

four suits, one house

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/54519556) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/54519556>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	Other
Fandom:	Lifesteal SMP
Relationship:	Ashswag & Branzy & ClownPierce & Reddoons (Video Blogging RPF)
Characters:	Ashswag (Video Blogging RPF) , Branzy (Video Blogging RPF) , ClownPierce (Video Blogging RPF) , Reddoons (Video Blogging RPF)
Additional Tags:	queerplatonic casino quartet , touch-averse Clown , 4k of casino quartet being absolute cunts to each other , arospec casino quartet , Branzy TOTALLY has a wife (come on guys)
Language:	English
Series:	Part 4 of MCYT aro week
Stats:	Published: 2024-03-16 Words: 4,031 Chapters: 1/1

four suits, one house

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Summary

“Yeah?” Ash asks, seemingly having learnt his lesson about looking anywhere other than forward. “How many people did you kill today, Clownpierce?”

“A gentleman never asks about another gentleman’s body count, you rascal.”

MCYT aro week day six - found family

Notes

The alternative title for this fic was they did NOTHING in that casino because they are AROMANTIC but. the vibes were off 😞

Prompts for this day were coming out / found family

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

“Home,” Clown calls, dropping his scythe in the umbrella stand by the door next to Branzzy’s cane, and Ash’s onetap god sword that he is explicitly banned from stealing, like he even needs it in the first place. Swords like that are for cowards, Gods who can’t hold their own in a fight and need outside assistance. They’re also for very curious murderous clowns, who want to know exactly what the enchants are, and how well it can work in experienced hands. He’ll get his hands on it some day.

He’s not surprised to get no response; their house—the *circus*, blueprint lifted from season three and dropped in their homeworld, with a couple of changes made to make it easier to live in—is big, with winding hallways and echoey rooms. He’ll just have to find the others. It’s for the best that they haven’t heard him anyway, mask snapping off of his face and into the holder on the wall with ease. In its place, he puts on a simple half mask, red diamonds over the eyes and swirls of gold that branch off to nestle in his hair and down his cheeks.

He takes off his costume next, shucks detailed layers with practiced efficiency until he’s left in a close-fitting black turtleneck, sans the sleeves, and a pair of black dress pants. The lack of jester’s hood leaves his hair loose, falling into long black ringlets that he very quickly pulls back, because this may be home, but he still needs to be alert. He doesn’t trust people, as, like, a default. It took him long enough to be comfortable with his mask off.

He’s fine with the half one, though, now that they’ve established some *rules* and *boundaries* and *guidelines*, none of which are things he follows. He’s an assassin, not a child.

Still, he takes his mask off, leaves the bottom half of his face open. It’s worth it, if not for the way he keeps catching Reddoons looking at him like he’s about to bite. His regular mask has a menacing smile: he simply has a flat face, most of the time. The whiplash is always funny. He’s pretty sure Ash almost pissed himself the first time he saw Clown smile—a real, genuine thing that he doesn’t like to think about too much.

His clothes get folded away into the depths of his inventory to be dealt with later, and Clown starts the trek through the halls of the casino. He designed them, so he doesn’t get lost in them, was the person who put in every fake bookcase and subhallway there is in the place. Of course, they took most of them out, turned them into bigger hallways, or sitting rooms, or yet another godforsaken office, but it’s the thought that counts. This place is full of his thought, paired with his blood, sweat, and tears.

It’s not as grand as MOB tower, not as intimidating as the season four end castle, but it’s home above all, the perfect match to his branding, and that is what he likes about it. He even managed to convince the others into keeping the roulette wheel, even if they covered it in a layer of glass several blocks up and turned it into a formal living room. Under pain of death, and only under pain of death, will he ever admit that it does look cool.

Today, the others are in the informal living room, if the sound of Redd and Ash bickering serves as any indication. If his ears serve him right, they’re still arguing over the best way to scam a man, a conversation Clown has very intentionally left himself out of, or there will be blood on the pretty wood floors. He’s not a mopping person.

The closer he gets to the room, the louder they get, and he can finally start to pick up on Branzy's additions to the conversation. In true Branzy fashion, he's playing both sides, pretending to be in the middle but driving them further and further into a frenzy. Wicked, cunning man.

Perhaps the best part of the situation is that they don't even realize how thoroughly they are being played, by the supposed weakest player on Lifesteal. It always goes like that, and he is not one to stop Branzy from his long con. "Gentlemen."

"Clown, you're home!" Redd says, and when Clown steps around the corner to the large room of couches, a conversation pit in the middle, he can see Redd sprawled out dramatically on a chaise lounge, suit unbuttoned. Branzy and Ash are on the same couch, Ash forced to sit on the floor while Branzy pulls his hair into increasingly elaborate braids. "You gotta help me out here. Tell Ash that a subtly worded contract with fine print is better at getting what you want than a desperate deal."

"Do not do that," Ash warns, turning his head to look for Clown and instantly getting his head tugged back into place by Branzy. "Ow! Do you want me to smite you, Branzy? I will smite you. Stop that shit."

Branzy, who does not look one bit sorry, apologizes. And then tugs at Ash's head again, using the braid in progress as an excuse. It makes Clown huff out a small laugh, barely there, because only Branzy could get away with something like that twice. Clown could go and sit beside him, maybe help to make Ash's head even more of a mess, but the thought of brushing shoulders with Branzy, feeling hair slip through his fingers, makes him shudder. Absolutely not.

He picks a loveseat close to both Branzy's couch and Redd's glorified fainting chair, and starts making his way over. "I don't think I will be getting myself involved in this argument. You can solve it yourself like gentlemen, right?" He makes it to the couch, sits down properly before pulling a pair of white gloves out of his inventory and pulling them on. "But the threat of danger is always a personal favourite."

"Yeah?" Ash asks, seemingly having learnt his lesson about looking anywhere other than forward. "How many people did you kill today, Clownpierce?"

"A gentleman never asks about another gentleman's body count, you rascal." That said, however, there *was* an issue at the casino—the official one, the one Clown runs. Their home is the prototype, far from the empire Clown has made, spanning several servers. It still makes him shudder to think about, chest convulsing with nausea. "Someone did try to seduce their way out of debt today, though."

"Oh?" Redd asks, and when Clown looks over, he's paused his dramatic sprawling to prop himself up on his elbows, head tipped to the side. For a businessman, he sure does act unprofessional. Clown simply cannot relate. "Now who on earth would want to seduce the *great* Clownpierce?"

Well, first of all, Clown does not appreciate the sarcasm, and he makes sure to tell Redd this, shooting a pointed glare his way for extra measure. "Some idiot who deluded himself into

thinking I don't collect. Really, I can only be too kind."

"We all know you're a dick," Ash says, and Clown is contemplating the merits of slitting his throat, just for emphasis. But again, blood. Mopping. He has no plans to clean, so Ash can continue being his *lovely* self. "Get on with it. Stop wasting our time."

"I don't think I want to tell you now," Clown says, because he's petty like that. If Ash wants to be *so* cruel to him, then he can simply shut up. And die. Forever. "On a *completely* unrelated note, someone came onto me today."

In the driest possible tone of voice, Ash asks, "Oh, really?"

"Yup."

"Okay, first of all, fuck you. Second of all, stop playing your *stupid* little games, and tell us the goddamn story before I kill you. You are a horrible piece of shit."

"Fuck you too," Clown says in the same tone of voice one would use to say I love you. Distantly, Branzy says something about *no murdering until I finish your hair*, but both Ash and Clown ignore him, because since when has *Branzy* ever been able to stop them from anything? "I feel scarred. Wounded. Traumatized."

"When we're saying came onto," Redd starts, unfazed when Clown levels a flat look at him. "Are we talkin' *literal*, or are we talkin' 'you're my baby daddy, love me back, please'?"

"Or are we talking 'take my son and my daughter and make them your polygamous wives so long as you rain blessings upon me and my family'?" Ash should like he's speaking from experience, voice crackling around the edges. "Maybe they only want you for your casino chips. Your personality leaves a lot to be desired."

"So where were you touched?" Redd finishes, voice flat as ever, looking over the top of his sunglasses. If they weren't enchanted with an illegal amount of unbreaking, Clown would have then broken within seconds. "You can point it out on the doll once we find one."

Ash, with the tone of someone who knows exactly what he's saying, fills in the gap. "Oh, look. Here's the doll! Branzy, get your hands out of my hair and let Clown tell us where the bad man touched him."

Branzy, Clown is convinced, simply likes watching all of them suffer. He keeps his hands in Ash's hair, and Clown watches as he pulls the strands of his current braid tighter instead of moving. "I don't think I particularly want to do that. What about you, Ash? Or maybe Reddoons?"

Over the sound of Ash cosplaying a cat hacking up a hairball with enough force that Branzy has to throw a leg over his shoulders to keep him still, Redd says, "Nah."

"All of you are *so* lucky that I left my scythe by the door," Clown threatens, and it's true! His scythe has been banned in the house for several months now, ever since Ash pissed him off and Branzy walked into the kitchen to utter bedlam. There's still a mark in the floor from

where Clown had Ash pinned, scythe impaled through his chest as he hissed and spat and defied the mortal plane, blood refusing to render as his body broke apart at the edges.

“We’re lucky that you’re a bitch, you mean,” Ash says, and Clown cannot tell if he wants to strangle him or force him into a lifetime of servitude. Maybe both. He could strangle him into agreeing to a life debt, probably. “Meh meh, I’m Clownpierce, I hate cleaning up blood. I hate dealing with the consequences of my actions. I’m a bitch. Skill issue.”

Clown doesn’t deign Ash with any more of his attention, considering he has nothing valuable to say. Instead, he turns to Redd, who’s tracing the patterns of his chair with one hand while drawing lines through the air with the other. Either he’s just sketched out the number thirteen, or he’s very slowly spelling an invisible *bitch* in the air. “Reddoons, tell me why you bother with him in the first place?”

Redd pauses in his air-spelling of bitch, halfway through the H, and lazily turns his head to look at Clown “Who, you? I ask myself that every day.”

Ash barks out a laugh, loud and mocking, and then shoots a smug, god-like grin at Clown. “How does it feel to know absolutely nobody likes you? To be completely powerless in the face of our unimpressed nature? I hope it feels bad. I hope you cry yourself to sleep.”

“Ah, Ash,” Redd says with a solemn nod, finally clued into Clown’s wavelength. If it means annoying Ash, he’ll team up with Clown any day of the week, unless it no longer benefits him. “He has a pretty face, I suppose. And unbeatable, unquestionable, god-like powers that can be used for all sorts of crimes with no repercussions.”

“Jump off a bridge,” Ash says, intelligently.

“Is that supposed to be a threat?” Redd returns, and *ah*, the sweet, sweet sounds of bickering. Oh, how Clown loves it. “Water buckets are real. I clutch. You lose.”

“How was your day at work?” Branzly asks, loud enough to bypass Ash and Redd’s arguing about clutches and bridges and reaction time. He’s had to deal with them for longer than Clown, so it makes sense that he’s ready to switch topics. “Is the redstone still working?”

Always trying to justify his worth, Branzly is. Or, at the very least, trying to make sure his *work* is still running. There are hundreds of other engineers Clown could choose to help maintain his casino, but the only one he trusts is Branzly. It gives him something to do, something to complain about that aren’t his limbs and his bones.

Still, Clown can’t allow himself to be too sentimental. Dramatically, he falls backwards on the couch, pressing the back of his hand to his mask. “Oh, Branzly. I thought you *cared* about me. I thought you wanted to hear about the horrible day I had at work today, not just about your redstone. That’s a pay cut. And another addition to your life debt.”

Before Branzly can respond with some simpering comment, a half-there apology, Ash very bluntly cuts in. “This isn’t capitalism simulator, fuck off.”

“Just because *you* are a god doesn’t mean that some of us don’t have to work. Lifesteal doesn’t pay the bills, and I am a very, very busy man.”

“This is *our server*. We don’t have any bills. How stupid are you?”

“Stupid enough to continue talking to you,” he suggests, because it’s true. “But none of that matters. My day, as I have tried to say, went horribly.”

Over Ash mocking him, and Redd not even sounding *remotely* sorry, Clown catches Branzy asking him what exactly happened. This is exactly why Branzy is his favourite. He knows how to be kind, and when to let Clown lead: all of the time.

He waits for everyone to quiet down before talking, so that he can be truly, properly heard, and his struggles acknowledged, as they should be. It takes a while, but that’s to be expected when both Ash and Redd can go at each other for hours until they get too tired to bother fighting any more. That, or until it becomes too sappy for either of them to pretend they’re mortal enemies.

When they finally do, he clears his throat, crosses one leg over the other at the knee, and makes sure his back is straight. “As I was trying to say,” he starts, pleased to note that for once, he has a decent amount of attention on him. “Work was atrocious. I expected debt day to be better, but I was mistaken. I was proved wrong. Reddoons, you should deal with this menial labour.”

“I do your taxes for fun,” Redd drawls, once again shooting Clown an unimpressed look from the floral mess of his fainting chair. “*And* I help calculate the debts. You should really be paying me more.”

“Consider the chances of you getting a raise to that of a snowball’s chance in hell. You have your own business. Regardless. Hands were laid on my person.” A glance over at Ash proves that if Branzy were not still holding him in place with a knee over his shoulder and a calf across his chest, he would also be laying hands on Clown’s person. The difference between Ash and today’s guest, as much as he hates to admit it, is that Ash’s touch isn’t completely vile. “The agony of unworthy hands was almost as bad as what followed.”

Despite knowing absolutely none of them are going to ask what followed, Clown pauses, waits for dramatic effect. He has a *reputation*, a craving for drama. Of course he pauses, sweeps his eyes across the room, and waits for a couple seconds to pass before continuing.

“He ran his hands up and down my arm, looked at me with eyes as dark and sultry as he could make them, and started complimenting me. *Oh, Clown, what lovely hands you have* —” all the better to be covered with his blood “— *what a fine figure you cut. You would be a wonderful lover. I want you so desperately. If there was one thing I got in debt for, it was so that I could talk to you like this, one on one.*”

“Why are you narrating this like a porno?” Ash asks, and Redd nods in solidarity. Horrible, the both of them. Clown is simply trying to express the agonies of being a murderous, evil clown, who scams people with his casino. “Get to the *point.*”

“He tried to ask me out on a date,” Clown says flatly, getting to the point. “His heart, *romantically*, in exchange for his heart, *literally*. Like he could flirt his way out of owing me tens of thousands of dollars. Insisted he could make me swing his way.”

“Like you swing at all?” Ash laughs, and to anyone else, it would sound mocking. Clown knows Ash, though, and Ash knows him. They share an understanding that few others will ever be able to replicate. “You’re like a fucking barbie doll. Nothing going on inside that chest of yours. I think if they cut you open, a jack in the box clown would pop right out of where your heart would be. Heartless. You killed him?”

Clown allows himself a small, careful smile, genuine down to the core. Ash knows him too well. “I killed him.”

“It better have been slow. Brutal.”

“Ash, do you not know me?” he laughs, dropping his folded leg in order to lean forward intimidatingly. “I’m wounded, really. I took his money, and then I took his heart. He wanted me to have it, he just didn’t elaborate on the way I could take it. I would rather let *Baconwaffles* kill me than let some nobody take me out on a date.”

“Really?” Redd asks, and Clown looks over just in time to see him shift around on his fainting chair, pushing up into a more properly seated position. “Baconwaffles? Am I that far removed from the table?”

“I would go on a date with someone before I let you kill me.”

“That’s *cold*,” Ash says, like he’s prepared to stir up trouble between the two of them again. They don’t need Ash to do that; they do it well enough themselves, but still. There’s something funny about an Ash-goaded conflict in a way that little else is. “Reddoons, I think he hates you. You should blow up the roulette table.”

“Again?” he asks in return, and *oh?* Is this a confession to the crime? The question of who left live piles of TNT in the formal living room has been unanswered for a while, and now it appears Clown has his answer. “I was picking shavings out of my hair for *weeks*, Ashswag. We can’t go blowing things up again.”

“If you blow up my circus again, I will be auctioning the both of you off for dates with the casino’s most wealthy patrons. They can remove the both of you from the premises and from my nerves.”

“And why not Branzzy?” Ash asks, directing everyone’s attention to the man who has been silent for most of the argument, tongue stuck out of his mouth as he works what looks like tinsel into his latest mini-braid. Ash seems to be losing his patience with each extra minute that Branzzy takes to do his hair, and it’s almost amusing. “You could sell him off into marriage so much easier than either of us. He’s got a nice face.”

“You like my face, Ash?” Branzzy asks, and then yanks at the braid in progress like a little boy in school. “That’s sweet of you. I don’t think I’m interested in any blind dates, though.”

“There’s your answer!” Clown says, hands splayed wide. “He’s not interested in blind dates.”

“Or any dates.”

“Or any dates!” he tacks on, grinning at both Ash and Redd. “You two, however…”

“Are also not interested,” Redd says, like that matters to Clown. No, see, this is revenge. He can do whatever he wants in the name of revenge. “I have to deal with enough people trying to baby trap me.”

“Oh, skill issue,” Branzly says placidly, wrapping an elastic around the last braid. “I usually tell them about my wife, and then they stop.”

“Yeah, but you don’t have a wife,” Redd points out, very blatantly stating the obvious. They’ve talked about Branzly’s hypothetical wife way too many times for him to bother mentioning her status as nonexistent every single time. “We haven’t met her. You don’t bring her home. Does she go to a different school, Branzly? Is that why we don’t know about your wife?”

Ash snorts, loud and disruptive, because that is his whole thing. “I think Clown’s his wife. Who else have we seen him around?”

“Ash, buddy boy,” Clown says, going for a menacing voice that would work on just about anyone else. He knows Ash. He knows that his God arc messed around with that neurochemical wiring. He *also* knows that he has a reputation to keep up. “Do you think *I* would ever get married? Do you think Branzly would? I come to you complaining about seduction practices, and you instantly try to set me up with Branzly? You should be ashamed of yourself.”

“Marriage is a feeble institution built on entrapment and narrow minded biblical standards designed to oppress and capitalize on toxic social standards,” Redd adds, and Clown fights the urge to punch him. Not because he’s wrong, but because he really likes hitting Redd, and his use of words is annoying. “Why would you want to tie yourself to one singular person who you might not even love all that much. Tax benefits? Kids? Have you *seen* the divorce statistics? Branzly, I bet your wife filed for a divorce.”

“Oh, shut your mouth about divorce, and come over here,” Branzly says, unhooking his leg from Ash’s shoulder before pushing him forward into the conversation pit. Ash lands with a loud yelp, and through promises of violence, jackknives around to lay on his back. He’s bent at weird angles around all of the pillows they keep throwing in the pit, because it’s easier to get more than to deal with the originals, and Clown snorts out a laugh. “Clown, you too.”

For a moment, Clown pauses, looks down at his gloved hands and debates the merits of listening. The thought of full, proper touch sends itches down his spine, makes his body want to shatter apart into glitches like Ash, but the thought of maybe bumping his shoulder against them, running his thumb over a hand is more pleasant than he wants to admit. In his peripheral, Redd gets up, and then crosses over to be in full vision, stepping into the pit with as much grace as he can pull together.

Then Ash hooks his hands around Redd's ankle, and pulls him down, the two of them getting into a slap fight while Branzy makes his way into the pit as well, tucking himself beside Ash like he hasn't already gotten enough of him. It takes a moment and a couple of winces for him to get settled, but eventually, Branzy is comfortable, and Redd and Ash have stopped fighting, and then Clown is the odd man out.

Normally, he wouldn't mind, but today, he notices. He notices that his personal, hell-sent annoyances are all comfortable together, bumping shoulders and throwing pillows at Branzy until he can prop his legs and arms in the right positions, and that he feels somewhat cold with the absence of their warmth. Maybe he will join them in the pit, at a safe distance away, until the ants under his skin decide to settle down into their colonies.

Really, these three are like his colony. His family. He doesn't hate it as much as past him would have thought.

End Notes

I like to think that all four of them are on different bits and pieces of the aromantic spectrum (&& also just the a-spec in general. aplatonic Clown saves lives) but if I had to figure out the exact identities I would be getting into a bar brawl with myself. behind a bar. So they're all ambiguous! (and stuck in varying positions where They Cannot Escape The Allos)

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