

"The, uh. The other day, somebody called me an 'it'." Moray propped a thick leg up on her knee, and her folding chair creaked ominously beneath her. The City whirled out above and below the roof of Cyrus's apartment, covering everything in a dusky twilight that flashed with screens and advertisements. "It was kinda cool. Like, I—I didn't hate it."

Ivain's gaze slid over to her side profile over the rim of their can. "Yeah?"

"Yeah." She grinned out at the view. "It was kind of a *fuck yeah* feeling, you know? Like, the same kind of feeling I get from performing. Just smaller."

Ivain hummed and pulled a hair tie out of their pocket. "That's lovely." They gathered up their black curls, nearly stuck with sweat to the back of their neck, and tied them back. "You want me to call you that sometime?" She shrugged.

"I wouldn't mind." Moray flapped the collar of her leather jacket as a makeshift fan. Ivain reminded themselves to bring her up to the Upper Levels sometime, just so that she could feel the temperature difference that people up there had access to. "I mean, I don't think I'd wanna be called it exclusively. But it's cool." She leaned back against the shitty folding chair that Cyrus set up on the roof months ago. "Ivain? Can I have fifty bucks?"

They sighed. "So asking people for money is a genetic thing. Got it." She shoved them half-out of their chair. "What? I'm the one paying your bills, I'm allowed to insult your ass a little. The hell do you need fifty bucks for, anyways?"

"A bridge piercing." Moray rubbed the spot where the side of her nose melded into her brow bone. "It'd be sick as fuck. I'd get one of those barbell-looking silver pieces. Or maybe spikes. Spikes rock."

The sliding door opened halfway and stuck, leaving Vera to curse and struggle with it for about five seconds before she gave up and just poked her head out of the opening. "Dinner will be ready in about two minutes." Ivain had only ever seen her hair slicked back religiously at gigs. Her pixie cut didn't look half bad when it was worn naturally.

Cyrus's faint voice made it way up the stairs and out onto the roof. "Vera! Why the hell is the stove set to 800 degrees? You're gonna burn the house down!" She turned just quick enough for Ivain and Moray to have plausible deniability that they saw her grinning.

"I wanted it to cook fast!" She disappeared back through the half-open door and ran downstairs, giggling to Cyrus about something. Moray snorted, grinning wide enough to show off her chipped tooth. Ivain knocked back the rest of their beer and set the empty can on the floor.

"How the hell do you put up with them?"

"I have no fucking clue." She laughed and fluffed up her bangs. "But they let me write my ballads and they make me food, so I'm just fine with them." Ivain smiled to themselves.