

## Illusion

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# Illusion

by [Truth](#)


## Summary

“I’m sorry.” Maurice watched miserably as Boma took the bag and made it disappear somewhere beneath his half-cloak. “He’s being so *difficult*.”

Rumie looked up at Boma, smiling just a little. “*Are* you being difficult?”

“Yes.”

## Notes

This... is very random and sparked by my asking for something to write.  [kouryou](#) asked for something with Boma, dealing with 'illusion'. I'm not quite sure what I meant to write, but this wasn't it.

Rumie flitted around the clinic, humming as she gathered up various bottles and jars. She loved the clinic, loved her work and was never happier than when she had something to do. Mixing up the various medications and watching the faint ripples of sunlight reflected through clean water from the thin slit of the window was something she especially enjoyed. The act of creating, of bringing health and life here in a place where you could always smell the raw sewage that sluiced through the Underground before being purified and recycled again to the enormous city above....

All the trash and refuse of Judoh moved through the Underground, the criminals, the abandoned and the neglected. Rumie herself was two out of three of those, taken in by an illegal immigrant and raised to assist him here, bringing medical aid and admittedly forbidden procedures to the forgotten and the lost.

“Rumie!” The doctor was calling from the sitting room and she blinked away her ruminations, putting down the little machine that measured the various mixtures into capsules and hurried to answer his call.

He passed her as she ducked through the curtains, a scowl on his face and a stomp to his step. “None of my concern,” he growled as he disappeared into the clinic. “*You* sort them out.”

Blinking dubiously, she turned to take in the occupants of the room.

Maurice, hands on his hips, fishnet over-shirt completely failing to conceal his ribs despite the sleeveless garment beneath it, was attempting to loom menacingly. He was failing miserably, in part due to his bony physique and fly-away hair. Admittedly, with the amount of frustration he was displaying, he might have appeared threatening, had it not been for the man he was attempting to loom over. Apparently listening solemnly to Maurice’s unhappy railing, the man seated on the low couch could easily have broken the technician and artist in *half* - even without the DNA augmentation and tweaks to his physical system that had brought him to the clinic.

“Boma! Maurice!” Rumie clasped her hands and treated them both to a bright smile. Maurice was a little flighty, but he was always pleasant company and Boma.... “Have you come for your medication, Boma?”

“Rumie!” Maurice didn’t give the man on the couch a chance to answer, swinging to face the petite nurse with a tragic expression. “You were there! You heard him! He *promised!*”

Laughing somewhat nervously, Rumie held up both hands. “Maurice, this is a clinic. We have patients here, I’ll have to ask you to keep your voice down.”

“But *Rumie*...!”

“Maurice.” Boma spoke softly, but his voice bit through Maurice’s high pitched protest and cut it off immediately. Rising to his feet, Boma inclined his head politely to Rumie.

Flushing at the implied rebuke, Maurice threw himself down on the couch, folding his arms and scowling darkly. “You *promised*,” he repeated fiercely, voice only slightly above a whisper.

Boma ignored him, one hand emerging from beneath the heavy half-cape he wore. Rumie accepted the small bag dangling from between his fingers with a bright smile. “I’ll be right back, then.” She frowned at Maurice. “No shouting, please.”

There was a dark mutter from Maurice, but Boma merely nodded again - expression almost serene.

Frown melting into a smile for them both, Rumie disappeared back into the clinic proper to collect the medication needed to regulate Boma’s accelerated system. The red eyes followed her and, in direct contrast to the intended effect of the color, made her feel *safe*.

Behind her, there was a brief silence before Maurice spoke again. “*Why*,” his voice far softer and containing more than a hint of child-like frustration, “won’t you let me?” Maurice scuffed one booted heel on the polished wooden floor, scowling. “You *said* that I could. More than once.”

Boma turned to him with a faint frown, considering. After a minute or two of silence, Maurice looked up at him and spread his arms. “Is it because you’re not happy with your face? It’s not as good as it could be, but that’s why I want to *fix* it.”

“There’s nothing wrong with it.” Boma gave a faint shrug, still frowning. In truth, a photograph of his face from several years ago, held up beside him now, would show little difference save in the tiniest marks of aging and in the color of his eyes.

“Yes, but it’s not *perfect*.” Maurice bounced to his feet, reaching out to flick a finger against the band that Boma wore around his neck. “It hasn’t got the range of emotion of your original, but I can alter it, easily enough – or make you an entirely new one. This one’s not as good as it could be and, I mean, the hair moves and the expression changes but still...”

Boma held up a hand and Maurice ground to a halt, frustration still obvious as Rumie appeared, ducking through the curtain with Boma’s bag in one hand. “Please, Maurice,” she reminded him, frowning worriedly, “I did ask you not to shout.”

“I’m sorry.” Maurice watched miserably as Boma took the bag and made it disappear somewhere beneath his half-cloak. “He’s being so *difficult*.”

Rumie looked up at Boma, smiling just a little. “*Are* you being difficult?”

“Yes.”

Maurice made a sizzling sound, bouncing onto the balls of his feet, which put him a good half-foot taller than Boma – though still less than a third his weight and bulk - and waved his arms wildly. He did not, however, shout. Rumie gave him an approving look before turning back to Boma. “You did tell him that he could, Boma. Won’t you let him? Please?”

Boma looked down at her, eyes losing focus for a brief moment... and shrugged. "All right."

The expression on Maurice's face hovered somewhere between ecstatic and actual orgasm. He nearly flung his arms around Boma's neck, stopped at the last minute by the flat look on the holographic mask he was so eager to change. Carefully withdrawing his hands, he smiled uncertainly. "Now?"

"Yes, now." Rumie nodded briskly, not at all deterred by the transference of Boma's not-entirely friendly look to herself. She took hold of Boma's wrist and gave a tug. Given their relative mass and the fact that Boma could easily lift and hurl something five to ten times his own body weight, the fact that he allowed the petite girl to pull him toward the exit to the clinic spoke volumes.

Maurice was almost dancing in their wake, an odd sort of exercise given his thin arms and legs and his height. He resembled nothing so much as one of those child's toys where you pull a string and the arms and legs fly outward; ungainly and yet somehow fascinating.

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The interior of Maurice's workshop was as far from the understated, antique elegance of the clinic waiting area as it was possible to get. Every square inch of the small room was crammed with various machines and large monitors, carefully coiled cables running along the edge of every wall and along the carefully insulated skirting board. Unlike the polished wood and heavy curtains of the clinic, everything was a careful, *sterile* matte white.

In point of fact, Maurice could probably have given the surgeon across the street a good run for his money when it came to the knowledge of basic anatomy and the correlation between the firing of certain synapses and the movement of basic muscle groups. Maurice was an artist to the tips of his skinny fingers and Boma's face was both an affront to his senses and a source of near-constant irritation. In his triumph, he was almost crowing with delight as he locked the door to his shop, leaving Boma to find his own way to the workroom. It was, after all, a place Boma had visited before.

The ragged half-cloak was shed at the door, hung carefully on a peg as Boma moved toward the back. While Maurice's movement was accompanied by the thump of his heavy boots, Boma's feet, equally booted, made no sound at all. Maurice turned to watch him go, eyes tracing the line of diamond tattoos down Boma's bared arms to the wide stretch of muscled skin visible between the bottom of his short, heavily embroidered vest and the low waist of his pants.

Boma was beautiful and therein lay a great deal of Maurice's dissatisfaction with his own work. "It really isn't fair," he lamented, following Boma into the workroom and waiting for him to drop into the carefully constructed chair. "Let's have the mask off, hmm?"

Without changing expression, Boma let the holographic mask that hid his face dissolve. Pale skin faded in a brief wash of blazing light, leaving behind black fur and pointed ears, a long muzzle and a trailing mane of something that Maurice knew from experience slid through your fingers like the finest of hair, with the softness of fur.

“It’s a shame and a pity,” he repeated with a sigh, shaking his head. “You are a beautiful piece of work in your own right.”

A hint of fangs glimmered as the long muzzle wrinkled, but Boma’s low voice was even as he responded, “I agreed to let you work on my face. Aesthetic commentary was not a part of our bargain.”

Maurice gave a theatrical sigh and extended a hand. “Let me have the collar.”

The microscopic controls to the projected mask lay in the thin strip that Boma wore wrapped at the base of his throat and which vanished into his fur when the hologram dissolved into inactivity. Maurice had learned the hard way not to attempt to hunt for it, however playfully, in the thick, black fur.

“It’s still a shame,” Maurice repeated stubbornly. “Of course, if you didn’t go around slaughtering people quite so enthusiastically, you wouldn’t *have* to hide it.”

“Maurice.” The thin, carefully constructed strip was held out to him, gently woven between long fingers, but there was the strong hint of a growl in that single word.

With a scowl, Maurice took it. “You have more issues than anyone else I know, and around here, that’s saying a lot. I’m doing this for *free*, so the least you can do is cooperate.”

Boma sighed and relaxed back into the chair, closing his eyes as Maurice took the thin choker that held the myriad tiny projectors and their controls to download the current settings. He shouldn’t have let Rumie convince him to do this, but he couldn’t say no. Not to her....

He closed his eyes, wondering when he’d stop seeing the face of his non-existent little sister in the faces of other girls - the wide, pleading eyes with their lingering sadness....

Boma no longer needed his mask.

Despite his notoriety and past bad habit of wholesale slaughter, Boma could walk most places wearing his own face - that is, the face that the prison system of Maganalia had chosen for him. Few would dare to cross him due to reputation alone... and the City Manager of Judoh and Company Vita’s Vampire would, between them, move heaven and earth to see to it that no one set off another episode like the one brought about by the Beastmaster in his quest to retrieve Boma.

200 heavily armed men dead in less than a week and open warfare in the streets....

No one in Judoh would cross the wolfman, even without the protection of the Shogun and the Gaazardolls. Boma had no real need to hide his face, and the holographic image was, by now, almost as well known as the black wolf’s head that he bore on his shoulders and thus an ineffective disguise.

No, Boma had chosen the complex and prohibitively expensive re-creation of his human face for Usagi. He had wanted to find his sister, to hold her and to protect her. He had dedicated his very existence to her recovery and protection - the hallucinatory creation of guilt, grief

and pain that had been taken and *twisted* by the Beastmaster when he sought to destroy Boma's mind and soul.

Usagi had never truly existed, a fragment of memory associated with the man Boma had loved... and killed. He was not her brother and there was no need to continue to wear the face of a man who had never had a precious little sister.

"Expressions!" Maurice's affected tones broke in on Boma's thoughts and red eyes slowly opened, blinking at the bright lights of the various laser mapping devices, cameras and the rest. "We'll go down the list. Do each one slowly first and then quickly. I've got a new system that works off ambient temperature as the muscles shift, so no electrodes this time."

Pausing to heave an almost silent sigh of relief for that small mercy, Boma's ears swivelled slightly.

"Not yet! I need to know which expression I'm looking at!" Dark skin peeled away from sharp, gleaming teeth as Boma's ears went flat and Maurice winced. "Okay... that one I know. Come on, Boma. This won't take too long."

With a sigh, Boma settled down for several long hours of various facial expressions. After that, there'd be full body movement calibrations and after that....

Rumie gave them six hours before letting herself into Maurice's small shop, swinging a heavy bag in one hand. Various appetizing smells came from the bag and it steamed gently as she politely rapped her knuckles against the door of the workroom.

The door was flung open, revealing Maurice, looking a single step from throwing himself at her feet and rending at his garments. "Rumie," he demanded, striking a tragic pose, "you *must* reason with him."

Peering around Maurice's skinny frame, Rumie took in the technology-crammed room and the man standing in the center of it; half-cloak dangling from the fingers of one hand, arms folded and mien decidedly mutinous. "Boma?"

He nodded to her, expression smoothing into something bland, peaceful and almost exactly as it had been when he'd left the clinic - hours before. "Rumie."

She looked up at Maurice, puzzled. "What's wrong?"

"What's *wrong*? Just *look* at him!"

Rumie did, wrinkling her forehead as she attempted to figure out what had set Maurice off. "He looks... fine?"

"Yes, he does." Maurice's voice rose half an octave. "He's *supposed* to look *amazing*!"

One of Boma's eyebrows shot upward and Rumie blinked. "... amazing?" she echoed doubtfully, looking up and down the muscled figure and finally meeting his eyes. "What's *wrong* with him?"

“Nothing,” was Boma’s flat response, but it was almost drowned out by Maurice’s growl.

“Everything!” Maurice waved his arms. “Hours of work... and he won’t even try the new image!”

“Oh, Boma.” Rumie shot him a disappointed look. “You did promise....”

“I promised to let him create a new mask.” Boma didn’t move an inch, watching the pair impassively. “I did not say that I would wear it.”

Rumie’s look of disappointment deepened. “That’s not fair.”

“Little is.” Boma unfolded his arms and shrugged. “He should be pleased with his creation.”

“No one will ever *see* it!” Maurice pointed out impatiently. “Without *you* it’s just another computer graphic!”

“But *you* know it’s beautiful,” Rumie told Maurice, attempting to draw his attention to the bright side of it all. “Do you really need other people to see it?”

“It doesn’t even look that different,” Maurice pointed out, reduced to pleading as he stared at Boma. “It’s just... better.”

Boma shook his head. “I don’t *need* it,” he told them softly, taking a step back and already beginning to fade. “I have enough illusions.”

Maurice and Rumie were left staring at an empty room.

“DAMN IT!” Maurice looked an inch from picking up the nearest monitor and *hurling* it at the space Boma had just occupied. “Damn, damn, *DAMN!*”

Rumie shook her head, reaching out to pat his arm sympathetically. “He’ll be back,” she promised softly. “He always comes back.”

Maurice waved his arms. “If that’s supposed to be reassuring...?”

“He’ll give in eventually.” Rumie smiled, the faint, cheerful curve of lips that said she was quite certain. “We’re not illusions, Maurice. We’re *real*... and he won’t let that go.”



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