

Something was definitely up. I could tell right away when they didn't put any of us back into the container after getting done 'playing' with us and washing us up after dinner. They just left us leaning against the wall of the container while they played cards a few meters away. Well, except the Illan, who was currently sitting in the Vulkus' lap, shivering and slowly rocking there, knotted. It didn't matter how much washing they gave her. She absolutely *reeked* of the Vulkus and I. Garkin didn't seem to really produce much in the way of marking scents, it would seem.

I could tell by the light shining through various cracks in the rickety train car that it was getting dark out. The Keld had left to take a comm call, and the two Vulkus relaxed back in their chairs as she did. "Think we got enough time to go another round?" The black Vulkus guard gave us a hungry look at that, but the other snorted.

"Nope. Ten minutes out, tops, I bet. Guess the rest of the ride to Kaldar's gonna be boring. All four are drops." We... were getting off the train...? We'd been traveling for almost two full days now... Where was there around here to drop us at?

"Damn! All four? Even the Illan's special order? Well fuck, hope they don't mind her being a little fucked in the head..." They both chuckled at that. I did my best to look at every little detail of them that I could. That way, when I did get rescued, they could get the mind scans from me and fucking sink all three of these monsters. I was pretty sure I had their appearances memorized by now, and it should be easy to interlay that with the guard roster for the trains. When... I got rescued.

I tried my hardest to keep up hope, but the colder things got and the further I traveled from everyone I ever knew, it was starting to get hard to do. I was alone and extremely vulnerable, and clearly just a toy to people for as long as I wore this collar. My eyes flicked to the right instead, as the Keld suddenly came back in, in a surprising hurry. Both Vulkus perked as they saw her, then frowned as she gestured upwards with a thumb.

"Up and ready, guys. We're using the bridge..." Huh? Both of them gave a jerk to that, with the brown Vulkus widening his eyes a little.

"Fuck, really?! Why? What's wrong with the fucking refueling station?!"

She shook her head, looking surprisingly grim. "We... might be fucked. But we'll see. The train two hours ahead of us commed me. The refueling station is absolutely *saturated* with Vulkus elite guards. Koramir's put their entire border on lockdown and are deep scanning every inbound train from Talgrand..." Oh...

They both winced at that, then looked to us instead. "The fuck?! Is this... This has to be related to Talgrand *still* being shut down. What the fuck did they lose?! Is it... something we have...? Please say it's not in the cargo hold..." The brown Vulkus actually looked nervous now. Well, this uh, was one of the cargo holds, so yeah...

The Keld shook her head slowly. "I don't ask questions, so I have no fucking idea if what they want is in the hold or not. If it is, we're fucked. So just keep your head down, don't agree to any mind scans, and let's ditch these guys and the container at the bridge drop..." This 'bridge drop' must be before the refueling station.

They moved into action then, pulling what looked like winter camouflage fabric from a smaller crate at the other end of ours. I realized I was partly right at least, a second later, as they stood the Vulkus up and started wrapping him in it. They were thermal camouflage blankets, and they wrapped him until just his face was visible, then clamped the blanket to him using metal bracket clamps. Oh, right, it was cold outside.

One by one, they wrapped all of us, and I felt like I was in a cocoon or something, with just a small window available for my eyes, and my ears painfully squished down to the top of my head. Was the full-wrap really necessary?! We were all laid down side by side with that, while the two Vulkus got jacks to lift the huge crate up onto one of the transport rollers. Basically, just a metal platform with big wheels on it. They rolled it right over to the massive side door, then hauled us over to it as well. Uh, was the timing on this tight or something?

They opened the huge door a moment later, while the train was still moving... Suddenly, I was *very* glad for the full blanket wrap, as a blast of freezing air came over me, and snow burst in. It was clearly evening now, with the sun just starting to set, and everything getting dark. Holy fuck was it cold! I started to shiver, even through the blankets, and noticed the Garkin also looking a bit miserable. Why did they have to open this before the train stopped?! The wind wasn't helping!

I got my answer a second later. The Keld nodded to them, then swallowed uneasily. "I hate the fucking bridge drop. Okay! We have a window of forty seconds as the train crosses over the bridge. The container needs to go out first! Just launch it off the side, fuck the transport roller! Simple and easy." First? *First*?! Oh fuck! They were throwing us out of the train!

"After it's out, we have to count out ten seconds before sending the slaves next. The net is only in a specific spot to catch them under the bridge! I don't need to remind you that this is over a four-hundred-meter drop. If any of the slaves *die*, we're in a lot more trouble than just not getting paid!" No, this wasn't happening! This wasn't happening! I was going to fucking *die* before getting rescued!

I couldn't move an inch, though. Not between the collar and tightly wrapped blanket. Fuck! Both Vulkus looked nervous but nodded and braced against the back of the huge container next to us. For a long, tense moment, the Keld looked out the side of the car with a stopwatch, watching directly ahead of us. My heart hammered in my chest, feeling like it wanted to sink into my stomach now. This was *insane*!

"Ten seconds out... Get ready with the container." Both Vulkus braced against it, and my eyes darted between them and the Keld. Fuck! I strained against my collar's control, and the mana limiter, but... there was just nothing! "Alright... bridge is... here! Ease it out!"

The second she said that, the rocky cliff vanished, and land disappeared out the huge doorway, replaced with open air. Both Vulkus pushed, slamming their weight into the back of the container, and it jerked forward, heading for the door. ...then jammed, the left side of it clearly hitting the edge of the container, with the door on that side not having opened far enough.

"Fuck! It hit the edge, stop push-" The black guard Vulkus tried to shout out the warning, but the brown one kept pushing instead, then widened his eyes as the container went at an angle, swaying to the right instead as the front-right wheel fell off the bottom of the freight car! There was a snapping sound, and

the front doors of the container came open, with chains and manacles suddenly dropping out the side of it.

It... happened almost faster than I could process. The chains hit the track passing under the train, even as the brown Vulkus tried to grab the back edge of the container and pull it straight again. Oh fuck... There was a yank and smashing noise, followed by the sound of metal being literally torn apart as the chains went taut against the tracks! The entire container snapped to the right in an instant, the back doors opening too, even as the Keld dove to grab us and yank us back from the edge!

The Vulkus slave was hit by the edge of the container, however. There was a brutal cracking noise before the container went entirely sideways and launched him out the side of the train car, and almost fifty meters out into open air before he disappeared below vision! Fuck! He... The brown Vulkus guard stumbled as the container was yanked away from him, then fell, hitting the floor in the mess of chains that were coming out the back of the container, and rapidly getting pulled off the side of the car!

He screamed, scrambling to get out of the mess of chains, with the container grinding, then torn in half off the side of the train tracks below us! Bits of metal and large panels were flung off into the air as sparks sprayed everywhere... but there was no way he was fast enough to dive out! The back chains hit the railing a second later, and he was snapped backwards by then, whipping sideways and backwards out of the train in an instant. I winced, looking away as, for just a moment, I saw a burst of red, and his lower half pass *over* the remains of the container, while the rest of him clearly went *under* it, before being flung off the bridge and joining the Vulkus slave below! This wasn't happening!

The container snapped free finally, with bits of chain smashing and sparking along the sides of the car. There was another grind and jerk, and it felt like the train *ran over* parts of the container, before we lurched sideways at an angle. Oh fuck! The Keld scrambled, clawing at the floor before grabbing the side of the door, managing to hold onto the three of us with the rest of her body as she braced against the little lip at the bottom of the door! The only thing stopping all of us from being tossed out into open air was her paws grinding against that little metal ridge.

"Fuck! Fuck, fuck! Gradir! He..." The black Vulkus guard clung to the wall on the other side, staring in horror at the splatters of blood along the wall next to him.

"He's gone! Help me! I can't..." The Keld growled, trying to pull herself to the side, but she didn't have the arm strength as the car wobbled again. The train sparked and slowed, unable to keep its momentum with one car literally at an angle and going on two fucking wheels! Slowly, our car started to tip backwards, but not before there was a lurch and snapping noise. Bits of the rusty metal flooring buckled with that, and the *wall* we were braced against started to come undone!

The black Vulkus made a dive for us instead. He managed to jump over the buckling area, landing into a roll and grabbing the Keld as he came out of it. With his momentum, she was pulled to the side and out of the way of the rest of the door, but...

She only managed to keep hold of the Garkin. I couldn't even scream as both the Illan and I were launched out into the open air! Things felt... slow now, and drifting. I saw her, wide-eyed and panicked looking as she fell next to me, but... Bits of the train fell around us, and I saw the tracks and bridge rapidly fall away as we dropped. I was...

Both of us smashed together a moment later as we landed in a taut net, taking the air out of me as it folded around us and we started to slow down again! ...not dead! I was not dead! Yet! The net snapped on both ends, apparently as intended, and became a net sack for us instead, tied to a very elastic-y rope of sorts. We snapped downwards, coming to a slow stop all of five meters before the ground... then popping back up again, bouncing there under the yield of the rope that strung us up! Holy shit! We were alive!

Slowly, things came to a stop again as we just dangled there for a long moment, momentum finally dying. I could hear screeches and warping metal, disappearing into the distance now as the train probably struggled onwards, with some serious damage to the side of the cargo car. Fuck, *someone* had to have seen that mess! The Illan's eyes opened slowly, and she looked at me as we dangled there, looking confused and in shock. I wish I could have... said something to her. Anything even, but we were both restricted by the collars still. Fuck, how long were we going to have to dangle from-

There was a low whistling noise, and a crossbow bolt flicked past, slicing through the rope above us with ease. Fuck! We dropped the remaining seven meters or so before crashing into a large bush, which... had a small pile of mattresses under it. I winced as we both bounced off the mattresses, then spilled to the side, immediately blending into the snow thanks to the blankets. You know, if they hadn't been black market slaver assholes, I might have actually been seriously impressed about how clever this had all been. Completely fucking *insane*, but very clever.

It didn't take long for two Illan in snow camouflage to reach us. They didn't say anything at all before sticking both of us with more of the purple injections, then hauling us rapidly towards the tree line. Oh... Everything hazed out with that, and faded away before we even made the trees...

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Everything was blurry and distorted. A flurry of movement that seemed accelerated. Like everything was going at three times the speed all around me, while I was stuck at a normal pace. I was dizzy, but felt myself being tugged and pulled around. The splash of water hitting me woke me up a bit more after that, and my eyes opened slowly, looking around a featureless gray, stone room. It was surprisingly well-lit and contained a ton of modern-looking showering and grooming facilities. A brown Jakatar, with white patches, was busy washing me with a warm water sprayer. It felt like I was lying on some sort of indented table or something, with drains on it. Alchemical plastic, maybe?

She had a completely neutral expression as she scrubbed me down, rinsing a heady-smelling soap out of my fur as she did. The biohazard suit she wore seemed a bit overkill, but the gloved paws going through my fur was surprisingly a nice sensation. After all the soap was out, she pulled down what looked like a medical scanner from the ceiling, and slid it over me. I could feel the mana tingling through my fur, and she watched the screen before nodding to herself. "Surface bacteria at minimal levels. Proceeding with medical scan and tagging." Uh... what?

She switched to drying me with that, and the comm system next to her gave a happy-looking green ping. I hadn't expected... this in the slightest from black market slavers... The hot air made short work of the dampness of my fur, but she kept it up for at least another minute or so, making sure every inch of me was dry. The scanner switched modes then, apparently away from germ detection, and she started analyzing me more carefully with it, lifting up my limbs as she did to look me over. I flushed a little as

she lifted and examined my balls too, before sliding me from my sheath and scanning my penis on top of that. Uh...

She didn't give any more interest than one did shopping for vegetables at the market, however. "Light bruising to chest, probably from the fall. Trauma to the anus and colon. Probably from the train guards. Laceration on the paw. Healing and older. Looks like it was treated for infection as a precaution. Subject also has a gimp leg on the left side. Misaligned hip bone structure, and lower spine."

The comm clicked, shifting to yellow for a moment. "Not as ideal as I would have hoped, but things we can fix. The client was very particular." The voice that came back was surprisingly deep-sounding, and loud. Louder than anticipated over a comm.

For the first time, the Jakatar hesitated at that, then looked at a sheet of paper she had on the side desk next to her. "There... might be a problem, there..." Uh... She moved her paw to the right, then appended one of the images she'd taken of my groin to the comm. "Uh, this is a male Inaga. The paper says the slave was supposed to be a female..." Oh, fuck. Right... The Inaga I'd replaced had been a girl...

There was a long pause, and the comm shifted a nondescript red instead. "What?" The tone was flat and lower now, and the Jakatar winced, cringing where she stood. For a long moment, there was silence, before the comm flickered, then slowly shifted yellow once more. What... What was this, a mood detector or something?! There was a long, very frustrated sounding sigh after. "Fucking idiots... Well, *that* we're not going to be able to satisfactorily fix. And with Talgrand *still* on lockdown... I'm going to have to talk to the client. Finish the preparations on the Inaga."

The comm turned off with that, and the Jakatar exhaled shakily, shifting back to her neutral expression. She stared at me for a long moment, rather creepily, before continuing her medical scan. Well... fuck. I didn't know what to think, now. Clearly, I wasn't the Inaga they were expecting. Could someone put two and two together and maybe do a bit of investigation here?! If they realized I was... no, wait, actually if they realized I was super important, who fucking knew what they'd do to me. Probably try to ransom me off or something...

Not that... I could really weigh in on the matter, anyway. It took her a good half an hour to scan every inch of me over, and then she applied more bandages to my paw, and an alchemical patch to my tail hole, surprisingly. Not to say she was... gentle and caring really. Overall, I got the distinct impression from her that I was either an expensive specimen or livestock. Which... was probably accurate, sadly.

Once the scans and my medical concerns were addressed, she actually put a simple white sheet tunic on me and walked me out of the washing area. There was no sign of the Illan girl at all. I knew they'd grabbed her too, but... Was she already processed? The hallway outside was surprisingly warm, and I just silently followed next to the Jakatar, as she kept to my left and helped me along despite my bad leg. Without a brace, it was going all over the place, and I couldn't exactly fully control its gait.

The hallways were just as... blank and gray as the washing room had been. Everything was surprisingly clean, looking like a medical facility. We slowed to a stop at what looked to be an elevator, as she hit the call button. I was able to look around with just eye movements at least and take in the dull white lights and featureless walls. The air was warm and ventilated too. I could feel the subtle movements on the fur of my ears, actually. Were they expecting airborne contamination of some sort, or were we underground?

The elevator read B3 when we entered, giving me my answer there. She pushed the button all the way at the top, and the door slid slowly shut. Twelve, thirteen... fourteen floors. Holy shit. This was a tall building! Inaga didn't tend to build up that high, apart from cliffside construction. That was more of a Keld and Vulkus thing. There were no stops for anyone along the way, however, and the doors slid open again just as quietly.

My eyes widened a little as I took in the sights at the other side. It... felt like a waiting room of some sort, only rather informal and relaxed. Also, dripping with wealth that definitely rivaled the Laridia palace. Something was... off, though. There was a set of couches and a tea table on the left, and a small bar or something on the right... but... The main chair next to the tea table was absolutely massive. Far larger than I would have anticipated in height off the ground, let alone width between the armrests. The double doors in the middle of the room were also quite high, being probably five meters or so tall. That voice I heard before was clearly coming from behind them, and my ears perked up.

"Yes, I know. No, there was clearly a fuck up. This doesn't usually happen." A pause. "Yes, a male." Another pause. Was he talking to the 'client' he mentioned? "That's okay then? Well, excellent! Alright, we'll begin training then." Training? They were going to... train me? To do *what*?! "Oh, it's... variable, depending on how resistant they are. Just the standard training. I'll keep you posted on the progress. Yes, thank you."

There was a long pause and silence before the double doors opened up, and I tried not to choke on the knot forming in my throat. A Gar! He was in his 'bipedal' form, making him actually a little smaller than he normally would be, but that definitely didn't say much. Absolutely towering, his long neck put his head almost at the wooden top of the door arch, with long, sweeping horns extending back behind him. He was easily half as wide at the shoulders, covered in all black scales that looked like some obsidian rock carved from the mountain. Huge muscles formed over his frame, and I realized he could probably casually pick me up and fit the entirety of my form in one fist!

...and he wore a cleanly pressed business suit, tailored with precision to his dimensions. Huh. There was an air of absolute confidence as he stepped out of his office, wearing a toothy grin as well. Rows of razor-sharp teeth glinted in the soft light, and I managed to swallow the tight ball finally, trying not to urinate all over his floor. He could probably swallow me whole, with minimal effort!

"Ah! I saw you coming up with the slave. He's all clean?" His voice was deep and felt like it vibrated the air around me. But surprisingly polite in tone.

The Jakatar gave a mid-bow, then nodded. "Yes. The medical scan should be on your monitor. He's all clean otherwise, and treated."

The Gar gave a long, slow nod at that, dark yellow, slitted eyes looking me over with interest. "Hmm. Good. You can go then. Your bonus is still granted."

She gave a deeper bow at that. "Thank you, Sir." With that, she went back through the doors we'd come through, and they slid closed, leaving me alone with the massive Gar.

He continued eyeing me up for a long moment as I shivered there, scared to even blink. Slowly, he scratched under his chin a moment later, then sighed. "Ah, where are my manners? My name is Ignaus. I'm the head of the Agency. We pride ourselves as the best option in Aion for the procurement of

specific slaves. No questions asked, and as exact as we can possibly get. Which... leads to a bit of a problem with *you*."

My eyes tracked him as he turned to the side, pacing almost for a moment and looking thoughtfully upwards. "Unfortunately, you're a male. Our client specifically requested a female. This is a rather glaring oversight and one that my pickup teams aren't known for. There will be... words with them."

I really hoped he wasn't expecting me to actually respond to any of this. I managed another stiff swallow as he turned to look at me again, to my left now. "Thankfully, however, the client has offered to take you as-is. But... we have a certain level of *pride* here at the Agency." His eyes narrowed to me at that, and I swallowed uneasily.

He gave a sigh, sliding a comm unit out of his pocket, with the screen popping up immediately. I couldn't read the writing in reverse through the illusion panel, unfortunately, and he snapped it off again afterward. "Indeed. Both Keldonia and Koramir are still on high alert. There's no way we're going to be able to get a replacement for you."

I froze... even harder than before... as he suddenly leaned down into a crouch, face moving within less than half a meter of me. I could feel his scalding breath exhaling over my fur, and felt light-headed for a moment. "But... given who the client is... There's no way we can have you talking about the little incident picking you up. Not if it can be linked back with Koramir's guards frothing at the mouth. That asshole wouldn't keep quiet about it..." Was he talking to himself? All I could do was shiver there as he seemed deep in thought instead, as if weighing his options.

At least he didn't just *eat* me. Instead, he stood back up and pulled out the comm once more. He turned as he did, and I winced, eyes slamming shut as his huge, thick tail swung in... and stopped barely a centimeter from my right side! Ah! He slowly walked back towards his office as the comm made a beep. "Yes, send up Atir and Callia. I think I may have a solution to their request."

I felt the air rush past as his tail cleared me finally, and exhaled a sigh of relief at not being firmly sent into the wall on the other side of the room with a swat. Still, I wasn't exactly hopeful now... Who were they? He was clearly... concerned about being discovered if I talked. Or maybe just didn't want the heat on his organization?

A moment later, I discovered he really was able to pick me up with one of his giant claws. He was surprisingly gentle as he walked over to the tea table with me, and plopped me down on the surface of it, sitting now. Uh... All I could do was sit here, bare rear on the glass surface, as he sat down and sagged into the huge chair at the end, relaxing now.

The elevator dinged again, and two clearly servants entered first and foremost, rushing over to the bar and preparing what looked to be drinks. Two Vulkus followed after them. They were both black-furred with a dark gray underbelly and paws, and both had the same shade of dark blue eyes, oddly. Siblings, maybe? The male was... large, but probably not Alpha-sized, and walked in front of the female, who was slightly to his right. They both turned to the tea area as Ignaus gestured them over.

"Ah, Atir. Callia. Good to see you both again." Atir, I assumed to be the male, sat down and straightened the collar of his informal suit. Callia wore a simple blouse and pressed skirt, by the looks of

it. I tried really hard not to stare up at it as she crossed her legs, but I couldn't exactly turn my head myself!

Atir gave a low nod at that, smiling now. "Ignaus. It's good to see you again too, Sir. Was our message passed along?"

The huge Gar gestured the servants over instead, who showed up with a tray and what looked like wine already poured. The bottle was in the ice bucket. It smelled kind of good, but I doubted it was for *me*. Fuck, it would be great on the nerves though...

"Of course. I also got your last reports on the project. Despite the technical failure, I still count the last iteration as an actual success. This has shown... promise." Project...?

Atir gave a firm nod at that. "I feel the same. Callia and I are definitely close to perfecting the formula! I think one, maybe two more iterations, and we'll have something able to be reused." Were they... alchemists or something? Was I about to be turned into a test subject?

Ignaus gave a low, rumbling chuckle at that, widening his maw into a toothy grin once more. "That does sound promising. Of course, untraceable subjects are... difficult to acquire, and expensive, as you know. Does our deal still stand for the end product?"

The Vulkus nodded again at that, though more hesitantly now. Even he seemed a bit intimidated by the huge Gar. "I, yes, of course. Once the process is perfected, you'll have sole possession of the techniques. We'll work for you full-time." This wasn't sounding like alchemy...

The grin widened, and he nodded. "Good. Good... This is sounding... profitable. And you know I do love things that are profitable. Your contract shall be maintained, though I'm activating the final clause of it. Anything after this point is no longer able to be backed out of. If you're in agreement, then I have another clean, untraceable subject for you. This one's a little... different though."

My eyes widened a little as he slid me forward on the table. Fuck! Untraceable subject?! They could do that?! But... Koramir had people like Kyry in it! Did he really think he could hide me from people like her?! The female Vulkus finally reacted, hesitantly looking down at me instead, a bit curious now. "Um, a m-male Inaga? That... T-That could uh, work out nicely. T-They're supposed... They're supposed to be hi-highly c-cognitively active." She spoke with a bit of a stutter, and her right eye kept twitching as she did, oddly. That was... She had some sort of degenerative neurological issue going on. Patch mutation?

Atir gave her a softer glance, before nodding slowly. "Then we'll do it. Same contract as before. You'll keep our basement lab operational, and Callia's treatments going?"

Ignaus grinned again, then nodded. "But of course. She's a genius, after all. This one won't be for private sale after, though. I have a... client arranged already for him. Certain... changes will be required, and the end product highly specific. I'll give you what paperwork we have on the project, then you can be on your way. I expect weekly updates, of course." Weekly...? This was a... long-term thing, I suddenly guessed.



Atir stood and reached out, shaking the large claw as it was extended to him. The Gar nodded though, as Atir reached down and grabbed my arm, sliding me over to his side of the table instead with a low squeak of my butt along the glass. “Deal, then!”

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I didn’t know what to think really. Hope was... dwindling in me now. After they had their drinks and talked about how inconvenient the lockdown was, I got poked with another needle and blacked out. Waking up, once I shook off the grogginess, I realized that I was literally strapped down to a multi-directional medical table, lightly angled towards what looked like a workstation. The female Vulkus, Callia, was looking over notes there at the desk and not paying much attention to me at all. The air was dead and still, and felt like we were underground again. The walls and tables were covered in alchemical equipment and a significant amount of medical gear, and my nose was greeted with the acrid scent of cleansers and reagents.

What... What was going to happen to me now? Even if they did find and rescue me... would they do it before these assholes murdered me in some experiment?! I felt cold, nerves dancing like pinpricks as I could do nothing but silently *wait* there, locked to the table. I just wanted to be back home now. I wished I was just back with the tribe, with my mom and sister, without a care in the world. This wasn’t fair at all. I... Why was this allowed to exist in Aion?!

I felt tears sliding down my cheeks again as I blankly looked ahead. I couldn’t do anything, though. Not even move. What was the point in wishing otherwise anymore? I swallowed painfully at that, and exhaled quietly. There was no point in it. I was completely helpless like this, and nobody cared. Well, no, they did care, but had the opposite of good intent towards me for it.

No, on second thought, part of me wished they’d stop caring and just leave me alone and strapped to the table. The other part of me realized that this was probably going to get worse. But Atir showed up regardless, a few minutes later. He walked into the lab in just a pair of shorts, clearly having ditched the formal business suit he’d been wearing. He was quite muscular and strode with confidence as he grinned towards me on approach.

“Ah, you’re awake! Good. *Good*. Welcome to our little operation here. This will be an experiment, taking equal parts medical, alchemical, and psychological. I’m Atir, as you might have heard, and this is my sister and mate, Callia!” My eyes flicked over to her. Her four ears twitched lightly at the mention of her name, but she didn’t look up. Instead, she only gave a little, quiet nod to herself. Uh... right.

Atir seemed unconcerned, however, and gave a nod to me. “Unfortunately, we don’t have anything to call you. Didn’t get your name from Ignas, if he even knew it. Thankfully, you’re the only slave we’re processing at the moment, so ‘Bitch’ shall suffice. Got it? That’s your new name.” I... great. That’s... great.

I was a little sad when Callia nodded to that, then actually wrote it down, without even changing her expression. He gave her a thumbs up, then turned back to me after. “That said, there’s a bit of pre-processing that we have to get out of the way before we can truly begin our experiments here. So, bear with me. Not that you have a choice otherwise...” Right.

I winced as he pushed the table back that I was strapped to, and I was suddenly leaned backwards, until my head was staring right up at the ceiling. The overhead lamp was on, and I was momentarily blinded before I winced and looked up instead, noting him above me now. “Good. Is everything ready so far then, Callia? Got the medical supplies?” Oh Gods, what were they doing to do...?

If she answered, it wasn't verbal, but he nodded over at her anyway. “Excellent. Now, the first step of our pre-processing is pretty fast and simple. You'll be gleefully *awake* through the first part.” His teeth showed at that, and he'd leaned down right next to my head, to whisper the last part. Oh fuck. I tensed, uncertainty and nervousness spiking. “Mmm, for as long as you can manage, anyway.”

My breath caught as he tacked on the last bit, then extended his paws upwards, lowering a blocky mechanical device down towards me. I... didn't recognize it at all as a piece of medical equipment. It looked custom-made. “See, psychologically, we're heavily dependent on our senses. I'm sure you know that. It's pretty basic. You Inaga have the best ears and hearing in Aion, after all, right?”

He spoke idly as he adjusted the machine, then swapped out a few pieces towards the front of it, clearly familiar with the thing. “It's innate. We take in information from them automatically, and our minds are used to that. It forms the very basis of reality for us, even. That's huge!” He sounded... excited... which admittedly filled me with a sense of dread instead.

It became justified as he rotated the blockhead of the device around, revealing two thick, metallic points extending right down towards me. Wait... that was... He adjusted them carefully, and two thin blue beams suddenly extended downwards from the disks the points were hooked into. I gave a start, feeling the magic connect with my cheeks and forehead... then stretch! They rolled over my fur until they'd latched onto my top and bottom eyelids on both sides and just... held them open as wide as they could go! Wait... no, no! No! Fuck!

Atir's grin widened, teeth shining in the light now before he licked his lips and flicked another switch. The metal bits on the machine above my head started to slowly rotate, then pick up speed, quickly revealing themselves to be drills instead. No! This wasn't happening! *Fuck!* “Mmmm, I love that look of fear in your eyes. You *reek* of it. Those beautiful, blue eyes your mother gave you.”

My body actually spasmed lightly, as the tentacles clutched my mind, yanking control back from me! No! The Vulkus hit another switch above, and the tips of both drill bits popped open, revealing barbed and serrated prongs to be added to the blurring spin. “But... you rely far too much on your eyes, little kit. Step one is to teach you a new way. In fact, just for this... You're allowed to at least make non-verbal noises. I want to... enjoy this. Feel free to move a bit too.”

The collar pulsed, and suddenly I managed a low, frantic whine. Fuck! I jerked against the leather straps, but couldn't manage any proper words at all. They got tangled up in the tendrils in my skull! More whining, and I tried to thrash sideways, but the leather straps were too tight! The brackets to the sides of my head locked me in place entirely!

“Mmm, good boy. Don't worry, I'm sure you'll grow to *love* my new ways of doing things.” He started to lower the drill bits, and panic took over as I thrashed and yipped in place. I couldn't look away or close my eyes as they slowly got closer and closer, whirling metal noises filling my ears.

His grin widened as everything went white with terror, the points of the drills lowering to millimeters before my eyes. My entire body shivered there now, and the smell of my urine flooded the room, just as Atir started laughing. Was... was this just... a cruel trick or...?

Then he pushed the head of the machine down the rest of the way. The last thing I remembered was my shrill screaming, body thrashing as everything went black to the spikes of pain digging into my skull...

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A new kind of darkness. It was without light entirely. No colors and no movement. Flashes of awareness that I was awake. Always with blasts of pain punching into my body in various spots. More screaming, thrashes, and I'd pass out again. I lost track. My chest in a few spots... My stomach and naval. Like someone was stabbing blades into me. White hot flame sensations burning over my groin. Then a horrible acrid smell, and it was like my entire face had been dunked in acid.

I was pretty sure I threw up at least once, my body shaking violently with the taste of blood in my muzzle. I knew I wet myself. It felt like it went on for hours, with nothing but my screams and Atir's laughter resounding through my head. But it slowly stopped. Everything ached and throbbed as I came to for the first time without a sensation of blinding pain. Darkness. My head was screaming to me, and it felt like my eye sockets were filled with rocks. Two huge rocks. Glass, maybe?

Quiet. I didn't hear Atir's laughter, or him talking to Callia. There was a dripping noise from far away somewhere, but I just lay there, unmoving now. I could feel the straps over me, but... Darkness. My eyes were... He'd shredded them with powered drills. I couldn't... I gave a shudder. All my nose gave me was the sensation of air being breathed in through it. This was...

I couldn't smell anything. It was completely gone. There was just... no sensation whatsoever. What... What the fuck had they done to my nose?! Medically... I knew once I forced myself to calm down again a moment later. They'd burned my scent receptors out. Probably with acid. But if they'd removed that...

My tongue felt sore. Aching in my muzzle. I felt over my teeth, but it was numb and tingly. Fuck... No taste. There wasn't a bit of taste in my mouth. They'd... taken everything except for hearing and touch from me. Why?! Why did they do this?! I felt tears slide down my cheeks as I shivered there, then immediately was wracked by a sob. Why would anyone do this to someone?!

I... No... I just... I just needed to be rescued. I could... I knew medicine could... eventually... give me back everything. It might not be... perfect or the way it was before but... Oh, Gods... Why hadn't anyone found me yet? I shuddered there, softly crying on my back. I didn't even know where I was. How could I expect someone else to?

Pawsteps. I froze, shivering there with snot running out of my ruined nose. Oh fuck... Please, not more. I didn't want... I couldn't take any more pain... "Ah, you're awake again! Sorry about that." Atir. No, not Atir...

Motion, and I felt the table jarred forward again. "Callia made me finally give you anesthetics. It was a pity, but I suppose we couldn't have you going into cardiac arrest or something from the shock. But you made it for a while! Consider me impressed, little guy! You're made of some tough stuff, Bitch."

He actually petted me on the head, and I shuddered again. “Anyway, obviously I left you with your hearing. You’d be kind of useless without a way to communicate with you. Plus, your sense of touch is still in place. Removing that is... prohibitively complicated. And it’s way more fun when you can feel things!” Fuck... I wished they’d taken that too, now. I tried to move my head away as he caressed my left cheek next, and then he gave a low chuckle.

“Don’t worry about your eyes, though. You’re actually kind of useless without those too, but there are arounds. Like this.” There was an audible click, and suddenly... vision flickered into my mind a second later! I gave a start, noticing immediately that everything was a little... grainy, and ever so slightly green. What... what had...? These weren’t glass eyes. They’d installed biotic eyes in me with actual enchantment hookups?

His grinning face was the first thing I saw. He backed up, then showed me a small remote instead. “See? Now, I can turn your vision on and off. Fun, right?! Don’t get used to it. I think I’ll reserve your sight as a special treat for you. Buuut I wanted you to at least be able to see the results of your pre-processing for yourself!” Oh Gods...

He stepped to the side, revealing a full-sized mirror behind him. I was almost upright now, and able to see myself mostly clearly in the mirror. Oh... I was covered in bandages over my neck, chest, stomach, and under my groin. Even all four paws had bandages over them. He grinned as he watched. Wait, was my torso...?

“Yeah, it might be kind of hard to tell the immediate things with the bandages in the way. You probably already noticed your sense of smell and taste are gone. Trust me, that’s a blessing there, with what you’ll be doing in the future!” He tapped the left side of my neck after that, and there was a surprising... clink noise from his claw point. “A nicely customized intravenous injection plate in your neck. Saves having to poke you with needles every time we want to give you something. Your paws were pretty simple too. We just removed all of your nails. Of course, eventually, you’re going to be a finished product. And statistically, I hate to break it to you, but males don’t sell *nearly* as well as females do on the slave market. The client originally requested a female.” No... Oh no... They had... But Ignaus... The client had said a male was fine!

He tapped my sore chest with his paws, moving gently over both sides of the bandage, right where my pectoral muscle cluster was on each side. “Artificial nipple augmentations added. Top of the line, with lactation options! Don’t worry, you’ll fill out nicely by the time we’re done with the ton of hormone treatments we’ll be giving you.” I felt myself grow cold as I stared at the bandages, but he kept lowering his paw. “We added some muscle shaping augments to your torso. Eventually, with the help of the hormones, we’ll be able to give you a nice, trim waist. We also injected uncapped regeneratives right into most of your major bone structures! You should be having quite a lot of bone development over the next few weeks, in line with the new female hormones of course...”

My mouth dried, but he grinned, then cupped gently under my groin, thumb brushing over my sheath. There was... There was an ache but his paw was pushed right up to my pelvis... They... No, no, they didn’t... “Of course, if we’re giving you female hormones, we can’t exactly have your nasty male hormones getting in the way and everything. Plus, I think your new streamlined, ball-less form is far more pleasing to look at! Of course, we sterilized a few glands in you too, and flushed your systems after, so you might be a tad sore...” The sinking sensation just kept crushing down into my chest as I

stared at the smoothness under my sheath. He patted me on top of the head with a smirk, and then... click. My vision went black again.

“You can’t see the last upgrade anyway from that side. Standard Garkin anal modifications. But those are so common these days that I’m sure you’ve heard about *those* already. Now, of course, we just wait for your body to adjust to the hormone shift. So, kick back and take it easy for a bit. I’ll be introducing you to your new home, soon enough! I’ve got some friends for you to play with here, and we’ll be starting up exciting new classes for you to enjoy! I’m sure you’ll come to love it here...” The straps unhooked from me, and for the first time in days, I found myself free of restraints and with full motor control.

Everything hurt though. It was just... I couldn’t... All I did was sag and slide down to the bottom of the table. All I... could do was curl up there into a little ball, trying to protect my torso as I started to cry again. All I could do... at all...