

Chapter 19 - Cuddle

Ember entertains himself by mulling about the room and starts fiddling with the piano keys while he waits for Cal to return. They don't make a sound while it's turned off but he knows he'd not be able to make any coherent music, so he gives up on reading the dots and lines on the page and wanders some more, trying not to pry by only observing what's on display. Most of it hasn't changed since last he was here, but now he has chance to look over the books he wanders over to the bed to inspect them. Aside from the striking spines of bright colours, he notices that they are strangely ordered non-alphabetically. He pulls some out one at a time to get a better idea of why that might be and finds them to be grouped by genre. Romances are all together, as are the paranormal and crime fictions and the remaining few fantasy, which also gives Ember a clearer idea of what Cal likes to read.

Without wanting to snoop any further, he lies back on the bed and waits. Ten minutes later, the door opens again and the wolf who enters is now clean and wielding a toothbrush. He plods over to the bed after hanging the towel on the back of the door.

"We'll need to get you a bunch of stuff for the house, but for now, you can use one of the disposable ones and any toothpaste that's in the bathroom." He hands over the brush as Ember sits back up at the edge of the bed.

"Oh, thank you. I was wondering how I'd clean my teeth."

"Well, wonder no more. Go get yourself ready for bed and come back here alright?"

The black wolf gets up and heads to the bathroom to complete his nighttime ablutions. The memory of being fucked on this tiled floor still very fresh from this morning and he can't help while brushing his teeth but remember the cheeky look on Hess's face as he watched him shower. While wandering back, the door to the rec room opens and Voigt trundles out looking like the living dead, and grumbles something incoherent at Ember in passing to the bathroom. With the door left wide open he's able to hear him piss noisily into the middle of the toilet.

Ember hurries back to Cal's room and finds it cast in gloom with the dim, orange lambency of a bedside reading lamp. The white wolf, shaded like a desert mesa, is sat up against the headboard with a book on his lap and a narrow pair of reading glasses resting upon his muzzle. He lifts his head a smidge and peers over the glasses at his company and pats the space beside him with a bright smile.

"If you want to, I thought you could sleep with me tonight." He suggests.

The new wolf smiles back and shuts the bedroom door, before walking over. "I'd really like that."

He climbs over Cal and shuffles himself under the covers, laying his head on a plump pillow. As a kiss gets planted on his forehead and with the warmth and security of the bed and its owner, he feels a comfort never before known to exist. He fidgets his lips in bashful awkwardness and looks up at the reading wolf briefly and then down at the book before they lock eyes. The cover is shown to him bearing a white, anthropomorphic wolf in a combat stance with a rapier.

"It's a drama about a terrorist plot to overthrow the government. I love a good fiction novel." Cal beams.

"I tried to read when I could, but it was hard to find any books that sounded interesting."

"Well we have plenty here and you can always get more if you know their names. There's also a library in town too."

Ember nods and shuffles in the bed to get the quilt to hug him a little more snugly.

"Today's been really nice ... thank you, Cal."

"Aww sweetie." The white wolf saves his place with the bookmark and puts the book and his glasses back on the bedside table. He worms his way down and scoops his arm underneath Ember's head pulling their bodies together. "I couldn't agree more dear."

"You guys are all so ... kind to me." Ember snuffles and rubs his muzzle against Cal's chest, smelling the coconut shampoo he must have used.

"Of course, we're like the nicest people in the world," the butler wolf says smugly to try and lighten the mood. He knows it works when he hears a short laugh. "It helps that you're worth being nice to," he adds, lifting the wolf's muzzle to face him.

The black wolf gives a wobbly smile and sniffs again, feeling more welcome here than any place he's been in his life. Not even his boyfriend before the incident made him feel this loved and the experience of it all overwhelms him to tears again. Cal holds him tightly while he lets his body vent out all this pent up sadness.

He sobs for minutes, being gently petted and stroked and comforted, holding the body of the other wolf tightly. He feels the weight of the world pulled off him in this moment. The burden of his past unchained from his leg and left to be forgotten in time, but no longer forced to follow him into the future. He knows that this life that found him, is better than anything he could have wished for but only now, finally realises that it's true.

He comes around slowly, with the help of Cal's tender hand stroking his chin and cheek, and feels another kiss on his forehead. The snuffles stop and he's given chance to blow his nose on a tissue before coming back into a cuddle.

"Are you alright?" Cal asks gently, as if the words may pierce flesh if spoken too harshly.

"That's just it ... I am." Ember looks up at the white wolf and laughs sadly. "I've never said I was alright before and actually meant it. Now ... I feel ... alright."

Cal pulls him in for a long hug and nuzzles his neck. "I knew you'd come around. I felt so sad for you in that cabin, all alone. I really hoped you'd stay with us."

"Y'no if you'd have asked, I probably wouldn't have been resistant at all," Ember chuckles.

"I'm sorry about that, when you kill a human we have to -"

"It's ok, I get it. I'm sorry I did what I did. I was in a really bad place." The black wolf mutters, hating himself for letting his hatred get so out of hand. "But I'm also glad in a way, because I would have never have wound up here if I hadn't."

"Best not to think of it like that." Cal smiles at him. "But I'm glad you wound up here too, dear."

"I just hope I can find something I can do- oh! My paper." Ember's ears flick up and he hoists his upper body onto the elbow.

"What?"

"The master gave me some paper to try doing some sketches for him."

"Really?" Cal laughs, surprised. "Sketches of what?"

"The collar. He wanted me to try and design a new one with swappable slots for spells."

"Gosh, that's ... really interesting. He's not done that since ... me." Cal pauses in thought. "Then again, both Hess and Voigt already had skills in place, so they could be put to work almost immediately. I was a bit more difficult to assign. It's good to know he's involving himself with you and helping to discover your talents."

"I suppose it is sweet. I want to give it a good try for him."

"That's all he can ask for. If it turns out it's not something you're good at though, don't get upset, alright? He's just testing the waters to see what you enjoy doing. I doubt it'll be the last time he does it too."

"You think so?"

"I know so, like I said, he did the same thing with me. Had me try all sorts of things, but I was pretty useless at handiwork and anything relating to maths. But I could sew and mend and I was always very organised so he put me in charge of cleaning the mansion."

"You had to clean the whole place yourself?"

"There were cleaners that he would hire, so it's not like the place was dirty when I joined, but I feel like I do a better job," he grins smugly and winks.

"Ah, heh. Well it always looks amazing, so, you do a great job."

"Thank you, thank you," he says, and Ember gets the impression he would be bowing were he not reclined. This makes him smile again.

"So ... what time do you get up?"

"I get up at around 7:30, but only because I want to get some piano practice in before I need to set up the table for breakfast at 8:30. Hess says he gets up an hour before me because he needs to do all the cooking, though I doubt he does because there's no way it takes two hours." Ember chuckles. "And Voigt gets up about 8:20, which gives him enough time to get up, use the bathroom and come down for food."

"Heh, I saw him in the hallway earlier looking like he was recently resurrected."

"Ha ha yeah, he likes his sleep that man. Can't blame him for that though, he had to get up unusually early this morning because you were here."

"Oh, I see."

"Don't worry, I'm sure he'll find a way for you to make it up to him," Cal titters. "So yeah, you can get up with me or you can lie in a bit, just don't be late for breakfast, the master doesn't like to see an empty seat when he arrives."

"Ok, thanks."

"And don't worry about the collar sketches tonight. You'll have time to do them in the morning before I take you into town."

"Oh gosh, we're going tomorrow morning?"

"Yes, I figured we may as well get it done before the lunch rush, there should be less people that way."

"Oh ... alright." Ember fidgets under the covers. "I'm a little nervous about being around people again so soon."

"Don't worry, we'll take it slow, and I'm gonna be right there with you the whole time." Cal holds the black wolf tighter and rubs his back. "Plus, it'll be good practice for the banquet."

"Yeah ... I'm worried about that too, I won't lie."

"I figured you would be. We have chastity collars that prevent us from getting erections for functions like this, I might try and convince the master to put the calming spell on yours. If you want?"

"How many collars do you have?"

"A few. That's what makes this whole spell hot-swapping thing so useful of an idea. But yeah, do you want me to talk to him about it?"

"Hmm ... how about we wait until after we've gone into town. If I get a bit ... bloodlust-y, then yeah, ok. Thanks Cal."

"Don't mention it. I'm expecting that you'll be fine, honestly. You've worked with the public before, and with me there ..."

"Yeah I know, I should be fine. I'd hate to ruin all the work you guys have done on me anyway," Ember smiles. "Trying to turn me into a model citizen and all that rubbish."

"Well, I don't know about model," Cal grins, groping under the sheets and playing with Ember's loose balls.

"Heyyy not before bed. I'm gonna have enough horny dreams as it is. I'm worried I might cum in my sleep."

"Oh no, all over me ... how terrible," Cal feigns, giggling.

"Eheh ... well ... I was hoping I'd get to use my one free orgasm to cum inside Hess."

"Oooh, that's a good idea honestly. He has an amazing ass, perfectly accommodating. He'll likely cum before you mind you, but don't let that stop you, he likes it."

"Huh, really?" Ember asks, looking up again.

"I'm surprised you have to ask. You've seen how he is, an orgasm could not stop that force of nature. He'd happily get fucked by all of us multiple times over before he got tired."

"Ha ha, yeah, you're right."

"Alright handsome, this little slumber party is cute and all, but we need to sleep. Do you wanna stay like this, or spoon or not cuddle?"

"I like this way, if it's not too much weight on your chest?"

"I may be thin, dear, but I'm tougher than I look." Cal grins and pecks the black wolf's forehead again before reaching behind and turning off the light.

Ember nestles up against Cal's side with his head laying on his shoulder and chest. He's held tightly and feels a great sense of belonging in this moment. Nothing like what he ever felt back at the tribal camp or in the dingy log cabin with its leaks and mould and dangerous wiring. Nothing like what he had with his old boyfriend either as he could never sleep over.

He hums an exhale as he snuggles deeper into the warm chest-fur and struggles to dream of anything better than what he has right now.