

A MOST NOBLE QUEST

© Elliott Kay 2023

Early October

I could be doing happier things.

Alex typed away, fingers dragging to the end of his term paper: “Evidence and expert testimony on the impact of de-platforming hate groups is often buried by popular media narratives...” *Shit, is it testimony if it’s not specifically in court? Is that the wrong word?*

I could be doing happier things. I could’ve done the leadership paper. Or the marketing paper. Or the cult paper, even if it’s cliché for me after last month.

He didn’t notice his posture, slumped forward with the chair pushed back, hanging to the keyboard like a cliff’s edge. Kinks in his muscles grew loud, but he pressed on. He was almost done. Almost ready to leave this behind. Almost ready to go bleach his eyeballs.

Period. Save. Psychology term paper: done.

Alex slumped back in his chair and pushed away from the desk. The walk-in closet converted to home office didn’t offer enough room to push back *and* stretch, but having a home office at all was a wild new luxury. He shuffled into the short hallway, feet bare under jeans and a loose t-shirt.

“Oh baby, yeah. Gimme that. It’s so big,” said a voice from the TV. Others in the background echoed it, with and without words. Light flashed against the kitchen counter from the living room. On the flatscreen beyond the sectional, a woman looked into the camera with her hair pushed back and her shoulders bare. She clutched at her chest with her hands, tilting back and forth over... something? Beyond her, the downward camera angle included only the bared legs and feet of others. He didn’t see a stitch of clothing.

Okay. I’m distracted.

“Nff,” came another soft voice. The back of the couch hid her from view.

Completely distracted now. What was I thinking about before?

Then she inhaled sharply, and the action on the screen froze. Lorelei’s hand rose from behind the couch cushions, beckoning. “I *feel* you there, love.”

“I’m not interrupting?”

“The rest of the world is the interruption, for you and for Rachel,” said Lorelei. She didn’t rise into view. “I feared disrupting you. Is this too loud?”

“No, I’m done. Finally. Although my brain is still all hate groups and radicalization garbage and...” He glanced at the screen again, and then stared. “Um.”

“Alex.”

He came around the couch, but didn’t look her way yet. The screen held his attention. His mouth opened, though it lacked words... except the text on the screen, covering the chest of the woman now frozen, grinning at the camera.

“Something to say, love?”

Lorelei’s voice turned his head, and then his mind slowed to a complete halt. She stretched out on the couch, propped up on one elbow, wearing a black silk robe too short to cover her legs. It also didn’t cover much of the rest of her. Her eyebrow arched at his roaming eyes. She knew what he was thinking. She knew all his desires. She liked his lingering gaze, too, and basked in it as often as she could.

“I am so in love with you,” he breathed.

“As I love you.” She nodded toward the screen, her voice less flirtatious than her pose. “Now say the other thing.”

Alex hesitated. He didn’t mean to prod, but she saw through him. There was no avoiding it. And it was, after all... “*Fit-Tucker Fever?*”

“It’s a spoonerism,” she said. “Swapping the first letters of a phrase, in this case.”

“Yeah, I got that.” He locked eyes with her. She was powerful, confident, wise, beautiful... and never had to put any effort into her endless poise. Almost. “I’m not judging.”

“You are, but you have an open mind, and I will endure,” she remarked. She reasserted her stature, even while lounging on the couch. “You know I enjoy pornography. You like that about me. And you are mine.”

He couldn’t argue that. Nothing made him happier, in fact—especially as it cut both ways. “I don’t want to hurt your feelings.”

Lorelei’s lips twitched, and then he felt a tug at his waistband. The pointed crimson spade at the end of her tail pushed into his jeans and freed the button at his fly in a single jerk. She pulled him to the couch, her agile feet pushing him into a seated position. He didn’t resist; in fact, he held his hands out of the way in compliance. “How long is that tail, anyway?”

“Don’t change the subject.” She sat up to face him. “Tonight ends like every other night since we came together, love. Nothing you say will hurt me. Speak.”

He wanted to forget it all, especially with her so close. *Especially* with her staring at him, with a promise-threat like that. He wanted to cooperate with her, and respect her wishes, and... and he still couldn’t hold back his grin. “Fit-Tucker Fever?”

“You would hardly object,” said Lorelei.

“Well, no,” he admitted, “but this seems like a whole fetish?”

“As presented here, yes.”

“Um. Are you...?”

“I would hardly object,” she echoed. “It is not a strong urge or kink, no.”

“Then why watch it?”

“I wanted to finish out the series.”

Again, he blinked. “Fit-Tucker Fever *Nine*?”

“The quality has declined predictably since the third volume,” she conceded.

“What, did Volume Three have a plot?”

“I prefer a plot or at least a premise, but no. Three had better directing.”

He laughed. “I’m sorry, I shouldn’t...” He found no rebuke in her eyes, nor hurt. She arched a challenging eyebrow. “Why are you watching bad porn?” he asked.

Lorelei turned her eyes to the screen and pressed “play.” The action resumed.

“Oh my god, this is like twenty people,” said Alex.

“They bill it as twenty people, but they only have that many for a few minutes. They use editing tricks to cover absences. I suspect performer accidents.”

“Wow. Um. Okay: why are you watching bad porn?”

She crawled close to him. Her tail was under his shirt already, now followed by deft fingers that cast the garment away. She stroked the back of his scalp and sucked his neck, then his ear. “This is completely uninhibited,” she murmured. Her touch roamed his body. “They are comfortable and amused. It’s performance, and no one appears to share the kink, but they’re all having fun. This is play, and they enjoy one another’s bodies. No one cares about the mess.”

“Uh-hhhuh.” Alex shuddered under her touch. He would’ve forgotten about the porn entirely, but following along seemed the way to keep her touching him. “So, you’re saying... this isn’t really bad?”

“Oh no, this is terrible.” Lorelei sank back on her knees, dropping her seduction with amusement. “The editing is weak, the backgrounds are distracting, and that man’s posture is making *my* back hurt. Pornography is always performance, but I prefer more attention to women’s pleasure than this.”

She turned it off and let the remote drop. His eyes returned to hers. “I enjoy it because it fulfills desires and fantasy, love. Perhaps not my strongest desires, but I see the dynamics and appreciate the appeal. I could say the same across all genres and every orientation. As long as everyone wants to be there, I can empathize. That’s how I enjoy this... and what I wanted to share with you, Alex.”

“You really do like just about everything,” said Alex.

“Anything all partners enjoy, yes. You don’t have to worry about satisfying some untended desire or kink for me. I wouldn’t enjoy it if you didn’t. You have passion, empathy, and... wait.” Her eyes narrowed. “You’re not thinking about that. Or us.”

“Oh, I want you to keep saying stuff like that forever, but yeah. I’m pretty solid on us. Including the sex. Maybe especially the sex.”

“Good,” she said, but it didn’t change her searching expression.

“Are you trying to read my mind?”

“I can only sense your desires. Whatever you’re thinking isn’t desire, exactly... and it’s silly.”

“Don’t need demon powers for that,” he admitted.

“No. What are you thinking?”

He nodded to the screen, paused once again. “You like *everything*?”

“Barring abuse or bigotry, yes,” said Lorelei. “It’s a pity how the genre so often categorizes race as a fetish. Nor do I appreciate when kink is used as a mask for cruelty or mockery.”

“Okay, but if it’s cringe, or silly, or just badly done?” Alex grinned.

“Do I sense a challenge, love?”

“Maybe. Like you said, it’s a big genre. Gotta be something that’s too cringe, even for you.”

“Intriguing. State your terms.”

“Um. I’m only just thinking of this. It has to be so bad you either turn it off or refuse it outright.”

“We watch together,” Lorelei decided. “Mutual interest must be a guiding factor to your selections, at least ostensibly. My orientation and tastes are broader than yours, but I don’t want you sitting through something you categorically dislike.”

“That seems carefully worded.”

“Everyone has their tastes. You aren’t into humiliation kinks, but I don’t hold that against you,” she teased.

“Any other parameters besides ‘not shitty to people’ and ‘categorically not for me?’”

“Hm. I prefer at least some semblance of a theme or a plot besides two or more people and a platform on which to fuck.”

Alex snorted. “Some semblance? So, like, as long as someone shouts the idea of a plot from the next room over, that’s enough?”

“Yes. Have we a time limit for this challenge?”

“Do we need one?”

“Stakes?”

Alex opened his mouth, but stopped at the enormity of the topic—and then stopped again. “I wouldn’t want to pressure you into something you don’t want.”

“Likewise.”

“And if you really wanted something from me, would I say no? Or vice versa?”

“Your point is taken. Pride and the satisfaction of victory are the only prizes, then?”

“Sure.”

“Then I am thrilled to accept your challenge.”

His lips pressed together. “This is gonna be pointless and painful.”

“For you, perhaps.”

ENTRY ONE: *EIGHT IS NOT ENOUGH*

Alex couldn’t keep the grin off his face all the way home, from the ride through downtown to the garage and to the elevator. Coming home to Lorelei was often an adventure, but this time the plans were his own.

He forgot those plans the instant he stepped inside.

Strong hands clutched his leather jacket, pushing him against the open door. Hungry lips seized his. Alex kept his hands low at first, occupied with his backpack and motorcycle helmet; the former he dropped with little concern, while Lorelei’s tail took care of the latter. Her kiss softened with his compliance, tilting to try different angles, still claiming all of his mouth. He felt her grin.

His hands slipped around her, feeling slacks and a shirt worn for work. She must have beaten him home by minutes. Lorelei kept Alex pressed against the open doorway, caring nothing for the odds of a passing neighbor.

“You’re mine,” she murmured.

“Yeah,” he agreed.

Her lips continued to explore, along with her hands... until the package tucked inside his jacket pocket crinkled. “Hm?”

“That’s... that’s, um.”

Lorelei plucked the plastic bag from his jacket. A door closing down the hall prompted her to tug Alex inside. She acted quickly, but didn’t seem the least alarmed or surprised. She loved being watched, after all. Her eyes flicked from the bag to his face.

“I wouldn’t pry, but this has something to do with me,” she said, close and warm, already driving him wild.

“Yeah, it’s, um. Brain. Sorry,” he said to her arched eyebrow and crooked grin. “You stole all the blood from my brain.”

“No apologies.”

“I wasn’t apologizing.”

“I mean you’ll have none from me on such matters.” She raised the package between them. “This is your first attempt at our challenge? You went out to find a disc?”

“Rented. I didn’t feel like searching on the computer or cluttering up an algorithm with trash.”

Grinning, Lorelei withdrew the disc and tossed away the bag. “*Eight Is Not Enough: A Stepmother Oct-travaganza*,” she read with amusement. “Oh! This is where the stepmother gets ‘stuck’ in the washing machine and her clueless husband rescues her only after she’s taken advantage of two of his adult sons there.”

“Wait, *she* takes advantage?”

“She’s on a quest for sexual vengeance. The promotional art may suggest a submissive dynamic, but the subtext is empowering.”

“So you’ve seen it.”

“Yes. You’re going to have that problem a lot.” She tugged his jacket, gently pulling him toward the living room. “And now you’ll see it, too.”

“Wait, now? I mean, you just... you’re...” He gestured to her, still breathless from her welcome home assault.

“Anticipation will make it better. Come.”

Bewildered, Alex followed, but glanced to the kitchen when he saw another figure standing by the counter. “Don’t look at me,” said Rachel. “I’m only passing through. You’re the one who picked out a filthy stepfamily infidelity fuckfest.”

“The goal was to find something *bad*,” said Alex. “It’s not my turn-on.”

“I’m not mad. I’m just saying you did this to yourself.” Rachel took a pull off the bottle and set it back down. “Perv.”

ENTRY TWO: *BARELY LEGAL MUTANT SEX-ADDICTS*

“Okay, this is a little close to home,” said Alex.

“Because of the sex addiction theme, or the ages presented?” asked Lorelei, curled up beside him on the couch.

“Both.”

“Your drives are stronger under my influence, but you are not an addict. You have no trouble turning down sex or maintaining a normal life.”

“Gnnnnrraaagh noooo,” shouted the film, followed by a sharp *poof!*

“And your penis will not burst with purple glitter and silly string with 24 hours of abstinence,” Lorelei added.

“I know. Still feels relevant. And the ages are a thing.”

“The youngest person here is twenty-four.”

Alex blinked. “I thought you haven’t seen this one before?”

“I have not, but I’m familiar with all these performers. By work and reputation, not personally—except him. And her. She didn’t get the augmentation until after she graduated Stanford.”

“Wait, Stanford?”

“Mmhhh.” Lorelei draped herself against his side, lips finding his ear while her hand roamed across his thigh. “And suddenly you find her more appealing.”

ENTRY THREE: *EUROPEAN UNIONS IV: TAKIN’ IT IN THE BREXIT*

Lorelei stretched out on the couch with her head in her lover's lap, Alex in simple pajama pants, her in that short silk robe he loved. She enjoyed the slow caress of his fingers across her scalp. Little intimacies and affection did more for him than the film... though in truth, neither of them hated it, exactly.

"I thought this would be more political. I'm not sure there's an actual plot here?" said Alex.

"The furniture is the plot," said Lorelei.

"Okay, but how'd they get access to a whole warehouse store to film this? Like, they even get to use the meatball counter."

"It's *art*," Lorelei protested insincerely, and then smiled at his laughter. "It's also not an American work. These things can be arranged in other lands. What you call bribery is just the cost of doing business elsewhere in the world."

"At least everyone seems to be having a good time."

"Mm-hm," she sighed.

His eyebrows rose. "Are you?"

Lorelei took hold of the hand in her hair, guiding it first to her mouth for the softest kiss to his fingers, and then down her body. She slid his touch between her breasts and beyond, parting the folds of her robe and her loose belt. Alex felt warm, damp hair before his fingers found her even wetter waiting for him. A happy moan escaped Lorelei's throat.

She writhed in his lap as his touch swirled and teased. He'd never turn down this sort of invitation.

"This is creative, athletic, and has the veneer of illicit fun in public," Lorelei sighed dreamily. "I like all these things."

He didn't speak. Slick with her arousal and fully welcome, Alex hooked his fingers and invaded her.

She breathed her approval, and not just for his touch. "Your silence hints at interest."

"Yeah, I think I'd like all that, too."

"I know you would." She settled in, enjoying both the film and her lover, but a thought furrowed her brow. "I still haven't placed this language, though."

"Me neither. I... wait." He listened, and then winced. "Oh my god. It's Simlish."

"It's what?"

“I’d need to boot up the console to show you.” Alex shook his head. “Okay, I’m starting to feel like this is one is actually good.”

ENTRY FOUR: *TRASH COLLECTORS*

“Ah. I thought the ‘trash’ in the title referred to the acts, not their sexual partners,” said Lorelei. “That’s disappointing.”

“Yeah, I read it that way, too. Guess this one’s disqualified.” Alex reached for the remote.

“You don’t need to turn it off. If I stopped every piece of media with an offensive element, I’d never finish anything. What’s that practice of rejecting the content on the page and substituting your own? Headcanon?”

“Yeah, basically,” said Alex. “Headcanon is good as long as people remember the difference.”

“We won’t likely be discussing this film with anyone.” Lorelei watched with diminished interest, but she didn’t turn away. “I appreciate their commitment to trash as a theme in the set dressing, at least.”

“Tetanus. The theme of this movie is tetanus.”

“You’ll never have that problem while you’re with me,” she assured him. “Or Rachel.”

“...um.”

“That’s not a request. I’m glad you don’t have a trash fetish.”

“Oh god, is that a thing?”

“Everything is a thing for someone,” Lorelei grumbled.

ENTRY FIVE: *THE SINS OF POPE PHALLUS THE TENTH (INCH)*

Every time Alex opened his mouth to comment, he wound up closing it again. He sat with his arms folded, at turns curious, befuddled, and almost amused enough to laugh. Almost.

Leaning against him on the couch, Lorelei watched with a furrowed brow, absently stroking her jaw.

Friday night had technically become Saturday morning by the time they turned the screen on. This time, they didn’t watch alone.

“Honestly,” Lorelei spoke up in the third act, “apart from the lead’s sexual performance and the cheap production values, the accuracy here is uncanny.”

“Yyyyeah.” A wide-eyed Rachel sat at the foot of the couch with one of Alex’s hoodies draped over her head. She pulled on the sleeves often, but it did little to protect her. “I heard about that pope. Ugh.”

“That pope?” asked Lorelei. “Only the one?”

Rachel let out a dismayed noise and pulled the hoodie over her face.

ENTRY SIX: *SEXSPORT!*

Alex slapped the DVD case onto the kitchen counter. “I found this in the vintage bin at that creepy place in Lynnwood,” he said, half with pride and half with lingering horror. “It’s musty in there. Dank. And then the lady at the counter is friendly and helpful and that makes it worse.”

“When I said you’ll never fall ill again, I didn’t intend for you to test it,” Lorelei smirked. “Do you need an angel hug to chase away the bad vibes?”

“I might,” said Alex. “But I got the job done.” He flipped the case around to show her the front face. “It’s an ’80s action parody. Lady hero tries to avenge the ‘loss’ of her husband to an international underground competitive fuck league. It looks stupid and *terrible*.”

Lorelei’s lips pressed together.

“Is it too cringe?” His eyes lit up with hope and pending triumph.

“No,” she answered reluctantly. “In fact, I appreciated the twist revealed in act two.”

“Oh no.” His shoulders slumped. “You’ve seen it?”

“No, but I may have had something to do with the unexpected death of the producer shortly before it was released.” Lorelei searched his eyes and found no judgment. “I believe the crew secretly celebrated once they found out.”

Hope drained from his eyes. He swallowed hard and asked, in a tiny voice. “What’s the twist?”

“The husband still lives. He left his wife for the woman who defeated him in the ring.”

Alex turned away in defeat.

“You are intrigued by the premise of competitive sex,” she called after him.

“Am not!”

“I won’t pressure you to watch, love. But you may discover something about yourself.”

He stopped, turned around, and picked the DVD up again with a grumble. “Fine.”

ENTRY SEVEN: YO-GA-OH!

“I understand this is a parody,” Lorelei began, “but I don’t understand the point of it all. The competitors summon other people to have the sex *for* them?”

“Yeah.”

“Competitively.”

“Look, don’t get me on the competitive sex thing again,” he grumbled, blushing fiercely. “The parody is the point.”

“Of course. Apologies. That isn’t the source of my perplexity.”

“Okay?”

“These opponents would rather have their minions do everything than have sex themselves?”

“In the original, they summon up monsters and stuff to fight one another. I thought they’d make this more accessible for the porn audience.”

“Did the conceit of the original make sense?”

“...not really, no. I never got into it, either. I just thought this would be silly.”

“It is that,” she conceded.

Suspicion crept into his mind. His eyes slid sideways. “So, is this *bad*?”

“The performers are all rather easy on the eyes. And I appreciate the costuming. I’m sorry, Alex.”

“No, you’re right,” he sighed.

“The leading man’s hair looks uncomfortable, but it is magnificent.”

“Yeah, they nailed that part.”

DEFEAT

Alex found her at their desk, typing one email or another. He leaned against the doorframe and waited patiently. She finished without interruption, hitting “Send” before turning to face him.

“The reality cooking show thing was close?” he asked.

“Close,” she said. “It had the leverage of especially bad food ideas.”

“And the courtroom drama?”

“I believe we must both admit the jury orgy was more compelling than it had any right to be.”

Alex conceded with a grunt. The unexpected hits of his selections made for a lot of fun.

“I was nearly defeated by the pastiche that parodied Hee-Haw and Sha-Na-Na. Be glad you were born after that era of television.”

“Oh, I am.”

“I gather you have another entry to our contest?”

“Yeah.” Alex nodded slowly. “I didn’t want to sink this low.”

“Oh?” She watched him. “I sense no desires stirred by this discovery. How low did you sink? I hope you did not suffer only to find something I have seen before.”

“I don’t think so. It’s recent, and it’s Scottish. That’s not the low part,” he noted.

“I admit, my familiarity with Scottish pornography is a bit lacking.”

“Like I said, the regional bit is just an extra detail.” He held out a thumb drive. Her eyebrow rose. “We’re not gonna talk about where I got that, but I’ve scanned it for viruses. Twice.”

Amused, Lorelei inserted the thumb drive into their computer, called up the coded file name, and clicked... and watched.

Until she didn’t. She clicked “Pause.”

“Stopping already?” he asked.

“It reminded me of something. I stored some belongings in Chicago after a job some years ago. It should still be secure, and I’m sure I could have it shipped.” Lorelei twirled a finger at the paused action on the monitor. “I have my own fursona, if you’d like to meet her?”

Alex hung his head and shuffled away.

“Is that a no?” she called after him.

“It’s really not my thing,” he called back.

“Yes, but we’re talking about me here.”

“...okay, maybe.”