

Donald knocked on the door, while Daniel looked around, that pale blue paint, the weed covered lawn, the gray door, he shuddered. They had decided to come themselves after their sons told them what had happened.

The door opened, and a tigress was standing before them.

"Hello Margarette," Donald said. Her name had been part of the information Damian had given their kids, they would have been able to find it on their own, they had all the records, in a box, somewhere in the attic.

She looked at them. "Hello, can I help you with something?"

"Yes, we'd like to see our son."

She seemed confused for a moment, and then her eyes grew wide. "No. Absolutely not. He's my son, not yours." She tried to close the door, but Donald held it open.

"Margarette, you signed a contract, which you broke when you vanished. We didn't pursue it back then, but if you don't let us talk with Patrick, we will drag you to court over this. Our brother has an entire law firm at his disposal, and believe me, we will use them." Donald's tone hard.

Daniel put a hand on his brother's arm. "Donny, calm down." He looked at the tigress. "We're not here to take him from you. We have sons, we're happy, but he is our son too, and there are things he needs to know, and you too."

"He's not here," she said, "and even if he was, I wouldn't let two fags like you get anywhere near him."

"Mom?" the voice came from further in the house. "Who's at the door?"

"No here, huh?" Donald sneered. He tried to push his way in, but Daniel held him back. "Danny, don't take her side on this. He is our son, she's probably poisoned his mind already."

"Donny, please, calm down. I'm not taking her side, I'm trying to avoid this blowing up. Margarette, regardless of what you think of us, Patrick is our blood, and that means he needs to be told some things. I really don't want to use the law, but we need to talk to him. You can either let us do that here, now, with you present, or we can go to court, where you will lose him."

Margarette's face was a study of stubbornness, broken only when her son appeared behind her.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"Hello Patrick," Daniel said. "I'm Daniel, this is Donald. We're your fathers."

"Is this a joke?" Patrick asked. "Mom, who are these fuckers?"

Margarette didn't reply, her body seemed to deflate. "Come in," she said, barely audibly.

"Mom? What's going on?"

Daniel and Donald entered a small living room, crowded with Christian symbols, crosses on the wall, angels on the tables, the small couch was upholstered with cherubs.

"Sit down, Patrick," she said, again, her voice barely audible.

She indicated two seats for Donald and Daniel to take, but they sat on the couch. Donald smirking at her. Resigned, she didn't comment.

"Mom?" now Patrick's voice was filled with concern.

She sat, and never looked away from the floor. "One of them is your father."

"What? What do you mean, 'one of them'?"

"I had sex with them, and nine months later, you were born."

Patrick stared at her for a long moment, then he turned, grabbed a picture of a shelf and shook it at her. "Then who the fuck is that?" She looked up at the picture, and then away. "You told me my dad was a war hero, you said he was deployed just after I was born, and that he died in Afghanistan! Are you telling me that was a lie. That I'm the son of one of those fags?"

Donald was about to stand and make the situation worse, but Daniel held him down, which earned him another glare. Daniel knew his brother was going to be royally pissed at him for some time, but a screaming match here wouldn't help anything.

Daniel looked at Patrick. "You're gay too, Patrick."

"No!" both him and his mother said together.

"You can deny it all you want, but it's in your blood."

"No, I am not a fag. I'm straight. I'm not a sinner."

"What the fuck does sinning have to do with anything?"

Donald growled.

"Donny," Daniel warned. Another glare.

Patrick gave a sardonic laugh. "What's it got to do with it? Everything. I'm a church-going Christian. I read the bible, I know right from wrong, and I know being a fag's a sin."

"So is lying," Daniel said, not raising his voice, but looking at Margarette. He then turned to her son. "Patrick, you don't want to act on it, that's your choice, but you need to know who you are. As our son, you are gay. That's in your blood. You can deny that you get turned on by looking at guys in the change room, but it doesn't change the fact that you do." Patrick looking away told him he was right. Not much of a guess, the kid was an Orr. "It isn't a sin, and it isn't a choice. If you're not going to act on it, make sure it's an informed decision, not a reaction to fear."

Daniel stood. "Come on Donny. It's time to go."

Donald started at him in surprise for a moment, and then the anger was just barely controlled.

Daniel took a card from his wallet, and handed it to Patrick. "If you have questions, this is our number. Any time, day or night, call us." Then he led his brother out, and to the car. Donald reached for the driver's door, but Daniel grabbed it first, getting yet another glare. He sat, put his hands on the steering wheel

"Go ahead, let me have it."

"What the fuck was that?" Donald yelled. "You saw what that woman's done to our son, he's fucking terrified of who he is!"

Daniel looked straight ahead. He hated seeing his brother when he lost his temper like that, so he wasn't going to look at him. "What did you want me to do, Donny." He kept his voice calm, a counter point to his brother's scream. "We can't change things just by sitting him down and having a talk with him. Things don't happen over night."

"So that's you're idea? Leaving him with his mind twisted mother, so she can continue the damage she's already inflicted?"

Daniel closed his eyes, and did his best not to flinch. He took his cell phone and handed it to his brother.

"What's that for?"

Daniel did flinch at having the anger directed at him. "Go ahead." He still managed to keep his voice from shaking. "Call Damian, tell him to come take our son and bring it to that bedroom, so he can do what ever he feel he has to to him."

That silenced Donald.

"Fuck." Donald hit the dash. "Fuck." Hit again. "Fuck!" again. "FUUUUUUCK!" when the scream ended, the silence was deafening.

Daniel let the silence hang for a long moment, before opening his eyes, and glancing at his brother. Donald was crying. He pulled him against him, resting his head on his shoulder and let him cry.

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Patrick looked at the house he was standing in front of. That wasn't a house, that was a mansion. His house could probably fit in there over twenty times. Who the fuck lived in places like that. He'd gotten a friend of his to do a reverse lookup on the number the two f He stopped himself, like it or not, one of those guys was his father.

The friend he'd been crashing at for the last week had found the address. He said it had taken him a bit more work than he'd expected to find it, something about it being unlisted, or something like that. So Patrick had given him the forty bucks he had on him.

The house was big, two story, white stucco. A garage on the side, he stared for a moment, fuck the garage was bigger than his house. He'd been amaze that a place like this didn't have a gate, with armed guards in front.

He knocked on the door, which was a deep crimson. An then noticed the buzzer button. Maybe he should have used that instead? But moments later the door opened. It was the smaller one who opened it. The one who had knocked on his door. He didn't remember his name. He was only wearing sweat pants.

"Hi," Patrick said.

"Hey,"

"Is your dad here?"

The guy nodded, took a deep breath and then yelled. "Guys! Patrick's here!"

Patrick winced. Man, for a guy so short, he certainly had one hell of a pair of lungs on him. Once his ears stopped ringing, he thought he could hear people running around. Not long after that, one of the two guys who had said they were his father showed up. He too was only wearing sweat pants.

"Thanks, Arthur," he said, ruffled his hair, and then moved out of the way to let him in.

For a moment, Patrick wasn't sure if he should go in. Sure, he'd taken the bus all the way across the city to come here, but now that he felt like he was about to enter an entirely new world. It wasn't just the obvious wealth, these guys were f... gay, and they acted like it was the most normal thing to be. Patrick couldn't see himself being comfortable around another naked guy, let alone doing something with him.

Still, he had made the journey, now it was time to enter the dark cave, and learn the secrets. The entryway, hall was more like it, had a black floor, polished to the point where he could see his reflection in it. The walls were white, there was a mirror on one side, in a gold frame. At his point he figured the frame was actual gold.

"Should I take off my shoes?" he asked. He was scared of dirtying the floor. He was scared of touching anything. If he broke something, there was no way he'd be able to replace it.

"Only if you want to. Don't worry about getting stuff dirty," he added, as if he'd read his mind. "We've got seven kids, nothing stays clean long here. If you want to take off your jacket, the closet is behind you."

Patrick turned, and there was a polished wood door. Should he leave his jacket there, did they expect him to get down to his boxers, or something.

"Is there a dress code, or something?"

"Excuse me?"

"You and Arthur are only wearing sweats. Is that how you dress here?"

The guy looked down at himself, as if he'd forgotten what he was wearing. "Oh, no. You just caught us, exercising. If you prefer I'll go put on something more appropriate."

"Exercising, like the whole lot of you?"

"Yes, it's a family tradition, we like to stay in shape. Looks like you do to."

Patrick shrugged, he was muscular, sure, but it wasn't because he liked to stay in shape. In his neighborhood, if you weren't strong enough, you got the crap beat out of you.

He decided to put his jacket in the closet. It looked like rags next to the others there.

"Look, I don't want to offend you, but I don't remember your name. I didn't really pay attention when you, or the other one gave them to me."

"I'm Donald, and I understand. That meeting wasn't exactly smooth."

"That's certainly one way to say it."

"How would you describe it?"

Patrick thought about it for a moment, maybe he shouldn't use that kind of language here. Except, he got the feeling that guy, Donald, appreciated honesty over proper language. "I'd call it a shit load of shit, blowing up over everyone."

Donald laughed. "That's certainly colorful. My brother's name is Daniel, but don't worry if you can't tell us apart. No one can. Don't be afraid to ask who's who. The kids just call us dad, so they don't have to worry about screwing it up. I don't expect you to call us that."

"I wasn't planing on it," Patrick said, defensively.

"I understand. How did you find our house?"

"I know a guy who's good at finding stuff out. I gave him your number." He left it at that.

They walked by what had to be a living room, with large couches, plush looking carpet, a large entertainment center. The place was a mess, cushions were all over the floor, it looked like one of the chairs was leaning against another. There was a scent of those artificial air fresheners coming from that room, roses or something.

"What happened there?"

"Like I said, we have seven kids," was all Donald gave as an answer.

They reached a dining room which again, was larger than his house. At the table, which could seat at least twenty people, was the other guy, Daniel, and the seven kids sitting at one end.

"Grab a seat," Donald said, and he went to sit next to Daniel. Patrick didn't move immediately, he looked at the two of them, trying to see some difference. He'd said no one could tell them apart, but that couldn't be true, no two tigers had the same stripe pattern, and they could always tell each other apart, it was a subconscious thing, he knew. You might not know their names, but you canould tell them apart.

Except for them, he realized, as far as he could tell, their patterns were identical, at least what he could see on their arms, and chest, where they faded into the while belly fur. He looked at the teenagers, and he could tell their patterns apart easily. Then he was realizing he was breathing a little hard, looking at those bare chest, so he looked at the table. He sat at the opposite end of the table.

"I have some questions."

"Feel free to ask them," Daniel said. It was Daniel, right? He was pretty sure Donald had sat on the left. That didn't matter, he decided.

"First off, why do you even want me to be your kid? I mean, I'm poor, I live in the bad part of town, I won't exactly fit in

here."

"Hey, you can fit in anywhere you want to." One of the kids said.

"It isn't about us *wanting* you to be our son," Donald? Said. "You are our son. That you live here, or not, and we don't expect you to do so. We are your fathers, but I don't expect that we'll be your family."

"Actually, can you clear something out? Exactly which one of you is my father?"

Donald and Daniel looked at each other. "We don't know," one of them said.

"How can you not know?"

"We both had sex with your mother, so there's no way to tell."

"We can get a paternity test done."

They smiled. "I don't think that's going to help," the other said. How the fuck was he going to tell them apart. They hadn't moved and he was already mixed up

"Sure it will, everyone's DNA is different, so it'll tell us whose genes I got."

"Just like no two tigers has the same stripe patterns?" the same one said.

"We'll be happy to get the test done, if you want," the other said, "but I don't think you'll get the result you're hoping for."

Patrick looked at the kids. "How do you deal with it?"

"What's there to deal with?" said the one who had been in the passenger's seat. Aaron, maybe? Or Albert? At least he could tell them apart, he'd just have learn the names. "They are both our fathers, we don't care who's genes are in us."

"So long as they are in us," someone said softly, which elicited chuckles from a few of the others.

"Aiden" one of the adult said. "Watch your language, we have a guest. You know the rules."

"Sorry dad."

"Next question?"

Patrick took a breath, okay, this was the big one. "How do you know I'm . . ." Fuck, he couldn't actually say it. He'd practiced it, he'd practiced asking the question without purring any scorn in it, because he knew being that was wrong, but he actually wanted to respect them, and to find out if there was any actual chances the bible might be wrong about this.

They didn't say anything, they let him figure it out by himself, but eventually he gave up.

"I can't say it. I'm sorry, but I just can't. But you know what I mean, right?"

"That you are gay," one of them said, and Patrick winced. "Yes, we know."

"How do you know that?" Patrick felt his voice break slightly.

"Because you are an Orr."

"I'm not an Orr, I'm a Sanders."

"That's your last name, but the blood that flows through your veins, that makes you an Orr."

"I could take after my mother."

"You don't."

"How can you know that?" this time his voice did break. They gave him time to regain his composure

"Somethings, you take after your mother, you have her eyes, but when it comes to your sexuality, you take after us. Children always do. We always have sons, and they are always gay."

"And weird," added another of the kids.

"Albert," one of the father said, with a warning tone. Okay, so if that's Albert then the other one's Aaron, I'm sure of it.

"What? It's true."

"What does he mean, weird?"

There was a pause.

"Do you mind if we keep that question for the end?" said the other father. "The answer will make you uncomfortable, and I'd prefer we go through the ones you already have first."

"Okay, sure." Patrick said. "You had kids, so you're not entirely gay. I could be like that too."

"Yes, we had sex with women. So we could have sons. The sex was fun, it always is." He looked at Patrick. "Have you had sex?"

Patrick's ears felt like they could start a fire, and he looked away, which earned him seven stares of shock.

"Like I said, it as fun, but it wasn't what we love to do. We're virile man, even now, if we were to set our mind to it, we could have sex with a woman, but it isn't want we want. We want men. That's what makes us gay." He paused. "That's what makes you gay."

Fuck. That wasn't what he'd wanted to hear. "But I don't have to do anything about it. I don't have to act on it, right?"

"What?" Aaron said.

"Why would you ever not want to have sex with another guy?"

"Alexander!"

"But dad?"

"Enough."

"Yes dad." Alexander looked at the table.

There was enough whispers going off, that Patrick could tell Alexander's opinion was shared by all of them. It was wrong, he reminded himself. Man didn't sleep with men. Okay, he could, for the sake of argument, accept that the desire wasn't the devils work, that it was genetics, like a lot of people claimed, but he didn't have to act on it, he wasn't going to.

Didn't he have other questions? He was sure he had, but he couldn't think of them right now. Well, he could think of one. Might as well get that over with. "What's the weird thing,

Albert mentioned, about?"

The fathers sighed, but the kids looked up, excited?

They looked at each other. "We did promise ourselves we wouldn't lie."

"Yeah, we did." He took a deep breath. "Okay, on top of being gay, Orr men always have, lets say eccentric tastes."

"What does that mean?"

"As an example, me and Donald, we like to tag team our partner. It isn't a fetish, we don't *have* to do it, but if given the chance, that's how we prefer do to it."

"Aaron liked them old," Albert said.

"What wrong with liking mature men?" Aaron countered.

"With wrinkles," Albert shuddered.

Patrick swallowed. "Okay, I think that's enough." He stated and stood.

"You're leaving?" one of those he didn't know the name of said.

"Yes. I am, you were right, this is making me very uncomfortable."

"But, we haven't showed you."

"No!" Patrick slammed his hands on the table, and rested his weight on them. He was panting. His entire body was scream for him to run. He started at the tabletop "Look. I came here of my own free will. I asked my questions, and you answered them. I can't fault you for anything. But. I. Really. Don't. Want. To. Be. Here. Anymore."

"I understand. Arthur, why don't you escort Patrick to the door."

"Yes dad."

Patrick started walking, barely aware of the small tiger next to him. He grabbed his jacket, and the door was already open by the time he had it on.

"Patrick?" Arthur said, when he was halfway down the stairs. Patrick stopped, but he didn't turn around. "I'm sorry we made you feel uncomfortable. I hope you'll visit again."

"I don't know, Arthur." He paused. "I don't think so." He started walking again.

By the time he reached the main road, he was shaking. Well, he'd gotten his answer, and a fucking lot more. What was he doing to do now? He wasn't going home, he was still pissed at his mom for lying about his dad, maybe in a day or two he'd be ready to go home. Maybe he could crash on Steven's couch, his folks didn't mind him doing that once in a while.

He became aware of the car keeping pace with him, when he heard the window roll down.

"Hop in, kid. I'll give you a ride."

"No thanks, I'm just going to the bus stop."

"Really? You barely have ten dollars left to your name. That's not going to get you anywhere near your house."

"Fine, I'll walk then. I don't get into a stranger's car."

"Kid. I'm not a stranger, I'm your uncle, now get in. I'm taking you home."

Patrick stopped, and so did the car. There was a tiger behind the wheel, and the door clicked open.

Patrick didn't move.

The driver pierced him with cold gray blue eyes.

"Patrick," he said in a measured tone, "get in the fucking car."

Patrick realized he was sitting in the car, and it was moving. "Who are you?"

"My name is Damian."

"So what? You were just waiting there, waiting for me to leave?"

Damian chuckled. "Nah, I was coming to visit my nephews, I saw you walking away, and you looked to be a bit out of sort. It would have been late by the time you got to the other side of town, if you made it that far. In your state someone was bound to jump you, so I decided to give you a ride home."

"I'm not going home." Patrick stated.

"Yes you are. Your mother's been worrying herself to death for the last four days. You need to take better care of her, you know."

"Why should I, after all the lies she told me."

"Most people lie."

"Do you?"

The driver thought this over, he actually had to think about it? Patrick couldn't believe it.

"Yeah, I guess I do, but always with good reasons."

"Fine, I don't care. I'm not going home. I'll tell you where to drop me off when we get close to it."

Damian didn't reply. He was silent for about a minute, and then the car swerved into an almost empty parking lot. There, Damian turned and looked at him. His face was slack, and those eyes, which had been blue gray were now pale blue, they were cold, emotionless eyes. They weren't looking at him, Patrick realized, they were looking in him. He tried the handle.

"Door's locked," Damian said.

Patrick looked for a way to unlock it, but he couldn't see any button. He slammed his elbow in the glass, and only had pain for his effort.

"Bullet proof glass. You're not getting out of this car unless I let you."

The tone, the words, they made Patrick shy back, trying to push himself as far away from this man as he could. He remembered what he'd been told about all the Orr men having eccentric tastes. He had the feeling that the few he'd heard had been mild compared to some. "What are you going to do to me?"

The eyes blink, and warmth seemed to come back to them. Damian gave him a wry smile. "I'm going to explain a few things to you. Relax kid. You have nothing to worry about. Not yet, anyway." He chuckled. "When someone tells you about me, you're

going to remember this meeting, and you are going to piss yourself." He got the car moving again.

"When my father was on his deathbed, he made me promise that I'd look after my family. I take my promises extremely seriously. And to be clear, to me, it isn't your last name that makes you my family or not. It's your blood. So no matter what you call yourself, you're an Orr. So I'm going to take care of you." He thought about something. "And your mother. She isn't blood, but you care for her, so I'm going to make an exception this one time."

Patrick calmed a little, and wonder if he had imagined his cold eyes. No one could really have eyes like that.

"What do you mean, by 'take care of me'. You're going to shower me with money, so I never have to work. Get my mom a house like that Donald and Daniel have?" It was odd how he couldn't seem to think of one of them, without thinking of the other.

Damian laughed, a cold and mirthless laugh. "Your mother would spit on anything a fag like me would give her. No, I'm not going to give her anything. That's not how I work anyway. You need to make your own way in life. You don't appreciate it if you don't have to work for it."

"Then what?"

"Here's my promise to you kid. You're never going to have to worry about your safety again."

Patrick stared at him.

"Yeah, I know about them. About how you go that cut."

Patrick reflexively put a hand over his bicep.

"They won't bother you again, I swear that to you."

"How?"

"How do I know? Or how can I promise that? I know people, that's the answer to both questions. Which reminds me." He pulled a business card out of his breast pocket, and handed it to him.

there was a diamond in the center of it. With 'Diamond Industries' over it, and 'because diamonds are just coal under pressure'.

"That doesn't make any sense, you know that?"

"Sure it doe, kid." Damian glanced at him. "And something tells me that if anyone can manage to figure it out one of these days, it's going to be you." Patrick just stared at him.

"Anyway, on the back there's the number to my company's recruitment office. Give it to that friend, the one who tracked down my brother's address. If he ever gets tired of shady deals, and going hungry for weeks at a time, I'm always looking for talented people."

"If you know so much about him, why aren't you making the offer in person?"

Damian glanced at him. "You can answer that one yourself."

"He doesn't know you from Adam, he'd never trust you. I'm

not sure I trust you myself," he mumbled.

"That's very wise of you."

"So I take it you're not offering me a job?"

Damian thought this over. "Do you want me to?"

Patrick was about to say yes, he could use an actual job, but he remembered those eyes, blue and cold. What would it be like, working for someone with eyes like that. He shook his head. "No, I think I'm going to make my own way."

Damian smiled. "Another wise thing you've said."

"Although I could use someone to pay my tuition to school."

Damian snorted. "Don't look at me for that. That's what fathers are for."

They drove in silence for a time, and when the car stopped, Patrick realized they were in front of his house.

"How did you know where I lived, I never told you."

Another wry smile. "Who do you think gave those kids your address? You go in now, your mother is going to be relieved to see you."

The door clicked, and opened. Patrick stepped out, and looked in, holding it open. "D . . . Uncle Damian," the words felt strange coming out of his mouth, he'd never had an uncle. "Why am I scared of you?"

Damian gave him the brightest smile he'd ever seen, but it didn't comfort him at all. "Because you are a wise young man, Patrick. Very wise indeed." Damian motioned for him to close the door, and he drove off.