

“AJAX” by Alexander Lee-Rekers - Nat/Tina/Gus - F/F/M - 20s/30s

NAT and TINA sit in the corner booth of a coffee shop. NAT keeps looking over her shoulder at the people walking in. TINA reaches a hand across the table to calm her.

TINA: You can stop checking over your shoulder. I'll tell you when he gets here.

NAT: I'll be able to tell. Always can, whenever he walks in a room. He's got a way to his step that's ... particular.

TINA: Just remember that we hold the cards.

NAT: I'm trying.

TINA: Gus is a lot of things. And while he's fucking stupid, he's not exactly an idiot. He'll deal-

NAT: *(Terse.)* I know my husband, Tina.

Pause.

TINA: It's going to work out.

TINA tenses up as GUS enters the cafe. NAT doesn't turn around, but she feels every one of his 'particular' steps as he walks to the booth and takes a seat next to his wife.

TINA: Evening, Gus.

GUS: *(Nodding.)* Tina. Nat.

TINA: Glad you could make it.

GUS: You shouldn't have waited to order. I'm not staying long.

TINA: We didn't wait, we didn't order.

GUS: Good, then. Where is he?

TINA: Where's the money?

GUS: Where's Ajax?

TINA: Where is Nat's money, Gus?

GUS sighs.

TINA: We're not playing games with you. You want to see Ajax alive again, you bring your wife what she's owed. And then you let her go.

GUS sighs again. He takes time, he takes up space. It has an effect on NAT and he knows it.

GUS: Why doesn't Nat say anything?

TINA: Sounds like a question for her.

GUS: She's not talking. *(To Nat.)* Are you. You know your bestie, here, she's using you, right? She knows you wouldn't pull this shit on your own steam. She knows you wouldn't try it on for a split second.

TINA: Don't talk to her like that.

GUS: *(Ignoring Tina.)* I thought you were done being controlled?

NAT: I just want my money, Gus.

GUS: Where the fuck is my dog?

TINA: He's close.

GUS: Do better.

TINA: It's the best you'll get.

GUS: And he's okay?

TINA: He's fine.

GUS: What are you feeding him? He's got certain things he can't be eating.

TINA: Man: fuck your dog.

GUS: You do know if he's harmed or worse, you'll get *nothing* from me. And there'll be nothing left to protect you.

TINA glances at NAT. GUS sighs. He slaps his thighs in a gesture of "so be it" and stands.

GUS: *(To Nat.)* Ajax is innocent in all this. He shouldn't suffer because we can't make it work.

NAT: Sit down.

GUS: Why?

NAT: Because I'll kill Ajax myself. You'll get him back in pieces. In doggie bags.

GUS sits.

NAT: He reminds me of you, Gus. Ajax. You both sleep so deep and peaceful. I remember nights in our bed. I'd look at you, still shaking from the fight we'd had. And after it all you'd be dead to the world, not a movement, not even a sound. *(She leans in.)* One night, I took your pistol and I held it to you, trained on your head. I told myself if you snored, or you stirred, I'd fire. I failed at that. I reckon I won't with Ajax.

GUS stands back up.

TINA: Bring it here in a bag you don't mind giving up. She'll count it, and if it's correct we'll walk out.

NAT: See you in half an hour, Gus. Or not.

He leaves without a word, without a sigh. TINA looks for a tell on NAT's face but finds none.