

The past however-many-hours he'd been conscious had been about as much of a blur as being stuck in that barrel hidden deep within the apothecary.

He knew that Olive wanted Mornan hurt, dead, gone — something that wasn't twisted into her business; that made sense, they got that — but they didn't understand why they were still *waiting*. This tagteam group that appeared in the apothecary seemed capable enough to pick him off.

The prick was out there making more booze or some other counterfeit goods, but the level of agitation in Olive seemed too high. Perhaps it was that they just didn't understand the politics of Thyram. It made their head ache; or maybe that was just the rattling of the carriage and the occasional knock of their head against the side of it.

Olive speaks plenty for someone who doesn't say much about anything. It doesn't help their head.

There is a moment of peace between getting back to the estate and dinner; a moment to stand outside, too far from the docks to hear the ocean, and smell the salt air. Away from the crew and a taste of home, there is an aching pang of something he does not understand. Jaw shifts and chest tightens, but he rubs at the tension and otherwise pushes the feeling away.

He's carried to the gate on the property and it's barred shut. That doesn't help the tightness in his chest, but it does translate into something else. It burns in the very center of himself, but that's not entirely unusual either. Requesting access out of the estate is met with meager pushback from the guard that Olive kept, asking them not to leave the grounds and shrinking back to see them push forward. Their lack of conviction doesn't help the warmth clinging to his sternum, begins to creep up his throat and threatens to choke him. *Pathetic*. They're not worth the fight, practically shaking in their boots already, even if he's itching for *something* beyond being stuck here in a situation he didn't quite understand.

Something, perhaps the Saltmother, cools their temperament for the moment, keeping them from pushing further against the guards in search of the docks and the sea beyond it. Time had passed strangely, they were uncertain of what day it truly was, but Ivan would not strand them here. There is a twist in the pit of their stomach that is uncertain about that as well.

Soon enough, Iris is able to gather them up for another meal without the blasted use of the bell to call the group forth as though they were simple stock animals to be fattened before market. It is full of conversation, most useful, but Olive fills the silence once again with nothing. There is one curious piece of information that comes from it; a letter and a package waiting for them in their rooms. It takes everything in them not to excuse themselves from the table at that moment. He's grateful when Olive eventually excuses herself from the table with Elska on her heels. They linger for a few moments longer before excusing themselves to stop in the kitchens prior to moving up the stairs towards the rooms that they have been assigned.

Their pack is placed down on the floor, the package and the letter sat on the bed. They need a moment to process, to breathe, before they touch that. They move over to push open the window and let the salt air into the space. It was a comfort at the very least. A hand lifts to rest on his chest, eyes closing for a moment before as a

light sea green energy seeps out between his fingers and into his chest. He lets out a long breath before turning back to the bed and the items there for him.

He reaches for the letter first.

*Siggy,*

*We didn't want to leave, but we had to. By the time we got wind that you were being held for ransom, a customs agent was already sniffing around. We had to cut loose and make sail.*

*I had enough time to pen this note for you and leave you a gift, but we couldn't fight our way to you; for that I apologize.*

*To make up for that, I've left you my family blade. Use it well, and I expect it back when we next cross paths, but I hope this makes up for what happened.*

*Stay well,*

*Ivan*

It seems that that sea green energy, one that they thought might ground them, does little to help. Anger crawls just beneath his skin, crackling and skittering along like the scars that mar him. It doesn't often come in a physical form, but now it burns the back of his eyes and tightens his throat. *Not tonight.* Palms press into his eyes before he rubs over his features. *Not tonight.*

A fleeting thought passes through their mind that that anger was present on their features, in their eyes maybe, in a way that they didn't understand. It would explain the fear the guards seemed to have, that he would do something unforgivable. He was not the monster here.

There's a harsh clearing of their throat as they unwrap the oblong package that accompanies the letter, already an idea of what lay beneath the dirtied cloth. Jaw shifts as he carefully unwraps the blade, a traditional Hjem cut with runes inscribed into the metal. He stands, looking over the weapon and cannot help but wonder if Ivan had left himself purposefully defenseless for the moments that this was out of his possession before he returned to the ship or if he had already replaced this blade with something else — if he had already replaced Siggy with someone else.

It's unfortunate that this blade has a good counterweight to it, that he cannot hate the blade for lack of craftsmanship. It was well built, likely well used over lifetimes. He cuts up quickly with it before slashing back down. He lets out a long breath, shoulders lowering as he moves to place the weapon back in its wrappings for the moment; that's what he intends to do, anyhow, before the crashing starts. It was going to be another long night it seemed.