

Sexualpathologie

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Sexualpathologie

by [JotunVali](#)

Summary

John remembers his rape at Paresis Hall and drowns little by little into depression. He has more and more nightmares about his past traumas and hates himself more than before. Laszlo decides to take care of him. A difficult task for someone who used to daily roast the reporter. He doesn't dislike it but being kind with John feels so wrong. Laszlo's convinced he's the cause of John's misery and will, for the second time of his life, make his best to make his friend happy. But what makes John really happy is a thing neither of them would have believed.

Laszlo thinks John hates him.

John thinks Laszlo hates him.

Both are depressed idiots.

Chapter 1

A few months had passed since the Dury case and even if there were still boys giving away their bodies in the street, at least their murders had stopped. And John Moore had made sure Joseph would live in a boarding school. Maybe his work at the NY Times was stupid, as the little boy once told him, but at least it put an end to Joseph's gloomy one.

That was what John was thinking about as his dear friend Kreizler was describing to him with the grandest enthusiasm the new opera play on the bill. It was the best way not to listen to Laszlo's incredibly soporific speech, for the famous alienist could not just content himself with only telling the plot of the play and had to add his own specialist nuanced criticism, without looking rude or sleepy.

"I expect you do not plan on snoozing on this arm chair, John." A firm yet not so moody voice woke him up.

The drowsy reporter abruptly opened his eyes as his chin was about to slip off his hand and crush against a cushion.

Shit, he didn't look subtle at all in the end.

"I admit the stuffed chairs of the Met are more comfortable to rest on." John replied in a defiant grin. He realized too late the huge error of uttering that line.

"Then it's decided. We'll go to attend *La Bohème* tonight." The alienist stood up from his chair.

"Labo-? What?" The illustrator interrogated while remaining on his posterior.

"*La Bohème*, John. This is the name of the play. Haven't you listened to a word of what I've just told?" His annoyed friend scolded him as he was putting on his gloves.

"Hard to do when I have a skilled lullaby singer next to me." The sitting journalist sassed the dapper doctor. "What does it even mean?"

"It's French. It means 'simple life' or rather 'artistic life'. Even a painter features in it. You should like it." Laszlo threw John's coat at his owner.

"Oh, because only one character in *that* particular play has painting as an occupation, my opinion about opera should shift from aversion to adoration?" The complainer nonetheless put on his coat. "Of course, silly me. It is so obvious. Thank you Lord Laszlo for opening the eyes of the blind fool I used to be."

"Well, I did actually open your eyes, didn't I?" Laszlo smirked at him before pulling open the door.

John didn't know how much time had run since the beginning of the play. French or not, artistic characters or not, it still was as boring as any other show Laszlo had dragged him to before. He was already dozing off.

On his side, Laszlo didn't realize Marcel the painter shared more common traits with his sleepy friend than he thought. The character lived in a tavern and was in love with an upper-class woman who left him for a wealthier man. But the big difference with Julia towards John is that woman came back to Marcel. Julia never came back. With no mention of Sara who probably had turned down John's proposal since he didn't wear on his finger the ring the good doctor had gave him when their last case ended. How much John must feel hurt right now? He shouldn't have picked that play.

Ugh. Even when Laszlo wanted to be kind with his best friend, he could only be cruel?

Why was he moving his hand towards John's? Couldn't he just apologize to him? That wasn't in his habits at all to publicly apologize, let alone in such a full of ears and eyes place! What's more, it would look awkward to say sorry to someone who still hadn't blamed you for anything. Still, Laszlo wanted to show some act of kindness to John. For once.

He suddenly remembered the only kind thing he'd ever done to his reporter friend. Back during the Dury case, when they both had gone to Charlestown State Prison. With a shaking hand, the alienist feebly approached and caressed the rugged back of John's hand.

Oh. The doctor didn't remember John's hands felt so smooth and warm. Had the napping illustrator changed something about his hands? Had he stopped smoking? Did he use some moisturizing cream? Or was it just the forgetful German idiot who simply never touched anyone's hand without wearing gloves? As he was daydreaming about the softness of John's skin, Laszlo noticed the hands of the latter were twitching. John was still undergoing his withdrawal effects? That sad spectacle pushed the smitten alienist to caress that poor little thing even more. To the extent of unnoticing his friend was awakening.

"Mmmm... is it ove-?"

The emerging beauty didn't have time to finish his question he felt a unpleasant yet familiar sensation on his hand.

Dim lights.

Scent of dubious alcohol.

Dancing young boys.

Ellison caressing his hand with a creepy smile on his face.

Paralyzing drug.

Sally unbuttoning his pants.

Countless boys jumping on his still body.

Satisfied spooky faces of three grown men as he craves to move and run away.

Ellison ordering the children to go away and pulling out his... and...

“Are you sure you aren’t a fairy as well, Mr Moore?”

John’s eyes rolled upwards before he collapsed next to a startled Laszlo.

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The reporter awoke in a bed he didn't know.

In a **room** he didn't know.

Wait.

That expensive European furniture.

That garish tapestry depicting a forest typical of German nobility.

Fuck. He was in Laszlo's house.

He fell back on his pillow.

How the hell had he landed here? And why? The last thing John recalled was that he and his friend attended an umpteenth soporific opera play, that he'd dozed off, then... he couldn't remember more. Had he left to drink in a bar and crumbled down back at Laszlo's? No, he'd stopped drinking! For his dear Sara! He wouldn't betray her in such a low way! He looked at his hands. They were shaking. At least, that proved he had kept his promise to the woman of his heart. But that didn't explain what he was doing in a bed, in Laszlo's home! And stripped off his clothes save for his undergarments! The fuck?

That bastard didn't dare! What am I thinking? Of course he dared!

He looked for some hints to know what time it actually was. He stared at the window screened by a thin white linen curtain on his right. The thicker curtains had been drawn. It clearly was daytime but was it morning or already noon? John didn't dare to get up. Especially not in such a light gear. Even if he ended up noticing his clothes on a chair on his left. What if Laszlo stepped in? Sure the alienist had seen him naked a lot of times and certainly did last night but... Ugh. Why was the illustrator feeling so shameful and embarrassed at the idea of Laszlo seeing him in his underwears? The opera fanatic never had any sense of shame or intimacy; regarding other people at the very least. John didn't have time sorting out his thoughts the centre of them entered the room.

"Ah. John. Glad to finally see you awake. I thought drawing the curtains that morning would have done the job, but you're quite the heavy sleeper, Moore"

"Good morning to you too, Laszlo." The reporter sarcastically replied.

"I've just told you morning has passed." Laszlo corrected him like a school master. "It's already 2 pm."

“If I make you lose so much time, maybe you should have considered dumping my corpse down my grandmother’s home.” John grumbled.

“Nonsense. If I wanted to scare your grandmother, I’d rather phone call her.”

“Of course. How considerate of you.”

“Alright, I think we should put that sarcasm contest on hold. What happened last night, John?” Laszlo enquired.

“And here I thought *you* might know it.” John bitterly snorted.

The emotionless-faced doctor sighed out of annoyance.

“Everything *I* know, dear John, is that you collapsed during the intermission of *La Bohème* next to me and that I had to bring you back here.” He sounded like he was blaming the reporter for committing some felony.

“I apologize for being such a burden, your Highness!” John hissed. “Nothing prevented you from telling Cyrus to bring me to a hospital or my own home!” He growled.

A bolt of irritation struck the usually composed alienist.

“But I did not, did I? You suggest I should have get rid of you?” He flamed up.

“Well that wouldn’t be the first time, would it?” The irate illustrator gritted his teeth.

Both faintly gasped. John thought he saw some glittering into the brown eyes. These eyes’ owner looked down.

“I... I’m sorry. I’m sorry Laszlo. You... Ugh. I’m sorry.” John awkwardly apologized.

“No it’s...fine, John.” Laszlo gazed back at him with a smile on his face.

John wished he believed his friend but caught of glimpse of the alienist’s clenched fists glued to his hips. The latter cleared his throat.

“I should... check your health condition.” He stated before he went to open a drawer and take a thermometer out of it. “I will have to ask you to take off your underpants.” He enunciated with a neutral tone.

“I beg your pardon?” John almost whispered in shock before staring at the glass stick. “No way! Are you out of your mind?” He roared. His friend really had no sense at of shame!

“It’s the most efficient way to know your body’s temperature! If you suffer something serious!” Laszlo explained.

*Oh yes I do suffer something serious! Rather some **ONE** !* The steaming reporter yearned to scream.

“I won’t put any object up my ass, Laszlo! Let alone let you putting it in!”

“Fine! Is putting it in your mouth alright?” The doctor grouched, losing his patience.

“It is. Thank you.”

After a few minutes, Laszlo took back his thermometer.

“No abnormal heat. So it wasn’t the fever.”

“Sweet. But we still don’t know why I’ve collapsed the night before.”

“I’d have thought of your usual deep boredom in front of art masterpieces at first. But boredom only makes sleep, not faint. I’m afraid I don’t have more informations than you.” The humorous doctor skillfully half-lied. Since the beginning, he was convinced John’s fainting had a link with his affectionate caresses on his friend’s smooth hand. *Scheiße*. Now wasn’t the right moment for his heart to beat so fast. “You will have to stay here until we figure out the severity of your condition.”

“You can’t be serious. I remind you I have a job!”

“I believe your coquettish clients’ decoration wishes matter less than the likeliness to pass out in the middle of your work. Besides...” The doctor interrupted his own sentence.

“Besides what?” The apprehensive patient asked.

Besides I doubt your archaic job will be your most missed occupation.

Laszlo had stopped his usual mockery right on time. After their psychologically harrowing investigation, and especially after seeing John so happy to receive his wedding ring, the alienist had sworn inside of the well-hidden depths of his heart not to purposely belittle or hurt his best friend again. That had happened too many times. Laszlo didn’t want that anymore. What’s more, John had stopped copulating with prostitutes and drinking since the Japheth Dury case. The admiring doctor had put this achievement to the credit of Sara Howard. Just one word from her and all of John’s destructive habits had disappeared. The exact opposite of Kreizler’s methods which consisted in reminding the reporter again and again his fiancée left him, how pathetic an addicted man is and how useless and insignificant he was for their criminal case. Oddly enough, this kind of method never helped John on the path of sobriety but rather regularly shot bullets in his knees to make him remain stuck on the roadside.

“Why do you push away those who care for you?”

John once had asked him after an umpteenth oral bullet.

Because I love you and can’t stand to see you suffering in my hands! Laszlo had wished to answer.

“The question is not why I push you away but why do you stay?”

Laszlo knew John must have taken that question for a “bugger off, I don’t want to see you again trashbag” -and might have been a little bit right for the alienist was mad at him back then- but it actually meant what it meant: why do you stay, John? Why do you still want to talk to me? After all the pain I’ve made you endure, why do you still see me as a friend? Why do you still hang out with me? Go away before I get you killed or lead you to suicide!

Every time John came back to him, Laszlo was at the same time happy his friend still liked him despite everything and scared to worsen his pain already too caustic for such a pure and sensitive heart as the illustrator’s. Of course the simplest to do could have been to stop every cruel line to slip out of his lips and start to act a bit more nicely towards his friend.

But old habits die hard.

Chapter End Notes

Scheiße: Shit

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“Nothing.” The alienist ended up replying. “I simply was... thinking about some of my clients’ children who suffered the same symptoms as yours.” He lied again.

“What were they sick of?”

“A few suffered of narcolepsy, they would fall asleep whatever the time or their tire may be, some others would pass out at the sight of something that scared them or triggered a buried trauma. I reasonably think we can remove narcolepsy of our hypothesis list for I do not recall seeing you falling anywhere else than the Metropolitan Opera House. As for you, it’s a question of taste, not health.”

The impatient reporter sighed. He was sure his friend could make even longer and emptier sentences.

“So what is your diagnosis?”

“Well the most obvious possibility is that a sensory stimulus reminded you some traumatic event you must have buried down in your subconscious so that you couldn’t remember it. We just have to know what it is that stimulus and what is that event.”

John lived a traumatic event that had a link with Laszlo’s caresses on his hand? For once, the alienist was clueless. There must have been a thousand women who may have caressed the reporter -and not just on his hands! But why would it have shocked John to the extent he forgot it all? That made no sense! And fuck, caressing his friend’s hand was the LAST thing Laszlo wanted to talk about!

“I would have thought of something that may have happened during our last investigation. It burst with traumatic events. Even for you.” He apprehensively gazed at John.

“ **You** tell me this?” The illustrator glared at him.

*It’s your fault if John lived all this! Your fault! **You** made him go through that sordid case!*

“I wish I could agree; but the problem is I remember it **all** , Laszlo.” John added.

“Obviously you do not. If so, you wouldn’t even be sitting in that bed, John.” The stubborn alienist insisted while thinking about a way of touching his friend’s smooth and warm hand again without arousing suspicions. Especially John’s.

The most obvious was to try during nighttime. A Laszlo in a nightgown checked with a vigilant eye and an oil lamp on his left then on his right the clearness of the way before he came out of his bedroom. He was reaching John's doorstep when a young voice made the calm doctor flinch in terror and almost let go of the lamp and put the carpet on fire.

"Doctor? Is there a problem?"

Laszlo's heart had frozen for a few seconds and a sharp bolt of dread had run through his spine. Still, he managed to get a solid grip on the lamp, not to hyperventilate or punch the boy behind him.

"No, there is none, Stevie." He forced a smile.

"Why are you at Mister Moore's door then?" Stevie couldn't help his lips to form a beginning of a smirk as he remembered the atrociously embarrassing task of stripping off a man. Of course, the carriage driver had to obey Laszlo Kreizler and the good doctor couldn't undress Mister Moore himself because of his bad arm but the boy could have sworn he had caught a glimpse of a little blushing on his master's face and was sure that if the alienist's arms had been both able, he would have done Stevie's job with a great pleasure.

"Thi-this is not of any business of yours!" Laszlo scolded him. "What about you? What do you think you're doing at such a late hour?"

"Gonna take a pee."

"Watch your language please." Laszlo changed their topic of conversation. "And keep away from affairs you're not involved in." He tried to sound the most authoritarian he could.

"Alright..." Stevie held from giggling at the hearing of 'affairs'. "Have a good night, doctor." He bid before he walked down the stairs with a mischievous smile on his face.

Laszlo could huff out at last. He wasn't used to freak out like that. He took the doorknob in his hand, turned it in the most careful and quietest manner, slowly pushed the door inches by inches, timidly glanced into the dark bedroom and dared a first step inside.

Should he really do it? What if he was about to unleash John's worst trauma and finish off that soft man's remains of sanity? Maybe Laszlo was committing the worst mistake of his life. Maybe this was going to be the ultimate punch in his friend's already much too wounded heart. But his long experience had taught the alienist suppressing bad memories did not do much good either. Shit, that bugging feeling of doubt again. Laszlo hated it.

John had gone through enough terrible events for the rest of his life; even for the rest of his future lives if Laszlo believed in reincarnation. Were the alienist's curiosity and psychology tastes really worth it? He'd already hurt too much the kind illustrator with these excuses; already invaded John's privacy countless times while he'd never told him anything about his own childhood or any other topics he'd discussed with Sara but never with John. The alienist had opened his heart more easily to someone he'd been knowing for a few weeks than to his oldest -and truth be told, only- friend. He had no right to violate John's intimacy; what's more during night! What had gone through his brilliant brain of his? He suddenly felt like a creepy

molester. Like the men who used to assault Stevie. Like Dury. Oh, he really had pushed too far his wish to understand that disturbed man. Now he was acting like him!

Laszlo was about to close the door and go back to his own bedroom but something else than his scientific experimenting likes held him on John's threshold. A shameful wish... to see John sleeping.

Just seeing him sleep. No one will know.

It's been ages since he'd seen his friend sleeping. Maybe it'd give the doctor as many informations regarding John's condition as awakening his buried trauma but without harming him. Laszlo slowly, silently closed the door behind him. He deeply inhaled. He hoped his lamp or his beating like crazy heart wasn't going to wake up the asleep reporter. He came closer as cautiously as he'd do in front of a rabid dog. Although John was the sweetest puppy ever. Laszlo smirked at that thought. He pictured John with dog ears and nose. He couldn't repress a snort but quickly covered his face to muffle the sound. A ruffle sound made him flinch in dread. He gripped on the handle of his lamp as if his life depended on it and quit breathing.

"Mmm..."

Laszlo dared to slightly rise his lamp near the bed. John was still asleep. The doctor could breathe again and attentively observe his friend's features. Rather contemplate them. The sleepy figure was hopelessly beautiful. And kind. And sensitive. And sweet. How come the thousand women he'd met all turned him down? How come he kept on self-destructing? Laszlo wondered as he was longingly gazing at John's serene face. Ah, yes. His *hectic* childhood of course, Julia... yet the alienist couldn't help blaming himself for most of his friend's self-loathing. Like with the slap on Sara, everytime John wanted to know more about him, which was more than fair, or wanted to help, Laszlo shoved this sweet puppy even deeper in his self-aversion and the habits that follow it. But Sara had suffered the alienist's execrable character for a much shorter period of time than John; and **she** was tough. The total opposite of John. A bit as if Laszlo had slapped a bull while beating a small defenseless puppy to a pulp. Oh, how many times had Laszlo tried to apologize and miserably failed?

The alienist began to softly caress John's cheek.

Maybe if I had apologized sooner, he wouldn't have tried so hard to prove his worth, even while risking his life? Maybe he wouldn't even be here. Laszlo wondered, as he enjoyed the warmth of John's skin.

He felt a bit guilty for being glad John was here; more guilty for disturbing John's necessary sleep. The doctor stood up. He was about to take back his lamp but instead gazed back at the handsome illustrator's face. He bent down, slowly, and placed a soft kiss on John's cheek.

Gute Nacht, John.

Gute Nacht: Good night

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

In the middle of the night, John suddenly screamed his brother's name.

Laszlo caught his shoulders.

"John! John, wake up! Wake up!" He urged. "He's not here! He's gone! Remember, John!"

"Gone?..." John repeated in a creaking whisper. He shook his head a bit. He looked like he's finally came to his senses. "Yes... I remember..." He mumbled before he loudly huffed out and ruffled his hair. "Why? It's been... years since the last time I've dreamt of him."

"The recent Dury case must have triggered your buried trauma. Seeing corpses must have..." Laszlo cut off his own speech. He realized something. Something he should have done so way sooner. He slowly stepped away from John with an appalled expression on his face.

"Laszlo? What is it?" The still panting illustrator sat up.

"*Es ist meine Schuld . Es tut mir so leid* , John." The alienist always talked in his mother tongue when he spoke his heart out so no one would understand.

"Why do you speak in Ger-? What? What are you sorry for?"

But the doctor had forgotten his friend had spent years by his side and so managed to grasp the subtleties of German language.

"I shouldn't... I shouldn't have brought you in that case." He awkwardly stammered.

"Laszlo, what are you talking about, for God's sake?" John lost his patience.

Oh, that man really was too sweet. So sweet it hurt the doctor's heart.

"That... horrendous case of children murders... it has worsened your mental condition." The alienist rolled down his glittering brown eyes with a disgust expression on his face. "As if the effects of your withdrawal weren't enough... I should have known better."

"I'm perfectly fine! And I'm in control of my withdrawal!" The reporter retorted.

"Then explain your hand-shaking or your more frequent night terrors!"

"Alright! Maybe it has upset me more than I would. But why do you say it's your fault?"

He really had no clue. Just how sweet and kind John Moore can be? He was so kind it made Laszlo mad.

"Because *I* 've brought you in! *I* 've hired you to work on that case!" He roared. "And *I* 've overlooked the fact it could scar you and increase your tendency to drink and depress! Instead, I've just kept taunting you about the matter!" He growled as tears were dripping off his eyelashes.

"What do you-?"

"What? Am I mistaken? Haven't you drunk more during the investigation?" The self-loathing alienist cut him off.

"Of course I have! I was shaken! Who wouldn't be shaken with children murders and prostitution in their own city?"

"Then you're confirming my theory."

"No, I'm not! Laszlo..." John jumped out of his bed.

"No, don't..." Laszlo took another step backwards.

"Laszlo..." John grabbed his friend's quivering shoulders. "I've *stopped* drinking just after the case. You know that. I've stopped the whorehouses too." He asserted.

"Thanks to **Sara** !" The alienist bitterly retorted. "Thank her for your recovery by the way."

"Laszlo..."

"I had broken you, she has fixed you. Wonderful, resourceful woman, isn't she?" The alienist showed a sad smile. "I wonder if she wouldn't make a finer alienist than I. She'll make you happy."

"My God, why must you talk like that? You didn't force me in anything! *I've* decided on my own to take part in that case! Because *I* wanted to make Dury stop! Just like you! You were even the most eager to find him!"

"Because I wanted to test my theories! Because I thought fiddling with a psychopathic murderer's brain sounded challenging, even entertaining! *You* were the one who always thought about the children's safety! Not me!"

"Of course you did! You daily work with children, Mister Smart!"

" *Gott* ! Why must you be so sweet and... caring after I've treated you like shit?" Laszlo screamed his lungs out.

"What... what did you just say?" A dumbfounded reporter asked.

"Noth..." The trapped doctor was about to spit his usual venom but changed his mind for he had sworn to himself not to hurt John anymore. Laszlo stopped breathing and closed his eyes. He had to find a proper answer. Quickly! "I've said..." He deeply breathed in. "... you're sweet... and caring, John." He gave in as tears dripped out of his eyes.

John remained as silent as a mouse.

“I-I’m still dreaming. Yeah, that’s it. I’m still dreaming.” He stuttered, avoiding Laszlo’s stare at all costs.

“Maybe you are.” The awkward alienist found nothing else to retort. Either way, he still couldn’t admit he’s just said nice things, especially to his best friend. “ *Du bist... der wunderbarste Mann das ich kenne.* ” Laszlo couldn’t help to add as he was convinced again John couldn’t understand. He immediately stared back at the illustrator to check any sign of comprehension.

“Ok, I didn’t catch that part.” John brilliantly lied.

Of course he had understood. He just wanted to... spare them the embarrassment. Laszlo smiled at the thought. Surely John was thinking about that awkward time in the train too.

“Of course you didn’t. I wouldn’t speak in my mother tongue if I wanted you to.” The doctor kept up appearances. “Please... forgive that... inappropriate meltdown of mine.” He apologized, wiping his tears away. “I suppose... that case affected me just as it did everyone else.”

It affected you the most, Laszlo. John was about to reply, implying Mary’s death, but prevented his mouth from talking.

“I’m only human after all, am I not?”

“As we are all, doctor Kreizler.” John warmly smiled at him.

The doctor couldn’t help doing the same.

God, does that man know how beautiful he looks when he smiles? The blushing reporter thought.

Chapter End Notes

Es ist meine Schuld: I’m to blame - It’s my fault

Es tut mir so leid: I’m so sorry

Gott: God

Du bist der wunderbarste Mann das ich kenne: You’re the most wonderful man I know

Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

John remembers. Flashback at the Paresis Hall.

“Now, let’s have some fun, mister muckraker.” Ellison freed his erected manhood. “Even here, you don’t question what’s in your glass?” He interrogated as he was pulling off John’s pants and undergarments without meeting any resistance. “You’re quite the addict. Have you other addictions, sweetcakes?” He touched the frightened yet unable to move reporter’s bare shaft.

John squirmed and whimpered against his own will.

“After all, why else would you visit us? You play the respectable gentleman but deep down you hold some... shameful tastes. What a very, very bad boy.” Ellison teased as he was starting to stroke between John’s thighs.

The scared to death illustrator whined and tried to wriggle out of the bed.

“Hey! Where are you going?” The robust man caught -almost crushed- John’s chin with his free hand. “You can’t leave!” Ellison warned him as he carried on slowly hand-jobbing John’s low parts. “I won’t allow it! You can’t even stand on your legs. Pretty long hot legs by the way.” He digressed before he placed a kiss on the helpless reporter’s right leg. “But I’d rather do what’s between them.” He licked his own lips.

John kept his eyes shut but had to bear his assaulter’s appalling speech.

Go away! Leave me alone! Leave me alone!

Help!

Sara!

Laszlo!

The drugged illustrator recalled why he had come here in the first place. A few minutes ago, Lászlo had spat at his face he no longer was of any use for their case. The alienist had made him witness the most horrible spectacle ever and now he had to act as if it never happened? As if he wasn’t allowed to help? As if he wasn’t... **able** to help?

Well, Lászlo was right, wasn’t he? He’s always. If he said John was useless, then John must be useless. The evidence was here. Instead of getting clues like a proper investigator, he was

being touched by a creepy pervert like a... like a whore. The lowest-ranked and most repulsive whore.

“Don’t... touch me...” The frozen reporter managed to breathe.

“Isn’t it a bit late to say that, mister I-dig-into-other-people’s-business?” Ellison slapped him hard. John barely hissed. “Besides, your pretty cock feels like it begs to be touched.” The strong man sped up his hand moves.

John gnarled.

“It feels hotter. Are you sure you came here only for clues? For your precious daddy Kreizler?” The tall pervert mocked him before releasing at last the trembling cock. John failed to hold back his erratic breathing and warm tears.

Leave me alone.

“I can’t believe it. John Schuyler Moore weeping like a bullied schoolboy? Do you actually miss your dear Doctor Kreizler?”

Don’t utter that name!

“Do you think he will rescue you? Do you think he’ll save his princess?” Ellison whispered into John’s ear. The latter shuddered.

Fuck off!

“If he cared for don’t you think he’d be already here, cutie pie?” The lustful man smirked.

John’s mind turned blank.

“What a fool I’m being now. If he cared, he’d have come with you in the first place. It’s really strange.” Ellison started to stroke John’s left thigh. “The alienist’s faithful puppy looking on his own for clues without having daddy Laszlo to back him up. I guess that good doctor mustn’t be fond of animals.”

Shut the fuck up!! John craved to scream as his tears grew thicker.

“Oh poor little pup. Did you actually venture all alone in such a dangerous place to make your master proud of you?” His tormentor mocked him even more as he was caressing the weeping reporter’s cheek. “Did you two had an argument? Did he blow you off?”

“Perhaps you’ve already played your role.”

Shut up! Shut up! Everyone shut up!!!

John couldn’t help sobbing. Too many feelings were mixed together inside of him.

“What a joke you are.” Ellison belittled him. “You attend women’s brothels yet a **man** stirs you up? Is it why you screw wenches all the time?” His lewd hand caressed John’s manhood

again. “To convince your pathetic self you don’t have shameful feelings for your dear Kreizler?” He scolded before he shoved one finger inside of the illustrator who made his best not to yelp. “You sham. You condemn us while we’re exactly alike.”

I’m nothing like you, you repulsive pimp!

“Don’t worry.” He grinned as his finger kept thrusting deeper. “I can blow men too. In a more... secret manner.”

What the fuck does that even me-?

No.

NO!

Keep your ugly mouth and fingers for Kelly!

GO AWAY!

Chapter 6

In the middle of the night, a horrifying scream startled awake the alienist. It was John's voice. Although it should have been Cyrus' work, the doctor threw away his comfortable blanket to rush into the reporter's bedroom. Again.

"Whe... where am I? Wha...what was it??" John panicked as he was randomly staring in every direction.

"What?" The worried psychologist was puzzled.

"Where am I? What is that place??" John urged.

"We're in my estates, John. You're here since last Saturday." His friend reminded him.

"That noise, what was it?" The appalled illustrator demanded.

"What noise?"

"That fucking noise just now! Have you turned deaf?"

"Calm down, John." The doctor advised him.

"Calm down? What if it's Kelly? First he sends Ellison, then Connor, now he comes himself!"

"What have you dreamt of? Kelly is not here! And even if he was, I'd kick him out myself. With Cyrus and Stevie's help. Why are you asking absurd things all of a sudden?"

"Because Kelly... Ellison! he..."

The reporter's breath was sharply cut off.

Oh no. He couldn't say it. He still didn't believe it himself. He let out a loud and tearful gasp as he covered his mouth with both his shaky hands.

"He what? What did he do?" Laszlo insisted.

"Oh I'm disgusting, Laszlo. I'm weak and disgusting. And stupid! And gullible! I'm such low repulsive trash! Lower than you thought." John wailed.

"What are you talking ab-?"

Laszlo dreadfully realized. He hoped from the bottom of his heart his deduction wasn't the right one.

No. Please no. He pleaded in his head. *No. My God, no!*

The alienist's bound, smothered down heart suddenly leapt up to cling on the prison bars made of ribs. It felt like this newly vibrant heart yearned to break out of Laszlo's chest and run to John's. Yet he remained stubbornly still like a lifeless stone. He nervously gulped down. He craved to hug his friend but something held him back. Why? Why hugging the worst serial killers was so easy and yet remained an impossible task as for John? John was one of the people the alienist cherished the most, so why? Decency? Etiquette? Laszlo never cared for these stupid concepts. Shame? Maybe. Ashamed of showing affection to the people he loved and who loved him back? That sounded so absurd yet so true. Now, he thought of it, he'd never really taken a good care of Mary, Sara... and certainly not of John.

Gott , even searching for a clever and treacherous serial murderer was easier and way less scarier!

Laszlo savagely hugged with his left arm the whimpering puppy too shocked to be surprised by such an unusual gesture. "Tell me I'm wrong! Please tell me I'm wrong!" The doctor begged. "For once, tell me I'm wrong, John!" He screamed.

A sorrowful whimper was his only answer.

"I'm sorry Laszlo. I was a failure until the end."

The doctor silently burst in tears on the reporter's quivering shoulder. John was perfect. And pure. So pure. And the stubborn psychologist had ruined and sullied him!

John had been... because of the alienist, John had been... !

A memory of gentle Mary helped him to know what to do when your beloved one is down and low. He stopped the hug.

"You're not a failure John. I am. *I* have failed you until the end." Laszlo asserted, looking away from his friend's stare before he took John's hands to kiss them to the dumbfounded reporter's surprise.

"What?" John didn't recognize his friend.

"I *knew* you had serious issues! I should have helped you! Instead, I've encouraged you to keep your destructive habits! I've constantly reminded you of your worst memories to explain my own selfish feelings! With no regard whatsoever for yours! I have failed you as an alienist and I have failed you as a friend!" Laszlo claimed out; two rivers glistening on his face. He wholeheartedly kissed John's knuckles again.

"Wha... what are you saying? This... this is my own fault. You have nothing to do with it." John tried to ensure the alienist. "It's... it's due to my own stupidity and my lack of thinking... I've been to that dreadful brothel alone!"

'Dreadful brothel'? No. No, you don't mean...

Laszlo suddenly looked up and stared into John's watering eyes.

"Which brothel?" He asked in a blank voice.

The illustrator swiftly looked away to stare at the window. Ashamed.

"Paresis... Hall." He whimpered.

All of Laszlo's memories of their investigation instantly flashed inside of his brain. The only time John went alone to Paresis Hall was at the beginning, when the alienist had the incommensurable pleasure to meet Sara Howard. He had been so pleased and amazed by her abilities he had thought he finally could stop to force his sensitive friend to work with him on such a gloomy case.

"Perhaps you've already played your role." The doctor crudely had spat into the illustrator's face back then.

Then, Laszlo painfully remembered, John had refused to go back with him and Sara. The doctor had thought back then his friend had merely left to drink and sulk somewhere before going back the morning after. Next morning, Stevie had found him wandering in the streets, pants-less. Laszlo had thought his best friend just had been robbed by the boys working at Paresis Hall. But it had been worse.

So much worse.

He also remembered. He had kept talking down to his friend afterwards, blowing him off when he came up with the idea of syphilis. The stubborn, conceited doctor had openly mocked him. He hadn't even thanked him later, when Sally confirmed what she had told John about the silver smile and how the girls trusted the killer. John had brought an important clue to their investigation, risking his life, his dignity and his sanity... and he, the reputable, magnificent alienist Laszlo Kreizler, kept ditching, demeaning him, reminding him how 'useless' he and his ideas were... even barely implied right into his innocent puppy face how nothing he was to the psychologist! While it was the total opposite! It had ALWAYS been the total opposite! He had always wanted to protect John by pushing him away and being the cruelest jerk with him so that he might go away once and for all from Laszlo's dangerous life. Such a failure. Such a terrible failure!

Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Mary was dead because of him. The same fate could have happened a million times to John, there again because of him.

"Laszlo, give yourself a few days before..."

*"Before what? Before I get **you** killed too?"* He had spoken his heart out for the first time in forever to John at Mary's funeral.

The great and powerful Laszlo Kreizler needed the people he loved dead to open his heart just a little bit. So pathetic and stupid!

Maybe this was why it had been easier to Laszlo to open his door to Sara rather to John. He had basically said 'I love you' to the reporter after having roasting him for years. In front of Mary's fresh grave on top of that! It had made the alienist feel so embarrassed and ashamed.

And now he had learnt the dreadful truth about that night he had coldly blown John off, he felt like the worst of the worst!

"Oh John, I'm so sorry..." He mumbled.

He really had failed him until the end!

"I'm sorry..." The doctor hugged his puppy tighter still with one arm.

It was because of his horrible constant belittling John had gone all alone to Paresis Hall to get clues and prove he wasn't useless!

John, you really didn't need to do that to show me your worth!

It was because of him his precious friend had been...

Had been...

His arm started to tremble around John's body.

"Again?" John struggled to break free from the alienist's embrace. " *You* weren't my assaulter! If... if I had just listened to you and... and gone back with you and Sara... instead of stupidly sulking like a five-years-old... it... it wouldn't have happened! You're not to blame!" He claimed.

"Of course I am!" Laszlo retorted, almost yelled, his eyes ready to shed waterfalls.

"Why must you feel responsible for everyone's wrongdoings?"

"Wrongdoing? How it is wrong to feel hurt? If it wouldn't have been for my... enormous pride and my pesky overconfidence, you wouldn't have felt so! Your... *assault* wouldn't have happened!" The alienist chose a more elusive word not to hurt his friend –and himself- even more.

"Still it... happened..." John stammered in a full of fright shivering voice. "And there's... nothing we... can do... about-" He was cut off by a tearful cry he tried to muffle off. Realizing such a horror actually happened was way worse than merely talking about it.

The self-flogging doctor grumbled before he hurried to tightly hug his trembling friend again.

The next morning, despite the little sleep he got and Cyrus' puzzlement, the alienist decided to wake up John personally.

"Come on. Get up, John." Laszlo almost pleaded, gently shaking his friend's shoulder. "Don't you want to see Sara?"

"Sara will storm off if she sees me in such a wretched state. She hates lazy people, you know that." John grumbled on his pillow.

"What about Joseph, then?" The alienist suggested before hearing a miserable chuckle.

"How can I ever look at Joseph again when I've lived the exact same horrors as him? How can I ever be a credible role model for him?" John cried out.

His friend was out of comforting words. Although he yearned to contradict John's self-loathing litany, he also agreed with it deep inside. And he'd have slapped himself for such a thought if he'd been alone in that room. Or maybe asked tough Cyrus to do it. He tried anyway.

"You think Sara hates lazy people?" He paraphrased the reporter. "Then why did she bother to come to me when I had abandoned all of you in the middle of our last case?"

"Wha-? You just had lost the woman you loved! How can you possibly take that for laziness?" John retorted in a shocked tone.

"And how can **you** take depression and traumas for laziness?" Laszlo almost screamed.

He noticed his arms were trembling. *Scheiße*. People out there really didn't need to know grand and serious doctor Kreizler actually had the shortest temper in New York.

"Are you kidding me, Laszlo?" The doctor got the most unexpected reply. "You've **always** taken all of that for a supposed laziness of mine. You've... **always** barely implied my ways of dealing with my problems were close to... **indolence**." John gritted his teeth. "I'm only an *indolent*, useless fool, only worth of being laughed at, is that it???" John snapped out.

"J-John..." Laszlo stammered at these too painfully familiar words and habits towards his best friend.

“After all... there’s nothing more... **laughable** than a sorry fellow who spends his nights in brothels and bars, messes up everything he does like the miserable failure he is and on top of that... still keeps obeying you like a good doggie, hoping you will someday say something nice to him!” John burst out to a wide-eyed alienist.

John looked away. Himself hadn’t expected such an answer. He’d wished to tell Laszlo all that since forever but never had the opportunity -or rather the courage- to do so. Yet, neither now was a good time. He really messed up everything. Tears dripped on his bedsheet.

“I... I’m sorry. I... I shouldn’t have...” He stuttered, covering his eyes with both his hands.

“No... *I* shouldn’t have, John.” Laszlo tried to apologize. “I knew I was right. I’m always.” He regretted. “Even when I want to be wrong. I am the cause of your misery. Since always.”

“No, no, Laszlo...” John softly shook his head.

“Please, we both know I would never had gone through the slightest trouble to keep you safe in my own house, let alone to take care of you myself if you hadn’t experienced your previous meltdown right before my own eyes. I am the kind of man who admits his affection for people when these people are on the brink of death. Or already dead. This is what I am.”

John didn’t have the time to finish his sentence Laszlo grabbed the illustrator’s wet hands.

“I’m sorry. I’m sorry for having been such a terrible friend.” Laszlo wept in front of John for the first time. “I... *scheiße* !” He cursed.

John moved before even thinking. He brought Laszlo’s hands up to his lips and kissed them.

The alienist softly gasped. That was unexpected too. They both froze on the spot. Did the reporter just... kiss the doctor’s -rather smooth- hands?

You condemn us while we’re exactly alike.

John threw them away as if he’d just burnt himself. Laszlo looked like his brain had shorted out. Then his brown eyes lit up as if he’d finally resolved some algebra complex problem. John held his breath, terrified of what the alienist might respond.

“J-” Laszlo barely uttered.

“I’m going home.” The dashed illustrator settled before his action immediately matched his words. He swiftly got off the bed and began to button up his shirt.

“John, wait!”

He turned back to face Laszlo with a blazing glare.

“Don’t you utter a single. one. more. word.” The mortified reporter carefully enunciated.

The doctor remained silent.

“My grandmother must be sickly worried by now and I remind you I have a lot of delayed work to make up for. I already have made you lose a pitless amount of time, haven’t I?” John assumed as he was putting on his pants.

“Pitless would be an exaggeration.” Laszlo replied with a clear hint of embarrassment in his tone and an uptight smile.

“Right.” John added he was closing his belt. He then began to knot his white tie. “Fucking goddam tie...” He grumbled as his fingers went entangled in the piece of cloth.

“Do you need help?” A shy alienist offered.

John turned quiet. Should he take the chance to let Laszlo believe -or... confirm?- he may feel something else than friendship for him?

“No. Thank you. I’ll just... not wear it today. I’ve already... outstayed my welcome, haven’t I? I... wouldn’t like to take advantage of your hospitality.” He faked a smile as well.

“As you wish, John.”

The truth was John wished to stay longer, even forever in this room with Laszlo. But he couldn’t. He just couldn’t. He put on his coat and grabbed his hat. He glanced one last time at his friend, still standing straight as if he’d forgotten how to move. Laszlo suddenly avoided his stare, looking down his feet.

Both had noticed how John carefully omitted to pronounce the alienist’s first name since that kiss on the latter’s hands.

“Good afternoon.” John finally bid before striding away from the still doctor.

Then another appalling realization sneaked into Laszlo’s brain. If he simply hadn’t touched his friend’s hand back on that evening at the Met, John likely wouldn’t have remembered his horrid rape at the Hall brothel. He really was the worst.

Chapter End Notes

Scheiße: Shit

Chapter 8

It's been three days since John's hasty departure. Three days the alienist constantly wondered how he was, if he was still having nightmares, if he would ever talk to Laszlo again, if he... had fallen into alcoholism again. Which given the recent events -remembrance of a rape and that awkward kiss on Laszlo's hands- was highly likely. The anxious doctor was in love with his best friend since their college years. He'd kept it secret for obvious reasons but at least he was aware of it and he didn't mind it much.

But Laszlo was sure it was the total opposite as for John. Average traditional American man. Beaten and raped by another man. Two die-hardly relevant causes to be repulsed by homosexual people and even more by himself if he believed he might be one of them too. Laszlo yearned to call John, tell him he didn't mind that kiss, that he hadn't deducted anything from it (which was a bald-faced lie!), that it didn't mean anything, that even if John held romantic feelings for him, he wouldn't mind it (he would even be happy like he'd never been in his life!), ask John if he was ok, if he had started to drink again... etc. But the alienist was too scared. Scared he might make the situation worse (if he hadn't already done so) and push his friend further into the abyss of madness.

"Doctor?" The little Anabella asked the doctor.

"Yes? Uh..." Laszlo tried to recall the little girl's name. "Anabella? We were talking about your night terrors." He reminded himself more than her. "How is it now?"

The girl was in the institute for one week. Her parents had come to the alienist because they thought she was possessed by Satan. Because having such frightful nightmares every night could only be the work of the devil. Laszlo didn't mind that of course, he was only concerned by Anabella's health. Also her condition reminded Laszlo of his illustrator friend's.

"Well, I... I still have them. I don't know why Satan torments me so much. But I think he'll leave soon." Anabella smiled.

"Really? What makes you think that?"

"Well, every night Edwin comes hugging me in my bed. Satan doesn't seem to like it. I still have nightmares but when Edwin hugs me, they're less... scary. He's my knight. I... I like him." She started to blush.

Although Laszlo thought that story was sweet and Edwin's behavior reminded his own towards John three days ago, he still had to make the institute's rules respected.

"I'm glad for your progress, Anabella, but you know here the boys must never meet girls. Especially at night. I'm honestly sorry but you can't see Edwin again."

"What? Why?" The girl sounded devastated. "I feel good with him and he makes my nightmares go! Why can't I see him?"

"Because... that's the rules." Laszlo sloppily explained.

“Well rules are stupid! I’m here to get Satan out of my head and now I have a cute boy to kick him away and heal me, you say I must not see him! That’s stupid! That’s cruel! If Edwin’s not with me, Satan will haunt me all my life!”

“Don’t talk nonsense, please. First there’s no Satan in your head, it’s a medical condition you have. Science and medicine can help you. Not one boy.” He calmly told her.

“I don’t understand what you just said, but I know the only time I’m not scared or tired is when I’m with Edwin. I know his hugs are magical and can make me feel better!” Anabella exclaimed. “You can’t take him away from me and say it’s for my own good!” She sobbed.

Again, that girl considerably reminded Laszlo of John. Her night terrors, the way she cried, her likely love for a boy... If only John was as honest and open-hearted as her. No stubborn *“I’m perfectly fine”*, *“I’m in control”*, *“I don’t need help”*... No *“I can’t, I mustn’t have feelings for a man”*...

He handed a tissue to the little crying girl. She snatched it up and covered her face with it.

However, Laszlo wasn’t conceited to the extent of thinking he might be as efficient as little Edwin to make nightmares go out of his own beloved one.

“I’m sorry, Anabella. But if I let girls and boys meet, your parents and Edwin’s parents will come to take you back. Neither you or him will overcome your illnesses.”

“What difference would it make if I can’t see him either way?” She wailed.

That girl was so adorable. The alienist felt so bad for making her cry. As he had probably made John -and Mary- cry before.

“Listen. You must promise me one thing.” His tone suddenly changed.

“Promise what?”

“Promise to never tell anyone about Edwin nightly escapades.”

“O-ok. I will.” Anabella looked down. As if she'd gave up.

She didn’t understood the doctor’s subtext.

“Just... don’t ***tell*** about it.” He emphasized, hoping he sounded clearer.

The little girl was confused. Then her face glowed with joy. She jumped out of her chair.

“Thank you! Thank you, doctor! Thank you!” She expelled.

"No. Thank ***you***, Anabella." The grateful alienist smiled back at her.

"What for?" The girl questioned.

"For being honest to yourself."

"But... what's the point of being...uh..." She searched for the right word. "... dishonest to me?"

"That's what a lot of grown-up people should wonder everyday of their life. You'd be surprised how numerous they are."

"You mean... my parents are liars to themselves?"

"Maybe your parents. Or any other adult around you."

Like me.

"I don't understand." Anabella admitted.

"And I hope you never will. You can go now. I heard Edwin is in the playground."

"He is?" She skipped away from the room.

Laszlo couldn't help smiling. That girl didn't know she was cleverer than most of adults. Even more than him, the prestigious and famous New York alienist. Even more than John. She was in love and didn't care the 'rules' forbid it. John certainly had repressed his attraction for men all his life while László... well, he'd always been convinced John only loved women and so always did his best (or rather his worst) to put across his 'unlove' for John. Now László had to unweave that lifetime-long robust web of lies. The hardest part still lay ahead. It was one problem to let a child see her lover. Settling disputes with his own lover (if László could call John that way) was a whole different one.

He picked up the phone. Dialed John's number. Secretly wished he might get his friend's grandmother on the line instead of John. Which was very unlikely. László's expectation was met.

"Hello? John Moore speaking."

The timid doctor couldn't utter the tiniest sound. It was like his vocal chords had been cut off. He didn't even dare to breathe.

"Hello?" John called.

László deeply inhaled.

"J-John, it's... It's me." He simply replied.

A long, awkward, heart-stabbing silence followed.

Please, John. Say something.

He got the harshest and most hurtful response. John hung up in one faded but solid *clac*. Being stabbed in the heart wouldn't have felt different. Well, the difference was an actual knife in László's heart would have killed him. And at the moment the alienist wondered if he wouldn't die right now.

Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Mrs Moore was gone for a week, maybe more, with a couple of friends. To cool her head after the sordid Dury case, she said. And today was the maid's off day. John had been alone to make his dinner which, given his poor cooking skills, looked and tasted terrible. Maybe his grandmother should hire a second maid. To cook a proper dinner and... maybe to make John feel less lonely. Less scared. The dreadful memory of Paresis Hall still haunted him and... the shameful, shameful memory of his thoughtless kiss on Laszlo's hand!

What was he thinking, for Heaven's sake?

He knew what.

But he didn't dare to admit it, not even to himself. That was so... gross... deviant... and so unlikely to be two-sided!

It was no use to think of it now.

Someone knocked at the door.

At 10 pm? Who was it? His grandmother? Dared he hope... Sara? Maybe a NY Times colleague? Everyone but...

"Good evening, John."

"Laszlo?" His heart and breath froze.

"I'm glad you still remember my birth name." The alienist serenely sassed his petrified -and in a quite becoming nightgown- friend. Still afraid of how John could react at each of his words, Laszlo -as proud as ever- nonetheless also was a bit frustrated his friend had raced out of his house and never called him once in a week.

"Wha-what are you... what are you doing here?" John yearned to yell but whispered as if some nighttime delinquant was visiting him.

"I'm simply concerned about your psychological issues that might get worse after you've dashed away from my estate without even notifying me of any betterment."

John sighed in annoyance.

"So you've come to check with your own eyes." He deducted with a demoralized face.

Why hadn't he slammed his door in Laszlo's yet?

“You know, you could be almost as good as Sara in the investigating field.” Laszlo agreed.
“May I come in?”

“You may even if I’m not ok with it, isn’t it?” John surrendered.

“Perhaps almost as good as me in the alienism field.” The victorious alienist agreed again before passing through the door held by a baffled illustrator.

“But not a good host. As you see, I’ve just finished to dinner.” John hoped that poor excuse would be enough to make Laszlo go.

“No problem. I’ve had mine at the Institute.” The latter fought back.

Shit.

“Then I... don’t assume you intend to stay here all night?” An apprehensive reporter asked.

“Oh please *do* assume, John.” Laszlo sat on an armchair.

Oh no you don’t, pal! I know you’re here to dig through my brain again like some... anatomy teacher! You crave it like I craved booze! I won’t let you play your games again and I certainly won’t let you just imply that... I might be... against all odds and nature... attracted to...

“You’re serious? Ah, wait. No...no. You’re... you’re joking me.” John forced a laugh.
“You... that’s it. That must be a joke.”

“I assure you it’s none of that, John.” The alienist gave him the most serious stare in the world.

“Wha-? Are you-?... Wait, are you *really* going to stay up in that chair all night just to see if I’m not going to behave like a bad boy? To... watch me? I don’t think my grandmother asked *you* of all people to stand in for her!”

“Indeed not. But I don’t need your grandmother to ask me to know it’s my duty, as an alienist... and as your friend...” Laszlo felt the need the remind his dumbfounded host. “... to be sure you’re alright.”

Under other circumstances, John would have kissed him.

But not on the hand.

“Don’t you have some duties tomorrow?” He asked.

“Thank you for worrying about my well-being John but despite what you or other people think I don’t work alone at the Institute. And this is by no means the first time I stay up late. You should be the first to know that.”

“Do you ever sleep at all? I wonder that.” The tired illustrator rolled up his eyes.

“Do you, John?” The skilled alienist spotted a crack.

Shit.

Not that insufferable inquisitive look again!

“If there is only that to please you, my dear doctor, I am off to my bed that instant and will sleep like an alcoholic baby. Good night on your chair!” John turned his back on way to his bedroom.

“ *Gute Nacht* , John.” Laszlo wished.

For his ill-tempered but so....

So gentle and so handsome friend.

Laszlo should have expected it. In fact, he was even 99% sure it'd happen the moment he stepped in John's apartment. Yet, he'd unsuccessfully hoped -even prayed!- it wouldn't.

A loud thud had startled awake alienist from his armchair.

What the-?

His ears identified a few muffled -and heart-ripping- whimpers. As if the person next door was trying to silence their cries. Because they were too ashamed of what they'd been through.

‘They’ ... rather ‘he’.

First Laszlo tried to deny the obvious -just like John; told himself maybe these noises came from another apartment or from outside but... he'd come to look after John, right? Because he knew his friend wasn't alright at all and because he wanted to help! Because he **HAD** to help! That was his job!

The determined psychologist took a deep breath, stand up from his chair and swore to himself not to break into a million of emotional pieces.

Come on, Kreizler. You're gifted professional alienist! You can bear up with anything!

That is, until he opened the bedroom's door.

John's puffed eyes wouldn't stop sobbing and his body from shivering. The trauma was too big. He must feel so ashamed, so low... so terrified. His impulsive kiss from a few days ago surely didn't improve his condition. But of course, he would never admit all that out loud.

That's what doctor Laszlo thought.

"It's okay, John. It's okay." He managed to whisper as he was clumsily trying to sit on the bed's rim and softly caressed a trembling shoulder. He still felt so awkward and moronic trying to comfort someone he'd always personally derided. Did John even believe it?

He didn't expect such a prompt reply. His frightened friend closed all at once his arms around Laszlo's waist and held him close as if the doctor was his only reason to live. The alienist then heard John's whimpers. The most heartbreaking sound to his ears. His body felt John's shivers. The most dreadful sensation; even worse than Laszlo's bad arm. Shame no longer had any control on the doctor. He started to weep as well; and hugged his puppy tight.

"Don't go, Laszlo. Don't go." John begged; his voice half-muffled by the psychologist's sweater.

It was so ridiculous. Laszlo had lived this kind of situation a million times with his patients, even welcomed the most bloodthirsty murderers in his arms, yet he didn't have a clue about how to react to his best friend's distress. He had played the cold, calculating, scornful medic with John so many times it felt unnatural being kind with him. It was such a usual habit for the alienist to belittle the illustrator that when Laszlo had the choice between taunting and comforting him, it was way easier to pick the first option. Even if he always bitterly regretted it afterwards.

"I know... I know you have work... and... your patients have worse problems than me... but don't go, please."

"John..." Laszlo started.

Scheiße, he yearned to cry all of his thoughts out loud but his mouth wouldn't follow!

"No, please! I'm begging you!" Strong yet frail arms desperately climbed up his shoulders and gripped on them. "I'll do anything! Don't leave! I... I don't want to be alone! I don't want to be... with myself." His friend pitifully admitted.

"J-John, I meant..." The afflicted alienist stammered.

"I know I'm not... a priority. I know I'm just a pathetic useless drunkard. I know... I don't deserve any love." John sobbed in a sad creaking voice. "But please, please... Stay tonight." He begged.

Laszlo didn't think his harsh words towards John had affected the latter so much. That they had... scarred his gentle soul just as his brother's death or the recent investigation. As a psychologist, Laszlo really should have known better. But he just kept throwing his usual spite like sharp, pointed spears right into John's soft heart. As if it was a mere harmless habit. He knew they hurt John at the moment they were spat out but he hadn't even thought about the possibility they could hurt in the long term. He had been so stupid. So stupid! He was a zealous yet an incompetent doctor! He wished Sara was here to tell him how stupid he was! Only she was able to talk to him the right way.

"John, you..." Laszlo really wouldn't be able to make full congruent sentences tonight! His eyes already were watering.

"I... I only have you..." John whined.

"You deserve... you deserve ALL the love in the world!" The set free doctor claimed, hugging John more tightly despite his damaged arm. He panted. Maybe he had shouted louder than wanted.

"Laszlo..." John didn't understand the alienist's sudden boldness. He didn't care. For only Laszlo's arms mattered now. He didn't want to leave them. He wished they'd stay like this forever. His fingertips slowly dug in the wool sweater.

The doctor couldn't help crying on John's shoulder. His best friend was having a terrible mental breakdown and had all the chances to develop severe depression. Maybe he already was in depression before the Dury case. And it broke Laszlo's too well hidden heart in half. In quarters! Because he was responsible! If he hadn't acted like a heartless and spiteful jerk with him... he wouldn't have such a terrible self-esteem... he would have stopped drinking and whores way sooner... he wouldn't have gone all alone to that blasted brothel...

He wouldn't be traumatized and scarred for life.

As if his dead brother and Julia –and Laszlo's constant hurtful contempt- hadn't been enough.

It was all Laszlo's fault. Of course he wouldn't leave John all alone!

"Laszlo... you promise you won't leave?" John breathed in a tiny strangled voice.

The doctor deeply inhaled as his nose began to softly rub on the black hair.

"I promise I won't leave, John." He whispered in John's ear.

"E-Even after I fall asleep?"

Oh *lieber Gott* , he sounded so scared!

"You have my word." The alienist gathered all his physical and mental efforts not to soak his friend's shirt and bedsheets with tears. "I'll stay with you and I'll still be here when you wake up." A few dripped on John's left shoulder nevertheless. "We... we can even stay like that if that's what you want." He suggested, implying their hugging posture. For once, they'd do what John wanted. Laszlo sealed that sacred oath in his heart. Maybe he would have to go to the opera on his own from now on.

"Thank you..." John breathed. It was like fright prevented him from breathing correctly. He trembled even more. What if it was Laszlo's umpteenth social experiment? Faking to be nice to observe his reaction then dumping him afterwards? It sounded so likely. He sobbed and wailed again.

"John? John, what is it?" Laszlo freaked out and embraced his friend even tighter. What was happening? Had he behaved the wrong way? Had he forgotten something?

"I don't want you to leave..." John bitterly sobbed.

"What?" The psychologist asked in confusion.

"Don't leave me alone... Just tonight, please..."

"J-John, I've just told you I won't leave!" Laszlo assured.

"..."

"I... I mean it! I'll stay with you tonight." He repeated, keeping his firm hold around his best friend's shoulders. Then he understood his friend's reaction. "There is... no study, no trick of any sort! You've always been here for me... despite everything..." He realized how true this statement was. "Now it's my turn to be here for you. If it can be of any help for you, I'll be here every night."

"Laszlo... But... but what about the children of the institute?"

"They'll have me all day."

John broke the hug to do what the alienist feared the most. Staring at him with his awfully soaked red eyes.

"You mean it?" He faintly smiled.

God existed. His purest angel was smiling at Laszlo. He had never been a good Christian, but he bitterly regretted it now.

"Of course I do, *Gottes willen* !" Laszlo snarled. "John, you are not less priority than my patients, you hear me?" He cupped John's wet face. "You matter! You are **not** pathetic, let alone useless!" He asserted as fresh tears sank into his brown beard.

Why had all these words been so hard to tell? Why was it as hard to do as tearing off a millennial tree with only one hand? So hard Laszlo had always claimed the opposite?

John gazed at him, wide-eyed and voiceless.

Was it because he wanted to end that awkward situation or simply out of sincere affection for the illustrator? Laszlo didn't know. He just hugged John back and started to kiss his temple.

Soft, tender kisses. John would never have suspected Laszlo was able to give that kind of thing. Yet it wasn't enough to stop his tears and trembling.

"Shhh... it's okay, John. It's all okay. No one will hurt you. No one will hurt you. You're safe here." His sincere friend gently stroked his hair.

John didn't move. He simply was staring into nothingness and enjoying Laszlo's unusual and likely to soon fade out tenderness.

"Do you need anything, my friend?" Laszlo kindly asked into his ear.

John answered with snuffles and small gasps. Laszlo noticed his horribly blood-shot eyes; the white even had turned into a faded pink, and his brittle dry lips. His first intent was to kiss them but Laszlo knew what his friend actually needed. He got up.

"No! Where are you going?" John grasped Laszlo's sweater.

The doctor gently caught the desperate hand and closed his own over it. It still was shaking a little bit.

"I'm just going to the bathroom." He yearned to kiss this poor trembling little thing. "There's something I need to take."

And so Laszlo went out. He came back with a basin full of water and a washcloth.

"Laszlo? What are you doing?" A puzzled reporter asked.

"Your face is all parched. Moisture is what you need right now." The alienist explained as he dipped the washcloth in the clear water, lifted it out and squeezed it in an echoing, drip-dropping waterfall. "May I?" He asked. He was even surprised John didn't protest until now. John usually hated to be treated as a fragile little flake. Although he *WAS* a fragile little flake, Laszlo thought. And the alienist actually loved him for that.

You represent the good people want to believe in all of us.

That's why they like you more than they do me.

The 'people' he had talked about on the first day of their investigation were none other than his sorry self.

John nodded, his eyes locked on the floor.

Laszlo began to dab the fresh cloth on John's cheeks, in order to wipe away these ugly tears. He dipped in the washcloth back in the cold water, wringed it out and dabbed it on John's eyes and forehead. His depressed friend let out a soft sigh of relief. Laszlo smiled. He was glad to do the right thing for once. He dipped the washcloth in the water back again, wringed it out and gently pressed it against John's lips. Laszlo's eyes accidentally caught a glimpse of John's glittering ones. They were as beautiful and talkative as Mary's. And for the first time, Laszlo found in them something else than anger or pain. Was it... gratefulness? Happiness? Laszlo made his beloved John happy? As weird as it may be, nothing made Laszlo's heart spring out with joy like making John happy. That feeling of absolute bliss, the improvised nurse had felt it when he gave the ring meant for Mary to his quite speechless friend who had stared at him with dead fish eyes back then. That memory put a large grin on the alienist's face. Making John happy wasn't such a difficult task after all. He just had to show his true feelings.

"It looks like you're feeling more... at ease now." He broke the silence.

"Quite a daunting task when you're around, isn't it?" The bedridden illustrator tried to joke.

"You've noticed?" The doctor softly chuckled. "Then it must mean you're a strong, fearless man, Moore." He pushed the joke further as he was putting the washcloth back on the basin's rim.

"Pff. I'm scared of everything right now." John lamented as he pitifully looked down on his bed sheets. He began to crumple them with his still shaking hands.

Laszlo put his own upon them. He softly caressed them. John looked up at him.

Oh dear God Almighty, the alienist couldn't resist such sad and hopeful eyes. He had witnessed the worst, bloodiest, most gruesome crime scenes with a perfectly composed mind and yet a mere pair of glittering eyes melted his heart down and shook up his mind. Now, right now, all the proud stone-cold Laszlo Kreizler wanted to do what to apologize, admit his feelings for his college friend, kiss him, caress him, tell him how his stupid daily roasting was a horrible lie that John never should have believed!

What was John hoping for, staring at his friend like that? Another kiss? Something more? How stupid and disgusting was he exactly, hoping for an intimate, a physical, an unnatural act with the alienist? He really was no better than Kelly and his repulsive team. He wanted to kiss and touch Laszlo exactly like he wanted to kiss and touch Sara! And he wanted Laszlo to take the lead! What kind of bizarre freak was he? Connor was right. John was a fairy. John was in love with the alienist.

"I'll... I'll go fetch some fresh water." Laszlo stammered before he went out with the basin to come back with a glass full of water. The truth was the doctor was awfully thirsty himself but again had decided to take care only of John tonight. "Drink." He simply told his friend.

John gulped it down and huffed out.

"Thank you, Laszlo."

Chapter End Notes

Gute Nacht: Good night

Scheiße: Shit

Lieber Gott: Dear God

Gottes willen: For God's sake

Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

One week later, John presented himself at Laszlo's door. With a sour and clearly embarrassed expression on his face. He was visiting the alienist reluctantly. He had explained his grandmother had come back from her vacation with a few friends of hers and needed her grandson's bedroom to lodge them.

Laszlo held from suggesting his friend to stay in a hotel. He was the best placed to know John wouldn't bear to sleep all alone in a public place. And John knew he knew. Perhaps Sara... No. Of course no. John would never dare to ask such an embarrassing and intimate thing to Sara. Even if the new NY detective might accept. John wouldn't get her into some kind of scandal. One woman and one man both single and working living together, even for a couple of days, it would rouse the gossips of the respectable conservative American society. And maybe John was still too proud, or too ashamed, to show his weaknesses to the great and powerful Sara Howard. In the end Laszlo, offered his friend to use Mary's bedroom. John looked shocked and appalled at that.

"But... won't it bother you? You're not afraid I might... intrude?" John stammered, visibly more embarrassed.

"Why would it bother me? Bedrooms are not made for the dead, John." Laszlo answered with a calm that froze the reporter's blood.

"Are you really sure?" John doubted.

"It's either that or sharing my own bed." Laszlo attempted to joke. And failed.

It just made the both of them more embarrassed and blushing. They even had stopped to look at each other to vaguely stare at the walls. The alienist cleared his throat.

"So, then... be my guest." He concluded.

"Thank you."

John sat on late Mary's bed. He knew it was the worst idea to come here. But his only other option was to sleep outside, or outdoors, and it just was impossible for him. And despite everything that happened between him and Laszlo recently, he had to admit he felt safe with his scientist friend. Maybe Laszlo was the only person John felt safe with. Although not secure. Not secure at all. His repressed feelings were getting stronger and stronger, more and more impossible to hold on day after day. He just couldn't confess to Laszlo! It was so... shameful and repulsive! Hell, Laszlo probably knew about these disgusting feelings with his efficient, privacy-disturbing psychological skills! John would just put the last stone of the tomb of his honor if he opened up his heart! John wondered what was the most embarrassing and ambiguous proposition from Laszlo: sleeping with him in his own bed or sleeping in the

bedroom of the woman he loved. Both were troubling and heart-upsetting. Did Laszlo... love him? Like he loved Mary? After all, he'd been quite soft and affectionate like he'd never been before with John these days. Now... No. That didn't make any sense. Laszlo couldn't love him! He had just decided to act more kindly with the people around him, that's all. And Laszlo loved Mary! No, he... John sighed in tire. He was thinking too much. He was going to sleep here a couple of nights, limit his interactions with Laszlo to the strict minimum, which wouldn't be too hard given their respective jobs and leave the soonest possible. He fell asleep quite fast.

Laszlo abruptly woke up. His eyelids were itching and watering. He wiped them. Tears? Was he crying? Why? Then, without any valid reason, he wondered if John was alright. If John wasn't having night terrors again. If John needed anything. If he could confess to John. No, what was he thinking about? Nonsense! It would just trouble John deeper, worsening his condition, and either way, John didn't love him back! John loved Sara. John loved women. Laszlo remembered the previous stay of his friend here in his house. He sighed and got up. The alienist should feel shame for spying on his friends at night but didn't feel any. He took his candle and nightgown.

In the once Mary's bedroom, Laszlo saw a safe and soundly asleep John on the pink-draped bed. The doctor smiled.

He looked so peaceful, so cute...

Yes. Despite his severe issues with alcohol and all the countless traumas he's been through, especially recently, John was the kindest and sweetest man the doctor knew. Even towards him, the bastard who had kept treating him like a dirty mop while all the reporter wanted was to help. At the risk of losing his honor or even his life! He was the sweetest man ever! And Laszlo had treated him like the worst pile of shit! So what was he doing in here? What was he doing in the house of the man who surely had worsened his tendency to depress?

Laszlo noticed he was still crying. But this time he didn't wipe his eyes. He leant closer to the sleeping figure and gazed upon it.

Look at him. It's like none of this sordid children killer case ever happened. Although he was the first to say he could never forget what he saw. And the first to worry about the potential victims. Oh John, you worry about everyone but you. He couldn't help stroking John's scruffy hair. If you only knew how many people care about you; how much I care about you! But how could you know after I've made everything to make believe the opposite? A doctor really can be stupid sometimes! The alienist was soliloquizing in his head as his eyes got more blurred.

What could he do to make John understand that he actually cared about him? That he... *loved* him?

He remembered what he felt for sweet Mary. God, he still missed her so much! Her room, Stevie bringing dinner and Cyrus doing the laundry... He remembered the kiss. Laszlo wished he had done more with her; given more to her. He would regret what could have been with Mary all his life. He wasn't going to make the same mistake with John! Even if it will be more difficult due to his maleness and the stupid society's opinion about same-sex love! He *will* express his affection for this adorable puppy! He *will* admit his despicable attitude

towards him just was a façade; because he was too stubborn to simply be kind with him! Because he was too scared of John's reaction! Because he was... a coward.

Scheiße . Why must Sara always be right?

How could he show the affection he held for his friend without looking awkward, stupid or... weak? Laszlo didn't want to look weak in front of John. The illustrator was the person who praised him and his work the most. He didn't want to... disappoint him. But given the recent events, a cold -and sometimes crude- alienist wasn't what John liked or needed the most. But how to undo a lifetime habit? How to convey his warm feelings for John without horrifying and shocking the latter?

His face was inches away from John's. Their lips were almost touching. Laszlo soon closed that small gap.

As he was tasting his friend's warm lips, Laszlo frightfully felt something pushing on his head. He opened his eyes. John was kissing him back! Instead of being happy about it, the alienist freaked out and abruptly backed off.

"Wait, Flora, where are you going?" His asleep puppy giggled.

Of course. John was dreaming of one of his former mistresses. What would he kiss the doctor? That seemed so rubbish yet Laszlo had believed -hoped for- it for a moment.

You thought John was in love with you? You idiot! John loves women! And even if he didn't, you'd be the last man he would love! Be rational! You're an alienist!

Said alienist didn't notice John was sloppily sitting up and fluttering open his beautiful eyes.

"Flora, you're scratching a little bit, you should pluck out these small hairs you have on your ch-"

John completely opened his eyes and did not catch the tiniest glimpse of the public girl. Instead, he saw...

"Laszlo??"

The terrified doctor stormed away from the room and slammed the door.

"No! Come back!" John called out.

As fresh tears dwelled anew in the corner of his eyes, Laszlo was rushing down the stairs and missed one step as if he was being hunted by some monster. He gripped on the ramp in time.

Scheiße . *Monsters shouldn't scare you off! After all you saw in your life! And John is the total opposite of a monster!*

His heart was beating like crazy, his mouth was panting out small clouds due to the freezing night ambiance and tears already rolled over his cheeks. Without further thinking, he ran towards his study room.

Where he and John spent so many times lately.

Scheiße!

He slammed the door again and stumbled on one armchair. His hurting ankle forced him to sit on it.

“Laszlo!”

He gasped in fright.

Go away! Go away!

He mentally ordered as he was curling up in a ball on his armchair. Fatally, he heard the soft creaking of the unlocked door. He clenched his fingers around his knees; then couldn't help weeping on them.

“Laszlo.” John confirmed his presence.

There was a soft tone in his voice that meant a mix of ‘At last I’ve found you’ and ‘I’m worried about you.’ Laszlo hated that kind of compassionate voice. It infantilized him -which he couldn't stand!- it made him feel weak and it reminded him how John was the kindest, sweetest, most angelic man on Earth and how horrible the alienist had behaved towards him! The reporter deserved so much better than a shitty person like the pathetically trembling in fear -and in cold- alienist! However, Laszlo apprehensively heard steps coming nearer of him.

No. Go away, please.

“Laszlo...” John put a hand on his shivering knee.

“*Verpiss dich! Rühr mich nicht an!*” The alienist cursed, slapping away John's hand.

“Laszlo... I just want to know what happened.” The illustrator tried to soothe him.

“*Nichts ist passiert.*” Laszlo replied.

“Of course it did! Don't play dumb, Laszlo. Also I remind you I can understand German.”

“Shit...” Laszlo gave in after a moment of silence.

Not only you're sweet and beautiful, but you're also clever, Moore. The doctor prevented his mouth from uttering.

“Laszlo... did you... ugh.”

I can't believe what I'm going to say!

“Did you... kiss me?”

*Of course not! You were dreaming, stupid! **You** kissed him! Laszlo is not the kind to kiss people! Well... not on the lips at least. He remembered when the alienist had kissed his hands and temples recently. Either way, Mary was the only person he ever loved! You really got a huge nerve hoping he might love you! And even if he didn't love Mary, do you really think he'd love **you** ? The pathetic gullible drunkard who messes up everything he carries out, abandons children in the street and kiss people -a **man** !- without their consent? Here you are crying now. Because a man doesn't love you. You're a pathetic fairy, John Moore. The most repulsive, sissy, useless, talentless trash ever! No one could ever love you!*

Laszlo heard some sniffles. He gradually looked up.

"John?"

"I'm sorry. I thought... ugh!" The weeping reporter gritted his teeth. "I should... I should go home." He stuttered. "I... never should have stayed in the first place." He apologized before he clumsily turned his back.

The question is not why I push you away, but why do you stay?

THAT was John's answer? 'I never should have stayed'? Why? Oh. Of course. It was crystal clear. The simplest reason ever: **because** Laszlo pushed him away. He was still doing it now. The alienist had the answer right under his nose since the beginning. The fact he kissed the illustrator in his sleep probably didn't help either. It hardly differed from what John had lived at Paresis Hall. He would certainly never come back. That was what Laszlo hoped *and* feared the most. But that was better for John. No crime scenes, no attempted murder, no hurtful roasting, no... rape. The alienist muffled a scream. Such a awful event was still hard to believe.

"Laszlo?" John swiftly turned back. Did his friend... *want* him to stay? No! Why would he? The reporter had made him lose already too much time! But then what was this high-pitched yelp for?

Gottes Willen!

"Go away, John!" Laszlo roared, his face glittering with tears.

"Laszlo..." The confused reporter breathed.

"Do you want to die young?" The doctor let go of his legs. "Do you want to be raped again?" He stood up. "Do you want to be so full of swill and smoke and self-loathing you'll explode?" He walked closer in front of John. "Do you want to be miserable all your life?" He screamt his lungs out while bursting in tears.

The illustrator thought his furious friend was scolding him for his carelessness -like kissing easily other people without their consent for example!- that had led to him to the most horrible experiences.

The truth was Laszlo was blaming himself again for what happened to John.

“Laszlo... I-I-m sorry... I didn’t know it was you.” John stammered in fright. “I... I was dreaming of...”

“Flora. One of your countless beloved halves!” The alienist sniggered. “Ha! You claim having heart and eyes only for Julia, then for Sara, while you probably sing your syrupy romantic vows to all of your public girls! Laughable!” The enraged doctor crudely spat as he was dangerously slouching closer. “I would bet my head you’ve offered the ring I gave you to the first harlot met in the street!” He kept on bragging out all the most painful allegations he could make up. His heart urged him to stop at once but the more he charged his best friend with the most disgraceful acts the more he figured out new ways to beat up and smash flat the softest heart of New York. “That’s ALL you’re good at, are you not? Drinking, smoking your problems away, in the most insufferable denial, like the sorry loser you are, having sex and shameful diseases with strangers all the while dreaming of a one illusory true love! You’re a joke, John Schuyler Moore!” Laszlo scoffed at the shaking reporter face.

“*What a joke you are.*” John remembered Ellison’s scolding.

“It’s not such a great surprise Julia let you down for a better man or Sara is not interested in you. A pretty face is not enough, John!” Laszlo finished him off.

“Is... Is it... what... you think of me, Laszlo?” The shattered illustrator frightfully repeated what he’d once told the alienist after the latter perhaps had implied John was nothing to him. Now... now Laszlo was explicitly spitting his justified hate and reject of him into his face.

John remembered he’d gone back to the firewater, Connor had found him and probably would have shot his brains out if the corrupted bastard’s superiors hadn’t ordered him not to. That night, John had craved to die; craved to scream at Connor “Come on, shoot me! Kill me! That’s what we *both* want!” After all Laszlo hated him and he *was* indeed a fairy! The fact Connor and only Connor had discovered John’s inadmissible feelings for the alienist made the reporter want to bang his head against a wall. No matter how many hugs, how many heartwarming words Laszlo had blessed him with recently, only Laszlo’s usual, harsh, debasing, spiteful words mattered and were filling John’s mind right now. No. No ‘perhaps’! John actually and clearly *was* nothing to the alienist! Since always!

He stared at Laszlo. The alienist was glaring at him with a blank, inexpressive face.

Too much. It was too much!

He couldn’t refrain his tears anymore. He ran away. Where to go? He didn’t care. He just wanted to escape Laszlo’s hateful stare on him! It hurt. It hurt so much! John did absolutely **everything** to please Laszlo, to help, to do things well, to merely be a decent man! But that wasn’t enough to his beloved alienist. It will *NEVER* be enough! John had failed it all. John was the lowest, most worthless pile of shit!

On his side, as thick tears were dripping into his beard, Laszlo gasped and nearly choked. Oh no. He’d done it again! Just when his precious friend needed his care and love the most, Laszlo had punched, trampled on John’s fragile heart again! He swore in German. Now John was going to dive into booze again, in a worse manner than before, ruining Sara’s admirable

work! No. With his recently recalled trauma and his likely advanced depression, John was going to... Laszlo hyperventilated.

“JOHN!”

Chapter End Notes

Scheiße: Shit

Verpiss dich! Rühr mich nicht an!: Piss off! Stay away from me!

Nichts ist passiert: Nothing happened

Gottes Willen: God's sake

Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The sobbing, breathless reporter had reached the kitchen. A remembrance of sweet Mary appeared to him. Oh, how he wished they could switch places. He would finally disappear from Laszlo's -from EVERYONE'S- life and she and the alienist could be happy together. John was sure Laszlo wished the illustrator had died instead of Mary. It would have been fairer. He remembered the day he'd seen her furiously chopping vegetables. When Laszlo had gone out with Sara. Leaving both of them alone. He remembered he'd had the nerve to tell her the doctor wasn't hurting his friends on purpose while just after their little stroll, Laszlo had literally taken him for his worthless shoe-servant not even good enough to keep his fiancée.

"The question is not why I push you away, but why do you stay?"

Isn't it obvious why I don't want you around? Get off my sight, you useless, pathetic drunkard! You low failure! Fuck off!

He remembered Mary's knife. Where were the knives stored in? He began to pull open drawers.

Scheiße. Laszlo's ankle hurt like hell. Probably his misstep in the stairs earlier. Where has John gone to?

Please, God, let me find him alive!

Where was he? Where was he?

As he was trying to look into each room, Laszlo started to ponder. Every time, every time he belittled John, it was always to avoid admitting his weaknesses. His short-temper, his past, his pride, his love... his undying love for his friends, for Mary, ... for John. Every time, he'd yearned to apologize, every time he'd refrained from doing it. Or really had to force the words out of his mouth. He'd only managed it with Mary, Cyrus and Stevie. And later Sara of course. Why was it just impossible with John? Because he was the person Laszlo had behaved the most horrible way towards?

Because he was madly in love with him and contrary to his feelings for sweet Mary, these were a bit less easy to admit, let alone out loud? Because he'd rather appear cruel than weak in front of John? Because he'd rather have John self-loathing than hating the alienist? How much selfish and careless was he? Laszlo castigated the machismo of society yet was its best follower! Admitting his insecurities and mistakes, showing his emotions, apologizing...

Laszlo considered all of this as evidences of weakness. Patronizing and looking tough instead made him feel somehow stronger. And of course, he thought he'd be more easily accepted by his peers that way, John included. It had worked yes, but at what cost? The ability to smile of the sweetest, purest man the stubborn doctor ever knew! That was why he loved John way more than himself! John was kind, sensitive, caring... and never bothered to hide it! John

was much more of a brave man than Laszlo!

Yet, the thick alienist belittled him, convinced him *he* was the lowest, weakest, most worthless scum ever! Convinced him the opera fanatic didn't love him!

What an idiot! Even if he'd confessed to John, his best friend would have avoided the topic or run away! Especially after what happened at Paresis Hall!

But wait... why would John self-loath so much just from Laszlo's roasting words? Why would he risk his life, his sanity, his health just to please the doctor or cope with his painful comments? And why had Laszlo NEVER asked himself that question before?? What if...

He *REALLY* was the worst alienist ever!

"JOHN! JOHN!" He desperately called, warm tears streaming out of his brown eyes.

The reporter at last found the coveted tool. He rose it up. So large, so serrated, so sharp... Perfect. Mary had always been a devoted worker. Bless her. He pressed the knife under his throat.

As if God had heard his plea, a covered in tears Laszlo saw light in the kitchen.

"John? Are you...?" He lost his capacity to breathe. To think. "*GOTT! NEIN! STOPPE! TU'S NICHT!*" He tore off his vocal chords.

"Stay where you are!" John threatened him, the blade still under his throat.

"O-Ok. Alright." Laszlo whispered and rose his hands up. He was out of breath as his heart was racing like a furious horse. "I'm not... stepping forward. See?" His lips and eyelids began to quiver. "Please... *Bitte*, John... Don't..." The panicked doctor begged as he was shaking his head.

"And why shouldn't I?" John snarled.

"I... I should have known... way sooner... I'm sorry, I'm so terribly sorry. I-I'm sure... you wanted to keep it secret... and well..." The alienist faked an amused smirk. "You've succeeded. Still... it wasn't... a good enough reason... to treat you the way I did. I'm sorry. But... dear *Gott*... if I had known... if... if I hadn't been obsessed with *my* own issues all the time!..." He gritted his teeth as fresh tears rolled over his pink cheeks.

"What are you raving about now?" John whined.

"Please, John. Please, I'm begging you... from the deepest bottom of my heart... put that knife down. Please." Laszlo silently sobbed.

"Why... would I do that?" John's eyes glistened.

"Because... because I want you to."

"No. No, you won't get me again! With your arrogant... and commanding looks!"

Laszlo dared one step forwards.

“I’m not commanding you, John!” He knelt down despite his aching ankle. “I’m begging you.” He joined his hands and intensely gazed at his friend.

John let out a small whimper, sniffled, at last let go of the blasted knife in a loud clatter and crumbled down before bursting into bitter tears. Laszlo rushed at his precious friend like a damned soul.

“Fuck!” John screeched out. “Why must I still obey you like a schoolboy? Like a good doggie?? I’m a failure... even in death!”

The remorseful alienist hugged his friend with all the physical strength he was able of; and damn his crippled right arm!

“Oh John, *Gott sei Dank*. ” Laszlo huffed out. “John...” He kissed the crook of the shivering illustrator’s neck. “John...” Kissed his black hair. “John...” Kissed his soaked cheek. “John, *mein Liebe* .” He muttered.

“Laszlo...” John whimpered. “I’m sorry... I’m an overreacting fool.” He sobbed into his friend’s ear. “A dramatic... fairy. Fit for an opera play.”

“No... No!” The heart-shaken alienist suddenly cried out. “ ***I*** am sorry, John! ***You*** have nothing, absolutely **NOTHING** to be sorry for! Unless being the most... adorable,... kind-hearted man ever is a crime!”

The burning-eyed reporter lost his voice.

“I... I didn’t think... what I’ve said earlier, John! I just... I didn’t want... to look *weak* in front of you. I wanted... to make you go. To save you from me... ugh!” Laszlo gnarled and hugged his friend tighter. “It seems... I never learn. I should have known... having you rushing back in the cheap ale... after our arguments... wasn’t a sign... of the good fulfilment... of my plan.”

And rather was the sign of something else.

Come on, you don’t have to pretend anymore, Kreizler. Tell him.

He took a deep breath.

“John, I wanted to tell you... I’m...” Laszlo searched for adequate words. For the first time of his life, it was as difficult as buttoning his boots on his own. “I’m... proud of you. And... I’d like to... thank you... for your involvement... in our last investigation... you helped us a lot... a large lot... and... for still not... throwing me away... from your life.”

Arschloch . *If you had thanked him sooner, he wouldn’t have gone to... he wouldn’t have been...*

“John Schuyler Moore, I...”

And here you were thinking looking strong mattered more than his self-esteem!

“I, Laszlo Kreizler, I...” He almost bit off his lip.

And his thirst to be loved!

“I... I wouldn’t say... that... I execrate you.” He babbled. “Truth is I... I... love you.” He shyly mumbled.

The kitchen went silent. Even John had stopped making any sound.

“I... I know you can’t believe me... and... that a man holding... romantic feelings for you... must appall you, and I sincerely apologize for that! But... I’m done... looking tough... I’m done... hurting you... I’m done... lying to you...” Laszlo sobbed against his friend’s shoulder.

John knelt up and gently caught the alienist’s. He stared at him.

“Right... Reject me, John... Don’t even believe me... That’s the only outcome... That’s all I deserve...” Laszlo looked down.

“Don’t you ever get tired of the sound of you own voice?” The illustrator unexpectedly showed a glowing smile before pressing his lips on a startled doctor’s.

The salt of his tears melted on their lips and tongues as they first hesitantly, timidly, looking for the best angle, then passionately kissed. All this ardent love repressed for so long finally allowed to go out. Finally free. John was a bit too pushy to Laszlo’s taste and his beard was itching John’s lips, but neither of them cared. Not anymore. They’ve bared themselves in front of each other, no one to disturb or judge them, they couldn’t be happier at the moment. They were happy yet so scared. Scared to lose each other once the kiss would end. Scared to be rejected. Scared to live like before, as if nothing ever happened.

As the reporter was gleefully tasting the man he’d always admired along his own never-ending tears, he wondered if he wasn’t hallucinating. Laszlo -Laszlo! The man which he’d only wished just a ‘thank you’ from- told him he loved him. Laszlo was kissing him! It was way more than he’d ever dreamt of! John was so scared his friend might change his mind and tell him all of this is a mistake! He had to kiss him more!

John’s kissing strength was pushing Laszlo backwards. He really wasn’t comfortable with physical affection! In a grunt, he slammed both his hands on his friend’s broad shoulders and broke the forceful kiss.

“Laszlo... no.” The breathless illustrator pleaded. “Don’t...”

Don’t push me away again!

“*Ich liebe dich !*” The upside down alienist hasted to cry out. “I love you... a lot, John! But... all this...” He waved his left hand as to signify he was looking for the most accurate words. “...physical behavior... disturbs me. I- I hope... you won’t hold any grudge against that... disability of mine.” He admitted with glistening brown eyes. “I... I wish... I was able

to behave... more affectionately with you, John. Nonetheless... I am afraid this kind of... demeanor is not... one of my most rooted habits and... is not... that simple... to practice to me.” He uneasily admitted.

Of course. Being physical had never been the most remarkable trait of Laszlo. Sometimes a handshake -never initiated by the doctor- or medical examination but that was his ultimate limit. Laszlo only touched other people for strictly professional reasons. Had he ever touched or kissed Mary? His eyes looked like a abandoned kitten’s.

“Laszlo...” John cupped a bearded cheek. “I could...never have hoped for so much. And God forbid, let alone asked for it!” He chuckled with a twinkle in his eyes.

“Maybe you should have...” Laszlo displayed a teasing smirk as a tear dropped on his best friend’s warm hand.

He realized too late how that sentence could be interpreted.

“How?” The reporter chuckled in a beaming smile. “With a wedding ri-...?” His smile faded as his eyes got wider. “Oh my God...” He breathed.

He still had Mary’s wedding ring! Should he...? No! That was the most horrible, disrespectful thing to do to poor Mary! And marrying another man was impossible anyway, no matter the amount of gold in the ring!

“Sorry. Sorry, John! I... That was stupid... And I... I assume you gave the ring to Sara. Did she like it?”

Chapter End Notes

Scheiße: Shit

GOTT! NEIN! STOPPE! TU’S NICHT!: God! No! Stop! Don't do it!

Bitte: Please

Gott: God

Gott sei Dank: Thank God

mein Liebe: my love

Arschloch: Asshole

Ich liebe dich: I love you

Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

Flashback with Sara.

The illustrator bitterly remembered the awkward yet firm refusal of his other beloved one. One or two days after he had stormed off Laszlo's house.

"Miss Sara Howard" He had even put down a knee. "Will you have me as your faithful and devoted husband?"

"John..." Sara did her best not to squeal and scream how freaking cute -and also a *bit* awkward- that man looked. "I'm sorry..." She faintly shook her head.

Faint but firm enough to shatter the reporter's heart in pieces.

"Wh-what do you mean?" He enquired nevertheless.

"I cannot... marry you, John Moore." She was trying her best to sound the kindest possible.

"Why? Is it some... flaw of mine? A bad habit? I-I've stopped drinking! I've stopped the night women! I-Is there... something else I should get rid of? Tell me and I'll do it!" He begged.

Sara believed him. Of course he would remove everything, everything he was just to please her!

There is nothing else you should get rid of! You're kind, you're pure-hearted, you're cute, you're perfect! Sara yearned to exclaim.

"Ugh. No, John. There is not... Actually, yes there *is* ." She changed her mind. "You should get rid of your affection for me."

"How can I do such a thing?" John almost lost his breath out of shock, standing up. "You're the most radiant, most brilliant, bravest person I've ever met! How can I not have affection for you?"

"John, you don't understand!" The detective grew impatient. With something gleaming in her eyes. Irritation? Regret? John couldn't tell. "I'm not...!"

"I'm not in love with you!" was what the reporter was expecting.

“I’m not *meant* for marriage! I’m not meant for... a good, marital, settled family life!” Sara tried to explain. “I *refuse* marriage. I don’t want to marry. Not you, not anyone.” She softly shook her head. “I wish to remain a... spinster, like people say. I wish to remain free. This is not directed at you or *because* of you. Do you understand?”

“I’ll... try to.” John pitifully lowered his arm that carried the precious ring as he was lowering his eyes down the pavement.

“John, I mean... I mean I’m not the woman, the *wife* you’re looking for. That’s why it’s better for you to give up your affection, or at least your hopes towards me. Because I *can’t* satisfy your wishes. I’m sorry.”

John closed the jewel box. Staring at the floor instead of Sara.

Just a moment, *just* for a moment he’d thought, hoped Sara might return his feelings for her, might love him back. What an idiot. Sara valued and loved her work, as well as her single status, more than everything else. What had he been thinking of?

You moron!

Also, he’d been searching in a wedding with Sara for an excuse, a proof he wasn’t... he didn’t hold unnatural feelings for Laszlo. His alienist friend would have left him alone once and for all if he had married, what’s more with the woman everyone knew about his adoration for her. He would have forgotten quicker his violation by the owner of a children brothel! John Schuyler Moore really had won it all. Or rather lost. Lost his brother. Lost his dignity. Lost his only friend. Lost the women he loved. If he lost his work too, he’d really be this century’s champion of loss!

Shit, now he’s looking more and more like a beaten puppy! Sara regretted.

“John, look at me please.” She softly asked.

He didn’t comply.

She sighed. She knew why. He probably was trying not to cry. And it ripped her iron heart into frail shreds.

“It wasn’t my intent... to make you sad.” She asserted, trying to hold in her own tears. “We simply... our respective life projects... are simply not... compatible.”

John kept his stare on the pavement.

“Do you remember what you told me?” Sara questioned out of the blue.

“What have I told you?” John finally looked up. As she was fearing it, his eyes were glittering with tears.

“*Don’t act as if I don’t have feelings for you.*”

“What do you-? Oh.”

These news enchanted yet surprised him. Such a surprise he barely noticed Sara's kiss on his cheek. She hugged him.

"Don't think... you are not loved. Or good enough. You *are* a good man, John. You *are* worth. You *are* valued. And loved. I... I like you. Very much." She stammered. "Just... don't ask me any kind of engagement."

Despite his heartbreak, he sincerely hugged her back. Breathed on her nice-smelling hair.

Besides, maybe it was another sign from God or any celestial entity that John should confess to his childhood friend.

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