

Stolen Puppy

By C. Jade Wyton

The ever-rebellious teen Olivia is having a restless night. She has to do SOMETHING. So she keeps making more and more trouble, until she ends up getting herself into some big trouble.

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It was around midnight when Olivia pushed open the door to the boys' room. She winced as it gave a deafening *creeeeeeeeeaaaaak...* in the otherwise silent night.

But nobody stirred. So, on tiptoe, Olivia crept her way through the room to the far bed where Daimon was sleeping.

She stood for a moment, watching the rise and fall of his chest as he snored, before reaching out to shake him awake.

*'Naw, little spitfire....'*

Olivia jumped at Bertram's voice, and whirled around to see the man sitting up in bed and rubbing sleep from his eyes.

*'Let 'im sleep s'more,'* Bertram whispered. *'Ya know he was working hard today. He was real tired when we got back and as happy as I think he'd be to see ya, I don't think it's fair t'disturb 'im.'*

She hated that Bertram was right. And she lashed her tail violently to let him know it.

*'Hah,'* Bertram gave a quiet chuckle as he slipped out of bed and adjusted his night clothes. *'Come on, darlin'. Let's get ya back to yer room.'*

Olivia lashed her tail again as she heard Farren stir, and folded down her ears angrily. *'Shh! You're gonna wake him, clomping around like that!'* she hissed, much to Bertram's amusement. *'You better not! Or else!'*

*'Don't ya worry, none. I won't be telling the others I caught ya awake,'* Bertram reassured, ushering Olivia into the hall. He put an arm around her as she tried to walk the opposite way to her room, and gently guided her to her door. *'If ya promise to go to bed.'*

*'I promise nothing!'* Olivia scoffed, sticking her nose in the air.

*'I didn't think ya would, ya little trouble maker,'* Bertram said, playfully ruffling Olivia's hair as he did.

Against her will, Olivia giggled. Then she felt herself blush and tried to smother it by turning it into a low growl.

She couldn't let Bertram know she actually *liked him!*

If he knew she liked him, he'd start trying to get away with things. Like talking to Farren even more than he already did!

And *nobody* was allowed to talk to Farren without her permission.

Except maybe Sheshalan. But that was *different*.

*'Go on, now,'* Bertram leant over Olivia, then, and opened the door for her. *'Y'all get some sleep b'fore we get working tomorrow. Something tells me it's gonna be a long day....'*

‘Was it the fight at dinner?’ Olivia recalled; thinking back to the argument Farren and Sheshalan had had about whether they should head up the East or West trail to the next town.

‘Yer a bright one, spitfire,’ Bertram grinned down at Olivia, who responded with a heavy, defeated sigh. ‘C’mon, ya need yer rest.’

‘*No I don’t*,’ Olivia mumbled, crossing her arms as Bertram nudged her into the room. ‘*You need your rest...*’

‘Yeah, darlin’, I do,’ Bertram said with a chuckle. ‘All of us do. So don’t let me catch ya up like that again, y’hear?’

‘Yeah, yeah...’ Olivia mumbled, sulking her way to her bed and flopping down in a heap.

‘G’night, Liv,’ Bertram said softly.

‘Whatever, Blueballs,’ she huffed in response before burying her face in her pillow and mumbling, ‘*Putting me in bed like I’m a kid.... Not... my dad...!*’

Bertram shut the door with a quiet *click* that was followed by his footsteps returning to his room.

*Sigh!*

Olivia gave a loud, annoyed huff and rolled onto her back.

Stupid Bertram. Stopping her from waking Daimon.... She just wanted to spend some time with her *boyfriend!* But that dumb cowboy always had to get in her way.

*Sigh.*

Another sigh found its way out of her, and she rolled onto her side.

It wasn’t *fair* that Daimon had to sleep in a different room! They were *dating!* They should be allowed to sleep in the same room!

But *nooooo!* They were “too young” and it would be “irresponsible” to let them spend the night together!

It’s not like they would even *do* anything! Especially not when there were other people sharing the room with them.

*Sigh....*

She rolled onto her other side.

Was it so wrong to want Daimon to hold her in those big stupid arms and breathe down her back with his stupid warm snores?

She wanted to hear his heartbeat instead of... whatever that ugly noise that was coming out of Sheshalan was!

*Sigh— THWUMP!*

Volante’s spare pillow slammed into the side of Olivia’s head and she gave a grunt as the tiefling groaned.

‘*Stop it, Olivia!*’ she complained from underneath her other pillow. ‘You’re being *so* loud! Farren wants me to finish my project tomorrow and if I don’t get to *sleep* I’ll miss the deadline!’

‘But I’m not tired!’ Olivia whined as she sat up.

‘Then go be not-tired somewhere else!’

‘I *tried* that and Bertram made me come back to bed—’

‘Both of you *shut up!*’ Sheshalan huffed, cutting Olivia off.

‘*You shut up!*’ Olivia snapped, picking up the pillow that Volante had thrown at her and throwing it as hard as she could at the goatling.

It was immediately thrown back, hitting her in the chest and winding her.

‘Don’t throw things at her!’ Volante exclaimed; throwing her remaining pillow at Sheshalan.

‘Don’t throw things at *me!*’ Sheshalan retorted, throwing the pillow back but falling short of Volante’s bed and landing the pillow on the floor several steps away.

‘Hah!’ Olivia laughed, loudly. ‘You *suck* Sheshalan!’

‘*Stop fighting!*’ Farren’s voice shouted from the other room.

‘YOU STAY OUT OF IT!’ Sheshalan screeched, slamming her hand against the adjoining wall. ‘UNLESS YOU WANT TO TRADE PLACES WITH ME?! I DIDN’T THINK SO!’

‘*Gods above...*’ Farren’s voice groaned. ‘What even *is* it this time?!’

‘Sheshalan *threw* things at me!’

‘*YOU THREW IT AT ME!*’

‘BECAUSE YOU TOLD ME TO SHUT UP!’

‘Is that Olivia? Can you tell her I love her?’

‘Daimon, go back to sleep!’

‘Don’t you yell at Daimon!’

‘I wasn’t *yelling*, Liv—‘

‘SHUT UP!’

‘YOU SHUT UP!’

‘Ooooooh my *gods!*’ Volante cried, furiously. ‘ALL OF YOU SHUT UP!’

‘NO!’ Olivia cried, throwing the pillow back at Volante... and immediately having it slam back into her face.

‘Oh *now* who’s throwing things?!’ Sheshalan snapped before immediately receiving the same pillow-to-the-face treatment Olivia had. ‘Volante!’

‘I’m going to kill you *both!*’

‘Oh yeah?’ Olivia growled. ‘Well—‘

**BANG!**

The door flew open and Olivia flinched as Veruca stood, her night-dress billowing from the force of the motion. Her form was silhouetted by the light that sat almost directly behind her; peeking out between the gaps in her large spiralled horns.

Olivia swallowed, feeling her fur bristling as Sheshalan turned on Veruca.

‘And what do *you* want?’

Wordlessly, with only a short glance at Sheshalan, the satyr *clipped* into the room and grabbed Olivia by the arm; pulling her out of bed and dragging her into the hall.

‘I mean if *you* want to deal with her then *be my GUEST!*’ Sheshalan yelled. ‘Maybe now we’ll get some *peace!*’

Veruca didn’t bother to shut the door as she quickly made her way down to the far room. She pushed open the already-ajar door and shoved Olivia inside.

Olivia didn’t say a word as she was taken to the spare bed and sat down; she was too busy trying to make her fur lay flat as the satyr watched her with sharp eyes.

‘You are still being scared of me?’ Veruca asked, curtly.

‘*No!*’ Olivia lied.

‘Don’t be lying to me,’ Veruca said. ‘I can smell lies.’

‘No you can’t,’ Olivia huffed, grumbling as Veruca lifted the blanket and threw it over her head. She quickly pulled it back off and grumbled, ‘People can’t *smell* lies!’

‘I can,’ Veruca said, simply.

Olivia opened her mouth to argue— But then found herself hesitating.

*Could* Veruca smell lies...? She *was* a bard. And they could learn Zone of Truth.... Maybe she’d modified it in a weird way and....

Olivia shrunk back, her eyes darting to the floor as Veruca watched her closely.

‘*Can you really smell lies?*’

‘Yes. Now be going to sleep,’ Veruca ordered, turning and making her way to her own bed. She settled down, snuggling deep into her blankets, before speaking again; a hint of humour in her voice. ‘Or *else*.’

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The night had been very, *very* quiet since Olivia had been moved to Veruca’s room.

After about twenty more seconds of arguing the rest of the party had quietened down and not made another noise.

It was probably close to one or two, now, and even though Olivia had been huffing and puffing and rolling over all night, Veruca hadn’t stirred.

Maybe Olivia could use this to convince Farren to give her her own room? Or better yet, give her and *Daimon* a room to share!

Hm....

No.

He’d *never* allow *that*....

In fact, if she brought up how quiet things were when she was in a room without Sheshalan, he would probably try and convince *Veruca* to keep her in her room from then on!

Olivia swallowed at the idea.

It wasn’t that she didn’t like Veruca or anything.... It was that Veruca was....

She was....

She could *smell lies!*

Olivia shivered at the thought.

Then she sat up and turned; slipping out of bed and brushing down her pyjamas.

Stupid pyjamas!

She hated them, but Sheshalan made her wear them because she had to be “decent” or whatever.

Like she cared about that....

Slowly, Olivia approached the inn room door and, carefully, opened it as quietly as possible—

‘Where do you thinking you are going?’ Veruca asked.

‘Uh... toilet?’ Olivia lied, trying to keep her fur flat.

‘Mm...’ Veruca let out a tired sigh. ‘I am not believing you. But stopping you

would be unethical.... Be quick.'

'Yeah— Uh, yeah!' Olivia stammered, quickly slipping out into the hall and shutting the door behind her.

She gave a heavy sigh of relief as she stood for a moment; then shook herself down.

Veruca would probably be listening to make sure she actually went the way she'd said she would....

So, deliberately heavy-footed, Olivia made her way down the hall to the bathroom.

She closed the door loudly, locking it behind her, and then gazed around....

She could fit through that window.

Flipping the lid down so she could stand on the toilet, Olivia hoisted herself up to the window and undid the latch.

It swung open easily.

'Hah! Yeah, take *that*, Veruca!' Olivia cheered quietly to herself.

Then, she gripped the window's frame and pulled herself through.

Or, *almost* pulled herself through.

She got to her waist, and then got caught.

Damn it!

She scrabbled at the frame with her claws, twisting herself at all sorts of angles until she managed to pull herself through; almost toppling to the ground and barely managing to catch herself and swing around to land on her feet.

Stupid hips!

Stupid puberty!

What was it even *for*?!

All it did was make her body a weird shape so it was harder to fit through things!

That, and make her insides feel all weird when Daimon put his arm around her....

She shook the thought of Daimon's strong hands out of her head and quickly glanced up at the inn-room windows.

Nobody had heard her. Or, at least, nobody was looking out their windows to look at her....

Perfect!

Olivia grinned to herself, flicking her tail in joy as she turned on her heels and made for the street.

Tonight was going to be so much fun!

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Tonight had fucking *sucked*.

It was cold. And the pavement was damp. And the clouds made the sky dark instead of pretty.

Her only comfort was that the pyjamas Sheshalan made her wear were warm and thick and kept the chill wind out of her fur.

But she couldn't ever admit *that*, or the stupid goatling would hold it over her head forever.

Though... as she rubbed her hand along the soft fabric, she *was* grateful that Sheshalan cared about her. Even if she was really bad at showing that she cared and yelled a lot.

Olivia stopped under a lamp, taking a deep, deep breath as she closed her eyes and thought about Farren and Sheshalan and wondered... if her real parents were anything like them....

She shook the thought from her head and pressed on.

It didn't matter.

They weren't here for her, so they didn't matter.

Stomping down the street, Olivia glanced around at the houses and let out a sigh.

She was one of the richer parts of town... not rich enough to have high fences and security guards. But rich enough to have nice things like garden gnomes and decorative paving stones.

*But also...* Olivia paused by the side of a house, her tail lashing from one side to the other. *Not so rich they thought to close their kitchen windows....*

This place would have been a *goldmine* for the Letter Park Gang.

Ear twitching, Olivia listened into the silence of the house.

She couldn't help it— It was just too tempting! And before she could stop herself she had hefted herself up and over the sill into the dark, quiet kitchen.

*Sheshalan is going to be so mad at me...* she thought to herself with a groan. *But what kind of idiot leaves their windows open all night!*

She thought it might have had something to do with the warmth of the house; the kitchen was hot, like the heat of the previous day was still trapped inside....

'Oh, *hello!*' Olivia felt her eyes widen as she saw, laid out on the drying rack, an expensive set of silverware. It had gold accents running down the handles with small gemstones inlaid in the swirling patterns. 'Looks like *someone* had a dinner party! Heh.... Yoink...!'

Making use of her deep pants pockets, Olivia jammed as much of the silverware as would fit into her pyjamas.

Knives, forks, spoons, and even a couple of plates that fit into the big pocket on the front of her shirt.

She took some fancy-looking biscuits from a tin, letting the crumbs fall wherever they wanted as she ate them. Then she took a bottle of wine from a shelf on the bench and *cracked!* it open. She took a sip and scrunched up her nose at the bitter taste.

*Eugh*, she thought as she drunk about a third of the bottle and abandoned the rest carelessly on the bench. *Rich people were weird!*

Sniffing loudly, she made her way through the house; examining all of the fancy little trinkets they had on display and wishing she'd brought her satchel bag so she could have taken some more of it....

*Yip!*

Olivia froze at the noise; her eyes darting through the dark room to lay on a large black and white dog that slept in the corner.

Her fur stood on end as it gave a low snore, and she licked her lips to stave off her nerves.

*Yip!*

Something small bumped her leg and she looked down to see a small puppy, tail wagging so hard its entire body shook from side to side.

She *felt* her pupils go wide as it yipped at her again, and she bent down to scoop it up into her arms.

*'Hello!' she cooed in a whisper. 'Oh my gods, hello!'*

It licked at her nose.

Then her lips.

Then her cheek.

She couldn't hold back her purrs as it ran its tongue all over her face and wiggled joyfully in her grip.

*'Oh my gods, you're so small!' she giggled; emptying the oversized pocket on her shirt's front onto the coffee table so that she could slip the puppy into it. 'You are coming home with me!'*

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She really hadn't thought that through.

She *really* hadn't thought that through!

What was she, stupid?!

There was *no* way she could hide an *entire dog* from the Dawn Runners!

They would all notice *immediately*— Well. Maybe she could keep it hidden from Daimon until it got bigger.... But *Sheshalan* was going to pitch an entire fit over it!

She supposed, now, she would have to leave the Dawn Runners.

Because she couldn't go back to them with a stolen dog! And she wasn't about to give it up.

She'd made a commitment to it, after all. And being abandoned sucked. She knew that from experience.

'I guess it's just you and me from here on out,' she said to the puppy, stroking her hand down its back as it slept in her lap. 'Maybe I can find Daimon before everyone moves on, and we can elope. And you'd be like the child we had out of wedlock.'

If she wanted to move on, she'd have to do it quickly. The sun was rising and everyone would start looking for her soon but... also....

She couldn't wake the puppy up!

She'd read once that it was *very* bad to wake a sleeping baby. And a puppy was a type of baby, wasn't it? And if she stood up, she would wake it up!

So she had to sit and wait until it woke up on its own—

'Ahem,' the familiar throat-clear was followed by the scolding *tap-tap-tap* of a satyr hoof, and Olivia didn't dare look behind her.

'Oh... hey... Veruca...'

'You did the lying to me,' Veruca huffed. *'You vere not going to the bathroom.'*

'I— I did go to the bathroom!' Olivia defended. *'I just... left the bathroom. Through the window...'*

'Hmp...' Veruca gave a sniff. *'Farren's been looking for you.'*

'Farren can get fucked,' Olivia mumbled, stroking her hand down the dog's back.

‘Where are you getting dog?’

Olivia blew a loud raspberry at Veruca; who raised a brow.

‘Mm. *Alright* then,’ Veruca mumbled, in that voice that clearly meant she was going to go tell Farren where Olivia was.

Gods....

She wanted to get up and hide or run away or— Anything!

But she didn’t want to wake the puppy....

So all she could do was sit and wait, her ears folded down in displeasure, until Farren and Sheshalan were flanking either side of the bench she sat on and looking down at her with those *stupid* disappointed looks they always looked down on her with!

‘Where have you been all night?’ Sheshalan asked.

‘Around,’ Olivia responded.

‘And where did you get the dog?’

‘Found it.’

‘Where?’

‘Mm....’

‘Hm...’ Sheshalan leant forward then, her nose twitching as she sniffed at Olivia’s breath.

It was clear she could smell the alcohol.

Olivia stared at Sheshalan with a pleading look that silently begged her not to mention it in front of Farren and, to her surprise, Sheshalan didn’t.

Instead she straightened up and crossed her arms and asked again: ‘Where did you get the dog, Olivia?’

‘*Found* it,’ Olivia responded, forcefully.

‘I don’t believe you.’

‘Well, I—’ Olivia hesitated as the rest of the Dawn Runners —Bertram and Daimon and Volante— came into view following Veruca. ‘*Technically* I did find it. Just... in... someone’s house....’

Now, Olivia didn’t remember having a mother. But she knew that the sigh that escaped Sheshalan *must* have been a motherly one, because there was absolutely *no* other way to describe it.

And all Olivia could do when Sheshalan grabbed her by the arm and began emptying her pyjama pockets was look guilty at the pavement. She hoped that Sheshalan wouldn’t raise her voice; if she did, she’d wake the puppy!

Once Olivia’s pockets were empty, Sheshalan tapped a hoof unhappily on the ground. ‘Same house that this came from?’

Olivia shifted uncomfortably as all of the adults stared her down. She didn’t want to answer Sheshalan, but the looks she was getting were stabbing into her like knives and, after a long and uncomfortable silence, she eventually gave an anxious hum. ‘Mmm... *yeah....*’

‘Show me.’

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Olivia’s heart was in her stomach, and her stomach was in her throat, and her legs were like jelly with cinder-block feet as Farren nudged her up the path to the



house's front door.

'Come on, Liv,' he said softly. 'You have to give him back.'

'But I don't *want* to!' Olivia argued as Sheshalan pounded heavily on the door. 'They can have the silverware, but do they have to take *him*?'

'He's *their* dog, Liv— Ah! Good morning,' Farren's tone switch was accompanied by a *very* friendly handshake. 'I'm so sorry we've come to call so early, but there's some important matters we *must* discuss with you!'

'Yes,' Sheshalan confirmed, giving Olivia a shove forward. 'Isn't that *right*, Olivia?'

Olivia swallowed as she was presented to the owner of the house; he was an older man. Human. *Clean*....

'Uh...' she cleared her throat, adjusting her grip on the dog. 'I uh....'

'Tell him what you did, Olivia,' Sheshalan urged.

'Um...' Olivia cast a pleading look back down the path to where the rest of the Dawn Runners stood. Luckily for her, they mostly looked empathetic— Bertram even gave her a friendly nod and motion with his hand to *go on*.... 'I uh...' she turned back to the human. 'I'm.... I'm in rehabilitation. For... uh....'

Losing her words, she instead stuck her hand in her pocket and pulled out a handful of the stolen silverware, which she held to the man.

'Ah,' he gave a low tut and took back his knives and his forks. 'We were just about to call the police about that....'

'Please don't,' Olivia mumbled, readjusting her grip on the dog so she could bury her face into his fur. 'I— I just couldn't help it! You left the window open and I— Uh.... I couldn't... *not*....'

'It's a compulsion,' Farren clarified. 'She can't help herself. We've been working on it, and I'd say she's doing well! But... sometimes she slips up.... It's a little bit like smoking; hard to quit! I'm sure you understand?'

The human man shrugged as Sheshalan tugged more things out of Olivia's pockets to return to him. 'Can't say I do. But I suppose no harm was done. And she looks sorry enough.'

'*Yeah, she's really good at looking sorry!*' Sheshalan mumbled under her breath.

'I *am* sorry!' Olivia defended, feeling her fur spike up as she glared at Sheshalan. 'I *am*! I've never been more sorry in my whole *life*!'

'Alright, *enough* arguing,' Farren chuckled, and placed his hands on Olivia's shoulders. 'Now, give him back his dog.'

The man held out his hands, but Olivia couldn't seem to move.

'The dog,' Farren repeated.

'But—'

'*Liv*,' he said, firmly.

'But I *love* him!' she whined, holding the puppy closer against herself. 'I don't *want* to give him back!'

'Well, you have to,' Farren said simply. 'We're not thieves, Olivia....'

'But— But—' Olivia cast a pleading glance at Farren. Then to Sheshalan. Then at the human man who stood in the doorway.

The man's eyes softened. 'Well...' he started, his own gaze flicking up to Farren's. 'My intention *was* to sell the pups. I was going to wait another week,

but if you're interested.... They're worth twenty gold.'

'But I don't *have* twenty gold!' Olivia cried, cutting Farren off before he could answer. 'I don't *get* an allowance! Sheshalan won't let me have money!'

'Because if I did,' Sheshalan snorted. 'You'd come home with all kinds of ridiculous things. Like *DOGS!*'

'Sha, I'm *handling* it,' Farren sighed, physically moving himself between the two girls as Olivia stuck out her tongue. 'And Liv? He was offering *me* the price.'

Olivia's ears twitched, at that, and her eyes widened as she stepped towards the orc.

'*Please?*' she asked.

'Ah... Liv, I don't know—'

'Please, Farren? *Please!*' Olivia begged, dropping to her knees and holding up the puppy to Farren. 'I'll never ask for anything ever again! I promise!'

'That's what you said about Daimon,' Farren chuckled, casting a playful glance back at the leonin. 'Hm.... Give me one good reason I should let you have a dog.'

'I let you keep the cowboy!'

Volante let out a snort, not bothering to hide the laugh that followed as Bertram heaved his sigh.

'Please, Farren, I'm on my *knees!*' Olivia begged. 'You know I *never* get on my knees!'

'Well... maybe...' Farren's hand brushed his coin purse, and Olivia felt her pounding heart leap.

'Farren, no! This is why she never learns!' Sheshalan scolded. 'You're rewarding her for her bad behaviour!'

'No, I am learning!' Olivia lied, stumbling back to her feet. 'I *am!*'

'Mhm,' Sheshalan gave a doubtful hum. 'Learning *what*, exactly?'

'Uh...' Olivia looked from Sheshalan to Farren and back. 'I'm learning... that... uh... there are consequences to my actions?'

'We're *not* getting the dog,' Sheshalan said, firmly.

'Oh, but Sha, *look* at her!' Farren cooed, pulling Olivia into his side. 'How about we put it to a vote?'

'Oh, for gods' sake... *fine*,' Sheshalan shrugged. She turned to the rest of the Dawn Runners, and motioned them over to the door. 'Farren wants to vote on if we should let Olivia keep the dog—'

'Yes,' Volante immediately interrupted. 'I say keep the dog. And if there's not enough room for it, we can leave Sheshalan behind to make room.'

'Ugh!' Sheshalan rolled her eyes. 'Veruca, *you're* sensible. What do you say?'

It was clear that she thought the satyr was going to side with her; but as Veruca crouched down next to Olivia to look into the puppy's eyes and grin, it was clear that wasn't going to happen.

'Vell. I have just spoken with him, with my Speak Vith Animals spell,' Veruca sniffed as she rose to her feet. 'And he is saying he wants to be doing crack.'

'*Veruca!*' Sheshalan snapped.

'He is wanting to be a crackhead,' Veruca joked.

'Take this *seriously*, Veruca!' Sheshalan grumbled.

'Please, Veruca?' Olivia begged, edging as close as she dared to the woman.

Veruca gave another sly grin as she pet Olivia on the head. Then, she turned

back to Sheshalan. 'I am thinking it would be great way for Olivia to be learning about budgeting her money. If you start giving her allowance, that is.'

'Yeah! Yeah!' Olivia stepped closer again, now feeling her shoulder brush against Veruca's side. 'See? It will be educational. I will budget *so hard!* It will be like nothing you've ever seen before!'

'Oh, I don't doubt *that,*' Sheshalan sighed.

'She needs to be learning to handle her own money *sometime,*' Veruca pointed out. 'She is being growing up fast. You don't wanting her to be adult with spending habits like Farren, do you?'

'Hey—' Farren started.

'Be proving me wrong,' Veruca challenged, curtly.

'I, uh...' the human man gave a cough to draw everyone's attention. 'I think I should warn you in advance, that one *is* the runt of the litter. So he's not as strong as the others. You're welcome to look at the other pups if you like, instead.'

'No!' Olivia gasped, holding the puppy close. 'I love *him!* And— A-And even if he *is* the runt, I bet he's still stronger than Bertram!'

'Hey, now,' Bertram sighed, shaking his head and fixing his hat. 'I'm never anything but nice t'ya, little spitfire. Why ya always gotta be so mean t'me?'

*Because you take up all of Farren's time,* she bit the retort back. Though, by the look Bertram gave her she thought he might have been able to read her mind.

'Well...' he sighed through his nose. 'It ain't often Liv takes a likin' t'things like this. Maybe looking after the little fella will help teach 'er some responsibility n' empathy.'

Olivia nodded, desperately, and turned back to Farren. 'Yeah! Yeah! Empathy! That! It'll teach me that!'

'Well, so far you've got everyone but Sheshalan saying yes...' Farren said, pushing back his hair. 'Daimon? Do you have any thoughts?'

'Any what?'

'I didn't think so,' Farren gave a humoured snort and pulled his coin purse from his hip. 'Looks like we're getting him.... What are you gonna call him?'

'Meth!' Olivia answered, perhaps a little too quickly. 'Crystal Meth!'

Sheshalan just sighed.

—END—

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