

The Shadow Zone 1.5: Fragile

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Maddox had time before the meeting with the Elders and he'd wanted to give Rick and Julia some time to themselves. So he'd automatically started walking towards the zone, his body knowing his mind's will without being told.

Just maybe it was the will of his heart. His dead, frozen heart would have thundered in his chest if it could have as he reached the door to her tiny, dirty cottage. There didn't seem to be anywhere else he wanted to be these days. When his missions kept him away, his mind was here anyway.

It was very early morning in the zone, the human world. Only a couple of hours until dawn. Making his way to her tiny window, he reached in to pull away the tattered curtain just as he always did so he could see her.

There she lay on the lumpy contrivance that was supposed to be a bed. Why the tiny human woman fascinated him so, he couldn't have said. Her silky fine hair curled like honey colored ribbons on her pillow. Her slender body was curled up as she lay on her side under a blanket that had seen better days. She was painfully thin, probably because she didn't make enough money to eat at times. He'd always wondered what she'd look like well fed and healthy.

Maddox had been sent to follow one of the higher ranking wolf soldiers into the zone and that was how he found her. She earned money selling her body and the

soldier visited her often. The first time he'd watched her with that brute had been hard to take. He hated how rough the mongrel always was. Yet his job was to shadow the wolf so he hadn't really had a choice.

By the next time he followed the soldier to her door, Maddox was imagining himself in the wolf's place. In his fantasies, it was him in her arms, inside her.

Impossible. He didn't have Rick's ability to manipulate human thoughts and perceptions. He couldn't project an image in her mind that he was just another human client. Oh, if he could have. He'd have had her so many times... He would have had to take such care but he would have found a way.

As it was, his skin was cold. He had no heartbeat, no warmth. No amount of money would persuade her to take him. A vampire...

She twisted in her sleep, a small frown forming on her lovely face. She looked almost like a child in sleep. She'd become restless. Did she sense danger in her sleeping conscience? Did his presence disturb her sleep?

He shared her restlessness. Not content with watching through her window, he silently made his way past the shadowy curtain that served as her door. Since he'd gone that far, he moved to the edge of her bed. He didn't want to stand over her like an old movie monster so he sank down onto the floor, sitting next to her.

The smell of her was an earthy perfume that made his mouth water. Shoving aside the thirst that cursed him, he focused on the other need she inspired in him. A man's physical need for a woman. That need never really left him. He got hard just thinking of her now. *Madeline.*

In his mind's eye, he could see himself gently climbing onto her makeshift bed, gathering her to him until his presence pulled her from sleep. Her eyes would flutter open in surprise, they were the color of rare amethysts, and she would smile up at him, offering him the warm curve of her lips.

He'd claim those lips in a soft kiss while the heated softness of her body crushed against him. He'd explore all that softness with his hands, his palms itched at that

thought. First he'd pull the simple shift she slept in up and over her head to reveal the wealth of warm skin that tantalized him. She'd trust him and welcome his touch.

Then he could focus on her breasts and the beautiful length of her neck. He could so easily imagine running his lips along the soft flesh beneath the soft angle of her jaw, enjoying the fragrance of her blood while his hands palmed the soft weight of her breasts. Her nipples were tiny red medallions when she was excited and he'd tease them gently, until she was so sensitive that she'd twist against him, arching her back to demand more of his touch.

Lost on the trail of his thoughts, his cock throbbed intensely.

He'd lower his mouth to the tiny ridge of first one breast and then the other, running his tongue all around each tight peak until she wrapped herself around him in a heated tangle. He wouldn't rush. No, he'd take his time in savoring the taste of her skin and learning each delicate inch of her body. He knew from memory what her breathy little cries sounded like when she entertained the clients she was able to get, always wondering how genuine they were. Would she do that with him as he suckled her? Would her cries be more magnificent with him? After all, he wouldn't be her client. He'd be her lover.

More than anything he wanted to be her lover.

So easy to imagine being surrounded by her unique smell when he'd ease down her body to the small patch of blonde down at the apex of her thighs. He could smell her private scent even now, could practically taste it on his tongue. Madeline would part her thighs for him, just allow them to fall open so he could smooth his hands over the creamy surface of her inner thighs.

She'd moan for him when his fingers reached the heated wetness at the top in her secret folds. Gently he'd part those inner lips until she had no secrets from him, until every part of her body was offered to him - to worship, to pleasure. And he wanted that ownership he realized. He wanted her to belong to him. Only him.

Maddox wanted to taste every part of her pussy, with his hands and his mouth, until she was mindless with pleasure beneath him. Her clients rarely lingered there,

always too eager to dive right in with their cock. How would she react to feeling a man's tongue lashing her clit like a rare delicacy? How exquisite would her passion be when he kept her on the edge of orgasm while he satisfied his need to trace her opening with his tongue, to sink his fingers into her delicate warmth and ready her for his claiming?

"Maddox," she'd whisper.

The need to have her say his name overwhelmed him at times, he'd imagined it so often.

He'd make her wait, make her come, before claiming her completely. When he sank his cock into her tight little body, she'd beg for him and twine her limbs around him like a vine. She was so slight for a human, maybe half his size, and he'd remind himself to be gentle as he pushed inside her. He'd have to control his movements because of what he was. Because of what she was. So fragile...

His cock jerked at the thought of that challenge and he groaned at the power of his desire for her. She'd fit around him so tightly, all wet heat that would drive him insane as he made her his. Her small breasts would be brands of fire against his skin. Her lips would blaze a path over his neck and shoulders and she'd move her hips to keep up with him.

He could make it last for a long time, make her come until she was exhausted and he would. It would be hard with her pussy walls stretched so tightly around him and her liquid fire burning him, urging him on. He'd revel in all of it. He'd enjoy the feeling of her thighs clenched tightly about his hips and the scrape of her nails down his impossibly hard skin as she cried out over and over again at the pleasurable invasion of his cock.

His own orgasm would be so shattering that it might well finish him.

Maddox smiled in the dark, watching her sleep. He could think of worse ways to end a long, lonely existence. Death in her arms would be bliss. The joy of holding her afterward, of having her gaze up at him with those beautiful violet eyes would be all he could ever want. She'd be his to protect, to touch and cherish whenever he wished.

Reality returned him to the shadows and the cold. He brushed his fingers against the soft skin of her cheek, not caring suddenly if it awoke her. Yet it didn't. She even smiled softly in her sleep.

Soon, he promised himself. *I'll find a way to make you mine.* It was the hardest thing to do, to leave her to go to the Elders' meeting. Somehow he managed, knowing he'd be back very soon...

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