

*Twilight could barely contain her excitement, folding the familiar egg up in a beach towel and slipping it into a nearby bag. It was the last thing she needed to pack, already heaving the tell-tale clicking of Alucard's feet atop the polished marble floor as he rounded the hallway corner by their bedroom.*

*"Twilight, are you ready?" He called, rapping his knuckles against the door as a forewarning before slowly allowing the door to swing open.*

*"Yes, I just finished." She said with a gentle smile, gesturing towards the pile of bags atop their bed. The lanky male would smirk, one side of his lips drawing up high enough to display his teeth before glancing back to his mate.*

*"I half expected the bed to no longer be visible." Twilight would poke her tongue out, winking.*

*"It's only for three days, maybe if I could convince you to add one more..." Alu would raise a hand, halting the sentence.*

*"You know I can deny you of little, but I would have some very upset patrons were we to extend our trip." Twilight would sigh in feigned exasperation, moving away from the bed- though not before grabbing the bag the egg was hidden within- to move up to Alu's side.*

*"Very well. We'll just have to come home and plan another one further out so we can stay for longer, then."*

*"Sounds like a fine plan, indeed."*

—

*The beach house overlooked a private beach, its exterior walls sporting large glass windows, its insides polished floors and decor suited to posh life on the beach. It reeked of pompousness, and yet Twilight had grown to love it all the same. In spite of the glitz and glam there were no servants here: it was a place for their family and their family alone. It had been filled with fond memories, many summers with their children having been spent here until they had grown and moved out. They still made it a point to spend a vacation here as a united family each year, but at times it was nice for her and Alu to get away to remind themselves on why everything was here existed in the first place. Stepping into the threshold Twi inhaled deep, appreciating the ocean air and the light, clean smell of fresh linens. Caretakers visited often and always before they planned to visit, ensuring it was always ready when they arrived.*

*Sometime later, with their bags unpacked and items tucked away, the pair would make their way out to turn beach as the sun began to cast its final rays across the shoreline. The familiar egg- still concealed- resided within a bag Twilolght insisted on carrying, settling down upon a towel in the sand and flopping back to appreciate the amber glow tracing the clouds above. Alu joined her, pulling her up against his side and planting a kiss to the top of her head. It had taken quite*

*a while, but the rigid male had finally learned to relax around her in ways only she ever saw. He had a reputation to uphold, after all, but when they were together all of that was swept away: he was her partner as she was his. There was peace here.*

*"Maybe we should just move here."*

*"Once I can retire and Historia can efficiently manage things... perhaps."*

*"You know she's not interested in taking your job over. She likes what she does already. And..." Twilight would trail off, grimacing to herself. "...You know she worries about the connotation of her being hollowed."*

*The sigh from the male indicated that he wasn't unaware of this, and in spite of his attempts to bolster their daughter's confidence it simply hadn't happened. "If she's certain, I would never force her to take on my job. Means I just need to live for forever."*

*"Or... maybe you already have a willing heir, they're just not old enough to take over yet." She would say quietly, taking the hand draped about her shoulders so that his fingers splayed against her midriff, a knowing smile slipping to her face. She watched the male visibly bristle, relishing in the surprise racing against his face. It wasn't an expression she got to see very often.*

*"Twilight..." He began, shifting into his seat so that his other hand could join the one against the stomach, moving beneath the hem of her shirt so that he might feel her scales. "How long?"*

*She smiled, noting the crack in his voice. Years ago she would have laughed at the idea of this male breaking down over anything, and although he was still as solid as stone she has seen him crumble a few times, all of them dealing with his children. "I've known for a couple of weeks now. I wanted to wait on this trip to tell you so that we could have some time to ourselves to—" Her words were cut short, stifled as Alu's arms enveloped her and his snout brushed against her nape. It wasn't an ordinary hug, but one that anchored him to her. With a smile she hugged him back, allowing him all the time needed to process the news. He held her what might have been hours, and when he finally relinquished her he sank down to settle his head on her lap, pressing his temple to her abdomen. Twilight ran her fingers through his hair, wondering if every bonded had a mate who turned to butter at such an announcement.*

*Their contented lull ceased when Twilight's bag began to rattle and shake, a loud chirp-like sound erupting from within the shatter the calm that had enveloped them. Alu's muzzle would twitch as though debating on whether or not to growl, but he stopped as he watched Twi lean over, gasp loudly, and pluck a familiar he'd never seen from the bag. Her delight was enough to calm him, though he couldn't say he was certain as to what was going on.*

*"I guess this little one decided to ruin my surprise early! I had planned to tell you I had gotten a new little guardian to help look after the new littles with Napoleon, but I guess this will do." Alu*

*was already making his way to sitting back up, the tiny wriggling thing winning him over quickly enough that he should gesture towards it, silently asking to hold it. As it bounded into his arms, lapping at his chin he would shake his head. "What's another mouth to feed, hmm?"*