

LEVEL UP

ASPEN EXPERT

T-189: ASPEN

(Featuring T-219: Cedric)

Word Count: 655

Aspen wasn't known to be the most upstanding person around. Some might even argue that he was downright unpleasant, although it often was hard to pinpoint exactly why he was so unpleasant to most. He smiled plenty at the people around him, he held conversation and would listen well. In public he would always uphold the facade of pleasantries and it was only behind closed doors that that facade fell. The pretend interest that he showed in someones life would disappear and he found it difficult to play nice. If someone bothered him or tried to talk to him in a way he didn't like then he would be more than willing to beat them into the ground. That was, unless he was put in a dangerous situation. One where his life hung in the balance. He was currently in one such situation. Normally, with someone he rather liked he would scoff and roll his eyes to show that he didn't care to hear about their family life- to have them move onto a new topic but instead, he tried to change his expression to a dumb surprise.

"No way. Is he really? You've been taking care of him for years?" Aspen asked with a curiosity that for once, wasn't faked. The only fake part of his question was the happy-go lucky tilt that lined his voice. This news, more than anything, was horrendous news. Cedric had come down for a visit, he was here to see his lovely boyfriend whom Aspen already had... difficulties with. In the past. Then he'd began to mention a new name, one that Aspen had a history with as well.

"That's right!" Cedric absolutely beamed. He had a wide smile and leaned back into his chair, looking relaxed and content as he spoke. "He was just so small and cute back then, he grew up to still be quite cute but I've been worried about him lately. He's been looking a little roughed up the last few times I saw him."

"Oh how awful. You know who did it?" Aspen swirled a drink in his hand as Cedric scowled. The other man it seemed, didn't know who did it and their whole expression was darkening due to it. The mood of the room that had previously been light was now so thick that it was hard to breathe. Aspen did his best to try and keep breathing normally. He couldn't show a single hint of unease. Normally such a heavy air was easy for him to ignore, so if he didn't keep up his expression it would be suspicion.

"No, but the moment I do I'm sure you'll hear about it. I'm not usually keen on violence, but if someones been hurting the kid I'd gladly return everything ten fold on his behalf."

Ah yes. Aspen gave an encouraging hum. He stared at his drink for a moment longer before bringing it up to his lips to take a slow sip. "As you should. Everyone should know better than to touch someone relating to you." That included him. The young kid whom Cedric was talking about just so happened to be the very same kid who had been getting under his nerves as of late. They were an adult, old enough to take care of themselves so he hadn't thought anything of it. He'd roughed them up a few times when they stepped out of line near him- and he'd assumed that it would go the same as usual. Which is to say, he assumed that nothing would come from his antics. Yet. It was looking as if he'd accidentally landed himself in hotter water than he'd want. That young man was in a way connected to perhaps one of the more dangerous folks that Aspen had interacted with. One who would not hesitate to kill him if they found out he was the cause for their current concerns.