

Thunderous laughter erupted from the tavern hall. Benant, the song's leader, raised his mug high into the air, soon to be followed by the rest of the room.

"Oi, kid. You got some visitors," the barkeeper said as he filled Benant's mug. The worried tone in his voice made Benant put a hand on his knife before he even began to turn around. Fully clad in polished suits of armor, a company of local guards approached. They had not drawn their weapons yet. A good sign, but their stance made it clear they had not come to partake in the revelry.

"Sir Benant, you're under arrest for disrupting the lord's peace," one guard announced, producing a set of manacles and holding them out as though to say; *come peacefully*.

"We're just enjoying ourselves with good ale and song. You're all the ones ruining the peace of this place," Benant chuckled; leaning back in his chair, hand on the grip of his blade.

"A merchant reported that robbed him at knife point," the guard explained, all three placing hands on their swords.

"I found a bag of gold lying in the trail. As far as that merchant can prove, the real thief dropped it and I was lucky enough to find it," Benant claimed, a knowing smile on his face. By now, the entire tavern was silent, watching nervously as tension brewed. They were waiting for the men to draw iron, each man choosing whose side to take once blood began to flow.

"You gonna die over a bag of gold?" the guard asked threatened.

"Once again you're confusing my situation and your own," Benant joked. Even as he chuckled at his own statement, there was a menacing tone to his voice. The guard just smiled at Benant, confident in their numbers and armor. Benant knew he needed to strike first, drop one of the three if he wanted to beat their numbers. Before they could blink, Benant pulled the knife from his belt and slashed towards the soldier's unarmored throat. The strike would have killed, the guard unprepared for the attack. But before the slash could land, a heavy blow struck the back of Benant's skull.

"Can't have a fight destroying my tavern," the barkeeper explained, holding a light wooden club in his hand. The guard stepped back, a scared exhale escaping him as he noticed how close

he had been to death. He looked over to the barkeeper and gave a thankful nod. Before manacling Benant's limp hands.

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Benant awoke with start, a drilling headache reverberating through his skull. He glanced around the dark cell he found himself in. The prison was a perfectly square room with two bedrolls, a burning torch outside, and a rust iron chamberpot. He searched his pockets and clothes for one of his many blades or skeleton keys.

"Sleeping beauty awakes," chuckled a voice from the other side of the room. Benant looked over, confused, as he had not seen anyone else in the cell.

"What the bloody hell is that?!?" Benant shouted as he jumped backwards to the corner of the room. What could only be described as a monster sat on the other side. The creature looked like a skunk, but he was much larger and stood on its hind legs like a human. Thick black fur covered the tall man from fluffy tail to fanged muzzle.

"Oh come now, words can be hurtful you know," the skunk-man joked, feigning insult. "You act like you've never seen pickpocket before," the man laughed, prompting a confused look from Benant. "Might it not be my profession? Have I something on my face?" he laughed. Benant was beginning to calm down, noticing that the creature was displaying now outward signs of hostility. "Suppose my kind are rather rare in these eastern lands."

"Name's Benant, in for robbing a merchant. You?" Benant asked, attempting to get a full read on the stranger.

"Cormus, sorcery and thieving. Suppose my appearance helped me little," the skunk-man explained. "Good to meet a fellow crook. You have a lovely country here, even if tis sorrowfully lacking in skinshifters," he laughed, easing Benant's nerves with jokes. "You should rest, it's not like we're going to have any shortage of free time."

"Perhaps you're right. Though I've only met one, they seem better company than most human," Benant muttered, chuckling with his new cellmate. He took his new friend's advice and

lay down. Bludgeoned unconsciousness had none of the rejuvenation properties of actual sleep and he felt exhausted.

Waking, Benant figured he had woken up from a dream. He felt the warm comfort of another's arms around him and figured it a tavern whore. He turned over and pressed himself close to his companion. As his eyes fluttered open, he did not see the flushed skin of a northern gal, but rather the black furred snout of Cormus. "The Fuck!" Benant shouted as he jabbed the skunk in the gut and jumping away. "What were you doing?!?"

"These cells get cold at night. Besides, I'm sure you'll make a lovely cell wife," Cormus comforted, stepping towards Benant.

"I'd kill you before I became your plaything," Benant spat, raising his fists for a fight.

"Oh you don't have to worry about anything like that," Cormus reassured, petting Benant's shoulder. A motion, which he shook off. "I've found that desire and pleasure go hand in hand. We won't mate until you ask for it," Cormus explained smiling.

"You've a bloody nail loose," Benant remarked. Cormus nodding in response. "And for fuck's sake, can you not use your bloody scent gland. It smells like a... well a skunk," he complained, prompting an amused smile from Cormus.

Benant spent the next day or two trying to avoid any eye contact with Cormus. However, boredom was a powerful force and the two found themselves exchanging stories of travel. Benant was a sellsword and mercenary who had fought many outlaws and lawmen alike. Cormus didn't tell many stories, mostly making clever small talk and humorous comments. They received food and water, which provided their only sense of time thanks to the lack of sunlight.

Within a few hours, Benant grew accustomed to the ever-present stink in the air. Cormus wasn't wrong, the nights quickly proved frigid. One night he found it impossible to sleep with his unstoppable and violent shivering. With his inhibition partially shut down by the intoxicating vapor in the cell, Benant shuffled his bedroll closer to Cormus's. Not enough so that the two were in contact, but just enough that they could share a modicum of body heat.

Next morning Benant awoke only to find himself once again in the arms of the skunk-man. Before, he would have violently shaken the man from him, but now he found himself taking comfort in the embrace. It was as though he had finally taken off his spite colored glasses. While Cormus's animalistic features were still off-putting, he could not help but notice how strong and handsome the man began to seem.

Cormus grumbled slightly in his sleep and pulled Benant close to his chest. Benant blushed deeply, but smiled nonetheless, taking enjoying the kind man's clutch. Benant was beginning to take a liking to his cellmate, although he wished the skunk-man could get control of his scent gland. He could swear the smell had only intensified last night.

"Cold night wasn't it," Cormus chuckled later that day.

"Cocky bastard," Benant muttered under his breath.

"Oh you'll see," Cormus murmured to himself, smiling.

Thankfully, the next night was nowhere near as freezing. Although, when the weather chose to be merciful, the moon chose to provide a completely new set of challenges. "Ah, I love the full-moon. Makes me feel alive," Cormus said, somehow knowing the phase of the moon without seeing it. He looked up at the sky and stretched out his arms, as though attempting to soak as much of the non-present moonlight in. As his tail stretched out and an oppressive scent filled the cell.

"By the gods Cormus, have a little restraint!" Benant shouted, gagging into his sleeve. If he heard, he certainly didn't acknowledge the request. Benant fell to the floor, coughing and gasping. His lungs burned as though the room had run out of oxygen. As quickly as the scent came, a numbness began to fill his nose, mouth, and lungs.

Suddenly inebriated, Benant's vision grew blurry as he sat there, just inhaling the scent. Lying there, Benant began to be able to distinguish the multiple scents filling the room. Most were clearly the various chemicals of Cormus's spray, but he also noticed another musky odor present. The scent was subtle in comparison to the skunk spray, but it had a powerful effect. Benant felt a warmth spread through him along with a flood of arousal.

It was as if the veil had lifted between the two. It was amazing how the flickering torchlight illuminated him. The bestial features of the man were no longer foreboding and alien, only complementing his features. Cormus was a muscular man with square, pronounced features. His black eyes catching the light and sparkling in the most miraculous of ways.

Benant had not seen another soul for almost a week now. In the past few days, he had been fighting to quell an array of confusing emotions, which had begun to bud within him. Yet with each breath he took, felt himself growing more and more heated. He took short shallow breaths, the magical scent filling his lungs and mind.

Knowing the state his powerful scent had put Benant into. He held out an inviting paw for his human cellmate. Drunk off the air, Benant stumbled over and fell into Cormus's arms. He gazed up into Cormus's deep eyes. Instinct and desire guiding him, Benant pulled himself close, soaking up the way his partner's soft fur against his skin. "I'm ready," he whispered, pulling Cormus's head close.

"So I figured," Cormus chuckled, pulling Benant close and kissing him deeply. For that moment, nothing else in the world mattered. The entire world seemed to darken until it was just the two of them in a sea of nothing. As their tongues danced passionately around one another, Cormus summoned a magical spark within him and sent it through his companion's flesh.

Lowering his head, he nipped and tickled his lover's neck, Benant quivering and sighing as his companion turned him over. Benant reveled in the sensation of Cormus's soft fur tickling his skin as his clothes were pulled off peace by peace, soon met by a pelt of his own. His skin itched as black strands pushed through it and replaced his natural hair. The semi-darkness of the cell seemed to meld with him as he gained a thick black coat, broken only by two white stripes along his back.

Putty in Cormus's hands, he allowed the larger man to guide him onto his knees. Cormus led his hands above his head as he kissed the back of Benant's neck, each touch sending shivers down Benant's spine. He took a pair of shackles from the floor and delicately hooked each around one of Benant's hands.

Pressure building in his spine, he attempted to feel at his hips, but found the chains wouldn't let him even pull his hands to his face. He let out a low moan as his spine pushed outward

painfully. Cormus stepped backwards as a large fleshy appendage grew from his hips and curled upwards. The tail then fleshed out like an inflating balloon and grew a thick layer of fur.

Cormus lay back down on top of Benant, pushing his tail to the side. "I love you," Benant murmured half consciously.

"Oh I can tell," Cormus whispered into Benant's ear as he wrapped his arms around his lover. "Let me show you what my love feels like." Benant gasped as he felt Cormus touch his erect member to his tailhole. Benant moaned as Cormus pushed into him. A wonderfully full sensation coming over his waist and gut. His mind went blank with pleasure and pain as Cormus brushed against his most sensitive points.

Shackles rattling, his hands spasmed as his mate rocked his hips with quickening pace. Know on his knees, little moans and yips escaped his lips as his lover reached around and gripped his shaft.

His mind emptied and refilled with warm red pleasure as his alpha. Stars danced before his eyes as he felt his skull contort and shift. Both men panted and groaned as their bodies slapped against one another softly. He pushed against Cormus as the rod within him rubbed against his innards sending pleasurable sparks throughout him. Cormus expertly pulled and massaged Benant's maleness and tickled him beneath the privates; each thrust sending new waves of bliss through him.

Benant's face pushed outwards into a musteloid muzzle. As his nose turned black, a whole new set of scents began to bombard him. Most enjoyable of which was the sweat and pheromones pouring from Cormus.

As the two humped, Benant's member shifted and altered into one more pointed and red. At the base of his member prepuce emerged from his skin and wrapped around the base of his shaft. Within his tailhole, a pair of scent glands emerged and began to emit their own odor.

Cormus's sensitive nose quickly picked up his lover's scent as it entered the air and mingled with his own. This stimulation was enough. With a loud yelp, Cormus broke. Benant groaned, feeling the hot liquid fill him and spray his innards. To complete the sensation, Cormus quickly flicked his wrist around Benant's member, quickly bringing him over as well.

Benant's world exploded as his alpha and he orgasmed almost simultaneously. He collapsed to floor in pleasure as sparks of pleasure warmed at his body. Cormus leaned over and licked at Benant's muzzle, an action, which Benant mirrored as the two, caught their breath. "I think we'll enjoy our time together," Cormus whispered as the two lay in each other's embrace.

Benant didn't respond verbally. A new scent was beginning to flood his nostrils. This warm odor lulled his mind into a deep calm, before finally sending him off to sleep.

With a smile, Cormus unlocked the manacles and walked over to the door. Their sentence coming to a close and it would be a long ride east, but the company could ease any trek.