

Tristan stood before the couch, watching him sleep. This wasn't going as he'd planned. He'd been staying here for four days now. Four days and the human still slept on the couch. Tristan hadn't expected him to have such willpower; he could smell the effect he had on him. He could tell there had been no need for the drug he added to his drink when they met. He would have offered to help, even without his pheromones making Alex susceptible.

He had expected to be offered the bed, as well as them sleeping separately. The human would have wanted to create an illusion of propriety, but Tristan had expected him to start manipulating the situation to get Jack to have sex with him, and make his stay dependent on that. Jack would have been reluctant, but he would have given in.

Except, it hadn't happened.

Tristan thought it might, the next morning. He'd heard the human in the doorway, breathing heavily. He didn't react, pretending to sleep. The human quietly moved about the room.

He waited for a few moments, to give the human time to make his move. When he didn't, Tristan made a show of waking up, yawning and stretching, 'accidentally' pushing the covers off his naked form.

The human immediately looked away, apologizing for waking him. He took clothes out of the closet and left the room. Moments later, the shower was running.

Tristan now looked down at him, lying on the couch, perplexed. How was it he was so honorable? The people he dealt with were always quick to take advantage of a situation. But this human, no matter how many openings he gave him, didn't.

It wasn't that he didn't notice them. Tristan had caught the looks, he'd smelled the interest. So why wasn't he acting on them? If he had more time, he'd let this continue. The human had to have a limit, and it would be interesting to see just how far he could push Jack's behavior before the human gave in. However, he couldn't afford to wait.

Unfortunately, he couldn't have Jack force himself on him; that could make the human suspicious. If what he was going to do now didn't work, he might not have any choice. For his plan to work, they had to have sex.

Alex stirred, and Tristan's body language softened, his eyes becoming tired. Alex opened an eye, closed it, and pulled the covers up. He frowned and looked up. "Is everything alright?" he asked, stifling a yawn.

"I, well..." Jack stammered. "I haven't been sleeping well."

Alex sat up. "Is there something wrong with the bed?"

"No, no. The bed's fine. It's just that..." Jack was silent for a moment.

He looked at Alex, then away. He tried to say something, but nothing came out. He took a deep breath. "Do humans always sleep alone?"

Alex's mouth dropped open for a moment. "Well, not always. I mean, couples will sleep together, but the rest tend to sleep alone. Well, usually. Why?"

"My people are pretty gregarious; we almost never sleep alone. I didn't realize it would affect me this much, and I have the interview with Glacomel tomorrow." Again, he tried to say something. He tried again, and his words were barely above a whisper. "Would you sleep with me tonight?"

Alex swallowed hard, his hands tightening over the covers. "I...don't think I should. It wouldn't... I'm sorry, Jack, I really don't think I should."

It was all Tristan could do to keep the shock from showing on his face. He'd given him the perfect opportunity, and he could smell how badly the human wanted it. He didn't see any fear in the human's face, so he wasn't a reaction to something done to him in the past. His refusal was out of concern, genuine concern, for Jack's well-being. How could someone put another's well-being before his own desires like that?

Tristan couldn't just force himself on him, not right now, so Jack's face fell. "I understand," he whispered. "It's okay." He walked back to the bedroom and crawled under the covers. Lying on his side, back to the door, Tristan started planning. He could afford to wait three days at the most. Maybe Jack could become amorous and try to express his gratitude physically.

There was movement in the living room: the human was rustling about on the couch. Tristan listened. His breathing was still quick and shallow. Was he trying to get comfortable? No, if he were, his breathing would be calming. The human stood, and Tristan smiled. He'd finally worn him down.

Alex walked to the door and stopped. He was silent for a long time, the scent of desire wafting in. "Jack?" Alex whispered.

Tristan waited a moment, then turned around. Jack looked up, eyes wet, at Alex. "Yes?"

Alex was holding the sheets wrapped around his waist. "You have to understand, this isn't about you. It just isn't a good idea for me to be in the same bed as you."

Tristan kept the shock from showing again. He'd come here to refuse?

"Do you know what a xenophile is?" Alex asked.

Jack frowned, thinking. "It's someone who's attracted to someone

outside his species, right?"

Alex nodded. "Attracted sexually," he clarified.

"Okay," Jack said, his face not showing comprehension.

Alex let out a breath. "I'm a xenophile, Jack. I'm a gay xenophile."

Jack sat up, legs crossed, facing him. "Is that wrong?" His head tilted quizzically.

Alex let out an exasperated laugh. "You don't understand. If I let myself sleep in the same bed as you, I don't know that I'll be able to control myself."

Tristan couldn't believe the human. He was explaining all this in the hope that Jack would tell him to go away. That gave him the advantage, at least. He couldn't have Jack just jump the human, but...

"You're saying you are attracted to me," Jack said. Alex nodded. "Do humans consider that wrong?"

Alex rested against the frame. He shook and had trouble breathing. "Don't you?" he finally managed to ask.

Jack thought about it. "My people believe that if you're attracted to someone, you should explore where that attraction leads. The only time we consider that to be wrong is if it's forced on someone after it was rejected."

Alex sighed in relief. "Then you get my position."

Jack looked away and bunched the sheets over his midsection. It took him a moment to work up the courage to say what he wanted. "I wouldn't reject you."

"What? Why?"

Jack looked at him, searching for the right words. "You've been nice to me. Nicer than anyone I've met since coming here. You look nice. Different, but nice. I'd...like to find out what it's like being with you."

"You can't mean that," Alex said in disbelief. He was holding on to the door frame. Tristan couldn't tell if he was keeping himself from running away, or to the bed. He was getting annoyed. This human was making him work much harder for this than he should have to.

"I don't think I understand humans. You do things very differently than we do, but I think I know you. You invited me to stay here and never asked for anything in return. You could have forced yourself on me, as a form of repayment, but you didn't." Jack extended a hand toward Alex. "I trust you."

Alex looked at the hand, hesitated, and then crossed the distance, leaving the sheet behind. He took his hand, climbed onto the bed, and Jack licked his cheek. Alex tried to kiss him and discovered that kissing someone with a muzzle wasn't a simple task. They figured out how to make it work around midnight, leaving them both giggling and more

at ease as they moved on to explore each other's bodies.

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Tristan looked at the ceiling. He'd been awake for an hour now, with the human half-draped over his chest. He fought the impulse to push him away, as that wasn't something Jack would do. Now that sex had finally been initiated, he could move on to the next part of his plan.

He had infected the human's computer on his first day alone here. The program activated when the human worked on it and recorded how he worked, his typing patterns, and more importantly, how he accessed his work systems from home. He'd come home early every day since Jack was here, saying he didn't like leaving him alone any longer than he had to. It wasn't like Jack was a prisoner; the human had given him the lock codes to the door. Consequently, he had to finish his work day at home. In a day or two, the program would have enough information so Tristan could infiltrate Luminex's system without arousing suspicion, so he could do some reconnaissance.

Alex stirred and looked up at him.

"Good morning," Jack said with a wide grin.

Alex yawned. "Morning. How are you feeling?"

"I feel wonderful."

"Any soreness?" Alex asked, with a hint of worry.

"Only a little," Jack answered. "Not as much as I thought there'd be. What about you?"

Alex chuckled. "More than a little." He lifted the covers and looked at Jack's groin. "You're much bigger than I expected."

Jack's ears went flat in embarrassment. "I'm sorry. After you did it to me, I just wanted to show you how good it felt."

"It's a good soreness, I'm not complaining. In fact, I'm hoping we get to do it again."

Jack smiled and pulled him into a hug. "Me too. In fact," he nodded to the growing tent under the sheet, "maybe we could do it now?"

Alex placed a hand over it and rubbed up and down, making Jack purr. "Don't you have an appointment today?"

"That's not 'til this afternoon," Jack said between moans. "We have plenty of time."

"Well, in that case." Alex disappeared under the covers. The bubble his head caused moved until it was over the alien's groin, then Jack gasped.