

Shadowplay by Xanthe



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Story Notes:

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He came out in the dark, as all rats do.

"Did I wake you? I'm **so** sorry." A twisted grin. The lamplight caught the flash of feral green eyes, and smooth black hair. The scent of leather hung in the air between them as darkness emerged from shadow.

"I won't ask you how you got in." Skinner sat up in his bed, naked torso silhouetted. "Just why you're here."

"To collect." The rat moved close, and reached out a hand, black leather stretched taut over plastic, to touch the other man's face. Skinner sat, unmoving, unflinching in the shadow cast by his enemy's body.

"What do you want?" Big body tensed, poised, ready to jump, feline paws closed, ready to swat.

"You." The rat smiled, moved his head in close, sniffed his prey's jaw and down to his throat, sharp, white teeth bared...A big hand closed around the intruder's neck, pushed him away, back onto the bed, making him lose his footing. The rat lay there for a moment, breathing

heavily, looking into Skinner's eyes - brown on green, green on brown. "Good." Dilated pupils swam in green silk. "I knew you'd get the idea."

Skinner swept the sheets aside, and stood up, legs long and lean, clad only in black boxer shorts. "I presume you've come with your demands. Just tell me what you want, and then go."

"Demands..." The rat scuttled back to the shadows, and returned with a black leather case. He laid it on the armchair in the corner of the room, and unlocked it with the sparkling silver key that he wore around his neck. Skinner stood, close to the door, fists curling and uncurling in an unconscious expression of his desire to take the rodent's neck in his hands, and squeeze. Hard.

"If I don't call in, giving the correct code word, by 6 am, then this..." the rat turned back and held up a small device, "instructs your nanocytes to start partying. You already know how that feels so I won't labour the point." Straight white teeth gleamed in that twisted, sensual mouth.

Skinner straightened. "Don't threaten me, Krycek. Just tell me what you want, then leave."

"All in good time. Sit." Krycek pointed at the bed. Skinner glared at him for a moment, struggling with the unfamiliar role of helpless victim, and then, with a sigh, he sat.

"We go back a long way, you and I." Krycek pulled something sleek and dark from the case, and laid it against Skinner's shoulder. It was cool, long, coiled...a whip. Skinner shifted uncomfortably. "Do you remember how far back we go?" Krycek knelt on the bed behind his prey, and ran the whip along the big man's chest, and down the side of his face. Skinner could feel the other man's warm breath on the side of his cheek. "I was just a green young double agent when I first saw you. I still remember the effect you had on me. You made me feel...small." Krycek placed one thumb, encased in black leather, against the back of Skinner's neck, and traced a line up to the bald scalp. Skinner's muscles bunched into futile implosions of silent anger. "You were so sure of yourself...growling and snarling and pacing. Using that big desk like a prop in your attempts to intimidate. When you gave me an order you...snapped..." Krycek clicked his teeth shut next to Skinner's ear with a resounding clack, then opened his lips and moistened them with his tongue. Skinner felt a warm wetness on his earlobe, and shuddered. "I used to look at your teeth and imagine them eating me." The rat raised himself up on his hindquarters, and Skinner felt hot breath on his naked skull. Two hands, one real, one false, descended on his shoulders - a light touch, keeping him down, keeping him still.

"This is about sex." Skinner shifted, grunted. The heat burning into his naked flesh from the hand on his right shoulder contrasted with the coolness of the artificial hand on his left.

"No." Krycek said. He brought the hard handle of the whip up under the other man's chin, where it bit deep into flesh, forcing Skinner's head up. "It's about power." Krycek hissed, his cheek pressed flat against Skinner's so that the big man could feel the stubble. "And I

haven't finished. When I saw you, big and invulnerable, in that stairwell, I enjoyed sinking my fist into your flesh. I looked into your eyes, and needed my revenge."

"Revenge for what? Giving you orders?" Skinner spat. "I hadn't done anything to you."

"You existed." Krycek whispered. He lowered the whip, got up, and went to Skinner's nightstand. With a sweep of his prosthetic limb, he cleared it of everything except the lamp. Wirerims, a novel, and a glass of water went flying. Krycek placed the whip reverentially on the nightstand, then turned back to his case. He pulled out a set of leather cuffs, with rings on the outside, and brought them over to the bed. He knelt again, behind his captive, and held one cuff against his nose.

"Smell it." Krycek commanded.

Skinner sat, resolute, ignoring him.

"I said," Krycek repeated in a low, insistent tone, "smell it." Skinner lowered his head a fraction, took in the pungent aroma of freshly polished leather. "I oiled it to myself - to perfection." Krycek informed him, his arms hanging loosely across the front of Skinner's naked torso. Skinner could feel the cool leather of the other man's jacket pressed against his back. "It smells good, doesn't it?"

"If you say so." Skinner shrugged.

"I do." Krycek nuzzled his lips briefly against the big man's neck.

"Maybe I lack your obvious, uh, appreciation of leather." Skinner observed.

"That's a shame. It'd be a good look for you," Krycek murmured. "Now, as I was saying...you existed. So big, and strong, so sure of your power. Memories of you **haunted** me. I thought I'd cured myself of you when I caught you in that stairwell. I thought that by hurting you, by sinking my fist into your flesh over and over again until you were on your knees, that I'd wiped out your power over me. I was wrong."

Skinner closed his eyes, opened them again.

"The nanocytes - you did all that just to come here, and show me that you have power over me?" He barked out an ironic laugh, and Krycek traced one cool leather finger over his cheek.

"No." Krycek whispered, ignoring the question, and continuing with his narrative. "That wasn't the end of it. I thought I was free of you - of dreaming about you, of wanting you, of the power that you wield so easily, but you robbed me of my peace, Skinner. You took it from me in the darkness on a cold night, and now I can't forget you. Do you remember that night?"

Skinner sat frozen, the leather cuffs still pressed lightly against his chest.

"Mulder brought you here," he murmured.

"Yes!" Krycek's breathing was fast and urgent. "Mulder brought me here, in handcuffs, and you...you came to the door looking like some kind of erotic god. You told him to bring me inside, and then you..." His voice cut off abruptly, as if the memory was too intense to share.

"I slugged you in the gut." Skinner shrugged. "What do you want me to say? I'm sorry?"

"No. You don't understand." Krycek hissed. "You dragged me outside, handcuffed me to the balcony, then you looked into my eyes and I **knew** then what I wanted."

"You want revenge." Skinner said in a low, disinterested tone. "All this is about revenge. Well, now you take your revenge, Krycek. Here." He plucked the cuffs from Krycek's hands, and turned to face the other man. "Put them on me. Do whatever you need to make yourself feel more of a man again, to even the score, and get your own back. I'm in no position to argue, as we both know. Do your worst, Krycek. Use any of these little instruments of torture you've brought with you, and indulge your sick fantasies. As my alternative is death, I have no choice but to endure." Skinner's tone was hard and angry. He scanned the other man's elusive green eyes but he wasn't prepared for the way his former agent threw back his head and laughed. Finally, enraged, Skinner put one big hand in Krycek's thick dark hair, and held him down, looming over him. "Come on, you sick fuck, let's get this over with," he growled.

"No." Krycek lay still under that big fist. His face seemed pale and eerie, cast half in light, and half in dark by the lamplight. One green eye, one dark eyebrow, one lock of hair curling over his forehead, one half of a pair of sensuous lips, twisted into a feral smile. "You don't understand. I didn't come here to hurt you." Krycek shook his head, the tip of his tongue moistening his lips, his eyes dark and sharp. "I came here to make you hurt me."

There was a long, silent, moment in time, marked only by the ticking of a clock, and the beating of hearts. Skinner's hand gradually relaxed its hold on the other man's hair, uncurling the fingers until they were limp. His dark eyes were shadowed and confused.

<What?> His mouth opened soundlessly.

"You heard. I want you to tie me, to beat me, to fuck me. I want you to unleash that power, and use it on me. I want you to abuse me until dawn - and then..." Krycek wriggled under the weight of Skinner's body, "then, if you've performed well enough, I'll make the call. If not...well, a reminder of who's in charge might be in order - and the nanocytes will get their little party."

"What the fuck...?" Skinner stood up. His body was taut with tension. The lamplight cast shadows over his broad chest, and long legs, and Krycek ate up the vision with undisguised lust. "You're saying that you want me to...beat you, and to...to...fuck you, and if I don't do it well enough, you'll **punish** me?" He asked, incredulously.

"Yes." Krycek's green eyes held a challenge. He got up, pressed his sinuous body close to Skinner's unmoving, solid flesh, and rubbed himself against him. "Top - sy. Turvy." He

grinned. "Master," he added, as an afterthought. "Come on, Skinner. You know you want to. You've wanted to bury your fists in my flesh ever since I spent the night on your balcony. You **promised** me something that night. You **said** that punch was a start. You **said** we weren't even yet..." Krycek licked his lips. "And then you left me there all night. You left me there, fantasising about what you'd do to me next. All night, thinking of you lying up here in your bedroom, your naked body pressed against warm sheets. All night, imagining what those strong arms would feel like wrapped around my chest, restraining me, imagining how you'd order me to kneel in front of you, and suck you off, your fist in my hair." Krycek's voice was almost evangelical in tone, and his eyes glowed like emeralds in the half-light. "It was a delicious torture. You kept me waiting all night. You kept me **hoping** all night. Then, in the morning, when you walked out of that door on your way to work, and I knew it had all been empty promises..." Krycek exhaled, a harsh rush of air that was almost a sob. "I almost fucking wept from the disappointment. I knew then, that I'd make you deliver one day. And now that day has come." He was so close that Skinner could smell the sweet scent of his breath, and the musky sweat of his body.

"You're a fucking pervert." Skinner backed away, and that sinuous, sensual body followed him, the buckle of the other man's jeans digging into his naked flesh.

"Oh yes." Krycek smiled. "And so, **Master**..." he paused, making the inflection on that word ironic, "...are you. You just need someone to show you how to unlock what you want most - because you do want this, Skinner."

"Don't damn well flatter yourself." Skinner growled, his back flat against the wall, muscles tensed, poised, ready to spring.

"And even if you don't," Krycek continued. "The beauty of it is - that it doesn't matter. You do what I want, because you have no choice. Refuse and..." His eyes wandered over to the device in his case.

"I've never..." Skinner found that his mouth was dry. He met Krycek's eyes, and drowned in a sea of green. He surveyed his old enemy, wondering what it would be like to force this man to his knees, to stand over him, dominate him, take from him roughly, and brutally, without giving anything back. He'd never made love in this way before...no, not making love, **fucking**. Rutting - overwhelming and overpowering someone else, using their body for his own pleasure with no thought for theirs. Skinner felt the sweat breaking out on his skin. "I can't do it," he whispered.

Krycek smiled. "You have to." He stated implacably.

"It's a physical impossibility." Skinner pointed out. "I can't...fuck you if I'm not aroused. And I'm hardly likely to get aroused by whipping the shit out of you."

"You underestimate yourself." Krycek ran a dark finger over Skinner's lips, then pushed it inside. Skinner tasted bitter leather on his tongue, and fought back a desire to bite down. Hard. "Come on, Skinner. Last time I was here you roughed me up, and then you handcuffed me to your balcony. If that's not a statement of intent, what is?" Krycek laughed. "Tell me,

Skinner, what do you feel like doing when you have a pretty boy all trussed up and at your mercy? No, don't tell me...**show** me." Krycek whispered.

"You're wrong." Skinner folded his arms across his chest, and glared at his uninvited guest. "You don't know the first thing about me, Krycek."

"And you don't know the first thing about yourself." Krycek snapped back. "But I'm going to show you."

Skinner's eyes flashed angrily in the shadowed lamplight, glowing embers dancing in burnished black tar.

"And what will you discover about yourself, naked, trussed up, under the whip, screaming?" he hissed, goaded by his enemy's words. "What will you find out, Krycek? Nothing? Is that what scares you? The emptiness? The lies, and deceit? Do the screams compensate for every dead body, every person you ever killed, or betrayed, in your miserable, pointless excuse for a life?"

Krycek turned away. "There's nothing to discover. I know all there is to know about myself." He plucked the cuffs off the bed, then turned, his expression savage. "This won't be the first time. I've been to that dark place a hundred times before. More. Only this time I want **you** to be the one to take me there. There aren't any surprises there for me. I know what I'll find. You on the other hand..." Krycek grinned, his white teeth gleaming. He moved into the shadows again and emerged, close to his victim. "You know, I've always had a certain...affinity with rats, and you..." He traced a leather-clad finger over Skinner's broad, naked scalp, down his neck, and along his arm, tracing the line of muscle. "You have always reminded me of a panther. A sleek black panther. All dark fur, and feline grace, dangerous claws sheathed in velvet..." His finger ended up on Skinner's hand, and he pulled it up to his mouth, and sucked Skinner's fingers into his mouth, then let him go again. "Prowling, poised - ready to pounce. It's ironic isn't it, that the rat has the cat in a trap?" He laughed out loud, and Skinner closed his eyes, and laid his head back against the wall, sickened. "Come, my caged panther. I have you leashed." Krycek placed his hands under the waistband of Skinner's shorts, and allowed his fingers to caress the other man's naked body, sliding his paws over taut, tense buttocks. Skinner's self control snapped, and he reached out with a growl, buried his fingers in Krycek's hair, and forced him to the ground.

"Then hold onto the leash tightly." Skinner hissed, bending over the kneeling man. "Because if you let it go - I'll strike."

"Strike, Master." Krycek grinned holding out the two cuffs, as an offering. "I'm yours. Hit me, hurt me." His eyes glowed green with need, and the half-light caught the moistened flesh of his lips. Skinner closed his eyes, trying to find some place he could go to in his head to make sense of this.

"Just think of me as a gift." Krycek purred. "Offered up to you on a plate. So now you can do everything you've ever wanted to do to me. Visit your anger upon my naked flesh, Master."

Hurt me. Leave thought behind, and become instinct, my enemy. Give into it. You know you want to."

The night was dark, and there was no sound in the room as Skinner loosened his hold on sleek black hair, accepted the cuffs, and fastened them tight around his enemy's wrists. He loomed over his captive, his captor, the outline of his broad, solid cock clear inside his shorts. Krycek let out the smallest of whimpers, and pressed his head in close, mouth open, and found his way blocked, and a finger placed across his lips.

"I'll say what. And when. Boy."

Krycek blinked, and his entire body trembled with excitement under Skinner's fingertip. "Yes, Master."

"Undress." Skinner snapped.

Krycek nodded, and undid his black jeans, eased them down his thighs, and kicked them away. He wasn't wearing any underwear. Skinner stood back, arms crossed over his chest, wordless and expressionless, save for one raised eyebrow. With a sigh, Krycek shrugged off his black leather jacket, and then stood expectantly. Skinner motioned with his head, an almost imperceptible movement, to the other man's white tee shirt.

"This?" Krycek gestured, plucking it between forefinger and thumb.

"Yes. Or don't you want me to see **this**." Skinner traced a hand over the prosthetic, but Krycek just laughed.

"I don't care what you see. I'm yours, Master. If it pleases you to see my scars, then go ahead." He tugged the tee shirt over his head, and stood naked before his master, before his slave.

"Move into the light. Where I can see you." Skinner knocked the leather case to the floor and sat down in his armchair, in the shadows, watching as Krycek stepped forward, his naked body catching the lamplight.

The other man's flesh seemed dappled, pale and strong, the hard muscles rippling under the skin, and Skinner took a sharp intake of breath, finding some nugget of arousal tugging at him, deep inside. Men's bodies had rarely aroused him before, but then he had never had one offered up to him like this before, with its owner in cuffs, awaiting his next instruction. Could this be a secret desire he had hidden so deep in the darkest recesses of his heart that he had barely been aware of it before? Skinner flinched, facing Krycek, facing himself. *Just put on a show...to save your life...* but what if, in pretence, he discovered some part of himself that he feared, and had always fought to control?

The cat took his time, seated in the shadows, psyching himself up for the part he would play in order to save his own life. He surveyed the rat, eyes lingering over a lean muscled stomach, and a solid chest. He glanced down at the slightly curved cock, swinging in its dark nest of wiry curls. Krycek shifted impatiently, annoyed by the scrutiny, clearly craving action.

"Am I keeping you waiting, boy?" Skinner growled, and Krycek twisted his mouth, and shook his head.

"No, sir." He said, his tone half an inflection away from insolence.

"Good. Come here."

Skinner leaned forward, and watched as the other man knelt before him. He noted the way Krycek's head nuzzled against his knee, and reached out a hand to brush one dark curl of hair away from his slave's face. His fingers fondled the bare flesh of Krycek's naked shoulder, and then dropped down to linger on the prosthetic arm.

"You'll have to lose this. I want the real you, without artifice." Skinner ordered, not sure why, just that he did.

Krycek raised his head, and looked with cold eyes into Skinner's face. "No." He stated firmly.

"Yes." Skinner replied implacably.

There was silence for a long moment, then Krycek got up.

"My arm is part of me. It stays," he said. "Without it I'm..."

"Vulnerable?" Skinner got up, circled him. "I thought that was what you wanted, Alex."

"Don't call me that." Krycek's flashed an angry green.

"I will, if I want. Isn't that what you're really asking for?"

"Don't push me on this, Skinner!" Krycek snapped. "You're here to do what I want."

"And you want me to be in charge." Skinner said mildly, stopping in front of the other man. "You can call this off, Alex, it's your game, but I have to play it as well as I can. My life is at stake after all. You have nothing at stake - so how can you get the thrill if you don't let me off the leash?"

"And if I let you off the leash, you'll strike. Isn't that what you said?" Krycek hissed.

"Don't you want me to strike?" Skinner asked, raising a quizzical eyebrow. "Forgive me, I thought that was why you were here."

Krycek glared at him, and they stood, unmoving, pale flesh and tan flesh, facing each other, both caught in the shadows.

"Come on, boy." Skinner moved in close, angled his head, felt a strange fire surge through his veins. "Leave thought behind and become instinct, my enemy. Give into it." He repeated Krycek's words back to him, and watched the thin sheen of sweat break out on the other

man's body. "How can I give you what you want, if you won't give it up?" Skinner murmured into Krycek's ear.

"I can't." Krycek looked up at him, green eyes almost moist. "I never can." His head hung limply. "I glimpse it," he said desperately to Skinner. "I see what I want, but I can't give myself to it. I don't trust. It isn't in my nature."

"But you can trust me. You've given me no choice but to be trustworthy. Yes?" Skinner's tone was soft, almost kind, like a caress. His fingers dug into Krycek's shoulder, eliciting a wince from the other man.

"Subdue me then. **Make** me yours, but I won't be willing flesh - I enjoy the battle too much." Krycek's eyes were a challenge. Skinner's fingers dug into his other shoulder now, and he was forced back down onto the floor, one reluctant knee bending, and then the other, until he was humbled once more before his master.

"I can't tell you that you can trust me not to hurt you, because I will." Skinner lifted Krycek's chin, and looked into those stubborn eyes. "I'll hurt you badly, I'll hurt you until you scream and beg, and then I'll hurt you some more. I'll make you mine, boy. You'll be mine, body and soul, until your screams merge with your worst nightmares, and you lose yourself in my power. And when you finish screaming, I'll still be here. There is no escape. There's only me."

Krycek trembled, and Skinner felt a heady sensation of power running through him. He was clearly doing something right, and it felt good. It felt...too good.

"Now..." Skinner bent his head back down to Krycek's ear. "Take off the arm, and let me see you naked. Really naked, Alex."

Krycek licked his lips nervously, then nodded, unable to meet Skinner's eyes. He undid the prosthetic, and threw it down on the floor. He didn't look up, as Skinner traced a finger over his stump.

"Do you think it makes you ugly, boy?" Skinner asked.

"I wouldn't care if it did. I can buy what I need, or just take it." Krycek snapped.

Skinner slapped him hard across the face. "Watch your tone, and lose the attitude, Alex," he warned.

Krycek licked the blood away from his torn lip and nodded, sullen.

"I know about boys like you." Skinner's hand kneaded into Krycek's neck. "Always pushing, always insolent, goading. Disobeying orders, challenging, forcing me to get rough."

"Oh yeah." Krycek's head snapped up, a laugh in his eyes. "I'll be him if you want, Master," he said. "For just the next few hours I'll be him, and you can do what you've always wanted to do to him. Just imagine I'm him...Please..." He rubbed his face against the side of Skinner's

leg. Skinner stood still, fists clenched. He was frozen for so long, that Krycek finally looked up - and saw the shock on the big man's face.

"Oh, you didn't know? You didn't know what you want in your heart?" Krycek laughed. "I know. I've always known. You want him as much as I want you. It hurts, doesn't it?"

"Don't make me see this, don't make me **be** this..." Skinner turned away abruptly, but Krycek was there, naked, willing, insinuating his sensuous flesh against Skinner's body.

"We can both have what we want - don't you see?" Krycek purred, nuzzling at Skinner's neck. Skinner's muscles were corded with tension. Krycek plucked the whip from the nightstand, and knelt again at Skinner's feet, offering him the whip, naked save for the leather cuff around one wrist. "I'm yours, Master. Use me." He implored.

Something inside Skinner snapped, and he found himself taking the whip, moving fast, in a frenzy of activity. He picked Krycek up and hauled him over to the bed, pushed him so that he was lying face down, consumed by the desire to hurt.

"I'm not going to tie you, boy." Skinner snarled. "I'm going to whip you, and you're going to take it, without moving."

"Yes, Master." Krycek's words were muted, buried in the pillow.

Skinner raised the whip and brought it down with a hiss on the other man's naked flesh. It left a livid red welt, and made his captive gasp. "Did it hurt?" Skinner leaned forward, grabbed a handful of dark hair, and looked into pain-filled green eyes.

"Yes, Master." Krycek panted.

"Good." Skinner dropped him, and ran the whip lovingly over the younger man's lean, solid flesh. He trailed the whip over his buttocks, watching Krycek flinch as it touched the sore welt on his ass. The next blow snapped down without warning, warming the flesh, stroking it, and painting another deep red welt onto the pale skin. Krycek gasped again, and Skinner smiled, enjoying the flawed beauty of the body writhing beneath his whip. He swung the whip again, and again, and Krycek's gasps turned into low moans of pain, his body convulsing with each burning caress.

"Be still." Skinner thundered, one flat hand descending on Krycek's head, pressing him down into the pillow. Now the whip swirled its lightning flash over the younger man's back, lashing across his shoulders. Krycek screamed, his cries reverberating around the room.

"Please, stop...please...stop..." he panted. Skinner paused, searching his mind for knowledge of these rituals. He recalled something about safe words, and negotiations, and dismissed them with a snort. Their only negotiation had been the threat of death this man held over his head. He redoubled his efforts, snapping the whip back again and again, seeking his vengeance, and visiting every last ounce of his frustrated hatred onto that willing body, until Krycek's voice had dissipated into a series of incoherent moans. Only then did Skinner stop, surveying his captive with a dispassionate eye.

"Get up, boy, and serve me." He commanded, throwing the whip down, and seating himself in armchair once more. Krycek eased himself gingerly off the bed, walked unsteadily over to the chair, and knelt at Skinner's feet. He reached forward, and tugged Skinner's shorts down, then grinned in triumph as the hard, eager cock rose up in front of them both. Skinner growled in anger, his own words reverberating in his head... *I'm hardly likely to get aroused by whipping the shit out of you.* Damn, the ratbastard for being right, for knowing him better than he knew himself.

"I see Master took some pleasure in his slave's distress." Krycek purred in a goading tone.

"Shut up." Skinner backhanded the other man hard across the jaw, then grabbed hold of Krycek's face, pushed him down roughly towards his cock...and hesitated.

Krycek's eyes were still swimming from his recent ordeal, the salt water dissolving the green into a hazy, red-rimmed aqua. His lips were swollen, and his face was streaked with tear-stains. Skinner sighed, and shook his head, gentle fingers wiping the tears away. Krycek froze beneath his hands.

"Don't be fucking kind to me..." He growled.

"Poor boy." Skinner placed tender lips against Krycek's forehead. "Why do you need to torture yourself like this? How many things do you need to be punished for?"

"Fuck off." Krycek pulled back, but Skinner was too strong for him, and the other man held his shoulders tight, keeping him crushed against his big chest.

"Poor, sweet, slave boy." Skinner murmured, lips nuzzling Krycek's swollen mouth, stealing a kiss. "Where does it take you? What do you find under the lash?"

"This isn't what I want." Krycek struggled to be free. "Have you forgotten what I'll do to you if you don't get this right, Skinner?"

"Master." Skinner corrected mildly. He placed his lips against Krycek's again, and plundered deep inside, tongue finding tongue, pushing in. He held the other man's body down while he explored his mouth, forcing his reluctant companion into the embrace. Finally Krycek's body relaxed, and he opened up, returning the kiss vigorously, pressing his lithe body against the wiry curls on Skinner's chest. "You're mine, remember," Skinner murmured, when he released his slave.

"Yes, Master." Krycek replied meekly.

"Suck me." Skinner sat back in the chair, and waited.

"Make me. I like to be forced." Krycek demanded.

"Suck me." Skinner leaned forward, and brushed the damp, sweaty hair out of Krycek's eyes.

"I said...make me." Krycek challenged. Skinner held him close, ran light fingers down Krycek's back, caressed his welts, explored each one with blunt, cruelly probing fingertips. Krycek yelped and tried to draw back - only to find, once again, that Skinner was too strong for him, and he was held fast. "That...hurts...Master..." Krycek panted.

Skinner wrapped a big paw in the younger man's thick, dark hair, and licked a line of sweat from his exposed throat, ending up at his ear.

"Good," he whispered. "I enjoy hurting you. Now I won't say it again - suck me." The fingers of his other hand dug savagely into the welts on Krycek's buttocks, and Krycek melted into him with a low moan, lowered his head, and took Skinner's cock into his mouth.

The big man was surprised by how quickly his cock swelled in that willing, moist embrace. Krycek gave head like the expert he undoubtedly was, licking the base of Skinner's cock, sliding his tongue along the shaft, then flicking at the crown, before swallowing the thick penis whole, straight down his talented throat.

"Shit!" Skinner's hands dug deep into Krycek's welted shoulders in shock, then recovered, relaxing into the pleasurable sensation. He wrapped his big thighs around the kneeling man, and pulled him in even closer, keeping him a captive there, one hand still holding that bountiful dark hair tightly within a bunched fist.

The younger man brought Skinner to the edge of climax, then settled back on his heels, with a look of triumph in his eyes.

"I wouldn't want Master to come before he's fucked me," he said with that twisted smile. Skinner's fists clenched, but he ignored the veiled order, and got up, his erection bobbing in front of him. "There's other toys we can play with," Krycek smirked with glee at how easily Skinner's arousal had been accomplished. "I brought other stuff. Look." He retrieved the case from the floor and pulled out some items. "Ball gag, nipple clamps, cock rings..." He held them up. Skinner ignored the proffered gifts, his eyes fixed on Krycek's naked body as if surveying a tasty meal.

"I don't need them." He snapped.

"But..." Krycek's eyes narrowed. "I enjoy playing with them."

"I said, I don't need them." Skinner repeated. He sat down on the edge of the bed, and beckoned. Krycek considered the unspoken command for a moment, then crawled over sullenly, and knelt between his knees again.

"Why would I need clamps when I have my mouth?" Skinner asked, and he bent his head, and took one of Krycek's nipples between his lips, while his hand played with the other. Krycek gasped as Skinner's teeth closed around the sensitive nub of flesh and nibbled - then bit down hard.

"Shit...please..." Krycek pushed back, struggling to free himself, but Skinner had him trapped again, those solid thighs encasing his flesh. "Please..." He pushed with his arm, only to find it

captured in one of Skinner's paws, and levered up behind his back. Skinner's mouth moved to Krycek's other nipple and he bit again, harder than before, making the younger man squirm frantically in his grasp. "Hurts?" Skinner drew back, looking into those green eyes, swallowed up by Krycek's need.

"Yes. Hurts." Krycek panted.

"Good." Skinner ducked his head down and bit again, savagely, ignoring Krycek's moan of pain that turned into a shrill shriek of agony as Skinner's teeth plucked the nipple and pulled it away from his body, then snapped tighter. The fingers of his hand meanwhile pinched Krycek's other nipple hard, between thumb and forefinger. Krycek opened his mouth and roared, bucking against Skinner's thighs. Finally Skinner released him, and looked down on the other man with a grin of pure malice.

"Why would I need a gag when I enjoy hearing these pretty lips scream so much?" He asked, tracing a finger over the swollen lips.

Krycek rested his head on Skinner's knee, still panting, but his eyes glowed as Skinner spoke those words, and he nuzzled against his master, and licked at his flesh, trying to capture that large cock in his mouth again. Skinner stopped him. "What do you like, boy?" He asked.

"I like to be tied." Krycek replied.

"And why would I tie you when I enjoy watching you writhe?" Skinner told him urbanely. "Lie on the bed. I enjoyed biting you, boy. I want to do it again."

Krycek struggled against invisible bonds, fought against the subtly disturbing skill of the man he held at his mercy, then gave in, and nodded, the tears still flowing freely from his eyes. "I'm yours, Master. You can do what you like with me," he whispered.

"I know." Skinner smiled, took hold of Krycek's face between his hands, and kissed the other man's forehead. Krycek stiffened.

"Don't." He pushed back, but Skinner held him close. "I don't want to be loved, or understood, or...pitied." Krycek spat.

"I know." Skinner said again, brushing gentle fingers over the younger man's tear-stained cheeks.

"I don't fucking need it." Krycek growled.

"Yes. I know." Skinner bent his head, and tenderly kissed Krycek's mouth.

"I fucking hate you." Krycek moaned, hanging limply in Skinner's grasp.

"I know. I hate you too." Skinner nipped a line of kisses along Krycek's jaw, lovingly swept down to his wet eyelashes and kissed them dry, then captured Krycek's waiting lips with his own. "Now go and lie down like I told you to." Skinner pushed him towards the bed.

Krycek lay on his back, and watched as Skinner prowled towards him. The big man's body was lean and muscled, with thick curls of hair on his chest. He was so strong, and so completely masculine that Krycek groaned with need. Skinner's cock was still hard, and Krycek longed to take it into his mouth and suck. Instead he remained still as Skinner lowered himself down onto his body, and pressed his mouth gently over one his tortured nipples. Krycek stiffened, expecting pain, another bite, but Skinner just licked, warming the flesh, and healing it beneath his tongue.

"Fuck you..." Krycek pulled Skinner down, wanting to be abused, covered, and possessed by someone bigger and stronger.

"Down. And don't move, or that whipping I gave you earlier will seem like a walk in the park compared to what I do to you," Skinner warned. Krycek gave into the thrill that command created in his gut, and settled back down. Skinner's head dipped once more, and licked his other nipple, then moved to his shoulder and bit gently, on to his arms, biting - little nipping bites that didn't break the skin, that just hurt enough to make Krycek sob, but not enough to make him scream. Frustrated, Krycek pulled at Skinner again.

"I meant it." Skinner told him, his dark eyes flashing a warning. "Now roll over onto your front, and stay still."

Krycek did as he was told, tensing as he felt that hot mouth descend on his body, nip his flesh, and then move elsewhere. Those cruel teeth dug a little deeper now, stayed a little longer, and when he cried out, Skinner's big hands held him down on the bed until the spasm of pain passed. Finally, Skinner ended up at his buttocks, and trailed a line of kisses over them, soft, sweet, and gentle. Krycek relaxed, giving himself up to the tender caress, then screamed for an eternity as Skinner's teeth dug in hard, and stayed there. He was still screaming minutes later, when Skinner released him.

"Did that hurt?" Skinner wiped the damp hair from Krycek's sweaty forehead, and smiled down into his pain filled eyes.

"Yes it fucking hurt." Krycek whimpered.

Skinner laughed like a vengeful god claiming a sacrifice. "Good."

He kissed Krycek's earlobe, and the younger man tensed, expecting another bite, and being rewarded with a gentle sucking that sent shivers down his spine. Skinner trailed his mouth along to Krycek's lips and kissed him gently, opening his mouth. Krycek moaned, enjoying the feel of Skinner's big body pressing on top of his, holding him down. Then, unexpectedly, Skinner's teeth found his bottom lip, and he bit again. Krycek struggled to move, gasped out his agony, but Skinner was too strong for him and held him pinned beneath him. When Skinner finally released him, he could feel the blood running down his chin.

"Come here." Skinner placed a hand on Krycek's neck and pulled him off the bed. "I haven't finished with you yet, boy." He pushed Krycek onto his knees, then sat down on the bed, picking up the whip. "I want you to jerk yourself off." Skinner nodded at Krycek's stiff,

neglected cock, and the other man looked up in surprise. "Do it - and look at me the whole time. Remember - I own you."

Krycek's eyes flashed angrily, spitting fire.

"Do it." Skinner flicked the whip negligently, and it burnt a searing line across his body.

He wrapped his hand around his cock, every muscle in his body shouting his outrage, fighting his bondage as much as he welcomed it. He slid his hand along his hard penis, back and forth, then closed his eyes, remembering the feel of Skinner flogging him, his hard body holding him down, his mouth devouring him... He gave a startled yelp as the whip flicked across his chest breaking into his reverie.

"Keep your eyes open," Skinner said. "I told you to look at me, and I meant it." The big man caressed the whip threateningly with his hands, and his dark brown eyes never left Krycek's green ones as the younger man continued to jerk off. Krycek moistened his lips with his tongue, putting on a display, as he knelt there on the floor in the shadows, his hand moving fast on his cock, his eyes locked in a bitter glare with the man seated on the bed.

"Call my name." Skinner commanded, twining the whip in his hands as he watched. "Call my name when you come."

"Damn you!" Krycek roared, his cock responding to Skinner's words even as his mind screamed its defiance. He almost laughed at the irony of his situation, needing Skinner to dominate him, hating himself for the need, hating Skinner for being what he most wanted him to be - and for not being what he could not dare ask for. "Damn you, Skinner!" he cried out - and he came. His body convulsed as he came with Skinner's name on his lips. Krycek sat back on his heels, feeling drained, savouring the raw sensation of delicious pain that spread from a host of different wounds throughout his entire body, caressing him, eating him up.

Skinner grinned, his limbs loose and relaxed, like a big cat. "Do you want me to fuck you now?" He asked casually. "Is that what you want?" He got up and went to crouch in front of the other man.

"No. I want you to rape me." Krycek growled. "Do it. Force me, take me..."

Skinner shook his head. "Beg me." He whispered in Krycek's ear.

Krycek howled in anger. "No, fuck it. That isn't what I want. I want you to force me, get hold of me, and take me, Skinner. Make me. I don't want a choice. I don't want to choose..."

"Beg me." Skinner said again.

"No." Krycek's green eyes were sullen.

Without warning he found himself on his front, his one arm clipped to the headboard of the bed. The whip flashed down like a streak of pure molten fire, burning into his flesh, and he screamed out loud in a long, keening wail of pain.

"Does it hurt?" Skinner asked, bringing the whip back down over and over again on the sore flesh.

"Yes, fuck you, yes...it hurts...it hurts..." Krycek gibbered, flailing around in his bonds, his body writhing.

"Good. Now beg me to fuck you." Skinner said, raising the whip again.

Krycek steeled himself to refuse, tried to force himself to be quiet, but it was no good. He would have agreed to anything as he descended into that furnace of pain, consumed by the whip that flashed like lightning over his flesh, covering his body with fine red welts. Between them, Skinner and the whip took him so far into his own pain that he entered that other realm, that realm he craved, and he opened his eyes dreamily, his pupils dilating as the endorphins kicked in and transported him away on wave after wave of almost orgasmic pleasure.

Skinner paused, glanced down at Krycek's tortured flesh, enjoying the way it moved and writhed. Then he resumed his painful caress. He became one with the whip, enjoyed its sibilant hiss as it arced through the air, and the snap as it sliced through the younger man's flesh, leaving its livid imprint, marking him, as if he were property. He felt some age-old instinct rising in his blood, searing him with its heat, and claiming him as he claimed the body of this beautiful, dangerous, damaged man on the bed beneath him.

"Please..." Krycek sobbed. "Please fuck me. Please...fuck me. Fuck me, fuck me now. Please..." Skinner's arm slowed, and he grabbed Krycek by the neck, swung him off the bed, and pushed him over to the case.

"Get me lube, and condoms," he snapped.

Krycek shook his head. "No lube," he whispered. "Make it rough. Hard. I don't want lube."

"Don't be a fucking idiot." Skinner roared. "It could tear you up..."

"I don't fucking care." Krycek yelled back.

"Well I do." Skinner rummaged in the case, one hand still on Krycek's neck, found the condoms, then dug further, and found some lube.

"Damn you - do it my way...do it..." Krycek's words were swallowed up as Skinner threw him physically across the room, and thrust him down over the back of the armchair, kicking his legs apart.

"Are you ready for this, boy?" Skinner hissed, leaning over him. "Are you ready for **me**."

"Fuck me. Just do it." Krycek snarled, and Skinner slapped on a condom, and slicked lubricant over his cock. He covered Krycek's body with his own, prised his buttocks apart, and rubbed one rough finger up inside the other man.

"No, your cock. Now - I want it now." Krycek demanded. "Use me, fuck me."

A heat rose inside Skinner, and he abandoned reason, wrenched Krycek's buttocks open with his hand, and then thrust into him, burying himself deep inside the slick heat of the other man's body in one fluid motion. He placed his hands on Krycek's shoulders and levered himself in even further, enjoying the little whimpering sounds his captive made as he was so brutally impaled. Skinner thrust once, twice, then lowered his head to the back of Krycek's neck and bit - hard. Krycek screamed, his body bucking under the hard caress, but Skinner took his time, marking him with the bite, enjoying the feel of Krycek's muscles clenching around his cock as the pain engulfed his squirming prey.

Krycek sobbed, his breathing coming in frantic gasps. He felt owned, used, overpowered. Skinner's big body was like a furnace, pressing down on top of him, hot and heavy, and his thick, hard cock was buried deep inside him. He gulped for air as Skinner withdrew, releasing his captive's neck, and sliding his cock back out. Krycek braced himself, as Skinner clasped burly arms around his chest, bending his crushed body even further forward over the chair, and then the big man thrust back into him, harder than before, his cock lancing deep inside Krycek's tortured flesh. Krycek screamed again, no longer sure who or what he was, lost in the frenzy, in the blood rush, in the raw, primal act of sex, and an age-old rite of submission. The older, stronger male dominated the younger, weaker one: Skinner's fingers were on his nipples, clamping down hard, pinching them in time to the thrusts of his body as he visited every ounce of his rage on Krycek's body. Krycek felt the pain of Skinner's hard cock tearing into him, crushing him beneath that powerful, muscled body, possessing him as he'd never been possessed before, and his mind flew, embracing the moment, and the pain, even as his body cried out for respite.

"Is this what you wanted, boy?" Skinner demanded, his tone a low growl in Krycek's ear, his body moving insistently in a vicious rhythm of conquest.

"Yes...Master..." Krycek panted, feeling the hard, upholstered edge of the chair dig into his midriff.

"Does it hurt?" Skinner asked, thrusting back deep inside Krycek's waiting body, and causing him to scream again. That big cock was too solid, too real, forcing its way hungrily into his very soul, demanding his attention, commanding his worship.

"Yes...Master..." Krycek repeated, holding onto the chair, his knees giving way.

"Good." Skinner thrust again, and again, picked up speed, his large body covering the younger man, slamming into him repeatedly. He wrapped a hand in Krycek's hair, pulled his head back so that his throat was exposed, and then bit the side of Krycek's neck. Krycek gave a strangled gasp, and Skinner thrust deep one more time, before coming.

Krycek passed out for a few seconds. When he came to, he was still lying under Skinner's sated body, listening to the other man's laboured breathing, and he could still feel his master's cock resting inside his body. They lay there for an eternity, complicit in what they had shared, joined for a moment in an exchange of power that had been raw, brutal, and exciting.

Then Skinner withdrew, and threw the condom down on the floor. He glanced down at the body he had just pounded into, and shook his head, trying to clear the frenzied thoughts, to purge the sensation of power he had just enjoyed. It was addictive. Krycek was covered in welts, and bruises had started to emerge alongside the livid weals on his pale flesh. Skinner fought to feel his usual hatred and contempt for his old enemy, combined with a healthy dose of a very real fear, but instead felt only pity.

"Alex." Skinner's hands caressed the other man's head, gently wiped a streak of blood from his mouth. "Was that really what you wanted?" He asked, his dark eyes struggling to understand. He crouched down beside his enemy, and lovingly stroked his back, kissed his neck. Krycek lay helpless under this tender assault, unable to move, his eyes registering his hatred of the act of kindness, and the pity that lay behind it.

"Yeah. Oh yeah...I wanted it." Krycek allowed Skinner to help him up, and guide him to the bed, then he fell down, his body still quivering in the aftermath of the ordeal he had stage-managed for himself.

Skinner sat, looked at the younger man's battered, bleeding body, and shook his head. He lay down on the other side of the bed, feeling tired and drained, and closed his eyes. A few seconds later, he felt a wet mouth nuzzling at his cheek, and a bruised body made its way into his arms, taking them, and wrapping them around tortured flesh, until he was holding his enemy tight, in a loving embrace.

"Poor boy." Skinner murmured, brushing a kiss onto Krycek's damp forehead. "Is it so hard to be what you are?"

Krycek closed his eyes to block out his own pathetic need, and angled his face up, wanting, **needing** the kisses, and hating himself for it - hating his old adversary even more. This wasn't what he wanted, wrapped up here, kept safe in a pair of big, strong, loving arms. This wasn't it...it wasn't... The tears fled silently down his face and he clung to his tormentor, buried his head in the strong chest, and hung on to the solid flesh until the moment of weakness passed, and he fell asleep.

Skinner watched over him for a long time, then relinquished his hold on Krycek's body. He reached out a hand, gently touched it to the sleeping man's dark hair, then got up and pulled a blanket over him, before leaving the room and going to take a shower.

Skinner scrubbed himself for what seemed like hours, removing the raw stink of sex that clung to him, permeating every pore in his body. He placed his weary scalp against the tiled wall and wondered what had happened here tonight. How darkness itself had seeped into his lair, and claimed him for its own, taking and shaping him into some beast he couldn't

begin to understand, still less control. He remembered the feeling of that body beneath him, of losing all sense of himself as he pounded into it, of Krycek's sensuous limbs moving in time to the whip, and he turned the shower to cold, dampening down his newly burgeoning erection.

Skinner returned to his bedroom, a towel wrapped around his waist, to find the bed empty. He glanced around, and a figure emerged from the shadows, collecting up items, and returning them to their case. Krycek was already fully dressed, the clothes covering all the marks on his body, save for his bitten, bloody lip, and a newly forming bruise on his jaw.

"How did I do?" Skinner asked. He leaned against the wall, and watched his enemy scuttle back and forth in the shadows.

Krycek shrugged. "You don't get marks out of ten." He snapped.

"No, but do I get to stay alive?" Skinner demanded.

"For now." Krycek nodded.

"I have to give a repeat performance?"

Krycek straightened up, and held out his wrist so that Skinner could remove the cuff.

"Would it seriously upset you if I said 'yes'?"

There was silence between them for a moment, then Skinner shrugged, and removed the cuff.

"I thought not." Krycek smiled, his white teeth gleaming in the half-light. He returned the cuff to the case and snapped it shut. Then he turned and without warning clasped Skinner's jaw between his fingers, holding the other man's face tight in a savage, iron grip. "Just remember this - **I own you.**"

"How could I forget?" Skinner replied with a mocking incline of his head.

"You forgot - for a while. See - I told you I'd show you something about yourself."

"And **I** showed **you.**" Skinner murmured softly.

"You showed me nothing." Krycek snarled angrily. "You gave me what I wanted, what I **made** you give me. That's all."

"Is it?"

"Yes." Krycek grabbed his leather jacket, and pulled it over his prosthetic arm before shouldering the rest of his body into it.

"I don't think so." Skinner stepped in close, too close, his body trapping Krycek against the wall. "I think..." Skinner murmured, "that inside you're just a little boy, Alex. A little boy who wants to feel safe, and you hate that weakness don't you? You hate it enough to want to punish yourself for it - or to find someone else to do the punishing for you. You want to force your weakness out - as brutally as possible, but it never works. It always comes back." Krycek's face was expressionless, and he made no answer. "So you devise your little traps," Skinner continued, "trying to get what you need, without risking yourself, and in the process not getting what you truly want."

"And that is?" Krycek raised an eyebrow.

"To be loved." Skinner shrugged. "What else?" Krycek's green eyes flashed angrily. "It's ironic isn't it? The rat gets caught in one of his own traps. You'll never trust anyone enough to get what you need, so you'll never be satisfied."

"And neither will you." Krycek stated with a sly grin. "And we both know what, or should I say **who** that is." The color drained from Skinner's face, as Krycek's barb hit home. "And while we're on the subject of animal alter egos," Krycek leaned close, and Skinner could smell the stink of sex that clung to him, "I think that tonight, for the first time, you freed that beast you've always kept hidden before."

"Maybe." Skinner's dark eyes glowed with a bitter self-knowledge.

"And, what's more, you liked it." Krycek's sensuous lips were mocking.

"Yes." It was a simple statement of truth.

"I took you there, I showed you what you are." Krycek taunted.

"We could both be more than this. We each have something to offer that the other one needs." Skinner said, his dark eyes intense.

"You don't seriously think me redeemable?" Krycek laughed. "Do you honestly imagine that you can drag me into the light?"

"No." Skinner shrugged. "But you won't drag me into the dark either."

"Well then, we'll both have to exist in the shadows won't we?" Krycek grinned malevolently, and picked up his case. "Next time, I want to be whipped for longer," he told the other man.

Skinner shook his head. "I didn't go easy on you. You're covered in welts. You'll sure as hell feel it tomorrow, when the rush fades."

"I can take more. I want more." Krycek insisted. "And you'll give it to me."

"All right." Skinner shrugged. "Whatever you say. You're in charge."

Krycek smiled, and patted Skinner's cheek. "That's right. I am. Remember that."

"And remember that if you set me free, for even one second, I'll turn on you, and kill you with my bare hands." Skinner murmured. Krycek nodded, grimly. He dropped a hard kiss on Skinner's mouth, and the big man tasted the blood from his split lip. He watched dispassionately as Krycek exited his apartment, and then he wandered over to the window, and glanced out: Daybreak. Rats everywhere were slipping back to their sewers.

Skinner stood at his window, and watched his savagely mauled prey disappear into the shadows far below. He absently fingered the invisible leash around his neck, and then, with a brief, low growl of defiance, he prowled back into the shadows of his cage.

THE END

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