

“Another day well done Grax, you just might make it yet.”

Some people found his speaking out loud to be more than a bit strange, but it really was one of his favorite ways to think through things. The old human was finally being given the chance to rest himself after another busy day being the sole cook for a rustic café; the best part was that it was fully his own. After constantly working and scrapping together his funds, he was finally able to open a little place right in the capital city of all places. Better still was the fact that he had been able to quickly establish himself and maintain his business; this was mostly done through his rather strange additions to meals that came with every holiday or special occasion.

He had heard called gimmicky, but he did legitimately enjoy changing the scenery around now and again, and he was coming up to a near full year in business. That would certainly be a nice blowout for his customers no doubt.

For the current time though, Grax could not stop smiling as he saw the last of the rather smitten looking couples finally exiting. It was a time for romance all throughout the cities, and plenty of new relationships forming, celebrating, or ending in all their varied ways. Grax could not help but smile a little at each new pair that walked in and out. It made him yearn for younger years and his own love, but he had put that behind him for the better. He was just glad he was able to give these younger folk a chance at a nice night out, and turn a nice profit for himself in the meantime with his ‘candlelight specials’.

Grax had just begun setting off to finish his closing when the door opened squeakily.

“My apologies, we’ve just closed for the ni-“ He was cut off with a pair of hands roughly grabbing and stretching his stained shirt as he was spun around. He stared into the glazed over but fully opened eyes of another human, taller and certainly more dangerous looking if the stare Grax was getting now would be of any indication.

“Alright, you damn, ponce,” a surprisingly smooth yet gravelly voice intoned, “I’ve got you unawares. So you’ll be telling me telling me *everything* you’ve been ingesting those people with, right quick!”

Grax could only stammer in response, “Ingesting them? What on-“ he was cut off, “Don’t you play dullard with me sneaksby, I’ve been eyeing this place all night, and I ain’t seen two people gone in that ain’t come out looking ready to tackle the other!”

Grax began to take more stock of what was happening; he was certainly grappled, but he was certain he could easily push off and be free from the grip and the man’s glazed look only indicated further of what was happening. “Are... Are you drunk?” He asked hesitantly. He was apparently not heard though, as the man continued to ramble.

“According to the Delgas concord, the application of biological agents against civilian pop-ulations is, summant to, crimes against.. .sentient... be-.” The ever quieting speech finally rumbled to a stop as the man collapsed sideways and almost took Grax along to the ground. He appeared to be unconscious in every sense of the word. Grax stood there, still in a fit of slight surprise as he regarded the rather well dressed man, before deciding to place a call to the local enforcers to get the man out of his shop. However, Grax could not stop his curiosity getting the better of him and he managed to find a set of credentials in a coat pocket.

“Doctor... Welcott, eh?”

CLANG* *CLANG* *CLANG

Koliss instantly felt himself awaken, but he kept his eyes closed in the hope that the echoing ring would show mercy to the mother lode of all migraines he had going on. He would not be so lucky.

“Up with you lout.” The rather gruff voice of the enforcer brooked no argument, but Koliss considered himself a gambling man. “You could literally be talking to anyone outside my door sir.”

The voice did not waver in its patterns, “You’re being released, *doctor*, now up with you or I’ll happily heave you out myself.” Koliss quickly sat up, immediately regretted it with the sudden onset of vertigo, but still managed to gingerly step to the door which was opened for him. “Well, why didn’t you lead with that sir?” He received a rather stiff shove towards the room exit.

Shuffling outside, Koliss saw only one person at the counter that was apparently signing someone out, and he certainly did not expect a rather portly older looking human to be the one to apparently come to his aid. He rather expected one of the clan’s own enforcers to give him a ride back to his telling off.

The old man turned and gestured Koliss over; he spoke as Koliss approached. “Good to see you in a right better state.”

“You just got me released,” a nod to the affirmative, “Why?” Koliss would remind himself of his manners, but he felt as if he knew this man in some way, and it was bothering him that he could not place it.

“Well firstly, it was technically your credit chit,” Koliss held back his incredulous look, “and secondly, I figure instead of pressing any charges we could just work out

something else.” Koliss felt a sense of dread as he began to recall his most hazy but recent memory of the night before.

“So, you’re the one that I... scuffled with.” The man chuckled, “I wouldn’t call it scuffling really, and even I could have toppled you as sloshed as you were. Regardless, you still technically did accost me, got it on my security camera and everything so if you prefer the charges...” Koliss sighed “Alright then, what is it you intend?”

Koliss settled into a cushioned seat with a heavy sigh. The café had finally been closed after a rather large influx of work for Grax and himself. It held no candle to a battlefield or operating room, but starting the day off with a migraine really didn’t help the sensibilities when trying to take and deliver orders of food and tending to a small bar in the meanwhile.

“First day of working hard?” Grax called as he came from the back storage room. “Oh no, not in the slightest Grax.” Koliss answered with a bit of flippancy. The two had managed to develop at least a cordial tone of conversing throughout the day.

“Ah, so you were a surgeon then? Grax asked, “Well technically I-“ Koliss stopped and shifted in his seat to see Grax holding up a familiar identification card. “Found it on you, figured I’d hold it just in case.” Koliss was glad to see that, and he figured Grax was able to have some insurance in case he presented a stubborn problem.

“I was wondering why I didn’t have my things at the station.” Koliss nodded in acceptance as some other tidbits, including a few less credits than before, were given back. “Figured if you could handle a hospital you could this, all that bedside manner bursting out of you.” There was a good natured chuckle that followed, and Koliss became curious about something. “So... I stumbled in here looking for, ingredients, to your dishes; and I’ve noticed that you advertise all those ‘candlelight specials.’ I’m a bit curious as to what you actually put in them.

Grax considered Koliss a moment before bending beneath a counter to retrieve something. “Well, it’s technically trade secret, but since you’re technically going to be working for me for the next while, I can probably trust you with it.” There was the slamming of a glass bottle, and Koliss could only stare in slight disbelief.

“Alcohol...”

“Not just-“

“That is literally just alcohol, I could walk down-“

“AH puh puh puh!” Grax stopped him, “it’s not ‘just’ alcohol, it’s how you prepare the meal with the alcohol. This mixture lowers the inhibitions for the lovers or daters while allowing them to keep... most of their mental faculties. Combine this with a few light scents, and you’ve got a setup to a great night.” Grax seemed to fairly proud of his pitch, and Koliss himself could not stop slightly chuckling. “Lowering inhibitions... you just may be a genius Grax.” Grax stowed away his special ingredient, “Nothing less and nothing greater Koliss.”

There was a silence for a minute, before Koliss spoke again. “So, Grax, about the rest of this deal-.”

“You’ve got some ways to go,” Grax interrupted, “but I figure you’ve got more important promises to keep being a doctor and all, so we’ll work out your days sometime later. You should be free to go now.”

Koliss stated, “Leave?” Koliss got his reply, “Yep.”

“Just like that; no getting my information or...?” Grax himself shook his head, “You seem like the type of man to keep his word doctor, but you also seem like the type to like to keep to himself, which I can respect. I think will be seeing more of each other, and hey, you know where I’ll be.” Koliss nodded slowly as Grax began to wipe away at countertop where Koliss sat at, there was a few more moments of silence.

“I don’t see any evidence of a security camera in here Grax...”

His new acquaintance scoffed “That you know of.”

Koliss nodded slowly once again before finally standing, “Be seeing you soon Grax.”

“Bright and early doctor, bright and early!” The voice faded as the door shut and Koliss found himself on the street again. He took one last look at the small hole in the wall café to commit it to memory, before turning on his heel and strolling away.