

AFTER fetching some hot tea for Braska, Auron returned to the room the three of them had booked; he placed the bowl on the table by Braska's bed, and murmured, "Got this for you, my lord."

Braska began to thank him, but he was interrupted by Jecht, who exclaimed, "Why didn't you get me one?"

Auron turned to him, unimpressed. "If you want tea, you can get it yourself," he said. "Besides, I thought you only drank beer."

Jecht glowered. "Yeah. You're right. Only thing I drink is beer. Guess I'll just get some beer, then." He stalked off, slamming the door on his way out.

Auron stared at the door, frowning, while Braska took a sip of his tea, too melancholy to pay much attention to his guardians.

Several hours later, Jecht returned, stumbling through the door and somehow finding his way to the mat left out for him. Despite his altered state, he was aware of Auron's gaze levelled in his direction.

"What're you lookin' at," he slurred, grappling with his shorts before fumbling his way under the blanket. "Went and had my beer like you said, didn't I? So what's new?"

Auron scowled, and then said, "You'll never fight well if you're drinking all the time."

"What do you fuckin' know about it," Jecht retaliated.

“In case you’ve forgotten,” said Auron, “and you probably have, combat is my profession. So I think you’ll find I –”

“*Was* your profession,” Jecht interrupted, sitting up on his mat. “The monks kicked you out – I wouldn’t forget *that*. Hey, I may be a drunkard, but at least I have a job to go back to when we’re done – I’m not some loser with no –”

He was cut off; Auron had sprung up from his own mat and made for Jecht, pinning him against the wall, both hands on his shoulders. “Are you trying to start something?” he snarled.

“Yeah, maybe I am!” Jecht countered.

“All right,” said Auron, finding himself to have calmed down slightly. “Not in here, while Braska’s sleeping. We’ll settle this first thing tomorrow.”

“Good,” said Jecht. “I’m lookin’ forward to it.”

“I’m sure you are,” Auron retorted, getting back under his blanket.