Our Little Secret

by VickyVoltaire

Summary

Scar is a woman of many secrets. At his christening, she lets Simba in on one of them: he was not the first.

Notes

Part of the 'Sordid Ambitions' series. This is after Sordid Ambitions and Partners in Crime. Story will have sensitive themes. Be warned.

Disclaimer: I do not own the characters. They belong to Disney and Co.

Author's note: This is dedicated to Robin Mask. This is part of the 'Sordid Ambitions' series. This will contain mature concepts and themes. Reader discretion is advised. The story will be LK centric but I hope you enjoy the Easter eggs.


Scar sneered at the gaudy display. The price tag on balloons themselves made her furrow her brow in disgust. This much for clowns? Were all these expenses necessary for something so personal?

Colorful tents, juggling performance artists, catering from this rather common and low-brow eatery called Louie's, Mufasa had certainly outdone himself.
Although she had known him all her life, Scar could never completely comprehend her brother. He argued for equality and yet the very same man would display what one would consider bigoted behavior towards certain members of lower classes. His claim was that they were not part of the 'circle' and did not contribute to the said 'balance'. Welfare was meant as a sort of relief, not a lifestyle. She thought that was ironic because as a business man he knew the significance of cost benefit analysis and yet when it came to his personal life, nothing could be too small or lavish, especially for such an important and significant event.

The dark skinned woman took a sip from her cocktail. She donned a pale peach colored suit dress which complemented her rich dark skin tone. She wore a pair of designer sunglasses as to scan the other guests to the party without making it look as if she were judging them.

She was completely out her element by coming to the soiree. She preferred the shadows and the close comforts of a fine wine, chamber music, consorting with her intellectual peers and debating ethics than to be at such events.

But today was no ordinary 'special occasion'.

Today was the day that Mufasa would debut his latest creation, one far more precious than the latest technological innovation or business deal that would make headlines.

It was for the birth of his son, Simba.

Everyone was practically invited to the event, and that meant everyone.

The garden was set up and decorated with balloons, fountains, a catering company, a rose covered trellis, a few specially designed gazebos as well as silk covered tents to cover the guests.

It was a sight that sickened Scar.

All this cutesiness and bright colors and garish atmosphere; she detested these sorts of gatherings. The socializing, the smiling faces and bright colors, it was well out of her comfort zone. The only reason she even bothered to appear was because her brother has specifically requested that she do lest she wanted him to pay her another 'visit'.

Out of spite, she did not bring 'the little prince' anything and judging by the grand and expensive looking presents that were beginning to overflow a table, it may as well have been a tear drop in the ocean. She could tell that one of the gifts was a rocking horse. Even the tissue paper that covered the gift bags was decorated.

Mothers from one of the various charities that he oversaw arrived with their children who were all decked out in festive attire. Scar knew that they were from the lower classes.

Scar recognized one of these women as one affectionately named 'Mother Rabbit', arriving with her brood. Her children played in the grass, looking like a bunch of cute little bunnies as they did so. 'Mother Rabbit' began to chat with another woman who also arrived with her three children.

It was Lady Duchess.

She was closer in class to Mufasa and Scar. She was dignified and carried herself with grace. She looked awfully dashing in a navy blue dress with a gold locket in the shape of a cat in the middle. Her children began to play. Scar saw that she began to engage Mufasa in congratulating him and Sarabi.

For a couple of minutes, Scar watched as the children began to play in the backyard. They went on
to join Duchess' litter of three whom were playing by the fountain. It was like a throwaway image from the Anne Geddes collection. Scar turned away from the offensive sight.

A bitterness rose up in her stomach and she walked away and made her want to drown herself in the strongest liquor.

Sarabi was busy greeting the guests by the entrance. She was a strong and bold woman with sandy skin and dark chocolate hair. She was lovely and matronly in spite of being so young. Her warm smile made everyone feel welcome no matter how poor or ugly. For one day, no matter what walk of life, the guests would be serenaded with live entertainment and fine cuisine.

How kitsch, she thought.

For a wedding, that would be one thing.

For the little hairball, it was too much. She took another sip of her drink and backed away into the shadows. She did it for the sake of peace with that brute, even if that stalemate would ultimately be temporary.

Scar composed herself. It was especially important today that she mind her bitterness and control her body language. Although she was someone important and notable within the company and family, she was a walking contradiction of dignified fury. She did not have to be here. She did not want to be here. She was only here out of obligation and duty. They were dirty words to her. They were like anchors that tied her.

It was a vehemence that she kept under control via careful body language and through manipulation of the tongue. She knew that there was a time to be civil. She knew that it was important that she kept up appearances, that she weigh her words, measure her tone and use just the right annunciations and tone of language. She knew when she had to be diplomatic. That was as far as she would go when forming an association with others. She never really formed a 'relationship' with others. The word itself suggested something beyond the cold and impersonal to something far more intimate. Hardly anyone knew who she really was. They knew that she was Mufasa's sister, Sarabi's sister in law, former head secretary and now Vice President of the Family company which she inherited after their father died. It was an attempt on Mufasa's part to appease her. It was a welcome change of events but it also like putting a band aid on an amputated leg.

It was never enough.

That was how she got others to do her bidding even if they did not particularly like her, but she was not there out of respect. She did not care for respect as much as she did obedience. Mufasa was not particularly fond of the way she directed those beneath her. She was always cold and brooding. She also had an uncanny knack for nitpicking small details and making the interns feel like utter idiots for missing such pertinent minutiae to the point of making them cry. Mufasa would go out of his way to console them either in front of her or behind her back. That is what earned him the adoration of the 'prey', as Scar named them. That was the difference between the two.

Mufasa wanted to establish a warm relationship between himself and his employees and associates.

Scar only cared if you could finish a task by a certain, often impossible, deadline and you never disturb her while she is on her coffee break or if she was on the phone talking to a client lest you wanted to feel her icy wrath in some form.

She liked it that way.
She did not care about contact so much as she gave off the image of being unapproachable. She wanted to be seen as being above them. Untouchable and beyond their reach.

Mysterious.

The ghost of rejection was now a distant memory. Now, she had set up an impenetrable wall, a wall that Mufasa and other tried to chip away at but she always stopped them.

It was just today. Just for the day. Just for a few hours. She meditated quietly as she observed the garden and the other guests.

She took pride in being active in the company's affairs. To her, it was better than being a trophy wife and living off a man's power. She knew the pressures of running a kingdom. The way she saw it, that is why you had underlings and paid them a tenth of what you were making. Although she may not have possessed Mufasa's managerial approaches, she understood the importance of fine psychology and rhetoric, and that was especially important if you wanted another party to sign on the dotted line.

She had managed to convince Shere Khan to agree to a partnership with Pride Incorporated. It took a few attempts to finally win him over but he finally relented. Scar wasn't sure if it was either the numbers on the profit margin or if it was the wine and lingerie ensemble from Ann Summers that made it possible. Either way, she had managed to get one of Mufasa's competitors to agree with a deal. She knew that he would forever be in debt to her for that.

Scar's concentration broke when she heard soft cooing. The newborn baby was kept in a cradle on the veranda. A veil covered the precious heir. Everyone marveled over him as if he were a rare and precious gemstone. He was already treated as a saint incarnate and the only things he had managed to do were eat, sleep and soil his nappies. Rafiki told Sarabi that it was good for the baby to cry a little it would teach him patience, compassion and most importantly, it would do good for his lungs and his little brain if he would figure out how to make himself go to sleep. It was a trick known to French mothers. For Duchess, the results were impeccable.

It was time to meet the little usurper.

Scar parted the veil. Simba was rolling over, babbling nonsense and observing his surroundings. She half expected him to let out a loud cry but surprisingly enough, the baby rolled over and gazed up at the decorations over him before settling his eyes on her. Immediately, his eyes locked onto this new and intriguing stranger.

She was certainly different compared to the others. Her hair was darker than his parents and her eyes hinted at no remote sense of friendliness. She did not scare him even though she had looks that could kill. Nonetheless, Simba became fascinated by this strange new guest standing over his cot. Only a few minutes earlier, he was crying his little heart out.

The newborn stared up at the strange woman. His bright reddish brown eyes were transfixed. She was different but he was not scared, at least that is how she read his reaction. On the contrary, he seemed to be mesmerized. Only moments ago, he was crying his little lungs out but seeing this strange woman hover over him seemed to have a calming effect on newborn Simba.

"So you are the little hairball everyone is talking about." Scar observed.

Her claw-like nail hovered over the baby who did not seem to be disturbed by the length. He gazed at the digit with curiosity and tried to grasp at it. She ran a finger down his chubby little stomach, noting how soft, how delicate he was. He was so vulnerable and he was giving her all his attention.
Power. She savored it like a delicious piece of chocolate. He would be considered adorable had it not been for the fact that he inherited his father's looks. Nor for the fact that he lessened her chances of inheriting a veritable position within the company but that was not entirely it.

He reminded her of what could have been.

Of what she once had.

It stared back at her and she hated it.

Simba cooed and kicked. He was actually happy. Scar got a rattle from the side and began to shake it. She leaned down and got a closer look at the little red haired cherub. He got a strong whiff of her expensive perfume and he let out a little sneeze. She smiled.

"Such a sprite fellow for being a few weeks old," Scar said in a low purr. Even if he was the spawn of the man she hated so much, even if she wished that the little bastard had never been born, she was intrigued by his sudden interest in her. He had practically forgotten about the toys and warm blankets and channeled his energies onto this pretty stranger. His little body could not contain his excitement. He wasn't crying at all. He was not looking to the side. He was focused on her. When she moved, he kicked enthusiastically. Scar's eyes widened when she saw that he was reaching up for her.

It was then that she realized that he wanted to be held.

Scar was taken aback. She only came here to study the little hairball and leave. She was not here to socialize. She was not here to make contact. And yet, just like business opportunities arriving at the most surprising of times, she thought that perhaps there could be a benefit if she got to 'know' her new nephew. For one, he wasn't screaming in her ear. He was quietly marveling at her. Although she did not completely count on it, she felt it was worth the gamble if Mufasa saw that his son had taken a liking to her. Then, if all went according to plan, that brute would lay off of her. If his son would serve as a barrier between them, then perhaps this little side project would serve to be fruitful. This was not about getting 'closer' to the family. This could be seen as a bargaining chip, a wild card. If they could see that little Simba had entrusted himself to her, someone who he had never seen before, then they would all back off, especially him.

She got a blanket and put it over her shoulder just in case he would babble and drool as she did not want him ruining her new outfit.

"Look how everyone worships you, as if you were the sun incarnate and yet, the only thing you care about is your next feeding," Scar sighed. She touched the clothing material. As she did so, Simba grabbed one of her very long digits. She kept her pointed nails away from him, lest one of Mufasa’s security members or someone within the family would take note. She had to play her role. There was an audience at hand and she had to play her cards right.

"Is there something troubling you, my love?" Sarabi spoke up.

"No trouble, just…..observing something unusual," Mufasa replied. Sarabi looked at his general direction. She wore a deep blue gown which complimented her taupe colored skin.

"Could it be? But your sister hates these types of events," she exclaimed. She was a little concerned, a little worried. Most of all, she was confused. She knew that Scar was never the warm type. However, one should not look a gift horse in the mouth. Simba had stopped crying and Scar was doting on him. That was not a bad thing.
"Perhaps she had a change of heart. Look at him, Sarabi. Look how calm he is. Look how quiet he is," he noted.

"Perhaps this is a sign. Perhaps this means things will change. If our son blesses her with his acceptance then surely this means that all is forgiven?" The sandy haired woman said in a sweet tone. Mufasa pulled her close.

"Yes, the ancestors are smiling down us now, Sarabi. This is a blessing."

Scar turned towards her brother and sister in law. She turned to Mufasa and gave him a knowing smile. No words were exchanged between the partied and yet they may as well have been communicating in a silent language.

Mufasa's eyes widened, unable to process this sudden and rather pleasant turn of events.

Scar in the meantime reflected back onto a distant memory, one that occurred between them.

It was one that brought up the bitter-sweet fruit within her memory.

One of that could have been; a demon from her past.

As she looked down at him, she frowned. This was not supposed to be. This was completely unfair. She was perfectly in place as second in command and next in line should anything happen to her brother but as of now, she had extra variable to deal with. To add to it, this monkey wrench in her plan was getting attached to her. This attachment brought back memories that she buried that were now bubbling up from beneath the surface. She cleared her throat and turned Simba to her. It was time he knew about the family business….and its little secrets.

"Look at all of this. All of this is yours and yet, do you even care?" She hissed. She let him play with the locket on her necklace. It was in the shape of a lion's head. He tried to chew on it but she pulled it away and wiped it. He then began to tug at her hair. "Your daddy is a very powerful man and you will be following in his footsteps. You will own this entire gravy train and yet you will have not lifted a finger to have earned it. Tell me, is that fair?" She held him up like a toy doll. He stared blankly at her before breaking into a fit of giggles.

He was already fawning over her and he enjoyed her company. He was already stuck to her like a honeybee to a flower. Or tar on a designer dress.

"Would you like to know a little secret? Do you promise to keep it between us?" Scar said in a low tone, noting how Simba grabbed and tugged at her long hair. It was so soft. It was his new favorite plaything. "Your daddy isn't the shining beacon of perfection he wants us to believe." Simba gazed nonchalantly as he ran his chubby little hands through her hair. She held Simba up. "You will grow fat on the richest meats and sweetest desserts, you will be told to stay away from certain areas and you will grow ignorant of the family secrets because your little ears aren't supposed to be privy to such details. You will be sheltered." Simba ran his little fingers along her hair and clothes before doing the impossible and making himself comfortable. He rested his little head onto her chest.

He was stuck on her.

Forever.

She despised him.

She hated him for that.
"Let me tell you another little secret." She held him up so that he was looking at her. His fat little cheeks were red and his eyes were transfixed onto her. She wanted to scrub that image from her head. It reminded her of what could have been and what almost was.

"You were not the first," she whispered. "There was someone else before you."

"Where did I put them?"

Mufasa asked as he shuffled through the papers. Normally, he would have Zazu do this sort of work but since it was Zazu himself who asked for a favor, the "King" felt that he was obliged to help his advisor for without his help, he would not run his 'kingdom' as smoothly. To an outsider, Mufasa's position was a venerable one. He was the owner, the de facto ruler of this little kingdom called Pride Inc. He had the privileges of the best parking spots, the best deals at expensive restaurants and opportunities that granted him access to exclusive associations.

But that was only a facet, a small component of who he really was.

He understood that being an owner of a company did not translate to resting on one's laurels. Mufasa took his job quite seriously. There were eight AM meetings set up with various representatives, meetings with the workers to boost morale and get a report or two in. It was certainly no bed of roses. One of the goals that he stressed since taking the reins was that it was important to build relationships with your peers and competitors. Just because one sold a similar product did not mean that there could not be a mutually beneficial relationship. Perhaps there could be an arrangement. A drive, a charity ball, something that he could do that could create that connection with the other party. His plans worked and thanks to his generous checks to various organizations, he became the media darling.

But not without a price.

Deadlines, new projects, new challenges equated to new problems. His work as ruler was never done and he made sure that he would deliver his services, rain or shine and with a smile.

But for now, he needed those reports.

"Something troubling you, dear brother?" A soft feminine voice announced from behind him. It was a stinging and yet very familiar intonation that he was especially intimate with.

"Nothing that I cannot handle, Scar," Mufasa said with a huff in his breath. Her. She just had to catch him in a most inopportune time. He turned to see that she was leaning against the door, looking like the proverbial cat who ate the canary. "I can handle this perfectly well." Mufasa said with a slight warning tone in his voice. It was not that he hated his baby sister. He just hated it when she saw him like this. Unprepared and lagging. It was unprofessional.

"So I see. It seems to be that you are the one who is struggling quite a bit in that department," she cooed softly and walked in.

Long shapely legs were connected to the heels. Her heels were pointed and with each step, Mufasa heard her echo. She wore a peach colored suit that was accented with black lace and gold. She was a marvel straight out of an interview for W magazine. "I just came to tell you that your coffee is ready. I needed to make some tea and we are out of honey," she retorted.
"I'll send one of my gophers for that." Mufasa replied sharply, not giving his full attention to her.

"Just tell me where it is. Oh, better yet, why don't you get it yourself? You are always stressing the importance of egalitarianism I am sure it would please your inferiors greatly if they saw you fetch something as mundane as coffee," she sneered. Mufasa glared at her before he continued with his administrations.

"What are you looking for? It must be awfully pertinent. Perhaps I can help?" She walked up behind him. As she did so, she could not help but create a wave of undulation as she did. She was the polar opposite of her brother who was rigid, tall, and bold. She was slinky and mysterious. It was hard to believe that they shared genes.

"I'm just looking for those morning reports." Mufasa said firmly.

"Oh? I thought you hated those things. In fact, I once found a whole wastebasket full of them. I just assumed that Zazu was working on his bad puns and did not like what he had prepared, as always" she said as she sipped her chamomile tea.

"It's not for me, it's for Zazu. He wants them." Mufasa declared. He shuffled over some binders and began to seep through them. Scar let out a mock gasp.

"Since when did you care so much about that fool? He's only your underling, your little bird and yet he acts as if he owns fifteen percent of the stocks." She purred deeply. Scar never resisted making pointed jabs at those Mufasa surrounded himself with. She hated that little man. He was small and funny looking and yet he carried himself with the same arrogance as if he was from the family. Scar would take any opportunity she could to make the short and stout man with the large nose feel small and uncomfortable. She never hesitated to use her nails to emphasize a point. Zazu always had a look where he feared that she was going to poke one of his eyes out.

"He gets the job done and he is very dependable. Unlike you, Scar," Mufasa declared with a sharp intonation. He was a friend, close confidante and unofficial second in command. Scar had risen from her previous position and she would use her family connection to get what she wanted. It was not unusual for her to make some workers nervous and cry. Zazu would do a marvelous job in cheering them up and boosting their morale. Scar never liked Zazu. He had no sense of self and he always walked around like he had a pen stuck on his backside.

"Perhaps I can prove myself, brother. The little problem is that you won't let me. Odd considering that you find me very useful in other places," she said suggestively. It was a tone that Mufasa tolerated but deep down he despised it. It was her passive aggressive behavior that was one of the catalysts of their arguments.

"I don't know what you are implying and I do not think I like it, Scar. Unless you have something extremely important to tell me than I will ask that you leave. If you have anything that you would like me to look at I suggest that it can wait until around sometime in the afternoon." Mufasa said with a booming voice.

She did not seem particularly fazed by his prompt response. Anyone else would have run out with sweat running down their foreheads, wondering if they were about to lose their job even though they had no reason to do so as Mufasa was generous. That did not mean that he could not be intimidating or imposing when he could be. Scar was used to this. She shot him a venomous smile.

"Oh, goody. In the meantime I shall practice my curtsy." She said with a flick of her hair. Mufasa always hated when she was so scathing. Now he had two problems in his hands.
“He needs them for records. That is all.” Mufasa stated simply. He was usually playing referee between the two of them. He loved them both equally. He depended on Zazu for filling him in on the pertinent details of the company. He had an unusual way of showing it. He often made a little song with bad puns and timing but if it made him happy, ‘The King’ would let him serenade him like a court jester. Zazu was professional, cordial and prompt. He was the model of discipline that the company needed.

Scar was….Scar. She was his flesh and blood, first and foremost. He could not just throw her out. Though he knew that Zazu would love nothing more than to see her pack her belongings and walk out with her cardboard box he knew that it would never happen. Mufasa could not just do it. He was as obligated to her as he was to his 'kingdom' and right now, he owed it to Zazu to find those old morning reports. He then went under the desk to pull out more files.

"Did it ever occur to you, dear brother than you can never do anything with that bird nosed idiot?" She observed. She made herself comfortable on top of the desk by crossing her legs, sitting foreword and eying her brother's backside as he struggled. Oh, what a treat it was to see the proud King break a sweat. Mufasa pulled back to glare at her.

"What are you implying, Scar?" He said with a low and tense tone. She did not seem particularly threatened. In fact, she only made herself more comfortable where she was sitting.

"I am just saying that it looks as if you are more dependent on that bird than he is to you. On the papers, it is you who determines how much he gets to take home and yet you seem high and bothered if he doesn't get those stupid reports." She observed pointedly. He stood up and he met her eye to eye.

"He asked me as a favor, Scar and as his employer, I owe it to him," Mufasa said grimly. "You seem so tense, as if the world will fall on you if you don't get Zazu what he wants." She said in a tone just barely above a whisper.

"Zazu does a lot for this family. I will go above and beyond if need be. Unlike you and the types you consort with, I take the time to make sure my employees are accommodated. Has it not occurred to you that that it is a way to ensure loyalty? Is that not what you seek, Scar?" Mufasa countered. Even in a low tone, Mufasa was commanding.

Scar laid down one final chip on the table. As much as Mufasa liked to give off the image that he was the 'King of the Pride', he was sorely dependent on others to do his work. He just refused to admit it.

"I just don't understand why you are so desperate for his approval? Can't the King take his own messages? Does he need to be so high up and untouchable that he needs an advisor to do the menial work? Delicate balance, indeed!" She hissed dangerously. She stood up and began to walk towards the door.

If there was one thing Scar was good at, it was in putting monkey wrenches in concrete ideas. She was also good at putting doubt in one's head.

Mufasa hated that. She got up to walk away. She turned her back against him and she looked back at him defiantly.

"I suppose I shall get back to my work. I cannot distract the King, especially when he has no useful tasks for me."
Before she continued, the door closed. Winded violently, she was pushed back onto the desk. Mufasa slammed her down hard. Her back arched and she clenched her teeth. She looked up and saw Mufasa loom over her, pinning her down.

"Is that a challenge?" Mufasa said with an angry voice. She grabbed at his wrist and tried to move around but to no avail. Mufasa was three times larger than she was and all muscle. She was slim and was no match to her more powerful brother. She began to writhe underneath him.

"That temper of yours, brother. It's very unbecoming," she tensed.

"This would not be a problem if you learned to control your tongue. I would appreciate it if you learned to control these filthy words." Mufasa warned her.

"Cat got your tongue, brother?" Scar said breathlessly. "Why are you so afraid of my words? They cannot cut you unless you let them. They cannot harm you."

It would be so easy just to end it there but he knew he could not. One mark on her and he could not live with himself. It would be easy to blame it on anger but that was the coward's way out. As much as he wanted to, he could not hit her. He could not cause her bodily harm. That could accomplish nothing and he could not live with himself if he crossed that line. Hitting her would not prove anything. Even if she were a man, Mufasa would still dare not strike Scar. It was abusive and cowardly. Most of all, it was beneath him.

He just hated Scar's power of suggestion. If it were any other way, they could have a stronger foundation. On the outside, they were united in front. They were the prodigies of what their father built. A brother and sister team united to represent The Pride, as the media called them. They were a shining example of hard work and the fruits of their family's legacy. Over the years, the media picked up on the subtle differences such as Scar being the private of the two whilst Mufasa was the more outgoing one and therefore the 'public face' of Pride Incorporated.

Behind closed doors however, it was anything but sunshine and roses.

Secrets, lies, deception and a shaky foundation were at the root between the high powered due of Pride Incorporated. They had a PR team that was strong and rivaled that of Khan Industries which was rumored to be behind some very sensitive acts such as the oil embargo where Shere Khan gouged prices. Mufasa prided himself on being the 'better' and more humane of the companies and he did whatever he could to maintain that public façade. It was just trying when you had a sister who insisted on making you doubt your leadership skills. He worked hard to build that image: Control the company's reputation, to be mindful of shares, to be aware of the latest technological advances and all other things that owners had to be mindful of. That would make anyone stressful and even snap. He was not going to do that.

And all this over a bunch of stupid reports he hated hearing.

He let her go. He had her firmly gripped by her hair which was as long and beautiful like silk. He slowly loosened his grasp on her. He would have Scar remember the mercy he had shown her.

"I - I'm sorry," he said finally.

Scar hissed angrily. For a long while, the two of them stared at one another. They were engaged in a private argument that never seemed to end.

It was always a battle between them, a cold war that never stopped. Their relationship was strained ever since they were kids. Mufasa tried to bridge himself more closely to her over the
years but she always rebuffed or kept her distance. Even during their most intense and passionate moments, there was this clash between them. It would be there so long as they were both standing. Mufasa using his brawn and strength to keep her in check whilst Scar used her words to get him to do what she wanted. On the surface and to people like Zazu, it was Mufasa who was in control but the truth was anything but crystal clear.

There was always a clandestine conflict between them. One that was just as full of hate as there was passion between them.

"Are you afraid that I will tell Sarabi about your affair with Sarafina and her friends?" Scar said with a snide smile. Mufasa looked at her with intensity. "They are awfully close, wouldn't you say?" She tried to shift under Mufasa's intense weight but she couldn't. He was firmly keeping her in her place.

"Even if you did, she would not believe you."

Scar had gotten wind of them when she saw Sarafina place a hand on her stomach whilst talking to him. The detail was too much to resist. Still, Mufasa did not seem particularly fazed by the confession. In fact, he was nonchalant about it.

"Even if I did not say anything, brother, it's enough to kill you on the inside. You don't want anyone else knowing about your little secret, eh?" She declared. Mufasa looked over to the wide window in front of his desk. It had been shut by the blinds, already ensuring them their privacy. He saw that the blinds were open a little bit. He took note of the workers below. All of them were oblivious to the private skirmish he was dealing with. They were there to punch their cards, collect their pay and go home. Although they were far below him in rank, they were in some sense lucky to have such simple lives in comparison to his. Though he knew he was blessed to be handed the position he was given, for a moment, he considered trading just to get away from this.

How many of them had to deal with the pressures of the company? He saw the problems as magnified. They only saw one facet of the company. What they had was miniscule to what he did. He had to worry about things months, years in advance. They only had to worry about production for that week or month. Their stresses, their worries could not compare to his.

How many of them had to deal with someone like Scar on a daily basis? How many of them had to deal with a sister who knew how to push their buttons that went beyond childhood teasing and developed into a full blown affair that he wanted to keep under wraps? They were lucky in that they did not have to deal with someone like her on a daily basis from the most professional of matters to the most private ones.

And that is what made them so blessed.

"I don't know what it is that you want. Money? Jewelry? Another car? You are more high maintenance mistress than sister, Scar." Mufasa huffed, almost defeated.

"Odd, considering that you treat me more like one and you show no signs of stopping. I should call the police and tell them that you raped me, you dirty old man!" Scar hissed teasingly.

Mufasa curled his fingers.

"If you did, you would have done that a long time ago. Now tell me, Scar. Why haven't you? It is because you are just as complicit about this. It is because you are just as guilty."

Mufasa had uncovered her bargaining chip. Scar had other cards up her sleeve and she would
play her game wisely. He may have disarmed her after she mentioned the affair. Poor Sarabi. While she was busy hosting parties for her husband or running fundraisers for the local children’s hospital, he was seeing her own best friend behind her back. While Scar did not have any sympathy for the ‘trophy wife’, Scar was just disgusted in seeing another one of Mufasa’s sins out in the open with no repercussions.

Still, it was the price to pay for no one could keep up the perfect façade for so long. Even Mufasa had weaknesses and they would manifest in various ways, most notably in women. When none of them were available and when he could, Scar would be his target.

As much as Scar hated feeling his mass move and writhe on top of her, she tolerated it on account that Mufasa garnished from the company's profits to pay her far more than she deserved. And as much as she hated admitting it, Mufasa knew her weak spots and he could play her body like a Stradivarius.

"If I am just as guilty, dear brother is that why you punish me? As a way to deflect from the feelings you wish to purge yourself of?" She said in a soft voice. She walked up behind him. Two opposing figures, male and female, light and dark, the sun and the moon glared at one another. Mufasa heard the echoes of her confession in the back of his mind. They were just words but they held a grain of truth to them, as much as hated admitting it.

In public, Mufasa was the power. In private, she controlled him. Their intimate relations were more than just a power trip. They were a psychological game. It was these little imperfections that Scar took note of and savored. When Mufasa was angry and would take it out on her in whatever shape or form, it was not him who was in control. He used her as a cushion. He used her as a way to allay his frustrations. He was a slave to his own anger, his disappointments no matter how great or small. He was addicted and he would use her as a shield. She was his outlet. It was so obvious that "The King" was out of control that he could not see the bleeding obvious in front of his nose. That is why he sought solace in dominating others. He just preferred rationalizing it a certain way and God help you if you pointed out a blemish.

That is why Scar could not help it. It would mean punishment but if it meant knocking her brother off of his pedestal and for a moment notice that not all was perfect in his little kingdom be it with others or within his own private Hell then it was certainly worth it.

They were both standing in the darkness before Scar nudged him to take a seat. Mufasa noted how deeply she was breathing. He could barely detect a hint of that expensive perfume she always wore. He could not help but notice how weak and helpless she looked lying beneath him. It was not an unusual sight between them and Scar did not seem particularly livid. On the contrary, she seemed to be actually enjoying this set of circumstances. It was this way in how their angry and bitter arguments would dissolve into something else.

"Forget about Zazu, you have other subjects that need your pertinent attention." She said with a sigh. She ran her hand across his mane. Mufasa barely flinched before pulling away and did as she ordered. Mufasa sat down and looked elsewhere but never directly at her.

He did not want to argue or fight anymore for that would prove or solve nothing. He only did as she asked because he did not want anymore conflict between them.

"I know of a local youth chapter that is in dire straits. Write them a check and you will have them eating right out of your paws." Mufasa could not deny that Scar had a silver tongue.

"You know that I do not consort with that trash," Mufasa said with a deep gruff. His sympathy could only extend so far. He did not take particularly kindly to those he saw as 'wasteful' and
irresponsible.

Scar walked around him and stretched luxuriously on his marble desk. She was graceful and fluid. Her angular figure rested in repose before him on his desk. Anyone else would have demanded that she get off. He didn't. It did not help matters when he saw her undo a button on her blouse, giving him a tiny glimpse of what she had and what he could not get enough of.

"It's never wrong to mingle with the commoners, brother. Isn't that what you always preach?"

Scar was a hard person to read. He knew that she despised him with all her being and yet, when she wanted to, she would turn on the charm. She would pout. When she was especially cunning, she would jut her hips out. It was then that Mufasa noticed that she was tugging at the strap from beneath her blouse.

"There is a difference between being caught in dire straits and trading one's food stamps for trivialities," Mufasa replied.

"Are you suggesting a background check, dear brother? That would be highly Fascist of you, now wouldn't it?"

Scar could see that he was tense and rigid. She knew that this was her brother's way of trying to maintain the last bits of control because he was overdoing it. Whenever he raised his voice or became particularly aggressive, it was because he was overcompensating something. She could see that he was hanging on to the last remnants of control and he was slowly slipping away. There was only one way that she could tame the wild beast. She could see that he was territorial and protective. When he was especially quiet, Scar had to play extra close attention for that was when he was at his most vulnerable, his most sensitive. Mufasa kept looking at her as she got down on her knees.

"Your heart's beating so fast, I wonder if there is a stampede in there," she smiled devilishly.

He was composed. Controlled. She sniffed him out like a predator. Mufasa then saw that she had reached behind and without struggling, he heard a snap. She then pulled out a lacy garment from under her blouse. Mufasa'a heart began to race. She then began to unbutton her blouse, giving him a preview of those beautiful feminine mounds beneath the garment. She was teasing him. Damn her.

"You drive a hard bargain," Mufasa said with a tense cough, taking special note when he saw that she began to undo his belt buckle.

"You have no idea," she said with a smile before she leaned in.

It was always like this, this eternal dance in the dark between them. He was her protector and at the same time, her own oppressor. She in return was his underling, his object, his second in command. She also tugged at the invisible puppet strings that were attached to him. Strings that no one saw but they themselves did.

They never used protection. It was never necessary on account of her being on the shallow end of the gene pool.

She took them to a more shady part of the family compound. It was stony and the surrounding area was grey and was covered with some vines. It was the perfect place for a private conversation.

"Your daddy has a very unique way to get what he wants out of people. Some call it persistence. Others see it as something else entirely." She murmured in a low tone. Simba was still, listening
closely but it wasn't the words that calmed him. It was her soothing tone. He was her captive audience and even if he did not comprehend the depth of such words, she would make him listen.

Simba looked ahead. His little mouth opened wide slightly. He looked as though he was spellbound into the admission, not really paying attention to the pertinent details. She knew that would be a habit of his when he got older. The perfect scapegoat, she thought.

Even if he was not born from her, he was still bound to her by blood. Moreover, he seemed to have entrusted his faith and dependence onto her. Scar could not help but to relish that. He had surrendered himself to her. She had heard that even Sarabi had trouble keeping him quiet. It wasn't a maternal bond that occurred between them. Scar took delight in this newfound 'relationship' because of the power she had managed over him. He was utterly dependent on her. He was so defenseless and helpless.

She smiled down at him. On the outside, it looked like a picturesque image of ideal motherhood. THAT was the image she tried to capture and imprint. It was just another move in a complex game of chess, one that she had to distill, one that would take years to bear into fruition.

She never saw herself as maternal as the idea of children repulsed her. They were another project that would take eighteen to twenty five years to train and the results are not always guaranteed. She saw how other women doted on their children. They were like precious little trinkets that breathed, walked and talked. They were extensions of themselves. Scar could never see herself tied down with such responsibilities. They were so limiting and they distracted one from bigger ambitions.

And yet, there was a very odd appeal to motherhood and it did not have anything to do with the bonding experience or the familial connection. It had a lot to do with something far bigger and far more ambitious.

It wasn't so much as the maternal aspect but the power that got her attention. To have someone depend on you and at the same time fear you. That was the kind of control that Scar lusted after. She had three of her 'own' but it was not the same if it was your own flesh and blood. Simba was bound by blood and that was made the establishment of a relationship far more important to her now. She had to build that bridge of trust. It was an investment, a gamble that she was willing to take. This project would not involve contracts or deadlines and yet she had a clear timeline of what could happen. She knew it was sordid but it was the only way she would be given her dues.

She saw how little Marie cherished her mother. The way she would fawn over Duchess and would do as she said with minimal effort. Her brothers would also listen, albeit after a firm tone. They would listen.

She also saw how Zira mad managed to put the fear of God into her kids. Now that was another example as to why she did not wish to have any and yet, she could not help but take note of how Zira's own children would take after her. They, unlike Duchess' litter actually feared their mother.

Scar remembered the day she was interviewed. She was obviously working class and tried her hardest to appear professional but no matter how much make up she applied or how much brown nosing she put out, nothing could cover up the scraggly and commoner background from seeping out from her. It was not the clothes or the amount of jewelry that could make one transform and be 'classy' or 'refined'. There was a difference between the privileged whom came from old money or were nouveau riche and could afford fine luxuries versus the sophomore who saved up and bought the Chanel purse. A sharp cocktail dress did not automatically equate to sophistication. It was all in outlook and the way one carried oneself.

Zira was an emaciated and overworked woman who was just as ambitious as Scar but was never
really as subtle as she was. Mufasa took pity and hired her. Zazu was not sure and he looked at her with a suspicious eye. Scar was the deal breaker. She hired Zira on account that she had that kind of personality who would do their best to please their superiors. She was not completely stupid and unlike the others, Zira seemed to have goals in mind. It was not enough to threaten Scar but it was enough to keep Zira close. Because Scar was the tie breaker, Zira became especially close to Scar. She was like a big sister whom she admired and worshipped. The dark haired woman savored the attention, even if Zira seemed a tad obsessive. Nonetheless, she was the type who would hang onto her every word and pour her heart and soul to her when no one else seemed to care. Mufasa was always away at some important business meeting and Zazu always seemed to have a convenient excuse to stay away from her.

Over lunch, Scar learned about Zira's history. She had three children, two boys and a girl. The eldest had some sort of developmental problems. He could not be trusted with babysitting and his spine was crooked. The second one was a girl and she seemed to have a mouth on her. The youngest was the one Zira fawned over. He was doted on. She showed Scar a picture.

"He looks like you!" Zira would scream with excitement. Her voice suggested that she was a chain smoker. She needed a distraction from her brood.

Scar did not really care for family talk. She never imagined herself being part of a group of women whose lives revolved around having babies and have conversations that centered around them. To her, there was more to life than that. That was not to say that she did not want to have children some day. She just had a different concept of what it meant to be a mother.

To women like a Duchess and Sarabi, they were their darlings. They were her little angels that they would guide. They had a sense of 'purpose' but it was vague and sugarcoated with sweetness and smiles.

Then, you had types like Zira. To her, children were a means to an end. They were the kind who would use their kids as charity cases. She remembered how Zira used the 'single mother' card and she played that violin perfectly. The fact that she was scrawny must have tugged especially hard at Mufasa's heart strings, he could not help but offer her a position.

Scar did not share either sentiment. If she were to have children, the purpose would be far more selfish….and far more meticulous, tenacious even. She did not want to be like those single mothers who had kids because society dictated it. She certainly did not want them for 'bonding'. To her, they would be an extension of who she was. They were insurance. They would carry her name, spread her genes. This was not about expectation or 'tradition'. This was about her lineage, her line of descendants that would grant her legitimacy and access to the family fortune.

Scar looked down when she felt Simba tugging a little too hard at her blouse. It turned that he was tugging at her blouse not out of curiosity but because of something else. He had parted the clothing. He wanted access to something.

He was hungry.

She held him up and gave him a disgusted face.

"You are such a naughty boy!" She said in a loud and mock fashion.

"Considering whom he shares his genes with, the resemblance is uncanny," a deep male voice spoke up from behind her.

"Shere Khan. How kind of you to come," Scar said formally.
Finally, a break from this dull and dreary environment.

"If this was my soiree, I would have trimmed down the guest list. I notice that your brother isn't very choosy about who he fraternizes with," Shere Khan observed pointedly.

"That may be so but if he thought like you, he would not have invited us and we….would not be having this little reunion." Scar countered with a dangerous smile.

"You have a point," Shere Khan mused before pulling out a large Cuban.

"You do well to put that away, unless you wish for Zazu to nag you." Scar warned. Shere Khan answered with a strong puff.

"I made a generous donation to one of your brother's charities and he seems to be still riding high on the partnership you helped to coordinate. I also doubt that you wish to be carrying him in your bosom while we play catch up."

Scar smiled. Simba was sucking his thumb and his eyes began to droop. She set him down onto his cot and joined the mogul of Khan Industries.

_Shere Khan isn't what anyone would call a 'relationship' type, at least not in the conventional romantic sense. He understood the inner workings aspects of a business relationship such as deadlines, expectations and paperwork, things which were on a much different plane than in a personal one. For one thing, the former placed emphasis on figures and statistics. Cold facts and numbers were things that he was far more intimate with than candle lit dinners and endearments found in a Valentine's Day card. He was well versed with the facets in a working partnership. There were demands and obligations on both sides. There was commitment and there were expectations. He was comfortable with the cold and impersonal aspects of business and working relationships because all parties were focused on the same goal. It was clear and concise as to what was expected from all sides involved. Depending on the depth and severity of each project or commitment, the demands could range from just a few lines to a few pages. What mattered to him most was that there no grey areas. Everything was concrete and expected. There were no variables such as sentiments. There were too many risks involved. A personal romantic relationship was a foreign concept to him. It was water best not treaded.

Still, it would be wrong to say that he did not enjoy the company of others. Like the consummate tiger, Shere Khan would blend in the company he kept. Said what was necessary, nothing more and nothing less. He did not like mingling with the lower classes because they would not know the difference between Manet and Monet. He was able to keep a composed face and feign interest in the personal lives of stock profilers and share holders but this was not done because he wished to fraternize with them. It was never personal or emotional. It was always clinical and cold.

Shere Khan would be invested in someone so long as they were useful to him. He would ask you for something and when he did, one could not help but feel that they were special, that they were the chosen one for when Shere Khan requested a favor for you, it had better be pristine, even if it meant fetching him a cup of coffee. After they were no longer useful to his services he would send them on their way. There was no point in keeping them around longer than necessary. That would have been like keeping milk well past its expiration date. This was the approach he took when it came to his private life.

When it came to female company, he was selective.
He preferred the classy and private type. He detested bad manners, loud obnoxious behavior and binge drinking hence why he never associated with starlets even if they expressed an interest. It was like downgrading from a BMW to a Dodge.

When he found a companion for the evening, weekend or vacation getaway, he would lavish them with gifts. This did not mean that he would stay around forever. It was just his way of being gentlemanly while he enjoyed their brief courtship. He turned to the particular breed of woman he was attracted to knowing full well that the contract would never be permanent, only temporary.

Commitment was the four letter word to him. He liked doing what he wanted when he wanted and how he wanted it. He was not one to be home at a certain time unless his leg was acting up. He ran on his own watch. That was his philosophy. He answered to no one. This made him look aloof, cold. Untouchable.

Ironically, this also made him very desirable.

The concept of a long term romantic relationship much less a marriage did not appeal to Shere Khan because there were so many unrealistic expectations.

On the outside, marriage was not that different from a business contract. To have and to hold, in sickness and in health and all of that. There were bold points, there were expectations but at the heart of it all, they were just flowery words. Marriage was a contract that could be made null and void whenever one party wanted. Usually it was the female and thanks to a little thing called alimony, she could walk away with half his fortune without actually lifting a finger in creating it in the first place. A 'long term' relationship carried the same expectations but without the legal binding. Still, he had no use for that kind of headache. He enjoyed his dalliances whenever he could. They were never permanent and Shere Khan would never agree to something if he could not put it on a piece of paper.

His private life was the subject of much investigation. He was officially designated as a bachelor. Shere Khan was just careful with whom he had his affairs with.

There was one such woman who was his match.

Like him, she was of a high class background. Well educated, traveled, versed in Machiavelli, Latin and the senses. She was very much his equal and this made her both desirable and very dangerous. He never forgot the first time he saw her. He was engrossed in a meeting with her brother. They had been discussing the tricks and trade of paid vacation and whether or not an employee earned it or was entitled to it. He found Mufasa to be a little too bleeding heart for his taste. It was then that he caught sight of her.

Her knowing eye hinted at a common belief, that they were above the mere lower classes. Business was about power, not egalitarianism. It was about being ahead of everyone else, of having first choice of cut in the meat of commerce not so called equality between the workers and the haves.

He was careful to not be aggressive in pursuing her. He was interested but when it came to the hunt, he followed the rules of the tiger. To stalk skillfully and silently without giving oneself away. Let the prey come to you before you pounce.

Ironically enough, it was she who initiated the physical activity.

It was in an elevator, not long after he first met her. They had shared the car with a few other business associates.
"Loved your presentation," she cooed softly.

"Charmed. I was afraid I was using too many intricate words there, judging by the faces I saw," Shere Khan said in a low drawl.

"Anyone who can quote Hobbes in such a way will always have good marks in my dossier," she said with a smile.

They were behind the others. He had to get down to the fifth floor and she on the second. Going by the number of buttons pressed, both would reach their destinations in approximately three minutes and forty two seconds. Shere Khan was staring ahead when he noticed that she shifted. Her arm was reaching toward him. His widened when he saw that she was aiming for a place lower than his chest. He did not flinch when he felt her hand on the area above his slacks. She reached lower and gave a firm grasp. Shere Khan did not move. He only stiffened his back, arching so as to accommodate the sudden jolt of pleasure. There were three more people in the elevator. If this was his building he would have yelled at them to leave.

Just as they were passionate in their views on Leviathan, they shared that intensity during their private moments. It was no secret that Shere Khan was the consummate alpha male and neither had any qualm when it was established that he would dominate. Without any effort, Scar submitted, yielding to the other as he explored the curves and proportions of her body. It was not that she was not interested in domination or power. On the contrary, she just had a slightly different interpretation of the word. In the conventional sense, power was about control, making the other submit, to order. And yet, was it not power when the 'dominating' party was doing all the work while the 'submissive' one was lying there, enjoying the fruits and labors of the other? Was it not power that she was one of the few who could tap into Shere Khan's baser instincts and turn him from complete gentleman into ravaging animal?

It was a thought she kept to herself while she savored his administrations. He on the other hand did not seem to care that he was catering to Scar's inferiority complex. Shere Khan knew that she was power hungry but for the moment, he decided to focus on the peaks and valleys of her flesh. They could discuss carnal politics later.

"I noticed how you were looking at Zazu at the meeting earlier. Friend of the family?" Shere Khan queried.

"He's just a little bird who likes to puff up his chest. Thinks too much of himself really!" Scar said breathlessly as she adjusted herself beneath his weight.

"Doesn't seem to have a spine of his own. Quite the brown noser, I might add." Shere Khan leaned down and gave Scar a gentle love bite while clasping a generous layer of her hair.

"You don't have an extra pair of hands to get you coffee or listen to your drone on about the employees?" Scar said between breaths. She clasped at the skin of Shere Khan's back, leaving a faint scratch trail along his skin. She winced and felt her lower regions flutter as she accommodated the man on top of her.

"I had one once. A complete snake." He said in her ear, hot breath made her shudder.

Scar arched her back. Her body was rigid with pleasure. She let out a content sigh when she felt him leave a small trail of kisses down her neck, chest and stomach.

"Do you have any underlings who do your dirty work?" Shere Khan said with a low growl in his voice. Scar winced as she felt him press down onto her.
“I don’t kiss and tell, Mr. Khan,” Scar purred.

“I find it hard to believe that a woman such as yourself does not have others at her beck and call.” Shere Khan rolled her over. She created distance between them by pressing her arms against his chest. She enjoyed relations for the release and companionship. What she hated was any sort of intimacy. There was a difference. For one, she hated ‘cuddling’.

“Then what do you call this?” She stopped and adjusted herself so that she sat down at a right angle on him.

“A getaway. A personal excursion.” He stated simply. He knew that she was more than a weekend distraction. He just wanted to see how she would react. He enjoyed seeing the little pouts she gave.

“A mere distraction?” She said pointedly.

“A favorite of mine,” he reached up and touched her neck. She let out a pleasurable moan and as she did so, he took the time to marvel at her naked beauty.

“Very well, then. If you must know, I do have some… mice.” She said in a low tone.

“I beg your pardon?”

“That’s what I call them. Street urchins I found and trained to hack and do other sorts of nasty little things for me.”

“And how do you pay them? I only pay by rate and only if they got the job done.”

“I pay them with meals, sometimes money.” She replied.

“Were they the ones who put you up with that nasty little incident with the 'The Bull', awhile back. I do believe I remember reading about that business.” Shere Khan observed.

Scar felt that it was getting too close for comfort. She had created an illusion and carefully chose her lies. She was observant as to who she let into her private world. She enjoyed going to bed with Shere Khan but that did not mean that he was supposed to be privy to every sordid little detail. In some things, he had to remain in the dark for she knew as well as he that they would put the knife in one another's backs to save their own skins. That was another thing they had in common aside from a sex life that was full of fireworks.

“Let’s not talk about things you have no idea about!” Scar hissed.

“If I am going to be sharing my bed with someone, I would like to know some of their idiosyncrasies.” Shere Khan said before pulling her close and ran a massive hand on her warm and dusky colored back. Scar let out a deep sigh upon feeling contact.

“Stick with me and you will never go hungry again,” she said in a passionate tone.

Shere Khan pinned her down before pressing his immense weight on top of her. Scar adjusted her legs so that his hips were between her thighs.

They had had other encounters in various places; private yachts, hotel suites during conference weeks, and the occasional desk. All the other times, they had managed to go undetected. Part of the thrill was knowing that they were in close proximity of others but even still, they managed to make sure that they would be undisturbed during their ‘private sessions’ together.
"I must take this call," Shere Khan declared upon pulling away from Scar's lips.

"Make it go to message," she demanded.

"It's an urgent call," Khan shot back. Scar hissed bitterly.

"You answer that and I will destroy that phone so that no trace of it will exist," she warned.

"Has anyone ever told you how lovely your complexion looks when you are angry?" Shere Khan teased. He grabbed his phone but Scar reached over.

"You are a busy man. Tell them that you were at an important engagement, in a manner of speaking," she said with a sensuous smile.

"You know I would love that but this is a private line for my closest of associates." Shere Khan declared.

Scar laid on her back. Her eyes were narrowed at Shere Khan, she thought of a million ways to demasculine him. It was one thing when her brother or his inferiors ignored her or did not take her as seriously as she felt that she deserved but to have Shere Khan of all people do such a thing tested her to the very core.

The conversation was a brief one.

"Yes? I see. Very well, I shall send the paperwork tomorrow."

For Shere Khan, there were never any vacations. Only small detours.

"It was her, wasn't it?" She hissed bitterly.

"I beg your pardon?" Shere Khan said nonchalantly as he sat up on the bed. Scar crawled up from behind him.

"I know it was her you were speaking to. The recent graduate, cum laude, business and economics with a background in English, Bengali and Hindi?" Scar said angrily.

"She was qualified and professional. She was a perfect addition to the company." Khan said pointedly. Scar's eyes tensed. He was so casual about it and it annoyed her.

"She is blue collar and an utterly saccharine goody goody," Scar declared angrily.

"Bagheera is a very dear friend of mine and a treasured colleague. I would appreciate it if you did not speak about her in such a derogatory manner."

She grabbed the sheets off the bed and covered herself. She was hoisting herself off the large canopy bed before Shere Khan stopped her.

"Let me go," she warned.

"This doesn't have to be this way," Shere Khan said in a cordial manner. He began to stroke her arm in a way to woo her back but she was having none. She was at a livid point.

"If it calms your nerves, I will have you know that she has completely rebuffed my advances. She is a professional. That is not grounds for calling her names." Shere Khan pressed his nose into her mane of black hair.
"You are like an expensive toy collector," Scar observed.

"I prefer the term connoisseur," Shere Khan muttered before planting a few kisses on her shoulder. Scar ignored him for a few seconds before turning to see him. Any other man would have stopped and ignore what he was previously doing but not him.

"Connoisseurs study art and collect Venetian masks. What do you collect?" Scar turned to him, letting the sheets fall.

"The finer and beautiful things in life," he said before pushing her down. She did not protest though a small part of her wanted to push him off of her for being inconsiderate. They were in the middle of something only to be rudely disturbed Then again, he was such a charmer and could make a woman quiver in wild ecstasy.

"You drive a hard bargain, Mr. Khan," Scar said in a shushed voice, looking down at the other man as he planted a trail on her slim form.

"You have no idea," he said.

She had to give Shere Khan credit. He never started what he could not finish.

A catering company provided fine culinary treats designed to please even the pickiest of palates. They both passed it by.

"Motherhood dons you well, Scar. Such a shame you have no one to pass on your secrets to."

Scar shut her eyes and concentrated. The words were pointed and she pushed the urge down.

"Well, it's not something within my near future. I am also not one to watch those horrid shows with those puppets," Scar countered.

"Hire a sitter. Then you would not have to deal with tot television." Shere Khan replied. He offered her a drink but she refused.

"And have someone else mold my progeny. I would rather fall off a cliff." The dark skinned woman countered.

"I see we diverge in parenting styles," the larger man observed. He wore a thick grey suit against a white shirt. His shoes were made of fine leather. What stood out was his tie. Although it was a bit bold, it certainly suited him. It was orange and it had black stripes.

Scar noted and smirked.

Although they were similar in many regards, ethics, food, culture, business and people, they were especially divergent in other ways. In many respects, he was the 'tiger', Lord of his domain, proud, bold and dangerous. She was a 'lion', she was bound by rules and social protocol.

"Do you have children, Mr. Khan? I never would have guessed," she replied coolly.

"None that I know of," he said dismissively. "And if I did have offspring somewhere out there, my involvement would be limited to monthly installments in an account."

A busboy had passed between them. Scar took a glass. It was a Spritz.

"Such a typical tiger. Did you know that lion fathers are said to be involved in their children's lives? Would you not wish to see your accounts mature, Shere Khan?" Scar said sweetly.
"I prefer my business ventures to last six months to two years. Not eighteen to twenty five." Khan said sharply.

"I can't imagine you pushing a swing set with a little Khan in it. Now that I think of it, the image is quite an amusing one." The lion-like woman beamed.

"And I could never conceive of an image of you holding a newborn babe making small talk and looking like the Black Madonna."

"Are you saying I would be a good mother, Mr. Khan? I am humbled, especially when it comes from someone who was close to his." Scar took a sip of her drink.

"I am saying that it would be unwise to arouse your wrath. Any children born from you should." He pulled her in close. "I noticed that you left early at the dual company lunch."

Scar stiffened. She kept her body composed but on the inside, she was on full alert. Her spine straightened subtly and her eyes narrowed. She had an appointment with Rafiki, the family physician for a….private consultation.

"I had a bad back." she said simply. He ran his hand across her face, pulling her intimately close.

"I had a doctor present at the luncheon. I could not help but notice your absence," he said in a low growl. What an odd gesture considering how casual he was when his second in command Bagheera called that day. She never forgave him for that one.

"I had an appointment." she stated simply. She dared him to broach the subject further. Instead, he pulled her close.

"I know you are very protective of your secrets but I wanted to tell you that a few weeks ago, I noticed at dinner that you had a sudden disinterest in oysters."

Scar's eyes narrowed. He had an eye for detail that was almost supernatural but those words weren't the only ones that shook her to the core.

"I know that you do not need aide in the pecuniary sense, but if you ever needed to discuss certain matters, don't hesitate to give me a call," he said vaguely.

He leaned in to kiss her. "I bid thee adieu. I must discuss affairs with your brother."

He walked away.

He knew.

It was a simple gesture but Scar had relived what she had pushed in the back of her mind.

The company picnic was about two and a half months ago. Her last encounter with Mufasa was three months earlier. It was a Tuesday. The Thursday of the following week, she and Shere Khan had a liaison at one of their favorite getaways. She was in town on a call and paid him a visit.

He was one of the few men who made her feel desired and wanted and did not feel dirty. They were not in an exclusive relationship and likewise he did not expect her to be for him either. He held her in regard on account of her connections, taste and convergent business views. She likewise thought he was handsome and well spoken. It would have been wrong to call it a 'relationship'. Dating was also a wrong word to describe their situation. It implied the usual charade of restaurants, movies and the usual banter that comes along. They did not have that. Nonetheless, he
enjoyed her company and he especially enjoyed bedding her. She on the other hand found him to be a worthwhile conversationalist and a well spoken man who was well versed in the classics, and a cunning linguist indeed.

"Ah, it is better to be loved than feared," an old voice said softly. Scar turned towards the direction of the sound. Of course, it had to be him and he had to be here.

"Rafiki," Scar said in a dim mood. Scar took another sip of her drink. She also felt that she needed a stiff one and on the rocks.

"Now, come, come. Dere is no need for dat. Dis is a happy dey." Rafiki said with his nauseating optimism. He took the drink from her hand.

"While I do appreciate your concern, Rafiki, I worked very late last night and I just saw someone I am not too fond of across the lawn by the veranda." Scar said with a sharp tongue.

"Dere are different ways to get rid of de sorrow. Personally, I recommend da yoga. It clears up de sinuses….and oder passages of de body." Rafiki said before breaking into a small fit of laughs. Scar rolled her eyes and tried to shift to the side. As well meaning as he was, Rafiki annoyed her to the very core. He never let go and when it looked like the conversation was finished, he managed to serenade someone with another tale. He knew better than to offer her opiates. Mufasa made it perfectly clear that he did not want his personal family doctor giving the guests 'visions', no matter how troubled they were but practical advice was perfectly fine. Warranted or not.

Scar sighed.

"Thanks for the tip."

She took care of her figure by drinking green tea, never eating after five PM and by doing calisthenics three times a week.

"Resentment is like drinking poison and waiting for de other person to die." The doctor said sharply.

Rafiki was the physical manifestation of everything Scar hated in people. His optimism cramped her style, he never meant what he said and most of all, his unorthodox views on psychology were borderline invasive. Because of this, she shut herself off from having any contact with him unless she had to.

Rafiki's role as family physician earned him a role in the family's inner circle. He was more than a family friend. He not only knew the cholesterol level of each individual or who had vision problems but he also took it upon himself to play the role of counselor. This grated Scar as whenever he tried to 'make invasive conversation' with her, it was like exposing a part of herself she wanted to keep under wrap in a lock and hidden from view. Scar saw it as invasive observation onto one's own life. She was the only one who saw the 'old fool' this way.

Mufasa saw him as valuable and irreplaceable. Not only was he a guide into the healing arts and medicine but he also served as a spiritual center. He would talk about things such as 'destiny' and 'fate' which Scar scoffed at. Those words did not exist in her vocabulary. Anyone who would listen would eat it up like a brainwashed cult member. As far as she knew, the future was determined by ambition, not by a bunch of stars. His role of jack of all trades in the family's secrets only added to Scar's dislike of him.

He was also an expert at herbal remedies and of other homeopathic arts. He was also like a
kaleidoscope and that in particular is one reason why Scar hated him because he was never direct. While some complained that they could never read the directions of their doctor's notes, with Rafiki you could not pinpoint him at all. She was the type who could read a person the same way a musician would read notes the way a musician would on a piece of parchment.

One could read someone else by looking at their facial expressions or ticks. Scar was able to pick up the nuances in actions that no one else would have noticed. At board meetings, she was especially adept at being able to tell who went to a better school based on their diction. That in turn would give her a glimpse of their history which in turn would give her a more detailed history than one would find in transcripts and certifications. Facts were intriguing but it was the emotion that she was more interested in. The weak spots and secrets that one would reveal by accident or in a non sequitur were the ones that she looked for.

As much as she wanted to, even she knew that it would be wrong to label him as a charlatan or a fortune teller. Just as he was a man of science, he was also a man of the stars. Just like science, there were rules in the stars just as there were on Earth and in medicine. There were patterns, logic and reasons behind the dance of the heavens as there was when two chemicals mixed in his granite bowl or beaker, given whatever he was doing at the moment.

What added to her resentment of him was not just her family's dependence on him. She too had in debt to his services and at least he did not air her dirty laundry to others. He knew every single detail of her life and yet, he never judged her.

"You should be celebrating with some'ting light," he pointed with his staff. He was not angry. He was never one to show strong emotion unless it was the obnoxious laughter of his. If he was disappointed or angry he hid it well.

"Just what the Hell do you want?" She hissed angrily.

"Dat anger of yours, it is like de scorching fire in de desert. Tell me, is dat productive?" The shaman-looking man replied back. Scar had no idea how old he was but he was sharp like a needle.

"When it comes to lazy employees or those who cannot follow a simple order, it gets the job done," she replied. She began to stir her straw in her drink in a circular fashion.

"Dat is another 'ting. In de professional worl, it is expected, like de crow of de cockerel in de morning. I am talking about what is under de wata," Rafiki said boldly.

Scar turned away from him. She could never escape his wandering eye for he was able to pick up whatever it is one said without them having to hear them speak first. Worse still, he had known her all her life. Throwing him a glass of champagne to his face would be unlady-like and unsporting. It would attract unwanted attention to her.

Just one day.

It was just one day to tolerate this idiot's madness.

She stood there. She did not wish to speak but if he did, she would let him but she would only let him hear what she would allow to cross her lips. She would carefully analyze her words and gestures before they would leave her mouth. With anyone, her lies were natural, an extended part of who she was. With him, it was like being a music prodigy trying to compete with a maestro.

"Now, WHO are you?" Rafiki said finally.

"Excuse me?" She hissed. "I did not come here for small talk! If you want to waste people's time I
suggest you look elsewhere, you old fool.” She threatened to leave before he managed to wring her back. He grasped at her shoulder gently.

"I asked a simple question and obviously de answer is 'no'. If you don't know who you are, how can you be sure where you are going?" Rafiki declared.

"I know perfectly well who I am, Rafiki. If you don't, I suggest you do an online search. It would do you a lot of good instead of carrying that big stick around to bash people over the heads with," she sneered darkly.

"If you knew perfectly well who you were, there would not be an imbalance of the de choleric and black bile!" The old master replied sharply. "In de public, you wear one face, the one that you want dem to see but dat is only a mask. The waters are boiling in de dark pit.” He observed. Scar did not look at him.

"Maybe the waters would not be boiling if I was not denied what was owed to me, Rafiki," Scar said in a tone full of contempt.

"You are a part of a very rich history, a tapestry. To demand more would be like adding sugar when the water already has honey!"

Oh, he had no idea.

"You, you have de traits. I can see….." Rafiki said gently. Scar turned to him, curious as to what exactly he meant. It was not exactly a compliment but it was not an insult for sure.

"Diplomacy, tact, grace. Things that could be yours if only you would apply dem in de right direction."

"Or, perhaps I am very content with myself and it is everyone else who moves to slow…." she said before taking a sip of her drink.

"De Earth moves very slow for a renegade star."

Renegade.

An anomaly.

A gaffe.

It was another reminder that she was an imperfection.

She noted the careful manner in which he crafted his words. Not pointed in which they came out as a criticism but at the same time, they contained a grain of truth.

He was telling her that she was like a painter trying to be a doctor. That did not mean that she was completely useless. It was his way of telling her that she was applying her strengths in the wrong direction. How lovely. Not only was he acting as another mouthpiece for her brother but he was talking down to her as if she was still in grammar school.

"You are like de fire. Always consuming. When unrestrained, it leaves a burning wake but in de right circumstances, it can bring warmth and happiness."

Now that was a truth that they both could agree with. Fire could not be contained, fire could not be controlled. It went wherever it wanted and it left its mark. It was a fitting description, one that she
was quite fond of. Mufasa was more grounded in reality he was still combustible at times. He was like Earth which had a special connection to the stars. While the stars gave Mufasa a more grounded personality, she was blessed with that of fire.

"You want, you constantly desire and dat is your curse," Rafiki said finally.

It was not a tone done in a superior manner. He just stated a simple truth, one that she was well aware of. Even in a productive environment where she held a lot more power, it would never be enough for her. It was insatiable. Because of this, Rafiki was never completely upset with her in the manner that her family would be. That did not mean that he was not above steering her in the right path whenever he could for even these sorts of things were out of his element. He only did it as a favor to Mufasa.

Scar never believed in fortunes or anything that was star crossed. If something was good, why not make it better? If something could be improved on, why not change?

If everything was fixed and inflexible, there would be no point in making an effort. If everything was handed down without quarrel, then they would all be objects or imprints in a 'tapestry'. They were figures with no influence or power to call their own, because it was dictated by the celestial bodies. History was never made with a passive state. Power was not power if it was just handed down. That was obligation and that was boring. What was power without control? What was power with sway? It was nothing more than a job.

"You are fire. Mufasa is de Earth. You may not be compatible but when you work together, it makes a harmony that is unparalleled."

If by harmony he meant Mufasa curling his toes and heaving while he was on top of her while she took pleasure in seeing that loss of control then he was right in the regard.

"You are de moon, he is de sun. Different function but you work beautifully together. You see, he lives in you."

She had heard the argument so many times. That she should be proud from coming such a rich heritage, that she shared the same blood with him. Blood or mystical mumbo jumbo, she always hated being reminded of that fact. She could never escape his shadow. Even when she was being interviewed by a photojournalist, her association with him would always come up. It was like being a politician's wife and having the other party acknowledge his gifts and his talents but never really her own.

"Come. Help me understand, only you can. Tell me, why so much anger and bitterness towards him?" He said gently. He was offering her a chance to explain. This time, he was no longer the scientist observing the flower. He was not going to nitpick and judge. It was quite an unusual sight. The fire woman and the man of the stars communicating in what looked like a peaceful cohabitation. Two beings from opposite ends of the spectrum on the same plane. To the public, it looked as if she was asking for tips on how to deal with her bad back and sensitive health but the awful truth was far from it.

"Heavy is the womb that bears the bitter fruit from the golden seed, Rafiki," Scar said finally. Rafiki always spoke in riddles and that always grated her. It was time that he figure this one out.

Anyone else would have asked for a more thorough explanation but having a talent for untangling the most complex of problems, Rafiki asked for none. He quietly accepted her explanation as if it were the final piece to the intricate puzzle. It was a riddle that was finally solved. He made a silent connection while others might have heard pretty words. It gave insight into her psyche unlike he
had understood before. This was also a revelation that gave him a glimpse into her broken and damaged mind.

While some saw her as Mufasa's evil twin or a bitter and angry, Rafiki only had pity and a small it of compassion. He understood where finally came from with those small little words. To undo the damage would be like trying to fix a broken and expensive vase….completely and utterly pointless. Now he understood why Scar kept distance from others. She was like an injured animal that snapped and bit as a way to defend themselves. This revelation also reminded Rafiki of a dark and ugly truth: that even the brightest lights casts the darkest shadow and that shadows themselves often held a wide collection of secrets. Rafiki's cardinal rule was to never focus on one aspect while dismissing the other for that would be like focusing on two trees while ignoring the entire forest.

He now understood why she was like an island stepping away from the mainland, but that did not mean that he condoned her choices. In the end, he had no say in how she ran her life. He could not be instrumental. As the gatekeeper and holder of many secrets, he too was bound by the rules.

A silent exchange occurred between them. They were both reflecting on that day when she needed his help. It was urgent but she was not frantic. As a professional, he kept his distance and did only as she asked. That was the last time they had ever had a peaceful evening between them.

Her face displayed no emotion. It was hard to get a reading. She wanted it that way.

He never questioned her choice or her history. She was entitled to her secrets and yet, he wanted to know more. He could not help but study and wonder about life's little secrets. From what he remembered, she sought him out to solve 'the little problem'. It was the one time where they were both on the same page. She needed his aide and he would provide, but not without giving her advice before giving into her wishes and did as she demanded. In the end, it was as if she plucked a pesky hair away. She got rid of the blemish. She was back to her normal life, free of this difficulty. She seemed to have shown gratitude, as much as her icy demeanor allowed it. It was just so tragic that it happened under such circumstances. That was the last time they ever 'communicated'.

He was more than happy to be of service.

He noted how she turned. He watched her as she looked down at Mother Rabbit and Duchess' children play together. Little chicks cheeped between the children who laughed and marveled at the little yellow balls of fluff. Rafiki dared not to broach the subject. From what he could see, Scar's cool eyes did not register anything other than a sense of cool detachment…..or immense loneliness.

It was time for him to back off and leave her be. Sarabi was walking towards them with a plate full of hors d'oeuvres.

"I am so glad you could come." Sarabi said warmly. Her sisters in arms were in the back helping to serve the other guests.

"Charmed," Scar said simply.


"That would be divine, but do you have any ambrosia? I heard it's to die for."
Author's end note: I originally planned this in August of last year as Robin Mask wanted me to explore a concept. Unfortunately, RL got in the way. I began writing this in January but working at night hindered the process. I hope I did my best and that you enjoyed it. If anyone was offended by any part of the material, I meant to cause no offense. I was originally going to expand on the abortion scene but decided to leave it vague and ambiguous as I don't want to be accused of endorsing one view or another. If you were in any way offended, I apologize. I plan to add more to this series.

This one is for Robin Mask and Freakuness. Hope you lovely ladies enjoyed it.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!