

Supplemental 8.5 - Interview with Voigt

"Punctual as always," Alek says cheerfully, leading a dishevelled Hess out of the study and making his way over to the desk. "Have a seat, Voigt, I'd like to have a little interview before we start."

"Yes master." The grey wolf plods over to the chairs and parks himself down into one. He sits upright, directing all his attention to the human.

"So, you've spent a little time with Ember now, I wanted to hear your impressions thus far. Do you think he's coping well?"

"Yes master, he's adapting better than I would have expected."

"What was your expectation?"

"Without having met him before he was brought up, I would have thought a minimum of two nights in the basement would be appropriate for any new wolf taken from the wilds." He wets his mouth, a glimmer of nervousness in speaking out against his master's decision.

"Two days is good estimate," Alek nods. "I know you and Cal didn't like me doing that, but I saw something in him that made me think he wasn't as dangerous as it seemed. He killed a human, he threatened me, but I saw a guilt behind the eyes; the same one I saw in you."

Voigt shuffles on his chair awkwardly. "What I did -"

"Is not important anymore." Alek interrupts with a wave of his hand. "You integrated perfectly, and I believe he will too. I trusted you then, I need you to trust me now."

"I do master. I didn't, I'll admit, but I do now." The wolf nods slowly. "I see it too. He hides his pain well, but there is damage in his past."

"Yes ... I think so too. And it's for that reason that I believed the dungeon to be considerably more detrimental to his induction." Alek sits back a little and looks off to the side. "He seemed very lonely in his cabin. He must have known he was going to be hunted, and fought me back, as any of you would have riding a bloodlust. But once he settled, he became so much more nervous and gentle; almost like he'd experienced capture before."

"Well, no one likes the dungeon, master."

"I know that, Voigt." Alek furrows his brow and smiles condescendingly. "But the expectation is hatred and revolt from a murderous werewolf, not fear."

"I suppose that might explain why he seems so protective of us."

"How do you mean?"

"He thinks we were all being held against our will."

"Well ... for a time, you are."

"Yes, but he doesn't understand yet and will need convincing otherwise." The wolf locks his fingers and busies his eyes by scanning the desk. "Before lunch, Ember was being too insistent about his questioning and it upset Hess. Threw him out of the kitchen. Ember came to me and I had a little chat with him about how delicate Hess's emotions are, as you know." Alek nods. "He seemed so disturbed by what he'd done and made up with him immediately after."

"Like he'd tried to convince Hess that he was a fellow victim." Voigt nods back. "That does confirm my suspicions then. We still don't know what his past is, of course, but he seems to

burden a lot of mistrust towards humans. Hence why keeping him locked up downstairs would have only caused more damage. He needs to be cured with kindness, not firmness.”

“As a fellow damaged individual, I think I agree.” Voigt sighs and leans back more casually in the chair. “Cal does too.”

“Yes. Well, this’ll be a good thing in a way, he’s might never have experienced congeniality like this, so he might be more receptive to it once he understands his purpose here.”

“Speculation, master, but plausible.”

Alek smirks. “Does he seem hard working at least?”

“Yes master. Under supervision he performs fine. I left him to complete trimming the bushes while I’m in here. I’ll give a fuller report at dinner.”

“Righto. I’m confident now that I’ve made the right decision pulling him out of the basement early, based on my meetings with the three of you. So, with that out of the way, let’s get you sorted.”

“Yes master.”