

While he waited, he thought about that girl from earlier today. Face scarred from some past misfortune, one eye almost completely shut. People around her glanced quickly at her, before hurriedly continuing on their way. She kept her head down and tried to hide the scars behind her hair. He approved of that face. She was almost perfect. Vague ideas of how he'd improve on her even further danced in his mind.

Woman's arrival interrupted his fantasies. He was instructed to sit while the masked lady produced a leather mask. This new mask was similar to the one he often wore. Both were leather and constricting, covering his entire head. But while his mask covered only his right eye, this one blindfolded him completely. It was an interesting experience.

After securing the mask in place, there was a soft rustling sound and the woman sighted contentedly. „I will tie you to the chair. You are not to move.“ She whispered, „Be warned, I will punish any misbehaving. Do not test me.“

He smirked to himself. She was being charming. So careful. Alas, she needn't have bothered whispering. Nobody could hide from him for long. He'd find her anytime he wanted. He always found them. But no need to tell her that. The mysterious woman was at his mercy and didn't even know it. And how exciting was that. He was glad he came here.

The woman continued: „Do you know why I masked you, and not just myself?“ Perfectly aware he was not supposed to answer, he did anyway, wanting to hear his voice touch this new mask. „I do not. Do enlighten me.“ He also got to enjoy her displeased silence. It didn't last long.

„You arrogant bastard. Here you sit, so full of yourself, the whole world on the palm of your hand, waiting for you to do as you please. Everyone unknowingly awaiting your judgement, those you deemed worthy with mere hours left before they get the grand-master's undivided attention.“ The words positively dripped with sarcasm. She leaned closer. „They get to wait until you make them perfect. Make them beautiful.“ Last word was almost a purr. „I know you hate that I mask myself around you. After all, everyone belongs to you, and I am preventing you from seeing what is rightfully yours. It makes you angry. You have to wonder what my face looks like. Don't you?“ She hissed the question.

She surprised him. She was almost right. Although he wasn't really angry. No need because she is always there for him to perfect. But he let her continue.

„And that is why we are here, my dear. That is the reason you are wearing a mask, and I...” she paused „am not“. That was whispered right behind his ear and he had to admit it had the desired effect. The thought that she was right there, uncovered, was intriguing. He had been wondering. A cold day in hell would come before he'd show that, though.

„Why do you believe I would care about you standing around without your mask?“ His words contained just the right amount of contempt.

„You may be a decent actor“, hint of laughter could be heard in her voice, like she was perfectly aware how insulting that was, „but you cannot change the facts.“

„What ever do you mean?“

„My dear, you are here. That speaks for itself, no?“ She chuckled. „You are so curious about me, you were willing to come here under my terms, and are now sitting tied and masked. At my mercy.“ Another chuckle.

He wasn't inclined to correct her. „It would appear you are correct. So what torture have you planned for me. Now that you have me at your mercy. Hot iron, perhaps?“

„Oh, I will not have to put a finger on you.“ She laughed like the mere thought was ridiculous. „I doubt it will be necessary.“ She stopped her pacing and came back again to stand behind him. „I'll just have you here sitting, with my face barred to the world, but denied to you. I will refuse you what you consider yours for the taking. For weeks you have been wondering what my face looks like. Am I considered a great beauty with perfectly symmetrical features? Or a plain woman with nothing worth noticing? Or do I perhaps have scars? Maybe I am disformed in some way? Wouldn't you like to know.“ That chuckle again. „Therefore, you are to sit here and wonder. And I will bask in the fact that you are not only unable to ever see me, but also that you are unable to imagine perfecting me. I am denying you your masterpiece.“ She was getting closer and closer until she was but hissing in his ear. „And that is hardly the best part. Because despite all this, you cannot do anything about it. If you were ever to take me, like I know you are dying to, and are capable of, all you would do is prove to me beyond a shadow of doubt that you are unable to control yourself. And you would prove I have read you like an open book. A mere mortal has found his way to the depths of your genius mind and made it his playground. I have made you less than what you believe yourself to be. And that, my virtuoso, is why regardless of what happens, I have already won.“