Mama Lycaon

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Mama Lycaon

by pixelzpup

Summary

Lycaon's fur bristled. He glanced down at Esme, who, as he suspected, was staring at him with those bright blue eyes. His eye twitched, knowing what the little was going to say before he had even opened his mouth—

"Are you Mama?"

Lycaon's lips pursed. He shifted, looking away from Esme.

"Let's stop talking for a while."

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am i the first person to post actual age regression here

anyway ao3 down and i hated their monopoly on fanfic anyway so im bringing one of my old fics here to get a feel for things. i like the look of it so far :]

this is NOT AGE PLAY do NOT piss me off. age regression is a coping mechanism in which someone actually reverts back to the mental state of a child. it's NOT sexual, and please do not sexualize this work. ty

Lycaon would not describe himself as a caretaker.

Yet, that was exactly the role he had taken on. Esme laid curled up against his chest, small hands clutching onto the fabric of his dress shirt, one hand balled into a tight fist around his pocket watch. The smaller boy's chest rose and fell in short, shaky breaths, almost perfectly synced with the soft video game soundtrack playing from his laptop not far away.

Lycaon pressed his lips together tightly. The best course of action would be to quietly detach himself from the clutches of the little in his lap, to attend to his other duties around Esme's mother's estate. Though one of his formal duties had been to check in on the boy every once in a while, to make sure he was functioning properly, it was far from his only responsibility. Esme's room needed cleaning. The paintings in the main hall needed dusting. There were streaks of pale white saliva on the windows closest to where the boy's dogs spent most of their time. However…

His hand faltered where it had been stroking Esme's hair. Esme glanced up at him, his bleary eyes teary from sneezing and coughing. His cheeks were red and flushed with fever, his throat slightly swollen where Lycaon assumed his lymph nodes must be. Human bodies were so fragile, he thought, but Esme's especially so; he'd only left the estate once this week, and he'd already caught something. The young master really should wear a mask when he left the house, and he'd told them to, but Esme had been "too embarassed". "Embarassment is not a reason to risk your health", Lycaon had chastised, but Esme had dismissed his concern with a wave of his hand.

"You gonna leave?"

Esme sounded exhausted, yet resigned to the fate of being left alone in his misery. His voice was small, more nasal than usual, which Lycaon assumed must be the effects of the sickness. The troublesome little thing didn't make any move to make the departure easier for him, but the despair in which he said the words made it seem like Lycaon would be going away on a long voyage.

Lycaon forced his jaw to unclench. It would be untoward to let the young master worry. He shifted slightly, resuming his gentle stroking of Esme's hair.

"No," he murmured, gentling his voice to a soft whisper. "I'm not going to leave."

He didn't scold the little for the improper grammar. If the boy were not in such a small state of mind, he might have considered it improper, had him repeat the phrase until he didn't stumble over his words like he would with Corin. But Esme was just as fragile emotionally as he was physically, and it would be more improper of him to enforce etiquette with a child than it would be to simply let it be.

Esme shifted, his hands twitching as if he knew he should let Lycaon go but couldn't bring himself to do it. "But you're busy," he mumbled. "I'm not important… m'just…"

Lycaon tutted, a sound he didn't make often. His hand moved to the back of Esme's head, gently pressing it into his chest.

"Young Master, I prioritize efficiency and value in all I do. I do not spend my time on unimportant things. The mere fact I am willing to spend my time making sure you are cared for is a testament to your importance. Do you understand me?"

Esme sniffled against Lycaon's chest, shaking his head. "No… I don't understand. I know you're important, I know you have work to do, but I don't understand why you would… unless I'm…"

Lycaon's eye twitched. Esme was perceptive, almost to a fault. He must have caught on to Lycaon's interest in his abilities— but this was far from the time for that.

"Esme." Lycaon's voice shifted to a warning tone. "Do not make any hasty assumptions."

"But you *care*." Esme shifted, wriggling away from Lycaon's hand against the back of his head in order to look up at him with those big, icy blue eyes. "Nobody does that unless they have something they want. I'm not interesting or brave or special or… I can't even manage myself. I can't even keep up with chores, or… You must hate how 'disorderly' I am."

Lycaon huffed, averting his gaze. He glanced around Esme's room. It was true, in part. Empty drink cans were stacked upon every surface. Every figure the boy had bought was placed in seemingly random locations, without any rhyme or reason. Stuffed animals, Esme's guilty pleasure, were strewn across his bed and any other available surface, and a thick layer of dust seemed to permeate every surface besides the desk the boy spent most of his time at.

And yet, Esme *was* special. Not just in the way that every person, human or Thiren, was unique from each other, but in a way that had Lycaon and Rina often whispering to each other in hushed voices when they discussed strategy. Esme's Ether resistance was *strong*. He'd gotten lost in a Hollow with nothing but one of his crutches and somehow managed to take out multiple Ethereals and last until Master Proxy found him hours later.

But that wasn't important right now. Esme was a little above all else right now, and he was running a high fever. He had to somehow abate Esme's self-conscious concern about Lycaon's priorities while also not denying his interest in the boy's ability.

Lycaon's eyes returned to Esme's, a hand reaching up to cup his cheek. "You are not unimportant, Esme," he muttered, his eyes searching the smaller boy's for the right thing to say. "Have that be noted above all else. No living being is unimportant. They all have value, and we can learn from all of them. I have learned a great deal from you."

Esme sniffled, wiping his nose with the sleeve of his hoodie. "Really?"

Lycaon snatched Esme's hand on instinct as snot smeared along the hoodie sleeve. "Don't do that," he scolded, before huffing out a measured exhale. "And, yes. Really."

Esme's bottom lip stuck out, the clarity beginning to return to his eyes as he opened his mouth to protest. Lycaon's own eyes narrowed in focus as he detected the regression

receding. He needed to keep the little small in order to ensure his comfort in his sickness.

Lycaon's hand moved to the back of Esme's head again, gently patting it and moving it towards his chest. "You are more special than you know," he murmured. "You do not need to worry about why right now. You just need to focus on your health, which is a mission we shall undertake together."

Esme blinked, before nuzzling his cheek into Lycaon's chest. "Like secret agents."

Lycaon let out a huff at that, not quite a laugh, but a sound of amusement at the irony. "Yes. Exactly like secret agents. We shall tackle this sickness with the weapons of rest and medication."

Esme's eyelids drooped open, his gaze trailing up to Lycaon's. Lycaon's jaw set, quietly admonishing himself for how soft his expression had become.

"I still don't understand why you care," Esme mumbled, his words slurring together slightly as the regression began to creep back. "Mama is the only one who cared like this… and I'm too old for her to care anymore."

Lycaon allowed himself a small, victorious smile as he ran his hand through Esme's hair. "Mama, hm?" His mind ran through a list of possible responses. It wouldn't be prudent to assign himself the role of Esme's caretaker, lest they imprint on him too heavily. "How did you know Mama cared?"

"She held me like this." Esme clumsily let go of Lycaon's shirt to point at his position in the wolf Thiren's lap. "An' said stuff about how I was special, and good, and…"

Lycaon nodded thoughtfully as Esme trailed off. His eyes narrowed as he mulled over this information. Every member of Victoria Housekeeping had their own idea of affection. Ellen, of course, was partial to gifts of candy and sweets. Corin, similarly to Esme, liked to be praised for a job well done, even if she didn't seem to handle it well. And Rina… well, it didn't matter much what Rina's idea of affection was. She always preferred to give rather than recieve.

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"Let's stop talking for a while."

"No, you're—! You totally are!" Esme wriggled up towards Lycaon's face, trying desperately to meet the much larger man's gaze. "You take care of Miss Ellen and Miss Corin and Miss Rina and even me! You gotta be—"

Lycaon's large palm pressed against Esme's forehead, preventing him from getting any closer. "I do *not* 'take care' of Miss Rina, and Ellen and Corin are perfectly capable of holding their own."

"But what about me?" Esme tugged on Lycaon's sleeve. "I don't do anything for you, n' you take care of me! Are you my Mama? Do you like taking care of me? Am I too much? Should I—"

"You are getting entirely too wound up." Lycaon removed Esme's hand from his sleeve and smoothed down the wrinkled fabric. "You are sick. Rest."

"You're avoiding the questions!" Esme's voice climbed to a whine as Lycaon pulled a blanket over his shoulders.

"I am avoiding the questions because they are too stupid to be dignified with an answer," Lycaon muttered as he swaddled the fluffy fabric around Esme's arms. "You are more intelligent than that, young master."

"It wouldn't be so bad, you know." Esme pouted. "If you do like it. If I'm not too much, which I probably am. I'd like it if you were my Mama."

Lycaon stilled, his hand faltering where it had tucked the edges of the blanket around Esme's collarbone. Esme suddenly looked too thin, too fragile, as if a small breeze would knock him over— and it might, if Esme ever went outside enough to know. His hand traveled up to the little's fever-flushed cheeks, brushing a stray lock of long night-black hair behind his ear.

Lycaon leaned closer to the little, pressing the tip of his nose to Esme's forehead. "Go to sleep, Esme," he murmured. "Just go to sleep."

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