

2:21

Written by Marcus Avenier
Illustrated by Felix Avenier

<http://www.avenier.org>

The following story contains:

Vulgar language, abuse, and consensual sex acts between two men.

It is intended for adult audiences only.



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One, two, skip a crack. Hip sway, knee swing, toe scrape. Devon went traipsing over the gritty cement. He was running through his walking. Fleeing through his swagger. Crossed too many lines. Broke too many rules.

Don't knock on the green door. Don't invite demons into your home. Or was it vampires? He didn't know. Not that Nasr ever needed an invitation.

Exhaust billowed into Devon's face, gray and dirty. Squeaky breaks, air vents and old hydraulics. His fingers hooked on the greasy cold surface of a green-faced sign as the bus drew to a halt at the curb. The opening of the door turned the fumed air thick with the stink of sweat and piss, the fruity undercurrent of bubble gum. The hunched driver fixed Devon with a lackluster stare. An elderly gargoyle clinging to his eroding controls.

"Ya coming or not, kid?" Dry leaves. Old toads. Broken fingers.

Devon hopped up and into the deep well of the entry. He mounted the second step as he dug into the tight cling of his pocket. A handful of coins tipped from his fingers to bounce and chink through the mechanical guts of the fare box. It whirred and whined, the LED screen flickering a few times before snapping off entirely. The driver pressed a rumple of barely-there paper into Devon's fingertips. The ink rubbed immediately, leaving his hand tacky and dirty.

Plastic seats. Blank faces. This one looked down. That one looked ahead. That one read a book. A little girl with pink ribbons in her hair smiled at him. Devon smiled back, and the world seemed to glow from the light in the girl's big brown eyes. It dimmed again as she looked away, her attention called by the possessive arm of the matronly figure beside her. Gather ye rosebuds.

The bus lurched. Devon's shoes slid along the smooth rubber of the beveled mat. He caught himself on another pole. His thumb slid past whiteout-scrawled initials. Fingertips clamped down over black spray paint. He twisted and plopped into an empty seat beside an empty seat. The bus cruised along. The bus stopped. Started. Stopped again. Started again. People funneled through, voiceless and faceless. Buildings outside of the window. Sign posts, benches, and the road. The gargoyle droned through speakers so shot that little could be heard beyond static and volume.



“Hey kid.” A voice croaking at his left. Devon jerked awake. He hadn’t even known he’d been sleeping. “Bus don’t go any furduh. I’m on break nah. Gedoff.”

The gargoyles turned and shuffled away, hunching down the narrow corridor lined with dingy poles and empty seats. Devon swayed and followed, leaning here and there. Watermelon bubble gum. Strawberry body wash. Barbie pink. Musk and sweat. Oil and exhaust. Cloves there. Made his nostrils twitch.

The sun came down hard on the top of his head as Devon stepped onto the dirty curb of the transfer depot. He peered down at the tiny blot of his shadow, shaded his eyes as he then stared up at the wan blue of the sky. Too far away. Not far enough.

Two blocks down, an alley up. Off to the left, impaled by the shadow rungs of a fire escape. Cardboard and bedrolls. Dumpsters and the sinus-raw sweet stink of overcooked coke. Devon rounded another corner, resisting the urge to run. An urge that twitched up his calves and caused his knees to lock now and then in the rub of faded black denim.

Bored reception clerk. Devon stared at the watery brown eyes and the nose that seemed to engulf her face. Pocks and pimples on a terrain of chocolate colored skin. She was staring at him with increasing irritation. He knew the look too well. Watched the spittle string itself thick between the shining brackets of her braces. Devon's thumbs twitched. He wanted to pop those brackets off one at a time and flick them about like tiddly winks. Or whatever the fuck they were called.

“Twenty bucks, mister.” She was getting tired of repeating herself.

The dollar bill was rumped and crumpled, balled and deposited in a wad alongside the thin paper of his expired transfer slip. She took the green, left the gray, and smoothed the bill out before shoving it into a drawer. Old metal key on a cheap plastic tag.

“Second floor. Out by ten, and don’t give us any trouble or I’ll send Gus up to cover the costs.”

He didn’t need to ask who Gus was. The world was full of Guses. Devon snatched the key in his fingers and tucked it into the tender dips behind his knuckles. The metal dug there in a comforting way. Reassuring. He ran to the stairwell and up. Up all of the flights of stairs, through a back and forth maze of flickering florescent lights and moths that were caught in a corridor of confusion. He ran down the hall as though his life depended on it. Perhaps it did.

Two twenty one. He had to check the tag to know the number. His feet wouldn’t be still. His toes were hot in the fronts of his shoes as he shuffled on the rug, kicked up tufts of fibers that were red near the base and brown near the top. The bolt slid out. The key clattered loudly to the metal folding table stuck up against the wall. Devon slammed the door shut behind him, fell back against it with a low groan and smacked the lock home once again.

The room itself was not very inviting. The bathroom door sagged open to the right, and Devon jerked himself thataway. His fingers still bore the barest impressions of the key on their bellies. He flipped the switch on. Bare bulb in the ceiling, shower across from the mirror. Generic off-white tiles. Dingy gray stains. That pink shit on the shower curtain that never goes away.

“Fuck.”

No cups on the counter by the sink. No complimentary soap. The only things complimentary were the roaches. Maybe the TV. Devon screwed the tap on and thrust his mouth into the stream of the water. He drank deeply, hurriedly to avoid the taste. That awful metal taste that laid itself thick on his tongue. He scraped at it with his teeth as he stared into the reflection on the white-flecked mirror.



How large the circles under his eyes had become. He pried at them with his fingers, gnawed their edges with nails kept too-short from the constant attention of his teeth. His hair fell about his head in wild disarray, brown roots showing near his scalp. He wanted to douse them in the black that covered his nails, his clothes. Comfortable black to hide away in forever.

“Fuck,” Devon repeated, though softer this time.

The bed was in the other room. Devon left the fan running to get rid of the stink that permeated the bathroom, and did his best to shut the door. It didn’t hang right, and went whining and creaking mockingly as it yawned open once again. Devon ignored it and flopped down onto the mottled blue span of the bedspread. The fabric scratched his cheek and made him itch through his shirt. He hauled himself up, and up, balled with the flat slab of polyester that was the pillow, and squeezed his eyes shut.

He felt old. He’d been running too long. Crossed too many lines. Running water, maybe. No. That was for the restless dead. Confessional booths? Churches? Maybe he could appeal to the angels. Devon laughed unsteadily into the pillowcase. The nicotine stains leering out at him offered no council despite all of his staring. Devon knew the walls had ears. All the walls had ears. He trembled with exhaustion and curled until his belly cramped.

The bed made him itch, but he slept anyway. He was too tired not to. He fell into an uneasy sleep full of ears and eyes.

*

When Devon woke, it was to the sound of the television. There was a buzzer, high-pitched bells. A woman shrieked hysterically into a microphone. People applauded.

Devon opened his eyes slowly. The wall was a wash of dull, reflected colors. The sound of the game show was momentarily interrupted by a harsh buzz of static noise. A heavy pounding even the dead couldn’t sleep through.

There was a figure at the end of the bed. Dark hair in straggly tangles that spilled across unwashed skin. Head and shoulder silhouetted against a blur of movement and sound. Devon dug the heels of his palms into his eyes and turned his face into his pillow.

“Devvvv.vvv.vvvvy.” Nasr revved his teeth against his lip, but did not turn his head about. “Ain’t you happy to see me? Huh Devy? Huh? Huh?”

Devon raised his head from the pillow. He looked tentatively toward the figure at the foot of the bed. Nasr was looking at him. Nasr whose eyes gleamed the most unnatural yellow in a frame of dark lashes. Nasr who was smiling, and whose smile made Devon cringe backward.

“Fucker,” he snarled in response.

Nasr cackled. His laughter rang crass against the too-loud noise of the game show on the TV. Cackling and free washing machines. Ball-shaped women bouncing in bright red crepe. Golden eyes with orange brims staring. Bouncing. Bouncing in time with the bed. Jostling. Devon hissed.

“Fuck you, fuck you, fuck you.”

Devon rose in a flurry. He did not feel old any longer. He’d slept so long that the windows were dark. He was tired, but not exhausted. He threw his energy into his pillow, rushing the man at the foot of the bed to pummel him with the dusty slab of fabric and dead batting.

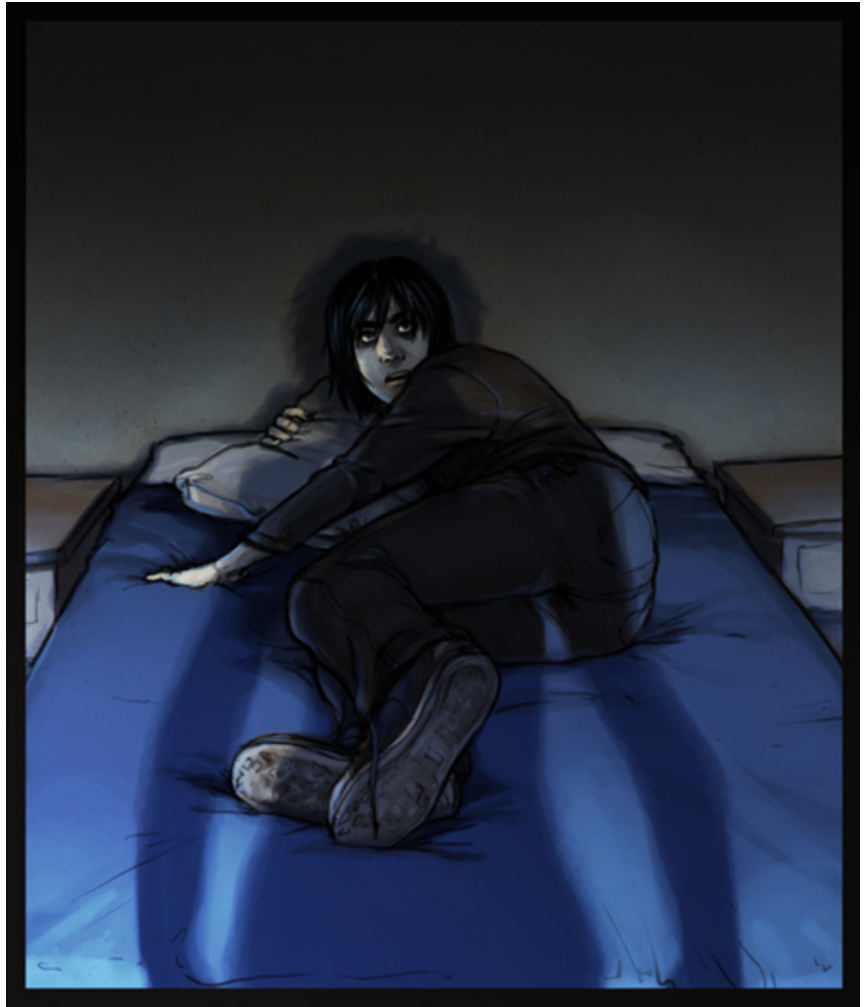
“Awww Devvvvy, ain’chu glad t’see me?” Nasr’s mouth twisted in a smirk, emphasized by the defined edges of his lips.

“No!”

Devon shrieked his frustration. The pillow crashed again and again into the crown of Nasr’s scraggly black hair, blotting from view the too-white teeth. A solid thump struck the wall at the head of the bed. A muffled shout of annoyance interrupted Devon’s frantic cries.

“Oh-ho. Oh-ho-ho. Looks like we woke the neighbors.” Nasr bent slowly down and set one hand to the bed. His fingers spidered outward, dimpling the scratchy cover as his weight sank into his palm. “Maybe we should wake ‘em proper, ‘ey Devy? Whatchu think? Doesn’t that sound oh-so, oh-so, oh-so fuuuuuun?”

Devon threw himself away from Nasr’s slow prowling. His heels scrambled in a wild shuffle, churning the bedclothes and riding his pant legs up his pale calves. His cheeks were wet



and hot. His eyes stung. He was thirsty again. He flung the pillow into Nasr's face, distracting the man long enough to spring from the itchy bedspread. Devon's feet struck the floor in a series of solid thumps from his flat-bottomed shoes.

The shade on the window was peeling and cracked. It zipped up all of two inches in response to his tug, then stuck. Tug, stick, tug, stick. Until it was far enough that he was able to claw at the window latch with his fingers. The window jerked sluggishly in its track. Everything was slow. Too slow. Then it stopped, and his gaze fixed on the metal bracket screwed into the top.

Devon reached up, rocked to his toes. Strained and stretched so that the sleeve of his coat slid down along the sickly white of his forearm. Warmth pressed behind him. Chest to back. Hip to ass. Breath at the top of his ear. The grill of the fire escape was dripped white with bird shit, lit yellow in the sulphur of the streetlights. Just on the other side of the glass. It may as well have been miles away.

"Where you goin', Dev?" Nasr's voice was low and rumbly, thrumming from his chest. Thrumming on Devon's ear.

"Away."

"Aw. Whatcha gonna do that for, huh? Huh, Devvy? Huh? Huh?"

The window jarred against his hips as he was pressed forward. The cold of the night nipped through the thin black cotton on his chest. Devon turned his face into the glass. His brow pressed into the grit. Breath in a dragon's plume of moisture away from his nose and mouth. His arm lowered slowly from its stretch, fingertips tucking reluctantly into his palm.

"Dammit, Nasr. What will it take to get you to leave me alone?"

He squeezed his eyes shut. How long had he been running? A week? Two? Was it ever long enough? Far enough?

"But you don't like being alone, faggot."

There was damp at the back of his ear. Damp and breath. Teeth on the skin. The back of his calf trembled and he lowered his heels slowly toward the floor. Pressure about his waist, heat at his ass.

"You fucking killed Michael, shithead. What in the fuck makes you think I want to see you again?!" Devon's voice rose of its own accord. His teeth jarred painfully as he snapped his jaw into place.

Nasr laughed against the crook of Devon's neck, tucking the sound down the collar of the man's jacket. His hips rocked and jounced rudely in bony prodding that was more mocking than suggestive.

"Don't be such a whiny bitch. That time of the month again, is it, Devy? Killed your precious boyfriend, huh? Huh? You didn't give a fuckall about him, boy-o. You know it. You tell him 'bout what you really want? Have him dress up for you? Play ball? Go to the park? Smack you 'round?" Nasr dug his teeth into the cartilage at the back of Devon's ear. He growled low and jostled forward again with a wicked curve of spine. "What in the fuck makes you think I care?"

Devon choked out a sob, his mouth distorted in its sideways press against the glass. "You were gone for six months." The night bit at his cheekbone. Nasr bit at his jaw.

"Boo-fuckin'-hoo. Poor little pookie. All alone. Couldn't do it, couldja? No. Fuckin' fag. Gotta have someone filling that ass of yours, huh? If I hadn't killed him, you woulda."

"Fuck you. I was cleaned up. I was getting away. I was getting my life back."

Devon grunted. He squeezed his eyes shut against the bright glare of the television set reflecting off of the window. He took a deep breath and nearly choked on the smell of old cigarettes and wet metal. Nasr was rocking, shifting Devon's weight against the window pane. Starbursts of heat fanned out from every bruising pinch of teeth. The cold was shocking through Devon's chest, left his nipples uncomfortably hard.

"Oh, Devvy. Devvy devvy devvy. You wanna tampon to go with your whine? High-class hooker."

Nasr's words bathed the back of Devon's neck in heat. Nasr's laugh snarled and lapped at the underside of Devon's ear. He dropped his palms from the glass. There were fingers at the indentation of his hip, clawing and dragging rudely downward to dip into his jeans. Fine hairs rose. The threat of a shiver gathered between his shoulders.

"Go away, Nasr." His whisper was little more than breath.

"Ainchi figured it out yet, Devy?" Fingers in Devon's hair. Nails scraping. Scalp pulling. "I ain't going nowhere, faggot. There's no fucking *away*. There's no fucking 'getting your life back,'" he whined mockingly. "*I am your mother-fucking, goddamn life.*"

One of Devon's shoulders was driven against the glass as his arms were tugged backward, slack from the joint. Nasr stripped away the faded black jacket and tossed it over his shoulder, wrapped his fingers about forearms, and smacked the warm insides of Devon's arms against the glass. Hips jarred, crashed, and rocked intently.

"Sides, Devvy," Nasr let go of Devon's arms, "you're such a good little bitch. You know you like it."

Devon kept his arms fixed in place. His gnawed nails scrabbled uselessly against the glass. He let out another gust of warmth. Stared at the yellow-white and orange of rusting metal. His fingers crept and scrabbled, curled their way over the lip of the window. A breeze washed across the backs of his knuckles.

The backward haul of his hips was familiar. Racing zippers, heavy whispers of fabric. His heart jumped, skipped, crashed against his chest. Nasr was right. Devon hadn't loved Michael. They'd all known it. Devon swallowed a grunt as long fingers curled between his legs, nails scraping along his balls. It hurt. Static from the television. Burning building up in his gut. His cock pulsed, and the cold of the window to the head caused his eyes to snap open. The warm haze shattered.

"Devy," Nasr cooed in a sing-song fashion. "Devvy, Devvvvvvy. Hey, hey Devy. Hey. You miss me?" Devon shifted at the strike of hard, warm flesh against the indentation of his right buttock. "Poor little girl. All alooouooooone in a strange place. You even know where you are?" Another fleshy prod to the opposite side. "Betcha don't, queerbag," Nasr rasped.

Nasr's fingers tightened, clutching. The heel of his palm dug against the base of Devon's straining cock. Devon's fingers hooked further through the crack of the window. The breeze made his fingertips pink.

"Fuck you, Nasr." Devon spat the words, droplets of saliva mixing with the filth on the window. "Fuck you and fuck off."

"I just love it when you beg, Devy boy," Nasr keened excitably.

Devon groaned, his muscles tensing as if he might shake his head. The window was in the way. The cocoon of heated hand and grasping fingers slid away. Cool trails of air took their place, but Devon did not even think to complain. There were teeth on his shoulder. He felt the beginnings of a bruise a moment later, the strange pull and soreness that promised a dark blotch the next morning. More heat in his gut, seeping up his spine to break a sweat along his ribs.



There were fingers at his hips. Gripping tight. More bruising. Nasr was too close. Too hot. Devon shuddered, shifted, and raised his weight into his toes. A pull from behind took him up further, the fronts of his shoes just grazing the brown shag of the carpet below. The head of Nasr's cock dabbed slick along the cleft of Devon's ass, into the tight ring of resistance. Devon's breath caught in his throat.

Things jumbled in a rush of movement. The soft skin of his face glanced into the glass. The window jarred in its frame. His body dropped down and thrust forward. Cold on his chest, on the splay of his arms, on the belly of his shaft. Heat behind him. Burning and split, stinging. Devon's breath stirred at last, left in a cry that fogged the window. His jeans snared at his knees as he tried to fan them outward.

“See, bitch. See. Fuckin’ fag. I knew it.”

Nasr cackled, his mouth hot at the back of Devon's head. Devon's breath rattled through his teeth. He sagged away from the window as Nasr drew backward only to find it again with another jarring of the glass in the sill. Devon coughed softly, his ribs expanding at a painful rate. Down again. His heart beat too fast. Darkness was easier than the yellow light. Darkness and silence. Nasr bucked into him, crashing. Belt buckle rattled too loud. Low rumbles that suggested laughter. Yellow light blinding his right eye. No darkness. No silence. He was not that lucky.

Grunts and groans. Thrusts and rocks. The raw rubbing pain loosened, let go, melted from the middle. Devon gasped, trying to catch his breath. The window vibrated, the brittle glass cold. He worried for a moment about breaking it. The moment was lost as Nasr's nails clawed along the delicate skin at the inside of his thigh.

“Oh God,” Devon cried as Nasr jarred shoulder to window; bit at Devon's shoulderblade through his shirt. A shirt that the demon all but shredded away a moment later that he might admire the mottling surfacing on Devon's skin.

“Nah Devy, nah Devy, nah. God don't love faggots, you stupid fuck. Donchu pay no attention?” Nasr jarred Devon harder. Harder. Cackled wildly again. “Fuckin’ cunt. Bet you'd like it if I fucked you right through this fucking window, you sick fuck. Little shit.”

“Shut. Up. Nasr.”

Devon pressed his palms to the window and pushed back, attempting to throw the man off balance. Nasr resisted, crowding close, forcing Devon's splayed arms to tremble for the force of his effort. It seemed Nasr meant to humor Devon's demands. His teeth were too busy wearing ragged the outer edge of Devon's ear to bother with words.

"Fffffuh," Devon's breath left in a rush. He pulled in another with a sharp gasp. Ribbons of red on the back of his ear. "Ck."

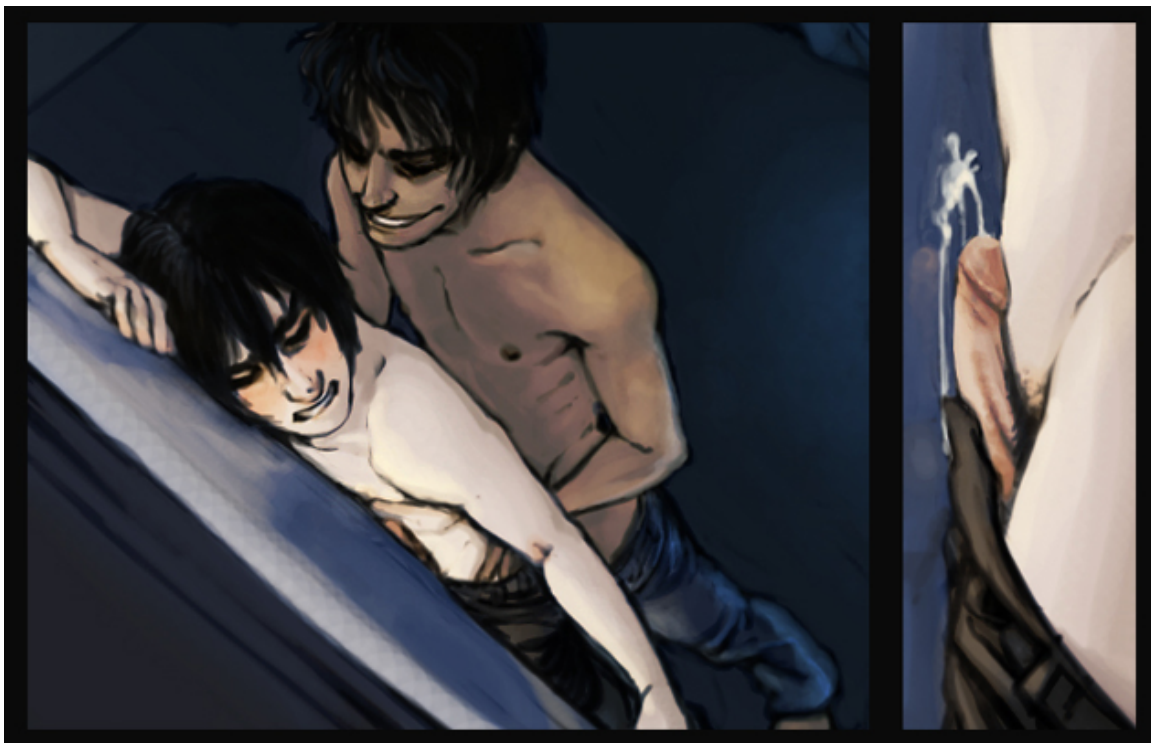
Nasr drove harder, faster. Pushed in deep and erratic. Devon bathed the cool glass with the dew of his breaths and cries. The television blared in the background about the glory of food storage. He did his best to tune it out, smacked his wrist into the window. Jerked and thrust and drove himself up. Dropped and down and back again. His cock left damp smears on the glass. Nasr was grunting in his ear. Devon gripped the window, pawed his way up as if he might somehow ease the force of Nasr's cock striking within him.

"Yeah, Devy. Yeah yeahyeah. Move, you cunt."

Devon choked on his breath again. He swallowed, grunted at another sharp thrust. His ear was cold. A more welcome burning was gathering. It coursed along his spine and through the insides of his hips. It made his thighs tremble. Too tight about that last thrust. Another cry punctured the air. The banging of the glass mixed with banging of the wall. His balls swung forward into the chill and the sticky film on the window. Devon writhed.

The pressure from behind increased, expanded. Burst with heat and wet, struck the electric tingling buzz of sensation that had drowned out his thoughts and left his skin too-alive. Devon's head tossed as Nasr bit into his shoulder. Spittle slick across pale skin. More snarls in his ear.

Devon's cock twitched, shuddered. Beckoned him to move. To clench and thrust. To rock, grind, and slide without any real purchase. He came so suddenly it hurt, caused his breath to reverse directions mid-passage. He squeaked, groaned, trembled as spurts of cum spilled sticky and white along the head of his shaft, streaked in wet smears down the dirt of the window.



“Awww. Ain’t that sweet.”

Nasr pulled out, still half-hard. He kept Devon pinned to the glass, chest to shoulder blades. Warm and panting. Nasr’s tongue slicked slowly up the bloodied edge of Devon’s ear. His fingers ruffled through the mess of Devon’s hair.

“You’re *mine*, bitch, and don’t you forget it.”

Nasr reached past Devon’s hand where it was still pressed to the window. Devon caught the golden gleam of Nasr's eyes, and realization came entirely too late. The window rattled in its frame once again, rushing all at once to slam home against Devon's grip. His hand shuddered even as it was pinned, and his fingers swelled with the instantaneous formation of four new bruises. He howled. Nasr cackled gleefully.

“Fuck you, fuck you, fuck you!”

“Aww, Devy. Gotta give me a minute. ‘Price is Right’ is comin’ on! It’s my favorite. Fuckin’ Bob Barker. Think he sold his soul to keep workin’ this old. What is he, three hundred? Maybe I should get you spayed like the little bitch you are. Arf, arf!”

"Fuck you," Devon spat again.

Devon managed the window open. He clutched his throbbing hand to his chest and stumbled sidelong into the corner, jeans slouching as he went. He left them slack as he sank against the wall, cradling his mangled hand. The heat was gone. So was the cold. The familiar post-coital emptiness was there instead. A rawness emphasized by the slick slip of cum and blood. He stared at the wall. Ears and eyes. Nobody who would respond to his prayers.

The red numbers at the side of the bed flipped zero-two-two-one. Devon sucked at his swollen fingertips. His eyes were stinging again. Don’t invite demons in. The TV blared. A brand new car! He choked on the dusty, musky air. Not worth finding the bed. Don’t invite demons in. But what to do if they invited themselves? Nasr cackled, enraptured as he watched a man in bermuda shorts clutch his thinning hair in frustration. Devon squeezed his eyes shut.

Tomorrow, maybe. Maybe tomorrow.
He’d get away. Tomorrow.

