Matte Mnemonics

Written by Septia.

It was shocking to realise how much their thoughts gravitated toward one particular pattern: spruce yourself up, locate the next club stocked with enough singles to break the roof, and bag a few oestrogen boosts. Outside of that, their life was empty. Amazing that it only took a near fatal experience, and an hour walk towards home – covered in drool – for her mind to wander these places.

“Balls,” Tam muttered, tasting that phallic, decrepit word wiping off of her lips. Suppose that it took a dam breaking to upholster the river of routine. Even still, there were thoughts they'd rather avoid, those of what they'd do when the authorities got involved with her building. Finding out that the previous, rightful owner, had long since passed through as far as the sewers let them. All but the portion she kept with the others, another liability. Further thoughts likewise plagued Tam: that fact that she hadn't had time for incense in weeks, or that some of her 'collection' was starting to stink, of course not to mention the fact even after this many months her chest was still flat as a pancake.

“Grraaah,” something snapped inside of Tam. Or perhaps it was the outside, yes, definitely an external issue. Lost in thought she failed to notice she'd been scratching and ripping their drool laced shirt asunder, buttons flung off and lodging in crevices of cobblestones where she hadn't the urge to find them again. How'd they had even managed this feat was beyond them. Hair gel greased her palms, a leftover from her scrambled hairdo. A mother and child passing by her on the opposite end of the street. Tam felt the chill of the mother's gaze boring into them, imprinted with the prejudice and judgement that was – quite honestly – appropriate to the situation.

She wrapped up her frame with the tattered flaps of her shirt, skulking away into the evening whilst the woman kept a secure hold of the youngling.

Tam's face laid buried in her palms, when they weren't swiping up through her hair, curling around her scrambled drills and shaking up her hairdo into a birds nets. White grease and slobber clotting to their fingers and jamming through her hair. “Drat, bag, just couldn't be so stupid, I've never seen suchfmmra," Tam communicated to herself in a volley of grumbles. Only a few ports away from her apartment, she slumped back against the tile bricked walls of the alley; bricks firm and cold at her back. With three fingers supporting their head. Tam vocalized their frustrations in a disgruntled sigh. “Can't believe, just would've been a regular night, and that bitch's almost… wouldn't have been, much longer…” Tam mumbled to themselves, the fabric on some of their clothes sloughing apart, seems moistened and melted by the residue of acids clinging to her, sticking to her as firmly as the anxiety mounting in the back of her head.

“If I'd said something, gotten that Pon happy enough, it wouldn't… Would have been,” Tam stopped, reflecting over the possibility of her mind, thoughts, and life itself could be snuffed out in an instant. Thoughts that were left to marinate. Her rump numbed against the patch of concrete it was stationed upon, getting cold and dull to the point where distinguishing between the human and street became a challenge.

Had she not been let out, she wouldn't be sitting here right now, tugging at her clothes to stay obscured, despite the majority of her attire molten and useless. She wouldn't be contemplating her mortality- Her expression contracted, mouth pursed into an oval. It showed no teeth, no sharpness or sturdiness, eyes glossed over, a screen with static snow twinkling in the lights of the evening.

“That could've been it,” Tam mumbled to themselves. One palm roamed up to give her chest a squeeze. She'd worked diligently for this, just to have it sacrificed as blubber on some brat's-… Tam's lips shrunk.

“Met…,” she mumbled, eyes closed, folded up legs spreading out in full, sighing. Met had been degraded to an afterthought. She saw through her inner eye how Met picked up and sorted through the apartment, was always picking up litter when they were young. Tam could see him when she closed her eyes, hear that clack and click of their hooves trotting over linoleum. Wonder how much snooping it would take to find the incense box. Tam's expression contorted into a grimace. The beams of the evening sun vacating the neighbourhood. An influx of people taking to the streets on their venture home from the venues of the night.

Tam glanced at her gut, hogging up the biomass other parts of her so desperately required. She sighed. At this point, eyes remained closes. “Maybe it would be the best not to come back, especially looking like this.” Her thoughts kept circling back in on themselves, until they reached the nadir of her mind, a place occupied by family, by Met, and…

Tam looked up, witnessing the last few streetlights shutting, in favour of stars peeking through the wild of the city, the lamps restructured to a dimmed blue. The starlight mirrored in her despondent face, an expression that grew proportional to the time she was lost glaring at those little pebbles of light.

“Suppose, that neglect has been my default the past years. That coin spewing vagrant…,” Tam mumbled under her breath, then sighed. “He doesn't deserve that.” Her brow furrowed, carving through the layers of make up and cream plastered to smoothen their head to a mirror shine. All that effort ruined, the little which remained after the trip down an eccentric's stomach's, caved like putty from Tam's brow.

She slumped back, taking in the murky scenery, as the chills got to set in, and illumination grew sparse in time for the night light to shake its corpse awake for another round. Money lost imagination, thoughts lost in shambles, her surroundings sticky and gross. Tam's mind roamed back to Met, thinking of them stashed away in an alley, wrapping up trash bags in place of blankets.

“If he was a girl I could've... Yeah, right, it'd be so easy. We've all got asymmetrical interests. Despite it all, I could… I…” Tam tired of hearing their own voice. Staring down to in search for patterns in the pebbles and construction, solutions they'd be sure to find in the tessellated chaos. Eyes flicking from rock to rock, a rhythmic clack with each glance, mimicing the taps of cloven hooves.

A clacking sound brought her brought them back. Seems the tapping wasn't conjured by her imagination, but the actual taps of their brother's hooves approaching. Tam smirked. Figured they'd find them now. Tam pondered back to the years their sibling had spent in the gutter. How fair of a chance could they have, if they decided to camp out one day, with the goal of seeing who could survive the longest?

“Tam? Treating themselves to a trek through the trash?” Met wondered aloud, carrying a parcel with a cast iron brand on its side. Their joking tone melting off as they saw what state Tam was in. “Wait. Seriously, how did this happ-.” Met begun to ask, though he was taken to avoid eye contact at this point, invoking the essence of an embarrassed party crasher who only came for the appetiser, but now was stuck until dinner. “Can almost see your bust, you ok? shouldn't you cover up-.” Met began, reaching around Tam's back.

“I'll do it myself, get your paws of me,” Tam said, halfway through regretting their tone, though their words already spoken. They stared at Met as they staggered back. That satyr, invoking feelings of home, a band tying Tam to the surrounding world.

Tam's attempts at standing were foiled by their own balance, resulting in reinforced support from their brother. This time, she didn't complain.

"We are getting you home."

Tam could not refuse. "Yeah." They were less certain they could handle the physical feat of walking home alone in this state. "Besides, if we were living outdoors, you'd have an advantage with all that fur."

Met didn't flinch in his response. "Wouldn't be the only insulation my chest got more of than you."

It hurt to smile at that. Met would not ask what happened again. Tam just wanted to forget.