

“I Hope You Have a Speech Prepared”

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[#Fictober18 \(October 2018\) writing challenge](#)

Day 20: “I hope you have a speech prepared.”

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1988

“I hope you have a speech prepared.” Her laugh came out in a fog, drifting in the chilled air. Both cloud and sound vanished.

“Speech?” Victor’s eyebrows went up. Amusement quirked the corner of his mouth.

“Speech—lecture.” Mara gave a small wave of her hand and another laugh followed. “You did say you were going to teach me something. So... teach.”

He sucked on his teeth for a moment. “Mm, so I did.”

“And,” she went on, inclining her head in a way that sent red hair cascading against faux fur trim, “I figure now’s as good a time as any.” They’d had good food, good drinks, and the chill in the air was invigorating. “That’s why you brought me here, right?” Her mouth pulled into a grin.

He couldn’t help his own grin. “It may be a little too cold for what I originally planned.”

She slapped his chest playfully. “Hey now.”

This time the laughter was his. “Alright, alright. I’ll behave. But... since you want a lecture.” He shifted away from her on the blanket and stood, offering a hand. “Come on. I’ll give you one.”

Mara slipped her gloved hand into his and stood with him. “What’s the topic? Transmogrification? Conjuring? Something taboo that would send my coven into spasms if I knew of it?”

“Mm, the topic is astrology.”

“Astrology? Really? I never would’ve pegged you as an astrologer.”

“I’m not,” Victor said, bringing her along with him a few feet away, further into the clearing. “The sky’s clear tonight, and the stars—just look for yourself.”

And she did. He’d chosen a wonderful spot for their impromptu night picnic—far from the city, and far from the prying eyes of their opposing covens. The sky was lovely—absolutely breathtaking.

“Do you know much about constellations?” he asked. When Mara shook her head, Victor continued. “I learned a bit. Not my forte, but I know well enough.” He looked up, gesturing at the sky. “Do you see that cluster, right there? That group of stars?”

“Yeah.”

Victor began to trace a path with his finger and Mara followed the outline he made. “This constellation is called Andromeda.”

“Like the figure in Greek mythology?”

“Exactly.”

Mara smiled, leaning against his arm. “I remember the story from when I first joined the coven. I always thought Andromeda was a pretty name. A pretty constellation too.” She sighed softly. “Thanks for showing me. I never knew that’s what it was.”

Victor smiled too. “My pleasure.”