

It's happening all over again.

Confrontation. Just the two of them. Blood stained clothes. Yelling, echoing,, just close enough to hear. Limited space (By God, he was glad the exit was right behind him this time.)

But this time was different. This time David had his armor. This time David's sword glinted in the low torchlight, held firmly in the hybrid's hand. This time, they were on equal grounds.

Except they *weren't*. Not even *close*.

Alexis knew he shouldn't be scared right now. His hands shouldn't be shaking where he grips his sword, there shouldn't be a lump of fear in the back of his throat, his mouth shouldn't feel dry when he glances at villain's sword, his heart shouldn't feel like it's beating out of his chest.

He shouldn't, he shouldn't, he shouldn't he shouldn't he shouldn't he shouldn't he shouldn't he shouldn't he—

*He shouldn't be panicking.*

He shouldn't, but he is. They both knew that.

Alexis makes the first move.

A downward slash. meant to hit a small opening in his armor, but a slow strike and shaky hands mean it left a small cut across the hybrid's cheek.

A second slash parried, and Alexis could barely dodge a swipe aimed directly at his throat.

The metal of David's sword scraped against Alexis's armor (he couldn't parry fast enough) and he could barely dodge a swipe aimed directly at his throat. A hoof to the chest sent him crashing down onto the cold stone floor with the tip of David's sword at his throat.

He was at David's mercy again.

*Because when was he not?*

And David laughed. He laughed like this was nothing to him, like this fight was nothing to him, like *Alexis* was nothing to him.

"You know what Alexis? I'll be nice. 20 second head start." he said, voice low and dangerous.

*"Run."*

Alexis was not ashamed to say he did.

He scrambled up and out the entrance before the villain could say “15.”.

He had gotten far from the Prison gates before he could get to “5”.

*The clock was ticking.*

But no matter how far he ran, he could still hear David’s voice ringing in his ears as he slowly counted down.

“5.”

“4..”

“3..”

“2...”

“1.”

Alexis feels his breath hitch as the last number passed, looking back for any sign of the red-coated pig-hybrid behind him.

No, no. He was over 200 meters out, he was already past the bend of the river by now, there was no way David could catch up *that* quickly.

So he gave himself a moment of reprieve. He was safe for now. He let himself catch his breath, he waited until his hands stopped shaking, until his heart stopped beating out of his chest, until his legs didn’t feel weak and he didn’t feel like he was going to collapse at a moment’s notice.

He’d have a while before David would catch up, if he could even find him, for that matter. No, he’d be okay. Everything would be okay.

He let himself calm down. He wasn’t being hunted, not anymore.

*“I thought I told you to run, Alexis.”*

Oh.

He bolted.

He didn’t bother looking back. He didn’t need to. No, all he needed to do was run.

He didn't need to listen to the sound of grass crunching behind him, he didn't have to pay attention to the fact that he could feel his heart pounding or that he felt like he could barely breathe or that with every passing moment he grew more and more exhausted or that—

“You know Alexis, there's something I've always noticed about humans in general.”

“What do you— what do you mean..?” He stuttered, his breath hitching as he heard the footsteps behind him ever so slowly speeding up.

“They've proclaimed themselves apex predators for hundreds of years, it's almost like they've completely forgotten that they used to be *prey*.”

The sound of a trident being used, the thud of someone landing behind him, cold metal pressed against the skin of his throat, the low hum of enchantments in his ear, and David was speaking again..

“Don't you think it's about time someone reminded them, Alexis?”

He seized up. He wanted to run, to yell, to fight back, but he couldn't move, he couldn't make himself run.

Fight, flight, *freeze*.

“Well, well you don't- you don't need to! It's just- it's, uh, it's- it's fine how it is, you- y-you don't need to- you don't—” the rest of his sentence tapered off into a high pitched whine, complete and utter gibberish as Alexis looked over his shoulder to see David for the first time since the countdown.

Black eyes, white pupils. Blood dribbling down his cheek and dripping down his chin. Sharp tusks jutting from his mouth, ever so slightly chipped from battle. Lips curved in a smile. Calm, cool and cruel.

*A predator.*

David had knocked him onto his back before he could do anything else, a hoof to the chest keeping him pinned down.

And Alexis swore there was a flicker of joy in David's eyes as he spoke to him for the last time that night. One last order.

**“Pray.”**

