

19. Nightclub

There was an intensely comfortable atmosphere lingering through the club, and Tabris was happily lounging in a quiet corner of sofas and glowing lights, away from most of the crowd. The lion had spent a good portion of the night letting his energy ebb into the room through every drink and dance he indulged in, only recently having found the moment to quite literally kick his feet up. That's when a shadow fell over his seat, and looking up, Tabris saw the visage of a tall, dark scaled dragon standing above him.

"This seat taken?" the dragon asked plainly.

Tabris glanced to the sofa facing his own, and then back to the dragon. He didn't want to cause an inconvenience, and he could hardly stop the stranger from sitting where he pleased; besides, the sooner he allowed the dragon to sit, the sooner he could get back to basking in the steadily pulsing lights of the club.

"No, go right ahead," the lion said apathetically.

The dragon gave a polite nod before taking a seat, not seeming to mind that Tabris' paws were propped up mere feet away from him. "Thank you. I'm Kass."

"Tabris." The feline raised an eyebrow as it appeared as though his new seatmate was actively admiring his paws.

“Don’t mind me,” Kass said with a low, soothing voice. “I won’t stop you from relaxing. In fact, just breathe, and forget I’m even here.”

Tabris still felt slightly off-put by the presence of a stranger, but had to admit somewhat begrudgingly that the dragon’s voice was pleasant to listen to, like the echo of a snoring giant that made him want to close his eyes and rest. The feline’s eyes lingered on Kass, softening slightly from their previously cold glare, and silently hoping that he would continue talking; a hope that apparently didn’t go unnoticed.

“Would you like me to continue?” Kass asked almost smugly.

“Tabris took a deep breath, as if absorbing the dragon’s voice. “Do what you like.”

“Well then,” Kass sat forward, his interest in the lion’s feet returning. “I know a very good trick to help you unwind. Just listen, and let me do all of the work.”

Without asking permission, the dragon grabbed one of Tabris’ shoes and deftly slipped them off, exposing his bare, yellow furred paw underneath. For some reason, the lion didn’t seem to mind as this stranger stripped away his footwear; perhaps it was the alluring atmosphere of the club that had subdued him, or the dragon’s calming, forward presence. Either way, he felt comfortably sedated and happy to let this sensation play out.

“You’re feeling good right now, I can tell,” Kass rumbled. “So why stop yourself from feeling better? Why let any doubts or thoughts get in the way of that.”

A heavy dragon claw brushed up the underside of Tabris' paw, tickling it slightly as it worked its way up towards his toes. The feline's sole flexed instinctively at the touch before the muscles relaxed, softening against the strong claw as if all of the tension in it had suddenly melted away. Every other sensation steadily melted for Tabris and began to blend together; the heavy bass music echoed for him, unfocused and distant as if it were being played deep within a cave somewhere.

Suddenly the feline felt a pinch on his pinkie toe, and his gaze returned to Kass as he heard the dragon begin to count, "Ten..."

The dragon's claw drifted calmly to the next toe, grasping and softly massaging it. "Nine..."

Tabris felt his focus sharpen onto Kass and nothing else. "Eight..." the dragon rumbled, pinching the next digit.

"Seven..." the feline's eyes narrowed into tunnel vision, only seeing the stranger's motions now.

"Six..." This time, Kass stopped to reach down with his other hand and remove the lion's second shoe. Tabris put up no resistance, if anything he wanted to eagerly accept the gesture, but found himself too heavy and lethargic to move.

Once his footwear was discarded, the dragon continued "Five..." Kass' deep voice rumbled through Tabris' mind like a small earthquake, shaking his thoughts loose with each number he counted down.

“Four...”

“Three...”

“Two...”

“One...” Kass ended with a tight pinch on the feline’s pinkie toe, before looking him straight in the eyes and whispering. “You’re gone.”

And he was. Tabris was floating in a soup of lost thoughts and muddled memories; it was even difficult for him to recall exactly how long Kass had been sitting there, or when his shoes had been removed. Not that he minded however; he was too busy admiring the enthralling dance of the club lights and the ephemeral echo of music that paraded across his mind. While the nightclub was foreign to Tab, something about knowing it was a place for new experiences encouraged him fall further for Kass, because he was enjoying himself; it was no time for reservations.

That idle train of thought was interrupted however when the tip of Kass’ claw trailed up the feline’s very relaxed sole once again, much more deliberately this time. A flash of sensitivity overwhelmed Tabris under the tickling touch, and he couldn’t help but let out a vacant giggle in response. He was still too lethargic to pull his foot away, and the dragon’s grasp on him wasn’t one that Tab had the willpower to fight.

The touch restarted, with Kass’ claw once again drawing a lazy line up the underside of the lion’s foot, parting his yellow fur with a heavy caress and coaxing another dim burst of laughter. With every titter, Tabris felt his intellect dwindling further and further; the act of

giggling was infectious and he had long since chosen to forgo any semblance of inhibitions in this nightclub. What would be the point after all? After a few moments, Kass pulled his claw away and sat back to admire his prize. Yet strangely, Tab still felt the phantom touch of that heavy, draconic digit tickling his foot mercilessly.

“Like I said, why stop yourself from feeling good?” the dragon chuckled.

The feline could only titter stupidly at the question, his mind was too far gone to process what it meant and his body was lost too deeply in a fit of giggles to even attempt an answer. The night was lost and so was Tab; all he could do now was enjoy it with an attitude as giddy as the smile he wore.