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WARNING: May contain coarse language, violence, gore or sexual content. Reader discretion is advised.

Chapter 7. "Regret"

Shari released his neck and slid her hands down to his chest. "You should sit and wash up. I'll clean up and wash your back for you."

"Yeah."

His head felt light. His body felt warm and light. The air cooled his burning penis. He gently pushed off the wall and stood. He finally opened his eyes. A thick, cloudy, slightly yellow substance was sliding down the wall. It smelled of a freshly forged and oiled sword.

"What is that?"

Shari leaned back so she could look at him. It looked like her face was melting. Her eyes sparkled in the light from the candle. "That's...semen. Males produce it. It's used to make babies during sex." Her voice was so soft and sweet. It sounded like the voice one makes after a satisfying meal.

He looked confused. "Will you tell me what 'sex' is now?" He felt his eyes becoming heavy.

"That happens during the other kind of 'love'," she said and slapped her hands against his chest. "Sit before you fall."

He stepped away from her as she stepped out of the tub. She reached down and pulled her towel from the water. She wrung out the water and placed it on the floor. She stepped on the towel and looked at him.

"Yes I'm naked. No I don't care right now," she said flatly but with a huge grin.

He felt his head warming. He looked down. His eyes widened as he saw his penis. It was darker red, large worm-like things were under the skin, dark blue streaks throughout it, and the mass...

"That was attached?" He asked and looked at her.

"Yes," she said as she used a cloth to wipe the wall. "It's uncommon in canine breeds these days, but wolf variants most commonly still have it."

He touched it to confirm it was indeed a part of him. It felt only slightly painful when he did. The pain was slowly leaving his groin. He groaned and grabbed his head. He carefully backed against the wall and slid down it into the water.

Shari trapped a scream in her mouth. He looked lazily at her under his fingers. She looked shocked and appeared if she was looking above him. "Sorry," she said into her hand and looked at him.

"Why?"

"Doesn't that hurt?" She asked through her fingers as she looked at him.

He shook his head. "You're the doctor. I'm the patient. I have to trust you when you work."

She moved her hand from her mouth and looked at him as if he'd said something ridiculous. "Right," she said as if not convinced.

He gingerly cleaned his penis and groin. Shari began to clean the wall above him.

"I'll have to bandage your back and...oof," she said and her voice changed pitch, "Your shoulder, too."

Shari moved around as she spoke. "The other kind of 'love' is when you feel all the other things like with a parent, but those emotions are stronger towards someone you find attractive. Someone you want to be with forever. Um...someone to start a family with. When those feelings are held by both people, it can lead to pressing lips and tongues together, touching parts you don't let others touch...and... it can lead to sex." Shari grabbed a cloth. She dipped it in the water and covered it in soap. "I'll wash your back now," she said as she knelt next to the tub.

He'd finished washing what he could reach. He scooted forward and turned away from her. She began to rub his back.

"Sex is when those feelings are at their peak. A male will slide his penis into a female's vagina. This is a sign of them wanting to be together at that strong 'love' level. It can also signal the desire to have children. A male's sperm and a female version called 'eggs' will do some complicated things. Eventually a child is born."

She paused scrubbing and rang out the cloth before carefully wiping the spot where she had clawed. "I think that's the simplest way to explain it. It's not always done with children being the result. People that love each other show that love through sex and other forms of passion." Shari rinsed and rang out the cloth. Her tone became somber. "Sometimes people have sex that don't love each other." She sighed, her voice becoming quiet as she laid the cloth over the wound and gently pressed into it. "Sometimes sex is forced."

He thought about everything she said the last few days. "Does that mean...does that mean I *love* you and you love...me?"

He felt her violently shake her hand to a stop. He winced from the pain. The cloth moved from his wound and slapped against the back of his head. "NOOO!" Shari shouted and stood. "DOC-TOR...PA-TIENT!!"

He glanced over his shoulder and watched as she grabbed a towel and left the room. She slammed her bedroom door shut and it sounded as if she fell onto her bed and screamed into her pillow.

He grabbed the cloth and hung it on the side of the tub. He scooted forward and rinsed his back. He lay submerged in the water as he tried to think over everything again. "Perhaps I'm wrong," he thought. "I do 'love' her in the sense I would want to protect her and I am grateful for everything she's done for me. But, she seems to 'love' me back in that she's protecting me from illness and my wounds. And she is kind and is helping me to understand things. But she did touch me where no one else has."

He paused for a moment before shaking his head and sat up. "No. She's right. She was a doctor helping a patient. There's no way someone like her could see someone like me with that *other* kind of 'love'."

He stepped from the bath and pulled the plug to let the water drain. Something tugged in his chest as he saw the ring of bubbles and fur around where the water was.

"Nnng," he groaned as his head ached. Images of cleaning the ring left in the tub filled his head. The tub in the images was different, but not unlike this one.

The images stopped with the pain. He looked over the tub again. He used the cloth she threw at him to wipe the ring from the outer edge and where the water pooled. He rinsed it out in the hand washing basin and hung it to dry.

He finished drying off, then pulled on his undergarment and those warm trousers. He grabbed the top and the candle and walked into the dining area. He grabbed the blanket and blew out the lantern. He made his way into the other room and set the candle down on the counter. He sat at the edge of the bed with the shirt next to him and the blanket over his legs.

Shari slowly opened her door and stepped into his room. She was wearing a thin nightgown with ribbon-like straps. It clung to her body in certain spots such as her hips and breasts. He forced his eyes to hers as his heart fluttered and his face heated up.

She looked as if she'd been crying. She stood just inside the doorway. She was looking down at her hands that she held by her groin. Her fingers were laced side-by-side and she was fiddling with her thumbs. Her hair was a mess and stood up on her right side.

"I," she said and tapped her thumbs together. "I should apologize."

She looked up at him with sadness in her eyes. "I may have sent some mixed signals. And I did abuse the 'doctor-patient trust' to my own gains and for that I am truly sorry." She looked back down at her hands as she squeezed them together.

"I may have misunderstood as well," he said as he looked at her hands with her. "You were being a doctor and helping a patient. I placed a new term to..."

"The thing just before 'love'," she began, "Is to '*like*' something or someone - which is not as strong a feeling as 'love'." She looked up at him slowly. "I think with your new understanding of feelings, you '*like*' me. Sometimes it's better to classify it like that. Such as how I I-like you. I can't '*love*' you since you're a patient. I swore an oath against it. And I want you to swear to me that you will never 'love' me."

He nodded. "I think I understand. I '*like*' you and you '*like*' me and nothing more."

She shivered and gasped into a sigh. "Good," she said and went to the cupboard.

She returned and began rubbing ointment into his back. She walked around and did the same into his shoulder. She went to the cupboard and began to wrap an 'X' across his chest and over his shoulders with a roll of cloth. She returned to the cupboard and cleaned up. She walked back in front of him and squatted down with her hands on his knees. She looked up at him and then down to her hands.

"I have to apologize...to you," she said and he could feel her claws against his skin. "You may not realize what I was doing while...assisting...you," she said with her expression reflecting guilt. "I," she began and sighed, closing her eyes. "I did something no doctor should do while treating a patient. I found myself having," she said and paused again with a shorter sigh. "Thoughts...that no doctor should, but it's been a long time since I've touched or had a man touch me in that way and I'm...I'm..."

He could feel her claws pressing into his skin.

She finally looked up with her eyes watering. They sparkled as she said, "I regret my actions. It will never...ope!" She squeaked as he placed his hand on her head.

He could feel how soft and silky her slightly damp hair was. "I understand," he said calmly and lightly smiled. "Doctor-patient trust."

A tear dropped from her eye and her hands relaxed against his knees. She smiled and said, "Yeah." She lost the smile and looked at his knees. "I still regret taking advantage of you. You have the body of a man, yet the mind of a child so it feels like..." She quickly looked back up at his eyes, her hair sliding with his hand so it was covering her eyes. "No offense. I don't think you're stu-..."

He lifted his hand and set it back on her head. "No. You're right. I'm a stupid, ignorant meathead."

He felt her head get warmer and her ears drooped. "I was mad at you. I didn't really mean..."

She squealed as he grabbed her wrists in his hand and pulled her up to her feet. Her hair fell to cover her left eye. Her right eye looked as if she was afraid. He pressed his nose gently to hers.

"There's too much goodness in you to be angry with your words."

He leaned back and lowered her arms. He watched her eyes soften as he let go of her wrists. She seemed to fidget as she began to stare at the floor.

"Before you sleep, may I ask a question?"

"Sh-sure," she muttered.

"I smell pine. I know that's from the stove. I smell your soap. But there's another..."

She looked up at him, mortified. "That's right! You...," she muttered and stepped away. She wrapped her arms around her slim frame. "But if you have...then you possibly..." She drifted off as if in thought. She cleared her throat, bringing a fist up to her mouth with the thumb to her bottom jaw. "Once a month," she said and took a step back as she looked at the floor. "Women release an egg into her uterus that can signify her readiness for children or is discarded out of her body until the cycle repeats. Ferals can pick up on the pheromones and..." she muttered.

Her other hand had crept down to cover her groin as she looked up at him. She continued to back up. "I'm going to bed-ee!" She exclaimed as she bumped into the counter. She quickly turned and blew out the candle. "Good night," she said hastily and just as quickly left the room closing the door behind her.

He sat there confused as she entered her room and closed the door. Just like earlier, he heard her slam into her bed and scream into her pillow.

"I don't think I'm meant to understand," he thought as he folded up the shirt and tossed it onto the counter next to the candle.

He maneuvered himself into the blanket and closed his eyes.

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He awoke to see the sun creeping through the cracks of the shutter doors. He didn't feel bad like the night before. His body still ached. He lay there listening to the birds chirping. He sighed and closed his eyes. His ear twitched as he heard someone humming. He sniffed to clear his left nostril. He didn't smell the pine. He smelled her soap. But it was too strong to be from her. He brought his arm up to his nose and smelled his forearm.

"Don't know how I feel about smelling like this," he thought as he flopped his arm down.

The humming got louder, then quieter for a moment as he heard some clunking coming from the other room.

He slowly pushed off the blanket and stood from the cot. His head felt a little heavy with a dull ache coming from inside. It didn't feel as bad as it did yesterday. He quietly walked to the door and pressed his ear to the wood. "Is that Shari humming?" He thought as he quietly opened the door. A rush of food smells caused him to breathe in deep through his nose. He quietly made his way into the hallway.

He stood for a moment as he took in the sight. Shari was dressed in a rosy-pink, short sleeved, thigh-high dress that hugged her body closer than her other gowns. Unlike her other gowns, this one exposed the tops of her breasts. He could see a large rose embroidered onto the right thigh and the dress hugged her waist with a pink ribbon that tied in the back with a rather large bow. She had her hair back in a shape that mimicked a bread bun. She had those two chunks of her bangs pinned to the sides of her head with clips that had small roses on the ends of them.

She hummed as she flipped something in the pan. The short bottom of her dress seemed to float as she seemed to dance with the pan and a spatula. She slid the contents of the pan onto a plate. The other side of the table had a similar setup with what appeared to be an omelet on the plate.

He stood quietly at the entrance of the dining area. He'd seen a similar sight at a 'Brothel and Breakfast' one of his party members dragged him to. He turned down the lady of the night, but couldn't pass up the free room and food.

She hummed and danced as she filled a tankard of the milky herbal substance and placed it on the table. She twirled and grabbed a fork and spoon and placed it neatly next to a plate. She glided over to grab another fork and spoon. She did a little dance toward the table.

"GAH!" She shouted as she looked up, the utensils hit the floor. She brought a hand to her exposed chest and heaved breath into her lungs. "How long were you standing there?" She demanded while looking over her glasses with her nose angled down.

"Not long," he said and stepped into the dining area.

"Well pretend you didn't see or hear *anything*," she said just as demanding and crouched down to pick up the utensils. She stood while holding the utensils out in front of her. "These are yours. Punishment for sneaking up on me," she said and slammed the fork and spoon down next to his plate.

"Smells good," he said and sat at the table.

She made her way into her seat at the table as he drank the liquid in his tankard. "I'm not speaking to you until you apologize. for being a creep," she said as she lay a cloth in her lap and looked over at him with piercing eyes.

"I'm sorry," he said and grabbed the fork.

"I don't think you meant it, but it'll have to do," she said and grabbed her fork.

"Thank you for the food," he said and cut into the fluffy egg to reveal various vegetables and sausage. A string of cheese followed the fork as he pulled a bite from the plate.

"You're welcome," she said with a hint of surprise. She cut a bite of the omelet off. "Someone does have manners," she said and placed the bite into her mouth.

He chewed and swallowed a bit of food. "Mother taught me. But I haven't said it since," he said and cut another bite off.

"I know you won't talk about her just yet. Even so, she sounds like she was a lovely lady," she said and took another bite.

"She was beautiful. And so kind," he said as the image of his smiling mother entered his mind.

"Do you think you remembered her better when you looked in the mirror because you look like her?" She asked as if hesitant.

He could feel a pain in his chest as his eyes began to water. He sniffled and nodded.

"Thank you for telling me that," Shari said sweetly. "That's enough for now. I won't pry further," she said and took another bite.

After a few more bites, the pain in his chest left. He sniffled again and felt his eyes return to normal.

"So how did you break your tooth?"

He stopped chewing and looked at her questioningly. He swallowed and opened his mouth so that he could touch the broken fang. He rubbed it a few times before removing his finger and grabbing his fork. He ate his food as he told his story.

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"So, you're Viktor?" A man asked from beside him.

Viktor bit into the mutton and began chewing as he glanced over at the human. The human had a decorative, thin longsword at his hip. Viktor could hear chainmail crunch under the long, red officer's coat that had various medals on it and tassels over the sides of the shoulders. He wore knee-high leather boots. He wore a cloth head wrap with a strip of fur around the bottom. Stitched on the front was an emblem of the country.

"I'll disregard your rudeness with the prospect of coin," the officer stated and placed his hand upon the table. "I'll also disregard the rumors about you and allow you to stay in this country if you assist us in the upcoming battle with (name forgotten). Ten coins now and twenty upon victory."

"Yeah," Viktor said and took another, larger bite.

"Good," the man said and straightened up. He dug into his coat and tossed a cloth pouch onto the table. "Tomorrow at daybreak. We meet at the South gate. Register with the guard at the entrance before you leave."

The officer walked away. Viktor set down the chunk of meat and lifted the pouch. It felt about right. He reached over and placed it into his knapsack. He finished his meal and left the tavern. He stopped by the blacksmith to pick up his freshly sharpened sword before stopping at the inn.

The next day Viktor awoke and stopped by the South gate. He registered as a mercenary for the coming battle and made his way to the gathering spot. The officers were atop tamed feral horses at the far end. Many of the mercenaries were either over equipped and barely seen a battle or under-equipped and desperate for money.

The officer, now with a real sword, gave some speech about the battle and victory. Another officer said some speech about the mercenaries earning their keep. The officer in half plate armor gave a speech about families before giving some rallying cries.

It took about an hour to meet the opposing army. Viktor sniffed out an ambush and stayed back. Several of the under-equipped people were taken out immediately. He flanked one of the attackers that were knocked off balance by one of the officer's horses running by. After the ambush, the opposing army didn't put up much of a fight.

When they returned to the keep, Viktor went to the guard and received his pay. Family members were by the gate awaiting the arrival of their sons. After several were told their sons weren't coming back home alive, some of them became distraught.

THWACK!

"YOU SHOULD HAVE DIED OUT THERE, YOU FUCKIN' BEAST!"

After regaining his bearings, he located the attacker and spit the tooth at her. An older woman hit Viktor across the face with a bread roller. He drew his sword and placed it neatly into her neck.

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"Did you *have* to kill her?" Shari asked, abruptly ending the story.

He looked at her and became angry. "Yeah!" He shouted, baring his teeth at her.

"Please don't bare your fangs in my house," Shari politely said and began to collect the plates.

He kept the feeling and expression until she came over and wrapped her arms over his shoulders. She rested her chin on his head between his ears. "Settle down, sweetie," she whispered. "It's okay. Remember: You're safe here."

He clenched his fist and slammed it into the table as he grit his teeth. "Rrrrf!" He growled through his teeth as he could almost feel the bread roller striking his face. He began to tremble with anger.

Shari let out a shushing sound as she squeezed across his shoulders. "That's not who you are anymore, sweetie," she whispered. He felt her drag her chin to the left.

"You're here to find the goodness in you," she whispered in his ear and squeezed a little harder before letting up.

The image of his mother flashed in his mind again. He opened his mouth as he lowered his top lip. It quivered back into place as he took slow breaths through his mouth.

"That's better," Shari whispered.

She dragged her jaw against his head a couple of times before she stepped out of the embrace. She walked to his right and placed her soft left hand on his muzzle. He closed his mouth and looked over at her, his eye still twitching, but feeling as though he'd calmed down.

"May I?" She asked as she placed her thumb on his lip.

He unclenched his jaw. Shari leaned in and lifted his top lip. She switched hands and placed her head on his shoulder. "She smells good," he thought as he slowly opened his jaw. She moved his head gently with her hands as she looked as best she could at all sides.

Shari let go of his lip but held his jaw in both hands. "It looks okay. The broken part does have some cavity to it, but I don't think it's a concern right now. However," she said and scratched under his jaw. "If left untreated, you'll regret it. It will reach the nerve and cause all sorts of pain." She let him go and began clearing the rest of the table. "When you're ready to leave the house, I can have Mùli look at it for you. He may be able to clean it and coat it to protect it. He may even reshape it to look normal using gold or silver. Pretty costly, though"

Shari moved about the kitchen as he sat there thinking.

"I left that town afterwards," he finally said. "I don't regret it if that's what you want me to say."

Shari moved over and sat across from him. She held her right hand out and motioned with her fingers. He looked at her hand and then up to her. Her eyes were serious but she wore a slight smile. He looked back at her hand and slowly reached out. He placed his hand over hers and looked up. Her eyes were softer and her smile was wider.

"One of the officers trailed me. He claimed her family was active in beast man hatred. He apologized for her behavior but agreed it would be best if I left."

"Then I suppose she," Shari said and sighed as she glanced to the right. "Deserved it." She looked back at him. "There will never be an end to humans that hate our kind. I mean, that was behind the recent attack. They took nothing. Only killed and burned what they could."

He could feel her hand tremble, but her expression never changed. The light coming in through the drapes picked up intensity for a moment and illuminated the room. He squinted his eyes as he stared into hers. He could feel the warmth rising in his face and his heart quickened. "So pretty," he muttered.

"Nng!" Shari squealed and looked in shock. She quickly took her hand back and held it in a fist at her exposed chest. "You have no filter, do you," she said as her chest heaved slightly.

He brought his hand in a fist and placed it in his lap. He looked down at the table. "Sorry."

"N-no need," she said and got up from the table. "I have to run some errands. I'll be back later," she said and picked up her shopping basket. She stood at the door for a moment. "Rest up. The fever isn't completely gone. If you get hungry, there's fruit on the counter and vegetables in the cooler."

Shari opened the door and stepped over the threshold. "Bye...Shari," he said as he looked up.

She turned and smiled wide with her eyes shut as she closed the door.

He noticed she seemed to shine even brighter in the morning sun. "Beautiful," he muttered.

He stared at the door for several minutes. "Now what?" He thought. "I don't feel tired." He looked around. Shari had placed the dishes in the wash basin and drew some water over them. "Could I do that?" He stared at the basin as he imagined himself grabbing the dish in his weak right hand and scrubbing with the left. He sighed as he imagined the dish slipping from his grip. "I mean, that is how it's done, right?"

Most of his meals were at taverns or served on sticks. Out in the wild they had handles built into the meat. "Maybe..." He imagined holding the dish with his stronger

left and moving his right shoulder to scrub. He imagined the dish staying in his hand, but wasn't sure if he could clean well enough. "I have to do something around here. I have no money and..."

He quickly got up and started searching around. He looked around the kitchen and dining area. He made his way to his room and looked inside. After a brief sweep, he found what he was looking for. He sighed in relief as he located his knapsack. He didn't see his sword, though. "I'll have to ask Shari about it when she returns," he thought.

He made his way back to the kitchen and grabbed a cloth from a hanger above the wash basin. A jar was just under the hanging cloth. He set down the cloth and picked up the jar. It contained slices of lemon and orange. He carefully lifted the metal lid. It was strong with citrus with a sour undertone. The sour smell reminded him of a marinade used on meat.

"Is this used to clean them?" He thought as he turned the jar in his hand. He winced as a sharp pain shot through his head that brought images of containers that had pictures of oranges and lemons with a wash basin in the background attached to them.

He shook his head and placed the jar down, then covered it with the cloth. He quickly turned the jar toward the water and set it back down. He moved the jar back to its resting place and carefully replaced the lid. He tucked the cloth into his weak hand and did his best to grab it. He picked up one of the dishes and began to wipe. The bits of juices and food stuck to the metal slid away with each wipe. It took, what he felt, longer than normal. He held the dish up and turned it in his hand. It looked as if it were clean.

It took, what felt like, hours of frustrating wiping to clean the dishes and the pan she cooked in. Each time he inspected his work before placing it into the wood drying rack. The tankards and cup were a bit more difficult. He switched hands with the cloth and tucked his fingers into the handles with the tankards. The cup was just big enough to hold in his right hand. He still held the base of it against the side of the basin as he turned his first two fingers inside.

He squeezed out the cloth and hung it up. He saw a slightly larger cloth behind the rack. "It would make sense to wipe the metal or it will get rusty," he thought as he planned his next attack.

It was much the same as washing. Same with the tankards and the cup. He finished drying the last dish and hung the towel up. He opened the cupboard just above

and saw the other dishes. He placed each in their respective spots and closed the door. The pan took some looking around to find where that went - next to the stove under the counter.

With that done, he emptied, then wiped out the basin. He grabbed a drink using his tankard. He placed the tankard in the drying rack on a rod that stuck out of the base. He felt drained after concentrating so hard for so long. It was something he'd never done before. For some reason, he felt a warm sensation in his chest.

"I'll have to ask Shari what that is," he thought and made his way to the washroom. He did his business and laid down on the cot.

[Shari](#) belongs to [Celeste](#)