

Summary: None given

Categories: [Anita Blake Series](#) Characters: Jason Schuyler, Zerbrowski/Asher

Genres: Slash

Warnings: Adult Situations, Brain-Insane, Caveat Lector, Complete, Fluff, m/m

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Series: None

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Story Notes:

That's what happens...

...if you do something your ex-wife wouldn't approve of.

...if you do something your boss wouldn't approve of.

...if you do something your job doesn't allow.

Written by WereWriter

Disclaimer: I do not, and repeat, do NOT, NJET, NICHTS, PAS, NIET own them. Five different languages. If you don't get it, go bug someone who cares.

Warnings: This probably won't make any sense. At all.

\*\*\*\*\*

WereWriter: I'M BAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!!!

Anita: Really?

WereWriter: Someone left me some sugary treats.

Anita: Left? Somehow, I find that hard to believe.

WereWriter: My adooooorable sister did.

Anita: You've been stealing candy from little kids? That's sad.

WereWriter: Hey, she got her share, I took mine. 'Sides, in MY country, we've got this lovely night where some holy guy dumps loads of cookies shaped like little letters, chocolate and some absolutely disgusting goo-filled little figures made of something with probably loads of sugar in it.

Anita: Like Halloween?

WereWriter: Yeeees, except for the fact that you don't have to walk half the town to get the candy. More like early Christmas. 'T also has giiiifts!!

Anita: And now you've had your sugar? Help us, dear Lord.

WereWriter: Yes.

Anita: And the victim of the day is...?

WereWriter: I was thinking about Dolph or Stephen, but then decided someone still needed her revenge.

Anita: I have this sudden urge to write my will. Any idea how that might be?

WereWriter: I meant you with the person who needed that revenge.

Anita: O.O Revenge? Me? Apart from Edward, there's no one I can think of that hasn't died after doing as much as insulting me.

WereWriter: And since your memory appears to have taken a holiday and is too cheap to buy post cards, the victim of the fic is one of your beloved colleagues.

\*\*\*\*\*

I don't know what's happening to me lately. Ever since last week, my life is a mess. Every morning - Evening, in theory - I feel like some force is trying to make my intestines my extestines by letting them get out trough my mouth. Jean-Claude noted it too, but refused to tell me what he thought was wrong. He just gave me this strange look of 'How could you?!' and walked out. Maybe because of Stephen... No, he would not act so childish. That's also strange. Ever since I started feeling so sick after waking up, the strangest thing happened. Instead of feeling like I'm being 'cleaned' again by those crazy humans, I feel strangely... strong, powerful, great, ready to take on the world. I even managed to call the wolf a few days ago, Stephen to be exact. I didn't knew what came over me. Okay, so I don't know what's coming over me most of the time lately. Most of all these strange visions of me knitting little pink socks, but that also might be from the fact that my last meal had had an overdose on sugar. Oh, Anita's coming in. She's also looking cranky. What did I do to make the universe so angry with me?

"Is something the matter, ma Chérie?"

She throws a box at my head.

"Yes, there is. Do you happen to know why Jean-Claude asked me to buy you this?" she hisses. I look at the box. Pregnancy test? I feel myself frown.

"Non."

I haven't done 'the dirty thing', as Jason calls it, for months. Oh, wait, there was this once, but that couldn't have... Could it?

"Peut-être..." my lips form.

Okay, I have about all the symptoms there are, from power boosts, to evening-sickness, to the fact that I have no desire whatsoever to make love to anyone. But the last time was last month, and I had merely fed of that man Anita had brought with her, - Who had agreed to let me, mind you. - And... Well, we were in front of Gretchen's coffin, and by the time we knew what we had done, it had been too late. He had whispered that he had never done it with a guy, that he was still getting over his divorce with his wife, that he didn't knew what had gotten into him, that he was so sorry... It was that night that I decided never to do it leaning on a coffin ever again. After I had gotten myself out of the cracked wood, Gretchen had came out too. I got scolded at for \*tripping\*. I guess I'll have to do this, no matter how embarrassing. Merde. Merde, merde, MERDE!

\*\*\*\*\*

"What?" I ask. Anita is looking at me so disgustingly I think she wants my head on a plate.

"What?" I repeat. What did I do this time to get her so angry?

"You and I need to talk." she says firmly. She doesn't seem to realize that such sentence sounds more like a threat if you're holding a bloody knife and wearing blood-smudged gloves. She pulls me away from the scene and then starts shouting at me.

What has gotten into me... All my fault... biggest bastard in the universe... taken his pride from him... Hasn't he suffered enough...

At that point, I stop her to ask what's she talking about.

"What I am talking about?!" she roars,

"What *\*I\** am talking about?! About you screwing Jean-Claude's second in command, THAT is what I'm talking about!!!"

I feel my jaw drop. Did Asher tell? And there she goes again.

Just got over Katie and...not a milligram of brains...if the papers find out...Will make Asher the laugh of the undead...deserve to be shot, etc.

Man, she has slept with half the lycanthrope population of St. Louis, plus the Master of the City himself, and then she's giving *\*me\** a sermon about morality. I mean, who is she to speak?

"Well?" she asks, her eyes looking as deadly as should be impossible. But then again, she's the Executioner. Nothing is impossible for this woman, no matter how little she might be.

"Well, what?"

"WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY FOR YOURSELF?!"

Someone is going through that lovely period of the month...

"Hey, you have been laid by more preternaturals then I can count and got away with it!"

Her eyes narrow, and she steps closer, still with those bloody gloves on, and starts pricking in my chest with the bloodiest of all her fingers.

"But--"

*\*Poke.\**

"--|--"

*\*Harder poke.\**

"--have--"

*\*Double poke.\**

"--never--"

*\*Hiss, poke, poke, poke.\**

"--made--"

*\*Hiss, poke, hiss, stomp.\**

"--one--"

\*Stomp, stomp.\* I try to count the stars that dance in front of my eyes, my stomach hurts like hell.

"--\*pregnant\*." she ends, panting. I get up, slowly.

"Anita," I try,

"guys can't get pregnant."

"So sayeth the almighty William Zerbrowski."

My first name. Ouch. She's mad.(A/N: Okay, I know it isn't his real name, but I never found his first name!)

"No, so sayeth Mother Nature."

"Then let me remind, you, WILLIAM, that vampires have very little to do with the bitch that you call 'nature'!"

"And vamps couldn't get pregnant." I reason.

"They can, they just have the habit of not \*getting\* pregnant so many times."

Women. Especially this specimen. I don't understand them at all. Guys can't get pregnant, and even if they could, what would be the chances of me getting a vampire pregnant? One percent, two? I sigh. I think I'd better go to Asher tonight, since Anita will probably kill me if I don't. Maybe I should simply try buying her a nice white jacket, try convincing her to help me put it on, and then hoping she won't struggle until it's closed. Naah.

\*\*\*\*\*

I wonder what Jason is trying to tell me. At the moment, I'm disposing the contents of my stomach into the toilet. If that wolf dares to take a photo now, I'll suck him dry. Bad thought. The mere thought of feeding makes a new wave of vomit seeking its way up. I must look simply lovely; black leather pants, white shirt, and my hair being held back by the named blonde wolf, kneeling on the floor and puking as if it is one of the needs to survive. What is that wolf talking about anyway?

Urgh, I feel bad.

"You done yet?" he asks when I this blasted sickness has finally stopped doing what it does. I nod, a small rope of saliva announcing the end of the seemingly endless stream of half-digested food. I am never having sex again. I can be as horny as is possible for a vampire, I'll resist. I manage to get up, taking the towel that Jason gives me - with the usual grin of disbelief - and wipe off my mouth. Zerbrowski stands into the doorway, trembling on his feet.

"What's wrong?" he asks, even if I know that Anita at least tried to explain.

"What Anita told you, that is wrong." I say.

"But--"

"Sex does not matter amongst vampires. The only thing that matters is that the... well, I guess 'father' would be a usable term, is living and, in any way whatsoever, dominant over the..."

I grimace.

"...'Mother'."

My life is getting better by each passing night, non?

"Dominant? Me? How am I..."

He does not finish his sentence.

"You have the power to let someone kill me. I am not the Master of the City, so no one can stop you if you would. I have no choice but to have some amount of respect for you."

Jason comes back, even if I didn't see him go out.

"Eeh... Guys? Has any of you seen Gretchen?" he asks.

"Non, pourquoi?" I ask.

Damn my mouth. French comes to me at the most unwanted times.

"Well... She hasn't been put back in a coffin and now is... well, sorta... gone."

I feel how doom crawls up and down my spine. Zerbrowski appears to be quite confused.

"So?"

"Gretchen once angered Anita. If you'd have been locked up in a box for a few years, how would you react?" I ask. I see the little color that had returned to his face fade away once again, and feel the urge to hug him. Mon dieu... Am I falling for this human?

\*\*\*\*\*

A few days later, Gretchen had returned, looking pretty pleased with herself, and Asher had locked himself up in his room, only coming out to feed. Anita and Jean-Claude had asked, begged and threatened Asher to come out. Jason had even gave it a lame try, but the only effect that it had was that Asher refused to talk to anyone too. Anita had asked Zerbrowski if he would come, and, to her surprise, he immediately agreed on doing so.

\*\*\*\*\*

I felt how my throat knotted with each step I came closer to his room. I know this is my fault. Totally my fault. I knock on the door, but get no reply. The door's locked.

"Asher? Can I come in?"

It's silent for a while, and then I hear a voice, which I have convinced myself of that I love, come to me, sounding as if Asher's tongue is replaced by something else, something not so soft.

"Go away, William."

"Please, Asher, please. Let me in."

"No."

Do I hear tears?

"Please? Open the door, come on."

A sound, sounding awfully like a sob, mixed with something that starts with 'Julia-'.  
~~~~~

"I just want to talk, Asher. Open that door."

I never thought turning over a \*Peep!\*-ing key could seem so freakin' long. I think Anita sighs in relief as Asher lets me in, but that's probably my overactive and stressy imagination. As soon as the door's closed once again, I turn around and match Asher's timing.

"I'm sorry." it echoes trough the room in stereo. Why can't I meet his eyes?

"I should have told you that it was possible." Asher mumble.

"I'm sorry if I upset you." I mumble. Asher shakes his head, and I once agin see those scars, which had startled me so at first.

"That wasn't your fault. It's just..."

~~~~~  
I will not cry. It was a long time ago. I HAVE come over it.

"...The last human I loved got burned at the stake, all her pride taken from her and left to beg for mercy before she got allowed to only scream as she got burned alive. Shortly after that, the same people gave me this little gift."

I'm sounding like an emotionally unstable woman. Someone help me.

Zerbrowksi swallows.

"What was her name?"

I wait for a while, wondering if I'd say this.

"Julianna." I say at last.

Suddenly, he hugs me. Out of nowhere.

"I'm sorry."

Our eyes meet and I can see that he is being truly serious. And the he does something I never expected to happen. He first lets his fingers go over my scars and then says in a sincere voice,

"You're beautiful."

If I'd be alive, I'd drop dead where I stood at hearing those words. We spend the rest of the night talking, probably with Anita, Jean- Claude and Jason with their ears pressed to the door. Help me, I fell for this human. Or, 'Help me, he'll loose his job if his boss finds out who made me pregnant.' You pick which one sounds more urgent.

\*\*\*\*\*

"What in the name of-"

Won't swear won't swear won't swear won't swear won't swear won't swear won't...

"D-o you know who let them know this, Anita?" I ask. Three months. It just went a little too smoothly for everyone's good. About every reporter in the city stands in front of Guilty Pleasures, and Jason is trying to get away. Jean-Claude convinced Asher to take a few months off from his 'throw the drunk guys out'-job at this club, and Jason has been told to look after him/piss him off by following him into every corner, safe for the shower. Yesterday, to take an example, that @#§\*\$μ%-wolf came in and asked if Asher would marry me. Asher laughed, my knees jellified and, with the worst of voices EVER, he asked me,

"You will marry me, won't you?"

As if I'd leave him!

But back in the here and now, Anita frowns.

"I have a suspicion."

When I frown too, she clarifies;

"A certain girl called Gretchen which you released once again on our beloved city."

Oh.

We get away from the mob without seeming suspicious or fine

interviewing material. Thank you, Lord. If Dolph doesn't find this one out, I'll go burn enough candles in church to lit St. Louis at midnight as if it were noon. I know Anita won't tell. when we get to the Circus, Stephen is already awaiting us.

"Eeh... You better stay out, Zerbrowski..." he says.

Anita raises an eyebrow.

"Irving?" she sighs.

"Hm. If he finds out... well, I don't need to tell you what will happen then." Stephen says.

"Okay, I'll just wait till Anita is finished paying her friend a visit."

I put on my 'I know nothing'-face.

~~In the meanwhile, inside...~~

"As last question, mister Asher, do you know who the... ehh... father is?" Irving asks me. Yes, no maybe so. Maybe not so. In this case, definitely so. He works for the RPIT and is named William Zerbrowski, but I won't tell you. I act as if I try to remember.

"Hmm... That might have been one of my meals. And since I need to feed every night, that keeps a lot of people as candidate, so I am afraid I cannot answer that most intriguing question."

He seems disappointed. Good. He leaves. Even better. He doesn't know anything more than when he entered this room. Best. I resist the urge to laugh at his foolishness; a mere hundred years is enough to learn how to politely answer questions without answering those questions. I almost pity the poor man. I think.

\*\*\*\*\*

"No."

I must be getting insane.

"And why not?" Malcolm hisses,

"The chance of your child being... normal, is rather small."

"Because."

And I must sound like a spoiled child.

"That's not an answer."

"Because this is not your city and you have no right whatsoever to order me around, let alone my child's father. Is that an answer?"

\*Thud!\*

"MALCOLM!"

That was Jean-Claude. Malcolm and I roll over the floor as if we were two fighting animals. He gets pulled off, but not because Jean-Claude is afraid that he will hurt me. At the moment, and for the next five months, I am stronger than him. But after that... Well, let's just say I might be needing more luck than one could miss if I'd want to win. His lip is knitting itself back together.

"Stop it, Malcolm. Asher is quite right, you have no right to speak at him in such way, and also about the fact that you cannot turn the father of Asher's child."

Did you notice that Malcolm has a strange way of hearing things? It has been a month ever since the paper screamed VAMPIRE OF ST. LOUIS PREGNANT!!! Come to think of it, they never were sold out so quickly. I couldn't fill in the crossword puzzle for two weeks, and Jason didn't have the daily TV guide for just as long.

"And who is the father, Asher? The papers paint you off as some slut, even if they don't know your name or face. That is not like you."

He smiles at me in a bone-chilling and blood-boiling way.

"To go back to your bad habits of hunting human's into death."

My body tenses, but I do not react. For the sake of the child; I won't try to kill this vampire, no, monster.

"I am not killing anyone, or driving anyone into death, and that is the exact reason why I won't tell you the father's name."

"Then I'll--"

"Malcolm." Jean-Claude's voice promises great suffering if he ends his threat.

"--have to stop trying to convince you." he ends, from between gritted teeth. He leaves, if with a poisonous look to my now swollen stomach. If he touches my child with so much as one finger, I'll take the risk of dying, if it means that he will tag along on the road to hell. Oh, Zerbrowski's here. I



look at him worriedly, and he smiles reassuringly. It's a habit we have developed ever since I got into the papers, if without name or picture. His boss - I believe his name is Rudolph Storr - hasn't asked anything. Jason comes out of his corner, and I suddenly remember why he had come to my room. I'll tell Zerbrowski the story during our trip.

\*\*\*\*\*

I don't remember why I agreed on this. At all. Dolph believes that I do so because Anita has asked me to, since she has zombies to raise and is befriended with Asher, and that she has passed her friendship for these particular two to me. True, I have learned to appreciate Jason's strange feeling of humour and I love Asher with all of my heart, but not because Anita introduced us. It's because I couldn't keep my hands and other body parts under control during work hours. Did I mention that I think of it dangerous to just go to the preternat's hospital? True, the press has nightmares about being sent to this place, but the fact that some of these doc's can lose their cool makes me shiver. I'm still having nightmares about the fact that Jason once suggested that - if they'd all lose it at the same time - they could kill Asher. I think that's the main reason why I sometimes hate him, especially at four am, when I shoot up in my bed, bathing in sweat, calling Asher, who then asks me if I'm not asleep yet. Die, Jason, die. Well...Wait 'till the kiddo's born, then die. I still don't get how those doctors see something in those blobs on echos. The white one's the child, but there it stops with me. The nurse smiles and mutters approvingly. Wait, I've seen this girl before. Isn't it one of 'Nita's kitties? What was her name again...Some fruit... Apple? No, that sounds a bit too dumb to be true... Cherry. Yeah, it was Cherry. Oh, we're leaving. I once again didn't listen. If Cherry had said that I'll be the father of a five headed, purple skinned, pink haired, green fanged and nailed monster with scales, more limbs than needed and a tail, I was more interested in the ceiling. I'm starting to think I should go to those foster-parent- education-thingies Anita tells me of. When I first asked her why, she told me that I \*sometimes\* - Anitanian for most of the time to always - act irresponsible. I wonder what makes her think such a thing. Maybe that one three year old werewolf which I dared to bite me, or that shifted wereleopard-cub which I pulled to the HQ by his tail. Or maybe - Yeah, I guess I could use some of those lessons.

\*\*\*\*\*


I think I hate Anita. Seriously, I think I do. Cherry had promised that she'd tell us the sex of our child at the first echo at seven months - which was five minutes ago, now Jason is driving us home and I'm royally pissed off - and when I asked, Cherry lowered her eyes and softly whispered that Anita had told her not to. I start to understand the title 'Executioner' too; I have never been tortured like this in my long life, counting in the time some priests bathed half my body in holy water. A hand wanders to my belly, followed by my own. Even through Zerbrowski's warm skin, I can feel the faint thump of a tiny body kicking against the palm.

"Don't be mad at her, Asher, she's only doing as she has been told."

I think any sane person would try to scream for help at this point: Jason is being the voice of reason. I never thought his name'd go into the same sentence with the words 'voice of reason'. Luckily, the baby room - At Zerbrowski's house - is done in purples and blacks. Well, pastel purples and really dark greys would be more exact. I thought I'd die when Zerbrowski showed it to me, with the excuse that the true black and scarlet red were sold out and this was the closest to what he thought to be my tastes. And may I burn in hell, for I loved it. Especially because there was one specific man in the middle of the room, covered in half dry glue from sticking some decorative wallpaper to the wall. Panthers on a purple background now crouch through the room, marking themselves as the room's occupant's protectors. The best part about it is that Zebrowski - call him stupid, exact, girlish, whatever you want - has bought himself some lilac glitter pen and has been dotting the eyes of those cats with it. If you light so much as one candle, the whole room is glittering. It took me three hours of time to convince him that newborns are just as fine with a plastic mobile instead of one with 'Swarovski' engraved in it, and made only on order, with only one being made yet on the world. The main reply was that the plastic ones aren't as nice in

filtering through sunlight. He hasn't seen sunlight in a few centuries, how would he know? True, the only thing I'd want to see on pictures of my child would be him/her - Die, Anita Blake, die - peacefully asleep in that - probably outrageously expensive - bed Jean-Claude has so kindly supplied us with, with the sun shining a crown of glitters on his/her little head. But then again, that certain vampire has kindly supplied us with more than he needed to. I asked him why. He told me that vampires giving birth was rare enough, but that he never thought one of his best friends to be so lucky. I told him that it was no reason to rob the national bank, just because he wanted to spoil me. His answer was that he'd keep it off my pay if it bothered me that much. I kept silent. It took me a few minutes to realize that he doesn't pay me. Jason found it highly amusing.

\*\*\*\*\*

I wonder what Asher is grinning about. Seriously, I do. Last time I told him I didn't understand his sense of humour, he kissed me until he seemed to remember that humans need air, unlike the undead. I was unconscious by that time, but Jason managed to tell it to me through his fits of laughter. At least I'm off the lessons. Yipee. And Jason has also learned how to change a diaper. That was enough of a payback from three months of torture; his Ulfric ordering him to go help on a kindergarten, the department of the youngest, with an RPIT agent  me - to watch his every step. On days like those, I love my job. Especially because Dolph actually believed that I was getting lonely enough to consider adopting a kiddo. And even if he didn't, he just didn't think of it important enough to let me be followed or fired. Or shot. Yeah, I love my boss from time to time. Not as much as I love Asher, or even Jason - Whom I love in the annoying-little- brother-way -, but I still... appreciate him. Okay, if everything seems strange, do something you know won't be strange. Always works. So I hug Asher. Not a warm hug, but an answered one. Beats glomping someone who will surely knock your teeth out.

"Hey, lovebirds, this isn't the time to get touchie."

And then Asher does something which is enough to bring me on the brink of a heart attack. He gives Jason the finger. I swear, that wolf is a bad influence to all of humankind. And vampirekind too, since I am no racist.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Last Christmas, I gave you my heart..." Jason sings softly.

"No, last Christmas, I sprained my finger stuffing a turkey." Zerbrowski growls. I look up.

"How so?"

"The phone went, it was Dolph, and I made a move which shouldn't have. I nearly lost my job because I was constantly insulting Anita and the person which caused me to do it." Zerbrowski says, hanging another sparkly ball in the Christmas tree. Jason frowns.

"How so? I thought you sprained your finger."

"I sprained the WRONG finger, okay?"

"I'm afraid I do not understand, Zerbrowski." I say, looking up from my book once again.

"Well, that particular finger had to be put in some metal thingy, and couldn't be bended, so every time I tried to pick something up, you go this." he demonstrates. He curls up his thumb, pinky, index finger and ring finger. Jason falls from the ladder.

"You're shitting me." he says. I've never seen such utter disbelief on his face.

"I'm not. Anita still uses it against - Asher?"

He's probably looking at me. God, it hurts.

"Asher?"

Was that Jason?

"Asher!"

And then it ebs away. I look up, even if I can barely see.

"It's time."

\*\*\*\*\*

I have never seen Asher so peaceful. The wonders of a human overdose of anaesthesia. My hand turns white against the glass. I have never wanted Asher to be a woman, until now... Naah. Then I'd have to hold his hand, and he has enough power in his pinkie to turn my beloved right hand into a few pounds of pinkish cream. Jason carefully pulls me away.

"C'mon, Asher is a tough guy. He'll live." he says, pushing me down on one of the chairs in the waiting hall. I try to get up, but Jason is stronger.

"He. Will. Survive." he says slowly. I've never seen the wolf look so serious.

"A Caesarean can kill a guy."

"Asher is a vampire. Unless they cut his living heart out, he'll wake up in thirty minutes, and be healed in another five minutes. Now sit."

God, help me. It's like someone placed some carnivorous animal in my stomach. Correction, like someone placed some very hungry carnivorous animal in my stomach. I get pushed down in that blasted orange plastic chair until Cherry comes out and hands over a bundle of crying towels to me.

"Completely healthy." she smiles. I look down and see a tiny little human between the soft fabric. I feel a smile reach my own lips, and my finger finds it way to that still half-moist face. The toothless mouth closes abruptly. Two familiar blue eyes look up at me. Brown curls shine in the light of the lamps.

"She's pretty, isn't she?" Cherry asks. My tongue refuses duty. I just nod. Jaso looks over my shoulder.

"She's got Asher's eyes." he grins.

"I would love to confirm, but that would be rather difficult with only view on those towels." a voice suddenly announces. I nearly drop the baby. Asher stands in front of me, fully dressed, his hair the only thing indicating that he has laid down somewhere. I place hi daughter in his arms, and he smiles at her.

"You pick a name." he whispers. I think for a while.

"Well, no offence, but there was this vampire chick Anita killed once... her name meant 'obsidian butterfly' or something... And there are people somewhere in Africa who believe that, once they die, they'll return as a butterfly. Death gives birth to butterfly. What would be the French for

butterfly?"

Asher smiles.

"Papillion." (A/N: pronounce 'pah-pee--j-on')

I smile.

"Why not call her like that?"

\*\*\*\*\*

~~Few months later, Zerbrowski's house~~

"Good evening."

"Hi, Asher."

"Gah!"

"You said you had something for me?"

"Yes."

"What?"

"A photo."

"Of?"

"Papillion."

"Hm?"

Zerbrowski smiles and shows Asher a picture.

Papillion is sitting on the grass, the sun shining on her hair, a purple butterfly on her nose, smiling.

END

1. [Chapter 1](#) by WereWriter

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That's what happens...

...if you do something your ex-wife wouldn't approve of.

...if you do something your boss wouldn't approve of.

...if you do something your job doesn't allow.

Written by WereWriter

Disclaimer: I do not, and repeat, do NOT, NJET, NICHTS, PAS, NIET own them. Five different languages. If you don't get it, go bug someone who cares.

Warnings: This probably won't make any sense. At all.

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WereWriter: I'M BAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!!!

Anita: Really?

WereWriter: Someone left me some sugary treats.

Anita: Left? Somehow, I find that hard to believe.

WereWriter: My adooooorable sister did.

Anita: You've been stealing candy from little kids? That's sad.

WereWriter: Hey, she got her share, I took mine. 'Sides, in MY country, we've got this lovely night where some holy guy dumps loads of cookies shaped like little letters, chocolate and some absolutely disgusting goo-filled little figures made of something with probably loads of sugar in it.

Anita: Like Halloween?

WereWriter: Yeeees, except for the fact that you don't have to walk half the town to get the candy. More like early Christmas. 'T also has giiiifts!!

Anita: And now you've had your sugar? Help us, dear Lord.

WereWriter: Yes.

Anita: And the victim of the day is...?

WereWriter: I was thinking about Dolph or Stephen, but then decided someone still needed her revenge.

Anita: I have this sudden urge to write my will. Any idea how that might be?

WereWriter: I meant you with the person who needed that revenge.

Anita: O.O Revenge? Me? Apart from Edward, there's no one I can think of that hasn't died after doing as much as insulting me.

WereWriter: And since your memory appears to have taken a holiday and is too cheap to buy post cards, the victim of the fic is one of your beloved colleagues.

\*\*\*\*\*

I don't know what's happening to me lately. Ever since last week, my life is a mess. Every morning - Evening, in theory - I feel like some force is trying to make my intestines my extestines by letting them get out trough my mouth. Jean-Claude noted it too, but refused to tell me what he thought was wrong. He just gave me this strange look of 'How could you?!' and walked out. Maybe because of Stephen... No, he would not act so childish. That's also strange. Ever since I started feeling so sick after waking up, the strangest thing happened. Instead of feeling like I'm being 'cleaned' again by those crazy humans, I feel strangely... strong, powerful, great, ready to take on the world. I even managed to call the wolf a few days ago, Stephen to be exact. I didn't knew what came over me. Okay, so I don't know what's coming over me most of the time lately. Most of all these strange visions of me knitting little pink socks, but that also might be from the

fact that my last meal had had an overdose on sugar. Oh, Anita's coming in. She's also looking cranky. What did I do to make the universe so angry with me?

"Is something the matter, ma Chérie?"

She throws a box at my head.

"Yes, there is. Do you happen to know why Jean-Claude asked me to buy you this?" she hisses. I look at the box. Pregnancy test? I feel myself frown.

"Non."

I haven't done 'the dirty thing', as Jason calls it, for months. Oh, wait, there was this once, but that couldn't have... Could it?

"Peut-être..." my lips form.

Okay, I have about all the symptoms there are, from power boosts, to evening-sickness, to the fact that I have no desire whatsoever to make love to anyone. But the last time was last month, and I had merely fed of that man Anita had brought with her, - Who had agreed to let me, mind you. - And... Well, we were in front of Gretchen's coffin, and by the time we knew what we had done, it had been too late. He had whispered that he had never done it with a guy, that he was still getting over his divorce with his wife, that he didn't know what had gotten into him, that he was so sorry... It was that night that I decided never to do it leaning on a coffin ever again. After I had gotten myself out of the cracked wood, Gretchen had come out too. I got scolded at for \*tripping\*. I guess I'll have to do this, no matter how embarrassing. Merde. Merde, merde, MERDE!

\*\*\*\*\*

"What?" I ask. Anita is looking at me so disgustingly I think she wants my head on a plate.

"What?" I repeat. What did I do this time to get her so angry?

"You and I need to talk." she says firmly. She doesn't seem to realize that such sentence sounds more like a threat if you're holding a bloody knife and wearing blood-smudged gloves. She pulls me away from the scene and then starts shouting at me.

What has gotten into me... All my fault... biggest bastard in the universe... taken his pride from him... Hasn't he suffered enough...

At that point, I stop her to ask what's she talking about.

"What I am talking about?!" she roars,

"What \*I\* am talking about?! About you screwing Jean-Claude's second in command, THAT is what I'm talking about!!!"

I feel my jaw drop. Did Asher tell? And there she goes again.

Just got over Katie and...not a milligram of brains...if the papers find out...Will make Asher the laugh of the undead...deserve to be shot, etc.

Man, she has slept with half the lycanthrope population of St. Louis, plus the Master of the City himself, and then she's giving \*me\* a sermon about morality. I mean, who is she to speak?

"Well?" she asks, her eyes looking as deadly as should be impossible. But then again, she's the Executioner. Nothing is impossible for this woman, no matter how little she might be.

"Well, what?"

"WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY FOR YOURSELF?!"

Someone is going through that lovely period of the month...

"Hey, you have been laid by more preternaturals then I can count and got away with it!"

Her eyes narrow, and she steps closer, still with those bloody gloves on, and starts pricking in my chest with the bloodiest of all her fingers.

"But--"

\*Poke.\*

--|--"

\*Harder poke.\*

--have--"

\*Double poke.\*

--never--"

\*Hiss, poke, poke, poke.\*

--made--"

\*Hiss, poke, hiss, stomp.\*

--one--"

\*Stomp, stomp.\* I try to count the stars that dance in front of my eyes, my stomach hurts like hell.

--\*pregnant\*." she ends, panting. I get up, slowly.

"Anita," I try,

"guys can't get pregnant."

"So sayeth the almighty William Zerbrowski."

My first name. Ouch. She's mad.(A/N: Okay, I know it isn't his real name, but I never found his first name!)

"No, so sayeth Mother Nature."

"Then let me remind, you, WILLIAM, that vampires have very little to do with the bitch that you call 'nature'!"

"And vamps couldn't get pregnant." I reason.

"They can, they just have the habit of not \*getting\* pregnant so many times."

Women. Especially this specimen. I don't understand them at all. Guys can't get pregnant, and even if they could, what would be the chances of me getting a vampire pregnant? One percent, two? I sigh. I think I'd better go to Asher tonight, since Anita will probably kill me if I don't. Maybe I should simply try buying her a nice white jacket, try convincing her to help me put it on, and then hoping she won't struggle until it's closed. Naah.

\*\*\*\*\*

I wonder what Jason is trying to tell me. At the moment, I'm disposing the contents of my stomach into the toilet. If that wolf dares to take a photo now, I'll suck him dry. Bad thought. The mere thought of feeding makes a new wave of vomit seeking its way up. I must look simply lovely; black leather pants, white shirt, and my hair being held back by the named blonde wolf, kneeling on the floor and puking as if it is one of the needs to survive. What is that wolf talking about anyway?

Urgh, I feel bad.

"You done yet?" he asks when I this blasted sickness has finally stopped doing what it does. I nod, a small rope of saliva announcing the end of the seemingly endless stream of half-digested food. I am never having sex again. I can be as horny as is possible for a vampire, I'll resist. I manage to get up, taking the towel that Jason gives me - with the usual grin of disbelief - and wipe off my mouth. Zerbrowski stands into the doorway, trembling on his feet.

"What's wrong?" he asks, even if I know that Anita at least tried to explain.

"What Anita told you, that is wrong." I say.

"But-"

"Sex does not matter amongst vampires. The only thing that matters is that the... well, I guess 'father' would be a usable term, is living and, in any way whatsoever, dominant over the..."

I grimace.

"...'Mother'."

My life is getting better by each passing night, non?

"Dominant? Me? How am I..."

He does not finish his sentence.

"You have the power to let someone kill me. I am not the Master of the City, so no one can stop you if you would. I have no choice but to have some amount of respect for you."

Jason comes back, even if I didn't see him go out.

"Eeh... Guys? Has any of you seen Gretchen?" he asks.

"Non, pourquoi?" I ask.

Damn my mouth. French comes to me at the most unwanted times.

"Well... She hasn't been put back in a coffin and now is... well, sorta... gone."



I feel how doom crawls up and down my spine. Zerbrowski appears to be quite confused.

"So?"

"Gretchen once angered Anita. If you'd have been locked up in a box for a few years, how would you react?" I ask. I see the little color that had returned to his face fade away once again, and feel the urge to hug him. Mon dieu... Am I falling for this human?

\*\*\*\*\*

A few days later, Gretchen had returned, looking pretty pleased with herself, and Asher had locked himself up in his room, only coming out to feed. Anita and Jean-Claude had asked, begged and threatened Asher to come out. Jason had even gave it a lame try, but the only effect that it had was that Asher refused to talk to anyone too. Anita had asked Zerbrowski if he would come, and, to her surprise, he immediately agreed on doing so.

\*\*\*\*\*

I felt how my throat knotted with each step I came closer to his room. I know this is my fault. Totally my fault. I knock on the door, but get no reply. The door's locked.

"Asher? Can I come in?"

It's silent for a while, and then I hear a voice, which I have convinced myself of that I love, come to me, sounding as if Asher's tongue is replaced by something else, something not so soft.

"Go away, William."

"Please, Asher, please. Let me in."

"No."

Do I hear tears?

"Please? Open the door, come on."

A sound, sounding awfully like a sob, mixed with something that starts with 'Julia-'.  
~~~~~

"I just want to talk, Asher. Open that door."

I never thought turning over a \*Peep!\*-ing key could seem so freakin' long. I think Anita sighs in relief as Asher lets me in, but that's probably my overactive and stressy imagination. As soon as the door's closed once again, I turn around and match Asher's timing.

"I'm sorry." it echoes trough the room in stereo. Why can't I meet his eyes?

"I should have told you that it was possible." Asher mumble.

"I'm sorry if I upset you." I mumble. Asher shakes his head, and I once agin see those scars, which had startled me so at first.

"That wasn't your fault. It's just..."  
~~~~~

I will not cry. It was a long time ago. I HAVE come over it.

"...The last human I loved got burned at the stake, all her pride taken from her and left to beg for mercy before she got allowed to only scream as she got burned alive. Shortly after that, the same people gave me this little gift."

I'm sounding like an emotionally unstable woman. Someone help me.

Zerbrowksi swallows.

"What was her name?"

I wait for a while, wondering if I'd say this.

"Julianna." I say at last.

Suddenly, he hugs me. Out of nowhere.

"I'm sorry."

Our eyes meet and I can see that he is being truly serious. And then he does something I never expected to happen. He first lets his fingers go over my scars and then says in a sincere voice,

"You're beautiful."

If I'd be alive, I'd drop dead where I stood at hearing those words. We spend the rest of the night talking, probably with Anita, Jean- Claude and Jason with their ears pressed to the door. Help me, I fell for this human. Or, 'Help me, he'll lose his job if his boss finds out who made me pregnant.' You pick which one sounds more urgent.

\*\*\*\*\*

"What in the name of-"

Won't swear won't swear won't swear won't swear won't swear won't swear won't...

"D-o you know who let them know this, Anita?" I ask. Three months. It just went a little too smoothly for everyone's good. About every reporter in the city stands in front of Guilty Pleasures, and Jason is trying to get away. Jean-Claude convinced Asher to take a few months off from his 'throw the drunk guys out'-job at this club, and Jason has been told to look after him/piss him off by following him into every corner, safe for the shower. Yesterday, to take an example, that @#\$\*μ%-wolf came in and asked if Asher would marry me. Asher laughed, my knees jellified and, with the worst of voices EVER, he asked me,

"You will marry me, won't you?"

As if I'd leave him!

But back in the here and now, Anita frowns.

"I have a suspicion."

When I frown too, she clarifies;

"A certain girl called Gretchen which you released once again on our beloved city."

Oh.

We get away from the mob without seeming suspicious or fine

interviewing material. Thank you, Lord. If Dolph doesn't find this one out, I'll go burn enough candles in church to lit St. Louis at midnight as if it were noon. I know Anita won't tell. when we get to the Circus, Stephen is already awaiting us.

"Eeh... You better stay out, Zerbrowski..." he says.

Anita raises an eyebrow.

"Irving?" she sighs.

"Hm. If he finds out... well, I don't need to tell you what will happen then." Stephen says.

"Okay, I'll just wait till Anita is finished paying her friend a visit."

I put on my 'I know nothing'-face.

~~In the meanwhile, inside...~~

"As last question, mister Asher, do you know who the... ehh... father is?" Irving asks me. Yes, no maybe so. Maybe not so. In this case, definitely so. He works for the RPIT and is named William Zerbrowski, but I won't tell you. I act as if I try to remember.

"Hmm... That might have been one of my meals. And since I need to feed every night, that keeps a lot of people as candidate, so I am afraid I cannot answer that most intriguing question."

He seems disappointed. Good. He leaves. Even better. He doesn't know anything more then when he entered this room. Best. I resist the urge to laugh at his foolishness; a mere hundred years is enough to learn how to politely answer questions without answering those questions. I almost pity the poor man. I think.

\*\*\*\*\*

"No."

I must be getting insane.

"And why not?" Malcolm hisses,

"The chance of your child being... normal, is rather small."

"Because."

And I must sound like a spoiled child.

"That's not an answer."

"Because this is not your city and you have no right whatsoever to order me around, let alone my child's father. Is that an answer?"

\*Thud!\*

"MALCOLM!"

That was Jean-Claude. Malcolm and I roll over the floor as if we were two fighting animals. He gets pulled off, but not because Jean-Claude is afraid that he will hurt me. At the moment, and for the next five months, I am stronger than him. But after that... Well, let's just say I might be needing more luck than one could miss if I'd want to win. His lip is knitting itself back together.

"Stop it, Malcolm. Asher is quite right, you have no right to speak at him in such way, and also about the fact that you cannot turn the father of Asher's child."

Did you notice that Malcolm has a strange way of hearing things? It has been a month ever since the paper screamed VAMPIRE OF ST. LOUIS PREGNANT!!! Come to think of it, they never were sold out so quickly. I couldn't fill in the crossword puzzle for two weeks, and Jason didn't have the daily TV guide for just as long.

"And who is the father, Asher? The papers paint you off as some slut, even if they don't know your name or face. That is not like you."

He smiles at me in a bone-chilling and blood-boiling way.

"To go back to your bad habits of hunting human's into death."

My body tenses, but I do not react. For the sake of the child; I won't try to kill this vampire, no, monster.

"I am not killing anyone, or driving anyone into death, and that is the exact reason why I won't tell you the father's name."

"Then I'll--"

"Malcolm." Jean-Claude's voice promises great suffering if he ends his threat.

"--have to stop trying to convince you." he ends, from between gritted teeth. He leaves, if with a poisonous look to my now swollen stomach. If he touches my child with so much as one finger, I'll take the risk of dying, if it means that he will tag along on the road to hell. Oh, Zerbrowski's here. I look at him worriedly, and he smiles reassuringly. It's a habit we have developed ever since I got into the papers, if without name or picture. His boss - I believe his name is Rudolph Storr - hasn't asked anything. Jason comes out of his corner, and I suddenly remember why he had come to my room. I'll tell Zerbrowski the story during our trip.

\*\*\*\*\*

I don't remember why I agreed on this. At all. Dolph believes that I do so because Anita has asked me to, since she has zombies to raise and is befriend with Asher, and that she has passed her friendship for these particular two to me. True, I have learned to appreciate Jason's strange feeling of humour and I love Asher with all of my heart, but not because Anita introduced us. It's because I couldn't keep my hands and other body parts under control during work hours. Did I mention that I think of it dangerous to just go to the preternat's hospital? True, the press has nightmares about being send to this place, but the fact that some of these doc's can loose their cool makes me shiver. I'm still having nightmares about the fact that Jason once suggested that - if they'd all lose it at the same time - they could kill Asher. I think that's the main reason why I sometimes hate him, especially at four am, when I shoot up in my bed, bathing in sweat, calling Asher, who then asks me if I'm not asleep yet. Die, Jason, die. Well....Wait 'till the kiddo's born, then die. I still don't get how those doctors see something in those blobs on echos. The white one's the child, but there it stops with me. The nurse smiles and mutters approvingly. Wait, I've seen this girl before. Isn't it one of 'Nita's kitties? What was her name again...Some fruit... Apple? No, that sounds a bit too dumb to be true... Cherry. Yeah, it was Cherry. Oh, we're leaving. I once

again didn't listen. If Cherry had said that I'll be the father of a five headed, purple skinned, pink haired, green fanged and nailed monster with scales, more limbs then needed and a tail, I was more interested in the ceiling. I'm starting to think I should go to those foster-parent- education-thingies Anita tells me of. When I first asked her why, she told me that I \*sometimes\* - Anitanian for most of the time to always - act irresponsible. I wonder what makes her think such a thing. Maybe that one three year old werewolf which I dared to bite me, or that shifted wereleopard-cub which I pulled to the HQ by his tail. Or maybe - Yeah, I guess I could use some of those lessons.


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I think I hate Anita. Seriously, I think I do. Cherry had promised that she'd tell us the sex of our child at the first echo at seven months - which was five minutes ago, now Jason is driving us home and I'm royally pissed off - and when I asked, Cherry lowered her eyes and softly whispered that Anita had told her not to. I start to understand the title 'Executioner' too; I have never been tortured like this in my long life, counting in the time some priests bathed half my body in holy water. A hand wanders to my belly, followed by my own. Even through Zerbrowski's warm skin, I can feel the faint thump of a tiny body kicking against the palm.

"Don't be mad at her, Asher, she's only doing as she has been told."

I think any sane person would try to scream for help at this point: Jason is being the voice of reason. I never thought his name'd go into the same sentence with the words 'voice of reason'. Luckily, the baby room - At Zerbrowski's house - is done in purples and blacks. Well, pastel purples and really dark greys would be more exact. I thought I'd die when Zerbrowski showed it to me, with the excuse that the true black and scarlet red were sold out and this was the closest to what he thought to be my tastes. And may I burn in hell, for I loved it. Especially because there was one specific man in the middle of the room, covered in half dry glue from sticking some decorative wallpaper to the wall. Panthers on a purple background now crouch through the room, marking themselves as the room's occupant's protectors. The best part about it is that Zebrowski - call him stupid, exact, girlish, whatever you want - has bought himself some lilac glitter pen and has been dotting the eyes of those cats with it. If you light so much as one candle, the whole room is glittering. It took me three hours of time to convince him that newborns are just as fine with a plastic mobile instead of one with 'Swarovski' engraved in it, and made only on order, with only one being made yet on the world. The main reply was that the plastic ones aren't as nice in filtering trough sunlight. He hasn't seen sunlight in a few centuries, how would he know? True, the only thing I'd want to see on pictures of my child would be him/her - Die, Anita Blake, die - peacefully asleep in that - probably outrageously expensive - bed Jean-Claude has so kindly supplied us with, with the sun shining a crown of glitters on his/her little head. But then again, that certain vampire has kindly supplied us with more then he needed to. I asked him why. He told me that vampires giving birth was rare enough, but that he never thought one of his best friends to be so lucky. I told him that it was no reason to rob the national bank, just because he wanted to spoil me. His answer was that he'd keep it off my pay if it bothered me that much. I kept silent. It took me a few minutes to realize that he doesn't pay me. Jason found it highly amusing.

\*\*\*\*\*

I wonder what Asher is grinning about. Seriously, I do. Last time I told him I didn't understand his sense of humour, he kissed me until he seemed to remember that humans need air, unlike the undead. I was unconscious by that time, but Jason managed to tell it to me through his fits of laughter. At least I'm off the lessons. Yipee. And Jason has also learned how do change a diaper. That was enough of a payback from three months of torture; his Ulfric ordering him to go help on a kindergarten, the department of the youngest, with an RPIT agent  me - to watch his every step. On days like those, I love my job. Especially because Dolph actually believed that I was getting lonely enough to consider adopting a kiddo. And even if he didn't, he just didn't think of it important enough to let me be followed or fired. Or shot. Yeah, I love my boss from time to time. Not as much as I love Asher, or even Jason - Whom I love in the annoying-little- brother-way - ,

but I still... appreciate him. Okay, if everything seems strange, do something you know won't be strange. Always works. So I hug Asher. Not a warm hug, but an answered one. Beats glomping someone who will surely knock your teeth out.

"Hey, lovebirds, this isn't the time to get touchie."

And then Asher does something which is enough to bring me on the brink of a heart attack. He gives Jason the finger. I swear, that wolf is a bad influence to all of humankind. And vampirekind too, since I am no racist.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Last Christmas, I gave you my heart..." Jason sings softly.

"No, last Christmas, I sprained my finger stuffing a turkey." Zerbrowski growls. I look up.

"How so?"

"The phone went, it was Dolph, and I made a move which shouldn't have. I nearly lost my job because I was constantly insulting Anita and the person which caused me to do it." Zerbrowski says, hanging another sparkly ball in the Christmas tree. Jason frowns.

"How so? I thought you sprained your finger."

"I sprained the WRONG finger, okay?"

"I'm afraid I do not understand, Zerbrowski." I say, looking up from my book once again.

"Well, that particular finger had to be put in some metal thingy, and couldn't be bended, so every time I tried to pick something up, you go this." he demonstrates. He curls up his thumb, pinky, index finger and ring finger. Jason falls from the ladder.

"You're shitting me." he says. I've never seen such utter disbelief on his face.

"I'm not. Anita still uses it against - Asher?"

He's probably looking at me. God, it hurts.

"Asher?"

Was that Jason?

"Asher!"

And then it ebs away. I look up, even if I can barely see.

"It's time."

\*\*\*\*\*

I have never seen Asher so peaceful. The wonders of a human overdose of anaesthesia. My hand turns white against the glass. I have never wanted Asher to be a woman, until now... Naah. Then I'd have to hold his hand, and he has enough power in his pinkie to turn my beloved right hand into a few pounds of pinkish cream. Jason carefully pulls me away.

"C'mon, Asher is a tough guy. He'll live." he says, pushing me down on one of the chairs in the

waiting hall. I try to get up, but Jason is stronger.

"He. Will. Survive." he says slowly. I've never seen the wolf look so serious.

"A Caesarean can kill a guy."

"Asher is a vampire. Unless they cut his living heart out, he'll wake up in thirty minutes, and be healed in another five minutes. Now sit."

God, help me. It's like someone placed some carnivorous animal in my stomach. Correction, like someone placed some very hungry carnivorous animal in my stomach. I get pushed down in that blasted orange plastic chair until Cherry comes out and hands over a bundle of crying towels to me.

"Completely healthy." she smiles. I look down and see a tiny little human between the soft fabric. I feel a smile reach my own lips, and my finger finds its way to that still half-moist face. The toothless mouth closes abruptly. Two familiar blue eyes look up at me. Brown curls shine in the light of the lamps.

"She's pretty, isn't she?" Cherry asks. My tongue refuses duty. I just nod. Jason looks over my shoulder.

"She's got Asher's eyes." he grins.

"I would love to confirm, but that would be rather difficult with only view on those towels." a voice suddenly announces. I nearly drop the baby. Asher stands in front of me, fully dressed, his hair the only thing indicating that he has laid down somewhere. I place his daughter in his arms, and he smiles at her.

"You pick a name." he whispers. I think for a while.

"Well, no offence, but there was this vampire chick Anita killed once... her name meant 'obsidian butterfly' or something... And there are people somewhere in Africa who believe that, once they die, they'll return as a butterfly. Death gives birth to butterfly. What would be the French for butterfly?"

Asher smiles.

"Papillion." (A/N: pronounce 'pah-pee--j-on')

I smile.

"Why not call her like that?"

\*\*\*\*\*

~~Few months later, Zerrowski's house~~

"Good evening."

"Hi, Asher."

"Gah!"

"You said you had something for me?"

"Yes."

"What?"

"A photo."

"Of?"

"Papillion."

"Hm?"

Zerbrowski smiles and shows Asher a picture.

Papillion is sitting on the grass, the sun shining on her hair, a purple butterfly on her nose, smiling.

END

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