

Downcast Dove and Lonely Lady

Written by Septia.

“Be seeing you after two weeks holiday.”

“Good tidings, friend.” Izolda waved bye to the last regular of the gym, hearing their steps echo down the metal staircase -Kllng- -Kklnft-. After moments spent in contemplation, she popped a couple of 'behind the counter' jelly rats down her gob, her munching providing atmosphere to the toom. There was no boss she hid the candy from, and few would mind a casual indulgence. However, when you are at the top oft the ladder, your boss becomes all your customers. Izolda ground the glucose gummies between her gums, tongue toying with the succulence of the sweets before her molars milled them.

“Hoooh...,” she sighed, chin slumped onto the gym counter, the murky verdant yarn tangle the woman called hair formed a drape over her eyes. Then and again between chews she blew the frizzle bangs out of the way, only for them to settle back again.

“Vrong you vere, of silence one only accept, not befriend.” The artificial flavours reminded her of times gone by, when she was not eating candy alone, in a desolate gym.

The cleaning crew would be around shortly. Izolda wandered the facility, picking up stray cans of imported sports drinks – might as well make their job a bit easier.

“One sign of turning older,” she thought out loud, though agreed each time she passed a mirror that she was sustaining an agile physique in her middle-aged body. She stopped to adjust her loose bra, when an inkling of a sound reached her. A tapping and grinding... accompanied by huffs. She cast a glance towards the dumbbells. In the darkness, she could just about pick out a shape scurrying in the corner shade. She leaned in to scrutinize the sight.

A pair of eyes peered back at her.

Izolda clasped her palms over her mouth, seeing the ginger tuft crowning a finger length boy. In the next moment he ducked behind the metal equipment once more, at the scramble of cans tumbling to the ground.

“Aa... aaah?” Izolda gasped, her eyes swapping between corner and the handful of cans littered over the floor.

“Z-S-sohrry, sohrry,” she called out, then took a step back. 'If scrambling was loud to me, must have been metallic avalanche for vem. How could I do so to vem?' Then, her train of thought ricochet backwards. This wasn't probable. 'Must, be a rat,' She thought to herself, though how many rats were scuttling around in turquoise shifts?

“Fnnfs, ssnnfff, huaannf...”

Once properly listening, the sounds of miniature weeping melted her shocked expression into one of concern. Remembering the cans, Izolda gradually neared the corner, threading on clouds until she reached the end of the dumbbell rack.

“Are yo-.” She stopped herself, holding over her throat. 'Is my voice too loud for them? Could it wound vem, of not careful?' A bloodied flash of tiny eardrums popppping grazed her mind. After banishing the mental sight, she lower her voice to a whisper.

“Meaning no harm of you, lil' dove. Asking of forgiveness.” She peered over the dumbbell. The ginger tuft rouse again, arms clutching over the handle, peeking out in the manner of a curious rat. Still keeping themselves on the back edge of the metal bar. They stood shorter than a pen, but a touch taller than her middle finger. Bearing the stature of a matured teen, yet the tearful eyes of an abandoned animal.

"Hoo... darling, how you..." Izolda reached out for him, the boy emitting a faint cry and ducking back in reflex. The shadow of her palm loomed over him, encasing a face painted in fright within her darkness.

'So frail, hand could be shelter for vem.' Izolda thought, her brain suddenly aching, a thought piecing through the side of her lobe, a frozen bolt of electricity. 'Would it resist against my hand, or would smear into paste, like bug?' Izolda retracted her palm, banishing the thought, but its residue remained. Her face mirrored the boy's. How could she trust herself with thoughts like that daring to show their face? She turned her head, dread budding over her cheeks.

The boy crept closer, internalising that she wasn't threat; both of them were scared. He huttered, brushing over himself, sniffing up his tears.

Izolda faced him, seeing his jerky rumble as he quivered in place. Listlessness took a backseat, and she offered her palm as a plateau.

"Staying here, you can not," she whispered,

He eyed her face, and down to her hand again, gulping as he stepped out onto her fingers.

-Kllngh- -Kkdff- Footsteps echoed from the entrance. Izolda's eyes flung open.

"Y-you cannot stay here," she wheezed out in worry, put her hand below her chest and cupped over the boy.

He was cast into darkness, the world throbbing and gusts of wind wisped through the gaps in her fingers, the whole cage throbbing and bobbing as she hurried off. -Bbfmmb- -Bmfms- A rhythmic slam crashed down from above, the boy curling up and covering his ears as tight as he could.

Izolda's chest bobbed and bounced in the flimsy bra, the front hook coming apart so they flung freely. She ducked behind the counter, hiding away the boy and fumbled with her packing.

He crawled under the depth of the counter, palms glued to his ears as new sounds came, a squad of people trampled in, giant voices chatting back and forth high above, rumbles of a thunderstorm, from which at any point lightning could strike. In time, he was graced by her grasp once more, and taken to a place where layers of padding shielded him from the sounds of rumbling mumbles and initialising vacuums, wrapped in silken fabric, once Izolda moved again.

The gym owner kept a hand over the middle of her scarf, feeling the faint wriggling of the bulge within. She didn't dare remove her palm, both for his safety, and hers, she had to make sure he was still moving. It was a balance act, holding steady as to not let him untangle, yet if she went too hard for even a moment...

'Banish, banish, banish,' she chanted inside her head, wishing to refrain for those thoughts at such a crucial moment.

Entering her car was being showered with a waterfall of relief. Safe, he was safe, she needed to get him home now. Hands on the wheel, she drove out into the white haze of snow. Flecks of frozen water pelted the glass, as if wanted to in, to freeze him. Izolda's breath turned unsteady, heaves flooding out of her nose and mouth alike, she had to focus on the road.

'Banish, banish banish, k-keep the lil dove safe.'

The flinging and thrashing of the breath bumped and bounced the scarf to and fro, the boy holing himself in place as the fabric unfolded around him, until a sharp turn arched him straight down. The fall didn't reach half his length, a straight tumble like a nail into the open cleavage of her bust. He quivered, clutching over himself and steeling his body against the cushions of feminine dough, grunting as they trapped his legs in place. -Gllch- -Hghnnfrg- He heard a sloppy mashing above, moments later globs of viscous fluids and congealed crumbs pummelling from on high.

Izolda stuffed jelly rats past her lips, humming a tune distorted by nervous adrenaline, but the sugary snacks granted her focus – instead of being devoured by her worry – despite some chunks of the gummy fleeing her maw.

The boy's world was hoisted into a torrent of sugar stained spittle, syrup and sweat staining the air in a sickly concoction, contained in a space where his whimpers and calls didn't reach his perceived saviour. -Sllfht- His legs ground against the inner slopes of the meaty hills, lubricating him to sink up to his shoulders.

Izolda breathed a sigh of relief, stress leaving her system and the sweet treat making her think back to better days. In one such breath of relief, she felt a whole candied-critter tumble out of her maw, and land on her chest, absented as she was, she jammed her fingers in to fish it out.

Her digits were met with movement.

The motion was brought to a sudden halt. Her pupils contracted, and she slammed on the brakes, curving off to an offshoot in the road, one arm hugging over her upper torso as the vehicle stuttered to an abrupt halt.

Silence ruled unopposed. Every thought – which she had worked so feverishly to repress – erupted in her mind, into a debilitating fog. So many she she couldn't see the forest for the trees. Time stopped existing.

“Gnnffns, snffff...”

A little whimper broke out, silent as a slug's footsteps. She felt him, he was alive, wriggling, but alive, right by her heart. She felt him quiver; the heartbeat of a baby bird. Izolda was doused with relief. Yet, when a fire grows too large, water will only fuel its growth.

~ 1 ~

Lights flickered on in her apartment. Izolda headed straight to her work desk, unlatched her belt purse from her hips, and placed it ceremoniously upon the table. From the open zipper the little boy scurried, fleeing on stumbling steps behind a collection of ring-folders, at the back of the shelf where only dust-mice live.

“Darling, be not of-...,” she begun, but silenced herself. ‘I’m not in position of judgement,’ she thought, and sat down on. She didn’t look for him, but noticed him peek out. She had to know... by the sight of how he clutched around his left shoulder, how the arm hung half limp clutching his stomach, and his pained shaking. Tears welled up behind her eyelids. She had grown complacent, so quickly, thoughtless... If she wasn’t sound in body or mind, how could she pose to protect him.

“Lil’ dove, zere are, much of I not proud. Zere is danger, for you, out in a big world... and... I now part of dangerous world too,” she explained, rubbing at her cleavage, wiping away little pockets of perspiration and sweetened saliva. “K-know that, your life is precious, more than all to my, is z ruth. I...” she struggled. Words – like her tears – growing; overflowing. It clung to the back of her throat like a slimy toad.

“Did not mean harm. Lil’ dove. Will, do all I can for you. Such sweet boy should... not suffer, by anyone hand,” she paused, peering down in her own lap, fingers twitching, “specially, not my.” She peeked back to the shelf, and noticed his shape in the shade, hearing a tiny mumble. It sounded of bitter forgiveness. Izolda bit her lip letting out a sorrowful sigh. “Could you, allow me now, to hear your name?” she wondered, though the boy stayed hidden. She looked down in her palms again, a fleeting thought of how easy it would be to tear out the folders, trap him, make him forgive her... make him do anything... She shook her head, and brushed her frizzled hair out of the way. Izolda plucked up a bag of jelly rats, about to offer them to the boy, when she realised what they implied... if not for them, perhaps he wouldn’t have... She pulled out the trash bin, glancing

back to the self for a moment, before dropping the candy, hearing it crumple a collection of torn forms underneath its weight.

Many seconds passed, before a sound slithered to her ear.

“Dm-n.”

She leaned down, pressing her chin on the wood.

“Please, again, my dove,” she begged.

The boy stepped out of the shade, rubbing his left arm. “Demyan.” he said, his head still turned aside.

Izolda felt the warm of liquid under her eyes again, yet, this time it did not only bring chilling shame and fear, but something tender and meaningful.

“Pleasure of meeting you, Demyan. I’m Izolda, my word on my name itself zat you will not come to harm. Please, let me see shoulder, I want know of how mend it.”

It was with some uncertainty that the boy neared her again, sitting down on a decorative mouse-mat as she picked out toothpicks and cut little strips of bandage to suit his size.

With exchanging gestures alone, the two conversed. Demyan on where it hurt; where her fingers had struck him, and Izolda on asking how much was needed. She instructed him how to apply and tighten the sprain on his own – something she wouldn't dare do at this point in time. A little smile was forming at her lips, seeing Demyan wrapping the bandage around the sprain, already the arm looked to be in the process of healing. She refrained from brushing a fingertip against him, though she was tempted many times. He was just so precious, so small and... she dreaded the fate he would have suffered if she left him at the gym, with the cleaning crew sweeping through the facility.

'Banish, banish banish', she hummed in her mind, she didn't wish to remain on thoughts of his body tossed and tumbling down a plastic monster's throat, breaking every rib in his precious.

Izolda's heart skipped a beat, Demyan had his good arm wrapped around the base of her thumb, standing behind her pal, with his face buried into the nook of her thumb, for a moment, the image of death haunted her, with one squeeze, one flick of her hand, his head could pop off like a the cork in a bottle of champagne. Yet, those thoughts quickly vanished, as only warmth filled her senses.

“Oh, darling dove,” she whispered, and he peeked up, drying his nose on his shirt.

“Will food now for you, Something of sleep on too,” she imparted, and pulled free to get to move towards her kitchen. “hat would she do with him. Then, something snapped into place in the back of her head, and straightened he back in her chair. What whould she do with him?

~ 2 ~

Encroaching darkness. Eerie rumbles, fangs of ice piercing his skin. Demyan awoke with a start. At the initial blackness he broke into a spasms, and bumped his head into the wooden wall. He calmed, taking deep breaths, clutching his left arm, it ached; a be sting injury, the lady had made sure it was sealed right. Demyan frowned.

The boy crawled out of the toppled matroska doll set up as beddings, packed cotton and felt padding the inside. The window at the end of the room was open, the doll stayed put thanks to supports Izolda had set up by the sides. Demyan pondered. Izolda, that was her name. He peered at the matroska, it was painted with seaweed hair, yellow eyes, and a big smile, the same Izolda wore yesterday. A pretty painted outside, onto a hard wooden shell. His senses was treated to a pleasant aroma of spices and beans, finding an assiett holding disk of baked bread and topped with fried mushroom stew. She had made an attempt to cook an appropriate portion for him, which still approached his head in width.

Demyan observed the warm meal. His attention turned back to the matroska doll once more; while it wore a facade of pretty colours, behind the hard shell was as safe shelter, in the form of cotton stuffing and felt.

~ 3 ~

'How size would fit vem?' Izolda pondered as she inspected a carved doll-bed. She noticed the store-owner giving her the odd eyes, she came to shop often, but seldom visited the toy shop. To now see her examining doll house furniture with such scrutiny... She let him remain curious.

Izolda carried a selection of beddings to the coll corner, picking between different sizes and shapes, measuring them against her hand. 'Could not smaller van zis,' she thought. She held the doll between her fingers, sensing the stuffing shifting as she moved her thumb sowed discomfort through her stomach. His organs couldn't be rearranged with that little force, could they? She pinched the doll, feeling her fingers meet – with but a two sheets of cloth separating them – the doll in turn stiffened for a moment, then folded over the abdomen.

“UHAhaaa,” Izolda exclaimed, dropping it to the ground. Sweat beaded on her forehead, creeping down her back.

'Banish, banish, a doll, only one doll... ' Yet the tether of her mind orchestra sonnet of crushes, splats and cracks of pulverised osteocytes. She clutched the doll to her chest. “Must protect vem, my darling dove,” she whispered.

“Mawhmmy, mhaaamy, you don't understand, I need this one.”

Izolda noticed a young boy clutching a plush toy by the legs, flinging it up and down in arcs to accentuate his point, a cloud of flapping polyester limbs tangling in the display. Izolda felt discomfort building in her chest, hastening her decisions to vacate the premises.

~ 4 ~

Septia

Demyan spied down the ledge of the swirling armchair, his expectations that the most difficult part being getting on the chair was subverted when he acquainted himself with the distance up close.

“Golubooshka, lil’ dove, are safe still? Weren't long waiting?”

Izolda unpacked as she got into the workroom, Demyan peering at the collection of bags with interest.

“Darrling? Hiding? If too loud, excuses please,” her volume dropped a few stages.

Demyan waved, yet she seemed preoccupied, shedding layers of clothes til she was peeling off the shirt concealing her laundrige, the woman having to wedge it forward to lift it off her bosom. The cusp of the emerald lingerie clutching around her crest, supporting the bulbous dough-peaches in their squeezed grasp, and even then the top was spilling over, riding bread left untouched too long. Similarly her spandex pantihose hugged her curvature, a blend of puff pasty and plump meat padding her thugs and boosting her bottom. All on Demyan's mind was worry, as the woman stood in not but undergarments searching for him, before moving to the chair.

“We need a luk at your arm, come sweetiemuffin. You worrying my heart.”

Demyan called out, waving his arms as she got to the chair, watching the mound of rump meat loom above, his body stiffening in frightened tremors as the bottom plunged downwards. -Dmmmfth- He shielded his face on impact... yet, peeked out a moment later, seeing a wall of rump pudge billowing out a safe distance from of him.

“Zought, vhen staying here, vill see eventually my underwear, should not be of embarrassment. So, get good look.” Her voice was calming; stout in her tone, yet intentions smooth similar to her rump.

Demyan relaxed, and nodded up to her, a certain bond of comfort formed from knowing she didn't have anything to hide from him.

"So, some things you of use find, dear shall be safe and comfortabl-." Izolda began to say, instinctively shuffling backwards on the chair to seat herself, the mound of juicy rear steam-rolling Demyan's legs to the seat cushion, "d-d-dove? B-be ok?" she called out and rose up, feeling along her rump. To assure his safety.

Once peeled off the buttocks into her cupped palm, the only damaged sustain was a shock to his nerves. He had the soft cushion and bottom alike to thank for his safety.

It didn't stop the awkward moment that followed, with the two of them staring at everything around the other person.

"Then, my rear and you...", Izolda said, scratching her side, "are now properly acquainted."

"Ehea," Demyan chuckled. It was a small chuckle, yet after it, the two's gaze could meet, once more.

Through Izolda's guidance Demyan unwrapped the bandage from his arm, after inspecting the arm she fished up a tube of medicinal salve. "Bought small one, so you can..." she began, then noticed the tube was still over half his height. "Perhaps, difficult," she mumbled.

Demyan mounted the tube and squeezing with his thighs, managed to push out a coil of salve, for Izolda's amusement.

"One moment," she scooped up a bit on her main finger, and spread it over his shoulder. Demyan winced, causing her to flinch back, "w-was t-too har-."

But Demyan shook his head, inviting her to keep applying the paste.

Visions of the dolls filled her mind once more, though, this time, there was no effort in pushing them away, focusing on applying the salve with only the barest needed pressure.

She insisted to see his legs as well, even though he gestured the previous ham sandwiching hadn't caused any harm. Though, he didn't struggle, letting her brush some salve over them as well, sneakily pilfering his clothes so she could give them a wash later.

'Hopefull zis makes lil' golbooshka happy,' she thought as she presented a carved doll's bed, along with a selection of colourful cups and bowls in polymer. Demyan approached with caution, and crawled into the bed, bundling up on the tiny mattress.

She clutched her chest seeing him getting comfy. Then her expression dipped as he tried to laid straight, only to bump his head on the front. "Zho-pa...", she mumbled, still too small. Had the doll been smaller than him? When she led it, she could swear it was just his size, did she feel him to be... that small? Her gaze wandered dejectedly to her hands.

-Sjhoohuu- Demyan whistled, and crawled back to the Babuska doll, peeking out of it with a smile.

"Joy, like of babuska still zen," she said, reminding herself to measure him later.

What she brought next confused Demyan at first, it looked to be a tiny, pink house, roughly as tall as himself, it would fit him sitting down, and the doors would snap into place with a little hinge, but it wouldn't fit for laying.

Seeing his curiosity, she opened it up, and placed the mattress from the bed along with some cotton inside. "Here, can carry, vithiout vorry to hold of tight," she explained, and showcased lifting the little secure house. Functioning like a diving bell; only this one was for going in all directions besides downwards, preferably. There was some caution associated with letting her carrying him around still, though the little house was placed at the shelf for now.

Izolda picked out yarn, toy ladders, stairs and building blocks, so he could make what he desired, create while she was away. She stopped when she felt him at her arm, resting against her in an approximate embrace. She remained still, smiling. At the same time, worried if she moved too quickly, it would hurt him, him... her little dove, her speck of starlight. She had given her situation

pause, yet her mind couldn't help spinning away at the possibilities, what should she do with him? Were she to take him outside, in this late winter, he wouldn't make it. He had to stay inside, stay with her. But, he couldn't stay too close to her. Despite each sight of him making Izolda want to clutch him to her heart so he burst... chances were if she were to try, he would.

~ 5 ~

The thoughts of his family had plagued her. It surfaced again when she stood in the kitchen, cutting salad into tiny flakes. Would his mother cut his portions into tiny, bits fit for a precious little dove? Even so, would she put as much care into it as she did?

'We can care of vem, lil precious can scare, yet means well, only wants of knowing zey are safe.'

"His happiness, means my world," she audibly realised. Of course she couldn't leave them with the authorities, how would they know how to care for them, locked in a cold cell, with all the dangers that lurked... inmates too, but of course, a water leak could make them freeze, dusty air would give them a cough, and if the cells had rats... she paused.

"Could, lil' dove, stand up to a... big rat?" she left the knife, biting her lip. Even a mouse could hurt them, even smaller creatures, large flies would be swarming like little cats, armoured, alien soldiers crawling under the house and between the walls, waiting to strike him down. And if he was trapped in a spiderweb...

She shook her head. Mumbling "Banish, banish, banish," to rid herself of the thoughts, she was going overboard, what was the likelihood of...

Then she spotted it. In the crevice between the wall and the kitchen cabinet – hiding a sliver outside her field of vision – a grotesque beast on eight legs, frozen in a contest of reaction with her.

Her chanting would contain her own imagined horrors, but in the eyes of that beast, she saw reflections of the future. A carcass, carved into a tenebrous crater, macerating blood dropping off exposed ribs and mandibular bones, with crimson vines ting the young body to the tendrils of the beast; spewing its filaments and contorting his twitching frame in webs.

Her eyes opened wide, huffing through her nose. The spider twitched. She rammed her hand onto it. Yet... stopped herself a moment before making contact. Her hair flowing down on end from her worry. She pulled her palm back, and saw the spider curled up. Afraid. Like... him.

A while later, she freed the spider in the garden, outside; temptatio to squish it out of existence lingered, she would eliminate a threat, but in doing so... would she be better than that beast?

"Banish, banish, banish..."

~ 6 ~

Izolda held up a measuring tape, Demyan nodded in return. After the meal, but before giving him back his clothes, she kneeled down by the desk to take his measurements.

"Right sized, next time," she ensured and noted down his heights, with, arm length, leg length. But hesitated coiling it around his middle. Once she had noted it all down, her eyes lingered. She hadn't seen him this up close in... ever. 'Such, a tiny, precious lil' dove.'

-Urrhp- Demyan patted his chest and blushed. Though she only snickered a bit.

She felt him come in, leaning against her nose, holding her cheek. She refrained from too much physical contact with him, but would never stop him from showing his appreciation, no matter how awkward or nervous the gestures was. But, here, she bent, put a finger to his back, he

didn't mind her pets this time. She smiled to herself, feeling her breaths wash over hi, warming him. He was about the size of a carrot, his breath smelled like it too... and human teeth could break bones as easily as carro-... but she wasn't bothered by those stray thoughts now. They came in one ear, out the other, this moment was one she and her lil' darling shared. That was all she needed.

~ 7 ~

"Want try?" Izolda spoke, opening the doors of the little plastic house. Demyan looked away, rubbing over his left shoulder – clad in a lighter bandage now.

"I want to prove, can be good caretaker of you. You not want to see home?"

At this, Demyan peered back to his shelf, then scampered over to the hut, and climbed in.

Izolda's voice rang of confidence, perhaps just because she was repressing her worry. 'May be padded, but still carrying precious dove egg,' she thought to herself, looking down at the cup sized house held below her bust.

She took him to the combined living room and kitchen, showing him shelves of little memorabilia, trinkets and books. He would knock on the ceiling once when he wanted her stop, letting him take his time adjusting to her walking speed, or when he wanted to see something closer.

"Little dove, may you frail and cause of worry, yet through able to fly.' She smiled, To an outside eye, she was keeping him captive in this little hut, ferrying him only where she would allow him, but in reality she was letting him soar. Free and secure. She showed him a corner where she kept personal training equipment, a few dumbbells and exercise balls on a mat, nothing fancy, though Demyan wanted to stay looking at it for a long while.

'Izolda's eyebrows crept down on her happiness. 'Feeling weak, he might. Lil' darling, incapable of so much on his own, poor thing...' her grip tightened by reflex, at the first sound of squeaking plastic she loosened once more, Demyan hadn't noticed. She had to let him be more capable, though, not in any way that would bring him harm.

she skipped over some shelves of memorabilia, showing him around the kitchen and library, where Izolda made a note to remember which books and films Demyan took interest in.

~ 8 ~

They sat down together with the building blocks and furniture she had gotten him, constructing little walkways up the higher shelves of the workstation and reliable paths for him to traverse the nearby environment. Demyan gestured how he wanted things made, and pushed on Izolda's hand now and then to make sure she were placing blocks in the right locations. It invoked a sense of childish glee to play again, and unlike when she had been a child, what she constructed had a purpose, adding to her feelings of safety and providing levity.

"Clever boy, you not? My lil' dove," she complimented, for the first time seeing him blush. She brought in a support structure for books to keep at the right end of the tablecounter, and together build up a staircase in front of it, so he could climb up and see the whole page. It was a joy seeing him get excited over all they were constructing, Izolda getting comfortable enough to ruffle his hair with her pinkie finger now and then, and hearing his miniature, chirping laughter.

Izolda poured up tea into a thimble, dotting in honey with a toothpick and stirring it for him. After a break from building – which turned into a light sandwich dinner. It was pleasant to share a cup of tea together. Demyan sat the end of the matroska bed, sniffing the tea.

“It may need moment to cool,” Izolda said, but saw him shaking his head, pointing into the thimble, mimicking pouring.

“Milk? I, not one of having milk in tea,” Izolda mumbled, scratching awkwardly at her side. Her hand roaming up to her chest, giving in a squeeze.

“But...,” she began, as she unhatched the front hook of her bra, paring the lingerie clutch of her chest, allowing her melons to spill out with a -Bwnn- bob of freedom.

“There should be some in here still.” She lowered her bust to the table, letting it billow onto the flat surface, rolling and jiggling from her movements, pressing her peachy nipple for the little boy. “See if zere is any left?”

he didn't hesitate long, crawling up the bosom which match his own height, kneeling by the nipple, and giving a glance upwards, bearing question of permission. When Izolda nodded, and buffed up her breasts comfortable, he leaned in, grasping after it.

Izolda closed her eyes, relaxing. -Sllrrt- Then blinked awake at the sensation of a humid brushstroke. Below, Demyan lapped over the teat, slowly pressing it deeper into his maw, the teat was the width of his wrist, struggling to compress and fit it into his gape.

'Stubbonr lil' dove,' Izolda smiled to herself, holding her palm a hair away from his back, as the little boy suckled, coaxing her nipple. A cautions heat bloomed within her, instinctively cupping her hand around him, hllding him to her chest, he didn't resist, only nursed from her, as a stream of milk flowed through her. A piece of herself, nourishing the precious little boy. It had been ages, since she shared this feeling.

“Mmpfh, mfmphg.”

She peeked down, seeing his cheeks inflated like waterballoons, she eased her hold, and Demyan -Pwhop- popped himself off of her nipple, white dairy trickle in rives down his cheek and chin, swallowing what he could, and transitioned to a coughing it.

“S-sweetie, a-are-,” she began, but saw him getting back to his thimble of tea, and holing it to the teat, to siphon some of the milk inside.

'Sweet, adorable dove, I could drown you in milk,' she thought as her heart fluttered. A tinge of worry stinging the back of her mind, as she realised that had almost happened.

~ 9 ~

Izolda looked up from the current building project, over to Demyan hopping with bundles of wires in his grasp.

“Sweet stuff, could get me some more honey for mama?”

The boy dropped all he was holding and flashed her a big smile. “Course, mom, but it is not as sweet as you,” he said and walked to the honey jar, except, the jar was on the edge of the table, teetering on the precipice.

Izolda didn't notice danger until he grabbed on, and the container tipped. “Stop,” Izolda called out and flung her to the end of the table, yet the wood stretched out of her way, further and further. She couldn't reach, only watch as boy and jar tumbled down the table, towards spears of jagged rocks crusting the abyss of her floor, his screams ringing in an unending chorus of exponential dread.

Izolda stared at the roof. The woman's breath laid disrupted in at the top of her throat, the tears cressing down her cheek the only tangible aspect of the dream.

'He ok. Is fine. Only dream,' she stated within her mind, yet the terrors stung her temple like a swarm piercing the walls of their hive, 'banish, banish, banish.'

Izolda looked over at her worktable, all was well, still littered with the crafts projects from yesterday, lingering conflict of worry and complacency stormed through her conscious. Rather than stewing in insecurity, she heaved herself out of bed, still in her lingerie and soft pants and to channel her emotions into something constructive.

~ 10 ~

Making cookies for breakfast was either a task for mothers with spoiled children, or for someone in baggy pants who had already given up on the coming day. There wasn't anyone to judge her though, or... at least that is how it used to be.

"Zey deserves bit of spoiling," she said with a smile as she poured cream into the beaten egg and vanilla mixture, before sifting in flour. She patted her cheek, 'Right, sweetening,' she reminded herself and looked through the cupboards. Remembering yesterday's tea time she got the honeyjar from the workroom and poured it in with the remaining flour and vanilla. "Yesterday memories makes of even sweeter," she hummed to herself, for a moment tempted to add a bit of her own milk to the batter...

Then the thought wouldn't leave her. She spied around for any tiny watchers, and unleashed her bust, massaging her left teat to drip out a thin stream of her feminine lactose. "Making milk cookies, after all. Lil' dove seemed so happy from it yesterday," she mused to herself at the somewhat suggestive act, a drip and splash making the proto-batter swamp ripple.

Clusters of flour curds congealed clumps congestion Demyan's surroundings. A film of honey clothes dressed the boy, gluing lumps of sweetened dust and whipped cream. The crushed grains and liquids melded to mortar, glob gumming onto his arms when he swung and flailed to escape it bonds, his efforts only bonding he substance to his frame, immersing himself in the bulk of sweet dew. Rivers of milk graced by his form, the supple blackcurrant sweetness brining him back to the day before, but whereas the aromas of honey, tea and milk had by yesterday brought him comfort, the entanglement of smells served onto to overwhelm him from whichever direction he turned to. The boy cursed his early morning sweet-tooth, and cursed the woman for leaving the jar on the table tempting him. But, he couldn't blame her for it, she wouldn't do this to him, she had shown who nice she was again and again. She was so warm to him. -Ghhlrlrsth- Sections of batter segmented, macerating what beat into his body, as Izolda transferred her her warmth and pressure into the dough around him.

Izolda hummed a tune she had learned from her mother, groping her fingers into the cookie-clay, webs of coalesced batter and nectar tethering her fingers to the batch and whipping up puffs of chalk dust. Each clutch and knead matured the haggard mass, folding in flumes of milk to the texture of the dough and macerating the mound into a uniform texture. It was now that she squeezed and kneaded with joyfilled abandon that she realised how stale her fingers had been getting, twitching and d stiffening from worry in handling the little tyke.

"Mmm, phaaa," she relished the gross motor skill therapy, fiddling and smacking the beige lump into shape, scooping and kneading clumps back in, gradually feeling the viscous filaments melding into the loaf.

'Only best for vem, work of effort no better placed, than one person you care for.' Izolda smiled, kneading the folding the cookie dough with her heart fluttering.

Tossed and squeezed from one dough pocket to another, the thick bile in constant flux around him, stripping off of his clothes and clutching onto him from another tangle, gluing to his form and compacting him again and again. Demyan huddled into a ball, safe from his limbs caught by the kneading clenches and pinches from above; living in an earthquake of confection. Pummelled from all directions. Until, he sank. And remained still. The world had stopped morphing, and he was left with the hand of dough clasping a hold of his body. The temperature dropped, he felt it from the hollow tunnels leading up from his cookie cell, staling breaths of chilled wind, yet backed in a cask of heat.

~ 11 ~

"Demyan?" Izolda called out, then slapping her cheek, reminding herself not to harm the boy's precious little ears. "Demyan...?" she whispered into her room, eyeing the staircases and structures, peeking inside the matroska doll, but nothing. She scratched through her hair, and went for a fourth survey of the living room.

"Here? Lil' dove, did I...," she thought to herself, what had she done to invoke his ire? "Where you hiding?" Her heart throbbed into itself. 'Spider, mouse, rat, snake.' worry crashed into her head, depictions of the boys end, legs tor off by rats, body gouged out by a swarm of spiders, his mangled corpse crumbled and diluted in a red splatter across the dough she just made, each vision grew in horror exponentially.

"Banish, banish, banishfhsh... where?" She scurried around the building, only too freeze in her chase. 'What if... r-ran him over?' A visage of her feet falling before she had a chance to react, of her little dove to avoid the oncoming sole. Izolda clutched her head, slumping back to the livingroom.

"... my lil'darling, dearest sweetest plum... r-realise h-how scared... how scared you make of me. Can not know if... you are safe," she sniffled, breathing through her nose and shaking her head. "Sweet dove, was... it so bad, staying here?" she asked into the aether. A vicious glare sparked, aimed over the shelf of memorabilia, her voice ramped up, blossoming from the tangled core in her chest into a shout.

"Why did you abandon me!?"

She stared, unwavering, her face flush with blood, and her chest heaving in trembling waves. She buried her face in her palms, suffering in the silence which she could not escape, or befriend.

~ 12 ~

The cold had begun to settle in his skin, Demyan huffing and stretching all around to keep his head functioning, working himself upwards, so a bulge in the bowl moulded and inflated from his struggles. He heard the fridge door open, and Izolda's sniffle.

She rummaged into the unprocessed cookie dough, pilfering a good bundle for herself, stuffing the gratuitous ball of dough into her lips – an act she had gained proficiency with over the years. Her lips curled over the bundle of succulent confectionery, the taboo of encasing raw cookie dough in her cheeks to quench the emotions springing up from the deaths of her spine. Delighting in the honey infused texture and round milk character of the edible clay, the rumble and thrashing of-
...

Izolda's eyes flung open. She instinctively swallowed, hands flying to her neck and clutching for her life, hawking and chucking up the globule of dough lodged in the back of her maw.

-Hhwuarrklk- she coughed it up straight into the fridge, vines of drool connecting her mouth with the blotches of saliva and teeth marked batter, in the middle of the melting dough laid a panting, quaking figure, shivering like a newborn dove, slathered in a melting womb of cookie clay.

Izolda's spine was replaced with an ice-sickle, feeling herself melt through the marrow and out her pores, stumbling backwards, and bumping into the wall. She slumped onto the floor in a panting fit, gazing at the open fridge, and the little boy within, who was doing the same.

"I-lil dove. Did not, w-would never, h-how di-." But as she spoke, she saw him scuttling away, hiding behind blocks of margarine.

A cocktail of pure shame and sadness stirred under her face, flooding her senses and pelting down her cheeks in tepid streams. Knuckles shielded her maw. Too much stormed through her mind, it wasn't just a fear, it happened, it had really happened, and she was to blame. She hadn't paid attention, she hadn't stopped to think, she was about to chew, she had...

Izolda covered her face, crawling up into a sprint to the bathroom, where any residual substance of sweetness washed away under a deluge of sour selfcontempt.

~ 13 ~

It was quiet for a while. Despite both sides understanding the other, trauma couldn't be cured with mere acknowledgement. Izolda stayed in her room, promptly refusing to leave him alone, but embarrassed to utter a single syllable. Instead, she browsed on her laptop, eyes hazily following links and images, opening tab after tab, without closing a single one, only breeding more distraction for the clump of sorrows and shame manifesting and nesting itself her chest.

A little whistle came. She glanced to the table, finding Demyan, emerged from his hideaway, observing the screen.

Izolda looked back, seeing a picture of a train. She opened a page on model railways; trains and models in all manner of sizes. She peeked back to him. Seeing his smile, she returned him in kind.

SepTia