

There Are Winners and There Are Losers

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/17935400) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/17935400>.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Critical Role (Web Series)
Relationship:	Percival "Percy" Fredrickstein Von Musel Klossowski de Rolo III/Vax'ildan
Characters:	Percival "Percy" Fredrickstein Von Musel Klossowski de Rolo III , Vax'ildan (Critical Role)
Additional Tags:	Angst and Fluff and Smut , Rough Sex , Dom/sub , Swordfighting , Mild Painplay , Established Friends to Crushes to Guilt Ridden and Angry Allies to Spiteful Rivals , Rivals to Lovers , Handling Problems but Like Kind of Badly , Post-Episode: c01e044 The Sunken Tomb , But like a while after ep 44 when things are starting to get better between them
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2019-02-27 Words: 8,009 Chapters: 1/1

There Are Winners and There Are Losers

by [inadistantworld](#)

Summary

Vax is frustrated with how perfect Percy thinks he is and challenges the gunslinger to an old-fashioned fight, daggers vs. rapier. Percy thinks that Vax needs to be taught a lesson so he'll stop picking fights he can't win and indulges him. As all their heated interactions go, it's laced with sexual tension and feelings they struggle to put into words, but this time they're willing to go the distance and maybe that will help.

Or the fic of boys swordfighting and boning down that nobody really asked for but that I believed was necessary.

Notes

I've been working on this one for a while (unedited still). I don't normally like Percy/Vax because of the post ep 44 vibes that I've never been big on, so I probably could have done a better job with their banter and interactions (also it's been a long time since I saw the boys together and I'm forgetting what they were like).

There's a pretty sudden shift in attitude towards the end that I almost scrapped but I think it felt right so it stays.

Thanks for reading, hope you guys enjoy it at least a little bit

The others would have said that Vax was brooding more than usual. He thought that was ridiculous. He didn't *brood*. Percy *brooded*. Percy was the one who had bloody smoke come out of him and spent hours in his workshop building deadly weapons and carried his guilt around like it was both his war flag to parade around and his burden to suffer through alone.

Vax was not brooding. He was just thinking. He'd been thinking a lot recently. It was Percy's fault. A lot of things were Percy's fault in Vax's opinion. Percy was the root of many of his problems and nobody seemed see it. He was arrogant, stuck up, perfect, always smarter and better and more proper than anyone else in the room. He was just another fucking lord and Vax was once again just not up to par.

He didn't used to see it like that. He used to have a bit of a crush on Percy and it had made those things endearing for a while. Now they made him angry and his blood hot. He couldn't ignore those parts of Percy anymore, every time he talked Vax wanted to scowl and take the pretty, noble tone out of him. It made him want to prove himself, to win, to show Percy he wasn't any better than him.

Vax was less angry now. He had hated Percy for a while after his stupidity got Vex killed. Vex forgave him so easily, the others were upset but not with Percy. Vax knew it was Percy's fault though, even if the others didn't. The two had moved past it, with some difficulty. They saved each others lives a few more times (Percy owed Vax one more than he owed Percy, but who was counting?) and time helped heal the rift between them, but it was still a scarred and rough relationship.

It wasn't brooding to think about that. Sometimes Vax missed the playful game of chicken they had, the quick kisses just to see his reaction, the flirting, pairing up together for the midnight watch. Those memories were always tempered with how he saw Percy now, though, with how Percy was one of the bigger pricks he'd ever met and that it no longer mattered how hot he was, he was infuriating.

At the end of the day he was just another noble. He had the fancy clothes and the fancy title and the fancy weapons and Vax had armor that still smelled like a crypt and he was the unwanted bastard son and he had a couple daggers. And Vax knew that if you stripped Percy of all his fancy things he wasn't any better than Vax. Noble or not he wasn't anything special.

That thought rolled around in Vax's mind for a long time. It didn't help his case against calling it brooding but nobody was around to call him out on it. He focused on that line of thought for a long time. On how Percy wasn't really all that special without his guns and without his name and even with his fancy clothes he was just a man in a jacket. No different than Vax being a man in a cloak.

And in true Vax'ildan form he did something impulsive.

He found Percy in what Scanlan called the library, but the few books it had were all erotic and filled with pictures. Percy brought his own books though and he enjoyed the thick armchairs and the fact that usually his only companions were Keyleth or Vex and they were

quiet. This time Percy was alone though. It was late and everyone else had gone to bed before Vax started thinking.

“You don’t need sleep?” Vax asked as he leaned up against the doorway.

Percy turned the page of his book. “Does that bother you?”

Vax scowled and looked away, “We have things to do tomorrow, you can’t be sleeping in.”

“I promise I’ll be in top shape tomorrow morning. Did you want something? Or are you just here to worry about me?”

“I came to remind you that’s you’re not immortal. You need sleep just like the rest of us.”

There was a bite to Vax’s words that finally drew Percy’s attention from his book. He looked up at Vax to find the familiar anger in his dark eyes. “Yes, well I will keep that in mind.” And he looked back down. “Now if that’s all I’d really like to get back to my book.”

“Do you practice with your sword much?” Vax asked with a lilt that said he meant the innuendo.

“A fair amount,” Percy answered smoothly.

“Any good at it?” Vax had seen Percy with his sword, he knew the answer was yes, but he’d never seen Percy practice with it. It was a last resort for when his inventions failed him.

Percy’s eyes flicked up again, a small smirk on the corner of his lips. It was infuriating. “I haven’t heard any complaints about my technique before, I’ve always gotten the job done.”

That only seemed to make Vax angrier. So cocky, so sure in his ability, that he was making fucking sex jokes at the same time. “Show me.”

“Here, Vax? This is hardly the place.”

Vax pushed off the doorframe and one of his hands dropped to the hilt of one of his knives. “Grog’s passed out at the dinner table, we could spar down in the sandpit. I’d rather not be putting my life in your hands should your guns stop working.”

Percy’s eyes didn’t leave Vax but his focus followed the hand down. “If you’re concerned that I’ll fail you on the field I can assure you it won’t be due to lack of skill.”

“Then prove it to me. I put my life in your hands out there, we all do, and I feel like I deserve a demonstration.”

Percy closed his book slowly with deliberate care and a dangerous look to him. “Is there something you want to say, Vax?”

“Something you need to be told, Freddie?” Vax stripped him of his name first. He was simply Freddie again, not his title, not his traditions, just a man in a coat.

Percy felt his heart stop but he was careful not to show his reaction, masking it quickly as he stood up. He couldn't remember the last time Vax had called him Freddie and he wasn't quite willing to give it up again so quickly. "If you insist we do this then I will." Percy stood and picked his sword up from where he had leaned it against the chair.

"I do."

Not long-ago Percy had thought he and Vax could have been something. They flirted and while there had always been tension between them and a desire to one up each other, it had always been as friends. They had always been on the same side. They had always done so with smiles at the end of the day. But things had changed, and Percy was well aware that he had no right to ask for better. But he was also well aware that he was too selfish to hold back from Vax offering any semblance of their old relationship.

The sandpit was empty. It had a couple straw mannequins and a ring in the center that Percy felt they would be ignoring. Percy walked in and shrugged his coat off and hung it on one of the mannequins. Stripped of his fancy coat he was still infuriatingly handsome, only now he was in a gray vest and a white shirt. Vax remembered clothes like those, how uncomfortable he had been in them, how little he could move. Percy didn't seem to care or maybe it was that he thought he was so much better that it wouldn't matter.

"No reason to keep up appearances, Freddie. You can take the vest off." Vax pulled his hair back and tied it up to get it out of his face.

Percy did his best not to let his eyes linger too long on his frenemy's sharp features and long neck and dark eyes. He'd been practicing long enough to get away with it and he quickly looked down at his hands as he loosened them up and got ready. "You're worried I can't hold my own with my sword, I would think you would want me in my usual attire."

So he was mostly stripped of his fancy clothes. Vax could live with that. "Fine. It should go without saying no guns." Vax wasn't in his cloak, unlike Percy he had changed into more casual wear when Scanlan opened up the mansion. He was in a dark gray shirt with laces at the collar and black pants. He still had his Boots of Haste but had no intentions of using them against Percy, which was why he switched his daggers to nonmagical ones as well.

"I would never dream of turning those against you." Percy unbelted the gun at his hip and unsheathed his rapier. He turned it in his hand, swinging it in a large arc and crossing it in front of him a handful of times before stepping forward.

Vax took a dagger in each hand. "Ready?"

"I've been wondering how much longer it would be before you hit me. I thought it would go differently." Percy turned, held his arm out, dropped his stance a little. Perfect form he learned from his expensive teachers all those years ago. He didn't even have an interest in sword fighting, it was mostly that Julius needed someone to practice with. Julius had always been better, but even back then Percy had been a perfectionist who hated to lose and those lessons still stuck with him.

“Not everything is about you, Freddie.” Vax had learned what he needed to in practice. He had to learn quickly to survive when he and Vex ran away, he may not have had the traditional training but in the middle of it all that wouldn’t matter. It would only take Percy so far.

“It certainly feels like this is about me,” he answered smoothly. “Let’s try not to kill one another down here. We don’t have to be gentle, we have health potions and you know what they say, ‘A long rest heals all wounds’, but I’d rather not have to explain to Pike why she was resurrecting one of us.”

“Don’t worry, I’m only trying to help you.” There was a bite to his words, somewhere between the friendly competition from the past and the more recent anger.

“You sound like you think you’re going to win.” Vax didn’t answer. “Prove it.” And Percy stepped forward.

They were even at the beginning. Blades clashed against one another, they sidestepped each other’s attacks artfully, they even predicted attacks before they happened. They showed their familiarity with one another in a way that was rather cliché.

And then Vax stepped close, pushed Percy’s sword away, and slashed forward. He was careful not to go too far in his attack, only wanting to leave Percy with a warning more than anything else. When he jumped back he saw Percy’s hand go to his side and the white haired man winced before he pulled his hand back, a line of blood on his palm. It was a shallow cut on his side and now both the vest and thin shirt beneath it were cut through and turning dark from blood.

“This will be the third time I’ve had to save this vest,” Percy said as he took his position again.

Vax almost rolled his eyes. “Perhaps you should wear more practical clothes.”

“I’m not sure that wearing an eyesore would have stopped your dagger, but even if it could I’m not sure it would be worth the cost.” Percy stepped forward and they began again.

Vax threw a hand up, his blade clashing with Percy’s and when Percy started to pull away Vax used his speed to catch Percy’s forearm, earning a hiss and the sight of blood spreading on his pure white shirt. “Is this all you have in you, Freddie?”

The words had barely left his mouth when there was the burn of a shallow cut on the outside of his thigh. Percy’s eyes were cold and focused, it was the same look Percy had in battle. Vax never anticipated the feeling of being on the wrong end of the cold, analytical mind Percy touted as his greatest gift. He felt almost like an animal locking eyes with a hunter before trying to sprint away. The idea was only strengthened when Percy said, “Your impulsiveness will be your undoing, Vax.”

“I don’t think you get to make judgements on my impulsiveness,” Vax snapped back and, unconsciously proving Percy right again, he swung at him. He didn’t even think about how

he was aiming for Percy's face until Percy simply tilted his head away, like he was dodging a child's predictable attack.

The dagger grazed Percy's cheek, leaving a thin line in its wake, but Percy didn't seem to notice. "Then you should know how dangerous it can be." Percy swung again, a quick arc through the air that Vax barely managed to block before Percy went for a second one, keeping Vax on the defensive. "If I need to be the one to show you that your actions have consequences, then I will be." He nicked Vax's side and when Vax dropped his hand to grab the fresh wound Percy whapped his knuckles. "You can be faster, you can even be stronger, but at the end of the day, Vax, you're going to be outsmarted."

Vax dropped down low and lunged towards Percy only to have Percy put a hand on his head and push him away. He recovered quickly, spinning back to look at Percy with a scowl. "You're going to stand there and tell me you're better than me? Like you aren't the reason Vex—"

"I'm telling you that you pick fights you can't win. Someone needs to show you your place before you do something you regret."

The fight changed. Every one of Percy's movements was calculated and with a point. Vax couldn't seem to catch up and he was once again reminded of the prey to a hunter. And each time Percy pushed him away, knocked his dagger aside, or hit him with the flat of his blade just to prove he was winning Vax found an old, familiar feeling building.

It wasn't a conscious thought. It wasn't something he knew in the same way he knew he liked having his hair pulled, it was quieter than that. It was farther down, something he did without fully understanding why. It was why Vax picked fights with Grog who would always get him back in a bigger way. It was why he used to like picking fights with Percy, because even when it looked like Percy lost, it always seemed to be in his grand plans. Percy always won in the end. And Vax? Vax liked to lose.

It's why he picked a fight with Percy again. Because he missed it. Because Percy was so good at putting him in his place.

Vax's footing was off when he stepped backward and Percy had never let a good opportunity pass him up before, nor had he ever refrained from playing a little dirty. He swept Vax's legs out from under him and when Vax blinked he was lying on his back with the tip of Percy's sword at his throat.

There was a familiar heat in Vax, a relief from the anger he'd been feeling. Percy's eyes were still hard and cold, still taking in everything like they would on be on the battlefield. And Vax felt entirely at Percy's mercy, not something most people in their right mind would have wanted.

"Are you finished?" Percy flicked the sword up to under his chin and forced Vax to tilt his back, exposing himself a little more.

The combination of it all was starting to get to Vax in a very different way. He kept as still as he could, knowing Percy wouldn't miss something like that. "Are you bored already?" He

shot back. Vax liked to lose, he didn't like to give up.

Percy arched an eyebrow and the corner of his lips curled up into a smirk. His eyes lost the hard determination in them and took on something almost amused. "What are you going to do from down there?"

They used to play chicken all the time. Who would go the farthest, who was going to make more jokes and slyly offer things to one another before the other backed out? Percy usually was the one to back down with a fierce blush on his cheeks, a quick glance away, subtle change of subject. This time Vax was the one whose heart was pounding.

"It's not a bad place to be," Vax answered with a shit eating grin. And because Vax's most notable quality was his ability to escalate he pressed a careful kiss to the tip of the sword.

He saw the flash in Percy's eyes and watched his tongue wet his lips. Percy remembered all the times he had pulled away, that he figured he didn't deserve the things Vax was offering if Vax meant to offer them at all. He remembered how for months he had only been "Percy" or "Percival" and how cold Vax had been. He was Freddie again and he wasn't ready to just give it up. If Vax wanted to play, he would play.

"I'm afraid I have to disagree. I've never seen anyone in your position turn it into a victory." He pressed down on Vax's bottom lip before moving the sword down to graze against the small amount of exposed skin at his chest.

"That's strange, every time I end up in a position like this I always feel like I've won."

"Then your...opponents are doing you a disservice." Percy lightly kicked Vax's legs apart and then planted one of his feet between Vax's thighs, close enough that Vax wasn't sure if he was imagining that Percy was just barely grazing against him or if he actually was. "When you're in this position it should be very clear who won and who lost. Anyone who lets you get up thinking you won should be doing better."

Vax grinned. "Are you going to keep me here until I admit you've won, Freddie?" He was half-hard, partly because it had been quite a while since he released any pent-up tension but mostly because while Percy had always been attractive he had never been as incredibly hot as he was standing over Vax with a sword in his hand.

"I don't care if you say it. It only matters if you know it. You're at the mercy of your betters, Vax'ildan. It's important that someone reminds you that." Percy trailed the point of his rapier down his chest a couple inches, catching on Vax's shirt and pulling it farther down.

"Do you hear yourself? Maybe someone needs to knock you down a peg, Freddie. The last thing you need is a bigger head." Vax's fingers twitched at his side, reaching for the last dagger in his belt, and before the thought had fully formed in his mind Percy's sword whapped his knuckles again.

"You've been outplayed, Vax. Your position puts you at a disadvantage, anything you manage to do is what I let you do. Give up." Percy was unwavering, his voice was firm, a clear warning for Vax. He had never been very good at listening to warnings.

Vax shifted his hips forward, pressing himself up against Percy's boot, leaving very little for Percy to guess at Vax's thoughts. "I always knew I had more experience at sword fighting than you did Percy, but are you really so naïve that you think I can't do anything from down here? I didn't think I'd have to teach you everything."

Percy picked his foot up and let it rest very lightly over Vax's hardening dick. It was hardly any pressure, just the implication of a threat that Vax felt in his core. "For someone at my mercy you're doing a terrible job of making me think you understand your place."

"You're assuming I give a fuck about what you think, Freddie." Vax licked his lips and he raised his head up to clasp his hands behind it, looking like he was perfectly comfortable with where things were at. And Percy watched with near hunger in his eyes when the movement pulled Vax's shirt up, exposing the V at his hips.

Percy pulled his foot back and glanced down to see the hard line of Vax straining in his pants. "With good reason."

Vax closed his eyes, "The way you act sometimes I'm not sure you would know what to do with it." There was a challenge to his voice and for a second his teeth pulled at his lip before he looked back up at Percy.

Though Percy liked to pretend he was more level-headed, that he thought everything through, and that Vax was infinitely more dangerous, Percy was just as impulsive.

He dropped to his knees and grabbed a fistful of Vax's hair, yanking him up to his mouth. The kiss was something one would expect of their relationship. It was messy with teeth and hands that dug into one another painfully. Vax even grabbed at Percy's side once he remembered his first successful swipe on the man and he drank in the sound of Percy's gasp of pain. It earned him a sharp nip on his bottom lip before Percy pulled away and looked down at him, panting heavily with his pupils blown from all the energy that had been building between them since they met. "If you're truly this desperate for someone to put you in your place then I'll do what I have to do."

Vax was panting underneath Percy and his lips quirked up into a smirk, "You keep promising to do that but I'm all you've done is give me a little kiss. Guess you nobles are all bark and no bite."

The sound that came from Percy was nothing short of a growl. Percy's thigh was between Vax's legs which made it very easy for the lord without his name, his jacket, or his fancy gun to press it hard against Vax's stiff member. It drew what Percy would later call a whimper but Vax would insist was a grunt out of the half-elf with a last name he never mentioned, a cloak forgotten in a corner of another room, and a handful of daggers.

Percy pushed Vax's chin up to give him absolute access to Vax's slender neck. His teeth dug painfully hard into Vax, hard enough for them both to know it would leave a mark when they had finished, and Vax rocked up against Percy's thigh in a hungry search for some kind of friction. Percy's hand slid up under Vax's shirt, pushing it up higher to expose lean muscles and what most would have assumed to be smooth skin. Percy knew better though, he'd seen

enough of Vax to know what it looked like and his hands brushed over him with a surprising gentleness, or perhaps it was something more akin to careful investigation.

Vax was marred with scars. There was one a few inches to the left of his bellybutton, long and jagged at the edges. Another, smaller and almost round from what Percy believed came from an arrow or a bolt, had pierced him between the ribs. A spot of ragged flesh that Percy would need a closer look at to decide if it was a burn or acid. Another at his collarbone, a short, pale line. An inch-long crescent on his side. That was only what Percy could feel with him on his back.

“Don’t you ever give up?” Percy hissed in his ear, pulling one of Vax’s nipples sharply.

Vax bit his lip and arched his back into it, “Can’t let you have all the glory.”

Percy grabbed one of the daggers that Vax had forgotten and sat back to pull Vax’s shirt away from his chest and slice through it. Vax frowned as it fell open, “That was a good shirt,” he said when Percy stabbed the knife back into the ground and leaned down to put his mouth on Vax’s skin again.

“I’ll buy you a new one,” Percy’s voice was impatient, demanding, lordly.

“You can’t buy people off every time,” Vax grabbed a tight handful of Percy’s white hair.

Percy groaned against Vax, “It’s not buying you off,” he countered, “it’s to remind you of your place. Here in the dirt under me.” His teeth caught Vax’s nipple and Vax’s grip grew harsher and Percy’s fingers dug into Vax’s hips harder.

“What? You want people to think of me as your property? Your little consort or whatever you princes call them? Just another fuckbuddy to another lord?” It pissed Vax off that Percy thought he could just get whatever he wanted, thought that he could own people, but there was a tiny part of him that was getting off on it. Part of him that *liked* that Percy wanted to own him.

“No, I don’t give a fuck about the others. I want you to remember you’re my bitch.”

No Mercy Percy had always been hot. The cold, calculated voice had always sent a shiver down Vax’s spine and maybe it was because of all the things Vax hated about Percy, how proper and noble he was, but there were few things that got Vax going more than when the fucking prick cursed. It was such an obvious break in his perfect façade, proof that something was getting to him and he was only mortal. That in the end he was no better than Vax.

Except this once he was using it to tell Vax the opposite, and surprising only Vax it was even better than thinking they were on equal footing. At least in this moment, later it would be a different story.

Vax pulled Percy’s hair again, this time using it as a handle to drag him back to his lips. Vax kissed him like he was still trying to win the fight and Percy responded like he had already won it. He let Vax kiss him, let his teeth knock into his lip hard enough for them to taste copper. He even allowed Vax to press his tongue into his mouth and sloppily taste him. When

he decided Vax had had enough he sat up and laid a firm hand over his bare chest to hold him down.

“Are you done?” Percy had an edge to his voice, but Vax knew it for what it was. An out. A reminder that while Percy was looking to get rough with him and even though he was holding the half-elf down and about to make good on his promises, Vax could still leave. All he had to do was say he was finished and it would be over.

Vax liked the option but he enjoyed digging his hole a little deeper and egging Percy on more. “Performance anxiety happens to a lot of guys, Freddie, you don’t have to feel ashamed to back out.”

Percy’s lip curled up in distaste, “I assure you that is not something to be concerned about.”

“Is it about the size, then? I can’t say I relate but—”

Percy flipped Vax onto his stomach with shocking ease. Vax lost his train of thought as Percy finished tearing his shirt off and pulled him up on his knees. “That is most definitely not something for you to be concerned about.”

“Never met a noble with a big prick, not sure I trust you de Rolo. That why you want me on my hands and knees? So I can’t see you?”

“If you’re going to run your mouth so much at least say things that are accurate. I want you like this because I’m tired of looking at you.” His voice was hard and cold but the hand that moved to touch his hip was, if only for a second, gentle. It was as if Percy meant to remind Vax that it wasn’t the entire truth. And then the softness was gone, replaced by a near bruising grip and a demand that Vax unlace his trousers.

Vax struggled with undoing his belt and laces with one hand so he could keep himself up but he eventually managed to do what Percy had asked. The gunslinger wasted no time in grabbing the waistband of Vax’s pants and yanking them down past his ass, letting them pool at his knees. He palmed at Vax’s cheeks, squeezing them roughly and dragging calloused hands over the smooth skin. Percy then slapped his ass once, just to hear the sound it made, before he growled out, “Stay put,” and stood up.

Percy’s jacket had more pockets than most men would know what to do with. Vax was quite familiar with how many pockets it had because he had rifled through it out of curiosity a handful of times. There were tools, pens, notes and diagrams, a pocket watch, charcoal, bullets, and many other things. Vax had no idea how Percy could keep track of it all but every time he pulled a hand out of one of his many pockets he had exactly what he was looking for in it. This time was no different.

He dipped his hand into a pocket on the inside of his coat and returned to Vax with a vial of oil. Vax looked over his shoulder to see him trying to warm the bottle up before using it, and because he was Vax he had to open his mouth. “You keep that in your coat? It can’t be for sex, I’m not even sure you’d know where to start. So what’s it for, Freddie? For a quick wank when you’re too fucking turned on to be around me? Gods, Percy is that what you’ve been

using your workshop for? If I go in there is there some kind of shrine to me where—” His voice fizzled out into a soft whine as Percy brushed a slick finger against his hole.

Vax dropped down onto his elbows and tried to press back against him but Percy pulled his hand away and with his other hand he gripped Vax’s hip firmly. “Stay still.”

Vax huffed but let the words about how Percy didn’t get to tell him what to do die on his lips when Percy finally pressed into him. Only an inch or so but Vax was grateful to have anything. Knowing Percy he would turn this into some kind of test or a way to punish him, he didn’t have the luxury of being picky when it came to this man. Percy was a take what you can get kind of person, not that Vax was opposed to that. If anything, that was how Vax liked it.

Vax didn’t have to wait long, it seemed that Percy was more interested in seeing how Vax looked with Percy’s entire finger inside of him. Then a second. And Vax was groaning and clenching around his fingers while Percy slowly fingered him.

“You take it so easily,” Percy wore the smirk that always made Vax mad and he could hear it in his voice. “Do you do this to yourself that often?”

“Only—ah—only when you piss me off to the point where it’s the only thing that can take my mind off you.” Vax’s fingers dug into the sand, trying to ground himself, to stop himself from moving with Percy’s hand.

“You’re a terrible liar, Vax.” Percy began to add a third finger and Vax dropped his head down to rest on his forearm as he bit his lip and whined quietly. “It doesn’t get your mind off me at all, does it? There’s no shame in wanting me, most people do.”

“You egotistical fuck,” Vax panted out. Percy was working three fingers inside of him and it was driving him mad.

“I can stop if you’d rather do this with someone more modest.” Percy let go of Vax’s hip and started to lean away from him and Vax’s pressed back, trying to follow him.

“Don’t, don’t stop,” it was a broken sound that came from Vax, something close to begging. Percy rather enjoyed hearing Vax beg for him rather than try to frustrate him.

Percy started working at his own belt and laces, “You can do better at asking for what you want.”

Vax grit his teeth and shut his eyes tightly, caught between telling Percy to go fuck himself and spreading himself for Percy and begging him to fuck him already. Instead he settled for a bitter sounding, “More, Percy.” And when Percy did nothing he added a very stiff, “Please.”

“It’s something we’ll have to work on if we do this again, but for now,” Percy took his fingers from Vax completely and dribbled more oil on his hand, “it will do.” Vax sighed and waited for Percy to touch him again.

Percy's hand glided over his cock and he looked at Vax for a few moments. It was perhaps the only time Vax had ever just stayed still and waited for someone else to make the first move. Part of him wanted to keep him there, to make him learn patience, but he doubted Vax would take the lesson so easily. Perhaps at another time if Vax wanted to do this again. Besides, Percy was tired of waiting, tired of holding back, tired of wanting but not indulging. Vax was handing himself over and Percy was not going to waste what was likely to be his only chance with Vax before he came to his senses.

Percy pressed the tip of his cock against Vax. "You're pretty like this, Vax." And before the half-elf could think of anything witty to say in return Percy was buried to the hilt inside of him.

Vax had gone from empty and wanting to full and stretched in one swift movement and all he could do was moan and relish the feel of Percy inside him. He didn't know what Percy was working with for sure, but he knew it fit inside him perfectly. He was thick and at least the average length that Vax was used to. He had been right to feel confident in it, especially if he knew how to work with it.

Percy used a handkerchief that he kept with the oil to dry his fingers again while Vax adjusted to him. Vax was everything he had imagined, warm and tight and it was like the half-elf was trying to take him deeper. Percy almost said how shocking it was that Vax wanted him closer for once, but he held it in. He dropped his hands to Vax's hips and gripped him lightly but didn't move.

Eventually Vax abandoned his pride to whisper, "Please, Percy."

"Please what?"

Vax looked over his shoulder, shooting daggers at him, "Fuck me already."

Percy rocked forward, "You're terrible at asking for things you want."

"And you're a huge fucking prick."

Percy tsked and finally pulled back and for a second Vax felt terribly empty and then Percy thrust into him, hard and deep and everything Vax wanted out of him. "I think you mean I have a huge fucking prick. You'll find that being nicer is more likely to make me nicer."

"If I wanted *nice* I wouldn't be fucking you."

"Who's fucking who, Vax?" A sharp snap of Percy's hips drove his point home.

Vax groaned his answer and bit down on his lip to keep himself from thanking Percy and begging for more. Percy was fine with that, though, he could read Vax well enough to know. That didn't mean he was going to go easy on him, especially when it was so obvious that neither of them wanted that. Gentle and loving was for people who weren't so angry with each other, for people who weren't always picking fights with one another, for people not so focused on winning and losing. Slow, attentive sex was for people who didn't go down into a

sand pit in the middle of the night to draw blood from one another. Making love was for people better with expressing their feelings.

One of Percy's hands slipped down to Vax's thigh and his fingers found the hot, slick cut from where Percy had caught him with his sword earlier and he pressed down on it firmly, drawing a sharp, pained gasp from Vax. "Fuck," he hissed, his voice laced with pleasure and a less than subtle demand for more. It was not much of a surprise to anyone that a little pain got Vax going.

With one hand pressing against the cut on Vax's thigh Percy slid his other up Vax's back. He couldn't thrust into Vax with quite as much power but Percy's interests had shifted and Vax's attention was elsewhere. His fingers found the many scars on Vax's otherwise smooth skin. Some of them were dark and ragged, poorly healed from a time before Percy had met him. Others pale and old but had obviously been taken care of properly, sewn up carefully and cleaned up nicely. And then there were the ones that should have taken Vax's life, ones that were a stark white with a soft shimmer to them in the right light, ones that had been healed with magic but too serious to just vanish. Not even magic can erase everything.

Percy scowled and the roughness returned to his movements and he put his hand to the back of Vax's head and pushed him down so that his cheek was pressed down onto the ground, getting scraped up by the sand every time Percy's movements rocked him forward, and Vax couldn't hold back any longer. His fingers wrapped around his own member, pumping his cock while Percy fucked into him with renewed vigor.

"I'm just another bad decision you're making, Vax. Just another thing that leaves you sore and bloody and conquered. And this," he squeezed Vax's thigh again and Vax's hand sped up, "will just be another scar you've collected from your impulsiveness."

"You're no better, Freddie," Vax panted out, "just another noble looking to prove himself as the prettiest, smartest one in the room. Making deals with demons, not listening to others, jumping into things, at least I own it."

Percy growled again, "I need you to learn from it."

Vax thought that Percy would have slapped his hand away by that point. He thought that Percy would have wanted to take care of Vax himself. A more scandalous part of him thought that he would have wanted to deny Vax entirely, to finish himself off and make Vax walk back to his room hard and aching all scraped up and dirty to lie in bed and jack himself off to the memory of it. It seemed like a very Percival thing to do, their relationship was not built on mutually rewarding activities.

Instead, in another unsurprisingly Percival act, he didn't seem to notice or care. In truth Percy did notice and he did care, he thought it was hot and he drank in the sound of Vax's open moans and it only spurred him on to fuck Vax harder and faster and pick up on the things that made Vax's hand stutter. Vax didn't see that though, he only knew that Percy wasn't touching his dick and he had always been quick to jump to conclusions when it came to Percy.

Percy wasn't taking care of it, though, he wasn't making the decision for Vax which probably meant that whatever Vax did Percy was going to say it was wrong. Vax wouldn't listen, of

course, but it meant that now there was a competition factor to this as well. Vax wasn't sure if he wanted to hold back and wait until Percy came first, as if to prove he had more stamina and that Percy was more desperate for him than he was for Percy, or if he wanted to cum first without Percy's help like he was saying he didn't need the man to get what he wanted.

And then Percy scratched his nails down Vax's back and grabbed his hip in a bruising grip to slam into him again and again and Vax's cheek was still pressed into the ground and his mouth was dropped open as he gasped and moaned. He cried out Percy's name when he came and spilled onto the sand under him.

Percy didn't stop. Vax's mind was in a fuzzy haze of pleasure until the sharp pain in his thigh brought him back. Percy hadn't slowed or lightened up or even acknowledged Vax's climax. Vax's eyes fluttered shut and he moaned. He should have expected this of Percy, he should have known that Percy would have used him, taken him for everything he could give until he had his fill. If he could have gotten hard so soon after cumming the thought alone would have been enough to do it for him. Instead he could do nothing but stay there and let Percy take him, which quite honestly Vax liked better.

Percy couldn't last forever though and soon he was bent over Vax, kissing at the scars on his shoulder as he came deep inside the rogue with a guttural groan. Percy had read it in many of the books he read as a young man, "marking him from the inside" "filling him up" "spending inside of him" "claiming him" but they all fell short of what it had felt like to finish inside of Vax. It had simply felt like a proper end. Like anything else would have been a disservice to them both, would have been unsatisfying and incomplete. It had felt both less and more dramatic than the stories made it out to be, but more than anything it had simply felt right.

And he stayed draped over Vax for a few moments. They were both panting and trying to catch their breath, both now unpleasantly aware of the aches and pains and discomforts from both the fight as well as the sex. Percy moved first. He was well aware of what that kind of game could do to someone's emotional state and it was his responsibility to draw Vax back to his usual self.

He pressed a kiss to Vax's shoulder blade and leaned back from his—his what? His friend? His rival? The man he owed? The man he conquered? His lover?—and brushed his thumb softly against his hip. He didn't say a word, just stood up and walked over to the basin of water in the corner of the room that was meant to be used to clean up after intended uses of this room. He grabbed two rags and got them damp before returning to Vax. He took one to clean Vax's ass and dick and everything else made sticky and wet from the second half of their time together. The other rag was used to clean up Vax's wounds. They were minor, Vax had gotten worse from jumping over tables in battle. He probably wouldn't have noticed most of them but Percy paid each one particular care.

Vax let Percy do as he wished. He closed his eyes and heavy with sudden exhaustion he leaned into Percy's touch as the man took care of the details. That was Percy's favorite thing to do anyways, he reasoned as he fought off the urge to just pull Percy down with him and go to sleep.

He found that he liked Percy best in the aftermath. There was something about him now that he had never seen in all their time together, even in the days where their fighting had only

been a game and not a rift between them. For once Percy chose to let Vax see him as vulnerable and broken and fucked up. More surprising than anything else there was fear. Vax didn't think it came from the sex, not really. He figured it came from the chances Percy gave him to back out, the occasional soft reminder that before all else they were allies or even friends if not...something else entirely.

Vax put his hand over Percy's, stopping him from continuing to wipe the dirt from his chest, and he turned to look at Percy. They didn't say anything, they didn't really know how to talk to each other like that, but Vax looked at him for a while. He looked at him for long enough that Percy's eyes glanced away and he grew nervous under his gaze. And then Vax took the rag from him and started to return the favor, cleaning the blood from Percy's cheek. And when he was finished with his cheek he moved to the man's hands. And then his dexterous fingers undid the buttons to Percy's vest and pulled his shirt off of him and Vax continued to run the damp cloth over Percy.

Vax was starting to understand. Well, perhaps that was too strong a word. Percy wasn't constantly trying to prove he was better than Vax, he wasn't berating him for the sake of making Vax feel stupid. Their fights were not about Percy wanting to win, were not even about Vax wanting to lose, but because Percy wanted to show him that he wasn't ready to lose Vax, to show them both that he could protect him.

Vax didn't get it. Not completely. He probably never would, he wasn't the kind of person who was particularly willing to let others give him enormous worth or to let others take on the mantle of his protector. What he did see was that Percy could be trusted. What he did know was that Percy was vowing something that Vax couldn't understand yet.

Vax took a moment to touch at a curved scar on Percy's chest, the line was precise and perfect and unnerving, nothing like the messy, rough scars that littered Vax's body. He'd seen Percy's scars before but never in this light. He was unprepared for how much these scars angered him, their perfect, meticulous lines and the evidence of their even healing.

Unsurprisingly they refused to look each other in the eye, but when Vax's fingers traced another perfect scar and a scowl marred his pretty face, Percy lifted a hand to cover Vax's and held it to his chest. Vax felt like he was trying to grab a handful of smoke, Percy was silently giving himself over to Vax and he couldn't grasp what it meant exactly. But he wanted to understand. For the first time in a long time Vax felt like he and Percy were coming back to the same page and maybe this was how they would be able to understand one another again. By egging each other on. By being little shits and forcing them to say what they needed to say.

They would probably do it badly. They weren't the kind of people to do it well. They were arguably the worst about saying the things they wanted and needed to say and it was even more of a disaster when it was the both of them trying to talk to each other. It was very likely they would do poorly, but dammit they were going to give it a shot.

So what if it took a swordfight to tell each other "Please don't die" "Please don't leave me without you" "I miss you" "I'm sorry"? So what if it took a swordfight to say "I love you"?

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