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

Chapter 15. "Not A Good Idea"

He covered the porridge for her lunch with a lid he found in one of the lower cupboards. He decided to do the dishes. It took him about an hour. The breakfast pan was a bit harder to scrub with the bottom caked with cooked in bits. While he scrubbed, he tried to think of anything else he might be able to do to help her.

"That's right," he thought. "Being by the fire felt nice." He placed the dry dishes into the cupboards and looked around. He shook his head. "No, she won't be comfortable on the bench. I'll have to do something else." He thought for a moment on how to make a comfortable situation for her next to the stove. "Maybe if I move the cot out here. No. It would take too long to get the frame out through the door. Maybe just the cushion..."

He surveyed the dining area and began to move the benches against the wall next to the door. He pulled the table over and tilted it on its side, then used his foot to scoot it against the benches and then put the top legs against the wall. He turned back and figured that would be enough room.

He was getting warm. He pulled off his cap and fanned his face a few times as he walked into his room. He placed the cap on the counter by the door and took off the sling. He set it next to the cap and pulled off the sleeve. After placing the sleeve next to the other items, he took the pillow off and set it on the counter. He lifted up the sheet and saw the thin sheet of leather underneath. He stripped the cushion of the sheet and leather. He placed the sheet next to the other bedding and rolled up the leather and placed it next to the counter against the wall.

He walked over and peeked into her room. "She's still asleep," he thought and pulled the door closed until it was open just a crack. "She might clean the area before she did something like this."

He moved to the kitchen and looked around for anything to use for cleaning. Between the dry goods pantry and the wall was a broom and a long stick with feathers on the end. "I've seen these used before," he thought. "But I've never..." "GAH!" He yelled and bent over clutching his head.

Images flooded into his head he's never seen before. The pain and the images were gone just as quickly as they struck.

He shook his head. "Just like the other times," he thought and looked around. He placed his hand on the counter. "That's real." He reached up and tugged on his ear. "That hurts. Again, I'm not imagining things. I should tell Shari, but she's not well. Regardless, I won't get anything done standing here trying to figure out what's going on with me."

He grabbed the long handle with the feathers and began tracing the feathers along the ceiling - especially in the corners. He moved it along the top and sides of the cupboards and pantry. He moved it down the corners of the room and placed the item back where he found it. He grabbed a cloth from the drawer and wiped off the cupboard and pantry doors. He wiped off the counters and the stove. He rinsed off the cloth and rang it out, then went back over all the places he wiped with a clean side of the cloth. He hung up the cloth and began to sweep the floor from the pantry to the stove and towards the door. He collected a small pile of dirt and fallen food crumbs in front of the door. He opened the door and swept it out.

"It's about lunch time," he thought as he glanced over at the wood pile.

He made sure nobody was around and quickly grabbed some logs from the pile and brought them in the house. He set them in the container next to the stove. He used the scraper to move the ashes before placing the logs and some tinder into the stove. He lit the stove and closed the cover. He made his way into his room and carefully pulled the cushion out into the dining area in front of the stove with enough room to move around. He grabbed the pillow and made the cushion into a bed for her. He just needed to grab a blanket from her room.

He pulled a bowl and spoon out and filled the bowl with the porridge. He placed the porridge pot onto the counter and picked up the food. He made his way into her room.

"Shari," he quietly called. He moved in the room and sat on the bed.

He looked at her while she slept. She had pulled down the blanket from her chest and it was scrunched up across her stomach. Her arms were on both sides of her on top of the blanket. He smiled as he reached out and did his best to nudge her with his weak arm.

"Shari," he said a bit louder. "Time to wake up."

She groaned and turned on her right side. "I already made dinner," she mumbled. "It's on the stove, Ensio."

"Who's Ensio?" He thought as he looked at her confused. He nudged her back. "Shari, I've brought you lunch," he said, pushing his thoughts aside.

"Huh?" She asked as she rolled to her back, the cloth from her head falling onto the pillow. She looked at him through barely open eyelids, her eyes looked foggy. "That was sweet of you," she uttered and sat up.

He held out the bowl for her. She carefully took it from him and placed it on her thighs. She stared at it for a while as she blinked her eyes. "I guess I could eat," she said and moved the spoon into the bowl. "Thank you, 'sio-gur."

She began eating as he looked at her feeling baffled. He shook his head and reached over to grab the cloth. As he pushed himself back with his good hand, she leaned over and smashed the end of her muzzle onto his.

"Mmm," she groaned as her lips pressed into his. She pushed away and their lips separated with a slight screech - similar to a rat or a bat, he figured - coming from her mouth.

He stared at her, frozen in place.

She half smiled at him and blinked her half-open eyes several times. "Have you been helping the village clean up? You look like you've been playing in the soot," she said and giggled.

"Y-yeah," he stammered out. "What is wrong with her?" He thought, trying to process the situation.

She returned to eating. "Thish ish goot," she said through the food. She swallowed. "Like daddy used to make." She smiled and kept eating.

"There's...a bit more left...i-if you want more," he said and touched his lips. He could feel heat rise in his body and his heart began to pound. "I need to calm down," he thought. "She's not acting normal. Shari would never..."

He stood from the bed and made his way into the kitchen. He leaned over the wash basin while clutching the cloth in his fist he placed on the counter. He gasped and began to breathe heavily through his open mouth.

"That wasn't a kiss like mother's," he thought as eyes began to dart along the bottom of the basin. "That was...the *other* kind of 'love' kiss." He groaned and clenched his eyes and mouth shut while slapping his fist into his chest. "I can't. She can't. I have to resist. I can't let her..."

He slowly relaxed as he drew deeper breaths into his chest. He sighed and wet the cloth. He rang it out and returned to her room. She was scraping the bottom of the bowl as he walked in. He folded the cloth and placed it on her head.

"Mmt," she squeaked as she startled. She held the spoon in her mouth and looked over at him. "Mmm," she hummed and held out the bowl with both hands.

"So cute," he thought as he returned to the kitchen.

He emptied the pot into the bowl and returned it to her.

"Hmm-hm," she hummed and took the bowl. She dug in as he left the room.

"She's probably thirsty, too," he thought. "Her nose was dry," he thought and winced as he recalled the kiss.

He brought out a small dish and placed an orange on it. He grabbed a cup and set it next to the stove. He pulled out the kettle and poured some water into it, then placed it on the stove. He cut the orange in half and carefully pulled back the outer covering. He pulled out the individual sections and discarded the shell. After sweetening the drink, he held the cup in his palm while balancing the dish on his forearm and against his stomach.

"Here's some tea and fruit," he said as he walked in the room.

Shari scraped the bowl and placed the last bite of food in her mouth. She looked over at him and placed the spoon in the bowl. She raised her left eyebrow as she looked at him.

"You're being awfully nice today, 'sio-gur," she said with disbelief.

"Why does she keep calling me an ingredient for sweets?" He thought as he looked at her vacant eyes.

She lowered her eyebrow and returned to the half smile. "Thank you for taking care of me, 'sio-gur. I guess I'm not feeling well today," she said and collected the cup from his hand.

"It might taste better with the fruit," he said and placed the plate next to her. "I put in a bit more sugar...er...honey since it tasted bad earlier."

She looked at the cup as she held it over her lips. She took a drink from the cup. "Ick," she said with her tongue out. "I don't think there's any fixing this medicinal herb taste," she said and looked over at him with a smile. "Thank you for trying, 'sio-gur."

She grabbed one of the fruit slices and chewed it. "Mmm," she hummed and swallowed. "This is good."

He took the bowl and spoon from her lap and returned it to the kitchen. He began to wash the dishes. He could hear Shari moving around in the other room as he placed the pot in the drying rack.

"Wait, you're not Ensio," she said from the end of the hallway.

He drained the water from the basin and hung the cloth up. He turned towards her.

"What's going on here?" She asked as she looked between him and the makeshift bed.

He took the cup and dish from her and placed them into the wash basin. He looked at her and motioned toward the setup in front of the stove. "I just thought that it felt nice lying in front of the heat when I wasn't well. I pulled this out here for you to sleep on...if you'd like."

"Are you trying to seduce me, Mr. Wolf?" Shari asked sternly with her right fist on her hip as she balanced with her left hand - holding the cloth he'd briefly forgotten about - on the wall. "I see, you gold-hearted wolf. Take care of me, be all nice to me and bed me...that sound right?"

"No. Not at all," he said as he began dreading his actions.

Shari giggled, then chuckled. She looked dispirited at the floor. "No one would want me like that, anyway."

"That's not true," he blurted and cringed immediately. "Dammit!" He cursed himself.

"No one is this nice to me without wanting my body in return. That's why this is out here," she said glumly and lazily flung her hand out to point at the makeshift bed. She returned her fist to her hip. She appeared to stagger a little.

"That's not true," he said, beginning to feel frustrated. "I'm just trying to take care of you like you did for me. I thought this was a nice thing to..."

"LIAR!!!" She yelled and threw the cloth at him. She staggered and fell against the other side of the hallway as he caught the cloth.

He held the cloth down at his side, his frustration beginning to turn to anger. She leaned against the wall breathing heavily. The right strap from her nightgown slid down her shoulder.

"Shari, I don't understand," he said and gripped the cloth tighter in his hand.

"Of course you don't understand, you complete and utter moron! First you're nice to me, then I touch your dick...then what? Huh? I teach you about sex, then you hit me and leave me? I bet that was your plan all along."

Shari's words were starting to cause pain in his chest. He could feel his throat vibrate with a growl he couldn't control. It felt like that first night all over again. He could see tears begin to fall down her cheeks. She was sliding down the wall but caught herself. She slid back up the wall causing the strap to fall lower down her arm.

"Shari," he said as calmly as he could, trying desperately not to show his teeth. "Calm down. I feel your words causing me pain and I feel angry from it. Please calm down, you're about to expose..."

"I'm about to expose this shit head for what he truly is," Shari interrupted with a menacing tone as she walked towards him. "Another parasite that latches onto....hup!"

Shari cried out as her foot caught on the edge of the futon. He dropped the cloth and lunged at her, falling to his knees. She crashed into him and he wrapped his arm around her shoulders.

"You okay?" He asked as he held her.

She began to punch his back. "LET ME GO!!!" She screamed.

He pulled her tighter to him and braced himself.

She began to punch his sides. "LET ME GO!!!" She screamed over and over.

He grit his teeth and squeezed his eyes shut. "She's so strong," he thought as he felt his ribs begin to ache. "Shh," he shushed as she began to breathe heavily. "It's okay," he said calmly as she continued to strike his ribs. "You're safe now. I'm not here to hurt you like that."

She weakly punched his left side once more before sobbing. He loosened his grip. She stammered in a deep breath and cried into his shoulder as she wrapped her arms around him.

"I'm sorry, Vilka-ha-has," she wailed, her fists clenching the tunic on his back and catching some of his fur in the process.

He rubbed her back as she began to babble, taking deep breaths every so often.

"I'm so sorry Vilka...I didn't mean it...I didn't mean it...I'm so sorry...you're not like that...you won't hurt me like that...you're too good to me...I don't deserve you...I'm so sorry..."

"Shh," he hushed again. He squeezed her shoulders and continued rubbing her back as she sobbed.

She finally started to calm down and loosened her grip on his tunic. She pulled away from him and lifted her gown to rub her eyes. He moved his arm to the side to allow her to move. She flopped her head against his chest and sighed.

"I feel tired from all that," she said quietly. "My head hurts."

He reached up and stroked her head and down the back of her neck. "You want to lay down?" He asked with concern.

"Yeah," she said and pulled away from him, his hand landing on her shoulder. She looked up at him with those blank eyes. "Would you lay with me until I fall asleep?" She asked as a child would a parent.

"I don't think that's a good idea," he said calmly and tried to smile warmly.

"Please?" She asked with a pout.

He looked at her sternly and sighed. "Just this once."

She smiled and fell into his chest. "Thank you," she said as she hugged him.

"Yeah. You're welcome," he said nervously.

"You might want to take this off," she said and pulled away from him. "I kind of made a mess of it," she said with embarrassment as she glanced away from him.

He looked at her for a moment. Her eyes met his. "This is not a good idea," he thought as he undid the buckle and unbuttoned the tunic. He slid it over his head. She helped him get it over and pulled his arms out. "And this is why," he thought as he saw her face and eyes were now lit up.

"Okay. Let's get you settled in," he said and moved off the futon. He tossed the tunic off to the side and it landed by the corner near the end of the flipped table. "I'll go grab the blanket."

He walked into her room and grabbed one of the blankets from her bed and an extra pillow. He walked back into the dining area. Shari was leaning on her left elbow. She looked like a predator stalking prey with her right hand kneading the futon and her tail gently thrashing the cushion. He moved to the futon and tossed the pillow down at the head. He pulled the blanket over her. She moved and slid under the blanket. He slowly laid next to her and put his head on the pillow. She placed her head on his shoulder and wrapped her leg around his.

"Mmn," she groaned. "Can you take those off, too," she said as she sat up. "They're itchy."

He glanced at her pouting face. He looked at the ceiling and closed his eyes. "*This is definitely* not a good idea," he thought as he undid the rope on his trousers.

He pushed them down and kicked them free from his legs. He used his foot to pull them up under the blanket and grabbed them. He tossed them next to his tunic. He saw something else fly over by the table.

He quickly looked over at her but she tackled him and his head slammed into the pillow. She pulled the blanket over before he could confirm what she just did. He could feel the soft pillows on her chest press into his aching ribs and something hot press into his thigh as she pulled his leg with hers.

"Shari," he began, feeling his heart race and a feeling of fear creeping into his chest.

"It's fine," she said and snuggled her head into his chest. "Direct contact is better for heat transfer when cold."

"You're not wrong...but this is," he said as he glanced at the top of her head.

"It's fine," she said as she moved her hand from his chest and caressed the side of his muzzle. "Just close your eyes, don't peek and pretend this never happened."

She stroked his muzzle several times. It felt really good and did calm him down a bit. He sighed and closed his eyes as she instructed.

"Good," she said and slid her hand down his neck and to his chest. She giggled. "And calm down. I won't sleep with that pounding heart of yours."

She giggled again and groaned as she squeezed her leg into his and clenched his chest fur. She relaxed her grip on both and sighed. He held his breath and let it out slowly.

"This is bad," he thought. "This is a mixed message waiting to be read wrong." He drew in and let out another deep breath. "Just remember not to look when she wakes up, Darijus."

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"YOU...BASTARD!!!" A furious, deeper male voice called out.

Vilkas snapped awake as two hands wrapped around his neck and began dragging him.

"SHARI!!!" A female's voice rang out.

Vilkas' eyes focused and could barely make out the enraged shepherd's face. His brow was furrowed into two large creases above the bridge of his muzzle. His eyes were filled with blood lust. His teeth were fully bare and clenched tightly together.

"Shari, put this on," Valeska said with concern. "What has he done to you?" She asked enraged.

"What have you done with my daughter?" The irate shepherd demanded as he dragged Vilkas between his legs by his neck.

Vilkas couldn't speak. He couldn't breathe. His vision became cloudy as he felt himself lifted up and a hand finally released from his neck.

"WHAT IS GOING ON HERE?!" Shari cried out desperately.

A heavy fist struck across Vilkas' muzzle and his head snapped to the right.

"That vile man can't hurt you anymore, Shari," Valeska said, comforting her sister. "We're here to save you. What did that creature force you to do?"

Another fist slammed into Vilkas' muzzle.

"IT WON'T MATTER WHEN HE'S DEAD!!!" Tangi bellowed and forced his hand into Vilkas' eye.

"WHAT IS GOING ON?! SOMEONE PLEASE ANSWER ME?!" Shari cried out.

"Calm down," Vilkas thought as another fist bashed into the side of his head. He reached over and clutched the end of the table with his hand and clenched his teeth.

"You're safe now, Shari," Valeska said comfortingly. "Daddy's got this under control."

Tangi's fist drove into Vilkas' muzzle. Vilkas could taste the blood filling his mouth and cool air brush his gum and teeth.

"DADDY STOP!!!" Shari screamed.

Tangi wrapped his hand back around Vilkas' neck and squeezed. "Not until he's dead," Tangi growled.

"LET GO OF ME!" Shari demanded. "DADDY STOP!!! HE'LL KILL YOU!!!"

"LET 'EM TRY!!!" Tangi growled louder.

Vilkas felt his lip tremble. His eyes focused on the eyes of the shepherd with killing intent. He squeezed his hand into the wooden table with all his might. Another punch landed across his muzzle. He snapped his eyes back onto the shepherd attacker and felt his throat vibrate into a low growl.

"DADDY STOP!!!" Shari shrieked and wrapped her arms around Tangi's massive arm.

"LET GO OF ME!" Tangi snapped and swung his arm back.

Vilkas' eyes followed Shari's helpless body fly back and to the floor with a loud 'THUD'. He shot his eyes back to the shepherd and growled louder. He felt the wood giving way under his grip.

"DADDY!!!" Valeska cried.

"KILL HIM!" Vilkas' thoughts roared as another fist found his face. He felt his rage building and his heart pounded. "Shari will cry if I do," he thought and tried desperately to calm down.

"DAMMIT!!! I SAID STOP!!!" Shari shrieked and threw herself at Tangi.

Shari wrapped her left arm around Tangi's neck and her right arm wrapped around his.

"Daddy," Shari cried breathlessly. "Please stop. He's trying so hard not to kill you right now."

"Shari! Get off of me!" Tangi yelled and tried to throw her off.

"LOOK DAMMIT!!!" Shari bellowed into Tangi's ears and pointed with her left hand at Vilkas. "He's trying so hard to hide his fangs because I told him not to," she cried softer and began sobbing into Tangi's head.

"She's right," Vilkas thought. "I am." He was redirecting his anger into his trembling upper lip to keep his fangs from showing. He couldn't ease the look in his eyes or release his grip from the table.

"Shari?!" Valeska cried and walked up behind Shari. She looked perplexed as to what to do as her gaze shifted from all the bodies in front of her.

"Daddy, please calm down," Shari sobbed. "He won't hurt you but he will kill you. He won't because he wants to stay here. He wants to live here. He wants to be friends."

"What nonsense are you going on about?" Tangi asked as he stared daggers into Vilkas' eyes.

"Daddy," Shari sobbed and gasped. "He saved this town from those men and I saved his life because of it, so you need to stop!"

"Shari. Explain yourself because that's not what it looked like when we walked in," Valeska said with concern as she knelt down and stroked Shari's back.

"Just look at him and think about Socorro's 'hero'," Shari wept.

Vilkas saw Tangi's eyes dart around.

"Shari, that was nonsense from a chi-..." Valeska began.

"Then explain how they died and he's alive," Shari interrupted.

Valeska looked over Tangi's shoulder and her eyes began to dart around.

Vilkas felt his anger subsiding as the grip on his neck loosened. He lowered his lip and eased his grip on the table. He still couldn't manage to soften the look in his eyes.

Valeska's eyes grew wide. "It's him," she said, flabbergasted. "But then why were you..."

"I asked him to, even though he didn't want to," Shari said and wept harder. "He's too kind. He really has a heart of gold without a sword," Shari cried. "Noth-hing happened. He was just helpi-hing with my fe-hever. It's my fa-hault."

Vilkas wasn't getting enough air through his nose so he opened his mouth to breath. Blood spilled from between his teeth and onto his chest. He closed his eyes and tried to calm down and catch his breath.

"You've *got* to be shitting me," Tangi quietly growled.

"Daddy, I think she's telling the truth," Valeska said calmly. "I just can't believe...he exists," she said with disbelief.

"Val, take your sister and calm her down," Tangi said and sighed. "Clean her up and get her dressed. She'll need to patch him up."

"Come on, sis," Valeska said soothingly. "Let's go."

"And you," Tangi said. Vilkas opened his eyes and glanced up at him. "Stay put until I tell you to move."

"Undershtood," Vilkas said and closed his eyes, wincing in pain as he pressed his hand against his muzzle.

Vilkas' head ached and the ringing in his ear intensified. He could still hear movement in the house. He could hear the women in the washroom and Tangi at the wash basin in the kitchen. The women moved around after a moment and Tangi sounded like he was moving something. He heard voices, but they sounded muffled and distant.

He couldn't focus. His mind went blank. He could only feel pain in his ribs, his face and his head. He could feel the blood pooled in the end of his muzzle and it dripping from his chin onto his chest.

"Oh gawd," he heard Shari gasp.

He opened his eyes and glanced up as she moved from the hallway and to the washroom. She was wearing a gown that was longer and had short sleeves. She came back a moment later and knelt next to him. Valeska appeared from the hallway. Shari began pressing a towel into his chest and began dabbing at his fur. She let go of the towel and touched the back of his hand.

"Let me look," Shari said calmly.

Vilkas looked in her puffy and apologetic eyes. He slowly pulled his hand away from his muzzle.

Shari winced. She looked over her shoulder. "Valeska, go get my suture kit. It's in the last drawer under the counter."

"Yeah, sure," Valeska said and disappeared.

Shari looked back at Vilkas with those apologetic eyes. "I wondered if all your wounds had healed," she said as she stared at his muzzle while moving her head. "I should have had her get the numbing agent."

"Mmm," he grunted and shook his head. "Ish fline. Jusht do it." He watched as her eyes welled up with tears. "Mmm-nnn," he hummed as he wiggled his head side-to-side. "Ish okay. No tearsh."

Shari collected herself and sighed. "I'm so sorry. This is all my fault."

"No," Vilkas said and tried to smile. "Shtupid, ignorant meathead."

Shari chuckled and smiled. "No. Stupid, heart-on-her-sleeve Shari."

"Here you go," Valeska said as she handed the kit to Shari. "Oh damn!" She exclaimed when she glanced at Vilkas, bringing her hand to her mouth.

"It was a clean cut before," Shari said as she prepared the curved needle. "It won't heal right now that it was bludgeoned open. I'm so sorry, Vilkas."

"Ish fline," Vilkas said as he watched her bring the needle up to his face.

"That's enough talking, you," Shari reprimanded. "I have to put my fingers in your mouth or I'm sewing it into your gums. You don't want that."

"Aren't you going to numb him or knock him out first?" Valeska asked with unease.

"He said 'ish fline'," Shari said and pressed the needle into his muzzle.

He winced as she stabbed through the thick skin. She used her thumb to press the two sides together and pierced through the top of his lip.

"I'm gonna be sick," Valeska said and covered her mouth before walking away.

Shari giggled as she continued to sew Vilkas' lip.

After a moment, Tangi spoke up. "So, start from the beginning. Who is he?"

Shari sighed and drooped her shoulders as she stopped sewing. "I'd rather not do this right now," she muttered. She sighed through her nose and straightened up as she drove the needle into Vilkas' lip. "I'm still learning myself. I'm slowly getting him to open up to me. He's used aliases his whole life because all he's done is fight. He goes by Viktor, but he wants to leave that life behind. After some thought, he decided he is to be called Vilkas while he's here."

"So, he's still a stranger living with my daughter," Tangi said gruffly.

"If you swung a sword your entire life because that's all you knew, do you think you'd be able to trust so easily?" Shari hissed. "His mother died at a young age, then he was forced into slavery. After the slavers ruined his arm and left him to die, he picked up a sword and has been killing ever since. He asked me to help him integrate into a normal life and that's what I'm trying to do."

"Are you serious?" Valeska asked in astonishment.

"Yeah," Shari said as she continued sewing. "He felt like he was at his end so he came here to die. His words. But, after we talked, he wanted to live. He wanted to feel like he lived a normal life before he died and this was where he wanted to do it."

Shari sighed and twisted her wrist causing it to crackle. She began sewing again. It sounded like Tangi was chopping something on the cutting board. It sounded like Valeska was feeding the stove with more wood.

"He was attacked on his way here," Shari continued, both talking and sewing. "That's why those men were found dead on the road here. That's when he met Socorro."

"My son was there when he killed people?" Valeska asked with aggravation.

"No," Shari corrected. "He was by the river when Socorro showed up. Socorro was also the one who told him the town was under attack. That's when our lame eared, little armed swordsman hero came here to save us."

Vilkas shot up his eyebrow and narrowed his eyes.

"Shut up, meathead," Shari snickered.

"So Socorro wasn't lying or telling tall tales," Valeska said proudly. "I'm hugging that boy when we get back and telling him his hero's alive."

"No!" Shari yelled as she looked over her shoulder. "I mean...he asked me not to," Shari said and returned her attention to Vilkas. "Not until he says it's okay," she said and clipped the string. She tied several knots over themselves at the end of the string. "I think he wants to heal and acclimate himself a bit to normal life before he wants that attention."

"I think I get it," Valeska said. "I'm still hugging him."

"So far, the only ones that know his identity are me, Seppo, and you two." Shari looked at Vilkas sternly. "Brace yourself."

"Wait! Seppo knows?" Tangi chimed in and the chopping stopped.

Shari winced as she pulled the string taut. Vilkas could feel the string slide through his lip and felt it close. Shari tied a knot close to his fur and clipped the string.

"That should do it," Shari said and smiled. "Yeah. Seppo knows. I had to tell him when this guy collapsed at the worksite." Shari packed up the kit and stood up. "Go get cleaned up for dinner," she said to Vilkas and left down the hallway.

Vilkas could see four eyes looking over at him. Tangi held a knife and was chopping vegetables. Valeska was lazily stirring something in a pot on the stove. Vilkas saw the cushion and bedding was gone from in front of the stove. He looked down and held the towel to his chest as he struggled to his feet. He felt those eyes on him as he walked down the hall to his room. He tossed the towel into the bin by the door. Shari was using a cotton ball and some strong alcohol to clean the needle. The cushion was back on the bed and the bedding was tossed on top of it. He walked into the washroom and grabbed a cloth.

"Are you okay?" Shari asked from the doorway. Vilkas looked over at her and nodded. She smiled and said, "I'm proud of you for staying calm and not fighting back." She looked down at the floor. "I'm really sorry I got you hurt like that. You were right...and it was a bad idea. I'm so sorry. I wasn't thinking straight and I feel like I betrayed your trust."

"Shari," he said calmly. "It's okay. I stayed calm and didn't show my fangs like you asked me to." He smiled as Shari looked up at him, looking a bit relieved. "Shari?" He said as something came to him. "Are you...a pervert?" He asked genuinely.

Shari glared at him. He looked at her, awaiting her answer. She scoffed and stomped into the dining room. He could hear Valeska laughing.

"I changed my mind, daddy. I hate him. Go beat that smart mouth of his," Shari bawled.

"You kiddin' me?" Tangi asked. "You see what that monster did to your table? That's your fight now."

Shari growled.

Valeska laughed. "Shari...*have* you turned into a shameless perv?" she asked.

Shari growled louder as Valeska wailed with laughter. Vilkas felt himself chuckle as well as he cleaned up the blood from his fur.

"I heard that!" Shari yelled. She growled again. "I regret teaching him to laugh."

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