

To Ashes

Chapter 10: Burning Out

“Miss Ashly,” Tooth guided Asher from the bed to the bath to get him all presentable. “Did you need my help in the shower today?”

“Yes,” Asher sighed, his legs shaking from that little love tap Fynx placed on his cheek. “If you could help me to the shower, I think I can handle the scrubbing, but I’ll need a towel.”

“Say no more Miss,” the shark nodded, his thick accent calming the drake. Tooth brought the drake to the bench in the shower and went to go grab a towel. Asher didn’t know why, but he felt safe around his protection detail. Maybe it’s because that meant Fynx wasn’t around.

The drake let that thought sink in. Fynx wasn’t around...his mate. A warmth bloomed in his abdomen as he brushed his hand over his cheek where he last touched him, his other hand going down to brush over the hash marks. Asher gave a light gasp as they stung, aching with the need to be submissive. Each one of those hash marks were another cub in his womb, another life he could give his mate, Fynx deserved to breed, he deserved to be a father, the drake owed it to Fynx to be a mother...

No, Ashly screamed at him and slammed her hand on the display, the water spraying over the drake and snapping him out of it. Asher blinked and then grit his teeth. How could he fold so easily? This was going to be torture.

Asher cleaned himself, the warm water taking the pain from his bones and loosening his aching muscles. Despite how much Fynx liked to do the heavy lifting, he didn’t let Asher slack on his dick

sucking and anal. Now that the drake could think clearly, he tried to devise a plan to get away from this elephant sized mess, and there was only one way to eat an elephant.

One bite at a time.

First, he would need to figure out their itinerary and find some way to work with that. He could feel his alter ego nod in approval.

“Tooth?” Asher raised his voice as he started scrubbing his chest.

“Yes miss?” The shark poked his head in to hear, but his eyes were closed.

“Does Fynx have plans for us tonight? Is there anything I should be preparing for specifically?”

“The Boss has dinner reservations for Tempest tonight. It’s that new place that debuted last week. He is taking you and wants you to be dressed for the occasion.”

“Thanks,” Asher nodded, even though the shark couldn’t see him. “Do we have a spending limit today?”

“Boss has given you the same limit he did yesterday.”

“Okay,” Asher pursed his lips. “Am I allowed to leave the penthouse today?”

“I think the Boss could be persuaded. Where to?”

“I was hoping to maybe go to Xadia to pick out a new dress, and maybe get my makeup done.”

“I can definitely get the Boss to sign off on that,” the shark gave him a blind nod. “Though, we’ll have to get some heat pads for you. Can’t be having you fuming all over town.”

“Seriously? He has those here?”

“No,” Tooth waived off. “I’m texting Nail now. Do you know your size?”

“Just get me one of everything. I don’t usually use pads so I’m not sure.”

“Right, of course Miss,” Tooth pulled himself away and Asher could hear the shark’s claws clicking against his phone.

“Could he pick me up a cold compress too?” Asher asked. He had no idea how long he was going to be here, but a nice cooling pack might do him some good.

“We’ll get you two so we can rotate them in the freezer,” Tooth responded.

Asher put his head under the stream of water, letting it roll over his face as he recited the numbers in his mind. He had to be sure they were correct, but he didn’t know if he could remember right. It just had to be good enough. He had a plan, but it would involve a lot of chance and a lot of luck. He might be able to pull it off...if the numbers were right.

Fynx agreed to let Asher go to Xadia on the condition that he be closely guarded. In other words, he didn’t trust that Asher wouldn’t run. Not that he could even if he wanted to. Asher found it difficult to walk in a straight line, needing to hold onto Nail’s arm to walk. He had never felt so exhausted or warm. Currently he was wearing a sweater dress, something more casual that Fynx allowed him outside of the penthouse. It was classy, designer, and had a built in knitted shawl that kept his shoulders warm, but he was trying to keep himself from sweating. Thank goodness he didn’t have pants, the breeze was nice and cooling, but the pad against his pussy was not helping with the lack of ventilation. He swore he could peel that thing off of him and it was slap on the floor and ooze.

“You alright miss?” Nail asked. “We can rest if you want to.”

“No,” Asher sighed, gripping Nail’s arm as hard as he could while trying to keep a straight face.

“No, the store is just around the corner.”

“Miss,” Tooth put a cool paw on his shoulder. “I’ll get you something cool from the smoothie place over there. The store will still be there in ten minutes.”

“But our appointment—”

“Doesn’t start until we get there,” Tooth reassured the drake. “Your wellbeing is more important than a dress fitting. Now sit.” The shark ordered.

Asher huffed, sitting down on a public bench. He almost believed the shark when he said he cared. If he didn’t know who the two worked for he would have trusted them, but he knew what their job was. To keep him comfortable and safe so Fynx could continue his tapestry of scars on his body. Asher put a hand over his womb, the little ball of fire in his abdomen felt like a constant spray of heat from a hair dryer. Along with eight hash marks of pain.

Asher made the mistake of brushing up against them and he gave a little gasp as his body grew heavy, his womb felt hotter. Did...did he really want to do this? Who knows if it would even work? Fynx provides well enough and...if Asher was going to be a mother...who would be a better baby daddy...

“Don’t worry Miss,” Nail stood next to him, being just far away that Asher could cool himself without being so far he couldn’t leap into action if something was to happen. Like anything ever happened at the mall. “He’ll be back shortly.”

“Could you get me some water?” Asher asked brushing his brow, a light glisten had settled into his brow, but he was already cooling off. The sweater dress was warm for the weather, but it was also airy. In the proper light, the creamy colors would be see-through.

“No can do Miss Ashly,” Nail shook his head. “Can’t have you unattended.”

“Unsupervised more like it,” Asher sighed and leaned back, the metal of the bench almost painfully cold. It was nice as the coolness shocked his neck before he settled in, his heat making his legs shake a little from that pain, but it was mild enough that it faded before edging into something more paralyzing.

“Here you go Miss,” Tooth came back with an orange and red swirled drink.

“Yeah, thanks,” Asher rolled his eyes and accepted the drink and started to sip on his smoothie. He was sure he looked like an entitled bitch bossing around her help. If they only knew.

Asher let the bursting flavor of mango and strawberries flow over his tongue. The sourness of the yogurt smoothed out the shocking sweetness and tang of the fruity mixture. The icy bits figuratively sizzling on their way down his heated throat and dripped icy droplets into his stomach. His eyes went wide as he drank the custom order he would have had if he were to go to the juice bar himself.

“How...How did you know?”

“We wouldn’t be very good protection if we didn’t know our clientele. How else would we be able to keep you happy?”

They put a positive spin on it, but Asher found the next gulp hard to swallow around the lump in his throat. This order was the specific one he added up and combined on his phone. He never spoke it out loud. He would just submit the order and pick it up when he got to the mall.

“How long has he been following me?” Asher demanded.

“Miss,” Tooth’s voice was sympathetic.

"No," Asher put up a finger. "Tell me."

"Miss Ashly," Nail tried to come in.

"Tell me or I'll scream," Asher warned.

"You scream, and we have clearance to use excessive force to stop you," Tooth responded by cracking his knuckles. "Please don't make us do that here Miss."

"*Right,*" Asher narrowed his gaze. "You think Fynx would let you beat me? He never liked other's sloppy seconds. Even back in high school he made sure to get the first punches in."

Asher decided to sip on his drink, setting his poker face. He was calling a bluff and Tooth looked serious about the excessive force.

"A week or so," Nail answered. "The day after you didn't respond to his messages he hired a private investigator."

"Nail, what did I say about leaving the talking to me?" Tooth gave a low growl.

"So you two knew Fynx was going to abduct me?" Asher scowled as he sipped his smoothie. "You know that makes you accessories."

"That's not what the footage looked like," Tooth pulled sunglasses from his jacket and put them on. "You seemed all too willing to go with Boss."

"You have tapes?" Asher furrowed his brow.

"Whatever footage may or may not exist would clear mister Fynx and not convict. Though it would be another scandal to cover up, public blowjobs would be the least of his concerns."

“Yeah, whatever,” Asher looked down and sipped his drink. Despite how mad he was at the two, he wasn’t surprised.

“Not to alarm you Miss Ashly, but we’re Mister Fynx’s personal bodyguards and we are hired to keep him safe and out of harm’s way. That is simply our job, and right now, our job is to keep you safe and comfortable.”

Asher was chewing on the tip of his straw as Tooth continued to prattle on in his disarming British accent. Eventually the big shark realized he wasn’t listening and returned to his post beside him. Asher knew the two were the living bars to his cage, but he felt stupid for thinking, even briefly, they gave a shit. Of course they didn’t. They were just another cruel joke that Fynx put together to hurt him.

“I’m done with this,” Asher held up his cup, the only thing left were seeds and some frosted ice chunks that didn’t get properly blended. “Please toss it and we can get going to my appointment.”

“Yes Miss Ashly,” Nail took the cup and deposited it in the can beside the bench. Asher knew he could have done it himself, but he wanted to be petty. He took a deep breath, the sweat mostly cleared, and he stood up, taking Tooth’s hand and going to the dress store.

Oksana, the Kalak who ran the store, was currently talking to a long and lanky cheetah.

“The girls will be right with you darling,” Oksana’s thick Russian accent came through before she went to finish up with her client who was already sliding her platinum card through the reader.

“Thanks,” Asher said, but his voice was weak. The small trek around the corner and down the hall took more out of him than he would have liked. Was he even going to be able to make it to tonight?

Asher felt like he was being dragged along for a bit, the sisters scooping him up and bringing him to the back, but his protection detail were able to muscle their way in this time. They wanted to be sure

Asher wasn't a flight risk, or maybe they didn't want him getting tipsy like he did the last time he was at Xadia. Whatever their reasoning, they were probably right to do so. Any time he made any attempt to look at the sisters' phones, Tooth and Nail were ready to snatch it away if anything got too suspicious. They never did, the drake not feeling confident enough to actually make a move.

They picked out a dress that was red, Asher wanting something that made him look powerful and not submissive. The two guards just kept a close eye on him.

"So, this one will really accentuate your body's natural curves." Rouge said.

"It's perfect for what you're looking for," Lilliana smiled. "You'll look like a blazing dragon. A goddess."

"Y'all done?!" Vivi shouted from the side of the room. "I can't match the makeup without knowing what I'm working with."

"One second Viv," Rouge called back as they got Asher to slip into the dress, the slit running up his leg and exposing his toned legs. A black ribbon was tied around the waist to synch it and the bust went right up to Asher's neck, the bottom half the same red silk while coming up to a mesh top that left Asher's collarbone exposed. It quickly rode up his neck and attached to a black silk choker. His arms were exposed, and the back was a crisscrossing of black silk that accented his white fur. His shoes were open toed black sandals that laced up Asher's legs and synched around his knee.

Asher took a deep breath, looking himself in the mirror with Ashly looking back.

"*You got this,*" she said to him.

Asher nodded and walked out to the main room where Vivi was waiving him forward.

"You ain't the only gorgeous face I got to paint today. Get your ass in the chair."

“Of course,” he smiled and got in the stool, the black rabbit already matching up colors before choosing a foundation. The paint felt thick, like a mask going on and hiding any obscured flaw.

“Anything new with you?” Vivi asked.

“Let’s keep the conversation to business,” Tooth responded.

“I wasn’t asking you,” the rabbit flicked her brush at the shark, speckles of paint staining his suit.

“It’s fine Vivi, and things are going as well as expected,” Asher turned his chin up as Vivi gestured him to do so.

“Well, Dumb and Dumber over there think I’m not wise to what’s going on, but I get it. Not like I can do much about it with how I’m tied down by that loan.”

“I see,” Asher’s shoulders drooped a bit, but his heart was racing. They were getting to the end of the session and it wasn’t going to be long before he needed to make his move. He needed to get his message out, and soon. “I’m going to that new restaurant that just opened. Tempest.”

“That’ll be fun. I heard a bunch of my clients saying they would kill for a reservation.” Vivi continued absently as she had the drake close his eyes. “We’re almost done here.”

“Thanks, how do you accept payment?” Asher asked.

“I can take a card if you’d like,” Vivi smirked.

“Do you accept tips?”

“Of course,” Vivi smirked. “But, don’t tip me until you see the end result. Okay, open.” She ordered.

Asher opened his eyes and Vivi was holding a mirror. He had never looked more powerful. If looks could kill, he would be the femme fatale to end all femme fatale. The dark wings on his eyes were large and razor sharp, the red eyeshadow like the last gaps of sunlight, and it all framed his golden eyes like the last rays of the setting sun. His face was made to look more feminine and his lips were a metallic black that shimmered red.

"Ready?" Ashly asked in the mirror.

"I think you earned that tip," Asher smiled. "I look like I'm going to burn the city to the ground."

"I may have been projecting a bit, but damn if I didn't do a great job." Vivi pulled out a phone app with a printer attachment. "Slide here."

Tooth pulled out a black card and slid it through the reader, the printer screeching off a new receipt.

"Hey, Nail," Asher smiled. "Do you know how much is left in the budget?"

"You have quite the balance yet," Nail shrugged, the big bear fighting to stay awake, a coffee in his one hand from the refreshments counter.

"Well, how much? I need to know how much to leave Vivi." Asher cocked a brow before turning to the rabbit. "You got a pen?"

"Hold up," Tooth tried to snatch the receipt, but Asher just pulled it away.

"Come on Tooth, you cheapskate. What? Fynx can't afford to give her a little cash?" Tooth put a hand on Asher's shoulder and leaned into his ear.

"I don't need you passing notes." Tooth practically growled.

“Oh come on. What’s Viv gunna do? Fynx owns her. Besides, I want to leave her a good tip. She did an amazing job.”

Tooth stood there before huffing and letting the drake go.

“Fine, let’s get this over with.”

“Someone’s in a foul mood,” Asher rolled his eyes and took the blue pen from Vivi.

“Don’t think I didn’t catch that comment about Fynx owning me,” Vivi had a brow cocked, her blue lips twisted into a scrutinizing purse.

“I think you’ll forget all about it when you see what I’m leaving you.” Asher started writing in the tip for the amount he had left on his balance. “Hey, Nail? Can you add these two together?” Asher rattled off the numbers and the bear spat out the answer without using his calculator, the big guy really good at math.

“Wait,” Asher paused. “Say that again? I didn’t catch the last few digits. What were they again?” Asher was scribbling numbers down as Nail said them. Then Asher signed for it.

“Ready Miss?” Tooth asked, he had calmed down, the stately butler mask back in place.

“As ready as I’m going to be,” Asher held out a hand and Tooth helped him up. “Vivi, be sure to process that tip before tonight so Fynx doesn’t have a chance to stop it.”

Vivi was looking at the receipt, her eyes wide. “Sure...”

“Thanks,” Asher waived off as he walked out with his new outfit.

Vivi was left standing there with a phone number written in the tip section with the signature filled out with a desperate message.

HELP

The Rolls-Royce pulled up to the restaurant, the city mired in a drizzling gloom. The shark escort came out of the car and came around with a large umbrella before opening the door for its passenger. From that coal black car an ember emerged, a spark of life burning for all the world to see.

Asher's blazing red dress was the only color beyond the muted grays and damp stone. He currently held up his dress as he got out of the car, not letting it hit the ground. The black, lace up, Greek sandals had shallow heels, the drake opting for that with how weak he was.

"Ready Miss Ashly?" Tooth asked, his strong hand offered out.

Asher took one last look at his reflection in the window and nodded before stepping out and taking his hand for balance.

"As ready as I'm going to be," Asher said with a confidence he didn't know he had. He couldn't be his usual self here; he had to be something more. He had to be Ashly for now. She seemed like the only one who had any power to resist Fynx.

Asher was lead into the restaurant, the maître a tall buck who spoke with such a smooth tone it melted like butter on Asher's ears.

"Welcome Madam," the buck had long hair that was tied up into a tight bun, silky brown locks framed by a powerful rack. He wasn't huge, but he wasn't tinny either. "Name?"

"It should be—" Tooth started.

"Under Fynx," Ashly interrupted Tooth with a gentle smile. "Christian Fynx."

“Right this way Madam,” the buck didn’t even look over his list. “Might I have your name as well?”

“You’re too sweet,” Ashly smiled warmly. “It’s Ashly.”

“Of course,” the buck nodded and guided her into the restaurant. Tooth started to guide her, but Ashly politely took her hand back.

“I got this,” she nodded and strode after the buck. The restaurant was all dark wood, pristine white table clothes, and golden lighting. Candles flickered on every table, and the place was packed to the gills, but as soon as Ashly walked onto the stage, the conversation died down. It was as if she was being herald into a ballroom, but this was no ballroom. It was a viper pit.

Asher felt his skin crawl, his back prickling with the eyes of so many people. He was thankful for the makeup hiding his blush. He faltered on his step and the buck paused. Asher took a breath before looking up and seeing a round booth in the back. Like some pimp at a club he owned, there was Fynx, sitting at the table and leaning back. Asher couldn’t see his full face as it was shrouded in darkness, but he could see those predatory eyes and that signature suit.

“Madam?” The buck paused.

We got this, Asher could feel Ashly’s presence.

“Thank you, but I can see my table in the back,” Ashly stated to the buck.

“Madam, we seat everyone—”

Ashly didn’t wait, she simply strode forward. The room got quieter as Ashly took off without the maître. As soon as she knew Fynx was watching, she unleashed her dress, the fabric flowing down like rivers of blood as she strode forward. Her dress like ruby rivers and her eyes like setting suns burning

bright in the defiance of night. She never looked down or away, a gentle curve to her lips as she approached the table. Ashly took her dress up again to slink into the booth and slide up next to Fynx. The snow leopard had a scowl on his muzzle as he glared at the drake.

“What the fuck do you think you’re—”

Ashly pressed her lips against the snow leopard’s. Her soft lips lingered there as she felt Fynx tense up. She didn’t know what he was going to do, but with a tender hand going up to Fynx’s mane and brushing through it softly, she could feel his muscles relax. His lips parted and so did hers. Their tongues danced for a moment, Fynx’s tongue almost inquisitive, tentative in its taking of Ashly’s muzzle. The kiss broke and a hot breath pulled from Fynx lips.

“I missed you,” Ashly lied like a pro, her hand slinking down from Fynx’s thick mane and gripping the nape of his tie, his claw loosening it just enough to reveal the top button of that dress shirt.

“The fuck you did,” Fynx called out Ashly’s lie, but his tone was unsure and followed by a hard swallow. To Asher, it wasn’t a total lie, he was already feeling his breath growing heavy and hot, but Asher couldn’t be trusted at the moment, so his alter-ego took over. Ashly didn’t respond with words, she simply tugged a little more on that tie, the silk loosening.

“Why so tense?” Ashly cooed. “Long, *hard* day at work?”

“I...” Fynx’s eyes darted from one of Ashly’s eyes to the other, looking for any trace of fear or doubt.

“Did your secretary help you again? Did she do a *thorough* enough job?” Ashly brought her other hand up and undid the top button of Fynx’s collar, the fabric practically bouncing apart as Fynx’s thick neck forced it open in relief.

Ashly never broke eye contact with those orange warning flairs, and when that collar popped open, it took everything in her not to chuckle as a pink blush broke its way across Fynx's cheeks. Ashly didn't want to undermine his masculinity, that would result in a quick end to the night, so she closed her eyes slowly and gently nuzzled under his neck.

"I've been burning to see you Fynx," Ashly murred into that neck fluff. She took a tender breath, only to regret it as it struck a chord deep in her womb. That blazing sun burned hot, scorching her insides as the scent of her mate was so intoxicating. She opted to breathe through her mouth to keep her resolve.

"A-Ashly?" Fynx was stumbling over his words. Did she really have this much power over him? Either way she needed to play this right. All it would take would be one wrong move and she would be putty in his hands again.

Someone politely cleared their throat at their table and Fynx straightened up. Ashly slowly pulled herself away as if in a lusty haze. It wasn't too far off from the truth. There stood a goat with a few menus.

"I'm Burt and I'll be your server tonight," the goat's fur was black and his hair slicked back into a bun. His brown eyes complimented his dark fur and his suit. He placed the menus on the table along with a drink menu. "Can I get you two started off with anything to drink?" He offered as he procured a pitcher of ice water that he used to fill the crystal already on the table.

"We need a moment," Fynx snapped, his fist clenched on the table. "Don't come back until I waive you over."

"Of course sir," the goat nodded as though this were the norm and walked off.

“What’s wrong?” Ashly asked as she put a hand on Fynx’s thigh. The snow leopard’s hand snapped to her wrist, gripping it almost painfully, eliciting a soft gasp from the drake.

“What are you playing at?” Fynx growled. Ashly let the question hang in the air, a gentle curve coming to her lips.

“Can’t a girl be excited to see the father of her cubs?”

It was a simple lie, a hasty selection of words to make a flimsy excuse, but Fynx’s eyes went wide as his hand let go over her wrist as though he were clutching a burning coal. He blinked before a sly smirk played at his lips. His hand came up to cup Ashly’s chin between his thumb and forefinger. Ashly could feel him trying to pull her face up to meet his gaze, but he stopped when he realized she already was, his smirk growing wider.

“Your heat finally broke you,” Fynx murred and pressed his lips against hers. They kissed, deep and slow, their tongues lulling over one another’s in the shade of their booth, their tongues flittering around one another. Ashly gave tender little murr into that kiss, her hand sliding up Fynx’s thigh and brushing his swollen sheath. A gentle shock went through the snow leopard before he broke the kiss with a grin. “That’s my good girl.”

Fynx lifted his hand and snapped his fingers several times. Burt came over swiftly, his movement smooth and dignified.

“Yes sir?”

“Fynx,” the snow leopard corrected his server without looking away from the drake. “Call me Mister Fynx or I’ll have your job. Get me a vintage cab, and whatever the lady here wants.”

“Of course Mister Fynx,” Burt didn’t miss a beat. “And you Miss?”

“Ashly,” she cooed without breaking eye contact with the snow leopard. “You can call me Miss Ashly, and I’ll have Champagne.”

“We have a selection of sparkling wines, what would—”

“A bottle of the Dom Perignon to start,” Fynx ordered. “I’ll motion you over when we’re ready to order.”

Ashly was flawless and elegant, strong and poised, everything that Asher wasn’t. She was the strength he needed to get through every touch and fondle, every sickening kiss and dirty remark. She would counter with something dirtier, she would touch him someplace riskier, she would condone his disrespect towards the staff, and she would laugh at his racist jokes. She needed to be strong, she needed to be charming, she needed to be the seductive viper, the honey bee that danced for its queen, the whore and the hierophant all in one. She needed to be everything he desired so that she could find a window of opportunity.

It didn’t need to be a window. It could be a crack in the wall, a loose floorboard, anything in this proverbial prison she could use to get out, but she needed to fight through the heat and the bubbles of her drinks. She didn’t even know if her message got out. Vivi could have just as easily tossed the receipt. She had so much to lose by helping me. Her business and livelihood would be gone.

But Asher didn’t know how much longer he could keep this up. His loins were on fire with need. Each counter Ashly made, only shook his resolve further. Even the light squish of his heat pad against his cunt sent shivers up his spine. His slick soaking through it and darkening his panties. It would only be a matter of time before the dress was soaked through. Maybe if he let Fynx—

“Madam?”

Asher's ears perked up. He knew that voice. Asher looked away from Fynx and his eyes landed on a black bear in a suit. It was Marcus!

"Hey, I'm the head of the table," Fynx smirked and jabbed his thumb to himself, the wine having gotten to him. "Address me, and where's that goat fucker?"

"I'll be your server for the evening..." Marcus was sweating, his body shaking, his suit wrinkled. Anyone paying attention could tell he wasn't supposed to be there.

"We already heard this song and dance," Fynx chuckled. "At least this time you're an omnivore and not some lettuce muncher, eh!" Fynx elbowed Asher and that shook him out of it. Ashly came out again and giggled at his joke before she looked at the bear. How the hell was Marcus going to get him out of this? Ashly glanced over to the table in front of them where the body guards were sitting. Tooth was already starting to stand.

"Of course, I mean...I..."

"You a fucking r-tard or something?" Fynx leaned back in the booth groaning. "Come on, just bring us the check so we can get out of here. Did you catch all that, or do you need me to say it slower."

"I...of course...but..." Marcus stammered.

"Do we have a problem here?" Tooth put a hand on Marcus's shoulder.

"No," Asher spoke up a little too quickly. "No, I mean, he's just doing his job."

"Poorly," Fynx rolled his eyes. "Go get the check and take one of these with you," Fynx pulled out his money clip and started tossing cards at him, the plastic hitting the bear in the chest and then hitting the floor. "Put it on any one. It doesn't matter. Can you do that right?"

"I...of course..." Marcus got down on the floor and picked up the cards and wiped his brow before turning to the miss. "Now would be a good time to p-powder your nose...um...madam."

"Sounds like a plan," Ashly nodded and started scooting out of the booth when Fynx gripped her by the wrist, his hand squeezing harder than normal with some of the alcohol numbing his restraint.

"Where are you going?" Fynx's eyes were narrow as he glared at Ashly.

"I'm just going to the bathroom to powder my nose," Asher answered.

"With what powder?" Fynx growled and yanked back. Ashly gave a little wince, the heat in her womb making her falter, her spine to tingle, her body screaming at her to lay down and just take it from her mate. Her mate will care for her, her mate will provide, her mate will give her so many strong children.

No, she needed to resist. Instead of pulling away, she leaned in and smirked while whispering into Fynx's ear.

"I'm going to go into the bathroom and remove my heat pad. When I come back, I won't be wearing any underwear and you can do whatever you want to me on the car ride home."

Ashly's hand slipped through Fynx's grip, he pulled her into a deep, passionate kiss, his tongue diving deep and hungrily as he gave a soft growl.

Asher felt his heart breaking, his body aching to stay. He needed to stay. But he felt Ashly's claws in him, ripping the broken parts of his heart out through his kidneys. It took everything in the drake not to sob.

"Don't keep me waiting," Fynx rumbled lustfully. "And you, get your ass in gear and get me the check!"

“Right away Sir!” Marcus shot off before turning away and practically jogging away to the bussing station before Fynx could correct him for calling him Sir.

Ashly slipped away and was working her way towards the rest rooms when Nail started walking behind her.

“It’s all right Nail, I can carry myself,” Ashly waived him off, hiding Asher’s tears. “Just make sure Fynx can still stand. He had a bit more to drink than me.”

“That randy fucker,” Nail mumbled under his breath. “I’ll get him to the car no problem Miss.” Nail turned around to help Fynx, Tooth already helping the snow leopard.

Asher made it to the bathroom, but before he could go in he stopped just outside where a mirror was. He looked at himself, a single tear rolling down his cheek.

That did it...he had to go back. He had to get to Fynx. His bones ached, his pussy quivered, his spine tingled, he felt like he was burning hollow and if he wasn’t filled with that fat snow leopard meat he would crack and fall apart like a tree scorched from the inside. Ashly was screaming to stop, to not turn around and go back.

Then he felt another hand on his shoulder.

“Asher, is that really you?” Marcus asked as he turned him around.

“Marcus...” Asher spun around and hugged the black bear, burying his face in the bear’s mane and shaking, holding back tears. The presence of a man gave him just enough control to keep himself together. “You got my message?”

“Yeah, loud and clear, though you could have given more details about your situation.”

“It’s all I could manage,” Asher smeared his makeup swiping away a duo of tears. “You need to get me out of here while I still can.”

“Oh, don’t worry, I called in the full cavalry,” Marcus gave the drake a thumbs up. Just as he did, there was a commotion coming from the dinning floor. Marcus started guiding Asher to the exit and kept him down so as to not draw much attention, but the drake still caught a glimpse of what was happening.

There, standing at Fynx’s table was Amber, her IRS badge out and on display as she spoke to the bodyguards. She was like some super Karen in her sweater and jeans. His knight in denim armor. Fynx had an annoyed scowl on his face as he strummed his claws on the table.

Then their eyes met. Fynx’s eyes locked with Asher’s as he tried to get out. The snep’s eyes went wide as he glanced at Amber, then back at Asher and everything clicked. The family resemblance was spot on.

“You BITCH!” He shouted, his guards coming to calm him, Amber continuing her legal talk while some other IRS officers came around to grab the snow leopard. Anyone who saw the outburst would think he was shouting at Amber, but both Asher and the snow leopard knew who that outburst was for. Asher’s eyes went wide before he looked away, making his way to the front door as tears stung his eyes.

“You’re DEAD!” Fynx roared. Asher didn’t catch the rest, he made it out, the rain having picked up a bit, the water speckling him and hiding his tears, smearing his makeup, extinguishing any strength he had left as Ashly washed away to leave nothing but the sobbing Asher. Marcus guided him to a familiar car. Amber’s car. Marcus got him in the car and he cried, he cried and screamed and cried. Half of him crying because he was so scared and relieved at the same time.

The other weeping at the loss of his mate...