

The Rabbit Hole, a cozy bar adjoining the Wonderland Casino, was bathed in the warm, dim light of its hanging lanterns. It was a particularly quiet night which surprised Vanille, since it was usually busy, given Hops' popularity and how good the drinks were. While Vanille preferred a lively party scene to really get her mind off of things and let loose, she made her way to her usual spot at the bar regardless, situating her large bunny butt into the rounded chair with a 'thwump.'

Hops, the bartender known for her cheerfulness and equally famed clumsiness, greeted Vanille with a bright smile. She was a hit with the patrons, and her friendly demeanor made her a favorite among the Wonderland Casino's regulars.

Hops quickly fetched a cocktail menu and handed it to Vanille, her bright eyes filled with curiosity. "Hey there, Vanille! What can I get you tonight?" Her voice was spunky as ever, but it sounded a bit slurred, like she'd been sipping from her own menu again.

Vanille smirked. "Hey," she said. "Quiet tonight, huh?"

"It happens. Sometimes we have those nights," Hops said with a nod, hiccuping once. *Yep, she'd definitely been drinking on the job again.*

Vanille scanned the menu, held in her paws, and her eyes fell on the Hopscotch, a signature drink crafted by Hops herself. The cocktail was known for its vibrant pink color and was adorned with a cute, purple bunny-shaped drink pick. She couldn't resist the temptation. "I'll have the Hopscotch," she said, her gaze fixated on the drink's vibrant appearance. She could almost taste it!

Hops chuckled as she prepared the drink, her hands deftly mixing the ingredients. "Going for the Hopscotch, huh? You think you're cute, don't you?" she teased, flashing a mischievous grin.

Vanille shook her head and stuck out her tongue. "It's not because of you, silly. You know you're not my type."

"Woah! Offended," Hops joked, sticking her tongue out back at Vanille as she mixed.

"I just really like the pink color, and that little purple bun is too cute," Vanille insisted. "Don't be mad, you know I only like the handsome ones."

"Yeah, yeah..."

With the Hopscotch in hand once Hops slid it over the table, Vanille took a sip and sighed as the sweet, fruity flavors danced on her tongue. Hops leaned in with a wink, "Well, if you ever decide you think I'm cute, I'll mix you one of these free of charge!"

Vanille snorted. "Isn't bribing your customers kinda fucked up?"

"Meh," Hops shrugged. "I've done worse."

"Like drinking on the job?" Vanille said after another sip, letting the alcohol wash over her.

"Guilty as charged."

As the evening wore on and the spirits flowed, Vanille's once restrained confessions became increasingly animated, reflecting her tumultuous dating history. With each anecdote, it was clear that her love life was nothing short of a comedy of errors.

With the fervor of an inebriated bard, Vanille recounted her series of misadventures, which she affectionately called her "butch bun tales." These tales, inspired by her frequent encounters with partners who seemed perfect but turned out to be anything but, were a blend of humor and heartache.

"The first one," she slurred, her words accompanied by a dramatic flourish, "he seemed like the perfect bun, you know? But then he told me he couldn't cook toast without setting off the smoke alarm. Can you believe it?" She gesticulated wildly, causing her empty glass to teeter precariously.

"Woooah, no way," Hops was obviously amused by Vanille's increasing inebriation. "Not even toast? What a loser."

"Oh yeah, a *total* loser."

Vanille went on, sharing a series of equally absurd stories. There was the one who showed up for their first date wearing mismatched socks, believing it was a sign of individuality. Then there was the bun who tried to impress her with his poetry, but it turned out he had been plagiarizing sonnets he looked up online!

As Vanille continued to pour her heart out, she veered into more personal territory. Her eyes glazed with the haze of alcohol, she mumbled, "You know, Hops, my dating life isn't the only mess I'm dealing with. I can't seem to hold down a job either."

Hops frowned sympathetically, but she didn't seem to actually care. She was getting a bit bored at this point. "That's rough, Vanille."

Vanille nodded, her expression a mix of melancholy and tipsy glee. "Yeah, I've had, like, a dozen jobs this year. I tried being a yoga instructor, but I'm about as flexible as a brick. Then, I attempted being an imp psychic, to match with Quince, but I couldn't even predict my own stroodle's next move!"

Hops, always eager to please, decided that Vanille needed something to lift her spirits. Even though she was already drunk on several Hopscotches.

"You know what, Vanille? I've got just the thing for you!" Hops perked up, taken by her own tipsy idea. "You've got to try the Angora Sour, named after my boss, Angora! And, and, you've gotta try the Smooch Hooch, it's pink too! Make sure to try the Bourbon too," she said, rattling off drink suggestions with uncontrollable excitement.

Vanille, already feeling the effects of the Hopscotchs, was more than willing to explore these colorful concoctions. The drinks flowed, one after another, and soon Vanille was happily bouncing in her seat—a bit of a shift in her miserable mood with every drink she'd chugged down. Her red face contorted into a playful, grumpy expression as she turned to Hops, who was keeping her company at the bar, occasionally tending to other buns here and there.

"You're too nice, Hops," Vanille mumbled, her words slightly slurred. "But my love life's a disaster, I tell you. A total disaster."

"You already told me that before!" Hops chuckled and patted Vanille's shoulder gently. "Well, let's hope a few more drinks can make that disaster feel a little less...disastrous, shall we?"

Vanille's head was now bobbing slightly to the rhythm of an invisible tune, and her voice took on an even more exaggerated tone as she addressed Hops. "You, Hops, are sweet," she slurred, her words carrying the warmth of the evening and the spirits that had consumed her.

Hops grinned as she continued her bartending duties, all the while keeping an eye on her friend. "Awww, thanks Vanille," she said. "But now you think I'm cute?"

Vanille's eyes blinked in drunken confusion, her grin widening. "Not like that, dummy..." She attempted to emphasize her point with a finger wag but only managed to knock over an empty glass. "And I said that you're sweet! Not cute."

"So I can be sweet but not cute... got it!" Hops playfully said, grabbing the empty glass in her petite hands. "And be careful there, tipsy. We don't want any bar casualties tonight."

Hops couldn't help but chuckle at Vanille's candidness, but she could also sense the underlying vulnerability in her stories. With a gentle smile, she refilled Vanille's glass.

The night continued, and Vanille continued to sip, laugh, and vent about her love life. With each passing drink, her stories became more dramatic and her giggles more infectious. Some stories sounded so bizarre that Hops wondered if they were even real, or just a figment of Vanille's insanely drunken imagination. Eventually, Vanille found herself completely black out drunk, her head resting on the bar counter, purple bunny drink pick in hand.

Hops chuckled and shook her head, glancing at the tab. "Oops, maybe I did encourage her to try one too many drinks," she whispered to herself, trying to suppress a laugh. But as she looked at Vanille, passed out and blissfully content, Hops couldn't help but smile. "At least she looks happy," she said, grateful for the colorful characters who made her job so enjoyable.

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As the first light of dawn crept through the windows of the Rabbit Hole, Vanille stirred, blinking away the remnants of last night's revelry. Her head felt heavy, and the memories of the previous evening began to flood back in fragments.

And then she noticed Hops. Both of them laid with their heads resting on the bar counter, nestled in the warm, dimly lit embrace of the bar Hops ran with love. Vanille couldn't help but smile as she took in the sight. Hops looked adorable, her features softened in slumber.

Vanille leaned closer, studying Hops's peaceful expression. She was also sleeping off her hangover, Vanille could bet.

In the quiet moments of early morning, as the world outside stirred awake, she realized something she had been too inebriated to grasp the night before—Hops was indeed cute, in her own unique way. Her kindness, her playful nature, and her genuine care for others had a sweetness that went beyond looks.

Vanille poked her paw into Hops's fluffy cheek, a contented smile played on her lips. With a sigh, she closed her eyes again. Her head ached with a hangover, but... she wasn't as mad as she was the night before.

In that quiet second, remnants of a night filled with laughter and stories, Vanille found herself grateful for more than just a good time at the Rabbit Hole. She was grateful for the wonderful bartender Hops was.

... Until she looked at the tab.