

There will be time to murder and create

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by [orphan_account](#)

Summary

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"Ah," he says, after a long moment of staring, capturing the details of how Asher's legs frame Grant's wide body and how his blond hair falls across his forehead. "You may continue. I would prefer to remain here and... observe."

Notes

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

And the afternoon, the evening, sleeps so peacefully!

Smoothed by long fingers,

Asleep ... tired ... or it malingers,

Stretched on the floor, here beside you and me.

-- The Love Song of Alfred J. Prufrock, T.S. Eliot

It begins with Asher typing in his bed, dark crimson curtains drawn shut to the bright lights of the city that keep the creeping shadows of the night at bay. His cat dozes in the armchair by the window, rasping out low snores to the sound of Asher's quiet breathing and the running water of Grant's shower in the bathroom beyond.

Asher patiently waits for his husband, mind gliding easily through the familiar routine that he knows the other man keeps. Beard groomed, jaw rubbed, hair combed with what Sybil had gifted them at their wedding, before he brushes his teeth and turns off the bathroom lights, striding slowly like a king out of his time as he approaches Asher's side of the bed to curl his fingers over Asher's shoulder.

Asher tips his head up to receive Grant's kiss, tongue flicking out to run over Grant's lower lip.

It's time.

"You've been distracted all evening," he speaks against Grant's mouth, his voice clear and far louder than their proximity would call for. His voice is strong, and accepts no excuses from Grant, even as his husband remains silent, eyes flashing for a moment. More fool him, if he had thought that having a keen journalist for a husband meant that Asher would not turn his instincts onto Grant.

Asher waits, until Grant replies.

"It's Royce."

Grants speaks in the same tone of voice that he does when trying to deliberate what to do with a new employee who is disrupting the law and order that Grants has established in his domain. It is just rare to hear him speak this way of Royce.

"He's been holed away in his Towers for quite some time. I fear he may be overworking himself."

"Isn't he always?" Asher's voice is politely skeptical of Grant's concern, as he runs a hand slowly over the soft beard at Grant's hard jaw. Over half a decade, and Royce is still an unknown quantity to Asher, a man who speaks as if he were in constant conversation with the

world at large. If the world were himself. He has always been working, for as long as Asher has been aware of the marks that he leaves on the city, even as he erases them to build new pathways, new bridges, new floors and ever more clever ways for the city to grow at the pleasure of its inhabitants.

“Not like this.” Grant’s frown deepens the grooves of his skin, and he is far too tempting for Asher to resist as he moves to run his hands down Grant’s sides, and pulls his robe to draw him to settle over Asher’s body. Asher’s own work is gladly pushed aside, and he works his fingers instead through Grant’s hair, still warmed from the hair dryer.

Asher makes Grant a more pliant weight upon him with each kiss that he nips down Grant’s throat, breathing a familiar and unconditional love across the hollow of his throat. “Have you spoken to him on this matter? The latest upgrade to the OVC is sure to have increased his workload. Just yesterday I was meant to interview a source in Goldwalk, but the walkway I expected to take had been dissolved into a garden instead.”

Grant settles between Asher’s legs, Asher easily opening them to drape them over Grant’s hips instead, the soles of his feet sliding along the swell of Grant’s calves.

He heaves a sigh, a human and all too ordinary sound that Asher is the only one to regularly hear. “He has refused to answer every missive of mine to join me for lunch, and the entry points to his towers remain locked.”

If it were anyone else, Asher would have been jealous of the persistent way that Grant has been trying to speak with Royce. But he is aware of the favouritism with which Grant shows Royce, has heard from Royce’s own featured interviews that he has known Grant for nearly half his life. Grant was the first eminent name in Cloudbank to give a young Royce an opportunity, with no reputation and no experience, to try one of his near-overwhelming outpouring of ideas for the city. Grant was Royce’s mentor.

Asher’s own mentors, when he was cutting his teeth in journalism, were not nearly so good as Grant. Not that he needed good people to learn from, to learn just how to corner a source and make them talk.

He draws upon that now.

“Clearly your invitations to lunch will not wear him down. So why not surprise him? Remind him that whatever he thinks you’ll say to him, you may yet surprise him.”

“And how would I do that?”

The memories coil like his cat over his shoulders, a heavier and near claustrophobic weight, of nights spent gathering research and writing bylines as his editors watch hawkishly over his shoulder, telling him exactly where to place a period and what word to use to flay a Cloudbank citizen's reputation open. Of men whose egos Asher stoked by calling them his mentors, even as he looked down his nose at the things they sent him out to do. Take him to dinner. Take her out dancing. Take them to bed. What his mentors lacked, but what Asher has finessed into the sharpest tool to excise the truth from people, is precisely when to act. And

Asher's crowning moment was when he had served his mentors the ultimate lesson -- the truth will out.

Asher skims his hands up the broad plane of Grant's stomach, and pulls his bathrobe slowly open. His voice is perfunctory and casual, even as his hands stroke like hot iron down his sides. "Invite him over for dinner and sex."

Every muscle in Grant's body tenses in surprise, as Asher grips his hands hard around his waist. But Asher sees no disgust on his face. He never expected to. He loves Grant, and knows his husband's foibles for young, beautiful men. Asher doesn't fool himself about his own age, and what he must look like to Grant, young and clever and oh so flexible, flush with youth and reverence for a man of Grant's age and experience. Asher finds his own attraction to Grant, and Grant's weaknesses in his strengths, all very attractive.

And he has every reason to believe that Grant would be interested in bringing Royce back to his bed, and introducing him to *their* bed.

"I... What has come over you, my dear?" Grant looks at Asher in a way that has Asher feeling a heady thrill, that he can surprise his own husband this thoroughly.

He gives Grant a soft, open look, reaching up to smooth his palm over his husband's neck.

"Does it make you uncomfortable? We've never discussed having sex with others. I would understand if you want us to remain exclusive. But clearly you're upset by Royce's distance, and I want to help. Don't insult either of us in thinking that I am in any way insecure about our relationship."

Grant presses his forehead down against Asher's with a sigh that shakes the air around them.

"My one. I love you. How I've ever come to deserve someone with your generous spirit, sometimes I don't know."

"I love you," Asher answers. His tongue feels heavy from the cloying, bittersweet taste in his mouth, holding back words that he is generous because his loyalty to Grant is so absolute that it makes him feel like he is the only one standing still while the world rolls on messy and oblivious to the history of the foundations that they were built on. He and Grant have built a foundation to their lives together that Asher will never abandon. Can never abandon.

He cradles Grant's jaw in both his hands, and draws him in for a long, slow kiss, Asher's tongue winding around Grant's.

"Are there any things that you would not want to do with Royce there?" Grant asks after Asher's kiss has finished settling into his very bones.

Asher thinks for a few moments. He has his doubts that Royce will want to fuck him, and his own interest in Royce is somewhat concerningly fixated on the desire to clinically dissect Royce and understand just what goes on in his head, rather than to take the man apart with pleasure. Grant will most likely be the conduit between the two younger men, and it is a

notion that Asher has no concerns with accepting. Grant is a beautiful man, and Asher would not object to seeing him work Royce apart, by each kiss and finger.

"None," he answers, and leans his cheek against the pillow to look up at Grant. His husband still hovers over him. Asher adores how being under Grant makes him feel safe, much like how Grant's information network blankets the entire city as well.

"I will of course say something if he proposes anything I am uncomfortable with. However, I'd like to see what he wants. The goal is to encouraging him to be comfortable. He won't talk to you if he's not comfortable, isn't that right?"

Grant bends down to trail a rasping kiss down Asher's jaw, exhaling heavily through his nose as he does. "Much to my chagrin, he never does when something is actually plaguing him."

Asher strokes Grant's sides, touch gentle to tease and stoke his fire. "That's a yes, then? To my proposal?"

"You will be the death of me, love," Grant says, as he slides a hand up to curl under Asher's throat and tip him back for a kiss that Asher is all too pleased to beckon him into.

Royce arrives a few days later, late in the evening, with a gentle knock to the door. Asher hadn't even heard the knock over the soft susurrations of the rain outside, and Grant only knew that the man had arrived because of the camera on their front porch.

Asher opens the door, and Royce steps in. Long fingers dig into the lapels of his stark white coat, and he shakes the water off of the fabric, then slips it off, to hang limply on his left arm. His tangle of curls have been matted together into a mass of inky darkness, and they drip rainwater down his neck, seeping into the black embrace of his turtleneck. As unassuming and woeful as he looks, posture stooped as he waits in the doorway as the automatic dryer activates to dry him off, Royce's eyes are piercing as he lifts his head to stare into Asher's eyes. Asher is reminded of just how observant Royce is of everything and everyone. He feels Royce dissect him in the span of those few seconds, a technique that flashes a sharp lance of jealousy through him, and then nods slightly to himself. What he'd found in Asher, the journalist doesn't know.

"Fascinating behaviour, isn't it?" He says to Asher, by way of greeting. "Knocking on a door, so very archaic. And yet it feels finite, it has a weight, by which I mean that the impact of the door against one's knuckles -- that is quite satisfying."

"I didn't even hear you over the rain," Asher comments, and smirks slightly as Royce's mouth twists. It looks as if the man is filing away that detail, telling himself to factor in rainfall and the depth of the door for the next time. He waves to the coat rack off to Royce's side, and hears Grant's footfalls behind him, and then feels his husband's hands rest on his waist, grip as possessive as usual.

"Glad you could join us, Royce," Grant greets, and Asher feels a flash of a thrill lash inside him, as he watches Royce's eyes darken as they dart down to observe Grant's hands on Asher, and then back up to the administrator's face.

"Of course," Royce answers, as Asher feels Grant slowly slide his hands back up along his sides, his fingers pressing lovingly between his ribs. Royce's absent-minded tone starts to sound even more distracted, as his gaze openly follows the path of Grant's hands up Asher's crisp white button-up.

"An invitation such as this one... Well, it's not one you can really say no to, is it?"

Asher doesn't try to hide the sharp and victorious grin that flashes across his lips. "Shall we have dinner then?" he asks innocently, just to tease the two other men and hear Grant's low groan rumble in the press of his chest to Asher's back.

Royce's eyes suddenly snap, with laser-like intensity, onto his face.

"No. No, I do not think so. I would much rather see this. Show me to your bedroom."

There is a tone in Royce's voice that Asher is unfamiliar with. It is one of the few times that Royce has not sounded as if his mind is far off, and there is a firmness to it that Asher could imagine in how Royce demands his structures be built, following his blueprints to the letter.

Asher steps a pace away from Grant, to take his hand and lead him down the hallway to their bedroom. Grant stops for a moment in front of Royce, and Asher watches as his husband cups Royce's jaw to tilt his face up and bestow a kiss, long and slow, on him.

Asher feels somewhat discombobulated as he sees Grant kiss Royce. There is no jealousy, but there is a strange realization of, 'so that's Grant looks like as he kisses.' And then Royce opens his mouth to slide his tongue out, and Grant responds in kind, and Asher feels heat stir in him.

He is still thinking about the slide of Royce's tongue against Grant's when his husband turns to pick Asher up and sling him over his shoulder, hand supporting Asher's ass and getting a good palmful of it as well. Asher rolls his eyes not nearly as derisively as he could, and then stills at the foreign touch of Royce's fingers against his cheek. Royce strokes his face, curls fingers around Asher's ear as if he is learning its shape, before he presses upwards just slightly on the balls of his feet to kiss Asher as well.

They all reach the bedroom in silence, but the unspoken heat building between them is nearly palpable. Grant sets Asher down on the edge of the bed, and Asher leans back on his elbows, lithe legs spreading in the way that he knows drives Grant closer to losing control that much quicker. They both turn to look at Royce, and are equally perplexed as the man takes a seat in the armchair facing the bed instead, and crosses one leg over the other.

"Ah," he says, after a long moment of staring, capturing the details of how Asher's legs frame Grant's wide body and how his blond hair falls across his forehead. "You may continue. I would prefer to remain here and... observe."

Disbelief scrawls over Asher's expression.

"Observe," he repeats, flatly.

"You object?" Royce questions, maddeningly calm.

Not just calm. There is a steely focus in how Royce looks at Asher, heat in his dark gaze and in how his fingers stroke over his own knee as he watches Grant start to unbutton his own shirt.

Asher had never thought that Royce would be such an open voyeur. He slides down to lie fully on the bed, and stretch his arms over his head with a curling smirk on his lips. "As you please, Mr. Bracket. Grant?"

Running his fingers down Grant's bared chest, Asher pulls his husband down by the buckle of his belt to kiss him. His tongue slides against Grant's, but Grant coaxes his kiss to go slower, and draws Asher's tongue to kiss between their mouths, out in the open for Royce to witness. Asher realizes with a shiver that Grant is kissing him like he had kissed Royce, a particularity that Royce must like.

He hears the rustle of clothes coming from the armchair, after all, and when Grant dips his head to kiss and suck at Asher's throat, Asher looks over at their guest. Royce has unbuckled his own trousers, the black triangle of its sides framing the dark hair that curls all around his cock as he holds it in his grip. It is half-hard, yet Asher has the sense that it is longer than he has been with before, and Royce seems more preoccupied with watching how Grant's beard scrapes against Asher's skin, and makes Asher's body jerk and back arch upwards in a reflex.

"Do that again," Royce speaks.

And Grant does so.

"So sensitive," Royce murmurs, as if Asher's reaction is a data point that he can plot on the grid of possibilities unfurling in his mind.

Grant hears him, mouth curving under his beard in a smile that Asher has seen many times before, right before Grant strings out the foreplay and has him gasping for completion.

"Watch," he says, eyes cutting to Royce, before he looks back at Asher and smooths his hands up Asher's bare forearms, sleeves folded up to his elbows as usual, to grip his wrists. He presses Asher down into the bed, indented under their weights, and Asher's eyes flutter. He retaliates by folding his legs around Grant's hips as he rolls his groin up to press flush against Grant's.

"Oh," Royce says, voice gone a little breathless and filled with a wonder that makes Asher shudder in surprise at how heady it is to hear that directed towards him.

With a smug smile, Grant grinds Asher's hips mercilessly down against the bed as well. They kiss, and Grant collects both Asher's wrists in one hand while he uses his other hand to ruck

up Asher's shirt and run his callouses down Asher's soft stomach.

While Grant curls his tongue against the roof of Asher's mouth, Royce's voice curls against Asher's ears and dips in like a sly lover's tongue. "Nerves and muscles, the processes that we aren't even aware of inside our own bodies. Our bodies... Those are quite beautiful to witness... Do you see? It's plain where I'm sitting. Your left knee shakes when he does that," he observes, eyes bright and chin resting in his hand. His pinky finger traces over his lips as he strokes himself.

Asher wants to tell Royce to keep his observations to himself, far too conscious of such an involuntary action, but Grant grips his dick over his trousers, and he gasps.

It happens so suddenly -- or perhaps, so *naturally* -- that Asher doesn't even realize what's happening until Grant has three fingers buried deep in Asher, stroking and curling against his prostate and making Asher gasp.

"Fuck me," he breathes at Grant, and Grant kisses his mouth.

"Not until Royce says you're ready," his husband rumbles against his jaw, and Asher wrenches his head over to glare at Royce. Royce's curls are sticking to his temple again, this time from sweat than rain, as his eyes are glassy yet sharp as he sweeps his gaze up and down the sight that Grant makes with his large hand crammed between Asher's narrow hips and spread legs.

His pinky is red from being bitten watching Asher shake and curse under Grant as his husband works him open.

"Your nostrils... Quite an evocative part of you. I find myself unable to look away, when they flare when Grant pushes your hips up with his thighs," Royce says, a non-answer that has Asher gripping the bedsheets in a twisted, shaking grip, and threatening to wring his neck if he doesn't let Asher have this, now.

Royce smiles against his fingers, and bites the knuckle of his thumb. "The mouth on you... I see the appeal... Take him," he says, to the both of them.

Asher still feels like Grant is scraping him open every time that he sinks into him. Grant has them on their sides, Asher's leg hooked over his elbow so Grant can hold him spread out as he pushes in, for Royce to see.

"Oh... Let's see... What if you were to go... Slower," Royce says quietly, but he is easy to hear over the soft patter of rain against the window and Asher's hitched breathing. Grant slows his movements, grinding inch by inch into Asher. Asher's knee shakes in his grip, Royce's teeth sink into the flesh of his thumb as his eyes catalogue that reaction, and Asher's reaction is even better than he'd expected.

Asher's sob rings out between the three of them. Grant can't hold back and pulls out to thrust back in, hard, but that only makes Asher gasp, and it isn't until Royce orders him to go slow again that they wring that sound out from Asher again.

Royce watches Asher's eyes shut, and head falls back against Grant's chest. He strokes himself at the same pace that Grant fucks into his husband, keeping Grant going slow until his own cock is furious and throbbing achingly in his hand, dripping just as wet as Asher's cock is, the tip rubbing against the sheets with each thrust that Grant makes. Royce can feel the same frustration that Asher does, evident in how the journalist's teeth bite his lip and he snarls at them both to *stop fucking around*.

"Now -- faster," Royce mutters at Grant, and Grant obliges with a grunt, gripping Asher's leg to open even wider as he slams his dick deep into him. It's the last straw for Asher, who comes with a loud cry, and Royce's voice is like a web that snaps Grant in place as he tells him harshly, "don't stop" even as Asher shakes with the force of his orgasm.

Grant fucks his husband through it, his breath hissing from how tightly Asher clamps down on him when he comes. He makes himself still drag his cock in and out of Asher, and the friction combined with the way that Asher slumps boneless against him while Royce's hand makes an obscene slicking sound as he works himself, it all makes Grant come as well.

Royce finishes last, legs spreading wide and sliding lower in the chair as he comes into his cupped hand. His eyes slide closed, blissful, and he opens them only a few moments later, to see the scene of Grant slowly pulling himself out of Asher, and the mess of cum spread over both their thighs and cocks. Royce drags the tip of his tongue along his inner bottom lip.

"Royce," Grant says, weary and sated. "Come here."

"Grab a towel first," Asher sighs like a well-fucked debutante from where he is collapsed on his back into the bed, and waves a hand toward where a few hand towels have been folded on the night stand for tonight.

Royce brings them to the bed, wiping his hands as he does, and takes a seat beside Asher's hip. He leans down to stroke his fingers over Asher's weak knee and swallow the man's gasp in a straightforward kiss, before turning his head to give Grant one as well. There is a tension that has eased from his posture, and a warmth that Grant has been searching for to return to him.

"Theories can never quite prepare us for reality, can it? And you are both so extraordinary. Thank you, my friends."

They sit down for dinner, after recovering and washing up. The conversation flows far more smoothly than Asher has experienced before, although the cynical part of him entertains itself by proposing that Asher only feels this way because he has the rush of endorphins from his husband digging his insides deep. It can think what it wants. Asher is at peace with the company on either side of him, engrossed in a discussion about the public utilities in Goldwalk.

At the end of the meal, Royce wipes his mouth.

“My friends... Allow me to extend the courtesy of sharing some new and promising information with you. It has kept me quite preoccupied, but I think nothing can truly develop until there is more than one set of eyes to bear witness upon it, I believe.”

He looks at them both, elbows resting on the blood red tablecloth and chin propped on top of his laced fingers, and a small, proud smile curving across his mouth.

“I’ve some friends I’d like to introduce to you as well. You’ll find them quite wonderful, I think. Yes, yes, I do think so.”

End Notes

I just love these three and had some fun fleshing out Asher's background a little bit. Thanks so much for giving this a shot ;)

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