

A Proper Husband

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A Proper Husband

by [the_deep_magic](#)

Summary

Day Eight: menophilia (menstruation kink)

"You're bleeding, Lilah."

Notes

Not gonna be coy here, warnings for period blood and oral sex. Yep. It's happening. You don't have to read it, but it's happening. Also, the Briarwoods: not good people.

I keep trying to write PWPs and failing. This fic about horny vampires and necromancers and menstruation accidentally got all romance novel on me. The prose? Oh baby, strap in, 'cause it's about to get purple.

He is still her Sylas.

Much of the time, that is not difficult to remember. Although they have fled their home, fled their country, he is still her one constant. Even here in Port Damali, a town so ironically flooded in sunlight that they dare not go anywhere during the day. Even though everything has changed, and they barely have more than the clothes on their backs. Even though their former friends have sent mercenaries to hunt them down.

Sylas still makes her laugh. He still protects her, even when she doesn't need him to. He still gently dissuades her from working too much, even though that's less of a problem now that they're on the run and her singular goal has been accomplished.

Even seeing him drink blood for the first time – a shock, though she knew it had to be coming, as he grabbed the nearest servant boy and snapped his neck in his haste to get to the blood within – didn't ultimately bother her much. He's always been unafraid to seize what he wants, and that's even truer now. Sylas is doing a service to Port Damali, in truth, skulking the streets at night and ridding the place of the poor, wretched humanoids that sleep in filthy rags in dark alleyways. They never have much coin on them, of course, but they aren't missed, and that allows the two of them to keep a low profile.

All Delilah has in the world now is her husband, and that's all she really needs. They spend nearly every moment together, sleeping during the day and emerging at night for Sylas to feed. Getting food for Delilah is harder, as it actually costs money, but they manage. Once, Sylas dispatched a beggar who had managed to save up a few silver. The next night, he surprised her by dressing up in the last set of fine clothes he had and urging her to alter their faces for the evening. Then, he took her to a tavern for a proper meal. It wasn't much, and he couldn't eat anything himself, but he had smiled the whole night, watching her. The meat pie and ale might as well have been steak and champagne.

But after...

To put it bluntly, he is cold to the touch. To complete the Rites, she had to clean and prepare his body, so she knows what death feels like, how cold it is. And even though he's no longer dead, his body still has the chill of the grave in it.

But if that were all, she thinks she could adapt. It's Sylas, after all, the only man she's ever loved. She's already broken the inviolable laws of life and death for him; cold hands should be the least of her problems.

He had told her once, before he'd fallen ill, that he'd wanted her from the first moment he saw her. And it had been less than a week after they'd met before he'd been able to indulge that desire. Her family hadn't approved of him, of course, but that merely meant she had to bed him in the stables instead of her room. At her urging, he took her three times that first night – it would have been a fourth if the damned stable hand hadn't come back early. They snuck around so often that they were finally caught, and her family was forced to allow them to marry after the scene it caused, finding them twined together in a corner of the library, her bare legs around his waist.

If she had expected their passion to cool after their wedding, as her mother and aunts assured her it would, she was pleasantly surprised. He remained insatiable, and seemed to delight in scandalizing the household staff, slipping his hands into her bodice or under her skirt when someone was sure to walk in. On occasion, he would invite his valet into his room while she was sitting – fully clothed, of course, as was her husband – on Syllas's lap, his cock buried to the hilt inside her. It became a game, to see how long either of them could stand it before ordering the poor man out of the room so they could finish. Of course, his voraciousness could become too much at times, but if she told him to back off, he always did so, respectfully and without hesitation. But the one thing she never doubted was that he wanted her, always. She thought that would never change.

Death, it seems, had other ideas.

It's been uncomfortable because it was never something they had to speak of before – he would give her a look, or she would slide a hand in his, and they would go to find some privacy. Or as much privacy as either of them cared to find at the time. Now, though, there are no servants, no valet. There's no one else at all in this vacant home they're squatting in. They have nothing but privacy, nothing but time as they hide from the forces sent to hunt them down and try to determine their next move.

And yet Delilah's husband won't touch her. It's only been two weeks since he returned, since they were effectively exiled, but the difference is stark. When she slips her hand in his – cold flesh between her fingers – he squeezes back, and there's still love and devotion in his eyes when he looks at her, but nothing more. None of that same fire he used to have.

One night she sets a fire in the small hearth and brings him to sit in front of it. "My love," she starts, her heart in her throat, "I realize things have... changed." She reaches for him, tries to brush her fingers against his face, and he flinches away. She feels as though the floor has dropped away from under her.

To his credit, he sees her pain and takes her hand, setting it firmly against the sallow flesh of his cheek. The fire has helped to warm him a little, but his reaction tells her that he's read her intentions. She wonders if he's going to try to deny it, if his pride will win out, but he just sighs. "I have been fearing this discussion for some time now, but it seems we must have it."

She nods, pulling her hand back and gazing into the fire. There are so many things she wants to say, so many questions and reassurances that she's rehearsed in her mind, and they've all fled in this moment. "So you... you no longer desire me as you did before."

"Delilah, I *love* you, now more than ever," he says vehemently. "What you've done for me, the things you've sacrificed... I would never have asked for that, but I am grateful for even one more day with you. When I thought I was dying – when I *was* dying – I would have given anything for more time, and now I have it. But as you've seen by now, a part of me is... missing. I am incomplete, as a man and as a husband. When I was sick, I merely lacked the capacity, but now I lack the will for it as well. I feel as though I am missing a limb."

She knew, but to hear it confirmed... She swallows hard, willing the tears to remain unshed. "I see."

“So you... you may go. Whenever you like. I only ask that you allow me to say goodbye.”

Astonished, she whips around to face him. “What?”

Even when he was inches from death, he never looked this despondent. “It is sentimental of me, to be sure, but I need one last—”

“You think I want to *leave* you?”

He blinks, face stony. “I cannot be a proper husband to you anymore. You are a passionate, desirable woman, and I cannot ask you to—”

“Stop, *stop*,” she cries, taking his face in her hands. “This is a misunderstanding. I am not leaving you. I am mourning this loss, yes, but you are still my husband. You are still the other half of my soul. I cannot live without you.”

At that, his expression cracks. “You would really remain with me? Even if I could not give you what you need?”

“*You are alive*,” she says, throwing her arms around him. “That is all I need. The rest is details.”

He holds her then, and with the warmth of the fire, his arms nearly lose their chill. “I could try, if you like,” he murmurs. “The idea of it seems... clinical to me now, but nothing about you has changed.”

She tries to imagine it – his hands or his mouth on her, trying to wring pleasure out of her while he remains impassive, unmoved. It turns her stomach in a way that even the temperature of his skin doesn’t. “Not now. But we have a lifetime together to learn each other anew.”

The next day, as always, brings new indignities. Perhaps the local guards have performed a sweep of the streets, or perhaps she and Syllas have gotten too lax about hiding the bodies, but they find no one sleeping in alleyways. She doesn’t know the exact needs of her husband’s new form, but he has safely gone a day without feeding before, though he suffers the same hunger pangs as a human would. They return to their temporary home long before sunrise.

Then she makes use of the chamber pot and sees the blood staining her smallclothes. Blast and damnation, of course she grabbed none of her rags in their frantic exit from their home, and she doesn’t want to bleed on the few good clothes she has left. She’s heard a rumor that women on the coast use sea sponges for this purpose, but she has no notion of where to find or buy them, and besides, it’s the middle of the night.

It’s highly unlikely that anything in this dilapidated house is clean enough for the task, but it’s currently her only option. They had combed through the closets and drawers upon first coming here, finding most everything either moldy or cobwebbed. She checks a few closets and finds more spiders than she cares to deal with at present. “Darling,” she calls down the hall. “Do you remember if we found any clean cloth here? Linens or scraps or what have you.”

“It was all garbage,” he calls back, and she can tell hunger is fraying his temper. “All of it.”

She walks into the main room to find him sulking in front of the fire. “I don’t suppose you have, ah...” She is a grown woman, in point of fact, a powerful necromancer who has made death bend itself to her will – why must this embarrass her so? “Any such rags? Anything will do, as long as you don’t need it back.”

“Gods, Delilah, have you lost your mind? You want to *clean* this wretched place?”

That startles a laugh out of her, which turns into a groan as she feels a wet rush in her smallclothes. At least the cramping is unlikely to rear its head until tomorrow. “No, Sylas, I have not discovered a sudden urge to scour the floors. I’d rather not—”

“That *smell*,” Sylas interrupts, nearly leaping off the floor. “Delilah, are you hurt?”

“You can—? *Oh*.” Of course he can smell it. He’s told her that it smells faintly sweet even under her skin. Now, though... She takes a step backward.

“Explain,” he says, his speech muddled slightly by the fangs she can now see glinting in the dark.

Her back hits the wall, her heart pounding. She’s not afraid of him. At least, she’s not afraid of the man he used to be. One day without feeding shouldn’t endanger her, didn’t do so in the past, but that time, all her blood had been safely contained within her body. “It’s my monthly courses. That’s all.”

He nods, and as he grows closer, she’s surprised to see how clear his eyes are. She’s never seen a vampire crazed with bloodlust, but she can’t imagine it would look this composed. What she has seen, however, is her husband’s face when he’s barely restraining himself from ripping her bodice. Her pulse quickens for an entirely different reason.

“You’re bleeding, Lilah,” he says, and it’s nearly a moan.

“I... I am.”

“Fresh blood just... just spilling out of you. Without even the need to break skin.”

She nods slowly, hoping against all hope that she’s reading the glimmer in his eyes correctly. If not, well, at least one of them will be satisfied.

He closes his eyes and breathes in, his face just inches from hers now. “I cannot describe the scent, how it compels me. Nor the desire to... consume.”

She reaches up, traces a finger first across his cheekbone, then his lower lip. She can’t even feel the cold now. “I would nourish you.”

His eyes fly open. “*Lilah*.”

“*Please*. It’s yours.”

He's even stronger now than he was before, able to loop his arm around her waist and lift her as though she were made of parchment. He brings her before the hearth, and despite his obvious hunger, he slings his cloak across the floor so as not to lay her on the filthy stone.

The firelight throws his face in stark relief as he pushes her skirt to her waist, and she wants to cry with the familiarity of it – *this* is her Sylas. He's still here, still hers. Still hungry for her, even if the dimensions of that hunger have changed. He tears away her smallclothes and she fists a hand in his long hair, dragging his head down until he can bury his face between her legs.

She shrieks with the first touch of his tongue to her, having missed it as her lungs would miss air. His sickness had lasted many months before his death, and she had felt selfish for wanting this from him when he was clearly suffering and barely able to breathe, and then she was certain she had lost it forever. Now it feeds them both, the way his tongue licks into her impatiently. The sounds are obscene, but then, they always were, his eager mouth awash in her wetness. The heat of her body warms his tongue.

And he is so delightfully thorough, the way he probes every crevice and fold until she's gasping. Perhaps it's a result of old habits or perhaps he is feeling what he has not since reawakening, but he spares plenty of attention for the hard, aching bud of her clit, working it fervently with his tongue until she shudders before dipping back down for more of her blood. He brings her to her peak twice without even slowing down, and she's working toward her third climax when the thought comes to her that she isn't some kind of endless fountain. The blood must have slowed to a trickle by now, but he isn't stopping, and she doesn't want him to.

When his fingers, warm from the nearby fire, slide into her, she feels a tear slip down her cheek. *This is her Sylas*, filling her and savoring her and loving her. When his mouth returns to her clit, he keeps it there, kissing and sucking until she screams out for a third time, her body thrashing with bliss on the hard floor.

The look on his face when he finally lifts his head from her makes her grin – the same dazed, contented expression she remembers, albeit with more smears of red. Most of the blood near his mouth is gone, as he's probably licked it away, but it wouldn't matter either way. She pulls him up to her, tasting traces of thick copper on his lips and tongue. It doesn't bother her. Nothing short of the earth opening up beneath her would bother her just now.

"I think," he says softly between kisses, "that if you could be satisfied with having a proper husband a few days a month..."

"I think this will work nicely," she says, licking her lips clean.

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