

Their Sweet Kisses

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Their Sweet Kisses

by [BiPrideMoth](#)

Summary

Five years after they shared a summer fling, Jaskier runs into Geralt on pure chance. While they still get along just as well, things have changed drastically and with Geralt being settled into a relationship with Yennefer and taking care of his adoptive daughter Ciri, Jaskier doesn't figure his chances to be particularly good.

Notes

Hey, everyone, it's me! Same bitch, new fandom, let's get kicking!

The "fairer sex" they often call it

Chapter Notes

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

On a Friday night in the Summer of 2015, Geralt takes Jaskier aside and everything is wrong. Jaskier almost doesn't want to listen because he knows what is about to happen. He never took Geralt to be one for clichés and yet, there's a lot of "It's not you, it's me" and "I just can't commit to someone right now" and "I'm sorry, but I didn't want to hurt you anymore." It's frustrating, but maybe it's his fault for constantly over-estimating him.

Jaskier doesn't cry. He doesn't want to give him that, he doesn't want to give him that kind of vulnerability because God knows, Geralt has never given him any. Instead, he nods and says he understands because what use is there in protest? None. He can't make Geralt stay any more than he can force a song into existence without a melody.

And with one last hum, Geralt is gone, leaving behind only silence and it feels like, in that instance, he has left Jaskier's life for good. And only when Jaskier hears the front door fall shut, he starts crying, alone and heartbroken and cursing himself for ever expecting more than what they had. It was good as a fling and maybe Geralt would still be here if he had never told him he wanted more than that. And maybe that would hurt more, in the long run, but Jaskier never was one for the long run.

He could have had the pleasure of the moment, for just a little longer. And maybe he wouldn't need more at some point, maybe he would get over that or maybe someone else would've come along and it would have been Jaskier with control over the situation.

But that's not what happened. What happened is he fell in love and had his heart broken. And now he is crying about it because he is only human and watching a man he was hopelessly infatuated with leave for vague, selfish reasons burns a hole into his chest, whether he wants it to or not.

~

Jaskier has never been good with faces. He is convinced he walks past at least three former classmates every single day, without recognizing them simply by virtue of them changing haircuts and hair colors or wearing a different style of makeup than they used to or gaining or losing a few pounds here or there. Or – the worst offense of all – some people grow *beards* which simply kills every ability for him to recognize anyone. Bottom line is, if he doesn't see someone for an extended period of time, he may never recognize them again.

But for every rule, there is an exception. And Jaskier is looking at that exception with big eyes and his heart jumping unpleasantly in his chest.

He hasn't seen Geralt in five years, but not only does he look almost exactly the same as five years ago, save for his jawline that seems to be even sharper than back then if that's even possible, he also appears to conduct himself in the exact same manner as he used to. Poise, effortless confidence, unrivaled gorgeousness, it's all there. And he's just sitting there, alone at his table, sipping a soft drink.

Jaskier needs to remind himself for a moment that he is standing in line at a Subway and really should be thinking more about composing his order rather than this man he used to know five years ago, before he was who he is now. He tries to shake it off, to ignore the pulling sensation in his chest that is trying to dig up memories that he has tried so hard not to dwell on.

They knew each other for about two months five years ago and yet seeing him here throws Jaskier off his game so completely and utterly that his mind goes blank.

"What would you like, sir?" the employee asks, visibly annoyed at his mental absence.

He apologizes and goes through the motions of his order. It costs him conscious effort to not constantly look over his shoulder and wondering whether Geralt has noticed him. Maybe he doesn't even remember him. *God, that would be fucking tragic*, Jaskier thinks and shoves the thought back where it came from. Geralt can't have forgotten him unless he has been with more than a hundred people in the meantime, all more memorable than Jaskier. And Jaskier would like to think about himself a bit more highly than them. He still remembers his five girlfriends from school, after all, even if he probably wouldn't recognize most of them and none of them were anything anywhere near a "serious" relationship.

He thanks the cashier mechanically, takes his sandwich and contemplates whether he should talk to Geralt. Would that be a weird move? Just chatting up an ex-whatever-they-were?

Fuck it, it's been five years, he decides finally and makes his way to Geralt's table and can't help but wonder if his favorite soft drink is still peach ice-tea.

"Geralt! What a coincidence, nice to see you!" He almost wants to pat himself on the back for how casual he makes it sound. As if he has literally just spotted him instead of agonizing about his presence for several minutes. "Can I sit down?"

Geralt looks up to him, face as unreadable as ever. He hums – that definitely hasn't changed – and nods slowly. "Jaskier," he says, and his voice is still as deep and rough as Jaskier remembers it, "I don't reckon I can stop you."

"Hey, I'm not a dick, I would only keep asking for a few minutes, nothing too drastic," he says, smiling. It still feels so easy, talking to Geralt. He settles down on the chair across from him and unwraps his sandwich. "So, wow, it's been a while, how have you been doing?" Jaskier knows it's a lame question, but he figures it's what he should be asking.

"Quite well, I think. I'm pretty settled," Geralt says and Jaskier eyes him suspiciously, "You?"

“Oh, I’m great, I’m a journalist now, of all things. A journalist! For sports, though, so that’s... Suboptimal, but well, you do what makes you money, I guess. Oh, and I have a band which is fun, for the most part. It’s been hard to keep it alive, you know, everyone being busy after college and such.” He shrugs and smiles a little awkwardly before digging into his sandwich. “What do you do?” he asks then, his mouth still half full. *Very classy, Jaskier; ten out of ten.*

“I teach medieval history here.”

Jaskier raises an eyebrow. “You’re a professor?”

Geralt smiles, being just as beautiful as Jaskier remembers him. Maybe even more so. “Yes, it was a good offer and teaching isn’t as bad as I thought.”

Jaskier laughs and nods, “I imagine, I just never saw that for you.” He pauses for a moment. “You’re still a hunter, though, right?”

Geralt nods and looks away. Jaskier has always been uncomfortable with that aspect of Geralt’s life. It’s his single most bothersome feature, honestly, and Jaskier only with pronounced discomfort remembers using it as petty ammunition against Geralt in arguments.

He clears his throat. “I’m... I’m sorry, you know. I was a huge dick about that whole thing. I shouldn’t hold that against you, I was just... You know, a twenty-year-old, I guess.”

“Thanks,” Geralt says, “It’s alright, though, I never accepted that you were uncomfortable with me talking about hunting and all that. Sorry about that, too.”

Jaskier smiles and feels like an idiot. He can’t help it when he looks at Geralt, it’s almost as if his face acts independently of his brain. “Why couldn’t we be this mature back then?”, he reminisces, “Things probably would have gone better...” He tries not to dwell on it, on how things could have gone had they just communicated better.

Geralt just looks at him, his face stoic but soft somehow. “Maybe,” he says and regards Jaskier for a moment longer.

Then he turns his gaze towards the door and lights up in a way that makes Jaskier’s heart flutter in his chest.

And then he hears the single most damning thing you possibly can hear when talking to an ex.

“Hi, Daddy!” a little girl’s voice yells happily and runs up to Geralt and hugs him tightly. She has long, blond hair, is about six years old and full of life. The whole scene raises several questions.

“We were wondering where you were, we wanted to meet up at the station ten minutes ago,” says a woman on her way to their table and it might just be worse than the daughter. With her slender yet curvy frame, flawless face and long, shining black hair flowing down her back,

she is easily the most beautiful woman he has ever seen. Geralt smiles in a way that makes clear he agrees and gets up from his chair.

“I’m sorry,” he says softly, lightly places both hands on her hips and places a tender kiss on her lips. Jaskier feels like he’s in the middle of a movie, watching two ridiculously perfect-looking people kiss while he sits on the sidelines watching, in awe of how beautiful they are.

“That’s Jaskier, by the way, an... old friend,” Geralt says vaguely after they part and gestures in his direction, “Jaskier, that’s Yennefer, my girlfriend.”

Well, at least not his wife, Jaskier thinks somewhat bitterly, but musters up a smile anyway. “Hi,” he says and gives an awkward little wave.

Yennefer looks at him, then back at Geralt skeptically and then promptly laughs. “*Old friend*, huh. So... ex-boyfriend, got it.” She smiles brightly and extends one hand to Jaskier who feels his cheeks burning brighter than possibly ever.

He hesitantly takes her hand and shakes it. “I, well, kind of...” he stutters, “I’m sorry, I don’t have any ulterior motives, I swear.” *Anymore*.

Yennefer smirks at Geralt and Jaskier feels like there’s a joke he has missed. “He’s adorable, Geralt, weird you never told me about him. Don’t worry about it,” she assures and drops his hand. Is he really so unintimidating as to elicit not even the slightest bit of jealousy? Well, no, he has some hospital records that clearly state the opposite. But Yennefer seems to be a unicorn of a woman. At least superficially she shows no sign of bother with her boyfriend interacting with an ex. Curious.

“I’m Ciri!” the little girl exclaims, obviously deprived of attention for long enough.

Jaskier smiles at her because of course he does, he’s not going to let out the awkwardness of the whole situation on a child. “I’m Jaskier,” he says softly and shakes her little hand.

He contemplates if he should ask, but shortly before he does, he decides to keep quiet instead. He doesn’t want cataclysm to break loose if he asks since when Geralt has a child when he very clearly didn’t have one five years ago. Instead, he shoots Geralt a quizzical look without receiving any reaction.

“If you have plans with your... family, I obviously don’t want to stop you, Geralt.” It’s almost bizarre to see Geralt with a daughter and a girlfriend.

“Yeah, I should probably go,” Geralt replies. “Little Ciri here,” he picks her up and holds her in his arms as though it’s nothing, “wants to go ice skating, isn’t that right?” He smiles at her and it’s the most genuine thing Jaskier has ever witnessed.

“Yes!” Ciri exclaims happily and, on cue, Yennefer waves with a clear bag with two tiny ice skates in it.

“Oh, I wouldn’t want to keep the little princess from ice skating,” Jaskier laughs and looks around aimlessly. Is he supposed to just stay seated while they get ready to leave? “It was...

nice seeing you. Catching up and all that. Nice to meet you, too, Yennefer.”

“You too!” she replies, “You should come over for lunch someday, actually. I would never pass up an opportunity to have one of Geralt’s old friend clue me in on some dirt.” She laughs her effortlessly beautiful laugh while Geralt looks mildly uncomfortable and gently puts Ciri back on the ground.

Jaskier glances at Geralt seems too busy side-eyeing Yennefer to pay attention to him. He needs some reassurance from anywhere, but it’s apparently not going to come from Geralt.

Does he want to visit their home? If they’re living together, it’s definitely serious, if the fact that they are raising a child together wasn’t clue enough. There’s not much in it for him, is there? Not a re-kindling of his old flame, at the very least. On the other hand, it’s undeniably easy to talk to Geralt and he does want to see him again, even if it’s not romantic. And hey, maybe they should never have been romantic in the first place. Maybe they should have just been friends and, best case scenario, Jaskier is getting not just one but two friends out of the deal. As they always say, it’s quite hard to make friends as an adult, so maybe even just that would be worth it.

“That sounds lovely,” he says, finally.

Geralt finally looks at him again, their eyes meet for a moment and Jaskier just looks away. “Sure, we’re free on Tuesday, think you can make that?”

Jaskier makes a mental note of how he can totally finish that opinion piece on the second half of the football season before Tuesday or, more likely, on Tuesday evening or, even more likely, in the middle of Tuesday night, and then just says, “Yeah, that sounds good.”

Geralt nods and gets his wallet and pulls a little card from it. “Call me if there’s a change of plans,” he says and hands the little card to Jaskier who can’t help but smirk at it.

“Business cards,” he says, amused, “Thanks. I, uhm, I’d say I’ll be on my way but, uh, I guess you guys are leaving?”

Yennefer nods and smiles at him again. “Yeah, we should be leaving. Nice to meet you, Jaskier, I’m looking forward to Tuesday,” she sing-songs and takes Ciri by the hand. The little angel waves Jaskier goodbye.

“Well, see you then,” Geralt says and lifts his hand in a vague goodbye gesture.

“See you,” Jaskier replies and forces a smile.

And he watches them go, a happy, gorgeous little family. He hasn’t missed Geralt in ages, but now, as he watches him leave this damned Subway, he suddenly feels that longing again and part of him wishes he had snuck in at least one quick touch.

Just to give you a feeling for how much I struggled starting this: The Word file for this chapter is called "attempt number 100" so... yeah.

Anyway, I love these three characters and I accidentally plotted 15 chapters of this one evening, so I guess I'm writing this now? We love solving love triangles with polyamory, after all. We'll take a minute to get here, but we'll get there.

For praise, fangirling or death threats, please refer to my [Tumblr](#)

Love you <3

All bark, no bite

Chapter Summary

Triss is almost helpful, Jaskier is an anxious mess.

Chapter Notes

In which the author who struggles with dialogue, writes a lot of dialogue.

Hope you guys enjoy <3

“You look sad.”

Jaskier rolls his eyes and gets up to fetch some coffee. The office small office cafeteria is almost empty this morning, save for a handful of people at a table next to him and Triss. Her eyes follow him, and he can't shake their suspicion. “I'm aware this shirt isn't exactly my most fashionable moment,” he quips as the coffee machine rumbles out a Latte Macchiato.

“Oh, come on, Jaskier, you know I'm not talking about your shirt, although that definitely is its own tragedy.” She gestures at him vaguely. The shirt is a dirty grey one that he grabbed in the morning after realizing he hadn't actually done the laundry yet and it looks like it has seen wars. “Who broke up with you this time?”

Jaskier looks at her with exaggerated offense and grabs his coffee. “Excuse me? Just because I'm in a bad mood doesn't mean someone broke up with me. I'm actually on a dry spell, so thanks for putting salt in that wound.” He lets himself fall back into the chair across from her. The cafeteria is like a refuge from the noise of the office that he already avoids as much as he can manage, doing most of his writing at home, cafés, the library or literally anywhere else. But apparently Triss is determined to fill that pleasant void with more noise today. On a fucking Monday.

“Why don't you just tell me what's up, Jaskier? Fine, I'll guess, then. We have twenty minutes, after all.” She takes a sip from her own coffee. “Let's see. I assume you haven't destroyed anyone's marriage lately?”

Jaskier rolls his eyes again. “I haven't, and also, the last time I destroyed a marriage was like two years ago. So, get off my case.”

“Suddenly becoming virtuous in your mid-twenties, I see,” Triss laughs, “Okay, so... No destroyed marriages. Got it. So, nobody is mad at you?”

Jaskier shrugs, “I mean, I can’t guarantee *nobody* is mad at me. Somebody usually is. But, uhm, not because my recent actions, at the very least.”

“Fair enough. But you still give off bad vibes. Love-related bad vibes,” she says without a hint of irony in her voice.

“Triss, you need to stop with...” he gestures helplessly, “whatever it is you’re saying.”

“I will stop talking about vibes when you stop basically oozing the kind of shit you feel sad about any given day. So, it’s still love-related, but nobody broke up with you and no marriages have been destroyed. Hm... What song did you listen to when you woke up this morning?”

Jaskier sighs. He never should have shared that morning ritual with anyone. “Valentine’s Day by Linkin Park,” he admits reluctantly.

She grimaces. “Okay, strong nostalgia vibes. I conclude you met an ex?”

“How do you-?”

“Your energies are very unsubtle.”

“Triss...”

She laughs, “Let me have some fun, okay. Also, I am right, too, apparently.”

He sighs. “Fine, yes, you’re right. I met a very sexy ex of mine at Subway yesterday and we got talking and he seemed to have changed quite a bit since... Well. Anyway, he has a daughter and an extremely hot girlfriend.”

“So, basically what you’re telling me is that you haven’t destroyed their marriage *yet*.”

“I mean they aren’t married, and I don’t really plan on making a move. Not to mention that he’s probably way too honorable for that, especially when they have a child together.” It’s both admirable and disappointing, really. Geralt is too good for that, undoubtedly and yet, part of Jaskier wishes he wasn’t.

“But he is really sexy and you’ve had sex before, right?”

“Oh, yes a ton. We were only... Well, not really together but let’s say together for two months? And in that time... I couldn’t keep count, it was honestly kind of depraved. It was... definitely something.” At a table next to theirs a woman – probably from Human Resources, Jaskier assumes based on both haircut and general disposition – audibly clears her throat. He shoots her look and proceeds to ignore her.

Meanwhile, realization creeps into Triss’ face. “You’re not talking about that guy you had a fling with between fourth and fifth semester, right? What was his name? George? Gilbert?”

“Geralt.”

Triss just stares at him for a moment. “Jaskier...” she sighs then and rubs her finger against her temples. “You can’t do this to me again, for the love of all that is holy.”

“I’m not doing anything, Triss.”

She doesn’t listen. “Oh my God, you spent *months* crying about this man, and now because he seems to have learned how to commit you want to crawl back to him?”

Jaskier crosses his arms before his chest. “You’re not listening. He’s taken, he has a family, I’m not making a move. Besides, I was twenty, of course I couldn’t deal with a fling at that age yet. That was the phase when I still wrote love poems. Poems, Triss, poems. That’s ancient history by now.”

Triss skeptically raises an eyebrow at him. “It’s been five years, not fifty. And he’s evidently still hot, at least by the way to talk about him. But, okay, so you met him at Subway yesterday, are you even guaranteed to see him again? Does he live here now, are you just going to see him around to occasionally swoon? Talk me through your process.”

“There’s no process, really. They invited me for lunch tomorrow. That’s it, that’s the process.”

“They?”

“Well, I guess it was mostly Yennefer, his girlfriend, but yes, they invited me over for lunch, to just... chat and catch up.”

Triss look at him incredulously. “His girlfriend, whom he has a child with, invited you over for lunch?”

Jaskier lifts his hands defensively. “I don’t know, I thought it was weird, too, but it seemed like a nice offer to me. I’d genuinely like to catch up with him. Apparently, he’s a professor now, I want to know how that thought process went after all he ever said about teaching before that was that he wanted to do ‘anything but teaching’. And Yennefer seems interesting, too, a bit scary, actually. Their kid is pretty sweet, too. I could stand to make a few more friends.”

“I don’t want to sound dramatic, but if they poison you and turn your remains into kebab, don’t say I didn’t warn you.”

“You’re being very dramatic, actually.”

She shrugs. “Hey, if you think an ex and his family make a great pool to get friends from, that’s on you. All I’m saying is that I don’t want to deal with you crying about how big scruff man doesn’t want to be all fluffy with you again. I mean, I *will*, but I’m not looking forward to it.”

Jaskier sighs, deflated. “I just think we’d make good friends maybe.”

“But if *he* wants to ruin his own relationship, you won’t stop him?”

“That’s never been my responsibility, so no, I won’t stop him.”

Triss smiles. “Good, so it is still you. Damn, all this talk about family and not making a move seemed really off-brand for you for a moment.”

Jaskier shoots her a grin back. “You know me better than that. But, to be honest, I’d still prefer if he didn’t mess with his relationship, not when there’s a child on the line. That would make me really uncomfortable.”

Triss doesn’t seem convinced. “You really need to get away from married people.”

Jaskier dramatically empties his coffee in one go. “What can I say? I have a type.”

~

On Tuesday morning, he has finally done his laundry, but he still doesn’t have anything to wear. He even finished his article in record speed at the office yesterday, just so he would get to fully bask in the concentrated anxiety of not knowing what to wear to something that isn’t even remotely related to being a date. Not that his brain understands that.

He has amassed an impressive collection of shirts over the years, each with different purposes – be it work, travel or communicating his sexuality in gay clubs – and each one just not quite being the right pick. Maybe he should wear a sweater instead? That’s more casual and also it is kind of cold outside. He sighs and eyes the pile of clothes in his bedroom. *This is ridiculous.*

He toys with the idea of calling Triss for a moment, but she’d probably be less than happy to advise him in outfit choices when there is literally nothing at stake. There is nothing at stake. That’s what he tells himself, but the truth is that even if he’s not aiming for “sexual” he still needs to wear *something* and preferably something at least sort of nice. He sighs. This is going nowhere.

He searches for Geralt’s business card in his jeans, unsuccessfully. He can’t find it in his jacket either. No panic-driven cancelations either then. Probably for the better, if he’s really being honest.

There’s no way around it. He’ll have to pick a shirt and live with it and he has to do it in the next – he checks his phone – ten minutes, ideally. He takes a deep breath. Maybe he should just do it systematically. *Good plan*, he thinks to himself and first discards any shirts with big cartoony prints that he doesn’t want to wear outside of very specific circles, as well as anything he’d wear to business dinners.

Before him sits a slightly less intimidating mountain of shirts, but it’s still just a little too big for comfort. He inhales again, and discards a few he just doesn’t like enough to consider until

his eyes fall on the most piercing pink color he has ever dared to purchase. He smiles. A terrible choice. He loves it.

Now he just needs to survive the way to Geralt and Yennefer's place without thinking too hard about Triss' suggestion of him getting poisoned. Or worse, he could embarrass himself by saying something stupid. Both of which would be equally lethal.

~

By a miracle and a half, Jaskier arrives at their doorstep in one piece, physically and mentally. His palms are still sweating and he is somewhat regretful of his choice in shirt choice, but at least he has made it on time.

He rings the doorbell. To his surprise, the first thing he hears in response to this is loud, excited barking. A dog? He didn't expect a dog, but in the realm of things he didn't expect Geralt to have acquired during the past five years, a dog is relatively harmless.

It takes a few seconds until someone opens the door, the person in question turning out to be Ciri who absolutely adorably grins at him, yes, but has no capacity for holding back the big, very excited brown Labrador that charges past her directly into him and knocks him back into the frost-coated grass behind him.

He groans in pain as the dog licks his face up and down, all the while yapping happily at him. "Roach, don't!" Ciri yells ineffectually, trying to pull at the dog's collar while Jaskier tries to get his hands back under control to push the dog off himself.

"Roach!" Geralt's voice is not overly loud, but undeniably domineering and the dog immediately lets go of Jaskier and demurely walks back to Geralt. "I'm sorry, she gets excited sometimes. Are you okay?" He pets Roach for a moment and then offers a hand to Jaskier and pulls him up.

Taken aback by the strong pull, Jaskier stumbles forward a notch and only in the last second catches himself with one hand on Geralt's chest. His heart makes an unruly tumble in his chest. He clears his throat and takes a step back with a laugh bubbling to the surface. "Yeah, I'm used to exciting the ladies. Or gentlemen?" He eyes Roach warily.

"She's a lady, yes. Not very ladylike, but alas." Geralt's smile is almost saccharine when he scratches her under her chin.

Jaskier dusts off his clothes. "May I ask why you called your dog 'Roach' of all things? Doesn't seem very nice..." He reaches for Roach and pets her on the head for a moment.

"The first fish I ever caught with my uncle was a roach," Geralt says, a solemn tone to his voice.

“Oh, so like the fish. Makes sense, I thought about a cockroach which... Uhm. Yeah, the fish makes way more sense.” Jaskier chuckles nervously.

“Come in.” Geralt steps aside and gestures for Jaskier to step in.

“Geralt! I think something is burning!” Yennefer’s voice comes from what Jaskier assumes is the kitchen and Ciri’s laughter tells him that it’s probably not the first time Yennefer has expressed that particular worry.

Geralt smirks. “Excuse me, I’ll take care of that.”

“Sure,” Jaskier mumbles as he takes off his jacket and hangs it up in the one spot sufficiently empty to hold another jacket. He watches as Roach follows Geralt, tail wagging excitedly.

“Mum can’t really cook,” Ciri explains then, not even trying to hold back a giggle. Children that small probably don’t have much control over these things anyway, Jaskier figures.

“But your dad can cook really well, right?” he asks then and she nods excitedly. Then she reaches up to his shirt sleeve and tugs it, trying to pull him towards the kitchen. But there’s something else tugging at him. The memory of the smell of fresh curry hitting his nose when entering Geralt’s apartment in another city all these years ago before he would be pressed against the door with kisses and demanding touches. Bacon and eggs sizzling in the morning after an especially eventful night. He doesn’t need Ciri to tell him Geralt can cook, he already knows and that makes him uncomfortable.

The hallway she leads him down is almost parodic in its domestic beauty. Dark wood contrasting against warm beige walls, a collection of shoes just scattered across the floor, a variety of family photos reminding him just how little he is really supposed to be here.

He thinks of Triss in that moment. She would shake her head at him if she were here. And she would be right. This isn’t the first time he enters a house that is clearly home to a family, pictures on the walls, the door to the child’s room clearly marked by miscellaneous merchandise. He has hooked up in houses like this before, has had semi-regular affairs even. And right here, in this moment, it all feels wrong.

He isn’t going to do that here, is he? If Yennefer left to visit a relative, Ciri was at school and Great pinned him against the wall, just as he used to do, would Jaskier really say yes? The thought alone is repulsive to him. He blames Ciri and he blames the nebulous concept of growing up that he only ever attributes any significance to when it’s convenient but maybe that is just what’s happening. He is growing up and when you grow up, married men just become less appealing.

“Hi, Jaskier!” Yennefer exclaims when they reach the kitchen after what feels like hours of being trapped inside his own brain, and wraps her arms around him as though he is an old friend. Has she just forgotten that he’s her boyfriend’s ex? Is she playing some sort of game? Jaskier doesn’t want to dwell on it too much, instead awkwardly reciprocating the hug.

“You look... homosexual,” she comments after they part, looking him up and down.

“Pan, actually, but yes, I know this shirt has that... vibe to it.” He feels almost painfully aware of his clothing choices.

“Don’t get me wrong, I think you look great,” Yennefer laughs, “Don’t you agree, Geralt?”

“Hm.”

~

By the time lunch is more or less ready, Jaskier has more or less settled into how things enough to engage in some chatter all the while handling Ciri who is continually lobbing questions at him.

“Why aren’t you at school, by the way?” he wonders as he helps Yennefer out plates on the obviously expensive wooden table.

“Winter holidays!!” She exclaims proudly and almost trips over herself.

“Oh,” says Jaskier simply. Right, holidays. He feels stupid in that moment because school isn’t even that far in the past for him and yet the whole concept of holidays seems illusory to him. He drops the thought. “So, uhm, what do you do, Yennefer? Like, for a job?”

Yennefer puts the last plate down and looks at him as though she’s unsure what to tell him. “I’m a makeup artist. And a model, as a side gig, no big deal, it’s-“

“Wait a minute, I knew your face was familiar! Weren’t you in the last H&M campaign?”

“I- Well. Yes.”

Jaskier just stands there for a moment, stunned. A model. Of course Geralt would get with a *model*. He’s gorgeous, she’s gorgeous, it’s written in the stars basically. “And, uhm, who do you do makeup for?” he asks, almost afraid of the answer.

Yennefer smiles at him. “You don’t need to be intimidated or anything it’s not that impressive. I don’t like bragging. “

He gives her a look.

She sighs, “I do steady work in television and the last big gig I did was a handful of people at the Golden Globes.”

“The *what?!?*”

“No super big names, don’t worry. But it’s good, I get pretty decent jobs.”

“So, you’re actually kind of famous, right? In your space at least, I mean.”

She shrugs. "I'm no Charlotte Tilbury, but I get by."

"Since when do *you* not like bragging?" Geralt enters the dining room and puts a steaming pot on the table. He smiles in a way that Jaskier hasn't seen in years and he pulls Yennefer into a light, affectionate side hug and presses a kiss on her temple.

"I care about first impressions! I can scare him off later."

"I'm sure you will."

"Guys, I'd really prefer not to be scared off, you can just tell me if I should leave," Jaskier laughs and doesn't quite know how seriously to take what is happening around him.

"We're just kidding, don't worry," Yennefer says, "Anyway, food time!"

Ciri jumps excitedly from foot to foot before Geralt finally grabs her and puts her on one of the chairs. He sits down next to her, while Yennefer sits down across from Geralt and gestures for Jaskier to down next to her.

He does, hesitantly, and to his own surprise, he doesn't get stabbed. Or poisoned, for that matter. The food is delicious, unsurprisingly. If there's one thing Jaskier had been confident hasn't changed about Geralt it's that he is good at cooking.

"So, you know you're here for a reason, right?" Yennefer asks when the food is mostly all gone and Geralt almost chokes on his last bite.

Jaskier raises an eyebrow and forcibly ignores a sudden, unwelcome burst of adrenaline jolting through him. "What do you mean?" he asks then, cautiously.

There's silence for a moment and even Ciri seems confused as to what is happening. Yennefer and Geralt exchange a look that Jaskier has no way of reading. Then, she just starts laughing.

"You look like I'm going to announce doomsday. What I mean is, I wanted some dirt. Some background story, some *lore* if you will. Because the big guy never properly gossips, but you look like you do, Jaskier. No offense."

Jaskier hesitates. "None taken... I think."

"What was he like in college? I'm dying to know, honestly, he was already finished when we first met. I just can't imagine him at college parties, you know?" Yennefer muses.

Jaskier looks at her for a moment, then at Geralt. Then at Ciri and really, he doesn't know if there much he can even say with her in the room. He fishes through his memory while Geralt doesn't comment or even moves his face.

"Well, uhm, the first time I saw him was at a party, actually. The history was always good at partying, at least in my limited experience at the time. And they really leaned into it and often had self-made stuff for drinks. Mead, Roman wine and all that. Was a good time. He was

completely *hammered* at that party, too,” Jaskier laughs, “He was talking about his hunting adventures like he was some kind of monster slayer, it was *hilarious*.”

“No way!” Yennefer interjected, visibly entertained by that image of her boyfriend.

“It’s true!” Jaskier looks at Geralt who has a slight, but pronounced smirk playing around his lips.

“You don’t know how *he* ended that night,” Geralt says, “He ended up doing improv-singing about how hot he thought I was.”

Jaskier’s breath catches in his throat, but before he can even make an attempt at defending himself, Yennefer puts a hand on his shoulder saying “That is extremely valid” and Jaskier feels like he’s landed in the wrong dimension.

“I-“ he starts but doesn’t really know what to say.

Yennefer gets up, chuckling, and starts collecting the plates. “Jaskier. It’s okay, you thought my boyfriend was hot five years ago. Big deal. This isn’t high school, I don’t actually believe I’m the only one who’s allowed to find him attractive.”

Jaskier lets a nervous laugh escape from his still far-too-tight throat. “Oh yes, I get that,” he lies, not really getting it at all, “I just... didn’t expect to have my college gossip thrown back at me.”

“Understandable,” Yennefer says, “but I do still want more embarrassing stories.”

Geralt gives a sarcastic, “Of course you do” and Jaskier feels a little lighter.

And so he starts telling stories. About the time he overheard a professor talk about how she was really into Geralt and how much that was bothering her. About the time he challenged Geralt to a drinking game and lost so hard that he didn’t find the way to his dorm room anymore. And then Yennefer laughs and talks about the time Geralt didn’t know what a Barbie doll was the first time Ciri asked for one and Jaskier laughs so hard he almost spits out his drink.

“She didn’t end up playing much with it anyway,” Geralt mumbles then, but it’s a half-hearted defense at best. And that how the day goes by, telling stories from college as the sun slowly sets and Jaskier feels, for the first time in a while, like he has made friends.

Songs that voices never shared

Chapter Summary

While Jaskier's band takes a hit, Geralt takes time out of his day for him and Yennefer takes a job

Chapter Notes

MORE TALKING

YAY

...We'll get through this together

Also, yes, this story is set in Berlin now. Yes, I should have decided on that earlier. As I said, we'll get through this together.

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

Jaskier loves his band. Sometimes he feels like it doesn't love him back. Not that the individual members don't like him, but the vague concept of a band seems to be against him sometimes to the point where even when they get exposure and an opportunity to go on stage, the air in the room itself seems to drain all passion from everyone in it.

"I can't make it to the gig in March" are the first words Jaskier hears when he arrives at the rehearsal venue, a cheap concrete parking garage in Berlin Schöneberg they rent out occasionally, on one Friday evening. He's early, but Priscilla, their guitarist, and her little brother Peter, their drummer were there even earlier, apparently. They're sitting on the concrete floor, backs leaned against the wall, speaking in quiet voices.

"Uhm, hello?" he says, trying to gently reveal his presence, but Peter flinches anyway and looks at him with large blue eyes that shimmer with panic.

"You can't make it to the gig?" he asks, but Peter's gaze is glued to the ground and he remains silent.

Jaskier lets his bag slide off his shoulder onto the concrete floor and sits down next to him and Priscilla on the floor. "What's up?" He nudges Peter in the shoulder.

"I'm sorry," he says, weakly.

Priscilla wraps one arm around her little brother. “He has a lot going on right now. You know how it is. Uni, exams, girlfriends...”

“It’s okay, man,” Jaskier makes himself say, even though his mind is already slowly entering panic-mode. They can’t perform without a drummer. And where else would they get a drummer a month in advance?

“I’m sorry, I just... I don’t think I still want to do... *this*.” Peter helplessly gestures around helplessly and frantically runs his hands over his buzz-cut hair.

Jaskier exhales. “Okay,” he says quietly and searches for Priscilla’s eyes. She gives him a serious look.

“Jaskier... I know, this isn’t... Ideal,” she says.

“You’re right,” he says, and it comes off more bitter than he intended, “It’s not.”

Tears are running down Peter’s face now. Guilt stabs Jaskier directly in the heart. It’s not Peter’s fault, and on some level, he’s doing the right thing by admitting to himself and them just how burned out he is feeling. “I know someone who can replace me,” he murmurs between sniffing sounds. “I’ll give you his number and... and I’ll tell him to come to rehearsals and such. He’s really good, much better than me.”

Jaskier musters up a smile. “Don’t talk yourself down. You’re great and we’ll miss you here.” He gently takes Peter’s hand and squeezes it. “But thank you for considering a replacement.”

“You aren’t mad?”

“Of course not, it’s important to take care of yourself. Don’t worry about us, we’ll make it work.” He doesn’t look at Priscilla, but she, too, says, “We’ll make it work.” He doesn’t believe her.

“I should go,” Peter says then, and rubs one sleeve over his eyes. Jaskier doesn’t stop him, he simply watches as he leaves, shoulders down and backpack hanging from one shoulder.

“One down, huh,” Jaskier says, flatly.

“You really think we’re going to make this work?” Priscilla looks at him, her expression unreadable.

He thinks of the last time they were sitting on the concrete like this, only the two of them. They were younger then, first semesters at university, with dreams bigger than Berlin, bigger than Germany, bigger than Europe, the world just about big enough. They didn’t have money then, and they didn’t worry about it, there was always a parent’s garage or an abandoned factory building, and the audio software pirated from the internet. Back then, they were burning with passion, all of them were, but now? Now he feels cold.

“Of course, we will, we always have,” he says, and he doesn’t believe himself.

So, they sit there in silence, waiting for a signal to get up and move and get things done, but there's nothing. Henry comes in half an hour late, a joint between his fingers and instead of complaining like he has so many times before, Jaskier asks to have a drag or two. He knows he's the one who is going to get the energy in the room going. It feels like an obligation, almost.

“Okay, get off your asses, we have a gig to prepare!” It comes out more enthusiastic than he had believed possible. Maybe they can make it work. Peter is sending a new drummer, too, after all. And even if he doesn't really believe it, he sure will keep telling himself anyway.

~

Jaskier has been to Geralt and Yennefer's place almost every other day for three weeks. They share meals and wine bottles and embarrassing college stories and Jaskier feels like imploding most of the time. He looks at Geralt and he wonders if he will ever meet another man that gorgeous again. And sometimes he looks at how Yennefer and Geralt look at each other and a little voice in the back of his head asks if he will ever have what they have.

It's a good distraction from when his editor complains about his over-use of commas a bit too much and his mother is in his ear all the time about marriage and children and he tries to explain that he's bisexual for the thousandth in the last five years and that while he may marry someday and there may be children, there is no guarantee for children and frankly, he isn't even that sure he wants any. But that's a low bar. Almost everything is preferable to dealing with his mother when she enters a dying-without-grandchildren panic.

He hasn't been there this weekend, though. Too busy with typing up semi-interested features about the kick-off of the second half of the football season. And with ignoring the nagging feeling in the back of head about his band falling apart.

But now, on Monday afternoon, he is sitting across from Geralt in a tiny coffee shop that is no less full to bursting. They're at the single table for two that was left when they entered. It's cozy, though, in a very city sort of way, where the humdrum of voices in the background forms its own tranquility and the sheer amount of unfamiliar faces forms its own sense of intimacy.

He looks at Geralt now, his hands wrapped around a glass of Latte Macchiato, and Geralt smiles at him. His smile is beautiful, almost unfairly so. Jaskier tries not to dwell on it.

Jaskier clears his throat. “My band actually got a gig next month.” He tries to play it off as a casual remark, but it lacks levity.

“That's great,” Geralt says with that unfair smile of his, “When and where?” He sips his coffee. Black, of course.

“March 7 at a local queer festival. I’m... I’m actually really nervous, you know? We haven’t had one in a while and our drummer just left and I haven’t met his replacement yet and... I don’t know, I feel like I’m the only one who is really... Invested?” He feels frustrated just saying it, a pent-up feeling made real after putting it into words.

Geralt nods slowly. “Are *you* excited about it, though?”

Jaskier smiles to himself, thinking of all the times he got to sing for audience before. “Yes, of course, I love being on stage.”

“Well, then everything is good, right?”

“I would prefer the rest of the band being there with me.” Jaskier takes up the spoon and stirs his Latte.

Geralt nods. “I know, I get that. But maybe, if they aren’t into the band anymore, you could perhaps go solo. Have you ever thought about that?”

Jaskier stares at his Latte for a moment, it’s all one muddy brown liquid now. Of course, he has thought about that, sometimes in anger after a bad rehearsal when Henry was, again, high off his ass, and Priscilla was too busy complaining about her latest fling to actually focus on the guitar. Sometimes in sadness after a gig with an audience that wasn’t properly participating. So, yes, sometimes he does think about leaving them behind and doing it all on his own, but then... It wouldn’t be the same, would it?

“I don’t think you’ve ever even heard me sing,” he says, trying to sound playful, “So, you know, I might actually suck and you’re actually encouraging to become the joke of a generation.”

“I have heard you sing before, actually.”

Jaskier’s gaze shoots up to meet Geralt’s eyes that are of such a light brown they may as well be golden. “When?”

“I think, uhm, when we were... You know. You got into the shower one morning and probably didn’t think I could hear you. You were pretty good then.” Geralt is still smiling, and Jaskier’s heart flutters.

The comment trips him up. It might be the first time that Geralt even acknowledges their past fling beyond half-related college anecdotes and uncomfortable looks. It’s probably better if they don’t talk about it, at least for Jaskier. At least if he doesn’t want to get ideas.

“So, uhm, any news on your end?” He asks, finally, dropping the topic completely.

Geralt pauses for a moment. “Hm... Correcting a lot of essays, dealing with students who don’t know what boundaries are... And I have a conference in Paris this weekend.”

Jaskier’s jaw drops. “*Paris?! That’s a huge deal, you can’t just casually drop that! That’s amazing, congratulations!*”

“I think you have an inflated sense of how exciting academic conferences are.”

Jaskier doesn't listen. “Are you taking Yen? Because Paris, city of love and such?”

Geralt shakes his head. “I'm busy, we have a child and a dog at home... I don't think we'd have much free time there.”

“Aww, too bad,” Jaskier sighs. Why doesn't his boss ever send him to Paris? The Eiffel Tower, baguettes, stylish Parisian women and men... He's ripped out of his thoughts when Geralt's phone rings. Who even still has their phone on any other mode than silent?

Geralt murmurs an excuse and picks up the call.

~

Yennefer is stressed out, to say the least. She has a makeup booking in two hours, needs to leave in one at the latest and yet, she is drowning in old receipts, tax statements and new bookings. *In my next life, I'll just be bad at things*, she thinks. Being popular is certainly preferable to not getting work, but at the same time organizing everything herself takes way too much time and energy.

She sighs dramatically and almost instantly Roach rushes to her side and lays her head in Yennefer's lap in comfort. She smiles and scratches her behind the ears a little. “Why did he have to call you ‘Roach’ of all things? You deserve a nicer name than that.”

Her phone vibrates and travels across the couch table a little in the process. One look at the display reveals that it's not a number she knows. She sighs again, unwilling to deal with more people she doesn't give a fuck about. But she's a professional, unfortunately, and picks up.

“Am I speaking to Ms. Von Vengerberg?” the voice on the other end of the line asks. It sounds male and unfamiliar and vaguely arrogant. The unholy trinity.

Yennefer hesitates. “Depends. Who am I speaking to?”

“Apologies, I am Raymond Andersen, manager to Irina Reynarde. I assume you are familiar?”

She keeps quiet for a moment, unsure of what to say, the excitement bubbling up in stark contrast with the rational skepticism she simply needs to implement in her work. “The actress?” she asks carefully.

“Exactly. She is getting married in Potsdam this Saturday and our makeup artist has landed themselves in the hospital, let's not go into the details. Anyway, we spontaneously need a new one and they recommended you.”

Yennefer slips out of her professionalism almost immediately and slaps her hand against her forehead. “Elihad?” she asks. Of course, Elihad would get himself into an accident right before a big job. Well, at least they had thought to promote her.

“I am not supposed to disclose that, but I also won’t deny anything,” Mr. Andersen says. “Anyway, are you free? I know it’s sudden, but trust me, we will compensate you accordingly.”

Her mind races for a moment. This Saturday? How does one even organize that quickly? Plus, Geralt won’t be home either and she can’t just leave Ciri alone at home. Maybe she could stay at a friend’s... What about Roach, though? She’d have to find a dog sitter. Goddammit.

“I have sent you an email with the address and proposed salary if you’re uncertain about that detail.”

She opens her laptops and view her mails. Her jaw almost hits the floor. “You can’t actually mean to pay me €2500 for maybe two hours of work?”

“Make it five hours, we’d like you to take charge of the bridesmaids as well, but you’ll get assistants for that.”

“You’re kidding me, what kind of mean prank is this?”

“Would you like more? We’ll obviously cover travel expenses, though, I suppose they won’t be much since you’re not that far from location. But you’re also free to attend the wedding yourself and we will, of course, be paying for a dress and provide you with a stylist.” Mr. Andersen speaks as though he is simply talking about paying for a cup of coffee.

She doesn’t answer, instead she googles the email address that sent her the ridiculous payment information and sends it to a handful of colleagues while she’s at it. “Give me a moment,” she says simply, and Mr. Andersen is more than happy to give her all the time she needs.

Five minutes later, Google and the colleagues who managed to reply already all point to him being legit. She thinks about it. A celebrity wedding. She can’t pass up on that, not just because of the pay. It’s priceless for both her ego and her portfolio. She’ll organize the rest around it, easily. There’s always a solution, right?

“Ms. Von Vengerberg?” Andersen asks, almost hesitant now.

“Yes? Yes. I’ll do it. I’ll email you the contract in a moment.”

“Thank you very much. Have a good rest of the week. I’ll send you the plans your colleague before they... Became unavailable. Feel free to edit and send them back for approval. We expect perfection which I am positive you will deliver.”

Yennefer smiles. “Of course, I will.”

They say their formal goodbyes and end the call. Yennefer leans back into the couch.

This could be a problem. She needs to call Geralt. He always has a solution. Or, even if he doesn’t, he is at least annoyingly stoic enough to eventually push her to come up with one herself. They complete each other in that way.

Is he even on break now? She checks the time. He should be. It can't go that wrong. She calls him.

"Yen?"

"Yeah, I have good news and I have bad news." Always the best way of relaying news.

"The good news?"

"Well, I'll make €2500 in a single day."

"That sounds great, what's the caveat?"

"It's on Saturday. This Saturday."

Geralt grunts. "Yen..."

"I know! But I can't miss that opportunity, okay? It's a *celebrity wedding*. Maybe they'll even credit me in the press! I just... Need someone to look after Ciri and Roach. Any ideas?"

Geralt is silent for a moment. "What about Jaskier?"

"Doesn't he have to work, too?" Does Jaskier ever really work? He does seem to have a lot of time on his hands, but he's also a journalist which probably gives him just as messed-up a schedule as her.

"I'm booked for the Friday conference and Sunday game, but I'm free on Saturday!" Jaskier's voice comes muffled through Geralt's microphone.

Yennefer smiles. She can't remember the last time Geralt went to lunch with anyone who isn't her before Jaskier came into the picture. "Greetings to Jaskier," she says and Geralt mumbles some greetings, "If he's free, I'd be really grateful."

"He'll do it," Geralt says. "I'd be happy to!" Jaskier adds.

"Thank you!" she shouts as if Jaskier can hear her.

"I love you," Geralt says quietly, Yennefer knows he's smiling.

"I love you, too," she replies softly and ends the call.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading thus far, you guys, I'm sorry I'm so slow, but hey, it's a slow burn after all, huh.

Plus, this bad boy went through some radical editing.

As always, if you wish to yell at me, you can do so in the comments or over on my [Tumblr](#)

Love you <3

A Scandal in Berlin

Chapter Summary

Jaskier looks after Ciri as Geralt and Yennefer are off doing their own thing. Everything is going just fine (TM)

Chapter Notes

Well, uhm, I guess I last updates this fic uuhhhhh *checks notes* five adn a half months ago.

Yeah, needless to say, the lockdown depression definitely hit me, so sorry for the wait. This chapter isn't even particularly eventful, but it does have Ciri-Jaskier bonding, so yay! There's that to look forward to.

Oh, also quick info for my non-Germans:

[This](#) is a Döner

[And this](#) is a Späti (basically a little corner shop for a variety of thing, ranging from drinks to newspapers to pens and stuff)

Okay, let's go!

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

The morning of her wedding gig, Yennefer gets sent a package with a dress, shoes, and accessories directly to her doorstep. She wants to call Mr. Andersen and ask him how they even know her size in anything, but in all likelihood, they just asked her modelling agency. Of course, they did that.

Almost at the same time, an email appears on her phone. From Mr. Andersen, obviously. “Entertainment industry managers are wizards,” she mumbles to herself and opens the mail, package still in hand.

“Dear Ms. Von Vengerberg,

I hope you have received your outfit in time. I advise you to bring it with you and change before festivities begin. It is free of charge, as discussed.

*Sincerely,
Raymond Andersen”*

She sighs and quickly gets to putting the clothes into a small suitcase together with her supplies. She doesn't have time to unpack them in their entirety, but the dress is of an undeniably stunning emerald green, the shoes matching the tone perfectly. A slight nervousness creeps up her spine. She owes Elihad a bottle of champagne at the very least.

Jaskier stands in the door just a moment later. He's early, she thinks, and smiles at him. At least she doesn't have to worry about him ruining her schedule.

She doesn't even let him say hello, though, before unloading all the essentials on him. "Dog food is on the shelf across from the oven, Roach will usually bark and run in circles in front of you if she needs to go outside, you're free to decide what to do for lunch, you can use anything from the fridge or go shopping or whatever, but Ciri is allergic to artificial sweeteners, so keep that in mind. Call me or Geralt if the house is burning down. You might not reach either of us, though, so maybe rather call the fire department."

"Okay, Yen, breathe," Jaskier says, then, and puts a hand on her shoulder to squeeze it gently. "Are you nervous? I thought you were more of the stone-cold badass type."

She stops for a moment when he calls her "Yen." She doesn't hear that nickname a lot from anyone other than Geralt. Most people who aren't him just call her Yennefer, sometimes Yenna and all the way back in school, her classmates sometimes called her Yenny. Jaskier says it differently to Geralt. His voice isn't as deep, but it's easily as gentle and there's a lightness to it that she rarely sees in Geralt. She shakes the thought.

"Ugh, I'm sorry," she says, "It's just... This is a really important gig, my name might actually get out there from this and then all the celebrities will want me for their weddings and their red carpets and maybe I'll even get to do Fashion Week for a major label one day. It all hinges on today."

Jaskier snorts and for a moment she considers throwing some random insult at him, but nothing comes out. He just smiles at her. "You'll be okay," he says, just like that, like it's easy, "And you'll make this woman the most beautiful bride to have ever had a wedding on this wretched earth and, uhm, who's a designer? Christian Dior?" – "He's been dead since '57." – "Karl Lagerfeld, then-" – "He's also dead." – "Fine, besides the point, some super famous fashion designer, will murder to have you make up their models."

And then, very dramatically, he looks off into the middle distance with an arm around her shoulder, and says, "You just have to belief in yourself."

Yennefer laughs, it just bubbles out of her in that moment, a mixture of genuine amusement and nervous energy. "Corny," she says after collecting herself, "but thanks." She turns away from the door, "Ciri!"

The little whirlwind comes running from her room mere seconds later and hugs Jaskier before she even acknowledges her. "Woah, slow down there," Jaskier laughs and hugs her back.

Yennefer squats down and waits for Ciri to look at her. "So, mommy needs to leave for work and because daddy also isn't here today, Jaskier will look after you for today, okay?"

Ciri is beaming relentlessly, “Jaskier is fun!”

“So, you won’t make his life too hard?”

“Totally not!” Ciri replies. She doesn’t know how lying works yet. Jaskier can handle it. Probably. Yennefer at least hopes so because, frankly, if he can’t there’s no one who can really save him.

“Okay, you guys have a good time then. You got everything, Jaskier?”

He nods, so she puts on her coat, takes her mini suitcase, and leaves them there.

“Wait!” he stops her and dangles the car keys in front of her, “Don’t you need these?”

“Oh, no, I’m taking the train. You’re wrong if you think I’m not gonna have one or three drinks after I’m done with work.”

“Okay then, have a nice day.” Jaskier smiles at her brightly.

She nods and gets outside. She has a train to be fifteen minutes early for, after all. “If anything happens, call me!” she yells back at the house when she halfway down the driveway, but the door has already fallen shut.

~

Jaskier isn’t sure what exactly gave him the confidence to agree to look after both a little child and a dog. They’re quite similar problems really, but at least Ciri can communicate when she’s hungry. But that doesn’t exactly mean that knows what to *do* with that. He can barely figure out what to make for himself on a good day.

“Jaaaask, I’m hungry,” she whines once more and at the same time Roach starts running in circles in the hallway, so maybe, Jaskier thinks, he should combine these problems. But with Geralt home-cooking most of the time that he spends here, he isn’t entirely sure where to get decent food in this part of the city.

He sighs, dramatically, as though that helps, and takes out his phone to have Google Maps solve the problem for him. He rolls his eyes a little at the laziness of it all, but he still smiles and looks at Ciri. “Yo, Ciri, have you ever had Döner?”

She tilts her head and then shakes it. “What is *Döner*?”

He smiles widely and grabs his jacket, helps Ciri into hers and gets the leash for Roach. “Oh, it’s the best, let’s go.”

The next Döner place is only a few blocks away which is normal for Berlin and honestly, how do you even raise a child in this city without introducing them to the bliss of the objectively perfect meal? Meat, vegetables, bread, it's all in there!

To be fair, Geralt's cooking is easily good enough to justify never getting fast food of any kind, but *still*. As someone who has survived university almost exclusively on instant ramen and Döner, Jaskier takes this issue very seriously. And personally, to a certain extend.

Plus, they can take Roach on a walk at the same time, so really, this was a great idea and him cooking something himself would have been a much worse one. Roach does what she needs to needs to do, Jaskier pats himself on the back a bit for being a model citizen he scoops it up with a little plastic bag and throws it in the trash. He's absolutely nailing this.

By the time they get to the little shop right before the train station, Ciri is getting a little tired, but that's okay, they can sit down and have lunch and then she'll be good as new. He orders a Döner for himself, a child-size Kinderdöner for Ciri and they sit down inside the little shop, Roach curling up at his feet.

Ciri gives a look of confusion first at her Döner, then at Jaskier. "How do I eat this?" She tries to take the flatbread into her little hands and bite into it but that doesn't work. A piece of meat tumbles to the ground right after.

In a grand display of hubris, Jaskier picks up his own Döner and moves it towards his mouth. "You kind of just... Well... you just-" he tries taking a bite himself, mimicking Ciri, realizing halfway through that even if he manages that, a six year-old surely won't and then he even fails spectacularly as a bunch of meat and lettuce drops, leaving him to just look after it solemnly.

Ciri laughs, obviously, his face must look very funny right now. He joins in, then sighs dramatically and gets up with a resigned, "Let's just get forks."

They get on with their food just fine after that point and honestly, he doesn't really understand why he thought he had to eat his Döner "properly" when he always just uses a fork anyway and there's nobody here that he needs to impress, but at least Roach seems happy with the extra snack she from his misfortunate, so he figures that's still a success. Things are still going well.

They finish, thank the owner, and leave.

Before they are even really on their way home, his phone vibrates in his pocket. It's Yennefer.

"How can I help you?" he asks.

"Ugh, you can't unfortunately, but I'm pretty sure you'd be a better assistant than the lost puppies they gave me to help with the bridesmaids," she says.

"What makes you think that?"

“I don’t know, you just seem like someone who’s done makeup before whereas those people can’t even get their *own* eyeliner straight, much less another person’s.”

He wants to object, but, “Fine, yes, I’ve dabbled. But I’ll have you know I’ve only done drag once.”

“I’m almost disappointed I missed that; you should do it again.” She laughs quietly.
“Anyway, are my child and dog still alive?”

“Alive and kicking. Any other reason you’re calling?”

“That’s good. No, I guess I’m just paranoid and wanted to check in while I’m on break. By the way, this place is absolutely beautiful, but full of lunatics, I swear to God. When people tell you, celebrities are just like normal people, they’re lying.”

He chuckles, “That bad?”

“Worse! You don’t want to know how they treat the servers, Jesus Christ, I can’t even. It’s gigs like this why I sometimes wish I would smoke. Allegedly it’s calming and also I’d have a convenient excuse to take more breaks.”

Jaskier furrows his brows. “You don’t?” To be fair, he’s never *seen* her do it, but he just kind of figured she would.

“Why would you think I do?”

He shrugs, “I don’t know, you just kind of give off that vibe.”

“First of all, you’re not young enough to talk about who ‘gives off vibes.’”

He laughs, “Sure, I am! I’m only twenty-five!”

She joins in, “Fine, but second of all, I can’t fit *every* femme fatale trope just for style points.”

“Oh, so *I’m* not young enough to talk about vibes, but *you* can describe yourself as a fiction character trope?”

“Hey, I didn’t choose the aesthetic, the aesthetic chose me.”

Then, Ciri starts tugging at his sleeve. “Are you talking to mommy?”

“Yes, do you wanna talk to her?” he asks gently and earns an enthusiastic nod. “Hey, Yen, Ciri wants to say hi.” He hands off his phone to Ciri, silently praying she won’t drop it, and lets them talk for a bit while he pets Roach for a bit.

Ciri’s face is lit all the way up, it makes him smile and ache a little at the same time. He wishes he had that much love for his parents sometimes. But it’s alright, he’s far beyond actually caring about that, he enjoys someone else have it better than he did.

“Okay, bye mommy!” Ciri says cheerfully and gives Jaskier his phone back.

“Are you sufficiently convinced of her alive-ness now?”

“It’s either that or you have a very convincing voice modifier,” Yennefer chuckles, “But yeah, thanks. It’s honestly kind of embarrassing how much of a mom I’ve become.” There’s a voice in the background that Jaskier can’t quite understand. “Ugh, gotta go, but thanks for listening. It was... Really nice talking to you. See you.”

“See you later,” Jaskier echoes as she hangs up.

He smiles to himself, kind of uncertain of why exactly and on further reflection, it feels like a bit of a cruel practical joke that he gets along so well with an ex-fling, his girlfriend, and their child. It’s fine, though, because at least he’s made new friends and he’s feeling happier than he has in ages when he spends time with them and that’s all that counts. He isn’t going to waste time thinking about whether or not he’s *allowed* to be happy or not in this strange arrangement.

It feels... Nice. Nothing in particular, just... It. Life, he supposes. There’s an odd bliss to having a walk outside with a dog and a kid, even though neither are his. It’s a feeling he can’t quite place, he doesn’t even know that a situation like this is something he wanted, but now that he’s here, he’s oddly grateful.

Plus, it’s not like he’s still in love with Geralt – if he ever really was in the first place. Sure, he’s an attractive man, but people are attractive all the time and he’s not in love with every attractive person he meets. Yennefer is attractive, too, so what? Bottom line is, he has friends, friends are good and it’s *fine* that things are the way they are. Period. Everything is still going fine.

Except, everything very quickly turn not-fine as he gets so lost in his own internal ramblings that he doesn’t see the loose brick sticking out of the pavement before he stumbles over it and lands face-first on the ground.

“Ah, *fuck!*” he exclaims and haphazardly wipes some blood off his nose. Then he turns towards Ciri. “Don’t tell your parents I said that.”

She laughs a little at that and gestures zipping her mouth shut. “Are you okay?” she asks, eyeing him suspiciously as he tries to contain the blood running from his nose.

“Ugh, it’s not stopping, is it?” He doesn’t wait for an answer. Instead, he takes out his phone to search the nearest doctor’s office, some dude named Doctor Anders. He scrolls for a second and groans. “Pediatrician” isn’t the worst possible kind of doctor he could have found to be nearby, at the very least they’ll have lollipops to tide Ciri over the waiting time.

They get there about 5 minutes later and, to exactly no one’s surprise, there are about 10 children in the waiting room who stare back at Jaskier in abject horror as he enters. He mumbles an apology, and steps up to the receptionist, a blond woman with a more-than-slightly confused look on her face.

He clears his throat, his hand still clasped over his bleeding nose. “So, uhm, well. Obvious problem. Landed myself face-first on the pavement. It’s... Well, you see.”

The receptionist nods. “It’s okay, we’ll get you a nurse, do you have your insurance card on you?”

He uses his left hand to fumble for his wallet, gets some blood on his pants for good measure and finally hands the little plastic card to the receptionist. “This way, please. I assume you want to keep your daughter with you?”

“Sure,” he says, mostly because he doesn’t want to go into a whole explanation about being the babysitter. For the most part, he’d just like his nose to stop bleeding.

They are lead into a small back room that mostly just consists of two chair, a stretcher, a shelf full of syringes and plasters and a few stuffed animals, presumably with the purpose of making the children feel a little safer. They don’t do much for Jaskier, but Ciri grabs a stuffed wolf right away and sits down on one of the chairs.

The nurse who comes into the room is pretty young with long brown hair, probably just fresh out of training, and she’s maybe just a little bit too enthusiastic about the amount of blood running down Jaskier’s face. “How can I help you?” she sing-songs with the brightest smile.

“Well,” he just says and gestures vaguely at his face.

She nods and laughs a little and runs a hand through her long brown hair. They talk about what happened for a moment before she cleans him up and examines his injury. “It’s not broken, so that’s good, but it’ll probably be bruised for a bit. And there’s a little cut on your chin.” She turns towards Ciri. “Would you like to put a plaster on your dad?”

“Uncle!” she corrects.

Uncle. Jaskier almost suffers a heart attack. He stares at her and can’t hold back a smile. Then, she jumps up and takes the plaster from the nurse’s hands.

“Okay, now you put that there,” the nurse says, pointing to Jaskier’s chin, “Right, and then you pull off the paper on this side. Perfect. And now you hold that down and take it off on the other side. Okay, great. Good as new.”

“Aye, good job, doctor Ciri!” Jaskier declares and pats her on the head.

“And thank you, I really didn’t want to steal your time. Or the children’s for that matter. I just didn’t know where to go, I don’t know this area super well.”

The nurse smiles at him, it’s genuinely warm and comforting. “That’s okay, it’s nice to have a patient once in a while that holds still. My name’s Sarah, by the way.”

He gets up, sighs at his image in the mirror and sends a smile back her way. “Well, thanks a lot, Sarah, I take it I can go now?”

“Oh, yeah, of course,” she nods quickly, “But, uhm...” She turns away to grab a pen and a piece of paper and scribbles something onto it. “Maybe you want to... Check in again.”

Jaskier looks at her, the spark in her big brown eyes difficult to miss. There’s challenge in them and a weird amount of admiration with a side service of ‘Please don’t tell my boss.’ Almost mechanically, he nods, “Sure, thank you.”

It hits him that moment that he really hasn’t been living up to his reputation lately. Well, he doesn’t really have that much of a reputation outside of his friend circle and work place, but now that he has a fairly cute nurse’s number in hand he realized that he hasn’t really been... playing the fields lately.

It’s weird to even notice, but it is a notable departure for him, in many ways, especially in the one where throughout most of university his middle name just seemed to be “man-whore.” He thinks that was unfair because the sex itself was never hugely important to him. But, to the casual observer, he was a guy known for flirting a lot, sleeping around a lot and generally just going on a lot of adventures like that.

But the last five weekends or so, he hasn’t even *thought* about going out. And it makes sense, in a way, because he’s been, well, busy, with work and with meeting friends, trying to keep his band alive and squeezing in time for his two new friends and their child. And that’s *not* weird, absolutely not. Sure, Geralt is an ex fling and Yennefer his hot girlfriend but all that is in the past and they’ve basically just met anew, it’s all *different* now.

And maybe he will call Sarah. He even gets out his phone to save her number, just to prove to himself just how definitely he is going to call her. Or text her, rather, he doesn’t really enjoy phone calls that much.

He sighs, dispelling the ramblings inside his head. “How about we watch a movie?”

“Moana!” Ciri exclaims without a second of hesitation and he smiles at her, takes her by the hand and they walk back to Geralt’s and Yen’s, though not without stopping at a little *Späti* to grab some chips. After all, how would you watch a movie without chips?

~

Jaskier’s always been terrible at taking naps. When he has them intentionally, but especially when he has them accidentally. Like when he’s looking after his friends’ daughter and they’re re-watching the same movie for the third because little kids sometimes just be like that and his eyes fall shut before he hears The Rock sing yet again.

He doesn’t stay asleep for long, though, because for some reason his notification sounds are on and he gets a message from Geralt.

Is everything alright?

A notably uneventful question to wake him up, but he still smiles at his phone.

Yeah, I've just watched Moana like three times with Ciri. Three times! There must be a limit!

He stretches. His muscles stiff from falling asleep in a less-than-ideal position on the couch. His eyes catch something then, a flash of light outside the window. He lets his arms fall down again and positions himself to look outside more comfortably.

It's a car. Which is a bit weird, but alright. Cars are allowed to exist and he's not going to think about unrealistic scenarios that this car could be involved in. Someone breaking in, someone spying, someone breaking in... Oh, God, he can't defend himself if someone's breaking in and it's too late to turn off the lights and pretend like no one's home. Maybe he can just surrender all of Geralt's and Yennefer's belongings. But, oh God, what if they ask him about a safe? He doesn't know where the safe is, he doesn't know if they even have one!

He stares at the car and realizes it's a small, rather old-looking Ford. A woman gets out and as the porch light goes on... It's Yennefer.

Of course, it is.

Jaskier barely resists the urge to punch himself in the face. He breathes out dramatically and motion to wave at her before he stops dead in his tracks.

Yennefer bows down back into the car and leans towards the driver, a dark-skinned woman who smiles at her widely and then... They kiss. Sweetly, tenderly, and part with content smiles.

Jaskier's brain goes into overdrive again, having just come down from the what-if-I-get-robbed panic. Yennefer just came home with a woman he has never seen before and *kissed* her.

She's cheating on Geralt, she's cheating on Geralt, she's cheating on Geralt, he thinks over and over and over again. He should confront her. Maybe it's all a big misunderstanding, maybe she just kisses her friends, some women do that, right? He can't confront her now, though, Ciri is here.

It's alright. No, it's not alright. What is he supposed to do? Should he talk to her, should he talk to Geralt? God, he needs to talk to Triss, she always knows what to do.

"Hey there!" Yennefer comes through the door *glowing*.

Jaskier forces himself to smile. "Hey, how was your job?"

"Oh, that was *annoying* but the celebration was pretty nice!" She puts her bag down and glides into the living room. "And how was your day, love?" She asks Ciri and presses a kiss onto her cheek.

"The best! We had Döner and we went to the doctor *and* we watch Moana!"

Yennefer frowns at that. "The doctor's office? What did you do there?"

Jaskier attempts to open his mouth, but Ciri is faster. “Uncle Jaskier tripped and got a bit ouchie! So, we went to the doctor and I put a plaster on him!”

“*Uncle* Jaskier, damn, look at you, all upgraded!” She laughs as though she hadn’t just cheated on her boyfriend and father of her child.

Jaskier musters up a stilted laugh and gestures at his face. “I’d rather not look at myself right now. But yeah, Ciri patched me up marvelously. And called me uncle, yes, that was sweet.”

“Man, we are making a whole family without anyone being related, huh,” Yennefer remarks before vanishing into the bathroom for a minute.

“Wait, what?” he calls after her.

She comes out again, shrugging. “Well, Ciri’s adopted, you’re apparently her uncle now... Heck, Geralt and I aren’t even married.”

“Oh,” is all Jaskier can say before throwing Ciri a worried look.

“Don’t worry, she knows.”

“I’m adopted!”, Ciri chimes in gleefully.

“Does she know what that means, though?”

“It means I wasn’t in mommy’s belly, I was in a different mommy’s belly!”

Jaskier blinks at her. “Well, then.”

There’s a moment of silence that makes Jaskier’s fight-or-flight instinct kick in again. He can’t push the image of Yennefer and that other woman out of his mind and he needs to get out of here before he does something stupid.

“I... Gotta go, to be honest. I still have... stuff to write and I’d like to not miss the next S-Bahn.”

Yennefer looks at him sceptically for a moment but seemingly decides not to push him. “Alrighty then.”

She follows him to the door where he throws on his jacket. She squeezes his arm. “Thanks for looking after her today, I owe you one.”

Jaskier forces another smile out of himself. “I’ll let you know if I ever have a child that needs looking after. Or a dog or something.”

“Sure, count on me,” she says and kisses him briefly on the cheek. “I’m glad to know you.”

He just nods, unable to say more. “No problem, bye.”

And with that, he leaves.

Chapter End Notes

Ugh, once again thank you guys very much for your patience, I promise the plot's going to get moving next chapter (ya know, a year from now. (I hope this is a joke as much as you do))

I did kind of re-plot the whole thing at some point and also this fandom moved forward quite a bit since I last updated and I think it's become customary to refer to Jaskier as "Julian" in modern AU's because that is his real name, but I don't think that used to be the case, so now I'm wondering if I should just keep rolling or change the whole thing? Let me know in the comments.

Thanks for all the nice comments so far, they were definitely a motivating factor in getting me to sit down and slowly put this chapter together (very slowly, I'm also working basically full time now, so that doesn't exactly help), hope to keep seeing y'all around <3

My Clarity

Chapter Notes

I'm so sloooooow, I'm sorry, I swear I'm not dead!
Anyway, have fun reading, we're slowly but surely making progress!

<3

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

“Oh my God, Jaskier, you need to calm down.” Triss is sprawled out on the couch, barely holding onto her glass of red wine as she watches Jaskier stalk up and down his living room.

“I *can*’t. How dare she? How dare she do such a thing? Any woman - screw that, any person in their right mind - would be blessing themselves thrice a day if they could have a man like Geralt and she just-”

“There we have it,” Triss sighs.

“We have nothing there, oh my God, this is a purely moral concern.”

“*You* wouldn’t cheat on him, presumably, that’s the only reason you care that she did. Maybe he’s secretly worth cheating, maybe he sucks as a boyfriend and you just don’t know about it.”

“I doubt it, but either way it’s *wrong*, isn’t it? She, she, she,” he takes a moment to breathe, “she just throws away all that they have! They have a child together, albeit adopted.”

“How did they adopt a child when they’re not even married, that’s not exactly legal.”

“That’s not my problem!”

Triss gives another sigh. “Do you want me to draw up a list of married people with children that you’ve slept with since you started college? Since when do you care about upholding other people’s monogamy?”

“It’s not that, I’d just like my friends to be happy and together or something because they’re good together and I like being friends with them like they are now.”

“Wouldn’t them breaking up just bring you closer to your real goal which is getting with Geralt again and living your ideal gay fantasy? I feel like you should be all for this, really.”

Jaskier throws his hands up. “I don’t want Geralt back, he’s happy with Yennefer and Ciri and I don’t want to ruin that. Plus, we weren’t even really *together* and we were not-really-

together for very much not a long time. Don't look at me like that, I'm serious. But apparently Yennefer doesn't care about that. I don't know, I should tell him, right? That's the good-friend thing to do, right?"

"Is it? I mean, it would certainly be *honest* if nothing else. You could tell him and he's gonna be mad that she did it or you could not tell him and if he finds out later he'll be mad she did it and potentially that you didn't tell him. He's gonna be mad about it, either way." She groans. "Whatever, dude, you can't win, the wine's empty and I'm getting cranky over here. Let's talk about something else."

Jaskier sighs. "Okay, fine, sorry, you're right, I'll just decide when I see him next, it's pointless to run in circles about this. What did you want to talk about? Is something going on with you?"

Triss shrugs, "Nah, not really. You know, the usual. Lots of work, some pointless Tinder dates - I had one last week that was *especially* disappointing - nothing out of the ordinary. But I heard you and your band have a gig soon? Why didn't you tell me about that, I wanna come. I'll even pay for tickets, I'm a supportive friend."

Jaskier looks away. It's not that he forgot, per say, though that's definitely part of it. It's more that... He doesn't want to think about it too much. "It's been weird... With the band. I told you Peter left and the new drummer is... Fine? I guess. His name is Hans, he's a drummer for multiple bands, though, so he doesn't have much time, especially since we're not exactly paying him. He'll get paid from that one gig, yes, but other bands are paying him an actual salary, so yeah, not exactly a priority."

"But it'll be fine for the gig? Where are you guys playing?"

"Just a tiny festival in Schöneberg. And I hope and pray it'll be fine, it's just... I don't know. Geralt says maybe I should go solo. Their hearts aren't in it anymore, I feel like I'm the only one who still actually wants to make it somewhere. And even I'm not really there mentally."

There's a moment of silence before Triss sits up properly and pats the space next to her on the sofa. Jaskier sits down and she puts a hand on his shoulder. "Jaskier, that's okay. You had a lot going on. Making new friends, working... It's okay if your dreams take a timeout for a bit, as long as you don't let them go. Woah, that almost sounded deep! Anyway, if I know one person who can make it big, it's you."

"You don't have to say that for my benefit, I-"

"I'm not saying it to make you feel better. I'm saying it because I can see the star you are every day of my life and you should get all the opportunities you can to shine as brightly as the world can take."

"That's corny." Jaskier laughs, but lets her pull him into a hug.

"I know. Now, where do I get tickets?" Her grin is infectious.

He sighs, pulls out his phone and searches Facebook for a moment. “Here, they have the ticket shop in the info box. We’re not really a main event, though, so you need to pay for the whole day.”

“Anything for you, buttercup,” Triss says and gives him a peck on the cheek. “Aaaand purchased!”

“Thanks, I really need some friends there, you know.”

Triss pats him on the back, “No problem. Oh, I know, you should invite Geralt, too! It’ll distract him from his broken heart, and maybe you’ll get some backstage action!”

“Triss! He doesn’t have a broken heart. Yet. And I would want to give him time if it happens. I’m not really into being a rebound, unless it’s, like, as a one night stand for a recently-divorced stranger.”

He can’t take any of his words back before she pounces. “I thought you said you didn’t want to get Geralt back?”

“I *don’t*. I’m just... Saying that if he did break up with Yennefer, I wouldn’t just want to play rebound.”

“Sure, buddy.”

Jaskier grabs behind himself and throws a pillow at her, and, for a moment, they’re twelve again, having a pillow fight for the ages and everything feels lighter. He forgets about Geralt and about work and about singing for just a moment and everything is a little more alright.

~

“Sometimes I wonder why universities give all these courses about writing papers when nobody seems to take them...” Geralt crumbles staring at his laptop in disbelief.

Yennefer leans over his shoulder, frowning. “Geez, why would you hand in a paper early when it’s not even formatted properly?”

Jaskier just looks at them from his place on the couch. They seem normal. Geralt seems normal, including the general crumpiness. And, more strangely, Yennefer seems normal. She doesn’t seem skittish or nervous or regretful or anything. She just... Goes about her day and their relationship as if nothing happened.

It makes Jaskier uncomfortable, the knowledge of what did happen in combination with her decidedly unaltered behavior. Maybe she’s just that good a liar. Or maybe she’s already done it more than once, maybe cheating on Geralt *is* her normal. Or, and that’s both least likely and most embarrassing, Jaskier hallucinated the whole thing and is losing his mind over nothing.

“What do *you* think, Jaskier? This looks like a mess, right?” Yennefer barges into his train of thought at full speed.

He gets up and takes a look at the paper that Geralt is grading. “Oh, my God.” He bursts into laughter involuntarily. “Is... Is this written in actual Comic Sans? And there’s no page numbers or index? This must be a joke. You can’t tell me this isn’t a joke.”

“I already wrote them an email. They’re serious.”

“I hate this, why would you do this to yourself?”

“I like having money to live. Plus, I don’t want to see your articles before an editor has touched them.” There’s a cheeky grin on Geralt’s face that Jaskier can’t help but reciprocate.

“I’ll have you know that I make life *exceptionally* easy for my editors, thank you very much.”

“Sure you do.”

It’s then that the doorbell rings and Ciri comes running out of her room at light speed.

“Pizza!”

Jaskier laughs and gets up, grabbing his wallet out of his coat by the door. He’s paying for all of the pizza because, well, it’s his turn to cook - not that there’s a dedicated plan, that would be *crazy* - but he’s just not much of a cook. And everyone loves pizza, so really everyone wins.

“I can’t believe you insisted on paying for Domino’s instead of just letting me cook.”

Yennefer obviously isn’t being serious when she says it, but Jaskier says, “I guess you could say I’m a bit of a *cheater*” before he can stop himself. It comes out sounding decidedly more bitter than would count as inconspicuous. Yennefer doesn’t react, but Jaskier still feels like the atmosphere has shifted a little.

It’s all incredibly uncomfortable and not improving the longer it goes on. Jaskier has come in earlier today for a regular hangout like they’ve been doing for weeks now. And he wanted to just play it cool, not let himself show that he knows stuff, that he knows what Yennefer has done. But it’s nowhere near as easy as he had thought it would be. The anger he feels bubbling up inside of himself everytime he looks at her is almost unbearable, especially since he doesn’t want to snap at her.

He needs Geralt alone. It’s a conviction that manifests in his mind over the day. He needs Geralt alone if he wants to bring the whole thing to light.

If.

Does he want to bring it to light? He doesn’t want to run in circles about it again, but he just doesn’t *know* which would be the better solution.

Triss was right in that Geralt would be hurt no matter what, but, especially at the moment, they seem so... Happy. It feels rude to want to interrupt them in their apparent bliss. But then again, he knows that some part of that bliss must be fake, otherwise Yennefer wouldn't be out kissing other people.

"Hey, are you okay?" Geralt is looking at him with concern.

"I'm, uhm... I'm feeling a bit sick actually," he says quietly. It's close enough to the truth even if not literally.

Yennefer regards him for a moment. "I'm sorry, do you want tea? I have some that should help. I could-"

"No, uhm, thank you, maybe I should just go home and lie down for a bit. It's probably stress, you know, work and rehearsals and such, I... I'm really sorry, I shouldn't have come over not feeling well."

There's an awkward silence before Geralt finally says, "I'll bring you home," and Jaskier isn't sure he wants that. It would be having Geralt alone, but it's too sudden, too soon. He hasn't planned his words yet. He wants to protest, but Geralt just says, "No two ways about it, I don't want you to throw up on the pavement. Come."

He puts one hand on Jaskier's back and gently pushes him towards the door. Jaskier can only nod and go along. At least he's getting out of this situation.

"Get well soon!" Yennefer shouts after him, but they're already out of the door. Good.

The ride home is quiet and it's probably better that way, makes it easier to not bring up things he'd rather not think about. He spends the time just looking at Geralt, thinking about how breaking his heart is the last thing he wants to do. But he also doesn't want him living a lie.

"You're staring." It's not an accusation, Jaskier knows he doesn't mean it that way, but he feels called out either way.

What he wants to do is play it off with a joke. Distract Geralt with a funny anecdote from whatever interest he's taken in what's going on inside Jaskier's brain. But that's not what he does. He just looks away without a word, trying to fix his gaze on the blocks of buildings rushing past him.

Geralt doesn't comment.

They arrive at Jaskier's apartment eventually, not another word spoken between them. Jaskier just wants to get out, get away from this whole situation, away from the guilt he feels just about *knowing*.

"Thanks for bringing me home," he says quietly and grabs the car door to open it and get out of there. Just out, it's all he wants.

That's when Geralt stops him, wrapping his strong fingers around Jaskier's wrist, holding him in place.

There's an inappropriate memory that flashes through Jaskier's mind of when Geralt used to grab him like that, right before shoving him roughly into bed. It has no place in this moment. He turns to look back at Geralt and as their eyes meet, neither of them moves.

Geralt fixates him with a gaze and, very slowly, asks, "Jaskier... What's going on?"

Jaskier can't look away. There are about five litres of guilt-fueled adrenaline in his blood and the only thing he can focus on outside of the white noise in his head are Geralt's eyes, vibrant amber staring him down. "I'm so sorry," he says, finally, vaguely, not quite sure why *he* is the one apologizing.

"What did you do?" Geralt asks.

"I didn't do anything!"

"Did you sleep with Yennefer? Because-"

Jaskier jolts up in his seat, the personification of panic. "No! No, I would *never!* That's ridiculous! I mean, not because she's not attractive or anything, because she is! And not because I don't fuck taken people, I do! It's just that I respect your relationship! Specifically! But, but, but..." He stops, "I... I'm so sorry to tell you this, Geralt, but... I don't think *she* respects your relationship."

Geralt raises an eyebrow. His grip around Jaskier's wrist has loosened, but his hand is still there, resting. "What are you talking about?"

Jaskier sighs, deeply and tries to gather his thoughts before explaining, "I... When I was looking after Ciri... We were sitting on the couch, watching a movie and then this... car pulled up with Yennefer and a woman inside and... They... They kissed. I'm so sorry, Geralt, I really shouldn't be the one delivering this information and I get if you don't believe me but-"

Geralt's hand squeezes around Jaskier's, making him stop dead in his tracks. He looks at him in confusion.

"What did the other woman look like?" Geralt asks, very calmly and if Jaskier didn't know better, he'd swear there's a smirk sneaking its way onto Geralt's face.

"Why does that matter?"

Geralt holds his gaze for a moment. "Just tell me."

"Well, she, uhm," Jaskier shifts in his seat, suddenly uncomfortable, "She seemed tall? Not sure, though, she was sitting down. She was black, with short black hair? Might have also been a pony tail, it was fairly dark outside. I don't know, what's the point anyway?"

Geralt nods, more to himself than Jaskier. "Yeah, that was Fringilla."

Jaskier blinks. "Who?"

“One of Yennefer’s partners.”

“One of Yennfer’s *what* ?”

Geralt looks at him, a little confused. “Have we never mentioned that before? I thought at least Yen would talk about it sometimes...”

Jaskier stares at him as the wheels start to turn in his head. He doesn’t feel one hundred percent confident in articulating his thought, but he figures he’s off the deep end anyway. “You are... polyamorous?”

“Yes.”

“So, she wasn’t cheating on you?”

“No, she was just picked up from work by another of her partners who I know and have had coffee with.”

Jaskier leans back in the car seat. “And you’ll tell her about this conversation and she’s going to make fun of me forever.”

“I’ll join in that when I’m in the mood.”

Jaskier looks at him and bursts into laughter, at himself and this whole conversation, this whole non-issue. Geralt smiles at him, and that’s nice, makes him feel a little warm inside and maybe a little bold. “So, do you...?”

Geralt shakes his head. “I support Yen’s relationships, but I’m just not... as open. It’s just her for me at the moment, but that’s okay.”

Jaskier nods and smiles, suddenly aware of how they’ve just been looking in each other’s eyes for several minutes and how Geralt’s hand hasn’t moved. It’s still on his hand, touching him, emanating warmth. It’s... a little too much for him, they’re a little too close and he feels a little too vulnerable.

He breaks eye contact and clears his throat. “Right, well, thanks for bringing me home. This was definitely... Revelatory. And, uhm, sorry I assumed your girlfriend was cheating on you, that was kind of shitty of me to think without context.”

“Bring her a bottle of red wine and she’ll forgive you.”

“Sorry I was weird today.”

“It’s okay.” Geralt smiles at him, and Jaskier hates when he smiles because it makes his heart do these little leaps that he’s gotten really good at ignoring.

“I... Uhm, while I’m already being an idiot, I wanted to ask you if you’d like to come to my gig next weekend. And Yen, too. I’d like you guys to be there.”

Geralt moves his hand then, just slightly, as if to finally acknowledge that it's still there, and gives Jaskier's hand a slight squeeze. "We'll come."

And then he lets go, just like that.

Jaskier nods, at nothing in particular. "Thanks."

He smiles, and gets out of the car, with a familiar warm feeling in his chest that he decides to just let sit there.

Chapter End Notes

Hiii, hope y'all are staying safe and healthy!

I'm really not good at updating frequently, but hey! At least we're sort of getting somewhere? I think? I technically have the whole outlined but also I think I might have to change some stuff??? Again???? Lord help me.

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