

Well, here we are! The end of 2015 is upon us, and Fae's Christmas Music-Themed Special is back again to ring out the old year and tell 2015 to fuck right off!

As per the usual, we have five stories for you this year! The first is up for the 21st of December, and they'll go through until the 25th where we'll finally conclude the ongoing story of Lucas from Christmases past!

But enough from me; you're here for the stories! So read on and enjoy *Your Wildest Dreams*, the first story of Fae's Christmas Music-Themed Special 2015!

- Ol' Saint Fae

Take It To The Limit

The stench of fear hung heavy in the feast hall. A dozen other bodies huddled together in their attempt to stay as far away from the blades of the bandits that had them cornered. The elders of the village all clutched tightly at one another. For Bain, only there because he'd been with his father when he'd been captured, he felt lost.

It hadn't taken long for the raiders to corral the elders of the villagers into the feast hall. The otter looked about himself, desperate for any sign of his mother. Unlike his father, staring stoically at the floorboards, she was nowhere to be seen. While it was entirely likely that she had been slain by the bandits, Bain hoped that she and a few of the other villagers had slipped through the bandit's net. It was the only chance they had.

Their little village rested on the furthest edges of the Noctus Imperium. Far from resources of value or strategic importance, their modest little farmsteads held precious little other than grain, vegetables and meat for the Imperium. There was no garrison to protect them, and hardly any threats to their lives save that of wild animals. Why would anyone want to take up arms against them?

Bain gave his father's paw a gentle squeeze as he looked around. The bandits came from many species. He could see fox and wolf, leopard and raccoon, horse and deer. Their armor and weapons were tattered and near useless, but they were more than a match for the pitiful defense that a few of the village's males had offered. Bain would have joined them in their attempt to defend their homes, but his father hadn't let him. *A fight is no place for a baker's boy*, he'd reprimanded Bain, before he and his son had both been captured.

He turned back to his father and closed his eyes as he leaned into his side. "Don't worry," he whispered. The quietness of his voice was able to keep his terror from shining through. "She'll be back soon." And to think, once he'd wanted to leave the little town himself. Get out, see the world. Not anymore. Not if the world was so full of this sort of evil.

"Shouldn't have let her go," the older male sigh as he clutched at his son all the tighter. "They killed her. I know they have... I shouldn't have let her go!"

"Hey!" The shout came from nearby, and both Bain and his father looked up to see a tall coyote point a rusty-looking sword at them. "Thought we told you to shut up!"

Bain's father immediately bowed his head, and Bain himself followed shortly after. He cringed as he heard the footsteps of the coyote on his approach. Silently he offered his prayer to the Lord of Justice, that help arrive soon and spare him death at the paws of this rogue. "What, now y'got nothin' to say?" the coyote continued as he swept his sword out before him.

The blade *wooshed* through the air right on front of Bain's face, and he whimpered as he pulled further from the weapon and its owner's reach. "N-no sir," he mumbled, eyes still low. "Sorry, sir. We'll be quiet, sir..."

It was with a snort that the coyote stepped forward and kicked Bain square in the face. He cried out in pain and brought both paws up to his suddenly bloody muzzle as he fell

against a farmer's wife and her two sons. "Quiet?" echoed the coyote with another derisive snort. "We don't want quiet, *bitch*. We said shut up!"

His boot came down again, and this time Bain's father cried out as the otter's slightly chubby belly became the target of the coyote's assault. The wind rushed out of Bain all at once as he curled in on himself, gasping for breath as he hugged his middle through the pain of the blow. It wasn't going to be enough to protect him from the next kick aimed for his head, however.

A call from outside stopped the coyote from his assault. He turned with perked ears toward the sound, and Bain's gaze followed through watering eyes. A rat stood there in gashed leathers, looking for all the world like he'd heard of bathing only as a concept. "Sentries thought they saw something," he reported as he looked around. "Boss wants a few more outside, jus' in case someone called the troops in."

The coyote didn't budge an inch, though a handful more of the bandits watching over the villagers turned and started off. Those that remained fanned out, the coyote included, and formed a looser net around their captives. Not one of those captives dared to push their luck and try to escape, however. The odds were still against the outnumbered and less-capable villagers.

Bain remained curled up on the ground as he hugged at his sore middle. Blood drooled from one nostril and dripped to the wooden floor until his father tore a strip of cloth from his tunic and used it to gently dab it off his face. He didn't say anything, but Bain could see gratitude and concern in his eyes.

It wasn't going to be enough to make him speak again, not so long as that coyote was around. He could see the bandit still glaring at him from the wall of the feast hall, as if goading him to say something. Bain instead averted his eyes and timidly bowed his head again. No more pain. He didn't want any more pain.

The cry of another bandit outside came loudly in the quiet of the night. Everyone inside the feast hall could hear it, and every set of ears inside perked up as the bandits gripped at their weapons all the tighter. The sound was repeated in a moment, and then it repeated again. Bain's eyes widened. Were the bandits under attack, or was the village?

The answer came a moment later as the rat burst back into the feast hall. "Boss wants them all dead!" he shouted. "No witnesses! Gut 'em and scatter!" He dashed off without another word.

No sooner was he gone than the coyote turned back to Bain with an evil grin. He advanced toward the otter as both he and the other villagers began to panic. "Sorry, loudmouth," he growled as he held his sword up high. "You won the pleasure of goin' first!"

Bain cringed back, but his father lifted herself from the ground quickly to interpose himself between the bandit and her son. He tried to gasp and push his father out of the way as the bandit's sword began to slice down through the air, but it was no use. There wasn't time.

But the sword froze in mid-air. It hung there as the coyote tugged at it in vain, as if some invisible force had taken a hold of it. He brought his other paw up to grip it, but the sword still refused to budge. Finally the coyote cried out in pain as the weapon wrenched itself from his grasp and flew across the room to embed itself in the wooden wall.

At the entrance to the feast hall behind the coyote, draped in robes of black and with fire burning in his eyes, stood a young fox with his paw outstretched.

Nearby him, a tall equine turned toward this newcomer and hefted a large ax high above his head. As Bain watched, the fox turned his head toward the horse and swept his paw across his assailant's path. The horse lost his footing as he was suddenly cast up into the air, and the fox punched forward with his other paw in an open-palmed strike. It didn't come close to hitting the horse, but a wave of force rippled out from his palm and slammed into the equine.

He was cast back with bone-shattering force into one of the ceiling beams of the feast hall and fell to a crumpled heap on the floor.

The fox turned in time to catch sight of a bow-wielding doe launch an arrow at him, and Bain's eyes went wide with concern for the fox. He needn't have bothered; the flames that burned in his gaze surged brighter and the arrow itself vanished in mid-air, consumed by the flames that had erupted from its surface. Another sweep of the vulpine's paw dashed the doe's head against the wall.

Bain was awestruck. The bandits came at him as one, and the fox calmly weaved his paws through the air. They were blasted back by some magical force, or set alight with magical flame. None even came close to touching him, and the fox stood his ground with a calm grace that entranced the young otter. His jaw dropped with every ripple of the fox's robes, kicked up by the wind his powers displaced.

His eyes widened as the coyote suddenly appeared above him and yanked him upright before the fox could turn his attention to the bandit. A terribly sharp-looking dagger was in the coyote's paw, and it was pressed swiftly to Bain's neck as the fox finished off the other bandits. "Not a step closer!" the coyote called out to the fox, though there was a fearful waver in his voice. "You hear me, demon? Not a step!"

"I have no need to step closer to finish you off," the fox replied, his voice calm as he stared down the coyote. The flame in his gaze vanished a moment later however, leaving crisp, green eyes to stare instead at Bain. His eyes met the otters, and he began to smile softly. "Do not fear," he said, his voice as gentle as his smile. "I am no demon. I am magi, and here to help. You will be fine; I give you my word."

"Magi?" spat the coyote as he brought the knife closer. "Ruttin' sorcerer-demons, the lotta ya! You leave, or I'll-"

The blue bolt of lightning that streaked in from the entrance of the feast hall came from over the fox's shoulder and slammed right into the coyote's face. Bain cried out in surprise and fear as he recoiled and fell back into his fellow villagers. There he was wrapped up tightly in his father's embrace, even as the smell of singed fur and burned flesh began to rise through the room.

"And what was *that*, Deacon?" came the shout of an older male from the entrance of the feast hall. Bain cast his eyes up to see a nearly identical-looking fox, covered head to toe in the same robes as the younger one as he marched into the hall. "What did you plan to do? Talk the poor unwashed bandit to death? He meant to kill this one!"

The younger fox bowed his head low and seemed to cringe back from the elder's gaze. "Forgive me, father. I wished only to reassure the otter that he would be-"

"The time wasted with your reassurance could have cost him his life, you fool," grumbled the older fox as he brushed past Deacon with a sigh. He knelt down right beside Bain, even as he and his father scrabbled back from them. "It is alright," he continued, addressing them at last with quiet, gentle words. "Fear not. I am Oswell, master *aerun* magi. We have come to free you."

Around Bain, the villagers wept with gratitude. They rose from their positions on the floor to embrace and thank Master Oswell for his efforts and valor. Bain shivered instead, having come within an inch of being struck by the magi's lightning. He closed his eyes tight as he curled back into himself. He had nearly been killed. A second longer and-

"Hey."

The voice almost sounded like Oswell's, but when Bain hesitantly opened one eye he was instead greeted with the face of the younger magi, Deacon. Concern was spread across his features as he bowed his head. "My most sincere apologies," he said, his voice only barely loud enough to be heard over the din. "I did not mean to put you in danger with my reassurance. I was already preparing to strike, and... I..."

He trailed off as tears began to fall from Bain's eyes. He leaned forward and wrapped his arms tightly around the fox that had tried to save his life — the fox that *had* helped save every single person trapped in the feast hall — as he leaned up to whisper back into his ear, "Thank you..."

The rest of the cheers and shouts of appreciation for Oswell and his work were lost to Bain. The rest of the world was lost to Bain. He shut it all out as he squeezed this fox; this magi; this *Deacon* tighter. And as his father rubbed at his back and the fox tentatively wrapped his arms back around him, Bain felt himself relax at last. It was over.

There, in Deacon's arms and for the first time since the raid began, he was safe.

The night had been full of reunions. The handful of villagers that had escaped the net, including Bain's own mother, had rejoined their fellows in the village. Those that had survived the escape had been met with a hero's reception, and what little food and wine there was filled the tidied feast hall in celebration not just of them, but of the magi Oswell and Deacon.

Of course, it was there that Bain learned that the pair did have other motivations for intervening. Their interest was not in gold or foodstuffs, but instead in assistance in their magical experimentation. Master Oswell had told the villagers of his advancements in healing magic, and that he was searching for someone who would be able to aid him in expanding his knowledge further. The deal that had been struck — one child of his choosing in exchange for his and Deacon's assistance in driving off and destroying the bandit raiders — had been given in a heartbeat, with the assurance that said child would be returned unharmed at the completion of a series of tests.

Honestly, Bain had understood little of the events. As Oswell had explained his needs to the village, he'd watched Deacon. The younger of the two vulpines had traveled around the gathered villagers and administered to their wounds with his fiery magic. He had cleansed infection and cured disease that had plagued some of them for months or years at a time. He'd smiled as he'd watched Deacon humbly turn aside offers of reward from those he'd assisted so. He had seemed so happy just to help those in need.

As the village elders and family heads all left to discuss with Oswell which of their number would be traveling with him and Deacon, Bain had remained in the hall to be alone with his thoughts. He'd not expected to survive the bandit raid on his village, but there he sat. He'd not expected to be saved by a bolt of lightning from the hands of a fox. He'd definitely not expected to find that fox's dashing son helping to save Bain's village.

He blushed as he glanced down and away. Those were dangerous thoughts that he couldn't dare act on. The fox was magi, and the son of magi. He was just a poor little baker's son. Even if he were interested for more than the fact that the fox had been there to save him, it was too much to hope for. Bain had already lost his only true friend to this *perversion*. He couldn't dare acknowledge it. Not ever. Not if he didn't want to lose his head, just like-

"Hey."

The familiar words and familiar voice came from beside him, and the otter jumped with surprise as he saw Deacon leaning against the wall not ten feet away. When had he arrived? Bain's eyes widened with fear. Could Deacon read his thoughts? There were tales of powerful magi who could do just that. If he had... "I... Master Deacon! I'm... I'm sorry. I didn't mean to bother you, and I-"

"It is no bother," the fox replied as he stepped a little closer. His paws were clasped together as he wrung them slowly, and his eyes drifted to the bench. "May I?"

Bain trembled with fear even as he nodded shakily and waved to the seat beside him. The fox smiled warmly back and gingerly sat down with a quiet sigh as he closed his eyes. "I am sorry once again for not being faster," he said after a moment. "If I had dispatched the other raiders with greater haste, that final one would not have been able to take you hostage so."

The otter shook his head. It was a sharp, jerky motion as he forced a smile. "I, uh... I was already a hostage, Master Deacon. You... you saved everyone in the hall here. You're a hero."

The smile that settled on the fox's muzzle was almost sad as he nodded and stared down at the ground. "If you say so," he mumbled after a moment. Then he lifted his head again and smiled a little wider at Bain. "So what brings you here to the hall all alone tonight? Ought you not to be out celebrating with your family and friends?"

Bain shook his head as he hugged tightly at his middle. It was still sore, thanks to the kick from that coyote. "I don't... I mean... I don't really feel like celebrating," he replied at last as he stared down at the ground. "I mean, I'm grateful, Master Deacon. It's just..." He shook his head. "I nearly died."

"And you simply need time alone to gather your thoughts?" Deacon offered. He smiled as Bain began to nod, and started to rise. "I will leave you to your solitude, then."

Before he could move too far, Bain's paw shot out to grab at the fox's. He squeezed it tightly for a moment before fear gripped him and he tugged his paw back again as if he'd burned it. "I... I beg forgiveness please, Master Deacon. I shouldn't have touched you, and... I'm so sorry!"

"No, no... ssshh. It is quite alright," Deacon replied. He didn't sit back down, but instead knelt on the floor before Bain and reached out to lay a paw down on his knee. "You need never beg anything of me, least of all forgiveness. I am flesh and blood, just as you are. Your touch is not offensive to me."

Even as he hugged himself tightly to keep his paws occupied, Bain nodded slowly and looked anywhere but at Deacon. Would that the magi knew. "I'm glad," he mumbled. "But... sorry I grabbed you. I just... I didn't want you to go, is all."

One of the fox's eyebrows perked as he tilted his head slightly to the side. "Oh?" he said as he began to smile.

"You... saved me." Bain shook his head slowly as he glanced ever so briefly toward the fox. "I wanted to be alone, but now you're here and... I don't." He forced himself to meet Deacon's gaze, and he could see the fox's smile in his eyes as well as on his muzzle. "So... please? Stay with me?"

Deacon cast a glance back over his shoulder toward the entrance, but there was no one else there. He flicked a paw out and the doors pulled themselves closed under some power at his command, and he stood just enough to settle back down on the bench beside Bain. "Of course. And with the door closed, no one else will intrude upon your personal time. I will ward them off, if you like."

It was with newly-trembling paws that Bain shuffled a little closer to Deacon. What was he doing? He tried to pull himself away, but his body wouldn't obey his thoughts. Instead of shifting away, he snuggled into the fox's side and shivered there. Deacon's warmth, whether natural or a side-effect of his fire magic, was a soothing thing. It was like it called to him. "Sorry," he mumbled again, even as he wriggled in closer.

The arm that came to drape down over his shoulders was a pleasant, if unexpected surprise. It didn't simply sit still and loose like Bain might have expected, but instead tugged him tighter into the fox's side and held him close. "You had a close brush with death today," he said, voice soft and quiet and soothing. "That affects many people very differently. I

imagine that the solace you seek is not solitude, but comfort. Security. You simply do not know where to turn to.”

“Yes, I do,” Bain replied with a shake of his head. He used the motion as an excuse to nuzzle gently into Deacon’s side, and he sighed quietly as he felt the fox hold him tighter. “Like I said. You feel... safe.”

“And is that all you feel?” Deacon asked.

Bain shot up instantly as the fear rushed back through him again. He almost pulled away entirely, but the arm that was wrapped around him lingered. It kept him close, and gently trailed along his own arm until his paw met Deacon’s. “No, it is alright... as I said, you need not fear me. You *are* safe here.”

The otter could feel himself blushing as he shuffled awkwardly on the bench. Did he want to move closer to Deacon, or run? Even he wasn’t quite sure. “You... you know, don’t you? What I am. And you’re not... not disgusted? Angry?”

Deacon’s smile seemed to twitch for a moment as he leaned in and nosed against the otter’s cheek. “Why would I be angry or disgusted with you?” he asked, his voice little more than a whisper.

The sound that Bain made might have been favorably compared to a squeak.

Before he really knew what was happening, the fox’s muzzle was against his own. He’d not been prepared to be kissed, not by Deacon or anyone else for that matter. He’d not been prepared for the kiss, a violation of all that the Imperium and the gods themselves held dear, in the heart of his village. His parents could be just outside. The elders could be just outside. *Oswell* could be just outside!

And yet, as the fox’s arm snaked around Bain’s middle and pulled him tight and close once more, Bain felt his cares and concerns start to slip away. They clung to him in spite of the raw presence that the young fox seemed to command, and the otter whimpered against Deacon’s muzzle as he ever so gently began to lean back up into his kiss.

He didn’t even realize he’d been shifted until he was seated in the fox’s lap, legs spread around his middle. The otter looked down with embarrassment at his breeches, bulged with his arousal. It would have been enough to make him scrabble away from the fox and try to escape, if he couldn’t feel something warm and hard resting just beneath his rump. Deacon was as aroused as he was. Another plaintive whimper escaped the otter’s muzzle. He couldn’t have dared hope...

But he didn’t need to hope, and he didn’t need to move or act. Deacon did all the work for him, as if the fox knew exactly what he wanted and what he needed. His kiss was firm but not forceful as he took control of the situation, and Bain was all too happy to relinquish control to the magi. Even if they were caught, who would stand against him? The otter was safe in the fox’s arms, and he wanted to stay seated right where he was.

It seemed Deacon had the same idea. His paws shifted to run gently down the otter’s sides, and Bain shivered under that firm, sure touch. Each finger traced down through Bain’s fur as the otter began to squirm down against that hardness in the fox’s lap. It seemed to appreciate the intention, and Bain could feel Deacon’s shaft hardening further under his touch.

The shift of the vulpine’s paw around and under Bain didn’t come as much as a surprise, given where he imagined things were already quickly headed. He could only chew nervously on his lower lip as he felt the fox part his robes to help ease that bare length of flesh upward. A strange touch ran over Bain’s waist, and a glance down showed his neatly-tied breeches being unbound presumably by the fox’s magic.

A gasp slipped from his muzzle as he found himself levitated slowly up and off Deacon’s lap as his pants began to slide down his legs. The magi’s magical touch was as gentle as that of his paws, and it helped to guide Bain’s legs into position as the breeches

were tugged off him and cast halfway across the feast hall. It revealed the otter's own strikingly hard arousal to open view, but the look on the fox's face was one of intent concentration and want rather than amusement or embarrassment.

That look on his face was all that kept Bain from nervousness and fear as he was lowered toward the fox's shaft. He'd never seen one in person before, but he'd heard the stories. The broad girth of that canine knot at the base looked positively tantalizing and terrifying in equal measure, but Bain wasn't in a position to argue right there and then. He wanted it. He wanted it *all*.

And as he was lowered back into the warmth of the fox's lap and embrace, he knew he as about to get it. Bain gasped as he felt Deacon guide the tapered tip right up and against the base of his tail, and he released a quiet moan into the air as he felt it grind across his tailring. His friend had told him how it had felt to be taken, but no story could compare to the sensation of being spread open for the first time.

Both that ring of muscle and Bain's eyes went wide as he felt the fox painlessly slide into him. Heat radiated outward from the contact as inch after inch sank up into Bain's body, and he could swear he felt his whole body contorting to accommodate that intrusive shaft. It set him awash with pleasure, and his paws scrabbled at Deacon's back as he pulled himself tighter against the fox and moaned again.

Suddenly, it was like they were the whole world. The rest of the village didn't feel like it existed to Bain. He didn't hold back as he arched his back and sank down onto the magi's shaft, and his whole body practically hummed with the influence of Deacon's powerful magic. He felt like Deacon was inside him in more ways than just the physical. If this was what it was like to be taken by a male, it was no wonder it was so forbidden; Bain couldn't even begin to imagine doing anything else with his time.

Then Deacon started to shift his hips, and everything just got better.

Bain's eyes rolled back into his head as he saw stars. The shaft buried inside him moved slowly back and forth as Deacon's arms helped to guide Bain's body up and down along it. He surrendered himself completely to the fox's ministrations, allowing him complete freedom to do as he liked. It wasn't about the cute magi or the fact that he'd saved Bain's life. Now it was just about all the years of fear and concern and secrecy about who Bain was melting away in the face of someone allowing him to be himself. It was magic of a whole different kind.

His fingers twitched as he squeezed tightly at Deacon's shoulders. The otter lifted himself a little further off the fox's lap as he watched the magi toss him a strange glance. Then, when Bain pushed himself back down again and ground that knot against his tailring, he could see the understanding on Deacon's face. The fox loosened his grip as Bain began to use his shoulders as leverage, wriggling his hips upward before sliding down into Deacon's lap again.

The fox's pants of pleasure and wanting mingled with Bain's as he settled quickly into an eager, quick pattern. His shaft twitched as Deacon's paw wrapped around it, squeezing it tightly and pumping along it with the motion of every rise and fall the otter made. It splattered Deacon's robes with pre, but if the fox cared Bain was unable to tell. He himself was too far gone; the vigor with which he drove himself down along Deacon's shaft was proof enough of that.

Every buck and thrust that the magi made helped to push that thick knot all the harder against Bain's rump. Deacon's other paw reached back to grip at his cheeks, prying them apart to help give that fat girth more room to press against him. It wasn't pain that met Bain every time he crashed himself back down against it, but more a sense of growing need. It was like waves lapping at the shore, building higher and higher as the tides of pleasure washed in

further and further. It was almost as though he could feel himself stretching bit by bit, straining in preparation to take Deacon fully into himself.

Again and again he fell against that knot, his whole body erupting with pleasure each time he pushed himself down against it. Bain panted for breath, that thick, otter tail swaying behind him and almost knocking over one of the tables that was just a little too far beyond his notice or care. He gripped tightly at the fox's shoulders as he bucked himself down into each upward thrust, tailhole kissing knot over and over again as both he and Deacon panted against one another.

It began as a tingle, and Bain knew what was coming. His whole body began to tense and squeeze down around the shaft pumping up inside him. He all but wrung that pillar of vulpine flesh, tugging it as deep into him as it could go. The otter felt himself straining around that knot, his breath catching in his throat with every downward push. Just a little more... a little more...

"Bain," he thought heard Deacon breathe, the word little more than a lustful exhalation against one of the otter's twitching ears. Hearing Deacon moan his name that way only sent Bain shivering all the harder, his whole body quaking as that tingle worked through him and intensified. "Bain..." came his voice again, a little louder as his thrusts grew more forceful; more needful. The fox was close, and by all the gods, Bain knew he was right on the edge as well. The otter's back arched as he pushed down one last time, his tailring stretching and spreading wide around the fox's knot. Stretching, stretching... almost...

"Ba- oh, gods!"

Bain's eyes snapped open just as he felt his malehood begin to erupt, but not against the magi's chest. Instead he looked on in horror as his seed shot straight up into the air. He could see behind that first spurt the roof of the feast hall. The otter wasn't in Deacon's lap... he was on his back!

He had been dreaming!

The rest of the realization had to wait as he was taken in by the throes of pleasure. The paw wrapped around his shaft — his own, he could feel — continued on instinct, pumping away and milking him dry as he spilled his seed all over himself. His legs spread wide as he humped up into the air, the events of the moment before already fading into the haze of a half-remembered dream. There was no strain against his tailhole and no vulpine shaft knotting it; there was only his spread legs, his untied breeches dangling from one limb as he spent himself against... well, himself.

It took nearly a humiliating — if awe-inspiring for the teenage otter — half a minute of orgasm for Bain to come back down, panting heavily at himself and looking up for the source of the voice. The feast hall was empty but for himself and a single black-robed fox, and it was with more than a little fear that Bain saw it was obviously the shorter and younger of the two magi. Deacon's back was to him, but there could be no mistaking it; Oswell was by far the taller of the two.

Bain hurriedly stuffed his softening shaft into his breeches as he pulled them up and began to hurriedly tie them off again. "M-master Deacon!" he stammered as he tried to make himself presentable. Why oh *why* had he seen fit to make a mess of himself? How had he even done it in the first place? The dream had been so intense... so *real*! "I... I, uh..."

"It's... uh, it is quite alright," Deacon replied, and the embarrassment in the fox's voice almost approached the shame that Bain himself felt. "I did not mean to intrude upon you in... ah... private contemplation."

"No, I... uh, I mean, I..." Bain shook his head with a quiet whimper that he desperately hoped that Deacon couldn't hear. "Oh, gods... please, *please* don't tell anyone you found me like this!"

Deacon coughed as he turned around at last, but he kept his eyes low. They barely flicked up to take in the otter's disheveled appearance before his gaze stuck firmly to the ground again. "I... I promise that your secret is safe with me," he agreed with a slow nod. "However... perhaps in the interest of keeping said secret, you might wish to obtain some cleaner attire before you leave."

Bain nodded as he brushed the back of one paw across his eyes. His vision was still a little fuzzy in the surprising awakening from his dream. "I... yes, that's..." He blinked and rubbed at his paw again as he frowned at Deacon. "Before I leave?" he echoed.

Once again and for only a second, Deacon's eyes lifted to meet Bain's confused gaze. "My father, Master Oswell, has selected you to be the youth that will accompany us back to his manor." Deacon coughed again and rubbed at the back of his neck as his eyebrows lifted. "You... are Bain, yes? Bain Mazon? I recognized the description given by your father at the meeting of the elders, and from the attack."

The otter nodded once more as he quickly peeled his tunic off. It didn't occur to him until afterward that he was then half naked in front of the fox he'd just been dreaming was mounting and breeding him, but the sticky nature of the tunic and the stains on it would leave nothing to the imagination of others who might see him. Deacon was right; he had to change.

But he froze as the reality of what the fox had said began to sink in. "I... was chosen?" he asked.

Deacon cocked his head to the other side and nodded back. "You were. By instruction of your elders, you will accompany us home, and there we will undertake study of your body in the hopes of refining my father's healing magic techniques." He smiled a little as if to reassure the otter, but his eyes carefully refused to meet the tunic or the damp spot that had begun to grow in the otter's breeches. "He seems to believe you contain a secret that has eluded his study for years. I admit I am quite looking forward to learning more about what that secret is, myself."

Bain hugged himself tightly as he looked the fox up and down. He'd just had that dream, and now Deacon was essentially inviting him into their home? The otter gulped as he cast a brief glance upward. The Mistress of Fate perhaps had some plan for him after all. His mother always said so, but Bain had never dared hope... "Will I... I mean, will I be able to come home afterward?"

The fox smiled warmly and nodded as he took a couple steps closer. Bain could see his nose crinkle, and once again he was painfully self-conscious of the act he'd just been caught performing. Surely the magi could smell it. "Of course. Your safety is guaranteed by Master Oswell, and myself of course. We seek to help, not to harm." He waved toward the entrance to the feast hall, and the smile slipped a little. "However, we do have to leave shortly. I must find my father and prepare for us to depart. You, of course, must gather a few changes of clothes and anything you cannot bear to part with for more than a few weeks."

With another nod, Bain glanced back at the entrance again and gulped. His eyes refused to meet Deacon's. There was a question he wanted to ask, but he was afraid of the potential answer. The otter didn't even know how to bring it up.

He didn't have to bother, of course. Deacon must have seen the concern on his face, and his smile returned in full force. "Are you alright?" he asked. "If you have questions about us, I would be happy to answer them."

"No... no, not yet. I just..." Bain cleared his throat and summoned all the courage he could muster as he forced himself to meet Deacon's gaze. "I just... wanted to know. Can... can you see into my mind? I mean, could you tell... what I was dreaming about?" Breath caught in his throat as he stared, waiting for Deacon's response.

The fox remained silent, before he finally released a quiet laugh and shook his head. It didn't do much to set Bain at ease until he replied, "No, I cannot read your thoughts, Bain.

Perhaps in time I will learn such a technique, but not yet. My father has mastered the mind, though. His influence is... well, it is powerful indeed.” Once more the fox’s smile slipped, and Bain almost thought he saw something else flash in his eyes. Fear? “Whatever you dreamed,” he continued, “the person involved must have been special to you indeed.”

Bain felt his cheeks burn beneath his fur again as he hugged his tunic tight to his chest. “Yes, well...”

Again Deacon chuckled as he turned to leave. “Do not tarry, Bain. My father does not like to be kept waiting, and we have much work to attend to. We will meet you by the edge of town as soon as you are ready.” With that, he began to head toward the doors. His tail swayed with each step and swept back and forth through his robes, drawing the otter’s gaze before he could catch himself.

“Thank you, Master Deacon,” Bain called out to him as he left, and he was gratified to see Deacon turn back briefly to flash him another shy little smile. The fox nodded to him before he swept out of the hall, and Bain let out the breath he felt like he’d held for years. Relief washed over him as he wrung the tunic in his paws. The fox hadn’t known what he’d dreamed of, save for its effects on him. Sweet mercy.

Not that it was likely to be much mercy. If the Mistress of Fate had seen fit to deliver him to the fox literally of his dreams, Bain could only wonder at what challenges the goddess would throw at him in the weeks to come. If this was some tacit admission of Hers that he had found someone important to his life — that who he was perhaps was *not* some filthy, unholy thing — then any challenge would be worth the prize. Fate, as it was said, favored the bold.

As he took a deep breath, Bain hurried out of the feast hall and rushed for home to change and pack. The otter knew it would be the last time he would be there for a while, but he had to be brave enough to strike out. He had to be bold enough to grasp this opportunity. Whether his destiny lay with Deacon or if Deacon was a step on the path to that destiny he didn’t know. He knew only what he had to do to find out.

Fate was calling him, and Bain knew he could not back away.

Oswell frowned as he opened his eyes and withdrew the invasive tendril of thought that he had pressed into Bain’s sleeping mind. A shudder of revulsion ran through him as he pulled back from the outer wall of the village’s feast hall. Playing to the otter’s secret perversion was almost more than he could stomach. *Almost*. The magi had to remind himself what it was all for.

That perversion *would* still complicate matters, of course. The young otter was necessary. Well, perhaps not completely necessary, but a latent *illaen* talent that came *with* Ahron lineage? That was an opportunity that he simply could not pass up. Destruction was coming. It was but a few years away; a decade at most. Oswald needed to move quickly, if he was to secure the power necessary to set his plans into motion. Losing this Bain could set his work back too far.

He wasn’t ready, of course. Deacon was progressing at a fair rate, but too much longer and he would potentially mature into a threat. And that said nothing of Bain; Deacon would need to be around when the final experiments with Bain began. If he was to awaken those *illaen* powers that he so desperately needed and unlock the Ahron sorcery in Bain’s blood, he would have to play to his perversion.

Disgust rolled through Oswald at even the prospect, but he forced it down. There were greater forces at play than the otter’s vile craving to be bred as if he were a female. If he had

to play to them — or more accurately, if he had to use *Deacon* to play to them — so be it. No sacrifice was too great for Oswell to see his plans come to fruition.

He would have to lie, of course, but that was nothing new. Deacon would have to believe that everything Oswell knows about Bain will come when the experiments ‘begin’. He would have to pretend to have only just discovered the otter’s fantasies and preferences. Lies were simple. It was *time* that frustrated him.

There was only one solution, as much as it pained him. Oswell would have to drain one of his arcanum shards and use it to lock Deacon in an unwaking sleep. He could set the young fox in stasis while he refine and iterate on Bain’s body and its connection to both aspects of his history. Deacon would sleep until Oswell was satisfied with Bain’s progress, or until he was awoken by necessity. Then, and only then, could the final experiment begin.

It was not a perfect solution, and Oswell knew that. Stoking the flames of desire in Bain and playing on his hero fantasy for Deacon was dangerous. Nevertheless, he held faith in that which he had always held faith in: himself. He knew Deacon would not falter in his duty, and would do it when the time came. He knew that he would not succumb to that attraction that he had planted in the otter’s perverted mind. Reciprocation was impossible. Oswell was certain of that.

Of course, there was always room for contingencies. Every possibility would be accounted for... even the impossible eventualities would be accounted for. Oswell had not come so far as he had by failing to prepare. He could forestall the possible by raw power and sheer force of will, but it was the impossible things — those he deemed unable to happen under any circumstances — that required a deft touch. That was a problem for lesser beings, though. Oswell had far exceeded them. The impossible would merely take longer to prepare for.

Content with his plan, he folded his arms within his robes. He would allow Deacon to prepare the otter for transit to his manor. Once there he could seclude the otter and place his body in stasis to prepare it for his work. By the time the ignorant villagers discovered his true purpose for Bain, it would be far too late to recover him. Everything would proceed apace. His plans were all coming together, and there were none who could stop him. The magi would have Deacon and Bain both to use as he saw fit, in time their powers would be his own... and everything would be fine. A smile touched Oswell’s muzzle.

He could hardly wait to begin.

Listen to Take It To The Limit by The Eagles with this Youtube link!

Take It To The Limit lyrics

All alone at the end of the evening,
And the bright lights have faded to blue.
I was thinkin’ about a woman who might have loved me,
And I never knew.

You know I’ve always been a dreamer,
Spent my life running around
And it’s so hard to change,
Can’t seem to settle down

But the dreams I've seen lately,
Keep on turning out,
And burning out,
And turning out the same.

So put me on a highway,
And show me a sign,
And take it to the limit one more time.

You can spend all your time making money.
You can spend all your love making time.
If it all fell to pieces tomorrow,
Would you still be mine?

And when you're looking for your freedom,
Nobody seems to care
And you can't find the door.
Can't find it anywhere
When there's nothing to believe in,
Still you're coming back,
You're running back,
You're coming back for more.

So put me on a highway,
And show me a sign,
And take it to the limit one more time.

Take it to the limit,
Take it to the limit,
Take it to the limit one more time.