

Weakness

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by [dotpng](#)

Summary

A look at the Camerata's biggest mistake.

Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

"I had a new target in mind," Sybil starts, as if it's just a thought she had in passing, as if it's no big deal, but Asher knows her well enough; the way her eyes light up spells danger. "Red. The singer. You've heard of her, right?" He glances around at the others: Grant's frowning, Royce smirking just a bit. They can tell too.

"She has some unique selections; data suggests a highly creative personality, dedication to her art, a desire for innovation," Sybil continues, ticking off points on her slim fingers like this is a speech she's rehearsed. "Red's not so ubiquitous that her disappearance would cause waves, but there is undeniable influence in that music. She does have a gift, I have to say. What do you think?"

Asher sighs. "I think you've got a bit of a fixation, Sybil."

She freezes. "Excuse me?"

"Come on. You've been watching her for, what, two months now? Much too long to be safe. You may be discreet, but gossip spreads, after all."

Sybil huffs. "That's irrelevant. I'm just being careful. Just- I needed to be sure, needed to- she keeps troublesome company, it could be a risk, he's always with her and I can't stand-"

And there it is. Royce barks out a laugh, a short, dry sound. She sighs, drops the act. "Fine! Fine, yes, she may have caught my interest, if you must know. Can you really blame me?"

Royce loves this, Asher thinks, loves seeing others' vulnerabilities exposed. Especially them, partners in crime; so powerful, and yet everyone has a weakness, he says. Asher, for Grant. And Grant for him. As for Sybil... Well. If she was superficial in her affections, like you'd expect from a woman with such a vast social circle, if she kept some distance, this wouldn't happen. The problem is she does love people, truly, fully, loves to love and to be loved. Craves it. She doesn't take rejection well, needless to say. Or at all, really. What a nightmare. Poor Sybil. Poor Red. Poor mystery man.

Royce probably thinks he's safe because he doesn't love. He's wrong, though, Asher knows. He loves himself, loves his designs, above all loves the city. That's why he's here. Why they're all here. Love, a weakness? Asher looks over at Grant, remembers those first days, before they knew what they were getting into. Remembers the fascination that drove them both to it, to each other. Love is a limitation, sometimes, but it's also the entire point.

"Is this going to be a problem?" Grant asks.

She rolls her eyes, petulant now. "It's not. She's good and we need her."

Royce pulls up Red's profile on his screen, scrolls a bit and flips it around so they can all see. "Well, Sybil's not wrong," he says, lighting a cigarette, "We can definitely use her. She's perfect."

Immediately she brightens up. "See? I told you. And we don't even need to lure her anywhere. She'll be alone after her next show at the Empty Set, in the dressing room. I

checked."

Asher stays silent, tries to gauge his apprehension. What's the catch, he thinks, how can this be so easy?

Like an echo, Grant speaks up. "Sybil, are you sure?"

"Of course! I promise."

Asher studies her face, smiling and open, blond curls framing it like a halo, and tries to determine if she's lying before thinking better of it: no better liar than Sybil, so charming, so loved. You don't get that popular without telling a few white lies, and certainly not without being damn good at it. She's not malicious, though, never catty, that's what sets her apart from all the other pretty young liars in Cloudbank.

Her deceptions are for the best, for the benefit of others; she knows what they need to hear even when they don't, knows what will make them happy. It is rarely the truth.

Asher sighs. For what it's worth, he'll trust her on this. In the end, does it really matter?

End Notes

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