Time Passes, a New World Begins

by The_Night_Owl

Summary

When E193 escapes from captivity from the organization investigating paranormal phenomena and unidentified creatures kept hidden from the general public, she is thrown into a brand new world of unspoken rules and threats of unspeakable horrors. Trapped for an immeasurable amount of time, the world she had walked for centuries has changed, leaving her trapped within the past, will she be able to adapt quickly enough to survive? Who are her real enemies? And will she be able to survive within this new world?
Amaryllis miserable—thoroughly and utterly exhausted. She hadn’t stopped moving for what felt like weeks, although in reality it had been only a few days—three to be precise, but three days was a long way to go without food or rest of any kind. The closest she had been to a nap was when she tripped over a gnarled tree stump and face-planted onto the muck below, almost knocking herself unconscious right there and then. Yeah, not her proudest moment.

Travelling like this wasn’t really the most efficient way to travel in this day and age, but it was the best way to travel completely undetected. There where no vehicles to track and nothing linking you to any particular place, that is if you were careful. So she much preferred this grueling method, as tedious as it was.

Now you’re probably wondering why exactly why such a delicate looking creature was stalking its way through the winding woods with a perfectly good concrete pathway just meters to her left, flooding with happy-go-lucky people casually making their way to wherever they wished, why she didn’t just take the less hazardous route to her destination. Well the answer was actually very simple—she needed to stay hidden. From who? Well, just about everyone really.

It had all started exactly three days ago, coincidentally enough. She had woken to a blaring siren and innumerable footsteps pounding through the immaculate hallways of the institute. The building itself could have rivaled a mountain in size, but she couldn’t possibly have known that, after all—most of her life had revolved around one, single room.

The lights had been dim, such a sharp contrast to the usual mercilessly bright light she had grown used to invading her eye sockets. It was comfortable, the murky red tint to the glow a nice countermeasure against the white glare. She had looked down to find herself suspended in a colorless liquid, gently floating in place. She had felt weightless, almost peaceful, if not for the thousands of lacerations littering her flesh, stinging like acid in the substance that surrounded her, filling and saturating her lungs.

She was baffled, only for a separate reason entirely—she was alone. Nobody ever left her alone, unless she was ‘sleeping’ of course, someone was always there. Watching her. Observing her.

She gingerly shifted her body, long arms maneuvering to her tiny chest, which was rising and falling rapidly at the excitement of finally having some time to herself, able to enjoy the company of solitude while fully conscious.

Clasping her clawed hands to each other tightly, she curled her body in on itself, she perked up her large ears, listening intently past the screech of the alarm. If she concentrated hard enough, she could just make out the sound of the humans yelling as loud as they were able, screaming orders at one another frantically.

"GET THE GENERATORS RUNNING NOW!! BEFORE WE RISK A CONTAINMENT BREACH!"

"Captain, the circuits have blown we can't reroute the power grid until they are repaired Sir!"

"Then stop standing there and fix it!"
Her breath quickened, heartbeat following suit. Each word meeting her ears making her eyes widen in pure exhilaration. A containment breach? That could only happen if the power system failed. And if the power system had failed. That could only mean one thing. Nothing was keeping her anymore.

Without another moment's hesitation, Amaryllis brought her legs back and struck down sharply in one swift movement. The reinforced glass prison that had held her captive for the past century crumpled like tissue paper, the barrier of energized particles that had once protected it now nonexistent. She tumbled out of the gaping hole, splinters of glass shards digging into her skin, swimming in the pool of liquid as it poured out of the tube like a torrent. For a moment Amaryllis just sat there, spluttering on the floor with her shredded hands holding her upright as her lungs adapted to the oxygen gas. The dry air like sandpaper against her soft, fleshy insides, rubbing her raw from the inside-out.

The room surrounding her looked a lot less intimidating without the swirling distortion that her cage had created, an illusion of the eye that had twisted, shrunk and ballooned the area around her. Complicated looking machines lined the walls, with a metal slab decorated with restraining equipment and a large lamp obstructed her path to the single door in the room. A small table cluttered with cruel looking medical tools lying beside it.

She didn't dare head for the door, instead making a beeline for the vent on the underside of the upper right ceiling, digging her toes into the soft metallic walls, the faint squeaking noise of the material warping lost in the chaotic orchestra.

With one final glower at the room itself, she forced her weak legs to propel her into the air, feeling her stomach drop to her feet as she almost missed her target and went crashing back down to the ground, grasping the grid with an unforgiving grip as she tore away the metalwork blocking her way and finally scrambled up into the unfamiliar- but arguably more comfortable terrain. Just as her foot disappeared from view, the door burst open, and she had smirked in satisfaction at the horrified shriek that resounded throughout the building seconds later.

"O-oh Lord- E193 broke free!"

From there she had snuck through the ventilation system, emitting a low frequency sound at periodic intervals to disable the sensors she suspected had been placed in the cramped rectangular tubes to track any escapee's. Although she couldn't spot any with a quick scan of the dark, enclosed space, she wasn't taking any chances. There was far too much at stake for her to be careless.

Eventually, after hours of shuffling through the building, an incredibly bright light lit up her peripheral vision, and she made straight for it, already smelling the earthy scent of the outside world. The scent of grass and trees almost made her mouth water with anticipation, and an incredibly faint breeze teased and ticked her hair, feather light touch on her clammy flesh.

Eagerly twisting off the panel, she was pleasantly surprised to find that despite the drop being sickeningly high, a large oak sapling had taken root just meters away from her, and the giant in front of her now was practically reaching towards to, a thick, steady looking branch extending towards her. Aiming her body carefully, she made a heart stopping leap, and breathed a heavy sigh of relief when her fingers clasped the rough bark.
Dropping from branch to branch, gradually making her decent as cautiously as she was able in her excitement, she let out a squeal when her feet met earth, the soft ground a natural cushion for her toes and she dug them into the grass. The living carpet felt luxurious against her skin that for so long had only known the slimy texture of the highly oxygenated solution of the laboratory. Her lungs- now used to inhaling air, very much appreciated the feeling of crisp, clean air pumping through her body. Brushing against the tops of her long obsidian horns all the way down the the tip of her happily swishing tail.

She could still hear the alarm ringing in her ears, and she quickly decided that the time to revel in her new found freedom was not now, and rushed to put as much distance between herself and the concrete prison behind her as she could, all the while waving a triumphant goodbye to the hellhole that had taken away her life.
The world sure had changed since Amaryllis last walked the earth as a free being. Humans walked their streets with their noses stuck to small, rectangular screens, sometimes humming tunes with wires plugging into their ears, strutting along to rhythms that only they could hear.

The occasional cluster of small children would fly past, apparently free of the restrictions that had been in place for youngsters last time the warm sun had graced the ancient creatures’ face. She had always marveled at the human species, so wonderful in one way and horrific in the next.

One thing that humans had always been talented at was their ability to create, their logical minds working together with their imagination to bring many oddities to life. But they weren’t satisfied with just that, they were ever on the path of evolution, working to upgrade their arsenals of gadgets and thingies-ma-bobs that frazzled her brain just thinking about it.

Creatures of old such as herself were made to survive with what they had, all of the tools they could wish for at their fingertips without the need nor want to build contraptions in place of natural ability. Though that didn’t mean she couldn’t take an interest in such inventions, she simply had no need for them herself. It was interesting to witness the evolution of a species when she herself never really changed, as if stuck in time.

Another huge difference of many, between herself and homo-sapiens, was that they were pack animals at heart, they all lived different lifestyles and had different ideals, yet they all flocked together to form communities, networks on a grand scale that other animals had little chance of mimicking, at least not at first lance. She was a solitary creature, her kind preferring to stay very far apart to avoid confrontation that would attract unwanted attention. That and not being slaughtered, that was also a nice addition to staying clear of others of her sort.

That was not to say that they were incapable of banding together, they were not savages, mostly, in spite of their occasionally excessively aggressive behavior. In fact many including herself were of extremely high intellect, to the extent that some even preferred to hide within human society, continually adapting to the race’s technological advancements, becoming fluent in its many languages. At one point Amaryllis had even given such a lifestyle pause for thought, only her diet would have made that life far too dangerous.

As she stepped over a small bush, she quickly decided that the form she currently held was far too risky to run around the forest right next to a human settlement in the middle of the day, and she wasn’t about to stop moving just yet, as she was still in fairly close proximity to the laboratory, so with a soft sigh, she resigned herself to the grueling process of accelerated metamorphosis. Commanding her bones to twist, shrink and turn painfully to form a humanoid body.

Sharp claws melted into long, slender fingers, tall horns receding to hide in silvery white hair that fell far past her waist. She couldn’t quite figure out what to do about her winding tail, not wanting to risk losing her entire sense of balance after already losing a large portion of functionality of her ears, which had shank to human size, yet still maintained their original shape. The shift in size was nauseating and her entire body tingled as her muscles and internal organs adapted to their new habitats.

Transformations like this were considered to be unnatural for her particular race, but it was a skill that had saved her skin plenty of times. Although far from perfected, she thought that it worked well enough, it made her feel sneaky and gave her a childlike form of glee whenever she had the chance to put her abilities into action.
She still felt comforted by the fact her strength remained though, along with her heightened senses, however her small stature felt off, unnatural compared to her usual height of just under 5 meters.

One thing that she was very anxious about was her eyes, the one thing she couldn't dare tamper with, eyes were the source of her power, the bond between her physical body and spirit, without her eyes she would be little more than a mass of aimless energy- incapable of cognitive thought and sentience. And so her eyes remained a shocking golden colour, the whites of her eyes unchanging from a dark black.

As a female human walked past, wandering dangerously close to the forests edge, the woman faltered in her stride, turning her head to face Amaryllis, who froze in place like a deer caught in headlights. The woman, who looked to be in her mid-thirties, gasped at the sight of the uncertain creature before her, fumbling in place before rushing towards her.

Amaryllis tensed in place, far too terrified to react, instead just standing stock still, shoulders raised in the picture of discomfort. The woman looked almost close to tears, making small noises of distress mixed with noises of comfort, reaching a shaking hand towards the white-haired female before her.

Bracing herself, Amaryllis held her breath as she regarded the lady with wide eyes, alert with fear and searching desperately for escape, any moment she would be taken hold of and dragged back to the containment chamber, or she would scream and lead her captors right to her, she was such a fool for thinking she could simply be free after so long. Clenching her eyes shut, she was shocked beyond words to feel a soft caress on her face, the woman before her cupping her cheek in her chubby, aging hands.

"Oh sweetie; it's alright, I won't hurt you, come love, let's get you down to the hospital alright?" she cooed gently, snaking an arm over Amaryllis's shaking shoulders as her shock quickly turned back into panic as she began resisting the younger woman's hold. She didn't want to be taken back, this woman was lying, she couldn't possibly be telling the truth. Humans were too selfish creatures for this woman to truly have good intentions.

Before the woman had much chance to do anything else, Amaryllis swiped her hand across the woman's jugular, efficiently severing the artery in two with her claws, which she had willed to shape far more rapidly than was safe, so both women ended up in varying amounts of pain.

For a moment the woman just...stood there, an expression of alarm on her face and she opened her mouth to scream, shout- anything. Her vocal chords had been sliced, no longer taut enough to vibrate against one another to produce noise. She reached a trembling hand to her throat, putting one foot in front of the other in clumsy succession, stumbling forwards with no destination other than to fall to her knees.

The blood loss fast became too much for her.

Amaryllis sighed, finally calm now the threat had been extinguished, her rapid breathing slowing to a composed and relaxed pace. It then occurred to her that she was rather bare, having no cloth to cover her body. Humans often took to wearing the pelts of other creatures, yet the material that they had grown to use most had long surpassed Amaryllis's ability to produce on her
She wouldn't have to do without, however, as just at her feet were the items she required. Quickly stripping the woman of all salvageable items of clothing, she flustered as she fixed them to her own body as best as she was able. The rigid, burgundy pencil skirt the woman had once owned fell just below her shins, with the crisp white dress shirt almost buried her as it was three sizes too large. After much messing around with the buttons, she eventually managed to fasten a few to the point the shirt stayed fastened around her torso, the fact that they were severely mismatched weren't important.

After dressing in the little clothing that weren't totally saturated with blood, Amaryllis took a moment to stare deeply in the the corpses eyes, dull and glazed over. Completely lifeless.

Well, at least she wouldn't have to go hungry for a while she thought to herself, as she slowly sunk her teeth into the corpses flesh. The blood was still warm as it trickled down her chin, and she leaned forwards to stop it fro dribbling onto her shirt, savoring the sweet taste of the meal before her.

The skin was fatty, and stuck in between her fangs as she took another ravenous bite into the meat, listening to the wet crunch of muscle separating in wake of her incisors. She hadn't indulged in such a feast for a very long time, occasionally having been fed scraps of rotting flesh for the sole purpose of keeping her just clinging to life.

She couldn't allow herself to linger for long though, so after licking her lips clean of the salty crimson, and wiping at whatever she couldn't reach with the corpse's bloodstained jacket and reluctantly pulled herself away, patting her stomach in satisfaction as she quickly vacated the area, leaving the body behind to be forgotten.
Finding shelter and small children

had taken another two days to find a place suitable enough to take up residence, which had shown itself in the form of a very regal looking oak tree, it seemed that oak trees had decided to be very kind to Amaryllis lately. It looked to be around three hundred years old, judging by it's colossal size, the mighty Oak towered above it's children, the father of the forest. The oldest living creature dwelling in the vegetation, she felt a special kind of respect for such longevity, the battered bark of the tree showing its age yet still standing strong.

Far above in the lush greenery of the leaves, sat a canopy of thick branches. Clambering over the winding roots, she grabbed at the lowermost branch and used her lower body to swing herself upwards, climbing her way upwards using the tree as a ladder, ignoring how the rough wood pushed splinters into her cuts. Changing forms did little to assist her multiple wounds, instead compressing them all into a smaller space. She could smell the damp very strongly from up here, the early morning dew had settled, twinkling in the sunrise, making the entire forest sparkle like thousands of precious gemstones.

Birdsong twittered above the rustling of the woodland creatures, commanding the attention of its fellow species, attempting to dominate the gene pool in the short lives they had. This was her home now. And she was content, the home she chose, the place she could exist without worry. Territory she would protect with her life. This was her forest now.

She was fairly close to the human town, preferring to keep the danger in sight than be blind to and oncoming threats, and she could hear the humans chatter on the very edge of her hearing. In spite of this, she still needed to claim this place, before anything else decided to rear it's filthy head. She couldn't smell any of her kind, not a whiff of their scent in the slightest, so after she made her nest in the canopy of leaves, she hopped down and ran along the borders of her home, being sure to brush against all the trees and bushes she could see, occasionally making a small chirping noise in her throat to ward off anything unpleasant. Primitive, but simplicity worked best, most of the time.

Along the way, she had discovered a small river trickling close by to her nest, after taking a deep drink of the much needed liquid, she began to dig a new stream to the small ditch just beside her tree, piling rocks and small stones into it as she went to filter out as much muck as possible.

It didn't take too long for her to finish her task, as by the time the water had began to rush to her self-made pond, the sun had risen high into the sky, indicating it was just about noon. Satisfied with her work for the day, Amaryllis decided to bathe herself in the stream just a little ways from her home, washing away the mud caking her arms and legs in the clean, refreshingly cold water. Perhaps tomorrow she would hunt for some fish, yeah! that sounded like a nice plan, and as she trotted off towards the human town, she had a bright smile upon her face, humming a mesh of the strange music that she had heard from the humans with wires in their ears.

The town was larger than she was used too, usually only ever encountering small villages in the country. So as she approached, she made sure to keep her head low as she stalked her way through the undergrowth. Last time she had been spotted she had ended up with a nice meal, but before that she had been bagged up and didn't fancy it happening again.

Peering from around a particularly thick tree stump, she noticed a strange metallic structure with brightly colored flooring enclosed in a small, fenced off area just in between a long row of houses. She recognized the strange place as a park, a place built for small humans to frolic with eachother, without the need of parental supervision.
When she had first encountered one of these places, she had been appalled to learn that adult humans would leave their young to their own devices, venerable to any predators that happened their way, honestly- did humans want their kin to die? Swallowing thickly, she pushed herself to her feet and forced herself to move forwards. She had a human disguise, she should be fine, right? Pushing her uncertainty aside, she focused on finding a way into the place where three young children where twirling around of a spinning metal plate.

After a moment, she found the small gate in the fence and pushed through. She must admit, a small part of her was pleasantly surprised to find that the children were giggling and shrieking in delight, not the nervous of being alone in the slightest. On the contrary, they actually seemed perfectly at ease without a protector, and Amaryllis found herself grinning despite herself and instead turned her attention to exploring.

A large ladder to her left of the spinning object soon caught her eye, half of a large metal tube tilted at an angle from the top of the ladder and right down to the colourful ground- which was unnaturally soft and rubbery for it to be stone or mud.

After inspecting it for anything potentially dangerous, she decided to lay a tentative hand on it, only to immediately yelp and snatch it away when a short, sharp shock ran up her fingers. The children that had been loudly chatting to one another all trailed off, looking towards the source of the noise. One small boy with sandy brown, short hair trotted towards her, and Amaryllis waved her arms frantically in front of herself.

"Stay back! It's dangerous!" she almost shrieked in an unnaturally high pitch she didn't even know her voice could reach. The child tilted his head to one side, apparently considering his next words carefully.

Just when she feared maybe her English wasn't entirely correct, the little boy adorned a lopsided smile "Dangerous? How come?" he asked, his voice light with a hint of amusement. Cheeky little shit. "It sparked me" Amaryllis spluttered, trying to shoo the boy away from the dangerous contraption. The little one paused for a moment, then something seemed to dawn on him, and he let out a bubbly laugh that left the female very concerned.

"It was just static" he snickered, and realization hit Amaryllis like a truck of embarrassment. Suddenly realizing her illogical error and dipping her head in shame of her silliness. Outsmarted by a six year-old, well done.

Once she had quenched the child's curiosity, he tottered back off to his companions, leaving Amaryllis standing there, just observing their behavior as they resumed their play.

As she left, she could have sworn her nose had picked up the strange scent of something...sweet.
Followed

After the her little mishap with the children, Amaryllis was a lot more careful about intervening in human affairs, being sure to avoid interaction with them at all costs. She had snagged a large bounty of fish in a small river just downstream of her new favourite watering hole, and had decided to let a portion of her catch attract something a little more appetising.

She had been going to and fro between jobs, having dug out a pit just beneath her home, and had upgraded her nest with a nice lump of dry grass from the small field just west of here, when the sound of smacking lips tore her attention away from weaving the live branches together, gaze quickly discovering the culprit, who was a very large, very aggressive looking wolf.

She could have sworn that wolves didn't eat fish, yet apparently the smell had attracted this young fellow. Strangely enough, Amaryllis couldn't smell any other canines in the area, the lone wolf turned out to actually be a lone wolf. Odd, since they preferred to hunt in packs, and last she had checked most of them did not have eyes that shone white.

The wolf sniffed at the air a few times, before approaching the small pile of oily fish and nibbling at it, as if it expected them to jump up at him. Hooking her fingers into the nooks of the wood, Amaryllis silently crawled down the side of the oak, winding and unwinding her tail from her waist as she used it to feel the air. After a moment of calculation, she pounced, tackling the poor canine and slitting its belly open before he could even let out a whimper.

As it slowly bled out, the wolf seemed to realise exactly how much trouble he was in, as he let out a pitiful whine and huffed short, panting breaths through his nose. A particularly loud, drawn out whine which sounded suspiciously like an S.O.S signal for help was cut short as Amaryllis slashed at it's throat, a clean cut that put the canine out of his misery within an instant.

She wasn't a fan of wolf meat, but waste not what not, and she carefully relieved the corpse of its shiny grey coat as she set aside the pelt to tan, having stretched it across a large chunk of wood to dry. Soon she would have a lovely fur blanket to keep warm in the night.

Removing her clothes, setting them aside to wash later, she began to dig into her meal, before the flesh could begin to spoil. Something to her left shuffled in the bushes, and she forced herself to remain relaxed, supposedly unaware of the newfound threat. Without so much as a twitch to indicate her awareness to the new presence, she inhaled deeply, smelling the undeniable scent of a canine.

So the lone wolf wasn't quite as alone as she had first thought, but what was strange about the scent was that it didn't smell like wolf. Wolves had a fresher, wilder scent, this smelt too musky-like a domesticated dog, which was ridiculous as wolves would surely have torn such a weak creature to pieces on sight, but it reeked of testosterone, it was definately an alpha. Lucky dog.

Despite her best efforts, the presence seemed to realise it had been detected, and quickly scurried off to wherever it had come from. Smart dog.

A few hours later, mid-doze just past dusk, she felt eyes on her, something in the air felt...malicious. Something was wrong.

She could smell human everywhere, surrounding her, trapping her within her own territory, in which they were trespassing. Luckily for both them and her, she had not once dropped her disguise, still appearing to be a human female, and she had also donned her clothes shortly after her meal, so nothing would appear amiss if she was confronted. She could simply warn them to
leave and be done with it.

From what she could hear, there appeared to be three invaders, spread around the clearing at random intervals, they where moving around, one flitting skillfully from one tree to the next, while the other two remained of ground level. she caught a flash of brown hair from the corner of her eye, and immediantly focused her attention in the opposite direction, she was supposed to see that. An effective ditraction tactic, had it been anyone else.

The figure that she had seen was the easiest source of sound she could hear, it seemed to emit a constant yet completely erratic stream of noises, as though they were having a siezure while trying to remain hidden. The other two were sneakier, the one high up in the trees being the clumsier of the two in the noise department, and the occasional twig would snap under the weight of its occupant, often followed by a muffled huffing sound.

The last seemed to be the stealthiest, as she could only hear their breathing, which was calm, yet hard with exertion, she listened as they continually shifted positions, never staying in one spot for very long. They seemed intent on observing her, and while she felt the threat, she just couldn't feel the bloodlust associated with any sort of attack.

They just seemed to be observing her, and while she didn't really like it, she didn't feel like making enemies with the human town on her doorstep so early into her stay. So she let it go, allowing them to go about their business, whatever it seemed to be.

Just to be safe, she decided to stay high up in the leaves, concealed up on her perch just above the treeline. She didn't quite trust the smell of iron that her guests had brought with them.

One thing that humans in particular did that really baffled her, was that humans seemed intent to detroy eachother when given the chance. While killing your own species was something not exclusive to humans, they often did so for the most illogical reasons. Jealousy, anger, greed, the list went on, it was something that had always seemed pointless to Amaryllis for her entire four hundered and six years of life.

By the time the sun had set, and the temperature had begun to drop, the activity below had dissapeared, the ancient being left to her devices once more. She decided to move to another place to sleep that night, and made a temporary nest as close to the town as she dared, finding an odd sense of comfort knowing that she had the safety of her disguise to aid her should any trouble pop up in the dark.
An unexpected friend

Amaryllis had woken far before the sun had the chance to hit her face, jerking awake to the feeling of company once more. She felt unsettled to have attracted such attention so quickly, and briefly considered moving along to find a new home. But something about this place kept her in place, like a magnet to her very soul, and despite her better judgement, she decided to stay put.

This time she decided that the safety of high ground would be more of a hindrance than an ally, and carefully made her way down, being sure to exaggerate her struggle to reach ground to keep her mask in place. Giving away her identity would make her situation a lot more dangerous.

As her feet touched the grass, she let out a sigh of relief, feeling better to not be attacked whilst vulnerable, having her hands occupied would not be ideal under threat. She stretched, clicking her joints and groaning at the pleasurable flexing of her muscles, stiff from her position in the...new...tree.

How had they found her again?

Turning heel, Amaryllis decided it best to make her way to an open space, somewhere with enough people to deter her followers, but also somewhere familiar. The only place she could think of was the park.

Forcing herself to walk at a casual pace was very hard, especially when all she wanted to do was run for the hills- or better yet turn tail and lash out at the trespassers. She couldn't risk more people to come looking for the missing bodies.

It was a beautiful morning, at the very least. The warm glow of the sun dancing through the bright emerald leaves filling the overhang of the trees. The natural brilliance of her home far surpassing the grey blocks of rock of the town. The forest was alive. The dull cement wasn't even dead, for it had never been alive in the first place.

Spotting the brightly coloured ground of the play area, she began to quicken her stride, ignoring the crunch of litter and debris digging into her flesh. Disgusting human filth. She made a mental note to clear away the scum from her forest when she had the time, alone.

She was pleasantly surprised to find that even in the early hours of day, a small body sat rocking slowly in the sun, Amaryllis recalled that it had been called a 'swing', as she had often played around on them herself. Moments of such frivolity were far and few in between for her these days, survival came before anything else, and play was always low on her list in the continuous battle to stay alive.

As she approached, the small figure turned to investigate the creak of the rusty gate as Amaryllis has pushed against it. She recognized the form as the small boy she had ran into a short time ago, having made a fool of herself by reacting so excessively to a small shock. Her nerves having been frazzled completely by the stress of being in such an unfamiliar environment. However, unlike the last time she had visited, today she felt comforted by the place, a safer haven, guarded by the human populace at each turn.

"You're the lady from the other day" he chirped happily, eyes bright and flashing with amusement. The woman nodded, pleased to have been spoken to by the little boy. It felt nice to interact with such an innocent creature after so long. "And you are the little boy that came to see why I yelled, right?" she replied, purely for the purpose of conversation. There was no mistaking that mop of brown hair.
"I'm not a little boy" he whined, lips puffed up in a childish pout, obviously offended about the title she had assigned for him, "My name's Thomas!" he finished, crossing his arms with a sense of finality. Amaryllis couldn't stop the chuckle that burst past her lips, children really never changed, no matter what the race.

"Well, Thomas, I must thank you for bravely coming to my rescue that day, it was terribly kind of you" she praised, and positively beamed at how his little face lit up at her words.

"I rescued you? Really?" he squealed, bounding up to her with the energy of a baby T-Rex on steroids. "Yes you did" she nodded, and felt proud to have brought such a huge smile to the child's face. She could get used to this feeling.

Carefully planting her butt on the swing seat, she pushed herself back with her feet until she couldn't go back any further, and then allowed herself to be swung forwards, Thomas quickly returning to his side and joining her. What started off as a fun game quickly turned into a competition between the two of them, both trying to get higher than the other as they rocked their bodies to gain more momentum.

Just as Amaryllis thought she had won, Thomas suddenly rocketed forwards, almost swinging completely around, the seat almost falling from midair, before regaining its speed as it fell back into swing without incident. Her heart had been stuck in her throat as she had feared the little body would go flying off of its seat and crash to the ground. Meanwhile, Thomas was giggling like he was having the time of his life, screaming in joy as he continued to rock back and forth.

Amaryllis had launched herself off of as soon as she had feared that the boy would go flying, and stood crouched close to the ground and ready to lunge in any direction, arms out to catch his flailing body, which was still being propelled forwards at an impressive speed.

It almost looked like someone was pushing him, but that was stupid, since the spot directly behind him was completely empty, the only thing filling the space being the smell of something sweet, again.

Still giggling, Thomas cried "Jack stop!" and gradually slowed to a halt before hopping off, running over to Amaryllis. "That was awesome! You went so high and landed like a superhero ninja or something!"

Before she had the chance to wonder who Jack could be, a paper bag was shoved in her face, almost knocking her over onto her backside. Thomas sat cross-legged in front of her, his arm still extended out to her with a paper back full of an assortment of colourful treats. "Mommy always says to share with friends" he said simply, staring at her expectantly as she tentatively stuck a hand into the bag of goodies. Fingers closing around a sticky blue ball.

Bringing it to her mouth, she gave it a hesitant lick, wary of what she had been gifted, but she couldn't taste anything amiss, so she popped it into her mouth without further fuss and enjoyed the foreign treat. It tasted tart, almost sour, but with an underlying sweetness that kept the experience enjoyable, and after a few minutes it had melted into nothing.
After a few more hours of playing make-believe, Thomas reluctantly left to the calling of his mother, who had called him back for lunch. Before he had left, he had made Amaryllis promise to play with him again soon, giving her the cutest puppy-dog eyes he could muster. She had easily agreed.

She could still feel the watchful eyes on her as she retreated back to her Oak, picking at twigs and rocks along the way to build herself a small pit to store her things. Lining the bottom with the stones she had found and laying the twigs above it, held together by twine and creating a small lid.

As she had been placing the cover down, she noticed that the pelt she had left to tan on a stump of dead wood had vanished, paw prints visible in the dirt around where it had been lain. She cursed as she berated herself for not moving it to higher ground- away from nosy snouts and scavengers. There went her blanket.

Grumbling to herself under her breath, she decided to take a quick nap before getting back to work, she had decided her modest meal of wolf meat and fish wouldn't last her for very long, and all of that social interaction had really knocked the breathe out of her. With a sleepy sigh, she settled herself into her bed of twigs and leaves, shifting until the stray pieces of wood lay flat instead of poking at her in uncomfortable places. The day was pretty sunny, so she doubted that cold would be much of an issue, the gentle breeze blowing warm air into her face through the vegetation. She felt at ease, gently allowing her mind to drift away from the problems of waking life.

Amaryllis always had a sense about what dreams would bring, she could always feel whether she could relax and enjoy the experiences her mind created, or if she should frantically thrash about in a desperate effort to wake up. This particular dream fell into the latter, a sense of dread clinging to her airway as her heartbeat thumped anxiously within her rib cage.

She would have very much liked to wake up. However, unlike most of her nightmares which were easily left behind to rot after a sharp intake of breath, this one felt almost like a cage. Something living that was trapping her to whatever it was that had decided to plague her.

The sky was dark, an unnatural sort of dark that brought with it an eerie fog that swept across the ground. A thick smell of something sweet mingled with the sour stench of decay and death permeated the air like a smog, it seemed to be coming from everywhere, the scent not growing stronger or weaker in either direction as she turned on the spot.

She looked to be in what she recognized as a human carnival, a place where humans- adults and children alike, flocked to spend their days playing in a playground of massive proportions. Colourful tents lining the perimeters of the property with strange machines that made people scream with both fear and glee. Amaryllis had always secretly longed to visit such places, if even for just a moment, just once. She had often watched wistfully from a distance, craving to be a part of such a place shimmering with colour and life and to join in the raucous laughter that she had heard so many times before, as she sat alone in a cold dark space in the shadows.

But this place, this place was not the world of her fantasies, it was dark, void of the vibrant colour that she had longed to be a part of. The structures around her looked to be perfectly intact,
nothing amiss barring the desolate landscape. Not a soul to occupy the busy space but herself, and an onomoius laughter that echoed in the distance. This place was a bad place.

By now, she was breathing erratically, eyes budging in their sockets as she turned every which way to detect the slightest form of life. She wasn’t entirely sure that she even wanted to find it, because whatever lived in such a tainted place just couldn’t be right.

Sweeping her gaze behind herself once more, she felt sick to find that the scenery had changed within the few seconds of zero eye contact. Where just a split second ago had been little more than a collection of dusty looking booths, now stood a large black door, just inches away from herself.

Above the door where the words "Cunningham's House of Illusions" in large, thick letters suspended on the buildings face with thick metal wiring. The door itself was cracked open a smidge, just enough for it to be noticeable without having to look too hard. Great, just great, she was having the time of her life, why not crush her hopes and dreams in a dream? And the best part would be that she would have completely traumatized herself with her own brain. Lovely.

She knew a bad thing when she saw one, so without further consideration she turned right around. Haha-no-thank you, Amaryllis very much enjoyed not dying. Only as she began to take a step forwards, a heart-stopping lurch of her stomach alerted her to the fact that the floor had simply vanished- leaving nothing but a bottomless pit beneath her foot. Without many options left, she flung her body weight towards the creepy door, the choice having been stolen from under her in the most literal sense.

Slamming into the rough wood, only for it to offer no resistance and opened wide, allowing her continue her fall to the floor, which she met. Hard.

As Amaryllis picked herself up off of the floor, grimacing at the splinters pushing into her cheeks, a low, gravelly chuckling whispered in her ear. Hot breath on the back of her neck that made her hair stand on end, a nervous shiver travelling down her spine. She refused to turn around, not wanting to know what was standing out in the open, almost taunting her- just daring her to make eye contact so it could pounce. Forcing her eyes forwards and willing herself to wake up, something shiny caught her eye, and she made the mistake of turning towards it.

A large, rectangular mirror was hung up on the wall, covering a large section of it, with many duplicates scattered all throughout a long hallway, each one distorted in odd places, making their reflections appear like a melting painting.

The problem she had, was that mirrors reflected what was directly in their line of sight, and as she met her own fearful eyes, she also caught a very good look at her tormentor.

He looked like a nightmarish version of a clown- which was fitting considering this all was in fact a nightmare. Only completely washed of colour. He was freakishly tall, even to her standards, towering a good head above her. The man smirked as he noticed the girls eyes widening in shock, being sure to hold her gaze as he flashed a set of obsidian black teeth, shark like and razor sharp.

Even in her dreams, her eyes functioned very much in the same way as they did during her waking hours, so it came as no surprise to her as she felt her irises contract, flashing white as her sclera’s grew a black to match the feather shawl draped across the clowns broad shoulders.

It certainly surprised him though, as when her eyes changed, he seemed to recoil a little, losing his grip on her consciousness as his concentration faltered. And they both just stared at one another as Amaryllis took her chance to break away from the corrupted world of her nightmares.
Over for tea

The night after her unsettling nightmare, Amaryllis couldn't bring herself to sleep, instead having a one-way staring contest with the night sky. The pollution of the human town close by blocked out much of the blanket of stars she had been hoping to see, but occasionally the fog would clear in patches, leaving the soft glow of the moon to peek through the clouds and cast a ghostly shadow over the trees.

Her long struggle against chilly night air seemed to drag the darkness along a lot slower than it actually was, but she still almost cried with relief when the sun began to climb the sky once more. Declaring another cycle complete.

Taking advantage of her early start, she roamed the borders of her land, hunting for anything that smelled reasonably appetising, snagging a couple of unlucky squirrels as they crossed her path and twisting their tiny heads off with a crunch before downing them raw, barely even taking the time to remove their fur before cramming the meat in her hungry mouth.

Unfortunately for her, her bounty for the morning didn't extend any further, and while she had something inside of her growling stomach, she felt heavily unsatisfied, an emptiness making her really wish her tresspassers had decided to stick around. Funny how she had been so pleased that they had left her be just a short time ago. She needed something bigger- a deer or something.

She sulked as she traversed her way towards civilisation, hoping to find a small sense of comfort in the bright play area that shone with colours she could have rarely seen out in the wild. Upon reaching her destination, she began to clamber her way up what Thomas had explained to be a slide. She had enjoyed the rush the small drop had given her when the little boy had nagged her to give it a try, and wasn't dissapointed to feel that same feeling of glee when she slid down the smooth metal again. A short burst of cool air flowing through her silvery hair.

"Amaryllis! You're here!" a high pitch voice suddenly bellowed from behind her, and for a moment her eyes shifted to white, she hadn't even smelled anyone approaching. Forcing herself to relax her jittery nerves, she turned to find Thomas bounding up to her in a big puffy coat that made him look huge, the only thing of him left visable being a tuft of messy hair.

"Look! Mom got me a new coat" he said with a twirl. Amaryllis smiled warmly, standing from her seat on the edge of the slide and brushing herself off. "You look so cool, I bet all of your friends are very jealous", the little boys eyes shone and he nodded enthusiastically, his head moving so fast that when he stopped, he actually wobbled on his feet a little.

"Yep, Jack says that I look like a marshmallow". She didn't know what a marshmallow was, but Thomas seemed happy about it so she just smiled, feeling silence was the best choice in that moment.

"I told Mom about you, she said you should come over for tea and we can play at my house", Amaryllis felt very conflicted about this, wanting very much to ignore the hopeful looks now being thrown her way. It was far too dangerous for her to be mingling with adult humans, just Thomas was enough, yes, there was absolutely no way-

Several hours later, she stood poised at the door of an unfamiliar house, Thomas by her side wearing a triumphant grin as he moved to knock at his door. The little devil had nagged her all day. He sure was persistent, she'd give him that, taking it upon himself to beg her all day to visit his house. 'Just once', he'd say, and he'd never ask for anything ever again. And then proceeded to pout when that hadn't worked, a grumpy frown on his face as his short replies became snippy.
She had given in shortly after.

The door opened to reveal a short, middle aged woman, wiry dirty blonde hair tied in a messy bun, she visibly stiffened, bright blue eyes instantly focusing on the young woman standing beside her son. "Mom! This is my friend Amaryllis! You said she could stay over for tea" he chirped, storming inside of the house without waiting for a reply and shouting for Amaryllis to follow.

The two women made uncomfortable eye contact with one another, the hostile mothers gaze searching her own frightened looking ones as she shrunk back under the heat of the icy blue eyes. "Ah, how lovely to meet you Amaryllis, you must forgive me I was expecting someone...more my sons age" the woman greeted tersely. "Please do come in, my name is Sarah Reigh, my son hasn't stopped talking about you since Tuesday".

Sarah lead her down a small beige corridor, decorated with many family pictures hanging in small frames along the walls, the polished wooden floor shining a beautiful mahogany.

"Those are some very scary looking contact lenses you have there, don't they hurt?"

"Umm, no, not really?" she replied, hoping Sarah wouldn't notice the question in her voice, and that she had answered correctly. At the end of the hall, the path forked into two directions. To the right was a charming living room area, a plush cream coloured suite filling most of the room splashed with rich browns and soft whites.

Amarllis was ushered into the dining room to the left, a wide open space, sparsely decorated with a large family dining table with a small kitchen just to the back. A large countertop hiding most of the workspace from view. Thomas sat at the table, legs swinging back and forth as they didn't even come close to touching the ground.

Upon spotting the two women, his face lit up, waving to Amaryllis while his mother gestgured for her to take a seat as she headed for the kitchen, keeping a watchful eye on her surprise guest.

Despite the uncertainty, Sarah was a graceful host and soon became much more relaxed, setting an extra plate for the woman and feeling just a tad embarrassed to be serving the her dinosaur shaped chicken bits. In her defence, once more she had been expecting a child- not a grown woman shabbilly dressed and eyes that could give anyone nightmares.

In fact she had half a mind to toss the woman on the curb and scream at her to never approach her little boy again, but Thomas seemed to have his little heart set on making friends with her and she hadn't actually done anything to change her mind. Yet. Sure she was very odd, but the girl was well mannered enough, she was brilliant with her little boy too.

The meal passed with relative ease, most of the silence being filled by Thomas' chatter, along with the occasional input from his mother, who seemed to be gradually relaxing in her presence, as she poked and prodded at her food. She had to be careful not to eat too much, as an excessive amount of human food would make her ill. However the majority of her attention was focused on Thomas, who had dove into a story of when he, his mother and some friends had visited the beach.

"It was awesome! The ocean was huge and there was lots of sand" he prattled, waving his hands in a wide circle. "We all made sandcastles and looked for sharks! We didn't find any though, mom said they must have gone on holiday when we went there"

At this Sarah shot a sheepish grin her way, glancing at her son and back towards Amaryllis, who in turn nodded in understanding. "What a shame, but I suppose there's always the next time"
she assured, affectionately ruffling the little boy's hair.

"I wouldn't be so sure about that". 
"I wouldn't be too sure about that"

A low, smooth voice growled from just behind her. Before she could even turn her head, something flashed across her vision and embedded itself into Sarah's cranium with a sickening crunch. The woman's head dropped like a rock, forehead slamming against the table with a thud as she went limp, eyes staring straight ahead—wide and dull. She died almost instantly.

Spinning around and throwing herself up off her seat, Amaryllis leaped to Thomas's side, heaving him off of his seat like a sack of potatoes and moving in front of him all within the span of two seconds. She could hear the little boy whimpering at his mothers corpse, clinging to the woman's wrinkled shirt as she kept her body solidly between him and the intruder.

If she hadn't known he was there before, she was certainly aware of the guy now, he positively reeked of blood, the metallic scent hanging over him like a coat, and coating the dull blade that he skillfully twirled in his long, slender fingers. She was very shocked to have not notices him sooner, though her hurt pride could wait.

He was tall and scrawny looking, with a mess of raven black hair sitting on top of his head. His face was an unnatural shade of white, withdrew, dark rings around his eye sockets with bags to match, as though he hadn't slept in years. Eyes dilated to a terrifyingly small size as they rolled around in his head, meticulously scanning the room, before eventually settling back on Amaryllis.

What was really terrifying about the man before her though, was his smile. Pale lips lengthened into a nightmarish grin, stretching to reach his ears. Cut into place, a smile to last for eternity.

He took a casual step towards the two, Thomas letting out a whine as his body guard matched his mothers killers movements. She pushed him backwards as she moved, rolling her shoulders in a menacing fashion, feeling a satisfying click as she allowed her muscles to flex underneath her flesh, morphing invisibly to suit the fight she knew was coming.

She had made the mistake of letting his mother die, she would not allow her new little friend to be killed by this bastard as well.

"If I were you, I would leave, very quickly" she warned, fingers itching to dig themselves into those unblinking orbs right in front of her. She felt wild. The excitement of the kill clouding her original purpose.

The man before her paused for a moment, before choking out a spluttering laugh. "Don't think you really understand the position you're in here sweetheart" he scoffed, taking in the scene before him. Two more lambs to the slaughter. "Now, who wants to die first?"

"This child is going to live a long time, and I don't plan on dying today" she declared in a flat tone. Bending her knees slightly as she forced her joints to relax in a bracing position.

"Huh, well how about that" he mused.

Suddenly, the man rushed forwards, tackling Amaryllis to the ground with a grunt, the woman's eyes narrowed as she made a grab for his hand, which had begun to reach backwards to plunge his knife into her throat. Keeping a tight grip on his wrist, she maneuvered her body to twist to the side, forcing him down with her and rolling on top of him.
They both grappled on the floor for a few heated seconds, both surprised at the others strength as they fought for dominance.

Quickly hopping to her feat, Amaryllis retreated a few steps back, narrowly avoiding the mans horizontal slash with the knife held loosely in his fingers, before stepping forwards with dizzying speed and roughly tangling her fingers into his hair and yanking it towards the window. She was rewarded with a short yelp as she forced his head through the glass, barely flinching as the razor sharp shards erupted from their frame.

What little remained of the window stuck out sharply from the framework, glinting dangerously in the sunlight and she made to slam the mans face down onto the less than inviting debris. Just before skin met glass, she felt a sharp sting in her side, and she leapt back so asses the damage as the man crumpled the floor, panting heavily in short, panicked breaths before pulling himself unsteadily to his feet.

A shallow, but long gash burned across Amaryllis's torso, just beneath her ribs, a small trickle of blood dripping onto the once pristinely kept floor. Piss, that stung.

"I'll give you one more chance to run" she offered, cracking her finger joints as she took a steadying breath.

"You'll be the one running" the man growled ominously, permanent grin widening slowly, and a sharp gasp turned her attention to the little boy, his body folding in on itself, laying sprawled out across the floor. Her heart sank. A deep gash marred his tiny neck as his body spasmed-gasping for air as he choked on his own lifeline, eyes watering and hands reaching desperately for anyone to make it better.

Above him, stood three men, one still hanging a foot through the wide open window as he scrambled through, with what looked like a modified mask covering the lower potion of his face with neon orange goggles resting on his head. His body twitching and convulsing as he moved, making it look difficult to keep himself upright as he swung his leg over the edge.

The other two were clad in hooded coats, both adorning masks that made it harder to make out their genders, but the way they held themselves suggested they were also male, even though one of the two wore a mask with exaggerated feminine features. The other just seemed to have a mass of black under his hood, the only thing visible being a bloody Smiley face that looked about as friendly as a chainsaw.

The trio all focused their attention towards Amaryllis, who immediately noted their scents to be very familiar. Her stalkers has decided to join the party.

"W-whoa, you l-look pretty b-b-beat up there Jeff" one of them said, all of their mouths being covered made it hard to tell which. 'Jeff' being the smiley faced bastard behind her grumbled an intelligible response, dusting himself off with his free hand and shoving his blade into the pocket of his dirty white hoodie.

"The Boss just said to bring her back with us, not to kill her" a stern voice interrupted, the feminine masked man stepping forwards towards Jeff as the latter scowled at him, looking pissed off about being scolded by his ally.

"Didn't fucking touch her- yet" he hissed, sending a menacing glare in Amaryllis's direction.
"Yeah, if anything i think Jeff's the one who had his ass handed to him" a voice chipped in, and the smiley lunatic lunged towards it's owner, spitting out insults as the other two made to hold him back.
While the four were occupied, she took her chance to slip away, she could protect just fine, but she didn't fancy her odds against all of them at once, not without knowing what they were capable of.

That Jeff character had thrown her off guard, sneaking up undetected and then actually matching her in that short scuffle. No, she needed to bide her time and get the ever living frick away from those guys before they noticed her gone. Then after she had gathered sufficient enough Intel on them, she'd simply get rid of her problems.
By the skin of his teeth

She didn't even bother trying to get home, home wasn't safe, but she refused to abandon her forest. Sure, it wasn't the smartest decision, but she had lost far too many of her places in the world, she wasn't about to let this one get ripped from under her too. Not by some foolish human group that had thought it a good idea to tangle with her.

She had quite like Thomas too. It saddened her to think the young life had been lost, she had always had a bit of a soft spot for them. At least now she wouldn't be burdened with watching him grow old and die, long before her life span even began to reach absolute maturity.

That didn't mean she wouldn't rip the smiley faced prick and his friends apart though. Oh how she would savour their deaths. Perhaps she'd even introduce them to a rather delicious ability of hers. Sickness was a mortal's greatest weakness after all. Her fangs practically itched to sink themselves into their scrawny necks, the pleasurable release of venom- knowing their deaths would be agonising, would almost be worth all of the trouble to dispose of their miserable corpses.

Slowing her pace to a trot, she didn't make the same mistake from before. This time, she heard each footstep every one of them made as they approached her. Now, how would she ago about this? They already knew she was capable of defending herself, so an innocent approach wouldn't be all to convincing, but going straight for it would be far too tasteless. She craved excitement! She wanted a thrill.

Perhaps she could separate one of them from the group, enjoy their expressions as she had her way with her first victim. Watch as they screamed and fled, maybe allow them to think they were safe before savouring their wails as she mutilated them one by one.

Oh hell, she needed to get at least one, just a taste before the real fun could begin.

Her musings were rudely interrupted by a hand shooting open her eye sockets, forcing her head back roughly while something cold and sharp pressed against her throat. This one would do.

"Don't move" a gravelly voice spat, hand travelling to tangle in her hair. This one smelled like cleaning supplies, mostly covering the scent of dead things. How about that?

Amaryllis let out a throaty laugh, voice dipping to a distorted, almost glitchy pitch as the sounds forced itself past her lips. "Oh, dear, you poor creature" she trilled, tone rising and falling dramatically with each syllable, as if she was losing all control of her vocal chords, which she was, bloodlust was a beautiful thing.

"Unlucky child" she snarled suddenly, dropping with inhuman speed, crouching on all fours and spinning on her hands, a leg kicking out and knocking the stranger's feet from right under him. He seemed to panic for a few seconds, letting himself fall as his hands made a move to bring his blade upwards in a pathetic attempt to block the oncoming attack.

Rising swiftly, Amaryllis lifted her leg to strike down hard against his abdomen, revelling in the spluttering choking of the man now being pinned against the ground. He writhed in agony, as well as trying desperately to free himself.

"M-m-masky!" a voice cried out, just before a body lunged towards her, only to be thrown over with his own momentum and slammed right next to his friend.

From his place of the ground, convulsing violently on the soft grass, Amaryllis worried for a
moment that she had been too rough with her new plaything. However, 'Masky', his ally, didn't appear too concerned, but the scent of fear wafting off of him indicated that he realised that the rescue attempt had failed miserably.

"If I push hard enough, will your organs squeeze out of your eyes?" she asked sweetly, beginning to steadily add pressure on her leg, inhuman muscles forcing downwards past any real humans capabilities.

Masky made a grunting noise, gasping for air as though it would make the pain go away. His friend had given up on trying to attack the woman on top of him, instead clawing frantically at her leg to try and ease the pressure. A sickly giggle bubbled up from her mouth before she could stop it, and she found that she was far past being embarrassed, instead revelling in the madness swirling in her mind like a drug. The only thing that mattered was eliciting more of those geourgious squelching noises from her victim.

"What the fuck?!" a voice to her left screamed, and she faintly recognised that voice to belong to the Jeff character, too focused on the squishy body beneath her foot to care about his arrival, until he managed to force her off of course.

He was fast, but what really struck her was his strength, though granted most of her energy had been directed into the brutal crushing of Masky. The masked man himself still groaned in agony, the damage she had dealt obviously keeping him down and out while he grunted weakly. His friend obviously didn't understand that picking him up would probably just make him worse, especially with that persistent twitch.

"Who the fuck are you?" Jeff mumbled, eyeing his opponent with a new wariness. She had taken down two of his allies without batting an eyelash. She was much more dangerous than he had first thought. Maybe the faceless freak had been right after all.

The girl paused, expression dropping for a minute or two, as he circled around her, trying to find a chink in her defence. she seemed to be nothing but chinks, but somehow it felt like a trap. Like she could react to anything he threw at her.

A graceful calm bloomed across her face, she almost seemed regal looking as she rose a hand to her chest, a thoughtful hum rumbling in her thoat. "I have too many names to even remember anymore" she answered simply, a soft sigh in her words.

"Not that it matters to you" she said happily, before appearing in a flash of white right in front of his eyes. If he could have blinked, he wouldn't have even caught that fraction of a second it took to cross the distance from where she had stood to where he was.

Just as her fist connected with his ribcage, the woman jolted a little, the force lessening considerably as her momentum carried the rest of her blow. Though he still flew a good few feet in the air before landing in a painful succession of rolls, still reeling from the force of her hit. Shakily rolling onto his stomach, he retched the contents of his stomach out right into the grass, the muscles clenching around his very, very broken ribs as he hurled. The acidic taste of bile spreading across his tongue and leaking from his mutilated mouth, tears stinging his eyes. The smell was horrendus, but he was more concerned with his opponent.

Swirling his ear around, crimacing at the throbbing pain in his torso, he felt a great rush of relief as he saw the woman dropping to the gorund, eyes rolling into the back of her head.

Behind her, just over the threshold of the treeline, stood Hoodie, who still held the dart gun that had fired the hauntigly long needle that now portuded from Amaryllis's shoulder.
"...Why the hell didn't you-"

"Special darts, just for her. The boss did try tell you, he told all of us. You just ran off before you heard about it" Hoody interrupted, sounding bored with the whole situation, yet still managing to sound very smug at the disgruntled look on his comrades face.
Taken

It took a long time for the four of them to make the trip back 'home', and with two of them heavily injured, it was very difficult to stick to the time limit. Whatever was flowing through the girl's blood would only last so long.

Masky had passed out a mile back, slumping over Toby's shoulder with a groan and hanging limply for the rest of the trip. The ticking masked menace didn't seem to realize the periodic jerking probably didn't do Masky any good, but he seemed determined to be a good 'nurse' regardless.

Jeff however, although sporting a nasty injury, was still pretty capable of walking. So the man was forced to walk without much assistance, and he seemed to feel a mixture of pride to be left alone and furious that nobody had even offered to lend him a hand. So he stalked a little behind, glowering at everyone the entire way.

Mostly he glowered at the tuft of silvery hair slung over Hoodie's shoulder. The unconscious body had dared to touch his perfect form, the filthy creature had no right. Humans like her just got lucky, and luckier still that he was forced to stay his hand from ripping her beating heart from her chest cavity.

They all walked in companionable silence, and by that of course it really meant that everybody didn't care enough for the other to try and force any sort of conversation. Even though Toby had tried, but he seemed perfectly happy chattering to Masky, who was still out cold.

"That l-lady sure can k-k-kick butt- i've never seen a human m-move like that!" he rambled, and Masky made a grunting noise that Toby seemed to take as a response. "I know r-right?" everybody half-listening wondered for the guys sanity. Or rather lack of it.

To the groups relief, home eventually came into sight in a large open clearing just ahead. Each of them walking just that bit faster to get their well-earned rest. They needed it. Stalking was exhausting.

They all collapsed in a heap at the doorstep, all except Hoodie, who still had enough in him to stand proudly as he knocked at the grand mahogany doors. He had barely retracted his hand before the swung open, another masked figure greeting them in the doorway.

"Oh shit" he gasped, voice sounding pretty normal, if you ignored the hissy undertone. Almost like someone was speaking under him, just out of sync. "The hell happened to him?" he asked, nodding towards Masky. In his shock he didn't seem to notice the black gloop dripping down his blue mask and onto his shirt, eye-sockets empty chasms of black.

"The target went to town on 'm" Jeff mumbled, ignoring the rest of his group as he stomped inside without even waiting to hear a response. The masked figure heard the sound of couch cushions creaking under his weight after flopping onto it with a groan.

"J-Jack, would you m-mind taking a look at him? H-he's been out for over an hour" Toby asked, shrugging towards Masky and giving Jack a pleading look that made him sigh. It wasn't as if he was just going to ignore the guy, the Boss would have his head if he did.

"Take him to the infirmary, i'll treat him after I get the st-ory on that girl who's waking up right now!" his voice rose to a shriek mid-way through, and Hoodie, who was holding her, visibly panicked, running inside faster than he'd ever moved before and practically launching her off his
shoulder, while Jack slammed the doors shut, locking them for good measure.

"You did say she took Masky down right? By herself?" Jack chuckled nervously, and Hoodie gulped from beside him. "Beat the shit outta Jeff too- twice".

Neither of them wanted to be around this girl, especially if she woke up in a foul mood, which is what most people who get kidnapped tend to do. They feared for their lives.

Amaryllis let out a moan as she picked herself up off the floor, teetering over a few times as she did. She felt disoriented, and the smells surrounding her didn't help, too many scents to sift through. She could smell people, a lot of people, as though this place was a highway for people to come in and out all day 24/7.

Without even opening her eyes, she knew she wasn’t in the same place anymore. It felt too closed off. The air was musky, it wasn't free in here. For a few seconds, she even panicked that she had been dragged back to the labs. But this place didn't reek of disinfectant and gunpowder.

Almost worse, she realized. This place smelled like her kind. Before she had the chance to react any further, something changed in the room, something was suddenly just...there. And as she cracked her eyelids open, she was greeted by the relieved men standing right behind a tall, slender figure of a creature she knew all too well.

"What is the meaning of this?" she spat, drawing her shoulders back and eyeing the man before her, to which the two behind him gaped. Nobody dared speak to Slenderman like that.

The faceless creature tilted his head for a moment, as if deep in thought, before suddenly appearing just inches away from her. She didn't even flinch. She could feel the energy swirling around him, it was challenging, a dark vortex of aura. He was mocking her.

"You trespassed on my land" a calm, collected voice spoke, it seemed to come from nowhere and everywhere. But she knew who it came from, and the culprit was standing right before her. "There was no claim, I didn't even catch a whiff of your foul odor" she hissed, leaning into the towering figures face, her own energy crackling around her. To any normal bystander, it would look as though the air was buzzing with electricity, like an indoor storm.

"My species does not work in...primitive ways such as yours", and Amaryllis bristled at the comment, ready to sink all of her claws into the creature before her. He should know better than anyone that he ranked far below her, he was signing his death warrant by insulting her so.

Only, then it struck. His words were correct.

Many different species worked in a manner of differentiating ways, however many of those creatures tended to use smell to communicate over large distances. It was how they avoided one another, avoided conflict as much as physically possible. It was an unspoken law among creatures of old.

Despite this, a select few of those entities lacked this ability, unable to control their fluctuating scents to the extent of their brethren. So they devised their own ways of marking the world, using aura alone.

She had been wondering about the strange lack of wildlife in her home. Though she had chalked it up to the human settlement on it's borders. A chill climbed it's way up her spine, for she realized that she was, indeed, in the wrong. And by moral code, she was chained to the creature undoubtedly smirking with nonexistent lips. And honor was everything.
"Now that you seem to understand your position, why don’t we negotiate in a more comfortable setting?"
Wrong side of the deal

Jeff winced at the sudden weight plonking down on the bed beside him, the bouncing springs jarring his ribs. Jack had just finished checking him over, confirming what he already knew- a rib or two were broken.

"You should probably loot a couple of painkillers next time you're out, of course you wouldn't be in this much pain if you'd have been less of an asshole and brought some back when I asked last month" he explained smugly from his place on the bedside, a foot dangling over the edge.

Jeff could practically feel the smirk under his mask, and glowered at him in response. "Ain't my job to be your personal maid, you can fetch them yourself just fine".

Jacks amusement faded, and he heaved a heavy sigh. His retort however, died on his tongue- as before he could even open his mouth to speak, a bone-chilling screech echoed throughout the building.

Masky, who had been lain aside on a bed just opposite Jeff, startled, waking up with a moan and turning towards the other two. "What the fuck- what was that? And what the holy shit hit me?"

"You 'n' Jeff got totaled by the target" Jack snickered, sending a pointed look towards Jeff, and seemed highly amused by the murderous stare he got in return.

"You can't be serious, you sure the Rake didn't get at us or something?"

Another round of furious yelling shook the house, this time closely followed by the walls actually shivering with violent tremors. Dust and flakes of plaster raining down from the walls.

"Did Jane fall outta bed or something?" Jeff snickered, foul mood gone. As he laughed at the joke only he found the least bit funny, the only warning they got from the oncoming danger was an inhuman growl immediately followed by a large, black tentacle puncturing the wall and embedding itself deep into the floor, on the far side of the room.

Jack felt the sting before he saw it, looking down to find the black mass had just missed his throat. He was inches from death, and he gave a relieved shiver, so close. He would never admit the girly shriek that bubbled from his lips in that moment.

The boys scrambled up and out of the room, stopping to double back to heave Masky out, as he had cursed at them loudly for leaving him floundering on the bed, clutching at his abdomen as he tried to get the holy fuck outta there.

It turned out that leaving that room had been a very good decision, as the second they had bolted from the infirmary, the ceiling caved in, with Slenderman and Amaryllis tumbling inside, grappling eachother without interruption.

Slenderman looked about as composed as he could manage, while struggling to keep the feral girl away from his throat with as many tendrils as he could conjur all wrapped tightly around her body. They trembled as they strained against her strength, and she snapped and snarled viciously as she tried to inch her lethal-looking fangs into his flesh. With each centimeter closer she got, her teeth seemed to grow larger, lengthening slowly and to a dangerous point.

Her eyes had flashed into a deep crimson, the deep black contrasting against her glowing irises as her face scrunched into an animalistic rage.
Slender had retained most of his original appearances, though the once crisp suit had become dusty with debris, and he looked to be sweating under the exertion.

A large, spider-like set of limbs began to sprout from the base of Amaryllis's spine with a sickening cracking noise. Each individual appendage growing in separate directions, and ending into a knife-sharp edge that looked like the aftermath of scorpions tails mixing with crab pincers.

They all crackled with a dark energy, hovering in place before digging themselves deeply into Slenders tentacles, earning a rough grunt from him, before dragging themselves upwards, slicing along up to where they ended in a long line travelling down his spine.

Before they could cut any further, the room was filled by deafening static, and Amaryllis hastily retreated a few feet away, standing just in front of the boys, facing her opponent with a calculating eye as she waited for his defense to wane.

What she didn't expect, was for the 'weaklings' that stood dismissed behind her to hear the order booming in their brains. "Restrain her".

Without any hesitation, the three leapt for her, wrapping their bodies around hers in a vice-like grip, and they all fell to the floor in a writhing pile of limbs.

Amaryllis opened her jaw, ready to clamp her fangs into the arm dangling tantalizingly close in front of her face.

"Don't let her bite!" the faceless creature roared, and a hand swiftly met her face, pushing her gaping mouth away from Jeff's forearm just before her teeth could snap shut. A series of rumbling growls erupted from her throat, and she began to thrash around more wildly, only to become overpowered by the black mass that tangled around the whole group, before one found it's way around her throat.

Her breaths cut short, the painful rasping noise gurgling out of her lips as she clenched her teeth.

As her face began to turn blue, she allowed her struggling muscles to go limp, begrudgingly accepting defeat as she glared daggers at her faceless enemy, who huffed in satisfaction, tightening his limbs grip a fraction before withdrawing, his minions following suit.

Masky lay spread-eagle on the ground beside Amaryllis, coughing and spluttering as blood leaked from his mouth, and Jack tiredly hurried over to his side, before excusing them both and rushing away with the injured man to an unknown part of the building.

Slenderman stood composedly a short ways away, drinking in the sight of the powerful being laying submissively underneath his towering figure, feeling a rush of delight in his triumph.

"Now, in place of my reward, I stake claim over you, as was our agreement" he taunted as he preened, straightening out his outfit and turning his head to Jeff.

"Jeff, please show your new team-mate to her quarters" he instructed, before striding down the hall.

"Quarters? What quarters? There aren't any empty--"

"Meet your new roommate"

Jeff immediately began spluttering out his refusal, waving his arms around angrily as he chased
after the tall man, lidless eyes blazing as he yelled himself raw.

Meanwhile, Amaryllis was busy nursing her wounded pride, and sulking as she focused of healing her scrapes and bruises.

She couldn't believe she had to serve as that creatures proxy.
Jeff stormed back to the hallway just outside of the infirmary. The woman was still there, in fact it looked like she hadn't even moved, as she still lay flat on the floor, staring up at the ceiling with a very nasty expression on her face.

He had half forgotten to be wary around her in his frustration, putting his emotions before a little thing called "survival instinct". So he was only half surprised when the girl was suddenly on top of him, trying to eviscerate him after he had tried to pull her up by the hair.

"Get the fuck off of me" he roared, using her body weight to push her back and jumping to his feet. He couldn't believe he's have to live with this freakshow.

Oh he'd make Slender pay for this.

He had screamed at the faceless bastard for the good part of an hour before he had been promptly tossed out of the window. Literally speaking.

"She is NOT staying in my room" Jeff declared, his stance agressive as he slammed his hands down hard against the beautiful mahogany desk, which shuddered under the force. "Just kick her in the basement or something"

"Jeff, you're a smart boy, you should be aware I cannot leave such a volatile creature alone" the faceless man reasoned in an uncharacteristic display of patients.

"You let him walk around don't'cha?" a sultry voice chirped in, just as a mop of silky black hair dissapeared behind the door.

Jeff sent a half-hearted glare in the voice's direction, before returning his attention back to the matter at hand. "I just don't get why I have to get saddled with 'er"

Slenderman sighed a little, shoulders drooping before he straightened his posture once more. "From the report I recieved from Toby, you were the only one to be capable of surviving a spat with the creature" he replied honestly, nodding towards the smiley faced man before him.

"Just because everyone else is weak doesn't mean you can just dump the bitch on ME"

"Are you questioning my authority?" Slender asked with a dangerous lilt to his tone. Jeff immediantly stiffened, before drooping is head in a pacifying gesture, he wasn't stupid enough to challange Slenderman.

"I thought as much" the man said in a pleased tone, locking his fingers together and resting his long arms on his desk.

"In consideration of your discomfort, I shall grant you full authority over Amaryllis until furthur notice, with the exection of my own wishes and management, of course" he relented, and took amusement at the downright wicked grin spreading across the younger mans face, eyes widening with...possibilities.

"My order for the moment, however, is to learn about her more recent affairs" he instructed, earning a baffled splutter from Jeff.
"You want me to ask her what she'd been doing lately? Want me to gossip about the weather too?" he snickered, wrapping his arms around his waist.

"My order stands regardless of your personal views" Slenderman stated, voice dropping an octave, amusement vanishing just as soon as it had come. Unfortunately Jeff was far too busy enjoying himself to notice the not-so-subtle shift in his superiors patience, and promptly found himself flushed flat on the grass outside, lidless eyes staring up at the sky as his head swam and his back throbbed.

Meanwhile, in the office above, the faceless entity picked at the dustings of broken glass marring his meticulously kept suit, deep in thought.

It had been a very long time since he had caught wind of the creature he now had in his possession, a valuable asset to his arsenal. He remembered having much of his clan wiped out by a single member of her family, which had long since died out, the woman in his grip being the last living descendant. So much power flowing through one body.

Perhaps he would be able to find adequate use of it.

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Amaryllis sulked- gracefully of course. She allowed herself to be lead by the scruffy-haired smiler along a very clean hallway, the deep brown floors shining in the dimly kept light. At least her new living quarters weren't filthy.

She could very clearly hear the 'discrete' grumbling of her new companion, finding a sick sense of hilarity in his little plans. Most of which involved tormenting her. How cute.

After climbing a grand staircase to the second floor, the man stopped abruptly at the first door to the left, which has a very deep set stain running down its handle, which Amaryllis enjoyed. The uptight asshat she now called her superior must have driven himself mad trying to get that out.

The door was roughly kicked open, and she was unceremoniously tossed inside, landing lithely on her heels and spinning around to glare daggers at Jeff, who had closed the door behind him, wearing a predatory grin. Those watchful, unblinking eyes sent a shiver down her spine, much to her distaste.

"How do you sleep?" she found herself saying "or eat?".

"What?"

"You haven't any eyelids. Nor cheeks"

Jeff faltered for a second, a smile twitching at his already-smiling mouth, before he burst into a heart guffaw, wiping nonexistent tears from his eyes as he tried to compose himself.

"That's something I never thought i'd hear- well, not from anyone who isn't Toby anyway" he snickered, form less tense than it had been before.

"How do you know I'm not like Slendy? Maybe I don't eat" he grinned.

"Oh, but he does eat"

"Wait-seriously? H-how does that even--"

"It's not pretty"
The two stood in silence, both feeling extremely uncomfortable as the quiet set in. Jeff didn't really feel up to tormenting the creature anymore, not yet. Amaryllis allowed her eyes to remain a glowing emerald, for unease.

Stepping back a little, Amaryllis turned casually, allowing her eyes to wander the length of the room. It was painfully plain, walls a crisp white colour, with the same deep coloured wood from the hallways. It seemed Slendy favoured mahogany. There was a king-sized bed pushed against the far side of the wall, a few miscallainious items shoved untidely under it.

Across from her, stood a fairly large window, with tasteful wooden panelling framing the edges, and just outside, stood a beautiful view of the forest. She could practically taste the sweet, wild air.

The only decoration she found was a single wall covered top to bottom in mirrors, apparently looted from various households and plastered to the wall. She wouldn't have cared, if not for the unsettling reminder of the nightmare that still haunted the back of her memory.

"So, mind telling me who the hell you are?"
Healing

He regretted asking almost as soon as the question left his scarred lips. Almost immediately the woman before him seemed to inflate, drawing herself up to her full height proudly, face dropping into a serious yet still somewhat pleased frown.

He could have sworn her eyes had been green a minute ago too. Now they looked almost...purple?

With a glint in her eye that Jeff wasn't too sure he liked the look of, she burst into a monologue of her deep family history. He heard all of two seconds of it before his mind tuned out and his eyes glossed over. Riveting, just riveting.

He could deal with a lot of shit, he'd signed himself up for an eternal lifetime of death and destruction, but there were things that he refused to put up with. And long, very boring lectures were one of those things. He didn't have the patience.

He heard something about the black plague and shapeshifting before he actually decided to play along, deciding if he was going to fill his orders he'd better put some effort into this shit. The sooner the better, and when he got bored he could always mess around with her, after all, he'd only been forbidden to kill her. He didn't hear anything about some more...'torturous' activities, he was sure he could get the others to help him hold her down.

Meanwhile, Amaryllis was in her element, passionately describing the rich world of her clan in exquisite detail.

"Unfortunately, Grandfather Nicholas met his end to a dispicable creature that my family don't give the satisfaction of naming. Filthy cretin has lived a long life, longer than that of most of my clan, one day I'll find him, rid the world of his foul aura.

Poor Grandmother was heartbroken of the loss, she was from a separate clan, so she was shorter lived by default, mixed blood made her fail, but she was incredibly powerful. Held her own magnificently against my brethren" she paused, taking a moment to look to her audience.

She was delighted to find Jeff listening intently, staring flatly at her with an intense look on his face. Luckily for him, she didn't know that intensity was boredom.

She didn't see much of an issue revealing so much of her family's history to this stranger, after all, from now on he was to be her ally. This was how companionship worked, right? Forming bonds and trust? She liked to think she was adapting rather well, she hadn't even tried to infect him yet.

"Oh! That friend of yours, Masky was it? He was injured correct?" she asked suddenly, a brilliant idea striking her, she'd gain the trust from her new allies yet! Jeff was relieved, but felt irritated to have not learnt anything. He would probably regret not paying attention. "Yeah, he's with Jack"

"Ah, perfect, take me to him now, would you?" she requested, her overpowering personality turning it into more of a command. Jeff seethed at this, but obliged. He needed to keep on her good side for the time being.

See, he realised that this creature was powerful. He saw how she messed with Slendy, and how it took him and four others to just keep her down. There was no threatening that kind of
power, but there was manipulation, and a lot of rope, eventually.

So within a few minutes, they both stood across from Masky, with Jack gruffly fuming at the 'rude' intrusion on his privacy. They had both almost knocked him over after he had opened the door without giving him a second glance.

"What's she even doing here? Thought the Boss was dealing with her" he grumbled, sending Jeff an irritated look, to which Jeff smirked. How he did so with that permanent smile of his evaded everyone.

"He did, i'm your new comrade" Amaryllis interviened dismissively, haughtily flattening her crumpled, fairly filthy shirt as much as she was able.

"C-comrade? Wait he's not killing you?" Masky chimed in, frowning behind his mask.

"Nope, in fact you'll be working very closely together from now on buddy, meet your new proxy pal~" Jeff sneered, already spotting the other mans discomfort and revelling in it.

As the two had their little exchange, Amaryllis had strolled up confidently to the bedridden man, kneeling next to his bedside and holding out both hands expectantly.

Jack coughed, clearing his throat and nodding his head to Masky, who turned to look to the woman beside him, suddenly feeling a deep sense of unease. "What?"

"Give me your arm" she said simply, making grabby hands while staring at him as though there was nothing at all odd with what she was asking.

Masky looked to the other two, silently asking for help. Neither of them moved, Jack feeling the danger and staying put, while Jeff seemed to enjoy the display far too much to intervene.

With an impatient sigh, Amaryllis violently yanked the mans arm from under him, pulling him over in the process, and he yelped at the jarring movement, feeling his damaged insides swishing painfully inside his torso.

"What the hell are you-"

"Oh shush, honestly you're acting like a child" she tutted.

And then promptly sank a very deadly set of fangs into his wrist.

The response was immediate, the masked man blowing everyones ears out with an agonised howl, his body free of the ginger movements as he writhed in agony, trying to separate his arm from her jaws without much sucess.

The two men who had hung back jerked upright, running over to the woman and trying to pry her off, any amusement quickly fading at the attack on their 'friend'. She didn't budge however, and instead made small noises of annoyance as she pumped liquid into his bloodstream.

Masky was terrified, an emotion that had almost escaped him over the many years of service to his Boss. It came back in full force within those few seconds of searing agony.

Strangely enough, as he felt the pressure of the teeth sinking into his arm filling with liquid? Somehow the pain ebbed.

Not just the pain in his limb either, suddenly the crippling hurt in his abdomen just seemed to...stop.
He stopped wriggle, his bellowing faltering in his throat as he stared at himself in shock.

It didn't hurt anymore. At all. And he was alive.

The other two stopped their assault as well, noticing the strange silence from Masky and fearing that they had been too late. When they looked up to find him still sitting upright, they were sure surprised.

And everyone seemed even more surprised when the creature let out a pained groan and removed herself from the group, leaning over slightly and wincing. She was clutching her abdomen.

"Now that you've finished belly-aching, that wasn't so bad now was it?" she mumbled, before collapsing to the ground in a crumpled heap.
That wannabe doctor

Jack didn't like the new proxy. He didn't like her at all. There was just too much about her that he didn't know, that didn't make sense, and he put up with a lot of shit that didn't make sense. This was just another level of oddness in his life he didn't need.

She was very obviously not human, that wasn't really the problem- none of them were, not anymore, but that thing, that had never been human. That's what scared him. They had all become what they were by choice, and while not all of the choices had been their own, they all shared the same starting point, they'd all known the struggles of mortal life, they had all began at the same starting line. They knew what they were doing, they knew what each other were, and what they had become.

Only this, this was something else entirely, it was bound by morals of its own, rules it alone abided by. It was something foreign and worse, it was a dangerous something, a dangerous something that he couldn't read. Now normally, he wouldn't be rooting around in the bodies of his fellow housemates. At least not without a reason, it didn't help to go out looking for enemies in this world, but for some reason or another, he felt a whimsical curiosity about his new ally. Plus it helped she was out cold and convulsing in very clear agony, so he had some sort of excuse if she did find out. Which he didn't intend for her to do.

So, after kicking both Jeff and Masky out of his room and slamming the heavy door shut in both of their faces before he could even glimpse the upset on their faces and fists could fly, and set off to work exploring the body in front of him.

A body, that's what it was, no more, no less. A slab of biological matter, something right out of a medical textbook. Living and dead, creatures in general were his forte, he was no longer limited to just humans after all- he had a very long time to learn much more than a human ever could, and a very extensive list of test subjects. Which was probably why it shocked him the most when he found he had absolutely no idea in the slightest what he was dealing with.

The blind-spot in his knowledge would have been shocking enough, but the spindly appendages that shot out from the small of her back really helped to get the futility of the idea to sink in. They looked to be made of bone, insect-like and all ending in a vicious looking edge that glinted menacingly in the light, and they stopped dead just mere millimeters from the openings of his mask, just short of dipping into his gaping eye-sockets.

"Shit!" he grumbled, reflexes failing him as he simply stood stock still, freezing in place whilst eyeing the sharp blades, which were just daring him to make another move. Only that should be impossible, right? The girl was out like a light, so those movements couldn't be conscious. So he decided to be a little reckless, for once, and pressed the tip of his blade against the flesh of Amaryllis's forearm.

Huh, weird, he was being careful, but not that careful. A little harder. Still, nothing. He pressed down with his whole arm, but the flesh refused to part, instead the blade in his hand seemed to give way a little, before snapping off entirely. What was this thing?!

He allowed the muscles in his knees to go slack, falling heavily onto the plush carpet and resting
his aching spine against the cool marble slab that bled into the woodwork. The chill sapped the heat from his body, though the discomfort was strangely comforting, the cold grounding him to the here and now and easing the anxiety burning in his mind.

How long had it been since he was this powerless of both mind and physical ability? Such a long time most would have neglected to remember. Such people could embrace the luxury of a lapse of memory, unfortunately, Jack often envied such fortunate souls. How could he ever possibly forget the day his humanity was ripped from him. The answer was quite simple, as there was no question in the first place- he couldn't, and he had no intention of forgetting either.

A low crashing tore him from his thoughts, and it was then he realized that his slender digits had slipped into his eye-sockets, the ooze forever spilling down his face slowly trickling down his wrists and staining his sleeves with an oily black. His fingers themselves had curled themselves into the grooves of his eyes, shortly kept nails thankfully just failing to catch the soft flesh as they quivered violently in place. He sucked in a greedy gulp of air, desperate to calm the rapid pace of his pulse with was beating unsteadily at an untimely rhythm.

He was fine, just fine, but realized he had been far too close to losing control. Just inches away of trapping himself within his own brain. He sent a silent thank-you to whoever had initiated the brawl downstairs, as he could now hear the muffled yells and cursings of multiple voices as glass splintered against walls- no doubt missing their intended targets of heads by mere millimeters.

He would most likely always find the constant streams of noise to be quite charming in its own right, it made the dangerous building feel more like home. Faces flashed across his vision before he could really notice them, vanishing within the span of a blink, and before he could question it, he had already forgotten.

Jack sighed, shoulders slumping with the weight of the day. The small piece he had enjoyed the past year had been crushed the second the boss had set his sights on the white-haired creature lying in his bed- no, wait. W... Where had she?

The surprise hadn't quite registered by the time he felt the hot breath against his ear, and so he received quite the fright when he turned to find a pair of pitch black eyes inches away from his own. Rather than jumping three feet in the air however, he stayed put, letting an undignified yelp escape from the lips behind his mask and flinching as though he had been shocked with electricity.

Amaryllis stayed unmoving, observing the man before her with an unwavering gaze that sent a shiver down Jack's back, expression as unreadable as the faceless man he called master. Quite the achievement.

He didn't get the chance to make the first move, as Amaryllis quite happily took the opportunity to butt her head against the defenseless man before her, knocking him backwards so forcefully he rolled away in reverse, only to topple over mid-roll from lack of momentum. The surprise had vanished from his system by that point though, and before his body had finished moving he had scrambled to his knees, ready to bolt for the door in a hasty retreat should the mood turn sour. Only when he had righted himself, he found the girl sat cross-legged in the ground, back straight and shoulders back in the picture of docility.

"W-what was that for?", the words had tumbled out of his mouth before he could really stop to think how childish he sounded, and he felt a little relieved when the woman before him grinned slightly, pale lips curving upwards just a fraction that reached her eyes, which twinkles with a warm light.

"Thank you for caring for me in my brief respite of consciousness” she said simply, taking the
man back a little by the elegance of her speech. She certainly hadn't appeared so delicate with her face scrunched into a wild snarl with fangs and claws beared. Also both directed at him, yeah, definitely didn't give him the prim-and-proper image he was getting now.

"Ah, uh, no problem?" he mumbled, voice a little higher than he would have liked. He hadn't really done anything, other than attempt to dissect her as she slept. Should probably not mention that part.

"How long was i-"

"A little over a half hour" Jack cut in just a little too fast, finding himself oddly flustered at his mistake. Who could blame him though? He didn't exactly get much practice socializing, not that he didn't get along with his... "companions", but having a friendly chat and being a nurse and or peacemaker was a little different. If you could call this chat friendly at all. At least it wasn't overflowing with hostility, that was always a good thing.

"I see, it isn't too late in the evening then, I must say, your quarters are very neatly kept, much more pleasant than the Smiley one" the girl hummed, breaking her one-sided staring contest and sweeping her eyes around the room. Something akin to jealousy mingled with longing taking her features.

Jack didn't respond, instead shifting his weight uncomfortably from side to side, face downcast in an effort to wordlessly portray his unspoken predicament. Said predicament being he had absolutely no clue how to act from here. He can't help it- he was used to being more of a wallflower, or the smooth talker that could bullshit and manipulate his was around the ball court. He doubted that this lady would buy the mask crafted by cleverly spoken words.

Though if she was in no rush, there would be no harm in asking a few tiny questions, were there?

"I just-I mean, wa-at the fuck is that!?"
First real conversation in 200 years

Jack hadn't really expected to feel too comfortable talking to something that could have quite easily twisted him into a pretzel. Hell he'd never really felt so scared by anyone in Slenders company before, but perhaps that was because they were often less... Animalistic. Though he was pleasantly surprised by how docile she seemed to be for the time being, and it was nice to have a decent conversation with someone other than Jeff, as much as he enjoyed the guys company at times, he was far too volatile to ever really relax around. Like walking on egg shells only if he cracked one he'd end up with a knife in his shoulder. Or dead. That too.

He'd been wary to ask her questions about herself, thinking maybe that treading on more personal topics would be stepping on her toes, which was not usually what you wanted to do to whatever she was. Only she didn't seem to mind when he'd tastefully hinted at wanting said information- on the contrary, she seemed almost thrilled. Which, in turn, perked him up considerably, and he'd had to fight the temptation to reach for his notebook and pen.

"So what you're saying is that you can create toxic compounds within your own body, and utilise them for both offensive and healing purposes?" Jack asked incredulously, regarding Amaryllis with a look that made her sit up a little straighter in pride. Nodding, she took a moment to shuffle from her place on the floor where they where both sitting, backs leaning against the soft mattress of Jack's bed.

"Although my abilities have their limits, I am able to procure most human medicines in my own body, though depending on the substance it takes time for my body to refine them specifically, though I specialise in venoms that can be used as weapons as well as for neutralising purposes." She explained, much to the awe of the man sitting beside her, who was leaning almost too closely for comfort, intent on catching every word. "t's handy as I myself am not immune to them, although it becomes a pain if I make an error in my bodily functions and they end up in my own bloodstream" she finished.

Jack frowned a little behind his mask, thoughtful. "Do you think you'd be able to produce penicillin?"

Amaryllis paused, before nodding slowly. "I believe so, though i'd need to know exactly how to produce it beforehand. All i'm really aware of concerning it at the moment is its use as an antibiotic and it's derivation from penicillium fungi"

"Then how did you figure out how to make what you already can?"

"Many accidents with my brother, altercations with creatures of my calibur, a mess of things really, whereas some are simply natural to my kind" she said, hands twiching a little uncomfortably at the thought. As proud as she was she didn't enjoy speaking of near death experiences, though she doubted Jack would pick up on the meaning she had hidden in her words. Though she had a few questions of her own for the masked man.

"So, tell me, what are things like around here anyhow?" she inquired with a grin, staring carefully into the oily black pits of Jacks eyeless but seeing eyesockets. After a short pause, he collected himself, searching for the words in his mind.

"Well, I wouldn't say anyone are easy to be around, it's not a very friendly place, but with a bit of bravado and your power alone you'll earn everyone's respect quickly enough, or fear rather" he managed, tousling his chestnut brown hair to get rid of the pent up nervous energy he suddenly felt. "I mean I like to think i'm pretty level headed, but things are pretty tense between all of us, I
think the only thing keeping us all from tearing each other apart is the threat of what the boss would do to us if we did”.

"Why has he gathered you five boys anyway?"

"Fi-Oh, it's not just us, there are others under his command too, but not all of them live here. To be honest we haven't been gathered in one place all that long either, I used to live out in an old cottage up North, but then we got ordered to stay closer, for safety, and I ended up just deciding to live here to avoid the hassle” he corrected, waving the explanation in a blasé kind of way as if it was the most boring subject he had ever had the displeasure to speak about. Though Amaryllis seemed intrigued somewhat.

"Safety purposes? And what do you mean hassle? Wouldn't living here in such close quarters be more dangerous based on your description of the others?"

"Ordinarily yeah, but I can reason with everyone else, kinda, but not so much with things like--" he sucked in a breath, not quite sure how to finish that sentence, until he eventually just gestured to her with an apologetic shrug. She frowned at that, cocking her head to the side, looking less offended than he had expected, but instead appeared to be confused.

"Am I being unreasonable somehow?" she asked with her eyebrows furrowed slightly, and Jack shook his head quickly, trying to backpedal before she could get upset. "No no, not at all, just, I know how to deal with people that used to be, well-- people I guess, but you're like Boss, and i'm no closer to understanding how to deal with him than I am being human again”.

"You aren't inhuman by choice?" the monster in the room asked, and the boy shuddered. It was strange for someone to call him anything but human so calmly, it sent a shiver up his spine, an unpleasant reminder of himself. Not that he needed it, but it felt strange. Even more so when spoken the mouth of a real monster.

"y'know, you change your tune about things pretty fast, just yesterday you were trying to quite literally rip my lungs out from my arse" he pointed out, making a sweeping gesture to his chest for emphasis, and regarding the creature before him with fresh curiosity. And the woman sat balled up next to him silently noted the evasion for another day.

"I just figure that if i'm to be stuck in this situation, I should do my best to enjoy it" she answered, nodding sagely and pausing, before adding "I adapt well, and the way I see it, treating my new companions well gives me a better chance of surviving the ordeal and outliving the lout who's got a collar around my neck than doing otherwise”. Jack shrugged, running an unsure hand through the mess of brown curls atop his head, and heaving a sigh.

"I guess you have a point, but you never really explained how you ended up under his hand anyway”

"I tresspassed and hunted on his territory" she said simply, as if that were all the explanation itself.

"Well, yeah, but that doesn't mean you couldn't have just killed him when we weren't around to play bait"

"It's not quite about that- it's about honour, pride in being strong enough to uphold our laws of chivalry even at the expense of some comforts and freedoms. To have the freedom to say that i'm powerful enough to afford to put myself in a demeaning position”

"That just sounds dumb to me, why would you do that to yourself?"

"Be thankful I did, or you'd be rotting back in a pile with your allies right now"
"True"

"I must admit though, despite the unpleasantness of being that filth's pawn, I am quite excited to have company for the while, at least if everyone is as amusing as you" the woman conceded, stretching so hard that her body shuddered, and she heard the satisfying clicking of her joints, while muscles jumped under flesh.

"By the way, now that I've been able to look at you properly, I noticed that your eyes keep...changing? I wasn't sure at first but i could have sworn your eyes were green earlier, but now they're blue" the masked man observed, and Amaryllis turned to face him properly, a happy smile on her lips.

"Ah, you noticed? Yes my eyes do tend to change with my mood, i've never quite mastered the skill of keeping them one way or the other. I've put on a camouflage of sorts, though I suppose there isn't much need to keep it up now"

As the words left her mouth, her body began shifting it's form, much to Jack's surprise and horror. Her legs crackled and popped as they grew, the hinges of her knee joints snapping backwards like the hind legs of a horse ending in small paws with sharp looking claws poking out of the white fuzz that was her fur. Her face grew slightly flatter, with her eyes growing with the proportions of her face and the whites of her scleras becoming pitch black, her iris's remaining a royal navy blue. While her mouth widened into a nightmarish slit that reminded Jack of Jeff, only shaped faintly like a Jack-O-Lanterns, and pointed so sharply they could have been teeth. Her tail, which she had wrapped around her waist as a belt, unfurled once more as the horns on her head grew long and the fingers on her hands enlongated into daggar like blades for claws. The silvery hair on her head remaining almost as a mane.

Jack swiftly scrambled backwards upon her transformation, hands and feet slipping on the slick surface below until his back collided painfully with the wall. Looks like he was back at square one. Upon noticing Jack's distress, which took a moment as she adjusted to the new proportions of her body, internal organs working overtime to make up for the large size of her body. Amaryllis quickly reverted back, head swimming under the strain of having everything tampered with so rapidly.

"Or perhaps, if your reaction has anything to say about it, I should remain like this?"

"Think that might be best- sorry! But you could put any horror movie to shame just by turning up"

"I don't know what those are, is that a good thing?"

"In this world- I reckon it is"

This was when a sort of realisation dawned upon Amaryllis, and she eyed the man before her with a childlike excitement that Jack wasn't entirely certain was a good thing after seeing the monstrosity she called a "normal" body. The girl was practically vibrating on the spot. Eyes sparkling and a smile splitting her face just a little too wide, mask slipping slightly as the words bubbled past her lips almost too fast for her mouth to keep up.

"You- you were human once! What was it like? I've seen all sorts of unusual things, but I've never been able to see things up close, there was one time but I got chased out by an old man and his servants" she babbled, waving her hands around in a bizzare attempt to articulate what her words couldn't get out. She had a lot of questions after all, far too many for her to simply say in one sentence.
"Uhh-serva-what? I don't really understand what you're asking" Jack spluttered, nerves still not quite settled, and feeling a little frazzled by the sudden enthusiasm. Of course, it was in this exact moment, a knock on the door distracted him from answering, and as he shakily stood to answer it he heard Amaryllis growl in frustration. He was just more surprised someone actually had the manners to knock. Usually someone would just come in whether he gave them permission or not. Though he had to wonder, as he opened the door, what on earth Toby could want from him at three in the morning.
"Really Toby, again?" Jack sighed as he pushed his door open wider to let the jittery boy through, posture hunched over the hands clutched to his chest, which were bleeding profusely. Amaryllis had caught the scent a few hours ago, so she guessed he had been bleeding for a while longer than he seemed willing to let on, though by Jack's tired attitude this wasn't something entirely new. She hadn't had the opportunity to meet this familiar face properly yet, and though disgruntled about having her enthusiasm put on hold, she felt it proper to introduce herself, this time in a politer manner. The fact that this time he had neglected to wear his mask however, was a plus.

Stepping forwards towards the boy, she noticed that he looked just a little younger than Jack, though she couldn't really be sure with that mask of his in the way. Though his frame was certainly thinner, sickly looking and frail, and yet his skin had a reasonably healthy glow, if she ignored the deep bags under his eyes, which were wide and bloodshot. Swiveling around the room with dizzying speed as though he half expected something unseen to jump out at him. He was wearing what looked to be a jumper and loose track bottoms as sleeping attire, obviously worn and wrinkled, colours once a mix of bright blue and grey now dull and faded, but smelled clean. When Amaryllis stepped forwards, he snapped immediately in her direction, though his eyes seemed to dismiss her in search for something else, though apart from Jack rooting through cabinets and drawers, there was no other source of interest in the room.

"It is good to meet you?" she greeted, moving as gracefully as she was able to whilst trying to stay in his sight, which was difficult when the boy seemed unable to stay still. He startled at the sound of her voice, and his eyes once again focused on her, though this time they settled, and at once they seemed a little less cloudy, clearer.

He didn't answer though, even if he was staring the woman down, and Amaryllis found herself mentally flailing to confront the situation. Unfortunately, she was terribly under-experienced in socializing, and it occurred to her that her skills in that domain lacked much more than she had first realized. When situations begin to turn difficult, she was unequipped to go any further- she had been lucky with the boys so far, and she made a note to herself to pay more attention to how the two interacted with one another. She'd need that valuable information to move forwards.

After a few painful moments of silence, Jack eventually approached the two, staring down at a small roll of white medical tape and scraggly cut bandages. "Well kid, looks like we're fresh out of antiseptic, hell we don't even have any painkillers left- most of my shit was in the infirmary" he sighed, sitting heavily on the floor, and patting the mattress in front of him for Toby to sit. The boy complied, though he didn't seem particularly bothered by this information, shrugging jerkily as the springs under him creaked under his weight. Jack seemed to take his silence as a cue to snatch his hand out of his lap and begin tending to it, frowning at the unsightly red welts on the boys bony fingers. "Well, bites are more lightly to get infected if they aren't treated right, i'll have to take a look and see if there's anything worth taking tomorrow night, guess i'm hunting a little earlier than I planned".

"Hunting? What for?" Amaryllis questioned, an eyebrow raised in interest. Surprisingly, it was Toby who spoke up at that, making her jolt with surprise at his sudden breach of silence. "Mostly for people" he said simply, pausing for a beat before adding "sometimes for unguarded pharmacies to loot, AKA a medical students wet dream all in one building".

Jack scoffed, "that'd be a hospital". Apparently unaware of, or totally uncaring of the little jab directed his way, and the lanky boy deflated a little, disappointed.
"People hunting? Humans? Were you both not human once yourselves?" Amaryllis pressed, seemingly disturbed by the idea of hunting one's own species. Both boys nodded quietly.

"I don't understand, what need would cause you to act in such uncharacteristically predatory ways for you subspecies?"

"subspecies?" Jack asked, attention momentarily stolen from the task at hand, so to speak.

The now golden-eyed creatures nodded, rolling her eyes as though tired, as if she were speaking with a simpleton that couldn't fathom even the simplest of concepts. It made Jack's eye twitch with irritation under his navy blue mask.

"I can still smell the human on you, but it's tainted, mingled with something else" the woman explained, making odd movements with her arms, twisting them in a pinwheel motion in front of her chest with eyebrows furrowed in concentration. "I can feel it, like a mutation of sorts, something changing you into something that should have never been created. A warp in natural evolution- an accident that was intentionally birthed". By this point the woman was frowning, eyes cast downwards as though the words on her tongue were painful to form as she spat them out, as though they were poison in her mouth. As though simply saying them would bring something vile onto them, breathing life into terrors best left unspoken.

Jack chose to remain silent, digesting the words that felt right, but also terribly wrong to hear. That what he was, happened by no accident- he knew that all too well, he had the scars to prove it. Only the way she spoke regarding the both of them was what truly made his flesh crawl. Even Toby seemed at least a little rattled, though he was more bothered by the woman's demeanor rather than her words. "So...what does that mean for us? Or are you being all cryptic and spooky for the fun of it?".

Both Amaryllis and Jack spun on Toby, who seemed to have made it painfully clear to very much ignore the tension marring the other two in the room. They had assumed that the concentration on his face had been of understanding. Apparently not.

"You know-- I recall you being much more pleasant back whilst you were attacking me" she grumbled, rubbing at her bare legs exposed to the scratchy material of the bedspread. irritated. She much appreciated Jack's more serious nature-- a scholar of sorts, someone she could relate to. This person's carefree and unpredictable nature just irked her. Still, she relented, patiently answering him with a deep set wrinkle between her brows.

"In essence, it means that whatever turned you into what you are was done intentionally. By a creature, or creatures powerful enough to influence the human conscience as well as physical aspects of your biological makeup. I regret to say that few of my people take part in such cruel...pleasures." she drew a shaky breath, a look of personal disgust crossing her features.

"We are all guilty of many things, things that by some measure or human morality are to be frowned upon. But we are not sick creatures, I feel it necessary to assure you so, we do not take happiness from unnecessary suffering-- at the very least, not most of us."

"That doesn't really answer my question" Toby grumbled unhappily, twitching at the warm soap seeping into the grisly mess at his fingertips. The gnarled flesh red and inflamed stinging uncomfortably with every dab of the sud-soaked cloth. Jack worked cleanly, efficiently, whilst still managing to focus his ears on the conversation. Though it was harder to tell where exactly his eyes were resting.

"What do you mean exactly?" Amaryllis frowned, running a hand through the silvery locks of
her head and massaging the base of her horns.

"Well you didn't tell us why this matters now- what difference does it make to us if someone did this on purpose when it's already been done?"

"...to be fair he does have a point, not like we can really do anything about it"

"Ha-nonsense! Nothing can be done with that sort of attitude, you boys really shouldn't underestimate the magic hidden in this world" the woman sneered, making a tittering noise with a hand fluttering over her mouth. "For example, i'm sure that most humans couldn't track someone for almost two days without rest and still have the energy to haul one another back home, am I wrong?"

Toby made a noise halfway between a gasp and a squeak, eyes suddenly bright. There was a childlike quality to his face that seemed to just blink into existence, the change so quick that it actually made Amaryllis a little uneasy. Again? The boy was a damn kaleidoscope of moods.

"You knew we where following you?"

"I'm more surprised that you didn't know that, to be completely honest"

"Huh...and that was magic?"

"Not quite, close to it, more like...instinct influenced by it, I felt the invasion of a foreign energy, and afterwards it wasn't all that difficult to sniff you all out"

"Y'know, you're really weird lady"

Amaryllis scoffed, and Toby made a hissing noise, snatching his hand away from Jack. The skin around his fingers looked redder than before, certainly a lot cleaner than it was, but more irritated. That soap was clearly giving him a much harder time than the original injury. Perhaps that's be an incentive to be more careful with himself.

Jack made a tutting noise, folding his hands back into his lap with a huff. He didn't seem annoyed, more as though he was bored, and he turned his head towards Amaryllis. Had his face not been obscured, she would have seen the disgruntled look take over his features.

Regardless of this, he spoke up, his voice not betraying his mood in the slightest. "You never did tell me exactly how that bite of yours did Masky any good, now that I think about it. It doesn't seem like something that any kind of venom I know about could fix"

"Ah, brilliant observation my friend"

Toby waved his good hand in attempt to get everyone's attention, one eyebrow raised. "How is it a good observation that poison couldn't help someone?"

The masked man sighed, as a little of him died inside. "Poison and venom aren't the same thing man" he corrected, and the younger boy made a face, "what's the difference?"

"Venom has to be injected into the bloodstream, if it's ingested it'll just pass through, poison maintains it's effect regardless"

Toby made a small noise of understanding, then shrank back from the conversation in a silent bid for them to continue. Amaryllis obliged suit.

"As my body has accelerated healing properties, by passing my cells into anothers body, the
cells are able to hitchhike almost on mine.

Using the rapid mitosis to heal tissue damage, though this method can often bring on a fever to whomever I assist, as the process is so rapid it accumulates heat through kinetic energy alone."

"So, when you bit Masky, you transferred part of yourself, i'm assuming a fluid, directly into his bloodstream?"

"That is correct, though I used a mixment of saliva and blood, as my blood- although suitable, would be far too strong for his body to handle undiluted"

Toby and Jacks reactions to this differed greatly. Jacks being one of blithering excitement and toby's being one of complete and utter disgust. Going so far as to make his revulsion knowns as a horrific gagging noise, quickly followed by the boy scampering off of the bed and throwing open the door. Disappearing into the hallway, being slowly flooded with the soft morning sunshine.

Apparently the thought of a saliva-blood transfusion was too much for the poor guy at 5AM
Good night, or is it good morning?

After bidding Jack a good morning, as evening had long since passed, Amaryllis had quietly made her way to her bed quarters. Or rather, her shared quarters. On the condition that she shared more with the man at another time, as he seemed very much eager to learn the wonders of a world he, already up to the neck in, was somewhat hidden to him.

With the hallways to herself, she took the time to inspect the smaller details of her new home. As much as she would deeply miss the richness of life in the wild, she was very much intrigued to live in such a human-like dwelling as this. Humans had always been a pique of interest for the creature destined to live a life of old, a youngling herself, curiosity was in her nature.

They were just so...different, in ways, similar in others. She couldn't quite shake the desire to learn, to touch, to experience everything that for some reason, nobody else she knew, would. She had already slaved to learn many of human languages, already being fluent in those of inhuman origins. Patching together using threads and snippets she'd caught along the way- learning a specific few after a very long, unpleasant stay in captivity. How had they learned to understand one another? How had they learned one anothers ways to communicate, without having the universal signals shared by almost every other mammal on earth?

The though fascinated the creature that had never been, nor could be, human. Yet was neither monster nor spirit, an species that had only quite recently, in the history of everything, migrated towards the earths crust. Or really, this Earth at all. In the same plain.

She'd never quite mastered the art of weaving cloth in such a manner, having tried and failed to replicate the materials she'd witnessed across her travels. Although she had learned how to create a very crude form of threat. Useful for keeping all sorts things together, in emergencies. She'd never really been able to produce such a plush, richly colored-- carpet? Or had it been rug? The fabric was soft and fluffy on her feet, and she found herself luxuriously digging her toes into it. Curling them into it with each slow step.

There was a plethora of generously framed paintings lining the walls, which she hadn't had the opportunity to appreciate until now. As she stepped by, she was careful to get a good eyeful of each, marveling at the craftsmanship of each. A horse riding in a golden field. A group of children clustering around a ball. A maiden sitting against a backdrop of waterfalls and leafy canopies. She wondered if perhaps anyone in the house were responsible for these, and if so, if they'd allow her to try her hand at it.

It was draftier than she had first noted it to be as she searched for her new accommodation. Having entirely given up on navigating the maze by memory alone and instead turning to her nose for help, which would have worked a lot better had her scent not been mostly obscured by-- well, everything else. Floor polish, the mingling scents of other cleaning supplies, whoever else lived here, fabrics, it was dreadful, and the whole lot together created a nauseating perfume that made her head spin. Though none of the smells were deep set, implying that this residence was relatively new to Slenders little gathering, as the building, although extremely well maintained, was not, as the very fully developed greenery clinging to it's outer walls made clear.

She was very close to just giving up and staying put to wait for someone to walk by and point her in the right direction before she spotted a familiar door. Recognizing it to be her own- or rather, Jeffs and hers, she reached carefully for the door handle, before halting. Hesitating a fraction before pulling her hand back, letting it rest at her sides. He would still be asleep now, right? Was it alright for her to simply walk in, or would that be rude? She knew that she certainly didn't appreciate being woken prematurely, but how much was too much to wake him up?
Humans didn't hear as well as she did, but he wasn't quite human anymore, what if she was being too loud now? Hmm, this was turning out to be a difficult conundrum, should she wait until he woke? How long would that be? Maybe if she was extra quiet?

Decision made, she once again gripped the handle, turning it agonizingly slowly, wincing as the door unlatched noisily and squeaked as she finished turning it the whole way. She opened it just a slither, slipping into the gap with careful steps, applying her weight in short bursts and reaching around to keep the handle from spinning backwards. Turning to close the door just as stealthily, pushing the door to it's frame and manually turning the handle until it clicked shut.

The wall beside her was alarming to look at in the dim light, her eyes meeting her reflections and making her stiffen slightly. She'd have to get used to that. She allowed her eyes to travel the room, eventually settling on the form huddled in a swath of blankets on a bed much to large for him. She obviously hadn't received permission to join him there, so she instead turned her focus to a new object that had been placed in the room. Pushed haphazardly up against the wall close to the open window, curtains shut tight against the world, sat what looked to be a make ship mattress. Perhaps 'mattress' was too kind a word, more like a nest of clothing and sheets. Ah well, it beat the floor. She'd slept in more uncomfortable settings.

Softly padding her way to the pile, easing and lifting her weight from floorboard to floorboard after testing her weight for creaks, she soon found herself standing in front of it. Crouching before transferring her weight onto her bottom and shifting on her side until she was comfortable, knees tucked up under her chin and cradling her arms.

"Next time, just come in normally instead of drawing it out would ya?" a grouchy voice grumbled, the sound muffled by the pillow he'd thrown over his head. He sounded very unhappy, though apparently too tired to really do much about it aside from complaining, his voice thick with sleep.

Amaryllis flushed, upset to have failed in her attempt to allow him an uninterrupted rest, despite her best efforts.

"Was I too loud?" she squeaked, and she heard Jeff blow out a huff of air. "The opposite--now shut up".

She didn't make a peep after that, sleep catching up to her relatively quickly. She had to wonder though, how could someone to be too quiet?

It felt like she'd been unconscious for seconds, rather than hours, before she felt a sharp kick to the thigh. Not even bothering to crack open an eye, she let a harsh growl in warning, the next kick she heard coming pausing at the sound. Apparently deciding that they'd made their point already, and that a second wasn't worth the implied consequence. Meaning she'd quite happily have bitten a chunk out of the offender and go back to dreamland. She faintly noted that, although she couldn't really remember what it was she'd initially dreamt about, it hadn't been very pleasant.

"C'mon get your ass up, need a hand with something" a familiar raspy voice grumbled. Amaryllis indulging it and peeling open one eye to stare defiantly up at the smiling-yet scowling raven haired madman that had the gall to interrupt her snoozing time. "I'm insufficiently rested, do it yourself".

"So you're a grumpy sleepy, good for you, now get the fuck up before I splice you the fuck up"

"I could murder you in a thousand different ways, and still not have moved an inch from this position. Do you really want to try?" the woman threatened bluntly, keeping one eye trained on
the man's face. Which had contorted into one of both fury and frustration. He didn't even twitch to act any further, instead seethed in place. Good boy. He learned quickly.

He did, however, scoff a little too loudly. Ah, a human male's pride was such a delicate thing. "What happened to the whole dignified act, huh? You're actually threatening to gut me over a nap?"

"Yes." she confirmed. Snuggling further into her swath of her makeshift mattress.

Silence. Then a loud thump, as Jeff had dropped to the floor, sat cross-legged a foot away from the already dozing figure. Stubbornly glowering at her with both hands gripping at his knees. "The way I see it, Slendy gave me the say-so over whatever the fuck you do, so that means when I say jump- you say how high. Get. Up." he hissed in a way that was probably supposed to sound demeaning.

She groaned, a sound full of mourning for the sleep that could have been. She did, however reluctantly, roll off of her bed. Clumsily pushing herself into a standing position, limbs stiff from rest. All the while cursing the all-too smug looking Jeff, who seemed quite happy to find that he had some measure of power over the creature. Even if it was only like this.

"I really dislike you right now" Amaryllis sulked, thick tears forming in her eyes as she yawned. Stretching her back and enjoying the feeling of her muscles stretching in all the right places. Blinking away the moisture, it revealed that her eyes had morphed into a deep amber colour, a sharp contrast to the black where the whites of her eyes should have been. Her tail was also, noticeably, still present, though her large horns had shrunk during her time at rest. Giving her a rather ethereal, yet youthful, appearance.

Without another word, Jeff rocked himself back and forth, using the momentum to rather gracefully land himself upright all in one fluid motion. His hair was still messy from sleep, though it was notable much cleaner than her own, as her silvery white locks now sat in oily clumps. Instead of the usual white wisps she usually adorned. Her clothing was also pretty unsightly, speckled with blood and filth, and so wrinkled that you could hardly tell it's original shape anymore. Meanwhile, Jeff had switched yesterday's hoodie for a skimpy, simple grey shirt, though hadn't bothered to change his jeans. Giving Amaryllis a good chance to get a good look on his physique, scrawny, yet lean. Just as she'd first thought, though she noticed that although he didn't have much meat on his bones, what was actually there was heavily well-worn. Much more muscular than he first appeared, though, admittedly, not--how did humans say? 'Ripped'? Certainly showed that he spent a lot of time moving.

She followed him out into the hallway and down an unfamiliar staircase, which was a sight larger than the one she had spotted just earlier. How big was this place? She was sure to keep close, not wanting to risk losing him and getting lost again. Though, despite having lived in the quiet for most of her life, she found herself feeling extremely uncomfortable with the quiet. Occasionally opening her mouth to speak, before snapping it shut again with an audible click. Not knowing what to say, or even where or how to start.

Then, as she'd been so preoccupied with her internal conflict, she failed to notice that the man had stopped dead. Walking straight into his chest and- as she was, after all, much, much stronger than he, knocked him straight over like a logged tree. She noted the raw shame on his face as he scrambled to stand, leaning imposingly into the older woman's face.

"Spit it out already- you're 'ahh' and 'uum'-ing is giving me hives", he sounded irritated, but at the very least it gave the creature an opportunity to speak. So she eagerly took the chance given to her.
"Y-you get uhh, angry easily, yes?" she spluttered, wincing at the words as she spoke them. Good lord, she sounded so very feeble-piteous, even. She knew she had been grasping at straws, but surely her brain could have produced a more intellectual response than that. To her relief, however, Jeff didn't seem to mind. He visibly digested the question, then somehow pulled a face of equal parts amusement and surprise in nature.

"I... guess?" he said, though it came out more than a question itself. Before shaking his head a little and continuing. "That was...you're fucking weird, I don't even know how to respond to that". It was true, he didn't know how to respond to that. She'd been twiddling her thumbs like a damn schoolgirl, it'd irked him more than it should have, which wasn't a good thing as trying very, oh so hard to play nice. For the time being at least. Though, thanks to his morning...'testiness', that hadn't started off as well as he'd hoped. He refocused his eyes back onto her, a little worried at the almost childlike excitement in her eyes.

Of course she was quite pleased with herself, she'd just thought of something to say. "How are your injuries faring?"

Jeff looked as though he was about to answer, but then something in his eyes clicked. Instead, his face changed dramatically, his eyes narrowed into slits, an impressive feat for someone without eyelids, and puffed up menacingly. "Don't you dare even think about biting me you littl-"

"I won't, I wouldn't, unless you were unable to give permission" Amaryllis assured, raising her hands in a placating gesture. Which seemed to do the trick, as Jeff deflated a little.

After a few beats, he nodded, albeit gruffly. "I'm good", and that was all he said for the remainder of the walk.

Thankfully, their destination turned out to be fairly close, so she didn't have to endure the painful silence for too long. It was almost like the man prided himself on not uttering a single word to his companions. Take some sort of sick, twisted delight at the expense of her, at her discomfort. Then again, there was a reason the Slenderman had taken him into his custody. Perhaps this unusual hostility played a part in that. Though, she had to admit, he was certainly acting much more docile than their first encounter. Sure, his words were vulgar in nature, but he was being rather complacent in comparison. She'd have to rethink her opinion on the guy, obviously there was more to his nature than simple aggression--that, or he was rather adept at feigning submission.

After swiftly passing through what appeared to be a dining room, a very, very large one. With a ridiculously long table that spread the length it, with enough chairs to seat close to thirty people. The two found themselves standing at the door frame of an elaborately furnished kitchen. So clean that even Amaryllis, who had no prior knowledge to how these rooms functioned, doubted that most of it had ever been put to use. The only table that looked to be worn in the slightest being a single worktop of many to the front left of the room. Surface scratched and littered with small dents and similar imperfections on the shiny metal surface. The rest lining the outer layer, pushed flush against the walls remaining pristine, and identical to one another. The hob within the center island appearing to being in a similar condition.

Many other contraptions sat on the far counter tops, as well as slotted into and over the equipment in the center of the room. Fridges slotted comfortably under the counters and two large sinks back at the right. Amaryllis didn't even know where to turn, everything just looked so wonderfully foreign.

Delighted, she shook Jeff's arm violently in her glee, almost dislocating the guys shoulder, and painfully jarring his ribs in the process. Leaving him gasping and breathless at the sensation. She wanted to poke and prod everything in sight, though refrained from doing so. For all she knew,
that could be impolite, but the desire in her eyes betrayed her. "Please tell me that i'm allowed to inspect these? Such unique craftsmanship! What uses could these strange objects possibly serve?"

If Jeff could have blinked. He would have. To try and confirm that someone was really so enraptured by a damn kitchen. Shouldn't she be a little, y'know, bummed out? Annoyed? Anything but this? Just a minute ago she was pissed at being woken up, and now she was practically estatic over...this.

He took a deep, calming breath, and stared deeply into the woman's eyes, "It's a kitchen." he said as seriously as he could manage. Hoping that she'd catch the 'as in, something you're not supposed to be this happy about" tone in his voice.

Her expression didn't fall, though understanding flashed in her eyes, which now sparkled a vivid royal purple. He'd seen that look before, and had gotten a lecture as a result. He saw her take in a deep breath, getting ready to speak-- and thinking quickly, he beat her to it.

"O-of course you can, have a look-that's what we're here for!" he spluttered hastily, breathing a sigh of relief when her mouth only released a high-pitched squeal. Much to his surprise, she gave him a fleeting embrace, before rushing off to tap the face of a microwave.

That had been...unexpected. Though, not entirely unwelcome, he could use this. Jeff, despite being very much a ruthless brute, with a stronger lust for death and gore, was a calculating man. He knew how to spot the little chinks in a persons armour, be it physically or mentally. He could sit in a whole room of people and pick out the venerable, the weak, the people born to be victims. Yet, he also knew when he was outmatched, but, with the right information, at the right time, any foe he faced could be taken down with a well-placed blow. Almost like some sort of video game, with the right sequences, the moves, any 'boss' could be defeated. He just needed to find that chink.

With that thought blossoming into his mind, the predator changed his mask to suit his prey.
Getting a little fired up

Oh this was simply glorious! So many goodies to try her hands at, and then even more toto after that. She'd seen so many unusual things come from machines such as these, so many unique and wonderful foodstuffs to satisfy humans appetites.

She'd nibbled a few examples during her days, sure, other times had little other choice. Her own experiments were not the only ones she took part in, after all. Alas, human foods didn't seem to satisfy her, it was more of a recreational activity at best. At worst, it was unhealthy, something akin to humans and their meat-tainting addictions.

Jeff had kindly explained that the purpose of this visit was to prepare breakfast for everyone within the household. Apparently slender took a strange thrill in forcing his subordinates into playing house as of late, since he'd never forced them to live together like this before. Today it was his turn, however, he'd thrust the job into her, his excuse being that he'd noticed her fascination with everything human, and had decided to indulge her for the morning.

Another thing she'd learned during the past three hours of running amok after being set loose on this room was that; A, oil catches fire very easily and B, she was very talented at doing everything wrong, in the wrongest way possible. She would have been embarrassed if she wasn't so focused on not doing it again, and also not letting the fire get too out of hand. Meanwhile, Jeffrey had been watching in awe from his perch on the counter top. Already wide eyes practically imploding on themselves at the havoc Amaryllis was wreaking on the damn place. Oh Slendy wouldn't be happy with this. How had she even managed to crack that marble worktop? And with a bowl no less?

He watched her fumble around in the cabinets for a while, face lighting up with recognition at a few choice ingredients and equipment. Picking out a frying pan, eggs, sugar and flour, sniffing at them for added measure. He could see the gears working in her head, staring back and forth between the ingredients and the pan, trying to connect how to bring them together. After a few seconds, her face shifted, turning away from the counter to rummage through the drawers again, eventually returning back with a mixing bowl and spoon. Then, with an unusual amount of care, she plopped everything into the bowl in varying, unequal amounts, mixing them together with a happy hum.

Jeff had, at first, assumed she knew what she was doing, or trying to do, but now he wasn't so sure. "hey, uhh, what are you making there?" he rasped, clearing his throat a little as he regarded the cheerful woman with a furrowed brow.

She jolted a little bit, having been startled out of her own little world. Busy playing in the equivalent of a child's toy store with the instructions to go nuts, "oh, oh, pancakes!", then, with a bit more hesitancy, "could you not tell?".

Jeff's mouth twisted a little, teeth working at the scarred flesh of his lips. Biting back a snide comment already, the mask wanting so badly to slip. This didn't go unnoticed, and Amaryllis found herself shifting under his gaze that lingered just a fraction to long, "I... Don't do much cooking?" he finished lamely, ending more like a question than an answer. The elder woman huffed, only mildly offended, though she'd expected this. Somewhat. Of course she'd been more hopeful that she'd observed enough to do better, her optimism didn't override her common sense.

Besides, things often looked better cooked, right?

Taking advantage of the silence, she switched on the hob to high heat. Marveling at the low ring
of light that blinked on with the device. She reasoned that this told the humans where the hot part
was, since she couldn't recall humans flesh being particularly sensitive to heat, or anything for that
matter. It was actually amazing how little humans functioned, their senses practically dead
compared to those of other mammals.

She didn't really know when she was supposed to pour the lumpy mixture into the pan she had
set up. She remembered the sound she'd heard from years of watching humans cook. What was it
they put in first? That made a very loud sizzling noise? It was yellow, at least, she thought, and it
was kept in a cool place. What was it? She thought that it was made from--oh! That was it!
Butter!

As if reading her mind, Jeffrey stepped in Amaryllis' path, blocking the refrigerator from view, his
tall frame towering over hers. The unusual point of view almost sent her teetering, the sudden
close proximity to the lanky man sending her off-balance, since she was so used to looming over
everything else. He made an odd shushing noise through his teeth, almost like he was tutting, and
shook his head.

Amaryllis frowned, eyes expectant, waiting for explanation. "No butter there pal, Toby used it all
up yesterday" he said simply, shrugging as though this wasn't an entirely new topic of
conversation. Amaryllis slumped were she stood, back slouching over as she considered the
conundrum, "ah, I see, i suppose I should have checked beforehand...".)))

"yeah well, blame the beanbags toast addiction, i won't tell if you don't"
"t-toast...? Nevermind, isn't there something else i could use?"
"whaddya need it for?"
"I don't know? I've-I've just seen humans use it?"

She heard him release a breath through his nose, mouth remaining shut a tad too tight. She could
smell the sudden irritation radiating off of him, but nothing else betrayed his needless anger. His
body remaining entirely passive, face as friendly as can be with an ear splitting grin carved into his
face. Meanwhile, Amaryllis felt herself tense, muscles stiffening with anticipation, eyes widening
to catch every movement he made. Very aware of his actions, though she knew she would always
be able to overpower him, she now felt chill, a deep unease as the man before her, who could so
well mask himself. It had been so so brief, but as brief as it was, she'd forgotten that he was a
threat.

If he had noticed her shift in posture, he hadn't shown it. Instead, the corners of his natural mouth
lifted, smiling warmly, even with the Cheshire cat grin surrounding the warmth. Impossibly wide
eyes twinkling with a kindliness that didn't match his scent. Behind it, was a boiling broth of
something much more dangerous. Now she couldn't notice anything else, eyes set and targeted on
his warning signals.

In a disorganized twitch, she flipped the mess of a pancake into the air, obviously trying to
replicate a movement she'd seen before, and failing miserably. The "pancake" splatting around
and breaking into burnt pieces on the pan. Whatever wasn't completely raw slop being incinerated
beyond recognition.

Jeff wasn't able to contain the the snort that blew bast his lips, the sound resembling a wet
raspberry. High pitched yips that didn't match his usual low tone bubbled past his hands that he'd
clasped to his face, pale face turning into a steady shade of red as he fought to gain control of his
outburst. It was almost endearing, if she couldn't still smell the heavy musk of death around him.
A heavy reminder that despite her playing to their so far companionable tune, she'd never be able
to truly get comfortable.

It seemed that donning his mask had drawn more attention than remaining bare. Not the good kind.

This wasn't anything particularly new, the concept had been with her since the moment she had been born, wild animals didn't make merry indefinitely. They certainly didn't stick around for threats to turn sour either. Yet this situation, however temporary, was good, she'd even dare to call it fun. More so had she gone into it willingly.

She could, even in spite of herself, get used to this.

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The fire had blown up like a mushroom cloud. The sound of the crackling flames softening just as quickly as it had began, as the flame almost instantly burned itself out. The remainder continuing to leech off of the oil that had pooled on the stove, the ember flickering angrily as the flustered creature attempted to suffocate the flame.

Her hands hovered over the fire, trying to avoid wafting fuel unto the flame, eyes scrunched up at the heat. The moisture evaporating from the bright yellow rings amidst a jet black, the glow from which casting a startling shine to the tears attempting to make up for it. She let out a hiss as her fingers almost made contact, drawing her hands back and grimacing at the feeling of her filthy body adorned in even filthier clothes. The grime had become a sticky, sweet mess, flecks of batter here and there, usually accompanied by large spills of the very same concoction. She felt disgusting, and the heat did not make her feel much better.

She turned towards Jeff, opening her mouth to ask for a hand, when she caught a good look at his face. She froze, her body tensing to mirror his. If she'd thought him pale before, now his face was ashen, the dark rings under his lidless eyes suddenly becoming much more pronounced. His mouth, despite being stuck in a smile, looked to be frowning, almost a grimace, lips pursed together too tightly. His eyes were focused on the flames.

Tentatively, she stepped forwards.

The change was instant. Within the blink of an eye, the man's eyes flickered towards where he had seen movement, not so much as actively attacking more as he was reacting. Pouncing on the alarmed woman and viciously clawing at her flesh like a wild animal. Punching whatever he could touch, not even caring if he sometimes missed and slammed his knuckles into the tiles below. His breathing was ragged with the effort of swinging his arms. Back hunched over the smaller form beneath him. Spit flecking from his mouth as he growled incomprehensible words at his victim. Though she distinctly heard the name "Randy", as well as something about a party—though whatever any of those two things had to do with bleach was anyone's guess. His grip tightened.

So much for playing house.

His "victim", Amaryllis, on the other hand, remained still. She hadn't been authorized to enter conflict, nor had she been granted permission to retaliate. So she laid still, the blows, while powerful, did little to harm her. Though another damage had been inflicted in its place, as her wariness had been proven warranted. She would no longer let her guard fall around this man. Though part of her felt a tickle of amusement. How easily had his mask crumbled. Really, it hadn't taken much, had he even been trying? Perhaps he was more impatient than he had smelled.

All humour aside though, the aggression in his savagery was rather disturbing. Sure he'd not exactly been passive as it was, but he certainly hadn't been anywhere near this level or raw
unadulterated fury just a few moments ago. To think he'd been capable of mustering up all of this in a matter of seconds was, in all honesty, frightening. She liked to think the large majority of her sort were much more refined in comparison. Civilized, in a sense, quite a cynical race—everything was for a reason, so such unpredictable behavior was deeply unsettling.

She could feel his thumbs trying to dug themselves into her windpipe, and the welt marking her pale throat had darkened into a throbbing angry red. The muscles beneath hard long since solidified, and he almost whimpered in frustration at the unyielding slab of meat under his powerful hands. Snarling furiously at the faceless figure laying motionless under him.

He needed it to die. No. He needed to kill it. He needed to feel it die through his own two hands. Watch the life seep through and out of its eyes. Why was it still here?! Why couldn't he just snap this damn just as he had done so many fucking times before?

Incredibly, through all of this, Amaryllis managed to speak. Her voice calm and unwavering, eyes clear and trained directly into the wide eyes wavering over her own, "Jeffery, please get off of me". This only granted her a slight pause before he resumed his assault. So, instead, she carefully shuffled her arms out from under his knees and wrapped one firmly around his wrists, gently prying them off of herself with relative ease.

By the time Jeff noticed the shift in power, he was already being held sternly against the floor. Having been flipped over so gracefully he'd barely felt it. Or rather, he wouldn't have felt it even if he hadn't been so distracted by his fit of mania. To his surprise however, the shift in balance almost snapped him out of the recesses of his mind, and for a moment, he felt a calmness spread throughout himself. This did not go unnoticed by Amaryllis either, as her grip loosened accommodatingly with his sagging body, and he heaved with the exertion. The adrenaline gradually fading just as suddenly as it had came.

That was the day that Amaryllis learned Jeffery was none too fond of fire.
The rest of that early morning had passed by relatively quickly. With Jeffery spending the
remainder quietly skulking in his little corner of the kitchen, with Amaryllis keeping a watchful
eye on his movements. He seemed displeased with the attention, even more so at his little outburst,
but had offered no explanation, and Amaryllis hadn't asked. So they had spent the rest of those
couple of hours in something just a little ways off if companionable silence.

It wasn't until Toby wandered in that Amaryllis decided that she'd had enough of the quiet.
Happily taking the opportunity to excuse herself as Toby bounced over to the table of prepared
food, though she didn't get to see his shoulders slump in disappointment. She did, however, hear
his exclamation of shock at the mess.

"wh-what the f-f-fuck happened in here?!"

Whatever Jeff might have said in response was lost to Amaryllis's ears as the door swung shut.
The dining room adjacent to the kitchen just as barren as it had been that morning, though the
house itself had noticeably stirred. Muffled activity travelling through the walls the telltale sign that
life was, in fact, present inside. Though nobody had yet shown their faces anywhere in sight.
Hadn't Jeff said that they were making breakfast for everyone? Surely everyone would be up and
about by now-- she could hear them, so why was it that nobody had gathered for it?

Just as that thought crossed her mind, there was a tremendous thumping noise. Barely audible
through the heavy doorways, which, after a moment of muffled bickering, flamboyantly swung
open. Both Masky and Hoodie spilling inside with a dramatic yelp--closely followed by an
unfamiliar figure. Standing over the two boys with an air of grace and authority, the slender figure
of a woman adorned in a slim-fitted dress waltzing in behind.

Her face was shockingly pale, almost reminiscent of Jeff's pasty white complexion, framed with
similarly raven black locks of thick, luxurious hair. Though the condescending expression on her
face, lips slick with black and pulled together in a mocking pout, eyes half-lidded as she gazed at
the heap at her feet. Revealed that, unlike Jeffery, this woman had eyelids.

She was, really, quite beautiful. Though, a sickly aroma hunk heavy around her, musky, and
definitely artificial. A perfume perhaps?

The woman carefully stepped over the two, eyes lingering on them before she visibly stiffened,
and her eyes swiveled up to Amaryllis. She could smell the uncertainty on the mysterious
newcomers face just as easily as she could see it. Her deep, heavily decorated eyes roamed over
the creature before her. Mouth pressed into a thin line as she studied her, before apparently
deciding nothing was amiss, and continued her way towards the dining room table. Taking her
seat noiselessly, preening daintily as she smoothed out her dress.
Even with her display of confidence, the scent of discomfort still lingered in the air. So much so that Amaryllis found herself sniffing for another possible source. Though nobody else seemed particularly disturbed. At least, nobody that who's scent she didn't recognize. Really, if she hadn't already found herself on the offending eyes of the eerie creature in that kitchen, she'd almost be impressed by this woman's incredible performance. She masked her nerves well.

Though not quite well enough.

Since the woman seemed intent on ignoring Amaryllis's presence. Eyes trained determinedly to the table directly in front of her, Amaryllis decided to take a more...Uncouth approach at gaining her attention.

Within a blink, she was kneeling down at the now very visibly alarmed woman. Crouching low as the table legs creaked with the sudden added weight. She barely even had the chance to offer her hand before the dear squawked, gloved hands swiping out at the offending creature,and the chair made an awful screeching noise as it was promptly shoved backwards. Before, after a moment of wobbling, tipped right over, with the woman still sitting in it.

Her head collided with the ground quite solidly. Though she was up on her feet within an instant, stance defensive as she glowered at Amaryllis with unkempt malice within her eyes. Her already frosty demeanor hardening into something ice-like. Well, perhaps, in hindsight, that hadn't been the politest way at making her introduction. On the brighter side of things, at least she had her full attention now.

"Um, well, that-that reaction wasn't quite what I was aiming for, but I suppose I'll take it" Amaryllis murmured. Standing to her full human height and delicately hopping back onto the ground, offering a pacifying hand towards the new face. "My name is Amaryllis, I apologies for my off-hand introduction, ma'am. I am afraid I underestimated human-hybrid sensory development, startling you, at least to that extent, was not my intention".

Rather than accepting the apology, the unnamed woman took this opportunity to morph her venomous expression into one of outright confusion. Her body relaxing slightly as her shoulders drooped, eyes no longer squeezed into angry slits.

"Human-hybrid?" she asked flatly, form still notably guarded. As if she were expecting some sort of assault.

"Correct" Amaryllis nodded, though froze mid-action. Frowning as she scented the air once more, digging past the strong artificial smell still lingering around her. Only to step back in surprise, eyeing the woman with a new-found sense of curiosity. This woman. She was human. Entirely human in fact.

"How... Peculiar"

"Are you two finished? This whole stand-off thing is really killing the mood" a voice interrupted, and both women turned to find Hoodie. Standing just off to the side, almost between them, with both hands shoved into the pockets of his front with an air of forced air of calm. A poor attempt at appearing authoritative, and he twitched slightly at the glowering the black and white beauty shot him. Reeling slightly, before clearing his throat once more, tone not bothering to conceal his irritation, already thin patience wearing even more so the longer this drew out.

"It's early, I'm hungry, and I'm tired--if you're both gonna fight then kindly do it somewhere that I'm not" he huffed. Pulling a chair back noisily and flopping down heavily.
"Seems like today's already livening up, and here I thought I had it rough" Jack's voice chimed in, and Amaryllis turned just in time to see him step into the room. He moved quite lazily, less alert than he had just a few short hours ago. Though if one payed enough attention, they'd see the rigid way he held his body. On edge.

Wasn't anyone in this house comfortable? It seemed that everybody Amaryllis had met so far was... Uncomfortable, in some way. As though they were permanently seeking an edge over one another, or trying to avoid the latter happening to them. Really, it would have made sense for her to feel so unsettled, but these people were accustomed to this life, right?

The sound of clattering from the kitchen soon broke her out if her thoughts. From what she could hear, Jeff and Toby were, not quite arguing, but there was definitely some sort of commotion going on. When the door burst open, it became apparent why. As Jeff stood with arms riddled with plates, Toby practically draped around his waist. His voice coming out as a long whine, as the taller of the two tried a little too fiercely to shake him off. "C'moooon J-Jeff lemme he-help!" Toby moaned, clinging to Jeff's jacket with a vice-like grip.

"you can help" Jeff began hotly, trying to swat at the brunette slunk around his middle with occupied arms, "by getting the fuck off me".

"b-but then I can't help serve breakfast" the boy pouted. He'd apparently, at some point, removed his mask from his apparel, it instead hanging limply around his throat. Goggles still resting atop his scraggy hair.

"Stop grabbing me--fucking--get off ya damn nuisance!" Jeff growled, mouth somehow contorting into a grimace. Which only deepened when his eyes caught the sight of the unidentified woman, who had dropped her gritty display in favor of donning a highly, very obviously pleased disposition. Tittering at the tangled mess of the two with an air of menace, as though in mockery. No, it was definitely contempt, and when she spoke up, Amaryllis faintly noticed Jack subtly moving between the pair. Apparently the new threat of animosity between them much more present than between her and the black beauty.

"Oh good, I do love a good show in the morning-- nice of you to act the clown for my entertainment" she jeered, eyes glistening with a dark scorn. Then she frowned, making a show of tapping her chin, before adding, bitingly, "though I guess it's not all that different from how you usually act, right?"

It was probably a very lucky thing for the dame that Toby was still wound tightly around his middle. Dragging on the floor behind him like a rag doll. The anger that flashed across his face was chilling, his mouth strangely splitting into a manic grin. As though he'd just been presented with a glorious treat, though Amaryllis knew better, she'd seen that look before. Many times, in fact. It was the face of a predator, salivating at a particularly lavish prey. Though, in a more sadistic sense than of any seeking of nourishment or hunger. Though she supposed, that it was, a form of hunger--a hunger that man seemed to specialize to specialize in. One that she couldn't deny she hadn't been partial to herself of course, but hand been more present, more importantly without reason, in the human race than hers.

Clearly, this was an example of that streak lingering within his sort.

"Nice of you to show your face, guess you couldn't wait to show off those little improvements I did for ya huh?" he chuckled. The sound sending shivers down her spine, even with the knowledge he posed no real threat. At least, to her. Meanwhile, the woman bristled at his comment. Pawing at her face almost self consciously, before turning back to glower at Jeff. Stepping forward brashly, bumping off of Jack's hand, which was raised steadily to block her movement. Another good move, she looked ready to lung--and claw the guys eyes out.
"Jane" Jack muttered warningly, his tone saying what his expression couldn't.

'stop', it said.

Jeff carried on as if he hadn't even heard him. "Aw c'mon Jackie-boy, let the bitch off her leash! Just a bit of fun, right? We're all friends here".

"oh, delightful!" Amaryllis found herself butting in. Voice fighting the uncertain wobble, though still sounded strained, and much too high with forced enthusiasm. Clapping her hands together as she hopped over the table, joining Jack between the two, ignoring the electricity shooting between them. "Here I was worried that everyone was on poor terms with one another, and it's been such a long time since I've had the opportunity to enjoy others company".

Nobody spoke, and from the way Jack was still standing, body guarded, things had not improved. Undeterred, she tried again. Turning towards who she presumed was Jane. "you're new here, aren't you? Your scent isn't very deep-set here as the others. I'm also new to this household! I-I'm not human, b-but I'd love to learn more about your kind! If you don't mind", she realized she was rambling now, but it seemed to be working. A little. The dark mood seemed to have shifted somewhat.

"for a long time, I've always been interested in humans and their culture. Jack here has been wonderful so far in welcoming me, if you'd allow me, I'd love to extend that kindness to you?" she ended lamely.

Interestingly, Jane seemed to balk at that. Stepping towards her meanderingly, as though hesitant. "you're not--I mean I thought your eyes were weird but you look so... Normal?'

"yeah, be lucky and hope to keep it that way" Jack quipped, backtracking quickly when Amaryllis let out an offended huff. "Hey to be fair, you're scarier looking than the boss--and he's a walking nightmare, besides, you didn't give me much warning before morphing into a goddamn like--six foot monster-demon".

"A walking nightmare, am I?" a prim voice countered, and if he could have, Jack felt his face pale at the sound. Spinning around to face a deeply unsettling lack of one. Glancing between the two monsters in the room, both slightly ruffled at his unintended insult. Though Slender still held himself regally, posture impossibly straight. Much like how Amaryllis held herself, though his clothes were much more polished. Suit and pants tailored to perfection, fitting his slimly built frame at a very flattering form. A bright red tie wrapped tightly around his throat, tucked neatly into his undercoat. He looked every bit clean and cut. "Do carry on, don't let me interrupt you" he said, gesturing for him to continue with a roll and flick of his wrist. His tone was mocking, bordering on teasing. If any of them hadn't known better, they'd have thought the display almost friendly.

Much to his apparent amusement, Jack muttered a fierce apology. Face aflame under his mask, making him glad it was not on display, ashen cheeks on fire with a mix of guilt and shame. God he felt stupid. A feeling he was not accustomed to.

Voice reverting to something more tight, he deftly ordered everyone to take their seats. Smoothly setting everything into an orderly motion, though both Jane and Jeff seemed reluctant to abandon their standoff. They obeyed without complaint. Sitting as far apart as physically possible, meaning that Jane ended up right beside Amaryllis, with Jack right opposite her. Everyone giving a notable berth to the faceless man at the tables head. Meanwhile, Toby happily took the opportunity to serve up the remainder of the plates, unperturbed by any of the previous events as if he's been oblivious to it--or living on an entirely separate plane from everyone else.
Once everyone had been served, they’d all had their opportunity to... Marvel, at the meal before them. Sending one another unusual looks that Amaryllis wasn’t exactly sure she appreciated. She was, in fact, just about to voice her thoughts before she noticed the lack of a plate in front of Jack. Casting him a questioning look, before speaking. Though Hoodie, who had evidently taken notice, beat her to it.

"He doesn't eat what we eat" he said bluntly, by way of explanation, while Jack suddenly looked deeply uncomfortable. Curling in on himself slightly, black ooze spilling from his sockets onto the table from his mask. He remained silent.

She was undoubtedly curious, itching to pry further, but she endured. This was clearly not a subject up for discussion, should she risk causing a rift between herself and her new comrades. The 'meal' went on in uneasy silence. Everybody picking at their gelatinous yet somehow burnt black pancakes. Masky and Toby at least pretending to be eating, hoping that if they messed it up enough it'd look as though they'd made a dent in the slime. Though the rest, aside from Jack of course, simply stared in unveiled disdain. Hoodie even going as far as to loudly shove the offending pretense of a meal away, silverware clattering loudly as he slumped backwards into his seat.

"s-so, your first time cooking pancakes?" Masky suddenly piped up. Confidence fading quickly as everyone's attention immediately traveled to him. Particularly Amaryllis's, who's brow wrinkled immediately, as though trying to fit together a puzzle in her head.

Then it clicked.

Her expression switched from mild confusion to rigid and stony within a second. Eyes dancing with restrained bloodlust, the black of her sclera's making the bright red of her iris's appear to glow hauntingly. Fixated on Masky, who felt his confidence fizzle and peter out, shrinking back in his chair.

"You." she hissed. Fingers warping the fork held clumsily in her unpracticed fingers with an audible creak. The metal bending easily to her strength. "You're the filth that killed Thomas" she spat out, bare feet digging deeply into the floor at her feet. Splintering the solid wood as she buried her feet inside, fighting the urge to leap for the cowering man.

At this moment, slender growled, low at first, but more than enough to dampen the female monsters flames. That was a warning. So, reluctantly, she settled back into her seat, grip forcibly unwrapping itself from its death grip on the now unrecognizable utensil.

With the unnatural chill hanging in the air, everyone quickly fell uncomfortably silent. Each of them desperately pleading for the tension in the room to be broken. All except for Toby, who had unusually withdrawn into himself, whispering too quietly for it to be anything intelligible.

Jane was the first to snap. Knee bouncing rapidly under the table, looking very much like she deeply regretted her seating choices. Which she did. Who could blame her? She'd just witnessed the seemingly harmless woman next to her crush steel as easily as if it were bubble wrap!

"who's Thomas?" she tentatively asked, glancing nervously to the white haired woman beside her. "My... Friend" she ground out in response, teeth gnashing as she stared down a very terrified Masky. Suddenly wishing she'd finished the job, instead of healing him. If only she'd recognized that stupid mask sooner.

Meanwhile, Jeff was eagerly glancing between the guy and the lady as though Christmas had come early. But his toys had been left just out of reach. He chimed in, hoping to spark the already
dancing flames over the edge. "A kid, she knew him for a few days—till Lady-face over there split his neck open like a fucking lamb to slaughter. Nice bit of knife work too, clean", Jane gawked, looking horrified at the mental image. Sending a disgusted look towards both Masky and Jeff, who grinned slyly. Adding, as though an afterthought, "well, at least, the cut was", before barking out into a fit of deranged, high pitched chortling.
"Sir, I've been meaning to ask you, what is the purpose of ordering your charges to attack humans? It seems entirely meaningless, not to mention entirely hazardous-- should they be discovered"

"I think you'll find I've done no such thing. I also recommend you consider your position before confronting your superior in such a rude manner" came Slender's clipped reply. Tone sounding surprisingly lighthearted, almost playful. As he continued to myther his extensive bookshelf of hard-covered novels, spines worn with age, yet visibly well cared for. Not once did he look up from his place, leaning down to pick over his collection.

This, however, wasn't what caused the creature stood at his doorway to falter in her accusations. Though the blatant disrespect did irk her somewhat.

So Slender wasn't the culprit who'd set her new comrades up to their culling of their former species. Hmm, how curious. She had expected many things, but this wasn't any of them, and the thought that perhaps he wasn't telling the entire truth, though she quickly dismissed the idea.

Even despite her distaste for the creature, she knew better than most that it was much too respectable for such fickle behavior. Deceit and trickery, were beneath this man, at least. Providing that there weren't circumstances warranting such actions under the veil.

Her question, however, had been answered. Regardless of whether or not her initial curiosity had been satisfied, so, feeling slightly exasperated by her findings-- or rather, lack of, she turned to make her exit. Bowing her head respectfully, before pivoting on her heel.

Though, as her fingers brushed the door handle, a voice stopped her short. "A moment of your time, if you would be so kind, Amaryllis" Slender called, and the rustling of clothing told her that he had shifted from his place by the bookshelf. Turning, she found that he had, indeed moved, and she found herself turning just in time to catch him easing himself into his seat. A large, luxuriously cushioned black chair, sat neatly, tucked into the free space under his desk.

She obliged, though as she stepped forward to do so, Slender noticed the woman's rigid posture. Shoulders tense with anticipation, as her eyes flashed through a plethora of unreadable colours, as she scanned his featureless face for a clue to his intentions. Finding none.

Quite mercifully, he decided to put her at ease. Though the thought of allowing her to stew in the anticipation was a pretty delicious one.

"regarding your... Duties, within the this household, since I have yet to find a suitable way to make use of you" he began, noting how the woman's face contorted in a mix of offense, as well as intrigue. Though settling decidedly on outrage. Eyes flashing a warning hue of burgundy, not red-no, that would be much too rude to present to her superior.

"for the time being, I'm assigning you to housekeeping duties"

Oh. Well. Now, that wasn't too terribly bad--honestly, she had expected something far more demeaning.

"Yes... Sir-- though I'd like to discuss my dietary requirements with you, regarding permission on
"hunting territories and the like"

"oh, well, there's no need for that. I'm not granting you them" he said simply. Happily drinking in the look of pure horror on the monstress's face as the implications of starving herself sank in. "Such privileges are luxuries, and I'm certainly not prepared to offer such pleasantries to wretches who obviously do not yet understand their place".

Almost disappointingly, she offered no viable protest. Though the unhappiness on her face was clear as crystal, and Slender took a spiteful sense of pleasure at the sight. Though, he did neglect the woman he, of course, had no intention of having her waste away at all, "I suggest, that unless you plan on losing the majority of your fat reserves, that you behave in a more pleasant manner from now on". That would've been stupid! A waste of a perfectly fine investment on his part. Still, there was no harm in letting her make some silly assumptions.

The woman, meanwhile, pursed her pale lips as she mulled over her options. She was already dangerously underweight for her species, even if her body neglected to project as such. An evolutionary tactic, developed over millenia of adaptation-- sure, she might be significantly weaker than any potential outside threats. Only--if her body, if it appeared strong and fit, then what imbecile would dare tangle with a creature of her stature?

The issue with this, wad that outside sources, including allies. Would be left unable to discern the state of her health. Until it was much too late.

It was difficult to get a read on whether the faceless creature was serious about that not-so-veiled threat. Would he really deprive her of nutrition? Was he prepared to risk her health out of pure spite? Then she shook her head, clearing the doubt from her mind as if it were a physical ailment. There was no question-- he would. Perhaps he would offer more kindness to his weaker bodied peons, but a creature such as herself? If she could take the strain, he sure as hell use it to his advantage, punishments that could be reserved just for her.

The damn sadist.

She refused to acknowledge that this had been a perfectly warranted punishment. It was much more gratifying to be upset.

Regardless of her own resentment for the new little predicament her goddamn pride (and mouth) had landed her in. She still snatched up the closest thing she recognized as--well, some sort of cleaning supply. Which took the form of a long pole, with firm bristles sticking out from the bottom bar of a bar of plastic. She recalled seeing this sort of thing quite often during her observations of human kind, as well as it's usage, and quickly began putting it to use.

Pride be damned-- she needed desperately to appease this man if she wanted to settle her poor stomach. She'd had a scrawny wolf and half a human carcass-- and it had been a good couple of days since those measly meals. That, combined with the additional few centuries of living of pathetic portions of barely edible scrap-- she was really feeling the effects of her bodily functions beginning to wither within her body. So she did as she was ordered, and began mentally planning her daily duties, as well as trying to piece together how exactly to keep such a large place clean. With little knowledge on how to maintain such a structure.

How did humans manage it? She knew soap and water would only do so much, and over the years, she'd bore witness to many different sprays of chemicals and home keeping gadgets. She had half a mind to ask for a little advice, but the thought of stomaching another bout of gloating was a little too much to bear. So, with a stubbornness resembling that of an ass, she elected to keep her mouth firmly shut. Vigorously scrubbing at the floor in a display, that to any well informed viewer, would find comical at worst.
Even so. The suited man said nothing. Keeping his amusement to himself. Kindness, however small, were not acts that were beneath him.

The quiet in the office stretched for a good long while. The only noises filling the thick silence, being the ticking of Slander's wristwatch, as well as the occasional muffled scat from somewhere below. As well as the sound of the broom scratching and clattering against the wooden floor in Amaryllis's unpracticed hands.

She couldn't help but wonder exactly what the hell rubbing this thing against the ground was actually accomplishing here. But nobody had admonished her actions yet. So she must've been doing something right... Probably?

Suddenly, a surprisingly welcomed voice broke the quiet once more. A mighty relief, as it offered her a much needed distraction from the pointless task in her fingers.

"Tell me, how are you finding your new life as a ward in my care so far?" Slender inquired. There was no mocking in his tone, just simple curiosity. Moreover, genuine curiosity. It was surprising to Amaryllis, and strangely saddening.

A world were conversation existed, with nothing hidden beneath, was not a world she was accustomed to. Yet, such an innocent question felt oddly... Warm, to her. It served to lift her sour mood somewhat, even if she couldn't help the reflex of awaiting the catch.

"It's... Certainly new to me" she slowly admitted, after confirming that there was nothing amiss in that sudden velvety tone. Pausing in her sweeping to add, "I do find the company welcome, that Jack boy in particular, and ignoring the very ambient animosity between the individuals I've met as of yet, I feel curiously pleased with my current situation".

The seated man hummed at this. Not particularly pleased or otherwise. Just a noise of acknowledgment, and he twirled a desktop pen between his long, white fingers as he mused her words. If he was completely honest that had not been an answer he was anticipating. Far from it, really, he had expected something nothing short of disdain. It was that bad a response though, he supposed, it wasn't exactly a bad thing. The happier she was, the more... Agreeable, she'd be. Probably.

Geez this woman was as nerve-wracking to deal with as Jeffery-- if he had been human. Or weaker. There was also the small matter of her power being much more dangerous than his own, as much as he loathed to admit it to himself. In fact, he suspected that should she for whatever reason become less compliant, he'd have a very troublesome time dealing with the monstress.

He shuddered at the thought.

Amaryllis frowned to herself at Slander's response. He'd become rather muted once more, and she inclined her head, ears straining to pick up any form of movement behind her. Only to give up, and turn towards the man, though with the blank slate of his face, she might as well have remained staring at the office door. Though she did notice his body had slackened in posture a tad, a bony hand up over to where his mouth would have been--had he had one. Clenched around his jaw just a fraction too tight.

He seemed to hesitate before he spoke again, and even without eyes. Somehow, Amaryllis knew, his rested elsewhere, "I've wondered. Have you... Noticed, anything odd as of late?'".

It took much of her willpower not to huff at this. Yet she managed, but her words cake out tight
and clipped, a detail that her master took note of. "Unfortunately I've not had the opportunity, I've-
I had been... In human captivity for-for a long..." she trailed off. Fingers gripping at the hallow
plastic her hands so fiercely, that it snapped with a loud crack under the strain. The now useless
tool clattering to the floor, quickly followed by the small bits and pieces that escaped her clenched
fists. The fragments left behind being ground to dust within her quivering palms.

She may be young, for her kind. But how many years had she lost--to those beasts in human
form? Beasts that, weren't entirely far from what they resembled in the first place.

The internal lament on her part, was swiftly interrupted however, by a very sudden shift in the
scents mingling within the air. It was quite potent, and the source was undeniably the man,
feigning comfort as he sat at his table. Unfortunately, he neglected to consider his peons much
more advances sense of smell--which, while he was in no way numb to the world of scent. He
certainly neglected this particular sense.

That, and he had no real ability to influence his smell anyway. So the sudden fluctuation was
almost immediately noticed, an unusual scent. One that Amaryllis didn't quite expect to ever catch
around the man before her. At least, perhaps not to this extent, under relatively unprovoked
circumstances.

Though it was most definitely there. It was very, very much there, invading her nostrils with
every breath. The pungent aroma of... Apprehension.

His made a noise resembling a grunt. "I see... By who?" he inquired, voice remaining steady. But
there was something amiss in his composure,and Amaryllis couldn't fight the feeling that there was
something she was being kept in the dark about. Something that regarded her, or at least had
potential to. Then it clicked, and she almost relaxed, having identified the situation, and found
comfort in that fact. He was probing, for information. That, that was already clear, twas the nature
of questions and queries after all, but this. This was something going deeper than mere
pleasantries, or curiosity.

She wanted very badly to confront this theory.

She didn't.

Instead, Amaryllis shook her head. Running a dust coated hand through the tangled white locks,
nails grazing her scalp. "Well, for all the time I was locked up there, I'd have wished to have more
information on that matter" she admitted, tail unfurling from around her waist, in favor of swishing
agitated like. Like a cat, only much more wildly. The extremity aching from its fixed position as a
makeshift belt. Muscles both welcoming and screaming in protest at the sudden movement. "I
wasn't really aware for the most part of my time there, I just remember hearing fragments of
conversations whilst I was getting manhandled-- rumors and silly presumptions no doubt, nothing
founded by fact I suspect".

"Rumors? What kind of rumors exactly?"

"Well, if they were to be taken seriously, then apparently--preposterous of course, but according
to those fools. It appears the more reclusive of my lot have been crossing over and making
nuisances of themselves here" Amaryllis snickered. Lowering herself to her knees to pick up the
mess she'd made, the mess she'd made quite ironically out of cleaning supplies.

"Ha, imagine that--hogwash it is. As if any of that bunch would travel here, especially with the
high-Born's clinging to them the way they do. No, this is most likely the work of some power mad
hooligan, or a group of gourmets. Gluttonous pigs"
No response. Her eyes still busy searching for stray bits of sharp shards of grey plastic.

"Sir?"

It was thanks to this, that she didn't bear witness to Slenderman snapping the surface of his desk right in half. With little more than a soft crunching noise, barely audible over the ruckus somewhere below, and by the time she returned her gaze upwards. The man was nowhere to be seen.

Chapter End Notes

So Amaryllis' questions went mostly unanswered, and so she's left with more questions now than ever. Though it seems Amaryllis isn't the only curious bunny in the room, Slender had his fair share of queries himself. Ooo, I do wonder what significance any of those concerns could hold? Anyways, I do hope you enjoyed reading, and thank you for doing so too! Perhaps If you enjoyed, why not leave a comment--or even a kudos? Till next time~
Not much had actually happened in the past few weeks. Not much. Though despite no particularly interesting happenings having happened, quite a lot of interest had. Namely, the timely arrival of an intriguing specimen that called herself Amaryllis.

He knew her kind. Not much of them, but he knew of them. Specifically their relations with the Royals within that other place that tended to stay out of this one. Even so, events within both tended more often than not to be linked in even more often nefarious ways. The dimension of which humans dwelled being the centerpiece for many others. All of whom fed upon the cattle of human kind. Their flesh or their energy, that varied, but otherwise, man was simply nothing more than a commodity to gawk at when they saw fit.

The creature herself though, she was quite the rarity indeed. The family having dwindles down to almost nothing over centuries of failed spawn, mostly due to their notoriously powerful bloodline. Most suitors simply didn't have the ability to produce offspring strong enough to hold it. She’d build quite the reputation for herself during her younger years, as an entrepreneur of all things. An inventive mind, though her exploits themselves were mostly speculation, and nothing more. Since those that ever did know more than was worth their salt had long since been silenced.

Now that Slender had her, he could see why. She was what most would call an abomination to her very species. How, he couldn't explain, since she'd yet to explain herself or her little quirks that would have gone unnoticed by an ignorant eye. But those that knew of her bloodline, also knew that the changing of their shape--the very form they boasted to be the reason they had earned the title of true Apex predator. It was unnatural. A disgrace to their own kind to willingly alter their own bodies. Yet, Amaryllis had first appeared to him as a human.

How she had accomplished this, he had no idea. It wasn't a gift that came naturally to her kind. Altering her surroundings, perhaps, he had no way of knowing her true limits. But he knew enough to wonder at how the little devil had accomplished what she had.

Another thing that had bothered the faceless man was her sudden appearance at his territory. For a being of her reputation to be so... Careless. If he didn't know better he would have accused her at being out of practice. Only, such a thing was just not possible. One simply did not take a break from--what is just done. From everyday, and certainly not for as long as it would take to confuse a creature naturally inclined to top most others.

This lead him to the only assumption. That she'd been forced there. Why else would a creature of her status be so clumsy? Had she not been evicted from her nest, it only seemed natural any creature in distress, no matter how mighty, could be a little uncoordinated after such a blow.

Then, he’d learned that the unlikely truth, had in fact, been the truth. She had been taking a little break from what was everyday. Only, this had not been voluntary. Nor welcome. Really, he couldn't decide whether this news was more distressing than his initial fears or not. That an unknown organization had managed to capture a creature of her ability for any period of time at all. Be it human or otherwise.

Another threat making itself known wasn't exactly the best news he'd received in the past few months. With a heavy sigh, the broad shouldered man let the book in his hand slide from his fingers. Landing on the table with a clatter, loud in contrast to the silence of his study.
It seemed that threats in general had been quite potent as of late. It was really very concerning. Things that go bump in the night were no longer being swayed into silence by simply his presence. In fact, it seemed that they were being almost encouraged, drawn out from the cracks and crevices and feeding and thriving in the deadly cocktail of swirling presences. No longer were things silenced by the thought of him alone.

This made Amaryllis's sudden appearance all the more convenient. While he had no doubt he could fend off the small fry seeping their way into his place. What better deterrent than a true monster of her caliber to act as the perfect guard dog against such fiends? And what better way to humiliate the proud creature than to force her to server's him as such a lowly lap dog? Then again, in hindsight. Too much playing around wasn't exactly wise. Her name would only hold her for so much, best not to upset the woman too much. Lest she take action, her reputation and pride be damned.

Still. She really was quite the prize. He still couldn't quite believe his luck. Nor could he stop himself from gloating over the prize. She was the Crown jewel of all the jewelry at auction. And she was all his, at his service until the day he died.

Or of course, the day she grew tired of her code of honor. Whichever came first.

Not that his other pawns were all that shabby. Useless in the face of their new companion sure, but definitely not poor in quality. Still, his *collection* was more than complete with Amaryllis underfoot.

He'd been collecting... Pawns. Yes, pawns. That was an appropriate word for it. Offering them some form6of shelter, and the gateway into a more suitable world than the one they'd been birthed in. He'd never really had much to do with their creation of course. Except perhaps sweet Toby. But he'd been more than happy to snap them up when they had appeared. Some had taken more persuasion to live under him than others. But eventually, they'd all come around. Eventually. For the most part, they were free to live as they pleased. But all were at his beck and call, whenever he saw fit to ring that service bell. Oh how good it felt to be the master of the household.

If he could have smiled. His lips would have been curled into something resembling the Cheshire Cat's own trademark grin.

Now, the issue was. Amaryllis was far too precious too simply let too loose on her leash as his other charges. Oh dear no, she required q much more-- active role in his affairs. Mustn't 't allow her to be idle, must keep her useful. Must keep her compliant. But, now, how to do that? She was horrendous in her duties as a measly housemaid. She was doing more harm than good, he'd gander. But it was far too quiet, at least so far, to send her on the offensive towards anything heading this way. It was better to stay quiet in these situations. Stay quiet, wait for them to get close, wait for them to make a move. All the the while sitting under the radar, watching for the best time to snap them up.

Whoever they where anyway. No. Far too soon to take an active role in searching things out. He needed to wait, until everyone had a head out from their hiding places. Meanwhile, he would wait patiently with the axe.

So, what else could he put the little devil up to, to keep her occupied?

... Of course. Of course! What better way to sharpen her claws, than to sick her onto her comrades. In turn, she'd train them to handle combat even better. The way they handled themselves now was fine for their little human hunting. But what better way to train monsters, than a monster? Maybe they'd even survive to see the end of it. That, and Slender couldn't deny he was more than a little eager to see her in action.
That all being said, he'd still allow her to stew in her position for a little while longer. Let the anticipation get to her before he gave her a promotion.

Ha. He could just imagine her right now, seething at the thought of cleaning up his messes. The faceless man chuckled darkly to himself, as he reclined in his seat to doze away the hours.

Meanwhile, Amaryllis was busy herself with Jeff.

"You know, you seem to make it a point to make absolutely no sense, boy" she commented as Jeff shoveled a large bag of... Something into her hands. Which she took easily, standing there awaiting further instruction.

She was referring to, of course, the man's odd tendencies to. Well. Change. Yes, that was the right word, wasn't it? It was like he made it a mission in life to be unpredictable. One moment he was volatile and dangerous, the next he was fairly charming (in his own right) and friendly. Then he'd be moody and reclusive--only to repeat the cycle again anew. Almost as if he himself changed with the wind.

Though, one thing that remained strictly consistent. He had a habit at staring at himself, whenever he caught a glimpse of himself on any sort of reflective surface. No matter what it was he was doing prior.

It wasn't even as if he was putting on an act when his mood shifted though, which was the stranger part. He genuinely just... Changed. Though his 'changes' only went so far, predictable in the sense that he only seemed to have a small selection of different faces of himself. Though, Amaryllis reasoned that by everyone's blasé treatment of his behavior, it became more predictable over time. Or at least less surprising.

Today, it seemed that Jeff has set his mind on being as aggressive as a man could possibly be without physically assaulting everyone he set his lidless eyes on. And yes, it got very close, quite a few times. All the times, actually.

He had a wild look about him today. He didn't seem to have slept much that night, though rather than tiring him out, it had the adverse effect of making him...twitchy. Very twitchy. It was almost as if he was so tired, that he no longer felt it, and instead felt the very opposite.

He scoffed as he rooted around the far back shelves for whatever it is he wanted. Making a victorious grunting noise when he apparently located it, before turning back to face Amaryllis. Face set in a sneer that told her she was dangerously close to being lunged at. Again. Jack noticed this, and took a few steps back, though Amaryllis didn't budge. Eyeing him calmly, almost daring him to give it a try. Knowing he had not a chance in hell to actually down her. That, combined with the fact he seemed preoccupied with his prize, seemed enough for the raven haired mam to back down.

"Yeah well I got two words for you about that" he growled, evidently sidetracked, fiddling with what looked like a--a...umm. She didn't know what it was called, but she'd seen it before. They clicked a button and fire came out of the end, and they used it a lot to light candles! Though what he wanted with that thing, she had no idea. "And they are, Fuck, and You" he finished, looking satisfied with himself. And pointed at Amaryllis in the face with the end of the lighter, tapping her on the end of the nose almost playfully, before passing by her. Nodding towards her and Jack for them to follow before vanishing through the doorway.

Amaryllis was less than amused by the man's antics, but Jack however, snickered a little under his breath. She shot him a betrayed look.
He raised his hands in surrender. "Sorry, you gotta admit, funny is funny" he defended, still chuckling. "Don't take him so seriously, he's alright, in his own way, he doesn't mean anything by it" he continued, shrugging his way through the door, walking beside her, as she hauled the giant bag of mystery substances with ease. And he, in turn, tried not to gawk at the display of raw strength too much. "Probably" he added under his breath.

Amaryllis simply huffed. "Really though, I've been in contact with the the guy for a long time, he takes some getting used too but, he's probably the closest thing to a friend I have" Jack admitted, watching the stony expression on the woman's face soften considerably at that. He offered her a small smile, which of course went unnoticed under his mask, before quickening his pace. Hoping to catch up on Jeff, who had vanished in the maze of hallways at some point.

Amaryllis, however, maintained her pace. Digesting the information as though it were a particularly delectable treat. Swilling the information around her mouth as she chewed on that, combining it with what she already knew.

Jack had seemed much more confident today. Though that behavior had began precisely at the point Jeff had become involved in the day. Having previously been conversing survivalist tactics of Jacks, and how they compared to her own. He'd seemed normal until that point, granted she'd known him for all of two days. But the change had been almost immediate. The moment Jeff had stepped through the door, ordering the both of them to give him a hand with something. At first it had seemed defensive, like he was on edge, but now, he seemed much more at ease than she was used to seeing him. She couldn't quite tell if that itself was a tactic of defense against the dangerous wide eyes man, or if he was simply piggybacking on the other man's energy.

Either way, it wasn't entirely bad. It was a new side to the scholar she had yet to be introduced to. His people person side, no less inquisitive, but a little more outgoing. Yet, at the same time, just as reserved as he usually was, with the poise and elegance about him to match.

Grumbling, Amaryllis shook her head. Reading people was so hard. Was she really so inexperienced with interacting with people? Was that why she was finding this so challenging?

Stepping out of the back door, having followed both men by scent and sound after losing sight of them. She found the two bickering together over a small pit, with Jack making big, frustrated waving gestures with his arms. While Jeff simply stood back, smirking, despite that ever present smile on his face alluding to any other expression he could make. Finally, just as she reached the edge of the hole, Jack spotted her. Moving towards her with a determined look on his face.

Meanwhile, Amaryllis was still trying to blink the afternoon sunlight from her eyeballs. Damn if it wasn't beautiful, but the light filtering through the overgrowth was almost blinding after spending two solid days indoors.

"Go back inside" Jack instructed firmly, ushering Amaryllis back as he himself retreated with her. Overwhelmed, and trying to maintain her balance, he actually succeed in knocking the bag from her hands. Though she doubted he notices, as he was busy looking back, keeping an eye on the grinning menace. Who was watching simply, casting a lazy eye over the two, only stopping to focus on the dropped bag. Seemingly uninterested in whether or not either of them stuck around or not.

"Thought you finally knocked some sense into that thick skull of his when you knocked him senses" Jack angrily mumbled as he kept trying to push the startles creature back into the door. She was reluctant to go back inside, wanting to remain in the nice, fresh air. So she protested, gently, not quite sure how much force was too much to exert on her fragile new friend. "But no" the doctor went on furiously, "of course the idiot--what kind of idiot wants to make a damn bomb in his own back yard?!".
That certainly got Amaryllis's attention. "A bomb? Why would that be?"

"Really? That's what you focus on?"

"I wanna practice, see if it works so I can mess around with it" Jeff stated proudly.

"I'd highly advice against that Jeff, if you wish to play with explosive matter, wouldn't I be more suitable in the detonation process? Depending on the firepower, I'm much more durable than you"

The grinning devil shrugged, "Well, if you're offerin'"

"Am I the only person here who realizes this is a terrible idea?!" Jack spluttered incredulously, looking between the two before him as if he couldn't believe what he was hearing. He couldn't.

Amaryllis though, seemed completely unperturbed. "You should probably move this experiment to a location farther away as well" she proposed, tapping a contemplative finger to her jaw, "much less risk to the buildings infrastructure and whatnot, I doubt Slender would be very pleased should it misfire and cause damage to his property".

"but I've already dug the pit" Jeff complained, gesturing to the hole in the ground to emphasis his point. As if it wasn't already clearly noticeable without pointing it out.

Now it was Amaryllis's turn to shrug. "Use it for something else, I can help dig another one".

Jack sagged, slumping forwards into a defeated slouch. "You two are insufferable" he whispered, pinching the bridge of his nose with his fingers, before sliding hid hand back from under his mask. He didn't seem to to notice the black sludge slowly making its way down his forearm.

"What kind of bomb were you thinking of?"

"I heard something about a dust explosion, thought it'd be pretty cool. Panic and confusion before KABLAMO!" Jeff eagerly explained. Only for his expression to falter slightly. "But I dunno how it works" he admitted.

Jeff sighed in relief at that.

That relief was short lived, when he remembered that Amaryllis was a lot more intelligent than Jeff was. She was as much of a scholar as he was. He felt his stomach turn upside-down when her face broke into an easygoing smile. She was practically beaming. He knew that look, she'd already made it clear to him that she wanted to make nice with Jeffery. She saw a chance to make merry with Jeffery.

Why couldn't she find a less insane way of making friends with psychopaths? Surely there must be an easier way of getting on Jeff's good side? Why did explosions have to be involved?

Of course they'd both be perfectly alright with risking blowing themselves sky high. Shit--should he run now? Yeah, now seemed like a perfectly good time to run. In fact, screw trying to keep those two idiots alive, learning about a mythical creature was so not worth the risk. Even if she was an anomaly that seemed perfectly open to answering every curiosity he could think of.

He cringed as he turned to make a run for it. Torn between wanting to keep the ideal live sample alive, and keeping himself from dying a horrible death in the process.

Amaryllis, it turned out, ended up making that choice for him.

"W-wait nonono I don't think this is a good idea--please, Amaryllis, let me--" Jack began to
stammer, only to be cut short by an evil sneer from Jeffery.

"Ahh quit yer whining Jackie-boy, this'll be fun" Jeff snickered wickedly. Clapping a hand to the struggling man's shoulder, as the completely oblivious monstress hauled him over her shoulder like a sack of potatoes.

"Ooh how exciting, I've never seen an explosion up close before, I've always admired how beautiful fire is" she gushed as she stuffed the sack of flour under her free arm. Not quite registering the very much protesting body in her other. "I do hope we don't start a forest fire though, now *that* would be positively tragic".

Chapter End Notes

Well, at least she's making friends? Or enjoying herself anyway. Kinda hard to determine when you're actually friends when the people you're trying to win over all have ulterior motives. Heh.
Anyway, thanks for reading, and I do hope you enjoyed. If you did enjoy, then why not leave a comment, or even a kudos? I'm happy to answer any questions anyone may have~

Till next time~
Jack had accidentally been set on fire in Jeff and Amaryllis's little experiment. He'd walked away unharmed, for the most part, but unfortunately the fire had set Jeffery off a little. So he'd had to run for his life after failing to subdue or calm the volatile man. Who had only been more encouraged to attack by the sight of the man fleeing. Sudden movements and whatnot.

He'd been sprinting through the bushes with the insane man hot on his heels for a good few heart stopping minutes. Too close to even try to hide and try his luck at stealth. And much too slow to put a safe distance between himself and the faster man's swinging knife. It was probably good that, in his wild and uncoordinated state, he was riled up into such a state his movements were clumsier than they would have been otherwise. Allowing Jack to employ a series of squirrel like twisting maneuvers to avoid being skewered.

Thankfully, Amaryllis had been on hand to aid in the man's hasty escape. Hauling him right over her shoulder very much reminiscent of the manner he'd been brought there in the first place.

It was then he discovered that her kind could move, very, very quickly. Sickeningly quickly in fact, and tended to prefer higher ground whilst moving through forestry, and so had arrived back to base littered in broken twigs and leaves stuck up the back of his jacket. As well as stuck in his hair.

She had assured him later, in the midst of a torrent of complaints, that she'd made sure to slow herself down. In consideration for his softer, weaker body. He would have felt insulted by that comment. If he hadn't already known it to be true. Having already true to dissect her while she was unconscious. He agreed to let bygones be bygones on the condition that she allow him to conduct some more research into her biography. She, just as enthusiastically, agreed, and rather than it be the god awful favor he had been anticipating. It turned more into a mutual agreement to swap data at a later date.

Jeffery had eventually meandered home as well. Though thankfully, he'd calmed down considerably by then, it had been quite the trek after all. Though his mood was fouler than it had been since she'd ever encountered him. But rather than hole up in his room, he'd decided instead to spread his aggressive mood by sullenly skulking around the lounge room.

"You smell worse than Thomas"

"You just... Sniffed me, did you not Jeffery?"

"Don't call me that" Jeff snapped, sneering and circling the very concerned monstress. Who had taken a seat on a straight backed chair beside the couch. He head didn't follow him as he prowled, but her eyes did, and she was very much feeling unnerved by his sudden interest on her scent.

"Apologies, but, my earlier question still stands".

"So what? You sniff us all the time" the man countered.

"Indeed" Amaryllis conceded, "But while that's not unusual for my race, yours, however, forgive me, but is it not considered strange?".

"Well you might look all sophisticated admiring all that pretty paintwork, but the way you smell
"Don't laugh at fart based humour, Jeffery, it demeans us both" jack sighed. Ducking the ornament that was thrown at his head without so much as a glance in his direction. Simply resuming his reading.

The monstress preened in response. A little offended by being called out on her scent. While she always tried to make sure she didn't smell unnatural as to conceal herself from adversaries. She was proud to say she always maintained a strict level of hygiene despite this. It was quite insulting to be told otherwise.

"I suppose if it really bothers you that much I can bathe, but I'd appreciate it if you consider being more tactful in the future" She scolded after a moment of consideration. Both Jeff, Jack, and even Jane, who had been sitting across from Jack, snorted at that.

Hmph. Well, she supposed it couldn't be helped. Perhaps she did whiff a little, and if even the halflings could pick that up, then she must be much filthier than she imagined.

It was only when she'd already retreated to Jeff's room, and locked herself in the bathroom. That she realized something problematic. She wasn't stupid, she knew what the strange contraptions were and what they were for. Only...

How does she make the water come out? Truly a conundrum, after a moment of fiddling, she decided it best to ask rather than risk breaking something. She'd already felt a nasty dent in the lock handle. She corrected her grip accordingly of course on the way back out. She hadn't known where to leave her clothing though, so she'd simply left it on a semi neat pile on the toilet seat. Folded clumsily in a crinkly heap.

Imagine the surprise the three halflings got when Amaryllis then waltzed back into the lounge room. Bold as brass. Butt naked.

Without a scrap of clothing on her. It was easy to sew that, while she had correctly mirrored commonly visible aspects of a human woman's anatomy. The lesser known parts were... Primitive at best. The woman's crotch was almost doll like, with the rest of her torso very much proportioned with her rib cage protruding out at a worrying density under her flesh. As if she'd hidden armour under her own skin. Still, the swell of her breasts was much more accurately portrayed, and both men seemed to gawk, then flush at the sight. Jack, at least, had the decency to avert his eyes, while Jeff, too busy howling with laughter, did not.

Jane was quick to rush to the other woman's side. She didn't really know how to respond to this situation. Should she be impressed or should she feel embarrassed for her? She decided after little deliberation on the latter.

"Jeff? I couldn't figure out how to turn the water on" Amaryllis said by way of explanation. Apparently oblivious to everyone's mutual discomfort and disbelief. "And there are a few bottles I'm not sure which to use, you don't seem to have any soap".

Jane approached the woman carefully. "You're quite confident aren't you?" She quipped, taking the creature gingerly by the shoulders to steer her out of the room. "I'll give you a hand, Jeff won't mind".

"Oh I mind, I mind a lot I don't want you in my fucking room--", he was promptly shushed by a pillow shoved over his face by Jack.

"See? He's fine with it". She nodded to the masked man, who blew out an exasperated sigh, but
saluted. He only let go after the two woman had disappeared around the corner, were both heard them both continue to bicker until they were well out of earshot.

"I do appreciate it, Miss Jane, but I must wonder, what you were referring to with that comment about my self confidence?" Amaryllis smiled warmly, but it faltered at the very concerned look on Jane's face. As if she were unsure whether or not to deliver bad news.

Then it clicked, before she even spoke a word. And she felt her stomach drop as she remembered that humans had an issue with showing flesh to one another. She’d just committed a social faux pas, in front of all three of them! Oh she was mortified.

Suddenly aware of her nudity. Amaryllis desperately attempted to cover her—everything. To the beat of her ability. Short of physically altering her body, which, admittedly, had been a tempting option. Had she not witnessed first hand Jack’s... Reaction to her doing so.

"I am so terribly sorry" She whispered, visibly ashamed as her eyes scrunch up. Cringing at herself. Eyes flashing a brilliant pink to match the glow of her cheeks, which had gone a cherry to rival the fruit itself. Jane just... Sagged, chuckling defeatedly to the woman a hundred times her elder.

"It's, fine, I've seen it all now, let's just get you cleaned up" She offered kindly. For the first time, Amaryllis didn't find the void black of her eyes unnerving. Perhaps that was a bit of a fib, but still, they were a source of womanly comfort. Which was... Strange, in and of itself. That was not a feeling she was accustomed to--or either acquainted with.

Amaryllis graciously accepted. And the two were soon at the door to Jeffrey's room. Jane hesitating a moment, before stepping inside. She made an interesting expression as she took in the room, which was sparsely decorated, save for the bed, and the pile of old cloths on the floor. And the many, many mirrors adorning the walls.

"And here I thought I was vain" She breathed. Comical of her to say so, as movement of her own reflection caught her eye. And she grimaced at her own image reflecting from the broken shards of glass that had been glued to the wall.

"Ugh, my skin is so dry" she complained, seeming disgusted as she pressed a delicate hand to her pale face. Rather than sickly, Amaryllis actually considered it an almost ethereal sort of look. The woman was dreadfully pretty, very much the dark mysterious looking beauty. It seemed, however, she considered herself quite the contrary. And the monstress found herself quite upset by that.

"Nonsense, you're a sight to behold young lady, I won't hear a word otherwise" She encouraged. Though she was heavily out of her comfort zone saying such.

It seemed to have the desired effect though, as Jane broke into a small smile at that.

"I never thought in all my life I'd be having a pep talk from a creature that, as I've been told, could apparently rip me in half with ease" she snickered, mostly to herself, as Amaryllis awkwardly stood beside her. That... Was approval in her voice. Wasn't it?

"I guess girl power stand regardless of race" She mused afterwards, before shaking her head happily. And moving to grab at the elder woman, to pull her into the bathroom. Locking the door as a precautionary measure. Frowning at the warped handle for a moment, before turning to take in the state of the place.

She couldn't deny she was a little surprised at how clean the bathroom was. She had half expected it to be in a much more... Filthy, condition. The only dirty thing in there was Amaryllis.
She still flinched when the water came on. With Jane sticking a hand in the quickly forming pool of water periodically to check the temperature, while Amaryllis simply watched in awe.

"Where does all the water come from? There are no large water sources anywhere nearby".

"Pipes" Came Jane's vague answer. And she really hoped the monstress wouldn't ask in any further detail. Thankfully for her, she seemed satisfied with that.

"I must thank you again, for assisting me with this, I am quite aware that this must make you a tad... Uncomfortable" Amaryllis thanked quietly as Jane was bent over the tub, leaning against its side as the steam rose into her face. Jane waved it away with a dismissive hand, which then went to tangle into her long, black hair.

"It's fine, it's kinda nice to have some girl time--though this is admittedly is the weirdest girl time I've ever--never mind", she was smiling still, though switched the tap off, apparently deeming it full.

It was a frothing mass of bubbled now. And Amaryllis couldn't help but wonder how all of that had formed from a few drops of that--whatever that she'd dropped into the water. Tentatively, she poked at the bubbles. Rubbing her fingers together at the residue that stuck to her fingers. Jane could have sworn she heard the creature mutter something along the lines of 'marvelous'. And she grinned at the innocence in the woman's wonder.

It was nice to feel normal again. Even in such strange circumstances. Jane could help but feel a odd sort of fondness for the woman her elder. She was just so open and wanting to learn, filled with a sort of childlike marvel that she had regretfully lost. Or so she'd thought. Spending time with the woman so different, words apart from her own, it stirred up feelings in her she long thought forgotten. It was almost like hanging out with her friends again.

"Alright, hop in" Jane instructed, and Amaryllis did so eagerly. Taking the order literally, resulting in the woman standing a bit too close getting splashed by the resulting torrent.

She didn't even sigh.

"It's--warm" The elder woman gasped as she took a crouching seat in the slippery tub. Her feet were robbed from under her a few times before she learned to keep a hand on the rim to steady herself. And she couldn't help but wiggle around as she took in the odd sensation of small bubbles on bare skin. Hmm. Tingly. The smell was going straight to her head though. Too concentrated and too close, and it was starting to make her eyes water.

Jane turned away while Amaryllis scrubbed herself clean. Scratching at the caked patches of mud and grime with half formed claws when it simply wouldn't wipe off. And dunking her head into the water, to run her fingers through the tangled mess of hair, that was so filthy it was now grey rather than white.

It wasn't all that better when she gave up, having done the best she could with it. Until she felt something cool trickling across her scalp, and she nearly looked up to get an eyeful of shampoo. Though she didn't, trusting the woman to do her no harm. The weight of the strange liquid felt very foreign on her head though. Much like everything else.

"Okay, scrub that in", she did as ordered. Enjoying the feel of suds forming under her fingers, rubbing the fruity smelling substance into her hair as if trying to wash the fabric of her shirt. She didn't seem all too bothered that she was only rubbing more knots into the birds nest of her hair. She felt much better for washing the rest of the soap out. She'd never felt so clean in her life, for the first time in her life, she wasn't imprinted by the scent of the wild.
After almost falling flat on her face when she rose from the now lukewarm water. Jane graciously helped the woman climb from the bath, wincing as the woman panicked a few times and dug her claws into the porcelain to stop herself falling. When the water drained, there were deep scratches embedded in the once smooth surface.

"I'm sorry" Amaryllis cringed, face set in a guilty expression.

"It's fine, in fact I'd pay you anything to do that to Jeff's face".

"You dislike him?".

Jane gave her a look. "Isn't that obvious?".

Amaryllis bobbed her head, "Fair point". But she was a little more focused on the strange spikey thing in Jane's hand. "What's that?".

Jane faltered a minute, before realization flashed across her features. And she raised the thing closer for her inspection. "A brush, it's for grooming your hair".

"Ah, I see humans are such ingenuitive creatures, you have a gadget for everything" She praised for a moment. Only to receive no answer, and she turned her face upwards to look to the woman's hesitant looking face.

"It's just, your hair is really tangled..." She trailed off. Amaryllis didn't understand. Wasn't that it's purpose? For untangling it? "Come, sit here, I'll do your hair".

Happily taking the young lady up on her offer. She took her seat on the toilet lid, quite content to remain there and let the woman do as she pleased. The bath had been quite pleasant overall, so she couldn't deny she was a tad excited to see what this new object had in store for her.

"This'll pull a bit, but I'll be as gentle as I can" Jane warned. Before she plunged the brush into the older woman's hair.

Roughly half an hour later, and the ordeal was over. Amaryllis had been very composed despite the fact that she felt as though Jane had been trying to scalp her. At a few points her hair had apparently been too matted to salvage, and so had formed clumps of broken hair in the bristles. Jane assured her that perhaps with a bit of tidying up, nobody would notice the uneven ends of her hair. Which for the first time in her life was falling neatly around her face. Silky and smooth, feather like and not at all like the greasy rats tails that had been clumped around her face when she'd first arrived. It was almost comical that the two women's hair colours differed so drastically. Yet they had discovered that they got along swimmingly in contrast.

Amaryllis was still fascinated by how soft her hair felt. It was so light! She felt just as pretty as the raven haired temptress with how clean and well groomed she now was. It was a nice change. Though she felt comforted by the fact that grooming her hair would not be as painful as it had been just now. So long as she integrated it into her daily routine and didn't let it tangle too severely again.

With a chipper sigh and an almost proud look of approval. Jane deemed her fit to get dressed again, now that she no longer reeked of. Well. Everything. Though she harshly slapped the wrinkled tattered mess of fabric from Amaryllis's hands when she moved to retrieve her old outfit. Hissing that she was not to touch the disgusting raga again, before practically dragging her away to her own room. The monstress simply allowed her to have her way.
"You can wear something of mine, I've got a few spares, I don't mind sharing" she seemed to decide herself as she unlocked her door and pushed it open wide. Stepping in without a second more thought, though Amaryllis simply watched.

Sensing that she hadn't been followed, Jane turned around with a slight frown. Impatiently waving her in, "Come, come, shut the door behind you please".

Jane's room was surprisingly...feminine. Not that she was expecting anything different, she was quite womanly in her mannerisms after all. But what surprised her was how much there was to see. Trinkets and decorations that had been all but nonexistent in Jeffrey's room, and evidently very well cared for. But the decoration was very mature. Dark blacks and greys rather than simply left unaltered, with a long full bodies mirror propped up beside the dresser beside her bed. A large cabinet, or chest rather that had been pushed up at the foot of it.

Stocked up on the dresser were many, many decorative glass--things. They were called paperweights, at least Amaryllis thought they were. All with pretty flowers encased in the clear glass.

Suddenly something red thwacked across her face, almost knocking her sideways. And she brought a curious hand up to detangle herself from the fabric.

"A dress?" she asked, and Jane nodded, twirling her wrist in a gesture for her to put it on. And she obliged, pulling it over her head, as Jane positioned her gently in front of the mirror. And the skirt fell away down her body, as she got a good look at herself in the glass.

Well this was simply fantastic. She looked very much human dressed in the almost doll like sailor dress, the bodice fitting snugly to her already delicate frame. It would have looked childish, but rather, it make the creature simply look like one of those French, ball jointed porcelain dolls. Appearing more youthful than she actually was. Jane made a squealing noise in response. Evidently pleased.

Really, she was just excited to dress the pretty creature up as she liked. Her own body was to generously built regarding her hips and chest to wear such dainty clothing. Meanwhile, said creature was busy trying to adjust to the feeling of being so exposed while partially covered. It was a strange sensation, she was very much accustomed to not wearing clothing, but she was also used to feeling more secure (maybe if at the price of personal comfort). Now her lower half felt a little breezy for her liking.

"Oh this is gonna be fun". Ah well. She supposed that she could tolerate this for a little while longer. Seeing as it was apparently making Jane so happy. Perhaps it wasn't so bad after all.

Chapter End Notes

GIRL FLUFF. Yes it's a filler but I thought it was cute. Ah well. Thanks for reading, and I do hope you enjoyed. If you did enjoy, why not leave a comment, or even a kudos?
Till next time~
Ah" the tired looking monstress sighed, as she positioned herself beside the blazing hearth. Fire crackling away in a golden hue that seemed to glow against the dimly lit room's gloom. "Nothing like a lovely fire such as this to warm the old excuse me".

The room was quiet, save her content humming, the only other source of sound being the fireplaces popping and cracking, as the occasional turn of paper from Jack's book. The room was noticeably void of a certain smiley faced menace, and in his place, it seemed Hoodie had decided to make his presence known. Amaryllis was still wondering what prompted him to choose such an odd name for himself, but otherwise she took little notice.

Masky, however, certainly had. And had made it almost a specific point to keep the man's figure solidly between himself, and her. As if he acted as a source of comfort, despite the man himself showing little to no sign of compassion for the nervous character. If anything, he was acting entirely indifferent.

Masky himself had been spending noticeably more time within the common rooms as of late. There was little time he spent outside of company since Amaryllis's arrival. It seemed as though he felt wary of being caught outside the view of witnesses, especially by herself, and he'd long since passed the point of concealing his fright. Now it was as though he felt no shame in advertising his fear.

Of course, Amaryllis herself had made no further move against him, since being warned off him by her new Sire. But that did not, however, stop her from scaring the unfortunate man silly. Further enhanced by her commenting often and consistently of her very much growing hunger. Implications of how, oftentimes, rules were even broken by the loyalist of subjects, as well as that apparently, he looked very, very easy to eat. It was probably for the best he was so evidently frightened really, the amusement it drew from the creatures unusually sadistic behavior was all that was keeping her so complacent about the situation between them. Had it been much different she may very well have acted on her... So to say, not-so veiled threats.

"Perfect, when one isn't one edge, one takes up far too much space" she'd chuckled airily at one point. Her eyes never leaving the beyond intimidated Masked man. Who'd promptly felt his stomach flutter, as his breakfast threatened to clog his own throat. The acidic taste of bile coating the back of his tongue.

Heh. Perhaps she was playing too cruelly, but it served him right, for attacking hers. She was in no way above attacking children herself, though she would alway avoid such barbaric behavior should it be an option. But she'd quite enjoyed that child. It simply wouldn't do to allow offensive or otherwise unpleasant behavior to go unchallenged, nor unpunished.

Still, for the time being, she was enjoying herself, toying with the boy. And that would suffice in place of tearing his organs from his mouth. Revenge was, at times, best served slowly--or was it cold? For once, she couldn't bring herself to bother much.

In other news, Jane had kindly provided the monstress almost a whole wardrobe of new clothing, though she'd seemed almost ashamed when she'd asked where it was she'd procured them all
from. But she'd quickly perked up, seeming to very much enjoy herself in dressing the elder woman up like a doll. Admiring how the perhaps even childish dressings sat on her impossibility delicate frame. Amaryllis hadn't really minded the attention, preening despite the unfamiliar sensation of being dressed. It felt so unnatural, but she couldn't deny, she did look quite peculiar, in a good sense, so perhaps the discomfort wasn't too terribly high a price to pay.

Nevertheless, it had been a welcomed relief to have retired from the activity of playing dress up with the black haired beauty. Though Amaryllis couldn't help but notice how Jane took little interest in her own grooming, excluding her hair. And she'd often catch her pawing at her face, fingers smoothening over her leathery skin, grimacing at her own reflection.

It was a shame that she didn't see her own beauty, as Amaryllis saw it. Though perhaps it was simply due to her human background. Such a waste. Such a pity, that she was blind to her own face. Amaryllis simply couldn't understand it. How humans found fault where it wasn't there. Yet couldn't recognize it when it was.

A bit abruptly, without much warning, Jack spoke up. Eyes still presumably focused on the pages of his novel, though without actual eyes visible to the observers own. It was difficult to tell.

"Amaryllis? Tell me, are you all that familiar with Shakespeare?" He asked. Tone hard to read, but the creature whom it was directed to perked up. Eyes flashing a vivid lime green for a moment, before settling back to a cool, calm yellow. "Indeed" she answered, removing herself from affront the fireplace to drape herself over the back of the sofa that jack was sitting on. Eyes flickering to the well loved pages settling between his slender fingers. He had quite feminine hands.

"There was a time in my youth, when I often used to frequent a special building where little humans used to gather to learn things" she said thoughtfully, while Jack hummed to confirm his interest. While the rest of the room quietly listened. Equally curious to the such strange creatures version of a childhood.

"I was fascinated by the things I saw at the time, but one thing that still strikes me quite vividly even today, was when one of the mature humans used to read" she breathed, relishing in the memory as she cast her mind back to the first few summers of her lifetime. Splitting from her litter to observe when she tired of the hunt. Only to be sucked into a world that she'd been led to believe was so very far beneath her. The wonder in her eyes. It was still there. Only slightly tainted by the years stolen from imprisonment.

"Telling stories and such. She has a wonderful voice--she never failed to captivate me into listening. I believe Shakespeare was one of her favorites, the youths too, since they wrote things about him a lot".

For some reason. Both Hoodie and Jack seemed to find that particular tidbit very amusing. Jack chuckling good naturedly, while Hoodie simply snickered into his hand. And Amaryllis had no doubt that if his face could have changed at all from that eerie looking smile, the man would be sneering. Masky just continued to rub at the black markings at his masks lips, head cocked as he listened in. While Jane was outright staring. Lurking around the rim of conversation, but showed little intent nor desire to interrupt or otherwise engage.

"That's interesting...actually. You really do love humanity, don't you?" Jack commented. And Amaryllis grinned widely.

"In a sense. I love their ingenuity, their creations and how they live. Culture i believe is the word. I enjoy eating them as well, but that's a taste i prefer to indulge on rare occasions. Id sooner eat animals if i can help it, conflict of interests have never been to my liking as it has others"
"I suppose that's probably why I find myself with a healthy respect of your character" Jack mused aloud. Or rather admitted. Shutting the book with a satisfying snap to face the monstress who was still lavishly hanging over the seats back. She smiled warmly at that, and, beneath his mask. Jack found himself doing the same.

It felt good to have a like minded scholar in his company. He was fond of Jeff, but Jeffery was unpredictable, dangerous. And he would never freely allow himself to fully relax around him, no matter how close they were. Amaryllis, although thousands of times more deadly, was reasonable. A breath of fresh air, and he felt a serenity about her that perhaps was simply all part of how evolution had her designed. Still. It was a welcomed comfort from feeling as though he was working with a ticking time bomb.

That. And the unknown specimen like aspect of her nature was exhilarating to him. But, if he was reading her right. He highly suspected that feeling went both ways. A mutual use of one another's data.

"I have a question, if you wouldn't mind Jack?" The monstress suddenly spoke.

Taken aback a little. He nodded dumbly. He'd been about to continue his interrogation--no that was too strong a word. More like...questioning.

"I've always wondered, why is 'leg' a bad word? Why do I have to call 'trousers', 'the southern necessity'? Why do people have to look at a 'hot air balloon' for an eye test--o-oh and what is an eye test for?" She abruptly blurt out in a torrent of excitement. Words babbling as if she couldn't get them out fast enough. And Jack recognized it for what it was almost immediately--this creature. No. Woman. This woman--she'd been wanting to ask these questions for a long time. In fact, he could almost guarantee that she'd been holding herself back to avoid being rude. Perhaps she still probably was. He knew he was.

He blew out an airy chuckle. Wow. They really were cut from the same cloth. Species apart, but personality wise, almost as similar as similar would allow.

"Well I can assure you now that legs and trousers aren't bad words, maybe they were at some point. But not anymore. Perhaps you're referring to more Victorian era society now that I think about it" Jack explained patiently, noting off them one by one on his fingers as he addressed them.

All of a sudden. Amaryllis clapped happily with a gleeful squeal. "Ah! Vic-torian--" she struggled to pronounce the name. As though it felt foreign on her tongue, and it came out sounding as such. Like she was finding it hard to get it out. Nevertheless, she sounded proud, to remember. Or to know in the first place. "I know what that word means. It refers to Queen Vic-toria's reign, correct? Mother told me about that, and brother Elias always said they made funny names for periods of time".

"Indeed" Jack praised, much to her delight, before he shifted in his chair as he thought over how to begin addressing the rest. It seemed so normal to him. Elementary at most. It was hard to remember that the creature that he was talking to was not human as he'd once been, and all these concepts must seem so very foreign to her. Maybe as much as her customs were to him.

"Hmm, I'm not sure where you heard anything about a balloon being used for eye tests--but generally speaking, humans eyes often have problems functioning correctly. Sometimes due to age or fault genes, environmental factors and such, eye tests determine how well or how poorly eyes of patients function in order to determine treatment options, if needed" he calmly supplied as the woman listened intently. Head bobbing along as she soaked up the new information like a sponge. But seemed baffles at the concept at human eyes not working.
"So many things can go wrong with human bodies" she breathed, face looking troubled as she worryingly glanced around the room. "It must be frightening to be so weak and fragile, i couldn't imagine being anything less than i am, i suppose your new halfling status might even be a blessing in that kind of light" she pondered thoughtfully. There was no mockery in her tone, just very real upset, which was probably why there were no outbursts to her evidently unintentional insult.

"Can you show me how it works?" She suddenly requested, enthusiasm apparently reinvigorated as she patted an excitable hand against Jacks upper arm.

He struggled for a moment, before eventually answering, "I could walk you through parts of it, but without the proper equipment i'm afraid a full overview would be impossible". Although slightly disappointed, she seemed nonetheless pleased with his response. "Thank you, Jack, in return I'll walk you through some basic biology of my race if you'd like?".

"That would be brilliant actually" Jack responded, a genuine smile hidden behind his mask. But it was heard in his voice, so he was saved the trouble of showing his gratitude in another manner.

The two talked over the process for quite some time after that initial conversation. Jack patiently walking her through the common practice from a very professional standpoint, seemingly unperturbed by her interruptions as she asked about the various machines. How they worked, how they were created, as well as how doctors discovered all of the information in the first place. Unable to answer some more mechanical queries, he promises to find her a book about basic engineering to compensate, and the subject was easily bypassed.

At some point during the faux examination, Jack had even been pushed to the point of following through a few basic practices he could with the tools he had at his disposal. Flashing a faulty flashlight into her eyes--which reacted accordingly to the invasive light, but when asked if she felt any discomfort from the glare. Jack was surprised to find that she felt no discomfort whatsoever, and concluded that her eyes must work at a much higher level to his own. Or any other creatures to his knowledge for that matter. All the while, she sat there graciously. Brimming with happiness as she learned.

"Alright, i'd like you to read aloud for me these letters, until you are unable to continue-- that is to say until you cannot see them anymore of course".

And that was how everyone present in the room discovered that Amaryllis did not yet know the alphabet. And was so then absolutely mortified to discover that she could neither read nor write, which, as Hoodie unhelpfully (taunted) pointed out, was a feat even small children could achieve. 

"Its not like you had much opportunity to learn-- some things have to be taught, rather than picked up" Jack tried to reassure her as she covered her face in her hands in shame. Whilst Jane crushed hoodies foot under her heel hard, ignoring his spluttering of complaints before moving on to assist in aiding the distraught monstress. 

"You know, I'm quite frankly impressed you even managed to learn English in the first place, so fluently too" she cooed gently, stroking her hair whilst Masky shakily uttered a noose of agreement. Timidly stepping forwards- mostly hoping to gain some brownie points with the aggressive character in her state of upset.

Jack also nodded, "Yeah--really, you speak English better than most humans, period, so try not to feel upset".

"I can see all of the shaped perfectly, but i cant even decipher what they mean" Amaryllis further lamented. Curling in on herself deeper in mortification. Before Jane seemed to have enough of whole situation, "if it upsets you that much, i can teach you how to read" she finally huffed with a
hint of impatience. But it had the desired effect. As the creature peeked up immediately. "Oh, really? You really would do such a thing?".

She was eyeing Jane as if she were a goddess on a pedestal. And Jane flustered a little at the purity and innocence in the older woman's gaze.

"Y-yeah" she stuttered, eyes darting uncomfortably every which way. "No problem".

Suddenly, at speeds none of the half-breeds in the room could follow. Amaryllis was on her, awkwardly embracing the smaller woman in a way she'd obviously seen others do so before. And was therefore trying to recreate the action herself. But only really succeeded in almost crushing Jane's rib cage as she was lifted easily off her feet. Wheezing at the sudden pressure and force as shed been plucked from the air at speed it took to blink.

"Well, knowing that you can't read definitely explains why you're so bad at cleaning up, especially when all the products have instructions of use" Hoodie murmured off to the side. Earning a sheepish flutter of a chuckle from Amaryllis. And Hoodie seemed satisfied with her discomfort, and resumed his silence once more. While Masky seemed highly conflicted with his sole partners behavior.

It was significantly later in the evening that the commons room had emptied out. Save for Jack and Amaryllis, who were still deeply engrossed in a conversation about the differences in their relative species immune systems, when Jeff decided to show his face. Looked oddly calm for his display earlier that morning, though his mannerisms were equally as playful—in a less than pleasant sense. He was a hard character to really define in a simple selection of words. He changed. Adapted—his character and personality itself seemed to rely on thin air. And his actions were just as unpredictable to match. But the one thing that remained ever consistent, was his seemingly obsession with his own reflection. And his deadly relationship with fire.

Oh, and his predatory streak. That too. That also never failed to reveal Its ugly head.

That evening however, it seemed he'd settled on a much more friendly demeanor than Amaryllis was accustomed too. Greeting them both with a upbeat sounding 'hey', which Jack matched carefully. But otherwise seemed unperturbed by his umpteenth shift in behavior. And he easily slotted himself in beside Amaryllis, looking curiously over her shoulder at the parchment of scrawls and sketched the pair had been busy discussing over for the past few hours.

"Whats that?" Jeff asked, plucking the paper from Jacks grip without warning and running his unblinking gaze over the scrawls there. Jack huffed slightly in annoyance at his friends rude manner, but otherwise it went uncommented on. And amaryllis took the silence as cue to answer.

"That is a complex structure of systems that is my immune system, as you can see here, mine differs greatly from that of the average humans, as it is heavily focused on the direct destruction and attack of bacteria and related pathogens rather than prevention, my body does carry preventative barriers such as humans, skin and other such physical barriers", Jack, who had already heard this information, allowed himself to recline in his chair, taking a breather from the overload of information. While, surprisingly, Jeff seemed intrigued by Amaryllis's lecture. "However my body focuses more on encouraging infection in the first place, for the purpose of immunization and also as a method of creating such organisms as a byproduct defense mechanism against predators, as well as an offensive weapon with certain pathogens and parasites that can survive in the conditions my body provides".
Jeff scrunched his face up in a way that made his scarred grin warp into a flat line. "Wouldn't that mean you'd be really venerable as babies?" He asked, sounding a bit baffled by the barrage of information he clearly hadn't expected.

Amaryllis nodded. "That is correct, hence why when we reproduce, our litters tend to be fairly large to compensate for the high mortality rate. But since our kind are designed to be solitary creatures, the chances of sexual reproduction is low, so we tend to reproduce mainly upon death, our corpses form an sole egg though, hence why there are so little of us"

"You don't get along with your own kind?" Jeffery scoffed incredulously.

"To an extent" amaryllis nodded. "As we are such successful predators, if we had been pack animals, wed basically destroy the local ecosystem by overfeeding. So the scent of others to us is so unbearable and anxiety inducing that our immediate instinct is to destroy the threat in order to regain a sense of dominance. If one can overcome that, reproduction and bonding is possible".

"Breeding really isn't part of my interests at the moment anyway, id probably end up killing my siblings if i ever ran into them nowadays, sad. But right now I'm more ravenous than familiar".

Something about what amaryllis said just then spiked Jeffery's attention a great deal more. And Jack noticed where amaryllis didn't. Though she did notice how his posture stiffened beside her, and gazed questioningly into the blackness of his eyeless eyes.

"Hey Jack, speaking of hungry--isn't it about time you go...collect some groceries?" He mused in a coy tone that sounded strange in his gruff voice. And Jack narrowed his eyes at him behind the barrier of his mask, lips pressing into a thin line. And jeff simply stared, gauging the other mans reaction, on what little he could see.

"Yes" he eventually answered in a measured tone. And jeffs grin widened considerably.

"Well y'know i was planning on going out hunting soon myself, whaddya say we accompany oneanother huh? Have a bit of fun, its been a while since I've seen you at work" the grinning menace requested suggestively.

"Why do i get the feeling that you're up to something bad Jeffery?" Jack sighed as he plopped the papers (that had been gratefully handed back to him) down with a tired sounding sigh. And Jeff just seemed highly pleased by the mans reaction. Meanwhile, Amaryllis sat inbetween the two, watching with avid interest.

That, and she was starving. And the mere thought of hunting almost left her salivating.

"Hey, i know, why don't you come along with us amaryllis?" He innocently suggested, clicking his fingers as though the idea had just suddenly struck him. While Jack groaned almost immediately as he realized the other mans intentions. Amaryllis hesitated to say no, and jeff somehow managed a frown. With didn't look right with his cheeks carved into an immortal grin.

"I am afraid i cannot accompany you on this occasion, as I've been forbidden of feeding for the time being" she politely declined. Though seemed thoroughly miserably about it.

Mischief glinted in the raven haired mans eyes. "Nobody ever said you had to eat anything, just--think of it as a night out! A bonding experience between three chums huh?" He cooed in encouragement, hooking an arm around her and Jacks neck and bringing them all into a too tight embrace. Jack fought the urge to roll his nonexistent eyes, while Amaryllis was beginning to get sparkly eyed at the thought of strengthening her at present questionable friendship with her comrades.
"I have a question first, jeffery"
"What?"

"Why is it that you attack humans in the first place?"

"Oh that's just because hes a savage" Jack deadpanned in a monotone voice. Chuckling and batting Jeff's hands away when he went in to mess up his hair. 

"I--" jeff paused, making a twisted expression that resembled a grimace as he thought it over before growling in frustration as he gave up, "I just need to do it, I need to", was his answer. Albeit not much of one.

"So Slender really isn't forcing you against your will..." Amaryllis hummed. It was more of a statement than a question. And Jack just shrugged.

"I think he views us as like a living collection, like trophies. That and he's like trying to hide that things like us exist in the first place" he theorized aloud. And amaryllis bobbed her head in agreement. It sounded reasonable. Certainly something Slender would do. And no doubt he was absolutely thrilled about his newest find.

That thought just made her blood boil.

"Y'know from what I heard, I think he did have something to do with whatever's up with the runt" Jeff commented. And Jack scoffed. "You mean Toby?" He asked. But then something seemed to click, and he made a so-so motion with his hand. "I guess it'd explain some things about the boy, but I'm still betting he was quite disturbed even before...he changed, I suppose, he's just too much of a wild card to have ever been normal, yknow?"

Jeff made a noise that was neither agreement or otherwise. "I dunno, I think I'm pretty impressive for what i uses to be".

"You're just a nutcase"

During all this, amaryllis had remained relatively quiet as she observed the two men bantering. The change in Jacks demeanor fascinated her. He was far less proper when he spoke with Jefferey, he seemed to almost...let go, of acting like a model student of sorts. All the way down to his speech pattern to the way he sat. Ans she wondered faintly if that was because he was on guard, or if it was because he was simply that relaxed.

Humans were so hard to understand. Even former ones.

"Actually, I will accompany you both, if you two would still have me" she suddenly decided. And the two men halted to stare at her. Both sharing a look, with basically consisted of varying degrees of excitement and anxious anticipation.

"I suppose as long as I do not consume anything, I will not be going against my sires wishes" she reasoned, almost defensively. Which was when Jeff seemed to snap out of it. Offering words of encouragement as Jack just seemed to groan defeatedly wearily sinking into the sofa as jeff happily bounded out of the room to change his shirt.

Ah well. Perhaps it would be fun to get out of the stuffy house for a while. She was certainly excited to get outside again, really to just get away from the indoors. Which was beginning to feel like just another prison.

Yes. This would be fun.
I have an exam today so this is kinda rushed but I hope you still enjoyed it. And looks like Jeffery seems to be schemeing something with that dastardly brain of his. I'm pretty sure at this point Jack feels more like a babysitter. Well, we learned a bit more about Amaryllis, and Hoodie made an appearance! Woo! I gotta go I'm making sachertorte with a while chocolate glaze and I am FREAKING--please leave a comment to lemme know what you thought of this. And thanks for reading.
Till next time~
"Ouch--dumbass! Stop treading on my feet" Jeff hissed for the fifth time in what must've only been ten minutes. It was very obvious to Amaryllis going by Jacks highly amused tone that he was doing this on purpose. Very likely in retaliation for the other man's antics earlier that day.

In any other circumstances, she would've suspected that it was his eyesight that was failing him--it was dark after all. And though she could see perfectly fine, she mused that perhaps that didn't go for the boys. They'd been walking for about half an hour by now, and although Jack seemed certain where his feet were at all times (except, of course, when he accidentally-on-purpose stepped on Jeff). The smiley faced man seemed to be struggling a bit more than his friend, though he never complained. Not once. And it took a while for her to realize he wasn't even paying attention to the ground before him, but, and quite cleverly she thought, his wide eyes were focused in intently on Jack's movements, as well as her own. Almost like a blind man using a cane to find his way about, only she and Jack were the cane.

It wasn't just the raven haired man's sneaky navigation tactic that was interesting for the monstress to watch either. Not even close. But the way the two moved as a whole. They were... Quiet. Not that she expected anything less, but they were much more quiet than any human she'd ever seen move could be. Hunters, thieves, she'd born witness to many, but these two were tenaciously so. They were sure of their footing as they moved, even with one evidently being practically blind in the gloom. They had absolute control over their lanky limbs, and the closer they got to human civilization, the more focused the two became. Almost as if they were practicing, managing to maneuver the tricky, forest flooring with impressive ease for creatures who were wearing shoes.

That ease, however, was nothing close to how she herself was faring.

Having gone barefoot, every time her foot met the ground below, not a sound was made. The cushioning of her flesh softening the sound of crunching soil, flesh and twigs and muffling it into a barely audible sound. Well. Barely audible to a human anyway. To her, the sound against the silence might as well have been gunshots going off right beside her head. And each time she grimaced at the sound, anxiety of discovery setting her senses through the roof. Eyes wide and glowing a bright gold, catching every bit of light available to her, allowing her to see almost as well as if she'd been in a well lit room.

But still, it was very entertaining to watch the two men as they went about. Sticking close together, yet moving relatively independently from one another as they went.

It was quite fun to watch, really. While Jack moved highly efficiently through the overgrowth, thin figure managing to slip easily through the shrubbery, Jeffery seemed to prefer keeping to the trees. His grey-white hoody, which he seemed to prefer wearing almost exclusively whenever getting dirty was apart of the equation, blended him very well into the dark silhouette of the trees. Even despite its somewhat bright colour. It took to the shadows well, and apart from his eyes, reflecting menacingly in the darkness, he was all but invisible to the unobservant eye.

Very efficient, for half breeds.

"How much farther is the town?" Amaryllis suddenly spoke up, and both men halted in their tracks. Jeff remaining flush against the trees, content to remain in his little place split off from the group of three. Whilst Jack chose instead to approach the monstress, until they were walking
beside one another in tandem. "Far enough, Boss chose the place he did for a reason after all, it's pretty isolated, my guess is that it's original owners must've liked their privacy".

"I can't even smell a trace of any sign of a humans presence here, we must be quite deep inside the woodlands, I'd even go so far to bet we're a good few miles away from any human settlement I've ever heard of" Amaryllis mused in response. Sniffing at the air audibly, taking deep drags and pausing, before shaking her head.

"My damn ribs still fucking ache from hauling ass back after you tossed me across the damn field" Jeff complained from his place leaning casually against a young birch-wood trunk. Face managing to look somewhat unenthused even despite his eternal grin. Jack simply snorted, and Jeffery shot a warning glare in his direction. Already annoyed with the leaner mans uncharacteristic provoking.

"I vaguely remember that, I was trying to split you in half" Amaryllis recalled in a-matter-of-fact tone. "Yes, I was about to throw you off when something hit me and I lost consciousness before I could".

"No, you did throw him" Jack corrected.

"Damn fucking straight, that's putting it lightly" the raven haired man grumbled, and Amaryllis just offered him a sheepish grin. "Well then I apologize for trying to kill you" was her only answer, but by the very unamused look she earned from Jeff, he didn't take much pleasure from her apology.

"Well in my defense, at the time I wasn't even aware of my trespassing, and your friend had just killed a child I'd marked as my property" she pouted, feeling his anger was very much unfair and unfounded considering.

The masked man stood beside her just patted her back, roughly, as he steered her forwards. And she realized that they'd all stopped walking during their conversation. "Ignore him, he's still convinced he can find a way to return the favor, and then some".

"Jack!" Jeff hissed in protest.

"What? It's not like you're fooling anyone, you know you're awful at lying when you're this hooked on 'em".

"D-doesn't fuckin' mean you can just blurt it out like that--you've blown my cover".

"You never had cover to begin with Jeff, you look at her the way Toby looks at soda".

"Is there something particularly interesting about Toby and this Soda person?" Amaryllis chimed in, butting in between the two men. As Jeffery had chosen to leave his spot amongst the trees in favor of squaring up irritably towards Jack.

"Sugar and Toby don't mix" Jeff spat at the curious monstress, scowling menacingly at the interruption. Whilst Jack simply chuckled, shaking his head calmly as he turned to face her. Effectively blocking out the more hostile of the men out, much to his outrage. And the pair continued to talk as if he weren't even present, treating him and the threat he posed as they would thin air. Completely and utterly ignored. The blue masked fellow feeling fairly confident that, should things with Jeffery turn sour, Amaryllis would prove more than capable of acting mediator. And save him from being knifed before they even made it to good hunting ground.

Still, as happy as he was to vent his frustrations out on Jeff--in his own, passive aggressive way, he could, more than he'd perhaps have liked, understand Jeff's...eagerness, to spill blood. He
hadn't eaten in a few days now, and as much as he'd have liked to pretend otherwise, he needed to eat. To kill. To *survive*.

Unlike Amaryllis, he didn't quite have the luxury of being a less than picky eater. A tidbit that he'd discovered the day prior, when they two had been studying amongst one another's company in the library. When she'd revealed herself to be, in fact, an omnivore.

Apparently, a carnivorous diet was the more practical of the less violent of the options she had at her disposal. A being of her status after all, required a lot more energy than simple vegetation could possibly supply substantially. *Besides*, she'd said, *plant life is much too beautiful to bear ruining with the will of one's stomach*.

He didn't have that choice. So human hunting, it would simply have to be.

"You know, you two are remarkably capable when it comes to moving in stealth, I'm quite surprised", Amaryllis's praised suddenly, halting both men in their drastically varying degrees of concentration. "I'd never have expected it of half-breeds, not with human blood in particular".

"Why, what a lovely compliment" Jack laughed, a surprisingly bright sound. Pleasant, and very sophisticated sounding, which was probably the least surprising thing about it, really. But even though he'd been nothing but friendly ever since their meeting, he'd only ever seemed so much too aloof...except perhaps when he was in Jeff's company.

He always had an air of cool standoffish-ness about him, that she'd honestly never noticed until it was made evident, right before her eyes.

She didn't have too much time to dwell in this, however.

"Compliment my ass, we're just as capable as you are priss--you don't have no right to fuckin' call us out just cuz you're some fancy monster".

"While I'm pleased to say I had no intention of offending either of you, I highly doubt you can back up that claim"

"Bullshit--"

"Now now, she's right Jeff, but yeah, maybe it wasn't exactly tactful of her to say--"

"Fuckin' listen to yourself! You can't seriously be okay with her callin' us weak!"

"Actually, I never said that--"

"We're just as fucking good as you ya stuck-up bitch--"

"Jeff back off--" Jack mumbled as he pressed a hand across against Jeff's chest, pushing him back sternly as the other man Strained against the barrier. Unable, or unwilling to break past it, he resorted instead to pace around Jack, like he was trying to find a gap in his defense, eyes trained on Amaryllis, who was frowning at the both of them. Hands raised and hovering before her, hands clenching and unclenching with uncertainty. Looking very upset at the turn of events she'd unwittingly caused.

Though the agitated swishing of her tail behind her was the lone tell-tale sign that her patience under the assault was wearing thin. Evidently not taking the ugly language being shot at her very happily, though she gracefully withstood it. She couldn't deny that, although she understood his upset, she very much disliked his...method of reacting to it. And she couldn't help but compare him to his friend and his more sophisticated approach to--well, every situation he'd been presented
"You talk shit walkin' round like a lost fuckin' kid followin' us around--you ain't anything special so where do you get off talking shit 'bout us?" Jeff continued to seethe, slurring furiously whilst his hands waved wildly all over the place. Jack continued to play shield, trying his best to calm the volatile man down, but failing miserably.

"I'm not accustomed to hunting with a pack, so I have to allow you both to set the pace, or you'll both lose track of my location, putting everything and everyone at risk--more so should you or I get in one anothers way during attack, I expected you to have understood that" Amaryllis calmly tried to explain. Only for Jeff to scoff indignantly at her, much to her own frustration.

"Why don't you fuckin' put yer money where your mouth is you snob--", he eventually snarled after pushing once more against Jack, colliding roughly against his shoulder.

And that's when her patience inevitably snapped.

It was almost immediately visible in her posture, the change. The difference from her previously rather passive posture was gloriously drastic, as her shoulders raised from their pushed-back position, and her entire body leaned forwards, as she slid her feet shoulder length apart. Lips snatching up into a warning snarl, like a small animal would should it feel under attack. Only, Amaryllis was far, far from being that small, nonthreatening little vermin that her description could compare too.

She looked positively menacing. So much that her limbs seemed to lengthen, along with her shadow, bleeding ominously into the backdrop of gloom behind her. And suddenly, the two men who had so much power under their thumbs, felt very far from being the being that went bump in the night.

"I'll take you up on that wager, Jeffrey" she snapped, voice tight and harsh. A far distance from her usually light and polite tone. "If it will make you feel better to be proven brilliantly wrong, seeing as you cannot control yourself enough to accept my miswording".

"I don't think that's a very good idea Amaryllis, I don't--"

"Shut up" Jeff hissed, shoving into Jack, who swore under his breath as he rolled the joint of his shoulder. Which was almost certainly bruised. "Stop being a frickin' wimp".

"Seeing as I've been forbidden of causing fatal injury to any of you, I challenge you to a game of simple hide and seek, all you need do is find me within half an hour. Easy, is it not? I pray this puts your mind at ease over being injured, Jack?"

"Wait when did I get roped into playing this--" Jack began in a high pitched voice. Before Jeff cut him off.

"Deal. We'll do it, you got five minutes" Jeff sneered as he hooked an elbow around Jacks neck, cutting off his air supply and effectively keeping his protests silent.

"How generous" Amaryllis sneered back with an air of sarcasm. Before turning heel and walking in the opposite direction. Pausing for a moment, just long enough to grin darkly, and say, "I wish you luck, you'll need it".

The two boys watched the woman seemingly vanish into the overgrowth. Despite their best efforts to keep her figure in their sights, even though they couldn't really leave the clearing they'd
found themselves in. In fact—they would both admit to being a little unsettled with regards to just how quickly they lost all sight of her. So much so that they even found themselves straining for any kind of telltale sound to give away her whereabouts. Only to become heavily disheartened and frustrated respectively when they found that to be a useless venture.

She'd been fairly quiet before. Now, any noises that she may have made, or been making, were totally lost to the forest's chorus.

"I can't believe you dragged me into this dude" Jack groaned heavily as he slumped dejectedly against a nearby oak. Twirling the small blade he'd pulled from his pockets agitatedly between his slender fingers.

Jeff spluttered. "Me? C'mon--you can't be serious, there's no way you were okay with that crap she was spoutin'--".

"Well I was, and now I've been dragged into your stupid game where the super-predator can laugh and gawk at us tripping over ourselves while she sits and watches us do it" Jack bit back hotly. Closing the pocket knife in his fingers with a satisfying snap.

Usually, he wouldn't mind too much, Jeff's temper landing him in something he didn't really feel up to participating in. But this was different than those times where he'd been dragged into a fight with one of the other housemates like Ben, or some 'fan' and usually extremely violent good-guy prank on some unsuspecting teenagers. No, this, this was against Amaryllis. A creature of power without a trace of humanity, like Slender--something neither of them could even entertain thoughts of competing with. A creature, which, in all honesty, he'd prefer not to embarrass himself in front of. And now thanks to Jeff's inability to think with his brain and just lie low for once, he'd now have to play a fool right in front of a creature he'd been fighting to gain respect from. And again, just the thought of it made him clench his jaw so hard that his needle-like teeth sank into his gums like butter. But he was angry, so he couldn't find the patience in him to give two shits.

"You're telling me that it didn't bug you even a little that she was calling you weak?" Jeff pried, seemingly unperturbed by the smaller man's uncharacteristic outburst. Or his mood. Glowering right into his eyesockets with just as much heat, which was about to be expected with Jeff when he was all riled up. His temper was short and about as fierce as a blaring volcano. An unpredictable, crude, and cunning volcano, that had about as much impulse control as a plastic spoon.

As brilliantly sly as Jack knew him to be, he wanted this one far too much for it not to be obvious. He wanted that girls blood bad, it was kinda ironic that that's what sorta made her safer, because there was no way for him to hide his malice.

Which only ended up serving to make him all the more hot-headed. And then situations such as this happened. Jack ground out a heavy sigh. Letting his head fall back against the tree's trunk, ignoring the way his shaggy brown hair tangled and caught in its bark.

"I guess it did bother me a little".

Thirty-five minutes to the letter later, both men were restless, tired, and frustrated. Watching in dismay as Amaryllis appeared from her hiding place before them, pleased as punch and very obviously very happy with herself. But it seemed that she'd calmed down during her time watching from--wherever the hell she'd been, since although noticeably coy. She wasn't smirking, or rubbing it in in any way. Just relatively quiet happy humming.

Though Jeff was still furious. But not he was keeping unusually... Quiet. Fuming with a far too tight grimace that Jack guessed was probably supposed to be a smile. He looked about ready to
blow up. But Jack liked to think he knew Jeff well enough to say he would probably be fine.

Probably.

To be honest. Jeff was too busy trying to take control of his own breathing to think about attacking anyone. He'd never admit it, but, just maybe, he was even a little bit...frightened, by how...unreachable, Amaryllis was proving to be.

"You know Jeffery, your body temperature is elevated, and your pulse is a little faster than it should be" she calmly pointed out. Sounding a tad concerned, but otherwise her tone was measured and even.

"Shut up" Was all Jeff said. And as if taking an unspoken cue, everyone disbanded once again, sticking within sight of one another. To continue making their way silently to their hunting grounds.

With the forest soon thinning out into a very generously proportioned park area, the group decided unanimously to group together more closely again. There was no way to access any of the nearby neighborhood houses by sticking to the treeline, so the only real choice that was left to them was to follow the pathways into the streets. Clumping together, like a group of friends maybe making their way home from a late night social gathering of some sort, (while Jack and Jeff silently sent a thank you to Jane for having the sense to have dressed Amaryllis into suitable attire). All strolling confidently and casually, perfectly at ease to the unobservant eye. While in reality all three were tense, and very much alert, watching out carefully for any witnesses that might've caught sight of the suspicious group of newcomers the night a potentially nearby local and family turned up missing.

Luckily enough for them however, the streets themselves were almost as barren and deserted as the Sahara. Completely void of life, barring themselves of course. And after a couple of quick rounds to scope out the area, looking for any lit up windows meaning someone was awaken and therefore acting as a living alarm system to steer well clear of. And thankfully finding none. They were ready to choose the unlucky house to invade, sticking fairly close to the park, just in case they needed to make a hasty retreat.

The residence they ended up choosing was a fairly large building. Standing just a stone's throw away from the row of homes perpendicular to were it itself stood, alone, without a single neighbour attached to itself. Making it a perfect candidate for attack--seeing as noise waking up any would-be saviors wouldn't be as much as a problem with a bit of distance to keep the peace. Plus, there was a gorgeous ivy canopy snaking its way up the left face of the entire two-story building. Like a patchwork ladder right on up to an open window. As if teasing for intruders to just come on up inside, begging to be the entrance of invaders. Which Jeff and Jack happily took. Grumbling at eachother as they climbed, as each seemed to have a knack for using the others hand as a foothold to get on up.

Amaryllis on the other hand, chose an entrance closer to ground, disappearing from the boy's view as she slipped in through an impossibly small basement window. And Jack would have sworn he heard her bones crackle in protest as she forced herself through, but she seemed completely unconcerned. So he figured she was probably fine, and directed his focus instead of getting inside himself.

With a little bit of fiddling as Jeff stuck his blade through the small opening between the window and its ledge, he eventually managed to catch it against its latch. Unhooking it from the outside and, with practiced finesse, slowly eased the window open, sliding himself in feet first, using the window frame as leverage to pull himself up and over the ledge. Jack easily following suit after him, until they were both safely inside of the unfamiliar building.
The sight that immediately met them was...darkness, that was really all really. Darkness, and a fairly sparsely decorated hallway, no furniture, save for the family portraits decorating the walls, and a single dresser pushed up by the wall opposite the landings staircase. A small balcony overhanging into what looked to be a kitchen/dining room area, with a few doors leading into what the two presumed to be the upstairs bedrooms. Only one door hanging slightly ajar leading into an in-proportionally small scaled bathroom, considering the rest of the building being so generously spaced.

After giving the immediate view a good quick scanning, as well as listening out for any other movement in the house, the two men decided without words to split up from there. Jeff eagerly heading off towards the master bedroom towards the end of the hall, whilst Jack crept downstairs towards the sounds of soft snoring sounds coming from what turned out to be the lounge.

Bumping into Amaryllis along the way (and nearly almost screaming in the process, if it hadn't been for her blessed quick, albeit panicked reaction of crushing a hand against his windpipe in order to shut him up, since she had no access to his actual face). Once he'd taken a strangled, calming breath, he'd nodded in silent greeting to her. Before jabbing a thumb in the direction of the snoozing sleeper, and turning his back to her. Crouching low in order to peek through the opening into the lounge, which lacked a door at all, finding the stranger had conveniently chosen to sleep on the single couch of which who's back stood facing the kitchen.

Allowing him to quite easily creep over without risk of detection, rising and slithering a hand up and over from the seat's back, and slip his blade right across what turned out to be a young woman's throat. Severing her vocal chords in such a way, that the only noise her startled composure could allow was the dull thudding of her falling to the floor as she rolled over, flailing momentarily, eyes wide and mouth trying and failing to utter cries of horror. Before inevitably bleeding out, and dying shortly after, her body growing still right there on the ground where she'd landed, surrounded in a pool of her own blood. Face forever capturing the look of absolute terror, frozen expression remaining on her face even in death.

"That was quick, very nice attack Jack" Amaryllis praised. Though her expression was more of a grimace than anything even remotely resembling pride. "I suppose you are more merciful in your ways than Jeffery, I can smell his... Eagerness from here".

"Yeah, guess he must've been pretty pent up--nit that he'd be any better otherwise" Jack muttered as he went about his business kneeling beside the corpse. He didn't even hesitate as he rolled the girl over onto her front. Black hair messy from sleep slipping to cover her face, as he ripped the blade vertically up her nightdress to expose her bare flesh. And once again dipping the blade into the skin to further expose her innards. The faint sound of wet sloshing being all that filled to room, as well as the muffled sound of movement upstairs. Not so much a struggle, but thumping that told that someone had definitely woken up, and they were currently suffering at the hands of a much less kind killer. Pathetic sounding mewling whimpers could be heard echoing from the long corridors.

"I see" Amaryllis frowned. But otherwise, offered no more to the subject. Content, in a manner of speaking anyway, to remain back and observe how the two worked. Knowing there was a high chance she'd probably have to work with them at some point if she was to have any luck with coexisting with them. And making it anything close to enjoyable,for both parties.

"Seems Jeff has really got himself set on targeting you, I know you're strong, but I'd still watch my back, he's rash but he's not stupid" Jack spoke up hesitantly from the messy business of removing organs from his catch. And storing them carefully in small jars he'd brought along in a small bag he'd slung over his shoulder last minute. He'd preserve them later on when he made it back, it was better to keep his carry ons light, just in case.
Still. Even with his forearms deep inside the young girl’s torso, he knew his way around the human body well enough to focus his mind on other things as well. Concentration in this case was pretty simply stretched in other areas after so much practice.

"He'll find a way to make your life harder one way or another, he's being far too compliant with you to not be up to something”.

He probably should’ve felt bad about warning off his friends prey so readily. But she was far too valuable to risk butting heads with at this point.

"I've noticed, I must say, he's proven very tricky to pin down, I can't seem to ever really predict how he'll act next, at least that of all things has been the consistent rule rather than the exception, I wouldn't be too surprised if it turned out he suffered from a mood disorder" was her response, much to Jack’s amusement. Of course she'd have already noticed. It wasn't like Jeff was the subtle type. In fact he highly doubted he'd ever been, even before. Still, it put his mind at ease to know that she was aware, and on guard--or at least would be if Jeff ever managed to pose a significant threat.

"Mhm" Jack hummed, nodding as he fought to get a good grip on the slippery liver that just kept sliding from between his fingers. Resulting in a series of sickening squelching noises filling the silence between the two. With Amaryllis wandering the poshly furnished room with avid interest, brushing her fingers fondly along the walls with a dreamy, far away expression. Apparently pleased to have the opportunity to explore a real, lived in home, rather than the inhuman like mansion that Slender and house occupied. There was just something about his presence and its uses that made the once human dwelling feel tainted, false, whereas this very real home felt... Well, real. And so very faraway, and for not the first time in her life, she found herself wondering, even as proud of her lineage as she was. What if? What if, instead of what she was, what wonders could she have experienced in the life which belonged to humanity?

"well, he's been like that for as long as I've known him, I guess he's always just felt wild like that, in a way his unpredictability makes him predictable in that sense".

"Yes", Amaryllis aid, bobbing her head absent in agreement, "I suppose you are right”. Then she paused for a moment, a thoughtful look crossing her features, before she made to speak.

"What--", was all she managed, before a sharp noise from above them cut her off. And her ears twitched, face scrunching up in concentration as she turned hot on her heel.

That noise. It hadn't come from where Jeff’s scent currently occupied. It was too close, and it had come from the room right above the lounge.

Jack seemed to pick up on her sudden silence. And briefly glanced up to catch her move quickly towards the base of the stairs, alert, like a cat that has suddenly caught a squirrel in its sights.

"You going to investigate?” he asked, unscrewing a jar (and struggling to) with bloodied and slippery fingers, before plopping an uniform mass of organs into its mouth.

She hesitated a moment. Before nodding. "Yes, yes I think so”.

And then she was gone.

He listened out for any more unusual noises telling of what either two of the missing pair of his allies could be up to, before returning his focus back to his harvest. Carefully removing the choice cuts, until the body had nothing left to offer. Tying off the incision with the woman's clothing to make transport a bit less messy, as well as cleaning up after himself with some bleach he found
under the kitchen sink. It was better to hide the evidence of any hunting they did nearby, and what would cause the least disturbance? An entire family brutally murdered and missing organs, or waking up to find they had mysteriously up and left for no apparent reason? Sure, the bodies may be discovered later on, but by then, at least if Jack had decided to make them his meal, anything could have gotten to them by the time they were dug up. Missing innards could be explained away by animal intervention, gruesome, but a lot less jarring than having a cannibalistic nutcase on the loose. Damage control was less important however, in places nice and far away, a luxury they didn't have on this particular occasion, but hey. Can't always be easy, could it? They were just lucky they'd found a house particularly close by that was far enough away from everywhere else to keep the commotion as undetectable as possible.

After giving the carpet one last good scrubbing, Jack had finished just in time to spot Jeffrey strolling inside from the kitchen. Wide eyed and all bloody, from head to toe, and grinning in a way that made Jack feel more than a little on edge. The dreamy way the raven haired man carried himself told Jack he was definitely still very much intoxicated on his kill. And therefore, still dangerously too close to Jack for comfort. So, as discreetly as he could, Jack inched his way back from the the man, being sure to oh-so casually keep the sofa directly between them. Not that it would provide all that much of a barrier against Jeff if he did choose to attack, but it was there anyhow. And the less nervous Jack looked in this situation, the better. Didn't want to to set Jeff off and every little helped.

"Feeling better?" he piped up, keeping his voice measuredly cool. Jeff nodded. Jack sighed. Then he froze, pulling a face under his mask at the all too smug look Jeff was shooting his way. "You made a giant mess again, didn't you?" he asked.

Another nod.

"For Christ's sake Jeff" Jack groaned, earning a snort of laughter from Jeff.

Then, something happened that surprised both of them.

"Jack? Jeffery? Would you mind terribly if you gave me a hand with the something?" a familiar voice called. And the two men eyed eachother curiously, sharing a look, before shrugging in unison, and moving to follow. Both wondering what an earth the monstress could possibly want their help with as they trudged awkwardly up the stairs. The masked fiend smacking Jack irritantly up the head as he caught sight of the mess he'd made of his two unfortunate victims of that night. He guessed he'd just have to think himself lucky Jeff had had the decency to at least commit most of it in the bathroom, where the tiles would make it easier to clean.

Still, that didn't stop Jack from swearing furiously at the cackling bastard who playfully jumped back out of the way of his swipes. Accidentally bumping against a locked door in his effort to get out of the way. A door that--that...hadn't been locked... Earlier.

What the--?

"Come in" Amaryllis's voice called from inside. And both men heard a satisfying click coming from the other side, and once again, they glanced at in another with upturned eyebrows. Before Jeff turned back to face it, pushing the door uncharacteristically tentatively, and it slowly creaked open. To reveal a sight that neither men had been expecting.

But one that Jeff definitely appreciated.
Blood. Blood was everywhere. Crimson was splattered all over the damn place, bits of viscera and hair and bone was flaking off the wall, ceiling--flesh littered the floor. Bits and pieces of unidentifiable much dripping to the floor like morbid rain showering the lone occupant in the room.

Amaryllis, stood gracefully amongst the wreckage of furniture and gore. A sense of what could have only been defined as triumph in her proud stance. Even though she looked a tad guilty as she eyed the true scale of the mess she'd made.

"W-what the hell...?"

"--it's beautiful..." Jeff breathed. Face the picture of awe, as he admired the sight surrounding them.

Jack, however, was less enthusiastic about it. Instead, he seemed to have settled on a mixture of horror, confusion, and mild irritation.

"What is all this?" he managed after almost a full minute of spluttering.

"The last time I saw his face, it was from the inside of a cage" she whispered shakily. Casting a disgusted look at the pile of muscle and what looked like brain under her feet. "I suppose I can relax, knowing he doesn't have a face at all anymore".

Chapter End Notes

It's late, so it's longer than usual! I'm behind on my update schedule yeah, I've been working on some original stuff, as in not fanfictions. And yet another undertale fic--anyone here into bittybones? If anyone's into either of those feel free to say so, and I'll get onto publishing em.

Anyway anyway, back to this fic. So, we get a little insight into how Amaryllis hunts, and Jeff and Jacks relationship with one another. Fun right? Look forward to reading the next chapter, because stuff is getting exciting~

Soon we'll have to see our lovely monsters in action.

Till next time~
It was a while before Amaryllis finally withdrew from the room which held her one and only victim of the night. She might not have originally intended to join the boys hunt, but in the end, it seemed she'd really done more damage than either had set out to cause in the first place. The whole 'leave no witnesses, leave no trace' plan was sort of ruined now, since there were trace amounts of the very unfortunate soul scattered, well, all throughout, and over, the room. Strangely enough, Amaryllis herself remained curiously untouched. Quite a feat, considering the gore splattered across the scene.

She wasn't usually one to revel in unnecessary violence or loss of life, but she couldn't find it in herself to be disturbed by her own mirth.

At least Jeffery seemed to be enjoying himself. Whilst she was trying her best to reprimand herself for her own weakness in giving into more...unsavory pleasures. Poor Jack seemed thoroughly unnerved by the display, but it hadn't seemed to have had much of an effect on the odd relationship she'd been carefully building steadily with him. If anything it just seemed it was the mess itself that had turned the fellows stomach--ironic, as he was currently off rooting around someone else's. The saving grace being he, at the very least, did not seem to be enjoying the task as his comrades were.

"Thought about how you're gonna deal with the mess yet?" he said without looking up, though his hands paused a second. His tone was uncharacteristically... Theatrical, and coy, more playful than anything. It was unusual for him, although he was never not pleasant, and was in no way stoic in his mannerisms, it felt strange to be on the receiving end of his teasing. It had more often than not, if not always, been directed at someone else, never really her. She'd been present to see it, but it had always felt like he was just a tad too wary to try with Amaryllis. His careful nature made him feel more like he chose his battles as well as his friendships very carefully, which was understandable given the general company he was subjected being in Slenders little collection. It paid to be careful hanging around with people didn't bat an eye around death. She guessed it was likely a good sign he obviously felt comfortable enough to include her in that little circle now, and she smiled, feeling rather pleased with herself at that. It felt good to be accepted, part of the pack, as it were.

"I'm surprised, are you not going to ask me what the purpose of the making of that mess? Or are you simply playing ignorant to be... Considerate?" Amaryllis mused aloud as she draped herself contentedly across the back side of the recliner, (the sofa was far too filthy, not unusual considering a woman had been both murdered and gutted on the thing). She took a moment to run her fingers over the soft, wonderfully smooth fabric of it, humans were so wonderfully creative with their human things. She'd have to make a note of looking out for a few luxuries to perhaps spirit away for herself, not like the homeowners would need them anymore. And it would make her stay in the dirty laundry pile in Jeffrey's room a lot more comfortable.

"Both? Neither? I believe it's just more practical to think of dealing with what needs to be dealt with, leaving that like it is, that's a no-go".

Ah, that was definitely more what she'd expected from him. But the good humour was nonetheless still very much present in the ambiance that should've probably been tainted in some way by the corpse lying still warm on the floor. An eerie reminder of the nights events, the woman lying face-down with a gaping hole in her back that'd allowed access to her organs. Many of
which were no longer internal to her, not anymore.

She hummed, bobbing her head thoughtfully, "I suppose you're correct about that, practicality overriding curiosity, you're actually quite efficient are you not?"

Jack snorted. "You're only just realizing that?"

The chair underneath her creaked as she tilted her head upwards to look at him, hair dangling away from her face, as she was upside down. Giving Jack a much cleaner look at her face, which was usually framed by white, feathery hair, her eyes were much sharper without it. But he couldn't say he was in any way startled by them, maybe he would have earlier, closer to when they'd first become acquainted, but now? Not so much, there was warmth in those eyes. She was a friend, a very unusual, very elegant friend, who was sitting with her legs flailing in the air as she smirked at him from across the room. Ah yes, the picture of grace. "Hmmm, I wonder" the creature quipped, earning a snort of laughter from the young man, who shook his head as he pushed himself evenly to a standing position.

"Pfft, you're awful!".

"Haha, indeed, but do not worry, I'll be sure to clean up after myself" Amaryllis assured him, which of course in no way answered the unspoken 'how' of the question. But was an answer all the same.

"Hopefully not with normal cleaning appliances, seeing how you managed to break the ironing board and the washing machine in the same day" Jack teased, grinning behind his mask as he watched Amaryllis's eyebrows shoot up her forehead in surprise.

"Those machines were too fiddly--and brittle!" came her spluttered reply. And she rolled over, only to lose her balance and topple altogether from the armchair, landing with a dull thud and splaying across the floor. Flustered, and hand over her face in embarrassment. She remained where she landed, making pitiful whining noises as Jack choked on his own chortling.

"Brittle my arse--I'm the one who helped Toby haul that thing back to the house, how did you break what Toby couldn't in two hours, that he couldn't in over ten?".

"How was I supposed to know that the insides were supposed to spin like that? Nobody told me!"

"So what? You of all thi--people got spooked by a washing machine?"

Her silence spoke volumes.

"Are you serious?" Jack snickered in disbelief. Barely able to entertain the thought that a creature such as herself would even be capable of feeling anything close to fear from something so...mundane.

The totally flushed expression that blossomed across her steadily reddening face caused the small chuckles turn into full blown laughter. And unexpectedly, Amaryllis joined in too, though albeit relatively more subdued due to her embarrassment.

Then something in Jack's posture changed, as his eyes--or lack thereof, drifted silently to the corpse at his knees.

"I hate doing this..." he whispered, not really regretfully. But, definitely unhappily. Not really caring if Amaryllis heard it or not, but not being particularly surprised that she did. She was a super predator after all.
"Doing what? The hunting?".

"The killing was more what I'm talking about" he answered without fuss. There was no point in theatrics.

"But you have to, does that not make it a tad easier? Knowing you have no choice?".

He paused. "I dunno how to answer that" he admitted honestly. He really didn't.

"There's nothing monstrous about wanting to live, Jack".

"I keep telling myself that...".

"Oh Jack" Amaryllis whimpered mournfully, feeling unexpressable sorrow at the slumped man's form, which usually held such poise. Sensible and graceful, not small, not this.

"...Thomas, that--kid? Jeff mentioned, I've been meaning to ask, where you planning on eating him?".

"What? Gosh no!" she practically squawked in indignation. Feathers ruffled. "While I admit humans are quite my favourite dish, I don't make a habit of hunting the young" she might've hissed if he hadn't looked so deeply upset a moment before--still did.

"Is it frightening? Seeing how similar you are to something like me? Is that why you are upset?".

"Perhaps..." he rolled his shoulders as if they felt heavier than they were.

"I don't think you are a bad person, Jack, and whilst you may no longer be human anymore, I can see the human in you the most".

Rather than scoffing like he wanted, Jack remained tight lipped. Oh if only she could see what lay behind his mask, how far from anything normal could look. He felt almost like he could spit out the bitterness out in her face, tear off his disguise and reveal to her what he tried his damndest to hide every single day of his life since--...

Side he could no longer call himself human anymore.

"I take pride in knowing that my personal morals are strongly set, and nothing pains me more to see somebody I can see myself in struggle with their own, do not feel needless guilt over keeping yourself alive"

"So you do eat humans, huh?" Jack deflected, although he felt somewhat touched by her words. He wasn't quite ready to forgive himself just like that, not yet.

"Oh honey, I'd eat anything with a heartbeat, given half the chance--especially at the moment, I'm ravenous" the monstress jokes hesitantly, picking herself up off the floor and approaching him steadily. Being careful to not startle the man anymore than she was already.

"Well, almost anything" she quickly remedied, sensing the uncertainty in the already uncomfortable man a she approached him. Until she was eventually able to bump shoulders with him.

Though, that was not what made the pair jump, but the sound of Jeff yelling from upstairs, suddenly splitting the silence that had engulfed the two like a fog.

"Jack ya bastard! Get up here 'n' help me scrape this bitch off the fucking wall!".
Both of them heaved a jointed, heavy sigh. Jack looking up from the body uncertainly, lips pulling into a wobbly grin which Amaryllis couldn't see, but rather heard in his voice. "Looks like you're not the only messy one here".

"Why--the cheek!"

It was roughly an hour or two later that the three decided to take their leave. After Jack had gathered his things and looted the place of anything of use that nobody would miss, and Amaryllis had mysteriously managed to clean up the atrocity that was what was left of the man upstairs. They'd piled up the evidence, which Amaryllis made short work of carrying--much to the frustration of Jeff, and started off back home.

"For the last fucking time Jeff, just leave it to her she's faster than dragging them back".

"Fuck that I can do it myself" Jeff sneered hotly, standing dead in front of Amaryllis, as she herself stood uncomfortably pawing at the ground, arms laden with bags of bloodied blankets and the even bloodier remains of the two women that had fallen victim to the night's outing. Jack also stopped walking, just a couple of paces ahead of the two with Jeff pacing back and forth in front of Amaryllis as if he had her cornered. Whilst she just seemed very much like she wished she wasn't there, trying her best to placate the man by keeping as still as possible.

"If it'd make you feel better Jeffery, you can take the sheets if you'd like, they're much lighter" she offered cheerfully, smiling at Jeff, but the smile died on her face as he just glowered back.

"Just hand the bitch over already".

"Are you sure? I don't want to be rude or anything, but, um--wouldn't it be a lot quicker if I just--"

"Give me it!"

"Alright, alright, here" she surrendered. Sounding a bit fed up, as she lobbed the half empty lady's body across his shoulders fireman-style. Mouth twitching in satisfaction when his knees buckled under her sudden weight, even Jack struggled to bite back a snort when the man face-planted into the soft soil underfoot. Jeff just choosing to grumble furiously to himself as he pulled himself from under her, shaking the dirt from himself, and stumbled to his feet with her legs hauled over her shoulder. He said nothing as he began trailing her ahead, and Jack and Amaryllis gave the man a few seconds headway before they too began to follow his stead.

Shortly after disposing of the bodies and what evidence they couldn't make use of through the incinerator, the three retreated inside to recover from the night out. Jeff had stormed off to his room within minutes of kicking the front doors open, and Amaryllis had followed Jack into the infirmary with the intent on helping him store everything he'd picked up from the house. There wasn't really much to tidy away, a few bottles of aspirin, ointments and over the counter stuff. The bandages would come in useful surely, since there wasn't a damn day that went by when someone in the fucking house screwed up in some way or another. Especially with Toby's new habit of gnawing on his fingers the way he did, Jack didn't have enough fingers of his own to count the amount of times he'd had Toby guiltily trudging to his room at some godforsaken time in the morning. Only to have him bandage whatever self mutilation he'd done to himself in a common yet all too familiar moment of collapse.
The good news was, he'd have plenty of food for the coming days at the least. Which he'd stored in the freezer on the way upstairs. Soon enough all his sorting away was over with, and the man still had a couple of choice items shoved into the deep crevices of his rucksack.

The masked man paused a moment as he fingered the small blanket he'd pulled from the guest bedroom that had remained untouched by the gore. It was soft, and he needed a new one anyway, since his was getting a pit too ratty for his tastes. He prided himself on keeping his room clean and tidy, so it was really time for a change.

"So..." Jack began thoughtfully, as he rubbed the fluffy trim of his new prize between his thumb and forefinger, "you said you don't like eating your greens, what did you eat as a kid? Did you go out yourself to get food or?"

The creature in question, who had herself been busily examining the well kept cabinets that was all that was left of the previous infirmary, turned towards his voice. Eyes still gazing intently on the salvaged goods, feeling only a slight twang of guilt that this was all that was left of the room she'd unintentionally destroyed. "No" she answered with a slight shake of her head. "No I was too young, I stayed home with my siblings while my parents went out to get whatever they could catch".

"Whatever?".

Amaryllis chuckled, a pleasant sound that reminded Jack almost like the faint chiming of bells in a slight breeze. "As you can imagine, so many young to feed, we got what we were given, we were ravenous little bastards I can tell you".

Jack snorted at the unusual choice of vulgarity the grinning woman had used. In a way, it made what she had said all the funnier, but the image of smaller, similar looking beasts to the Amaryllis he'd glimpsed once before, all tearing into a thrashing lump of still living flesh, took a bit of the fun out of the image. "That bad huh?" he said still, choosing to shrug off the chill that went up his spine.

She wasn't like that.

She wasn't a mindless monster.

She was, he hesitated to even think it, a friend? Could he call her that?

The hearty chortle that joined his was sufficient answer to that question, for the time being. "Hahaha, indeed, that's mostly why too many of us can't live in close proximity, we'd clear the entire area of life just trying to keep full bellies".

"I guess that makes sense" Jack nodded to himself, because it did. He'd seen what she was, what she was capable of, and it made sense that that sort of strength and agility required just as much energy to feed it. "Seems pretty sad though, you guys can't just visit eachother sometimes instead?"

Amaryllis mock gasped in a scandalized way. Giggling like a schoolgirl as if that was the silliest thing she'd ever heard. "Gosh no! Ha, the only thing worse than eating an-an entire city's worth out is being near my own kind" she gushed, face scrunching up in absolute disgust as she struggled to find the words to describe it. "The smell. It's, it's dreadful, imagine the worst possible thing you could ever imagine smelling, then triple it, call it nature's way of keeping us from destroying the ecosystem, population control".

The man faltered at that, settling down the blanket down against the makeshift infirmary bed and
stepping around to lean casually against its foot. Curiosity evident in his attentive posture, he said nothing in response to that, but instead motioned for her to continue.

He really couldn't help himself. Call it the scholar in him, but he just craved new information--new knowledge just as much as any drug in the known world. It was fascinating. Truly, and even more so knowing that this was world apart from anything he could've learned in his own, small, much too boring sounding world that he'd been wrongfully ripped from against his will. The one upside to the hell he'd been forced into.

After a moment of thinking, Amaryllis sighed, gagging at the imaginary odor just even thinking about it. "The stench we give off to one another is so foul, we'd just kill to get rid of it. And we do, often, that's the whole point, maybe once in a while we overcome it to mate, but more often than not we'd just kill one another to be done with it, so we tend to give each other wide berths".

"Even your family?" Jack questioned, eyebrows furrowed in...an emotion he couldn't quite place right then.

"Most likely, the pheromones, they're painfully uncomfortable when we clash, it's almost like...a dominant animal, only we're all dominant, and the only way to fix the feeling of...how do I say it? Competition? Is to simply make it go away".

"Well, what about other monsters?" he cringed inwardly at the term that had thoughtlessly slipped from his mouth, but he kept going. Refusing to acknowledge his small but insulting slip up as if it hadn't happened. Luckily, Amaryllis continued smiling as if she hadn't even heard it. "Ever meet any other creatures?" he corrected himself still, words coming out more stern than he'd have intended.

"Sounds more like a recipe for lunch to me" came her very blasé reply.

"You never just like, socialize?".

"Nope" she shrugged, ending the 'p' with a satisfying pop. "No real need to".

Jack felt that emotion surface in his stomach again. This time, though, he recognized it for what it was. Pity..

"That's just...sad" he stated quietly. Again, Amaryllis simply shrugged her shoulders.

"I suppose so, we as a species are rather reclusive in nature, we do leave scent trails, I guess you could call that our way of communicating with others, but not all of us use scent to begin with, it's all a very intricate balance of being in the right place, and in the right time, I guess if I wasn't very hungry I would possibly engage with another like I do here with you, such as it was with Thomas, all of us are different though, for all I know others of my race are social butterflies".

"Hey" Jack interrupted, but not in an altogether unpleasant way. Taking a step forward to put a hesitating, yet comforting hand on her shoulder. Only, since she chose that exact moment to turn around from her place sitting on the bed beside him, he ended up planting his hand right into her hair, and in his surprise, he also accidentally ended up petting her head automatically, as if he'd been aiming to pet an animal.

There was a moment of uncomfortable silence, at least on his part. Going beet red underneath his mask, feeling his face heat up against the blue plastic as his mind screamed his mistake. Amaryllis, however, didn't seem to care in the least, leaning into the comforting contact, eyes closing dreamily as she felt the warmth against her scalp. It was...familiar, like when she was young and
successfully took down her own meal for the first time, beaming eagerly up to her mother, hearing that unmistakable pride in the rumbling from her chest. Nuzzling her much larger snout into the top of her daughter's head.

Trying to bypass the mortification he felt after literally just feeling up the woman's head like a moron, Jack cleared his throat as he tried to make the act of snatching his hand away look not as hasty as he felt. As well as trying to make his rigid form look less like he'd shoved a rod up his own arse. "You're plenty sociable, you're a helluva lot better than Jeff here".

With a small sigh, Amaryllis blinked herself out of the daze her mind had wandered off too. Yet, even still, she didn't feel any sorrow in that she'd have expected in breaking the daze. In fact, she still felt very pleased. And in no small way, she attributed that feeling very much to the awkward, very embarrassed boy standing beside her.

"That's sweet of you to say Jack, thank you" she thanked him in the most sincere way, and she meant it.

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That evening, it became more evident that Jeffery was acting very...shifty. Agitated, which wasn't new, but also unusually twitchy, as he seemed to linger around the outside of the group that had congregated in the common room. Everyone unnerved by the grinning man's antics choosing to join together in hopes of the numbers acting as a deterrent to the obviously disturbed man's mind.

After growing frustrated and tired of searching for... Something that he wasn't finding amongst the group, he skulked away back to the confines of his room. Where Amaryllis found him, much later on, standing, staring, entranced by his own reflection. Gazing into the many many mirrors in a way that told Amaryllis that he may have been doing exactly that the entire time he'd been absent from the downstairs safety huddle.

After seeing as much as she needed to. The woman quietly slipped away from the spectacle, shutting the door behind her with a soft click. The man, who'd remained undisturbed during the entire ordeal, remained completely unaware of the disturbance. Continuing to gaze in awe at the reflection staring back at him through the mirror.

"Beautiful..."

Chapter End Notes

Sorry it's so late! Writer's block is a bastard, and what with Christmas and all, woooooow! Busy stuff, but on the bright side, thanks to a sliiiight nervy breakdown, for the next couple of months, I'm gonna have wayyy more free time to get these updates going. So, yeah, small victories right? Anyway, so I wanted to get some more info about Amaryllis outta there, and I really like how Jack and Amaryllis's relationship is coming along. Like I love how they can both mutually learn from each other, it's just pretty adorable? Like Amaryllis is this whole apex super predator being stuck dealing with a whole bunch of ghosts and former humans, playing house. I feel its probably unintentionally the happiest Amaryllis has ever actually been, a lonely soul that just finds wonder in everything? She's a real cutie.

So, if ya enjoyed this, please leave a comment, I appreciate the feedback. Also, I do write a lot of other stories, so maybe check them out! Never know, might enjoy em.
Heh, thanks for reading!
Till next time~

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