

## Novice

Had anyone told Ismir a month ago that he would be lying bound, blindfolded, and gagged on a strange man's floor waiting to be fucked, he would not have believed them.

Then his father, discovering his secret, turned him out of the family home. After spending two hungry, uncertain nights sleeping in an alley, a contact at the local bathhouse sent him to Latham's Oasis, an exclusive club garishly appointed like a Tajhaani desert chieftain's tent.

Had someone told Ismir he would be nervous, yes, he would have believed that. He was no virgin, as his furtive couplings in the bathhouse proved, but this was not sex as he knew it. The Oasis was nothing like the dozens of cheap brothels scattered throughout Teghriz. The moment he arrived and blurted out his desperation to find work and lodging, Latham took him aside and explained that his establishment offered more than just sex.

Clients came with unusual requests. Wealthy men wanted to be spanked, or humiliated. Men with reputations to uphold wanted to suck cock, or be fucked in the ass. And they all wanted discretion.

So Ismir lay on his side in a rich man's house, a cloth over his eyes, and his limbs bound with cord. Under him, he felt a thick woolen rug, and smelled beeswax polish. Muffled by distance, he heard a servant passing in the corridor. All Latham could or would tell him was that his client was a merchant who wanted a pretty, inexperienced youth.

Time seemed to stretch on interminably. Ismir could not say how long ago he had been led blindfolded up the stairs and told to lie down, or how much longer he would have to wait.

Too long. Long enough for his heartbeat to quicken and his belly to flutter. Long enough to wonder if he was making a mistake, or if he had enough courage to do this.

Then the door opened, turning his thoughts, his doubts to wool. Footfalls sounded on the wooden floorboards, drawing closer until they were muffled by the carpet. A presence stood over him, just beside his head; he did not need to be able to see to know that.

Rustling cloth preceded the fabric that spilled over his thigh—a cloak falling to the floor as its owner unpinned it. Was the man old or young, handsome or repulsive? As Ismir knew he would never see his client, perhaps it did not matter so much as whether or not the man was cruel. Here, however, Latham was able to reassure him. “It's the clients who want to be punished, not the other way around. Not even the prince of Teghriz would be foolish enough to hurt one of my boys.”

Fingertips whispered against his thigh, and his breath hitched. Would the man turn him over onto his stomach and fuck him now, with his hands still bound, with the gag in his mouth, or would he turn this into a game?

“What's this?” The rumbling, seasoned voice at his back told him only that the man was no blushing youth. As he tensed, waiting for the man to speak again, he heard the slither of metal against leather, and a moment later felt cool steel slicing through his bonds. Blood flowed into his wrists again. Instinct prompted him to undo his gag and blindfold; he would have had Latham instructed him not to. *This man wants to rescue a pretty boy from would-be rapists and then comfort him. You'll see his face only if he wants you to.*

“Look at you, bound and trussed up like a lamb for slaughter. What in the name of the gods were those

ruffians going to do with you?”

Oh, yes, now the fantasy began in earnest. Ismir did his best to go limp when arms slipped under his knees and shoulders to lift him up. Muscles flexed against his bare skin; the man was obviously strong enough to carry a nineteen-year-old. Ismir fought back a blur of dizziness, and a heartbeat later felt a soft mattress yield under his weight. Crisp linens cooled his flesh like silk. Whoever this man was, he could afford the best.

“I came just in time.” That thick, rumbling voice breathed warm air in his ear; his hair stirred. “I know those men. What they did to the last boy they abducted was terrible. You are very fortunate I found you.”

Had his client not been utterly serious, had Ismir not been so anxious, he might have laughed at the sheer absurdity of it all.

Steel slid between his ankles and the ropes binding them. Once he was free, hands gently removed the gag, but not the blindfold, which he had worn since Latham put him into the litter that conveyed him to the client’s house.

“Who are you, sir?” Ismir was no actor; he did not need to be to project the right touch of fear and uncertainty.

“Just a nameless benefactor,” was the reply. “You may call me Eshumo.” *Eshumo*—patron, guardian spirit—not a real name at all.

When that strong hand returned to his thigh, moving up toward his pelvis, it only served to remind Ismir how little he wore. For decency, Latham made him wear a cloak in the litter; a servant had taken it when he arrived. Now a mere strip of linen banded his hips, riding up his ass and just managing to cover his cock and balls. The unseen fingers ventured close enough to his groin to make his cock twitch with anticipation.

Eshumo did not comment or move to undress him. Fingertips swiped a trail from his hips to his chest, dancing circles around his navel before moving on to his nipples. “Such lovely little buds you have, like unripe strawberries. And your lips, full and luscious. I am amazed no one has tried to ravish you before this.”

*He makes me sound as beautiful as a god.* Ismir had seen himself enough times in a looking glass to know how middling his charms were.

The mattress shifted under him. A body bent over his, arms braced on either side of his head, and pressed him deeper into the soft down. Eshumo smelled of leather and sandalwood and pungent male musk; Ismir did not need to feel the generous erection rubbing against his thigh to know the man was aroused. Before he could think, Eshumo’s mouth found his, and coaxed him into a long, deep kiss.

*Play the virgin and follow his lead,* said Latham. *It will feed his fantasy.* Ismir had no need to be told. Kissing was not something he initiated well; his efforts always seemed to fall far short of the ease and heat he craved.

This man, on the other hand, could definitely kiss. Ismir waited until Eshumo slipped a tongue into his mouth before responding. Moaning softly, all too aware how he blushed, how his growing erection strained at his loincloth, he twined both arms around the man’s shoulders and moved down a broad back. Eshumo was muscular, perhaps even handsome and not too old. “May I see your face?” he murmured.

It was an idle wish; he never really expected his client to oblige. Eshumo evaded the question entirely. “Once the streets are safe again, I will take you home. For now, just rest.”

Ironically, his idea of resting encompassed anything but. Ismir’s half-hearted protests were swallowed by a hot tongue, and hands that roamed everywhere, rubbing his nipples and hovering feather-soft above his bulge until he arched his hips off the bed to beg for more.

Laughing, Eshumo broke off the kiss and drew back. Ismir felt the ties of his loincloth come loose; the linen peeled away with aching slowness—then abruptly stopped. Ismir stifled a frustrated cry. Eshumo left him half-exposed, with just the root of his cock free. By now, his erection must be straining the little scrap of cloth to bursting, and he could only imagine how tantalizing his swollen prick must look when glimpsed through that gauzy linen.

When a finger traced the outline of his cock, slowly moving up and down, his gasp of surprise mingled with a groan. Then, just as abruptly as it began, the stimulation stopped. The finger vanished, and reappeared a moment later to circle his left nipple, to graze the bud and flick it. Someone must have told Eshumo how sensitive his nipples were, because now the man was rolling and pinching the one under his hand, and laughing low in his throat at Ismir’s hitched moans.

Of course, Latham had known since the first day, when he instructed his assistant to test Ismir. From a seat in the corner he had watched, and chuckled as a chance caress brought an unexpected cry of pleasure. “Ah, we’ve found something,” he commented. “Go ahead, Essi. Rub and suck his buds, and see if you can make him come from it.”

Until now, that session had been the best sex of Ismir’s life. And to think, he had crept in the door of the Oasis, half-ready to dash out again but determined to see the matter through. When he approached Latham, he expected to be taken, to be humiliated. But the Oasis was no ordinary brothel, where his ass would have sold for a few coppers. At the Oasis, his pleasure mattered, because without it, said Latham, his work would lack the necessary spirit. Elsewhere, the owner would have assigned him a cubicle and ordered him to start spreading his ass for customers at once. Here, Latham made sure he received a good meal and hot bath, and a thorough explanation of what he would be doing. Only later in the day, as evening fell and the lamplighters plied their trade in the streets, did Ismir stand behind a curtain and watch one of Latham’s workers fuck a client with a leather phallus.

That such pleasures existed, he never knew until then. Time and again, he pictured himself lying facedown on the divan, his ass thrust into the air for the toy pushing in and out of him. Latham forbade him to touch his cock while watching, but in the darkness behind the curtain who would know? His hand inched inexorably down his belly, and his tongue darted out to lick dry lips.

Just as he started to fondle his balls, light suddenly flooded the recess, and a strange man grasped his shoulder. “Not so quickly,” he said, softly so the participants on the other side of the curtain would not hear. “We have work to do.”

In an adjoining room, after a bit of kissing and fondling, Essi pushed him down to his knees and had him demonstrate whatever he knew about sucking cock.

*Will this one want me to suck him? Or will he suck me?* Because Ismir had seen clients come to the Oasis to do just that: take another man in their mouths knowing neither their servants nor their neighbors would ever find out.

“It would have been a crime had those men ruined such beauty,” said Eshumo. Oh, yes, he was still playing the rescuer. “Such fine skin you have, like pale honey, and hair like burnished gold.”

“Please, sir, don’t hurt me.”

In reply, a hot mouth closed over his nipple, and he gasped again. A tongue lapped the swollen bud and flicked it back and forth, and he cried out. Eshumo’s large hand moved down his back to squeeze his ass before stroking his thigh.

Eshumo sat up again. “They did not leave you much to wear, did they?” The loincloth folded back, releasing Ismir’s cock, before disappearing altogether. “Ah, you are feeling better! I think you are already beginning to forget your ordeal.”

As a hand reached between his thighs, Ismir spread his legs invitingly, lifting his knees just enough to expose his hole. A fingertip grazed his perineum, making him shudder, then a hand cupped his balls, caressing them. Biting his lip, he groaned, partly in ecstasy, and partly in frustration that Eshumo ignored his cock—so hard now, bobbing so stiffly against his belly, that only a blind man could have missed it.

When something warm and wet closed over his prick, he practically shot off the bed in surprise. Just to picture it—his faceless tormentor sucking him in and out, flicking his tongue around the shaft with butterfly touches, squeezing his balls to milk him—no one had ever taken the time to do that.

And then, with a slurp, Eshumo released him.

“No, please, don’t stop.”

After several moments, after vague shifting and fumbling, Ismir felt wetness slick over his hole. Eshumo was stroking oil onto him, making a game of playing with his ass while he writhed. All the preparation was unnecessary; Latham had him purge and lubricate himself before leaving.

An oily finger breached his opening; he tensed, then, taking several deep breaths, relaxed. And tensed again, clenching his belly, when that digit twisted around and slowly began to pump in and out. This could be better than straight fucking. A man could come with just a finger inside him. That first time, with Essi drilling him, he had spurted all over his stomach, even before the man shoved his cock in.

By now, hiding his pleasure had become impossible—and Eshumo noticed. “Would you have rather I left you to those men?”

Ismir felt his patience with the game slipping. In fact, at this moment the mere thought of being fucked by three or four men, having them plug his mouth and ass and come all over him, excited him beyond reason. *But that isn’t why I’m here.* Collecting himself, he managed to gasp out a suitable reply, “Oh, no, sir, I’m so grateful to you. I’d do anything to show you how much.”

Eshumo grunted and pushed his knees farther apart, spreading him even wider. Hard flesh rubbed up against his hole, teasing it before pushing past the outer ring of muscle. Ismir hugged his knees to his chest and willed his body to relax around the cock. Eshumo gave him only a moment to adjust, only a few breaths before he began to move. And here was a man who knew how to fuck, how to angle his thrusts so his cock chafed that wonderful place deep inside that felt so good. Pleasure coiled like a stirring serpent in Ismir’s belly, it urged him to reach between his thighs and under his prick to massage his balls. So close now, he was so close, driven by his partner’s hard, quick thrusts, his animal grunts, and his own raging need. So close, and yet it seemed the end could not come swiftly enough.

A spasm rippled through his groin, equal parts pain and pleasure. Cum dribbled onto his belly, ribboning through his fingers when he reached up to pull at his cock, and his body clenched uncontrollably. Eshumo gave a strangled cry, his grip on Ismir’s thighs tightened, and Ismir felt warm

fluid rush through his bowels. Even then, Eshumo kept thrusting, pumping through the last of his orgasm, until his deflating cock slipped free. His hold loosened, he drew back, and Ismir, wincing at the sting of pulled muscles, slowly lowered his legs. Slick with sweat, he shivered a little.

Eshumo patted his thigh. “Rest now,” he said. “It will soon be safe enough to send you home.”

“Thank you, sir.”

Moist lips touched his cheek. “You do not have to offer me your gratitude. Saving you from those men was...a pleasure.”

The mattress shifted, lightened as Eshumo left the bed. Ismir heard him gather up his clothes, then pad barefoot across the floor; the door closed behind him.

Vaguely, it occurred to him that he might lift up his blindfold, just enough to take in the room where he lay, but exhaustion sapped his will; he did not even possess the energy to wipe the cum off his belly. For a time, lulled by the soft bedding and his own lassitude, he drifted in and out of consciousness, stirring only when the door opened and someone entered.

Hands bathed and dressed him, then led him still blindfolded down the stairs. His cloak dropped around his shoulders, and his sandals slid onto his feet. A few steps more and he stood on the street, amid the noise and dust of afternoon traffic. Someone guided him into a litter. Darkness enfolded him, and he knew the curtains had been drawn. A lurch told him the litter bearers were at their task; he gripped the cushions as the litter swayed, then relaxed as it regained equilibrium.

With his work done and the curtains closed, there was no harm in undoing the blindfold. Ismir pulled the cloth down around his throat, and blinked at the glaring shaft of daylight spilling through the dark blue drapes. Two hours remained until sunset; the visit had taken less time than he thought.

And he had gotten through it. A smile flitted across his lips, and he stretched his limbs, content as only the truly sated could be. Yes, he could grow to like this work very much.