

“God fucking dammit Snooki, can you be anymore drunk?”

When it wasn't Odette's team up to something weird or stupid, it was always her mother who picked up the slack--when she was home, at least. She'd only been back in Kalos since Sunday night, and she was taking every possible moment after to enjoy her leisure time. Vienna Cinq-Mars wasn't a subtle woman by any means—if she wanted to sit home all day and scream at her reality TV shows, that's what she did. And if she didn't want to wear pants while she was doing that...well, she didn't.

As Odette walked through from her bedroom to the kitchen, she furrowed her brows at the sight of her mother, cradling a bowl of nachos like a newly laid Pokemon egg, while she yelled at the orange Unovans on their TV screen. At least she had the common decency to put on a pair of granny panties in favor of one of the thongs she managed to leave all over the house during laundry days.

“You could at least watch something fulfilling, like a horror movie,” Odette commented.

“Thiiiiii,” Solene chirped. She shuffled over to the couch and threw herself down to sit next to Vienna. Ever the punctual one, she was already ready to go.

“What's more horrific than that spray tan? I swear, I got better color just climbing up the side of Coronet in the middle of a blizzard,” Vienna said, patting Solene on the head. She then threw one of the chips in her mouth. “The Unovans really know what they're doing with their TV.”

“Agree to disagree,” Odette said.

She fanned her wet eyeliner as she pulled open the fridge. Her eyes fell on the last available water bottle, and she grabbed it in one quick motion. She hadn't even left for her outing with Dorien yet, and she already felt like she was going to explode.

It had been a week since she had reluctantly approached him in class again and “apologized” for her foul attitude after their battle. He seemed more than willing to forgive her, because when she offered that they “hang out after class,” he took every opportunity possible to treat her to extravagant excursions. Private jet flight from Lumiose to Gloire one day, limousine ride to the movies the next. Today's plan was a trip to a fancy restaurant, where apparently a cup of soup cost more than she made in an hour's work. She only knew that much because she'd searched up the menu out of morbid curiosity.

She felt idiotic getting as dressed up as she was. It was already a pain in the ass to wake up every morning to straighten her hair and do her full ten-step skincare routine, but adding on a full face of makeup and a nude, loose-fitting cocktail dress that hadn't seen the light of day since her first college party somehow made it all the more harder. She didn't want to make herself look that good for Dorien; he didn't deserve to see her in such a state. However, being that this restaurant seemed to be so high end, she'd be cutting off her nose to spite her own face if she

decided to roll up in a tracksuit instead. So, prettying up was a necessary evil here. She'd have to deal with his stupid goo-goo eyes and try not to gouge them out in the process.

She began chugging the water, hoping it would do something to ease her mind for the time being.

"Easy there, you're going to choke," Vienna warned over the noise coming from the TV.

Once she'd managed to down half of it, she relented. "That's always the goal," she said sarcastically.

"You should really try training up your gag reflex then. Trust me, it's worth it."

She could thank her lucky stars she wasn't drinking at that moment, because she'd have spit everything out.

"Mum," she sputtered. "You're disgusting."

"Thi!" Solene said.

Vienna snickered and covered her mouth. "Woops."

Odette had to take a second to compose herself before she stormed back out to the living room. "You know, you have the mental age of an eighteen year old."

"Yep, all mental growth stopped as soon as I pushed you out, snookums."

Odette wished she'd somehow grown some sort of mental wall against Vienna's out-of-pocket comments over the years. It was stuff like that that set them apart from other mother-daughter duos; Vienna mostly acted more like an obnoxious older sister than a parent, and it didn't help that she looked the part. People mistook them for sisters all the time. In her forty years of age, she still managed to look like she was thirty.

"I'll say it again. You're disgusting," Odette said.

"Well, I'll say that you're beautiful. You never dress like this," Vienna gushed.

"Are you even listening to me?"

"Mm, no. I'm too busy taking in the rare image of you in something that isn't a pair of fucking joggers."

Odette rolled her eyes so far back, it triggered a headache. She downed the rest of her water as she trudged back to her bathroom, throwing the empty bottle in the trashcan next to the sink. "Just for that, I'm spending my next paycheck on more joggers."

"Oh no, the humanity," Vienna laughed. "Why must you do us such a disservice and hide those dancer legs from the world?"

Odette decided the best way to stop the harassment was to ignore it. She began digging through her makeup trunk, trying to figure out what lipstick she should bother slathering on. She wondered if it would even be worth the trouble. Her lips looked perfectly fine without it, anyway. She was cursed with Vienna's big billowy lip genes, so people eyed them enough without them being colored a deep shade of red.

"Hey mom, do you have some Chapstick anywhere?" she called.

"Probably somewhere in my bathroom. Or under my bed. Or in my underwear drawer. Who knows, really. I'm always losing them," Vienna said.

"Thanks, you're a real help."

Her RotomPhone, which was sitting on the back of the toilet, suddenly began to ring, and her shoulders tensed at the sound of it.

"Bzzzt! Bzzzt! Incoming call from Dorien 'Dickhead' Bonhomme!" it said, causing her to groan.

"Fuck," she muttered. She slammed her makeup trunk closed, and slipped on the heels she'd set next to the bathtub. "Incoming, Solene!" she yelled, grabbing her phone and trudging back out to the living room.

The Gothitelle was already up at the door, holding her purse.

"Thi?" she asked.

"Yep," Odette said, snatching the bag. "Let's get going."

Vienna paused the TV and threw her arms up in the air triumphantly. "Have fun, my love!" she said. "I slipped a condom in your purse just in case. It's a heat activated one, so it's supposed to make things superb."

If looks could kill, Vienna would have dropped dead under the intensity of the glare Odette sent her way. The mere thought of getting anywhere near Dorien was nauseating, but doing that?

"Oh my fucking--goodbye," she screamed, yanking open the door and slamming it shut once she was out in the hallway.

"My brother and I came to eat here months ago, but there was a waiting list. Six months, pretty standard for this restaurant," Dorien explained, swishing some of his white wine around in his glass. He sipped from it, darting his eyes around the crowded dining hall. "I wonder, did you know this place even existed? You seem like the kind of person who'd frequent more...smaller scale joints, yeah?"

"Exca," his Excadrill said. Odette never heard any Pokemon sound pompous, but she supposed there was a first time for everything.

She swallowed down the urge to glare at him and hid it behind her masterfully crafted half-smile, which she accentuated by thoughtfully resting her cheek in her palm. She forced out an airy mix of a scoff and a chuckle, hoping it would be enough to mask any disdain wafting off of her.

Odette could just barely hear the small growl that rose out of Solene, and nudged her under the table.

"I don't really have the time to wait six months for a dinner reservation," Odette said sweetly. Years of acting classes did wonders in pulling off innocent facades like this one. Dorien appeared none the wiser, because he set his glass down and rested his chin in his hands. Something of a goofy grin passed over his lips, and his eyes drooped smugly.

"Well, sweetie, that's simply a perk of the high life. If you stick with me, I'll give you and your Pokemon more than just a taste of it."

The complimentary bread she'd been munching on started to come back up. She casually rubbed her chest, coaxing it back down into her stomach. Barfing in a high end restaurant like this was hardly "laying low." She already felt out of place wearing her department store dress while it seemed every person and Pokemon around her were dressed in designer attire. Even Dorien's Excadrill was wearing a damn Dior jacket. If she'd known better, she'd have put Solene in something nice, too.

"Sounds enticing," she said offhandedly. She picked up her glass of mineral water and sipped it, hoping to bide her time before she had to engage in more talk. She was mildly concerned when she didn't hear a response though, and shot a glance at him. He'd yet to move, still gazing at her with that droopy eyed look. It made her skin crawl.

She wished he'd just come out and say what he was thinking so she wouldn't have to continue being looked at like this. Gods knew Solene was certainly over it.

It was then that a Florges approached the table, two of the entrees balanced on her hands, while the other two levitated off to her sides. She bowed her head politely, like she had every time she'd come back to wait on them.

"Flor," she said, setting down the plates of food. She clasped her hands together, and nodded again. "Gesss?" she asked.

Dorien began setting his napkin in his lap, while his Excadrill mimicked him. "No ma'am, we're all set," he said. The Florges grinned broadly, before hovering off to her next task.

Odette gazed down at her food. She'd gone out of her way to get one of the cheapest things on the menu out of pure spite. She'd been very tempted by the beef bourguignon, but surely Dorien wanted her to spend his money. If she wasn't as hungry as she was, she wouldn't have ordered anything. Instead, she opted for a mere chicken caprese salad.

Dorien eyed it over his lobster meal, and raised a brow. "That's really all you're going to eat?" he asked. "Even your Gothitelle got more than you."

Odette shot a look at Solene, then down at her coq au vin. Solene stuck out her lower lip, before grabbing a fork and stabbing one of the chunks of meat with it. She began to eat, and Odette shrugged her shoulders.

"I'm not that hungry," she said. "But I guess Sol is."

Dorien pursed his lips. "Are you trying to watch your figure?"

Odette's eye started to twitch, and she had to claw into the tablecloth to get a grip on herself. She could see Solene tense up out of the corner of her eye.

"My figure's fine."

"liitelle," Solene said stiffly.

Dorien chuckled and held up his hands defensively. "Oh, you don't have to tell me twice. Clearly the dance lessons did you well in the curves department."

Her eyes cut to his neck. The collar of his pressed shirt and jacket didn't cover it entirely. There was just enough exposed skin to justify an easy chokehold.

"My eyes are on my face, not my ass," she said.

"Well, with the figure you have, I can't help but look."

It was amazing. He really thought he was being suave and flirtatious. She had to wonder if he listened to himself when he spoke. Maybe if he did, he'd realize he sounded like a douchebag. Or, maybe not. Odette had started to realize that his head was so far up his ass that it was probably hard to see or hear anything else.

When she didn't immediately respond, he shrugged. He removed his napkin from his lap and stood up, motioning for his Excadrill to follow him.

"We're going to go wash up. Don't miss me too much while I'm gone!" he smiled.

The smile she forced might have been too fake, but she played it off by politely waving as he walked off. When she was positive both of them were out of ear shot, she brought her hands to her face and exhaled deeply.

"Goooooth," Solene hissed.

"I know, Sol, I know," Odette said. "Imagine how I feel."

Solene took another bite of her food. "Telle, itelle, itelle."

Odette pulled her face from her hands and shot a look at the Gothitelle. "How many times are you going to tell me you think this is a bad idea? I think I'm well aware by now."

"Teeeeelle," she said with a shrug.

Odette groaned and brought her hand back to her face. She squeezed the bridge of her nose, hoping to ward off the headache that had manifested at the sound of Dorien's voice. It was there that she felt her mock-designer purse start to vibrate on the back of her chair. She nearly jumped out of her skin to get to it, hurriedly pulling open the zipper to steal a look at the caller ID.

"Bzzzt! Incoming call from Noel Massé!" RotomPhone said as she read her friend's name on the screen. She answered it before she held it to her ear.

"Noel," she said breathlessly. "You need to come be a buffer. I'm going to stab him."

A snicker on the other end. "We already decided that my tagging along would defeat the purpose of this."

"I know but holy fucking shit, this is the worst it's been all week. It's like he's evolving into a bigger scumbag every time he opens his mouth."

"So what you're telling me is he's a Pokemon?" Noel queried.

"That's an insult to every and all Pokemon," Odette snapped. She noticed Solene glance at her from the corner of her eye, but decided to ignore it.

"Nothing new?" he said, a little more deflated this time.

Odette shook her head. "No. But I think he's starting to think we're dating."

Noel was silent for a moment, possibly contemplating the statement. "You could capitalize on that. Play gold digger for a bit and wipe him clean of his money before he dies."

"Pretty sure that only works if he's seventy years older than me," she said flatly.

"Well you can hope he has some terminal illness you don't know about. Or pray a Grimer tries to crawl into his mouth while he's sleeping."

Odette laughed at the image of Dorian choking on that particular poison type, before shaking her head again. "No amount of money in the world is worth this," she said. She paused to consider her next words. "I'm starting to wonder if it's worth it at all."

Noel sighed. "We're playing the long game here, and it's only been a few days."

She pursed her lips. As much as she didn't want to admit it, he was right. She'd gone into this knowing Dorian wasn't just going to come out and say anything alarming, but she supposed she didn't fully consider just how long it would actually take. It was true that it had only been a few days, but she hadn't been prepared for how excruciatingly long they would feel

At the very least, it was keeping her mind off of everything else. So, she supposed she was getting something out of it. Besides, her mum and grandparents didn't raise a quitter. She could stick it out.

"Hopefully he says something sooner rather than later," she sighed.

She felt a couple hasty taps to her shoulder, and glanced over to see Solene pointing in the directions of the bathroom. Dorian and his Excadrill were coming back, but had momentarily stopped at another table to talk with the diners sitting there.

Odette's posture stiffened. "Okay, okay, gotta go, talk later," she said quickly. She barely heard Noel's response before hanging up and tossing the phone back into her bag. She'd just hung it back on her chair when Dorian and Excadrill sat back down.

"Sorry, sorry. Saw some friends and had to say hello," he said.

"No problem; I was perfectly content," Odette replied. "Let's eat."

She took a bigger bite of her salad than she initially intended to, but it got the point across. Dorien wordlessly started to dig into his own meal--some sort of steak that looked like it cost more than her whole net worth. Much to her relief, that did the job in preventing any extra conversation from happening. They were all so caught up in their food that nothing was said for a solid five minutes. It was bliss.

"So," Dorien said after he finished his bite. He politely brought his napkin to his lips and dabbed them off. "I have something I want to ask you."

Odette suppressed a groan. She swallowed whatever she had in her mouth, before exchanging quick looks with Solene. "What would that be?"

Dorien smirked, and she felt a bolt of a metaphorical thunderbolt rock her chest.

"Nothing major," he said. "I just had a slight concern."

"Why, because you're hanging out with a commoner?" she asked, raising her brow.

He chuckled, almost...darkly. She began to kick off her high heeled shoes, in case her instinct to run came back full force. She felt it bubbling in the back of her head.

"Well, as you know, I come from a lot of money," he said. He began to examine his fingernails nonchalantly. "My parents raised my siblings and I to be protective of that fortune, so naturally, when I start seeing somebody new, I do my research."

She furrowed her brows. Where the hell was he going with this? She grabbed her near empty glass of water and began to drink again to keep her hands busy, and Dorien must have taken that as a sign to keep going.

"I wanted to ask you about the manslaughter case you were involved in last year."

Odette choked on her next gulp and began to cough violently. She had to set the cup back down and lower her head to avoid drawing attention to herself.

"Well, I guess it was more of a self defense killing, considering the victim molested you, right? So that makes you the victim, I suppose..."

The mixture of pure shock from his questions and her water going down the wrong pipe made it impossible to stop coughing. She was certain she was going to choke to death with this asshole and his mole watching, until suddenly, her throat loosened up. Next thing she knew, she could breathe again.

She sucked in a couple greedy breaths, trying to refill her shriveled lungs. She looked back over to Solene, seeing that her hands were engulfed in her signature pink glow. She didn't even have

time to thank her because of the anger exploding from the spot on her back. She had half a mind to flip the table right then and there.

“Stop,” she said, loud enough to turn a few heads. She didn’t care. Fuck laying low, when she was in the presence of such audacity.

“You’ve got a lot of fucking nerve,” she menaced. “Seriously, you thought that was something I was going to want to discuss with you?”

Dorien held up his hands, but it looked more like he was just going through the motions of being startled. Like he was doing it to save face, though Odette was positive that he didn’t care about that. He wouldn’t have asked about something like that, or even gone as far as to look it up in the first place, if he wasn’t trying to get under her skin. There was no way.

“I see you’re upset.” The emphasis he put on that last word prompted a chill to run down her spine, but she was far too mad to acknowledge it.

For her own sake, she started to drink the rest of her water. She needed to calm down before she did something too rash. Her mind, despite the angry fog, was flooding with questions.

Why? Why? Why? Why? Why? Why did he do that? Why is he going there? Why does he need to know that?

She hadn’t felt this exposed since she walked back into Fleurrrh’s campus after the charges were dropped. Where everyone knew what had happened, and the only people who didn’t look at her like a threat to society were her friends who knew the whole story. She couldn’t deal with the scrutiny, she couldn’t deal with the looks...and now, here she was, dealing with that same thing from the very person she probably despised just as much as him.

Dorien continued, apparently unfazed. “I apologize, but it’s not every day you read that your date killed her drama professor in near cold blood.”

Her grip on her glass tightened.

“What was his name? Jordan Deschamps?” he asked.

Crack.

The glass shattered in her hand, shards falling into her lap and on the floor. She could feel some of the shards digging into her skin, saw crimson start to stream from the wounds, but she felt no pain. All she could feel was the heat of her rage.

“Ma’am are you okay?!” a passing waiter yelped. His accompanying Sentret chirped in alarm. “Sen! Tret! Sen!”

Odette couldn't find the words to respond. She finally regained feeling in her hand and flexed it, allowing the heavier glass shards that were still stuck in her skin to dislodge themselves. Solene was quick to grab hold of her wrist, and she pressed her dinner napkin to the wounds in order to slow the bleeding.

"Itelle? Itelle?!" Solene said frantically.

It was only then that the pain of the gashes started to register. Other waiters and waitresses and their accompanying Pokemon started to crowd around the table. Their questions slurred together in her foggy mind; several more forced "are you okay's?" managed to break through. One of the workers, who she assumed to be the manager or something of the sort, was phoning for a first aid kit over the headpiece he was wearing.

Through all of that, she peered back over at Dorien. She wished she could say she was surprised that she couldn't find a lick of remorse on his face, but she was far from that. His eyes had gone dark, and she recognized that threatening hostility from class just those few days before.

The fight or flight was kicking in again, but this time, they were truly at odds. She both wanted to bolt from the restaurant and make him bleed, too.

But, as soon as the manager approached him, that malicious look was replaced with a worried frown. He said something about being shocked, about how he wasn't sure what happened, but also how they most likely wouldn't need to call an ambulance. The manager looked relieved by that, then said something else about a free meal. At least, that's what it sounded like. Dorien glanced down at the diamond-encrusted watch on his wrist, and she couldn't pick up on much else after that.

"I'm good," she finally said. "We'll take the check. I just want to go home."

"Ma'am, at least let us wrap the wound up for your travels, okay?" said a waitress. The Chansey standing next to her nodded in agreement.

She shook her head and shrugged. "Fine. But I'm okay. Really."

"I really am sorry. I didn't think a glass would shatter in your hand."

She refused to look at him. She refused to give him any more of her time for today. She was over it.

Instead, she zeroed in on the throbbing in her bandaged hand in order to keep herself from punching him. It'd be easy, now that they were in the chauffeured car and headed back to her apartment. They were in close proximity, and the only person watching would be the driver and Solene. It'd be easy.

"C'mon, Odie, talk to me."

She crossed her arms over her chest, keeping her eyes focused on the other cars on the city road. Perhaps if they weren't surrounded by so many, she'd open the door and barrel roll out onto the sidewalk and walk home.

"Goth," Solene said. She sat in the middle of them, serving as the much needed buffer. She kept her hand on Odette's arm, clearly ready to jump into action if need be.

"You know, the car ride would be easier if you put your Pokemon back in her ball," Dorien said tentatively.

"I think she's fine where she is," Odette said.

"Telle," Solene agreed.

She heard Dorien sigh, and the leather of his car seat squeaked as he leaned into it. "C'mon, sweetheart, I didn't mean any harm. It was a genuine concern."

"Yep, and you just kept rubbing salt in the wound, you fucking psychopath."

He was silent for a while. The car turned down Gigavolt Way. Soon, she'd be free.

"I'm sorry," he said dejectedly. "I clearly got very carried away." His tone was remorseful, and if she didn't know any better, she'd think he was sincere.

"I think it's a lot more than that, but whatever helps you sleep on your bed of roses at night."

The car had barely pulled to a stop in front of her building before she had her hand on the door handle. She tugged on it, but it wouldn't budge. Her gaze cut to the lock indicator, intent on pulling it open herself, only to find it was one of those that sunk all the way into its compartment, making it impossible to grab hold of.

"Open the door. Now." She turned back to face him. "Or Solene will blow the glass out."

Dorien sighed deeply, then checked his watch again. She had half a mind to rip it off his wrist and shove it down his throat.

"I did say the ride would be easier if you'd put her back in her ball. Hopefully I have enough."

Odette furrowed her brows. She opened her mouth to say something, but was caught entirely off guard when she got a fist full of some sort of red dust in her face. As soon as it made contact with her eyes, they started to sting.

“What the fu--”

A violent cough cut her off. She could hear Solene coughing too, but was unable to open her eyes to get a good look at her. She didn’t have enough time to let herself be mad that this guy had just pepper sprayed her, because her brain was going into emergency mode.

Need milk, need water...stop coughing, stop inhaling it in...need to break the glass, now.

“1:30 to 2:47,” she heard Dorian say.

The expletives began to well up in her throat, but it was far too busy constricting, trying to ward off the effects of the dust. She found the slightest bit of solace in feeling Solene’s hand on her arm, but the fact that she couldn’t see or help her was causing panic to set in.

She regained some control of her body and began to feel along the door, up to where the window was. Punching it wouldn’t be an option, but if she could angle herself to kick...

No sooner had the thought set in, the effects of the vapor vanished. The stinging in her eyes ceased, and her throat opened. The panic vanished and Odette was suddenly in a daze, wondering briefly where she was. Something had just happened, but she couldn't put her finger on what. She felt like she'd had too much to drink...had she? Where was she? Right, Dorian’s car. She was being driven home. She looked down at Solene, who was darting her head around tiredly.

Maybe they really had too much to drink...

She then looked to Dorian, who appeared concerned.

“Are you alright?” he asked. “I had no idea you were both such lightweights, I wouldn’t have ordered that much wine.”

Well, that answered her question. Odette’s temples throbbed, and she reached up to massage them. A sharp pain radiated from her palm, and she recoiled to get a good look at the bloodied bandage.

“When did I--” she started to ask.

“Faulty glass. Shattered right in your hand, remember?”

She thought about it for a second, and was relieved to find that she did indeed remember. Whatever wine she had hadn't shot her memory of the day entirely. Anger surged from her back again. She had half a mind to march back down to that restaurant and yell at them for using such shitty wine glasses.

She shook her head abruptly. "Sorry. I know better than to drink that much during the day."

"Gothii," Solene slurred in agreement.

"Well, you're home now. You can go get some rest."

The door unlocked, and she stared at it for a long while before pushing it open. Her body felt light as she stepped out of the car, but somewhere in the back of her mind she felt...dread. Like there was something wrong. Of course, that had to be Dorien's doing. She could never feel at ease when she was near him.

She pushed the door shut behind her once Solene was out, but the window rolled down before she could walk away.

"Before I forget, I need to give this to you," Dorien said as he leaned nonchalantly on the sill. He held a yellow envelope out to her.

"There's a big gala happening this weekend, and I'd like you to come," he said. "That's your invite. I don't expect you to know anybody there, but you're more than welcome to bring a plus one if it would make you more comfortable. But, you'll still be going as my date."

The possessiveness behind that 'my' made her skin crawl. She eyed him, trying not to let her disgust show on her face, before snatching the envelope away.

"Your platonic date, of course," she said.

A half smile crossed Dorien's face. "Kiss goodbye?" he asked.

She swallowed down a bald-faced laugh while she shoved the envelope in her purse. "Sorry, I feel a cold-sore coming on, maybe next millennia."

She didn't let him answer before walking inside with Solene.

Through her drunken haze, Odette was at least satisfied to see that Vienna had clothed herself. Her hair was sopping wet from a fresh shower, and her face was coated in some sort of gray clay mask.

"Oh, hi! You're home early," she said. "I guess you didn't use my present."

"I'll kill you," Odette said dazedly, kicking off her heels next to the door. Solene took that time to wobble over to the couch and throw herself down onto it.

"Awwww, come on now, I'm just busting your balls," Vienna whined, twirling a lock of her curly hair around her finger. She then held her hands out in front of her, like she was beckoning for a hug.

"Give mumma some sugar."

"Just because you said it like that, no."

Vienna stepped toward her. "Pleeeeeeasssee? I missed my little red eye so much."

Odette stared at her for a long while. She ultimately decided she couldn't say no, and stepped over to lay her ringing head on Vienna's shoulder. The tension left her body when she felt her mother's fingers rub over the back of her neck. In the face of what some might call their "unconventional relationship," Vienna somehow always knew what she needed. She was a good mum. A lunatic, but still a good mum.

"Whatsa matter? You look more disgruntled than usual," Vienna asked, letting her go. "Let me guess. Wine?"

"Too much wine," Odette huffed, picking her head back up.

Vienna chuckled. "Can't believe I birthed such a lightweight. I wish--" As she spoke, her eyes traveled down toward the floor. Her words abruptly stopped, and she reached down and grabbed Odette's bandaged hand.

"Oh, that's--"

Vienna furrowed her brows as she examined her palm. "What happened?"

"Oh, yeah." Odette yanked her hand away and began to caress it herself. "Bad glass broke in my hand. Nothing deep enough for stitches, just needs to be re-bandaged."

Vienna's gaze became a little more intense, and she crossed her arms over her chest.

"According to whom?"

Odette didn't immediately have an answer for that. She had to close her eyes and think long and hard about why she was so sure of that.

“One of the first aid Chansey’s at the restaurant,” she recalled. It sounded right. “I trust their judgement.” Mostly because the thought of having to get stitches sent a chill down her back that matched the ones Dorien gave her. No thank you.

Vienna paused to consider the statement, then chuckled. “Well jeez, honey, if you needed a stress ball so badly, all you had to do was ask. I keep twenty in my desk at the lab.”

Odette let out a sardonic laugh as she leaned against the dining table. “I could use one. My friend isn’t exactly good company.”

“Man, and I gave you a condom for him? Why are you hanging out with him if he isn’t good company?” Vienna wondered.

Odette wanted to laugh, but she held her ground. “It’s complicated.”

“That’s what I said when I was seeing your sperm donor, and he was a dick,” Vienna said flatly.

Odette’s nose crinkled in a grimace, as it always did when Vienna decided it would be a good idea to bring up her unknown father. “Well, even I could have told you that messing around with someone twice your age was a bad idea.”

“True,” Vienna said, shrugging. “But, how can I be regretful when I got your cute face out of it?” She reached out and squeezed Odette’s cheeks for good measure. “Red eyes and all.”

She let go and made way toward the kitchen, where she dug around in the fridge for gods knew what. Odette silently watched her, and let her head start to right itself. She glanced over at Solene, who was on the verge of sleep. It actually made Odette more sleepy, too.

“I’m going to take a shower,” she announced.

“Left a lot of hot water. Don’t drown, love ya!” Vienna called.

She hobbled over to her bathroom door. Certainly the hot water would bring her back entirely, and allow her to adequately examine the events of the day. Though, she wasn’t sure what was there to pick apart. Aside from her shitty luck with glassware, it was remarkably uneventful. At least, from what she could recall. She really knew better than to drink that much, especially in the presence of such a problematic person. What were she and Solene thinking...

However, she did manage to snag an invite to another place. He’d called it a gala, which undoubtedly meant there were going to be a lot of people there. A perfect opportunity to perhaps see past Dorien, and look to his colleagues instead. She could even bring Noel to be a buffer if she needed it.

“Hey, mum?” she said. “Do you happen to have any sort of designer brand dresses I can borrow?”

She heard a cabinet slam, and a chip bag crinkled. “Sure, baby, we can go through my stuff later.”

Odette smiled and wearily pushed open the door, looking forward to the end of such an obnoxious day.