

“Hey Benoit, are you free?”

Benoit watched through narrowed eyes as Hutch sidled over to him. At the training camp, these two were definitely an unlikely pair: Benoit looked like he'd rather be anywhere *but* there, and he certainly wasn't dressed like he was attending a fun little camp, while Hutch donned his usual garb and expression, only looking a *little* uncertain as he addressed the taller man.

“It depends on what you're about to ask me,” Benoit replied, the tone of his voice already hinting at his desire to refuse.

Hutch sighed. “Well...we've been having friendly competitions between people to see how well-trained everyone's pets are, and we just had someone back out. I was wondering if you wanted to take their place...?” His hesitance in speaking was to be expected—Benoit was often arrogant to a fault, and talking with him could be a real pain in the ass. The fact that they were on speaking terms with one another to begin with was already some small miracle, as Benoit was quick to turn his nose up at most...however, Hutch had taken a special interest in Benoit's pets: one was a furdin that appeared to be a touch aggressive, something quite unusual for its kind, while the other was a virtue. Virtues were already uncommon, and even rarer still was the fact that it was a *chastitia* of all things. Benoit either didn't mind that awkward fact, or he was *very* good at hiding how embarrassed he was over it. Two things were for certain, though, and that was that Hutch clearly wanted to study the chastitia, while *Benoit* wanted to train his furdin—which he had weirdly called *eccentric* with the fondness of a doting parent—and Hutch was only too eager to help him in exchange for the opportunity to learn more about those elusive virtues. And so, here they were.

The corners of Benoit's lips twitched, but before he could reply Hutch quickly cut him off. “If you ask me, I think Choupette has made great progress, and wouldn't it be satisfying to really see how far you've come? Plus there's your chastitia Ines, who I'm sure other buns would love to see...” After a brief pause, Hutch looked off to the side and rubbed the back of his head. “Erm, that is to say...not as the main focus, of course, but it would be a bonus to show it off.”

The vamp rolled his eyes, but the additional information seemed to still his tongue. “Very well then. I will participate in this...*friendly*...competition.” He waved his hand. “Show me who I'll be up against.”

Hutch beamed. “Great! Right this way then...”

---

Miori had decided to come to this imp training camp together with their chimelody Furin, but had quickly been disappointed by the fact that their competitor decided to toss their hat in before they even had the chance to introduce themselves to each other. Was the chimelody intimidating in some way or was it Miori herself that gave off an aura that made the other bun not even consider a fight with them? They were quite unsure, but quickly shrugged it off.

Hutch had left the two of them to themselves as he left to find a replacement competitor for them. Miori spent the time playing with their very recent addition to their household, enjoying the calm chiming melodies the imp sang as they floated around them.

It didn't take long for Hutch to reappear, though who he brought along was quite a surprise to them, not sure if they'd made Hutch aware of the connection between them and Benoit. Nevertheless, Miori was happy to see a very familiar face. "Is this supposed to be my opponent?" Miori smiled mischievously at the lust bun behind the imp expert as his tail did a happily little twitch.

Hutch, a little slow noticing the way Miori looked at Benoit with familiarity, answered, "Yes, Benoit was so nice to step in as a replacement for your little compe—" but was interrupted when Miori made it all the way up to Benoit and grabbed him by the collar, just to pull him down to their level and greet their cute bat with a kiss. "—competition" Hutch finished, clearing his throat. "I assume the two of you are familiar with each other?"

"More than you think." That was all the glutton was willing to share with Hutch, clearly waiting for him to leave so they could be alone with Benoit and have their little competition.

—

To say that Benoit's demeanor changed upon seeing Miori would be the understatement of the century—he had walked in with his head held high and his eyes narrowed in a way that could only be described as *haughty*, but the moment he laid eyes on Miori they had widened, baffling Hutch as the stupidest smile spread on the nobleman's face. His tail began to wag like an overexcited impup's when Miori pulled him into a greeting kiss, and he stayed there with his head bent afterwards.

"My love, heart of my heart, *ma moitié*, what are you doing here?" The giddiness in Benoit's voice was unmistakable; Hutch felt a chill run down their spine, as if they'd just seen a ghost. "Don't tell me you're to be my opponent? No wonder your other opponent backed out, they would be foolish to try anything against you..."

Benoit's furdin, Chouquette, eyed the overly-smitten couple after sauntering in before turning its attention to the chimelody hovering not too far away. It looked at it like a cat would a bird—ready to pounce—and perhaps Benoit sensed as much as he quickly scooped her up into his arms.

"Chouquette! Play nice," he chided, scolding at the imp only to be met with a sly bap to the face. "You mustn't hurt that one, it belongs to Miori. Speaking of...mon cœur, you have a new pet?"

---

Miori couldn't help but raise a hand to scratch under Benoit's chin, as if treating him like the cute impup he seemed to behave like. Letting the touch and affection linger for just a moment longer. "A bit too eager, Benoit," they half scolded their lover for their rather over the top greeting.

Some of Benoit's words stuck out to them. "Ah, am I really that intimidating, my dove?" They questioned, pondering if they did in fact give off that kind of aura for others to not want to even attempt a training competition with them. Though their thoughts were cut short when Choupette decided to go for Furin, they watched as Benoit took their imp and Furin came floating loyally back to Miori's side. Miori pulled the mischievous Furin in Benoit's arms gently by the cheek fluff. "Naughty, you know you're only allowed to swat at your papa," they said before giving the imp a small kiss on the forehead.

Hutch had tried several times to get their attention, but finally decided to give up and leave the two of them to themselves. They were definitely not needed anymore, and watching those two lovebirds was getting increasingly more awkward.

Miori gestured for the chimelody to come settle in their hand as they stood next to Benoit. "This is Furin, they flew into the tea house the other day when I was closing the shop and didn't seem to want to leave... so I guess they're mine now." Miori cooed softly at the imp. An unspoken claim between the two of them that even if someone did state their ownership of the imp, Miori was not willing to share, just as they were unwilling to share their dear lover. Whatever was theirs was theirs. "I was hoping to train them and help them gain a bit more obedience, maybe you can help me with a little playful competition? You do have a bit more experience than I."

—

"How could I not be, when you've graced my presence?" He leaned into the touch, desperate for it to continue. Alas, Miori wouldn't spoil him if it wasn't earned; with their greetings out of the way they withdrew, leaving Benoit bereft of their affectionate touch. While his tail still wagged, it visibly slowed down a fair amount.

"Of course!" He didn't even have to think about the answer to *that* question. In Benoit's mind, everything about Miori was perfect, so it was little wonder that he thought others could see through the same rose-tinted glasses as him. "You are the epitome of grace—I'm sure they took one look at you and knew they would lose. As they *should*."

Choupette settled quietly in Benoit's arms after its gentle admonishment, nearly purring at the attention from Miori—like owner, like pet it seemed... Benoit looked at the chimelody, and nodded in approval after hearing how his lover came to acquire it. Clearly, Furin had refined tastes; he decided that he liked it from that little fact alone. "Please, you know that helping you would be my greatest pleasure. I'm sure that *mon chou* would love to show off for you, as well. Isn't that right?" Benoit looked to Choupette, who happily yipped in reply.

----

As much as Miori wasn't willing to show it, they found it charming how Benoit cooed for their attention, words laced with compliments and his affection clear as day from horn to tail. Miori had never been as openly affectionate as their dear puppy, but it warmed their heart to see the way he showed them he was theirs even without opening his mouth. There was no doubt that the two were a pair, even if it seemed unlikely from a passing glance. "Benoit, if you don't calm that silver tongue of yours I might have to gag you in front of everyone here," they mused playfully as they placed a finger against Benoit's lips.

"While I'm sure you'd be happy to have your mouth occupied by something given by me I don't think you'd be very helpful with training if you can't speak... and I would much rather reward you with a treat tonight instead," they teased as they leaned closer to Benoit, their lips barely touching as they mouthed something: their reward for him, if he behaved.

They didn't give him much time to process before they ran their hand down his cheek and neck and hooked a finger around Benoit's collar, yanking it harshly and winking back at their cute pet before turning around. "Now, shall we go, my dear bat?" they hummed as they led him to the training grounds. "My sweet Furin won't train themselves after all."

—

It was almost comical how Benoit's tail quickened its wagging at Miori's little threat (that was definitely *not* a threat, as far as he was concerned), and he very nearly decided to tempt fate and see if Miori would actually do that...but then his love teased him *again* by mouthing something against his lips—his reward for the night to come, if he behaved himself—and it shut him up immediately. The blush that spread across his face was unmistakable. Swallowing thickly, Benoit could only nod dumbly in reply before following after the shorter bun, any quips or further compliments gone with the wind. He would behave himself, for now...

—

Miori led Benoit to the training area they had been shown before their previous contestant had abandoned them. It was quite a simple setup, with an exercise course for the imps to weave and jump through and an area to focus more on showing off the imps abilities to perform tricks.

Miori let go of Benoit's collar and placed a gentle kiss on his cheek. "If I have to be honest, I'm not sure where to start. I saw a few demonstrations, but Furin and I have never tried anything like this. What do you think would be better?" They asked the lust bun as they petted their chimelody that had followed along loyally. "Do you think Furin will be able to do the same kinds of tricks as Choupette? I don't really have much experience with them, but maybe they could do well... we were supposed to compete right? I think that was the point of this, I kinda forgot when I saw you." they hummed quietly as they turned around to stare directly at Benoit with a serious gaze.

“I think a race on the course between the two would be the most fair, since Furin’s barely had any training doing tricks. I would just lose by default” they said, raising a brow at and challenging their lover, secretly feeling kinda smug about the fact that their imp could just float over all the obstacles.

---

“My—” Benoit bit his tongue. He had to be good and keep the terms of endearment out of his speech if he wanted to behave, but it was so *hard*...clearing his throat, he started again. “...Furin will have a little trouble performing most traditional tricks due to the whole...floating thing.” And lack of arms and legs, but that much was a given. “But, ah, a race would be good. We can also try some other things out, with some treats to encourage them.”

Luckily for them, treats weren’t hard to find at the training camp. Once they’d acquired a decent amount, they went to one of the race courses and began—but not before Benoit surreptitiously told Chouquette to let Furin win, of course. And so the race began, with both sides appearing equally serious up until halfway through the race, where Chouquette casually stopped and waited for Furin to fly ahead of it. With Benoit nodding in approval after Chouquette looked at him, the imp and owner both couldn’t make it any more obvious that they were throwing the race just so that Miori could win. Benoit, on his best behavior, didn’t look at Miori until Furin finally crossed the finish line, with Chouquette trailing after it.

“Ah, what a shame, Furin is far too agile for *mon chou*...you’ve trained them well.” Benoit said, nodding sagely. “How could I ever compare to you?”

---

Once they had set it all up Miori was excited to see the race between their two imps only to be met with disappointment. They stared at Chouquette as they looked at Benoit and then at Benoit as he not so subtly proved that this race was fixed. Furin was gonna win no matter what. To say Miori found the situation to be unexpected would be a lie, knowing full well that Benoit gladly would lay down the earth for them and then some even if it meant loss to his integrity.

Miori sighed as they grabbed Benoit by the ear the second the race was over, the result unsatisfactory. “Benoit you think yourself a slick man, but I see past your schemes. I did not win fairly, you didn’t even race me on fair terms” the glutton huffed at him. “Cheater!”

With that their race was over and neither of them were truly the winners of the race, instead Miori scolded Benoit for several minutes while their two imps entertained each other with play.