

Julie Mannino

A
Touch
Of
Innocence



A Touch of Innocence
(A Demisexual M/M Fairy Romance)

Julie Mannino

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Author's Note

This novella contains material intended for mature readers, including sex workers, light bondage, mentions of parent death, angst, rich/poor, class difference, friends to lovers, and lovers to enemies. One character is a demisexual with biromantic attraction, but his feelings and actions don't speak for all demisexuals or anyone under the ace umbrella.

While this is set in the same universe as my Alternate Earth novels, the fairy realm is separate from Earth, and no interaction with humans takes place. This takes place in 1674.

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This is the life and the way that was chosen.

The silence, often of pure innocence, persuades where speaking fails.

-William Shakespeare, Winter's Tale, Act II, Scene Two

Aspen

“I’d pay him to fuck me.”

Aspen snorted as he looked at the older prostitute. “No, you wouldn’t.”

Zima chuckled and leaned against the wall. “You’re right. I’d never give up my money even for a Prince.”

“And he’s too young for you.”

“Pfft. Who cares? It’s not like it would actually happen anyway. Someone like him wouldn’t look twice at us.”

“That is Prince Oriel, right?” asked Aspen.

“Yeah, he always keeps his hair shorter than the other two. Thank Elira, or we’d never know which one is the Crown Prince.”

Aspen eyed Prince Oriel as he rode by on his horse. His hair was short and black, although purple highlights showed where the sunlight hit. Combined with his slim physique, neat features, and fine clothing, he certainly looked good to Aspen.

“I wish someone like that would swoop me off the street and marry me,” he said even though knew that was the dumbest fantasy ever for someone in his position.

“Pfft. No one is ever going to marry us whores. Remember what I told you.”

Aspen remembered. Zima’s area to pick up customers was the docks, and he’d caught Aspen too far in. Instead of kicking his ass or threatening him, he’d taken him to a tavern, bought him a drink, and gave him tips for living as a street whore. Aspen figured that Zima had felt sorry for him since he’d also been on the streets since he was fourteen and had to be at least twenty-five by now.

The first tip had been to be careful about where he tried to get customers. If a whore had decided an area was theirs, it could lead to trouble if someone was snagging their potential customers. Aspen had some skill with a sword and a bow since he'd had lessons while growing up, but he only owned a knife now, and he wasn't that big. In a fight, he'd get his ass kicked pretty fast even though he could channel fire through a weapon.

It was usually slower during the day, which was why Zima must have decided to hang out with Aspen by the guild area where most of the jewelers had set up shop. Aspen usually had decent enough luck here since a crummy tavern was nearby, and more than a few of the drunk customers had made use of him.

It wasn't a job he'd have picked if his life was different, but at least he wasn't dead of starvation.

"If he wants a fuck, he's probably got a half-dozen courtiers his age that are ready to slobber on his royal cock." Zima rolled his eyes. "Lucky bastard. I'll see you later, all right?"

"Bye."

Aspen remained on the low wall of the tiny park. The pleasantness of the guild area ended before the park, which wasn't taken care of, and he could see the tavern where he'd had some luck. The overgrown bushes and shrubbery here were great if he needed to suck someone off or bend over. Not too far, there was an inn with hourly rates if a customer needed a little more time and wanted to do something extra kinky to him. If he went around the block at night, he could often find someone looking for a quick hump and just use an alley if needed.

He'd only been doing this job for a few months, and he tried to imagine being like Zima in another decade. He didn't want to be whoring his ass out on the street for that long. Zima said Aspen was pretty enough to get a job at a whorehouse if he wanted, although he would never do that himself. Zima

liked being free and not having to give a cut to the Madam and live with a bunch of other whores.

Aspen wouldn't mind since it was much safer, and he'd have a proper room to live in, but none of the good ones would take a seventeen-year-old. Eighteen was the legal age of consent, not that anybody bothered to ask how old he was on the street.

He let his shoulder-length hair fall forward enough to cover his face as he spotted the Prince riding back up the street again. What would it be like to never worry about money, food, or where he'd sleep?

He peeked at the handsome face and let his eyes drop. Like he'd ever get to fuck anybody like that. The hooves clomped closer, and he expected the Prince to ride by without a glance, but the beast paused.

“Hey.”

Aspen peered up at him. Why the hell was Oriel looking at him? It wasn't like Aspen was in his way.

“You were out here last week when I came by.”

“This is my spot.” Aspen put a little emphasis on the last word.

He was sure the meaning was clear, and Oriel glanced away as he seemed to get it. But instead of leaving the lowly street whore, he inched the horse closer. “What's your name?”

“Aspen.”

“Do you want to go for a ride, Aspen?”

A ride on the horse, or a ride on Oriel's cock? “Uh...don't you have some other place you could go?”

Aspen immediately wanted to kick himself. If the Prince was stupid or desperate enough to pay him for sex, the answer should be an instant yes. Oriel surely had no disease, and he'd probably give Aspen extra. It wasn't like money was a problem for him.

“No, I just thought we could go for a ride,” said Oriel.

“And?”

“And maybe we could have some fun.”

Aspen raised an eyebrow. “It’s a din for a half-hour, Your Majesty.” It usually wasn’t, but he doubted the Prince would mind paying it.

“Don’t call me that. Oriel’s fine.” He pulled out a din and tossed it over.

Aspen caught it and tucked the silver, triangular coin in his pocket as he stood. The Crown Prince was surely lying, and he’d be up Aspen’s ass somewhere in five minutes. There was no reason to give him a ride on the horse as if they were friends.

He went to mount the horse behind Oriel, but the Crown Prince took his hand. “Sit in front of me. Come on. I’ll boost you up.”

Aspen got himself situated in the saddle and adjusted his cloak, although he couldn’t see the point in this. Oriel nudged the horse into a trot. Maybe he had a nasty, disgusting kink, and that was why he wanted a street whore who wouldn’t say a word. Or if he did, no one would believe him.

Or maybe he wanted someone to hurt. Not with a cane or a paddle, something Aspen enjoyed, but maybe in a way that was too brutal for him. Maybe he’d be left bloody and half-dead in an alley once the Crown Prince was finished with him. It wasn’t like anyone would miss a street whore and complain to King Leneer about it.

Why didn’t he think about this before he agreed?

He couldn’t run right now, but if things seemed to be heading that way, he’d bolt as soon as possible. If he had to fight, he’d channel fire through his knife, although he’d have to hide for ages if he managed to hurt the Crown Prince. More likely, Oriel would kick his ass if he tried to fight. He didn’t need anything to channel his fire through.

Oriel guided the beast down a quiet side street, toward the end, and behind an abandoned shop. Maybe Oriel just wanted a quick suck or fuck, but Aspen kept imagining terrible things he'd heard of. Zima knew of a whore who had been choked to death while his customer fucked him a couple of years back.

“Here’s what I need you to do,” said Oriel. “I’ll pay you extra too.”

Oh, Elira, here it came. Aspen tensed, ready to jump off the horse and haul ass.

“I managed to snag a plain cloak, but this will probably work better with two, so that’s where you come in.” Oriel plucked at Aspen’s dingy one. “Let me have this one, and you can wear the other one.”

“Why?” asked Aspen.

“You’re going to help me sneak out of Lork.”

Aspen turned a bit in the saddle to eye him. “Why don’t you wear the plain cloak and go yourself?”

“My Father already warned us that we’re not to leave Lork alone until we’re eighteen. It’s stupid I still can’t go out even though my birthday is so close. Even with a plain cloak, it’s kind of hard to hide my clothes and everything. What if they see my face or guess? Besides, I’d like to go out with someone.”

“Go with a guard.”

“That’s the whole point of this! I don’t want to go with a guard. I just want to go out somewhere with someone my age that’s not related or paid to watch me, but I’m not allowed until I’m eighteen. I can’t even go to the beach without someone pasted to my side.”

“Why not fuck me here instead of out there?” Aspen waved a hand.

Oriel scrunched his eyebrows together. “I’m not bringing you along to fuck. You’re the decoy and company, and I know you won’t snitch to my parents.”

Aspen bit his lip. This didn't sound too hard, although there probably would be fucking. Oriel would likely figure why the hell not? "You'll pay me extra, right? My time is money. I don't have time to be playing when I have to eat later."

"I'll pay you." Oriel dug in his trouser pocket for more money. "Can you guide Raven? She's a good horse."

"Yeah. I can ride." Aspen used to have a nice horse before everything went to shit. He took the proffered coins to put in the coin purse looped on his belt. For that many, the Crown Prince could do all kinds of kinky stuff to Aspen.

Oriel dismounted and pulled out a plain cloak from the saddlebag. Aspen noticed that the horse's saddle and stuff wasn't too fancy, but it was still clearly a good beast.

"Isn't your horse too nice for this?" He got down and undid his cloak. "Won't the guards recognize it?"

"Raven's not actually mine," said Oriel. "She's for anyone, but I've ridden her before. She's a good girl."

He put on Aspen's cloak. Aspen took the other one, which had a big rip near the hem but was still in better shape, and swung it around himself. After Oriel folded and put away his purple one, he mounted Raven again and arranged the new one the best he could to hide himself. Aspen could see the problem. If he took the reins, his silk sleeves stood out against the coarse weave of the cloak, and the guards might try to look at his face.

"You need to wear all plain stuff," said Aspen.

"I don't own anything like commoners."

"Ask a servant to borrow clothes."

"They might tell my Father because they'll guess and probably worry. That's why if you sit in front of me, it'll work. They won't suspect that I'm with a commoner. You'll hide most of me. Besides, I want to go with someone."

"All right."

Once he mounted the horse, Oriel rearranged his cloak again and leaned against Aspen.

“Let’s go.”

Aspen was able to relax since he figured they were safe. Unless this was an elaborate plan for Oriel to get him out of the city for his sick kicks. It’d be easier to hide a body somewhere out there. Or maybe he truly just wanted to sneak out. He wouldn’t be the first seventeen-year-old to flout his Father’s rules.

Aspen hadn’t ridden a horse in a while, but it was rather hard to forget such a skill, and Raven was quite agreeable. For a moment, he almost felt normal like he did before Father started selling things to pay for the massive debts he’d racked up.

Oriel was quiet as they rode, and he rested his head against Aspen’s shoulder like they were just two lovers who were poor but owned a rather nice horse for whatever reason.

When Aspen approached the massive gates, he wasn’t sure if he’d get in trouble if the guards realized their ruse. Oriel wouldn’t get in real trouble, of course. As they approached, Aspen kept his head up like he had nothing to hide. Oriel remained against him with his hood up.

Aspen was a nobody, and while his horse was nice, there could be a reason. Maybe it was a gift or they had borrowed it. The guards glanced at him and didn’t seem to realize that the guy tucked against his back was royalty.

They passed by with no issue, and Oriel slipped his arms around Aspen’s torso before he whispered. “We did it!”

Aspen couldn’t help the slight feeling of elation as he nudged the horse into a gallop since the area beyond was clear. Raven flew down the hard-packed road. Out in the distance, the vast ocean shimmered and seemed to go on forever.

With the wind and freedom, Aspen could almost pretend he was someone else. Oriel remained against him even though they were too far for any guards to figure out who he was.

With the feel of his arms, Aspen could also almost imagine he was with his first love back when he was fifteen. Of course, that ended once he was poor.

A whore would be stupid to love anyone now.

Raven's hooves pounded the dirt as the road took them closer to the beach, parallel to it, and into the forest. Aspen wasn't sure where the Prince wanted to go, but he hadn't said anything, so this must be fine. He slowed Raven to let her rest before he galloped her again and took the left fork that came up.

Oriel had mentioned the beach. Once they left the forest, crossed a bare scrubby patch, and reached the sand, he lifted his head although he didn't remove his arms.

"This is nice."

"It'd still look the same even with a guard," reasoned Aspen.

"It's not the same when someone is always stuck to your side if you step foot out of Lork," said Oriel. "You wouldn't understand. You can stroll out anytime you want."

"Boohoo, someone keeps you safe," said Aspen. "I'd like to have a guard keep me safe."

"You also have more freedom than me in some ways."

Aspen paused Raven and twisted in the saddle to gaze into Oriel's purple eyes. "What? The freedom to starve to death unless I let people dump a load in my ass or mouth? Or to sleep in the street? I'd cut off my pinky to live in a Castle, eat regular meals, and be protected."

Oriel reddened, and Aspen could also feel his face warming from his outburst.

"I-" Oriel flushed even deeper.

"You do know I'm a street whore, right?" asked Aspen. "If I sit in the same spot or hang around a certain area a lot..."

“Yeah, I’m not stupid. I’m sorry. I didn’t mean...” The Crown Prince dropped his eyes.

For some reason, that made Aspen feel worse as shame coiled in his gut. “I’m sorry for yelling, Your Majesty.”

“Don’t call me that,” said Oriel.

“Aren’t you worried someone might have seen you talking earlier with a lowly prostitute? Someone might have remembered me.” Aspen faced front again and guided Raven forward. He felt Oriel’s shrug.

“If anybody said anything, Father would scold me for screwing a street whore, but I could probably fib my way out.”

Aspen wished he still had his Father. Even if he got yelled at for something, it’d be nice to hear his voice again.

“I just want to go out by myself, and when you have two brothers, always doing stuff together gets kind of old. I love them, but I just want to do my own thing sometimes and not share everything. I know that probably sounds strange when I have everything else I could want.”

“Eh, I guess not. I don’t have siblings.”

“How old are you?”

“Seventeen, like you.” Everybody knew the triplet’s age, and their birthday was only a week after Aspen’s.

Oriel was quiet for a moment. “You’re too young to be a whore.”

“Like customers care. Nobody asks my age when they see me on the street. I’m either ignored or some guy asks how much.”

“That’s illegal. You’re too young to consent-”

Aspen rolled his eyes. “Nobody gives a shit. They just want to tie me up and dump a load in me. Besides, I’ll be eighteen soon.”

“Haven’t you tried to get a different job?”

“Yes, I’ve tried to get a different job,” snapped Aspen. “This ended up being my only option, but what would you know?”

He stared ahead at the sand without seeing it as he tried to force his anger back down. Stupid fucking Crown Prince. Like Aspen hadn’t thought of doing something else. He’d tried, but shit didn’t always work out the way people wanted.

“I’m sorry. I don’t know what it’s like on the street.”

“Damn right, you don’t.”

Oriel kept his arms around him. Aspen wished he had his ignorance.

“Can we stop here?”

“It’s your horse.”

Maybe Oriel would ditch him and risk being noticed when he returned. Aspen had Raven stop, and he slid down, but Oriel did too and kicked off his boots. He didn’t seem angry at the way he’d been spoken to.

He took off his cloak and coat, dumped them on the sand, and started undoing his vest buttons. “Can we enjoy our time out here?”

“If you want to whip my ass or anything kinky, you gotta pay extra.”

Oriel raised an eyebrow. “We’re not fucking, remember?”

“I don’t have a disease yet since I’m still kinda fresh. So, if that’s what you’re worried about...”

“I’d rather go swimming.” Oriel flung his vest on top of the cloak. “We’re out here, so why not have fun that doesn’t involve sex?”

Aspen didn’t mind sex, and he often quite liked the kinky stuff as long as the customer wasn’t an arse. Still, it’d be nice to not have it, and he’d already been paid. “All right.”

Oriel tossed his sword belt on the clothes and undid his belt. "Last one in the water is a rotten egg."

"What-hey!"

Oriel whipped down his trousers and drawers in one swift movement while Aspen fumbled with his clothes. By the time he got everything off, the Crown Prince was already halfway to the water and laughing.

"You're a cheater!" Naked, Aspen ran after him. "You didn't warn me or anything!"

"I had more clothes on! That was fair!"

"Your ass is so pale, I bet everyone in the East Forest can see the glow."

The water was cool, and it dragged on Aspen's legs as he went in. For a moment, he completely forgot who Oriel was.

Oriel spluttered when Aspen tackled him in the hip-high water and knocked him right under. Aspen saw froth and bubbles before he came up and realized his mistake as his eyes burned from the salt. Talking was one thing, but he'd jumped on the naked Crown Prince of the West Bay Kingdom and knocked him down. Oriel coughed as he stood and swiped at his face.

"I'm sorry," said Aspen.

Oriel stuck out his tongue. "What? That you lost, and you're a rotten egg now?" He laughed, splashed Aspen, and plunged deeper into the water.

Oh. He wasn't pissed that a lowly street whore had just taken a huge liberty and bodily tackled him. Aspen had expected a threat or something for getting so physical.

He had a feeling he was seeing a side of Oriel that others didn't get to. King Leneer was considered to be pleasant and fair but a bit strict on manners in some ways. He probably wouldn't let his sons strip naked and go swimming around here. The beach was empty today, but commoners could come by. The triplets were old enough to where they needed to

behave in public and present a certain image since they weren't children anymore. Running around with a street whore while their balls hung out probably didn't count as proper etiquette.

But Oriel didn't seem to care, and he splashed Aspen when he drew nearer. Aspen splashed him back, and in the next few seconds, water went back and forth. Oriel cheated and went under.

He came up a little farther out where the water was nearly at his shoulders. While he was wiping his face, Aspen paddled over and took another risk by wrapping his arms around Oriel's shoulders.

"Now you can't splash, and you have to carry me."

"What am I? A horse?"

"Yes. You're my royal steed."

Oriel reached back and managed to grab his hip with one hand. "If I'm going to give you a piggyback ride, put your legs around me. I'm not dragging you through the water like that. Would you hang off of Raven's neck?"

"Erm, no."

Aspen put his legs around the Crown Prince's waist. Oriel had to feel a certain something against his lower back, but he didn't seem to care. If Zima could see Aspen now, naked and getting a piggyback ride on the Crown Prince in the shoulder-high water. And he'd been paid even though the Oriel didn't seem interested in a suck or a fuck.

The water was pretty calm today with a slight swell that caressed them as Oriel walked on the sandy bottom. He wasn't as skinny as Aspen, and he had some muscle since he practiced fighting and archery. Aspen rarely got nice touches that didn't lead to something else within five seconds. He wouldn't dare say it, but he craved simple cuddles and affection. Unfortunately, people didn't pay for that.

Resting his cheek on Oriel's shoulder, he could detect the rich scent of magnolias which was a rare smell for any fairy to have. He could tell it was his natural odor because soaps were never quite like that.

"Have you always lived here?" asked Oriel.

"Yeah. I was born in Lork."

"Do you swim a lot?"

"Nah. Not anymore."

"Since this is fun, do you want to do it again sometime? We might have to go farther out if there are people around, but we could come back all summer and swim."

"I have to work. Food's not free."

"I'll pay you."

"You'd really pay a street whore to come play on the beach with you?"

"If that's what it takes, yeah." Oriel placed his hand on the back of Aspen's. "Besides, you're not a street whore now. You're just Aspen, and I'm Oriel who cheats at games and gives ocean piggyback rides."

Aspen laughed against his shoulder. "Sure. We can do this again."

They laid out in the sand on the cloaks to dry in the sun once they'd had their fill of the water. Aspen thought for sure Oriel would start to think of other things they could do. He'd certainly paid enough, so Aspen would let him if he wanted. He had to want it, right? They'd been naked for the past hour and up against each other too.

But when Oriel sat up, he only reached for his clothes. "I have to get back and take a bath before dinner."

Aspen could have a nice dinner tonight too. Hell, he'd even buy Zima a meat pie if he could find him. Once they were dressed and back on the horse like before, Aspen wondered if Oriel would really find him again.

He'd probably forget or he'd get distracted by other stuff. Or he'd decided to go with someone else so he didn't have to worry about hiding. As for not wanting sex, maybe he was just too shy or inexperienced.

Besides, who wanted to be friends with a street whore?

Aspen kicked Raven into a gallop so he could feel free for a little longer as Oriel held onto him.

Oriel

While his brothers tried to control their snorts about something at the High Table, Oriel stared at his plate as he ate. Father would probably be quite displeased if he knew his son had been with a street whore. He'd also be furious if he knew they had left Lork and gone to the beach to play naked in the water like a couple of commoners.

It had been worth the risk. Oriel had friends at court, but they wouldn't go playing naked on the beach or swimming. They'd act like that was above them and say they were too old for such games if he suggested it.

It had been nice to simply be Oriel for a bit. Everyone would probably say Aspen's frank way of talking to him was because he was lower, but Oriel had liked it. Being treated as though he just wanted a fuck was a bit hurtful at first, but nobody probably ever wanted to do anything with Aspen except screw him. How long had it been since he'd had fun?

Oriel had gone into the city last week to pay a jeweler to make Mother a necklace for her birthday in a few weeks. He'd seen Aspen sitting on the wall then, and his eyes had been drawn to him. A not-so-nice tavern was nearby, so perhaps he had customers from there. Oriel wasn't experienced in such a life, but he could guess some things since Aspen had been in the same spot.

Something about his long, black hair and slim body had attracted Oriel's attention. He wouldn't say it was lust either because he didn't feel that for others, even the few he'd had sex with.

He'd gone all the way with another male courtier and a kitchen girl. Both had been his age and quite eager to fuck, but they hadn't been keen to stick around after or get too cuddly.

The kitchen girl wouldn't stop calling him "Your Majesty" and said she had to get back downstairs. The courtier had trusted Oriel to be in his ass, but he hadn't seemed interested in a cuddle afterward.

Oriel had been too embarrassed to ask either because he was afraid he'd be thought of as silly.

A couple of months ago, there had been a lot of blowjobs with a stableboy who was the same age too, but he was aloof and had acted like they were simply cum middens for each other. Oriel wanted affection, and not the hugs Mother was willing to give. He was getting too old for that.

Aspen had held onto his shoulders and demanded to be carried. The whole time, Oriel had kept feeling his cheek on his shoulder.

He wanted to feel that again. As long as his parents didn't find out, he could.

The next week, he found Aspen lounging on the wall. Oriel guided the horse over, and Aspen's grey eyes widened at the sight of him.

"Ready to go?"

Aspen opened his mouth slightly, and he paused. "You want to go back again?"

"Of course. We had fun last week, right?"

Aspen's eyes lit up before he stood. "Yeah, we did."

The gate guards didn't suspect a thing since Oriel kept his hood up and his head down like last time. Aspen kicked Raven into a gallop once they were away from Lork, and Oriel held onto him, enjoying the slim feel of him and the scent of roses.

"You ride well," he said when they slowed.

"I practiced when I was younger."

"Where's your-" Oriel cut off. Stupid. Aspen's parents were probably dead. Why else would he be on the street? Teenagers

didn't wake up one morning and decide to start selling their arse to strangers.

"My Mother died when I was one, and Father had a heart attack," said Aspen, clearly guessing. "I used to be middle class, but not anymore."

"I'm sorry." Oriel wanted to kick himself because that was so inadequate. He really needed to learn to think before he spoke.

Aspen shrugged. "It's not your fault. I figured you'd wonder why I was on my own."

"Do you want me to see if there's a job or something in the kitchens?"

Aspen stopped Raven and turned to look at him. "Oriel, I think you're nice, and if you want us to play on the beach, that's fine. I like you, and you're not all snobby and uppity, but I don't need saving. All right?"

Oriel gave him a small nod. "All right."

He had just wanted to give him a way out, but he could see why Aspen found that insulting. Even though he hadn't intended it, it probably sounded like he was better, and Aspen could never find his own way in the world without a rich guy helping him.

Maybe he should just keep his mouth shut.

But the part where Aspen said he liked him kept ringing in Oriel's ears. He got along well with others in general, but if someone didn't like him at court, they'd probably never say the truth to his face. He could tell Aspen hadn't been lying out of politeness.

As soon as Aspen paused the horse on the empty beach, he slid down and started hastily removing his clothes. "Last one in is a rotten egg."

"Now who's the cheater?!"

Oriel had a vest, a coat, and a sword belt. His shirt was tailored too and had laces at the cuffs. Aspen simply took off his loose shirt, kicked his boots aside, damn near ripped off his trousers and drawers, and streaked toward the water while laughing.

Oriel finally dumped everything on top of his cloak and waded in up to his chest where Aspen was already waiting with a smug expression. "I'm definitely the rotten egg this time."

Aspen grinned and looped his arms around Oriel's neck before he slung his legs around his waist. "If I squeeze you, will you make a bad smell like one?"

"No!"

The full-frontal contact was a bit surprising but welcoming. Oriel wrapped his arms around his neck, and they stayed like that in the water. It was almost like Aspen wanted touch just as much as him. Hugs from his parents just didn't cure the craving for affection. He wanted *someone* to have that special thing with. For a moment, he imagined Aspen coming to live at the Castle with him so they could do stuff together and hug all of the time.

Aspen would probably roll his eyes and think Oriel sounded beyond dumb and childish.

"Do you like men and women?" asked Aspen.

"Yeah." Oriel wasn't attracted either, but sex with the courtier and the kitchen girl had felt good.

"Are you a virgin?" Aspen asked as he leaned his head on Oriel's shoulder.

"No."

"Then how come you don't want to fuck me? Are you shy?"

"No. I...I wasn't looking for someone to screw. It'd be weird to do this and fuck you like an extra bonus."

Would Aspen think he was weird if he knew Oriel didn't feel sexually attracted to anyone? To him, sex was just an action that felt good.

"You're paying for us to play on the beach like kids," said Aspen. "And a hug."

"Can't we just do that? I don't get to do this with anyone else."

He'd probably sound like an idiot if he tried to explain how he felt. He had regular meals, silk clothes, a fancy roof over his head, and everything a Crown Prince could want, yet he was desperate for intimacy like one of those lovesick ladies in the romance novels Mother read.

With the feel of Aspen against him, Oriel was happy enough.

Aspen

Aspen figured he was set for the summer since Oriel came to get him every week and always paid a good amount. He almost wished he had said yes to getting a kitchen job, but he'd felt a little ashamed too, like he couldn't take care of himself. It seemed too awkward to ask again.

It was strange to have a guy hand over so much money and not even ask for a blowjob, but it was also a relief. They could just be together with no expectations, and Aspen got all of the hugs he wanted. They always ended up plastered to each other in some way.

It was almost like Oriel craved the simple intimacy just as much. His hands never wandered south, and he never tried to kiss Aspen.

A couple of times, he thought about making a move because why not? Oriel was certainly more attractive than the gross forty-year-old who smelled like booze that Aspen had sucked off one night. They were also the same age and both turned eighteen in the beginning of June.

Aspen still fucked whoever he could get in the evenings because why not save up as much as possible? Money never lasted forever for people like him.

"I wouldn't mind if he fucked me," said Aspen.

Vima side-eyed him as they aimlessly wandered down the street one night in late June. Most of the shops were dark, and not many others were around. The Temple was ahead, and that remained lit up all night. "If he asked for a kiss, would you give it?"

"Yeah. I just said I'd fuck him. A kiss is nothing."

Vima paused and faced him. “If he came up to you right now with no money and asked for a quickie, would you do it?”

Aspen nodded. “Yeah. He’s paid me a lot before.”

“Wrong answer,” said Vima. “It doesn’t matter what anyone has paid or done before. If they want something in the here and *now*, they pay for it *now*. You’re catching feelings, and I’ve told you that’s one of the biggest mistakes you can make.”

“I’m not catching feelings,” snapped Aspen. “I know damn well I’m just a prostitute, and he’s the Crown Prince.”

“If you’re willing to give out a free fuck, you are catching feelings,” said Vima. “A whore never does that. It’s how you get burned in other ways. We mean nothing to the customers no matter what they say. I’ve told you this before. They might even say they love you in the heat of the moment, but it’s not true.”

“I know that!”

“Then why a free fuck?”

“Because he’s paid for way more even though we just go to the beach, and he’s done nothing but hug me. He’s never tried to kiss me or do anything else.”

Vima brushed back his pinkish-blond hair. “I can’t pretend I don’t wish someone would pay me to frolic in the ocean, but there wouldn’t be any free fucks later. Our holes cost money, and that’s that. Prince Oriel sounds nice, although he must be a bit naive and innocent since he’s wasting so much money. I guess it doesn’t matter when you’re that rich, but you know this won’t last forever. Even if he’s cute and sweet, a Crown Prince can’t keep hanging out with a whore. He’ll have to get married too, and it’ll be to some lord’s kid that the King thinks is good enough.”

Aspen thought about what would happen in a few months once the weather grew cool and nobody wanted to go swimming anymore. Oriel would move on, and Aspen would be forgotten. The idea of no more hugs or the sweet scent of

magnolia made his gut pinch. He'd be stuck with idiots pounding him and leaving as soon as they blew. Even if he was taken on at a decent whorehouse, it would basically be the same.

"I know he'll move on later, but I like it now."

"You're young, and I'm telling you this stuff so you don't end up hurt later on," said Vima. "You need to be careful. You might like it now, but it won't last. We'll never matter to anyone. No one loves us or really cares. They just use us. He's using you to have someone to sneak out with and so he can have a temporary buddy on the beach who won't go tattling to his Mummy and Daddy. So don't give him any free fucks later if he asks later on and decides to dust off his dick."

"What if I feel like fucking him one day when we're out?" asked Aspen. "He's my age, and he's got a nice body. He's certainly better looking than some I've had. He pays for my time."

Vima narrowed his eyes. "If you're horny, and he's paid, go for it. We all got to eat, but don't be pining for him when he leaves. He will leave, and he *will* forget about you. I can already tell by your face that you're hooked."

"Because I get something back besides money."

Vima leaned down. "It's not real. Worry about saving for slow times. I'll see you later."

Aspen watched him walk away. Vima was older and knew what he was talking about. He'd been working the streets for far longer than Aspen, so he'd seen and done a lot. Everything he said was true.

He knew deep down this wouldn't last. The Crown Prince was miles above him in station, and he wouldn't love Aspen or have real feelings for him. This wasn't a storybook world where the orphan got to marry the person of their dreams and live happily ever after. Vima's words were cold, but the truth could be painful.

Aspen already knew that. Father had racked up gambling debts and started selling everything to pay it off. They'd moved to a dwelling to save money, and Aspen had to say goodbye to his horse along with his sword and archery lessons.

Gambling was like a sickness for some, and Father hadn't stopped despite their troubles. Maybe he could have paid off the debts if he'd quit, but he got drunk one night, bet the whole merchant business and lost.

The stress gave him a heart attack shortly afterward. Aspen, with no income and nothing left besides some clothes and a few small possessions, had been kicked out onto the street since he couldn't pay the rent. He'd tried getting proper jobs, but it wasn't always that easy. It was a cold truth when he realized he'd have to sell his ass and mouth to eat.

Now, he'd lose Oriel's sweetness and hugs at some point. If that felt like a stab, was Vima right? Maybe Aspen was getting feelings and breaking one of the most important rules a whore should follow. As he walked down the street, he fumed because while he was stuck in this line of work, nobody would really love him.

How could anyone love someone that fucked anybody for coin? Oriel was sweet, and maybe he was naive, but his feelings couldn't be real. He was using Aspen.

He told himself it was fine because he was using him too. He had a nice little stash of money buried in the dirt in the abandoned shed where he slept and hid a few things like extra food when he could buy it. It would get him through winter and slow times if a whore house wouldn't accept him later. Since he was eighteen, he could ask somewhere, but he figured he'd wait for a bit since he was making quite a bit now.

In the meantime, maybe if he fucked Oriel, he'd get some of the feelings out. Plenty of people thought they really liked someone and realized it was just lust. Once that was worked off, they'd lose interest.

There could never, ever be anything more between them.

Oriel

Oriel's eyes widened as Raven stood at the fork in the road. "We don't have to fuck."

"I know," said Aspen. "But we could. We're both eighteen now too, not that it really matters anyway for us since we're the same age."

"Yeah, but I-I wanted someone that I could enjoy time with."

"We could enjoy this too. It's not like I'm going to force you, but I would fuck you if you wanted. You've got a nice body and face, and you don't seem like the type with disgusting kinks."

Oriel did have kinks that he jerked off to, but nothing that would be considered disgusting. His face flamed because he had imagined things specifically with Aspen in the privacy of his room last night. Something had changed in the past month.

"You don't have to be shy," whispered Aspen. "If you're a virgin, I won't laugh at you either."

"I swear, I'm not. I just haven't been with that many. But... you..." Oriel's mouth went dry as he imagined him and Aspen getting naked in the next few minutes. Dear Elira, he barely knew what to do with his new feelings, especially with Aspen bringing it up. "I don't want to use you."

Aspen brought his face closer. Close enough to kiss. "You wouldn't be. I'm offering it." He let his lips brush against Oriel's.

He knew he was lost. He leaned forward, wanting to taste him. Aspen grabbed the back of his neck as they kissed.

"I have oil," he mumbled against Oriel's mouth.

Oriel pressed his body against Aspen who surely had to be feeling his arousal against him.

“Let’s go,” he said. “Go right.”

Aspen nudged Raven into a canter, and they went right. All they needed now was a private spot just in case someone happened to go by. Oriel slipped his hands under Aspen’s cloak and shirt to feel him before he kissed the back of his neck.

“Fuuuuck,” Aspen hissed under his breath.

Oriel couldn’t deny that after so many trips and simply spending time with Aspen, he was starting to feel attracted to him in a different way, although he hadn’t dared to utter a word. He’d never looked at anybody and had such feelings before. Maybe he just needed more of a bond with someone first, and then the sexual attraction came from that. Either way, this was the first person he’d had such feelings about.

Aspen guided Raven off the road and through the undergrowth. Oriel kept kissing his neck, and he barely noticed when the horse paused.

“Get down. I don’t think Raven will like it if we sit and fuck on her back.” Aspen chuckled.

As soon as Raven was tethered so she wouldn’t wander off, they went behind some thick bushes. They were far enough from the road to avoid being seen, although someone might hear if Raven whinnied. Likely, no one would come to look.

Oriel fumbled at his clothes which he couldn’t seem to get off fast enough. His cock throbbed painfully hard as Aspen took off his much simpler clothes and scrambled to help him.

“What do you like?” asked Oriel. If they were going to fuck, he didn’t want this to just be about his pleasure. Aspen’s customers probably only cared about their own. This fairy was too sweet for him to ever treat like that.

“I like you.” Aspen tossed aside his shirt and shoved him back into the grass on his cloak.

He climbed on top to kiss Oriel who wrapped him in his arms and growled as he felt Aspen's erection poking him. He prayed he didn't burst too soon and embarrass himself. He had never been so painfully aroused. If other people always felt like this about sex, no wonder everyone seemed to like it so much.

He grabbed Aspen's hair to hold his head still while he kissed his neck, eager to feel him squirm and breathe in his rose smell.

"You smell like magnolias," whispered Aspen. "Lucky bastard."

"What do you want?" Oriel licked up Aspen's neck. "Anything you want, I'll do it."

"I want to hold you down while I fuck you," growled Aspen. "If we had a bed, I'd tie you to it."

He hadn't expected Aspen to be the dominant sort. Maybe a top, but not the kind to tie up his lover and have his way.

The idea made Oriel's cock pulse. The kitchen girl had kept calling him "Your Majesty," but she had pinned him down while she rode his cock. Or more like Oriel had let her pin him since she was a slip of a thing. It had seemed to excite her, so he'd figured why not let her? He'd found he'd rather liked it.

"Anything you want," said Oriel. "As long as it makes you feel good."

"Then get on your knees and suck my cock first."

Oriel scrambled to get on his knees as Aspen stood. Oriel fisted the base of his cock and slipped the head into his mouth, but Aspen pushed his hand off.

"Mouth only," he said.

He grabbed the sides of Oriel's head and pushed himself in to the hilt. He almost gagged for a second as he clutched Aspen's ass. Thank Elira that the stableboy had taught him a couple of things about blow jobs.

Aspen probably didn't get to do what he wanted in bed for the most part, so Oriel let him set the pace and breathed when he could. As he looked up, Aspen stroked his hair back.

"You look good with your lips wrapped around my cock."

Oriel's eyes watered, and he was tempted to fist himself, but he was afraid he'd cum too soon. He tongued the underside of Aspen's cock as he kept his cheeks hollowed. He wanted to memorize every vein, the taste, and the way Aspen gripped his head.

"Fuuuck. Do you like being on your knees for me, Your Majesty?"

The hint of sarcasm said he wasn't using the title out of respect for royalty. Oriel's cock dripped pre-cum as he mumbled his assent.

Aspen withdrew. "Show me your ass."

He reached for his discarded trousers while Oriel turned on his hands and knees. Aspen smacked his rear, and a second later, oil was being smeared in his crack and on his rim. Nobody had been up Oriel's ass yet, and he felt a little apprehension even though the courtier had said it didn't hurt. That was what the stretching and oil was for.

"I'll be gentle." Aspen started fingering his rim. "See how good that feels?"

"Yes." Fuck, did it feel good.

"Relax, and it'll be easier. Don't tense up."

And Oriel could say no or stop this if he needed to. He practically melted as Aspen rubbed his back and continued stimulating his rim. He focused on relaxing as Aspen added more oil and slowly slipped his finger in.

"Feel that?" Aspen rubbed his prostate.

"Yes!" Oriel fisted the rough fabric of the cloak under him.

"Just wait until my cock is in you."

Aspen worked his way up to three fingers to make sure he was properly stretched. Oriel wasn't expecting it when he was pushed down, and his wrists were pinned. Aspen straddled him and adjusted his position. Keeping Oriel's wrists together with one hand, he guided his cock with the other.

"Breathe and bear down."

The initial entry was a little uncomfortable since he'd never been penetrated, and the sensation was so new. He breathed and bore down which helped as Aspen fully sheathed himself.

"Fuck," he breathed.

He started to slowly move. Oriel's erect cock was trapped under him, and it rubbed on the cloak and his belly. He flexed his hips and tried to move to meet the thrusts.

"You're mine. All mine." Aspen released the Prince's wrists as he lay against him and grabbed his hair. "Who do you belong to?"

Oriel's head was forced back, and Aspen's breath tickled his ear. "Yours."

"Say it." Aspen kept his thrusts at a steady pace, and his other hand snaked up to grasp Oriel's throat and remind him of who was in control. "Say it or I'll leave you wanting and send you back home with my cum leaking out of you."

"I'm yours. I belong to you."

Aspen nibbled on his ear. Every thrust stroked Oriel's prostate and made the pleasure build. Nothing existed besides Aspen's hand in his hair, the other on his throat, his breath against his cheek, and his cock buried in Oriel's ass. He didn't want this to ever end. The tip of his own cock felt wet, and his nuts were already tightening.

It would have to eventually end, and he could feel himself nearing the point of no return.

Aspen's breath quickened as he shifted to pin down Oriel's shoulders. "Shit-I'm close. Eliiira, you feel so good."

“I’m going to cum,” Oriel managed to get out.

He couldn’t help but to tense and clench as the orgasm seemed to explode from the inside. He shouted as he tensed. For a second, it was almost too much as his cock spurted, and Aspen drove himself into his ass like his life depended on it.

“Fuck! Fuck! You’re so tight.” Aspen groaned as he filled Oriel’s ass with cum.

Oriel bucked his hips against the cloak as he felt his own hot cum on his belly. Aspen pushed himself in like he wanted to be a part of Oriel as he grunted.

Oriel went limp as Aspen stilled. He wasn’t sure if he could ever move again. If he closed his eyes, he could probably sleep right there with Aspen’s cock buried in him. Aspen gently withdrew before he rolled Oriel over and licked the cum from his stomach.

He twitched at the feeling of a hot tongue sliding across his abs. Aspen gently lapped at his sensitive cock.

“You taste good,” he murmured against Oriel’s shaft. “Next time, I want to swallow you.”

Next time. Oh, fuck yes, there would definitely be a next time. He couldn’t wait to hand himself over to Aspen again and do whatever he wanted.

Once Aspen lay next to him, Oriel rolled to get on top and kiss him and taste his own saltiness on the fairy’s tongue. Aspen pulled him closer as the kiss turned messy. Oriel nibbled his ear and licked down the side of his neck. If only he could have this touch forever.

Aspen

The lust didn't burn off and take away his feelings. Aspen was utterly hooked.

Twice a week, they met up. They went to the beach to play in the water and sun their pale arses. Sometimes, they had to go way down because other fairies liked to swim and enjoy the summer sun. But they always ended up in the woods and naked together. Aspen liked being in control, but he could enjoy being the perfect little submissive too.

Oriel seemed eager to give him whatever he wanted. Never before had Aspen been with someone that truly seemed to care about what he liked or desired. After sex, they always kissed and hugged like two fairies starving for more touch, more sensation, and more time.

It was a pity it wouldn't last. Aspen knew he was a damn fool for allowing his feelings to turn to love when they'd never be reciprocated. It would hurt like a bitch later, and that was what Vima had been trying to protect him from. He didn't dare say any of his real feelings because no matter what he thought, he knew the cold, hard truth.

Nothing real could come from this. It would die like the beautiful white rose Oriel bought before coming to get him one day. He'd removed the thorns with his dagger, and the petals had been smoother than velvet.

Aspen had enjoyed it until it wilted. He'd enjoy this too until it was gone.

"I don't want to go," Oriel said one afternoon as they lay with their limbs tangled.

Aspen breathed in his magnolia smell, tinged with salt water. "I know. But you have to bathe and go to dinner. You

can't go to the High Table looking like a raggamuffin."

Oriel snorted. "Maybe I'll just toss on my sleep clothes and go like that."

Aspen laughed and imagined him lounging at the High Table in his sleep clothes with his hair askew while everyone else was in their finery. His parents would scold him, and Oriel's brothers would probably laugh until they split their sides.

Aspen kissed his neck. "There's next time."

"But I love you now."

Aspen's heart jumped as his words tumbled out. "I love you too."

Oriel tightened his arms around Aspen who cursed himself. He shouldn't have said it back no matter how much he meant it because the Crown Prince didn't mean it.

Then again, maybe it wasn't so bad. Maybe Oriel thought he did since his balls were empty now. He'd come to his senses soon enough and remember that love and lust weren't the same things. Or maybe he just said it to be nice.

"What if-what if you came with me?" asked Oriel.

"I can't come home to dinner with you."

"I mean, I know you can't just stroll in with me. Technically, you could because the guards would listen to me, but what if I talked to my Father?"

Aspen drew his head back a little to look at him. "He'll say no. Don't be silly."

"Aspen, I don't want to keep going home without you. I just-I want you to be with me always. We could always have this."

Like a pleasure slave. Aspen got it. He could never be more than a pleasure slave to the Crown Prince, and that would be a pretty good job. The slave part was just a term because anyone who signed a contract like that pretty much was a sex slave,

but they could leave. If they did, they'd forfeit further wages and the bonus at the end of the term.

Aspen would be living in luxury and doing whatever Oriel commanded in bed, although he was sure the Crown Prince would certainly allow him to be the dominant one since he enjoyed that too. A pleasure slave didn't necessarily have to be the bottom.

But he could imagine King Leneer's face if his son said he wanted a street whore.

"It's a nice fantasy, but you know King Leneer won't let you drag in a prostitute," said Aspen.

"I'll ask him."

"And he'll say no."

"I'll beg if I have to." Oriel kissed his cheek. "Whatever it takes. Do you want us to be together forever?"

"Yes." Wanting things he couldn't have hurt, even though Aspen should be used to it.

"Then we'll do it."

Pfft. Forever. Contracts were usually like four or six years. That probably sounded like forever to Oriel.

Oriel

“Hello, Father.” Oriel approached King Leneer in his sitting room and sat in the armchair next to him.

“Oh, I wanted to tell you something,” said Father. “I couldn’t find you earlier, but I told your brothers. I’m going to start looking for a pleasure slave.”

“You mentioned that a while ago,” said Oriel. He didn’t know or want details, but he knew his parents pretty much never had any kind of sexual contact. Giving birth to triplets had been hard on Mother, and they had come too early. Despite them living, Mother had suffered ill effects, and another pregnancy would probably kill her. Even with herbs and medicine, sometimes her monthly time left her bedridden too.

“Since you’re all eighteen now, you can share him too,” added King Leneer.

Oriel made a slight face. It was a western concept to share a whore, but he didn’t see the appeal.

King Leneer enjoyed sharing, but Oriel didn’t like that idea. He’d only had attraction to one person, and he also preferred privacy when he had sex.

His brothers seemed to have sexual attraction to plenty of others, and they liked some pretty kinky stuff. Zale, the youngest and eight minutes younger than Oriel, had been in his room last week with two maids and two courtiers who had been eager for their share of royal cock.

Oriel was pretty sure his younger brothers had a couple of kinks that required a third for them to both play with. That didn’t interest him, but it was their business.

Father noticed his expression. “You don’t have to share him with others at the same time, but he’ll be there for whatever when I’m not using him if you do want him.”

Oriel only wanted Aspen. “Father, there’s someone I like. A lot.”

“Is it Lord’s Alpot’s daughter? I forget her name, but she’s seems nice.”

“Uh, no. Kard likes her.” They were already fucking, not that Oriel would tattle. “And I’d rather marry a man, not a woman.”

“Well, who is it you like?”

“There’s a guy I met in the city...’

King Leneer’s expression grew guarded. “Is this why you’re often missing for hours every week?”

“Yeah, but-”

“I don’t mind if you go out, and you’re eighteen, so you can leave the city on your own if you wish, but if you’ve been hanging out with someone, and you haven’t mentioned him not even once, he’s probably not fit for you.” Father pursed his lips and gave his son a look.

Oriel felt his face warm. Like he would have told Father. He hadn’t even mentioned Aspen to his brothers since he didn’t feel like answering a bunch of questions. “He is fit. He was born middle-class.”

“I hear a but in there somewhere.”

“He’s-he had some shit luck. He’s homeless, but it’s not his fault that his Father died. He’s eighteen like me.”

“What’s his name?”

“Aspen.”

“And what does Aspen do for a living?”

Oriel wanted to squirm at the expression on Father’s face. “He’s a prostitute, but-”

“A homeless street whore?”

“It’s not his fault. I wanted to ask-”

King Leneer held up a hand. “Son, stop. I can guess where this is going, and the answer is no.”

“I didn’t even get to finish!” exclaimed Oriel.

King Leneer stood. “If you’re in here and bringing this up, I’m assuming you’ve had his cock, and you probably think it’s the best thing ever. The answer is no.”

“Father, I-”

“I said no,” King Leneer said in a firm voice. “I have to meet with a couple of the lords, but stay away from the street whore. That’s how you get sick. You know better than that.”

Oriel’s face flamed as Father left the room. What the fuck? He automatically acted like Aspen was some piece of trash that Oriel accidentally got attached to and stopped listening. He gripped the armrests of the chair and was tempted to kick something, but he forced himself to sit there. It was beyond unfair.

If he waited, he could try again. Maybe in a couple of days, once Father had time to cool down, Oriel could ask him after dinner. King Leneer wasn’t a heavy drinker, but a glass or two of wine would mellow him out. Perhaps he’d at least *listen* for more than five seconds, and Oriel could explain how he really felt and why he wanted to bring Aspen there to live with him. In a few months, they could get married.

Technically, Oriel should marry other royalty or some lord’s child, but it wasn’t entirely unheard for a commoner to marry a Prince or Princess.

Besides, he didn’t care about Aspen’s status. King Leneer had said his children could marry for love, and that’s what Oriel would do since Aspen had said yes when asked if he wanted them to stay together forever.

Even if Father still refused despite knowing how they felt, Oriel would properly ask Aspen to marry him, and they’d go

to the Temple anyway. Father would be furious, but they were eighteen, and they could marry. King Leneer couldn't make them get a divorce because no fairy could take apart what the Goddess Elira put together.

Aspen

Aspen didn't think much of the guards coming down the street. It wasn't even noon yet, he was bored as hell, and Zima hadn't been around. He wouldn't see Oriel today. Maybe Aspen should go for a stroll along the beach by himself. There usually wasn't much business this early, so he wouldn't be missing out on much. When he returned, he could go around the block a bit. Once nightfall came, he'd probably find someone.

"Hey," barked a voice. "Aspen?"

He jumped and looked up. The three guards were dismounting their horses.

"Uh, yeah?" What the fuck? He wasn't doing anything. He didn't pickpocket or do stupid shit either, so what the hell could they want with him?

"Someone needs to speak to you."

He should have denied it to begin with. "I mean-I'm not Aspen. You got the wrong guy." That sounded beyond dumb to him, and they clearly didn't believe him.

A guard grabbed his arm and snatched him off the wall. "Nice try."

"Let go of me! I didn't do anything!"

The guard walloped his behind hard enough to make him howl. "Shut up or I'll give you something to cry about. I'm not in the mood for anyone's shit today."

"But I didn't do anything! I swear!"

Aspen's protests were completely ignored. He was dragged onto a horse, and the guards moved on. They only spoke to bark at others to move their asses. Nobody was going to argue

with big men on even bigger horses. As they moved into the nicer part of the city, Aspen started to shake.

He was still at a loss for what he could have possibly done when the guards stopped in front of a fancy inn and hustled him inside. Oh, Elira. He must have pissed off someone with money.

“What in the name of Elira did you do to him?” snapped a voice as Aspen was hauled into a sitting room. “He looks ready to pass out.”

“He didn’t want to come.” One of the guards closed the door.

“Did you have to terrify him?”

The man in the chair had to be the King. Aspen had seen a portrait, and while the King was obviously older now, he still had the same black hair like his sons, although he had a few white strands too. His eyes were purple too, and he lacked the crown with amethysts since that was only for formal occasions. The guards that had taken Aspen had plain armor, but the one by the wall had the crest on his chest. One from the trio pushed him toward the King, and Aspen knew he should bow, but he couldn’t help but to freeze.

He must be in trouble for being with Oriel. That was the only reason the King would want him. He had found out and was furious that some dirty prostitute had sullied his oldest son.

“I can see why my son likes you,” said King Leneer. “Although you’d look better if you weren’t so scared. Come here.”

Aspen trembled as he glanced at the guard to one side.

“It’s all right,” said King Leneer. “We’re not here to hurt you, and you’re not in trouble. My son, Oriel, spoke of you. He said there was someone he liked in the city, and I can see why he’d want you as a pleasure slave.”

He gestured, and Aspen dared to step closer. The King took his arm and drew him onto his lap.

“What-”

“Shhh.” King Leneer took his chin and turned his face this way and that to study his features.

Oriel had actually asked, and the King was considering it? He must be if he was here. Aspen’s heart thumped, hardly able to believe that King Leneer would even think twice about a lowly whore.

“I was going to look for a pleasure slave,” said King Leneer. “I was thinking of a six-year contract, and he’d be someone for the whole family to use, not counting my wife. Her health is poor, and she’s not interested. How do you feel about that?”

Aspen would rather be Oriel’s pleasure slave, and no one else, but they were sometimes shared. Why have two? He could be shared, but the idea made him a little uneasy because he didn’t know what the younger brothers or the King were like in bed.

“I don’t want to be hurt, Your Majesty. N-not like that.”

“No, no, no.” King Leneer cupped his face. “I’m not looking for someone to brutalize. That’s not what pleasure slaves are for, but we might be rough with you. Can you take some pain such as a caning or a whipping?”

“Yes, Your Majesty.” Some had done that to Aspen, and he liked it.

“I would do that to you at times, but I’m not cruel. I don’t know what kinks my sons have, but they aren’t harsh, and they’d know to take care of you. You look too sweet to truly hurt. Oriel brought you up yesterday, and I said no at first because normally, I wouldn’t go for a street whore.”

Aspen flushed a little.

“He said your Father died. Is that true?”

“He had a heart attack,” said Aspen.

“What did he do before?”

“He was a merchant. He-he had debts, and the stress was too much.”

King Leneer nodded. “Have you been to school?”

“Yes. And I took sword and archery lessons for several years.”

“That’s nice,” said King Leneer. “So you’re not lower class. You’re merely here due to circumstances that were beyond your control. I’ll admit, I thought my son was quite silly at first, but I questioned myself later and thought maybe I’d been a little too swift to say no. He’s a sweet boy, but he’s not stupid, and I doubt he’d prefer the company of a rude, ignorant lout. If he took a liking to someone and seems to have been spending time with them, perhaps they’re not so bad after all. That’s why I decided to have my guards find you. It’ll be a nice surprise for him and his brothers.”

“Oh.”

Aspen wasn’t sure what else to say. The fact that he might be on the verge of changing his entire life was almost too much to believe. King Leneer hadn’t actually offered him the position, but if he’d gone through the trouble of finding him, and hadn’t booted Aspen back out on the street...

“Are you eighteen?” asked King Leneer. “You can’t sign a contract if you’re not.”

“I am,” said Aspen.

“If you were a pleasure slave, you’d be mine first and foremost,” said King Leneer. “My wife has no qualms about me having one, but you would never be touched by her in that way. If you are around her, I’d expect you to be polite and not too noisy since she’s not in good health. My sons would have you after me, so it’s possible all three of them would use you at once. Are you sure you’re okay with that?”

“Yes.” Of course, he’d be the King’s first, and not Oriel’s, but they could still spend plenty of time together.

“Not everyone is into gang bangs. If you’re not, we can leave that out of the contract. My sons would know to honor whatever it says.”

“I’ve been gang-banged before, and I enjoyed it,” said Aspen. It had happened twice, and he’d made a good amount each time. Luckily, the groups hadn’t been cruel, and they’d even seemed to enjoy making him cum. Aspen would take that any day over some drunk lout who smelled like he hadn’t washed.

And while he preferred Oriel, two others that looked like him would certainly make things more interesting. Even though he loved the oldest, this was still far more than he’d ever dared to hope for.

“Besides my sons, there are times when you’d entertain the court and be used by many if we have a celebration,” said King Leneer. “Even woman. You wouldn’t fuck a woman since I don’t want someone banging on the door with your bastard in nine months, but you could pleasure one with your mouth. Can you do that?”

Aspen had never been with a woman, and he wasn’t particularly interested, but he was sure he could figure it out. “Yes.”

“At celebrations, you might be used several times in a night,” said King Leneer. “I like sharing.”

“I can do that.” Aspen’s heart thudded.

“Do you want the job?”

Of course, he wanted it.

A contract for a pleasure slave listed his duties which involved the sexual satisfaction of King Leneer first and foremost. The Princes came after, and he could be shared at will. He’d receive a bonus to start with and regular wages. On top of that, his food and clothing would be purchased for him.

He'd have a set of rooms all to himself, and he could buy things he liked later such as books. He could even get a horse and go riding since he wasn't expected to stay inside for every second of the day. Someone would go with him if he left the city because he was too precious to lose, so that meant he and Oriel could go riding.

For the most part, he'd have free roam of the Castle grounds. As a slave, he was expected to do as he was told in whatever way. If something was too much, he could say so, but if he clashed too much with his superior's desires, he could also be let go.

He also could decide to leave before his six years were up, but if he did that or was let go, he'd forfeit all future wages plus the bonus he was supposed to receive at the end.

After six years, he might be asked to sign another contract. He could do so or decline, take his money, and find something else to do with his life.

Aspen carefully read the contract and thought it over. The money itself was a lure enough. He'd sleep in a real bed every night and not worry about someone bigger than him robbing him one day. Or worse. He'd be protected, and no one would dare to mess with the Royal Family's slave. He'd be for sex, but pleasure slaves were valued.

He'd be set for years, and with all of the money he could save up, he'd have other choices later in life.

He could have more time with Oriel. More touch, kisses, and cuddles.

It might be hard to leave after six years. He'd surely get attached to King Leneer and the family since they'd treat him like a special pet. He already loved Oriel even though he knew it would never be more.

Still, having Oriel for a time was better than nothing. He'd asked, and that showed he valued Aspen in some way. If Oriel simply wanted sex, he could get that at any whorehouse or go to bed with some courtier who was willing. The fact that he'd

asked his Father to give Aspen this job showed he cared enough to make sure he was taken care of and not just someone he fucked once in a while and went home after.

Vima had said not to get attached. He was heading right toward more hurt because six years wasn't forever, but he wanted more time with Oriel. One summer hadn't been enough. He'd get that, money, and safety.

He signed at the bottom of the contract. The only thing that could negate this now was if the court physician declared him unfit. Aspen had said he was fine, but he still needed to be checked out.

"I want to send a message to a friend," said Aspen. "He might worry a bit if I just vanish. He'll think I'm dead. He's helped me before, and I really don't want to simply go away like that."

King Leneer nodded and told a guard to fetch more parchment. That seemed like a good sign because the King owed nothing to Vima, but he cared about how Aspen felt.

Aspen wrote the note himself. He said where he was going and that Vima was to take all of his money and things in the abandoned shed. He would certainly appreciate the extra, free money, and the little items Aspen had tucked away.

At the bottom, he added that if Vima needed anything, he could write. He'd helped Aspen when he was new, and he wanted to repay that if he could.

He told the guard who had been given the task of delivering the note what Vima looked like and where he usually hung around. Afterward, Aspen got to ride in the carriage with King Leneer. He felt beyond awkward and tried not to keep looking at the King. At least he was good-looking even though he was older.

Aspen could enjoy this.

Part of him was excited, but the other half of him was in shock. Oriel had done what he said he would, and this job

would change Aspen's whole life. He was probably the first street whore to ever be a pleasure slave.

He could barely stop staring at things in the Castle when he was led in by a servant. The floors were shiny, and the crown and base molding was carved with intricate designs. The closed doors seemed to have gold doorknobs. And that was just in the back passage the servants used.

On one of the floors, he was brought to a room that held cupboards. The glass fronts showed they were filled with colored bottles, vials, and dried herbs. Several shelves held books, and the room smelled like lavender from the bunches hanging in the corners.

A physician checked out every inch of him. Aspen had been seen naked so many times now, he didn't care. He also had to answer several questions such as if he'd ever had sores or discomfort when he pissed. Aspen said no, and once the physician finished, he was declared to be fine.

"You're a little too skinny in my opinion," the physician said. "Try to eat a bit more, and have a variety of foods, but if you stay skinny, don't be too worried. Some people are naturally like that."

Father had always been on the thinner side, so Aspen wasn't too concerned since he had no issue with his appetite. With regular meals, he certainly wouldn't waft away anytime soon. A servant would tell King Leneer that Aspen was fine so he simply had to go to his own rooms.

A couple of servants helped him to bathe even though he was quite capable. It was like they wanted to make sure he hadn't forgotten how to clean himself while on the street. They also shaved certain parts of him and said to keep it like that. Aspen didn't mind when they rubbed oil all over him to make him soft and left him to dress. They showed him which drawers his clothes were in, and what was what.

If he went out somewhere, he could wear trousers, but around here, he was supposed to wear tunics. Or less. It was

for easy access and showed his status: valued but intended for sex. Males didn't normally wear tunics without trousers, but he was supposed to leave his lower legs bare. Aspen pulled out some drawers that were more like scanty scraps of silk clearly intended to leave little to the imagination.

Some of the drawers were lacy and see-through. Even Aspen's face warmed a little at the thought of wearing something like that. It wouldn't take much strength to tear them off.

He tried on a pair of the lacy ones to see what they were like. His dick and balls barely fit, but he guessed some people liked this

The door suddenly opened, and for a second, he thought it was Oriel, but it had to be one of the other triplets. They were all identical, but this one's hair was slightly longer. Another entered, and he had a ponytail with a few loose strands by his face.

"Ah, there's our little Aspen," said one. "Father said we could come give you a nice, warm welcome. We can't find Oriel, but he can see you later."

"I think two is enough," said the other. "Especially for his first time. Oriel doesn't like playing with more than one anyway."

"Um, hi," mumbled Aspen. "Your Majesties." He gave a bow and felt like an utter fool since he was mostly naked.

The first approached him and took him by the shoulders. "You don't have to call us Your Majesty. I'm Kard. That's Zale, and he's the youngest. Father says you know Oriel."

Aspen would have to remember that. Zale had longer hair, and nothing else was different about them. He wished Oriel was here too, but he'd have to fuck others without him sometimes. He might as well get used to it, and if Oriel wasn't into group stuff, that was okay.

And he couldn't exactly complain about being railed by two lookalikes.

“What should we do with him?” asked Zale. “We could stick both of our cocks up his ass.”

Apparently, there were a few things Aspen wasn't familiar with. He thought siblings would pick an end, but they must not mind if they touched a bit more than that.

Also, wouldn't that be painful?

“Hmm.” Kard seemed to notice Aspen's faintly horrified expression. “If you're stretched properly, you can take two cocks without being hurt. Trust me, we wouldn't risk damaging you, but we won't put you through that since you're so new. Father will be using you later tonight when he's not busy with other things.”

“Yeah, I guess we shouldn't wear him out too much after he's been here for five minutes.” Zale took Aspen by his hair. “I'm not waiting anymore, so come over here, pet. Do you know how to deep throat?”

“Yes, Z-zale.”

He couldn't pretend he wasn't a little nervous now that it was actually about to happen. Zale wasn't rough, but he led Aspen over to the bed and tore off the lacy drawers. Aspen had been right since it didn't seem to take much effort.

In the next second, he was on the bed, and both were on him. He thought they'd get straight to the sucking and fucking, and he couldn't help his moan when their hands started rubbing him everywhere. The only thing that would make it better was if Oriel was also here and stroking him like a cat.

Aspen let himself sink into the bed and the feeling of their hands. And lips. Kard started kissing down his throat, and his nerves settled. Fuuuck yes, he would definitely enjoy the next six years here if they petted him like this. Kard rubbed his chest and nibbled on his earlobe while Zale's hands massaged his thighs and wandered closer to his erect cock.

“Are you a good boy?” asked Kard.

Aspen would be anything they wanted him to be at this point. “Yeeess.” Zale’s hand wrapped around his cock. “Oh, fuck!”

“See what’s in the drawer,” said Kard. “I want to tie him up.”

“Flip him over.”

Aspen’s wrists were tied behind his back, and Kard started oiling his ass. Zale was already stripping off his clothes.

“Here, oil him.” Kard’s belt clinked as he started removing his trousers. “I need his mouth on my cock.”

Once he was naked, he crawled onto the bed by Aspen’s head. Even their bodies were as perfect as Oriel. This was the best decision ever. Kard grabbed Aspen’s hair to lift his head.

“Open your mouth. If you don’t know how to deep throat, you’re about to learn.”

Aspen barely had any gag reflex by now. Kard set a rough pace while Zale fingered Aspen’s ass. He made a choked noise when Zale found his prostate.

“He’s so pliable,” he said as he made Aspen spread his legs farther. “Imagine what we can do to him.”

Aspen’s left asscheek stung at the smack he received. Zale got behind him and started working his cock in.

“We’ll make you feel good.”

Aspen took Kard’s cock to the root and was held down while Zale fully sheathed himself. He gasped when his head was allowed up.

“Fuck, he’s tight,” Zale said as he started thrusting.

“Don’t worry,” said Kard, and Aspen looked up at him as he sucked. “If Zale blows too fast, I’ll make sure you get off.”

“Shut up. I’m not that quick.”

Aspen’s cock rubbed on the blanket as they railed both ends of him. He was already close, and he tried to say so despite the

thick length in his mouth. Zale must have gotten the idea because his thrusts grew faster.

Kard stroked the side of Aspen's face. "Come on. I can tell you're close. Let me see you cum on my brother's cock."

Aspen made a noise as the pleasure snapped and raced through him. Kard cut off his speech as he pushed himself in. Zale swore as Aspen clenched, and his rhythm stuttered.

"Fuck," muttered Kard.

Aspen couldn't believe they were both cumming in him as finished. He wanted to taste Kard's cum, but it went straight down his throat. Zale's fingers dug into his hips as he pounded and shouted.

Kard finally pulled back. Aspen gasped as he felt his cum pooling against his belly. Zale gave a last thrust as he breathed heavily. It was over, but there would be so much more. Aspen went limp when they withdrew, but Zale rolled him over and started lapping up the cum.

"Who's our slut?" asked Kard.

"I am," said Aspen.

Zale made a satisfied humming noise before he pressed his lips to Aspen who tasted his own salty cum.

"Swallow," said Zale. "Or I'll whip your little ass with my belt."

Aspen swallowed it. "You could do that anyway. I'd like it."

"I don't think you want to be too sore on your first day." Zale rubbed Aspen's chest. "But one day soon, we'll redden your ass."

Kard stroked his hair. "One day, I'd like to see how much you can take before you beg for me to stop. But I'll make sure you feel good in the end after I make that ass squirm enough."

Aspen could handle that if they wanted to make him hurt. Especially if they always stroked him afterward.

“Come have a bath,” said Kard.

He couldn't believe it when they washed him too. Clearly, they intended to take good care of their toy. Once he was dried and dressed in a tunic, they left him in his sitting room. Aspen went to look out the window at the courtyard below. A few lords and ladies were walking on the paths between the rose bushes.

He'd miss Vima, but he hoped the money helped. He wasn't sure if he should go exploring so he could start remembering his way around or stay up here. Oriel would probably come to find him soon.

The door suddenly opened, and he jumped, but it was Oriel who entered. Aspen had been right. He smiled and moved toward him as he started to say something, but Oriel sidestepped away from him.

“What the fuck?” he asked.

Aspen paused. “What?”

“You're my Father's fuck toy now?!”

Aspen's mouth dropped slightly. “I'm the pleasure slave.”

“I heard!” Oriel's purple eyes flashed with anger.

“Why are you so mad? I thought you wanted me as the pleasure slave. That's why you-”

“I don't want my family fucking you! What the fuck, Aspen?!” Oriel clenched his fists. “Why would you agree to this?”

“You said you'd talk to your Father. He sent men to find me and said he could see why you liked me. And I was middle class before-”

Oriel made a frustrated noise as he stalked to the window. “I didn't even get to fully talk to him because he said no at first when I mentioned I liked someone that was homeless. Why would you sign a contract to be our pleasure slave?”

“What’s your fucking problem? Is it because I can’t just be yours? I don’t think King Leneer wants two. He sent guards to get me, and he said you spoke of me, but he said no at first because he wasn’t going to get you a pleasure slave from the street. Then he rethought it because if you liked me, I must be a little more than a common lout, so he offered me this position because he wanted a pleasure slave anyway.”

Oriel paused by the window. “I never intended to ask him for you to be our whore. I was going to ask him if you could come live here with *me*. Not as a pleasure slave for them or me. I wanted to have a proper relationship with you. I thought-I thought-” He turned and sagged against the window. “I guess everything we did meant nothing to you? When I said I loved you, that...” He fluttered a hand. “I guess that meant nothing. Clearly, it meant shit when you said it back.”

Aspen froze. Oriel wanted him to come here with him like that? “You know I can’t be with you like that.”

The Crown Prince threw his hands up. “Great. So you didn’t mean it either.”

“You wanted a homeless street whore to live with you?”

“I didn’t care what you were,” said Oriel. “I didn’t give a fuck about your position. I thought that would be obvious by now. I said I loved you!”

How could Oriel love him like that? Why would he want more with someone so lowly? It made no sense when there were so many other, better fairies he could pick from who didn’t have shameful pasts.

“You’re the highest in the Kingdom,” said Aspen. “I know damn well that matters, and there’s a big difference between a street whore and a regular commoner. Why on Ymir’s dirt would I believe you loved me like that?”

“So why would you lie and say you loved me if you didn’t believe it?” asked Oriel. “I said something to you that I’ve never told anyone-”

“It wasn’t a lie,” said Aspen. “But it’s different if I get hooked.”

“How is it different? That doesn’t make any sense!”

“Because you can have whoever you want. I can’t! Nobody loves prostitutes! Your Father wouldn’t let you get with one, and you damn well know it.”

“I love you,” Oriel choked out. “I’ve never had feelings for anyone else. Not like that.”

Aspen stared at him. He’d thought he’d been the only one with real feelings despite Zima’s warning. He figured Oriel just *liked* him enough to make sure he was taken care of. The sex was great, anybody could have great sex, and of course, Aspen would fall for someone that treated him so well.

“I can’t believe you didn’t fucking say anything to Father when he asked you.” Oriel pinched the bridge of his nose as he turned to the window.

His tone stabbed Aspen in the gut as he realized how much he’d fucked up. Vima had gotten into his head and made him disbelieve everything.

“Do you-do you want me to break the contract?” asked Aspen. “You know I can.”

“You already fucked by brothers!” Oriel shouted as he turned around. “I had to hear from them about how great the new pleasure slave was, and how Aspen’s such a sweet boy, and Father told me it was a surprise. A fucking surprise! You didn’t think to say no earlier.”

“But I didn’t know you truly felt like that!”

“I said I didn’t want this to end when we were last together! I don’t just fuck you and run off. I stay because I enjoy *us*. You made me feel-” Oriel broke off and wiped at his eyes.

“Oriel-”

“I never felt like that when I had sex with someone else. With you, it was different. I wanted *you* and to be *with* you. It

wasn't just the action and the end result."

Fuck, fuck, fuck. Aspen backed up a step. He'd always secretly wished someone would swoop him off the street, but he'd figured that was a fantasy. Zima's logic had made more sense, and besides, lots of things hadn't turned out the way Aspen wanted, so why would this be any different?

"Oriel...I'm sorry. I didn't think you really loved me."

"Oh, great, that makes me feel better."

"But I do love you. I just didn't think you meant it because you're so much higher than me."

"You don't love me. If you did, you wouldn't have agreed to be the family whore."

"How the fuck would I know?" yelled Aspen.

"I said forever! I wanted to marry you."

"Like you'd be allowed."

"I'm eighteen, and I'll only get older," shouted Oriel. "Hell, if Father still refused, I could have gone to the Temple with you and had them marry us anyway as long as you agreed. But I guess you wouldn't if I had asked, since I'm worthless in your eyes."

"Oriel, you know damn well I don't think you're worthless. I can break the contract."

"It's too late. I don't want to marry someone who's had my brother's cocks up their ass. I'm done. Have fun with my brothers and Father."

"I wanted more time with you," said Aspen. "I didn't want this to end after summer, and I thought it would even though you said forever. That's why I signed and because of the money. I have to be able to take care of myself and not rely on a fantasy."

"You wanted me as a secondary fling and because I paid you to make sure you could eat even before we ever fucked. Enjoy the money. You'll have lots of it now." Oriel stormed

for the door. “You care more about that, I guess. You really are a whore.”

Anger boiled up in Aspen. He knew what he was, but the way the Crown Prince said it made him want to slap him. How the fuck was he supposed to know Oriel had meant it when Zima said to never listen to such stuff and nobody cared that much for whores? Fantasies didn't feed people. Money did.

“I will enjoy it,” Aspen snapped as the words poured out in a fury. “I wouldn't break the contract now if you begged me. So much for love if it's gone that fast. One mistake, and you're ready to walk out.”

Oriel whirled around. “Good. Go fuck yourself. Oh, wait, my brothers and Father will do that.”

He slammed the door, and the silence was so loud, Aspen remained frozen in the middle of the sitting room as it pressed on him. Part of him wanted to run after Oriel because if he wanted it, Aspen would break the contract. But the Crown Prince was so furious, he'd probably be brushed off.

He sat on the couch as the other half of him simmered. How was he supposed to know Oriel had been willing to risk his parent's anger by taking them to the Temple to get married? Orphaned street whores didn't get happy endings handed over to them. He'd wanted his Father to stop gambling, but that hadn't happened. He hadn't lived after his heart attack either. Aspen always had to settle for whatever he got as life yanked him about.

Maybe if Oriel cooled down, Aspen could talk to him. He'd apologize for the bad words, and they could still do this. King Leneer would be angry at Aspen for breaking the contract so quickly, but if he saw his son loved him that much, he'd have to accept it.

Even a King couldn't break a marriage once it had already happened. It was sacred in the eyes of Elira. Maybe Oriel would see how Aspen felt and why he thought certain things.

If he truly loved Aspen, or had, they could fix this, right?

Oriel

Oriel stared at the wall in his sitting room as he lay on his couch. Part of him almost wanted to get up, run back to Aspen, and beg him to break the contract. The loss of money wouldn't count since Oriel would obviously take care of him.

But he couldn't make himself move. Aspen had signed and never said a word to King Leneer. He'd happily gotten in bed with Kard and Zale. He hadn't felt the same way or even believed Oriel.

If he'd had real feelings for Oriel at all, wouldn't he have at least asked to see Oriel first instead of fucking the younger two? Kard and Zale would have waited because even if they were horny, they weren't assholes.

Oriel had given his heart over like a damn fool, and having it thrown back in his face hurt like a damn dagger.

Father came in without knocking. "What's got you all worked up? You stormed out earlier--"

Oriel pushed himself up. "You made my lover your pleasure slave!"

Father paused by the door after he shut it. "Isn't that what you wanted?"

"No! I wanted him to be mine. I wanted to be with him. We would have gotten married later. If you'd let me speak when I tried to tell you, you would have understood that, but you brushed me off."

"Oh, for Elira's sake." Father pinched the bridge of his nose. "Son, a pleasure slave is one thing, but you can't really feel like that about him. I already like him, but if your Mother passed, I'd never marry a street whore."

“I don’t care what he was,” snapped Oriel.

“I do,” Father said with a touch of impatience.

“You said we could marry for love.”

“Not to someone who’s sold their body like that.”

Oriel slammed his fist on the couch cushion. “He didn’t have a choice.”

“I understand that,” said King Leneer. “But what’s done is done. He’s already sold himself, and I wouldn’t let my sons marry someone like that. A pleasure slave is different, and will still be treasured, but he’s not marriage material for you. I’d never allow it. When you tried to talk to me about it, I never even imagined that you wanted to go that far! I thought you wanted a pleasure slave.”

“I don’t need you to allow it,” Oriel said through gritted teeth. “We would have gone to the Temple with or without your blessing. The Mages wouldn’t argue with me. Hell, if I had too, I would have taken him out of Lork and gone to another city.”

King Leneer approached an armchair and rested his arms on the back. “Watch your tone. I’m still your Father, and you’re a young boy who became infatuated with someone. There is a big difference between that and love. If you had been so foolish as to run off with him like that, in a few months, you’d have seen things quite differently. Sex makes people feel close, and when you’re young, it can seem real.”

“I’m not stupid!” Oriel burst out. “He’s the first one to make me feel like this.”

“You sound just like a young boy.” King Leneer shook his head. “I thought I loved the first girl I had sex with. She was a lord’s daughter. But after a while, the feeling ebbed, and I saw how we wouldn’t have been a good match. We were too different even if the sex was good, and she knew it too. Now as for your Mother and I...that was different. We didn’t have sex until our wedding night, but I knew beforehand that I wanted to be with her forever. I still love her even though we

don't have sex anymore. If Aspen had some kind of condition that made intercourse painful, would you still feel this way?"

"Yes," said Oriel. "He wasn't my first, but I didn't feel the same with anyone else. I wasn't really attracted to the others. I just liked the action and the end. It was different with Aspen. I wanted him to be mine forever, not something to share."

"Son, you're too sweet and innocent sometimes."

"No, I'm not. I'm eighteen-"

"And you don't know everything yet," said Father.

"I know how I feel."

"But you don't have life experience yet. I do." Father sighed. "I don't want you treating your brothers differently just because they fucked him."

Anger flared at the thought, but it fizzled out. They hadn't had a clue how Oriel felt. He hadn't said a word to them, so what were they supposed to think when they learned they had a pleasure slave and were allowed to go fuck him? "I'm not angry at them. They didn't know."

King Leneer stared at the wall for a few moments. "This is against my better judgment, but if you really want to, I could talk to Aspen and see if he'll break the contract. You could have him exclusively for a while if you like. I'll grant you that if it means that much, and if you still feel the same later on, I'll give you my blessing to marry him."

"I don't want him now." Oriel lay back down and faced away, not willing to say out loud how Aspen hadn't felt the same or believed him. It was humiliating, and he could imagine Father's thoughts about how he was too immature and innocent. "Not after he's already been fucked by my brothers. You all can have him, but I'm not touching him."

"Even if I talked to him and got his feelings on this?"

"No." It was over, and trying to force things to be the way Oriel had originally wanted wouldn't work.

Father was quiet for a minute. “If you truly loved him, you wouldn’t be so quick to say no. Actual love doesn’t go away so quickly. It sounds more like jealousy since he was with someone else.”

Oriel said nothing as Father’s footsteps moved away. The door closed, and his eyes filled with tears. Like he’d want to marry someone who didn’t love him. Aspen had only said that in the room because he felt put on the spot and ashamed. His words about signing for money had been the truest thing he’d said.

Father never mentioned the possibility of loving someone who didn’t love them back. Oriel wished he didn’t know how bad it hurt.

Aspen

Three months after he'd signed, Aspen lay in Zale's bed, sleepy and worn out. His ass was a bit sore. Being paddled and penetrated by two cocks had felt good, but it wasn't exactly easy.

Both had cum in him, and he could feel it leaking from his ass. Zale's arm was thrown over him, and Kard was already asleep with his head on Aspen's chest.

Life was mostly good so far. Sometimes they ran him a bit ragged, but they never truly pushed him too much or did anything he didn't enjoy. They always took care of him. King Leneer was quite dominating and liberal with his whip, but he rewarded Aspen for his good behavior. Even though the flick of the braided leather was quick to come across his ass, so was the praise.

In fact, he was one of the best lovers Aspen had ever had. He was good with aftercare and cuddles, and he treated Aspen like he was something to be treasured. The younger triplets did too.

He had almost all of the touch he craved, hard and gentle, but it wasn't the same. Even when he tried to pretend one of the brothers was Oriel, he couldn't quite manage it. Even if they looked alike, they weren't the same. All he had now was the memory of the time with Oriel on the beach and in the woods.

The oldest triplet pretended like he didn't exist. Aspen tried to not let it bother him, but it still stabbed at him. He couldn't even bring himself to try and speak to him since it was clear Oriel avoided looking at him if they happened to be in the same vicinity.

The brothers seemed all right with each other, so it appeared that Oriel didn't blame the other two. It was all Aspen's fault. He'd had something a whore could only dream of, and he'd ruined it.

If he could go back, he'd say no to the contract. If Oriel had been willing to marry him and ignore his Father's wishes, Aspen would have said yes and been entirely his. But he'd fucked it up and let his storybook ending, the only one he'd ever get, slip away like a damn fool thanks to his doubts and belief that no one would ever swoop him up.

Kard finally got up, kissed Aspen, and left. Aspen remained for a bit but decided to leave too. Zale was fast asleep, so he quietly slipped out from beneath his arm. Once he dressed, he hurried to his rooms for a bath and changed.

He wanted to find one of the maids and see if she was done with her tasks for the day. If she was, they'd have a quick game of chess in the back before she went home in Lork. He wasn't very good at it, but she said he'd get better with practice, and he liked her bright personality.

As he was going down the stairs, he spotted Oriel with a friend on the lower landing. The friend parted and went down a hall, and Oriel hurried up the flight Aspen was on.

How was he supposed to put up with this for six years and deny himself what he wanted? Maybe they could fix things and have "before" again.

"Oriel," said Aspen.

The Crown Prince reached the landing and continued up the next flight.

"Oriel, I just want to talk," Aspen said a little bit louder.

Oriel's legs disappeared up the stairs.

"Please."

Soon, even his footsteps faded. Aspen held onto the railing as his throat tightened. He might as well not exist to the Crown

Prince now. The blatant refusal to even acknowledge his presence said enough.

Aspen didn't want to play chess anymore. He wandered down one of the fine hallways and paused in an alcove to stare out the window. He had everything he thought he wanted before: regular meals, protection, money, and safety. He even had lots of affection, but he'd let the one thing he really wanted get away.

He sat in the window seat and drew up his knees. Maybe Vima was still right. Oriel hadn't loved Aspen when he was a street whore. If he had, wouldn't some shred of affection remain? Wouldn't he at least let Aspen talk to him if he'd had genuine feelings?

Aspen needed to accept it and get on with life. The refusal from a few minutes ago said everything. He'd just been another hole that Oriel felt possessive over for a while, but possessiveness didn't equal love.

If Zima was right there, he'd shake his head and say, "I told you so. You're too innocent, and I didn't want you to find out the hard way, but sometimes it has to happen."

Aspen might as well enjoy what he did have now because it wouldn't last forever either. He slipped off the seat and figured he'd find the maid so he could focus on something else.

But as he headed down the hall with slumped shoulders, he knew the cold, hard truth would sting for a long time.

A Touch of Savagery

After a betrayal between Kingdoms, Oriel finds himself torn down from his position of Crown Prince, collared, named as a traitor, and made into a slave. He's lost his Kingdom, birthright, family, innocence, and the only man he ever thought he'd love. Trapped with his new Master, Roth Delwin, Oriel is sure he'll lose what's left of himself. The cat-like fairy is beautiful with his red hair and ears, but he's vicious with his new toy. The Delwin family has a score to settle with the Keepers, and Oriel will have to pay for it.

Aspen, further betrayed by Oriel on the night West Bay fell, is torn between love and hate of the prior Crown Prince. When he finds himself in a position higher than he ever thought possible, he knows it won't fix his broken mind. Nobody will want him now, and he might as well have perished on the ship. All he wants is the summer he had with Oriel two years ago, but how can Aspen ever trust him again?

Three men bonded in the present by their past will need to be as savage as the ones they hate to stay together and survive.

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