

overestimate your virtues

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/35462371) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/35462371>.

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Rating: | Explicit |
| Archive Warnings: | Graphic Depictions Of Violence , Major Character Death , Rape/Non-Con |
| Category: | F/M |
| Fandoms: | The Grisha Trilogy - Leigh Bardugo , Shadow and Bone (TV) |
| Relationships: | The Darkling Aleksander Morozova/Alina Starkov , The Darkling Aleksander Morozova & Alina Starkov |
| Characters: | The Darkling Aleksander Morozova , Alina Starkov , Mal Oretsev , Ivan (The Grisha Trilogy) |
| Additional Tags: | Alternate Universe - Modern Setting , Alternate Universe - No Powers , Alternate universe - Mafia , Russian Mafia , Older Man/Younger Woman , Kidnapping , Murder , Stockholm Syndrome , Emotional/Psychological Abuse , Psychological Trauma , Gaslighting , Mind Break , Rape/Non-con Elements , Dubious Consent , Cunnilingus , Spanking , Restraints , Bondage , Exam table , Medical Procedures , Sedation , Somnophilia , Blood Kink , Choking , Breeding , forced eating , Daddy Kink , Implied DD/lg , Gaslight Gatekeep Grisha , not technically a crackfic , just unapologetically unhinged , and shamelessly self-indulgent , dead dove , trust us , we killed it ourselves , and now it haunts us in our sleep , no beta we die like mal does in this fic , unrepentant mal slander , IU-Don't AU |
| Language: | English |
| Series: | Part 1 of the philosophy of ethics |
| Collections: | Sandm , Darklina |
| Stats: | Published: 2021-12-02 Words: 15,270 Chapters: 1/1 |

overestimate your virtues

by [AlterMortem](#)

Summary

"You were the most beautiful thing I'd ever seen. Still are, until our baby arrives."

Creating an heir is the next step for Aleksander to solidify his legacy. Too bad the perfect mother already has a lover... and an IUD...

Notes

started this fic after a really unhinged night of craving some dead dove for our favorite couple, then Vuas said on the bird app that there wasn't enough noncon+cunnilingus up in here so this was finished in her honor. Mind the tags, and otherwise enjoy!

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

“Wanna run that by me again, kid?” The bulky brunette man says.

He takes a deep drag of his cigarette. Leans forward and blows the smoke directly into Mal’s face.

“I said, watch where you’re going, asshole,” Mal bites out, waving his hand in front of his face. “You don’t own the fucking sidewalk.”

“That so?” Another draw from the filterless cigarette, though his words are filtered through a heavy Slavic accent. “News to me. Maybe I should make you kiss my fucking shoes for allowing you to walk on our streets.”

Alina grabs hold of the back of Mal’s coat sleeve and gives it a tug, pressing herself into him. “Just drop it. Please? Let’s go home.”

Mal pulls his arm away from her, brow furrowing deeper and fist clenching as male ego deafens him to her pleading.

She doesn’t have the energy to deal with this-- finding herself outside a seedy bar, in front of an alleyway lined with dumpsters, her boyfriend itching to square off with the goddamn Bratva. Their responsibility for the uptick in crime in the city should have been enough for Mal to steer clear at the first sound of Russian on the air.

Alina briefly considers cursing the day she met him. She knows how this ends, but cannot seem to find it within her to leave him alone with the two other men in the alley. She cannot seem to force herself back to the apartment they share. She cannot will her body towards the streetlights.

“Listen to your girl and take yourself home, boy,” says the other man, his slighter frame leaning against the alley wall.

“Yeah-- take your pussy ass home and hope she doesn’t mind fucking a coward,” the first man sneers.

Time seems to slow and she watches helplessly as Mal acts on his bravado with a swing of his fist aligned with a twist of his hips.

The brunette before them takes the hit as if he’s actually the brick shithouse he’s built like. He wipes his teeth with his tongue before saying, “Really? The mouth, kid?”

Mal scoffs and opens his mouth to speak, but before he can finish forming the first syllable, the man is grabbing him by the shoulders and wrapping him around his knee, slamming the wind out of him repeatedly before letting him drop to the ground.

Alina is screaming. She thinks. Perhaps an endless stream of expletives directed at a pair of men who have certainly heard far more creative insults than she could imagine wouldn’t count as screaming, but she does it anyways as the taller of the two rounds on her hapless wonder of a boyfriend, and the one against the wall does nothing to stop him.

It is at this moment that a bearded man steps out of a side door in the alley they'd been about to walk past when one of the men had accidentally nudged Mal in his walk to toss a cigarette into the street. Alina pauses her shouting to briefly take him in.

Though not quite as tall as Mal, the careful tailoring of his suit would suggest he'd tower over her boyfriend if he were to stand on his wallet. Dark eyes like street puddles at midnight pool with mirth as he looks her up and down in a reflection of what she had done to him.

"What do we have here?" His voice is mahogany: dark and rich.

"A punk bitch and his bitch," spits the brunette, a wad of blood smacking the concrete underneath them.

Alina glances back, seeing the blood on one fist before looking to Mal who lays crumpled on the cracked pavement, breathing deep and evenly, out like a light. Her heart thrums beneath her breast, adrenaline pumping through her veins.

Fight, flight, freeze, fawn.

Alina freezes.

"Is that so?" The man pulls a silver case from a front pocket, unclasps it and slides a cigarette from it.

The smaller man has a lighter out before Alina has the chance to register he has moved forward and is offering it to the man, who leans towards the proffered flame. He doesn't remove his gaze from her as he lights the cigarette and takes a long drag. Smoke billows out around him, a dark dragon in the street.

"I'm not anyone's bitch--" she hears herself snapping out, to her own horror, "I'm going to call the fucking cops. Who the hell do you do--"

"The police?" the man says, raising his eyebrows and the corners of his lips into a smile that's nothing short of Cheshire. "Fedyor, do you still have the commissioner's number? And our attorneys? We can get this squared away immediately in case you're wanting to press any charges, little one. Seeking out justice can be hard work."

Alina wisely keeps her mouth closed this time, looking down and away to Mal, still flat on his stomach against the sidewalk.

Trying to threaten the fucking Bratva-- who do you think you are, Alina? No one will swoop in to save you.

He reaches forward with his free hand to take hold of her chin. She shivers as a rough patch of skin catches against her jaw before meeting his gaze again.

"Ah, nothing to say now?" He takes another drag before letting the smoke blow into her face. "Much better, sweetheart."

His condescending tone is smooth and low, and Alina knows she could get lost in the way his accent catches vowels. She moves to step back, to gain space between them, but his arm

lashes out and he grips her bicep firmly.

“Got somewhere to be?” He taunts her.

He glances over at the smaller man, the one not responsible for putting Mal on his ass, and nods.

Alina tries to break free from his grasp. “Let me go-”

“Not likely,” he says curtly, and tightens his hold on her arm.

She turns her head just as the brunette man slides behind her and curls one hand around her neck, the golden wedding band on his finger glinting in the streetlight. He has one of her arms twisted behind her back and begins to increase the pressure to the sides of her throat, right under her chin.

She thrashes against him, her cries strangled by the pressure and tears mist over her already-darkening vision. The dark-eyed man leans forward and strokes her cheek.

“Shhh,” he murmurs. “Don’t fight. You were doing so well before, knowing when to stop fighting.”

Her vision spots, her body and head growing heavy, and then she’s slumping forward into the front of the leader’s suit.

Feels expensive , is her last coherent thought as she dips into darkness.

She’s on a cot, she thinks.

She can’t be sure, her head hurts and her mouth is dry and the light in the room *burns* to look at. No windows, no clock. No idea where or when or why she is. Only the simmering glow of a single fluorescent tube light high above her.

A groan slithers out from between her lips as she tries to sit up.

“You finally rise, *solnishka* .” Mahogany again.

This time, he is across the room from her. The distance would have been a small comfort, except she quickly realized the cloth and silver in his hand was actually him polishing a gun at a small table. The walls are white and sterile. The cot she lies on and the table and the chair he occupies are the only furniture in the room.

The scent of warm bread is a far more welcome greeting and her once-dry mouth quickly moistens. A small plate of buttered toast and apple slices sits off to the side on the table.

She slowly shifts to plant her feet against the floor, cool against her bare soles, and then inches upright. It takes her several minutes to coax herself from the bed to the other side of the table, hands reaching for the plate, when he sighs.

“You’re going to need to ask nicely first, Alina.”

Her heart slams against her ribs. “What?”

“I hope Ivan didn’t damage your hearing. I said you’re going to--”

“No. My name. How did you know my name?”

He smirks. “Silly girl. As if I wouldn’t have had access to your bag.”

“You went through my--”

“I didn’t. Ivan did.”

She stares back at him, mouth agape. “Are you shitting me? Who the fuck is Ivan? And who the fuck are you?”

“Me?” He pauses in polishing the gun, briefly holding it up to inspect it in the light. “I am your generous host. You may call me Aleksander. Or Aleks, if that proves to be too much for your little mouth.”

Alina flushes, closing then reopening her mouth multiple times before reaching for the plate of toast. Aleks snatches it away with one hand before setting the gun on the table away from her.

“*Manners*, Alina.”

Alina recoils in shock.

“I-but--”

“Only good girls get their... what do kids these days call them... ‘appy slices’?”

She feels the flames of anger heat her face, searing her skin to the roots of her hair. “Excuse me? Where do you get off on--”

“You cannot eat standing up, Alinochka. It’s simply in poor taste.”

“You’re sitting in the only chair in here, asshole.”

He tuts. “We’re not being very inventive, now are we?”

“If you think for one moment that I’m going to--”

“That’s not very ‘*good girl*’ of you. I suppose you aren’t eating.”

“If you think I’m sitting on your lap, you can get fucked.”

“Oh,” he grins. “I intend to. But I think you need to eat something first.”

She catches herself before telling him to get fucked again and instead goes back to the bed to lay down.

“Hunger strike, then? How original.”

Rather than responding, she rolls over to face the wall, not wanting to give him the satisfaction of seeing the scowl etched into her features.

The wall has a light texture to it-- bumps and ridges from plaster covered in a layer of gleaming eggshell white-- and she summons the boredom companion she'd mastered in her first foster home. Tracing the patterns in the wall with her eyes and looking for pictures as though the wall were actually the night sky instead of something summoned from one of the nightmarish dark romances Zoya was always reading.

She's found several flowers and a dog before she hears a distinct-- *CRUNCH!*

Flipping over, she makes eye contact with Aleksander as he sets the other half of one of the apple slices back on the plate. He raises an eyebrow and one corner of his mouth, challenge gleaming in his eyes.

Alina turns back to the wall and can no longer see the dog. She shuts her eyes in frustration. Her traitorous stomach rumbles loudly. *Fuck.*

She hears a munch of toast from behind her and refuses to rise to the bait. *Fucker.*

Another low rumble of her stomach and two more loud bites from Aleks almost sends her into panic mode. She knows she needs her strength for trying to get any kind of help, but the idea of *sitting on his lap*? It makes her want to vomit. Or maybe that's just from the pangs of an empty stomach and recovering from having been knocked out?

Okay, Alina. You're just sitting on his lap, not having his children. Get a grip. If you starve yourself now, you won't be able to think clearly enough to plan anything. You can afford to let him feel like he's winning.

She rolls over again and stands up, Aleks looking at her with a knowing grin. She holds her head high as she walks over to him. She sits down without pomp and circumstance, making sure to add excessive force, for fun.

“Was that so hard?” he says, wrapping one arm around her waist and resting a hand on her thigh. He sets the gun and cloth off to the side again and pulls the plate closer. “You're so beautiful when you're doing as you're told.”

“Next thing you'll tell me is I should smile more,” she says under her breath before taking a bite of toast.

“You said it, sweetheart, not me.”

She rolls her eyes and starts on the other side of the toast, avoiding the bits that he'd already touched with his own mouth and the thought of how nice his hand gently stroking the fabric of her jeans feels.

It isn't until she's finished her third apple slice that she suddenly realizes his hand has slid to her inner thigh and is approaching dangerous territory.

Alina sharply inhales and attempts to shift away. He tightens his grip. She turns her head to face him.

"Could you... please stop?"

"How can I refuse when you ask me so nicely?"

Aleks slowly begins to extricate his hand from between her thighs, the side of his index finger lightly dragging up the seam of her jeans before his hand comes to rest on her hip. She jerks against him then blushes as his seemingly ever-present smirk widens.

Quickly scarfing down the rest of the apples and toast, Alina is careful to not make eye contact with him again until she's finished.

He strokes her outer thigh and leans in to murmur against her ear:

"Good girl."

It's been a week, Alina believes. Or nearly.

The lack of tools to help her mark the passing of time makes the elapsing of it murky, but she feels confident in using the visits Aleksander has with her as ways to distinguish time in this place. She is led to a shower fairly often by a guard. Simple and clean lounge sets always sit on the small counter of the washroom. Each of them new, with tags. The wide legs, the mother of pearl buttons, and silky material of them radiate bespoke luxury.

She sleeps when she needs to, and when she wakes, Aleksander is usually there waiting at the table with some work of his own and a plate of finger foods for her to scarf down while sitting on his lap. Alina has a sneaking suspicion that she isn't going to be entrusted with eating implements any time soon.

"Do you make it a habit of abducting girls to toy with like this?" she asks him at one point, when his hand has slipped too far between her thighs once again, and she's reduced most of her chicken nuggets and tater tots to crumbs.

He doesn't even look up from his paperwork to reply, "Only the ones with incompetent and arrogant boyfriends."

Five days in by her calculations at that time, and she couldn't find a way to respond that didn't feel like a lie, though she still wonders why she feels she owes this man-- "her host," as he wants her to think of him-- the truth.

Their snark and ripping at each other relaxes into only occasionally sharp banter, and every time she looks down to see her plate empty, he says a gentle, "Good girl," against her ear that sends a shiver down her spine in a way Mal had never been able to.

It's just an automatic response of the body. Just a reflex. Relax, Starkova, she'd reassure herself after settling back into bed.

She wakes to Aleksander opening the door to her room, carrying in a particularly thick stack of paperwork, and a tray laden with charcuterie, two plastic cups and a plastic pitcher of a deep purple-red liquid sloshing against the sides.

Alina stands and walks to the table, arriving as he's setting everything down and settling into the seat. She slides onto his lap without prompting and immediately reaches for a water cracker and slice of nutty, orange cheese.

"What's the pitcher? Finally trying to get me to drink the kool-aid?"

He snorts. "No, no. I've got a stack of paperwork and figured I'd join you to eat. It's wine."
"Ah, that explains the adult food. Since I've been, you know, eating like I did back in first grade."

"Is that a problem?" he asks, raising an eyebrow.

"No, no. I'm a college student. Or... was? I've probably missed enough classes to get dropped from everything now..." She turns to look at him expectantly.

Aleksander waves a hand. "We used your phone to withdraw you from your classes already."

"How... *thoughtful*," she says, finding a way to stuff her rage deep back into its box. "And by 'we', I assume you mean Ivan? Or was it Fedyor this time?"

"Genya, actually. But you haven't met her yet." He smiles and strokes the soft fabric swathing her hips. "You do have her to thank for the clothes you've been wearing. She figured out your size and picked them out."

"What would you do without them?"

He laughs. "Go back to doing my own dirty work, I guess."

“Oh no,” she says dryly, taking another bite of cheese. “How would you live having to light your own cigarettes and wash your own socks?”

“You’d be surprised.” He arches an eyebrow and squeezes her hip in a soft warning and she feels a thick cord of anxiety thrum between her ribs. “Now, pour the wine. Do you think you can keep my glass filled for me, *solnishka* ?”

She nods, biting her lower lip to hold back a sarcastic quip. It was *wine* -- the first she’d had access to since he’d taken her and brought her here. She hadn’t been able to find a way of escape quite yet, but this one just might suffice for the time being.

By the time Aleks has made a sizable dent in his paperwork, she has drained her fourth glass, a fifth sitting three-quarters full in front of them.

“And, like, I just don’t understand why she’d do that? I just don’t get it...” she said, her drunken state slurring her words and tone.

“Mhmm...”

“Yeah, like... just like how I don’t understand why... why you’d... do this?”

Alina feels tears prickling behind her eyelids and somewhere she knows she’d want to blink them away. Not give him the benefit of seeing how he’d gotten to her. But the way he turns to look at her, setting his fountain pen down and tensing the ever-present hand at her hip-- the careful attention a deeper part of her craves combined with the fear weaving her ribs together into a tapestry of stress flips a switch

“Why I’d do what, *solnishka* ?” he asks quietly.

She freezes-- little deer caught in headlights (fight, flight, freeze, *fawn*)-- and her lower lip quivers. “I-- I don’t-- why you’d... why you’d just *take* me?”

A choked sob wrenched from the inside parts that had been shunted to the side. The scared parts that just wanted the comfort of her childhood-friend-turned-boyfriend, and before that had wanted to disappear into her father’s arms and the Polo cologne worn when he was living.

Alina leans into him, pressing her face into his neck as the tears roll before she pauses again.

“Wait. Why-- no. No. Fuck you,” she declares. “You’re the reason I’m feeling like this. Fuck you. Fuck this.”

She snatches up her glass of wine and the pitcher and goes to move from her spot perched on his leg and finds herself unable to move.

“Alek-- Ale-- Aleksan--”

“Yes, little one?”

“ *Aleks*, let- - ” She sways-- “ *let go of me.* ”

He arches an eyebrow. "Excuse me?"

"You heard-- you heard me! Let go. Now."

"I don't think so."

She starts to squirm. "This is GROSS. *GROSS*. Let go. I'm done. I don't want to sit here anymore."

"Alina--" he says sharply, and she just twists more.

"I'm not--" she hiccups-- "not kidding. *Let go of me*."

With a particularly strong jerk, she manages to free herself partially from his grip and almost crows with delight until she notices the utter dearth of wine in her once mostly-full glass. She looks down.

He looks up at her, his black dress shirt soaked, his brow furrowed and a fire lit in his eyes that makes the warning bells sober Alina was much more in tune with resound.

"...oops..." she says under her breath, setting down the pitcher and empty cup to pick up a single napkin and begin dabbing at his shirt. "I can fix--"

He wraps both arms around her, scooping her up and forcing a scream out of her.

"No! Aleks! I'm sorry! I'm so sorry-- I didn't mean to! It won't happen again!" she protests as he carries her across the room to the bed.

Roughly setting her down, he stands in front of her, trapping her against the wall. His scowl is inscrutable of any emotions aside from displeasure. "Alina..." he growls, that mahogany tone to his voice deepening further before he begins to unbutton his shirt.

"I-I'm sor-sorry. I'm so sorry. Plea-please-- I've... I've been good so far r-right? It's just-just some wine? Please--"

"I don't appreciate you ruining my clothes, Alina," he says, fingers working at the buttons. "I'd like to make sure it never happens again."

"It won't," she insists, a pleading lean to her tone. "I promise it w-won't. I'll be care-careful. I promise."

He drops the shirt to the floor. "I know."

Taking her by the hair at the back of her head, he maneuvers her back to a standing position and swaps places, sitting himself at the edge of the bed with both feet braced against the floor.

She feels the sobbing begin but is too drunk to process or experience it. All she can focus on is the pain in her neck and knees from the angle she's having to bend them to accommodate his grip in her hair.

Aleksander pulls her closer and guides her to lay across his knees, belly down. Her breath wracks from the sobs, blurring her vision as she faces the floor. He grabs both sides of her pants and pulls them down to her knees, then off, exposing the black cotton thong Genya had included.

“Wait wh-hat--”

Bare hand sharply strikes bare ass and her shuddering sobs rise into a scream.

“I’m going to spank you 10 times, Alina. I need you to count for me, and then when I’m done, I need you to explain to me what you did to make you deserve this.”

“Bu-ut I didn’t--”

He spanks her again, more forcefully this time and it *stings* . “Stop talking.”

She nods down at the floor, tensing to hold back her whimpering. A long pause follows.

Aleksander sighs. “What number was that, Alina?”

“O--one,” she says, swallowing hard.

“Good.” He slaps her ass again, then pauses, waiting.

“Two-o.”

“Good girl. That isn’t so hard, is it?” *Slap* .

“Thr-three.”

Alina sobs, chokes and stammers her way through each stroke, the skin of her ass stinging and then warming to the touch, feeling like fire under the comparative coolness of his hand. She cries out loudly several times, her mouth sticky and nose running as the tears well anew with the refreshed pain. Each time her cries escalate, he pauses to slide his palm over the offended cheek in comfort before switching to the other for the next strike.

The sniffles continue though they’ve begun to subside by the time he moves her from his lap and onto the bed, staying seated on the edge. He gently strokes her hair while she breathes. Her chest seizes every few moments, then relaxes partially in a jerky exhale.

“Why did you deserve it, Alina?” Aleks asks quietly after a time. “Why did I have to spank you like that?”

She looks up at him from her place on her back and shakes her head. “It-- it was just wine, Aleks. It was an accident.”

He touches her cheek, moving her hair back out of the way. “No, little one. It’s not about spilling the wine. Think about it. I know it’s hard, but you can do it.”

A flush of rage. “It’s not hard. I’m not fucking stu- *stupid* .”

Aleks raises both eyebrows. “Well then this should be a walk in the park for you, Alina. Why did you deserve what just happened to you? Think about it, or I might have to restart.”

She pauses, slowly biting her lower lip, preventing her anger from slipping past. She doesn’t know how her mind can feel so heavy and so light at the same time. With all the alcohol in her system, she *wants* to tell him that he’s not her real dad. That he’s full of shit. That he can get bent. And yet...

“I... because I was... fighting you? Trying to leave your lap? When you told me no?”

He breaks into a beaming grin and she tries to kill the sudden fluttering pleasure of him being pleased with her, reaching out to caress her cheek again. Knowing she’s safe from his ire for now.

“Yes, that’s exactly it. Very, very good. You deserved it because you fought me. If you don’t fight me, I won’t have to punish you like that. Do you understand?”

“Yeah.”

“Manners, Alina. What do you say?”

“Yes, Aleksander.”

“Good girl,” he says, his voice a low rumble. “Now, I know that was really overwhelming. How about I make things better, hm?”

“...with more wine?”

He laughs. “No, *milaya* . I think you’ve had enough wine for tonight.”

Helped by the heaviness of her body from the alcohol, she feels her features droop into disappointment.

“Maybe tomorrow night. I was thinking of a different reward. Close your eyes.”

She looks at him. “You... what?”

“I need you to trust me just this once, Alina.” He leans over her, resting his hand on the other side of the bed. “Let me reward you. You’ve been such a good girl otherwise. I haven’t actually hurt you yet, have I? Just relax, okay?”

“...okay,” she murmurs before closing her eyes slowly.

Alina feels him shift-- feels him leave the bed and she wants to peek. (But what if he’s watching?) Cannot sense time. Feels like either one second or one hour before he returns. She startles when his hands seize her ankles and pull her legs apart. Sudden panic floods her gut with more butterflies than a lepidopterarium.

“Wait-- Aleks I--” She opens her eyes and meets his gaze. It freezes her in place-- that challenging look. Asking her if she’s going to fight him. Asking her if she’ll sit back and

behave just this once.

A foggy thought of how he might hurt her if she manages to muster the strength to kick him is suddenly replaced, consumed by her coming to know how good it feels to have his hands sliding up her bare legs, following the forms and curves of calves, to her thighs, before he wraps his arms around them, his face positioned between and--

“No-- No, Aleks. No. I can’t--” She squirms in his grasp to no avail. He looks up at her sharply before lowering his head to the black thong still clinging to her cunt and exhaling softly, his lips lightly brushing against her. She shivers. “Aleks--please--”

“I can feel how much you want this. Don’t lie to me,” he murmurs into her fabric-covered folds. “I can *smell* how much you want this. Just let me taste it. Stop fighting me.”

She cries out, snapping the back of her hand over her mouth to silence herself, as he pushes his lips against her. Legs shaking in his grip, Alina feels a rising tide of pleasure meeting and pushing back against her willpower. She fights her own keening cries, desperate to not give him the satisfaction.

He abducted you. He’s forcing this on you.

But in another voice tucked away somewhere inside-- quiet-- *Don’t fight him. Just give in.*

He feels her legs relax a little and murmurs another, “Good girl,” before moving to kiss the inner sections of each of her thighs, and then her center. “Don’t fight me, milaya. You’re so beautiful when you do as you’re told.”

Alina feels the tears returning despite her best effort to push them back. “But I don’t--”

“Shhh,” he hums, pulling aside the fabric and exposing her to the chill. “Just enjoy yourself, little one.” And he buries his face between her legs, flat of the tongue first sliding across the whole curve of her, dipping between her folds briefly before dragging across her clit and pulling it into his mouth.

She tries not to think of Mal-- but it comes unbidden when her only experiences like this current one centered around the reluctant boyfriend she so often had to take her pleasure from rather than him wanting to give to her freely like this. But no-- Aleks can hardly be described as *giving* her pleasure.

He wrenches it from her. Devours her, not like a starving man, but instead like a plague of locusts who’d already taken their fill, overwhelming her alcohol-laden senses. Each lazy, pressing lap, every greedy suck promising deeper devastation if they-- *he--* could not be fought back in time.

In time for-- “*OH--*”

Alina feels the pressure building, twisting itself into the threads of her very muscle fibers, forcing them to quiver with every stroke of his tongue, every tug of his lips, every kiss planted against the delicate flesh that joins her inner thigh to her torso. She forces her face

into the crook of her elbow, arm curved over to hide her flush from him. To perhaps hold back the loudest of the moans his lips demand from a place deep within her.

At the sound of another of her throaty hums rending the air, she feels his lips curl against her into a smile and she makes the mistake of shifting her arm and glancing down. He's studying her. A piercing abyssal gaze staring back in a smirk.

She quickly hides her face again.

"That's it, Alinochka." The tip of his tongue darts out to tease the flesh around her entrance in a careful circle before flicking inward and upwards, just barely inside. "You make such pretty sounds." Another inviting lick. "Singing my favorite song for me." Inviting her to come undone into his mouth. "Such a good girl."

"Aleks," she inhales. "*I don't--*"

He suddenly shifts forward, and she shrieks as he savagely sucks her swollen clit into his mouth and refuses to let up on the pressure. Bites down on the back of her arm to try and suppress the noises. To push away the pleasure but the pain--

Aleksander smiles as her cunt spasms against his mouth, her legs seizing and pushing up against his hands, cushioning his head. He eases long, comforting licks against her. "Good girl. *Very* good girl."

Her panting sinks into shallow breaths as she finally relaxes against him. He releases her legs, stands, then nudges her to the side to lay next to her, carefully taking her into his arms.

The alcohol and orgasm have evaporated any energy she'd have used to fight him and it makes him smile as he watches her catch her breath at his side. He slips his hand up her side to cup a breast through her shirt, his thumb stroking the outline of a nipple. She stirs slightly, unconsciously pressing her ass back into him.

His precious girl-- tracks of tears drying against her cheeks, sleeping tucked against his body curled around her.

There's only one way he'd rather have her.

Aleks shifts his hand down to cup the slight curve of her lower belly, then plants a kiss against the top of her head.

When she next wakes, he's back in the chair, a steaming plate of scrambled eggs, thick-sliced bacon, beans and toast waiting for her-- a single silver spoon resting next to it.

It's been two weeks when there's an interruption to the thinly veiled comfort of routine.

It's Mal.

It's Mal and he's thrown to the ground in her room unceremoniously. The man she suspects is Ivan follows behind him. Alina feels a dizzying mix of relief and fear.

This cannot be good.

"Look what's been caught in the spider's web," Ivan sneers.

"Fuck you." Mal spits at him while scrambling to his feet.

"Ah, you poor motherfucker. We told you to stay away, didn't we?"

Ivan's coppery brown hair glints under the fluorescents. Mal's skin looks particularly pale. Alina feels her heart in her throat.

"Mal, listen to me-" Alina tries to reason with him, tries to temper the anger radiating off of him.

"Alina, stop. This isn't your fault. I'm getting you out of here." His statement ends with his feet being kicked out from under him. Alina shrieks.

"Have you somehow forgotten who it is we *are*, kid?" He kicks Mal in the ribs, a wheeze coming from the felled man, the air knocked from him.

"Ivan-" Alina tries to plead with him, but she knows it's probably in vain. He's like a hound on a scent.

Alina thinks of Mal's younger sister, Taya. How she was pulling Mal's hair when they were all children. How this will break her. How Mal being beaten will break her.

Ivan begins punching Mal in earnest, bent at the waist and wailing on her boyfriend. A sick crunch marks the breaking of his nose. She sees blood splatter on the floor. She feels ill. She stumbles forward, trying to shove Ivan off of Mal. Ivan easily overpowers her, shoving her to the ground away from the two men. Mal yells in displeasure at Ivan handling Alina, reaching and grabbing hold of Ivan by the balls, literally.

"Don't fucking touch her!"

Ivan gives a shout and reaches behind him.

Time slows.

Alina watches as Ivan produces a gun. Mal shouts. Mal tries to roll as Ivan clicks the safety off. A reverberating bang bounces through the room. Mal slumps back to the ground, blood pooling from under his head. The red is a stark contrast to the white of the floor, the white of the walls. She cannot seem to hear right.

It's funny, really. How Mal looks distorted with half of his forehead blown. Alina feels a giggle burst through her lips. It turns into a keening sound. She sounds like a wounded

animal.

“ *M-Mal* -” She crawls towards his body.

Ivan takes a step back, sweeping the hair off his forehead with a huff. He grumbles something in Russian under his breath. Blood splatters the front of his polo shirt. A pretty painting, to someone, somewhere. Alina is sure of it.

“Fucking twat.” He says more clearly, glaring at the cooling body. It sounds miles away, his voice.

Alina skims her fingers over Mal’s cheek, over his hairline. Blood coats her fingers. She barely registers the tears building and falling. Her ears ring in a horribly high pitch.

“Oh, Mal. Oh, dear. Oh, no.” She whispers quietly, her words a mantra as she repeats them over and over. Whoever looks at her now will see her pupils blown wide, her hands shaking. She’s in shock.

The door to the room slams open.

“ *What in fuck* -” The deep voice breaks the dam inside of Alina and she sobs.

“My finger slipped.” Ivan supplies as he shrugs to Aleksander; surveying the scene. Aleks scoffs.

“I see that. Go clean yourself up.”

Alina barely registers the sound of the door closing again. Hardly recognizes that it’s just her, Aleksander, and what was once Mal. She is silent now, unable to feel anything at all. Blood has now soaked through the knees of her pants.

She thinks of how she’ll hate the color red for the rest of her days.

There’s a presence behind her. A hand on the crown of her head, gently stroking. A comfort, one could assume.

“Sweet one, let’s get all washed up, hm?” His voice is soft and low, a lover’s embrace.

Alina continues to stare at Mal’s face, committing the sight to memory. Sure, things with him hadn’t been perfect, but the history between them...the way he’d been a lighthouse for her, calling her home. The only good thing to come of her childhood is gone.

She remains silent.

“Alinochka?” She feels the air shift, Aleksander now squatting beside her. She can’t seem to look at him.

He brushes some stray hair from her face, tucking it behind her ear. He sighs and puts his knees to the ground, kneeling beside her. He feels Mal’s lifeforce seep into his slacks.

The both of them create an image of a devout pair, the blood of Mal their Communion.

“Do you want me to make the pain go away, *milaya* ? Would that make you feel better?” His voice maintains that nurturing tone, but without the usual condescending edge.

He watches Alina’s eyes shut with a certain finality, a shaky acceptance. He tracks the tear that streaks down her cheek. He leans towards her, catches the salt with his lips. He places a hand to her shoulder, gently coaxing her onto her back.

“Lay down for me, sweetheart.” She has no fight in her body.

“Oh, *solnishka* . What ever am I to do with you?” He appraises her, finally noticing the flecks of blood splatter on her cheeks and neck. A macabre smattering of freckles.

She must have been close to the two of them when Ivan fired the gun. Interesting.

He trails his fingers up her right leg, skimming over the blood stains on her knee. Her head is turned to the side, staring off into space at the white wall beyond.

That simply won’t do.

“ *Solnishka* , darling, look at me.” His voice is the softest he’s ever used with her. She darts her eyes towards his.

“Ah, there we are, *zlotse* . We can’t have your mind drifting. I’ll give you something to focus on, yes?” He drags his fingers into her waistband, smoothly pulling the pants down, stripping her bare.

She lies in the outer edges of Mal’s blood. Her hair fans out like a dark halo. One can forget how much bodies bleed. Aleksander has never seen her look more holy.

He shuffles on his knees, placing a hand on the floor for balance as he moves over, stopping to kneel between her legs. He reaches up and deftly undoes the buttons down the front of her shirt, her dark nipples pebbling in the exposed air. He leaves the shirt open at her sides.

Divine, he thinks.

Placing a hand beside her head, he looms over her, an angel of death and destruction. She averts her gaze.

“I’m going to make you feel better, Alina.” He sucks two of his fingers into his mouth and then drops them to her folds, hardly noticing the blood he’d cleaned off of them.

He teases her lightly, eyes rapt on her face, waiting for a reaction. It’s only when he fully seats his fingers within her tight cunt that she reacts to his touch, a soft gasp, a small rise of her chest, a curve of her spine. He grins. “There she is.”

Alina meets his eyes again, and he nearly chokes at how dull hers are. Windows to the soul and no one is home.

“Oh, milaya. I’m so sorry.” He whispers to her, slowly increasing the pace of his fingers. she slides a leg up, her knee pointing towards the ceiling. The sound of her breaths quickening spurring him on.

He leans down, catches a nipple in his mouth. Alina sharply inhales as he begins circling his tongue around the soft flesh. She mewls, a fragile sound, but Aleks tilts his head up, catching her looking down at him. Mal lays just beyond. Aleks pauses his movements, returns to his kneeling at her body’s hearth. Alina tracks his fingers as they unzip his slacks. Sees the dark shimmer of blood glisten against the black fabric as he brushes more of Mal off his skin.

His hard cock falls out, ready to help her forget the mess laying just beyond her. Alina does not register the sheer size of him.

Without missing a beat, Aleksander wraps his arms under her thighs, pulling her forward through the ichor towards him, angling her entrance up at him. He works his jaw around for a second, and then spits on her cunt.

“We’ll take this nice and easy, little one.” He murmurs as he lines himself up with her and then thrusts all the way inside her with a measured push, working past the hitch in her pussy as it tries to stop his advance.

Alina’s breath catches in earnest.

“ *Aleks.* ” she hisses out.

“Sasha. Call me Sasha, *milaya* .”

Her world fractures and reforms, the stretch of him springing new tears in her eyes. The near-burn of the rapid intrusion making spots show in her vision.

“Oh my *god* -“

“God can’t help you here, Alina. Only me.” He runs a finger down her cheek as he withdraws from her, his own eyes nearly rolling back in ecstasy. He thrusts back in and she seizes up, her body locking down at the pressure he provides.

“Shh, sweet one, relax. I’ve got you.” He pauses his movements, giving her a spare moment to adjust.

“Deep breath—good. Good girl.” Her body slowly unwinds from itself, the tension fading, finally accepting his body into her own.

“You’re so fucking beautiful with tears in your eyes,” he grinds out between each thrust of his cock. “I could never stay away.”

She moans in earnest.

“Seeing you sob was nearly my undoing.”

He places a hand down next to her waist, lifting her hips up in tandem with his movements, changing the angle. The sound of flesh slapping against flesh reverberates between the lingering ringing in Alina's ears.

"*Fuck* , Sasha, please-" She's at his complete and utter mercy.

She's barely a person. Doesn't want to be anymore. Because if being a person means suffering like this then she'd rather be nothing, only existing as a vessel to be pleased by his lips and hands and cock and gentle murmurs of "*good girl* ."

Everything else, all the other horrors, be completely damned.

He moves his hand from beside her waist to gripping her breast, pressing down, pinning her. He grunts as she squeezes her walls around him.

"Fuck, you feel incredible, *milaya* . So tight. No one's ever felt like this—you're so good." He praises her and she feels like a fucking goddess being worshipped. His dark eyes don't leave hers.

She covers his hand on her breast with her own, but it slips. She glances down and freezes.

Red. Her chest is covered in red.

She shrieks, batting his hand away, trying to pull away from him. She hyperventilates and chokes out a sob.

She's brought back to reality. Aleks grips her thighs tightly, effectively trapping her.

"Alina—" He begins.

She thrashes, crying out in frustration, trying to sit up and slapping at his chest. She cannot think straight. Her mind spirals. She cannot think, cannot *breathe*-

"*Alina* ." Aleksander's voice is heavy and dark, commanding attention.

"Alina, come back to me." A beacon. His voice tethers her back into her body, her swelling panic plateauing. Tears continue rushing down her cheeks.

"Sasha..." She whimpers. He resumes fucking her, softly setting her head back down onto the concrete.

"I'm here, *solnishka* ." She flutters around his incredible cock, the girth nearly sending her into a fit.

"Sasha, please." She begs.

"What do you need, little one?" he croons to her, a cruel twist to his smile. He watches the tears fall down her face. He's effervescent.

“Please-I need... oh, *Sasha*- “ She moans loudly as he tweaks the angle he’s coming at just slightly, hitting that sweet spot within her. She writhes.

“Tell me.” He pants.

“Forget! Sasha please, I need to forget...I need-“

He increases his pace, and he feels her inner walls begin to tighten, a soft flutter building up. He keeps at it, the tempo nearly unbearable for Alina, but the sensations he gives her, it's what she needs. It's all too much and she cannot focus, cannot pinpoint exactly where her mind should be, and it's a gift. He doesn't realize how much of this is a gift to her.

Her moans turn reedy, high pitched, faster and faster until she hitches her breath and cries out in a long wail. Her cunt clamps down on Aleks, and he lets out a long string of curses in Russian, spilling his come within her on a gasp.

The blood around them begins to congeal.

She next processes the sound of a shower. Aleks has brought her to the bathroom down the hall. She cannot discern how much time has passed, but she feels the tight grasp that the dried blood has on her skin, flaking and cracking on her back like she's being born anew.

She sits on the toilet, still naked, and she experiences what must be tunnel vision. The outer expanse of her vision blackening, all she can really process is the tiles making up the floor. Hexagonal, grey. She feels hollow. Clothes land on the ground before her, and then a bare, muscled arm comes into her small worldview.

“Let's get cleaned up, little one,” he says softly.

She'll do what he says. Whatever he says, if it means she never has to think again. Alina finds there to be some thread of justice in that, in never having to reflect or to dwell or to process. Whatever he says.

She grabs his hand and she rises, her core spasming at the abrupt movement. Alina hardly winces.

Pain. Pain means I'm alive.

The spray of hot water on her skin is jarring, bordering on too hot. Perhaps the burn is what she deserves. This must be a baptism into Hell. Aleksander is behind her, holding her steady.

Her eyes track down to the floor, to the excess water. The water is scarlet as it circles the silver of the drain. Her knees buckle and Aleks slowly lowers her to the floor. Her head hangs.

“Oh, *milaya* . Don’t despair. I can protect you, provide for you, better than Mal ever did.”

She tenses at his name on Aleks’ lips.

“You see now why one must be adequate at protecting what they assume is theirs?” He begins running his fingers through her black hair, shampoo washing away the final grasp Mal holds on her.

“I am better, I am worthy, I will keep you safe, Alina. Do you understand?” His morbid affirmations tumble through Alina’s head.

Perhaps he’s right.

She thinks she moves her head enough to be considered a nod, and Aleksander hums approvingly.

“Good girl. All you ever need to worry about from now on is growing our child. You’re a safe harbor, Alina.”

At this, something clicks and whirs to life in Alina’s mind. She opens her mouth, her voice hoarse.

“ *Child* ?”

His hands in her hair pause for a second before resuming. “Of course.”

“Aleks, you cannot be serious.” Her voice is low.

She can’t make it any louder, can’t fathom raising her voice.

“I’ve spent many months considering my future. Considering how and when I want to carve my legacy into this syndicate. The next step is an heir.”

Alina almost laughs. Almost.

“Aleks. Stop fucking with me more than you have. You’ve known me for two weeks.”

“Ah, *you* have known *me*. And it’s actually been about three.”

Her eyebrows tilt down, confused.

“Excuse me?” She whispers. Her mind starts to slip back again. It was easier that way.

“Nothing is ever a coincidence, Alina. Trust me.” He kneads his knuckles against her scalp a bit longer. “I’ve determined you will make an excellent mother.”

She can barely bring herself to feel any emotion outside of the blankness she’s in, just existing.

“I love to inform you that that isn’t a viable option.” She can feel the wisps of rage, they’re just outside of her grasp.

If she can just *focus* she can achieve it.

“Whatever do you mean?”

“IUD.” She nearly spits out, almost giddy at the prospect of having outwitted him without her ever really trying.

He hums. He fucking *hums*.

“It’s all very interesting, *milaya*,” is all he says on the matter. Her skin crawls as he rinses her hair.

She falls back into the clean, blank slate of simply existing. She breathes in and out, ignoring the dull pain blooming in her heart. She does not think. Does not want to feel. She’ll do anything he asks if that makes things easier. But she does not want to *feel*.

Alina stares at the spot she *knows* his body fell. The spot now unblemished. Gleaming. Flawless sealed concrete. As if he had never been here. As if his death had been a dream and lying on her back in his blood is her and Aleks’ little secret.

She can barely feel the blankets wrapped around her. The old ones had been sprayed with blood. She knew that. She clung to these new ones as if they’d bring the old ones back-- along with the proof that the pictures that replayed over and over on loop in her mind were real. That they’d happened.

When Aleks had first brought her back to her room, she’d moved all the furniture. Flipped over everything, scanning every sterile inch for signs of the blood she still swore she could feel clinging in her hair.

“What are you doing?” he’d asked, reaching out to touch her shoulder as she pushed over the table and chair.

“Alina?” To grab her wrist, but it had slipped beyond his grasp as she tore all the sheets off the mattress.

“This isn’t appropriate behavior, Alina,” he’d said as he’d seized hold of her by her wrists, stopping her from pulling the thin camping mattress off the frame.

“Where is he?” she’d demanded. “Where’s his body?”

“What body? Whose? Are you feeling alright, *milaya*?”

“You know what I’m talking about,” she had snapped at him. “Mal’s body. Where did you take him?”

He had taken firm hold of her chin then. Steered her wild, roving gaze to him. “I don’t like that tone, Alina. Ask me nicely.”

She had grit her teeth, clenching at the anger. Trying to hold on to something-- any semblance of emotion in the moment. “Aleks, where is Mal?”

“I’m sure I don’t know who you’re referring to. I don’t have any men in my employ named Mal,” he’d said smoothly, polishing it off with a concerned smile. “You must not be feeling well. Here-- let me help you get into bed.”

He’d guided her over, then gathered the sheets she’d torn off and thrown to the floor.

“Help me clean your mess, *solnishka* .”

She hasn’t left the bed since then. Aleksander had come in twice now with food, trying to rouse her from between the sheets, but she’d not responded, instead she’d continued to stare blankly at the cracks in the floor under the sealant that she’d known Mal had fallen over. Or was it where Aleks had kneeled as he’d slid balls-deep into her cunt?

Alina’s eyes widen as she realizes even now she’s mixing things up. Even now, she’s having trouble sorting through everything, the images beginning to blur together into a single red-stained montage. She returns her eyes to the spot, trying to fix it all again in memory.

“Alinochka?” Aleks says, stepping in after the click of the door behind him. “Ready to eat, sweetheart?”

She doesn’t respond. He sighs.

“Oh, *milaya* . We are a mess.” Sits on the edge of the bed. Her bed. Blocks her view. He tucks some of her hair behind her ear. “Did I do something to upset you? Is the food not to your liking? What’s wrong?”

“Where--” she croaks, her throat dry and lips cracking, then coughs.

“You’re dehydrated. You need to drink something. Have you even slept? It’s been three days since I tucked you in, little one.”

He stands and strides back to the table for the glass of water on the tray before returning to her side. “Here-- let’s sit up and drink this. Then you can answer my questions.”

She doesn’t move.

“Alina, you can either drink this here and now, or I can get you started on an IV. Take your pick.”

Shifting against the mattress felt like trying to push a door open whose hinges had begun to rust. She was numb to the tension her muscles held and were now being requested to relax or contract in ways that felt unfamiliar to her. Was this even her body? Or was it his now?

Aleks loops the hand not holding the water behind her to press at the center of her back and hold her steady before he brings the cup to her lips, not releasing when she raises a shaky hand to take it from him. He glides the hand at her back up her spine to finally rest behind her head as she drinks.

“That’s my girl,” he murmurs as he strokes her hair. “Good girl, Alinochka.”

Somewhere inside, the orphaned child preens at the praise, soaking up the love like scraps from the table of belonging to something. Meaning something to someone. Not even Mal had praised her so much, and he was all she really had in terms of a solid connection. She’d been moved between foster homes too often to get anything really consistent, and everyone else had always eventually faded away... just like she was--

“Stay with me, Alinochka. Just a little longer,” he said. “I need you to finish the whole thing.”

Alina pushes against his hand, but he holds it and the cup of water firm against her mouth and forces it to continue draining past her lips. She taps. He holds. Until the last of the water is down her throat and her already-angry stomach feels heavy.

“Such a good girl. Can you eat for me?”

She shakes her head slowly. “Hurts.”

“Your stomach?”

She nods.

“Probably because you need to eat. Here-- I kept it simple.” He stands and exchanges the cup for the plate of food before returning to the edge of the bed and lifting a piece of it to her lips. “Open for me, Alina.”

She opens her mouth and he moves the slice in. “Close.”

With a snap, it is cleaved and one half is meticulously chewed before sliding down her throat. Distantly, she knows she tastes apples and it clings to her teeth. She opens her mouth again as it settles into her aching gut and he places the rest inside.

Alina eats as much as she can and then some. She wonders if Aleks is wanting to make her vomit but then dismisses the panic-inducing thought because he could be and it wasn’t as if she could muster the strength to stop him.

He finally stops before the last slice of toast and pats her head before wiping the crumbs away from the corners of her mouth.

“Now, get some sleep, little one. Want me to tuck you in?”

She shakes her head slowly, then begins to pull herself back under the covers. He kisses her on her forehead before standing and leaving, taking the remainders back with him. She doesn’t see him standing in the doorway, small frown thinning his lips in concern, because she is too busy trying to etch the location she knows Mal died into the floor.

At some point, she falls asleep. She dreams of red against white floors. Red against his lips. Red against her breasts. Red against gray hexagonal tile. Red like the heartbeat at the center of this nightmare, knitting it all together into the blankets that twist around and trap--

She wakes with a gasp as Aleksander seats himself on the edge of the bed and tucks some of her hair off to the side.

He smiles softly down at her. "Did you sleep well, Alina?"

Alina breathes deeply, averting her eyes back to the spot on the floor and nods once.

"What's wrong? Talk to me?"

She meets his gaze again. "Where is Mal?"

"Who?"

"*You know who!*" she explodes. "Mal! My boyfriend! The man who your goon fucking *shot in front of my goddamn--*"

He grabs her by her cheeks with one hand, wrenching her upright. She shrieks.

"That is *enough*, Alina," Aleks says, his voice taking a dangerous edge that makes everything in her flutter, as he forces her into a kneeling position on the bed. "You will *never* speak to me that way again. Is that under--"

"*You fucking murdered him!* Murdered him and you're too much of a goddamn cowa--"

His hand moves to her throat. "Do we want to finish what we were saying?"

She narrows her eyes at him, finally able to put a leash on and ride her rage.

"You're too much of a *coward* to take ownership of it."

Alina understands in moments how black holes can turn to quasars, his endlessly dark eyes shooting the full concentrated force of his fury directly into her own. Even the butterflies in the pit of her stomach go silent, as though themselves afraid of what she has awoken. She holds her breath.

Releasing her throat, Aleksander stands and removes himself from the room, leaving Alina to watch the door slam and lock behind him, frozen, heart trying to hide in her chest, trying to not make a single sound. Trying to resist the impulse to start sobbing. Trying to resist the urge to not spiral, but all she can think about is the ease Ivan had in putting his finger to the trigger. In pulling it. In the bang that still has her ears ringing and stuffy.

She inhales sharply, her body demanding air, and a sob leaks out. Bites her lower lip to stop it from trembling and triggering the tears waiting for their chance to leak out. Waiting for--

He returns, door slamming against the wall as he strides in and beelines for her.

“Please—Aleksander—I’m—”

His hand wraps around her throat and pushes backwards, forcing her into the mattress. She’s almost as beautiful with her wide panicked eyes staring up at him, begging for his mercy, as when she cries, he thinks.

She mouths words to the air, unable to fully vocalize anything. He brings one leg up and pins her under him before calling out behind him, “She’s restrained, David.”

The butterflies are now rocks and they drop into her stomach like they’re trying to drag her down to hell. The tears start and she is *his*.

A dark haired man in slacks scurries in with a silver tray, setting it down on the table.

Aleks shifts his weight, digging his knee into her sternum as he removes the hand from her throat and uses it to rip away the covers, exposing her legs and clamping down on the one nearest him. She coughs as air filters in once again.

“Please, Aleksander,” she begs, tears gathering in the corners of her eyes. “I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have said what I said. I won’t ask again. Please.”

He ignores her and instead continues to watch the man. Alina raises her head to look-- sees the flash of a silver stethoscope tucked under his open collar, the gleam of a syringe in one hand and a vial in the other as he drags out a dose from within.

Another jolt of panic-- or maybe it’s the apple slices from earlier-- rises from the depths of her clenching gut and her pleading turns to ash in her mouth. Her throat burns. Her eyes burn. Her chest aches where he’s kneeling into her.

“Daddy--” she cries. “Please.”

That gets his attention. He turns his gaze to her, caressing the curve of a cheek with his eyes. “Hush, pet. Be good for me and hold still. We’re going to make it all better.”

Her eyes widen, the sclera becoming more visible and glistening with tears already ghosting down the sides of her face and soaking into her hairline. He smiles softly down at her before turning back to the man joining him at his side.

The touch of wet paper-- quickly chilling. An alcohol pad against the outside of her thigh.

She twitches, trying to pull away. Peels her head up from the pillow. Aleksander presses down on her chest even more, squeezing the air from her. Breathing becomes a labor of love she’s not sure she’ll be able to maintain much longer and black hazes over the corners of her vision.

Another pair of hands and she jerks again. They aren’t his. They aren’t his and she doesn’t want them touching or he might hurt them. They’re soft, and then there’s a quick pinch-- and

she *burns* again, whatever Aleks allowed him to inject into her thigh; searing through her tensed muscle. Another wipe of alcohol pad that also cleanses her of thoughts.

She is released and she lays in the bed, all fight gone. Able to move and not bothering, allowing the sense of violation to truly wash through her and perhaps do war with the parts of her giving in to him. Her head pounds as her body rummages for more water to feed through her tear ducts, coming up with nothing. She is empty. Has he taken it all and hidden it somewhere, like he did with Mal and all the red?

“It takes about five minutes to take effect, and then we can get her moved to the exam room,” David says, walking back to the table and returning the syringe and used cleansing pads to the tray. She hears the flexing snap of rubber gloves being removed. “Her tears may have dehydrated her further, so I’ll need to prepare fluids, if you’ll excuse me.”

Aleksander sits on the side of the bed. She doesn’t look. Can’t drag her eyes away from the ceiling.

“If you weren’t such a naughty thing, I wouldn’t lose my temper with you, *solnishka*,” he murmurs. Strokes her thigh with the back of his fingers. She shivers. “So disrespectful, after all I do to care for you. I don’t know what I’ve done to deserve such mistreatment.”

“You killed him,” she says quietly.

“Such accusations,” he scoffs. “Who do you imagine I’ve killed, Alina?”

“Mal.” She whispers his name like a prayer, as if he’s already been declared a saint she can claim as her patron and his only miracles hadn’t been somehow managing to find her clit during a few drunken tumbles.

Aleksander goes still and she anticipates the leap of adrenaline that never comes. “If you’re going to accuse me of something, at least make it plausible.”

Her brows furrow and she pulls herself up, arms leaden and torso heavy. “I saw it with my own eyes.”

His smile is only on one side, his eyes filled with gentle concern. He reaches out. Cups a hand around her cheek. She pulls away and he grabs her jaw, forcing her to stay turned towards him, his eyes slightly hardened. “Alina, I don’t appreciate all these little stories you tell yourself about me. I’ve been nothing but kind to you. Patient. Fed you good food. Given you nice clothes. A soft bed.”

“You--” Her mouth feels cottony-- “You keep me locked in a cell.”

“It’s for your protection, *milaya*,” he says. “I promise. I only do this for you because I care so much for you.”

“Why--” She droops, her eyelids beginning to slide closed under their own weight. “I’m-- you... drugged...”

“I told you we’d make it all better, little one.” He leans in and presses his forehead to hers, holding the nape of her neck now. Closes his eyes and she can feel his eyelashes brush hers. “You can sleep. I promise I’ll always keep you safe. Give you exactly what you need.”

She can’t find the strength to keep herself upright as the drugs worry at the cords of her tensed muscles. Mouth dry. Breathing slowly, her jaw slack. She slumps and he slowly lowers her back to the bed. Kisses her forehead.

He watches her, reading the swearing and struggle weakly passing across her lips, until David returns to the room. He lurks in the doorway and nods to Aleks, who stands and very carefully gathers her up into his arms like her father had when she’d fallen asleep on the couch next to him. As if she was precious to him -- one arm at her back, tucking her against his chest, and another under her upper thighs.

Alina subconsciously uses what little control over her body she has left to bury her nose against his neck, and into the subtle spice-and-leather of his cologne.

Aleksander carries her down the hall and up a flight of stairs, following behind David and letting him hold doors open until they reach the final one-- solid metal with an opaque glass window.

He hauls his limp charge into the exam room and lays her down, her back against the table, before he reaches for her sleeping shorts and slides them off her legs with her panties. Setting them off to the side, he returns to lift her legs into the l-shaped stirrups and strap them in above and below the knee, quickly following suit with a strap across her hips. Takes a brief moment to admire the way she’s spread open for him, the way her thighs tightly connect to her hips. His cock twitches and begins to harden as he remembers how she tasted-- the beautiful keening noises she’d made for him before coming against his mouth.

David rolls the IV pole over to the other side and takes Alina’s hand in his. He kneads the back of it, feeling for a vein to begin the insertion process, while Aleks pulls a chair up to sit at her head and stroke her hair and cheeks.

His doctor works quickly, much to Aleksander’s relief.

The IUD had been a snag that he hadn’t known to account for and needed to be taken care of expeditiously if he wanted to stay on schedule. He’d thought enough ahead to allocate extra time in the case of any unforeseen fertility issues-- which, admittedly, this was, but all the same, the idea of a simple piece of plastic stopping him from moving forward with his plans made him uncomfortable, so he’d prioritized its removal.

He runs his fingers through her hair again, watching her eyelids twitch. Perhaps she dreamt of her old life. Or perhaps she dreamt of him, just as he had so often since he’d seen her. More mornings than not, he’d wake with a stiff and leaking cock he’d have to take in hand himself until he could finally sheathe it in her warm cunt, or slide it into her mouth-- between the perfect lips he finds himself tracing his fingertips over as David works between her legs.

A twinge of possessiveness-- jealousy. A reminder that David was a professional. That this was necessary. That the need for this, for anyone else but him to see her legs spread wide

would become even more critical to ensure a healthy pregnancy and birth.

He leans forward and kisses her forehead.

“It’s out,” David says as he sets the contraceptive device on the empty metal tray he’d brought with the other examination tools. The speculum quickly joins it on another tray and the doctor stands to carry it all away.

“Leave it. You may go.”

The doctor doesn’t hesitate or delay. Not even glancing back to take anything with him, David strides out of the door and allows it to slam behind him.

Aleks strokes her cheek. Rests his face on the table next to her, chair scooted back so he doesn’t have to hunch. Watches her carefully, for any flutter of eyelids, any twist of lips, any furrow of brows. It’s different having to wait like this for her. To be powerless over when she’ll return to him. Did she miss him like this while she waited for him to return to her cell room?

He sits up and his gaze drags down from her face, along the curve of her torso, to its split into two long legs still clasped into the stirrups. Smiles as he notices that the patch of hair at her mons is uneven, a small stripe of it longer than the rest. While he wouldn’t allow her a razor for some time, perhaps she’d allow him to manage it for her...

His cock swells again and he groans. The way the little minx shattered his careful control--simultaneously intoxicating and infuriating. How he’d like to take it out on her ass until she cried pretty for him again. How he’d take away focus on the sting by slamming into her tight cunt. It was better than he’d imagined...

“Fuck,” he mutters, adjusting the now-painful press of himself against the seam of his briefs and trousers to relieve the pressure.

Leaning forward once more to press his nose to her hair, he inhales that sweet scent. The one he couldn’t wait to have tangled up in his sheets. On his clothes from every brush of her against him.

“Oh, *milaya* ... how you undo me,” he whispers. “You can’t begin to understand.”

He stands and sighs with the relief of pressure on his dick. He can feel a distinct wet spot soaked into the fabric as it shifts to accommodate his new position.

Begins to pace.

Looks over at her, glimpsing the gentle rise and fall of her stomach.

Paces.

Her nipples are peaked, their silhouettes tantalizingly visible under her camisole from the chill of the air.

Walks around to where her legs are open. Begins once again.

The gentle curves of her legs smudge the shadow from the overhead exam light.

Paces.

Her cunt is at the perfect height. He wouldn't have to crouch or stretch.

Paces.

Stops in front of her.

Unzips his trousers and pulls out his cock.

Aleksander steps between her raised legs and looks down at her beautiful cunt. Gripping himself firmly and angling down into her, he directs the head of his cock to her inner folds and begins to spread his precum across her. He frowns. His Alinochka isn't ready for him.

He reaches off to the side for the bottle of lubricant still resting by the speculum and cracks the top. Squeezes a generous amount onto the head of his cock and returns it to its place between her legs.

Now gliding across her pussy with ease, he slots himself at her entrance and presses in.

"Fuck." He moans deeply as her pillowy heat encloses his head, then shaft, until he's pressed deep enough for his balls to gather at her ass. Doesn't even have to hold her, the restraints locking her into the stirrups doing the majority of the work.

"Taking my cock so pretty, even fast asleep," he coos. "Should I fill you up nice and deep, little one? Give you what you need to make my baby?"

Wrapping his hands around her thighs for leverage, he pulls out and then slides back in with another groan. In, and out again, taking a slow pace as he watches her sleeping face. The only movement of her body is the slight shift of her hips every time he bottoms out.

Aleks works up his pace quickly, making short work of rutting into her until he erupts with a shouted, "Fuck, Alina!" and grits his teeth as his torso curls down towards her. His fingers clench into the top of her thighs as he digs in and his hips finish jerking against her in his release.

Eases himself out of her and stows his still-firm cock back into his pants before surveying his handiwork. White spend pearls against her skin as it slowly oozes out of her. Wants to lift her hips to keep everything in her just a bit longer, but the restraining belt around them would stop him. Instead, he reaches down to gather some onto the pad of a finger and press it back into her.

He pulls David's rolling stool under him to take a seat between her legs just as the doctor had just a short time ago. Strokes her inner thigh with the back of a finger.

"So beautiful," he murmurs after a time with a gentle smile. Tucks his cum back in where it belongs for the fifth time.

“So beautiful when you’re doing as you’re told.”

She opens her eyes slowly, a curtain being pulled back. Alina feels groggy, and she can’t quite remember what had led to her being in this exact moment. She attempts to sit up and fails. Her ankles are in stirrups, her hips belted down to the exam table she realizes she lays on.

“What the fuck-” Alina whispers.

“Language, *solnishka* , language.”

Aleks comes into view, a hand held behind his back. His beard is freshly trimmed and his hair slicked out of his face, the ends curling against his neck. He appraises her quietly. Alina swallows.

“Aleks, what is this? What the fuck is *this* ?” She can’t keep the shrill note out of her voice. She is utterly trapped, at his mercy, at his disposal.

“I said I had goals and aspirations, Alina.” He leans down at this, his free arm bracing himself just above her shoulders. His head blocks out the overhead light, a twisted halo.

She feels dread swell within her.

“What the fuck does that mean, Aleks? What are you doing?” He ignores her cursing; decides to humor her.

“You’d mentioned something very interesting several days ago, sweetheart.” Her breaths pick up in pace, a sweat breaks out along her brow.

The meltdown is imminent.

The arm Aleks had kept behind his back is brought in front of him, his hand above Alina’s gaze. The small T-shaped object is dangled from his fingers. Every thought and panic Alina had emptied out, her ears have a dull ringing. She feels her body go cold and her face heat. Her IUD is held aloft, the cruelest taunt Aleks has made thus far.

For the first time, Alina is silent not out of defiance, but out of true and utter fear.

“A simple fix, really.” Aleks’ eyes gleam at her look of horror.

“You...” Alina cannot get the words out. Her mouth is filled with cotton and her mind is taken out to sea.

“Yes, me.” He runs a finger up the backside of her thigh, Alina fully exposed and spread before him.

“Now I can put my baby in you, Alinochka. You’ll be so stunning with a swollen belly. I couldn’t possibly be happier.”

Alina’s mind snags across the praise, catches on his fantasies and his evident joy at the prospect of impregnating her. Her stomach twists. She might be sick. She might pass out. This could not possibly have happened to her, right? *Right ?*

Her remaining symbol of autonomy has been ripped from the very depths of her, cast aside to the concrete with a flick of Aleks’ hand. No amount of praise can soothe the terror within her now.

She screams.

“Such lovely songs you sing, Alinochka.” Aleks sighs dreamily, hitching his wandering finger closer and closer to her cunt.

“Off! Get off of me! Get me *out-*”

“Shhh, my pet. Discourse is bad for conception.” He bops the tip of her nose with the wayward index finger of his, making a mockery of her collapsing psyche.

“Now be a good girl and *behave* .” His finger drags down over a nipple, peaked in the drafty room. He traces a line down the middle of her body, splitting her from herself, guiding her soul into ruination. The feather light touch ends at her core, now dampening for him.

The traitorous body of hers heats at his command.

“Oh, my sweet, sweet *solnishka* .” Aleks murmurs.

He takes stock of her body, notices how she subconsciously readies herself for him despite her distress. His heart swells alongside his cock at the endearment this represents. He unzips his trousers and Alina freezes.

She always fucking freezes.

Aleks slides into her body with a low groan, stretching her inner walls nearly to a point of pain.

“Temperance be damned, your cunt was made for me.”

Alina feels the tears slip from her eyes, silent and endless. Her breath hitches as Aleks finds that perfect space within her that will send her rocketing into fits of pleasure. She wishes she could find it within herself to lock down any sort of physical reaction to his touch on her body. The way he thoroughly works her over could be a cardinal sin if it wasn’t so close to a goddamn symphony. She is stuck in this purgatory between loathing and admiring.

He plays her body like a fiddle.

“Gonna fill you up so fucking full.” Aleks grunts.

Alarm shoots through Alina, sharper and clearer than before. “Wait, wait-”

Aleks increases the speed of his movements, the slapping of his body against her obscene. She tries to wiggle away from him, but her efforts are futile. She is strapped down and spread open like a broodmare.

“Wait, *please* -” Alina grows more frantic at the sounds Aleks makes, clearly approaching the finish. She yanks her legs towards her, or tries.

If he comes in her, the chances of her falling pregnant are-

“Sasha, please!” She’s shrieking, but it only seems to spur Aleksander on even more.

“Fuck, *milaya*, *fuck* !” He grinds out, his tempo losing its steady beat, growing erratic.

Oh, god, Alina thinks, *he’s about to-*

“Don’t you fucking DARE-” Her voice is low and guttural, alien. She’s so hysterical she can barely breathe around the panic overtaking her like a tidal wave.

“*Alina* .” Aleks calls out her name as he finishes, pulling out at the last possible moment and spilling himself all over her stomach. Alina shouts every curse under the sun at the man above her, hardly registering the fact he didn’t come within her.

He’s panting, sweat gleaming over his forehead, his head tilted down as he gazes at the mess over her skin.

Her tears continue to fall. Beyond belief, salvation, even reason. Her mind is out to pasture. Aleksander runs his eyes over Alina’s face. He tuts quietly and cups her cheek.

“Oh, darling, why are you crying?”

She gives him no response. Doesn’t even think she’s capable of one.

“I wasn’t going to really come in you, sweetheart, come on now.” He’s lightly scolding her. She sniffles.

“We are just so on edge, aren’t we? Don’t you trust me, *milaya*? I’d never break that trust. I’d never have come in you like that. Chin up, now.” He knocks a knuckle under her chin, tilting her head and to meet him eye to eye.

“You’ll be begging me for my come before I fill you up, *milaya* . Downright *begging*. I look forward to that.” He slowly undoes the strap across her hips on the table, the cuffs at her thighs and calves. He gently brings her down from the stirrups.

“Let’s go and clean up, my dear.”

Alina remains silent.

She exists in a liminal space. There is a path her mind is on between the *before* and *wherever* she will be at the culmination of this captivity. She cannot seem to recognize who she is any longer.

She does not care how long she lays in bed. Does not care when Aleks comes and sits at the table to do work, or when he sits on the edge of her bed and strokes her hair. She does not care what will become of her.

It has been days, weeks, years. The actual time no longer meaning anything. She abandons making sense of it, much like trying to decipher a vision. It is pointless.

He'll decide what happens anyways.

She sinks deeper into the darkness.

Time is like a dream, Alina thinks. A hazy cloud of the extraordinary, a full sprint in molasses, a whisper to her inner self.

Aleks approaches the bed, a beacon in the hazy existence of hers.

“*Solnishka* , we need to talk.”

Alina turns her head to address him, but she cannot find it within her to speak.

“This behavior is not sustainable.”

If she cared, Alina would roll her eyes.

“Alina.”

She blinks. She swallows. He tracks both of these movements.

“Moping is unbecoming, sweetheart.”

Alina takes a measured breath, expanding her lungs to near-full capacity. She knows she must respond but cannot reason with her body enough to deign to answer him. She cannot see how anything she says or does or asks will ever matter anymore. He has ruined her – body and spirit.

“I don’t have anything to say.” Her voice is hollow.

Perhaps it matches the space within her where her heart once resided. Her lack of lust for life is apparent to Aleks.

“Then allow me to speak first.” Aleks says and he watches as Alina shifts her shoulders slightly, open to him talking.

“I realize I might have pushed you a little far...perhaps not have warmed you up enough before doing some of the things I did. But know that it was all with the best intentions.” Aleks strokes her cheek as he continues.

“Seeing you so despondent and quiet is eating me alive, *solnishka* .”

Alina blinks again.

“I never meant to break you so thoroughly, but imagine the life within you. Imagine the spark of *being* once our baby starts growing. You never had a permanent family. Let me give you the one you’ve always dreamed of.”

Alina raises her eyes to Aleksander’s. He withholds the urge to flinch at the lack of expression there.

“I saw you at a restaurant four months ago. You were with him. You were arguing and you looked more and more sad. You were the most beautiful thing I’d ever seen. Still are, until our baby arrives. There was a visceral anger I felt that scared me. I knew you deserved better. I’ve kept tabs on you, knowing that I could give you what you’re worthy of.”

Alina shifts, her left shoulder falling onto the bed, fully opening herself up to him. Aleks feels the first thread of hope, seeing a breakthrough in this shell of the woman he’s chosen.

“I know you’re alone. There is no one else. I know your parents are gone. I know your friends are inconsequential, they haven’t come for you. I am here. I am here for you and for our future children and I will *always* make that so. I am your family as much as you are now mine.”

Alina processes the words he speaks to her. She dissects them and thinks. If she could hold them and spread them out before her to get a better idea, she would. He knows her, he knows her wants. How he manages it she cannot fathom. How can he know what her darkest wishes are? How can he know the right words to say that will make her fold? Why put her through all the turmoil and hell to get to this point; when she could have been putty in his hands with these platitudes from the start?

Alina snakes her hand out from under the covers, grabbing hold of Aleks’ lapel and yanking him down. She has him nose to nose. She holds his gaze with a fiercely assessing look. She says nothing, just reads the expression in his eyes.

Because maybe she could learn to live with the pain he has caused, could learn to not let it swallow her whole. He offers more than Mal ever did. She just wants to *belong*, to have

something of her *own*, and here it is on a platter. She is overwhelmed with the idea of finally *giving in to him*.

Alina is tired. Her emotions have been so strung out for so long that the energy to keep fighting Aleks and his whims exhausts her beyond belief. She is so tired, and she wants nothing more than to please the man beside her, if only to make everything easier. She wants that—easy.

She knows suddenly, to her very core, that surrendering to him would open the door to a life she could live with.

“Do you swear it?”

“On my very life.” He pledges.

Alina’s face crumples.

“Oh, milaya, my dear, it’s okay.” Aleks wraps his arms around her, pulling her up, soothing her.

She cries in a way that finally feels like she’s releasing something. The floodgates have burst. For the first time in so long she feels seen, feels like someone has finally understood her most basic need. She recognizes now how Mal hasn’t met that need, how he might never have.

Yes, Alina thinks, yes, this is what I want.

“Shhh, my love, I’m here.” Aleks whispers into her ear.

She manages a garbled ‘*Sasha*’, but is content with being in his arms as she surrenders to the inner turmoil within her, and lets his promise of being made whole again begin to knit the jagged pieces of her back together.

She pulls back, her hands resting near Aleksander’s collarbones. Tears glitter on her lashes. Aleksander darts his gaze between her eyes, trying to gauge her emotions.

“Alina?”

She moves smoothly, changing her position from sitting off to Aleks’ side to straddling him, throwing a leg over his lap. Alina slides her hands up Aleksander’s neck, cradling his face.

She leans in and kisses him. Soft, tender, with incredible care. Aleks hums his approval at her initiation. It spurs her on.

It’s an unhurried menagerie of tossed clothes and hands sliding across skin, down backs. Little sighs and soft giggles. Alina positions Aleks’ cock between her folds, straddling him still.

“Go on, Alinochka. Take what you need,” Aleks goads her, his eyes never leaving her face.

Alina takes a quick breath before lowering herself down onto him. She lets out a low moan as her body adjusts to the sizable intrusion.

“Oh, Sasha,” she manages.

Alina loses herself to the feeling of *wholeness* and being filled. She feels complete. She feels the most human she has in weeks. Damn the consequences. Damn the history that's short and murky between her and Aleks. Damn everything that could take away this feeling of want and desire and unity within her.

Fully seated inside her, Aleks marvels at the woman above him. Alina begins a slow rocking of her hips, slowly lifting up and lowering herself back down in tandem with the movement. Aleks grabs the ends of her hair down her back and pulls, exposing her neck to his onslaught of open mouthed kisses, his beard scratching against her soft skin.

Alina glows under his attention.

This moment is different from the others. It is leisurely, relaxed. Alina sets the pace and Aleksander is simply along for the ride, content in watching her take her pleasure from him.

“You beautiful little thing,” Aleks murmurs against her pulse.

“Feels so good, Sasha.”

“Yeah?”

“Yeah.”

“Yeah, what, Alina?” He gives her hair an extra tug, “I let you ride me and all your manners go out the window?” He nips her skin, teasing.

Alina huffs a soft laugh.

“Yes, *Daddy*. ”

“ *Make* me a daddy, Alina,” Aleks says as he slides his hands down her sides, coming to rest at her hips.

He begins guiding her movements, speeding up her pace. She mewls.

“ *Oh—* ”

“That’s it, *milaya* . You ride so pretty for Daddy.”

Alina digs her nails into Aleks’ shoulders, her head tossing back on its own accord. A sheen of sweat covers her body and all but has her sparkling.

Aleksander is enraptured at the sight before him.

He groans as Alina tilts her hips back, taking him deeper within her. She grips him like a vice and he can tell her pleasure rackets higher, spinning closer and closer to release, her cunt tightening around him.

“Sasha, *fuck*—”

Alina grows flushed, her cheeks heating and her pulse quickening. Aleks feeds her wanton hunger with equal determination. Her breaths become ragged, a desperate panting that ends each exhale with a strangled moan. Her body sings.

“Sasha, please!”

“What do you need, sweetheart?” He’s right there with her, his own pleasure threatening to crest as her cunt elicits another moan out of him.

He holds out for her, knows that they’re on the cusp of something great.

“Please, Sasha, please...I—I need you.”

“You have me, *milaya* . You have me.”

“I need you to come in me. Please, I need it.” She barely manages the words past her lips, so intently focused on the pleasure he gives her.

Aleks’ heart jumps in his throat.

“Yeah? You want this come? You want it deep inside you?” His voice is hardly more than a growl.

Alina’s shrill moan is all the confirmation Aleksander needs. His hands change their grip on Alina’s hips, and in one smooth motion he flips them, Alina on her back on the narrow bed beneath them. He grabs her knees, pulling her legs up before sliding his hands to her ankles, tossing her shaking legs over his shoulders, pushing more of his weight onto her body.

He begins a punishing pace. Alina cries out, her voice watery as she continues babbling through her ecstasy.

“Sasha—Oh, *god*, Sasha—fuck, you feel—you feel so—”

“I know.” He’s barely holding back his own orgasm, refusing to finish before her.

“I’m gonna—”

“Do it. Come for me, Alina, come for me.”

At the sound of her name on his lips, Alina shatters. Aleks hurtles into euphoria right with her. Their moans make an emotional duet in the silence around them. As they both come down from their highs, Aleks slides Alina’s legs down on either side of him before leaning forward and catching the last of her moans between his lips.

“Incredible,” he whispers.

“Holy *hell*,” Alina says in disbelief.

She’s filled to the brim, she can feel it. Aleks had not held back in filling her with his spend. He withdraws from her, the mixture of the both of them flowing out at his cock’s absence. She sighs, a content sound.

Aleks stands, quickly dressing. Alina tries to keep the confused and hurt look off her face at his haste to leave, but knows she fails miserably. Aleks turns to hear before scooping her up in his arms, a sheet around her.

“Aleks?” Alina questions.

He walks them to the door of this cursed room, walks out, heads the opposite direction of the small bathroom. He begins making his way up a flight of stairs before responding to her.

“Relax, *milaya*. No mother of my children is staying in the fucking basement. We’re going to my room.”

“Oh?”

“We’ll need to repeat what we just did, just to make sure I’ve really knocked you up, hm?”

“Is...is that...” Alina holds in a laugh.

This acceptance of her fate, this ease into what Aleks has offered her, fills her with a certain soft light. She’s baptized in this warmth, this reassurance.

Family. It feels like I have family.

“I wasn’t kidding about giving you a family of your own, *solnishka*. Of *our* own. Let me keep my promise to you.”

End Notes

follow on [borb app](#) for more mal slander and #GaslightGatekeepGrisha

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!