

Man-and-master bonding, Joslire's POV,  
scene originally occurring around page 54 in published novel:

Inside foot braced against the outside foot. Inside hand at the crook of Koscuisko's elbow, outside arm stretched to make contact with Koscuisko's other shoulder. Joslire was ready to begin, but he knew that he was afraid, even so.

"Now. The officer should feel an equal distribution of tension. Balance the weight carefully, there is more stability to the offside foot, in the present configuration."

Combat drill started simply enough with a series of modified wrestling holds. It was easy to teach, easy to learn. If Koscuisko was interested they might get as far as flying drill with three on one, before the end of the Term. But that was entirely up to Koscuisko.

"It still seems rather odd to have gotten so close to an hostile party, Joslire." Koscuisko was testing his weight, shifting his balance. Koscuisko had a good point, but combat drill was easiest to teach from the inside out. Not all the skill in avoiding or evading contact would really serve Koscuisko well if he were to be at a loss as to how to break contact if and when it should chance to be made.

He couldn't stand here forever, no matter how nervous he was. "Even so. The Student's attention is respectfully directed to the primary disengagement from this position. Student Koscuisko reviewed the drills?"

Koscuisko nodded, still testing the balance of the grapple-hold restlessly, if a little absentmindedly. Perhaps there was an instinct of a sort in Koscuiskos after all, despite his stated diffidence, and that was why he seemed intent on learning the moves, even if unconscious of the intent. Or maybe Koscuisko was just nervous, as well. "You will bend your straightened arm and straighten your flexed arm, and that is to compromise =my= balance. To the extent that my balance depends upon my right foot."

The balance would be quite so easy to predict, not with Koscuisko. Joslire's other Students had been physically right-dominant, and not as quick to shift their weight to their left side as Koscuisko would be. But he could deal with that.

"As the Student has stated. At the same time I will try to turn the officer's body toward Student Koscuisko's left. My goal will be to gain control of the Student by twisting Student Koscuisko's right arm behind the officer's back."

It would take more than just one Term for Koscuisko to begin to match him on the exercise floor, despite the anomalous physical strength of the Dolgorukij lineages. Fighting took aptitude, skill, technique, and -- above all -- practice. Joslire wasn't worried about a serious challenge to the instructional paradigm.

What he=was= worried about . . .

"On the count of two, if the Student permits. One. Two."

Kosciusko didn't lose as much of his balance as Joslire had expected, even taking preparation into account. Joslire had to make his pivot a little more swiftly, a little more sharply than he had planned, in order to be able to ensure a good demonstration. His momentum carried through to the finish, with Kosciusko's arm twisted up behind his back, and Joslire could hear Kosciusko grunt with evident pain even as he released his grip.

He would find out, now, perhaps.

He didn't want to know.

Seeking refuge in formal silence, Joslire stood at a carefully respectful command wait while his Student, his back still turned to Joslire, shook his arm as if the muscle strain could be stripped out at the fingertips. "It is very convincing, Joslire," Kosciusko said, and Joslire could not for the life of him decipher Kosciusko's tone of voice. Remind me, I would prefer to relax the shoulder next time, perhaps there would be an advantage. -- What next?"

"The Student is to practice the same technique. Somewhat slowly, at first, and we will also repeat the demonstration, at the Student's discretion."

Kosciusko turned to him, finally, and Kosciusko was grinning. "I am unsure. Show me how I am to do this, first, then we will repeat your demonstration, yes?"

It was too early to feel relieved, Joslire reminded himself. "As the Student wishes. The Student's inside foot is to be braced against my offside foot . . ."

And still the maneuver had clearly caused Kosciusko appreciable pain, more than Joslire had anticipated because he'd been caught off guard by Kosciusko's solid balance. When people were hurt, especially when they were hurt sharply and suddenly, their first reaction tended to be one of anger. Surely he had hurt Kosciusko enough to make him angry, even if it was just at the beginning, even if it didn't mean that Kosciusko wouldn't get angry later.

Maybe Kosciusko was not going to get angry, when he was hurt during practice.

Maybe it was going to be safe for Joslire after all.

"Now. The Student will push -- slowly, for demonstration purposes the exercise can be walked through. The upset of equilibrium should start the opponent's turn -- like this -- and the Student can easily gain control of the arm. Yes, precisely so, if the Student permits."

Kosciusko carried the gesture through far enough to see where it was going, not far enough to start to hurt Joslire in turn. "But it is too easy with a passive partner, Joslire. Perhaps again, more quickly?"

Joslire shut his relieve away inside him, deep, locked down. He had to concentrate. "As Student Kosciusko wishes. Once again."

Had he really been so afraid that Kosciusko would be angry, being hurt?

An excised Andrej-and-Chaymalt scene, fit into around page 260, her POV.  
There is a reference surviving in the text to the issue of the cost of pharmaceuticals,  
and Andrej's intention of making a thank-you call, surviving on page 198.

"Student Koscuisko to see Doctor Chaymalt, as arranged. Good-morning, Doctor."

Ligrose Chaymalt looked up at the talk-alert tone, a little surprised. Yes, Koscuisko had an appointment, but he'd also had his Sixth Level just yesterday, and she'd more than half expected a postponement. At the very least, some visible signs of wear and tear on the man.

"Good-greeting, Andrej, do please be seated. You may put your man at ease, if you like."

Koscuisko looked just fine from where she sat; more rested than when she'd seen him last, and the uniform looked particularly well on him, for some reason. He certainly didn't look like most of the Students she'd seen, when they were just coming off the Intermediate Levels.

"Thank you, Doctor Chaymalt, St. Clare, you may be at ease. It is actually about St. Clare that I have come, Doctor."

There was a little discomfort, there, but no more than usual. He'd get used to it. He'd be talking about bond-involuntaries as if they weren't there in no time. It was either treat them as invisible, or have to take their suffering seriously, and as far as she was concerned that was far too much suffering for anyone to be expected to take seriously.

"Then I'll have my say first, Andrej, if you don't mind." As if he'd argue with her. "If you'd care to consult the monitor, there -- " The screen at the front of her work-table would show the same information she had been studying; Idarec, Koscuisko's neurosurgery. They'd taken a secondary prelim scan just yesterday, and the evidence was -- if anything -- even more impressive than it had been immediately after the operation.

"I thought you might find the progress report gratifying. I'm afraid there won't be many opportunities for you to practice your art in Fleet, however."

He'd gotten absorbed in the stats, so much was clear. "Yes, well, a man could wish for time to do a maintenance run here, with the optic bundle. -- Excuse me, Doctor Chaymalt, you had said?"

She stifled a laugh; he was so easily distracted, so easy to lead aside. Fleet was going to chew him up and spit him out in eight different dysfunctional directions. She didn't feel much like smiling, actually; better for her to find out what he had on his mind and get rid of him, before she had time to get really depressed about his prospects. "It is a sad truth that the patient load on a cruiserkiller does not exactly challenge a man of your evident abilities. I'm sure you are as aware of that as I am?"

Getting depressed would only sour her mood and mean nothing to him, and Ligrose hated to waste energy.

"I hope that I have studied the indices, Doctor Chaymalt." A little touch of frost, there. Or maybe he thought it was depressing, too. "That is to say, it will be enough of a challenge to oversee a staff of career physicians, all of them with experience superior to mind. I imagine that I will have my hands full."

None of his staff would dream of challenging his authority; none of his staff would want to face the less strictly medical duties that the assignment entailed. Still, career staff respected ability, and Koscuisko had an abundance. "I'm sure you will do very well. Your man, there, what's-his-name, I understand he is doing very well also."

Koscuisko glanced up over his left shoulder to where the bond-involuntary stood immobile and impassive. He was a big boy, Koscuisko's man. Not bad-looking, for a Nurail, but it was a shame he couldn't wear his hair a little longer. Nurail could be actually quite attractive, with their hair down their shoulders. Not that she cared.

"He heals well and quickly, for which reason I wished to see you. I have also read Fleet protocols concerning cost management and the rising price of pharmaceuticals." Oh, she hoped he wasn't going to say anything embarrassing. Thanking her for an impulsive act, committed during a moment of weakness, would only remind her of her little lapse.

She set her teeth against the chagrin she felt, having let herself be caught in the middle of a sentimental weakness, and waited for the worst. "Yes?"

"The issue is one of obvious concern. It would not be possible to return St. Clare to duty status for three days yet, had the stress delayed his healing."

As if that stopped anybody. Bond-involuntaries did as they were told, no matter how much it hurt while they were doing it. And medical staff -- generally speaking -- made it their business to get them out of Infirmary as soon as possible, because it was too negative a morale factor to be unable to do the natural thing and press a couple of eighths of the nearest narcotic through to ease the suffering.

"And I hoped you might be able to advise me, Doctor. There may be some way in which the problem might be approached, to stay within one's budget and optimize the healing process, at the same time."

Cunning little bastard. He wasn't going to make an issue of her lapse of impersonality. But he =was= going to pump her, for ways in which to persuade future Captains to grant him as much leave with their restricted stores as she had.

"You've been spending a good deal of your time down here, haven't you?" Speaking slowly, thinking fast, she thought that it was just possible that she knew the answer. "Your Tutor explained that you were working a Controlled List problem, for him."

Koscuisko ducked his head, nodding. A tender subject, perhaps. She wondered that he hasn't seen the obvious implications.

"Two choices present themselves. There is a bounty, attached to new approvals." Not enough of one for a man as rich as Koscuisko to have noticed; but one recognized as budgetarily significant

by Fleet. "The bounty usually attaches to the administrative budget of the station where the work was performed. I dare say your Captain wouldn't care how you spent the money, as long as you kept it coming in." Koscuisko's research would make a nice little sum to Clellean's credit, now that she came to think of it. Enough to pay for a bond-involuntary at least, St. Clare, for instance. "And your other option, of course. You get first refusal on lab space, as Chief Medical Officer, and your research is a valid Fleet enrichment activity. If your Captain won't release the budget, why not just synthesize the drug you want?"

Koscuisko looked both intrigued and alarmed, and Ligrose hastened to erase the negative impression she feared she might have created. "I'm not talking bootleg or contraband, mind you. No-one will fault you if you happen to re-invent the universal soother, though, and you'll have to test it, won't you? The odds are good that no-one will even care to notice."

No, of course she wasn't talking Bench commercial irregularity. Koscuisko would hardly be manufacturing in bulk, or for personal use or gain; and Fleet didn't consider itself bound by Bench commerce regulations anyway. Koscuisko would know what to do. She was certain of it.

"I am -- very grateful to you, Doctor Chaymalt." Once the initial shock had passed it was clear enough that Koscuisko grasped the entire tape, and liked it, too. "I would not have thought. -- May I excuse St. Clare, for a moment? I have brought his release documents."

She didn't see why he should feel it necessary; but there was no reason not to let him have his own way. She merely nodded her permission, and Koscuisko waited until the bond-involuntary had left the room before he spoke again.

"With your permission, Doctor Chaymalt. I am grateful to you most of all for the use of your -- pharmaceutical budget. It was of significant comfort to me, that St. Clare was spared unnecessary torment."

He was too sincere for it to be embarrassing, Ligrose was glad to note.

"You did beautiful work, with Idarec." She might as well be candid, to match his unguarded candour. "I was glad to render a token of appreciation. Now let me witness the release documents, and let you get back to whatever it is that you're supposed to be doing."

With Koscuisko's anxious eyes on her she found she could not treat the orders as briskly as she would have liked. Doubtless Koscuisko expected her to actually read them. He had been right; St. Clare had healed well, and quickly. But it had less to do with her and more to do with Koscuisko than Koscuisko seemed willing to acknowledge.

"Be on your way, then. Good-greeting."

The more she saw of Koscuisko's work the less she liked the thought of wasting him on Fleet. Obviously the best thing to do was not to see any more of Koscuisko than she could help.

"Thank you, Doctor Chaymalt. By your leave."

Otherwise she was going to end up complaining to Clellean again. She just knew it.

A scene where Joslire does his best to help Andrej face his first test . . .

This would have been on or about page 55 in the printed text.

I took the opportunity to give a bit of physical description, in the printed version; part of the meditation about the loss of his carefree student brawling-in-taverns lifestyle (to the extent that he ever really lived one) stayed in. On reflection, this scene, while kind of fun, trivialized the turmoil that Andrej was in on the morning of that exercise by reducing it to aggravation about scuffed boots and tepid rhyti.

Andrej could hear Joslire's quiet movements from the room beyond, but lay on his back on the sleep-rack without stirring, savoring his relative privacy and trying to nerve himself up to face the day's requirements. The second practical exercise was not likely to be as simple as the first had been, distasteful as it was. Once he had grasped the joke of it he'd been too disgusted to be nervous, even though Tutor Chonis had not really been a good sport about the matter.

Curran's respectful cough at the entry to the cubicle but an end to Andrej's meditation on Chonis' utter lack of any discernible sense of humor. It was time to get up, now, of course. Curran was the best morning-chimer he had ever had, and never failed to wake him in good time to prepare for the day. Andrej stretched and glanced over at the chrono near the sleep-rack, smiling, well content to verify Curran's impeccable timing.

Except that there was a problem.

Today Joslire was a full two-eighths after the usual mark, and he was going to have to hurry, and he was in enough of a turmoil over what the morning held for him without needing any more confusion just at present. There was no question of being a few marks late to the exercise theater, not when he dreaded the experience that awaited him so. Tutor Chonis would unquestionably take any tardiness as evidence of a case of insufficiently controlled nerves, which would be absolutely unacceptable.

Swearing to himself, he threw himself into the washroom to splash some water into his face and put himself to rights. There wasn't any toweling by the basin, and there weren't any cleansing packets for washing, and he hadn't even checked until he was dripping -- Joslire had never failed to see that all that was necessary was at hand, ever before. Well, at least he could count on Curran to have his uniform ready for him, and his fast-meal set out. Bond-involuntaries were apparently taught to be mindful of the details, this business with the washroom aside, and Curran had quickly learned what Andrej liked best for fast-meal, gratifying his early-morning appetite in a pleasingly thorough manner.

Andrej concentrated on that pleasant prospect while he dried his face on his sleep-shirt, trying to equalize his humor. Rhyti and sliced acetos, hot toasted bread with Vilesa marmalade . . . it was enough to take a man's mind off any inconveniences. Almost enough to take a man's mind off of the problem of having to trot off to class and strike some inoffensive prisoner for the crime of having stolen flour to feed his family, or some such nonsense.

Almost.

When Andrej had finished combing his hair -- which was going to need cutting, soon, since it was beginning to show signs of thinking about falling into his face again -- he stepped out into the main room in happy anticipation of his fast-meal, already forgiving Curran for his morning's lapses on the strength of Vilesa marmalade to be forthcoming.

And Curran was not ready at table to pour the rhyti -- not that Andrej needed Joslire's help to pour his own rhyti, just that Curran had always had his uniform ready for him, before. Curran was not ready to serve his rhyti because Curran was sitting in the corner by the door, polishing one of Andrej's boots with a look of furious concentration on his face. Andrej sighed -- perhaps the moons were wrong in Curran's quarter, or something -- and trudged to the study-set, feeling considerably deflated.

In such a mood depressing fore-fears of what he was going to be expected to do today returned in full force. Without adequate distraction Andrej brooded, taking up a slice of aceto in his fingers. It was sour. It was the first sour aceto he'd had all Term, and he could not stomach sour acetos.

He didn't mind hitting people, not really, and that was all today's exercise should entail -- hitting someone. Frequently, perhaps, but with no permanent ill effect, and he certainly hadn't come all the way through his medical training without hitting people. After class hours, usually in a tavern of some sort, and never without either having been hit or being immediately hit back. Recreational brawling, with a little thin-blade dueling thrown in. Servants at home were sometimes beaten even in these days, on Azanry -- but seldom at Rogubarachno. His father had been a progressive man, who loved his wife and declined to beat his children, no matter how they tried his patience; and therefore it had come to pass that Andrej had never struck anybody in his life who had not been in a position to retaliate, without hesitation or restriction.

He reached for the toast. Two pieces cold; one piece cold and soggy, as well. Curran was still working on his boot. Andrej frowned at the rhyti-jug, unsure of the wisdom of going three for three; but he was hungry, and so he reached for the jug and poured himself a cup.

And found it tepid, under-steeped, and flat.

Frowning at Curran, now, in his turn, Andrej considered the situation. If Joslire had been an Aznir body-servant, there would be a simple explanation, to wit: Andrej had offending, in some way, and would be punished in this manner to bring his offense to his attention until he found some opportunity to make amends. But Curran was not Aznir, Curran was Emandisan, coal-black hair and cross-eyed look and all. Nor -- as Andrej understood it -- could a bond-involuntary undertake such guerilla warfare without clear and present danger of immediate, and brutal, reprisals. So what he was to make of it all?

"Joslire."

Curran jumped to attention, scuffing, the otherwise flawless shine of Andrej's boot against the wall-board as he did so. "The officer requires?"

"Joslire, you are being very irritating this morning." Curran couldn't duck his head, from a position of attention; but it seemed to Andrej that the muscles that underlay those flat Emandisan cheekbones twitched with frustration and resentment.

"The officer's displeasure is understandable. There can be no excuse. The office will wish to discipline -- "

"No, you're not listening to me, Joslire." Glancing at his chrono, Andrej pushed himself away from the disappointments of the fast-meal to finish dressing. He was hungry, cross, and aggravated. And he did not want to go to his practical exercise and hit somebody. "I said that you are being very annoying. It has only been three eighths, Joslire, but in three eighth's time I have never seen you even think anything without some specific underlying reason."

Trousers. Underblouse. Boots. Joslire brought him his boots, kneeling to help him get the angle right to get them on. The uniform required tightly fitted footgear, and there wasn't much room for error.

It was a moment before Curran answered his implicit question. When he did, it was from his kneeling position, his head quite close to Andrej, his voice low - as if he hoped not to be overheard, even while he surely knew better than Andrej that his words were being continually monitored.

"The officer," Joslire began, meeting Andrej's curious gaze with a flash of black eyes otherwise prudently lowered. " -- is respectfully encouraged to use whatever energy may be available to him, to assist him in his study."

Was that it?

Subject him to every petty inconvenience Joslire could imagine, in order to send him to his practical exercise so full of unfocussed frustration that he would =want= to hit somebody?

"Hurry with my overblouse, if you please, I wouldn't care to be late." It had succeeded, whether or not that was the reasoning behind the stratagem. Andrej was genuinely irritated.

But more at the all-too-successful attempt to manipulate him, than for any other reason.

(There was one more little clip, but I thought it was just too self-pitying and rather clumsy and gauche as well. So to heck with it.)