

Circ's gaze flitted this way and that as he was led down the halls of the compound. There were several others in the hall, presumably running errands, or having quiet conversations. Only two of them had a chaperone like himself, and one of them was oddly familiar. It seemed crazy, but Circ could swear that he was the CEO of a social media startup he'd heard of recently. The cat didn't have much time to ruminate on it--his guide did not halt for even a second, and Circ didn't want to embarrass himself on his first day by getting lost.

When Circ had heard the cult's name, "The Sound of Light," he expected something much more somber. The name implied to him the sort of quiet sterility that one expected in older, more orthodox religions, but he found quite the opposite. All he had seen so far of the cult's main compound was the grounds, a lobby, and these halls, but they didn't have the brutal or beautiful aesthetic he expected. If he could attribute any sort of vibe to this place, he'd call it "sleepy comfy cozy," at least until he could think of something that flowed a bit better. Soft lighting, thick cushions, and snug robes were everywhere that Circ looked, and his fellow cultists shared a demeanor reflective of it. Practically everyone wore the exact same silly smile, when he could see their snouts at least. For as many faces as he saw wearing that big goofy grin, just as many were covered by the hood of their robe, his guide included. As near as he could tell, there was no rhyme or reason for it. Still, hooded or not, he'd describe all their behavior as the same: kind of like sleepwalking.

"Are we almost there, sir?" Circ asked, hoping his tone was respectful enough to intrude upon the silence of their journey.

"Yes, almost. Sorry for the long walk," his guide said, in that same musical tone that he always had, "And no need to call me sir. You and I are equal before the light, you are simply uninitiated."

"I've heard that before," Circ continued, "But I don't think I really understand what the 'light' is, exactly. Would you mind explaining what you mean by that?"

"I'm afraid not," his guide predictably answered, "that's something that will be made clear as you are initiated."

"Well, I just don't want to screw anything up, or offend anyone," Circ said, desperate to keep up the conversation, "I'd hate to do anything that could jeopardize my membership."

At this, his guide laughed. It was a lovely laugh, so reassuring and sincere that Circ could not help but get a little embarrassed by his anxiety.

"Do not worry, my brother," the man said, coming as close as he ever did to stopping on their whole journey (but didn't), "Such a thing is impossible." His tone had a firmness to it that Circ had heard a couple of times before, and he was already duly familiar with its meaning. He strode behind his guide in silence for the rest of their journey

Their walk ended at a set of double doors that lacked decoration, or identification. They were as unassuming as it gets, which is why Circ had such a strong reaction to what his guide said next.

“Wait here in front of these doors, my brother. Our leader will call you in for your initiation shortly.” Circ did a double take, and then a triple. He looked to his guide’s face for more clarification, but the hooded snout revealed nothing.

“Wait, I’m meeting the leader? Isn’t he too important to meet some nobody like me?” Circ tried to keep the suspicion out of his voice, but it was difficult when he was still reeling from this revelation.

“There is not a single acolyte among us who was not personally initiated by our leader,” his guide replied, as if it was the most obvious thing in the world, “You will by no different, my brother.”

“Now, wait here,” the guide said, already turning to walk away, “You will hear your name called shortly.

His guide’s soft steps echoed through the hall as he left Circ to his own devices. By the time those echoes had long since faded into silence, a crafty smile had appeared on the cat’s snout.

“I can’t believe my luck!” Circ thought to himself, *“I thought it’d be days, maybe weeks before I got a look at this guy, and I’m meeting him day one? This is gonna be easier than I thought.”*

Circ was not the lost soul that he had professed to be when he first met with a member of The Sound of Light. Far from it: he was a professional investigative journalist, and a damn good one, at least in his opinion.

The cult had appeared about three months ago, out of nowhere. While it wasn’t nationally known, anyone with their ear to the ground was aware of the cult and the powerful following it was amassing. That wasn’t what got Circ’s attention, however. A cult suddenly appearing and managing to rope in a few affluent, powerful bozos was a tale as old as time. What got Circ’s attention was how squeaky clean their record was. No past convictions for any of the higher-ups, no testimonies from members who had left the cult, no nothing. Private eyes turned up squat, too. It was the only cult Circ had ever seen that wasn’t actually doing anything wrong, legally or ethically. Which, as far as the cat was concerned, was as damning of evidence as it got.

“Alright, so I just gotta charm the head honcho, get him to open up to me, and in no time I blow the lid off this entire operation.” He cracked his knuckles, and his thin tail whipped around behind him. It was hard, keeping that self-satisfied smirk off of his face, but he was a professional. A voice, soft, but clear as day, came from behind the double doors, and Circ turned.

“Please come in, Circ.”

The doors shook slightly as they unlocked, and Circ took a deep breath. When he was sure that he had properly reapplied his worshipful façade, he opened the doors, and stepped through.

“Uhh... huh.”

Circ was not sure what he was expecting, but it certainly wasn’t this. It was supposed to be some ritual or initiation chamber... that’s what his guide told him,

anyway. In Circ's head, that implied strange implements on display, or great stone slabs with suspiciously colored stains. What he got reminded him more of some stoner's college dorm room.

The lighting was low, and not because of long candles on tall stands of gothic persuasion, but because of soft blue LEDs strung along the corners and ceiling, accompanied by throbbing lava lamps placed here and there for that extra bit of needed luminosity. The smell was oddly welcoming as well. No scent of sulfur or similarly arcane odors here--only the scent of incense, which smacked of sandalwood more than anything else. There was a large sectional couch in the middle of the room, in the shape of a square and with gaps at each corner for entering. Sitting in it, opposite the door, was a gator, and he was smiling at Circ.

"Hello, Circ, and welcome to the family."

The gator stood up, and Circ instinctively took a step back. It wasn't that the man did anything scary, necessarily, but now that he was standing Circ was able to fully appreciate his massive size. He was ten feet long from snout to tail, and his huge gut was constantly threatening to undo the strap holding his longer-than-usual bathrobe together. It did not hide his moobs, however, which were so large that at least one was constantly poking out from behind the robe's fabric. He looked like the embodiment of what the room, and really the whole cult up to that point, had been about: comfort, overwhelming.

"Hello, uhh, sir," Circ began when he finally found his tongue, "Thank you. It's an honor."

The gator chuckled, and Circ shivered. His laugh made it feel like the earth beneath him was shifting, and the cat found himself eager to sit down. Thankfully, the gator plopped back down into his seat and indicated to the couch opposite of himself.

"No need for 'sir,' little one. Nask is fine." He waved his hand through the air dismissively as he spoke, as if even his name was hardly worth the trouble. Circ found this man very odd, and worryingly disarming to boot, but moved forward and took his seat nevertheless. He hadn't come this far to wimp out now.

"Thank you, Nask," Circ said, unsure, "So... how long does the ritual take? And why does the room look like this?" The cat was worried about how probing he was being right off the bat, but he figured he could fall back on the "curious new initiate" excuse if he needed to.

"No time at all... It's hardly worth using the words 'ritual,' if I'm honest," Nask said, with that same bored tone he had when giving his name, "The room is like this because it's mine; the comfort of my family and myself is what's most important to me."

"Ohhh, okay," Circ said, trying to sound as thick as possible, "Is that what this group is all about? Comfort?"

"Yes, bringing comfort to those who join us."

"How do you, well, we, do that exactly?"

"Through harmony and togetherness."

"And what does that *mean*?"

"All that and more will be answered after your initiation, my friend," the gator said softly. Circ sighed, and sat back. The cat had a slight suspicion that Nask was wise to

his ruse, so he figured he better not push it. That said, he figured one more question couldn't hurt.

"So... What is the ritual, exactly?"

At this, Nask stood up again, and readjusted his robe. He took in a deep breath, and Circ could not help but watch his already prominent belly expand to cartoonish proportions. When Nask spoke again, Circ twitched, gently coaxed from his stare by the gator's syrupy sweet voice.

"It's simply a recitation of the goals and beliefs of The Sound of Light," he took a heavy step to the side, and his thick tail hit the ground with a massive thumping sound, "If you find that they align with your own philosophies and desires, you have the choice to join our family." He looked directly at Circ now, and the cat found himself paralyzed by the gaze.

"Simple enough, isn't it little one?"

"I can lie well enough to fool this old gator," Circ thought to himself, making sure to hold the reptile's gaze, *"Just have to nod my head like a good peon, and he'll be none the wiser. Easy."*

"Yeah, please!" Circ said enthusiastically. A bit more than he planned on sounding, but all the better. He surprised himself with his own acting ability, sometimes. At least, that's what he told himself right after.

"Good, good," the gator said, taking a few more heavy steps. Every word made the cat have to suppress a shiver--it was like he could feel the gator's words pushing through his bones and blood, tugging him forward in his seat to make sure he didn't miss a syllable. The more he spoke, the less the cat consciously noticed it, and the more his body moved without his knowledge.

"The world is an uncomfortable, unhappy place," Nask began, "So many people lash out at each other without thinking. So much pain, and we don't even know we're inflicting it." As he spoke, he swayed. Hundreds of pounds of fat draped in smooth scales moved in front of the cat with an energy identical to the lava lamps nearby. Circ tried not to stare in such an obvious way, but each new syllable drew his gaze back.

"People wish to be kind, deep down. They don't want to cause pain, or suffering; they want to be helpful, and kind. They want to bring nothing but joy, but the path is obscured. That is why The Sound of Light exists: to show others that path."

Circ could already see how this guy had amassed such a following. Nask's voice floated through his ears like a song, familiar and relaxing, but it nevertheless had an air of staunch authority. Like the very idea of questioning this man was little more than a pointless display of arrogance. It should have made the cat all that much more suspicious, and he *did* feel like something was up, something he couldn't quite place his finger on... But every time he started to articulate it, the gator started up again, and his progress was washed away by a wave of relaxation.

"The Sound of Light shows us the path," Nask said, continuing his subtle sway, "How to get along with others. How to see them not as simply other people, but as a brothers, sisters, everything in between. How to relax, and let go of the preconceived notions society has instilled in you."

"This guy isn't anything to worry about," Circ thought to himself, sinking further into the couch, *"He's just some hot old weirdo who wants to help people out. Can't*

blame anyone for wanting to follow this guy." Nask flashed Circ a smile, and the cat felt his cheeks light up with heat. The gator continued to speak, and sway, and Circ listened intently, body at as rapt of attention as he could muster.

"The Sound of Light knows that we are all one big family. That no matter where you came from, or how you live your life, we are all brought together by our shared desire for peace, and love."

"*You know,*" Circ thought, nodding his head, "*This guy brings up some really good points.*" As soon as Circ thought this, his body was overtaken by a spike of pleasure so sudden he could not hold back his gasp. The flood of endorphins was so much, almost too much. His extremities got tingly, and he found himself stretching every part of his body that he could. He was so enraptured with this sudden wave of pleasure that he did not notice Nask's evil smile, or how quickly the gator had gotten behind the him, his snout hardly a foot from Circ's ear.

"When you join The Sound of Light, you join an organization that cares about you," Nask's hands planted themselves on Circ's shoulders, and the cat's toes curled, "One that you can trust. One you can believe in. One that..." Nask's hands began to move, and everything else faded away.

Circ knew that Nask was saying something, but it was so hard to grasp, at least consciously. He tried to pick out the words from what the gator was saying, but at best he got bits and pieces. "Family," "relax," and "obey," seemed to come up, a lot. That made sense though. This cult was Nask's family, and you listen to the head of the family; Circ knew that much, despite his daze. Nask cared a lot about the people in his cult, and he cared about Circ, too. The cat could feel his sincerity in every word, in every movement of his fingers across his body. He could tell that Nask truly cared about him, from the way the gator's teeth dragged across his neck to the possessive way he was squeezing at the cat's chest. This wasn't the actions of some crazed cult leader, but of a father who wants to take care of his family. A man who wants to take care of him.

"We know that everyone has needs, and they must be," Nask's mouth was right up against Circ's ear, now, "Sssatisfied."

Circ let out a long, shameful moan as his dick jumped to life. Suddenly, every inch of his furry body felt like it was on fire, and his dick ached against the fabric of his undies. His cheeks burned with embarrassment, but it was not enough to lessen his arousal. If anything it was feeding into it. He didn't know why it felt so good to have this gator grabbing him so roughly, to have Nask hug him to his chest... They had just met, right? Thi was weird, wasn't it? Circ started to stumble onto a way out of this haze, but a lick up his neck caused his dick to leak, and banished the thought as quickly as it appeared. Sure, they just met, but had Circ ever met someone so hot, or so trustworthy? Not that he could remember. Plus, the gator just said something about sexual freedom, didn't he? Circ could not truly recall, but he knew it didn't matter anyway. He could trust Nask. He could feel safe around Nask. He should relax around Nask. The gator's hand cupped the cat's chin, and he sunk deeper into the couch, the smile on his face getting wider.

"You're so close, little one. So close to freedom, so close to bliss. Listen to your body, and the feel the heat the light provides..."

Circ didn't remember unzipping his pants, or whipping his dick out. He found himself suddenly aware of it, though, and stopped. He shook his head for a moment, the big smile on his face starting to wilt.

"What am I... doing..." Circ mumbled. Every word was hard. It felt like weights were attached to his lips. He moved to cover himself, but a firm hand on his arm stopped him.

"You're relaxing," was all the gator had to say. The words ran through Circ's ears, down his body, and directly into his dick, which throbbed with sudden stimulation. Whatever fear Circ felt was gone, as was the knowledge that he even felt it. At this point he was nothing but a smiling, stupid cat, rubbing his dick while Nask groped hungrily at his body, all but the last glimmers of intelligence gone from his eyes. A particularly powerful hiss against Circ's cheek made the cat whine, and his stroking grew more frantic.

"You understand now," Nask said, a note of victory clear in his voice, "What we are. So the question is, why are you here?"

"It was to expose you, and this cult," Circ said without thinking. He didn't even hear himself say it, either. All he heard was the chuckling that rumbled behind him; it reverberated through every muscle in his body.

"But why are you here, now?"

"To join your family," Circ said, mewling from the rush of dopamine that followed.

"That's right," Nask said, "There's always more room in the flock." Circ whimpered with joy at the idea. Accepted into Nask's family? He could not think of a higher honor than that. The very idea made his dick want to shoot off like a rocket, but he held the orgasm back. He didn't know how, or why, but somehow, he knew it hadn't been earned. Not yet.

"Soon, you will be an initiate. I only need one more thing from you, little one," Nask said, his hands on Circ's neck, "Give up the last of your will, and you can truly join our family."

Circ's eyes popped open. Even in the daze that Nask's voice placed him in, the weight of that statement set off alarm bells in his mind. He remembered why he was here, and knew that this was the exact kind of thing he came here to find out about. He squirmed in his seat, trying to wake himself back up. He didn't have a plan, per se, but he knew he needed to get away, now.

Nask laughed to himself as he watched the cat finally begin to fight back. It was too late, of course: the pleasure the gator's voice brought guaranteed that his ideas had taken root in the cat's mind. If he did somehow manage to escape, he'd be back before too long, hard as a rock and begging for forgiveness. Nask would not let him get that far, however. He had taken a liking to this stupid spy, and was eager to see what his body could handle. In one smooth motion, he knelt behind the cat, put his arm around his neck, and grabbed his dick.

"You've never felt pleasure like this before, have you," Nask asked, his voice dripping with charm, "Never felt so good. Never felt so relaxed." Circ, despite his continued struggling, mewled out a sheepish "y-yes." The gator smiled, and continued.

"You can feel this way forever. Happy, relaxed... at peace. Knowing where you belong, in my family."

"I, I..."

"Want to give up my free will."

"I want to give up my free will." Circ shook his head, but could not stop the words.

"I want to be with you, forever."

"I want to be with y-you, f-f-forever." Circ's panting was getting faster, and his dick's throbbing was teetering between pleasureable and painful.

"I want to cum."

"I wanna cum!" Circ was humping frantically now, as his body drowned out his conscious mind.

"Then, cum for me, little one." Nask turned Circ's head, the cat staring directly into his eyes. He smirked, and forced his lips against the cat's.

There was no more fight, no more resistance. No more thinking of the consequences, or remembering why he came here. All there was was pleasure. Unceasing, unbearable pleasure, coursing through Circ's body as long ropes of cum shot out from the tip of his dick. It may have only been seconds, but it felt like it went on forever. The thick arm pressing on his chest as it rose and fall; that huge tongue, probing and pushing along the inside of his mouth, choking him with its possessiveness; that huge hand, holding his dick as he humped, and humped, and humped the last shots of his free will away.

Eventually, the orgasm stopped, and Nask let go. He wiped his hand on the cat's shirt, and stood up, admiring his handiwork. Circ was gone, and there was nothing but a stupid, smiling cat, sitting before him, eyes now a curiously golden hue.

"Tell me little one, what's going through your head now?" Nask asked, claws dragging down the fur on Circ's cheek.

"I... heh," Circ struggled to answer the question, though not very hard, "I dunno. Happy. Relaxed. Feeling really good.... Horny?" His answer was rewarded with another deep chuckle, and which made his body light up with pleasure.

"And why do you feel like that, you think?"

"Cause it feels good," Circ slurred, "I don't have to worry, you're here. So I can just do what feels good. I just have to listen to you, and I can be happy. Everyone should listen to you." Nask snickered behind him, and Circ's heart soared from being responsible for it. The gator walked over to the cat's side of the couch and pulled him against his body. His voice was as enthralling as ever, but it had a new quality to it: hunger.

"Good boy. Let's see just how much pleasure you can handle, hmmm?"

Circ giggled vapidly, and nodded. He had no idea what was in store for him, but that's alright. At this point he was too stupid to fully appreciate it anyway.

Two months later, and Walter, a shrew, was being led through the compound for the cult The Sound of Light. His eyes flitted to and fro as he walked through the halls, trying to memorize every detail he could. He'd have to, if he wanted to bring this whole operation crashing down, like he planned.

"The leader is going to see *me*, personally?" Walter had trouble concealing his smirk when he and his guide reached the double doors at the end of the hall, and he was told who would be initiating him, "What an honor."

The hooded feline turned to leave, unable to keep the twinkle of mirth from his golden, glowing eyes. His words had an unmistakable weight to them, probably because they're the last words the man known as "Walter" would ever hear.

"You have no idea."