

The sound of muffled music and laughter drifts through the dimly lit room, the atmosphere electric with the buzz of a night in Burrowgatory's movie scene in full swing by this time. Neon lights flicker through the windows, casting shifting colors over the plush velvet furniture and the polished marble floor.

Inque sits poised on the edge of an overstuffed couch, her dark black hair cascading in waves over one shoulder, her silver dress shimmering like liquid moonlight—it's different than what she usually wears; usually clad in all black. Her eyes, lined with kohl and smudged with secrets, follow the figure pacing before her.

It's Narcissus, her dear little toy in striking in his tailored suit, moving with a restless energy. His tousled blond hair catches the dim light in the party room each time he shuffles, and his sharp features are set in a frown.

He pauses, finally meeting Inque's gaze.

"You know," he starts, a mix of irritation and longing in his voice, "this isn't exactly how I imagined things going when I met you for the first time."

Inque's lips curve into a knowing smile, her eyes glinting with mischief. "Oh, darling, what did you imagine? That you'd waltz into my life, and I'd just hand you the keys to stardom? ... We've been over this, love. That's not how things go in my world."

He scoffs, running a hand through his hair. His teeth catch on his bottom lip. "I thought I'd at least get more than a handful of club appearances and a few paparazzi shots."

"Oh, poor you. So jealous." She laughs, a low, sultry sound that sends a shiver down his spine even despite his frustration. "You've gotten plenty, and you know it. Or have you forgotten the parties, the limelight, the perks of being seen with me? That's more than you could ever get yourself!"

Narcissus's eyes narrow. "I'm not just here for the perks, Inque. I have *talent*. I could *be* someone!"

Her smile fades, and for a moment, something tender flashes in her gaze before she masks it with her usual nonchalance. “And you think I don’t see that? You think I keep you around just for the fun of it?”

Drugs and alcohol are littered where she sits. Maybe that’s just—that’s just those things talking, for her. But still—

He hesitates, the vulnerability in her tone catching him off guard. “Sometimes, I wonder. Because you don’t show me that you care. You just switched up. You’re so cruel sometimes, and then you expect me to believe you when you say something like that?”

Inque stands, the movement graceful and deliberate, and closes the distance between them. She places a lovely hand on his chest, feeling the rapid beat of his heart beneath her palm. “Narcissus,” she purrs, her voice softening to something equal parts tender and dangerous. It’s true. He can’t trust her. “I do have a... certain special fondness for you.”

His breath catches, and he searches her eyes for the sincerity he craves. “Prove it,” he challenges, his voice barely more than a whisper.

She tilts her head, her expression inscrutable. Then, with a suddenness that leaves him breathless, she pulls him into a kiss. It’s fierce, almost desperate, and it leaves him reeling. He can taste the alcohol on her tongue. When they part, her lips are curved into a mischievous smile once more, but her eyes betray a deeper emotion.

“There,” she says, her voice husky. “Consider that a down payment.”

Narcissus blinks, caught between the dizzying effect of her kiss and the weight of her words. “You’re... impossible, you know that?” He says weakly.

Inque’s laughter fills the room, light and airy, a stark contrast to the tension hanging between them. “And you’re insatiable... that envy of yours. It’s part of why I like you.”

He grins, the familiar banter easing the knot in his chest despite the unease still lurking there... “So, what now? More parties? More fleeting fame?”

Inque's gaze softens, and she takes his hand, guiding him elsewhere. "Maybe," she says, her tone thoughtful. "But maybe... something more."

He raises an eyebrow, curiosity piqued. "More?"

She leans in, her lips brushing his fluffy bun ear as she whispers, "I've been working on a new project. A film. And maybe... just maybe, I want you in it. Your first *big break*."

Narcissus pulls back, eyes wide with surprise. "You're serious?"

Inque nods, her smile... genuine? Wicked. He can't tell with her. Maybe he's drunk, too, from her taste. "Serious enough to risk it all on you."

He swallows hard, the weight of her words sinking in. "Why now?"

Her gaze locks with his, unflinching. "Because I believe in you. And because, despite everything, you've stuck around... but you'll have to work hard for it. For me."

"Maybe I just like the view." He smirks, the familiar bravado returning... and then, his voice breaks slightly. "I'll work for it."

She laughs again. "That's what I like to hear."

Narcissus feels a warmth spread through him, a mix of hope and gratitude and absolute terror. "T.. thank you, Inque. I won't let you down."

Inque's smile turns sly. "You'd better not. Because if you do, I'll make sure you never forget it."

Narcissus's heart pounds in his chest as Inque's words hang in the air, the underlying threat sharp and undeniable. He watches her closely, his mind racing. The warmth from her touch and the remnants of their kiss linger, mingling with a creeping unease.

Inque leads him through the opulent room on a whimsy, past clusters of famous buns lost in their revelry. Her hand is firm and possessive on his wrist, guiding him with an authority he can't resist. They pass by a table littered with

empty glasses and half-finished lines of some sort of drugs, a stark reminder of the hedonistic world they inhabit. The neon lights flicker and dance over them, casting eerie shadows.

As they enter a more secluded area, the noise fades to a dull hum. Inque releases his wrist and turns to face him, her expression a mix of excitement and something darker. "This film, Narcissus," she begins, her voice low and intense, "it's going to be different. It's going to push boundaries."

Narcissus nods, trying to steady his breathing. "I'm ready for it, Inque. I'll do whatever it takes."

Her eyes gleam with a predatory glint. "Good. Because this isn't just about acting. It's about becoming. Losing yourself in the role."

He swallows hard, a shiver running down his spine. "What do you mean?"

Inque steps closer, her figure curvy and lovely, her fingers trailing up his chest to rest lightly on his neck.

"I need you to give me everything. To trust me completely. There will be moments where you'll feel like you're drowning, like you're losing your grip on reality. But you'll have to hold on to me. Do you understand?"

Narcissus's throat tightens, and he nods slowly. "I... I understand."

A wicked smile spreads across her lips. "Good. Because if you don't, it won't just be your career on the line. It might just be your soul."

He blinks, taken aback by the severity of her words. Wasn't that... a little dramatic? "My soul?"

Inque's grip tightens slightly on his neck, just enough to make his pulse quicken. "Yes, your soul. This isn't just a film, Narcissus. It's an experience. A transformation. You'll emerge from it changed, reborn."

Narcissus's mind races, the weight of her words pressing down on him. He searches her eyes for any hint of jest, but finds only a cold, dangerous determination. "And what about you? What will you give?"

She leans in, her breath warm against his ear. “Everything. Just like you.”

He exhales shakily, the gravity of the situation settling in. “Then I’ll do it. I’ll give you everything.”

Inque’s smile is triumphant, her eyes gleaming with a dangerous light. “That’s what I like to hear.”

She releases him and steps back, her demeanor shifting from predatory to almost affectionate. “We start tomorrow. Be ready. This is what you’ve always wanted... *right?*”

“Right.” Narcissus nods, his resolve firm despite the lingering fear. “I’ll be ready.”

As Inque turns to leave, she pauses, glancing back at him with a look that sends a chill down his spine. “Remember, Narcissus. I believe in you.”

She smiles sweetly. Almost like she means it.

He watches her walk away, her silhouette a stark contrast against the flickering neon lights. The weight of her words presses down on him, but beneath the fear, a spark of determination ignites. He’s been given a chance, a dangerous, intoxicating chance, and he won’t squander it.

The night stretches on, the party continuing its chaotic dance around him. But for Narcissus, everything has changed. He’s no longer just a toy in Inque’s world; he’s a player in a high-stakes game, where the rewards are as intoxicating as the risks are lethal.

...Right?

He takes a deep breath, the air thick with the scent of alcohol and desire, and steels himself for what’s to come. Inque has shown him a glimpse of the path ahead, and despite the danger, he feels a thrill of excitement. He’s ready to dive into the abyss, to lose himself and be reborn, all for a chance at stardom and something more—something real.

And in that dangerous, electric moment, Narcissus knows that he'll either rise to the challenge or be consumed by it. But either way, he's ready to face whatever Inque throws his way.