'Cause you're my girl, and that's alright (If you sting me, I won't mind)

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by cremecheesebagel

Summary

Meredith becomes a vampire. Luckily for her, so is her boyfriend. Unluckily for her, so is his wife.

Chapter 1: There's no crowds in the street and no sun

Chapter Summary

> "For a vampire, the act of feeding becomes highly sensual, regardless of their gender or previous sexual orientation. This applies to the victim as well. It is an extremely intimate experience, perhaps the most intimate experience either participant will ever experience. For the victim, a vampire's bite brings exquisite bodily pleasure, comparable to or even greater than the height of sexual release."

"Something is wrong. Something is very, very wrong." Says the mantra repeating in Meredith's head; over and over, banging the interior of her skull like a hammer as she is filled with certain dread. She tries to shake the feeling, breathing in deeply as the elevator takes her down into the lobby. She exhales as the doors open, tightening her grip on her coat.
"It's nothing - you're fine. Everything is fine." She whispers in the attempt to silence the overbearing paranoia. All she needs to do is go find Derek and they can leave together - they'll have a nice night, Derek will refuse to stay over again out of some distorted sense of chivalry and Meredith will sleep soundly in her sheets. Tomorrow will be a new day - preferably, one where Meredith *doesn't* feel overwhelmed with the feeling she's going to die tonight.

She catches a glimpse of Derek on the other side of the lobby; he balances a laptop on his leg while looking at a paper folder in the opposing hand. She sighs, slowly walking over to greet him when she is stopped in her tracks.
"Excuse me! You wouldn't by chance know where the Urology wing is, would you?" Asks the man in front of her. Once again, Meredith can't help but feel uneasy; something about him is deeply unsettling. He wears a pristine, vintage suit, nimble-looking fingers fiddling with the buttons of the blazer; his smile looks practiced - almost painted on, mannerisms more akin to an imitation of a person rather than someone genuine.
Meredith swallows, "Oh, uh-" She stutters, looking behind herself only to turn her head back and make eye contact with the man, "-the Urology wing is-"
"*Follow me.*" The man says, an unmistakable predatory glint in his eye.
She feels like a prisoner in her own body - she wants to fight, to run, to yell obscenities - but instead she feels herself saying "Sure." before blacking out.

She comes to on cold floor, the night air hitting her lungs as a hard wall digs into her back. Meredith blinks frantically, looking up to see the man sitting on the ground opposite to her.
"And so, the childe awakens. But what's this? She's not alone! Will our courageous heroine escape death's clutches, or will she succumb to her fate? Tune in next week to find out!"
"What the fuck?" Meredith whispers, scrambling to her feet.
His smile falters, eyes widening mockingly. "This is the part where you *run*, little lamb - you'd be *crazy* not to."

He's right - she *should* run... So why can't she? Why are her legs stuck in place, knees shaking as her heart pounds in her ears? She tries to move - to run, to hide, to scream - but fear paralyses her completely.
He grins wolfishly, slowly rising to his feet; he gets close enough for her to see the long, sharp fangs in place of his canine teeth.
"Well, don't say I didn't warn you."
She can barely manage to whisper her next words. "What the-"
"Welcome to the family, little lamb."

He sinks his teeth into the side of her neck and Meredith is filled with pure bliss. She's being born, she's being made love to, she's being buried. Her eyes roll into the back of her head as pure, unadulterated ecstasy overtakes her and she lets out a shameful moan as he drains her dry. She doesn't notice the blood leaving her body until he stops, gently licking her neck to close the bite wounds before he takes a razor blade to slice his finger tip, hanging it above her lips.
"Drink." He says.
Her vision trembles as a drop falls onto her tongue: sharp, metallic and bitter-sweet. The aftertaste makes her scrunch her nose as she passes out.

Her body is on fire. Every inch of her skin burns and she wakes up feeling the life draining out of her; it's euphoric, in a way - the overwhelming feeling of complete stimulation unlike anything Meredith has ever experienced. Her skin scratches against the grass beneath her and she sits up in a panic, frantically scanning her surroundings. All around her stand tall, wide trees - moonlight hitting her through the branches.
"Pine trees?" Meredith whispers.
"Douglas Fir, actually." says a voice.
She startles, a small squeal escaping her mouth. "Who said that?!"
"Relax, little lamb. I'm not out *there*. I'm here with *you*. I'll *always* be with you."
"This isn't real. This *can't* be real. What the fuck?"
"Like I said, welcome to the family."
A wave of information fills her head all at once - a trailer to the west inhabited by a dog and an orchid mantis, barking and chirping at each other in fury, the river on the east flowing towards a lake, the smell of blood to the north, the-
"Blood?" Meredith whispers.

An overwhelming hunger grips her - a hunger so intense she feels like she's going to die if she forgoes it any longer. She can't think of anything else, it overtakes her mind completely as she stumbles forward. She hears it before she sees it: a pained cry - distinctly animal. The smell of blood fills her nostrils and under any other circumstances Meredith would panic at the fact that it is making her salivate gleefully; instead, all of her attention is on the cowering deer before her, leg stuck in a trap. She blinks, canine teeth extending and sharpening in her mouth as she lets out a quiet hiss. The deer stares at her, eyes wide and frozen in place. She pounces before she can think, biting into the deer's neck and beginning to drink. The deer relaxes, leaning into Meredith's touch as warm, foul-tasting blood fills her mouth. One part of her wants to retch, another part is filled with a pleasure more intense than she has ever known.

The deer grows cold in her arms, collapsing into her as reason returns and she realises what she's done. Meredith drops the carcass, blood dripping down her chin as tears prick in the corners of her eyes - her dead lungs spasm as she draws breath for the first time since waking up, hyperventilating as she wipes her eyes only to see blood.
"What the *fuck*?"
Rather than transparent, salty tears filming the back of her hands, the unmistakably bittersweet aroma of blood - much like the blood of the man in the pin-striped suit - fills her nostrils as a deep red covers her fingers; her vision swims with red as even more tears well up.
"Go west - find the feral and the aesthete." The voices whisper.
Meredith covers her ears. "Shut up! You're not real! It's just a dream! A really vivid, really terrifying dream!"
The voices laugh, "Then why can't you wake up?"
She groans, trailing onwards as the voices go silent once again.

The pain begins as a metal trailer comes into view - a burning sensation in her chest that rises up to her throat, nausea beginning to seep into her bones. An all too familiar white Land Rover is parked out front next to a bright red vintage Porsche. She walks over to the cars, moving to pass them before a sultry voice fills her ears.
"And just where do you think *you're* going?"
Meredith rolls her eyes. "What is it this time?" She grumbles, looking around in hopes of finding the source of the talking.
"Over here!" The Porsche calls.
Meredith blinks at the car - cherry red paint job glistening in the moonlight, top pinned down behind the seats. "*The car*? I'm talking to *a car*?"
"Maybe you are - or maybe it's just the easiest way for your brain to process all of... whatever it is that's happening to you."
"Do you *know* what's happening to me?"
The Porsche laughs, "Well of course I do, sweetie. But where's the fun in telling you?"
Meredith wipes her face and sighs. "Seriously? Seriously?"

"Hey, look - it's not all bad! There is plenty of enjoyment to be savoured from this new existence of yours!"
"Like what?"
"Well for one, you'll never be short of company."
Meredith huffs, crossing her arms defiantly. "What if I *want* to be alone?"
The Porsche sighs, "Oh, Meredith... You & I both know that alone is the last thing you ever want to be."
Shame floods her chest - she tries to argue. "That's bullshit."
"*Really*? Then what have you been doing for the last two months playing a sociosexual game of cat and mouse with your attending?"
Meredith opens her mouth to respond before quickly shutting it again.

The Land Rover snorts, "Damn, she's got you dead to rights."
"A second talking car? Are you fucking kidding me?" Meredith lashes.
"Woah, hey! Calm down, lady! Let's all just relax a little, alright? You wanna hear a joke?"
"Is it the one with the tuna again?" The Porsche asks.
"No, it's a different one." The Land Rover.

Meredith shrugs, "Sure, I guess. I would love my boyfriend's talking car to tell me a joke."
"Okay, so a bear is stuck in a trap, right? Can't get out at all. The more the bear tries to get out of the trap, the more it hurts itself. Then, a hunter comes across the bear. Now, the hunter, she sees the way the bear's growling and bearing its teeth and decides to sit next to the bear - just far away enough to not get hit by the bear and eventually, the bear finally gives up and lies down, defeated - only for the hunter to free it from the trap."
"...I don't get it."
The Land Rover groans, "Of course you don't. Serves me right for using my best material on crazy dead ladies."
"*What?*"
The Land Rover doesn't respond. Something tells her it never will again.

The nausea is beginning to distract her as she walks over to the trailer door - muffled voices bleeding through the walls as Meredith's stomach churns in a vice; the pain has become blinding. She frantically bangs on the door with a blood-covered palm and it opens moments later. Derek stands before her, eyes wide with shock.
"Meredith? What happened?"
"Oh God, Derek! I don't know what's going on!" Meredith sobs, clinging to him for dear life. "There was - there was this guy in the lobby and he made me - he made me follow him into an alley? I couldn't control *my own body* and he - he said something about lambs and he *bit me* and I woke up in the woods and everything hurts. I think I - I think I just killed a deer? I drank its blood, it was *awful* and then your car started talking to me and there's these-"

She looks up from his chest to face him only to see a flash of red in her peripheral. Turning her head, Meredith sees a woman she's never seen before, long red hair falling onto a sleek, black dress with a matching fur coat discarded on the bed. The woman stares at Meredith with sharp green eyes and she's unsure of whether to shrink under her scrutinising gaze or stare further into the abyss of the woman's pupils.

Derek prickles from underneath her touch, quickly to moving to stand between Meredith and the other woman. "Oh, wow - uh - I'm really sorry this is how you two meet, uh... Meredith, this is Addison. Addison... this is Meredith."
Addison clenches her jaw, eyes flicking down Meredith's (no doubt utterly disheveled) figure. "You must be the woman who's been screwing my husband." She greets, outstretching a hand as she gazes at Meredith condescendingly.
"He's married?" One voice cries.
"He left *her* for *you*? Talk about a downgrade." Another chides.
Humiliation. A total, complete and utter ego death. She should scream. Or cry. Or maybe just kill her. Pure, unbridled rage courses through Meredith's veins - she bares her teeth as fangs jut out once again and hisses, ready to pounce- only for a final wave of nausea to course through her instead.
"Oh, fuck." Meredith whispers, reaching a hand over her mouth and rushing to the trailer's cramped little bathroom.

Her throat burns in agony as she vomits into the toilet, blinking at the putrid, red abyss before her.
"Is that... *blood*?" Meredith coughs, only to quickly begin the process all over again.
Long, delicate fingers trail through her hair between retches, nails scratching her scalp as

Addison gently holds her hair in place.
"Careful, you're gonna get your hair in there." Addison mutters, using her free hand to rub Meredith's upper back reassuringly.
She hears shuffling from the other side of the trailer as Derek speaks. "Did you seriously have to provoke her into a frenzy?" He grumbles.
"I didn't think it was going to be *that* offensive to her!"
"*How*? Were you *that* wrapped up in your dramatic fantasy?"
"Is this seriously the time you want to have this conversation, Derek? While your fledgeling girlfriend is getting rid of her stomach lining?"
Meredith lifts her head from the bowl. "*What?*"
Addison grimaces, "Oh, you don't know... um - look, just try not to get your stomach acid all over my shoes, please. These are Louboutins."
Derek scoffs, "Your shoes! Of course you're only worried about your shoes right now - typical!"
"They were *six-hundred dollars*."
"Does that impress the other degenerates?"
"We can't all be flannel wearing, wood chopping *farmers*!"
"I'd rather be a picky eater than a *blood-sucking hooker*!"
Meredith coughs as she finally raises her head, gingerly wiping her mouth and turning to face the other two. "What the *fuck* are you talking about?"

Addison's eyes narrow as she tilts her head. "Oh, wow - you *really* don't know, do you?"
"Know what?"
Derek and Addison freeze, quickly looking to each other wide-eyed; she gesticulates, he shrugs.
Addison sighs, pinching the bridge of her nose. "There's no easy way to say this, but... you're a vampire."
"What?"
"You're a vampire. A blood-drinking creature of the night; and we should know because, well - *we're* vampires." Derek states.
Meredith's jaw drops. No, she thinks, he must be lying. This is a dream, or a joke, or some kind of elaborate, definitely illegal hidden camera show. She can't possibly be a *vampire*, right? She gulps, mind going into overdrive trying to put the pieces together: she was bitten, she drank blood, she hasn't been breathing this whole time and she's fairly certain if she checked her own pulse right now she wouldn't feel anything. Then, she finally processes it: *Derek* just called *himself* a vampire.

"You're - you're *a vampire*? This whole time?" Meredith croaks.
"Well, we call each other kindred but-"
Derek cuts Addison off. "Yeah. I am. I'm a vampire."
The confession hits her like a slap to the face. She swallows, "You've been lying to me *this whole time*?"
"Meredith-"
"Oh my God - did you *drink my blood*?"
"Meredith-"
"You drank my blood, didn't you?"
"I-" Derek sighs, wiping his face with his hands. "A few times, yeah."
Addison scoffs, "But *I'm* the blood-sucking prostitute?"

"I never drank it consistently, though - I only did it when I was desperate or hungry."
"You still drank her blood, Der." Addison chimed.
He turns to face her pointing at her frustratedly. "The ice you're on? *Thin.*"

Meredith rubs her eyes - the stress of the last several hours has begun to give her a headache. When she opens her eyes again, she's presented with a different scene to what came before. In place of Derek and Addison, Meredith sees the same dog and orchid mantis from earlier. She opens her mouth to speak, but finds herself at a loss for words. The mantis holds up a foreleg in front of the dog, turning to face Meredith; the dog in turn looks to Meredith, tilting its head to the side as an inquisitive whine escapes its mouth.
"Hey, so uh - are hallucinations a vampire thing too or did I just... lose my mind?" Meredith asks, closing her eyes shut and hesitantly opening them again.

Addison's (*not* an orchid mantis, just Addison) eyebrows shoot up her forehead. "You're a *Malkavian*? Fuck!"
"Malkavian?"
Derek clears his throat. "Not all kindred are... created equal, so to speak. This - uh - *condition* effects us all differently depending on us as individuals and who embraced us-"
"Turned us into... what we are." Addison clarifies.
Derek rolls his eyes. "There are a bunch of different types of kindred - clans, if you will. Some of us are pretentious snobs-"
"Or budget werewolves-" Addison hisses.
"-or, uh - in your case... lunatics."
Meredith chuckles dryly. "I'm sorry?"

Addison grimaces, "Every clan has a curse - a secondary curse, really, to the whole vampirism thing - that sets them uniquely apart from the others. Some of us are naturally a little better at certain things than others and different types of people are embraced into different clans." She clears her throat, pointing towards herself. "Toreador - my clan - are... very fixated on *beauty* and aesthetics to the point where we sometimes get... completely swept up in it and can't focus on anything else." She swallows, then pointing to Derek. "Gangrel are more closely in touch with their instincts - we call it 'The Beast', the impulse to hunt, feed and kill - and are usually a bit more... animalistic, though through no fault of their own."
Derek begrudgingly nods.
Addison continues, "Malvakians, to their credit, have a very unique insight on the world - they see things through new perspectives, letting them be prophets of a sort... but they *have* that different perspective because well, they're insane."
"Oh." Meredith says.
"How has..." Derek trails, gesturing vaguely to his own head. "*That* been going for you?"
Meredith swallows, "It's - it's going... your car told me a really bad joke."
Addison and Derek glance at each other, both grimacing.
"Is that bad? Like, even for a Mal-whatever?"
"It could be worse." Addison assures.
"*A lot* worse." Derek affirms.

A beat. Derek shuffles to the fridge, opening it and taking out a blood bag. He looks to Meredith sympathetically. "Hungry?"

Addison shudders. "Bags? Eugh."
"They're for emergencies." Derek grumbles.
"Where did you get that?" Meredith asks.
Derek grabs a pair of scissors, cutting the top off of the tubing. "The blood bank. Don't worry, it's just A positive - easy to replace."
Meredith gulps, "You want me to - to *drink* that?"
Addison squints, "Strange. You're not immediately going for it?"
"Why would I?"
Derek sighs, fiddles with the cut-off part of the blood bag's tubing. "Usually after we're embraced we're starving. First time we see blood-"
"We go a little nuts. We call it frenzy."
Warm, short fur and the smell of cold steel flashes through Meredith's mind. "I drank a deer. It was in a bear trap, or something."
Derek tsks. Addison raises an eyebrow at him.
"That was my dinner." Derek bemoans.
Addison snorts - the gnawing, aching hunger grips Meredith into a vice once again.

"I'll - take the blood bag." Meredith mutters.
Derek gently hands it to her as Addison scrunches her nose in contempt. Meredith holds it gently, careful not to grip it too hard and make a mess. She wraps her lips around the tubing, slowly drinking the cold, stale blood. If the deer's blood was foul, the bagged blood is simply bland. Meredith swallows hesitantly, slowly emptying the bag in her hands.
"Huh." Addison says.
"What?"
"That's - palatable for you?"
"It's fine? Tastes like nothing, really."
Derek waves a dismissive hand in Addison's direction. "Ignore her. She's just jealous because she can't keep it down."
"You can *barely* keep it down." Addison argues.
He raises his hands in mock surrender.

Meredith looks down at the empty bag in her hands. "Why do I still feel hungry?"
For the first time, Addison looks tired - maybe even devastated; the mask only slips for a second, however, before she quickly composes herself again.
"The beast is... insatiable. The only way to shut it up-"
"Is to kill someone." Derek finishes.
Tears prick up at the corners of Meredith's eyes - Addison silently offers her a black handkerchief, Monogrammed *A.M.*
"I have to - I... *what?*" Meredith sobs, furiously wiping her eyes only for the handkerchief to acquire a thin layer of blood over the top.
"You don't *have to* - really, you *shouldn't*. The more you give in to The Beast, the more it tries to take you over until-"
"-until you're a mindless, ravenous beast that kills everyone in sight and gets put down like a rabid animal." Addison finishes.
Derek glares at Addison before giving Meredith a tight smile. "It's a balancing act."

Meredith sighs, "So, what? Am I just like this... *forever* now?"
Addison's gaze softens, Derek looks down at the floor.

Addison clicks her tongue. "I mean - it's not all bad? We're not like the vampires you see in movies."
Derek nods, "Garlic is useless."
"Crosses also - unless the person holding it is *really* religious, but that's rare these days." Addison adds, an uncharacteristic nervousness in her eyes.
"What about wooden stakes? Or running water?" Meredith asks.
"Stakes aren't *lethal* - they do paralyse you if they get you in the heart, though." Derek says.
"Running water is harmless - we still *bathe*, we're not animals." Addison adds, before chuckling to herself. "Well, maybe not the Nosferatu."
Derek snorts, giving her a high five.

Meredith nods slowly. "Okay - so is there anything that *does* hurt us?"
Derek nods, "Sunlight - that's a big one."
"Ashes in seconds." Addison adds.
"Fire is more of the same." Derek says.
Addison grimaces, "Extensive head trauma too - decapitation or say, a shotgun blast to the face."
"We call it 'final death' because technically we're *already* dead."
Meredith sighs, "Cool. Great. I always wanted to work nights." She quips.

Addison's face dawns in sudden realisation. "Oh! Right! This is the really important part, actually: you can't let anyone know that you're kindred. Or that we *exist*, for that matter."
"No one?" Meredith asks.
"Not a soul. Pretty much the only universal rule we have is the masquerade - not letting humans know that we're real because they could very easily kill us all."
Derek clenches his jaw. "There are some exceptions, but those exceptions are usually only for people with high standing - even *then* it's pretty dangerous and you're just putting a target on that poor person's back. *Especially* if you didn't ask the Prince for permission."
Meredith raises an eyebrow. "The Prince? What is this, the dark ages?"
"They're usually *from* the dark ages." Derek jokes.
Addison rolls her eyes. "We're governed by a group called the Camarilla - the Prince is basically the kindred mayor of any given city. If you wanna leave the city, enter the city or embrace someone the Prince usually has to hear about it and approve of it."

Derek's eyes narrow in contemplation. "Wait - who *is* your sire?"
"My sire?"
"The one who embraced you." Addison supplies.
"I uh - I don't know. Blonde - creepy blue eyes, wore a suit from twenty years ago, really unsettling. He led me into an alley? I think? Took over my mind, kinda - then I woke up in the woods."
The other two freeze - glancing at each other; Derek's features remain impassive, Addison's eyes betray her panic.
"No." Derek barks.
"Derek-"
"No! We're not inserting ourselves into this! For all we know the guy's gonna come back tomorrow and do it himself."
"Then why the second location? She woke up *here*! She hasn't seen him since!"
Derek opens his mouth to argue before sighing, snapping it shut. "Fine."

"What are you guys talking about?" Meredith asks.
Addison and Derek glare at each other, Derek speaking first. "We need to see the Prince."

Chapter 2: I watched a change in you

Chapter Summary

> "The first reaction most childer have after an Embrace is raw hunger. With less than a blood point available and no experience dealing with a fully raging Beast, the childe will most likely enter a hunger Frenzy at the first sight of blood. For most vampires, this means that the Embrace is followed immediately by a moment of degradation."
>
> New York City, 1996

The clock ticked mockingly, Addison's gaze fixed on the minute hand as she watched it inch ever forward in time. She found herself doing the math in her head, thoughts spiralling as her fingers tapped against the kitchen island anxiously. The sound of rain hitting the roof was almost deafening, a chorus of tiny hisses filling her ears. She sighed, leaning forward and taking a slow, deep breath, weight supported by her arms as they braced against the edge of the marble. She shook her head, opening the top drawer and pulling out the corkscrew, grabbing the first bottle of wine she could find (French, a vintage port) and watching as the deep red liquid slowly filled the glass.

She picked it up gingerly, swirling it carefully and watching the small whirlpool the motion created. Addison hummed, lifting it to her lips and gently sipping. Slowly, one glass became two and two became three. As her worry faded, a small pressure began to build behind her eyes and her head started to spin. She blinked, widening her eyes and blinking slowly in the attempt to regain focus; nothing happened, she sighed and started pouring the rest of the bottle.

Then, a knock at the door. Just once, loud & violent. A battering ram trying to splinter the wood of the brownstone. Addison yelped, grip slacking on the bottle in her hand for just long enough to drop it. The glass broke, a sharp pain shooting through her foot and a burgundy puddle blooming onto the hardwood floors; Addison swore, looking down to see a small red drop at the top of her left sock slowly begin to expand.

More knocking, now multiple frantic raps - she heard a voice sob through the door, desperate and almost animalistic.
"Addison!" Derek howled, hammering on the door once more. "Addie!"
She whipped her head to the sound, cataloguing his pained, hoarse cries; she scrambled over to the door, pain blinding her as more blood seeped through her sock. She opened the door in a hurry, rain pelting down on the streets in front of the steps. Derek was soaked: hair slicked back and dripping; two of his shirt buttons were ripped off, the edge of his collar stained red - the jacket he had left the house in that morning was nowhere to be found and he was deathly pale.

He rushed into her arms, sweeping her into an embrace and burying his head into the crook of her neck. She took a few steps backwards, allowing him to enter the threshold and shutting the door behind him with her good foot. Her fingers trailed to his hair, twirling the wavy, wet strands as he sobbed into her shoulder.
"Oh, God, Addie I don't - I don't know what happened! One minute I was - I was cutting through Central Park and the next I - I-"
"Derek." She cooed, gently lifting his head, stroking his cheek with her thumb. "Honey, you're not making any sense. It's okay - it's just me. Everything's alright now."

Derek gulped, throat bobbing as he nodded solemnly, head freezing when he tilted his head downwards. Addison followed his gaze, landing on her almost dark red sock.
She sighed, laughing dryly. "Oh, it's stupid, I dropped the-" She looked up at Derek again, freezing.
His eyes were fixed on her foot, gaze shifting from the soft, somber look he had given her moments ago into something primal - *hungry.*
"Der?"
Derek swallowed, opening his mouth to speak and revealing long, sharp fangs in place of his canines. "Addison, run."
"What are you-"
He looked up, his stare no longer recognisable - no longer *human*. "Run." It growled - a deep, animalistic gravel creeping into his tone.

She stepped backwards, only for her blood-soaked sock to give out under her weight and send her tumbling into the floor. Her back hit the floorboards with a loud thud, knocking the air out of her lungs as she scrambled away from him. It leapt forward, sitting itself on top of her - thighs bracketing her waist as it sank its teeth into her neck. At first, it was painful - the violent puncturing forcing a moan out of her mouth. Then, a shockwave of pleasure; a gasp escaped her lips as she shivered, reaching out to grab his hair and dragging her nails through his scalp, pulling a strand with her fingers as her hips bucked desperately.

Her eyes rolled back into her head. "Oh, *God*, Derek, I-"
She felt the faint sensation of something being taken from her: slowly, fervently. Her mind flashed to her last blood donation earlier that year. She made the connection - primitive, existential terror overriding her as her grip on his hair slackened.
"Derek..." She panted, hands moving to push up against his chest (a futile effort - he far outweighed her), "Derek, honey..."
A low purr exited his throat as it drank, Addison's extremities beginning to feel faint. She fumbled around on the floor, desperately trying to grab onto something when her nails clicked against a shoe (hers, Christian Dior, from the previous year's spring collection).

She grabbed it. She swung. A sharp crack echoed throughout the house. She felt the fangs exit her neck as he groaned, hissing. She swung again. He flew off of her, falling back onto the floor, clutching his jaw. He blinked, eyes scanning his surroundings before widening at her neck. It felt hot - she clutched it and was met with warm, flowing blood; she used her free hand to press down on it, panting. The shoe was still in her hand.
His gaze was filled with remorse, bloody tears beginning to well up in his eyes. "Addie-"
"Derek? Is that - are you... *you* again?"
He nodded, a sob wracking his chest. "Fuck, Addie, I'm so sorry, I- I don't know what

happened! I couldn't - I couldn't do anything - it was like I was a passenger in my own body, I-"
He crawled over on all fours - slowly, hesitantly. She dropped the shoe, pressing down on her oozing neck harder with her free hand. He sat next to her, gently cradling her face with his bloodied hands - she noticed a laceration on his jaw.

"I think I can - I think I can fix it." He whispered, head gesturing towards her aching neck.
"You can?"
"I think - I don't know, I just have this like, instinct to lick it?"
She laughed - hoarse, sardonic, pained. "I - uh - go for it? Just... please try not to drink any more of my blood, honey."
He nodded, lip quivering slightly as the tears (*blood* tears - it made her skin crawl) streaked his face. "Right." He whispered.

She took her hands off of her neck, heart rising into her throat at the sight of her palms slick with blood. Derek's stubble tickled her neck slightly before his cold, wet tongue swept her skin. She shuddered, another wave of pleasure overtaking her as the holes closed. She touched them experimentally, only to find perfect, smooth skin in place of the deep, thin puncture wounds there just seconds ago.
She blinked, looking at Derek. "How did you..."
"I don't know. Oh, God, Addie, I'm so sorry." He mumbled, head sinking into his hands as sobs wracked his chest.
"Honey..." She cooed, gently wrapping her hands around the back of his neck and tilting his head up to face her. "I know. It's okay. It wasn't you. It's over now."
He blinked, more bloody tears wetting his face. She pressed their foreheads together, closing her eyes.
"It's gonna be okay. We're gonna figure it out." She whispered.
"Addie-"
She pulled their heads away, looking him in the eye. "In sickness and in health, Derek. And this definitely *seems* like sickness."
He swallows, teeth red and mouth bloodied. "I *drank your blood*."
She sighed, "I know... Look, I didn't plan on marrying one of The Lost Boys, but you're still *my husband*, Derek. I'm always gonna be here, I *promise*. We'll figure it out."
He nodded, "We'll figure it out."
"Together."
"Together."
She kissed him, softly, slowly - mouth firmly closed for fear of tasting her own blood.

"Come on, let's get cleaned up." She whispered, slowly rising from the floor onto to stumble as dizziness overtook her.
Derek caught her, steadying her with his hands around her waist. "Are you okay?" He asked, eyes flicking her up and down in concern.
"Yeah, fine, I'm just - a little light-headed, I guess. Wasn't exactly prepared to give blood today."
Shame filled his eyes. He nodded, "Right. I - uh - let me carry you?"
"Derek-"
"Please. Besides-" He looks down, gesturing to her blood-red sock with his hand - the small

shard of glass still wedged in her foot. "You really shouldn't be walking on that."
She laughed, "Okay." She said, wrapping her arms around the back of his neck.

He swept her off her feet, carefully cradling her in his arms as he walked her over to the kitchen. She tucked her head into his chest, heart breaking when she realised there was no rise and fall in his chest nor could she feel his heartbeat. Gently, he lowered her onto the stool next to the kitchen island before striding over to the sink and grabbing the first aid kit from underneath. He snapped on a pair of gloves, giving her a small smile; blood was stuck in the gaps between beard hairs.

The headache began to creep in by the time he finished, gently wiping the area and applying a closing strip over the wound; the offending, blood-soaked fragment laid on the island, the remaining pieces of shattered glass were still spread on the floor, wine having already soaked into the floorboards. He looked up at her, eyebrows furrowing.
"You don't look so good."
"Says the dead guy."
He gave her a broken smile, getting up off the floor and walking over to the pantry, opening it.
"What do you want?"
She blinked, "Um... I don't know."
He produced a small box of saltines, raising it over his shoulder for her to see. "These okay?"
She smiled, "Yeah, thanks."

He nodded, grabbing a cup and filling it with water. He set the water down first; she took a small sip as he opened the box, emptying it into a small bowl and placing it in front of her.
She swallowed the water, setting the cup down and picking up a cracker. "Thanks." She muttered, taking a bite.
He nodded, leaning against the counter. "In sickness and in health."
She smiled, chewing slowly.

A few minutes passed as Addison slowly ate the saltines, intermittently taking sips of water. All the while, Derek watched her - eyes fixed upon her (was he even *blinking?*).
Addison swallowed, "Honey? Everything okay?"
"Yeah, I'm just... really hungry."
She laughed, silently offering him a saltine.
He chuckled, wiping away a remnant tear (smudging blood all over his face in the process) and taking the cracker by the corner, slotting it into his mouth. His face shrivelled, his disgust evident as he forcefully swallowed.
"They're not *that* bad, are they?" She asked.
He gagged, slapping a hand over his mouth before he could respond, rushing to the bathroom. Slowly, Addison got up off the stool, limping after him; Derek's gags and wet coughs echoed through the house.

The scene in front of her looked like a murder site - a small puddle of blood lined the floor, Derek hunched over the toilet as more of it escaped his mouth.
"Jesus Christ." Addison whispered, wincing as another loud wretch seared her eardrums.
She sighed, limping over to Derek's side as she stroked his hair with bloodied hands, nails scratching his scalp. She kneeled on the floor next to him, conscientious to not be in the

splash range.
"It's okay." She soothed, patting him gently on the back as a dry sob left his throat. "I've got you."
The coughing continued. She winced with every splash and retch.

After far too long, Derek lifted his head up. Gingerly wiping his mouth with the back of his hand, he hauled himself off the floor, offering an arm to help Addison up as well. She grasped it, getting to her feet just before he closed the lid and flushed.
"How are you feeling?"
He sighed, wincing slightly as he smacked his lips. "You know how when people die they empty their bowels sometimes?"
She raised an eyebrow. "...Yeah?"
"I think I just puked my guts out. And maybe some other things."
She grimaced, resting her hands on his shoulders and stroking them sympathetically. "You feel a little better now at least?"
He shuddered, "I uh - I think so?"
She hummed, moving her hands to stroke the sides of his face. "How about we get cleaned up?"
He smiled, leaning into her touch. "Good idea."

She nodded, slowly beginning to unbutton his shirt, revealing a newly-acquired carpet of chest hair underneath. Addison paused, squinting as her fingers brushed against the thick, matted strands. Derek looked down at her hands, brows narrowing as he saw the curls.
"That's..." Derek trailed, jaw clenched.
Addison tittered, "Maybe you're a werewolf?"
"I thought werewolves were still alive." He croaked.
"And I thought they were fiction but here we are."

Silence. She undid the remaining buttons of the shirt and he shrugged it off, revealing even more hair. Addison blinked, trying to reconcile the (significantly smoother) image of Derek shirtless from just that morning to what she saw before her: dark curls so densely covering his chest it almost looked like fur, narrowing as it trailed down towards his stomach, widening as it approached and passed his navel. Addison's lips pressed into a thin line before she forced herself to laugh. "Should we get you some shampoo for this?" She teased, gently twirling a few wild, stray hairs in her fingers.
Derek laughed - a pained one. "I don't know. Part of me is still hoping this is all a dream."
She simply nodded.

He helped her pull the T-shirt (Derek's, his scent lingering around the collar) over her head and she helped him unbutton his pants. They undressed each other methodically, leaving their clothes in a "keep" pile (not stained in blood) and a "burn" pile (stained with far too much blood to reasonably wash out). She turned on the shower, sticking a hand under the water to test the temperature, beckoning him to enter behind her wordlessly. Blood - mostly his, a bit of hers - pooled at their feet, circling the drain as he carefully threaded his shampoo lathered fingers through her hair, massaging her scalp. She wiped his face clean with her hands, the suds of the soap he bought last month ("Soap for *your beard,* Derek?" "What? I have a beautiful wife and I want to look my best for her.") dripping off his chin. She stared into

stormy, lifeless blue eyes and she could faintly feel tears prick in the corner of her eyes. A weighted silence sat between them.

She turned off the faucet. He ran his hands through his hair, shaking off the excess water. They exited the shower. He handed Addison her towel, she handed Derek his. They dried off in silence.
"We can survive this." She whispered, voice trembling and curling further into the towel wrapped around her shoulders.
Derek pauses, lowering his towel off of his head and onto his shoulders, hair mussed. "You think so?" He asked, eyes void of hope.
She found herself fiddling with the gold band around her finger, his name and their wedding date engraved on the interior. "Yeah. Yeah, because - because we're *Addison and Derek*."
He looked at his own ring, smiling faintly before wrapping the towel around his waist. "Yeah. Yeah, we are."
Silence again.

They dressed wordlessly, falling into bed and embracing. She rested her head on his cold, soft chest as he wrapped an arm around her waist, playing with her hair.
"You don't have a pulse." She breathed, dangerously close to a sob.
"I know. I'm sorry."
"It's not - it's not your fault."
"I shouldn't have tried cutting through the park - not this late."
"We've done it a million times before together."
"Exactly. *Together*."
A beat. She swallowed.
"I..." He sighed, chest rising slightly as he made that singular breath, "I don't know what happened. One minute everything was fine and the next there was - there was this woman and she - she just *jumped* on me..."
She said nothing, waiting for him to continue.
"She just - she just started *drinking* and it was - God, Addie, it was better than sex, I don't even know how to describe it but - but I couldn't stop thinking about *you*. I had to come back to you. I couldn't - I couldn't *let her* do it. I couldn't-" He trailed off, breath hitching as he choked back a sob.

She lifted her head, watching as bloody tears pricked the corners of his eyes once again. She rose from the bed, reaching for the box of tissues on the nightstand and handing it to him. He sat up, leaning against the headboard and gently wiping his eyes.
"God, I'm - I'm sorry, I'm making a mess." He whimpered.
She took his free hand, gently stroking the back of it with her thumb. "It's okay. It's okay."
He nodded, setting aside the box and the blood-stained tissues. She moved to sit next to him, resting her head on his shoulder, their fingers intertwined between them.
Addison swallowed, "What did it taste like?"
He blinked, "The saltine? Like ashes."
"No, not the saltine I... What did *I* taste like? My - my blood."
"Oh..." He paused, considering his answer before speaking again, "Um - bitter-sweet, kind of. It was like - like I could taste your love and your fear compressed into a fine wine."
She nodded, morbid curiosity replaced by muted terror - she regretted asking.
"Addison?"

She hummed, lifting her head up and looking into his eyes.
"I love you."
She squeezed his hand. "I love you, too, Der."

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