

Lucent was losing.

He darted back, breathing heavily. His feet shifted. He drifted to the side, trying to keep his stance carefully controlled, but he knew it was slipping. He was getting worn down. He was making too many mistakes.

But his opponent was, too. They always did eventually. His opponent was getting cocky, confident that they had him outmatched. They weren't guarding their left.

His foot twisted in preparation.

He lunged for the target with a silent exhale. His saber flashed in the dim light of the training hall as its tip pierced straight through the heart.

Lucent panted with exertion. "Ha." He held the pose for a second, studying it carefully. It was a strong move. A winning move, even.

Then again, his balance hadn't been as steady as he'd have liked. His foot had twisted a little clumsily. And he'd let the fight get too close.

At least, he imagined he would have, if he hadn't been fighting a bundle of straw and cloth.

He pulled the saber out of the training dummy, taking a deep breath and letting it out slowly. His fist clenched around the hilt.

He struck another pose, preparing for Round Seven.

"Sir Lucent?"

The sword nearly slipped from Lucent's hand. He spun around. "What!"

Dame Coral stood there in the doorway, staring at him with a quizzical expression. She was dressed in evening wear—nothing scandalous, just a loose-fitting shirt and baggy, comfortable-looking fleece trousers. Her hair was done up in a tight bun, presumably to keep it neat during sleep, but a few locks had strayed loose.

"Dame Coral." He brought the sword up in a sardonic salute. "You're up late."

Her lips quirked. "I am. I should really be in bed. Only an idiot would be up in the training hall this late."

"It's a cold walk back to my chambers." He shrugged. "The training hall is warm."

“It’s freezing in here.” She raised an eyebrow. “Can you hear how the wind howls from in there?”

“Let’s hope it doesn’t topple the castle towers.” He snorted, turning back to the dummy and giving it a vicious *thwack* with the flat of his sword. “They might have to cancel the ball.”

Coral didn’t answer for a moment, long enough that he wondered if she’d just left without a word.

Then he heard her feet padding from the stone floor onto the soft mat to stand beside him. “I told you not to come. You only have yourself to blame, Lucent.”

“It’s expected of a knight to attend the Solstice balls.”

“And?” She shot him a scowl. “Just do what I do! Show up to the first night, cough a few times, and then the next morning you say you’re sick and stay in your room for the rest of the month.”

He studied the training dummy. His sword drew back, and he gave it another smack from the other side. “These people are gods-damned *leeches*, Coral.”

“That’s why I don’t go.”

“No, you don’t go because nobody *expects* you to.” He turned to face her, scowling. Coral’s expression was hard to read. She seemed to be studying him—her red hair flashed beside brilliant green eyes. “If anything, they’re probably relieved. You know how they are about sworddaughters.”

Coral stared at him. She popped her lips, visibly collecting herself.

“Lucent,” she said slowly, “You are trying to strike a match that has already burnt down to your fingers. You *need* to take a break.”

“It’s just two more nights.”

“And you were ready to collapse two nights ago.” She looked between him and the dummy. “And I was hoping you’d at least be trying to get some rest, but here is where I find you.”

“I’m fine, Coral.” Lucent huffed, turning away. “I don’t need you to mother me.”

“You don’t need a mother, you need a *trellis* to climb on, or a *leash*.”

“I’m not one of your collared greens, Coral.”

“Well, someone has to rein you in.”

“If I need help from anyone, Coral,” Lucent snapped, losing patience with puns and whirling back to face her, “I hardly think it would be from *you*.”

Coral stared at him in silence.

As the flurrying back-and-forth subsided, Lucent’s words echoed coldly back to him off the far walls. He licked his lips, trying to find a way to backpedal without yielding.

Coral spun on her heel and started walking for the wide-open double doors.

“Coral.” He swallowed, raising his voice. “Coral, I didn’t...”

She reached the doors. But then she stopped.

She grabbed one door handle and started drawing it inward.

Lucent’s breath caught. “Coral. Wait.”

She stretched and grasped the other door handle, pulling it inward as well.

“Coral, I’m sorry, I...”

Dame Coral swung the doors shut, sealing the two of them in the training hall.

She picked up a broom and slotted it above the two handles to lock the doors.

“Hey.” Lucent’s heart started to race. He hurried after her. That broom wasn’t to keep him in. It was to keep others out. “Coral, I-I didn’t mean to...”

As he drew near, Coral spun around while lifting something from between her cleavage.

Her little crystal bell pendant glittered as she smiled.

Lucent’s mind started to soften at the sight.

Before she could give it a swing, he forced his gaze away. “N-No. Nice try.”

“Oh, come now, Sir Lucent~”

“Fuck off.” He rolled his eyes. “As if that’s going to work when I’m this pissed.”

“All that anger must be tiring you out~”

“I’m *fine* Coral.”

A pause. He didn’t dare turn to gauge Coral’s emotional response; he’d fallen for that too many times before.

“It’s okay to need a little attention, Sir Lucent.” Coral’s voice was very soft. “Won’t you let me touch your hair? It’s so very soft, and you know my fingers running through it can feel so nice...”

Lucent’s heart caught. Coral’s fingers running through his hair... her soft palm pressing against his head, petting his head, so soothing and gentle...

Little half-activated triggers and suggestions fizzed and tingled through his brain just at the thought. Her headpets would melt him, and they both knew it.

He flinched away as he sensed her hand approaching. He sensed Coral drawing back, and could tell she was thinking.

“Okay, Lucent. I’m putting the pendant away.” Her voice remained silken and sly, but he could see from the corner of his eye that it was true. “I can see that you’re feeling especially *stubborn* tonight. Goodness, getting you to do what I want is like getting a feral cat to sleep in its proper bed.”

He rolled his eyes, refusing to dignify this with a response.

Coral’s voice lowered to a delicate whisper. “And we both know that good little kittens much prefer my *lap*, don’t they?”

He snorted. “You’re just trying to piss me off more.”

“Oh, I would *never*, sweet Lucent,” she cooed. “I know how you kick and claw when you’re in a temper. I wouldn’t dare!”

“Ugh. You’re so condescending when I’m in a bad mood.”

“When you put yourself in a bad mood,” she murmured, “and refuse to let me help you, yes.”

“I don’t need help.”

“But you *dooooo*, Lucent. You so badly just want to be my happy, docile lapkitten, don’t you?”

“Gods, you’re so—”

“Maybe you’d be happier at these silly balls,” she chirped, giggling, “if you got to attend them hanging on my arm~!”

“Oh,” Lucent whirled to fix Coral with a glare, “*would you just—*”

Coral’s green eyes sparkled. Lucent felt his mind stutter.

Coral’s lips curved upwards. “Would I... just...?”

Lucent licked his lips. “You...”

“I...” She batted her eyelashes. “What’s wrong? Can’t you *look me in the eyes* and tell me what’s wrong with me?”

Lucent swallowed. He took a step back reflexively, trying to keep his eyes off hers. “N-Nice, um...”

Coral reached back, not looking away, and retrieved a spare rapier from the rack. “Nice... what? I’m nice?” She giggled. “My eyes are nice?”

Her eyes flashed.

She lunged.

Lucent reflexively parried. The clash of steel should have shocked him out of the daze, but instead—

Clang.

It almost sounded to him like the chiming of a bell.

Her eyes glimmered in the dim lantern light. “Poor boy. My eyes are just so very pretty, aren’t they?”

“N-No, you...” Lucent tried to will himself to look away.

Coral’s eyes shot to his right a second before her blade did, and he swung his sword up to block.

Clang. The ring of steel left his head spinning. He stumbled, studying her gaze helplessly to guide his parries.

He knew he needed to watch the rest of her, but her gaze was so revealing, so *clearly* telegraphing her strikes. Since when was she this easy to read? Since when were her eyes this... obvious?

“What’s the matter, Sir Lucent?” Coral teased. “Since when are you so quiet when we spar?”

“Y-You—” Her eyes flitted to the left. Lucent followed her gaze to parry another casual swipe.
“You’re—”

Clang.

“I’m....?” Coral’s insufferable giggling made his whole body heat up. “Yes? Goodness, Sir Lucent, you must be *so* tired if this is the best you can do. Unless...” Her lashes fluttered. Her green eyes drew him deeper. “... perhaps you *want* to lose to me?”

“You’re s-so...” Lucent tracked her gaze to parry another slice. *Clang.* She was barely even trying.
“...a-annoying...”

“Oh, am I?” She smiled, advancing. *Clang. Clang.* Their blades met in clattering chimes as her gaze led him like a puppet on a string. “But isn’t your arm getting so heavy, Sir Lucent?”

Her eyes shot to his right. He went to parry.

Clang. Her blade lightly tapped a buckle on his left side. “And I’ve scored my first point, Lucent. Easily.”

Lucent blinked. “Wh...”

Her eyes gleamed. “You need to focus, silly~”

A fresh wave of dizziness. Lucent swayed. What? She’d—but her eyes had been—

He followed her gaze to the right—such pretty, shimmering emerald eyes—and blocked another blow from the same side. But the blade felt weighty and clumsy in his hand.

“Poor boy,” Coral cooed. “Getting so *dizzy*. So *tired*. Losing himself to my *pretty eyes*...”

Her eyes led him left. He swung obediently to the left.

Chime. The musicality of her blade striking his right side made his whole world swim.

“... and losing this match,” her voice echoed, “to *such a pretty girl*.”

“I-I...” He panted, struggling to keep his balance. He couldn’t process what was happening.

Her eyes led him to and fro in a steadily-speeding rhythm as her blade flashed forward.

Chime. Parried just in time. He stumbled away, breathing heavily...

Chime. Her blade tapped his side. "There's a point! Poor silly boy, so weak, so worn out..."

Her eyes sparkled with mischief. He held in a whimper. They were such dainty, teasing blows to contrast with the violent strikes against his parries. Perfectly controlled, like her weapon weighed nothing, while his felt like lead.

All he could do was... follow her eyes... right, she was going to swing right—

Chime. He parried her lazy swipe. The impact felt so sharp and sudden, his sword almost slipped from his hand. Had she swung hard, or was he just getting weaker?

No. focus. Follow her eyes. Follow them left, she was going to swing left, she was—

Chime. She'd swung right again. "Point. Getting so sleepy, so suggestible, lost in my pretty eyes that remind you of cozy beds and warm hugs and soft, gentle pets..."

"N-No," he gasped, "I—I'm n-not—"

"Follow my eyes."

He followed them. His blade followed them.

Her sword flashed in the opposite direction.

Chime. The blade tingled slightly against his left side.

"Point, Lucent," she teased.

He whimpered softly, stumbling, trying to follow her eyes—

Chime. Buzzy pleasure as the blade tapped his right. "Point."

But she wasn't—

Chime. "Point."

Her eyes and sword weren't—

Chime. "Point."

His cheeks were burning—he needed to stop tracking her gaze, but—

Chime. “Point~”

He was two-handing the sword now, trying to keep up with her dancing eyes—

Chime. “Point. Are you even trying, silly boy~?”

Lucent’s footwork was a stumbling, shuffling mess. He stared helplessly into Coral’s eyes, head ringing with the tinkling music of her weapon, and swung exactly where she guided him.

Every strike brought more tingles in, more magical pleasure to relax his weary muscles. Coral was giggling, cooing, her eyes alight with glee as she blatantly used her skills as a swordswitch against him.

“Go on, sweetie,” she sang. “Why don’t you retaliate? Take the offensive? Or are you just,” **chime** “too,” **chime** “tired~?”

Her lashes fluttered.

Lucent’s breath caught. He managed somehow to set his stance, to steady himself briefly, and forced his gaze away from Coral completely—

CHIME.

Her rapier struck the hilt of his blade, just between his trembling fingers, and his weapon was sent flying from his hand as though magnetically repelled.

It fell with a clatter several armspans away.

Lucent blinked dumbly, then looked back... and re-entered her gaze.

Coral took a step closer. He stood there, swaying, struggling to process what had just happened. He’d... lost? She’d... her sword, her eyes... such pretty eyes...

She took another step closer, and her rapier whipped down to lightly tap the back of his knee.

With a pleasurable tingle, Lucent felt his legs buckle, and his knees hit the padded floor. His head lolled downward.

The tip of the blunted blade appeared under his chin, and he shivered as her silken magic trickled straight into his head. The blade gently tipped his chin up until he was forced to meet Coral's gaze once more.

Dame Coral smirked.

"Point."

Lucent stared helplessly up into her deep, pretty eyes. Fuzzy bliss was starting to flood his brain. "I... you... th-that's not..."

"Aww, don't feel bad, sweet boy!" Coral leaned down over him, eyes shimmering. Her free hand went atop his head. "It's not your fault you lost! You'll *always* lose to me."

"I..." He shivered at the tender touch. "N-No, you just..."

"How can you do *anything else*," she murmured, as her fingers started to run through his hair, "when you're *so... very... sleepy~?*"

Her words seemed to trail the tips of her fingers and sink straight into his open mind.

"I'm..." He yawned. "I'm n-not..." She gave a few scratches right behind his ear, and the words seemed to teeter away from him. "Um..."

Coral beamed. She lowered the rapier and started stroking the side of his head, cooing soft, wordless nothings.

Lucent trembled from the pleasure of her touch. He knew she was trying to shut him up, but though he tried, he couldn't remember what he'd been about to say. He whimpered softly.

"That's it." Coral's voice was soft. "A sweet, silly boy like you can't be expected to resist a pretty girl like me, can you? So silly to even try. So don't try."

"A-Ah..." He kept having to stop himself from nuzzling her hand. It was just so... *much*. She was flooding him with so much affection, and he was so sleepy...

"That's right," she whispered. She scratched under his chin, and he lifted his head for her by reflex before he realized what he was doing. "Just let your will melt away for me." She patted the top of his head with a sly, affectionate smirk. "You're simply too sleepy to fight me, aren't you? Too sleepy, weak, and adorable, and... *obedient*."

“Nnuh...” But his voice was slurred and slow. Her scritch felt so nice, the petting activated so much gentle, cozy pleasure inside him...

“It’s so *hard* to make you do anything. But you want to do this, don’t you? You want to submit.” She scratched the back of his head. Her fingers trailed down to the nape of his neck. “You’re like a kitten in a sunbeam. Don’t you just want to drift away for me? Don’t you just want to drift, and doze, and... *sink*?”

“I... um...” He was trying to follow her words enough to argue, but following them just made him so dizzy, which made him sway and lean forward, which made it seem like he wanted the pets, which he obviously didn’t, he just felt so fuzzy and confused and it felt so nice to let Coral touch him however she wanted and...

Coral tossed her sword aside. Its dull clattering was just another chime to his mushy brain. She descended down close and used her hands to guide him to sit.

Lucent found himself sitting obediently without even thinking about it.

Coral spilled right into his lap.

“A-Ah—”

“You want me nice and close, Lucent,” she purred, “don’t you?”

“I—” His face was burning, he knew he was supposed to fight back, but her scritch made his whole body go so limp, and her plump butt was squishing into his lap, and her knees were on either side of his hips, and he could only *pray* she didn’t notice what he knew she’d already guessed...

“Nice and close,” she whispered, reaching back under her blouse, “so I can show you *this*~”

Lucent was too busy trying not to nuzzle her hand to recognize the danger.

The next thing he knew, Coral’s beautiful bell necklace was already swinging before his eyes.

Chime. The pure, piercing clarity of Coral’s glass bell was like a sudden note of music silencing a thunderstorm. Suddenly, the echoing clatters of the swords felt inconsequential. Suddenly everything felt inconsequential. Lucent stared at the bell, trembling as he watched it swing...

Chime. “You remember the pretty bell, don’t you, sweetie?”

“I...” He licked his lips, strenuously *forcing* his will into something resembling a solid shape. “N... no, I c-can just—”

Synchronizing with the motion of the bell, Coral gave her hips a playful little forward *grind*.

Chime.

He moaned aloud. “C-Cora—!”

“Good boy,” she cooed. “Just be good and stare, sweetie. Do as you’re told. Just...”

Chime.

Grind.

“... relax~”

Relax.

Chime. Grind.

Chime.

Grind.

Lucent stared helplessly. His body swayed.

Coral moved in perfect rhythm. Every time the bell rang, she matched it with physical pleasure, rocking her hips up and down along his throbbing hardness. Her butt squished against him. He watched the bell swing.

He was starting to buck reflexively the second he heard the bell’s call.

“Good boy!” She gave her ass a little wiggle in time with the ring. “Doing so *well* for me. Miss Cora’s so *proud of you*~”

He whimpered.

Chime.

Buck.

Grind.

Coral was smiling wickedly, her free hand still stroking his hair. She leaned in close to whisper in his ear, keeping the bell swinging slowly before his eyes. “Do you know...” *Chime*. Grind. “... what I’m doing, precious thing?”

“Y-You’re...” His body shook. He tried not to say it, but his thoughts were too slow to warn his mouth in time, and he knew the answer, he *did*... “... c-conditioning me...”

Coral’s grin widened. The bell chimed. He bucked helplessly as she grinded back against him.

“*Gooooo* boy!” She scritchd just above the back of his neck, making him whine. “Such a clever boy! You’re *sooooo* smart!”

Chime. Buck. Grind.

“Nnf...” He squirmed, overwhelmed as much by the praise as the sensations themselves. “Oh... *C-Coral*...”

Chime. Buck. Grind.

“Such a smart, handsome boy,” she cooed. She caressed his cheek. “My clever, adorable, obedient, *perfect* little subject~”

The bell *chimed*, and he *bucked*, and her hips rocked, her butt *squishing* softly against his throbbing bulge...

“P-Please,” he panted, squirming, “I c-can’t—”

Chime. He bucked senselessly, moaning at the pleasure.

“My cute, lovely, charming pet,” she sang.

“C-Cora!”

“Aww, what’s wrong?” *Chime*. He bucked, humped against her ass, practically drooling. Cora laughed. “Is it too much?”

“T-Too m-mmuch...”

“Too much what? Too much... praise?” *Chime*. “Too much *ooey-gooey* praise for my *sweet, precious* boy...” *Chime*. “... who *so many* people care for *sooo* much?”

“A-Aah—”

“All of that venom,” she whispered, and she seemed to be swinging the bell a little faster, “and bitter meanness you’ve been dealing with... and now suddenly you’re being drowned in *so. Much. Sweetness.* Aren’t you, *sweetiepie?*”

The bell’s chimes matched his helpless thrusts.

“It’s just melting your brain into *goo*, isn’t it?” She beamed at him. Stroked his hair. Swung the bell. “And there’s just sooo much *pleasure* every... time... this bell...”

Chime. He grinded his hips upwards against her softness, moaning.

“Y-Yes, Cora!” he whined. “P-Please, I—it’s s-so much... y-your, your ass, grinding, you kn-know h-how your lapdances, um—um—”

He lost his words as Cora’s smile turned into a sly smirk. “My sweet, precious little pet! So happy and dazed from all this pleasure.” She stroked his hair. He rubbed against her hand. “So easily *conditioned* by the chime of a pretty bell that you haven’t even noticed...”

Lucent’s breath caught. He dimly registered...

“... that you’re the only one grinding right now, silly boy.”

He blinked.

The bell chimed. He bucked on cue, gasping at the sweet pleasure.

But Cora stayed perfectly still. She just sat there, smiling, eyes glinting with wickedness.

He trembled.

Cora cupped his chin and brought the swinging bell up very, very close. “*Fall for me, pet.*”

Chime.

He bucked, whimpering.

“You’ll always associate this bell’s chime with pleasure, won’t you?”

Chime.

He bucked, panting. Pleasure. The bell meant pleasure.

“With me in your lap. So warm and soft and cozy and cuddly.”

Chime.

He bucked, drooling. Cora in his lap. Soft. Cozy... cozy with Miss Cora...

“My perfect... little... *lapkitten*.”

Chime.

As he bucked upward, Miss Cora swirled her hips, grinding her plump ass against his drooling cock.

“Isn’t that right,” she cooed, “my precious *kitten*?”

“A-Ah—M-Miss—”

“Ah-Ah.” She giggled, giving the bell two swift chimes that sent exquisite pleasure into him. She wriggled mischievously. “Words are too much work for a silly kitten like you.”

“gh—” He felt his brain molding beneath her fingertips, and there was no fighting it, there was never any fighting Miss Cora—

Chime. “Kitties don’t talk in those big, hard, *exhausting* people words unless Miss Cora tells them to~”

She patted his cheek with a lazy smile and gave her ass a little wiggle.

And his lips parted.

“*Mewww!*”

“Good kitten.” She beamed, eyes sparkling with pure joy, and she gave the bell several dainty little rings. “My *perfect, precious, sweet, gorgeous, adorable* little happy *lapkitten*.”

“*Meww!*” He bucked and humped, reaching forward to cling to her helplessly. He felt Miss Cora’s breath catch.

“Good boy,” she whispered, slowly rocking her hips against him. *Chime. Chime.* “My good kitten. My *sweet* kitten. Miss Cora’s gonna keep you safe, sweetie. She’s going to make you feel *so good*.”

He mewed and clutched at her, nuzzling her hand as it gave him so many nice scratches and pets. His cock was throbbing faster and faster with the chimes, with all the softness, the coziness, the happy dumb dreamy fuzzy bliss...

“That’s what you want.” Miss Cora’s hypnotic voice caressed his cock, his mind, his molten, gooey, lovey-dovey heart. “Isn’t it, sweetiepie?”

He moaned, drooled, and trilled softly. There was a pause.

“... oh my *goodness*. Was that... was that a purr?”

Chime.

The lapkitten trilled and mewed and clung to his mistress, bucking happily. His cock was throbbing so fast now. It felt so good. Miss Cora felt so good.

“You are. So. *Cuuute* like this.” Miss Cora stroked his hair heavily with both hands, bouncing her ass faster. “You wanna cum for me? You wanna? Huh? Do you?”

“Meww!” He nodded eagerly. “*Mrewww!*”

“Then use your words.” She smiled sweetly, cheeks flushed with desire. “And admit I know what’s best for you, kitten.”

He blinked.

His tongue fumbled.

“Y-You... know what’s best for me, Miss Cora,” he cooed, grinding happily. “Miss Cora knows what’s best for me!”

“*Good boy.*” The bell chimed. His cock throbbed. “And aren’t you sooooo grateful to me for showing you that~?”

“Yes, Miss Cora!” he squealed. Hump hump hump. “Thank you, Miss Cora! Thank you thank you thank you—”

“And you want more~?” She giggled. “Kitten wants to cum cum cum?”

“Pleease! Please, kitten needs it, kitten needs—”

“No more words.”

And just like that, words were gone. He mewled and whined and purred and humped, clutching at Miss Cora, staring at his beautiful mistress, at her pretty eyes, her pretty bell, her lovely, luscious lips...

She smirked. “Isn’t that—”

The dumb, happily broken lapkitten swayed forward and clutched Miss Cora close and kissed her deeply.

He heard Miss Cora let out a squeak.

Then a moan. Her lips were so soft as she returned the kiss. Everything about her felt so soft and warm and safe as his tongue slid in and he felt her trembling and—

—and he heard the bell give one last chime, and her hips bounced, and he came.

The kitten cried out meekly into the kiss, but didn’t let go. He felt Miss Cora whining, moaning, panting as their lips broke apart and met again, kiss after kiss leaving him dumb and drunk and dazed and drooling...

“Good kitten,” he heard Miss Cora whimpering, as he bucked and felt *her* body quivering with climax, “good, good, good—nnf—”

The bell fell with a clatter as she pulled him in tighter and kissed him again, deep, passionate, desperate, stroking his hair, pulling at it, grasping, clawing, clinging.

His brain turned into goo as her tongue slid in...

* * *

Coral couldn’t think. She kissed Lucent, kissed her happy broken kitten, and her free hand felt around for the bell.

She needed it, needed more. He was so cute, so precious, so *perfect* for her. She grinded against him, legs locking on either side, humping desperately against his bulge. “More,” she moaned weakly, “more, more...”

He mewled hopelessly, nodding, kissing, bucking. So eager to help her. So eager to please. So... *unbelievably* adorable...

She found the bell with a shaking hand as she pushed him onto his back, breath hitching.

She was close. Close to another. Close, close, she needed it, needed him, now. More. *Now*.

“Mine,” she gasped softly. “My pet, my l-little lapkitten, ah—aah!—”

He mewed and purred eagerly, grinding, trying so hard to make her feel better and better...

She grasped the bell. Close. Close—!

“P-Please!” she squealed, and she started frantically ringing the bell, heedless of anything, and bubbles of pleasure appeared and popped in her brain as she felt him freeze, felt him throb, throb, he was going to—oh, *fuck*, *she* was going to—

“L-Love my kitten,” she mewled, as second orgasms claimed them both, “love, love, love, *love*—”

“*MREWWWW!!*”

Pure pleasure took hold of the two of them and didn’t let go. It squeezed and groped and milked like a vise as their bodies intertwined, puppeting her to kiss him, him to kiss her, grinding and squeezing and bucking and thrusting. They sank to the floor, her atop him, kissing her sweet, perfect boy until he was utterly insensible, rocking her hips until she could feel him throbbing towards a third, the bell’s sweet chime echoing in their ears over and over...

It felt endless. Inescapable.

The rosy fog of bliss didn’t even begin to fade until her lust-drunk grip at last loosened, and the bell flew from her hands and struck a wall, and then its song went quiet.

Gradually, their desperate thrusts and grinds gave way to a slow, dazed dryhumping.

And then faded further into blissful, dreamy cuddling.

Coral let herself stop thinking for a bit.

She just stroked his hair—and he was still eagerly nuzzling, still needy—and for a few minutes, drifted in an exhausted afterglow.

* * *

“Up. Up-up-up.”

Lucent's eyelids fluttered. He heard the pretty voice calling him, but he felt so comfy, the pillows his face lay between felt so warm and soft and smooth, and the idea of pulling away felt completely unacceptable. He nuzzled in deeper.

"Lucent." A sigh.

A hand went next to his ear, and a loud *snap* rang out. "*Up-up-up! Snap out of it!*"

Lucent's eyes shot open.

He hadn't been exactly in trance. He'd more just been comfortable, and so tired, so in need of somewhere soft to rest his head. But the rude snap of the fingers helped him remember exactly whose pillows these were, and whose waist his arms were wrapped around, and who he was lying next to on the training hall mats.

His head lifted from her chest, and he felt his whole face burning as he blinked up at his rival's smirking face.

"Did you sleep well, Sir Lucent?" Coral asked sweetly, batting her lashes. Despite her triumph, her own cheeks were bright red.

He glanced down, bit his lip, then reluctantly released her waist. He rolled onto his back, rolling his eyes. A part of him felt like he should at least scoot away a little bit, but that didn't feel necessary just yet. "That was... uncalled for." He reached a hand surreptitiously under his trousers to adjust himself.

"You called for it a few times, I think." She laughed lightly, sitting up. She didn't scoot away, though, and her eyes didn't leave his. "I just had to... prove a point."

"Right. Sure." He snorted, sitting up, too. She was very close, and her scent was all over him. "So, I suppose you're going to use this as proof that I should stay in tomorrow evening and, what, play Snapdragon with you?"

She sighed. "I suppose you *can*. I was, ah, looking forward to having every ball night to myself, but I can tell you *need* it, so... as a favor to a friend..."

"Don't push it." He scoffed, trying to dispel the fluttering in his chest. "I was thinking about skipping, anyways, for your information. You clearly need the company."

"Ha."

They sat there for a moment. Lucent felt strangely reluctant to rise to his feet, to end this closeness.

A part of him wondered what would happen if he suggested they both just... lie back down.

He saw her bite her lip. Gods, she looked so cute. Maybe, on the way back to their rooms, he might suggest they stop at his room for a 'nightcap', and they could sit on the bed, and he could lean against her, and...

"Y-You wanna spar?" Coral asked, her voice faint.

"Mm." Lucent sprang to his feet at the same time she did. "Yes. Just one match, then bed."

She smirked, kicking his rapier to him from the floor. "You'll be asking for two out of three soon enough."

His lips quirked as he caught it. "You only win when you cheat."

"Mm, want me to cheat some more?"

He blinked.

Coral blinked, too, as if registering her own words. Her face was redder than a sunset as she hurriedly bent to scoop up her own rapier. "R-Right! One match. Shouldn't take too long, with your footwork."

Lucent raised his rapier in a sardonic salute.

Just one more match.

They both needed the excuse for how quick their hearts were racing.