



“Your Servant, Sir”

by Cephias

Alec Tollora, Lord Kotar, paced restlessly in his study. It wasn't really a study, as it was the largest library of the manor (and arguably, the entire city), but he used the high-ceilinged and drafty rooms as an escape from the deathly silent halls and the creeping feeling of solitude that ached in his bones. It was a place where he could get away from the blank and baleful stare of his aged grandmother, Lady Terris. A place he could hide from the failures of his workroom. Even now he had sent Cephias to the dungeon-like workshop to clean up the pebbly mess of his last vain attempt at golem construction. He knew losing his patience wouldn't help, but he felt besieged with helpless emotion as time went on.

Some said madness ran in the veins of the “pure-blooded” Kotar nobles. He didn't believe it, even as the tendons in his neck bulged and he smacked his dry lips together over his glass of port wine.

The experiment with the corpse – the abhorrent mixing of construct and necromantic magic – had gone awry, but not in any severely disastrous manner. He didn't know for sure, but he had a sneaking suspicion he might have sabotaged the project himself, afraid of what he might create. His grandfather, Lord Terris, had warned of dire and terrible things (all referred to in abstract concepts) that would occur if magics were to be combined in an obscene union.

Obscene union... he thought bitterly, taking up a glass of chilled water and rolling the sweating goblet across his fevered brow. The phrase rang in his ears, but it was no longer flesh golems that filled his mind. He remembered the Lady Terris catching him as a young man – barely sixteen – kissing the family's most prized and precious servant. Both his grandparents gave him lecture, impressing upon him that the hard work that Lord Terris had put into Cephias meant that it was not intended for the pleasures of the flesh.

Opening his eyes and returning to the present, Alec scowled. His grandfather had lectured from a sickbed, passing away soon after. Creating Cephias had taken the man's health, and as the now-deceased Lord had no living children (his only daughter and her husband, Alec's parents, had died a year before), Alec found the burden of Lordship passed to himself. There was no more time to moon over sexless statues.

Anger burned low in his gut, like the embers of the fire nearby. He clutched the moist glass, knuckles white, staring into the golden roses of the dying fire. He had been violently



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upbraided then, but now Cephias had so little to do, that she was reduced to babying the older generation. Alec wasn't sure whether he felt ill-used, or he felt Cephias ill-used, or both.

As though his thoughts had summoned her, Cephias entered the library, slightly dusty from her work but otherwise as unchanged as always. Startled from his reverie, Lord Tollora straightened up and put his water down, gesturing imperiously towards the fire. "Build it up, Cephias. I'm cold," he commanded. Silently, she complied.

It's not that I lust after her, he reasoned silently, watching the golem skillfully invigorate the crumbling fire until it was roaring with heat and life once more. *There are human women far more beautiful than she... it...* He snatched up the glass and rolled it along his forehead again, wishing he hadn't asked Cephias to build the fire.

"Cephias." She stood and approached Alec, bowing respectfully at the waist. *What is wrong with me? There is nothing about her to suggest a female gender, and yet here I am...* "Come closer." She complied, silently, face impassive and black eyes unfathomable. The Lord found himself transfixed by her unsettling and undirected gaze, and before he could stop himself, his hand moved to trace the elegant, high cheekbones of his grandfather's golem.

Cephias had been modeled in the manner of the beauties of his grandfather's age. She had been made with short, bristly hair in order to wear wigs, to pass off as anyone. The sort of ideal, multi-purpose servant.

"Say something." His voice was weak as he ran his finger against her lips, then down to her throat, still impressed after all these years at her softness and warmth, and how human she felt under his hands. He grew bold, perhaps from drink, and felt her arms with both strong palms, eyes wandering to her small mouth.

"Speak, Cephias! I command it!" He was impatient now, and squeezed her forearms. She didn't flinch. Her lips parted, but before words could escape, Alec found himself helplessly crushing his mouth to hers.

She tasted dusty, like the scent of old, musty books. There was the strangest hint of nutmeg and pomegranate in her mouth.

Just like when he was sixteen, she didn't move, didn't protest. But she didn't say yes, either. There was no eager reciprocation. Like kissing the lips of a dead woman.

Alec withdrew sharply, angrily. He pushed Cephias away from him, wiping his mouth on his elegant sleeve, glaring resentfully at the placid figure of the golem. There was something in





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the way she looked at him that made him catch his breath. All it took was the slightest tilt of the head, a few tiny lines on her smooth face. Was she... emoting? Inconceivable.

Before Alec could gather his thoughts and send her away, her lips parted, and she spoke in a tone that belonged to neither man nor woman nor human. Her voice was mid-ranged, flat, and seemed to echo somewhere in the recesses of her head.

“Your servant, sir.”



“Lord Tollora” created by Tony Graham in [Cephas Continues](#).

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