

(Every character depicted in the story below is a consenting legal adult over the age of 18)

A/N: The name!

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“Crow. The name’s Crow.”

He’s in a rush, sure. He would have liked more time to think about it, no doubt. But as Cameron announces his name, he feels good about it all the same. ‘Crow’ feels right to him. Not only does it match the animal theme of Felicia’s Black Cat, but crows tend to be little thieves sometimes as well, right? So... it just works.

Alas, he’s the only person in the large room that seems to feel that way. Felicia looks disappointed that he didn’t go along with her own idea and stick with ‘Mouse’, while Ghost-Spider...

“Seriously?”

Even though she’s wearing a hood and a mask that conceals her facial features, Cameron can feel her cringing from across the room anyways.

“Crow? That’s a little... edgy, don’t you think? You want to give it another go? I don’t mind if you do.”

Cameron bristles, correctly recognizing this as just an extension of her banter. She’s not serious about giving him ‘another go’, even if it does make Felicia perk up hopefully, like she thinks he’s going to suddenly change his mind or something.

He’s not, though. His mind is made up. For better or worse, Crow is what they’re getting from him. Well, that and...

“I don’t really see why I have to take that from you of all people.”

Ghost-Spider goes still at his words.

“... What’s that supposed to mean, exactly?”

Tilting his head to the side, smiling condescendingly even if its hidden behind his mask, Cameron makes sure to let out a forceful chuckle.

“I mean, we all know that you only go by Ghost-Spider because Spider-Woman was already taken.”

She had always been a bit less active than Spider-Man admittedly, and not quite as centered on New York, but everyone knew Spider-Woman was out there. She wore a costume that was yellow, red, and black instead of Spider-Man’s more famous blue, red, and black.

Now admittedly, Cameron had no way of knowing how Ghost-Spider would react to the comparison. She might just brush it off with a laugh. But no... as it turned out, that was apparently a sore spot, because the next thing he knows, he’s dodging a gob of webbing that comes with barely any warning from the darkness up in the corner of the ceiling.

He definitely wouldn’t have been able to get out of the way of that attack six months ago, but Felicia’s training has been huge in that regard and Cameron has absorbed everything she’s given him.

Letting out a bark of laughter at Ghost-Spider’s reaction, Felicia sneers.

“Hah! Crow struck a nerve, didn’t he? Much be such a shame to always be the back-up, Ghostie!”

With a low growl, Ghost-Spider finally leaps down from the ceiling, landing on the floor in front of them with the cat statue in hand. Which... as it turned out, proves to be a mistake. Cameron isn’t entirely sure what happens. Someone like Ghost-Spider doesn’t seem like they should be capable of slipping and falling on their ass.

And yet... that's exactly what occurs. Ghost-Spider lands, but she lands awkwardly and stumbles and a moment later does a prat fall that leaves Cameron blinking in shock. Not Felicia though. The Black Cat is already moving the instant Ghost-Spider stumbles, and a moment later she snatches the cat statuette from the superheroine's hand.

"I'll be taking that~"

"Black Cat-!"

But before Ghost-Spider can do more than let out an embarrassed snarl, Felicia has already spun around... and lobbed the statuette to Cameron. He catches it of course, he's not stupid... and yet, he doesn't know why she's giving it to *him* of all people.

"Get that out of here, Crow! I'll catch up with you later~"

What? Cameron hesitates, even as Ghost-Spider recovers from her incredibly embarrassing prat fall and finally hops back to her feet.

"Oh no you don't-!"

Her hand comes up to fire another gob of webbing at him, but before she can line up the shot, she's forced to dodge out of the way as Felicia's incredibly sharp claws swipe through the air where her head had been mere moments before.

"Whoa!"

"Go, Crow! NOW!"

It dawns on him then that Felicia is basically giving him a chance to escape. She's staying behind in order to hold Ghost-Spider off so he can get away cleanly. It's just that she expects him to also escape with the statuette they'd come here for tonight.

Part of him wants to protest, but at the same time Cameron has someone else relying on him. If he and Felicia were both captured, Brandon would be screwed. And besides, despite Ghost-Spider being much faster and stronger than the average human being, Felicia was still holding her own, somehow. And Cameron... would just get in the way.

With that in mind, he whips around and begins to run. In the process of doing so, he stumbles for a moment and almost falls... but that turns out to be an incredible stroke of good fortune because just as he's crossing a threshold and turning a corner, a fresh gob of webbing slams into the wall over his head, where it surely would have caught him and pinned him against said wall if he hadn't tripped.

The strangled cry of frustration from Ghost-Spider behind him is something Cameron decides he's going to cherish for some time to come, even as he continues running away from her fight with his mentor.

There's just one mild problem... he honestly has no idea where he's going. Their exit strategy had been to go back the way they'd come via the roof, but that path was cut off by Ghost-Spider. On top of that... Cameron hears police sirens outside, much to his dismay. Ghost-Spider had called the cops on them. Wasn't she a vigilante?! Sheesh!

So he couldn't go the route of the roof and he couldn't go out the front... that left the back. Only, as Cameron rushes into the museum's backrooms, he hears police sirens from that direction as well... and more than that, he hears the sound of boots coming his way as officers of the law rush into the back of the museum.

Letting out a frustrated noise, Cameron dips into the nearest storage room, barely noting the 'Department of Scandinavian Studies' label over the head. He just needs to find some place to hide properly... and fortunately, there are some people-sized storage lockers. Unfortunately, most of them are locked up tight at this time of night. He only has time to choose one and then pick the lock with the

cat statuette tucked under his arm, hoping there will be enough space for him to wedge himself in.

Fortunately, he opens it to find that the shelves end halfway, leaving room for larger, or rather taller things to be slid into the middle. Things like him. Without missing a beat, Cameron stuffs himself in the storage locker, closing the doors behind him.

Just in time too, the boots he'd heard running down the hall reach his location a moment later and he hears voices outside.

"Clear each room!"

"Understood!"

"And don't forget to look up for fuck's sake! They love hiding on the ceiling!"

Grimacing, he focuses on calming his breathing, even as he hears what sounds like SWAT entering the room. Unfortunately, he can't lock the storage locker from the inside, so if they realize it's the only one unlocked, they're certainly going to check it.

He'll need to be ready to fight, likely with the muzzle of a gun pointed directly at his face or chest from the very start. Obviously, Cameron would rather that not happen. He would like it not to happen very, very much.

... Just as he's thinking that, something starts glowing on the shelf right in front of him. Cameron blinks, caught off guard by the glow... before realizing that whatever it is, it's definitely going to reveal his location through shining out through the crack of the storage locker.

Cursing under his breath, Cameron reaches out and grabs the glowing thing with his free hand, closing his black gloved fingers around it to try and stifle the glow.

And then... all of the sudden, he's somewhere else entirely. Cameron's eyes widen as he goes from the blackness of the storage locker to the dim light of a cavern. The ceiling has slightly glowing lichen latticed across it, providing enough light to see by as his eyes adjust and he looks around in shock.

"Well now... isn't this exciting~"

A feminine voice breaks Cameron out of his stupor and he looks over just in time to make eye contact with the brightest, greenest eyes that he's ever seen. Though to be fair, the color of her eyes is almost certainly enhanced by the sheer amount of emerald she's wearing elsewhere. From a green tabard to green stockings and even a green cape... as well as the green in her gloves and the glowing emerald in her staff.

Of course, then there's what she's *not* wearing. She's definitely not wearing pants, instead having on what looks to be a sleeveless leotard beneath the emerald tabard, one that shows off her arms, her armpits, and her thighs. Her cape has puffy white shoulders to it that cover her shoulders though, and the leotard goes up to her neck.

But also... the antlers on the crown atop her brow are... quite distinctive.

"You're... Loki, right?"

Rising from her throne, where she'd had one leg crossed over the other, the beautiful goddess chuckles throatily.

"Almost. I am he... but he is not me. For I am she."

No doubt detecting his confusion, she smirks wickedly.

"You may address me as Lady Loki, if it pleases you. Or Milady. Or Goddess."

Right, okay, so whatever was going on here, he was definitely dealing with someone way more powerful than him. Cameron swallows thickly and decides to err on the side of caution, slowly bowing his head to show his respect.

“Lady Loki. Apologies for the intrusion. I didn’t intend to come here... wherever here is.”

Lady Loki hums, her eyes sliding down to his hands.

“No, I suppose you didn’t. Though it is interesting that you carry *two* artifacts with you.”

Blinking, Cameron looks down as well and finally beholds the glowing thing he’d grabbed off the shelf in an attempt to mute its light. No longer glowing nearly as brightly, he finds himself staring at a shimmering emerald figurine of a horse with eight legs.

“Do you often bring foreign artifacts into a goddess’ domain?”

Her tone is teasing, but Cameron blanches all the same as his eyes then shift over to the cat statuette he’s holding onto for Felicia. Feeling like he’s treading on thin ice, he holds up the cat statuette and decides to be honest with the gorgeous goddess in front of him.

“Ah... it was not my intention to do so, Lady Loki. Rather... this is for a friend of mine. She... has a thing for cats.”

Stalking forward until she’s looming over him, proving to easily be a foot taller, the Norse Goddess leans down, sniffing haughtily as she eyes the statuette. Cameron can do nothing but hold his breath as he awaits her verdict.

“... No matter. It has no divinity tied to it anyways. It is simply a work of art.”

Wait, what? Hadn’t she just been calling it an artifact? Cameron belatedly realizes she’s been messing with him as he beholds the glint of amused mischief in her eyes. Of course she was fucking with him... she was literally the God of Mischief. Or rather, the Goddess of Mischief... fuck that was throwing him for a loop.

“Uh... if you don't mind me asking an impertinent question milady...”

The Goddess arches a brow at that, causing Cameron to clam up as he rethinks his words. But after a moment, she waves a hand airily.

“Ask. I already know what is on your mind.”

Did she? Could she read his mind? Was she hearing his thoughts right now? Cameron flushes a little bit at that, but Lady Loki doesn't react in any outward way that makes him think she is. Still, if he has permission...

“Why are you a woman, currently? I uh... I've heard of your exploits before, specifically on Earth... or Midgard as I think you call it, but you've always been male.”

Lady Loki's eyes narrow at that. Suddenly, she's back on her throne and Cameron is stood right in front of it, maybe only half a dozen feet away. The abrupt change is jarring, causing him to jerk in discomfort... but the goddess just crosses her legs again and huffs.

“I cannot recall my visits to Midgard. Tell me, what sort of things do I usually get up to?”

Huh? What kind of question was that? It felt like a fucking minefield, all things considered. And yet... Cameron had no idea how to get out of here and escape this place, so he really has no choice but to try and play along. But how to phrase things properly...

“Well... you tend to involve yourself in a lot of battles... and you often are at cross purposes with your brother Thor. You've also made it clear that you intend to... rule Midgard a few times, but that has yet to come to pass.”

There. That was neutral enough, right? He wasn't about to say something like ‘you've tried to invade Earth half a dozen times but either the Avengers or some other group of heroes always stops you, whether your brother is available or not’. That seemed like a pretty easy way to get on the goddess' bad side.

Then again, even after hearing his words, Lady Loki's face scrunches up in disgust.

"Warring? That is what my male self has been doing in my absence? Trying to conquer a pathetic mudball like Midgard? No doubt he's attempting to impress Odin... ugh, how despicable."

Wait... what? Her... male self?

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A/N: Remember to Vote, leave a Like, and let me know what you think!