

## Chapter 1: Where are we going, where have you been?

Jack sighed as he looked at his phone. Ever since he'd started this rideshare job, he had felt a little out of it, but waiting outside of some fancy store for ten minutes with people driving around him had to be the worst yet. How come someone who shopped at a high end place like this didn't have their own car or didn't have a ride arranged? His car wasn't old, just a decade or so out of date, but everyone here was driving luxury cars that probably cost more than Jack had made in his entire life.

Not that he'd been working that long...

The little knock on his passenger window pulled him out of his thoughts. He snapped his head up to see the smirking face of a woman. He froze for a moment, unsure what she wanted -- she was way too well put together to be some panhandler, and--"Mind unlocking the door, Jack?" she asked.

Oh. Right. Yeah. He clicked the little electric lock and looked over, a bit embarrassed as she started climbing in the passenger seat. "Uh, you're sitting in the--"

"You don't mind, do you?" she asked. She cast a quick look around the car and smiled. "Oh! So clean! Ever thought of being a maid?" She didn't have a purse on her or any shopping bags. Her outfit was a bit... *much*. An almost business-like top if it didn't hang completely off her shoulders and bare her cleavage. Or if it didn't end mid-thigh to reveal some tights straining around thick thighs. It was hard to tell if the maid comment was a joke or not.

"...No," Jack said before he turned to face forward and mind his own business. He was a little worried that she might be judging him. Crap. Was she looking at him? He started driving and tried his best to keep his eyes on the road, but he could swear she was staring right at him out of his periphery.

He should say something smart. Ask a question. Get her talking. This was awkward. He opened his mouth to speak, but she beat him to it, "Get up to anything fun today?" she asked.

"...No," he murmured.

She laughed. "Ah! The quiet type, then! Not so big on someone in your personal space?"

Though she was sitting still in her seat, he could *feel* her practically hovering inches away. Maybe he should've encouraged her to get in the back.

He was being paranoid. Why would he think this lady meant him any harm? She was gorgeous and friendly. “Yeah. Just. Never really got used to it. People usually sit in the back. I don’t mind, though. It’s fine.”

The scent of her perfume itched his nose. It didn’t have the chemical bite of someone trying to attract attention. At least, he didn’t think so. It was subtle. Something that lingered. Something he couldn’t quite place.

“Good! We’ve got a bit of a drive ahead of us. You don’t mind, right? I like to think I’m a generous tipper, but I know going across town can be pretty annoying for some of you Mover drivers, but really, you’re lifesavers. Hailing a taxi in that part of town is the worst. And I don’t think the bus route even comes around there.”

“Yeah. This is the ritzy part of town,” Jack mumbled. He was paying attention, but he was just more and more confused. She had business? He hadn’t even seen her phone yet. She didn’t have a purse on her. No briefcase. Nothing. What business could she have?

As they came to a red light, Jack looked distinctly away from the woman and out the window. This drive couldn’t be over quick enough.

“I have to admit, you’re one of the first people I’ve seen today that’s tried so hard *not* to stare,” she laughed.

“Huh?” Jack looked back over to her. The light turned green, he started going. “Oh. I don’t--I mean. Sorry? Just--”

“--Not used to it. No, I get it,” the woman laughed. “My name is Dama. And don’t worry! It isn’t every day you meet some beauty like me, right?”

Jack laughed. The first bit of humanity he’d been able to show since she hopped in his car.

“Look out!” the woman suddenly yelled. Jack turned his eyes away from Dama. He distinctly remembered seeing a tree in the middle of the highway and hearing the sickening crunch of metal before everything went black.

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“Are you okay?” Jack shook his head. Shit. He crashed his car, didn’t he? Fuck. That was pretty much his livelihood, he was fucked. This was--He finally opened his eyes to see the sky. Something was terribly off about the sky. Was it green? Why did it look green? “Mm. Nothing too bad. No concussion at least. I do need to fix these cuts, though. Some of the glass got you.”

Some of the glass? What? He lifted his hand and tried to sit up, but the woman gently pushed him back down. "Whoa, hold on. Take it slow. I can fix it, but if you move around, it might dig a little deeper. So stay still for me, okay?" She teased her hands across Jack's face, fingers leaving trails of warmth.

The ground was unusually soft. Where was the pavement? Jack turned his head slightly and looked at a nearby tree.

What was a tree doing in the city...? Where were the buildings?

Pain shot through Jack's body. He remembered crashing into the tree at almost full speed. He remember the sound, the pain, the airbag, the feeling of the seatbelt against his neck. Fuck, he ached everywhere. Wait. She wasn't wearing her seatbelt. How was she--"All done," she cooed.

"Done? What--Oh. Oh shit. I'm so sorry. You weren't wearing your seat belt. Are you alright? I can't believe I--" Jack hurriedly stood up to look over his passenger and assess how hurt she was. Where were the paramedics? Where were the onlookers?

It took one look around for him to understand.

Where was the road. Or the city. Or... anything he remembered? All around him were trees. Not the little things he was used to seeing in the city, but huge trees that looked like they came right out of some fantasy movie! Vines full of flowers and wrapped around their trunks, and the floral smell in the air smelled like walking into a flower store. Jack finally managed to look up and was completely stunned.

"Where... are we?" he asked. An aurora of blues and greens danced across the sky. Stars gleamed like brilliant jewels, but as far as he could tell, there was no star to give light, yet it was still as bright as day wherever he looked! A planet hung in the sky, clouds of purple and pink circling around it endlessly.

Dama stood right up. She wasn't bruised a bit. Her hair wasn't even out of place. She joined him in looking up at the sky before gently bumping her shoulder against his. "For the first time in a very, very long time, I have no idea! Isn't that fantastic?"

"...What?" Jack stared at the woman. It was like he was finally recognizing her as a person. The yellow eyes, the dark skin, the red hair. She stood at about his height, though, the heels she wore might explain that. "But what are we doing in a forest?" he blurted out. He turned to look to his car. The vehicle was absolutely totaled. The front end was crushed, and it looked like even the engine block didn't survive. The windshield might as well have been gone. "Ah... my car!" he shouted. "How am I supposed to make a living without my car!?"

He rushed over to see what could be salvaged. He looked around for his cellphone before spotting it smashed against the dashboard. "My phone! My music! How are we going to call for help!?"

"I don't think you'd get signal here!" she laughed. "But this isn't my first rodeo. If you stick by me, I can promise I'll keep you nice and safe."

Jack looked himself over. Why wasn't he hurt anymore? Where did all his aches go? What...? "Safe, seriously? How? You're just--I mean, no offense, but you're not even carrying anything on you!"

"Okay now, let's take a deep breath," Dama said, looking right at him. "I know, I know. You're human, lots of weird things are racing through your head, you're probably going to start freaking out once you recognize you're not on Earth anymore--"

"...you're talking as if--"

"Right! Well, kind of. I'm not really an alien either. Listen, just don't think about it."

Jack stared. What else could he do? His passenger was some sort of alien. He was in a fairytale forest with flowers everywhere. His car was totaled -- he couldn't even figure out what the fuck was going on.

"Oh. This way, I can hear someone." Dama grabbed Jack's hand and started leading him into the forest. "I think there's a road over here. Or at least a path. Sounds like maybe a wolf. A big one."

"We're walking toward a wolf?" Jack found himself almost mesmerized as Dama led him around like he was a puppet. His sense of self preservation was drastically trying to engage, but he hadn't managed to get his bearings, and this woman just kept pulling the legs out from under him.

She suddenly froze. "Lay down on your back with your arms against your sides."

"...What?" Another curve ball left Jack completely confused.

"No time, forgive me later. Just be good and stay quiet," Dama slipped a leg behind his and pushed him, sending him right onto his back. As soon as he hit the ground, she was practically on top of him, her thighs right against either side of his face. A dress billowed from nowhere around her waist, covering most of him under it, leaving him with little light and soft, warm thigh-flesh squishing his face to focus on.

Jack wasn't a *sexual* man. For whatever reason, he was just never comfortable with it. And now, pressed with his face practically against this woman's pussy with only the fabric of her panties between his nose and her, he felt a sudden strangeness he'd never expected.

Yeah. Looking at porn with his dick in his hand was one thing, even if he didn't like the activity much, but under her dress, in such an intimate spot, so suddenly, unable to move--his heart was racing. He could feel his pants getting tighter. Fuck. What was going on? Why was she doing this?

"Hail!" the muffled voice of a woman called out from... somewhere. Jack really couldn't tell. He was just trying to ignore the scent this woman had. He didn't know what he expected a woman to smell like, but there was something primal and enticing that flooded his mind. Is this how men felt when they were being driven wild? Then why was it when he tried to move, he just felt weak.

"Oh, hello!" Dama called back. "Awwh, your riding wolf has such a wonderful coat! Must really be happy the winter is over, huh?"

"You know your wolves, eh? Good to have a woman of culture around!"

Jack could just barely hear heavy footfalls and the jingle of metal. Whoever they were, they were getting closer. And he was... Fuck. His face was burning up. He wasn't sure if he was embarrassed, or maybe it was because he couldn't smell anything but this woman and it was making it hard to think straight.

"Oh. I travel quite a bit. Find myself in all sorts of strange places. Never been here before. May I ask where I am? Kind of popped in, not really sure how!"

How did she sound so perky about that!? Jack tried to squirm, but the thighs compressing tighter around his head gave him the crystal clear message that wasn't allowed right now.

"You're in Quelcana, but I suspect that doesn't mean a thing to you if you don't recognize it," the other woman said. She sounded proud, though kind. "Hate to say that if you've found yourself here, it's unlikely you'll be leaving."

"Oh?"

"Aye, sorry to say, miss--"

"Dama, and you?"

"Ah. I forgot myself. You have one of those faces. So beautiful, I'd like to think I already know you."

“Oh. A charmer,” Dama teased.

Wait, was she flirting with some woman while sitting on his face!?

“Yeah. Yeah.” She sounded way too proud about this. Dammit. Why wouldn’t Dama just let him up? Why was he even stuck down here? Was this some twisted kink of hers? “I like to think so. I’m Gatekeeper. Just Gatekeeper. It’s my name and occupation.”

“Mm... a gatekeeper,” Dama mused. “And yet, you didn’t open the gate?”

“No miss--”

“Dama. Just Dama, please!”

“No. Dama. I didn’t. I only open the gate every once in a while, and only for a select few who have business elsewhere. The realms are too dangerous to let anyone -- especially as pretty as you -- out of my sight.”

Jack could barely breathe. Every breath just felt like he was huffing more and more of Dama’s scent, and it was slowly pushing everything else out of his mind. Or maybe it was just CO2 poisoning.

“Oh, such a sweetie! But I have to say, since I stepped in here, I’ve noticed something quite strange!”

“What’s that?”

Dama tightened her thighs around Jack and relaxed them for just a moment to get his attention. “I haven’t smelled a single man since I’ve gotten here.”

“...Smelled?” the woman laughed. “You’re an odd one, must have a nose sharper than Fera here!”

More heavy footsteps. The sound of sniffing. Wait. No men? What did that mean? Were they forbidden or--oh. That wolf was getting closer. Shit. This was bad. He wasn’t sure what was going to happen, but with how serious Gatekeeper sounded, this wasn’t going to end well.

The sound of sniffing grew closer and closer, soon right overhead.

“I have some tricks,” Dama laughed. The sniffing abruptly stopped. “Have to make sure I can talk to such beautiful, precious cuties as this good girl! Awwh, such a good girl! Aren’t you just so lovable and sweet! So cute! I want to cover you in kisses, yes I do~”

While Dama played with what Jack could only assume was a giant wolf, Jack was frozen in fear. He was about to be discovered and then... what?

"Aye. No men allowed. None. Zero. If I see a man, well..." Something heavy thudded against the ground. "They'll be dealt with."

"Oh. I see. A turf," Dama muttered.

"A what?" Gatekeeper asked.

"I mean, oh, this is your turf, I understand! Must be easy to tell if someone new pops up." Dama laughed. "Well. If you don't mind pointing me to the nearest--"

"Dollihome is just up the path. I'd take you there myself, but Fera here caught the scent of a male, and I'm not failing in my duty. Come along, Fera. You can play with the nice lady later, we gotta get back to work. But you should be careful. There's monsters about, and they'd be more than happy to get their hands on you."

Jack was frozen stiff. He didn't move a muscle.

"Oh my. Monsters? What sort?" Dama tightened her thighs around Jack's head. The soft, warm squishing flesh was pure torture. Jack felt like he was going to blow any moment just from the intoxicating scent and the bizarre situation. Even if he was scared for his life.

"A plague. They devour men and multiply, but they have a fondness for draining the magic out of women. Their actions are..." Gatekeeper paused as she let it sink in. "Hrm. Shameful, is the best way I can put it. There's a group of women at Dollihome who do their best to keep the realm stable. You'll be safe with them."

"Oh. Well then. Thank you! I'll make my way there as quickly as I can!"

"Aye." The heavy footfalls slowly grew more and more distant. Finally, Gatekeeper called out once more, "It was a pleasure meeting you, Dama."

"Yes! You too! A real pleasure! Hope we talk again soon!"

Dama didn't move for at least a minute. Or make a sound.

"You doing okay down there, Jack?"

Jack finally remembered to breath again and started squirming.

“Oh, come on! It’s not that bad, is it?” Dama laughed before she rolled off him and helped him up. She even leaned in to sniff. “Hm.”

“What? What hm!?” Jack couldn’t help his freak out. His face turned red. He felt like he had just escaped by the skin of his teeth. “When that lady finds me, she’s going to pound that heavy thing against my face! What was it anyways!? What was she!? Who are you!? Where are we!? Are there really monsters!?”

“We’re in the realm of Quelcana, where no men are allowed. I’m Dama. She was a tall, strong woman who could crush you with one hand, and we are, as far as I can tell, stuck here.”

Jack felt like crying.

“Oh! Don’t worry. I won’t let anything bad happen to you! We’ll just have to disguise you!”

“Disguise me? Disguise me as what!?”

“A girl, duh!” Dama laughed.

Jack’s heart pounded. “W-what?”