

It had only been two laps of night chasing day and the unlikely pair of demon and ghost already had more than their fair share of action to last them the rest of the month. After departing from the estate, they had both hoped for a relatively uneventful journey, but as is the case, fate had already decided to kick them while they remained squirming on the ground. Still recovering from the previous day's ordeals, the two who were currently lying haphazardly in a tangle of blankets across a bed suddenly found themselves upended and thrown across their small bedroom, smashing into the ceiling that now served as a wall.

The sun hung high in a crystalline blue sky, nary a spot of clouds lazily floating through the azure to blot out any rays of the oppressive heat beating down to the ground below. In contrast to the pristine scene above, the landscape below was dotted with large pools of crimson. Flecks of deep wine-red gore and other viscera dotted a lemon and emerald green field of velvet grass. Patches of vibrant wildflowers that once grew and stood proud in their windswept fields now weighed heavy with the result of the afternoon's violence. A short way away from a straight-line road of extensively traveled dirt, an RV lay solemnly on its side. A once rather surprisingly dignified-looking vehicle that had been lovingly customized and put together now remained with its underside exposed like a wounded animal. The paneling that could be seen on top was starting to collect scars of its adventure and a large dent had been gifted to the RV near a wheel well from several hours ago during the morning. Several feet away from the sad state of the mobile home, a moody jackal was swinging wildly at an angry swarm of large, bloated insects, yelling in annoyance in the general direction of a grey and purple haze hovering above the mess of brown fuzz flailing around in vain. Bobbing excitedly around the large ears of the jackal, the ghostly plum-colored mirage cackled joyously as it observed their travel partner wage a losing war against the blood-sucking fiends.

Several more eventful hours later, the once bright and clear sky surrendered to gentle violet, a small river of salmon pink creeping alongside the horizon as the wakeful sun slowly fell to its own slumber. The expanse of grass and flowers that had once only been decorated with a spattering of red was now absolutely drenched in vermillion, the modest pile of hacked and pummeled corpses from the morning swelling to a large wealth of mutilated beasts. The local fauna had turned their own habitual daily irritations towards the mobile box, deigning it necessary to send the strange new intruder to its fate with a hearty slapping from a larger resident. Now the aggressors were lying next to each other, in various forms of carnage, their large forms contributing to the hills and mountains in the far, far distance. A meteor storm had begun an hour before, streaks of fire twinkling in the infinite stretch of amethyst, making the otherwise demented aftermath of indulgent savagery rather enchanting and innocuous. Sitting a skip away from the large pool of blood, the jackal hunched over slightly as he looked towards the setting sun, his labored breaths coming out in faint puffs from his mouth as he was finally allowed respite from the day's events. Heavy panting gradually slowed to a controlled rhythm as he further relaxed, a leg folded upward and supporting an arm propped on the knee. The slender figure looked downward at himself, their head shaking as they looked over the state of their body and their clothing; gashes cuts and tears of various forms and sizes littered his form, blood soaking into the black and blue threads of his clothing and into the fur of himself.

"That might take two washes to get out. What a nasty piece of work you are." The purple and grey smudge that had been audience to the macabre fanfare quipped out as it floated up beside its scratching post of a partner. A bottle of water he had been carrying was dropped unceremoniously into the jackal's lap.

An ear of the sitting figure flicked once, the head turning down to look at the solitary bottle of water.

"This is all you have for me? It's been as hot as Hell itself the past few days, I had been fighting these assholes all day today and this is the first fucking bottle I've seen from you." The jackal snapped out angrily as he reached for the refreshment, twisting the cap off. The grey emaciated figure he had been yelling at tilted to their side midair, floating in circle slowly around the ranting male, a broad smile decorating their face as it looked downwards.

"You looked like you were doing just fine and dandy. I know how much you just *hate* distractions when working and you sure looked nice and busy. Besides, you were very entertaining and I wouldn't have wanted to miss anything."

The jackal scowled at the lynx, having already drained the water completely from the bottle.

"You're an asshole you know that? A huge asshole. I actually can't tell who is worse, these chucklefucks who decided to wake me up early in the morning thinking I'm breakfast, or you. Did you enjoy it? Huh? Watching me turn into a fucking prune?"

The feline, now spinning slowly while making circles around the dehydrated man burst out into laughter, his petite legs swinging about in his fit.

"Not my fault they knew delicious when they smelled it. Like ripe beef jerky. Extra salty." The empty bottle of water arched in the air as it was thrown from the irate male, passing through the plum-haired phantom and bouncing off the side of the upended RV with a weak *tok*.

"Jerkass." The sitting canine sniped back.

The two continued to trade insults to another throughout the evening as they worked to recover their beached mode of transport, the demon doing the bulk of the work as he throws his back out upending the RV right-side up and the ghost playing the role of unhelpful cheerleader. After several more hours of checking the vehicle and cleaning up inside into a manageable state, the ghost set the autopilot again and had the truck moving once more through the empty flat lands. Outside of the cabin area, the exhausted jackal dragged their feet towards the bathroom, peeling the remains of the now dry blood-caked threads off his body, tossing them to the side to wherever they may land on the way. Standing just outside the bathroom, he reaches forward and slides the door open, lifting his gaze from the floor and jumping slightly as he's greeted with the sight of the haunt floating directly behind the door, the lynx fully naked now.

"Sergei, I fucking swe-how many times do I have to tell you not to do that?" snapped the tired male, a hand rubbing at his eyes and running down over his face.

The phantom waves his hand side to side, dismissing his concern uncaringly, taking to turning over onto his backside and doing slow backflips.

"I'm going to have an audience for this too? Didn't you get enough already?" muttered the jackal, starting to step forward towards mirror mounted above a sink basin. The floating lynx drifted ahead, his backflipping coming to an end as he remains arched backwards.

"I did say those monsters knew delicious. I wouldn't miss any chance of getting a serving for myself. What else am I doing anyways? This path is *dreadfully* dull, no sights to see or large balls of twine to

ooble at for five minutes. I can at least help you clean off.” The lynx finished with a chuckle, grinning as his mouth opens in a broad grin, his long snake-like tongue slipping out and wiggling about, saliva dripping down the entire length as strands break and splatter over the front of the jackal’s stomach.

A bloodied fist swings downward, slamming down against the counter with a loud *thud* as it passes clean through the ghost in an attempt to silence the cackling. Minute cracks spider webbed from the impact of the fist, the hand clutched tight and trembling faintly as the man stood hunched and panting over the sink. His head tilting up shortly after, the demon paused to examine himself in the reflective surface. Blood, dirt and long-dried sweat caked a face that had been worn out and beaten into submission after many years of abuse. Despite the tribulations, the visage remained striking; a strong, angular countenance graced the jackal, his brow, cheeks and chin giving his appearance a sharp and faintly gaunt profile. The modest length of hair that had been black as coal now stuck in stringy chunks against his head and face, small bits of viscera decorating his crown. Beneath the blood-stained curtain of hair hid a pair of shining jade eyes, of which were currently open wide and staring holes into the perturbed figure in the mirror looking back at him, casting its own silent judgement. Behind the rattled jackal floated the Cheshire, tutting away and chiding him for his attempt at physical abuse. After several moments to collect himself, the male turns away from the mirror and starts toward the tub. Looking down, he runs a hand over the spittle thrown from the purple snake-tongue, grimacing in mild disgust and pain as the damage from the day’s events catch up to him, the scratches and gouges on his person stinging and prickling sharply. Swinging a leg into the tub as he climbs in, he lets out a weary sigh of relief as he slips into the bubbling hot water, the magic infusion already getting to work on the myriad of injuries. With the soothing concoction engulfing his body, the jackal leans back and gets into a comfortable resting position, looking upwards as Sergei floats directly above and getting into his own idle pose, piercing ruby eyes cast downwards. Rolling his own eyes at the ghost, Chaz eventually begins to stare off into the distance as he is lost in his own mind once more. Thoughts about the week’s events broil up again in his head like the bubbles around his form, his brow beginning to furrow as a heavy scowl bears across his face. Above, the ghost resumes his mouthing off, babbling about the day and commenting briefly about the deep frown. Content to listen instead to the ghost’s inane ramblings, the recovering demon eventually relaxes again as his face returns to a neutral expression, lounging in the tub for the rest of the night and ignoring his own thoughts. The same rather weak attempt to quell the rising frustrations that continued to pile onto an already tenuous and fragile plate.

The same shit as usual.