

# NORTH X NORTHWEST

## Chapter 14

Headnote: warning! mentioning of pedophilia.

An old servant asked Cesar why he was following them. Lil and the rest of the crew flinched and prayed for the poor servant, who dared to speak to Cesar that way. Red eyes immersed in darkness stared coldly at the man.

“How do I know what you’re going to do? I’ll escort them to the bedroom.”

It was a tone as sharp as a knife. The servant trembled, knowing his life was precious and quietly began to take the lead. Feeling overwhelmed and weighed down by Cesar, the servant didn’t even comprehend the fact he heard informal speech behind him.

“We’re from Madame Rouge and here to see the Count.”

The servant looked sideways at Marenzio again, who he’d been glancing at since earlier. Something felt suspicious. He couldn’t imagine her being a man, but it was strange that she kept covering her face with a fan. In fact, she didn’t look anything like Jericho standing next to her. Marenzio stuck out because she seemed to be too overwhelming to be a woman.

“Why don’t you take off your robe?”

Startled, Marenzio shrugged his shoulders. Suddenly the sound of seams tearing was coming from beneath the robe.

“We’re wearing special outfits for tonight. The Count said he didn’t want anyone to see them until he did.”

Lil approached his side and gently stroked his arm. Then a soft hand reached up and caressed his chest. As the servant exhaled a groan-like breath, Cesar's eyes quickly became sharp. His eyebrows wrinkled fiercely and after he blinked, a threatening sparkle was seen.

"Do you still want me to take it off?"

"Oh, ah no."

The servant was conscious of Cesar and brushed off the hand. At the same time, the count's voice came from inside the bedroom.

"Let them in."

It sounded as if his vocal cords were suppressed by fat.

Although he felt wronged because she was the one touching him, the servant couldn't handle Cesar's gaze any longer and quickly opened the door. Even the senior sailors, toughened by their life on board and countless plundering, felt uncomfortable under Cesar. Let alone that a mere servant can stand him.

Lil passed Cesar with a smirk. Alain and Cesar remained in the hallway with two guards. Before she completely entered the room, she glanced at Alain, who confirmed with a nod.

"Come closer."

"Ugh, what's this smell?"

Lil frowned. A huge strange shaped candle was emitting thin scented smoke from beside the bed. She scanned the room, the whole place was lit with those same candles, creating a bright view. The bed draped with a gold-leafed red cloth, as well as the skins of predators scattered all over the floor, smelled like loot from the sea. She stared at the wall, not only the floor but also the walls were decorated with stuffed animal heads.

*'It looks more like a primitive cave.'*

The muffled voice spoke again.

“My, my, there are some shy children today. I told you to come closer.”

*‘Does he like flashy things?’*

The count himself was laying on the bed. He wore rings on all ten of his fingers and a huge golden necklace full of precious stones hung on his thick neck. To complete the outfit a heavy turban with long feathers was resting on his head.

*‘Today’s theme must be the bedroom of a desert kingdom. I’ve never seen such a meticulous pervert before.’*

The count made a vague hand gesture, it was obvious he couldn’t move his fingers normally, due to the rings. His gown, missing the waistband, hangs open. Revealing slightly more than they wanted to see.

Marenzio’s low voice broke out.

“Bloody hell.”

Clenching her teeth, Lil whispered.

“Shut up, Marenzio.”

Only the count, oblivious to the situation, spoke brightly.

“I heard what you said outside. Oh, God. These are special outfits for me, right? I didn’t order it separately, but seeing it’s from Madame Rouge, she really doesn’t disappoint me.”

Marenzio flinched again, making the seams of his dress burst even further.

“Put the fans away.”

Strangely, the Count showed the most interest in Marenzio, even with the younger Courant and feminine Lil next to him.

Behind his fan, Marenzio's eyes sent a rescue signal. Lil took away his fan without any hesitation. The count narrowed his eyes and stared intently at Marenzio. He'd put a colourful wig on his head, applied powder on his face and as much paint on his lips as possible, therefore from a distance, he really looked like a woman.

"Take it off."

Marenzio stood there, unable to do this or that. Jericho couldn't hold his laughter and made a sound similar to a groan. The count let out an excited snort. Lil made use of the shifting momentum and grabbed Marenzio's robe, dragging him towards the bed. The count's face, staring at him in anticipation, grew more and more confused. Presumably, because he could finally see Marenzio clearly.

Before the contemplative count could shout, Lil got onto the bed and squeezed his neck.

"Don't shout."

"Uh-huh, Who the hell are you..."

"Do you want him to teach you?"

"My...If you touch my body..."

At Lil's gesture, Marenzio came closer. Under the cloud-like wig, sweat and heavy makeup were dripping down his face. Marenzio had tanned skin, so the parts where the powder was removed, looked weird. Moreover, his lips were still a vivid red. In the shadow of the candle, Marenzio smiled.

The count stiffened with his mouth open, forgetting if he wanted to resist or not.

Lil slapped him on the cheek.

"Wake up, Pervert! Is he so beautiful that you're losing your mind?"

“If you hurt me... His Majesty...”

“Who doesn’t know.”

Lil pulled the robe from Marenzio’s shoulders. Revealing a dress, which was torn to shreds and left only the tight body, wrapped around his muscular torso.

“Ahhh...”

A loud scream echoed through the bedroom.

*‘He must have been really desperate, seeing how he could make such a loud noise while being strangled.’*

“Oh, my god! I can’t believe you’re so hard on me. I don’t know if I can handle it!”

Lil glanced at Courant while yelling some lines to ease suspicions in the hallway. The boy, standing without knowing what to say, took a small piece of paper out of his dress. He then approached a candle and read the content out loud with a stutter.

“Oh, oh. Count! Honey...just a little more!”

Jericho also took her cue. He looked around and hit the cabinet next to him. After confirming the sound was quite dull and heavy, he nodded his head. Soon a new scream and smacking sound echoed through the room.

*‘This distraction is perfect.’*

She pushed the count’s face in front of Marenzio’s nose. It was terrifying to see a cross-dressing Marenzio frowning his face. The count’s chin trembled and Lil spoke grimly into his plump ear.

“He’s dying to play with you. I heard fair skin like yours is just his taste. Do you understand? He’ll do the same to you, as you’ve done to those little boys. I don’t think the Emperor will be of much help to you now, don’t you think?”

“Ugh...Ooh!”

“Can’t you shut up already?”

Before he could shout, Lil shoved the rope into his mouth. She then grabbed the count’s chin, who was trying with all his might to turn away from Marenzio.

“Struggle all you want. I’ll decide whether or not I throw you under him. There are a lot of people waiting outside, you better not be a fool and put aside your plan to signal your guards.”

After that, the count’s eyes lost their last string of hope. Lil threatened him with her eyes and took out the cloth. The count, whose mouth was now free, followed the instructions obediently. As soon as he finished speaking, Lil shoved the robe back in.

“Now, I’m going to ask you a few questions. If you don’t answer quickly enough or stay silent, you’ll be smothered by his thick chest.”

The count could only sigh out in relief for a short moment. Marenzio overheard the fun conditions and came over to wrap his hand around the back of the count’s head. Immediately, a different kind of fear flashed across his face.

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Lil ran down the empty hallway with Cesar.

*‘The count said that all correspondence between him, the mainland, and the Navy are in the office and study upstairs. There was no need to ask where the rooms were. In those southern-style mansions, often used as villas by the imperial nobles, it was traditional to make a room at the end of the corridor on the third floor with a convex terrace as study. And direct above it is the office. It was a very familiar structure.’*

“You go to the office, I’ll take the study.”

Cesar was about to go up the stairs without a word but turned around and walked up to her. Lil watched him as he wrapped his arms around her waist

and untied her necklace. She didn't even had the time to ask why, as he already kissed her lips. Lil hugged him unconsciously. The kiss didn't last long.

"Be careful."

Lil nodded her head.

"You too."

She briefly stared at the stairs where Cesar had disappeared and entered the study.

*'It doesn't look like it was used recently. The desk must be in front of the terrace windows, but for some reason, all curtains are closed.'*

Because of this, it was almost completely dark. Only the outline of the bookshelf by the window was partly visible. Lil walked, fumbling through the air with her hands. She still had a long way to go.

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Next