
[119] [Release][🍊🍊]

“Come on, faster!” Urtha barked, her voice cracking like a whip, yet her hand gently lay upon Rick’s back, giving him the softest push. “You can go harder!” she urged him, her own feet smacking against the ground with all the severity and potency of a jackhammer.

He grunted, only barely giving a slight nod of his head, his body drenched in sweat, legs screaming out at him as muscles coiled and pressed. He wasn’t jogging; he was sprinting, running with every ounce of lung-burning air he had in a mad dash through uneven terrain.

Next to him, Urtha was having a leisurely jog, using her left arm to carry a barrel filled with rocks. Despite the ease of the activity, her face was flushed, the Orc licking her lips, her little pokes and nudges lingering against his skin as if his skin were magnetic. Sinco was still within sight, barely on the horizon, and Monica prowled around, as a favor to Urtha more than out of her own volition.

“Just a little more,” Urtha grunted, giving his ass a squeeze.

Rick was too out of air to properly convey anything other than a wheeze.

Their run proceeded further and further away from the city, following the coastline. Rick didn’t get much chance to rest, only to slow down and catch his breath before he was pushed to a sprint again. Urtha barked orders, telling him how to breathe properly, how to move, how to feel the earth under his feet, and how to make every movement count.

This was not their first run; this was not her first lesson.

And he could feel Urtha’s anticipation growing the closer they got to their destination.

Eventually, they reached a small twist in the shoreline, a natural, tiny bay with rocks at the opposite side. Rick could only collapse, his lungs aching and burning as Urtha did not waste a single second to reach down and strip his soaked shirt off.

There were no words. He was too out of breath to say anything, and she was too worked up to speak. The maiden’s meaty fingers trembled with desire as she gingerly touched his skin, tracing the scars on his torso. Leaning closer, she kissed him, then kissed his cheeks, his chin, his neck, his shoulders, working her way down to his chest and stomach, but not going lower.

No, lower was not a place Urtha was allowed to go to just yet. For all the carefulness in her movements, the Orc had bruised Rick's rib the last time they'd done this. It was a strange feeling, how intensely and deeply she wanted this, but how terrified she was of her own strength.

A fear Monica did not share.

The feline prowled closer, taking command of Rick's lower half and amusedly providing that which Urtha wished for.

Rick was vaguely aware this had some sort of power and social dynamics involved, a mix of Monica's domineering position as Chieftess alongside her own instincts. Both giants were working in tandem, figuring out the nuances of this relationship, and the Sabertooth was all too eager and happy to take the lead.

Too tired to move, too winded to speak, Rick was more than happy to oblige.

By the time they went back to the city, the only one that could walk properly would be Monica, with the feline dragging him to her nest for her own fun.

After a nap, of course.

Rick was in darkness, blind, with no sounds around him. There was only a deep warmth that made any clothes uncomfortable to wear; even naked, the heat made his skin sticky. Monica hugged him from behind, just as sweaty as he. Her scent permeated everything around him like a blanket, a tangy spice that made Rick's brain think of wild nights spent within the deepest jungle.

His awakening stirred Monica to do the same.

Quietly, wordlessly, she rubbed his body with a cloth, drying his sweat, but only slightly. There was an almost ritual-like nature to her actions, a sense of importance as she moved to pin him down and straddle him, purring and growling like a chainsaw as she greedily sought every ounce of his attention.

It was a wild dance where his partner was made both of rubber and steel. Monica contorted to anything and everything she wanted, her body flexible beyond belief. Yet, at

the same time, she had the sort of strength that allowed her to hold him midair as if he were a rag doll, maneuvering them to the next position to try out.

The hours would stretch out, sleep and being awake mingling together, the heaviness and scent in Monica's den growing thicker each time until Rick could pick up his own scent mixed in with the Sabertooth's. A singular emotion poured out through the bond, a view of a Monica heavy with child, raw, primal, and growing in intensity.

When night came, Monica took him to the house and bridal-carried him to drop him into Urtha's arms before leaving.

Dia was waiting there to give him a quick checkup and to use some spell to make his sore muscles and exhausted body freshen right back up. Then the Orc dragged him to the basement to the main bedroom, her green skin glistening with sweat from a whole day pushing herself to the limit for the sake of exhausting her absurd stamina.

This time it was his turn to lavish all the attention upon her rock-hard muscular form as her own fingers brought her to completion. Only when her whole body began to go limp like a giant pile of jello could Rick move into the rock-crushing weapons that were her thighs.

The "training" would continue long into the night.

"My Lord! Stop!" Eva shrieked as Rick's hands tore at her flimsy excuse for a dress, exposing pale skin and goosebumps. "You beast!" Her fangs flashed as she couldn't help but smile through the blush. "I beg of you!" She mocked, shoving him off, intentionally holding back the bone-breaking strength and 'succumbing.'

"No." He growled, leaning closer and biting her shoulder. "You're mine."

The Vampire shuddered, licking her lips and gasping out. "Yours~" She cooed, pulling his head closer as her own sharp nails tore at her clothes. "Your slut." She added, right before shrieking as he shoved her onto the bed.

Rick pounced.

"My Lord!" She screamed at the top of her lungs, fingers digging into the back of his head as he bit her throat, pulling him closer, breathlessly moaning. Her naked desire

exploded outwards through the bond like a typhoon. “Yes, eat me, bite me, claim me, I’m prey!” She shrieked, her body convulsing in minor orgasms as she fought both to pull him closer and to restrain herself, the fantasy in her mind expanding with every word.

Rick pinned her to the bed, hand on her throat, moving his way down her nubile, eager body, her tightness impossible to compare, her body collapsing and surrendering to his touch. All it took was a thought, a notion pushed through the bond, and she’d blush and squirm.

“Mine,” he’d whisper, giving Eva a single digit to prick and drink from, and the maiden would squeal, the orgasm immediate and intense.

Entirely overwhelmed, the Vampire would collapse into a boneless heap, jolting and shuddering and moaning from the feeling of his touch throughout her over-sensitive body. “Yours.” She’d whisper, her ruby eyes half-lidded and foggy with desire, biting her lip as he kept causing her pale skin to be riddled with goosebumps.

Over and over the scenario played out, a hungry and almost predatory creature being brought low. Eva got off on the degradation and submission, especially if it was tied to her Vampiric nature. Rick figured it was some sort of equivalent to S&M, though rather than a human’s instincts and reactions to pain, Eva was toying with her own Vampire-based impulses.

Perhaps a coping mechanism, perhaps a fetish, at this point he was sure neither of them could tell the difference. All that mattered to Eva was that the dichotomy of being manhandled by him ended up working her up into a frenzy.

Though the real star of the show would be when he focused on the bond to deny her climax. It was then when she truly sang, loud enough that, were it not for the thick stone walls of the fortress, the whole city would have found out.

“I love you.” Three simple words, thick with meaning, as Dia wrapped her hands around his neck, rising to her tiptoes to meet him in a hot kiss. Naked as the day she was born, she tugged him by the collar of his shirt, leading him into the room at the basement of the Medicen. This was the first time Rick had stepped into this part of Dia’s “domain;” the healer’s building had been in a constant state of construction. Within the dead of night, there was a touch of ‘illicit’ in the Rapha’s state of nudity as she kept eyeing him while

leading the way. The moment they stepped into the room, she hastily closed the door behind him, a heavy metal bar locking the wood securely in place. The room was an empty cell save for a pile of hay and a cloth. A dim blue magelight cast the room into a sterile glow.

“Now.” Dia produced a leash and a collar, clipping the heavy leather around her throat right as she put the leash in his hand. “Master.” The moment she spoke the word, her face took a shade darker than her pink hair as she slowly descended to her knees. “Tonight is just for you.” Reaching out to his pants, her fingers began to unmake the belt and the buttons. “All for you.”

“And what would that mean?” he asked, his breath hitching at the feeling of her breath against his abdomen.

“Anything,” she declared. “Everything.” Her fingers hovered over his thighs, breath heavy as she teased him with gentle touches. “Tell me what you want, I’ll do it. Please use me,” she bit her lip. “Master.” This time she reached out through the bond, not to shove her lust at him, but to slowly draw his own feelings. Opening her mouth, she leaned forward and began to read him as his fingers dug into her hair.

“Give me everything,” she goaded him, cooing, pulling more and more, reading his emotions, adjusting her actions. Her touch was silk, her every movement devotion and warmth. The slightest hint of discomfort pushed her to change her approach, anything that sparked a trickle of pleasure she doubled down on. And when he grew too exhausted to continue, a prickle of her power would have him good as new.

Though there was a tiny edge of desperation to her actions, one Rick recognized as her want to ascend, it wasn’t her priority. It was as if her sole purpose that night was to become his personal sexual outlet, drawing ever-growing confidence and joy at learning what made him squirm, made him moan. He gave her his all anyway, if not just for his own pleasure, but for her own.

Dia knelt, cooed, begged; she called him master over and over, a mantra that stoked her passion. The maiden bent against the wall, raised her rear, tied herself up, and even as her own body grew sore and exhausted, she patched him back up and begged for more.

It proved to be a true marathon, one where he was running against a ravenous beast hell-bent on milking him dry, denying him the right to exhaustion, his body healed and regaining a “second wind” faster than he could catch his breath. All so that it may betray him for another round.

It was a beautiful morning. Rick contemplated the ash-gray, dim sunrise through the cloudy sky, practically ignoring the chill of the approaching winter. His lips twisted into a slight smile as he approached his chemical facility, feeling, for all intents and purposes, that he should've been limping his way ahead.

Three weeks.

Dia had promised a few days, but it had been three weeks.

Three weeks of having the four maidens cycling him through them like an emotional comfort teddy bear. Each of the four maidens had pent up emotions about everything that had happened: the fear, concern, and anxiety of nearly losing him had left a mark, and each of them had chosen to tackle that the best way they knew how—through physical intimacy.

Rick wasn't going to complain. There was a deep reassurance over the feelings of concern and desire mingling together. He'd pushed himself as hard as he could to reassure them, to bring them the comfort and certainty that he was back, he was safe. None of them spoke up nor wanted to speak up about what had happened or their fears, perhaps because it had been partly due to the bond, or maybe it was just a way to avoid jinxing it.

He was at least grateful they allowed him some time to address work-related things in between giving each of them his full attention.

Now, Rick's mind felt like he hadn't slept in a month. His brain insisted his body should be battered, broken, and bruised, even when he'd been healed so many times he'd lost count. The question of how he'd not gotten elemental poisoning was forgotten, entirely thrown aside under some half-cobbled-together thought that Dia had figured something out.

Whatever the case was, today was a beautiful day.

Because Rick reached his sanctuary.

With a skip in his step and a flutter in his chest at the mild scent of chemicals, he greeted the workers, taking a moment to twinge at their bonds to remind himself of their names. This earned him happy looks and enthusiastic greetings in turn, each of the maidens working for him more than happy to give a brief report of what had been going on in his absence.

There was no rush for him.

Today was a wonderfully calm day.

The projects he'd left cooking had mostly borne fruit. A few had hit snags he hadn't anticipated, but the others had unfolded far more easily than he'd thought. Problems here and there, solutions here and there, safety meetings over every facet and step, and new machines had been put on the priority commission list.

All things he'd look more deeply into once he started checking the reports from the rest of the city with the thoroughness they deserved. All things he'd been looking forward to ever since he'd set foot on the campaign to hunt down the Pinielf.

So it was with a happy tune that he stepped into his office, a weight rising off of his shoulders.

Only to immediately collapse into Kiara's arms.

"Amateur," she snorted as the world went black.

After what felt like both too long and too short a time, Rick opened his eyes slowly, staring at his paper-filled desk. He was on the couch, his head lying on a very soft lap. Fingers traced patterns in his hair.

"I knocked you out before you actually collapsed," she poked his cheek with her finger. "For being a healer, that Rapha of yours doesn't seem to know how to spot emotional exhaustion. Not that she should have, you went on a fucking-spree without knowing your limits."

"She's called Dia."

"She'll be dead in a century."

"You call me by name though," he countered.

Kiara didn't answer, letting out a sigh. "We were supposed to meet two weeks ago. I didn't push things because those four looked like one smart quip away from tearing me to shreds."

“You wouldn’t be wrong; they had a lot pent up,” he didn’t bother to move, closing his eyes. “What can I help you with? Dia didn’t tell me about a meeting.”

“Our bond,” Kiara traced a sharp nail against his cheek, not enough to draw blood, but enough to make him wince. “We’re supposed to make it stronger.”

“Neat.”

With a sigh, he shifted just enough to find some comfortable position and just stayed there, fully expecting her to interrupt the moment after a few minutes. But it didn’t happen; Kiara just remained in place, moving her fingers through his hair, stroking his scalp gently, minutes turning into an hour.

Rick didn’t fall asleep, but his sense of time wasn’t all there. Now that Kiara had pointed out his emotional exhaustion, he’d been left unwilling to do much more than just rest his eyes and his head and his thoughts.

By the time he felt like stirring again, he sat up, meeting the Succubus’ sharp golden gaze. “You don’t rest, huh?”

Kiara rolled her eyes. “I don’t need much sleep, if that’s what you’re asking.”

“But you do need some sleep,” he emphasized, rubbing his face and patting his lap. “Why don’t I return the favor? I don’t think I’ve ever seen you sleep before.”

“That’d be because I avoid being asleep when people are awake,” she snapped, crossing her arms emphatically.

“Hey, I’m just making an offer here,” he placated. “Trust helps the bond grow stronger, and I think one of us has been more willing to show it.”

Kiara’s eyes narrowed, lips drawing thin. For a moment, her shoulders drew taut, fingers digging into her arms. “Fine,” she conceded, closing her eyes as she slumped down, putting her head on his lap.

Despite her proclamation and acceptance, she didn’t fall asleep. Not right away. Her golden eyes kept glaring at the opposite side of the room as she kept wriggling and changing position to look for comfort, eventually just releasing her human form and allowing her horns to grow. The shift in anatomy forced her to lay on her back, a position she also didn’t seem to appreciate, seeing how she was lying on her wings and tail. Lying on her front was also not possible, with her chest and arms apparently getting too much in the way, which left her on her side.

Which got a little tricky.

“You can’t complain,” she threatened as she laid her neck on his left thigh, while her horns rested on his right, threatening to poke through.

“I’m not complaining,” he replied, waiting for her to finally make the final tweaks and let out a sigh, relaxing.

Then, as if realizing some way to find further comfort, Kiara made her clothes vanish and took his left hand, placing it upon her naked breast. Rick blinked a little, about to speak up, but opted to follow her instructions and stayed quiet, figuring this was some sort of Succubus thing.

“Fine, I’ll do this properly,” she muttered in resignation, closing her eyes. “Just be warned there’s going to be an orgy outside.”

“Wait, what?”

“You want me to relax, right?” Kiara huffed, letting out a slow breath. “That means I stop holding back my aura.” On cue, the air around them felt heavier, Rick’s skin prickled ever so slightly to signal the power that was now saturating the air, a scent of lilac reaching his nostrils.

At exactly that point in time, someone right outside the door let out a low moan. A sound that was accompanied by others, the bonds he had with the workers opening up to flood him with a sudden and unexpected wave of arousal. His pants became far too tight for comfort.

The Succubus smirked, blue hair cascading down his knee. “Now stay still, it shouldn’t take more than an hour.” Her voice came out a husky whisper, amusement dripping with every word. “Maybe I’ll even get a post-nap snack.” She rubbed the back of her head against the hardness now pressing against it. “Shame you humans have so little energy to provide.”

He grit his teeth.

It was going to be a very long hour.

Rick buried his face in his palms, letting out a groan as the door closed with a click, the sound of a satisfied succubus sauntering her way out. He was vaguely aware that she'd

changed shape at some point and was discreet about things, after all, his "human wife" had "died" during the raid, but he had a hard time believing the orgy would go unnoticed.

Using his fingers to comb back his hair, he began to turn his attention to his work. His absence had seen a pile-up, and though most, if not all, of the mechanical problems that had arisen had been tackled, the chemical ones had not.

So it was his job to figure out why some of the processes had failed, and figure out how they should've been done properly.

Despite how tedious it sounded, Rick found the remainder of the day practically flying by. He was ecstatic to finally chew on problems he had clear paths to solve, and ones that did not involve him being the squishy element on the playing field.

As night descended upon the city and the maidens changed shifts, a knock at his door drew his attention up from the almost completely finished workload.

"Come in."

It was Dia.

Rick's brows furrowed at the giddiness in her smile.

"Can it wait?"

"Unlike some others, I'd never interrupt your work, my Lord," she bowed, pretending like she wasn't playing on technicalities.

"Not letting me start work also counts." There was no heat to his words, but he did shoot her a pointed look.

Dia had the decency to blush. "I thought it important to come to you first before the news spread." There was a faint look of mixed concern and sympathy. "Monica's going into heat soon; she's been showing all the signs these past few weeks."

"And that's... concerning." He frowned.

"Allow me to rephrase." Dia cleared her throat. "There is a four-hundred pound mass of muscle and claws with the hunting skills of an apex predator. That maiden will soon have her hormone levels reach points that are borderline dangerous to her own health. It's the equivalent of casting a starvation spell on a feral, except the only thing she wants is you, and broken bones won't stop her."

"Snu-snu," Rick groaned.

"What?"

"Death through sex with an overwhelmingly strong woman."

"I... remember Miss Katherine using that term before, but I had not known the meaning." Dia blinked for a moment, then shook her head. "Rick, this is serious."

"I know." He groaned louder.

"Dead serious." She scowled. "Do you know why the Tigress tribes constantly raid the kingdom looking for humans?"

"Slavery, trade with the vampires, and snu-snu?"

"RICK!" She called out, now glaring. "Most of the humans taken in by the Tigress tribes do not survive for more than a couple of years. Bond or not, many kill their humans once they lose all ability to reason."

Rick had a healthy amount of skepticism about the claim, mostly because he'd seen firsthand just how twisted impressions were regarding Wildlings. But at the same time, he wasn't about to deny that even if Dia was just half-correct, the situation could become unexpectedly dangerous.

Still, she had a point.

Monica, for all her tenderness, could still break him in half with a sneeze. If, God forbid, she became unable to regulate her own strength, then she'd be more dangerous to be around than Urtha.

"I get why this is concerning; it's just... absurd to think about." Taking a moment as he leaned back in his chair, Rick's gaze drifted toward the couch. "You mentioned you were planning something with Eva, regarding Kiara, right?"

"I did." Dia nodded, confusion clear.

"Do you think that having her help with this might prove useful?" Rick made a vague motion with his hand. "You know, like having her potentially tire out from needing to spend days on end keeping Monica manageable?"

The nurse didn't need to say anything, but the glint in her eyes spoke volumes.

"I'll see if I can think of something. I'll check with the others in case they know more about what to expect." She promised, giving a quick bow. "My Lord."

As soon as the door closed, a stray thought wormed its way into his mind.

This “heat” business had been building up over the past few weeks. And during that time, the four maidens he’d been bonded to had been particularly very affectionate.

His bond to Monica was a strong one, as was the case with the other three.

As much as he wanted to dismiss the concern, he distinctly remembered the attack on Sinco, how the deaths of the maidens and their emotions had been so overwhelming he’d needed to get knocked out. Now, imagining an out-of-control Monica, looking at the prospect that might lead to her emotions being more than he could handle, a looming threat hung over his head.

One that wondered, ever briefly, what would happen if he did get overwhelmed and ended up blasting out the emotion to everyone. He was bonded to several hundred maidens, most of whom made the beating heart of the militia as well as the industrial sector.

The last thing anyone needed would be having some sort of spontaneous mass hysteria breaking out.

“Maybe I should arrange a meeting with our newest neighbor,” he muttered, remembering they’d yet to send an envoy. The distance would also aid in mitigating anything that might come through the bond. “And she might know more about these things too... something to consider.”

Rick had no desire to just up and leave Sinco and take the week-long trek to reach the Grove... best to set up a neutral ground closer to home.