His Butler, Nursemaid

By Caleb Arentz

Commissioned by: Colby-Hedgey

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“A telegram has arrived for you, my lord.” purred the low, velveteen voice; a stark contrast to the silence of the study.

A steady, soft, and rhythmic click of heels followed sooth, providing the only other sounds of the tall slender figure’s cat-like stride. His voice, the voice of a loyal servant, and the familiar graceful strides, would be the only thing which could break the young lord’s single eye from his work. His face was beset with an age well beyond his meager years, stern and impassive despite his age of 14, and only just barely peering up from his desk.

“Care of Her Majesty, herself.” Sebastian continued.

“Curious that it bares the royal seal, but the sender’s address is a residence in Stourbridge... You’ve authenticated this?” Ciel asked with a dispassionate and stoic tone.

“Of course, my young lord: the letter and seal are authentic. Evidently Her Highness is either travelling covertly, or she desires our attention to this address most urgently. I have already tallied the estimated travel time by train, should we need to pack and depart.” Sebastian bowed, placing a hand to his chest.

A perfectly postured and stiff 30 degree bow punctuated his words as, with great care, Ciel took the letter and letter-opener from the silver tray on which his diligent server had delivered it. Unmoving, stoic, and steadfast, to total submission and dedication, the tall and finely dress figure hung with not even a noise of breath escaping him as his young master set his single eye to gaze about the paper. Much as his seniors, Ciel’s fair brow furrowed as he made his way through the body of the text, exhaling quietly as already he began to push back from his desk.

“A most curious circumstance, indeed. Contact Lau upon our return, and ask him if there has been any talk of trafficking or goings on regarding Circuses or those obscene Sideshows. Anything involving…. physical oddities, or a market thereof.” Ciel instructed.

“Yes, My Lord. I shall prepare a carriage at once, we should be able to catch the 10 o’clock train to Stourbridge.” Sebastian nodded with am ever pleasant smile.

“And have Mey-Rin convert the bedroom off-set the family room into a nursery for the time being. Until further notice, in addition to your respective duties, there shall be an infant left in your care. I expect not to be disrupted with a detestable abundance squealing and crying flooding the manor at all hours. This matter is somewhat outside of the purview of Her Majesty’s Guard Dog, but I expect this inconvenience not to hamper our assignment.” Ciel continued, grabbing for his coat as he strode across the room.

“A child? How interesting.” Sebastian smirked with muted intrigue.

Naturally, as a butler, young Ciel was under no burden to disclose any of the letter’s contents, nor was Sebastian particularly bothered. He was, after all, a butler; it was not their place to pry, simply to serve as ordered. But perhaps it was the devil in him that birthed a certain coy curiosity deep in his scarlet eyes, one that Ciel noticed, but did not react to. They’d known each other long enough to pick up those little details that hid behind the outward exterior of man, well enough that Ciel knew that Sebastian could just as clearly see a certain discomfort in him.

Despite his young age, or perhaps because of it, the young lord was exceptionally uncomfortable around young children. Their screaming, their unvoiced wants and needs, their mess, it was all as off-putting as it was overwhelming for him. Of course, it was unbecoming of an Earl, to concede so easily, that there was anything he was incapable of, let alone the Earl of house Phantomhive. Unto himself, he was as all Phantomhives before him had been; like a calm ocean betraying the fatal currents beneath. That quality made him all the more tantalizing to Sebastian, both as a soul to devour and as a spectacle of the human condition. The boy who must be a man, so very adult in his wrath and vengeance, so much a boy in his selfishness and terrors, a juxtaposition of youth and conviction.

As was his way, the young Earl said nothing to his staff as he departed. They knew their jobs, as did Sebastian, who would hand down his orders to a more than confused Mey-Rin. His focus, even on the train to Stourbridge, was what laid ahead; what the Queen had once more asked of him. It wasn’t until well into the ride that Ciel’s deep blue eye turned to Sebastian, who sat dutifully across from him in their booth, and began to speak.

“Sebastian, is it within your power to sense if other Demons enter our world?” he asked in a quiet and dry tone.

“A rather concerning question, my lord. I can within a certain range, but it’s somewhat a more complicated affair than that. To a degree, with certain precautions, we can dampen our presence to other demons to avoid compromising our chosen prey. There are certain ripples I can feel, but mostly it’s the weight of another demon’s presence and scent which betray the human façade. What is it that you would have your Butler look for?” Sebastian asked quietly.

Crossing his legs, Ciel’s attention turned towards the door of their private seating before knitting his brow some. It would be an inconvenience that could not be helped, and not one that he would dwell upon. His time would be better spent trying to plan accordingly, and after a silent breath, Ciel would finally betray the secret of the letter’s contents.

“Well, that is indeed a bother, but one that we shall have to work with. There have been certain… *abnormalities* distressing Her Highness which she’s taken great efforts to keep from the public’s attention; infants with deformities, such to the degree that they’re inhuman in appearance. They’ve been appearing deceased in Dudley, discarded at the priory ruins and the canal tunnels. The incidents began simultaneously with a series of murders in Bishopston, exclusively targeting recently expecting couples. The most recent murders suggest that the next victims will be in Ashley Down, however, the infant element of these occurrences has broken the pattern with a live one arriving on the stairs of an orphanage in Stourbridge. We’ve been ordered to take the little thing into our custody before investigating the murders.” Ciel explained.

“Hm… vexing indeed, but I assume these *distortions* to the infants’ forms are beyond the explanations of conventional medical science if you’re considering a supernatural component to this.” Sebastian answered, placing a gloved finger across his chin.

“Naturally, I wouldn’t have wasted my breath otherwise. Her Majesty has pulled the Double Charles to address this, and even they are at a loss. The infants appear as total hybridizations of human and animal forms; animals warped into a humanoid form, right down to the internal organs.” Ciel replied with a dismissive glance out the window.

“I can understand the source of her Majesty’s discontent with such an alarming development.” Sebastian nodded, narrowing his brow in contemplation as the first droplets of rain began to patter on the car’s glass.

By the time the two had reached the little orphanage in Stourbridge, the harmless pattering had all but turned into a deluge. The deep chattering of rain masked every footfall of the pair, and so too did it offer them cover from whatever curious eye normally resided among these streets. No words filled the space between Master and Servant as they approached the run down façade of the building, only a blanket of duty that steeled them both against the rain. From many rehearsed times of dealing with the seedy underbelly of Her Majesty’s Kingdom, Ciel and Sebastian knew from reflex to approach the building upon the address they were given from the back. The stark white uniforms of the pair waiting by the steps of the back door, having had the same good sense to avoid the front of the building, seemed almost to glow in the mist of breaking droplets.

“Bloody took you long enough. I’d assumed the prospect of finally being around people your own size might inspire some swiftness on your part.” played the teasing soft hum of Charles Grey.

The young Earl remained silent, swallowing down a grimace of distaste for the more brash and unruly of the Secret Secretaries. Their arrival in his business was always an annoyance which he suffered only for necessity. The way he reveled in his authority and chaotically applied it at his leisure, very blatantly and frequently acting to provoke and demean him proved childish even to the far younger Ciel. His only saving grace was the restraint that Charles Phipps exercised over him. Instead, the young Earl proceeded to the old door, giving the knocker three solid raps against the thick wooden surface, feeling the jeering smile hang lazily on the man stood aside him.

“We shall attend to matters with the Orphan Keeper and expunging their records.” spoke Mr. Phipps, degrading neither of them by repeating the orders he knew that Ciel knew well.

Make the distressing and unsightliness disappear discretely, investigate what they could, and vanish back to Phantomhive manor; by now it was an old and tired song, but it was one that Ciel would always heed. When Her Majesty called for him, the Guard Dog responded, and whatever this was, whoever was responsible for these murders and malformities, would come to learn of their fatal mistake. The hurried clunk of the latch of the door stole the time for rebuttal as an older, heavier set woman lurched the door open long enough to peek out.

Her eyes needed only to fall to the stark whiteness of the uniformed pair to the left of the doorframe to encourage the Orphan Keeper to make haste with the door. The relief, the confusion, were all plain on her face as the door quickly opened the rest of the way, sending a cautious look to the streets beyond her humble establishment. It was by no means glamorous accommodations, being a fairly common terraced house that had been converted to house the children, smelling thick of its old carpets and gradually deteriorating wood, but the many candles that lined the interior bathed the homely estate in a comfortable warmth that helped the four shed the chill of the storm.

“It’s in here.” she spoke with a hushed macabre.

Though he remained the perfect visage of dispassionate upon his exterior, Ciel’s eye greedily dined upon every detail within the orphanage. Everything about the woman screamed unsettled and dismayed, more than any hoax or scheme would seemingly do. It gave Ciel pause as, if only a moment, he gave some greater level of consideration to the more fantastical claims of the report. But as the moment built up momentum, travelling ever swiftly along as Mr. Phipps pressed on, hurrying them along.

“On behalf of Queen and Country you have our assurance that this matter will be resolved immediately. Naturally, we’ll need digression on your behalf and that of any of your staff to curb a panic. Your cooperation is appreciated, and will, of course, be reward on behalf of Her Majesty.” began Mr. Phipps, producing quickly 100 pounds.

“Please take us to your record keeping and direct our associates to where you’re keeping the little thing.” continued the Earl Grey.

“A-Associates? But heavens, that one’s little more than a boy himself.” the woman sputtered quietly, paying Ciel a quick look over.

Once more, Ciel swallowed down his annoyance, feeling the teasing smirks of both the Earl Grey and Sebastian alike weigh down on him, but his face reddened slightly in annoyance. Loyal and obedient as he was, his demon nature always seeped through those finely polished seams of his butler appearance. No matter his devotion, his submission, there was always that air of bemusement around him, making those occasional remarks, offering those occasional glances, reminding him truly and utterly that when his deal was met and that formal act fell, there was an unimaginable and undeniable force that he would be helpless to deny as it consumed his soul.

“Of course! We can’t very well walk out of here without a child! It would rouse suspicions, you know!” Earl Grey smirked in a pleasing and charismatic way.

“I can assure the madam that everyone present is exceptionally well trained for their duties.” Sebastian would add.

“Quite.” Ciel spoke dryly, much to the Orphan Keeper’s surprise at the tone well beyond his years.

He could all but feel that teasing smirk, that glint of humor, behind the set features of his butler’s face as the woman motioned them into one of the adjacent rooms. Both he and Sebastian departed as the Double Charles moved on for the book keeping. The furious patter of the rain against the glass panes only reminded Ciel just how truly quiet the inside of the Orphanage was, despite how densely crowded some of the rooms were. The light from the candles seemed intent on stirring to mind the images of an alter as they entered a room of cribs and the soft breaths of stirring infants. To think that there were so many abandoned or unwanted children in the Kingdom, it was a sickening state of affairs but one that was symptomatic of humanity and its lack of caring, in Ciel’s mind.

Set separate from the others, there was little doubt in either Ciel’s mind or Sebastian’s which was the crib they were looking for. The ever faithful butler allowed Ciel to march ahead of him, as the morbid curiosity brought tension to every breath, his hand reached outwards towards the blanket that covered the small shape within, and with a final slow swish, revealed the minute occupant. With a quiet gasp and feigning step away, the form that filled the space of his rich peacock-blue colored eye made every detail within the letter clear: it was no exaggeration.

“My God!” Ciel recoiled in a quiet revulsion before catching himself.

“Do you know of any forms of surgery that could yield a modification to someone’s appearance to this degree?” he continued.

“No, My Lord. I don’t believe there’s any surgery so sophisticated to alter something so drastically without any trace of a scar, nor do I believe this creature’s been alive long enough to have healed from any procedure. It was born this way…” answered Sebastian as his hand reached down into the crib.

His thumb combed softly through its full covering of red fur, barely disturbing the soft sleepy coos of the infant. A small nubby snout stretched from the face of the child, a mop of yellow blonde hair coiling atop its head. Two yellow markings were at either cheek, and a small short tail peeked from its back. However, the two articulate hands, complete with thumbs, destroyed any notion that it was a misshapen animal of some unique fashion. In its every detail, wrapped in simple clothes that the orphanage had in supply, Sebastian studied its form as his brow tightened.

“And while it isn’t a demon, I do smell something altogether unearthly about it. It’s clear that whoever is responsible for this possesses a rather worrisome proficiency in the occult, as well too some considerable command of the sciences. I’ll see about compiling any potential leads for our case.” continued the ever-faithful Butler as he pulled back his hand.

“Otherworldly, so Supernatural, like you, is it? Does this *creature* pose us any sort of danger?” asked Ciel.

“Outside of the potential olfactory displeasure, I should say not, at least for the time being.” answered Sebastian.

“Then get it a basket or whatever it is you need to do to move it, and get us a train back to the Manor at once!” ordered Ceil with little pause.

“At once, My Lord.” Sebastian bowed.

From that point until their return back to the Manor, neither Ciel nor Sebastian disrupted that uneasy tenseness that birthed from the hush of their situation. When it came to matters in the supernatural, with the Reapers and Demons, Sebastian was his repository of information. He was swift and conscience, preventing the young Ciel from blundering ahead blindly. To see him quieted at the unfamiliar form of this infant left him in a uniquely vulnerable position, one that was a good deal unlike the usual cases Her Majesty entrusted to him.

While he intended for Sebastian to depart for Lau’s immediately upon their return, with the foulness of the weather delaying their travels, Ciel’s only focus was ensuring the oddity was silent for the night. The last thing that he needed on top of this already formidable mystery was a poor night’s rest to dull his keen mind. It was in the latter half of the train ride home that the little red creature had begun to stir, greeting them both with a blank and vacant stare. After beginning to fuss within the basket and bundle that they had used to hide its appearance, the true depth of its human qualities came forward, for what followed behind its distressed blubbering at the rain and strangers was not the howl or whimper of a threatened or scared animal, but rather the very human tears and crying of a proper infant.

To no one’s surprise, Ciel’s annoyance and Sebastian’s calm reasoning did very little to negotiate the infant from its noise. It was only as Sebastian’s soft voice simplified his words down to a simple but continuous hush, paired with the slightest jiggling of the child’s little form within the basket, that any peace seemed to return to it. It had taken his constant efforts to keep the little figure appeased as the dreadful weather seemed intent on following them. It had been their considerable fortune that in his times in town, the demonic butler had seen a few interactions between the fairer sex and their infant young.

The attentive eyes of the Phantomhive staff turned at once in the direction of the yawning door of the mansion as it creaked inward, and the hiss of the rain outside grew louder in the foyer. Their relief and joy at the duo’s return was palpable, but intercepted just as suddenly by their curiosity as their eyes fell to half soaked whicker basket that the indefatigable butler held with such care. With a tired huff, Ciel pulled ahead and rapidly progressed onward to the stairs.

“I’m going to retire for the evening, see to it that I’m not disturbed.” he spoke quietly.

“Of course, My Lord.” Sebastian smiled, slight and same as always.

“Blimey, the Young Master looks proper exhausted, he does! Are you sure you’re gonna be able to help them take care of this little fella, all by yourself, Mey-Rin? I know! Maybe we could all pitch in so’s Mister Sebastian can rest too!” chimed the gentle voice of Finny.

“Yeah, figure’ I could take care of the formula and feein’ the lil tike! Bein’ out in weather like this, it’d do all of ‘em good to have a warm meal! And I know just the trick to get throw something together quickly!” added Baldroy, with thoughts of pyrotechnics already dancing through his mind’s eye.

Neither of the two however, would notice as Mey-Rin shivered like a creaking house; turning a flush red in the face as she did so. The thought had occurred to her not too long into her duties to convert the off-set bedroom into its new temporary role as a nursery, in that these new duties would afford her the delight of working closely with Sebastian until their housing of the child concluded. It would be, however scandalously it would be to entertain such a thought, very much like raising a family with the tall, dark, and handsome Butler; which in turn only turned her face brighter.

“N-No! The Young Master entrusted this job to Sebastian and myself, he did!” Mey-Rin Stammered.

“Ah c’mon, Mey-Rin! I figure ‘tween the lot of us, they’re gonna need all the help they can get. I reckon I’m the only one of us that’s actually taken care of a baby before, so I’ll-.” Baldroy continued before Mey-Rin interrupted.

“I can make due myself! Besides, you need to cook for the Young Master after all that runnin’ about in the rain! The Master asked me to help Sebastian with this!” she quickly answered in a huff.

Her steps away from the stairs and towards the basket burdened butler were nearly as quick as the following face-plant, as her nearsightedness immediately halted her attempted retreat. Face down, she could do little more than hide the violent glow of her reddened face as Baldroy cracked a smile. Leaning back some against the railing of the stairs as Finny stood silent and confused between them, the head chef of the Manor would hum some as he bit at the end of his cigarette glowed under his breath.

“Oh I see, you’re just wanting to be alone so’s you can make eyes at Sebastian.” he teased.

“WHAAAAAAAA!? I DO NOT! THAT’S A BLOODY LIE, THAT IS!” Mey-Rin squeaked

“Oh, honestly, I know we’ve talked about running inside before, Mey-Rin. Now, I’ll have to ask the lot of you to quiet yourselves. We mustn’t wake our visitor lest he disturbs our Young Lord, understood?” sighed Sebastian quietly as he approached, looking down to the floor.

“And do put that out, Mr. Baldroy. Until further instruction, I must ask you to limit your smoking inside the manor. A good deal of delicate research has been requested of the Master, research that could easily become contaminated.” Sebastian continued.

“Research? Is the lil’ guy sick? Poor little baby! I know, maybe we could get him some fresh air in the Green House!” Finnian spoke, outstretching an arm to the basket.

The quickness of Finnian would take Sebastian by surprise for a moment, frozen at the forwardness of the thoughtful, if not naïve, gardener. As always, his heart was overflowing with his juvenile compassion, inspiring him to his often impulsive actions. It was almost surprising how quickly he disregarded what he’d just been told. With a speed like lighting, and a feline’s grace, the gloved form of Sebastian’s hand intercepted Finny’s hand before raising a single over his lips; signaling for his silence.

“While that is indeed kind of you to offer, Finnian, the Young Master’s orders were clear. He wishes not to be disturbed, and while your consideration for our younger guest is a splendid testament of your character, for now our only concern should be to avoid any unnecessary disturbances to either of them. Wouldn’t you agree?” Sebastian quickly recovered.

“Aw, I suppose so, Mister Sebastian.” nodded Finnian quietly.  
“In any case, once your duties are done for the night, I recommend you get some rest. Just in case we should put in a rough night tonight, Mey-Rin and I will be counting on you to tend to the child in our stead.” Sebastian continued.

“Right!” nodded Finny and Baldroy.

“Now that that’s settled, let’s get going, Mey-Rin.” said Sebastian as he quietly and steadily made his way to the new nursery.

Diligently, Mey-Rin sprang back to her feet and quickly followed after Sebastian, before catching herself and trying to ease her pace down into something brisk but proper like Sebastian’s. It just wouldn’t do to have her stumbling so clumsily around their new guest! It would never do to be so careless with a guest to the Phantomhive estate, after all! Naturally, however, Sebastian took the lead, and without much fuss, eased the child into the crib that had been arranged.

Almost immediately, the little red furred figure began to squirm and kick as Sebastian moved him. With a gentle handling of his weight, with one glove under the lump of his body and another under his head, the tall shadowy figure of the Butler would ease the child down as Mey-Rin pulled back the covers. Her eyes would linger in surprise as she caught a look at the snouted face as it began to scrunch and huff.

“Now, now. None of that.” he spoke softly, moving the hand behind its head to the top of its head and gently patting.

“My glasses must be smudged something awful! It looks like he’s got a proper snout, like a right proper little red mouse!” gasped Mey-Rin.

“Naturally our Master wouldn’t allow just any infant to impose upon his hospitality, not without considerable intrigue, of course.” quickly replied the Butler, wasting no time to quell her surprise.

“I suppose that ­*does* sound around right. But….er….how exactly….” Mey-Rin continued.

“Hush now. It wouldn’t do to explain this while the little one is trying to sleep.” Sebastian spoke, half hushing the child as well as Mey-Rin.

With a delicate and careful touch, as he had in the train, Sebastian hushed the infant and gently attempted to reassure the child with his touch. At such a late hour, he was indeed fortunate that his efforts saw success at easing the child back to sleep, as he admittedly knew very little about human infants. Its befuddled and irritable mumbles and grumbling gave way once more to a soft and steady breathing as the strange abomination fell back into its simple dreams.

“If only all children were so easy to quiet.” Sebastian mused with a coy smirk, under his breath.

As Mey-Rin watched him from behind, unseen by the Phantomhive Maid, Sebastian’s teasing smirk was replaced with a much more scrutinous look as, once more his critical eye fell on the details of the baby’s unfamiliar form. It was clear that this was outside the realm of human abnormality, and his keen senses could not shake the unmistakable sour of unearthly powers at play. For as much as it bothered Ciel, that annoyance would be multiplied a thousand fold for Sebastian as he was left, momentarily stumped by their odd houseguest.

His brow perked some before turning back to the quiet maid who remained silent in the doorframe, before looking back to her and adopting a soft and dismissive expression. Raising his free hand, Sebastian would wave her off, standing up himself before straightening his uniform. Her expression had been consistently one of intrigue but unease as she regarded the already distorted shape through her glasses.

“Oh, it was nothing. Nevermind me. I do believe that I have things under control here for the evening. If you’d like to turn in for the night as well, I should be able to see to our little visitor.” smiled Sebastian pleasantly.

“A-are you sure?” asked Mey-Rin.

“Oh yes, he seems little trouble at all.” chuckled Sebastian softly.

His chortle, however was cut off almost instantly as the renewed babbled fussing caught his ear. Looking quickly back to the child, Sebastian’s hand moved from its head to its stomach, petting softly and seemingly quieting the infant. A small breath of relief escaped Sebastian, collecting himself as he prepared to dismiss Mey-Rin, before the fussing began once again. Before he could even turn his head in her direction, the stubby and aimless legs of the little figure kicked aggressively against its blanketed bundle, all as the owner of those fatty and clumsy legs squirmed and began its prelude to a screaming cry.

Both stunned at the child’s neediness, as well as the unfamiliar difficulty Sebastian was having with the child, Mey-Rin and Sebastian both jumped as they tried to hedge off the ensuing noise. At once, Sebastian renewed his hushes and shushing of the little blanketed figure, which now seemed to do little more than frustrate the little fellow all the more. With his Master’s orders still very clear in his mind, Sebastian carefully scooped the child up against his chest and shoulder, patting and stroking its back.

“Hush now. We’ll have none of that. There, that’s one crisis averted.” Sebastian sighed with some relief as its tail began puddering back and forth behind the blanket.

“That’s a sodding tail, that is! D’oh Sebastian, what on Earth is tha’ lil thing? It’s a little monster stuffed animal, that’s what it is.” shivered Mey-Rin as she jumped.

“Now there would be an interesting product line for the Phantomhives, I’m sure that’s been a long untapped market. However, as unique as haunted plushes might be, I can assure you that the child is nothing of the sort.” Sebastian said.

Pausing for only a moment, Sebastian sighed with some relief as the silence from the child remained. Allowing himself to relax only slightly, he resolved to offer the Maid some form of explanation for while they were working together on this. Of course, no Phantomhive servant would ever question their duties, for that was not the way of this household. Each member of the servile staff possessed a fearsome loyalty to the Young Lord which had offered them shelter and home, one which afforded him their undying vows to protect the manor and all inside of it from the many enemies he would make as the Queen’s Guard Dog. However, to varying degrees, Finnian, Baldroy, Snake, Mey-Rin, and Mr. Tanaka, were unaware of the more supernatural elements that came with the Young Master’s work.

In the short time ago that he and the Master had taken their trip across the Atlantic, to the knowledge of the others, it had been a freak accident at sea. The Bizarre Dolls which had doomed the ship had remained private, even from the lips of Snake. In truth, it was not within the scope of their duties, nor was it a requirement or an expectation on their behalf to know the exact business of their Master. Mey-Rin was a very practical young woman, composed, intelligent, and not averse to horror in general, and whether she was told or not, she would not allow the surprise to impede her duties. However, Sebastian was not so brash as to assume it his place to leak information that Ceil might otherwise object to as confidential. He was, after all, simply one Devil of a Butler.

“It’s radically unusual appearance is the point of the Young Master’s curiosity. Naturally, with children as the primary customer base for the Funtom Toy Company, it does the Master well to take matters such as these, with the utmost seriousness, especially where there exists the possibility of slander to his reputation.” Sebastian elaborated.

“Wha-? You mean someone’s trying to say that the Master’s company did this to the little moppet?” asked Mey-Rin.

“I’m not saying anything of the sort, only that there’s a possibility. It would be negligent for him not to preemptively ready himself in the event another company would be aware, or in any part responsible for this however.” Sebastian quickly interjected.

Before he could elaborate further, a small squeak and splattering sound faintly punctuated their conversation. As a warm dampness, which quickly turned to a cold wet sensation, which ran down the back of his suit almost instantly caught the Butler’s attention. His entire body was rigid behind his otherwise calmly formulated face, tutting behind an equally measured tone despite the instantaneous annoyance that filled him.

“Oh dear, it seems this moppet, as you call it, has sullied my suit. Mey-Rin would you-” began Sebastian.

“I’ll go get you a new suit and a cleaning rag right quick, I will!! Don’t you worry, Mister Sebastian!!” Mey-Rin nodded as almost immediately she began running out of the room.

“Thank you.” Sebastian nodded before the calm smile on his face faded.

His hands eased the child back from his now ruined coat, who in turn simply turned his large turquoise eyes upwards to Sebastian’s scarlet glare. Unphased by the chaos his belly had cast upon the Butler, the baby was content to stare with a vacant expression as Sebastian sighed quietly. While utterly revolted by what had happened, Sebastian was still very much at the mercy of the little goblin should it choose to raise its voice in tantrum. Quietly, Sebastian set the child down upon his knee and surrendered to waiting until Mey-Rin had returned.

“How dreadfully cunning: waiting until your victim had let their guard down before launching your attack. Building up the trust of those around you, lulling them into a false sense of security before enacting your betrayal, though I suppose that was rather foolish of me to expect anything less from children or otherwise. How very human of you, you are assuredly a predator after all.” he mused quietly.

Of course, no response came from the infant as they looked up towards the strange figure. A hand rose up to their mouth, wriggling free of the blanket, and allowing them to absentmindedly suck on their hand while looking around. In truth, the entire room and everything from their arrival was one strange new experience after another. It was all very unsettling and confusing to one as little as the baby. But its immediate interest would remain on the slim dark figure before it, looking deeply into the red eyes that looked back into his.

“Which makes you all the more vexing.” Sebastian continued before the child responded simply with a “G’buh” noise.

“And you won’t be able to shed any light on that at all, will you? By the time you could talk, if you can, you’ll have long since forgotten anyone involved with your creation.” came another defeated sigh.

The continued talking from the stranger, in that moment, seemed to offer some assurance to the baby, as in response, a slew of babbling nonsense inarticulately dribbled between the invading fingers of the child’s face. While Sebastian’s gloved hand would reach up to try to dissuade the child’s consumption of their own hand, the small furred child would immediately return their hand to their mouth, keeping it there until Mey-Rin returned. The stumbling clatter of her steps demanded the baby’s attention at the door, before encouraging another round of blubbering which Sebastian met with the same patting from before.

“I got them as quick as I could, Sebastian! We’ll get you out of that ruined suit in….” she began as Sebastian rose from his seat.

“Thank you. I’ll need you to hold this for a moment while I get changed.” nodded Sebastian.

Out of reflex, Mey-Rin took the little creature as Sebastian took the rag and clothes from her, before looking down at the little red figure. His eyes would stare with the same blank curiosity as before, locking eyes with her as Sebastian removed his jacket. Before he began wiping down the back of his coat, and the chair, his attention turned to his shirt with some annoyance.

“Bother. It seems the little one is nothing if not thorough.” began Sebastian, unfastening the buttons of his shirt and turning Mey-Rin nearly the same color of the infant’s fur.

“Would you mind waiting outside of the door for a moment?” he asked, snapping her back to reality.

“AH! R-RIGHT!” nodded Mey-Rin before practically launching herself out of the room.

Her heart pounded in her chest as her knees nearly collapsed from underneath her as the sight of his soft pale complexion, and the thin physique of the Butler she’d seen as his shirt had fellow open. It took her a considerable effort to compose herself and turn her attention back to the bundle in her hands, but as her attention turned, her eyes trained in as best as they could on the blurry shape in her arms. Its ears were far too large and floppy to be anything but an animal’s, and while it babbled like a real infant, everything about it seemed so very out of place.

“There, that’s one hurdle dealt with.” spoke Sebastian as he opened the doors to the room, in time to catch the sound of the baby’s stomach rumbling.

“Just in time for another….”