“Is he gone? Are you well again?” Shani’s words cut into my soul. I frowned. I walked past her.

“Call Vanessa, that idiot cut my hand.” I had to see Mel. I had to see Dad. I trusted Olivia. I’d get advice from her and work my way to Amanda.

“Of course!” Shani jumped and ran to a tablet mounted on a nearby wall. It wasn’t Frankie who answered but I didn’t care. There were big doors ahead and I was near certain that was sunlight coming through their circular windows. I walked like I knew where I was going.

I had fog in my head. There were images and instances in my brain but nothing was coming out smooth. I boomed out into a small walled in garden.

“Shhh!” Rena snapped at me. The baby in her arms erupted into terror and screams. The bottom fell out of my stomach and my knees shook. I ran ahead and sat on a stone bench across from her.

“Shhh, Lawrence, shhh.” She whispered and shook him. The baby slowly returned to calmness. I was very proud of how loud the little demon belched. “How bad did you--did he take it?”

I took a long drawn out breath. My hands were clammy and Rena was one of the good ones, wasn’t she? Oh no. I started breathing too hard. I leaned to my left and grabbed the edge of the bench.

“Brian? What’s wrong?” She was bouncing my son and I couldn’t keep a breath in my lungs. I shook my head.

“Didn’t take the pills. Remembered.” I coughed out. I--

“Oh my God!” Rena moved smoothly with the baby but it was a near hurry for her to get next to me. “This is Lawrence. He’s going to be the big brother. You blacked out before you met him.”

She wanted to hand him to me but I had to swear off with the mess I had made of my hand. Seeing his face, having him so near to me. I pulled myself out of my attack. I was sweating but I was breathing now.

“What happened? Did they let you out because you tried to kill yourself?” Rena worried.

“I broke the TV.” I replied. “I had a little flash of what to say. Shani was--”

“She must be over the moon!” Rena grinned. I was shocked. “Garth wanted to up his dose so he could confront you. Shani talked him down when Olivia wasn’t getting through. He just grabbed her by the brain. Grabbed Shani, I mean. There’s a part of her, that wants all of us to be a family, not king and queens of some elaborate empire.”

“You sure?” I smiled. I took a long calm breath. I looked through the door I had just stormed out of. There were similar ones to my front and left. An archway opened to the island. I could see the shape of Casa de Tanner along the way. “Where am I?”

“The House of Love and Family.” Rena grinned. “The only place on the island where there aren’t any whores. Or at least, there aren’t supposed to be.”

I looked up along with her and saw the incoming cart. The tanned redhead was likely the doctor I had called for. The girl at her side was probably a nurse. I waved, and looked to Rena.

“I think I called for them.” I admitted.

“Called them here?” Rena frowned. “Shani probably told everyone you’re not who you promised us you’d be.”

“Damn,” I said with a smirk. “I never knew I’d be so happy to break a promise.”

“You’re happy?” Rena had the sweetest smile. I still had a moment of culture shock. Rena was the stern lesbian office nag. I smiled back.

“Every moment I spend with you and knowing how much love there is for me? Yeah, ecstatic.”

“The army of cute whores has to be an upside too.” Rena grinned.

“A drop in the bucket.” I admitted. A drop in the ocean even. The autonomous golf cart came to a stop. The nurse was wearing a bikini and Vanessa was in a tank top and shorts. Both wore red. Both had a white cross over their left breast. I shook my head.

“Yeah, it’s such a cartoon.” Rena had tears in the corners of her eyes.

“What’s wrong?”

“It’s, well, this respite is nice,” She was smiling. “We’ll do what we can. But you’re going to go back sooner or later. Even without the drugs. If you don’t have a plan for him… Do you think next time you wake up you’d risk telling yourself to just take the pills?”

“Why wouldn’t I just take them as I was blacked out?” I shook my head. “I’ll deal with him. If you’ll help me?”

“I will.” Rena agreed. “Let me go call our family together.”

“How’s Mel?” I asked as she stood.

“She’s not having as easy a time as I did.” Rena frowned. I looked up worried. “She’d do better if you get these two to take you over and see her.”

“I already breathed today!” I wanted to bark like she had but Lawrence had cooed before I had hissed out the words so I remembered the words softly.

“What? I don’t follow.” She shook her head. “What’s up Doc?”

“Mistress Tanner called for me. You’re hurt, Master?” Doc Vanessa knelt down in front of me as I rolled over my hand and showed the scratches.

“Broken glass.” I explained.

“Tingling in your fingers? Is your hand moving like it should?” She as with her thumbs on my wrist rolling my hand left and right for a first look. Her nurse was the girl from Rena’s birth. I guess she only dressed like a proper healthcare provider behind closed maternity ward doors.

“This’ll sting.” She told me as she took a white uncapped bottle from her nurse. She poured the alcohol or peroxide or whatever it was to clean wounds over my hand. I flinched, gave a loud, “Hah!” My son cried again.

“Shhh! Shhh! Lawrence!” Rena was bouncing him. The nurse was there as Rena stood to her six foot height. “Shhh!”

“Where’s his sister?” I asked as Vanessa cleaned away the mess I had made. Blood was flowing again.

“She sleeps after she eats.” Rena said through Lawrence’s screams. “She’s upstairs with Olivia.”

“Not like his dad then,” I grinned. “Get me on a tit and I’ll knock off as soon as the white spits out.”

“Gross, Brian.” Rena said. “Take him to see Mel when he’s cleaned up, Doc.”

“I will.” She answered with a grind of her teeth. Rena was bouncing the boy and walking out of the little cloistered garden.

“I don’t think you’ll need stitches.” Doc Vanessa called my attention from Rena’s backside. I grinned. Even after two babies I still wanted her. That was a good thing, or so Dad told me. “I’m going to use two band-aids, but if your hand is closing stiffly or you have numbness in any of your fingers, go immediately to the clinic.”

“You’re probably the only person who can tell me what to do.” I thought aloud. “You, nurse, take off your top.”

I needed to see that I had control of a woman. I needed control. It was the only weapon I had. The nurse, her name escaped me if I ever even knew it, was more square and fit than some of the slender fashion model types I saw around. She had nice round and high breasts. They must’ve jiggled like hell if she ever had to Baywatch run in that swimsuit. I was grinning.

“How good of head do you give?” I asked.

“Oh, I’m rated three stars.” She answered.

“Two and a half,” Vanessa answered morosely. She was screwing the cap of the stinging disinfectant and filling the black bag. It had a bit of an olde timey Sherlock Holmes feel to the bag. I wondered if that was her choice... No, I knew that when I had seen those in The Globe’s prop room I had changed all of the white medical bags for them. Doctors should have black bags.

“If that’s not good enough…” My first instinct was to interrupt the nurse and assure her it was going to be great but I held off. “I saw Kelsey or Sunlight down by Casa de Tanner. We have to go buy anyways. That is if you want something better.”

“I think I’ll treat myself.” I grinned. I stood up and made a fist around the band-aids. She had swabbed up the blood and things seemed good. “Who would you recommend, Vanessa?”

“Kelsey’s the only 5-star left on the island and she should’ve flown out a few weeks ago.” Vanessa grumbled.

“Not happy someone’s wrecking the bell curve?”

“It’s a more of negative exponential function,” Vanessa corrected me. “And, no, you wouldn’t move the goalposts just so the best cocksucker on the island made five stars.”

“I’d just keep her from leaving?” I grinned.

“I think you chose to provide her a home after learning her soldier husband had failed to come back from Niger.” My topless nurse said. I slumped. I swung into the backseat of the cart.

“I--I,” Didn’t know what I’d say to a woman in that situation. Kelsey. She had been the waitress at The Castle’s burger joint. I was glad I remembered that.

“Are you OK? We could pick up Sunlight instead. Four and halfers aren’t common but you claim they’re nearly the best a cock could get.” The nurse added helpfully.

“Yeah, maybe. Suck me until we get there and I’ll make a decision then.” I saw it. The delay of decisiveness stood out on their faces. That was not something they were accustomed to. I guess the ability to procrastinate, to wait and see, those traits don’t give you billions of dollars and Fuck Island.

I witnessed that the seats in the golf cart were designed for someone to kneel down and suck off another person. The front passenger side seat rotated and the nurse knelt down so that my place, on the raised back seats, was readily at hand. Vanessa ordered the cart to move from the tablet on the dashboard.

“Wait up!” Shani hurried out of the front doors and dashed up to the cart. She was breathing heavy but rebounding into great shape a few weeks (months?) after her first kid. The nurse yanked down my shorts.

I didn’t realize how being unable to crank it with my slashed up hand had left me burning for some sexual attention. I took a long deep satisfied groan as her nose hit my pubic hair.

“Oh, yeah, what do you need, Shani?” I turned and grinned. Relief flooded her face. I focused on the breath. Slow, dragon warm flow from a nurse’s nose around the base of my cock.

“There was some grossness in the room. I had to see you were OK.” She took a long warm breath with a hand on her breastbone. I grabbed her hand and pulled her.

“I’m going to go see my child being born. You’re going to arrange a family dinner for tonight. Everyone. Everyone who matters.”

“We haven’t had one of those since Amanda had that announcement she was pregnant!” The bloom of joy on Shani’s face was infectious because I was overstimulated. “I’ll have it all… This is going to be the first time you and I shared a drink in eleven months!”

“Good.” I reached forward and slapped Vanessa on the butt. It took a smuggled hand down her back to get at it with the seat back. “Go.”

“See you at The Strip!” Shani waved. She spun calling for Rena.

“You didn’t say your son being born.” Vanessa finished her eureka moment. I had to hold the nurse’s head to keep her sucking or she would’ve asked something more. I looked at Vanessa. “What did you do with the pills?”

“Crushed them with my foot. Peed on them.” I smirked.

“Must’ve bubbled like hell!” She laughed. She turned her seat and grabbed my knee. Her other hand settled on mine. I grinned dumbly for my three star blowjob. It was incredible. She sucked hard enough I could feel her cheeks squeezing in between her teeth. She fit my cock in the seat of her throat. She seemed like she was able to roll her tonsils. Like her head was bobbing up and coming down all at once. I would’ve enjoyed it for hours.

Vanessa’s nails pricked the back of my hand. The shock, the slight pain, was enough to fire my eyes wide open and eject myself into her mouth.

“Good job, Rudy,” Vanessa pet the woman like an obedient dog so I could learn her name.

“That’s only three stars.”

“Maybe three and a half. I haven’t been clocked since month 4.” Rudy gulped down my cum and bared her throat and tongue so I could see it was all gone. I was in a loopy non drug fueled post sex haze. I missed the urge to sleep right after sex. Vanessa’s nails squeezed again.

“Straight to the hospital.” I answered a question I was only semi-certain had existed.

“He needs some Sisyphos?” Rudy looked down with a beaming prideful smile on her face to see me laying down and defeated.

“Maybe for later.” I shook my head. “Can you find out how things are going?”

Vanessa turned to the tablet. Frankie answered the call. She was cute in that “Are you sure the director double checked her ID?” kinda way.

Frankie, Francine McLean, was 19. From Omaha, Nebraska. Flew in nine weeks ago. Grievance studies drop out after one year. This was her first actual job. The thoughts whisked away.

“What the fuck are grievance studies?” I asked myself.

“Feminism and the like.” Vanessa answered. “Non business or STEM fields.”

“Like English Lit?” That was Larry’s degree. “That doesn’t sound right.”

She tried to offer clarifying information. I shook my head. I waved down further explanations. I didn’t care.

We rolled along by the big hotel. You couldn’t see the back pool on this new road. Each building, each section of the island, managed to be whole and discrete. I was glad the main home was

disconnected. I guess it was good in the same way that it was best that the women's dorms and rooms while they worked here were free of guest meddling.

"It's just Ellie and Olivia left after Mel." I told myself.

"Yeah, I think Larry's waiting till it's all done before he takes on his harem. Or he missed Jade and Charlotte's fertile windows last month." Vanessa shrugged.

"Larry's going to be a dad?" I asked. I always assumed I was going to be an uncle. It felt wrong that Larry was even trying without Shani. I wondered if they wanted to get together? The heavy "No!" in my mind held little weight.

"If the plans hold out." Vanessa shrug.

"Good for him." I genuinely felt. I squeezed my fist, felt the band-aids. The post orgasm cobwebs were clearing out. I frowned. We were just a minute or two out. "Doc, what kind of doctor are you?"

"GP," She shrugged. "You do a bit of everything in residence. I decided to wholly focus away from surgery."

"Am I missing something?" Rudy worried. "Are you OK?"

"Side effect of my meds is temporary amnesia." I told her. "It'll clear up if we handle it right."

"Do you have a plan?" Vanessa asked me.

"I don't have enough data." I frowned. I focused. She grimaced. "Who can I trust?"

"Any woman!" She squawked. I lessened my focus but the pressure didn't seem to let up until I broke eye contact. "Larry too, at least."

That didn't give me answers. I would need better questions at dinner. We pulled up to the clinic. I hurried out putting my dick back in my shorts as I walked. I went up to the glass front doors. Dad was there with Amanda. I made sure to push them open gently and not barge in like I had been stomping forward for.

"Shani called us with the plans." Amanda looked up and smiled. She was beautiful. I grinned. She was brilliant. She was decidedly out of my league. I smiled back. She blanched. "You didn't take your meds?"

"My drugs?" I asked her. "Bury myself and live my life away from my friends and family until I blacked out and died?"

“You’re not going to die!” Rudy huffed as she hurried in behind me. She hadn’t heard most of my exchange with Amanda. I shut her up with a gesture. Vanessa drove away. I frowned. I turned back to Amanda.

“I will not abandon my family.”

“Goddammit!” She spat. “You’re not at war with yourself!”

“And yet, only one of us can win.” I kept my voice low but she was shaking her head and speaking loud enough to wake Noel.

“I don’t understand.”

“Your in a clinic, you’re a nurse. Go help someone.” I dismissed Rudy and she dashed off to the short Vietnamese woman working the front desk. It wasn’t red cross bikinis in here but it was hypersexualized nursing outfits. White stockings, pink smocks, and paper caps. I walked over to my daughter and smiled. I rocked Noel’s bassinet as I sat down with Amanda.

“That’s not what’ll happen. You’ll integrate your waking mind with your dreaming one. You’re asking us to give up half of you.” She laid her hand on my thigh. I watched her frown. I could see her thoughts running mad behind her eyes. Or I could feel that. “You can’t let your illness destroy what you’ve built with me. With all of us.”

“Are you telling me what I told you to tell me?”

“Of course I am!” She threw up her hands. “Obviously! But it’s not untrue. It’s what I want.”

“I don’t recognize you like this either.” I put my hand on hers. “That doesn’t mean I’m going to let my addiction win and destroy what chance I have with a family.”

“It’s not an illness! It’s not an addiction! It’s not a war!” Amanda set her jaw. “It’s a cure. For all of your faults.”

“What faults? What should I pull out of myself and toss away despite it being distinctly Brian?”

“I’m not your enemy,” She promised me. “I want you to get better.”

“I will,” I squeezed her fingers. “With hard work and good ideas. Not by blinding up parts of my brain. You don’t cut off your arms because you’re muscles aren’t big enough. You get off of your ass and start lifting weights.”

“That’s a garbage analogy.” She sighed. “You don’t get to see what you’re like when you’re better. If a fat man woke up for a day, thin, strong, and healthy, and then went back to being fat the next day, he’d be exercising and fixing his diet just to feel that good again.”

“But I do get to see. I get to see the relief that I’m whole again in my Dad’s eyes. I get to see the excitement boil up on Ellie’s smile. I get to see Larry hand me a beer like it’s strange to be my equal.”

“Oh.” She slumped her shoulders.

“I also get to see how much better I can be. That it’s possible to be the man you’ve come to expect.” I lifted Amanda’s chin. I smiled. She didn’t.

“But, without you being your best? How am I going to be good enough? I made nothing but mistakes until I was with you.” Her bones were softening, her whole body was sinking as much as it could.

“Then it’s a promise.” I grabbed her hands and squeezed. “I’ll be as good as I can be. You’ll be as good as you can be. And we’ll push each other until we’re good enough for Noel.”

“Um?” She asked.

“What? Anything?”

“I thought you’d think it was stupid.” She told me. “I never told you why I wanted to name her Noel.”

“Because we first made love on Christmas.” The thought bubbled out of my mind. “Until then, I was only interested in Shani and those girls from the office. Only Shani was worth keeping. And you were too valuable to let go.”

“Shit!” She grinned. “You knew?”

“Not anymore than that right now.” I forced my brain to delve through the darkness but all I found was amnesia.

“We were at your Dad’s place. Olivia had decorated your old room with this wooden series of painted Christmas trees. It said Joyeux Noel, thinking Shani’s parents would be staying. I rode you so hard it fell off the wall and blacked both of your eyes.”

I was laughing my ass off. She squeezed my hands and pulled them onto your chest. “Old slacker Brian isn’t a good enough man to have me or love our daughter.”

“Then I’ll be far better. And still me.”