

More or Less Than Human (Drinking Up My Soul)

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Summary

There's a human slave on Relar III: blue-eyed, handsome, with a genuine love for sex, for affection, that Arbat can't stop thinking about.

She'd like to have him as a pet.

Sequel to *Noli Me Tangere // Touch Me Not*.

Notes

“I was dancing with an immortal august woman, who had black lilies in her hair, and her dreamy gesture seemed laden with a wisdom more profound than the darkness that is between star and star, and with a love like the love that breathed upon the waters; and as we danced on and on, the incense drifted over us and round us, covering us away as in the heart of the world, and ages seemed to pass, and tempests to awake and perish in the folds of our robes and in her heavy hair.

Suddenly I remembered that her eyelids had never quivered, and that her lilies had not dropped a black petal, or shaken from their places, and understood with a great horror that I danced with one who was *more or less than human, and who was drinking up my soul* as an ox drinks up a wayside pool; and I fell, and darkness passed over me.”

— W.B. Yeats, *Rosa Alchemica*

It was a blue planet: tundra and ice and frozen rain. When Commander Arbat thought of pleasure worlds, she never imagined a husk like Relar III, where the snow cracked underfoot. Temperate climates like Risa and Orion, with the sweet perfume of fresh fruit caressing your tongue on every breath, where the water was warm and sparkling underneath the burning sun -- that was the stereotype. But in the heat, one's appetite for sex diminished. In the cold...

In the cold, that was where the Ferengi sold their slaves.

Arbat clasped wet gloved hands over her ears, the pointed tips aching all the way down to the root. She hustled through a blast of icy rain, each droplet piercing her skin in a needle-sharp burst of pain, and ducked through the nearest tent. Even in the haze of sleet she could see the tent was a soft velvet blue material, the flaps embroidered with gold thread, the color scheme of Fremat's marketplace. A whore's tent.

A strained breath blew out through Arbat's lips when she stepped inside, half a sigh and half a shiver. She stripped the gloves from her fingers with shaking hands. The cloth was soaked through, her knuckles chapped and green. She dry-washed her face, eyes squeezed shut, trying to rub some life into her flushed cheeks, her frozen nose.

“Let me,” said a voice nearby -- masculine, light, friendly. Broad, warm hands closed over hers, his bare skin setting Arbat's face aflame. He was large enough to nearly dwarf her; his thumb, thick and callused, swept over her bottom lip.

“You're warmer than I thought you'd be,” he laughed. “I'm not sure how much use I'll be to you.”

“Human,” Arbat guessed, her eyes still closed. She wiggled her hands out from under his and pressed his warm palms straight to her cheeks with a contented sigh.

“Human,” he confirmed.

“After that storm, even a Human’s pitiful heat is welcome,” Arbat said. She turned his left hand over and checked his wrist before she ever checked his face. There was a decorative Ferengi hammer tattooed there -- a symbol of love, which in Ferengi culture also made it a symbol of possession, of wealth. He *was* a slave, as she suspected. Then he wouldn’t mind if she rucked her shirt up and slid his hand against her stomach, where her skin was cool.

He smiled at her boldness. His blue eyes crinkled. Striking, Arbat realized. His best feature.

“What’s your name, slave?” she asked.

“Whatever you like,” he murmured. He slid his palm over to her hip and tugged her closer. “So long as you have the gold.”

She snorted in contempt. With his hand blazing heat against her waist, she felt a little less cold -- warm enough to skim her hands up his chest, fingering the thick robes he wore to keep out the chill. His cock strained against his robes; a purple bruise marked his neck, where he’d taken far too many hyposprays. Probably the whore’s drug, dryhaxalyn, to keep him ready. He’d known she was coming.

“I’ve heard of you,” Arbat said.

“Oh?” He looked flattered.

“The whore with blue eyes. Let me...” She unfastened his robes and slid them down his shoulders. Whip scars curved around his biceps, each one thick and shiny, almost silver. “Yes. It’s you. But I’d heard you were hairy.” She scratched lightly at his chest, as hairless as a boy’s. “Thick, dark curls, they said. But I suppose it’s not fashionable here. They shaved you?”

That charming smile faded a little. He rubbed his thumb in a circle against her hip, pulled her closer. The hard length of his cock pressed against her thigh, his robes between them, softening the iron core of his arousal, soaking up some of the heat.

“You’re cold,” he said softly, his breath cool against her lips.

“Yes.”

He leaned closer, almost a kiss, his hair falling boyishly over his forehead and tickling her cheek.

“Let me warm you up,” he said.

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