Living Chambers

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Summary

Shivering waifs blown in from the storm with conspicuously see-through tops keep showing up at Mina’s castle while she’s trying to enjoy her melancholic solitude! Can’t these stupid sluts leave her in peace?!

It’s the third knock of the castle’s massive, cast-iron door knocker that finally sets Mina screaming off the walls.

The thing is at least as heavy as her, you’d think some stupid human would give up after the first two bellowing, *inexcusable* crashes rang through the ancient walls and got no response. Maybe the idiot outside can’t hear it over the storm, but inside it sounds like the world’s ending.

Her fury rushes down the stairs in a torrent of bats and smoke, extinguishing candles as she passes by, and heaving aside the great doors with a, “What the fuck is your damage!”

Unfortunately, she isn’t even allowed the catharsis of a good chewing-out since a timely clap of thunder drowns her out. All the human sees — and they are a human, no mistaking the thin, chattering form for anything *resilient* — is a woman framed by the castle’s maw and screeching like a banshee.

“I’m sorry, Viscountess,” they say, lowering their eyes to skillfully avoid the **fuck off** aura Mina’s radiating, “Th-the storm’s too strong, and you’re the only shelter for miles.”

“What are you *doing* out here? Don’t you have a coat?”

They shiver. They wear nothing but a flimsy shift, soaked to the skin and clinging to it, just in case she didn’t get the memo. She flicks her eyes away from the pale, damp skin move underneath the fabric. The waif’s lips are blue-tinged, their arms wrapped tight around themself, doing a poor job to hide their modesty.

Everything about them screams they’d make a thin, watery meal.

“… I lost it,” they say.

Had it stolen more like. Probably accosted on the road, robbed of everything they were worth, and left to freeze in the storm. Will, if she doesn’t let them in. The longer she looks the more she’s sure of it.

“Please Viscountess,” they say again. “If I could come in. Just for one night.”

Control. She needs *control*, not the wild anger that had her blundering down the stairs and shouting at a vassal of the Viscountess with no heed for decorum or language. She cannot do what Mina Ha wants to do, cannot act on every childish whim that comes to her mind any longer. The Viscountess has certain expectations upon her, and until she is settled, Mina cannot afford to come off as anything less than regal.

For she ate the Viscountess two weeks ago.

“Yes, of course,” she says, adopting what she hopes is reserved, respectable aloofness, “please. Come in. My home is yours.”

The relief almost brings color back to their pale, droplet-dappled skin. Well, color beside an encroaching hypothermia. They nod, bare feet leaving pristine prints on the flagstone for the hearthfire's reflection to twinkle off. She'll have to light more of those. Humans have so many more *needs*, no wonder they build such large buildings to try and accommodate them all. Already her guest has begun to shiver again as they ascend the many flights to the living chambers and the grand hall's warmth recedes. It was a mistake to let them walk in front of her, every twitch of their graceful, living body on full display — the shift barely goes down to cover the curve of their backside.

Saliva unwillingly pools around her fangs. She needs to control herself. She straightens her shoulders, and starts going off on the history of the castle, all of which is a rote resuscitation of the books she binged in a few days, helplessly poring over them like learning about who constructed what in which century would reveal to her how to run a viscounty. Or at the very least how to seamlessly depose the ruler of one.

"And enter not the west wing after sunrise," she finishes one of her history lessons sharply.

Not that she's sleeping in a coffin (any more) or anything. But it feels like she needs to inject a little authority back into her tirade. It's something a noble lady would do.

"Right…" the newcomer, Pocket, says. Like *she's* the crazy one!

The guest wing's rooms are all themed.

Easier to shout *butler! Take them to the Marigold room!* Mina guesses, but when she came to this place through an open window and a tear in the veil, she found no butlers to speak of. She can only guess why the Viscountess did the things she did, imagine what each of these spaces might have meant. She thinks of the room she assigns Pocket as the Sea Foam chambers.

It's been years since she's seen the sea. Mina and running water no longer mix.

"Could we light the fire?" they chatter while Mina's coming up with a few more castle rules.

She's going to snap that she's not a damn servant, when she catches herself. What would the Viscountess do? Would she not deign to serve her vassals either? Or do rules of propriety demand something like this from a host?

"Fine," she sniffs.

Standing in the middle of the room, dripping onto green carpet, they look like a drowned cat. They certainly stare at her like one as Mina makes herself useful. Their hair is black and voluminous, or at least would be if not plastered to their neck and cheeks, and their shift is doing them more harm than good. Her mind turns. She needs to do something about the clothing soon. A fire won't actually stop them freezing to death as long as they're wearing it, freshly dousing them in the storm's deadly chill, so she hauls a basin from behind the screen and sets about making a bath.

When Pocket's eyes widen, she realizes she hauled nearly seventy gallons of water onto the fire with inhuman ease. Oops. She really needs to be more careful.

Or she can not. Things are already coming apart rather quickly. The longer she stands in the room the harder she finds it to keep her eyes off them; up until tonight, the agony since her last meal almost seemed tolerable, a thing that could be borne indefinitely. Now, having something living, with blood moving just under the skin and a heartbeat she can hear drowning out the roar from outside, makes the *two weeks* since the Viscountess like sawdust coating her tongue.

She struts over to them and rips the shift over their head. They yelp.

"You need to get out of this," she says, holding the drenched top. "You're *literally* dying."

"But I-" They make an attempt to cover themself. It's ineffectual. But cute.

"They take anything else from you?" She knows she should ask it softer, with more empathy, but she can't manage it. The question itself will have to do.

"I wasn't robbed," they lie.

"Sure," she says.

She takes a slow walk around them, observing, noting despite their impressive height they can't stay un-slouched for more than a few seconds. As the weight of her gaze lands on them, they'll straighten out — but a few more steps of Mina's slippers against the flagstone and they retreat in again, coiled and protective. A brave face under the attention, but certainly not used to it. Trying to look dignified for their Ladyship, just as Mina is playing a part for them.

She finds no bruises. They seem unharmed, or at least not harmed recently — one of their arms is diseased and green, but from some sort of arcane decay rather than the aftermath of an attack. It has an eye scratched into it, a wound that won't heal, and its skin is even colder than the rest of their already dangerously-low external temperature.

"It's a birthmark," they say, stone-faced.

It should disgust her. Encourage her to keep her fangs as far away as possible from something bent on eroding magic. But it's not, which is even more concerning.

An idea takes hold of her, a habit much older than her vampirism which she gratefully indulges if only to keep her other urges down. From her over-robe she withdraws her measuring tape, noting their clavicle length, the distance from knee to hip. Clinging to something distracting enough that she will feel nothing for the flesh moving under her hands, the damp fuzz of body hair interspersed between beads of rainwater.

Pocket bears it until she begins the inseam measurement: palm to inner thigh, end of the tape slithering daringly close to their groin. The body under her hands stiffens, so she looks up, reigning in a glare for the interruption but rewarded by getting to watch the emotions play

across Pocket’s face in real time. It’s like their posture but more apparent: the active, conscious uncurling, the effort of *not* having a reaction to her nearness.

She snaps the tool away.

“Get in the bath,” she says, “I’ll be back in a bit,” and departs in a manner that is definitely not running away.

The room she’s foisted her mania upon is most certainly meant to be a servant's quarters. It has none of the amenities of the east wing, relying on the fire of the next room over, but it was chosen for its few disused boxes of thread and roughly chopped bolts — supplies as forgotten and slipshod as Mina’s own interests. It made a perfect coupling, and in the days when she’d first laid claim to the castle she’d hungered for a distraction from her precarious position. That had only lasted the weekend though, and since then she’d fully committed to her new, more self destructive hobby of wandering around and fretting.

Now she turns to the tailoring supplies all over again. The body upstairs is only remembered when imagining how the fabric will drape across it.

And this works. Mostly. Works right up until she’s panting victoriously, standing in the doorway of the Sea Foam chamber, so caught up in creating the mock-up that she’s forgotten why she fled in the first place.

The human is asleep, of course. Curled in the thick blankets on the bed, no longer shivering, under the illusion that they’re safe. Unaware of the figure watching the covers rise and fall, the matted muslin clutched in her fist as her throat constricts. She’s pathetic. It’s only been two weeks. The ancient vampires go *months* without feeding, yet a warm body a few feet from has her supporting herself on the molded contours of the doorframe and heaving in lungfuls her body doesn’t need.

A vampire is meant to be unaffected. A vampire only cares for its meal so long as it can get close. A vampire, most of all, is a silent predator, whose mere presence should not cause their prey to twitch awake in alarm.

“Hello?” Pocket calls to the room. They try to clutch the blankets around their naked form, but a corner still slips demurely from their shoulder, exposing it to the moonlight breezing through the curtains. The silver doesn’t reach Mina. “Viscountess?”

Praying it’s her. Hoping it is, fearing it isn’t, that something terrible is lurking just outside their circle of vision in this dreadful castle in the middle of nowhere. Wishing their hostess would whisk in to assure them, to save them the doubt. Not knowing that it’s neither the bandits nor the freezing storm that’s the most dangerous thing for miles.

“Mina?”

When she finally lurches forward, her gurgle of pain tears the peacefulness of the room in two. Pocket shrieks in alarm. It doesn’t help them, nor do their attempts to shove off the attacker who’s flown across the room with impossible speed, garment forgotten in a heap.

The first bite is so good she starts crying. Literally, humiliatingly crying it's so good. The knotted balls of hunger and desire unspool onto each other like they never have before, her body trying to get as close to Pocket as possible. The narrow gap between the blankets where they held it in place with one trembling hand is discovered and conquered in a moment, and she's flush against them, leveraging everything to suck against their neck.

"Mina??"

Terror weighs down their voice, but not their motions. They thrash, then stop, then start again, as though unsure if they're even *allowed* to fight against her. She's been the first to break the rules, but now they're left in the uncertainty of retaliation, the confusion of what she's even *doing*. They finally grab her shoulders and push back, and she allows the small amount of space. She likes looking down at them. Gravity grips her, propped up by Pocket's extended arms. When she tries to speak, a wet mouthful of blood lands on their chest with a *plap*, helping exactly neither of them. It'd be so easy have her way, so easy to kill someone who'd go entirely unmissed; no longer some crazed hunter who needs to seek out her next meal, but someone who's bought her own freedom by corralling others.

But she killed the Viscountess because the Viscountess needed to die. The feeding was a perk, not an end, and feeding doesn't have to be an end. She doesn't have to kill, doesn't have to go crazy and alone in her tower.

Again she tries to tell them to stop squirming so much, but, mortifyingly, she realizes she's crying too hard, snot and tears impeding all her orifices as relief overwhelms her. The blood settling in her stomach is so gratifying she might collapse.

Pocket freezes at her strangled cry. "Oh. Um." Then, they commit the worst act imaginable: they reach up and pat the back of her head. "There there?"

That blunts the edge of her frenzy. The danger isn't gone, only the first hurdle passed, but the red haze clears from her mind enough to function again. She feels there's platitudes one says to placate a thrall, a forgotten line in a script. She should assure, sooth. *Shush, shush, I'm not going to kill you.*

Instead she wheezes thickly, "Are you getting hard from this? Seriously?"

They squawk, shifting self-consciously. Which, of course, makes the boner pressed to her ass all the more pronounced.

"I- uh-"

As if they haven't been taunting her all night, showing up on her doorstep like they did. If she were a living woman she'd sure her *other* natural instincts would be firing every synapse, and it's only the strength of her vampiric hunger that's made it the star of the show. Still. Just because she's not alive doesn't mean she doesn't *have* natural instincts, and they all rush forward now, combining desire and hunger in a heady mix.

"Pocket," she murmurs, releasing her bite and nuzzling under their chin.

One hand, lost in the dark under the blankets until now, finds its way to her hip. It's the cursed one, still icy cold even compared to her own bloodless flesh, yet oddly tender. Thinking on its own. For the first time, neither are playing the part imposed on them, lady and vassal or what that demands.

For a moment, the hand is cautious and searching, before landing just above a heart that doesn't beat.

She pulls on the edges of herself — nightgown one way, underclothes another — until she can grind skin-to-skin as aggressively as when she started her meal. Pocket stiffens, gasping breathlessly as she humps them, whining a bit when she resumes widening the wound in their neck.

She wants all of them. Everything they can offer. Her cunt and mouth devour them simultaneously, instantly, gobbling up anything she can get her fangs into. The pace she sets is infeasible, and Pocket throws their head back whorishly, giving her all the better access to the two divots in their flesh.

Semen and blood. She sucks both up greedily, covetously, every fluid they possess she will possess in turn. Her orgasm clamps down on their cock, wringing it out, drawing their life inwards and becoming stronger for it.

The wound in their neck slows to a trickle — they lie meekly in the moonlit bed, completely spent. But hey. She didn't kill them. She considers that a victory for Mina Ha's Dubious Self-Control.

Invigorated and well fed, she is the first to recover, sitting up in bed and watching their chest rise and fall. Undaunted by rain, their hair has become wild and poofy, striking a pleasing silhouette. Watching them shouldn't be so endearing. Yet it is.

When their breathing turns even she says, "You'll stay with me."

She means it as a demand, a contract, still trying to shoulder the role of the unaffected Viscountess. But try as she might, the last syllable pops up, becoming a helpless question. Pocket's eyes find her hazily. They do not nod, or speak, or even seem to breathe. She worries very suddenly if she's fucked them so hard she's rendered them brain dead.

But they're merely studying her. It ends after a moment, when they reach up and press a thumb to her bottom lip, revealing the fangs that glint there. Then, finally, is the recognition she was searching for. They hum, closing their eyes, knowing what she is and still letting themself fall asleep before her while the rain slows to a patter.

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