

(TXT to Isaac) Mackenzie: Okay, so you were right, and I was wrong. 😊

(TXT to Mackenzie) Isaac: Bout what now?

(TXT to Isaac) Mackenzie: The stupid auction thing.

(TXT to Mackenzie) Isaac: How'd that go, by the way?

(TXT to Isaac) Mackenzie: Well, they raised plenty of money for charity. And there were bids on my offer to teach some basic dance moves, for my advanced first aid, AND for an evening where I teach someone to make my enchiladas. So.. uh, someone different bought each of all three. Two of them could have been suspected might? But one of them.. I didn't even know the guy.

(TXT to Mackenzie) Isaac: So now you have more valentine's dates than you can shake a stick at, huh?

(TXT to Isaac) Mackenzie: I don't know that any of them count as dates. I don't think teaching Griffin advanced first aid counts as a date 😊 However, I did win a night of a movie marathon at the drive-in. So basically, whoever I want to invite, free popcorn and drinks and such. You'll come, right?

(TXT to Mackenzie) Isaac: What, the heimlich ain't sexy?

There's some typing, then the dots vanish for a minute.

(TXT to Mackenzie) Isaac: What movie?

(TXT to Isaac) Mackenzie: I'm not going to be teaching him that. Things like doing stitches, things more complicated than wrapping sprains in ace bandages and the like. Probably more like how to treat shock, because a lot of people get that wrong, sutures, how to immobilize.. And it's a marathon, Isaac. It's three movies. I don't have a set list, yet. I'm thinking more on the comedy side, maybe something a little actiony. Like.. The Mummy - not the one with Tom Cruise. The good one.

(TXT to Mackenzie) Isaac: A marathon? Wait, I thought you said it was a movie.

(TXT to Isaac) Mackenzie: I get to pick three movies. Triple feature. You don't have to stay for all three, if you're not into it. But it would mean a lot if you came. I'm a little excited to have a big movie party.

(TXT to Mackenzie) Isaac: Oh, hell. I got you now. A marathon like, a bunch of movies.

(TXT to Mackenzie) Isaac: I can try. Never seen the Mummy. Drive-in, huh?

(TXT to Isaac) Mackenzie: Yeah. I've got like a tent thing I can put over the bed of my truck, so I can make it all comfortable and stuff. Yeah. I've only ever been to one drive in before. And man, I love it. Top notch action/comedy/bit of romance (she's a very independent, sassy, smart type, so I love her). Is there a favorite movie you love, that you'd like to toss into the ring of consideration?

(TXT to Mackenzie) Isaac: Independent, sassy AND smart? Sounds familiar

(TXT to Isaac) Mackenzie: ... I almost might think you mean me. Smartass.

(TXT to Mackenzie) Isaac: Not as smart as the rest of me.

(TXT to Mackenzie) Isaac: Haven't seen too many movies. Don't know what to recommend. Let me think about it.

(TXT to Isaac) Mackenzie: Not enough ass to be the smartest part of you 😊 And yeah, no sweat. I would be waiting for a weekend night, anyhow. I need to find out what dancing Kelly wants to learn, and make a plan when the bartender from the Peach wants his enchilada lesson.

(TXT to Mackenzie) Isaac: Wait, what's that meant to mean?

(TXT to Isaac) Mackenzie: What, the comment about your ass?

(TXT to Mackenzie) Isaac: Yeah, you got a problem with it?

(TXT to Isaac) Mackenzie: With your ass? Not in the slightest. I was saying it's not big enough to contain all the smarts and sarcasm 😊

(TXT to Mackenzie) Isaac: When am I ever sarcastic.

(TXT to Isaac) Mackenzie: Oh please. You get all dry and sarcastic on me.

(TXT to Mackenzie) Isaac: Also, is enchilada lesson code for something?

(TXT to Isaac) Mackenzie: ... code for what? You've had my enchiladas. I offered to teach someone to make them, and share the meal.

(TXT to Mackenzie) Isaac: Sounds like a secret handshake or something for some villain's underground lair.

(TXT to Isaac) Mackenzie: I would like to think I could think up something better than making enchiladas. But you're making jokes, I like it.

(TXT to Mackenzie) Isaac: Was that a good joke? I'm trying to be less dry.

(TXT to Isaac) Mackenzie: Are you feeling okay, Isaac?

(TXT to Mackenzie) Isaac: Why wouldn't I be?

(TXT to Isaac) Mackenzie: You don't normally make jokes, about making jokes? You consider that camper offer any further?

(TXT to Mackenzie) Isaac: Wouldn't hurt to take a look at it. Not making any commitments, though.

(TXT to Isaac) Mackenzie: Okay. Give me some time to make sure I have everything out of it, and it's all cleaned up?

(TXT to Mackenzie) Isaac: Not in a rush. Take your time.

(TXT to Mackenzie) Isaac: I'm gonna go. Need to finish some things. You have a good night.

(TXT to Isaac) Mackenzie: Finish what things? It's late?

(TXT to Mackenzie) Isaac: Just some things I gotta do.

(TXT to Isaac) Mackenzie: It's not dangerous, is it?

(TXT to Mackenzie) Isaac: You have a good night, Mack.

(TXT to Isaac) Mackenzie: Isaac. Please tell me you're not doing anything dangerous alone.

(TXT to Isaac) Mackenzie: Isaac.

Mackenzie will send that, just his name, trying to get a reaction, as she pulls in at the motel. She will climb out of her truck, locking it up as she looks to check for his truck, his bike. The bike would be stupid in this weather, but.. well, stupid is what she's worried about.

The bike is parked in its usual spot, with a tarp thrown over it for the incoming inclement weather. The truck, in all its decrepit glory, is also right where it always is; there's some lumber in the cargo area, stacks of 2x4s presumably intended for some project of his up at the Ranch. So at least he's *home*-- but that doesn't necessarily preclude anything dangerous.

There's still no response to her last couple of text messages.

Well, that's clear enough, and Mackenzie will charge full steam ahead, up the steps and to Isaac's door. Her glove is stripped off, and it is bare knuckles that rap painfully hard on the door. "Isaac! Isaac, it's me. Please open the door." Though she's ready to break it down.. or bust through a window.

For a hot minute, it might appear that Isaac is in fact not at home. It's dark inside, and there's no indication of movement.

But at some point, likely around the time Mackenzie's starting to consider rash measures to remove that door from her warpath, there's a *thunk* of the latch, and it simply swings open. And he's standing there in the doorway, one big hand braced on the top of it, watching the younger woman with a strange little Mona Lisa smile. "Hey," he murmurs, the drawl a little more pronounced than usual. "Whatcha doin' here?" She might or might not notice his pupils are blown wide, and he's stripped down to a faded tee shirt over dark cargo pants. "You should go home. Bad weather." He looks skyward, seeming to get distracted for a moment by the few stars visible through the haze of approaching stormclouds.

She looks up into his face, noting the pupils, the exaggerated drawl, the hand on the top of the door. "I'm here to see you, of course." She will attempt to slip inside him, brushing up past him, if she must. "You ignored my texts, and I just.. I had a bad feeling." Instincts? Mackenzie?

He doesn't really try to stop her from barging in. This seems to be turning into a theme for him, which might amuse him later. For now, he goes to shut and latch the door, and watches the younger woman drift into his motel room while still talking to him.

"Told you I had some things to do," he tells her, trailing along after. The place is clean and tidy as always, save for a bag of lollipops spilled on the table, and a neatly folded surgical mask beside it. Absently, he steps past her to begin picking up handfuls of the candy and tossing it back into the bag. "Real nice of you to check on me, but I'm fine. As you can see."

<System> <FS3> Mackenzie rolls Athletics: Success (7 5 4 4 4 2)

She will pause at the sight on the table. When he goes to start cleaning up candy, she will reach to grab his arm, to turn him and force him to look at her. Blue eyes will study his face, especially his eyes. "Holy fuck, are you _high_?? Are you seriously rolling on Molly like some stupid fucking club kid?!?!"

There's no real resistance to his arm being snagged, save the slight firming of muscle beneath her fingers in a sort of faltering startle reflex. He resists focusing on her eyes, of course, but that's nothing new. "What? No. No. Just--" He tries to wrench his arm away, but isn't truly putting much effort into it. "--just relaxing a little. You gonna start policing my spare time? Or--" He makes a moue with his mouth. "You want some?" One of the lollipops is plucked from the pile, and the plastic wrapper plucked off so he can slide the candy into his mouth.

She will reach over, picking up the mask to take a sniff, sure she will smell mentholated rub. "This.. You.. I thought you'd just been drinking, but.. " She lets go of his arm, staring up at him. "Relaxing? Try pot, or a massage, or a hot tub. This shit.. even for us, it has to be bad news."

Isaac might be able to hear her heart pounding a bit faster in her chest. "Good. Candy. Keep the teeth from grinding. I know all the tricks, the tells. This shit is .. fuck. Isaac." Her hand lifts, to rub ever so gently against his cheek. Softness, soft things, soft touches.. she knows the drills. "Isaac.. how long have you been doing this?" Her voice is pitched low, quiet.

ding, ding, ding That would be the correct answer. Clearly Isaac was not expecting company tonight, or he'd likely not have had the evidence of his miscreance out in the open like this. "Drinking?" The corners of his eyes crease with a smile like he can't seem to manage while sober. "No, that's for later." The lollipop is cracked in half with his teeth, chewed and swallowed, and he's about to go for another one when she touches his face. The contact makes his whole body still and his lashes sink low, until there's only a sliver of gold at their dark, dark fringe.

Then he makes a pleased, rumbling sound in his throat that's far more canid than human, and rubs his cheek gently against her palm. "Hmm?" He doesn't seem to understand the question at first. After running it through his head a few times, he replies softly, "The molly? Don't know. Awhiles. Not as long as the other things." She can feel him smile again. "I ever tell you how good you smell?"

Mack will use his distraction, pulling him in closer to hug, to hold. Her other hand rubbing against his back, soft and slow. Snuggling in up against him. "What other things, honey?" She's still speaking so soft, quiet. "...no? I mean, you told me you liked the perfume oil I mixed up, but.." Her head will tip back, looking up at him with those blue eyes trying to find gold.

All of that nervous, terrified energy from being a wild animal trapped in a human body is-- absent. Or at least, heavily muted while under the influence. So he practically climbs into her arms, enfolding her against his larger frame like he did the other evening, digging his fingers into her fair hair. More of those low, warm growly noises as she rubs his back and speaks to him in soft tones.

He's reluctant, still, to meet her eyes when she pulls back to gaze up at him. Moreso perhaps because focusing on her seems difficult. "Don't matter," he murmurs. Then squeezes his eyes shut and gives a short, sharp shake of his head as if to clear it. "You should, you better go home. I'll be fine. I am fine." He leans down to press a kiss to the top of her head.

Her heart has slowed a bit, and those blue eyes have lost that terrified look. She makes a soft little sighing sound when his fingers find her hair again. "Mmm, it matters to me." Her hands still rub and stroke along his back, over to his sides, then along his spine again.

"Mmm don't wanna drive home just yet. Let me stay just a little bit? I like it when you play with my hair like that." She's practically whispering, even as she will take a step back, her hands on

his back to try and pull him along with her towards his bed. "Will you do it some more? It feels really good."

His lips twitch when she makes that little sound, like it was somehow unexpected. So he does it again, but this time more slowly; trails those weathered, calloused fingers through her silky hair, marveling at how much more fair it is than his nut brown skin. "Okay," he tells her, imitating her near whisper. "Just a little bit."

And he allows himself to be drawn along, seeking the contact he's craving. She can feel muscle under the thin layer of tee shirt; he's nowhere near ripped, but he's leaner than his usual layers of clothing suggest. He's also got a fine network of what look like track marks scored along the inside of both arms, in various stages of healing and recency.

"Come sit with me, and play with my hair? It's so nice and relaxing. Please?" She's still, slowly, stepping back, trying to guide him along with her to the bed. When Isaac is sober again, he may realize she clearly has to have had some experience with people rolling on Molly. The softness, the warmth, the gentle guidance. "I feel so safe when I'm with you, and when you play with my hair, it feels so warm, like I could just melt into a curled up puddle."

Well, when she asks him like **that**, he seems only too willing to comply. Except he's all thumbs and left feet at the moment, a very far cry from his usual animal grace. So he briefly gets tangled up with her, and unless she manages to salvage it, sends them both sprawling onto his bed. He laughs, kisses her hair again, and rolls over onto his back with one leg draped off the side and his golden eyes searching her face hazily.

"I know you don't need protecting. Can take care of yourself. Don't mean I can't try, though." A few strands of blonde hair are tucked out of her eyes and behind her ear.

Considering getting him to lay down on the bed was her entire goal, she doesn't try too very hard to keep them upright. She giggles with him, her hands still touching, gentle and careful. She will roll with him, sliding herself up against his side. Blue eyes watch his face, his eyes.

"I don't mind you trying, you know. So long as you don't put yourself in harm's way to do it, you know? I just wish you'd give me the same leeway to care about you." She murmurs, blue eyes almost closing as her strokes her hair back behind her ear. "This is nice. I like this." She means the cuddling, of course.

The bedsheets are clean and freshly washed, and there are a couple of afghans, both of them hand-knitted out of warm, contrasting colours and geometric patterns. The style is what some would call **chinle**, based on Navajo designs. Unless Isaac has some skills he hasn't mentioned before, he probably didn't make them.

"Not stupid," he tells her gently, going back to stroking her hair when she closes her eyes. "You know that was my job. Find people. Keep 'em safe. Even them as don't want to be found." A

smile flickers into existence for a moment. And briefly, the calloused pad of his thumb grazes her temple, and then traces the shell of her ear. His body is warm where it's pressed against hers-- almost too warm, like his system is running too fast. And yet there's a fine tremble that she can pick up on whenever he touches her, like he's simultaneously cold.

Mackenzie will lean in, a brush of lips to just along his jawline, not quite making it to his cheek. Mack may try to tug an afghan over their legs (hers and his one), but she knows nothing of designs, so she does not know the tribe of origin. All she knows is she has Isaac where she was hoping to get him, hoping to keep him still and safe and warm.

"Like you found me." She murmurs. She will lay her head on his shoulder, watching his profile. "You maybe had a little help, but you found me. Gave me something to hold onto, when I felt alone and adrift." She confesses, in that quiet, quiet voice. Her hand will shift, stroking over his chest.

His skin has long lost the softness of youth; there are lines where he's smiled in years past, and lines where gravity has started to pull him down, like it eventually does with everyone. And, of course, that curious titanium earring piercing his left earlobe; cool in contrast to his warm skin.

As she tucks her head against him, he allows his eyes to close and his profile to sit in sharp relief. Nobody in their right mind would call him pretty; there's something too feral, too unfinished about him. Like something carved from stone, but abandoned with all his rough edges and predatory aspect intact. "Like I found you," he agrees in a barely audible murmur. There's that rough little rumble in his throat again when she runs her hand over his chest.

Possibly he'd meant to say more, but instead he seems to have simply dozed off in the middle of his thought.

At some point in the night, Mackenzie had been lulled to sleep, perhaps by his warmth, his slumbering breathing. But she's more used to sleeping alone, these days, and at some point will curl up and face away from the other coyote.

The woman stirring beside him doesn't seem enough to wake Isaac. But then, who knows what all he'd been taking before Mackenzie showed up. He dozes on, somewhat fitfully, but oblivious for the time being.

Normally, Mackenzie still wakes several times a night, unsettled by the newness of the cabin surroundings. But it seems, perhaps she'd been worried and tired from thinking about Isaac, the marks at the crook of his arms, the molly, god only knows what else. Because even as that golden sunlight starts to illuminate the hotel room, the blonde is still in his bed.

She had, at some point, rolled back over and cuddled into the warmth of him, having lost most of the afghan cover she'd tried to pull over them, earlier. That scent of sun-warmed fur, the clean smell of salt water, something vaguely sweet, and just a touch of sandalwood, with that

perfume oil with notes of vanilla, clove and spices he's mentioned liking before, will possibly rise to his senses.

There's definitely something.. off. Something that scratches at his subconscious, even as he's starting to rouse from sleep. Since when does his place smell like-- well, Mackenzie?

Turning his head, Isaac tries to process what he's seeing: the tousled blonde beside him, curled up against him like they'd just spent the night-- oh, god. At least he doesn't shove her unceremoniously out of his bed. No, just a careful attempt to extricate himself without waking her, despite the mattress's traitorous *creeeeeeak*.

There's the line between her brows, first, a mildly grumpy expression as she starts to wake. Blue eyes are still drowsy, cracking open. There's a single, slow blink, before her head lifts to look at him, cheeks lightly flushed still from sleep. "Isaac." Her voice is low, husky.. "You okay?" She'll ask, but trying to prop herself will assure him that the blonde coyote is still dressed, at least.

He freezes, going stock still when he spots that flutter of lashes. As if, by pretending to be a statue, he can fool her into going back to sleep.

But no such luck as she rouses, and invokes his name. "Mack," he returns, voice rough like he's been gargling gravel. He sinks back against the bed, running his palms over his face. "Head's killing me." A beat, and then he decides to venture, "What're you doin' in my bed?" Hard to say how much he remembers of the night prior, given how high he was.

<System> Mackenzie spends a luck point on Because it'll be funny. .

<System> <FS3> Mackenzie rolls Influence: Good Success (7 7 7 6 4 4 2 1)

There's a moment, when she starts to speak, before he's venturing that question about why she's in his bed. Her tongue will run over her teeth, before she will scoot out of his bed, and well, she lost boots, jacket, and her sweater along the way, but that cami is still on. She'll head for the sink, getting two glasses of water, though she'll drain hers, before she heads back towards him.

Fingers go through blonde hair, as blue eyes will run over his face. "So.. you don't.. you don't remember?" She even sounds almost.. hurt. Just the tiniest of tremors on the last word, setting the water down in his easy reach, as blue eyes will avoid golden ones, and her cheeks burn hotter with flush. "I.. " She glances towards him, still avoiding his eyes before she turns away. "I don't get it, you weren't drunk. You don't remember getting naked.. or touching me.. or anything?" She swallows hard enough for it to be audible, and he can see that posture slumping down just a touch from that normal perfect line of shoulders.

Isaac's a little too out of it to even try to track the younger woman's departure from his bed. He struggles to pull himself upright, wincing as the pain in his head spikes with his movement. And then, somewhat belatedly, her words seem to hit him. One, two at a time and then all at once.

He looks completely confused-- the glazed-over look in his eyes vying with a dawning horror that he might have-- but how? He looks down at himself quickly. Yep, still dressed. Though he stumbles to his feet to go track down something to pull over his tee shirt. Beat up old zip-front hoodie'll do. It takes him a couple of tries to tug it on, back kept to the blonde. "I-- I'm sorry, I don't.."

Mackenzie has her head ducked a bit, and even when he does turn around, she won't look at him. "Drink your water." No, her voice is tight, and there may even be a hitch in her breathing as she moves to grab her sweater to pull on over her head, before she tugs her hair out from under it, sending another wave of her scent from the tousled blonde waves.. which definitely has some of that lingering desert and cigarette scent mixed in from his hand playing with it. "You.. you don't remember /kissing me/?" He had, after all. More than once. Just.. not one of passion, but more like protective, to her hair and the top of her head.

The order gets a slight narrowing of eyes, and another beat of pause. As if he has to make it clear that he doesn't jump to obey.

But the guidance is sound: water's what he needs right now. Shuffling for the kitchen, he manages to find a glass and fills it from the faucet before downing it all in a few swallows. "Remember you showin' up at my door. Cause you wouldn't take no for an answer." He swipes his knuckles across his mouth, keeping his eyes on her. Then a shake of his head. "I was--" Then he spots the spilled bag of candy on the table. And his gut twists as he realises she already knows.

He leans back heavily against the counter. "I don't remember what we did."

"Oh, so now that you're not rolling on Molly, you won't even drink from the glass of water I got you? Last night you were telling me how good I smell, and more than happy to get in bed with me. But now.." She glances at him, barely making it to his chin. "Wouldn't take no for an answer? You didn't even try to say no. So when you're high, I'm good enough to touch and.. and now, you want it back to status quo?" Mack will sit down on the edge of the bed, to start pulling on her boots. Her hands will come up, elbows on her knees, burying her face in her hands.

"What's gotten inna you?" he fires back, perhaps a little more sharply than is usually his wont. It's nowhere even *close* to him raising his voice; there's just that slight *edge* to his normally deep, even-keeled drawl.

The glass is set on the counter, and his thumb and forefinger dug into his temples like it'll help banish the headache. "I'm real sorry. I shouldn't've spoke like that. I just-- don't remember what happened." Absently he watches her pull her boots on, then pushes away from the counter

slowly when she covers her face in her hands. What the hell to do? He makes his way over and sinks down beside her, unsure of how to respond. And feeling, roughly, like death warmed over.

<System> <FS3> Mackenzie rolls Healer: Success (8 7 5 4 3 3 3 1 1)

"Into me?" Is choked out, and she still refuses to look at him. When he sits on the bed beside her, there's a tension, not quite a wince. One hand comes away from her face, and is held in front of her, palm up. She's just staring at it a moment.

"I shouldn't be nice. I shouldn't care." She will move her hand, to rest fingertips to the side of his face. It will feel weird, startling at first, a building warmth that will bring tingles up and down his spine. His whole body will feel it, like a warm light spreading through him. There may be a brief moment where his stomach feels queasy, there and gone in a moment. Then that splitting headache will lessen. The aches and pains, the general bogged down feeling of the hangover, will leave him.

The touch to his face is unexpected, and Mackenzie knows by now what that means: he jerks away from it on instinct, breath coming out in a short, sharp *huff*. Well, at least he didn't try to hit her this time.

"What're you doin--" The initial prickling, crawling, almost electric sensation has his heart rate shooting up and his whole body tensing. Then a sound in his throat like a guttural growl; not even remotely human, that sound. Should she glance up at him, a pair of long, knife-sharp canines have erupted from his jaw, and there's no white left in his eyes. He's gripping his hands like he's trying to massage feeling into them, as if they've gone numb.

And then the healing hits, and his headache fades from a dull roar to a niggling ache, and some of his general malaise seems to lift a little. He places his hands on his thighs, breathing heavily, silent.

"Now you know what I was doing." She will say, and she will look at him, finally. Blue eyes are dark, emotional. "Maybe you should be a little more moderate in your use of Molly. You're not some stupid fucking club kid, Isaac." She swallows hard again, and when she pulls the laces of her left boot, she pulls too hard, too tight, one snapping in her hand.

There's curse words in Spanish, before she's on her feet, marching towards her jacket. "I know I can't make you quit. Not the molly, not the heroin,.. not whatever else you're doing to.. relax." She whirls to face him, and her eyes are tortured. "But can I ask you to be careful? Please? I.. I know I haven't known you very long, okay? I'm aware of that, logically. But.. it would hurt me, deeply, if you were suddenly gone."

His jaw's tight, and he keeps his mouth shut for the time being until -- hopefully -- those canines decide to retract on their own. It'll be painful, but this? This is worse.

When the laces snap, he glances down at her boot. Then back up again slowly. "You don't know me well as you think you do, Mack. You ain't been in my shoes, so you can save the lecture. Think I can manage takin' care of myself." His mouth twitches slightly when she asks him to be careful, but he doesn't respond to that.

That may not be the best way to address her, in this moment. "No, I've never been in your shoes. I've also never been so high on Molly I couldn't tell you if I fucked someone in my own bed the night before." She will start to advance towards him, and there's a glint in blue eyes that isn't the amber-gold of her coyote.

"And clearly you can't take care of yourself, or you would have cleaned up the candy and the mask before I got in here." Her voice goes from harsh and growling, to almost satin soft. "Did you forget where I come from? Did you think I wouldn't know?" Her fingers reach out again, to try stroking his cheek. She will bend to look him in his face, try to catch his eyes. "I could have had you any way I wanted you last night." Still so softly spoken. "All I would have had to do is touch you, and ask. You came to your bed with me very, very willingly. I just didn't want you, while you were higher than a god damned kite. I'm not giving you a lecture. I'm asking you to try for moderation. Please." She will sink down on her knees, looking up at him.

"It ain't your *business*," Isaac interjects when she gets to *so high on Molly*, his quiet voice underscored again with a hint of that chained aggression. Like a thread woven through him, and visible only when the light hits it right. He doesn't give an answer for the mask, the bag of candy that's still scattered atop his table. How high *was* he last night? It was almost certainly more than just the MDMA.

He's in no mood, however, to look her in the eye. The touch to his cheek makes his mouth twitch like he's going to bare those sharp canines at her-- but the instinct's held in check. And then the rest of it, the humiliation of hearing he was some docile, pliant thing that flies in the face of all his efforts to close himself *off* from people.

"I want you to leave," is all she gets, in that same low, taut voice when she drops to her knees in front of him.

"It ain't my business?" Mack asks, and her face is incredulous. "I'm sorry, what was that? You don't remember the conversation at all either, I suppose. Telling me about your old job. Finding people, even those that didn't want to be found. Keeping them safe..." She trails off a moment, still looking up at him. "Like you found me. Like you made me feel safe. You claimed me, Isaac, not the other way around. Don't tell me you're not my business, when you made yourself my business." That voice is still soft, and there's a tremble. Should he risk a glance, he'll see moisture building in those blue eyes of hers.

"You let me touch you, last night. Nothing sexual, that was acting, I wanted to see how high you really were last night. I don't think it was just Molly, but that's the only _proof_ I saw." Her hand will move, try to gently touch the crook of his elbow. "You let me see a little bit more of you. I

don't know what you were afraid of, but it's not like I'm running anywhere. I just don't want to lose you. Please. Just tell me you'll try and be careful. I'm not trying to mother you, Isaac. But I care about you, and you _can't_ stop that, as much as you might want to. You can keep pushing me away, and growling and snapping at me.. but I'm not buying it."

Her hand will rub over his knees, before she pushes to her feet. "You want to show me how okay you are? How much you don't need any caring for? Make me." Her voice is even, calm, steady. Almost detached. "Bare your fangs at me, Isaac. Show me those all gold eyes. I know what it looks like, when we start treading too close to the line of losing control. I've done it in front of you, once, after all."

<System> <FS3> Isaac rolls Composure: Great Success (8 8 8 8 6 6 5 4 1)

Mention of his old 'job', his time in the Army that seems a lifetime away now, earns her an unreadable look. Cool, though not quite *cold*. But it's the tears glossing her eyes that melt away some of the ice, in spite of himself. Then she reveals there was *nothing sexual* that happened, and a good deal of the brittle tension in his shoulders softens and erodes. He runs his fingers through his hair, his mussed braids.

But then his eyes tick up again when she touches his knee and pulls to her feet. The rest of him stays put; just those bright golden eyes track the younger woman with that predator's glint in them. "You're tryin' to rile me up. She can sense his breathing, his heart rate: steady, measured. All of him maddeningly calm. "But I ain't going to give you what you want. Need you to leave.

<System> <FS3> Mackenzie rolls Composure: Success (6 6 5 5 4 2 1)

<System> <FS3> Mackenzie rolls Influence: Good Success (8 8 8 6 3 2 1 1)

Oh, she sees that tension fade, the line of his shoulders softening, and that gloss of tears is back, and he can hear her heartbeat shift. "Wow. So it was all bullshit, the whole you being in a bad spot, and you think I can do better. If the idea of being with me gets you that tensed up, it was all bull. And to think I thought you were the sort to shoot from the hip, and not bother with pretty lies." One traitorous tear escapes to skip down her cheek, before she will take a deep breath. He can almost feel the strength of will the other coyote will summon to shove all of that down, though she can not completely banish the sheen in blue eyes.

"And I need you to talk to me. So it looks like you've got a choice." She'll take a step back, keeping her body loose, not letting tension take hold. "Not trying to rile you. I'm trying to show you that you are not _nearly_ as good at taking care of yourself as you want others to think. I think, in your current state despite my efforts, that you couldn't make a brand new shifter give way to you. It's either that, or cry, because you don't even give a shit if you hurt me." And oh yes, that tone, while still soft spoken and calm... is just subtly taunting him.

<System> <FS3> Isaac rolls Composure: Great Success (8 8 7 7 6 4 4 3 1)

The older coyote watches her throughout all of this. Still. Silent. As ever, the stone in the midst of a raging flood. The river may overflow its banks, but he'll still be standing there resolute.

"Don't need to make nobody give way to me, Mackenzie." There's a touch of something like melancholy in his voice. Like he had some rare and lovely bird in his hand, just for a moment; and then it flew away. "Least of all you." He looks off to the side for a few seconds, and she can see his adam's apple when he swallows thickly. "Don't mean t'hurt you, neither. But I do need you to leave. Now."

She'll snort at him, and there's a flush in her cheeks now, darkening the blue color of her eyes. "Then why do you? You seem to hurt me rather often, if you don't actually mean to, or want to." Her voice thickens, just a bit.

"Maybe I need you to make me give way. Prove to me that you don't care, and that I shouldn't care about you. Show me that the words of the high man, were not the thoughts of the sober one. Because I've found that's more often true, than not. People under the influence, can't seem to lie very well." That seems true enough, her voice rings with it.

"I want to understand, Isaac. What drives you to this?" Her hand waves at the table. "Do I need to beg you talk to me? I _want_ to know you. Why do you always push me away so hard? What scares you so much about _me_ of all people?"

"Reckon I've told you my thoughts before, and they didn't sit too well with you." He's referring, perhaps, to his confession of being attracted to her.

Then he eases onto his feet. Slowly, experimentally, since the headache's not **entirely** gone, and starts hunting for where he left his phone. The remainder of her questions are left unanswered. Instead, "You ever want some chance of seein' me again. You will do like I told you, and get the fuck out of my room." It's only a slight turn of his head to face her, but those inhumanly bright golden eyes seek out her blues, and don't relinquish them until Mackenzie herself looks away.

"You think you wanna rile me up. See what I'm really like." One corner of his mouth twitches again; his speech remains slow, smooth, a restrained growl. "But you ain't got the slightest idea." He snags his phone, and holds it up to her. "Now you leave. Or I'm gonna have to get Marcus to come take you home." And, well, the Alsatian is rather less restrained than Isaac.

<System> <FS3> Mackenzie rolls Grit: Success (8 5 3 1)

<System> <FS3> Mackenzie rolls Athletics: Success (6 5 3 3 3 3)

"What the fuck are you talking about, not sitting too well with me?" Mackenzie sounds frustrated, her hands gesturing. "You being in a bad spot? I don't.. what thoughts, Isaac? The only thing

you've ever said, that didn't sit well with me, is that I could _do better_ than you. I still disagree with that."

Blue will hold gold ones for longer than he anticipated, perhaps, as she steps forward. "I'm desperate to find a way to reach you. Rile you, beg you, whatever the fuck I have to do." Her jaw clenches a moment, chin tipping up. "I have a sliver of an idea, Isaac St. Marie. Though I am pretty sure that's not even the truth, to be honest with you. "

She'll glance away to his phone, before she's _laughing_, a full throated sound of bitter amusement. "Go ahead, call Marcus. And then I can tell the worried Marine why it is you're so fucking twitchy and not as strong as you should be. Do you think I don't know he worries about you, cares about you? Do you think when I went to him that time for help, that his worry for you didn't show?" She'll lift her brows. "For a man so determined not to have people worry or care about him, seems you've got a few, big guy. Hate to break it to you."

She will grab her jacket, before she's darting towards the table, to try and snag that mask, some of the candy, to take with her.

Still no answers to her questions, and no clear sign that she's getting under his skin, either. The coyote's still as a shadow in the unlit motel room. Only a slight motion of his head to follow her movements, causing sunlight to glint off his eyes and his earring. The phone's still held loose in his hand, and there's deceptive laxity in his posture; in truth, he's every inch the predator who's well aware that she's the very same.

Briefly there's an urge to stop her from grabbing the 'evidence', but it isn't acted upon. He goes instead to sink back down on the edge of his bed, and fidget mindlessly with his phone.

She'll head for the door, the only evidence of her emotions in the heaviness of her usually light tread. "Talk to Marcus, please?" She'll try one last appeal, even as she undoes the latch and lock.

She'll turn to look at him, her hand on the doorknob. "I want to care about you, Isaac. I offered it to you, even if you don't want it. I know how to not hold on too tight, you know, and understand you have need to be alone more than I do. But I.. you're killing yourself, and the next time could be the last time. If you don't care about what that does to me, think about the fact it would hurt Marcus, others on the ranch. I'm not the only one who took a quick fondness to you, despite your best efforts."

"I don't want to lose anyone else to that shit." The words come out, sounding as breathless as if the wind had been knocked out of her. She finally loses that grip on emotions, and the tears start to slip past her lashes. "Who else is going to roll his eyes at me and tell me I don't know anything, if you're gone?" The ache she feels makes those words unsteady. "Please talk to Marcus. Someone. I don't.. I don't _want_ to tell Marcus, you know. It would feel like I was

betraying you. But I'd rather you hate me, hell, hunt me, even, than you get some shitty Molly, or the other stuff you're doing.. and you're not even on the planet anymore."

No response. Nothing. He continues turning the phone around and around in his hands, soothed by the mindless motion. Maybe she'll spot the sheen of tears in his eyes, or maybe she won't. But he's clearly got nothing more to say.

"Fucking _SAY SOMETHING_, god damn you. Don't you fucking dare give me the cold shoulder silent treatment. I came last night because I was afraid for you, and I didn't know why. I _Don't deserve_ you acting like I've wronged you, and what's worse, is you know it." She shoves her hands in her coat pockets, freeing them of candy and mask. One curls around her phone, the other around her keys.

"Don't turn me back into the worst version of me." The words are whispered, broken, before there's a sob of sound. It's almost like she can't keep standing, sinking to her knees, turning her head to hide her face against the door. "Please, please, please.. I'm not strong enough to claw my way out again... Isaac.. please!" The words are sobbed out, and it's like she can't catch her breath. He'll hear her struggle for long moments, before her right hand will let go of her phone, reaching blindly for the doorknob to pull herself up. "Fucking hell.."