

## The Devil and His Soldier

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# The Devil and His Soldier

by [boltedfruit](#)

## Summary

Prompt: Voyeurism

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It's 1957 in post-war Monaco. Eames convinces Dom to throw one of his and Mal's famed parties filled with drink and debauchery, insisting that he meet someone new. Then he meets Arthur.

## Notes

Some of you may recognize this fic! It was originally posted when I was using my old mrhiddles handle on 2017-12-22. I spent like eight hours trying to figure out this weird internet archive SQLite thing, but I am dumb and finally just pasted a link I got from an old email for kudos into the Wayback Machine and there it was.

This was also originally a Secret Saito gift for CoffeeWithConsequences!

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### **Historical notes:**

- \*The Grand Prix in Monaco 1957 was pretty raucous, there were a lot of crashes.
- \*The word 'fag' is used here in its traditional British/Aussie slang for cigarette.
- \*Eames is a Marquess, basically a war hero. (In this he's somewhere in his forties.)
- \*Arthur is of French and British ancestry, but is within British royalty here and someone Eames has never met. (Presumably a Duke who takes holiday way too much.)

*May 19th.*

The sun beats down angry and scorching, and Eames has had about just enough of the great city of Monte Carlo, Monaco. His neck is entirely too hot, and already he feels the tight stretch of a burn starting along his collar. He dabs the sweat at his brow with his years-old worn handkerchief, stuffing it in his breast pocket with such annoyance, his companion notices.

“Three years and yet you still insist on accompanying him.” His friend, a Monaco native though usually he spends all his time in Westminster with he and his uncle. With little more than a few acres to his name, Dom has managed to snake his way into lunching with all manner of well-to-do folks. Like Eames. And Eames’ uncle.

“He’s my uncle,” Eames tells him, glowering. Just a row ahead of them stands his uncle, leaning precariously into the street as Collins passes Moss in a tight turn. His uncle waves England’s colors on a miniaturized stick, and he’s entirely weary with the whole display. But everyone is hollering as the drivers pass, the wind stampeding along behind blurring tires. “I can hardly sit home and ignore his goings-on. I’d be shunned.”

“Only from dinners,” Dom supplies, taking a deep drag off the fag hanging loose from two fingers. “The formal ones anyway.”

Eames rolls his eyes. “It’d be a bloody relief.” Another pass around their bend of the track, raucous cheers calling after Trintignant. “Tell me, why have we not dined at your leisure of late? Too busy doing God knows what to God knows who at castle what-do-you-call-it?”

Dom makes a noise at him and flags his hand. “Because there was the war, for one—”

“You’ve been using that as an excuse for over a decade—”

“And two,” Dom continues, eyeing Eames, “Two, I’ve been busy. Married life makes it a little more difficult to get away.”

Eames hums, knowing the truth of that. “Well, I know your wife well enough that she’d not only not mind a night or two of fun, but rather revel in it. If I remember correctly, she’s the one who—”

“Not another word, Marquess.”

Eames laughs, throaty. The announcer rattles off names, ever unchanged. “I’m just saying we’ve all missed the parties, is all.”

And just then the announcer picks up in volume, booming that first Moss has barreled through the chicane, causing all manner of chaos which Collins then crashed into, leading him along the quayside trying to swerve out of the path of it. There’s a collective gasp from the crowd, but soon enough it’s announced they’ll be alright.

Eames does not miss the way his uncle is retrieved from the road by his detective, duly chastised as much as the man is allowed to be.

“Poor bastards,” Dom mutters, puffing another drag.

“What say you?” Eames asks, suddenly anxious for it.

Dom seems distracted now but then he nods and elbows at Eames, saying, “Yes, yes, alright, I’ll talk to Mal tonight.”

“Lovely. And do try to bring someone new.” Eames smiles and leans out and away from the smoke billowing out of his friend.

Some time passes, and Eames has nearly forgotten what he’s said. But then, just as the announcer shouts the winner—the expected Fangio—Dom replies.

“It’s 1957. I think I can throw one or two fresh faces in the mix.”

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It’s not before July that Eames gets the call he was waiting for. His uncle is currently being turned in a neat circle for a list of ties to be wrung about his neck— *Oh, yes, the green is nice this time of year*— when his own secretary whispers to him he has a call waiting in his private study.

Normally he wouldn’t leave to take such calls, but in this instance...it’s best his uncle knows nothing of what he and Dom get up to in the night when time allows.

“Tomorrow,” is what Dom tells him. “Tomorrow at nine in the evening, sharp. Dress casually.”

“You mean dress to impress but not to contest?” Eames chimes.

Dom snorts on the other line and Eames smiles. “If one can still tug your belt loose, wear a belt I suppose. See you then.”

The line goes dead and Eames sets it back to its rightful place.

He stares at the books lining the far wall and remembers he forgot to ask Dom who will be there this time round.

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The best thing about Dominic Cobb, Eames has found over the last twenty years, is that he’s a good man, an opportunistic man, a man who knows how to shoot his enemies, and a man who does not live anywhere near Monaco-Ville, Eames’ second cousin’s palace. This lends to privacy when desired and Dom and his wife Mallorie, who are often walking caveats of indulgence, need all the privacy they can get. Despite his title, Dom has aplomb enough to make Eames’ uncle blush in his blue sash and wings, but thankfully the two rarely speak.

Dom's home is modern, with pale blue walls and yellow molding about the ceiling and doorways. The furniture consists mainly of things with plush seats and length to lie alongside, but the main foyer is the genuine treasure of the Lord's house. Mal has hung oil portraits of painters Eames can't afford to openly enjoy at home. Dill, Ackermann, and—

"Jean Arp. I went to a gallery in Munich recently and was able to bring home this beauty," Mal informs him as he stares at some white lump of a thing in the center stairwell. "Isn't it devastating?"

Eames tilts his head. "Something to that effect. Very modern."

"It's abstract, I've been told! Came right out of the war. Had to be hidden under cloth for years, the poor thing." And how she says it is all excitement. Eames still prefers his oils.

It's not that he's a sympathizer. Never that. But he appreciates the German mind when it comes to creating art. His family is, after all, half German. But it wouldn't do to have a piece of Ackermann's framed in his uncle's house, no matter how badly Eames would like to. And he surely doesn't have the freedom to visit galleries in Munich like Mal does. The papers would label it a scandal for weeks.

Dom chooses that moment to slap a hand on his shoulder. Mal has wandered off to cater to the other guests, her skirts gathered in one hand while she trudges up the steps.

"There's more than I remember, Dominic," Eames mutters, still eyeing the strange amorphous statue.

"You know I hate when you use my entire name." He sighs. "Come on, you'll not recognize half of them, I'll bet."

Eames pulls Dom's hand off his shoulder and shuffles beside him, grabbing a drink from one of the various servants weaving about. "Save gambling for the casino. We still have a week left here."

Dom leans close then, whispers, "So enjoy yourself."

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There are indeed new faces. So many, Eames feels delighted when more than a few don't recognize who he is or what rank he holds. He walks through the crowd, jutting into conversation here, stealing an hors d'oeuvre there. The women fawn over his charming words, their eyes trying to catch his for longer than a fleeting moment. And there's more than one man too, which gives Eames hope that neither Dom nor Mal have lost their touch when it comes to entertaining, and *properly*.

A Duchess of who-knows-where and who looks to be no more than twenty is prattling on in a thick accent about her poodle and how she can't get her to stop running straight into puddles. Eames is entertaining the thought of splashing his champagne on her pearls just to get her to quiet.

“You look bored.”

That voice gives him pause. A murmur. American. Deep. Dreadful in a way that likely matches his own face at the moment.

He turns to see sharp features, soft brown eyes, dark slicked back hair and the distinct military array of medals that are cause enough to have him flounder. The cut of the uniform, the colors, it's certainly not American.

Eames stares at him, thinking, *He can't be more than twenty-three*. Says, “You can't be more than twenty-three.”

The man smiles, and Eames is done for. He has dimples. The stranger tells him, “Usually people like to comment on my accent first.”

“You're French,” Eames says simply. An American does not earn the medals that are on the man's breast.

“I am. Parents thought it best to send me to America for my education.” He takes Eames in for a long moment and then bows his head just low enough Eames knows.

“Who are you?” he asks.

“Arthur, of course.” The way Arthur does not say any other name is telling. Either he is famous enough that Eames ought to know who *Arthur, Of Course* is, or he doesn't want anyone to know.

“And do you know who I am?” Eames continues, sipping his champagne.

Arthur takes the flute from him, drains the rest in a single swallow. The poodle prattler is staring at them as if famished.

“You're someone important. Tell me your name.” Arthur's eyes are fierce then, and Eames really is done for. He wants those eyes locked on his when he—

Arthur leans close, those dark eyes shutting gently as his breath tickles along Eames' jaw. He's smelling Eames and really that shouldn't be such a turn on in a room full of people half Eames' age.

“How old are you?” Eames whispers instead.

Arthur's knuckles brush his wrist as he hands back the flute.

Arthur says, “Old enough for war stories.”

He pulls back and tilts his head towards the nearest doorway, towards events Eames knows all too well.

Yet with Arthur looking at him over his shoulder, his heart still manages to race.

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These parties...Eames has missed them.

The upper floors are why they're notable. Why Dominic Cobb has managed to gain favor with men and women three times his status in society countries over. It's how Eames and he met in the first place. Mal, his long-time friend, had been throwing a party celebrating the end of the war some months after when she'd introduced the two of them. Only two years later and she and Dom were married.

And Arthur. Darling Arthur in his soldier's dress with pinned silver enough to topple a small dinghy, leading Eames up the steps and into a shrouded room filled with some thirty people.

Arthur, who leads Eames to the center of it all, just before a great length of sheer fabric cascading from ceiling to floor, with pillows and blankets piled in the middle on top a rug so intricate, Eames knows it's direct from India. How Mal acquires these items so quickly without causing a stir, he'll never know.

Arthur, who's silent beside him, staring on. Arthur who takes a fag tin out of his pocket and fingers one easily, just holding the thing. Eames has the ghost of the reflex to pull out a lighter for him, instead jostles his elbow.

Eames thinks once, then twice, and decides why the hell not. "Nasty habit, that."

Arthur blinks at him. "I agree. I quit after the war. But holding them makes me feel less restless, honestly."

Eames nods. "Good."

Arthur smiles and jabs a finger toward the center of the room. "Now just watch."

Eames concedes, pleased by the nonchalance this stranger affords him. Too often do people greet him with bowed heads and curtsies, that it's become tiresome. Arthur had respect enough to hang his head, but treats him as if a neighbor.

Eames watches. He watches a man emerge from the shadows in the back of the room, pushing past the drapery to stand just beside the rug. He strips, slowly, expensive pieces of silk and wool falling away to reveal smooth skin and long legs. He leaves his under briefs on, and collapses suddenly on the rug, pushing the palm of his hand into the dip of his diaphragm, the spread of his pelvis. Beneath the last bit of cotton does his hand slip, and this is when Arthur leans close, surrounded by the silent stares and sharp breaths in the room, from men and women both.

"Dom told me you used to come to all of these parties. Used to come every other night, even staying the weekends sometimes." He swallows. "He told me, told me that you were where he is now, lying splendid before any set of wandering eyes to transfix on you, if they dared."

Eames' neck heats. "You *do* know who I am." It's not a question.

Arthur's lips brush his neck the same moment the man in the center of the room grabs his own cock and it's all Eames can do not to whimper.

"You're an egalitarian devil. That's all Dom would say."

Eames can't help but laugh at that, but all he manages is a series of harsh breaths. Arthur slides his nose down to Eames' collar and then he feels strong fingers grip the side of his coat. "You're rather bold," Eames tells him.

"Maybe I spent too much time in America," Arthur murmurs.

The man, the stranger, the creature lying spread and suppliant in the mess of pillows has his briefs about his own ankles, fingers disappearing beneath him, riding his own hand. His cock is wet, Eames can see the slick specks of spend on his lithe stomach and, and—he turns fully to Arthur, nuzzles his face into his jaw, snakes one hand to grab his neck and hold him still. And Arthur is just breathing quick and hot against his face.

Arthur's breast is marked with the silver of the Queen. The silver of another kingdom entirely. The array of colors above that mark him as someone Eames should bow to, and never the other way around. He marvels he does not know the boy by his face. But the years since the war, if he served as the badges suggest, marks him at least in his mid to late thirties, unless he snuck in underage. The merits catch in the low light and Eames takes the briefest moment to look around them. The others filling the room, they're doing similar things. Either pressed to each other in wet embraces or focusing on the man pleading to the air in the center of the room, imagining themselves touching his begging body, their own hands vanished beneath layers of exquisite clothing.

But Eames isn't interested in them, like he'd usually be. Like he *used* to be.

"You're not exactly common, boy."

"You're not much older than me," is all Arthur says. His hands have wandered, cradling Eames' neck. His fingers play absently in the hair at his nape and Eames feels odd, too open.

"Am I now?"

"I can tell," Arthur mouths. He moves suddenly and catches Eames' displaced thumb between his lips. Sucks.

Eames doesn't need to glance down to know Arthur's hard. The way he's acting is enough. He's not entirely sure if the boy is simple or merely brash. Decides at the behest of Arthur's lips that he's some clever mix of the two.

Eames drags Arthur close, one hand going around his waist. He pulls his thumb free, leans close enough that he can feel the trace of Arthur's mouth against his.

"If I took us somewhere private, what would you say?"

Arthur's little huff lets him know he understood the question in the question.



Because Eames, being who he is, and with what he has to lose, he needs to know. He cares about those things now.

Arthur leans forward simply, gently presses his lips to Eames' and tilts his head so he's speaking against Eames' cheek.

"I told you, I'm old enough for war stories. And none the local papers know."

"And what would it take to hear them?"

Arthur shrugs, his teeth sharp against his skin, and says, "A good whiskey and warm bed, I'd tell you anything you want to know."

When he pulls back, Eames sees mischief in his eyes, and knows for the last time, he's done for.

"Anything," Arthur repeats. "At all, Eames."

And Eames, Eames lets himself be pulled from the room, heart racing.

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