over that Handsome Jack was her boyfriend.

Eat on it Miss Moxxi.

Jack stretched up towards the coffee cups he kept the highest shelf - Hyperion company mugs of course. The jeans at his hips shifted an inch and she saw a strip of purple lace peep up from beneath the waistband.

Nisha went still on the countertop.

No.

Surely not.

Surely he wouldn't.
Oh but he would.

The Lawbringer couldn't have stopped the grin from spreading across her face even if she had tried. Very kinky. It was a new milestone, even for him.

“Jack?” She struggled to keep the excitement out of her voice.

“Hmm?” Jack turned around, his hands curled around two mugs. His jeans had righted themselves back onto his hips and the lace had vanished.

“Have you seen my panties? I can’t find em anywhere.”

“And you’re asking me why?” Jack replied, in his typical snotty attitude.

So that was how he wanted to play it. A shudder pulsed through her spine at the thought of humiliating Jack by finding him out and making a show of it. "You were the last person with em."

“Then they’re probably under the bed or something I dunno,” he said glibly. “Can’t remember where I threw them. As you recall, I was a little preoccupied.”

Her eyebrow twitched. A little? That was putting it mildly. Nisha felt a flash of heat in her stomach at the very thought of Jack's mouth pressing kisses down her stomach. “Hmm vaguely.”

Nisha popped herself off the counter to distract herself from the low burn in her belly. You wouldn’t mind if I checked your pockets then?"

“Be my guest,” Jack said with an indifferent sniff as she approached. “But I have coffee to make.”

“I won’t be a sec,” Nisha said pleasantly.

“Well don't feel like you need to wear them on my account,” he remarked as set the coffee mugs down and carried on with the business of making coffee. "In fact I don't think you should wear them on Helios ever," Jack added. "I could make it company protocol ya know. And since you technically work for me you’d have to do it."

"Yeah try getting that past the other directors," Nisha commented. She had to admire his ability to bare face lie to her. He should have known better than that.

Nisha pressed against his long back, and she felt him shudder hard. He was wonderfully warm even without a shirt on. Her cheek found the spot between his shoulders as her hand slid down into the back left pocket of his jeans. She could feel the heat even through the thick denim. “Hmmm. Nothing in here,” she hummed before giving his buttock a squeeze for good measure.

She did want her handful of Jack after all. And she always got what she wanted.

Jack jumped slightly, and she heard sugar granules scatter over the counter. He cursed, then looked over his shoulder at her. Bless his greedy little heart for trying so hard to appear uninterested. Those hetero-chromatic eyes had expanded into black. "Do you mind?” he asked, as if Nisha’s hands in his jeans was simply a mild inconvenience.

"Not at all," she said, dropping her voice down an octave as she stood on her tiptoes to press an open mouthed kiss against his shoulder. "It's such a fine ass.”

She heard him snort. “Everything about me is fine as fuck.”

“Don’t I know it." Nisha pressed her lips against his shoulder again. "And it's all mine,” she breathed
Jack’s arm muscles tensed as he maintained control over himself. "Pffft you wish. I hook up with Wilhelm twice a week. Sorry you had to find out this."

"Wow, same." Nisha kept her hand firmly wedged in his back pocket while her free hand slipped into the other. It was empty, just as she expected. ‘Nothin’ in here either.” And again, Nisha squeezed through the denim. Jack’s breath hissed through his teeth and she felt him lean against her ever-so-slightly. She responded by pressing her chest against his back. Any closer and she would have been inside his skin.

“Are you done yet?” Jack asked, trying to sound bored. It wasn’t working. There was unmistakable edge in his voice, that was entirely familiar and always welcomed.

Nisha smiled. “I still need to check the front pockets.” She unhooked her hands from his back pockets. “Turn around."

“But I’m making coffee,” he protested.

“The coffee ain’t going anywhere Jack. Don't make me ask again." 

"Alright fine, geez", he said as if it were all some big chore but turned around to face her. He regarded her with large, dark eyes and a curling smile on his clever, clever mouth. Despite his bitching he was clearly enjoying himself.

Nisha returned the gesture as her fingers spread against his belly, curling around the dark dusting of hair. He trembled beneath her hand with delicious anticipation. All that coiled strength and power completely docile at her fingertips. It was nothing short of thrilling.

Her palms smoothed down his stomach and over the sharp bones of his hips. She slid her hands deep into both his pockets and pretended to look disappointed when she found them empty.

“See. I told you I didn’t have them,” Jack said, unbearably smug as she extracted her fingers. He must have thought his dirty secret safe.

No chance. Not with Sherriff Nisha on the job.

She did not bother dignifying him with a response. Instead she simply shoved her hand straight down the waistband of his jeans.

And there it was; the all too familiar sensation of lace and shiny satin beneath her fingers. “Bingo," Nisha drawled, suddenly wishing for a camera. She would have liked to frame it a picture of his stupid, shocked face for her own office.

“Oh fuck," was all Jack said.

She glanced up at Jack from beneath long eyelashes, wearing a grin. “Care to explain this cowboy?” she asked, hooking her thumb into the lace waistband, drawing it away then letting it ping back against his flesh. Jack let out a shuttering little sound in response. “This is kinky, even for you.”

He cleared his throat. “Those aren't my pockets babe,” came his casual response, as if he had not just been discovered wearing his girlfriend’s underwear while making coffee.

“Answer the question Jack,” Nisha said, letting her blunt finger nails dig with enough force to leave little crescent moon marks in his skin.
He hissed again and the sound sent a ripple through her. “Geez, claws, Nisha. I couldn’t find mine alright so I borrowed yours. God, I try and make you coffee like a good boyfriend and this is the thanks I get. Victimised in my own kitchen!” There he went again, blowing everything out of proportion. He was just being a piss baby because he had gotten caught.

“Why didn’t you go commando?” Nisha asked, lips still curled into a smile.

Jack snorted, as if it were the most ludicrous thing he’d ever heard. Rude, considering the sort of shit that came out of his mouth on a daily basis. “Because those damn jeans chafe and I ain’t risking a rash. I don’t love you that much.”

Nisha clicked her tongue at him. “Lyn’ and stealin’ Jack? You know I’ve hung folks for less right?”

He masked his embarrassment with humour and a shit eating grin. “Excuse me, but you’re wearing my sweater. Maybe I should rough you up for it.”

Nisha laughed and it was impossible to miss the way Jack smiled at her. “Only because you ruined my clothes big boy. Which you’re replacing by the way,” she stated, tugging him forward by his hips. His eyes widened but he allowed himself to be man handled. He could stop her. He could stop her any time he wished.

But he didn’t, because he loved how they played their little games.

“What are you doing?” Jack asked, trying to sound as disinterested as possible. She didn’t know why he even bothered. He should have known better than that. He’d be submissive and pliable in her palms before the coffee had even cooled.

“I wanna see what you look like in ‘em,” Nisha said as she found the buttons on his jeans. “Bet you look hot in purple.”

He gave a snort. “Babe, I look hot in everything,” Jack replied with the arrogant twitch of a smile she loved to kiss. Even now as she toyed with his jeans he couldn’t resist an opportunity to blow his own trumpet.

"You look the best on my floor." Nisha  popped the first free, then the second. The zipper came down with a slow hiss.

"Hurry up while I'm young," Jack said with an unnecessary eye roll.

"Jack I could grab your balls and twist them right now don't start with me," Nisha added, finishing with a hard tug on his zip then parting the denim.

There they were, her missing pair of satin panties: snug and stretched to capacity. His They had never looked better, nor happier.

There was a little silence upon her discovery. Nisha ran her tongue over her front teeth. It shouldn’t have been kinky to see him wearing her favourite underwear, yet it was. Fuck they looked better on him than on her. She suddenly found herself slipping her hand into his jeans and further into her little satin shorts, desperate to touch him.

Jack made a strangled sound as her fingers curled around his erection. “S-Shit...” was all he managed as she stroked his heated flesh once, then twice. He pressed against her hand and she rewarded his eagerness by massaging her thumb against his favourite spot beneath the crown.

“Purple is definitely a good colour on you Jack,” she purred, her own pulse a gentle humming in her
ear as she applied gentle pressure. He twitched in her hand, coupled with a little soft groan. The smugness had evaporated completely and she took pride in knowing it was because of her doing. His eyes were hooded, and unspeakably dark. Stomach muscles tightened and tensed in time with her ministrations.

“Fuck, Nish-“ She loved how he hissed her name in a feverish prayer, when he forgot all about himself and his company and his grand plan. His breathing was ragged as she teased him, stroking and curling her fingers around him just right.

"I think I'll let you keep these. They look great on you," Nisha added, heat building in her own gut. She could get off alone by just watching him.

He must have some control over himself left for Jack’s large hand came up and cupped her jaw. He drew her into a crushing, open mouthed kiss with the heat and intensity of a super nova. Nisha kissed him back just as hard, teeth clinking together in their roughness, but did not ease up her rhythm. Let it never be said that she wasn’t tip-top at multitasking.

And it was with some reluctance that she drew herself away, tearing her mouth and hand away. But it was far more satisfying to leave Jack ruffled and twisted in knots for a while. And she didn’t want to risk him staining her panties any further. She’d need to wear those later.

Jack blinked at her in confusion. “Hey-“ he started but she cut him off by pressing her finger against his lips. “Bring me a nice cup of coffee in bed babe and I’ll think about finishing you off,” Nisha promised with a wink retreating out of his reach before he could make a grab for her. She was too quick to be caught by him.

That, and the fact his jeans would slip down to his ankles if he moved.

Jack growled – a low, frustrated sound that was perversely satisfying. “Fuck, you’re a real piece of work.”

Nisha laughed breathlessly. “Honey, If you didn’t know that by now then we’d have a real fucking problem,” she replied before turning on her heel to retreat back to the bedroom. “You’d better hurry up or that coffee will go cold. And you know I hate cold coffee,” she called back to him.

There was a curse behind her and she grinned again. She never missed an opportunity to be spiteful with him. He would most certainly do the same. “Don’t forget the vanilla extract, or you're making it again.”

He wouldn’t.

She knew as well as she knew her name that Jack would be through in an instant with a piping hot cup of coffee.

And she knew it would be just right.
Police Brutality

Chapter Notes

She would have been really, really hot if she hadn’t been writing him a speeding ticket. (AU in which Nisha is a highway patrol officer and Jack is a software programmer who just wants to get to work on time) Featured Art by sanzo-sinclaire

Jack was late.

And Jack was never, ever late.

He had never missed an appointment, never failed to hand in an assignment or finish a report. He had never missed one of Angel’s parent-teacher nights. Even when he was hungover in his college years he was never late to his classes.

And now he was late, of all days.

Why today?

“Sir, where are you? Mister Tassiter is getting really impatient.” squeaked his intern, Rhys, through the Bluetooth speaker.

“On the moon obviously,” replied Jack, unable to resist a spot of humour. “Tell him I’m about twenty minutes out. I couldn’t get the car stared this morning and the traffic has been a fucking nightmare.”

Rhys must have had his big boy pants that morning because he answered back for a change. Or he’d finally gone mad. “But it’s a new car! How can it break down?”

“I don’t fucking know,” Jack snapped back. "Do I look like a fucking mechanic?" If Tassiter didn’t kill him before the day’s end, Jack would go and ring the neck of the sorry sales assistant who sold him the car. Or maybe he’d just skip the sales clerk entirely and go straight to Scooter.

There was a flash of vibrant colour behind him, shards of light catching his attention. Jack’s eyes glanced upwards to the rear view mirror and he groaned.

A police patrol bike following him, lights flashing and indicating that they wanted him to pull over to the side.

It couldn’t be happening.

Not today.

But it was, because his luck just fucking sucked.

“Shit Rhys, I’m being pulled over. Might be a delayed a little longer”

“Are you serious? What are we supposed to do?”
“Use your initiative kid. Stall him, jerk him off or whatever. I’ll be there as soon as I can.”

Jack disconnected the call before Rhys started crying. “Un-fucking-believable,” he cursed, slowing the car down to a halt off the side of the road. The police bike pulled up behind him, turned the lights off then kicked out the stand. He watched as the officer dismounted and it became very apparent it was a woman. Whoever it was, they managed to make the bog standard highway patrol uniform look very sexy.

Jack pressed down the window as she approached the driver’s side. Her name was stencilled on her jacket in bold lettering: N. Kadam.

Of course it would be her.

It fucking would be Nisha Kadam.

He was in for it, one way or another.

Off came her visor, revealing a pretty young woman who was definitely very familiar. God, she looked good in leather

But she always did.
“Everything alright officer?” Jack said, trying to keep himself as pleasant and calm as possible, but God it was hard with his Bluetooth buzzing in his ear. Rhys was probably having a heart attack at that very moment.

The crisp leather of her jacket creaked as she braced her arm against the roof of his car. He could see her eyes more clearly now – her cat eyes as he liked to call them. No one else had eyes as bright and gold as hers.

“Howdy,” she said, sounding as if she were straight out of an old western movie. “Can I get a look at your licence and registration cowboy?” Her voice was far too sexy for a police officer. It put him in mind of honey and strong whiskey – the expense kind, not the dirty water he used to drink in college some fifty million years ago.

It wasn’t the least bit fair.

He managed to stop marvelling at the sound of her dark, smoky voice just long enough to string a sentence together. “Oh come on, you know who I am.”


He would have made a deeply inappropriate joke if he hadn’t been feeling so frazzled. “Alright geez hold your horses.” He unclipped the glove compartment and fished out his documentation. “Here,” he said, thrusting them through the window.

Officer Kadam glanced through his paperwork, glancing up at him once as she checked his ID. Yes, he was as handsome in real life as he was in his ID.

“How do you know what speed you were doing back there?”

He didn’t like where the conversation was heading.

“Uh…the speed limit?” Jack asked with a grin, hoping that it was all just one big bad dream that he’d wake up from once he realised he wasn’t wearing any clothes. He wasn’t speeding. He couldn’t have been speeding. He didn’t speed. At least, he was never caught speeding. Only useless bookends like Rhys got caught speeding.

She flicked her tongue against her teeth and he felt his gut sink, as if he had just swallowed a brick. “Not even close stud. You were doing 58 in a 45 zone.”

Jack was stunned. He knew his new car had a nippy engine in it but he hadn’t even felt it go that fast. “Seriously? Fuck off!”

“Afraid so.”

“Shit,” Jack cursed. God, new car and he was already being pulled over in it. It wouldn’t have happened if he had been driving his old shit heap. His old shit heap could barely go above 50 on a good day. “I didn’t even realise I was going that fast.”

“Where are you off to in such a hurry? Got a hot date with your left hand?” Officer Kadam said, shifting her weight onto her right leg. And damn, what a fine pair of legs they were.

He was late after all, not dead.

“Hey well at least my hand never gets a headache. But seriously, I’ve had a fucking train wreck of a morning.”
Officer Kadam's lips tipped upwards and he couldn’t help but notice the glossy shine of dark purple lipstick. That colour would look good pressed around his neck. “Well, it’s about to get a whole lot worse.” Her hand slipped into the pocket of her jacket and she withdrew the infamous yellow note pad that he wished he’d never have to see.

Jack wanted to sink through his seat and into the ground below. “Oh no.”

Gold eyes seemed to glow with delight at the thought of booking him. “Oh yes.”

He ran a hand through his hair, trying to control his temper. What this actually happening? “Look Nisha-“

“That’s Officer Kadam to you.”

His brow quirked. So she wanted to play it like that did she? Well he could play rough too. He was late and pissed. He was within his rights to give her a bit of lip. “Sorry, Officer Kadam,” he said, rolling her title off his tongue with blatant disrespect. “Can’t you cut me a bit of slack here? I’ve had a shit morning.”

Officer Kadam tapped her pen against the pad. “I already have. I should haul you down to the station and charge you with reckless driving. You’re lucky I’m only giving you a speeding ticket. You ran a red light as well.”

“It was amber actually.”

She went back to scribbling his details down. “Which means you should’ve been preparing to stop.”

“I was committed to the manoeuvre.”

“Those lines don’t work on me cowboy.”

He was getting nowhere fast with her. “Don’t suppose flashing a bit of leg or chest would get me off the hook?” he remarked. If she said yes, he’d do it in a second.

“Are you trying to seduce an officer?” she drawled without looking up, as if she had heard it all already. She probably had.

“If I am? Would it help?” Jack asked, allowing himself a glance at her legs again. She would have been really, really hot if she hadn’t been writing him a speeding ticket.

Officer Kadam laughed, and even in his bad mood he had to admit he liked how it sounded. “No, but it would make my day” Officer Kadam replied, tearing his ticket off and handing it through the window.

He glanced at the ticket and nearly choked. Were those numbers right? “$250?!”

“Yeah.”

Jack was livid. “Are you for fucking real?”

“You’re lucky it’s not more,” she pointed out.

“That’s highway robbery right there.”

The officer raised a fine eyebrow. “What’s that old saying? ‘Crime doesn’t pay’?”
He exhaled, snatching back his control as he tossed the ticket into the passenger’s seat. He’d deal with that later. “Why don’t you just boil me in oil and call it a day?” he said, his fingers drumming against the steering wheel with impatience.

“That would be a waste of a real handsome face,” she replied, not missing a beat as she flipped the visor back down over her face. “You’re free to go. Watch your speed next time,” she warned.

“Yeah yeah,” he said dismissively, watching her leave. His eyes dropped towards and he took a moment to appreciate the curve of her ass in those leathers. She’d given him a ticket. He wasn’t feeling charitable enough not to look.

Once Officer Kadam was back at her bike, Jack pressed the engine button and the car rumbled to life again. He waited until she had kicked off and drove on ahead before eventually edging his own vehicle back out onto the road. Like he was going to drive in front of her after she had busted his balls over a speeding infraction. Jack had a few bad habits, and he knew it.

He glanced at the speeding ticket in his passenger seat and inwardly cringed. A $250 speeding ticket. That was $250 better spent on him, $250 better put in Angel's college account. He only hoped he’d still have a job by the end of the day in order to even pay it.

What a complete bitch. Even if she had a nice ass.

Okay. So he wasn’t fired.

But he probably would have been had the board not liked his proposal so much.

Jack headed down the staircase to the exit, laptop bag on his shoulder and feeling quite pleased despite his rough morning. Tassiter had been spitting tacks when he left and his intern Rhys lying down in a dark room somewhere, poor little greenhorn that he was. He’d get used to it. Everyone in Hyperion did.

He bid goodbye to the reception team in the lobby, pushed through the glass door entrance and out into the main courtyard of Hyperion Studios.

And sitting on one of the benches outside was none other than Officer Kadam herself; looking like a country rock star with her ruffled bob cut hair and suede cowboy boots. Those shapely legs he’d eyed up that morning were looking amazing in a pair of fringed shorts.

It just wasn’t fair at all.

He couldn’t even pretend her had not seen her. She was sitting in plain sight, no doubt waiting for him. “What have I done now Officer? Breathed too loudly? Existed too much?” Jack said snidely as he tried to walk past her. She deserved his scorn for what she had done.

Officer Kadam fell into place next to him, easily keeping up with his long strides. He most definitely did not glance to at her legs again because that would just be totally weak. “You still sore about that?” she asked.

He shot her a filthy look. The balls of this woman. She was unbelievable. “Damn right I’m still sore. Ugh I can’t believe you. I was late for that presentation.”

She had the audacity to laugh at him and he suddenly envisioned himself pushing her into shrubbery
on the sidewalk. She wouldn’t be laughing after that. “What did I do? Other than my job?” she questioned, eyes bright and lips glossy.

“Well yes. You owe me an apology. I so didn’t need that today,” he fired back.

She linked her arm through his. He wanted to pull away just to be spiteful but she hung hard and tight. “Okay: I’m sorry I did my job and I didn’t let my boyfriend run a red light and speed in a restricted area. Happy now?”

“Not really,” Jack said with a sniff. He was still mad with her. And with good reason too. "Do your job a little bit less well next time would ya?"

“You really did deserve it though,” Nisha stated casually. “You could have caused an accident, and it would have been my ass that was called to the scene first and I'd be tied up there for the next 12 hours."

“I still debate I was speeding,” he said with a huff.

“I’ve got the readings recorded and everything if you really wanna see them.”

It’s a lost cause to keep arguing, but Jack did so regardless because it is what she expected of him. “You could have just given me a warning instead.”

“You need to learn to obey the law babe,” she countered, giving his bicep a squeeze through his jacket. "Can't give you special treatment just cos we're fucking."

“You know, I could have been fired today thanks to you.”

Nisha scoffed at him. “No you wouldn’t have.”

“Know that for a fact do you?”

She made a humming sound of agreement. “You’re good at what you do. Tassiter might hate your bony ass, but the others appreciate the shit you do.”

He huffed, feeling both annoyed and hopelessly charmed. Nisha was a very frustrating woman, and he hated that she seemed to be able to defuse his irritation and anger with very little effort. “Okay first of all: Rude. My ass is not bony and secondly, what would you know about the politics of Hyperion?"

“I’m a cop Jack. I know everything,” she said matter-of-factly.

“Yeah, a bad one at that,” he said with a snort. "I should submit a complaint about you."

"For what?"

He didn't know, but he felt if he tried he'd manage something. "Victimisation."

Nisha was unfazed by the threat. She just glanced at him from beneath long, dark lashes and there was little quirk of a smile on her lips. He knew that look. He was in trouble. He was in definitely in trouble. “If you take me home, I’ll show you how bad of a cop I can be. Angel is with her friends tonight right?”

Jack hadn’t even told her that. She really did seem to know everything.

And for the coup de grâce, Nisha rattled her jacket pocket and metal clinked together. “I’ve even
‘borrowed’ my handcuffs for the occasion. We can play the interrogation game if you want.”

Jack grinned, his ire melting away like candle wax against an open flame.

Oh yes.

Officer Kadam was definitely worth a speeding ticket.
Short Changed Hero

Chapter Notes

Nisha pays Jack a visit in hospital after the events of the Pre-Sequel. Featured Art by sanzo-sinclaire

It was the first time Nisha had seen Jack since Lilith had shown up and turned circles into triangles before phase shifting on her merry way. He had been up on Helios getting treatment for the mark, so communication had been sparse. For a while, Nisha had been almost convinced that Jack had forgotten about her. A bandit camp on the outskirts of Dust had paid the price for the Nisha’s frustrated, imagined neglect.

Until a message had come through from Jack, suggesting that she pay him a visit at the moon base.

And like a stupid little girl with a crush, she had accepted the invitation.

So she found herself lingering at the threshold of the med bay, feeling shabby against the sleek, polished world of Helios. Everything smelt too clean, too sterile and it was too quiet for a supposed weapons manufacturer.

The things she put herself through for this man. It was ridiculous. She had even worn those low rider jeans he liked so much.

Jack was at the furthest end of the surprisingly empty medical, watching Pandora’s hazy clouds swirl beneath them. He must have been really fucking bored.

“Hey partner,” she greeted, tipping her hat as if he were a fair, country belle. She imagined he’d laugh at the comparison. Maybe she’d tell him later.

In the Hyperion’s medical bay, Jack looked over his shoulder and Nisha felt her breath catch hard in the back of her throat.

It was worse than she thought.

She had been expecting the mark of course. She had been there when the Siren bitch had sucker punched it onto Jack’s face, effectively cattle branding him with a Vault Symbol. She still heard Jack’s howl of pain in her eardrums, still felt it in her bones. She still felt the heat of it under her palms when she had pressed a cooling pad to Jack’s face in an attempt to bring him some relief as it seared his skin. She still felt Jack’s body trembling with pain and fury against her as he swore his vengeance.

Yet still the brand made her stare.

Even with medical intervention, the mark did not look much better than before. It was bright and blue; taking up most of his face. The skin around the edge of the brand still looked red and raw, despite his assurances that it was healing up okay. His green eye had clouded over to silver, seemingly damaged beyond repair.

He barely looked like Jack at all.
She fought to keep the shock from her face, but somehow Jack saw it and grunted in confirmation.

“So…That bad huh?”

He spoke slowly now, his voice rough from disuse. It must have hurt to speak. It didn’t suit him at all. She was accustomed to fast talking Jack; cracking jokes and laughing at just about everything. She liked that about him. He loved to have a good giggle, even at the expense of others. There was fuck all else on Pandora to laugh about.

Despite the wound, Jack did not miss an opportunity for a spot of humour. “And…here was me…thinking that you…you liked a man with a sexy…scar,” he continued.

Nisha did. But this was not a scar. This was something... Wrong.

She clamped it all back down for his sake. “I dunno. I still think it’s pretty sexy,” Nisha said, recovering herself enough to make her way to his infirmary bed. Her boot prints left a dusty trail on the shiny, clean floor that would no doubt upset some nurse somewhere.

“You think so huh?”

“Yeah,” she replied. “What a conversation starter it will be with the ladies. They will be all up ons now.”

Jack let out a dry laugh, and it must have cost him for she saw him shudder afterwards. “Heh, guess you’ll have…competition Nisha.”

Nisha sighed for effect. “I know. I’m making a shit list already,” she replied casually, hand on her hip. “I had grapes for you, but I ate them on the way up. Sorry.” She wasn’t sorry, nor had she even had grapes. But it was worth it to make Jack smile again.

And it worked.

He cracked a grin, the brand pulling at the healing skin. She had to wonder how much it hurt just to smile. “Wow, you’re so considerate.” He patted the space on the hospital bed next to him in invitation.

“How does it feel anyway?” Nisha said, sinking down onto the bed. Against the clean Hyperion med-bay bedding, she looked positively filthy and in need of a good scrub. Fuck could she infect Jack’s wound further? She hoped not. He was far too pretty to die just yet. Hell, he had survived tangling with a Vault Sentinel. He would survive her grubby jeans and hands as well.

He shrugged, as if it were all some minor inconvenience. He need not have bothered, considering how he trembled. There was no need to try and convince her otherwise. “Still hurts like a bitch….Like all the time. Kinda makes the room spin sometimes. Which…isn’t nearly as fun as it sounds.”

She found it hard to read him, with that great big Vault brand marring his face. “What did the doc say?”

Jack waved a hand weakly. “All say the same thing…”’Never seen…anything like it blah blah blah…Need further testing drone drone drone.’ They’ve tried…to correct it with skin grafting or something, but…the scar just burns through.”

“So they are pretty much just grasping at straws then?” Nisha replied with an arched brow. “That’s shit.”
“Yeah…She…” Another pained breath rattled through his teeth. There was long, heavy gap in the conversation as Jack struggled to form words. “…really fucking did a number on me.”

The aching sound of his voice made her chest feel tight, as if a great, unwanted weight was pressing down on her. Was this where she was supposed to do something? Say something comforting? She was not a dab hand at comforting people. Hurting them yes, she was very good at that. Pandora – and by extension her mom she supposed – had taught her how to deal pain as well as take it. But comforting…She didn’t really know where to start.

Yet Nisha found herself reaching out for Jack. He made her want to try.

Her hand – sweaty under the leather fingerless glove - settled against his back. He trembled against her palm in either with pain or anger she didn’t know. They were likely one in the same. Nisha pressed against the spot between his shoulder blades and rubbed gently - like she had read in old books.

It felt awkward and odd. Her brow wrinkled. How could this even be the least bit helpful? What was she even trying to tell him? That she was there for him? That went without saying really. They’d seen too much, done too much. Almost dying with the man had made her attached.

But whatever she was doing, it seemed to Jack. He seemed to still beneath her hand, and his hard, laboured breath steadied out. He glanced up at her, and she saw the look of gratitude under the Vault Mark. “I…Get me the painkillers would ya?” Jack asked, running a shaking hand back through his hair.

She retracted her hand. “Sure. Where are they?”

“Bedside table.”

Nisha slid over to the bedside table, retrieved a small yellow bottle of tablets and tossed them back to Jack. He caught them deftly, dry swallowed two (it made her stomach lurch just imaging dry swallowing pills) then cleared his throat. “Thanks.”

“No problem,” she replied, sinking back onto the bed.

“You found them yet?” he asked.

There was no need to define “them.” Nisha knew who he referred to and shook her head, feeling miffed. It would have been nice to visit Jack in with Lilith’s head in a canvas sack. What a nice ‘Get well soon’ gift that would have been. “No. The rat bastards have gone to ground. I was looking forward to bringing you the bitch’s head. Could have mounted it in your office.”

He made a sound of disgruntlement. “Figures. Frigging…” Jack winced again, his fingers curling into tight, hard fists. “Frigging cowards. We coulda…We could have fixed Pandora overnight babe…God.”

Nisha frowned. He had certainly gotten short changed out of them all. “We will yet. And we’ll get even don’t worry. We’ll string em up when we do. The bad guys always lose, remember” she said reassuringly. Jack loved a spot of violent banter.

He snorted in approval, and for a moment he seemed like his old self again. “I call dibs on the Siren bitch.” There was the bite in his voice that she loved.

Nisha smiled with just enough teeth. “Then I get to end your sleazy pretentious ex,” she stated firmly. It was a cheap but satisfying shot. Being branded with a Vault Symbol was no excuse not be
ridiculed for having poor taste.

Jack groaned in dismay. “What was I thinking?” he said.

“Not with your head clearly,” Nisha said with a snort. “Well, not with the right one.”

“Hey…you’re supposed to be nice to me…I’m injured. You’re supposed to feel sorry or me ya know?” Jack protested.

She cocked her head to the side. “I do feel sorry for you…For putting your dick in that,” Nisha replied. “I’m surprised it didn’t fall off afterwards.”

“You’re all heart babe.”

She winked at him. “That’s me, Nurse Nisha on duty.”

“You know, you’d look…real hot in a nurse’s uniform,” Jack quipped.

Nisha cocked an eyebrow at him, a smile creeping onto her face. Typical Jack. Never missed an opportunity for a good flirt. “You know those cheap japes don’t work on me.”

“Hey, I don’t make cheap japes…I make…really sophisticated japes,” he stated, but she heard the amusement in his voice. He seemed better at least than he did when she first arrived.

“Well handsome. When you’re feeling up to it, let me know when you want to go and skip those drinks.”

He blinked in surprise – at least he blinked his one remaining good eye. “You mean…you still want to? Or have I just slipped into a morphine induced coma…” He inhaled sharply. “…And this is all an elaborate drug dream?”

Nisha hummed at him as she leaned back on her hands, surveying him with keen eyes. “Fuck yeah. Because damn if I ain’t looking at the most handsome, badass man on galaxy with a sexy new scar,” she replied, and it was true. She still liked him despite everything – maybe even in spite of everything.

“You’re just saying that.”

“And you’re just fishing for complements.”

“Well yeah, duh, because I'm the best and I deserve them.” The effect of the brand just seemed to melt away completely, and she could suddenly see him again. There he was, the Jack that made her pulse quicken. The Jack that was confident and demanding and made her toes curl in her boots.

“You are the very best,” Nisha agreed. His ego needed a little bit of a stroking. “And when that mark heals up a bit, I wanna run my tongue over it,” she added. Best give him something to look forward to while she was gone, and he was recovering.

There was a stuttering sound as Jack looked at her as if she were the answer to all his problems. “God, where have you been all my life?” Nisha couldn’t suppress the smile that curled at her mouth. It was impossible not to be smug about it.

“On that shithole planet. Which I need to get back to.”

“Well yeah.” Nisha replied. “Gotta go and round up the bad guys like you wanted me to.”

“C’mon,” he implored, more of a whine that anything else. “Stay a while and keep me company… Boring as fuck here…Tell me what you’ve been up to.”

“Well…” She paused a moment, trying to decide if she truly wanted to go back to that dusty planet, or hang with Jack in this bright, and glimmering world.

But Jack was looking at her with those eager eyes and she found she didn’t have the heart to refuse him. “I did get the drop of a group of bandits and burned them all alive.”

Jack suddenly turned and wriggled backwards down the bed so that he could lay his head on her lap. His feet stuck off end of the bed, but he didn’t seem to mind despite looking ridiculous. “I love a story with a happy ending babe,” he said, lacing his hands together over his chest.

Nisha fixed him with a reproachful look but he just smiled back, as if butter wouldn’t melt in his mouth. He knew she wouldn’t shove him off, and he was right as well. She should of, just to teach him a lesson.

But instead, she took her hat off and dropped it onto his belly. Her fingers carded into his damp hair, and she found herself gently combing it this way and that as she spoke.

“Okay, so I was in Dust right and this asshole road hog tries to run me off the road…”
Chapter Summary

She always took what was hers. God what a woman.

(Straight up Jack and Nisha porn because I regret nothing.)

Chapter Notes

Inspired by thisssssssss Featured art by Sanzo-Sinclaire.

He should have known she was up to something by the way she looked at him at the bar.

It hadn’t been his fault that Moxxi was to talking to him, and it certainly wasn’t his fault that she had been plying him with free drinks while he waited for his hired help to show up. And Jack didn’t waste, even if the liquor was coming from his ex’s bottle.

Nisha had been the first to arrive, with that ridiculously large sniper rifle slinging on her shoulder and her whip (her goddamn whip) swinging on her hip. She was early, punctual, first. He liked that in a woman.

All it had taken was one look at him and Moxxi, and her pretty features fixed into a look at had his pulse hammering.

Fast forward and now Jack found himself being pinned against a nearby wall in plain sight of Moxxi, with Nisha stretching herself against him. Her mouth was on his, insistent and visceral, with her hands gripping his shoulders.
For a moment, he couldn't do anything. He was too shocked to really do much of anything. He felt paralysed by Nisha’s sudden attention. He had thought her a lost cause, given how she had snubbed him off when he called her pretty on Helios. He remembered through the gunfire being so bummed out about it.

Yet here she was, kissing him like it were her last act as a free woman.

Nisha’s teeth bit into his bottom lip and suddenly, Jack remembered how to be a human being again. He curled an arm around her waist, pulling her close with a creak of leather. His tongue pressed into her mouth and she made a sound of approval in her throat that vibrated all the way down into his belly.
She broke from him for a moment, and it was just as well because Jack felt his lungs straining. “That’s one hell of a ‘hello’ Nisha,” he panted, letting his fingers draw patterns on the exposed small of her back. The skin there was as soft as he had imagined it to be.

“Heh, I like to do things big,” she replied, running her hands down his arms. His muscles twitched in response and he longed to have those capable hands run down his bare biceps.

Jack cocked an eyebrow at her. “What brought that on? Not that I’m complain’’ of course,” he added quickly.

There was a glint in her gold eyes as she answered. “Well, you’ve been such a trooper lately, and it’s not like I haven’t seen you lookin’ at me.

"I uh.” Oh shit. Had he been so obvious? Jack inwardly cursed. He’d made an effort to only glance at her ass once every half hour.

"Don't tell me I was imaginin' that,” Nisha replied, glancing over her shoulder, her smile still fixed firmly in place. Fingers squeezed his shoulders and she pressed her hips a little harder again his. "Or do you wanna stay with that slutty clown"

As he bit back a moan, the last penny dropped. Nisha was staking a claim, making sure that Moxxi knew that she had an interest in him.

Fuck, it was hot. And there was just no way it was happening. "Well no but I-

“Think you have time for a quickie hero?” she interrupted casually, fingerling the fabric of his jumper.

Jack almost laughed. Because there was no way this was happening. It was a dream, definitely. He had either fallen asleep, or he was dead on Helios somewhere. Because there was just no way that Nisha the Lawbringer, the sexy cowgirl with a sexy whip was asking him of all people for a quickie.

But since it was a dream, Jack decided to play along.

“The others…They will be here soon. We have ten minutes, tops,” Jack said, suddenly unbearably hot. He was not trying to make excuses, God no. But the thought of the others catching him balls deep in her was offputting. And this was his dream after all, and they were entirely unwelcome.

But Nisha simply winked at him from beneath the brim of that ridiculous hat. No it wasn’t ridiculous at all. It was sexy – as sexy as she was.

“Then you’d better hurry up,” she drawled in that dark whiskey voice of hers that just seemed to curl around him, like tendrils of smoke. He didn’t know anyone else with a voice like that.

As her fingers toyed with his jumper further, Jack could scarcely believe his luck. Was she actually so possessive that she’d fuck him within earshot of his ex. God what a nice dreaming he was having.

“Nisha I-“

“I’ll time you then if you’re so worried,” she said, cutting him off. “Ten minutes right? Think you can manage that?”

For her, he could. Because Nisha was the particular breed of sexy he liked - dangerous and powerful. He smiled at her in the dim lighting of Moxxi’s bar – that smug little grin that he knew she liked. “Pfft, I can do it in eight,” he bragged.
Nisha chuckled softly. He could get rip-roaringly drunk on that sound alone. “That's optimistic.” Her lips met his again and he tasted a faint flavour of bourbon on her tongue. It should tasted cheap, but it didn’t. It tasted spicy and wild, just like she did.

She took the hand from her hip and tugged him playfully backwards. Jack followed her, powerless to really do anything else. He couldn’t look away from her, like a charmed snake. Her eyes – as heated and intense as liquid gold- held him entirely as she lead him through the bar. Her hand felt right in his; just the right size and her fingers seemed to thread perfectly through his own. He didn’t want to think too closely about what that meant.

There was curtained booth in Moxxi’s bar, secreted away from prying eyes and probably built for such trysts. And there was enough noise that no one would even notice them. And some wicked part of him almost wished that someone would.

In the dark, Nisha pushed him against the wall again with enough force to bruise in back. She was so rough, and damn if it didn't make something in his blood scream.

While he still had the presence of mind, Jack reached up and drew the curtain shut, sealing them away in their own heated world. Her sniper rifle rattled its way to the ground and she all but pounced on him before the curtain was closed. Her fingers plunged deep into his hair again, drawing him in for a kiss that he felt all the way down into his toes. It was hard to think of anything else, not when Nisha was kissing him like she were trying to draw out his very soul. Maybe she even was.

What a way to go.

His hand slid high up her back, slipping under her jacket and further still up her white shirt. She was hot beneath his palm. She was scorching to the touch, as if the lava of Elpis pulsed through her veins instead of blood. His fingers stroked against the scars from past battles; thin lines of rough silver against her smooth, dark skin. God how he wished they were not having a quick ride in his ex’s bar. He wanted to run his tongue over them and feel her shiver.

He heard the soft beeping of a timer being set. God was she timing him? “You’ve got ten minutes, do your worst hero,” Nisha breathed, pressing a hot kiss against his jaw line.

His breath stuttered out as he spoke. “A-Are you actually timing me? For real?”

Nisha pulled back and he could see her teeth glinting in a smile. “You said you could do it in eight. Or was that just bullshit?”

Jack didn’t bother answering her. Words was time wasted – time better spent buried in Nisha’s welcoming, lithe body.

Instead he leaned down and latched his teeth onto the slope of her neck beneath the leather collar, biting hard enough to leave a visible mark.

Nisha hissed in his ear, drawing his name out with a moan. A thrill ran down his spine. It was the best sound he had heard all day. He wiped his tongue over the spot, taking a moment to suckle it with his teeth. Her skin smelt of ozone and something sweet he couldn't place.

She made an impatient little growl he nibbled above her leather collar. “Hurry up Jack,” she demanded, hooking one of those strong, sexy legs around him. A boot rubbed against the back of his knee and fuck if he nearly didn’t collapse on the spot. “We don’t have all day.”

No they really didn’t. They probably only had maybe nine minutes or so. He didn’t even have enough time to get her jacket off. "Y-Yeah. Right," Jack breathed, his forehead resting against hers.
Hands, desperate and shaking, fiddled with the cumbersome belt buckle below her daring little belly button. The zipper on her pants were next, and he was proud of himself for not breaking it even with her breath hot on his neck, or upon discovering that she had gone commando under her jeans.

Nisha was not so considerate. She was rough, jangling open his belt and tugging the zipper down hard. Her hand snaked between his jeans and her clever little fingers curled around his erection. Jack seized her mouth to stop himself from groaning out loud. She stroked his heated skin intimately as if she had done it a hundred times before; knew just where to stroke and how much pressure to apply. It was crazy, and crazily good.

“Frigging hell Nish…” he hissed feverishly against her lips, trying to keep his voice down.

Nisha let out a little laugh. “I know my way around a gun,” she answered, kissing him again. He would have laughed at the comparison had Nisha’s tongue not been curled around his, sucking greedily. Jack’s hands roamed over every strip of bare skin available; running along the curves of her ribcage, down the slope of her waist and around to her back again. There was so much skin to touch and it frustrated him to the point of madness that they didn’t have time for anything more than a quickie in Moxxi’s place. He wanted to strip her down and see her dark skin shimmer with sweat.

Nisha drew away to run her tongue along his jawline. “Eight minutes Jack,” she panted against his skin. "I'm doing all the work here." She ran her thumb over the tip of his cock just to add insult to injury.

It was hard to form words with his jaw still wet from her saliva and her fingers still curled around him. It was hard to do anything except push against her clever hand.

But somehow he snatched back the confidence she temporarily disarmed. “Yeah yeah I’m getting to it,” Jack hissed, pushing her hand off his erection otherwise they'd have a problem.

With his heart wild in his chest, Jack slid his hands down her thighs and with strength he didn’t realise he possessed, he turned to pin her securely against the wall.

Nisha gave a little surprised gasp and he wanted to be smug about it. But the comment fizzled out on his tongue as her legs hitched around his waist; the dusty heels of her boots digging into his leather jacket.

He never got the one over on Nisha.

Ever.

She wasted no time in grinding her hips against his, looking so damn pleased with herself. “F-Fuck,” he growled, pressing harder against steel and titanium. Flyers scattered free, and Nisha's hat toppled from her head but neither of them paid any attention. Jack could focus on nothing else except Nisha and hungry, wanting look she gave him.

His vault hunter leaned forward and Jack shivered as her lips nipped the helix of his ear. She was close enough now that he could feel her body heat radiating through her clothes, seeping into his flesh. It was wonderful. In this dark little alcove, he could not remember the last time he felt more alive and wild. “What are you waiting for Jack? A written invitation?” The sass and passion in her voice was so thick he could have drowned in it.

His brows deepened. “I'll friggin' show you a written invitation,” Jack growled back. He wanted to shut her up somehow, because her voice was too erotic and taunting and he simply could not bear it. The only way he could think of was by shoving himself deep and hard into her.
And it worked.

Nisha let out a deliciously sexy moan as she curved against the wall, her fingers digging into the leather sleeves of his jacket.

“How’s that for a written invitation?” he ground out through a set jaw. It was a struggle to hold himself together. She felt so good – wet and hot and snug.

She tipped her chin down to give him a lazy look, as if he weren’t buried deep in her. Heat clenched around his dick and Jack cursed again. Fucking tease. “I’ve had better.” Her voice betrayed her. He could hear her breathlessness.

He managed a smirk, drew himself away then forcefully pressed back into her. Again, Nisha made a gorgeous sound that went straight to his cock. He had to bite the inside of his cheek to stop himself from groaning as well. “Shhhh not so loud babe,” He warned, struggling to form full sentences.

Her fingers dug into the meat of his shoulders and she pulled him forward for another kiss; probably to muffle her moans. Jack swallowed them down as he rocked against her; holding her in place against the wall. His own strength surprised him. He was no army commando and Nisha was slight but toned with muscle. Yet it seemed easy to keep her pinned up. But he’d pat himself on the back for that later.

“Seven minutes. Hurry up.” Her breathing was ragged, her fingers slipping up to scratch along the base of his neck.

He pushed into her again and felt her press her boot heels harder into his back. “God, want want want with you isn’t it?” Jack hissed into her hair, but he loved it. He loved her passion and greed. He loved her demanding and her wanting. He loved how she clawed at him like a jungle cat; wild in her need for him. It did his male ego the world of good. Moxxi was never like that. Moxxi was calculated and measured and detached.

But Nisha wasn’t Moxxi. And the thought made him smile against her dark, fluffy hair. She was so, so much better.

Time seemed to slow into a long crawl, and the remaining seven minutes they had felt like seven hours. And even then, seven hours would never be enough with Nisha. She was fire; consuming and burning and needing. Every thrust he made, Nisha let with a little buck of her own. His mouth found every inch of her that he could, from her neck to her collar bone and back again to her lips. Every gasp he heard, even over the thumping of the music.

“F-Four minutes,” she panted, squeezing him all the way down with her inner muscles. He damn near bit off his own tongue.

“You’re not my damn stop watch,” Jack retorted, giving her an extra hard thrust that caused more flyers to jostle free.

The bit of snark cost him, for Nisha gave him a hard look as she rotated her hips in a tiny circle. She hit a sweet spot he did not even realise he had. Pleasure cut through him and a groan that slipped from his lips didn’t sound human at all.

“You bitch,” he hissed, seeing spots in his vision.

“You love it.”

He was going to die in this woman, and he was completely fine with that.
His finesse was all but gone. The need to feel her skin on his was unbearable, but he knew they didn’t have time for that. It should have been a smooth seduction with Nisha – a quiet room somewhere with candlelight and roses and all that other junk that women were supposed to like.

But Nisha wasn’t like any other woman. And the quick, hot, heavy roll in the hay felt appropriate. It felt right, considering they could die in the next twelve hours. There would be time later for all that romantic shit, when there wasn’t a great big dirty moon canon being fired overhead by a mad woman.

And he only had four minutes left. He’d have to do something quick if he wanted to finish her off before the others arrived. Jack doubted he could even hold out another minute, much less four. He was so, so close it almost hurt.

He slipped his hands down lower to cup her backside, and changed the angle. One. Two. Three strokes then he felt her body go tight and taunt like a drawn bow string. Muscles contracted and the last of her resistance broke in her. Nisha made a hissing, yet gasping sound but Jack leaned forward to muffle her moans with a kiss, swallowing down the sound of her climax as he rode her high to his own.

Nisha’s hands came up to cup the back of his neck, nails digging in like talons. “Come for me cowboy,” she ordered in her dark, sexy voice. Jack’s fingers dug into her backside with enough pressure to leave bruises even through the denim.

It only took another ten seconds or do for the tight thread in his belly to finally snap completely. A full body shudder surged through him. He didn’t pull out at all, and simply emptied himself into her with a groan whistling through his clenched teeth. Nisha didn’t seem to mind, if the insistent rocking of her hips was any indication.

They went completely still against the wall; Nisha flopping bonelessly against him, her arms hanging off his shoulders. For a moment, nothing was said. Jack struggled to find his breath, and find the strength to move his legs. He was certain that he would collapse at any minute, taking Nisha with him.

But slowly the world shifted back into reality again and he regained the feeling in his lower half. And god if he didn't feel good.

“You had two minutes 15 seconds left.” Nisha said between pants. “Not bad at all.”

“Heh, and you doubted me,” he said with a smug look, slowly letting her down from the wall.

Her boots tapped against the steel of the floor, and he noted with deep satisfaction that her legs were trembling. “For a second, yeah.”

“Guess you owe me an apology then.”

Nisha snorted. “I don’t owe you shit. I didn’t say that you couldn’t do it. I just said it was optimistic.”

Jack laughed at her, like the snotty asshole he was. “Well c’mon. Better go and meet the others babe. Or they might come looking for us.”

But unlike the snotty asshole he was, he leaned forward and pressed a kiss against her damp forehead. She smelt of sweat and, now, of him.

“Lemme just sort myself out.” Nisha righted her hat back onto her head and wiped the smudged lipstick from the corners of her mouth. She looked sated and deeply satisfied. It was a good sign. "Better fix yourself up as well Jack."
She made a valid point. He must have looked like a right wreck as well. He zipped up his pants and rearranged his jacket before fixing his hair.

“How do I look?” Jack asked, smoothing it all back into place. No need to let anyone in on their little secret right away. He wasn’t sure he could have coped with Athena’s curious glances, Wilhelm’s knowing smugness or Aurelia’s disgust. And he couldn’t handle any questions that the Clap-Trap unit might have had.

She reached up and rubbed away the residue of her purple lipstick from his lips with the cuff of her jacket. “Like a trashy slut,” Nisha replied.

He took her hand and kissed her fingertips, unable to resist a spot of gentle intimacy. He was a romantic at heart after all. “Really? Does it suit me?” he asked.

And apparently neither could Nisha. She stroked her fingers over his lips, her eyes hooded with something he hoped was affection. It didn't cost to hope. “Purple yes, but trashiness no,” she answered before releasing him and reaching down for her sniper rifle. “Let’s go save that moon then hero.”

He opened the alchove curtain for her. “Ladies first.”

As Nisha ducked underneath his arm, he distinctively felt her hand on his ass, copping a feel as she passed.

He was truly in trouble now.
Chapter Summary

Jack and Nisha get married. Sort of. Featured Art by the fab sanzo-sinclaire.

Chapter Notes

I’m not too happy with this one but I wanted to get it out of the way because it kept distracting me.

High thread count sheets. Multimillion dollar company at his fingertips. His enemies on the run. The drills getting closer to the Vault.

And a sexy sheriff Vault hunter curled up next to him, completely dead to the world.

Jack stretched his legs. Yes, life was good. Life was fucking great actually.

How could it get any better?

Well, it would be better with Roland’s fucking head mounted in his office. And that siren skank too. He could live without them for a while longer.

The only thing that could really put the cherry on top of his life was if Nisha was to marry him. Then he’d always have her heavy warmth tucked in at his side; snuffling softly in her sleep.

Nisha would never marry him though, not right now. Probably not ever. That wasn’t her, not while there was bandits to slay and order to bring. There was always something that she needed to do on Pandora, someone to sling from her hastily constructed gallows.

So instead, Jack imagined that Pandora has been civilised once and for all. There’s no need for her to be constantly in Lynchwood. He could see it clearly. Spring in Opportunity, everything lush and green. Their wedding would be big, and Roland and his little band of merry assholes would certainly not be getting an invitation. Wilhelm would be there. He’d be there even if Jack had to pay him to be there. He’d send an invitation to Springs and Athena. Springs was always ready to party, and she’d be fun to have at the after service. Aurelia would receive a invite as well. She’d never show up of course. That would be beneath her. But she’d send a nice gift.

Maybe he would send an invite to as well Moxxi just for a joke, as a passive aggressive fuck you. Maybe he’d get Nisha to sign it as well.

A chuckle slipped from his lips and at his side, Nisha stirred slightly. Jack stilled in response, waiting to see if she’d woken up. If she had, maybe he could talk her into a quickie before heading to the office.

But no, her breathing remained soft and slow.
How disappointing.

Now, where was he before he was so rudely interrupted?

Yes. His imaginary wedding to Nisha.

He’d make sure it was big and grand, so over the top that Nisha would double over laughing at his outlandishness. She’d never play the bride though. Jack knew that. She’d never show up in a dress, because that was not her. Though, he would never have her any other way. She would show up in her Sheriff’s gear and it would be polished up for the occasion. Not a speck of blood in sight. He’d be proud of her restraint.

They’d have to have a honeymoon of course. A two week honeymoon on Opportunity sounded nice, away from the buzz of the office and policing duties. They could laze around, drink cocktails at the poolside by day and bang their brains out by night. Maybe he'd put a baby in her before the end.

Yeah. Jack could see himself having kids with Nisha. He thought about it a lot if truth be told; far more than he should of. Nisha was hardly the mothering type, god no. But still he found himself imagining what she’d look like pregnant with his kid, hot as he'll probably.

And that would just be what Angel needed, a little sibling to keep her company and make her laugh, make her smile again.

Sometimes he imagined ten kids, other times it is only three. More frames to sit on his desk to motivate him through the slog of his paperwork. He needed heirs to run the company after all. Hyperion wasn’t going to manage itself once he had popped his clogs. He needed a handsome son to take over for him.

Yeah.

That's what he needed. A handsome, strapping son with a clever glinting smile that can bear the responsibility of Hyperion.

But it’s always, always a daughter that’s first. He liked the idea and she would look just like her mother; gold eyed and dark haired with the ability to wind him around her finger. Effortlessly adorable, just as Angel was but as fierce as Nisha, three girls to bully him into submission.

The alarm clock on his bedside table suddenly started to beep loudly, disturbing him from his lovely little day dream. How rude.

Jack growled, immediately rolling away to over shut it off. Or throw it at the wall, he hadn’t decided.

As he moved, Nisha stirred properly – making a sound of displeasure as he shifted away from her. He heard a soft little thump behind him.

Jack glanced over his shoulder and there was Nisha face down in the mattress, looking as limp as a ragdoll. Evidently she was very tired. “Mmmm, Jack no, come back…’is too early.” She said, voice muffled and pawing at the spot he had previously occupied.

“Babe, c’mon. We gotta get up,” he said with some reluctance, mashing the buttons on his alarm clock. “I’ve got a company to run.”

He felt her hand slip over his hip. “Just five more minutes…”

Jack didn't have it in him to refuse her, not when she was stroking his sharp hip bone like that.
“Alright, alright. Five more minutes,” Jack relented, rolling back into bed. It was hardly a hard decision.

His girlfriend looked up and smiled that warm, languid smile that he only ever saw in those hazy morning moments when she was still half asleep. “S’not like anyone can fire you for bein’ late anyway,” she replied lazily. Jack uncurled his arm and let Nisha snuggle into his embrace. She felt wonderfully warm at his side and Jack sighed in contentment. There was no reason to get up just yet. Hyperion could wait a while.

He let his fingers draw soft patterns on her arm and Nisha responded by kissing his shoulder. He enjoyed these moments with her, where she was pliant and placid after a good sleep. She was a firecracker through and through; all passion and energy and heat but even Nisha needed her quiet moments to recharge.

“Mmm what you thinkin about?” Nisha asked, her voice still thick with sleep. Damn if she didn’t sound sexy even then.

Jack kissed the top of her head. Her hair was ruffled from sleep, and smelt of faintly of the honey scented soap she had used to scrub away all the Pandora grime and dust the night before. He’d be craving honey for the rest of the day. “Hmm…’bout stuff.”

Nisha slid her leg between his slowly, rubbing her toes against his calf. It was deeply distracting. “What sort of stuff?”

“You mostly.”

She made a little soft snort. “And not yourself? Colour me shocked.”

“Yeah I spared you a whole five minutes,” he replied, sliding his fingers into her hair. She had grown it out over the past few years and there was nothing he liked doing more than running his fingers through her dark locks. “I was thinkin’ about what it would be like if we were married, what our kids would be like.”

Nisha went still against him and there was a small, unexpected silence between them. Jack was certain that she even stopped breathing for a second.

But then he felt her exhale against him with a little laugh that was not entirely discouraging. “You wanna make an honest woman of me?”

“Would that be so terrible?”

Nisha chuckled softly. The sensation of her breath on his collarbone caused goosebumps to flutter over his skin. “Well, we’d probably end up killin’ each other. And our kids would be so fucked up.”

“Yeah probably,” Jack agreed, drawing a figure of eight on her hip. “But humour me a minute babe. ‘Mrs Handsome Jack’ has a nice ring to it doesn’t it?”

She made a noise of disapproval in her throat. “‘Jack Kadam’ sounds better.”

“Let’s just take it in turns then. Some days I’ll be Jack Kadam and others you can be Mrs Handsome Jack.”

Nisha snuggled in closer to him still, draping an arm over his chest. Apparently, she quite liked this game after all. Because that was what it was; a game. To consider it anything else would make him feel like a love sick fool, and he just wasn’t down with that. “Okay then, I’ll bite this once.” As if.
“What’s our wedding like?”

Jack sunk back into his daydream. It had become one of his favourites so far. He could almost feel the heat of the Pandora’s sun dappling his skin through Opportunity’s lush trees. “Big, grand. Lots of stupid flowers. The works. There’s a huge fucking cake, and Butt Stallion is pulling our carriage about Opportunity.”

“I like it.” He felt her lips curl into a smirk against his skin. “Will you be wearing a dress?” she asked, sliding her fingers through the dusting of hair on his chest.

He paused for a long moment, as if giving her request some serious thought. “Nah, I look fat in white.” Sigh dramatically for effect, because that would make her smile. “But you’d look fucking gorgeous.”

She let out a snort. “Not a chance cowboy.”

“Even if I asked you very nicely?” he asked with an arched tone, wiggling his eyebrows. It was hard not to think about Nisha in one of those wedding dresses; fitted white satin and silk a delightful contrast against her dark skin. It was harder still not think of the lace stockings and silky garters underneath.

But she shot him down in flames. “Not even then,” Nisha said, her tone indicating there was no
The bubble popped. “Pfft, killjoy.” But he couldn’t have everything he supposed, even if he was the president of Hyperion. “Then I ain’t wearing suit.”

“Never said you had to.” Nisha propped her chin on his chest, wearing a cheeky smile. God how he loved it when she smiled at him like that. He felt like the centre of the universe when she looked at him like that (technically he was). "And let's face it Jack, you'd look like a startled penguin in a suit with that hair”

He pinned her with a look, trying his damndest to look irritated. He couldn’t let her know that he inwardly found her comment hilarious. “Oh haha-fucking-ha. You’re funny.”

Nisha grinned back. “Babe, I’m hilarious.” She stretched out again with a sigh that was almost obscene. Knowing her, it probably was and she was doing it just to spite him. “Okay. Outfits sorted. Who’s going to be there at our wedding?”

“Well, who do you want to invite?”

She made a disgruntled face. “Can we not invite my mom? I don’t want her ruinin’ our first dance by throwin’ something at you,” Nisha didn’t seem to be letting the fact that her mother had been dead for nearly six years spoil her little guest list.

He should have felt like an idiot; planning an imaginary guest list for an imaginary wedding to a woman who’d probably rather cut her own head off than settle down. But he didn’t. “Yeah I can’t be bothered dealing with pissy in laws. Right so, no parents,” Jack replied, checking off his fingers. “Who else?”

“I’m thinkin’ of having Wilhelm as my maid of honour. He’s got the legs for it,” Nisha commented.

Jack couldn’t stop himself from snorting as he imagined gruff, cyborg Wilhelm stuffed into a frilly dress holding a bouquet of flowers. Nisha giggled at his side as well, evidently imagining the exact same thing. “Can we even get dresses for loader legs?”

“You could have one made. Make sure it’s pretty.”

“Something in purple?”

“Yeah, bring out the colour of his eyes.”

Jack grinned. “Okay so Wilhelm is there in his fancy frock. Who else?”

Nisha paused for a moment, playing the part of a pondering bride well. “Springs and Athena. Springs is fuckin’ wild with a couple of beers in her.”

He cocked an eyebrow at her. “And how do you know that huh? Got some hot, girl-on-girl stories to share?”

“Pig,” she retorted, kicking him hard under the blankets. God, he had forgotten how hard she could kick. He'd have a bruise the size of an orange on shin later.

Despite her assault on his shins, Jack managed to grin. “Oink oink.” But yes, he could see it now. Springs camped in the front row, scrubbed up in her Sunday best with a moody Athena sitting next to her with her dark hair threaded with flowers.
“What about Aurelia?”

“Yeah I was thinking about sending to the ice queen invite.”

“Do you think she’ll show up?”

Jack tipped his chin back. “Oh she’ll show up babe. She’d never miss a chance to try and upstage me at my own damn wedding.”

“Well good thing you're so handsome then,” Nisha said before pressing her plush lips against his chest in a kiss.

Jack felt the jolt of something akin to electricity run through him, spiking all the way down to his toes. As he inhaled sharply Nisha’s eyes seemed to glow with satisfaction and her hand slipped downwards. He didn’t know a woman with eyes as vibrant as hers – not a woman who wasn’t a siren anyway.

“Focus Babe, focus,” Jack said sternly, even though he would have much rather her not focus at all. “We’re getting married remember? And I’m not doing all the hard work.”

She spread her palm flat against his stomach. Jack felt himself shiver in response. If only she went a little lower. “Not so fun at the other end of the barrel is it?” Nisha remarked.

He eyed her. “What’s that supposed to mean?”

His Vault Hunters just smirked back. “You know what it means.”

Jack did not bother to justify her comment with a response. Typical woman, thinking she did absolutely everything. He had been nothing but devoted to her the night before, and he still had the ache in his jaw to prove it. “Great, so we’ve got our guest list sorted. We’re practically halfway there babe.”

There was a little pause in the conversation before Nisha spoke again. “And what about…Angel?”

Yes. What about Angel indeed.

Well, it was an imaginary guest list for an imaginary wedding on a imaginary Pandora that had been civilised so there was no reason not to have Angel there. It was his dream wedding after all.

“She’s the flower girl,” Jack responded with a tight throat.

“Good choice,” Nisha stated, and that was all she said on the matter. She never lingered on the topic of his daughter, because they both knew there wasn’t much to say on the matter.

Jack felt a great sense of relief when she spoke again. “And your employees? Gonna give them the day off for it?”

“Yup, they are all there. Though they are probably just there for the free food and wine, the bastards.”

“And our honeymoon?”

He tried not to answer too quickly. “Two weeks in Opportunity, with all the cocktails and beer we can drink.”

“Will there be a pool? Wanna drown a puppy in it.”
Jack’s throat went dry. If he saw Nisha in a bathing suit by the poolside, he’d probably die on the spot. All the more reason to make sure their apartment came with a pool. “Of course.”

“Sounds like you got it all sussed out. I’m impressed,” Nisha replied.

“And you said men can’t multitask,” he said with a smug smirk.

“I’m just surprised that you can focus on anything other than yourself for five minutes.”

“Wow, okay rude.”

“So, where’s my ring,” she asked, wiggling her bare fingers at him. “Gotta have a nice ring baby.”

“God, nag me to death already why don’t you,” Jack replied before taking the ring off of his finger. He caught her hand and threaded it onto Nisha’s slim ring finger. It was far too large for her, but it looked good on her hand. “There, now you do. So stop bitching.”

Nisha silent for a moment, then a soft, heartfelt smile broke out across her face - definitely not a smirk but a proper smile. “You’re such a cheap shit Jack, not even getting me a proper ring,” she sniped back, but spread her fingers admiringly as if he had just presented her with a diamond ring. He could see what the gesture meant to her, judging from the darkening of her cheeks.

But still he opted to play the asshole, because that’s what she expected. “Give it back then.”

She coiled her hand away from him protectively. “No. You can’t take it back, there’s no take backs,” Nisha insisted. It made him swell with pride to see her so fondly twirl the heavy ring around her finger.

“Alright, you got your frigging ring. You happy now?”

Nisha didn’t respond verbally.

Instead she slung her leg over his hip. With a suddenly rush of movement and an oof! on his part, she had straddled his waist. She was strong, his Nisha, so it was easy for her to keep him pinned with those strong legs. He had seen her break a man’s neck with a twist of those thighs, so he did not even think to complain. Not that he even wanted to of course. Nisha was a comfortable, satisfying weight on his lap.

“I’m fucking ecstatic,” she replied, a dark heat in her eyes.

“What are you doing babe?” he asked with a raised eyebrow, trying to look cool and collected – as if he wasn’t the least bit bothered by her.

There was a press of her hips and Jack’s fingers dug into the bed sheets. She smirked down at him, wriggling slightly because she lived to torment him. “Do I need to draw you a picture Jack?” Nisha replied, cocking her head to the side playfully. It was almost shameful how easily she could get his heart rate thumping.

“Yeah, but I’ve got to go to the office soon,” Jack protested, but he couldn’t stop his traitorous hands from coming up to and slipping under his Hyperion sweater.

Heated gold glowed in her eyes as Nisha rocked from side to side gently against his hands. “No you don’t. We’re on our honeymoon remember?”

Jack matched her smile. She was willing to pretend for him, if only for a few hours. So he pretended
as well, that they weren’t on Helios and that Pandora wasn’t a freaking shithole and his daughter was penned up in a chamber on said shithole. “Oh yeah, so we are,” he replied, stroking circles on her hips.

Nisha’s slender fingers slid beneath his jaw to cup his face, thumbing over the hammering pulse point. “My handsome husband, the hero of Pandora.” His ring pressed against his skin as she leaned down to press a kiss against his cheek without a hint of teeth. It was a remarkably tame gentle for her. Jack felt himself sigh as her lips brushed against the Vault mark. His mask was on the bedside table. Nisha always insisted he remove it. Don’t need to wear that round me Jack she had said one afternoon as she lazed about his office. She knew what he looked like under it all.

He appreciated her, and he’d appreciate her every damn day if only she would let him.

Her hair brushed against his face gently. “You wanna have those kids now?”

That tore it for him.

His forearms clamped around her waist and Jack rolled, taking Nisha with him. She let out a squeal that was quite unlike her, inner knees pressing against his hips.

As he worked the hem of his jumper up her stomach towards her ribs, he connected his ECHO device through to his unfortunate secretary. “Denise”

She answered immediately, sounding perfectly perky. Was that even normal for 7:45 in the morning. Did she actually sit around waiting for his call? A+ for effort. “Good morning sir.”

“Cancel all my meetings for today. I won’t be in,”

“Yes sir. What should I tell the department heads?”

Tell them that I’m currently undressing my sexy girlfriend so we can bang like bunnies while pretending we’re married. That would go down like a ton of bricks. “Tell them I’m on my honeymoon,” Jack answered. Yes that was better. It sounded far more ridiculous that they would think it was true.

“Sir?” She sounded confused, and he didn’t blame her. But there was no reason to confuse her with the trivialities of logic.

“Yes now chop chop Denise, time’s a wasting And you know how I feel about that..” Jack stated pleasantly as Nisha lifted her arms up so he could tug his Hyperion jumper over her head. He was super proud of his own composure, the evenness of his voice as Nisha smirked beneath him.

“Y-Yes sir, of course sir.” She clicked off the line, and it was just as well because Nisha was impatient. Her hands slid up onto his shoulders, squeezing gently. “You actually told her you were on your honeymoon.”

Jack cupped her breasts, noting the way that Nisha arched into his palms. “Yeah cos we are, Mrs Handsome Jack.”

“I told you I liked Mr Jack Kadam better,” she said before drawing him down from another kiss, fingers threaded deep into his hair.

If it meant that she would kiss him like that every day, Jack would happily take the latter.
Succour

Chapter Summary

He didn’t sound like a man whose best laid plans had just been scuppered, but a father who had just lost his only child.
(In which Nisha takes care of Jack after the death of his daughter)

Featured Art by the fabbbbbb sanzo-sinclaire

Chapter Notes

(I’ve been feeling sad so have something sad. So Nisha and Jack are probably totally out of character.)

“Sheriff Kadam?”

Nisha’s ECHO device pinged in her ear quite unexpectedly. She lowered the sniper rifle and turned away from the screeching Bandit whom she had been using for target practice. Had to keep her skills sharp after all, and there was nothing better than sniping from the top of a watch tower at any bandits who strayed too close to her borders.

“Go ahead.”

There was a swallowing sound on the other end of the line. “Sorry to disturb you ma’am, but there’s an incoming train requesting entrance to Lynchwood. The driver says he has Mister Handsome Jack on it, and that he’s requesting to see you immediately. He-uh, said that Mister Handsome Jack was quite insistent.”

Nisha raised an eyebrow to herself. It was odd really. Jack rarely visited Lynchwood. Too much dust and dirt and peasantry for him she supposed. He liked everything glossy and bright and metallic. He only seemed to visit her if he wanted to pick a fight with her over some imagined slight, or when he was in the mood for a bit of slap and tickle and simply couldn’t wait until she visited him on Helios.

“Thanks for the heads up. Let it dock as soon as it arrives.” She was too curious to be spiteful and make Jack wait.

“Yes ma’am.” Hyperion employees were so well trained, and polite. It was impossible to buy that sort of manners on Pandora.

Nisha hefted her sniper rifle back up and took aim once more. The bandit she had sniped in both knee caps were bleeding out on the dust. She was feeling merciless for once. She squeezed the trigger. A bolt of recoil ran through her arms and then bullet sniped through the skull of her captive.
with a bang putting an end to the psycho and her afternoon target practice.

She had a train to catch after all.

The sun had set by the Jack’s train arrived. She knew something was wrong the minute he stepped off the train and onto the platform. He should have stepped off all swagger and mouth and the general pig-headedness that she had come to love.

But there wasn’t any of that. Just Jack stumbling off, looking quite unlike the sleek, predator she had was accustomed to. His hair was a mess, as if he had been hauling his hand through it constantly. There was blood splattered on his vest and jacket (she hoped it wasn’t his). His breathing was hard, as if he had been running for life and there was a Hyperion assault rifle slung around his back.

Damn, what had had happened to him?

Nisha walked towards him, trying to ignore the knot widening tight in her belly. “Jack? You okay honey?” she asked carefully.

He focused on her, looking exhausted and lost. His eyes were red and raw, as if he had been crying only minutes before. But that couldn’t be right. Because Jack never, ever looked like that. Jack never looked lost because Jack always knew exactly what he wanted, and when he wanted it. She had fallen in love with his ambition, his drive to constantly want more from life. He was never happy with the status quo. Which was perfect because neither was she.

Finally he spoke after what felt like an age. “Nisha…” His voice sounded pained, broken. She hadn’t heard him sound like that in a long time. Hell, had he ever sounded like that?

“Yeah it’s me babe. What’s going on?” Nisha asked, unease creeping up on her like a poorly concealed assassin. Something was terribly, terribly wrong.

Jack moved suddenly, closing the gap between them in five long strides. He threw himself at her – there was no other way to describe it. He damn near knocked the wind right from her. Nisha stumbled under the unexpected weight, but managed to keep herself from falling over. Jack’s arms slipped up under hers, pulling her against him as he pressed his face into her shoulder.
Nisha’s hands came up to rest upon his shoulder blades, trying to steady him. She could feel him trembling beneath her palms, shaking as if he were suffering from a terrible chill. There was a desperation in the way he clung to her like he was afraid she was suddenly going to vanish if he didn’t hold tight enough. “Hey hey c’mon handsome, talk to me. What’s goin’ on?” she asked.

“It’s-It’s Angel,” he gasped into her neck, curling his arms around her tighter. The shuddering seemed to increase in intensity.

Nisha thought of the pale teenager with those big, blue sad eyes. Jack’s little ghost; who was the eyes and ears of Hyperion. “What about her babe? What happened?” Nisha seized her willpower and as gently as she knew how, pushed Jack from her shoulder so she could look him in the eye. He wore the look of a man whose world was crumbling to pieces before his very eyes.
Fuck. What had happened to him?

She placed her palm against his cheek as gently as she could. Jack pressed into her touch as if he had been starved of physical contact for years. He was almost cold to the touch, yet his skin was clammy with sweat. “Jack?”

He seemed to break into a thousand pieces right in front of her. “They killed her Nish, they killed my baby girl,” he whispered, his voice crackling with grief.

Everything went still for a moment, and Nisha was suddenly hyperaware of her heart beating against her eardrum like a hammer. “What? Who?”

Jack’s nails dug into her back as he tightened his grip on her. She considered it lucky she was wearing her heavy leather duster, otherwise they would have cut right into her skin. “Those bastard Vault hunters. They got into her chamber, and she helped them do it. They—they frickin’ turned her against us and then…and then they killed her.” His voice broke again. He wasn’t crying, but he let out a small, dry croak of a sob that was somehow worse.

For a moment, Nisha couldn’t say or do anything. Her breath was stuck in her throat. She didn’t know how to deal with grief. It was not something she ever truly experienced. The only thing that had come close was when she buried her dad, and it had been a detached feeling of emptiness. It was like something happening to someone else, and she had just been an observer. A day later and she had been killing bandits the same as ever.

And the truth was, she didn’t know how to grieve, and she didn’t want to know how, because it sounded weak. It sounded awful.

But this was different. This was Jack. And maybe it was because of him that her stomach seemed to knot. “Oh Jack…Shit, I’m sorry.” Her response came out softer, quieter than she would have liked.

Jack swallowed hard. “I begged them not but, but they fucking did it anyway…” Every word seemed to be a struggle for him. “My baby girl….she told me I was an asshole Nish. They made her hate me. She died hating me…Oh God.” There was the crack in his voice again - the break that twisted in her gut like the serrated blade of a rusty knife.

He didn’t sound like a man whose best laid plans had just been scuppered, but a father who had just lost his only child.

She had to get him somewhere else for a while, and get him a stiff drink for the shock. “Jack, it ain’t the place for this,” Nisha said as softly as she could. Empathy did not come easy to her. She was glad of it, because empathy got you killed. Empathy got you robbed. Empathy was for the fucking weak. Nisha didn’t want to ever be weak again.

But God how she wanted to try for him; anything to stop him from making that broken sound of despair.

Nisha slipped her arm around his waist, then slung his arm over her neck supporting his weight as if he were drunk. Jack was much taller than she was, but he was slight and lanky like the office jockey that he tried not to be. “C’mon babe, let’s get you home.”

Jack sagged against her again for a moment, but then righted himself. “Yeah. Okay,” was all he said, sounding lost and distant. It felt wrong. She would have preferred having him hissing curses and working himself up into an rage. That she could manage, could handle.

But this grief stricken stranger, she didn’t know what to do with.
Nisha led him through Lynchwood, opting to take the side routes and deserted streets. She wouldn’t allow anyone gawk at him when he was so close to breaking. He shivered against her, despite the heat of the Lynchwood evening. “Almost there Jack, We’ll get a drink in you then get you to bed.”

“Don’t want a drink.” The words ghosted from his lips and evaporated into the hot Lynchwood air. If she had not been paying attention, she’d have missed them completely.

“Yeah you do. You’ll feel better after one,” Nisha insisted. She tightened her grip on him to stop her hands from shaking as well. “A stiff drink and a sleep is what you need Jack.”

Up the stairs they went behind the sheriff’s office to Nisha’s lavish apartment. She kicked the door open. There was no reason to ever lock her door. No one had the balls to steal from the Sheriff of Lynchwood, maybe except for Jack. Even then it was only ever her panties he pinched to use as a flag for Opportunity.

She led him in, then pressed the door closed again with her booted heel. Jack did not even seem aware of where he was, otherwise he might have complained forever about the untidy state of her apartment.

Instead he simply stood next to the squishy couch, looking weakened as Nisha grabbed a bottle of whiskey from the drinks cabinet and a clean glass. He was quieter now than he had ever been before.

“Let’s get you off to bed huh cowboy,” Nisha said, taking his hand. It was cold and clammy in her grasp. She led him down the hallway into the master bedroom; a familiar, safe place for him. He had it custom built for her after all. Complete with mirrors on the fucking ceiling.

She pushed her bedroom door over and was glad she had the foresight to make her bed that morning. Nisha flicked a switch near the doorframe. The blinds shuttered down and the lights glowed to life.

“Gotta get some of layers off you cowboy. Won’t be able to sleep like that,” she stated as she unclipped the straps securing the assault rifle to his back.

“Yeah, sure.”

It was strange to strip him of his clothes without passion or haste. She helped him out of his jacket first, then opened the metal clasps of his waistcoat and the buttons of his white shirt. Jack let himself be handled by her without complaint, lifting limbs when need be like a lifesized human doll. He did not even protest as she eased his mask off, setting it down gently on a side table as opposed to a fucking cushion like he usually insisted upon.

Once he was left only in his jeans and his soft, faded Hyperion jumper did Nisha bundle him onto her bed. She worked his sneakers off as well, tossing them down with the rest of his clothing. Then she poured a large measurement of whiskey into the glass. “Drink this Jack,” Nisha insisted, pressing the glass into his hands. There wasn’t any problem that couldn’t be solved with a drink.

“Don’t want it,” he protested, but made no attempt to push it away. “Last thing I want is a drink.”

“It will help you sleep. Drink it babe,” she said, barely applying any force to her voice.

He caved to her authority almost immediately, completely out of fight. Down the whiskey went; his throat jerking hard as he swallowed the contents of the glass in a single gulp. She sat the glass on the side table and dimmed the lights down. “Right handsome, get some sleep. We’ll deal with everythin’ in the morning. I’ll be in the living room if you need me.”

“Alright cool.”
She doubted he would even notice if she was there or not. Nisha started for the door, only to hear Jack suddenly protest behind her.

“No, Wait. Nisha.”

She paused in her step and looked back. “Yeah?”

Jack’s gaze seemed to find hers, even in the dark of her room. “Stay with me.”

Nisha swallowed, feeling a great pressure on her chest. She really didn't want to stay with him. "I..."

"Nish, please. I don't really wanna be alone right now."

She hadn’t refused him nearly five years ago when he was hurting. She couldn’t refuse him now.

“Yeah. Sure. Whatever you need Jack.” Off came her boots, her duster and her hat. She tossed them onto the arm chair near her bed with a rustle of fabric. Her gauntlets were shed and dropped onto the bedside table next to the glass.

Jack shuffled over to make room and she climbed in next to him on the purple bedding. Her back settled in against the headboard and Jack curled against her wordlessly. She straightened her legs, allowing him more room. His arms weaved around her, hugging her close as his cheek pressed against her chest.

Nisha draped an arm awkwardly around him in response, her fingers resting in his hair. “That better?” She hoped it was. She didn’t know what else to do otherwise.

“Yeah,” said Jack in the dark. He let out a pressured sigh, releasing the tension in his body. “Thanks.”

Nisha ran her fingers through his hair softly, gently just as her dad had done so many years ago. It had helped her then, so she hoped it would help Jack now. “Don’t mention it cowboy. Get some sleep yeah?”

They lay together for several minutes; Nisha stroking his hair and Jack snuffing against her shirt. “She’s really gone…My baby girl is really gone.”

“I know babe,” Nisha replied quietly, and to her horror her voice was trembling.

“God Nish, what am I going to do?” Jack pressed his face a little harder into her chest, and she felt a quake run through him.

She continued stroking her fingers through his hair as she spoke. “We’ll do what we always do. We’ll get even. We’ll find ‘em, and we’ll make them pay for Angel. I promise.”

Nisha felt him raise his head from her. “She said she hated me Nish…”

“She didn’t hate you. She knew what you did for her,” Nisha answered quickly, without hesitation. She would not allow him to think anything else. “It wasn’t you. It was those damn Vault hunters fucking with her head. It’s their fault.”

He pressed his cheek back against her. “I shoulda done more, put more defenses in but I didn’t think…Goddamn it.” Nisha heard the broken sob again and she was suddenly glad of the darkness of her room. She didn’t want to think how it would have made her feel to see him sobbing.

She tugged his hair to get his attention because damn it, he would listen to her even if she had to
force him to. He needed to hear it. “Jack don’t. It wouldn’t have mattered. They got in from the
inside out. You said so yourself,” Nisha reasoned. Logic wasn’t her forte. Never had been, never
would be. Jack was the logical one out of them both, the clever one. But he wasn’t in any fit state to
be making a rationale decision.

“She called me an asshole.”

Nisha pulled on his hair again, harder this time to divert him. She felt him flinch and he tried to
squirm away.

“Nisha, that fucking hurts.”

“Good, because I need you to listen to me,” she said, her voice without bite. “Angel... Well shit Jack
she was just a kid. Teenagers say all sorts of shit to get at their parents.”

“But why?.. I just..” There was another choked noise. "I tried so hard for her."

“Because those assholes convinced her that you were the bad guy,” she answered.

“I’ll kill them. I’ll kill them all.” Jack sucked in a breath. “I got that bastard Roland at last, but I gotta
get the rest. Fucking child killers.”

She stroked his scalp to make up for her necessary roughness. “And I’ll help you Jack. We’ll put
them down like the fucking dogs they are.” Anger burned in her gut, rolling around with the hate.
She hated the Vault Hunters. She hated them for what they had done to Jack, how they had reduced
him into a trembling wreck. It pissed her off to see him so broken, so wounded.

Jack suddenly sat up abruptly, unexpectedly. It was first bit of independent movement he had made
since clutching her at the train station. Before she had even exhaled again, he was cupping her
cheeks unsteadily. “You’ll help me Nish. You’ll help me kill the bastards.” Even in the darkness of
her room, she could see the pleading in his eyes.

“Yes Jack,” she replied, feeling the pads of his thumbs stroke beneath her eyes. Their talks of murder
were as casual as talks of the weather, but this was different. Everything was different now. The
gloves were off for good, and they both knew it. “I’d burn Pandora to a fucking crisp to see them
dead.”

“And you’ll stay Nisha. You won’t leave.” It was order, not a question. Nisha never usually took
orders. She did her own thing, and half the time she did it just to annoy him. But Jack...he deserved
some allowances today.

“Nah, you’re stuck with me handsome. Me and you against Pandora, remember?” She said with a
half smile.

Jack was silent again for a moment. She could feel him studying her face, looking for something.
Then, he released her and folded himself back against her body. Nisha’s arms came back around
him. Somehow, it didn’t quite feel as awkward as it did before. The trembles were still there, but they
seemed less frequent. “You won’t leave. No, no, not like Laura did, and Moxxi and Angel. You’ll
stay with me,” he mumbled against her chest.

Nisha pressed her lips into his hair. He seemed to get involved with a lot of bitches who didn't
understand him. “I ain’t going anywhere Jack. Go to sleep. I’ll be here in the morning. I promise.”

And when morning broke, Jack awoke to find that Nisha had kept her promise.
“So, what exactly was that meat?”
Nisha looked over the rim of her wine glass – filled with bourbon of course because champagne and wine tasted like piss – giving her boyfriend a pointed look. “Does that really matter? It tasted good right?”

Jack just raised his eyebrows at her. “I like to know what I’m eating. I don’t want to get the frigging shakes tomorrow.”

“You really wanna know? You might not like the answer.”

“Yeah.”

“You sure?”

“Great, now I’m definitely going to get the shakes tomorrow.”

“A haunch of Bullymong.”

Jack pulled a disgusted face. “Seriously? Ugh. Could have gotten you something decent to cook ya know.”

Sprawled out on Jack’s squishy, leather couch, Nisha gave him a prod with her booted foot – despite Jack’s strict “no shoes on the sofa” policy. “I don’t remember hearin' you complain. You had fucking seconds.”
But today, Jack didn’t seem to mind. He caught her leg and ran his hand up the back of her calf. “Well it would have been rude not,” Jack replied, massaging the back of her knee absentmindedly with his free hand, Nisha resisted the urge to sigh in satisfaction as his fingers drew little circles through the leather of her pants.

It was mercenary day. Helios was a glitter with decorations – from tinsel lining the clean hallways to little spent bullet shells fashioned into shiny baubles for artificial trees. Jack had given his employees the day off, and there was an unofficial cease fire with the Vault Hunters down on Pandora. Nisha suspected he was just unusually lazy and couldn’t be bothered dealing with them.

They were camped out in Jack’s quarters, watching Pandora shimmer outside; glittering like the frosting on a cake. Nisha stretched out, feeling comfortable and stuffed. Traditional Mercenary day food had been consumed, because for the past four years Jack had called the shots with the food. Cooking wasn’t and would never be her thing. This time, Nisha had caught and killed the Bullymong herself. She had even cooked it in a rare, fleeting moment of domesticity while Jack was down visiting Angel, adding far more red wine than she should of. It was no wonder that Jack was more than a little drunk, and she was more than a little giggly.

“I still can’t believe you fed me Bullymong.”

He didn’t truly care. She knew that. If it really bothered him, she’d have known about it. Rather loudly. Jack was just complaining on principle now.

“I still can’t believe you’re still thinkin’ about it. It’s traditional Jack.”

“If it was traditional to eat the ass out of a skag, would you do it?”

“Don’t be stupid. That’d never be traditional.” She bared her teeth at him in a toothy smile. “And besides, they don’t taste half bad with some salt.”


What a fucking liar. Nisha took another mouthful of her bourbon as she retracted her leg from his grasp. Jackie dearest didn’t get to put his hands on her after insulting her taste in food. “Stop whining and open your presents already, you’re giving me a headache.”

He huffed at her. “I’m not whining I’m making an argument. I like to know exactly what I’m eating.”

God, he was so hot when he got all bent out of shape over nothing. She pushed her the heel of her boot against his shoulder to give him another shove, trying to push him towards the tree. “Pfft, fucking rich boy.”

“Pfft, fucking native peasant,” Jack fired back, without hesitation. He was a class act, and if nothing else, Jack could always make her laugh.

Jack’s tree was decked up in yellow and black Hyperion decorations, with a stupid “H” at the top. There was probably an identical tree in Angel’s chamber. Beneath the artificial branches was a long, nicely wrapped package that looked as if it might contain a chest with a nice gun in it. Nisha hoped it was addressed to her.

Jack crawled under the tree, evidently looking for something. It took all her willpower not to reach out and give his wiggling ass a good kick. Not a wise move if there really was a nice gun under there.
Nisha drained the rest of her glass then joined him on the carpet - not without teasing her fingers through his hair as she sank down next to him.

“Here you go babe, courtesy of Hyperion,” he said, hefting the package out and handing it over to her. “Happy Mercenary Day.”

“Thanks Jack.” She started peeling back the wrapping paper. It was definitely too neat and tidy to be his doing. “You didn’t wrap this yourself did you?”

“Nah, I’m too busy for that shit. Why do today what I can get someone else to do?” he answered with a grin.

Nisha snorted as she lifted the metal lid off carefully. Pressed into a bed of velvet was a Hyperion sniper rifle. And a beautiful rifle it was, with features sharp and a tasteful paint job. The gaudy, Hyperion yellow that Jack usually slapped on everything had been replaced with a rich purple colour.

It was one of the sexiest guns she’d ever seen. “Wow…Damn that is a fine gun.”

“Yup, one of a kind. Custom Designed by yours truly. 14x scope. Slag enhanced bullets. Night vision mode. The whole shebang. One of the first of our rifles to start using this magnesium and carbon fiber hybrid,” Jack bragged.

Nisha ran her fingers against the cold metal, feeling the skin on her arms break out into goosebumps. She couldn’t wait to use it. On the long receiver, there was the engraving of her old calling card logo, and a line of text underneath in Jack’s sketchy print.

“‘The last thing you’ll never see’ huh?”

“Yeah, figured it was appropriate.”

She was touched. He had brought her countless guns before, each more powerful than the next. But rarely did he put much thought into them. He was far too concerned with himself, after all.

“Thanks Jack. You always buy me the sexiest guns.” Nisha hefted it into her arms, surprised by its light weight. “Fuck, I can’t wait to use it.”

“Heh, I know what the ladies like. Here, open the rest.”

Jack had been good to her that year; Countless containers of her favourite, expensive ammo, good bottles of bourbon, a new leather duster, cosmetics and a set of heavy duty handcuffs. How surprising.

Nisha looked at him, unable to stop herself from smirking. “I ain’t exacting arresting anyone on Pandora.”

“You might one day,” he replied vaguely. "Once we bring law and order and shit."

“Huh, maybe I’ll test drive these on you later.”

Jack grinned again. “Oh please do.”

When it was her turn to exchange gifts, Nisha felt a tension in her gut. Jack was notoriously difficult when it came to gift giving. After all, what could she get a man who had everything? Who had the money to buy everything? She almost felt silly as Jack fished out the little parcels she had brought up
from Pandora. “It’s just junk really,” she insisted, hating that she felt the need to justify herself. It was just as well she had her back up gift.

But Jack didn’t seem to mind in the slightest. “Hey, it isn’t a proper mercenary day without your junk gifts babe,” he replied cheerfully as he tugged at the string securing the wrapping paper together.

She watched from the couch as Jack carefully unwrapped the small parcel that contained an unassuming box. Inside was a ring, carved from a glowing chunk of the Eridium harvested from Lynchwood.

“Is this…Fuck is this Eridium?” Jack asked, turning the ring over on his palm. The Eridium glowed against his skin in steady pulses.

“Yeah, it was some of the left over pieces that didn’t make quality control,” she replied. Jack’s old ring still glinted on her finger, altered in size to fit properly. “Figured I owed you a new ring.”

Jack threaded it onto his finger immediately, the bright purple glowed against his skin then clasped his hands together. "Making an honest woman of me at last. Mother and father will be so pleased."

“Heh, I hope you come with a big ass dowry,” she replied.

Jack unlaced his hands.“Seriously, this is great. Thanks Nisha.” He spread his fingers for her. “And look, it’s like my own mini torch. No more pissing in the dark for me if I don’t want to turn the light on.”

“Classy.”

“Yeah that's me. The classiest girl at the ball.”

Jack worked through the rest of his gifts; an “H” pendant cut from the same chunk of Eridium she had used to make the ring and bottle of Pandora Fire Brandy that was almost too good to give to him. He didn’t seem to mind at all that most of her presents were hand-made, or had come from Pandora. “You spoil me babe, thanks,” he said as he gathered up the wrapping paper.

“I do have another present for you,” Nisha added as Jack stuffed the wrapping paper into the rubbish compactor. "As a back up ya know."

He returned to his spot on the floor next to her. “Hmm, what is it? You gave me some cool ones already,” he stated, then that shit eating grin split across his face once again. God how she loved that look. “And the blow job this morning wasn’t bad either.”

"This one is even better." Nisha stood up, smirking at his inquisitive look. Her hand drifted up to her sheriff’s shirt leisurely, and she popped the top button, then the second. The lace along the cup of a bra peeked into view and Jack suddenly sat up, very sober indeed.

“Well well, look at that,” Nisha said, letting her voice curl into a purr. She popped another button. Golden yellow satin glimpsed out, barely visible, just teasing beneath the surface.

Jack’s face changed from a look of curiosity to a dark hunger that had her toes curling in her boots. “Damn babe, you know just what to get me.” Jack stated, reaching out for her.

It was a delight to push his hands away and listen to him growl in frustration as he toppled backwards. “Hold your horses’ cowboy,” she insisted, pressing her boot onto the middle of his chest, applying just enough pressure to keep him pinned down.
“C’mon Nish. It’s Mercenary Day. Have a heart,” he huffed. “Don’t show me the goods then say I can’t have them. That’s just fucking cruel.”

Nisha tutted at him as she popped open the final button on her shirt. It fell open, allowing him the full view on the black and gold lingerie underneath – Hyperion colours of course. It couldn’t be said that she wasn’t good to him, because she hated how gold looked on her.

“I don’t think you deserve this one at all Jack, insulting my cooking and shit,” Nisha replied, bending down to see to her boots. Out of the corner of her eye, she saw Jack’s throat jerk.

“Hey, I didn’t say it was bad cooking, I just can’t believe you fed me Bullymong,” Jack protested. “It’s not like I actually said anything bad about your cooking.”

“Flimsy,” she replied with a sniff, kicking her boots away.

“C’mon, I’ve been so good this year babe,” Jack insisted, balancing on one elbow in an attempt to look cool and casual.

“Hmm let’s see,” she said, running her fingers leisurely along the straps and down to the lace detailing. “Burnin’ down towns, lying, insulting my taste in food. Oh yeah you’ve been so good this year baby.”

Jack’s gaze followed her with interest. “Excuse me but that was a town of bandits I burnt and you’re welcome by the way.”

"Yea but I wanted to do it."

"You snooze, you lose babe," Jack retorted before continuing. "And secondly, I don’t lie I’m just liberal with the truth. I’ll give you the last one but on the whole I’ve been a fucking saint.”

“A Saint huh?” Nisha hummed, sliding her hands down the planes of her stomach, over the raised ridges of scars to the buttons of her leather pants. It had the intended effect. Jack’s eyes had blew into black, the rings of colour barely visible. “Saint Jack of Hyperion. The patron Saint of bullshit.”

“Throw me a line here Nisha.” His voice had dropped an octave, and there was a plea in his tone she loved. It did her good to hear the big, powerful Handsome Jack desperate to touch her. And he wouldn’t until she had given him the green light. He knew the rules.

“Well, I did go through all this effort to put it on,” Nisha said, taking pleasure in the growling sound he made as she slipped her fingers under the waistband. She enjoyed torturing him; leaving him so twisted up in knots that he’d come even if she were to just ask nicely

But it was the festive period, and she was feeling very generous after being presented with such a thoughtful mercenary day gift.

Nisha popped the buttons free, loosening the waistband of her leathers, then pulled the zipper down. They clung to her like a second skin, so it always took a bit of wriggling to get out of them - wriggling that apparently Jack liked very much judging by the low growl of approval he made. She inched the leather pants down and the band of her garter belt glimpsed out. Another few centimes revealed lace panties, secured only by two silk ties on either hip.

Jack made a sound of both deep frustration and satisfaction; a rumbling sound that she wished she could record and keep for when she needed to get off and he wasn’t around. “Oh fuck me,” breathed
Jack, his voice hoarse. His hands had curled into tight, hard fists. Good on him for keeping himself together.

Nisha smirked. “Soon Jack, soon” she replied, then pushed down her leather pants further to reveal lace tops of the stockings underneath.

"Nish.” She could hear his control slipping further, his voice thick and low in his throat. That was the best gift of all.

With her heart thumping, she shimmed her leathers all the way to her ankles then stepped out of the little pile of clothing.

There was a silence as Jack drunk her in, his eyes almost entirely black. She loved those moments when something she did made Handsome Jack forget how to speak, how to function for a fraction of a second. He could be so easily cowed.

Nisha straddled his lap, taking advantage of his paralysis to remove her open shirt and drop it behind her. Her hips swayed from side to side as Jack just stared at her with open mouthed awe.

Now that was true power. “What’s wrong baby?” Nisha asked, cocking her head to the side while her hands sought out his broad shoulders. "Don't you like your present?"

But the respite only lasted a second or two before Jack was throwing her onto her back with all the force of a Nomad.

Nisha grunted from the sudden flare of pain. Where the fuck had he learned that move? She didn’t even have a chance to ask, because Jack was on her in a second and it made the ache all the more enjoyable. His hands skimmed up her bare waist, holding her steady as he ground her into the carpet.

Nisha grinned in victory as hooked one stocking-clad leg around him, keeping him secured against her.

“Damn it Nish, you really put the merry in mercenary day,” said Jack before his mouth was pressing to hers. He kissed with a roughness he knew she liked, with a demand that left her wanting and needy. He was all tongue and teeth, biting with just enough force to make her arch against the carpet.

Yet still she couldn’t resist a little dig at him. Her fingers sunk deep into his hair and she tugged him back to give him a questioning look. “I thought you said you were never kissing me again,” Nisha remarked smugly, grinding her heel into the dip in his back.

Something dark and savage flashed behind Jack’s eyes. “Yeah bugger to that for a game of soldiers,” Jack breathed. His lips crushed to hers again, savagely kissing; pain and pleasure spiced together. She ground her teeth into his lower lip and she could almost taste Jack’s soft groan in his throat.

He broke from her to skim his hands up her thighs appreciatively, fingers slipping over the bare strip of skin between the stockings and the garter belt. She suppressed a shudder as his fingers toyed with the straps. “Man, I must have been really fucking good this year,” Jack commented, lips tipped into a smirk that had her pulse quicken.

Nisha seized her bravado before it escaped. She couldn’t afford to give Jack even an inch. “Actually, you’ve been fucking terrible,” she responded mildly.

His hand slipped down to stroke at her inner thigh. She shivered with delight. “Then why such a nice present babe?”
Nisha back combed his hair, paying special attention to the streak of grey threaded through. “Because I’m a generous girlfriend.”

Jack’s palms – unsurprisingly soft – cupped beneath her ribcage. “Well ain’t I lucky.”

“And don’t you forget it,” she cooed in agreement, giving his hair a tug. “I don’t do this for just anyone.” She loved fighting him with words – all heat and snark. She loved putting him in his place, and relished that she was probably the only one who could. No one else could get away with the amount of lip that she gave him.

“Good.” Jack’s mouth found hers again, but it was far too brief for her liking. “I’m not down with sharing.”

He pulled away to press a flux of hot kisses against her neck and shoulder, applying teeth as well as lips. She’d be wearing his marks tomorrow, but that would be okay because he would be wearing more of hers. Her fingers tugged at the lapels of his jacket, trying to work it from him. She needed to feel his body, his skin pressed against her own, sink her own teeth into that delicious curve of a collarbone.

Jack took the hint. Let it never be said that her boyfriend wasn’t a perceptive guy. He sat back on his haunches, shedding his jacket, waist coat and white shirt, tossing them to the side. Nisha couldn’t help but hum a jingle as he stripped off for her. The festive period was infectious, and Jack was sexy in a nerdy sort of way.

What was definitely not sexy was the fact that he was deliberately taunting her; leaning down to kiss her instead of removing the rest of his clothes. “C’mon Jack, hurry up,” Nisha ordered. It was warm in his quarters, yet still she shivered on the carpet.

Jack laughed and pinged one of the straps of her garter belt. She flinched at the sharp sting on skin. God, she wanted him to do it again and again and again until she bruised. “You’re so damn impatient. Just settle down babe. I wanna enjoy this thoughtful Christmas present you got me.”

Fuck that. Nisha reached out tugged apart the buttons on his jeans. “Can you blame me? You’re hot as fuck Jack,” she replied, appealing to his ego as she pulled the zipper down. He was going to take forever at this rate. Might as well give him a little helping hand.

“Yeah I really am,” he stated with a smugness that drove her crazy. As Nisha worked his jeans free, Jack hooked his thumbs into the collar his Hyperion jumper, faded yellow and patchy with age, and pulled it up and over his head. Nisha admired him openly. He was hard and soft at the same time; muscles sleek and defined in some places and pliable in others. She loved that squishy little bit of belly he had.

Jack tossed the jumper aside and it joined the rest of his clothing. Maybe she’d steal it from him later when he wasn’t looking. “Any day now Jack, while I’m young,” she stated, letting her fingers slid down beneath the waistband of his jeans. She wasn’t the least bit surprised to find he had gone commando today, spite always moaning about chaffing.

His grin flashed like a knife blade as his hips pressed down, erection pressing through the denim of his jeans. An involuntary gasp pushed itself from her lungs, and her own hips bucked upwards. The lace panties she wore felt unbearably wet, her core throbbed with awareness. "Jack stop fucking around," she hissed.

“Babe you ain’t in any position to make demands,” Jack stated. The control he exhibited must have cost him. She could see his jaw and neck muscles going tight with effort.
She should have flipped him onto his back and tortured him with her tongue until he wept. She knew
his weak points now. It would have been easy. It always was. But it was mercenary day, so maybe
she’d let him be on top just this once. She’d let him call the shots.

After all, she was a generous girlfriend. And it would make it all the sweeter when she snatched back
control.

Her lips curled into a smile. “Alright then hero, do your worst,” she panted, slipping her hands up
into his hair again and drawing him down for a kiss. She articulated her point with a hard bite to his
lip.

And his worst, Jack most certainly did.

He didn’t even both to take off his jeans. He just pushed the zipper down, tugged a ribbon at her hip
free then pressed hard and deep into her; hard enough to cause a shear of carpet burn on her back.

Nisha let out a purring moan of delight as he slid into her without any resistance; just a breathy gasp
that sounded like her name. "Atta boy Jack."

Jack seemed to have hands everywhere; on her thighs, on her stomach, on her back, on her ass. Had
he somehow engineered some more body doubles to sneak it while she was slugging down her bourdon? The thought of three Jacks had her bucking harder against him, biting into his neck with
enough force to break the skin. Three Jacks, three sets of hands. Oh the fun she could have had with
that. Maybe, she considered as he thrust into her again, she’d have a talk about it sometime.

At some point, he rolled and took her with him. Nisha’s hands splayed against his chest, not breaking
the rhythm or the contact with his flesh. God, how she loved how he felt in her, how she loved him,
loved how rough he could be.

One hand found the clasp of her bra and he unclipped it expertly. It loosened, and the cups gapped
away enough that he could enclose his mouth around a peak nipple. Her eyes fluttered shut at the
contact, sighing out his name as his tongue circled around a peaked bud. Her eyes fluttered shut at the
contact, sighing out his name as his tongue circled around a peaked bud. His mouth enclosed around
her nipple and a spike of pleasure shot straight down into her toes as he bit down. "Fuck," she
hissed. Jack growled against her breast, and the sound seemed to pulsate right through her skin and
into her very bones. His hand pushed the straps down her shoulders and Nisha responded by
scrabbling with the clasps of his mask. She had to kiss him without out it or she’d go crazy.

He let her take his mask off; encouraged it with his hot, demanding voice. "Come on babe, take my
mask off I wanna kiss you without it on," he might have said. Nisha could barely hear him. She
couldn’t concentrate on much other than working his mask free, and his cock thrusting inside of her.
The clasps snapped open on his mask and it rattled off onto the floor somewhere when she threw it
away. Along with her bra.

Even branded with the Vault mark, he was still jaw-droppingly handsome; strong chinned and sharp
cheek bones that she loved to kiss. And to say nothing of the brand. It made her stomach burn just
thinking about running her tongue over it again. “Well h-hello handsome,” she gasped, struggling to
put words into sentences. With her palms pressed against his chest, fingers curling into his chest hair,
she leaned down and dragged her tongue over the thick blue scar on his cheek.

Jack groaned, a broken sound. Evidently he was just as close as she was. His thrusts were erratic,
hard and punctured by curses and gasps. The amounting pressure deep within her gut was
wonderfully unbearable; a string lanced through her body that was growing tighter and tighter with
each buck and squeeze. “Fuckin hell Nish-“ came Jack’s broken voice.
Her hands found his as she pressed her lips against the stretching, blue brand along his cheek. “Come for me baby,” she whispered against his skin. "C'mon baby, I'm so close."

It did the trick. It always did

Jack thrust once or twice more then she felt his entire body tense beneath her, his back arching through his release. Grasping her hands, he clenched his fingers through hers as heat swelled up inside of her, a wonderful feeling. "Oh yes babe, yes. Fuck. Nisha,"Jack hissed through his tight Jaw. Nisha squeezed back, her knuckles going white beneath her skin, as the crest she had been riding suddenly crashed down with him.

She slumped down in a boneless mess, her breath hard and laboured as if she had just been running for her life. Her muscles pulsed and throbbed, milking Jack's still hard cock.

“Merry Mercenary day babe,” Jack gasped, curling an arm around her sweaty, damp body. Nisha’s ear pressed against his chest, hearing his heart pound wild and alive. She should have answered, but that would have required effort, and she just didn’t have enough energy.

Yet still she managed to find the strength to take his hand and pressed her lips to the Eridium ring. “Merry…Merry mercenary day Jack.”
Ash in a Jar

Chapter Summary

She wasn’t going to let him rot there like an asshole bandit. He deserved more than that.

Chapter Notes

(quickie on Nisha finding Jack’s body at the end of BL2. A little more abstract cos I’ve exams coming from every direction and don’t have much time for anything else kill me pls.)

The destructive trail they left is easy to follow. Neither Jack nor the Vault Hunters did anything neatly.

The pedal is flat beneath Nisha’s boot, the engine protests loudly in the hood of the vehicle. Just a little further, she tells herself. Not far to go now. She just hopes the Bandit Technical she’s high-jacked holds out.

As she takes a corner a little too fast, Nisha knows she should have been expecting this. Since Angel had been killed, Jack had been wild and unpredictable. Dark and angry, revengeful. She didn’t blame him. But she knows she should have seen this coming, that he’d pull something like this.

Halfway through the Eridium Blight, She kills the engine, and continues on foot, following the strong smell of sulphur through to the Hero’s Pass – and the bright fizzling remains of Hyperion robots. She knows where she is going, having punched Jack’s last known coordinates into her map. She hopes she can get there in time as she bounds up a flight of rocks.

She has to get there in time.

To think of anything else…she won’t think of anything else. She has faith in him.

She doesn’t get there in time.

Nisha knows that as she enters the chamber, covered in ash and grime from her journey. Because if she had, she should have walked into a firefight

The chamber of the Warrior is something out of a nightmare. If she were believer, Nisha might have thought it hell. It’s fire and bright, and it’s unbearably hot. There’s shapes in the sky too dark to be clouds. Her clothes stick to her, the sweat slick on her skin. But she’s dealt with worse.

Nisha picks her way through the debris of the main arena – evidence that she’s missed one hell of a hoe-down. The Vault Hunters are gone. The Warrior is cowed and broken; a smoking pile of rock
riddled with bullet holes and scorch marks. There’s very little left of it. They have made short work of Jack’s last, best hope for a peaceful Pandora. Fucking bandits.

Which meant Jack was..

Behind a shattered spire of rock she sees a body that is too familiar. Her throat closes up, her heart grinds to a stuttering halt within her chest.

Suddenly, she can't breathe, and there's lead in her gut. Dying would be preferable to how she feels now.

“Jack.” His name isn’t even audible over the roar of rushing lava.

He isn’t dead. He couldn’t be dead. Jack wouldn’t just die like that, she thinks to herself. He’s too stubborn to die. Dying is what the bad guys do, not the heroes. Heroes don’t die in places like this, in a Pandora version of hell.

She makes her way to him, her legs uneasy and her gut shivering. The earth is still shuddering under her feet as the liquid fire churns beneath the surface. Nisha doesn’t feel as if she could take another step, but she has to, she must. She has to know for herself, even if she doesn’t want to believe it.

She is able to reach him. Somehow she’s still expects him to suddenly sit up and start howling with laughter at the look on her face. “What? You think those friggin’ losers could kill me? I’m the hero baby, remember? Heroes don’t die.” he’d say arrogantly, and she’d punch him hard enough to give him a dead arm to mask her relief. The smoky taste of ash is on her tongue, and something salty she didn’t want to think too closely about. It's sweat, she tells herself as she sinks to the ground next to him, because this is a hot, unforgiving place. She’s not crying. She’s just sweaty.

But her hands are shaking, trembling with cold fear as Nisha turns him over. It’s worse than she thought.

He’s splattered with blood; a large stain on his waistcoat congealed and black. His mask has been knocked free, his last expression a bitter grimace. There’s still warmth in his body, probably from the heat of the stone beneath them.

Nish finds herself grasping his blood soaked clothes, shoulders trembling as she struggles to find her breath again. “Jack” She says again, but her voice catches and she finds herself swallowing down a sob. “They…They really fucking did a number on you.” She repeats his words, from five years ago in the hospital, stupidly hoping to hear him answer; sniping at her about stealing his lines.

He’s silent and still; eyes staring straight up through her to the burnt orange sky above.

Nisha sucks in another breath of hot, lava warmed oxygen, trying to keep herself together. Damn. Shit. Fuck. “You’re an fucking idiot, runnin’ off like that to go and play hero.” she says, still craving an answer as she strokes fingers down the sharp lines of his jaw. "What were you thinkin’?”

Again, he doesn’t reply, just looks at her blankly. She loathes the stretching silence. Jack had never been the quiet type. He always had too much to say, too many opinions, too many thoughts racing for attention. She's gagged him for his back chat in the past.

“Shoulda waited for me Jack,” Nisha says, though she knows that she may have well asked water not to be wet. "We could have taken them on together, just like before. Me and you against Pandora, remember?” Nisha finds herself rearranging his hair back into place. He’d have hated his hair looking messy. Heroes always had perfect hair. He's no exception. “But no, had to go off and face 'em on your own. You're so fucking dramatic,” she adds, and she hates how her voice cracks.
It’s fucking bullshit, she considers as she wipes the blood from his face with the cuff of her sleeve. This wasn’t how it was supposed to be. Her stomach coils into a tight little ball, and the sulphur is making her feel sick.

They weren’t supposed to lose. They were supposed to rid Pandora of bandits for good, be big goddamn heroes.

Yet here she is, just defeated and alone. She can’t imagine a world without Jack, can’t imagine her world without Jack. He’d installed himself into her life; made himself a staple. He just got her in a way other people didn’t, even on a harsh planet like Pandora. She’d told him about her mom, and he’d told her about his grandmother. Maternal abuse snapped them together like a broken, misshapen jigsaw. Maybe that’s why they got along so well. That, and their shared love for unapologetic violence and pain and cheese on crackers. The sex wasn’t bad either. She imagines him smiling conceitedly at the thought, and she thinks don’t flatter yourself I always did all the work.

Something damp slides down her cheek. It’s just sweat. It’s just sweat. “Sorry I didn’t get here in time, partner,” she says, her words wet with dry sobs that she can’t admit to shedding. “Shoulda been me going first. You’re the hero Jack, remember? And the heroes don’t die...You weren’t supposed to die... You weren’t...I...” Her fingers are on his face again, tracing over the scar as she’d done countless times before. The thought rolls around her head, gorging on the readily available guilt she feels.

It should have been her laying there, and suddenly Nisha wishes it was. She’s just the anti-hero of the story. The real hero of the story isn’t supposed to die first.

But she won’t leave him here, she thinks as she rights out his collar and straightens his waistcoat. She’ll take him back to Helios, cremate him then fling him off into space. That would be dramatic enough for him. That would suit Jack, not a lava tomb for a forgotten past.

Nisha’s knees crack as she manages to stand up. Jack doesn’t belong to Pandora. She wasn’t going to let him rot there like an asshole bandit. He deserves more than that.

As she searches for his mask (because he would want to have it) Nisha can’t even think of the last thing she said to him. Was it a word of warning? A coy little remark? She can’t remember, and she hates herself for it. Why hadn’t she been listening to him?

She finds his mask nearby; cracked slightly from whoever had gotten the killing blow but it’s still useable. She reattaches it carefully back onto his face with her shaking fingers; taking a moment to stroke beneath his his eyes before closing the lids.

He looks like his old self again. It would be easy to pretend that he’s just fallen asleep at his desk again and needs to be helped back to his bed.

Nisha eases him up into a sitting position so she can throw one of his arms around her shoulders, then she presses upwards from her knees. His body is still pliable and slightly warm, so moving him is easy. “Let’s get you home, hero,” she says, her free arm slipping behind his back to help keep him upright just as she has done so many times. A tremor runs through the earth as it does through her voice.

It’s a long hike back to the Technical, but she’ll do it for him. It's further still to his space station. Nisha looks up to the giant “H” shape in the sky. Helios blinks overhead, a comforting shadow she finds she needs now more than ever.

She takes a deep breath, tightens her grasp on Jack then takes the first, hard step forward.
The Parting Glass

Chapter Summary

He wants to face Lilith’s firing squad with a smirk and the memory of Nisha’s kiss on his lips – his real lips.

(*Alternate Ending* Jack and Nisha share a moment before their execution by a firing squad )

Chapter Notes

( AN: Another quickie because I'm too tired for anything else )

It’s dark in the holding cell. No point in wasting power on prisoners who will be dead by dawn he supposes. Through the pain of a broken arm (cheers, you siren skank), Handsome Jack is livid. He’s the hero of the story. He’s not supposed to be waiting out his execution in a cell that stinks of skag. He’s supposed to kill the bad guys, save the day and get the girl.

Well, he got the girl. The ironic part is that Nisha sitting in the jail with him. They are sitting side by side, yet separated by heavy cell bars. There’s enough space between the bars for him to slip his good hand through to rest on her knee. He needs her contact now more than ever.

“Ever thought it would end up like this?” asks his sexy love interest and she sounds remarkably calm considering the circumstances.

Jack’s head tilts to the side to look at Nisha. Even now she’s pretty, no, beautiful. She’s ruffled and bloodied; looking every the wild, untamed hunter he knows her to be. Hilarious really, because she’s everything he hates about Pandora.

Yet he’d been so proud of her that it had taken bird brain Mordecai, Mister Mystery number and mental Maya to subdue her. They had worked as hard to get her into a cell as Jack had to get her into bed. Nisha doesn’t bend knee easily.

“Taking us prisoner was a surprise,” he answers before breathing a pained hiss. He feels as if he were about to pass out, maybe it would be a good thing at this point. “If I were them, I woulda… just fuck, cut our throats and saved the ammo.”

“Well, the bad guys love to make a scene,” Nisha replies as she shifts against the stone in an attempt to get comfortable. But the shackles on her don’t allow for much give. “Wish I coulda gone out in a showdown or something, anything is better than this.”

“Not so fun on…the other side of the cell,” He manages with a smile he can't feel. The irony that she's a sheriff and sitting in a jail isn't lost on them.

"Guess I've had better evenings," She says casually as she taps her booted foot against the concrete.
He knows by now it's a nervous habit. She's a fidgeter, his Nisha. "How'd you'd see yourself going out babe?"

"Heh, handsomely and heroically," Jack retorts and pauses for another breath. "Not a with…firing squad with a broken arm."

Nisha’s hand slips onto his, her palms damp but he doesn’t care. His fingers entwine with hers. He’d squeeze to comfort her, but he doesn’t think he has the strength. His shattered arm is draining everything from him. He hadn’t pegged Lilith for the sadistic type, just a back stabber.

But he had been wrong about a lot of things lately and the thought infuriates him more.

They’re quiet again for a moment, listening to the sound of Rakks cawing distantly – probably mad about sharing their airspace with sanctuary. A flying city. Jack snorts to himself. What a total joke. He’d never do that. Well he would, but his city wouldn’t look so shit and he wouldn’t rely on a junkie Siren to do it. He’d do that shit with science.

“Wonder what’s on the other side.” Nisha suddenly says.

“Probably nothing,” he says rather unhelpfully.

She raises an eyebrow at him. “Not what I need to hear right now."

And he didn't need to die today but here he was, hours away from a firing squad. “What do you wanna hear then?” Jack snaps.

Nisha's expression is as hard as ever. “Anything but that. Wanna think there’s an afterlife or some shit.”

They're fighting, and he can't believe it. They don't have time to fight. Maybe it's just habit at this point. "Since when have you been spiritual?"

“Since now. We’re gonna die soon and you’re interrogatin’ me ’bout my beliefs?” she says with warning. “Gimmie a break Jack. I wanna believe I'll see you again. That so hard to imagine?"

Jack lets out a stuttering, pained sigh. She’s right of course, but it’s not his fault. He’s got a broken arm. He’s allowed this rudeness.

Yet he pulls himself together for her, one last time. He shuffles a little closer to the bars so he can rest his head against them. “Okay listen, if there’s an afterlife, ya know, pearly gates and all that jazz… Do me a solid right and run around outside the entrance so I can find you. I don’t wanna go in on my own,” Jack says. He means it as a joke, but he’s serious, deadly serious. He catches himself, inwardly groaning. The pain is definitely becoming too much now. He’s making shitty puns to himself.

But the truth is, if there is an afterlife, Jack isn't sure he can face Angel on his own.

She chuckles next to him as she wriggles a little closer, the sound seeping into his heart. “For the shit I’ve done Jack, there won’t be any pearly gates waiting for me,” she replies, leaning against the bars of her own cell. Her hair brushes against his bare cheek, and he feels a tremour run down his back.

“Just humour me and…” A wave of nausea rolls in his stomach again. “Pretend for a minute that there will be.”

Nisha squeezes his right hand hard enough that he was able to focus on something other than the
pain of his broken left arm or the sickness in his gut. “Yeah, sure thing partner.” She tilts her chin upwards to face the ceiling. “Hear that big guy? We’re on our way.” There’s a sureness in her voice that makes him feel brave again for a moment.

“Yeah, get the good china out,” he adds before noticing that Nisha’s hand is shaking in his own. It dawns on him suddenly that she’s afraid. And he's afraid too.

There’s an orange glow in their cells, of the yellowed sunlight cutting through the gaps on the jail window. Morning has come and he’s still not ready. There's still so much left to say.

He straightens from against the wall, and he's immediately dizzy. His arm feels as if it was being hammered by a Nomad. He’s probably going to pass out before they come for him. That would be nice and spiteful. At this point, he’s in favour of doing anything that pisses them off.

His good arm comes up to press against a steel bar to steady himself. “Nish…Listen…” he starts, clenching the bar.

She waits smiling, despite the swelling of a split lip. "Yeah?"

“I’m sorry…” He wants to say more, but anything else would be fucking inadequate. His brow wrinkles. What's he sorry for exactly? He’s sorry it all went to shit. He’s sorry he’s dragged her into this. He’s sorry that the Warrior turned out to be a complete pussy. He’s sorry she’s going to die with him. He’s sorry that they met. Maybe if they hadn’t, she’d have been still driving about the Dust like the fucking lunatic driver that she was, or lassoing skags.

But Nisha seems to know what he’s trying to say. She reads him like a book, and even now it frustrates him.

Her hand snakes through the bars, cupping beneath his jaw to draw him closer. His heart beat cancels out the sound metal doors clanging somewhere and approaching footsteps as she strokes a thumb against his chin. "Don’t be." His face is clammy and he feels gross. Nisha doesn’t seem to mind. He sees the wet shine in her eyes. Her breath whispers against his lips, soft when she wasn’t soft at all. "I'm not."

She catches his mouth through the bars in a kiss, and he feels her pouring a ‘goodbye’ into the gesture. She’s never kissed him so softly. There's not a gentle bone in her body. He’s suddenly relieved he doesn’t have his mask on for this. He’s glad he can feel the press of her lips against his, the sigh of breath into his mouth. He’s glad he can taste the dry blood – her dry blood. He wants to face Lilith’s firing squad with a smirk and the memory of Nisha’s kiss on his lips – his real lips.

His good hand is able to slip through the bars so he can thread his fingers into her hair one last time. He kisses her until he forgets where they are. He kisses her while committing the sensation of her hair to his memory. He kisses her until his lungs hurt more than his arm. He kisses her until he forgets about the firing squad getting ready. He kisses her until he forgets he’s about to die. He kisses her until he forgets that I love you and goodbye is the same thing when loving someone like Nisha.

The brig door swings open just as Nisha pulls away. The Vault Hunters say something to them, but Jack doesn’t listen. He’s too focused on Nisha’s fingers running along his brand one last time.

“Well and you against Pandora, remember?” Nisha says, her voice choked slightly before she suddenly clears her throat as Jack’s cell is unlocked.

As the commando is hauling him none too gently onto his feet, Nisha is pressing herself against the bars dividing their cell. He shouldn't be stupid enough to believe the shimmer in her eyes are tears
because Nisha never cries.

But he is, so he does. “See you on the other side honey,” she says, sounding casual despite a break in her voice. Fuck if he ain't proud of her all over again, his brave, fierce lawbringer. It steadies his own legs out and straightens his spine.

"Wouldn't miss it for the world babe," Jack calls back and it's the most honest thing he's said to date.
**Chapter Summary**

*Hero Jack AU* Jack was going to kill Roland. Why couldn’t he have warned him that the Sheriff of Lynchwood was a total fucking hottie? He would have put more effort into his hair otherwise.

(In which Tassiter’s forces found the Vault, Jack is allied with Roland and Nisha is still bringin' the law in Lynchwood)

**Chapter Notes**

I was going to continue and make this much longer but I think I'll just end it here and continue it in another chapter further down the track. A lot of liberties were taken for this chapter.

Also I'm going to start taking short prompt requests. So if there’s something you'd like me to write, drop me a line on muh tumblr (neebsandtatties) and I'll see about writing it!

“So, let me get this straight because every day I’m getting older and more confused. You want me to go to fucking Bandit country, on my own might I add, to basically troubleshoot some asshole’s computer?”

In the headquarters of the Crimson Raiders, Roland heaved a sigh, but didn’t seem the least bit surprised. The rest of his cohorts just looked at him, as if he was being deliberately dense. Jack scowled back, drumming his fingers against the table. Why were they all looking at him like that? What was he? A looking-at person?

“No, we want you to go and remove a Hyperion virus from Lynchwood’s shield generator,” Roland repeated.

“I didn’t think any settlement outside of sanctuary had shield generators,” Jack remarked. In truth, he didn’t think anyone other than themselves and Hyperion had the intelligence to rig up a shield generator.

“You’d get a shield generator too if you were sitting on a big pile of Eridium,” said Mordecai idly from his perch opposite.

Jack’s eyebrow twitched. “And we should go along with their little request why?” he retorted, opting to be deliberately difficult. It was what they expected of him after all; Jack the former Hyperion programmer turned begrudging ally – all lip and snark and general unpleasantness. Why should today be any different?

“If we help them, they’ll give us a shipment of Eridium and a weapons cache. Lynchwood sits on
In the corner, Lilith shifted her weight against the wall. It annoyed him, more than it should of. Why couldn’t she just sit down like everyone else? She made him nervous when she did that. “Which we really need by the way,” said the siren, rather unhelpfully.

Jack ignored her, because he knew she was probably right. “And you lot are just going to, I don’t know, take a bunch of bandits at their word?”

“We have their word.”

Jack let out a sharp bark of a laugh. “And you believe them why? Go on, I’m dying to hear your little rationale,” he remarked, leather creaking as he folded his arms over his chest.

Roland braced his large elbows on the table. Jack half hoped it would collapse and send him toppling to the ground. “The leader said they would join us when we finally assaulted the Bunker. You remove the virus and they’ll deliver our guns and Eridium personally.”

That stumped him. A bandit leader throwing it in with them? Interesting turn of events. God he hoped it wasn’t a Midget Psycho or something. Jack didn’t think he’d be able to tolerate their squeaking for any more than five minutes. “Huh. How about that. They say why?” he asked with an arched brow.

“They have a bone to pick with Hyperion apparently,” Roland replied.

“Who doesn’t these days?” Mordecai asked ironically. “They’ve pretty much pissed on everyone on Pandora.”

“And we need all the help we can get. So yeah…you gotta go,” Lilith added.

“God what is this? ‘Gang up on Jack’ day?” he asked incredulously, looking between the three of them as if they were a criminal line up.

“Every day is gang up on Jack day. It’s like a national pastime at this point,” replied the hunter without looking up from his magazine. It was rude not to look a man in the eye when you were giving him shit.

“Aren’t you just fucking hilarious,” Jack fired back.

Mordecai chuckled. “I aim to please.”

“Anyway, they’re using an old Hyperion operating system, and it’s a Hyperion virus that’s keeping their shields from activating. You’re the only one here who knows how that works, who knows how it really works,” said Roland.

The siren added her two cents worth. “And we need the eridium Jack. I used most of our supply shifting the city. Our supplies are...” Lilith paused a moment, running a hard through her hair. “Well, we’re running dry. And before you ask, I’ve already checked the washing machines.”

Jack leaned forward, jabbing the table with an index finger. “Hey, I warned you lot that that power core was suspect but did anyone listen to me? The one who’s actually worked for that asshat Tassiter? No of course not because apparently Jack doesn’t know jack.” It was hard to keep the smugness from his voice, but he had the high ground on this matter.

But they just ignored the statement, which was typical. “And if we want to get to the Bunker and get
the key back, then we need all the help we can get,” Roland added firmly, then his face softened ever so slightly that Jack might have missed it - if he hadn’t spent the last five years in his company. “And you want to get Angel back right?”

Angel.

His gut churned around something hard, and Jack went quiet for a moment. It was a question that they shouldn’t have even bothered to ask. They all knew why he was there, why he was fighting against Hyperion and why he spilled his blood for the Crimson Raiders. He wanted to get his baby girl back – well his not-so-little baby girl now he supposed - and wring Tassiter’s scrawny, bird-like neck.

There was a silence, heavy even over the whirling of Sanctuary’s makeshift engines. It wasn’t the most uncomfortable silence he had ever endured, but it was a very close second. They’d all lost friends and family to Hyperion, but no one else had a Siren daughter who was penned up in some god awful chamber somewhere. Even Lilith stopped hating him for a moment to regard him with a look of mild sympathy.

Stop fucking looking at me like that, he wanted to screech. Stop looking at me like you understand!

But he didn’t, because he had more restraint than that. Jack the Laugh didn’t lose his shit. Jack the Laugh, well, laughed it all off and acted like it didn’t matter. He didn’t know what was worst; pretending that he didn’t care or pretending that it was all just one big joke. Hilarious either way.

Only this time, he couldn’t find it in himself to even manage a snicker. “Look,” he started. “Even if I agreed to go right, I haven’t really worked with their systems for what, five years now. I don’t even know if the anti-virus software I made will even still work. It’s outdated. See where I’m going with this? There’s a very small, small chance that I might not be able to fix whatever’s in their systems.”

“You’re the only one with any real experience with their systems Jack. You’re the safe bet right now,” pointed out the solider.

He made a good case, and Jack hated him for it. “Ugh, I hate it when you use logic on me. It’s always super effective,” he conceded.

“So you’ll do it?” Roland pressed.

He made a good case, and Jack hated him for it. “Ugh, I hate it when you use logic on me. It’s always super effective,” he conceded.

“So you’ll do it?” Roland pressed.

Jack made a frustrated sound in the back of his throat. As if he could have refused them when they were looking at him like that, like he was the last hope they had.

It was so hard being the hero.

“Alright. Fine. Whatever. Like I can refuse when you all look at me like that,” Jack relented, throwing his hands up. “But I’m doing this for Angel alright? Not so Lilith can feed her drug habit.”

He glanced to her. “Might wanna see about kicking that sometime. It’s hard to love an addict ya know,” he added, camouflaging his unease in a haughty tone and a smirk.

Roland sighed, Mordecai snorted and Lilith bristled. “Screw you Jack,” she fired from the corner. There was heat in her voice, indicating he had touched a raw, open nerve. His mouth curled into a knowing smirk. His shots may not have always been accurate, but his insults were always on point.

“You aren’t my type sweetcheeks,” he retorted.

Lilith’s tattoo’s pulsed in warning, illuminating her hand with embers. “Don’t ever call me sweetcheeks again.”
It suddenly occurred to him that maybe pissing off a siren wasn’t such a hot plan. Especially one as temperamental as Lilith.

Roland – ever in control – intervened before either of them did anything rash. “Hey, lock it down, both of you,” he ordered, hefting his weight off the table. He didn’t raise his voice, he didn’t need to. Roland had a presence about him that made even Jack want to fall into place. Fucking asshole. Must have been that whole command of authority thing.

“I know we’re all rattled after that last attack, and we lost some good people. We can’t be divided now,” he stated, but there was a weariness in his voice. It was only then that Jack realised just how tired his ally/rival/very occasional friend was. Maybe dinosaur-neck ought to stop riding him so hard. Jack inwardly snickered at his own joke, but kept his lips sealed. It seemed a shame not to share his hilarity, but he didn’t fancy Lilith punching him in the face.

Again.

Instead, Jack straightened up in the chair. “So when do I have to go?”

“Now,” replied Roland.

“Now?”

“Now.”

That was that then. There was no point in trying to negotiate with Roland. Shifting a granite statue would have been easier.

Jack stood up, ignoring the loud clicking of his knees. “Let me get my shit together first before you drop kick me off of Sanctuary,” he said, heading to the supply cache situated at the back of Roland’s headquarters - that was little more than a couple of boxes filled with ammo.

“Good. Lilith will teleport you down, and you can get a catch-a-ride from the Highlands,” Roland continued.

“Or maybe I’ll just drop him off the edge instead.”

“It hurts me that you would say that Lilith, but I know it’s not true,” Jack replied as he scanned the contents of their meagre armoury. The pickings were slim indeed. Roland really hadn’t been just exaggerating the worse. Maybe it was just as well Lynchwood had contacted them when they did.

But they were sending him in alone. He was justified to complain a little about it. “Still can’t believe you’re sending me alone,” he griped as he started to shove a handful supplies and ammo his old canvas bag. It would have to do until he could rough up some bandits for their ammo.

“Sorry Jack, but we can’t spare anyone to send with you.”

“What? Not even that Maya chick? I like her, she's all chill and shit,” he said casually as he slung the bag over his shoulder. “And she's easy on the eyes ya know.”

Lilith gave him a baleful look as she pushed away from the wall. “Especially not her.”

“Suck the joy out of my life why don’t ya,” he retorted. “Alright, let’s just get this over with before I change my mind.”

“Keep us updated Jack,” Roland said.
“If I don’t come back, speak fondly of me at my funeral,” Jack insisted

“Heh, no promises,” said Mordecai.

“Well at least pretend you like me. See you lot later.”

As he followed Lilith out of the door, the down the crumbling, granite steps and out to the fringes of the city, Jack managed smile. He complained and mumped and moaned about them all but in reality, they weren’t so bad. Not really. Even ol' huffy knickers Lilith.

~

The journey to the Dust was long and surprisingly uneventful, apart from the occasional Bullymong he managed to dodge. He’d never get used to Pandoran weather, nor the wild fluctuations in both terrain and climate. The Highlands was muggy and humid, and almost always seemed like it was going to rain. Neither Jack nor his hair appreciated the humidity.

And as for the Dust, it certainly lived up to its namesake. As he crossed over the threshold and down the highway, he flicked the window wipers on though he might have well not have bothered for all the good it did him. The poor weather made him miss Helios; a shiny, bright world where he never had to worry about such trivialities such as weather. Hell, he’d even take living on Elpis again. Particular storms and solar winds were easier to deal with. He glanced up to the moon. Helios hovered over Pandora like a shadow, always watching, always looking. Jack wondered what had become of his office, of all the photo frames he had of Angel. Fingers tightened on the steering wheel, his knuckles white under his gloves.

*Don’t worry babygirl, Daddy is going to fucking kick Tassiter's skinny ass yet.*

About a mile or so outside of his target destination – Thank god Scooter had the foresight to install a Dhal GPS into all his vehicles – he connected through to Roland. “So who am I looking for when I get there?” he asked, slipping his sunglasses on with his free hand. He liked to think it made him look cool.

There was a fizzle of statistic before Roland spoke. “*You’re looking for the Sheriff, Jack. They’ll meet you at the old train station in the east side of the Dust. When you get there, tell them I sent you and that my Clap-Trap unit is in the shop. They’ll know you’re legit then.*”

“Right,” Jack responded. “What do we have on this ‘Sheriff’ anyway?”

“*Not much. Took over the area a few years ago, set up camp there. Runs a hard town. Folks used to call the Sheriff ‘the Bandit who killed other bandits’.*”

“You’ve just described with, ninety percent of this planet. How’s this guy any different?”

“I think they had somethin’ of a work ethic.”

Jack accelerated past a pack of Skags, narrowly missing a large pot hole on the road. “So like us I take it? But less handsome and good looking.”

Roland didn’t laugh, and Jack didn’t expect any different. He didn’t think Roland enjoyed much of anything anymore. “*Give us a status update at 1300.*”
“Wico, Delta out,” he replied, inwardly saluting. “That is what you soldier boys say right?”

The signal clicked off and Jack snorted. Geez, he really couldn’t take a joke.

It wasn’t long before the train station to Lynchwood winked into view as he rounded the corner. Jack squinted through the grubby, dusty window as he shifted the gear stick down and eased the technical into a slow crawl (he was proud he could do it without stalling the vehicle now). This couldn’t be the right place, could it? He glanced at the GPS system mounted on the dashboard. Sure enough, X marked the spot.

Jack killed the engine, shoved the keys into his pocket then grabbed his gear from the passenger’s seat. He heaved the heavy door open then slammed shut again with a booted heel. The sound echoed off into the distance ominously. Considering it was the entry point to the largest Eridium reserves on Pandora, it was too quiet and too still. The train station looked deserted, and he had to wonder what sort of security they were operating. He had expected a checkpoint of some sort, maybe some automated turrets. Something. Anything.

But as he started to cross to the station that was when he noticed three red dots from laser scopes pinned him from three different angles.

Shit.

Jack immediately held up his gun above his head as a sign of peace. “Hey, hey! I’m a friend! Don’t fire! To whoever that it is, don’t fucking shoot me.”

One of the dots danced across his chest for a moment longer before it travelled south, down along his stomach. Muscles and tendons clenched instinctively, bracing themselves for the all too familiar puncture of a bullet. “Whoa, hey at least buy me a drink first,” Jack called, panic rising as he looked around for the sniper. All that surrounded him was rock, rubble and sand. God where the fuck where they?

If he died here by this sniper’s scope, he was so going to haunt Roland forever.

His ECHO device suddenly crackled to life in his ear. “I might just take you up on that, handsome,” said an unfamiliar female voice, tinted with humour. Despite the imminent threat of death, Jack’s curiosity was piqued. He couldn’t remember the last time he remembered hearing a voice that sounded that sexy. It was smoky, dark and with an undercurrent of concealed danger. It went straight to his gut, much like her red dot sight. “What's a pretty girl like you doin’ around these parts?”

He ignored the obvious sarcasm. “I’m uh, looking for the Sheriff of Lynchwood. Roland, ya know, Crimson Raiders Roland, sent me. Told me to tell you that uh.” Jack swallowed again, still acutely aware of the red dot on his stomach. A wrong move and he’d have a hole in his lower intestines. “That his Clap-Trap unit was in the shop.”

“He did huh?” The voice was silent on the other end for a moment. “So, you’re the code jockey from Hyperion?” she said eventually.

Whoever she was, she didn’t sound desperately impressed. It was not encouraging.

Slow, he lowered his gun back down to this side. “Something like that. Roland said you had a virus you needed seeing to.” He glanced down and the red shot was still hovering on his belly dangerously. “So, how about you come down from wherever you’re hiding and we can talk and you can take me to your Sheriff?”

“Yeah, give me a minute. Can’t be too careful these days ya know. Stand down boys. This is our
guy,” her voice crackled again. The red dots vanished and Jack heaved a sigh of relief. Okay so he hadn’t been shot on sight. That was a good start. But he had to wonder just how many people were currently looking through the scope at him.

He waited patiently for the sniper to make her appearance. Overlooking the train station to Lynchwood were two formations of weathered rock, with various outcrops cut into the sides. Jack marvelled that he had missed them in the first place. They were the perfect sniper nests. A lone figure threw down a rope and scaled down the rocky crevice in less time it took for Jack to get his boots laced – which was no time at all since his old boots didn’t have laces.

The figure approached him, slinging the strap of an old Hyperion model sniper rifle onto their back. As they got closer, he realised two things about them: one that it was a woman and two she was awfully pretty.

“Howdy,” she greeted with a tip of her cowboy hat and a smile. She was a good few years younger than he was, possibly on in her mid-twenties, with vibrant, gilded eyes, darkened skin and shiny black hair brushing her shoulders. The urge to push his fingers through her hair was strong but he managed to keep his hands casually in the pockets of his jacket. “Sheriff Nisha, Miss Kadam if you’re nasty.”

She could have knocked him over with a feather.

Jack openly gaped. “You’re the Sheriff of Lynchwood?” She did not look the part of a Sheriff. She seemed more like a cowboy, with her cowboy hat, long duster coat, daringly short white top and low rider jeans. A Skull motif was stamped on her boots as well as her shirt, drawing his attention to her belly button. And a whip on her hip – an honest to god fucking whip.

No she didn’t look like a Sheriff at all. He didn’t know a Sheriff who looked that hot.

Sheriff Nisha clicked her tongue at him. “That’s me cowboy. Ain’t a problem I hope?” she asked with the quirk of a fine eyebrow and a curl of glossy, purple lips. There was something in her tone that sent an excited thrill through him. He didn’t want to cross her, but at the same time he did just to see if she were as nasty as she claimed she was.

“No no, just didn’t know who I was expecting,” Jack insisted, inwardly fuming. He was going to kill Roland. Why couldn’t he have warned him that the Sheriff of Lynchwood was a total fucking hottie? He would have put more effort into his hair otherwise.

He remembered himself and extended a hand. Sheriff Nisha stared at him with a surprised half smile, and immediately he felt like an idiot. Bandits didn’t shake hands. He’d be liable to lose one. “Uh, and I’m Jack by the way. Nice to meet you Nisha,” he said, sincerely hoping she didn’t cut his hand off. He liked that hand.

To his surprise, Sheriff Nisha grasped his hand and gave him a firm shake with a gauntleted hand. Jack surprised by her grip. She was strong, this Nisha character. He liked it. He liked her.

“Likewise partner,” she said, and he hoped she meant it. "Now, let’s get you to Lynchwood then, gotta get that shield generator up and runnin’ again before fucking Hyperion tries to bull rush us again.” She released his hand, stepped back. “Follow me handsome,” said the Sheriff, beckoning him with a finger.

Jack’s tongue felt glued to the roof of his mouth and he almost tripped over his own feet. He was off to a great start. “Yeah. Sure. Lead the way Sheriff.”
She turned on her booted heel and he followed her to the train platform, doing his damndest not to look at her ass or her legs swishing beneath her coat. He wasn’t that weak, he told himself sternly. He had dated Moxxi for a time, and she had a fine set of chromosomes. It was nothing he hadn’t seen before.

But this Sheriff pulled at his gaze; tugged it to places it shouldn’t have gone. If he didn’t get his act together, he’d be in real trouble.

Suddenly, Sheriff Nisha glanced over her shoulder, as if she knew he had been staring. Given how she drop dead gorgeous she looked, she probably had. She was probably used to it. “See something you like?” she asked, her tone ripe with mirth.

A blush broke out over his cheeks, embarrassed that she’d known he’d been staring. “You won’t shoot me if I say yes will you?” he asked, opting to be brave. Fortune favoured the brave after all.

And it worked. The Sheriff just chuckled, and it was a wonderful sound. “No, you’re much too pretty to go to waste like that,” she replied, eyes sun caught and brighter than spun gold.

Oh yes.

He was definitely going to kill Roland when he got back.
Chapter Summary

During a night out in Concordia with his Vault Hunters, Jack loses a bet and his jacket. (Mini fill for a lovely Anon)

Chapter Notes

[ The song Nisha sings is actually by her voice Actress Stephanie Young Brehm. You can listen to it here! She sounds so fab and you should totally support her band! Art by the fabulous and talented sanzosin. Go and le follow! ]

It started out as a stupid statement in Moxxi’s Up Over bar during an evening booze up with his hired help. Jack didn’t want to call them ‘friends’ because to call them friends would imply he had to buy his friends and he just wasn’t down with that thank you very much. They were his…business associates. Yeah that sounded okay.

They were all squashed around the table at the back of Moxxi’s place; Jack, Wilhelm, Athena, Athena’s cute little squeeze Springs, Aurelia (with her feet resting on Frag-Trap) and of course, trouble herself Nisha. She was sat next to him and under the table, hidden from view of their associates, his hand was stroking her thigh. No need to let the rest of his gang know that his relationship with Nisha was more than professional. Couldn't have them accusing him of playing favourites. Which he totally was.

“The drinks ain’t bad Jack, but fuck the entertainment is shit,” commented Nisha as she took a mouthful of beer straight from the bottle – no glass tumblers for savages like her apparently. “Ain’t exactly a night out. You promised us a proper night out.”

There was a ripple of agreement amongst his Vault Hunters. Jack scowled. Traitors, the lot of them. He’d remember that when he was dishing out the bonuses for the month.

“She’s right Boss-man,” said Wilhelm, which was just typical. He always took Nisha’s side, Jack noticed. Probably wanted to put his cyborg dick in her.

“What’s wrong with it?”

Nisha jerked a thumb to the Karaoke stage set up in Moxxi’s bar – well, if it could be called a Karaoke. Karaoke was being generous. It was more like a haze drunken noise and incoherent sentences mixed with poor quality music files.

“That’s what’s wrong with it.”

His Vault Hunters laughed over their drinks. She was right, he conceded. There should have been a law that prevented drunk people from singing. If he was in charge of Concordia he'd definitely make it a criminal offence.
Yet still he opted to give her a bit of a fight. For some reason he failed to understand, she seemed to like it when he was disagreeable and snappish. Which worked out perfectly for him because his job made him disagreeable and snappish 90% of the time. “Stop bitching, they’re having fun. You could try having some fun as well. It won’t kill you.”

She rolled her large, gold eyes. “They’re givin' me a fucking headache with their singing. I wanna shoot them, or myself.”

He dug his fingers hard into her thigh daringly. "Oh, you could do so much better could you?"

Nisha’s expression didn’t change, but in the cyan light of the bar, her eyes expanded from gold to black. “Of course I could.”

He could get off on their comfortable bickering. “Pffft, you?”

“Yeah. Me.”

“Bullshit.”

“Oi, would you listen to that cheek? You gonna take that Nisha?!” exclaimed Springs, sipping her cocktail from a goddamn straw. Jack had almost forgotten everyone else was there. He always and frustratingly slipped into Lala land around Nisha.

“She’s right dear. Those sorts of comments just won't do,” added Aurelia, swirling the contents of her wine glass.

“Yeah! Tell ‘em sister!” piped up Frag-Trap from beneath the table.

Aurelia gave the robot a good, hard kick with her heel, shutting him up immediately. Jack was so glad he’d hired her. “Mouth is open, Frag-Trap, should be shut,” she said before continuing. “Let a man take an inch and he’ll take a mile, Nisha darling.”

The girls had ganged up on him, but Jack barely noticed. He was far too preoccupied with the look Nisha was giving him – the look that made his pulse race and his belly hot.

“You willing to put money on that, Jack?” God he loved how she drawled out his name, like she was savouring the taste of it in her mouth.

And what a coincidence that was because he was imagining her taste in his mouth as well. “Yeah, I would. Get up there and give us all a show then, put your money with your mouth is.”

The minute he had said the words, Jack wished he could have snatched them out of the air and stuffed them back into his mouth, for Nisha gave him a very confident, self assured smile. “Alright then cowboy, you’re on.”

Fuck he had really dropped himself in it this But Jack didn’t dare back down. Nisha would have been disappointed in him if he did. “How about we make things interesting while we’re at it.”

She leaned on her elbow, her chin pressed into her palm. “What did you have in mind?”

Jack glanced around Moxxi’s bar. It was busy, a typical Friday night really. “If you’re shit and get booed off the stage, you gotta give me your hat,” he said. He liked her hat. It was sexy and it would make a great trophy if she didn’t decide to stick around later once all was said and done.

“For how long?”
“Forever.”

“How about just for a day?”

“Alright.” Nisha’s smile continued to glitter under the light of the bar. “But if I’m not, you’ve got to give me your jacket for a day.”

It was a terrible, terrible idea. He knew that. Yet Jack held out his hand. “Deal. Shake it on.”

She gave his hand a firm, hard shake. “This ain’t going to end well for you Jack,” she said, leaning forward slightly. Her scent ensnared him – a blend of ozone and gunpowder and something faintly floral. “You know that yeah?”

Jack released her hand quickly before he did something stupid and embarrassing. Like kiss her fingertips. “I’ll take my chances,” he replied, trying to ignore the urge to push her hair back behind her ear. “Get up there and show us what you’ve got then.”

“Alright.” Nisha adjusted her hat then stood up. “Keep that jacket warm for me handsome,” she replied and edged her way around the table.

He watched as she swayed up to the make shift stage –and felt a ripple of hostility that he wasn’t the only one watching her with such interest. His fingers tightened around his beer glass.

Next to him, Wilhelm chuckled. Jack threw him a withering look. The cyborg saw more than he let on.

“Woooh! Nisha! Go!” shouted Springs, kneeling unsteadily on her seat for a better look at the stage. Athena reached up to stabilise her.

They watched as lawbringer selected a song from the track list of the beat up karaoke machine then stepped back and took center stage.

The electric energy of guitars and drums blasted out of the speakers, fast paced and punchy. It was some sort of classic pop number that got into his head immediately, kinda like Nisha herself had. His boot started to tap against the floor in time with the rhythm as the Lawbringer grasped the microphone in her right hand and took a deep breath.

“Catch a cab just can't wait

Shake off this city shake off this scene

Find some air find some sky

In your blue, blue eyes live on island time.”

His jaw almost knocked his beer over as it dropped to the table.

Nisha could sing.

And damn if it wasn’t the sexiest singing he’d ever heard.

She knew it too, judging by the smile in her eyes as she sung. Her pitch was perfect, her tempo flawless and it more than made up for the poor quality of the music track. Jack was at a loss for words, and it should have annoyed him but somehow, it didn’t. He was too amazed to be annoyed.

Next to him, Wilhelm whistled, Springs bobbled excitedly in her seat, cheering Nisha, on while
Athena tried to keep her steady and listen at the same time. Even Aurelia looked mildly impressed as she sipped her wine.

“Buildings pass stone after stone
Lights wash your face the dull grind away
Lose the suit lose your cares
Clothes so cumbersome Time so scarce.”

The patrons of the bar had gone quiet as Nisha sung. Jack couldn’t remember the last time he’d seen them so mesmerised by someone else other than Moxxi herself. He might have gone over and smashed their faces into their drinks - if he had had presence of mind. But he was too distracted by the smoky, dark vocals of Nisha and the way she rocked from side to side on the stage, hands clasped around the microphone.

“Take my hand c’mon along for the ride
Take my hand let go inside
Trip this town for a change of scenery
Take my hand and....come with me.”

Nisha moved with fluid rhythm like she had been doing it her whole life, like she had been born to be on the stage; hips moving in time with her shoulders. She sung with her whole body, moved as smoothly as water. He was completely caught and captured by her.

“I-want-to-run-with-you boy, run away
I-want-to-be-with-you, yeah, run away
From the streets, the hype, the hollow vibe
Feel your hands, your lips, your weight on mine
I want to run with you, yeah, runaway...from the heavy.”

The song was about him. He was 99% sure she had selected it on purpose, judging by the way she looked at him as she sung. The bar seemed to melt away around them, and he was suddenly aware of nothing else except from Nisha and her voice. Even the pint of beer was forgotten.

“Don't care about the meter
I'm gonna enjoy the ride
Need my blue sky and blue eyes
To get by
This concrete pushin' me thin
In your arms safe again
A welcome change
Welcome space

Welcome another place.”

She shouldn’t have been a Vault Hunter, slinging guns and taking contracts. Jack swallowed as he watched her sway and sing. No, not at all.

“Take my hand c’mon along for the ride
Take my hand let go inside
Trip this town for a change of scenery
Take my hand and….come with me.”

Jack’s heart pounded over the music. Her voice surged through him like an electric current, heating his belly better than any glass of whiskey. Why was she rounding up bandits on Pandora when she had a voice that?

“I-want-to-run-with-you boy, run away
I-want-to-be-with-you, yeah, run away
From the streets, the hype, the hollow vibe
Feel your hands, your lips, your weight on mine
I want to run with you, yeah, runaway...from the heavy.”

The song came to an end after the last guitar solo. The bar erupted into claps and whistles of approval, with even Aurelia among them.

Grinning, Nisha took her hat off and bowed in a dramatic flourish to the patrons. There was another roar from the patrons of the bar and he saw her wink over at their table.

“So, guessing she won then, Boss,” Wilhelm commented as Nisha stepped off the stage, her hat still in her hand.

“Yeah yeah I know. Don’t rub it in.” Jack slipped his jacket off his shoulders. There was no disputing her victory and he was man enough to admit when he had been beaten. “Fuck, I’ll never live this one down.”

“You did start this Jack,” said Athena, ever the reasonable, logical one. "Looks like Nisha made some money as well.

Jack looked back up and saw Nisha pass through the little crowd that had gathered near the stage. Dollar bills were stuffed into her hat as she weaved between the other customers.

Despite losing the bet, Jack still smiled like the stupid idiot he was. Damn, what a voice though. She’d been completely wasted on Pandora.

Nisha approached the table; hat full of dollar bills and glossy purple lips tipped into a grin. She tipped the contents out onto the table in a flurry of green flakes. “The next round is on me guys.”

“Wow Nisha! I didn’t know you had such a good set of pipes!” Springs exclaimed enthusiastically, slinging an arm around Nisha. He was surprised when his Lawbringer didn’t shrug her off, just
chuckled softly and gave the scavenger's arm a little squeeze.

“Splendid, Nisha darling, utterly splendid,” added Aurelia, smiling over his glass. “Where on earth did you learn to sing like that?”

The lawbringer shrugged. “Girl’s gotta have other hobbies ya know,” she replied.

“You sounded good up there,” stated Athena, her expression neutral but her eyes were bright.

“You could make some serious money on a planet I know with that voice,” said Wilhelm and Jack fired him a look of warning. He wasn’t ready for Nisha to take off just yet.

"Nah, think I'll stick around here a while longer." Nisha turned her attention to him, looking at him with an expectant smile. She didn't have to say anything. She didn't need to.

“Alright alright.” Jack held out his jacket to her. “I know when I’m beat. Here,” he said, giving it a shake.

She was graciously smug as she took the jacket from him. “Thank you,” Nisha replied, looking rightly proud. “I think I’ll put it on right now.”

Jack tried to appear uninterested as Nisha shed her own jacket for his. But it was no use. His jacket engulfed her completely; the sleeves hanging long past her wrists and the body settling past her hips. It hid more of her slender frame than her own jacket did, but somehow, the sight made his mouth unspeakable dry. She looked good in it. But Nisha could look good in a bin bag.

“How do I look then?” she asked, grasping the lapels.

“Sexy as fuck,” Jack answered before his stupid walnut brain could catch up. His Vault hunters looked at him curiously and he felt heat rise up into his cheeks. “W-well, I mean, fuck it is my jacket ya know? So of course it looks good,” he replied quickly. Nice save. He’d pat himself on the back for that later.
“Mmm, it’s nice and warm, thanks Jack,” she said, practically purring like a cat as she ran her hands down the sleeves.

Jack shifted in his chair, trying very hard not to think of Nisha’s fingertips trailing down the curve of his biceps.

“Well good, because I’m freezing my ass off now over here,” he huffed, playing the part of a sore loser.

His Vault hunters laughed, Nisha among them. God, whatever happened to employee loyalty? “Let that be a lesson to you Jack,” said the Baroness, setting her empty glass down. “Not to judge a lady by her cover.”

“Yeah, she freakin’ showed you!” piped up the Clap-Trap unit under the table.

The baroness slammed her heel onto his chasse. “Now now Frag-Trap, what did I say earlier about speaking?”

“Huh, not to?”
“That’s right, so shhh.”

“Yes ma’am.”

He glanced to the Cyborg. “Help me out here Wilhelm,” he implored, spreading his hands.

But his pleas fell on deaf ears. The Cyborg just sat back, beer glass clutched to his chest. “This is your own doing Boss. You couldn't pay me to help you out now.”

Nisha slid back onto her seat, and immediately her hand slid onto his thigh. “I’ll give it back later, I promise.”

“And if you don’t, I’ll be taking it off you.”

The statement sounded innocent enough to anyone but Nisha. “I don’t doubt it,” she said with a secretive smile, her eyes glowing under the cyan light. The thought of wrestling Nisha out of his jacket later - and the rest of her clothes as well - caused heat to flush up his neck.

Suddenly it wasn’t so cold anymore.
Dinner had not gone well.

And the kicker of it was that it hadn’t been her fault. She hadn’t fucked up for once. Nisha had played the part of a lady fairly well. Not bad for a $100 an hour, twenty four year old hooker.

No it was only when palate cleanser had everything only gone sour when her ‘employer’ revealed he intended to buy the beloved company of their dinner guests and break it apart. Nisha hadn’t been ready for the look of hurt that those two young men wore, and her employer certainly hadn’t been ready for the younger of the two to stand up and declare that they weren’t going down without a fight. For the rest of evening, her employer had been quiet and not his usual I’m-really-freaking-busy-so-don’t-disturb-me kind of quiet.

Nisha found her employer outside in a chair as far away from the balcony as possible; suit still impeccable and hair a perfect blend of style and untidiness. ‘Handsome Jack’ he said he people called him, and they were right to do so. Jack was handsome. His face was angular, sharp and strong jawed. His eyes – apart from being heterochromatic – were bright with intelligence. A streak of silver ran through his hair, yet he didn't seem any older than forty. He looked every bit the part of a refined and distinguished business man.

Until he opened his mouth of course. Turns out he was a fucking unapologetic asshole. Which worked out great because she was an asshole as well.

“Thought you never came out here cowboy,” Nisha teased. He had told her the first night he employed her that he was afraid of heights, which was hilarious considering he had hired out the penthouse suite. Stupid rich bastard.

Jack caught her tone and glanced up. “I’m only halfway out actually, smartass,” he said, stubbing out the cigarette in the glass – or crystal knowing Jack – ashtray next to him

She smiled, wriggling her toes in the well-worn slippers – Jack’s slippers really. Hookers didn’t own
slippers. Well, only the really good ones did who had cash to burn. Until recently, Nisha was neither. "You didn't say much on the ride home, Jack. Still thinkin' about dinner?" she asked, hands on her hips.

He didn’t say anything, and that in itself was unusual. Jack always had some smart ass comment ready. It was quality she really likes about him.

Nisha turned to find a suitable seat, which happened to be on the ledge of the balcony. “I was a fuckin’ train wreck, but the business was good.” She propped herself up onto the cool stone. “He's in trouble and you want his company. He doesn't want to let it go,” she said, crossing her legs.

Jack raised an eyebrow at her. "Yeah I know, I was there too. Thanks for the recap," he sniped, but without malice. He sounded weary. It definitely wasn’t like him at all, and she’d only known him for a few days.

Nisha quirked her head to the side. "Thing is honey... I think you kinda like Rhys and Vaughn. Hell, I even like them. They ain’t bad for a couple of nerds," she commented, leaning back slightly.

He scowled, watching her movement. "What I would like is for you to get off of there. C’mon babe, you’re freakin’ setting my teeth on edge,” Jack insisted.

She cracked a grin. Oh yes. That would get him going. "What? This? This makes you nervous? Is Big, powerful Handsome Jack nervous?" Nisha leaned further, glancing quickly over her shoulder to see how much space she had. Just enough to scare the shit out of Jack. “Would you catch me before I fell cowboy?"

Jack visibly paled and Nisha almost laughed in his face. “Nisha, I'm serious! Damn it, do you have a death wish?” he said, looking away with a shudder.

She should have stopped, but frankly, he deserved a bit of pain after putting her through a fucking awkward dinner. “Damn, it’s really high Jack. Whoops I think my hand just slipped.”

Jack looked as if he were about to have a heart attack. “If you fall and die it will be your own damn fault!”

He sounded so anxious that Nisha took pity on him. “Alright alright, sorry. Look I’ll stop,” she said shuffling forward properly.

Jack sighed in relief. After a moment of quiet, he glanced up to meet her eyes again. "Look, the truth is that it’s really totally irrelevant how I feel about these idiots. I don’t get emotionally involved in business, see where I’m going with this?"

Yes. She did see. It really wasn’t so different from what she did. "I know," Nisha admitted, uncomfortable with this sudden sincerity. "Springs is always tellin' me not to get attached when I turn tricks ya know? That's why no kissing ... It's too personal.” She sighed. “It's like what you're saying ... you stay numb, you don't get involved. Like when I’m in a roedo with a guy, I’m like a fucking robot ya know? I just do it then high tail it out of there. Wham, Bam, thank you man.”

Jack Cocked an eyebrow at her, and Nisha’s cheeks heated as she suddenly realised what she’d just said. “Well not with you,” she recovered quickly.

“Nice save, I outta give you a bonus for that,” Jack replied, lips twitching into a waning grin. “Guess we’re similar creatures, babe. We both screw people for money.”

Nisha tried not to flinch. It was a true enough statement. But it didn’t make it any easier for her to
hear from someone else. She didn't like the razor accuracy.

There was a silence between them as Nisha searched for something else to say. Then, she remembered what Rhys had said about Jack’s mother. “I’m sorry about your mom Jack,” Nisha said, summoning empathy she didn’t truly feel. Her own mother had thrown things at her until she’d moved out. “When did she die?”

“Last month,” Jack replied passively.

“Do you miss her?”

His expression didn’t change at all. “Nah. Hadn’t seen her in over fourteen years. Hard to miss someone who dumps you on someone else’s doorstep ya know?”

“You wanna talk about it?” Nisha asked. That was why he hired her, right? To talk and entertain and warm his bed at night? She hoped that was why he hired her. To entertain any other idea was… impossible. And dangerous.

Jack snorted. “Fuck no. Geez, what are you? My shrink?” he said, briefly sounding more like his old self.

Nisha slid off the balcony. “If I were your shrink honey, you’d have payed me more than $100 an hour when we met,” she stated with a wink of a smile. “Anyway, I have an idea.” She crouched down in front of his chair and took his hand. “Let’s just sit and play old video games all night. We can just veg out…Be still like vegetables…lay like broccoli,” Nisha stated, running her fingers over his knuckles. She had to cheer him up somehow. It made her uneasy to see him so…reserved. She didn’t like it.

Jack started to smile, only for it fade slightly as if he were remembering something painful. “Listen, I gotta go for a bit,” he said, retracting his hand then standing up. “We can be some kid’s worst enemy tomorrow yeah?” he added, sliding his fingers over her jaw gently

“Where are you going?” She hated how hesitant her voice sounded.

He didn’t look back as he answered. “Downstairs for a while.”

3am, and Jack still hadn’t returned.

And it worried her far more than it should of.

But Nisha prided herself on a woman that didn’t wait. He flicked the television set off and stood up, adjusting the waist tie of her dressing gown. She found the spare key and slipped it into her pocket, just in case he had wandered further than the hotel. Nisha locked up the room and headed downstairs to the lobby.

An elevator ride later and Nisha found herself standing in the glittering lobby of the hotel. It was blessedly quiet, so her clothing – or lack thereof she thought with a snicker – went almost unnoticed by the staff. They had become used to her unusual appearance.

She heard the soft, melodic sound of a piano being played – though played didn’t seem
appropriate to describe the sound that filtered into the lobby. It was singing. She’d never heard a piano being played like that.

Nisha followed the sound to the hotel restaurant, utterly memorised. She gingerly pushed the door open. The restaurant was empty, save for the staff setting up tables and polishing cutlery for the morning’s breakfast service.

Her breath caught in her throat at the sight of Jack in the muted light; his eyes hooded and distant as he played the piano for the small gathering. He was in his own little world – a world where only him and the keys of a piano existed, where Hyperion didn’t buy beloved companies only to break them apart over and over again. Nisha could have watched him play forever - if she had the money to waste.

The music trailed off and there was a soft little applause from the nightshift workers. “Thank you,” came Jack’s reply as he shifted in his chair. His expression went soft when he saw her. “Hey Nish.” His suit jacket was gone, his waistcoat unbuttoned and his tie loose. It was very good look for him. “Didn’t know you played Jack,” Nisha commented.

Jack ran his fingers over the keys fondly. Nisha’s eyes followed the moment of his fingers. Fuck, he had such nice hands – long with chiselled, square tipped fingers. “Yeah well, I only play for strangers ya know?” he replied.

She leaned back on the piano lazily, trying to distract herself from thinking too closely about the implications of his statement. “I was getting lonely upstairs cowboy, all by myself. Shouldn’t leave a girl waiting like that,” Nisha commented, trying to keep her tone light and casual.

Jack watched her a moment, his heterochromatic gaze searching her face for something. There was hurt in his eyes; old, resigned hurt. She didn’t like it. It didn’t suit him at all. Jack was all about attitude and sarcasm and shit-eating grins across the boardroom. She didn't think he cared about anyone enough to be hurt by them. “Give us the room,” Jack said, without even looking at the staff.

Nisha’s eyebrow rose as the remaining workers retreated out immediately, leaving them alone with the only the faint scent of smoke to keep them company. Evidently when Jack asked you to do something, you didn’t fuck around.

“Must be nice Jack, to have people always do exactly what you say,” she stated with mild amusement, hoping to prompt a snappy little comeback.

Instead Jack didn’t reply verbally. His hands slipped up to hold her hips, thumb pressing against her hipbone. He manoeuvred her with a gentle, yet demanding tug. The keys of the piano chimed in protest from the cords, louder now in the soft atmosphere, as the backs of Nisha’s thighs pressed against the polished ivory.

There was a hesitant pause, as if Jack wasn’t quite sure what he wanted to do. It wasn’t like him to be so quiet. Not at all. Then, with a heavy sigh, his head tipped forward to rest against her belly like a defeated man.

Automatically, her fingers came up with rest in his tousled locks. Nisha wanted to run her fingers through them; to stroke over his scalp and take the ache away. But she couldn’t. She wouldn’t. She couldn’t afford to get in too deep. Fuck, She was in too deep already.

A breath had passed, then two before Jack raised his forehead from her. Nisha’s hands slid onto his shoulders, unsure of what to do next. She wasn’t sure what to make of this vulnerable Jack. His gaze found hers just as his fingers found the fuzzy cord of her dressing grown. Nisha’s pulse shifted up a
gear as he peeled away the gown to find the short black lace slip underneath. She shivered instinctively to the coolness, skin pebbling.

Jack suddenly stood up, his expression a strange mix of hunger and hurt. She knew what that look meant, but anxiety curled tight in her belly. “Guess it is,” Nisha stated.

He smiled slightly, but there was no bluster or confidence to it. Wordlessly, he bent down slightly, slipping his hand behind the back of her knees whilst looping an arm around her and lifted her up onto the piano with a strength she didn’t think he’d have for corporate raider. The piano chimed again as Nisha’s toes and Jack’s waist pressed against the ivory keys. The sleeves of her dressing gown inched down her shoulders. Jack’s hand found her cheek; pushing her hair back with his fingers. Nisha watched him, eyes half-lidded, for him to do something, anything else.

Again he said nothing – just watched her with a mixture of pain and uncharacteristic tenderness. And loneliness. It was a look she knew well. She saw it every damn time she glanced in the mirror.

Yet still, as he leaned in to kiss her, she couldn’t bring herself to let him. She evaded the kiss and his brow creased in confusion. What the fuck? He seemed to say. Nisha just rose her eyebrows at him. You know the rules. Jack frowned. Fuck the rules. They were communicating without spoken words now. Fuck, when had they gotten to that stage? Before or after dinner?

He tried to kiss her again. Nisha skilfully dodged and instead pressed a kiss against his neck; hard
enough to leave a smudge of purple lipstick imprinted above the collar of his shirt. A little mark of affection, the only thing she could give him.

Jack shivered against her lips and seemed to understand at last. As she drew away, he stepped between her legs, clamping his hands to her backside and edged her forward on the piano. The black satin of her dress hitched up her thighs and Nisha felt a rush of through her spine. Did he really to bang her in the middle of the hushed restaurant upon a piano that must have cost more than all the furniture in her apartment put together? Above her heart beat, she heard the chiming of agreement from the piano. It was an exciting thought, even for a hooker in Pandora, the city of Sirens.

But this wasn’t about her, Nisha reminded herself as Jack pressed a breathy kiss to her chest. It never was.

She leaned back onto the smooth surface of the piano; fingertips pressing marks onto the polished surface. It was just a job. He was just a job, Nisha told herself as her face tipped to the side. If she said it enough, maybe it would be true.

In the silence, his sharp inhale was audible and it was hard to resist a half smile. She was definitely worth $100 an hour, probably more. His hand settled upon her collarbone, thumb stroking against her skin. The goosebumps came, unbidden as his hand – fingers spread – slid down between her breasts and along the smooth curves of her ribcage, down her stomach to her hip. His touch was slow, heavy and full of purpose and Nisha found herself arching into him. The piano tinkled softly and then she felt the silky whisper of her nightdress being pushed up higher; the fabric so soft it didn’t even snag against her skin. Fingertips pressed a little harder against the surface of the grand piano. What was he doing?

Out of the corner of her eye, she saw him lean down. Warm lips suddenly pressed against her belly in a soft yet audible kiss. Her eyes slid shut as another kiss found the spot beneath her hip bone; lazy and leisurely. Nisha sighed gently, curving against him. She could count on her fingers the amount of times anyone ever bothered to give her any pleasure. But it wasn’t an industry famous for employee benefits she supposed.

Jack traced a path of kisses down further. Her breath stuttered and hitched with each press of his lips. His hands found her hips and he slid her higher, harder against the piano. It rumbled in complaint as Jack pressed against the keys but neither of them paid it any attention. Nisha was too preoccupied with how her nightdress was gathered high at her hip and how Jack’s hand was on her thigh, edging her legs apart even further. Then his lips against her inner thigh, grazing his teeth along her skin. “Jack,” Nisha breathed, trembling with something she didn’t want to name. Naming it made it real.

The first press of his tongue on her had Nisha writhing, and the second swipe had her arching against his mouth with a soft hiss. Her hands left the surface of the piano and found his hair at last. Fingertips grazed through his scalp and Jack made a noise at the back of his throat in she heard even over the striking of piano keys. He drew circles around her sweet spot like a champion, alternating the patterns between languid strokes and short laps. Nisha fought down the delirious giggle. How appropriate he’d be so good with his tongue. Of course he would be good with his tongue.

Squared fingertips dig into her hips, holding her down as he ground against her. His name left her in short little pants as he brought her to the edge. The piano was louder, yet a distant sound. She was aware of it over the rapid sound of her own breathing and the soft growls that Jack made. The tune plays as Jack’s tongue slipped inside her and she could almost see the colour of his music.

And when she came at last with a staggering cry, the notes settle deep into her heart into the unreachable place she tried to keep closed.
Five Times

Chapter Summary

The five times Jack didn’t tell Nisha he loved her, and the one time he did *Slight AU at the end because I wanted a happy ending* (Prompt for a lovely anon)

I.

They’ve betrayed him.

And he’s enraged beyond words, hurt beyond belief.

He should have seen it coming. Shit had been going far too well.

He paces like a caged, wild animal, working himself into a frenzy. Nisha watches him, her weight propped back on her palms. He should have been ecstatic that Nisha the sexy Lawbringer is sexily watching him. He’s worked hard for her attention.

But he’s too furious to enjoy it now, and it’s all their fault; Moxxi, that rock head Roland and his cock warmer Lilith.

“Frigging assholes, they’ve fucked up everything,” he seethes, running a hand through his hair in frustration. He’s still shaking from the attempt on his life. It’s not the first time someone has tried to kill him but it’s definitely the first time a friend has tried to do it.

“Jack.”

He hears her vaguely, but he’s too worked up to reply. His mind is racing, plans tumbling and turning over each other. There’s sweat collecting in his palms and on his forehead. “We’re gonna have to regroup, ugh Fuck it. Means Concordia is going to be freaking impossible now. God those idiots! Do they realise how much harder this is going to make our job?”

“Jack.”

His chest goes tighter still, and it almost physically hurts. “And we were so frigging close too!”

“Jack!”

He snaps, like the crack of her whip. He rounds onto her, face fixed into a snarl. “WHAT?!”

Nisha doesn’t flinch and he doesn’t expect her to. He’s pretty sure she’s faced down worse but he doesn’t care. Almost nothing touches Nisha. “Calm down,” she replies, and her coolness rankles him even more. How can she be so damn calm? They tried to kill her too.

His pulse is a loud, hammering sound as he fires back: “How can I be fucking calm? Once again, the universe has decided to jam its frigging dick in my ass and I’m supposed to be calm about that?”

She gives him a daring, challenging look. Employees aren’t supposed to look at their employers like that. “Just sit your ass down for five minutes and take a deep breath okay? You don’t look so hot.”
He wants to tell her to go and fuck her deep breath. But the blood is pounding in his eardrum and he can feel the pressure building in his head. At this point, if his head exploded it would be a blessing.

He sits down next to her on the pile of upturned crates. His face presses into his hands and he exhales deeply. Nisha’s hand finds his back, not rubbing just resting there in comfort. He shudders as he inhales, then releases the breath slowly. “Atta boy, deep, slow breaths.” He continues to take slow, calming breaths, listening to Nisha’s oddly calming voice. It keeps him anchored as he breathes. “That’s it, keep going.”

For once he does as he’s told. Old Gran-Gran would be proud. In and out. In and out. In and out. Over and over he repeats the motions and he finds it actually helps. Nisha knows her shit apparently.

He raises his head from his hands with one last heaving sigh. “Better?” she asks when he looks at her.

“Yeah. Thanks.” The headache is subsiding at last and he feels a little calmer now, certainly calmer than he was before. Or maybe it’s because he finds sudden comfort in the shade of her eyes; they’re gold and flecked with shards of dark amber. He’s reminded of a jungle cat he once saw on another planet, a jungle cat with sleek black fur, sharp claws and gold, predator eyes. He could easily envision Nisha as a cat.

Her hand lingers on his back. “Don’t mention it.”

He falls a little deeper.

II.

When they begin, his mask in still on.

They’re kissing in his fancy new office; Nisha perched on his desk with her legs curled around his waist. He’s trembling with need he can barely stand it. He’s been lusting after Nisha for six months. Six whole months. That’s a record for him.

And here she is, wonderfully naked on his desk save for her fucking stupid cowboy hat. Her skin presses against his and he can damn near feel every soft curve and every ridged scar. It’s better than he’s ever imagined, better than every fantasy. He palms over her ribcage, over her breasts, slips down to the dip in her back to curve his arm around her backside. Every part of her he’s thought of, he’s let his hands roam over.

“Mask off Jack,” she says, her voice husky and breathless and oh-so-sexy. Her hands run up his cheek to fumble for the clasps.

He catches her wrists tightly. “Nisha, no, I…” Suddenly he’s unwilling to let her see the brand that lingers beneath his new face. Because that isn’t him. That isn’t the Jack that she was attracted to. She liked Jack the handsome hero, not the Jack he still didn’t recognise in the mirror.

But she’s not a quitter. “Lemme see that handsome face big boy,” she says, running a thumb over artificial lips.

“Nish…”
Her legs tighten around him. “Jack, it’s alright.” She says it with such sincerity that he believes her.

He relents at last and drops his hands back to her waist. Nisha catches his mouth in a lush kiss as she unfastens the clasps at either side of his temple and on his chin. His grip on her tightens, and for a wild moment, he’s certain she’s going to change her mind and do a runner.

Gently – he wasn’t sure she was even capable of that – she eases the mask away from his face and places it onto the desk. The coolness of the office air feels good on his skin.

But the sensation of Nisha cupping his cheeks in her hands feels better. She’s smiling as she thumbs over the scar and he shivers again. “Well hello handsome,” she says. Last time a woman said that to him, she cattle branded him with a vault symbol. But it didn’t hurt when Nisha says it. It feels great. It feels fucking great.

And he wants her to feel great too.

He’s pushing her back onto his desk – not giving two shits about the paperwork that goes flying. She lets him, even shuffles back slightly to give him more room. *I love you*, he thinks as he slides into her wet, hot, welcoming body. *I love you.*

But he won’t say, not yet. He’s not ready.

III.

The subject of his grandmother comes up fairly quickly and unfortunately, it’s between colitis. Nothing could kill his boner faster than talking about that bitch.

They’re lying in his brand bed on Helios, sheets tangled and skin slick from exertion. Not how he would have liked to have had the conversation but it happens regardless.

“Nice scar Jack, where’d you get it?” she asks lazily, rolling over onto her belly.

He gives her an appreciative glance. He’s got enough energy for that. “Which one?” he slurs, still hazy and dazed from sex. Nisha is a very demanding lover.

Her fingers run up along the zigzag of a scar along his shoulder, a lightning bolt of jagged tissue. “That one.”

The sex warmed sweat on his skin goes cold and just like always, he can’t speak. There’s a lump plugged deep in his throat. Thirty years and he still can’t deal with it.

She senses that change in his body immediately. “Jack? Jack you alright there babe?”

Just like that, he breaks.

He tells her.

God, how he tells her.

He tells her of how his Grandmother, his psycho bitch of a Grandmother and how made him feel like less than nothing; of how he was a poor, wretched mirror of his father, of how if his mother had
taken him with her when she jumped off the cliff then she’d have liked him much more. He tells her of the buzz axe, of the basement, about his broken wrist. He was little and didn’t understand why his grandmother hated him so much. He still doesn’t understand nearly thirty years later, though he understands why his wrist aches in the cold.

Nisha is silent at the end of his tale. He doesn’t dare look at her. He doesn’t want her pity. He wants her to get his dick hard again and ride him until he forgets all about the buzz axe and the blood and the sound of his own wrist breaking.

Instead she takes his hand and presses it to the scar on her warm side. He knows it’s an old scar, very old judging from the colour, but it’s still rough even with age. It must have been a hell of a wound to still be coarse in her twenties.

“You know where I got that?” she asks.

“Yeah, said a skag attacked you,” he says, tracing his fingers over the scar.

“No.” She’s quiet again, as if she’s remembering something painful and difficult. He waits for her to continue, letting his fingers stroke along the scar.

“Mom gave that one to me. Threw a hot poker at me. I wasn’t fast enough. And Dad…well fuck he said nothing and pressed ice to it later…Dad tried but he just wasn’t brave enough to deal with mom. Fucking coward…I still fucking miss him.”

“Shit.” He doesn’t know what else to say. Anything else would be inadequate.

“Yeah.” Nisha strokes his knuckles. "Guess we've both been fucked up huh?"

“How many more did she give you?” he asks curiously. He has to know if she’s as damaged as he is. If she is, then god help him he's going to fall even deeper for her.

Her mouth quirks in that half smile he likes so much. “Show me yours and I’ll show you mine.”

And he does just that.

---

IV.

He hates how the mask feels on his face. It takes time in the morning to heat up on his face and makes him feel like he’s wearing iron for hours. Sometimes he’d rather go without. Then he remembers that without optic compensators built into the mask, he’d have no depth perception at all.

That, and he can’t stand the way people stare at his brand. And that’s even after he’s threatened them with a nice trip to the Friendship Gulag.

He stands in front of the mirror. His hand clench tightly around his mask and he sucks in a frustrated breath. State-of-the-art prosthetics and artificial skin grafting and this is the best Hyperion could come up with it? It doesn’t even match his skin tone, he thinks with irritation. He’ll look like a party clown. He ought to sue.

Sueing his own company. That would be a laugh he thinks as he presses the mask into his face. The latch on his chin he can manage just fine, but he’s frustrated with the clips on the side of his temples. He’s still not used to it, or his own face. It’s not his anymore. The thought makes his fingers shake.
Fucking Siren bitch. He maliciously hopes she’ll choke on Roland’s dick and die. That would be poetic justice, sort of.

Suddenly Nisha appears in the mirror with him; her hair fluffy from sleep and wearing one of his spare jumpers. Without her make-up, she looks young and delicate. Looks being the key word. He knows better. The bite marks on his throat and hips say otherwise. “Here, lemme help.”

There’s an honest, open brightness in her eyes and he finds himself loosening his grip on the mask. Nisha fixes it in place with two loud snaps without even needing him to turn around. She’s able to do it while facing the mirror. She’s a talented woman his girlfriend.

“There we go,” she proclaims then runs her hands down his bare waist. He shudders in pleasure, just as he always does. “Damn, look at that handsome guy,” she says without a hint of teasing or sarcasm. “Ain’t I a lucky gal? Having you all to myself,” She says it like she means it; even illustrates her point by standing on her tiptoes to press a kiss against the back of his neck.

Jack holds her gaze in the mirror a moment. The mask doesn’t feel so heavy anymore and his heart feels light in his chest. God when was the last time he felt like this? Not since Angel’s mother. And that felt like it happened to somebody else, in some other time. He wants to tell her he loves her, that he loves how she gets on his very last nerve or how she sneezes or how she squeals when he tickles the spot on the back of her knee. He loves how she curls around him in her sleep because deep down, she's as afraid as he is about being alone. He loves how picky she is about her coffee in the morning, how she's developed a taste for banana pancakes. He loves the sound she makes after a good sleep. He loves how she walks with a confident sway, like she knows something about the world that he doesn't. He loves how she can hit a bullseye from 500 yards, even in low gravity. He loves how her eyes glow gold when she’s happy, or how they flame when she’s angry. He loves the sound of his name as his shivers from her lips, loves the press of her hand on his back. He loves how she can make him twist and moan and beg, loves how she feels straddled on his hips. He loves how she presses lipstick kisses into the collar of his shirt so that everyone on Helios knows he’s hers. He loves her even more when she substitutes out the lipstick and peppers his neck with bite marks. He loves the sound of his name as his shivers from her lips, loves the press of her hand on his back.

He wants to tell her he loves her so badly he aches. He's never been one to censor himself so why start now?

Instead he does the opposite because he’s like a kid again – dipping the pigtails of a girl he’s got a crush on into paint because he won’t admit to liking her. “What? You think we’re exclusive? That’s just too precious,” he says with the mockery she expects by now.

Nisha just smiles knowingly. “I’ll remember next time you want your gun cocked,” she says, nudging him to the side with her hip so she can get to her toothbrush and he loses his opportunity. Again

V.

He doesn’t sleep so well anymore.

Some nights he’s still sucked into nightmares. He understands there’s things in the Vault he shouldn’t have seen. He dreams of sirens and fire and creatures made of stone and spinning heads. He dreams
of the vault symbol shattering into his eyes, his face. Dreams aren’t supposed to hurt, but these ones do. God how they do.

A year later and he’s still not over what happened in the Vault, though he tries to pretend otherwise. Some nights he thrashes awake, others he’s woken by the hard floor as he falls out of bed. The state he awakens is always the same; sweating, heart pounding and terror swirling in his head.

One night it happens, and Nisha isn’t curled up by his side. She’s in Lynchwood, taking care of bad guys like the good sheriff she is.

He fumbles for his ECHO device, connecting through to the one person who knows who’ll understand. Because she was there too.

“**Mmm hey handsome,**” she says sleepily. He’s woken her up and he feels guilty for it.

“**Nisha.**” His voice sounds as if it’s about to break and he swallows down it all back down.

She knows there’s something wrong immediately. The sleep disappears from her voice. **“Jack? You alright?**”

“I-I don’t know.” Honesty is difficult for him, always has been. Even now he struggles to get the words out.

There’s a pause on the other line. **“Nightmares again?”** she says softly, and he knows how difficult it is for her to find empathy. Nisha doesn’t feel some things like other people do. **“Yeah,”** he answers shakily.

“**Need me to come up babe?**”

God yes he does. He doesn’t want to be alone in the dark right now. But the shame whirls in his gut. He’s bothered her enough by wakening her up at two in the morning. She’s a busy woman. Chasing bad guys must have been tiring. “**No just…stay on the line. Please,**” he adds, the word odd on his tongue. Since becoming president of Hyperion he hasn’t had to ask anyone for anything.

“**Yeah. Whatever you need,**” she answers, just as she always does.

He swallows the lump in his throat. **“Talk to me about something, anything.”**

“**You wanna hear about the time I held up a bandit chieftain because he tried to run me off the road?**”

He settles back into his pillow, the calm slowing returning. He finds it amazing still just how much better she can make him feel with just her voice. **“Yeah I like that one.”**

---

VI.

He’s breathing hard as he storms through Lynchwood and it’s a mess if he ever did see one. The Vault hunters have definitely been there. There’s evidence of a fight, destroyed buildings and bodies and blood splattered on the cracked, dusty ground. Two of his best robots flank out to secure the area as Jack vaults over corpses and climbs over wreckage, using muscles he hasn’t used since his glory days on the moon. His heart is racing, his stomach is knotting and there’s a cold sweat on beading on his brow. He imagines what he’ll find; Nisha’s body in the dust, seared with blood and her precious
hat ruined.

He’s not ready to be without her.

Suddenly he hears a familiar voice, cursing somewhere nearby. “Assholes! You’ve ruined my saloon! I liked it here!”

He sees her at last, stumbling from the remains of her saloon – that looks as if it’s been torn in two by the force of a Siren and riddled with the bullet holes of a turret. There’s blood on her duster, in her hair, on her cheeks. He’s terrified that it’s hers; that he’s arrives too late and that she’ll die in the arms of a hero.

He’d give anything for there not to be a hero this time. If there’s no hero she can’t die right?

“Nisha!” he calls out, not even trying to hide his desperation.

Nisha looks up and sees him. Then she smiles – she smiles that fucking gorgeous smile, as if stumbling from the wreckage of a saloon was an everyday occurrence for her. It wouldn’t surprise him if it was. She’s an adventurous sort.

“What’s cooking, good looking?” she says as he approaches her. She sounds breathless but blessedly alive.

“Are you…Fuck are you alright?” he asks, looking for possible self threatening wounds.

She gives him another flash of a grin. “Of course I am, why wouldn’t I be?” There’s a gash on her side, blood staining purple to red, but she doesn’t seem to be aware of it.

“You-The Vault Hunters…They…” He’s so relieved that he can’t even form coherent sentences. All he can do is gesture wildly.

“Dead as a doornail now,” she replies holstering her pistol. “Ain’t my first rodeo ya know.”

His answer is in a bone crushing hug of relief. He coils in arms around her, holding her to his body and knocking her hat off in the process. She feels so warm and alive in his gasp that a dry croak of relief escapes him.

Her hands slip up to rest on his shaking back. “Hey hey, it’s alright Jack. Calm down. I’m alright, everything is fine.”

It doesn’t feel fine. Not yet. “I thought you were-oh Jesus I thought I was gonna get here and you’d be dead.” His nose presses into her hair and he breathes in her scent, metallic copper and all.

“Honey, it takes more than that to bring me down. You of all people should know that,” she says, tapping his back.

He pulls away slightly but keeps his arms looped around her. “Fuck why didn’t you tell me they were here?”

“Figured I could handle them on my own.”

“They had a fucking Siren with them babe. You don’t wanna mess with a Siren.”

“I tangled with Lilith and survived didn’t I?”

“Yeah but me and Wilhelm were around as well.” He’s aware he sounds irrational, bordering on
hysterical. But he doesn’t care.

She quirks an eyebrow. “C’mon Jack, what’s this all about? It ain’t the first time I’ve been in danger. Hell, you put me through some shit on Elpis remember?”

This is it. He’s gotta fess up now. The words snag momentarily on his tongue but he forces them up, however unwilling and vulnerable and stupid it makes him feel. He won’t be a coward this time, not this time. Not after nearly losing her.

“I love you,” he admits, voice raw with emotion. “Jesus sometimes it makes me sick how fucking much I love you. And the thought of losing you to those frigging bandits, fuck I just couldn’t take it.”

Her face softens slightly and she sighs. “Oh Jack-“

He recoils slightly, disappointed and furious that he’s mistaken her affections for anything more than a simple friends with benefits. Of course that’s what it is. She doesn’t love him. He was stupid to think that she did. “Don’t you dare ‘Oh Jack’ me. I’ve just poured my frigging heart out to you and you just –“

A slim finger, encased in Hyperion armour, presses against his lips. “Let me finish asshole. I was gonna say that I loved you too, you stupid idiot.”

His world seems to stop. “You were?”

“Yeah but I don’t think I will now,” she says but there’s an encouraging edge of humour in her voice. “You've ruined the happy ending Jack.”

He’s so relieved that he laughs and pulls her into his arms again. This time, she embraces him back fully; fisting her hands into his jacket and pressing against him. His nose nuzzles into her gunpowder smoked hair as his hands spread out against her back, feeling her torso expand as she breathes.

“I just…I’m not good at this Jack…this whole ‘love’ shit,” she admits against his chest. “I don’t even know if I know how…”

As Lynchwood smoulders around them, Jack feels like he could take on every single Vault hunter on Pandora. “Hey I ain’t great at it either babe. But once we fix this fucking planet, we’ll have time to learn.”

“Yeah,” she says, burrowing against him. “You and me against Pandora.”

Just as it should be.
Chapter Summary

Nisha bets Jack can't keep a straight face during his meetings. Jack proves her right.
(Under desk blow jobs and dirty talk)

Chapter Notes

Straight up Jack and Nisha smut for the wonderful Sanzosin <3

The game was simple. Keep a straight face. But he should have known better than to bet against Nisha. The odds were never, ever in his favour.

But Jack couldn't help himself. He loved making shit hard for himself when it came to Nisha Kadam.

“If I win…” Fingers had toyed with his hair as she walked around behind his desk chair. “I want you to wear my collar for a week. I want everyone here to know who you belong to.”

Jack glanced over his shoulder, intrigued and slightly aroused. “And if I win?”

She gave his hair a little tug, sending a tingle down his spine. “If you win, I’ll let you be on top for a week. No questions asked,” she’d said with mischievous little glimmer. As if he could turn that offer down. The thought of being able to have Nisha writhe underneath him for a change was too good to pass up.

“Alright, you’re on,” he had said, leaning back on his desk chair. “Do you worst. But I gotta warn you babe, I got a hell of a poker face.”

Nisha lips – the kind that just begged to be kissed over and over – had tipped into a glossy, confident smile. “We’ll see about that,” she’d said.

His secretary had phoned through to tell him the department heads had arrived, and did he want them sent through? “Yeah, send them through,” he had said as Nisha crouched down to crawl under his desk. He pushed his chair forward slightly, hiding her from view, before his department heads filled in.

He could do this.

He could do this.

And here he was twenty minutes, thinking that he very much couldn’t do it as Nisha’s fingers massaged the sensitive spot behind the back of his knees.
“Yes yes, get on with it. I’m a very handsome yet busy guy ya know,” he said, waving a hand dismissively.

They might have stuttered an apology at him, they might have not. Truly Jack didn’t care. He was far too preoccupied with the sensation of Nisha’s chest pressed against his knees, his face still perfectly schooled into a look of complete boredom even as she slowly ran her hands up his thighs.

He inhaled, then exhaled. He could do this. Nisha had grossly underestimated his control. And that would cost her a mattress facial later on in the evening.

“So, what you’re telling me is that you can find my vault quicker?” Jack said trying very hard to ignore Nisha’s fingertips running up the teeth of his zipper tauntingly. He felt as if his jeans had shrunk a size right then and there.

“Y-Yes sir,” stuttered his employee as nimble fingers worked the buttons free on Jack’s jeans.

As… - Joe from Production? Was that his name? Usually was - explained something about a new type of metal they were producing for the drills, Jack cleared his throat to mask the hiss of his zipper inched down. Why did he have to wear those new jeans today? The zipper was ridiculously stiff and loud. He was certain everyone heard it.

His employee looked a little startled. “Sir?”

Jack coughed again to mask Nisha’s sigh of approval from beneath his desk. “Nothing, just something in my throat. Continue,” he said whilst trying to push her back slightly with his knee for even just a moment of relief so he could bring his breathing back under control.

But Nisha wasn’t having any of it. Whatever Nisha Kadam wanted, Nisha Kadam got apparently. And damn he well loved her for it.

She pressed right back, and he suddenly felt the all too familiar sensation of her breasts on his kneecaps; warm even through the thin white shirt she wore. God how he hoped that the bead of hardness he felt was just a button and not her nipple pressing through. Otherwise his head would probably fall off.

He swallowed down a moan as Nisha’s fingers traced him through his boxers; walking her fingers up his concealed erection. His pulse was an erratic thumping in his ear as his heart hammered in anticipation. Funny he didn’t think he had any blood to spare. “What…What are we looking at? Cost wise?”

“Nothing that we can’t afford sir.”

“Yeah, I’ll be the judge of that.”

“Yes sir. Apologises. We estimate it would take 3.2 million to upgrade the drill heads.”

As his department heads continued to drone on, Nisha continued her slow torture of him. Jack ground his teeth together as he felt one of her clever hand slip into his boxers. His fingers tightened hard around his pen and if it had not been an executive ballpoint, it might have shattered. Why was this taking so damn long?

And even though he expected it, the first touch of her fingers against his heated flesh sent a jump through his very nerve fibres, like the jolt from a car battery.

Dear god she felt good, so good it should have been criminal. He heard something he could only
liken to a giggle underneath his desk. He’d give her something to laugh about if she wasn’t careful.

Something in his face must have betrayed him, for he suddenly received a look of concern. “Sir? Are you okay?” asked one of his little plebeians, obviously feeling practically brave.

Forming complete sentences was difficult as Nisha curled her hand around his thick base. “Yeah, I’m fine, I just-“ She squeezed, none too gently, and he nearly swallowed his own damn tongue. “Ohfuckme..”

“Sir?”

He inhaled a shuddering breath. “It’s nothing. Just got a bit of a headache from all your fucking talking,” He growled through his teeth, with enough sense to press his fingers against his temple to feign a headache.

His employees didn’t really know where to put themselves. And at the first swipe of Nisha’s tongue against his girth, he frankly lost the ability to care. “Oh-Oh god.”

Robotics and Production exchanged a worried, uncomfortable glance. “Sir, if you’d rather adjourn…”

He didn’t have to look down to know that Nisha was smirking against his cock. He could almost hear her voice in his head. Yeah Jack, wouldn’t you rather adjourn?

Never, he snarled back. "No let's just get this over with," he managed with what little control he still had.

"Yes sir of course sir."

The meeting continued, and it was perhaps it was just as well. It gave him something to focus on other than the fact that his girlfriend was trying to drive him mad. Nisha’s tongue pressed flat against the underside of his erection and he bit the inside of his cheek, trying to distract himself with something, anything.

But it was no use. Not even the exceedingly shiny bald head of his Robotics manager could distract him. Nisha’s mouth was on point, and just like all her other weapons, she used it well. She dragged her tongue up in a languid lick, her breath searing on his hypersensitive flesh. Jack squirmed, struggling to keep his breathing even.

God why was she so good at this? How had she gotten so good? He didn't want to think about Nisha on her knees for another man. He couldn't handle that.

Just when he thought it couldn’t get any worse, she found the spot beneath the tip of his cock. Jack couldn’t bite back the hiss as she pressed her tongue against the sensitive little spot. His hips bucked again and her teeth gazed the crown with a flash of pain. “J-Jesus.”

“Sir?”

He waved a shaking hand. “Sorry, not feeling so hot today. Just get on with it.”

His staff seemed uncomfortable with the idea. But he didn’t give a shit. Nisha's mouth was far too distracting.

She dragged her tongue up his length again, paying special attention to the crown. Jack’s free hand clenched into a hard fist, nails digging hard into his skin. God, he was going to fuck her later until
she walked like a saddle sore cowboy. Perhaps instead he’d just haul her out from under his desk and
give her a good spanking right in front of his senior staff. That would surely teach her a lesson.

No, he considered as his lower gut burned pleasantly, she’d probably enjoy that. So would he, truth
be told.

And finally, finally, he felt Nisha’s hot mouth envelope him completely; taking his length in as far as
she could. Jack bit into the side of his cheek stop himself from groaning her name. But the burst of
bitter copper on his tongue only aroused him further. He bought a shaking hand up and feigned
another cough.

“Sir? How do you think we should proceed?”

Nisha hummed and the vibrations of her throat made him bite into his sweaty palm. He tried to think
of something else, anything else. Like an answer to the question he had just been asked.

“A-ah. Outfit…Outfit ten drills..And....Go from there. I aint...Oh hell-” He hissed out the last syllable
as Nisha’s hand and mouth started a steady pace. She was hot, wet and always so, so much better
than his own hand. She took his shaft entirely, her fingers squeezing in rhythm with her mouth. Hips
jerked again of their own accord, forcing his length further down her throat. Dizzily, he almost
wanted her to choke on it.

But she didn’t. Nisha simply made a sound in her throat again as if she couldn’t be any happier. She
ought to be happy, he thought, having Handsome Jack’s handsome dick in her mouth.

“Yes sir. Ten drills. I’ll have my team get right on it,” said Production. Manufacturing said
something, but Jack didn’t hear. He couldn’t hear over the pounding of his eardrums. Her pace
continued steady, winding a string of tension deep in his belly. He was certain he was going to die
with his girlfriend’s mouth around his dick. That would look great on his autopsy. Cardiac arrest via
blow job.

But then, just like that, Nisha withdrew from him with a soft little *plop*. He was trembling, inches
away from detonating inside her mouth. He wouldn’t have been able to keep himself together for
that. He knew it.

And she knew it too as she pressed a kiss against the crown of his aching length. Jack slipped a hand
under his desk to cup his girlfriend’s hot cheek. He just had to touch her. He couldn’t take it
anymore. “Alright, I’m done.”

“Sir?”

Nisha pressed against his palm as keenly as a cat. “I said I’m done. You lot get out,” he growled out,
pressing his thumb against her lips. Her tongue darted out and circled around him just as eagerly as
she’s tongued his cock.

His senior staff sprung from their chairs, as if they had been waiting for his dismal. “Yes sir,” they
chorused. He watched, toes curling in his shoes as they all near enough legged it from his office.

The office door had no sooner closed before Jack was throwing his weight back in the chair, pushing
away from the desk. Nisha peeked out beneath him, eyes gleaming like black gold. “So much for
that poker face,” she said breathlessly. Just to add insult to injury, her tongue flicked out over her
luscious bottom lip. "You're so weak pumpkin.”

“Shut up,” Jack hissed back, not caring two shots about their stupid bet. All he cared about hearing
her moan his name as he buried himself deep into her wet her.
He hauled her up by her arms, noticing with a sharp, hard inhale that the zipper and buttons on her leathers were already undone. The thought of Nisha with her hand down her pants as she tongued him made Jack physically ache.

He pushed her onto his desk, sending paperwork and pens scattering. Nisha shuffled back, eyes lidded as she lifted that spankable ass up to he could shimmy her waistband down and out from under her. He wanted to strip her down; see her skin gleam with exertion, see her backside red and raw with spank marks, see her throat bruised. But fucking her in his desk would have to do. He didn't have the willpower to do anything else.

Jack's hands gripped at her hips, holding both her body and her gaze as he pressed into her.

Nisha immediately made a wonderful, guttural sound that went straight into his cock. "God-.

She felt amazing, as slick and hot as wet velvet. No woman should have felt so damn good. "Fuck Nish," Jack growled, arms straining as he seated himself fully into her welcoming body. She felt as if she had been made in specifically with him in mind.

"Jack" Nisha moaned, her whiskey warmed voice breathless.

He withdrew with a slick sound then rammed forcefully back into her; hard enough to cause something in his desk drawer to rattle. Nisha cursed him as he slipped his hands to her backside, drawing her closer, deeper. "Atta boy Jack," she praised. Jack repeated the motion again and again, getting high off of her praise, until he lost count. His heart beat like a hammer against steel, the pressure in his belly building and rising.

"Nish," he whined, because managing a sentence and fucking her at the same time was impossible.

Nisha’s mouth found his ear, biting hard as she rocked her hips in time with his thrusts. "I wanted to fuck you in front in of all those eggheads Jack," she panted, breath hot against his neck. "I wanted em to see you totally fucking wrecked and beggin' for me."

Jack made a noise; a mix between a groan and a whine. He couldn't help it. The image was unbelievably hot; black eyed Nisha mounting him in front of his entire senior staff just because she could.

His girlfriend continued her little story, grazing rough kisses against the corner of his mouth. "Coulda just climbed on your lap and fucked you so good instead of hidin' under the desk." Her hand slipped under the waistband of his jeans to cup his ass; squeezing as only Nisha Kadam had the bottle to do. No one else had the guts go grope Handsome Jack. "Would ya have liked that baby? Have all your senior staff know that you're so fuckin' pussy whipped by me?"

"J-Jesus Nisha." He was vaguely aware his thrusts were becoming more erratic, but he was more aware of Nisha’s body going tight around him, the press of her hand against his backside as she sought him in deeper.

"Jack, fuck. Shit, I'm close," she gasped, her ambered voice scraping thick in her throat.

And like a thoughtful boyfriend he helped her along. His hand left her hip momentarily and jammed down between their joined bodies and rumpled clothes to find Nisha’s sweet spot. She'd taught him how to touch her with his tongue; where to stroke, how much pressure to apply to make her hips jolt and her breath stutter. This was no different.

Jack rubbed his thumb against her, digits sliding against her slick, soft skin. Her breath hitched in her throat as her orgasm crested. Fuck she was so hot, so perfect when she made that noise.
And he told her so, because he couldn't contain it anymore. "Fuck Nish, you're so frigging hot like this, fuck. You feel so good." He's almost delirious at how wonderful she feels around him.

She seized his mouth in a kiss and he could near enough taste her need. "Don't you fucking forget it Jack. Fuck. I'm the best you'll ever get," Nisha hissed against his lips.

It's true. She was. He doesn't know a woman alive who can even begin to compare to her. His hot, sexy, determined, live-wire of a Lawbringer. "Nisha-

With hazy eyes, Nisha's thumb pressed into the hollow of his throat, fingers curling against the nape of his neck. As his own thumb pressed against her, she applied just the right amount of pressure to cause his throat to burn. "C'mon Jack," Nisha ordered. "Come in me cowboy."

That was his coup de grâce. His hips rolled and his teeth clenched as he passed the point of no return. Deep in his gut, the winding, tight string of tension snapped like Nisha’s whip.

With a groan whistling through his teeth, Jack emptied himself into his girlfriend. Nisha's welcoming body pulsed around him, milking, suckling as her hips against him. She took every last drop, panting as if she were about to die any second. "That's it Jack. Shit, you fill me up so so good," Nisha praised, her voice hoarse.

The strength from his legs suddenly fled and he slumped against her shoulder. If it wasn’t for his desk, he might have collapsed completely and taken Nisha with him. Instead he trembled against her, his nose pressed onto the collar of her shirt; just breathing her in.

Nisha was the first move. She pulled back slightly, ignoring his weak protest as she settled her hands back onto his shoulders. "Guess I win then?" Her make up was mussed and her eyes were bright, brighter than any star he'd ever seen. His rapidly beating heart swelled tight against his chest. He wasn't sure if he loved Nisha yet - God he couldn't afford to love her - but he loved fucking her and that was as close to love as he could get from his Lawbringer. Jack didn't dare hope for anything else. "I-Jesus Nish-

But she cut him off with the press of her finger against his lips. “You’re going to look so, so hot in my collar lover boy,” Nisha said, sealing her mouth over his in a kiss before he even had a chance to protest.

Funnily enough, he didn’t even feel mad about it. Because she was right.

He was going to look super hot.
Morning Glory [NSFW]

Chapter Summary

Nisha knows just how to wake up Jack (Lazy, morning sex because I can)

Chapter Notes

Inspired by this adorable piece of fanart by the fabulously talented Sanzosin that I've taken to a sexy place XD sorrynotsorry
The first thing she became aware of was a familiar presence curled up around her; one arm draped over her waist, the other looped under her shoulders. Jack seemed to envelope her completely. His chest was hot against her back, but it was a comfortable heat that made her happier than it should of. His breath was slow and deep, warming the base of her neck pleasantly. One leg was slipped between hers, the hair on his legs soft like the hair on his chest.

Yawning, Nisha snuggled against Jack’s arm. She couldn’t even remember falling asleep. She definitely remembered how she had ended up alone in Jack’s quarters. He had been in his office, working late. Nisha had occupied herself in his bed by reading through an old, well-thumbed paperback about pirates and booty she’d found on Jack’s bookshelf. At some point, she must have fallen asleep and Jack must have come in and turned the lights off.
She glanced to the bedside table. The book was there, her place marked with a spare piece of paper. Next to it was Jack’s alarm clock.

06:15.

They had slept through his alarm. Jack liked to go to his office early and if she didn’t wake him now, he’d bitch forever that she let him sleep him in.

“Jack, hon,” she said gently, giving him a nudge with her elbow. “You awake? Time to get up.”

Jack didn’t stir in the slightest.

Nisha gave him a harder nudge. “Jack, c’mon. Wake up.”

And still he didn’t budge, just made a sleepy noise in his throat and carried on snoozing like the lazy bastard he was.

Nisha huffed in his arms. There was only so much she could do, being completely covered by Jack. But she was a resourceful sort. Wouldn’t get by on Pandora without being a little bit creative.

She pressed her hips back slowly; tentatively testing Jack’s awareness. He made a low rumble near her ear, but his breath was still relatively slow and steady. Nisha couldn’t help but smile. He slept like a dead man.

It was just as well she was so good at waking him up.

Nisha pushed again, harder and with a little wriggle of her backside. She felt him shift slightly, and his breathing became a little more regular. Although he was not quite fully conscious, his body was already responding to her gentle little thrusts. The hand on her stomach curled; fingers entwining with the polyester of the jumper she wore – his old Hyperion number of course – as he pulled her body against his. Her breath notched in her throat at the sensation of hardness pressing snug against her ass, and she couldn’t suppress the desire to grind against him. That would certainly wake him up.

And it did just that.

Jack gave a sluggish groan of approval and it was like a lick across her bare skin. He slipped under the hem of his jumper, pushing it up her hips to bunch below her ribcage. His palm glided upwards to her breast and Nisha sighed softly at the familiar sensation. That very same hand that had crushed windpipes cupped her breast. Those very same fingers that had gouged into someone’s eye socket now rolled over her nipple, pebbling the skin. His fingernails pinched hard and a jolt of arousal surged straight down her leg. Nisha arched into his touch, humming with pleasure. It was wonderful.

But she couldn’t tell him that. Otherwise his head would swell up and he’d never be able to fit through the door again.

There was a rustle of the duvet being pushed back slightly as Jack pulled her impossibly closer. His breath was hot on her neck, searing like a swipe of his tongue. She felt his nose against the back of her head, trying to get further access to her neck. Nisha tipped her head forward slightly and Jack pressed a pattern of slow, kisses down the bumps of her spine beneath her neck.

Above the collar of his jumper Nisha felt Jack’s teeth sink deep into her skin, as if he were trying to tear a chunk of meat out of her. Her eyes clenched shut and she hissed as pleasure tumbled over pain. His lips and tongue immediately followed his teeth, worrying the bite into a bruise. It would be vivid even on her dark skin. She couldn’t wait to show it off. Handsome Jack was something of an artist.
As he made another bruising bite upon her canvas of flesh, she found herself reaching her free arm back and up so she could slide her fingers into Jack’s sleep-tousled hair. Nisha dragged her fingernails over his scalp as best she could - given the angle. Jack made a muffled noise against her skin and suckled hard on a bitemark. She couldn’t remember a last time he had been so quiet for so long. She would have thought him asleep if he hadn’t been panting softly in her skin. The part of him that definitely wasn’t was wedged firmly against her ass, separated only by the boxers he wore.

She pressed back against him again and this time, she felt Jack’s rumble defuse through her back and into her chest, settling in her hair. His hand slipped down from her breast, along the flat planes of her stomach to curl down her hip and further still to cup her thigh. Nisha’s legs instinctively shifted and she released her hold on his hair to fumble underneath the sheets for the waistband his boxers. She needed to touch him, needed him burrowed in her.

It took a bit of wriggling to push his waistband down and Nisha huffed with effort. Why did he even bother wearing them if he was just going to fuck her anyway?

Finally her hand wrapped around his hardened length. Jack swore low in his throat, thrusting into her palm as she thumbed against the ridge. Nisha felt his nose press against the back of her head, stifling his moans into the tangle of her hair. The Lawbringer squeezed again and he made the delicious groan again. She loved that sound, and loved even more than she was the one who drew it out of him. She knew where to touch, where to press, how much pressure to apply to make Handsome Jack moan and curse and fuck her hand like some hormonal teenaged brat.

He may have been the richest man in six galaxies. He may have owned the largest deposit on Eridium on Pandora. He may have owned even the fucking moon and stars themselves. But behind closed doors, she owned him.

And judging from the soft curses, moans and filthy words of praise and nonsense as he breathed, Jack knew it too. His hips jerked, his cock bucking into her hand. She ran her thumb over the swollen tip and found him slick for her already. A pulse of heat throbbed between her legs at the whine Jack made as her thumb pressed against along his warm flesh. He was so damn hot like this; needy and desperate for her touch. He dragged his hand along her thigh, leaving angry red scratches on her upper thigh.

Nisha responded, pushing the suddenly sweltering blankets back further as she arched for him. She felt the crown of him press against her and a shiver of hot arousal curled deep in her stomach. The hand on her leg cupped her thigh, pushed it upwards. Then with a smooth thrust, Jack slid fluidly into her as if she had been made of oil.

Nisha keened high in her throat at the sensation, toes curling against the bedsheets as he seated himself to the hilt. It was an impossible fullness that still made her ache and stretch. For all his bragging and bullshit, he was a really fucking good lay Jack filled her in a way no other man could, fucked her like no one else could. She felt very sorry for everyone else across six galaxies. They were really missing out.

As he started to move, Nisha reached out and gripped the sheets for purchase as her hips found a rhythm to match Jack’s large hand suddenly came over hers; encompassing and holding as he pinned her to the bed. His thrusts were slow, languid as if it were all a big chore. But Nisha knew better. His mouth pressed eagerly against the slope of her neck, stealing quick kisses with every thrust.

Without thinking, Nisha flipped her hand over to entwine her fingers through his. Jack squeezed back as he slowly fucked her into the mattress.

But his orgasm came too quickly for her. Jack’s breath shuttered harshly, his fingers clenching so
tightly around hers that she was sure he was going to break her hand. His hips erratically crashed against her backside maybe twice more, and then she felt him spill hot into her with her name on his tongue. Nisha continued to thrust her his. Pleasure coiled tight in her belly, pulled at her thighs. She was so close, so close she could almost see the stars in her vision.

And Jack seemed to know exactly what she needed. He made an almost inhuman growl near her ear as his free hand gripped her windpipe. She had heard starving skags that didn’t snarl like that. Then, a set of jaws sunk hard into the side of her neck again, so hard that she felt the blood swell against Jack’s teeth. Nisha couldn’t stop the cry that tore from her as she hit the climax she’d desperately needed.

Jack rode it out with her, rocking her body as he whisper words of nonsense of how sexy she looked, how good she felt, how he had to feel her come around him. Jack was so hot when he was demanding, and knowing that her blood was on his teeth and tongue made the climax all the more sweeter.

With one last thrust, Nisha collapsed into stillness as her body seemed to just turn into jelly. The arm pinned beneath her waist curled and Jack drew her close, slotting his chin onto her shoulder as he heaved from exertion.

They lay together for a few moments, snuggled in the domesticity while their bodies found equilibrium again. Then Nisha finally summoned the strength to draw their entwined hands towards her. “Mmmmmm mornin’ Handsome,” she slurred, kissing the front of Jack’s hand. It was a damn good start to the day.

“Mornin’ babe.”

"Nothing like breakfast in bed huh?”

"Yeah thanks Nish. You're too good to me, " Jack managed, drunk on sex and passion as he pressed a kiss against her ear. He sounded relaxed as he nuzzled into her ruffled head, sighing deeply. It would do him good to go to the office with a clear head. Maybe he’d only kill one employee instead of two.

“Don’t you have work to go to?” Nisha asked, as if yelling at people all day could even be classed as work.

Jack tightened his arm around her waist. “Nah, five more minutes yet,” he said sleepily.

Nisha wanted to argue, just for the sake of it. But she was feeling too tired herself. She drew Jack’s hand between her breasts and snuggled against his arm.

Neither of them saw 07:00
Falling ladders

Chapter Summary

Jack gets his mask. Nisha shows her appreciation.

(Continuation of Short Changed Hero in which Jack and Nisha get together. Works on the assumption that Jack killed Tassiter before taking over Hyperion.)

Chapter Notes

Idea and Beta'd by the lovely Sanzosin! I just wrote the thing.

God, the Siren really had done a number on him.

It was hard to recognise the man staring back at him in the little compact mirror. He didn’t look right anymore. The vault symbol stretched down his cheeks and across the bridge of his nose; an curving slash of blue and red. It looked like a brand but it hurt like a third degree burn. It felt alive, angry, malevolent almost; pulsing with pain. Every twitch of his face had his face burning and sweat pearling on his forehead.

And to say nothing of his eyes, the damage that had been done. His green eye had taken a direct hit, and had clouded over to a dirty white. He was really fucking bummed about that. He had always liked the heterochromatic effect. It set him apart, made him feel different, made people look twice at him. And it had always been a good conversation starter with the ladies of Helios.

Now his vision felt wrong, off-center and oddly dark. He knocked things often on his left side and even struggled to pour a glass of water from a pitcher. His perception was royally and totally fucked.

Was this his punishment for opening a Vault that should have stayed sealed? For seeing things he shouldn’t have?

Jack scoffed, and immediately felt a spasm of malignant pain behind his eyes. His fingers made tight fists in the blankets as he trembled through the ache.

No, it wasn’t a punishment from some higher power. That was just ridiculous. It was some psycho bitch with a beef. She hadn’t even cared that she had destroyed his face for life.

He’ll carry that to his grave; after the initial shattering sound came pain, and it filled his whole world.

But he would also always remember what happened after that; Nisha at his side, pressing a burn pad hastily pulled from a first aid kit over the raw flesh. Nisha’s arm around him; holding steady as he stumbled. Nisha’s voice in his ear, cutting through the pain. Nisha’s hand in his, anchoring him as he flirted with consciousness on the ride back to Helios. Nisha’s fingers stroking through his damp hair, combing out the tangled knots as he shivered from the shock.
Jack snapped the compact mirror shut and exchanged it on the bedside table for a bottle of painkillers. Would she even still be interested in him? He hoped so, because he still liked her. He had liked her the minute he laid eyes on her, and he liked her more now after everything that had happened – Concordia, Elpis, the Vault. It was almost scary how easily they had fallen together. The Lawbringer was certainly something special.

As Jack popped a pain killer into his mouth, he still wasn’t sure what to make of her. He hoped Nisha would come back if his mangled face hadn’t scared her off completely. She had seemed okay with it. She’d let him lay his head on her lap and kept him distracted from the Vault wound. Even now, as he thought of those fingers carding through his hair, a shudder coursed down his spine.

God he hoped she’d come back. And while he was rich as six kings now, it didn’t cost to hope.

“Hey there handsome.”

_Speak of the devil._

Jack recognised Nisha’s voice immediately, wonderful and familiar. He especially recognised the little rush that surged into his stomach whenever she was near, just he was dropping in artificial gravity. He looked up and there was the sexy Lawbringer Nisha Kadam standing in the doorway of the med bay – complete with her mucky boots and fluffy bob cut.

She’d actually come back.

He was so pleased to see her; pleased enough to the point that his smiling was causing his wound to stretch and ache. “Nisha, hey. How are you doing?” Jack said, then immediately cursed himself for sounding like a complete tool.

_God, way to go and make it all weirdly polite, idiot._

To his relief, the Lawbringer didn’t seem to mind. She regarded him with those honey warmed eyes. “Not bad, how ya feeling, cyclops?” she joked.

“Better,” he lied over the painful throbbing of his face. The pain killer hadn’t kicked in yet.

But Nisha was not convinced. “Really, because you still look like shit, Jack,” she joked, but he can see the concern pinched in her brow – visible even under the brim of her hat.

“You know, you could at least try to lie to me,” he remarked in a snippy tone she’d probably expect from him.

She clicked her tongue against her teeth. “Honey, you didn’t hire me to lie to you.”

“Yeah why did I even hire you in the first place?” _Because you really wanted to get in her pants_ said the treacherous little voice in his head. _No I didn’t_ he thought back furiously. He could feel a heat in his cheeks that had nothing to do with the stretching Vault mark.

The Lawbringer just cocked her head to the side. “To keep your skinny ass out of trouble.”

"Hey my ass isn’t skinny, my ass is great actually,” Jack insisted.

She gave him a teasing smile that relieved the tension in his head. “Whatever, but I’m the one having to look at it all the time honey,” Nisha remarked before adding: “Nice implants by the way.” He knew that she was referring to the metal fixtures attached to his temples and chin left over from the failed skin grafting.

Jack shrugged, as if it wasn’t any big deal – like he had always had them. The doctors wanted to try
something else apparently so they had left them attached. “Well I was gonna go for breast implants, but they didn't have the size I wanted so I got these instead,” he said glibly.

Nisha gave that low, dark laugh that always made something in his stomach flutter. “So, did you come all the way back up here just to tell me I look like crap?” Jack continued.

“Yeah,” she answered with a smirk. “And I picked up somethin’ for ya as well. Special delivery.”

That was when he noticed the briefcase sized storage case she was carrying under her arm. He had been a little too preoccupied with the important things – such as the curve of her hips. “What is it?”

“A surprise.”


The Lawbringer giggled again, and that was worth the dull throb of pain. “You wish,” she replied as she crossed the ward, her boots squelching on the gleaming flooring. Some nurse would come by later and to tut and sigh over the mess but whatever, it was hardly his problem. “Gift from your doctors. They asked me to give it to you.”

Well, that was decidedly un-sexy and very boring. “What? They actually spoke to you?” he asked, surprised that anyone had the balls to speak to Nisha.

She sunk onto the end of his bed. “If by ‘spoke’ you mean they tried real hard to avoid eye-contact with me and handed this over then yeah, they spoke to me,” Nisha drawled, sounding more amused than she should of. She enjoyed the effect she had on Hyperion employees.

Jack snorted. “Why are my staff so flipping spineless? Half of them can’t even look me in the eye anymore.”

Her mouth curved. “Cos you’re the big boss. You’re the man now. Guess they don’t wanna mess with you.”

The irony wasn’t lost on him. “Yeah. I mean, I spent my entire career sticking it to the man. And now I’ve actually become the man,” Jack commented, leaning back against his pillows. “Let’s see what those assholes have sent me, their new glorious leader.”

“Well it ain’t ticking so that’s a good start,” Nisha replied as she handed the case over. Jack tried very hard not to get giddy as her fingers brushed against his knuckles. For a moment, he didn’t feel like the new C.E.O of a multibillion dollar weapons company. He felt like a stupid teenager with a stupid crush.

Damnit, Nisha could never know the power she had over him already. That just wasn’t safe.

Jack pushed the knowledge away to be dealt with at a later date. He had enough to worry about, like his mangled face. “Wonder what it is?” he remarked, turning the case on its side.

“Dunno, thought it might just be some drugs or something,” Nisha answered as she shrugged her way out of her weathered leather jacket. He tried to appear disinterested by the sudden reveal of her toned, supple arms because he wasn’t that thirsty for her. But that was just as out and out lie. There was a sprinkling of dark freckles on the curve her shoulder and he felt the overwhelming urge to kiss them.

But instead, Jack smoothed his hand out over the crisp Hyperion stencilling on the surface of the case to keep himself from reaching out for her. He didn’t want to come across as creepy, or have his
fingers broken. “Did those assholes not say?”

“No, only that it would help…” Her eyes glanced briefly at the wound – the anger, throbbing Vault symbol. “Well, you know,” Nisha finished simply.

He snorted derisively. “Lilith’s head would help me more to be honest,” Jack replied, her name like vomit in his mouth. “Could use some decoration for my fancy swanky new office.”

“As if her big head would fit in a box that size,” Nisha retorted causally with a grin, her teeth bright against her lips.

Jack laughed, then wished he hadn’t because it hurt like hell. “Jeez Nish, don’t make me laugh. Rest of my face might fall off,” he said as he unfastened the clips and tried to lift. It stayed tightly sealed. He grappled again, but the lid didn’t budge.

“Damn, what the hell did they seal this with?” he said with frustration. The Vault wound seemed to have drained him of all his energy and strength. Even the smallest tasks took so much effort to complete.

“Need a hand there cowboy?” Nisha asked with a little quirk of her eyebrow as she shifted a little further up his bed.

Jack tightened his grip on the lid. “No, I got this. It’s just stiff that’s all.”

The Lawbringer’s expression became impish and teasing. “There’s a first for you Jack.”

"Yeah you're fucking funny," he fired back as he gave the case lid one final tug. They really didn't seem to want him to get into it.

Finally, as he was about to admit defeat and hand it over to Nisha to prise open, the lid shifted. A wheeze hissed through the seals, as if it hadn’t been opened in some time, then the top lifted away. Jack set the lid aside and peered in.

And his own face peered back.

Mounted on a backing of yellow matte was a near enough perfect copy of his face – or rather a mask of his facial features. It was roughly his own skin tone, perhaps a shade lighter. Eyebrows were carved in above the empty eye sockets; a near enough perfect replica of his own thick brows.

Jack stared for a few moments, open mouthed. His amazement was total. That was definitely his face in the box. He didn’t know anyone else who had a face as handsome as his. “Holy shit.”

“What? What did they give you?” asked the Lawbringer.

Jack turned the case around. “Check this work of art out.”

Nisha’s eyebrows shot high up into her hat in surprise. “Fuck, is that your face Jack?”

“Looks like it.” He picked the mask up carefully and was surprised at how light, malleable it was. The flesh felt almost exactly like his own, but a tone or two lighter. Metal clasps were fitted to the chin, and the temples – the exact place where the fixtures were attached on his own face. When he turned it over, he could see fine, intricate circuitry beneath the flesh-like substance.

So, this was his doctor’s great plan. He was to wear a mask. If they couldn’t fix the problem, they would just hide it instead. “Well they didn’t do that bad of a job did they?” said Jack.
His Vault Hunter leaned back on her palms. “Yeah, they even got the wrinkles under your eyes right.”

“I so don’t have wrinkles under my eyes,” Jack protested, yet he ran his thumbs under the eye sockets of the mask regardless. She was just bullshitting, wasn’t she?

Nisha just gave him another smile, as if he were woefully uninformed. “C’mon then, let’s see what it looks like on.”

“God I hope I don’t look like a clown in this,” he remarked before lifting the mask up to fit against his face.

At first there was an initial blister of pain as the mask pressed against his ruined skin; slotting against his nose, merging to the curve of his cheeks, slotting to his jaw. But the mask seemed to just meld perfectly to his face even without the clips attached. He reached up, fiddled with the locking mechanisms and snapped them into place.

The effect was immediate, indescribable. Jack blinked and his impaired vision seemed to shift back into place. The world brightened and tightened around him – the horizon no longer stretched as it felt before. His environment looked as it did before he lost the sight in his right eye. God he had forgotten in such a short space of time how bright Helios looked, how vibrant Pandora was outside.

Jack swallowed his suddenly hard, dry throat and became aware of how the mask had merged to the shape of his lips as well. He ran his tongue out over his strangely heavy lips. The flesh tasted synthetic and foreign, not entirely his.

He glanced to Nisha to gauge her reaction to his new - old - face but realised that she was in fact sitting much closer than he had first thought. He’d completely misjudged the distance between them. God he even had his depth perception back. Hallelujah.

“So, how do I look?” Jack asked, hoping that she would at least have the decency to lie to him just this once. "Like my old handsome self?"

Nisha appraised his mask, then smiled slightly. “Better, even if you look like a party clown. Sorta fixed your eye as well.”

“Really?”

She nodded. “You got a mirror around?”

“Pfft do you even know me?” Jack retorted. Of course he had a mirror spare. He reached over and retrieved the compact mirror he had been using earlier when he mourned his good looks.

He clipped it open and his reflection blinked back, looking like a startled hedgehog with his wild hair. The mask concealed his Vault wound completely, encompassing most of his face except for his forehead, where his original skin tone was visible. His green eye had been repaired, at least through an illusion of a hologram. He scrunched each eye once and his eyebrows jerked in response. God his mask even simulated his eyebrows right. A+ to his Medical Technology division.

“Feel alright on?” Nisha asked.

Jack stretched his jaw and the mask moved with it, like a thin but heavy membrane attached to his skin. “Yeah…just different,” he replied, reaching up to prop the warming synthetic flesh. His nose felt alright; if still a little big, his cheeks still felt sharp, his chin shape was still good save for the fixture at the bottom. Everything felt and looked alright.
And he hated it. He hated that he even had to wear a mask in the first place. It made him look really fucking stupid. Who was even going to take him seriously when he looked like a man using a poor choice in foundation. “You sure it looks alright?” Jack asked, because Nisha didn’t lie to him.

She reached over and pushed a lock of his hair back into place. He caught a wisp of her scent – sweat and gunpowder and something earthy. Maybe that was just the mud on her boots. No it was too floral, too sweet. “There, now it’s perfect,” Nisha responded, patting his knee.

“Better be, cos if I go out and someone tries to hire me for their brats birthday party, I’ll punt you straight out the airlock,” Jack threatened.

Her cat-like expression didn’t falter. “Heh, I’ve always wanted to choke out in space anyway,” Nisha replied, unfazed by his threat.

God she was so cool. Jack couldn't stop himself from smiling again, no matter how much it hurt.

“So stud, when you gonna take me to not-get those drinks?” Nisha continued.

A strange sort of excitement rippled through him. “You seriously still want to?”

“I said I did, didn’t I?” she said.

“Even when my face is all…you know?” Jack asked, a warmth kindling in the centre of his chest. It was the first good feeling he’d had since the siren sucker punched a Vault artefact onto his face.

"You know what?"

The need to say something was strong, because she had to have some other reason for coming to see his fucked up face. “You’ve seen how it looks…It’s completely fucked now. Not looking so handsome these days,” Jack admitted, his voice hard like stone. The assertion felt like one in his stomach as well.

Fuck that Siren bitch. Fuck her and fuck her boyfriend and fuck that fucking planet.

Nisha looked at him unhesitatingly – the same expression she made when she was about to make a particularly difficult shot with her revolver. “You think that's all that was? All the shit we've done together? You think I liked hanging about with you, getting my ass shot up because you're a pretty face?”

Panic lurched in his stomach. *Come on Jack, stop talking. Don't fuck this up for yourself.*

But he couldn't stop sticking his own foot in his mouth. "I paid you and shit already, so it's not about the money. So why are you even here? You're amazing and cool and just ugh look at my frigging face now-"

Nisha’s warm palm suddenly cupped his artificial cheek and he felt the roughness on her hands even through his mask. They were tough hands; the hands of someone who could take of themselves.

He looked at her questioningly, entirely expecting her to give him slap across the mouth. But his Lawbringer’s mouth just curled into another easy smile. “Settle down cowboy. I'm here cos I wanna be here.”

Then the fingers resting against his cheekbones started on the latch of his new mask. The claps came away easily but suddenly, he did not want her to look at the wound again. He didn’t want to feel ugly, because hot, awesome women like Nisha weren’t interested in ugly guys. They liked their
heroes handsome and dashing – not scarred beyond repair.

"Nish, don’t–" he started.

Her thumb suddenly pressed against his lips – no the mask’s lips. “Jack, stop worrying,” Nisha cooed again as she ran her thumb over the length of his mouth. Her eyes – gold spiced with amber – hypnotised him into silence. He really couldn’t do much else while she was looking at him like that.

She fiddled the metal catch on his chin, clipped it open then peeled the new mask away from his face. Jack swallowed, at least he tried. He felt as if there was a sudden huge blockage deep in his throat.

Nisha placed the mask on the bed as his eyes readjusted to a world without depth perception. “I’m a lucky girl to have such a handsome boss,” the lawbringer remarked. Her hands found his face again but she seemed consciousness of the vault scar because she kept her fingers beneath his jaw, on his thudding pulse point. Her touch was soft, light and he thought – for just a moment – that maybe the Vault mark had driven him crazy because Nisha wasn’t a soft sort of person. Why was she being so gentle.

He wanted to ask her if she was even real, but then Nisha’s purple hued lips suddenly pressed against his mouth and everything else felt wholly unimportant.

Holy shit.

Nisha Kadam was kissing him. Nisha Kadam; the Lawbringer, the Bandit who killed other bandits, the sexiest women he’d ever laid his eyes on, his Vault hunter, was kissing him.

Holy shit.

But the kiss hurt. It hurt like hell. His wound throbbed and ached as Nisha kissed him hard, unapologetically – her previous gentleness gone as her hands left his jaw to grip at his shoulders. It was the right kind of hurt, the best kind of hurt. The sort of hurt that set his belly aflame. His good eye slid shut as he inhaled through his nose, breathing in the earthen scent that was Nisha. Her lips were plush and supple, conditioned by the lipstick she wore. Fuck, they were just as soft as he had imagined them to be.

How many times had he thought about this moment? How many times had he imagined sweeping Nisha into a dramatic kiss like a handsome hero might at the end of one of those old movies he used to watch? How many times had he imagined pushing her onto the Merrif’s desk while her pulse was still running hot and blood still slicked her fingers? How many times had he imagined fisting his hand into her hair – knocking her hat off in the process – to draw her into a kiss in front of everyone. He’d thought about it far too much, and that was really fucking sad.

The low burning in his chest caused him to pull away briefly, otherwise he might have passed out. His pulse was a wild, hammering beat in his ear that drowned out the white noise of Helios. But he could still clearly hear her rapid breath, feel it warming his face. Nisha’s eyes had gone as dark as her hair, yet gleamed like polished marbles. “Jesus Nish–you–I,” Jack babbled, unable to even able to string together a full sentence when she was looking at him like that.

“Shut up, lover boy,” Nisha breathed back before claiming his mouth again, taking care not to bump her nose against his Vault wound. Jack slid back into bliss, losing himself in her taste and scent.

Lover boy.

Yeah.
He was okay with being her lover boy. Totally okay with it.

Vaguely, Jack heard himself make a groan against the back of his throat and he hooked an arm around her waist, drawing her to him. He needed to feel everything; needed to feel every inch of that strong, lithe, perfect body so he could really tell himself that she wasn’t just a really pleasant side effect of some really fucking strong pain killers.

He pulled her further onto his lap, hauling the bedsheets untidily from beneath the mattress in his haste and not giving a shit about her muddy boots. Nisha’s legs adjusted to straddle him against the mattress; knees pinning on either side. Her tongue found the seam of his mouth; going flickity flick along his lips as her fingers plunged into the back of his hair. How wonderful her hands fisted against his skull; knuckles rubbing against his scalp. He didn’t even care that she was messing up his carefully styled locks. Pleasure flashed hot in his lower stomach as she tugged, not hard, but enough to surprise him into parting his lips. Jack’s breath hitched hot into her mouth as she bit his tongue hard, raking her tongue over the stinging flesh then immediately suckled away the taste of copper. He groaned, a muffled sound, tugging her impossibly closer. He had to get his hands on the rest of her or he would lose it completely.

Between tiny sips of air, his hand slid down to settle on her hip while the other cupped the gorgeous little dip in her spine. There was a pucker of a scar there, and Jack had to wonder as he traced over the gnarled skin what the story was behind it. Nisha made a sound of approval against his lips; a low moan he swallowed down as he shucked his fingers under tattered hem of her cowgirl shirt. The skin was soft, softer than it had any right to be because Nisha was as hard as cut diamonds.

He pushed his hand up further, bunching her shirt up below her ribcage. It was impossible not to feel a rush of satisfaction as Nisha arched to his touch. Her stomach pressed tight and taunt against his jumper. Her fingers clenched harder in his hair, pulling the strands at the back of his neck. He swept his hand up along her shoulder blades, dragging his nails along the slopes of her back. Nisha’s legs squeezed against him and she bucked slightly in his lap. God, he never wanted her to stop, and he never wanted to stop fucking touching her.

But Nisha eventually broke from his mouth, loosening her fingers from his hair as she panted. Jack felt starry eyed, stupid and very much in love after only one kiss from her. Shit. He was in trouble. He was in so much trouble. “You’d better hurry up and heal up Jack,” she stated, pushing a lock of her hair behind ear. Even with pain spasming behind his eyes, Jack couldn’t help but notice that even her ears were cute – small, rounded and the perfect shape for sinking his teeth into. “Because I really, really wanna sit on your face.”

If that wasn’t an incentive to get better, Jack would eat his new mask.
Jack can’t seem to get the blood off his hands.

He tries, by god how he tries. He’s fervently scrubbed his hands until they are red and raw, until it hurts just to hold his pen. He’s near enough taken two layers of skin off with his hard scouring. His hands look like a burn victim’s now; cracked and scaly and sore.

Yet he still feels it on his hands; slick, sticky between his digits. If he focuses closely, he can still see the red little rings under his nails, see the blood staining up his fingertips. Blood hasn’t bothered him for years. He’ll spilled enough throats to get to the top, and even more to stay there.

But Nisha’s blood is different. He’s never clean of it.

Jack drinks alone at his desk, always alone now. As the liquor burns down his gullet, he remembers how fucking sad it is to drink alone. He swore he’d never become that guy, some asshole who needs a shot every morning to cope with the world outside his walls. But here he is, drinking to help him forget how his girlfriend looked riddled with holes, how her coat was congealed black and stuck to the ground in the heat of Pandora.

He swallows down another mouthful of cheap, strong alcohol because that gets him hammered faster. But it tastes like glassy, and it goes down his throat like broken shards. His stomach lurches momentarily. He’s had too much, judging from how his belly swirls, but he keeps drinking regardless.

Nisha hovers, a hallucination or a hologram he doesn’t care which. All he knows is that she’s there, just as she always is when he drinks enough of the cheap shit.

“Slow down Jack,” she cautions with a ghost of a smile (and that’s pretty fucking ironic really). He’s a bit of a lightweight when it comes to his booze, and she knew that. He can’t drink like she can. *Come from a long line of alcoholics* she’d once said, knocking back a glass he couldn’t finish. God he can see it now; the heels of her boots on his desk, the smell of ozone on her skin, the crinkles of her eyes as she smiles at him when he makes a bad joke.

He looks at this shimmering phantom, devoid of touch, and suddenly hates her.

“Go fuck yourself,” Jack snarls, his mouth feeling like it’s crammed with marbles. It’s easy to blame
his anger on the old demon drink. But it isn’t the alcohol that makes him hurt, makes him as raw as his hands. The Vault Hunters did that. “You’re just...fucking bullshit,” he adds, because it is, she is.

This wasn’t how it was supposed to go down. They were supposed to find the warrior, fix the planet, kill the bad guys just like they’d planned. Maybe they’d even get married, and he’d put a baby in her. She was on board for that, at least up to the killing bad guys part. He’d have worked on the marriage bit.

But it could have been great. It could have been really fucking great. There’s a tightness in his throat that he tries to loosen with another mouthful of alcohol.

Nisha looks sad. She should be sad, he considers. She had the balls to go off and die on him. “Jack,” she says, and his name is like a fucking knife to the gut.

“It wasn’t supposed to be like this babe,” he explains. She isn’t supposed to die. Nisha was untouchable; a force of nature as powerful and destructive as a hurricane. Danger has snatched at the hem of her coat countless times, in the form of bandits and Vault guardians but Nisha was too clever, too quick to be caught. Everyone else was always two steps behind her. He used to believe that even Death couldn’t catch up.

Until the one time that it did.

“It wasn’t supposed to be like this,” he repeats again. If he says it enough, maybe he'll stop clawing feeling that it's his fault.

“I know.”

“I’m sorry.” Jack can’t remember the last one time he’s ever apologised for anything. The CEO of Hyperion doesn’t apologise. He pays people to do that for him. “I’m so fucking sorry.”

His phantom Nisha hazes out of focus, glimmering an iridescent azure. Her stance shifts, but he doesn’t hear the comforting creak of her leathers. “I know baby, I know.”

Jack takes another large mouthful, gulping the cheap spirits down like it’s water. He doesn’t stop until the bottle is empty. “I’ll kill them for you babe. Fuck, I’ll kill every single one of them,” he swears as he drags his mouth away from the rim. He can’t even see straight at this point. Black spots seep into the edge of his vision, like ink splatters on paper.

But her ghost is still bright and blue and vibrant. “Atta boy,” she purrs fondly, like he’s just made a good kill in front of her. Like he’s just burned down a bandit camp.

Like he's just pressed a kiss against her thigh.

And that breaks him.

Tears come then, thick and fast. He’s done so well, not crying over her because she’d have hated that. She would have given him so much shit for sobbing over her like a child.

There’s a shatter of glass breaking then Jack slumps against his desk, hands clamped over his face to hide his tears. To stop them. To smother them. Anything to keep her from seeing, because he still wants the approval of Nisha’s ghost.

Jack feels her, hovering behind his desk as silent as a shadow. Jesus, how he wishes she would just run her hands through his hair once more.
And for a moment, he’s almost certain she does. “I would have said ‘yes’ you know.”

He shudders harder.
Things you said when I wished you hadn’t

Chapter Summary

Jack says the "L" word. Nisha wants to strangle him for it.

Alternative summary: Author gets feely so Nisha and Jack act like prats for a bit.

Chapter Notes

Happy Holidays my gorgeous people, or whatever holiday you celebrate. I'm still alive, trying to finish my last year of uni. Haven't forgotten about this fic. I've just been so busy with my research project. Anyway I was determined to get something out before Christmas. Stay safe and take care of yourselves!

Of course he’d let it slip. Of course he would. Nisha thought she’d be ready for it.

She isn’t.

He’s pulling her down to kiss her when it slips out like something close to a plea – a raw, desperate benediction against her lips. “I love you Nish, fuck I love you so much,” he breathes hot against her mouth. And just for a moment, it sounds so damn good.

Then she feels change into something more sinister; slicing through her like a sharpened blade, grazes against her thumping heart.

I love you.

I love you.

Nisha instinctively pulls back. Suddenly that orgasm she was chasing wasn’t important. The rising swell in her stomach flatlines and an inexplicable fear curls beneath her breastbone. She hasn’t felt fear like this in a long time. Fuck, has she ever felt like this?

“What did you say?” She wants him to start laughing mockingly at her for believing him. Pfft as if, she wants him to say. Then she’ll give him a slap, wrap her hands around his throat and give him a squeeze for good measure as she fucks him to within an inch of his life. Can’t be saying that sort of shit to her. Not yet. Not now.

But he doesn’t.

Instead he fumbles, and that is so much worse. “I, uh, What did I say?” Jack asks, trying to bullshit his way to victory. The lights are dimmed down in his quarters but she can still see the nervous gleam of his eyes; reflected by Pandora’s hue in the spanning window. The light cuts into the hard angles of his face; glows against his Vault scar, curves along the steep slope of his jaw. Even now with panic beating in her throat, it twists her up how handsome he is.
Her hands rest on the dusting of curled dark hair, pressing into the gorgeous dimension of his chest. Nisha hopes he’ll think that the shivering of her fingers is because of an orgasm denial. “You know what you said Jack. You said you loved me.”

Really, she should have expected it would happen like this.

Beneath the snark and the sarcasm, Jack is the most hopelessly romantic guy she’s ever come across. She isn’t sure what to make of it. He leaves little candy hearts by her bedside table when she wakes up alone in his quarters. He sends down interesting new ammo for her to test, asks her opinion on what he should make next. He tucks notes into her coat pocket for her to find later, detailing the explicit things he wants to do with her when she returns from Pandora. He calls her on a good day, rants down the line on a bad one. He Invites her up to dinner, fucks her afterwards. He’s a good boyfriend, one of the better ones she’s had.

And she has to admit, she likes his little gestures. They make her feel real fucking good - that she, Nisha Kadam, a nobody from some backwater little planet could catch and hold the attention of the richest man in the galaxy. It made her feel powerful, and wanted. She hadn’t felt like than in a long time.

But that is all it was – gestures from an attentive boyfriend. She’s tried not to think too closely about what any of it really means. Nisha still can’t explain away that unnamed spin of her heart, the thrill of her stomach when she hears him sigh out her name. She can’t explain that low burn she feels on her skin when he’s near. Fuck, she can’t even explain why she stayed awake all night with him after the Vault incident, watching over him as shivered and twisted and moaned with pain.

In the dark, she sees him blink. “I did?”


Jack smiles that shit-eating grin, visible even now. She’s torn between slapping him or kissing him. “Didn’t kill mine,” he deflects and shifts beneath her, to prove a point. Nisha’s toes curl in response as he grinds against her. But she’s not going to be distracted by his dick. She’s better than that.

Instead, Nisha runs a shaking hand through her sweaty hair. She needs to something with her hands or she might actually try and strangle him out of fear. “You know, if you wanted your dick sucked you didn’t have to drop that love bullshit on me. All you had to do was ask.”

“Who says it’s bullshit?” There’s a notch of defensiveness in his voice.

“I do.”

“Well, it isn't.”

Nisha scoffs. She doesn’t want to believe he’d be that stupid, but she’s seen him in a firefight. She knows he can be that stupid. “That’s just your fucking dick talkin’” she replies derisively.

"No it isn't."

"Yeah it is. I'm the one sitting on it right now."

Jack makes an affronted noise beneath her, and his fingernails bite into her thighs. “Jesus, just shoot me in the heart then and call it a day," he says and he doesn't sound like he's joking.

Nisha’s heart constricts at the hurt in his voice. “Fuck, you aren't serious are you?” Say no she thinks. Use that walnut brain of yours for once and say no.
But he doesn’t. There’s a pause, a shudder of a heartbeat before he answers. She can’t see his face and suddenly, she’s glad of the dark. “Yeah. I’m totally fucked aren’t I?”

He’s not wrong. The lawbringer laughs, a hard sound even to her own ears. “Shit, you’re pathetic.” And if he is, then what did that make her?

She feels his eyes on her, as intense as a pair of crosshairs. “Don’t you love me back? Even just a little?”

It’s an honest, frank question that makes her shake. I don’t know what how I feel you fucking asshole Nisha wants to yell. But he doesn’t even know what he’s asking of her, why she just can’t. The words are trapped at the back of her throat. “’course I do. Just like I love my hat or my gun,” she finally manages, but the lie is open and bare underneath.

Jack isn’t convinced. His hand slides back up onto her hips, as if trying to keep her anchored against him. “Then humour me a sec. Tell me you love me, lie to me if you have to.”

“What? Why?” Nisha asked, fingers curling against his chest. She has to wonder why he needs this from her. He’s got a big ass company now. He can just pay people to tell him they love him.

He looks at her, his expression unreadable in the dark. “I just wanna pretend it’s real for a moment.”

The comment stings more than it should for some reason. She thinks about saying it. She can feel it on the tip of her tongue, the awareness of it like an ulcer. It even hurts like one. “Jack...”

“I’ll give you a bad ass, expensive gun if you do,” Jack adds, as if money could solve the problem. Usually it did.

“You’ll give me a bad ass, expensive gun if I don’t because you’re fucking pussy whipped” Nisha retorts as she struggles to understand how this happened. How did they go from fucking to sentimental crap? It’s his fault – Jack and his stupid romantic rubbish. He’s starting to rub off on her. Pathetic. Fucking Bullshit. "Can we just get back to fucking now?"

His breath is ragged when he replies. “Lie to me babe, just this once.”

Don’t-” Nisha starts. She doesn’t know what she’s even asking him not to do. Don’t love me? Don’t ask me to love you? Don’t ask me to lie about it?

And apparently, neither does he. She can hear Jack’s loud scowl; his mouth curving, his thick eyebrow twitching. “Don’t what?”

“Just don’t ask me that,” Nisha replies, as if that’s explanation enough. She wishes it was.


“Because I said so, that’s why,” Nisha replies, her voice on the edge of breaking. She can’t say it. Saying it would make it real, tangible. Would make him more than just a regular boyfriend, more than a good lay. She can barely cope with it in her own head. She doesn’t know how to be in love. "I just can’t Jack."

There’s another small silence as Jack considers her response. “Nish, please.” He says her name like a prayer, like before, but it’s softer somehow as he reaches for her shoulders to draw her back down. "Lie to me babe. Tell me I’m the only guy for you."

The sad reality is that it’s true. "Jack, I-" An old instinct hums through her blood. Run, it commands,
get out of there while you still can. That old instinct has kept her right so far. She could reach down now and break his neck, strangle him with his watch chain. Her troubles would be over if she did that.

"Just this once Nish." Jack sounds starved for affection, yet she knows he has enough cash to buy it in bulk. "I wanna believe you love me back. Just this once."

She feels like something is pressing down on her chest. "Jack, I just... I don't even know how to love someone else." Funny how such a small thing is so hard to admit.

He's silent for a moment, then his hands are skimming up her arms. "Try, for me then," His voice is thick in his throat. "Please babe."

_Do it_, the instinct demands as Jack’s warm palms smooth over her shoulder. Nisha shudders against him unwillingly. Suddenly she’s so afraid to move, to shatter this moment they have – whatever the fuck it even is. _Kill him now before you get in too deep._

But she can't.

Her hands slid to his neck and instead of squeezing, she’s cupping. Instead of strangling him with his watch, she’s leaning down to kiss him. She repeats it, rolls it around inside her head, tastes it on her tongue; stronger and sharper than good bourbon. If she repeats it enough, maybe he'll taste it too. _I love you_ she thinks as her mouth presses to his with a tenderness she didn’t realise she’s capable of. _I love you_ she thinks as her fingers stroke through his hair. _I love you_ she thinks as his hands skim down the dips of her back. _I love you_ she thinks as he moves with her.

“I love you Nish,” he says into the crook of her neck. This time, it doesn’t hurt.

_I love you too_ she thinks back.
A thousand Lives

Chapter Summary

Jack keeps finding and losing Nisha (reincarnation freeform because I can)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

I recognised you instantly. All of our lives flashed through my mind in a split second. I felt a pull so strongly towards you that I almost couldn’t stop it – J. Sterling.

They meet in the Spring.

She is not Roman, not like him. He knows that much. Eyes such as hers – like the polished, flashing gold coins - are not common even within the mighty empire of Rome. Her skin is the colour of rich sienna and smells like the incense that is burned in the temples. She’s lovely, unspeakably lovely. She’s lovelier still when she pressed a blade into the lower back of a thief who had tried to take his purse. His eyes always catch their attention.

“Here,” he remembers her say as she tosses him the retrieved money. “Be more careful.” She with the blood against the dark purple of her sari calmly, as if she’d done it countless times before.

He asks to repay her in some way, because good Roman citizens pay their debts. She wants him to hire her as a guard. His estate is small, not big enough to justify a guard. But he hires her regardless.

They make quite a pair on the streets of Pompeii; a widowed Roman litterator with his scrolls and clever words and a mercenary from Tamiḻakam with her urumi and longbow. She teases him relentlessly, wondering how someone so slight could have lasted so long without getting robbed blind. He drinks her attention like a thirsty slave. He’s been living in the shadows since the death of his wife and child, taken by the Gods too son. He still can’t face the master bedroom in his villa. Most nights he sleeps in his office because it felt safe from their ghosts.

But this Tamiḻa woman…She runs hot and bright, shimmers with light as if she were made from a piece of Helios himself. She burns herself into his home, into his life. There’s warmth in the Villa again, and he feels like a young man again when they tumble over each other; wrestling as if they were gladiators in an arena.

It should have been a sign from the Gods that his life would end in fire and heat. But the summer he falls in love with a woman named after the night.

~

She grows restless and wants to leave. Her feet itch when she stays in one place for too long. He
asks her to take him with her. He has no desire to stay in Pompeii without her. Tasitus doesn’t much care for him and his family have departed for the afterlife ahead of him. He’s benefitting no one by staying. They could go to another city. He has money and could easily get work as a litterator.

Holding a thin linen sheet to her chest, she laughs at him as if he’s woefully misinformed. Oh how he remembers that warm laugh. ‘You would not survive on the road, pulcher.’ There’s bitter disappointment on his tongue, like a sour grape, until she says ‘We’ll leave after the festival’. Her voice spills over him like the oil made from olives in the fields and he feels love searing in his throat.

~

In the autumn, his throat burns again. This time, it burns from the ash and smoke that bursts from Mount Vesuvius. He looks for her as the earth rumbles and howls like a dying bull, as the sky falls down in a sheet of black fire. He has to see her once more, just once more before the world ends.

It is a small mercy when he finds her. His sandals melt against the scorching ground as he pulls her to him on the crumbling streets and into shelter of villa. He can feel the heat as the mountain bleeds into Pompeii. They don’t have much time left. “Nisha,” he chokes. He's sorry, so sorry. They should have left sooner. It was his fault, him and his foolish duties to his masters.

Fingers tangle into his smoked robes to stop herself from shaking. “Ioannes.” There’s blood on her lips when she breathes out. “Look at me.”

Her face is white with fear and ash. Against the cinders, her eyes have never been so bright, so golden and it nearly tears him asunder. “I have no regrets,” she says even as the tears cut dark paths down her cheeks.

Neither does he.

It’s hard to breathe yet he’s the last gasps of his life to press his mouth against hers. He will not die with ash and death on his lips. He’ll die with sunlight instead.

Havana is hot, too hot for an Englishman and certainly too dangerous for one at times, depending on who is sitting on the throne of Westminster Abbey. But it has what he needs; pirates experienced in taking down trader ships with teeth. His queries have lead him to two pirates who love the thrill of impossible heists. He hopes he can convince either of them to help him take down Tassiter.

It goes as well as he expects - not that he expected either of them to be women.

The redhead snubs him off, tells him to crawl back to his master like the dog he is. He has to remind himself why he’s approached them in the first place; Captain Tassiter is an insufferable bully, the Helios Shipping Company is failing and Midshipman Rhys didn’t deserve that flogging. No one deserved that. It incenses him enough that he’ll seek the help of a pirate to end the Captain of the Phaeton.

But the dark-haired pirate tips her hat upwards to get a better look at him. Her eyes glint under the oil lantern. They aren’t mismatched like his. They are bright and gold like the treasure of pirate legends.

An awareness presses down on him, the weight of an ocean. He’s seen them before. He knows he has, but he can’t remember where. It’s just a strange feeling in his head, like a buzzing. Maybe he shouldn’t have taken that mouthful of dirty, watered down scotch earlier.

She motions for him to sit down and ignores the look from her red haired companion – who stalks off for another refill. Captain Kadam’s mouth curls as he sinks onto the seat in front of her. He
swears for a moment that he can see light pouring out of the corner of her mouth. “Say I was interested. What’s in it for me,” she asks in an accent he can’t place.

“My gratitude?” He chances, because until he has control of the ship and by extension, the company, that’s all he has.

Captain Kadam grins again and he realises he could live for that smile alone. “Hmm what else?” she presses. “Big risk for me and mine you know. I’m not certain it’s worth so much trouble for a pretty face.”

He offers her 10% of Tassiter’s company, on top of access to the wealth in his cabin. She asks for 20, plus the coat off of his back because she likes how it looks. And he agrees, partly because he wants to see the hem of his coat skirting at her knees.

~

Somehow, they pull off the impossible. A trap is weaved and Tassiter falls right in. Jack spikes the ale of the crew so they are sluggish when the Captain Kadam – Nisha she says he can call her – boards under the guise of a marauder. She kills Tassiter (There’s something so satisfying about seeing his blood on her fingers) and takes just enough as to not arouse suspicion. He takes over the Helios Trading Company and gets away with it like the jammy bugger that he is.

And as for Nisha. He meets her every two months in Havana, where it all started. And for one week every two months, he’s richer than seven kings; His kingdom an Inn, his banquets ale and meat on bread, his queen a warrior pirate.

Her hands plant against the weathered headboard, nails scratching, breaking as she moves with him. His body remembers her slick frame like it shouldn’t. He seems to know all the places to make her gasp and moan. He falls in love with this fierce, golden eyed woman as easily as he breathes.

~

She stops showing up.

Two months past. Then four, then six. He rages, he worries. He expends money trying to find out where she’s gone. He can’t even find Captain Scarlett, who seems to have vanished like sea foam.

John considers that maybe he’s imagined them both, that perhaps they were just a couple of sirens that have returned to the sea. That would be easier to believe. It would make his heart stop hurting and his palms from prickling.

Then he sees the notice pinned up to a bulletin board, that the British Navy had caught and executed multiple pirates in a raid of Tortuga.

Her name is on the list.

Sheriff Kadam was the absolute devil.

It had all started with the robbery of Opportunity Springs bank. He’d been doing what he did best – robbing the state of all its wealth. He hadn’t even thought of the sheriff. He’d shot two dead in Opportunity Springs already. What was another notch on the belt of Handsome Jack; bank robbing, train heisting extraordinaire?

But then Sheriff Kadam shows up and complicates everything.
He remembers having to throw himself out of the window to avoid her getting her iron on him. She’d been fast to follow him through the glass and Wilhelm had to shoot four horses to stop her from making after them.

She dogs him from there-on out, from bank to gambling house like a scorned wife. He has to admit, it’s something of a thrill. Sheriff Kadam is different from the usual lawmen and deputies he’s used to outrunning, and it wasn’t on the account of her sex. She doesn’t fall for the same tricks he uses to outwit the law; dodges them like she’s done them herself. She’s relentless in her pursuit of him. It would be almost flattering if she didn’t have a colt on her hip and a star on her chest.

“Are you going to do something about her?” he remembers Rhys asking one evening after they’ve barely avoided her again.

‘Yeah boss. She’s trouble,’ Wilhelm added from beneath a hat with a hole through it.

Jack had grinned that cocky smirk he was famous for and laughed it off. Oh, he’d do something about Sheriff Kadam alright, and he half hopes that a bed is involved. Thinking of her golden eyes she made him want to be on the right side of the law.

~

As it turns out she’s as bright her sheriff’s star. She outmanoeuvres him, and somehow manages to catch him on his own without his posse.

The sky is bleeding pink when he feels her pistol press between his shoulder blades and a low threat on her smoky voice. “Hands where I can see em Handsome,” she says, and he curses his bad luck. What was that old saying? Shephard’s sky in the morning, Shephards warning? He should have known better.

Jack raises his hands in surrender and tries not to shiver when he feels her breath ghost his neck. Sheriff Kadam strips him of his weapons – right down to the knife in his boot. He expects her to throw him onto her horse and cart him off to the jailhouse.

But she doesn’t. Instead her hand spreads across his chest, pressing against the plaid printed shirt in a manner that is far, far too familiar. As if his body knows her touch. Jack's brow wrinkles. That can’t be right. He’d remember meeting a woman like her.

“Aren’t you gonna drag me off to the jailhouse sheriff Kadam?” he states, though he’d have to be mad not to want her to stop now. “Put me in shackles?”

A hand finds his belt, jangling the steel buckle open. “The hangman gets you tomorrow, but tonight you’re mine,” she says, voice like the dark bourbon he swigs by the fire. “I wanna see if the rest of you is just as pretty ‘Handsome Jack’.” There’s something so familiar about her voice, and that frustrates him more than being caught. He wants to know why he seems to know her.

He wants to ask, then her fingers grip his chin and he forgets the gnawing feeling in the back of his mind when she kisses him blind.

~

In the end, the hangman doesn’t get him because somehow, she likes being with him – likes him enough to leave her badge in Opportunity Springs. She joins his posse, makes friends with Wilhelm, teases Rhys until he blushes like a virgin.
Those were good days, good nights by the fire where her fingers teased through his hair and his hand palms over her ribcage. Her skin is a familiar map, and he knows without counting the number of freckles she has on her shoulders. He just knows somehow, and he wonders if he’ll have a chance to figure out why.

He never gets the chance.

~

The marshal shoots him and the runaway sheriff before dawn on Sunday. Can’t have one of their own going rogue for a robber. Nisha gets it the worst, and he’s forced to watch as the marshal ruins her then guts a bullet in her head.

Through the pain and the rage is indescribable shame, a horrible sensation that hurts more than the bullet in his gut. As he presses his thumb against her bloodied lips, Jack feels he’s somehow failed her again.

She calls him ‘cowboy’.

Ironic really, since she’s the who actually owns a cowboy hat. He supposes that she’s right in a way. Tassiter calls him an ‘undisciplined cowboy’ during assemblies. Jack calls him an asshole and he gets away with it because they are teetering on the edge of war. And he’s a good pilot - even if he drag the tail of his P-40B Warhawk down the runway once during the landing.

When they meet, it’s like something out of an old romance novel. She’s a munitions expert for the U.S. Army Air Corps; a working gal in an uncertain time. He’s a pilot stationed in Pearl Harbor. A disparaging comment made towards her by a non-commissioned officer. He remembers with relish the way she turned around and punched the man in the jaw, hard and fast. He’s never seen a woman punch like that before, and laughs himself silly from his cockpit.

No one calls her sweetheart or asks her where's her sari again.

Instead, they call her the “Lawbringer”. As if she were a pilot as well. She takes no prisoners, this Law bringer. He’s pretty sure even the commissioned officers are afraid of her.

But Nisha doesn’t punch him, even when he asks her out for a drink. She likes him, refers to him as cowboy, calls him handsome sometimes. He can work with that. Heck, he’d have been happy if she’d even punched him. He’ll take what he can get.

Sometimes when she isn’t looking, he’ll watch her repair guns with her cowboy hat wedged on her head and engine oil smeared across her nose. She’s beautiful, so damn beautiful either in a little swing dress or her engineer’s jumpsuit and hat.

And she's difficult, by god how she tests him. She pushes against his decisions, pulls him like a woman shouldn't. She is every until that he's not supposed to want in a woman.

Yet in December he asks her to marry him. She’s not a homemaker but he doesn’t care. He loves her, loves in a way he didn’t love his deceased wife. He feels like he’s loved her before, somehow. It’s an old feeling, loving her.

She’s gloriously naked from the waist up when he asks; a thin sheet bunched at her hips. Hawaiian sun spills in through the open window, warming her eyes, her skin.

His chest is tight just looking at her. He’d look at her all day if he could. “We can’t Jack” she says
plainly, and doesn’t need to explain. The anti-miscegenation law is in effect in his home state.

But it isn’t in Hawaii. The little island paradise.

“We’ll stay here then babe,” he replies, because he’s desperate and in love. “My tan needs work.” He likes Honolulu well enough, and even in December it’s tropical. They could stay, get married in the spring, have 2.5 kids, start a business, maybe an airline company. He doesn’t want to fly planes for the military forever.

Helios Air. Yeah, that had a good ring to it. What a life it could be, the true American Dream.

But it’s not a life they’ll get to have.

~

Later, he chokes on his stupid dream as he’s holstering himself into his Warhawk. As Pearl Harbor burns, he feels the horrible sense that this has happened before – that he has seen this kind of fire and death. There’s the horrible, sick smell of pork in the air that catches in the rotary blades of aircraft. He can see waterfront is blazing with ignited oil, the carriers already sinking into the orange sea. The sky overhead is peppered with Japanese fighters. His stomach lurches and rolls, as if he’s just pulled a hard loop. He’ll be lucky to even get off the ground.

And she knows it.

Nisha’s fingers are trembling as she checks over the machine guns. There’s ash smudged across her face, and her hands are bleeding. It’s so horrifyingly familiar. “Nisha,” he calls over the engines, panic hammering in his chest. Never has it hurt more to say her name. He realises that it may be the last time he ever says it.

She slams the chambers shut with enough force to make the frame of his bird rattle. “Go Jack!” she yells, her voice breaking as she backs away from his aircraft. Fear curls in his chest, numbing his fingers, making his heart hurt. His soul knows that somehow, he’s never going to see her again.

Nisha’s been a wanderer for as long as she can remember, always looking, searching for something she can’t put a name to. Safety maybe? No, it’s not that. She can out gun any man, any woman. There’s no one who can get a bead on her now.

It’s a yearning more than anything. It is particularly noticeable at night, when she’s gazing at the ceiling, restless and empty. She used to chalk it down to her mom – that the wanderlust is the result of a broken childhood. When she left home, she thought it would go away. But the feeling never did. It got worse. She does everything she can to plug the hole; drinks, kills, destroys, fucks. It doesn’t stop the creeping ache that she’s missing something important in her life.

That’s why she takes the job from the Hyperion employee. She wants a change of scenery to forget how desperately unhappy she is. Space would do the trick. He promises her money, and her wallet is feeling light these days. She accepts.

But of course it all goes to shit. She has the worst luck sometimes. Her shuttle is attacked on the way to Helios and the Legion is already in the station by the time they arrive. Their employer is penned in somewhere and needs help. Nisha is glad for the distraction. The longing got worse on the ride up. It’s almost a physical pain in her stomach now, a dull ache.

They make quick work of the Legion soldiers. As Nisha pops the head off the last infantryman, Athena lays down her weapon to administer first aid to their employer. Her side is bleeding from a
laser graze, seeping through the dark brown of his jacket. Athena rolls him to get a better look.

Nisha recognises him immediately and suddenly she can't breathe.

Familiarity.

That's the only way she knows how to describe it. A tingle pulses through her spine, soothing her aching stomach as Athena prepares a shot of something red and glowing for Jack. There's sense of awareness, a sense of 'Hey, I think I know you'. She shouldn't know his man. She has no reason to know this man.

But she does and it's like an instinct. She's feels like she's traced along that strong jawline, framed his cheeks with her palms. She knows how his skin feels beneath her fingertips, how his lips feel when he smiles. I know you Nisha thinks as Athena plunges the syringe into him. Even that dark groan is familiar. Your name is Jack. Your favourite colour is yellow. You hate shrimp because you got food poisoning. You like bourbon in your coffee and don't take sugar in your tea. You can't cook worth shit. You're afraid of bees. You giggle a lot when you're drunk. You have a ticklish spot on your right side, beneath your ribcage. You kick in your sleep. You once, twice told me you loved me. You wanted to marry me.

“I know you,” she finds herself saying, and even to her own ears it sounds implausible. The others must think she’s fucking crazy.

But Jack doesn’t. He props himself up onto his elbow, looking at her with something close to disbelief. His eyes are alert, despite the pain killers and he looks at her like she's the answer to all his problems. Nisha realises that she’s seen that look before. It's burned into her very skin, into her bones.

“Yeah, and I think I know you as well,” he replies. “I hope I do at least.”

The ache ebbs away.

Chapter End Notes

Hi guys,

As you know, I'm a psychology undergraduate at Glasgow Caledonian University. This year, I'm conducting a research project to fulfil the requirements of my Honours degree. I'm inviting you to participate in a study investigating relationships with video game characters. You don't have to take part, but if you do, you will be participating in a short online questionnaire. The study will take approximately 10 minutes. You'll find the link below. Please share with your friends and family

If you need any additional information, please get in touch!

http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/3177059/Social-Attachments-to-Video-Game-Characters
Fractions

Chapter Summary

Glimpses of Jack and Nisha’s relationship through sporadic text messages

[Warning: implied/referenced abortions and some mild sexting]

Chapter Notes

Just gonna leave this here I'm really sorry it's not a proper chapter but it's been sitting in my drafts for a while and I wanted to just sort of use it as a dialogue practice piece.

Also I am terrible at sexting, as my ex boyfriends will concur, so I apologise for the awkwardness of it.

[CONNECTION ESTABLISHED: HYPERIONJACK:::BRINGINGTHELAW69]

[17:32] HyperionJack : You busy right now??
[17:34] HyperionJack: Well as your ‘employer’, I think you need a night off, we all do. Moxxi’s Claptrap can mix some awesome cocktails if you’re interested.
[17:36] Bringinthelaw69: u askin me out forr a drink
[17:37] HyperionJack: I was hoping for a bit of slap and tickle as well
[17:37] HyperionJack: But a drink is a good start.
[17:38] Bringinthelaw69: uhhuh
[17:38] HyperionJack: Seriously though, I’m assembling the avengers for some R&R.
[17:40] Bringinthelaw69: yeh but ur buyin
[17:41] HyperionJack: God bleeding me dry already. Are you a mercenary or my wife?
[17:42] Bringinthelaw69: u wish I was ur wife
[17:42] HyperionJack: you wish you were my wife :winky face:
Bringinthelaw69: id sooner eat my own face

HyperionJack: Harsh. Just for that you can buy your own drinks

HyperionJack: I didn’t realise you were so good at singing.

Bringinthelaw69: Girl gotta have hobbies ya know.

HyperionJack: You could make a lot of money with a voice like that.

Bringinthelaw69: Used 2 sing in the streets as a kid for pocket money.

Bringinthelaw69: not like I got any from mom. Got my dog to do tricks, hold my hat and shit.

HyperionJack: Is this the same dog whose skull you bashed in?

Bringinthelaw69: yeah when things got tight I used 2 regret killin him.

Bringinthelaw69: then I look at that scar on my neck and think nah.

HyperionJack: If it makes you feel any better I think it looks kinda sexy, like a vampire bite.

Bringinthelaw69: you think so?

HyperionJack: Yeah

HyperionJack: Wouldn’t mind having a bite myself.

HyperionJack: *winky face*

Bringinthelaw69: Jesus that’s fuckin lame.

Bringinthelaw69: ur so lame.

HyperionJack: God way to kick a man where it hurts.

Bringinthelaw69: buuuut.

Bringinthelaw69: is kinda cute.

HyperionJack: Heh, I’ll take cut.

HyperionJack: *cute*

HyperionJack: Don’t get called that very often.

Bringinthelaw69: don’t push your luck cowboy.
[03:02] Bringingthelaw69: okay the gang is almost comatose

[03:02] Bringingthelaw69: come down

[03:02] Bringingthelaw69: momma needs some tlc after the shit u put me through today

[03:03] HyperionJack: Yes ma’am

[03:03] HyperionJack: What’s the password to your room? ‘I<3Jack?’ If it isn’t, it should be

[03:03] Bringingthelaw69: no its I<3jacks ass

[03:04] HyperionJack: Okay first of all, rude

[03:04] HyperionJack: I shouldn’t come down just for that

[03:05] [IMAGE RECEIVED: BRINGINGTHELAW69]

[03:05] Bringingthelaw69: u really wanna miss this show?

[03:05] HyperionJack: Hells Bells

[03:06] Bringingthelaw69: hurry up


[23:12] HyperionJack: Yeah I’m fine

[23:12] HyperionJack: No I’m not actually


[23:13] HyperionJack: I can’t believe they pulled that shit on me

[23:14] Bringingthelaw69: i know

[23:14] Bringingthelaw69: im pissed off too


[23:15] HyperionJack: I’m not surprised about Roland and Lilith you know. But Moxxi stabbing me in the back was a shock.

[23:15] HyperionJack: Thought she was better than that... Thought we were better than that
Bringingthelaw69: don't trust a woman with tits that big
Bringingthelaw69: gotta be hiding secrets in them
Bringingthelaw69: sorry it went so badly Jack 4 u jack
HyperionJack: Me too
HyperionJack: Hey Nisha
HyperionJack: yeah?
HyperionJack: ...Do you think Moxxi was right about me?
HyperionJack: When she said there was something not right about me?
Bringingthelaw69: wtf no
Bringingthelaw69: theres nothing wrong with you Jack
Bringingthelaw69: other than havin shit taste in women
Bringingthelaw69: that aint a crime
HyperionJack: Sorry about, you know, almost getting you killed by my crazy ex. You think I get a hallmark card for that?
Bringingthelaw69: don't worry about it aint the worst thin a guy has done to me
HyperionJack: The Sooner we crack open this vault, the better. Then she'll be damn sorry
Bringingthelaw69: yehh save a bit for me
Bringingthelaw69: that aint a crime
HyperionJack: There's enough of those tits to go around
HyperionJack: jack ew
HyperionJack: Sorry that didn't come out right
Bringingthelaw69: yeH I'll bet u ready to go
HyperionJack: Yup, I'm ready
HyperionJack: I'll meet you there

Nisha: hey handsome hows the face?
Jack: Ugh terrible. You should come up here and sit on it.
Jack: I'd feel better then.
Nisha: can't gotta bad guys 2 round up remember?
Nisha: but I'd love 2 sit on it later
Jack: Have you found anything on them yet?

Nisha: nothin yet keep ya posted okay

Jack: Good thanks

Nisha: this is usually the part where u ask what colour my panties are and I say what panties???

Jack: Oh sorry

Jack: What colour are your panties today babe?

Nisha: u alright honey?

Jack: Yeah I’m fine.

Nisha: cum on Jack I no ur not

Nisha: i’ve fucked u enough to no that gimme a bit of credit

Nisha: so whats up?

Jack: It's just

Jack: Damnit

Jack: I can’t stop seeing shit...whenever I close my eyes, I see things you know. Keep seeing shit in the dark that isn’t there. I hear things that aren't there, like this fucking whispering. And I keep feeling like there’s something underneath my skin, moving and shit. And the damn nightmares are just..

Jack: Fuck I feel like I’m going crazy.

Nisha: wanna talk bout it or somethin?

Nisha: or not

Nisha: we can just talk about any other shit

Nisha: or sext

Nisha: whatever u need Jack

Nisha: im still workin for u remember

Nisha: counselling ain’t my usual wheel house but ill give it a shot

INCOMING CALL: JACK

Nisha: Jack

Nisha: I got a message about my dad from some old friend of his

[14:35] Nisha: he's kicked the bucket

[14:35] Jack: Oh geeez

[14:35] Jack: *geez

[14:35] Jack: I'm sorry babe :Sad face:

[14:36] Nisha: don't be

[14:36] Nisha: he was a fuckin coward let mom get away with ssuch shit

[14:37] Nisha: I just

[14:38] Nisha: jesus

[14:38] Nisha: i don’t even know why I’m fuckin upset about it

[14:38] Jack: He was your dad babe. And you said yourself that your dad meant more to you than your mom.

[14:38] Jack: Guess it shows you’re not as much of a heartless bitch you pretend you are.

[14:39] Nisha: yeh guess so


[14:40] Nisha: yeh Ill be fine ill handle it

[14:40] Nisha: need 2 get his funeral sorted out

[14:41] Jack: Nish

[14:41] Jack: Listen

[14:42] Jack: If you need anything, lemme know okay?


[14:42] Jack: Just say the word

[14:43] Nisha: ur not so bad sometimes

[14:44] Jack: Yeah well don’t go spreading it around alright

[14:45] Jack: I can’t have anyone up here thinking I’m the same old softie I was before

[14:46] Nisha: wut dont they know the only thin soft about u is ur belly?

[14:47] Jack: WOAH OKAY I'M FEELING VERY ATTACKED RIGHT NOW

[14:47] Nisha: its so cute tho

[14:47] Jack: It's not cute because it's definitely not soft. I have an 8-pack. I'm shredded. I'm so shredded women drop their panties when I walk by
[14:48] Nisha: yeh I’ll bet
[14:49] Nisha: hey jack?
[14:50] Nisha: thanks needed a laugh
[14:50] Jack: Blow jobs are the preferred way to show your appreciation :winky face:
[14:51] Nisha: ill keep that in mind

[18:44] Handsome Jack: Oh I forgot to say before I left! Thanks for the help today. Made things a bit more fun
[18:44] Nisha: happy 2 do it aint been to a rodeo like that in a while
[18:45] Handsome Jack: Afterwards was good too :winky face:
[18:45] Nisha: just good huh?
[18:46] Handsome Jack: You looked so damn pretty surrounded by all that fire
[18:47] Nisha: fuk ur being romantic today
[18:47] Nisha: aint even my bday
[18:48] Nisha: that so huh
[18:49] Handsome Jack: And I don’t get to fuck you after a setting a bandit town on fire very often.
[18:50] Nisha: oh I know alright
[18:50] Nisha: thought u were gonna put ur back out frm the noise u were makin
[18:51] Nisha: felt kinda sorry for Willem though, havin 2 listen 2 u get carried away like that.
[18:52] Handsome Jack: I didn’t get carried away!
[18:53] Nisha: u should be 4 what u did to my pants
[18:54] Handsome Jack: I’ll make it up to you
Nisha: You better

Handske Jack: ALSO

Handske Jack: Did you just call me old?????? :Angry Face:

Nisha: haha took u long enough

Handske Jack: Hey babe what’s a four letter word for ‘idiot’

Nisha: rhys

Handske Jack: Perfect!

Handske Jack: trying to finish this crossword

Nisha: wut a hard life u lead

Handske Jack: You have no idea bad how exhausting it is to be this handsome

Handske Jack: Coming up for dinner tonight?

Nisha: u cookin

Handske Jack: Pfftt no.

Handske Jack: haven’t eaten out in a while :winky face:

Nisha: then hell yeH

Handske Jack: Got something to show you babe.

Nisha: is it a cat pic?

Handske Jack: No, better

Nisha: is it a dick pic?

Handske Jack: It can be if you want

Handske Jack: Eyyyyy


Nisha: i’ll pass thanks

Handske Jack: Geez what sort of girlfriend are you?
[11:05] Nisha: the sort who’s seen ur dick enough that I could draw a picture of it


[11:06] Nisha: Ive had no shit to do lately

[11:07] Nisha: I’m on ur payroll and I’m just sittin around sweet F.A

[11:09] Handsome Jack: Since I’m such a great boyfriend and all that, I thought it’d get you a nice present

[11:09] Handsome Jack: But if you’re going to be a heartless monster who always hurts me I wont bother. I’ll give it to Willem instead.

[11:10] Nisha: what is it? yet another vibrator in the shape of ur dick? Im sure Wilhelm will luv that


[WAYPOINT RECEIVED: HANDSOME JACK]

[19:22] Nisha: Jack

[19:22] Nisha: thanks for today

[19:22] Nisha: you know, givin me Lynchwood and that nice shiny badge

[19:22] Nisha: feels good to have something to do again

[19:23] Handsome Jack: The pleasure was mine babe.

[19:23] Handsome Jack: Still wish you’d let me call it New New Haven

[19:23] Nisha: jack no

[19:23] Nisha: its a terrible name

[19:23] Handsome Jack: Pfft you’re a terrible name

[19:24] Handsome Jack: Anyway, I need you to handle this. I know you’ll get shit done for me. I need that Eridium. I also need a Toblerone. But I’ll take the Eridium first.

[19:26] Nisha: i’ll get it done


[19:27] Nisha: yeah i’ll bring those new handcuffs with me test em out on u

[08:32] Nisha: Jack u up?

[08:32] Handsome Jack: For you babe, always

[08:33] Nisha: i need to talk to you


[INCOMING CALL: NISHA]

[17:33] Handsome Jack: How are you feeling?

[17:38] Nisha: fine

[17:38] Handsome Jack: you sure?

[17:39] Nisha: yeh

[17:39] Nisha: why wdnt I be?

[17:40] Handsome Jack: I just wanted to make sure you were feeling, well…

[17:41] Handsome Jack: You know…


[17:42] Handsome Jack: About things. I haven’t heard from you in a while

[17:42] Nisha: I had an abortion jack, not a heart transplannt im fine


[17:43] Nisha: jack god its no a big deal

[17:43] Nisha: ur making somethin out of nothin here

[17:44] Handsome Jack: Yeah because what a monster I am for asking how you are, wanting to be there for you and shit like a good boyfriend.

[17:44] Nisha: u know ur being more of a woman about this than I am

[17:45] Nisha: its gone, just move on no point gettin worked up about it now

[17:45] Handsome Jack: That’s ice fucking cold Nisha

[17:46] Nisha: what do u want from me Jack? do u want me to cry about nothin? we agreed to this remember? even if I had kept it u heard what ur doctors said, kid would have been born dead im not pushin out a dead baby not 4 u jack
[17:48] Handsome Jack: Nisha...
[17:46] Nisha: don’t know what else u want me to say
[17:48] Handsome Jack: I don’t know
[17:48] Handsome Jack: I know it was your choice and shit babe, but fuck it still hurts
[17:49] Nisha: look ill call 2morrow got shit to do here

[00:23] Nisha: jack u awake?
[00:23] Handsome Jack: Yeah. Wide awake. Cant sleep?
[00:23] Nisha: no I’m cuming up don’t feel well
[00:24] Handsome Jack: Okay see you soon

[21:24] Handsome Jack: Remember when we first met? Like back on Helios?
[21:24] Nisha: u feelin nostalgic for the good old days?
[21:25] Nisha: probably a papyrus scroll round that could remind u of that better than I could.
[21:26] Handsome Jack: Ha
[21:27] Nisha: u were so fuckin awkward
[21:28] Handsome Jack: Excuse you but I was incredibly handsome and charismatic actually so get your facts right.
[21:28] Nisha: like hell u were u were fuckin scared of me you
[21:28] Nisha: had this cute little deer caught in the headlights whenever I looked at u

[21:29] Nisha: Unsure huh?

[21:29] Handsome Jack: Yeah you were the dark horse of the team. Didn’t know what to make of you. Still don’t.

[21:29] Nisha: compliment in there somewhere

[21:30] Handsome Jack: I was so sure you’d end up fucking Wilhelm before the end of the week. And I was so bummied out about it because I thought you were really cool

[21:30] Nisha: and hot right?

[21:31] Handsome Jack: Well yeah that goes without saying doesn’t it :winky face:

[21:31] Nisha: does Wilhelm even still have a dick? or does he have some attachment?

[21:31] Handsome Jack: We call him ‘Fisto’ round these parts :sausage: :robot:

[21:32] Nisha: does he no that?

[21:32] Handsome Jack: No i like my head on my shoulders thanks

[21:32] Handsome Jack: Anyway where was I?

[21:33] Nisha: u were sayin how hot and cool I was

[21:33] Handsome Jack: that’s right. Anyway, so you were so hot it drove me crazy. When I saw you curb stomp that asshole stalker guy I thought I was going to jizz my jeans.


[21:34] Nisha: aww jack u should have said somethin sooner.

[21:34] Nisha: woulda cum up and made sure u did.

[21:35] Handsome Jack: I wish I had but I guess I didn’t wanna scare you off

[21:35] Nisha: scare me off

[21:36] Handsome Jack: I didn’t want you to think I was, I dunno, a clingy weirdo or something


[21:37] Nisha: honey i’d have dumped u if u hadn’t been a weirdo

[21:38] Handsome Jack: So you think I’m a weirdo?

[21:38] Nisha: I think ur the handsomest weirdo in the galaxy

[21:38] Nisha: no one else I wanna get my freak on with every night

[21:39] Nisha: chance would be a fine thing

[18:44] Handsome Jack: Hey babe
[18:44] Handsome Jack: Would you still love me if I grew a moustache?
[18:44] Nisha: no
[18:45] Handsome Jack: Fair enough
[18:45] Handsome Jack: What about a bread?
[18:45] Handsome Jack: *beard?
[18:46] Nisha: maaybe
[18:47] Nisha: can u even grow 1?
[18:49] Handsome Jack: I will have the beardiest beard on Helios
[18:49] Handsome Jack: The kind of beard you can hide a badger in
[18:50] Nisha: gotta see this

[13:01] Handsome Jack: Hey babe what are you up to?
[13:01] Nisha: gun maintenance. you?
[13:01] Handsome Jack: Stuck in some boring old accounts meeting.
[13:02] Handsome Jack: The only highlight was Karen from finance losing the rag at Brenda.
[13:03] Nisha: Did she get all wobbly?
[13:03] Handsome Jack: Oh yes
[13:03] Handsome Jack: it was jelloid city
[13:04] Handsome Jack: Even her tragic hair cut was jiggling
[13:04] Handsome Jack: It’s only a matter of time before she explodes

[13:05] Handsome Jack: God I wish she would though because I’m so bored

[13:05] Handsome Jack: You should come up here

[13:05] Handsome Jack: Keep me company

[13:05] Nisha: no thanks

[13:05] Handsome Jack: You don’t want to come up????

[13:05] Handsome Jack: see your very rich CEO boyfriend


[13:06] Handsome Jack: btw, is incredibly handsome?

[13:06] Nisha: no

[13:07] Nisha: if I cum up and u leave ur meetin early

[13:07] Nisha: ull bitch about it

[13:07] Nisha: blame me for distractin u aagain

[13:07] Handsome: Excuse me but when have I ever done that?

[13:08] Nisha: 3 wks ago


[13:08] Handsome Jack: when have I done that recently?

[13:09] Nisha: 2 days ago

[13:09] Handsome Jack: *angry face: God drone on about ancient history why don’t you

[13:10] Nisha: so i think I’ll stay down here

[13:10] Handsome Jack: you’re the most unconsiderate


[13:10] Handsome Jack: I should report you to the police


[13:11] Handsome Jack: and you’ll go to jail cos you can’t abuse a celebrity

[13:11] Handsome Jack: then you’ll have to get a prison wife and be gay for the stay.


[13:12] Nisha … u done with ur litle rant?
Nisha: cuz if u are, I'll tell u wat Id be doin’ if I were there

Handsome Jack: You might as well.

Handsome Jack: I've got nothing else to do

Handsome Jack: You know I do Nish

Nisha: Id kiss along ur jaw, damn that fcukin jawline jack, it feels so good baby. Id be running my tongue along ur pulse point, feelin u riggle when i bite ur throat

Handsome Jack: are you naked on my lap babe?

Nisha: yeh, nothin on but my hat nd holsters

Handsome Jack: You really know how to get my engine going

Nisha: but ur not allowed to touch me til I say so. I’d want ur hands on the armrests at all time baby. Ur not allowed to touch me

Handsome Jack: Nisha that isn’t fair

Nisha: life ain’t fair hun

Handsome Jack: Nish

Nisha: id get the zipper of ur jeans down, get my hands into those stupid yellow boxers I no ur wearing. id wrap my hand round ur dick, get u all hard and nice for me cus no one does it like I do right?

Handsome Jack: fuck no one does it like you babe

Nisha: Id grind my thumb against the head until ur slick and buckin in my hand the thought of it makes me so wet jack i wanna ride u until all of helios hears u screamin my name

Handsome: Nisha Jesus I’m in a meeting

Nisha: u started this jack ull see it thru

fuck I bet ur already fuckin hard already jack bet that big handsome dick is just achin 2 get inside me are u baby?

Handsome Jack: oh babe you don’t know the half of it

Handsome Jack: if you were here, Id have you flat on my board room table with my hand around your damn throat and my biiiiiiig handsome dick you love so much filling you up.

Handsome Jack: maybe id even get a body double in as well

Handsome Jack: have him fuck your mouth

Handsome Jack: You look so hot when you’re struggling for breath around my dick

[IMAGE RECEIVED: NISHA]
[13:36] Nisha: u should cum down here
[13:37] Nisha: finish me off
[13:37] Handsome Jack: Babe you know I can’t
[13:37] Nisha: ur the big boss
[13:38] Nisha: u can do whatever u want
[13:38] Nisha: so u should come down here and do me
[13:39] Nisha: i wanna be ridin ur handsome dick instead of my damn fingers, listenin 2 ur pretty noises as u beg
[13:40] Nisha: u sound so good I could cum just hearin it
[13:40] Handsome Jack: Fuck it I’m coming down
[13:40] Handsome Jack: and I swear to god all of Pandora is going to hear you screaming
[13:41] Nisha: hurry up jack or Ill have 2 finish myself off nd u know that makes me sleepy
[13:41] Handsome Jack: Don’t even joke about that

[09:12] Nisha: not feelin a little sore at all?
[09:12] Handsome Jack: Fuck you
[09:13] Nisha: cum on honey
[09:13] Nisha: u enjoyed it
[09:13] Nisha: I could tell from all that noise and moaning.
[09:13] Nisha: Shit that was so hot, havin the big hero of Pandora squirmin and beggin beneath me.
[09:14] Nisha: yeh I’m sooo glad I recorded it.
[09:16] Handsome Jack: You recorded that???
[09:17] Nisha: hell yeh I did
[09:17] Nisha: u think I was gonna not?
[09:17] Handsome Jack: You sneaky bitch
[09:18] Handsome Jack: I should sue you into the fucking ground for that
[09:18] Nisha: Bet I could sell this online to a porn network and turn a few dollars
[09:20] Nisha: i could retire
[09:20] Handsome Jack: I’m never doing anything nice for you again ever
[09:20] Handsome Jack: You’re so ungrateful
[09:21] Handsome Jack: God
[09:21] Nisha: don’t get ur butt plug in a twist
[09:22] Nisha: like I’d actually do that
[09:22] Nisha: don’t want any 1 else seein u like that
[09:23] Handsome Jack: Never thought you for a jealous type
[09:23] Nisha: i didn’t learn to share and play nice in school
[09:24] Handsome Jack: My ass can testify to that
[09:24] Nisha: you comin down tonight?
[09:25] Handsome Jack: Pfft no. It’s too hot down there
[09:25] Nisha: aww poor baby
[09:26] Handsome Jack: It is! Nearly sweated my nuts off last time
[09:26] Nisha: poor baby
[09:26] Handsome Jack: You’re such a bitch
[09:27] Nisha: and u love it

[19:55] Handsome Jack: It was Angel’s birthday today
[19:57] Nisha: did you go see her?
[19:59] Handsome Jack: She’d barely even looked at me

[19:59] Handsome Jack: And when she did…

[19:59] Handsome Jack: Damn it, she looked at me like I was a fucking stranger

[20:00] Nisha: im sorry baby

[20:01] Handsome Jack: Can you come up?

[20:01] Handsome Jack: Don’t really feel like being on my own right now

[20:02] Nisha: wut right now

[20:03] Handsome Jack: Babe please

[20:04] Handsome Jack: I don’t feel…right

[20:05] Handsome Jack: Please, come up

[20:05] Nisha: shit you must be upset

[20:05] Nisha: you never say please

[20:06] Nisha: alright cowboy Ill be up soon

[20:06] Handsome Jack: Thanks


[18:44] Nisha: yeh i heard hope it was worth it dickhead


[18:45] Handsome Jack: C’mon don’t get your thong in a twist.

[18:45] Handsome Jack: You know I had to do it.


[18:46] Nisha: did u even tell him??


[18:47] Nisha: that he was collateral?


[18:48] Nisha: thats low Jack even 4 u


[18:48] Nisha: fucks sake Jack he was 1 of us.
Nisha: doesn't that mean anythin 2u?

Handsome Jack: Yes and he will be remembered in Hyperion a competent employee.

Nisha: ur an unbelievable piece of work sometimes

Handsome Jack: says the woman who strangled a puppy

Nisha: go to hell jack

Handsome Jack: So....

Handsome Jack: I guess a bj tonight is out of the question then?

Nisha: blow urself asshole

Handsome Jack: I could you know

Handsome Jack: I have body doubles remember.

Nisha: then literally go fuk urself then

Handsome Jack: Okay okay, I can see you're upset so I'll leave you alone. Come find me when you've cooled down a bit.

Handsome Jack: Babe have you seen my violin?

Handsome Jack: I asked Blake but he's useless as usual and doesn't know where it is.

Handsome Jack: You seen it?

Nisha: yeah it's up your ass

Handsome Jack: You still sore about Wilhelm?

Nisha: u still an ass hole?

Handsome Jack: God why are you even getting bent out of shape about this?

Handsome Jack: you and Wilhelm weren't besties

Handsome Jack: he was barely even 10% of a friend to you he was probably more matey with the toaster than you

Nisha: not the point jack

Nisha: if Wilhelm is expendibl to u even after everythin hed done 4 u, then what's 2 stop u from doin it to me? Replcin me with sum new girl

Nisha: fjck can't believe I was so damn stupid

Handsome Jack: Jesus Christ Nisha
Handsome Jack: I’d never, ever do that to you. Not to you.

Nisha: u sure about that sure i won’t end up as collateral?

Handsome Jack: Nisha I would never fucking do that to you

Handsome Jack: You know I wouldn’t

Nisha: uve made a lot of empty promises 2 a lot of people Jack

Nisha: like angel

Handsome Jack: Don’t you dare bring Angel into this Nisha I’m not having that

Nisha: u brought her into 2 this, and wilhelm as well. U and this mad fucking revenge road trip.

Handsome Jack: You wanted this as well! You wanted revenge since Elips! We swore we’d make them pay

Nisha: yea we. Me u nd Wilhelm.

Nisha: we were in it 2gether we were supposed 2 kill them 2gether

Nisha: u used him jack u gonna use me too when irs convenient 4 u?

INCOMING CALL: HANDSOME JACK

INCOMING CALL: HANDSOME JACK

INCOMING CALL: HANDSOME JACK

INCOMING CALL: HANDSOME JACK

Handsome Jack: Nisha come on. Stop giving me the cold shoulder it's getting old.

Handsome Jack: If you don't pick up Nisha I'll come down and make you answer

Nisha: ill blow ur nee caps out before u can even get close

Handsome Jack: I'll nuke Lynchwood

Nisha: Go ahead then

INCOMING CALL: HANDSOME JACK

INCOMING CALL: HANDSOME JACK

INCOMING CALL: HANDSOME JACK

Handsome Jack: Nniiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii

Handsome Jack: niüssshhhhhha
[03:10] Handsome Jack: don’t take ur love 2 town

[03:11] Nisha: u been drinkin 2night jack

[03:13] Handsome Jack: im handsome fcuking jack babe

[03:13] Handsome Jack: takes a llott to get me drunk

[03:20] Handsome Jack: yes

[03:21] Nisha: go to bed Jack

[03:21] Handsome Jack: say u forgive me baby

[03:21] Handsome Jack: ive has a big mouth

[03:23] Handsome Jack: didn meannn it

[03:24] Nisha: well talk bout it 2morrow jack

[03:24] Handsome Jack: gud

[03:25] Handsome Jack: I lobe u Nisha inn sorry

[03:24] Nisha: go and sleep jack

[15:04] Nisha: Vault hunters are on their way here.


[15:05] Handsome Jack: Right okay. Hunker down. I’ll send some back up for you


[15:06] Nisha: i can handle them


[15:07] Handsome Jack: Just fucking wait for them alright? These fuckers aren’t our garden variety Vault hunters

[15:08] Handsome Jack: They’ve got some serious firepower with them

[15:08] Nisha: i said I can handle them Jack I don't need your cheap ass robots to take them down

[15:08] [INCOMING CALL: JACK]

[15:08] [INCOMING CALL: HANDSOME JACK]

[15:09] [INCOMING CALL: HANDSOME JACK]

[15:11] Handsome Jack: Come on pick up

[15:13] [INCOMING CALL: HANDSOME JACK]

[15:13] [INCOMING CALL: HANDSOME JACK]


---


[04:18] Handsome Jack: God


[04:24] Handsome Jack: I keep waking up and reaching for you, thinking it’s all just one horrible fucking dream. But then I end up remembering all over again…and I just fuck.

[04:30] Handsome Jack: I know I never said it never said it often because I knew you hated it when I did… but I love you…And I’m sorry. I’m sorry I didn’t get there in time. God seeing you like that… fuck it almost destroyed me.

[04:30] Handsome Jack: But I’ll kill them babe. I promise. I’ll make it slow and painful. Then I’ll fucking mount their heads in my office, next to your hat.

[04:30] Handsome Jack: And I'll make sure that everyone knows who are you

[04:31] Handsome Jack: and how incredible you were to me

---

[23:30] Handsome Jack: Could really use you here with me right now babe. Everyone is turning on me…even Angel. They even got into Angel’s head, tricked her. Then killed her.


[23:31] Handsome Jack: Fuck how did this go wrong for us? I got Roland but I've lost Angel and you. Every time I get close, they push me back again. Ugh it's so frustrating.

[23:33] Handsome Jack: But I’m going to make them pay babe. I swear to god I’ll make them pay for what they’ve done. For her. For you. I've got nothing left to lose.

Chapter Summary

Four times Jack asks Nisha to marry him, and the one-time she said yes.

Chapter Notes

Not my best work cos I’m not feeling good right now. You might notice pieces of this being inspired by previous work and the artwork of Sanzosin.

They’re drunk when he asks the first time

Of course they’re drunk. They’re drunk off of power, success, each other and the fucking expensive champagne they’re drinking in a hot tub.

But Handsome Jack has a reason to celebrate. Hyperion has a new and improved C.E.O who is so much more handsome than that wrinkly asshole Tassiter.

And he has himself a new girlfriend, who is so much hotter and cooler than balloon titties Moxxi.

His new girlfriend’s wet fingertips dive his locks. She tugs him down for another blistering kiss that makes the expansive hot pool feel cold by comparison.

As water from the jets swirl against his back, Jack’s tongue presses against the seam of her mouth. He tries hard not to appear too eager and fails entirely when her lips part with a breathless sigh. She tastes like champagne and strawberries; sweet and tart. If he isn’t already drunk, he’s certainly hammered off of the taste of her.

“Marry me Nisha,” Jack says stupidly, desperately against her lush lips. He just can’t help himself.

The Lawbringer always makes him feel silly and love sick. She just has to look at him with that amused, half smile and his brain drops into his dick.

Nisha draws away and back combs his hair (which is just spiteful because he’s tried hard to keep his hair from getting wet). Jack’s scalp prickles in response. “That’s the booze talking babe.”

His hand cups the base of her spine possessively, relishing how hot she is against his spread palm. There’s magma in her blood, he’s sure of it. “No it isn’t,” Jack insists with the bravado that comes easily these days.

Okay maybe it was, just a little. Maybe he’s had a few (ten) glasses too many. But he needed some liquid courage to ask her.

The corner of her mouth lifts up. Jack turns to butter and near enough melts into the water. “Ask me
again tomorrow when you’re sober,” she replies, her knees squeaking against the wall of the hot tub as she climbs higher onto his lap.

~

He doesn’t.

II.

Jack asks again after they’ve just shot up a bunch of bandits. They’re a poor substitute for the Vault Hunters but he needs to get out of the office every so often and stretch his legs.

And he’s invited Nisha the Lawbringer with him – Nisha his girlfriend. He’s still struggling to process it but It’s a wonderful feeling to know that he can cop a feel whenever he wants and not lose a hand in the process.

“Hey Nisha?” Jack asks over the gurgling of a psycho choking out. Nothing gets his jollies off like strangling some asshole who deserves it. Nothing gets Nisha going than seeing him strangling some asshole who deserves it. If he were to shove his hands down her jeans, he knows she’d find her slick and wet.

His girlfriend pulls the trigger of her beat-up old revolver, kneecapping some another bandit with ease. “Huh?” she says casually over the cawing screeches of the bandit.

“We should totally get married,” Jack says casually as he hears the dull cracking of vertebrae breaking from the pressure of his palms.

There’s a pause, a long pause that near enough drags his heart over hot coals. Jack chances a glance at her, and Nisha’s expression is unguarded, shocked even. He’s thrown her – something that happens so infrequently but he can’t even enjoy being smug about it.

Then, an unmistakable crack of a skull shattering from a well-placed bullet to the eyes. Jack feels a splatter of warmth above his upper lip. Recoiling, he wishes that she hadn’t done that so close. He’ll probably get Hepatitis A-Z because of that shit.

“Nah I’ll pass,” Nisha replies mildly, as if he’s just offered her the sugar bowl.

The answer is exactly what he expects, but Jack still throws her a very rude gesture at her in response.

“Pfft I was just joking anyway,” he retorts, voice blunted with sarcasm. The ring box deep in his pocket (next to his awkward boner) silently suggests otherwise.

Jack expects that to be the end of it but suddenly Nisha has her free hand in his collar and she’s hauling him towards her. Jack lets out a sound of surprise that is muffled as her lips collide hard against his.

It’s a brief kiss but it leaves him stupidly dizzy, like some stupid fucking high school kid with his first crush. “I don’t need to marry you to keep you,” she comments when she breaks again, her gold eyes turned black.
Swallowing, Jack hates that she’s right.

“Yeah but I do,” he admits, the closest admission he’ll allow himself that he’s afraid to lose her.

But Nisha runs her fingers along his jawline, her eyes warm as the blood that pools by her boot. “Just keep plying me with free drink and I’ll hang around a little longer.”

III.

He asks again at their anniversary dinner on HELIOS.

But it’s not their anniversary, not really. That isn’t for another ten days (Not that Jack is counting because he certainly isn’t). It’s more like his first anniversary being the CEO of Hyperion, a celebration of his success. There had been an expensive dinner and ball arranged for the occasion, so it would only be right to put on a nice suit and invite his girlfriend up from Pandora. He’s still trying (and unsuccessfully to civilise her)

“Wear something nice,” Jack threatens over the ECHO as he skims through a report from Karen in finance. “And make sure it hasn’t got any blood on it. If you show up in your fucking leathers, I’ll have you escorted out the airlock.”

“Hmph,” Nisha responds flippantly, as if she was entirely unfazed by his threat. She probably wasn’t. Nothing seems to frighten Nisha Kadam, not even a threat from Hyperion’s very handsome and powerful CEO.

“I’m serious,” Jack insists because he has his pride to think of. He should punt her out of an airlock just to teach her a lesson. He’s not someone to be crossed. She should know that.

But his girlfriend just laughs, as if he is someone who should be regularly crossed. “Apparently so,” Nisha replies as his stomach quivers at the sound of her chuckle. She hangs up before he can threaten her further. As Jack leans back in his chair, he half hopes she’ll show up in her leathers.

~

He has to admit, Nisha cleans up well.

Very well since he can’t seem to take his eyes off her.

Rich, plum coloured fabric spills over Nisha frame; as sleek and shiny as petroleum. There’s a slit cut high into the dress, teasing him with glimpses of laced top stockings. A choker of amethysts nest around the curve of her throat, catching against the light like stars. Even her hair has been tamed into submission, curling against her jawline in glossy coils. She looks like a complete differently person and the sight of her nearly sends him into shock.

And the bitch knows it too, judging from the way her lips curls into a smile that seems positively feline.

Nisha takes a flute from a passing steward and casually downs the contents, as if the most expensive champagne in the galaxy was just water. Jack’s throat dries as hers jerks, swallowing down the
bubbly before returning the glass to another steward. She’s definitely doing it on purpose.

He finds he doesn’t care. “Hello handsome,” she comments when she approaches him. “Lookin’ pretty slick there.”

Jack is proud of himself when he manages to form a complete sentence. “Yeah well, you don’t look bad yourself,” he replies, although it’s an understatement. “Can’t believe you actually listened to me for a change.”

“Don’t get used to it,” Nisha replies as she settles in at his side. “Only got dolled up cos you asked so nicely.”

His hand presses against her lower back. He can feel the heat of her skin and suddenly wished he was anywhere else. “Maybe I’ll ask nicely again in the future. How would you feel about wearing white?”

Nisha glances at him, her eyes framed by thick black lashes. “Not a chance.”

“Spoilsport.” Jack cracks a grin. “Coulda be great to announce our wedding while everyone is here. Would save on invites,” he jokes, but there’s honestly in his statement.

“You’re only askin’ cos you have a boner for me in a dress.”

“You insult me. I always have a boner for you,” he replies with a smile, despite how her response makes him sting with disappointment. He should know better by now than to hope.

IV.

When he asks her again, there’s smut on his lips, ash on his cheeks and blood thumping in his eardrum

New Haven is torched, burning from Hyperion oil and warheads. In his left hand there’s a dripping spoon and in his right, a high calibre pistol. His fingers are slick with blood that isn’t his. He’s at the pinnacle of his victory, a culmination of all the vengeance he swore he’d have. Jack can’t remember the last time he felt more alive.

Nisha burns bright nearby; brighter and hotter than the flames engulfing New Haven. Against the orange of the horizon, she’s as beautiful and ruthless as wildfire. Light catches at her shimmering badge, turns her armour amber, colours her hair rich sienna. For someone named after the night, Nisha is so bright it almost hurts to look at her.

He's fucked.

He's so fucked.

But Jack can’t stop himself from marching over and kissing her, despite the ongoing firefight, despite how fucking stupid it is. Somewhere, Wilhelm will be snorting with derision but Jack doesn’t really give two shits.

It’s like a scene from some lame old romance vid. He drops the gun in favour of slipping his hand
onto her hip; hooking a thumb into the belt loops of her leathers so he can pull her closer. Nisha slings her arm around his neck, pulling him flush against her so that her belly is flush against his belt buckle. The barrel of her gun presses against his neck and the heat is delicious. He hopes it will leave a burn scar; a permanent, enduring mark of her on his skin.

“Marry me Nish,” Jack says again, his voice choked from something other than smoke. His proposal is a synonym now, his own way of saying I love you. It’s all she will allow him. She’d probably back-hand him across the jaw if he were to say anything else.

Nisha answers him, as she always does. Teeth digs his lip, biting with enough force to draw blood. “No.”

Jack runs his tongue over his bottom lip, tasting the iron and residual gloss of her lipstick. “Fair enough,” he replies, smirking the way she likes, the way that makes her eyes turn from gold to black.

V.

When he asks one last time, Jack is in Lynchwood and feels as if he’s about to die.

He scans his surroundings wildly. There’s evidence of a fight, destroyed buildings and bodies and blood splattered on the cracked, dusty ground. Smoke stretches up into the skyline, smokey fingers reaching to HELIOS for help.

His robot army flanks out to secure the area as Jack searches through Lynchwood. He’s too late, judging from the wreckage. “Nisha!” Jack calls wildly. “Nish! Where are you?!” He can’t remember the last time he felt so scared, so desperate.

There’s no response, other than the sound of wood popping as it burns. Jack stands for a moment, straining his ears, listening for Nisha’s smokey voice over the fire. She’ll be okay, he tells himself. She’s a tough girl. A bunch of second rate Vault Hunters won’t put her down. Better ones have tried. Any moment now she’ll come sauntering out of the ruins of a building, carrying a tune about spurs that jingle.

Then Jack hears her. Or rather, he hears the sound of her revolver firing off – that rusty piece of shit she still insists on carrying about with her. He looks in the direction of the sound and realises the shot has originated from the smouldering wreck of her saloon. There’s not much left of it now, just a husk riddled with bullets and distorted wood. It looks like someone has set a bomb off under it.

Jack bounds over, his footsteps matching the pounding of his heart. Oh please be okay. Please be okay babe.

He finds her, propped against an singed, upturned table. For a moment Jack wishes he hadn’t. There’s blood everywhere; on her duster, in her hair, on her cheeks. As expected, his girl has put up one hell of a fight.

Nisha manages a smile for him. There’s blood in her teeth, making her mouth a horrible grimace. “Hello handsome,” she manages, her breath swallow and laboured.

He sinks down to try and stop the blood flow. “Oh Nish-” There’s so much blood he doesn’t even know where to begin. “Jesus. Fuck. I’ll get you a medic, just hang on.” Jack looks around wildly for
Hyperion’s footsoldiers. There’s bound to be a medic with them.

But there’s just murder bots around who couldn’t hold a scalpel to save themselves. They’ve been programmed to kill, not heal.

And Nisha seems to know it. “Too… late for that baby,” she replies. She’s shivering, despite the heat of Pandora. The hand pressed against her gut shakes, and he can see the blood oozing between her fingers.

Jack feels a sudden cold sweat lick down his back, as if he’s just vomited. She can’t die. She’s not supposed to die in the arms of a hero. That’s not how it’s supposed to work.

“Oh no no no. Shut up. It’s not too late for that,” Jack says with a thick throat, pushing her hand away so he can apply his own pressure to the wound; half hoping he could push it all back in and make her okay again.

“Jack it’s is…They… got me in the back.” Her voice is weak, shivering. He’s never heard her sound like before and it puts a terror in him. “I can’t… feel my legs. Fucking shit.”

Jack’s free hand pushes the sweaty, filthy hair away from her brow and cheek. He’s not ready to be without her. “No babe don’t say that. Fuck, don’t even dare,” he pleads, cupping her jaw. It had been so easy to forget that Nisha was human; ultimately fragile, breakable. She’s hunted Vaults and Vault hunters alike. She’s tangled with an ancient civilisation and always come out on top. He’s always known her as something more than mortal, something almost inhuman. “You can’t be…”

The Lawbringer closes her eyes a moment. “Sorry hon,” she replies and that fact that she sounds as if she means it has his heartbeat a steady, panicked hammer in his chest.

“Nish, I-” Words fail him, catching tight in his throat. Was is he supposed to say while his girlfriend is dying in his arms? That’s not what’s supposed to happen to the hero.

Nisha’s eyelids slide open again with great effort. “Ask me.”

“What?”

There’s a shine her in eyes he’s never seen before. “Ask me again.”

Her voice seems strange, foreign. Jack’s never heard her sound like that. It takes him a few seconds to realise she’s pleading with him, and that he knows exactly what she’s referring to. “Seriously? You’re seriously gonna do this now?” he asks. To his own ears, he sounds incredulous and it’s almost absurd. She’s dying. He’s got no right to get pissy at her.

“Yeah.”

Jack’s voice breaks he asks, cracking over the words. “Will you marry me Nish?.” He asks because her rejection would mean normality – that everything was going to be fine. She’ll reject him, he’ll have a good laugh about it, pretend it’s all just a joke and ask her another day. Just as they always do.

But she doesn’t.

His Lawbringer takes a long, shuddering breath. “Yes,” Nisha sighs out.
Despite himself, Jack cackles. It’s a horrible, deranged sound but he can’t quite believe what’s happening. “Jesus Nish, you’ve got really shit timing.”

Nisha manages that red smile for him again. “…Perfect time,” she replies, voice wet. She’s right though. “You…have a ring yeah?”

He does, but it does not have a bright amethyst cut into the shape of a star mounted to it like the one in his desk on HELIOS.

But Jack takes his ring off and threads it onto her slick, bloodied ring finger. It’s far too big for her of course, and her gauntlets prevent it from sliding all the way up. Somehow, this is infinitely better. “There, you’re now Mrs Handsome Jack.” His voice shatters as he entwines their fingers so he can feel the metal press against his skin.

Nisha exhales as she tries to squeeze back. Her grip is so weak, so very weak, like a child’s grasp. “I like Jack Kadam better.”

He cannot contain the fear anymore; the same fear that reflects in her eyes. “Nisha, Nish, please.”

“Jack shhh.”

“I’m sorry.” Something hot rolls down his cheek.

“Don’t be,” Nisha manages. “I’ve had…a hell of a ride.”

~

He’s deeply raw and half mad by the time his human soldiers arrive. He remembers vaguely someone trying to coax him away from her and he breaks their nose for it. Nisha smiles at that, he remembers vaguely.

~

Later, when the trembling has stopped, when he’s drunk enough to steady his voice, he makes a call to the Vault hunters.

“Did you actually kill my girlfriend? Huh. That’s actually pissed me off,” he says. It’s a monumental effort to keep his voice composed, it’s a monumental effort to stop himself from screaming. His fingers tighten around the brim of Nisha’s hat – her old, beloved cowboy hat. He’ll kill them for this. He’ll fucking rip them apart with his bare hands.
The fluorescent lights of the clock read 02:13 when Jack awakes. He’s always up at this hour, craving the ritual of a cigarette, much to Nisha’s ire. She hates the disruption of his habit, but he doesn’t like her enough to stop just yet.

*Oh the lies you tell yourself.*

Through the thick fog of sleep, Jack considers how to get out of bed without waking his girlfriend. He doesn’t dare chance another grumpy slap or a kick to the family jewels again. His balls still seem to ache at the thought.

It takes another few moments for Jack to realise that he shouldn’t have bothered fretting. The space that was usually occupied by a Nisha shaped lump was empty, the warm sheets the only indication that anyone had been there at all.

Immediately, Jack assumes the worst – that she’d run off in the dead of the night with some other Vault Hunter or worst still, the help. He’s tried hard not to be so clingy, give her enough space. Nisha won’t tolerate any of his overly dramatic bullshit.

The panic, however, is immediately tamed when he spots the dim shape of her hat on the beside table. Nisha would never leave without her hat. He’s pretty certain that she loves that hat more than she loved him. He could hardly blame her. It’s a cool hat.

Jack sits up, pushing the covers off. His room is dark and quiet, save for the lazy glow of Pandora outside and the surflike humming of Helios’s anti-gravity engines. A thin blade of light cuts through underneath the master bedroom door.

Good. If Nisha was already awake, he could at least put the light on and not snuffle around in the dark like blind but handsome mole.
Jack reaches over and fumbles for the switch in the dark. He flicks it on, grimacing uncomfortably. His treasured monster feet slippers were at the bedside. Jack puts them on and slides out of bed to look for his Hyperion jumper to shove on with his boxers. When he can’t find it, he puts on a loose robe that Nisha always laughs at for some reason.

His mask is on the dresser, next to his other daily staples such as his hairspray and cologne. Momentarily, Jack considers putting it on. He’s still getting used to his new reflection. Some days he can just about tolerate the brand of blue slashed across his face. Other times he can’t bear to look at himself without it on.

However, there’s no need for it around Nisha. Jack exhales a tense breath as he heads through to his living space. She’s made it clear already (and rather enthusiastically) that she doesn’t mind the scar. She had once said that it made him look dangerous and very fuckable.

He’d take that over scarred and disfigured.

His dangerous and very fuckable girlfriend is perched on one of his leather sofas, watching the slow turn of Pandora outside the expansive windows. Her dark hair fluffy from sleep and it puts him in mind of feathers. He notices that she’s wearing his Hyperion sweater because of course she is, thieving little shit. However, Jack finds he can’t even be mad about it because she looks so damn good in it.

Nisha glances up when she hears him enter and wordlessly holds out his packet of cigarettes. She looks as if she’s been waiting to give him them.

He won’t acknowledge that she knows his routine so well. “You’re up early,” Jack states in way of thanks.

Nisha gives him a glib smile. Without her make up she seems younger, softer. At that moment, Jack feels every bit the cradle snatcher she often implies he is.

“And you’re right on time.”

“Can’t sleep either huh?” Jack asks as he slumps into the armchair opposite. An empty cup on the smooth glass of his coffee table indicates she’s been there for a while.

“Nah, Just thinking about things.”

Nisha doesn’t elaborate and Jack knows better than to push while she’s looking so tense. Instead, he flips the packet open and picks out his lighter – a novelty lighter in the shape of a dick that still makes him smile whenever he looks at it.

“About me I assume? Can’t say I blame you,” he said jokingly. "I mean, look at me."

His girlfriend looks as if she’s trying hard not to laugh. “You know not everything’s about you right?”

“If it isn't, it should be,” Jack replies, trying to light his cigarette and failing miserably. “Fucking hell.” Without his mask and the technology built in, he has shitty depth perception. His flame keeps missing the end of the cigarette.

Nisha takes pity on him and plucks the lighter from his hand. It clicks to life with a little spark and soon, the end of his cigarette is glowing orange. “I can’t believe you’re still using this fucking lighter,” she comments and hands it back to him.
Jack grins around his cigarette as he reaches for his ashtray. “Was I not supposed to?”

“Just surprised you are that’s all. Figured you’d have like a solid gold one or something instead,” Nisha replies, propping her chin onto her palm.

He has a gold lighter stamped with Hyperion’s emblem, but it lives at the back of his desk drawer. He prefers his novelty lighter. It was the first gift Nisha had given to him, a stupid thing that she’d bought from a vending machine on Concordia. She’d made a some smart ass comment about how it reminded her of him. He’d scowled in response, ego dented. It had lived in his packet of smokes ever since.

“Yeah, well, this one is more reliable.” Jack sucks in a mouthful of nicotine. Heat barrels through his chest as he inhales, the tightness familiar and comforting. The smoke is thin and grey when he exhales but it proves a cover for him to survey Nisha a moment. Her amber gaze was distant, her attention focused elsewhere. Her lips are tipped downwards, a whisper of a frown. He hasn’t seen her look that since... Well, ever.

He retracts the cigarette from his mouth, taps off the ash then offers it to Nisha.

His girlfriend looks at him, startled, as she’d momentarily forgotten he was even there. “Damn, Hyperion that hard up we’re havin’ to share cigs?” Nisha asks, but takes the cigarette anyway.

Jack shrugs. “Nah, you just look like you need it.”

Nisha takes in a practiced breath before handing it back to him. “Thanks,” she replied, smoke pouring from her mouth. With her dark hair and amber eyes, she seems almost otherworldly against the hue of Pandora's glow. When was the last time she'd looked so damn beautiful?

Get a fucking grip Jack.

“So...” He takes another puff before tapping the glowing ember against the ashtray. “You wanna tell me what’s got you up at this hour?”

“Not really.” Nisha raises her eyebrows at him. “But I reckon you’re not going to let up until I tell you huh?”

“Nope. But if you’d rather me leave you here in the dark, looking as if someone stole your parking space, I can,” Jack retorts. ”All the more space for me in the bed.” Another lie. The bed feels too empty without her.

His lawbringer laughs but there’s something plastic, artificial about the sound. He’s not sure what to make of it.

Then she speaks again, her voice low. “It was my mom’s anniversary today …”

“As in?...”

“As in the day she kicked the bucket.” Nisha drew her legs up a little closer to her body, wrapping her arms around her bare knees. “She’s been gone like what now, four years, and fuck I’m still mad about it.”

Jack knows Nisha’s history. He may or may not have listened to her ECHO recordings. It’s a painful, familiar story – a dark mirror of his own.

“And you know what got her? A fucking heart attack.” Nisha swallows. “It shoulda been me, or
liver disease. But I had more right to it than her liver for all the shit she put us through.”

He sucks in another lungful of nicotine, nodding in agreement. Jack would have been furious if someone killed his Grandmother before he did.

“I hated her temper so much. Hated her hitting and shouting. I used to wish someone would fucking shoot her, leave me and dad in peace.” Nisha runs her fingers under her eyes nd Jack pretends not to notice. “But fuck I still wanted her to like me for some reason, even when she was throwing shit at me.”

There’s a desperate weakness in her whiskey colour eyes as Nisha speaks, a look he’s seen in his own on occasion before he broke the mirror. She aches like he does; a pain festering from maternal cruelty. “I used to think that maybe it was my fault, that I wasn’t doing something right ya know.” Nisha snorts to herself. “What a stupid little shit I was.”

It was no more her fault than it was his. It wasn’t his fault he had so much of his father in him just as it wasn’t Nisha’s fault that her mother hated something about her. “You know that it wasn’t your fault,” Jack says firmly then offers her his cigarette again.

Nisha accepts, but doesn’t bother with the ashtray. She simply lets the flinted embers fall onto her skin. “Yeah I know. Felt like it at the time. I thought if I toed the line, did the dishes, keep the place clean. All that shit then she wouldn’t get so pissed at me.”

He understands entirely and he wishes to God that he didn’t. “She’d have found something to be pissed at,” Jack replies. His grandmother certainly always did. She was resourceful, in the worst possible way.

“Every fucking year I think I’m over it, then boom, something reminds me of her and suddenly. I’m not over it. I mean she’s the reason I’m such a good shot,” Nisha said, scrubbing her face hard in frustration with her free hand. “It’s fucking bullshit.”

“You wanna know the truth of it?”

“Shit this sounds serious.” She hands back the cigarette, not that there is much left of it now. “Go on then.”

Jack takes another puff. It’s not liquid courage but it’s the next best thing.

“The truth is that you’ll never get over it. Sure you could have killed her but it wouldn’t have changed anything. Not really.” Sometimes, in the restlessness of the night, he can still see his grandmothers dark eyes simmering at him with a malice. It's those nights that has his heart racing with the crushing realisation that he'll never really be free of her. She's long dead and still bleeds into his life.

Nisha snorts dismissively, as if the concept is impossible to imagine. “Woulda made me feel better,” she retorts.

“For all of five minutes. Believe me I’ve been there, done that, got the frigging t-shirt. It doesn’t make it go away,” Jack replies, feeling as he's being flayed alive by the raw honesty. “Fuck, if only it did.”

His girlfriend doesn’t look convinced. “Might have saved dad some fucking grief at least. I hated her for what she did to him as well. He was always so passive and twitchy around her. Only time I ever saw him stand up to her was over that dog.” Nisha reached him and touched the faded scar on her neck, a thin crescent of silver against her dark skin. “And look how that fucking turned out.”
“You keep in contact with your dad?” Other than when you wire him cash and I look the other way.

“Nah. There isn’t really much to say to him. Guess I’m still pissed he let her get away with all her bullshit. Takes everything I have to not kill him as well sometimes,” Nisha admits.

Some part of him wishes he knew where his own mother was so he could put a bullet in her brain from leaving him with that poisonous witch. “I know what you mean. If I knew where my mom was, I think I’d strangle her for leaving me with that troglodyte.”

Nisha glances at him, seemingly surprised by his insight. As if she’d forgotten they’d both been abandoned by a parent in some way and hurt by another. Maybe that’s why they seemed to fit together so damn well.

“...Did you ever find her?”

Jack swallows the lump in his throat. “No. It was like she just friggin evaporated or something. But whatever, I couldn’t give a damn. She’s probably dead by now. Good riddance.”

It was a lie.

He cared.

He cared very much. He still wanted to find her, look her straight in the eye and ask why she’d left him.

And Nisha must have seen it on his face. An unfamiliar look of warmth flickered in her amber eyes. She reached out and curled her her fingers around his forearm. “Fuck,” she breathes. “We’re a bit too real here hun and we haven’t even been drinkin’”

“I know. I don’t like it.” But he likes her hand on his arm. It’s far more comforting than it should have been.

“Quick, say something patronising and sarcastic.”

Jack’s eyebrow quirks and he feels his scar stretch tight. “I’m impressed you even know what patronising means.”

“That’s better,” Nisha said, placated by the normality of his sarcasm. It’s safer territory he supposes. Neither of them really want to consider how fucked up they really were. Heroes weren’t supposed to be like that. “Oh and I went to school by the way. Don’t know where you’re getting this idea that I’m some country bumpkin.”

“Yeah right. I’ve seen the way you eat, fucking savage. You can barely work a damn fork. If you weren’t hot I would have dumped you for it,” Jack replies with feign distaste as he stubs out the cigarette into the ashtray. “So, wanna go back to bed?” So wanna go fuck and forget?

“Yeah.” His girlfriend smiles, a little curve of her nude lips. Jack’s blood warms in response and suddenly he just wants to kiss and forget all the cellar and the buzzaxe and silver scars in his knees.

“Bring the smokes.”
Cultural Appropriation [NSFW]

Chapter Summary

He looked good.

He looked really, really fucking good.
And judging from his expression, Jack knew it too.

(Jack wears a kilt to a Hyperion tech gala. Nisha can't keep her hands off him for it.
Inspired by Sanzosin's artwork and a fab conversation I had with a very handsome voice actor)

Chapter Notes

I got the absolute joy of meeting Dameon Clarke in the summer (who was an absolute sweetheart of a man and utterly gorgeous irl). I'm Scottish so of course we talked about scotch and he mentioned wearing a kilt once and my brain imploded. So of course I had to write about Jack wearing a kilt.

Haven't written any Jack and Nisha smut in a while so I'm a bit rusty and this ended up being close to 8000 words so there's some weakness in the chapter here and there.

Nisha wasn’t late, not really.

Okay sure, maybe she was a little late, an hour maybe. Hyperion galas always took a while to get going. She probably wasn’t missing much – other than Jack congratulating his own company for an hour.

As Nisha approached the doors that lead to Hyperion’s technology gala, she could hear the faint sound of synthesised music. Jack had a former storage bay converted into a hall for his fancy events. Nisha had seen it prior to the renovations and was mildly intrigued to see what Jack had done the space.

She dug her hand into her jacket pocket for her security pass. She’d accepted Jack’s invitation but had no intention of dressing up for the event. He was lucky she was even showing up at all.

Regardless, Nisha still gave herself the once over as she handed the security pass to a rather indifferent Hyperion security officer. The blood on her shin guards wasn’t really noticeable unless someone was at knee height with her. What sort of fucking weirdos would be looking at her knees? Unless Jack had invited some bandit midgets to his gala, which wouldn’t surprise her. He’d done worse.

Her security pass was accepted without question. Nisha doubted that it wouldn’t be. Everyone on Helios knew who she was: Nisha Kadam, Vault Hunter, Bandit who killed other bandits, the woman responsible for the bruises around Handsome Jack’s throat. She’d left a lasting impression in the skull
of a security officer who had once questioned the legitimacy of her ID.

Hyperion’s security nodded her through, handing her back her security pass along with hyperion lanyard with her name and affiliation on it. What is the official title of the CEO’s girlfriend? Nisha stuffed both into her pocket. The doors slid open and she stepped through into the colour and sound of Hyperion’s annual technology gala.

The hall was scarcely recognisable as an old hanger bay, having been stripped of the loading equipment. Instead of crates and chests, Jack had set up demonstration stalls for the various robots and weaponry manufactured by Hyperion. Sleek, modern spotlights had replaced the workhorse industrial lights. The metal flooring had been updated to black marble speckled with glitter. Projectors sprinkled the ceilings and walls with glowing, silver stars. Holographic banners stretched out overhead, playing Jack’s disembodied advertisement. Giant balloons of metallic gold and black floated above the stands, stencilled with the thick Hyperion logo. Nisha wasn’t surprised to see that he’d put a stage in (along with a statue of himself). He at least had the decency to put in a bar nearby as well, which was already busy. The old control room had been turned into what looked VIP longue that overlooked the hall.

Nisha shoved her hands into the back pockets of her jeans. She had to admit, Jack had done a good job – or at least his design team had. He’d probably take the credit regardless.

A passing waiter wearing the gold and black livery of Hyperion offered her a drink from a tray. “Drink ma’am?” he asked, looking as if he were teetering on the edge of a panic attack.

Nisha quirked an eyebrow at the waiter – young man who reminded her faintly of Jack. He was cute, in a gormless kind of way. “Huh, haven’t been a ma’am before,” she commented as she accepted one of the flutes. “Keep talkin’ like that and I might have to trade Jack in for a newer model.”

The waiter excused himself rather quickly. Nisha noted with mild amusement that his ears had turned slightly pink.

Damn, almost too easy.

Sipping her drink (that turned out to be a sickly fruity champagne), Nisha scanned the event with mild disinterest. Unsurprisingly, she recognised few people. But this was Jack’s gig. There were plenty of interns rushing around, with just as many engineers overseeing Hyperion’s robotic demonstrations. She spotted a good couple of egg head scientists she vaguely knew from when she’d sat in on Jack’s meetings (with the sole purpose of distracting him). The remainder of the guests there like investor types with wads of cash - Jack’s favourite type of people. Rich men and woman with deeper pockets and fat checkbooks.

Nisha made her way through the stalls, looking for her boyfriend. Her absent boyfriend had certainly gone all out. Every surface was loaded with various Hyperion weaponry, ammunition, prosthetics and other equipment she couldn’t identity. There was another section dedicated to Hyperion branded clothing and other assorted merchandise. Nisha gave that stand a hard pass. She had more hyperion t-shirts and memorabilia that she knew what to do with. Maybe she could start a black market of goods, if only to syphon off Jack's profits to piss him off.

Off to the right was robot alley – a section of the event dedicated to live demonstrations of Hyperion’s robotic division. One of Jack’s clones had made an appearance, showcasing Hyperion’s Biotechnology department. It was surrounded by a small group of interested patrons, juggling a handful of oranges. At least the clone was trying to juggle. It seemed more like it was just throwing the fruit up into the air then trying to catch it.

Definitely not worth $1000 an hour, Nisha considered as threw back another mouthful of champagne as if it were hard spirits. She’d have to drink a lot if she hoped to make it through the night without
As a group of interested attendees moved toward a display of newly developed ammunition, Nisha spotted the Wilhelm nearby – flanked by his two drones. Nisha grinned to herself. He looked as he were about to set himself on fire. Fuck she’d like to have front row seats for that.

She downed the remainder of her drink, discarding the glass onto nearby corner table. Maybe she’d do him a solid and rescue him this once. It wasn’t as if she had anything else to do since Jack hadn’t even turned up yet. She’d punish him later for that slight, making her at his stupid fucking PR event.

The lawbringer made her way towards him, noting with deep satisfaction that the other guests seemed to give her space. Either they knew who she was, or the dried flecks of blood on her boots was too much for them.

He spotted her at last and waved. “Nisha, hey!” Wilhelm boomed, startling a passing waiter into dropping a plate of cocktail weenies. Fuck, he must have been bored. He didn’t usually look so goddamn happy to see her.


“Oh yeah. Nearly as much fun as I had when I fell in that septic tank on Concordia.” The cyborg’s weathered face wrinkled further as he surveyed the gala with open distain. “This is some goddamn bullshit.”

Nisha made a humming noise of agreement as she leaned against the wall next to him. He was the only one there who made her feel normal. “I hope he’s payin’ you extra tonight.”

Wilhelm grunted. “Is he fuck paying me extra. He pulled the contract out on me. Turns out I gotta do a couple of these fucking things a year, gratis. No fucking bonus tonight.”

“That’s why I haven’t signed anything he’s offered me. He’s a sneaky shit.”

He glanced at her speculatively. There was a curious glow in his cybernetic eye. “Why you even here then? This ain’t your sort of show.”

The lawbringer smirked. “Like I was gonna pass up seeing what sort of train wreck Jack was hostin’ tonight.” She glanced around, looking for her boyfriend. It wasn’t like him to miss an opportunity to swagger around like a self important peacock “So, where is he?”

“At the bar,” Wilhelm said, gesturing towards the main bar. “Trying to fleece out new contracts out of his new drunk friends.”

Nisha followed Wilhelm’s gesture, looking for the silvered hair of her boyfriend through the throngs of guests.

“Where?”

“You fucking blind?”

“You want a fucking punch?”

“You’re the fucking sharp shooter here. Use your damn eyes.”

Nisha was about to kick Wilhelm in what was left of his balls when she finally saw Jack, really saw him. A rasp of surprise caught in her dry throat at the sight of him and she suddenly forgot all about Wilhelm.
Oh.

Oh.

Jack was wearing some sort of skirting of cloth around his slim hips, patterned in bold stripes of yellow and black. His fitted jacket was made of glossy black material that accentuated those deliciously broad shoulders. A great lash of the same plaid hung down over his left shoulder, gathered to his jacket by a large ornate ‘H’ pin. Nisha’s eyes continued to travel down, her throat drying as she drunk in the sight of bare knees and calves clad in thick black socks. A small blade was sheathed against his ankle, though it looked as if it was more for show than shanking.

As if he knew someone was watching him, Jack glanced over his shoulder.

He looked good.

He looked really, really fucking good.
And judging from his expression, Jack knew it too.

“What the fuck is he wearing?” Nisha asked, her voice hitched a little tighter and higher than it should have been. No wonder she hadn’t clocked him earlier. She’d been looking for Jack in his black suit and yellow tie. Not whatever... This was.

And now that she’d seen him, Nisha found that she couldn’t look away. It seemed to anchor her attention to Jack’s broad shoulders and slim waist – his best assets. God, how she couldn’t decide where she wanted climb on first.

Wilhelm gave her a knowing glance. Nisha couldn’t find the desire even be mad about it.

“That’s a kilt. You tellin’ me you’ve never seen one?”

She swallowed, her tongue feeling as dry as old leather. God no she’d remember seeing something like that. “No. But men in skirts ain’t really my thing,” she replied. That was evidently an out and out lie, because Jack in a kilt was most definitely her thing. It was impossible to stop staring at the way his broad back moved in the slim fitted jacket.

“Wanna know something else?”

“Hmm?”

The old Cyborg grinned, his wolf-like features prominent. “He probably aint wearing anything underneath.”

Nisha felt as if the air had just been sucked out of the room and, suddenly it seemed impossible to breathe. “Bullshit.”

“Check for yourself then.” He seemed decidedly smug, as if he knew the knowledge would drive her mad. “Bet the boss man is completely starkers under his kilt.”

A shiver of arousal cut through her at the possibility. The thought of it was delicious; hiking up the plaid to get a good handful of Handsome Jack’s handsome ass, imagining his breath and harboured against her neck as she worked him under the bold plaid. Even if Wilhelm was just fucking with her, it was definitely spank bank material. “And how do you fucking know this huh?”

“Worked with a guy who wore one. Used to piss off bandits by lifting his kilt at them,” Wilhelm explained. “Never had anything on underneath.”
It sounded so ridiculous that it just had to be true. “Jack would never have the balls to do something like that,” Nisha replied, eyeing her boyfriend across the room. She certainly hoped that he would.

Although he’d seen her, Jack seemed quite content to mingle amongst his guests. Nisha’s fingers tightened against her biceps as she watched a brunette (who made Jack’s clown of an ex look underendowed) pay particular attention to the pin on his chest. Nisha wondered briefly if she could take off all of her fingers off without hitting Jack. Maybe she’d hit Jack as well, just out of spite.

He caught her eye again and winked. Nisha scowled back. She wouldn’t be so easily won over by his damn kilt or his oily smile.

Maybe she didn’t quite guard her expression as she would have liked. The thick brows on Jack’s mask pulled together as he stared at her for a moment. Then, he leaned over and said something to his little audience. He broke away from the bar and swaggered over, fabric pleats swishing at his knees. He’d gathered a few more interested looks that Nisha wasn’t sure she liked.

“Hello gorgeous,” Jack said cheerfully with that irritatingly lovely smile. “Oh hey, and Nisha’s here too. Hi.”

As Wilhelm snorted, Nisha allowed Jack to slide a hand onto the naked base of her spine. Best to remind him that she could be a generous girlfriend before applying the thumb screws later. The smell of him – the warmed spice of his stupid cologne was a mild balm to her jealously. “Hello handsome. Hell of a shindig you’ve got going on.”

“Thanks. It was really exhausting ya know, having to make a call to marketing.”

“Tell them to bring more beer next time,” Nisha stated. “Not nearly enough beer at this party.”

Wilhelm grunted in noncommittal agreement and Jack just huffed at the perceived betrayal. “Well maybe you should have got here sooner before people, you know, started drinking it.”

He then proceeded to make a big show of looking at an imaginary watch on his wrist. “But better late than never I guess. I was beginning to think you weren’t gonna show. Stand me up at my own party.”

Nisha raised her eyebrows, giving him a rather pointed look. “Oh yeah, because you looked real strapped for company,” she drawled, as if it meant nothing party to see another woman put her hands on her boyfriend.

Jack grinned, apparently pleased by her jealously. “Aww you getting jealous babe? That your handsome, rich boyfriend is such a lady killer.”

She shrugged. “Nah, they’re welcome to you.” What a fucking lie that was. “You snore like a sick skag anyway.”

“I do not!” her boyfriend snapped back. As if he would even fucking know.

“You do so. Was gettin’ on my nerves. So they can keep you and your damn skirt,” she aid before giving his kilt a scornful look.

Jack made a dismissive sound, decidedly put out by her response. Thank fuck he didn’t realise how hard her pulse thumped when her gaze ran along his shoulders or legs. “Uh it’s called a kilt actually, and it’s a traditional outfit on Tantalus. Check your privilege, asshole.”

Suddenly, Nisha wanted very much to visit Jack’s home planet. Maybe there were other good
looking dudes wearing kilts there too.

“And why are you even wearin’ it?”

Jack smiled that devastatingly grin, looking sexier than he had any right to. “Cos I look, like, really frigging good in it that’s why,” he replied.

Nisha gave him the once over again and hated that he was right. God, how she wanted to hike that kilt up and get her handful of Handsome Jack. “You tell yourself that if it helps you sleep at night honey.”

Jack rounded onto the Cyborg. Truthfully, Nisha had forgotten he was even there. “Wilhelm, you can objective right? Tell her that I look good and that she’s full of shit.”

“I’m not getting involved with this.”

Jack sniffed, apparently unsatisfied with his answer. “Well as your employer, I’m ordering you too.”

“Hardly objective Jack,” Nisha pointed out.

“Shut it.”

Wilhelm let out a long suffering sigh before giving her a side glance. “Nisha, Jack says he looks good and that you’re full of shit.”

“Atta boy. Now, go make yourself useful and check in with security,” Jack said, waving the Cyborg off dismissively. “Make sure no one runs off with the silverware or whatever.”

Wilhelm heaved himself away from the wall with what seemed like great effort. “Alright boss. Whatever you say,” the Cyborg replied, sounding unenthused.

Nisha watched him leave, almost feeling sorry for him. Almost. He was getting paid more than she is was. Hyperion’s equal pay policy was such bullshit.

Jack’s attention swivelled onto her. “So, you actually showed up huh?” he asked, his fingers stroking beneath the hem of her top

“Yeah. Was that invite not for me then?”

Her boyfriend immediately back pedalled."Just surprised is all. You usually never come to these things.”

“That’s cos you never make it worth my while hun.”

“Oh. Oh.” If Jack had been a bird, his feathers would have been ruffled beyond repair. “So seeing your handsome and amazing boyfriend isn’t enough for you then?”

Nisha glanced around the tech gala before answering. “My handsome and amazing boyfriend is always too busy when he’s at this sort of shit and ignores me,” she retorted, because it was true. She often had to make her own fun at Jack’s PR events.

If she were honest with herself, she felt strangely out of place. This was Jack’s glittering, glimmering world. She seemed little more than an intruder.

“Lemme make it up to you now then. I’ll give you the VIP tour babe, right now, show you off a bit. I want everyone to know I’ve got a sexy, bad ass girlfriend,” Jack insisted.
Flatterer. It was hard to stay mad at him when he was like that. Nisha tapped his nose, lips curling into a smile as Jack tried to bite her fingers playfully. “I’d settle for just a moment alone with you, loverboy.” She simply had to know if he was naked under the kilt.

“Wanna see the VIP longue then?” Jack asked. “You can have me all to yourself there.”

It was a tempting thought, stealing Jack away from his own tech gala. “Yeah, alright then,” replied Nisha.

Jack grinned at his victory. “Come on then babe,” he said, gesturing for her to follow him. “Lemme show you the tops.”

Nisha fell into place next to her boyfriend, still aware of his palm against the base of her spine. What a fucking sight they must have looked – Handsome Jack in his fancy kilt and a Vault Hunter with blood on her boots.

The VIP longue overlooked the tech gala, accessible by a gangway that had been converted from a flimsy old mental walkway into a sleek, glass staircase.

As he walked her to the converted gangway, Jack suddenly her hand without permission. “I’m gonna get real here a moment. I’m glad you here Nish. I was getting bored ya know.”

Nisha willfully ignored how good his palm felt in hers, how solid and warm he was. “Really? Didn’t look it from here,” she commented, cocking an eyebrow. “Looks like you had enough company.”

Jack studied her face. “You aren’t actually mad about that are you?” His eyes had a strange, tender quality in them – as if he was genuinely worried that he’d upset her.

An odd feeling curled beneath her breastbone that she couldn’t place, a rapid thumping of her pulse. “No, like I said hun, they can have you and your snoring,” Nisha replied, pretending that she couldn’t give a damn about his concern.

Jack rolled his eyes, apparently not buying it. He settled her hand on his arm, as if she were his dinner date. “Look, I was just working, ya know. Trying to sweet talk some rich bitches into getting their rich daddies to taking out my contracts,” he answered. "Our shit isn't much good if no one is buying it."

Nisha spread her fingers against the smooth fabric of his jacket. “Did that even work?”

“Pffft no. Everyone wants a piece of Hyperion but won’t cough up the cash for a contract. I’m tempted to drive their share prices into the ground for it. Fucking cheap asses.”

Nisha gave the guests below another vague glance. “Ya know, we could probably blow this entire party out the airlock right now, make it look like an accident. Then you could buy up all their assets dirt cheap,” she replied. Nisha wasn’t sure if that was how it all that business shit worked, but she figured Jack would appreciate the thought.

For a moment, Jack looked as if he was seriously considering her proposal. “God, I love how your mind works,” he replied with reverence, before leaning over and smacking a kiss against her cheek.

When they reached the VIP longue, Jack took off his communicator and locked the door with a code behind them.

The VIP longue was not how she imagined it would be. She had expected something like Moxxi’s UpOver VIP booths. It was decked up in the livery of Hyperion’s angry wasp colours. There was a
well stocked bar that was unmanned and countless large, squishy black couches but other than that, it seemed incomplete somehow.

But the room was empty and the view was pretty decent so Nisha couldn't complain "Not bad Jack," she commented. It was better than anything she lived in, even now.

"Yeah, still needs some work though but it's getting there."

Jack then leaned against the window. “So babe, you’ve got me alone. Now what?” he asked, his lips quirked into a smile.

Nisha glanced closed the gap between them. For starters, she would make him forget about the busty brunette in her blue dress. She fist his shirt and pulled him forward, slamming her mouth against his lips for a kiss that would leave a smear of lipstick in her wake.

Jack responded immediately, as if he’d been waiting for her to kiss him. His broad hands found her ass and he hauled her against his warm body. A moan bubbled up her throat at the press of his groin against hers. Her fingers left to his shirt to gouge into his hair.

As her boyfriend kneaded her backside with enthusiastic palms, she plied her tongue against the seam of his lips. There was a vague hint of synthetic flesh from his mask, but she was accustomed to the taste by now. No one man alive tasted like he did.

At her insistence, Jack’s mouth slipped open and Nisha curled her tongue around his. The artificial flavour of his lips was replaced with a sharp, tart taste of expensive champagne. He breathed out her name, a beautiful sound of yearning. She hadn’t realised her own name could sound so good.

A leg slid between her thighs, pushing her to the thick glass. Nisha rubbed against him wantonly, grinding on his bare knee for friction. She felt the heat of his skin through her pants. Jack’s palms cupped her a little harder, demanded her mouth a little more. He was eager certainly. Nisha appreciated that in a man.

She pulled her lips away, leaning her weight against him. Her forearms pressed to his broad chest, her fingers pulling loose the tie at his neck. “Is it true then?” she asked, trying to keep the excited tremor out of her voice. “What Wilhelm said about kilts?”

“Hmm?” Jack replied, sounding most dazed. Her lipstick had left faint smudges of purple over his chin and lips, like bruises.

Nisha pushed her hips a little harder to his. An undeniable, heavy heat pressed back. “He said you aren’t wearing a thing underneath it.”

“Not a stitch babe.” Jack’s voice dropped, letting it scrape at the back of his throat. Bastard. He knew how much she liked that. “Gotta respect the culture and all that.”

Her mouth went dry again. “Lemme me see.”

Jack blinked, as if he couldn’t quite comprehend what she was asking of him.

“What? Like right now?” He didn’t sound so smug and sure of himself now. It was always such a fucking thrill to take Handsome Jack down a peg or two, to watch him squirm and wriggle in her palm. It made her feel powerful, respected.

“Yeah, this is a weapon demo right? Let’s see what Hyperion has to offer then.”

Her boyfriend’s grin stretched across his face, pulling at the artificial flesh of the mask. “Nothing but
the best babe. Hard, quality weapons right here,” Jack said before snickering at his own innuendo. He could be so damn juvenile sometimes.

Nisha’s hand felt for her revolver and she withdrew it out of the holster on her belt with a rattle.

Immediately, it sobered him up. Her boyfriend eyed her gun warily. “The fuck?”

She pressed the barrel of her weapon against the heavy weave of his kilt. “I said I wanna see what’s under your kilt.”

“Sheesh, can’t you just lift it up or something like a normal creep?” Jack asked, looking as if he would rather

The lawbringer clicked her tongue at him tauntingly. “You really wanna get mouthy with me when I’ve got my gun so close to your junk?” she replied as she pushed the barrel of the revolver up the hem of his kilt, watching for his reaction.

To his credit, Jack’s expression didn’t change as she edged the material up. Only the hard jerk of his throat gave anything away.

Nisha dragged her revolver up his thigh, taking the fabric with her. She watched his reaction carefully, noting that he winced as the notches on the barrel caught against the dusting of hair on his leg. “Geez fuck, you trying to wax me or something?”

“Don’t be a pussy,” she replied, hitching her weapon higher up his mid thigh. The slow reveal of his skin was far more erotic than it should of been. As the pleats bunched, Nisha found herself longing to leave bite marks along the delicious, pale skin of his thigh. Maybe she would later, once she’d inspected his kilt herself.

With one last jerk of her wrist, the remainder of the fabric hiked up to his groin. Nisha half expected to see his obnoxious hyperion boxers. There was no way he’d have gone without. He didn’t have the balls. She almost couldn’t wait to rub it in his face.

However, Nisha was more than pleasantly surprised when she realised he, in fact, did.

Beneath the black and yellow weave, Jack was completely bare and unabashedly hard. It could never be said that Jack was just over compensating with his weapons

Nisha holstered her revolver as she ran her tongue over her teeth, imagining his cock pressing against the back of her throat; suffocating her. “Looks like Wilhelm wasn’t lyin’ to me after all,” The lawbringer said, glancing at her boyfriend.

Jack looked rather pleased with himself. “Told you babe. I’m a real man,” he stated smugly. Nisha wanted so desperately to wipe that self assured smirk off his face.

And she knew just how to do it.

Releasing his kilt momentarily, Nisha shred her holsters and sunk down onto her knees in front of him. Her hands found the back of his calves. The wool of his socks was warm with his bodyheat.

Apparently it isn’t what Jack was expecting. “Nish?”

Nisha liked how he sounded, unsure and intrigued, as if he could not quite believe what was happening. She glanced up at him through her dark lashes, stroking the bend of his knees beneath the fabric of his kilt.
Jack looked down at her, brows knitted as he struggled to work her out. Nisha held his heated gaze as she pushed the kilt out of the way again. “I’ve been wanting to do this since Wilhelm told me about your kilt,” she confessed.

He got the message immediately. “I gotta give him a frigging raise then.”

“You could give me one too while you’re at it,” Nisha replied as she pushed the fabric up over Jack’s knees and up his thighs to bunch against his hard cock.

Above her, Jack snorted as if she’d said something stupid as he held his kilt for her. “Hey, you’re getting to suck Handsome Jack’s handsome dick. That should be enough for you. Heck, you should even be paying me.”

Nisha toyed with the idea of punching him right in his ‘handsome dick’ but decided against it. It would be far more satisfying to watch him come apart from her efforts. She applied pressure to the back of his legs, edging him forward so she could plant kisses against his thigh.

Jack made a soft noise of encouragement. Nisha found she enjoyed the sound immensely. She tested his need, pressing her teeth into the soft flesh of his thigh. Despite the light coating of hair there, Nisha was pleased to see visible marks in her wake.

She shuffled a little closer, her hands following the natural curves of his ass. She canted his lower body forward, allowing herself a good squeeze. Jack did have a nice ass, which was fitting because he was one.

Her boyfriend let himself be manhandled with nothing more than a tut, as if getting a blowjob was boring, tedious affair. He was just doing it to mess with her, Nisha knew that. She could feel the thrum of energy in his body. However, she wouldn’t let him away with such a slight.

Nisha ran her hand around his thigh and up to encircle his girth. Her fingers wrapped around him, applying just the right amount of pressure. Their dry humping had left him slick so it took little effort to slide her fist up his length.

Jack reacted just as she expected; shuddering against in her palm, a curse whistling through his teeth. “Fuck.”

She grinned as she stroked beneath his crown, drawing another low hiss from her boyfriend. She knew all the weak points now, how to make him squirm. “If you think that’s good, wait till you see my hat trick.”

He glanced down, his unspeakably dark expression sending a tendril of warmth into her gut. Nisha met his challenging stare, keeping deliberate eye contact as she made the first initial slow swipe up his cock with her tongue.

Jack groaned, head tipped back against the glass. He didn’t seem to care that it would mess up his hair. “Christ Nisha. Just put me out of my misery already.”

Nisha felt a burst of arousal in her groin at the roughness in his voice. She’d show him mercy, this once. “You’re lucky I’m feelin’ so generous,” she drawled, before taking him in her mouth completely.

The sound Jack made was worth the initial twinge of discomfort as his cock pressed against the back of her throat. Nisha persisted, pressing her tongue flat against the ridge as she settled into a bobbing rhythm; using her hands and mouth simultaneously.
At the curl of her fingers around his base, Jack knocked her hat clear off her head. She felt the bite of his metal ring against her scalp as he twisted his digits through her dark hair. “Oh fuck Nish,” was all he could manage before he groaned above her again.

Nisha glanced up briefly, admiring Jack in his raw vulnerability with a soft moan of pleasure. She loved watching this dangerous, powerful man fall to pieces at her hands. Humbling him was an erotic, addicting experience.

His eyes slid open, as if he realised she was watching him. Their eyes made heated contact; a clash of black. Nisha purred and to tease him further, she swallowed around his girth. His hips suddenly jerked; forcing him a little deeper with another gutteral swear. The sensation caught her off guard and she coughed around his cock.

Jack glanced down at the sound, his expression flushed with pleasure. He did not apologise, and Nisha didn’t want him to. As she blinked away tears of discomfort, the thought of suffocating on Handsome Jack’s dick sent another round of heat into her stomach. That a fucking hoot that would be on her obituary. Nisha Kadam. 23. Beloved Lawbringer. Choked to death on Handsome Jack’s Dick.

It didn’t take long for Jack’s breath to become ragged and hard. She could read the signs of his taut body, the bucking movements of his slim hips, the frequent curses and praises that slipped from his lips.

“Geez Nish, fuck.” His grasp on language seemed to have dissolved into single syllable words. He could barely manage more than her own name and the occasional expletive. She might have laughed if her mouth hadn’t been full.

Nisha tightened her grip, holding him to her mouth to make her message clear. She preferred to have him finish inside her or on her stomach. But since it was his gala and he was scrubbed up well, it would be a shame to mess up his kilt.

Her boyfriend got the message.

He made a desperate moan, thrusting shallowly into her mouth. “Fuck fuck fuck,” Jack cursed. His hand clenched her hair once more, tight and taunt, then she tasted the rush of bitter warmth on her tongue. Nisha’s throat jerked out of reflex, swallowing his release down as he stuttered out her name. She’d once heard that it was a good source of protein, but that sounded like the sort of bullshit rumour Jack would start to wheedle more blowjobs out of her.

Above her, Jack continued to shudder through the aftermath, though he released his excruciatingly tight hold on her hair. Nisha waited until the trembling in his legs stopped, then she let him slide out of her mouth with a satisfying plop.

For a few moments, no words passed between them (a miracle for a motor mouth like Jack). Nisha recovered her breath, listening to the faint sound of the gala outside the VIP longue. She wondered if anyone had noticed that Hyperion’s CEO was even missing yet. All they’d have to do was look up and they’d see Handsome Jack against the window. Her swollen lips pulled into a smile at the thought of causing such a scandal: ‘CEO Handsome Jack leaves own tech gala to get a blowjob from a dusty vault hunter. More on page 2.’

With her pulse settling, Nisha leaned back and started to fold the kilt back down over his cock. There was a ring of purple around the base that was deeply gratifying. “All in good workin’ order.”
Jack blinked at her, looking half dazed. "Uhhh," was all he could manage. Nisha felt a cresting of rare tenderness in her chest at the sight of him so sated and satisfied.

She patted his knees once more then stood up, ignoring the twist of heat between her legs. She’d deal with that later. Jack had a gala to get back to and she had a bar to empty.

But a hand around her wrist stopped her from drawing away completely. Nisha’s eyes snapped to Jack’s hungry, frenetic stare and found herself wetting her lips. Whatever spell she had Jack under seemed to shatter when her tongue flicked out. He came alive again, as if someone had just shoved an electrical current through him.

Jack sprung away from the window and suddenly, he was so close that his breath caught in the fringe of her mussed hair. His feverish palms cupped her cheeks, holding her steady as he seized her lips in a consuming kiss that ached his lungs. He didn’t seem to care in the slightest that she still tasted of him. Jack kissed her hot and open, his tongue eagerly seeking the mouth that had been encircled around his cock.

Nisha’s fingers dug into the muscle of his broad shoulders, kissing back with her own visceral need. A small part of her hated this weakness; that Handsome Jack just had to kiss her in just the right way and her soul would shiver in response.

He spun her around, pressing her eagerly to the window. A hand threaded through her hair as Jack planted hot, open mouthed kisses along the curve of her jaw. His lips found her pulse point under her jaw, whispering her name like a holy benediction. Nisha shuddered as his teeth grazed softly against the thudding skin. Her eyes fluttered shut momentarily in pleasure, imagining Jack’s teeth sinking down hard enough to sever the artery. It wouldn’t be a bad way to go, bleeding out at a Hyperion gala while Handsome Jack panted her name in her ear.

Beneath them, the tech demonstration was still in full swing. She glanced over her shoulder, ignoring Jack’s rumble of annoyance. Jack’s assistant Blake flitted between the guests like a distressed bird.

“I think he’s looking for you,” Nisha breathed, hooking an arm over her boyfriend’s shoulder to draw him closer. She had no idea of letting him get away after he’d kissed her like that.

And under the pale ambient lighting, Jack didn’t look as if he gave a shit about the event beneath him either. The black of his pupils had swallowed all the colour of his eyes. He looked as predatory as a shark as he leaned forward. “Screw him,” he answered, his breath like a steam burn against her skin.

Nisha sighed in delight as Jack’s teeth pressed into the slope of her bare neck, worrying dark marks beneath her collar necklace. “Don’t you dare complain at me later then when you lose a contract cos you wanna mess around.”

“Worth it babe,” Jack answered, mouth warm against her skin. “You’re so goddamn worth it.”

Nisha groaned softly, curling her fingers into Jack’s hair. It was impossible not to feel supremely proud that she’d managed to coax Handsome Jack away from his business dealings. The only thing Jack liked more than fucking, was money. And fucking on money.

She was about to ask if they could do that again when Jack’s warm palms slid up the hem of her shirt. Nisha sighed as his hands smoothed along her stomach, along the soft skin of her battle scars, over the indents of ribcage and higher still to curve along her bra. Her own hand in Jack’s hair tightened, tugging with encouragement as his fingertips rolled over the hardened nipples through the fabric. A moan slipped from her lips and Nisha found herself pressing into his electrifying touch.
But too soon, his hands left her breasts and slid back down her belly. Nisha’s breath came a little faster as she felt him settle on the thick belt buckle of her pants.

Jack fumbled with the clasps and bolts of her belt, cursing their complexity under his breath. “What the hell is this? A damn chastity belt?” he said with a low growl, glancing down between them to get a better look at the buckle. He struggled with it every damn time.

Nisha smirked. There was nothing chaste about the way she skimmed her hands down his long back to cup his ass through the fabric of his kilt. “Hurry up Jack,” she answered, kneading her fingers against his skin.

Jack hissed through his teeth, a beautiful sound of frustration that flooded her with warmth. “Fuck Nish-”

Nisha groaned as his hips ground roughly against her. Through the thick fabric, she could feel Jack’s insistence against her inner thigh. Fuck, it was a delicious thought to know that so little separated them (other than Jack’s inability to work a damn belt)

The buckle finally clanked free, followed by a jerk of her zipper. Jack wasted no time in slipping into the fabric of her underwear. Her breath caught high in her throat, then choked out as Jack’s clever digits slicked against her hot core.

For all Jack’s talk, for all his bullshit, he was very good with his hands now. She’d trained him well. He knew what she liked, altering pressure and speed that soon had her breath coming in hard pants. “Friggin’ Hell Nish, didn’t know my kilt drove you so goddamn crazy,” he said, his voice hoarse and his eyes black with passion. “Woulda wore it sooner.” The rough pads of his fingertips ground against her wet flesh; circling languidly, never quite going where she needed him.

What a fucking cocktease of a man.

Nisha wriggled against his hand, trying to coax him where she needed him to go. “C’mon Jack, do you need a damn map?” she panted, her hips moving of their own volition.

He made an irritated noise. “Geez, I was just trying to be a good boyfriend to you,” Jack said, as if it such an inconvenience to have his hand down her pants.

Nisha, however, could hear the tightening strain on his voice. He was struggling to keep control, desperate to maintain the illusion that he was somehow calling the shots. Fucking idiot. “Jack, don’t make me kill you,” Nisha hissed, rocking on her heels in rhythm with his ministrations. A low pressure built in her belly; a familiar coil that seemed to wind each time he stroked against her core.

Jack chuckled and his thumb ground against the throbbing bundle of nerves. “That old threat huh?”

Panting, Nisha pressed her forehead onto his shoulder. The fabric of his jacket was cool against her burning face. “You’re an asshole Jack.” An asshole who was good with his hands, who could make her gut burn.

But then Jack suddenly pulled away, stealing her orgasm with him.

Immediately, Nisha opened her mouth to snarl at him to finish what he started. But her demand died a quick death when she felt Jack’s hands at the waistband of her pants.

“God, you’re so hot when you get like this Nish,” Jack said, his lips cutting a satisfied smirk. He shucked the material down her hips to get better access, taking the thin straps of her thong with him.
Not to be outdone, Nisha grasped the heavy pleats of his kilt with trembling hands and hiked it up once more. He was ready for her again, slick at the crown. It was kinda flattering really, that touching her had such an effect on him.

Nisha reached her free hand out and coiled her fingers around his heated flesh. She relished the sound of his strangled curse as he involuntarily bucked against her palm.

“Fricking hell. You wanna have to finish yourself off?” Jack asked incredulously, his eyebrows pinched in effort to keep himself together.

“As if that’s different from any other day,” Nisha replied with a scoff as she released him - but not before running her thumb over along the thick ridge.

"Didn't hear you complaining before,” Jack retorted, pulling her hips against his so his cock pressed between her legs. It was an exquisite feeling, the head of his cock slipping against her wet flesh. Nisha helped line him up, her heart high at the back of her throat with anticipation. When she swallowed, she could almost feel it beating.

Then, finally, finally he slid into her, slicking her up to the hilt. Jack made a sound, but Nisha barely registered it over her own moan. “Fuck,” she swore, gripping at his broad shoulder for stability. “About fuckin’ time.”

Jack’s breath puffed into her hair as he panted. “Geez Nish, so impatient.” He withdrew, then pressed back into her slowly again; his fingernails digging deep into her hip bones.

Nisha spasmed with pleasure at the sensation, her stomach muscles curling. She still could not fathom how perfectly well he fitted into her, how he just seemed to hit every sweet spot. “That’s it baby,” she purred, tilting her hips so she could move with his initial, testing thrusts. “Damn, you feel so good.” It was true. He felt so much better than her own fingers, so much more satisfying than the butt of her revolver. He stretched her out, made her ache, filled her like no other man ever could.

Nishapurposefully tightened around him, watching with satisfaction as Jack’s shit eating grin broke into a look of complete torment. “Then show me how good you are handsome,” she said, throwing down the gauntlet. It was probably the most cliche thing she has ever fucking said. If she’d been in her right mind, she might have shot herself for it.

Jack met her challenge. He slammed into her; painful and savage like he knew she liked. Nisha’s mind turned white as her breath emptied from her lungs with a keening sound. For a moment, she was certain that he damn well winded her with his dick.

Above Hyperion’s finest minds and richest share holders, Handsome Jack fucked her like against the window she was the only woman in six galaxies. There was a desperation in him, like he was worried she might disappear at any moment. His lips seared heated brands against her mouth, her throat, her neck, every inch of her that he could reach.

Nisha returned his enthusiasm. She arched into each thrust, her nails scoring marks into the muscle of his ass. When he kissed her mouth, she raked her teeth over his tongue until she tasted metal in his groan. They were not gentle, they never were. Nisha was not interested in gentle. She wanted Jack’s pleasure and cruelty in equal measure.
But maybe, as Jack’s hand came up to cup her jaw almost tenderly, she needed his devotion and affection as well.

Finally, when the tight coil in her stomach was becoming almost painful, Jack’s face pressed into her hair, trying to muffle the sound of his groans. “Nish, fuck, fuck,” he panted, his fingers tightening as he babbled her name almost incoherently.

Nisha knew. She knew from the way his hips juttered out of rhythm, his thrusts rough and shallow with effort.

And she refused to let him withdraw.

“Yes,” she hissed back against his neck, cupping his ass and pulling in him as deep as she could. “God Jack, yes.” She wanted the scent of him deep in her clothes, in her skin. She wanted to go back to that damn gala wearing his marks around her neck, his taste in her mouth. She wanted to grin at the rich bitches who thought they were better than her while she still felt Handsome Jack’s warmth seeping between her legs.

He shuddered against her, making a sound that was deliciously obscene. His hand left her hip and pushed down between the join of their bodies. Suddenly, his fingers were grinding in tandem with his shaky thrusts, thoughtfully drawing out as much pleasure for her as he could.

And that tore for her.

Nisha clenched involuntarily, gasping, grasping as she pulsed hard around Jack’s cock. The tight wire deep in her belly snapped and pleasure ripped through her with an unexpected intensity. Vibrant colour exploded behind her eyelids. It was so wonderful, he was wonderful. She could think of anything more perfect than having him a part of her.

Jack rode out the aftershock of her release, working against the clenching of her inner muscles to draw out his own. He heaved in her ear; breathing rough, filthy words that nearly made her shatter all over again. There was one, two more frantic thrusts then she felt him go against her. He gave a full body ripple, groaning her name into her hair, as a pressure of heat welled up inside her.

Without realising it, Nisha buried her face against his shirt. A sob hitched at the back of her throat. She was glad that she could muffle the sound against Jack’s chest.

Jack arms folded around her waist; holding her steady as his thrusts became slow and languid. His lips press against her mussed hair almost tenderly, a stark contrast to his previous savagery.

Nisha let the gesture pass without comment, sighing contentedly. In that brief, vunerable moment, she could allow herself to love him.

“Definitely...” Jack started, combing her dark locks with his trembling fingers. "Gonna wear this kilt more often."

Nisha pressed her cheek against his chest, imagining she could hear his heart pulsing her name. "You're gonna have to wear it all the time."
Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!