

Title: Dress-Up

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Rating: General

Characters: Jax/Tara

Warnings/labels: None

Spoilers: None

Word count: 1,076

Author notes: This one's for Tanaqui, who still manages to fling plot bunnies in my direction without ever having seen a minute of the show. Timeline-wise, this slots in somewhere between Kohn's death and Abel's homecoming. Thanks to Tanaqui for betaing.

Summary: Jax manages to fit in with Tara's world better than she would've expected.

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"So, see you at the clubhouse tomorrow?"

Before answering Jax, Tara made sure she shut the door to the hospital's nursery quietly behind her. Once she was confident the babies inside could sleep undisturbed, she shook her head. "I can't. I've got a... a work thing."

"Work?" Jax frowned down at her. "I thought you weren't on call this weekend."

"I am. Am not, I mean." One of the nurses wanted her to sign off on a chart; after quickly scanning the data, Tara added her signature to the bottom. When the nurse had scurried off again, she explained, "This is something else. A fundraiser, in Oakland. For a walk-in clinic."

Jax turned from where he'd been looking through the window at Abel and leaned a shoulder against the wall of the nursery. "And you were plannin' on going alone?"

She stiffened involuntarily, the question instantly setting her on the alert, the small hairs on the back of her neck rising in warning. When she was with Joshua—.

But no. She mentally shook her head. This was Jax, and his tone had held none of the jealous possessiveness that Joshua had displayed—something she'd only become aware of when it was far too late. "Yeah, I was."

One of the doctors in the geriatrics wing *had* suggested they go together, in fact; the news of 'the doctor and the biker' had apparently not yet filtered through all layers of hospital gossip. She'd turned him down. Whatever was going on with her and Jax, the last thing she needed was the complication of another man thinking he could lay claim to her. And it wasn't like she wasn't used to going by herself. "I don't think you'd like it much."

"Too many doctors?" Jax was grinning down at her, his arms crossed in front of his chest and amusement dancing in his eyes.

She looked him up and down: from the sneakers and the baggy jeans to the hoodie proclaiming *Fear the Reaper* and the leather cut with its various patches. She tried to imagine him mingling with the uptight physicians and surgeons of Oakland, and bit her lip to keep from smiling. "It's a black tie affair, Jax."

He quirked an eyebrow. "So?"

"So you'd have to wear a tux."

"And...?"

She snorted, and slapped at his arm. "Stop it. Where would you even get one?"

"That's for me to worry about." Some of the amusement left his face and his expression turned more earnest. "I don't like you driving into Oakland alone."

She cocked her head. Her first instinct was to laugh and tell him she was a big girl who could take care of herself, just as she'd done for the past eleven years. But truth was, it was rather nice to have someone care. Was that why she'd come back to Charming? Because people cared? She knew all her neighbors by name, and when she greeted the girls at the grocery store, she got a friendly greeting in return. She was a person here, not some anonymous face best ignored, as she'd been in Chicago....

Shaking off the memories, she pictured Jax in a tuxedo—and quite liked what she saw. She licked her lips. "You'd really come with me?"

"Sure." He nodded and pushed off from the wall. "I'll be free to take you after church."

Right, church. The weekly club meeting. She'd forgotten about that. "Pick me up at the house?" she suggested.

He grinned. "It's date."

She watched him head away from her down the hallway, hands stuffed in his pockets, his stride a little too large, nodding in greeting at a nurse heading in the other direction.

She blew out a breath. What the hell was she doing?

oOo

Tara had been ready and waiting for a few minutes when she finally heard the distant rumble of an approaching Harley. Snatching her purse and the keys to the Cutlass from the dresser, she headed outside. The club meeting must've lasted longer than expected, and they'd have to hurry to keep from being unfashionably late.

Jax had parked the bike while she locked up the house, and she couldn't help suck in a lungful of air when he took off the helmet and turned to face her. He sure cleaned up nice, she decided. From somewhere, he'd managed to procure a tuxedo that fitted him remarkably well,

snug across his broad shoulders, and he'd pulled his unruly strands of hair back and tied them in a neat tail at his neck.

"You look amazing." His voice was low while his gaze traveled up and down her body, checking her out the same way she was him.

"Thanks." Tara knew the black spaghetti strap evening gown suited her well, but it was gratifying to see it confirmed in the smoldering look in Jax's eyes. "You don't look so bad yourself. But—" It was only then that she realized what her subconscious had been trying to tell her was wrong from the instant she'd laid eyes on him, and she had to hide a giggle behind her hand. "You're not planning on wearing *that*, though, are you?" She dipped her head at the leather cut, so familiar, yet so out of place over the smooth black fabric of the tuxedo jacket.

He squinted down. "Just flyin' colors."

"Yes, but—" She caught the way his mouth twitched as he struggled not to smile. "Oh, ha ha, very funny, Jax Teller."

He broke out into a full grin as he slid out of the cut. "So, bike or car?"

Tara stuck a leg through the split in her ankle-length dress, wiggling a high-heeled foot in his direction. There was no way she'd be able to get on the back of the bike in this outfit.

Desire sparked in his gaze, something she hadn't been aiming for, but she didn't mind in the least. He nodded once, sharply. "Right. Cutlass it is."

She threw him the car keys, more than willing to let him do the driving. It'd be awkward in these heels, anyway. He snatched the keys out of the air and opened the door for her. As she settled in the front seat, she didn't miss the way he carefully folded the cut into the back. She frowned a little. Jax might know enough not to wear it to a fundraiser, but that cut was something she guessed she had to learn to live with.

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