

Le Français Chapter 39-43

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Chapter 39

Sinead wasn't sure why the hell she said it.

Everything had been moving so fast. The fundraiser dinner, the wealth and fancy clothes around her, feeling out of place but somehow being openly accepted even when Marc left her side to forge her own path. Then the walk through the museum, and the coat room, and his fucking smile as he explained their 'adventure' for the night.

Why did he keep calling it that? He was leveraging her for sex acts. It must have made him feel better or something. To be fair, it *did* help - whenever she got a text from him that said 'our next adventure' instead of 'the next time I get you to compromise yourself sexually' it didn't make her cringe.

She'd blown him in the coat room, and Sinead hated the fact that she'd done it willingly. He'd barely needed to ask. She'd put up a token resistance at best and caved as soon as he assured her. Then his cock had been in her mouth, and she'd tasted him on her tongue again, and she'd gone at it with energy. His words, from that first time, had been taunting her in the back of her mind. There had been plenty of problems between her and her ex, the biggest of which had been they just got married too fast and too young, but the sex had never been an issue until the end when hate-fucking wasn't enough to ignore the hate part.

So she'd blown Marc, and every little groan he let out and his soft touches to her hair as if he wanted to grab it and use it like a handle to fuck her mouth but also wanted to protect her from getting it messed up had gotten her going. She'd felt his orgasm coming on, his cock stiffening that little bit more, and she'd swallowed it. Tasting it. It had been like a prize she'd been chasing and she wanted more. She wanted him to bend her over in that coat room, hitch up her dress and pound her like a bitch in heat.

And then she'd looked up at him and said, 'That it?'

That sort of comment was... with her ex, it would have been a little taunt he would have laughed at before starting round two. Or it could have been a saucy line from a TV show or movie if she'd been getting interrogated and tortured by some evil bastard, something the heroine would say to show they weren't broken.

Maybe she'd meant it like that, just a little bit. Not consciously though. No, kneeling there on the coat room floor she'd wanted Marc bad and she blushed just thinking about it. She wasn't *supposed* to want him like that. She was trying not to want him at all. The longer she kept him hooked with basic stuff, the more she could get out of him before he got tired of their arrangement. And he had to get tired of it eventually and walk away like every other guy. That's what they did.

But Marc hadn't laughed and flipped her ass up to fuck her. And he hadn't chuckled evilly and threatened her. No, he'd... ordered her to put him away. And it had been with a tone of voice that told her there was no arguing. No room for sass. Sinead could have found it hot if it also didn't feel so...

She wasn't sure why she said it.

Marc had brought her back out to the main fundraiser area and things went back to how they had been. The speeches were still happening, but people were slowly filtering around the bars and speaking quietly, and that was where they went. The drinks were free, and Sinead ended up with a glass of some ridiculously nice wine as she chatted away.

But it wasn't the same as before. Something had changed, and she couldn't tell what it was.

Marc didn't get clingy, but he also didn't get distant. He was there and present. He didn't glare, or get snotty or snappy. He just... something had changed in the way he looked at her when their eyes met during a quiet moment.

It took until the party was ending, and Marc offered her his arm to escort her out, that Sinead realised what was missing.

Marc wasn't giving her that smile.

The game had deepened, and Marc wasn't sure how he wanted to play it.

He hated to admit it, but Astrid was right in one of her observations - Marc had it easy with Felicity. His blonde escort was so willing, and trusting. She loved to submit to him, and it was all so easy with her.

Marc wasn't used to being challenged.

It was a tough pill to swallow. There was a small instinct in him that had wanted to punish the Detective right there in the coat room. To show her who was in control, like an owner correcting a puppy. He knew that there were some Doms who approached things that way.

He also had a very deep feeling that if he handled the Detective like that it might have been fun in the moment, but the game would have ended. What was happening between them wasn't an agreed-upon D/s relationship. There were controls and boundaries and discussions that helped establish trust in a proper one. With Sinead, it was... different.

So Marc decided to wait, and he could tell that Sinead was stewing as they continued on with socialising. He didn't give her anything, and he watched her. She played her part well, talking openly without being overbearing. She didn't get drunk, she was polite and funny. He had no doubt that a couple of the folks he knew from the fundraiser would be surreptitiously asking him about her in the future, just like he'd gotten a few questions about Felicity not being at his side for the night.

The thing that helped Marc keep his inner calm was that she kept looking to him, more and more frequently. Checking in with him. She knew what she'd done, and was waiting for what his reaction would be.

The game wasn't over, but he needed to make a move that night. His plan had been that the coat room would be the limit. Now he needed to decide what the new limit was, and how far they would push together.

At the end of the night, Marc offered her his arm and escorted her out as they bid their goodbyes. When they got to his car, Marc opened the passenger door for her and helped her in, and then got into the driver's seat. He glanced at her, and she was looking at him. He just raised an eyebrow slightly and pulled the car forward and onto the street.

Sinead sighed softly in the seat next to him, folding her hands in her lap and fidgeting with her thumbs.

No, Marc thought to himself. *The game certainly isn't over.*

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Marc parked his car and Sinead hesitated before getting out. He'd driven them back to his place, which made sense since her car was parked out on the street, but she was feeling nervous and wasn't sure how to handle it. The weirdest part was that it wasn't nerves like the first time when she'd known what she was getting into with Marc.

This time it felt even more like an unknown than what she'd been guessing when she thought he was going to just take her to bed and fuck her. He'd proven that he wasn't just looking for sex - and she knew that *she'd* been more than a little interested in just sex. Especially that night after staking out Barisha, but that had mostly been the booze talking.

Her hesitation gave Marc the time to cross around the car and open her door for her, and he offered her a hand out.

"Thanks," she said, feeling his strong hand in hers.

He didn't respond, and that made the little pit in her stomach grow a bit. Then Marc offered his arm, and she held it as they walked through the underground parking to the elevator in silence except for the sound of her heels on the concrete. Marc thumbed the call button and they waited. Sinead opened her mouth slightly, wanting to say something, but not knowing what to say. She didn't want to apologise to him, that was for damn sure. And she hated that she felt like maybe she should.

The soft *ding* of the elevator arriving knocked her out of her own head and Marc led her into the small, enclosed space. Sinead took a breath as she turned to face the door, but Marc thumbed the Close Doors button and then held the Stop button.

"Detective," he said, his voice deepening a bit back towards that one he'd used in the coat room. "Tonight I thought we were having fun. A beautiful dress, a fancy party, good food and drink. I intended to be a perfect gentleman, and we could have our little adventure. But tonight you acted like a brat."

"Marc-" Sinead said, her voice firm. She wasn't some child to be scolded. But as soon as he held up a hand, one finger ordering her to wait, she stopped.

"I'm not interested in having fun with a brat, Detective," he said. "A brat thinks she's better than the people around her. A brat thinks she deserves things that she hasn't earned, and says things that she knows will be hurtful just for the sake of a tiny endorphin hit. Brats have no self-control, no impulse control. I'm not interested in a brat, I'm interested in real, adult women."

"I'm-" Sinead started, but hesitated again. She did *not* want to apologise to him.

“Brats also don’t deserve nice gifts,” Marc said. “Not when they can’t behave themselves. So, Sinead, I think you should give me back my gift.”

Sinead frowned. He hadn’t given her anything except the USB drive with the data for her case, and there was no way she was handing that back when she’d already blown him in payment. But looking into his eyes, Sinead realised that wasn’t what he was talking about.

The dress.

She swallowed, glancing down at herself. She was wearing her leather jacket, her heels, her own thong, and the buttplug. Other than the dress.

Sinead clenched her jaw, looking back up at Marc. “I’m sorry,” she said. “I was being a bitch.”

Marc pursed his lips slightly, nodding just a little. “*Merci*,” he said. “Now please, Detective. The dress.”

Sinead swallowed. He was still holding the Stop button on the elevator and it was buzzing softly. She was stuck in there with him, not that she felt like he was physically threatening her. When she took it off, she wouldn’t be naked. Her coat covered down to her waist. Her ass and legs would be out, but that wasn’t the worst.

What were the chances he’d stop them on the first floor and ask her to leave, sending her out into the cold like that? The part of her that was so fucking frustrated with him thought he’d do that. It was late, easily midnight or a little later, so there wouldn’t be that many people out on the street to see her rush to her car.

The other possible stop would be up on his floor, and she would be walking into his loft almost naked.

Sinead didn’t really make the decision, because she realised she already had. Her thoughts hadn’t been about *if* she took it off, they had been about *when*. She quickly took off her coat, handing it to Marc to hold, and then reached back and unzipped the dress and shrugged it off. As soon as her tits were free her nipples got hard in the cold of the elevator. She quickly slipped the dress down over her hips and stepped out of it carefully, bracing herself in her heels with one hand on the elevator handrail, and then she stood tall and raised up the beautiful little cocktail dress and showed it to him before folding it neatly and offering it to him.

Marc took the dress and then opened her coat for her, and she felt so fucking weird letting him put the coat around her naked shoulders.

“*Bien*,” Marc said, giving her one look over before releasing the Stop button and thumbing the button for his floor.

Sinead let out a breath, feeling a heat in her chest and cheeks and shaken by how relieved she was that she was getting what she wanted. He was taking her to his apartment. He wasn't sending her out into the cold.

They didn't say anything through the elevator ride and arrived on Marc's floor quickly. He took the initiative, stepping out first and looking up and down the hallway before looking back and nodding to her. Sinead wasn't sure *how* to feel about that - he was making her walk practically naked through his building, but also protecting her?

At his loft door, he ushered her in almost like he was acting like a gentleman, and then politely took her coat and hung it up.

"Come," he said in that voice, and he started down the hall and towards the stairs up to his raised bedroom area.

Sinead swallowed her nerves and followed.

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The Detective had looked extremely sexy wearing nothing but her coat and a thong, but Marc was playing things by instinct and he felt like having her give up her covering was just another little part of the build-up.

He led her up to his bedroom but didn't turn to look at her as he went to the dresser and carefully laid out the dress that he had taken back from her. She really had looked stunning in it, and he had no intention of keeping it from her. Hell, he wanted to see her in it again. But for now it was a symbol, and leaving it in the open like that would keep her guessing. Once that was done, he turned and gestured for Sinead to sit on the end of the bed. She followed the silent directive and sat up straight, making no move to try to cover herself. Her upper chest and neck were still a little flush from embarrassment, but her dazzling spray of freckles were clear. Marc had a moment of desire, wanting to just kiss her and get his mouth on those firm nipples of hers, but he resisted.

Sinead looked at him with an expression somewhere between contrition and frustration, which seemed like a good place to have her for what came next.

“As I said, Detective, I am not interested in exploring and having fun with brats. I am not attracted to teenagers, either physically or mentally. I am attracted to *women*. Tonight you acted like a brat, *n'est-ce pas?*”

Sinead swallowed and nodded just once. She'd already apologised and Marc could tell that she wasn't thrilled with the admission, and how he wasn't just blanket accepting it.

“There are consequences to actions in the real world. You know this well, you are part of the justice system,” Marc continued. “The same is true of relationships of all kinds. Business, familial, and personal. So here is what I think needs to happen - you acted like a brat tonight, so this one time I will hand out a consequence. A punishment, if I were a man who thought such things proper. Et je ne suis pas le genre d'homme qui prend plaisir à donner des punitions quand elles sont méritées. I'm no supervisor and you're not some college girl. I do not want to treat my friends as pets who need correction. After tonight, if you act like a brat again, we will end our arrangement. That is the boundary I am setting. You can disagree with me, argue, or even hate me at times, but I will not stand for childish petulance. *C'est compris?*”

Sinead clenched her jaw lightly, her eyes boring into Marc's before she opened her mouth to speak. “Am I allowed to set boundaries?”

“Of course you can,” Marc sighed. “Though that is a discussion for another time, I think, because right now the power imbalance is too great. So, Detective... I am going to punish you like a brat gets punished, but I will not do so if you do not consent.”

“What sort of punishment are we talking about?” Sinead asked, her brow slightly furrowed.

“What sort of punishment do you think a mouthy, petulant brat deserves?” Marc asked, raising an eyebrow lightly.

Sinead flushed a soft pink and rolled her lips in a little to bite them. She knew. It was obvious. And she knew it would be embarrassing.

“Do you consent?” Marc asked firmly.

Sinead sucked in a big breath through her nose and then let it out slowly before nodding.

“*Bien*,” he said. “Remove your thong and get on the bed on your hands and knees.”

As Sinead dealt with the mental effort of following that order and what would come next, Marc went into his closet and opened up a small cupboard. Inside were some of the toys that he and Felicity had used over the last few years. Marc selected a simple silicone paddle. It had enough firmness and flex to get the job done but wasn't going to risk much damage. There were others that he and Felicity had graduated up to - she enjoyed a good spanking as part of the mild masochism they played with - so this one hadn't been used in some time.

When he came back out of the closet, Sinead was looking over her shoulder at him, her ginger hair pulled over one shoulder. She was sitting with her ass low, almost squatting on her knees, and Marc tutted as he shook his head.

“Come now, Detective. *Tu sais que ce n'est pas la position appropriée pour ce qui t'attend*,” he said as he stood just to the side and behind her, tapping her body with the paddle as he indicated what needed to be changed. “Knees apart. Down to your elbows, that will be easier. Push your ass out. You may arch your back if you want to maximise the visual, but it isn't necessary. Ah, there. *Bien*. Much better.”

Marc went to the side of the bed and showed her the paddle properly as she knelt on her elbows and knees, completely vulnerable. She was fully flushed now, her freckles almost disappearing as she breathed deeply and tried to keep her composure and dignity. “This is the tool I will be using,” Marc said. “It is not so bad, see? Feel it.”

Sinead held the paddle, rubbing her thumb over the flat part and feeling it flex a little. She swallowed as she looked at it, then looked up at him. “This is some sort of a training toy, isn't it?” she guessed.

“It is,” Marc said.

“I can take whatever you've got,” she said. “I'm not some weak little girl. If we're doing this then fucking do it.”

Marc sighed, pressing his lips together in a firm line. She was doing it again, though she didn't seem to realise it this time. She was challenging his judgement. Sinead *thought* she was being strong, so he didn't feel the same frustration.

"Je vais donc te donner deux leçons ce soir au lieu d'une." Marc muttered under his breath. "Fine, Detective. You think you know better than me, so I will show you why I chose this punishment."

Sinead nodded, a hard certainty in her eyes, and Marc left her holding the paddle as he went back into the closet and opened the cupboard. He reached into the back and pulled out the thin, hard cane. It was only about half a centimetre wide and had just the right amount of flex. Looking at it, Marc took a deep breath and shook his head. It would only take one stroke if she was smart, or two if she wanted to be stubborn.

Chapter 42

“Holy fucking fuck!” Sinead yelled, collapsing forward onto her chest and face.

Marc had shown her the cane and confirmed from her reaction that she’d definitely never done anything like this before. If she had, she would have been a lot more reluctant. So Marc had stood behind her, looking at the perfect picture of her upturned pale ass and thighs, the little jewel on the end of her buttplug peeking from between her cheeks. He’d hit her, once, at about one-third of his usual range of power for a spank. Harder than he used the cane on Felicity, but *much* softer than he would have been with any sort of paddle or strap.

Sinead’s ass immediately welted, inflaming in a stripe across both cheeks, and her body quivered as she sobbed for a split second into the sheets of Marc’s bed.

“Shhh,” he hushed her softly, rubbing her lower back with one hand. “Shhh, Sinead. It’s alright.”

“What the fuck!?” she gasped, raising her face from the sheets and glaring at him.

“I warned you,” Marc said. He gestured lightly with the cane in his other hand. “These games we play, they can be many things, but they have consequences. You need to trust that when I warn you, or choose to do something, I am doing it for our mutual engagement.”

“You want me to *trust* you!?” Sinead growled. The implication was clear - he was, after all, leveraging her into all of this.

“Yes,” Marc said simply. “I do. Now, do you want to continue like this, or should we go back to my plan?”

Sinead swallowed, took a breath, and then gritted her teeth. “We can go back to your plan.”

“*Au moins, il ne t’a fallu qu’un seul coup,*” Marc said. He set down the cane and held out a hand for the paddle. Sinead was still holding it squeezed tightly in her fists, and she peeled her fingers from it and handed it to him. Marc then took off his belt, sliding it out of the loops on his pants, folded it in half and presented it to her. “You may bite on this, ma petite rebelle.”

She hesitated a moment, looking into Marc’s eyes, and then opened her mouth and let him set it between her teeth. It was expensive leather, but it wouldn’t be the first belt he owned with teeth marks on the inside.

Marc came back around the bed to her rear, tutting softly as he examined the welt. It was still a little raised and a bright, angry pink, but it wasn’t anywhere near what would have happened through repeated strikes. He took a moment to slide his hand across her ass cheek, feeling the heat coming from the strike, and he could feel Sinead tensing at the touch for a moment before relaxing.

“Alright,” he said. “Usually I would say a good and proper spanking should be counted out loud, but I’ll forgive that since it’s your first time. Are you ready to accept your punishment, Detective?”

Sinead looked over her shoulder, glaring slightly as she bit down on the belt. Even with her hair a little wild now, and her eyes having gotten a little watery from the cane strike and her makeup smudging a little, she was stunning. And that fire was there behind her eyes even as she nodded and grunted her assent.

Marc raised the paddle and brought it down on her ass in a firm, even stroke. Middle range of power, and landing on the outer curve where there was plenty of muscle. The smack of the silicon paddle against her flesh was a satisfying *clap*, and Sinead grunted in her chest but didn’t squeal in pain. There was a nice pink outline of the paddle on her butt that slowly started to fade.

He raised the paddle again and brought it down on the other cheek. Another *clap*, another grunt. Another pink, fading outline.

“Good girl,” Marc hummed softly, caressing her butt again with his free hand for a moment. Then he spanked her again, more in the middle of her right cheek, and quickly again on the left. And again on the right. Then he switched the pacing and hit her right again, keeping her guessing.

A good round of spanking wasn’t just about swatting the ass of his partner. It was like sex - variation was pleasure. Fast swings, slow swings. Lighter, quick spanks varied with hard, powerful ones. Different angles, different targets. Marc covered Sinead’s ass and upper thighs with strikes that turned her ass a light pink, and then an angrier red pink.

She was crying into the belt, but she took it. She didn’t beg him to stop. Didn’t pull away from the paddle, or the occasional touch of his hand as he felt her smooth, hot skin. She tossed her hair a couple of times, and he could see that it was sticking to her forehead from sweat. He was starting to get hot as well, and he stripped off his suit coat before going back to the punishment.

The only part of her ass he didn’t hit was the centre. A proper spanking should have really included the inner curve of her ass cheeks, but he didn’t want to take the buttplug out of her, and he was careful not to strike it either.

“*Fini*,” Marc finally declared as he tossed the paddle onto the bed next to Sinead. She didn’t sit up. Her ass wavered, a hot red that was practically glowing, and she was panting. Marc knew why. He knew what she wanted. He could see the physical reaction he’d pulled from her.

Under Sinead’s inflamed cheeks, her pretty pussy was swollen with arousal and her labia were slick and flowered open just a little. The stinging pain of the spanking hadn’t reduced her desires, they’d only teased them.

Marc set one knee on the bed, standing beside his little plaything, and he ran a thumb down from her perineum to her labia, feeling the slickness of her. Sinead moaned, arching her back, trying to push her pussy towards the contact. With a little smirk, Marc rested his other hand on the small of her back, his fingers dipping between her ass cheeks to tap on the buttplug, and he began to play with her. She moaned loudly into the belt as he inserted his thumb into her, and pushed a pulsing rhythm into the plug with his fingers, and then tugged on it and glanced her finger across her clit.

It took less than a moment for Sinead to come, her body wracking with moans and sobs until she tensed, her cunt practically trying to suck on Marc's thumb with her inner core muscles. When it finished she spit out the belt and looked back at Marc, her eyes wild and her hair plastered to her forehead and cheeks. "Fuck me, Marc," she pleaded. "Just fuck me already. Get it over with and get your cock in me."

Marc smiled and shook his head as he made eye contact with her. "Sex isn't a punishment, *ma petite rebelle*. Sex is a reward. But you did so well, I think you've earned more than one release."

She growled in frustration, but the growl turned into another moan and Marc tugged on the buttplug, pulling the largest part of it through her anal ring, and then pushed it back in while he began to fuck her pussy with his thumb again.

Sinead staggered into the elevator. Her legs still felt weak, even after Marc had-

She closed her eyes, trying to just breathe. Trying not to focus on everything that had happened. The massage with the moisturiser on her ass. The shower. Before that...

No matter how much she tried to be furious with him, her mind kept going back to that fucking *smile* on his lips when she'd finally begged him to fuck her and he'd denied her.

It took almost five minutes for Sinead to realise she hadn't pressed the button for the ground floor and that the elevator wasn't moving.

"Shit," she grunted, reaching out and thumbing it.

She looked at herself in the reflective metal of the elevator door. Her hair was dry but no longer styled, and she was makeup-less, but she still looked hot. He'd dressed her in the dress again and put her heels on her, and helped her into her coat before ushering her out the door with a hand on the small of her back.

And she still had the buttplug in.

Sinead closed her eyes again and shook her head. This was bad. She shouldn't want this. Shouldn't want to go back up there.

But she did.

Chapter 43

“Hey, bitch,” Jules said.

Sinead literally jumped in place as she spun, her eyes wide from getting spooked. “Jesus Christ,” she said, blinking and putting a hand on her own chest. “Where the fuck did you come from?”

“The elevator?” Jules laughed. She looked around the barren Financial Forensics office. “Real busy place here, eh?”

“Well, *I’m* busy,” Sinead said darkly. “I don’t know what the other two guys do.”

“I can see that,” Jules said, poking at the stacks of documents Sinead had spread across her desk and a folding table she’d set up next to it. “Is this your case with Marc, or something else?”

The documents were from Marc’s USB drive, but Sinead hadn’t been zoned out reading them. She’d been standing with her hands planted on her desk, looking at her computer screen without really looking - her mind had been wandering again. To last night. It was the fourth time that day she’d drifted off, trying to comprehend everything that had happened. Somehow blowing Marc in a coat room at a fancy fundraiser wasn’t even breaking the top 5 mind-bending things from that night.

It also didn’t help that her ass still stung when she sat down, which was why she was standing to begin with.

“So it’s Marc now and not Fornier?” Sinead asked, reversing the question onto her old partner.

Jules shrugged with a little smirk. “I guess so,” she said. “I had to bring him in a few days ago to get everything cleared up officially. We talked.”

“He never mentioned that,” Sinead frowned.

Jules sighed and wheeled over a chair from one of the empty desks in the nearly-unused bullpen around them, dropping into it. “Not keeping strong tabs on your CI, Sinead?”

“He’s not a CI,” Sinead said. “He’s a... concerned private volunteer.”

“Well, whatever he is, he’s interesting,” Jules said.

Sinead felt a spike in her chest at that but buried it. There was no way she could talk to Jules about everything that had been happening with Marc. Especially not now. “He certainly is,” she said, trying to make it off-handed. “So what brings you down here?”

"I got permission to loop you in on the Barisha case," Jules said. "Officially. And Cap said he called your Captain and gave me the go-ahead, so I thought I'd drop in."

"Does Cap know that Barisha is just a stepping stone to try and get Le Français?" Sinead asked. "I don't need something useful getting used as a bartering chip because it'll nail someone smaller."

"Sinead," Jules said, screwing up her face a little. "What the fuck? You know I wouldn't do that."

The redhead stopped herself from shuffling through the papers in front of her and took a breath. "I know," she said. "Sorry."

"What's going on with you?" Jules asked. "Jesus, sit down and talk to me."

Sinead didn't have a good reason to deny that, so she gritted her teeth and sat in her desk chair. She managed not to wince as the deep aching sting in her glutes flared up. "Nothing's going on," she said. "I'm just- I'm feeling a little lost here, I guess. I'm doing the work, but I don't have anyone breathing down my neck like I'm used to. It's weird because you'd think I'd be enjoying that but it feels like I'm sort of adrift here."

"No, I can see that for sure," Jules assured her. "Seriously. This place looks like a dump and you aren't even undercover."

"That's probably at least part of it," Sinead said, thankful that Jules was helpfully offering suggestions so she didn't need to lie.

"Well, we're in it together again," Jules said, offering her a supportive smile. "Why don't you run me through all of this? Maybe some fresh eyes will help."

"Actually, a bunch of this stuff is fresh for me too," Sinead said. "I had some, um, *help* getting some information."

"Marc?" Jules guessed.

"No comment," Sinead said. "Anything printed on the green paper is real, but won't hold up in court or if we need to get a warrant."

"Sinead," Jules said. "It's like 80 per cent green paper."

"Yeah, well, like I said, it's all new," Sinead sighed. "So do you want to help me look for anything juicy that might give us a place to start looking officially, or are you just here to chat my ear off?"

"Let's get looking," Jules agreed, picking up a stack of papers. Sinead didn't miss the fact that her friend gave her a long side-eyed glance, but decided to just ignore it and focus on the job.

“Victor,” Marc said. “I’ve been waiting for your call.”

“You know what, you’re right,” Victor said from the other end of the call. Marc couldn’t hear anything else in the background to give him a hint of where the man was. “I did owe you a call, I just got a little busy.”

“That’s more than alright,” Marc said. “I just need to know if you’re planning on sending me those personal documents. My schedule is filling up quickly.”

His schedule was *always* full, and in most any other circumstance Marc wouldn’t have been following up with a personal call for any size of client. But after everything that had happened the night before with Sinead, he felt like he... He didn’t owe her an apology, but he felt like he’d taken more than what the initial deal had been about.

Marc didn’t feel like he’d taken advantage of Sinead, because it wasn’t a business deal. He felt like he’d cheated in the game, and wanted to make it up to her. The Detective’s hesitation over the legality of the information he’d acquired through Astrid was something he could try to fix - especially if Barisha gave him access to much of the same information himself.

“Shit, alright,” Victor said. “I’ll get you my personal stuff sometime tonight or tomorrow, is that alright?”

“It’s a start,” Marc said, projecting warmth through his voice even while he grimaced. “We’ll see where we need to go from there.”

“Great. Talk to you soon,” Victor said.

“You too,” Marc said and hung up and finally allowed himself to smile. Another game started.

And another one around the corner. Astrid would be at his apartment in just under 36 hours, and Marc had to make sure all of his own plans were secure before he could let the green-haired Domme start ordering around Felicity. He had work to do.