

Behind The Mask

by Futark

Chapter 1

“Mmh, mmh, ah! Here it comes.”

I’m tired of having to cum in her mouth every morning... She could at least give me a blowjob once in a while, but she never does.

“Hm, there’s not much, but thank you, Cupcake. What’s with that face? You know I need it. It’s essential for keeping my body balanced, so I have enough energy to get through the day.”

Great, Grace is annoyed—again.

I know I don’t look very enthusiastic when I give her her daily dose of juice. But how could I be? I’m barely awake, and I’ve got to jerk off just to give her what she wants EVERY DAY. She doesn’t even try to turn me on or anything. She just stares at me, almost bored to death, waiting for me to unload. My schedule is already pretty demanding, and having to ejaculate right before I start my day wears me out.

And please, stop calling me Cupcake... I hate cupcakes...

“Sorry, it’s still pretty early, and I’m still tired from yesterday’s shift.”

“Don’t worry, Cupcake, I’m not mad. You still taste amazing. You’re still my pretty, lovely boy.” She gives me a kiss, leaving a lingering taste of my own semen in my mouth—I suspect that’s part of what turns her on. “Okay, I’m off! Love you!”

“Have a nice day, Cookie!”

Cookie and Cupcake, what a blast...!

5:42. I’ve got a bit of time... Let’s go back to bed. Just ten minutes...

Mmhhhh! Huh? 6:31? Fuck! Fuck! Fuck! I’ve got to hurry!

Panties, socks, yesterday’s jean shorts, top... Not this one. Oh no, not this one. This one—an emerald green top with a scoop neck. Perfect. Shoes, shoes, shoes... My dark-green Doc Martens will do. Alright, let’s go! I’ll grab something to eat on my way to the hospital.

6:42. Great. No time for the bakery today. That means vending-machine coffee and whatever sad thing is left in the staff room again. If I miss the 6:46 bus, I'm dead...

—BRRRRRRR-TAT-TAT—

CLANK! CLANK!

—GRRRRRRRRRRRR—

As always, the sidewalk is packed because of this never-ending construction. I weave through the crowd. At times like this, I wouldn't mind being 6'2", but for now, I have to push my way through.

"Excuse me! Sorry. Sorry."

T32! My bus is already there. I'm only a few meters away. I quicken my pace even more.

"Hey! Careful, kid!" says the man I bumped into, visibly annoyed.

"Sorry, mister!" I shout as I keep running.

The bus doors are already starting to close when I finally squeeze inside.

PHEWWW...

I made it! I'm all sweaty now... But at least I'll be on time. How about we don't sleep in next time? We should try sticking to the plan once in a while...

Anyway...

That man called me "kid". It's the third time this week... I'm twenty-one, for God's sake. Yeah, I'm only 5'2", but still... At this point, I'd better get "Adult" tattooed on my forehead.

After a ten-minute drive, the crowded T32 bus stops right in front of Tranquility hospital's parking lot. That's where I get off. I've only got a few minutes left before my shift starts. Off to the ER.

Two ambulances are already there. The crews look hard at work. As soon as I step inside, the atmosphere is exactly what I expected. The ER is already pretty packed. Something must have happened.

"Hey Beth!" I call out as I rush past the reception desk.

She's too busy to give me more than a quick glance.

I really have to get ready fast. I head to the changing room and put on my nurse's uniform. Ready to roll.

"Sky! Great. We need hands!" Maisie, the charge nurse, calls out to me.

"Long story short, there was an explosion due to a gas leak at Holloway Cross. At least a dozen people injured. We've got one here in serious condition. Trauma two. I want you there. Jessica! Bring Sky up to speed."

Jessica is one of my coworkers—blonde, energetic, and quick on her feet. We work really well together, and somewhere along the way, I started considering her a friend.

"Hey, Trouble. Listen. Female, twenty-eight years old. Twenty-five percent TBSA burns—face, neck, chest, both arms. Possible inhalation injury. Soot in the airway, worsening hoarseness. Tachy at on-twenty-eight, pressure on-oh-two over sixty-four, sat ninety-three on fifteen liters. Two large-bores IVs, five hundred of LR in. Still conscious. Copy that?"

"Roger. Let's go!"

I push through the doors of Trauma Two, and the smell hits me first. Smoke, burned fabric, and that unmistakable scent I learned very quickly not to think too hard about.

The patient is already on the bed, surrounded by half a dozen people. Her clothes have been cut away from her upper body, exposing angry burns across her chest and arms. The skin around her face and neck is red and blistered, streaked black with soot.

She's awake.

That's the good news.

"Hey," I say, stepping up beside her. "I'm Sky. I'm one of the nurses taking care of you. Can you tell me your name?"

"Lauren."

The answer comes out rough and breathy.

Airway.

I glance at the monitor. Heart rate in the one-twenties. Pressure still holding. The non-rebreather covers most of her face, oxygen cranked high.

“Lauren, do you know where you are?”

“Hospital.”

“Good. Do you know what happened?”

“My apartment...” She coughs beneath the mask. “There was an explosion.”

Her voice sounds worse than Jessica described.

“She's getting hoarser,” I call out.

The physician looks over from the other side of the bed. One glance at Lauren's face is enough.

“Yeah. We're tubing her. Let's get set up.”

No time to think. Training takes over.

I move.

Suction. Ready.

Airway cart. Open.

I check that the IVs the paramedics placed are still running properly, then start getting everything ready for the intubation while the rest of the team moves around me. Someone hooks up additional monitoring. Another nurse draws blood from one of the lines.

“Sky, get me a second pressure before we push anything.”

“On it.”

The cuff tightens around Lauren's arm.

“Lauren.” I lean closer so she can hear me through the noise. “We're going to put a breathing tube in. Your throat may start swelling because of the heat and smoke, so we want to protect your airway before that happens. Okay?”

Her eyes widen.

“Am I—”

“No.” I keep my voice steady. “We’re doing this now so you keep breathing safely.”

The monitor gives me the new reading.

“Pressure ninety-eight over sixty.”

“Got it.”

Orders come quickly after that.

I repeat each one back, prepare what I’m asked for, check it, then check it again. Around us, Trauma Two has become its own little machine—everyone moving at once without getting in anyone else’s way.

Lauren reaches blindly toward the edge of the bed.

Her hand finds mine.

For half a second, everything else fades behind the pressure of her fingers around mine.

“I’ve got you,” I tell her.

Then we’re moving again.

It’s almost nine by the time Lauren is stable and on her way upstairs, and I finally get a chance to breathe.

Not for long.

The ER is still packed, the waiting room is overflowing, and apparently the rest of the city didn’t get the memo that we’re already dealing with an apartment explosion.

The next few hours disappear into a blur of blood draws, medications, paperwork, pissed-off patients, worried families, and enough beeping monitors to make me seriously consider a career change.

Things finally start to calm down sometime after noon. I have no idea when I last ate. Or where the hell I left my coffee.

A few minutes after I finally get to sit my ass down in the break room for—hopefully—ten or fifteen minutes, Jessica walks in.

“What’s up, Princess? They let you off the hook?”

“Don’t even get me started. What a morning, huh? You didn’t fuck too much shit up while I wasn’t looking over your shoulder?” she asks me, smirking.

“You could check my work if you weren’t disappearing every five minutes to touch up your makeup...” I shoot back.

“Haha, little prick!” she laughs, as she usually does after one of our verbal spats.

“Hey, don’t tell everybody, okay?” I joke.

“Well, you’re the only one with a prick in the ER, so technically, you should have the biggest one... Unless... Haha!”

My stomach reminds me that eating wouldn’t be such a bad idea before getting back to work. I grab the salad I put in the fridge earlier. Jessica follows suit.

“Speaking of pricks, how are things with your... Grace?” The way she says her name tells me she’s not too fond of her.

“Fine.”

“Fine? That’s all you’ve got to say? It’s just fine?” Her skeptical gaze stays fixed on me.

“What do you want me to say? She’s... okay...”

“WOOOW... Incredible... A dream come true.”

“I don’t know...”

“Are you happy?”

“Yes! Sort of...”

“See? You’re not happy! It’s written all over your face.”

“Really?” I suddenly feel exposed.

“Honestly, this morning, you looked like shit—AGAIN. I don’t mean to be insulting, but... lately, before your morning shifts, you look worn out.”

I can feel my cheeks heating up just imagining how I’m going to explain our morning routine.

“Come on, you can tell me. What’s troubling Trouble?” Jessica looks suspiciously enthusiastic.

“I don’t know how to say it...”

“Words usually do the job. Don’t be embarrassed. We see buttholes, green mucus, pus, and scabs all day long. You’ll be fine.”

“Okay! Okay! Every morning, Grace asks me to give her... some... juice...”

Jessica looks thoroughly confused. Fair enough.

“My juice... She wants me to come in her mouth, okay?”

“Ooohhh! Okay. Is it a kink or something?”

“I don’t know! She says she needs it to keep her body balanced. You know, they say it contains vitamins, and she says it gives her more energy...”

“You know that’s bullshit, right?”

“Did you do a study on it?”

“No, but if that were actually true, I think men would’ve figured it out a long time ago!”

“You have a point,” I say, genuinely puzzled.

“But at least you get some kinky action every day.”

“Are you kidding? She makes me jerk off on my own while she just sits there waiting.”

“No shit? She does... nothing? Not even a little licky-sucky?”

“Never...” I lower my head in despair.

“Never? Like... never-never? Wow!” Jessica stares at me in disbelief. “Do you want me to? I mean—your condition must be life-threatening!”

“Stop shitting me.”

“I could suck a dick if it meant saving a friend’s life! It can’t be that difficult... But! Only you, ‘cause you’re so cute!” She winks at me.

“Thanks for the offer... But I’m not dying!”

“Alright, I’ll stop. But seriously, that’s fucked up.” Her expression turns serious again. “That’s crazy selfish of her. You can’t just say yes to everything she asks of you.”

“I don’t, but it’s easier than having her upset all the time.”

“Trouble! You see? That’s not how couples work.” She sounds half worried, half pissed now. “I don’t want you getting hurt by some toxic, manipulative non-cock-sucker.”

“That particular part really made an impression on you.”

“It’s just that I’m putting myself in your shoes, and if my girl didn’t go down on me... That’d be a deal breaker. She doesn’t love you if she doesn’t do THAT for you.”

“You’re pushing it too far—”

“Ladies! Break’s over, we need you right now!” Maisie barges in, interrupting our conversation. “Oh, sorry. Lady and gentleman. Move your butts, thank you.”

“And what butts, huh, Trouble?” Jessica murmurs in my ear, giving me a knowing grin.

“Alright. Let’s go, Princess.”

“Sky, room seventeen. Eighty-three-year-old man. He fell down the stairs at home. His daughter called us.”

“Jessica, room eleven. It should be quick. Join Sky afterward.”

I immediately head to room seventeen.

“HELLO, MISTER!” Experience has taught me to automatically speak louder to older patients. “HOW ARE WE?”

“I told ‘em I’m fine. All this fuss over a little bump on the head.”

“It might not seem much, but there comes a time when your body isn’t quite as tough as you are anymore. I know it’s annoying, but we just need to check a few things, and you’ll be back home in no time,” I tell the old man with a broad smile.

“I know. At my age, you fall every now and then. But I’m okay. Don’t you have somebody actually sick to look after?”

“Don’t worry, the other nurses are already doing that. And I wanted to see you. Wanna know why?”

“Why’s that?”

“That’s how I lost my grandma... She fell too, and she didn’t complain. But sadly, her brain was hiding something much worse. ”

“Oh...” The old man’s tone suddenly changes.

“So, you’re probably fine, but we have to check, okay, mister?”

“Alright. Just make it quick.”

“I promise I’ll do my best.”

First, I look at the bandage wrapped around his head. “That’s an impressive amount of blood for a scratch.”

“Heads bleed.”

“Yes, they do. I’ll have to change your bandage, okay?”

“Do I have a choice?”

“Well, yeah, but you’ll be way more handsome with a clean one. Better look presentable when my colleague gets here.”

The old man hides a laugh behind a cough.

I quickly check his knees. They don’t look too badly hurt, so I move onto the bandage around his head.

Before I finish, Jessica enters the room with the CT results in hand.

“Hello, mister!” She flashes him one of her charming smiles. “Here you go, Trouble.” She hands me the results.

“CT came back clean. No bleeding in your head.”

“See? Told you.”

“You being right after the test doesn’t mean we didn’t need the test.”

He grumbles something under his breath.

I notice him rubbing his hands and hand him a blanket.

“What’s this for?”

“You’ve been rubbing your hands for the last five minutes.”

“I’m not cold.”

“Of course not.”

He takes the blanket anyway.

“Alright, mister. I’ll go check the results of your last test and come back. Just a few more minutes, and you’ll be free to go.” I keep giving him encouraging smiles.

“Jessica, my colleague here, will stay and take care of your IVs, okay? See you in a minute.”

“Mhh.”

I finally find the results I was waiting for. Fortunately, everything looks good. He's free to go, and I don't waste any time before heading back to give him the good news.

"As promised, you're free to go. Just take good care of yourself and don't overdo it, okay?"

"Alright. Thank you, young lady," the old man says before getting up from the bed.

Young lady? Really?

"You've been lucky. She's one of the best nurses here. Always kind and competent! Be safe on your way home, mister."

No way Jessica was going to let that one slide.

As we walk side by side down the corridor, she keeps piling it on.

"Don't worry, Trouble. He's an old man. His eyesight and hearing are probably failing a little... But then again, you're so cute in this blouse, anyone could make the same mistake."

"Yeah, I get it." I make a point of showing her how annoyed I am.

"Alright, alright. Just saying..."

At the end of the hallway, a stretcher passes through my field of vision. I swear I catch an iridescent shimmer coming from beneath the sheets.

"Princess! Did you see that?"

"What?"

"That was an Altered—on the stretcher!"

"Oh? Okay... You've never seen one?"

"Of course I have, but never in here! I've gotta go check!"

"Here you go again! Trouble! Maisie's gonna be pissed."

In the year and a half I've worked at this hospital, I've never taken care of an Altered. Which isn't all that surprising, now that there are specialized clinics for them. Their alterations require different kinds of treatment, and some of the more significant ones call for specialized equipment and logistics.

If I saw correctly, this person had iridescent scales on her leg, maybe on the rest of her body too. If I could just take a look...

"Hey! Wake up! Not your patient." Jessica grabs me by the shoulders and gives me a shake.

"Hm? Yeah, I know."

"So?"

"Sky, stop daydreaming. Bandage change, room seven." Another assignment from the charge nurse, coming at the worst possible time.