

Lend a Friend, Lose Double

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The return of his awareness brought only confusion. His senses groped, but there was simply not enough to orient him. He lacked light, sound, or any ability to move. With nothing to push against and no variations in pressure, he could not even tell which way was up or what position his body was in. He had risen from the murk of unconsciousness, only to break the surface in pitch black.

Breathing. He could hold his breath and feel the gentle burn in his chest. He could pant, and feel the resistance as the air squeezed through his nose with some difficulty. What was it called... sensory deprivation tank? Was he in one of those?

It would be meaningless to try and explain what time passed in this way, as he could not reliably count the breaths he took. Conscious thoughts blended with dreams in waking hallucinations of reason. His very sense of logic failed completely, in no small part due to the fact that his memories were as unreachable as his senses.

What did he know, in this bodiless prison of time and breath? He knew he was a man, for whatever that was worth. What was the other thing? His mind spun off into dissociated spirals again. But he thought sometimes in sensation, as with breathing

or flying, and other times in words. Language, that was a thing that existed. But what language?

He must have started over in this hopeless search hundreds of times. So when sensation returned, it was intoxicating. He felt vibrations, and a sudden thump. The unruly portions of his mind that had run riot in the void now suddenly snapped to keenest focus on this input. The subtle jolts were like a blinding spotlight into dark-adjusted eyes: he winced within himself at the intensity of the knowledge now that *down* was *beneath* him.

After the movements ceased, he had enough of his faculties to reflect on the probability that he was in some kind of crawling position. He was on hands and knees somehow, but suspended in a medium that kept the ground from being anything he needed to deal with. It did not make sense to him, but it was glorious to have *anything* new to think about.

His mind tumbled freely again, and when sensation returned, it was again in the form of touch. Hands... a *woman's* hands, yes that was the other sex... a woman running her fingers along his arms. The sensation again stunned him, and came with a growing fire in his belly that made him want to clench, to bear down on... what, exactly? Something felt wrong.

The hands vanished, but the tingling remained. It distracted him enough that he wasn't shocked by the reappearance of sound in his world. He could now hear the breaths he took, and slowly he began to hear the acoustics of a room. He was inside and not alone, or at least the sounds of movement in front of his head made it seem that way.

"Well now, let's see what they've done for *you!*"

The voice was indeed female. He felt her tug at his head, and then she pulled the mask from his face. Tubes snaked painfully out of his nostrils and throat, and a rubbery mouthpiece forced his jaw open before the whole contraption vanished from his ex-

perience. His eyes stayed shut tight, and even so the light from the room was excruciatingly bright.

“Well cut my throat. . .” the woman swore in astonishment.

He felt a wave of nausea pass as his mind grew accustomed to the sensation of air on his face and saliva on his tongue. He gritted his teeth, working himself slowly to the world outside his cocoon. But the woman had other plans. She had already moved around behind him, and was pulling a plug out of his anus.

His muscles were somehow deliberately relaxed back there, and he let it go with a gentle wet pop. Then he felt the most peculiar sensation: some sort of sheath must be sliding off his cock, rubbing against his balls, but missing the tip? It made no sense, but he had other things to worry about as he tried to relax his eyelids.

“Oh, now this is *unreal*. . .” The woman’s voice came from behind him. He was still trying to come anywhere near ready to open his eyes when he felt his glans being squashed and rubbed around and mashed into his balls and—this shouldn’t be possible with a healthy penis. What had been done to him? Was he still just confused? His hips bucked in the springy suspension bondage.

“Oh, this suits me just fine!” The awed female voice sighed, and then came again from near his head. “Lights a little too bright for you, pet? Here, let me dim them for you. . .”

The pain behind his eyes softened, and he soon found he could open them into the darkness. Fireworks danced across his vision, but eventually he was able to focus on the fuzzy shape of a naked woman squatting in front of him.

“Like what you see?” She stood up and did a pirouette for his benefit, but it was mostly lost on him. “They did an amazing job on me, I think. Put me back better than I remembered! But this just *withers* compared to what they did to you!”

She giggled and squatted down again, and he began to work his jaw. He had to try and speak, but what came out was an indistinct moan. The voice he heard. . .

But the woman had already pulled out a floor-length mirror and wheeled it to him, and he could begin to see. He was in a box, of some sort. It was a black vacuum-box, his head poking out from one side, surrounded by the rubbery suspension membrane like a conical ruff. His head was slender, somehow. . . something not right.

“This is what Mazos has chosen for you.” The woman was enjoying this moment, though perhaps she overestimated the progress of his senses.

He groaned again, and it began to dawn on him what he now was. The voice from his throat was not just high, but sweet. The sensations at his groin, the arousal inside his gut, the feeling of his skin against the clingy bondage. . .

“That’s right, pet. It’s Domeda. After we were separated, the Dæmons asked *my* petition. And from the looks of things, they granted it!” she chuckled slightly, “And just like in the stories, they didn’t do it in the way I imagined. I can’t complain. . . although you’re probably going to *hate* it.”

He worked his tongue and jaw, huffing out sounds. He did not know this woman. The name “Domeda” was unfamiliar. He didn’t remember any of the events she referred to, though the mention of Mazos and the Dæmons brought back some kind of ancient instinctive fear.

“What’s that, pet? I can’t understand you.”

He continued to try to make sounds he could turn to words. The syrupy voice gasped and cracked from his throat.

“Let me get you something for that throat.”

The woman disappeared for a moment, and came back with a stick of something, which she pushed against his tongue. It

plunged into his throat, and he felt himself swallow instinctively. He felt instantly humiliated, and the humiliation only increased the arousal in his belly.

Once he caught his breath, he tried again. Sounds came out as voice now, and his lips clumsily formed the shapes he needed, feeling swollen as if numbed.

“What’s that pet? I still can’t hear you.” She leaned closer.

He brought all his strength to bear and choked out his question.

“WHO...”

“Yes?” she prompted, irritatingly.

“AM...”

“What?”

“I?”

Domeda had stormed out in frustration, leaving him alone with his thoughts. She didn’t stop at that, of course: in one corner of the room she had set out a full-length mirror so that he could see the extent of his predicament. In some ways, this turned out to be worse than the empty confusion of the void that had tormented him before his awakening.

He bobbed his head and made faces, astonished that the bald head in the mirror reflected his actions back to him. He squirmed as best he could, and watched the slick black body struggle in the vacuum-cube displayed in the looking glass. He was captivated by what he saw, yet the only conclusion he could reach was that it was some sort of image mapping system: a bit of computational trickery to play with his foggy mind.

He could not bring to memory any idea of what his face *should* look like, but he was dead certain that it should *not* resemble the one in the mirror. His expectations would have suggested a

square jaw, and he had some instinctive urge to run his fingers through what ought to be a beard. But the face in the mirror was long and slender, and so clearly female that it would be laughable to imagine any stubble on its chin.

But it was the body that had him questioning his own self-image. Squirming against the membrane that held him on all fours, he felt the suction pulling against the bulbous breasts that hung beneath his chest. The more he tugged with shoulders and stomach, the more he recognized the sensations that matched the movements in the mirror.

But worst of all was the device between his legs. Before she left, Domeda had attached something to his exposed crotch, in the concavity of the vacuum-cube's membrane opposite his head. It was out of sight in the mirror, but he could feel it just fine. And the sensations only troubled him more.

He felt a plug inside his anus, and that much was simple enough. Or, it would be except that there was a *second* plug that felt as though it ran straight up his frenulum and against his prostate. Where the first plug only filled and humiliated, the second plug hummed with a pleasing warmth that kept him sexually stimulated. What's worse, there was a third attachment that felt as though it squashed between his balls and rested teasingly against his glans.

The geometry of this arrangement was baffling enough, but with what he saw in the mirror he began to question his own very anatomy. Surely it must be simpler to assume that the second plug was in his *vagina*, and that the attachment must be teasing his *clitoris*? But why, despite his debilitating amnesia, was he so certain that he'd never had any such body parts before?

The last unexpected aspect of his body was the reaction to the pleasure it received. His muscle-memory expected a tease that brought on a slow crescendo in desire like a swelling balloon

behind his cock. At some point the scales would tip, and he'd explode in sudden release. But the ride he was on now had a dramatically different flavor.

Everything about the teasing pleasure within was more complex and subtle. Instead of pressure and tension building in a single spot, waves of pleasure rippled through in chaotic combination. He could not put to words how it all worked, but it only began to make sense if he thought of it in terms of female anatomy. It was enjoyable, to be sure, but he felt himself longing for the crashing release that he'd come to expect.

He was still squirming and experimenting, trying to bear down on the device at his crotch when Domeda returned. She was now dressed very smartly in a slick latex business outfit complete with pencil-skirt, corset-blazer, and a pillbox fascinator that nestled in her rolled up-do. She stalked toward him on her towering platform heels and squatted down to grab his chin in her fingers.

"Ah, I can see by your pupils that you're well and truly randy right now! Well, perhaps if you're a good girl we can do something about that." She let his head drop and then held herself steady on the frame of the vacuum-cube, looking it over with interest. "I think that it's about time I let you out to begin your life of service!"

She disappeared out of view for a while, and there was a sighing sound as the vacuum-cube fell slack. He tumbled to the floor and bumped his head against the frame. His struggles had brought some tone back into his arms and legs, but clearly not enough for him to stand yet. He flailed in the loose sheets of rubbery film, and managed to drag himself only as far as freeing his shoulders and arms before Domeda hauled him to the floor.

He lay back, panting, and then turned to the mirror again. Reaching one hand to his chest, he grabbed and gently kneaded one of the firm breasts that sat atop his chest, squashed slightly by gravity. He explored the outer contours of his feminine curves, and then finally ventured to run his fingers between his thighs.

What he felt there was firm metal or plastic. He rolled his knees over to get a better angle in the mirror, and could only see a glittering panel of silver. A little green light winked slowly in time with the rhythms of the teasing devices it concealed. He ran his fingers down its length, and found it perfectly sealed to his flesh from pubic mound all the way to the plug in his anus.

"The stories say that they prefer their tribute in an aroused and frustrated state." Domeda seemed to be reciting words she'd heard before, sneering at their intent, gazing all the while into his confused eyes. "Ah, I suppose your memory hasn't returned yet. A pity the choice of belt is lost on you, then. It's the exact device you placed on *me* before we set out on our little journey together. Still doesn't ring a bell?"

Domeda sighed and helped him to his knees, the strength returning to his limbs with amazing speed. Still, he reached down with his hands and rubbed the smooth casing of the belt, upper arms squashing his breasts together into a not-unattractive cleavage.

"Well I'll keep it simple for now." Domeda knelt down behind him, hands on his shoulders, and spoke to his reflection in the mirror. "You took twelve slavegirls to Mazos as tribute. The Daemons found your request selfish and unappealing, and instead granted favor to *me*. When we entered the Ziggurat, you were my male Owner. Now you are my slavegirl!"

He stared into the mirror, astonishment leaving his jaw slack and desire fluttering his eyelashes. He slid his hands up to his pert breasts and massaged them sensuously, taking advantage of

the lack of barriers over his erect nipples. Exhausted, he leaned his head back onto Domeda's shoulder and squeaked out a word.

"Please. . ."

Domeda sneered into the mirror, "Learning to beg, my little pet? Tell me, for what do you beg?"

"Please. . . Let me. . . come?"

"Well, my little fuckpet, it is time for your first lesson!" Domeda pinched his nipples hard, twisting and pulling them outward. He gasped, his eyes wide, and he arched his sore back to relieve the tension. "Please let me come. . . *what?*"

"Please!" He panted, his voice emitting high lusty peals of girly squealing, "Mistress! Please let me come, Mistress!"

"Now we're getting somewhere!" Domeda let go of his nipples and stood, letting him fall to the floor. He rolled onto all fours, and began to feel almost as if he had the strength to stand now. His hips bucked involuntarily at the unending stimulation at his new groin, but he rose to one foot and one knee.

Domeda had hiked up her skirt, and now sat on a cushion with her knees spread horizontally to either side. Her pussy jangled with rings and adornments, and she gestured to it with a long-handled riding crop.

"Here's how it's going to work. You will give me pleasure while I give you pain. Then I will grant you a reward as fits your performance. Once we have finished all these requirements we shall go out and celebrate the arrangement. Now: lick, pet."

He stopped in his half-stood crouch, stunned. He could not think of who he was or how he could get out of this. He did not want to be a slavegirl to this woman who clearly had a vendetta against him for things he could not remember. He felt nothing but the urge to run, even naked and female as he now was. His eyes shot nervously to the door of the apartment, and then back to Domeda as if afraid she'd know what he was thinking.

Of course, she did know. "Ah, not feeling up for formal slavery just yet? Well if you are feeling well enough you can always just walk out by the front door."

She seemed genuine, as if she did not care if he left then and there. Every fibre of his being, every instinct forged by memories he could not recall, every neuron in his groggy brain was telling him it was a trap, but he had to try it or wonder forever if he'd given up freedom needlessly. Slowly, on shaky legs hooked to hips that felt far too low for him, he stood and staggered toward the door.

When he reached the wall, he leaned against it for support, touching the control and letting the bulkhead swing open. Outside he saw one of the interior levels of a City Spire somewhere in one of Torei's ringdoms. He couldn't tell where he really was, but the call of *outside* was just too strong. He stepped forward. He could catch someone's attention. He could find a foreign embassy, or a hospital, or a kind stranger. Perhaps that screaming woman...

Doubled over on the ground just outside the door, he suddenly realized that the female screams were coming from his own new voice. The teasing plugs inside of him now pumped raw fire into his sensitive erogenous zones. He had grown used to the new sensations of female pleasure, but now he was aware of more sensitive corners of the anatomy that were suffering electric agony.

Cramped into himself, he finally managed to roll back inside the doorway, and the pain began to subside. Weeping on the floor, he looked up to see Domeda still waiting with her pussy out.

"Decided to come back? Well I'm delighted, and really we'll make a wonderful pair. Now you put that tongue to work and we'll see about your reward after."

He retched the moment his tongue met her sex. The sensations were too strong for a mouth that had tasted nothing but the shipping-mask's plug in its whole life. Her crop was encouraging, though, and soon he dove in just to avoid the sting on his backside.

In his brief experience as a woman thus far, he had managed to learn a thing or two about how a woman experiences pleasure. The plugs in the belt had slowly warmed back to their teasing state, and he copied their ministrations as much as possible until the crop startled him into more aggressive probing. Soon he was doing to Domeda what he *wished* the plugs would do to him, and he struggled for breath as her thighs held him smothered into her.

He scrambled after her, now fairly an expert at jogging in the towering platform heels. His pace quickened whenever he felt the tug on the lead, the memory of Domeda's crop keeping him right at her heels. He dared not walk too quickly, as the singleglove that held his elbows together behind his back made balance difficult.

His shoulders hurt less than he would have expected from the extended time spent in the strict armbinder, but that could have been thanks to the distracting sensations caused by the tight clamps on his nipples. Bells dangled from little chains on the ends of the clamps, and the bouncing tugs never let him forget they were there.

He knew almost nothing about where they were going, but it seemed to him that his mistress was pleased with his progress under her whip. She had mentioned something about "paying off debts" before they stepped outside, but had not provided any details. He now knew better than to pursue the matter with her.

So he kept up his wide-hipped runway strut, round breasts jiggling noisily and painfully with each footfall, and endured it in silence. His gaze traced down the spine of Domeda's exposed back, admiring the shape of her backside contained within the glossy laminate material of her dress. He had longed to go outside Domeda's apartment for weeks, but now that he was walking beneath the artificial sky he felt his training kicking in.

He squeezed his thighs together as he walked, trying to get some stimulation off the arousal of what was going through his head. He longed to be between his mistress's knees, to please her well and to know he had done well through her rewards. He craved her approval every bit as much as he longed for that unique wave of pleasure that brought him that uniquely female wave of orgasm. He cursed his wandering mind as the runnel of juices from his exposed slit tickled his leg.

Domeda brought him up to an apartment door labeled "Prod" and touched the pad. A glossy maid answered the door and ushered them inside a lush living room. On a sofa sat a meaty pile of taut muscles in the shape of a man, his laminate shirt stretched over firm pectorals and a textbook abdominal washboard. He waved the maid away and addressed Domeda with a smirk.

"Well I must say you were one of the least likely slaves I'd expect to earn manumission." He took a sip from a glass tumbler, "Isn't it a bit late for you to be out walking unescorted?"

Domeda tugged down on the lead, and her slave knelt immediately by her feet. He nuzzled her leg through the long slit in the side of her gleaming ankle-length evening gown.

"A lot has changed since we last spoke, Prod, sir. I have a walking permit from the Ministry of Wombs now."

Prod raised an eyebrow and set his drink on a side table, "Well then what can I do for you? Is this our old arrangement? Or do you need your belt unlocked a few hours so you and your rental

here can impress a potential master?"

Domeda did her best to hold back her smile, but it spread wide against her face despite the effort. Wordlessly she reached down and lifted up her dress to reveal the bare pierced mound beneath.

"I'm a Freewomb now, and I intend to stay that way. The circumstances of my emancipation left me with a few of my original debts, according to the clarkette at the Ministry of Wombs. I've come here tonight to settle the last one out."

The man's brow dropped suddenly in concern, and he traced sigils on the glass side table. His eyes scanned the text and tables of figures that appeared on the surface, and then sighed a breath of acceptance and resignation.

"Ah, and since you've come in person, I take it that you wish to pay in trade. My chambers are always ready for you, and we can begin whenever you like. But first, have a drink!" He touched a control and the maid scampered in, her eyes on her master's feet.

Domeda held up a hand. "We do not need anything to drink. My slave here will serve as my proxy, and I must inform you that she has never known a man before."

The man stood, and his heavy musculature seemed even more intimidating when it towered above the pair.

"Of course, if I took you up on this, that would leave me in *your* debt, now wouldn't it?" He spoke through his teeth, holding back anger.

Domeda tilted her head in acknowledgement, "Yes sir, or you could refuse our offer of payment entirely. Of course, that would strike it from the books the moment you did."

Prod kept his eyes locked on Domeda's, but grabbed the lead and pulled the kneeling slave upright. He bent down and sniffed hungrily, inhaling the scent of female arousal. He ran his hands

over the monoglove, squeezed breasts so that bells jingled, and slipped a finger up into the sopping slit.

"She's..." Prod's voice caught in surprise, "It's like she's fresh out of the vat! Her skin is flawless..."

"Then I take it you accept?"

Prod set his jaw, prompting ripples of motion through the skin at his temples, and yanked the leash from Domeda's hand. He pulled the slave into an interior room and hoisted the singleglove up to attach a chain from the ceiling. The amnesiac slave danced in the strappado, his panic coming as much from being separated from his mistress as it was from fear of what was to come.

Prod rammed a smooth glass phallus into the slave's mouth, lips forced in an "O" around the shaft. He then covered the slave's eyes with one hand and bent the head up while growling into one ear.

"I am going to fuck you in your mouth, your cunt, and your anus. And if you are a *very* good girl, and keep that thing in your mouth the whole time I whip you..." Prod took a heavy breath in through his nose, "then I will be merciful, and do it in that order."

He came to consciousness suddenly, and the sense of motion brought on a dizzy spell that almost caused him to vomit. His arms were free, though his shoulders ached. Truth be told, his entire body ached, inside and out. He shifted in his seat, only to feel the board of a hansom cab locked down over his legs.

"It's okay! It's okay. Shhhhh..." Domeda cradled him in her arms, soothing him as he tried to catch his breath. He hurt in places he was sure he hadn't even *had* until recently, but felt so comforted by his mistress's attention that he didn't mind.

“You did well today, pet.” She soothed his bald head, the one place where he hadn’t been whipped, branded or shocked that evening, and showered praise and motherly kisses on him. “You took my training well, and you endured a terrible ordeal for me. You’re a good slave.”

The ponygirl drawing the cab stopped, and Domeda helped her slave up the steps of a vast temple. He felt the cold stone beneath his bare feet, and noticed how difficult it had become for him to stand flat-footed. He leaned on his mistress and entered the building.

Surrounded by the smell of incense and the sounds of chanting, the pair stumbled to a ring of statues with hollow black eyes. Domeda helped him kneel in a circle set into the floor, and walked to the center of the room, placing a circlet of metal on the ground. She then walked to the opposite side and sat in a square.

Domeda began intoning a rite unfamiliar to him, and as she did so nine pairs of eyes snapped open inside the statues. They looked around, and finally all settled on him. He squirmed under their gaze.

At last, Domeda spoke to him across the chamber. “You are my slave already, in every official capacity. But I’m a traditional sort of girl, and I wanted to do this right. To accept slavery under my hand, you must crawl to the collar and put it on.”

“If you accept my collar,” Domeda went on, “I will give you the gift of two names: one is the name you once had, but forgot. The other is your new name for the life you will lead from now on. The witnesses will record your submission.”

He waited dumbly, wondering if Domeda would say any more, and then the silence had gone on so long that it felt awkward to speak. He looked up at the eyes in the statues, almost certainly those of women bound inside for years at a time. He shuddered,

and began crawling.

He picked up the collar and looked at its gleaming silver weight. He hefted it in his hands, and brought it experimentally to his neck.

“Huberian!” Domeda shouted, the word echoing off the stone pillars, “Your name was Doctor Ambrow Huberian!”

He swallowed hard. The name did not bring back a flood of memories, as he’d hoped. He did not find himself understanding how he could have been so cruel as to drag Domeda and the other women down to the ziggurat of Mazos as an offering for whatever petty petition he had presented. He did not know anything new about who he was; and if he was never to learn that, he would never find a way to forgive Huberian.

He closed the collar around his throat, feeling the locking pin ratchet in with a sound like a tuning fork. He hooked his finger through the ring that dangled from the front of the collar, and then let go and crawled over to Domeda, laying his head on the floor at her knees in supplication.

“Kneel up, slave.” Domeda helped him up, and then pulled his head to hers by the ring in his collar. She placed her forehead to his, nose to nose, and looked into his eyes.

“I name you Cuireann, slave to Domeda. You may offer this name when using my signet.”

Cuireann collapsed into Domeda’s arms, sobbing for reasons he—no, *she* could not understand. Huberian was gone, and she could start to live the life she now had. Her path was now clear.

The two went home and made love in Domeda’s bed for hours. In the morning, Cuireann woke and had the wardrobe dress her as a maid with a black wig while she served Domeda breakfast. She fell into domesticity, and relished the job of serving her mistress.

Once the wounds Cuir suffered under Prod’s hands subsided,

Domeda clipped a leash to her collar and the two of them took a midday ride in a hansom cab. Cuireann again ached to know where they were going, but knew better than to take the liberty of asking. Her eyes grew wide as they approached a vast factory-like structure inside their home tower. It was the Ministry of Improvements.

Domeda and Cuir were whisked through a fast track process, skipping waiting rooms and interrogation cells and other bureaucratic formalities. They soon found themselves in the facility's best treatment room. A vast and terrifying surgical table dominated the space, robotic arms and panels and tubes of liquid splaying out like the legs of a crab. To either side of the table stood two jet black Isolates, as immobile as the witnesses in the temple.

"Mistress, I..." Cuir felt tears welling up in her eyes. Her voice caught with a sob of fear.

"Shhh..." Domeda again soothed her, "Mazos gave me many blessings, and it would be ungrateful of me to refuse any of them. I made this appointment on your first day, when I learned that I was allowed to choose whatever I liked for one session. So I chose one of the most expensive improvements for you. You should feel honoured!"

Cuir looked up into her eyes, begging with her every obedient silent atom to be reassured that everything would be okay.

"Be a good girl." Domeda caressed Cuir's cheek, "I'll be back in an elevennight to take you home. Just do everything they say; and remember that no matter what happens, you're mine."

Domeda paused, then drew Cuireann in for a tender kiss. Finally she turned and walked out of the treatment room, leaving Cuir alone with the two Dæmons and their horrifying machine.

Domeda promenaded down the Traitor's Boulevard wearing a shiny hobble dress and holding a leash. Heads turned all up and down the road as people looked away from the punishment display-cubes that hung along the lane. Their attentions were caught by something far more dramatic at the other end of Domeda's chain.

A pewter Isolate, her helmet swept back in a single fin, followed the Freewomb's pull obediently. Her silvery isolation suit was clearly not the same as those used by the emissaries, but the crowd could tell it was something special.

"How do you get one of those?"

"I hear it costs so much that only off-worlders can afford it!"

"They say the jaw part opens for that stuff."

"No, they're not as strong as the Dæmons."

"That makes my costume look like cheap rags, doesn't it?"

Cuireann heard every sidelong comment up and down the length of the boulevard. She would have spat rude comments back, but her mouth was filled with a spongy slickness that stuck to her tongue and palate. Even the sounds she could make went only so far as the shell of her gleaming silver helmet.

The leash was unnecessary, as the suit would not permit Cuir to stray even a little from her mistress's command to "heel". But then, strutting down Traitor's Boulevard wasn't strictly necessary either. The pair were there to be seen, and not just for their own publicity.

Cuir saw the client several minutes before he could see them. The suit had worked out that he was a prominent pro-offworlder politician who had spoken out publicly against the policies of Mazos and Dahom. By the time she walked in front of him, she knew ways of giving pleasure or pain that were tailored to his specific physiology.

She saw also, in a 360° panorama, that all eyes were focused on this spot. A crowd pressed in, but with enough space to make a stage for them and the politician's bodyguards. The politician mugged and waved to the crowd while Domeda undid the collar and dragged Cuir forward by the upper arm. Her grip was sex.

In her head, Cuir squirmed and writhed in frustration. The suit made every touch an agony of teasing pleasure. It was as though her arm were all clitoris, and Domeda ground it in with her fingertips. She felt this way every time her glossy pewter skin came in contact with anything now, but the suit had trained her well: she never so much as flinched in response.

An earlier deal was reiterated. The politician was now Cuir's ward for three days and nights. She was his for that period, and in return Domeda received an unfathomably large amount of currency. Cuir was proud to be worth so much, and to be able to serve her mistress in this way.

She followed the man into his aircraft, watching her mistress through the back of her helmet. Her elbows obediently merged behind her as if in a single glove, and she knelt down to put her head to the floor of the craft at her client's feet. She was now held in this pose, immobile.

As she felt the craft slowly lift off, she found herself in a waking dream. It was one that haunted her regularly now: she was naked, a collar around her throat, in the arms of her mistress on the temple floor. It was the one moment in her artificially short memory that she found comforting. She wished with every futile strand of hope in her soul that she could return to live in that moment forever.

But, since that was clearly not to be, she knew she would obey absolutely any order for the chance of even one little orgasm.



Cuireann's Lament