

Painted red

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Painted red

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Summary

Verso discovers something about himself. Gustave is okay with it.

It all started with something innocent. They just finished beating a particularly tough Nevron, and most of them were basically covered in blood. Verso's gaze met Gustave's form. Nothing unusual, the man was tougher than expected, but every time, the older man couldn't stop himself from looking. Maybe it was about the strength he exuded in these moments, maybe it was because the dark red contrasted beautifully with his skin. He wasn't sure. But each time Gustave had blood on himself, Verso's eyes were on him, unwavering.

And as time passed, he found himself more and more obsessed with this vision. And the more obsessed he was, the more Gustave found himself in situations that ended with himself, at least partially, covered in blood. It was accidental, really. It wasn't like Verso intentionally moved to make him stand exactly where he needed to be in order to be painted with the blood of the enemy. Not at all. Nothing strange about that, he kept telling himself.

And it was so easy to touch him like that. Pretend it was out of worry, or to check for injuries, or just an accidental touch. And the warmth only fueled that strange feeling blooming within his being. It wasn't just his warmth, it was how the blood was still burning hot, how easy it was to smear it over his pale skin. He could already imagine how he would look if-

Stop.

Once again, Verso splashed his face in cold water, kneeling next to the stream at their camp. This was something he had started to consistently need, lately. He was slowly discovering something about himself that he wasn't sure if he liked. It was only with Gustave, but it was unmistakably about the blood too. He should've been disgusted, or at the very least indifferent, about *Nevron blood*, but no. Not when it was on Gustave. The combination of the two made him feel on edge, like something was waiting for just a little thing to let go. Like he was minutes away from doing something, he didn't know what.

And the man in question knelt right next to him. Verso's briefly looked at him from the corner of his eye. He was washing the blood off of his face, as usual. And, god, Verso wanted to tell him to not do that. He wanted to see him like that for a minute longer. But he couldn't deny he also quite liked the vision of the blood stained water dripping down his face, his hands, briefly coating his lips in a translucent red color before he rinsed his face again. How would it taste, he wondered? He realized he was staring, way too obviously, and went back to his own task.

"You're lucky, you barely get any of that blood on yourself." Gustave spoke up. The other could hear his smile in his voice.

"I suppose you could work a bit on your dodging skills." Verso replied, trying to match the lighthearted tone of his counterpart despite the tingles he felt all over his body.

"Ooor someone should learn not to put me exactly in the enemy's way every time we're about to finish it off."

Verso's breath caught in his throat. There was no way he had noticed. Right?

"I... wasn't exactly..." He sounded so unconvincing in his attempt to defend himself. But Gustave simply stood up with a chuckle, lightly tapping his hand on his shoulder.

"I'm kidding." He said, before leaving, probably to join the others around the campfire, leaving Verso breathless and confused, his hand still under the water stream.

After that, he was acutely more aware of every single one of Gustave's actions. He might have been a bit paranoid, but it almost felt like he was now getting coated in blood on purpose. He wasn't exactly sure of it, at first, but when their eyes started to meet during the fights, almost always right after Gustave's skin started being stained in red, it became more and more obvious. And if he started hiding his interest in this vision less and less, it was just a natural evolution of that situation. And if the two 'accidentally' touched more and more during these fights, it was only because he felt more daring.

Until.

Another evening of splashing cold water on his heated face. The air was slightly cold, and yet it still wasn't enough to calm down the desire roaring inside of him. He stood up, his face still covered in droplets of water, and almost collided with the object of his latest fantasies. Gustave looked almost amused for a moment, the corner of his lips twitching, though Verso wasn't exactly sure of it, the blood and the dimmed lighting of the night making it hard to discern his facial expressions.

Their eyes met. He didn't speak. Wasn't sure what to say anyway. They had danced around his newfound fascination for weeks now, and there was no doubt in his mind that Gustave was aware of it, especially with the way he was looking at him now, not making any move to clean himself up.

Verso opened his mouth to speak, but Gustave took a step closer. He could feel his warmth, almost smell the blood. It was making his head spin. His eyes wandered over his face, his eyes, the blood staining his hair, cheeks, beard, his lips, and god he wasn't making any effort to hide it, was he? He didn't even notice when Gustave reached to grab his hand, not forcefully, just enough to raise it, and just like that, Verso's hand made contact with the bloody skin. The brown-haired man guided him for only a few second before letting him do as he wanted, observing his face more than anything as he explored. His fingers traced the shape of his face, effectively smearing the red over his skin, and his blue eyes darkened at the sight. It was more than he ever thought he would ever have. It *felt* more than he ever thought it would feel. He reached the other man's lips, and he hesitated for a second before tracing them too, feeling the warmth, how they were soft even if a bit chapped, the blood over them.

“I was wondering why you kept looking at me.” Gustave said quietly, softly grabbing his hand to take it away from his lips, earning a disappointed glance from Verso.

“... Sorry. I...” And once again, he couldn’t find his words.

“I kept thinking about it. There was no way it was what I thought, mh?”

Verso fought the urge to look away, and instead chose to let him speak.

“At first I thought maybe you thought I wasn’t capable enough to fight without you keeping an eye on me. But it didn’t make sense. So what was it...?” He kept saying, practically murmuring. He hadn’t let his hand go, and he was looking at him in a way that made him shiver.

“I’m not stupid, you know? For some reason, you... Like this. Right? Me. With the blood.”

“... Yes.” He nodded. He would’ve felt mortified in any other situation, but Gustave almost seemed *okay* with this. There wasn’t any judgment in his eyes.

“I found it weird at first. But I think I’m starting to like it too. The way you look at me.”

He took a step closer and Verso’s breath hitched. He could feel his breath on his skin, could definitely smell the blood and even the sweat resulting from their previous fights. He let go of his hand. Verso murmured his name before feeling a metallic hand tilting his head just enough to face Gustave properly. And it was all he needed to finally get a taste of him. Of his lips. Of the blood. Of both. And it was intoxicating. The kiss was messy, and not just because of the red that was now painting both of their lips. It seemed that, in the past weeks, Gustave had grown as desperate as him. And maybe the blood was only the catalyst for them to come to terms with their mutual attraction, or maybe this attraction was only a result of whatever thing Verso had with blood. Either way, he couldn’t think anymore. Not right now. Not when the other man’s tongue was meeting his and he was struggling to breathe in the best way and his hands were trying to grab anything he could, feeling Gustave’s hands mirroring him.

When they finally pulled away, they were both breathless, and god he hoped he could remember forever the way Gustave looked at this moment. Red lips, his gaze burning with unconcealed desire.

“I think... I could get used to this.” He said lowly, licking his lips. But he didn’t have time to completely rid them of the blood before Verso leaned forward and did so for him. Now that he knew he could indulge in his desires freely, he certainly wasn’t going to stop himself from doing everything he had imagined, and if that included licking the blood off of him, then he would do it. And if that included showing him how beautiful he was painted in red, then he would definitely show him.

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