

Rand had begun to hate the painter. He was excited at first, overwhelmed even when he saw the huge cases of brushes and colors the large, strange looking tapir had brought with him, practically ensorcelled by the prospect of having his portrait done. The mink had sat enraptured as his father took a turn in front of the artist, his noble and powerful demeanor captured perfectly upon the canvas. The initial fascination dwindled quickly as Rand himself stood in an uncomfortable pose. His limbs ached terribly from the frozen gesture he was forced in and he was grateful his father had left to attend to other business and had not stayed to watch.

"Stay still, please." The heavy voice behind the large easel said. It had been about the eighth time he'd been told that, but the young mustelid's knees couldn't help but tremble. He'd stayed still, as best he could, for what felt like hours now yet it didn't satisfy the artist.

"Can't I stretch for a moment?" Rand asked, his tone bitter and frustrated.

"No, little lord, remain still." The painter said again, his head drifting out from the side of the canvas to regard the mink's posture, squinting. The odd trunk that drooped down from the tapir's face fascinated Rand at first, but he felt more inclined to jeer at the flopping thing now.

"What's taking so long?" Rand said as he flicked his glare over to his father's steward, Vincent, who stood behind the painter.

The heavy set badger shrugged in the young lord's direction, a wry smile on his face as he studied what the artist had done so far. "Your capricious nature is harder to capture, Rand."

"What does that mean?"

Vincent chuckled, a sound that Rand had always found to be unpleasant. "Your expression keeps shifting. You look gallant one moment then wily the next. Your face is more capricious than a cat. Your father hardly blinked during his round."

"Is it almost done or not?" Rand demanded, upset at the constant comparison to his father. The badger always enjoyed pointing out how Rand never measured up to the typically proud Kolverstead bloodline.

"Save for the giant blank patch where your face is, yes!" Vincent laughed again, clapping in earnest.

Rand hoped he would find some means to make the steward regret his jabs, but he turned to the tapir, trying to catch his gaze. "How am I supposed to know what sort of face I have to make? It's not like you told me to do anything else but stand here."

"May I instruct you?" There was a tone of caution in the tapir's foreign tone.

"If it will get this portrait done, yes!"

Still, the tapir either ignored or refused to meet the mustelid's face. "Usually you noble folk already know how you want to be portrayed. Simply think how you would want other to see you as and the rest will come naturally."

Rand thought for a moment, his whiskers twitching as he rolled the question through his mind. Initially, he surmised it would be best to act and look like his father; confident, strong, stone-like in his resolve. Yet, as he struggled to make such a determined expression he saw Vincent once again grinning with his venomous humor at the young lord's attempt. Rand blinked then dropped his head. He wasn't anything like his father, as he was often reminded him. Count Kolverstead was a righteous figure, capable of standing with a firm calmness on the rim of a battlefield, the river at his back as enemies charged ahead. Or at least, that's how it was described to Rand. He, on the other hand, was flagrant, scrawny, and boastful; a proper brat, as he was often reminded. It was something an Kolverstead, a noble born mink of the river, should be ashamed of.

"There. Hold that."

Rand was nearly taken aback by the painter's command. He glanced up, ready to say something, and was surprised to see the tapir's face leaning out from the huge canvas. The tapir's eyes meet his and the mink was taken aback for a moment when he saw that the foreign painter's eyes were glowing.

Immediately, he felt numb. Rand's limbs began to sag as though a warm, soaked sheet had been flung over him. The foreigner's eyes were wide and glassy, twinkling with a purple sheen. The mink felt as though he was being drawn into them, tugged like a forlorn boat towards a dock. He heard a voice that gently coaxed him to forget worry, to abandon all concern and simply-

Hold his pose.

The painter resumed. The tapir's wrist moved with sharp flicks and jabs, full of purpose as it captured the mink's frozen form.

Rand couldn't see Vincent with his downcast gaze, but he could hear him. "You can't paint the boy like that. He looks miserable." He must not have noticed to intense sheen the tapir's eyes had taken nor how frozen Rand was thanks to whatever magic the tapir was using. "No son of Count Kolverstead should-" The badger's outburst suddenly halted, replaced with a sharp breath.

Rand struggled to crane his neck up, just enough to steal a moment to look up, catching the steward staring into the tapir's face.

"You commissioned me to make a portrait of the count and my little lord-ling here. You'll leave us alone and undisturbed for the rest of the day and go about your other duties." The painter said in a slow, thoughtful tone as he casually mixed colors together.

At first, Rand expected Vincent to rage and possibly attack the foreign artist, but instead the steward nodded, his expression blank. "Of course. I'll leave you two alone and go about my other duties."

As Vincent stepped away and made for the door, the painter turned back to his canvas. "Ensure we are not disturbed."

"Yes." Then the door opened and Vincent left. Simply left.

Rand began to feel his limbs shake and he suddenly wanted to do the same and leave. Before he could move, however, the tapir leaned over the easel again. "Ah, ah! Hold that pose for me."

The deep glow of his eyes became irresistible. Rand was almost thankful he had to hold his head down, his sullen expression making his

face go numb over the next few minutes. The only sound in the room was the soft strokes of the brush and a low hum from the tapir, peeking out from time to time to stare at Rand. He would have shivered at the sight of him, but Rand's body refused to jerk or twitch despite its discomfort. It boggled the mustelid's mind how the artist had done this.

"Very good." The painter said with a jovial tone. "You can relax now."

Rand's breath came out in gasps, his limbs felt sore and he finally felt like it was his own once more. "How did you do that?"

"Sympathy magic."

The mink blinked then took a small step back. "What is that?"

"It's a paltry spell. Sympathy magic spills out from one soul and into the other. After that, the recipient will prefer acting on my own whims than their own. It made the painting go faster, didn't it?"

Rand swallowed, unable to deny that simple fact, but still uneasy with the past few minutes. "Did you learn it from a devil?"

The artist chuckle, leaning out to smile at the young otter. "No, little one, I did not. There are no devils in truth, only devilish men."

He'd always known, or at least been told, that magic was a hellish art spun by devils and only cruel people spun it as well. Any who practiced it had sold their souls for the gift. "You're from Gatlisuu. Father says the southern country is full of devils."

"Your country seems to lack the vibrant quality of magic that permeates my own. Rather than listen to reason and master that art that upholds our world, your country seems intent on thriving in ignorance and superstitions."

"Are you going to hurt me?"

The tapir's expression tightened, as if in shock. "I am not. The magic was only to aid us both in this painstaking job." He said simply, the glow from his eyes now dead and gone. He once again looked like the saggy and unassuming man Rand had once jeered at, but now he felt a bridled mix of fear and apprehension towards the broadly shaped creature. Everything was peculiar about him and now he had a mysterious power behind his odd attire and demeanor. "I am here to paint you and your father's portrait for a considerable fee. Nothing more."

"You could be lying."

"I could also merely use the magic to insist that what I am saying is true, hm? That would save me some breath, wouldn't it?" The tapir queried with an amused hum. "My only intent with the magic earlier was to perfect your portrait, nothing more. I believe there are some things people should be free to choose to do, without such perverse influence. For instance," The tapir stood from the stool and stepped out from behind easel. "You can come and share some tea with me while we wait for the first layer of paint to dry." With that, the tapir walked beside one of the large armchairs, snatched a large pillow, and seated himself on the floor. Rand stood, uncertain whether this was a trick or not, then decided it would be best to at least play along with the tapir's game, whatever it was.

"So the painting isn't finished?" Rand asked, warily seating himself cross legged on the carpet.

"The first layer, yes. There will be several more sessions, I'm certain." The painter said, stretching out his arms and turning his wrists up and down, clenching his stubby hands. He turned the dial for the burner, sparks of magic sprouting up from the device. This bit of magic Rand could stomach. It was practical and only good for one purpose.

"More?"

"Indeed, the painting of your father alone is worth the longstanding effort on my part. The river lord of the Kelps has deeper pockets than I imagined."

Rand's face grew solemn as he frowned at the tapir's choice of words for the river. "Don't call it that."

The tapir raised an eyebrow, grinning underneath the loose trunk. "Everyone calls it that. It's riddled with the stuff. I couldn't help but follow suite."

"If my father hears it from you, you'll find yourself in bad standing with him. He's always tried to present our house as rightful to bear our honorable title as Kolverstead's to lord over the river and all commerce that comes through it." The mink spoke in a rather proud tone, imitating his father as best he could.

The tapir merely shook his head, chastising Rand with a playful tone. "You minks hold your appearance and honor very seriously, but to everyone else you look stuffy and vain rather than rich and respectable. Look at yourself! So many ruffles in that collar. Why, little lordling, you hardly have any neck to speak of!" The artist chuckled, making Rand's ears burn red with an embarrassment he hadn't expected to feel. He took such painstaking effort into looking as refined in his dress as any other noble son would. Rand began to tug at the white, curled cloth that clung to his neck, rising up to his chin. It was oddly uncomfortable now. It was supposed to be some of the highest fashion attainable according to his status, yet it did little to impress the painter who hardly dressed himself at all.

"How long will my portrait take?" Rand asked, eager to be done with this beast.

The tapir unbuttoned the vest he wore as he spoke. "A few days or so at the least. We can work in another session tonight, so you are free to do as you wish in the meantime. You have a more open schedule than your father, I assume?" The intricate yellow weaves came loose, almost forcefully baring the tapir's round belly. It splayed out along his waistband, the rim of it taut with the expanse of the artist's gut. His profession obviously kept him well fed.

"Later tonight perhaps?" The water was boiling well at this point and the mink began to sprinkle herbs among the dipping bag, eager to have the gentle brew calm his nerves.

The tapir seemed as thirsty as the mustelid. "Of course! The second layer will be easier to get through if, that is, you can hold your pose. Might I have my little lordling's permission to aid him in this? It'll only take a simple suggestion on my part and I assure you that I'll attach no ill will amongst my magic." The painter poured the tea into his cup, blowing on it before offering it out towards Rand, like a handshake.

The noble boy considered the tapir's words. He was a strange

foreigner, perplexing in both his attitude and his attire. The magic was frightening, but it had made the process so much less painstaking. Giving the artist a suspicious look, Rand asked, "You promise you'll not force me to do nothing but pose for you?"

The twinkle in the tapir's eye was unsettling, but his smile was honest enough. "Aye, this is my promise."

"Very well then." Rand clicked his cup to the painter's own. "What is your name, painter?"

"Lavni, accomplished Sympathyst and artist among the streets of Gatlisuu. I know you and your family well enough so no need to perform a formal introduction."

The short introduction done, they shared a second cup, the mink couldn't help but let his eyes roam along the foreign artist's soft bulk, finding himself admiring the enticing curves and simple girth. The man was rotund, but not without a fair amount of muscle amongst the layers of fat and flab. Even more, the sickly sweet stench of the bare skin of the older male was making the noble's nose wrinkle. Already feeling as though he needed to attend to the tightness between his legs, Rand excused himself, bowing to the artist and eagerly jogging out into the courtyard and into the manor.

Privacy. Rand needed privacy and release. His room was isolated from all else, tucked into the corner of the second floor and the windows were always covered by the silk curtains. The whole ordeal with the tapir and Vincent's brash words left him with bottled emotions and he fought to summon what sort of pleasurable image to focus on while he fondled his crotch. Discarding the tight clothes was a chore but it left him time to bring up the familiar sight of Ekkart, the stable hand. The donkey was a few years ahead of Rand, not as chubby and well rounded as the tapir, but his stomach was pleasant enough to gaze at and even more lovely to touch. The two had indulged in their discoveries, taking rides together to secluded places along the Kelps and exploring their growing fascinations.

Rand wanted him. He yearned for the low born brute to clamber atop him, dig his unkempt hands into the noble's soft, luscious fur. Ekkart confessed it was the softest thing he'd ever touched. The mink laid on his bed, hand eagerly pumping his erection furiously. Even now, he could almost feel the donkey's heat burrowing under his tail. In those private moments of lust and youth, Rand denounced all the titles held to him, the thought of being nothing but a writhing, mewling hole for the gruff commoner drove his limbs mad with pleasure. All the while Vincent and even his father would never suspect such debauchery and their hurtful words and intentions seemed far off, unable to touch Rand while he was encased in the heat and the musk of a strong man braying above him in devious delight.

Sticky fur. A almost nauseating wave of pleasure. Warm tingles trickling down his limbs. Rand's orgasm died down fast. He despised making a mess of his fur. The mink grabbed a cloth, a finery more expensive than anything Ekkart might ever own, and swabbed the cum loose from his fur. A ride, Rand remarked to himself. He would try to sneak in a ride away from the estate with the donkey before his portrait with the tapir. Perhaps then he could stand tall and proud without the virtues of his status hanging above his head like an executioners axe.

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To Rand's surprise, his mount was already out in the round, grassy pen grazing with the others. It was a curious sight and he huffed a sigh of

annoyance since it would take Ekkart a few minutes to get one ready for them to ride out together. They'd had to forego their frequent outings to their hiding spot on the beach ever since Rand's father had been leaning on him to act more his age and rank. Even more to his annoyance, the stable door was locked.

"Ekkart, open the door!" Rand shouted, crossing his arms angrily. "I mean it!"

Silence mocked the mink and with a grunt of frustration he rounded the stable, finding a window that the always left unlocked in case they ever wanted a private lay in the hay. He was half expecting the donkey would offer him such a romp, but with the harassment of Vincent and the tapir, he hoped to get away from noble lavishness for a bit.

Rand's nose quickly began to burn with the strong odor of hay, dust and musk. A wry smile spread across his face, thinking that again this was a game that Ekkart would play on him. No doubt the stable hand's chores left him riddled with sweat and the spice of it was more relaxing than any of the silly expensive odors of the fancy candles and incense he could burn. As the mustelid began to sneak his way forward he undid the several buttons of his shirt, parting it gently so that the donkey could easily tear it off him without damaging the fabric. It was a common problem they often ran into, but thankfully they had formulated a thousand excuses to mask the lewd truth of it all.

"Ekkart," Rand called out playfully, his footfalls falling softly on the floor of the stable. "If you make me come find you, I'll expect to have a turn on top this time!" He wheeled in front of the first stable, discovering the freshly cleaned pen, no doubt the reason the animals had been put out. All the better for the two boys to flop around in.

The mink quickly darted into the second one, expecting to take his friend off guard, but his mischievous smile was dashed off his face as though it had been slapped. Rand took a step back, eyes wide with shock, gaping at the sight of the naked tapir, Lavni, lounging back with Ekkart's torso resting against the foreigner's plump chest. The stable hand's muscled back was drenched with sweat, breathing long, tired breaths as his lips and tongue played upon the painter's breast. Laying along that mound of a belly was possibly the largest cock Rand had ever laid eyes upon. The only other he'd seen and experienced being Ekkart's sizable shaft, but even in his wildest fantasies he'd not imagined such a sight as the tapir's tremendous erection.

Rand was left speechless, unsure whether to be outraged or aroused at this discovery. The painter's fat tip was still wet with semen running along the rigid length while the cum oozed down Ekkart's rump. The hole that the young Kolverstead rarely got to enjoy for himself was well bred and loose from the harsh labor of taking such a thick insertion.

"By all means, take your time staring, little lordling." The tapir said with a casual tone.

Rand was speechless at first, but amidst his stammering he exclaimed, "What are you doing?"

The tapir's calm visage slacked for a moment, confused. "To whom are you asking?"

"You, of course!" The mustelid squealed, trying to keep his voice low despite the heat rising to his face.

The painter glanced down at the donkey, grinning widely. "Enjoying the youthful bounty that the Kelps can provide me." The thick arms came around the stable hand, nudging his mouth towards the fat nipple. Ekkart groaned, pursing his lips and firmly suckling from the burly chest. Through those lidded eyes and dull smile, Rand could see a faint purple glow emanating from the dull expression the donkey wore.

"Ekkart! What are you doing!" Rand shouted, hardly trying to suppress the jealous haze that raged through his thundering heart.

The donkey's eyes blinked rapidly, then it was as though a candle had been snuffed out. "Wha-pardon? Rand?" He turned his head, his lips popping wetly off of the tapir's nub as he shot a shocked look towards the mink. "Rand, what are you doing here?"

"Looking for you!" He was appalled that his voice cracked as he spoke, ashamed that he was feeling this intense sensation that he couldn't quite put a finger on. Ekkart was only a stable hand, an uncouth commoner. It was unlikely he would return Rand's affections in the same turn a noble would. The mink felt sickened that he could have entertained such notions; courting a donkey, a low base hooligan over his fits of emergent lust. Worse, the painter was now aware of such sins. He had to get away, preferably before the tears in his eyes flooded out. "Perhaps I should leave you to whatever you care to call this."

Rand turned and darted back, shoving the stall door close, hearing it bounce against the wood and the shifting of hay as he clambered out the window. "Rand, wait! Just stay a moment, let me explain-" Ekkart's voice, and the calls that followed, grew distant. As he ran, the mink felt a weight settle in his chest. In only a few hours he would have to stand in the same position as before while the tapir put him onto a canvas. The glowing eyes of the tapir filled his mind and Rand shuddered.